



TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Economic Impact Report: 2020–2023

*Community Branding, Marketing,
and Economic Development*

Prepared by

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NH Tourism Quick Facts

- NH welcomes over 10 million visitors each year who generate an average of \$5.4 billion in total spending (Source: NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development)
- Tourism is the second largest industry in New Hampshire and the number one industry in Northern NH (NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs)

Throughout the duration of the marketing campaign, traffic has steadily increased to BethlehemNH.org. New website launched October 2020.

- 2021 – 2022 year-over-year data shows +26% users and +9.7% page views
 - Jan – Dec 2021: 34,722 users, 107,286 page views
 - Jan – Dec 2022: 44,019 users, 117,688 page views

Data collection for 2023 will continue through the end of the calendar year; trends indicate increased traffic.

- Jan 1 – Aug 22, 2023: 32,608 users, 82,870 page views (+15% users from same period (Jan-Aug) in 2022; page views are +6%)

Campaign Goals & Objectives

As outlined in the Town of Bethlehem Community Branding, Marketing and Economic Development Initiative Request for Proposal

- a. Uniformity** – The brand should convey a common message and image to constituents. A defined message that will market the Town of Bethlehem locally, statewide, nationally and internationally as a great place to live, work, play, vacation and do business; a community historically focused on sustainability and conservation; the right place for development, redevelopment and investment; the perfect mix for a business-friendly community.
- b. Community Identity/Pride** – Identify and promote what makes the Town of Bethlehem distinct and appealing in a regionally competitive environment for 2nd homeowners, businesses, retailers, visitors, and residents.
- c. Community and Economic Development Promotion** – Promote a healthy economy, attract new businesses, new residents and young professionals, and retain and enhance key businesses and creative talent.
- d. Flexibility** – The brand must be flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs of the Town, as well as the diverse groups and businesses within the Town in their specific marketing initiatives, while maintaining consistency with their overall brand. It must also be flexible enough to grow and evolve along with any changes in the market.
- e. Endorsement** – The brand must be authentic and resonate with community leadership and stakeholders in the Town of Bethlehem.

Implementing TOB Campaign Goals & Objectives

Uniformity

- ▶ Creation of the logo and tagline “Just Be”
 - All-encompassing to resonate with both tourists and community members
 - Adaptable across many platforms, businesses/organizations, and initiatives
- ▶ “Just Be” brand has been elevated through marketing opportunities including:
 - Free “Just Be” stickers for businesses
 - Savor & Tour Recipe Book, showcasing businesses across town. This initiative also drove website traffic and collected e-mails from tourists
 - Ongoing, year-round social media and email marketing campaigns highlighting Bethlehem businesses

Community Identity/Pride

- ▶ Showcasing the unique characteristics of Bethlehem as a destination in NH’s White Mountains
- ▶ Elevate the historical fact that Bethlehem has always been a tourism destination
- ▶ The promotion of Bethlehem since the beginning of initiative has been recognized by local and statewide tourism agencies including White Mountain Attractions and the NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development. Additionally, Bethlehem has been featured on NH Chronicle (WMUR) 3-5 times, with a focus on the entire town

Community and Economic Development Promotion (Rural Economic Development)

- ▶ Increase interest in visiting, vacationing and becoming a resident of Bethlehem
- ▶ Put more money into the community, buy a second home, move to region, open a new business
- ▶ Increase awareness to Town businesses and organizations, which in turn drives traffic to businesses and increases foot traffic and potential sales
- ▶ Helps facilitate new revenue into the town

Implementing TOB Campaign Goals & Objectives (cont.)

Flexibility & Endorsement

- ▶ The “Just Be” brand has been adopted by town entities, businesses, and organizations. Examples include:
 - “Just Be Litter Free,” Bethlehem Conservation Commission
 - “Just Be Greener,” Bethlehem Transfer Station Committee
 - “Just Be Recreation,” Bethlehem Parks & Recreation Department
 - The Bethlehem Elementary school also created a “Just Be” bulletin board in 2020, which featured adjectives written by students
- ▶ The “Just Be” brand is versatile and helps promote a variety of activities through its tagline, such as:
 - Just Be Active – promotes outdoor recreation such as biking, hiking, and snowmobiling
 - Just Be Hungry – highlights local restaurants and farms
 - Just Be a Shopper – showcases Main Street businesses

Municipality Statistics

- ▶ Property Value has gone up: \$215,704 in 2015 to \$282,867 in 2022
- ▶ Building Permits for new single-family homes since 2020: 44, as of Aug. 2023
- ▶ Voter Registration, roughly 500 new voters in 2022
- ▶ 2023 Average House Cost for Single Family Home is \$326,345, up 70% from Jan 2021 \$191,776 (Source: Zillow)
- ▶ Bethlehem tax rate has decreased
 - 2022- town \$23.89 if you live in the village \$24.89
 - 2021- town \$24.79 if you live in the village \$25.80
 - 2020- town \$25.20 if you live in the village \$26.19
 - 2019- town \$26.73 if you live in the village \$27.69
 - 2018- town \$25.97 if you live in the village \$26.99
- ▶ Revenue received from the State of NH from Rooms & Meals Tax
 - 2022: \$219,484.20
 - 2021: \$192,141.10
 - 2020: \$131,111.61

