Ten Year Sustainable Tourism Development Plan High Springs - Florida

2016-2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CITY SCOPE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

High Springs has expressed an interest in increasing economic opportunities for its citizens by expanding its tourism competitiveness and sustainability.

First, our guiding framework is referred to in academia as the conceptual model of destination competiveness and sustainability. This framework requires a battery of analyses including Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis; Assets Analysis; Competitive Analysis; Trends Analysis; Capacity Analysis; and Risk Analysis that have been quantified in detail for easy graphical understanding.

Our Top Ten Objectives were guided by what we learned from those analyses. Those Objectives in turn led us to three future Scenarios with an ascending level of effort. One of them is identified as being ideal for High Springs and includes launching the non-profit High Springs Economic Development and Tourism Corporation and a plan to bring a 120-room hotel to downtown High Springs. The market segments identified by the client were borne out in research and we detail multi-stage market segmentation that can be used to reach those customers/visitors. Finally we make some suggestions, recommendations and thoughts on funding for High Springs tourism that we believe will be useful in the years ahead.

A number of dedicated and determined High Springs stakeholders have demonstrated their determination to do what it takes to succeed. Inspired by that determination we were motivated to provide the following thoughts on what makes High Springs important:

At the beginning of the 20th century America was an agrarian country. Our citizens lived, worked and raised families on farms and in small towns spread across this great land. Our country's urban centers and populations have exploded since those early days, but somewhere within our deepest instincts there remains a yearning for that sense of community, an ideal of what it is to be a part of something. We want to stroll down the street and say hello to those we meet. We want to walk into shops and be warmly greeted. And, many of our foreign visitors are looking for that feeling just like we are. High Springs is still the kind of place where those kinds of experiences happen.

GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The conceptual model of Destination Competitiveness and Sustainability (diagram) is the result of over a generation of research by Drs. J.R. Brent Ritchie and Geoffrey I. Crouch. Their research tries to bring into focus the interrelated forces that result in a destination that is both competitive and sustainable – a desirable condition, whether we are talking about a country, a state, or a town such as High Springs, Florida. We have used the Ritchie/Crouch conceptual model as a Guiding Framework for our development of a Ten-Year Sustainable Tourism Development Plan for High Springs.

For greater clarity, please refer to the larger diagram depicted on page 4
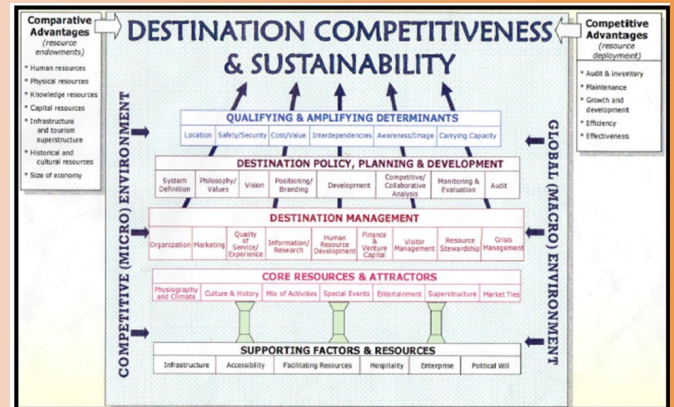
The Ritchie/Crouch model seems complex at first glance. However, a closer look can bring some clarity. Working from the outside into the central bands in middle, we see how all the elements in those five horizontal bands are represented as being affected by both the **micro (local perspective) and macro (world perspective) environments,** which the inward arrows imply. The (micro) environment encompasses things like local prosperity, the local business and finance environment, the political scene, and local climate conditions. As an example, the 2004 hurricane season impacted tourism in the (micro) environment. Both may enhance or diminish the factors in central bands. The financial contraction of 2009 seemed to spread simultaneously among the (macro) environments and the (micro) environment.

Focusing on the central portion of the Conceptual Model, there is a temptation to view it as a progression from bottom to top. Doing so will not capture the interrelated/interactive nature of the model. However, for our purposes, we will discuss each of the bands in succession. This is done in order to understand how each banded category helps us leverage our Guiding Framework and lead to a strong Development Plan for High Springs. Of the total thirty-six separate factors on the five bands, we limit ourselves to elaborating on those that are integral to our Guiding Framework.

The bottom-most **Supporting Factors & Resources** band lists six factors. The Infrastructure factor includes such things as roads, electrical, cell service, internet, banking, fuel, education and medical etc. Continuing to read from left to right, Accessibility is obvious and refers to the ease of getting to and from a destination. Facilitating Resources include both human knowledge and financial capital. Hospitality has to do with how visitors are treated. Enterprise is a core characteristic of the American economic system. Finally, Political Will sets the tone as to whether tourism is a priority.
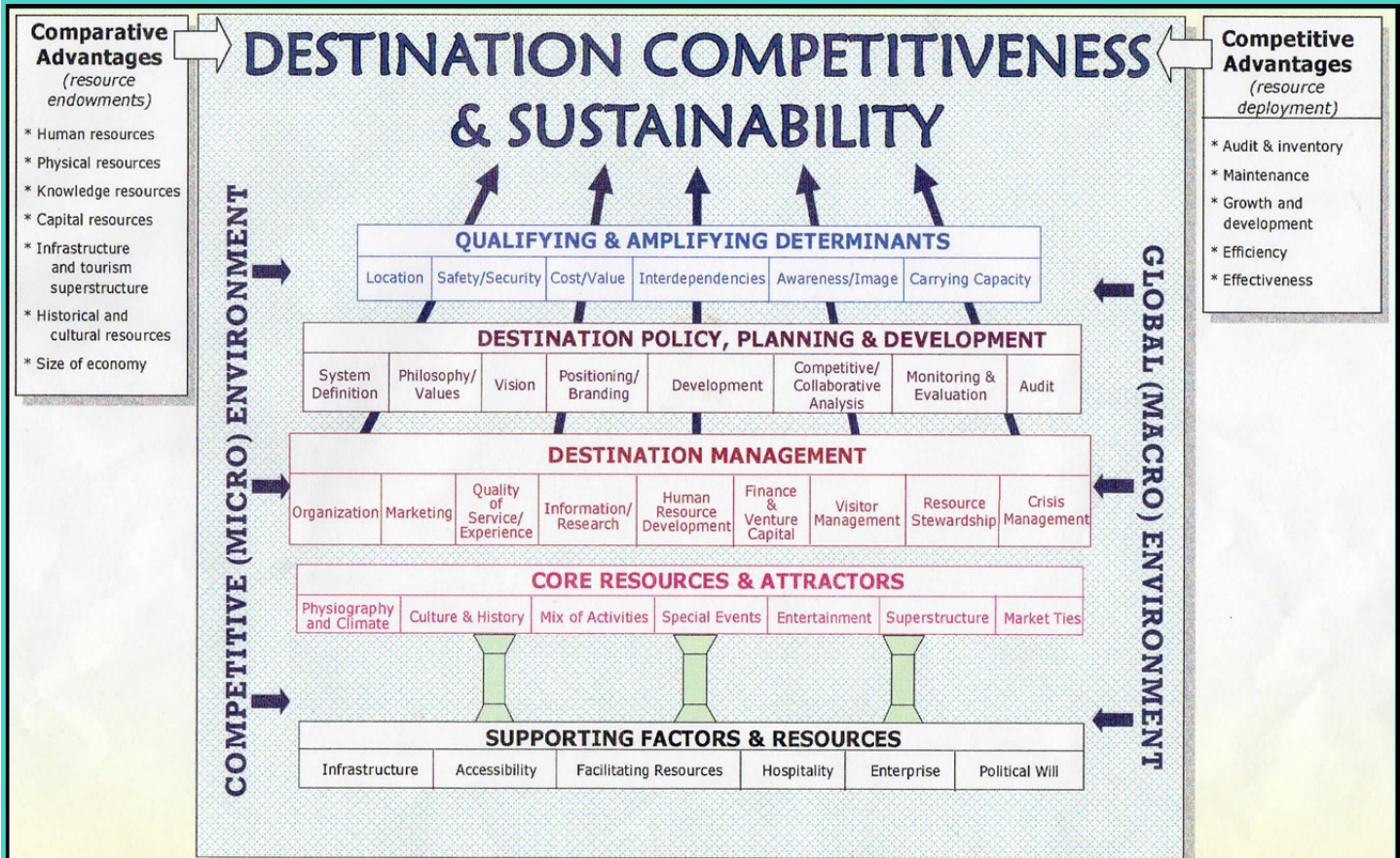
GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The next category band, **Core Resources & Attractors**, has seven factors described by Ritchie and Crouch. Reading from left to right, The Physiology & Climate factor are obvious – northern Florida weather is a solid Attractor. The Culture and History factor is also clear as the history and heritage of High Springs is clearly a Core Resource and Attractor. The Mix of Activities factor answers, "what is there to do?" Special Events create destination uniqueness. Pioneer Days in High Springs is perfect example. Even a community theater or Priest theater grows a destination's Entertainment under the Core Attractors category. Superstructure refers to hotels, restaurants, visitor center, etc. at a destination. Market Ties refers to the strength of family ties, religious ties, and organizational and professional ties that might be a core resource or attractor.

The **Destination Management** band is the next category in the Destination Competitiveness & Sustainability model to consider for our Guiding Framework and Plan. There are a total of nine factors. Four of them may be of particular interest, although all have some impact on High Springs. Those that deserve particular focus are Organization, Marketing, Visitor Management and Resource Stewardship – all are underpinnings for our Framework as we develop the Ten-Year Sustainable Tourism Development Plan.

