

A STRATEGIC AGENCY
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DESTINATION Development Plan

MAY 2016



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Dear CVB Partners,

As leaders of the region's tourism industry, the Greater Palm Springs CVB must always be looking ahead—not just for the year—but for the destination's long-term future. By identifying challenges, as well as opportunities, we stay on the straightforward path to growing visitation and resultant jobs for all travel segments—from leisure to meetings.

The Goal is to grow annual visitation from 12 million people to over 16 million people by 2026.

To meet this goal, the CVB Board of Directors held a strategic planning session to discuss the climate and trends of tourism and hospitality in Greater Palm Springs. Six main goals were adopted: grow midweek business; grow summer and fall visitation; improve existing attractions and events; coordinate nine-city efforts; grow international business; and grow air service.

Creating a Destination Development Plan for future success depends on careful, in-depth research. As a result, the CVB contracted with leading strategic agencies, Minding Your Business (MYB) and Convention, Sports & Leisure (CSL) to formulate a Destination Development Plan, for both short- and long-range planning that relates to both the leisure and group markets.

However, no matter how well constructed, implementing a master plan for nine distinct cities depends on more than research and recommendations. To be entirely successful, this plan depends on building on our successful collaboration with our city Partners, the CVB Board of Directors and the Joint Powers Authority. As you read the recommendations in this plan, you will discover the many, important ways that your community or business can become a crucial part of the plan's success. Working together, we will be able to meet the challenges ahead in our ever-evolving industry—tourism.

The Executive Summary will give you highlights from this ambitious Destination Development Plan. The plan, in its entirety, is available upon request in both printed and digital formats.

Scott White

President & CEO, Greater Palm Springs CVB



Scott White
President & CEO
Greater Palm Springs CVB

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minding Your Business (MYB) and Convention, Sports & Leisure (CSL), were tasked with formulating and recommending strategies to gain market share of tourism, increase hotel bookings and drive exposure to new markets for both the leisure and group markets. Based on a combination of in-depth research, both primary and secondary, a foundation was built to create a blueprint that set forth Destination Goals for the next five years and longer.

The Destination Development Plan (DDP) is the blueprint to reach those goals, which are largely reliant on the role of the community to reach fruition. This study was conducted in each of the nine cities that make up Greater Palm Springs. The research ranged from mayors and city managers to meeting professionals, travel writers and the concierge community, as well as interviews with 10,000 visitors enjoying the destination.

This evidence-based, deep-dive approach played an essential role in defining a common vision for growth. It provides a plan for success that will not only grow tourism, but contribute significantly to Greater Palm Springs' economic and social development.

The Destination Development Plan's primary goal is to attract over 16 million visitors to the valley by 2026. This aggressive goal will require collaboration among all cities, business leaders and tourism partners. The recommendations in the DDP are designed to inspire and generate ideas that all of us can support. A competitive spirit is healthy locally, but can be detrimental regionally and globally. As a destination, we are competing with world-class cities and regions and our brand must be unified with one voice and one goal. Together, we can grow our economy and be recognized as a destination that is modern, relevant and admired.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

After identifying destination challenges and goals based on more than a year of extensive research, recommendations have been formulated focused on the following priorities: increasing air service to the destination; growing business midweek; supporting higher education locally to ensure the future of the hospitality labor pool; leveraging the natural assets of Greater Palm Springs to be recognized as an outdoor destination; focusing on the art and cultural assets of the destination; leveraging our existing health and wellness offerings; addressing wayfinding challenges; strategizing shared marketing resources; building on our presence as an eco-sustainable destination; supporting and encouraging events that fill our need periods; and working with the growing tourism sectors of boutique hotels and vacation homes.

Within these areas, recommendations are in some cases very specific. In other cases, they are more general in nature to provide decision-makers with a framework for future initiatives. The recommendations intersect with the destination goals, and, to some extent, each of the recommendations will grow tourism, create more jobs and revenue for the cities and increase the desirability to attract companies to relocate to Greater Palm Springs.

TRANSPORTATION

For Greater Palm Springs to be a year-round destination, it requires year-round air service. Although the CVB's efforts to subsidize airlines have been successful, the reality of continuing and expanding subsidy will require much greater support. Airlines will not risk year-round service into Greater Palm Springs



without a minimum revenue guarantee or cooperative marketing agreement. Consistent year-round air service will be beneficial to attracting new companies and diversifying the economy. We are recommending the establishment of a nine-city Blue Ribbon Committee to review and evaluate the options to create a revenue source to cover summer and fall subsidies. The plan also recommends the establishment of immigration and customs facilities at the airport for international charter flights, expansion from Canada, new markets such as Mexico and long-term Asia.

We must continue to support shared ride services which are an important component for Greater Palm Springs and its modern and Millennial visitor. The lack of mass public transit for the visitor is a weakness. It is important the modern traveler has a positive experience, and Greater Palm Springs should be supportive of services such as Uber and Lyft. The CVB, working with CVAG and other nine-city organizations, should identify opportunities to maximize and protect the service in the market.

Access from Southern California will continue to be an issue and adding daily Amtrak service would enhance the accessibility of the destination to in-state and international travelers tremendously. This is considered a long-term initiative that will not likely develop until 2020 or beyond, however steps should be taken to plan and possibly expedite the development process by establishing a specialized project team that might include representatives from each participating organization to partner with the RCTC and the Southwest Rail Passenger Association.

Ontario International Airport has the potential to be an asset and compliment Palm Springs International Airport. Having shuttle service or an express train between Ontario and Greater Palm Springs will significantly impact tourism, real estate and economic growth. We believe some form of public subsidy would be required. The CVB, CVAG and other destination representatives should create a task force to investigate the concept of a larger-scale, visitor-oriented transportation hub system, potentially with various locations throughout the valley, as well as a public shuttle subsidy plan.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

One of Greater Palm Springs' most unique assets is its variety of geographic terrain and natural beauty. The outdoor adventure tourism industry is growing



rapidly and has measurable effects on destinations worldwide. There are opportunities to strengthen the Greater Palm Springs position as an outdoor and adventure destination. Similar to health and wellness, outdoor adventure is a natural component of the destination. The product is being developed naturally and will need the support of local and regional government to overcome issues related to permitting, land use, signage and possible incentives to attract the right events and new product. The destination should be positioned as a gateway to the high desert and southern deserts. The Greater Palm Springs CVB has begun this initiative with Visit California creating collaboration with the desert communities. The destination offers over 100 hiking trails, yet many do not have signage or restroom facilities. Many of the Phoenix / Scottsdale trails have restrooms, shaded areas to rest, water and areas for groups. The trails will be an attraction for both leisure and groups.

The proposed CV Link Development would help enhance the destination's outdoor and adventure product in many ways, such as: health and wellness offerings; bike rental docks; events, from traditional running or biking races to those that bring attention to "green" industries which also help tell the destination's story. Based on our research and discussion, CV Link can be a "game changer" for the destination, and we are hopeful it will become a reality and a catalyst to build upon.

