

## TOURIST INFORMATION BUREAU SERVICES

### ANNUAL PLAN YEAR 2

Visit Jacksonville will serve as the premier expert on tourist attractions, activities and events, accommodations, and restaurants available to tourists who visit Jacksonville. In accordance with Section 666.108(b)(1), *Ordinance Code*, Visit Jacksonville will operate and staff the City's Tourist Bureau. The Tourist Information Bureau Services to be performed shall consist of the three functions required under the Tourist Development Plan:

- 1) visitor centers
- 2) comprehensive listings
- 3) assembly of available information

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2017-2018 has been a year of discovery for our tourist information bureau efforts. Opening the new fully staffed Beaches Visitor Center provided a wonderful opportunity to be much more engaged in the beaches area. We hired new staff that resides in the area and have developed a strong bond with the Beaches Museum & History Park. We participated in the *Opening of the Beaches Parade* to make locals and visitors more aware that we are open. Though our initial traffic was slow, we are seeing improved visitation numbers and know that once there is more awareness of our center we will see traffic numbers increase.

Our efforts for comprehensive listings have been a wonderful undertaking, introducing us to new businesses throughout the city. It is challenging to keep up with all the new business, but even more so to keep track of those that have closed or moved locations. Our staff is diligent in our efforts to keep our database as up to date as possible and work daily to make updates and changes. We would like to purchase 1 to 2 laptops for the Beaches Visitor Center to enable staff there to help in our efforts to keep data current; which currently they are not able to do.

Our visitor centers have been acquiring new brochures all year long. The key to success here has been educating the businesses on the demand and having them plan to keep us in the loop when brochures change. We still feel there are many businesses not taking advantage of the opportunity and will pursue additional efforts in year 2 in this area.

Overall, our staff is better trained than ever, more enthusiastic about Jacksonville and the Beaches and excited to give the best possible experience to every visitor that walks through our doors. Several individual team members have been recognized for going above and beyond this year. One team member was recognized for her efforts with a ROSE (Recognition of Service Excellence) Award in February. Another team member received an outstanding thank you from a satisfied visitor who was thrilled with the one-on-one attention and said that this team member's efforts had made her trip. Another team member has been recognized by the Aviation Authority three times in 2018 for going "above and beyond" to help individual visitors.

We are excited about adding a mobile visitor center and believe it will prove well worth the investment. The new mobile center will also add a new employee to staff this endeavor.

With no expected slowdowns, 2018-2019 looks to be another successful year for tourism to Jacksonville. In the following Year 2 Plan you will find the individual strategies and tactics for this next fiscal year, which align with the 3-Year Comprehensive Plan that was approved in January 2018.

**Note: Bold, italic font throughout document represents additional items due to amendments to the plan by TDC at the meeting on August 9, 2018.**

## Annual Metrics

### 2017-2018 Metrics Results (Individual FY Visitor Center Traffic thru 8 months)

Visitor Center	FYTD Total In-person visitors	17-18 Annual Goal In-person Visitors	% to Annual Goal
Airport	125,192	157,299	79.6%
Beaches (2 ½ months of data)	1,157	15,000* (Requesting this change to 5,000)	7.7%
Downtown	19,452	27,195	72%
VISIT FLORIDA	94,204	108,968	86.5%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>240,005</b>	<b>308,462</b>	<b>77.9%</b>

Tourist Bureau Metrics	FYTD
Website/Phone interactions	9,811
Businesses added to database/visitjacksonville.com listings	204
Total visitor magazines distributed	22,231
Total referrals to tourism businesses from visitor center employees	610,178

\*After two and ½ months, the Beaches Visitor Center traffic is still lower than anticipated. We have increased awareness efforts within the beaches communities by having meetings with local businesses, calling them weekly to remind them we are open, speaking at beaches community events, participating in the opening of the Beaches Parade and adding portable signage on the grounds of the Beaches Museum & History Park. We are creating a short video to share via social media and our website to hopefully push more traffic to the center. We anticipate at best this center will only hit 5,000 visitors for FY 2017-2018; however, overall, total visitors to all centers should exceed the mark. We propose the 2018-2019 goal to be 10,000 overall visitors to the Beaches Center based on annualization of actual to date.

