

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis:                   COLLABORATION AS A STRATEGY TO  
  ENHANCE A HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM  
  IN KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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This thesis demonstrates that collaboration between partners is a strategy that will enhance the development of a heritage tourism program in King County, Washington. It describes a theoretical segment for a Heritage Trails Initiative. The Initiative, currently proposed by 4Culture, a funding agency for the arts and heritage, would promote county heritage resources as visitor attractions. This research selects heritage sites, preservation organizations and agencies, economic organizations and agencies, and the travel and tourism industry as potential partners to test the feasibility of collaboration when developing an Industrial Achievements Loop, a component for the Heritage Trails Initiative. This thesis studies sites and organizations, conducts interviews with representatives of the selected organizations, and analyzes the information.

Research and case studies provide the foundation for discussing and analyzing the impact of heritage tourism and related collaborations. A brief history of tourism provides context for the contemporary role of heritage tourism. This study defines the current status of heritage tourism and the heritage tourist, and it elaborates upon the synergistic relationship between historic preservation and heritage tourism. This thesis also examines federal, state, and county policies and programs supportive of heritage tourism. Case studies portray a variety of existing collaborations around the country. The focus then narrows to King County, presenting a heritage overview and introducing the proposed Heritage Trails Initiative and theoretical Industrial Achievements Loop. The thesis findings enumerate the benefits of collaboration, or the collaborative advantage, and the attributes of strong partners. It describes and analyzes the qualifications and attractions of potential partners for the Loop.

The research finds that in King County there are an abundance of industrial heritage sites, that there are interested, even eager, potential partners among preservation, economic, and travel and tourism entities, and that there is a desire to collaborate in a heritage tourism endeavor. Capitalizing on this momentum, it is clear that there would be support for 4Culture to move forward with the Heritage Trails Initiative, and some suggestions are made for starting the process. This thesis demonstrates that collaboration has the potential to enhance a heritage tourism program not only in King County, but wherever there is a collective will.