



2020–2022  
Strategic Plan

VISION:  
Inspiring Experiences

MISSION:  
Strengthening Lehigh Valley's economy through tourism, while enhancing quality of life and regional pride

2020 - 2022 Strategic Plan



Strategic Goals, Key Initiatives & Targets

Strategic Sales & Marketing

- a) Continue to promote and leverage the cohesive valley-wide brand across the valley
- b) Developing a neighborhood/resident driven marketing program
- c) Promote the connectivity of urban and outdoor landscapes
- d) Promote the older and more recent history of Lehigh Valley
- e) Increase meetings, events, and sports tourism
- f) Develop an international visitors strategy
- g) Elevate the region as a cycling destination

Targets:

- Rollout a neighborhood program by September 2021
- Increase group business by 10% by July 1, 2021
- Designated ride center by 2022
- Develop a historical trail content platform by 2022

Proactive Destination Management

- a) Provide the business case for the development of a new conference center
- b) Support the development of a bike accessible valley
- c) Develop content highlighting our culinary experiences (agritourism)
- d) Support the development of a multi-modal transportation plan (e.g. Columbus)

Targets:

- Provide lost business data by December 2021
- Culinary video content developed by July 2020
- Facilitate mobility meeting with cities/counties by August 2020

Intentional Community Alignment

- a) Enhance engagement with local city councils and civic organizations
- b) Pooling resources with economic development and local organizations (LVEDC)
- c) Build a stronger coalition among the arts & cultural community
- d) Be a more authentic ally for diverse communities
- e) Develop and implement an ambassador program

Targets:

- Launch CTA program by 2021

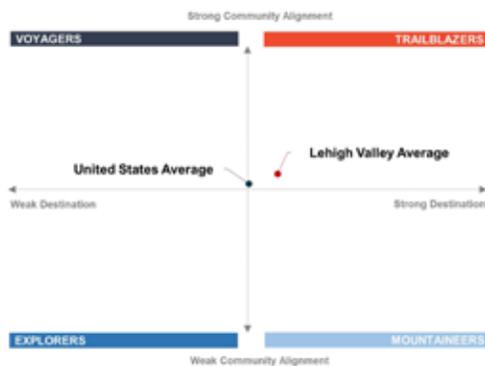
Modern Organization

- a) Develop new revenue and funding streams
- b) Embrace and adopt new technologies
- c) Be an educational resource for partners around new technologies and business strategies
- d) Develop a business case for a Destination Master Plan
- e) Become an accredited Destination Organization

Targets:

- Establish a TID by Summer 2022
- Deliver monthly community touchpoints by the end of 2020
- Complete DMAP Certification by July 2020

DestinationNEXT Assessment



# Introduction

In 2019, Discover Lehigh Valley set out to develop a new 3-year strategic plan for the organization. The purpose of this plan is to provide an updated vision and mission, new strategic goals and actionable initiatives, and new targets.

MMGY NextFactor engaged many of Discover Lehigh Valley's executive leaders and board members, plus local government leaders, key stakeholders, industry clients, and residents to ensure the broadest possible range of input to develop the plan.

## The project included:

- A DestinationNEXT assessment of Lehigh Valley
- One-on-one interviews with key industry and community leaders
- Board and management sessions

This Strategic Plan was produced by:

- Greg Oates, SVP Innovation, MMGY NextFactor
- Jordan Young, Manager, InterVISTAS Consulting Inc.



## Community Engagement:

### 1-on-1 Interviews

12 interviews with local stakeholders throughout the valley

### Board & Management Sessions

Multiple sessions with Discover Lehigh Valley's executive team and board of directors

### DestinationNEXT Assessment

99 Participants

- 10% – Discover Lehigh Valley Board of Directors
- 13% – Discover Lehigh Valley Management Team
- 56% – Bureau Partners
- 21% – Community Leaders

# DestinationNEXT Assessment

The DestinationNEXT Assessment Tool and Scenario Model helps destination organizations gauge how the destination is performing in the global visitor economy, in relation to more than 200 other assessments worldwide.

The methodology incorporates an in-depth survey of government officials, tourism and hospitality leaders, community leaders, and key stakeholders.

Survey questions are based on 10 variables to determine destination strength, relating to infrastructure and services, and 10 variables to determine the level of community alignment in support of the destination organization.

## Destination Strength Variables



## Community Alignment Variables



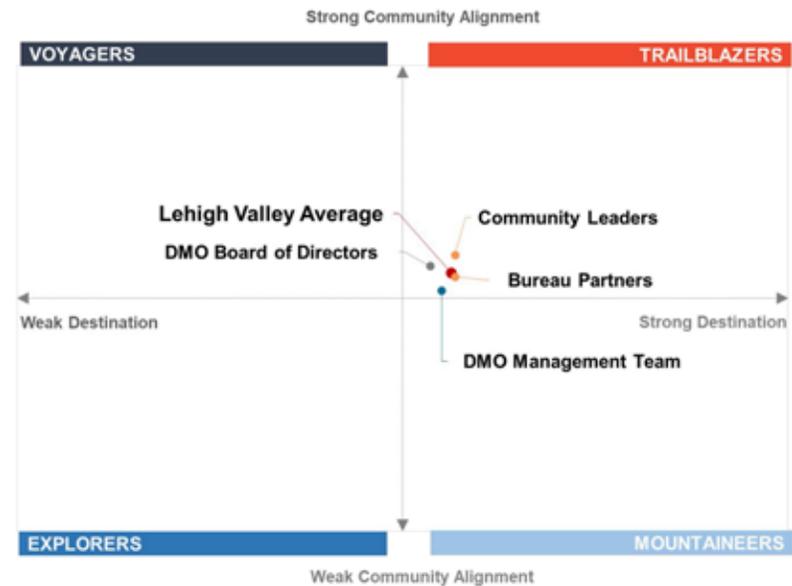
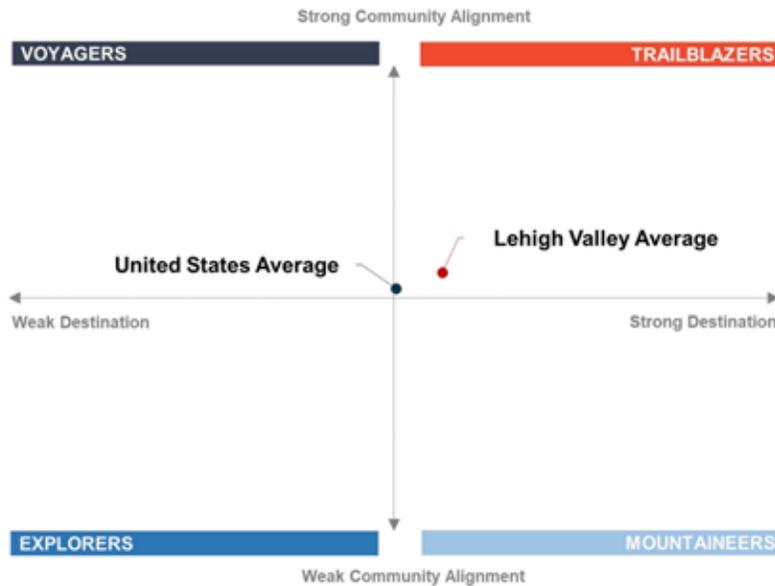
# DestinationNEXT Assessment Results

The results of the DestinationNEXT assessment placed Lehigh Valley in the top “Trailblazers” scenario, showing higher than average rankings for destination strength and community alignment.

An overview of answers for the survey’s open-ended question is listed on the following page.

**Below left:** The industry plot shows how Lehigh Valley compares against the average of U.S. destinations that have completed the assessment.

**Below right:** The stakeholder plot signals that the assessment participants are strongly aligned in their views of Lehigh Valley’s overall tourism landscape.



## What one thing could the destination do to become a better or world-class visitor destination?

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### Convention and Meeting Facilities (25%)

- A real conference center
- Add a convention center
- Better Meeting and Convention Space
- Build a Lehigh Valley Convention Center
- Build larger meeting venues with hotel rooms within walking distance
- Convention Center and more downtown hotel rooms
- Convention Center with Host Hotel attached. Utilize Coca Cola Park and PPL Center to attract pre-season professional games
- Facilities to hold conventions
- We need a large convention center

### Marketing (25%)

- Market all events going on in the valley - really become the one stop shop for everything we have to offer (festivals, concerts, events, games, movies, etc.).
- Communicate more effectively the economic impact of events/meetings to the area which would in turn capture the attention of media.
- Continue to promote Lehigh Valley as a safe, fun, inclusive, friendly and vibrant community
- Develop and market the Lehigh River as a recreation resource
- Market what is going on in multiple cities at one time. That way, people have a reason to make their stay overnight
- National marketing & promotion
- Promote and support more authentic outdoor assets

### Access and Mobility (15%)

- Continue to enhance assets and draw of three downtowns, and begin to better connect them (light rail is probably a pipe dream, but let's dream)
- Easier public transportation to and from major cities and within the area. Passenger train access/extension from Philadelphia.
- Having more walkable areas with the perception of safety
- Improve the infrastructure of the roadways
- Parking and signage
- Trains to/from NYC & Philly
- We need a better system of mass transit (trains) to connect the three cities
- Work on public transportation. Creating a lite rail between the cities would encourage guests to extend their stay and explore

# Ideal Future Results

During the board retreat, Discover Lehigh Valley’s executive staff and board members ranked the following items to determine the ideal future for Lehigh Valley’s visitor economy in the next three years.

