

# VISIT WEST ALLIS



## ***2018 Recommended Tourism Commission Budget and Operational Plan***

# **City of West Allis Tourism Commission Members**

Mayor Dan Devine  
Alderperson Martin J. Weigel  
City Administrator Rebecca Grill  
Commissioner Laura Mueller  
Commissioner Rod Raschka

## **Background**

Formed in 2016, the West Allis Tourism Commission is responsible for using the room tax revenue that it receives from the municipality for tourism promotion and tourism development in the municipality. Wisconsin law requires that certain percentages of room tax revenues, as discussed below, must be spent on tourism promotion and tourism development. For municipalities that adopted a room tax after May 13, 1994, the room tax rate may be no higher than 8%, and at least 70% of the room tax collections must be dedicated to expenditures related to tourism promotion and development. Therefore, up to 30% of room tax collections may be directed to general municipal expenditures.<sup>1</sup>

The Tourism Commissions efforts are intended to not only utilize the room tax revenues to promote tourism in the City of West Allis, but to help the City achieve goal number 1 “Brand/Image/Destination” in the City’s 2017 – 2021 Strategic Plan, which states: The City of West Allis will become the “preferred municipality in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area, the state, and the country for visitors, residents and businesses through focused rebranding, marketing and promotion actions.” Under this goal, strategic action 1-1 states the City will “Formalize a clear image through marketing and brand development process.”

In addition, the Tourism Commission is specifically tasked with promoting the West Allis Farmers Market and West Allis Library as community destinations.

To support these goals, the Tourism Commission issued an RFP for a marketing agency in late 2016, and at the time of this writing contract negotiations between the City of West Allis and Savage Solutions, LLC are still in negotiation. A tentative timeline proposed by Savage Solutions would initiate brand development processes for the City in late Q3 or early Q4 of this year. By June 1 2018, Savage’s timeline suggests launching a new, clearly defined brand that will position West Allis for future growth. A brand re-launch will impact logos, messaging, design, and strategy for the City’s marketing and tourism budget. However, with funds available and stakeholders and residents eager for a fresh start for the City, cohesive and impactful marketing tactics can be leveraged prior to the new brand launch. This plan suggests messaging, timeline and resource allocation for this campaign to begin.

# Immediate Marketing Opportunities

Preparing a marketing plan without first defining messaging, target audience, and outcomes will not allow for the thoughtful use of resources or effective leveraging of available platforms. Knowing that Savage Solutions will conduct additional research and potentially uncover new opportunities, existing tools and data reveal existing opportunities to leverage the City's strengths in effective marketing campaigns.

The [appendix](#) of the City's Five Year Strategic Plan provides feedback received from residents during the preparation of the Strategic Plan. Relating to Image/Brand/Destination, the following feedback was received:

Appendix E - Strategic Plan Open House and Internet Feedback
Goal #1 – Image/Brand/Destination <i>The City of West Allis will become the "preferred municipality in the Milwaukee metropolitan area, the state, and the country for visitors and residents through a centrally-focused marketing, branding and far reaching events.</i>
More family orientated; less renters; safety; higher class stores; clean it up; making people prouder of their neighborhood; marketing for West Allis***
Increase entertainment and specialty retail opportunities citywide to deepen block-level to commercial corridor connections as destinations
Formalize clear image and marketing development plan ; increase entertainment and specialty retail opportunities;
Create hook for city like City of Fountains or birdhouses (on street trees)
Move farmer's market administration so it can be promoted and have other uses during the year
Create farmer's market marketing plan and creative ways to use the space more than 3 days/week, 6 months/year
Streetscaping and signage program
Safety first – zero tolerance of all criminal behavior; Safety. Dispel the rumor of our city being trashy / family friendly..to draw more families to visit and live/ food music entertainment...not having to travel too far for good food and culture
Stop calling it "Stallis"
Coordinated community communications and regularly through multiple outlets
Aligning how we collaborate city agencies
Promote city-wide businesses across sectors by creating a city-wide marketing plan that connects them to the city's renown walking and biking paths and trails I see these goals as working together, as it seems like the downtown area has its own agenda rather than working with the larger city to build itself up to be a destination downtown ala BayView, Cedarburg, Wauwatosa, etc. There are so many great buildings down there, and it's a terrific area, but it needs an anchor business that will bring in people consistently day and night. I don't think this city needs another Cafe Hollander, but something like that. I also think highlighting ways to make the city more walkable and bike friendly is very important. I hate how much I have to drive in West Allis. (I used to live downtown, and the thing I miss most is my ability to walk everywhere.) I now drive to a park to walk, which seems ridiculous. If I felt safer riding my bike from my home, I would do that much more frequently too.
Crime: It's obvious why minimizing crime is important. To that end, DO NOT tell the WAPD to adopt a similar "Do Not Chase" policy as the Milwaukee PD currently has for their cops
Create a 'destination environment' as best you can
Where you can, discourage certain types of resale shops, check cashing places, tattoo places tax-exempt church properties.

