



TOURISM

A LOOK BACK & FORWARD

Visit Mobile is proud to share with you, our stakeholders and friends, a review of the major initiatives the organization undertook in 2020 and the top goals for 2021. You will see our focus utilizing a balanced approach to tourism in order to shorten the COVID recovery to our destination.



FOOD SERVICE PRACTICING COVID SAFETY AT SQUID INK

2020 A LOOK BACK



The **Lodging Room Tax** for the 2019/2020 fiscal year was off to a record start until the COVID-19 pandemic shattered the industry by halting consumer travel in March 2020 and devastating Mobile's travel and hospitality community; as well as North America's.

In May of 2020, the **Tourism Improvement District** (TID) became a law for the City of Mobile; the first city in the state of Alabama to have a TID. The governing organization, Mobile Area Lodging Corporation (MALC), subsequently formed a Board of Directors and began collecting assessments the following July on room nights within the city limits.



Since the **discovery of the remains of the scuttled schooner, Clotilda**, Mobile has been on the cusp of being a leading destination of Cultural / Heritage



Tourism in the southeast, U.S., and world. As the year unfolded, Visit Mobile lead the collaboration of developing **Africatown Tourism** alongside local community leaders (turning the story of the community into an experience), as the City of Mobile awarded a performance contract with the Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD) to develop an Immersive Experience in Africatown and Documentary Film of the Clotilda Journey.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, **Carnival Cruise Line** retired the Fantasy and announced the **Sensation** will change port cities to depart



2020 A LOOK BACK



from the Port of Mobile once cruising continues in the U.S.

In the worst year of global travel and tourism history, the Visit Mobile **Convention Sales** team booked record Future Definite Room Nights; 20% over the previous record year (97,000).

Visit Mobile moved to **re-structure the organization to align resources to shorten COVID recovery.**

In 2020, **Mobile's lodging occupancy** of 53% was 8 points (or 13%) less than the previous year, however, **Smith Travel Research (STR)** shows favorability in comparison to the comp-set of 10 other major cities.

Noting predicted trends, Visit Mobile commissioned **Tourism Economics**, the leading forecasting

travel and tourism company in the United States, to perform a *Lodging Revenue Study* in May of 2020.

The study forecasted that Mobile would return to 2019 actual lodging metrics in 2022 with its "upside forecast." On a "downside forecast" (with a virus drag), Mobile lodging metrics would return to 2019 levels in 2025. We are excited to share that Mobile is on pace with the "upside forecast," with 2020 lodging revenue 11% higher (\$97 million) than predictions.

Visit Mobile must continue to aggressively push the leisure, business transient, and convention markets to keep the encouraging pace. Leisure travel should start returning in Q3 of 2021. We project hotel lodging occupancy to be approximate 59% in 2022 vs 53% in 2021, with leisure travelers leading the way.



2020 A LOOK BACK



As international and domestic travel halted, the **Marketing & Communications team** pivoted their focus of inviting travelers to visit Mobile, to being the communication arm for the city highlighting businesses that were required/allowed to remain open and concentrated on the sustainability of all city stakeholders. Throughout the year the marketing spends went dark while energies honed in on the **Phases of COVID-19: Response, Stabilization, Recovery.**

Through collaboration with the Mobile City Council, City of Mobile Administration team,

Downtown Mobile Alliance, and many others, #MobileStrong became a calling card in developing programs and campaigns like **Enjoy Mobile with Confidence, Takeout Fridays, Hometown Heroes, Gift Card promotions, Staycations, Restaurant Rescue, and many more.** With Visit Mobile being a tourism based membership organization, we developed a brand new website to highlight every type of business showcasing fast-changing hours and policies. (Note: Recovery tactics ultimately were not fully initiated until 2021).





MURAL IN AFRICATOWN

2021 A LOOK FORWARD



Initiatives & Deliverables

The *primary* goal for the Visit Mobile team in 2021 is to **shorten the COVID Recovery** by marketing the destination using a balanced approach to tourism.

With the formation of the TID, **MALC Marketing Initiatives** have started and will continue to be a major focus throughout 2021; working closely with the MALC Board to use resources wisely and timely bringing lodging room nights to the City of Mobile.

