



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202
Phone: 315.435.2070 • Fax: 315.435.8434 • www.ongov.net/legislature

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 **TIM BURTIS, CHAIRMAN**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Garland

ALSO PRESENT: Chairman Rowley, Mr. Ryan, Mrs. Ervin; also see attached

Chair Burtis called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

1. VISIT SYRACUSE: Daniel Liedka, President/CEO

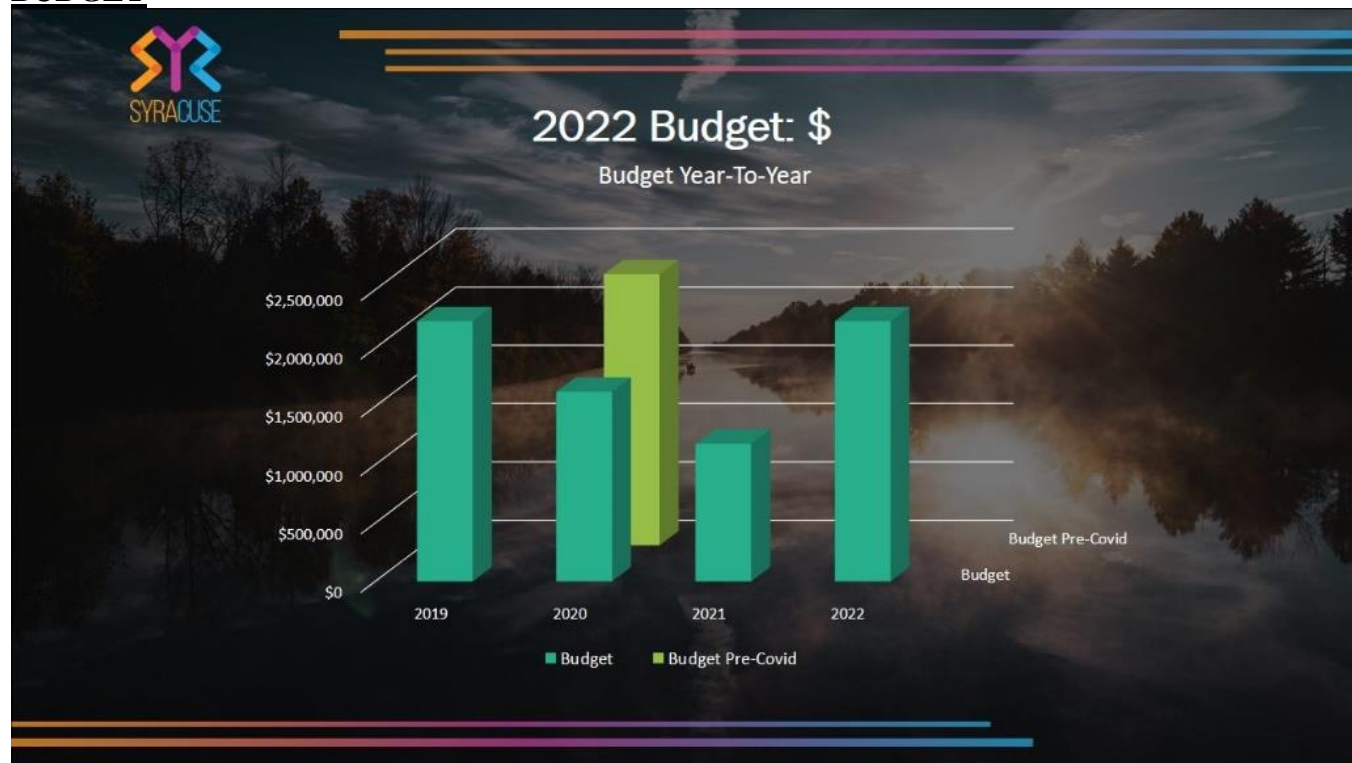
a. Designating Visit Syracuse as the Agency Authorized to Make Application to the New York State Department of Economic Development and to Receive Matching Funds Therefrom Under the New York State Tourist Promotion Act for January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023

- Matching Funds Grant received from I Love NY and Empire State Development (ESD) every year
- 2022 - Received \$50k from NY; projection looks the same for 2023
- Matching funds have to be used, NYS has to approve use of those funds
- Funds are put into an account and then NYS matches it
- Funds typically used for website, visitors guide, photography
- Funds are very helpful; without them, it is probably a position would have to eliminate
- Visit Syracuse provides \$50k, NYS provides \$50k - \$100k total
- Money must be in separate account prior to approval of match grant
- Official website launch about 12 days away
- Modernized website includes accessibility for hearing and visually impaired

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Garland, to approve this item. Passed unanimously;
MOTION CARRIED

