



5 YEAR STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN

Hillsborough Tourism Board

Adopted: December 2017

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Executive Summary

Hillsborough has a strong tourism program that has been built through the collaboration and cooperation of many forward thinking local non-profit organizations, citizens, business owners, and local government. This plan was developed in order to continue the strength of the tourism program by guiding the future work of the Tourism and Visitors Center staff and informing and directing decisions about tourism spending for future success. The tourism program has been focused for many years on the town's rich history dating back to the



mid 1700's. This plan outlines strategies for continuing to promote and celebrate that amazing history as a focus, while also recognizing and promoting other emergent strengths. Such strengths include: lively music and arts offerings, outdoor recreation adventures, and award winning food and

beverage samplings. It is recognized that economic development through tourism adds value and revenue into the local economy which generates future private investment, creates jobs, and improves prosperity for local businesses. Using the objectives outlined in this plan, Tourism Staff and Visitors Center Staff will work collaboratively and strategically with other tourism partners noted in the plan to expand the availability of information for visitors, to promote what's attractive and interesting about Hillsborough, and to incrementally attract more new and repeat visitors to town. The implementation of this plan is expected to tactically achieve the overarching goal of elevating Hillsborough as the premier North Carolina tourist destination.

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Hillsborough was established in 1754, two years after the formation of Orange County, where the Great Indian Trading Path crossed the Eno River. Hillsborough was a political hub during both the colonial period and American Revolution and many significant historical events have occurred during Hillsborough's 263 years.

Many important historical figures also have lived, worked, and rested their heads in Hillsborough. There remain more than 100 late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century structures that illustrate various periods in time that have defined the town. In addition, there are numerous secondary buildings, bridges, millsites and dams along the Eno, and Native American relics from the locations of ancient towns stretching back thousands of years.



Town government, local organizations, and citizens have long recognized and embraced Hillsborough's rich and diverse history and have placed a heavy emphasis on the importance of the preservation of the structures, artifacts, and



folklore that illustrate Hillsborough's important story. That story is woven into the fabric of the many things that Hillsborough has grown to be able to offer visitors and residents through the years.

At present Hillsborough invites visitors into a beautiful, historic town that offers a vibrant arts scene and live music performances, many outdoor recreation possibilities, and the opportunity to enjoy both locally made craft beverages and fine dining options. This diversity in opportunities for visitors to enjoy Hillsborough provides a full, well rounded, and authentic experience.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

In the early 1990's a small group of preservation-minded citizens got together to discuss the possibility of furthering economic development and tourism in Hillsborough. Their idea was to organize a Visitors Center in town and to create a non-profit organization that would identify, encourage, and coordinate historical and educational projects designed to enhance and preserve Hillsborough's history and culture and to create a public awareness of that heritage. This grassroots association of people worked with local government officials, business owners, and the Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce to draw up agreeable draft legislation and



presented their idea of creating the prepared food and beverage tax to the Hillsborough Town Board. The Hillsborough Town Board approved the plan to implement the tax and the legislation was passed by the North Carolina General Assembly.

As a result, the Hillsborough Tourism Board was formed as a public authority operating under power granted by Chapter 449 of the North Carolina Sessions Laws of 1993 and structured by Town Code ordinances adopted by the Town of Hillsborough. The Tourism Board's activities are funded as permitted under this legislation by a one

percent tax on prepared food and beverage sold within the Town of Hillsborough. In late 1992 the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough was formed as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Tourism Board shortly thereafter began contracting with the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough to operate the Hillsborough Visitors Center, which is currently located at 150 E King Street in the historic Alexander Dickson House.

Today, the Hillsborough Tourism Board continues to contract with the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough to staff the Visitors Center, plan and host history tours,

develop and execute heritage programming and special events that celebrate our cultural history, and encourage visitors and residents to enjoy Hillsborough through active marketing. The Alliance has served this role for many years and has contributed to the positive growth of tourism in Hillsborough.

Additionally, the Tourism Board contracts with three other organizations in town that provide valuable visitor services and events. They are as outlined below:

The Historic Hillsborough Commission, which operates the Burwell School Historic Site, is contracted to provide convenient hours, free admission and free tours of the historic site. Visitors, residents, and school groups can take part in the site's many special events and heritage tourism programming focused on that site and the history of the Burwell School, which was one of very few all girls' educational facilities of its time. The school also includes a special story in that of Elizabeth Keckly, a former slave at the school who went on to become a seamstress to first lady Mary Todd Lincoln.



