



Destination Ann Arbor

Strategic Recovery Road Map

A unified response to COVID-19



The impacts of COVID-19 have dramatic effects on Ann Arbor's visitor economy, forcing Destination Ann Arbor to rethink our strategic priorities. In some instances, this means addressing fundamental questions such as why we exist and how we add value to our community and to our stakeholders.

The overall intent of this plan is to update the strategy maps for the organization and destination by guiding an urgent and unified response to the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19. The recovery plan outlines tangible actions to be enacted over the next 18 months as well as a reexamination of our long-term goals.

Given the volatility of the current COVID-19 operating environment, this recovery plan will be a 'living' document which is regularly reviewed and adapted to reflect changing circumstances and to monitor our progress.

Stakeholder Engagement:

Focus Groups

A series of sector focus groups were held with various stakeholders throughout the community in September to identify key issues and opportunities.

Recovery Workshop

A recovery workshop was held on September 17th with members of the board and leadership team to determine the recovery strategies for organization.



Strategic Plan

Vision & Mission



During the last strategic planning process, Destination Ann Arbor and its Board of Directors collectively agreed on a new Vision and Mission for the organization which provide direction for the sustainable growth of Washtenaw County, based on the shared interests of stakeholders, visitors and the local community.

During the Recovery Workshop it was determined that the organization's vision and mission are still relevant and do not need to be reexamined.

VISION

The leading force in promoting the Ann Arbor region as a vibrant destination that inspires people to think and dream bigger

MISSION

Promoting sustainable tourism to elevate economic vitality and quality of life

Revised Organization Goals



The 2019 Strategic Plan for Destination Ann Arbor outlines a set of four strategic goals.

During the recovery workshop, the board and leadership team prioritized a set of recovery strategies which have been utilized to develop a revised set of goals for the organization.

2019 Strategic Goals

1. **Innovative Marketing & Strategic Sales**
2. **Strong Partnerships & Community Engagement**
3. **Collaborative Destination Development**
4. **Trailblazing Organization**

