**Tourism Strategic Plan**

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 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, arts and an event center while continuing to support artists and craftspeople.

Strategies to achieve this goal

1. Develop a master calendar/schedule/inventory of all events/activities/opportunities/facilities that would be accessible and available to citizens and visitors.
   1. This would increase the customer base for existing businesses and opportunities for new ones. Tool for hotels, restaurants, event planners.etc. It would provide options for tourists and locals and would increase foot traffic.
   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.
   3. Action Plan- We met with Tourism and talked about the calendar they already have in place and discovered that they could post events by calendar date and add information about other events. The Chamber agreed to work with Tourism and their members to identify other information that could be included on that calendar.
   4. We developed a business card promotional prototype that includes information about the website and a toll free number that could be used by hotels, restaurants, gas stations and others when directing tourists to information about Berea.
2. Create events - recreational, swim meets, runs, trail hikes/walks/events, tournaments, agritourism.
   1. This would increase sport/recreation/culture sales for local businesses – t shirts, books, sports related equipment as well as food, lodging, gas. It could generate new businesses – run/bike shops.
   2. Action plan – We found that a group was already working on coordinating runs in Berea and David Rowlette and Louisa Summers agreed to work with them.

Recommend that a small group of volunteers work with Tourism and Parks and Rec to identify slow times, space for events, possible events and venues, link to regional activities, identify partners.

1. Create and identify more facilities that would promote events and interaction and review existing physical image.
   1. More spaces and better image of existing facilities would provide opportunities for a variety of activities – passive and active for locals and tourists.
   2. Action plan –
      1. 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.
      2. A master plan should be developed for city wide parks/greenspaces/gardens, bird sanctuaries, dog walks. It should identify possible locations (Moore farm, parks throughout town) and conceptual plans. Look at examples (Yew Dell Gardens) from other cities Finalize and implement the City of Berea “Trail Plan”. Develop an action plan and timeline.
      3. 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. This work is ongoing.
2. 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.
   1. 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.
   2. Action plan We discovered that there was a group of citizens who had already started research and conversation about this issue and invited them to meet with us. They have looked at 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. We recommend that the Tourism Commission undertake an economic impact study of the moist more than 50 seats option this group will use that information as they go forward.
3. Other Action Plan We recommend that this group (or those who wish to continue and other that wish to join) be ongoing as an advisory committee to the Tourism Commission so that the ideas generated in this process could be followed up on and new ideas and perhaps volunteers could emerge to help promote and grow tourism in Berea.