GORI FORTRESS

VISITOR INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE CONCEPT

Gori Fortress

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

VISITOR INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE CONCEPT (VIEC): PURPOSE

A "Visitor Interpretive Experience Concept" (VIEC) uses experiences likely to be desired by target markets as the framework for determining the entire information network to develop to support those experiences that will effectively attract and hold identified target audiences. The information includes all the interpretive, outreach, orientation, wayfinding and trip planning information a visitor would need or want through all segments of their experience, which begins and ends where that target audience lives. Segments of a visitor experience include trip planning, travel, arrival, the primary experience that attracted the visitor, departure, return travel and post trip. Different information is needed at each point in that experience. Offering information a visitor needs at different points in their experience in a manner that the information is easily accessible creates the opportunity to provide optional information – interpretation – that builds intellectual and emotional bonds with a site and its story, and has the power to motivate visitors to stay longer and visit associated sites, make a return visit, and engage in positive social selling of the site as a destination worth visiting.

This document contains the recommended Visitor Interpretive Experience Concept for Gori Fortress, and associated visitor interpretive experiences that extend into Gori Municipality and the surrounding region. The Concept focuses on providing a high-quality visitor experience at Gori Fortress and contributing to making Gori a hub for visitor experiences in the area by extending the experiences at Gori Fortress to the city and region. The experiences focus on exploring Georgia's history and culture using Gori Fortress as a starting point.

OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

The project began with review of information regarding Gori Fortress, Georgian history and culture, and tourism in Georgia. Of particular value was the Georgia Tourism Action Plan 2020 / 2025 prepared by Solimar International Inc. The overall goals for this concept were taken from that plan.

Following review of available information, an interpretive planning workshop was prepared and presented on-line due to issues with COVID. The workshop was attended by personnel from the following organizations:

- National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia
- Gori Historical-Ethnographical Museum-Reserve
- Gori Museum of Military Glory
- Gori Joseph Stalin Museum
- The Great Mtskheta Archaeological State Museum-Reserve
- Vardzia Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve
- Uplistsikhe Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve
- Didi Liahkhvi State Museum-Reserve
- Gremi Museum
- Niko Pirosmanashvili State Museum
- Parmen Zakaraia Nokalakevi Architectural-Archaeological Museum-Reserve
- Kutaisi Historical-Architectural Museum-Reserve and Geguti Palace

The workshop was intended to be face-to-face, but COVID prevented travel, resulting in a virtual workshop spread over 10 weeks. In addition to training participants in the planning process, the consultant used the workshop to gather valuable information regarding goals, target audiences, parameters, and interpretive opportunities that informed development of the Vision and Concept.

Following the workshop, the draft Vision, Goals, Objectives, Messaging, Target Market Profiles, Parameters and Implications and Interpretive Inventory were developed and submitted for review by participants in the workshop. The draft document was adjusted and finalized based on feedback and discussions.

One of the major goals of the project was to assist a Design Team tasked with designing the Exhibition for the water tank and Interpretive Signage at the top of the Fortress. Consequently, the consultant met with the Design Team in a virtual meeting to discuss the draft document and to present information on best practices in interpretation. An additional meeting was held for the Design Team to present their ideas based on the draft Concept and for participants in the meeting to provide feedback.

The next step in the process, in addition to the Design Team completing their designs for the interpretive opportunities and implementing those elements of the visitor experience, is to use the Concept as a basis for developing an effective orientation and wayfinding network for the Fortress. Ideally, this work would be concurrent with the work of the Design Team. In addition, a detailed Interpretive Master Plan, based on the VIEC, should be developed to guide design and implementation of the key elements of the visitor interpretive experience recommended for the base of the Fortress. Those opportunities will increase the effectiveness of the visitor experience at the top of the Fortress and serve as the cornerstone of the interpretive network that will extend into Gori and the surrounding region. It is also a key to making Gori a hub for visitor experiences in the region.

VISION / MANAGEMENT GOALS

INTRODUCTION

Interpretive Program goals are derived from Management Goals by asking how an Interpretive Program will help achieve those goals. The Management Goals, in turn, are based on the future desired condition (Vision) for the Fortress. The following section contains the Vision, Management Goals, Interpretive Goals, and Interpretive Objectives that were used to develop the Concept for the Visitor Interpretive Experiences at Gori Fortress.

FUTURE DESIRED CONDITION (VISION)

BACKGROUND

During the VIEC training workshop the following questions was posed: "What do you want the Fortress and surroundings to look like in 20 years?" The question addressed both the physical and social environments of the artifact with the purpose of providing a starting point for crafting the Vision. The answers submitted by participants included changes to the infrastructure, features and other physical attributes, who would be visiting, how often they visited, and what those visitors would do while they are at the Fortress and afterwards. The following Vision is based on those responses from the participants and on the desire to create visitor interpretive experiences that contribute to sustainable tourism while protecting the artifact. Protecting Gori Fortress and all cultural and natural resources that are part of the visitor interpretive experiences is essential, because they are a part of heritage of the people of Georgia and because the experiences do not fall in the category of sustainable tourism if resources on which the tourism experience depends are damaged in any way.

VISION

Gori Fortress and the surrounding town of Gori enjoys a steady stream of first time and repeat visitors in Spring, Summer and Fall because it offers high quality and unique visitor experiences based on authentic Georgian culturaland natural heritage and history. Because of the sites included in the interpretive network in the area, many of the visitors use Gori as a hub for exploring the area.

One of the key attractions is Gori Fortress, where visitors can spend a whole day and evening exploring the site and engaging in associated interpretive opportunities. The site offers guided and self-guided tours, multimedia experiences, exhibitions, and other visitor opportunities. An interpretive center / museum in the Plaza at the base of the Fortress focuses on the history of the Municipality of Gori, the historic trade routes, Gori Fortress, and sites associated with the story of Gori Fortress.

During their visit, Visitors purchase Georgian clothing, art, and hand-crafted items, especially pottery like that developed and traded in Georgia in antiquity, at the Gift Store. Each item has an associated story that makes visitors aware of other sites they can visit to learn more about the item they are purchasing and/or the associated story. They can also sample authentic Georgian food and wine along with finding recommendations for restaurants serving authentic Georgiancuisine and locations that serve and sell Georgian wine. Events such as food fairs, craft fairs, demonstrations of Georgian wrestling, and dance performances occur on a regular basis in the area that used to be occupied by the Agrarian Market. Many visitors plan their visit so they can attend the Celebration of Georgian Culture, which features wine tasting, Georgian foods, a craft fair with demonstrations, dance performances, a music fest, and other attractions. Those who choose to visit during Georgian holidays can join in the celebrations at Gori Fortress or elsewhere in the Municipality.

Visitors also pick up publications and other sources of information that facilitate exploring the area. The array of potential visitor experiences – both interpretive and recreational – in Gori and the surrounding area is outstanding, including guided and self-guided bicycle and walking tours focusing on combinations of cuisineand wine, nature, history, trekking, engaging in winter sports, and horseback riding. The array of high-quality interpretive opportunities in Gori, which can be visited on a self-guided or guided walking

or vehicle tour, incudesall the museums and interpretive opportunities based on visible features in the area. The stories focus on one ormore of the following:

- *Gori's history with an emphasis on the fact that it always had to defend itself because it was a key location along major trade routes. The story of the need for defense is carried through the present andincludes the 2008 conflict.*
- *Gori's history with an emphasis on the fact that it has been occupied by a multitude of different cultural groups and exposed to other cultural groups by virtue of being on the Silk Road.*
- *In conjunction with the previous point, the interpretive opportunities focus on how the Georgians wereinfluenced by other cultural groups but still held on to their basic Georgian culture.*

Visitors have such a good time on their visit that they want to return, and that they share their experiences with friend with an admonition to visit Gori – the center of Georgian Culture and History.

The site is managed by the Friends of Gori Fortress under the direction of the Municipality of Gori. The arrangement helps maximize profit from the site, which is used to manage the site and continue with improvements both to visitor opportunities at the site and in the rest of the interpretive network beyond the Fortress.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

The following Management Goals are based on the Vision. Management Goals should be used toguide everything that happens at the site, including modifications to the infrastructure, protecting the site, conducting research on the artifact, and developing visitor and interpretive opportunities, so it is important that they are comprehensive and accurate. Note that no Management Goals existed at the beginning of this project.

> **Management Goal 1**: Maintain/conserve/restore (parts of) the Fortress and managevisitation so the resource is not compromised.

Discussion and Comments: As noted previously, protecting the artifact is important to sustain the visitor interpretive experiences. It is also important because damaging the resources creates a mixed message –we are communicating the message that people should behave responsibly and protect the cultural heritage of Georgia but damaging or appearing to damage the resource contradicts that message.

> **Management Goal 2**: Significantly increase visitation and repeat visitation, particularlyby high value visitors who spend at least one night in Gori, but also from the local area.

Discussion and Comments: Achieving this goal requires eliminating negative aspects of visitor experiences and developing and enriching the positive aspects to create high quality, memorable visitor experiences. (Note that the current quality of lodging options is potentially a negative aspect of the visitor experience for high quality visitors. Consequently, the initial focus should be on attracting visitors who are comfortable with the current quality of lodging. (It might be easier and less expensive in the short term to support upgrading local Guest Houses so they would be acceptable to high quality visitors.)

> **Management Goal 3**: Significantly increase the amount of visitation to other sites withinthe Interpretive Network.

Discussion and Comments: Achieving this goal requires marketing Visitor Interpretive Experiences in and around Gori that are connected by story to the interpretive experiences at Gori Fortress, and helping other entities develop elements of the interpretive network for which they are best suited. Note that a network of

high-quality interpretive experiences encompassing an array of sites telling different parts of a larger story contributes to attraction and holding power – keys to tourism – and is a key to transforming Gori into a hub for tourists exploring the area.

Management Goal 4: Significantly increase the support, revenue and contributions to alevel that allows the Municipality to create and sustain the array and high quality of visitor experiences.

Discussion and Comments: Achieving this goal requires improving amenities, improving the information network, training staff and interpreters, cleaning up the site, and using effective 'Best Practice' information delivery strategies to create attractive Visitor Interpretive Experiences both for Georgians and International travelers.

Management Goal 5: Complete archaeological investigation of the site.

Discussion and Comments: This should happen regardless of upgrading the site as a tourist destination. However, it can have impact on the interpretive program as an attraction to be interpreted and because the artifacts and subsequent research can be used in interpretive opportunities.

Management Goal 6: Significantly increase use of the site by local schools andresidents.

Discussion and Comment: Achieving this goal regarding school children requires addressing the infrastructure to support the needs of school groups (multiple WC facilities, staging areas, learning stations and bus parking and turnaround space) and working with local schools to create opportunities to support what the teachers are doing in the classroom. In regards to residents,it means changing the array of opportunities regularly to encourage repeat visitation and/or staging events that cater specifically to residents, such as a weekly Farmer's Market.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM GOALS

INTRODUCTION

Interpretation is a tool to cause impact on visitors. Although most people assume that is an impact on knowledge, the desired impact is typically on behavior. Consider the case of Gori Fortress. One of the goals is to conserve the artifact, which involves having visitors engage in stewardship behaviors during their visit to avoid damage and having them help conserve and protect the resource by contributing time and/or money for that purpose. It is not enough for visitors to simply value the artifact; the need is for them to take actions to help restore and protect the artifact, and/or to support the efforts ofthe managing entity to do so. People act when the resource in question is something they care enough about that they consider the time and effort they expend to help protect the resources worthwhile. In this case the key is for visitors to care about Gori Fortress, and all the cultural and natural resources that contribute to the high-quality visitor experiences available at the site and in the network, to the extent that they consider it a part of their quality of life and consequently, help conserve and protect the resource.

