

2018 HAMILTON COUNTY, INDIANA

Tourism WORKS



JUST NORTH
OF INDY

visit
hamilton
county
indiana

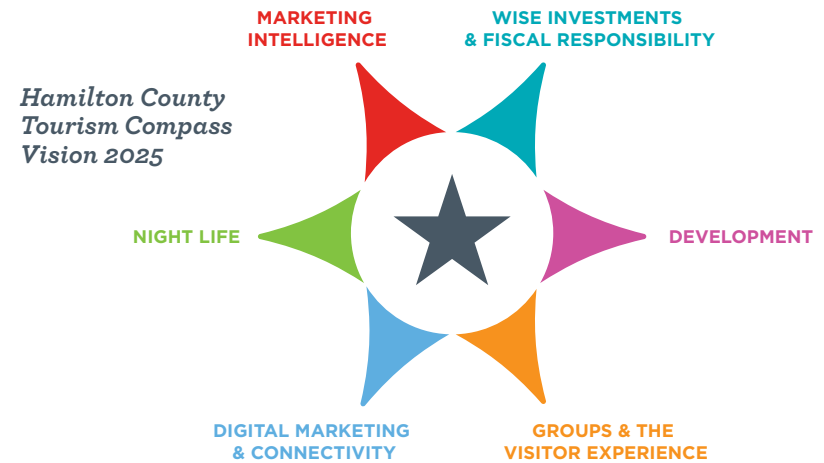


CARMEL | FISHERS | NOBLESVILLE | WESTFIELD | NORTHERN TOWNS

Action



A destination FOR THE FUTURE



If 2017 was the year of discovery, then 2018 is the year of action for Hamilton County Tourism. Following the guiding compass in HCT's Vision 2025 Plan, the organization prioritizes the following new initiatives to support destination development and visitor growth in 2018:

- Launch a new and expanded advertising program in key target markets, supported by traditional and digital media marketing and new creative in all platforms
- Retain a national public relations firm to work with Hamilton County's communities to promote nationally what makes them unique
- Support the county's vibrant youth sports market through a new national sponsor attraction pilot program
- Expand efforts to position the county as an affordable and interesting meeting location for smaller groups through regional and local collaborations, and sales marketing or continued "smarketing"
- Continue growth of expanded visitor experience efforts through creation of an innovative ambassador program
- Lead and support Hamilton County's participation in the White River Regional Masterplan study with Indianapolis
- Support implementation of a new tourism railroad and its home communities in northern Hamilton County from Atlanta to Noblesville
- Launch a pilot internship program to support a high school hospitality workforce development program launched in 2017
- Research and work with communities on responsible nightlife activation

Happening

2018 Hamilton County, Indiana THINGS TO WATCH

- ★ Another 500+ hotel rooms now open in Noblesville, Carmel, Fishers and Westfield, bringing the total county lodging growth since 2014 to 27% for a total of just over 4,000 hotel rooms
- ★ Arrival of a new and exciting Indianapolis Colts Summer Camp at Grand Park in Westfield
- ★ Creation of maker spaces opening at Conner Prairie and the Hamilton East Public Library, both in Fishers
- ★ Zagster bicycle rental programs expanding beyond Carmel and Westfield into Noblesville, and ongoing growth in the county's bicycle-friendly tourism community program
- ★ Evolution of Atlanta to *Indiana's Midwest Traintown, USA* and introduction of the new Nickel Plate Express Railroad/Arcadia Depot Museum
- ★ Ongoing growth in the local food scene throughout the county and especially in Westfield's "Restaurant Row" and the creation of The Yard in Fishers in addition to others
- ★ Finch Creek Park and the Fieldhouse in development in Noblesville
- ★ Opening of the Embassy Suites and Conference Center adding 30,000 sq. ft. of meeting space to the county's meeting and conference locations
- ★ An expanded Monon Trail footprint through Carmel's Midtown establishing it as a unique destination and business stimulator



CHIBA, WESTFIELD



DESIRABLE DESTINATIONS

Tell Hamilton County's story nationally and support destination development opportunities

Destination development is an art, not a science. While community leaders rely on policies and planning to create appropriate guidelines, it is their overall vision that creates great places. Hamilton County's downtown destinations demonstrate how that vision is put into action. Once sleepy spots that primarily supported government services, these uniquely defined urban cores now draw crowds each week.

Hamilton County's four larger cornerstone attractions continue their own creative visioning for the future. Whether through innovative programs and master planning at Conner Prairie, constantly improving visitor experiences at Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center, growth both indoors and outdoors at Grand Park, or ongoing artistic growth at the Center for the Performing Arts, the bar is raised year after year for the county's iconic attractions.

Hamilton County also is home to not one but two designated Indiana Arts Commission state-designated cultural districts: Carmel and Noblesville. Anchored by the Carmel Arts & Design District and Nickel Plate Arts campus, art partners in these communities support place-based development and add personality, culture and authenticity to these city stories.

Hamilton County's Strawtown Koteewi Park now offers year-round programming; from winter snow tubing to summer archery, high adventure to horseback riding and distance hiking to water experiences. Soon, a complementary tourism excursion railroad will be located

just a few miles away, making this area one of the county's hot spot destinations.

In 2018, actual implementation of the White River Regional Masterplan begins. Regional partners—including the City of Indianapolis, Visit Indy, Central Indiana Community Foundation and Legacy Fund, local advocates such as the Friends of the White River, Hoosier Environmental Council and White River

68% of travelers plan a vacation around an attraction.

Alliance, Hamilton County Surveyor's Office and the cities of Carmel, Fishers and Noblesville—will join together in the largest river study in the country. This will be a regional effort with input from residents and visitors alike.

Hamilton County Tourism will help tell this life-enriching story because visionary place-making for the community also means great experiences for visitors—or what some tourism professionals call “temporary locals.”

A contract with a national public relations firm will help spread the word of this and other important work. Working with our city communications partners, the goal is to begin building relationships with national media outlets beyond tourism.

Innovative

MEANINGFUL MARKETING

Maximize marketing intelligence and use targeted traditional and digital marketing

Marketing today is more sophisticated than ever, with endless opportunities that require constant oversight to ensure proper return on investment. Nowhere is that more obvious than in destination promotions.

Similar to stockbrokers who work to maximize yield on investments, the digital and social media experts at Hamilton County Tourism read analytics constantly. Firm believers in layered marketing that combine traditional with social and digital promotions, the tourism marketing team works with its media agencies to target

Mobile web applications continue to be the preferred choice of visitors, which means both desktop and mobile versions of websites must be responsive to support visitor information searches throughout the booking window time frame and while visitors are in market as well.

Google Travel Products are quickly becoming the singular most used source for trip planning. Important content management and collaboration with the search engine giant will ensure Hamilton County attractions are presented in the best possible light.

Social media is perhaps one of the most influential means of micro-targeting potential visitors, and in 2018 HCT launches a series of 28 new Facebook-friendly video shorts featuring views of our cities along with county views that tell the story quickly and meaningfully. The videos will be shared throughout the Midwest and specifically in Chicago, a lucrative target market.

This is just the beginning of a new comprehensive and layered strategy for 2018 and beyond. The videos are also suitable for television and other platforms.

*A 1-star increase in
Yelp can result in a 5%
increase in revenue.*

time periods where hotel demand is weakest to influence visitor stays.

While not the Dow Jones Industrial Average, HCT's ongoing key performance indicators are detailed and focused. Combined with end-of-year visitor panel surveys, research provides insights into just how much impact marketing makes on visitation.

That influence extends in-market as well. A pilot digital information wall in Westfield's Grand Park Events Center tells visitors what is happening in the city and throughout the county.



RENAISSANCE HOTEL, CARMEL

Attractive



GROWING GATHERINGS

Work to attract groups of all kinds, roll out the groups red carpet and pilot a sports sponsorship program

Nowhere is change more evident than in the group travel market. Groups today are discerning. They want unique places to gather, local stories to tell, quality accommodations and events to experience. Whether it's a gathering of fraternal educators or a coaches' conference, place matters more than ever.

So does the welcome a community gives a group. Working with lodging and sports partners, HCT will expand on how the county welcomes groups in 2018. This includes providing support services to more than 50 larger groups scheduled to gather here with everything from hotel signage and information desks to special gift packages.

A new ambassador program will expand hospitality services and provide more one-on-one contact with visitors, plus provide better customer training for frontline staff. HCT also will make sure the story of tourism's impact is communicated locally so every resident understands his or her role is to serve as an ambassador to the more than four million visitors that will come here in 2018.

To support local sports venues, HCT's Hamilton County Sports Authority division will explore how to expand sponsorship visibility as more than one million athletes and fans arrive here each year for youth competitive events. The authority will explore ways to maximize that opportunity to support these vibrant venues that run such great events.

Stop planning meetings, and start designing events.

The HCSA is still very much in the youth sports business, but its role is changing to look for ways to support clubs and events not only through sales but through business intelligence and smart marketing.



GRAND PARK, WESTFIELD

Vibrant

ENHANCE & EDUCATE

Explore responsible nightlife activation programs, pilot a high school hospitality internship program and continue to lead in tourism market intelligence

One of the guiding principles of HCT's work is a desire to be better and work smarter. One of the organization's values is listening, whether learning what the visiting public needs, or hearing what leaders and organizations desire to support their hard work.

Paid vacation days—many times wasted by American workers—are now being used because of a behavior shift toward prioritizing leisure time.

Hospitality workforce needs have also grown, and the local industry reached out to HCT for support. Working with the IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management at IUPUI and Ivy Tech Community College, HCT partnered with Westfield High School in the fall of 2017 to launch a new tourism hospitality certificate program. In the summer

of 2018, students will work at more than 20 partner organizations learning every aspect of hospitality and event management. This unique internship program will be managed by a trained industry professional and hopefully grow interest in hospitality as a career. The IU School of Physical Education and Tourism Management at IUPUI awarded HCT the 2018 Dean's Educational Impact Award for the program.

Market intelligence will always drive HCT, which is why research is a hallmark of the organization. From data to feasibility studies, HCT is ready to study, learn and teach.

In 2018, HCT will reach out to communities to understand their current policies regarding nightlife as the county works to become an 18-hour community that attracts young professionals and visitors to the area. Growing nightlife responsibility will be an important next step to support the Vision 2025 Plan.

Digital marketing return on investment, advertising effectiveness, forecasting, completion of a year-long online visitor profile study and visitor spending pattern research are just a few of the 2018 research programs planned.



UNION BREWING CO., CARMEL

VISION:

Hamilton County will be nationally known as an innovative, diverse, vibrant and attractive tourism destination.

90 CENTS OF EVERY \$1 SPENT IN HCT STAYS IN THE COUNTY



The local tourism economy saves Hamilton County households \$850/year in taxes

MISSION:

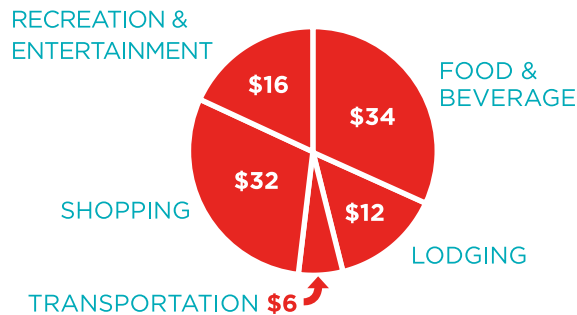
*We message.
We move.
We make it fun.*



Visitors in Hamilton County:

- ★ Spend **\$738.2 million** annually
- ★ Support **14,000+** jobs
- ★ Generate **\$105.4 million** in state and local taxes

FOR EVERY \$100 SPENT IN HAMILTON COUNTY BY A VISITOR:



WE ARE



ABOUT 7.6%

of all jobs in HCT are supported by tourism to the region

We ❤️ our community.
We care. We give.



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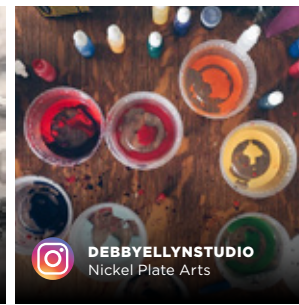
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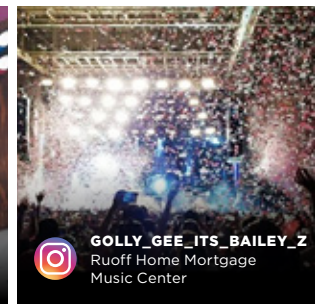
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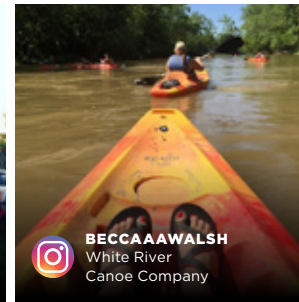
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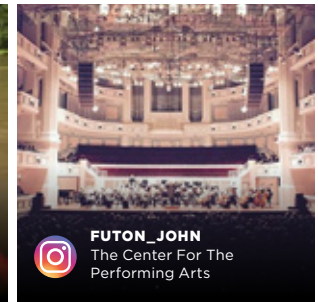
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Ruoff Home Mortgage Music Center



THESINGLEHOOSIER
Symphony on the Prairie



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FUTON_JOHN
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