



Visit Brenham/Washington County, Texas Tourism Strategic Action Plan

August, 2019

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Acknowledgments

The development of this strategic plan was a collaboration between Cygnet Strategies; Opportunity Strategies; staff and elected officials from the City of Brenham; City of Burton; Washington County; chambers of commerce; local organizations; and various tourism stakeholders.

We would like to express our gratitude for the hours, ideas, and resources contributed by the broad range of participants to make this plan a reality.

The information and recommendations contained in this plan are based upon our broad-based experience working with communities and destinations combined with local workshops, independent research, previous planning efforts, interviews, informal conversations, and best practices.

Any plan is only as effective as its implementation effort. We encourage the City of Brenham, City of Burton, Washington County, and local organizations to support each community's efforts with options for funding and other resources as they move through the implementation process.

Introduction

Tourism is an enormous economic driver for the State of Texas. In 2017, visitors spent \$74.7 billion resulting in \$7.0 billion in local tax revenues and supporting 1 out of every 10 jobs. More specifically, visitors to Washington County/City of Brenham in 2017 had the following impacts:

Total Direct Spending: \$92.3 million/\$67.7 million

Total Direct Employment: 670 FTE/520 FTE

Total Direct Earnings: \$17.1 million/\$13.2 million

Total Tax Receipts: \$8.5 million/\$5.9 million

Clearly, tourism is a strong partner in terms of economic development and business retention with a pleasant side effect: local residents spend more of their money at home when their community offers new and different experience, retail, restaurants, and attractions. This helps to stop the leakage—the cash residents spend someplace else—and strengthens local pride.

Decisions to close attractions, stores and restaurants, even those that appear successful, are announced too frequently in today's economy. Washington County contains prime examples of this and has seen restaurants and retailers come and go over the past several years.

Doing nothing puts communities at the mercy of the unknown and at risk of losing control over their future quality of life. The purpose of this plan is to leverage existing tourism product and consider additional options that will add sustainability and resiliency.

Throughout the development of this plan, consistent themes emerged. This plan focuses on the identified themes and provides a roadmap for improving the visitor experience, creating visitor loyalty, and increasing the area's visibility as a tourism destination.

The analysis and recommendations are aimed at building a foundation for future tourism efforts that positively impact the area's quality of life. A foundation that supports residents, business owners and stakeholders in providing hassle-free experiences and services that meet visitors' needs and exceed their expectations.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This county-wide project began when the City of Brenham brought the Visit Brenham destination marketing organization (DMO) under the City's umbrella and sought to create a collaborative framework for answering the core visitor question of "*Why should I visit the area?*"

The project started by taking a candid look at where each community is today and what will make the community stronger in the future. It also established a foundation for the multiple conversations and stakeholder meetings about the current state of tourism in each community and what the future might look like in terms of the visitor experience and quality of life for residents.

Communities that successfully attract visitors combine a strong identity and strong sense of place backed by solid product and effective marketing. When you deliver on the promise you make to your visitors, they are eager to return and will share their positive experience with friends, family and a variety of online channels.

It's important to note that emphasizing tourism isn't for every community. Some choose to focus in other directions and this decision should be respected.

This project, funded by *Visit Brenham*, is a multi-tiered one. Phase 1 was a look at the communities in Washington County through the eyes of a visitor. Using that information and the feedback from stakeholders, the team identified strengths upon which to build, challenges to mitigate, and opportunities to consider. Phase 2 was the creation of a Tourism Strategic Action Plan for each community. This document combines both phases and includes:

- Results of the Visitor Experience Assessment—both a marketing assessment and an on-site assessment for each community;
- Tourism strengths and opportunities/challenges and threat for each community; and
- An identity, vision, and goals for the communities of Brenham, Burton, and Chappell Hill;
- Recommendations and implementation plans for Visit Brenham and each community; and
- Implementation progress measurement and reporting tools.

The Plan is an honest assessment of current conditions with recommendations for defining and establishing the future visitor experience for each community. It includes goals and strategies developed in collaboration with the communities and supports their efforts in moving forward.

PROJECT GOAL AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Evaluate the area's current visitor experience and, by working with the individual communities, develop an affordable, implementable strategic plan with a detailed action plan and provide on-going support during implementation.

Objectives:

- Understand the actual visitor experience and the area's reputation as a destination.
- Enhance and build upon each community's character and existing tourism product.
- Develop and implement a strategic plan with action steps for improving, monitoring and promoting tourism.
- Increase HOT revenues and sales tax revenues.
- Establish tools for tracking success.

PROJECT TIMELINE

September/October 2018

A team of four completed the consumer marketing assessment to determine if the county and/or its individual communities show up as an option when people plan a getaway between Austin and Houston.

The assessment started with each person planning a trip in the area between Austin and Houston, then they focused on the individual Washington County communities to determine whether they would visit and what they would do if they did visit.

September 2018

Another team conducted the on-site assessment of Washington County. The purpose of this phase was to experience the community the same way a first-time visitor might.

Questions addressed were:

- ✓ Can visitors find each community?
- ✓ What's the first impression?
- ✓ Where can visitors get information?
- ✓ What is there to do in the community?
- ✓ What is the community's story?
- ✓ Can visitors find their way around?

Team members visited every community multiple times to understand what visitors experience. These visits took place on a variety of days and at different times of the day. We took pictures, explored, visited attractions, made purchases, ate in restaurants and talked to business owners, residents and other visitors.

Three stakeholder meetings were held in Brenham with additional meetings in Burton, Independence, Chappell Hill, and at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site.

October 2018

A digital footprint assessment was conducted for Visit Brenham to evaluate the current website, social media, and other online tools.

November 2018

All research and data were compiled into a Phase 1 Report and formed the foundation of the short-term recommendations contained therein.

December 2018

An onsite meeting with Visit Brenham was held to review the report, recommendations, and other information in preparation for creation of the final Tourism Strategic Action Plan.

January 2019

Presentation of Phase 1 results were provided to:

- County Commissioner Kirk Hanath
- City of Brenham officials
- Brenham Stakeholder Group
- Burton Stakeholder Group
- Visit Brenham staff
- Chappell Hill Stakeholder Group
- Independence Stakeholder Group

Identity and goal development workshops were held with:

- Brenham Stakeholder Group

- Burton Stakeholder Group
- Chappell Hill Stakeholder Group

February, 2019

Discussion held with Visit Brenham staff to discuss goals, needs, challenges, and a vision. Development of the Tourism Strategic Action Plans for each community.

March 2019

Review of draft Tourism Strategic Action Plans with:

- Visit Brenham staff
- County Commissioner Candace Bullock
- City of Brenham staff

Presentation of Phase 1 results to Washington-on-the-Brazos representatives.

April 2019

Revisions completed to Tourism Strategic Action Plans

May 2019

Review of draft Tourism Strategic Action Plans with:

- Brenham, Burton, Chappell Hill and Independence stakeholders
- Visit Brenham staff
- County Commissioner Candace Bullock

Meeting with County Judge John Durrenberger

September 2019

Presentation of plans to Brenham City Council and Washington County Commissioners.

TOURISM FUNDAMENTALS TO REMEMBER

(1) Visitors are on vacation. Both business and leisure visitors want things to be easy, they want to enjoy themselves. They're looking for experiences and opportunities that they can't get closer to home.

(2) Not everyone uses a smartphone. Even if your visitors have smartphones, they're not necessarily using them for anything other than phone calls, texting, taking pictures and checking email. Don't assume they'll always be looking online for information. Be sure to provide alternatives that are available beyond business hours on weekdays.

(3) You love your town but visitors don't know your town like you do. It can be difficult to see your community through fresh eyes. Can visitors navigate easily? Do they feel welcome? Are your "hidden gems" too well hidden? Shop and restaurant owners should stand across the street from their businesses at least once a week and look at the impression their business makes. Are the windows clean? Are displays (including menus) fresh, attractive and inviting? Can people tell the business is open?

(4) Your visitors have interesting places and cool shops and restaurants in their towns too. People travel—whether for an afternoon or for several days—to see and experience something different. Every community has its own sense of place—its own personality. Help visitors experience and appreciate what makes your community different, what makes it worth their time and money. Don't try to be everything to everyone and don't create experiential expectations that you can't meet. Not every town will appeal to every visitor and that's okay.

(5) Some of your visitors may have disabilities related to vision, hearing or mobility. There are little things you can do to provide accessibility. Making sure the videos are closed-captioned and that written materials can be accessed in auditory format goes a long way toward providing a rich experience. Historic buildings and public spaces often have uneven surfaces and awkward transitions. Do what you can to mitigate these or provide alternatives.

2018—General Marketing Assessment

As part of the Visitor Experience Assessment, a marketing assessment was conducted using four individuals who live either in the Austin area or the Houston area and who have different goals and expectations for a destination. Each fits within an appropriate general demographic of current and potential visitors.

The team had a two-part assignment:

- ❑ Consider the area between Austin and Houston to see what looked interesting for a day trip or getaway (these results begin on page 10.)
- ❑ Look at each community individually and consider whether they would visit and what they would do (these results are included at the beginning of each community's section.)

Our team was free to use any resources they would normally use when planning a trip, including:

- Recommendations from friends and family
- Books
- Movies and TV shows
- Magazine and newspaper articles
- Guidebooks and brochures
- Print advertising
- TV and radio advertising
- On-line advertising
- Social media including Facebook and Twitter
- Websites
- Blogs

Visibility is critical. If people can't find information about the area or individual communities, they won't know the place exists. In fact, most people may not even specifically search for information about the area, but that doesn't preclude a successful process where visitors:

- ✓ Find information
- ✓ Choose to visit
- ✓ Visit
- ✓ Leave satisfied and happy
- ✓ Tell friends and family
- ✓ Return visit

Your marketing presence is one of many resources available to potential visitors. The good news: one community's presence on the Internet can be as strong as any other. The not so good news: with the breadth of information available, people have become less trusting of what you say about yourself. They want to know what other people say about you, and you have limited control over this.

Getting past the first step, where visitors gather information, is challenging for all destinations. When visitors are making decisions about where to spend their time and money, they consciously and subconsciously access an array of resources over an indeterminate period of time. The goal is to make the most of each potential touchpoint.

MARKETING ASSESSMENT TEAM

Jenna

Single female, 20s

Travels with girlfriends/friends

Houston area resident

Likes history/stories, quirky places, shopping, cultural arts

Budget-conscious

Paula

Married female, 40s

Travels with family, girlfriends, other couples

Austin area resident

Likes family-friendly, outdoor recreation, shopping, history, cultural arts

Quality of experience is more important than cost

Carl

Married male, 40s

Travels with spouse, extended family/friends

Austin area resident

Likes historic sites, local food, wineries, breweries, music

Cost isn't an issue

Meredith

Married female, 40s

Travels with spouse, girlfriend getaways/day trips

Houston area resident

Likes local foods, historic sites, music, wineries, shopping

Value over price

ASSIGNMENT: PLAN A DAY TRIP OR GETAWAY BETWEEN AUSTIN AND HOUSTON

As an Austin area/Houston area resident, you are looking to take a day trip or an overnight getaway somewhere between the two cities.

Where would you go?

Is there any place that you've read about or heard about that sounds interesting?

This can be towns, historic sites, activities, restaurants, lodging, retail, natural areas, attractions, anything.

SEARCH TERMS USED

- Interesting day trip sights between Austin and Houston along Hwy 290
- Interesting day trip sights between Austin and Houston along Hwy 71
- Places to visit between Austin and Houston along 290 and 71
- Things to do outside Austin
- Things to do outside Houston
- Interesting towns US 290 Austin to Houston
- Events between Austin and Houston
- Antiques day trips from Houston
- Unique lodging between Austin and Houston
- Cool places between Houston and Austin
- Live music between Houston and Austin
- Places worth the drive outside Austin
- Places worth the drive outside Houston
- Brewery road trip Austin to Houston
- Wineries between Austin and Houston
- Day trips from Houston
- Getaways from Houston
- Getaways from Austin
- Texas historic sites
- Great restaurants between Houston and Austin
- Southeast Texas events
- Best down home cooking southeast TX
- Dance halls southeast TX
- Family-friendly southeast TX
- Offbeat Texas
- Hand-crafted in southeast TX
- Free things to do southeast TX
- Local specialities TX
- Quirky places in SE TX
- Where should I go in SE TX
- Where should I stay southeast Texas
- Best places to eat in Texas
- What history happened in southeast Texas
- Historical events north of Houston
- Historic events south of Austin
- Hiking historical sites Texas
- Texas historic sites timeline
- Texas state parks
- Girlfriend getaways Texas
- Texas arts districts
- Texas wineries
- Texas breweries
- Texas distilleries
- Best places to shop in Texas
- Farm to table Texas
- Best ethnic food Texas

WEBSITES VISITED

traveltexas.com	brookshiretexas.org/businesses
visitlagrangetx.com	texaswinelover.com
cityofelcampo.org	brewtrail.com/texas-breweries/
tripadvisor.com	txaletrail.com
ci.smithville.tx.us/for-visitors	Various Facebook Pages
visitsugarlandtx.com	cityofkaty.com
arts.texas.gov	cityofbellville.com
cityofmagnolia.com	bellville.com
brookshiretexas.org/businesses	tpwd.texas.gov
thc.texas.gov	roundtop.com
texasmonthly.com	cityoflg.com
catspringtexas.net	visitsugarlandtx.com
fayetttevilletxchamber.org	expedia.com

BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS CONSULTED

AAA Texas Guidebook
Lonely Planet Texas
Backroads of Texas
Texas Travel Guide
Texas Monthly

WHAT PLACES AND/OR ACTIVITIES BETWEEN AUSTIN AND HOUSTON LOOK INTERESTING?

Blue Bell Ice Cream (Brenham)	BBQ in Elgin	Austin County Jail Museum (Bellville)
Amy's Ice Cream (Smithville)	Schobel's Restaurant (Columbus)	Best Little Quilt Show in Texas (La Grange)
Southside Market (Elgin)	Hruska's Bakery (Ellinger)	Schmeckenfest (La Grange)
Giddings, Texas	Buc-ee's	Main Street La Grange (La Grange)
Texas Wendish Heritage Museum (Serbin)	Prause Market (La Grange)	Cowboy Up Hang Gliding (El Campo)
Round Top, Texas	Timeless Texas Classic Cars (La Grange)	El Campo Museum of Natural History
Brenham, Texas	Brazos Bed and Breakfast (Washington)	Pinchers Boil'n Pot (El Campo)
Windy Winery (Brenham)	Las Americas (Brenham)	Gerberman Jewelers (El Campo)
Funky Art Cafe (Brenham)	Antique Rose Emporium (Independence)	Vintage Chica (El Campo)
Kountry Boys Bakery (Brenham)	Old Baylor Park (Independence)	Tree House Park (Cypress)
Must Be Heaven (Brenham)	Texas Cotton Gin Museum (Burton)	Lone Star Pinball Museum (Cypress)
Fayetteville, Texas	The Book Nook (Brenham)	The Cupcake Cowgirls (Cypress)
Country Place Hotel (Fayetteville)	Home Sweet Farm Market (Brenham)	Brazos Bend State Park
Antiques on the Square (Fayetteville)	Round Top Antiques Show (Round Top)	George Ranch Historical Park
Fayette County Reservoir	Feed & Firewater (Round Top)	Republic Roots (Sugar Land)
Orsak's Cafe (Fayetteville)	Cat Spring, Texas	Red Caboose Farm B&B (Magnolia)
Junk Gypsy (Round Top)	Blisswood B & B (Cat Spring)	The Crawfish Joint (Magnolia)
Henkel Square Market (Round Top)	Multiplicity (Katy)	Patron Azteca (Magnolia)
Southern Rose Ranch (Chappell Hill)	No Label Brewery (Katy)	Baa Baa Brewhouse (Brookshire)
Wakefield Farms (Chappell Hill)	Katy Market Day (Katy)	Hemi Hideout (Brookshire)
Kay's Cuisine for the Soul (Brenham)	Katy Heritage Museum (Katy)	Texas Bluebonnet Wine Trail
Chappell Hill Lavender Farm (Chappell Hill)	Silver Saddle Smokehouse (Bellville)	Brazos Valley Brewing (Brenham)
La Grange, Texas	Newman's Castle (Bellville)	Shakespeare at Winedale

GENERAL MARKETING ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

After all of the research of what to do between Austin and Houston, these are the only places in Washington County that were identified by the team:

- Restaurants in Brenham
- Bed & Breakfasts
- A few shops
- Wineries and a brewery
- Texas Cotton Gin Museum
- Old Baylor Park

None of these are surprising.

What is more interesting and warrants further consideration is the list of places and experiences that did not show up. Things like Brazos Belle in Burton and the Bluebonnet Festival in Chappell Hill did not show up on the radar for any member of the team.

In fact, none of the events in Washington County made the list. Not because they didn't seem interesting, but because they didn't initially appear in any of the team's searches.

All of these individuals specifically seek out historic sites and it was a shock that none of them found information about Washington-on-the-Brazos. This is even more surprising when you learn that each of them visited the Texas Parks & Wildlife website during their research.

BRENHAM

2018 Marketing Assessment

ASSIGNMENT: WOULD YOU GO TO BRENHAM?

If No, why not?

If Yes,

—Where would you go?

—What would you do?

—How long would you stay?

Jenna—Yes, stay overnight

"Brenham looks like a very cute town with a wide variety of activities that look to be very unique and perfect for me and my friends.

Their website (visitbrenhamtexas.com) is very well-organized and makes the town look very appealing. Things to do are easy to find, making a possible trip to the town easier to plan and get excited about.

I would definitely stay overnight at one of the cute B & B options."

Things Jenna would do/places she would visit:

- Back Lot Gallery
- Unity Theatre
- John P. Coles Home Tours
- Black Truck '48 Independence Coffee
- The Canyon Chicks
- The Flamingo Ranch Boutique
- Barrington Living History Farm
- Peecka Ranch Alpacas
- Anatomy Boutique
- Texas Cotton Gin Museum
- Adventure 290
- Home Sweet Farm
- Kay's Cuisine for the Soul
- Las Americas
- Ant Street Inn
- Sycamore Cottage
- 4 Star Concert Hall

NOTE: Team members often listed attractions under the wrong community due to confusion about where places were located. This is common for visitors. They don't pay attention to city limits.

Paula—Yes, day trip

"Brenham looks like a cute town but not someplace I'd spend more than a few hours. It doesn't seem like there is much of their history that is accessible."

Things Paula would do/places she would visit:

- Jet Set Chocolates
- Antique Rose Emporium
- Texas Cotton Gin Museum
- Home Sweet Farm Market
- The Book Nook
- Annual Used Book Sale

Carl—Yes, overnight

"I've always been curious about going to Brenham due to Blue Bell but never knew anything else about it. Blue Bell's website led me to visitbrenhamtexas.com and this is a neat website with lots of ideas for planning (it's not perfect and does have some navigation issues, but it was very helpful.)

I also found a copy of the visitor guide online and see there is enough to make this an overnight stop instead of just a pit stop for ice cream. In fact, I'm thinking about taking off on Friday (so I can go to Blue Bell) and spending the weekend exploring the area."

Things Carl would do/places he would visit:

- Blue Bell tour
- Home Sweet Farm Market
- Winery tour
- Visit area communities
- 4 Star Concert Hall
- Kayaking at Lake Somerville
- Nathan's BBQ
- Brenham Art Walk
- Carousel
- Toubin Park
- Roux Street
- Brenham House B & B
- Main Street House

Meredith—Yes, overnight

"Although Blue Bell is here, a tour doesn't interest me. I would rather experience like a local and do laid-back, relaxing things.

I would stroll through downtown to see historic architecture and take whatever tours are available.

It seems like Brenham is developing a nightlife, and wouldn't be a town that shuts down at 7 pm. This makes it more attractive for an overnight stay."

Things Meredith would do/places she would visit:

- Windy Winery
- Brazos Valley Brewery
- Roux Street
- Home Sweet Farm
- Shopping downtown Brenham
- Toubin Park
- Historic tours (guided or self-guided)

In reviewing the list of things the team thought they would do and places they would visit, there are a handful not actually in Brenham. On the surface, this would seem to be a problem, however, it's really an indication of successful cross-promotion.

Your visitors don't care if something is technically within the city limits. They just need to know how far away it is and how to get there.

When you look at the places that multiple people chose—Texas Cotton Gin Museum, Home Sweet Farm, Toubin Park, Roux Street—this list supports the idea that people seek experiences they cannot find closer to home.

Identifying what makes a town, a restaurant, an attraction, a shop, an hotel, or an experience different is the first step.

Communicating and highlighting these differences in ways that connect with the appropriate audiences is the second step and this takes time and skill.

Promoting what sets you apart draws people to your destination. Once they arrive, they will explore your other options. The further they've traveled, the more options they'll seek in order to make the trip worthwhile.

2018 Visitor Experience Assessment

ONSITE ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

A separate team conducted the onsite assessment in September. The purpose of this phase was to experience the community the same way a first time visitor might. We explored, visited attractions, made purchases, ate in restaurants, and talked to business owners, residents, and other visitors.

Prior to the onsite assessment, a list of expectations was created by the marketing assessment team. These expectations were based upon their perceptions and research and may, at first glance, seem illogical. However, this does not negate them. An analysis of whether the expectations were met is included at the end of the Visitor Experience Assessment.

The expectations for Brenham were:

- We expected not much traffic and easy downtown parking.
- We expected downtown to be crowded on Saturdays.
- We expected Brenham to look and feel like "Everywhere USA."
- We expected lots of antique shops.
- We expected great local restaurant options.
- We expected an emerging nightlife scene.
- We expected it to be warm and welcoming.
- We expected the availability of historic tours.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



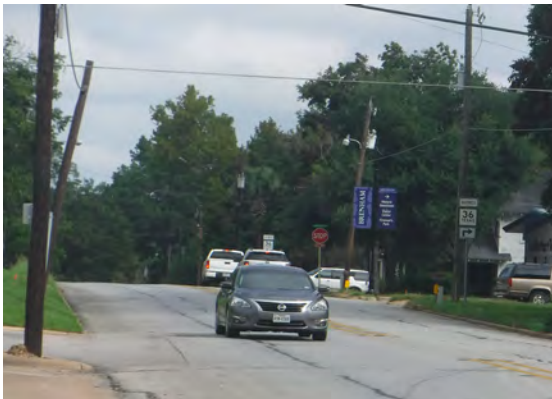
The entry corridors to Brenham itself and then into downtown are not particularly inviting. Encouraging and/or incentivizing property owners to clean up eyesores will help, particularly at primary intersections.



Gateways are a community's welcome mat. A way to say, "We're glad you're here. Come in and let us show you around."

We didn't see monument gateway signs but we did see downtown murals that served as a type of gateway. The murals are well maintained and this reinforces the welcoming feel upon entering.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Brenham's wayfinding system relies on banners and kiosks to guide visitors to and through downtown with traditional signs in more commercial, high traffic areas.

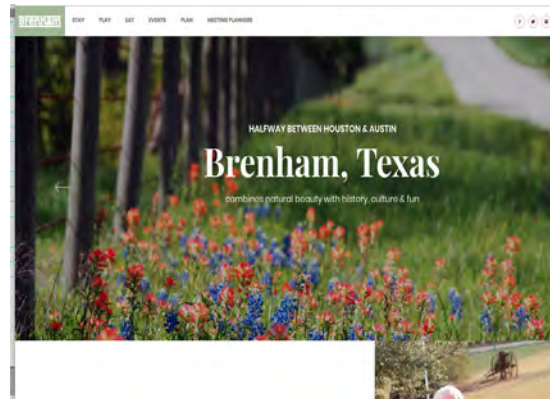
These directional banners stand out from the other highway signs but we nearly missed them. We saw the Brenham banner but not the information. This is an easy fix—simply switch the banners. Putting the one with wayfinding information closer to the road will make them even more effective.

Once visitors find their way downtown, they are rewarded with a charming setting, filled with public art, historic architecture, whimsical touches, and welcoming shops and restaurants.



WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION?

Brenham does an excellent job of providing information in a variety of formats—website, apps, kiosks, printed materials, and a visitor center that is open 7 days a week. The floor map in the visitor center is a delightful surprise and helps to put the county's communities and attractions into geographic context.



WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?

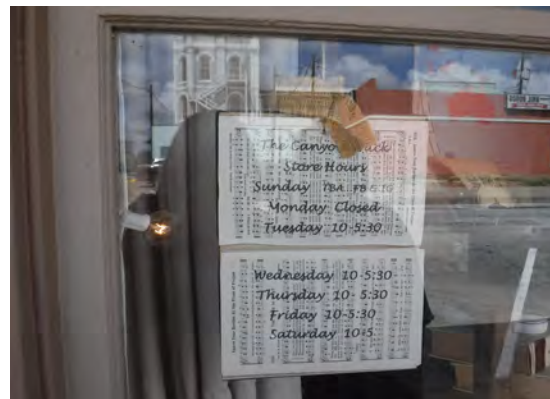
To draw visitors, you must offer something worth the trip and it has to be something people can't find closer to home.

What did we find in Brenham?

We found great local food! Based upon the recommendations of the marketing assessment team, experiencing local food options was something we looked forward to—Brenham did not disappoint.

We were pleasantly surprised by the variety and quality of every snack and meal and wish we'd had more time to eat everywhere.

