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**RESEARCH FORECASTS THAT DOMESTIC LEISURE TRAVEL
WILL LEAD TOURISM INDUSTRY'S COVID-19 RECOVERY**
Opportunities & Challenges Ahead For Philadelphia Region

PHILADELPHIA, May 21, 2020 – According to tourism industry research, domestic leisure travelers will lead the industry's recovery in 2020. Many American travelers' renewed interest in taking trips close to home is welcome news for destinations like Greater Philadelphia, situated within a five-hour drive of a quarter of the U.S. population. Additional research commissioned at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic by VISIT PHILADELPHIA®, the Greater Philadelphia region's tourism marketing organization, indicate that there are both opportunities and challenges for the destination as it plans for its recovery.

"Domestic leisure travel is expected to initiate the recovery," says Erik Evjen, director of data analytics and insights, Tourism Economics. "Our analysis finds a substantial amount of pent-up travel demand, which will be primarily channeled to regional, drive-to destinations. In this sense, Philadelphia is well-positioned to capitalize when the first stage of recovery begins given its proximity to major traveler markets."

"There are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about Greater Philadelphia's recovery as a tourism destination," said Jeff Guaracino, president and CEO of VISIT PHILADELPHIA. "The region is very popular with leisure visitors. It's an easy drive for much of the population, and it offers a good variety of things to do. Some hotels are even beginning to accept reservations for future stays. When our destination is ready to open, we'll be ready to welcome locals and visitors to explore."

He continued, "But we also know that there are challenges ahead: the unpredictability of this health crisis, the weakened economy and the temporary loss of some of our key nighttime offerings like concerts, shows and sporting events."

Since mid-March, Russell Research has been gathering data that measures travel perception/intent and feelings about COVID-19 nationally and in three key Designated Market Areas (DMAs): New York City, Washington, DC and Philadelphia. Key findings from the latest round of research include:

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- **Outlook for Upcoming Travel:** Consumers across the three DMAs are more optimistic about the COVID-19 situation as it pertains to travel than they have been in previous months (31% of respondents think the situation is getting better as compared to just 5% in March/April surveys).
- **Timeframe for Travel:** 30% of travelers would feel comfortable visiting Philadelphia in the next three months (up from 23% in April) across all three DMAs, especially among travelers 18-34 (38% of respondents in this age range) and those from the Philadelphia DMA (42% of respondents in this market).
- **Mode of Transportation:** Traveling by car with a partner and/or family is going to be the most common type of trip. (Typically, about 80% of overnight visitors travel by car to Philadelphia.)
- **Trip Type:** Close to one-third of travelers in the three DMAs would be most comfortable taking a day trip as their first leisure trip. Another third would be most comfortable taking a domestic leisure trip that requires more than a two-hour drive. A quarter of travelers in the New York and Philly DMAs would feel most comfortable taking a domestic leisure trip within a two-hour drive.
- **Destination Type:** With summer approaching, beaches are the most preferred destination for travelers' first leisure trip, according to 34% of respondents across all three DMAs. The next most popular destinations for 17% of respondents are small towns and countrysides or mountain/lake regions.
- **Trip Activities:** Roughly six in 10 travelers indicated they would be comfortable with outdoor activities on their first leisure trip, especially outdoor attractions like zoos/botanical gardens and public parks/sightseeing attractions.

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website and blog, visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers. Travelers can also call and stop into the Independence Visitor Center for additional information and tickets.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.