

HIGHLIGHTS OF STAKEHOLDER INPUT

KEY ASSETS/TOP DEMAND DRIVERS FOR TOURISM TO GREATER DES MOINES:



Conventions
& Meetings



Entertainment/
Concerts



Iowa State
Fair



Conventions
& Meetings



Recreational/
Youth Sports &
Tournaments

KEY THREATS TO INCREASING VISITATION TO GREATER DES MOINES:



Lack of
dedicated Airlift



Increased
competition from
other cities within
driving distance



Weak
destination
brand and overall
perception



Lack of
consistent, region-
wide municipal
funding support



Lack of a unified
tourism vision-
based destination
development plan

STAKEHOLDERS ALSO RANKED THE FOLLOWING AS THE TOP FOUR AREAS OF RECOMMENDED FOCUS FOR CATCH DES MOINES:

1

Marketing the destination to drive market overnight visitors.

2

Advocating for enhancements to the regional tourism product and overall quality of place for residents and visitors alike.

3

Providing comprehensive on-site or online visitor services and resources on things to see and do.

4

Developing and investing in current and future visitation “demand generators.”

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Community support and pride
- Sports tourism
- Iowa State Fair
- State Capitol
- Largest conference venue in the state
- Proximity to drive markets
- Corporate presence
- Ease of access/congestion during commute times
- Safe community
- Economic development/continued growth
- Agriculture market

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of differentiation from comparative and competitive destinations
- Lack of high-profile “attractors”
- Lack of funding sources – (No TBID)
- Airlift
- Tight labor market
- Convention/downtown hotel package
- Lack of regional collaboration with major projects/economic development priorities
- Lack of development around Iowa Events Center
- Corporate engagement
- Lack of ethnic diversity in region and state
- Lack of concentration of indoor/outdoor sports facilities with sufficient capacity

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continued and focused development support with existing attractions
- Continued direct marketing campaigns with curated, targeted content and in-house fulfillment
- A unified downtown citywide convention strategy
- Proactive event development strategy (i.e. Event Matrix)
- Convention center district development
- Increased advocacy for new destination developments (recreation, water trails, skatepark, airport, etc.) and aspirational opportunities to increase visitors
- Capitalizing on events using new development (skatepark, etc.)

THREATS

- Competition for funding
- Lack of advocacy/support for investments to increase visitors and elevate destination cache
- State government approach to restrict future funding opportunities (TBID)
- Inadequate labor market COVID-19 future travel impact
- Sports tourism limitation due to lack of courts or fields in one location; and sponsorship dollars to host these events.
- Ongoing development and innovation in competitive cities



MISSION STATEMENT

The Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Des Moines Area Sports and Tourism Commission market the region as a visitor destination increasing economic growth and enhancing the visitor experience.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to be the leader in regional destination development through strategic partnerships to advance tourism and economic growth.

ABOUT CATCH DES MOINES

Catch Des Moines was founded in 1908 and is governed by a 27-member board. Funding for Catch Des Moines is generated from 2/7th of the hotel/motel tax from the communities represented. Additional revenue is generated through private sector sponsorships, corporate sponsorships, and other marketing advertising opportunities.

Catch Des Moines is an accredited Destinations International organization in recognition of the organization's commitment to industry excellence and meeting the industry standard for performance and accountability of destination organizations around the world.

CATCH
DES MOINES
ONLY THE Ss ARE SILENT

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**CATCH DES MOINES
DESTINATION
STRATEGIC PLAN**
2023 – 2026



CATCH DES MOINES COMMITMENTS

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Catch Des Moines wants all visitors to see the region as the progressive and inclusive place that they strive for it to be and for the region’s minority-owned businesses, retailers, and attractions to feel supported and valued. Diversity is what inspires learning, advances innovation, is a catalyst for creativity, and makes life that much more exciting and fun.

CATCH DES MOINES IS COMMITTING TO:

- Continue to make a concerted effort to bring in conventions and events serving people of color (POC), religious conventions, human rights organizations, and other diverse groups and will work with those within those communities to ensure that everyone coming to the region feels welcome, safe, and valued.
- Support POC and minority-owned businesses and organizations by elevating them through marketing and sharing their stories.
- Continue to be a resource for POC-owned businesses and event organizers to help them make the right connections to ensure their success.
- Bring POC and other leaders of diverse communities to the table and listen.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Catch Des Moines is a proponent of enhancing and developing the hospitality workforce. We will work with local Workforce Development, other local agencies, and schools to assist with an approach to engage students and bring greater awareness about career opportunities within the hospitality industry.

