



## Grant Details

### 95522 - FY21 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

#### 101303 - FY21 Whitefish CVB Marketing Plan

#### DOC Office of Tourism

**Grant Title:** FY21 Whitefish CVB Marketing Plan  
**Grant Number:** 21-51-028  
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#### Comments

#### Amendment Comments

## Community & Brand Support

*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?*

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. We recognize the strain that increased summer visitation places upon our town. As such, Explore Whitefish supports business strategies that emphasize economic and social benefits to our community while maintaining the integrity of place and quality of life of local residents. Our mission is to build a high level of awareness and intent to travel by developing support for Whitefish as a premier year-round mountain town. This includes increasing the occupancy for lodging facilities in Whitefish during lower occupancy times of the year. 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.

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 UNESCO World Heritage Site. The majority of our visitors come during the summer months of late June, July, August and early September. This seasonality presents problems for the many small businesses dependent upon non-resident travelers. As a result, we spend a large majority of our marketing budget on promoting the winter and shoulder seasons. The influx of 3 million Glacier National Park visitors annually allows Whitefish to offer excellent dining, expansive lodging options, and exceptional recreational opportunities. Having a viable, robust downtown is very attractive to our visitors. We are also home to Whitefish Mountain Resort, offering 3,000 acres of great skiing, abundant snow and incredible views of Glacier National Park as well as world class mountain biking in the summer months.

Whitefish aligns perfectly with the Montana Brand pillars:

- 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

We utilize the Montana Brand pillars in unison to create a cohesive and encompassing message. In our ads and collateral, we serve up beautiful high resolution photos of the scenic beauty and 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. Exhilaration by day and comfort by night truly defines us.

Whitefish Mountain Resort is our most important marketing partner. In summer, if the town does well, the ski resort gets the lodging overflow. In winter, if the ski resort does well, the town benefits. The addition of enhanced on-mountain activities at the resort has increased their summer and early fall offerings and has also resulted in international recognition as a mountain biking destination.

## STRENGTHS

- Whitefish aligns perfectly with the three Montana Brand pillars
  - 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 — National travel forecasts have predicted an increase in travelers expressing an interest in visiting sites managed by the National Park Service. 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. According to the National Park Service, visitors to Glacier National Park spent an estimated \$344 million in local gateway communities during 2018 (+25%). An estimated \$141 million of those dollars were spent on lodging, comprising the highest percentage of expenditure at 41% of the total expenditures. Visitors spent an estimated \$54.4 million on restaurants, comprising the second highest percentage of expenditures at 16% of the total expenditures. Visitation to Glacier National Park continues to be very strong with approximately 3 million visitors in 2019. This is a 4% increase from 2018, and is the second busiest year on record. Increased visitation provides us with the opportunity to highlight the many visitor experiences available outside of Glacier National Park, particularly in Whitefish.
- Downtown Whitefish and the alluring character of the town’s built environment — 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 Golf Club, 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 and Glacier National Park are fewer than those provided at competitor destinations.
- 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.
- Limited Access To And Traffic Issues On The Going-to-the-Sun Road — The Whitefish summer tourism season is directly tied to the opening and closing dates for automobiles on the alpine section of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park.
- Uncertain Weather — During some years, low snow levels in the winter hamper winter visitation and spending while summer fire seasons affect willingness for visitors to travel in summer and fall.
- Market Perception — Research performed by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development 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, deboardings at Glacier Park International Airport (351,719 in 2019) accounted for 15% of the total deboardings in the state, trailing Missoula (19%), Billings (19%), and Bozeman (33% - See Appendix). Deboardings at Glacier Park International Airport have been rapidly increasing, with 2019 deboardings showing a 15% increase from 2018, indicating that Glacier Park International Airport is one of the fastest growing airports in the state. Also, the work of Glacier AERO on new and expanded air service continues to yield increases in seat capacity year over year.
- Gasoline Prices — The fluctuation of gas prices affects willingness to travel to Whitefish in two ways. Lower gas prices have the ability to spur domestic travel as the cost of driving or flying becomes less expensive. Conversely, the Canadian dollar is a commodity based currency and the exchange rate can fluctuate based upon higher or lower gas prices. As a major producer of oil, lower gas prices often mean a less advantageous exchange rate for Alberta visitors.
- International Travel — The strength of the U.S. dollar in addition to the uncertain climate related to international travel to the U.S. has the

potential to result in a decrease of international travelers.

- o COVID-19 — Due to the fluid nature of the current situation, it is very difficult to predict how long it will be until it is safe to travel again and when visitors will return to Whitefish in historic levels.

## **ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES RELATED TO COVID-19**

During the final stages of approval of the Explore Whitefish FY21 Marketing Plan, the first effects of COVID-19 began to surface. Although the full impact of this global pandemic is yet to be determined, we are planning for both short and long term impacts to the tourism industry. In the short term, we have constructed messaging around safety and empathy for our local community in partnership with the City of Whitefish, while letting visitors know that now is not the time to travel to Whitefish. However, when the time is right, we will be ready to welcome travelers again. In the meantime, we are working to maintain top-of-mind brand awareness through our website, consumer newsletter, and social media channels, with the goal of providing inspiration for future trips to Whitefish.

While the strategies outlined in the Explore Whitefish FY21 Marketing Plan are based on conditions prior to COVID-19, Explore Whitefish has the ability and expertise to adjust to this new fluid situation while executing on our strategies. New variables include, but are not limited to, state and local travel restrictions, community and traveler sentiment, and fluctuations in revenue over the next year. Furthermore, we will continue to use our success measurements and indicators defined in the Explore Whitefish FY21 Marketing Plan to measure our effectiveness as travel and tourism trends (economic, environmental, social) are continuously shaping the industry.

