

# Tourism WORKS.



GENERATING  
\$950 MILLION  
ANNUALLY

hamilton  
county  
tourism  
inc





# Hamilton County Tourism Vision 2025 Planning Timeline

- 2015

Hamilton County Vision 2025 10-Year Plan Adopted
- 2020

COVID-19 Hamilton County Tourism Recovery Plan Adopted
- 2022

Vision Destination 2025 Planning

Stakeholder Engagement – Resiliency Conversations

Destination NEXT – National Comparative Study

Workplace Culture Assessment – Structure and Office Adaptations to Meet Changing Needs

BEST Study – Business of Entertainment, Sport and Tourism
- 2025

Vision 2035 Under Way

## Overnight Tourism by the Numbers

	2015	2019	2020	2021
HOTEL ROOM INVENTORY	3,082	4,545	4,853	5,033
ROOM OCCUPANCY RATE	68.6%	63.7%	36.9%	54.2%
TOTAL ROOMS SOLD	771,702	1,056,735	653,626	995,678



## *Plan for a Plan: Ensuring Tourism will Always Work*

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Summer 2022 through Winter 2023 will find the Hamilton County Tourism (HCT) staff and governance teams—along with its many industry partners—standing in front of white boards, marking on sticky notes, and envisioning a more resilient future for the community’s important travel industry sector.

After the shock of 2020 to the local and national tourism economy, HCT commissioned a study in 2021 from Tourism Economics to better understand market recovery. That study revealed just how significant youth sport and entertainment visitors are to the local leisure and group travel economy. In fact, they make up about 20% of all visitors.

# 9,913

**PEOPLE EMPLOYED**

as a result of  
visitors coming to  
Hamilton County.

*“Hamilton County Tourism has always relied on qualitative and quantitative data to map its course, and that business intelligence allowed us to weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it’s time to support our important tourism economy with community conversations and a revised plan to diversify our product offerings, ensure workforce and economic recovery, and create resiliency.”*

— BRENDA MYERS, President/CEO

# Sports & Entertainment Market Snapshot

MARKET SEGMENT	UNIQUE VISITORS	DIRECT SPENDING
Youth & Amateur Sports	887,000	\$106.3 million
Entertainment	755,000	\$91.4 million
All Tourism Segments	4,000,000*	\$960.8 million

Data Source: Tourism Economics 2019 Data  
\*Reflects estimated overall day and overnight visitors to county, not all of which are unique.

With business transient weekday travel anticipated to not fully recover until after 2025, HCT must better understand how its annual calendar of events shapes the local tourism economy and explore options to decrease dependency on late spring and summer travel.

The BEST Study will focus on the sport, entertainment and group travel markets. The leisure market remains strong in Hamilton County, although competition for weekend hotel rooms is intense due to high demand for sports and entertainment rooms during the same spring and summer seasons that also appeal to casual travelers.

There is additional hotel capacity for fall and winter visitors, and these studies will explore what could encourage additional travel during those periods.

Other study components will include revisiting the Vision 2025 Plan that guided the organization until the pandemic forced focus on a recovery plan. HCT will also do an internal assessment of its staff and environmental culture in light of the changing needs of workforce and workspace post-pandemic.



*“U.S. Youth Sports is a \$17 Billion industry which grew 55% since 2010.”*

— WINTERGREEN RESEARCH, U.S. Travel Association

# Overview of Planning Areas

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## BEST STUDY

WHAT	Business of Entertainment, Sport & Tourism long-range plan
WHEN	Spring 2022 through Winter 2023
WHO	HCT governance teams, Hamilton County Sports Authority (HCSA), staff, and community sport and entertainment partners
HOW	National search for a long-range planning team, with several market research studies to inform decisions

## WORKPLACE CULTURE ASSESSMENT

WHAT	Space use and staff studies to understand the post-pandemic work environment
WHEN	Summer 2022
WHO	Consultants, staff and HCT governance teams
HOW	Survey and conversations

## VISION DESTINATION 2025

WHAT	Destination NEXT comparative study and tourism resiliency conversations
WHEN	Summer and Fall 2022
WHO	HCT governance teams, staff, and community leaders and partners
HOW	Online survey, facilitated conversations and community input gatherings





# Destination Advertising: Why Wait for the Weekend?

Pent-up demand for travel and relaxed pandemic restrictions combine for a rosy outlook in leisure travel in the near future. However, with Hamilton County's typical spring and summer weekend sell-outs, from youth sports tournaments, live entertainment, and golf and wedding groups, the need for tourism business resides during the week. While current weekday business travel is running 10 points ahead of last year due to decreased business travel and additional rooms available for sale, there is opportunity to move leisure business away from weekends.