Interpretation can help that effort by creating strong positive emotional, intellectual, and physical connections with the Gori Fortress and associated sites. Those interpretive efforts are not aimed at simply affecting a visitor's knowledge or attitude. They are focused on motivating people to become active stewards of those resources through donating, volunteering, and practicing stewardship, all of which are behaviors.

Although interpretation can be a key tool in helping create conservation minded visitors, it will not, by itself achieve significant progress. Studies show that education *alone* has little or no effect on sustainable behavior. Interpretive and environmental education programs are important tools to achieve the desired outcomes, but by themselves are unlikely to cause a significant shift in the level of conservation behaviors practiced by visitors unless barriers that increase the difficulty of engaging in the desired behaviors are reduced or eliminated. That requires additional actions on the part of the managing entity beyond developing interpretive and recreational opportunities. A classic example that has occurred and continues to occur in cities around the United States is the increase in recycling when curbside recycling programs are instituted. The significant rise in recycling that occurs is not due to a change in knowledge or attitude regarding recycling, but that the effort (a barrier) to engaging in recycling behavior was reduced significantly.

With that in mind, this Concept addresses the information that needs to be communicated to motivate visitors to take desired actions and identifies some of the barriers to those actions and ways to eliminate or minimize those barriers. Addressing barriers is not always expensive or difficult. For example, if you want visitors not to throw trash on the ground, put garbage cans throughout the site, especially atlocations where visitors are likely to have trash, such as at places they buy food or eat food.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM GOALS

> **Interpretive Program Goal 1:** Significantly increased attraction power of Gori Fortress and associated sites to the level that they attract national and international visitors to visit for more than one night.

Discussion and Comment: Creating an integrated network of high-quality interpretive opportunities increases the perceived benefit for visiting the area and increases the probability of visitors spending a night or more in Gori Municipality.

This goal directly supports Management Goals 2, 3, 4 and 5 because all are associated with increasing visitation. It implies that interpretation is a factor in increased visitation, which is one of the Management Goals. It suggests that the interpretive experiences must be high quality, which means state-of-the-art (which requires constant

upgrades), sophisticated, offered in multiple languages, and able to be understood by people with different cultural backgrounds.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- Annual visitation at Gori Fortress will rise by 10% each year for the 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.
- Overnight visitation will increase by 10% per year for 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program. (This may also require an upgrade in lodging opportunities.)
- Percentage of visitors to Gori who visit the Fortress will increase by 10% a year for the 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.

Interpretive Goal 2: Increased level of active support and stewardship behaviors practiced by visitors towards cultural and natural resources both within and outside the Fortress grounds.

Discussion and Comment: The desired outcome is for visitors to contribute significantly to the ability of GoriFortress to be managed using resources obtained from outside the system. This contributes to sustainable tourism, which is the focus of Management Goal 1, while at the same time acknowledging that it is not just the cultural and natural resources of the Fortress that visitors need to help protect.Active involvement by visitors in helping sustain Gori Fortress would be indicative that it has achieved the status of being linked to a visitor's quality of life. This would manifest itself in an increase in donations, volunteers for work parties, and stewardship behaviors practiced while engaging with the resources of the site and with natural and cultural resources off-site.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- A formal Friends Group will be established and the number of new volunteers / members of theFriends Group will increase by 10% per year for 5 years. (This is an indirect measurement of increase in stewardship behaviors because it is an increase in people who care about the site).
- Volunteers for work days and projects will increase by 3% over the 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.
- Donations for projects or programs will increase 5% each year for 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.
- Program attendance will increase 5% each year for 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.

Interpretive Goal 3: Significantly increased attraction power of visitor interpretive experiencesthat extend beyond the Fortress to the point that there is a significant increase in visitors engaging with these experiences while using Gori as a base for their explorations.

Discussion and Comment: Increased attraction power of the network will lead to increased visitation and *length* of visits. This can be accomplished by piquing the interest of visitors so they want to know more about a particular topic or story, making them aware of other sites where they can get additional information, and guiding them to those sites. This goal reflects the fact that the goal of interpretation is not to cover a subject, but to spark an interest that motivates people to learn ontheir own.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase in sales of publications related to the primary story by 5% a year for 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.

- An increase in people wanting to take a tour that extends beyond the Fortress and includes other prominent sites associated with the stories presented in the interpretation at the Fortress after implementation of the basic interpretive program at the Fortress and modification of the extended tours to focus on the stories introduced at the Fortress.

- An increase in visitation at sites associated by story with Gori Fortress due in part to the interpretive experience at thesite and in part to a more complete and effective orientation and wayfinding system.

- An increase in repeat visitation by 5% a year for 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.

Interpretive Goal 4: Significantly increased awareness of, appreciation for, and support for the workof the Municipality of Gori and other entities with jurisdiction over the site and its resources, in restoring and conserving the cultural and natural resources within and outside the Fortress. In addition, an increase in awareness of, appreciation for and support for the work of the volunteers.

Discussion and Comment: Interpretive Goal 2 focuses on supporting Gori Fortress through conservation and other means but does not include supporting the entities responsible for managing the site. This goal simply means that the interpretive opportunities must help ensure that visitors know who is responsible for the high-quality experiences they are enjoying, and ideally, to support the Municipality of Gori in those efforts.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase in donations by 10% a year for 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.
- An increase in visitors aware that the site is managed by the Municipality of Gori by 15% each year following implementation of a significant interpretive opportunity.
- An increase in volunteers for work days and projects by 5% over the 5 years after implementation of the basic interpretive program begins.

Interpretive Goal 5: Significantly increased engagement in interpretive opportunities by visitorsto the Fortress, especially by target audiences.

Discussion and Comments: This implies that the interpretive program must play a role in attractingand serving Target Audiences, which means the opportunities must appeal to those audiences. It also implies that a Universal Design approach be used to ensure that all opportunities are fully accessible to the extent possible and ensure that the information obtained in all interpretive opportunities is accessible to everyone.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase in numbers of visitors participating in interpretive opportunities by 10% a year for 5years after implementation of the basic interpretive program.

> **Interpretive Goal 6**: Significantly increased visitation of partner sites connected to the stories presented at theFortress.

Discussion and Comments: Although this is covered to some extent in Interpretive Goal 3, it was deemed important enough to highlight in a separate goal because it could be significant in helping to achieve Management Goals indirectly by strengthening the relationship with other sites. A stronger relationship could result in those sites marketing a visit to Gori Fortress, thus increasing visitation. It also helps increase the benefits perceived by visitors for visiting the area, which should help increase visitation in general and visitation by people wanting to spend at least one night in the area.

Objectives

Note that the following objectives require establishing baseline data to determine if increases occur. That baseline data should be determined prior to implementation of interpretive opportunities.

- An increase of 5% per year for 5 years in the number of visitors who heard about the park atother key sites in the story (an indication that those sites are marketing Gori Fortress) after implementation of the basic interpretive program.
- An increase of 5% in the number of visitors to Gori Fortress who plan to visit at least two othersites, not including Stalin Museum, associated with the story in the year following implementation of significant interpretive opportunities that include reference to other sites connected to the story. Note that Stalin Museum was not included because it is already visited by a significant percentage of people who visit Gori.

TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES

INTRODUCTION

Information - including interpretation - is a commodity; people must 'buy' it with their time, a highly valued personal resource, along with attention and cognitive effort. They also incur opportunity cost, which means that if they spend time reading a sign or walking an interpretive trail, they lose the opportunity to spend that time doing anything else. In short, paying attention to information is 'expensive.' Consequently, understanding what visitor interpretive experiences a specific market is willing to 'buy' is critical. Since different people 'buy' different interpretive experiences, it is important to identify the key target audiences, and then build profiles of those differentvisitor groups to determine the type of experiences they are willing to 'buy' with their time, and the level at which information, including interpretation, must be presented so they are able to process given theirknowledge and background. The primary target audiences are ones that will help achieve project goals, which means 'high value' tourists, or those who may become 'high value' tourists.

In general, experiences that visitors are willing to buy can be described as ones that:
*   Meet their needs.
*   Meet their expectations.
*   Are within their limitations of time, money, energy, and other personal resources.
*   Are experiences that compete successfully with other options for spending time, usuallythrough association with interests that were the primary reason for visiting.

Needs include such basic amenities as food, shelter, and restrooms. The key information-related need is orientation and wayfinding information. Interpretation is an option. Consequently, developing a good orientation and wayfinding system is a higher priority than developing interpretive opportunities.

Expectations are more variable because they are created by previous experience, what people hear and what they read. A good way to determine expectations is to identify common complaints because complaints reflect unmet expectations.

Limitations are factors that prevent someone from engaging in an experience or interpretive opportunity, such as not knowing the language in which information is presented, and factors that tend to offset the benefit of engaging in an experience and can therefore cause a potential user to bypass an opportunity. For example, visitors are on leisure time and do not always want to 'work'—either physically ormentally—at their recreation unless the personal benefit is worth the time and effort required. Limitations can relate to physical ability, language, education level and other characteristics.

Opportunities that can compete for a person's time typically relate to a visitor's interests. Although those interests can exist prior to arrival, they can also be generated by what they see or hear oat a site. On-site features are of key importance because they represent one of the best opportunities to capture the interest of a visitor and begin the communicationprocess.

The focus of the audience analysis in developing a Visitor Interpretive Experience Concept is to first determine the target audiences and then profile those audiences in such a way to help determine what type of interpretive experiences would attract them to Gori Municipality in general and Gori Fortress specifically and/or that they would engage with when there. Once that is accomplished, interpretive opportunities can be identified that add value to those experiences, as the target audiences define value, and that they are willing to engage with and able to understand. Key target audiences include those listed below. Note that a person can belong to more than one target audience, such as residents can come as a family unit.

- Residents, including families and school children.
- People with physical impairments (sight, hearing and mobility). Addressing these groups will also address the elderly as it is loss of physical ability that affects experiences that meet their limitations rather than age.
- Citizens of the Republic of Georgia.
- Activity-oriented visitors. This includes bicyclists and people coming to engage in hiking or trekking.
- People from outside the Republic of Georgia. Initially this would be markets that are already visiting the area, but in the future, high value travelers from other countries currently underrepresented,such as the US, should be targeted.
- People on bus / package tours. (Although Gori does not derive much value from these toursbecause they do not typically stay in town, the participants in those tours can help with social selling and could return as high value independent travelers.)
- Backpackers. Although this group does not have particularly high value as backpackers, they are already coming. If they have a goodexperience it could help with social selling, and they also may come back later in life as a 'high value' traveler.)

