



Fairfax County, Virginia
Connect with America

2020-2021

VISIT FAIRFAX

SALES, MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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SALES, MARKETING, & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



It is indeed my great pleasure to share our 2020 – 2021 Sales, Marketing, and Business Development Plan on behalf of the Fairfax County travel and tourism industry. Fairfax County has so much to offer our visitors and residents alike. We are privileged to call this beautiful place home and are honored to have the opportunity to contribute to both the economy as well as the overall quality of life for our citizens simply by sharing our love of this destination with visitors to the region.

Considering the various facets that make up the travel and tourism industry, our plan was developed with three distinct audiences in mind: Business – relating largely to meetings and events, Leisure – meaning both group tour and individual consumer, and Sports – ranging from state tournaments to broad-reaching international mega-events. Each audience segment plays an important role in the success of the Fairfax County tourism industry. For each segment of our audience, we address the strategic and tactical actions that will be used to market Fairfax County as a preferred destination. Within each segment we have indicated the primary, secondary and tertiary markets where our attention will be focused as well as some examples of what our efforts will be and where they will be focused.

Throughout the year, Visit Fairfax represents the county in a wide variety of different marketplaces and through many types of marketing, advertising and communication methods. We have provided a master activities calendar to identify each of these major programs and activities. We invite you to use this calendar to leverage our plans to enhance your own sales and marketing efforts for the year.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of the Visit Fairfax team as we are always more than happy to assist in any way that we can. And thank you for making the industry of travel and tourism a major part of the economic fabric of this great county.

Yours in Tourism & Hospitality,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Biggar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Barry Biggar, CDME
President & CEO
Visit Fairfax

2020 – 2021 Environmental Analysis

Strengths

With our proximity to the many attractions and experiences available to visitors within Northern Virginia and the region as a whole, a central location continues to be a key Fairfax County strength. With world-class hotels, restaurants, and attractions, Fairfax County offers visitors an enviable array of things to do – once visitors are introduced to them. The County also boasts a highly eclectic number of choices for visitors – surrounding them with experiences ranging from the natural beauty of Great Falls and historic treasures such as Mount Vernon to numerous recreational activities such as golf and shopping. Finally, Fairfax County offers visitors ultimate convenience with accessibility from air, rail, and highway; easy access to many of the area's best-loved activities and some of the country's top businesses; and a manageable and less expensive environment that offers a wide range of quality accommodations.

Weaknesses

The most significant weaknesses faced by Fairfax County are infrastructural in nature. The sheer size of the County can make navigating among attractions a challenge. This issue is further aggravated by limited "tourism-friendly" signage throughout the County. Consumer perception is also impacted by the lack of a "downtown area," limited brand awareness, and extensive traffic – all of which leave tourists with the feeling that Fairfax County may not be a tourist-friendly destination. Lack of extensive public transportation was mitigated to a degree with the expansion of Metro to Tysons; however, visitors still require affordable, convenient alternatives. Additionally, consumers may be confused as the various cities, towns, and communities tend to market individually instead of as a cohesive group. Finally, Visit Fairfax funding continues to lag significantly behind other DMOs with similar hotel inventory. Compared to other high-profile destinations, Fairfax County does not invest nearly as much in tourism marketing dollars per hotel room, putting the County last in the Commonwealth and most other DMOs in the nation.

Opportunities

Key market opportunities exist for the business, leisure and sports segments, especially during weekends and other distressed periods. The Connect with America brand leverages the county's strengths with a highly personal message. The planned expansion of Metro to Dulles Airport provides new opportunity for both individual travelers and group event planners. Two new museums represent opportunity within all segments. Both the National Museum of the U.S. Army and the Lucy Burns Museum will be very attractive to niche groups and individual travelers, and a new sense of community spirit may provide new opportunity to engage with local residents. Additionally, the planned expansion of Tysons as a pedestrian-friendly area also holds great opportunity. Finally, additional funding would increase opportunities for greater outreach, especially in the international markets.

Threats

The obvious gorilla in the room threatens not only Fairfax County but the entire travel industry. Our industry was drastically impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, and the timing for full travel recovery remains uncertain. Competition for visitor attention remains fierce in the region. In this environment, Fairfax County faces the challenge that many destination marketing organizations contend with – drawing eyes to our message when numerous choices abound. Through Visit Fairfax, the County's tourism community has embarked on a collaborative effort to move the needle for leisure, business and sports travelers. With new inventory being added to the marketplace, complicated by even more competition nationwide, the competitive environment remains challenging. The uncertainty in the federal government budgeting process also greatly affects the travel industry with the threat of shutdowns repeatedly rearing its head and the potential impact of US travel policies on international travel remains to be seen. Additionally, nearby competitor Washington, DC has invested millions of dollars toward international markets such as China and India, giving them a competitive advantage in these lucrative marketplaces.

SALES, MARKETING, & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In the Spring of 2020, the hospitality and tourism community endeavored to navigate unprecedented waters through a storm like nothing we had ever seen. This was not the first time that we had faced troubled times, but neither the aftermath of 9-11 nor the 2008 financial crisis prepared us for the economic impact of COVID-19. With travel all but stopped, the impact on our industry was almost immediate, and it remains uncertain how the recovery will take place. Even after stay-at-home restrictions are lifted, it may be some time before event planners and individual travelers are comfortable enough to travel again. And so, Visit Fairfax implemented a strategic response to this complicated problem in three phases.

Recognizing this new paradigm, Visit Fairfax quickly reacted to support our stakeholders through the development of a Fairfax County Restaurant Take Out Trail and First Responder Rates for hotels. We also repositioned FXVA.com to promote the many innovative virtual experiences that stakeholders created by introducing our Fairfax-at-Home pages. And finally, we introduced a way for local residents to support hospitality workers through LoveShare, a page featuring ways to donate and support the hospitality community. All of these actions fell into Phase I of our COVID-19 response.

*"When you're
going through hell,
keep going."*

- Winston Churchill

The second phase of the strategy required continued empathy as we were all asked to stay home during the national emergency. Yet, there will be a time when we see these troubled times in the rearview mirror, and we want Fairfax County to remain top-of-mind when that time comes. Three media campaigns were launched, not to prompt immediate trips but to inspire future travel. Two of these efforts involved social media campaigns: one revolving around an inspirational video encouraging people to get through it "together," and the other inviting our followers to send us their "Front Porchtraits." A third digital campaign was formulated to remind consumers that "we'll be ready for you" when the time comes to travel again.

Phase III of the strategy will deploy in FY21 the moment consumers and event planners are ready to travel again. At that time, after we have all breathed a sigh of relief, Visit Fairfax will launch our campaign telling them that "it's time to travel again" and invite visitors to "Reconnect with America" here in Fairfax County. Our goals will be, as they always have been, to contribute to the overall economy of our County and the quality of life for our citizens in accordance with our mission. Tourism contributed over \$3 billion annually to Fairfax County, and we will work tirelessly to see those numbers rise again through timely and engaging messages delivered to highly targeted audiences with the objective of incremental spending that benefits our stakeholders and our local citizens.

Who knew that my top 3 favorite things are:

1. eating at restaurants
2. going to nonessential businesses
3. touching my face

Without doubt, travel will resume; however, the manner in which visitors choose to travel and the core drivers that motivate them may change. Given Northern Virginia's central location along the East Coast that is easily accessible by car, Fairfax County will be an attractive destination given some of the potential changes in consumer sensibilities. Additionally, our visitor experiences are highly eclectic, ranging from national historic treasures to wide-open green spaces for those who prefer less crowded environs. Additionally, for those who recently faced economic insecurity, Northern Virginia

represents an incredible value within the National Capital Region, with many of the benefits of an urban destination and all of the conveniences of a suburban location.

Using innovative technologies, Visit Fairfax will continue its programs intended to send highly creative and targeted messages to very defined niche audiences with a new focus on those "precious moments" with family that many see as a top priority given recent events. On the group event side, we will leverage the power of human connection that comes only from face-to-face interaction in business. The overall sales and marketing strategy will remain focused on the three key markets on which we have prioritized from the beginning: Business, Leisure, and Sports – each with resources dedicated based upon their Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary audiences. We will also continue to reach out to our own local residents who, now more than ever, influence inbound friends & family, support the tourism infrastructure, and ultimately ensure our success through the shared voice of all of our proud citizens and political leaders. We remain positive that the future is indeed bright and that the strategies planned for the coming year will move us in the right direction.

Primary

- Major focus due to high return & good yield

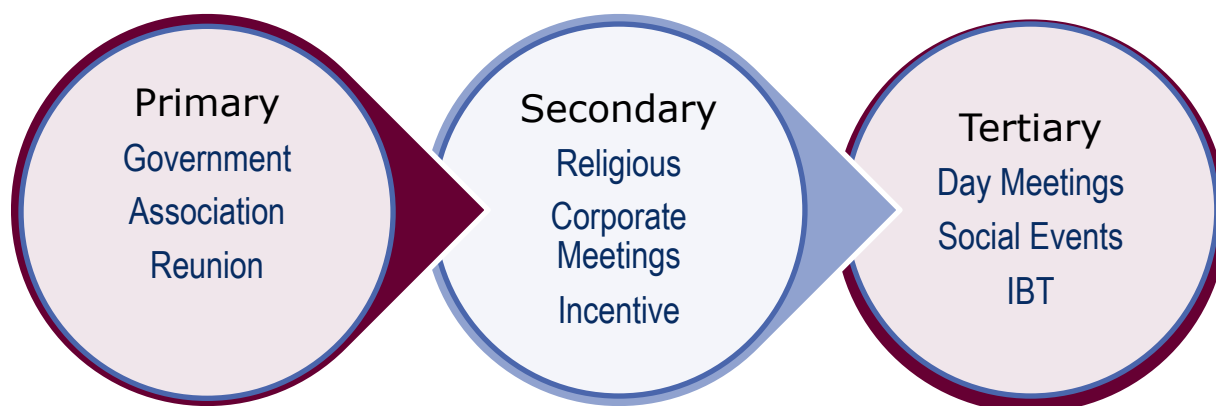
Secondary

- Has great potential if given additional work, but less resources to avoid duplicate efforts

Tertiary

- Provide support but not a major focus

BUSINESS



The upcoming year will post a host of new challenges in finding business for our stakeholders as the world seeks a new "normal" following the worldwide public health emergency and the shutdown of major segments of the economy.

Our biggest single challenge going forward will be responding to, and recovering from, the outbreak of COVID-19, as well as embracing a number of changes in the meetings landscape, some of which are likely to be long-lasting or permanent. While we are experienced in selling in "down" markets (e.g., after the attacks of 9/11/01, during the "Great Recession" of 2008-2009), selling in the current unsettled environment will provide a number of unique obstacles, as well as a few opportunities.