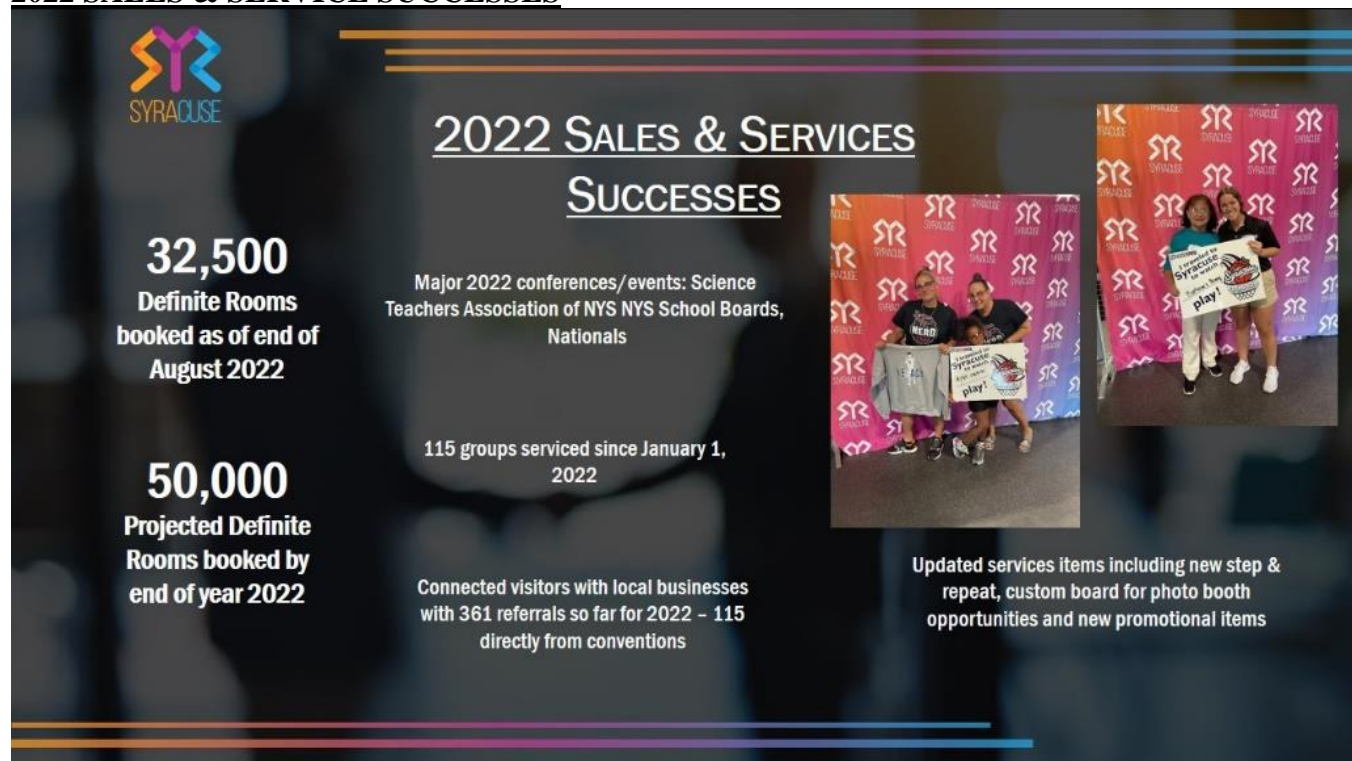
b. INFORMATIONAL: 2022 Budget Update

BUDGET



- Funding 2019-2022
- Asked for sizeable budget increase for 2023

2022 SALES & SERVICE SUCCESSES



- Sales in 2017-18 approximately 28-29k rooms per year
- Shadow 50k this year; hit numbers during COVID-19

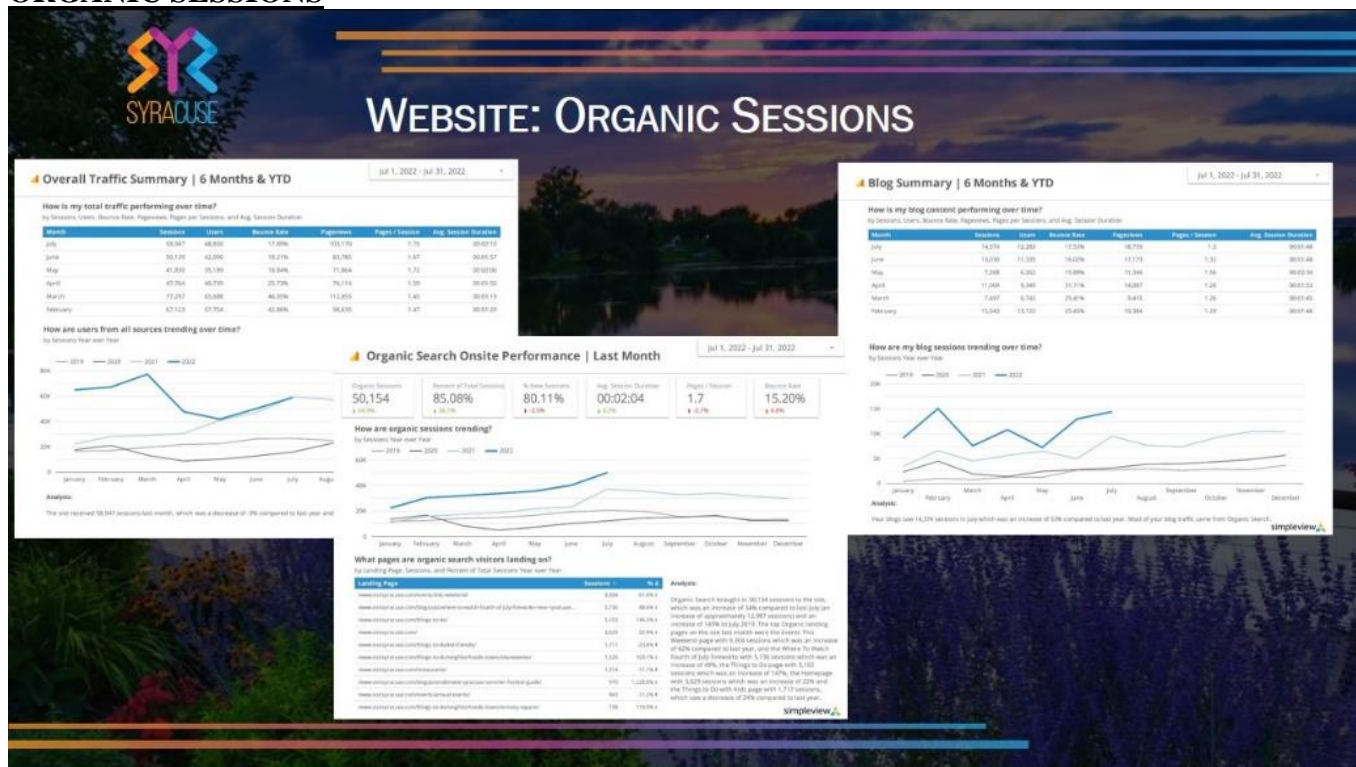
- 2022 will shatter previous years
 - Will easily hit 50k rooms with a stretch goal of 55k rooms
 - Approximately \$46 million economic impact for the County through these bookings
- Conventions
 - NYS School Boards are returning this year and every 3 years thereafter
 - Have not been in Syracuse since 1998
 - Syracuse Nationals
 - \$20 million economic impact on its own
 - Servicing Events
 - Provide transportation for events at the Oncenter
 - Conventions of 300 people or more require transportation from 4 or 5 hotels
 - Pre-COVID, could transport 48 people per bus
 - Cannot put more than 26 on a bus now for spacing reasons
 - Very costly
 - Spent close to \$200k this year on transportation due to rising costs, fuel, more buses
- Bed Tax Collection Numbers
 - Occupancy rates are on par with 2019
 - Room rates are on par with 2019
 - Expecting a good year for Bed Tax Collections

MARKETING SUCCESSES



- Website Design
 - Websites are all about video content now; video content is expensive and takes time
 - Getting traffic to website is all visual now
 - Have prepared the last few years for this
 - Plenty of assets
 - Plenty of ways to drive traffic
- Website is backbone of Syracuse Visits
 - Thank you to Legislators for stepping in support of website
- Navigation improved 1,000%

