



## **VISIT FORT WORTH**

### **FISCAL YEAR 2020 MARKETING PLAN**

Submitted to the City of Fort Worth on August 1, 2019

Fort Worth's growing visitor economy plays an important role in our economic development strategies. Visit Fort Worth is dedicated to increasing the impact of tourism and through these efforts increase the visibility of our city.

## **VISION**

Sharing the Fort Worth welcome with all.

## **MISSION**

To enhance Fort Worth's image, economy and quality of life through business and leisure tourism.

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

- 9.4 million visitors
- \$2.6 billion in economic impact
- 24,000+ jobs
- \$126 million in local sales taxes
- \$638 per homeowner offset per year in taxes generated by tourism

*Source: 2018 results from Tourism Economics study*

## ADMINISTRATION

Visit Fort Worth has established strategies for regional collaboration and development of our destination to meet yearly and long-term goals.

## DESTINATION MASTER PLAN

The Destination Master Plan is a community-wide effort to increase the impact of tourism on our economy and enhance the visibility of our city. These strategies are in collaboration with strategic plans developed by the City of Fort Worth, Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce and Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Many other partners and institutions are contributing to the Plan's success. Read more at [FortWorth.com/MasterPlan](http://FortWorth.com/MasterPlan)

### Destination Master Plan Strategies

- Enhanced experiences
- Strengthened messaging
- Expanded facilities
- Improved connectivity
- Greater collaboration

## ORGANIZATION PRIORITIES

The following programs are designed fulfill the Destination Master Plan and motivate community organizations to develop products and infrastructure that increase visitor spending and the city's quality of life.

**Destination Architecture:** Support and advocate for enhancements to the Fort Worth experience that attract visitors and contribute to the city's quality of life.

**Customer Engagement:** Increase connections with meeting customers and prospective leisure visitors through personal outreach, engaging events, social media and other tools.

**Organizational Sustainability:** Ensure long-term strategic planning and the commitment of resources to supporting the organization's goals.

**Community Awareness:** Educate and engage stakeholders and business about the benefits of tourism, conventions, visitor spending and the impact of successful destination marketing.

## PLANNING AND COMMUNICATIONS

**Staff Leadership Retreat:** Held annually with the CEO, vice presidents and directors to plan for the year ahead and review long-term needs.

**Customer Advisory Boards:** Convened annually with meeting customers and travel experts to provide feedback about our destination and growth opportunities.

**Sales Committee:** A monthly meeting of downtown hotel sales directors who coordinate efforts to secure convention-related site visits and bookings.

**Marketing Committee:** A quarterly meeting of marketing directors from area partners who provide feedback on Visit Fort Worth outreach strategies.

**Services Update for Hospitality Partners:** Quarterly meeting with hotel and hospitality partners to update on new venues, events and developments.

**Film Commission Executive Committee and Advisory Board:** These groups help direct efforts to increase production of TV, film and commercials, bringing economic impact and jobs.

**Hear Fort Worth Board and Town Halls:** Help direct efforts to promote music and increase local music initiatives, bringing economic impact and attracting and supporting the creative class.

**Annual Meeting and Annual Report:** Annual event and publication to report progress and plans to stakeholders and encourage their involvement.

## MEETINGS SALES

Meeting Sales promotes Fort Worth as a top convention destination and ensure outstanding meeting experiences to drive demand for facilities, room nights and local businesses.

By November 2019, Visit Fort Worth Meeting Sales and Sports will set goals for FY20 that benefit the Fort Worth Convention Center (FWCC) and/or Fort Worth hotels:

- Leads for meetings and conventions
- Booked meetings, conventions and trade shows
- Definite room nights
- New business, which has not booked within four years
- Retention of existing business

### New Business

The Meeting Sales team will target market segments to introduce meeting professionals and events rights holders to Fort Worth. New strategies have been developed with Visit Fort Worth Marketing and a new agency partner, Digital Edge:

- Strategic prospecting through sophisticated digital outreach
- Identifying prospects through researched customer personas
- Sales missions to target markets, especially Austin, Chicago, Washington D.C. and Atlanta
- Trade show participation and events
- Development of campaign messaging and creative (print/digital/display/video)
- Creation of email templates and social media expectations for pre- and post-event event communications
- Enhanced customer engagement opportunities

### FY20 needs include:

- Addressing short-term FWCC and hotel needs for 2020-2021
- Identify mid-size peak night groups that can be accommodated in FWCC during construction period 2022-2026
- Identify larger meetings peak night groups that can be accommodated in expanded FWCC (2026 and beyond), once capacities are known
- Identify opportunities for venues of varying size, with particular attention to future impediments of construction at FWCC likely necessitating smaller peak night groups
- Maintain rate integrity and use VFW financial incentives as appropriate

### Business Retention

VFW Convention Services team will work with hotel partners, restaurants, unique facilities, sports facilities and other entities to meet customer needs before, during, and after meeting and events. The convention services goal is to maintain a 97% rating on post-event customer

satisfaction surveys. Additionally, Meeting Sales leadership will collaborate with the VFW Sales Committee to help retain existing business.

