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Print to PDF will convert the application plus any PDF attachments into a single PDF file. **Release for Review** will change the status of the application to Under Review and move it on to the evaluation process. **Negotiation** will allow you to unlock one or more sections of the application and route the application back to the applicant for further editing. **Annotations** allow internal staff to add notes that are visible to internal staff only and possibly also reviewers if they have a special security privilege. The applicant cannot see these notes. **Versions** will display all component versions that were created as a result of the negotiation process. **Feedback** allows staff to enter feedback about the application to the applicant. The feedback text will appear at the bottom of the application and will be visible to anyone who has access to the application. **Withdraw** changes the status of the application to Withdrawn and removes the app from the evaluation process.

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27194 - FY16 Region/CVB Marketing Plan - Final Application**30487 - FY16 Whitefish CVB Marketing Plan**

DOC Office of Tourism

Status: Under Review

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Comments:

Organization Information

Name: * Whitefish Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc.

Organization Type: Non-Profit Organization

Organization Website: www.explorewhitefish.com

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Comments:

Community & Brand Support

1. Describe your destination.

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges. How does your destination align with Montana's brand pillars?

PURPOSE OF THIS MARKETING PLAN

The purpose of the Explore Whitefish Marketing Plan is to sustainably grow the economy of Whitefish by emphasizing its desirability as a travel and recreation destination to non-resident visitors who appreciate and respect the character of the place. Our mission is to build a high level of visibility by developing and building support for Whitefish as a premier year-round mountain town. This includes increasing the occupancy for lodging facilities in Whitefish. Established by the City of Whitefish, Explore Whitefish is the officially designated organization charged with tourism promotion and marketing of Whitefish. The organization also provides critical support for visitor information services, travel infrastructure development, market research, and public relations.

ABOUT WHITEFISH, MONTANA

Whitefish Montana is an authentic mountain town located in the northern Rockies, home to some of the world's most beautiful mountains and spectacular, unspoiled nature. Just 25 miles from Glacier National Park, Whitefish offers close access to the hanging valleys and emerald peaks of this World Heritage Site. The summer season has historically been the busy (high season) for Whitefish with Glacier National Park as a key draw. Whitefish Lake, at the edge of town, has also been a popular warm season draw. Research also indicates that visitors are attracted to Whitefish because of the distinctive and inviting qualities of the downtown and Central Avenue district. Increasingly, visitation includes those who come to Whitefish without any particular activity as a prime motivation, other than to spend time enjoying the various shops, restaurants and gallery options of the town's eminently walkable downtown core.

The world-class ski slopes and facilities of Whitefish Mountain Resort serve as a key driver for winter visitation to Whitefish. The relationship between the mountain resort and the town of Whitefish is symbiotic, especially as skiing-centric vacations have evolved increasingly into winter vacations where some in the traveling party are not skiing or snowboarding participants—rather, they enjoy the many other winter amenities and activities in and around Whitefish and nearby Glacier National Park. As a result, improving and enhancing the connectivity of the mountain and the town experience helps improve the economic outcomes of both and improves the overall visitor experience as well. Whitefish Mountain Resort summer activities have expanded considerably over the last several years, improving the summertime vitality of the mountain resort experience as well as enhancing the overall attraction of Whitefish as the preferred place to base a northwest Montana and Glacier National Park region vacation.

WHITEFISH, MONTANA AND THE MONTANA BRAND

Whitefish aligns perfectly with the Montana Brand pillars. In all our ads and collateral we serve up beautiful high resolution photos of the scenic beauty, our pristine lake and the incredible nature that surrounds us. Photos of our iconic downtown are an important part of our collateral. Visitors are very attracted to our downtown and it is a primary economic driver for the town. In addition, we try to counter the preconceived notions that Montana is remote and does not have adequate facilities by showcasing the beautiful lodging and incredible dining that can be found here.

While the incredible scenic and wild landscapes that surround Whitefish are a key and compelling inspiration to travel to Whitefish these landscapes are placed in the context of hospitality. The broad majority of travelers are intimidated by wildness without the tempering possibility of civilization. Beyond the adventure of wilderness by day, they want a good place to eat and comfortable place to sleep. This context is central to the Whitefish experience and also communicated in our marketing efforts.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES OF WHITEFISH RELATIVE TO OTHER DESTINATION MOUNTAIN TOWNS

STRENGTHS

- Whitefish aligns perfectly with the three Montana Brand platform statements
 - More spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48
 - Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders
 - Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night
- Proximity to Glacier National Park — Travel forecasts have predicted an increase in U.S. travelers expressing an interest in visiting a U.S. national park. In addition, the significant name recognition that Glacier National Park holds among North American and international travelers provides an advantage to “putting Whitefish on the map” for potential visitors.
- Central Avenue Whitefish and the alluring character of the town's built structures — Research indicates that visitors are attracted to the character and scale of Whitefish, especially the town's Central Avenue district. These are attributes that form the foundation of the town's appeal to visitors who stay in, or around the community, eat at the town's various restaurants, and shop at local stores. Additional amenities such as pedestrian friendly sidewalks, miles of trails and ability to see the night's sky all add to the Whitefish character.
- Access to recreational activities — A wide variety of recreational opportunities in and around Whitefish is a major draw for visitors. These include Whitefish Mountain Resort, the Whitefish Trail, Whitefish Lake, and the Whitefish River, as well as the trails, rivers and scenic roadways in and around Glacier National Park.

