



**Final Report on Execution of Services
2020 LODGING TAX/ TOURISM FUND (CIVIC IMPROVEMENT FUND)**

Project Name:

VISIT BAINBRIDGE ISLAND MULTI-MEDIA DESTINATION MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Name of Applicant Organization: VISIT BAINBRIDGE ISLAND (VBI)

Number:

VBI is a 501 (c) 6 Tax ID# 83-4290465

Date of Incorporation as a Washington State Corporation and UBI Number:

2019 UBI # 604 419 884

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Scope: The main objective of Visit Bainbridge Island is to function as the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Island. Its primary focus is to attract visitors for the purpose of enhancing the local economy through the purchase of overnight accommodations, food and beverage, retail, transportation and visitor services.

In keeping with this objective, VBI will be developing a strong travel and tourism scope of work for the Island with tactical focus on the need periods of October 1st until Memorial Day. VBI will serve as the gateway to the Island, offering current information about our destination's attractions, businesses and lodging. Currently, the BICC acts as our Visitor Information Center where tourists and locals can engage with staff, pick up maps, brochures and promotional materials. A vibrant tourism community will result in economic vitality for restaurants, attractions, retail stores, festivals, cultural, and sporting events.

Project Objective A: Operating Expenses

Build infrastructure and administration of VBI to include bookkeeper and insurance, office supplies, postage, rent, telephone, post office box and legal fees. Budget \$7,500

Results: As VBI's first official year as a 501(c)(6) DMO, activities included first time filings for business licenses, IRS tax exemption paperwork, engaging a CPA, insurance, an official post office box, mailing address, and finalizing our legal charter documents. Budget variance negative -\$5,763 was due to additional fees for CPA, insurance and staff time required to establish VBI as a legal entity.

Project Objective B: Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Implement Customer Relationship Tool to manage VBI's relationships and interactions with visitors and the meeting and event customer. A CRM system will build contact management, track leads, streamline processes such as proposal writing and itineraries, produce economic impact numbers and improve productivity. \$10,000

Results: VBI opted not to engage its original CRM vendor, settling for a much less expensive option. Once the pandemic hit, we opted not to launch VBI's membership program and meeting and special events ceased, thus did not need a full CRM system in 2020. VBI did implement MailChimp for stakeholder communication and used minimal staff hours to enter subscriber data. Budget surplus +\$9,160

Project Objective C: Marketing

Advertising: Market destination to local, drive and regional markets through digital and print campaigns, focusing on off peak periods in an effort to drive both day and overnight visitations to these time periods. VBI will continue leveraging its partnership with Visit Kitsap Peninsula and their LTAC funds to include Bainbridge in their printed regional brochures. \$2,000

Results: With the onset of Covid-19, non-essential travel meant a stop to all leisure and business travel. VBI paused destination marketing for a time. When travel restrictions eased, we began a coordinated response to media inquiries. All work took into consideration the current WA State reopening phase and reflected the guidelines recommended by state and local government agencies. Here are a couple examples of our earned media and the published articles: *Red Tricycle -3 Ways to Spend the Day (& Stay) on Bainbridge Island, *Sip Magazine - Spring Issue highlighting Hitchcock Restaurant, *Bainbridge

Island Review - How Covid-19 has Impacted Tourism on Bainbridge, *Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA) - Partner Spotlight feature on Visit Bainbridge.

As the year progressed, we secured a handful of paid advertising opportunities in the leisure drive markets for placement in 2021:

**Sound Publishing* – Love Kitsap Staycation Guide, Circulation 36,000. Co-op ad with BILA. Target audience: Kitsap and Olympic peninsula leisure overnight market.

**GSBA Digital Magazine* -Circulation 9,000 plus social media, e-news and website promotion. Co-op ad with BILA. Target audience: LGBTQ leisure Washington State/Regional overnight market.