### **Business Analysis**

Meeting Sales uses the results developed by the Marketing and Digital Edge teams to engage and nurture contacts to advance relationships bringing meeting and event to Fort Worth.

Strategies include:

- Working with local partners, including hotels and venues, to identify needs and opportunities to bring business
- Evaluating Fort Worth's ability to attract and accommodate various market segments and pursuing top prospects
- Provide customers with comprehensive proposals
- Attending tradeshow and hosting events to meet contacts and build interest

### **FY20 Target Market Overview**

#### **Geographic Target Markets:**

- Texas: Dallas, Austin, Houston, San Antonio
- Chicago
- Minneapolis
- Indianapolis
- Washington, D.C.; Virginia
- Atlanta
- N.Y., Penn., Mass., N.J., Calif., Ariz., Colo

#### **Visit Fort Worth Planner Personas**

Developed by Digital Edge based on VFW CRM data analysis

#### **National/Regional/Texas Association**

- Educational, Agricultural/Commodities/Food, Health/Medical, Religious, Trade/Commerce/Business, Ethnic, Meetings/Convention/Tourism Industry Events, Finance
- Association Motivations: Cost, Creative space, Family and spousal activities, Creative attendee experiences beyond the meeting, Community engagement, Host city opportunity
- Strategies:
- Increase prospecting events in market segments not typically exposed to DMOs efforts
- Conduct smaller FAM tours with regional groups with Texas on their radar but haven't been exposed to Fort Worth in the last 5-10 years, focusing on weekend activities, things to do, places to eat
- Continue relationships with local partners to share information about potential bookings, RFPs, co-op opportunities, and enhanced services

- Attend appointment-based trade shows to meet planners one on one, highlighting Fort Worth as a cost effective and family-friendly destination
- Connect with attendees during meetings/conventions to gather data, optimizing future service offerings
- Conduct follow-up surveys with planners and attendees to gauge satisfaction and identify areas for improvement
- Produce webinar to showcase VFW as experts and build Fort Worth brand awareness
- Use dedicated social channels to create engagement with prospects, keep Fort Worth top-of-mind, and demonstrate VFW's industry knowledge and connections

### **Corporate**

- Franchise/Multi-Level Marketing, Tech, Transportation, Medical/Pharma, Agriculture, Logistics, Finance, Insurance
- Finance/Tech/Insurance Motivations
- Incentives, Luxury/high-end experiences
- Strategies:
- Leverage LinkedIn, Instagram stories, and other social media channels for personalized social selling opportunities
- Host four buyer events per year to cultivate meeting planner and event owner relationships
- Join and participate in FICP to better understand needs of financial meetings and meeting planners, thereby generating more referrals and RFPs
- Host financial-focused FAM tours in Fort Worth, highlighting the presence of high-end food and beverage establishments and ample evening entertainment opportunities
- Host FICP Directors Board event
- Medical/Pharma Motivations: Adaptive reuse, Appearance/cleanliness, Presence of medical/pharma/biotech resources, Sustainability, Headquarters proximity, Sponsorships
- Strategies:
- Work with Marketing/Digital Edge to deploy messaging highlighting new TCU/UNTTHSC Medical School
- Work with Fort Worth Chamber to identify companies interested in showcasing innovative, cutting-edge and creative developments
- Develop a presence in niche trade shows (non-DMO focused) to identify potential meetings/conferences that would be a good fit for Fort Worth
- Build awareness among pharma planners of Fort Worth available inventory periods by leveraging user-generated content through social channels
- Identify and attend medical tradeshow/meetings for presence in the medical field

### **Third-Party Planner**

- Corporate, National, Regional and State Associations
- Motivations: Same as Corporate and Association as noted above plus retention of customer and commission payments

- Strategies:
- Establish and maintain strategic partnerships to boost Fort Worth awareness
- Host various FAM trips for appropriate third-parties
- Create unique incentive packages for associates for booking need periods

VFW will conduct a Need Assessment Survey for all meeting/full-service and a significant portion of remaining properties to develop a better insight to specific short-term and long-term partner needs allowing VFW to prioritize sales activities, market segments, geographical, need periods, feeder cities, etc.

