

Patty Smith, Chair  
Daniel Hennessee, Vice-Chair  
Michael Nichols, Board Member  
Cristy Buckner, Board Member  
Edward Mondich, Board Member  
Mike Ezzell, Board Member  
Kasey Crutcher, Board Member

Cassie Ham,  
Tourism Marketing Manager



**NOTICE OF MEETING  
TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD  
December 5, 2024  
4:00 PM  
City Hall Conference Room  
504 N. Queen Street  
Palestine, TX**

Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83623787680?pwd=tkA6bQAexa5VmBhizySSTM6sTemWuo.1>

Meeting ID: 836 2378 7680

Passcode: 228448

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,83623787680#,,, \*228448# US

Note: when you are joining a Zoom meeting by phone, you can use your phone's dial pad to enter the commands \*6 for toggling mute/unmute and \*9 to "raise your hand."

Follow us live at: [facebook.com/palestinetx/](https://facebook.com/palestinetx/)

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES OF AGENDA ITEMS**

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Any citizen wishing to speak during public comments regarding an item on or off the agenda may do so during this section of the agenda. All comments must be no more than five minutes in length. Any comments regarding items, not on the posted agenda may not be discussed or responded to by the Board. Members of the public may join via Zoom or in person.

**D. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

**E. MANAGER'S REPORT**

1. Review the October 2024 Tourism Monthly Report

**F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Consider approval of minutes from the November 4, 2024, meeting.

**G. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. Update on the Palestine Wayfinding Signage Project as of December 2024.

2. Discussion and possible action regarding the current strategic plan for Tourism in the City of Palestine.
3. Discussion and possible action regarding authorizing the Tourism Marketing Manager to form a committee to evaluate the current strategic plan for tourism in Palestine.

H. **ADJOURNMENT**

I certify that the above Notice of Meeting was posted on the outdoor bulletin board at the main entrance to City Hall, 504 N. Queen Street, Palestine, Texas, in compliance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code on **Monday, December 2, 2024, at 3:45 p.m.**



April Jackson, City Secretary

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) PERSONS IN NEED OF SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROCEEDING SHALL, CONTACT THE CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE VIA EMAIL AT [citysecretary@palestine-tx.org](mailto:citysecretary@palestine-tx.org) or 903-731-8414.



Agenda Date: 12/05/2024  
To: Tourism Advisory Board  
From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager  
Agenda Item: Tourism Manager's Report - October 2024  
Date Submitted: 12/01/2024

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**SUMMARY:**

Review the Tourism Manager's report for the month of October 2024.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No action is required.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

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**Attachments**

October 2024 Tourism Report



## TOURISM REPORT – OCTOBER 2024

### Hotel Occupancy Income Tax Collected/STR Reporting

	October 2024	October 2023	+/- to Last Year	Year-to-Date
Occupancy	62.1%	64.2%	-3.3%	+12.9%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$95.33	\$85.58	+11.4%	+4.6%
Revenue Per Avail. Room (RevPAR)	\$59.21	\$54.94	+7.8%	+18.1%
Revenue	\$1,299,440	\$1,205,830	+7.8%	+18.1%

\*Census includes 8 hotels, 708 rooms. (8 of 11 hotels reporting)

### Accomplishments, Activities & Successes

- Represented Palestine at the State Fair of Texas for Palestine Day, gave away a Christmas experience package, sponsored by Texas State Railroad, Redlands Hotel and Texas Jailhouse
- Held 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Hotel & Attraction meeting to discuss best practices on promotion of Palestine as a destination heading into Palestine
- 45<sup>th</sup> annual Hot Pepper Festival in Downtown Palestine

#### Marketing:

- Over 1,200 contacts made at the State Fair of Texas for Palestine's Destination Day on October 16.
- Bulk mailout for Christmas events – over 600 direct mailers sent.
- Launched AlphaMap subscription in partnership with Palestine Economic Development to obtain geo-location data for Palestine attractions and to better quantify the number of overnight stays are generated by each event/business.

#### Main Street

- Attended Texas Downtown Conference in Abilene, TX where Palestine Main Street was awarded a \$5,000 grant for improvements to the Farmer's Market Pavilion.
- Hot Pepper Festival brought approximately 6,000 visitors to downtown the day of October 26, 2024, including vendors, locals and visitors to Palestine.
- Palestine Trade Days relocated to Downtown Palestine
- Downtown Rotary Club volunteered to clean up all the alleys in Downtown Palestine

#### Visitor Center

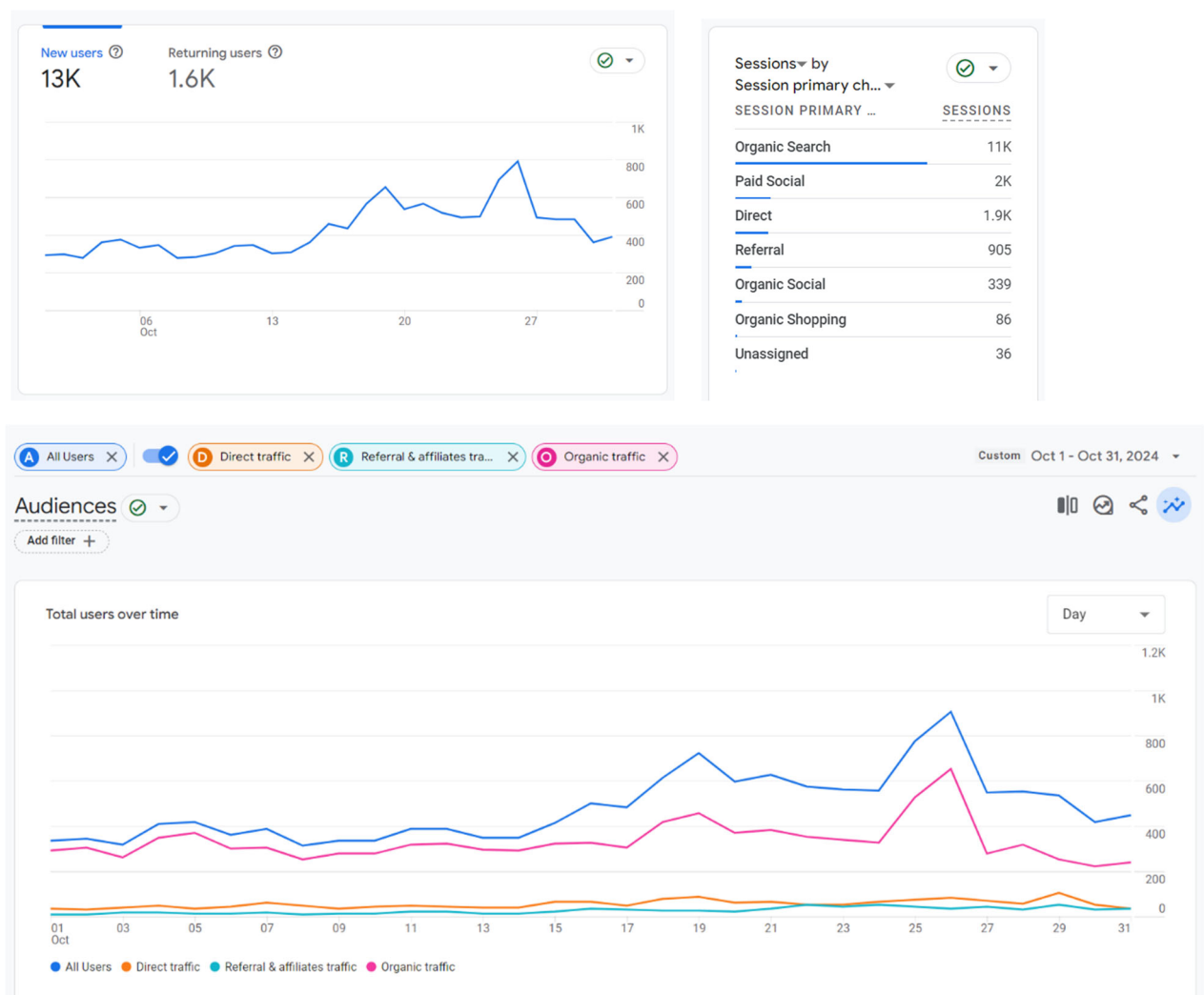
- Updated the fall foliage driving tour for visitors to Palestine to enjoy nature during this season.
- Installed new programmable Christmas lights at the Visitor Center to replace the white lights that were falling.