Using the unique strategic actions contained in the Strategic Plan and this feedback, several areas of opportunity for promotions already exist:

- Restaurants/"Foodie Destination"
- West Allis Farmers Market
- Library
- Parks/Bike Trails/Recreation
- Small Businesses/Shopping
- Location – Best of City and Suburbs
- City Events – West Allis A La Carte, Classic Car Show, Christmas Parade, National Night Out

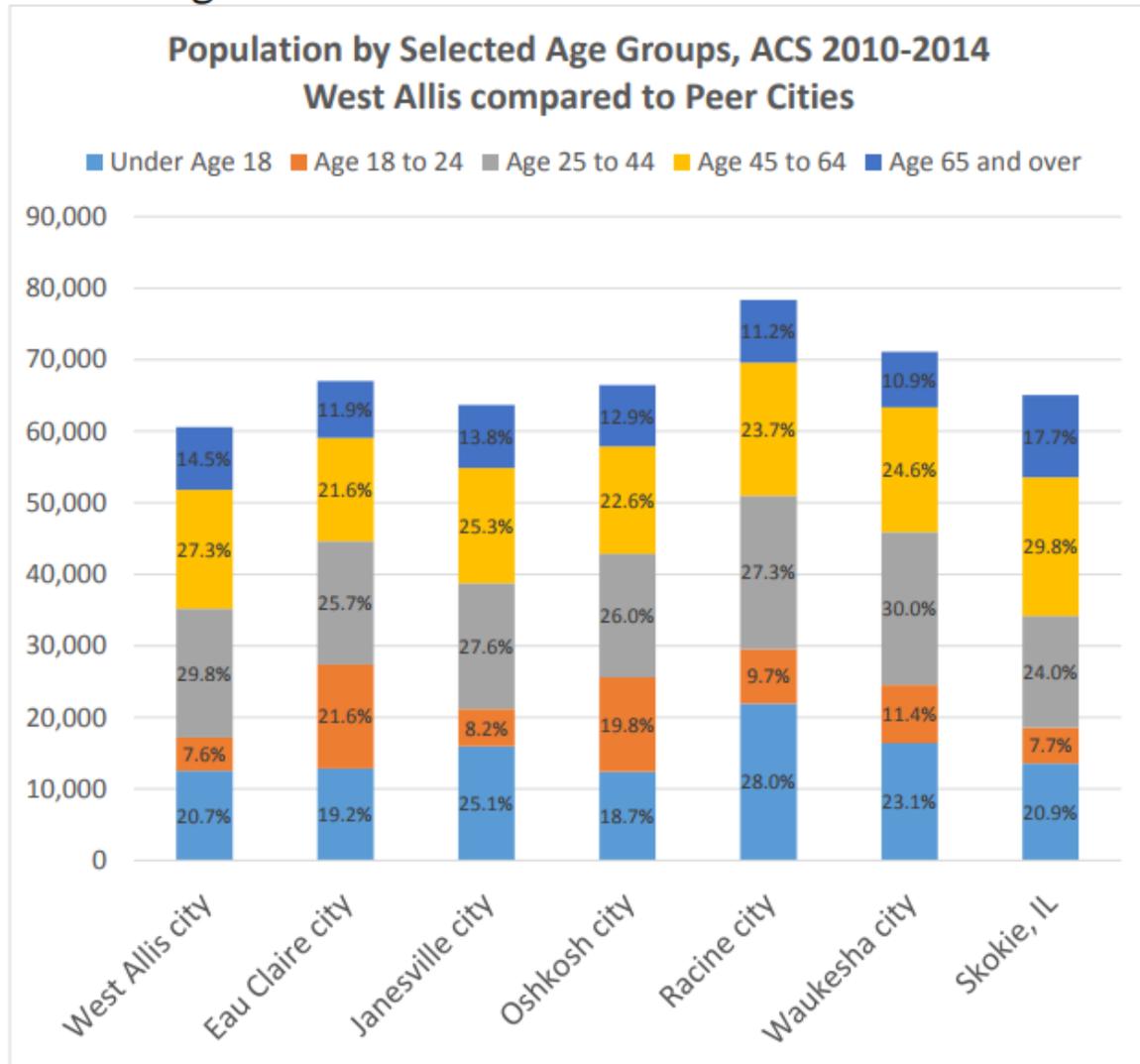
These specific areas of opportunity provide focus to potential messaging and help identify appropriate platforms for allocation of budget expenditures.