The development of **Africatown Tourism** remains a primary focus for the Visit Mobile team which continues to lead the collaboration with SCADpro and local stakeholders to turn the 150+ year under-

told community story into an experience. Initiatives include the development of a documentary film of the Clotilda journey to be shown at GulfQuest initially, creating an immersive tourism experience in Africatown, and launching water and land tours by summer 2021 during Phase I at Cooper Riverside Park. Additionally, the Visit Mobile team will assist in the development of the marketing resources needed to open the Africatown Heritage House. We envision that in future years, once the Africatown assets are fully developed, the community could see **1 million visitors** per year coming to experience their story.



SCAD PRO RENDERING OF PROPOSED AFRICATOWN ENTRANCE GATE

2021 A LOOK FORWARD



Initiatives & Deliverables

The Phases of COVID-19:

Response, Stabilization, Recovery have carried into 2021 with the focus now squarely on **Tourism Recovery**, first with leisure travelers late in 2021, then with business transient travelers and convention-goers. The focus is to drive the relevant messages knowing the order of rebounding travel. The Marketing & Communications team has begun advertising efforts as well as engaging with travel writers, travel publications, writers, and bloggers to highlight all the city offers. The Visit Mobile Sales team will continue to engage with meeting planners and group tour operators in the industry.

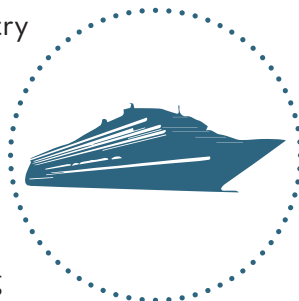


As the Visit Mobile team focuses on the recovery of leisure travelers, the team will proactively collaborate with partners to develop, and support **local packaging/promotions** of hotels, attractions, and restaurants.

The Convention Sales team has been nurturing meeting planner relationships over the past year. The **convention meetings market** is “thawing out” and anticipated to return to the market in 2022. While last year was a record year with future definite room night bookings, this year’s booking pace has slowed substantially and is down to last

year’s lead and room night pace by 45% and 49% respectively. We are taking action to increase the lead funnel by contracting more lead generators, incentivizing meeting planners, growing our presence and increasing marketing efforts to the industry. We are ramping up our staff and travel plans accordingly. We must continue to evolve and improve as the meetings industry bounces back and reinvents itself.

The Visit Mobile team, collaborating with the City’s administration, has continued close relationships with with Carnival partners, Roger Blum, and leaders in the cruise industry to ensure the readiness of the community when the **Carnival Sensation returns cruising to the Mobile market** - predicting no later than the end of 2021.



Another key focus of the Visit Mobile team for 2021 is to work closely on **Hospitality & Tourism Workforce Development** on recruitment to restore the supply of employees into the lodging community in Mobile. This involves working closely with the University of South Alabama’s Hospitality & Tourism Management department, the City of Mobile’s YES Initiative, and the Mobile Area Lodging Association (MALA). Collaborations

