

Clinton County Destination Master Plan

Revised Goals

As Guided by the 2015 Plan Renewal Retreat

The following goals reflect intentions voiced by the people, businesses, organizations, and governments of the destination we call the Adirondack Coast. We invite all parties to join us in our efforts to accomplish these goals and to deliver the benefits they will create for our residents, visitors, businesses, natural resources and heritage.

Note: There may be the appearance of some redundancy among these goals. It is important to point out that some goals which are important to the community are very similar to goals that are important to visitors or the hospitality industry.

Community Related Goals

- We will grow our regional pride
- We will maintain the unique social character of our region while increasing economic opportunities and quality of life for those who live here through the development of carefully planned tourism
- We will use tourism as a tool to help attract young professionals (and their families) to the Adirondack Coast
- We will use tourism to leverage more opportunities for residents to embrace a healthier outdoor lifestyle
- We will use tourism as a tool to help reconnect our communities with the waterfront
- We will use tourism as a tool to support culture and the arts
- We will use history tourism as a tool to support local museums and re-enactment groups and to help residents embrace our heritage and history
- We will use tourism, particularly agritourism, to support the economic health of rural residents of the region
- We will help local residents understand and value the hospitality industry and its patrons – and the benefits residents enjoy as a result of hospitality-related activities
- We will showcase tourism as a growing a positive force in Clinton County

Hospitality Industry Related Goals

- We will improve the way we take care of our existing hospitality industry patrons
- We will build a strong leisure component to our destination, based on our strengths of history and outdoor recreation
- We will grow products and services that enable us to excel in the history, agritourism and outdoor recreation markets

- We will build products, services, and events that celebrate our unique history in a manner and scale that are equal to the importance of that history – and create jobs and business opportunities in the process
- We will develop a full set of products and services to support cycling tourism, and match our opportunities with appropriate markets by both interest and location
- We will develop a full set of products and services to support paddling tourism, and match our opportunities with appropriate markets by both interest and location
- We will establish our Adirondack Coast brand in the minds of our target markets, gaining traction as the brand expands beyond tourism marketing
- We will create an inbound flow of leisure visitors through Plattsburgh International Airport, targeting by market and interest
- We will increase profitability, growing both numbers of visitors and expenditures per arrival
- We will build a state-of-the-art data collection system to better target our audiences and increase our competitiveness
- We will measure our success by comparing our products and services against the best, by the reputation we earn with our visitors, and by the progress we make to improve quality of life
- Adding the energy, infrastructure, and vibrancy that our hospitality industry envisions for the destination, we will make the destination more exciting for the relocation of both professionals and businesses
- We will create a sense of place and support local industry by putting local agricultural products (apples, maple syrup, wine, etc.) in the forefront and showcasing them in menus.
- We will diversify our patron base to provide more economic stability for the industry and the destination, to raise the value of our products, and to broaden our seasons
- We will expand our tourism seasons, growing reasons to be here, and inviting visitors to come all year
- We will package our experiences with our services and products to make it easier for visitors to plan time in our destination.

Visitor Related Goals

- We will bring history to life, making it engaging, approachable and participatory, building such strong relationships with our patrons that they will return many times
- We will connect our visitors with Lake Champlain, getting them to the waterfront and onto the lake
- We will connect our visitors with the Adirondacks and our fantastic rivers, giving them multiple ways to experience this destination
- We will become a bilingual destination (English and French)

- We will make information and services (such as public restrooms) available wherever we create flows of visitors
- We will connect our visitors to the region's great agricultural products
- We will send our visitors home as advocates for our destination, spreading the word about the great experiences we have to share

Stewardship Related Goals

- We will honor our history by making it more accessible to the people of the nations which shaped it and the people of the world whose lives were impacted by the events and developments that took place here
- We will build and manage tourism in a way that contributes to the health of Lake Champlain, the Adirondack Park, our forests, and our rivers
- We will build and manage tourism in a way that contributes to the quality of life of local residents

Destination Management Related Goals

- The Strategic Tourism Planning Committee and the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau will lead the execution of the Destination Master Plan. The STPC will cooperate with and support efforts and initiatives by other public and private entities such as the North Country Chamber of Commerce, the Vision to Action Committee, local and county governments, private businesses and investors to further these goals.
- We will build a strong mutually beneficial relationship between our hospitality industry and those focused on our region's unique history
- We will renew the plan annually, keeping it current and alive
- We will maintain a strong leisure travel marketing budget
- We will strengthen the Adirondack Coast brand
- We will build a partnership among the public and private sectors all across the Adirondack Coast

Goals – Elaboration

Here are more detailed descriptions of our destination goals. As we develop and execute actions, some of them will contribute to the achievement of more than one of these goals.

Community Related Goals

We will grow our regional pride

We will build products and experiences based around our strengths as a destination. The messages we create to attract visitors to the Adirondack Coast will showcase this as a special place to visit – and have quality experiences. As we create a steady stream of visitors who come because they value what we have, what they can enjoy here, and what they can learn from our history, we will develop a stronger sense of pride in our region.

We will maintain the unique social character of our region while increasing economic opportunities and quality of life for those who live here through the development of carefully planned tourism

We seek tourism to grow our quality of life, to achieve better economics for those who live here, and to protect the social fabric of this region. To that end, we are designing the future of this destination in ways that create economic opportunity for people who live here and for people who will reinforce our community values. We are building new products and experiences that will also generate ways for us to enjoy our lives. We will use tourism and other hospitality industry patronage to leverage more amenities for our communities, a healthier local population, and reasons for young people to stay here, have careers here, and raise families.