CHALLENGES

- Limited Transportation Infrastructure — Public transportation options and visitor infrastructure services in and around Whitefish are fewer than those provided at competitor destinations.
- Uncertain Weather — Fire, low snow levels and other natural crises affect travel patterns and willingness to travel.
- Market Perception — Research performed by the Montana Office of Tourism in key destination markets reveals that Montana is perceived to offer lower quality amenities and services to visitors. While Montanans are perceived as being friendly, it should be distinguished that this friendliness does not automatically translate into a guest's perception of a high level of service.
- Lack of Competitive Pricing for Air Access and Limited Seats — When compared to mountain communities with which Whitefish competes for destination visitors, airline seats to Glacier Park International Airport are limited, with fewer flights, limited markets and are priced higher. Within the state, nonresident arrivals at Glacier Park International Airport (225,027 in 2013) accounted for 13% of the total deboardings in the state, trailing Missoula (19%), Billings (24%), and Bozeman (27% - See Appendix).
- Highly Seasonal Visitation Patterns — Visitation patterns to Whitefish are highly seasonal with the majority of visitation occurring during the high demand months of July and August. This seasonality impacts the operating effectiveness of Whitefish businesses that must accommodate these aforementioned demand swings.
- The Going-to-the-Sun Road – The Whitefish summer tourism season is directly tied to the opening and closing dates of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park.

KEY TRAVEL BUYER MOTIVATIONS FOR WHITEFISH, MONTANA

Whitefish experiences an uneven cycle of visitation with a high summer season that operates at capacity with little occupancy available. Very deep shoulder seasons include early spring and late autumn, with moderate visitor and business activity during the winter season. Higher winter activity and occupancy exists during the Christmas holiday period and also during select holiday periods throughout the ski season.

Summer occupancy is primarily driven by the town's proximity to Glacier National Park. The quality lodging opportunities, dining and nightlife possibilities coupled with the town's distinctive downtown environment have made Whitefish a preferred location to base a vacation to the Glacier National Park region. Summer visitation is also supported by the attractions of Whitefish Lake and the expanding attractions in addition to Glacier National Park including the Whitefish Trail and other mountain biking opportunities in and around town. The activities available at Whitefish Mountain Resort enhance the downtown shops, restaurants and galleries of the town itself. Many

warm season festivals and events support the active and vibrant social environment of the town's core, which serves as a key visitor attraction.

Winter travel is primarily driven by the skiing and snowboarding opportunities at Whitefish Mountain Resort. However, this relationship has become increasingly symbiotic as winter visitors increasingly seek off-slope activities as part of their vacation. Winter experience in Glacier National Park, including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and sightseeing are examples of unique off-slope activities increasingly promoted by Explore Whitefish. Furthermore, travel groups may include those who do not ski or snowboard. Good places to eat, active nightlife, shopping, arts and other winter sport activities, attractions, and events have become an increasingly important component of the overall winter vacation product mix.

Specific motivations for spring and fall season travel are less centralized than summer or winter travel. Additional research should be focused around travel motivations for these time periods. Currently Explore Whitefish has focused its marketing efforts around extending the summer season - Summer Plus (building early autumn visitation), Secret Season (building late spring/early summer visitation), and growing winter visitation during select periods of time with historically lower business levels. Central to this effort is to communicate specific reasons for travel in these time periods, including visitation to Glacier National Park. This means communicating activities, features, and events worth experiencing during these time periods that cannot be experienced at other times of the year and are unique to our area.

Optional: [Include attachments here](#)

[FY16 Executive Summary.pdf](#)

2. How will your marketing plan address the three phases of the travel decision process of inspiration, orientation and facilitation?

THE TRAVEL DECISION FUNNEL: INSPIRATION, ORIENTATION, FACILITATION

The overall vision for Whitefish is to have integrated communication throughout the travel planning funnel:

INSPIRATION > ORIENTATION > FACILITATION

Inspiration. At the highest levels of communication, Explore Whitefish leverages the Montana branding guidelines in its selection of imagery and development of creative content, while applying its own Whitefish spin on things. We want to foster an emotional connection with this combination of imagery and creative content so that the viewer will move forward with the primary call to action, which is to visit [ExploreWhitefish.com](#).

Orientation. Orientation to new opportunities is administered through interactive maps within the Explore Whitefish website, as well as companion maps within the Travel Guide and a printed town map available for visitors at kiosks and visitor centers. All maps have a consistent look between them. Depending on the method of communication, the location of Whitefish within the state, or its proximity to other points of interest in the region is detailed.

Facilitation. Facilitation (connecting users with stakeholder businesses) is achieved by empowering individual businesses with the capacity to create and maintain business information, specials, packages, video and events that are displayed at [ExploreWhitefish.com](#) and a companion mobile app that visitors can download for either Android or iPhone. The travel guide and locator maps are made available at local visitor information kiosks, visitor information centers and business locations throughout the town.

Optional: [Include attachments here](#).

3. Who is your market?

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psycho-graphic)

KEY MARKETS FOR WHITEFISH, MONTANA

Our potential visitors are targeted by geographic location, demographic characteristics, and values that distinguish a potential visitor as a "geotraveler" (as defined by research conducted by ITRR, the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and the National Geographic Society). The following section provides information on the distinguishing characteristics of our geotraveler along with our core and emerging geographic markets.

GEOTRAVELERS

Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of the place being visited including its environment, culture, heritage, landmarks and the well-being of its residents. According to the ITRR study, *Statewide Vacationers to Montana: Are They Geotravellers*, the strong geotraveler spent the most money per day while traveling in Montana (\$141.79) followed by the moderate geotraveler (\$134.10) and the non geotraveler vacationer spent (\$133.27). Visitors who agreed with the principles of geotourism spend more money per day while traveling in Montana than non-geotravellers.

Geotravellers are high-value, low impact visitors who appreciate the unique characteristics and natural values of the places they visit. They place a high value on authentic travel experiences that respect and support the local character of place and its environment, and are less likely to become discouraged in their travel experiences by travel distances, difficulties and variable weather.