ORGANIC SESSIONS



- Overall Traffic
 - Completely transformed Team over the last 5 years
 - Relied heavily on outside Marketing firms; parted ways in May 2022 with local Marketing firm to do in house
 - March 2022 had 98k visitors to website
 - February 2022 had 112k visitors to website
 - April 2022 had 76k visitors to website - lost traffic because previous Marketing firm did paid ads with tags to website
 - July 2022 up to 103k visits to website (all in house)
 - 2023 budget will ask for another Employee for Creative - will drive traffic to website
- Organic Search (not paying someone to find website)
 - Finding website is 85% Organic
 - Top google searches for Syracuse and website are:
 - #1 search - What to do on the weekend
 - 4th of July fireworks (85,000 searches)
 - Kid friendly things to do
 - Showcase unique neighborhoods, restaurants, festivals
- Blog Summary
 - Hired local news personality to handle blog content
 - 2 year goal is to launch a YouTube TV channel that can be monetized and generate more revenue
 - New employee will do stories on local small business and go to big events
 - Blog traffic increased 30k people year over year from July
 - Hired a "Reputation Builder" - Google certified expert



VISITORS GUIDE



Brought creative, content and ad sales fully in-house for the first time for this print and digital edition

Visitor Guide Ad Sales totaled:

\$29,785

We have distributed over 30,000 printed copies and have had Visitor Guide requests come in from 36 different states, and Puerto Rico as well as Canada and nine additional countries

- In years past, Advanced Media did Visitors Guide
 - Cost was about \$45,000 per year
 - Printed about 50,000 copies
 - Visit Syracuse did lion's share of content
 - Advanced Media handled the layout
 - Advanced Media sold the advertising and kept it
- Visit Syracuse is now handling the Visitors Guide
 - Printed the Guide for \$36,000
 - Sold \$32,000 in advertising
 - Cost \$4,000; with a net \$41,000

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Worked with new PR agencies to host vetted social media influencers and journalists
 Participating in NYS Industry Assn. Canadian PR Program to include representation at Canadian media trade shows, hosting Canadian journalists & pitching to media outlets

THE EVERYDAY FOODIE

Update Coto Trail - Your Next Road Trip Awaits!

Looking up on rooftops, as a hot ball made the redneck arena (tavern) along with children in a prearranged time. From car, was starting to move down to Florida, Texas, New Brunswick, and back West to Vancouver. The location of the open road was out of the Toronto area (in Ontario) and the route (beforehand) when I had been in 2020. These road trips took a back for a few years, and I was left wondering where and when my next road trip would be.

Food Festival (over 2020) - road trips on back on the agenda. Had great feeling my trip to Florida (in Ontario) after a few years that was a tough one. The great thing about being in Toronto is that there is a lot of amazing places and events to visit that are only a short drive away. So when the opportunity to go on a road trip across the border to the United States came up, the answer was a resounding "yes"!

Click on [Unleashed Buffalo: The Complete Travel Guide to Buffalo, Niagara](#).

If you're a person who loves to travel, the two weeks of food and travel together, then the [Update Coto Trail](#) is the next best trip for you! As the new suggests, the next trip is all about taking up the challenge and exciting idea of [Update New York](#) where some of the best food, travel, and travel are all in one place. The next trip is all about taking up the challenge and exciting idea of [Update New York](#) where some of the best food, travel, and travel are all in one place.

We're hitting up four cities on our road trip: [Binghamton](#), [Syracuse](#), [Rochester](#), and [Buffalo](#). The trip took several of our nights and had a great morning from Toronto, Canada. There was one exception to this rule: the other than the Buffalo trip from Toronto which is Binghamton and where you'll have the longest drive on the first day of your trip, you can start from the Ontario side. Toronto which is Buffalo. If you start in Buffalo you'll have the shortest drive to your first stop, but the longest drive back home on your first day. This choice is completely up to you.

Latest and Greatest

Update Coto Trail - Your Next Road Trip Awaits!

March 2022 Toronto, Canada

Syracuse: New York State's Multicultural Food and Live Music Hub

[Bruce Northam](#) July 26, 2022
 Bruce Northam is the author of [THE DIRECTIONS TO HAPPINESS](#), a 135-country quest for life lessons, and [Chicken Soup for the Traveler](#)—but with balls. Check out his alternative beyond an [AmericanDietary.com](#) and follow him on [Facebook](#).

This trip was sponsored by Visit Syracuse. All opinions expressed within are my own.

It's wonderful to behold a city—the spiritual and geographic heart of New York State—that has reinvented itself. The neighborhoods ringing downtown Syracuse have an amazing range of people hailing from every corner of Mother Earth, and they all tossed in their fabulous dishes. The essence of travel is, and always be, about the people you meet along the way. And who knew that Syracuse is a booming live-music town? We all dance in the same language.

JOHNNY TRAVELING TRAVEL CREDIT CARDS REWARDS & POINTS GUIDES TRAVEL 101 ROAD TRIP

- Started Upstate Eats Trail (UET) during pandemic
 - Partnering with Buffalo/Rochester/Binghamton
 - Due to success, Governor put additional few million dollars into it
 - Appeared in Food & Wine Magazine and Forbes
 - Visit Syracuse handles Instagram
 - Regularly host influencers, travel writers, journalists
 - Separate account getting money from the State for the UET
 - UET consists of Binghamton, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo (I-90 to I-81)
 - State provides money to the UET to fund website and advertising that goes with it
 - Visit Syracuse provides much of the content for the UET
 - UET asks to recognize 4 or 5 iconic restaurants
 - Heids; Coleman's, Doug's Fish Fry, Bull & Bear
 - Free coverage and traffic from media
 - 2021 Visit Syracuse invested heavily in data
 - Geo-fence restaurants and big attractions
 - Track monthly data on email addresses, credit card spend number of people visited
 - Personal information goes into database to target other ads that may be of interest

ADVERTISING

SYRACUSE

ADVERTISING

Amtrak print advertising in NY By Rail magazine and year-round digital campaign on NYbyRail.com

Continued Step Out leisure visitor ad campaign through May featuring our great outdoor activities

FOUR SEASONS OF FUN!