# Audience

Savage Solutions is expected to conduct in-depth market analysis to determine West Allis' audience. However, until that time, several distinct market groups can be identified using the [City of West Allis Fact Book](#), compiled in January 2017.

Demographic data suggests West Allis is a younger city than many perceive it to be, with the average resident aged 37 years old.

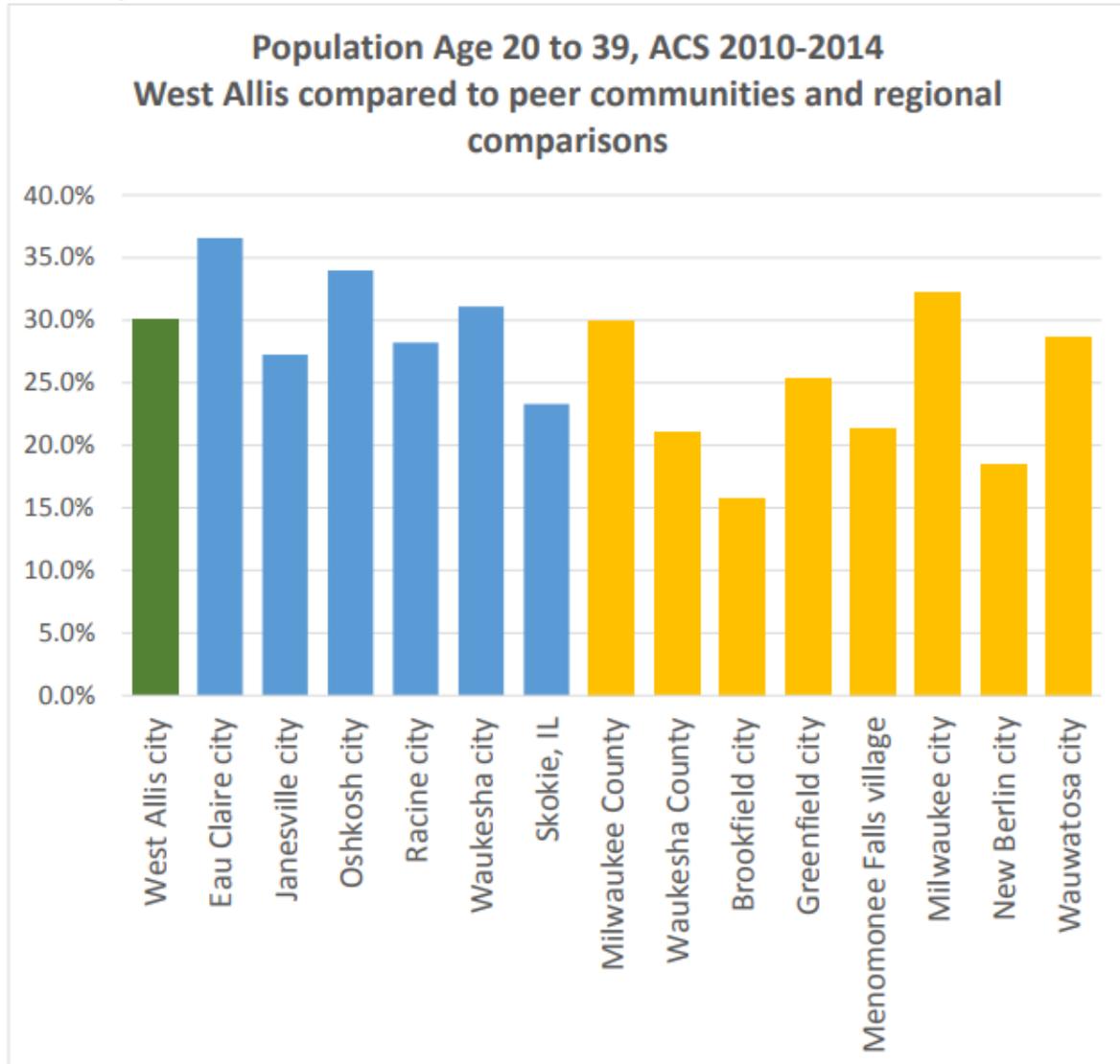
Chart 6. Age Distribution



The City of West Allis along with the City of Waukesha have the largest percentage of their respective populations between the ages of 25 and 44. West Allis also have the second largest percentage of its population among peer cities between the ages of 45 and 64. Only Skokie, IL had a higher percentage of its population between the ages of 45 and 64. Over 57 percent of the population in West Allis was between the ages of 25 and 64 during the period 2010 to 2014. This percentage was highest among all peer cities.