Business Development

New Businesses

- ▶ Super Secret Ice Cream, El Mirador, Washwick Insurance, Cottage on Main, Rek-Lis Pint House & Expansion, South Farm Christmas Tree; Top Notch Van
- ▶ Businesses underway – new location at Ragamuffins, Lloyd's Hill building (potentially 2 new storefronts)

New Initiatives

- ▶ Maplewood Train Station
- ▶ Sinclair Block Lot
- ▶ WREN – various renovations and pocket park enhancement (scheduled for 2024)
- ▶ Colonial Theatre – new investment in solar
- ▶ Bethlehem Community Market – Saturdays in the summer
- ▶ The Rocks – restoration
- ▶ Bethlehem Trails – trail expansions and ongoing improvements
- ▶ Workforce housing initiative
- ▶ Safe Routes to School

Grant Funding – Local organizations who have been awarded federal and state infrastructure grants for major projects

- ▶ Local business/organizations including WREN, Bethlehem Trails, and the Colonial Theatre
- ▶ Solar Ray Project (Library, Highway Center, Town Hall)
- ▶ Bethlehem Skatepark received Congressional Spending
- ▶ The Sinclair lot has received several grants to help fund cleanup of the property
- ▶ Safe Routes to School: building bike bath through Franconia, Bethlehem, Littleton
- ▶ Bike the North Country has received grants to make cycling more accessible and safer

ADDENDUM

Website Analytics

Oct 2020 – August 2023

- ▶ 2021 – 2022 year-over-year data shows +26% users and +9.7% page views
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- ▶ Jan 1 – Aug 22, 2023: 32,608 users, 82,870 page views (users +15% from same period in 2022; page views are +6%)
- ▶ Top Geolocations, 2021-2023: NH, MA, NY, CT, VT, VA, FL
- ▶ Top Webpages, 2021-2023: Homepage, What to Do, Where to Eat, Departments, Where to Stay, Town Clerk

Social Media Followers

- ▶ Facebook: 1,488 followers
- ▶ Instagram: 1,192 followers

Facebook & Instagram page created July 6, 2020. Data above as of Aug. 2023

Social Media Reach

- ▶ 2023 Reach as of Oct 2023: 184,818 (Facebook & Instagram)
- ▶ 2022 Reach, Jan 1 – Dec 31: 237,589

Getting the Campaign Started

- ▶ Market Research & Community Focus Sessions: March – April 2020
 - What came through loud and clear through each focus session was a love for the great outdoors and the appreciation for a small-town with close-knit community and neighbors. Bethlehem is a place where people can be themselves, whether it be through outdoor recreation, cultural activities, running a business, or relaxing.

ADDENDUM (cont.)

Implementing Market Research

- ▶ Creating new logo with “Just Be” tagline
- ▶ Redesigned and optimized BethlehemNH.org, which launched October 2020
 - Created a website that served a dual purpose, serving both town residents and potential visitors/tourists
 - Identified keywords and phrases to enhance search engine optimization (SEO)

2021 Marketing Plan Highlights

- ▶ Creating and promoting Savor & Tour Bethlehem online recipe collection and visitor’s guide (January – June 2021)
 - Promoted through paid social media, unpaid posts, and paid Google Ad campaign
- ▶ Launched tourism-focused e-newsletter, first email sent May 2021 focused on Memorial Day. A total of 5 were sent in 2021
- ▶ Professional photography shot seasonally (summer, fall, winter)

2022 Marketing Plan Highlights

- ▶ Broadened reach throughout New England
 - New England Focus (Yankee Magazine), an editorial-style email highlighting Bethlehem, sent to over 100,000 opt-in subscribers
 - VisitNewEngland.com Level 1 advertising package, which included listings throughout their website and social media posts. VisitNewEngland.com, 5 million users annually and over 75,000 Facebook followers
 - 2022 White Mountain Attractions Travel Guide ¼ page color ad in printed guide, distributed to all NH Welcome Centers and mailed to more than 20,00 tourists. Also included a digital version which receives 1.5 million impressions
 - Rack Card promoting seasonal events and activities in Bethlehem, distributed to local businesses, and placed in 8 NH Welcome Centers
- ▶ 6 Tourism e-newsletters sent from TOB, which included itineraries to highlight seasonal events and activities
- ▶ Seasonal vlogs – shot and produced 8 short videos: agriculture, biking, fall foliage, Gazebo Concerts, hiking, historical markers, shopping on Main Street and a day in Bethlehem overview
- ▶ Paid social media, unpaid posts, and paid Google Ads campaign

ADDENDUM (cont.)

2023 Marketing Plan Highlights

- ▶ Became a Discover New England partner, which included a listing in their guide as well as their website. DNE provides cooperative marketing opportunities to reach domestic and internationally travelers
- ▶ Continued to promote throughout New England
 - White Mountain Attractions Travel Guide ads for 2023 & 2024 (2024 Guide will be distributed starting January 2024)
 - VisitNewEngland.com Level 1 advertising package
 - NEW: Added VisitNewEngland.com (VNE) dedicated e-blasts (June & September) sent to 17,700 opt-in subscribers and shared to VNE Facebook page
 - NEW: Salmon Press NH Summer Guide print ad, distributed throughout New England
- ▶ Created A-Z Summer Guide campaign and Just Be stickers
- ▶ Hired an SEO Specialist to thoroughly analyze website and performance, and implemented recommendations
- ▶ Added Summer Rack Card distribution locations around North Conway, Ossipee, and surrounding areas
- ▶ Seasonal photography and videography
- ▶ Paid social media, unpaid posts, and Google Ads campaign