With that said, the FY21 Public Bed Tax Budget, which supports this marketing plan along with the FY21 Private Budget, have both been decreased from their original projected revenues.

### **Describe your destination.**

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. 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**

a. *Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psychographic).*

## **KEY MARKETS FOR WHITEFISH, MONTANA**

Our potential visitors are targeted by geographic location, demographic characteristics, and values that distinguish our overall potential visitor as a “high potential visitor” (as defined by research conducted by Destination Analysts) and our niche 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 potential visitors defined by MOTBD along with the core geographic markets for Whitefish.

## **HIGH POTENTIAL VISITORS FOR MONTANA**

Recently, the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) engaged in a destination brand research study with Destination Analysts in which the characteristics of the most desirable visitors to Montana were defined. The “High Potential Visitor” profile aligns with the demographics and psychographics of the geotraveler that Explore Whitefish has been marketing to and has had significant success.

## **MONTANA'S HIGH POTENTIAL VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS**

*Source: Destination Analysts, Montana Destination Brand Research, 2016*

- o 60% have HHI (Household Income) above \$80,000
- o 54% Male, 46% Female

- o 68% have college degrees or above
- o Average age: 36.4 years old
- o Expected Days Spent in Montana: 8.1
- o Expected Total Expenditures in Montana: \$1,887
- o Frequent travelers who live in urban areas yet are outdoor-oriented travelers and heavy consumers of recreational activities

### **WHITEFISH NICHE VISITOR: 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 Geotravelers," 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- geotravelers. A 2016 ITRR Study, "The Importance of Traveler Spending on Locally Produced Goods & Services," further examined geotraveler spending. The results of this study showed that visitor groups who purchased "Made in Montana " products, items from local farmers' markets, and who used local guides and outfitters spent \$184.76 more per stay than visitors who did not purchase these products and services.

Geotravelers are low impact, high value 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, especially during the shoulder seasons.

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.

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

### **NON-RESIDENT WHITEFISH VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS**

Source: 2019 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study

- o 95% visited Glacier National Park
- o 43% traveled as a pair (2 persons)
- o Average group size was 2.25
- o 67% have HHI (Household Income) above \$75,000
- o 51% Male, 49% Female
- o 29% were first time visitors (up from 17% in 2018)
- o 72% plan to return within 2 years
- o Average age of visitor was 57 years old
- o Average length of stay in Montana was 6.06 nights (down from 6.42 nights in 2018)

### **NON-RESIDENT WHITEFISH VISITOR AGE GROUPS REPRESENTED**

Source: 2019 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study. The total response percentage exceeds 100% because the question allowed for multiple choices thus the total number of answer choices selected were greater than the number of respondents

- o 27% Under 18 years old (23% in 2018)
- o 7% 18-24 years old (2% in 2018)
- o 27% 25-34 years old (16% in 2018)

- o 19% 35-44 years old (15% in 2018)
- o 17% 45-54 years old (16% in 2018)
- o 35% 55-64 years old (41% in 2018)
- o 27% 65-74 years old (40% in 2018)
- o 8% 75 and older (5% in 2018)

#### **TOP FIVE NON-RESIDENT VISITORS TO WHITEFISH ACTIVITIES WHILE IN MONTANA**

*Source: 2019 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study*

- o 60% Scenic driving
- o 56% Day hiking
- o 39% Nature photography
- o 38% Wildlife watching
- o 35% Visit local brewery
- o 34% Recreational shopping

#### **WHERE NON-RESIDENT VISITORS TO WHITEFISH PRIMARILY COME FROM**

*Source: 2019 ITRR Non-Resident Visitor Study*

- o 9% Minnesota (3% in 2018)
- o 8% Alberta (9% in 2018)
- o 7% Idaho (4% in 2018)
- o 6% Texas (2% in 2018)
- o 6% California (6% in 2018)
- o 6% Arizona (2% in 2018)
- o 58% Everywhere else in the U.S. and the world (without any regular pattern)

#### **WHITEFISH 2019 NON-RESIDENT DOMESTIC VISITOR EXPENDITURES: \$32.3 Million**

*Source: VisaVue and other sources*

- o 17% California (16% in 2018)
- o 14% Washington (13% in 2018)
- o 8% Texas (6% in 2018)
- o 5% Colorado (4% in 2018)
- o 5% Oregon (4% in 2018)

#### **WHITEFISH 2019 NON-RESIDENT INTERNATIONAL VISITOR EXPENDITURES: \$7.7 Million**

*Source: VisaVue and other sources*

- o 92% Canada (92% in 2018)
- o 2% United Kingdom (2% in 2018)
- o 2% Australia (2% in 2018)
- o 0.6% Germany (1% in 2018)
- o 0.5% France (0.5% in 2018)

*b. What are your emerging markets?*

#### **CORE GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS FOR FOCUS**

Explore Whitefish will focus its attention during this fiscal period on low impact, high value 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 and Business Development. In these instances, Explore Whitefish may extend its efforts beyond these core focus markets.

