



VISIT LEX

A central blue diamond-shaped graphic containing the title and date, surrounded by a collage of images: a horse race track with jockeys, a basketball arena filled with spectators, a distillery with large copper stills, a modern glass skyscraper, a Hyatt hotel building, and a crowd of people watching horses in a paddock.

# LEXINGTON DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

December 5, 2017

# EXTENSIVE OUTREACH

- In-market tours and site reviews.
- Conducted in-person and telephone interviews with more than 80 local stakeholders, tour operators and non-local meeting planners.
- Contacted CVB's, city representatives, downtown authority organizations and/or attraction management in 10 comparable destinations (Little Rock, Fort Wayne, Savannah, Columbia, Greenville, Sonoma County, Asheville, Norfolk, Grand Rapids, Columbus).
- Surveyed more than 40 national Travel Writers.
- Surveyed 275 residents of Lexington-Fayette County region.



# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS



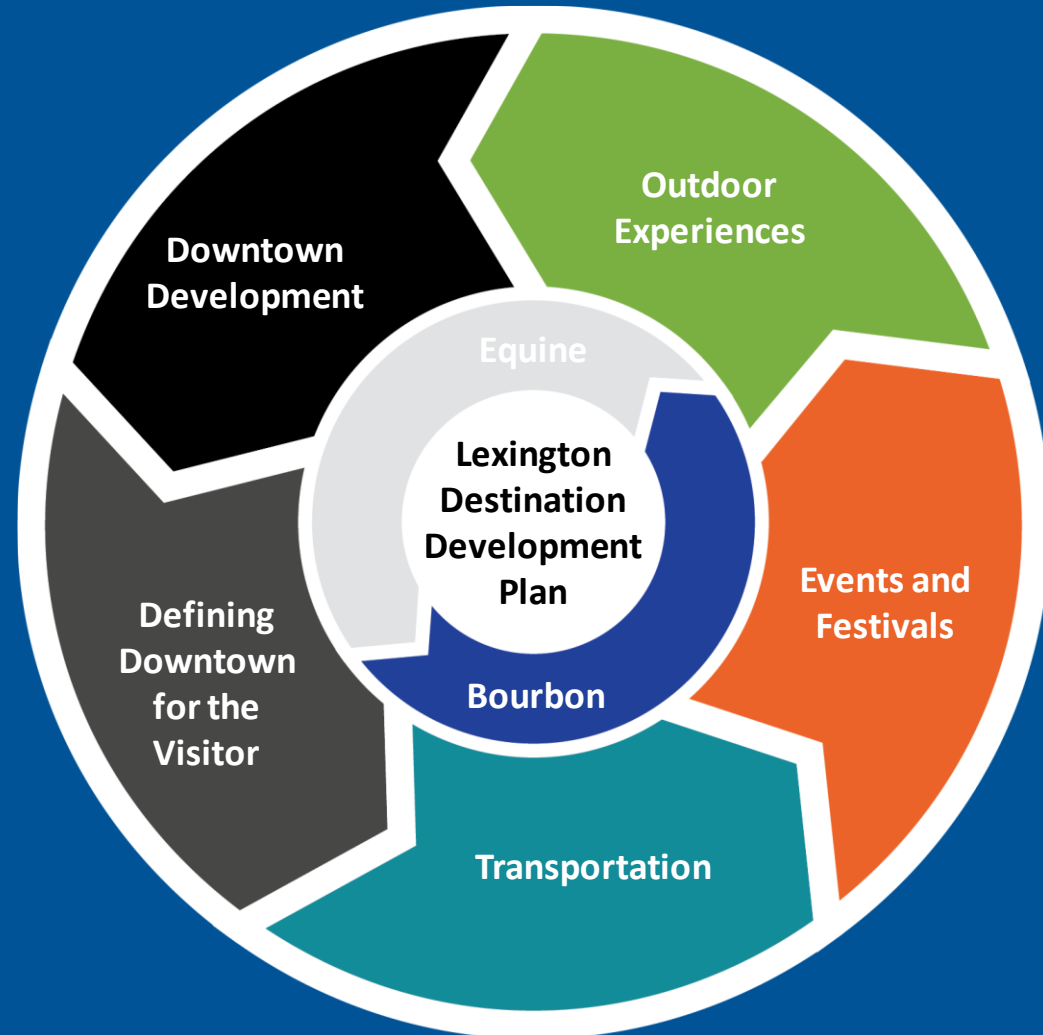
## Strengths and Opportunities

- Friendly and sophisticated people and atmosphere
- Beautiful landscape and countryside
- Unique equine destination
- Substantial ongoing investment and planning (Town Branch Commons and Courthouse)
- Proximity to Kentucky Bourbon Trail
- Local increase in breweries/distilleries