Note that people who specialize in Georgian history, archaeology, or other fields of study tied to the Fortress or Municipality are not included as target audiences because an interpretive network will not serve their needs, typically because they already know more than can or should be offered in an interpretive program. This reflects the goal of interpretation as a tool to spark an interest in a subject. There is no need to attract such audiences and hold them because they are, by definition, already interested in information about the site and may already be coming. Even if they are not already visiting, the addition of interpretive opportunities is not likely to factor into a decision to visit.

AUDIENCE CHARACTERISTICS

The following characteristics and associated implications will help guide selection and design of interpretive opportunities that will attract, hold and communicate with target audiences.

All Visitors

The following characteristics and limitations apply to almost every situation and every audience.

Characteristic: 70% of visitors to Georgia spend part of their time experiencing the cuisineand/or wine.

Implication: Offering interpretive opportunities at restaurants and wineries designed to attractvisitors to Gori Fortress could be effective.

Characteristic: All visitors will expect anyone associated with the Fortress to answer basic questionsregarding basic cultural history of the area, especially the history associated with Gori Fortress.

Implication: All on-site staff need to be able to answer basic questions and direct visitors to on-siteand off-site locations where they can obtain additional information.

Characteristic: Visitors will expect orientation information to interpretive and recreational opportunities in the surrounding area (what else is there to do around here?), especially opportunities with a similar focus as the Fortress (what other sites tell stories of Georgian History and how do I getthere?).

Implication: Staff should be prepared to answer such questions, particularly regarding sites telling a part of the same story. Ideally, orientation and wayfinding information to all associated sites should be developed as an Application and/or brochure that can be distributed to visitors.

Characteristic: A significant percentage of visitors use social media such as Twitter, Blogs and Facebook, and a significant percentage of visitors are comfortable with and prefer using new technologies, such as vodcasts, podcasts and GPS-based tour programs.

Implication: New media should be used as part of the information delivery network when appropriateto the audience and situation and social media should be used when appropriate to continue connecting with visitors after they leave.

Characteristic: Many travelers plan part of their trip, including general itinerary, using the internet to access information to plan.

Implication: Trip planning information, including suggested itineraries, should be available on the internet.

Characteristic: Most travelers visit in groups, typically family or friends. Families and other similar groups have a variety of educational levels within the group.

Implications:
- Interpretive opportunities such as signs and exhibits should be designed to accommodate atleast small groups.
- The interpretive program should provide opportunities that allow all members of a family or group to be involved at the same time and place, despite having different educational or experiential backgrounds. This can be accomplished by providing several opportunities in one location, each catering to a different educational level, or a single opportunity that is designed in such a way that everyone in the group has an intellectual entry point into that interpretive opportunity.

Characteristic: People visiting an unfamiliar area are focused initially on meeting needs, including the need to feel confident in their ability to navigate an unfamiliar environment.

Implication: It is important for the orientation and wayfinding network to be designed to be easily understood by people unfamiliar with the area and make them comfortable and confident in their ability to find their way around.

Characteristic: Visitors will have varying limitations in terms of energy, time, and interests.

Implications:
- To the extent possible, the interpretive program should offer opportunities to 'skim,' 'browse,' or 'gorge' the information to accommodate preferences and to accommodatevisitors on a tight schedule.
- The interpretive program should provide an 'opportunity menu' that lists time required for each activity and suggested itineraries based on time available. For example, it should suggest an itinerary for the visitor that has a half-hour, 2 hours, a half-day, a full day, more than a day, etc.
- Frequent and well-placed opportunities to sit and rest in the shade will enhance the experience for many people (this is currently an issue on top of the Fortress, both in terms of places to sit and available shade).

- To the extent possible, the interpretive program should present information in a way that is within a visitor's limits imposed by a 'leisure' activity and organized according to themes to eliminate unnecessary effort.

Characteristic: Many international visitors will have a general lack of knowledge regarding the history of the Republic of Georgia in general and of the history of Gori and Gori Fortress specifically, while Georgians are more likely to have a significant amount of knowledge.

Implication: The Interpretive Program must not assume knowledge of Georgia in general or Gori and Gori Fortress specifically. Visitors must have the opportunity to start at a point that assumes little or no knowledge, but they also must have the option of skipping to an intellectual entry point based on their knowledge. Serving citizens of Georgia may require opportunities designed specifically for them. Although such opportunities can take any form, the easiest and least expensive to develop are opportunities such as a talk series and guided tours that do not require significant design and construction.

Characteristic: Any given group of people is likely to have one or more preferred learning styles within the group. The most common model has 3 - visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Using that model, it is likely that within any given audience you will have those who are more likely to engage with experiences involving social interaction, others who are more likely to engage in experiences offering the opportunity for 'hands-on,' and others who will want to 'see' what you are trying to communicate.

Implications: Since audiences are voluntary participants, offering information in the preferred learning style of the participant is more likely to be successful; if they are uncomfortable, it is likely they will choose not to engage. Since all learning styles are likely to be represented in any one group, optional learning environments should be created to accommodate each group. For example:
- Hands-on. An environment where visitors can work ideas and concepts out for themselves.
- Observation: An environment where visitors can collect, analyze and reflect on information to produce a concept. Information can be presented in a myriad of forms, such as images, sounds, text, scents, and textures. It can also be presented in person, although interaction should not be forced.
- Social: An environment where visitors can discuss the topics, such as with a guide or a presenter.

Families

Characteristic: Families are made up individuals of many ages, educational levels, and interests.

Implications: A variety of interpretive strategies may be necessary to address the multiple learning styles and education levels. Also, due to the needs of children, experiences need to be within proximity to amenities, such as restrooms.

Characteristic: Families often have time limits based on the needs of various members.

Implication: Experiences need to be at convenient times and flexible in length.

Characteristic: Families have a need for a sense of safety and security, which is why when looking for places for their children to play, parents prefer open locations where they can always see their children.

Implications: Facilities need to be well-maintained, accessible, and secure. Guidelines for safety need to be well-communicated for experiences.

Characteristic: Families often prefer social experiences.

Implications: Experiences that are successful with families that are seeking a social experience are ones where all members of the family can be engaged in the same opportunity at the same time. Creating experiences where parents can facilitate activities for young children often work well for such families.

Children

Reaching children is not about dumbing down the information presented. It is about offering experiences that help build emotional, physical, and intellectual connections to the extent possible, and laying groundwork for understanding key concepts when the children are older.

Characteristics: Children are short.

Implication: Viewing opportunities and material addressed to children need to be at a comfortableheight for children. In addition, viewpoints may need places for children to stand to see over the battlements.

Characteristic: Children often have an abundance of energy, particularly if the stop is after anextended period in a vehicle.

Implication: Opportunities for children to expend energy should be included at the beginning ofvisitor experiences, and interpretation-related opportunities that involve expending energy should be identified and developed when possible.

Characteristic: Children have limitations regarding learning the same way as adults. Whereas adults can learn by processing incoming verbal information based on experience and existing knowledge, children up to around the age of 8 do not have a vast storehouse of existing experiences and knowledge. Consequently, they focus primarily on acquiring information firsthand. Since they have not completely mastered the symbol system we call "language," they use their primary information-gathering tools – their senses – to explore their environment.

Implications: Opportunities to touch, smell, taste, see and hear are critical to an effective experiencefor children. This is an important point because we often focus on the need for activities to be interactive and believe we have accomplished our goal if they can push buttons. Although the opportunity to interact in such a way increases the attraction power of an opportunity to many children, if it is not an opportunity to discover information using senses, it is not as effective in terms of gathering and processing information.

Children on school field trips

Discussion and Comments: This is an important group in terms of gaining support from residents. Note that most characteristics and associated implications focus on infrastructure rather than on information to be presented, including interpretive opportunities. Although school children may be able to engage in some of the opportunities, they should not be developed with school children as the target audience. Instead, separate materials and opportunities should be developed that cater specifically to the goals and desired outcomes of teachers.

Characteristic: They arrive as a large group at the same time.

Implications:
- A large percentage are likely to want to use the WC immediately. Consequently, multiple facilities will be necessary. (Note that bus tours have this same characteristic with the same implication.)
- Staging areas will help manage the large groups when they arrive and when theyprepare to depart. (This also works well for bus tours.)
- An array of opportunities taking approximately the same amount of time may be necessary to 'pulse' large groups through the site in smaller groups, which increases the potential for learning and decreases negative impacts on other visitors.
- If students move around an interpretive pathway in small groups, they will need learning stations that can accommodate a group of 10-15 students standing around a presenter.

Characteristic: The key to schools visiting is often because the site offers opportunities that supportwhat the teacher is trying to accomplish in the classroom.

Implication: School curriculum should be considered, and teachers involved in development of the opportunities and support materials.

People with Disabilities

Using a Universal Design Approach, which focuses on creating experiences that can be enjoyed by all members of a target audience, including people with disabilities, involves integrating multiple delivery tactics that use multiple senses within the same interpretive opportunity. The result is an overall array of experiences with opportunities for everyone.

A Universal Design Approach also benefits our aging population because it is physical change, such as deteriorating eyesight, hearing, and mobility, which are typically the issues older adults have with interpretive and recreational experiences, not their age. Therefore, a separate category for 'older adults' is not needed.

The overarching implication is that the interpretive program should adhere to Universal Design Standards to make the information accessible to all people, despite any impairment, whether it is visual, auditory, physical, or otherwise. The following are specific characteristics and implications based on specific disabilities.

DISABILITY: PEOPLE WHO USE WHEELCHAIRS AND OTHER MOBILITY DEVICES

Note: Surfaces that provide easy access for wheelchair users also generally work for people who use othermobility devices such as a walker or cane.

Characteristic: Visitors who use manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs and scooters sit at varying heights but are lower to the ground than a standing adult, making it harder to see objects and read textmounted at a height intended for an adult standing.

Implication: Consider the average sightline for adults who are shorter in stature or use wheelchairs as well as standing adults. Exhibits with text need to have it located at the right height and angle to be easily read from a wheelchair. A good set of guidelines can be found at: *https://www.si.edu/Accessibility/SGAED#page_21.*

Characteristic: Visitors who use wheelchairs or scooters need maneuvering space and clearance for body parts held in place by the wheelchair.

Implication: This must be considered in the design of infrastructure – parking areas (accessible spaces), width of walkways, hallways, wheelchair locations integrated into the seating plan for a public program, etc., and in placement of movable items, such as are often found in Exhibitions. All interpretive opportunities need to be designed for knee and toe clearance, thus allowing the person to get closer to text and other features of an exhibit.

Characteristic: People in wheelchairs have limited reach.

Implication: Exhibit interactives must be designed so they are within reach of people who use wheelchairs as well as standing adults. The following is a link to Chapter 3: Building Blocks of the ADA Standards. The chapter focuses on information related to physical access. *https://www.access- board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards/ada-standards/chapter-3-building-blocks#308%20Reach%20Ranges*

Characteristic: Manually operating a wheelchair can physically challenging, especially with varying topography or uneven surfaces. Some people may need to move more slowly or tire more easily.

Implication: Guided programs involving moving to different locations should be slowed down in terms of speed whenmoving. Additional time between program stops will then be required, so program routes may need to be shortened if adhering to a time schedule.