Our only challenge: was finding local food on Sunday evening. One recommendation we have is to communicate what is open and when on Sundays; this applies to shops, restaurants, and attractions. When we asked retail clerks what was open, we usually got a confused look. Most didn't even know whether their neighboring business owners were open or not.



WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?

It is obvious that an incredible amount of time and money has been spent on preserving Brenham's history and its historical buildings.

Toubin Park appeared on the "to do" lists of two of the team members because it was quirky—something they'd never thought about and definitely never seen. When we visited the park, the interpretation left us wanting to learn more.

When we stopped at the Visitor Center and wandered into the lobby of the Simon Theatre, we found the restored displays delightful. We inquired about the film and were disappointed that it was not being shown.

Our attempts to visit historical attractions were stymied by the fact that places were not open and tours were not available. Consider expanding Weekend Fun Days to include tours instead of restricting them to a few times a year. So much effort has been put into preservation, it's a shame that things aren't more accessible.

The way that art and the arts are woven throughout the community give it an upbeat vibe. Many historic towns are pretty to look at but seem to lack a pulse. Brenham successfully blends its stage—the buildings and streetscape—with unexpected public art, music, and a quality professional theater providing both main stage and more intimate studio productions.

Our day exploring the local wineries was a much-needed retreat. We learned the stories behind each winery and discovered some new favorite wines.

Stories are important. They create connections for visitors and become a part of their own story of exploration. Every shop, restaurant, attraction, and lodging facility should know and tell its story in a variety of ways.



HOW WERE WE TREATED?

In most cases, we were treated with kindness and made to feel welcome. Throughout the downtown, shop owners and restaurant staff were helpful and provided recommendations for other places to visit.

At the Visitor Center we had varied experiences: one time the staff didn't greet us and was distracted; another time they were friendly and asked appropriate questions to allow for better suggestions.

Throughout the community, we did encounter some frontline staff at gas stations and chains who told us "There's nothing to do here" but there were others who went out of their way to help.

WAS OUR #1 NEED MET?

Clean, accessible restrooms are the #1 need for visitors. Some businesses were accommodating even if we were not paying customers; others directed us to the City's public facilities.

We saw a few signs that said "No Public Restrooms" and this doesn't help visitors. Don't tell them NO; tell them where the facilities are located. Even better, take down the signs and allow visitors to come into your shop and ask about restrooms. Every time someone walks through the door, there's both an opportunity to make a positive impression and an opportunity to make a sale.

WERE OUR EXPECTATIONS MET?

Expectations are built upon all the pieces of information a visitor consciously and subconsciously gathers before they arrive at a place. Below are the expectations developed by the marketing assessment team. How did Brenham do? (Green check indicates the community met the expectation. Red X indicates the community did not meet the expectation.)

- ✗ We expected not much traffic and easy downtown parking—*on the weekends, this was true; during the week, it was not.*
- ✗ We expected downtown to be crowded on Saturdays—*yes, it was crowded on the Saturday we visited, but this was due to a parade. Later in the day, there were few people even though it was a pleasant day.*
- ✗ We expected Brenham to look and feel like "Everywhere USA"—*definitely not true: the architecture, streetscape and public art create a charming setting full of character.*
- ✓ We expected lots of antique shops.
- ✓ We expected great local restaurant options.
- ✓ We expected an emerging nightlife scene.
- ✓ We expected it to be warm and welcoming.
- ✗ We expected the availability of historic tours.

BRENHAM AS A VISITOR DESTINATION TODAY

Strengths & Opportunities

- Blue Bell Ice Cream
- Breadth and quality of restaurants
- Historic architecture preserved downtown
- Family-friendly
- Some businesses open on Sunday
- Winery loop
- Event schedule to build upon
- Fairgrounds facilities
- GeoTour
- Public Art
- Blinn College

Challenges & Threats

- Downtown is away from main arteries
- Employees parking on street
- Historical assets are not open
- Empty storefronts
- Not enough lodging downtown

What We Heard From Others

The following is a compilation of comments received in public meetings, conversations with business owners, and random encounters with both residents and visitors throughout town.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE?

- Good, but lacking.
- Success with Groupon and visitor center.
- Blue Bell, Must Be Heaven, some downtown shopping and seasonal events.
- A lot of people visit and come back over and over.
- Some are disappointed, some are fine, things could be better. We need a more friendly visitor center experience.
- They know Blue Bell and nothing else. Don't know where to go, but if they do find Brenham they love it.
- Erratic, but has bright spots. Small town feel in family-friendly. Quick getaway.
- Big gap between events. Not enough to get people here on nonevent weekends.
- Casual, interactive, spread out. Appropriate for all ages and income levels.
- Surprised to find out there is a downtown with things to do. People are usually looking for more to do. They enjoy being here.
- We need more retail and parking downtown. Love the events, the food, and the music. Not much going on on Mondays.

- Most people don't know it exists.
- People come for festivals, but other than that I don't know.
- Warm, cozy, family-friendly, quaint, hometown, and escape from the big city.
- People are in and out quickly.
- Good food, music, some art, shopping.
- People complain about the parking. We want them to come to events, but there's no place to park. This has gotten worse.
- Authentic downtown. Most shops are open (slow on Sundays), antiques. Need more food options. Great murals. Family and dog friendly.
- Most come to stroll in shop, have a light bite, visit attractions (if there are any open.) Quaint shops with unique items.
- Mixed demographic of visitors. 80% from Houston. They like downtown, come once a year to browse around.
- Popular destination. Nice stop between Austin and Houston. Most people find us on their phone or computer.
- Sometimes lots of the retail is closed when they visit.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN THE FUTURE?

- Visitors need to take that community history away with them. There needs to be enough for them to do to stay overnight.
- Community referrals and awareness. Social media, a place to come with a group or for retreat.

- Explore more of the community and the county, enjoy the downtown food, shops, and music.
- To have a great experience and want to come back.
- Better signage, one-stop shop for anything tourism in the county. All businesses and facets of tourism working together.
- Cohesive. Attractions and businesses need to work together to get people to come back.
- Things to do for all age groups. More businesses open. Living village experience. Get the museum complex open.
- Need to become more of a destination outside of that weekends. Downtown crowded every weekend. More emphasis on being the center of Texas history.
- Weekend that is full of activities from beginning to end. Tours to and from attractions.
- A cohesive plan that coordinates with businesses and a variety of experiences.
- Increased aesthetic beauty of downtown.
- More frequent visitors.
- Small town feel. Family friendly. Attracting middle-aged families with or without kids. Experiences and activities for all ages. Nightlife. Variety of activities. Business owners need to support each other and encourage people to visit each other's locations.
- Much of the same, but with more businesses open during holiday weekends. Public transportation like Uber and hotel shuttles.
- That are able to park, shop, dine, and play downtown. Offer lots of things to do and make them want to come back.
- Music in the gazebo Saturday and Sunday. Sidewalk sales. Street parties. Artists and unique shops. More food and entertainment.
- A really good mix of shopping, dining, seasonal attractions. Move away from being a family destination a bit. Offer wine, dine, and shop packages targeting couples and girlfriend weekends.
- Where people visiting and more people saying how much they love coming here.
- Visitors should know there are four wineries in the county. They should plan to sleep over and go to the mall.
- Broader and more inviting. Things open seven days a week.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION

- Signage.
- Efficient and affordable outreach. The community needs to support tourism.
- Better promotion and signage.
- More parking.
- Master plan, open to ideas, no fighting for visitors. No "us against them" between the communities.
- Lifelong residents need to be more involved and proud of where they live.
- A roadmap.
- Transportation, cross promotion and marketing support.
- City and County working together, creative events that continue to grow.

- More visitors, more fun attractions.
- Working together to create some buzz.
- Slowly moving that direction, community support, lodging downtown.
- Taking the time to communicate and support each other.
- Community working together for the greater good. More public transportation.. Broader advertising. More progressive businesses.
- Marketing, wayfinding, branding, family events.
- More events and things to do downtown that people KNOW about.
- Nonprint advertising, promotions etc.
- Buy-in from all partners, inclusive approach.

The Brenham Experience—The Future

At its core, the essence of this project is to make Brenham a “3rd place” for residents and potential visitors. Their 1st Place is their home. Their 2nd Place is where they work. Their 3rd Place is where they hang out and spend their leisure time (and money.) Third Places are important and smart communities work to establish their reputation as a local and regional option to meet this need.

However, communities cannot be all things to all people. Narrowing your focus, identifying your points of differentiation (particularly among neighboring communities,) and building your identity upon existing assets and the desired quality of life for residents is the most effective and sustainable approach.

The Brenham Experience identity is comprised of two things—an identity vision and identity pillars.

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Identity Pillars: Concepts that support the identity while retaining Brenham's core characteristics.

Brenham's identity vision and the accompanying pillars are built upon a clear definition and clarification of the foundation for The Brenham Experience. Each of the recommendations in this plan supports this effort and meets the following goals established by the stakeholders:

1. Enhance and utilize the heritage experience in ways that respect the past while creating a vibrant future
2. Increase quantity and quality of experiences
3. Increase the number of events that appeal to visitors
4. Strengthen connections between lodging, retail, restaurants and attractions
5. Increase number of groups
6. Continue to expand the use of existing businesses and other spaces as performance venues to create a variety of capacities and settings

THE BRENHAM EXPERIENCE—IDENTITY VISION

An emerging music, arts, and foodie hub anchored by the nostalgia and quality of the past.

THE BRENHAM EXPERIENCE—IDENTITY PILLARS

Historic Charm—The charm and sentiment found in this historic area appeals to heritage visitors seeking quality historic experiences.

Home Away From Home—When urbanites want to get away, they escape to Brenham, finding a comfortable place to relax, reset, and recharge.

Down Home Cool—Eclectic shops support an emerging foodie paradise and low-key, but hip, nightlife scene that combines with public art and events to create an unexpected vibe.

The recommendations listed below and outlined in the following sections are designed to strengthen The Brenham Experience and mitigate challenges. They are also intended to complement the efforts of other communities in Washington County.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

BRE - P1: Beautification

BRE - P2: Sundays/Weekends

BRE - P3: Make Your History More Accessible

BRE - P4: The Arts

BRE - P5: Small Scale Events

BRE - P6: Initiate New Events

BRE - P7: GeoTour

Product Development Recommendations

BRE - P1: BEAUTIFICATION

The baskets and planters downtown are a good start and additional ones should be added as funds are available. Additional ways to enhance the setting, particularly downtown, are:

- Expand beautification efforts outward from downtown along the entry corridors to increase the welcoming effect.
- Consider enforceable ordinances to clean up some of the eyesores along entry corridors into downtown.
- Retain the mid-block crosswalks and consider adding artistic pavement enhancements.
- Keep benches and trash cans clean and inviting.
- Encourage business owners to stand across the street a few times a week and to see what first impression they're making. Do their business look open? Welcoming? Interesting?

BRE - P2: SUNDAYS/WEEKENDS

- ❑ 1. Continue establishing a "We're Open" culture on Sundays with the postcard listing and map. Businesses should consider adding activities or music as an additional draw for local residents as well as visitors.

- ❑ 2. Expand the Friday Farmers Market and Sunday Funday events into a full weekend to drive overnight stays.

- Incorporate historic tours and activities. These need to be engaging and entertaining. It may take time for there to be much interest but take video and photos and post on Instagram and YouTube to start creating a buzz.
- Have a different theme each month and create a photo scavenger hunt to support the theme. This is one way to get people to keep coming back because the experience is different each time.
- Add quirky aspects like a parade each month. One month could be a dog parade complete with costumes. Another month it could be a bike parade where all the kids decorate their bikes with streamers and noisemakers and whatever they can find.

BRE - P3: MAKE YOUR HISTORY MORE ACCESSIBLE

Making the commitment to be part of revamped First Friday Farmers Market and Sunday Funday events would be a major step for the groups involved with Brenham's historic assets. Initially, only commit one asset each month until everyone is more comfortable with the expectations. There will need to be variety in the visitor experience so it doesn't become a "been there, done that" activity.

BRE - P4: THE ARTS

- ❑ 1. Public art—The number of murals in Brenham is impressive and installing new pieces will continue to enhance the visitor experience. Consider:
 - Add art to the transformer boxes to bring a new dimension.
 - Build some interactive elements, whether through a walking tour with interpretation or a guide, or through a gaming element to expand the experience in new directions.
 - Add three dimensional pieces in unexpected places. Create an iconic shape or item (possibly little blue bells) and tuck a dozen or more throughout downtown.

- ❑ 2. Music Venues— a large part of Brenham's "down home cool" is the emerging music scene. The variety of both venues and genres appeals to a broad range of people. Proactive attention to maintaining this feel is important moving forward to prevent a shift to a more commercialized product.
 - New venues should offer an intimate experience to complement the welcoming small town feel.
 - Find ways to provide some family-friendly opportunities.
 - Venues will be the most successful if they work together instead of viewing each other as competitors. Book complementary acts when possible and keep each other informed about your upcoming calendar

- ❑ 3. Performing Arts—with Unity Theatre as the base and the Simon Theatre and Blinn College program as partners, Brenham has an opportunity to broaden its offerings.
 - Add a quarterly Reader's Theater activity as a showcase and incubator for aspiring playwrights.
 - Create a 48 Hours to Curtain event where participants take part in an intensive weekend with a performance on Sunday evening.
 - Incorporate multiple dimensions of dance: jazz, hip-hop, ballet, interpretive into programming and use creative performance spaces to bring it to life.

BRE - P5: SMALL SCALE/EXPERIENTIAL RETAIL EVENTS

Some individual businesses are already holding mini-events on their own or in partnership with their neighbors. To encourage other businesses to join them, the Chamber or Visit Brenham could develop training and assistance on how to have a successful event. Assistance could include:

- Identifying the type of event that would be right for a business.
- Creative ways to provide an engaging experience that connects with customers.
- How to promote the event.
- How to determine if it was successful.

BRE - P6: INITIATE NEW EVENTS/FOODIE EXPERIENCES

Develop at least one new event each year. Some will be one-offs and others will be popular enough to continue in future years. If an event is similar to one in a nearby community, find ways to tweak it to make it more appealing to out-of-town visitors.

- Hold a Restaurant Week during slow periods. Differentiate it by having restaurants try new menu items with customers voting on what they like and even offer suggestions.
- Instead of a Table on Main event, on the Saturday before Easter hold an Easter Bonnet parade followed by Brunch on the Square.
- Start a Pie Festival on Pi Day (March 14) with celebrity chef workshops, competitions, eating contests, throw a pie at the mayor/principal/other local dignitaries, maybe even a math competition related to pies.
- Conduct cook-offs using local products: ice cream, coffee, wine, beer, salad dressing, sausage, or candy.
- Conduct a Battle of the Bands competition at the fairgrounds with categories for high school and college.
- Plein Air for All event with painting stations set up throughout downtown and invite aspiring artists of all ages to paint what they see. Have local artists available for assistance.
- Culinary Experiences—Bring together small groups (no more than 8) for a variety of meals with drinks and appetizers at one restaurant, main course at another, and dessert at a third. There could be several options, tickets would be purchased in advance

to help restaurants plan, and on any given night, a restaurant might be serving different courses to different groups. This could be limited to week nights and slower months.

- Chocolate VIP experiences—Take visitors behind the scenes with curated tastings. Consider creating complementary chocolate and wine flights.
- Wineries Tour—Provide a bus and partner with the wineries to provide a full day/ evening of wine tasting paired with appropriate hors d'oeuvres and light snacks.

BRE - P7: GEOTOUR

The GeoTour is an underutilized asset and is currently not even listed on the geocaching.com website. This is an activity that draws participants from around the world. With the proximity to GeoTours in Kyle, Conroe, and Baytown, the area has strong cross-promotional potential.

1. Verify the existence of each cache and make improvements to the condition if necessary.
2. Re-establish the GeoTour on the geocaching.com website.
3. Work with other communities to collaborate on multi-day packages that could be promoted to the overseas market.
4. Have a few GPS units available at the visitor center for checkout. This allows people without smart phones to dissipate on the spur of the moment when they learn about the GeoTour and want to try to find some caches.

- ❑ 5. Add a training cache at the visitor center for visitors to use to learn geocaching. Make sure everyone at the visitor center is trained on what the GeoTour is and how people can participate.
- ❑ 6. Have information available in various locations around town for when the visitor center isn't open.

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - P1: BEAUTIFICATION								
1	CONTINUE	INCREASE EFFORTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2 EFFORTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2 MORE EFFORTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2 MORE EFFORTS
BRE - P2: SUNDAYS/WEEKENDS								
1	CULTURE	INCREASE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES OPEN ON SUNDAYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	INCREASED BY 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>	INCREASED BY 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>	INCREASED BY 10%
2	EXPAND	GROW FIRST FRIDAY INTO A FIRST WEEKEND EVENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	SHIFTED TO FULL WEEKEND				
BRE - P3: MAKE YOUR HISTORY MORE ACCESSIBLE								
1	EXPERIENCES	FIRST WEEKEND PARTICIPATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTICIPATED IN 2 FIRST WEEKENDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTICIPATED IN 4 FIRST WEEKENDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTICIPATED IN 6 FIRST WEEKENDS
BRE - P4: THE ARTS								
1	ART	INCREASE NUMBER OF PUBLIC ART PIECES			<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2
2	VENUES	ENHANCE USE OF MUSIC VENUES	<input type="checkbox"/>	ESTABLISHED COLLABORATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADAPTED 1 VENUE FOR MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADAPTED 1 VENUE FOR MUSIC
3	PERFORMING	INCREASE VARIETY AND NUMBER OF PERFORMING ARTS EXPERIENCES	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 2

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - P5: SMALL SCALE EVENTS								
1	EVENTS	PROVIDE TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESSES CONDUCTING OWN EVENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	DETERMINED TRAINING NEEDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED TRAINING FOR 5 BUSINESSES	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED TRAINING FOR 5 BUSINESSES
BRE - P6: INITIATE NEW EVENTS								
1	EVENTS	DEVELOP AT LEAST 1 NEW EVENT EACH YEAR	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 1 NEW EVENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 1 NEW EVENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 1 NEW EVENT
BRE - P7: GEOTOUR								
1	VERIFY	VERIFY THE LOCATION OF EACH CACHE	<input type="checkbox"/>	CACHES VERIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CACHES VERIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CACHES VERIFIED
2	WEBSITE	RE-ESTABLISH ON GEOCACHING.COM	<input type="checkbox"/>	GEOTOUR RE-ESTABLISHED				
3	COLLABORATE	COLLABORATE WITH OTHER GEOTOURS TO CREATE PACKAGES			<input type="checkbox"/>	PACKAGES CREATED		
4	UNITS	PROVIDE GPS UNITS AT VISITOR CENTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNITS PURCHASED				
5	TRAINING	CREATE TRAINING CACHE AND TRAIN VISITOR CENTER STAFF ON GEOTOUR	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLACED TRAINING CACHE & TRAINED STAFF	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD TRAINING	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD
6	INFORMATION	MAKE INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION DISTRIBUTED

VISIT BRENHAM

2018—Digital Assessment

WEBSITE

VisitBrenhamTexas.Com is the website for Visit Brenham, the destination marketing organization (DMO) for Washington County. The DMO uses "Visit Brenham Texas" as its consumer identity and markets the entire Washington County area as a visitor destination.

The website is easy to navigate and provides information for Brenham, but not as much for Independence, Burton, Chappell Hill, and Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site. There needs to be more editorial copy on this website in general, and especially about the other communities. The only way to see which attractions, accommodations, and restaurants are in different communities is to use the map tool.

The home page is very long, with multiple calls to action—read blog, get Visitor Guide, see event calendar, download app, watch video, read blog again, sign up for E-news, read testimonials, see map, and Contact us—which makes it hard to take it all in. Many of these calls to action could be displayed in a manner on the home page that is more user-friendly.

For example, the blog is not included in the top navigation. Only by clicking on "Discover Brenham" just below the hero image or by clicking "Read more" or the image in the "Explore Brenham Like a Local" section, are you able to access the blog. The blog has a good frequency, helps with Search Engine Optimization and should be promoted more in more prominent areas of the website.

In the Stay, Eat, and Play categories, adding more editorial copy on these pages, as well as other places on the website, would help Search Engine Optimization.



At least five dead links were found:

On <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/getaways/>, the Reconnect section goes to this dead page: <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/couples-getaway/>

On <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/girls-getaway/#1514246752778-97feb7fe-9552>, the Spas link goes to this dead page: <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/plays/spas/>

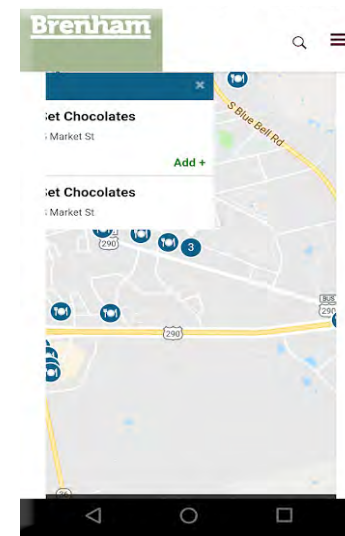
On <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/girls-getaway/#1514246752812-a02f96a7-7ed3>, the Day 2 “coffee” link goes to this dead page: <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/eats/dessert/>

On <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/history-getaway/>, the Day 1 “Independence” link goes to this dead page: <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/plays/independence-visitor-center/>

On <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/three-day-getaway/#1514772120851-708a352b-963d>, the Day 3 shopping link here goes to this dead page: <http://www.visitbrenhamtexas.com/plays/shopping-old/>

A copyright date should be added to the footer to let website visitors know that the website content is current. The footer currently displays appropriate essential contact information, such as the phone number, street address, email address, and social icons.

The website is responsive on mobile devices, which is great. However, the restaurant map, for example, displays the restaurant name cut off on the left side of the screen.



The *Visit Brenham Texas!* App has received a high score of 4.8 out of 5 stars from 45 ratings from the Apple App Store and two 5-star ratings from the Google Play Store.

OTHER WEBSITES: GOOGLE, YELP, TRIPADVISOR

The CVB has a claimed listing on Google and the Visitors Center has a claimed listing on Yelp. However, neither have listings on TripAdvisor—a trusted, crowd-sourced tool for travelers. We recommend creating and claiming a listing on TripAdvisor, as well as responding to and interacting with (liking) comments and reviews on each of these websites.



Brenda T
Texas

Level 2 Contributor

19 posts
5 reviews

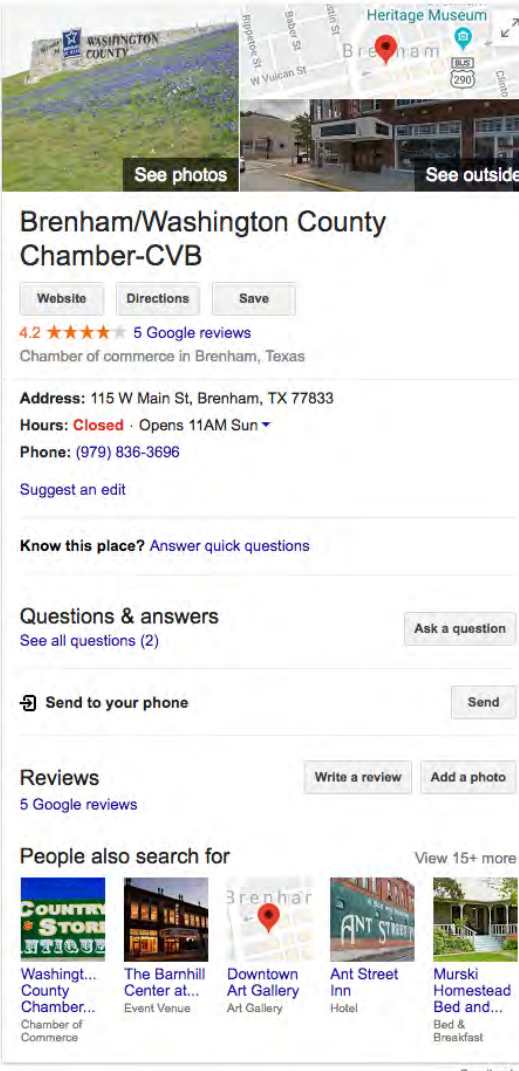
Activities/Attractions to see in & around Brenham for kids?

Jul 13, 2013, 10:44 AM

Hi! We are planning a day trip this summer to the Blue Bell Creamery Factory tour. Wondering if there's any other 'must-see' or do places there or along the way? Have two kids ages 9 & 12. We are coming from [Houston](#). TIA for your help!

Edited: 10:44 am, July 13, 2013

[Reply](#) [Report inappropriate content](#)



Brenham/Washington County Chamber-CVB

4.2 ★★★★★ 5 Google reviews

Chamber of commerce in Brenham, Texas

Address: 115 W Main St, Brenham, TX 77833
Hours: Closed · Opens 11AM Sun
Phone: (979) 836-3696

[Suggest an edit](#)

Know this place? Answer quick questions

Questions & answers
See all questions (2) [Ask a question](#)

[Send to your phone](#) [Send](#)

Reviews
5 Google reviews [Write a review](#) [Add a photo](#)

People also search for [View 15+ more](#)

- Washing... County Chamber...
- The Barnhill Center at...
- Downtown Art Gallery
- Ant Street Inn
- Murski Homestead Bed and...