VISIT SYRACUSE

I LOVE NY

SPRING INTO SYRACUSE

- Google and Facebook ads - Facebook ads are economical; can micro target age and location



MARKETING SUCCESSES
ADVERTISING

STILL TO COME
October 2022
New York Society of Assn. Executives ad campaign targeting meeting/convention planners throughout the Northeast

5-week summer/fall advertising campaign in Ottawa and Kingston

THE OTHER NEW YORK
VISITSYRACUSE.COM/CANADA

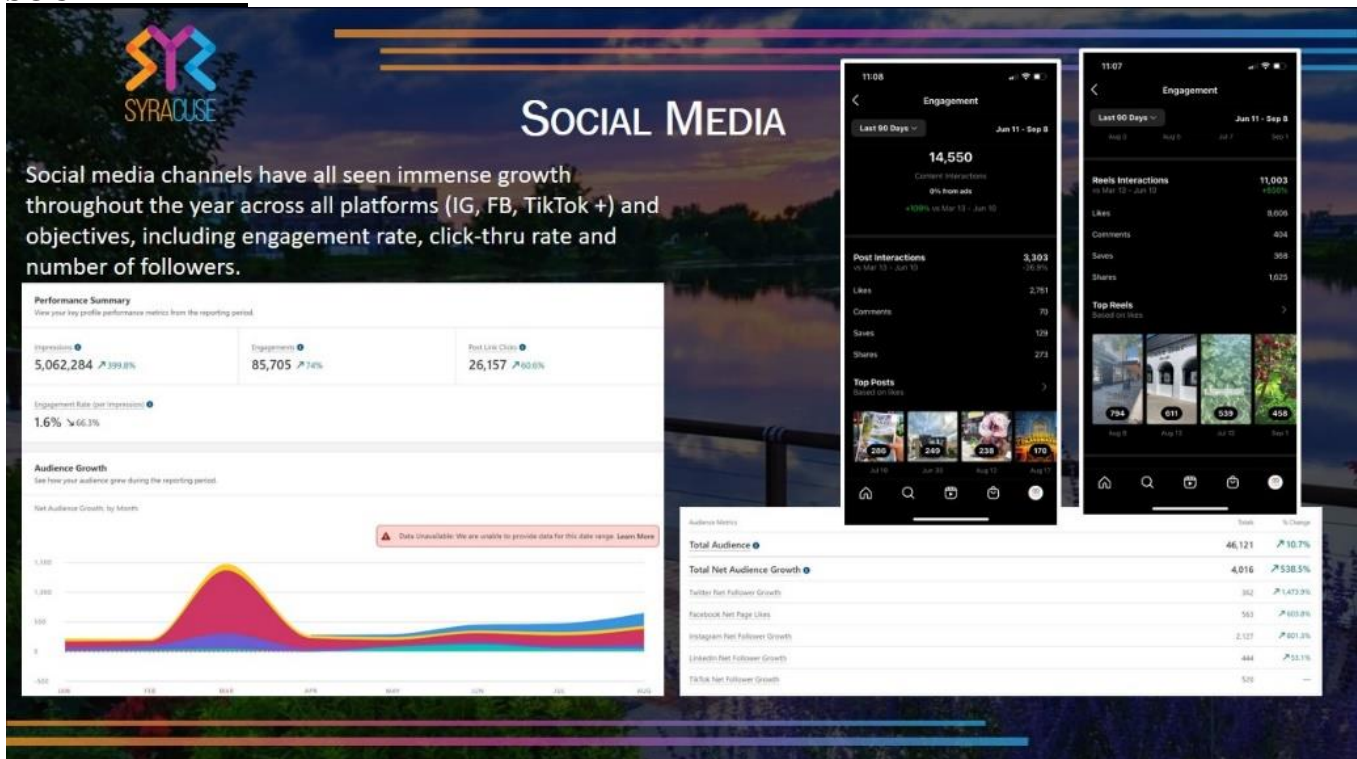
YOU
KINGS, QUEENS & KIDS
A Syracuse story about the city's history and its future.

THE OTHER NEW YORK
VISITSYRACUSE.COM/CANADA

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT
Westland conservativists warn of blue-green algae

- Advertising in NYC and Canada
 - Has been in market for about 3 weeks
 - Ottawa is a feeder city
- Now able to measure the ROI - have the ability to know if choices made are good ones

SOCIAL MEDIA



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels have all seen immense growth throughout the year across all platforms (IG, FB, TikTok +) and objectives, including engagement rate, click-thru rate and number of followers.

Performance Summary
View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks
5,062,284 ▲399.8%	85,705 ▲74%	26,157 ▲60.6%

Engagement Rate (per impression)
1.6% ▲66.3%

Audience Growth
See how your audience grew during the reporting period.

Net Audience Growth by Month

Engagement
Last 90 Days
14,550
Comment Interactions
0% from ads
+100% on Mar 12 - Jun 10

Post Interactions
vs Mar 12 - Jun 10
3,303
Likes: 2,761
Comments: 70
Saves: 129
Shares: 273

Reels Interactions
vs Mar 12 - Jun 10
11,003
Likes: 8,696
Comments: 404
Saves: 364
Shares: 1,023