West Allis' population also includes a strong representation from the Millennial subgroup, which has a spending power internationally of \$65 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>

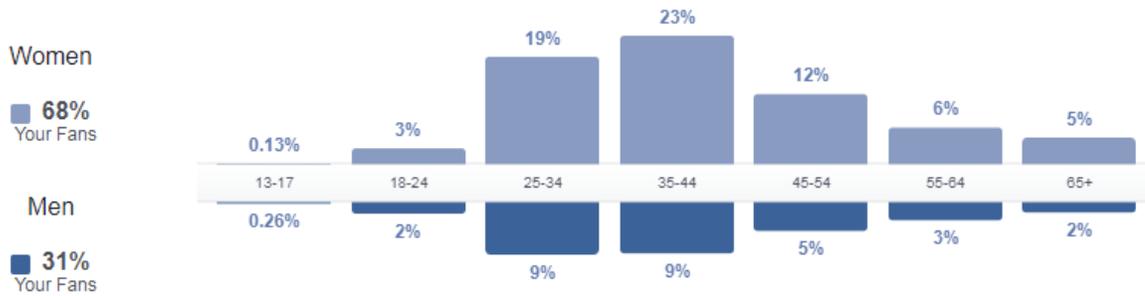
**Chart 7. Millennials**



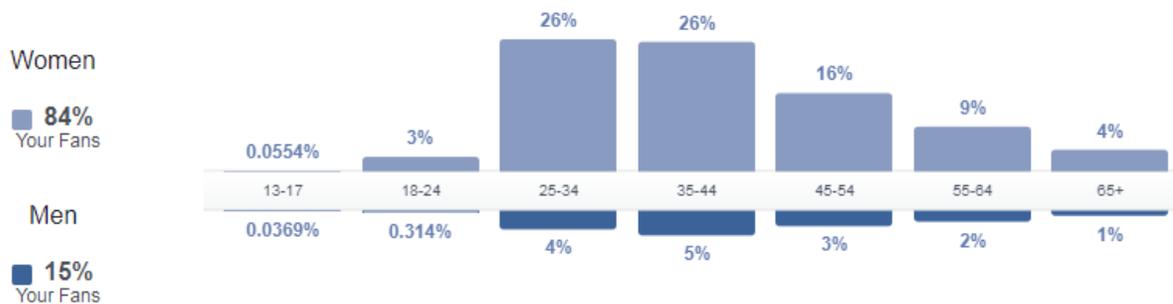
**Almost one out of every three residents in West Allis is between the ages of 20 and 39. In the Milwaukee Metropolitan Region, only the City of Milwaukee and the City of Waukesha have a higher percentage of residents of age 20 to 39. In statewide city peer comparisons, only Oshkosh and Eau Claire exceed West Allis in this age group. Despite the fact that these two cities both have large 4-year comprehensive University of Wisconsin public universities, West Allis is only four to six percent lower.**

Additional data regarding West Allis residents can be found on the City's social media pages. The City's Facebook page fans consist of 68% female followers and 31% male. The majority of fans are ages 35 – 44.

