



The Harbor of Hospitality for All

Hospitality is woven into the fabric of Elizabeth City. As a destination, we have the privilege and responsibility to share and demonstrate the vibrant diversity of Elizabeth City's people and places through intentional experiences that convey - **all are welcome here**. Today, we are committed to enriching the story of our city through more equitable, balanced, and welcoming experiences for all.

Over the next three years and beyond, we will embark on an intentional journey to illuminate the diverse people, places, and history that make Elizabeth City a special place to live, work and visit. We will work to ensure that **all** visitors feel safe and welcome.

These commitments anchor us deeply in our purpose and strengthen our ability to carry out our mission-oriented work: evolving our story to "**one community unified by our common love for Elizabeth City**." As such, we are committed to the following areas of focus:

EVOLVE

Elizabeth City has the potential to serve as a model for other destinations with complex histories such as ours. We are not satisfied with our city's current perceptions, and there is much work to be done. We hold ourselves accountable to a disciplined, sound, and inclusive plan to surpass our goals. We choose transparency and measure our progress in promotability, community engagement, and equitable practices. We remain committed to continued growth and evolution and to exploring new ways to ensure that all travelers feel loved, welcomed, and safe when visiting Elizabeth City. We will conduct an annual assessment and measure our success with these metrics:

Net Promoter Score

- Current score is -27
- Increase by 10 points annually to achieve a +20 score by 2025.

T&H (Tourism and Hospitality) Community Engagement

- Engage 40% of T&H Community by attendance at annual sales kick-off. Increase percentage of attendees by 10% annually.

Improve Engagement with Diverse Segments

- Identify and engage diverse local influencers to extend outreach efforts targeting diverse residents.
 - 2022 – Partner with at least two net new local Black community influencers.
 - Increase engagement with local Black community by 20%. Measured by media hits and activity engagement.
 - 2023 – Partner with at least two net new local LGBTQIA+ community influencers.
 - Increase engagement with local LGBTQIA+ community by 20%.
 - 2024 & 2025 – Based on population growth, identify growing demographics, and ensure they are represented and engaged.

CONNECT

We serve as a connector to experiences, people, untold stories, and even other destinations. We prioritize making all travelers feel welcome, safe, and at home when they visit. We acknowledge our city's complicated history and challenges with unity across differences. We don't deny it; we learn from it.

Creating a more inclusive and equitable travel experience for historically underrepresented diverse travelers is not only the right thing to do; it also represents a significant tourism opportunity for the city. We strive to embrace variety in race, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, language, visible and invisible disabilities, and all the intersecting identities that make Elizabeth City and visitors unique. Diversity enriches, not diminishes, our story.

Design events, campaigns, and/or tours related to monthly cultural celebrations. Partner with diverse stakeholders to design and execute campaigns. Example campaigns might include:

Leverage the popularity of culinary celebrations with themes such as:

JUNE	Juneteenth Culinary Celebration (High On The Hog movie showing. Showcase local culinary talent - African American restaurants, recipes, food cookoff, etc.)
SEPTEMBER	Heritage Month, Partner with local Hispanic-owned restaurants to design and execute campaign.
NOVEMBER	Native American Heritage Month, Partner with local Native Americans to design and execute campaign.

Additional Annual campaign theme ideas listed below and to be determined in partnership with VEC and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Board.)

FEBRUARY	Black History Month
MARCH	Women's History Month
MAY	Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
JUNE	LGBTQ+ Pride Month
SEPTEMBER	Hispanic Heritage Month
NOVEMBER	Native American Heritage Month

Host and/or Curate Multi-Cultural Events

These events are not focused on a particular demographic yet intentionally feature diverse talent, food, and experiences. I.e., a music fest that highlights everything from country, salsa, and R&B. These events may be hosted by local T&H community members yet promoted and supported by VEC.

INVOLVE

Ongoing and active learning will enable us to uphold our mission and foster connection within the tourism and hospitality community. Visit Elizabeth City aims to grow our understanding of the diversity of people's identities and experiences to help us build a stronger, more equitable, and more unified community. We commit to linking arms with all Elizabeth City hospitality and tourism businesses and partners that prioritize inclusivity by providing educational opportunities, resources, and guidance.

Host Annual Tourism and Hospitality Sales Kick-Off (first event, May 2022)

- A sales kick-off experience where we create excitement for the EC tourism strategy and campaigns.
 - Facilitate networking experiences.
 - Prepare T&H community for inclusion expectations.
- Create and distribute a hospitality toolkit including resources such as signage for EC Pride and upcoming events.