The **Destination Policy, Planning and Development** band has eight factors. We focus on just three of them: Vision, Development and Monitoring & Evaluation. Before considering those three factors, it is important to offer an overarching definition of Policy: a set of regulations, rules, and strategies that provide a regulatory basis on which decisions affecting tourism development are made. The first factor in this band to discuss is Vision and where we get our "inspirational portrait of an ideal future". If heritage tourism is to be our focus, it must be included in the strongest possible vision statement. Development is another critical factor: how do we translate the vision into reality? Finally, a process for Monitoring and Evaluation will make sure we stay true to the vision for High Springs.

Finally we come to the six factors of **Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants**. Reading from left to right, Location, Safety/Security, Cost/Value and Awareness/Image are obvious. Interdependencies represents our relations with other nearby destinations. However, Carrying Capacity is more abstract. It refers to determining the maximum capacity the destination can handle and why – the destination's hard capacity. For example, hard capacity might be dictated by rooms available in the area. Soft capacity is the point at which visitors begin to have adverse experiences.

GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Comparative Advantages (resource endowments)
* Human resources
* Physical resources
* Knowledge resources
* Capital resources
* Infrastructure and tourism superstructure
* Historical and cultural resources
* Size of economy

Competitive Advantages (resource deployment)
* Audit & inventory
* Maintenance
* Growth and development
* Efficiency
* Effectiveness

DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS & SUSTAINABILITY

COMPETITIVE (MICRO) ENVIRONMENT

GLOBAL (MACRO) ENVIRONMENT

QUALIFYING & AMPLIFYING DETERMINANTS

| Location | Safety/Security | Cost/Value | Interdependencies | Awareness/Image | Carrying Capacity |

DESTINATION POLICY, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

| System Definition | Philosophy/Values | Vision | Positioning/Branding | Development | Competitive/Collaborative Analysis | Monitoring & Evaluation | Audit |

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

| Organization | Marketing | Quality of Service/Experience | Information/Research | Human Resource Development | Finance & Venture Capital | Visitor Management | Resource Stewardship | Crisis Management |

CORE RESOURCES & ATTRACTORS

| Physiography and Climate | Culture & History | Mix of Activities | Special Events | Entertainment | Superstructure | Market Ties |

SUPPORTING FACTORS & RESOURCES

| Infrastructure | Accessibility | Facilitating Resources | Hospitality | Enterprise | Political Will |

A final overall look at the model of shows **Comparative Advantages** on the left side and **Competitive Advantages** on the right side. Comparative Advantages are the attributes that a destination offers. For example the long history and heritage of High Springs is a Comparative Advantage. Competitive Advantages are the ways High Springs leverages its attributes. A strong sense of Enterprise is a Competitive Advantage.

The model in its totality, the micro and macro environments, the five bands of factors, and the comparative and competitive advantages all create our Guiding Framework. They were all considered as we developed this Ten-Year Sustainable Tourism Development Plan for High Springs, Florida.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

PLAN GOAL   Our goal for the 10 year plan is to move High Springs from the "Involvement" Stage of the Destination Life Cycle to the "Development" Stage by building a diverse, sustainable tourism industry that enhances visitor experiences, increases job and income opportunities for residents, respects cultural and historical heritage and protects the natural environment upon which the town depends.

PLAN OBJECTIVES   Our intention is to provide a plan describing where High Springs is today, envisioning where it could be in the future, prescribing how it can get there, suggesting how it can make sure it is getting there, and how High Springs will know if the goal of sustainable tourism has been reached.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLAN

⇒ We present a guiding framework for sustainable tourism development. Growing tourism in a sustainable manner is complex. This industry-standard framework serves as a guide.

⇒ We discuss existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) as they apply to sustainable tourism development. These factors are taken into consideration throughout the plan.

⇒ An inventory of core assets and community attractions as well as supporting factors and resources tracks with the guiding framework and helps to visualize where we are now.

⇒ In our competitive analysis we rank High Springs with other area towns in a variety of categories.

⇒ Current industry trends are selected for applicability to the High Springs destination and analyzed to inform our detailed plan objectives and assist in the measurement of progress.

⇒ We also analyze current and projected capacity and risks associated with the plan.

⇒ A critical element of the plan is specific goal setting targets and objectives based on our analysis activity including SWOT, the competitive analysis, and current industry trends.

⇒ We also review various scenarios, target market segments, assessment activities, and funding.

⇒ Finally, we offer some very specific recommendations for the city to reach the plan goal.

High Springs

High Springs, Florida

⇒ County: Alachua
⇒ Area: 22.05 mi²
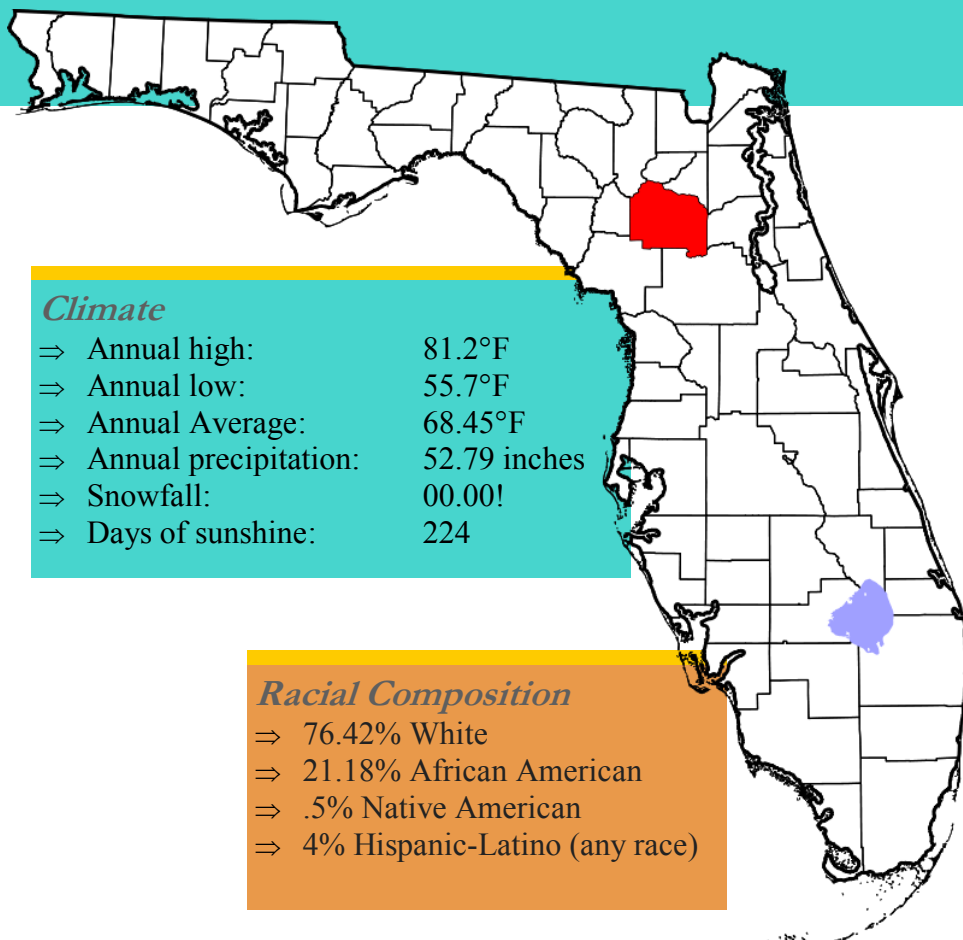⇒ 2014 Population: 5,672
⇒ 2004 Population: 4,139

High Springs is located in the northwestern corner of Alachua Country (pictured in red). Dating to the late nineteenth century, the town takes its name from a tiny hillside spring that originally supplied water to settlers in the area.

Founded as a major railroading operation, the town is now an agricultural service center and well known for antiquing, sightseeing, and summer sports such as hiking, swimming and floating on the Santa Fe River.

The area also boasts the largest concentration of freshwater springs and is internationally known for cave diving.

High Springs is called the friendliest small town in Florida. The designation is easily validated by strolling along Main Street and talking with residents you meet.


Climate

⇒ Annual high: 81.2°F
⇒ Annual low: 55.7°F
⇒ Annual Average: 68.45°F
⇒ Annual precipitation: 52.79 inches
⇒ Snowfall: 00.00!
⇒ Days of sunshine: 224

Racial Composition

⇒ 76.42% White
⇒ 21.18% African American
⇒ .5% Native American
⇒ 4% Hispanic-Latino (any race)

Friendliest Small Town In Florida

Friendly folks are everywhere !