The Historical Foundation of Hillsborough, which operates the Orange County Historical Museum, is contracted to provide convenient hours, free admission to the museum for visitors, residents, and school groups, as well as special events and heritage tourism programming focused on the unique story of Hillsborough and Orange County throughout time. The collection consists of the most important historical Orange County artifacts held in trust for the public. These artifacts are shared through permanent and temporary exhibitions. Additionally, researchers are permitted access to the museums archival files to support their studies.



The Hillsborough Arts Council is contracted to plan, manage, and execute Hillsborough's 'Last Fridays: Free Concert Series' which consists of free music, vendors, visual arts displays, children's activities, and more, every last Friday of the month from April-September. This event series has a focus on the arts and has a large community festival feel that brings people locally and regionally in to town.



The Hillsborough Tourism Board acknowledges that there has been a steady increase the tourism, economic and commercial development, and residential development in town since the early 1990's and that many aspects of the tourism program have evolved over time. As a result, the Hillsborough Tourism Board in conjunction with local tourism stakeholders, partner organizations, elected officials, and community supporters have developed this plan to act as a guiding document for the continuation and expanded success of the Hillsborough tourism program.

The Hillsborough tourism program consists of, but is not limited to, the operations of the Hillsborough Visitors Center; tourism marketing to include: development,



printing, and distribution of tourism collateral and marketing materials, branding, messaging, and expanded market reach, management of a dedicated tourism website, management of tourism social media accounts on major platforms; research and implementation of current tourism trends and best practices, and data collection; and providing funding and resources to local organizations that are actively working to create and promote

interesting attractions, events, and programs to attract visitors and enhance visitor and resident experiences in our town.

The Hillsborough Tourism Program is directly managed by a full-time Tourism Board staff member under the direction of the Hillsborough Tourism Board. The

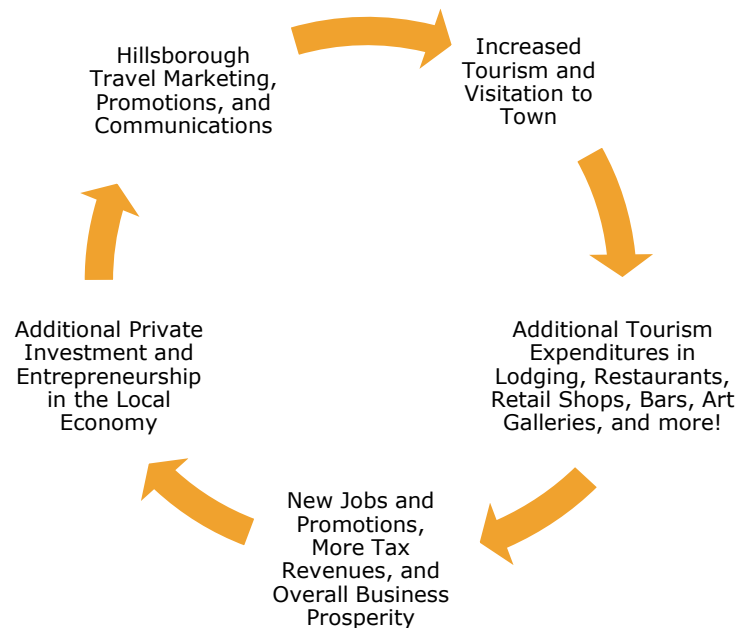
Tourism Board Staff member oversees the Tourism Board's contracts and contracted services on behalf of the Tourism Board as well as the Tourism Board's grant program. The strategies outlined in the plan implementation are to be overseen and primarily completed by the Tourism Board's Staff member and with assistance from other contracted staff, such as the Visitors Center Staff, and in cooperation with other town entities where appropriate.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Tourism is an economic development tool in many communities and it is one component of Hillsborough's economic development strategy.