Included in outdoor adventure is the recommendation to grow amateur sporting events and family sports. USA Field Hockey and Lacrosse at the Empire Polo Fields attract thousands of people and create compression similar to a large convention center. We recommend a deeper look into building facilities to attract more of these sporting events which will benefit local residents and the tourism industry.

Hotels and resorts in Greater Palm Springs should invest in chillers for their pools; perhaps the cities can assist the hotels with such a conversion. Summer is the largest opportunity for the cities to generate additional revenue and job creation. Water activities are critical to attracting families during the summer. Investment in lazy rivers, water slides and surf riders will need to be supported by cities in order for the hotel owners to find the financing. The destination could become known as the place to "Chill" which supports the current branding by the CVB.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health and wellness tourism is a growing global phenomenon and one of the destination's "authentic experiences." The DDP recommendations seek to leverage Greater Palm Springs' existing health and wellness offerings for visitors which are strongly tied to outdoor adventure experiences. Health



and Wellness is a pillar that all cities can embrace and collaborate upon. Our recommendation is to integrate health and wellness development into each city's long-term plans. New product development such as festivals, conferences, trails and bicycle friendly streets are a few ideas for consideration. If every city included health and wellness as a priority for product development in terms of attracting events, conferences and developing programs that benefit both the resident and the visitor, the destination brand would be strengthened and recognized globally. The destination plan outlines many different ideas and concepts. We encourage the cities and communities to work together with the CVB on expanding these ideas and incorporating them into their long-term strategies.

SALES AND MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

Collaborative efforts to market Greater Palm Springs between the CVB and city Partners has achieved great strides forward since this study began with an award-winning marketing campaign that united the unique message of each involved Partner with Greater Palm Springs' branding. This collaboration should continue and be enhanced in every aspect possible of marketing efforts, especially in respect to the duplication of marketing efforts. The nine cities compete against each other for tourism, but there is value in unifying the destination by creating a brand architecture that might follow a major hotel structure. Such a structure has a parent brand with several sub-brands that offer unique customer experiences.

The CVB has also made great strides in developing a solid, cohesive brand positioning plan that truly connects the nine destinations into one modern oasis. Confusion between Palm Springs and Greater Palm Springs is prevalent. The two entities have begun a successful cohesive approach in some marketing efforts. Future suggestions include finding areas in which to collaborate on strategies and campaigns to eliminate redundancies that create confusion, especially internationally. The synergies that exist between the CVB and each city for all print and digital media buys and promotions should be carried over to the travel trade and media relations areas, working with the key guiding principles that steer decision making. The guiding principles should be reviewed and agreed upon by the CVB and key stakeholders.

A more coordinated international strategy should be embraced by all destinations and coordinated by the CVB. The CVB's four international offices allow cities to leverage assets to grow international travel through collaboration. Focusing on fewer, more impactful feeder destinations could be more effective; a wildcard international destination, such as a South American country would be wise since seasons are opposite from ours.

The CVB should further the work begun by the CVB's new Film, Arts and Entertainment Manager to develop a valley-wide network to make Greater Palm Springs more competitive for location work, as well as streamline the permit process.

The Greater Palm Springs visitor experience and brand growth can be accelerated if the nine cities align their social media strategy through one key

channel—the Oasis brand. Aligning handles and hashtags that are unique to each city but unite them under one umbrella could create a more powerful social media strategy and reduce visitor confusion.

ARTS, CULTURE AND THE VISITOR INDUSTRY

The arts and cultural fabric of a destination support elements that help create first-time and repeat visitation. Recommendations are designed to provide a direct return in terms of room nights and encourage a long-term focus on art and culture, critical to the Greater Palm Springs brand marketing efforts. The



Greater Palm Springs CVB is currently investing in the Desert Arts Council, recognizing that a strong arts and cultural community is critical to developing a strong brand for the destination. It will be important for all cities to work together on supporting a strong creative economy and attracting world renowned artists. The Destination Development Plan provides many recommendations to grow the creative economy; a collective dive into this area by all nine cities is highly recommended.

ECO SUSTAINABILITY

A fast growing sector of the tourism industry is eco-tourism, which is about uniting conservation, communities and sustainable travel in one experience. These recommendations aim to highlight important opportunities to grow this industry which is underexposed to visitors and one that Greater Palm Springs could "own." Doing this will aid in overcoming the misperception that the region "overuses water." All nine cities and venues should pool their sustainable practices information and communicate their stories

of eco sustainability. CVAG is accumulating such information and will collaborate with the CVB and its Partners to make a comprehensive and on-going list that can be marketed.

The CVB should continue to support the Salton Sea assist with public awareness of the need to restore the Salton Sea through marketing the specialty license plate and the continued coordination with public agencies, including the Salton Sea Authority, the Salton Sea Action Committee, CVAG and others. Also, continue to promote events at the Sea that drive outdoor recreation possibilities.

EDUCATION

With the knowledge that continuing education plays a vital role in the local economy and that the lack of labor pool is a main obstacle in the hospitality industry, the CVB and city Partners should make education in the industry a top priority. The enhanced educational opportunities will provide hospitality workers/professionals in the community who are essential in maintaining high quality employment standards locally. The CVB and Partners should support the hospitality programs offered at CSUSB and College of the Desert. Growing both campuses will create multiple benefits: a younger work force for the hospitality industry, educated work forces to attract companies and an enhancement to the local night life. A program designed for the current worker to enhance their skill set is recommended, a positive visitor experience will be shared and return visits will be more often.

BOUTIQUE AND SMALL HOTELS

The small hotel, specifically the boutique hotel, can share many descriptors that underline the



Greater Palm Springs brand such as unique, trendy and aspirational. There is also an important tie-in between midcentury modern and many of the existing more intimate properties. Cooperation should be encouraged with broader destination marketing efforts. Creating specialized marketing materials on these smaller/boutique properties that go beyond basic information might include unique features such as in-house chefs or spas, showcasing the diverse hospitality options in Greater Palm Springs. A small hotel industry manager at the CVB could organize a presence at selected tradeshow and seminars domestically and internationally, as well as at local events. The CVB should encourage Partnerships between Boutique Hotels and BLLA. Higher-end boutique hotels should become members of the Boutique Lifestyle and Lodging Association (BLLA) which develops marketing strategies for this sector. The CVB should consider subsidizing this fee to encourage hotels to seek support from and participate with the CVB.