Characteristic: Visitors who use wheelchairs are just like able bodied visitors in terms of mentalcapabilities.

Implication: Program design should be inclusive, with people in wheelchairs being treated the same from an intellectual perspective as everyone else.

Characteristic: People in wheelchairs are generally unable to use steep trails or navigate stairs.

Implication: Strategies such as lifts, funiculars and elevators should be used if necessary to provide everyone access to key locations. If locations are not accessible to those in wheelchairs, the information obtained from those locations should be offered somewhere that is fully accessible.

Note: In the case of Gori Fortress, it may be difficult to put in elevators or other strategies to provide access to the top of the Fortress because it could cause damage to the artifact. If that is the case, it will be important to provide a good array of interpretive opportunities at the base of the Fortress to compensate for not being able to access the top area.

DISABILITY: PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LIMITED VISION

Characteristic: Difficulty seeing clearly or at all.

Implication: Key information should be offered in an audio format, ideally with supporting tactile elements (which will also appeal to other audiences). To facilitate reading by those who are experiencing some loss of vision, fonts should be easily readable with font size large enough to achieve a high degree of probability that people with low vision will be able to read the text. Also use universal symbols when appropriate.

Note: Braille is not a particularly effective option because only a small percentage of people who are blind can read braille.

Characteristic: People with vision loss (rather than being fully blind) need additional mobility and orientation information to successfully navigate unfamiliar terrain.

Implication: Consider ensuring at least 2030 mm (80 in.) of clear head room along the circulation route and painting edges of a path in clearly contrasting colors.

DISABILITY: PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HAVE HEARING LOSS

Characteristic: There is a range of hearing loss, from slight to profound. People who are deaf often identify with the culture and language (American or New Zealand Sign Language) of their community.

Implication: Ensure written materials are available. Also consider hiring a sign language interpreter and using assistive listening equipment for key programs. Note that sign language for deaf is not universal. Also consider using Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs), especially in indoor areas, such as the Exhibition Area in the water tank. They deliver audio directly to the ear and separate it from background noise This improves the 'speech-to-noise' ratio.

Residents and Citizens of Georgia

Characteristic: Residents have a higher potential for repeat visits than people who live a significant distance from the site and have a higher potential to become volunteers or join an organization like a Friends Group.

Implication: A changing variety of interpretive activities and programming is needed to keep residents coming back to engage in the Interpretive Program. In addition, annual passes (including family passes) should be offered at a significantly reduced rate to motivate residents to keep coming back.

Characteristic: Local audiences may not be aware of facilities, programs, and services offered at the Fortress as interpretive and visitor opportunities are implemented.

Implication: If necessary, marketing strategies need to be revised to reach local audiences effectively, so they hear of improvements and opportunities as they are completed.

Characteristic: Residents often have specific times when they can participate in interpretive opportunities, such as in the evening and during weekends. They are also present year-round. They are often interested in local issues because of direct impact on their lifestyle.

Implication: Serving residents effectively may require programs specifically designed for this audience or a segment of this audience and scheduled at times they can attend.

Characteristic: Residents and Citizens of Georgia may prefer more in-depth material, and/or can handle more in-depth material because of familiarity with the area, Georgian history, and local issues.

Implication: Opportunities to obtain material that provides more in-depth information, such as purchasing publications, should be available.

Characteristic: Some residents get to the point of considering a site 'theirs' and resent visitors from outside the area, especially when they interfere with activities in which the residents want to engage. (This may not be the case with Gori Fortress due to the desire to attract tourists.)

Implication: Having special programs that cater more specifically to residents may be effective in countering resentment by residents toward visitors.

Visitors on Package or Bus Tours

Visitors on package or bus tours are not typically high value travelers because they are not likely to spend a night in Gori. However, they are still a valuable audience because they can help market an experience in Gori to their friends when they return, and they could return as independent travelers.

Currently, visitors on package or bus tours typically only come to Gori to visit one or two sites, such as the Stalin Museum. Since such tours have their entire itinerary already established with a focus on sites that are popular and ones that offer a fee to the tour company, it is difficult to add sites to such tours. It is also difficult to motivate such tours to stay overnight in Gori, possibly because of higher quality amenities and night life in Tbilisi and on the coast. Tour operators prefer places that are unique, offer good bus parking and turnaround space, multiple restroom facilities, are convenient in terms of routes already being traveled, that offer money in return for stopping at the location, and offer opportunities that visitors desire, such as the opportunity to purchase authentic (or even replica) items. Gori Fortress is already planning to develop infrastructure to accommodate bus tours. It does have the advantage of being typically listed as one of the Fortresses in Georgia that tourists should not miss, and it is on routes traveled by bus tours.

The best strategy for attracting this audience is to create a unique experience – one that cannot be had anywhere else in Georgia, including at more well-developed Fortresses, so it becomes a 'must see' attraction. Creating such an opportunity might be easier by adding associated high-quality opportunities at the base of the Fortress, so a bus would only have to stop in one location.

Activity-oriented visitors

Activity-oriented visitors are ones that are in Georgia to engage in a specific activity, such as bicycle touring, or hiking. Catering to this group focuses on offering interpretive experiences that complement and add value to the experience they desire, without detracting from it through competing for the visitor's time. The following are characteristics and implications that should be considered.

Characteristic: Opportunities that are available at the same time as activity-oriented visitors can engage in the activity they desire are less likely to be effective than opportunities that are available when the visitor cannot engage in their desired activity.

Implication: Both hiking and cycling are daytime activities. Thus, opportunities offered in the evening are more likely to attract visitors from these groups. Such opportunities are also more likely to motivate someone engaged in these activities to spend the night in Gori.

Characteristic: Activity-oriented visitors, like other tourists, do not want to 'waste time.'

Implication: Opportunities that do not 'waste time,' such as ones adjacent to a popular bicycle route for example, are more likely to be engaged with than ones that are out of the way.

Characteristic: Activity-oriented visitors are typically paranoid about the equipment they use to engage in their desired activity. For example, cyclists worry about their bicycles being stolen, backpackers worry about their gear being stolen, and skiers worry about their skis being stolen.

Implication: Creating infrastructure at the site (lockers, bicycle pens, etc.) that allows safe storage of an activity-oriented visitor's equipment will help address this issue.

PARAMETERS AND IMPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Parameters are those conditions under which visitor experiences and the associated Interpretive Program must be developed, such as monetary constraints, and under which it must function, such as climate. They are also called 'givens,' 'circumstances' and 'constraints.' Identifying parameters and implications of those parameters ensures selecting and developing experiences and interpretive and wayfinding strategies and infrastructure that are effective and realistic, not idealistic.

The following section contains key parameters with implications. In reviewing the parameters, it is important to remember that they represent what is, not what should be or what is desired.

KEY PARAMETERS AND IMPLICATIONS

BUDGET

B-1: The budget Is not clear. This creates difficulty in knowing what is feasible and what is not, and in knowing how to phase the project appropriately. However, budget is not likely to be sufficient to implement everything recommended at the same time, so a phased approach will be necessary.

STAFFING

S-1: Gori Fortress currently has no full-time staff (this will change when the infrastructure is developed, if it includes a Visitor / Interpretive Center, a multimedia experience in the old water tank,and/or a museum). This has the following implications:
- Although personal interpretive services should be offered, the visitor interpretive experiences must be designed to function with no or limited number of staff toensure a viable interpretive experience even when staff are not available.
- If living history, guided tours, or other interpretive opportunities requiring staff/ volunteers are to be developed, additional staff/volunteers will be necessary.
- Additional visitor facilities / structures, such as the Visitor Center and Exhibition Space in the Plaza, will require additional maintenance and security, both of which will require staff. This represents additional costs and a need forincreased budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

E-1: Weather can be harsh in the winter. This has the following implications:
- Outdoor signs and structures must be constructed of materials resistant to the weather conditions (ice, freezing, damp).
- Given the current lack of infrastructure, the Fortress is limited to being a 3-season attraction.

E-2: Inclement weather can occur any time of the year, especially fall, winter and spring. If the Fortress wants to sustain visitation in the shoulder seasons (fall and spring) or all year, the type and extent of opportunities inside or in sheltered areas need to provide enough motivation for people to visit duringthose time periods.

E-3: Wind is an issue on top of the Fortress. This has the following implications:
- Without sheltered areas, the windy conditions are likely to limit the amount of time a visitor

would spend on top of the Fortress.

- Holding events on top of the Fortress may not be effective.
- Visitors may have trouble hearing guides and other opportunities that involve an audible component.

E-4: The Fortress is on a hill with the only current access a long uphill pathway with a shortstairway at the end, which makes it virtually impossible for anyone in a wheelchair to access the site and difficult for many visitors with limited physical ability. This has the following implications:

- It will be expensive and difficult to build a mechanism, such as a funicular or elevator, whichallows everyone access to the top of the Fortress without compromising the artifact. However, this may be the best way to provide access to the top for those who cannot take the walkway.
- A significant array of visitor opportunities should be developed at the base of the Fortress to provide an alternate experience for those who do not want to or cannot access the top via the existing walkway. These should be developed even if a mechanism such as a funicular is developed because it would increase the overall attraction power of the site and would be available regardless of hot or windy conditions at the top.
- Interpretive opportunities that provide the complete story should be available at the base of the Fortress and easily accessible to ensure communicating key messaging and associated stories to all audiences.

E-5: The terrain at the top is uneven. This makes walking around on the top difficult and unsafe for visitors who have issues with balance (such as many elderly people). Paved walkways would help alleviate this issue. Also, opportunities at the base of the Fortress could provide an alternate experience.

E-6: Summer weather can be hot and there is little shade at the top of the Fortress. Heat-related issues (such as heat stroke or heat exhaustion) are potentially an issue. Air conditioning the water tank space is important, as is putting in some shaded sitting areas at the top. Again, opportunities at the base of the Fortress could provide an alternate experience.
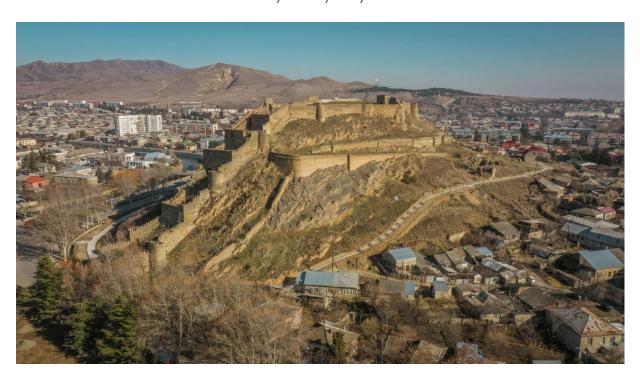
PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

PI-1: A Visitor Center has been constructed at the base of the Fortress near the statue. The covered interior space could be used for interpretive opportunities.

PI-2: A Plaza exists at the base of the Fortress that can be used for visitor experiences.

PI-3: A large open area adjacent to the Plaza can be developed to support visitor experiences (this is the old Agrarian Market).

PI-4: A paved path runs along the base of the Fortress but does not completely encircle the site.

PI-5: A large water tank, located at the top of the Fortress, is being remodeled so it can house opportunities for visitors.