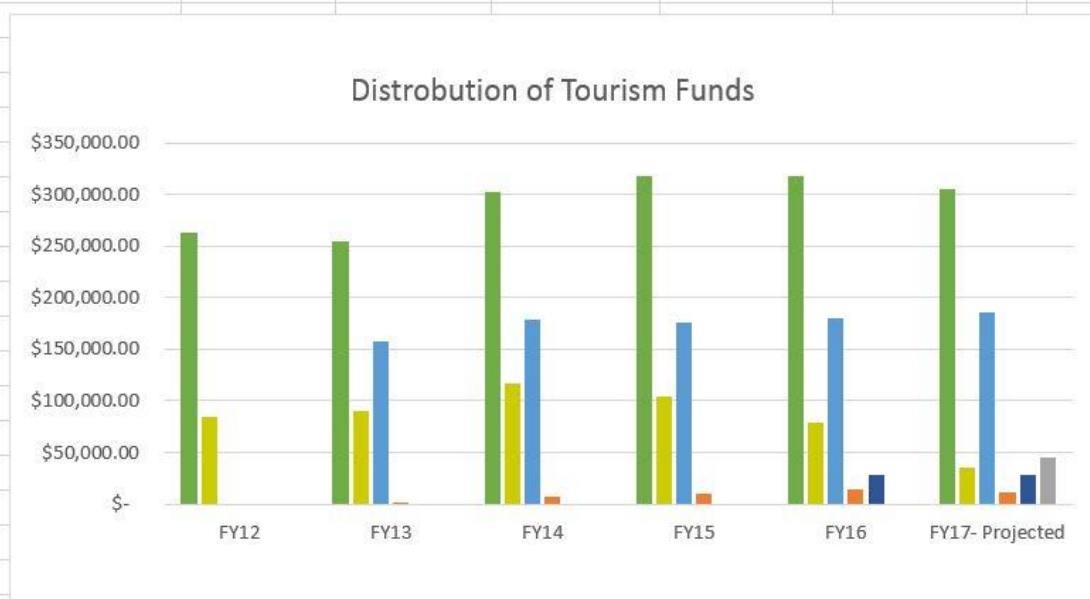
The expenditures into Hillsborough's local economy produced by tourism generates added overall wealth, prosperity, and business growth. Tourism adds dollars into the system that may not otherwise be spent here resulting in small business stability and creation and retention of available jobs in our community.

Additionally, the tax revenues on prepared food and beverage are reinvested cyclically into programs, events, initiatives, and infrastructure that improve not only the tourist's experience but the overall quality of life for residents. This reinvestment provides additional opportunities for visitors that to come and again spend money here in Hillsborough.



Tourism staff and the Tourism Board can track economic growth and progress attributed to the tourism program by studying increases in food and beverage tax revenues which represent an increase in both sales at food service establishments as well as the number of food service establishments in town that are remitting food and beverage tax. Strong sales and the opening of new restaurants and bars indicate additional private investment and entrepreneurship which continues the successful cycle of the tourism program. From FY2012 to FY2016 there was a \$54,910.94 total increase in revenues. With the increase in revenues came the need for the Tourism Board to analyze how they were reinvesting funds as is shown by the chart titled 'Distribution of Tourism Funds'.

	FY12 *	FY13 *	FY14 *	FY15 *	FY16 *	FY17- Projected *
Food & Bev Tax Revenue	\$ 263,376.00	\$ 254,631.00	\$ 301,976.00	\$ 318,172.00	\$ 318,286.94	\$ 305,000.00
Grants	\$ 84,463.00	\$ 89,357.00	\$ 116,646.00	\$ 103,741.00	\$ 78,430.00	\$ 35,500.00
Contracts and Partnerships	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 44,540.00
Visitor Center Support	**	\$ 158,013.00	\$ 178,185.00	\$ 176,297.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 185,000.00
Staff Support	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	28,000.00	28,000.00
Administrative Costs	\$ -	\$ 968.00	\$ 7,324.00	\$ 9,690.00	\$ 13,470.00	\$ 11,960.00



* Table is illustrative and not an accurate representation of any complete Fiscal Year budget or expenditures.

** FY12 Visitor Center Support data is undefined

Fund distribution has been spread from only Visitor Center Support and Grants in FY12 to many different areas in FY17 including, but not limited to, contracting, special projects and partnerships, staff support, and administrative costs such as website updates and maintenance, legal aid, and financial auditing. This plan will continue to guide the Tourism Board's fund distribution and fiscally responsible decision making.