- Seattle, Washington (Puget Sound Area) – Seattle and the Puget Sound area have been historically strong markets for Whitefish. The existence of the Amtrak train route has made this connection logical, as well as daily direct flights. Explore Whitefish invests in print, digital, and out of home campaigns in this market as well as actively cooperating with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on multi-channel marketing campaigns. During 2019, approximately 3% of visitors surveyed who spent at least one night in Whitefish originated in the state of Washington.
- Portland, Oregon – The existence of the Amtrak train route has made this connection logical, as well as seasonal direct flights and short connecting flights the rest of the year. Explore Whitefish invests in print, digital, and out of home campaigns in this market as well as actively cooperating with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on multi-channel marketing campaigns. During 2019, approximately 4% of visitors surveyed who spent at least one night in Whitefish originated in the state of Oregon.
- Chicagoland (Chicago core and northern suburbs to Madison, Wisconsin) – During FY19, Explore Whitefish engaged in its fifth consecutive comprehensive cooperative marketing campaign with Whitefish Mountain Resort in the Chicago market with many years of assistance of MOTBD. There is currently a weekly winter seasonal direct flight from Chicago O'Hare (ORD) to Glacier Park International Airport (GPIA). Daily direct flights are also available during the holiday season. A significant expansion of seats for warm season service have also been added in recent years as well as multiple carriers now flying this route daily direct seasonally. During 2019, approximately 4% of visitors surveyed who spent at least one night in Whitefish originated in the state of Illinois.
- Minneapolis, Minnesota – This has been a historically strong market for Whitefish in terms of visitation and ease of travel due to daily direct flights and Amtrak service. During FY21, Explore Whitefish will increase investment in this market in order to continue building awareness of Whitefish as a premier travel destination. During 2018, approximately 9% of visitors surveyed who spent at least one night in Whitefish originated in the state of Minnesota.
- California (San Francisco/Oakland & Los Angeles) – Although California consistently ranks as a top market of visitors to Whitefish, the addition of enhanced direct air service has made California a core geographic market for Explore Whitefish. Daily direct service during the warm season of 2017 was added for San Francisco and daily direct seasonal service for Los Angeles began in the spring of 2018. As of 2019, multiple carriers will be flying to Los Angeles with seasonal daily direct flights. During 2019, approximately 6% of visitors surveyed who spent at least one night in Whitefish originated in the state of California.
- Regional Drive-To (including Spokane, Coeur D'Alene, British Columbia) – Explore Whitefish invests in regional drive-to markets as these potential visitors have the ability to travel on short notice, particularly during the shoulder seasons. Although the amount of investment is significantly smaller than the aforementioned core geographic markets, we believe it is important to continue to raise awareness and intent to travel in these regional drive-to markets.

## ESTABLISHED GEOGRAPHIC MARKET

Explore Whitefish has identified the following established geographic market due to current and historic visitation numbers, as well as historical investment in marketing. Although this market is very important from a visitation perspective, Explore Whitefish is currently choosing to invest in the core geographic markets identified above as having the largest potential for growth.

- Alberta – Alberta has been a historically strong market for Whitefish. Awareness of Whitefish as a premier travel destination has been well established and the fluctuations in currency exchange play the single biggest factor in increased or decreased visitation and expenditures to Whitefish. During 2019, approximately 8% of visitors surveyed who spent at least one night in Whitefish originated in the province of Alberta. In 2018, this number was 9%.
- Missoula, MT – Missoula has been a historically strong market for Whitefish in terms of visitation and ease of travel due to proximity to Whitefish. The ability to make short shoulder season trips and last minute trips makes this market desirable. Explore Whitefish will pursue the possibility of using only private funds for specific, targeted marketing opportunities.

**Optional: Include attachments here.**

*c. What research supports your target marketing?*

We utilize many sources for our research that validates our marketing plan. The non-resident data collected by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana is an invaluable tool for determining where our customers come from, what they do, how much they spend, what they like and do not like. We also use data from the US Travel Association (USTA) for broad industry indicators as well as Smith Travel Research and VisaVue for data on lodging occupancy and visitor expenditures. In addition, the information provided by the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development (MOTBD) regarding the effectiveness of campaigns, ad awareness, likelihood to travel, etc. also determines the co-op advertising opportunities in which we participate.

## 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 geographic markets.
- Aggressively showcase varied winter vacation experiences in and around Whitefish and Glacier National Park.

- o Position special events messaging to enhance visitation during the “Secret Season” of May-June, and the “Summer Plus” season of September-October.
- o Position Whitefish as the basecamp for Glacier National Park visitors with the natural, cultural, and culinary assets of Whitefish.
- o Improve “Secret Season” visitation by promoting bicycling, wildlife viewing, birding, fly fishing, golf, water sports, horseback riding, performing arts, culinary experiences, and community events.
- o 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.
- o Stimulate the publication of feature stories in national and regional publications, digital media, and broadcast media.
- o Encourage corporate retreats and improve meeting and convention market with emphasis in shoulder seasons.
- o Expand the pursuit of year-round airline markets to improve access, ease, and affordability of travel.
- o Collaborate with regional and state tourism partners, including Glacier National Park, to develop and build out support for shoulder season visitation.
- o Participate in the implementation of a Whitefish Sustainable Tourism Management Plan in conjunction with the City of Whitefish.

a. *In what types of co-ops with MTOT would you like to participate?*

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 and Business Development (MOTBD). Explore Whitefish participation in MOTBD marketing programs in the past have primarily centered around spring, fall, or winter campaigns. Winter MOTBD 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. Without the lead of MOTBD and their financial assistance, Explore Whitefish would be unable to make a significant impact in these markets. In FY21, Explore Whitefish will consider cooperative opportunities and research cooperative opportunities which align with our budget, timing, and marketing goals.

**Optional: Include attachment here.**

b. *In what other types of co-ops would you like to participate? (Regions/CVBs, etc.)*

Explore Whitefish actively cooperates with Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) on multi-channel marketing campaigns in key target markets including Seattle, Portland, and Chicago. Explore Whitefish also cooperates locally with Glacier AERO (Airline Enhancement and Retention Outreach), WMR, and Discover Kalispell to promote inbound travel on new and expanded air service to Glacier Park International Airport.