Income — HHI of \$65,000 - \$150,000+ Education: Bachelors' degree+ Age: 33-55+

Source: *Montana Office of Tourism, FY16 Marketing Plan*

Values — Creative, curious, connected, engaged, adventurous, independent, mindful.

Source: *Geotraveler Exploratory, Alexis Sanford, 2008.*

Attitudes — Immerse yourself in the culture, go off the beaten trail, get out of your comfort zone, allow for spontaneity, take a risk, pay attention, go now.

Source: *Geotraveler Exploratory, Alexis Sanford, 2008.*

- A segment of the U.S. total travel market estimated to include over 55 million people.
- They seek authenticity in travel experiences.
- They seek out opportunities to experience businesses and activities that are locally unique.
- Travel is an important part of their "lifestyle" and they often combine learning with travel.
- They spent a disproportionate amount of their income on travel compared to other travelers.
- They are more likely to be aware of their own impact, both environmental and community, on the places they are visiting.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

We apply the aforementioned geotraveler profile to travelers seeking active experiences such as bicycling, scenic driving, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, alpine and nordic skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, golf, fly-fishing, non-motorized water sports, horseback riding, paddling, and hiking. Cultural and culinary experiences such as dining, shopping at local shops, attending performing arts, and community events are also considered primary activities for Whitefish. This includes traveling to Whitefish for the

purpose of relaxing, strolling the streets and shops and trying out great dining and nightlife options.

NON-RESIDENT VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS

- 95% visited Glacier National Park
- 56% traveled as a pair (2 persons)
- Average group size was 2.36
- 66% have HHI (Household Income) above \$75,000
- 51% Male, 49% Female
- 33% were first time visitors
- Average age of 54 years old
- 44% were 35-54 years old, 31% were 55-64 years old, 27% were 65-74 years old

Source: 2014 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study

TOP FIVE NON-RESIDENT ACTIVITIES WHILE IN MONTANA

- 76% Scenic driving
- 56% Day hiking
- 54% Nature photography
- 46% Recreational shopping
- 34% Wildlife watching

Source: 2014 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study

WHERE NON-RESIDENT VISITORS TO WHITEFISH PRIMARILY COME FROM

- 17% Alberta, Canada
- 8% Washington State
- 7% Florida
- 6% North Dakota
- 5% Oregon
- 4% Minnesota, Texas, Colorado
- 3% British Columbia, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, Alaska, Alabama
- 2% California, Virginia, Wisconsin, Saskatchewan
- 18% Everywhere else in the U.S. and the world (without any regular pattern)

Source: 2014 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study

CORE GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS FOR FOCUS

Explore Whitefish will focus its attention during this fiscal period on potential visitors who match the geotraveler profile in the following geographic markets. It is possible that opportunities will arise in additional markets in partnership with other tourism organizations, such as the Montana Office of Tourism. In these instances, Explore Whitefish may extend its efforts beyond these core focus markets.

- Seattle, Washington (Puget Sound Area)
- Portland, Oregon
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Regional Drive-To (including Alberta)

b. What are your emerging markets?

EMERGING MARKETS

- Chicagoland (Chicago core and northern suburbs to Madison, Wisconsin) - This has been a target market for the Montana Office of Tourism for many years. During FY15, Explore Whitefish engaged in its first comprehensive cooperative marketing campaign with Whitefish Mountain Resort in the Chicago market. There is currently a weekly winter seasonal direct flight from Chicago O'Hare (ORD) to Glacier Park International Airport (GPIA).
- San Francisco/Oakland - Whitefish Mountain Resort began marketing efforts to this area three years ago. There is currently a bi-weekly summer seasonal direct flight as well as short airline connections to Glacier Park International Airport (GPIA).

c. What research supports your target marketing?

Research conducted by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana as well as the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and the National Geographic Society are referenced in question 3a and can be found under Miscellaneous Attachments.

Optional: [Include attachment here.](#)

4. Overall Goals

MARKETING PLAN GOALS

- Support the brand identity and presence of Whitefish, Montana in the marketplace as a destination for active experience-seeking travelers.
- Encourage destination visitation from the core and emerging markets.
- Aggressively showcase varied winter vacations experience in and around Whitefish and Glacier National Park.
- Position special events messaging to enhance visitation during the "Secret Season" of May-June, and the "Summer Plus" season of September-October.
- Position Whitefish as the basecamp for Glacier National Park visitors with the natural, cultural, and culinary assets of Whitefish.
- Improve "Secret Season" visitation by promoting bicycling, wildlife viewing, birding, fly fishing, golf, non-motorized water sports, horseback riding, performing arts, culinary experiences, and community events.
- Improve "Summer Plus" visitation by promoting fall foliage, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly fishing, bicycling, non-motorized water sports, horseback riding, performing arts, culinary experiences, and community events.

- Stimulate the publication of feature stories in national and regional publications, digital media, and broadcast media.
- Encourage corporate retreats and improve meeting and convention market with emphasis in shoulder seasons.
- Expand the pursuit of new airline markets to improve access, ease, and affordability of travel.
- Collaborate with regional and state tourism partners, including Glacier National Park, to develop and build out support for shoulder season visitation.

Optional: [Include attachments here.](#)

5. Joint Venture Opportunities

a. In what types of Joint Ventures with MTOT would you like to participate?

MTOT COOPERATIVE MARKETING

Explore Whitefish has actively participated in the past and anticipates participating in the future in a variety of cooperative marketing programs with the Montana Office of Tourism (MTOT). Explore Whitefish participation in MTOT marketing programs in the past have primarily centered around spring, fall or winter campaigns. Winter MTOT cooperative campaigns that focused on the destination ski market have been of particular interest to Explore Whitefish. Spring and Autumn cooperative campaigns that are focused on the active outdoors traveler within our core geographic markets have also been of particular interest.

b. In what other types of Joint Ventures would you like to participate? (Regions/CVBs, etc.)