Another way the economic growth of tourism can be tracked is by obtaining data from local economic impact studies when it becomes available. The Town of Hillsborough recently partnered with Americans for the Arts who held the Arts and Economic Prosperity Study, which was a national survey-based economic impact study. The impact study utilized randomized surveys given to participants at

qualifying Arts events in Hillsborough over a one year period and then analyzed the results of that study.

Event-Related Spending by Arts and Cultural Audiences Totaled \$4 million (excluding the cost of admission)

Attendance to Arts and Culture Events	Resident ¹ Attendees	+	Nonresident ¹ Attendees	=	All Cultural Audiences
Total Attendance to Arts and Culture Events	174,566		109,743		284,309
Percentage of Total Attendance	61.4%		38.6%		100.0%
Average Event-Related Spending Per Person	\$12.20		\$16.88		\$14.00
Total Event-Related Expenditures	\$2,129,705		\$1,852,462		\$3,982,167

Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Event Attendees Spend an Average of \$14.00 Per Person (excluding the cost of admission)

Category of Event-Related Expenditure	Resident ¹ Attendees	Nonresident ¹ Attendees	All Cultural Audiences
Meals and Refreshments	\$8.76	\$9.64	\$9.10
Souvenirs and Gifts	\$0.64	\$2.47	\$1.35
Ground Transportation	\$0.45	\$1.11	\$0.70
Overnight Lodging (one night only)	\$0.00	\$2.31	\$0.89
Other/Miscellaneous	\$2.35	\$1.35	\$1.96
Average Event-Related Spending Per Person	\$12.20	\$16.88	\$14.00

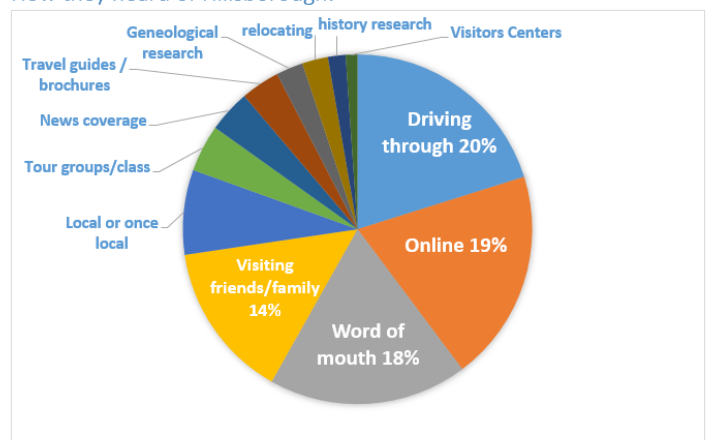
Source: *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and Their Audiences in the Town of Hillsborough*. For more information about this study or about other cultural initiatives in the Town of Hillsborough, visit the Town of Hillsborough Planning Department's web site at www.ci.hillsborough.nc.us.

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Local economic impact studies give great insight to the kinds of people that are spending money in our community as well as how much they're spending and what kinds of things they are spending money on. This kind of data allows the Tourism Board, Tourism Staff, and Visitors Center Staff to make more informed decisions on where to focus time, energy, and tax revenues for the biggest return on investment. Additional data such as website analytics and visitor data

Visitors Outreach Data

How they heard of Hillsborough:



retrieved from the Visitors Center also assists in informed decision making particularly when marketing Hillsborough and ensuring that marketing resources are being spent where they are going to make the biggest impression.

THE ROLE OF THE TOURISM BOARD

The Tourism Board is a volunteer board comprised of nine seats. Tourism Board members serve two year terms and may serve up to three successive terms. The seats are allocated as follows: four for business owners that collect the tax, a seat for the Chamber of Commerce, a seat for the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, a seat for the Hillsborough Town Board, and two at-large seats.

The Tourism Board is dedicated to driving economic development through tourism by promoting Hillsborough as a unique destination and by providing visitor services. To accomplish this, the board reinvests the prepared food and beverage tax in funding for a visitors center, grants, special projects and partnerships, and contract services with local organizations and historic sites.

TOURISM BOARD MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

Mission: The Mission of the Hillsborough Tourism Board is to drive economic development through tourism.

Vision: The Vision of the Hillsborough Tourism Board is to enrich Hillsborough's attractions, culture, diversity, and economic development, for visitors and residents alike.