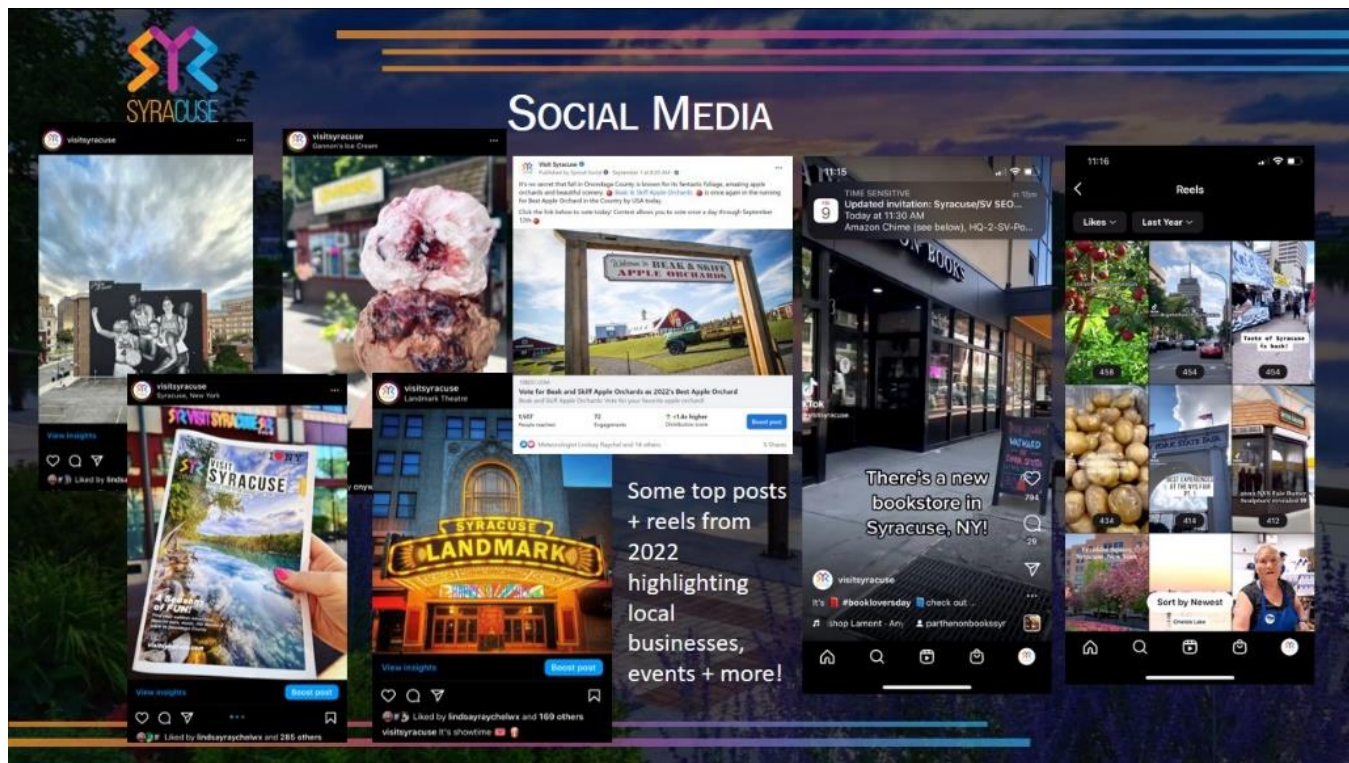
Top Posts
Based on likes

Audience Metrics

Metric	Value	Change
Total Audience	46,121	▲10.7%
Total Net Audience Growth	4,016	▲538.5%
Twitter Post Follower Growth	362	▲1,473.9%
Facebook Post Page Likes	563	▲603.8%
Instagram Post Follower Growth	2,127	▲601.4%
LinkedIn Post Follower Growth	444	▲53.1%
TikTok Post Follower Growth	520	—

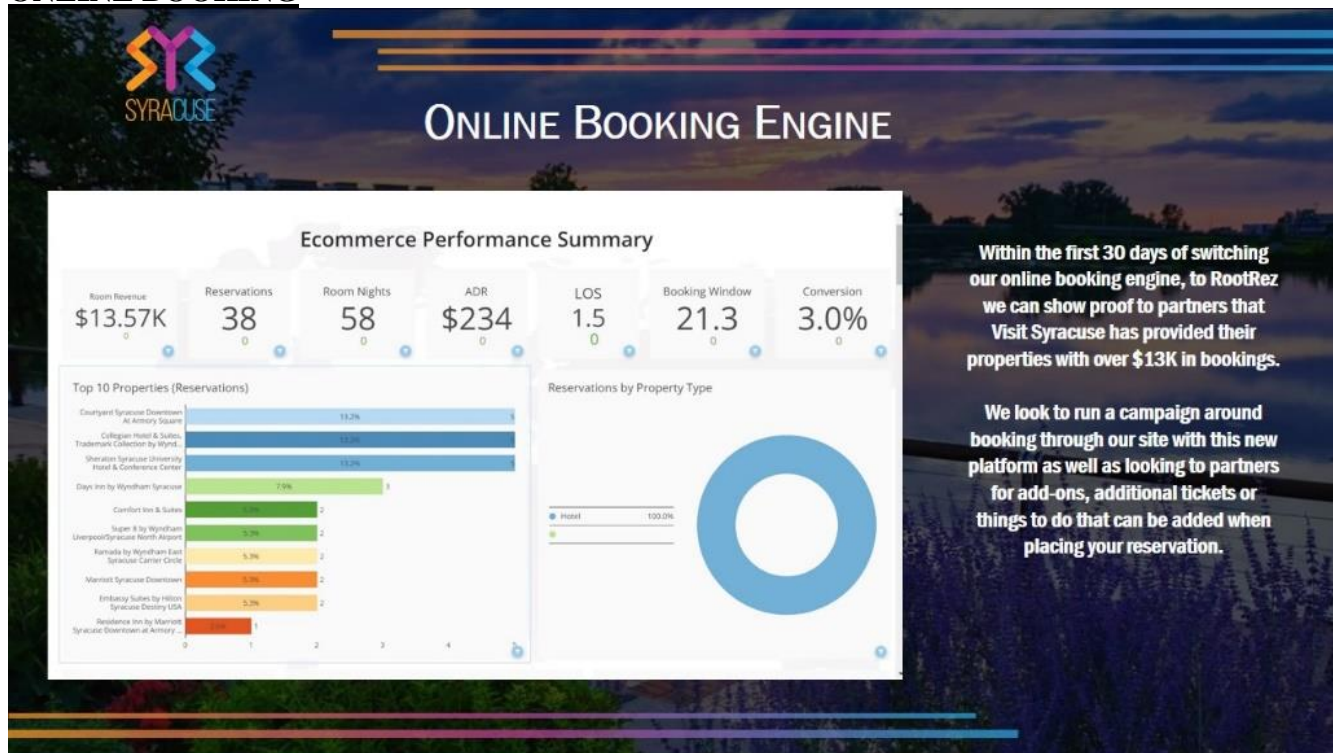
- Launched TikTok end of 1st quarter 2022; picked up additional 90k followers
- Engagements - 85k Engagements; up 74%
- Impressions (when you scroll through and see an ad)
 - 5 million impressions so far this year; up 400%

- Clicks
 - Average time on click is 1 minute and 50 seconds
 - Currently ahead of competitors on click time
 - Up 26%



- This slide shows some examples of TikTok posts
 - Try to promote as many local businesses as possible
 - Below are links to 2 TikTok videos
 - <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTRaeVxPF/>
 - <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTRaeqNau/>

ONLINE BOOKING



- Stakeholders are hotels, Airbnb, Campgrounds, RV Parks, Bed & Breakfast
 - Commend Legislators for including Airbnb in bed tax
- Currently, Visit Syracuse is the only website for travelers to find local hotel inventory and rates
 - Have the ability to:
 - Know if they book
 - How much they spent while in town
 - Where they are from
 - Have all contact information
- Been online for 3 weeks and have produced almost \$14,000 in revenue for stakeholders
 - Valued partner for hotels
 - Public can opt out of data collection; opt out ratio is currently about 60/40

FESTIVALS

FESTIVAL PROMOTION

Launched digital ad campaigns targeting markets outside of Onondaga County featuring the NYS Blues Festival as well as the Syracuse Jazz Fest. Markets included Massachusetts (MassLive.com) Pennsylvania (PennLive.com) and regions throughout NYS (NYUp.com)

SYRACUSE JAZZ FEST
JUNE 23 - 25
CLINTON SQUARE • DOWNTOWN SYRACUSE
3 NIGHTS
30 BANDS
20 VENUES

NYS BLUESFEST
JUNE 16 - 18
NYS FAIRGROUNDS, SYRACUSE, NY
FREE ADMISSION

Featured area festivals on VisitSyracuse.com throughout the spring and summer, as well as social media video posts.