**Visit Jacksonville will provide any year 1 deliverables not delivered by the end of the contract year to TDC no later than November 30, 2018 utilizing the funding approved in year 1.**

## Proposed 2018-2019 Annual Metrics (\*Goal Numbers will be inserted once we complete the fiscal year)

- **Performance measurement period for Year 2 will run from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019.**
- An annual 5% increase in the total visitors to each individual visitor center (\*based on final 2017-2018 numbers). **The Beaches Visitor Center will have a Year 2 goal of 10,000 visitors; however, the collective total increase for year 2 for all centers will increase by 5%.**
- **NEW!** Interact with 30,000 visitors through a Mobile Visitor Center.
- Visit Jacksonville will comply with the comprehensive listings requirements in 666.108 (b)(1)(ii):
  - (ii) *Comprehensive listings.* The establishment of continually updated comprehensive and all-inclusive listings of all: public and private museums including library special collections; guided tours; event listings at all City-owned facilities such as the arena, performing arts center, baseball grounds, stadium and other City-owned venues; other events and activities submitted to the website host which are open to the public; golf courses and other sports facilities open to the public; activity rentals (bicycle, kayak, power boats, etc.); charter fishing captains; manufacturing facility tours; links to Jacksonville Parks, Libraries and other public facilities offered within the City of Jacksonville; hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts and other accommodations; restaurants, bars, clubs, and similar food and entertainment establishments, and other similar listings of tourist oriented facilities and activities.
- Other metrics that will be tracked and reported quarterly include:
  - Total visitor magazines distributed
  - Total referrals to tourism businesses from visitor center employees
  - Total listings added/removed from database

## Year 2 Annual Plan, 2018-2019

This is the Year 2 Annual Plan for 2018-2019 fiscal year. This document follows the 3-Year Comprehensive Plan for the Tourist Information Bureau. The following are the specific, detailed Year 2 strategies related to the Plan.

### There will be three Official Visit Jacksonville Visitor Centers

#### Downtown Visitor Center

The Downtown Visitor Center will be in our current location on Laura St. For now, the Laura St. Center is in an excellent location offering visitors a center within one-mile of I-95. The center offers clean adequate bathrooms, hours of operation that can be set around visitor demands, street parking, and the opportunity to use the space for both private events and art displays.

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Saturday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. We will evaluate the hours open to see if there is a need to shift more hours to busier times.

### **Year 2 Goals**

Visit Jacksonville's lease in the current downtown location will expire in the year 2020. The Tourist Development Council is spearheading the effort for the location of the new downtown center and Visit Jacksonville will cooperate and support these plans.

### **Beaches Visitor Center**

Visit Jacksonville will continue our partnership with the Beaches Museum & History Park for our Beaches Visitor Center.

Hours of Operation: (starting February) Tuesday – Saturday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., Sunday & Monday 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### **Year 2 Goals**

We will promote the new center through the following activities:

1. Increased signage (permanent as well as temporary)
2. Increased communication with the area businesses
3. Increased presence at local events in order to draw visitors in since they are not accustomed to a staffed center in the area.



### **Airport Visitor Center**

Visit Jacksonville maintains a center at the Jacksonville International Airport in partnership with the Jacksonville Aviation Authority. This location is open 91 hours (50 as part of the plan with the Tourist Development Council). Since this center is owned by the regional aviation authority, this center is a regional Visitor Center and is financially supported by both the airport and several neighboring counties. Visit Jacksonville currently uses these funds to offset the cost of the extra 41 hours the airport requires the center to be open beyond the TDC's 50 required hours.

Hours of Operation: Hours of Operation: Seven Days a Week: 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

### **Year 2 Goals**

1. Visit Jacksonville plans to work with the Jacksonville Aviation Authority to enhance the signage directing visitors to this location.
2. We will also work on a long-term plan to enhance this center with more enticing features for visitors. We have commenced this effort by meeting with the Jacksonville Aviation Authority leadership and they have agreed to partner on improvements. We will regularly meet with Aviation Authority leadership in Year 2 to complete the renovation project in this year.
3. We will offer more enhanced video and digital experiences with less emphasis on printed collateral.

## Ongoing Efforts from Year 1:

### Coordination with VISIT FLORIDA'S Welcome Centers

Intercepting visitors coming to Florida at the I-95 Welcome Center has been a successful tactic for recruiting new visitors to the destination. Research from VISIT FLORIDA shows that 63% of travelers stopping in their centers visited additional destinations or cities based on their visit to the welcome centers. The experience development previously mentioned will be perfect to promote to visitors who don't already have a set plan for their trip.