High Springs Museum: The Savannah, Florida & Western Railroad , High Springs Engine Shops Circa 1890, is depicted in a amazing working diorama for all to enjoy.
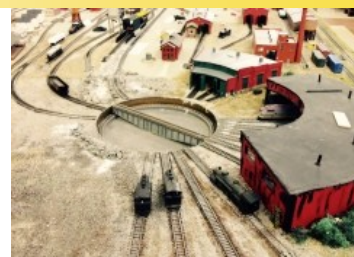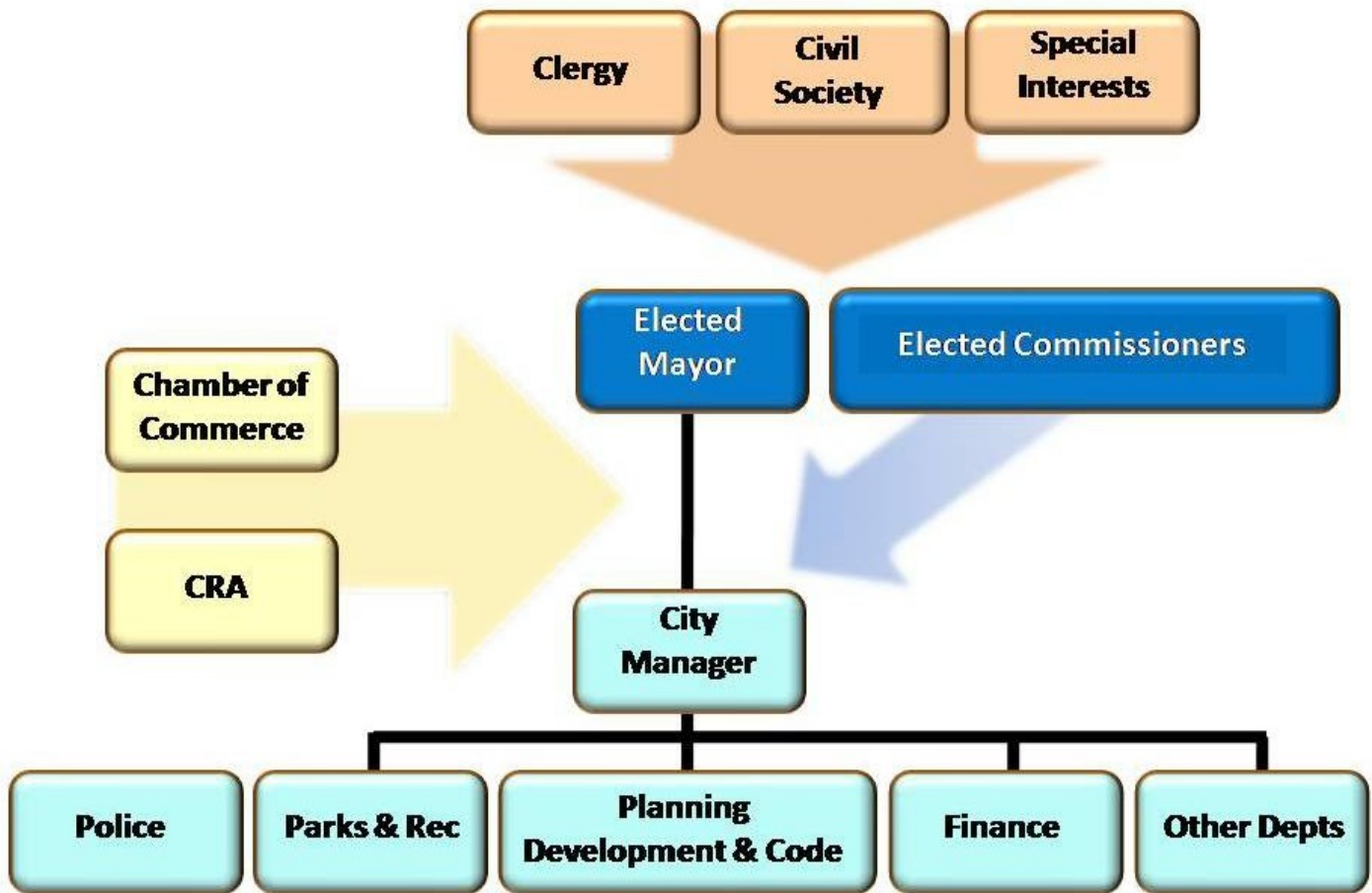

Step back in time...

CITY SCOPE

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

City of High Springs and Influential Organizations and Groups

Clergy	Civil Society	Special Interests

Chamber of Commerce

CRA

Elected Mayor

Elected Commissioners

City Manager

| Police | Parks & Rec | Planning Development & Code | Finance | Other Depts |

Government: The City of High Springs government structure is a typical elected commissioner (3), Mayor, Vice Mayor (not depicted). The various Departments are overseen by a professional City Manager who runs the day-to-day business of the city. With the Departments, the most important for tourism development purposes is the Department of Planning, Development and Code Enforcement. Without their cooperation and input the concept of economic development and tourism will have a hard time proceeding, even with the enthusiastic support of the elected Mayor and Commissioners. Properly done, the professional departments will be very supportive of moving tourism forward as it also helps to secure their employment and bring prosperity to the town.

Civil society: civil society (Lions, Kiwanis, etc.), the Clergy, and Special Interests also have input through the Mayor and other elected officials. Many of them may be past elected officials themselves.

Chamber of Commerce: the Chamber is very active in High Springs, essentially acted in the interest of the business owners, but also serving as the visitors bureau.

Community Redevelopment Agency: the CRA uses grants and other monies to preserve the city, promote cultural heritage and is a strong ally in expanding tourism development in a sustainable manner.

VISION - ORIENTATION - VALUE PROPOSITION

VISION

Background: crafting a vision statement is a critical step in developing sustainable tourism for High Springs. The vision inspires strategic decision making and the development of the High Springs "product" over the next ten years. The tourism visioning process should involve relevant High Springs stakeholders and may be demanding and even stressful. However, as a beginning point, we recommend the following vision:

High Springs leverages our old time charm and cultural heritage to provide memorable experiences for our visitors while creating measurable and sustainable economic benefit for all of our citizens and protecting the unique environmental gifts with which we have been blessed.

Content: pursuant to best practices advanced by Ritchie and Crouch and the Guiding Framework highlighted at the beginning of this document, the recommended vision includes community, education, visitor experience, economic, and ecological themes.

PHILOSOPHICAL ORIENTATION

Background: we believe that tourism should play a fundamental role in the life of High Springs as a destination. To do otherwise would be to ignore the cultural and environmental gifts of the community as well as impact the sustainability of the city, not only for tourism, but for the economy as well. City stakeholders will bring their own expert perspectives, but we offer the following philosophical orientation statements:

⇒ *Our residents must benefit from increased tourism, especially in terms of income and jobs.*
⇒ *Our cultural heritage and the historic district at our city's core must be preserved.*
⇒ *Our natural environment, including old-growth trees, waterways, and springs, is highly valued.*
⇒ *Our city will continue to be a welcoming place for all visitors, foreign and domestic.*
⇒ *Our city welcomes people and businesses who seek to join with us in growing our tourism industry.*

VALUE PROPOSITION

Background: A destination needs, at a minimum, the comparative advantages of good services as a basis on which to operate and grow. However, in the tourism business, experiences are the product which High Springs is selling. Memorable experiences bring repeat business. Therefore we offer the following:

⇒ *Experience the Friendliest Small Town in Florida*

⇒ *Experience: Real People. Real Nature. Real History.*

⇒ *High Springs: Experience. Enjoy.*

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Climate
- Water resources
- Historic Building Stock
- Cultural/Historical
- Special Events
- Entrepreneurship
- History of Teamwork

WEAKNESSES

- Hospitality Superstructure
- Hospitality & Travel Jobs
- Hospitality Hours of Operation
- Seasonality of Tourism
- Brand Identity

OPPORTUNITIES

- Leverage/Develop Historic Area
- Industry Partnerships
- Superstructure Development
- Dedication to Sustainability Development Planning
- Development of Brand Identity

THREATS

- Funding for Superstructure (Micro)
- Outside (Macro) Economic Factors
- Hospitality Reduced by Congestion
- Natural Resources are Threatened
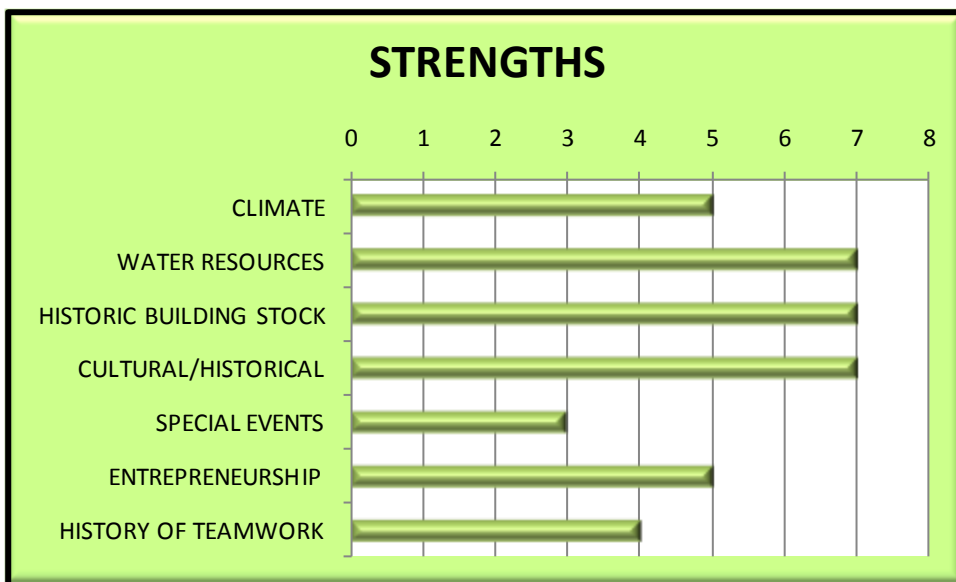- Special Interests Oppose Tourism
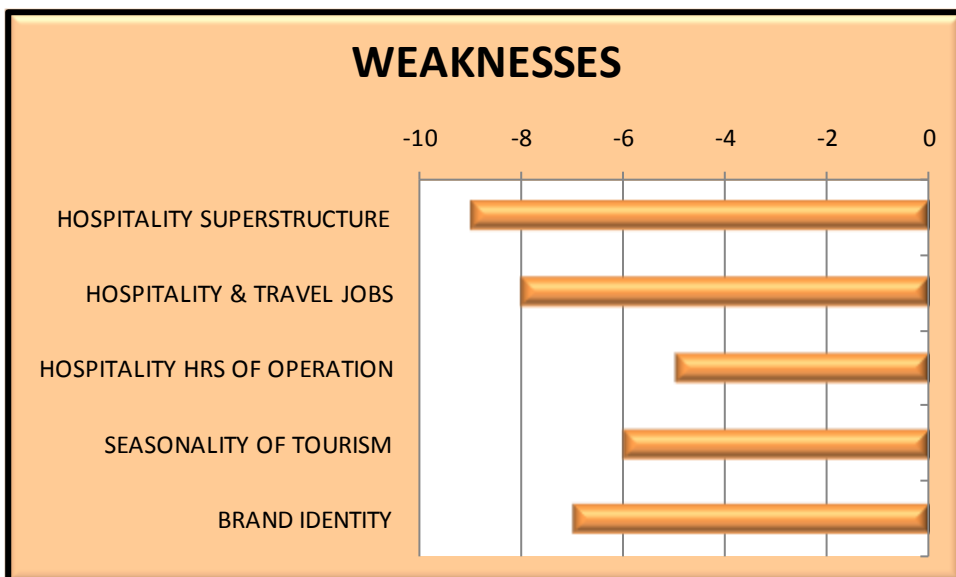
SWOT ANALYSIS

