

# VISIT TUCSON

AUGUST 13, 2019

METRO TUCSON  
10-YEAR TOURISM  
MASTER PLAN



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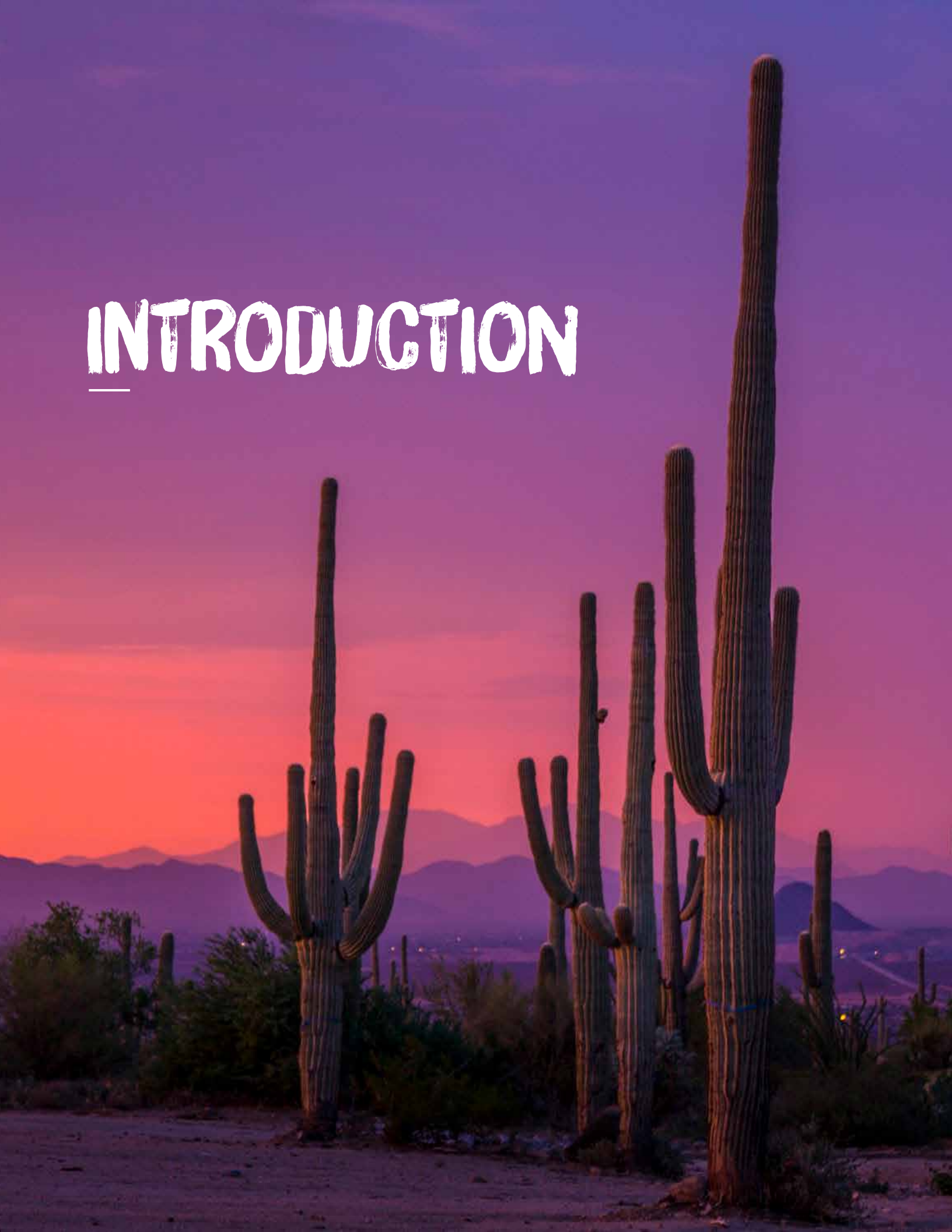
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# INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

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*Historically, the wealth of communities and nations has been determined primarily by geographic factors—climate, access to resources, ports and proximity to other markets. For centuries, the luck of the geographical draw attracted capital and investment, created jobs and generated economic growth and prosperity. But as developed economies have shifted rapidly from a manufacturing orientation to services and technology in the latter half of the 20th century, geographic factors have become less important in determining the economic success of cities, regions, states and countries. Today, it is increasingly the perceived quality of place that determines where talent, capital and Travel & Tourism flow.*

But what is it that attracts people to one place versus another? Research by Resonance Consultancy has shown that what attracts people to places to live is increasingly aligned with the very same factors that make places attractive to visit. Among them: the quality of the natural environment, parks and open spaces; the diversity of people; the variety of restaurants and nightlife; and the quality of arts and culture. These assets, and many others, shape the perception and identity of places in the minds of people as they consider and evaluate places to live, visit or invest.

Therefore, destination marketing and management requires taking a strategic, rather than organic, approach to defining an overarching vision and competitive positioning for a destination in order to attract specific types of Travel & Tourism to the destination. In a world where the competition for visitors is fierce, knowing and understanding the

ideal visitor segments, speaking directly to them and focusing on providing a high-value travel experience can help destinations differentiate themselves.

Recognizing this, leaders across the Metro Tucson region are taking a step back to purposefully consider what type of community it wants to become in the future. How can stakeholders across the region work together to advance common economic, social, environmental and cultural goals?

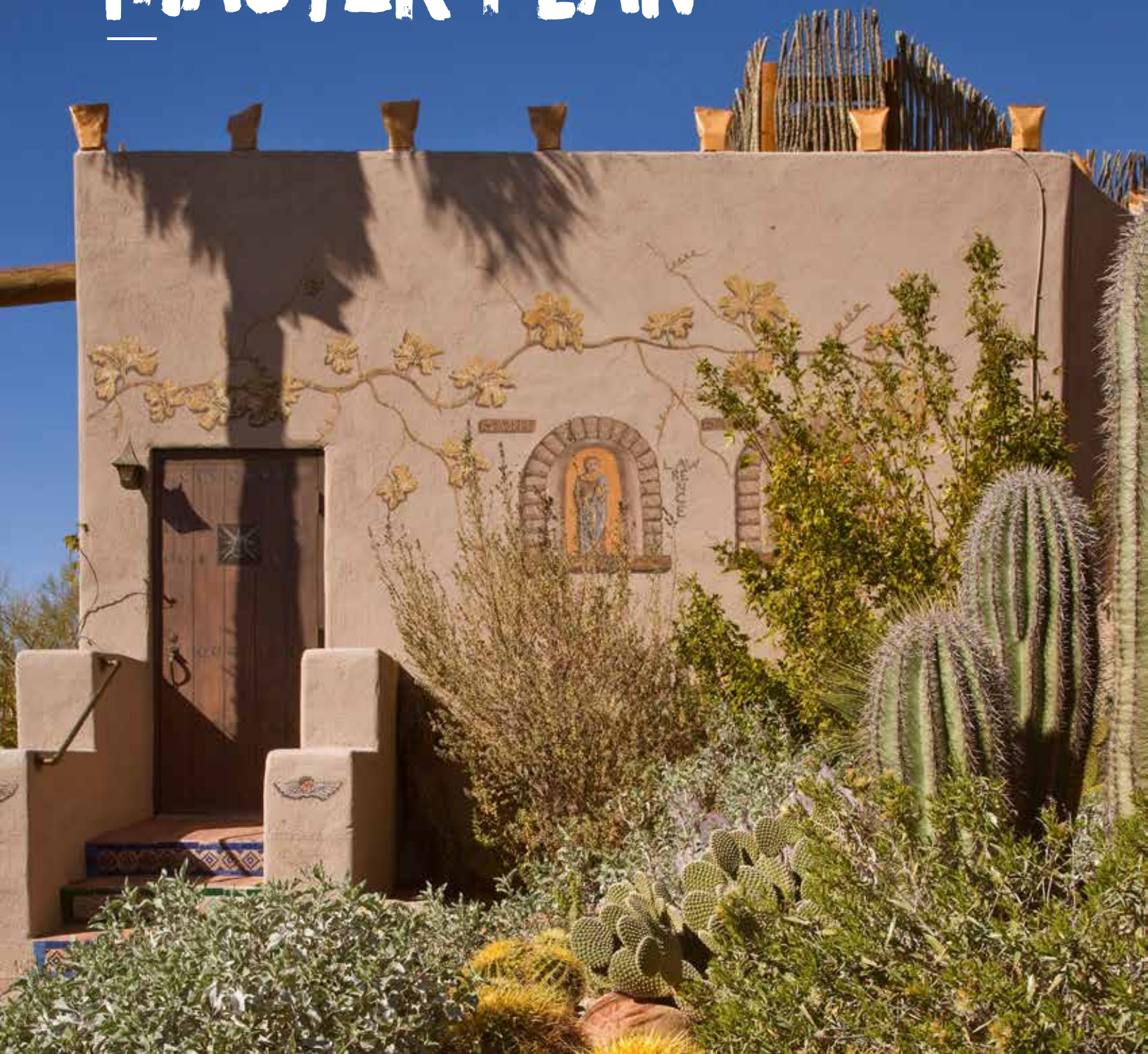
In this regard, Resonance Consultancy has been engaged by Visit Tucson to help Metro Tucson understand its key competitive advantages and weaknesses, and provide the foundation to create a Tourism Master Plan to guide the planning, product development, programming, policy and promotion of Metro Tucson's tourism industry.

The Tourism Master Plan is built upon the recognition that the tourism industry is both a major stakeholder and strategic partner in this integrated planning effort. With a mission to establish Metro Tucson as a premier destination to live, work and visit, and a major economic driver in the area, the tourism industry is well positioned to help balance the economic development and quality of life issues facing the region.

Please note, throughout this report, we use the term “Metro Tucson” or the “Metro Tucson region” interchangeably to include: Downtown, University of Arizona, Central Tucson, Catalina Foothills, Westside, Eastside, Southside, Pima County, Green Valley and Oro Valley.

# CRAFTING A TOURISM MASTER PLAN

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# CRAFTING A TOURISM MASTER PLAN

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The Resonance approach to the creation of a Tourism Master Plan was designed to help residents and stakeholders articulate and share a clear vision for the future—because when people share a vision of the future, it gives them shared belief, shared purpose and shared passion.

Our approach sought to define the destination as more than the sum of its parts. While the Tourism Master Plan addresses critical hardware, such as transportation or the Tucson Convention Center, that is required to achieve Metro Tucson's goals, it also addresses the software of relationships and programming required to foster the quality of life, culture and experiences necessary to create a unique and compelling sense of place.

Our experience has also taught us that successful destination management planning requires the participation and alignment of not only industry stakeholders, but those of both the visitor and the local community as well. As such, the process was designed to not only consult, but also engage and collaborate with the tourism industry stakeholders, visitors and the community.

It is for these reasons that the Tourism Master Plan for Metro Tucson focused on five research activities. These five pieces of research, which were reviewed and critiqued by a Steering Committee of community leaders and industry stakeholders, led to important insights that were considered in the development of a future vision for Metro Tucson as a destination and the resulting Tourism Master Plan that was developed by this project.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### ***Identifying Strategic Issues and Opportunities for Metro Tucson***

Resonance met with approximately 50 stakeholders in 25 sessions during the week of August 20, 2018 and additional calls held on September 7th. The primary purpose of these discussions was to identify participant opinions, aspirations and ideas (issues and opportunities) for the future of Metro Tucson as a destination for visitors and place for residents to live, work and play.

## VISITOR SURVEY

### ***Opinions and Perceptions of Previous Visitors and Residents about their Experiences in Metro Tucson***

Resonance surveyed 972 English speaking visitors and 709 Spanish speaking visitors to understand who the current Metro Tucson visitor is, how they compare to U.S. travelers in general and what types of travelers and residents might be attracted to the destination in the future. The survey was also used to assess the quality of and satisfaction with current destination services, accommodations and amenities; and create a segmentation analysis to better understand the Metro Tucson guests and residents and how they differ from U.S. travelers in general.

## DESTINATION ASSESSMENT

### ***Benchmarking Metro Tucson Experiences vs 14 Other Destinations (Actual and Aspirational)***

Resonance conducted a quantitative assessment of Metro Tucson's destination assets and experiences, utilizing a combination of social media reviews and core performance statistics collected directly from TripAdvisor and Yelp. This research benchmarked both the quantity of Travel & Tourism assets and the quality of these experiences against 14 competing and aspirational destinations. The focus of this activity was to understand what visitors are saying about Metro Tucson's products and what they compare online about Metro Tucson and 14 other destinations when making their travel plans.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

### ***Opinions and Perceptions of Residents about Key Issues and Opportunities for Metro Tucson***

In consultation with Visit Tucson staff, Resonance developed an online survey to identify and gauge residents' perceptions on a variety of key characteristics with respect to livability, culture, economy and sense of place. The survey was extensively promoted via social media platforms and email to the databases of a variety of public and private organizations as introduced by Visit Tucson staff.