- Finalized the plans for Christmas decorations for the City of Palestine, in collaboration with Parks and Streets departments.
- In the month of October 2024, we had a total of 159 people physically visit the CVB. Thursday had the highest average number of visitors, closely followed by Friday. Please note: there is an error in this data, as no visitor data was captured on 10/26/24 during the Hot Pepper Festival

## Website Analytics

- Website traffic was slightly higher in October
- Organic traffic is still our highest source of traffic, with 11,000 visits to our website.
- Paid promotional material on social media resulted in 2,000 visits to our website..
- Outlier: October 26, related to the Hot Pepper Festival – with roughly 800 visitors to VisitPalestine.com on that day alone.
- Future projects: as our website traffic is highly mobile based now, we need to ensure our website is totally mobile friendly.




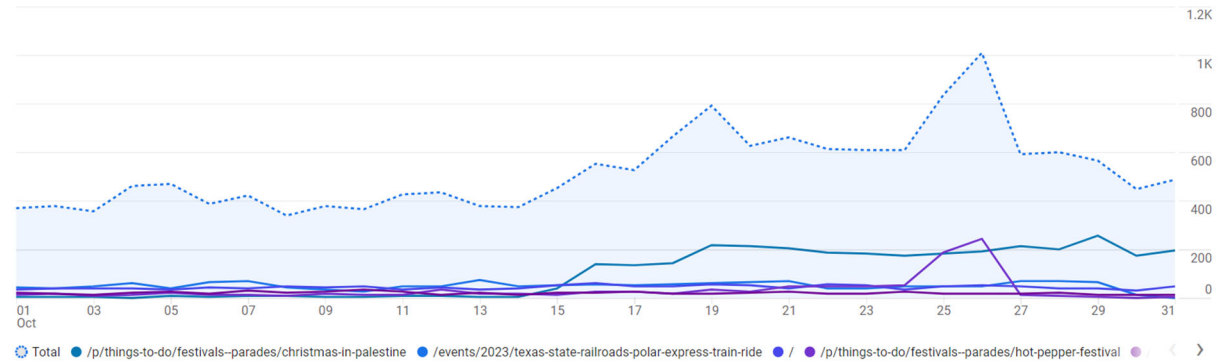
Landing page: Landing page 




Add filter +

Sessions over time

Day 



Active users by City 

CITY	ACTIVE USERS
Dallas	3.7K
Houston	995
Palestine	592
Austin	375
Fort Worth	230
San Antonio	174
Tyler	168

Active users by 

Platform / device category

PLATFORM / DEVICE CATE...	ACTIVE USERS
web / mobile	9.9K
web / desktop	3.3K
web / tablet	301
web / smart tv	2

Social Media

Visit Palestine, TX Social Media Report						
Facebook						
Month of 10/01/2024 - 10/31/2024						
TOP PERFORMING POST						
10/25/2024 -Hot Pep Festival	Reach: 22,063	Impressions: 24,582	Interactions: 226	Reactions: 101	Comments: 28	Shares: 94
		Percentages				
REACH						
Total Reach	159,409	47.70%				
Reach Breakdown						
Followers	10,120	3.00%				
Non-Followers	147,620	53.70%				
Organic	68,014	67.50%				
Ads	91,274	35.00%				
FOLLOWERS						
Total Follows	21,613					
Follows	228					
Un-Follows	51					
Net Follows	177	82.50%				
DEMOGRAPHIC						
Women		Men				
18-24	0.90%	18-24	0.50%			
25-34	8.00%	25-34	2.90%			
35-44	17.20%	35-44	4.20%			
45-54	17.70%	45-54	3.90%			
55-64	17.40%	55-64	3.30%			
65+	19.80%	65+	4.20%			

Visit Palestine, TX Social Media Report				
Instagram				
10/01/2024 - 10/31/2024				
TOP PERFORMING POST				
09/03/2024 - 4J's Promo	Reach: 959	Impressions: 977	Interactions: 48	Reactions: 32
		Percentages		
REACH				
Total Reach	2,917	0.60%		
Reach Breakdown				
Organic	2,601	8.10%		
Ads	362	249.00%		
FOLLOWERS				
Total Follows	8,041			
Follows	73			
Un-Follows	58			
Net Follows	15			
DEMOGRAPHIC				
Women		Men		
18-24	2.70%	18-24	1.70%	
25-34	16.10%	25-34	6.10%	
35-44	26.10%	35-44	8.30%	
45-54	16.80%	45-54	5.40%	
55-64	8.10%	55-64	2.80%	
65+	4.50%	65+	1.40%	
TOP CITIES		Percentage of Audience		
Palestine	12.50%			
Houston	6.20%			
San Antonio	3.60%			
Dallas	2.40%			



# 2024-2025 Campaign Summary

Oct 1, 2024 - Oct 31, 2024

## Social Summary



The benchmark for a Social campaign is a Click Through Rate of .9%, your campaign performed 119% better than benchmark. Your top DMA's by CTR were Tyler-Longivew with a CTR of 6.83%, Waco-Temple-Bryan with a CTR of 6.12% and Dallas-Fort Worth with a CTA of 5.89%.

Impressions	Main Clicks	Clicks (All)	CTR (Main Clicks)	CTR (All Clicks)	Reactions	Saves	Shares	Comments	Page Likes	Page Engagement
132,440	2,608	7,543	1.97%	5.70%	851	3	109	41	16	3,628

## Native Summary



The benchmark for a Native campaign is Time on Site at 40 seconds. Your TOS was 51 seconds which exceeded the benchmark by 28% and last year's TOS by 21%. (October 2023) Additionally Native is considered a Display ad and the benchmark for Display is a Click Through Rate of .08%. Your CTR performed 225% above the benchmark for Display.