2021 A LOOK FORWARD



Initiatives & Deliverables

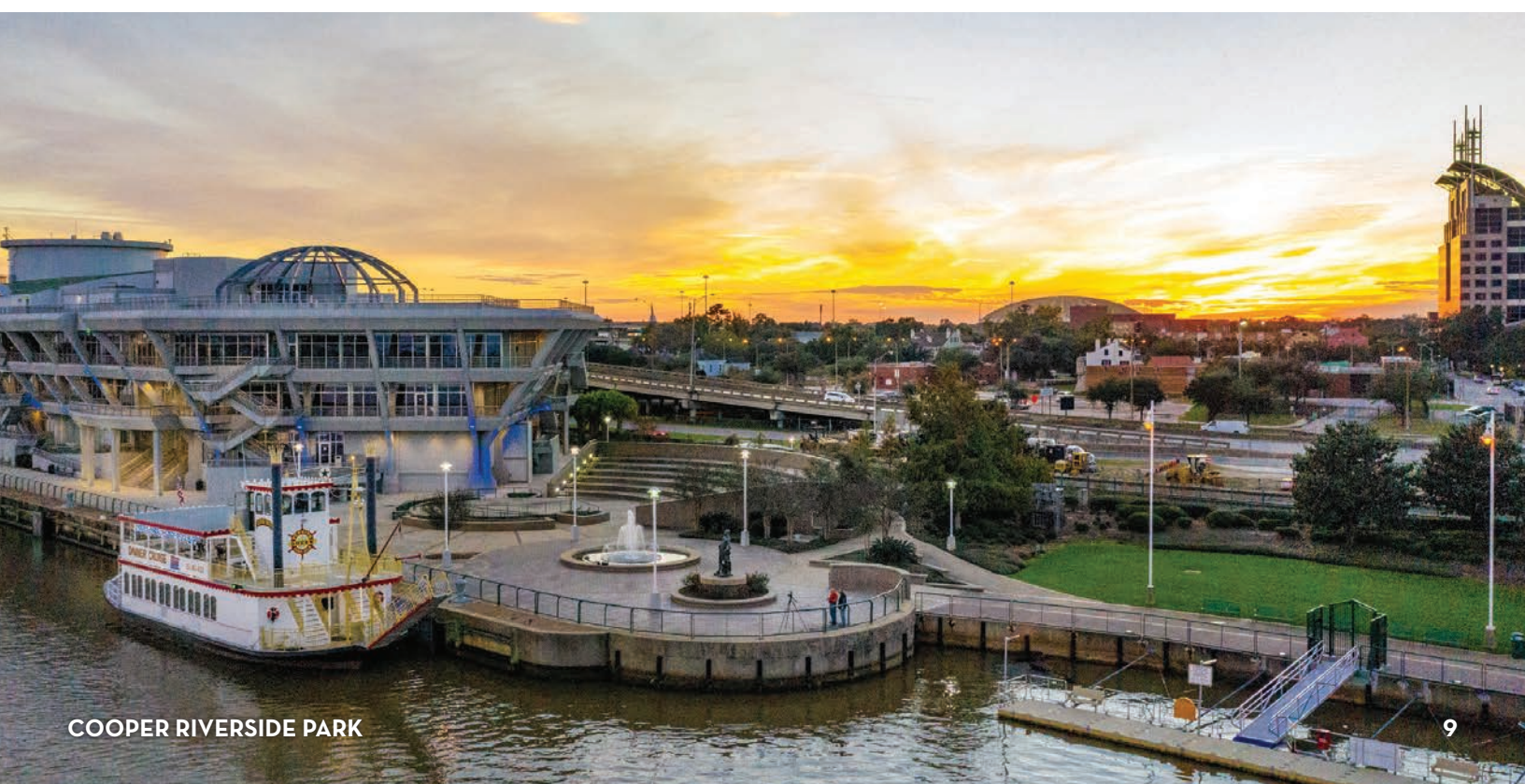
also include recruitment of a workforce from Mobile County Schools, Bishop State Community College, Coastal Alabama Community College, and others. Visit Mobile will fund a job portal website in collaboration with the stakeholders to connect worker supply to hotel needs.

As the travel and tourism industry rebounds, the Visit Mobile team will continue to focus on **diversity and inclusion initiatives** not only in what is being promoted but with the infrastructure of the organization.

A favorite of the local community and a resource to visitors, the Visit Mobile team will aim to

re-establish and re-develop the **I am Mobile Tourism Ambassador Program** created to train locals to become certified Mobile experts who could serve as hosts, ambassadors and tour guides throughout the community.

As has been a focus in the past, Visit Mobile will continue to collaborate with the City of Mobile in **Cooper Riverside Park** programming elements as well as attraction and infrastructure development. This strategy goes hand-in-hand with Phase I Africatown Tourism / Clotilda Experience opportunities.





BRAGG-MITCHELL MANSION

MOBILE CELEBRATES TOURISM

By the Numbers

NUMBER OF VISITORS

2011 - 2,874,349
2012 - 2,829,714
2013 - 2,874,808
2014 - 2,958,008
2015 - 3,050,633
2016 - 3,227,689
2017 - 3,406,459
2018 - 3,296,924
2019 - 3,336,851
2020 - Coming May 2021

Alabama Tourism Department,
Economic Impact of Travel

CITY & COUNTY LODGING TAX REVENUE (operating fund, fiscal year)

	City	County
2011	\$7,010,084	\$2,216,282
2012	\$6,670,668	\$2,175,120
2013	\$6,927,187	\$2,254,541
2014	\$7,174,830	\$2,320,052
2015	\$7,529,252	\$2,421,391
2016	\$7,876,145	\$2,554,441
2017	\$8,269,682	\$2,721,602
2018	\$8,888,287	\$2,851,613
2019	\$8,874,232	\$3,042,325
2020	\$Coming Soon	\$Coming Soon

Data from Mobile's City and County Monthly Financial Reports

TOTAL VISITOR SPEND

2015 - \$1,027,623,404
2016 - \$1,081,954,872
2017 - \$1,167,139,662
2018 - \$1,255,161,957
2019 - \$1,302,542,294
2020 - \$Coming May 2021