We'll be operating in several areas of uncertainty, which will include:

- the need to work closely with numerous planners and our hotel partners throughout the coming year to reschedule or relocate previously postponed meetings and programs.
- having to adapt to the changing profile of meetings being planned. Meeting industry experts are predicting that we will likely see an increase in smaller, more customized regional meetings, as opposed to large-scale national conventions.
- the financial health of the airline industry will likely take several years to recover, which will impact us. In the short term, there are likely to be fewer flights flown, with higher fares charged, which will impact attendance at larger, "fly in" programs. "Drive in" meetings will likely grow, and there will be more of them planned, giving us an area of opportunity to pursue



- video conferencing and "virtual" meetings are likely to increase, impacting the demand for traditional hotel and event venue meeting space
- our largest meeting hotel in the county, as measured by square footage of meeting space, has permanently closed, which will restrict our ability to place larger programs here

Our overall approach will require a great deal of flexibility, as we likely will not know for several months when individuals are able to travel / attend meetings / plan events in a "normal" environment.

Looking ahead, we have added to our existing schedule of "one-on-one" appointment trade shows with the return of Destination Southeast in Marco Island, FL in August to our show schedule. We'll continue to look for opportunities to play host to such programs, knowing that exposing planners to our hotels and attractions first-hand is far more effective than any brochure, e-mail, or sales presentation can possibly be.



We will enjoy increased opportunities to book new business attracted by the new National Museum of the United States Army, and the extension of Metrorail Silver line service to Dulles Airport, both of which are scheduled to take place during the upcoming year.

We'll continue to identify and prospect Army reunion groups who will be drawn to the National Capital area by the opening of the National Museum of the United States Army. Prospecting utilizing the American Legion and Disable American Veterans magazines will continue; although somewhat "low tech", this has proven to be a surprisingly effective means of generating reunion leads. We will continue running display advertising in issues of *Military Officer* magazine, and will attend the TMRN (The Military Reunion Network) Educational Summit in New Orleans, LA. We will bid to co-host a "fam trip" event for reunion planners with TMRN in the fall of 2021.

We'll host two events related to the opening of the Army museum that we were forced to postpone by the public health emergency: a "press fam", specifically for editors and writers, to promote the museum, and a luncheon for locally-based meeting planners, to showcase the museum as a special events venue.

The extension of the Metrorail Silver line will provide us with a "once in a generation" opportunity to drive additional business to our hotels in the Herndon and Chantilly areas of the county. As we did in 2013 / 2014 for the opening of the Silver line's first phase, we'll begin promoting the enhanced access that the Dulles extension will afford groups with trade show collateral, mailings, e-mail blasts, and meeting planner luncheons, beginning in late 2020 and continuing through the line's scheduled opening in 2021.

Group planners have responded enthusiastically to our providing them with customized, full-color "Save the Date" postcards, which we offer as a "value added" service to assist them in maximizing the attendance at their meetings, and we'll expand this program in the coming year. This complimentary amenity allows Visit Fairfax to stand out from the crowd of competing destinations for their business, as do our other service enhancements, such as helping to arrange guest speakers, sightseeing tours, and entertainment options, including our life-sized icebreaker game of "Fairfaxopoly".

Strategic Objectives

1. Market, sell and promote Fairfax County as a premier business meeting destination within the group business segments we target: national and state associations, corporate and government.
2. Profile and build on our database of group meetings and events that meet during specified need periods, specifically military and family reunions, religious groups, and special interest / hobbyist groups.
3. Maximize the opportunities presented by the two new facilities opening in 2020 / 2021: the National Museum of the United States Army, and the Metrorail Silver line extension to Dulles Airport.
4. Continue to build upon the service reputation of Visit Fairfax by providing the highest levels of personalized service, attention, and support for meeting planners and event organizers.

Tactics

1. Market, sell and promote Fairfax County as a premier business meeting destination within the group business segments we target: national and state associations, corporate and government.

What

Tradeshows

Print and Online Advertising

Direct Sales

Membership and Sponsorship

Group Fams & Client Events

Where

Washington, DC

Northern Virginia

Richmond

National Shows Close to Home

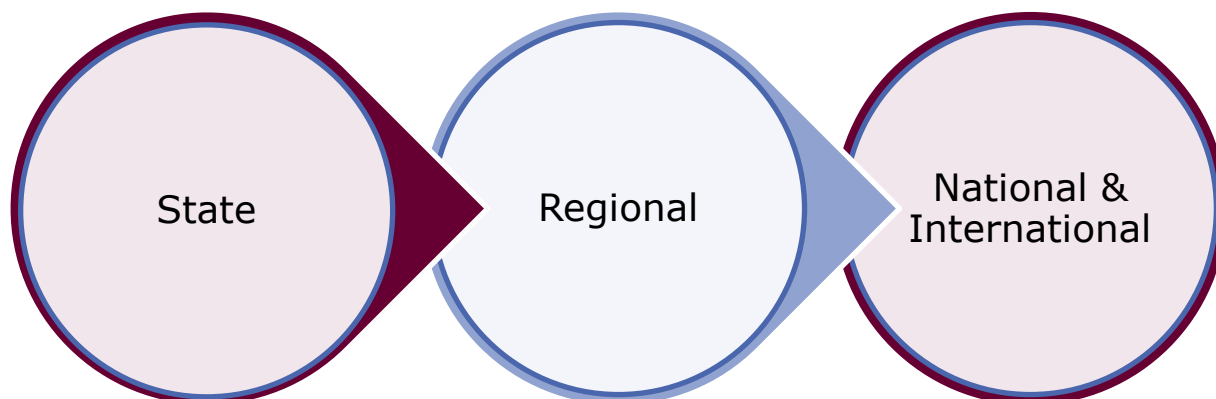
- a. Ensure visibility for Fairfax County and our meeting hotels at association tradeshows including Connect (New Orleans, Washington, DC and Chicago), *Convention South* Rendezvous South, and Northstar Travel Media IPEC (Independent Planner Education Conference) and Destination Southeast.
- b. Bid to host the Smart Meetings Experience trade show in June, 2021.
- c. Host a luncheon and "hard hat" tour of the National Museum of the United Army for locally-based association, corporate and government planners.
- d. Continue to expand our relationships with state association meeting planners through our participation in VSAE and attendance at various VSAE Meetings and events throughout the year.
- e. Exhibit at the VSAE Fall Conference in October, partnering with our Fairfax County meeting hotel partners. Provide our hotels with access to Virginia state association planners through a semi-annual Visit Fairfax sales blitz (November and April)
- f. Exhibit at the Reston-Herndon Meeting Planners (RHMP) "Summer Camp program (July)
- g. Ensure visibility among corporate and association planners through advertising in *Meetings Today* and *Convention South*.
- h. Utilize the bi-monthly group planner eNewsletter to deliver information on new developments, special offers, and items of interest to groups.
- i. Continue to develop relationships with Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) planners through chapter events and activities; sponsor a monthly chapter meeting; attend SGMP National Education Conference.



- j. Host "Bidding on Government Meetings Bootcamp" to educate hoteliers about best practices when soliciting state and federal government business.
 - k. Join Meeting Professionals International (MPI); network with MPI's corporate meeting planners to maximize event hosting opportunities.
 - l. Enhance CVENT listing to compete more effectively against other destinations and generate additional business opportunities in all target markets.
2. Profile and build on our database of group meetings and events that meet during specified need periods, specifically military and family reunions, religious groups, and special interest / hobbyist groups.

- a. Refashion our annual Family Reunion Workshop, into a more intimate, more focused, and more cost-effective "Family Reunion Seminar" to showcase Fairfax County to family reunion planners
 - b. Attend the TMRN Educational Summit in June to reach military reunion planners and convince them to meet in Fairfax County.
 - c. Bid to host a TMRN planner event in September, 2021.
 - d. Ensure visibility among military reunion planners through advertising in *Military Officer Magazine*.
 - e. Reach special interest and hobbyist event planners through Connect Marketplace and Rendezvous South.
3. Maximize the opportunities presented by the two new facilities opening in 2020 / 2021: the National Museum of the United States Army, and the Metrorail Silver line extension to Dulles Airport.
- a. Host a press fam promoting the opening of the National Museum of the United States Army in July, 2020 to draw attention to the museum and Fairfax County in various publications.
 - b. Attend the Overseas Brats Gathering event in San Diego in October. Give a formal presentation to the attendees, providing them with an update on the Army museum, and on the group's 2021 Gathering, to be held in Fairfax County.
 - c. Continue ongoing direct mail / e-mail / telephone prospecting campaigns to generate military reunion leads, especially Army reunion leads.
 - d. Promote the scheduled 2021 arrival of Metrorail service to Dulles Airport via trade show signage and custom collateral.
 - e. Host two "Countdown to Metro" luncheons (September and March) for locally-based meeting planners, to highlight the Silver line extension to Dulles and showcase the capabilities of our meeting hotels in the Dulles Airport area.
4. Continue to build upon the service reputation of Visit Fairfax by providing the highest levels of personalized service, attention, and support for meeting planners and event organizers.
- a. Continue to promote customized Fairfax County "Save the Date" postcards as a low-cost, high value-added service available to planners as an attendance-building tool for their programs.
 - b. Offer the use of "Fairfaxopoly" and other experiential activities to planners as unique enhancements to their programs
 - c. Assist planners in arranging locally-based guest speakers, sightseeing tours, and entertainment for their programs to enhance the "Wow!" factor of their meetings.

SPORTS



On April 14, 2020, Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred stated the following in a nationally televised interview:

“Baseball is not going to return until the public health situation is improved to the point where we’re comfortable that we can play games in a manner that’s safe for our players, our employees, our fans...and in a way that will not impact the public health situation adversely. Right now, it’s largely a waiting game. During this period as you might expect any business would, we have engaged in contingency planning, we’ve thought about how we might be able to return in various scenarios, but again, the key is improvement in the public health situation.”

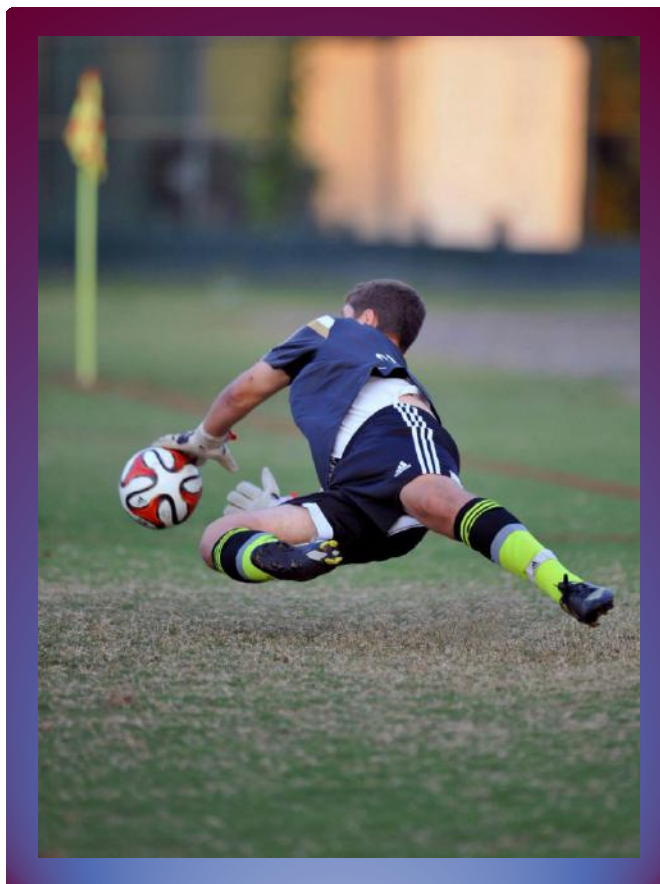
Indeed, along with practically every aspect of normal life, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the world of professional and amateur athletics upside down. Manfred’s statement certainly captures the current state of the sports tourism industry and how tournament planners are swimming in the choppiest of uncharted waters. Many have cancelled or postponed events. All are assessing how to remain financially viable, which will require making events as safe as possible for participants and spectators in a manner complying with local, state, federal, and international restrictions, regulations, and protocols. Until there’s a cure or vaccine for the virus (which may take up to a year or more to develop), a combination of mandates and guidelines for social distancing, sanitation and hygiene, temperature checks, personal protective equipment, and virus/antibody testing will surely be instituted by communities to put people at ease about going back to work and school, and getting back on the playing field.