Visit Jacksonville will encourage local businesses, specifically those with a direct start in Jacksonville such as Firehouse Subs, Salt Life, as well as specialty and shops located only in Jacksonville, to display their brochures at VISIT FLORIDA's center, as well. Right now, tourism businesses are welcome to join Visit Jacksonville in our weekly trips to the I-95 center. We will encourage our local tourism industry to have a greater presence and we will work with VISIT FLORIDA directly to find more affordable ways to get local businesses involved. We know that a greater representation by the Jacksonville area tourism community would encourage visitors to see our destination as a place they need to visit within Florida. Visit Jacksonville will be putting a plan together immediately to engage local tourism businesses in these efforts.

### Promotion of Visitor Centers/ T.R.I.P. (Tourist Referral Information Pass)

To better serve our tourists the T.R.I.P. (Tourist Referral Information Pass) program was developed by Visit Jacksonville to increase awareness of our Visitor Centers and to drive additional visitors into the centers. T.R.I.P. educates the frontline staff at local businesses, hotels and attractions to direct guests to the closest Visitor Center. With limited time and budget dedicated to this program, T.R.I.P. produces 20 to 50 additional visitors monthly to the closest Visitor Center. Statistics from VISIT FLORIDA show that 31% of visitors extend their stay by 2.8 nights after stopping at a Visitor Center. The Visitor Center staff regularly makes calls to Jacksonville hotels to book rooms for visitors that had not planned on staying in Jacksonville.

### 360 Videos

Exciting videos are a perfect way to entice visitors to go and do the activity they just experienced while watching the video. Visitor Center team members will have brochures and webpages prepared as follow-up to each video to provide easy instructions on how to go and do what they have seen in the video and all the local businesses that can provide the experiences.

Experiencing a destination in 360 transports you, and we believe it will do an amazing job of compelling visitors to drive attendance at our attractions and activities. And, it can be as simple as walking to a table and putting on a headset.

Year 1 of the contract will see the completion of 4 of these videos. Current proposed videos include:

- (1) Hiking: Theodore Roosevelt area of the Timucuan National Ecological Preserve.
- (2) Fishing: An offshore as well as inshore excursion to highlight all that Jacksonville has to offer.
- (3) River Taxi Tour: Science & History tour or sunset river cruise
- (4) Surfing: Film a surfing class or local surf camp

## **Tactic**

***We will add four additional videos during Year 2 and will broaden the content to include at least 1 video focusing on the arts, 1 on sporting events (possibly to include golf) and 1 on family attractions (such as the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens).***

## **Continuation of Unstaffed Kiosks Efforts**

Visit Jacksonville will work to ensure that the 3 all-weather kiosks agreed to in Year 1 are procured prior to September 30, 2018 (barring any purchasing constraints with the City). We will base the decision to purchase additional kiosks beyond the original 3 using results from implementation of the first kiosks.

## **Wayfinding Signage**

Visit Jacksonville was not able to complete the deliverable of establishing signage in Year 1 as stated in our plan partially due to a change of leadership in the organization. Our current CEO plans to meet with political leadership of Jacksonville Beach and develop a plan to partner with them to place signage directing to the Beaches Visitor Center in Year 2. Councilwoman Boyer has agreed to assist with coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation to plan additional signage once the new location proposed at the Times-Union Center is constructed.

## **Staffing and Operation of Visitor Centers**

Visit Jacksonville has managed the staffing of the Visitor Centers for over 20 years. We have knowledgeable, customer service-oriented employees that have worked for the company, on average, for at least seven years.

Visit Jacksonville will utilize the current staff of 15 part-time and full-time team members who are already vetted and trained. To staff the new mobile visitor center, there will be one additional staff member added.

Visit Jacksonville will follow the hiring policy, background checks, orientations, and ongoing training program outlined in the 3-Year Comprehensive Plan.

## **Comprehensive Listings and Assembly of Information**

The tourism business database will be managed in-house again in Year 2. New businesses are discovered, contacted and added daily to help reach our goal of always having an all-inclusive tourism industry database. There are currently 2,167 listing/businesses included. We work with an online customer relationship manager (CRM) system called iDSS to store and host the data and to be able to create specific reports and lists when needed.

In 2017-2018 we have done the following clean-up efforts to make our database as accurate and as user-friendly as possible:

- Added 216 total businesses from 10/1-6/30/17 to include: 118 Restaurants/Nightlife; 5 meeting places; 14 Convention services (speakers, planning assistance, decorators, etc); 12 Transportation (car services, rentals, Frontier Airlines); 5 Where to Stay (RV park, new hotel about to open, longer term temp rentals); 62 Things to Do

- Simplified the Things to Do search (added more) categories in some cases to make it easier for a visitor to find the “things to do” they are searching for. For instance, added categories for Library, Movie Theaters, Dog Parks (separate from Parks), Bowling, etc.
- Simplified the categories for Hotel search functions. The original terms were Focused Select Terms, Upper Midscale Chains, Other Accommodations, Midscale Hotels, Luxury Chains, etc. The new category is “Where to Stay-Hotels/Motels”. This process was done for other Where to Stay which now has the B&B/Rentals/Temp Housing in one place and then Campsites/RV in another.
- Reviewed what search terms are used for Convention Meetings/Groups and Services for groups and made sure these categories were available on our site. Removed categories planners/visitors are not looking for to provide the best user experience on the meetings pages site. Reviewed other DMO websites that have high convention business to research new terms and search/page ideas.
- Added a secondary search feature for cuisine type for Restaurants, so it could be classified as Pizza and Italian for instance, or Breakfast and American to make it easier for visitors to find what they are looking for.

### **Year 2 Goals**

For Year 2, we will monitor, search and update to ensure that our database stays current and is relevant for visitors. This is an ongoing effort through all years of the contract.

### **Tactic**

***We will develop 8 new tour itineraries (4 geographic based and 4 subject matter based) to be provided to marketing for publication in various forms.***

## **Assembly of Available Information**

We are constantly working to gather new information. This year the visitor center team put together a plan to request information from area businesses in February of 2018. They mailed, emailed and called over 2000 area businesses requesting brochures, information and contacts. They received responses from about 100 local businesses with about 20 of those choosing to share their brochures for distribution in our visitor centers.

This year several new brochures and pieces of content were researched by the Tourist Bureau Team and shared with the marketing team to develop new collateral. This research included:

- New overall destination map
- Top Nationals, State and City Parks – including map
- Fishing – types and guides
- Museums – including map
- Top restaurants to dock your boat and eat at – including map

### **Year 2 Goals**

In 2018-2019, new research will include:

- Ongoing park research

- Beach experiences in each beach town – unique things to do
- Most popular fishing charters
- Jacksonville’s best watersports & related tours
- Trampoline Parks
- Restaurants – new, changed and closed
- Craft Cocktail Bars
- Farmer’s Markets

We are in the process of requesting 1-2 additional laptops for the Beaches visitor staff so that they can also help in these research efforts.

### **Tactic**

***We will develop 3 hiking/biking routes in the City of Jacksonville in year 2.***

### **NEW! for Year 2**

#### **Mobile Visitor Center**

There is a greater need for flexibility for Visitor Centers in the future, and Visit Jacksonville believes that a great way to access more visitors is by going to where they are! A mobile visitor center will be used daily in different neighborhoods and areas of the city and on the weekends based on what is happening in the city. This vehicle will also be used at special events and conferences. The mobile center will feature all the collateral and benefits of a brick and mortar storefront, but with the ability to reach the visitors where they are!

The vision is of a branded vehicle moving around to different neighborhoods throughout the week and weekends. It can be located at the St. Johns Town Center or parked in Five Points or Avondale. On nights when we know that a large convention is occurring it will be parked outside of the Convention Center or at a nearby hotel. The vehicle will have a staff member to provide dining options or entertainment ideas. It will also be used for promotional efforts at festivals around the state to promote visitors to consider Jacksonville for future trips.

Some of the features the vehicle could have include:

- The vehicle will be wrapped with Visit Jacksonville signage/graphics.
- A screen that plays videos of Jacksonville and things to do
- An open window set-up so a staff member can stand inside or outside
- Brochures would stay neatly displayed inside the vehicle, no matter the weather conditions, and include mobile racks for nicer weather
- A large map of the area showing local attractions
- Consideration will be given to a retractable awning and an outside table and chairs
- While the vehicle is closed it still provides the perfect opportunity to market Jacksonville with the branded wrap on the outside as well as our website/social media information



This visitor center would have new dedicated staff members. To start this mobile center, we will be looking for staff members who are not only experts on the city's attractions, dining, nightlife, and things to do, but will be flexible to work hours that include nights and weekends. We expect to interact with 30,000 visitors in the first year using the vehicle. Estimated cost of \$75,000 (includes wrapping and supplies). This project will be pending approval by TDC of capital funding.

***Visit Jacksonville will present an operating budget for staffing, fuel, vehicle maintenance, etc. for the current and future years by November 2018; if this project proves not feasible based on this requirement, Visit Jacksonville will provide an alternate service level enhancement at the January TDC meeting.***

We have included some photos as examples of similar vehicles.