Additional ideas include:

- During event, video capture T&H owners' invitation to visit their establishments. Repurpose the videos in EC marketing and promotions.
- Conduct focus groups to empathize with T&H community's needs and insights.

Artist Competition

Invite local artists, including college students, to produce a piece (sign/poster) that depicts the inclusive vision we have for EC, "**all are welcome here.**" Encourage the T&H community to display the piece along with local pride signage.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Advisory Council

Establish and engage Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council made up of local T&H hospitality professionals. They will guide the Visit EC Board of Directors through its FY22-FY25 Action Plan.

The Visit EC Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council will help Visit EC deliver on the organization's commitment to the diverse and culturally rich community they serve as well as ensuring that EC is a welcoming destination for all.

Internship Program

Create a formal internship program for local colleges and universities to work for VEC - enrich collaboration, scale operations, and diversify representation. Discover ways to leverage student talent in production assets - videos, graphics, social, etc. on project or internship basis.

It is worth noting that this plan is intended to be a guiding document. Some items may be implemented, others modified as appropriate. In addition, the VEC Board will need to review the budget as appropriate to consider funding allocations as needed to move certain aspects of the plan forward. Working together, VEC, the Tourism & Hospitality Community and the DEIAC will make an impactful difference ensuring Elizabeth City truly becomes the Harbor of Hospitality for All.

Timeline At-A-Glance

2022

Evolve	NPS = -10
	40% T&H Community Engagement
	Identify and engage local diverse influencers to extend outreach efforts targeting diverse residents - BIPOC.
Involve	Artist Competition (April)
	Tourism and Hospitality Sales Kick-Off (May)
Connect	Intentionally work towards more inclusive messaging, possible themes to consider for calendar year 2022 include: JUNE Juneteenth SEPTEMBER Hispanic Heritage Month NOVEMBER Native American Heritage Month

2023

Evolve	NPS = 0
	50% T&H Community Engagement
	Identify and engage local diverse influencers to extend outreach efforts targeting diverse residents - LGBTQIA+.
Involve	By first quarter, 2023, Establish and engage Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council (DEIAC) made up of local T&H hospitality professionals. They will guide the Visit EC Board of Directors through the organization's FY22-FY24 Strategic Plan.
	Tourism and Hospitality Sales Kick-Off (May) The Visit EC Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council will help Visit EC deliver on the organization's commitment to the diverse and culturally rich community they serve as well as ensuring that EC is a welcoming destination for all.
Connect	FEBRUARY Black History Month MARCH Women's History Month MAY Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month JUNE LGBTQ+ Pride Month SEPTEMBER 15 – OCTOBER 15 Hispanic Heritage Month NOVEMBER Native American Heritage Month Host multi-cultural events not focused on a particular demographic, yet feature diverse talent, food, and experiences. I.e., a music fest that highlights everything from country, salsa, and R&B.

2024

Evolve	NPS = 10
	60% T&H Community Engagement
	Based on population growth, identify growing demographics and ensure they are represented and engaged.
Involve	First quarter 2024: VEC and DEIAC review this plan and accomplishments thus far. Determine any changes or updates as appropriate based on the evolution of the Elizabeth City destination.
	Tourism and Hospitality Sales Kick-Off (May)
	Discover ways to leverage student talent in production assets - videos, graphics, etc. whether through a formal, ongoing internship-based program, project-based internships or other student involvement.
Connect	Continue to engage DEIAC.
	<p>FEBRUARY Black History Month MARCH Women's History Month MAY Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month JUNE LGBTQ+ Pride Month SEPTEMBER 15 – OCTOBER 15 Hispanic Heritage Month NOVEMBER Native American Heritage Month</p> <p>Host multi-cultural events not focused on a particular demographic, yet feature diverse talent, food, and experiences. I.e., a music fest that highlights everything from country, salsa, and R&B.</p>

2025

Evolve	NPS = 20
	70% T&H Community Engagement
	Based on population growth, identify growing demographics and ensure they are represented and engaged.
Involve	<p>Tourism and Hospitality Sales Kick-Off (May)</p> <p>Continue to engage DEIAC.</p>
Connect	<p>FEBRUARY Black History Month</p> <p>MARCH Women's History Month</p> <p>MAY Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month</p> <p>JUNE LGBTQ+ Pride Month</p> <p>SEPTEMBER 15 – OCTOBER 15 Hispanic Heritage Month</p> <p>NOVEMBER Native American Heritage Month</p> <p>Host multi-cultural events not focused on a particular demographic, yet feature diverse talent, food, and experiences. I.e., a music fest that highlights everything from country, salsa, and R&B.</p>