OTHER COOPERATIVE MARKETING EFFORTS (AIRLINE, AMTRAK, REGIONAL SKI HILLS)

Explore Whitefish actively cooperates with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on multi-channel marketing campaigns in key markets including Portland and Chicago. Explore Whitefish also partners with WMR and other partners to create a comprehensive Whitefish presence at winter activity focused trade shows in select markets. During FY16, Explore Whitefish desires to partner with WMR and Glacier Country Regional Tourism to extend our sponsorship with Warren Miller Entertainment in order to extend our presence as the MTOT three year sponsorship has expired. Although Explore Whitefish and WMR did not participate in cooperative marketing efforts with Amtrak during FY15, an unspecified level of partnership will likely occur in FY16 due to the rescheduling of the Empire Builder.

Explore Whitefish is also interested in exploring expanded cooperative opportunities with Glacier Country Regional Tourism including media events, FAM trips, and groups marketing.

c. What types of Joint Ventures have you done in the past? Were they successful - why or why not?

PAST COOPERATIVE MARKETING EFFORTS (SUCCESSFUL AND NOT SUCCESSFUL, WHY?)

Explore Whitefish has engaged in many cooperative marketing initiatives with the Montana Office of Tourism in the past. These initiatives have been measured separately by Explore Whitefish through independent ad tracking. We have made adjustments to future participation based on previous tracking. We have found the most success in MTOT cooperative efforts that are aligned with our primary seasonal and geographic targets, and include the opportunity to provide fulfillment on responses.

Optional: [Include attachments here.](#)

Include pie chart here.

[FY16 Public Budget Pie Charts.pdf](#)

Marketing Segment, Strategy & Budget

| Marketing Segment | Marketing Method | Does research support this method? | Describe your method. | Supporting research/statistics | Provide a brief rationale. | Plan to measure success? | Marketing Method Evaluation | Estimated budget for each method. | Non bed tax funds? | Add'l Atchmnts |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Consumer | Photo/Video Library | No | Our consumer advertising is based around visitation in our shoulder seasons and our strategy is broken out into the following three categories: Summer Plus, Winter, and Secret Season. Eighty-five percent of the consumer advertising budget | | RATIONALE Compelling photo and video content are vital to the success of our online and print campaigns. We utilize local photographers as much as | MEASURING SUCCESS Although one hundred percent of the success of our online and print campaigns cannot be attributed to the purchase of appropriate and vibrant photo and video content, this does play a significant | | \$5,000.00 | Yes | |

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| | | | <p>for each strategy is allocated to the seasonal media buying plan while fifteen percent of the advertising budget for each strategy is left open as a contingency for reactive media buys throughout the season.</p> | | <p>possible because of their knowledge of our tourism products.</p> | <p>role in our success. Therefore, we use the same measurements as we do for our online and print campaigns.</p> | | | |
| Consumer | Print Advertising | Yes | <p>We advertise in publications within our target markets with alignment to geotraveler and other demographic profiles that have been outlined for Whitefish. Print opportunities, especially in cooperation with the Montana Office of Tourism in national active travel specific media channels, are also pursued. Our consumer advertising is based around visitation in our shoulder seasons and our strategy is broken out into the following three categories: Summer Plus, Winter, and Secret Season. This method comprises 40% of our consumer advertising budget.</p> <p>SUMMER PLUS</p> <p>DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>The target audiences for this time period are those who do not currently have children in school, have adult children, or do not have children. This primarily means a target audience of 35 and older with HH income over \$75,000.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p>Travelers seeking active experiences such as scenic driving, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, bicycling, non-motorized water sports, horseback riding, paddling, and hiking. Cultural and culinary experiences such as dining, shopping at local shops, attending performing arts, and community events are also considered primary autumn activities for Whitefish. This includes traveling to Whitefish primarily for the purpose of relaxing, strolling the streets and shops and trying out great dining and nightlife options.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>Seattle and Portland, Regional Drive-To.</p> <p>WINTER</p> <p>DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>Skiers and</p> | <p>SUMMER PLUS & SECRET SEASON</p> <p>Seattle and the Puget Sound area have been historically strong markets for Whitefish. Portland is now a core market as we have increased investment in the past few years. The existence of the Amtrak train route has made this connection logical, and a seasonal direct flight on Alaska Air/Horizon has increased the possibilities of this market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of fly-in vacationers: Not all visitors are alike. The same is true of their economic impact. Research by ITRR indicates that vacationers who travel to the state via air spend more money per day and stay longer than vacationers who entered the state via automobile. • Highway vacationers: The average nonresident vacation group to Montana (2.54 people) who entered the state via highway spends an average of \$175.19 per day. With an average length of stay of 5.85 days, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$1,025. • Fly-in vacationers: The average fly-in nonresident vacation group arriving in Montana (2.84 people) spends an average of \$332.86 per day. With an average length of stay of 8.53 days, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$2,839. • Difference: \$1,814 in additional spending per fly-in statewide vacation group. <p>WINTER</p> <p>During the winter of 2014/2015, Explore Whitefish partnered with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on a multi-channel marketing campaign (digital and out of home) in the Chicago market to promote the new winter seasonal direct flight from Chicago O'Hare to Glacier Park International Airport. As a result of this marketing</p> | <p>SUMMER PLUS</p> <p>Occupancy history in Whitefish shows that during the period of late June through August the town is at or very near 100% capacity. From late August into early September, occupancy levels are still strong, but begin to wane. The objective is to extend the peak summer season and grow occupancy and business levels in the autumn for the time period of September to the end of October. The approach for this time period is to develop and communicate narratives for adventures, activities, fall events, and specific reasons for visiting Whitefish during this time period that cannot be experienced if Whitefish were visited during another time of year. As we continue to position Whitefish as the basecamp of Glacier National Park, the narrative will lead with fall experiences in Glacier National Park such as scenic driving, fall foliage, wildlife watching, and hiking. Explore Whitefish has allocated 20% of its overall consumer advertising budgets to Summer Plus marketing efforts.</p> <p>WINTER</p> | <p>Success is measured seasonally with Resort Tax Collections and Lodging Tax Collections. In addition, click-through-rates (CTR) as well as website sessions are measured against industry standards and historical performance. Specific details can be found on the attached PDF.</p> | \$24,260.00 | Yes | <p>FY16 Marketing Method_PrintAdvertising.pdf</p> |