The sports market was not without its challenges even prior to COVID-19 times. Tournament planners have been competing for athletes like never before, destinations and their athletic venues have been battling for the rights to host events, and families have been faced with finding the time and money to support their kids playing travel sports. Also, as the competition for a larger slice of the sports tourism pie has become increasingly fierce, destinations – often in cooperation with their local governments – have been entering into a sports facilities “arms race” to offer larger, more tournament-capable venues. Compared with other U.S. destinations (including those in its backyard), Fairfax County has not kept pace in this race to build large clusters of outdoor fields,

indoor courts, and other facility types. This in turn has adversely affected the county's ability to fully capitalize on the booming youth sports market.

Established in 2018, the Fairfax County Sports Tourism Task Force has been meeting on a regular basis to discuss ways to improve the county's sports tourism infrastructure and remedy this situation. The Task Force's main recommendations have included negotiating a public-private partnership to build an indoor skiing and snow venue at the Laurel Hill landfill; making capital improvements to Fountainhead Regional Park to position it as a destination site for mountain biking; exploring bandwidth and computer enhancements at public high schools to maximize their esports potential; and further developing the tournament capabilities at select county parks. For example, a new, turf baseball complex – Patriot Park North – will be constructed adjacent to Willow Springs Elementary School in western Fairfax featuring four 90-foot diamonds in a wagon-wheel configuration (with central concessions) and two adjacent 60-foot diamond fields. This complex is expected to be completed by 2023.

In addition, the Task Force contracted the services of Conventions, Sports, and Leisure (CSL) to assess the feasibility of new and improved tournament-capable public facilities, which could be built to maximize visitor spending while providing the local community with enhanced or supplemental athletic venues. Based on extensive research, CSL has recommended additional and upgraded outdoor complexes (i.e., 16-field rectangle complex; 12-field diamond complex; and improvements to Baron Cameron, Patriot Park North, Wakefield, and Braddock Parks), a new indoor hardcourt complex with 12 full-size basketball courts; an indoor 200-meter, 6-lane banked track; a second sheet of ice at Mount Vernon RECenter; and a new natatorium with 50-meter competition pool and diving complex. CSL is currently evaluating potential sites for proposed new venues, and will be making recommendations on financing options as well as facility governance.



In terms of existing private facilities, there is no venue in the county with greater potential to attract travel tournaments than The St. James. This indoor, 450,000-square-foot mega sportsplex located in Springfield features a FIFA turf field with 70-foot height clearance, two NHL sheets of ice; four NBA basketball courts (convertible to nine volleyball courts); a 50-meter, 10-lane Olympic pool; and eight international squash courts. As they arise, Visit Fairfax will continue to feed event hosting opportunities to The St. James.

Other challenges to the county's sports tourism objectives are the perennial obstacles for most bidders interested in hosting large events that attract thousands of attendees: rights fees and funding for initial operating costs. Without the ability to make such investments requested by event rights-holders, destinations with insufficient resources are often shut out from competing for select competitions. Fortunately, Fairfax County government's new Economic Opportunity Reserve fund has made it much easier to overcome these financial barriers.



Created to “stimulate economic growth” and to provide “strategic investment opportunities,” this reserve – funded with an initial budget carryover of \$5 million – will provide investment dollars for capital development projects, property acquisition, and programming support (which would include potential funds to secure and operate sports events). The criteria for distributions will include financial modeling analysis (e.g. cost-benefit, etc.) to determine the fiscal impact to the county of the proposed investment opportunity and will require approval from the Board of Supervisors. After carefully assessing the potential return-on-investment of various sports events available for bid and targeting the best prospects, Visit Fairfax and its partners will take full advantage of this county program and apply for grants whenever appropriate.

Although there may be uncertainty regarding how and when our community and the nation recovers from the coronavirus pandemic, Visit Fairfax remains prepared and ready to support our stakeholders during what will likely be one of the most challenging periods of our lifetimes.

We will need to be more resourceful than ever before. This is why we are partnering with other local jurisdictions actively pursuing the sports market (Loudoun, Prince William, and Stafford counties) to form Sports NOVA. This coalition will enable us to leverage our resources to cost-effectively promote our region and pursue mutually beneficial event hosting opportunities.

Paradigm shifts will also be required to maximize tournament opportunities. Could our “un-clustered” turf fields now be an advantage since they allow for more physical distancing among large groups of tournament attendees? In the same vein, should we target individual (vs. team) sports and non-contact (vs. contact) sports where social distancing measures may be easier to implement? We are

contemplating these and other important questions to determine how best to maximize our sports tourism efforts and resources.

The consensus among many sports professionals is that amateur competitions may not be hosted again until the fall, maybe late summer if our citizens strictly follow mandated and suggested health guidelines and orders. Much will depend on the decisions made by governors, many of whom want larger-scale testing before reopening their states.

As Visit Fairfax navigates the sports market during these uncertain times, it will be vital to keep abreast of the public health issues relating to COVID-19, to support our local sports community as its recovery will be a harbinger of regional/national event possibilities, and to communicate regularly with our sports clients to let them know that we'll be there for them when they need us. These actions will be as important as implementing the following marketing plan strategies and tactics designed to promote the county as a first-rate destination to host travel tournaments and competitions.

Strategic Objectives

1. Attract state, regional, national, and international sports events that match up well with the area's existing facilities infrastructure and grow existing competitions that have the potential of drawing additional out-of-town visitors.
2. Continue to build awareness of and support for Visit Fairfax's sports marketing initiatives among various stakeholders (event planners, sports leaders, facility owners, government officials, etc.) and work cooperatively with these stakeholders to enhance event hosting opportunities and improve the county's sports tourism infrastructure.
3. Provide sports stakeholders with marketing and event support services to increase tournament attendance, assist with event planning/execution, and maximize visitor spending.

Tactics

What

Conferences & Tradeshows

Direct Sales

**Public Relations
& Trade Publications**

Web Marketing

Relationship Building

**Fairfax County Sports Tourism
Task Force**

Local Organizing Committees

Sports NOVA

Where

TEAMS Conference & Expo

Sports ETA Symposium (I&III)

Virginia Sports Summit

**Fairfax County Park Authority
& Public Schools**

**Northern Virginia Regional
Park Authority**

**George Mason University and
NOVA**

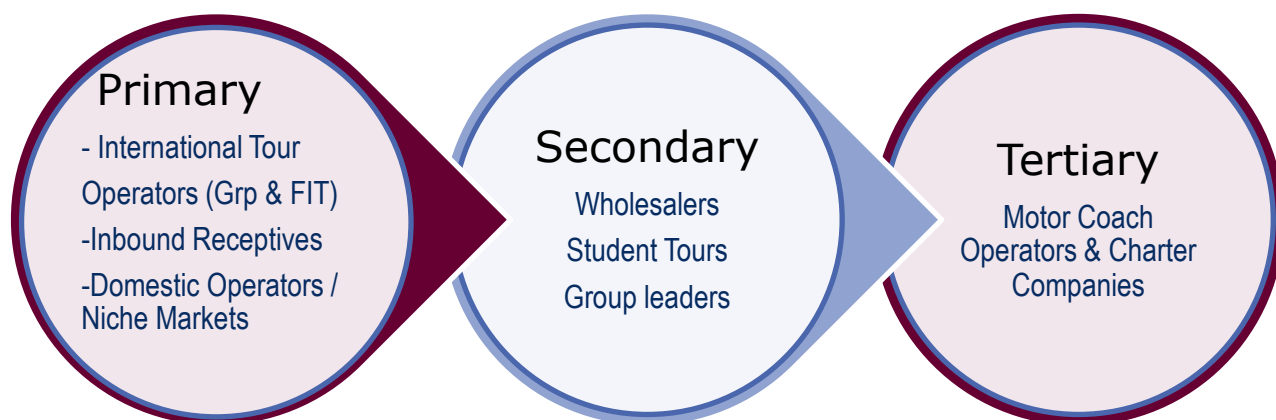
**The St. James and Other
Private Sports Facilities**

1. Attract state, regional, national, and international sports events that match up well with the area's existing facilities infrastructure and grow existing competitions that have the potential of drawing additional out-of-town visitors.
 - a. Promote Fairfax County as an ideal destination to host state, regional, national, and international sports events at industry trade shows and conferences:
 - a. Sports ETA Symposium I (August 2020)
 - b. TEAMS Conference & Expo
 - c. Sports ETA Symposium II (April 2021)
 - d. Virginia Sports Summit
 - b. Participate actively in the Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA) as well as Sports Virginia, the coalition of CVBs and sports commissions which seeks to attract new events to the state.
Communicate regularly with local sports leaders, event organizers, and facility owners/managers to discuss ways to attract new events and grow existing ones.
 - c. Mine various trade publication and association databases for event opportunities.
 - d. Continue to build prospect list of sports planners and conduct sales solicitation calls with those whose events match up well with Fairfax County's sports tourism assets.
 - e. Conduct in-person and virtual site tours to promote Fairfax County to select sports decision-makers and influencers.
 - f. Provide sponsorship support to select events to grow existing business and attract new opportunities.
 - g. Draw outdoor, adventure, and other leisure groups to Fairfax County by promoting select public and private venues in the area that target these groups (e.g., golf courses, parks, The St. James, etc.)