Overview:

Please refer to the previous overall SWOT diagram and the four individual graphs that follow. In undertaking a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (Constraints) Analysis of High Springs, we narrowed our scope to those factors we felt would have the most significance to this tourism development plan. In fact there are many more categories in the realm of consideration. We recognize that rankings carry with them an element of subjectivity. However, we maintain that within each category (SWOT) they represent relative values with some degree of accuracy. Hence their value is not in concentrating on the absolute numbers, but rather as a stimulus for discussion among stakeholders and decision-makers.

Methodology:

Strengths and Opportunities are ranked from 0 to +10 where 0 is neutral and +10 is the maximum positive ranking in the factor. Weaknesses and Threats are ranked from 0 to -10.

STRENGTHS

Factor	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CLIMATE						5			
WATER RESOURCES								7	
HISTORIC BUILDING STOCK								7	
CULTURAL/HISTORICAL								7	
SPECIAL EVENTS				3					
ENTREPRENEURSHIP						5			
HISTORY OF TEAMWORK					4				

Strengths: A number of factors rank highly in this category. The water resources (springs and Santa Fe River), the Historic District and Historic Homes, and underlying cultural/historical are particularly high. Of special significance are fairly high marks for entrepreneurship which is a real destination competitive strong point.
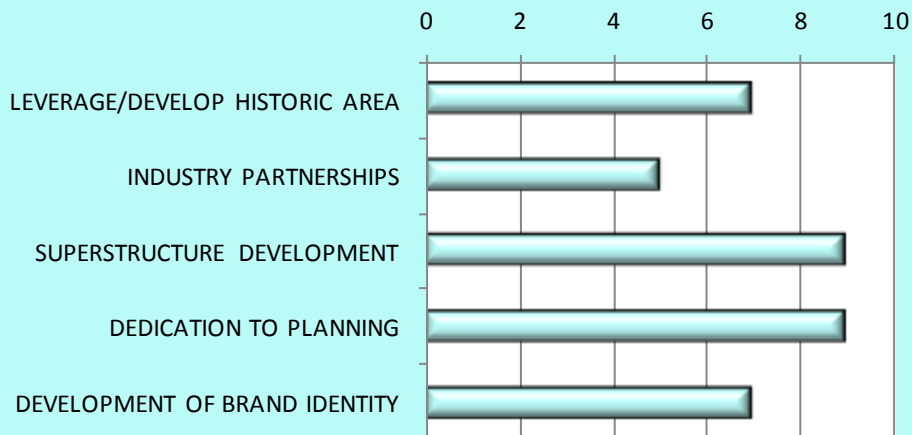
WEAKNESSES

Factor	-10	-8	-6	-4	-2	0
HOSPITALITY SUPERSTRUCTURE		-9				
HOSPITALITY & TRAVEL JOBS		-8				
HOSPITALITY HRS OF OPERATION			-5			
SEASONALITY OF TOURISM			-6			
BRAND IDENTITY			-6			

Weaknesses:
There are some visceral weaknesses in moving tourism forward in High Springs. One of the most critical issues is hospitality superstructure. Our plan makes some strong recommendations in how to deal with this.
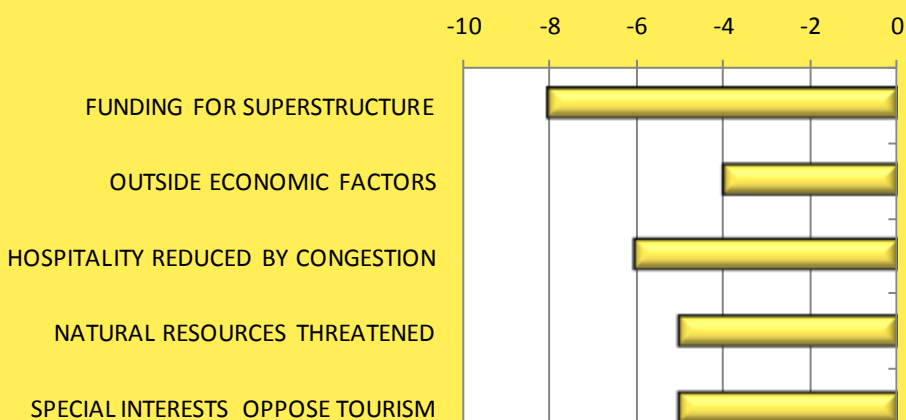
SWOT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES

	0	2	4	6	8	10
LEVERAGE/DEVELOP HISTORIC AREA						
INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS						
SUPERSTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT						
DEDICATION TO PLANNING						
DEVELOPMENT OF BRAND IDENTITY						

Opportunities: High Springs is unique among area cities in the number of tourism opportunities that lay before it. In a sense, the opportunities are the opposite of weaknesses and threats. We believe that seeing them graphically represented here clearly identifies what can be accomplished if the initiatives we recommend are adopted.

THREATS

	-10	-8	-6	-4	-2	0
FUNDING FOR SUPERSTRUCTURE						
OUTSIDE ECONOMIC FACTORS						
HOSPITALITY REDUCED BY CONGESTION						
NATURAL RESOURCES THREATENED						
SPECIAL INTERESTS OPPOSE TOURISM						

Threats: Funding for Superstructure is an obvious negative, but there are others. Tourism planning must be undertaken methodically and according to a predetermined roadmap understood by stakeholders. Other than a recession, congestion and opposition from the community pose threats that are real and must be constantly and consistently addressed.

Conclusion:

There will invariably be a range of opinions about tourism development in the community, ranging from very supportive to very skeptical. Discussing the tourism development plan and its underlying analyses with stakeholders from all viewpoints will help to ensure success for High Springs. SWOT Analysis is the first of seven data evaluations that follow in subsequent sections. All the analyses serve to bring clarity to the amazing possibilities that can be a part of High Springs' tourism development.

ASSETS ANALYSIS

Core Assets and Community Attractions

Physiography and Climate	⇒ Warm Florida weather ⇒ Great location (near I75, US 441, US 27 and US 41) ⇒ Southern live oaks and pines - green year round
Culture and History	⇒ Dudley Farm historic park where visitor step back in time to pre-Civil War Florida ⇒ Main Street with several restaurants, craft and arts center, welcoming atmosphere ⇒ Historic Homes scattered throughout the town ⇒ History Museum ⇒ Multiple historic cemeteries (potential dark tours)
Mix of Activities	⇒ Visits to Ginnie Springs and others ⇒ Antiques and variety of other shops ⇒ Camping and floating on the Santa Fe River ⇒ Walking tours of the town (the Sink, historic homes, etc) ⇒ Range of eating experiences: Spanish tapas, craft beers, fresh bakeries, farm-to-table dining, farmers market
Special Events	⇒ Santa Fe River Fest (early April) ⇒ Pioneer Days (late April) ⇒ Christmas Parade
Entertainment	⇒ High Springs Playhouse ⇒ Priest Theatre, Florida's oldest continually operating movie theater - shows first run movies and special events ⇒ Live music weekly at the Great Outdoors restaurant
Superstructure	⇒ Two older hotels (generally good reviews) ⇒ Visitors Center in old train station ⇒ Multiple restaurants
Market Ties	⇒ Close: Gainesville (20 miles) and Lake City (20 miles) ⇒ Farther: Jacksonville (80 miles) Valdosta, GA (80 miles)

ASSETS ANALYSIS

Supporting Factors and Resources

Infrastructure	⇒ Multi-lane US441 from Miami to Tennessee ⇒ US 41 from Miami to Upper Peninsula of Michigan ⇒ Reliable electrical, water and sewerage ⇒ Interstate 75 passes nearby ⇒ Fire protection
Accessibility	⇒ Easily reached by highway from all nearby population centers ⇒ No barriers for targeted market
Facilitating Resources	⇒ Considerable number of experienced hospitality staff for restaurants and the two hotels ⇒ Small businessmen (and women) ⇒ Banks that service the local community and are prepared to lend to support local businesses ⇒ A small but growing community of Europeans that bring their knowledge of travel to the community ⇒ University of Florida and Santa Fe annually graduate thousands of students, some of whom specialize in tourism
Hospitality	⇒ Hospitality and friendliness is generally very high and the towns people are used to and welcome outsiders ⇒ No specific programs in place to encourage hospitality among the citizens
Enterprise	⇒ Multiple restaurant entrepreneurs compete for business ⇒ Chamber officials and business association is highly award of the Gainesville DMO and seeks out alliances ⇒ There are multiple ancillary services (auto repair, groceries, and financial services.
Political Will	⇒ State representatives promote tourism as does the governor and High Springs is listed on Visit Florida ⇒ People in the town recognize the potential tourism offers and are willing to support new initiatives