Explore Whitefish partners with Glacier Country Regional Tourism including cooperative media events, special events, press trips, FAM trips, and groups marketing.

c. *What types of co-ops have you done in the past? Were they successful - why or why not?*

Explore Whitefish has engaged in many cooperative marketing initiatives with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development in the past. We have made adjustments to future participation based on previous tracking and we have found the most success in MOTBD cooperative efforts that are aligned with our primary seasonal and geographic targets.

**Optional: Include attachments here.**

**Optional: Include attachments here.**

**Optional: Include attachment here:**

### Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Describe your method.	Provide supporting research/statistics.	How do you plan to measure	Provide a brief rationale for this	Estimated budget for	Marketing Method	Add'l Attchmnt
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				success?	method.	method.	Evaluation
		<p>We explore opportunities to advertise on and around public transportation, including bus wraps, digital displays and billboards, and inside airport terminals, particularly with cooperative partners such as Whitefish Mountain Resort in our target markets. In FY21, this method will comprise 40% of our consumer advertising budget.</p> <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. The consumer advertising budget for each strategy is allocated to the seasonal media plan.</p> <p><b>SUMMER PLUS &amp; SECRET SEASON</b></p> <p>DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>The target audience for this time period are those 35 and older with a household income (HHI) over \$75,000 whose travel or vacation is not restricted by an academic calendar.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p><b>Summer Plus:</b> Travelers seeking active experiences such as scenic driving, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, road and mountain biking, 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><b>Secret Season:</b></p>	<p><b>SUMMER PLUS &amp; SECRET SEASON SUPPORTING RESEARCH &amp; STATISTICS</b></p> <p>Not all visitors are alike. The same is true of their economic impact. Research by ITRR indicates that nonresidents who travel to the state via air spend more money per day and stay longer than the average nonresident traveler group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average Nonresident Travelers: The statewide average 2018 nonresident traveler group to Montana (2.27 people) spent an average of \$148.30 per day. With an average length of stay of 4.59 nights, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$680.</li> <li>Fly-in Nonresident Travelers: The statewide average 2018 fly-in nonresident traveler group arriving in Montana (2.17 people) spent an average of \$247.09 per day. With an average</li> </ul>		<p><b>Summer Plus:</b> Occupancy history in Whitefish shows that during the period of late June through August the town is at its busiest. 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</p>		



<p>Consumer</p>	<p>Billboards/Out-of-Home</p>	<p>Travelers seeking active experiences such as road and mountain biking, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, non-motorized water 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><b>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</b></p> <p>Seattle, Portland, Chicagoland, Minneapolis, California, Regional Drive-To</p> <p><b>WINTER DEMOGRAPHICS</b></p> <p>For the 2018/2019 season, the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) estimated that there were 10.3 million domestic active skiers or snowboarders who average 5.5 visits per year (NSAA 2019 U.S. Snowsports Participants Report). Our target audience for this time period are those 35 and older with a household income (HHI) over \$100,000 whose travel or vacation is not restricted by an academic calendar. Since we are targeting a small percentage of the domestic population, and particularly those active participants, we can most efficiently reach this target through niche channels.</p> <p><b>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</b></p> <p>We largely apply our overall traveler profile to the ski market. Experiential preferences for authentic travel are more likely to appreciate and enjoy Whitefish and then return again in subsequent years. The top reasons for</p>	<p>length of stay of 6.38 nights, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$1,576.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difference: \$896 in additional spending per fly-in statewide nonresident travel group. In addition, all 2018 nonresident traveler groups arriving at Glacier Park International Airport (2,30 people) stayed longer (7.70 nights) and outspent average statewide nonresident travelers by an estimated \$1,025 per trip (total trip expenditure of \$1,705).</li> </ul> <p><b>WINTER SUPPORTING RESEARCH &amp; STATISTICS</b></p> <p><b>OVERVIEW OF SNOWSPORTS VISITS 2018/2019 SEASON</b></p> <p><i>Source: NSAA, ITRR, WMR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>59.3 Million: Nationwide (+11.3%)</li> <li>1.7 Million: Montana (+7%)</li> <li>384,800: Whitefish Mountain Resort (+0.7%)</li> </ul> <p><b>WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT OVERNIGHT VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <p><i>Source: 2019/20 Whitefish Mountain Resort End of Season Report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>81% have HHI (Household Income) above \$75,000</li> <li>41% were first time overnight visitors</li> <li>61% were repeat overnight visitors</li> <li>Average age was 44.8 years old</li> <li>47% of overnight visitors used air travel</li> <li>Average number of nights on trip: 5.8</li> <li>Average number of days</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEBSITE SUCCESS MEASURES: ALL SEASONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clicks to book</li> <li>Clicks to reserve (restaurant)</li> <li>Clicks off to stakeholder websites</li> <li>Newsletter sign-ups</li> <li>Travel guide downloads</li> <li>Traffic volume from targeted markets</li> <li>Visitor quality measures</li> <li>Bounce rate</li> <li>Length of time spent on site</li> <li>Number of pages viewed</li> </ul>	<p>budgets to Summer Plus marketing efforts.</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> 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 50% 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 cross-country 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. In addition, Whitefish also has fat bike and cross-country skiing experiences near town.</p> <p><b>Secret Season:</b> 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</p>	<p>\$28,400.00</p>	<p>During FY21, the marketing mix was shifted heavily toward online/digital advertising since we determined that our historical public transportation out-of-home placement would not be seeing the number of impressions we had seen previously due to decreased travel on public transportation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>As a result, we did not end up utilizing public funds for out-of-home advertising during FY21. We do believe that it can be a valuable strategy in our marketing mix and has the potential to reach parts of our target markets which we do not reach in our online/digital advertising. We will continue to review opportunities for out-of-home advertising and we will continue to use this method in the future.</p>
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		<p>choosing Whitefish for a winter destination were cited as "experience of a prior winter visit" and "affordability compared to other resorts" and "snow conditions" and "lack of crowding" and "the Town of Whitefish" (Whitefish Mountain Resort 2018/19 End of Season Report). 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</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>Seattle, Portland, Chicagoland, Minneapolis, California, Regional Drive-To</p>	<p>skied/snowboarded 4.2 days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nearly 46% skied/snowboarded for 2 or 3 days</li> <li>49% stayed at accommodations in town while 32% stayed at the mountain</li> </ul>		<p>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 wildlife watching. Explore Whitefish has allocated 30% of its overall consumer advertising budgets to spring and early summer marketing efforts.</p>			
							<p>This method was successful as we met our objective. We successfully completed our seasonal online/digital marketing campaigns and reported ad performance and website metrics. Creative examples, enhanced reporting, and website metrics reports are attached and there is a summary below. We will continue to use this method in the future.</p> <p><b>DIGITAL ADVERTISING SUCCESS MEASURES: ALL SEASONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad click through rates</li> <li>Ad cost per click</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>In aggregate all Facebook ads from Oct 2018 to July 2020 had a CTR of .73% and a CPC of \$1.49. Since</p>	