[Feedback](#)

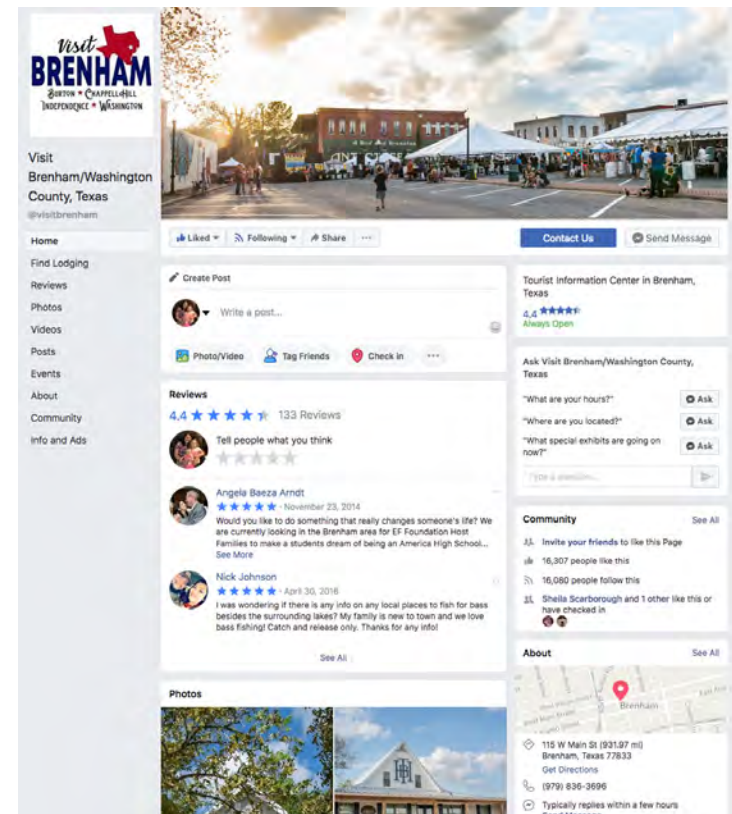
FACEBOOK

The *Visit Brenham/Washington County, Texas* Facebook page is posted upon regularly and includes all essential contact information. At the time of this assessment, the page had 16,300 Facebook fans/likes.

This page/destination received a 4.4 out of 5 stars rating and 133 reviews. Surprisingly, there were only six Facebook events listed on the page. This is a missed opportunity because of the way Facebook promotes events and reminds attendees. We recommend adding more Facebook events, especially events occurring in the next few months.

The Facebook page incorporates a "Find Lodging" tab that pulls in accommodation bookings via JackRabbit, which is helpful to visitors.

The Facebook page uses a lot of photos but they are not organized into many photo albums. We recommend creating a photo album promoting each community in the county and adding other appropriate topics.



TWITTER

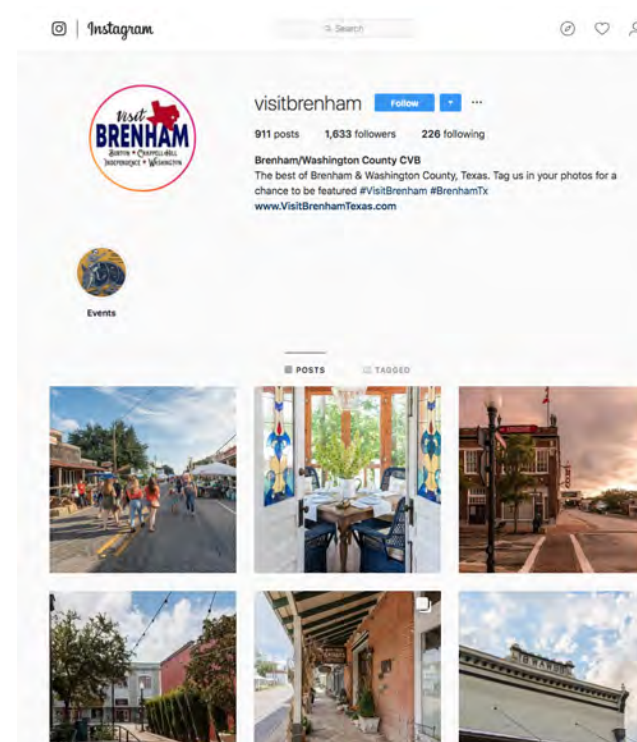
With 1,044 followers, the @VisitBrenhamTexas Twitter account has been inactive since July 2018. Previous to then, most tweets were retweets of other users' content.

If this account is to become active again, we recommend posting a higher percentage of original content. When an account only retweets other content, it fails to claim its status as an authority on its destination.



INSTAGRAM

The @visitbrenham Instagram account has 1,633 followers and posts quite frequently. Followers are interacting with the CVB's posts and the branded #visitbrenham hashtag was used in 2,127 posts. The account responds well to comments and should continue these efforts while also encouraging visitors and stakeholders to post and use the hashtag.



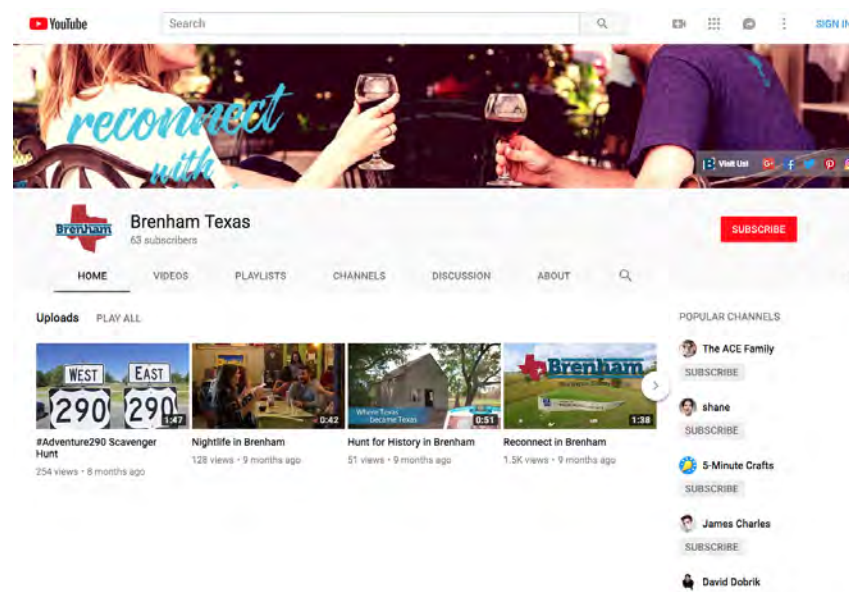
YOUTUBE

The *Visit Brenham* YouTube channel has been inactive for most of 2018. It has 63 subscribers and 28 videos. Nine of these videos have a handful of interactions. It appears that a few videos might have been promoted or just gained a lot of organic interactions since these videos have up to 18 likes and more than 1,000 views each.

All recent videos appear to be professionally filmed, which leaves out some authentic personality. The channel subscribes to two other channels (RE/MAX Advantage and KLRU.) We recommend subscribing to all stakeholder channels.

There are four playlists (Liked videos; Fun in Brenham/Washington County, TX; Brenham, Texas Hotels; Washington County Chamber of Commerce.) We recommend creating more playlists, especially if you don't have new video content to post. Compiling playlists of other people's videos (user-generated) will help visitors learn more about the destination as well as start a relationship with other YouTube users/influencers in the destination.

Pinterest and Google+ links were listed in the YouTube "About" section. The most recent Pinterest content was posted in early 2018. Since this network is not active and is not promoted on the CVB website, we recommend updating YouTube's "About" section to delete the link. We also recommend deleting the Google+ link since that platform no longer exists.



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VISIT BRENHAM MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

BRE - M1: Customer Service

BRE - M2: Cross Promotion

BRE - M3: Packages/Tours

BRE - M4: Group Sales and Services

BRE - M5: Visitor Center/Kitchen Table Concierge

BRE - M6: Claim Listings

BRE - M7: Review Websites

BRE - M8: Visit Brenham Website

BRE - M9: Annual Marketing Plan

BRE - M10: Digital Tools

BRE - M11: Print Media

BRE - M12: Collateral

BRE - M13: Partner Communication

BRE - M14: Learn the Stories

BRE - M15: Partner Training

BRE - M16: Trade Shows/Public Presence

BRE - M17: Public Relations

BRE - M18: Made in Brenham Shop

BRE - M19: Barnhill Center/Simon Theatre

VISIT BRENHAM ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

BRE - A1: Staffing

BRE - A2: Culture and Tourism Board

BRE - A3: HOT Grants

BRE - A4: Ambassador Program

BRE - A5: Industry Organizations

BRE - A6: Metrics

Visit Brenham Marketing Recommendations

BRE - M1: CUSTOMER SERVICE

- ❑ 1. Provide customer service training on at least an annual basis. This training should also include information about what there is to see and do in the area. The goal is for every front line employee to provide exceptional service and knowledgeable recommendations about what there is to see and do. No visitor should ever hear, "There's nothing to do here."
- ❑ 2. Create a locator map for parking and restrooms downtown. It could be a creative, 6-inch square that sits in the bottom corner of business windows. It's better to tell people where they CAN do something than to tell them where they CANNOT. Improve information availability when visitors are in town.
- ❑ 3. Add better signage for the public restrooms downtown to make them easier to find.
- ❑ 4. While it's inappropriate (and violates the terms of some review sites) to ask customers to give you a positive review, it is absolutely appropriate to ask for feedback. Create a campaign, encouraging visitors to provide reviews. Yes, there will be some negative ones, but these can be a catalyst for improvement if there is a legitimate issue.

BRE - M2: CROSS PROMOTION

All tourism partners share in the responsibility for marketing Brenham and the area. Visit Brenham takes the lead and provides many of the resources, but it's a team effort.

- ❑ 1. Develop a schedule of business-to-business FAM tours to help partners learn more about each other so they can make referrals. Cross-promotion helps everyone and provides a strong customer experience. When businesses are knowledgeable about one another and encourage customers to visit other shops and restaurants, it enhances the welcoming "home away from home" feel.
- ❑ 2. As new businesses open, they should provide lodging properties, including rentals, with information about what they offer. Front desk staff are happy to make referrals when they have accurate information and word-of-mouth information is well-regarded by visitors.

BRE - M3: PACKAGES/TOURS

In addition to offering them to the general public, these activities can be adapted for VIP experiences for families, groups, and corporate team-building. Regardless of the type of tour or package, be sure to include photo stops at iconic selfie spots. Encouraging participants to document their experience with photos (that they will post on social channels) will add credibility to your marketing efforts.

Tour examples:

- Ghost Tours— Brenham's best storytellers can guide visitors on a ghost tour of the community, including a downtown walking tour featuring some of Brenham's (reportedly) most haunted locations. A sample tour might start at the F.W. Schuerenberg House at 503 W. Alamo, moving to the Brenham Grand Opera House (now Today & Yesterday Antiques), adding a stop at the Brenham Heritage Museum and concluding at the Ross Carroll Bennett House at 515 E. Main. Adding vehicles to the tour can easily bring visitors to the Giddings Wilkin House Museum and end at the Citadel on 290 E after a short drive.
- Cemetery Tours— There are approximately 80 cemeteries listed in Washington County that could appeal to most history and genealogy buffs. Cemetery tours can give visitors an unexpected interaction with residents of the past and an idea of how people lived and challenges they faced. .
- Wildflower Tours—There really is more to see than bluebonnets. Work with the Native Plant Society and put together tours at various times of the year.

BRE - M4: GROUP SALES AND SERVICES

Group sales is an area with significant growth opportunity for the DMO and should have a dedicated staff person. Identifying target markets, attending trade shows, and finding creative ways to help the community stand out take time. Add this to the 2-3 year lead time for most meetings and group tours and set reasonable goals and targets for the staff person.

- ❑ 1. Provide training to hotels about how to respond to RFPs and how to book 2-3 years out. Working together is the way for everyone to be the most effective.
- ❑ 2. Identify specific types of clubs and organizations to target but don't fall into the scattershot trap where you market to everyone and hope someone is interested. Pick four or five specific niches to begin with, this will make it easier to craft an appropriate message, organize support services, and develop a smooth flow. Once you are successfully recruiting and meeting the needs of these groups, re-evaluate and determine if there are targets that can be added (or ones that no longer makes sense.)
- ❑ 3. As you establish a database of clubs and organizations in the region you want to identify groups that have regular events. For example, in the Directory of Associations (directoryofassociations.com) there are 1850 listings (with website links) for groups in Texas, everything from garden clubs to accordion professionals.

Initial targets that have been identified by the DMO staff:

- Sports tournaments
- Weddings
- Reunions
- Corporate retreats and trainings
- SMERF (this is an extremely broad category and the emphasis needs to be narrowed initially)

- ❑ 4. Create an event marketing piece that explains why Brenham and other locations in the county would be a good venue for an event. Highlight things like costs, affordable lodging, unusual venues, support staff— details that show how you could be a perfect fit for their event. Give them contact information, resources, logistics details, costs for using city-owned facilities and ideas about other venues. Include strong photos of events being held in your facilities.
- ❑ 5. Draft a sales letter inviting groups to host events in Brenham. Don't send it by email, mail it as a package and use a personal touch to stand out from the crowd (don't forget to include an iconic tchotchke.)
- ❑ 6. Develop a meetings incentive program where, for example, groups receive a 3-5% credit up to a maximum of \$3,000 on their total actualized room revenue. Use the program during slow periods and require a minimum number of rooms for multiple nights (X rooms for 2 nights).
- ❑ 7. Create pocket-size visitor guides specifically targeted at sports teams, meeting attendees, wedding guests, and other groups. Keep the information relevant to their needs and work with organizers to distribute them.
- ❑ 8. Run a campaign targeted at residents and the groups they belong to, encouraging them to bring meetings to Brenham.
- ❑ 9. Provide personal touches for groups—welcome signs at hotels, shops and restaurants and mirror clings in venue restrooms during multi-day workshops.
- ❑ 10. Increase connections with local CEOs. Create a database with information on the company and what their meeting needs might be to assist in the development of customized experience options.
- ❑ 11. There are about 20 foreign consulates in Houston, develop a relationship with them and learn what type of packages would appeal to their visitors.
- ❑ 12. Create a system for following up on leads from trade shows and submitting RFPs.
- ❑ 13. Partner with the County to recruit dog shows and dog agility competitions to the fairgrounds. These are multi-day events with affluent participants from across the region and around the country. Attend dog shows as a vendor to promote Brenham as the place to hold an event and research kennel clubs.

BRE - M5: VISITOR CENTER/KITCHEN TABLE CONCIERGE

The Visitor Center currently does a good job at providing information in a variety of formats. Strengthening the customization of recommendations will increase the length of visitor stays and encourage them to come back. It will also help with outreach to local residents who can provide strong word-of-mouth and social support for the area's assets and experiences.

- ❑ 1. Develop a catalog of local recommendations that is available to staff and visitors. In addition to print, have people submit their ideas and insights using video and post to your YouTube channel. Feature the videos on Facebook and have a link on the website.
- ❑ 2. Train all staff in methods for learning about people's interests and needs without it seeming like a questionnaire. Have them engage in conversations about what they've already enjoyed and why, how much time they have, and other information. Try not to just distribute information, but provide visitors with relevant, honest advice. This also prevents information overload and decision paralysis.
- ❑ 3. Create a "Kitchen Table Concierge Desk" effort by distributing information to residents throughout the county. Friends and family are a significant visitor population and if residents don't know the wealth of opportunities in the area, they will send their guests elsewhere. In addition, residents have leisure dollars to spend as well, help them learn about what the area offers that might appeal to them. Help them find reasons to keep their dollars in the community and remind them that the community exists as more than just a place to live.
- ❑ 4. Aim to be available for online chat/messaging as much as possible during major events. This allows you to assist visitors in-the-moment and make relevant suggestions.
- ❑ 5. Continue staff and partner FAM trips to ensure everyone can speak first-hand about key experiences in the region.
- ❑ 6. Use a tablet to collect visitor information.

BRE - M6: CLAIM LISTINGS

Provide local businesses with training to help increase Brenham's online presence and assist businesses in getting more traffic. Every business, attraction and facility should claim their listing on the following sites:

- Google—business.google.com
- Tripadvisor—tripadvisor.com/owners
- Yelp—biz.yelp.com

Start with setting up a Gmail account that is only used for these type of sites. That way, no one's personal emails are at issue if log-ins are shared or staff changes.

Once the listing is claimed, correct any inaccurate information, post current photos, and respond to recent comments, complaints, and compliments.

BRE - M7: REVIEW WEBSITES

Work with all businesses, attractions and facilities to go through this basic checklist for their websites:

- Phone (including area code) and address (including city and state) should be on every page in the header or footer.
- Current hours—be sure to update this as changes occur seasonally or due to holidays or special events.
- Check links—this needs to happen on a regular basis, at least quarterly.

- Use great photos and change them often.
- Use at least an 18 point font—even though it's easy to change the font size when viewing webpages, many people don't know how to do this or get irritated when it's necessary.
- Is the content up-to-date?
- Can website visitors quickly tell what type of business or attraction you are?
- Is the site mobile responsive?

BRE - M8: VISIT BRENHAM WEBSITE

As you continue to evaluate whether to update the website or create an entirely new one, the following recommendations from the Phase 1 Report are included here for continuity:

- 1. Increase the amount of editorial, particularly about the outlying communities.
- 2. Make it easier for users to find all of the attractions, retail, restaurants and lodging in a given community instead of forcing them to find items on the map.
- 3. The mobile site needs to be fully responsive. For example, when restaurants are viewed on the map the name is cut off on the left side.

- 4. Create a half-day and/or "quick stop" itinerary specifically for each community to help visitors know that even a short detour off the highway will be worth the time and effort.
- 5. Link the events calendar to the "Plan a Trip" section.
- 6. Be sure events are removed (or updated for the next year) once they have occurred.

BRE - M9: ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN

Create a broad annual marketing plan broken into monthly or quarterly themes to focus on events, seasonal activities, and partnerships. Use these themes to narrow the focus for social and print campaigns to create a more targeted, powerful message.

BRE - M10: DIGITAL TOOLS

- 1. Create a targeted social strategy based upon the marketing plan. Initially, focus most of your effort toward posting on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. This includes:
 - Identifying and working with local influencers.
 - Facebook—highlight activities, events and businesses; create events, share relevant posts from tourism partners; ask trivia questions.

- Instagram—maintain a mix of architecture, landscapes, businesses, events, activities and iconic places shots, with and without people. Your goal is to evoke an "I wish I was there" feeling. Share photos from partners as well.
 - YouTube - see #7
- ❑ 2. Create consistent listings on Google, TripAdvisor and Yelp for both the visitor center and individual communities and assign someone to respond to reviews and interact with comments and questions.
 - ❑ 3. Combine the Google, Yelp, and TripAdvisor listings for the DMO and the Visitor Center. Be sure events are removed (or updated for the next year once they have occurred).
 - ❑ 4. Separate the hundreds of Facebook photos into albums to make it easier for people to explore.
 - ❑ 5. Continue the new energy on Twitter and analyze it after 6 months to find the best content strategy to drive engagement. Verify correct spellings for hashtags and Twitter handles.
 - ❑ 6. Select and then promote, promote, promote your hashtags.
 - ❑ 7. Every day, 300 million people watch 5 billion YouTube videos. To capture more than the handful who are currently viewing your videos, increase the number of amateur videos hosted on your channel, subscribe to relevant local channels, and create additional playlists.

BRE - M11: PRINT ADVERTISING

For the time being, it makes sense to continue with the current focus on Texas Highways and Texas Events. Once more substantive experiences are established, identifying more targeted publications will make sense. For example, if the Wildflower Garden is successfully established, advertising in Wildflower magazine (Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center) would connect more directly with those strongly interested in any activities or events.

BRE - M12: COLLATERAL

- ❑ 1. Rack cards still serve a purpose particularly when they are narrowly targeted. You never know what might catch someone's eye.
 - Focus on primary draws and unusual experiences like the GeoTour, signature events, walking tours, driving tours or interactive experiences.
 - Keep the experiences at the top— short, sweet, descriptive.
 - Provide basic contact (including website) and location information if it's a destination.
 - Use bold photos.
 - Unless it's a tour where detailed directions are necessary, keep it simple. Wet their appetite, don't try to tell the whole story. Create one that highlights the location between Houston and Austin.

- ❑ 2. The Visitor Guide is a good start. It provides just enough information about most listings for people to know if it might be of interest. Some rearrangement of the material could be considered. For example:
 - The Chappell Hill Museum information is woven into the description about the town of Chappell Hill instead of being listed in the museum section.
 - The Conference Venue category should be expanded to include meetings, weddings, and events. This way places like the bus station, which is actually a venue not a museum, could be listed in a more appropriate category
 - Since so many of the museum-type attractions are already listed under historic sites, it might make more sense to eliminate the Museum section altogether and consolidate the listings.

BRE - M13: PARTNER COMMUNICATION

- ❑ 1. Maintain an up-to-date partner database to enable easy communication about upcoming groups, events, and training.
- ❑ 2. Use the quarterly newspaper idea to spread the word and give partners an opportunity to share their news as well.
- ❑ 3. Identify regional influencers and make information available to partners looking to connect with influencers in their niche.

BRE - M14: LEARN THE STORIES

- ❑ 1. Identify and refine key stories about the people, places, and history of the region.
- ❑ 2. Have visitor center and front line staff learn the stories for use when sharing information about the area. Stories are powerful and create emotional connections between visitors and the community. People will want to know more and this sets the stage for them spending additional time exploring.
- ❑ 3. Incorporate storytelling into events, programming, tours, and advertising whenever possible.

BRE - M15: PARTNER TRAINING

Provide an annual calendar of training for tourism partners. Build the calendar around expressed needs and observed weaknesses. All tourism partners share in the responsibility for marketing Brenham and the area. Visit Brenham takes the lead and provides many of the resources, but it's a team effort.

BRE - M16: TRADE SHOWS/PUBLIC PRESENCE

Leisure trade shows are important, however, it is just as important for the DMO to be a part of events throughout the county. This is a great opportunity to educate residents about what you do and its value to the county. You will also be connecting with people who may be able to bring a meeting, workshop, or other events to town. You never know where the next lead might come from.

BRE - M17: PUBLIC RELATIONS/FAM TRIPS

Third-party information, whether in print, on social media, or via word-of-mouth is always more credible to potential visitors than anything you say about yourself. This is why articles and posts by others are so coveted. Visit Brenham is currently doing a good job and should continue to seek out every opportunity that puts the area front and center for target markets.

- ❑ 1. FAM Trips—identify regional influencers and offer to host them for specific experiences. Don't try to cram everything into one trip. Focus on a specific aspect— history, architecture, outdoor recreation, culinary, newly developed tours. Work with influencers that have targeted audiences, this will make anything that they write far more effective.
- ❑ 2. Public Relations— Put together a list of article ideas in an online press room as a starting point. Continue pitching ideas with a narrow focus, this provides the opportunity for more stories and a more targeted audience.

BRE - M18: MADE IN BRENHAM SHOP

Use the empty corner space at the Simon Theatre to have a shop featuring made in Brenham/Washington County products. There are a couple of different formats that this could take:

- Tasting room—this format focuses strictly on providing samples and information about how they can tour the facility or purchase the products.
- Tasting and sales outlet— in addition to providing tastings and

the opportunity to book tours, you could also provide the option to purchase in small quantities if it doesn't not compete with local retailers.

BRE - M19: BARNHILL CENTER/SIMON THEATRE

Once the meeting space is completed, sales efforts can be ramped up for meetings and workshops. Additional emphasis should be put on programming the Simon Theatre with a variety of activities as well as booking a range of music acts and touring shows that complement but don't compete with the schedule at Blinn College. When it comes to music, the Simon isn't a competitor for the private entertainment venues, it's a partner that can bring in bigger crowds who then take advantage of the other options throughout town as well.

- Initiate a Night To Shine event for youth. This isn't a competition, but an opportunity for musicians, dancers and others to share their talents with the community. Held on consecutive weeknights, it will bring families downtown where they can take advantage of early dinner specials.
- Songwriters workshop.
- Writer's workshop with sessions by famous authors.
- Youth Film Festival with one weekend for learning about film and another weekend to showcase their work.
- Poetry slams (competitive, dramatic poetry performances).
- Monthly history talks or first-person portrayals by national experts and performers.

Visit Brenham Administration Recommendations

BRE - A1: STAFFING

- 1. Tourism Director—this position oversees all tourism activities with primary responsibility for:
 - Budget, including monthly reports
 - Staffing Culture and Tourism Board
 - Overseeing marketing plan implementation
 - Maintaining partnerships
 - Overseeing training for staff and partners
- 2. Group & Sales Specialist—this position focuses on bringing groups to the area with primary responsibility for:
 - Identifying group leads
 - Working with tourism partners to respond to RFP requests
 - Working with Experience & Event Specialist to create customized offerings for workshops, conferences, reunions, and team-building
 - Coordinating volunteers to assist with groups
 - Recruiting events like car shows to use Brenham as a venue
 - Attending group-related trade shows
 - Booking groups for The Barnhill Center
- 3. Visitor Center Coordinator—this position oversees the operation of the Visitor Center with primary responsibility for:
 - Supervising Visitor Center staff
 - Booking tours for independent leisure visitors
- Updating event calendar
- Working with Marketing Specialist to implement Facebook strategy including: posting Facebook events, timeline posts, cross-promotion of partners.
- Reviewing Meltwater
- Overseeing the Made in Brenham shop
- 4. Experience & Event Specialist—this position supports and develops events and experiences for groups and individual visitors with primary responsibility for:
 - Scheduling and staffing the Barnhill Center (as use of the facility increases, staffing assistance may require additional part-time/on-call staff)
 - Working with tourism partners to enhance experiences and develop new options
 - Serving as liaison between the DMO and events
 - Working with Group & Sales Specialist to support events using Brenham as a venue
 - Overseeing website
- 5. Contracted marketing and public relations services—these services should be contracted out for now with the possibility of bringing it in-house after a few year. Services include:
 - Coordinating on development of social media strategy and calendar
 - Implementing social media strategy and calendar
 - Revamping and updating website

BRE - A2: CULTURE AND TOURISM BOARD

A new board should be created to advise and support the DMO, advocate for the continued development of tourism and cultural assets, and evaluate HOT grant applications.

