

May 4th Visioning Session Issue Identification/Categorization Exercise

The following represents input from Council members via “sticky notes” at the end of the day on May 4th. Participants were asked to identify the top two issues in each of the following categories:

- #3 – unknown and needed attention now
- #2 – known and needed attention now
- #1 – known and don’t need attention just yet

The #2 and #3 sticky notes were quickly sorted into subcategories. Those subcategories became “issue areas” around which further work will occur.

#3 - Does not know and they must deal with now

Body/Organization/leadership

1. Commercial airlines, charter airlines, private aircraft ownership, charter –private boat ownership – Michigan travel
2. “Travel Michigan” has earned the prominence to become it’s own state division
3. How we are going to come up with the report and what needs to be in it
4. Snowmobiling
 - How to interface with the snowmobile program to advance winter tourism
 - How effectively educate the industry on all aspects of the snowmobile program

Collaboration

1. Tourism industry needs to become unified
2. Collaboration must happen
3. How to keep this divisive group together?
4. How to bring together the diverse interests of the industry
5. Dealing with our lack of diversity in terms of industry leadership – were missing big market opportunities
6. All the things in MI tourism industry and collaboration btw groups (e.g. ag tourism, attractions, culture/wine)
7. Need for a common voice
8. In recent yrs. Every time we came together good things happened . PLDS - \$15 million
9. Need a unified voice
10. What are big partnerships outside the industry that can help advance the mission
11. We need to explore more strategic partnerships to help communicate our message
12. What opportunities and methods are available for collaboration across lines (i.e. prt, business, volunteer, local, state, fed gov.
13. How to support each other
14. Tools for higher level of collaboration with tourism community
15. We need to explore more strategic partnerships to help communicate our message

16. What opportunities and methods are available for collaboration across lines (i.e. prt, business, volunteer, local, state, fed gov.
17. How to support each other
18. Tools for higher level of collaboration with tourism community

Funding

1. Don't know , but need to work on now:
 - Stable funding
 - Source to advance/implement strategic agenda
2. How much support would there be for establishing a tourism foundation or trust fund where some money would be spent, but some could be saved and invested to create long term funding sustainability
3. The funding
4. Funding/Policy
5. Develop a champion
6. Funding
7. State tourism funding possibilities
 - Additional 1% room tax
 - Rental car tax
 - Tax campgrounds like hotel on occupancy tax
8. Need to find out how all states get their tourism funding
9. Need to find out how all states legislate or administer their funding
10. How do we become more politically effective?
11. Improving relationship on tourism issues with governor candidate
12. How much revenue is generated by our industry in the state of Michigan. We need to communicate this to legislators and our communities.
13. How much political support there is for developing a stable funding source for tourism promotion.
14. What is the political makeup after Nov.
15. A source of sustainable funding other than gov't funding or room assessment for lodging industry to promote tourism industry
16. MEDC needs to be pressured to fund more tourism development projects
17. Any potential funding cannot be distributed evenly. There must be prioritizing for funding and the tough decisions that go with it
18. Reduction in federal funding for recreational harbor dredging projects.
19. What creative methods do other states use for funding travel promotions/
20. Developing a way to fund and continue the strategic plan process

Research

1. The group does not know what the customer is looking for or looks like
2. Critical research agenda
3. Define the Michigan tourism experience.
4. Exploit unique attributes to create consumer experiences
5. Research that assists us with developing tourism message for Michigan
6. Research
7. Need to know the demographics of Michigan tourists

8. What do tourist want to do in Michigan that we don't have
9. How to identify & market toward the female segment (the decision maker)
10. Research that helps us identify our primary target markets
11. Timely info about the market(s)
12. Define the customer segment needs
13. Other states have dealt with these issue – how?
14. Data collection on lowest hanging fruit. Who are most likely to spend \$ and time in MI
15. Must identify ways to be inclusive of all demographics
16. Don't know – need to work on now – market research i.e. market segments & drivers
17. What people (age groups) want from travel experience
18. Research data on market segments
19. We need to better understand our markets and our competition
20. Research on market segments to guide plan
21. Research about how Michigan assets and experience perceived by niche groups
22. Who are our best target audiences?
23. The overall impact of parks and recreation facilities (parks, golf courses, recreational centers) on tourism – let's study it.
24. MSU's TTRRC is going away and we cannot let this happen
25. Employment in industry quality/quantity
26. Determine definition of "Tourism" What /who is included? What activities are included?
27. Holistic, comprehensive data on economic benefit of tourism industry in Michigan
28. Cultural Tourism
29. Value of Ag tourism
30. How much does tourism currently contribute to MI economy? What is it potential?
31. Need to know the real economic impact of tourism to the state
32. Quantify economic impact of tourism
33. Measure value of tourism jobs

General Promotion/Media

1. Deal with branding
2. How to communicate the message to the entire state across all industries
3. Unique selling proposition
4. Understand market potential
5. Market Michigan as a fun destination
6. What will MI tourism look like (image)
7. What are our product short falls?
8. What our industry really is
9. Marketing
10. New tourism product
11. What is the Michigan brand? What do we stand for?
12. Product image

13. What does Michigan have that no one else in the world has and takes advantage of it.
14. Brand identity/message
15. The media can be our friend. We need proactive public relations work from the industry.
16. There is an opportunity to cross promote tourism and economic devel. Through promoting the use of biodiesel fuel at marinas, in snow, mobile tour buses, etc. (protects natural resources, reduces dependence on foreign oil, supports farmers/rural communities)
17. Media needs to understand Michigan offerings. State/DMO's need to teach media about state's resources.

Other/did not easily fit other categories

1. The group does not know the importance of our people vs. our asset
2. We need to know more about how to organize to affect public policy in our favor
3. Market your strengths – only!
4. Branding/PR/Marketing
5. What to do with thin plan when done
6. What they would like the end result of this strategy to be
7. Educate potential tourist – that gasoline on a vacation will cost about \$100 more than last years (not significant)
8. Detroit must be effectively incorporated into the state marketing plan
9. Great things happen when we don't care who get the credit
10. Winter is cool! It represents an excellent opportunity for tourism.
11. Comprehensive summary of labor force
12. Description (details)
13. Less & less access to water resources while demand for access increases
14. Industry/employment images
15. We have a reservoir of good will (public, legis, editorial) – we need to leverage this!

Plan (category eliminated as an “issue” by consensus at May 4th session)

1. Establishing consensus on strategy i.e. priorities
2. How will this plan be used
3. How does the industry organize to enhance leadership
4. Definition of the problem being addressed
5. Who will be responsible for implementing plan
6. The structural needs to implementation plan.
7. Where do you begin?
8. Long term goals
9. Where to start and a group for short term
10. How can we have a plan/structure for collaboration
11. Concrete definitive documentation of investment in tourism providers
12. Who will run with plan!
13. Michigan needs a comprehensive study of the scope and value of its agricultural and cultural tourism sectors

14. Plan
15. Competitive strategy – brand development – image/market position – I DON'T MEAN ADVERTISING
16. How are we going to change industry w/the report. What types of results are we looking for

#2 - Know and they must deal with now

Body/Organization/Leadership

1. The industry needs to review how its organized or isn't and decide what is needed into the future
2. Department level state agency for travel or travel and agriculture or travel and transportation
3. Create a "body" or "organization" to coordinate the industry and facilitate the strategic plan
4. We need strong leaders
5. Need Champion
6. Deal with Industry Leadership Organization
7. Tourism Industry structure with one voice
8. Must have sustainable leadership structure for industry
9. Exotic ... too easy ... economy
10. Agritourism Heritage Collaboration

Collaboration

1. Improve collaboration
2. Collaboration is lacking in some areas of our state. This should become a stronger focus
3. Getting work groups formed as volunteers
4. What topics/ issues create division with the industry? How do we overcome these obstacles?
5. Opportunities for greater collaboration
6. Increase collaboration between industry groups
7. Improve communications
8. Need for collaboration at many levels including rural/ urban/ different segments, etc
9. Cooperative ventures
10. Collaboration
11. Provide opportunities for exploration & implementation of strategic collaboration
12. Collaboration within the industry is needed to promote mutually beneficial promotions/ partnerships
13. Need a good way to work together to enhance/ develop travel programs/ opportunities
14. Work together
15. Working together
16. Have to get more collaboration
17. Know we need to collaboration but need to work on doing it.

Funding

1. Bottom line is we need more funding to drive change. Let's seek out additional funding now.
2. Inviting government to tax your inevitably invited trouble... i.e. redirecting your tax funding for other government purposes
3. Stable source of funding for tourism promotion
4. Funding
5. Budget - Economic impact
6. Increasing tourism promotion funding without raising taxes, surcharges or imposing fees
7. Know we need more promotion funding... need NOW!
8. Funding
9. Deal with promotion funding
10. Need funding sources
11. We know we need more money but don't agree that spending it on marketing is the answer
12. Steady source of funding that grows with industry for
 1. Promotion
 2. Research & evaluation
 3. Education & Training
13. Seek additional funding and share resources to support destinations
14. Need a stable sustainable funding source
15. We know we need to fund tourism marketing at higher levels
16. Travel Mi Budget is under funded & must be increased
17. Funding for research to facilitate decision making
18. Funding economic impact
19. Economy
20. A stable source of revenue is needed for statewide tourism promotion in the budget
21. Steady source, non-politically based

Research

1. Economic Impact
2. We know state, regional and local parks attract visitors, but lets conduct research now to measure their level of impact on tourism
3. We need more research
4. More reliable data that can be used
5. Define exactly what Mi comparative (not competitive) advantages are in tourism
6. Trends
7. Need research on consumer wants and needs
8. Need more research on ROI, etc
9. Research to show economic impact of Tourism Industry

Visitor Experience

1. Must find customers who will purchase our product
2. Guest service must improve and we need a statewide effort to promote friendly tourism!
3. Plan to support creating high quality experiences for staff and consumers
4. How do we raise the level of hospitality as #1 goal in Mi tourism
5. Visitor experience including cultural/heritage tourism
6. Visitor experience

Lobbying/PR/Government Interface

1. Political action and pulse awareness education about the value of tourism
2. Political action lobbyist
3. What does young (20 and younger) black, Hispanic people might want or looking for in tourism
4. Need strong political voice
5. Legislators must be educated regarding our issues
6. We need to educate state (including legislators) on the value and contribution of tourism to state.
7. Public policy
8. Develop public policy recommendations for the future of tourism
9. More legislative power/ government support
10. Political funding implications of strategic planning
11. Public policy agenda/ funding – industry driven, shared cost agriculture commodity model or existing revenue not a new tax
12. Develop consensus, common voice for community industry
13. Work on a legislative strategy for the industry
14. Legislature does not understand tourism industry economic impact and does not value jobs it creates
15. We know the tourism industry must become more politically powerful
16. Create a public policy within the plan to present to the legislator
17. Important to enhance and increase tourism's legislative/ government relations efforts
18. Legislative relations
19. Increase lobby/ joint effect in Lansing
20. Leadership & Advocacy
21. Re introduce the say Yes to Michigan campaign
22. Just what we are
23. State of Mi image
24. Audience/ Market

General Promotion/Media

1. Promote marketing Agri Tourism
2. Improve image
3. Fight the negativity about Mi, promote its attributes
4. Design slogan, campaign, identify major attraction types for why should you come to Mi
5. Define who we need to market to now and in five years

6. Perception of Mi by outside world and by Mi citizens. Understand diverse audiences their needs and desires
7. Define what and who tourism is
8. Statewide promos is \$\$ well spent – how do we increase the amount
9. Clarify/ define what tourism is for Mi
10. Develop brand we can agree to use
11. What is unique to Mi
12. What is Mi tourism industry and its strategic advantages
13. We do not have an overall brand identity to market Mi tourism
14. Mi needs a state branding program
15. Agree on a simple tourism message for all sectors
16. Branding/ PR
17. How we are going to get the word out to others about what the state has to offer
18. Need to develop a cohesive message for Mi

Training

1. Need hospitality training as a priority

Other

1. We know we need a brand for the state... just don't know what it is
2. Trails are the connecting thread, that can help Mi Story- whether it be heritage, agricultural, natural resource, cultural, etc. They can showcase it all while providing healthy, enjoyable exercise.
3. There's a good opportunity for trails and agritourism to work together (most popular destination Hart Montague Trail- homemade ice cream at a working dairy farm)
4. Develop the role of natural resources as a base for tourism strategy
5. Define the role of travel commission
6. Know we have ability and talent to execute this plan but don't know if we are willing to commit
7. Agriculture and wine industries
8. How we are going to bring technology and the natural resources together

Plan (category eliminated as an “issue” by consensus at May 4th session)

1. Organize an outline to process
2. Develop a winter tourism strategy
3. This group knows we must do something different but doesn't know what
4. Develop a strategic marketing plan
5. Need competitive strategic plan
6. Organize state tourism assets into coherent product lines
7. Embrace and encourage tourism in winter
8. What opportunities are currently available in Mi
9. Create a comprehensive plan to address industry challenges
10. How to put a complete tourism plan together
11. There needs to be a way to sustain this process of strategic planning

#1 - Know and do not need to deal with (unsorted)

1. Weather
2. Natural resources
3. Marketing and promotion needs more \$\$
4. We know we have a good product
5. Tourism has economic impact
6. We know we need more \$\$
7. We have a great product
8. We don't have enough funding
9. Branding/ PR
10. Markets
11. Research
12. Theme or Branding
13. This group knows we need to work together
14. This group knows we need additional funding
15. Effective fuel costs
16. Tourism as economic development
17. Don't deal with cost of fuel
18. Don't deal with transportation
19. We know marketing/ promotion isn't the Silver Bullet
20. We know what makes Mi unique
21. We need to elevate the statue of the industry
22. We need a better source of funding
23. Where will the \$\$ come from
24. How will we promote Mi
25. Decide on specific technology for industry use/ promotion
26. Decide on promotion strategy
27. We need to implement a more stable funding source for promotion
28. We need longitudinal research data to explain what's happening in our industry
29. New product is necessary not needed to move forward now.
30. We all know how much money is currently available for tourism spending
31. We all know what resources are available in our state for tourists
32. Positive hospitality
33. Travel time trends
34. Facilities inventory
35. Economic impact
36. Funding will always be an issue... deal with it
37. We can not change our climate or our location
38. Gas prices
39. Festivals
40. Boating
41. Climate is changing... implications for Travel and recreation industry
42. Weather – winter
43. Land use and Water use

44. Water ways – Great Lakes
45. Public policy
46. Mi is a great destination
47. Development of a new brand
48. Auto industry in trouble works doesn't have \$\$\$
49. Missing gas prices
50. Know we have product
51. Develop campaign materials
52. Foreign markets may be great avenues for marketing
53. Identify importance of tourism
54. Mi has great natural resources and beaches
55. Gas prices are what they are and people still need to travel. We can't do anything about this in the next 6 months
56. Don't promote until we develop a tourism plan
57. Mi 50th in Hotel vacancy
58. Funding necessity... need to know what we're doing before exploring \$\$\$
59. Acknowledgement of diversity of resources
60. A strategic marketing plan as needed
61. There is a need for a voice for the tourism industry
62. Demographics aging population
63. Tourism is entrepreneurial
64. Mi rich natural resources
65. International markets
66. Diversity of industry
67. Do not need to work on promotion plan till later in process
68. Product
69. Volume of the industry
70. Mi tourism has a problem
71. How to promote the product... when not yet defined
72. That we have a broad resource base. No need to think about what to market
73. That there is a lack of \$\$ and we just have to deal with it
74. Unique image of Mi as viewed by visitors outside of state. Hopefully, new ad campaign in Oct with address
75. Promotion
76. We don't yet market tourism effectively
77. Need to use technology & collaboration to increase ease of buying for customer
78. Mi economy effects the health of our states travel industry and it will take time to revive/ therefore, look beyond Mi borders for growth in tourism
79. Create a complete trail infrastructure in Mi
80. They do not need to worry how to fund a trail network. User funded as for as motorized recreation
81. Price of gas
82. Technology
83. Weather affects tourism... and you can not change the weather
84. Travel Mi is under funded
85. We have fabulous natural resources

86. There are few hotels on beaches in Mi
87. China is a tremendous growth market for Mi
88. We have already proven that there is a positive ROI when investing in tourism marketing
89. Government funding
90. Transportation
91. Group knows they have to recruit and sustain employees that understand hospitality, to improve business and promote Mi
92. Group can't work in individual silos
93. Gas prices affects tourism
94. Weather affects tourism outcomes
95. Working together, we will succeed in making Mi a revived tourist/ travel destination
96. Increasing cooperation between tourism sectors
97. Mi has a world class tourism product
98. We know we are diverse & have lots to offer, need to put individual business in back seat... unify
99. Marketing ventures cooperative
100. Highway transportation
101. Sensitivity to natural resources – land use, water quality
102. Increase funding for promotion
103. How to provide hospitality which includes security, cleanliness, convenience, access and enjoyment
104. Marketing techniques
105. Improve the states infrastructure
106. Tourism investment creates immediate results
107. We know we have a financial return to the state
108. We know we have great natural resources
109. Economic importance to state
110. High gas prices may very well be a long term reality... move on to other concerns
111. Some people don't like winter, etc... don't waste time trying to change their minds... instead target those specifically show have interest in our product