		<p>We advertise in our stated target markets as well as nationally through cooperative opportunities with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development. In FY21, this method will comprise 50% of our consumer advertising budget.</p> <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. The consumer advertising budget for each strategy is allocated to the seasonal media plan.</p> <p><b>SUMMER PLUS &amp; SECRET SEASON</b></p> <p>DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>The target audience for this time period are those 35 and older with a household income (HHI) over \$75,000 whose travel or vacation is not restricted by an academic calendar.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p><b>Summer Plus:</b> Travelers seeking active experiences such as scenic driving, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, road and mountain biking, non-motorized water sports, horseback riding, paddling, and hiking. Cultural and culinary experiences</p>	<p><b>SUMMER PLUS &amp; SECRET SEASON SUPPORTING RESEARCH &amp; STATISTICS</b></p> <p>Not all visitors are alike. The same is true of their economic impact. Research by ITRR indicates that nonresidents who travel to the state via air spend more money per day and stay longer than the</p>		<p><b>Summer Plus:</b> Occupancy history in Whitefish shows that during the period of late June through August the town is at its busiest. 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</p>	<p>implementing a content forward approach, CTR has increase by 56% to 1.14%. CPC has dropped by almost 60% to .61¢ and still continue to perform well above industry benchmarks.</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>The content-forward approach saw very strong CTRs and CPCs and outperformed last year's winter campaign. Retargeting did much better than last year's retargeting campaign. CTR was 1.33% and CPC was \$0.48 for retargeting this year.</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>The Facebook spring campaign compared well to 2019's spring campaign with a CTR of 0.80% (compared to 1.1% CTR) and a CPC of \$0.78 (compared to \$1.42) for upper funnel content.</p> <p><b>WEBSITE SUCCESS MEASURES: ALL SEASONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clicks to book</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>September recorded 2,011 clicks to book (528 previous year) and October recorded 1,120 clicks to book (423 previous year).</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>The winter campaign (Nov-Feb) recorded 7,522 clicks to book (3,469 previous year).</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>The spring campaign recorded 9,525 clicks to book (compared to 3,182 in 2019). Due to the pandemic shutdown in spring 2020, spring numbers are best compared to 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clicks to reserve (restaurant)</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>September recorded 1,018 clicks to reserve (114 previous year) and October recorded 526 clicks to book (103 previous year).</p>	
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Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	<p>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><b>Secret Season:</b> Travelers seeking active experiences such as road and mountain biking, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, non-motorized water 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><b>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</b></p> <p>Seattle, Portland, Chicagoland, Minneapolis, California, Regional Drive-To</p> <p><b>WINTER DEMOGRAPHICS</b></p> <p>For the 2018/2019 season, the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) estimated that there were 10.3 million domestic active skiers or snowboarders who average 5.5 visits per year (NSAA 2019 U.S. Snowsports Participants Report). Our target audience for this time period are those 35 and older with a household income (HHI) over \$100,000 whose travel or vacation is not restricted by an academic calendar. Since we are targeting a small percentage of the domestic population, and particularly</p>	<p>average nonresident traveler group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average Nonresident Travelers: The statewide average 2018 nonresident traveler group to Montana (2.27 people) spent an average of \$148.30 per day. With an average length of stay of 4.59 nights, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$680.</li> <li>Fly-in Nonresident Travelers: The statewide average 2018 fly-in nonresident traveler group arriving in Montana (2.17 people) spent an average of \$247.09 per day. With an average length of stay of 6.38 nights, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$1,576.</li> <li>Difference: \$896 in additional spending per fly-in statewide nonresident travel group. In addition, all 2018 nonresident traveler groups arriving at Glacier Park International Airport (2.30 people) stayed longer (7.70 nights) and outspent average statewide nonresident travelers by an estimated \$1,025 per trip (total trip expenditure of \$1,705).</li> </ul> <p><b>WINTER SUPPORTING RESEARCH &amp; STATISTICS</b></p> <p><b>OVERVIEW OF SNOWSPORTS VISITS 2018/2019 SEASON</b></p> <p><i>Source: NSAA, ITRR, WMR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>59.3 Million: Nationwide (+11.3%)</li> <li>1.7 Million: Montana (+7%)</li> <li>384,800: Whitefish Mountain Resort (+0.7%)</li> </ul> <p><b>WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT OVERNIGHT VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS</b></p> <p><i>Source: 2019/20 Whitefish Mountain Resort End of Season Report</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>81% have HHI (Household Income) above \$75,000</li> <li>41% were first time overnight visitors</li> <li>61% were repeat overnight visitors</li> <li>Average age was 44.8 years old</li> <li>47% of overnight visitors used air travel</li> <li>Average number of nights on trip: 5.8</li> </ul>	<p><b>DIGITAL ADVERTISING SUCCESS MEASURES: ALL SEASONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ad click through rates</li> <li>Ad cost per click</li> </ul> <p><b>WEBSITE SUCCESS MEASURES: ALL SEASONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clicks to book</li> <li>Clicks to reserve (restaurant)</li> <li>Clicks off to stakeholder websites</li> <li>Newsletter sign-ups</li> <li>Travel guide downloads</li> <li>Traffic volume from targeted markets</li> <li>Visitor quality measures</li> <li>Bounce rate</li> <li>Length of time spent on site</li> <li>Number of pages viewed</li> </ul>	<p>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><b>Winter:</b> 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 50% 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 cross-country 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. In addition, Whitefish also has fat bike and cross-country skiing experiences near town.</p> <p><b>Secret Season:</b> The objective is to begin the visitor season earlier and grow occupancy and business levels in the spring and early summer for</p>	<p>\$90,935.00</p>	<p>Winter</p> <p>The winter campaign (Nov-Feb) recorded 2,967 clicks to reserve (644 previous year).</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>The spring campaign recorded 3,980 clicks to reserve (228 previous year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletter sign-ups</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>September recorded 265 sign-ups (84 previous year) and October recorded 199 sign-ups (60 previous year)</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>858 sign-ups were recorded during the winter campaign (562 previous year)</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>938 sign-ups were recorded during the spring campaign (338 previous year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel guide downloads</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>September recorded 334 digital views (213 previous year) and October recorded 292 digital views (150 previous year)</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>The winter campaign recorded 1,137 digital views (1,135 previous year)</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>The spring campaign recorded 1,164 digital views (677 previous year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic volume from targeted markets</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>Almost all of our identified target markets (Seattle, Portland, Spokane, Los Angeles, Chicago) showed up in the top ten for website traffic volume. Seattle ranked as the top overall market for website traffic volume with 1,079 visits (compared to 318 in 2019). The five target markets mentioned</p>	<p>FY21 Online and Digital Reporting and Creative Samples.pdf</p>
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		<p>those active participants, we can most efficiently reach this target through niche channels.</p> <p><b>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</b></p> <p>We largely apply our overall traveler profile to the ski market. Experiential preferences for authentic travel are more likely to appreciate and enjoy Whitefish and then return again in subsequent years. The top reasons for choosing Whitefish for a winter destination were cited as "experience of a prior winter visit" and "affordability compared to other resorts" and "snow conditions" and "lack of crowding" and "the Town of Whitefish" (Whitefish Mountain Resort 2018/19 End of Season Report). 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</p> <p><b>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</b></p> <p>Seattle, Portland, Chicagoland, Minneapolis, California, Regional Drive-To</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average number of days skied/snowboarded 4.2 days</li> <li>• Nearly 46% skied/snowboarded for 2 or 3 days</li> <li>• 49% stayed at accommodations in town while 32% stayed at the mountain</li> </ul>		<p>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 wildlife watching. Explore Whitefish has allocated 30% of its overall consumer advertising budgets to spring and early summer marketing efforts.</p>	<p>above combined for 2,345 users to visit the website.</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>Almost all of our identified target markets (Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago) showed up in the top ten for website traffic volume. Los Angeles ranked as the top overall market for website traffic volume with 1,688 visits (compared to 135 in 2019). The five target markets mentioned above combined for 4,656 users to visit the website.</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>Almost all of our identified target markets (Seattle, Portland, Spokane, Missoula, Los Angeles) showed up in the top ten for website traffic volume. Seattle ranked as the top overall market for website traffic volume with 6,875 visits (compared to 1,706 in 2019). The five target markets mentioned above combined for 14,299 users to visit the website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor quality measures</li> <li>• Bounce rate</li> <li>• Length of time spent on site</li> <li>• Number of pages viewed</li> </ul> <p>Fall (Summer Plus)</p> <p>There were 32,828 pageviews (35,849 the previous year), an average length of time spent on site of 00:01:01 (compared to 00:01:23 previous year), and a bounce rate of 76.75% (compared to 67.31%). The overall number of website sessions was 23,100 (compared to 17,546 previous year).</p> <p>Winter</p> <p>There were 199,907 pageviews (199,256 the previous year), an average length of time spent on site of 00:00:50 (compared to 00:01:39 previous year), and a bounce rate of 80% (compared to</p>	
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						<p>64.30%). Organic traffic was also up 22.3% year over year. The overall number of website sessions was 147,084 (compared to 93,553 previous year).</p> <p>Spring (Secret Season)</p> <p>Spring website traffic during the campaign saw a large year over year increase in spring with last year's COVID shutdowns. Traffic was still up significantly compared to spring 2019 with users up sessions up almost 100% (104,785 compared to 54,102).</p> <p>There were 149,246 pageviews (135,981 the previous year), an average length of time spent on site of 00:01:05 (compared to 00:01:51 previous year), and a bounce rate of 77.15% (compared to 62.68%). The overall number of website sessions was 104,785 (compared to 54,102 previous year).</p>	
		<p>We advertise in publications within our target markets with alignment to the geotraveler and other demographic profiles that have been outlined for Whitefish. In FY21, this method comprises 10% of our consumer advertising budget.</p> <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. The consumer advertising budget for each strategy is allocated to the seasonal media plan.</p> <p><b>SUMMER PLUS &amp; SECRET SEASON</b></p> <p>DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>The target audience for this time period are those 35 and older with a household income (HHI) over \$75,000 whose travel or vacation is not</p>			<p><b>Summer Plus:</b> Occupancy history in Whitefish shows that during the period of late June through August the town is at its busiest. 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</p>		