We will use tourism as a tool to help attract and keep young professionals (and their families) to the Adirondack Coast

As we build new products and experiences and motivate a new segment of leisure travelers to come to the Adirondack Coast, two key things will happen. First, we'll need talented people, invested in the region, to guide new businesses or to staff the expansion of existing business. Second, the new products and experiences will add to the quality of life for residents – and the sense that the region is “going places”. That will make it easier for businesses and institutions to attract quality professionals who intend to put down roots and become part of the community.

We will use tourism to leverage more opportunities for residents to embrace a healthier outdoor lifestyle

We will use tourism to leverage infrastructure such as bike paths and lanes and kayak put-ins, most of which will also be used (perhaps even more often) by residents. Similarly, tourism will support businesses that also sell or rent bikes, skis, boats, etc. to local residents. As fit visitors seek local services such as guiding or instruction (e.g. paddling) those same services will be available to residents – and offered by people who are part of the community. There will be every opportunity for residents of all ages to engage in an active outdoor lifestyle. Further, as the industry develops a stronger flow of leisure travel, there will be more economic support for non-chain restaurants that feature healthy menus, including dishes constructed from locally grown produce – another health-related benefit.

We will use tourism as a tool to help reconnect our communities with the waterfront

When the region was first settled, Lake Champlain, and associated waterways, were transportation routes. Rivers were sources of power. And communities developed along the waterfront. Over time, industry took much of that waterfront and the development of highways pulled the focus of communities away from the water. Then, the Northway pulled the energy even further inland, cutting off the energy of some communities.

Tourism is being used to reconnect us to the waterfront. Visitors traveling to the Adirondack Coast will expect a coast, will expect to get onto the water, and will expect rooms and meals with a water view. As we accommodate those expectations, we'll also draw our residents back to the water's edge.

Further, as we continue to develop paddling, fishing, and boating as strong activities for people traveling great distances – those same activities will become even easier for our already “outdoor oriented” population to enjoy.

Rouses Point is already well on the way to reconnecting its business district to the waterfront. By drawing more marina users into downtown, and encouraging more residential use of the waterfront walk, that connection will strengthen.

We will spend a great deal of energy on the corridor between the Plattsburgh's Dock Street Landing, Durkee Street and Wilcox Dock – revitalizing it and making it both visitor and pedestrian friendly. That connection includes the new Saranac River Trail, expanding on already great local opportunities, to embrace both the lake and the river.

The steps we take for community benefit our ability to attract and serve visitors – and the steps we take to facilitate visitor experiences augment the ability of local residents to embrace the outdoors and a healthy lifestyle.

We will use tourism as a tool to support culture and the arts

Culture and the arts are lifestyle benefits that come from having a population that is economically stable, socially diverse, and educated. As we develop leisure tourism, we will create more management jobs and a better environment for recruiting those who will both expect and patronize culture and the arts. Further, leisure travelers will be much more likely than the region’s existing traveler profile to engage in/patronize cultural activities. With further development of destination tourism and the strengthening of cultural activities, especially the development of The Strand, there is the potential for the region to have a fourth core strength in the tourism market.

Destination leadership will work with local artists and organizations to celebrate the people, places, history, and products of the Adirondack Coast through art, helping create a sense of place. We will work to create place-based art that will promote our core strengths (as identified in the Destination Master Plan). That art will enable our visitors to return to their homes with meaningful keepsakes from their travel – and those purchases will further support our community of artists and artisans.

We will use history tourism as a tool to support local museums and re-enactment groups and to help residents embrace our heritage and history

One point that everyone in the planning process seems to agree upon is that those who have been struggling to keep history alive through museums and re-enactment events are heroes. At the same time, the conversation has quickly noted that the region was home to some very important history (both events and developments) that shaped the evolution of at least four “Western” Nations and a number of Native American Nations. This history belongs to all of those people and should be honored and celebrated in scale to its importance. And, most importantly to the local economy, the people of those nations should have the opportunity to embrace and interact with that history in a quality manner.

This plan calls for an aggressive development of products and experiences related to history – and to make the local hospitality industry and governments partners with those who have worked so hard to protect and share history. This plan calls for using private and public investment to ramp up the region’s history-sharing infrastructure and bring interpretive centers to current state-of-the art.

This plan also calls for involving visitors in hands-on activities that generate new history-related infrastructure. It looks to those who have guarded and shared history to become teachers and mentors of a broader population of both residents and intrigued visitors as they seek to learn history at a deeper level than kiosks and interpretive signs will support.

This plan calls for re-enactments to happen more frequently – and for being able to create paying careers for those who would love to re-enact, tell stories, teach, and guide visitors in their explorations of history. It calls for transportation, perhaps horse drawn, to connect the Plattsburgh waterfront to the museum complex.

The intentions of the hospitality industry are to work closely with the history-related community to grow budgets, infrastructure, quality, and frequency of history-related facilities and events. The industry does not seek to “take over”, rather it seeks to partner and to create a symbiotic relationship. The industry will take the initiative to build and strengthen relationships with the history-related community.