- Up to 7 members from the lodging industry, historic sites, attractions, arts community, and business community.
- The Commissioners Court would appoint one representative and the tourism liaison would be an ex officio member of the board.

BRE - A3: HOT GRANTS

In the Fall of 2019 begin evaluating the best future structure and process for HOT fund allocations.

BRE - A4: AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Establish an ambassador program to provide assistance for the DMO and an outlet for individuals who are enthusiastic about tourism and its potential to positively impact their community.

- Work an average of four hours a week and no more than 20 hours per week.
- Participate in training workshops.
- Assist at trade shows or local events.
- Assist with providing support services to groups

- Conduct tours
- Work in Made in Brenham shop
- Staffing support for museums and attractions

BRE - A5: INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS

Participating in statewide organizations is a good starting place. There are excellent opportunities in Texas for continuing education, peer networking, and targeted resources. Plan to participate in:

- Texas Downtown Association (TDA)—annual conference and regional workshops.
- Texas Association of CVBs (TACVB)—Annual conference, Mid-winter meeting, and regional workshops.
- Texas Travel Industry Association (TTIA)—begin sending staff to Tourism College (3 years) and Summit.
- Texas Independence Trail
- Houston and Beyond—join for one year and evaluate the ROI. This is an expensive membership and it is important to be sure you are receiving value.
- Business organizations in the Houston area with members who are appropriate as potential small meeting and group clients.

BRE - A6: METRICS

Metrics are valuable in making decisions about the allocation of resources, however, tracking them can be overwhelming. Don't try to do everything at once. In addition to the metrics provided by your creative agency related to social, website, and ad placements, consider starting with the following:

- ❑ 1. Visitor Center
 - Number of walk-in visitors each day
 - Number of phone inquiries each day
 - Walk-in visitor time in visitor center
 - Whether walk-in visitors took brochures
 - Home zip code /community
 - Notes about their experiences in the region already
- ❑ 2. Groups
 - Number of outstanding leads
 - Number of RFPs responded to and projected room nights
 - Number of RFPs won and projected room nights
 - Reasons for lost RFPs

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M1: CUSTOMER SERVICE								
1	TRAINING	PROVIDE ANNUAL TRAINING	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD
2	MAP	CREATE MAPS FOR PARKING AND RESTROOMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MAP CREATED				
3	SIGNAGE	IMPROVE RESTROOM SIGNAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNAGE INSTALLED				
4	REVIEWS	REVIEW SUGGESTION CAMPAIGN			<input type="checkbox"/>	LAUNCHED CAMPAIGN		
BRE - M2: CROSS PROMOTION								
1	BUSINESSES	CREATE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS FAM TOURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD 2 TOURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD 3 TOURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD 3 TOURS
2	NEW	CREATE PROCESS FOR NEW BUSINESSES TO DISSEMINATE THEIR INFORMATION TO LODGING PROPERTIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROCESS CREATED				
BRE - M3: PACKAGES/TOURS								
1	TOURS	CREATE MENU OF EXPERIENCES AND TOURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CREATED 2 EXPERIENCES/TOURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CREATED 4 EXPERIENCES/TOURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CREATED 4 EXPERIENCES/TOURS
BRE - M4: GROUP SALES AND SERVICES								
1	RFPs	PROVIDE TRAINING TO HOTELS ON HOW TO RESPOND TO RFPs AND BOOK 2-3 YEARS IN ADVANCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOOKING TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	RFP TRAINING CONDUCTED		
2	TARGETS	IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TYPES OF CLUB AND ORGANIZATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TARGET CATEGORIES DETERMINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	RESEARCHED TARGETS	<input type="checkbox"/>	RESEARCHED TARGETS

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M4: GROUP SALES AND SERVICES (CONTINUED)								
3	DATABASE	CREATE DATABASE OF POTENTIAL GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	DATABASE CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	DATABASE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	DATABASE UPDATED
4	MARKETING	CREATE EVENT MARKETING PIECE ABOUT "WHY BRENHAM?"			<input type="checkbox"/>	SENT TO 50 GROUPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SENT TO 100 GROUPS
5	LETTER	DRAFT SALES LETTER INVITING EVENT ORGANIZERS TO USE BRENHAM AS VENUE			<input type="checkbox"/>	10 EVENTS CONTACTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	15 EVENTS CONTACTED
6	INCENTIVES	DEVELOP MEETINGS INCENTIVE PROGRAM			<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 MEETINGS PARTICIPATED
7	GUIDES	CREATE POCKET-SIZE, AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC VISITOR GUIDES FOR SPORTS TEAMS, MEETING ATTENDEES, WEDDING GUESTS, ETC.			<input type="checkbox"/>	4 GUIDES CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	GUIDES UPD
8	RESIDENTS	ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO BRING THEIR MEETINGS TO BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMPAIGN REFRESHED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMPAIGN REFRESHED
9	WELCOME	CREATE PERSONAL TOUCHES TO PROVIDE AN EXTRA LAYER OF WELCOME FOR GROUPS			<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED TO 4 GROUPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED TO ALL GROUPS
10	CEOS	CONNECT WITH LOCAL CEOS	<input type="checkbox"/>	MADE INITIAL CONTACTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUED RELATIONSHIPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUED RELATIONSHIPS
11	CONSULATES	MARKET TO CONSULATES IN HOUSTON			<input type="checkbox"/>	MADE INITIAL CONTACTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUED RELATIONSHIPS

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M4: GROUP SALES AND SERVICES								
12	LEADS	CREATE SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFYING AND FOLLOWING UP ON LEADS	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDENTIFIED LEADS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FOLLOWED UP ON LEADS	<input type="checkbox"/>	FOLLOWED UP ON LEADS
13	DOGS	PARTNER WITH THE COUNTY TO RECRUIT DOG SHOWS AND AGILITY TRIALS TO THE FAIRGROUNDS			<input type="checkbox"/>	BOOKED 1 SHOW/TRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOOKED 2 SHOWS/TRIALS
BRE - M5: VISITOR CENTER/KITCHEN TABLE CONCIERGE								
1	RECOMMENDATIONS	COMPILE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LOCALS USING PRINT AND YOUTUBE			<input type="checkbox"/>	10 VIDEOS POSTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	10 VIDEOS POST
2	TRAINING	CONDUCT STAFF TRAINING TO ENHANCE VISITOR INTERACTIONS			<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING CONDUCTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING CONDUCTED
3	RESIDENTS	TARGET RESIDENTS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION			<input type="checkbox"/>	1 CAMPAIGN EXECUTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 CAMPAIGN EXECUTED
4	ONLINE	AVAILABILITY SCHEDULE ESTABLISHED			<input type="checkbox"/>	SCHEDULE CREATED AND TESTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SCHEDULE MAINTAINED
5	FAM	CONTINUE STAFF AND PARTNER FAM TRIPS TO NEW AND EXISTING BUSINESSES AND ATTRACTIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 TRIP HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 TRIPS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 TRIPS HELD
6	TABLETS	USE TABLETS TO COLLECT VISITOR INFORMATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	TABLETS PURCHASED	<input type="checkbox"/>	TABLETS USED	<input type="checkbox"/>	TABLETS USED
BRE - M6: CLAIM LISTINGS								
1	LISTINGS	PROVIDE TRAINING TO BUSINESSES ABOUT CLAIMING LISTINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M7: REVIEW WEBSITES								
1	TRAINING	PROVIDE TRAINING/CHECKLIST TO BUSINESSES ABOUT WHAT TO REVIEW ON THEIR WEBSITES	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD
BRE - M8: VISIT BRENHAM WEBSITE								
1	EDITORIAL	INCREASE AMOUNT OF EDITORIAL CONTENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE REDEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED
2	NAVIGATION	CREATE SQUARE VERSION OF LOGO FOR PROFILE IMAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE REDEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED
3	MOBILE	MAKE MOBILE SITE FULLY RESPONSIVE	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE REDEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED
4	ITINERARIES	CREATE QUICK-STOP ITINERARIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE REDEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED
5	LINKING	LINK EVENTS CALENDAR TO PLAN A TRIP SECTION	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE REDEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED
6	EVENTS	KEEP EVENT INFORMATION CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS UPDATED
BRE - M9: ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN								
1	PLAN	CREATE ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLAN CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLAN CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLAN CREATED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M10: DIGITAL TOOLS								
1	STRATEGY	CREATE AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGY	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED
2	LISTINGS	CREATE CONSISTENT LISTINGS ON GOOGLE, TRIPADVISOR, YELP	<input type="checkbox"/>	LISTINGS UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	LISTINGS UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	LISTINGS UPDATED
3	COMBINE	COMBINE OLD LISTINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	LISTINGS COMBINED				
4	PHOTOS	PUT FACEBOOK PHOTOS INTO ALBUMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS SORTED				
5	TWITTER	CONTINUE INCREASED TWITTER ACTIVITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOALS ESTABLISHED AND MET	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOALS ESTABLISHED AND MET	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOALS ESTABLISHED AND MET
6	HASHTAGS	CREATE HASHTAGS AND CONSISTENTLY PROMOTE THEM	<input type="checkbox"/>	HASHTAGS USED CONSISTENTLY	<input type="checkbox"/>	HASHTAGS USED CONSISTENTLY	<input type="checkbox"/>	HASHTAGS USED CONSISTENTLY
7	YOUTUBE	INCREASE NUMBER OF VIDEOS ON VISIT BRENHAM CHANNEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADD 10 VIDEOS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADD 15 VIDEOS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADD 25 VIDEOS
BRE - M11: PRINT ADVERTISING								
1	STRATEGY	CONTINUE CURRENT FOCUS AND ADJUST AS MORE EXPERIENCES ARE CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTINUED FOCUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADJUSTED FOCUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADJUSTED FOCUS
BRE - M12: COLLATERAL								
1	RACK CARDS	KEEP RACK CARD DESIGNS FRESH	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED RACK CARDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED RACK CARDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED RACK CARDS
2	VISITOR GUIDE	RESTRICTURE CONTENT GROUPINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	RESTRICTURED GUIDE	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED GUIDE	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED GUIDE

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M13: PARTNER COMMUNICATION								
1	DATABASE	CREATE AND MAINTAIN UP-TO-DATE PARTNER DATABASE	<input type="checkbox"/>	CREATED PARTNER DATABASE	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED PARTNER DATABASE	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED PARTNER DATABASE
2	NEWSPAPER	DISTRIBUTE QUARTERLY NEWSPAPER TO PARTNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 NEWSPAPERS DISTRIBUTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 NEWSPAPERS DISTRIBUTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 NEWSPAPERS DISTRIBUTED
3	INFLUENCERS	IDENTIFY REGIONAL INFLUENCERS AND CONNECT THEM WITH TOURISM PARTNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFLUENCERS IDENTIFIED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONNECTED PARTNERS WITH INFLUENCERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONNECTED PARTNERS WITH INFLUENCERS
BRE - M14: LEARN THE STORIES								
1	STORIES	DEVELOP STORIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	STORIES DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STORIES DEVELOPED		
2	STAFF	TRAINING STAFF TO TELL STORIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	STAFF UTILIZED STORIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	STAFF UTILIZED STORIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	STAFF UTILIZED STORIES
3	INCORPORATE	INCORPORATE STORYTELLING WHEREVER POSSIBLE			<input type="checkbox"/>	STORIES INCORPORATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STORIES INCORPORATED
BRE - M15: PARTNER TRAINING								
1	TRAINING	PROVIDE A CALENDAR OF TRAINING FOR PARTNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 TRAININGS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 TRAININGS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 TRAININGS HELD
BRE - M16: TRADE SHOWS/PUBLIC PRESENCE								
1	SHOWS	ATTEND TRADE SHOWS THROUGHOUT TEXAS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDED 3 SHOWS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDED 3 SHOWS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDED 3 SHOWS
1	PUBLIC	ATTEND COMMUNITY EVENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CREATED TRADE BOOTH/2 EVENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDED 4 COMMUNITY EVENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDED 4 COMMUNITY EVENTS

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - M17: PUBLIC RELATIONS/FAM TRIPS								
1	FAM	HOST REGIONAL INFLUENCERS FOR SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOSTED 2 INFLUENCER	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOSTED 3 INFLUENCERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOSTED 3 INFLUENCERS
2	PR	POST ARTICLE IDEAS IN ONLINE PRESS ROOM AND CONTINUE OUTREACH TO MEDIA OUTLETS	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPILED AND PROMOTED IDEAS	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPILED AND PROMOTED IDEAS	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPILED AND PROMOTED IDEAS
BRE - M18: MADE IN BRENHAM SHOP								
1	SHOP	DETERMINE SHOP FORMAT AND BEGIN OPERATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	OPENED SHOP	<input type="checkbox"/>	OPERATED SHOP	<input type="checkbox"/>	OPERATED SHOP
BRE - M19: BARNHILL CENTER/SIMON THEATRE								
1	UTILIZATION	RECRUIT MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS/INCREASE PROGRAMMING	<input type="checkbox"/>	DEVELOPED SALES STRATEGY	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 MEETINGS RECRUITED	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 MEETINGS RECRUITED
BRE - A1: STAFFING								
1	DIRECTOR	TOURISM DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADAPTED POSITION DESCRIPTION				
2	SALES	GROUP & SALES SPECIALIST	<input type="checkbox"/>	HIRE POSITION				
3	VC	VISITOR CENTER COORDINATOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADAPTED POSITION DESCRIPTION				
4	EVENTS	EXPERIENCE & EVENT SPECIALIST	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADAPTED POSITION DESCRIPTION				
5	CONTACTED	MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADAPTED SCOPE OF WORK	<input type="checkbox"/>	MONITORED EFFECTIVENESS & ADAPTED SCOPE OF WORK	<input type="checkbox"/>	MONITORED EFFECTIVENESS & ADAPTED SCOPE OF WORK

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BRE - A2: CULTURE AND TOURISM BOARD								
1	BOARD	ESTABLISH BOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	ESTABLISH BOARD				
BRE - A3: HOT GRANTS								
1	GRANTS	EVALUATE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF HOT ALLOCATION PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVALUATED PROGRAM				
BRE - A4: AMBASSADOR PROGRAM								
1	AMBASSADORS	ESTABLISH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM ESTABLISHED				
BRE - A5: ORGANIZATIONS								
1	ORGANIZATIONS	JOIN APPROPRIATE INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	JOINED 6 ORGANIZATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS IN 6 ORGANIZATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS IN 6 ORGANIZATIONS
BRE - A6: METRICS								
1	VISITORS	COLLECT VISITOR CENTER DATA	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRACKED METRICS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRACKED METRICS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRACKED METRICS
2	GROUPS	COLLECT GROUP SALES DATA	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRACKED METRICS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRACKED METRICS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRACKED METRICS

BURTON

2018—Marketing Assessment

ASSIGNMENT: WOULD YOU GO TO BURTON?

If No, why not?

If Yes,

—Where would you go?

—What would you do?

—How long would you stay?

NOTE: Team members often listed attractions under the wrong community due to confusion about where places were located. This is common for visitors. They don't pay attention to city limits.

Jenna—Yes, day trip (overnight for an event)

"Initially I thought Burton would just have a few houses and small store but after researching a little, it looks very cute and rich in history.

The events are appealing and I would probably come with friends and make a weekend of it."

Things Jenna would do/places she would visit:

- Back Lot Gallery
- Burton Trade Days
- Bayberry's Antiques
- Pigs Fly
- Texas Cotton Gin Museum
- Burton Christmas Village
- Burton's Great Pumpkin Patch
- Wildflowers in the Spring
- Brazos Belle Restaurant
- Spend the night at a B & B

Paula—Yes, maybe overnight

"I would visit during the Burton Antiques Market and support the local fire department by eating at their BBQ."

Things Paula would do/places she would visit:

- Burton Antiques Market
- Fire Haus BBQ
- The Stone Cellar
- Pigs Fly

Carl—Yes, short stop

"I'd stop for a quick visit on my way from Austin and then get to Brenham in time to take the Blue Bell tour."

Things Carl would do/places he would visit:

- Burton Railroad Depot
- Mt. Zion Chapel and Cemetery
- Texas Cotton Gin Museum

Meredith—No

"There doesn't seem to be much to this town. I might stop to take a picture of the cotton gin and the depot and then keep driving."

The La Bahia Scenic Highway looks interesting but it doesn't require me to spend time in Burton."

In reviewing the list of things the team thought they would do and places they would visit, there are several references to events. Events are an important tool for generating return visitors and the fact that Jenna is interested in multiple events can be leveraged.

Once someone attends an event and has a positive experience, they're more likely to actively seek out information about your future events and plan a return visit.

There are also a few places that are not actually in Burton. On the surface, this would seem to be a problem, however, it's really an indication of successful cross-promotion.

Your visitors don't care if something is technically within the city limits. They just need to know how far away it is and how to get there. The addition of a Burton-specific itinerary will help clarify the options actually in town.

Capitalize on the idea that people seek experiences they cannot find closer to home by identifying what makes truly makes Burton different from surrounding communities. Communicate and highlight these differences.

2018—Digital Assessment

FACEBOOK ([HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BURTONTEXAS](https://www.facebook.com/burtontexas))

893 people like this Facebook page. The Facebook page is updated quite frequently but is only receiving 1-3 interactions on many of the posts. Facebook recommendations:

- Develop a content strategy to utilize fewer posts but generate more interactions per post.
 - Create a square logo so the name isn't cut off on the sides.
-

INSTAGRAM ([HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/BURTONCHAMBERTX.COM](https://www.instagram.com/burtonchambertx.com))

426 followers, 8-37 likes

There were eight posts in 2018, all between Sept 10 to Nov 9. Previous to that, there was nothing posted since Nov 2017. Of the 2018 posts, half were about the silent auction for #bigstartexasnight.

- Update the Instagram icon on your website to reflect Instagram's colors/official logo.
- When posting promotional images with a lot of text, include photo captions/copy with event details and a phone number for more information.
- Like Burton-related photos that others post, cross-post, and promote your hashtags.

WEBSITE ([HTTP://WWW.BURTONTEXAS.ORG](http://www.burtontexas.org))

Overall, the website is active and has pertinent information to the visitor. However, the design and navigation are dated. Website observations/recommendations:

- The Instagram logo needs to be updated to the current logo.
- The Burton Chamber's contact information should be listed in the footer on all pages. We recommend adding the email address and phone number.
- The font size and style is inconsistent on the website, especially on the events page: <http://www.burtontexas.org/events>
- We recommend customizing the URLs for every page. For example, <http://www.burtontexas.org/page-1574989> should be <http://www.burtontexas.org/shopping>.
- Content should be updated for past events. Even adding "Thanks for participating in our 2018 [event]. Check back here for info on 2019!" would be helpful. This was evident on <http://www.burtontexas.org/tradedays>.
- We recommend creating a template with images all the same size, at least for image width, on pages with member listings, such as the Shopping page. <http://www.burtontexas.org/page-1574989>
- The text for Annie Maud Avis Memorial Fajita & Bean Cook-off is an image and cannot be read by Google. We recommend posting any text as text, not as an image, to help increase search engine optimization. Example: <http://www.burtontexas.org/pag-1777717> (there were multiple pages with this issue.)
- The left sidebar navigation needs apostrophe in "Whats" for the What's Happening page.
- <http://www.burtontexas.org/happening> This page also incorrectly displays a stretched Twitter icon. Fonts are different sizes and styles. The first mention of the email address is not a live link.
- There was a typo for the wrong date listed for Tannenbaum (note this is misspelled on the poster) Tour (It's Sat, Dec 8 not Sat, Dec 6.) We recommend going through the website, like an audit, to correct any other typos or incorrect information. <http://www.burtontexas.org/events>
- Remove the Google+ link since this platform no longer exists.

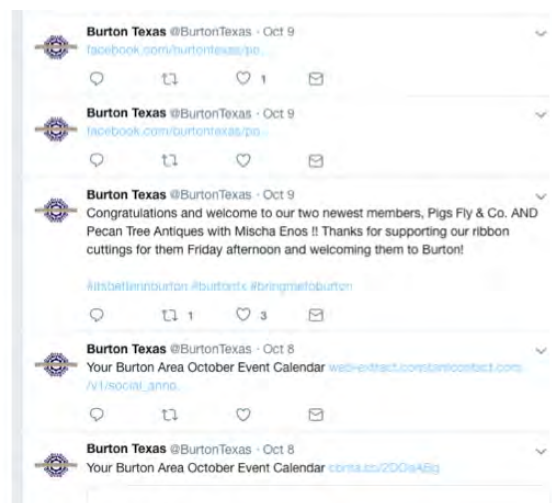
TWITTER (HTTP://TWITTER.COM/BURTONTEXAS)

307 followers

Twitter can be time-consuming and determining whether it is worth the effort depends upon whether your potential visitors are hanging out on Twitter. Currently, this Twitter account is connected to the Burton Chamber's Facebook page and some of the posts only have a Facebook URL with no other text. This defeats the purpose of providing content to the audience since few, if any, of them will click on a tweet with cut-off URLs as content.

Another observation is that the automatic posts from Constant Contact post twice: once with an image, once without. We recommend making these posts manually to avoid the duplication.

The good news: we noticed a post welcoming a new Chamber member and it generated four interactions, proving that if you post fresh content, your followers will interact.



2018—Visitor Experience Assessment

ONSITE ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

A separate team conducted the onsite assessment in September. The purpose of this phase was to experience the community the same way a first time visitor might. We explored, visited attractions, made purchases, ate in restaurants, and talked to business owners, residents, and other visitors.

Prior to the onsite assessment, a list of expectations was created by the marketing assessment team. These expectations were based upon their perceptions and research and may, at first glance, seem illogical. However, this does not negate them. An analysis of whether the expectations were met is included at the end of the Visitor Experience Assessment.

The expectations for Burton were:

- We expected a peaceful, relaxed feel.
- We expected a quaint, inviting small town.
- We expected a neglected, run down feel.
- We expected Burton to roll up its streets at night and be very quiet.
- We expected a bedroom community.
- We expected historic buildings.
- We expected to have trouble finding Burton.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



The sign on US 290 helps communicate that Burton isn't just a wide spot in the road, that there is something to do—that's good!

Building upon this with well-designed, strategically-placed billboards will reinforce the message.



Gateways are a community's welcome mat. A way to say, "We're glad you're here. Come in and let us show you around."

Burton has a sign, but unfortunately, it's nearly invisible due to the lack of contrast between the words and the background. If the words could be powdercoated white (or tan) they would stand out on the frame.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



This was the only "information kiosk" we could find and it was peppered with old flyers related to lost animals.

Even if it were cleaned up and current information was added, it is still an odd design and its location is too isolated for it to be effective.



This is an interesting building and we were disappointed when it wasn't open. Initially, it made us think that there weren't any other shops in town and if we hadn't been doing the assessment, we might have turned around and left town.

Adding a visitor information kiosk in front of the Museum will help alleviate this problem and keep people in town longer.



The interpretive display in front of the Texas Cotton Gin Museum is very welcoming. The shelter over the signs is a thoughtful touch, making it more attractive for people to take the time to read the signs when it's hot.

The signs also help those who visit at times the museum isn't open get a taste for the history. It also may whet their appetite enough to encourage a return visit.

WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?

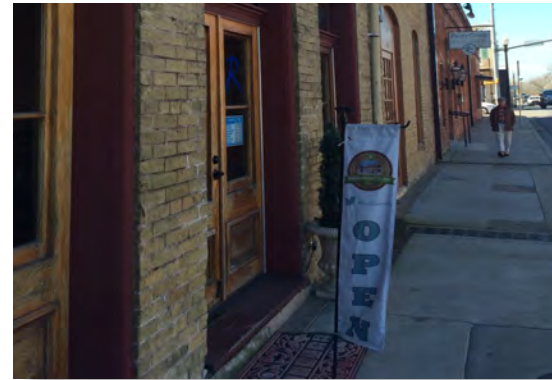
To draw visitors, you must offer something worth the trip and it has to be something people can't get closer to home.

What did we find in Burton? As we drove through town, it was difficult to determine which buildings were abandoned and which ones were operating.

For example, White Horse Tavern was a place we drove right past. From the outside, we had no idea that it was open.

Painting the words "White Horse Tavern" on the front in an appropriate style (something like a ghost sign) might help. Adding a neon "live music tonight" sign for the window would help visitors know it's a functioning business.

Burton Roadhouse has a sign, which is a good start. As time and money allow, adding a "coming events" marquee on Main Street to promote the music at both venues will be helpful.



Development of a county-wide banner program where all businesses have similar flags they fly when open (similar to the one seen here in Bastrop) will help visitors know where there are places for them to visit and spend their money.