THE ROLE OF THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Tourism Development Authority is a volunteer board consisting of three seats. Tourism Development Authority members serve one year terms and may serve up to six consecutive terms. The seats are allocated as follows: a seat for the Town Board of Commissioners designee, a seat for a Tourism Board Member, and a seat for a business owner in town that collects and remits the occupancy tax.

The Tourism Development Authority promotes travel, tourism and conventions, sponsors tourism-related events, and finances tourism-related capital projects. To accomplish this, the Tourism Development Authority reinvests the three percent occupancy tax into special projects and partnerships, events, and promotions to encourage visitors to stay in our lodging facilities. The Tourism Development

Authority works both collaboratively and individually as a partner in the overall Tourism Program with the Tourism Board.

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS, AND SUPPORTERS

Organizations, groups, and individuals that spend their time to contribute ideas, comments, and strategies for the Hillsborough Tourism Program's continued success are greatly appreciated:

Ayr Mount (Classical American Homes)

Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce

Hillsborough Tourism Board

Hillsborough Tourism Development Authority

Hillsborough Arts Council

Historic District Commission of the Town of Hillsborough

Occoneechee/Orange Historic Speedway Group

Moorefields Historic Site

Orange County Arts Commission

Orange County/Chapel Hill Visitors Bureau

Orange County Historical Museum & Historical Foundation of Hillsborough/Orange County

The Burwell School Historic Site & Historic Hillsborough Commission

The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough

Town of Hillsborough Board of Commissioners

Town of Hillsborough Staff

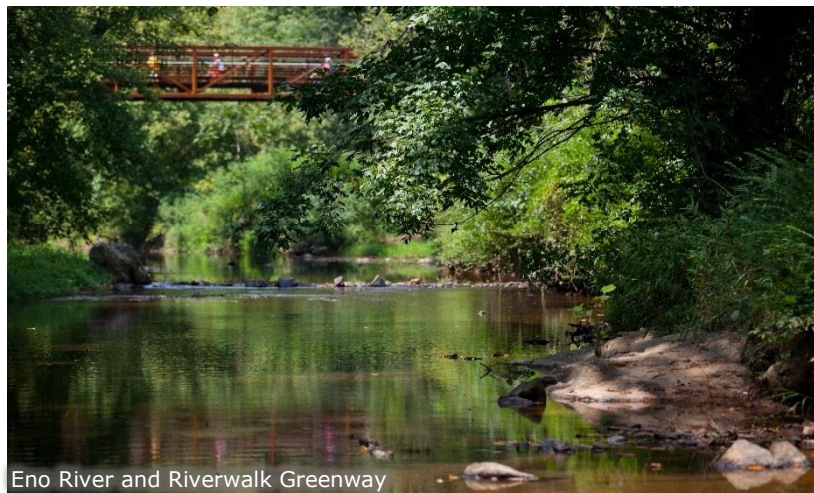
PLAN PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of creating and implementing a Tourism Plan is to guide and inform the work of both the Tourism Board as well as the Hillsborough Visitors Center and Tourism Staff. This guidance is needed to assist the Tourism Board with decision making in funding the tax revenue reinvestments in the community through grants, contracting, and special projects/partnerships, as well to direct the marketing, outreach, and growth of the Hillsborough Tourism Program.



The plan is designed to achieve the following goal:

Hillsborough shall be the premier North Carolina tourist destination.



TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL THE PLAN WILL USE THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES:

- *Incrementally grow the tourism base and expand the types of tourists that visit Hillsborough by providing information, creative marketing, consistent communications, and interesting arts, music, outdoor, and cultural events.*
- *Market Hillsborough as a beautiful and charming small town with a long, rich history, vibrant art and music scene, great outdoor recreation opportunities, and delicious food and beverage.*
- *Maintain a vibrant, friendly, clean, and attractive destination to keep visitors coming here and returning year after year and work to improve the built and natural environment for visitors and residents.*
- *Maintain and work to expand the economic vibrancy and diversity in business types of our town-wide commercial community.*
- *Provide updated, stocked, and complete visitor information, guides, maps, and brochures for the convenience of our visitors.*
- *Foster and support long term strategic tourism planning while continuing to grow and improve the Tourism Program.*
- *Maintain a well-trained Staff and Tourism Board through professional development, workshops, trainings, and conference attendance.*

PLAN STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

In order to achieve the goal of this plan several strategies have been identified for each section, and a number of implementation projects have been developed, and a priority has been assigned to each implementation project in order to achieve the strategy and realize the plan goal.