Over Jazz Fest weekend Clinton Square was one of the Top 5 most visited destinations in NYS.

Visit Syracuse sponsored Hanover Thursdays, inviting community members to support local businesses while appreciating the abundance of local talent.

- Mission with Festivals and Economic Development projects
 - Offer assistance in Economic Development by:
 - Doing presentations for them to showcase the area
 - Offer assistance to Festivals in order to:
 - Help them understand how to properly do their social media
 - Drive traffic to their website
 - Place Facebook ads in markets to help get people to their event
- Jazz Fest
 - Received about \$10,000 for assisting with social media
 - Clinton Square was in top 5 most visited destinations in NYS excluding Manhattan for Jazz Fest weekend
 - Measured 450 hotel rooms
 - The economic impact over that weekend was well over \$500,000
 - Economic impact would have been better if Visit Syracuse had a full year to advertise
 - If location is turned on in (i.e.) Clinic Square, geo-fencing can access where they are from, how much they spent, what they spent it on, etc.
 - Additional information can and will be dropped to individuals

PARTNERSHIPS



MARKETING SUCCESSES
PARTNERSHIPS

On planning committees and Task Forces for:

- 2022 Travel Unity Summit Northeast (featuring DEI approaches to Tourism Marketing)
- Hancock International Airport – Air Service Development Task Force
- Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council – Board of Directors

Participate in ILNY programs and ILNY Media Marketplace PR events

Created & manage the Upstate Eats Trail Instagram account

Oncenter Complex Seasonal Marquee Displays

Partner with Mets & Crunch

BRUNCH
BREWS
BLOOMS

CUISINE
CONCERTS
CARNIVALS

IT'S SPRING IN SYRACUSE
EXPERIENCE THE SEASON AT VISITSYRACUSE.COM

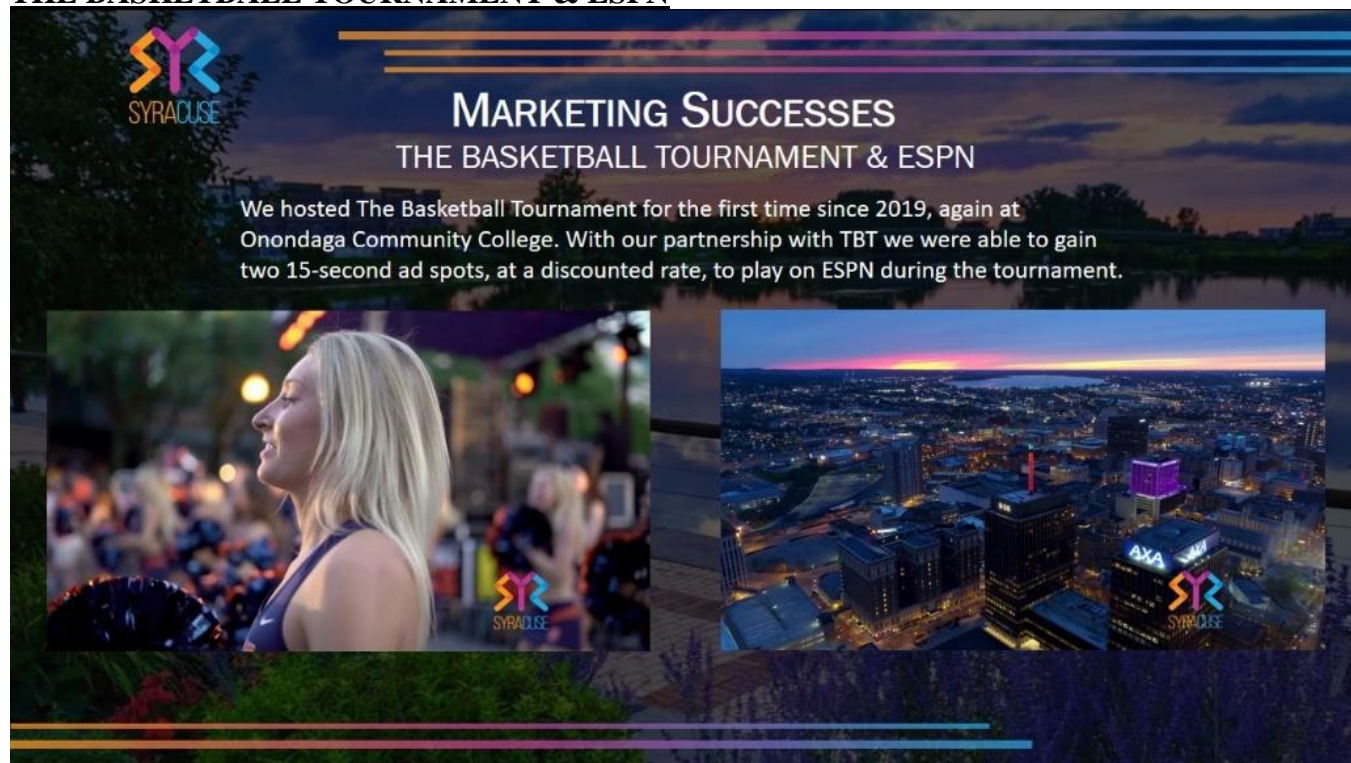
IT'S SUMMER IN SYRACUSE
EXPERIENCE THE SEASON AT VISITSYRACUSE.COM

CRUNCH

Upstate Eats Trail Instagram account

- Designed Marquee's for the Oncenter and War Memorial
- On task force for the Travel Unity Summit (Diversity & Inclusion Convention)
 - Hosted first convention pre pandemic
 - Sponsoring October 2022 convention in Cayuga County
- NYS looks at Onondaga County two ways:
 - Tourism – Onondaga County is viewed as the Finger Lakes tourism region
 - ESD – Onondaga County is viewed as the CNY region (which includes contiguous counties; Onondaga, Cortland, Madison, Cayuga, Oswego)

THE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT & ESPN



MARKETING SUCCESSES
THE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT & ESPN