We will use tourism, particularly agritourism, to support the economic health of rural residents of the region

Those involved in the planning process strongly feel that we should use tourism as a tool to reinforce the social and economic value of our regional farms – and to help keep families on the farm. The agriculture community has embraced this initiative and is working closely with the hospitality industry in a mutually beneficial manner. The Adirondack Coast region has wonderful agricultural products that have their own value on the open market. We will work to raise that value by promoting them on local menus, connecting the image of the Adirondack Coast to products, and by presenting many of them for direct sales to visitors. We will invite our visitors to celebrate the wealth of agricultural products and experiences during their visits – and to learn about our industry. There are a number of agritourism events featuring everything from maple syrup to strawberries to apples to wine and cider that are in the works – all making this destination more viable while reinforcing the value of local agricultural products.

There are, literally, millions of people within a day’s drive of Clinton County who live in very urban environments – and need a connection to rural life. There will be, once the airport expansion is complete and new routes are opened, even more people who live in environments unlike that of the Adirondack Coast. The potential, with both audiences, for developing strong and resilient farm tours, farm stays, and even rural apprenticeships is enormous – and could yield new revenue streams to rural residents and farmers.

We will help local residents understand and value the hospitality industry and its patrons – and the benefits residents enjoy as a result of hospitality-related activities

The existing hospitality industry creates many quality of life amenities for local residents. As we gear up the destination for leisure travel, even more will be created. There is often a gap of understanding between a host community and the hospitality industry on what those amenities are. The hospitality industry will work closely with civic leaders and the media to provide an ongoing flow of information to help residents understand how much the industry creates to the local tax base, to jobs and business opportunities, and to simple things like restaurants that locals frequent that could not make it without visitor spending or retail stores that wouldn't exist in this region without Canadian shoppers.

We will showcase tourism as a growing positive force in Clinton County

We will work hard to help our communities, our governments, and our fellow businesses understand that tourism is a machine that generates quality of life, jobs, local profits, and taxes that stay in our communities. We will help them understand that our occupancy tax is the tool for refueling that machine by attracting new and repeat visitors to our area – and that our visitors are paying this tax, and providing the resources for recruiting those who will follow.

We will communicate to the public and to our partners as we make achievements, showing them how those achievements impact our region's economic well-being and quality of life.

Hospitality Industry Related Goals

We will improve the way we take care of our existing hospitality industry patrons

The existing hospitality infrastructure and much of the retail that is associated with the Rt. 3/Northway intersection was built in response to business travelers, Canadian shoppers, and, more recently, Canadian outbound fliers. We intend to continue to take good care of all of those important patrons – and to find ways to improve our services for those patrons.

We will find ways to make it easier for business travelers to arrive and depart through our airport, and will add travelers' services to the terminal. We will work on adding new lodging, dining, and retail in the terminal vicinity, highlighting local products. We'll also expand the rental car options to arriving visitors. Existing lodging facilities will work out shuttle arrangements between hotels and the terminal as inbound travel justifies.

We'll seek to add more upscale retail opportunities to draw a wider cross section of Canadian shoppers (we think that residents will also applaud this move). Some of the new visitor services and experiences that are aimed at leisure travelers will also appeal to the Canadian shoppers. We will work hard to become a more bilingual destination, so that our French speaking visitors will find us more welcoming and accommodating. We will expand the number of traffic and directional signs that are in English and French – and miles and kilometers – to make visiting the region easier and friendlier. We'll constantly seek new ways to serve these visitors.

The flow of Canadians (and others) to the region to take advantage of flights from the new Plattsburgh airport is new. The addition of new travelers' services in the terminal (as it expands) should improve the experience of flying from our airport. The addition of lodging, restaurant and retail facilities near the terminal should also help serve these visitors. Efforts to become more bilingual in both signage and front line encounters should also improve our level of service for these visitors.

We will work hard to help local residents understand the value of these visitors to our economy and our quality of life – and to encourage residents to be welcoming of these visitors regardless of their country of origin.

We will build a strong leisure component to our destination, based on our strengths of history and outdoor recreation

We intend to design, build products and services for, and market a new leisure component to the Adirondack Coast hospitality industry economy. We see distinct opportunities to quickly grow and continue to refine flows of visitors seeking outdoor recreation – particularly cycling, paddling, fishing, boating, hiking, and skiing. We see strong, long term opportunities connected to the distinct history of this region. When we have those flows of visitors established, there should be a substantial growth in our industry, more resilience (as we have a more diverse source of patrons), new jobs and business opportunities, and increases in quality of life for residents.

We will grow products and services that enable us to excel in the history, agritourism and outdoor recreation markets

The Adirondack Coast has incredible potential to become a history destination and we have great outdoor experiences to share with visitors. We will take steps to turn that potential into reality by making history more approachable and interactive – building ways through which visitors can engage in history while contributing to our economics and regional pride.

We will continue to strengthen the ties between the hospitality and agricultural communities, generating events, products, and experiences that will enrich our visitors' time on the Adirondack Coast. Our branding effort will help connect visitors with agricultural businesses and products – and with events we jointly promote based on those products.

We will build products, services, experiences, and packages and add infrastructure where needed to deliver great experiences cycling (road and mountain), paddling, skiing (downhill and cross country), fishing, boating, hiking and more. We will focus people within Clinton County for recreation when we can, but will also serve as a base camp for recreation in a broader area including the Adirondacks and northern Vermont.

We will build products, services, and events that celebrate our unique history in a manner and scale that are equal to the importance of that history – and create jobs and business opportunities in the process

This plan calls for an aggressive development of products and experiences related to history – and to make the local hospitality industry and governments partners with those who have worked so hard to protect and share history. This plan calls for using private and public investment to ramp up the region’s history-sharing infrastructure and bring interpretive centers to current state-of-the art. When there are sufficient new history-related products and experiences available, the destination will look to build a state-of-the art interpretive center celebrating the region’s history – which will then guide visitors to explore further in each of the existing facilities.

As we build new products and experiences for our visitors, we will also position opportunities for the hospitality industry to deliver retail products and services to those same visitors. We will manage that in a way that does not degrade the visitor experience, but does enhance our ability to capture revenues from our visitors and generate jobs and profits that stay in our local economy.

This plan also calls for involving visitors in hands-on activities that generate new history-related infrastructure. It looks to those who have guarded and shared history to become teachers and mentors of a broader population of both residents and intrigued visitors as they seek to learn history at a deeper level than kiosks and interpretive signs will support.

We are actively pursuing the development of a world-class museum surrounded by a set of visitor experiences and themed retail establishments, perhaps on the site of the long-abandoned landfill near the intersection of Routes 9 and 314. This proposed complex would enable both static and interactive interpretation and could focus as a hub for broader community-wide experiences.

This plan calls for rebuilding the fleets that were engaged in both the Battles of Valcour and Plattsburgh – and then using those fleets in events that re-enact those important battles. It calls for bringing history to life through storytellers in restaurants and pubs – dressed in period as they tell the stories of both events and life in the past. It calls for a history-focused zone from the dock to downtown in Plattsburgh, where visitors can find recreated historical businesses and experiences and where, again, many of those they encounter will be dressed in period garb. It call for re-enactments to happen more frequently – and for being able to create paying careers for those who would love to re-enact, tell stories, teach, and guide visitors in their explorations of history. It calls for archaeological excavations, where visitors become the trained laborers and pay for the privilege of joining in the hunt for new data on our past. It calls for transportation, perhaps horse drawn, to connect the Plattsburgh waterfront to the museum complex.

Significant history did not all take place on and along Lake Champlain. We have the opportunity to share history and to help visitors learn historic “ways” of life throughout the county. There are countless ways this history economy can bring visitors and their revenues throughout the local region. And there are many opportunities for rural individuals to engage in this economy by joining re-enactments, offering guided tours, or “teaching” visitors the “old ways”.

We will give our visitors the opportunity to dress in period clothing, to learn to fire a musket, to row historic boats, to work with blacksmiths, to help mill grains, to tan hides, to cook with wood heat, and more. We’ll create high end “boot camps” where both youngsters and adults can learn how to live in the time, dress in period clothing, and earn their way to participating in re-enactments.

We want this history to truly belong to those nations involved. We will invite British citizens to join in the re-enactments, taking on the roles of the British on recreated British boats – and in land skirmishes.

We intend to create one or more reconstructed battleships that have concealed modern propulsion – and to use those boats for history cruises and dinner cruises that tie Rouses Point to Plattsburgh, and points south in New York as well as Burlington.

We hope many of the historic buildings in the Point District of Plattsburgh can open to visitors while creating economic gain for the owners in ways that expand our set of history experiences.

It will be important to integrate a history theme into the region from the museum campus, through downtown including Durkee Street, out to Dock Street Landing, and further north to the Beach Development Project. As our history comes to life, we will be channeling more and more people into this zone – and history themes in architecture and street enhancements will improve the visitor experience and spill over into dining a retail success.

The City of Plattsburgh has taken over leadership in organizing and operating our annual celebration of the Battle of Plattsburgh. As our capacity grows with changes described above, re-enactment of that battle should take place more than once a year and become a draw for a steady flow of visitors who will both observe and participate in these re-enactments. A first step in making this an ongoing “celebration of our history” is under discussion – a daily firing of a cannon!

We will develop a full set of products and services to support cycling tourism, and match our opportunities with appropriate markets by both interest and location

We have identified cycling tourism as having potential for the Adirondack Coast. A major cycling event was held in the region in 2010 with good reviews from both the industry and the cyclists. The flow of both independent and small groups of cyclists continued to expand in 2011. We now have a set of maps for those wanting to challenge themselves on road bike routes. Local organizations are promoting cycling events. And we now have college level cycling teams. There are countless opportunities to cycle for pleasure (road and mountain bike routes) and to test oneself (road and mountain) along the Adirondack Coast, in the Adirondacks, and across Lake Champlain.

We will continue to build a partnership among the local cycling-related retail and service businesses to support cycling tourism. We will match our cycling seasons, our occupancy patterns, and our flight connections to find key marketing opportunities. We will connect lodging, rental cars, and cycling support to build packages.

We will develop a full set of products and services to support paddling tourism, and match our opportunities with appropriate markets by both interest and location

The Adirondack Coast has a diversity of paddling opportunities, from the challenging Lake Champlain, to gentler smaller lakes, to slow rivers flowing into Champlain, to faster waters in the Saranac and Ausable Rivers. From a base camp on the Adirondack Coast, one can also explore the high lakes of the Adirondacks and cross into interesting paddling waters in northern Vermont. There are paddling opportunities that will engage paddlers of all skill sets for many days – and paddlers will enjoy some very beautiful scenery and exciting wildlife as they paddle.

We have, since this planning process started, expanded the number of put-ins and upgraded some of the existing paddling access points on Lake Champlain, other lakes, and rivers – including kayak storage at launches. The City of Plattsburgh has completed a feasibility study on a whitewater park on the lower Saranac River and is moving into development. We will continue to expand and improve infrastructure (parking and put-ins), strengthen the options and expand the locations for renting paddling equipment, provide instruction and guiding, work to get a fleet of adventure vehicle rentals in place, add even more options for field meals (several restaurants have added this service since this plan was first launched), and create a flow of paddlers to the region. We will expand the current set of maps outlining paddling opportunities. We will build packages that include lodging, rental vehicles and paddling equipment, and instruction/guiding.

We will establish our Adirondack Coast brand in the minds of our target markets, gaining traction as the brand expands beyond tourism marketing

We have picked a destination name that enables us to build and establish our brand among those markets we target – without the baggage of old destination assumptions. At the same time, the airport opens new markets – and we have fresh eyes looking at what we have to say about the destination. We will weave together the great geographic, agritourism, and history attributes of our region and bait potential visitors with descriptions of the scenery they can explore, the cuisine based on regional agricultural products, and the outdoor recreation they can experience in and around the Adirondack Coast, building an image and a demand for the destination.

We will create an inbound flow of leisure visitors through Plattsburgh International Airport, targeting by market and interest

Forward thinking leaders in the region built (and will soon expand) our new airport based on demand largely generated by nearby Canadians. These passengers use our airport (because of lower prices and an easier set of hurdles) to fly throughout the United States and beyond. We will support efforts to attract more carriers to the airport as capacity increases, with a special emphasis on connecting with one or more legacy carriers.

We will entice people on the other ends of those flights to fly to Plattsburgh and enjoy leisure time on the Adirondack Coast. We'll match opportunities in our region (both great weather and lulls in occupancy) with weather patterns for those flight destinations to find windows where potential visitors will find us an attractive getaway. We'll use targeted marketing aimed at those destinations and at certain history-focused and recreational user groups in those destinations to create demand – and then answer that demand with packages combining lodging, rental vehicles, recreational equipment, and other products that make a trip here hard to resist.

The Adirondack Coast is partnering with neighboring New York counties to jointly approach the “fly market”, creating a broader Adirondack and Adirondack Coast appeal that should funnel visitors through the new airport and our new connections.

We will increase profitability, growing both numbers of visitors and expenditures per arrival

As we build more products and experiences to engage leisure travelers in history and outdoor recreation, we will also work to generate demand for these activities. Leisure visitors will stay longer than most of our current visitors. They will add a new flow to our existing base, swelling arrivals, adding to the average length of time spent here per arrival, and increasing our average expenditure per arrival. Many of the products and services they buy will originate here along the Adirondack Coast, reducing leakage, and putting a higher percentage of hospitality industry revenues back into the local economy.

There are new rooms opening in our destination now and we anticipate other new lodging establishments to open along the waterfront of Lake Champlain and oriented to experiences and scenery in the region. We'll grow arrivals to keep pace with the expanding room count.

Leisure travel oriented lodgings, oriented to views, will be able to command higher prices per night, growing our destination average daily rate (which will also put upward pressure on business and government travel rates).

We will build a state-of-the-art data collection system to better target our audiences and increase our competitiveness

The Adirondack Coast lodging establishments will partner with the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau to create and manage a data collection and interpretation system that will put us ahead of most competing destinations. This system will enable participating establishments and the Visitors Bureau to both analyze seasonal trends and respond rapidly to windows of opportunity. This data, coupled with detailed target analysis, will enable the destination to work as a team to seize opportunities.

Progress has been made in collecting data. More progress is anticipated!

We will measure our success by comparing our products and services against the best, by the reputation we earn with our visitors, and by the progress we make to improve quality of life

Those gathering to plan the future of the Adirondack Coast as a destination were adamant about one thing – they don't want to be another pretty good destination – they want to set our sights high and be one of the best at what we take on.

At the same time, the planners have insisted that tourism be scaled in a way that doesn't overwhelm local society – and that the nature of tourism development be a match for the region rather than something that will undo local culture and society.

The plan, then, is to build excellent products and experiences based on strengths that come from our region's geography, history, and patterns of outdoor recreation. While we will grow our arrivals volume modestly, we will grow length of stay, expenditures per day, and expenditures per arrival to make our destination more profitable and rewarding for our neighbors. We'll court visitors that value local products and the people that live in the region. And we'll use tourism to augment our economic and social well being.

Adding the energy, infrastructure, and vibrancy that our hospitality industry envisions for the destination, we will make the destination more exciting for the relocation of both professionals and businesses

As the entire Adirondack Coast comes together to build this new leisure tourism economy, we'll create an air of excitement – of things happening. And, at the same time we'll be adding great new quality of life features to the region, including infrastructure related to outdoor lifestyles and great new dining with a view. We'll create new career opportunities that will draw young professionals and their families to the region. And, we'll begin to fill some of the empty storefronts with exciting new businesses.

Those businesses and organizations along the Adirondack Coast which constantly need to court new professionals to their staffs will find the job easier. And, as we entice visitors to fly into the region and embrace our great tourism products and experiences, some of them will actively think about relocating their businesses to this great region.

We will create a sense of place and support local industry by putting local agricultural products (apples, maple syrup, wine, etc.) in the forefront and showcasing them in menus.

The Adirondack Coast is a destination we will build on our existing strengths rather than on "built attractions". Our strengths are based on history, geography, agriculture, and outdoor recreation. Part of our "identity," and our brand, is the rural nature of the region and the interesting agricultural activities that are unique to this place. The region is known for its apples – and we will work hard to tie those apples to the Adirondack Coast brand. We produce outstanding maple syrup that should also wear the brand.

The local wine makers are in the process of zeroing in on what wines the region can be known for – and are working to establish the region's AVA and to identify themselves with the Adirondack Coast brand. These local winemakers have banded together to work with an advertising agency to build regional wine identity and following. They will work to increase acreage and to focus on wines that can be best grown in this region. They will work hard as an

association to focus on developing in a way that new vineyards and winemakers can follow as this young industry works to achieve critical mass.

We intend to introduce regional agricultural products to visitors from the moment they visit our website, to when they set foot in our airport, to when they sit down for a meal. We'll encourage retail and lodging establishments to offer local products for sale. We'll create awards for the best restaurant meals featuring local products. And we'll send visitors home with cookbooks featuring outstanding recipes built around local products and have ways to ship those products home for our visitors.

We are actively building events and "tours" to enable our visitors to focus their stay on our agritourism experiences. And our array of products means that those events can literally be spread throughout the calendar year!

We will diversify our patron base to provide more economic stability for the industry and the destination, to raise the value of our products, and to broaden our seasons

We understand that a significant part of our economy is dependent on existing relationships between the United States and Canadian currency. We also understand those relationships can and will change. We will build a leisure component to our tourism economy, both to grow the economy and to provide a measure of stability. Much of the focus of our leisure marketing will follow the routes of airlines serving the Plattsburgh airport, across the United States and into Europe (especially for history). By targeting patrons in diverse economies we will add stability as economic situations vary.

Initial efforts to establish a significant set of inbound travelers will focus on our Florida connections. It may prove to be a symbiotic win-win situation where Floridians escape warm muggy summers and local residents warm up during long winters. There are significant opportunities for agritourism and the flow of agricultural products going both ways on these routes.

We will expand our tourism seasons, growing reasons to be here, and inviting visitors to come all year

We will develop products and services that will give visitors good reasons to be here all year long. We will specifically target visitors that can help us expand on our current "strong" season of July and August and that will help us grow a steady base flow of visitors throughout the calendar year.

Progress on this goal will generate better year round employment opportunities within the hospitality industry – and stabilize those retail and dining establishments that derive their business from both locals and visitors.

We will package our experiences with our services and products to make it easier for visitors to plan time in our destination.

We are looking to help visitors put together multi-day itineraries that join lodging, dining, and experiences. This will help them “imagine” what a vacation on the Adirondack Coast might entail – and make it easier to choose this destination. One idea that has appealed to the Strategic Tourism Planning Committee is to have a “packaging party” during which experiences could be “paired” with lodging and dining.

Visitor Related Goals

We will bring history to life, making it engaging, approachable and participatory, building such strong relationships with our patrons that they will return many times

Our history belongs to the people of at least four nations. We intend to bring that history to life in a way that the people of those nations who are interested in history can embrace it, both learning from and enjoying the experience. We are looking to build long term relationships with history aficionados – people who will return time and time again – and who will pitch in with their efforts to help us grow the very things they come to experience.

This plan also calls for involving visitors in hands-on activities that generate new history-related infrastructure. It looks to those who have guarded and shared history to become teachers and mentors of a broader population of both residents and intrigued visitors as they seek to learn history at a deeper level than kiosks and interpretive signs will support.

This plan calls for rebuilding the fleets that were engaged in both the Battles of Valcour and Plattsburgh – and then using those fleets in events that re-enact those important battles – and serving as year round attractions/exhibits. We will let visitors pay to join us in reconstructing these fleets (most of the work can be in the winter while tourism's draw is weaker) – and they'll need to patronize hotels and restaurants while they do. Further, those who have built a relationship with our fleet rebuilding program should return time and again to see those boats in action and to show their work to friends and family – all resulting in expenditures in our economy.

We are seriously exploring the development of a world-class museum/interpretive complex near the intersection of Routes 9 and 314. This complex would have the potential to become a hub for a greater set of experiences related to the history of this region.

This plan calls for bringing history to life through storytellers in restaurants and pubs – dressed in period as they tell the stories of both events and life in the past. It calls for a history-focused zone from the dock to downtown in Plattsburgh, where visitors can find recreated historical businesses and experiences and where, again, many of those they encounter will be dressed in period garb. It call for re-enactments to happen more frequently – and for being able to create paying careers for those who would love to re-enact, tell stories, teach, and guide visitors in their explorations of history. It calls for archaeological excavations, where visitors become the trained laborers and pay for the privilege of joining in the hunt for new data on our past. It calls for transportation, perhaps horse drawn, to connect the Plattsburgh waterfront to the museum complex.

We will give our visitors the opportunity to dress in period clothing, to learn to fire a musket, to row historic boats, to work with blacksmiths, to help mill grains, to tan hides, to cook with wood heat, and more. We'll create high end "boot camps" where both youngsters and adults can learn how to live in the time, dress in period clothing, and earn their way to participating in re-enactments.

We want this history to truly belong to those nations involved. We will invite British citizens to join in the re-enactments, taking on the roles of the British on recreated British boats – and in land skirmishes.

We intend to create one or more reconstructed battleships that have concealed modern propulsion – and to use those boats for history cruises and dinner cruises that tie Rouses Point to Plattsburgh.

We hope many of the historic buildings in the Point District of Plattsburgh can open to visitors while creating economic gain for the owners in ways that expand our set of history experiences.

In short, this plan calls for making history "approachable and interactive" for visitors – and it plans to accomplish that with visitor expenditures. It will protect history, make it important to residents, and engineer it to contribute to the local economy.