The survey questions were designed to:

- Assess the quality of and satisfaction with current services, accommodations and amenities throughout Metro Tucson;
- Identify hidden assets that may offer potential for increasing residents' quality of life and tourism growth;
- Assess the relative attractiveness of different new amenities and improvements under consideration for Metro Tucson;
- Inform project decisions for stakeholders and prioritize opportunities for the region;
- Assess the impact of key issues (current) and opportunities (future) on residents' quality of life; and
- Engage residents in the development phase to accelerate the approval and design process for permanent changes in the future.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS ANALYSIS

### ***Understanding the Return on Investment (ROI) on Metro Tucson Festivals & Events***

The objective of the Festivals & Events Analysis was to assess the quantity, quality, calendar distribution (scheduling), resident and visitor attendance / satisfaction, diversity (interest group), current results (attendance, income, reviews), future viability / opportunity for growth, and economic impact of Metro Tucson's existing events.

The data source for the Festivals & Events Analysis was Visit Tucson's calendar of 227 events against which each listing was scored across 7 categories of "Event Impact" (see below) based on publicly available information and the consultant's expert opinion.

- Economic Impact
- Tourism Potential
- Uniqueness
- Social / Cultural
- Scalability
- Brand Alignment
- Seasonality





## VISIONING WORKSHOPS

The results and information from these five research activities were then used in two visioning workshops and one Board of Directors meeting, to gain broad input and envision / develop priorities for Metro Tucson opportunities and challenges that might be addressed by the project.

## RECOMMENDATIONS / ROLES & STRATEGIES

The results of the two workshops were then compiled into a Draft Recommendations Report, which was presented to the Project Steering Committee and the Visit Tucson Board of Directors for consideration, feedback and comments. The Metro Tucson 10-Year Tourism Master Plan Recommendations and Roles and Strategies are the result of this effort.

## PRIORITIES & IMPLEMENTATION

A long-term plan such as this can be a little overwhelming when taken as a whole. It is for this reason that a Priority Analysis has been included at the end of the document to guide Visit Tucson and its partners in developing their annual plans and resources necessary to move this Plan forward to implementation.

# GOALS

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# GOALS

Destinations (cities, counties, states and countries) have undergone a period of extreme change over the past 10 years. Travelers' motivations have shifted, leaving many destinations that were well positioned just a decade ago struggling to balance the needs and interests of their industry with those of their local community. At the same time, this market dislocation is creating opportunities for forward looking Travel & Tourism destinations to

create strategies and products that satisfy the needs and desires of both their residents and visitors.

As a starting point for the Tourism Master Plan, Resonance asked industry, government and resident stakeholders to guide the process by prioritizing the goals that they felt were important for the project. The goals in order of priority are:

## 1. VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Visit Tucson will create, enhance and deliver destination products and services, activities and events that create a compelling, must-visit destination experience that reflects the unique environment, culture and diversity of Metro Tucson.

## 2. QUALITY OF LIFE

Visit Tucson will create, enhance and deliver destination products and services, activities and events that preserve and create a high quality of life experience for residents that reflects the unique environment, culture and diversity of Metro Tucson.

## 3. INVESTMENT

Metro Tucson will foster expansion of private sector investment in tourism projects and services and the coordination of public infrastructure investment to achieve optimum benefits for the tourism industry and residents.

## 4. GROWTH

Metro Tucson's tourism industry will deliver competitive growth that is consistent with optimized carrying capacity, reduced seasonality, and high value products, activities, services and events.

## 5. SEASONALITY

Metro Tucson will focus creation, enhancement and delivery of tourism products and services, activities and events in low traffic months to help reduce and optimize the seasonality of visitation.

## 6. EMPLOYMENT

Metro Tucson's tourism businesses will become employers of choice for residents seeking long-term careers, offering exceptional opportunities for growth in the competitive tourism industry.

## 7. EDUCATION

Metro Tucson's secondary and post-secondary institutions will offer world-renowned tourism education to attract and develop future tourism employees and leaders.

## 8. ENVIRONMENT

Metro Tucson's tourism industry will embrace the vision of sustainable tourism and sustainable development, and work with Visit Tucson to develop and promote the Metro Tucson region as a world-leading sustainable community and tourism destination.

## 9. DISTRIBUTION

Metro Tucson's tourism industry will create, enhance and deliver destination products and services, activities and events that distribute both the benefits and impacts of a growing tourism industry throughout the region.

Please note, these goals have been used throughout the Tourism Master Plan process to shape the research, visioning workshops, recommendations and strategies. The top goals have also been used to create the Priority Scoring at the end of this report to determine the priority implementation of recommendations.

# THE VISION METRO TUCSON TOURISM 2030

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# THE VISION METRO TUCSON TOURISM 2030

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Metro Tucson is a global gathering place for explorers and the culturally curious of all ages who come to connect to one another and to the unique environment, food, people and wisdom of a place where well-being takes many forms. From enjoying outdoor experiences in the clarity and healing serenity of the desert landscape to partaking in cultural adventures where locals celebrate one other, their neighborhoods, books, cuisine, gems, cultural traditions and wellness, Metro Tucson is a thriving, progressive and spirited destination that makes visitors feel enriched, healthy and a part of the world as never before.

# METRO TUCSON'S VISITORS

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# METRO TUCSON'S VISITORS

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Visitors to Metro Tucson, young and old, come to experience a well-being that few other places can offer. They're active seekers—explorers of the physical and spiritual, the cultural and the curious, and Metro Tucson satisfies on all levels.

Metro Tucson's Tourism Master Plan, and the recommendations that follow, are geared towards satisfying the needs and interests of local residents and three particular visitor audiences we expect to see more of in the future – Seekers and Explorers, Spanish-Speaking Visitors and Meetings and Convention Visitors.

## SEEKERS AND EXPLORERS

Seekers and Explorers come to explore and experience not only the deep physical beauty of the desert, but also its magic and clarity, serenity and spirit. In the future, Metro Tucson will fuse the down to earth and the ephemeral with a range of events and festivals that celebrate both, and a contemporary definition of wellness will become a key part of the city's identity—a natural complement and extension of the healthful movements begun by the renowned spas that chose Metro Tucson decades ago. Wellness today is an exploration of mind and body, and it's much more—it's also a celebration of life. Visitors will live the joyfulness that comes from living like locals, seeing through their eyes, experiencing their environment, and doing what they do.

In the future, Metro Tucson will draw people who want to explore new frontiers—experiences in places off the beaten track with different and authentic stories to tell. This multi-generational visitor wants to learn the stories of the ingredients that make Tucson a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, eat up local events like the Agave Heritage Festival, enjoy the conviviality of Tucson Meet Yourself, and feel the spirit of the All Souls Procession—experiences that both enhance and celebrate local life.





## SPANISH-SPEAKING VISITORS

Our Spanish-speaking visitors—young people and multiple generations of families from south or north of the border—consider Metro Tucson a gathering place of choice, a city that understands them culturally and gives them opportunities for togetherness and conviviality in the urban environment and in the nature around it. Metro Tucson is a playground for family fun and activities they can enjoy together, particularly shopping—for this visitor, shopping is as much about enjoyment and spending time in one another’s company as it is about finding the perfect thing, be it a luxury product or a locally-made craft. Metro Tucson’s streets, malls, markets and outlets offer a range of retail experiences and environments that can’t be duplicated online or elsewhere, and visitors delight in sharing the experience with one another and socially.

In the future, shopping will continue to be a reason to visit, and wonderful environments that include opportunities to shop and socialize will grow and evolve. But there will be many other reasons to stay here. Metro Tucson has a culture of its own that’s a relief from mass culture—for the visitor of the future, the city will embrace its multi-cultural roots, Mexican and otherwise, and as it does so, draw Spanish- and English-speakers young and old to the city. Metro Tucson’s inclusivity, already part of its identity, will come to the fore and stories will be told in both English and Spanish. Metro Tucson’s festivals of food and shopping, drink and culture will provide enjoyment for generations of families, offering a sense of belonging and ‘togetherness’, an opportunity to be part of a vibrant scene of joyful well-being.



## MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS VISITORS

Metro Tucson won't win conference business because it has the biggest conference center; it'll win because it knows how to give conference travelers a profound sense of place and helps them live like a local, however briefly. We'll create events that inspire and engage them, because our meetings are true experiences that also make them part of the larger story of the city. We know they're traveling alone—or with luck, bringing a

significant other—and Metro Tucson's open-ness and hospitality helps them embrace that as we give them the tools to explore the city on their own, meet the locals and encourage them to mix business with pleasure. A meeting in Metro Tucson will be an invitation to stay longer and go deeper.

# VISIT TUCSON

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# VISIT TUCSON

Visit Tucson is a private non-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) whose mission is to “drive economic development by connecting visitors with their ideal travel & meetings experiences in Tucson.” Visit Tucson is financially supported by the City of Tucson, Pima County, the Town of Oro Valley and more than 450 individual and business partners.

In its role as destination steward, and as part of this Tourism Master Planning initiative, Visit Tucson has started an evolutionary journey to become a DMMO (Destination Marketing and Management Organization) moving beyond its traditional role of tourism marketing and promotion to also include responsibility for implementing the recommendations of the Tourism Master Plan.



These recommendations have been grouped into six strategic areas of focus that are interwoven and inform one another:

## 1. WELL-BEING

Focusing on the visitor experience by managing all destination and tourism product development activities for Metro Tucson.

## 2. PLACEMAKING

Visit Tucson will create, enhance and deliver destination products and services, activities and events that preserve and create a high quality of life experience for residents that reflects the unique environment, culture and diversity of Metro Tucson.

## 3. CONNECTIVITY

Organizing the movement of residents and visitors into, out of and around Metro Tucson.

## 4. CULTURE

Celebrating Metro Tucson’s history, heritage and culture.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT / INVESTMENT

Delivering a quality experience for our visitors via major infrastructure or large-scale projects.

## 6. ADVOCACY

Serving as the industry voice, champion and conduit for a broader portfolio of policy, programs and opportunities that affect Metro Tucson as a visitor destination and a place to live.

While it’s a big step, this transition from DMO to DMMO is becoming standard operating practice for many destination organizations in cities and destinations around the world. Metro Tucson’s Tourism Master Plan implementation is just another example of how Visit Tucson will be growing to better serve the industry, visitors and the community at large.

# A TOURISM MASTER PLAN

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# A TOURISM MASTER PLAN

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*To realize the vision for Metro Tucson tourism, we have collected tourism master plan recommendations into six strategic areas of focus that are interwoven and inform one another.*

## 1. WELL-BEING

Metro Tucson has a strength of identity associated with well-being that is an authentic product of the city's history, environment and experiences. How do we best communicate and build on that?

- Capital of Well-Being
- Health Well-Being - Medical Tourism
- Intellectual Well-Being - Higher Education and Lifelong Learning
- Physical Well-Being - Biking Tourism
- Physical Well-Being - Sports Tourism
- Spiritual Well-Being - Outdoor Experiences

## 2. PLACEMAKING

How do we enhance places, large and small, that reveal Metro Tucson as a distinct and authentic place or destination for residents and visitors alike?

- Downtown Tucson
- Gathering Place
- Community Villages, Main Streets and Downtowns

## 3. CONNECTIVITY

How do we organize and move residents and visitors into, out of and around Metro Tucson conveniently, efficiently and enjoyably so the experience of getting here and there is as pleasant as the destination itself?

- Connectivity, Accessibility and Proximity
- Airlift Development
- The Loop

## 4. CULTURE

How do we celebrate our history, heritage and culture for the benefit of our residents and connect with visitors from around the world?

- City of Gastronomy Activation
- Events & Festivals
- Native American Experience
- Spanish-Speaking Visitor Experience

## 5. DEVELOPMENT / INVESTMENT

How do we choose and build major infrastructure or support large-scale projects that deliver a quality experience for our visitors?

- Full-Service, Downtown and Headquarter Hotel(s)
- Tucson Convention Center
- Technology and Tourism
- Experience Hothouse
- Economic and Workforce Development
- Visit Tucson

## 6. ADVOCACY

What means the most to us as Metro Tucson residents or to our visitors? Where do we need to take a stand and work to improve situations that will enrich the quality of life or visitor experiences for all?

- Meetings and Conventions Business and Economic Development
- Neighborhood / Community Development
- Basic Infrastructure
- Sustainable Tourism

# 1.

## WELL-BEING

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Well-being is one of the biggest stories and opportunities in the tourism and hospitality world today, and Metro Tucson is uniquely positioned to leverage its authentic history and leadership in the wellness field to differentiate itself in a manner that speaks to a young, inquisitive traveler keen to explore new and true roads to well-being.