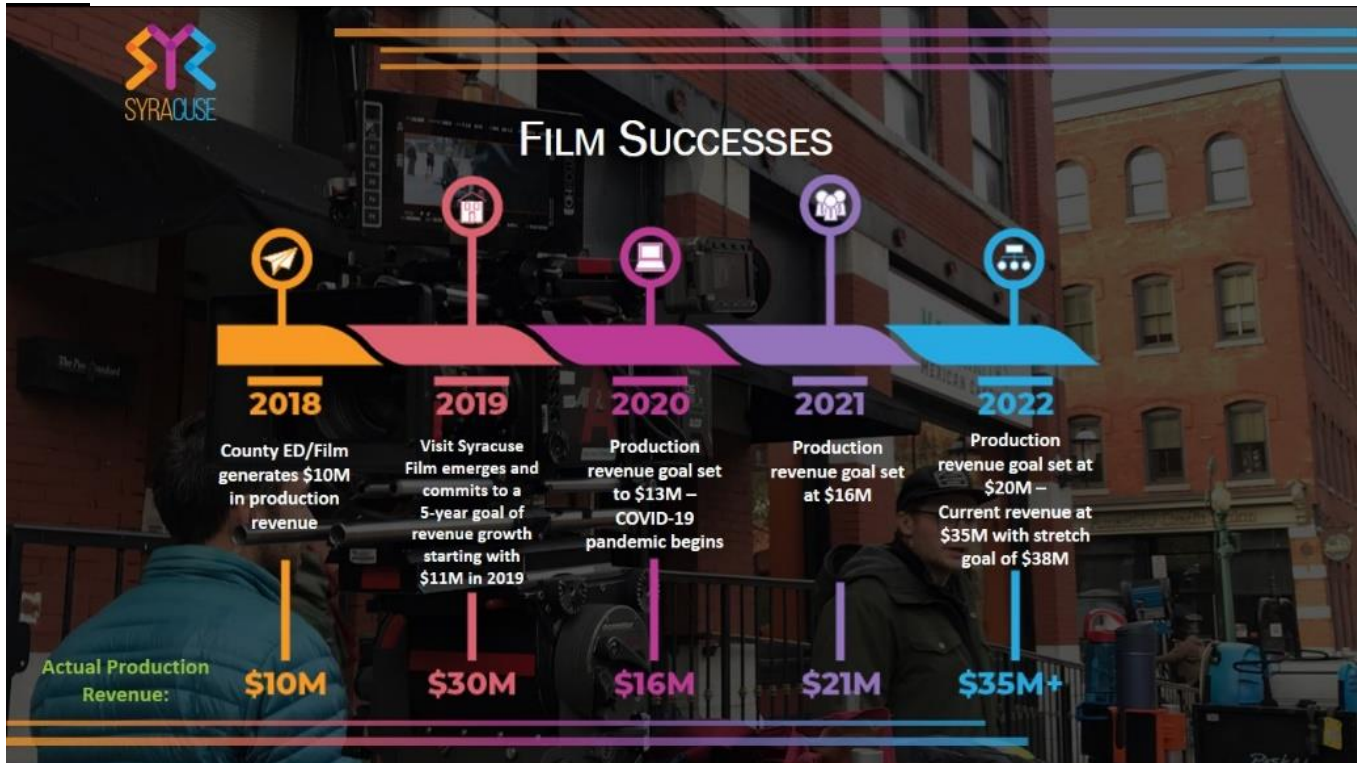
We hosted The Basketball Tournament for the first time since 2019, again at Onondaga Community College. With our partnership with TBT we were able to gain two 15-second ad spots, at a discounted rate, to play on ESPN during the tournament.

AXA SYRACUSE

AXA SYRACUSE

- Produced TV commercials which appeared on ESPN with a national audience for duration of tournament
- All images in commercial spots are the work of Visit Syracuse
- ESPN charged \$6k for commercials

FILM



- Return is close to \$125 for every \$1 put in

FILM STUDIOS



- Film is taking off
 - Aggressive with geo-targeting at film festivals

- Appear in high level magazines that film producers receive
- Syracuse 1 of 2 cities in final running for \$50 million movie with A-List cast based on bestselling book
 - The other city was selected because it was where the history of the book took place
 - Per A-List Celebrity - Pitch deck better than any seen in Hollywood
- Visit Syracuse receives a script and determines what physical assets in County or region would fit the part
 - Utilize drone footage and photography
 - Script is sent back to the film maker outlining assets that line up with script
 - Provide information on tax credit

BINGHAMTON

FILM SUCCESSES

The Film Office is working with 8 additional counties in the Southern Tier region through a partnership with Visit Binghamton to oversee their film industry. This increases the VS Film Office reach and strength for resources, infrastructure and locations.

WHY BINGHAMTON?

- ▶ New York's \$422 million film incentives program is one of the most robust in the nation. The greater New York region, including Binghamton and the Southern Tier has a Production Tax Credit and Post Production Tax Credit 10% higher than that of the downstate New York region.
- ▶ New York's Southern Tier is a budget friendly area with cost effective options regarding accommodations, dining and catering options, and general cost of living or working.
- ▶ The region has four options for Qualified Production Facilities and also partners with the Syracuse Film Office for access to additional facilities, just down the road.
- ▶ The Binghamton area has access to qualified crew, positive union and guild relationships and an established and growing film infrastructure.
- ▶ Our goal is to provide a hands-on, welcoming approach, while incorporating major metro market tools to successfully and effectively film in our region. Keeping the safety, health and wellness of production companies, as well as our local region, is a top priority. This level of service allows us to attract more productions to the Southern Tier region, creating existing new opportunities not only for production companies but for the community as well.