<p>Consumer</p>	<p>Print Advertising</p>	<p>restricted by an academic calendar.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p><b>Summer</b>  <b>Plus:</b> Travelers seeking active experiences such as scenic driving, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, fly-fishing, road and mountain biking, 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><b>Secret</b>  <b>Season:</b> Travelers seeking active experiences such as road and mountain biking, wildlife viewing, hiking, birding, golf, non-motorized water 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, Portland, Chicagoland, Minneapolis, California, Regional Drive-To</p> <p><b>WINTER</b>  DEMOGRAPHICS</p> <p>For the 2018/2019 season, the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) estimated that there were 10.3 million domestic active skiers or snowboarders who average 5.5 visits per year (NSAA</p>	<p><b>SUMMER PLUS &amp; SECRET SEASON SUPPORTING RESEARCH &amp; STATISTICS</b></p> <p>Not all visitors are alike. The same is true of their economic impact. Research by ITRR indicates that nonresidents who travel to the state via air spend more money per day and stay longer than the average nonresident traveler group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average Nonresident Travelers: The statewide average 2018 nonresident traveler group to Montana (2.27 people) spent an average of \$148.30 per day. With an average length of stay of 4.59 nights, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$680.</li> <li>• Fly-in Nonresident Travelers: The statewide average 2018 fly-in nonresident traveler group arriving in Montana (2.17 people) spent an average of \$247.09 per day. With an average length of stay of 6.38 nights, this equates to a total trip expenditure of approximately \$1,576.</li> <li>• Difference: \$896 in additional spending per fly-in statewide nonresident travel group. In addition, all 2018 nonresident traveler groups arriving at Glacier Park International Airport (2.30 people) stayed longer (7.70 nights) and outspent average statewide nonresident travelers by an estimated \$1,025 per trip (total trip expenditure of \$1,705).</li> </ul> <p><b>WINTER SUPPORTING RESEARCH &amp; STATISTICS</b></p> <p>OVERVIEW OF SNOWSPORTS VISITS 2018/2019 SEASON</p> <p>Source: NSAA, ITRR, WMR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 59.3 Million: Nationwide (+11.3%)</li> <li>• 1.7 Million: Montana (+7%)</li> <li>• 384,800: Whitefish Mountain Resort (+0.7%)</li> </ul> <p>WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT OVERNIGHT VISITOR</p>	<p><b>WEBSITE SUCCESS MEASURES: ALL SEASONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clicks to book</li> <li>• Clicks to reserve (restaurant)</li> <li>• Clicks off to stakeholder websites</li> <li>• Newsletter sign-ups</li> <li>• Travel guide downloads</li> <li>• Traffic volume from targeted markets</li> <li>• Visitor quality measures</li> <li>• Bounce rate</li> <li>• Length of time spent on site</li> <li>• Number of pages viewed</li> </ul>	<p>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><b>Winter:</b> 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 50% 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 cross-country 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>\$7,100.00</p>	<p>During FY21, the marketing mix was shifted heavily toward online/digital advertising since we determined that our previous print advertising placements were becoming more difficult to track the effectiveness of (print circulation) compared to online/digital advertising metrics where clicks to the Explore Whitefish website and activity on the website could be measured more specifically.</p> <p>As a result, we did not end up utilizing public funds for print advertising during FY21. We do believe that it can be a valuable strategy in our marketing mix and has the potential to reach parts of our target markets which we do not reach in our online/digital advertising. We will continue to review opportunities for print advertising and we will continue to use this method in the future.</p>
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		<p>2019 U.S. Snowsports Participants Report). Our target audience for this time period are those 35 and older with a household income (HHI) over \$100,000 whose travel or vacation is not restricted by an academic calendar. Since we are targeting a small percentage of the domestic population, and particularly those active participants, we can most efficiently reach this target through niche channels.</p> <p>PSYCHOGRAPHICS</p> <p>We largely apply our overall traveler profile to the ski market. Experiential preferences for authentic travel are more likely to appreciate and enjoy Whitefish and then return again in subsequent years. The top reasons for choosing Whitefish for a winter destination were cited as "experience of a prior winter visit" and "affordability compared to other resorts" and "snow conditions" and "lack of crowding" and "the Town of Whitefish" (Whitefish Mountain Resort 2018/19 End of Season Report). 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</p> <p>GEOGRAPHIC AUDIENCE</p> <p>Seattle, Portland, Chicagoland, Minneapolis, California, Regional Drive-To</p>	<p>CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>Source: 2019/20 Whitefish Mountain Resort End of Season Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 81% have HHI (Household Income) above \$75,000</li> <li>• 41% were first time overnight visitors</li> <li>• 61% were repeat overnight visitors</li> <li>• Average age was 44.8 years old</li> <li>• 47% of overnight visitors used air travel</li> <li>• Average number of nights on trip: 5.8</li> <li>• Average number of days skied/snowboarded 4.2 days</li> <li>• Nearly 46% skied/snowboarded for 2 or 3 days</li> <li>• 49% stayed at accommodations in town while 32% stayed at the mountain</li> </ul>		<p>In addition, Whitefish also has fat bike and cross-country skiing experiences near town.</p> <p><b>Secret Season:</b> 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 wildlife watching. Explore Whitefish has allocated 30% of its overall consumer advertising budgets to spring and early summer marketing efforts.</p>		
						<p>We successfully acquired ten (10) professional photos,</p>	