Well-being is technically considered to be ‘A state of being or a feeling which is achieved by connections with family or community, with an emphasis upon making the best of life by self-contentment and less stress’. It’s an overarching term that encompasses the concept of wellness, which is “transforming almost every aspect of Travel & Tourism”, according to the Global Wellness Institute. ‘Making the best of life’, of course, can take many forms, from learning new things to celebration, to efforts to improve physical, mental and spiritual states. And wellness tourism, which is defined as “travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one’s personal well-being”, according to the institute, “will only grow faster in the years ahead, as it lies at the powerful intersection of two massive, booming industries: the \$2.6 trillion tourism industry and the \$4.2 trillion wellness market.”

Indeed, well-being is more than a trend—it’s part of a societal movement brought on by an awareness of just how unwell we are, and the failures of the medical, pharma and healthcare establishments to make us feel better and prevent disease. People are taking their well-being into their own hands, responding to advances in multidisciplinary approaches to predictive, preventative and lifestyle-based health care modalities. Traveling to enhance well-being is intrinsic, as the numbers show.

Hospitality operations and guests in general look for healthy alternatives—the expression “healtharisation” of hospitality, unknown just a few years ago, is becoming increasingly mainstream—like the words well-being and wellness themselves.

Organizations from hotels to destination resorts, lifestyle residential communities and medical facilities are positioning for an ever expanding and ever more competitive global well-being industry. Metro Tucson has an authentic story of well-being to tell, one that reflects the best of the region. Now is the time to bring it to life.

## CAPITAL OF WELL-BEING

Visit Tucson should work with public sector and private sector stakeholders to increase the destination and product development efforts that enhance and build on Metro Tucson's strength as a "Capital of Well-Being."

To create a foundation for "Capital of Well-Being", Visit Tucson should tell the stories of how Metro Tucson became the recuperative destination of choice for Easterners and war veterans suffering from tuberculosis, pulmonary and respiratory diseases as far back as the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the 1930s, Hacienda Del Sol was built to be an oasis—first a ranch school for the daughters of society's elite families, and later a guest ranch that attracted the Silver Screen's most popular stars. As importantly for prospective visitors who are aware, engaged and sometimes obsessed with wellness, there are also authentic and deeply relevant stories to tell of how Metro Tucson emerged as a capital of alternative medicine and care in the 1970s, and how two of the world's best-known names in wellness started in the region—Canyon Ranch in 1979 and Miraval in 1995.

Tucson is also home to the University of Arizona Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine, which trains health professionals, individuals and communities to optimize health and well-being through evidence-based, sustainable, integrative approaches.

Given this compelling context and Metro Tucson's ongoing significance in the wellness space, Metro Tucson should explore creating a signature event or festival associated with contemporary Well-Being, such as Wanderlust. This would help cement the region's reputation, particularly among active younger travelers, as a destination with a broad range of opportunities for physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, social, economic and holistic well-being.

Visit Tucson should create a communications platform and roadshow effort that tie into Well-Being itineraries, activities, events and experiences that celebrate the notion of Tucson as a Capital of Well-Being.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Pima County, City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, University of Arizona, economic development organizations, tourism industry partners.

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will include well-being in its branding, positioning, and marketing strategy by celebrating the history of Metro Tucson as a place for physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, social, economic, and holistic well-being.
- Visit Tucson will refresh its brand in collaboration with community partners and county, city, and town governments, with the concept of Metro Tucson as a Capital of Well-Being considered as an important element.
- Visit Tucson will create and distribute marketing materials and digital communications that celebrate and promote Metro Tucson as a destination for all forms of well-being.
- Visit Tucson will participate in trade shows and out-of-town sales, marketing, and promotional efforts that focus the positioning of Metro Tucson as a Capital of Well-Being.
- Visit Tucson will showcase Metro Tucson as a destination for well-being in its destination communications and public relations efforts, along with its online portals and digital platforms.
- Visit Tucson, in conjunction with its Events & Festivals Strategy, and stakeholders will explore the development of a signature event that celebrates the region as a Capital of Well-Being.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to collaborate with Visit Tucson to include the concept of well-being in their destination branding positioning, marketing, and communications to outside constituents.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal economic development, investment promotion, and talent attraction agencies and organizations are encouraged to join in an effort to create a new universal brand for Metro Tucson, with the concept of the region as a Capital of Well-Being considered as an important element.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to adopt, relay, and amplify the concept of Capital of Well-Being in their positioning, marketing, promotions, communications, and public relations.



## HEALTH WELL-BEING - MEDICAL TOURISM

Tucson should continue to expand its efforts to build Medical Tourism in Metro Tucson, especially for visitors and patients from Mexico who seek specialized treatment north of the border.

Patients Beyond Borders, which describes itself as “the world’s most trusted source of consumer information about international medical and health

travel,” defines a medical traveler as anyone who travels across international borders for the purpose of receiving medical care” and they quantify the market size at \$65-87.5 billion, including medically-related costs, cross-border and local transport, inpatient stay and accommodations. Patients Beyond Borders estimates the worldwide medical tourism market is growing at a rate of 15-25% per annum.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Binational Health Alliance, Tucson Health Association, Pima County, City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, hospitals and clinics, tourism industry partners.

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will continue to establish and build its relationships via the Binational Health Alliance and the Tucson Health Association (THA) to entice visitors to come to Metro Tucson for elective, non-emergency services. The THA includes Banner Health, Carondelet Health Network, Northwest Medical Center and Tucson Medical Center, as well as Pima County, City of Tucson, and Visit Tucson. The Binational Health Alliance partners refer patients on both sides of the border to facilities and specialists that can best meet the patients' medical needs.
- Visit Tucson will continue to foster relationships between Metro Tucson health organizations/practitioners and health organizations and providers in northern Mexico to encourage medical referrals for Mexico patients to visit Metro Tucson providers and for Metro Tucson patients to seek medical care in Mexico.
- Visit Tucson will strengthen its coalition of Metro Tucson medical providers that are seeking to serve the medical needs of visitors from Mexico, as well as future patients from Canada and other nations.
- Visit Tucson will facilitate familiarization tours for medical professionals from Mexico to visit Metro Tucson facilities and meet local specialists, and, vice versa, with Tucson medical professionals touring medical facilities in northern Mexico.
- Visit Tucson will work with the Tucson Health Association partners to assist patients and their families in appropriate aftercare logistics including, but not limited to, accommodations, transportation, food and beverage, etc.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to increase their efforts to facilitate and develop medical tourism opportunities starting with international visitor access, increasing medical facilities and infrastructure, language services, medical service offerings and logistics associated with patient and family stays.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to explore the opportunities for creating, marketing and selling medical tourism packages (transportation, accommodations, food and beverage, things to do, and other services) via the Tucson Health Association, so there is a one-stop-shop for patients exploring Tucson as a medical tourism destination.
- The industry will work with the Binational Health Alliance and Tucson Health Association to establish immediate medical treatment and first aid protocols that patients might require while visiting Metro Tucson.
- The industry will work with nursing organizations and practitioners to establish and facilitate care for medical tourists in hotels or other Tucson accommodations.



## INTELLECTUAL WELL-BEING - HIGHER EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

Higher and continuing educational institutions in Metro Tucson (The University of Arizona, Pima Community College and others) have an opportunity to serve a broader role (resident quality of life and visitor experience), facilitating intellectual engagement, activities and entertainment for residents, short-term visitors and longer-term snowbirds who are looking for personal growth and intellectual stimulation.

The University of Arizona should consider the opportunity for greater outreach, marketing and communications of its activities, events, exhibits, facilities, assets, sports and services to Tucson residents and visitors.

The University of Arizona should work with Visit Tucson and Metro Tucson leaders and communities to open doors and remove

barriers (physical and psychological) between the University and residents and visitors.

Visit Tucson should engage with the University of Arizona (UA) to create a UA Visitor Strategy to capitalize on this opportunity.

Tucson should also explore the broader potential for delivering unique educational experiences for longer-term visitors such as that offered by The School of Life, which is “devoted to developing emotional intelligence.” The School of Life, headquartered in London, operates around the globe, offering classes and workshops that assist in the quest for a more fulfilled life, addressing such issues as how to find fulfilling work, how to master the art of relationships, how to understand one’s past, how to achieve calm, and how better to understand the world.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: University of Arizona

Additional Suggested Partners: Pima Community College, Visit Tucson, TedxTucson, and businesses and organizations offering classes in art, etc.

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will work with the University of Arizona, Pima Community College and other educational institutions, and TedxTucson to coordinate and facilitate life-long learning opportunities for residents and visitors, and networking opportunities for Metro Tucson's tourism industry partners.
- Visit Tucson will work with educational institutions to welcome new students and their families to Metro Tucson and to help them explore the community they are joining.
- Visit Tucson will work with various deans, department heads, faculty and other staff to solicit meetings and non-sporting events to Metro Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will explore educational experiences that are offered in other destinations, but could be brought to Metro Tucson and considered an additive element to the notion of "Intellectual Well-Being".



### **Metro Tucson Educational Institutions:**

- Metro Tucson's educational institutions are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson on all the above and identify opportunities for the institutions to create and deliver academic, athletic and other products, services, events and festivals that might improve resident quality of life or the Metro Tucson visitor experience such as the University of Arizona's numerous lecture series and STEM camps.
- Metro Tucson's educational institutions are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson to identify meetings business that is associated with the institution, departments, faculty and / or staff and could be brought to Metro Tucson.
- Metro Tucson's educational institutions are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson and tourism industry organizations to create internship opportunities for students.
- Pima Community College is encouraged to continue working with Metro Tucson's Travel & Tourism industry to develop training, classes and initiatives, such as its Hotel and Restaurant Management certificate program, that train students to fill current and emerging industry jobs.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- The Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism industry will make itself available to Visit Tucson and Metro Tucson's educational institutions for educational and training networking, lectures, mentorships, internships, student employment, destination promotion, meetings and group business venues, transportation, food / beverage and logistics.
- The Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism industry will make itself available to Metro Tucson's academic institutions to assist and invest in curriculum and program development associated with the Travel & Tourism industry and careers.

## PHYSICAL WELL-BEING - BIKING TOURISM

Tucson has a unique competitive advantage in the category of biking (road biking, mountain biking, competitive racing, recreational biking and biking The Loop), offering excellent infrastructure, venues, events and resources to serve residents and visitors. Tucson should seek to build additional biking-related marketing, resources and investment in infrastructure, trails, parks, competition venues (such as a velodrome), and enhance its safety rating to improve the city's #24

ranking of "Best Bike Cities in America" (Bicycling Magazine, Oct 2018).

Tucson should develop and enhance its signature riding events such as El Tour de Tucson, explore and grow kid-friendly fun-ride opportunities as well as night time rides in the cool of the evenings, just like Montreal's Tour de L'isle and Tour la Nuit, which could serve to enhance Tucson's standing in the biking world.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Pima County, City of Tucson, Epic Rides, Perimeter Cycling, Town of Oro Valley, Living Streets Alliance, Coronado National Forest and other cycling-related organizations and businesses

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will work with Epic Rides, Bicycle Tucson, Greater Arizona Bicycling Association, Perimeter Bicycling Association of America, Bicycle Inter-Community Art & Salvage, El Grupo Youth Cycling, Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists, Tucson Off-Road Cyclists & Activists and others to advocate for, champion and support Metro Tucson biking infrastructure, multimodal connections, amenities, programming, events and festivals, such as Cyclovia, and amateur / professional competitions.
- Visit Tucson will work with Perimeter Bicycling Association of America, Pima County, City of Tucson, and Town of Oro Valley to explore the future potential for El Tour de Tucson to determine if the event might serve as a “signature event” for Tucson, and if so what resources might be needed and necessary for that to happen.
- Visit Tucson will work with county and municipal governments and biking organizations and businesses to develop and maintain biking tourism guides, maps and technology to make all kinds of biking in Metro Tucson accessible, convenient and up to date.
- Visit Tucson will build on and expand its existing bicycling-related marketing.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson’s county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to work with regional biking organizations to decrease biking fatalities in Metro Tucson and fulfill the promise and implementation of the Bicycle Boulevard Master Plan, the Regional Plan for Bicycling and the Master Plan to extend The Loop.
- The City of Tucson is encouraged to fulfill the mission of the Tucson Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, “to create a complete transportation network where walking and biking are safe, convenient, and comfortable ways of moving around the city for people of all ages and abilities.”
- Metro Tucson’s county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to implement biking-related plans such as the Bicycle Boulevard Master Plan, the Pima Association of Governments Regional Plan for Bicycling and Pima County’s Master Plan to extend The Loop.
- Metro Tucson’s county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson to explore the potential opportunities for enhancing Metro Tucson as a premier visitor destination for Biking Tourism.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- The Travel & Tourism industry in Metro Tucson will work with Visit Tucson and local governments to create a Working Group to develop and implement Biking Tourism specific actions and activities that improve infrastructure, policies, activities, experiences, operations, events and festivals.