## FORT WORTH SPORTS

Promote sports at all levels that bring significant economic impact and visibility to Fort Worth. Leverage new and future facilities to secure more sports-related meetings and events.

### STRATEGY

Attract, promote and create high profile, signature sporting events. Leverage current and future facilities to attract sporting events that drive total visitors and hotel room nights while having a positive impact on the local economy.

### TACTICS

- Work with local stakeholders to identify regional and national championship to bid on. This includes events for organizations like the NCAA, Big 12, United States Olympic Committee sports, UIL, Equestrian, youth/amateur sports, e-sports and more.
- Attend industry trade shows to increase the Fort Worth profile with National Governing Bodies and Events Right's Holders. In addition to attending these shows, Fort Worth Sports will be enhancing our presence through sponsorships directed at the NGBs and ERHs. Those conferences are listed below.
- Partner with Fort Worth venues to identify potential events that are a good fit for Fort Worth and that specific venue. Venues include; Dickies Arena, Fort Worth Convention Center, Will Roger Memorial Center, Texas Motor Speedway, Game On, Rolling Hills and others.

### STRATEGY

Provide a championship experience for athletes, fans and families for events that are hosted in Fort Worth with the ultimate goal of having the event (and its fans and athletes) return.

### TACTICS

- Work with hospitality partners to provide welcome signage and a personal touch that makes visitors to Fort Worth feel valued and appreciated.
- Coordinate with corporate and community leaders to spread awareness of events and use all resources available to show the city is collaborating to provide a championship experience.
- Use the Texas Event Trust Fund to secure additional funding to enhance the experience for athletes and fans
- Initiate activations around big events to interact with visitors and get their feedback



## STRATEGY

Enhance Fort Worth Sports brand awareness from a local, national and international perspective

## TACTICS

- Share importance and impact of sports tourism and specific events coming to Fort Worth with corporate and community leadership through speaking engagements, a newsletter, social media and email.
- Fort Worth Sports has secured exclusive rights at the following trade shows to interact with NGB's and rights holders without competitive cities:
  - US Sports Congress
  - TEAMS Sports Conference
  - Sportology - A Sports Technology Conference
  - Sports Events & Travel Association National Symposium
- Fort Worth Sports will be hosting the following Olympic Sports national championships which will open up opportunities to host international competitions:
  - USA Table Tennis US Open
  - USA Fencing North American Cup
  - USA Track & Field Long Distance National Championships

## STRATEGY

Collaborate with community partners on the development of a new youth sports facility that will drive sports tourism and create a better quality of life for local residents.

- Communicate the recommendations from the consultant group hired by the Sports Authority Board (Sports Facility Advisors & Huddle Up Group) to local elected officials, community and corporate leaders to garner support for the project
- Work with City leadership to identify potential locations and funding mechanisms for the project
- Align local sports stakeholders to advocate for the project

## TRADE SHOWS AND CONFERENCES

IMEX America  
Connect Faith  
ConferenceDirect CEO Summit  
MPI Hill Country Chapter Texas Education Conference  
National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners Education Conference  
U.S. Sports Congress Annual Conference  
IAEE Annual Meeting & Exhibition EXPO  
Association Forum Holiday Showcase  
Professional Convention Management Association Conven  
PBR Customer Event in NYC  
Connect Specialty  
Southwest Showcase  
Connect Diversity  
International Franchise Association Annual Conference  
Meeting Professionals International WEC  
DMAI Destinations Showcase  
Georgia MPI Annual Customer Event  
DFW Association Executives Association Day 2019  
ConferenceDirect Annual Partners Meeting  
National Association of Sports Commissions Sports Event Symposium  
U.S. Sports Congress Sponsor Forum  
TSAE Summer Event  
IAEE Central Texas Chapter Summer Event  
Helms Briscoe Annual Business Conference  
Direct Selling Association Annual Meeting  
Professional Conference Managers Association Education Conference  
CESSE Annual Meeting  
Destinations International Annual Convention  
ASAE Annual Meeting  
Connect Sports  
HPN Partner Conference  
Texas Society of Association Executives Annual Meeting  
Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference

## CONVENTION SERVICES

Convention Services ensures the satisfaction of our customers by meeting their needs for meetings in Fort Worth. The team strategically works in collaboration with Fort Worth hospitality partners to support and enhance the attendee experience, increasing economic impact as a result.

### STRATEGY

Provide innovative tools for meeting planners to engage their audiences and boost attendance.