Impressions	Clicks	CTR	2+ Site Interactions	TOS (Time on Site)
259,022	676	0.26%	722	:51s

## Total October 2024 Campaign Performance

Impressions  
391,462

Clicks (All)  
8,219

CTR (All)  
2.10%

2+ Site Interactions  
722

Page Engagements  
3,628

TOS (Time on Site)  
:51s



Oct 1, 2024 - Oct 31, 2024

Page Engagement  
3,628

The line chart displays the Click-Through Rate (CTR) for main clicks over a 16-day period. The y-axis represents the CTR percentage, ranging from 0% to 3% in 1% increments. The x-axis shows dates from October 16, 2024, to October 31, 2024, with labels every two days. The CTR starts at approximately 2.3% on Oct 16, peaks at 2.8% on Oct 19, and then generally declines with some fluctuations, ending at approximately 1.3% on Oct 31.

Date	CTR (Main Clicks)
Oct 16, 2024	2.3%
Oct 17, 2024	2.3%
Oct 18, 2024	2.7%
Oct 19, 2024	2.8%
Oct 20, 2024	2.1%
Oct 21, 2024	2.7%
Oct 22, 2024	2.5%
Oct 23, 2024	2.1%
Oct 24, 2024	2.2%
Oct 25, 2024	1.8%
Oct 26, 2024	2.1%
Oct 27, 2024	1.8%
Oct 28, 2024	1.3%
Oct 29, 2024	1.4%
Oct 30, 2024	1.8%
Oct 31, 2024	1.3%

Grand total

132,440

**7,543**

**5.70%**

Legend: Impressions (Black Bar), Main Clicks (Green Bar), CTR (Main Clicks) (Line with Circle)

Age Group	Impressions (K)	Main Clicks (K)	CTR (Main Clicks) (%)
25-34	~5	~0.1	1.38%
35-44	~11	~0.1	1.22%
45-54	~19	~0.1	1.68%
55-64	~40	~0.1	1.80%
65+	~55	~1	2.40%

Impressions Main Clicks CTR (Main Clicks)

Gender	Impressions	Main Clicks	CTR (Main Clicks)
female	~100K	~2K	2.08%
male	~30K	~1K	1.63%
unknown	~1K	~1K	1.82%





Social Creative - Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024

Oct 1, 2024 - Oct 31, 2024



Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX\_Santa  
6.71% CTR (All)

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX\_Train  
5.59% CTR (All)

**Visit Palestine, Texas**  
Sponsored · 

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.



VISITPALESTINE.COM  
**Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX**  
Plan Your Visit Today

[Learn more](#)

 Like  Comment  Share

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VISITPALESTINE.COM  
**Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX**  
Plan Your Visit Today

[Learn more](#)

 Like  Comment  Share



NATIVE PERFORMANCE

Oct 1, 2024 - Oct 31, 2024

Impressions  
259,022

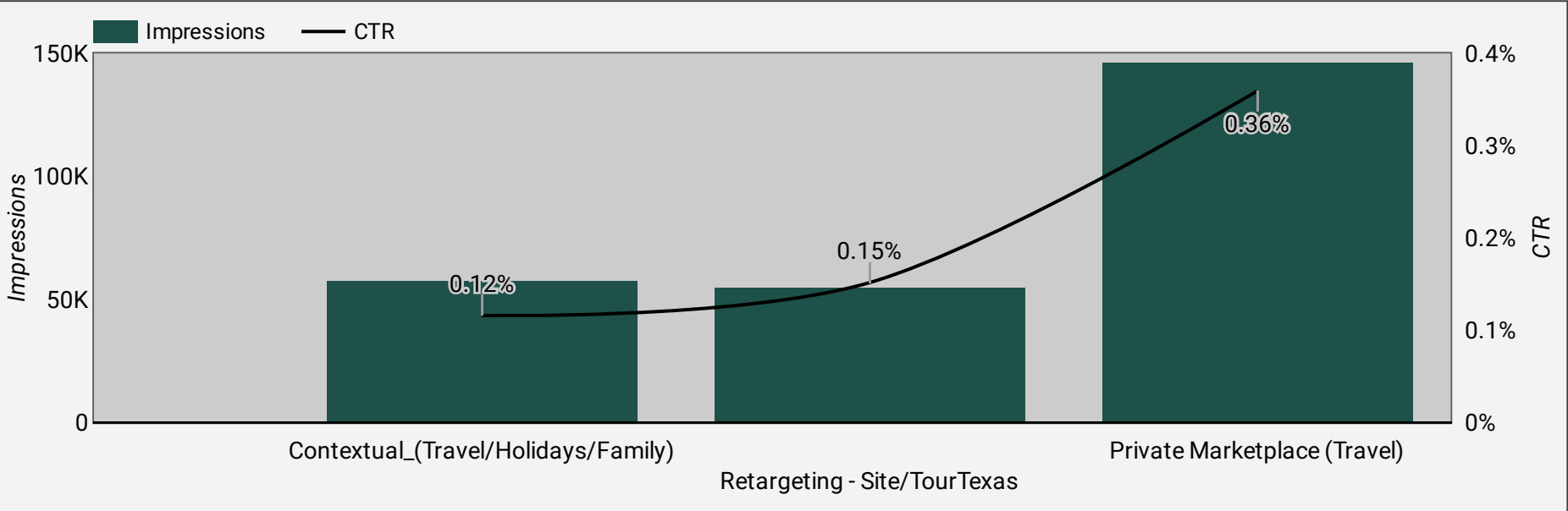
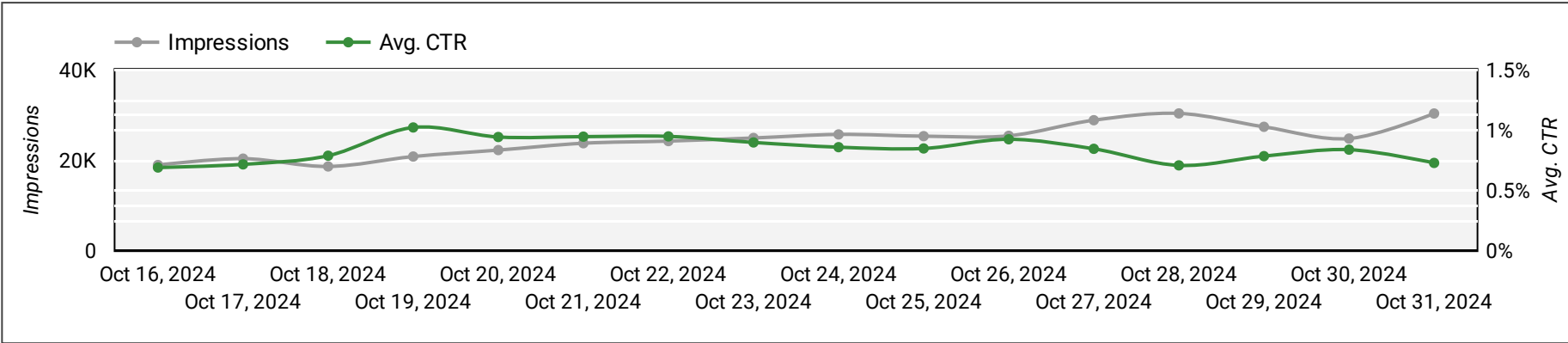
Clicks  
676