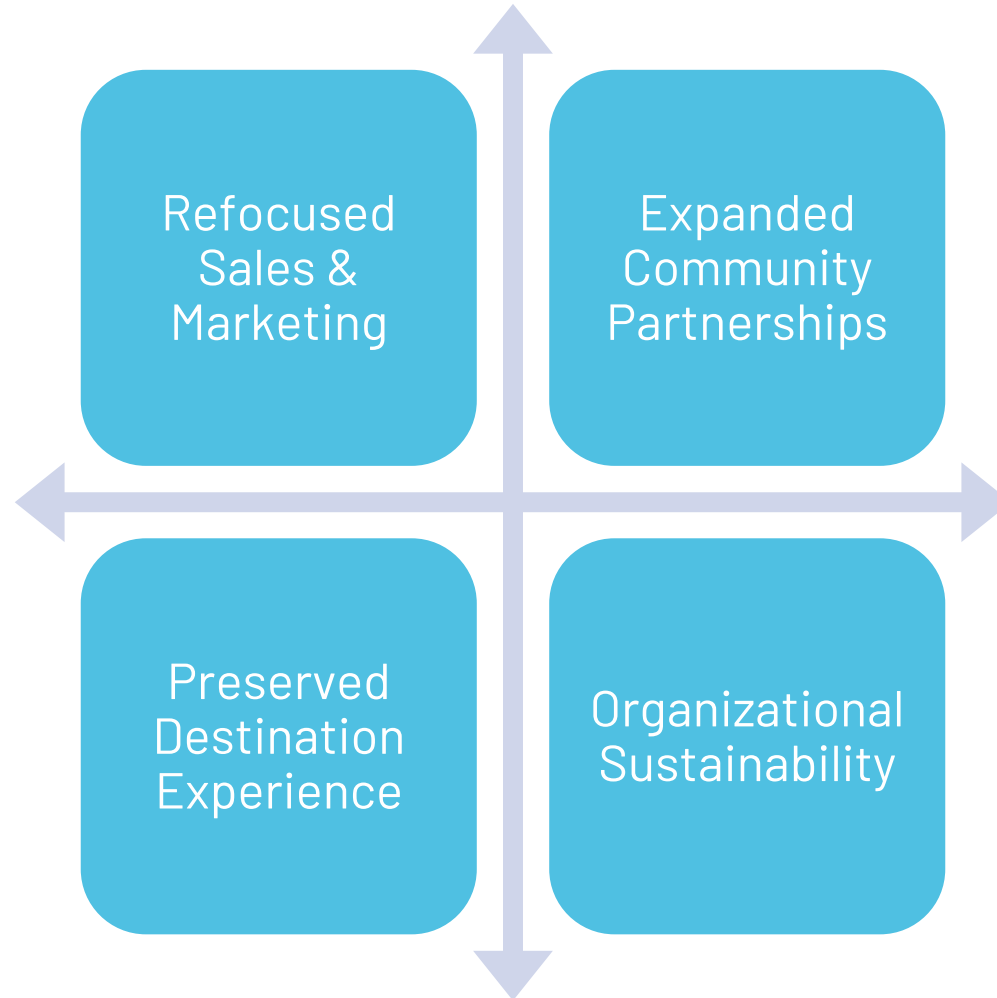
Revised Organization Goals

1. **Refocused Sales & Marketing**
Adapt strategies to align with market opportunities with an expanded focus on local audiences
2. **Expanded Community Partnerships**
Engage a diverse set of stakeholders to collaborate on recovery efforts
3. **Preserved Destination Experience**
Maintain the community vibrancy which makes the region an attractive destination
4. **Organizational Sustainability**
Ensure financial sustainability and refocus roles to deliver greatest impact

Strategic Goals



To achieve Destination Ann Arbor's vision, these four new strategic goals have been established for the organization. On the following pages, the specific initiatives and targets are listed for each.



Strategic Recovery Initiatives



Refocused Sales & Marketing	Expanded Community Partnerships	Preserved Destination Experience	Organizational Sustainability
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop resident-facing messaging that highlights local experiences and promotes local pride 2. Identify new source markets and strategy to attract local/regional customer base for the short and medium-term 3. Promote nature, parks and outdoor experiences while determining how to differentiate local offerings 4. Develop transparent, consistent health and safety messaging to restore confidence and provide assurance to residents and visitors 5. Create a new sales deployment strategy for 2021 and identify the needed sales and services roles for the future 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage industry stakeholders to share trends and best practices for reopening and rebuilding visitor economy 2. Work with relevant and targeted stakeholders to address economic sustainability issues (e.g. support small businesses and workers) 3. Continue to serve as the voice for hospitality and tourism sector in recovery planning conversations and efforts 4. Align more closely with the economic development organizations, colleges and universities and private sector companies 5. Strengthen strategic relationships with elected and appointed officials 6. Expand community collaboration to develop new content and storytelling initiatives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with industry partners and stakeholders to deliver clean and safe visitor experiences 2. Provide education on the value of tourism and investment in visitor products to my community 3. Support efforts to transform the region into a more inviting, vibrant and prosperous place for residents and visitors throughout the winter months 4. Play a larger role in placemaking and community programming to stimulate local and regional demand 5. Create an Experience Development Plan to identify product gaps and opportunities and develop positioning strategy for future of visitor economy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work strategically with hotel partners to drive overnight visitation and rebuild hotel occupancy tax 2. Avoid being reactionary and establish recovery strategies and action steps which make progress toward long-term success 3. Expand advocacy and education role to protect funding sources and relevance 4. Collaborate with other organizations to share resources and improve efficiencies 5. Maintain cash reserves and assess reserve funding requirements and policies 6. Reconsider organizational structure to prioritize key roles and essential programs for the short and long-term

Goal #1

Refocused Sales & Marketing



Targets	Objectives	Lead	Timeline		
			Next 3 months	3-6 months	6-18 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch campaign to attract local/regional visitor spending by January 31, 2021 Grow local social media engagement by 20% by December 31, 2021 Grow local website engagement by 10% by December 31, 2021 Create a new sales and services strategy by December 31, 2020 	a) Develop resident-facing messaging that highlights local experiences and promotes local pride	VP, Marketing & Communications	X	X	X
	b) Identify new source markets and strategy to attract local/regional customer base for the short and medium-term	VP, Marketing & Communications	X		
	c) Promote nature, parks and outdoor experiences while determining how to differentiate local offerings	VP, Marketing & Communications, Executive Director Of The Ann Arbor Sports Commission	X	X	X
	d) Develop transparent, consistent health and safety messaging to restore confidence and provide assurance to residents and visitors	VP, Marketing & Communications	X	X	X
	e) Create a new sales deployment strategy for 2021 and identify the needed sales and services roles for the future	Executive VP of Sales & Marketing, Executive Director Of The Ann Arbor Sports Commission	X	X	