- Clean, pristine destination (downtown, parks, countryside)
- Surprising culinary scene
- “Backroad” driving experiences
- Long travel season
- Experience and wherewithal of Visit Lex and Lexington Center staff

## Challenges and Threats

- No walkable marquee attractions
- Lack of family-friendly entertainment
- Lack of citywide and downtown events/festivals
- Underleveraged outdoor assets
- Lack of access to the horse farms, limited tour experiences (though this is improving)
- Kentucky Horse Park is underdeveloped
- Lack of “hands on” horse experiences
- Lack of downtown “buzz”
- Lack of public transportation options to travel to/from downtown
- Parking issues in downtown
- Accessibility of Keeneland
- Limited direct air access

# OPPORTUNITY AREAS





# 1. Further Developing Equine Tourism

# EXISTING ASSETS

## Progressive and creative initiatives in place:

- Horse Country (expected to grow visitor base by 100 percent)
- Growing recognition of tourism opportunities by horse farms
- Developing product – enhanced experiences and horse farms and increased access to the horses themselves
- KHP and Keeneland are world class equine event facilities
- Significant economic impact generated by horse events and horse market



# BUILDING ON PROGRESS

## 1) Themed

- Develop distinctive branding for different types of farms/tours
- Racing, Medical, Hands On, Horse and Ag, Horse and Bourbon

## 2) Accredited Tour Operations

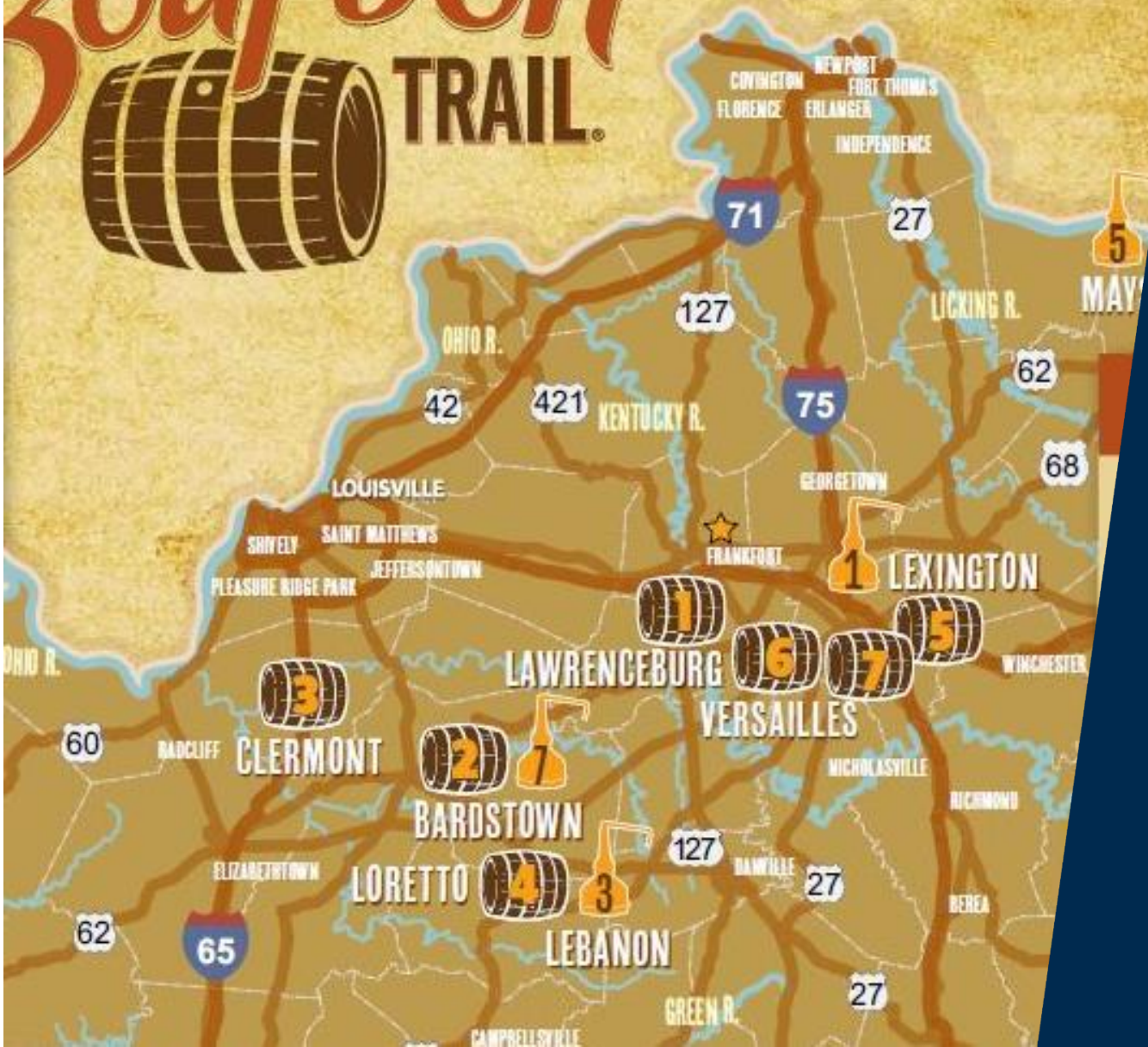
- Training (potential UK partnership) – tour operators and on-site staff
- Central location option
- More frequent/consistent bookings

## 3) Develop Product

- Educational content
- Hands-on experiences
- Add farms
- Enhance online booking
- Review and refine zoning laws
- Add cafes, bed/breakfasts, spas near sites



# KENTUCKY Bourbon TRAIL.



## 2. Leveraging the Bourbon Industry

# BOURBON IN URBAN CORE

- Prioritize recruitment of showrooms, bourbon restaurants, bourbon cooking classes – emphasize authentic
- Develop interactive exhibits tied to bourbon industry (Destination Square)
- Promote and enhance distilleries, breweries and bike/walk trails in and around downtown
- Connect convention groups to the trails and bourbon assets downtown



# BOURBON TRAIL

- Encourage onsite amenities
- Consider low interest revolving loan fund
- Tie to Horse Country (combined itineraries)
  - Develop shared website to simplify trip planning
- Assist/support legalization of out of state ecommerce
- Coordinate Trail members to develop Trail logo/stamp to add to international distribution of product





## 3. Outdoor Experiences

# LEVERAGING OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES

- Product development
  - Canopy tours (zip lines, ropes courses)
  - Rock climbing at Red River Gorge
  - Trails (Mountain biking, urban/regional bike trails, horseback riding, hiking)
  - Water sports whitewater park (Lock and Dam 10)
  - Overnight stays in Palisades (bed and breakfasts, tree houses)
- Public/Private Partnerships, TIF financing, Tourism Development Fund
- Package existing assets with other attractions
  - Red River Gorge
  - Boone Creek Outdoors
  - Blueway Trail
  - Kayaking at Silver, Otter, and Elk Horn Creeks