VACATION RENTALS

The growing inventory of vacation rental properties gives Greater Palm Springs a unique opportunity to tap into an \$85 billion international industry. As with boutique hotels, it will be important to create a value proposition tied to greater collaboration and secure participation in the TMD throughout the nine cities. There could be a Greater Palm Springs Vacation Rental Managers Association to unite this segment of the hospitality industry with membership fees that would fund marketing efforts. Since companies within the industry compete for visitors and property owners, it is important that the CVB take a leading role in forming the organization. This might involve the creation of a part-time or full-time role to assist in marketing vacation rental properties by promoting the industry, by attending key events, writing news releases and serving as a liaison. This person could also represent the Boutique Hotel sector. The CVB could offer marketing support for a new statewide or regional event for the vacation rental industry with educational seminars, an awards ceremony, etc. The tradeshow could garner media attention and expand to a national event. We should consider creating a regularly scheduled informal workshop that brings together representatives from the hospitality industry and the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs. Market opportunities, sales and marketing approaches, etc. could be discussed.

DESTINATION WAYFINDING AND ENTRY CONDITIONS

A lack of unifying signage and wayfinding is a challenge with attractions and event facilities spread throughout the destination. Uninviting entrance routes add to the wayfinding and entry challenges. Addressing these issues is a long-term effort, involving each city. A newly developed, remote programmed signage called “Points” could address various destination wayfinding and signage challenges, used permanently at higher traffic sites or temporarily at signature events.

CVAG is involved in signage and coordination with the agency is recommended. Digital billboards for each city could also display main attractions and events from I-10. Windmill up lighting could serve as a landmark “entrance” to Greater Palm Springs from the I-10 at night. Blending a unified component on destination signage, yet with a distinct element for each city, could further help tie the nine cities together.

Importantly, collaborating on signage for signature events valley-wide with banners or other signage will help unite and promote the destination. Signage in each city that directs visitors to hard-to-find attractions, such as hiking, is recommended; a “Did You Know?” campaign could steer visitors to unique attractions or difficult to locate amenities. The I-10 corridor does not reflect the same atmosphere as the destination and efforts should be made to beautify and add signage promoting attractions and key points around the valley. The Phoenix/Scottsdale highway system is a good comparison on use of hardscapes and brand integration.





1.0 INTRODUCTION

The battle for tomorrow's traveler is on. Consumer behavior is ever-changing, information and communication channels proliferate, and demographics shift. Destinations across the globe are forced to step up their tourism products and services like never before. From infrastructure developments to branding and positioning, the competitive landscape for destination marketing organizations (DMOs) is at a fever pitch. The Greater Palm Springs area is staking a claim and aiming to win more than the previous share of tomorrow's visitor. The race is on.

This project was initiated and funded by the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau (GPSCVB) with the goal of providing stakeholders throughout the Greater Palm Springs region with a Destination Development Plan (DDP) built from the ground up. Leadership at the CVB wanted to listen, not dictate, and made it clear that the plan was to be rooted firmly in research. One significant finding from the research was the positive momentum and spirit of collaboration that already exists between the Greater Palm Springs CVB and the nine cities within Greater Palm Springs. Collectively, there have been many successes. This provides an ideal foundation from which to establish a DDP that will accelerate current efforts to attract more visitors to Greater Palm Springs. In addition, the DDP will be able to leverage current assets, identify opportunities for development of improved infrastructure, and cultivate new assets that will benefit the entire Greater Palm Springs community.

The success of this plan will be dependent on each of the nine cities' ability to enhance, evolve and/or create the destination products and services in their geographic area. At the same time, each of the nine communities is encouraged to actively collaborate with the GPSCVB to leverage the marketing and brand momentum of the Greater Palm Springs visitor experience. Together you will re-define the region in the minds of the traveler.

This DDP is intended to be a framework by which

local funding priorities are made as each municipality develops their budgets and re-defines their individual tourism development plans. Each city is strongly encouraged to build their tourism products, services and visitor experiences while collaborating with the GPSCVB as they take the lead in marketing the destination.

As each municipality develops their budgets and re-defines their individual tourism development plans, this DDP is intended to be a framework by which local funding priorities are made. Each city is strongly encouraged to build their tourism products, services and visitor experiences while collaborating with the GPSCVB as they take the lead in marketing the destination.

The DDP is founded on the following objectives:

1. Create a priority list of specific product developments that will enable the destination to grow both the leisure and the meetings and convention business. Midweek business should be expanded.
2. Review existing attractions and events, and make recommendations for how the CVB and local municipalities can assist these attractions and events by preserving, protecting, and growing their business.
3. Review and identify how the destination can create programs and events to drive leisure demand for the summer and fall period.
4. Review, analyze, and make recommendations for how the destination can capture greater market share from international segments.
5. Provide comparisons and best practices with similar destinations that were able to bring multiple cities together. Show how these destinations united to grow tourism with an emphasis on creating new jobs, growing the tax base, and adding to the attractiveness model of the Greater Palm Springs region.
6. Evaluate current air service and provide recommendations for how the region can collaborate on expanding air service. Provide comparisons and best practices with similar destinations that have been successful at increasing air service.

The role of sales and marketing for any destination or DMO is an ever-evolving effort. DMOs must continuously plan strategies to gain market share of tourism, increase hotel bookings, and drive exposure to new markets. The DMO must also manage the growing expectations of local hoteliers, attractions, politicians, and other hospitality and business leaders.

Throughout this project, it became apparent that Greater Palm Springs CVB is a well-positioned, professional, and very accomplished organization. The sales and marketing efforts are well-tuned and focused. Meeting planner focus groups and surveys clearly show that CVB leadership has helped reinvigorate Greater Palm Springs as a favorable meeting destination. Through expansive, aggressive and targeted strategies, the CVB has been a leading innovator for the community in attracting domestic, international, and group visitor segments. The CVB has brought in a plethora of new direct spending which has favorably impacted the region economically.

The Greater Palm Springs brand is vast and unique, and the CVB sales and marketing teams have been outstanding at introducing the destination's many faces to a variety of travel markets. These include golf, LGBT, family, romance, wellness, tennis, outdoor adventure, and convention visitor segments. Furthermore, the CVB has been heavily involved with several critical visitor industry developments in Greater Palm Springs. These include the highly successful "Summer Chill" co-promotional effort, immensely beneficial air service agreements with American Airlines, West Jet, and JetBlue, and the development of a modernized CVB website.

Since the ultimate goal is to drive even more demand and more visitors from all segments, it is recommended that the Greater Palm Springs community draw upon the current momentum. The CVB's current accomplishments will be the base from which to further enhance strategies with the consideration and integration of various recommendations within this DDP. This report will clarify the reasons for these recommendations and how they will benefit the Greater Palm Springs CVB.

The challenges of marketing a region versus a single destination are complex, given the unique character of each city. A fundamental strategy for the Greater Palm Springs community is to consolidate sales and marketing efforts. Collaboration bolsters efforts of the CVB and reduces redundancies. The CVB

could be positioned to be the overarching voice on behalf of the region. To do this, the CVB needs the collective commitment from all cities so there can be a unifying entity for sales and marketing. All communities within Greater Palm Springs would join to be marketed more effectively – especially on the national and international scale. While this may seem simple in theory, it is not. Almost every city in Greater Palm Springs has its own "brand," marketing efforts, and resources to fund those initiatives. The assets within each city vary, and the awareness/appeal to the tourism market varies significantly. So how does the CVB fully promote its role as a regional DMO and be the go-to-market voice on behalf of Greater Palm Springs? How can the CVB continue to provide opportunities for individual cities to market their own assets as the entire destination grows?