HCT has shifted its marketing message to encourage consumers to visit during the week when business is needed. Workers in the knowledge sector are combining remote work and destination travel more than ever. The campaign "Why Wait for the Weekend?" will answer that trend. Ads will run on media throughout the Chicago DMA and digitally across Indiana.

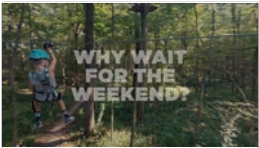
## CAMPAIGN DELIVERABLES



Print Ad

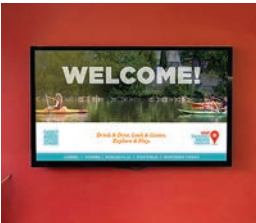


Web Banner



:30 TV Spot

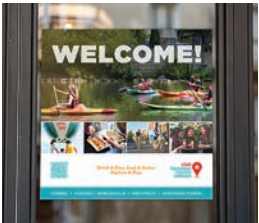
## IN-MARKET DELIVERABLES



Horizontal TV Lobby Ad



Vertical TV Lobby Ad



Window Cling







# Meeting Planners: Rest Easy with HCT Expertise

Groups that travel for meetings, conferences and events are ready for a full calendar year of activity. Meeting Planners report their members feel safer to travel and are encouraged by strong registrations.

Planners appreciate Hamilton County's affordability, beautiful properties, safe communities, turn-key service, and proximity to Indianapolis International Airport. With high quality meeting and event spaces, Hamilton County is well-positioned for small- to mid-size gatherings.



Print Ad

Hamilton County Tourism (HCT) will expand outreach to build market share in this small-but-mighty segment of the tourism trade. Sales staff will attend sales missions and trade shows targeting association and fraternal groups, plus invest in new business lead generation programs. Group services will ramp up hospitality efforts through hotel welcome signage, bus transportation support, and gifts and amenities using our local partners.

## Hamilton County Sports Authority Doubles Event Support

In the latter half of 2020, HCT identified youth sports travel tournaments as a key component to tourism industry recovery. In fact, in some aspects of sport—especially the golf daily fee—businesses saw record-setting sales and development last year. To encourage new sport development and help sustain existing events, the HCSA created a sponsorship program to support events and programs. In 2022, HCSA will double its sponsorship support and reinstate the local sports club grant program. Hamilton County communities will host a number of new championships and events, and HCSA will provide planning and event management as well as offer key leadership for the BEST Study.

*“In Q1 2022, American Express reported doubled consumer spending on entertainment and travel—rising 121% as compared to the previous year.”*

— THE ECONOMIC TIMES, APRIL 2022



## ***Tourism Innovation Lab Focus: Hospitality Workforce Recovery***

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The Hamilton County hospitality industry lost a quarter of its workforce with the 2020 pandemic, with most of those employees choosing to turn to other career paths.

Housing availability and cost of living affordability pressures make local recovery slower than the national average.

Using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant dollars allocated by Hamilton County to support tourism recovery, HCT's partner at Invest Hamilton County has an innovative plan to support workforce recovery.

The first program is a tourism-focused curriculum of study based on the American Hotel Lodging Association's gold standard educational program. This unique and free opportunity will be marketed through various direct channels to a non-traditional workforce in the hope of enticing them to consider the lodging industry as a career pathway. Research shows lodging guest services to be a gateway to future work and financial success.

In addition, a training program for cognitively impaired adults to work in various roles with hotel housekeeping, food service and laundry services will be established with local workforce partners.

Both programs will support these future workers with wrap-around supportive services to ensure they can thrive in the exciting world of hospitality.

***“Travel and entertainment are the top categories where consumers want to spend time and money, and consumer loyalty, especially to subscription services for Millennial and Gen-Z consumers, has become a major opportunity to grab market share.”***

— RECURLY.COM



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*tourism together*