## 4. Events and Festivals

# DEVELOP NEW CITYWIDE FESTIVAL

- Opportunity to activate downtown during shoulder season
- Food, concerts, lectures, exhibitions, competitions, parade
- Budget range of \$2 million to \$3 million
- Develop five-year plan to gradually grow the event
- “Theaters” of activity throughout town
- Need “quarterback” to unite various stakeholders and execute event details





## 5. Transportation

## DEVELOP A NEW TRANSPORTATION ASSET

- Current challenge for visitor
- City buses are not effective visitor assets
- Invest in uniquely designed shuttles/trolleys
- Low cost model
- Electric vehicles?
- Needs to be heavily marketed
- Incorporate distillery district / emerging hospitality nodes



# A NEW TRANSPORTATION APPROACH



GR:D Bikeshare (Tempe, AZ)



Free Trolley (Charlottesville, VA)



Joyride (Knoxville, Panama City, Nashville, Tuscaloosa, Tallahassee)



Hopper Carts (Columbus, OH)



## 6. Defining Downtown for the Visitor

# NEW DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING

## Wayfinding Development Options



**Interactive Kiosk:**  
Denver, CO



**Seamless Cleveland:**  
Cleveland, OH



**Informational:**  
Littleton, CO



**Custom/Unique:**  
Points

# DOWNTOWN VIBRANCY



- Current lack of resources
- BID only focused on cleaning/safety
- Increase budget and staff :
  - Planting trees and beautification
  - Add benches/pocket resting areas
  - Enhance streets and sidewalks (Distillery District)
  - Assist with storefront façade improvements
- Consider parking management revenues to fund projects
- Develop public art and regular entertainment programming<sup>20</sup>

# CASE STUDIES

## Monumental Public Art



*Louisville Slugger Bat (Louisville, KY)*



*Jack Knife (Scottsdale, AZ)*



*Head of Franz Kafka (Prague, Czech Republic)*



*Spoon Bridge (Minneapolis, MN)*



*Charging Bull (New York, NY)*



*I See What You Mean (Denver, CO)*



# 7. Downtown Development

# A DOWNTOWN DESTINATION SQUARE

- Consider themed sections dedicated to bourbon, equine, history, heritage, arts and culture
- Interactive attractions, exhibits, theater, virtual reality, interaction with mobile apps
- Open “Square” – pedestrian center
- Signature storefronts tied to bourbon and other Lex themes
- Transportation hub (bike, regional shuttles, trolley, walking tours)
- Unique restaurants and retail – craft foods/product
- Public Market

# CASE STUDIES

## Possible Downtown Destination Square Components



*Evan Williams Experience (Louisville, KY)*



*The Brew You Ride (Amsterdam, Netherlands)*



*Cattle Raisers Museum (Fort Worth, TX)*



*Downtown Market (Grand Rapids, MI)*

# DOWNTOWN DESTINATION SQUARE

Possible Destination Square Site



Key	Hotel
1	Hilton Lexington
2	Hyatt Regency Lexington
3	Gratz Park Inn
4	21c Hotel Lexington

Key	Amenity
●	Restaurant
○	Fast Food/Carry-Out
●	Café/Bakery
●	Bar/Lounge/Nightlife

Key	Attractions/Entertainment
1	Downtown Arts Center
2	Explorium of Lexington
3	Gratz Park
4	Lexington Opera House
5	Mary Todd Lincoln House
6	Old Fayette County Courthouse
7	Rupp Arena
8	Town Branch Park
9	Triangle Park

# A PUBLIC MUSEUM/ATTRACTION

- Existing inventory of museums includes only modest-sized attractions
- Common opinion that Lexington lacks fun, family-oriented attraction
- Combine elements from children's museums, history museums, science centers and planetariums
- Consider inclusion of downtown public library, Explorium, UK Art Museum and LexArts (each looking for new space)
- Appropriate attractions for area's well-educated local demographic

# CASE STUDIES

## Public Museum – Grand Rapids, Michigan





# LEXINGTON DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN

October 17, 2017