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

		High Springs	Alachua	Newberry	Gainesville
Core Assets and Attractions (CAA)	Physiology	Fairly high 4	Moderate 3	Moderate 3	Fairly high 4
	Culture & History	Fairly High 4	Moderate 3	Fairly low 2	Very high 5
	Mix of Activities	Moderate 3	Very low 1	Very low 1	Very high 5
	Special Events	Moderate 3	Fairly low 2	Moderate 3	Very high 5
	Entertainment	Fairly low 2	Very low 1	Very low 1	Fairly high 4 (not year around)
	Superstructure	Very low 1	Moderate 3	Very low 1	Fairly high 4
	Market Ties	Fairly low 2	Fairly low 2	Fairly low 2	Fairly high 4
	Raw Subtotal (Mean)	19 (2.7)	15 (2.1)	13(1.8)	31 (4.4)
Supporting Factors/Resources (SFR)	Infrastructure	Fairly High 4	Moderate 3	Fairly low 2	Very high 5
	Accessibility	Fairly high 4	Moderate 3	Moderate 3	Very high 5
	Facilitating Resources	Fairly high 4	Moderate 3	Fairly low 2	Very high 5
	Hospitality	Fairly high 4	Fairly low 2	Fairly low 2	Fairly low 2
	Enterprise	Fairly high 4	Fairly low 2	Moderate 3	Fairly high 4
	Political Will	Fairly high 4	Fairly low 2	Fairly high 4	Fairly low 2
	Raw Subtotal (Mean)	24 (4)	15(2.5)	16(2.6)	23(3.8)

High Springs	Alachua	Newberry	Gainesville
CAA is surprisingly high considering superstructure is almost non-existent except for restaurants. SFR is also high, equaling much larger Gainesville. This reflects **high core attitudes toward hospitality and tourism.**	CAA is low - history and superstructure near I-75 score well. There are lots of campgrounds. SFR is lowest of the group with hospitality, enterprise and political will low- may indicate a **low core attitude towards tourism.**	CAA is low, but rates 3 in special events for Watermelon Fest and new sports facilities and partnerships as highlights. SFR political will is also important along with enterprise and accessibility. **Newberry is trying to improve.**	CAA is high for things like the Hippodrome, Butterfly Rain forest, nightlife and UF sports events. SFR hospitality and political will are low. If you're a Gator fan things are fine, but the **city needs help welcoming others.**

TRENDS ANALYSIS

Trend	Impact
EXPERIENCES ARE KING Travelers expect good service at hotels and restaurants. They penalize the industry on social media for service that falls short. They are really looking for experiences. Destinations that provide a range of experiences will see their competitiveness and sustainability increase.	**PROVIDE WHAT PEOPLE WANT** Destinations must take regular inventory of the experiences visitors may have and ensure that continues and grows in a sustainable manner. The targeted market segment enjoys cultural and historical experiences. High Springs is working to expand in this area with the downtown rejuvenation, historical emphasis, and various festivals such as Pioneer Days.
LIMITED SERVICE DOMINATES Limited service hotels continue to dominate growth in traditional hospitality sectors including in Florida. Bed and breakfast units are nice to have, but account for little volume in the trade.	**SUPERSTRUCTURE IS A MUST** Destinations that find themselves without sufficient accommodations will remain uncompetitive no matter what other steps they take. High Springs has few accommodations, although the two aging hotels generally rate well. Efforts to renovate and restore old buildings is a plus in addressing other trends.
BABY BOOMER POWER Baby boomers are, broadly, the largest travel segment, are looking for the unusual, are very active, and are the most environmentally aware of all age groups. In addition, statistics show they control a huge percentage of the assets in the United States. All indicators are they will be prepared to spend some of that money as they age.	**SEGMENT IS A BIG TARGET** Destinations must target this segment by ensuring their needs are met and exceeded and marketing to them in an on-going and sustainable fashion. High Springs has recognized this and wants to increase this segment.
NEARCATIONS RISE Low fuel prices in the U.S., terrorism abroad, a recovering economy, and a shortage of time to take a full-length vacation are fueling strong growth in nearcations, daycations, etc. They travel more often and stay for shorter periods.	**TRACK VISITOR NEEDS** Limited options to restaurants late in the day translate to visitors that will go elsewhere. High Springs suffers from a lack of options at certain times of day or days of the week. Archaic liquor laws are also an impediment. The nearcation phenomenon also indicates destinations must closely track when people are actually visiting and pivot to accommodate their needs.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Assessment of Tangible Assets				
Category	**Subcategory**	**Business**	**Rooms/Spots**	**Head Count (AHLA 2015)**
ACCOMMOD-TAIONS				
	Hotels			
		Country Inn	19 rooms	38
		Cadillac Motel	19 rooms	38
	B&B			
		Rustic Inn	6 rooms	12
		Grady House	6 rooms	12
	Specialty			
		Ginnie Springs Camping	129 spots	258
		Blue Springs Camping	80 spots	160
		High Springs Camping	45	90
			Total	527
ATTRACTIONS	9	Santa Fe River Fest, Pioneer Days, Christmas Parade, Main Street, High Springs Historic Museum, Ginnie Springs, Santa Fe River, Priest Theatre, High Springs Playhouse		
DINING	12 Specialty	Great Outdoors and Spring Garden, Bev's Better Burgers, Alice Parkside Restaurant, Pepperoni Pizzeria, True Blue Cafe, Secret Garden Bakery, Pizza 2 Go, Chef's table Bistro, The Talented Cookie company, Station Bakery and Café, Spanish Restaurant		800
	2 Franchise	Hardees, Subway		150
		Grand total dining seating in High Springs		950

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

		Assessment of Tangible Assets continued	
Category	**Subcategory**	**Description**	
PARKING	Paved	Main Street	60
	Paved	Adjacent Streets	120
	Unpaved	Old RR track area	200
	Unpaved	Other	120
		Total Current Parking	500
RESTOOMS	Public	Chamber of Commerce	2
	Business	Restaurants	30
TRANSPORTATION	Bus	Alachua County Connector	2-4 times daily
HIGHWAYS	US 441	Dublin GA (N) Miami (S)	2-4 lanes divided lightly trafficked north bound
	US 41	Lake City (N) Miami (S)	2 lane good condition primarily local traffic
	US 27	Tallahassee (W) Orlando (S)	Concurrent with 41
	I-75	Miami to Mackinaw, Michigan	Heavy traffic up to 75K cars and trucks per day.
		Assessment of Intangible Assets	

Surrounding MSA has a population of 201,774. In the immediate five-mile radius the total population is estimated at 14,700 of whom approximately 60% (8,820) are of employment age. Our estimate is that at least 20% could be or would like to be employed in the area (1764). Based on our Ideal Scenario, detailed later in this proposal, we evaluate the Intangible Assets as sufficient to support strong tourism growth.

DESTINATION LIFE CYCLE

Overview

The general notion of "Butler's (1980) Destination Life Cycle" comes from the "product life cycle concept in marketing" (Howie, 2003, p. 56). This model is used to assist in the theoretical development of an area attracting tourists. To the left of the graph shows the number of tourists which usually signifies products sold (Howie, 2003, p. 56). This can also stand for tourism dollars generated. Located at the bottom of the graph horizontally signifies growth/time and stages. The knowledge of developed tourist destinations provide the basis for this model. There are several stages a destination progresses through. These are as follows below.

Exploration Stage

The first stage is called the "Exploration" Stage. This stage has been termed the "Discovery" stage as well. The tourists are drawn to the destination simply because of the character and the original condition of the environment even though no "tourism development" exists. For example, tourists visit High Springs because of the natural springs that have been untouched. In addition, visitors visit because no one known to them has visited before or they simply have heard through word of mouth about the destination. Only a few tourists have visited during this stage (Brooker & Burgess, 2008).

Involvement Stage

The second stage is called the "Involvement" Stage. This has also been termed the "Discovery/ Development" stage (Brooker & Burgess, 2008). This stage involves the community deciding on whether to proceed with tourism by providing tourists with the provisions they desire. Local authorities have to work together with the community for this to be successful. The type of visitor from the "Exploration" Stage phases out and the first ripple of real visitors present themselves. These visitors come to see the unique characteristics of the destination and have heard through word of mouth. There are tourist guides, brochures, websites, and advertisements in papers. A few businesses are realizing there is a potential to open facilities in support of these visitors. There is a need in this stage to have the right tourism organizations set up to assist in the development.

Development Stage

The third stage is called the "Development" Stage. This is the growth stage. Noticeable changes in newly constructed infrastructure and international companies assist in the development of the community to accommodate this growing influx of tourists. Larger companies begin to invest building hotels selling packages which include accommodation, food, travel, and excursions. Tourists are visiting High Springs, Florida because media has publicized the community (Brooker & Burgess, 2008). The support of the larger companies assist with the massive growth in tourist numbers which in turn creates more jobs not only for the locals but for the individuals providing these construction services. In addition, more infrastructure is built to support the rising number. The locals may lose the decision making causing over institutionalization. As these changes take place, allocentric tourists start to disappear while psychocentric tourists become prevalent (Smith, p. 40-43).

DESTINATION LIFE CYCLE

Consolidation/Stagnation

Stage 4 and Stage 5 consist of "Consolidation/Stagnation". This is located on the curve at the Apex. The increase of tourists become very minimal and over the previous years you might see a decline. At this stage, the destination has many fast food restaurants, shops, and hotels to accommodate the influx of visitors. Many locals will start making their monies off of the tourism industry closing other industries such as fishing and farming depending on the destination. The big issue that most likely will present itself is over time the destination begins to look like every other destination losing its distinctive appeal. Because of stagnation, the destination can look run down and old.