### TACTICS

- Offer digital marketing tools and content to promote Fort Worth.
- Engage partners to ensure we provide the best resources and newest venues to meeting and event customers.
- Provide Destination Education opportunities for qualified planners showcasing unique and diverse opportunities in Fort Worth.
- Develop promotional and attendance-building materials that engage attendees.
- Encourage meeting attendees to spend more time in Fort Worth, enjoying local attractions, dining and shopping.
- Facilitate a customer satisfaction survey with a goal of 97 percent satisfaction rating.
- Conduct quarterly meeting with Convention Center and full-service hotels to network and discuss upcoming conventions and opportunities.

### **Action Calendar**

Event Service Professionals Association Annual Conference  
Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)  
Valentine's Dinner in Austin, Texas  
Atlanta Client Appreciation Event  
Bring Meetings Home Event  
Heart and Sole Client Event  
DI (Destinations International annual conference and services summit)  
TACVB Annual Conference and local events  
Simpleview Summit  
Cvent CONNECT  
TxACOM  
MPI (local and annual conference)  
NACE  
PartyFest  
Celebrate Fort Worth  
Connect Meetings  
The Special Events Show

### **Attendance-Building Trips**

The Convention Services Team will promote Fort Worth to build future attendance at conventions and meetings booked for the city in future years, especially:

- Society of Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry - 2020 Annual Meeting
- National Business Aviation Association - 2021 Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference
- Woodward Events – 2021 Scaling New Heights
- Electrical Apparatus Service Association - 2021 Annual Convention

## MARKETING

Increase awareness of Fort Worth as a visitor destination for leisure and meetings. Enhance visitor economy, including jobs and financial benefits for residents, by promoting hotel bookings and attractions. Assist in the development of visitor attractions, Fort Worth's vibe and other aspects that attract people to our city.

## STRATEGY

Increase awareness of Fort Worth so that more people consider the city as a meetings and leisure destination.

## TACTICS

- Activations in target markets to engage prospective travelers and meeting planners in Fort Worth culture, working with partners in food, beverage, music and more.
  - Los Angeles
  - Chicago
  - Lubbock/West Texas
  - Sydney/Brisbane
  - London/UK
  - Toronto/Canada
  - PCMA trade show
  - IMEX trade show
  - Regional meeting planner engagements
  - Other target meeting events
- Advertising/promotion for brand awareness
  - Social media
  - Texas Monthly
  - Hear Fort Worth music promotion, artist on tours
  - Brand partnerships with The Infatuation, Garden & Gun magazine and Texas Tech
  - New York Times Travel Show

- Outdoor
- Online partners such as Spotify, NPR
- DFW International Airport for in-terminal advertising
- Fort Worth-based films/film projects
- Public relations
  - Media relations and story placement about cool aspects of the destination, developed working with agencies in NYC, London, Sydney and Frankfurt
  - Stunts/activations/stories that draw attention to the city
- Local promotion
  - Promote Fort Worth as a visitor destination to local residents – who are an important driver of the visitor economy by inviting friends and relatives

## STRATEGY

Increase hotel bookings and length of stay and spend

## TACTICS

- Call-to-action advertising
  - National digital ad networks, especially Adara, Conversant
  - TripAdvisor, Expedia
  - OTT (online TV networks)
- Social media campaigns with engaging video and other content
- Promotions developed with partners
- Promote tourism by educating Fort Worth residents

## TACTICS

- Promote attraction development
  - Tours and experiences
  - Festivals (e.g. Fortress Festival)
  - Partner event promotion

- Convention District
- Visit Fort Worth Creative Conference
- Add-a-day campaign for meetings
- Family reunion promotion
- In-market destination education
  - Visitor centers
  - Helpful materials
  - Mobile website
  - Social media
- Promotion of Fort Worth's many districts

## STRATEGY

Analyze results and data insights to hone marketing tactics and fuel future efforts

## TACTICS

- Understand changing perceptions of Fort Worth as a visitor destination
- Understand hotel bookings and arrivals as a result of marketing
- Understand visitor activity within Fort Worth
- Understand visitor spending to focus marketing efforts on highest ROI

## Tourism

## STRATEGY

Increase tourism by promoting Fort Worth hotels and attractions to **tour operators and travel agents**.

## TACTICS

- Continue training and presentations to the travel trade in key domestic and international markets.

- Leverage destination experiences such as tours to market and reach new consumers, also as content that travel companies can sell.
- Create outreach and education in key languages.

## STRATEGY

Increase bookings from domestic and international customers.

## TACTICS

- Partner with Brand USA, receptive operators, tour operators and airlines on co-op promotion and advertising opportunities.
- Work with Visit Fort Worth Community Grant recipients and Visit DFW regional tourism coalition to maximize room nights.
- Host educational familiarization trips and sites for the trade.
- Develop dynamic package offerings with hotel and attraction partners.