Showboard activity participants with household incomes of \$75,000 or greater. Overall, the percentage of the population that are active skiers or snowboarders is approximately 7% of the US population (SIA 2012 Participation Report). That means we are targeting a relatively small percentage of the population and can most efficiently reach this target through niche channels.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

We apply largely the same geotravel profile to the ski market. While not all skiers and snowboarders fall within the geotraveler psychographic, we find that those with experiential preferences for authentic travel are more likely

to appreciate and enjoy Whitefish and then return again in subsequent years. It is important that we acquire new, repeat customers, not simply attract one-time visitors who are not a good fit for the Whitefish experience and as a result will not likely return. The addition of marketing the aforementioned Glacier National Park winter experiences provide additional breathtaking experiences for a day off for skiers and snowboarders as well as those who do not alpine ski or snowboard.

GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE

National communication cooperative opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism. We also focus much of our efforts within the Seattle, Portland, and Chicago metro areas. Regional drive-to markets are also a target and the addition of San Francisco/Oakland as an emerging market yields additional opportunities.

SECRET SEASON

DEMOGRAPHICS

The target audiences for this time period are those who do not have kids in school. This primarily means dual- income, no-kids and those 45 and older with HH income over \$75,000.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Travelers seeking active experiences such as bicycling, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, non-motorized water

campaign, WMR has seen a 30% increase in skier visits from Illinois compared to the previous season. Illinois moved from the 23rd ranked destination market for WMR to the 8th ranked market. We believe that these types of statistics show the effectiveness of our winter marketing efforts and we plan to use this multichannel cooperative approach during FY16.

Whitefish offers a world-class ski and snowboarding experience, including unique winter events, yet destination visitation to the town is still significantly lower than the summer season. As a result, Explore Whitefish has allocated 60% of its overall consumer advertising budget to winter ski marketing efforts. These efforts also seek to focus on the winter experiences in Glacier National Park, including sightseeing, snowshoeing, and nordic skiing. The perception that Glacier National Park is closed in the winter continues to be a challenge and our increased efforts to showcase these winter experiences will hopefully help to dispel this myth.

SECRET SEASON

The objective is to begin the visitor season earlier and grow occupancy and business levels in the spring and early summer for the time period of May and June. The approach for this time period is to develop and communicate narratives for adventures, activities and specific reasons for visiting Whitefish during these time periods that cannot be experienced if Whitefish were visited during another time of year. As we continue to position Whitefish as the basecamp of Glacier National Park, the narrative will lead with spring experiences in Glacier National Park such as biking or hiking the Going-To-The-Sun Road and

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|----------|----------------------------|-----|--|---|--|--|--|-------------|---|--|
| | | | <p>sports, and horseback riding. Cultural and culinary experiences such as dining, shopping at local shops, attending performing arts, and community events are also considered primary spring activities for Whitefish. This includes traveling to Whitefish primarily for the purpose of relaxing, strolling the streets and shops and trying out great dining and nightlife options.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>Seattle and Portland, Regional Drive-To.</p> | | | | | | <p>wildlife watching. Explore Whitefish has allocated 20% of its overall consumer advertising budgets to spring and early summer marketing efforts.</p> | |
| Consumer | Online/Digital Advertising | Yes | <p>We advertise on websites in our stated target markets as well as nationally through cooperative opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism. Our consumer advertising is based around visitation in our shoulder seasons and our strategy is broken out into the following three categories: Summer Plus, Winter, and Secret Season. This method comprises 50% of our consumer advertising budget.</p> <p>SUMMER PLUS DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>The target audiences for this time period are those who do not currently have children in school, have adult children, or do not have children. This primarily means a target audience of 35 and older with HH income over \$75,000.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p>Travelers seeking active experiences such as scenic driving, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, bicycling, non-motorized water sports, horseback riding, paddling, and hiking. Cultural and culinary experiences such as dining, shopping at local shops, attending performing arts, and community events are also considered primary autumn activities for Whitefish. This includes traveling to Whitefish primarily for the purpose of relaxing, strolling the streets and shops and trying out great dining and nightlife options.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>Seattle and Portland, Regional Drive-To.</p> <p>WINTER DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>Skiers and</p> | <p>SUMMER PLUS & SECRET SEASON</p> <p>Seattle and the Puget Sound area have been historically strong markets for Whitefish. Portland is now a core market as we have increased investment in the past few years. The existence of the Amtrak train route has made this connection logical, and a seasonal direct flight on Alaska Air/Horizon has increased the possibilities of this market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of fly-in vacationers: Not all visitors are alike. The same is true of their economic impact. Research by ITRR indicates that vacationers who travel to the state via air spend more money per day and stay longer than vacationers who entered the state via automobile. • Highway vacationers: The average nonresident vacation group to Montana (2.54 people) who entered the state via highway spends an average of \$175.19 per day. With an average length of stay of 5.85 days, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$1,025. • Fly-in vacationers: The average fly-in nonresident vacation group arriving in Montana (2.84 people) spends an average of \$332.86 per day. With an average length of stay of 8.53 days, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$2,839. • Difference: \$1,814 in additional spending per fly-in statewide vacation group. <p>WINTER</p> <p>During the winter of 2014/2015, Explore Whitefish partnered with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on a multi- channel</p> | <p>SUMMER PLUS</p> <p>Occupancy history in Whitefish shows that during the period of late June through August the town is at or very near 100% capacity. From late August into early September, occupancy levels are still strong, but begin to wane. The objective is to extend the peak summer season and grow occupancy and business levels in the autumn for the time period of September to the end of October. The approach for this time period is to develop and communicate narratives for adventures, activities, fall events, and specific reasons for visiting Whitefish during this time period that cannot be experienced if Whitefish were visited during another time of year. As we continue to position Whitefish as the basecamp of Glacier National Park, the narrative will lead with fall experiences in Glacier National Park such as scenic driving, fall foliage, wildlife watching, and hiking. Explore Whitefish has allocated 20%</p> | | | \$30,325.00 | Yes | <p>Success is measured seasonally with Resort Tax Collections and Lodging Tax Collections. In addition, click-through-rates (CTR) as well as website sessions are measured against industry standards and historical performance. Specific details can be found on the attached PDF.</p> <p>FY16 Marketing Method_OnlineAdvertising.pdf</p> |