MARKETING, COMMUNICATION, & PROMOTIONS

Strategy: Incrementally grow the tourism base and expand the types of tourists that visit Hillsborough by providing information, creative marketing, consistent communications, and interesting arts, music, outdoor, recreational, and cultural events.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Promote and encourage Sunday, early and/or mid-week event and activity at businesses and attractions. **Priority: High**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Board will financially support special events, programs, and activities on Sunday, early and mid-week by adding a grant application question and scoring mechanism to give preference to funding requests that support this objective.*
 - *Tourism Staff will engage with the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses on coordinating a consistent set of hours of operation.*
 - *Tourism Staff will work with area event and meeting venues to explore ways to market Hillsborough as a fun and different professional meeting destination.*
 - *Tourism Staff will create and build out an area on the visithillsboroughnc.com website for Wedding and Event venues.*
- Promote and support Hillsborough and the surrounding area as a destination for Agritourism by dedicating one advertisement per year on marketing this sector, expanding the information available on the

visithillsboroughnc.com, and dedicating a section of the Visitors Guide to agritourism. **Priority: High**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will develop content for a section on visithillsboroughnc.com for agritourism venues, tours, and offerings. Visitors Center staff will contribute to and maintain this new content over time.*
- *Tourism Staff will reserve a section of the Visitors and Relocation Guide dedicated to agritourism and will develop meaningful content for it.*
- *Tourism Staff together with Visitor Center Staff will design and publish an agritourism advertisement annually as part of the Visitors Center marketing.*
- *Tourism Staff will coordinate agritourism efforts with local restaurants that use farm-fresh ingredients and brainstorm ways to highlight that on both the website, visitors guide, and marketing materials.*
- *Tourism Staff will work collaboratively with OCVB on ways to incorporate Hillsborough into their overall County-wide agritourism efforts.*

Strategy: Market Hillsborough as a beautiful and charming small town with a long, rich history, vibrant art and music scene, great outdoor recreation opportunities, and delicious food and beverage.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Produce 4 advertisements a year in regional and state publications that highlight one or more of Hillsborough's main assets in addition to advertising special events. **Priority: Medium**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will use analysis from Facebook, Google analytics, and visitor data to pinpoint key markets.*

- *Tourism Staff will work with Visitor Center Staff to develop a cohesive and strategic formal marketing plan as a communication tool and guide for marketing and promotions.*
- *Tourism Staff will guide Visitor Center Staff in the use of consistent colors, fonts, and logos to market Hillsborough and further develop the Hillsborough brand by expanding into new regional and state marketplaces.*
- Promote and encourage multi-night and weekend-long visitor stays in Hillsborough by creating and distributing a one page brochure or rack card highlighting reasons to stay multiple days and accommodations.
Priority: Medium

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will work with Visitors Center Staff to design the brochure with Tourism Board input.*
- *Tourism Staff will print, and distribute the brochure/rack card to places such as Sportsplex, NC welcome centers, airports, train stations, and other traveler hubs.*
- *Visitor Center Staff will track material locations, reprint, and replenish brochure/rack card at the various locations as needed.*
- Tourism Board will budget for the completion of a market analysis to obtain better data regarding demographics and geographic information about our visitors so that marketing dollars can be better spent. **Priority: Low**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will research the cost of such a study and determine the need to go out for an RFQ/RFP.*
- *Tourism Staff will prepare an RFP (if needed) with Visitors Center staff feedback and cooperation.*
- *Tourism Board and Tourism Staff will select a vendor.*
- *Vendor will prepare and present results.*

Strategy: Support the economic vibrancy and diversity in offerings of our town-wide business community.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Promote and encourage events, programs, and projects that ensure local spending and bring a variety of kinds of people to town. **Priority: Medium**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Board will financially support special events, programs, and activities that ensure local spending and bring a variety of kinds of people to town by adding a grant application question and scoring mechanism to give preference to funding requests that support this objective.*
- Promote and encourage events, programs, and projects that bring people to a variety of different neighborhoods and commercial areas in town.
Priority: Medium

Tactics:

- *Tourism Board will financially support special events, programs, and activities that bring people to a variety of different neighborhood and commercial areas in town by adding a grant application question and scoring mechanism to give preference to funding requests that support this objective.*

VISITOR SERVICES & HOSPITALITY

Strategy: Maintain a vibrant, friendly, clean, and attractive destination to keep visitors coming here and returning year after year.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Support 1 program or initiative per year that could provide new amenities and beautification to downtown and/or the greater Hillsborough area.

Priority: Medium

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will work with Visitors Center Staff, the Chamber of Commerce, Town of Hillsborough, restaurateurs and merchants to explore new ideas and programs to enhance downtown and town in general including, but not limited to:*
 - *additional string light displays*
 - *façade grants*
 - *holiday decorations and displays*
 - *wayfinding signage and banners*
 - *connectivity and transportation amenities and improvements*
 - *general improvements to public amenities in town*

Strategy: Provide updated, stocked, and complete visitor information, guides, maps, and brochures for the convenience of our visitors.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Tourism Staff will increase the distribution of visitor information materials to at least 2 new locations per year and ensure that those locations are stocked a minimum of once a quarter. **Priority: High**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will work with Visitors Center Staff to record and maintain a database of material locations.*
- *Tourism Staff will meet with attraction managers to determine a favorable location for the materials.*
- *Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will work together to budget funds for new cases and displays as needed.*
- *Visitors Center Staff shall check locations for stocking on a regular basis.*
- *Visitors Center Staff will re-print materials as needed.*

- *Tourism Staff and Visitors Center Staff will make note when information is outdated or needs to be updated and initiate updates of visitor information materials.*
- Tourism Staff will work with the Tourism Board to have Visitors and Relocation Guide and Official Visitors Guide Map designed, printed, and available for visitors. **Priority: High**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Board will assemble a design subcommittee.*
- *Tourism Staff will obtain quotes and pricing from a design firm and work closely with that firm and the subcommittee to produce the material files.*
- *Tourism Staff will print materials and supply the Visitors Center Staff with the initial print of those materials and files for reprint.*
- *Visitors Center Staff will continue to reprint and restock materials as needed.*

TOURISM BOARD, STAFF, AND TOURISM PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Strategy: Foster and support long term strategic tourism planning while continuing to grow and improve the Tourism Program.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Tourism Staff will create an annual Tourism Report documenting the previous fiscal years' monthly Food & Beverage Tax revenues, Occupancy Revenues, Visitors Center tourist numbers, phone calls, information requests, states and countries of origin, as well as any available visitor number data from area attractions and special events. **Priority: Medium**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will collect and compile relevant data from the Town, Visitors Center, historic sites, attractions, and special events.*

- *Tourism Staff will track and include in the annual Tourism report what plan implementation objectives have been completed to date.*
 - *Tourism Staff will design an informative 1-2 page document that explains that data in an easy to read format that matches the Tourism Program's brand.*
 - *Tourism Staff will distribute the annual Tourism Report at the Annual Tourism meeting and share it with local and regional partners, on social media, and on visithillsboroughnc.com*
- Tourism Staff will hold annual Tourism meeting and invite the Town Board members, Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce, local non-profits, businesses, and citizens interested in information on the Tourism Program to share the Annual Tourism Report, network, and familiarize everyone with one another year to year. **Priority: High**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will schedule the Annual meeting at an agreeable time and coordinate invites to all relevant parties.*
 - *Tourism Staff will coordinate the meeting location and light refreshments as well as have copies of the Annual Tourism Report available with the assistance of the Visitors Center Staff.*
 - *Tourism Staff will put together a powerpoint presentation for the meeting.*
 - *Tourism Staff will create nametags for all attendees to familiarize them with each other in a large group setting.*
- Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will complete at least 3 plan implementation projects annually. **Priority: High**

Tactics:

- *Prior to the beginning of each fiscal year Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will discuss at a regular Tourism Board Meeting which implementation projects are the priority for that year.*

- *Both parties will work together to map out how those implementation projects will be completed, who the key players are, what the budget is (if any), and what will be the timeline.*
- *Tourism Staff will track completed projects.*
- Tourism staff will work with Orange County Visitors Bureau to add a board member seat for Hillsborough Economic Development/Tourism Staff. **Priority: Medium**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will meet with the Director of the OCVB to discuss this possibility and any feedback.*
- *Tourism Staff will draft a memo to the Director of the OCVB, County Manager, and County Commissioners requesting the seat.*
- *Tourism Staff will attend any necessary meetings or make any needed presentations for the OCVB or County Commissioners.*
- Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will update the Tourism Plan every 5 years. **Priority: Low**

Tactics:

- *In January of 2020 Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will evaluate all implementation projects completed to date and any uncompleted implementation projects.*
- *Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will determine if any budget for FY21 is needed for allocation of a plan update.*
- *Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will determine a timeline for the plan update to ensure the project stays on track.*
- Tourism Staff and Tourism Board will work together to gradually build the fund balance to cover a year's worth of operating expenses so that funding for the Tourism Program is guaranteed in case of grant disbursement timing changes, natural disaster, catastrophe, etc. **Priority: Low**

Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will update the Tourism Board on the current fund balance during yearly budgeting and advise them on growth year to year.*
- *Tourism Board will reserve a portion of grant or contract overage payments to the fund balance yearly.*
- *Tourism Board will minimize it's spending from the fund balance.*

Strategy: Maintain a well-trained Staff and Tourism Board through professional development, workshops, trainings, and conference attendance.

Implementation Project Objectives:

- Tourism Staff and Visitors Center Staff will attend at least one tourism related class, workshop, training, or conference per year. **Priority: High**
- Two Tourism Board Members per year will attend at least one tourism related class, workshop, training, or conference per year. **Priority: Medium**

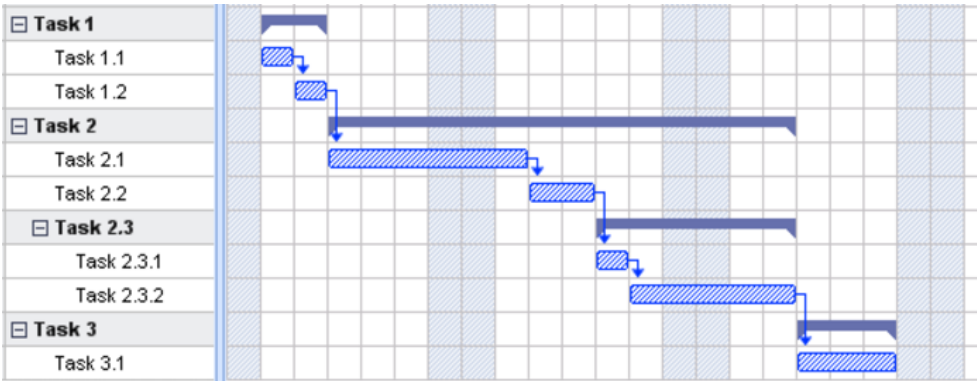
Tactics:

- *Tourism Staff will build travel and training monies into Tourism Board and Tourism Development Authority budgets to support this strategy.*
- *Tourism Staff will ensure that the Visitors Center Budget includes travel and training monies to support this strategy.*
- *Tourism Staff will identify at the beginning of the year all known opportunities and their potential costs.*
- *Tourism Staff will track which Tourism Board members have gone to what trainings and will encourage all Board members to attend a class, training, workshop, or event.*
- *Tourism Staff will coordinate registration of members for fee based trainings.*

PROGRESS REPORTING

The execution of the strategic tourism plan is as important as writing the plan itself. The plan has outlined the critical action items that need to take place in order for Hillsborough to achieve its ultimate tourism goal. This plan will be implemented based on the priority of the implementation projects as well as any deadlines given specifically in the strategies as assigned.

A Gantt chart will be prepared at the beginning of each fiscal year outlining the strategies to be achieved and the timeline for completion.



Additionally, Tourism Staff will provide a quarterly report on the status of each strategy item being completed for that fiscal year. All completed implementation projects under the strategies will be evaluated for effectiveness and strategy achievement during the plan update process.

CONCLUSION

Hillsborough’s tourism economy has changed and grown dramatically since the formal creation of the Tourism Board, Visitors Center, and implementation of the Food & Beverage Tax in the early 1990s. In order to plan and prepare for future growth, keep the current momentum going, and stay relevant to new and repeat visitors these strategies and implementation projects outlined herein must be completed and the plan must be re-evaluated every 5 years in order to keep the document fresh and continue to reach for the plan goal.