Goal #2

Expanded Community Partnerships



Targets	Objectives	Lead	Timeline		
			Next 3 months	3-6 months	6-18 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build stakeholder email database to engage industry and increase the size by 5% to 2,300 by December 31, 2021 Build a 2021 government, community and industry engagement strategy by December 31, 2020 Host 5 industry webinars or training sessions by June 31, 2021 Develop baseline metric of stakeholders who believe Destination Ann Arbor is an effective champion for industry by January 31, 2021 	a) Engage industry stakeholders to share trends and best practices for reopening and rebuilding visitor economy	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	b) Work with relevant and targeted stakeholders to address economic sustainability issues (e.g. support small businesses and workers)	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	c) Continue to serve as the voice for hospitality and tourism sector in recovery planning conversations and efforts	President & CEO, VP, Marketing & Communications, Executive Director Of The Ann Arbor Sports Commission	X	X	X
	d) Align more closely with the economic development organizations, colleges and universities and private sector companies	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	e) Strengthen strategic relationships with elected and appointed officials	President & CEO	X	X	X
	f) Expand community collaboration to develop new content and storytelling initiatives	VP, Marketing & Communications	X	X	X

Goal #3

Preserved Destination Experience



	Objectives	Lead	Timeline		
			Next 3 months	3-6 months	6-18 months
Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow the number of local business who have taken the Pure Michigan pledge from 31 to 50 by December 31, 2020 5 Destination Master Plan initiatives advanced or completed by end of 2021 Develop baseline metric of residents who believe tourism is an important contributor to Ann Arbor's economy and quality of life* Develop baseline metric of residents who would recommend Ann Arbor to friends and family* 	a) Work with industry partners and stakeholders to deliver clean and safe visitor experiences	VP, Marketing & Communications, Executive Director of The Ann Arbor Sports Commission, Executive VP of Sales And Marketing	X	X	X
	b) Provide education on the value of tourism and investment in visitor products to my community	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	c) Support efforts to transform the region into a more inviting, vibrant and prosperous place for residents and visitors throughout the winter months	VP, Marketing & Communications, Executive Director of The Ann Arbor Sports Commission, Executive VP of Sales And Marketing	X		
	d) Play a larger role in placemaking and community programming to stimulate local and regional demand	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	e) Create an Experience Development Plan to identify product gaps and opportunities and develop positioning strategy for future of visitor economy	President & CEO, VP, Marketing & Communications			X

Goal #4

Organizational Sustainability



Targets	Objectives	Lead	Timeline		
			Next 3 months	3-6 months	6-18 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to 90 days cash reserves by December 31, 2020 Review organization and staff roles by Dec 31, 2020 Identify potential new funding sources by January 31, 2021 Begin implementing initiatives for a diversity and inclusion program across the organization by Jan 31, 2021 	a) Work Strategically With Hotel Partners To Drive Overnight Visitation And Rebuild Hotel Occupancy Tax	Executive VP of Sales And Marketing	X	X	X
	c) Avoid being reactionary and establish recovery strategies and action steps which make progress toward long-term success	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	d) Expand advocacy and education role to protect funding sources and relevance	President & CEO, Board of Directors	X	X	X
	e) Collaborate with other organizations to share resources and improve efficiencies	President & CEO, Management Team	X	X	X
	f) Maintain cash reserves and assess reserve funding requirements and policies	VP of Finance And Administration, Finance Committee	X	X	X
	g) Reconsider organizational structure to prioritize key roles and essential programs for the short and long-term	President & CEO, Board of Directors	X	X	



Destination Master Plan

Vision



During the Destination Master Planning Process, a destination vision was developed to outline the desired future state for Washtenaw County.

Three unique destination signatures emerged during the development of the Washtenaw 2030 plan which contributed to the development of the destination vision:

1. A center of innovation emanating from universities, colleges and high-tech industries
2. A diverse place with many desirable cultural attributes
3. A deep connection to sports and outdoor activities

VISION

A culture of innovation and knowledge that unleashes immersive creative experiences in active, diverse communities.

Strategic Goals



The Washtenaw 2030 Destination Master Plan outlines five goals to realize the destination vision.



Strategic Recovery Initiatives



These goals continue to be relevant and paramount in the 'new normal', however in some areas certain initiatives should be prioritized or new initiatives must be added.