CTR  
0.26%

2+ Site Interactions  
722

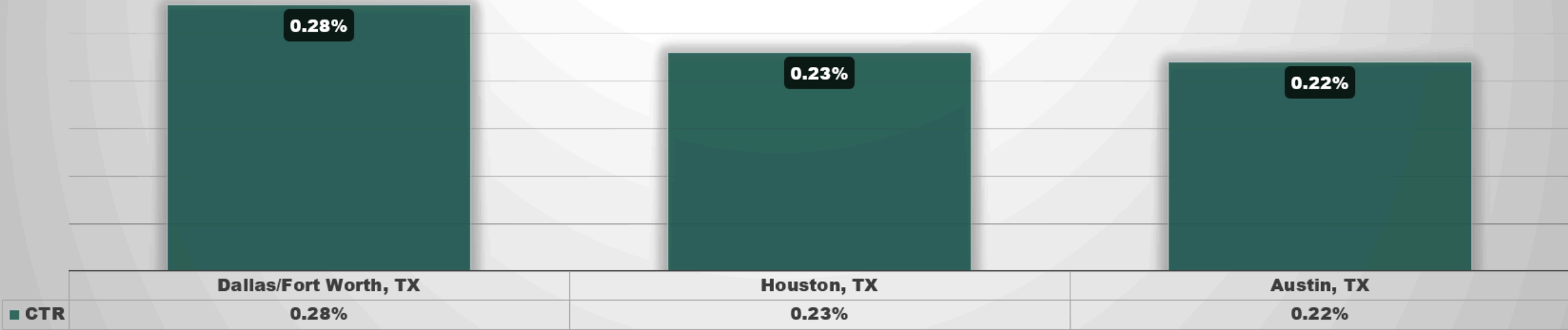
TOS (Time on Site)  
:51s

Strategy	Impressions	Clicks	CTR ▾
Private Marketplace (Travel)	146,474	526	0.36%
Retargeting - Site/TourTexas	54,792	83	0.15%
Contextual_(Travel/Holidays/Family)	57,756	67	0.12%
Grand total	259,022	676	0.26%



Campaign	Creative	Impressions	Clicks	CTR ▾
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_1200x627 _Grinch	64,268	191	0.30%
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_1200x627_Tree	86,043	236	0.27%
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_600x600_Train	70,804	193	0.27%
Palestine_Native_Oct 16-Dec 2, 2024	Visit Palestine_Native Oct-Dec 24_600x600_Santa	37,907	56	0.15%
Grand total		259,022	676	0.26%

Top DMA's by CTR





Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_ 1200x627 \_Grinch

0.30% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_ 600x600\_Santa

0.15% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_ 600x600\_Train

0.27% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Visit Palestine\_Native Oct-Dec 24\_1200x627\_Tree

0.27% CTR



Visit Palestine TX

Unwrap the Magic of Palestine, TX

Whether you're hopping a ride on the Polar Express or visiting the Grinch at the historic jailhouse, Palestine is a one-of-a-kind Christmas escape.

Native URL ▾

<https://www.visitpalestine.com/p/things-to-do/festivals--parades/christmas-in-palestine>

1 - 1 / 1 < >





Agenda Date: 12/05/2024

To: Tourism Advisory Board

From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager

Agenda Item: Approve Meeting Minutes for the November 4, 2024 meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board

Date Submitted: 12/02/2024

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**SUMMARY:**

Consider approval of the meeting minutes from the November 4, 2024 meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends approval of the item as presented.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

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**Attachments**

Tourism Advisory Board Meeting Minutes - 11-4-24

THE STATE OF TEXAS                   §  
COUNTY OF ANDERSON               §  
THE CITY OF PALESTINE             §

The Tourism Advisory Board of the City of Palestine convened in a Regular Meeting on Monday, November 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., in the City Hall Conference Room, 504 N. Queen Street, Palestine, Texas, with the following people present: Chair Patty Smith, and board members Daniel Hennessee, Kasey Crutcher, Michael Nichols, and Cristy Buckner.

Staff present: Tourism Marketing Manager Cassie Ham and City Manager's Administrative Assistant, Casey DeBord.

Not present: Board members Michael Ezzell and Edward Mondich.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

With a quorum present, Chair Patty Smith called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES OF AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

There were none.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. Tourism Marketing Manager Cassie Ham presented the Tourism Monthly Report for September 2024.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Consider approval of minutes from the September 24, 2024 meeting.

Motion by Board Member Michael Nichols to approve the minutes as presented, with an update to the approval date to November 4, 2024. The motion seconded by Board Member Daniel Hennessee.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously

## **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. Review the Mural Arts Program. No action was taken.
2. Review the “Hotel Tax Two-Step” training document. No action was taken.
3. Discussion and possible action regarding an Arts & Cultural Enhancement Project Grant through the Mural Arts Program for a mural located at 310 W. Oak Street for FY 24-25.

A motion was made by Board Member Casey Crutcher and seconded by Cristy Buckner to approve the proposal as presented.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously

4. Discussion and possible action regarding amending the meeting schedule for November and December.

A motion was made by Cristy to move the regular November 2024 meeting to December 5, 2024 at 4 pm, and cancel the regular December 2024 meeting. Daniel Hennessee seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously

5. Discussion and possible action regarding the appointment of the Tourism Advisory Board Chair and Vice-Chair.

Cristy Buckner made a motion to appoint Patty Smith as Board Chair and Daniel Hennessee as Board Vice-Chair. Daniel Hennessee seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 5 – 0 – Unanimously

## **ADJOURN**

With no other business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 5TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2024.

ATTEST:

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Patty Smith, Chair

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Cassie Ham,  
Tourism Marketing Manager



Agenda Date: 12/05/2024  
To: Tourism Advisory Board  
From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager  
Agenda Item: Update on the Palestine Wayfinding Signage Project for December 2024  
Date Submitted: 12/01/2024

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**SUMMARY:**

Hear a project status update on the Wayfinding Signage Project as of December 2024.

Project Highlights:

Phase 1 is scheduled to be completed by the end of the week 12/6/24.

There are 13 - two-post signs in phase 1, located primarily along major highways at or near intersections with the Loop.