Alabama Tourism Department, Economic Impact of Travel

AVERAGE DAILY HOTEL RATE

2011 - \$71.49
2012 - \$71.89
2013 - \$73.11
2014 - \$74.76
2015 - \$76.28
2016 - \$76.50
2017 - \$78.13
2018 - \$82.86
2019 - \$83.74
2020 - \$77.73

Smith Travel Research

HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATE (annual)

2011	56.7%
2012	56.8%
2013	57.9%
2014	59.3%
2015	60.9%
2016	62.6%
2017	64.5%
2018	63.8%
2019	61.1%
2020	53.1%

Smith Travel Research



TOURISM ECONOMICS

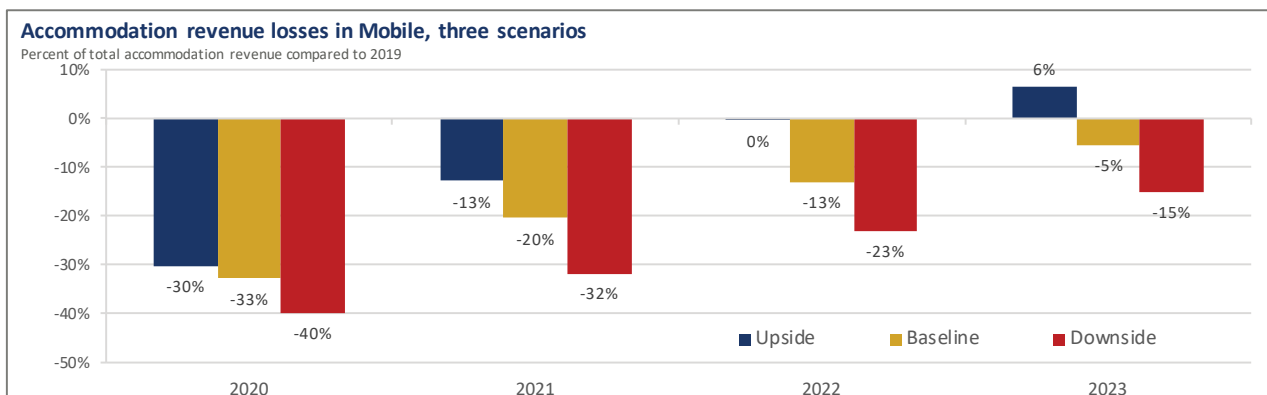
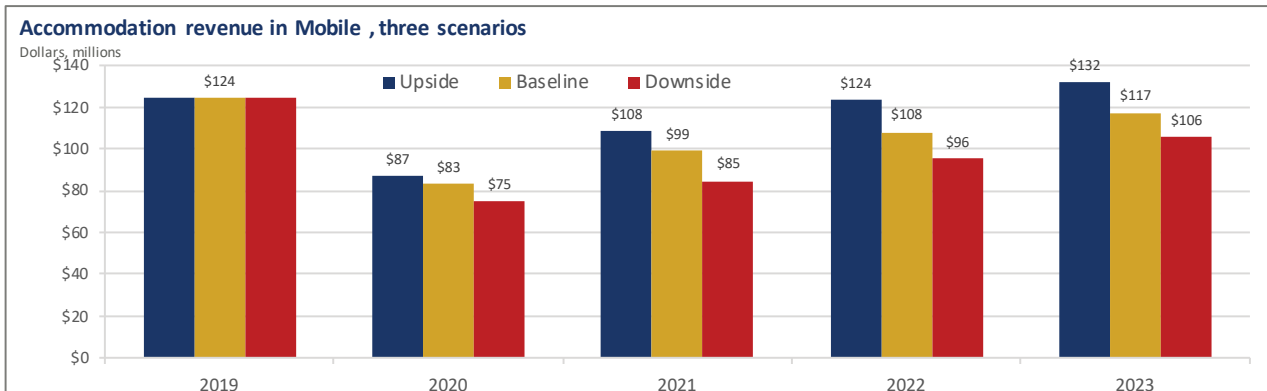
AN OXFORD ECONOMICS COMPANY

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON MOBILE'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Baseline, Upside, and Downside Scenarios

This workbook contains three forecast scenarios for the City of Mobile.

- In the Upside Scenario, room revenue losses peak at 64% in April 2020 and return to 2019 levels in 2022.
- In the Baseline Scenario, visitor spending losses peak at 64% in April 2020 and return to 2019 levels in 2024.
- In the Downside Scenario, visitor spending losses peak at 64% in April 2020 and return to 2019 levels in 2025.
- All comparisons are made in reference to 2019 figures.