Aggregated demographic data about the people who like your Page based on the age and gender information they provide in their user profiles.



The West Allis Farmers Market Facebook page shows similar demographics, with more women liking the page than men.



The West Allis Farmers Market Facebook page demographics are particularly of note, as research suggests women aged 25-44 years old are most likely to shop at Farmers Markets<sup>3</sup>, and this demographic is most engaged with the City's Market. As a plan is developed to promote the Market, this customer generalization can help identify appropriate platforms to reach female shoppers in this key age group.

Two target market areas emerge from this data:

**Primary Demographic Market:**

- Adults between age 24 – 44 (Millennials, Gen Xers)
- Secondary Market (specific to Farmers Market): Women aged 25 – 44

**Geographic:**

- Primary Market: Southeast Wisconsin
- Secondary: State of Wisconsin



## Platforms and Tools

VisitWestAllis.org needs to be created before any tourism marketing can begin. This website needs to be the virtual home base to promote West Allis tourism, and all marketing efforts should direct to this site (with the exception of Farmers Market specific promotions, which will direct to [www.westallisfarmersmarket.com](http://www.westallisfarmersmarket.com)).

The following platforms and tools are recommended for the Tourism Commission to develop and/or utilize in 2018:

Platform/Tool	Targeted Launch Date
Website – VisitWestAllis.org	February 1, 2018
SpinGo and milwaukee365.com event promotion	This tool is already in use for City events.
Visit West Allis blog	February 1, 2018
Print visitors guide	February 15, 2018
TravelWisconsin.com Page Listing	Complete – managed by WADBID
Monthly e-newsletter	March 1, 2018
VisitWestAllis Facebook page	March 1, 2018
VisitWestAllis Instagram	March 1, 2018
Visit West Allis press kit	March 1, 2018
Press Releases	As needed; will distribute announcing new website and social channels, in addition to upcoming events
Corporate Sponsorships	July 1, 2018
YouTube channel	August 1, 2018
DearMKE.com submissions	Sept. 1, 2018

## Messaging

Cohesive messaging and clear calls-to-action are crucial to effective promotions. Savage Solutions' research and marketing plan development will outline such components beginning mid-2018. In the meantime, it is recommended that a comprehensive campaign messaging platform be developed to create effective marketing materials. These may include:

### Visit West Allis

**Creative rationale:** Simple and to the point, Visit West Allis encourages visitors to come to the City. VisitWestAllis.org has already been claimed as the website domain for the tourism-focused website of the City. This campaign would instill this URL in audiences' minds and drive traffic to the new website. The new site would need to be created with assistance from the Communications Department, and this could be done prior to the Savage Solutions rebranding. Content and navigation could be created at this time, with copy and graphics being changed to match the new look/tone when it is revealed.

**Target audience:** Adults aged 25 – 44 in Wisconsin



## Rediscover West Allis

**Creative rationale:** “Discover” is a common and overused term in tourism marketing. “Discover” suggests that visitors are the first to arrive at a tourism destination, and that no one else has uncovered the great offerings the site may have to offer. This is simply not true of West Allis, as a majority of people in the Southeast Wisconsin area know about or have been to West Allis – and we are aware that many of them have negative perceptions of the City. Rediscover West Allis encourages those who have not visited the City in some time to revisit and change their perceptions of what West Allis has to offer. Many people may only know the City for State Fair, or for mass-retailer shopping on 108<sup>th</sup> St. Rediscover West Allis encourages people to come back, try something new, and walk away with a new mindset towards the City. This campaign lends itself to a branded, easy-to-remember hashtag for social media use as well.

**Target audience:** Adults aged 25 – 44; families and couples seeking unique experiences in dining, recreation, or shopping. Southeast Wisconsin geographic focus.

## Best of Both Worlds: Where Suburbs Meet the City

**Creative rationale:** West Allis ideal location between the City of Milwaukee and outlying suburban regions presents visitors with the diverse options in dining and entertainment found in any metropolitan city, as well as the parks and greenspaces coveted in the suburbs. Promotions highlighting West Allis’ multi-faceted amenities will attract a diverse audience eager for experiences that can be walked, biked, or driven to with little hassle finding parking or managing navigation.