2. Continue to build awareness of and support for Visit Fairfax's sports marketing initiatives among various stakeholders (event planners, sports leaders, facility owners, government officials, etc.) and work cooperatively with these stakeholders to enhance event hosting opportunities and improve the county's sports tourism infrastructure.
 - a. Educate tournament directors, facility managers/owners, sports leaders, and other tourism stakeholder groups about Visit Fairfax's sports initiatives through networking events, presentations, and e-marketing tools.
 - b. Play a leading role in the Sports Tourism Task Force's efforts to improve the county's facilities infrastructure and tournament-related policies. Work closely with the consultant hired by the Task Force to recommend improvements to this infrastructure to ensure the achievement of desired tourism objectives.
 - c. Update database of Fairfax County and area facilities capable of hosting various sports events and competitions.
 - d. Partner with neighboring jurisdictions (Loudoun, Prince William, and Stafford counties) to create a regional sports tourism brand ("Sports NOVA") to enhance Fairfax County's ability to host large or multi-sport events; promote Sports NOVA through advertising, public relations, sponsorship, and other communications vehicles.
 - e. Sponsor Champions of Character, the local sports community's awards program which honors youth, coaches and parents for extraordinary service in pursuing victory with honor on and off the field of competition.
3. Provide sports stakeholders with marketing and event support services to increase tournament attendance, assist with event planning/execution, and maximize visitor spending.
 - a. Offer support services to tournament directors and visiting sports teams/participants through a Visitor Services support program.
 - b. Create customized "Welcome to Fairfax County" web landing pages for select tournaments to provide useful destination information to participating teams/individuals and encourage additional event registrations.
 - c. Offer additional tournament amenities to assist with the sales process and encourage repeat bookings (e.g., Visit Fairfax tournament app extension).
 - d. Promote "Extend Your Stay" web page that encourages sports groups to add leisure time to tournaments by "multi-tasking" their trip. Promote increased spending through hotel, attraction, and restaurant offers to group travelers. Market the program and offers via Visitor Services as part of pre-arrival servicing packets.

LEISURE GROUP



The Group Tour market often meets those critical short-term need periods by filling stakeholders' distressed inventory. The segment also affords the opportunity to establish long-range series business within growth markets. Many hotels, nearly every attraction, and dozens of restaurants eagerly seek lucrative adult, senior and student group tours to drive business. Fairfax County is a leading group tour destination in the Capital Region thanks to its ideal location coupled with great products, at a superb price-value point.

Over the first half of 2020, the circumstances caused by COVID-19 have presented extraordinary challenges and new uncertainties across economies globally. Due to unprecedented social distancing and quarantine measures that have been put into place worldwide, travel and tourism was the first industry to suffer serious consequences caused by COVID-19. The pandemic and the resulting



economic crisis call for stopgap measures to endure in the short-term and creative mid to long-term strategies to facilitate economic recovery and return to pre-pandemic travel levels.

Still, brighter days lie ahead. When the situation improves, the travel industry will be among the first to rebound thanks to pent-up demand. For the time being, it is vital to plan and prepare for the eventual recovery using a multi-pronged approach. While travel is restricted, sales efforts are focused on engaging with travel trade and inspiring future travel through advertisements and editorial content in print and online trade publications. Many tour operators have indicated they are

using this time to focus on product development and create new itineraries which will be featured on their brochures, catalogues and websites. We are dedicated to supporting operators in product development and have been crafting highly customized itineraries to match their clients' niche interests. These efforts highlight new and diversified product in Fairfax County such as Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, the Museum of the USA Army and River-Sea Chocolate Factory among others.

We are identifying strong segments that are likely to recover first and putting in place strategies that will capitalize on these segments when they rebound. As evidenced in the recovery period following other global crises such as SARS and the economic crisis of 2008/2009, domestic and short haul travel rebound faster than long haul travel. Likewise, with recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, many visitors will be reevaluating their vacation plans and choosing destinations that are within driving distance. We are looking at neighboring states and drive markets to emphasize the ease and price/value equation of a vacation in Fairfax County. As the situation stabilizes, we will be engaging domestic operators in drive markets to consider exploring their own backyards.



In the mid to long-term as travel resumes, we plan to recommence participation in tradeshow and sales missions, two proven tactics to facilitate packaged leisure sales. Our comprehensive activity calendar spans sales missions in UK, Germany, India and China and includes tradeshow focused on adult, student and senior travel that connect us with group, FIT, receptive and wholesale operators. These in-person meetings at marketplaces

and during sales calls allow us to continue building awareness of Fairfax County as a compelling group leisure travel destination and cultivate relationships that convert awareness into leads and FAMs.

Though it may be slower to recover due to global travel restrictions and flight reductions, international travel cannot be overlooked. After all, international markets have proven time and again to be more lucrative than domestic tourism as international travelers stay longer and spend more, particularly on accommodation and shopping. We will maintain sales efforts in the mature markets of UK, Western Europe and Canada as well as the largest growth potential markets of China and India. These five markets, which have consistently yielded robust arrival numbers and strong air service, continue to drive our international strategy.

China remains the top international inbound market to the Capital Region. Despite the Sino-American trade tensions that peaked in 2018/2019, for four years in a row, China has been the leading overseas source market with 267,000 visitors in 2018, accounting for \$1.2 billion in direct spending. Given the current and projected COVID-19 recovery curve, China will likely be ready to travel before Europe. In fact, internal domestic travel has already resumed with a bang, demonstrating the pent-up demand likely to replicate with all outbound markets. Outbound travel from China will be contingent on when air service and visa approvals resume. We are positioning to welcome this important market back by planning in-country sales missions and participating in tradeshow events that are geared towards Chinese travel trade.



There is also still appetite for future travel from the mature Western European markets. Industry updates from Capital Region USA, the region's tourism promotion organization, indicate that tour operators in Germany, France and the UK are trying to reschedule trips for dates in late 2020 through 2021. Considering that the UK and Germany are our second and fourth largest overseas source markets respectively, we plan to continue engaging via participation in tradeshow events oriented towards the European market as well as sales missions to both countries.

As tourism increasingly gravitates to novel, experience-based offerings, it is imperative to focus on product development with stakeholders in order to craft and promote tourism experiences that elevate Fairfax County's competitive advantage in the domestic and international marketplace. With so many unique attractions in our inventory that appeal to varied niche market interests such as African American heritage, women's history and STEAM-focused tours, tour operators can easily enhance their tour products by adding these distinct activities to their itineraries.

Sales efforts will also continue to focus on student groups, for which the learning component of the itinerary is particularly important. Visit Fairfax is uniquely positioned to appeal to this market given the wide array of available educational programs, after-hour activities and group dining options at student-friendly price points. Senior groups, while requiring more customized itineraries, remain an important market for Fairfax County given their propensity for post-retirement travel, high disposable income and appetite for new and niche products.

Finally, sales efforts will be further supplemented by targeted advertising in qualified trade publications that reach active tour operators and group planners. Cooperative efforts will be leveraged through CRUSA and NVTP including co-op advertising and familiarization tours.

Strategic Objectives

1. Build strategic tourism product lines—based upon current market conditions and trends—that will attract and grow the domestic markets, which are key to short and mid-term recovery.
2. Leverage the appetite for future travel to rebuild business volume by presenting Fairfax County as the “smart choice” within the region for international travelers.
3. Raise Fairfax County’s domestic and international profiles and connect within the region through advertising, international tour co-ops, and sales mission opportunities, partnering with other organizations such as Capital Region USA (CRUSA) and Northern Virginia Tourism Partnership (NVTP).
4. Show buyers firsthand why they should be selling Fairfax County, Virginia—rather than only telling—through familiarization tours.

Tactics

1. Build strategic tourism product lines—based upon current market conditions and trends—that will attract and grow the domestic markets, which are key to short and mid-term recovery.
 - a. Further develop niche product lines with a collection of supporting collateral, collaborating with nearby destinations to create well rounded experiences
 - b. Attend the American Bus Association’s Marketplace in Baltimore targeting motor coach operators to underscore the convenience of Fairfax County hotels and major roadways
 - c. Attend the National Tour Association’s Travel Exchange to meet with domestic as well as international tour operators that are currently coming to Fairfax County and those that are not yet utilizing the county’s products

What

Sales Missions

Tradeshows

CRUSA

NVTP

FAMs

Advertising

Co-op Programs

Where

Domestic

China

India

Canada

United Kingdom

Germany

- d. Be a preferred partner of the Travel Alliance Partnership and attend their annual tradeshow to maintain close connections with key domestic and receptive tour operators throughout the United States, which will help promote Fairfax County to others in the industry
 - e. Host Mid Atlantic Receptive Services' (MARS) tradeshow Spotlight on the Mid-Atlantic in Fairfax County to directly promote our destination to MARS client base and group leaders planning trips to the Capital Region
 - f. Attend Student & Youth Travel Association's annual conference to create new connections with decision makers in the student and youth travel market and leverage non-traditional student options within the Capital Region
2. Leverage the appetite for future travel to rebuild business volume by presenting Fairfax County as the "smart choice" within the region for international travelers.

- a. Attend U.S. Travel Association's IPW in our own Visit Fairfax booth, showing that Fairfax County remains a top destination within Virginia and the Capital Region



- b. Attend Active America China and Active America China Receptive Edition Showcases for one-on-one appointments with Chinese tour operators and Chinese inbound receptive operators looking for new American tour product
- c. Attend Brand USA's annual India Sales Mission to penetrate the India market by meeting with qualified tour operators and media in the New Delhi, the capital city and one of India's largest hubs for outbound tourism.
- d. Attend the International Inbound Travel Association's Annual Summit to update key receptive operators on the hotel, dining, and attraction offerings that Fairfax County has to offer
- e. Continue outreach into international markets through Northern Virginia Tourism Partnership
- f. Create more in-language content for international tour operators to have access to in order to help develop tour product
- g. Attend Receptive Tour Operator (RTO) Summit East to have one-on-one appointments with receptive tour operators based in the New York/New Jersey region, an epicenter for inbound European and Asian visitors.

3. Raise Fairfax County's domestic and international profiles and connect within the region through advertising, international tour co-ops, and sales mission opportunities, partnering with other organizations such as Capital Region USA (CRUSA) and Northern Virginia Tourism Partnership (NVTP)
 - a. Maintain active membership with the Virginia Motor coach Association to interact with member motor coach operators within the immediate domestic market
 - b. Increase Fairfax County's web presence through touroperatorland.com to reach tour operators looking for new and unique product ideas
 - c. Participate in Capital Region USA's China sales missions to continue educating these growing markets about Fairfax County and to meet face-to-face with key decision makers
 - d. Participate in Capital Region USA's Germany sales mission to participate in sales calls and training opportunities in this important market
 - e. Participate in Capital Region USA's UK sales missions to participate in training opportunities, sales calls and private client events in this key mature market.
 - f. Partner with international tour operators in co-operative targeted advertising and marketing campaigns through CRUSA
 - g. Partner with NVTP to develop key international and domestic markets to the region, whether this be through new itineraries, familiarization tours, or receptive sales missions
 - h. Advertise in the NTA's Courier Magazine's November 2020 issue to promote product to their vetted international and domestic tour operator readership
 - i. Advertise in Leisure Group Travel Magazine's April 2021 edition featuring a Virginia Group Tour Guide to highlight niche tour itinerary options to adult and senior group tour planners
 - j. Advertise in the Student Travel Planning Guide's September 2020 issue to reach active & qualified student tour operators during their key planning time
4. Show buyers firsthand why they should be selling Fairfax County, Virginia—rather than only telling—through familiarization tours
 - a. Host several familiarization tours through Capital Region USA with their in-country representatives pre-qualifying each participating tour operator
 - b. Build cohesive itineraries with surrounding destination partners as regional itineraries are essential for the international market. These itineraries will also gain increasing significance within the domestic market during the recovery period post-COVID-19 when drive markets are first to rebound.
 - c. Create familiarization tour itineraries that fit the specific market that is being hosted; include stakeholders who want/fit the market that is being hosted for the best ROI

LEISURE CONSUMER



The recent national emergency relating to COVID-19 will undoubtedly result in ripples that could affect national psyche for years to come. We may not know the long-term or even mid-term impact on travel for some time; however, one thing is certain: our resilient nation will travel again. This is not a question of if, but when. Perhaps the more important questions will be how and why.