Phase 2 will begin shortly after phase 1 is complete. It was delayed due to a material change required by TxDOT.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No action is necessary.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

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**Attachments**

December 2024 Wayfinding Update

# Wayfinding Signage Update

# December 2024 Update

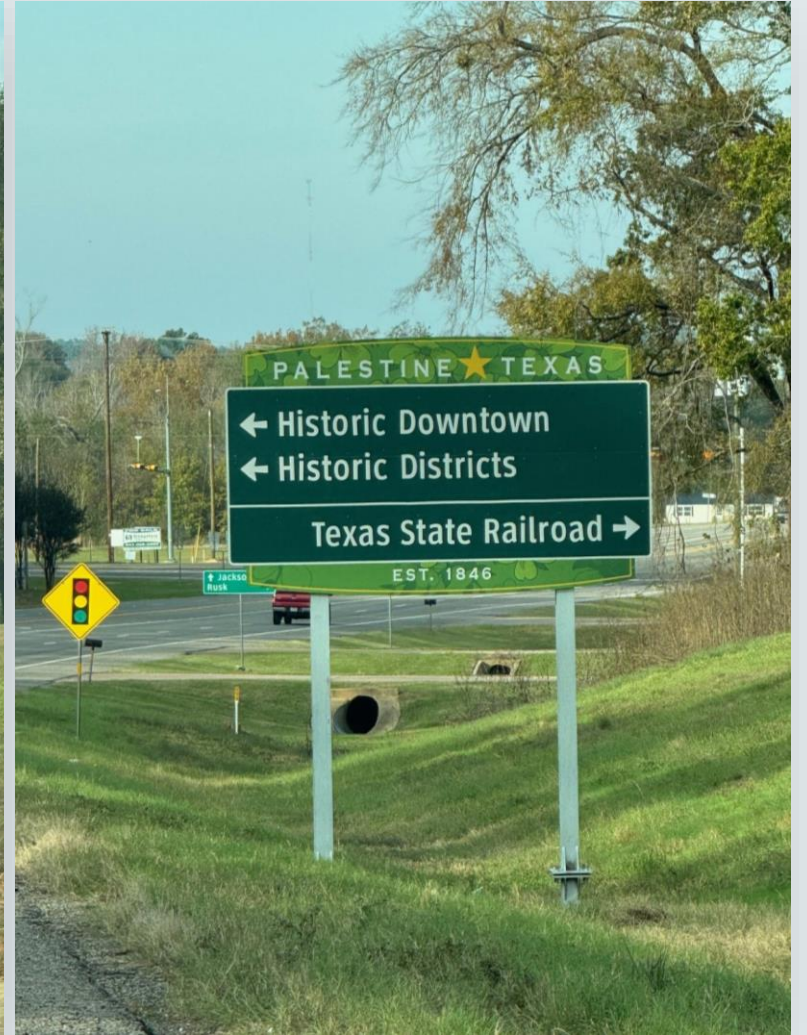
As of 11/13/24 Comet Signs has begun installing Phase 1 of our Wayfinding signage

These are the 2-post large signs that are located primarily along major highways and the loop

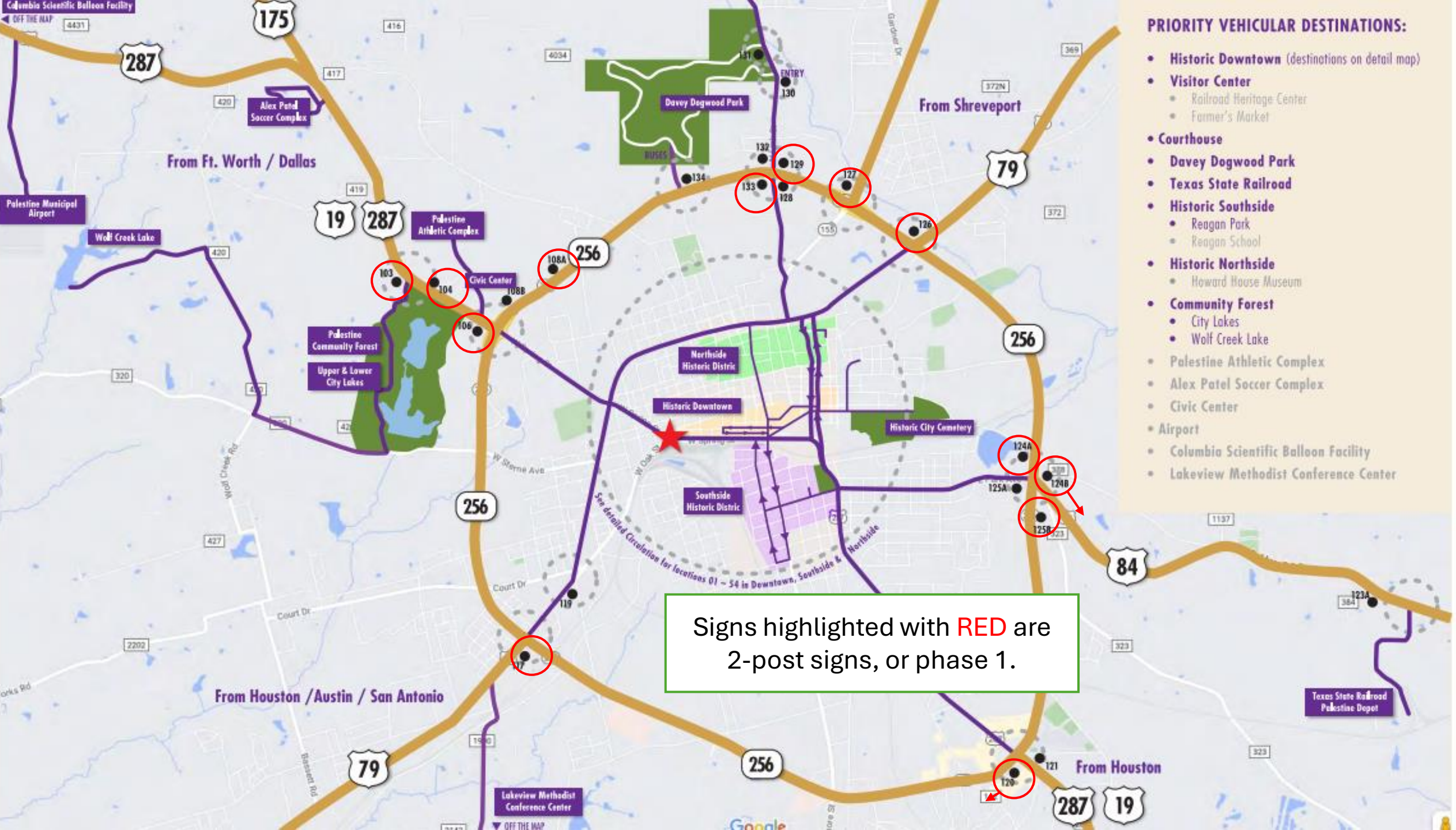
Measure roughly 12 feet wide - they are BIG!