## PHYSICAL WELL-BEING - SPORTS TOURISM

The City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley and individual communities should increase their efforts associated with Sports Tourism as an important component of Tucson's leisure tourism business, and determine, facilitate and develop new infrastructure, facilities and venues necessary to serve this important market.

Tucson should develop a comprehensive Sports Tourism Strategy to properly and fully develop this opportunity.

Tucson should explore the potential for indoor sports facilities and venues that can be used

throughout the year, especially during the height of summer heat and evenings.

Tucson should also explore the potential for non-traditional sports such as E-sports, BMX, extreme sports and other activities that could complement current two-wheel activities.

Tucson should match sports facilities and venues with complementary and nearby hospitality establishments (hotels, restaurants and retail) as an important element of the Sports Tourism strategy.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Pima County, City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will work with Pima County, the City of Tucson, the Town of Oro Valley, and other regional partners to assess sports facility needs, cost-sharing opportunities, and promotion of sports tourism in the region.
- Visit Tucson will work with these government and industry partners to develop new infrastructure, facilities and venues necessary to serve the growing sports tourism market.
- Visit Tucson will develop a comprehensive sports tourism strategy for Metro Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will increase its efforts associated with sports tourism as an important component of Tucson's leisure tourism business.



### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson to develop a comprehensive sports tourism strategy.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to develop a sports promotional campaign that focuses on all ages (children, adults and seniors), and which opens the doors to a full range of sports activities and encourages residents and visitors alike to get healthy and to be physically active.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to work together and with private-sector stakeholders to remove barriers to sports infrastructure and venue development and create funding mechanisms, development and partnership opportunities to deliver the same.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- The Travel & Tourism industry in Metro Tucson will work with Visit Tucson and local governments to create a Working Group to develop and implement sports tourism specific actions and activities that improve infrastructure, policies, activities, experiences, operations, events and festivals.

## SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING - OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

The Destination Assessment underscored Tucson's competitive advantage in Nature & Parks and Outdoor Activities. Tucson should focus on developing and promoting year-round experiences that appeal to the evolved adventure traveler.

According to a recent study from the Adventure Travel Trade Association and Outside Magazine, today's adventure travelers place less focus on risk

and more focus on being in a natural environment, learning and meaningful experiences. As a result, Metro Tucson is well positioned and should attract these visitors by showcasing the region's proximity to nature and the outdoors, and by developing a full range of outdoor experiences like wildlife viewing, birdwatching, astro tourism, nature studies, photography, hiking and horseback riding, which tap into the destination's sense of well-being.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Pima County, City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, state and local parks

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will commission an outdoor experience audit in Metro Tucson with the goal of determining activities, experiences, organizational and community-wide gaps that may hinder growth.
- Visit Tucson will work with the Adventure Travel Trade Association to host an AdventureConnect meeting to bring together adventure tour operators and organizations in the region. Visit Tucson will also consider hosting ATTA's AdventureELEVATE in Metro Tucson to showcase the region as an adventure tourism destination.
- Visit Tucson will collaborate with the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance to promote outdoor experiences related to the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.
- Visit Tucson will promote year-round outdoor experiences through its website, video content, and other marketing channels.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and agencies are encouraged to review their outdoor experience Master Plans (parks, recreation, etc.) to set forth a new and updated vision for outdoor experiences for residents and visitors.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- The Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism industry will work with Visit Tucson, and local, state and federal government agencies (especially parks) to explore, consider, develop and launch new Metro Tucson outdoor activities, experiences, events and festivals that increase the opportunities for residents and visitors to participate.



## 2.

# PLACEMAKING

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Placemaking is an approach to community and destination planning that enhances underutilized spaces and places within a city, transforming them into attractive gathering places that foster social cohesion, enhance economic well-being in the community, and elevate quality of life for locals and visitors alike.

Strategic placemaking seeks to make investments in the renovation or creation of a public space to also attract investment, residents and / or tenants to the area that surrounds it. Creative placemaking involves engaging the arts, whether visual, musical or otherwise, to enhance these underutilized spaces. Tactical placemaking takes a “lighter, cheaper” approach and involves making a temporary change in design or use of a space—for example, something as simple as closing a block of a street to cars on the weekend, converting it into a public plaza with bistro tables and chairs.

All these placemaking techniques can be employed to enhance the Tucson experience.

## DOWNTOWN TUCSON

Downtown Tucson delivers an important culinary, retail, hospitality and entertainment experience for 80% of visitors that is unique to Metro Tucson. Tucson should continue to focus on and invest in placemaking opportunities, tourism assets, activities and quality of life experiences in Downtown Tucson that will be a critical component of Tucson's overall success.

Tucson should consider the opportunity and issues associated with creating pedestrian-only streets in Downtown Tucson, during specified events, potentially including, but not limited to, Congress Street.

Tucson should consider creating significant shading structures and areas in Downtown

to encourage visitors and residents to enjoy outside eating, drinking, entertainment and retail opportunities available downtown during the daytime hours.

Tucson should consider creating a night market in Downtown to encourage visitors and residents to enjoy the eating, drinking, entertainment and retail opportunities available downtown during the cooler evening hours.

Tucson should ensure that the existing and future streetcar routes take visitor travel patterns and demand into consideration and capitalize on their hospitality, eating / drinking, retail and entertainment activities.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Downtown Tucson Partnership  
Additional Suggested Partners: Rio Nuevo, Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Pima Association of Governments and downtown districts



### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will collaborate with Downtown Tucson Partnership, City of Tucson, Rio Nuevo and downtown districts to advance ongoing revitalization downtown.
- Visit Tucson will use its destination communications and public relations efforts, along with its online portals and digital platforms, to promote downtown Tucson as a vibrant destination for shopping, dining, entertainment and nightlife.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to collaborate with Downtown Tucson Partnership and Rio Nuevo to assess needs, feasibility, and cost-sharing options for increasing the amount of shading structures downtown.
- The City of Tucson, Downtown Tucson Partnership and Rio Nuevo are encouraged to collaborate to update planning documents for downtown Tucson.
- Downtown Tucson Partnership is encouraged to include placemaking recommendations described in this Metro Tucson Tourism Master Plan in its strategic planning.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to lend their expertise to Downtown Tucson Partnership and Rio Nuevo to help it achieve its mission and encourage ongoing revitalization of downtown.

## GATHERING PLACE

Tucson should explore, advocate for and facilitate the creation of a central outdoor gathering place, in or near downtown, that serves to anchor the community, and where a melting pot of multicultural locals and visitors can gather to celebrate events and festivals, arts and culture, music and performances, food and beverages, farmers markets and other markets, and enjoy daily events and activities.

The Gathering Place should be universally accessible (The Loop, pedestrian, auto, public transport, parking and shuttle services).

An excellent example of a downtown Gathering Plan is Guthrie Green in Tulsa Oklahoma, which opened in September 2012. Located in the heart of Tulsa's Arts District, this industrial square block was transformed from an old freight yard to an inviting green space. Guthrie Green is now a community town square that celebrates the performing arts. It is a source of health and wellness, ecological awareness, and joyous appreciation of the arts.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Rio Nuevo

Additional Suggested Partners: Downtown Tucson Partnership, Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Pima County, downtown districts, Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, Metro Tucson business organizations and private developers

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will encourage Rio Nuevo, City of Tucson, and other partners to create a committee of public and private sector leaders in Metro Tucson to discuss and consider the issues and opportunities for the development of a central gathering place for Metro Tucson.
- The Gathering Place Committee should review existing regional studies and plans, such as the Urban Land Institute Downtown Study (2013), to assess public and private spaces near downtown Tucson that remain priorities for development.
- The Gathering Place Committee should review case study examples of outdoor gathering place projects recently created in other U.S. cities to assess their projects, successes and processes, and how these experiences might apply to Metro Tucson.
- The Gathering Place Committee should develop a strategy and workplan to define what a Metro Tucson Gathering Place might be and might include and how the opportunity should move forward with public and private sector agencies, offices and organizations.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to create and participate in the Gathering Place Committee.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to contribute their insight and experience to the Gathering Place Committee.



## COMMUNITY VILLAGES, MAIN STREETS & DOWNTOWNS

Many of the communities in Metro Tucson lack a centralized village, main street or downtown area that could serve as a gathering place for retail, entertainment and food / beverage offerings for residents and visitors.

Tucson should advocate for shaded, pedestrian-friendly places where residents and visitors can enjoy the unique character of these communities and their activities during the day and at night, and help to create a sense of community, place and destination character that is attractive for people to live, work and visit.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Living Streets Alliance

Additional Suggested Partners: Downtown Tucson Partnership, Rio Nuevo, Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley, Pima Association of Governments and downtown districts

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will collaborate with the Living Streets Alliance to “Advocate for a thriving Tucson by creating great streets for all of us” and support the Complete Streets Program.
- Visit Tucson will encourage the evaluation of a Village, Mainstreets or Downtown concept with the Town of Oro Valley.
- Visit Tucson will share the findings of the Town of Oro Valley Village, Mainstreets or Downtown concept with other Metro Tucson communities and advocate for similar concepts.
- Visit Tucson will collaborate with the City of Tucson and other partners on placemaking activities related to the Oracle Corridor, S. 12th Avenue, Sunshine Mile, and other initiatives.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson’s county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to look at their own villages, main streets and downtowns to consider if they are delivering a sense of place, community and economic development for their residents and visitors, and determine if projects makes sense for them to follow.
- Metro Tucson’s county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to collaborate with Living Streets Alliance to create safe and welcome streetscapes for use by all.



### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to advocate for and champion placemaking initiatives for villages, main streets and downtowns throughout Metro Tucson.
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners should consider how their businesses can help activate existing and proposed placemaking projects and help to bring these destinations to life for residents and visitors.

# 3.

## CONNECTIVITY

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*Connectivity is a complex, multi-layered aspect of the experience of place, and the way a destination combines those layers has an enormous effect on the local and visitor experience.*

A few considerations:

- connectivity between the destination and the rest of the world (aviation, ground transportation and water transport systems);
- infrastructure for transportation services (airports, cruise ports, highways, train and bus stations);
- connectivity between visitor activities within a destination (accommodations, restaurants, tourism activities and entertainment); and
- the modes of transportation (airplanes, automobiles, coaches, ships, mass transportation, biking, scooters and walking) that help people connect to places and to one another.

Visit Tucson has a range of strategic opportunities.

## CONNECTIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY & PROXIMITY

Visit Tucson should focus programs, plans and resources to increase visitor place-to-place connectivity, destinations, accessibility, and timings to outdoor activities, sights / landmarks, parks and nature, and other activities which are the hallmark of the visitor experience in Metro Tucson.

Visit Tucson should work with State, County and City agencies and departments to ensure that visitor transportation needs (public, mass and

private), connectivity, destinations, timings and ease of access to a wide range of transportation modes is considered and addressed in their broader transportation strategies and plans.

Visit Tucson should consider new / developing technologies, guides, languages and options that will help current and future visitors better plan and execute their visits before and during their trip.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Regional Transportation Authority  
Additional Suggested Partners: Rio Nuevo, Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will participate in state, county, and city transportation forums held to help identify options that leverage existing transportation solutions.
- Visit Tucson will advocate for a Visitor Transportation Strategy for the Metro Tucson region.
- Visit Tucson will promote, communicate and demonstrate to visitors the ease of car-free visits to Metro Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will advocate for alternate transportation options such as the street car for convention and leisure purposes, and ride-sharing services for minimizing congestion.
- Visit Tucson will support incentives for businesses (tourism and non-tourism) and events and festivals to promote car-free movement.
- Visit Tucson will advocate for the enhancement of safety and connectivity, so car-free travel feels and is viable.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to develop policies to support alternative transportation, including public transportation, streetcars and ride-sharing services.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to create incentives for businesses, events and festivals to use public / alternative transportation.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to enhance safety, security and connectivity of public transit and bike routes.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to create and implement a visitor transportation strategy for the Metro Tucson region that ties into existing transportation master plans for the region.
- Pima Association of Governments is encouraged to continue working with public-private partnerships to implement the Smart Region Southern Arizona initiative, in particular as it relates to modernized transportation systems.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to ensure that tourism is "at the table" when transportation policies are taking shape (state, county, city and local).
- The industry is encouraged to create forums to engage the industry in issues affecting the visitor transportation experience.
- The industry is encouraged to create incentives for visitors to use alternate forms of transit.
- The industry is encouraged to conduct visitor flow research to assess true demand impact from out of town visitors to be used in future transportation policy considerations as well as local campaigns.