In terms of leisure travel, statistics suggest that more than 80% of leisure visitors had already been arriving by car. That high number may rise even further in the wake of recent events, but either way, the majority of our visitors will continue to drive to Northern Virginia. On the other hand, the question of what motivates them to come, or the “why,” could change significantly. In many ways, our world of destination marketing changed nearly overnight as we all adapted to the new reality of virtual experiences and entertainment. Visit Fairfax transitioned our marketing from print to primarily digital years ago, and so, we were able to serve up robust content to engage local residents and potential visitors as #stayhome began trending across the nation. Additionally, industry leaders such as George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Wolf Trap, the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, and The Workhouse Arts Center in addition to others offered innovative online experiences that we consolidated into a central location called “Fairfax-at-Home.”

With so many online marketers transitioning to digital media, the resulting competition for online attention has been escalating for years. Consequently, simple display ads do little to grasp consumer attention. In recent years, Visit Fairfax successfully used highly interactive rich media ad units to grab and hold interest and to reach consumers where they most often make travel choices. That paradigm shift will be even more complicated now with so many more competitors making that move out of necessity. Search engine optimization will also likely be a challenging adventure as content evolves to meet consumer mentality and needs.

We may not know exactly what the long-term impact of COVID-19 on travel will be, but we also will not give up on the progress we have made, especially with niche audiences. For years, we have seen considerable growth in website traffic and consumer interest via highly targeted messaging directed at highly defined audiences that were chosen in alignment with our tourism assets. This strategy resulted in hundreds of thousands of consumer engagements and nearly a million new visitors to fxva.com. In the new year, we will continue these highly customized campaigns that leverage our strengths, but with careful consideration of the potential changes in our national psyche, specifically in terms of what we value, and therefore what we seek in terms of travel experiences.



We will execute two niche campaigns based on our two new museums, the Lucy Burns Museum and the National Museum of the United States Army. Both of these museum experiences hold inherent appeal to targeted audiences and present great opportunity for advertising campaigns. But while niche campaigns have been highly successful for us in the past, the time is also

right for a more general message telling visitors that “it’s time to travel and to reconnect with America.” This overarching campaign must be deployed at exactly the right time when public confidence in travel has sparked and our visitors are once again open to the message. Finally, we will employ those distribution channels with the greatest ability and agility for audience targeting, message type, engagement, and accountability.

As always, one of the great benefits of online marketing is the ability to evaluate return-on-investment through the use of analytics that track actual visitor party spending. And so, we will have the opportunity to adjust the plan as we get real-time data on what is working and what is not – allowing us to calibrate the plan even as it is being executed.

Strategic Objectives

1. With close attention paid to our new reality, maximize engaging content on FXVA.com that helps consumers to personally connect with Fairfax County.
2. Develop and execute a marketing and communications strategy for local residents and constituents.
3. Utilize direct e-Mail marketing to build consumer relationships in those markets that result in the highest yield in converted visitor parties.
4. Execute a comprehensive Search Engine Marketing program while continuing the migration from paid search to organic optimization with content that evolves to meet consumer mentality and needs.
5. Reinforce stakeholders' use of the Fairfax County brand message to multiple audiences and build alliances within the County's tourism community.
6. Ensure maximum attention within the growing audience of mobile users through mobile-friendly platforms and outbound messaging.
7. Execute six integrated marketing campaigns that target highly motivated consumers by engaging those visitors through targeted messaging and relevant content.
8. Leverage inherent interest in high-demand local events by "drafting" the Visit Fairfax message off of existing consumer interest.
9. Track and report online conversion through 3rd party conversion study.

Tactics

1. With close attention paid to our new reality, maximize engaging content on FXVA.com that helps consumers to personally connect with Fairfax County.
 - a. Conduct a consumer experience path review, to be completed in stages depending on the COVID19 situation, ensuring that Fairfax County is on the cutting edge of consumer and traveler sensitivities, fears and hopes.
 - b. Curate all virtual visitor technology offered by county stakeholders, making it easy and appealing to preview a visit to Fairfax County online.
 - c. Engage consumers by distributing our most compelling content throughout the site, such as the Virtual Tour eMap, Storyteller video series, and niche market imagery.

What

**Search Engine
Marketing &
Optimization**

Direct eMail Marketing

Niche Audiences

**Online Display Banner &
Native Advertising**

Social Media Outlets

Mobile Marketing

Consumer Publications

**Fairfax County Visitors
Guide**

Where

Search Engines

Drive Marketplaces

**Self-identified Niche
Audiences Online**

**Washington DC,
Maryland, and Virginia**

- d. Ensure that all of our visitor experiences feature both group/social and other more individual/solitary options to appeal to the entire range of potential visitors.
 - e. Incorporate real-life imagery and user-generated content derived from a cross-section of social media platforms via Crowdriff technology.
 - f. Employ dynamic website technology to craft personalized webpage content depending on consumer interests, based on previous behavior, or based on their geographic location.
 - g. Support new and existing content through social media channels with a focus on authentic visitor experiences and the desire to create “precious moments” with loved ones that appeal to a potentially transformed national psyche.
 - h. Evolve the annual Fairfax County Visitor Guide based on these new sensibilities.
 - i. Develop unique visitor experiences through Bandwango that offer specialized digital itineraries.
2. Develop and execute a marketing and communications strategy for local residents and constituents.
- a. Adopt a “show don’t tell” strategy to illustrate why tourism is valuable for local residents and is an important part of our local economy.
 - b. Continue to promote the Fairfax Take Out Trail as an amenity for local residents and as a means to promote our local businesses.
 - c. Evolve the messaging of Fairfax-at-Home into a planning tool for local residents who want to take advantage of their own local attractions as well as to plan for visiting friends and family.
 - d. Use website personalization to ensure messaging that will resonate with locals who visit FXVA.com.
 - e. Develop and execute a marketing campaign using owned and earned media that highlights tourism programs and amenities for local residents.
 - f. Continue to leverage the Insider newsletter to highlight what Visit Fairfax is doing to support the county’s hospitality industry.
 - g. Add an additional direct eMail marketing deployment that specifically speaks to local residents and all that our industry offers in their own backyards.
3. Utilize direct e-Mail marketing to build consumer relationships in those markets that result in the highest yield in converted visitor parties.
- a. Continue the momentum established through the e-Dialogue program database with 5M total e-Mail deployments to 4 consumer segments (general sites & attractions, Epicurean/Culinary, Civil War History, and Locals) in addition to meeting planners and stakeholders.

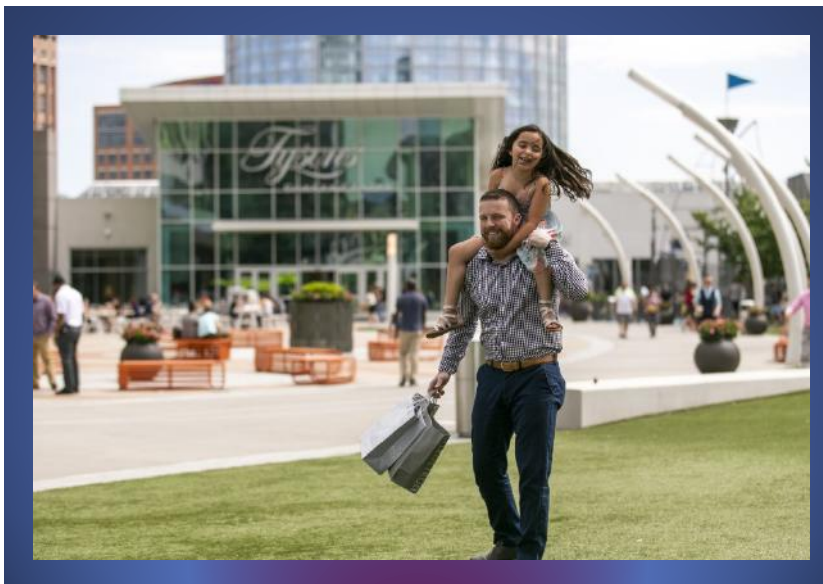


- b. Maximize exposure for eMail content to 800,000 consumers by using cross-channel promotion via 12 social media ads.
 - c. Maintain the e-Mail database with 12,000 new subscribers within the highest performing segments.
 - d. Attract more organic opt-in subscribers on fxva.com via attention-getting strategies designed to deliver 10,000 new subscriptions.
- 4. Execute a comprehensive Search Engine Marketing program while continuing the migration from paid search to organic optimization with content that evolves to meet consumer mentality and needs.
 - a. Continually calibrate the Search Engine Marketing Program in alignment with current trends of online consumer behavior.
 - b. Prioritize the top 20 most successful PPC phrases and optimize those landing pages to ensure the best results with top consideration given to new consumer sensibilities.
 - c. Continue the emphasis on both paid clicks and organic rankings; however, ensure a continued presence on engines with a program delivering 170,000 new consumers to the fxva.com website using both PPC and Facebook look-a-like advertising.
 - d. Continue to broaden the organic optimization program with new key words and phrases resulting in top sort rankings. Integrate these key words through strong optimization of highly impactful and relevant landing pages with a target of 12,500 new organic visitors.



- 5. Reinforce stakeholders' use of the Fairfax County brand message to multiple audiences and build alliances within the County's tourism community.
 - a. Host a Fairfax County celebration to bring the hospitality and tourism community together in recognition of National Travel & Tourism Week.
 - b. Help stakeholders make the most of Fairfax County resources by reinforcing use of the online stakeholder resource toolkit as well as the sales collateral system.
 - c. Execute a photography/video shoot to gather additional image assets for use in Visit Fairfax marketing.
 - d. Promote use of the Visit Fairfax mobile app as a complimentary guest amenity for county businesses.
 - e. Support county stakeholders through social media, finding new ways of reinforcing their brand message within the Visit Fairfax umbrella.