We will connect our visitors with Lake Champlain, getting them to the waterfront and onto the lake

We ARE the Adirondack Coast on Lake Champlain. Visitors will be enticed here because of our unique geography and the history it spawned – and for outdoor recreation – all of which ties visitor expectations and experiences to the waterfront and lake. To succeed with our visitors, we will strengthen current opportunities to get visitors to the waterfront and onto the lake. We will also construct new products and experiences that enable visitors to embrace Lake Champlain.

New opportunities related to windsurfing and kite flying along the beaches of Lake Champlain will give us the chance to draw more people to the lake front. This, in turn, will further drive demand for dining with a water view. At some point, especially as history tourism moves onto the water, it will make sense to add a lake-facing lodging option.

We will become a bilingual destination

We live on the border between the United States and Quebec, the French-speaking province of Canada. We have a substantial flow of shoppers, marina patrons, airport patrons, and outdoor recreationalists flowing across the border into the Adirondack Coast. We recognize the importance of these visitors to our economy and our quality of life – and we will work hard to make them feel welcomed and valued. One of the ways we can do that is to become bilingual on our business front lines and in our signage. In this plan, the hospitality industry embraces the concept of having a bilingual staffer on duty – and challenges all the businesses and organizations in Clinton County (and beyond) to join us in this commitment. We are actively working, and will continue to work, to provide bilingual education opportunities to our industry’s front line staffs.

There has been a steady flow of industry staff to French language training since this plan was first launched. A next step would be for businesses that interact with our Canadian visitors to commit to having a French speaking frontliner on staff or on call.

We will make information and services (such as public restrooms) available wherever we create flows of visitors

As hosts, we understand that it is part of our responsibility to locate public restrooms in places visitors are drawn to. As marketers, we understand that it’s not a visitor’s job to hunt down a place to gather information on a destination. Currently, we have needs for both near the intersection of Rt. 3 and the Northway. We anticipate a future need between the city dock and downtown in Plattsburgh. There may be additional needs in Rouses Point. We will address those needs quickly when they arise.

We will connect our visitors to the region’s great agricultural products

We intend to introduce regional agricultural products to visitors from the moment they visit our website, to when they set foot in our airport, to when they sit down for a meal. We’ll encourage retail and lodging establishments to offer local products for sale. We’ll create awards for the best restaurant meals featuring local products. And we’ll send visitors home with cookbooks featuring outstanding recipes built around local products, and make it possible by having those products easily shipped to their homes.

We will make a new push to integrate our agricultural products into local dining experiences – working as a team to crack the issues of a steady supply and a “route” between producers and those businesses that would use our products. We will also push to facilitate opportunities for visitors to encounter local agricultural products in lodging, dining, and retail situations.

We will build a new set of products that enable our visitors to “experience” both historic and current maple syrup production. Those new products will be promoted and packaged with local lodging and dining options – and can be used to draw visitor traffic at a traditionally light time of year.

We will send our visitors home as advocates for our destination, spreading the word about the great experiences we have to share

We will develop such great products and experiences, and become such good hosts, that our visitors will go home delighted with their visit to the Adirondack Coast. Their satisfaction will make them our best marketing ambassadors. Their testimonials to our excellent products and experiences will send others to visit us. And their ratification of the great hosting we intend to provide will help us raise the reputation and value of our products.

Stewardship Related Goals

We will honor our history by making it more accessible to the people of the nations which shaped it and the people of the world whose lives were impacted by the events and developments that took place here

Our history belongs to the people of at least four nations. We intend to bring that history to life in a way that the people of those nations who are interested in history can embrace it, both learning and enjoying from the experience. We are looking to build long term relationships with history aficionados – people who will return time and time again – and who will pitch in with their efforts to help us grow the very things they come to experience.

This plan also calls for involving visitors in hands-on activities that generate new history-related infrastructure. It expands the re-enactment schedule so that more people can watch and participate. It lets visitors help reconstruct the fleets from the Battles of Plattsburgh and Valcour and then puts those fleets in motion on a regular basis. It engages visitors in research as they participate in archaeological excavations.

We will give our visitors the opportunity to dress in period clothing, to learn to fire a musket, to row historic boats, to work with blacksmiths, to help mill grains, to tan hides, to cook with wood heat, and more. We'll create high end "boot camps" where both youngsters and adults can learn how to live in the time, dress in period clothing, and earn their way to participating in re-enactments.

We will invite British citizens to join in the re-enactments, taking on the roles of the British on recreated British boats – and in land skirmishes.

We hope many of the historic buildings in the Point District of Plattsburgh can open to visitors while creating economic gain for the owners in ways that expand our set of history experiences.

In short, this plan calls for making history "approachable and interactive" for visitors – and it plans to accomplish that with visitor expenditures. It will protect history, make it important to residents, and engineer it to contribute to the local economy.

Our industry, recognizing that our "history-related partners" are not always well funded, will strive to support those partners, lending energy and expertise, and through an "adopt a museum" program. Work on this program has advanced in the past two years, with the industry leading the community to add strength and support for history and other museums.

We will build and manage tourism in a way that contributes to the health of Lake Champlain, the Adirondack Park, our forests, and our rivers

We are who we are – and we have developed our society and economy – largely because of our unique geography and the history it helped spawn. Lake Champlain is important to us economically, as a part of our history, and as a place we like to recreate. The Adirondack Park will be of increasing importance to our tourism future as population growth makes it harder to find pristine places in the Northeast. The Park will provide waterways that our visitors will explore with canoes and kayaks. Our forests and rivers will provide platforms for visitor experiences – and they are important to us for our own recreational experiences.