PI-6: An Exhibition Building is available in the plaza.

PI-7: A building with restrooms exists on one side of the Fortress, some distance from theplaza. Although it is not likely to be used by people parking in the Plaza area, it is on the pedestrian route from some parts of the city to the Fortress.

LOCATION AND ACCESS

LA-1: The Fortress is located near the center of town, adjacent tomajor roadways, making it easily accessible, and making it easy for it to function as a hub for experiences extending into the city.

LA-2: Currently, the top can only be accessed using an uphill pathway with steps at the end.

LA-3: Gori Fortress is on the route currently used by many bus tours.

EXISTING INFORMATION AND INTERPRETIVE/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

EI-1: Information on Gori Fortress exists, but it is not readily available at the site.

SAFETY

S-1: The top of the Fortress contains pits (some with guardrails) uneven terrain, and steep drops from some of the walls.

S-2: Visitor's parking in the Plaza area must cross a major street to access the Fortress.

S-3: As noted, heat stroke and heat exhaustion are potential issues during hot weather.

S-4: Gori Municipality is near an occupied zone (visitors may be concerned). It will be important to ensure that all visitors know to avoid getting close to that area.

POTENTIALLY COMPLEMENTARY/COMPETING OPPORTUNITIES

PCO-1: Gori Fortress has a large array of potentially complementary attractions within or close to the city. This creates the opportunity to create an extensive interpretive network, which couldsignificantly increase the attraction and holding power of the area – keys to Gori becoming a tourismhub.

The following sites offer interpretive opportunities associated with the story of Gori Fortress. To the extent possible, complementary opportunities should be developed at Gori Fortress rather than ones that duplicate what is available at other sites. However, the story of the need for constant defense of Gori and its people is best told at the Fortress.

Note: This is not meant to be an exhaustive list (there are hundreds of sites in the area that either tella part of the story or could be used in a tour).

- Ethnographic Museum
- War Museum
- Ceramics Museum
- Erekle (Turkish Bath)
- Unexploded ordinance from the 2008 Conflict in a building in Gori
- Memorial to Georgian Warriors
- Uplistsikhe
- Ateni Fortress (Gori Municipality)
- Vere Fortress (Gori Municipality)
- Cave Complex of Kvakhvreli

- Borjomi (museums)
- Any restaurant serving authentic Georgia cuisine.
- Any historical buildings with architecture reflecting influence from other cultures.

PCO-2: Georgia has many Fortresses, some in better condition and better developed than Gori Fortress. This has several implications:
- Those Fortresses that are successful in terms of attracting tourism can be analyzed to determine if characteristics of the visitor experiences offered at such places can be duplicated at Gori Fortress.
- Despite duplicating some aspects of the visitor experiences offered at similar sites, the experience at Gori Fortress needs to be unique to achieve the highest attraction power.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

RP-1: The site, and the archaeological ruins, are accessible from all around the site.

RP-2: The archaeological ruins and digs do not appear to be protected from people.

RP-3: Potential for vandalism exists.

OTHER

O-1: The site is currently not well-protected from damage by visitors.

O-2: Gori currently has a lack of high-quality hotels. However, it does have high quality guest houses.

O-3: The site appears to be managed by multiple entities with overlapping jurisdictions. This creates issues when trying to develop a cohesive unified visitor experience.

O-4: Gori is already visited by bus tours, although they do not stop at the Fortress and do not stay in town. Although this is not ideal now, the fact that bus tours already come to Gori lessens the difficulty in motivating them to visit Gori Fortress after it is developed, especially since the Fortress is on a main travel route.

O-5: The existing archaeological dig is accessible. Although this creates issues in terms of protecting the dig, it does create the potential to use it as a tourist attraction.

O-6: Funds are being expended to modify the water tank for use as part of a visitor experience.

O-7: Space at the base of the Fortress that can be used for visitor parking and experiences includes the Plaza and the area where the Agrarian Market was torn down.

O-8: The top of the Fortress offers a great view of Gori. Aside from being a major attractor (people love views from high points), this has several implications:

- The view creates the opportunity to identify sites within the interpretive network, such as the Georgian warriors.
- The view of the rivers and the confluence creates a good opportunity to talk about rivers as important travel and trade routes and confluences of rivers as key trading hubs.

INVENTORY OF FEATURES / STORIES

INTRODUCTION

The planning process includes selecting themes (messages) that will, if understood by the visitor, have the potential to cause a change in knowledge leading to an impact on behavior that is consistent with the Management Goals. Stories are the vehicles for communicating the themes. People become more interested in a story when they can see something related to it, and they are more likely to believe what they see than what they only hear or read. Therefore, the more an interpretive opportunity connects with and uses actual artifacts, specimens, features and other sensory stimuli in conveying information, the more effective the opportunity will be. With that in mind, the inventory of potential stories focuses on identifying sensory stimuli as a means of determining what stories can be told most effectively.

The following table contains a list of some of the prominent features and stories that could be told using those features. This table should be added to as the planning and design process proceeds and should eventually include a list of artifacts recovered from the site.

LARGE FEATURES AND ASSOCIATED STORIES

Feature	Associated stories and comments
Gori Fortress	• The strategic importance of Gori. • The relative geospatial position of Gori and Georgia as a crossing point between Asia and Europe, causing invasions and attacks throughout history. • The need for Gori and Georgia to constantly defend themselves.
Gori	• The importance of the confluence of rivers as key trading locations.
Rivers	• The importance of the confluence of rivers as key trading locations.
Architectural arch in the Fortress architecture	• Influence by other cultures
Ruins of Roman fortifications	• Incursions by other empires
Historic Turkish bath	• Incursions by other empires • Influences of other cultures
Ruins of church in the Fortress and different churches visible from the top.	• Influence of religion in history of Georgia.
The Caucasus Mountains	• The relative geospatial position of Gori and Georgia as a crossing point between Asia and Europe, causing invasions and attacks throughout history.

MESSAGING (THEMES)

Note: The Connection of Themes to Visuals
One of the basic rules in interpretation is to choose messages (themes) that connect strongly to the visual features in the landscape because it is difficult to communicate ideas and concepts that a visitor cannot see evidence of. For example,the Fortress indicates a history of conflict and defense, the Persian arch and Erekle (Turkish Bath) indicate influence by other cultural groups, and qvervri is an example of Georgian culture.

INTRODUCTION

Themes (messages) and topics are not the same. A topic is a subject, such as "Gori Fortress" A theme is a statement or message about the subject, such as "Gori Fortress reflects the need for Gori to constantly defend itself over time." Themes are derived from goals and objectives by determining the concepts visitors need to understand for them to respond in a way that helps achieve the goals and objectives. In combination, the themes provide guidance for selecting information to be presented, which are the supporting stories.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretive Theme 1: Gori's location at the confluence of two major rivers, and therefore the confluence of two travel and trade corridors, and its location on the Silk Road at the connection between Asia and Europe made it a strategic location as a trading hub and military site. One of the impacts was that it was invaded multiple times during its history and had todefend itself constantly.

Discussion and Comment: This is a key point in understanding why Gori was such a strategiclocation and the target of multiple invasions during its history.

Examples of Supporting Stories
- The Silk Road passed through Gori.
- Gori as a hub of trade in past eras
- Invasions by each empire – Byzantine, Persian, Roman, Greek, Mongol, and Russian
- The presence and story of the evolution of Gori Fortress
- Uplistsikhe as a place of refuge during conflicts

Interpretive Theme 2: The geospatial location of Georgia in general and Gori specifically on a travel route connecting Asia and Europe meant that it was exposed to influence from an array of different cultures.

Discussion and Comment: In a sense, the influence of other cultures helps support the story of thehistory of Gori and Georgia – that it was invaded by numerous different empires form the East and West.

Examples of Supporting Stories
- The Erekle Bath
- The arch showing Persian influence.
- The ancient Turkish coin found on the site.
- Other artifacts found on the site associated with invading empires.
- Artifacts and influence associated with exchange of cultural elements along the Silk Road.

> **Interpretive Theme 3**: Despite being occupied for long periods in its history, Georgia has retained its unique culture, with flavors of other cultural groups blended in, which shows the resilience of the Georgian people.

Discussion and Comment: This is important, both for the pride of the Georgian people, and as a selling point for tourism. Visitors want to see authentic. They especially want to see or experience something that is not only authentic, but which is also unique. The fact that Georgia has retained elements of its unique culture reflects the resilience and determination of the Georgian people.

Examples of Supporting Stories
- Traditional wine making and qvevri
- Traditional Georgian foods
- Traditional Georgian patterns used in garments, tablecloths and similar items
- Traditional Georgian designs used in making objects
- Georgian wrestling

RECOMMENDED VISITOR INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCES

CHARACTERISTICS OF VISITOR INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCES: GORI FORTRESS

Based on information gathered during the training sessions and from various sources regarding tourism in Georgia, the following are basic characteristics of the Visitor Interpretive Experiences that encompass Gori Fortress and associated sites within Gori Municipality:

- The experiences should be based on opportunities involving authentic Georgian culture. According to reports on tourism, many tourists are seeking authentic Georgian culture during their experience in Georgia, especially when they are in areas not considered to be the popular tourist destinations. It is also a characteristic of experiences that appeal to many high value travelers.
- The experiences should include opportunities to sample Georgian cuisine (food and wine). Over 70% of visitors to Georgia include sampling Georgian cuisine as part of their trip. In addition, with Georgia being the birthplace of wine and having a unique wine making process (use of qvevri), wine is a staple of authentic Georgian culture.
- The experiences should include multiple sites within and around Gori. Motivating visitors to stay longer inthe area is a key to Gori becoming a tourism hub. The more sites visitors visit, the more time ittakes and the more likely the visitors are to spend a night or more.
- The experiences should be user-friendly. The easier it is to engage in experiences, the higher the probability that visitors will engage in those experiences, and the higher the probability that visitors will be positive in describing the experiences to family and friends after they return. Key characteristics of a user-friendly experience include a good orientation and wayfinding system, easy physical access, information that is easily obtainable, and information available in the language spoken by the visitor.
- The array of experiences available to a visitor should be more than they can accommodate in asingle visit. This is, in part, what drives repeat visitation.
- Although components of the experiences should allow for any time limitation, ideally the experience at the Fortress should last a whole day and into the evening. This increases the probability of visitors spending at least one night.
- The sites and associated visitor interpretive experiences should be tied together by story.This approach provides a strong connection between sites that can be used to motivate visitors to visit other sites within the network.
- The experiences should be as unique as possible. The one commodity that any place can sell that nobody can duplicate is the experience of being in that location. For example, many places in the Republic of Georgia can provide interpretive experiences about the history of Georgia, but the best place to tell the story of Gori Fortress and the history of that area is inGori. The more a place can focus on telling its own unique story, the more unique it can be.