- f. Leverage the influence of the Marketing Advisory Committee as ambassadors of the grass roots efforts within their own peer communities.
 - g. Offer opportunities to increase stakeholder exposure through packaged advertising in the visitor guide, on the website, and within the e-Dialogue program.
6. Ensure maximum attention within the growing audience of mobile users through mobile-friendly platforms and outbound messaging.
- a. Utilize Bandwango technology and mobile offerings to implement a variety of curated “experience paths” for consumers that include targeted itineraries, special discounts/passports, a County Take Out Trail, and other benefits.
 - b. Maintain momentum for Visit Fairfax mobile technology via the Fairfax County smartphone APP including a Brew Trail for county breweries.
 - c. Utilize A/B testing on high-traffic pages and PPC landing pages to increase time on page and decrease bounce rates.
7. Execute six integrated marketing campaigns that target highly motivated consumers by engaging those visitors through targeted messaging and relevant content.
- a. Develop and execute a 7 Million impression display advertising campaign using Conversant’s first-person data which affords us the best option for targeting and maximum cost effectiveness, as well as the most accurate tracking of incremental spending.
 - b. Develop and execute an “It’s Time to Travel” campaign when we are no longer reminding visitors to plan for the future but inviting them to get here as quickly as possible to enjoy Fairfax County’s hospitality.
 - c. Continue the successful niche craft brew campaign to support our local breweries including a printed and mobile Brewery Field Guide.
 - d. When timing is appropriate, execute niche campaigns that leverage the county’s newest attractions: National Museum of the United States Army, the Lucy Burns Museum, and the Turning Point Suffragists Memorial.
 - e. Work with Virginia Tourism Corporation’s TripAdvisor co-op to extend Visit Fairfax marketing dollars through the popular travel platform. Using dynamic website technology, present compelling content and imagery that specifically appeals to these niche interests, including custom landing pages that “speak to” and pay off banner and print advertising with content based on the special interests of the targeted consumers.

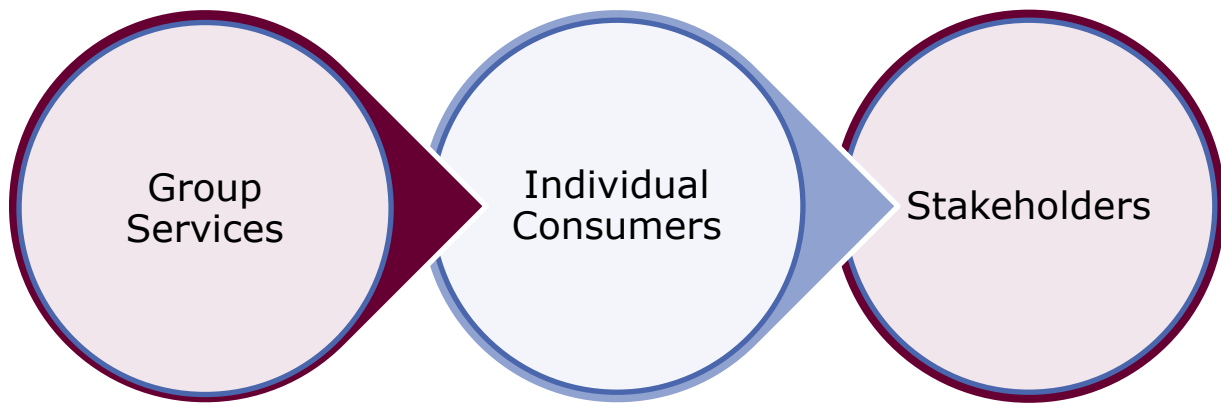


8. Leverage inherent interest in high-demand local events by “drafting” the Visit Fairfax message off of existing consumer interest.
 - a. “Draft” traffic to fxva.com during large-scale events (e.g. National Cherry Blossom Festival) by carefully using specific key word content that drives Internet users to relevant programs offered by County attractions.
 - b. Use social media channels and look-a-like targeting to identify audiences that will be especially receptive to our messages.
 - c. Design custom landing pages that fulfill the advertising message specific to the audience.



9. Track and report online conversion through 3rd party conversion study.
 - a. Work with our marketing partners and Texas A&M University to track conversion through a statistically valid and reliable research study.
 - b. Analyze results and compare return-on-investment to identify the most lucrative programs as well as those that need to be reviewed prior to future investment.

VISITOR SERVICES



Supporting the Visit Fairfax sales force, as well as the sales efforts of County stakeholders, is the mission of the Visitor Services Department. Given the far-reaching effects of the recent corona virus pandemic, the VS department has now devised new strategies to respond to the needs of the post-corona traveler, both as individuals and as members of pre-formed groups. As always, the staff will ensure that prospective clients have all they need to successfully plan and promote their group. In addition, the Visitor Services team will provide information and assistance to the leisure traveler in an environment which the visitor feels is safe and healthy. Finally, through training and tours, County stakeholders are given the tools they need to increase their sales.

The Visitor Services Department accomplishes these objectives through a three-pronged approach with Visitor Center Operations, Ambassador Program, and Group Servicing.

Strategic Objectives

1. Continue to ensure that the Visitor Center maintains its ability to service county visitors with the most current information and interesting, interactive technology; and that Visitor Counselors are not simply information providers, but sales professionals who suggestively sell new experiences to visitors and increase traffic to the Center.
2. Continue to increase the force of hospitality industry professionals and students in the county who can increase their organizations' bottom line by giving their customers the



information they need to experience sites and create a desire for return visits through the Ambassador Program. Tailor the Program to the needs of hotels to reflect the staffing levels/availability in the post-corona period.

3. Satisfy all requirements for groups traveling to the County to ensure expectations are met and exceeded before, during and after their stay and to encourage extended and repeat visits. Introduce new incentives to increase attendance which will undoubtedly be affected after the pandemic.
4. As with other large events following the pandemic, visitor interest in attending the programs of the National Cherry Blossom Festival will be affected. Support the continued viability of the Festival as a way to also attract visitors to Fairfax by sponsoring Festival-related events, either live or virtual.

Tactics

1. Continue to ensure that the Visitor Center maintains its ability to service county visitors with the most current information and interesting, interactive technology; and that Visitor Counselors are not simply information providers, but sales professionals who suggestively sell new experiences to visitors and increase traffic to the Center.
 - a. Research and compile a new database of experiential offerings provided by County stakeholders, and then vet these experiences. Working with the Marketing Department, incorporate these experiences into an “incentive to participate” program which will be fulfilled at the Visitor Center.
 - b. Maintain a well-stocked and current supply of county and regional brochures and informational material.
 - c. Encourage visitor use of the interactive kiosk to increase excitement about county attractions and encourage visitation.
 - d. Serve as a fulfillment site for the Visit Fairfax Craft Brew Passport program.
 - e. Promote the Visit Fairfax smart phone app and Flash Pass.
 - f. Participate in applicable Tysons Corner promotions, including the coupon book and promoting the Center to Tysons Corner retailers.
 - g. Promote the Center through the Visit Fairfax website with free gift offer.

What

Consultative Selling

Ambassador Classes & Tours

Event Planner Toolkit

Visitor Guides and App Promotion Cards

Flash Pass

Planner Welcome Gifts

New Experience-Related Incentive Program

Local and Regional Events

Where

Visitor Center

Airport Taxis

Local Hotels

College Campuses

Stakeholder Sites

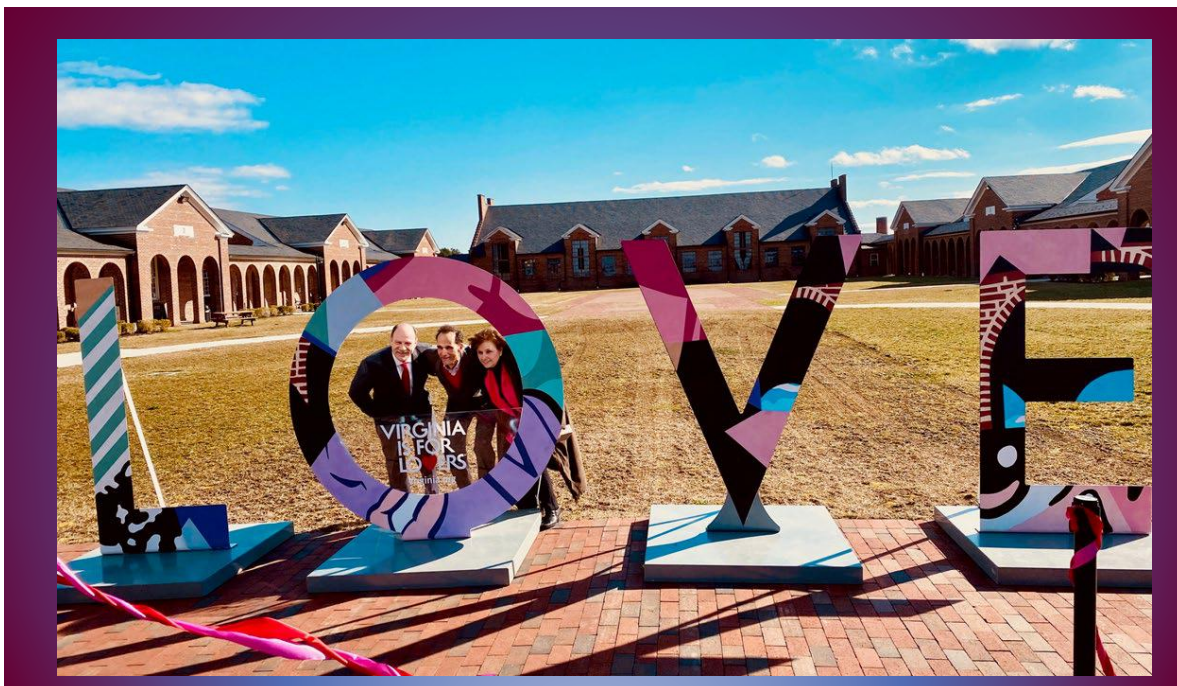
Festivals

2. Continue to increase the force of hospitality industry professionals and students in the county who can increase their organizations' bottom line by giving their customers the information they need to experience sites and create a desire for return visits through the Ambassador Program. Tailor the Program to the needs of hotels to reflect the staffing levels/availability in the post-corona period.
 - a. Hold classes for hoteliers, taxi drivers, and hospitality students in local colleges. Given the difficult hotel environment where training times will be at a minimum, explore the possibility of doing online classes. Hold 2 in person classes at attractions with their visitor services staffs. This will prepare the visitor services staffs at the attractions for an increase in visitors following increased use of the Flash Pass.