## AIRLIFT DEVELOPMENT

Although it is unlikely that Tucson could ever compete with the Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport—which serves as a major aviation hub in the U.S. Southwest region—Tucson should continue to cultivate and invest in additional non-stop, long-

haul and specialty market airlift development (East Coast, low cost, Canada and regional Mexican markets) that provide additional opportunities for growing aviation traffic and Metro Tucson tourism.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Tucson Airport Authority  
Additional Suggested Partners: Sun Corridor Inc, Visit Tucson, Rio Nuevo, City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley, private industry partners

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will continue to drive visitor demand and work with the suggested partners to increase seasonal and year-round airlift opportunities for Metro Tucson residents and visitors.
- Visit Tucson will also look to other creative efforts for inspiration, like the Louisville Regional Airlift Development, Inc. (LRAD) - a public/private partnership formed to support Louisville Regional Airport Authority (LRAD) in pursuing new nonstop passenger service to key coastal markets, with other markets to follow. LRAD sponsors include state and local government, chambers of commerce, convention & tourism bureaus, and many regional businesses.



### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to lead Airlift Development efforts and support calls, activities and actions necessary to provide incentives for new nonstop service.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged will create a Call to Action like LRAD by asking civic and business leaders to improve nonstop service at Tucson International Airport by committing to:
  - Participate in minimum revenue guarantees to share upfront risk with airlines.
  - Agree to fly new nonstop routes as they begin.
  - Maximize airport-based incentives and marketing support for each new route.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to work with individuals, businesses, and other organizations to support this effort by requesting pledges to provide funds to be used for minimum revenue guarantees to support the launch of new air service at Tucson International Airport.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to join forces with Airlift Development efforts and support calls, activities and actions necessary to provide incentives for new nonstop service.

## THE LOOP

The Chuck Huckelberry Loop has served to connect communities, provide alternative transportation options and create recreational opportunities in Metro Tucson that are unique for the City / County and aspirational for many communities, near and far.

Metro Tucson should facilitate and deliver continuing development, enhancement and expansion of The Loop and focus on more and better:

- pathway connections to downtown Tucson and important regional venues;
- wayfinding and information;
- bikes and recreational gear rentals;
- attractions, public art and places;
- pedestrian and cyclist amenities, food and drink, rest areas and restrooms; and
- activation and programming that brings the infrastructure to life for residents and visitors alike.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Pima County

Additional Suggested Partners: Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, Pima County Loop Advisory Committee

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will advocate for development, maintenance and enhancement of The Loop as an important visitor activity and experience, as well as a sustainable alternative to automobile transportation.
- Visit Tucson will help meetings, convention, event and festival planners communicate The Loop experience to their attendees.
- Visit Tucson will visually communicate and promote the idea of a connected city, ease of connectivity and the unique visitor experience of The Loop as metro Tucson's recreational core.
- Visit Tucson will encourage visitor usage of The Loop as a visitor activity, experience and mode of transportation.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to market The Loop as beneficial to Tucson residents and visitors.
- Pima County will encourage local establishments to leverage The Loop, and its walkers, runners and riders to create amenities, activities and experiences that activate The Loop 365 days a year and create new business.
- Pima County is encouraged to collect input from tourism industry partners and individual business owners when considering wayfinding, programming, wayfinding, including Google Streetview, and additional pathway connections, such as the El Paso and Southwestern Greenway.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to communicate the value of The Loop as a way to direct bicycle, equestrian, and pedestrian traffic to industry establishments including restaurants, hotels, retail, attractions and more.
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to appoint an industry representative to share industry concerns, ideas and opportunities that relate to The Loop.



# 4.

## CULTURE

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Cities have become the focal point for creation, innovation and exchange in the world, magnets for people seeking excitement and opportunity. In our urban age, where all cities compete against each other to attract and retain residents, visitors, investment, talent, events, creative people and organizations, the ephemeral, beautiful and inspirational aspects of city life— culture, creativity and the arts—are increasingly a central point of differentiation and attraction.

In some cities, culture is about museums, opera or ballet. In others, it's about family, traditions and communities. Either way, it reveals the true character of place, the essence that travelers are looking for and the heart that makes residents love where they live. Grown, shared and celebrated, culture can be transformative— opening minds, shedding light, shaping identities of visitors and locals alike.

## CITY OF GASTRONOMY ACTIVATION

In 2015, Tucson became the first U.S. city to become part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network for gastronomy, honoring Southern Arizona's food traditions and culinary innovation. Metro Tucson should increase attention by activating the city as a gastronomy destination, developing products and experiences that allow travelers the opportunity to experience the region's rich agricultural heritage, thriving food traditions, and culinary distinctiveness that helped Tucson earn this designation.

Metro Tucson should explore, advocate for and facilitate the creation of culinary trails, events and experiences that bring the city's culinary story to the visitor in the same way that Black Tomato's Tasting Notes presents "a series of immersive, luxurious journeys...with Michelin-starred chefs and food-personalities from around the world...granting you unheard of access to not only their kitchens but their minds." Unique experiences can be offered in shoulder and off-peak seasons to combat seasonality.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Tucson City of Gastronomy

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Visit Tucson, Tucson Originals

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will tell the story of Tucson's culinary history, events, and restaurants.
- Visit Tucson will help communicate a vision of Tucson as more than a place of food history and traditions, but a place of today's new culinary and food experiences, new chefs and innovative experiences.
- Visit Tucson will liaise with Tucson restaurants, chefs and innovators to champion a world class Tucson culinary experience.
- Visit Tucson will advocate for and promote locally-owned and operated restaurants and other food-and-beverage providers throughout metro Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will participate in the Tucson City of Gastronomy's efforts to facilitate a strategic vision of Tucson's food, drink and culinary experience to foster and explore new ideas, events, products and services in cooperation with sectoral stakeholders.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to champion, support and facilitate Tucson as a leading culinary destination.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments should encourage the development of food and drink experiences that combines residents' patronage and visitor attraction/convenience.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to support new food service organizations, establishments and chefs.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to partner with Visit Tucson and the Tucson City of Gastronomy to support the culinary ecosystem and cement Tucson's reputation as a leader in creating and delivering a unique world class culinary experience.
- The Travel & Tourism industry is encouraged to support Visit Tucson and the Tucson City of Gastronomy's efforts to create a strategic vision for Tucson's food, drink and culinary experience.



## EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Tucson should develop and implement a comprehensive metro-wide Events and Festivals Strategy, along with professional resources and a dedicated stakeholder group (Visit Tucson, City, County, Regional Communities and UA), that brings together public sector officials, industry stakeholders, venue owners / operators / organizers and event producers.

The strategy's purpose should be to agree on a destination-wide master calendar, program, sponsorship / funding, locations, seasonality, logistics and operating plan to deliver the full potential of events and festivals to Tucson.

Tucson should work with event producers and organizers to develop and enhance their marketing reach, operational and quality efforts to create, maintain and enhance events and festivals that are true to Tucson's brand, authentic to Tucson as a destination, capitalize on Tucson's strengths as a destination and is(are) reflective of Tucson's values.

Visit Tucson should work with Events & Festivals producers to invest in, incubate and spin off events and festivals that create and fulfill key return-on-investment criteria set forward in the Events & Festival strategy.

Visit Tucson should work with the Events & Festivals group to identify and fill niches, need periods and gaps in the visitor calendar.

Tucson should work with existing events and festivals to help deliver high quality experiences and explore the potential for building a signature event(s) or festival(s) for the destination. The Festivals and Events Analysis offered a set of criteria to prioritize events in Tucson and suggested two events, the Agave Heritage Festival and the All Souls Procession, have the potential to be signature events for the destination.

General preference for events and festivals should be given to those that align with Tucson's advantage in the areas of well-being, food, science, culture and music, as well as those such as gaming and E-sports that can be hosted indoors during off-season summer periods.

Educational and Scientific events appear to be an area of opportunity for Tucson. Tucson is home to the University of Arizona, a premier public research university, as well as other higher learning institutions including Pima Community College. It's also home to unique meeting and event spaces with ties to education, space and science, including the world-renowned Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Pima Air and Space Museum, and Tucson Botanical Gardens.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Festival & Events Association of Tucson & Southern Arizona

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Visit Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley, Southern Arizona Attractions Alliance, Azteca Tucson, event organizers

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will work with county, city and community leaders, major events producers and organizers, along with industry stakeholders, to create an Events & Festival Strategy to set forth the vision, goals, strategies and plans for growing the number of visitor-related events and festivals in metro Tucson that increase direct-spending by visitors and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- Visit Tucson will encourage and support efforts by Festival & Events Association of Tucson & Southern Arizona to create an Events & Festivals Council of stakeholders to:
  - Agree on a vision to strengthen metro Tucson's supported arts, cultural and sports events and festivals
  - Identify and articulate detailed funding criteria for arts, cultural and sports events and festivals that will be supported by various funding sources, not limited to Visit Tucson
  - Encourage coordination of events and festivals to maximize timing and impact, while reducing seasonality swings and unsustainable high-volume visitor traffic
- Visit Tucson will encourage the Events & Festivals Council to organize communication, marketing and promotion of metro Tucson events as well as other events and festivals not supported by the city, county or communities, but nevertheless of potential interest to visitors.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to actively participate on Visit Tucson's Events & Festivals Council to facilitate and operationalize events and festivals from a regulation and permitting perspective.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to have a staff position available to assist in the realization of events.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to organize and manage department/agency involvement in metro Tucson events and festivals.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

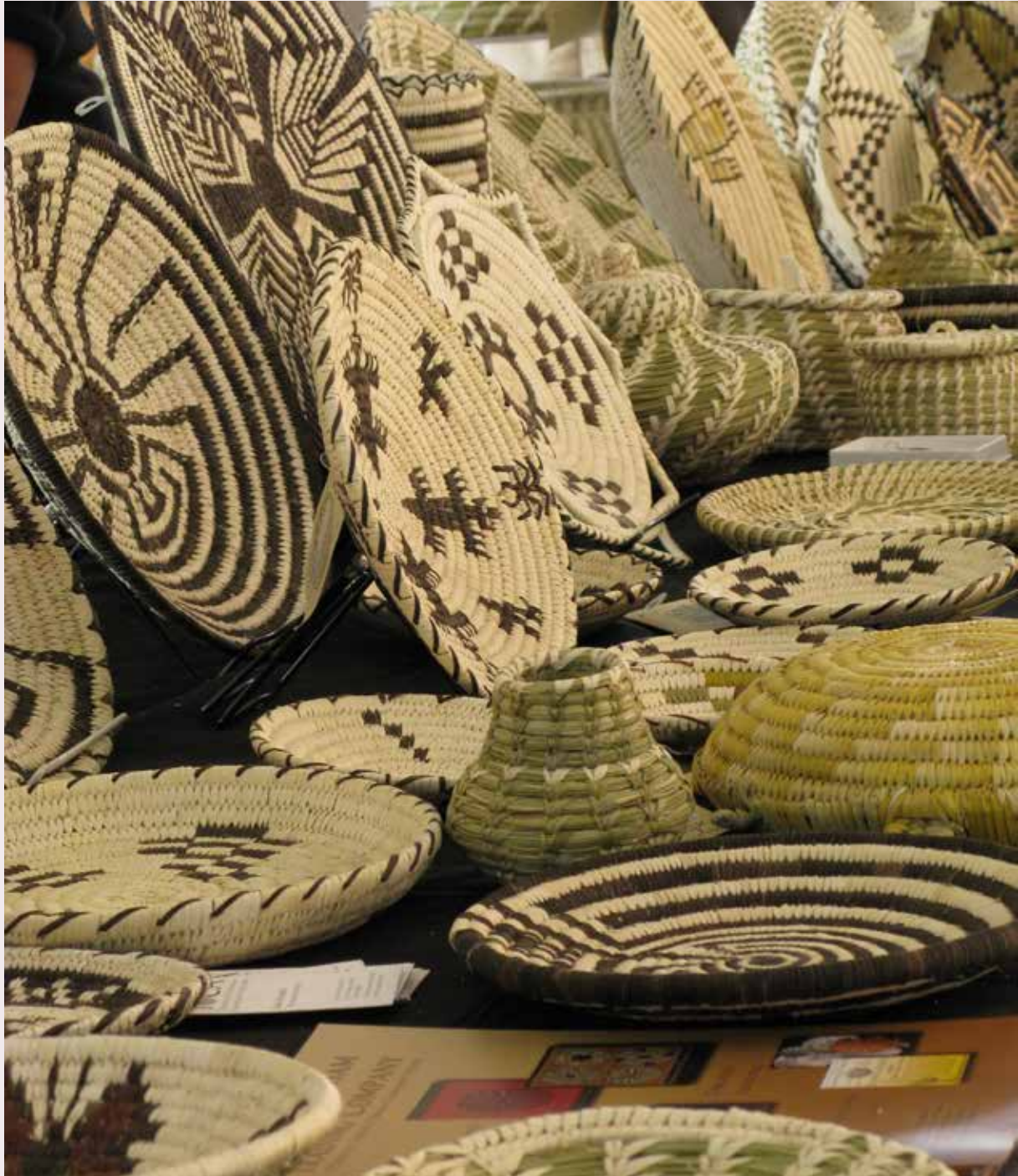
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners will encourage existing event organizers and venues to engage with the Events & Festivals Council to coordinate calendars, resources and funding.
- The industry will collaborate with event organizers, venues and startups in the sector to build stronger, more engaging visitor-related events.



## NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Tucson should increase and improve engagement with and coordination of events, activities and experiences with Native American leadership, communities and organizations in and around Metro Tucson.

These efforts should be targeted to increase the sustainability and knowledge of Native American culture and history, deliver authentic experiences that appeal to visitors and residents alike, and create economic and business development opportunities for both Native American communities and Metro Tucson.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Tohono O'odham Nation, University of Arizona and Pima County

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will increase its communications efforts with the Tohono O'odham Nation and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe to determine how the Metro Tucson Tourism Master Plan recommendations and strategies might support their cultural preservation efforts, economic development opportunities and way of life.
- Visit Tucson will brief tribal leaders on the Metro Tucson Tourism Master Plan and discuss how Visit Tucson and the Travel & Tourism industry can support or implement various programs, activities and actions for implementation.
- Visit Tucson will listen to tribal leaders and determine how their issues and opportunities can be factored into the Tourism Master Plan and its implementation.

### ***Tohono O'odham Nation & The Pascua Yaqui Tribe:***

- The Tohono O'odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe are encouraged to review the Metro Tucson Tourism Master Plan and engage in discussions with Visit Tucson about how the recommendations and strategies might impact their communities.
- The Tohono O'odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe are encouraged to collaborate with Visit Tucson to carry out the recommendations and strategies that are consistent with the tribes' cultural preservation efforts, economic development opportunities and way of life.



### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson, Tohono O'odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe to carry out the recommendations and strategies that are consistent with the tribes' cultural preservation efforts, economic development opportunities and way of life.

## SPANISH-SPEAKING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Tucson should continue to focus greater attention, destination and product development efforts and marketing on Spanish-speaking visitors—who tend to spend significant money on their visits—in order to protect and expand this important market segment.

Tucson should increase the amount of Spanish-language signage, wayfinding and information, which would make these visitors feel much more welcome and increase their loyalty to the destination.

Tucson should create a dedicated Hispanic Visitor Council composed of Visit Tucson, stakeholders and the local community establishments /

operators who specialize in this market and create strategies, programs and plans to increase this business.

Tucson should protect, enhance, facilitate and expand the shopping experience(s) associated with the Spanish-speaking visitor market, which is a particularly important piece of tourism business for Tucson.

Tucson should capitalize on its unique attraction to both English-speaking visitors and Spanish-speaking visitors and weave these two experiences together into one that celebrates the heritage and history of Tucson as a cultural crossroads.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, Pima County, Downtown Tucson Partnership, Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Consulate of Mexico in Tucson, Metro Tucson business organizations and retail partners

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will create a Spanish-Speaking Visitor Council in collaboration with government partners, the Mexican Consulate in Tucson, and stakeholders that specialize in this market to develop a segment specific strategy (marketing and destination development) to increase business from Spanish-speaking visitors.
- Visit Tucson will create a Hispanic Visitor Council to develop a marketing and destination development strategy specific to the U.S. Hispanic market.
- Visit Tucson will create a retail taskforce to assess and develop a Metro Tucson retail strategy specific to Spanish-speaking visitors.
- Visit Tucson will partner with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to enhance the visitor experience for Mexico visitors, including facilitating enrollment in Trusted Traveler Programs, such as Global Entry.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to collaborate with Visit Tucson on its strategies to protect and grow the Spanish-speaking visitor market.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to review and assess the services provided to Spanish-speaking visitors to determine if they are properly aligned with the Spanish language.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to assess their economic development plans to determine their alignment with the Spanish-speaking visitor.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to review and assess their marketing, promotions, and communications, as well as product and service offerings to increase the quantity and quality of delivery to Spanish-speaking visitors.
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to partner with Visit Tucson to create a destination marketing and development plan for Spanish-speaking visitors and a segment specific retail strategy for these visitors.

# 5.

## DEVELOPMENT/ INVESTMENT

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*Visit Tucson serves as the Destination Marketing and Management Organization for Metro Tucson and is responsible for destination marketing, development and management projects that will shape both the physical and perceived landscape of the region.*

These proposals are expected to be investments in hardware and of scale: they take time to conceive, necessitate public engagement, implicate architecture and design, and often require programming. Some of these developments and investments could become the signatures of the city, the game-changing places or events of the future. They can't be taken lightly.

## FULL-SERVICE, DOWNTOWN & HEADQUARTER HOTEL(S)

Tucson should continue to explore and facilitate full-service downtown hotel(s), and / or a headquarter hotel (for the Tucson Convention Center) that will provide much-needed room inventory for meetings and sports visitors to Tucson.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Rio Nuevo

Additional Suggested Partners: Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Pima County, SMG, downtown districts, business organizations and private investors

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will advocate for new downtown hotels that support meetings and events at the Tucson Convention Center.
- Visit Tucson will continue to advocate for a headquarters hotel with direct access to the Tucson Convention Center (TCC) to make the facility potentially viable for small conventions.
- Visit Tucson will work with all downtown hotels, and those in close proximity to TCC, to promote, market and sell room blocks needed for larger meetings, conventions and group business.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Rio Nuevo is encouraged to invest in new hotel developments within its district that provide accommodations and meetings/ballroom space to augment TCC meetings and events.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to work with Rio Nuevo, Visit Tucson and hotel developers and owners to facilitate a headquarters hotel for the Tucson Convention Center, or a collection of nearby hotels that serve the same purpose.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to work with partners, developers and hotel owners to facilitate a headquarters hotel for the Tucson Convention Center, or a collection of nearby hotels that serve the same purpose.



## TUCSON CONVENTION CENTER

The Tucson Convention Center (TCC) should re-vision, re-structure, renovate and remodel to deliver an overall facility, exhibition hall(s), meeting space and rooms, technical and operational enhancements / upgrades, parking and placemaking necessary to accommodate today's more demanding, high-tech and engaging meetings and conventions.

TCC should strive to deliver an authentic, connected and walkable Tucson experience.

Tucson should work to deliver a balanced supply of connected, adjacent and / or nearby (walkable) hotel rooms that are necessary to keep the TCC competitive with other destinations of similar size and ability.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Rio Nuevo, SMG and City of Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: Visit Tucson, downtown districts, nearby residents and businesses, and business organizations

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will continue to consult with Rio Nuevo, the City of Tucson and SMG about the plans to update the TCC, stressing authenticity of place and facility enhancements that are appealing and attractive to its targeted meetings, conventions and groups.
- Visit Tucson will advocate for TCC placemaking, design, decoration and sense of place that is unique to Metro Tucson and embodies the spirit of the destination and its people.
- Visit Tucson will continue to work with Rio Nuevo, the City of Tucson and SMG to create a meetings and convention experience at the Tucson Convention Center that is unique, authentic, attractive and sets TCC apart from the many other choices that these groups could otherwise make.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Rio Nuevo and the City of Tucson are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson and SMG to update the TCC infrastructure, systems, operations and experience in a way that enhances the facility's sense of place and makes it unique amongst competing convention centers and a special experience for residents and visitors.



### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

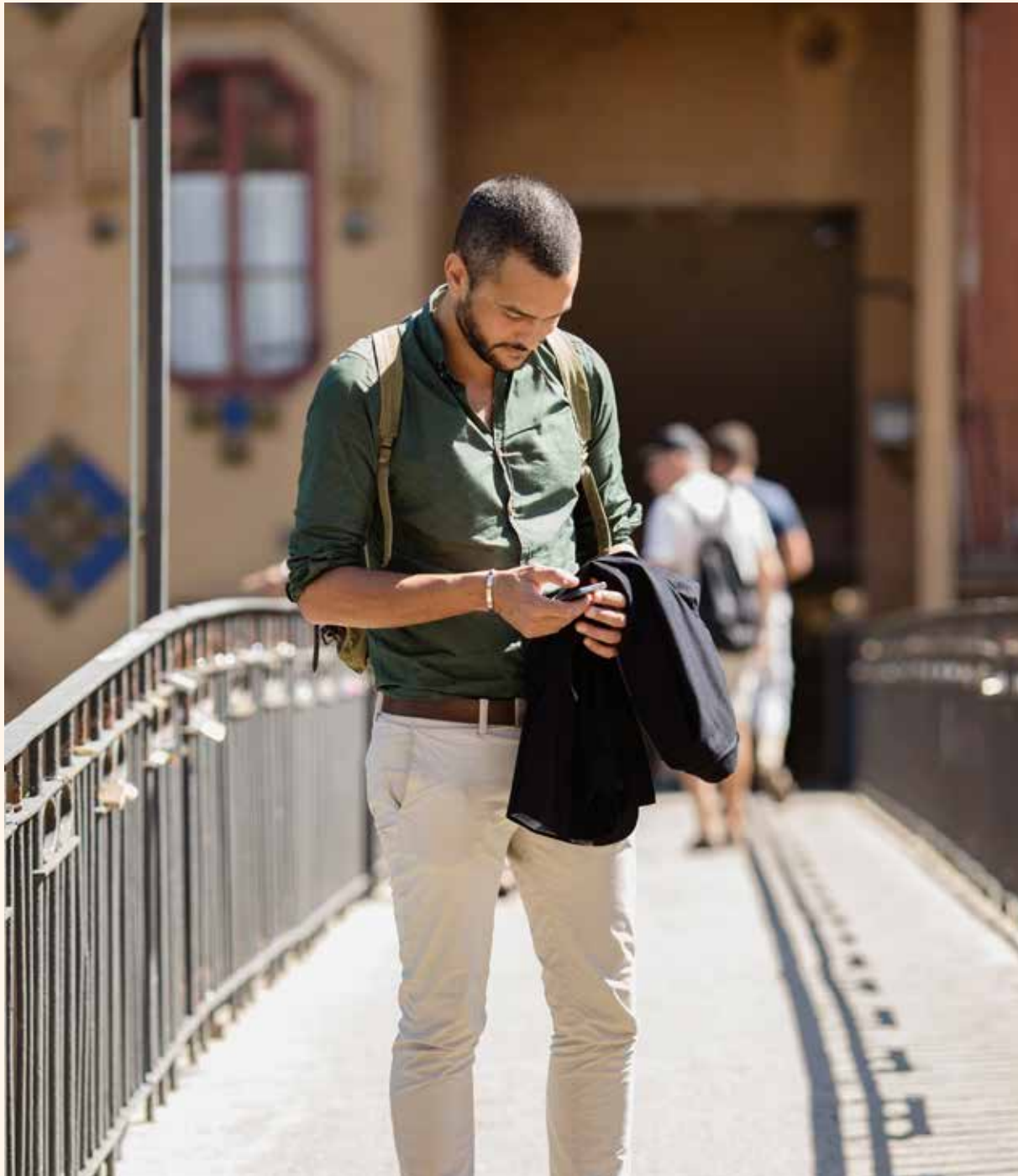
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners will strive to deliver a unique and compelling experience for meetings, conventions and groups that use the Tucson Convention Center, which is different from competing destinations and that is authentic to Tucson as a place.

## TECHNOLOGY & TOURISM

Visit Tucson should explore the potential for “big data”, artificial intelligence, geo-targeting, geo-fencing and other developing technologies for use in personalizing the visitor experience in Tucson.

Technology is changing the way destinations are interacting with consumers, as travelers demand more personalized experiences and DMOs place

greater emphasis on engaging with customers in two-way conversations. Visit Tucson and its stakeholders should examine new technologies that allow the organization to engage with travelers during all phases of the travel cycle, including while they are in the destination.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, SMG, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley, Pima Association of Governments and Rio Nuevo



### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will engage a Travel & Tourism technology specialist to consult and work with industry stakeholders (public and private sector) to develop a Technology and Tourism strategy for Metro Tucson that combines existing and future technology opportunities and the current and future needs for Metro Tucson visitors.
- Visit Tucson's Technology and Tourism strategy will focus on opportunities to engage with visitors before and during their visits to enhance their experiences, increase their spending and extend their stays.
- Visit Tucson will partner with SMG, Rio Nuevo and the City of Tucson to explore ways to enhance the Tucson Convention Center's technology to the point where Ten West, e-gaming events and high-tech meetings can thrive.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson to develop and implement a Technology and Tourism strategy.
- Pima Association of Governments/Regional Transportation Authority is encouraged to consider visitor experience in its smart region initiative.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson to develop and implement a regional Technology and Tourism strategy.

## EXPERIENCE HOTHOUSE

Metro Tucson should launch a metro-wide incubator and support network (Hothouse) for Tucson visitor establishments and attractions (startups and existing) needing business development assistance. The Tucson Experience Hothouse will be a new program designed to discover and foster startups working on innovative solutions and activities to improve the Tucson experience, as well as those needing additional

support, consultation or re-development to rebuild, refresh or re-launch their tourism experience business or attraction. The Hothouse will bring together Visit Tucson, Sun Corridor, City of Tucson and Pima County economic development agencies, and others, along with participating startups and owners / operators, to co-create and develop unique and inventive experiences for Tucson residents and visitors.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: To be determined

Additional Suggested Partners: University of Arizona, Visit Tucson, City of Tucson, Pima County, Southern Arizona Attractions Alliance, Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, Town of Oro Valley, Startup Tucson and Tucson Young Professionals



### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will work with the suggested partners to determine which entity will lead the region's efforts to launch an Experience Hothouse in support of metro Tucson attractions and visitor experiences.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- The University of Arizona is encouraged to play a major role in launching an Experience Hothouse incubator for metro Tucson attractions and visitor experiences.
- The suggested partners are encouraged to collaborate to develop a hothouse strategy, program of work, and seek funding and sponsorship.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to support the Experience Hothouse and engage with Visit Tucson, sponsors, mentors and participants to help guide it toward success.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to support the Experience Hothouse and engage with Visit Tucson, sponsors, mentors and participants to help guide it toward success.

## ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The importance of destination promotion to the visitor economy is well recognized, but destination promotion also acts as a catalyst for economic and workforce development in a broader sense. In fact, cities that prioritize destination promotion, and coordinate these efforts with economic development initiatives, investment promotion and workforce attraction are better positioned to

compete for new corporate relocations, investment and building a talented workforce. Visit Tucson should collaborate with Sun Corridor, City of Tucson and Pima County economic development agencies, as well as the Tucson Metro Chamber and others to ensure there is alignment on marketing, promotional, development and attraction efforts for the destination.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Leads: Sun Corridor Inc, Pima County, City of Tucson, Tucson Metro Chamber, and Town of Oro Valley

Additional Suggested Partners: Visit Tucson, University of Arizona, Pima Community College, Rio Nuevo, Southern Arizona Leadership Council, Pima Association of Governments, Tucson Airport Authority, Tucson Hispanic Chamber, Tucson Association of Realtors, Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, Tucson Young Professionals and DM50

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will provide its destination marketing experience, photography, video footage and content to the Tucson Metro Chamber, its Talent Taskforce and local businesses to attract and retain workers.
- Visit Tucson will work with the Tucson Metro Chamber, Sun Corridor, county and municipal governments, and academic institutions to coordinate metro Tucson marketing efforts associated with tourism, economic development, and workforce development and attraction.
- Visit Tucson will work with the aforementioned partners to promote metro Tucson's assets to companies considering moving or expanding to Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will engage these organizations in exploring the issues and opportunities associated with creating a community-wide brand for metro Tucson as a destination for tourism, economic development, talent attraction and investment promotion.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations, especially those associated with economic development, talent attraction and investment promotion, are encouraged to consult, cooperate and coordinate with Visit Tucson in their destination marketing efforts.
- These same agencies and organizations are encouraged to develop a community-wide brand for marketing Metro Tucson for tourism, economic development, talent attraction and investment promotion.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to collaborate on economic development initiatives such as the Thrive in the 05 project along the Oracle corridor.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

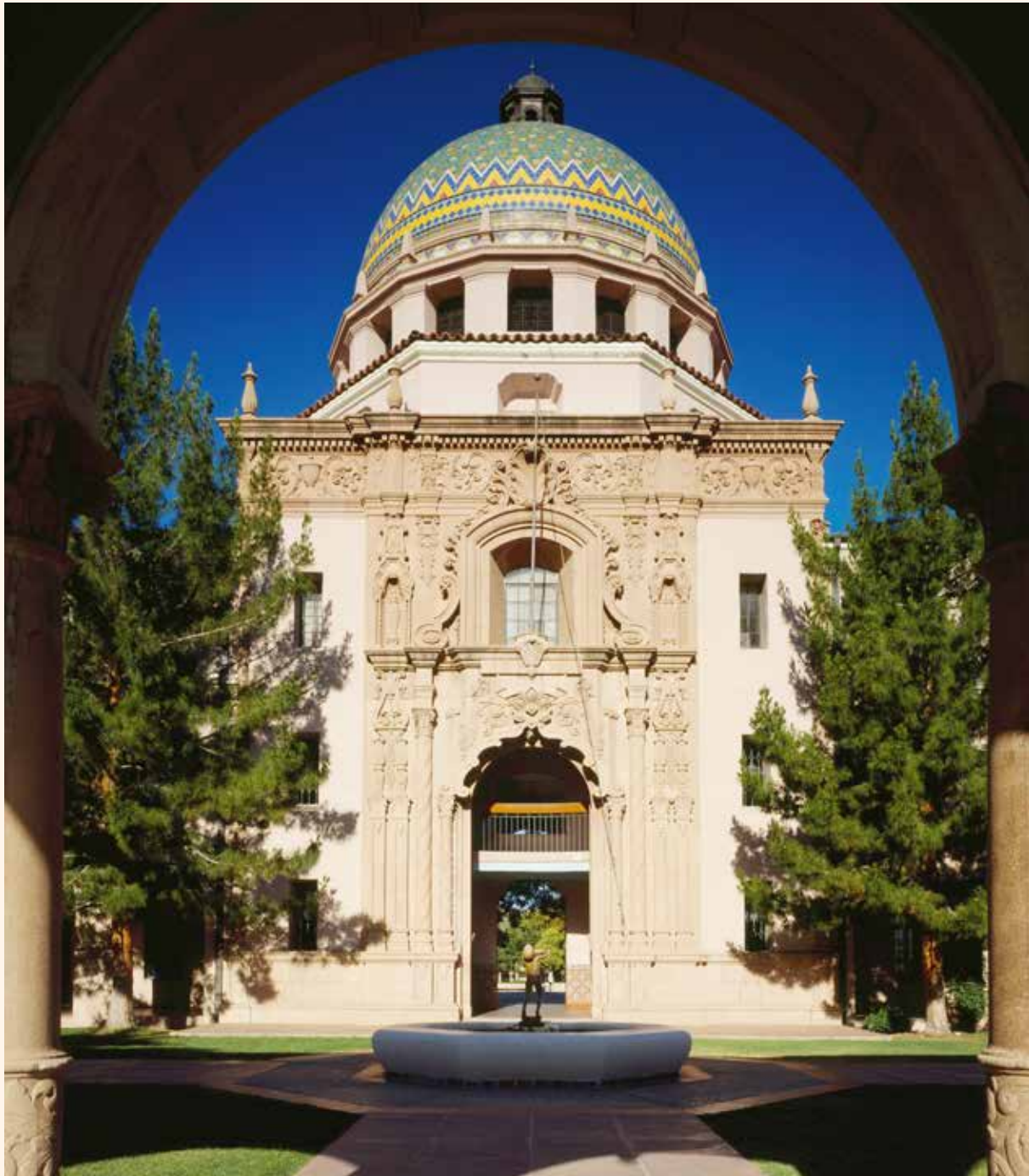
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to contribute to the metro Tucson destination marketing effort and potential community-wide branding by contributing their photographic and videography assets to the collective initiative.



## VISIT TUCSON

The objectives, strategies and recommendations of the Metro Tucson Tourism Master Plan will require Visit Tucson to make adjustments and additions to its organization, staffing, operations and programs, as well as adjust and potentially increase the level of funding necessary to deliver a broader range of destination marketing and management services. Visit Tucson should update its 3-Year Strategic Plan

to account for the recommendations of the Tourism Master Plan and continue to pursue plans for Tourism Improvement District (TID) funding (volunteer and / or compulsory) dedicated to increasing the reach of Visit Tucson's sales, marketing and communications efforts, as well as provide the revenue necessary to carry out its new tourism management mission.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will annually review the Tourism Master Plan recommendations, priorities and progress to date, and set forth annual plans, resources and funding needed for current year implementation.
- Visit Tucson will develop a work plan for Tourism Master Plan activities and incorporate that into its annual operating plan and budget.
- Visit Tucson will monitor and review annual progress and performance against the Tourism Master Plan and adjust the Tourism Master Plan, annual operating plan and budget accordingly.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to regularly check in with Visit Tucson to review progress against the Tourism Master Plan and make sure the funding necessary to continue implementation of the Tourism Master Plan is sufficient and available to Visit Tucson for the same.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to check in regularly with Visit Tucson to review progress against the Tourism Master Plan and make sure the organization, operations, staffing and funding necessary to continue implementation of the Tourism Master Plan is sufficient and available to Visit Tucson for the same.



# 6.

## ADVOCACY

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Tourism Advocacy is generally focused on communicating the economic impact and overall importance of tourism to a destination's economy in order to help public officials and the general public understand and appreciate the positive impact that the industry has on the economy, employment, taxes, investment and overall economic development.

There is definitely an opportunity for Visit Tucson to enhance and expand its role as the lead tourism advocate, taking on a broader and deeper leadership position in city, county and community affairs, and bringing together these government offices to work in concert on Travel & Tourism-related issues and opportunities.

## MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tucson should increase its efforts to connect the Meetings and Conventions business with economic development efforts.

Visit Tucson sales staff should be well-versed on economic development strategies, targeting meetings and conferences that align with business clusters and utilizing the city's thought leaders in these spaces as selling points for the destination. City, County and Regional development agencies, organizations and officials should take advantage of professional and association groups meeting

in Metro Tucson to engage in a strategic and concerted business recruitment effort.

Mayors and other top government officials should make a special effort during large Meetings and Conventions events to welcome and engage with visitors, and promote Metro Tucson as an excellent place to live, work and invest.

The Festivals and Events Analysis identified Educational and Scientific events as an area of opportunity for Tucson to utilize its thought leaders and unique meeting venues.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Leads: Visit Tucson and Sun Corridor Inc  
Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley, Rio Nuevo and economic development partners

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will better connect meetings business with the economic development efforts of Sun Corridor Inc and other economic development partners by pursuing additional meetings in top metro Tucson sectors, such as optical science, aerospace, defense and transportation.
- Visit Tucson will coordinate with county and municipal government officials, leaders in economic development and others to pitch Metro Tucson to meetings customers as a destination for business development, investment, talent attraction and growth.
- Visit Tucson will create an informal ambassadors' group of academic and industry leaders who are well positioned in associations, organizations and other groups to encourage and facilitate meetings that can be held in Metro Tucson.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- County and municipal officials, along with economic development officials throughout the region, are encouraged to partner with Visit Tucson to identify and pursue meetings that fit with Metro Tucson's top economic sectors.
- Those same stakeholders are encouraged to connect with top sector decision-makers who attend Tucson conferences before, during and/or after these meetings to promote Metro Tucson as a great location in which to create or relocate a business.



### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism leaders are encouraged to partner with regional economic development leaders and Visit Tucson to entertain top decision-makers that are considering moving their businesses or expanding them to Metro Tucson.

## NEIGHBORHOOD / COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Each of the rural and neighboring communities, including but not limited to Tubac and Tombstone, have unique and important tourism assets that add to the overall experience of tourism and quality of life in Metro Tucson. Visit Tucson should assist in developing the experiential quality of these rural and neighboring communities / unincorporated areas by building on their existing and future tourism assets.

Tucson should increase attention on destination development; building Travel & Tourism activities, attractions and itineraries; and increasing product diversity, entertainment and hospitality (especially food, culture and music) in a number of Tucson communities / neighborhoods such as Southside, Eastside, Westside or Sahuarita that would benefit from the additional business created by visitors.

Tucson should create an inventory, site specific assessment and targeted strategy for underutilized County and City owned properties and land that might possess potential for economic development associated with Travel & Tourism activities including, but not limited to, the Tucson Greyhound Park and the Tucson Rodeo Grounds.

Visit Tucson should work with and educate Tucson's communities and neighborhoods about

the economic development potential of Travel & Tourism activities and visitors, and encourage them to explore and facilitate strategies (development and marketing) to capitalize on this opportunity.

Visit Tucson and Pima County / City of Tucson development agencies should work with local business organizations to reach individual businesses and assist them in increasing or enhancing their Travel & Tourism opportunities.

Pima County and the City of Tucson development agencies, offices and leadership should enhance their focus on Travel & Tourism as an economic and community development tool for all communities and neighborhoods.

Pima County and the City of Tucson agencies, offices and leadership should focus greater resources on community beautification, multilingual wayfinding and signage, building codes and zoning rules and regulations that is welcoming, enhances the visitor experience as well as quality of life for residents.