Due to changes in TxDOT regulations on sign reflectivity, we split the package into two phases – the 2-post and the single post signs

The single-post signs are now estimated to be installed on or around the start of 2025









## PRIORITY VEHICULAR DESTINATIONS:



### Visitor Center

- 1 Railroad Heritage Center
- 2 Farmer's Market



### Historic Downtown

- 3 Chamber of Commerce
- 4 Carnegie Library
- 5 Redlands Historic Hotel
- 6 Texas Theatre
- 7 Old Town

### Courthouse

### 10 Historic City Cemetery

### 11 Mt. Vernon AME

### 12 Historic Northside

- 9 Drive/Walk Tour
- E Howard House Museum
- I Bralys Ace Hardware

### Davey Dogwood Park (off map)

### Historic Southside (off map)

- Reagan Park
- Reagan School

### Texas State Railroad (off map)

OFF THE MAP

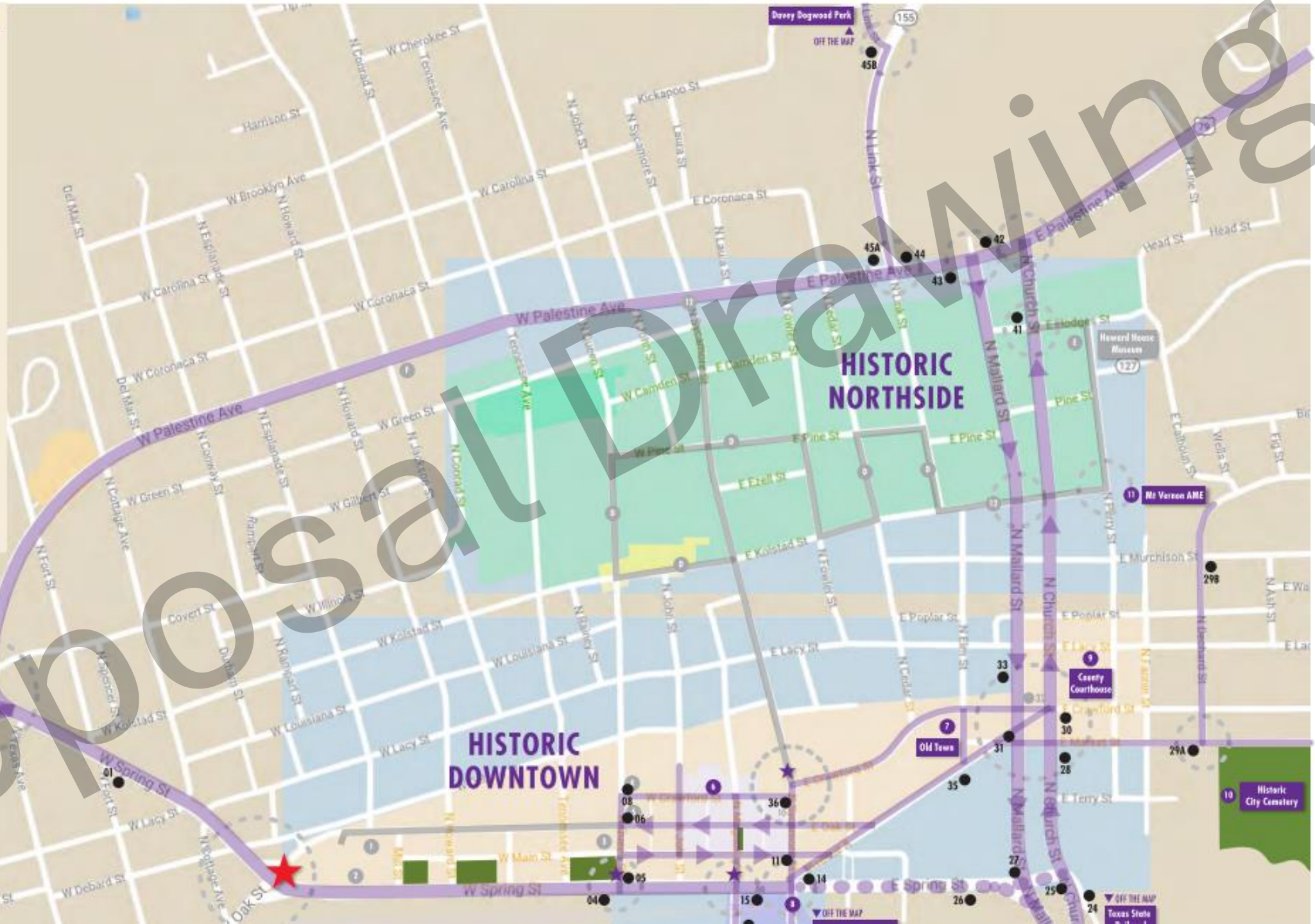
Civic Center

Community Forest  
& City Lake

Sports  
Complexes

Airport

Proposal







**PRIORITY VEHICULAR DESTINATIONS:**

- ★ **Visitor Center**
  - 1 Railroad Heritage Center
  - 2 Farmer's Market
- ★ **Historic Downtown**
  - 3 Chamber of Commerce
  - 4 Carnegie Library
  - 5 Redlands Historic Hotel
  - 6 Texas Theatre
  - 7 Old Town
- 8 **Historic Southside**
  - A Drive/Walk Tour
  - B Reagan Park
  - C Reagan School
- 9 **Courthouse**
- 10 **Historic City Cemetery**
  - Historic Northside (off map)
    - Howard House Museum
  - Davey Dogwood Park (off map)
  - Texas State Railroad (off map)



# Sign Sample

The single post signs will all be similar to this.

There will be variations of

- Panel size
- Decorative bases
- “Toppers”

ETA January 2025.



# Project History & Highlights

Wayfinding project began in 2018 to guide visitors through the City of Palestine to major landmarks and attractions.

Total expenditures so far: \$367,285 with approximately \$264k remaining.

These signs are primarily paid for with Hotel Occupancy Tax funds, which are restricted, by law.

Signs are being manufactured in Texas, by a company based in Austin.

# Questions?

Cassie Ham

Tourism Marketing Manager

Visitor Center: 903-723-3014

Direct: 903-723-3053



Agenda Date: 12/05/2024  
To: Tourism Advisory Board  
From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager  
Agenda Item: Review the current Strategic Plan for tourism in Palestine  
Date Submitted: 12/01/2024

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**SUMMARY:**

Review the current strategic plan for Tourism in the City of Palestine, which was established in 2020. The current plan is dated 2020-2025, so now is the perfect time to evaluate the status of projects proposed in the plan, and their relevance for the City of Palestine moving into the future.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