The proposed solutions are specifically designed to work within the Greater Palm Springs destination. Drawing upon case studies of similar efforts in other destinations provided a place to start. However, the main source of information that built the foundation from which the recommendations grew was primary and secondary research. This study was conducted in each of the nine cities that make up the Greater Palm Springs region. The research ranged from mayors and city managers, to the concierge community and visitors enjoying the destination. This evidence-based approach will also play an essential role in defining a common vision for growth. It provides a plan for success that will not only grow tourism, but contribute significantly to Greater Palm Springs' economic and social development.

Before solutions are presented, however, it is important that all stakeholders are aware of the **10-Year Tourism Destination Goal (10-Year TDG)** set for the destination. The DDP is the blueprint to reach that goal, and the community plays a crucial role in making the DDP come to fruition.

Next, seeing where Greater Palm Springs is today in terms of its current assets, attributes, competitive advantages, and challenges will help focus the solutions for consideration. Finally, key research and findings create a snapshot of the current Greater Palm Springs visitor. This serves as a demographic "starting point" for developing strategies that will attract different segments to the destination, while keeping repeat visitors coming back.

To that end, the Greater Palm Springs Destination

Development Plan is structured as follows:

- 10-Year Tourist Destination Goal (TDG) and the Role of the Community
- Where Greater Palm Springs is Today
- Key Research and Findings
- Solutions for Consideration
- Appendix

1.1 THE 10-YEAR VISITOR DESTINATION GOAL

The group meetings and travel industry market will continue to be important segments for Greater Palm Springs. Of course, the true test of the direct sales effort will continue to be REVPAR growth and economic impact of the tourism sector. Today, there are 12.2 million visitors per year to Greater Palm Springs. What will that number be in 5 years? In 10 years? In 20 years? We propose becoming bolder with targets, ambitions, and efforts.

What if the total market potential from the group and travel industry markets was defined? Success could be measured in three, five, and ten-year increments. This “ideal state” would be defined with the input from all key stakeholders to include city managers, hotels, and attractions towards a goal for 2026. This would be defined as a 10-Year TDG. The strategy would focus Greater Palm Springs collective efforts and zero in on joint success. For example, it would need to demonstrate to each city and key stakeholder how REVPAR performance in one area of the valley affects the overall REVPAR for the entire Greater Palm Springs area.

The process of establishing and agreeing on a 10-Year TDG goal would lay the groundwork for consensus on a common goal. The region would work together. There would be full consensus on how success is defined for the visitor industry in Greater Palm Springs. Progress will be measured with collective accomplishments and key milestones. This will drive collaboration and cooperation among the cities and key stakeholders. The 10-Year TDG is a call to action for the entire community of cities making up Greater Palm Springs. While the goal is to increase the number of visitors, the benefits to the community are the ultimate driver of the 10-Year TDG’s success. Over time, increased visitation will: 1) positively

impact the economy, 2) increase the number and caliber of jobs, and 3) add to the quality of life of the nearly 500,000 residents that call Greater Palm Springs home.

Using this DDP as a foundation from which to further align and advance awareness and demand of the destination, the role and commitment of the community—mayors, council members, hoteliers, restaurateurs, businesses, investors, schools—is paramount to making this vision a reality.

In a recent article, The Greater Miami CVB announced record-breaking travel and tourism numbers, with a 5.4% increase in over-night visitors to Miami and its beaches during a recent 12-month period (Sept. 2014–Aug. 2015). Setting a goal using this percentage of growth as a metric, by 2026 Greater Palm Springs could increase its current 12.2 million combined day and overnight visitors to a



10-Year TDG of 16 million. There is also tremendous growth potential in the overnight visitor segment, currently at 5.5 million.

1.2 THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

A destination development plan must consider the assets, infrastructure, opportunities, and challenges of the physical destination itself. However, one critical variable that defines the success of the plan is the level of engagement and commitment of the community. As noted, this will be contingent on nine cities coming together as one destination. This is a somewhat challenging proposition as each city has its own unique attributes and value. Some cities, like Palm Springs, have great brand equity. They are a destination unto themselves and have a history of success in the tourism marketplace. However, existing infrastructure and marketing efforts are already in place to leverage Greater Palm Springs as a single destination. Tourists and visitors explore and enjoy many festivals, attractions, and activities that stretch beyond the city proper. The same is true of other cities in the valley. A visitor in Indian Wells may enjoy the dining and shopping in Palm Springs. The impact of tourists attending

the Coachella Music and Arts Festival stretches throughout the entire valley. Accommodations, restaurants, transportation, etc. are utilized across the geographic area. This synergistic relationship between and among the nine cities already exists to some degree. It is the foundation from which a destination can focus on growth of the tourism market. Given the incredibly diverse assets of all nine cities, this DDP is designed to integrate the unique qualities of each. The intent is to capitalize on the opportunities to leverage them collectively in innovative and dynamic ways. By identifying opportunities to enhance or add new assets, a framework will be provided from which Greater Palm Springs can have a stronger competitive advantage in the tourism marketplace.

There are several key questions that the Destination Community needs to consider collectively to maximize the benefits of the Destination Development Plan throughout Greater Palm Springs:

1. Should Greater Palm Springs be a year-round or seasonal destination?
2. Is there a commitment from all nine cities to come together as one destination? A go-to-market single-mindedness that will push beyond their individual marketing efforts?
3. Is there a willingness to invest in infrastructure to ensure Greater Palm Springs not only remains competitive, but becomes a leading destination into the future?
4. How can the community build on the collaborative momentum and continue to support the CVB as the primary marketing voice on behalf of Greater Palm Springs?

This plan is intended to be a framework for the destination over the next 10 years.

The economy, technology, changing demographics, and consumer behavior will continue to evolve as well. This plan is intended to be flexible, and designed to meet the changing needs of the destination and the community it serves.



2.0 WHERE IS GREATER PALM SPRINGS TODAY?

The Greater Palm Springs destination is world-class. It attracts visitors domestically and internationally, holds some of the largest special events in North America, offers high-end resorts and boutique hotels; and at the same time, is a unique and authentic place.

The arts and culture community is emerging. Downtown Palm Springs has been largely reinvented, highlighting midcentury modern architecture. The LGBT community and the younger demographic segments are growing.

Against this backdrop, the DDP seeks to create a coordinated framework. Cities and stakeholders throughout the destination would work together to elevate the destination to respond to continual demographic changes in the visitor base. Together, they would enhance the product and positioning of the destination for this future market.

