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Destination Strategic Plan Directs High Point to Capitalize on Furniture and Design for Tourism Growth

HIGH POINT, N.C. (AUGUST 21, 2019)—Members of the High Point Convention & Visitors Bureau’s board of directors voted at its monthly meeting today to adopt a new destination strategic plan that calls for High Point to better leverage its furniture heritage and other key assets, including niche sports, High Point University, festivals and other downtown catalyst projects on the horizon such as the Congdon Events Center. The plan also calls for High Point to work more collaboratively with Greensboro and other areas of Guilford County to recruit regionally focused events and complimentary tourism assets.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau contracted with JLL in mid-2018 to develop a 10-year destination strategic plan for High Point. The plan, which was developed with input from a broad range of High Point’s leadership, will serve as a road map for community leaders, industry partners and businesses to develop, market, package and promote the city as a year-round tourism destination.

“The new tourism strategic plan will help us further our goal of making High Point a year-round destination and is a vital part of making High Point the stimulating and vibrant community that we aspire to be,” High Point Mayor Jay W. Wagner said.

Key points of the destination strategic plan include:

- Elevate the furnishings brand to the fullest, cultivating more year-round opportunities to secure more designer B2B business.
- Leverage High Point University as “college town branding,” including using the school’s premier life skills brand for the community to recruit more meetings and events for the University and the Congdon Event Center.
- Work closely with Guilford County stakeholders to attract more county and regional events that better leverage assets and services and shared assets such as transportation systems.
- Focus on niche sports events that are not saturated in the marketplace. Niche sports success in High Point includes rowing
- Expand “home grown” events that have the potential to evolve into signature events for High Point. A good example is to create more opportunities similar the Coltrane Festival, which is a two-day event that attracts guest from more than 20 states each year.
- Capture more events that create spectator opportunities such as concerts, festivals, and races at venues including BB&T Point, Oak Hollow Lake, the transportation terminal and City Lake Park.
- Use public art to enhance the home furnishings branding, specifically in streetscaping.
- Link High Point’s districts and note the authentic attributes of each district with wayfinding signage, public art branding and other managed assets.

- Work with the Congdon Event Center to develop a calendar that can accommodate small tradeshow and meetings throughout the year.

“JLL’s recommendations make up a holistic approach that complement our home furnishings and design branding as well as other tourism opportunities that leaders can use as a road map to strengthen destination travel,” High Point Convention & Visitors Bureau Interim President Melody Burnett said. “Destination development is critical for all economic development strategies in our city. JLL most recently partnered with Raleigh to develop a own long-term tourism strategy that is already paying economic dividends.”

“High Point does not have traditional tourism products for leisure travelers. Most of our attractors are furniture retail and design assets that will be better marketed in a more direct approach than in traditional leisure markets,” she added. “In conjunction with the plan, a destination development coalition will be commissioned and will be tasked in leading asset development and enhancements to strengthen High Point as a destination appealing to visitors as well as a city that locals will be proud to promote. Internally, our organization will be focused on morphing from a traditional destination marketing association to a now destination management association.”

“Our months of research clearly indicated that there are many exciting new ways that High Point can capitalize on its furniture heritage and better use other existing assets like High Point University to attract more year-round tourists to the city,” JLL Executive Vice President Daniel Fenton said. “Our recommendation that High Point tout its furniture heritage is much like what Louisville, Kentucky has highly successfully done with bourbon. The lack of furniture manufacturing doesn’t mean that High Point can’t use furniture as a tourism marketing tool. There are no major bourbon distilleries in operation in Louisville, but the city has done a masterful job of embracing its bourbon heritage.”

“The recommendations within our plan also will greatly enhance the overall quality of life for residents of High Point,” Fenton said. “High Point is poised for continued success and growth and the plan provides a road map for a bright future for residents and visitors alike.”

About the High Point Convention & Visitors Bureau:

The High Point Convention & Visitors Bureau is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote and encourage economic development in High Point through travel and tourism. The Convention & Visitors Bureau works closely with meeting planners to bring events to High Point and to enhance their experience here, providing white glove assistance with event planning tasks including registration, transportation, and coordination among various venues. These services ensure that every group event will be successful down to the last detail because we want each visitor to make yourself at home. Established by state legislation in 1984, the Convention & Visitors Bureau is an independent 501(c) 6 nonprofit organization funded by a self-imposed three percent room occupancy tax on local hotels. No taxpayer funds – city, county or state – are used to fund the Convention & Visitors Bureau. The Regional Visitors Center is located at 1634 N. Main St., Suite 102, Suite 102 High Point, N.C. For more information, visit highpoint.org.

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What Local Leaders are Saying

“This long-term tourism strategy supports the direction of our public-private partnerships that we have formed with the state as well as the Congdon Family Foundation. Plant 7 and the Congdon Event Center are two key projects that will build year-round destination opportunities creating an experience around our

furniture and design branding as well as recruiting new business growth and opportunity around our organizational goals.”

Patrick Chapin
President and Chief Executive Officer
Business High Point

“The High Point Market Authority is pleased that High Point’s destination strategic plan will focus on our established brand in home furnishings and design. When the community supports the brand, it strengthens opportunities for more year-round success with the already established assets to create future wins in our industry.

Tom Conley
President/CEO
High Point Market Authority

“Sports tourism is an economic driver and this plan delivers a road map to go after niche markets that are not already saturated in the marketplace. We have had some success with rowing events in our community and with some enhancements to Oak Hollow lake, we should be in prime position to be a competitive destination for more tournaments in the near future.”

Lee Tillery, CPRP
City of High Point
Director, Parks & Recreation