Rank	Ideal Future	Importance
1	Develop new revenue and funding streams	9.21
2	Develop a cohesive valley-wide brand	9.13
3	Enhance engagement with local city councils and civic organizations	8.43
4	Pooling resources with economic development and local organizations	8.29
5	Developing a neighborhood/community driven marketing program	8.20
6	Embrace and adopt new technologies	8.14
7	Collaborate with regional airports and CVBs to increase international visitation	7.79
8	Be an educational resource for partners around new technologies	7.79
9	Promote and develop the connectivity of urban and outdoor landscapes	7.73
10	Support regional governments to develop expanded transportation system	7.71
11	Promote the old and recent history of Lehigh Valley	7.53
12	Build a stronger coalition among the arts & cultural community	7.50

## Ideal Future Results cont'd

During the board retreat, Discover Lehigh Valley's executive staff and board members ranked the following items to determine the ideal future for Lehigh Valley's visitor economy in the next three years.

Rank	Ideal Future	Importance
13	Support the development of a bike accessible valley	7.36
14	Develop a farm/farm-to-table experience (agritourism)	7.36
15	Support the development of a multi-modal transportation plan	7.21
16	Create a town-hall series that helps engage with the community	7.14
17	Be an incubator for small travel businesses	7.00
18	Develop an innovation think-tank event	6.93
19	Consider creating a community advocacy position	6.64
20	Connect all the stories around technological innovations	6.60
21	Provide the business case for the development of a new conference center	6.50
22	Develop an international visitors strategy	6.33
23	Develop a branded Lehigh Valley hop-on/hop-off bus system	6.29
24	Support the development of an international air access strategy	5.29

**Discover Lehigh Valley and its board of directors are united in their vision and priorities for the future of the city's visitor economy.**

As agreed collectively, the new Vision, Mission and Values for the organization provide direction for the sustainable growth of the valley, based on the shared interests of stakeholders, visitors and the local community.

**VISION:** Inspiring experiences

**MISSION:** Strengthening Lehigh Valley's economy through tourism, while enhancing quality of life and regional pride

**VALUES:**

- **Authentic:** Knowing who we are; being true to our roots
- **Collaborative:** Bringing the community together; encouraging partnership
- **Curious:** Open to new perspectives; exploring and discovering new experiences
- **Responsible:** Do everything with integrity and transparency



# Strategic Goals & Initiatives

2020 - 2022

# Strategic Goals

To achieve Discover Lehigh Valley’s vision, there are four new strategic goals for the organization. On the following pages, the specific initiatives and targets are listed for each.

- 1. Strategic Sales & Marketing**
- 2. Proactive Destination Management**
- 3. Intentional Community Engagement**
- 4. Modern Organization**



# Goal #1

## Strategic Sales & Marketing

Targets	Objectives	Timeline		
		FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rollout a neighborhood program by September 2021</li> <li>Increase group business by 10% by July 1, 2021</li> <li>Be a designated ride center by 2022</li> <li>Develop a historical trail content platform by 2022</li> </ul>	Continue to promote and leverage the cohesive valley-wide brand across the valley	█	█	█
	Developing a neighborhood/resident driven marketing program	█	█	█
	Promote the connectivity of urban and outdoor landscapes	█	█	█
	Promote the older and more recent history of Lehigh Valley	█	█	█
	Increase meetings, events, and sports tourism	█	█	█
	Develop an international visitors strategy	█	█	█
	Elevate the region as a cycling destination	█	█	█

## Goal #2

# Proactive Destination Management

Targets	Objectives	Timeline		
		FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide lost business data by December 2021</li> <li>• Culinary video content developed by July 2020</li> <li>• Facilitate mobility meeting with cities/counties by August 2020</li> </ul>	Provide the business case for the development of a new conference center	■	■	■
	Support the development of a bike accessible valley	■	■	■
	Develop content highlighting our culinary experiences (agritourism)	■	□	□
	Support the development of a multi-modal transportation plan (e.g. Columbus)	■	■	■

## Goal #3 Intentional Community Alignment

Targets	Objectives	Timeline		
		FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch CTA program by 2021</li> </ul>	Enhance engagement with local city councils and civic organizations	■	■	■
	Pooling resources with economic development and local organizations (LVEDC)	■	■	■
	Build a stronger coalition among the arts & cultural community		■	■
	Be a more authentic ally for diverse communities	■	■	■
	Develop and implement an ambassador program	■	■	■

## Goal #4 Modern Organization

Targets	Objectives	Timeline		
		FY 20/21	FY 21/22	FY 22/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a TID by Summer 2023</li> <li>Deliver monthly community touchpoints by the end of 2020</li> <li>Complete DMAP Certification by July 2020</li> </ul>	Develop new revenue and funding streams	█	█	█
	Embrace and adopt new technologies	█	█	█
	Be an educational resource for partners around new technologies and business strategies	█	█	█
	Develop a business case for a Destination Master Plan	█	█	█
	Become an accredited Destination Organization	█	█	█