VISIT BINGHAMTON FILM & TELEVISION OFFICE

Louis Newman
louis@visitbinghamton.org
607.321.5755

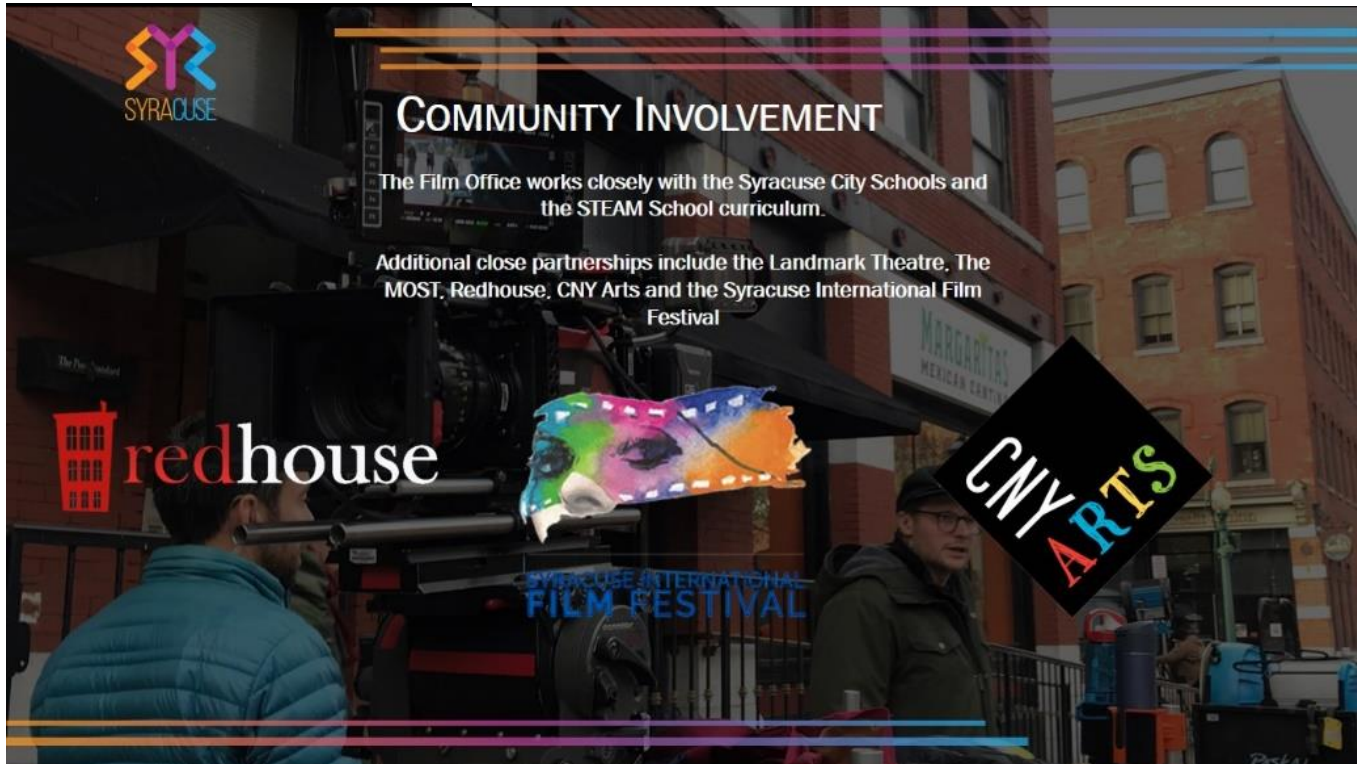
Eric Vinal
erica@visitbinghamton.org
315.952.5801

BING FILM OFFICE

A Participating Member of:
atci

- Binghamton hired Visit Syracuse to do their film
 - First step with Binghamton began January 1, 2022
 - First movie out January 1, 2023
 - Binghamton pays Visit Syracuse \$125k per year in a management contract
 - New employee in Binghamton to handle logistics
 - Worked out permits with police and local municipalities
- Goal is to have a film region from Oswego to Binghamton
 - Currently in communication with Ithaca in Cayuga county
 - Onondaga County benefits from filming in Binghamton because
 - They fly into Syracuse airport
 - Eat in local restaurants
 - Shoot some scenes in Onondaga County

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



- Redhouse and MOST are important because
 - Both are qualified as production facilities
 - Both have to shoot a scene to get a tax credit
- Film has been a major success story; American High – worked out a few more movies to stay
- Incentives
 - NYS offers approximately 38%
 - Another 4% local incentive through CNY Arts
 - Top 2 best incentives in the country
- CNY Arts
 - Visit Syracuse will train CNY Arts and other small agencies on how to access and put events on calendar
 - Events on calendar go through a review and approval process
- The system allows a way to measure the status of leads - contracts are out there waiting to be signed
- Roadblock
 - 81 project is a huge concern
 - Competitors use 81 project against the county
 - Need a comprehensive plan to get through the 81 project
 - Asking for big increase in budget
- Turning Stone is competitor that flies under the radar
- Everything is goal driven and is run like a business; everything is measured
- Can get numbers on geo-fencing
 - Went into a cooperative with other agencies
 - Got 30 locations for free
- Carrier Circle starting to rebound
 - 2-3 years ago a depressed area
 - Can get hotel occupancy rates by neighborhood

2. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Martin Skahen, Director

a. **Expressing Support for Onondaga County's Application for Restore NY Funding for the South Presbyterian Church/Castle Restoration Project** *(Sponsored by Mr. Garland)*

- Empire State Development (ESD) offering grant called "Restore NY Communities Initiative"
 - Competitive grant program

- Eligible to ask for up to \$5 million
- Program designed for revitalization of commercial and residential properties
- Webpage for Restore NY: <https://esd.ny.gov/restore-new-york>
- ESD is looking address blighted structures
 - Priority given to projects that leverage other state or federal development remediation or planning programs
 - Strong emphasis on projects from economically distressed communities
- City of Syracuse recommended the Castle project
 - Ms. Primo and County Executive McMahon on board with project; Legislator Garland supports project
- Castle is a project to transform vacant church into a multiuse venue
 - Developers are Chino and Evelyn Ingram
 - 30k square foot venue that will be an arena for
 - Professional Development, Awareness Building, Jobs, Health and Nutrition, Social Engagement
 - \$14 million project will include
 - Upscale lounge, large event space for banquets & performances, conference rooms, job training space; construct addition to hold state of the art kitchen
 - Received funding from:
 - National Grid, Allen Foundation, CNY Community Foundation, Gifford Foundation, Reisman Foundation, Jan McDonald Foundation, and 2 National Trust Preservation Fund Awards
- ESD awarded this project a \$1.2 million grant
- Submitted grant in August and was told it could move forward
 - Need to have application in on 10/11/22, need resolution from municipal body showing support of project
- Asking for \$5 million in Grant money
 - Per prior experience, Grant is typically not split up; all or nothing
 - Competing with everyone in the entire State for this grant
- Per municipality size, maximum Grant ask from ESD is \$5 million
- Must be severely economic disadvantaged area to meet the main criteria for the grant
 - ESD sends out rankings by number of disadvantages areas
 - Most disadvantaged is an 8; Clay would be a 2 and would not meet the main criteria
- Plan to use other funding sources as the match to the Grant
- Community Development will oversee the Grant
- Will reimburse as goals of the project are met
- Believe it is a 2 year period after go ahead is given
- Have not seen any stipulations in the Grant application; may be stipulation details in agreement if awarded money
- Developers are enthusiastic
- Starting point to transform the whole neighborhood
- King & King did schematics
- Will have a competent General Contractor

A motion was made by Mr. Garland, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to approve this item. Ayes: 3 (Burtis, Kuhn, Knapp, Garland) Abstain: 1 (Gunnip); MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DATE: SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Danny Liedka	VS
Melissa Morgan	VS
Susan Boyle	Comm Dev
Marty Skane	Comm Dev
Patricia Hendo	Comptroller's Office
Tenisha Murphy	CE Office
Daniel Leonardi	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg