

Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan Project
SE Lower Michigan Stakeholder Listening Session
Issue Areas Comments/Feedback
July 12, 2006
Dearborn, MI

“Top Four Issues” vote:

Industry Organization and Leadership (17)

Collaborations and Partnerships (18)

Funding (21)

Research and Market Segmentation (11)

Public Policy and Government Relations (6)

General Promotion (Media) (19)

Training/Leadership (13)

Visitor Experience (21)

1.) Industry Organizations and Leadership

- 1.) Harness the existing champions that we already have
- 2.) Develop the role of all resources (i.e. – Metro Detroit, cultural, etc.)
- 3.) Develop the role of Metro Detroit as the base for tourism strategy
- 4.) Be inclusive about the potential for all resources
- 5.) Hold leaders accountable
- 6.) Educate the public about the value of tourism and tourism jobs
- 7.) Leadership’s recognition of the need for tourism training
- 8.) Set goals and create a roadmap
- 9.) Identify a leader or organization to be responsible and accountable for the plan and its strategy to move it forward
- 10.) Align promotion with infrastructure (ex: transportation to hotels/attractions is challenging in Detroit) – promote to the “right people”
- 11.) Organize around non-partisan or bi-partisan principles.

2.) Collaboration/Partnership

- 1.) Partnerships with organizations and infrastructure that are affiliated with transportation (support and enhance)
- 2.) Couple tourism with economic development – collaborate
- 3.) Look at what people in Ontario are doing – share ideas; they’re working on a similar exercise
- 4.) Get Detroit CVB and chamber involved in this process – critical!
- 5.) Develop mechanisms/structure to improve communications
- 6.) Involve corporate partners with consumer bases outside of Michigan
- 7.) Be mindful of redundancies (especially in the current environment) especially Detroit’s efforts
- 8.) Are there broader collaborations as well? (i.e. – Great Lakes region and national)

- 9.) Involve county parks and other park resources – continue to strengthen collaboration with Natural Resources

3.) Funding

- 1.) Solicit corporate environment and financial support
- 2.) Funding needed both for promotion and product development support and support of infrastructure (decent roads)
- 3.) Explore the overlap between urban development and tourism development
- 4.) Encourage the state to recognize that ROI on tourism is better than other existing investments
- 5.) Funding should be targeted with realistic goals
- 6.) Involve MSU students in fundraising efforts
- 7.) Stable, sustainable funding

4.) Research and Marketing Segmentation

- 1.) Is appropriate research conducted on the state's current promotion plan?
- 2.) Analysis and interpretation of outcomes is key – where are underutilized opportunities? – strategic, prioritized outcomes
- 3.) Use research to identify where investments should be made
- 4.) Very detailed analysis should be done on state's budget – tourism ROI is higher than that of other industries
- 5.) Do we need a baseline of the tourism assets (inventory) that exists in Michigan? ...so we can target areas for strategic funding
- 6.) Image research followed by branding
- 7.) Identify destination attractions (icons) in the state
- 8.) Explore whether tourism can help us attract the next “Google” (quality of life)
- 9.) How can we expand and have more of what makes Michigan unique and brings visitors here?
- 10.) Understand the motivations of our markets (in-state and out-of-state) – understand competition

5.) Public Policy and Government Relations

- 1.) Where are the assets within state government that can contribute to this industry? (opportunities/resources/alignment)
- 2.) Support DNR budget – struggling every year – important to retain assets
- 3.) Realignment of state agency organization so state can better support tourism (HAL, DNR, etc.)
- 4.) Identify key legislators who can be our champions

6.) General Promotion (Media)

- 1.) Michigan needs a brand “czar” to integrate all marketing and promotion efforts of the state to promote the brand
- 2.) Promote what's unique and the “must dos”
- 3.) What are the best and most effective means of advertising? Step back and re-assess. Explain new methods. Are we best positioned for the future?

- 4.) Innovate for new technologies of how travelers get information during all stages of trips (at home, en route, on site); consider demographic differences
- 5.) Be able to react quickly – instantly target changing markets (ex: Super bowl visitors from Pennsylvania)

7.) Training/Leadership

- 1.) Integrate local awareness with hospitality training (i.e. – where to go...)
- 2.) Utilize college student interns – can assist, and to orient them to our industry
- 3.) Identify existing hospitality training programs and integrate them; collaborate with Michigan Works, regional skills alliance, community colleges, etc.
- 4.) Do better outreach to existing college programs
- 5.) Should unions be involved in training? (Ex.: few smiles in airport terminals by airport employees)
- 6.) Grow industry skill set, increase the value of tourism jobs
- 7.) How do we sustain training beyond special events?
- 8.) Create statewide certification program – how do we do this?
- 9.) Do other agencies and organizations (state parks, golf courses, art galleries, etc.) understand “their” role in the tourism industry?
- 10.) Canada has a turn-key program for CVB’s; also use ambassadors and downstate hosts
- 11.) Smaller organizations may not have funds to provide training
- 12.) Integrate state brand into training

8.) Visitor Experience

- 1.) What’s it mean?
 - i. Judgment of whether good or bad feeling you have to be away
 - ii. Equation: Value, experience, cost
 - iii. Will recommend and come back
 - iv. Deliver a promise: experience=expectation
 - v. Understand outsiders (visitors) perception/standards
 - vi. Are all pieces in place (to provide experience)
- 2.) Overall condition of infrastructure – balance improvement with new building
- 3.) Get locals to utilize/patronize what’s here – promote locally
- 4.) Look at all ways to fund physical improvements (Ex. Car rental tan in Florida)

9.) Other Issues

- 1.) Would rather see one thing done well instead of a plan on a shelf
- 2.) Get outside perspective (experts) when developing the plan

Comment Cards

- 1.) Agree with varieties of promotion – not just big ad campaign. Maybe more grass roots
- 2.) Visitor Experience:
 - i. Putting this before money
 - ii. Will group be happy downtown?
 - iii. Will group trip work if they stay at a hotel 45 minutes again from Henry Ford
- 3.) Lots of little gems to see and do = how can travelers easily put it together?
- 4.) Clearly identify what does Michigan offer that you can't get elsewhere? Make that the focus of our development.
- 5.) Detroit must participate. I'm a stakeholder – I've never heard they aren't participating. Maybe stakeholder pressure would be helpful.
- 6.) Concern with role of private entity Circle Michigan - Very high participation cost. Makes participation exclusive. Need state tour representative – rep all – not just Circle Michigan members.
- 7.) We need to focus more on our product (existing) and development possibilities.
- 8.) Determine which segments have the best potential for growth and/or ROI and relate it to funding opportunities. For example: Camping, fishing, hunting related to DNR spending; agricultural tourism related to department of agriculture; urban spending vs. urban tourism
- 9.) Highway signage visitor friendly, mass transit, Jackson: I-94, I-75
- 10.) Add infrastructure improvements and new development to embrace tourism industry segments! Roads parks water and beach access development, etc.
- 11.) Highlight cost-savings travel available in Michigan when targeting the 20-30 year age bracket
- 12.) Define skills-set needed for tourism industry when approaching college students
- 13.) Build interest in Michigan Tourism among the less than 40 year age bracket – future of Michigan
- 14.) Benchmark funding, marketing, etc. with other successful tourism states to identify strategies