**Target audience:** Adults aged 25 – 44; singles, families, and suburban residents seeking easy-access experiences. Metro Milwaukee/state of Wisconsin focus and reach.

## West Allis: More Than Meets the Eye

**Creative rationale:** Negative descriptions of West Allis gathered through resident feedback have included descriptions of “Dirty Stallis,” furthering the notion that West Allis is a dingy, unkempt industrial town. Our well-maintained parks, easily navigable bike trails, scenic downtown, and quality restaurants belie the image. This campaign invites visitors to not only take a closer look at the City’s many positive attributes, but for visitors who may only visit the City to attend State Fair, this campaign will encourage them to look beyond the fairgrounds to see the many other attractions the City offers.

**Target audience:** Adults aged 35+; families, senior citizens (or former residents who may have left the City due to negative perceptions); suburban visitors; State Fair visitors. Geographic focus within southeast Wisconsin.

Any of these campaigns could be continued with modifications, or closed without negative impacts, at such time as the City’s rebranding with Savage Solutions is ready to launch.



**WEST ALLIS**  
THE BEST OF  
BOTH WORLDS



VISITWESTALLIS.ORG

## Goals and Objectives

Between now and the expected brand relaunch in summer of 2018, marketing and promotional efforts to support tourism should strive to achieve the following:

Goal	Measurement
Create brand advocates for City of West Allis	Social media sentiment
Generate/renew interest in West Allis and its events	Website page visits/social media post engagement
Increase attendance at City events/Farmers Market	Event attendance metrics/feedback surveys
Increase business/residential property occupancy	City provided metrics

## Strategy

A multi-channel campaign that is conscious of the impending mid-year branding changes allows the Tourism Commission to begin leveraging available funding to further its mission and uphold the goals of the City's Five Year Strategic Plan. The following platforms may be used:

### Print Advertising

Print advertising is alive and effective and particularly useful to reach potential audiences in the Milwaukee Metro area, as many local publications connect with visitors on weekly, monthly, or quarterly touchpoints. In addition, the Tourism Commission can create print promotional materials for the Farmers Market and Library that will be usable for the first half (and perhaps through Q3 or Q4) of the 2018 fiscal year, as branding changes will be phased into City materials.

Platforms/materials may include:

Piece/Publication	Target Audience	Focus
Brochure	Female suburban/urban potential visitors; those who are not currently customers of the market.	Farmers Market
Brochure	Adults aged 25-44, currently living outside of West Allis – potential visitors	City amenities – parks, dining, shopping, entertainment, lodging, events.
Shepherd Express	Adults aged 35 – 64.	City events; Farmers Market
MetroParent	Parents aged 28+ of school aged kids	Christmas Parad
M Magazine	High income adults in metro Milwaukee aged 35+.	Farmers Market
Milwaukee Magazine	Adults aged 25 – 64; married couples, families with school age children	Parks; events; National Night Out
Edible Milwaukee	High income households concerned with eating local	Farmers Market
Footlights Milwaukee	Adults aged 30+; those interested in the arts, fine dining, experiential entertainment; families.	Dining in West Allis – “Skip the downtown parking headaches. Visit West Allis for your post-show meal!”

## Social Media & Digital Advertising

The Tourism Commission may launch a unique tourism-focused Facebook page for the City, knowing that graphics and audience may change pending the Savage Solutions work. However, beginning a page and starting to build followers will position the page for continued growth and reach when the brand is defined and launched.

In addition, the City's Facebook page(s), Twitter account, and Instagram account can be leveraged to support tourism initiatives and strategic campaigns.



Paid advertising and boosted posts on Facebook and Instagram, as well as paid ads on strategic website platforms, are recommended.