We intend to build and operate tourism products and experiences in ways that value and protect the integrity of these key resources. We will help educate our visitors about issues like the introduction of exotic aquatic species and the risks involved with transporting firewood. Further, the hospitality industry will join and sometimes spearhead efforts to clean up rivers and shorelines. We will invite our visitors to do their part to help keep our natural areas clean of human debris.

We will showcase the efforts our industry and our region are making toward sustainability and social and natural resource responsibility. We will build our own pride as we do and stimulate our visitors to go home and work harder on issues that impact all of us.

We will build and manage tourism in a way that contributes to the quality of life of local residents

The hospitality industry of the Adirondack Coast is dominated by businesses that are owned and guided by people living here. This is our home. Our employees live here. So do our friends. This is where we live, play, dine out, send our kids to school, pay taxes, and belong to organizations. We have worked hard to listen to our neighbors, our governments, local organizations, and other businesses as we've designed this plan.

This plan is designed to engineer quality of life gains for the people who live in Clinton County. We will generate new employment and business opportunities – and work hard to turn those opportunities into reasons that young people can have careers here and call this home. We will grow leisure tourism in ways that increase opportunities for healthy lifestyles and outdoor recreation. We will embrace history in a way that builds local pride – and creates educational and recreational opportunities. We will build new infrastructure and support community efforts to build infrastructure that entices our residents into a more active lifestyle. We will seek new higher end retail opportunities for residents and Canadian shoppers. We will work to grow the airport facilities and attract new airlines and flights, creating more travel opportunities for residents.

The Strategic Tourism Planning Committee recognizes that it is not the only entity working to engineer better quality of life in Clinton County. It is committed to working cooperatively with others such as the North Country Chamber of Commerce, the Vision to Action Committee, local and county governments, private businesses and investors to further these goals.

Destination Management Related Goals

The Strategic Tourism Planning Committee and the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau will lead the execution of the Destination Master Plan

Under the plan, each action will have a designated group of people and organizations who are responsible for making progress. Each action will also be associated with a timeline. The Strategic Tourism Planning Committee and the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau will oversee those teams and make sure that progress is being made on all actions, against all timelines.

We will build a strong mutually beneficial relationship between our hospitality industry and those focused on our region's unique history

This destination's history has helped shape the way four very important "Western Nations" evolved and relate to each other. History is an important part of the future of this destination. We honor those who have worked hard to keep our vibrant history alive and celebrated. The hospitality industry will build trust and partnership with the history-focused community, helping bring stability to the economics and operations of museums, events, and reenactments. Our marketing will draw larger crowds, benefitting both the history-related organizations and the hospitality industry. Our hospitality industry will help raise operating funds and provide physical energy to shore up the efforts of the history community. The hospitality industry will be there to support history-related initiatives. We look forward to a day when the celebration of our unique history is supported by robust budgets, state-of-the-art facilities, and large cadres of both paid and volunteer history aficionados – and pledge our industry to work with the history-related community to achieve that status. At the same time, the hospitality community wants to be clear that it is not the goal to take over and push those who have worked so hard for many years to the side, but rather to facilitate making those history-related endeavors successful.

We will renew the plan annually, keeping it current and alive

We will make progress on our plan every year. Some actions will be completed and can be crossed off the list. Others will need to be modified, perhaps with new timelines, or changing team makeup. The tourism environment will change, and we will need to adjust goals, actions, and timelines. To accomplish that, the Strategic Tourism Planning Committee and the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau will have an annual fall retreat to evaluate progress and update the Destination Master Plan, its actions, and its timelines.

We will maintain a strong leisure travel marketing budget

The planning process has found there are leisure travel products that can, with minimal work, be brought to the market. New lodging rooms continue to come onto the market creating both opportunity and the need for a greater flow of visitors. The hospitality industry is in agreement that we need to have a strong and effective marketing effort. There is great confidence in the marketing team at the Adirondack Coast Visitors Bureau. And there is an understanding that fly-in leisure travelers will stay longer and spend more per arrival in the local economy. The industry and Clinton County have worked together to establish a new, stronger marketing budget based on funds collected through a lodging tax on our visitors. We will work to renew that mechanism in 2015 with an increase in percentage of occupancy tax collected and delivered to our marketing program. We will use that to drive up visitation and the value of our products, ensuring that it grows in ways that reward both the industry, the county, and our neighbors.

We will strengthen the Adirondack Coast brand

We will define the Adirondack Coast brand based on the directions outlined in this tourism plan and then blaze it into the minds of our residents and target travelers in our target destinations. That brand will represent our unique geography, our important history, our great outdoor recreation, and our intriguing agricultural output. We will work hard to get that brand on products and businesses throughout the region to further strengthen it.

We will build a partnership among the public and private sectors all across the Adirondack Coast

We recognize that tourism is an important partnership between our industry, the residents of the Adirondack Coast, and the public sector. We understand our success is dependent upon our patrons interfacing a welcoming population. We understand that many of the products and services we share with visitors involve the use of public infrastructure. We understand that our success generates many quality of life benefits for our local neighbors. We pledge to operate our industry in ways that bring rewards to the people and governments that we share the destination with – and we are determined to work closely with all parties to make this a great destination.

We understand that it is of paramount importance to these partnerships that we communicate with our partners, helping them understand how we fit into those partnerships. We also pledge to be good listeners, learning what our partners need, and finding creative ways to fashion wins for all sides of the partnerships we enter.