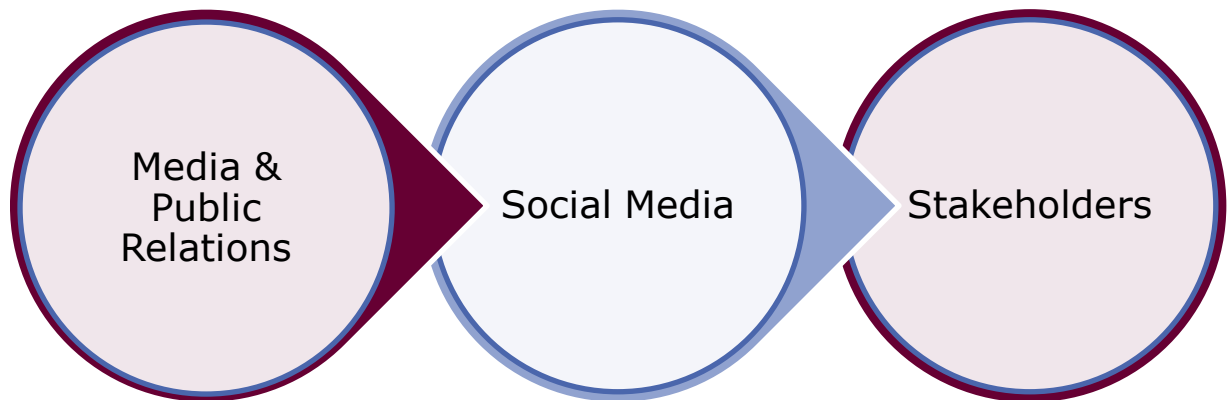
- b. Hold classes geared to hotel sales professionals to provide destination information, as well as refresher tips on utilizing Visit Fairfax sales tools.
 - c. Hold tours of county attractions for Ambassadors to provide first-hand experience of the sites discussed in classroom settings.
3. Satisfy all requirements for groups traveling to the County to ensure expectations are met and exceeded before, during and after their stay and to encourage extended and repeat visits. Introduce new incentives to increase attendance which will undoubtedly be affected after the pandemic.
 - a. Work with Bandwango to create customized experiences for large groups, drawing on the new database created and vetted by the Visitor Services team.
 - b. Promote the Stakeholder Toolkit to County stakeholders as a tool for their use in selling and servicing their meetings and provide advice on its use.
 - c. Actively promote and implement every aspect of the Event Planner toolkit to meeting planners serviced by Visit Fairfax. Continually update information and incorporate tools for stakeholders.
 - d. Welcome qualified groups to the County with a planner amenity and welcome letter.

- e. Send a survey after a group visits to assess the quality of the services provided.
- f. Provide storage and timely fulfillment of visitor guides to groups, hotels, attractions and Certified Virginia Visitor Centers.
- g. Order and maintain the supply of appropriate promotional items so that office staff has a ready supply of branded items for client gifts.



- 4. As with other large events following the pandemic, visitor interest in attending the programs of the National Cherry Blossom Festival will be affected. Support the continued viability of the Festival as a way to also attract visitors to Fairfax by sponsoring Festival-related events, either live or virtual.
 - a. Sponsor events at County attractions (either live or virtual), such as the Workhouse Arts Center, Green Spring Gardens, Meadowlark Botanical Garden, Children's Science Center and others; as well as online promotion of these events.
 - b. Distribute an amenity for distribution at these events which promotes Visit Fairfax
 - c. Hold an event during the Festival at the Visitor Center, increasing attendance at the Center and promoting the Center as a venue offering County and Festival information.

COMMUNICATIONS



As the travel industry enters an unprecedented new era, where social distancing is the norm and consumers are slowly dipping their toes back into normal travel routines, the way businesses speak to their audiences needs to be as fluid as ever. Luckily, the quick shift in strategy that Visit Fairfax took as the COVID-19 pandemic arrived during fiscal year 2020 will help guide the plan for 2021. In addition, the Fairfax County community has banded together in this time of crisis, which means there are countless uplifting stories to share that will ultimately help inspire travel again in the future.

A recent study by Arival pinpointed that the industry may not see a return to pre-COVID travel levels before 2023, which, while unsettling, gives businesses the opportunity to reinvent themselves and their marketing and communications strategies. Visit Fairfax had previously adopted an outside-the-box mentality and in this current travel climate, will continue at an even more rapid pace to work on innovative approaches to content marketing, communications, and storytelling.



Journalists, maybe more than ever, will be seeking content to fill re-worked editorial calendars and will want to be a part of the industry's recovery in a way that will fuel travel inspiration for the future. Visit Fairfax will work on new story angles that feature virtual offerings, weekend getaways for people venturing out closer to home, community heroes and sustainability/wellness efforts from our hardworking stakeholders, a renewed focus on the culinary scene, and more evergreen destination

pieces that embrace the “we’re ready when you are” travel attitude.

The regional work among the Northern Virginia localities will also play an important role in this post-COVID world – a rising tide lifts all boats, so the efforts to come together regionally will, more than ever, help showcase Northern Virginia in a positive light. This outbound communication through customized pitches and inquiry responses, experiential familiarization tours and in-market desksides (when possible), and targeted press release distribution, will create destination awareness in a renewed and inspirational way.

Internally, Visit Fairfax must continue the efforts to support its stakeholders and tell their stories using tools available via social media, industry e-newsletters, and web-based promotions like the blog and event calendar.

The goals of this communications plan will be achieved through numerous strategies and tactics that include facilitating press coverage through pitches and networking, creating and distributing content via social media, web, eMail, and video, and educating and supporting our local hospitality industry in a day and age when they need it more than ever. Visit Fairfax will continuously measure, adjust, improve, and refresh all of these strategies and tactics throughout the year to deliver the most effective results, as the whole industry finds its way back onto its feet.

Strategic Objectives

1. Further develop public relations initiatives by proactively seeking out and placing media coverage in national publications to build awareness about Visit Fairfax and Fairfax County.
2. Strengthen content marketing efforts through owned and shared media with integrated approach to storytelling.
3. Develop new communications strategies to support local stakeholders and hospitality partners to help fuel recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.
4. Seek out new relationships and strengthen current ones with local media, content creators, and micro-influencers to help build credibility for the Visit Fairfax brand within the community and with national/international media to help further our message.
5. Cultivate and fine-tune social media presence with consistent and targeted messaging and by utilizing user-generated content (UGC), stakeholder assets, and intimate knowledge of Fairfax County tourism product to help build Visit Fairfax’s share of the online conversation.
6. Find new ways of using existing consumer assets (website/blog, visitor guide, app, etc.) to communicate the Fairfax County tourism message.
7. Strengthen partnership with the state and regional tourism entities to generate positive press and awareness for the County, region, and Commonwealth.
8. Strengthen partnerships with industry colleagues, public relations alliances, and stakeholders who can help spread the Fairfax County tourism message.
9. Develop partnerships and materials for consumers and stakeholders that will pique interest and encourage visitors to engage with our tourism products.

10. Leverage and draft off trending national and local events to insert Fairfax County's message into the conversation.
11. Promote in-destination brand advocacy and encourage local pride by serving as a resource and voice for the local and regional tourism industry.

External Communications Plan

1. Develop new pitches and outreach to specifically help fuel the "we're ready when you are" travel message that will support the industry's recovery from the covid-19 pandemic.
2. Identify other travel trends and media opportunities to proactively pitch story lines that will result in positive press coverage for Fairfax County and Visit Fairfax in the national/international markets.
3. Respond to media/journalist inquiries and requests for information, photos, interviews, and press visits to produce positive press for Fairfax County and Visit Fairfax.
4. Host a variety of press familiarization tours throughout the year to gain valuable editorial coverage in local, national, and international publications.
5. Distribute seasonal and campaign-focused press releases covering Fairfax County tourism product to local, national, and international media.
6. Develop new engaging and shareable content that can be utilized and distributed on the online blog module to help tell more niche, featurette, and local community stories about Fairfax County.
7. Work with local experts to bring trusted third-party stories into the fold and form relationships that will benefit Visit Fairfax for future endeavors.
8. Create brand equity, start conversations about tourism in Fairfax County, and curate new content for web, social, and other marketing channels by engaging social media users and influencers via Crowdriff and native social platforms.
9. Maintain fluid, daily editorial calendars to ensure messaging continuity on social media platforms, pushing out compelling, fact-based, shareable information.

What

Increase the County's Share of the Online Conversation

Positive media coverage

Updates and news for stakeholders

Support for local community

Partnership with state and regional tourism/PR organizations

Curate user-generated content

Content creation and distribution

Where

Online/Social Media Outlets

Local Media

National Media

International Media

Newsletters/eBlasts

Blog

PR Tradeshows/Networking

Press releases

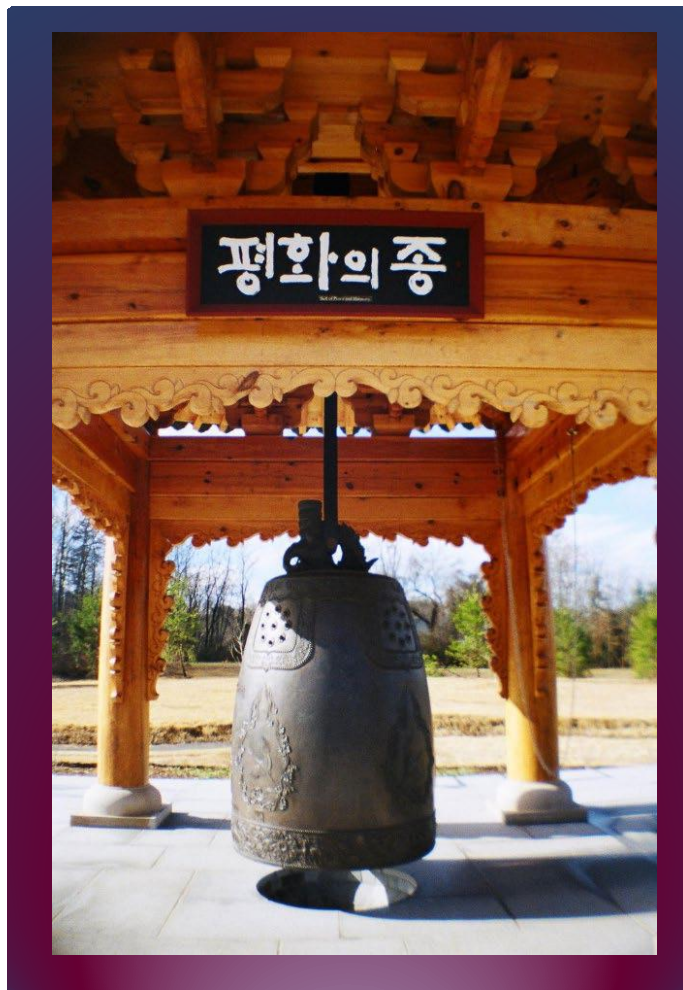
FAM Tours

Video

10. Create new opportunities for supporting stakeholders via video tools within social networking.
11. Use the Visit Fairfax smartphone app platform to send push notifications to hundreds of subscribers with special emphasis on stakeholder offers and updates.
12. Refresh the Official Fairfax County Visitors Guide with new and updated editorial content, imagery, and listing details to help guide visitors through the County.
13. Attend public relations tradeshow, networking events, and press missions to pitch story ideas, network with journalists, and take Fairfax County's message in-market to further Visit Fairfax's reach in our target markets.

Internal Communications Plan

1. Communicate regularly with stakeholders about viable opportunities and relevant updates via the Partner Extranet and Toolkit, e-Blasts and Insider Newsletter.
2. Gather information from stakeholders through a quarterly planning form.
3. Foster new relationships with stakeholders by proactively seeking out and welcoming new members of the Fairfax County tourism community through in-person meetings, training calls, and social media communication.
4. Create content creation opportunities via the blog by partnering with stakeholders who are experts in their fields already and give them a platform on FXVA.com in which to share their knowledge.
5. Present opportunities to our stakeholders and incoming special event organizers to further their brand through the tools and resources offered by Visit Fairfax.
6. Host an annual stakeholder event in conjunction with National Travel & Tourism Week to allow the Fairfax County tourism community to gather, network, and promote all tourism efforts.
7. Serve as a sponsor for the Valor and Innovation Awards, as well as the annual tourism scholarship initiative through the state hospitality association.