Consumer	Photo/Video Library	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. The consumer advertising budget for each strategy is allocated to the seasonal media plan.	Although one hundred percent of the success of our online, print, and out-of-home campaigns cannot be attributed to the purchase of appropriate and vibrant photo and video content, this does play a significant role in our success. Therefore, we use the same measurements as we do for our online and print campaigns.	We will acquire 10 professional photos. Compelling photo and video content are vital to the success of our online, print, and out-of-home campaigns, as well as our social media channels and our website. We utilize local photographers as much as possible because of their knowledge of our tourism products.	Without high quality, compelling photo and video content, we could not successfully execute our advertising campaigns or social media strategy. Nor could we truly convey the Whitefish experience to visitors on our website, inspiring them to travel to Whitefish.	\$5,000.00	licensed for one year. These photos were utilized in our marketing efforts during the fiscal year. These photos were used in the Whitefish Travel Guide, on the ExploreWhitefish.com homepage, on promotional items, and in online/digital paid advertising. Examples of how each of these images were used has been attached.  We will continue to use this method in the future.	FY21 Photo Samples.pdf
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	Money is set aside to examine opportunities and potentially act upon them if they are in line with our marketing strategy.	We create full vetted strategies and rely on industry and historical research, along with the annual marketing plan, to determine how opportunity marketing funds are spent.	Depending on the opportunity, we measure success in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, the success measurements outlined in the FY21 Marketing Plan.	Throughout the year, new marketing opportunities present themselves that were not specifically budgeted for.	\$50.00	While we did not end up utilizing public funds for opportunity marketing during FY21, it is integral to our strategy to be able to take advantage of new marketing opportunities which present themselves throughout the year. For reference, we utilized opportunity marketing funds during FY20. We will continue to review opportunities for using public funds for opportunity marketing in future years. We will continue to use this method in the future.	
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	As the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) meetings take place all over the state, we require support for travel and expenses to attend.	Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) meetings are required attendance for CVBs/Regions in order to be maintain yearly bed tax funding (pending TAC approval of annual marketing plan). It is also a valued networking opportunity to expand knowledge of the Montana tourism industry, destination marketing trends, and opportunities to partner with the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development.	Explore Whitefish is required to attend all meetings of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) as well as the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation.	Successful execution of the FY21 Marketing Plan and annual marketing plans in the future.	\$1,950.00	This method was successful as we met our objective. The Executive Director attended all virtual TAC meetings. Since in-person meetings did not take place this year, travel expenses were not incurred. The Executive Director reported back to the board of directors meetings with new resources, information, research, best practices, and marketing updates which were obtained through the meetings. While the 2021 Governor's Conference was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Director will attend the conference once it resumes. We will continue to use this method in the future.	
							We successfully acquired data through various	