## STRATEGY

Increase tourism related to multicultural markets.

## TACTICS

- Leverage partnerships with local organizations, especially Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber, Fort Worth Sister Cities International, the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber and the North Texas LGBT chamber.
- Promote “Y’all Means All” Campaign to promote inclusion in a positive, fun way.
- Launch self-guided tours that highlight sites of cultural significance in African American and Hispanic-related tourism.
- Create co-op advertising and promotion opportunities for these markets.



## *Fort Worth Film Commission*

### **STRATEGY**

Increase economic impact and jobs by securing productions of television, film, commercials, video games and more through the Fort Worth Film Commission.

### **TACTICS**

- Work with productions to identify Fort Worth locations and crew.
- Promote Fort Worth as a film-friendly, location-rich destination at high-profile festivals and events, engaging filmmakers and other members of the industry.
- Proactively pitch major studios, production companies and directors in Los Angeles, NYC, Texas and beyond.
- Celebrate significant productions when they release to the public, potentially with advertising, red carpet events and public relations.
- Promote local crew and Fort Worth locations through social media and public relations initiatives.
- Support initiatives such as Lone Star Film Festival to increase Fort Worth visibility with filmmakers.
- Represent Fort Worth city and district filming regulations to help productions do business here.
- Cultivate visibility and appreciation for film productions to create a film-friendly environment and, long-term, support growth of the city's creative class.

## *Hear Fort Worth Music Association*

### **STRATEGY**

Work with Hear Fort Worth to promote the city as a **vibrant music destination** to visit with many venues of choice for live concerts and great touring artists.

## TACTICS

- Promote music across many genres to connect visitors with the Fort Worth vibe.
- Continue Hear Fort Worth initiatives that export Fort Worth musicians to key markets, including travel grants.
- Continue artist of the month program to highlight new and diverse sounds.
- Promote Niles City Sound session recordings to promote a diverse group of new artists
- Hold semi-annual music town halls to discuss opportunities and needs in the local music community.
- Support initiatives that dramatically increase Fort Worth's visibility such as Fortress Festival, Ranch Bash, Texas Crossroads and Texas Music Office's Music Friendly program.

## *Visitor Services*

### STRATEGY

Maintain excellent customer service in visitor centers, including the Stockyards, Sundance Square and Will Rogers Memorial Center.

### TACTICS

- Hold quarterly staff and volunteer training to ensure outstanding customer service.
- Provide engaging visitor information based on research and customer feedback.

### STRATEGY

Develop mobile visitor-welcome opportunities to reach travelers at high-profile events in Fort Worth and at events in target markets.

## **TACTICS**

- Seek ways to mobilize staff from fixed centers into concentrations of visitors, such as active streets and festivals.
- Leverage staff time and expertise to help monitor social media.
- Activate volunteers during major festivals and events.

## **STRATEGY**

Expand retail in our visitors centers to engage visitors with the Fort Worth brand

## **TACTICS**

- Expand retail offerings to include local flare of Fort Worth and Texas.
- Research best practices for marketing and selling.

## THE FORT WORTH HERD

Enhance the distinctive Western heritage of the Stockyards National Historic District through an authentic experience appealing to visitors of all ages. In its 19-year history, more than 9 million people have watched the twice-daily cattle drive and participated in Herd educational programs.

The Fort Worth Herd provides a unique and engaging experience for visitors to the Stockyards National Historic District. The cattle drive is a leading reason people visit the city and consistently ranks among the top attractions visited.

### STRATEGY

Expand the Herd experience to reach more people and to boost visitor satisfaction

### TACTICS

- Explore expanding the twice-daily cattle drive through Rodeo Plaza and arriving at the practice pen adjacent to Cowtown Coliseum (for public engagement)
- Conduct feasibility study and assess fund-raising opportunities
- Plan programming and marketing to leverage the extended experience

### STRATEGY

Update the current Education Facility.

### TACTICS

- Ensure educational program is current with Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) state requirements.
- Acquire sponsor to make necessary changes to current facility.
- Update bleachers, fencing, lighting and signage.
- Perform Behind the Scenes during events and peak weekends to engage audiences.

## STRATEGY

Increase donations to the Fort Worth Herd.

## TACTICS

- Celebrate those who have donated by adding a donor list to the website.
- Continue to leverage the 20th anniversary celebration during calendar 2019
- Increase special appearance opportunities to expand the Herd's brand awareness
- Create Adopt-A-Steer opportunity for guests.
- Host annual fundraising gala to raise profits to support education program and marketing efforts.