CONCEPT / APPROACH

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES AT GORI FORTRESS

Because the intent is to eventually transform Gori into a tourism hub, the visitor interpretive experiences identified in this Concept will all either take place within Gori or be based in Gori. At the Fortress, the approach that is most suited to the context (goals, target audiences, parameters, opportunities, and messaging), is to use the area at the base of the Fortress to develop the focal point of the interpretive network with the experience at the top of the Fortress being a key secondary part of the experience. This is based on several factors, including the following:

- Accessing the top of the Fortress currently requires a long uphill walk with stairways. That factor

currently eliminates access by people in wheelchairs and many people with limited physical ability. It also eliminates many groups who have such people within their group. Even if a funicular or other means of access is developed, it does not mean that everyone will go to the top. Also, designing and constructing a means of accessing the top, such as a funicular, will take a significant amount of time. While such access is being developed, interpretive opportunities at the top and at the base of the Fortress could be developed. That does not mean that the top of the Fortress should not containsignificant interpretive opportunities. It just means that the opportunities at the base of the Fortress should be significant enough to provide adequate attraction power without depending on the visitor taking the trip to the top. It also means that the opportunities at the base must include thematic overview leading to marketing additional sites within the interpretive network located in Gori Municipality and the surrounding region.

- Development at the top of the Fortress is constrained by the goal of protecting theartifact. The area at the base of the Fortress can be developed without as many constraints.
- Visitors who are physically able to access the top of the Fortress may still choose not to do so for several reasons, including weather (heat, wind or inclement weather) or time constraints. Visitors will perceive that visiting the opportunities at the base of the Fortress do not require dedicatingas much time to accessing the site, thus increasing the attraction power of those opportunities. The opportunities at the base can also remain open during extremely hot weather and during inclement weather.
- There is more space available at the base of the Fortress for developing visitor opportunities than is available at the top.

GORI AS A CENTER FOR GEORGIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

Based on key opportunities in Gori (especially the Fortress), and experiences desired by key target audiences, the recommended concept/approach is to focus on visitor interpretive experiences that supportGori being a national center for authentic Georgian cultural heritage, which includes history, especially the heritage and history of Gori and the area around Gori. This approach requires less investment in contemporary infrastructure of the type required to create a high-quality resort type of experience. Even creating infrastructure to support such an experience would not result in attracting a large number of people who desire that type of experience because places on the coast are preferred locations for resort type experiences. It also does not depend on more typical opportunities that visitors want in the evenings, such as nightclubs This does not mean that creating a 'spectacle' should not be considered, but the issue with focusing on such an approach is that you are not doing something that others cannot easily duplicate. Nobody can tell the story of Gori better than it can be told in Gori.

ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION

The description of the Concept is organized based on the stages of a visitor experience, which are described below. The focus is on the Primary Experience, which is the part of the Visitor Experience into which interpretive opportunities will be integrated. The information necessary for the part of the informationnetwork leading to the Primary Experience and continuing after the Primary Experience is described in this document to complete the Concept. Actual interpretive opportunities to deliver the information will be identified later in the process of transforming Gori into a hub for visitor interpretive experiences focusing on the culture and history of Georgia.

The stages of a visitor experience are as follows:

- **Choice to Engage.** Visitor Experiences do not start with a website. Something must motivate a person to access the website to get more information.
- **Pre-visit Experience.** This typically includes deciding to visit based on information that markets the site and the available visitor opportunities, and planning the visit to the site, which requires trip planning information, such as directions, what to bring, hours open to the public, suggested

itineraries, etc. This information is typically presented on the Web.

- **Travel Experience.** The key to this part of the experience is the wayfinding network. The macro aspect of the wayfinding network (how to get to the Republic of Georgia) is typicallytaken care of by others. Consequently, the major focus is the wayfinding and orientation network supporting the visitor interpretive experiences based in Gori, which includes directions for getting to Gori. Independent travelers (not on a guided bus or van tour) will want to know how to get to Gori when they land in Tbilisi.

- **Arrival Experience.** Upon arriving in Gori, visitors staying the night are likely to be concerned initially with finding their lodging. When they arrive at a site like Gori Fortress, visitors are typically initially concerned with meeting their needs, which may include drinking water, WC, orientationand wayfinding information, site-specific trip planning information, and any information necessary to facilitate engaging in the activities that prompted their visit, such as attending an event, engaging in a recreational opportunity or something else. After they are comfortable in their ability to move around the site and have made decisions on what they are going to do they are ready for the Primary Experience, which should include a significant interpretive component.

- **Primary experience.** Visitors typically visit places for the experiences offered, not the interpretation. Interpretive opportunities can be a value-added element to their experience if they enrich the desired experience and do not compete with the activities in which the visitor wants to engage. In other words, the interpretation must be integrated into the visitor's desired experience in ways that those opportunities add value rather than competing for attention. The interpretive network should begin with Thematic Overview and proceed to detailed interpretive information. Consequently, Thematic Overview needs to be available in all areas that are used by a significant number of visitors to enter the Fortress area.

- **Departure experience.** This typically includes another visit to the WC and a visit to the gift store (if one exists). This part of the experience is one of the best opportunities to market upcoming events and otheropportunities on-site as well as off-site opportunities at partner sites.

- **Return travel experience.** The key to this part of the experience is simply to guide visitors back to their lodging or to the major transportation routes that were used to access Gori if they are leaving.

- **Post-visit experience.** This part of the experience depends on what happens during the Primary Experience. If contact information can be obtained, it can be used to market upcoming events and opportunities directly to the visitor. If the Fortress has been successful in marketing opportunities at partner sites, the post-visit experience for the visitor can be a continuum of experiences – both repeatvisits and visits to related sites – that continue to reinforce key messages.

RECOMMENDED INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES: OVERVIEW

Note: *Some of the experiences listed are currently offered, such as walking tours. They are included to indicate that should be retained as part of the interpretive network, although they should be modified to reflect best interpretive practices and to reflect the goals, objectives, and key messaging (themes).*

CHOOSING TO ENGAGE: OVERVIEW

As noted previously, a Visitor Interpretive Experience does not typically begin with a visit to a website. Potential visitors must first become aware of a destination and its visitor opportunities to be motivated to visit a website for that destination. Typically, potential visitors will learn of the site and the visitor opportunities through communication channels they already use, such as radio, television, newspaper, programs for school children (for residents), programs in the surrounding communities at events and other functions attended by residents of the area, brochures/flyer available at locations frequented by visitors to the area, brochures/flyers at partner sites, and especially by social selling (hearing about a destination from others). The latter is extremely important because it is the single most effective marketing strategy. That is one reason it is critical to ensure that all visitors to Gori Fortress and Gori have a good experience and that their expectations are met or exceeded.

Reaching potential visitors necessitates inserting elements of the network into places already frequented by the target audiences, whether physically or digitally. This will vary by target audience. Typical strategies include the following:

- Traditional mass media such as newspapers (including on-line papers), radio and television.
- Table Teasers. Table Teasers can take the form of place mats, laminated cards, or booklets to name a few possibilities, and are typically found in restaurants where people browse them while waiting for food. Table Teasers focus on presenting interesting tidbits of information associated with the stories covered by the interpretive network. They contain directions to the site and contact information, such as phone numbers, so visitors can obtain more orientation and/or interpretive information. These are more likely to be effective in Georgia.
- Rack cards and flyers.
- Social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Ideally, you will want visitors to post pictures ontheir social media sites, which is a major form of social selling in today's world. Consequently, you should set up places at Gori Fortress and associated sites with attractive backgrounds where people can take 'selfies.'

PRE-VISIT EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

After learning of Gori and Gori Fortress, and that it has interesting recreational and interpretive opportunities, most potential visitors will then try to find information on the internet. The website for Gori Fortress should focus on marketing the visitor experiences, and then offer trip planning information, such as best times to visit, what to bring, directions, and an array of suggested itineraries that use Gori as a hub and include Gori Fortress and associated attractions in the region. The most important element of successful websites is the navigation system. Consequently, the website must be designed so the user can find desired information quickly.

The website can also include interpretive opportunities,such as a virtual tour of the site. Such a tour helps market visitor experiences and may be the Primary Experience for visitors who are unable to make a trip due tophysical infirmity, lack of funds or other reasons. Such 'virtual visitors' are still of value because they can help with social selling by letting others know that the Republic of Georgia in general and Gori specifically looks like a great place to visit.

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

This is the part of the experience between when visitors leave home and when they arrive at Gori and/or the Fortress. It has a macro component, which focuses on traveling to Georgia and Gori and finding Gori Fortress, whether from their lodging or from the highway. It also has a component that focuses on orientation and wayfinding supporting the visitor experiences that extend beyond Gori Fortress.

The key information needed during this part of the experience falls in the category of wayfinding. Although many visitors will use GPS on cell phones to find their way, many will still rely on directional signage and paper maps. In addition, independent travelers will rely on guide books. (This is why it is important for Gori and Gori Fortress to become a 'do not miss' experience so it starts getting includedin the major tour books.)

Many visitors will have multiple Travel, Arrival and Departure experiences in their overall experience. For example, visitors spending a night in Gori will have a Travel and Arrival Experience associated with their place of lodging and a Travel and Arrival Experience associated with Gori Fortress, assuming that is the first interpretive experience they engage with. Consequently, the orientation and wayfinding network must be detailed and extensive to cover all sites within the interpretive network.

ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

The key tasks in facilitating the Arrival Experience are to make visitors feel welcome (which is not difficult for Georgians, who are known for their hospitality), and provide visitors with directions to places to take care of their needs. Such places may include where to park (if arriving in rented or private vehicle), location ofthe WC, and location of site-specific orientation, wayfinding and trip planning information. (Although most independent visitors will plan much of their trip prior to arrival, they often make their final decisions on what to do after arriving.) The necessary wayfinding information must be provided at key points in the experience, including when they arrive at their lodgingand when they arrive at any site in the interpretive network, especially at Gori Fortress. In general, the goal is to create a system that moves visitors around the network without them experiencing wasted time or frustration.

Typical strategies for delivering wayfinding information include site-specific directional and identification signage, map/brochures, printed tour guides with suggested itineraries, self-serve orientation stations, and staffed information stations. It is important when designing directional signage and maps of the area to ensure that all colors, symbols and names are consistent throughout the entire network.

The Plaza below the Fortress contains a Visitor Center, which should function as a hub for the on-site and off-site VisitorInterpretive Experiences. To do so, it should provide WC facilities, orientation and wayfinding information and trip planning information for both the Arrival and Departure Experiences, including suggested itineraries for exploring the surrounding region. Ideally, it should have a designated space where people can sit and plan their site-specific or area-specific itinerary.

The outside of the Visitor Center should have a designated staging area where people on bus or van tours can disembark from their vehicle or wait for their ride to return. Staging areas can also be used bypeople gathering for a guided tour of the Fortress, and people waiting to begin a guided bicycle or walking tour of Gori. It should have shaded benches to provide for a comfortable wait.

PRIMARY VISITOR INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

The interpretive opportunities in the Primary Visitor Interpretive Experience should progress from Thematic Overview to detail. Using the area at the base of the Fortress as the starting place for experiences at the Fortress ensures that all visitors can easily access thematic overview opportunities before progressing into different interpretive experiences where the interpretive detail will then make sense. The Primary Interpretive Experience is organized into the following sections:

- **Support Strategies.** These support the entire interpretive network.
- **Base of the Fortress.** We recommend that this eventually be the focal point of the Visitor Interpretive Experience at the Fortress, and the focal point of the entire Interpretive Network. It will be a key to attractingand holding visitors.
- **The Fortress.** Although the opportunities at the base of the Fortress are the focal point, the opportunities at the top of the Fortress should still have strong attraction power to motivate visitors to make the climb because of the stories best told at the top (key stories associated with invasions and defense), and because it increases the length of stay.
- **Extended Experiences Within Gori.** These are the opportunities that occur within the city of Gori.
- **Extended Experiences in the Region.** These opportunities extend beyond the city, while using Gori as a base.