Decline and Rejuvenation

Lastly, Stage 6 is called the "Decline" or "Rejuvenation" Stage. The "Decline" Stage represents the "Slippery Slope" (Brooker & Burgess, 2008). This could happen rapidly or slowly. The visitors now come for weekend or day trips as a vacation. They are considered repeat guests but they spend less. Jobs are lost resulting in the image suffering. This is a great time to do an analysis to see what is the destination doing wrong that caused this outcome. Then what can we do right to fix it. On the other hand, there is the "Rejuvenation" Stage. This is the outcome of strategies that have worked successfully. Strategies come from introspection and comparing what other destinations have learned. For example, these successful strategies could be based off of rejuvenation, new markets, and repositioning. There can also be a new attraction within the destination to revitalize or boost the popularity. Investors help with modernization attracting visitors increasing numbers.

Conclusion

The Butler Model is relevant to the success of the High Springs developing long term success. Based on our groups analysis, the community is currently going through a transition to undergo more tourism development to boost local economy and to share their beautiful community with visitors. However at this time, High Springs is currently in the "Involvement" Stage. The reasons are as follows. First, tourists are coming because of word of mouth and the "Exploration" Stage tourist no longer is present. Second, on the High Springs Chamber of Commerce home webpage it states "Welcome to High Springs" and "Voted the Friendliest Small Town in Florida" (High Springs Chamber of Commerce, n.d.). This is encouraging tourists to come to the area basically stating the locals welcome tourists. Third, the local authorities are taking a proactive approach to building the tourism destination. Fourth, according to the conversation with Dot Harvey there is a small strip center, pavilion, and park being built in the future along with the current process of Main Street America's application approval. Fifth, the local rebellion against tourism development has ceased (Dot Harvey, personal communication, February 23, 2016). Sixth, there is a proactive approach with the publicity of their Facebook and the Chamber of Commerce Website to gain more visitors. Seventh, High Springs is also working with Destination Management Organizations such as Visit Gainesville and Visit Florida. (continued on following page)

Conclusion continued...

Eighth, small businesses are opening taking advantage of the income. For example, the restaurants are promoting places to dine. Ninth, the Smithsonian Institute Water/Ways exhibit will attract customers through July and August of 2016. This is a very big honor and attraction for the community. Tenth, taking a proactive approach to keep the Natural Resources intact. Lastly, they built the High Springs BMX Sports Complex. The Butler model is a credible source to break down what stage High Springs, Florida is in during the growth process.

Butler's (1980) Destination Life Cycle
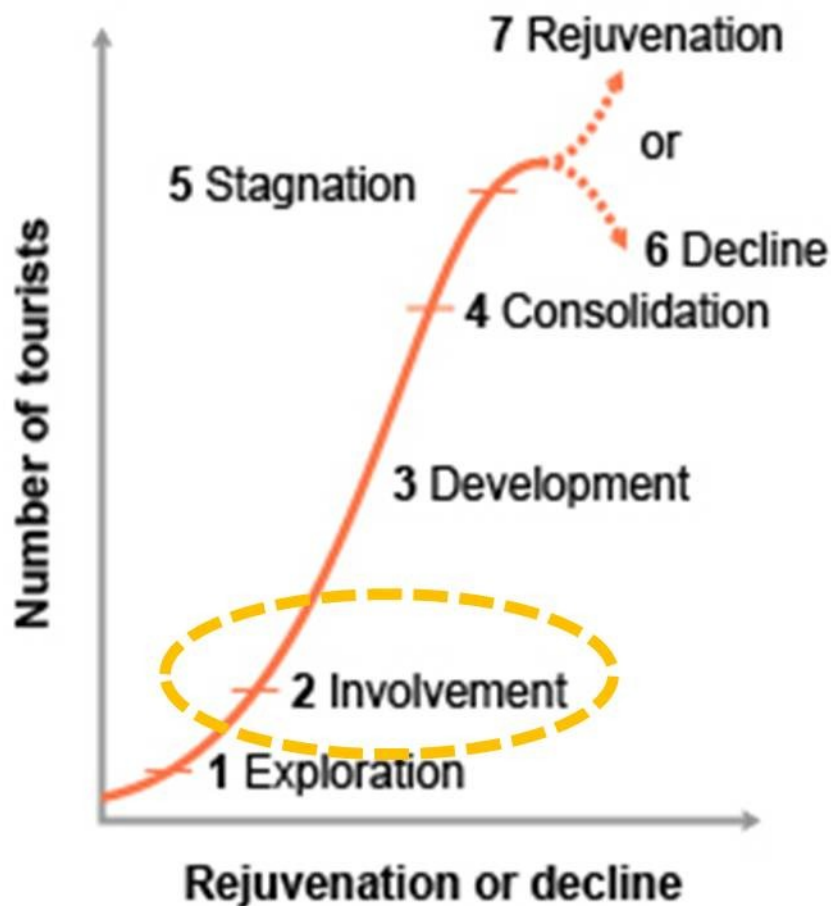
RISK ANALYSIS

Risk and crisis management are essential for successful destination management. Sustainability requires a destination to consider the possible crises that may affect a destination and their potential effects. We estimate the likelihood of those crises occurring and how vulnerable High Springs would be if the crises were to happen tomorrow. To assess and quantify the likelihood (Table 1) and vulnerability (Table 2) of the types of crises, we have ranked them on a Likert-type scale. Each type of crisis is scored on that scale, which is combined to create a composite score for the destination (Table 3). Using the composite scores, we were able to identify which crises may need the most attention in helping High Springs to successfully plan their tourism

Table 1. Risk likelihood assessment for High Springs

Type of Crisis	Likelihood
Flood	4
Hurricane	5
Tornado	2
Wildfire	2
Heat Wave	3
Sink Hole	2
Crime	3
Rioting	1
Bombing	1
Death of Tourist	2
Chemical Spill	1

*Ranked on a 1-5 Likert-type scale (1 = very unlikely and 5 = very likely)

Table 2. Risk vulnerability assessment for High Springs

Type of Crisis	Vulnerability
Flood	2
Hurricane	3
Tornado	2
Wildfire	2
Heat Wave	3
Sink Hole	3
Crime	3
Rioting	2
Bombing	4
Death of Tourist	3
Chemical Spill	3

Ranked on a 1-5 Likert-type scale (1 = very invulnerable and 5 = very vulnerable)
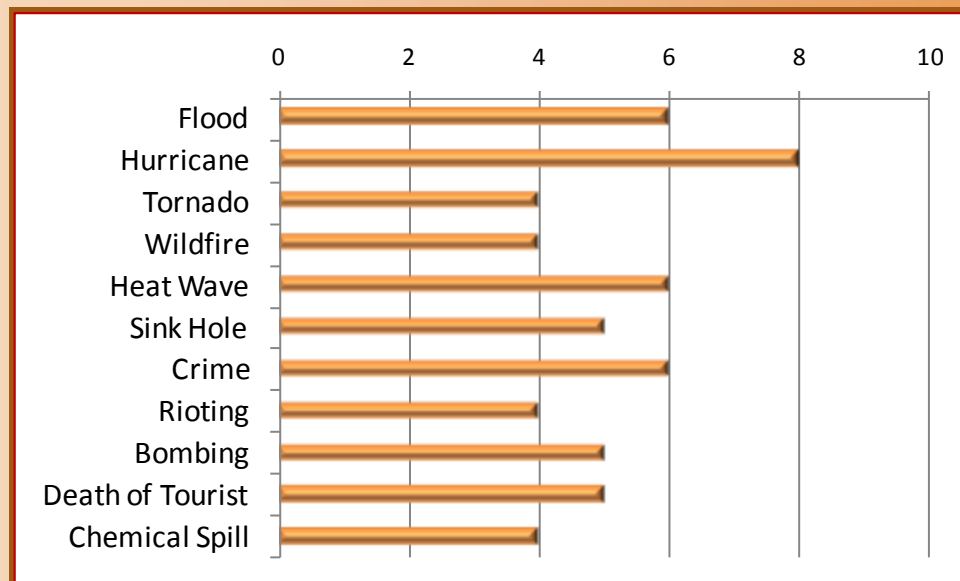
RISK ANALYSIS

Table 3. Risk composite score assessment for High Springs

Type of Crisis	Composite Score
Flood	6
Hurricane	8
Tornado	4
Wildfire	4
Heat Wave	6
Sink Hole	5
Crime	6
Rioting	4
Bombing	5
Death of Tourist	5
Chemical Spill	4

*Combined likelihood and vulnerability scores

Graphed version of risk composite score (above)

No destination is completely immune from the full range of risks, including some that we have chosen not to include here. The intent of this graph is to stimulate thinking about risk by High Springs stakeholders. The graph illustrates four risks that stand out. Three of them, floods, hurricanes and heat waves are natural events completely out of our control. Crime is the only high ranking (6 or above composite score) manmade risk that would quickly damage the competitiveness and attraction of High Springs as a tourist destination. Referring back to the Guiding Framework that underpins this development plan, where Crisis Management appears in the Destination Management category, stakeholders in High Springs should continue the concept of risk analysis and management as they work to develop and advance sustainable tourism development .

GOAL SETTING **OBJECTIVES**

Overview and rationale:

- The list below represents our top ten recommended objectives for the ten-year sustainable tourism development plan for High Springs. The objectives are not necessarily in chronological order. Rather, they are listed as they might appear within the conceptual model of Destination Competitiveness and Sustainability (aka Guiding Framework). The model is described on pages 5, 6, and 7.