Enhanced Experiences	Expanded Meetings & Events	Improved Mobility & Connectivity	Empowered Workforce	Greater Regional Collaboration
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance outdoor recreation experiences and accommodation options Develop and integrate multi-day "mind/body" tours and itineraries Develop a winter strategy to transform the region into a more inviting, vibrant and prosperous place for residents and visitors throughout the winter months (NEW) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Incubate new and grow existing locally-driven celebrations and festivals with themes such as craft beverages, music, automobiles, etc. Enhance existing meeting and event facilities to deliver virtual and hybrid meetings effectively (NEW) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improve bikeability with fully connected bike routes. Further support the development of broadband (Wi-Fi) infrastructure County-wide. Utilize lessons learned from street closures in future planning efforts to create a more walkable, connected destination (NEW) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for relief programs for workforce impacted by Covid-19 (NEW) Work with stakeholders to retrain and reskill tourism workers, including unemployed workers (NEW) Collaborate with public/private sectors to develop minority youth development programs, scholarships, mentorships and internships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Convene leaders in government, academia, arts/culture, business, tourism and non-profits on a regular basis Inform local business and industry leaders on best practices for operating in 'new normal' (NEW) Ensure the long-term success of The Arts Alliance and other cultural advocacy organizations across the County

Full Workshop Results

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Strategy	Score
Work with industry to reopen the visitor economy with clean/safe visitor experiences	8.56
Engage industry stakeholders to build a unified process for reopening visitor economy	8.35
Ensure recovery plans include long-term strategies for community and visitor economy	7.76
Promote the value of tourism to my community	7.53
Work with relevant stakeholders to address economic sustainability issues	7.41
Ensure my organization and the industry is at the table for recovery planning	7.24
Align visitor strategy with public/private sector strategies	7.24
Expand advocacy role to ensure industry businesses and workers are valued	7.19
Play a larger role in event creation to stimulate demand	7.19
Strengthen strategic relationships with elected and appointed officials	7.00
Expand community collaboration to develop new content	7.00
Expand content and messaging beyond traditional members/partners	6.82
Expand networks in local community to include unlikely/unusual allies	6.65
Align more closely with economic development organizations	6.56
Work with health officials to develop cleanliness standards for the industry	6.44
Work with relevant stakeholders to address social sustainability	6.24
Work with relevant stakeholders to address environmental sustainability	6.24
Ensure my organization's policies on ethics align with community values	6.18
Improve how organization provides business intelligence/data to stakeholders	6.18
Play a larger role in delivering education and training materials to the industry	5.75
Play a larger role in building and amplifying community pride	5.65
Develop resident sentiment survey to guide recovery strategy and long-term planning	5.24
Establish a procurement program to support underserved communities	5.18

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Strategy	Score
Expand marketing outreach and campaigns to target local audience	8.63
Promote and highlight nature, parks, and outdoor experiences	8.63
Develop messaging related to health and safety to reassure visitors	8.06
Focus marketing strategies on generating positive PR to augment advertising	7.94
Promote and highlight health and wellness experiences	7.94
Reassess meetings market and target new groups (e.g. smaller, regional)	7.75
Showcase creative/innovative community members and influencers	7.38
Encourage partners to provide live content online	7.38
Expand content and messaging to ensure appropriate tone	7.31
Evaluate target markets and evolve marketing strategies to attract more resilient travelers	7.13
Collaborate with other industry organizations to expand audience reach	7.06
Monitor data signals to inform recovery timing and messaging	7.00
Repackage current content relevant to new audiences and demands	7.00
Develop messaging highlighting the community's values as a differentiator	6.81
Work with technology platforms and partners to expand capabilities to deliver hybrid meetings	6.75
Utilize client input to inform recovery messaging and timing (e.g. Client Advisory Board)	6.44
Build library of virtual experiences to inspire future visitation	6.44
Improve how the organization collects and leverages visitor data and digital footprints	5.69

ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Strategy	Score
Work strategically with hotel partners to ensure industry recovery and resilience	4.44
Identify potential recovery scenarios to guide strategy and priorities	4.25
Expand advocacy and education role to protect funding sources and relevance	4.23
Collaborate with other organizations to share resources and improve efficiencies	4.22
Assess reserve funding requirements and policies	4.14
Prioritize organizational roles, programs and activities	4.13
Assess KPIs related to visitor satisfaction	4.12
Use lessons learned from remote working to examine office flexibilities and efficiencies	4.11
Assess KPIs related to economic development (e.g. recovery, jobs, taxes)	4.08
Pursue new private funding sources (e.g. partnerships, sponsorships, crowdfunding)	4.08
Assess KPIs related to sustainability	4.07
Assess KPIs related to community advocacy (e.g. resident satisfaction)	4.03
Assess organization structure and staffing	3.85
Review organization mission, vision and values	3.76



Destination Ann Arbor

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