In this section, a jumping-off point is created. Past and current conditions of the destination are defined and described. These include the following:

- Attractions, hospitality inventory, events and other assets that drive and accommodate visitation to the destination.
- A summary of the various challenges currently facing Greater Palm Springs. The product and reputation are both presented, drawing on extensive in-market interviews, customer intercept research, and surveys of local visitor industry personnel.
- Statistics that describe existing Greater Palm Springs visitation such as place of visitor origin, seasonality patterns, and day of week data.
- A summary of current visitation levels, room night generation, and visitor characteristics.

2.1 EXISTING DESTINATION ASSETS

Greater Palm Springs stretches from the San Bernardino Mountains to the north shore of the Salton Sea. Historically it has been a loosely affiliated network of the nine cities—Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, Indio, La Quinta, Coachella,

Cathedral City, Palm Desert, Desert Hot Springs, and Indian Wells. The destination's scenery spans a wide spectrum, from its extreme mountainous and desert terrain, to its lush, vibrant palm trees and gardens. Its resorts and boutique hotels boast iconic mid-century architecture as well as world-class spas and other services. With year-round warmth and an upscale reputation, Greater Palm Springs has developed into a popular hub for both retirees and foreigners with seasonal second homes. This section describes the wide-ranging appeal of these and many other valley features.

2.1.1 ATTRIBUTES

Within Greater Palm Springs, visitors and residents can experience an extensive array of festivals, activities, attractions, culture, and other entertainment. The broad appeal encompasses attractions for any gender, age group, or social class. This flexible identity is a fairly recent development. Greater Palm Springs has been slowly shedding its image as being exclusively a retirement/relaxation getaway. This section identifies the key components that serve as drivers of domestic, international, and group/convention visitation to the Greater Palm Springs region.

Festivals

The magnitude and variety of event activity that occurs in Greater Palm Springs is second to none for a community of its size. Each event represents distinct opportunities to showcase, broadcast, and introduce the destination to cultural segments from around the world. A brief summary of these valuable assets are listed below.

- **Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival** – Presented by Goldenvoice, Coachella is a major concert series over two weekends that attracts an estimated 198,000 attendees to Indio. The Festival features multiple headlining acts from a variety of genres, including pop, hip hop, rock, and alternative. It has grown into one of the biggest music festivals in the United States.
- **Stagecoach Festival** – A three-day country music festival that started in 2007, and annually draws approximately 75,000 attendees per day. Like Coachella, the event is presented by Goldenvoice.

- **La Quinta Arts Festival** – Celebrated high-end fine arts festival showcasing top artistic talent from around the region. Hosted by the La Quinta Arts Foundation, it draws around 25,000 attendees per day. The event has received national recognition for the quality of its attending artists, as well as the quality of artwork available for purchase. The Festival will be celebrating its 34th year in 2016 at La Quinta Civic Park.
- **Palm Springs International Film Festival** – Twelve-day film festival that has experienced rapid growth over the past decade, drawing nearly 150,000 people to Palm Springs. The event features screenings of over 200 films from 60 different countries. The Festival's centerpiece, the Award's Gala, has drawn some of the world's most famous actors to Downtown Palm Springs, including Julianne Moore, Robert Duvall, and Benedict Cumberbatch.
- **Palm Springs International Shortfest** - This four-day fest is held under the umbrella of the International Film Festival. It was recently hailed by USA Today as the best U.S. film festival for short films and is one of the most acclaimed festivals in the world for short films. This festival is providing a launching pad for emerging filmmakers. The program includes seminars, panel discussions, roundtables, and master classes staged free of charge for attending filmmakers. The 3,000-title library available to film buyers is the only short film market in North America.
- **Modernism Week** – This ten-day event attracts just over 59,500 design and architecture enthusiasts to the destination. An annual celebration of the area's world-famous midcentury architecture, the event also showcases the culture and fashion of the time. It features over 250 associated events such as walking and biking tours, classic car shows, Signature Home Shows, the Modernism Show & Sale, and the Fall Preview.
- **BNP Paribas Open** – Taking place at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, the BNP is the largest professional combined ATP and WTA Tour Tennis Tournament in the world. It attracts more than 500,000 attendees over the event's two weeks.

- **CareerBuilder Challenge Golf Tournament** – Formerly known as the Bob Hope Classic, then as the Humana Challenge, the now-named CareerBuilder Challenge is an 80,000-attendee golf tournament. It has been utilizing golf courses in Greater Palm Springs since 1960.
- **The ANA Inspiration** - Still sometimes referred to as the Dinah Shore) The ANA is one of the five major championships of professional women's golf. An event of the LPGA Tour, it is held yearly at the Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage, California.

As described, these and other Greater Palm Springs events have a delightfully broad range of appeal. Events such as Coachella and Stagecoach Festival typically draw younger music fans. Modernism Week and La Quinta Arts Festival appeal to a distinctly different demographic. The major sporting events held in the destination create opportunities to broadcast nationally the tennis and golf matches, which also showcase the destination. This concept can be taken further by Greater Palm Springs, as recommended later in the DDP.

Attractions

Major attractions of the nine cities include:

- **The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway** - Completed in 1963, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway carries passengers from Valley Station (elevation 2,643 feet) to Mountain Station near the top of San Jacinto Peak (elevation 8,516 feet). It is the largest rotating aerial tramway in the world, taking 12.5 minutes to cross 2.5 miles of Chino Canyon. Nearly 18 million people have made the trek, including more than 537,000 in 2014.
- **The Palm Springs Air Museum** – Opened in 1996, this non-profit history museum is aimed at educating the public about the role the Air Force has played in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The museum includes one of the world's largest collections of flying World War II warplanes, many of which were constructed in Southern California and are still in flyable condition. The museum attracts nearly 100,000 visitors per year.
- **The Living Desert** – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens, located in both Palm Desert and Indian Wells, is a public desert botanical garden and zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos and

Aquariums. The Living Desert spans 1,800 acres, of which 1,000 is maintained in its natural setting. There are 150 different species of animals, and the attraction brings in 385,000 visitors annually. According to the 2014 Annual Report, the estimated regional economic impact of The Living Desert was \$56 million. There is a master plan in the works that will enhance the park considerably, which will be a significant addition to the Greater Palm Springs community of tourist attractions.