Showboard activity participants with household incomes of \$75,000 or greater. Overall, the percentage of the population that are active skiers or snowboarders is approximately 7% of the US population (SIA 2012 Participation Report). That means we are targeting a relatively small percentage of the population and can most efficiently reach this target through niche channels.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

We apply largely the same geotravel profile to the ski market. While not all skiers and snowboarders fall within the geotraveler psychographic, we find that those with experiential preferences for authentic travel are more likely

to appreciate and enjoy Whitefish and then return again in subsequent years. It is important that we acquire new, repeat customers, not simply attract one-time visitors who are not a good fit for the Whitefish experience and as a result will not likely return. The addition of marketing the aforementioned Glacier National Park winter experiences provide additional breathtaking experiences for a day off for skiers and snowboarders as well as those who do not alpine ski or snowboard.

GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE

National communication cooperative opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism. We also focus much of our efforts within the Seattle, Portland, and Chicago metro areas. Regional drive-to markets are also a target and the addition of San Francisco/Oakland as an emerging market yields additional opportunities.

SECRET SEASON

DEMOGRAPHICS

The target audiences for this time period are those who do not have kids in school. This primarily means dual- income, no-kids and those 45 and older with HH income over \$75,000.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

Travelers seeking active experiences such as bicycling, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, non-motorized water

marketing campaign (digital and out of home) in the Chicago market to promote the new winter seasonal direct flight from Chicago O'Hare to Glacier Park International Airport. As a result of this marketing campaign, WMR has seen a 30% increase in skier visits from Illinois compared to the previous season. Illinois moved from the 23rd ranked destination market for WMR to the 8th ranked market. We believe that these types of statistics show the effectiveness of our winter marketing efforts and we plan to use this multichannel cooperative approach during FY16.

of its overall consumer advertising budgets to Summer Plus marketing efforts.

WINTER

Whitefish offers a world-class ski and snowboarding experience, including unique winter events, yet destination visitation to the town is still significantly lower than the summer season. As a result, Explore Whitefish has allocated 60% of its overall consumer advertising budget to winter ski marketing efforts. These efforts also seek to focus on the winter experiences in Glacier National Park, including sightseeing, snowshoeing, and nordic skiing. The perception that Glacier National Park is closed in the winter continues to be a challenge and our increased efforts to showcase these winter experiences will hopefully help to dispel this myth.

SECRET SEASON

The objective is to begin the visitor season earlier and grow occupancy and business levels in the spring and early summer for the time period of May and June. The approach for this time period is to develop and communicate narratives for adventures, activities and specific reasons for visiting Whitefish during these time periods that cannot be experienced if Whitefish were visited during another time of year. As we continue to position Whitefish as the basecamp of Glacier National Park, the narrative