CONVENTION SALES BY THE NUMBERS

YEAR	ROOMS NIGHTS BOOKED
2014	64,043
2015	53,059
2016	61,583
2017	69,183
2018	81,103
2019	76,225
2020	97,000
2021 Projection / Pace	60,000

YEAR	LEADS
2014	239
2015	289
2016	264
2017	273
2018	318
2019	419
2020	315
2021 Projection / Pace	195

VISIT MOBILE STAFF

DAVID CLARK

President & CEO

JAY GARRAWAY

VP of Administration

CHERYL L. SMITH

Administration & Office Manager

PATTY KIEFFER

VP of Leisure Tourism

JERRY L. BOUSARD

Senior National Sales Manager

DERRICK WILLIAMS

Senior National Sales Manager

TINA TRUESDALE

National Sales Manager

GARRETT WAGNER

Leisure Sales & Events Manager

WALTER CALHOUN

Visitor Services Manager

EMILY E. GONZALEZ

VP of Marketing & Communications

MEREDITH GUZY TURNCLIFF

Digital Marketing Manager

OLIVER DORGAN

Creative Brand Manager

TARA ZIEMAN

Director of Marketing & Communications

ANDREW FELTS

Marketing & Communications Coordinator

VISIT MOBILE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DR. WILLIAM BARRICK – Exec Board: Chair
STANLEY CHASSIN – Exec Board: Vice Chair
PAT DOWNING – Exec Board: Sec / Treas
KAREN O. ATCHINSON – Exec Board: Immed. Past Chair
MIKE LEE – Exec Board: Past Chair
ARNITA DIAMOND – Exec Board
MARGO GILBERT – Exec Board
BOB BAUMHOWER – Exec Board
DAVID COOPER, SR.
ROSS PETERSON
CLINTON JOHNSON, JR.
DOROTHY CRAVEY
TERRY ANKERSON
RICHARD H. WEAVIL
GEORGE W. BOCK, JR.
DEBORAH VELDER
LYNN CHRONISTER
DANIEL A. DENNIS, IV
KELLY FINLEY
BOB OMAINSKY
CHRIS CURRY
ELIZABETH STEVENS
THELMA SINGLETON - Ex Officio

CITY ADMINISTRATION

MAYOR, SANDY STIMPSON

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

LEVON C. MANZIE – President
C.J. SMALL – Vice President
FREDRICK D. RICHARDSON, JR.
JOHN C. WILLIAMS
JOEL DAVES
BESS RICH
GINA GREGORY

COUNTY COMMISSION

MERCERIA L. LUDGOOD – President
CONNIE HUDSON
RANDALL DUEITT

MALC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KENT "SPIKE" BLACKINTON – Chair
MARGO GILBERT – Vice Chair
DUNCAN MILLAR – Secretary
TERESA FLOYD – Treasurer
RAJ DESAI
KEN PATEL
NIK PATEL
JUDI GULLEDGE
HUNTER OMAINSKY
LEVON MANZIE - Ex Officio
DAVID CLARK - Ex Officio

CONTINUING IN THE FOLLOWING LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL COLLABORATION

MOBILE AREA LODGING CORPORATION

MOBILE AREA LODGING ASSOCIATION

AFRICATOWN TOURISM

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA - HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT

MOBILE AIRPORT AUTHORITY

MOBILE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MOBILE DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE

DESTINATION MOBILE

COASTAL ALABAMA PARTNERSHIP

DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL

LEADERSHIP ALABAMA

SOUTHERN RAIL COMMISSION

MOBILE UNITED / LEADERSHIP MOBILE

AMERICAN ADVERTISING FEDERATION - MOBILE BAY

ALABAMA TRAVEL COUNCIL

ALABAMA CONGRESSIONAL TOURISM CAUCUS

ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF DESIGNATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION

ALABAMA COUNCIL OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

ALABAMA RESTAURANT AND HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

MISSISSIPPI SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

SOUTHEAST TOURISM SOCIETY

MEETING PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL

CONNECT, HELMS BRISCOE, CONFERENCE DIRECT

PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

PUBLIC RELATIONS COUNCIL OF ALABAMA - MOBILE CHAPTER

FLORIDA CARIBBEAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION

CRUISE LINES INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

PROFESSIONAL CONVENTION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



BELLINGRATH GARDENS AND HOME



2020 | 2021
A LOOK BACK & FORWARD