**Pacific Publishing* – Seattle Annual Manual, Circulation 26,000, quarterly throughout 2021. Co-op ad with BILA, Target audience: Regional leisure overnight market

**Saga City* - Visit Seattle Official Visitors Guide, COVID edition. Circulation 200,000 Q1-2 2021, with special placement in Portland Monthly magazine. No co-op, Visit Bainbridge Island destination ad Target audience: WA, MT, ID, OR and CA overnight leisure market.

**NW Travel & Life* - Circulation 300,000 and newsstands at 1200+ retailers across the Western US and BC. No co-op, Visit Bainbridge Island destination ad. Target audience: WA, MT, ID, OR, CA and BC leisure overnight market.

Budget variance negative -\$11,333 was due to paid advertising commitments and first-time creative services for destination ads. These funds were supplemented from other areas in VBI's budget.

Website: Maintain and enhance VisitBainbridge.com (launched in June 2018) to continue building on website momentum. This would include hosting fees, updated content and directory of local attractions and lodging, dynamic webpage layout, updating and creating backup files and key word placement to enhance google search. In 2020 VBI will also implement a universal tourism calendar (Currents Online) in collaboration with Arts & Humanities Bainbridge. \$7,000

Results: Local Bainbridge web designer Artsopolis has completed the refresh of VisitBainbridgeIsland.org. The original site has been redirected to our new domain and legal name, Visit Bainbridge Island. Features include an integration with the Arts & Humanities Bainbridge (AHB) calendar and a comprehensive Bainbridge hospitality business directory they built to showcase restaurants, attractions, retailers, etc. The "Where to Stay" tab directs visitors to partner Destination Bainbridge (managed by BILA), where all Island lodging options are listed.

VBI also launched its social media [@VisitBainbridgeIslandWa](#) in May, focusing on Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG). As result of strong content strategy, we have grown our followers to 750+ on IG, with average weekly audience reach of 2,500 and are approaching 200 on FB.

Budget variance was negative -\$5,263 due to costs associated with website design, staff collaboration and syndication fees to set up partnerships with BILA and AHB and time to launch and maintain social media channels.

Brand Development and Collateral: Polish the 'launch' Visit Bainbridge brand logo with updated and refreshed look. Carry this theme throughout the development of VBI collateral to include letterhead, press kit, itineraries, tradeshow giveaways and sales collateral. \$2,000

Results: The official VBI logo styling and color palate has been completed. This refresh is now carried throughout our online presence, letterhead and press itineraries. VBI also began development of “Meetings on Bainbridge” collateral, which was put on hold during COVID. Budget surplus +\$302

Event Representation: Organize Bainbridge partner participation in industry trade shows and meetings such as the Wedding Show, NW Event Show, Seattle Hotel Concierge Association and Concierge Guild trade shows, Port of Seattle Cruise Ship Connections and Visit Seattle Customer Events such as Taste Washington. \$3,000

Results: Virtual meetings replaced in-person industry tradeshow, client events and meetings. Despite these challenges, here are some events VBI participated in: *Bainbridge tourism update presentation hosted by VBI via Zoom to 40 regional concierge. *VBI invited to participate in Greater Seattle Business Association's (GSBA) Tourism Advisory Board, meets quarterly and focuses on LGBTQ travel. *Attended the Washington Tourism Alliance (WTA) Annual Tourism “virtual” Conference in October. *WTA included VBI in their Peninsulas focus group seeking input on their upcoming branding and marketing initiatives. *VBI represented Bainbridge in the Port of Seattle's - U.S. Embassy London - Opening Up America's Pacific Northwest event in early December. Budget surplus of +\$1,478 which accounted for staff time and collateral in support of presentations.