Many businesses use A-frame signs effectively. However, this isn't appropriate for Burton since the signs would often be hidden by a car parked in front.



Events were one of the largest attractions for our team and is one of Burton's strengths. Some of these events are built around local businesses, others are seasonal or historical. This variety helps attract a broad range of attendees and the event schedule, as a whole, gives people

a reason to return to Burton throughout the year. Events are what keep Burton from being a "Been there, done that" destination.

HOW WERE WE TREATED?

We didn't encounter anyone else walking around Burton but once we were in the museum, a shop, the Roadhouse or the Brazos Belle, we received excellent, friendly customer service. Everyone made us feel welcome and invited us to return.

WAS OUR #1 NEED MET?

Clean, accessible restrooms are the #1 need for visitors. While we did not find any public restrooms, Burton's merchants did a great job of helping us find an option.

WERE OUR EXPECTATIONS MET?

Expectations are built upon all of the pieces of information a visitor consciously and subconsciously gathers before they arrive at a place. These are the expectations developed by the marketing assessment team. How did Burton do? (Green check indicates the community met the expectation. Red X indicates the community did not meet the expectation.)

- ✓ We expected a peaceful, relaxed feel.
- ✓ We expected a quaint, inviting small town.
- ✗ We expected a neglected, run down feel—*the feel was more of a sleepy, slowly reawakening destination.*
- ✓ We expected Burton to roll up its streets at night and be very quiet.
- ✗ We expected a bedroom community—*while many of the residents may work elsewhere, Burton is a clearly a cohesive community where residents are engaged in its future.*
- ✓ We expected historic buildings.
- ✗ We expected to have trouble finding Burton—*finding Burton was easy and this is a good thing!*

BURTON AS A VISITOR DESTINATION TODAY

Strengths & Opportunities

- Event schedule is a solid foundation
- Round Top attendees
- Local residents are engaged/get things done
- Texas Cotton Gin Museum
- Live music options
- Safe, low-key environment

Challenges & Threats

- Shops closed on Sundays
- Walkability
- Funding
- Aging resident population

2018—What We Heard From

The following is a compilation of comments received in various settings from a variety of stakeholders.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE?

- People love the tranquility experience, need more eating options.
- Maybe stay for lunch, weekdays visit the Cotton Gin Museum, weekends they visit Museum, shop, have lunch.
- Depends on when you come to town.
- It depends on when you come. Tuesday to Saturday most things are open and the museum serves as a visitor center. If people don't find someone to talk to they may just leave because they don't know what to do.
- On most days the best experience comes from being greeted at the Cotton Gin Museum, it is consistently open and is sort of the face of Burton.
- Visiting the Cotton Gin Museum.
- Very limited, most of the day activities revolve around the school. Word-of-mouth is great but people don't always know all of the resources the community has to offer .
- Warm and welcome feeling.
- Local restaurants and the Cotton Gin are sleepy. Weekends there are 2 live music venues, special events with local businesses, farmers market.
- Most of the people I've talked to have never heard of Burton.
- Not much open during the week.
- Not much going on, Thursday to Sunday shops are open.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN THE FUTURE?

- More shops and businesses, nice city park, clean up the creek and unsightly things around town, revive empty buildings.
- History trail is everything, visit communities via backroads, guides for the Cotton Gin Museum, optional self-guided tours with wireless headphones, interactive exhibits, playground for kids with agriculture theme.
- Highlight walkable areas with better signage, increase curb appeal, many historical buildings have become derelict, need more food and entertainment to keep people coming back, we need new regional events.
- People are welcomed and know exactly what to do and when things are open, we want them to feel a sense of quiet charm.
- More things open, make people feel welcome and part of the community, make more people available for visitors to talk to, better signage and self-guided tour.
- County is loaded with Texas history, working cotton gin.
- Expand the visitor experience to increase support of local shops, restaurants, businesses.
- Need better signage and events marketing for upcoming events.
- Small but vibrant little town, full of music, arts, and crafts, most unique small town in Texas.
- Highlight history, promote festivals, encourage outsiders to come, piggyback off surrounding towns' activities.
- Small businesses need to grow, need year-round and midweek attractions, need enough businesses to sustain the community.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION?

- Need to attract more businesses and young people, need to get more people involved in the community.
- More money, volunteers, promotion, and work with the Washington County CVB .
- Potential agreements on property beautification, signage, better walkability, profit off Round Top overflow.
- Better signage on the highway, a visitor center, a chamber of commerce website, unified effort by the community and businesses.
- Concentrated effort by local citizens and business owners, empower people to keep moving forward without getting discouraged.
- LARGE signage on US 290, more publicity, especially about being number one cotton producing state in the nation.
- Make more connections, build positive relationships between community organizers and business owners.
- Designated board to help organize and enhance current activities, promotions to draw new visitors, punch cards after visiting attractions or businesses.
- Renovate historical buildings, bring in new businesses, advertise, and work hard.
- Signs, advertising, social media, get people involved & interested.
- Relying on social media has not been enough for promotion, most people can't put any money into advertising, funding.
- Openness to selling vacant buildings to someone who will do something with them or reinvesting in Burton economy.

The Burton Experience—The Future

At its core, the essence of this project is to make Burton, a “3rd place” for residents and potential visitors. Their 1st Place is their home. Their 2nd Place is where they work. Their 3rd Place is where they hang out and spend their leisure time (and money.) Third Places are important to demographic groups and smart communities work to establish their reputation as a local and regional option to meet this need.

However, communities cannot be all things to all people. Narrowing your focus, identifying your points of differentiation (particularly among neighboring communities,) and building your identity upon existing assets and the desired quality of life for residents is the most effective and sustainable approach.

The Burton Experience identity is comprised of two things—an identity vision and identity pillars.

Identity Vision: A statement of fewer than 10 words that concisely describes the identity Burton is striving to establish as The Burton Experience.

Identity Pillars: Concepts that support the identity while retaining Burton's core characteristics.

Burton's identity vision and the accompanying pillars are built upon defining and clarifying the foundation for The Burton Experience. Each of the recommendations in this plan supports this effort and meets the following goals established by the stakeholders:

1. Consistency in shop hours and communication among businesses
2. Cross-promotion of businesses and events
3. Beautification
4. Increase visitation at the museum by 10% over next 36 months
5. Increase number of groups who visit and keep them in town longer
6. Increase number of events

THE BURTON EXPERIENCE—IDENTITY VISION

An unexpected, but welcome, visit from an old friend.

THE BURTON EXPERIENCE—IDENTITY PILLARS

Hospitable/Warm—Burton is a delightful, fun, hospitable place that makes visitors feel like they've come home.

Charming/Cute/Peaceful—Visitors escape the big city pace and experience laid-back charm in a peaceful setting.

History/Heritage—Burton brings the area's heritage to life in engaging ways.

The recommendations listed below and outlined in the following sections are designed to strengthen The Burton Experience and mitigate challenges. They are also intended to complement the efforts of other communities in Washington County.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

BUR - P1: Beautification

BUR - P2: Groups

BUR - P3: Events/Activiities

BUR - P4: Shopping

BUR - P5: Cotton Gin Museum

MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

BUR - M1: Website

BUR - M2: Facebook

BUR - M3: Twitter

BUR - M4: Instagram

BUR - M5: Local Itinerary

BUR - M6: County-Wide Visitor Info Kiosks

BUR - M7: Review Websites

BUR - M8: Claim Listings

BUR - M9: Event Marketing

BUR - M10: Networking

Product Development Recommendations

BUR - P1: BEAUTIFICATION

Increasing the visual appeal of Burton is a collaborative effort requiring volunteers and fund-raising creativity.

- ❑ 1. Clean up of entry corridors and trashy areas can be accomplished with organized clean up days. Add a fun event like a potluck or BBQ at the end to celebrate the accomplishment.
- ❑ 2. Start a flower box/planter/hanging basket program. If a business can't afford one, there's probably someone in the community that would sponsor it— a family, nonprofit group, or business outside of downtown.
- ❑ 3. Adding public art brings vitality to an area. Themed murals, a map of town, or other works can be created collaboratively. Think quirky and interesting—a giant quilt made of squares created by different people with a variety of materials; a sculpture created with old furniture parts,; or a mural created using natural materials.
- ❑ 4. Encourage business owners to stand across the street from their businesses at least once a week to make sure their building is making a good first impression. Windows clean? Paint fresh? Displays inviting? Signs visible?

BUR - P2: GROUPS

One of the stated goals is to increase the number and size of groups hosted each year and find ways to keep them in town longer.

- ❑ 1. Evaluate both the number and type of groups that visited in previous years.
- ❑ 2. Build upon the cotton gin's status as a National Historic Engineering Landmark by partnering with *Visit Brenham* to put together a professional meeting/retreat/team building package for mechanical engineering groups. This can be professional organizations or teams within a specific firm. Lodging and meeting space would be in Brenham with a field trip and special programming at the Museum.
- ❑ 3. Find a space, perhaps the General Mercantile building, that could be used for a post-Round Top week of assistance and/ or workshops to repurpose or refinish pieces. Packages could be created with the B&Bs and the wineries. This would keep the momentum going once Round Top is over and could be expanded to slow times of the year.
- ❑ 4. Research historical societies in the region and write a personal letter inviting them to visit. Not just to tour, but to learn about how to take a historic property and revitalize it and re-integrate it into the community fabric.

BUR - P3: EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

Adding more events throughout the year and promoting them on Facebook will help keep Burton visible and serve as a reminder that when looking for something to do, people should check out what is happening in Burton.

- ❑ 1. Create an event schedule with the goal of having something special each month by 2021. For this to be economically beneficial to the community, businesses need to be open in conjunction with the event. Using space downtown instead of hosting everything at the Museum helps visitors and participants know that you have a downtown and encourages them to explore.
- ❑ 2. Work with *Visit Brenham* to support the Birthplace of Texas GeoTour and educate business owners about what it is, how people can participate, and encourage them to find ways to partner with the experience. At a minimum, you could create small or micro caches related to each business. This would entice cachers driving by on US 290 to stop and look around.
- ❑ 3. May is Preservation Month. Consider creating small, special events where families, not just the kids, can work together on a project—at the cemetery doing stone rubbings or evening ghost walks or at the depot where they can be stationmaster for the day. Consider a month-long hands-on volunteer experience where they can be a part of a preservation effort.

- ❑ 4. Consider building upon the pumpkin patch event with hay bale sculptures similar to those found at "What the Hay" in Montana. (www.montanabaletrail.com) This brings people from all over the state and beyond to the small town at the beginning of the Trail. Be sure it doesn't compete with the Scarecrow Festival in Chappell Hill by having the main celebration in town on the third weekend of October or even the third and fourth weekends. This could be an enhancement to the other October events.
- ❑ 5. Work with the Fire Department to expand their Firemen's Feast to a quarterly event with horseshoe, washer, or cornhole tournaments for all ages.

BUR - P4: SHOPPING

One of the stated goals is to increase the number and size of groups hosted each year and find ways to keep them in town longer so they can spend money with local businesses. This will only be successful if the businesses are actually open when the groups are in town.

- ❑ 1. Conduct a survey of business owners to assess their willingness to be open when groups are in town.
- ❑ 2. Evaluate the survey responses and determine if there are any challenges that need to be addressed or overcome before inviting groups and assuring them that businesses will be open. Be prepared to find creative ways to mitigate the challenges. Help business owners see the potential economic benefits.

BUR - P5: COTTON GIN MUSEUM

Increasing visitation at the Museum by 10% over the next three years is a modest and achievable goal.

Museums are often "one and done" experiences or are perceived that way by visitors. Little things can help change that perception. For example:

- Benchmark attendance with 2018 numbers.
- Seed back hill with bluebonnets.
- Have information available to share with them about upcoming special events, exhibits, speakers, or activities.
- Ask for contact information and send news of special interest.
- Consider revisions to the membership framework. Price a family membership just below the cost of admission for a family of four to come twice. Have special "members only" events or tours.
- Change up the tours, have different themes, make it worthwhile for visitors to return and learn something new.
- Use a section as an "escape room" experience with changing themes that relate to the history of the gin. Participants will pay \$15-\$40 for a one-hour experience.
- Be sure that when you thank them for visiting, you also invite them to come back and bring their friends and family.

Marketing Recommendations

BUR - M1: WEBSITE

- 1. Update to current Instagram logo.
- 2. Add the Burton Chamber of Commerce's contact information to the footer for all pages, include email address and phone number.
- 3. Improve the font size and style consistency on each page.
- 4. Customize the URLs for each page with the topic of the page instead of the random numbers that are assigned.
- 5. Once an event is over, update the content, thank people for attending and let them know about dates and plans for next year along with other upcoming events.
- 6. Consistency is important; create a template for images so they're all the same size in the members listings.
- 7. Check for typos, broken links, and outdated content.

BUR - M2: FACEBOOK

- 1. Develop content strategy with fewer posts but more interactions per post.
- 2. Create a square logo.
- 3. Use Facebook Events tool to help get the word out and make it easy for people to invite their friends and share the information.

BUR - M3: TWITTER

Before continuing to spend time creating content for Twitter, determine if your current and potential visitors are actually using it as an information resource. An informal survey of usage by local residents would also be beneficial. If people are not using it, you shouldn't be spending time marketing on the platform.

Facebook, Instagram, and your website will probably be more effective and produce a greater return on the investment of time.

BUR - M4: INSTAGRAM

- 1. When posting promotional images with a lot of text, include photo captions/copy with event details and the phone number for more information to make everything searchable.
- 2. Take the time to "like" Burton-related photos posted by others, cross-post appropriate photos, and promote your hashtags.

BUR - M5: LOCAL ITINERARY

Burton is already part of area itineraries on the *Visit Brenham* website, however, it is important that there be a stand-alone itinerary for Burton itself. It should link to itineraries for the other communities as well.

The idea is to help people understand that there is enough for them to do to make the stop in Burton worth their time and effort.

BUR - M6: COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSKS

Creating a county-wide system of information kiosks would provide onsite information in each community along with cross-promotion opportunities. The kiosks would be placed in Burton, Chappell Hill, Independence, and Washington-on-the-Brazos (if permitted.) A bench and garbage can would be a nice addition.

Development of the kiosks will require collaborative funding and once this has been accomplished, *Visit Brenham* would provide the kiosks and update the information. Each community would be responsible for maintaining their kiosk and the area around it, keeping brochure racks filled, and emptying the trash can, if one is provided.

Kiosks would all be the same color, ideally red for visibility, with "Visitor Information" across the top in white letters. One side would contain a county map with key attractions indicated and a "You are Here" star. The other side would be local information.

Other parameters for the kiosks:

- Do not sell ads or allow advertising on the kiosks.
- Locate kiosks in visible areas that will not be blocked by parked cars.
- Add brochure holders for the county brochure and a local brochure.

BUR - M7: REVIEW WEBSITES

Work with all businesses, attractions and facilities to go through this basic checklist for their websites:

- Phone (including area code) and address (including city and state) should be on every page in the header or footer.
- Current hours—be sure to update this as changes occur seasonally or due to holidays or special events.
- Check links—this needs to happen on a regular basis, at least quarterly.
- Use great photos and change them often.
- Use at least an 18 point font—even though it's easy to change the font size when viewing webpages, many people don't know how to do this or get irritated when it's necessary.
- Is the content up-to-date?
- Can website visitors quickly tell what type of business or attraction you are?
- Is the site mobile responsive?

BUR - M8: CLAIM LISTINGS

Work with *Visit Brenham* to provide local businesses with training to help increase Burton's online presence and assist businesses in getting more traffic, every business, attraction and facility should claim their listing on the following sites:

- Google—business.google.com
- Tripadvisor—tripadvisor.com/owners
- Yelp—biz.yelp.com

Start with setting up a gmail account that is only used for these type of sites. That way, no one's personal emails are at issue if log-ins are shared or staff changes.

Once the listing is claimed, correct any inaccurate information, post current photos, and respond to recent comments, complaints, and compliments.

BUR - M9: EVENT MARKETING

In addition to using your own website and Facebook Page to promote events, there are ways to broaden your reach.

- 1. Cross-promote events and activities of other communities and be sure to send them your information as well.
- 2. Keep event data current on local business websites.
- 3. Submit event information at least 3 months in advance (6 months+ for statewide marketing) to *Visit Brenham*.

BUR - M10: NETWORKING

Accurate, consistent communication among local businesses is critical for small towns.

- 1. Consider a Sunday email newsletter that lists:
 - Businesses open this week and what their hours will be
 - Upcoming events for the next few weeks
 - Restaurant specials and retail sales events
 - Groups and their schedules
 - Links for social media cross-promotion details
- 2. Put together information on each shop/restaurant/business to help all owners educate themselves and their staff about what else is available in town. This will help answer the constant visitor inquiry: "What else is there to do here?"

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BUR - P1 BEAUTIFICATION								
1	ENTRIES	CLEAN UP DAYS	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 CLEAN UP EVENTS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 CLEAN UP EVENTS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	4 CLEAN UP EVENTS HELD
2	PLANTERS	PLANTER/FLOWER BOX PROGRAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLANTERS MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLANTERS MAINTAINED
3	ART	PUBLIC ART PROJECTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 ARTWORK INSTALLED	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 ARTWORK INSTALLED	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 ARTWORK INSTALLED
4	STOREFRONTS	PROVIDE TRAINING FOR BUSINESS OWNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	STOREFRONTS WELL-MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STOREFRONTS WELL-MAINTAINED
BUR - P2 GROUPS								
1	BENCHMARK	DETERMINE NUMBER AND TYPE OF GROUPS TO-DATE	<input type="checkbox"/>	DATA GATHERED				
2	ENGINEERS	TARGET ENGINEER GROUPS			<input type="checkbox"/>	1 GROUP VISITED	<input type="checkbox"/>	2 GROUPS VISITED
3	WORKSHOP	POST-ROUND TOP WORKSHOPS			<input type="checkbox"/>	1 WORKSHOP HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 WORKSHOP HELD
4	HISTORICAL	CONTACT HISTORICAL SOCIETIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	GROUPS CONTACTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	GROUPS CONTACTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	GROUPS CONTACTED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BUR - P3 EVENTS/ACTIVITIES								
1	SCHEDULE	GO FROM 7 EVENTS ON THE EVENTS SCHEDULE TO SOMETHING EACH MONTH BY 2021	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 EVENTS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	10 EVENTS HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	12 EVENTS HELD
2	GeOTOUR	CONNECT WITH GeOTOUR	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROMOTED GeOTOUR	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 3 LOCAL CACHES	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED 3 LOCAL CACHES
3	PRESERVATION	CELEBRATE PRESERVATION MONTH			<input type="checkbox"/>	1 EVENT HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 EVENT HELD
4	FALL	BUILD UPON PUMPKIN PATCH EVENT			<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED ENHANCEMENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED ENHANCEMENTS
5	FIREMEN	EXPAND FIREMEN'S FEAST	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADDED ACTIVITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD TWICE	<input type="checkbox"/>	HELD THREE TIMES
BUR - P4 SHOPPING								
1	SURVEY	SURVEY BUSINESS OWNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURVEY CONDUCTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURVEY CONDUCTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURVEY CONDUCTED
2	PARTNERSHIP	WORK WITH SHOP OWNERS TO BE OPEN FOR GROUPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	IDEAS DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	75% OF SHOPS OPENED FOR GROUPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	100% OF SHOPS OPENED FOR GROUPS
BUR - P5 COTTON GIN MUSEUM								
1	VISITATION	INCREASE ATTENDANCE BY 10% BY 2021	<input type="checkbox"/>	DETERMINED 2018 BENCHMARK	<input type="checkbox"/>	INCREASED 5%	<input type="checkbox"/>	INCREASED 10%

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BUR - M1 WEBSITE								
1	INSTAGRAM	UPDATE INSTAGRAM LOGO	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOGO UPDATED				
2	FOOTER	ADD CONTACT INFORMATION TO FOOTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION ADDED	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION UPDATED
3	CONSISTENCY	MAKE FONT SIZE AND TYPE CONSISTENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	FONT SIZES AND TYPES EDITED				
4	URLS	CUSTOMIZE PAGE URLS	<input type="checkbox"/>	URLS EDITED	<input type="checkbox"/>	URLS CHECKED	<input type="checkbox"/>	URLS CHECKED
5	EVENTS	KEEP EVENT PAGES UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAGES KEPT CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAGES KEPT CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAGES KEPT CURRENT
6	IMAGES	CREATE IMAGE TEMPLATES FOR CONSISTENCY	<input type="checkbox"/>	TEMPLATE CREATED				
7	PROOF	PROOFREAD WEBSITE FOR TYPOS, BROKEN LINKS, AND OUTDATED CONTENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE PROOFED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE PROOFED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE PROOFED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BUR - M2 FACEBOOK								
1	STRATEGY	DEVELOP CONTENT STRATEGY	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRATEGY DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STRATEGY IMPLEMENTED
2	LOGO	CREATE SQUARE LOGO	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOGO UPDATED				
3	EVENTS	USE FACEBOOK'S EVENT TOOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENT TOOL USED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENT TOOL USED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENT TOOL USED
BUR - M3 TWITTER								
1	TWITTER	DETERMINE IF AUDIENCE IS USING TWITTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	DETERMINATION MADE				
BUR - M4 INSTAGRAM								
1	INSTAGRAM	REVISE FORMAT WHEN POSTING IMAGES WITH LOTS OF TEXT	<input type="checkbox"/>	REVISED FORMAT USED	<input type="checkbox"/>	REVISED FORMAT USED	<input type="checkbox"/>	REVISED FORMAT USED
2	OTHERS	LIKE POSTS BY OTHERS AND CROSS-POST	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSTS LIKED & CROSS-POSTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSTS LIKED & CROSS-POSTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSTS LIKED & CROSS-POSTED
BUR - M5 LOCAL ITINERARY								
1	ITINERARY	CREATE ITINERARY AND SUBMIT TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY SUBMITTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
BUR - M6 COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSK								
1	KIOSK	PARTNER WITH VISIT BRENHAM ON KIOSK	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK CONTENT DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED
BUR - M7 REVIEW WEBSITES								
1	TRAINING	PROVIDE TRAINING/CHECKLIST TO BUSINESSES ABOUT WHAT TO REVIEW ON THEIR WEBSITES	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD
BUR - M8 CLAIM LISTINGS								
1	LISTINGS	PROVIDE TRAINING TO BUSINESSES ABOUT CLAIMING LISTINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD
BUR - M9 EVENT MARKETING								
1	FACEBOOK	CROSS-PROMOTE OFTEN ON EVENT PAGES	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED
2	WEBSITES	KEEP EVENT INFO CURRENT ON WEBSITES	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT
3	CALENDARS	SUBMIT INFORMATION TIMELY TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY
BUR - M10 NETWORKING								
1	NEWSLETTER	SUNDAY EMAIL NEWSLETTER TO BUSINESSES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWSLETTER CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SENT WEEKLY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SENT WEEKLY
2	INFORMATION	INFORMATION PACKET ON BUSINESSES	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION PACKET CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	INFORMATION UPDATED

CHAPPELL HILL

2018—Marketing

ASSIGNMENT: Would you go to Chappell Hill?

If No, why not?

If Yes,

—Where would you go?

—What would you do?

—How long would you stay?

NOTE: Team members often listed attractions under the wrong community due to confusion about where places were located. This is common for visitors. They don't pay attention to city limits.

Jenna—Yes, day trip

"The town looks cute and rich in history. I don't think I would need to stay overnight, there isn't enough to do to keep us here that long.

At first glance it looked like there would be several attractions but as I did more research, I'm pretty sure it would be an hour stop and then I'd go to the more interesting places in the surrounding area."

Things Jenna would do/places she would visit:

- Walking/driving tour
- Old Rock Store
- Antique Rose Emporium
- Chappell Hill Lavender Farm
- Shopping along Main Street
- Christmas Gala
- Christmas Home Tours

Paula—Maybe

"The only place that seemed interesting is the Chappell Hill Lavender Farm and I don't think I have to go through Chappell Hill to get there.

If I did go through town, I'd probably just stop for something to eat."

Things Paula would do/places she would visit:

- Chappell Hill Lavender Farm
- Shabby Cupboard Deli
- Texas Star Winery

Meredith—Maybe

"If I was passing by I might spend an hour poking through a few shops or having coffee but otherwise it does not seem different enough from other nearby places that offer more to do.

Maybe if there was a festival or a specific exhibit at the museum I'd stop, but it wouldn't be a destination for me."

Carl—Yes, short stop

"If it hadn't been for the suggested "Step Back in Time Tour" information on the Visit Brenham website, I wouldn't have been interested at all."

Things Carl would do/places he would visit:

- Chappell Hill Museum
- Masonic Cemetery
- Chappell Hill Bakery
- Bevers Kitchen

MARKETING ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

In reviewing the list of things the team thought they would do and places they would visit, some are in town and others are not. Creating a day trip itinerary that combines places in multiple communities helps visitors understand the proximity and encourages a longer stay (and hopefully more spending.)

Interestingly, neither of Chappell Hill's two major events appeared on anyone's list. Since the events are significant for the community, more research should be conducted into where new attendees are getting their information about the event and what the ratio of new vs. returning attendees is. Events don't always have the perceived impact and without solid data and analysis, effective decisions cannot be made about changes, improvements, marketing, and new audiences to target.

Events are also an important tool for generating return visitors. Once someone attends an event and has a positive experience, they're more likely to actively seek out information about your future events and plan a return visit. This can increase attendance at your smaller events.