The recent designation of the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area presents an important opportunity to unite the community and develop meaningful solutions to these opportunities.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley, Downtown Tucson Partnership, Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance, Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will continue to engage with Pima County, City of Tucson, Town of Oro Valley, Downtown Tucson Partnership and local economic development leaders to provide input, feedback and advice on issues and opportunities that might impact the visitor experience in downtown Tucson, various communities and neighborhood business districts.
- Visit Tucson will pay special attention to unique visitor activities such as accommodations, restaurants, nightlife, retail, entertainment, outdoor recreation, parks, cultural / arts, events and festivals and transportation in neighboring communities.
- Visit Tucson will work with county and municipal leaders to articulate, market and promote the unique sense of place and character that Tucson's downtown, neighboring communities and neighborhoods offer to residents and visitors.
- Visit Tucson will review destination / neighborhood-focused development and marketing efforts by leading tourism organizations to see how they are organizing capacity building for their own business establishments and destinations / neighborhoods; apply same to Tucson's neighborhoods.
- Visit Tucson will work with Sun Corridor Inc to include "retail" job and investment growth, such as accommodations, restaurants, nightlife, retail, entertainment, outdoor recreation, parks, cultural / arts, events and festivals and transportation, in their mission.
- Visit Tucson will educate Metro Tucson's communities about the economic development potential of tourism activities by re-launching a Certified Tourism Ambassador program.
- Visit Tucson will hold meetings with short-term vacation rental owners/operators to provide free visitor information and paid visitor-training opportunities, such as Visit Tucson's Certified Tourism Ambassador program, to help these vacation-rental operators extend visitors' stays and encourage their customers to spend more money in Metro Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will work with partners to promote the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area, which presents an important opportunity to unite communities in Pima and Santa Cruz counties.

### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to provide neighboring communities and neighborhood business districts with organizational assistance and funding to better develop, manage and market their unique places.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to support their staff participating in the Certified Tourism Ambassador program.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to join community or neighborhood business districts, actively engage in their destination development and promotional efforts, and increase the connectivity of local business owners and operators to the broader Metro Tucson experience.
- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to support their staff participating in the Certified Tourism Ambassador program.

## BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Stakeholders have reported, and research for this Tourism Master Plan has confirmed, that basic transportation infrastructure, including roads and highways, are poorly maintained and do not deliver a quality experience for visitors or residents. It has also been suggested that neglected infrastructure may be a factor in limiting or reducing repeat visitation. In addition, the visioning workshops for this project identified several future infrastructure opportunities including, but not limited to, public transit, new highways, airport improvements, additional

light rail services and the potential for high speed train service to Phoenix, which individually and collectively could have a significant impact on Tucson's future as a destination for residents and visitors. As a result, Visit Tucson should advocate for and work with the State of Arizona, City of Tucson, Pima County and local infrastructure and transportation agencies to identify, advocate for and address those basic infrastructure issues and opportunities that do and will have an important positive or negative impact on Tucson's Travel & Tourism industry.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: County/Municipal governments  
Additional Suggested Partners: Visit Tucson,  
Pima Association of Governments and business  
organizations

### **Visit Tucson:**

- Visit Tucson will monitor, engage in and advocate at state, regional and Metro Tucson policy and legislative hearings and public forums that are held to discuss infrastructure and transportation issues and opportunities that might impact Travel & Tourism or visitors to Metro Tucson.
- Visit Tucson will engage and participate in research, studies, strategies and plans that enhance Travel & Tourism infrastructure and transportation.



### **Local Government / Community Leaders:**

- Metro Tucson's county and municipal government leaders and Pima Association of Governments/Regional Transportation Authority officials are encouraged to meet regularly with Visit Tucson to brief them on issues and opportunities, along with their strategies and plans to improve Travel & Tourism activities and the visitor experience.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to solicit input from Visit Tucson on strategies and plans that impact the Travel & Tourism industry and the visitor experience.
- Metro Tucson's county and municipal governments are encouraged to invest more in repairing existing roads, while creating additional roads/freeways, ride-share programs, bike lanes and mass transit options that make Metro Tucson a better place in which to live, work, play and visit.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry:**

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to continually monitor and report issues and opportunities to Visit Tucson associated with infrastructure and transportation that is impacting the industry or its visitors.
- The industry needs to support revenue-generating initiatives to pay for better road maintenance, new roads, mass transit, bike lanes and enhanced WiFi and data infrastructure throughout the region.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Metro Tucson, like many other popular and important destinations, is facing a number of natural and manmade issues that are impacting, and will continue to impact, the quality of Tucson as a visitor destination and a place for residents to live, work and play including: climate change, water shortages, energy, waste management, economic growth and social development. Visit Tucson should set an example by developing a sustainable tourism strategy to wisely manage and fully restore imperilled resources for the betterment of visitors and residents alike.

As a starting point for developing this strategy, Visit Tucson should review and assess sustainable

tourism programs that are currently in place in Tucson and used by industry stakeholders, owners and operators, and their impact on industry-wide objectives. Second, Visit Tucson should review well known international, national and statewide resources such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization programs for Sustainable Tourism and their applicability to Tucson; consider other well known sustainable tourism organizations' programs and certifications and their benefits to Tucson; and finally select or design and implement a sustainable tourism program that best suits the needs and requirements of tourism in Metro Tucson, its visitors and its residents.



## RECOMMENDED ROLES & STRATEGIES

Suggested Lead: Visit Tucson

Additional Suggested Partners: City of Tucson, Pima County, Town of Oro Valley

### ***Visit Tucson:***

- Visit Tucson will review Sustainable Tourism principles, strategies, plans and programs currently being undertaken by Travel & Tourism stakeholders throughout Metro Tucson.
- If necessary, Visit Tucson will assess the benefits and limitations of an “off the shelf” sustainable tourism program for Metro Tucson or take the opportunity to create a customized program that is more specific and focused for local stakeholders.
- Visit Tucson will build consensus with tourism stakeholders on the need for and benefit of a sustainable tourism program and roll out the agreed strategy and program to the industry.
- Visit Tucson will market the region’s Sustainable Tourism attributes and programs to targeted leisure travelers and meeting groups seeking those initiatives in their vacation or meetings destinations, respectively.

### ***Local Government / Community Leaders:***

- Metro Tucson’s county and municipal governments and business organizations are encouraged to work with Visit Tucson and its stakeholders to define and organize a sustainable tourism strategy that complements existing programs and efforts, and makes Tucson a sustainable tourism destination.

### ***Travel & Tourism Industry:***

- Metro Tucson Travel & Tourism partners are encouraged to identify gaps that need to be filled to make Metro Tucson a strong and vibrant sustainable destination.
- The Travel & Tourism industry will implement Sustainable Tourism components to provide additional attributes that can be marketed by Visit Tucson to targeted customers.



# PRIORITIES



# PRIORITIES

For all destinations there are limitations on the resources (organizational, staffing, time and funding) available to carry out the Tourism Master Plan Recommendations. Visit Tucson is no different. As a result, the following table sets

out a Priority Analysis of the Tourism Master Plan recommendations and provides some guidance to Visit Tucson in the implementation of the Tourism Master Plan and will aid in the development of the organization's annual plans and budgeting.

Based on the Tourism Master Plan Recommendations - Priority Scoring table (see below), the priority order of recommendations is:

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## GROUP 1

- 3.2 Airlift Development
- 6.1 Meetings and Conventions Business and Economic Development
- 1.1 Capital of Well-Being
- 1.5 Physical Well-Being - Sports Tourism
- 1.6 Spiritual Well-Being - Outdoors Experiences
- 2.1 Downtown Tucson
- 5.5 Economic and Workforce Development

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## GROUP 2

- 1.3 Intellectual Well-Being - Higher and Continuing Education
- 1.4 Physical Well-Being - Biking Tourism
- 2.3 Community Villages, Main Streets and Downtowns
- 3.3 The Loop
- 4.1 City of Gastronomy Activation
- 4.2 Events & Festivals
- 4.4 Spanish Speaking Visitor Experience
- 5.2 Tucson Convention Center
- 6.4 Sustainable Tourism

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## GROUP 3

- 5.6 Visit Tucson
- 6.3 Basic Infrastructure
- 3.1 Connectivity, Accessibility and Proximity
- 4.3 Native American Experience
- 1.2 Health Well-Being - Medical Tourism
- 2.2 Gathering Place
- 5.1 Full-Service, Downtown and Headquarter Hotel(s)
- 5.4 Experience Hothouse

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## GROUP 4

- 5.3 Technology and Tourism
- 6.2 Neighborhood / Community Development

	3 POINTS	2 POINTS	1 POINT
<b>P1: COST FOR VISIT TUCSON ACTIVITIES</b>	Low Cost is <\$1M	Medium Cost is \$1-5M	High Cost >\$5M
<b>P2: TOTAL NON-VISIT TUCSON CAPITAL AND OPERATING COSTS</b>	Minimal Cost is <\$1M	Moderate Cost is \$1-10M	Significant Cost is >\$10M
<b>P3: RESIDENT QUALITY OF LIFE IMPACT</b>	High	Medium	Low
<b>P4: ECONOMIC IMPACT</b>	High	Medium	Low
<b>P5: OPPORTUNITY FOR VT TO IMPACT</b>	High	Medium	Low
<b>P6: TIMING TO IMPLEMENT</b>	Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<b>P7: POLITICAL WILL TO MOVE FORWARD</b>	High	Medium	Low
<b>P8: FULFILLMENT OF VISION</b>	High	Medium	Low

<b>SCORE</b>	Each Dark cell is scored 3 points, Medium cell 2 points and Light cell 1 point. The highest score possible is 24. The lowest score possible is 8.
<b>RANK</b>	The Recommendations are ranked 1-26 with Number 1 the best and 26 the least.

## TOURISM MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS - PRIORITY SCORING

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	SCORE	RANKS
<b>WELL-BEING</b>										
1.1 Capital of Well-Being									19	3
1.2 Health Well-Being - Medical Tourism									15	21
1.3 Intellectual Well-Being - Higher and Continuing Education									18	8
1.4 Physical Well-Being - Biking Tourism									18	8
1.5 Physical Well-Being - Sports Tourism									19	3
1.6 Spiritual Well-Being - Outdoors Experiences									19	3
<b>PLACEMAKING</b>										
2.1 Downtown Tucson									19	3
2.2 Gathering Place									15	21
2.3 Community Villages, Main Streets and Downtowns									18	8
<b>CONNECTIVITY</b>										
3.1 Connectivity, Accessibility and Proximity									16	19
3.2 Airlift Development									21	1
3.3 The Loop									18	8

## TOURISM MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS - PRIORITY SCORING (CONTINUED)

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	SCORE	RANKS
<b>CULTURE</b>										
4.1 City of Gastronomy Activation									18	8
4.2 Events & Festivals									18	8
4.3 Native American Experience									16	19
4.4 Spanish Speaking Visitor Experience									18	8
<b>DEVELOPMENT / INVESTMENT</b>										
5.1 Full-Service, Downtown and Headquarter Hotel(s)									15	21
5.2 Tucson Convention Center									18	8
5.3 Technology and Tourism									13	25
5.4 Experience Hothouse									15	21
5.5 Economic and Workforce Development									19	3
5.6 Visit Tucson									17	17
<b>ADVOCACY</b>										
6.1 Meetings and Conventions Business and Economic Development									20	2
6.2 Neighborhood / Community Development									13	25
6.3 Basic Infrastructure									17	17
6.4 Sustainable Tourism									18	8

# IMPLEMENTATION



# IMPLEMENTATION

The individual strategies included in this Tourism Master Plan should be key input into Visit Tucson's annual planning process, the county and city's strategy, planning and management processes, as well as guide the industry and its stakeholders in their individual and collective development and management efforts.

In many cases, the Action Items included in this report can be undertaken by Visit Tucson, while others need to be shared with stakeholder partners of county, city and neighboring community agencies and organizations who need to understand how their engagement and cooperation can serve to enhance the Metro Tucson as a destination, increase the region's economic development opportunities and enhance the quality of life for residents. Sharing this report and its Action Items with Tucson's public and private sector tourism stakeholders and opening the lines of communication and discussion will be the first step in this process.

Of course, Visit Tucson will play a disproportionate role in working to implement, direct and manage the Action Items that have been articulated in this report, but as the leading tourism organization, which is evolving into a destination marketing and management organization, it has a major responsibility to do just that.

In moving this process forward, it is envisioned that implementation will include, but is not limited to:

- Presentation and communication of the Tourism Master Plan by Visit Tucson to County, City officials and industry stakeholders
- Engagement with specific stakeholders to discuss and share individual Action Items
- Agreement with specific stakeholders to work cooperatively to implement Action Items
- Articulation and agreement of cooperative stakeholder implementation initiatives
  - Inclusion of the Tourism Master Plan Action Items into Visit Tucson's annual planning process
  - Identification of organizational responsibilities and authorities
  - Identification of activities and work plans for implementation
  - Identification of resources necessary for implementation (financial, human resource, organizational)
  - Identification of time table for implementation
  - Identification of Key Performance Indices (KPIs) necessary to monitor and assess performance
  - Direction, management and monitoring of implementation initiatives

To coordinate this effort, Visit Tucson will establish and facilitate a Tourism Master Plan implementation committee to manage, direct and organize action plans; assign roles and responsibilities; allocate resources; monitor and review efforts; assess KPIs; and adjust the Action Plans accordingly. The committee will be chaired by Visit Tucson and will include Visit Tucson board members and management, key County, City and neighborhood officials and leading industry stakeholders.



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