PRIORITY 1

Event Evaluation and Development

Catch Des Moines will create and implement an event evaluation tool to assess an event’s current and future potential to drive measurable overnight visitation. Priority and resources will go to events that increase overnight visitors and raise the profile of Greater Des Moines.

KEY COMPONENTS

- CREATE AN EVENTS MATRIX**, using criteria from Destinations International as the baseline.
- Establish four event categories, with unique but similar criteria for each — Citywide, Multi-Property, Single Property, and Sports.
 - Beta test historic, actualized events in each of the four categories, to ensure the criteria is valid and appropriate.
 - Update Simpleview fields to match scoring criteria, so data is accurate and standardized.

RETRO-SCORE all leads, regardless of current status, for the past two years, and all future leads, to provide applied practice of the matrix, and ensure validity for future decisions.

DETERMINE whether or not this evaluation tool should be used for festivals and local events, and what that scoring criteria should be. This should only be done after the matrix is solidified and validated.

- Existing festivals and local events may have better actual data from Arrivalist.
- This is a year 2-3 priority.

BY YEAR THREE, Catch Des Moines should be prioritizing high scoring events on the matrix.

IT IS IMPORTANT to remain up to date and consistent with Destinations International and any updates or adjustments provided to this tool. Continue to research peer cities also using this matrix to remain relevant and consistent in the industry.

ANALYZE other organizations that may have access to other events.

EVALUATE events that could increase visitors with the help of Catch Des Moines marketing resources and initiatives.

PRIORITY 2

Using Data to Develop Travel

Use visitor data to help develop marketing strategies, measure effectiveness, and gain greater insights into how, where, and when to best market Greater Des Moines tourism. Identify which events increase visitors, and provide support and targeted campaigns to maximize economic impact and length of stay.

KEY COMPONENTS

- LEVERAGE** investments made in data sources to understand travel patterns, home location, and key destinations in the community.
- Work with Arrivalist to gain a larger understanding of the impact of individual events, including attendee numbers, length of stay, cross visitation, and home location.
 - Use STR data to show occupancy and rate information, providing more accurate economic impact calculations.
 - Create marketing campaigns based off key arrival markets, and track the effectiveness of these campaigns with Arrivalist data.

USE ARRIVALIST DATA to better understand local and annual events, including total attendance, percentage of visitors, length of stay, and cross visitation. Use this data to drive decisions about which events Catch Des Moines provides support and resources.

BETTER UNDERSTAND the impact of specific points of interest in the community and use these points, in cooperation with events, to increase visitors’ length of stay.

- Create marketing assets (such as itineraries) to assist and make this easy for visitors.
- Research common themes amongst points of interest.

SHARE pertinent data with stakeholders to help the community better understand the impact of visitors and events.

- Be a resource for communities as they consider destination development and improvements.

ENGAGE an attractions group to collaborate and gain data on demographics and visitor volume to local area attractions.

PRIORITY 3

Downtown Optimization

Optimize downtown Des Moines meetings and events through booking guidelines at the Iowa Events Center and an event booking strategy to include a plan for citywides and high end, single property business. This strategy includes buy-in and percentage blocks from downtown hotels. The optimization of downtown will subsequently have a positive impact on the Iowa State Fairgrounds and other important venues in the community.

KEY COMPONENTS

- OPTIMIZE** the space at the Iowa Events Center — filling the most possible dates with groups that fill hotel rooms and drive revenue to the venue.
- Update the Iowa Events Center booking guidelines for peak and total rooms, to better match booking windows, and downtown hotel product. Consider including a category for facility revenue.
 - Create a plan for additional reporting both in the lead stage and post-event that tracks proposed charges and actual spend. Additional historical data will help with future decisions.

SECURE new citywide, miniwide, and multi-property business that uses the Iowa Events Center.

- Work with the downtown hotels on a booking strategy that includes buy-in for a certain number of groups each year, through percentage blocks (i.e. 75% of hotel) and unified concessions.
 - o Peer cities throughout the country are developing larger convention hotels, and to remain competitive, Des Moines needs to look at additional strategies.
- Provide special consideration to need dates, groups with varying diversity, and those that will score high on the events matrix.

PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION in the sales process to which groups should be using the Iowa Events Center, and which groups may be a better fit elsewhere in the community. A key part of optimizing downtown is creating additional demand for other facilities outside of downtown.

ASPIRATIONAL CITIES

Oklahoma City, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Omaha

COMPETITIVE CITIES

Grand Rapids, Lexington, Albuquerque, Madison

PRIORITY 4

Sports Marketing Venue Development

Advocate for current and proposed sports facility development projects, and potential future enhancements, to attract new sports business and remain competitive in the industry. Market and prioritize sports at existing multi-use venues.