Industry Affiliations: Partnering with organizations who promote and advocate for tourism on both the local and national level is critical for networking and keeping current with industry innovation. VBI will maintain memberships with Visit Seattle, Washington State Tourism Alliance, Puget Sound Business Travel Association and Meeting Planners International. Local Bainbridge memberships to include BIDA and BICC. \$500

Results: Visit Bainbridge Island joined the following organizations to support its core mission of destination marketing: Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations (WSDMO), Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA), Washington Tourism Alliance (WTA) and Visit Seattle. Budget variation negative -\$225.00 due to VBI's acceptance into joining the State's DMO Association at the end of 2020.

Bainbridge Island Special Events and Sponsorships: VBI will work with its partners to create off-peak promotions to draw both day and overnight visitors. These events will evolve into annual signature promotions. \$4,000

Results: Due to COVID-19 event cancellations, VBI did not able to create any special promotions for special events or sponsorships. Staff time was spent early in the year in preparation and support of the Founders Pickleball Tournament and the Trillium Run. Budget surplus +\$3,681.

Photography/Videography: There are few curated, professional images of Bainbridge in the VBI photo library. It is critical to begin collecting these licensed images for collateral and press and media inquiries. \$2,000

Results: VBI worked with Bainbridge photographer Pete Saloutos for the rights to a beautiful aerial image for use in advertising, promotions and on our website. VBI did not have the funds to purchase additional images so had a positive budget surplus +\$1,490.

Inbound FAMs, Client Site Inspections, Press Trips: The key focus of VBI is to bring the best quality day and overnight business to Bainbridge. Focusing on the market segments identified in the VBI mission statement, VBI will work with its partners to host prequalified meeting and event site visits and quarterly destination knowledge trips for those groups not familiar with Bainbridge. VBI will also be responsible for coordination of media visits and arrangements with Bainbridge tourism industry partners. *\$5,000*

Results: Although there was no option to bring FAMs and Client inspections to Bainbridge during the first 8 months of the year due to COVID-19, activity did pick up in Q4. To follow are a few highlights of sites VBI coordinated.

*Hosted social media influencer visit to Bainbridge: Scout the Golden Retriever, 219k followers, @scoutgoldenretriever. Two-day highlight tour of Bainbridge, "Scout Hugs" meet and greet downtown. Followed with a "Best of Bainbridge" weekend giveaway to Scout's followers for destination awareness and exposure. Collaboration with BILA, Tour Bainbridge, Peasant Beach.

*Hosted travel writer for Red Tricycle (family blog with an average monthly page views of 2.7M) for an article on family fun for the holidays and winter activities on Bainbridge. Collaboration with BILA, Bloedel.

*Hosted travel writer for NW Travel & Life for an article focusing on the Bloedel Reserve as well as special island gardens including the Japanese Exclusion Memorial, Bainbridge Gardens, Halls Hill Labyrinth and Heyday Farm. Collaboration with BILA. Budget surplus +\$2,804

Outbound Client Events and Sales Missions: VBI will be seeking appropriate opportunities to represent Bainbridge in outbound client events and missions. Examples of this are event participation with the Port of Seattle in destination outreach, Corporate Travel Industry Days with large local employers and other Visit Seattle sales missions promoting out of state visitors. *\$4,000*

Results: The most significant activity to report in this category, is VBI's collaboration with the Port of Seattle. Bainbridge Island will be featured for the first time in their 2021 international cruise and stay brochure as one of the "Exciting Experiences Within Minutes of Seattle" and as a featured stop in the "Explore Washington Waterways" trip planner. You can also find Bainbridge represented in their "Ultimate Pacific Northwest Road Trip" itinerary promoted on their website and in the UK, Australia and Germany. This is an exciting new opportunity to participate with their international sales missions. Budget surplus +\$1,772.

Membership Outreach: For long term viability, VBI will be actively developing a membership program with identified benefits. Initially this could be limited to a few partners to "trial" for a specified time period. *\$3,000*

Results: Early in the year, VBI had designed a membership program was ready to launch. Once the global pandemic hit and tourism was especially hit hard, VBI postponed this initiative. We will revisit this with a modified program launch in 2021. Budget variance +\$1,922