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------------|-----|--|--|---|--|------------|-----|
| | | | <p>sports, and horseback riding. Cultural and culinary experiences such as dining, shopping at local shops, attending performing arts, and community events are also considered primary spring activities for Whitefish. This includes traveling to Whitefish primarily for the purpose of relaxing, strolling the streets and shops and trying out great dining and nightlife options.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>Seattle and Portland, Regional Drive-To.</p> | <p>will lead with spring experiences in Glacier National Park such as biking or hiking the Going-To-The-Sun Road and wildlife watching. Explore Whitefish has allocated 20% of its overall consumer advertising budgets to spring and early summer marketing efforts.</p> | | | | |
| Consumer | Billboards/Out-of-Home | Yes | <p>Our consumer advertising is based around visitation in our shoulder seasons and our strategy is broken out into the following three categories: Summer Plus, Winter, and Secret Season. We explore opportunities to advertise on digital displays and billboards, particularly with cooperative partners such as Whitefish Mountain Resort in our target markets. Our main focus for out of home advertising is our winter season. Currently, this method comprises 10% of our consumer advertising budget.</p> <p>WINTER</p> <p>DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>Skiers and Snowboard activity participants with household incomes of \$75,000 or greater. Overall, the percentage of the population that are active skiers or snowboarders is approximately 7% of the US population (SIA 2012 Participation Report). That means we are targeting a relatively small percentage of the population and can most efficiently reach this target through niche channels.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p>We apply largely the same geotravel profile to the ski market. While not all skiers and snowboarders fall within the geotraveler psychographic, we find that those with experiential preferences for authentic travel are more likely to appreciate and enjoy Whitefish and then return again in subsequent years. It is important that we acquire new, repeat customers, not simply attract one-time visitors who are not a good fit for the Whitefish experience</p> | <p>WINTER</p> <p>During the winter of 2014/2015, Explore Whitefish partnered with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on a multi-channel marketing campaign (digital and out of home) in the Chicago market to promote the new winter seasonal direct flight from Chicago O'Hare to Glacier Park International Airport. As a result of this marketing campaign, WMR has seen a 30% increase in skier visits from Illinois compared to the previous season. Illinois moved from the 23rd ranked destination market for WMR to the 8th ranked market. We believe that these types of statistics show the effectiveness of our winter marketing efforts and we plan to use this multichannel cooperative approach during FY16.</p> | <p>WINTER</p> <p>Whitefish offers a world-class ski and snowboarding experience, including unique winter events, yet destination visitation to the town is still significantly lower than the summer season. As a result, Explore Whitefish has allocated 60% of its overall consumer advertising budget to winter ski marketing efforts. These efforts also seek to focus on the winter experiences in Glacier National Park, including sightseeing, snowshoeing, and nordic skiing. The perception that Glacier National Park is closed in the winter continues to be a challenge and our increased efforts to showcase these winter experiences will hopefully help to dispel this myth</p> | <p>WINTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resort Tax Collections for 4th and 1st quarters (December – April) Lodging Tax Collections for 4th and 1st quarters (December – April) Click-through-rates (CTR) above industry standard (.07%) for online advertising Increase website sessions 8-10% based upon 69,000 sessions | \$6,065.00 | Yes |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----|---|---|--|--|-------------|-----|--|
| | | | <p>and as a result will not likely return. The addition of marketing the aforementioned Glacier National Park winter experiences provide additional breathtaking experiences for a day off for skiers and snowboarders as well as those who do not alpine ski or snowboard.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>National communication cooperative opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism. We also focus much of our efforts within the Seattle, Portland, and Chicago metro areas. Regional drive-to markets are also a target and the addition of San Francisco/Oakland as an emerging market yields additional opportunities.</p> | | | | | | |
| Marketing Support | Administration | No | <p>In order for the WCVB to effectively and strategically operate, the organization has set aside a budget to support the marketing efforts of the organization. First and foremost, we require administrative support for staff and business expenses. Previously, we have used these public funds to pay for insurance, supplies, utilities, rent, and a portion of director wages.</p> | | | | \$18,000.00 | Yes | |
| Marketing Support | Opportunity Marketing | No | <p>In order for the WCVB to effectively and strategically operate, the organization has set aside a budget to support the marketing efforts of the organization. Throughout the year, new opportunities present themselves that were not specifically budgeted for. Money is therefore set aside to examine these opportunities and potentially act upon them if they are in line with our marketing strategy.</p> | | | | \$4,500.00 | Yes | |
| Marketing Support | Superhost | No | <p>In order for the WCVB to effectively and strategically operate, the organization has set aside a budget to support the marketing efforts of the organization. This includes funding for the Montana Superhost Customer Service Program.</p> | <p>The WCVB sponsors the Montana Superhost Customer Service Program each spring and offers training at no charge to frontline staff, managers, owners and engaged community members about the</p> | <p>Success for this program is measured by the number of participants at our two Superhost sessions held in May/June and December.</p> | | \$350.00 | No | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|----|---|--|---|--|--------------------|----|--|
| | | | | | <p>importance of customer service in delivering quality visitor experiences that not only satisfy customer needs, but instill a desire for repeat visitation. As we spend the majority of our budget on promoting Whitefish, it is important for us to invest in this type of training to ensure a quality on-the-ground visitor experience.</p> <p>As a designated Montana Superhost community, Whitefish receives one free session per year. Due to the popularity of the program, as well as the importance that the WCVB places on the program, we offer an additional session to the community which we pay for. Each session provides an opportunity for us to create a cooperative tourism expo event with the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce. Whitefish businesses are encouraged to set up booths following the Superhost session in order to provide information on activities and services to Superhost participants.</p> | | | | |
| Marketing Support | TAC/Governor's Conference meetings | No | The WCVB is required to attend all meetings of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) as well as the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation. As these meetings take place all over the state, we require support for travel and expenses to attend. | | | | \$1,500.00 | No | |
| | | | | | | | \$90,000.00 | | |