- **Joshua Tree National Park** - Joshua Tree National Park, located near Twentynine Palms, California, spans nearly 800,000 acres of two distinct different desert ecosystems - the Mojave Desert and the Colorado Desert. The park became a national monument in 1936, and then a national park in 1994. It is named for the iconic Joshua trees, native to the park and revered by local Native American tribes for their material and wellness uses. In 2014, 1.6 million people visited Joshua Tree National Park, and in 2013, Joshua Tree supported 770 local jobs, generating \$62,929,900 in economic impact to the area.
- **Sand to Snow National Monument** - The recently approved Sand to Snow National Monument encompasses 154,000 acres, tying together diverse geography and climate ranging from the Sonoran Desert to the San Bernardino Mountains. This diversity can be reflective of the incredibly unique and authentic visitor offerings available in the Coachella Valley area. The land protected by the monument includes Native American cultural and historical sites, uniquely diverse botany, and opportunities for outdoor adventure including horseback riding, hiking, fishing, cross country skiing and bird watching.
- **The Palm Springs Art Museum** - The Art Museum features three different locations, two in Palm Springs and one in Palm Desert. The Palm Springs location began as the Palm Springs Desert Museum in 1938. A new, modern, 10,000-square-foot location was built in 1958 near downtown Palm Springs. It features contemporary art, sculpture, studio art glass, architecture archives, and natural science exhibitions, including a 24,000-item permanent



collection. The 437-seat Annenberg Theater was added in 1962, and presents internationally-known performers and artists in music, dance, and theater. In 2012, the museum opened a satellite location in Palm Desert which hosts 16,000 visitors annually. In 2014, the museum debuted the Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, in downtown Palm Springs as the hub of architecture and design for the museum. In 2014, the Palm Springs Art Museum attracted 62,000 visitors. The current endowment at the museum is \$15.5 million, but in the near future is projected to reach \$24 million.

- **Cabot's Pueblo Museum** - Cabot's Pueblo Museum, now included on the National Register of Historic Places, is a 5,000-square-foot pueblo structure that is visited by more than 10,000 people each year. Built by architect and former tenant, Cabot Yerxa, it was constructed with abandoned cabins and adobe bricks made by Yerxa. Visitors are given tours of the building's four stories, which contain artwork and exhibits. The Museum is a crucial part of the history of Desert Hot Springs and the entire valley, and was

built as a tribute to the Hopi Native Americans.

- **The McCallum Theatre** - The McCallum Theatre is a 1,127-seat theater and concert venue at the College of the Desert's campus in Palm Desert. After 10 years and \$22 million of development, the theater opened in January 1988. With an annual attendance of 175,000 people, the performing arts center has hosted such nationally televised events as performances by George Burns and Johnny Cash, as well as earlier events hosted by Elizabeth Taylor and Oprah Winfrey. As a not-for-profit center, McCallum draws on a team of 250+ volunteer ambassadors who serve as ushers during each event.
- **The Empire Polo Grounds** - Established in 1987 and featuring 12 grass polo fields, the Polo Grounds receives approximately 24,000 polo spectators per year. Empire is also the host site for both the Coachella and Stagecoach Music Festivals. Management has expressed a desire to further capitalize on its excellence as an entertainment venue. There is potential to add a regular summer and/or fall concert series.
- **BMW Performance Center West at the Thermal Club** - Recently opened attraction in nearby Thermal, California, the BMW Performance Center offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity to take professional high-speed driving lessons. The Center is open to the public and geared toward visiting corporate groups. Management expects to attract 15,000 visitors per year from that corporate segment, and hopes to add an additional track within five years.
- **The Mineral Springs of Desert Hot Springs** Greater Palm Springs is one of the top destinations in California with natural hot mineral waters. These waters have helped develop Greater Palm Springs's reputation as a destination for relaxation and rejuvenation due to their reputation for natural healing. Desert Hot Springs features approximately 20 boutique hot springs resorts, as well as an annual tour of the hot springs spas and hotels, and attracts thousands of visitors every year.
- **Palm Springs Convention Center** - The Palm Springs Convention Center opened in 1974. The Center underwent a massive \$32 million renovation and expansion in 2015. The PSCC

offers approximately 92,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space, a 20,000-square-foot ballroom, and just under 15,000 square feet of meeting space. The Center also connects to the 410-room Renaissance Hotel. Recent success for the venue includes increasing from 84 events in 2010 to 113 events in 2014, and an increase from 154,300 attendees in 2010 to 221,000 in the same time period.

Outdoor Adventure and Experiences

One of Greater Palm Springs' most unique assets is its variety of geographic terrain and the beauty of its natural attractions. Positioning these existing assets can help market Greater Palm Springs as a one-of-a-kind outdoor and adventure destination. Potentially, it could attract a younger and more active demographic and at the same time encourage longer stays. Activities and attractions within the destination that fall under the category of "outdoor and adventure" can range from exhilarating such as mountain biking, the BMW Performance Center at the Thermal Club Raceway, and ATV tours; to more relaxed and leisurely activities that include bike tours, hiking through Joshua Tree National Park, and riding the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

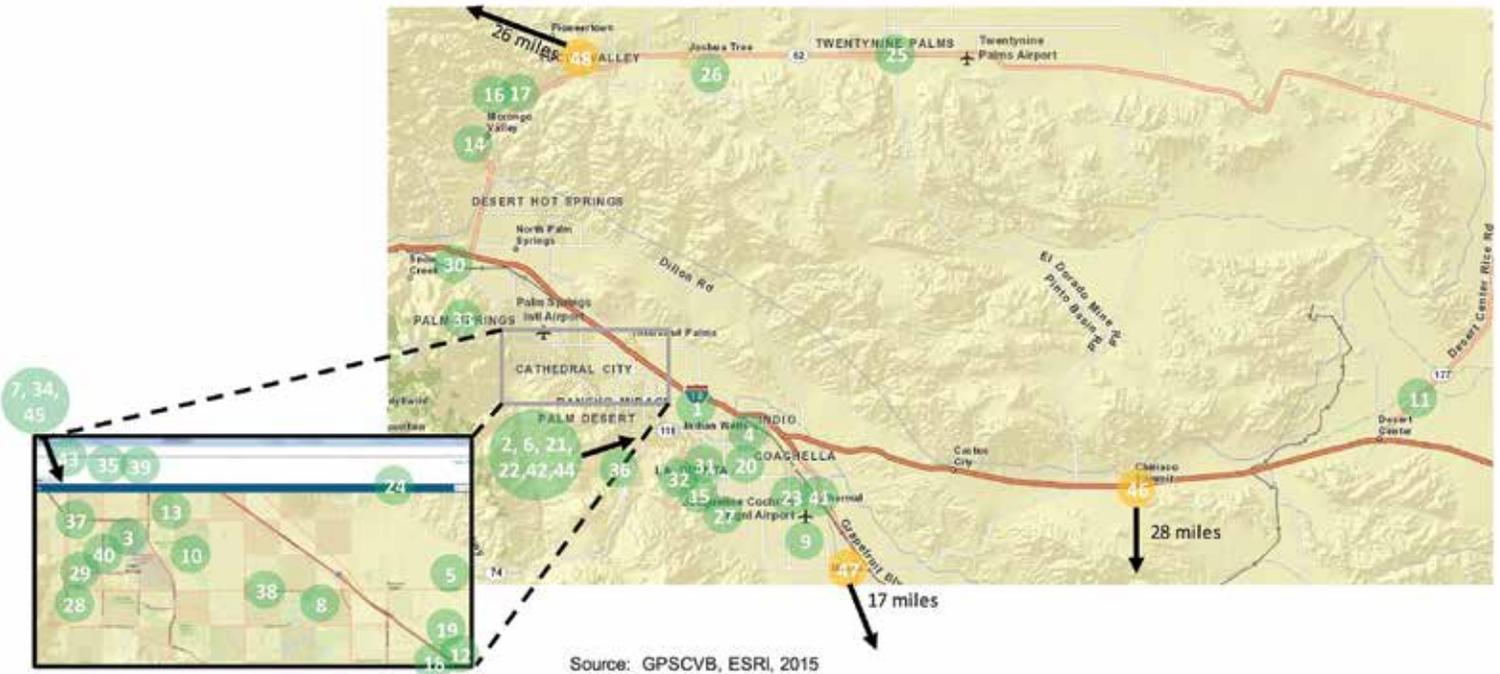
A listing of Greater Palm Springs' major outdoor amenities is illustrated in the following map on the adjacent page.