ACRONYM DEFINITIONS

Abbrev.	Definition	Abbrev.	Definition
ABA	American Bus Association	PMPI	Meeting Professionals International Potomac Chapter
AMPS	Association of Meeting Professionals	PRSA	Public Relations Society of America
ASAE	American Society of Association Executives	RSAA	Receptive Services Association of America
CRUSA	Capital Region USA	RFN	Reunion Friendly Network
DMAI	Destination Marketing Association International	SEM	Search Engine Marketing
FAM Trip	Familiarization Trip	SEO	Search Engine Optimization
HARO	Help a Reporter Out (PR lead source)	SGMP	Society of Government Meeting Professionals
MATPRA	Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance	SYTA	Student & Youth Travel Association
MPI	Meeting Planners International	TAP	Travel Alliance Partners
MWAA	Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority	TEAMS	Travel, Events, & Management in Sports
NASC	National Association of Sports Commissions	USTA	U.S. Travel Association
NATCAP	Society of Government Meeting Professionals National Capital Chapter	VADMO	Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations
NTA	National Tour Association	VSAE	Virginia Society of Association Executives
PPC	pay-per-click advertising	VTC	Virginia Tourism Corporation

Appendices

Performance Measures

Staff

Activity Schedules

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Market Segment	Performance Measure
Business & Sports Groups	Number of Definite Groups
	Number of Definite Room Nights
	Number of Definite Attendees
	Number of Leads
	Number of Potential Room Nights
	Number of Potential Attendees
Leisure Groups	Number of New Overnight Programs
	Number of Definite Room Nights
	Number of Visitors
	Number of New Daytrip Programs

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Market Segment	Performance Measure
Consumer	Website Unique Visitors
	Advertising Reader Response
	Online Marketing Conversion
Public Relations	Number of Media Stories
	Social Engagement

VISIT FAIRFAX STAFF

Barry H. Biggar, CDME President & CEO bbiggar@fxva.com 703-752-9501	Jackie Franchi VP Marketing & Sales jfranchi@fxva.com 703-752-9506	Sue Porter Director of Visitor Services sporter@fxva.com 703-752-9512	Patrick Lennon Director of Marketing plennon@fxva.com 703-752-9504	Bert Cook Office Manager bcook@fxva.com 703-752-9508
Eric Kulczycky National Sales Manager, Sports, Government, & Corp. ekulczycky@fxva.com 703-752-9510	Dean Miller National Sales Manager, Association & Reunion dmiller@fxva.com 703-752-9509	Linda Horowitz National Sales Manager, Domestic/Int'l Group Tour lhowitz@fxva.com 703-752-9513	Ali Morris Destination Marketing Manager amorris@fxva.com 703-752-9505	
Margaret Tenenbaum Visitor Services Counselor fxva2@fxva.com 703-752-9500	Birgit Klare Visitor Services Counselor Fxva2@fxva.com 703-752-9500	Lori Knittel Visitor Services Counselor Fxva2@fxva.com 703-752-9500	Jehan Mondal Visitor Services Counselor Fxva2@fxva.com 703-752-9500	
Katherine Moore, CPA Accountant Ross, Langan & McKendree klm@RLMCPA.com	J. Scott Hommer, III Attorney at Law Venable SHommer@Venable.com			

ACTIVITY CALENDAR — GROUP SALES

Audience	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Business	Reston-Herndon Mtg Planners “Summer Camp” Fairfax, VA <u>Date TBD</u> Army Museum Press Fam <u>Date TBD</u> Army Museum Planner Lunch Date TBD	Connect Mkt New Orleans, LA <u>8/17-19/2020</u> Destination SE Marco Island, FL <u>8/23-25/20</u>	Countdown to Metro Lunch Fairfax, VA <u>Date TBD</u> Overseas Brats Gathering San Diego, CA 10/22-25/20	VSAE Fall Conf. Richmond, VA <u>10/1/2020</u> VA-1 Conf Hot Springs, VA <u>11/15-17/2020</u>	VA Assn Blitz Richmond, VA <u>Date TBD</u>	Connect Mktpl Washington, DC <u>Date TBD</u>	IPEC Louisville, KY 1/27-30/2021	Connect Chicago Northbrook, IL <u>2/17-18/21</u>	Rendezvous South Lake Charles, LA <u>3/2-4/2020</u> Countdown to Metro Lunch Fairfax, VA Date TBD	VA Assn Blitz Richmond, VA <u>Date TBD</u> Family Reunion seminar Fairfax County, VA <u>Date TBD</u>	VSAE Annual Mtg Virginia Beach,VA <u>5/2-4/21</u> SGMP NEC Conf Location TBD May/2021	TMRN Educ Summit New Orleans, LA <u>Date TBD</u> Smart Mtgs Experience Fairfax, VA Date TBD
Leisure		SYTA Winnipeg, CAN <u>8/14-18/2020</u> CRUSA Int’l Mktg Summit <u>Date TBD</u>	Active America China San Diego, CA <u>9/13-15/20</u> Active America China Receptive Los Angeles, CA Date TBD	CRUSA China Sales Mission <u>Date TBD</u> BrandUSA India Sales Mission <u>10/5-9/20</u> RTO East New York, NY 10/19-22/20	Spotlight on the Mid-Atlantic Fairfax County <u>11/12-14/20</u> NTA Reno, NV 11/15-19/20	CRUSA Germany Sales Mission 11/29-12/5/20	ABA Baltimore, MD <u>1/29-2/2/2021</u>	IITA Summit St. Pete Clearwater <u>2/2-5/2021</u> NVVC Sales Mission Date TBD	CRUSA UK Sales Mission <u>Date TBD</u>	IPW 2021 Chicago, IL <u>5/30-6/3/2021</u> CRUSA FAM Fairfax County <u>Date TBD</u>	CRUSA China Sales Mission <u>Date TBD</u>	TAP Dance Location TBD <u>Dates TBD</u>
Sports		Sports ETA Symposium I Kansas City, MO <u>8/2-5/2020</u>		TEAMS Conf & Expo Houston, TX <u>10/19-22/2020</u>				VA Sports Summit Feb/2021		Sports ETA Symposium II Birmingham, AL <u>4/26-29/2021</u>		

ACTIVITY CALENDAR — MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Audience	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Business	Group Planner eNewsletter CVENT	CVENT	Group Planner eNewsletter CVENT	Advertising Meetings Today Advertising Convention South Advertising Military Officer Magazine Advertising Government Connections CVENT	Group Planner eNewsletter CVENT	CVENT	Group Planner eNewsletter CVENT	Advertising Smart Meetings CVENT	Group Planner eNewsletter Advertising Meetings Today Advertising Reunions Magazine Advertising Military Officer Magazine CVENT	CVENT	Group Planner eNewsletter Advertising ConventionSouth CVENT	CVENT
Leisure	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Epicurean eNewsletter Facebook Targeted Ads Locals eNewsletters	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Locals eNewsletters Facebook Targeted Ads	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Epicurean & Locals eNewsletter Facebook Targeted Ads Student Travel Planning Guide	General & Civil War eNewsletters Locals eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Facebook Targeted Ads Beer Campaign	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Epicurean eNewsletter Facebook Targeted Ads NTA Courier Magazine ABA Destinations Magazine	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Locals eNewsletter Facebook Targeted Ads 2021 Visitor Guide CRUSA Guide & Website	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Epicurean & Locals eNewsletter Facebook Targeted Ads VTC Leisure Travel Guide Touropoperatorland Travel Site	General & Civil War eNewsletters Locals eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Facebook Targeted Ads It's Time to Travel Campaign (Date TBD)	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Epicurean & Locals eNewsletters Facebook Targeted Ads CRUSA eNewsletter Military History Campaign Beer Campaign	General & Civil War eNewsletters Locals eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Facebook Targeted Ads Spring Travel Campaign Women's History Campaign	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Epicurean & Locals eNewsletter Facebook Targeted Ads Spring Travel Campaign TripAdvisor VTC co-op	General & Civil War eNewsletters SEO/SEM programs Facebook Targeted Ads Spring Travel Campaign Locals eNewsletters
Sports												

ACTIVITY CALENDAR – COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Audience	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Outside Media	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> MATPRA Quarterly Meeting Howard County, MD <u>7/17/20</u>	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> Beer Program <u>Press Release</u> FAM Tour	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> MATPRA Marketplace Delaware's Quaint Villages <u>9/21-23/2020</u>	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> MATPRA Qtrly Meeting Location & <u>Date TBD</u> Press Fam Fairfax, VA Date TBD	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> FAM Tour	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u>	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> What's New / Time to Travel <u>Press Release</u> MATPRA Qtrly Meeting Location TBD	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u>	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> Spring Topic <u>Press Releases</u> FAM Tour VTC Visitor Center Seminar	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> MATPRA Qtrly Location TBD <u>4/19/19</u>	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> Media Fam Tour NTTW Press Release IPW Las Vegas, NV 5/10-14/20	HARO/Direct <u>Media Pitches</u> Summer Topic <u>Press Releases</u> FAM Tour NVVC Media Canada Dates TBD
Internal Stakeholders	<u>Amb. Newsletter</u>	Stakeholder <u>Newsletter</u> <u>Amb. Newsletter</u>	<u>Amb. Newsletter</u> Taxi Amb. <u>Class</u> Hotel Amb. <u>Class</u>	Stakeholder <u>Newsletter</u> <u>Amb. Newsletter</u> <u>Amb. Tour</u> NOVA <u>Amb. Class</u>	<u>Amb. Newsletter</u> Hotel <u>Amb. Class</u>	Stakeholder <u>Newsletter</u> Ambassador <u>Newsletter</u>	Ambassador <u>Newsletter</u> Hotel Amb. <u>Class</u>	Stakeholder <u>Newsletter</u> Ambassador <u>Newsletter</u> Sales <u>Amb. Class</u>	<u>Amb. Newsletter</u> Taxi Amb. <u>Class</u> NOVA Amb. <u>Class</u> Hotel Amb. <u>Class</u>	Stakeholder <u>Newsletter</u> Ambassador <u>Newsletter</u>	Stakeholder ICW <u>Nat'l Tourism Wk</u> <u>Amb. Newsletter</u> Hotel Amb <u>Class</u>	Stakeholder <u>Newsletter</u> Ambassador <u>Newsletter</u> Taxi Amb. <u>Class</u> <u>Amb. Tour</u>
Misc	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	VA-1 Conf Hot Springs, VA <u>11/15-17/2020</u> Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u>	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u> Valor Awards <u>Sponsorship</u> NCBF Culture Day at VC	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u> Innovation Awards <u>Sponsorship</u> VA Welcome Center Mktg "Takeover"	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u> VA Welcome Center Mktg "Takeover"	Social Media <u>Outlets</u> App Push <u>Notifications</u> Celebrate Fairfax <u>Booth</u>