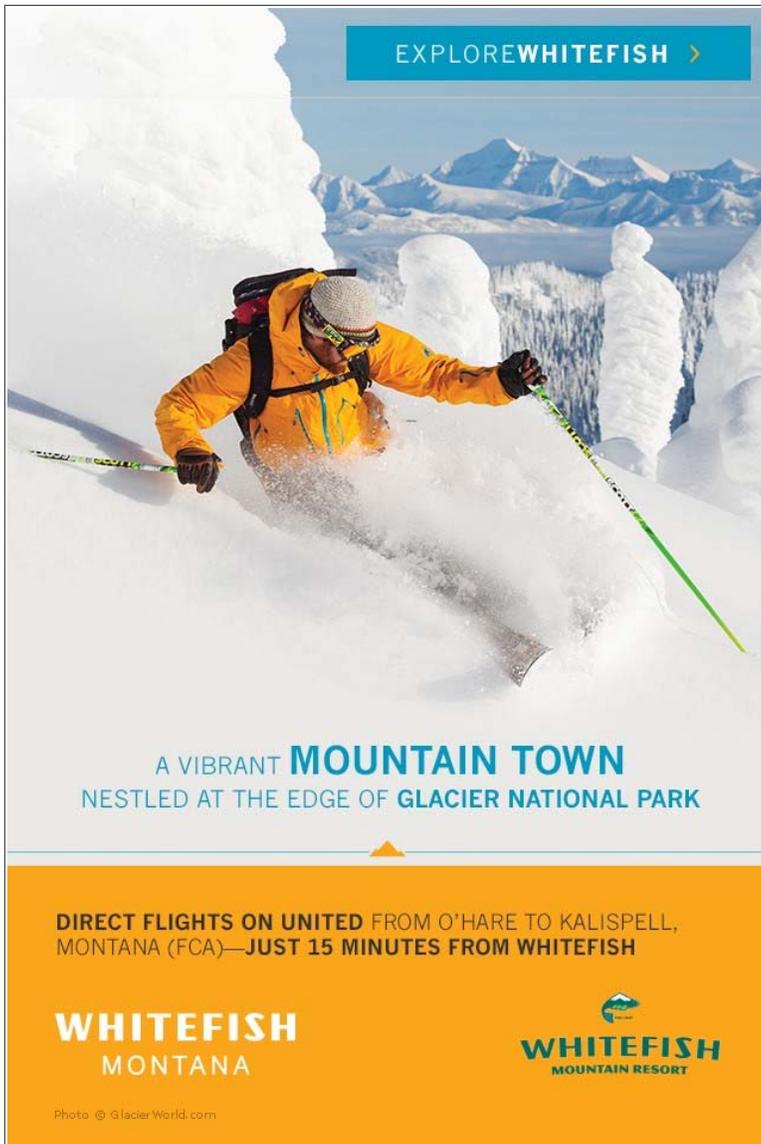
Marketing Method Budget

| Marketing Segment | Marketing Method | Bed tax funded budget | Non bed tax funded budget |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Consumer | Online/Digital Advertising | \$30,325.00 | \$43,482.00 |
| Consumer | Print Advertising | \$24,260.00 | \$21,741.00 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Consumer | Photo/Video Library | \$5,000.00 | \$13,100.00 |
| Consumer | Billboards/Out-of-Home | \$6,065.00 | \$7,247.00 |
| | | \$65,650.00 | \$85,570.00 |
| Marketing Support | Administration | \$18,000.00 | \$82,000.00 |
| Marketing Support | Opportunity Marketing | \$4,500.00 | \$1,000.00 |
| Marketing Support | Superhost | \$350.00 | \$0.00 |
| Marketing Support | TAC/Governor's Conference meetings | \$1,500.00 | \$0.00 |
| | | \$24,350.00 | \$83,000.00 |
| | | \$90,000.00 | \$168,570.00 |

Miscellaneous Attachments

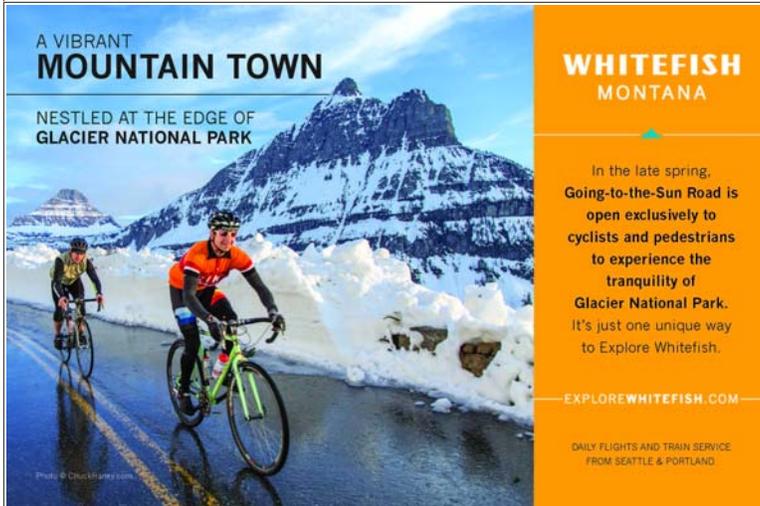
| File Name | Description | File Size |
|---|--|-----------|
| 2013FlatheadCountryNonResidentexpenditures.pdf (131 KB) | 2013 Non-Resident Expenditures for Flathead County (ITRR) | 131 KB |
| 2014 Montana Airport Deboardings.pdf (84 KB) | 2014 Total Montana Airline Deboardings by Location and Percentage (ITRR) | 84 KB |
| 2014WhitefishNonResidentTravel.pdf (45 KB) | 2014 Whitefish Non-Resident Visitors (ITRR) | 45 KB |
| Expend Profiles by travel mode 2014 draft.pdf (576 KB) | 2014 Vacationer Expenditure Profile By Travel Mode (ITRR) | 576 KB |
| Expenditures by airport 2014.pdf (94 KB) | 2014 Non-Resident Expenditures by Montana Airport (ITRR) | 94 KB |
| FY16 Marketing Plan Total Budget Breakdown.pdf (40 KB) | FY16 Marketing Plan Total Budget Breakdown | 40 KB |
| FY16 Public Budget Pie Charts.xlsx (28 KB) | FY16 Public Budget Pie Charts | 28 KB |
| Geotourism The New Trend in Travel TIA.pdf (526 KB) | Geotourism: Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) and the National Geographic Society | 526 KB |
| Whitefish Marketing Plan FY16_FINAL.pdf (797 KB) | FY16 WCVB Marketing Plan | 797 KB |



FY15 Sample Winter Creative



FY15 Sample Fall Creative



FY15 Sample Spring Creative

Reg/CVB Required Documents

| File Name | Description | File Size |
|--|--|-----------|
| Applicant's Certificate of Compliance.pdf (238 KB) | Applicant's Certificate of Compliance | 238 KB |
| Application For Lodging Tax Revenue.pdf (181 KB) | Application For Lodging Tax Revenue | 181 KB |
| Pledge Of Understanding and Compliance.pdf (169 KB) | Pledge Of Understanding and Compliance | 169 KB |
| WCVB Board of Directors Minutes 2015-03-26.pdf (89 KB) | WCVB Board of Directors Minutes 2015-03-26 | 89 KB |
| Whitefish City Council Minutes 2015-04-06.pdf (202 KB) | Whitefish City Council Minutes 2015-04-06 | 202 KB |

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