Marketing Support	Research	In order to gauge the effectiveness of our marketing efforts, Explore Whitefish will take part in research.	We utilize many sources for our research that validates our marketing plan and gauges the effectiveness of our marketing efforts. The non-resident data collected by ITRR is an invaluable tool for determining where our customers come from, what they do, how much they spend, what they like and do not like. We also use data from the US Travel Association (USTA) for broad industry indicators as well as Smith Travel Research for lodging occupancy, Sprout Social for social media monitoring, and Meltwater for earned media. In addition, we have and are continuing to partner with MOTBD on the Visa Vue Joint Venture.	We will acquire data through various research platforms. All of these research opportunities are vital tools to measure the success of our marketing efforts as outlined in our success measurements and success indicators in the Whitefish CVB FY21 Marketing Plan.	The objective of this method is to obtain visitor expenditure and visitation data, social media audience performance, and earned media value which all help to evaluate marketing performance, monitor seasonal visitation expenditures and target markets, and help inform future marketing strategies.	\$13,497.00	research platforms (VisaVue, AirDNA, Smith Travel, Sprout Social, and Meltwater). This information was used to understand and refine our target markets through visitor expenditures as identified in our annual marketing plan as well as benchmarks for social media success measurements. In addition, data was reviewed and reported monthly during board meetings as well as periodically to the Whitefish City Council and the Whitefish Sustainable Tourism Management Plan Committee (STMP). Examples of these reports have been attached. We would not be able to understand our visitation trends and make marketing decisions without this research. We will continue to use this method in the future.	FY21 Sample Research Reports.pdf
						\$146,932.00		

**Marketing Method Evaluation Attachments**

- Attachment 1 Whitefish CVB FY21 Budget vs. Actual and Pie Chart.pdf
- Attachment 2
- Attachment 3
- Attachment 4
- Attachment 5
- Attachment 6
- Attachment 7
- Attachment 8
- Attachment 9
- Attachment 10

**Marketing Method Budget**

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Bed tax funded budget	Non bed tax funded budget (optional)
Consumer	Billboards/Out-of-Home	\$28,400.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Online/Digital Advertising	\$120,935.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Print Advertising	\$7,100.00	\$0.00
Consumer	Photo/Video Library	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
		\$161,435.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$50.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$1,950.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Research	\$20,497.00	\$0.00

		\$22,497.00	\$0.00
		\$183,932.00	\$0.00

### Miscellaneous Attachments

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Description	File Name	File Size
FY21 WCVB (Explore Whitefish) Marketing Plan	Whitefish Marketing Plan FY21_STATE.pdf	1.9 MB

### Reg/CVB Required Documents

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Description	File Name	File Size
Whitefish City Council Approval: WCVB FY21 Marketing Plan	April 6 2020 City Council Meeting Notes.pdf	2.7 MB
WCVB FY21 Financial Pie Charts	FY21 PIE CHARTS.pdf	89 KB
WCVB Board of Directors Approval: WCVB FY21 Marketing Plan	WCVB Board Meeting Minutes 9 Mar 2020.pdf	135 KB
WCVB FY21 Required Documents	WCVB FY21 Required Documents.pdf	682 KB