Since everyone on the marketing assessment team was interested in history and sought out historic sites and museums, the fact that only one member identified the museum as a place to visit is disappointing. Further feedback indicated that two of them saw a listing but didn't understand enough about what it was. Both agreed that, if they had, it would have made their list.

2018—Digital Assessment

WEBSITE ([HTTP://WWW.CHAPPELLHILLTX.COM](http://www.chappellhilltx.com))

Overall, the website has an updated design with a hero image, has consistent font sizes and styles, and has full contact information in the footer. Website observations/recommendations:

- Add a Facebook icon to the website that links to your Facebook page.
- Add top level navigation that would be of interest to visitors – like PLAY, EAT, STAY (Currently, visitors first need to click on the business directory to find a listing of shopping, restaurants, lodging, etc.
- The “Attractions” and “Events” images in the hero image are less noticeable than they would be in the top navigation menu bar.
- Additional copy on the directory listing pages would help increase search engine optimization. Example: <http://www.chappellhilltx.com/members/ql/restaurants-food-beverages-21>

INSTAGRAM—NO ACCOUNT FOUND

There are already thousands of photos using the hastags listed below along with several other event-specific hashtags. Consider creating an Instagram account to leverage and promote this user-generated content.

#chappellhill

#chappellhilltexas

#chappellhilltx

FACEBOOK ([HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHAPPELLHILLTX.COM](http://www.facebook.com/chappellhilltx.com))

131 people like the Chappell Hill Facebook page.

The page has an active posting schedule. Most posts have images and good copy. A few posts generated a lot of interactions (likes and comments) but most posts only had 0-5 interactions. Facebook recommendations:

- Create a content schedule that includes trivia questions, photos, and cross-promotion.
- Create a square version of your logo for your page profile image.
- Use a photo for the larger page cover image.

2018—Visitor Experience Assessment

ONSITE ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

A separate team conducted the onsite assessment in September. The purpose of this phase was to experience the community the same way a first time visitor might. We explored, visited attractions, made purchases, ate in restaurants, and talked to business owners, residents, and other visitors.

Prior to the onsite assessment, a list of expectations was created by the marketing assessment team. These expectations were based upon their perceptions and research and may, at first glance, seem illogical. However, this does not negate them. An analysis of whether the expectations were met is included at the end of the Visitor Experience Assessment.

The expectations for Chappell Hill were:

- We expected the town to be very quiet and peaceful.
- We expected little traffic.
- We expected friendly and welcoming residents.
- We expected there would not be much to do.
- We expected shops and restaurants to close early and a ghost town feel in the evening.
- We expected multiple quality breakfast and lunch restaurant options.
- We expected an above-average local history museum and to tour historic buildings.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



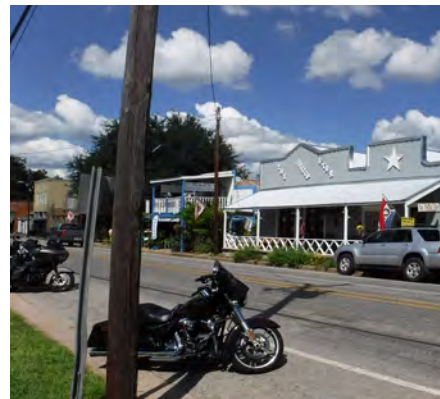
Gateway signs are your welcome mat and the first indication of a community's character. This oddly-angled sign has become nearly invisible amidst its surrounding vegetation. It sends the message that Chappell Hill is bedraggled and neglected.

Be sure that the sign itself still reflects your identity. If

not, replace the sign. If so, trim the overgrowth so it is visible and communicates an image of a town that cares.

The drive along Main Street is pleasant and the entrance into downtown is inviting.

Placing a Visitor Information kiosk on the SE corner of this intersection at Main and Poplar (where the arrow signs are currently) would be beneficial. Block off the 2 parking spaces in front of it to make it more visible and remove the directional arrows.



The shops and businesses on Main Street appear quaint and inviting and we appreciated the number of places that were open on Sunday.

The lack of consistent sidewalks on the east side of the street made it a bit awkward to access those businesses when cars were parked in front and motorcycles raced past.

Traffic calming options, particularly during peak seasons, would be helpful for maintaining a relaxing experience.

WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION

The signage in Chappell Hill helped somewhat, once we found it, however, the fact that some of the businesses couldn't be found and that there were misspellings diminished the effectiveness of the business listings.

Having a visitor center in a real estate office may prevent people from stopping because it is perceived as a potential sales situation that they are not interested in. When we visited, the office was closed and there was no indication that visitor information was available. At a minimum, there should be a covered brochure rack accessible 24/7.



WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?

To draw visitors, you must offer something worth the trip and it has to be something people can't get closer to home.

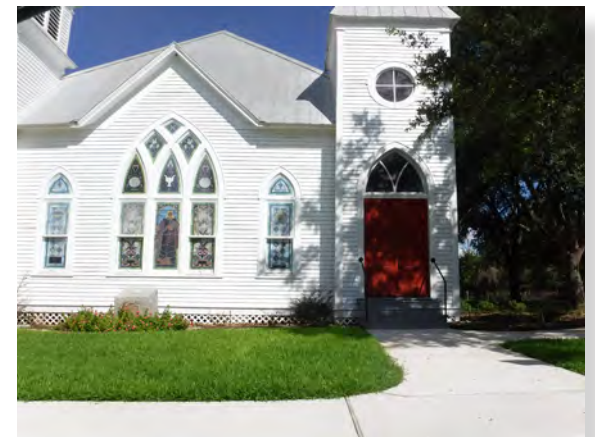
What did we find in Chappell Hill?

We found a small group of shops with well-displayed, eclectic merchandise ranging from clothing and art to home goods and garden supplies. In speaking with the shop owners, they asked relevant questions in a conversational style that made us feel like valued customers.

Lunch at Bevers Kitchen was delicious and we appreciated being able to stop there again for a cold drink before leaving town. We missed the chance to try the Chicken Salad at The Shabby Cupboard since they weren't open on Sunday but the space appeared charming.

We stopped at the museum twice, once when it was closed for lunch, and a second time on another day. We were impressed by the The World War I exhibit; it was of a caliber not often found in local history museums.

The drive out to the Chappell Hill Lavender Farm was pleasant, and even though it wasn't the right time of year for blooms, we enjoyed walking the fields and learning about the history of the farm and the challenges and rewards of growing lavender. This is an excellent example of an experience visitors cannot get closer to home. It won't appeal to everyone, but it should appeal to many in the demographic groups Chappell Hill is working to attract.



HOW WERE WE TREATED?

Most interactions with staff in shops and restaurants were great. They were helpful, inquired about where we were from, and asked what we were interested in so they could make recommendations about other things to do.

They sent us to the Lavender Farm, the museum, Antique Rose Emporium, and restaurants in Brenham for dinner.

WAS OUR #1 NEED MET?

Clean, accessible restrooms are the #1 need for visitors. While we did not find any public restrooms, most of the merchants directed us to the museum or businesses out on US 290 when the museum was closed.

Directing visitors out of town makes it more likely that they will just keep driving to someplace else, rather than come back.

WERE OUR EXPECTATIONS MET?

Expectations are built upon all of the pieces of information a visitor consciously and subconsciously gathers before they arrive at a place. These are the expectations developed by the marketing assessment team. How did Chappell Hill do? (Green check indicates the community met the expectation. Red X indicates the community did not meet the expectation.)

- ✗ We expected the town to be very quiet and peaceful—*at times it was peaceful and at times the roar of motorcycles was deafening and so loud that the noise actually set off car alarms.*
- ✗ We expected little traffic—*as above, sometimes there were few cars; other times we had to dodge the speeding cars and motorcycles.*
- ✓ We expected friendly and welcoming residents.
- ✗ We expected there would not be much to do—*the handful of shops, selection of restaurants, and the museum combine for a nice day trip.*
- ✓ We expected shops and restaurants to close early and a ghost town feel in the evening.
- ✓ We expected multiple quality breakfast and lunch restaurant options.
- ✓ We expected an above-average local history museum—*the museum exceeded our expectations.*
- ✗ We expected to tour historic buildings—*we were unable to tour any buildings due to lack of staffing.*

CHAPPELL HILL AS A VISITOR DESTINATION TODAY

Strengths & Opportunities

- Museum and historic buildings
- Signature events to build upon
- Core group of shops and restaurants
- Chappell Hill Lavender Farm
- Passionate, engaged community members
- Proximity to Houston

Challenges & Threats

- Weekend traffic volume and speed
- Inconsistent heritage tour availability
- Few places for dinner on weeknights
- Disconnect between downtown businesses and those on the highway
- Intermittent sidewalks on east side of Main St.

2018—What We Heard From Others

The following is a compilation of comments received in various settings from a variety of stakeholders.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE?

- People make a very brief visit to eat, shop, and see historical sites.
- Lack of consistency in the town's identity, experience depends upon who you encounter first in town.
- People seem happy to tour this area and appreciate the historical information, buildings, and Museum.
- Sometimes people find their way to the Museum (a hidden gem), driving the countryside, visiting and shopping downtown.
- Very friendly and charming, but pretty quiet.
- Visits are very brief.
- Small town flavor, history, shopping, dining, spring and fall festivals, bluebonnets.
- Festivals, flowers in spring, Brenham events, Antique Rose Emporium.
- Quaint small town, shops might be open or closed, flowers in the spring, innovative programming at the Museum.
- Need for signage, planned trips, quiet downtown.
- Not enough activities.
- Friendly community with great businesses.
- Small town charm.
- Love the beauty of the community, small town USA.
- Good at certain times, needs more promotion.

- Come to experience country life, ride bikes to the country, and see the flowers.
- Disconnected, no real direction, very little info.
- Overall very good at the Lavender Farm, visitors would like to see more businesses open more days in the week.
- Nice shops, a couple of good places to eat, B&Bs, people want to come enjoy the country.
- Quaint, beautiful setting, country life, brief but enjoyable visit.
- Small town feeling, popping festivals, quaint, friendly.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN THE FUTURE?

- More consistent draw, monthly markets, gateway to wine trail, Independence Trail, wildflower trail.
- Uniform, branded public identity.
- More tours conducted.
- Improved signage, more shops and restaurants, better directions to the museum, more bed and breakfasts.
- Community needs to come together for a common goal and vision, more nightlife, more retail.
- Need to be able to spend a weekend, eat, shop, visit.
- Need to maintain a country atmosphere but learn how to embrace tourism.
- A thriving downtown open 7 days, a multicultural experience, all the historical buildings open for tours at least on weekends.

- More shops open on Sundays, more signage, more collaboration.
- More attractions, shops, etc., and work on cross-promotion with other chambers of commerce.
- More signage and advertising.
- Not far from what we have now, more local crafts, retail, small cafes.
- More eating places and shops on Saturdays.
- More volume and events, weekly business increase.
- Need signage and maps, food, attractions, very open accepting community.
- More retail and places to eat to encourage people to stay, better printed materials.
- Activities year round, businesses helping to promote each other, better advertising, keep the area quaint.
- More things to do, more places to eat and shop, people like to come to get away from the city.
- More things to do, more lodging, more networking.
- Connected visitor experience.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION

- Need more advertising dollars and support from the county, Chappell Hill is the Gateway to Washington County.
- Teamwork, businesses need to work together, need branding that is fresh and consistent, joint advertising, strategic planning.
- More events and promotion.

- More active community workers, want people to care more about preservation than just making money on festivals and visitors.
- More community involvement, everyone needs to buy into vision.
- Find funding and get everyone on the same page with a common goal and objective.
- More advertising and be better supported by the county, billboards and funds.
- Incentives for retail shops, need more unique shops.
- More of a county-wide perspective, it's not just about Brenham.
- Increase visitation, redesign exhibits, funding, more visibility, more support from the county.
- More signage and digital advertising, strong retail presence, advertise across Texas.
- Help with funding.
- Gain a balance between increased tourism and country living.
- Businesses need help to be sustainable.
- Better communication between the chamber and businesses.
- More signage, promote events, take advantage of all resources.
- A community-wide effort to involve all.
- Working together to promote each other, more networking and social media.
- Something to encourage new business, incorporate as a city.
- Capture contacts from festivals, capitalize on who is already coming, need strategic and 5-year plan, master-planned development.
- Connect with those marketing Washington County

The Chappell Hill Experience—The Future

At its core, the essence of this project is to make Chappell Hill, a “3rd place” for residents and potential visitors. Their 1st Place is their home. Their 2nd Place is where they work. Their 3rd Place is where they hang out and spend their leisure time (and money.) Third Places are important to demographic groups and smart communities work to establish their reputation as a local and regional option to meet this need.

However, communities cannot be all things to all people. Narrowing your focus, identifying your points of differentiation (particularly among neighboring communities), and building your identity upon existing assets and the desired quality of life for residents is the most effective and sustainable approach.

The Chappell Hill Experience identity is comprised of two things—an identity vision and identity pillars.

Identity Vision: A statement of fewer than 10 words that concisely describes the identity Chappell Hill is striving to establish as The Chappell Hill Experience.

Identity Pillars: Concepts that support the identity while retaining Chappell Hill’s core characteristics.

Chappell Hill’s identity vision and the accompanying pillars are built upon defining and clarifying the foundation for The Chappell Hill Experience. Each of the recommendations in this plan supports this effort and meets the following goals established by the stakeholders:

- (1) Build events that are intimate experiences
- (2) Increase Chappell Hill's visual appeal
- (3) Improve marketing
- (4) Recruit visitor-focused businesses

THE CHAPPELL HILL EXPERIENCE—IDENTITY VISION

A charming small town escape for shopping and a leisurely afternoon.

THE CHAPPELL HILL EXPERIENCE—IDENTITY PILLARS

History—History is preserved as the cornerstone of the community and embraces the significance of women in its founding and heritage.

Upscale/Relaxing/Intimate/Exclusive— Charmed visitors enjoy upscale shopping and dining and exclusive events in a relaxing environment.

Events—Chappell Hill's exclusive events are perfect for girlfriend and family getaways.

The recommendations listed below and outlined in the following sections are designed to strengthen The Chappell Hill Experience and mitigate challenges. They are also intended to complement the efforts of other communities in Washington County.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

CH - P1: Community Foundation

CH - P2: Women's Event Development

CH - P3: Beautification

CH - P4: Recruit Businesses

MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

CH - M1: Website Decision

CH - M2: Website

CH - M3: Facebook

CH - M4: Instagram

CH - M5: Local Itinerary

CH - M6: County-Wide Visitor Info Kiosks

CH - M7: Review Websites

CH - M8: Claim Listings

CH - M9: Event Marketing

Product Development Recommendations

CH - P1: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

A Community Foundation is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that is established with a purpose to serve a community and can provide grants to local charities. In the eyes of the IRS, a Community Foundation is classified as a public charity, meaning that most of the support comes from the public and not a single individual, family, trust, or business. Public charities must be governed by a diverse board of directors.

The primary benefit of creating a Community Foundation is to have a public mechanism to fund community projects that aren't or cannot be funded by a governmental entity or other nonprofit. It is a way for a group of concerned citizens to affect change without a taxing entity, private business, or sole individual making allocation decisions for them. Community Foundations can function completely alone, or they can partner with and/or support other local charities for various purposes.

Community projects can be anything the governing board votes to support. For some communities, that may be revolving loan funds for new businesses, maintenance of existing buildings, façade grants, law enforcement or safety equipment, or transportation needs. Other communities use theirs for cultural programs, historical preservation or events, disaster relief, tourism development, or strategic planning for their future.

An additional benefit to having a Community Foundation is the ability to seek grants to help fund the foundation and the focus areas within it. A Community Foundations can solicit financial support from local and county governments, business and industry, and private citizens. They can also use the services of a grant writer to pursue grants to help fund their mission.

A high functioning Community Foundation can serve as a tool to improve the community, exhibit community pride, and establish a long-term, sustainable funding source for community efforts.

In order to create a Chappell Hill Community Foundation, we recommend the following steps:

1. Identify a local champion to research and prepare a brief presentation on what a Community Foundation is, how one is formed, and how one operates.
2. Champion hosts a public meeting to discuss the possibility and viability of creating and operating a Community Foundation, then gauge interest.
3. If there is interest, identify 5, 7, or 9 local volunteers and secure a commitment to serve as founding board members.
4. Secure commitment for officers. Officers must include a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.
5. Establish a Mission/Purpose Statement.
6. File for nonprofit public charity 501(c)3 status with the Texas Secretary of State.
7. Once Texas tax identification is secured, apply for a Federal tax identification.
8. Establish 3-7 achievable long-term goals for the Foundation that are widely supported in the community.
9. Create an organizational functional structure and membership criteria.

- 10. Develop and adopt bylaws.
- 11. Solicit initial financial contributions from founding board members to open a bank account.
- 12. Once Federal ID is established, take both tax IDs to a local bank to open a checking account for the Community Foundation.
- 13. Produce a brochure that highlights the mission, goals, membership criteria, membership contribution levels, and benefits of membership.
- 14. Set annual fund-raising goals.
- 15. Create social media accounts to inform others about the Foundation and a tool to collect online donations.
- 16. Solicit contributions to fund the Community Foundation.

Begin achieving stated goals!

It is important that the initial contributions be substantive so as to express conviction and support. Initial contributions often inform later contributions in considerations of generosity levels. When initial contributions are too small, the following contributions tend to be too small too. Many donors will rise or fall to the bar set for them by the founding contributors.

Gifts may include cash, real estate, securities such as stocks, bonds, funds, CDs, etc. or personal property such as vehicles, boats, or art.

Gifts can also be planned giving such as a monthly, quarterly, or annual automatic contribution.

Gifts can also be deferred for posthumous giving; examples include life insurance, cash or property bequeathments in wills/estate planning, and trusts.

Gifts can also be special purpose/occasion giving such as in honor or memorial of someone or a celebration of anniversary or milestone events. Ideas include a 25th wedding anniversary, or a business’s 10th Year in business, or in lieu of flowers at a loved one’s funeral, or in celebration of someone’s birthday on Facebook.

CH - P2: WOMEN'S EVENTS DEVELOPMENT

Creating additional events that are limited in size and have a level of exclusivity will help Chappell Hill strengthen its reputation as a preferred destination for women and their friends.

Event ideas:

- Garden/Home Tours
 - Keep the attendance small and expand this beyond Christmas
 - Add a high tea or other food component
 - Bring in a speaker or entertainment
 - Detailed garden tour with discussion about the plants and why they were selected and how to grow them

- ☐ Lunch on the Lawn with Mary Elizabeth Haller
 - Hold this in the Spring and/or Fall, by the Circulating Library or some other outdoor space away from Main Street.
 - Have someone portray Mary Elizabeth Haller & serve as hostess.
 - Keep attendance small, 40-50 people maximum.
 - Make it an experience with period dress, guests met by a butler, a string quartet.
 - Use china and crystal, serve delicacies and local wines/mimosas.
 - Consider building upon the significance of women in the history of Chappell Hill.
 - Expand the focus to a broader audience to mother/daughter or grandmother/granddaughter .

- ☐ 4. Encourage business owners to stand across the street from their businesses at least once a week to make sure their building is making a good first impression. Windows clean? Paint fresh? Displays inviting? Signs visible?

CH - P4: RECRUIT BUSINESSES

Increasing the number of visitor-focused retailers downtown will help keep people in the area longer and make Chappell Hill more appealing as a day trip destination. Work with the Chamber and the Foundation to recruit appropriate businesses and provide new business owners with training and support. Types of businesses to consider include:

- Clothing—especially women's and children's
- Antiques
- Books
- Restaurants
- Ice Cream
- Wine tasting room

CH - P3: BEAUTIFICATION

Maintaining inviting corridors into town is just as important as keeping the downtown sidewalks and storefronts clean and colorful.

- ☐ 1. Create a volunteer schedule for picking up trash along the corridors.
- ☐ 2. Add banners on the approach to downtown along Main Street that can be changed out to advertise events or simply provide a colorful welcome.
- ☐ 3. Add flowers and planters at strategic locations.

Marketing Recommendations

CH - M1: WEBSITE DECISION

- Decide if the Chamber of Commerce website or the museum website will be the primary visitor information resource and revise the sites accordingly.

CH - M2: WEBSITE ([HTTP://WWW.CHAPPELLHILLTX.COM](http://www.chappellhilltx.com))

- 1. Add a Facebook icon to the website that links to your Facebook page.
- 2. Add top level navigation that would be of interest to visitors – like PLAY, EAT, STAY (Currently, visitors first need to click on the business directory to find a listing of shopping, restaurants, lodging, etc.)
- 3. The “Attractions” and “Events” images in the hero image are less noticeable than they would be in the top navigation menu bar.
- 4. Additional copy on the directory listing pages would help increase search engine optimization. Example: <http://www.chappellhilltx.com/members/ql/restaurants-food-beverages-21>

CH - M3: FACEBOOK ([HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CHAPPELLHILLTX.COM](http://www.facebook.com/chappellhilltx.com))

- 1. Create a content schedule that includes trivia questions, photos, and cross-promotion.
- 2. Create a square version of your logo for your page profile image.
- 3. Use a photo for the larger page cover image.

CH - M4: INSTAGRAM (NO CURRENT ACCOUNT)

- 1. Create an Instagram account to leverage and promote user-generated content.
- 2. Identify hashtags to use, including existing ones like #chappellhill, #chappellhilltexas, #chappellhilltx.

CH - M5: LOCAL ITINERARY

Chappell Hill is already part of area itineraries on the *Visit Brenham* website, however, it is important that there be a stand-alone itinerary for Chappell Hill itself. It should link to itineraries for the other communities as well.

The idea is to help people understand that there is enough for them to do to make a stop in Chappell Hill worth their time and effort.

CH - M6: COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSKS

Creating a county-wide system of information kiosks would provide onsite information in each community along with cross-promotion opportunities. The kiosks would be placed in Burton, Chappell Hill, Independence, and Washington-on-the-Brazos (if permitted.) A bench and garbage can would be a nice addition.

Development of the kiosks will require collaborative funding and once this has been accomplished, *Visit Brenham* would provide the kiosks and update the information. Each community would be responsible for maintaining their kiosk and the area around it, keeping brochure racks filled, and emptying the trash can, if one is provided.

Kiosks would all be the same color, ideally red for visibility, with "Visitor Information" across the top in white letters. One side would contain a county map with key attractions indicated and a "You are Here" star. The other side would be local information.

Other parameters for the kiosks:

- Do not sell ads or allow advertising on the kiosks.
- Locate kiosks in visible areas that will not be blocked by parked cars.
- Add brochure holders for the county brochure and a local brochure.

CH - M7: REVIEW WEBSITES

Work with all businesses, attractions and facilities to go through this basic checklist for their websites:

- Phone (including area code) and address (including city and state) should be on every page in the header or footer.
- Current hours—be sure to update this as changes occur seasonally or due to holidays or special events.
- Check links—this needs to happen on a regular basis, at least quarterly.
- Use great photos and change them often.
- Use at least an 18 point font—even though it's easy to change the font size when viewing webpages, many people don't know how to do this or get irritated when it's necessary.
- Is the content up-to-date?
- Can website visitors quickly tell what type of business or attraction you are?
- Is your site mobile responsive?

CH - M8: CLAIM LISTINGS

Work with *Visit Brenham* to provide local businesses with training to help increase Chappell Hill's online presence and assist businesses in getting more traffic, every business, attraction and facility should claim their listing on the following sites:

- Google—business.google.com
- Tripadvisor—tripadvisor.com/owners
- Yelp—biz.yelp.com

Start with setting up a gmail account that is only used for these type of sites. That way, no one's personal emails are at issue if log-ins are shared or staff changes.

Once the listing is claimed, correct any inaccurate information, post current photos, and respond to recent comments, complaints, and compliments.

CH - M9: EVENT MARKETING

With a separate Facebook Page for each primary event, the year-round marketing messages for Chappell Hill have become diluted.

1. Consider cross-posting more often to keep content flowing to all Facebook pages to keep Chappell Hill top-of-mind when items show up in people's timelines.
2. Keep event data current on websites.
3. Submit event information at least 3 months in advance (6 months+ for statewide marketing) to *Visit Brenham*.

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
CH - P1 COMMUNITY FOUNDATION								
1	CHAMPION	IDENTIFY LOCAL CHAMPION TO BEGIN RESEARCH	<input type="checkbox"/>	RESEARCH COMPLETED				
2	MEETING	HOST PUBLIC MEETING	<input type="checkbox"/>	DECISION MADE				
3	BOARD	IF CREATING FOUNDATION, SELECT BOARD			<input type="checkbox"/>	BOARD SELECTED		
4	OFFICERS	EXECUTIVE BOARD CREATION			<input type="checkbox"/>	EXECUTIVE BOARD SELECTED		
5	MISSION	ESTABLISH MISSION STATEMENT			<input type="checkbox"/>	MISSION ESTABLISHED		
6	STATUS	FILE FOR TX 501(c)3 STATUS			<input type="checkbox"/>	TX STATUS OBTAINED		
7	STATUS	FILE FOR IRS 501(c)3 STATUS			<input type="checkbox"/>	IRS STATUS OBTAINED		
8	GOALS	ESTABLISH 3-7 LONG-TERM GOALS			<input type="checkbox"/>	GOALS ESTABLISHED		
9	STRUCTURE	ESTABLISH ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA			<input type="checkbox"/>	STRUCTURE ESTABLISHED		
10	BYLAWS	DEVELOP AND ADOPT BYLAWS			<input type="checkbox"/>	BYLAWS ADOPTED		

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
CH-P1 COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (CONTINUED)								
11	FUNDING	SOLICIT INITIAL FUNDING			<input type="checkbox"/>	INITIAL FUNDING OBTAINED		
12	ACCOUNT	OPEN BANK ACCOUNTS			<input type="checkbox"/>	ACCOUNTS OPENED		
13	INFORMATION	CREATE INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE			<input type="checkbox"/>	BROCHURE CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	BROCHURE UPDATED
14	FUNDRAISING	SET ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GOALS			<input type="checkbox"/>	GOALS SET	<input type="checkbox"/>	GOALS SET
15	DIGITAL	CREATE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS			<input type="checkbox"/>	ACCOUNTS CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ACCOUNTS MAINTAINED
16	SOLICIT	SOLICIT CONTRIBUTIONS (*SHOULD BE UPDATED TO REFLECT ACTUAL % OF GOAL MET)			<input type="checkbox"/>	**% OF GOAL MET	<input type="checkbox"/>	**% OF GOAL MET
CH - P2 WOMEN'S EVENTS DEVELOPMENT								
1	EVENTS	DEVELOP AND HOLD NEW EVENTS TARGETED TO WOMEN	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 NEW EVENT HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 NEW EVENT HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	1 NEW EVENT HELD

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
CH - P3 BEAUTIFICATION								
1	VOLUNTEERS	CREATE AND MAINTAIN VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROGRAM MAINTAINED
2	BANNERS	DESIGN AND INSTALL BANNERS			<input type="checkbox"/>	BANNERS INSTALLED		
3	PLANTERS	ADD FLOWERS AND PLANTERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLANTERS ADDED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLANTERS MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLANTERS MAINTAINED
4	STOREFRONTS	PROVIDE TRAINING FOR BUSINESS OWNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	STOREFRONTS WELL-MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	STOREFRONTS WELL-MAINTAINED
CH - P4 RECRUIT BUSINESSES								
1	RECRUIT	RECRUIT NEW DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUITED 1 BUSINESS	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUITED 1 BUSINESS	<input type="checkbox"/>	RECRUITED 1 BUSINESS
CH - M1 WEBSITE DECISION								
1	WEBSITE	DETERMINE WHICH WEBSITE WILL BE PRIMARY	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE DETERMINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE UPDATED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
CH - M2 WEBSITE (CHAPPELLHILLTX.COM)								
1	FACEBOOK	ADD FACEBOOK ICON	<input type="checkbox"/>	ICON ADDED				
2	NAVIGATION	ADD TOP LEVEL NAVIGATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	NAVIGATION ADDED				
3	IMAGES	MOVE ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS TO NAVIGATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOPICS MOVED				
4	DIRECTORY	DIRECTORY LISTING COPY	<input type="checkbox"/>	COPY ADDED				
CH - M3 FACEBOOK								
1	CONTENT	CREATE CONTENT SCHEDULE	<input type="checkbox"/>	SCHEDULE CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SCHEDULE IMPLEMENTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SCHEDULE IMPLEMENTED
2	LOGO	CREATE SQUARE VERSION OF LOGO FOR PROFILE IMAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOGO CHANGED				
3	COVER	USE PHOTO FOR COVER IMAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTO CHANGED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTO CHANGED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTO CHANGED
CH - M4 INSTAGRAM								
1	INSTAGRAM	CREATE ACCOUNT	<input type="checkbox"/>	ACCOUNT CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTENT POSTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTENT POSTED
2	HASHTAGS	IDENTIFY HASHTAGS TO USE	<input type="checkbox"/>	HASHTAGS DETERMINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	HASHTAGS USED	<input type="checkbox"/>	HASHTAGS USED
CH - M5 LOCAL ITINERARY								
1	ITINERARY	CREATE ITINERARY AND SUBMIT TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY SUBMITTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
CH - M6 COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSK								
1	KIOSK	PARTNER WITH VISIT BRENHAM ON KIOSK	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK CONTENT DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED
CH - M7 REVIEW WEBSITES								
1	TRAINING	PROVIDE TRAINING/CHECKLIST TO BUSINESSES ABOUT WHAT TO REVIEW ON THEIR WEBSITES	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD
CH - M8 CLAIM LISTINGS								
2	LISTINGS	PROVIDE TRAINING TO BUSINESSES ABOUT CLAIMING LISTINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRAINING HELD
CH - M9 EVENT MARKETING								
1	FACEBOOK	CROSS-PROMOTE OFTEN ON EVENT PAGES	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED
2	WEBSITES	KEEP EVENT INFO CURRENT ON WEBSITES	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT
3	CALENDARS	SUBMIT INFORMATION TIMELY TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY

INDEPENDENCE

2018—Marketing Assessment

ASSIGNMENT: WOULD YOU GO TO INDEPENDENCE?

If No, why not?

If Yes,

—Where would you go?

—What would you do?

—How long would you stay?

NOTE: Team members often listed attractions under the wrong community due to confusion about where places were located. This is common for visitors. They don't pay attention to city limits.

Jenna—Yes, day trip (overnight for an event)

"This town looks like it is rich in very cool history and was the first home to Baylor University as well as cotton plantations.

I'm not sure I can actually see all of the historic sites. I'd need to do more research before I actually drove there, but I hope there is an opportunity to see and experience all of the history."

Things Jenna would do/places she would visit:

- Lighted church tour
- Fall Festival of Roses
- Antique Rose Emporium
- Old Baylor Park
- Sam Houston homesite
- Seward Plantation
- Independence Coffee Company
- The Groves of Independence

Paula—No

"I cannot find any events here and there is only one, small antique shop."

Carl—Yes, short stop

"This is definitely a stop along the way to somewhere else, I wouldn't make it my specific destination."

Things Carl would do/places he would visit:

- Antique Rose Emporium
- Old Baylor Park
- Walk around John P. Cole's Home

Meredith—Yes, short stop

"I like that there are a few historical sites that seem well-preserved and collectively, I could learn more about Texas history."

So many small towns close early, however Independence has taken some things one might think to only visit during the day and turned them into a fun evening activity. The lighted church tour caught my eye. Instead of focusing on the interior of the churches during the day, this tour provides a different, almost ethereal and spiritual way of looking at this cluster of churches."

Things Meredith would do/places she would visit:

- Lighted church tour
- Walking/driving tour
- Old Baylor Park
- Sam Houston homesite
- Independence Town Square

There were a few misunderstandings by the team when it came to Independence. Jenna thought that the Independence Coffee Company was a coffee shop in town and Paula mistook the Antique Rose Emporium for an antique shop. If they had clicked through on the links, they would have discovered their mistakes.

This is a good example of how people do a quick sweep of the information on a website and don't always click through for the details.

Additional confusion occurred about whether buildings were open to the public and, if so, when. When a visitor cannot tell if something is open they will not investigate long before abandoning the idea.

Initially, Meredith expected a Town Square filled with the buildings indicated by #7 on the map, however, after seeing the aerial map, she understood that it was a historic-context map.

Creating a short-stop trip itinerary for the *Visit Brenham* website, based upon the Independence walking/driving tour would help alleviate some of this confusion.

Since everyone on the team was interested in history and seeks out historic sites and museums, this was a good find for them.

Paula chose not to stop because she prefers live interpretation where she can ask questions.

2018—Digital Assessment

WEBSITE (HTTP://INDEPENDENCETX.COM)

Website observations/recommendations:

- Get control of the website URL.
 - The website requires Flash to display images, which was used in older designs. Some mobile devices and desktop browsers cannot use Flash.
 - We recommend updating the site to a more modern format (retaining the historic feel) so all users can view the images.
 - Listing all the tours is a great way to entice visitors to explore the destination. The photographs and maps on these pages help greatly.
 - Adding website copy to the Local Directory page would help increase search engine optimization.
 - Add information about events and keep it current.
 - Update the copyright date to 2019 and include contact information in the footer on all pages.
-

FACEBOOK—NO ACCOUNT FOUND

INSTAGRAM—NO ACCOUNT FOUND

2018—Visitor Experience

ONSITE ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

A separate team conducted the onsite assessment in September. The purpose of this phase was to experience the community the same way a first time visitor might.

Prior to the onsite assessment, a list of expectations was created by the marketing assessment team. These expectations were based upon their perceptions and research and may, at first glance, seem illogical. However, this does not negate them. An analysis of whether the expectations were met is included at the end of the Visitor Experience Assessment.

The expectations for Independence were:

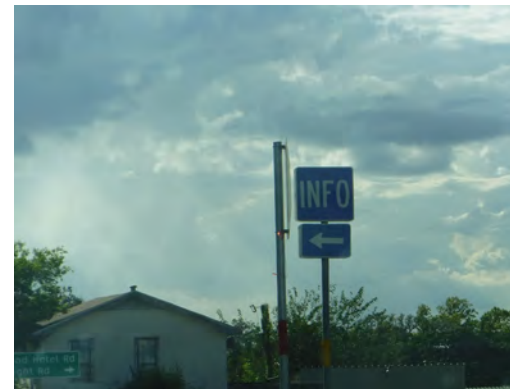
- We expected it to be idyllic with few people.
- We expected guided tours to be available.
- We expected there would be no place to eat.
- We expected knowledgeable, passionate community members.
- We expected it to be easy to follow the walking and driving tours.
- We expected Antique Rose Emporium to be a calm oasis.
- We expected the churches to be lit in the evening.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS



While this isn't a traditional gateway sign, it does serve the purpose of welcoming people to the community and effectively communicates your legacy.

WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION?



Once we found the visitor center, we were able to obtain walking/driving tours maps. Both times we visited, the visitor center was closed. However, the brochure rack was full.

Independence is not a ghost town but it does have some similar characteristics. Based upon the website, the team got the impression that no one actually lives in the town.



We expected scenes like this ruin with interpretive signage and, perhaps, a staff person or volunteer on hand to answer questions.



WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?



The general store is actually a gas station/ convenience store, not an old school general store experience as the name implies. The architecture and story are interesting but contrast sharply with the ice cooler out front and the merchandise inside.

It makes sense that it would serve as a small grocery store for the area; to be a traditional general store would probably not be profitable.

We noted the bars on the windows as an indication that safety could be an issue in the area.



To draw visitors, you must offer something worth the trip and it has to be something people can't find closer to home.

What did we find in Independence?

History, history and more history! From Sam

Houston to the birth of Baylor University, there were well-researched stories to be told.

Between the Texas Baptist Museum, Old Baylor Park, and the walking/ driving tour, we got a feel for the community's place in Texas history.

Antique Rose Emporium was a fitting bookend for our visit. The shaded paths provided a peaceful oasis after the heat of our walking tours.



HOW WERE WE TREATED?

The only places we saw or spoke to anyone were the museum and the general store. Both interactions were pleasant and informative.

WAS OUR #1 NEED MET?

Clean, accessible restrooms are the #1 need for visitors.

We found restrooms at the museum and at the general store. (The general store was also a welcome sight when we were in search of something cold to drink after taking the walking tour.)

WERE OUR EXPECTATIONS MET?

Expectations are built upon all of the pieces of information a visitor consciously and subconsciously gathers before they arrive at a place. These are the expectations developed by the marketing assessment team. How did Independence do? (Green check indicates the community met the expectation, Red X indicates the community did not meet the expectation)

- ✓ We expected it to be idyllic with few people.
- ✗ We expected guided tours to be available.
- ✓ We expected there would be no place to eat—we understand that there is a meal served at the General Store, however, it was not available when the team was in town.
- ✗ We expected knowledgeable, passionate community members—*although we know there are residents who fit this description, the team did not encounter any community members while in town.*
- ✓ We expected it to be easy to follow the walking and driving tours—*once a brochure was obtained, the map was easy to use.*
- ✓ We expected Antique Rose Emporium to be a calm oasis.
- ✓ We expected the churches to be lit in the evening.

INDEPENDENCE AS A VISITOR DESTINATION TODAY

Strengths & Opportunities

- Core of dedicated, passionate volunteers
- Schedule of events
- On-going connection with Baylor University
- Purchase of Schoolhouse
- Staffed visitor center
- Interpretive signs
- Walking/driving tour brochure

Challenges & Threats

- Not enough volunteers
- Need for succession planning
- Inconsistent hours
- Interpretive signs are hard to read
- No actual restaurant
- Wayfinding
- Maintenance costs

2018—What We Heard From Others

The following is a compilation of comments received in various settings from a variety of stakeholders.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE CURRENT VISITOR EXPERIENCE?

- Spring flowers, community events, Antique Rose Emporium.
- Attractions have inconsistent hours and visitor center is hard to find. Tours are very good when given. Website is confusing and no visibility for events.
- They visit historical buildings.
- Spring is high season. Most homes are not open and you have to call ahead or no one will be there.
- Busy tourist season is the spring. Not enough wayfinding signs or information brochures, no designated guide for bus tours.
- People are excited about visiting and enjoy the history.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN THE FUTURE?

- Better bluebonnets in the park, school groups, and more historical events.
- Consistent hours for attractions. Visitor center on-site with a person to answer questions.

- Would like to see the tourist season extend beyond spring.
- Have the ability to able to open the buildings regularly with a docent. Buildings need to be open in summer and winter.
- Clear wayfinding signage and reading materials, clean restrooms, guide for the cemetery.
- Need a restaurant.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION

- Replace bluebonnets in park and roadways.
- Funding, strategic plan, and better collaboration between groups.
- More community involvement. State and local preservation involvement.
- Think about the people who are coming to visit, what we have to offer and how to make it easy for them to enjoy. Include general store, food, drive-by site.
- Someone to open a restaurant, have more people to help visitors at historic sites.

The Independence Experience—The Future

As Independence works to clarify its mission in relationship to tourism, it will also be important for stakeholders to define what the intended visitor experience should be. The recommendations included in this plan are designed to create short-term successes and develop a solid framework for future success.

Based upon the last stakeholder meeting, the Independence Historical Society, the Independence Community Events Organization, residents, and local business owners plan to work together to refine an Identity for marketing, a Vision, and Goals to achieve.

The recommendations listed below and outlined in the following sections are designed to strengthen The Independence Experience and mitigate challenges. They are intended to complement the efforts of other communities in Washington County.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- IND - P1 Interpretive Signs
- IND - P2 Succession Planning
- IND - P3 Legacy/Planned Giving

MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

- IND - M1 Website
- IND - M2 Independence Community Events Facebook Page
- IND - M3 Local Itinerary
- IND - M4 County-wide Visitor Info Kiosk
- IND - M5 Event Marketing

Product Development Recommendations

IND - P1: INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

The current interpretive signs are plentiful and well-researched. To make it easier for visitors to follow the walking/driving tours, we recommend:

- 1. Replace worn or faded signs.
- 2. Place the corresponding number from the map on each sign.
- 3. Install brochure boxes on each sign pole so visitors who do not already have a map can still follow the tour.
- 4. Remove any additional signs that are causing confusion.

IND - P2: SUCCESSION PLANNING

The members of the Independence Historical Society work to share the community's history with the public. They have successfully preserved many historical buildings over the years in conjunction with the Independence Preservation Trust. As their volunteers age, a chief concern is establishing a continuous volunteer development to maintain their preservation efforts.

We recommend the creation of a succession plan to lay the foundation for ongoing efforts. A succession plan is a deliberate, systemic plan to ensure volunteer leadership, capture historical and institutional knowledge, and to encourage others to continue to plan for the next set of leaders. Some of the benefits of succession planning include new leaders being developed, new skills and abilities established, and an assurance that assets will be protected and preserved.

The main purpose of Independence creating a succession plan for the Historical Society is to ensure that there will be highly qualified people within the organization's key leadership positions for decades to come.

The six elements of succession planning are:

1. *Board Vision and Planning*

Develop the Independence Historical Society in a way that transcends its dependence upon current leadership and volunteers.

Host an annual one-day planning retreat that consists of Board Development Training and a Strategic Plan for the coming year. A full day is important in order to effectively plan for the year. Volunteers may complain about the time commitment, however, 1 day of planning for an entire year is a small ask if it is planned and communicated well in advance.

Throughout the year, the board chair and/or staff should provide interesting and relevant articles, speakers, and videos to increase the board's skills and knowledge. Volunteer development is a year-round effort.

2. *Board Qualifications*

Determine the exact leadership requirements and skill sets needed to lead the organization into the future and create job descriptions.

Qualitative considerations: Do you need bold, vocal people? Behind the scenes workers? People who excel at collaboration or compromise?

- Quantitative considerations: What type of commitment levels are expected in terms of time and money? What technical or other skills does the organization need? What does successful board service look like?

3. Potential Board Members

Identify a pool of high-potential individuals with the capacity for development to fill these future leadership positions.

- Identify 1-3 people for each identified skill .

4. Board Development

Develop volunteers into future board members through planned developmental work experiences, training, education, and personal growth.

- Provide a training and education opportunity that includes information on what it means to serve on the Board before asking them to serve.
- Help them appreciate the free training and tell them that the organization is seeking strong future leaders.
- Consider a pre-leadership workshop as an opportunity to learn more about potential Board member as well as a time to help volunteers and members to determine if Board membership makes sense for them.

5. Select Board Members

Once the pool has been established and evaluated, select those who are the most qualified and most likely to fulfill the organization's vision.

- In making the selection, consider who was the most interested and curious? Who was most enthusiastic? Who arrived most prepared to engage? Who brings needed technical and/or fund-raising skills? Who brings financial contributions?

6. Long Term Success

Set this process in place to sustain long-term success.

- Keep track of what works and what doesn't.
- Send volunteers to workshops and conferences on historical preservation and/or organizational management to show your appreciation and investment in their continued education in relevant areas.
- Ask new volunteers for suggestions on continually improving the succession plan so that the buildings you have worked hard to preserve and interpret remain in caring hands well into the future.

Once you have a succession planning process in place, it is also important to maintain and manage it successfully. The organization must secure a firm commitment from its current leadership to manage this plan and to work hard to secure and develop future volunteers. Current leaders must have a vested interest in cultivating future volunteers from the residents and other stakeholders in the community.

Strong volunteers emerge in organizations where there are deliberate and meaningful efforts to develop leadership and board skills.

IND - P3: LEGACY/PLANNED GIVING

We recommend creating a Legacy or Planned Giving campaign for Independence. This can be within the Independence Historical Society, by using the Independence Preservation Trust, or by creating another 501(c)3 charity (a financial professional should be consulted to determine the appropriate structure.) A Legacy Giving program is a tool by which local stakeholders and interested parties are encouraged to donate to the organization either for a special campaign or posthumously.

Importantly, recurring Legacy Giving donations help build a sustainable foundation for the group's annual budget.

This type of program usually begins by creating a brochure that describes the mission of the organization, the primary goals it's trying to accomplish, and a list of the different ways someone can contribute.

Gifts can include cash, real estate, securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, CDs) or personal property such as vehicles, boats, or works of art.

Gifts can be structured as planned giving such as a monthly, quarterly, or annual automatic contribution.

Gifts can be deferred for posthumous giving—life insurance, cash or property bequeathments in wills, estate planning or trusts.

Gifts can be given for special purposes/occasions such as in honor or memorial of an individual, to celebrate an anniversary or milestone event, in lieu of flowers at a funeral, or in celebration of a birthday via Facebook.

This type of funding solicitation is different from what is typically known as an endowments. An endowment is a fund from one or more large financial gifts where the interest on the money donated actually covers operating and overhead costs. A Legacy Giving program is for smaller contributions than those traditionally added to an endowment.

If a donor is interested in making a significant donation, financial guidance should be obtained as to whether creating an endowment would be advantageous.

Marketing Recommendations

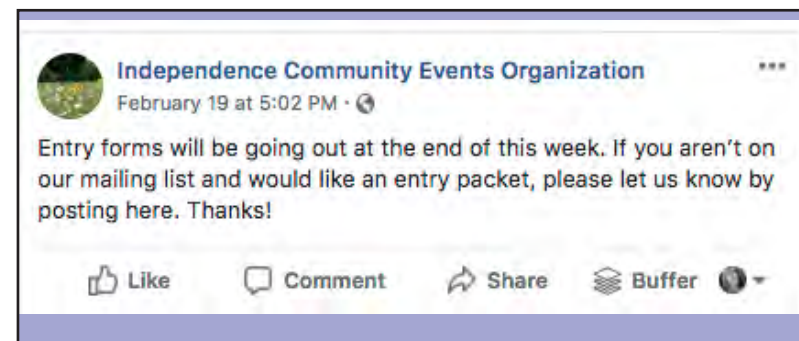
IND - M1: WEBSITE

- ❑ 1. Get control of the website URL or create a new site with a new URL and have the current URL—www.independencetx.com—redirect to the new website.
- ❑ 2. Do not use Flash to display images in the updated or new website. Flash was used in older designs and is no longer appropriate since some mobile devices and desktop browsers cannot use it.
- ❑ 3. Update the website to a more modern and responsive format— while retaining the historic feel— so all users have access on any device.
- ❑ 4. Add more to the listings on the local directory page. This will help visitors and increase search engine optimization.
- ❑ 5. Add more information about annual and upcoming events and keep the information current.
- ❑ 6. Update the copyright date to 2019 and include contact information in the footer on all pages. The contact information should be for visitors to get more information or schedule tours, not to contact the Independence Preservation Trust since the Trust itself does not appear to be involved with providing the day-to-day visitor experience.

IND - M2: INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY EVENTS FACEBOOK PAGE

The Organization is doing a good job of keeping potential attendees and participants informed about upcoming events. One recommendation is to include the name and dates of the event and relevant posts. The post shown below is an example of a recent one that, when it appears in a person's timeline, they may have no idea what you're talking about.

Remember, many people are seeing the post in the midst of several others on their own timeline, not on your Facebook page. Help them understand what's going on with a high level of clarity.



IND - M3: LOCAL ITINERARY

Independence is already part of area itineraries on the *Visit Brenham* website, however, it is important that there be a stand-alone itinerary for Independence. It should link to itineraries for the other communities as well.

The idea is to help people understand that there is enough for them to do to make the trip to Independence worth their time and effort.

IND - M4: COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSKS

Creating a county-wide system of information kiosks would provide onsite information in each community along with cross-promotion opportunities. The kiosks would be placed in Burton, Chappell Hill, Independence, and Washington-on-the-Brazos (if permitted.) A bench and garbage can would be a nice addition.

Development of the kiosks will require collaborative funding and once this has been accomplished, *Visit Brenham* would provide the kiosks and update the information. Each community would be responsible for maintaining their kiosk and the area around it, keeping brochure racks filled, and emptying the trash can, if one is provided.

Kiosks would all be the same color, ideally red for visibility, with "Visitor Information" across the top in white letters. One side would contain a county map with key attractions indicated and a "You are Here" star. The other side would be local information.

Other parameters for the kiosks:

- Do not sell ads or allow advertising on the kiosks
- Locate kiosks in visible areas that will not be blocked by parked cars
- Add brochure holders for the county brochure and a local brochure

IND - M5: EVENT MARKETING

Use all available options to promote your events and tours:

1. Consider cross-posting to keep content flowing to relevant Facebook pages to keep Independence top-of-mind when items show up in people's timelines.
2. Keep event data current on website.
3. Submit event information at least 3 months in advance (6 months+ for statewide marketing) to *Visit Brenham*.

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
IND - P1 INTERPRETIVE SIGNS								
1	SIGNS	REPLACE WORN OR FADED SIGNS			<input type="checkbox"/>	REPLACED SOME SIGNS	<input type="checkbox"/>	REPLACED REMAINING SIGNS
2	SIGNS	PLACE NUMBERS ON SIGNS	<input type="checkbox"/>	NUMBERS ADDED TO SIGNS				
3	SIGNS	ADD BROCHURE BOXES ON SIGN POLES	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOXES ADDED				
4	SIGNS	REMOVE CONFUSING SIGNS			<input type="checkbox"/>	SIGNS REMOVED		
IND - P2 SUCCESSION PLANNING								
1	VISION	HOST ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	RETREAT HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	RETREAT HELD	<input type="checkbox"/>	RETREAT HELD
1	VISION	INCREASE BOARD SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED 1 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED 1 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	PROVIDED 1 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
2	QUALIFICATIONS	DEFINE WHAT TYPE OF MEMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE BOARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	QUALIFICATIONS DEFINED				

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
IND - P2 SUCCESSION PLANNING (CONTINUED)								
2	QUALIFICATIONS	COMMITMENTS IN TERMS OF TIME, MONEY AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR BOARD MEMBERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	TIME AND MONEY COMMITMENTS DEFINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMMITMENTS REFINED		
3	MEMBERS	DEVELOP LIST/POOL OF POTENTIAL MEMBERS WHO MEET NEEDS OF ORGANIZATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	POOL DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	POOL UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	POOL UPDATED
4	DEVELOPMENT	TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT EVENT FOR RECRUITMENT			<input type="checkbox"/>	HOLD EVENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOLD EVENT
5	SELECTION	IDENTIFY NEW MEMBERS TO BE SELECTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	SELECTED NEW MEMBERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SELECTED NEW MEMBERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SELECTED NEW MEMBERS
6	FUTURE	KEEP TRACK OF WHAT WORKS	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOGGED SUCCESSES	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOGGED SUCCESSES	<input type="checkbox"/>	LOGGED SUCCESSES
6	FUTURE	SEND VOLUNTEERS TO SKILL TRAINING			<input type="checkbox"/>	SENT VOLUNTEERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SENT VOLUNTEERS
6	FUTURE	GET FEEDBACK FROM VOLUNTEERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOCUMENTED FEEDBACK
IND - P3 LEGACY/PLANNED GIVING								
1	CAMPAIGN	CREATE AND EXECUTE A CAMPAIGN			<input type="checkbox"/>	CONDUCTED CAMPAIGN	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONDUCTED CAMPAIGN

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
IND - M1 WEBSITE								
1	URL	GET CONTROL OF THE URL	<input type="checkbox"/>	URL OBTAINED OR NEW SITE CREATED				
2	FLASH	REMOVE FLASH FROM WEBSITE			<input type="checkbox"/>	SITE UPDATED/NEW ONE CREATED WITHOUT FLASH		
3	RESPONSIVE	UPDATE TO MODERN, RESPONSIVE FORMAT			<input type="checkbox"/>	RESPONSIVE FORMAT CREATED		
4	LOCAL CONTENT	ADD CONTENT TO LOCAL DIRECTORY PAGE			<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED LOCAL DIRECTORY CONTENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	UPDATED LOCAL DIRECTORY CONTENT
5	EVENTS	INCREASE AND KEEP EVENT INFORMATION UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS UPDATED
6	COPYRIGHT	REVISE FOOTER INFORMATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	FOOTER UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	FOOTER UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	FOOTER UPDATED
IND - M2 INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY EVENTS FACEBOOK PAGE								
1	FACEBOOK	EXPAND INFORMATION IN EVENT-RELATED POSTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSTS EXPANDED	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSTS EXPANDED	<input type="checkbox"/>	POSTS EXPANDED

#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
IND - M3 LOCAL ITINERARY								
1	ITINERARY	CREATE ITINERARY AND SUBMIT TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY SUBMITTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED
IND - M4 COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSK								
1	KIOSK	PARTNER WITH VISIT BRENHAM ON KIOSK	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK CONTENT DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED
IND - M5 EVENT MARKETING								
1	FACEBOOK	CROSS-PROMOTE ON RELEVANT FACEBOOK PAGES	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	CROSS-PROMOTED
2	WEBSITES	KEEP EVENT INFO CURRENT ON WEBSITE	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	KEPT INFO CURRENT
3	CALENDARS	SUBMIT INFORMATION TIMELY TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY	<input type="checkbox"/>	SUBMITTED TIMELY

WASHINGTON-ON-THE- BRAZOS

2018—Marketing Assessment

ASSIGNMENT: Would you go to Washington-on-the-Brazos?

If No, why not?

If Yes,

—Where would you go?

—What would you do?

—How long would you stay?

NOTE: Team members often listed attractions under the wrong community due to confusion about where places were located. This is common for visitors. They don't pay attention to city limits.

Jenna—Yes, overnight

"I would definitely go here. Of all the places I looked at, this would be the one I would be most interested in visiting. There are so many things to see and do—and with the events and activities—this is a place I would come back to and visit again and again."

Things Jenna would do/places she would visit:

- Barrington Living History Farm
- Candlelight Christmas
- Camping
- Fishing
- Rock Climbing
- Boating and Paddleboarding
- Holiday in the Park

Paula—Maybe

"If I was in the area, I might stop for a few hours. If there were some events or more going on, I would stay longer."

Things Paula would do/places she would visit:

- Hiking
- Barrington Living History Farm

Carl—Yes

"I think this would be quite a relaxing day filled with a leisurely walk and immersion in Texas history."

It would be nice if there were campgrounds so you could stay overnight and experience the park in the evening and at night."

Things Carl would do/places he would visit:

- Independence Hall
- Washington Townsite
- Visitor Services Complex
- Star of the Republic Museum
- Barrington Living History
- Walking trails

Meredith—Yes

"I would definitely visit. I am interested in natural areas and Texas history. This is a win-win! I would love to take a guided tour and then wander around on my own. This is now on my bucket list!!"

I'd like to see Barrington Farm but it will probably be overrun with children or school groups and that might put me off."

Things Meredith would do/places she would visit:

- Guided tour
- Star of the Republic Museum
- Independence Hall
- Picnic
- Walk the trails
- Barrington Farm

MARKETING ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

There were a few misunderstandings by the team when it came to the facilities available at Washington-on-the-Brazos. Jenna thought that it was a full-scale traditional state park with camping, water recreation, and even rock climbing.

This occurred because, as she went deeper into the state park website, she left the Washington-on-the-Brazos pages without realizing it. This often happens on robust websites and is why it's important to maintain navigational integrity.

The good news is that everyone found the park and was excited to enjoy all that it offers. Even Meredith later said that she would go to the farm anyway (despite her concern that it would be overrun with children) because it seemed like such a cool experience.

Carl's comment was: "Why wasn't Texas history this much fun when I was in school?" To us, that sounds like the kernel of an effective marketing campaign concept.

2018—Digital Assessment

WEBSITE (HTTPS://TPWD.TEXAS.GOV/STATE-PARKS/WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS)

The amount of copy on each page is excellent for SEO and the calendar of events is full and up to date. We recommend adding photos to events, if photos are available, to make the event pages more engaging. Examples: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/washington-on-the-brazos/cooking-at-the-quarters-7>

Similarly, consider adding photos to the History page to break up the long paragraphs of text.

On the home page, we recommend adding “(PDF)” or changing the call-to-action to “Download the Interpretive Guide to Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site” so that users can expect the PDF when they click on the link.

The Facebook icon (to share on Facebook) on the top of the webpage is broken.

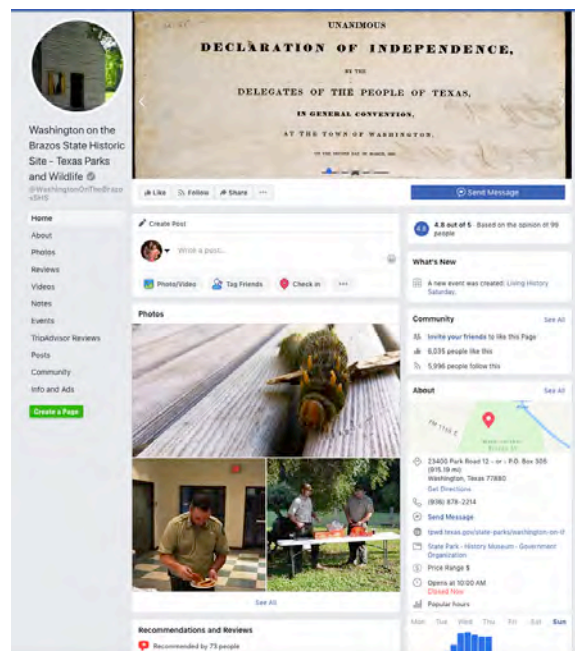
FACEBOOK ([HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WASHINGTONONTHEBRAZOSSHS](https://www.facebook.com/washingtononthebrazosshs))

This Facebook page is only for this park, not the entire state park system and 6,035 people like the page.

Overall, the page has been updated fairly regularly but the frequency has decreased in November. The page posts usually generate a decent amount of interactions among the fans.

Be sure that all of the park events are also created as Facebook events. This will help publicize events to those who never visit the websites and help increase overall interest in the park due to the way Facebook promotes events. This also allows the Facebook page to invite people to attend and attendees to invite their friends.

Consider changing the cover photo to something with people participating in activities at the park to draw attention to the fact that there are new things happening all the time and it is not a "one and done" park.



2018—Visitor Experience Assessment

ONSITE ASSESSMENT EXPECTATIONS

A separate team conducted the onsite assessment in September. The purpose of this phase was to experience the site the same way a first time visitor might. We explored, made purchases, and talked to staff, volunteers, and other visitors.

Prior to the onsite assessment, a list of expectations was created by the marketing assessment team. These expectations were based upon their perceptions and research and may, at first glance, seem illogical. However, this does not negate them. An analysis of whether the expectations were met is included at the end of the Visitor Experience Assessment.

The expectations for Washington-on-the-Brazos were:

- We expected to learn about Texas history.
- We expected it to be crowded on weekends.
- We expected quality exhibits and interpretive programs.
- We expected a peaceful trail walk near the river.
- We expected well-maintained facilities.
- We expected welcoming staff and volunteers.
- Jenna expected to be able to camp and participate in water-based recreation.

WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION?

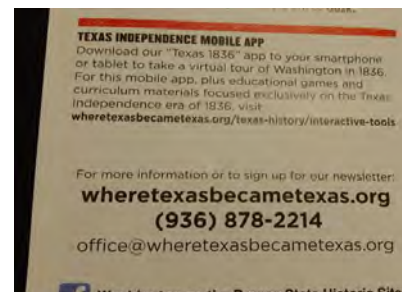
This is a well-maintained, high-experience historic site with excellent interpretive programs.

One key to having a positive experience is getting oriented to the site—what the various options were, where they're located, and what special events are happening. Accomplishing this was a challenge for us in some ways.

In addition to the brochure, we attempted to download the app. After a search on Google Play and the Apple App Store, we couldn't find it. We then typed in the URL from the brochure. That took us to a website not optimized for mobile where we had to enlarge the screen to read the text and access the link.

We received an "Item Not Found" message on both platforms. After returning to the website, it appears that while this site is still "live," it is out-of-date.

Our only other option appeared to be downloading the map from the website and using it on our phones.



WHAT IS THERE FOR ME TO DO?



After downloading the map, we explored the park, following the trails to visit Barrington Living History Farm, Star of the Republic Museum, and Independence Hall.

Each provided an engaging, immersive layer to the Texas Independence story. Return visits would certainly continue to fill in pieces we missed on our first visit.

The self-guided tour of the farm provided a foundation that was well-supplemented by interaction with the knowledgeable staff and volunteers.

A suggestion: add the distance for the trail from the museum to the farm. We encountered several people who found themselves midway on the trail without water and unsure how much further it was to the farm. Some told us they were turning around and heading home. This is an easy fix. If they know the distance, they'll make better decisions about walking vs. driving, snacks and drinks to pack, and have a more pleasurable experience.

The weekend events schedule is enticing. Additional promotion and cross-promotion will increase attendance, especially when supplemented by activities like the farmers market and food truck events. (Great job, by the way, of keeping your event information updated for the *Visit Brenham* event calendar.)

HOW WERE WE TREATED?

Staff and volunteers were friendly and effectively answered every question we asked. They often provided additional information and we appreciated the approach of weaving a story instead of simply reciting facts.

In several cases we saw them go above and beyond with other visitors. When a particularly inquisitive child asked an on-going stream of questions, the volunteer stayed patient and kind, engaging the child in an experience beyond Q & A.

WAS OUR #1 NEED MET?

Clean, accessible restrooms are the #1 need for visitors. We found restrooms available in all areas of the property and in the one instance where there was a maintenance issue, it was reported and had been repaired by our return visit.

WERE OUR EXPECTATIONS MET?

Expectations are built upon all of the pieces of information a visitor consciously and subconsciously gathers before they arrive at a place. These are the expectations developed by the marketing assessment team. How did Washington-on-the-Brazos do? (Green check indicates the community met the expectation. Red X indicates the community did not meet the expectation.)

- ✓ We expected to learn about Texas history.
- ✗ We expected it to be crowded on weekends—*the fact that this expectation was not met is a good thing. The lack of crowds created a better overall experience.*
- ✓ We expected quality exhibits and interpretive programs.
- ✓ We expected a peaceful trail walk near the river.
- ✓ We expected well-maintained facilities.
- ✓ We expected welcoming staff and volunteers.
- ✗ Jenna expected to be able to camp and participate in water-based recreation—*these were expectations based upon information on the state parks website that confused her about what facilities and activities were available at the site itself. This is an example of how people process information differently due to a number of factors present at a particular time and there is no way to account for every possible search situation.*

WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS TODAY

Strengths & Opportunities

- Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association
- Number and variety of events
- Houston and Beyond partnership
- Partnerships with B & B/AirBnB owners
- Cross-promotion
- Significant historic site with quality facilities
- Knowledgeable, enthusiastic staff and volunteers

Challenges & Threats

- Competition with other parks for funding
- Legislative priorities
- TPWD restrictions
- Slow months: Summer, January, February
- Public confusion about what Washington-on-the-Brazos actually is
- Not enough volunteers

Marketing Recommendations

WOTB - M1: COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFO KIOSKS

While a kiosk may not be possible at the park, participating in the county-wide system of information kiosks would provide onsite information in each community along with cross-promotion opportunities.

Development of the kiosks will require collaborative funding and once this has been accomplished, the kiosks would be placed in Burton, Chappell Hill, and Independence, to provide local and area information about what there is to see and do, along with events scheduled for the next quarter.

Washington-on-the-Brazos will also be a part of this cross-promotion and would be eligible to have a kiosk as well.

WOTB - M2: WEBSITE

- ❑ 1. Add photos to events and break up long paragraphs of text with photos.
- ❑ 2. Clarify that there is a PDF of the Interpretive Guide on the Home Page.
- ❑ 3. Fix the broken link to the Facebook page.

WOTB - M3: FACEBOOK

- ❑ 1. Be sure all park events are also created as Facebook events to make sharing and inviting easier.
- ❑ 2. Consider using photos with people engaging in activities as the cover photo.

WOTB - M4: LOCAL ITINERARY

Washington-on-the-Brazos is already part of area itineraries on the *Visit Brenham* website, however, it is important that there be a stand-alone itinerary for the park. It should link to itineraries for the other communities as well.

The idea is to help people understand that there is enough for them to do to make the trip to the park worth their time and effort.

WOTB - M5: LODGING CROSS-PROMOTION

During the slow season in January and February, contact all of the local B & B and Airbnb owners to talk about the park and its programs.

Make sure that all lodging properties in the area have brochures and event schedules.

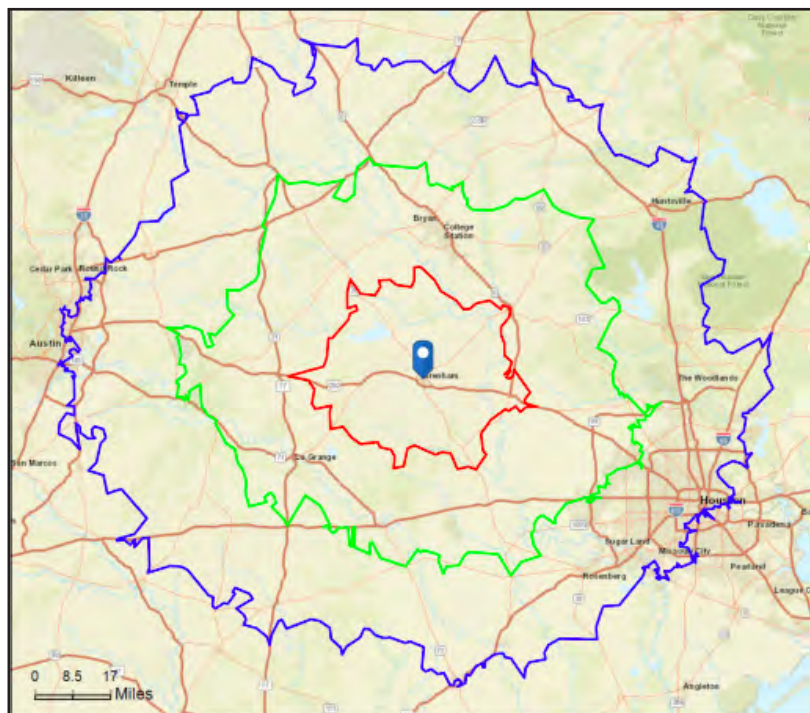
#		ACTION ITEMS	FY 2020	METRICS	FY 2021	METRICS	FY 2022	METRICS
WOTB - M1: COUNTY-WIDE VISITOR INFORMATION KIO								
1	Kiosk	PARTNER WITH VISIT BRENHAM ON KIOSK	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK CONTENT DEVELOPED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED	<input type="checkbox"/>	KIOSK MAINTAINED
WOTB - M2: WEBSITE								
1	PHOTOS	ADD PHOTOS TO EVENTS AND TEXT PASSAGES	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS ADDED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS ADDED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS ADDED
2	PDF	CLARIFY PDF AVAILABILITY OF INTERPRETIVE GUIDE	<input type="checkbox"/>	AVAILABILITY CLARIFIED				
3	LINK	FIX BROKEN FACEBOOK LINK	<input type="checkbox"/>	LINK FIXED				
WOTB - M3: FACEBOOK								
1	EVENTS	CREATE FACEBOOK EVENTS FOR ALL EVENTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS CREATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	EVENTS CREATED
2	PHOTOS	USE PHOTOS SHOWING ACTIVITY FOR COVER PHOTO	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS SELECTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS SELECTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOS SELECTED
WOTB - M4: LOCAL ITINERARY								
1	ITINERARY	CREATE ITINERARY AND SUBMIT TO VISIT BRENHAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY SUBMITTED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED	<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY UPDATED
WOTB - M5: LODGING CROSS-PROMOTION								
1	Lo	PROMOTE TO LOCAL B & B AND AIRBNB PROPERTY OWNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTACTED OWNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTACTED OWNERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTACTED OW

Demographics

Tourism marketing and product development focus on connecting visitors with aspects of your community that will interest them, challenge them, and educate them. To be successful, you need to know where those visitors might come from and what their interests are.

Generally, people travel for one of two reasons: (1) leisure, including weddings and visits to friends and relatives; or (2) business, including meetings and conferences. Leisure visitors, particularly those who live nearby or are driving through the area, will form the foundation of the area's tourism market. Since visitors to one community are also potential visitors for the rest of the county, Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds may be used to help enhance and develop each community's assets in ways that attract more visitors while providing services and activities to encourage longer stays.

The ESRI data provided here is based upon individuals who live within a 30-minute, 60-minute, and 90-minute drive from the Brenham Visitor Center (see the map on the next page.) The ESRI segmentation tool called *Tapestry* provides an accurate, detailed description of American neighborhoods based upon their sociographic and demographic composition. Using these *Tapestry* segments for understanding your potential market will be helpful as you move forward in defining who your target market is.



	30-minute drive	60-minute drive	90-minute drive
Households	27,803	328,644	2,037,229
Adult Population	56,407	719,373	4,332,340

There are significant sociographic and demographic differences between the nearby population (within a 30-minute drive) and those that are 60 to 90 minutes away. This makes proactively balancing the needs and desires of locals to preserve the area's character with the needs and desires of potential visitors even more important.

The reasons that many people choose to live in the area—especially the slower paced, more rural lifestyle—are at the core of what attracts many visitors. Retaining and enhancing what already makes a community appealing and then marketing it to the appropriate audiences is the best way to retain quality of life while drawing targeted visitors in manageable numbers.

The ESRI *Tapestry* tool divides United States neighborhoods into 68 well-defined segments. These segments are also grouped into 14 LifeMode groups that share commonalities in experiences, and 6 Urbanization groups based upon the characteristics of the places they live.

More than 70% of Washington County's residents fall into one of two LifeMode groups:

6—Cozy Country Living (37.2%)

- Empty nesters
- Homeowners with pets
- Prefer to eat at home, shop at discount retail stores
- Spend time and money working on home and yard
- Enjoy fishing, hunting, camping, boating, bird watching

10—Rustic Outposts (36.1%)

- Older families in older homes
- Live within their means, shop at discount stores
- Grow their own vegetables, love their pets
- Enjoy hunting and fishing
- Consider technology prohibitive and complicated

Within these LifeMode Groups, the largest segment (16%) is:

6C—The Great Outdoors (16%)

- Average Household Size: 2.44
- Median Age: 47.4
- Median Household Income: \$56,400
- Empty nesters living an active, but modest lifestyle.
- Their focus is the land and they are active gardeners and partial to home-grown and home-cooked meals
- Most still work although retirement beckons
- Members of AARP and veterans' clubs and support various civic causes
- Light use of Internet for shopping
- Television channels such as CMT, History, and Fox News are popular
- Enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, hunting, fishing, and boating

Throughout the 60- and 90-minute drive populations, there are only small pockets of people who fit into **6C—The Great Outdoors** and this is a good thing. People travel for experiences they can't get closer to home. If you offer the same setting, activities, and feel as what they experience on a daily basis, you won't be very appealing or worth the trip.

For those within a 60-minute drive time, 55% of residents fall within one of three highly-diverse LifeMode groups:

7—Ethnic Enclaves (20.1%)

- Young, Hispanic homeowners with families
- Multilingual, multigenerational households with children
- Shopping and leisure focus on children

1—Affluent Estates (19.5%)

- Wealthy, educated, well-traveled married couples
- Expect quality
- Active in their communities
- Active in sports
- Enthusiastic travelers

10—Rustic Outposts (14.6%)

- Older families in older homes
- Live within their means, shop at discount stores
- Grow their own vegetables, love their pets
- Enjoy hunting and fishing
- Consider technology prohibitive and complicated

Within these LifeMode Groups, the two largest segments are:

7A—Up and Coming Families (15.7%)

- Average Household Size: 3.12
- Median Age: 31.4
- Median Household Income: \$72,000
- A market in transition—residents are younger and more mobile and ethnically diverse than the previous generation
- Ambitious, working hard to get ahead, and willing to take some risks to achieve their goals
- Their homes are new; their families are young
- One of the fastest-growing markets in the country
- Rely on the Internet for entertainment, information, shopping, and banking
- Prefer imported SUVs or compact cars, late models
- Carry debt from credit card balances to student loans and mortgages, but also maintain retirement plans and make charitable contributions
- Busy with work and family; use home and landscaping services to save time
- Find leisure in family activities, movies at home, trips to theme parks or the zoo and sports; from golfing, weight lifting, to taking a jog or run

1C—Boomburbs (13.7%)

- Average Household Size: 3.25
- Median Age: 34.0
- Median Household Income: \$113,400
- Young professionals with families that have opted to trade up to the newest housing in the suburbs
- This is an affluent market but with a higher proportion of mortgages
- Well-educated professionals with a running start on prosperity
- One of the top markets for the latest in technology, from smartphones to tablets to Internet connectable televisions
- Style matters in the Boomburbs, from personal appearance to their homes
- These consumers are still furnishing their new homes and already remodeling
- They like to garden but more often contract for home services
- Physical fitness is a priority, including club memberships and home equipment
- Leisure includes a range of activities from sports (hiking, bicycling, swimming, golf) to visits to theme parks or water parks
- Residents are generous supporters of charitable organizations

Within the 90-minute drive time, resident diversity increases with nearly 60% falling within one of four highly-diverse LifeMode groups:

7—Ethnic Enclaves (23.1%)

- Young, Hispanic homeowners with families
- Multilingual, multigenerational households with children
- Shopping and leisure focus on children

1—Affluent Estates (17.0%)

- Wealthy, educated, well-traveled married couples
- Expect quality
- Active in their communities
- Active in sports
- Enthusiastic travelers

4—Family Landscapes (8.3%)

- Successful, prosperous, dual-income young families
- Enjoy home and garden DIY projects
- Eat out frequently at fast food or family restaurants
- Enjoy bowling, swimming, golf

11—Midtown Singles (8.3%)

- Millennials—single, diverse, urban
- Seek affordable rents and work in service and unskilled positions, usually close to home or public transportation
- Single parents who depend on their paycheck to buy supplies for their very young children
- Embrace the Internet both for social networking and downloading content
- From music and movies to soaps and sports, radio and television fill their lives
- Brand savvy shoppers who select budget friendly stores

Within these LifeMode Groups, the largest segments are:

7A—Up and Coming Families (10%, see previous details)**1C—The Boomburbs (7.9%, see previous details)****13C—NeWest Residents (6.1%)**

- Average Household Size: 3.35
- Median Age: 27.3
- Median Household Income: \$30,200
- Young Hispanics who are new to America and new to their careers, with new, young families
- Many are new to the English language; nearly one-third of households are linguistically isolated
- Slowly working to assimilate into American culture
- Prefer to watch Spanish-language channels on TV
- A large portion of their income goes toward baby and children products
- Prefer to use cash

17C—American Dreamers (5.5%)

- Average Household Size: 3.19
- Median Age: 32.5
- Median Household Income: \$50,900
- Younger married couples with children and often a grandparent living in the household
- Many are foreign born, of Hispanic origin
- Spending is focused on family members rather than the home
- Connected and adept at accessing what they want from the Internet

7D—Barrios Urbanos (4.5%)

- Average Household Size: 3.62
- Median Age: 28.9
- Median Household Income: \$38,000
- Family is central within these diverse communities and Hispanics make up more than 70% of residents
- More than one in four are foreign born, bringing rich cultural traditions to their neighborhoods
- Younger families with children or single-parent households with multiple generations living under the same roof
- Shop at discount and department stores like Walmart, Dollar General/Family Dollar, and JC Penney for baby and children's products
- Magazines are extremely popular sources of news and the latest trends

11B—Young and Restless (4.4%)

- Average Household Size: 2.04
- Median Age: 29.8
- Median Household Income: \$40,500
- Well-educated young workers, some of whom are still completing their education
- Almost 1 in 5 of this group move each year
- Smartphones are a way of life (no landlines,) and they use the Internet extensively
- Enjoy dancing, playing pool, basketball and ping pong

- Listen to contemporary hits, jazz, rap, hip hop, and dance music
- Purchase natural/organic food, but frequent fast food restaurants
- Residents like to read magazines, especially digital, covering topics ranging from news to fashion and music