KEY COMPONENTS

SELF-ASSESSMENT of lost business over the last five years and groups that currently do not consider Greater Des Moines as a host location due to facility limitations (NCAA Track & Field, USA Track & Field, NCAA Wrestling, etc.).

CATCH DES MOINES should be involved in facility development conversations at the early stages. This allows for developers and cities to consider important event amenities and space, as well as leverage and be aware of other similar projects in the community.

STRENGTHEN Catch Des Moines’ position and brand in the sports world. Develop this brand and position the organization for greater involvement in minor, major league, and professional opportunities.

- Proactive marketing and PR efforts such as in sports publications.
- Sports Advisory Committee
- Opportunities to expand sports market through niche sports (lacrosse, rugby, etc.).

MAXIMIZE opportunities for regional and national events at existing multi-use facilities. Prioritize dates and space for key events.

- This allows for multiple facilities to be used, creating opportunity to host larger events. This includes the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Iowa Events Center, MidAmerican Energy Company RecPlex, and others.
- Create diagrams and materials to show spaces in use and consider booking guidelines to prioritize dates and space for key events.

UTILIZE the Catch Des Moines Sports Advisory Committee to stay on top of current events and issues, for expertise and leverage on bids and potential opportunities, and ideas for future development.

- Advisory committee members should be chosen based on their position in the community or notoriety in the industry.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING resources could provide opportunity for additional bid incentives and event funding, as well as assistance with development and improvement projects.

LEVERAGE new and planned sports facilities to attract regional, national, and high-profile sporting events. This includes traditional and niche markets.

- Major development projects include ICON Water Trails, Bucs Stadium, Stadium District, Sleepy Hollow, Ignit, GrimesPlex, Norwalk.

RESEARCH and understand competitive set facilities and proposed developments. Understand what cities and which projects, if implemented, would take Greater Des Moines to the next level. Share this data with communities and developers when looking at projects and potential events.

ASPIRATIONAL CITIES Eugene (track & field), Indianapolis, St. Louis (soccer and baseball)

COMPETITIVE CITIES Omaha, Madison, Tulsa, Overland Park, Eugene

PRIORITY 5

Destination Development

Advocate and lead a strategy that supports investment in current assets, embraces planned projects and has a long-term vision to enhance the overall profile and reputation of Greater Des Moines. This begins with identifying aspirational, high-profile assets that can serve as “attractors” and ways to grow their profile.

KEY COMPONENTS

CATCH DES MOINES should be involved in development conversations at the early stages. This allows for developers and cities to consider important event amenities and space, as well as leverage and be aware of other similar projects in the community.

- ♦ Coordinate regular meetings with developers and city economic development officials. As the destination management organization, Catch Des Moines should understand what is happening and planned in the market, and provide advice and insight on what is needed.

BE A RESOURCE of important data to cities and developers looking to invest in projects in the community. Share applicable and key information on visitors and events, using the research tools that Catch Des Moines invests in.

ADVOCATE for key projects in the community that enhance the profile of Greater Des Moines. This includes the Des Moines International Airport, ICON Water Trails, development surrounding the Iowa Events Center, Market District, Pro Soccer Stadium with Stadium District, and the downtown skywalk system.

SUPPORT the Downtown DSM Future Forward plans and initiatives for enhancements to the downtown region.

SUPPORT ASSET DEVELOPMENT through Catch Des Moines’ existing 28E Sponsorship program. Additional funding resources could provide future dollars towards destination development.

ASPIRATIONAL CITIES Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Nashville, Austin

COMPETITIVE CITIES Spokane, Omaha, Madison, Tulsa, Providence, Grand Rapids, Albuquerque, Lexington

PRIORITY 6

Advocacy for Destination Sustainability and Growth

Catch Des Moines will play an active role in advocating for destination enhancements and explore the expansion of existing and new funding resources to support visitor and quality of life amenities for the region.

KEY COMPONENTS

INVESTIGATE the feasibility of a Tourism Improvement District in Greater Des Moines.

- ♦ Create a small steering committee with key stakeholders and hotels to determine feasibility, and then steps for formation.
- ♦ Consider the involvement of Civitas, who is a leader in funding resources and tourism improvement districts.
- ♦ Engage other Iowa destinations in joint advocacy and statewide support.
- ♦ Educate the community and stakeholders on what a Tourism Improvement District is, garnering support and input.

IDENTIFY possible strategies related to co-advertising, corporate investment, grants, etc. and leveraging opportunities with the Des Moines Area Sports & Tourism Commission.

RESEARCH and understand how other communities are using diverse funding for support of events and destination development.