No action is necessary.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

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**Attachments**

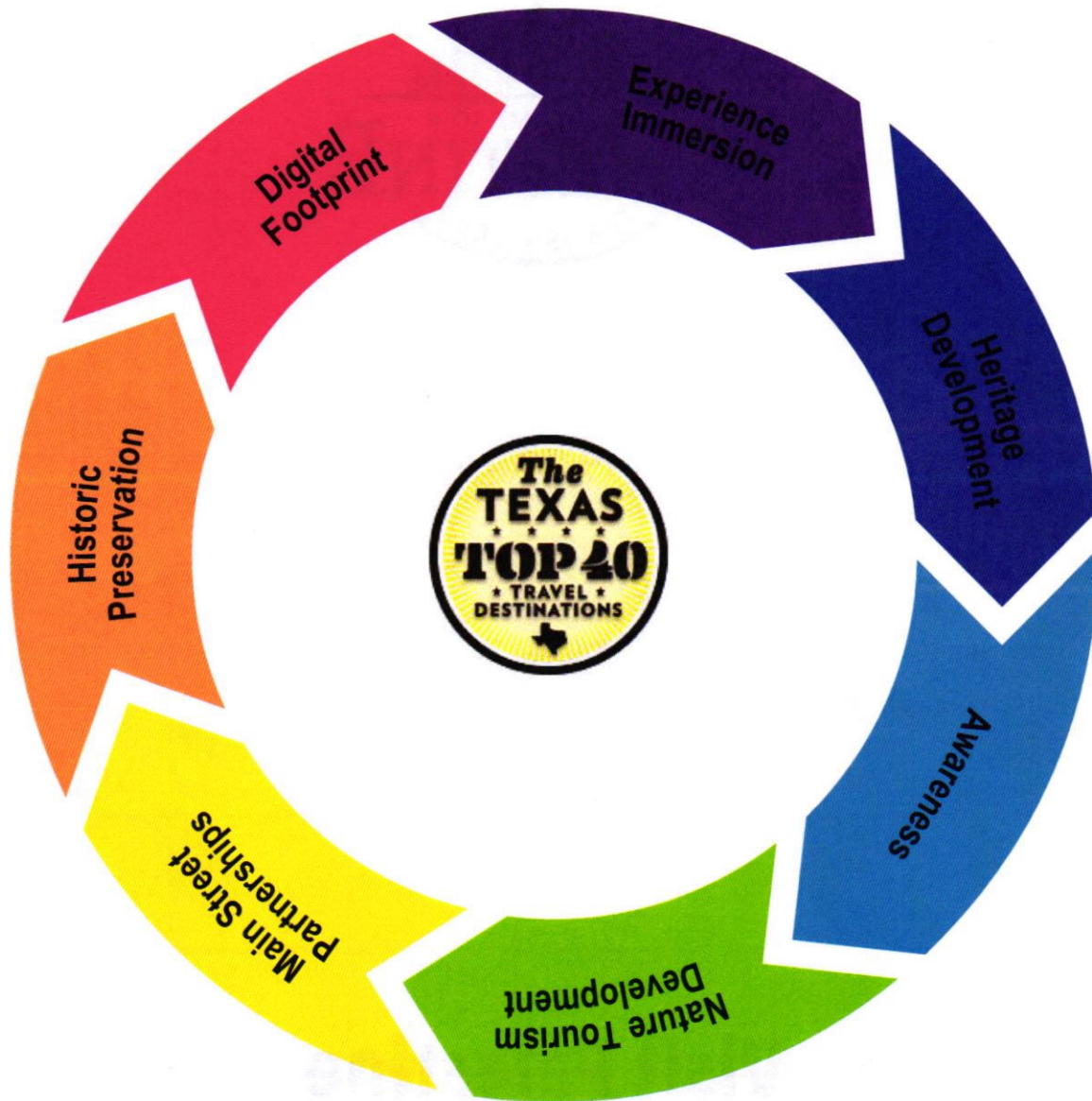
2020-2025 Visit Palestine Strategic Plan



# **Visit Palestine 2020-2025 Strategic Plan**



# Visit Palestine 2020-2025 Strategic Plan





## GOAL 1

### Experience Immersion

- a. Texas State Railroad – Support efforts to enhance the static displays at the Palestine depot, expansion of special events and activities onsite
- b. NASA – Establish a point of contact with NASA to develop an enhanced customer experience
  - i. Gauge interest with them to partner with Visit Palestine
  - ii. Develop agreement and strategies to collaborate
  - iii. Develop document showcasing why this asset merits visitation
- c. Embrace technology for walking and driving tours
  - i. Upgrade the digital platform for augmented reality and enhanced experiences
  - ii. Upload existing tours with visuals and audio
  - iii. Content development
- d. Specialty Tours – Partner with locals to develop tours of existing sites that have marketable content
  - i. Ghost/Jailhouse
- e. Create alternative options for guests to be able to easily social distance and create their own experience for a, b & d.

#### **2019 – 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

- Upgraded Visit Widget to enable Visit Palestine to utilize push notifications & proximity messaging.
- Converted and uploaded 4 tours to the app/digital platform
- Successfully launched the 2nd annual Fairy Garden Project in Davey Dogwood Park

#### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

- Create/upload 4 new tours/challenges to the digital platform
- Create social distancing options for 3 items in Goal 1

#### **Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2025)**

- Partner with NASA to host at least 2 guided tours per week by 2025
- Develop at least 10 walking/driving tour uploads by 2025
- Expand events/activities at the Texas State Railroad by 2025

## GOAL 2

### Heritage Development

- a. Develop a resource library of sound clips, vocal narratives, photos and videos
- b. Secure designation as Dogwood Capital of Texas
- c. Establish 6 destinations to develop living history displays
  - i. Sites to consider include Reagan High School, Texas Jailhouse, Courthouse, Eilenberger Bakery, Nickle Manor, Texas State Railroad
- d. Develop tours
  - i. Trolley Tours – ticketed tours sold by Visit Palestine or other organizations
  - ii. Establish guided group tours available for download or as a service to hop onboard
  - iii. Create challenges/scavenger hunts to encourage social distance activity options including murals, sculptures, historic sites, architecture, etc.
- e. Create alternative options for visitors to be able to access information while social distancing
- f. Educate the community on local history through social media outlets

#### **2019 – 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

- Designed new 82nd annual Dogwood Trails Celebration Guide
- Resource library created for historical photos/videos
- Developed Railroad History Tour
- Updated historic driving tours and digitized in app
- Submitted letters of intent to legislators with our intent to seek the designation as the Dogwood Capital of Texas

#### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

- Establish a filing system and begin labeling and documenting files on hand
- Obtain the designation of Dogwood Capital of Texas
- Launch 3-5 challenges/scavenger hunts to encourage social distancing activities
- Research and establish 1 living history event in conjunction with an existing event or festival
- Create print ready booklet for the History of Palestine
- Digitize and publish the African American Heritage information originally published in 1997

### **Years Two - Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2025)**

- Continue to develop and add content to the resource library
- Develop a calendar of living history events throughout the year by 2025
- Create sustainable Trolley Tours per year by 2025

## **GOAL 3**

### **Awareness**

- a. Wayfinding signage
  - i. Create cohesive signage throughout the City
  - ii. Develop maps and signage for recreational opportunities at our lakes and parks
  - iii. Identify Main Street districts through distinctive signage including street signs, light pole banners, murals and pedestrian kiosks.
  - iv. Implement historic district boundaries and street signs
  - v. Develop a design plan for large identification signage for attractions and city own properties
- b. Explore cooperative advertising opportunities with partners
- c. Provide Texas Friendly Hospitality Training workshop every 2 years
- d. Partner with local attractions to develop residential FAM tours
- e. Explore volunteer managed booths at area events
- f. Attend select trade/industry shows

### **2019 - 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020)**

- Hosted stakeholder meetings and survey to get wide ranging community support and ideas
- Attended 4 trade/industry shows (and countless webinars)
- HGTV Hometown Takeover video submission

### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021)**

- Identify key locations for pedestrian kiosks in high traffic walkable areas throughout the City
- Complete design plan for Trailblazing, proximity & pedestrian signage



- Host a Texas Friendly Hospitality workshop
- Partner with attractions for their zip code captures and customer profiles
- Attend 2 trade/industry shows

#### **Years Two - Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2025)**

- Complete the Wayfinding Signage Plan implementation by 2025
- Host a Texas Friendly Hospitality every two years (2023 & 2025)
- Develop resident FAM tours with partners
- Host volunteer-managed booths at area events
- Attended trade/industry shows

### **GOAL 4**

#### **Nature Tourism Development**

- a. Partner with TPWD and the City of Palestine to assess potential tourism opportunities
  - i. Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area
  - ii. Steven Bennett Park – add trails and signage (pending council decision of the future of the space)
  - iii. ID Fairchild State Park
  - iv. Palestine Community Forest – kayaking, canoeing, paddling trails, camping, hiking/biking trails & swimming
- b. Develop seasonal driving trails
- c. Solicit & cultivate relationships to develop Fall Foliage Bus Tours and Birding Tours
- d. Become a member of the Texas Paddling Trails
- e. Define digital footprint for this guest

#### **2019 - 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020)**

- Received designation for 2 sites to be added to the Texas Paddling Trails program
- Developed seasonal driving trail maps for the north/south routes, Davey Dogwood Park and historic homes.

### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

- Implement signage in parks/lakes/forest
- Partner with TPWD to develop a plan to promote sites
- Add 2 more hiking/biking trails to Davey Dogwood Park
- Clean up Community Forest Trails for public use

### **Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2025)**

- Collaborate with partners to access new potential tourism opportunities
- Offered kayak/canoe rental service through outside partnerships
- Allow overnight tent camping with registration at Upper/Lower City Lakes
- Develop at least 4 Dogwood and seasonal nature trails by 2025

## **GOAL 5**

### **Main Street Partnerships**

- a. Enhance the entertainment options with additional content and facility improvements
- b. Create Instagram-able moments
  - i. Murals – Establish a mural policy and
  - ii. Standing pucks/ selfie stations
  - iii. Sculptures
  - iv. UGC – utilize user generated content on social media
- c. Review and update ordinance
  - i. Explore ordinance options regarding street paint
  - ii. Partner with Code Enforcement to develop a plan of action to document and enforce code violations
- d. Create a list of Wi-Fi hot spots and promote visitation at those places
- e. Support Main Street in the process to secure a Cultural Arts District Designation
- f. Partner with influencers to generate IRL (in real life) content
- g. Work to create a strong line of communication to enhance community engagement in Main Street.

### **2019 – 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

- Created tags on visitpalestine.com with Wi-Fi hotspot destinations
- Enhance entertainment options by partnering with facilities
- Partner with 1 influencer to feature Main Street destinations
- Utilize social media and in person meetings to continue to cultivate community engagement
- Built Mural Art Policy and Program for the City of Palestine for review

### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

- Host a photo walk with amateur and professional photographers
- Begin to review and educate property owners on the Main Street ordinances
- Maintain the sculpture program throughout the district
- Partner with property owners to provide canvases for murals
- Complete pedestrian signage plan in the Main Street district for implementation the following year

### **Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2025)**

- Become a designated Cultural Arts District by 2025

## **GOAL 6**

### **Historic Preservation**

- a. Partner with Historic Landmark Committee, Historic Preservation Officer and Main Street Manager
- b. Reagan High School
  - i. Emergency stabilization of the porticos
  - ii. HVAC to climate control the entire facility
  - iii. Building accessibility
  - iv. Exhibit interpretation/ lighting/preservation of artifacts/marketing materials
- c. Encourage spaces with historical significance to apply for grants
  - i. Multi grant opportunities between HOT and Main Street
- d. Howard House Museum

- i. Exterior repairs to façade
- ii. Establish a contract with the managing organization
- iii. Facility open to the general public with a minimum number of days per month to be established by City leadership
- e. Federal Building
  - i. Explore preservation and use opportunities

#### **2019 – 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

- Revised contract to complete the Emergency stabilization to the porticos at Reagan High School (pending approval from leadership)
- Begin a dialogue with Friends of the Howard House to discuss goals for the City owned space and develop a plan of action for the maintenance and repairs needed.
- Designated Official Best of Texas – Historic Destination – hosted videographer for feature footage for tv air in 2020

#### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

- Complete Emergency Stabilization Study for the Reagan High School and seek resources to facilitate repairs
- Partner with 2 historic sites to consider applying for grant funds through PEDC, HOT and Main Street
- Continue to partner with the Friends of the Howard House to maintain public viewing hours during peak weekends and events.
- Partner with Anderson County to discuss potential opportunities for the Federal Building

#### **Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2025)**

- Complete Emergency Stabilization repairs needed to the Reagan High School
- Partner with 3 historic sites to consider applying for grant funds through PEDC, HOT and Main Street
- Develop a plan with Anderson County for utilization and preservation of the Federal Building



## GOAL 7

### Digital Footprint

- a. Continue SEO optimization review
- b. Add recommendations to all attractions
- c. Build and refine destination pages
- d. Create detailed visitor personas
- e. Batch schedule our social media 4x per week
- f. Utilize and build on Vlog, Blog and Pinterest

#### **2019 – 2020 Accomplishments (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020)**

- Added “You may also like...” links on each attraction and business page to other destinations that the visitor may find interesting
- Created Google Tags Manager account and applied to every page on VisitPalestine.com for tracking the effectiveness of our digital advertising campaigns
- Worked to build a baseline for SEO and Google Analytics using tools including OneSignal, Spyfu & Moz

#### **Year One Short-Term Goals (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)**

- Complete 5 detailed visitor personas
- Batch social media posts per a weekly schedule maximizing organic publishing tools
- Utilize social media outlets
- Facebook: Post strategically engaging content based on carefully reviewed engagement statistics
- Instagram: Build out page to its full capacity, create stories for highlights, actively seek out follower engagement
- Pinterest: Tie-in blog posts and flood our page with clickable content to enhance our searchable presence online

#### **Years Two – Five Long-Term Goals (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2025)**

- Analyze two year history to determine if we increased our SEO for VisitPalestine.com
- Continue to develop and refine destination pages





Agenda Date: 12/05/2024

To: Tourism Advisory Board

From: Cassie Ham, Tourism Marketing Manager

Agenda Item: Consider authorizing Tourism Manager to form a committee to update the current strategic plan for Tourism in Palestine

Date Submitted: 12/01/2024

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**SUMMARY:**

Discussion and possible action regarding authorizing Tourism Manager to form a committee to evaluate the current strategic plan for tourism in Palestine. The committee will consist of no more than 2 board members and at least 3 community stakeholders. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan was developed by Opportunity Strategies. If it is determined that the committee needs to obtain assistance from a consultant, that request will be brought back to the board at a future meeting.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Consider authorizing Tourism Manager to form a 2025-2030 Strategic Planning Committee for Tourism in Palestine.

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

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