

Tourism Strategic Plan (May 10th)

The leakage analysis indicates there is a demand for an expansion of tourism in Berea that would create new jobs. The disconnect of arts centers, no fun, and lack of gathering spaces are listed as weaknesses in the SWOT analysis. That analysis lists opportunities as building upon Berea's existing arts reputation and taking a broader approach to tourism by emphasizing local scenery, sports tournaments, recreation activities and local history and culture. The IMPLAN model indicates that a 25% shift in the entertainment, restaurant & tourism sector could produce 168 new jobs.

The tourism group's goal is to leverage tourism as an economic development tool by broadening the definition of tourism to include diverse recreational activities and events, history, scenery, exercise, continuing to support artists and craftspeople and to explore the possibility of alcohol sales within the city.

Strategies to achieve this goal

1. Investigate alcohol sales in Berea as an economic driver. We observed that SWOT analysis and every small group that reported earlier identified this an opportunity and a weakness.
 - a. This could attract tourists and provide entertainment opportunities for local citizens and opportunities for local businesses to grow by developing wineries, craft breweries, and theme cafes. It could also attract new businesses such as restaurants and allow existing restaurants to expand business.
 - b. Action plan Different people have collected some information and shared ideas and conversation about this issue and we have spoken with several of them. Those discussions centered on economic growth in surrounding towns such as Danville, the various options from moist to wet and the steps needed to place the issue on a ballot for a vote.
 - i. We support the "moist more than 50 seats" option sale of alcohol.
 - ii. The Tourism Commission has indicated financial support of further economic develop studies of this issue.
 - iii. A group of 5 people should be recruited with one leader to continue research and establish a strategy and timeline to collect signatures to get

the issue placed on a ballot. Much research has been gathered already and will be shared with this group.

- iv. Any strategy should include community education about the process – City appointed Commission, zoning regulations and local control, economic benefits and factual information about associated issues.
2. Establish a citizen advisory team that would work with Tourism and the Commission on ideas to expand marketing efforts, local outreach and diverse new events.
 - a. Suggestions that have been discussed with Tourism include:
 - i. Develop a master calendar/schedule/inventory and arrange by date/type of event, etc for all events/activities/opportunities/facilities that would be accessible and available to citizens and visitors.
 1. Advertise the calendar via social media and business cards (prototype developed).
 2. It is low cost and should use web based- use technology. The costs would be IT support and staff to monitor. There could be kiosks located through out town and there would be a cost to maintain those.
 - ii. Local Team could also help in the understanding of how Tourism works, how it is funded, statutory restrictions on operations and possible funding of events. They could also help educate the public on these issues.
 - b. Action Plan- Follow up with Tourism Commission and formalize role of advisory team.
 3. Create and identify more facilities that would promote events and interaction and review existing physical image.
 - a. More spaces and better image of existing facilities would provide opportunities for a variety of activities – passive and active for locals and tourists.
 - b. Action plan –

- i. Recommend that the City develop master plans to upgrade Berea physical image – no unique identity – Chestnut street needs facelift. Create dynamic community – make Berea feel different. Need consistent look - play up history, tell Berea’s story. More public art, signage, maps. Bury utilities. Benches, bike racks, more recycling.
- ii. A master plan should be developed for city wide parks/greenspaces/ gardens, bird sanctuaries, dog walks. It should identify possible locations and conceptual plans. Look at examples from other cities Finalize and implement the City of Berea “Trail Plan”. Develop an action plan and timeline.
- iii. Conduct a feasibility study for a facility that would serve as a community/ conference center. Define what it is, determine conference revenue potential and demand (less than 300 participants), inventory existing facility resources, explore the possibilities of partnering with local industries, Berea College, and explore underused or unused facilities. The tourism Commission is looking at spaces for learn shops and is interested in partnering with others to share space. A committee has been appointed to do this.