The key to making all these experiences mesh together and be part of an extensive network of visitor interpretive experiences is for each to tell stories that reflect the key storylines and messages in such a way that the visitor wants more, and then send them to other experiences within the network where they can get more of the story. That also means that partner sites should try to avoid duplicating the story.

DEPARTURE EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

This is a distinct part of the visitor experience, during which visitors may need information to help them on their return journey. Despite finding their way to specific destinations, many visitors are unable to reverse that process in their mind to find their way back. Consequently, it is important to develop a wayfinding system that includes the return trip, whether returning to Gori from an Extended Experience in the Region, returning to their lodging from Gori Fortress or an Extended Experience Within Gori, or returning to Tbilisi. In addition to needing information to guide them, many visitors will want to use the WC prior to a return trip, so this amenity should be easily accessible to visitors when they arrive and when they depart.

For many visitors, the Departure Experience includes a stop at a Gift Store to purchase a souvenir. Ideally, the choice of what to sell should be dictated by the site and the stories being told in the interpretive network. That way, the souvenir will remind visitors of the location, and could instigate conversations with friends that leads to endorsements of a trip to the area. For example, Te Papa Tongarewa, the National Museum of New Zealand, sells coasters with images of endangered bird species to support their Exhibitions on Natural History and their Management Goal of conserving natural resources of New Zealand.

RETURN TRAVEL EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

This is the part of the experience between when visitors leave Gori or one of the other destinations in the Interpretive Network and when they arrive at another destination or at their home. (If their next stop is outside the Interpretive Network, it is the responsibility of others to provide appropriate wayfinding information for a Return Travel Experience.) It has a macro component, which focuses on traveling from Gori or associated sites to their home. It also has a micro component that focuses on orientation and wayfinding that assists the visitor in finding their way back to their place of lodging. The key information needed during this part of the experience falls in the category of wayfinding. Although many visitors will use GPS on cell phones to find their way, many will still rely on directional signage and maps.

POST TRIP EXPERIENCE: OVERVIEW

This is the part of the experience after they return home. It is optional in a sense because a communication connection between visitors and Gori Fortress, such as email, Twitter, Instagram, etc., may not have been established. If a link has been established, visitors can be reached with information about Gori Fortress, Gori or one of the partner sites. This information can include new opportunities, images and anything else that helps maintain awareness of a trip to Gori Fortress, Gori Municipality and the Region. This increases the likelihood of visitors mentioning it to others. It also increases the likelihood of a repeat visit. The basic approach is to always consider the Post Trip Experience as a marketing opportunity to entice visitors into a repat trip or to help them be an ambassador for the site by telling others about their experience (in a positive manner).

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES: SUPPORT

The following strategies support the entire network, or a chunk of it, by making visitors aware of othersites and facilitating a visit to those sites by offering orientation and wayfinding information. In the case of a guidebook or App, interpretive information could also be included. The following specific strategies are consistent with the Visitor Interpretive Experience Concept:

- **Passports to History.** These function like real passports, only instead of getting a stamp when you visit other countries, you get a stamp if you visit one of the other sites in the interpretive network. It could be made a bit moredifficult by requiring the participant to engage in an activity like the 'Hunt for History' Discovery Activity for children described in the section on Gori Fortress.

- **Touch Screen Interactive Map of Area.** This is located indoors at the Base of the Fortress. It also could be duplicated at any site in the network. The map would be of the part of Georgia covered by the Interpretive Network. Sites within the network would be identified by a specificsymbol. Upon pressing the symbol, an image and brief description of the site and what it has to offer is displayed. In addition, tour routes on which the site is located would light up so visitors could identify other attractions along the route to the site. When not in use, the touch screen cycles through a display of each image to help visitors understand what it contains. Publications that facilitate exploring the area or visiting specific sites should be located nearby so a visitor can get more information if their interest is piqued. Note that the purpose of this exhibit is not to try to hold visitors and provide a lot of information. It is intended to help motivate visitors to visit other sites in the network.

- **Podcast or Vodcast Series.** This is a series with each site having one overview vodcast and/or podcast to tell a different 'chapter' of the overall story.

- **Guide Book to the interpretive network.** The publication would include maps and orientation information, images from each site and short descriptions. The purpose is not to provide in- depth information about each site, but to motivate visitors to go to those sites and thenfacilitate the travel to that site with orientation and wayfinding information.

- **Application (App) for the interpretive network.** This contains the same information as the Guidebook, but it isan App for use on smart phones.

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES: BASE OF FORTRESS

INTRODUCTION

The keys to an effective array of opportunities at the base of the Fortress include the following:

- All visitors can easily access the Thematic Overview.
- Have enough experiences that take approximately the same amount of time so large groups (such as multiple busloads of tourists) can be pulsed through the experience in small groups by rotating them through the different experiences. This also works well for handling large groups of students.
- All opportunities inspire visitors to want more.
- All visitors have easy access to orientation and wayfinding information to additional opportunities.
- The array of interpretive opportunities includes different 'entry points' into the story to accommodate everyone from visitors to Georgia who don't know much about the history and culture to residents who are quite familiar with the culture and history. (This is adesign issue because accommodating families typically requires providing different entry points into each exhibit.)
- Market the experiences at the top of the Fortress so visitors are intrigued enough that they arewilling to pay for a ticket to access the top.

STRATEGIES: INDOORS

The following specific strategies are located within the Visitor Center or Exhibition Hall in the Plaza at the base of the Fortress:

- **'A Virtual Walk-Through Georgian History.'** This is a cornerstone visitor experience providing Thematic Overview. The concept is to move a visitor intellectually through a history of the area relying on visuals and narration (with information also accessible in written form for those with hearing issues) to show the successive conquests by the Byzantine empire, the Persians, Romans, Greeks, Mongols, Ottomans, and Russians, but always with the Georgians reasserting their independence. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, from a 3-D film with surround sound in a theater to a 'black box' virtual experience where cutting-edge technology is used toimmerse visitors in the story so they feel that they are literally walking through history, witnessing the caravans on the Silk Road, the invasions, and other events significant in the history of Georgia in general and Gori specifically. The actual experience depends on space available and budget. Whatever the actual strategy, it should communicate all the key themes and be presented in a way that whets the visitor's appetite, so they want more of the story. Note that this should not be construed simply as a 'Disney-type' experience, although it could have that kind of feel, and should be captivating and engaging. However, its purpose is not simplyto entertain, but to communicate the key messages to provide visitors with an overview of thestories told throughout the Interpretive Network so the stories told at any other site in the network make sense, and to convey those stories in such a way that inspires visitors to engage in other interpretive experiences in the network.
- **Exhibition: Gori Fortress in its Prime.** One question many visitors will have when they go to the top of the Fortress is 'What did it look like in the past?' They may also want to know what buildings were located inside the Fortress, and how the people inside survived during a siege. This Exhibition focuses on answering those questions by depicting the Fortress when it was whole and showing how it functioned, especially during a siege. It should answer questions regarding the purpose of the multiple gates. As with all the Exhibitions, this can be a simple exhibit, or it can make use of technology to animate the use of the Fortress in peace times and when operating in defense of Gori. This Exhibition will help visitors understand what they are seeing at the top and should be designed to inspire them to make the climb.

- **Exhibition: Clues to the Past.** This is a museum exhibit with the artifacts in this space relating to the Fortress in some way. It should include artifacts (or replicas of artifacts if environmentally controlled space is not available) found during the archaeological digs, with part of that section dedicated to what has been discovered recently, which means refreshing the exhibit periodically. An ever-changing exhibit, although it does require staff time, helps motivate people to return on a regular basis. The key to making this an effective interpretive space is to select and use the artifacts to tell stories in support of the major storylines and messaging rather than to simply use it as a space to houseand label different artifacts. For example, a series of sets for armor could show the evolution of armor over time, with supporting interpretive information focusing on the reasons for thechanges, and whether those changes were due to influence from other cultural groups or uniquely Georgian.
- **Craft-Space – Georgian craftspeople at work.** This is a space for local artisan or painters to work on items uniquely Georgian. It could include a space to display examples of authentic Georgian craftwork made by local artisans. Associated interpretation would focus on what is uniquely Georgian and what are characteristics that represent influences from other cultures, both of which reflect Theme 3. Ideally, the objects displayed could also be purchased in the Gift Store.
- **Changeable Exhibition Space.** This allows for exchange of exhibits with other museums, especially the ones in Gori, Borjomi and nearby towns, which helps market the Gori story, andhelps strengthen the interpretive network by motivating visitors to visit those museums, which in turn strengthens the relationship between Gori Fortress and other sites in the interpretive network. Note that it is ideal to exchange exhibits with nearby locations to help motivate visitors to use Gori asa hub for their visit.
- **Performances / Events (indoors).** Our understanding is that there will be an indoor space for events such as dance performances. That space should also work for music and for singing of Georgian folk songs.As with all the elements in the network, interpretive information should accompany the presentations.
- **Gift Store.** The merchandise should reflect the goals and messaging for the project. In other words, you would want to sell authentic Georgian items, especially ones made locally, authentic Georgian wine, publications that help the visitor learn more about the stories presented and items that facilitate their visit to the Fortress and to other sites in the network, such as sun block, sun glasses, etc. Keep in mind that many visitors will return using air travel and need to be able to fit gifts into their luggage, so small items should be included in the array of merchandise.

STRATEGIES: OUTDOORS

The space for these strategies is where the old Agrarian Market stood. This space is owned by the Municipality and is intended to be used to support the efforts to increase tourism at the Fortress and in Gori. The site should have events happening every day and especially evenings during the tourist season. Theevenings are important because visitors who attend events in the evening are more likely to spend the night. All events should reflect the approach of Gori being a center of Georgian culture and history, and all should have an interpretive component. The space should be developed so it can be used for a variety of events, such as dance performances, demonstrations, craft fairs, etc.

The following visitor opportunities should be developed for this space:

- **A Celebration of Georgian Culture.** This event is a combination craft fair, food fair, wine tasting, music and singing exhibition, and dance exhibition – all of which should focus on presenting authentic Georgian culture and cuisine, and all with associated interpretive information. This should be developed as a signature event – one unique to Gori – and large enough to attract a lot of visitors and to have visitors plan their trips to ensure that they can attend this event.How often this takes place is a question for discussion.
- **Rotating or Periodic Events:** The following are all events that could be staged in the outdoor area. All should focus on authentic Georgian culture. As with everything else in the network, an interpretive component should be integrated into all the events. For example, if theevent is a Georgian

Food and Wine Tasting Fair, the interpretive information would provide information on what foods are uniquely Georgian and what have been influenced by other cultures. It would also include a focus on Georgia as the birthplace of wine, and the unique traditional method for making wine. Note that the events listed could rotate daily, and two events could be held on the same day – one during the day and one in the evening. Potential events include:

- o A Georgian Food and Wine Tasting Fair
- o A Georgian dance exhibition featuring dances from different regions (an annual dance competition could be a part of the Celebration of Georgian Culture)
- o A Craft Fair focused on crafts that are uniquely Georgian, from clothing to daggers
- o A Georgian Art Show
- o A Georgian Music Festival (could also include singing)
- o Demonstrations of Georgian wrestling, archery, and similar skills

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES: GORI FORTRESS

Note: *Site improvements should be made before visitor experiences should be offered. These include, but are not limited to, upgrading the safety measures at the top, creating a paved or hard surfaced walking path around the edge of the top area so visitors have a level surface to walk on (particularly important for older people), putting in shaded benches to rest, and putting in a staffed first aid station (especially important when it is hot outside).*

INTRODUCTION

The keys to effective opportunities located on the grounds of the Fortress include the following:

- The opportunities at the top have significant attraction power.
- The opportunities inspire visitors to visit other places within the interpretive network within and outside of Gori.
- The opportunities include thematic overview. You cannot assume that everyone has engaged in the thematic overview opportunity at the base of the Fortress. Visitors with limited time may have to choose between the two and many, given the choice, would go to the top of the Fortress. This does not mean that thematic overview must be presented to the same level of detail as at the base, but it should be included in some way. If the Exhibition at the top is the first interpretive opportunity developed, it should focus on presenting thematic overview of the key stories.
- The array of opportunities should include ones that take advantage of the view, because it is one of the most significant assets at the site.
- The array of opportunities should include ones that take advantage of the archaeological dig, but in such a way that the dig is protected.

- Interpretive signs should not be visually obtrusive or numerous. They should also be designed with limited information. The average length of time a person spends reading an interpretive sign is less than a minute. Consequently, the best use of interpretive signage is to pique a visitor's interest and direct the visitor to another source of information that contains more detail, such as the Exhibition in the water tank.

STRATEGIES

- **Tours – Guided and Self-Guided.** The interpretive stories included in these tours should use visible features to help communicate key concepts. For example, the Fortress itself is stark evidence of the need to defend the town. As another example, one of the arches reflects influence by the Persian empire. Note that guides should be trained in Best Practices and trained regarding the key storylines, messaging, and the supporting stories. An 'Interpreter's Notebook' would be a good tool to develop to facilitate that training. People without a guide can be supplied interpretive information in a variety of ways – a brochure (often preferred by older people), an App for a smart phone that is triggered by beacons or chips located around the site, and/or a series of podcasts or vodcasts. Note that self-guided tours are only possible if staff are present at the top to prevent visitors from causing damage or endangering themselves. The possible strategies for conveying the interpretive information include:
    - Map brochure of Gori Fortress with self-guided interpretive tour. The stops are identified by features rather than something like numbered posts.
    - Podcasts. These would be a series of short programs that provide information at specific locations along the route to the top and at the top. They could be part of a larger set of podcasts that include other sites in the network.
    - Vodcasts. These are like podcasts, only with video.
    - Self-guided tour Application (App) for smart phones. Accessing information can be triggered by chips, beacons, or something similar. The advantage over podcasts and vodcasts is that the App is easily updateable because it is essentially a website.
    - QR codes or a similar strategy for accessing a website with information.

- **Roving interpreter.** Note that this is only effective if you allow people up without a guide. This person moves around the site engaging with visitors and answering questions.
- **Low-angled interpretive panels focusing on the view outside of the Fortress.** These would primarily be what are termed 'panoramic' panels, which focus on identifying key features – natural and cultural. They are popular because they help answer questions that many visitors have, such as wanting to know the identity of a specific structure or the name of a natural feature. They can also be used to market visits to sites that are visible from that point.
- **Low-angled interpretive panel series focusing on the inside of the Fortress.** This series of panels, located along the outer pathway, focus on what the Fortress looked like when it was functional.
- **Low angled interpretive panels focusing on key features.** These panels, located adjacent to key features such as pits, the ruins of the church, the battlements, the top gate in the series of gates extending towards the river, and the Persian arch, focus on one or more supporting stories.

- **Glimpses of the past – an augmented reality experience.** To avoid limiting this opportunity to people who have a smart phone or I-Pad, the concept is to use mounted binoculars with a mechanism that allows the visitor to 'switch the view' to different times in history. The binoculars would provide a stereoscopic view of what the area might have looked like at that time. An associated audio element would provide a brief narrative of what was happening at that point in time. Note that these might be most effective if pointed at locations where specific events transpired or that had significant structures that no longer exist. For example, one could be focused in such a way that a person would be able to 'see' a caravan on the Silk Road, and at another point in time, an army approaching along that same route.
- **Exhibition: Georgia (or Gori specifically) – the Gateway Between Europe and Asia.** (This is the Exhibition recommended for the water tank.) Georgia's location and geography destined it for use as a major travel and trade route connecting Europe and Asia, and consequently, a target for invading armies. One concept would be to use a map of Europe and Asia on the floor of the Exhibition, with Georgia in the center represented by a raised topographic map of the country. The Silk Road, crossing through Georgia, would also be represented on the floor. Exhibition elements focused on invading empires would be located around the room in the direction those invasions came from. A series of waves of light would move along the floor and change the color of Georgia to support a narrative focusing on the invasion of a particular empire. The exhibition elements associated with the different empires would provide supporting interpretation that helped explain why that empire wanted to invade Gori, and the impact it had on the country – its history, people and culture.
- **Archaeologist talks.** Periodically, on a regular basis, an archaeologist would present a summary of what had found recently in the dig and what the discovery signified in relation to the key stories being told. They and would answer questions from visitors. (This could be handled by a guide, but if self-guided visitors are allowed access, this would be a way for them to be able to access the same information. In addition, many visitors believe stories more when they come from an authority on a subject.) Note that these could be part of a talk series that included specialists from different field.
- **Hunt for History – a family activity.** This is like a Scavenger Hunt only the search is for specific features that are selected because they can be used to tell part of the story. The key is to design the activity so children understand what to search for and parents can facilitate a discussion of the feature and its significance. The child can then bring the completed activity back to the Visitor Center for a prize of some sort.

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES WITHIN GORI

INTRODUCTION

Note: The interpretive network should include the museums in Gori, but the plan will not include what should be in each one except to note a type of exhibit for the museum that would fit within their purview and would focus on support stories for the interpretive network.

In general, the interpretive opportunities in Gori are primarily tours that can include existing museums and key features. Specific locations that should be included on the tours should reflect one or more of the key storylinesor messaging. For example, interpretive opportunities at places serving authentic Georgian food could focus on the fact that the cuisine is uniquely Georgian in general but could also highlight influences from other cultural groups.

STRATEGIES

- **Walking Tours – Guided and Self-Guided.** These already exist, but to be a part of the network, should be modified so they focus on telling stories that support the major storylines and messaging. For example, they could include the Erekle Baths, where the focus would be on influence from other cultures. Stops would depend on the type of tour, such as a wine tasting tour, food tour, historical tour, or a combination of many types of places. The tours could focus on features or sites that are connected through story. For example a tour of churches would include supporting information focusing on the many religions that exist in Georgia and whether that was caused by influence from other culturalgroups. As another examples, an array of buildings and other architectural features could trace changes in architectural style to different eras in Georgian history that reflected cultural influence from outside its borders. As another example, a tour could focus on places serving authentic Georgian cuisine, places to taste authentic Georgian wine, and the museums in town, with a focus on exhibits within those museums that help support the story of the resilience of the Georgian people and retention of authentic Georgian culture in wine, foods, customs, etc. (This is a good way to market a longer visit to the museum because the visitor is offered only a 'taste' of that museum.) Note that

theSelf-Guided version would require a map/brochure with the route. Interpretive information could be supplied by publication, vodcast, podcast and/or an Application for a smart phone or iPad.

- **Bicycle and Vehicular tours – Guided and Self-Guided.** These are the same as the Walking Tours, but they can include locations that are too far away to be included in a WalkingTour. The vehicles for a Guided Tour can be bicycles, motorized vehicles, or replicas of some historical form of transportation, such a Stalin's carriage.
- **Table Teasers.** Table Teasers are place mats, laminated cards, or booklets to name a few possibilities, which are typically found in restaurants where people browse them while waiting for food. They would focus on presenting interesting tidbits of information associated with the stories covered by the interpretive network, and/or interpretive information focused on the wine and cuisine and would market sites within the interpretive network where visitors could obtain more information on that topic.

INTERPETIVE STRATEGIES FOR EXTENDED EXPERIENCES

INTRODUCTION

These are tours that should all be developed using Gori as a base. In other words, they should begin and end in Gori, which helps establish Gori as a hub for visitor experiences in the region. To increaseinterest and attraction power, the tours should be loops if possible. Specific locations included on a tour depend on the focus of that tour but should focus on supporting one or more of the key storylines or messaging. For example, a stop at museums in Borjomi should focus on interpretive opportunities in those museums that support the key storylines and messaging. That does not mean participants in those tours cannot be given extra time in a museum to visit other Exhibitions.

Note: At this point, none of the tours should take visitors close to the Occupied Territories. In addition, all visitors should be made aware of the danger associated with approaching the borders of those territories.

STRATEGIES

- **Bicycle Tours – Guided and Self-guided.** These can be single-day or multiple-day excursions where participants stay in a series of lodging establishments along theroute. The exact stops would depend on the focus of the tour, which could be food and wine,history, architecture or a combination of several focal points.
- **Driving Tours – Guided and Self-guided.** These exist also but should be modified to focus on stories that support the key storylines and messaging. As with the Bicycle Tours, these can be single-day or multiple-day excursions where participants stay in a series of lodging establishments along the route. Driving tours can include locations further from Gori because of the reduced time required to travel between sites, but these especially should be designed as a loop to encourage travelers to base their excursions in Gori. As with the Bicycle Tours, the exact stops would depend on the focus of the tour. They could also be a combination of sites that tell unique parts of the overall story. For example, it would not include all the churches in the area but could include ones that reflect examples of influence from other cultures, or cultural elements such as architecture, paintings and other adornments that are uniquely Georgian. In addition to loop driving tours, the major routes to and from Gori should have an associated driving tour, which, if Gori is included as a starting or ending point, or a point along the route, would encourage travelers to include a visit to Gori in their itinerary.

    Potential stops for any of the tours include, but are not limited to the following:

    - Borjomi Museum of Local Art
    - Borjomi Historical Park (with mineral waters) and nearby sulfur baths
    - Castle at Borjomi (12th or 13th century)
    - Palace in Borjomi
    - City of Kaspi
    - Grakliani Hill
    - Dzalisa Fortress
    - A typical Roman villa (not sure of location)
    - Khashuri Museum
    - Samtavisi Cathedral
    - Uplistsikhe
    - Kvakhvreli Complex
    - Gudabertya Archaeological site

Note: It is our understanding that a cultural history driving tour has already been developed. To make the most progress towards the goal of developing Gori as a tourism hub, this tour should be tweaked so the information included focused on the key storylines and messaging.