- Each objective was developed with the Guiding Framework in mind. In the pages that follow, three possible scenarios were developed and compared against these objectives.

- These objectives and the scenarios are recommended and not a rigid view of what is going to work best in the community. Stakeholders in High Springs may want to rank the objectives differently, come up with different scenarios or use a modified set of objectives in which they take ownership. The overarching concept is that all development is a process.

- As planners, we strongly endorse this process and encourage High Springs stakeholders to develop and utilize their own expertise to advance the interests of the entire community.

TOP TEN RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES

Qualifying and Amplifying Determinants

⇒ *1. Brand identity is distinct and well-known*

Destination Policy, Planning and Development

⇒ *2. Evaluation system for tourism planning is viable and working*

Destination Management

⇒ *3. Dedicated tourism management structure*

⇒ *4. Tourism increases and visits are longer than a single day*

⇒ *5. New funding and investment*

Core resources and attractors

⇒ *6. Unique culture, history and spirit of the city is maintained*

Supporting Factors and Resources

⇒ *7. Tax revenues strengthen infrastructure and sustainability*

⇒ *8. More residents are locally employed and well-being increases*

⇒ *9. Strong and growing community and political support for tourism*

⇒ *10. Viable entrepreneurship and business climate*

SCENARIOS

Scenario One (Strengthen Destination Competitive Advantages)

⇒ Establish High Springs Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) Corporation (non-profit)

    The Board (community leadership)

    Director, Department of Planning, Development and Codes, City of High Springs

    President, High Springs Chamber of Commerce

    Director of Communications, High Springs Chamber of Commerce

    Director, CRA (or their designate)

    President, High Springs Lions Club (Christmas Parade)

    Community Leader 1 (e.g. banking or large business)

    Community Leader 2 (e.g. other)

⇒ Engage Interim Hospitality Consultants, LLC to develop hotel feasibility study

⇒ The EDT Corporation cooperates with UF TRSM to create a baseline marketing feasibility study 2017

⇒ Outdoor advertising north of Exit 404 on west side I-75 and northbound I-75 and I-10 locations TBD

⇒ Tourism creates an additional 75 jobs - new tax base raises revenues by at least 10%

Scenario Two (Strengthen Destination Competitive Advantages and Comparative Advantages)

⇒ All actions from Scenario One

⇒ The 115 room limited service hotel (Drury Inn or Pear Tree Inn) opens in downtown

⇒ The High Springs EDT spearheads the efforts to develop relationship with Lake City, also in US Congressional District 3 and Florida House District 10

⇒ Florida State Legislators (Districts 10

⇒ Hotel taxes collected fund the High Springs EDT which is designated a DMO

⇒ High Springs tourism web site is established as visithighsprings.org and promoted

⇒ The EDT Corporation cooperates with UF TRSM to create a baseline marketing plan for 2018

⇒ Tourism helps create an additional 150 jobs and 10 small businesses

⇒ Tax revenues more than double over 2016

**Scenario Three** (Dramatically Strengthen Competitive and Comparative Advantages)

⇒ All actions from Scenario One and Scenario Two

⇒ High Springs leads efforts to promote Lake City and High Springs as Twin Cities of North Florida

⇒ Twin Cities of North Florida Corporation submits a successful proposal for MDL 2179 funding.

⇒ Twin Cities of North Florida investigates a large joint festival for the two towns

⇒ The EDT Corporation cooperates with UF TRSM to create annual marketing plans for 2019-2025

⇒ High Springs EDT spearheads efforts for the Northern Florida Heritage Trail (Lake City to Williston) along US41 including paved two-lane bicycle and walking trails with links to other biking in the area

⇒ High Springs incorporates the area along County 236 east including Exit 404 interchange

⇒ County 236 is widened and improved along with the US 41 intersection

⇒ Another limited service hotel is built downtown

⇒ A limited service hotel and large travel campground is zoned and built near Exit 404

⇒ Tourism helps create an additional 350 jobs and 20 small business

⇒ Tax revenues due to residential, tourism and business growth grow to six times the 2016 rate

SCENARIO EVALUATION

|	Existing	Scenario One	Scenario Two	Scenario Three
Brand Identity	20	30	70	85
Evaluation System	20	50	60	80
Dedicated Management	30	80	90	100
Tourism Increases	20	40	80	90
New Funding	20	30	80	90
Unique Culture	90	100	90	80
Tax Revenues	10	30	80	100
Income & Well-Being	40	50	80	90
Community & Political	60	70	80	90
Entrepreneurship & Business	80	85	90	90
Mean Composite Score	39	56.5	80	89.5

Raw Score Ranking

The three scenarios are ranked for the 10 objectives along with the Existing situation in High Springs as we see it. Even with fairly low scores in most categories, High Springs ranks highly in Culture and Entrepreneurship. There is a risk that cultural identity may gradually slip as illustrated in Scenario 3.
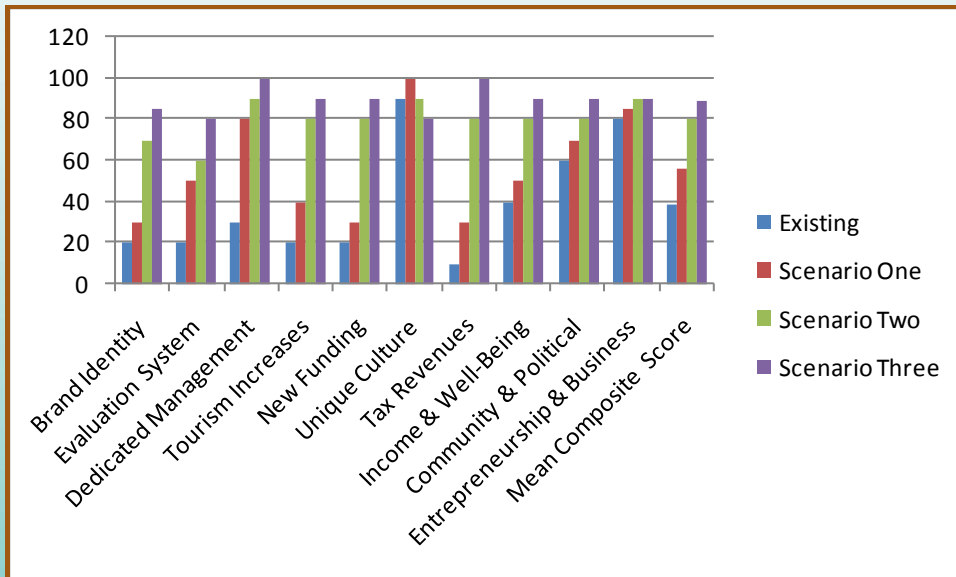
Overall Comparison

This graph illustrates how each scenario appears in comparison. The Existing situation does not compare well with any of the three scenarios. Unsurprisingly, Scenario Three, which has the highest level of effort, has the highest scores. What is remarkable is that Scenario Two ranks very closely with Scenario Three.

Mean Composite Score
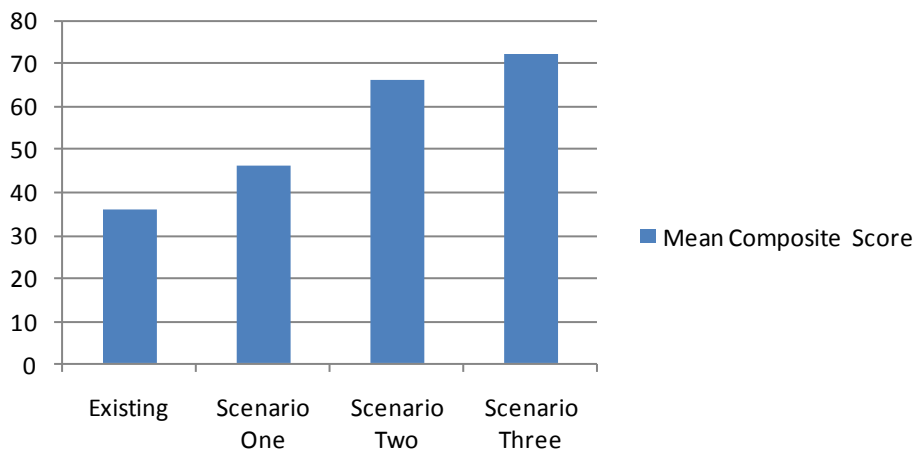
Mean Composite

This graph is a snapshot. Again, Scenario Two actually achieves solid levels in most objectives. Incorporating a new large area into the city along County 236 would be a large undertaking. The leadership would have to run a careful ROI to determine if this is truly worthwhile. The Twin Cities of North Florida could be a valuable partnership. Again, stakeholders need to gauge receptivity as well as ROI.

IDEAL SCENARIO

Selection Process

In order to further the tourism development interests of High Springs in a sustainable manner, we have presented three scenarios – each with a successively higher level of effort. We refer to the Scenarios and the Scenario Evaluation (data) pages to inform our selection of an Ideal Scenario for High Springs.

Existing

When we look realistically at where we are currently we discover that the majority of objectives are not being met. The composite scores a 39% objective achievement score. The exceptions are High Springs' unusually strong sense of culture and heritage, their community activism and their knowledge of entrepreneurship and business. These Core Resources and Attractors and Supporting Factors and Resources are exceptional and demonstrate that High Springs has a foundation on which to build.

Scenario One

Scenario One takes many of the objectives to new levels, but is still weak in brand identity, new funding and tax revenues. Also, job opportunities and incomes remain low as does a sense of well-being. Scenario One scores a 56.5% objective achievement. This is a 40% increase over not doing anything and makes the establishment of the EDT Corporation an easy win.