Platforms may include:

Platform	Target Audience	Focus
Google Ads	Farmers Market shoppers – women/men aged 30+	Farmers Market. Target ads based on website search analytics relating to Farmers Market terms. Direct to <a href="http://westallisfarmersmarket.com">westallisfarmersmarket.com</a>
Google Ads	Cyclists in Milwaukee area aged 25+	Direct to <a href="http://www.westalliswi.gov/bike">www.westalliswi.gov/bike</a> .
Facebook Ads	Adults aged 30+ in Wisconsin.	Target interests based on unique ads for Farmers Market, dining, shopping, outdoor recreation.
YouTube	Men and women aged 18 – 49	Well-produced, tourism-centric videos showcasing city attractions and destination shops and restaurants
Instagram	Adults under the age of 30	Events, dining, nightlife, Farmers Market
WPR.org (tax deductible underwriting)	Adults aged 40+ from high income households	Farmers Market, events, <a href="http://www.westalliswi.gov/bike">www.westalliswi.gov/bike</a> . Library events.
Entercom Channels – 99.1 WMYX, 103.7 KISSFM	Women aged 29+, families w/school age children	Christmas Parade; Farmers Market; VisitWestAllis.org; Library events
Fox6Now.com	Men and women aged 35+	Events, Farmers Market

## Outdoor Advertising

Billboards and outdoor signage in the City of West Allis and beyond will remind audiences of all of the exciting opportunities for entertainment, dining, and shopping just a short drive away. Clear Channel Outdoor is the preferred partner for outdoor advertising solutions and has submitted a proposal for 2018 options. These ads should include the [visitwestallis.org](http://visitwestallis.org) or [westallisfarmersmarket.com](http://westallisfarmersmarket.com) URL as appropriate.

## Sponsorships

The Tourism Commission may wish to consider sponsorship opportunities at large-scale regional events such as Summerfest, Milwaukee World Festivals (Irish Fest, Festa Italiana, etc), NEWaukee Night Market, and even State Fair, etc. that would allow the tourism message to spread beyond West Allis' borders. Many sponsorships include additional web or print advertising to direct audiences to West Allis tourism resources, or allow booths at the event to connect with potential visitors.

## Radio and Television

The expense of television ads makes them best suited to leveraging in the future, when branding and messaging for the City are clearly defined. Radio can be an affordable alternative to reach large audiences in the Milwaukee metro area and beyond. One station does not fit all, however, and identifying which stations to advertise on should be based on the audience the City is trying to attract. Men, women, and listeners of different ages prefer different stations, and each station's audience demographics should be reviewed before an ad reservation is placed. A high volume of women aged 35+ prefer radio station 99.1 WMYX in Milwaukee, while more men aged 50+ listen to WTMJ620. Unique messages should be crafted for each station to engage their average listener, and the target listener the City is trying to move to action.

## Promotional Items

Cost savings occur in printing promotional items when the items can be produced in bulk; however, with a change in logo and branding anticipated within six months of the new year, investing in materials with "old" branding will result in a surplus of unusable items.

A unique idea that would not be dependent on branding changes is seed packets to promote the West Allis Farmers Market. These can use "generic" branding or simply be printed with stock images and Market's website URL.

To promote West Allis bike trails, bicycle merchandise such as lamps or bells can allow cyclists to take the City's message out onto the road with them.

Bumper sticker magnets are also an idea that could be created with flexible branding, to direct viewers to the [visitwestallis.org](http://visitwestallis.org) tourism website.



# Projected Budget

2018's project budget includes potential expenditures relating to the work proposed by Savage Solutions, LLC., pending approval of the contract between the City and Savage.

<b>INCOME</b>	
Municipal Room Tax Revenue 2017	\$200,000 <i>estimated</i>
2017 Expenditures	\$40,500
Anticipated 2017 Carryover	\$159,500
Municipal Room Tax Revenue 2018	\$200,000 <i>estimated</i>
<b>TOTAL 2018 INCOME</b>	\$359,500
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Marketing Services – Savage Solutions – Phase 2 3 Year Marketing Strategy	\$20,000
Marketing and Promotions (May include: photography, videography, print and digital marketing, advertising, promotional items, etc.)	\$132,925
Events	\$25,000
Wayfinding	\$150,000
Annual website hosting fees	\$1,575
LTE – Tourism & Event Coordinator	\$30,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$359,500

<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Legislative Council Information Memorandum: 2015-17 Biennial Budget Revisions to Municipal Room Tax

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/press-room/2017/nielsen-unveils-first-comprehensive-study-on-the-purchasing-power-of-multicultural-millennial.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/26768/1/36010192.pdf>