Outdoor attractions and experiences are heavily concentrated within Palm Springs, Palm Desert, and La Quinta. However, there is also a notable array of outdoor activities located in other areas of the Greater Palm Springs area. Just outside of the valley are sites such as Joshua Tree National Park, Salton Sea, and Idyllwild.

As presented in the adjacent map, Greater Palm Springs offers a marvelous variety of opportunities to enjoy its unique outdoor landscape, including:

- **Hiking** - The Coachella Valley is known for having excellent hiking trails with breathtaking scenery. Highly-rated trail experiences include the Indian Canyon Trails, the Bear Creek Canyon Trail, and the trails found in nearby Joshua Tree National Park. Hiking is perceived as a seasonal activity in Greater Palm Springs due to the harsh summer months. However, visitors can ride the Tramway and hike higher and cooler elevations atop San Jacinto or nearby Idyllwild.

Exhibit 1 Outdoor and Adventure Attractions of Greater Palm Springs



Key Activity

1	Adventure Hummer Tours
2	Andreas Canyon Trail
3	Araby Trail
4	ATV Experience
5	Balloons Above
6	Big Wheel Tours
7	Bike Palm Springs Rentals & Tours
8	Blixseth Mountain Park
9	BMW Performance Center West At The Thermal Club
10	Celebrity Tours
11	Chuckwalla Valley Raceway
12	Coachella Valley Hiking Club
13	Coachella Valley Motorcycle Training
14	Cottonwood Canyon Ranch
15	Covered Wagon Tours Inc
16	Coyote Ridge Stable
17	Crazy Horse Ranch
18	Desert Adventures Eco-Tours & Events
19	Eaglerider Motorcycle Rental at JW Marriot Desert Springs Resort & Spa
20	Empire Polo Club & Event Facility
21	Funseekers
22	Garganoptics Observatory
23	Hits, Inc.

Key Activity

24	Ivey Ranch Equestrian Center
25	Joshua Tree National Park
26	Joshua Tree Rock Climbing School
27	Lake Cahuilla Recreation Area
28	Maynard Mine Trail
29	Murray/Palm/Andreas Canyon Trails in Indian Canyons
30	Offroad Rentals
31	Old Town La Quinta Bike Rentals
32	Old Town Peddler (Beach Cruiser Bike and Hybrid Bike Rental)
33	Palm Springs Aerial Tram
34	Palm Springs Bike Rentals
35	Palm Springs Windmill Tours
36	Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument
37	Scout Palm Springs @ Ace Hotel
38	Sky Watcher Stargazing Tours
39	Skyline Trail
40	Smoke Tree Stables
41	Stevens ATV Rentals
42	The Living Desert
43	Trail Discovery Desert Safari Outdoor Guide Service
44	Tri-A-Bike
45	Windmill Tour

Major Attractions Nearby

Key	Activity
46	Salton Sea Recreational Area
47	Thermal Club Raceway
48	Big Bear Ski Resort

- **Cycling** – The Greater Palm Springs area features several cycling rental companies so visitors can enjoy leisurely rides through the scenic valley. These include Big Wheel Tours, Old Town Peddler, Palm Springs Bike Rentals, and Old Town La Quinta Bike Rentals. Notably, Sunline Transit Agency is currently working toward developing a public bike-share program

to help ease travel to and between the area's bus stops. The Coachella Valley Association of Governments has proposed the CV Link, a unique bike and electric vehicle trail that would run along the spine of the valley.

- **ATV/Off Road Recreation** – The southern region of the Coachella Valley features a multitude of ATV and mountain biking trails and tours. This

represents a definite prospect to cultivate more visits to the areas of Indio, La Quinta, and Coachella.

- **Cross Country and Alpine Skiing/Snowshoeing** – Visitors can enjoy cold weather leisure activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing atop the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. More “extreme” opportunities for alpine skiing are available just under two hours away at Big Bear Ski Resort.
- **Balloon/Plane Tours** – Companies such as Balloons Above, Beeline Airways, Palm Springs Plane Rides, HAVNFun Hot Air Balloons, and Magical Adventure Balloon Rides offer opportunities to view the beauty of the Coachella Valley from the sky. Cathedral City’s Hot Air Balloon Festival is also one of the destination’s distinct events.

Each activity represents opportunities for Greater Palm Springs to define more broadly its product as an outdoor-oriented combined destination. This can aid in better unification of the nine cities. By packaging their diverse assets, the cities can help more travelers experience the beauty of Greater Palm Springs.

2.1.2 LODGING INFRASTRUCTURE

There are more than 18,700 hotel rooms in Greater Palm Springs with varying inventory levels located throughout the nine cities (via VisitGreaterPalmSprings.com).

- Desert Hot Springs – 705 total hotel rooms
- Palm Springs – 6,059 total hotel rooms
- Cathedral City – 764 total hotel rooms
- Rancho Mirage – 2,167 total hotel rooms
- Palm Desert – 4,828 total hotel rooms
- Indian Wells – 1,502 total hotel rooms
- La Quinta – 1,123 total hotel rooms
- Indio – 1,347 total hotel rooms

There are a few high-end resort properties within Greater Palm Springs that feature 800 or more sleeping rooms. Moreover, the destination’s array of small and boutique hotel properties (defined by the CVB as properties with less than fifty hotel rooms) is a unique key feature.

Approximately 60 such properties are spread across

the nine cities. Packaging and leveraging this diverse inventory could be difficult. However, these properties can provide a very trendy and unique experience at an upscale level. This can appeal to the demographic of many visitors to the destination, and many of the valley’s mineral spas are located in these small hotels in Desert Hot Springs.

Furthermore, Greater Palm Springs also currently offers an inventory of approximately 7,800 registered vacation rental properties. Summaries of this asset’s contributions to the TOT and the direct spending that the market generates include:

TOT from VR in the Greater Palm Springs	\$6.8 million (up from 5.1 million in 2011)
Direct Spending from VR’s	\$72.2 million during 2013

The short-term vacation rental market has become an integral part of Greater Palm Springs’ overall tourism industry. It is on the rise as popularity for travel in the region increases and more condos and homes are being made available. Even during the summer months, business is steady. The Coachella Valley Realtors Association is seeing foreign investment in property from Canada, China, and India. Inventory was down in 2014, but the median price is on the rise, and the market was projected to improve in 2015-16.