Scenario Two

Scenario Two substantially raises every category and raises Scenario One scores a stunning 70%.

Scenario Three

Scenario Three is a blue-sky approach. However, we see only an 11% increase over Scenario Two. It may be that city stakeholders and leaders will pursue some of the initiatives such as the Twin Cities of North Florida or keep the cooperative relationship with UF TRSM marketing plans going. Our view is that Scenario Three does not represent a good return on investment (ROI).

Ideal Scenario

Therefore Scenario Two is the Ideal Scenario we recommend to High Springs.

MARKET ANALYSIS

The client states: the primary target market consists of baby boomer segment tourists who have money to spend and are predisposed to stay more than one night.

We add to that: families that are traveling along the I-75/I-10 corridors, have money to spend, and are looking for interesting experiences.

Therefore the target market is segmented using a multi-stage (five) segmentation approach utilizing Purpose of Trip Segmentation, Demographic Segmentation, Geographic Segmentation, Psychographic Segmentation, and Behavioral/Benefits.

Purpose of trip Segmentation:
Both target market segments are traveling on pleasure.

Demographic Segmentation:
The target market is differentiated by the socio-economic marker, family life-cycle.

Geographic Segmentation:
The target market is differentiated location using Geographic Information Systems GIS customer data.

Psychographic Segmentation:
The target market is differentiated using by location using the Nielsen PRIZM NE research program.

Behavioral /Benefits Segmentation:
The target market is differentiated by behavior and the perceived benefits they see in visiting. According to Morrison (p225) "many marketing experts consider benefit segmentation to be the best segmentation characteristic.

Conclusion: the multi-stage marketing approach suggested above should be addressed by a firm experienced in tourism marketing in a comprehensive marketing plan. The marketing firm should:

Suggest a range of strategies to effectively reach these two segments based on a range of cost options.

Suggest a combination of outdoor advertising, carefully placed print advertisements, press kits, special event media blitzes, and enhancing the motion media on the client's site.

A highly experienced marketing firm will also be able to place free media by inviting media to visit High Spring for backgrounders.

They should enhance the brand by synchronizing graphics, messaging and social media.

Finally, the firm will be able to provide data demonstrating success over time.

ASSESSMENTS AND PLAN

Introduction

The following action plan will assess and identify the goals that High Spring must accomplish to achieve the ideal scenario over the next 10 years.

Step One: Establish High Springs Economic Development and Tourism Corporation

- ⇒ Engage and gain support of community stakeholders
- ⇒ Create the organizational structure of EDT
- ⇒ Identify community leaders to serve on EDT Board
- ⇒ Establish the Corporation as a Florida Non-Profit
- ⇒ Appoint community leaders and stakeholders to leadership positions of EDT
- ⇒ EDT to come to consensus on vision for High Springs

Step Two: Conduct Research on Hotel and Marketing feasibility

- ⇒ Hotel Feasibility Research
  - Identify possible locations for limited-service hotel
  - Contact Interim Hospitality Consultants to develop hotel feasibility study for potential sites
  - Decide on final location of hotel
- ⇒ Market Feasibility Research
  - Contact University of Florida Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Sports Management
  - Cooperate with UF TRSM to create a marketing feasibility study

Step Three: Create Infrastructure to Support Tourism Growth

- ⇒ Hotel Construction
  - Using hotel feasibility study work, to de-conflict any obstacles among City Planning Department, Investors, Owners and General Contractor.
  - Gain City approval for final plan for limited-service hotel
  - Break ground on limited-service hotel

Step Four: Establish and Execute Marketing Plan for High Springs

- ⇒ Work with UF TRSM to create a marketing plan
- ⇒ Use funding from grants and bed taxes to execute marketing plan
- ⇒ Create outdoor advertising on I-75 and I-10
- ⇒ Establish High Spring tourism website à visithighsprings.org
- ⇒ Promote new websites to tourists via social media and advertising

FUNDING

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (2016)
Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program
www.floridajobs.org/smallcitiesCDBG

Florida Department of Transportation Grants (FDOT, 1996-2016)
For Traffic Safety Priority Areas
For current use or building infrastructure needs
http://www.dot.state.fl.us/safety/3-Grants/Grants-Home.shtm

Gainesville Florida Visitors & Convention Bureau (2016)
Visit Gainesville - Tourism Development Council
Tourist Product Development Grants
Contact John Pricher @ JOP@visitgainesville.com

United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Library (USDA, 2016)
This website has many grants listed.
https://ric.nal.usda.gov/downtown-revitalization
Downtown Revitalization Federal Programs
Rural Development – Community Facilities Loan and Grant Programs (10.766)
http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-%3Cbr%20/%3Efacilities-direct-loan-grant-program
Rural Development Utility Programs
http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/programs-services-utilities
US Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
For economic development
http://www.eda.gov/
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
State Community Development Block Grant Program
http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/stateadmin
U.S. Department of Interior
National Park Service - Working with Communities funding
To create recreation and preserve history
http://www.nps.gov/communities/index.htm
Main Street America (already started pursuing)

FUNDING

Rural Business Development Grants (USDA RD, n.d.)
Grants used for community economic development, feasibility studies and business plans, and other uses
http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants

Home Depot (The Home Depot Foundation, 2016)
Community Impact Grants Program
http://homedepotfoundation.org/page/applying-for-a-grant

The Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation (Lowe's, 2016)
Grants for Community Improvement Projects.
http://www.lowes.com/cd_The+Lowes+Charitable+and+Educational+Foundation_474741 445_

Community Redevelopment Agency

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is funded through TIF (Taxation Increment Financing) monies from Alachua County. TIF creates approximately $175,000 per year for the High Springs CRA. The advantage of TIF funding is that spending, within general guidelines, is at the discretion of the municipality.

Historically, the High Springs CRA has funded projects and improvements that contribute to the tourism infrastructure. It is anticipated that will continue. However, we recommend that the CRA consider how tourism, specifically, should be included in CRA planning. Our recommendation is that tourism projects should be emphasized when possible.

MDL 2179 Funding

Under the decision related to Multi-District Litigation against British Petroleum in the oil spill case, Florida receives approximately $1.5 billion. The non-profit Triumph Corporation was set up in Florida to disburse 75% of the Florida money to eight disproportionately-affected counties in the Florida panhandle. The State of Florida has control of the balance of the money. The Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation (Visit Florida), for example, receives funding from the MDL 2179 funds. Our recommendation is for the CRA to contact their District 10 representative to learn more about how High Springs might fund tourism projects all or in part from MDL 2179 funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

⇒ Promote physical activity as a mode of transportation by developing active infrastructure. Examples include well-lit sidewalks, shared use paths, and recreational trails.

⇒ Gather and prepare town leaders to devise and implement beneficial economic initiatives.

⇒ Promote a climate where citizens of High Springs can become involved in discussion and innovation.

⇒ Encourage the town to think beyond its limits and comfort zone and to actively build connections with a wide variety of partners.

⇒ Enhance and cater to job-creating investments among local and extrinsic sources.

⇒ Recommend at least on superstructure such as a brand name hotel be put in town but made sure that it is fashioned to represent the town in the same way of its historic nature.

⇒ More signage should be implemented so that tourists can get around more easily and know where they are and where they can go walking or by transit systems throughout the city.

⇒ I would add more of a social media presence for their pioneer spirit and attractions along with selected events that would bring in more people to the city.

⇒ Overall my recommendation would just be to refresh the city without taking away its identity and what it has been working with since it was first founded.

⇒ Collaborate with University of Florida Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Sports Management professors and doctoral students to create marketing research and plans.

⇒ Contact Main Street America and begin process of reapplying for grant.

⇒ Apply for grant from Visit Gainesville Tourism Development Council, making sure to emphasize the ROI.

⇒ Identify and target community leaders and stakeholders to create in High Springs to Economic Development and Tourism Corporation.

⇒ Create an identifiable gateway to downtown High Springs.

⇒ Increase public restroom accommodations downtown.

⇒ Create partnerships with local plant nursery or garden shop to begin a "beautify downtown" program.

⇒ Collaborate with well-known children's programs such as the boys and girls club, boy scouts, and girl scouts to create family friendly events geared towards history.

⇒ Use social media platforms such as twitter, facebook, snapchat, and Instagram to display what the city has to offer in terms of beauty, events, etc.

CITY *SCOPE*

EVALUATION

Overview

In designing our Plan Evaluation, we consider the following Sections of the proposal:
1. Top Ten Recommended Objectives (Goal Settting)
2. Scenario Two (Ideal Scenario)
3. Market Analysis
4. Assessment and Plan (1-4)

⇒ Web Analytics from the new tourism website show progressive increases of at least 50% each year.

⇒ Local superstructure (hotels and restaurants) remain in business and report business increases of 15% by the end of 2018.

⇒ Anecdotal (intercept surveys) of city residents show strong satisfaction with tourism increase.

⇒ High Springs Economic Development and Tourism Corporation is incorporated and gains non-profit provisional status by end of 2017.

⇒ Business tax revenues show year-over-year regular increases (up 15% by end of 2018)

⇒ Interim Hospitality Consultants (or other) company is hired to develop a new hotel.

⇒ Real estate valuation shows year-over-year regular growth (up 10% by end of 2021)

⇒ Tourism-related business open for longer hours by mid-2017.

⇒ A local organization offers to sponsor an additional festival in the city by 2019 (in addition to Pioneer Days and the Christmas Parade).

⇒ Pioneer Days capacity and attendance are increased by 40% by 2020 (up to 16,800)

⇒ Parking capacity in the town is doubled over the current capacity by end of 2019.

⇒ Parking capacity in the town is tripled over the current capacity by the end of 2021

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