Greater Palm Springs numbers for the vacation rental market are following the national trends and indicate significant economic opportunity:

- Vacation home sales grew significantly in 2013,





with a 30 percent growth in sales from 2012, and a 47 percent growth since 2011. 717,000 vacation homes were purchased in 2014, the most since 2006 before sharp declines in the real estate market took effect.

- Nearly a quarter of vacation homes were purchased with the intent to rent out to others.
- The median sales price rose from \$150,000 in 2012 to \$168,700 in 2013 (a 12.5 percent increase).
- The appeal seems to be following travelers' trending desire for unique experiences. Douglas Quinby is a leisure travel analyst at the research firm PhocusWright. He compares staying in a brand-name hotel chain to Starbucks, "where you know what the coffee is going to taste like when you get there." Staying at a vacation rental, he said, is akin to "stumbling upon that independent coffee joint that's different and enhances your experience."

An array of Greater Palm Springs' product and infrastructure features encompass the area's lodging offerings and add to its opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure. The nine cities make up a region that, depending on who is being asked, evokes associations with midcentury fashion, progressive artistic culture, outdoor recreation and adventure,



one-of-a-kind events and festivals, and world-class resorts and spas. This variety of assets drives many of the recommendations described later in the DDP.

2.2 EXISTING DESTINATION CHALLENGES

Every destination has obstacles and imperfections that impede on the brands, visitors' experiences, and even local quality of life. Greater Palm Springs is no different. It is critical that the DDP take into consideration destination challenges. In some cases, the DDP should seek to eliminate them, or in other cases, simply acknowledge the challenge. The DDP can then begin finding ways to overcome the negative effects on visitation.

Currently, there are several broad “Pain Points” impacting the leisure and group traveler, including the following:

- Limited direct air service, particularly during the summer.
- Difficult travel within the Greater Palm Springs.
- Destination perceptions that don’t reflect the existing diversity of visitor amenities.
- Limited hotel inventory near the Palm Springs Convention Center.
- Signage and wayfinding challenges.
- Greater Palm Springs’s reputation for being expensive.

The research conducted as part of the DDP process is designed in part to explore these and other challenges. The impact on visitation is assessed, and ways to mitigate them are defined. A brief assessment of destination challenges is important while considering future product and policy initiatives and is described below.

Transportation and Accessibility

Local stakeholders and travelers alike have sometimes criticized the condition of key entry points into the destination. This includes taxi cab costs, lack of directional signage, and

lack of in-market transportation options. The challenge of getting around can make it more difficult to experience all nine of the destination’s cities fully, which works against creating a united Oasis.

A survey of meeting planners indicates that transportation to and within the Greater Palm Springs is a considerable “headwind.” Ninety-one percent of meeting planners rank this feature as important in a meeting destination. Only 61 percent indicate that Greater Palm Springs adequately provides this feature. Data from research efforts indicates that taxi service is often seen as too expensive and inconvenient.

Wayfinding

Greater Palm Springs’ lack of directional signage and the absence of landmark identifiers are cited by industry stakeholders as obstacles to the overall visitor experience. It impedes the ability of visitors to experience assets fully throughout the nine cities. Also, many survey respondents and focus group members point out the long distance that drivers must travel from I-10 into the heart of each the nine cities. This can make the destination less accessible, particularly with the current quality of directional signage.

Convention/Hotel/Entertainment Density

The Palm Springs Convention Center is the largest such space in the market. It combines with various hotel properties also with limited large event space to accommodate conventions and conferences throughout Greater Palm



Springs. The Convention Center is located several blocks outside the core of downtown Palm Springs. It does not currently offer the convenience of walkability from facility to hotel to entertainment that meeting planners are increasingly seeking. Adjacent/attached hotel inventory additions, as well as greater commercial density between the Center and downtown would help increase market share.

9-City Differences

The nine resort cities vary in demographics and contain a cultural diversity that can clearly be an advantage. They provide an uncommon diversity of amenities and assets for the visitor. These differences can also create a tension in the form of an “up-valley vs. down-valley” dynamic. Each city represents itself in diverse ways. This is natural as each has its unique culture. Differing levels of resources for developing their city’s image is also an issue. Furthermore, there is wide variation in the Coachella Valley’s incomes and community assets.

Organizations such as the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP), and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), as well as the extensive efforts of the Greater Palm Springs CVB, have worked to lessen challenging aspects associated with wide swings in income and resources. A goal for the DDP is to define initiatives that can allow the communities within the destination to jointly participate in important visitor-generating and community development initiatives.

Limited Corporate Base

With just over 15,000 business located across the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs, the area currently lacks economic infrastructure to support significant corporate transient business. Limited air service also presents a challenge for supporting major industry. While organizations such as CVEP are working to increase corporate base in key industry sectors, the leisure and group sectors will continue to represent the majority of destination visitation.

Limited Higher Education Infrastructure

Greater Palm Springs currently offers a community college (College of the Desert), and California State San Bernardino Palm Desert campus. However, the destination does not currently have a large university influence. Such an influence tends to support start-up companies and help retain graduates within the market. This can impact start-up business potential,

and opportunities for students to remain in Greater Palm Springs post- graduation. Opportunities to integrate the existing educational institutions into the fabric of the visitor industry are discussed later in the recommendations section.

- *“It’s a tough talent pool. I mean, it’s not that there aren’t workers, but the quality of the worker is not great. I’m talking with my team about why that’s the case. There’s no university here, just a college. So anybody that wants to aspire to something greater is going to leave and whether they come back or not is another question, because what do you come back to. So coming back to the pool of people you hire. So the community that is here, the kids that you want that are going to be that bright light in our business, generally leave, or the people that stay are going to community college or don’t go to college. So your level of talent changes. There’s a very average level of expectations here.”*

The Heat

Not surprisingly, Greater Palm Springs’ heat was the second most frequently cited weakness by interviewed travel writers. During the summer months, temperatures can frequently exceed 105° Fahrenheit, a significant deterrent to experiencing outdoor attractions while in the area. As mentioned throughout the DDP, the heat reduces visitation during the summer and early fall periods. Active efforts to address this challenge and increase summer business include the recent “Chill Pass” and its various supporting marketing campaigns. This type of initiative should be repeated into the future, and broad strategies to package indoor and/or relaxation assets should be considered by each of the nine cities. Visitors need to know that they can enjoy the “pool party” atmosphere and other indoor/outdoor experiences throughout the Greater Palm Springs destination year-round.

Salton Sea

Interestingly, the Salton Sea can be described as an asset to the destination’s product offering, but a challenge to its brand. As will be described later, plans are in place to showcase the Sea better, as it is the largest body of water in California. Travel writers and concierges alike indicate that visitors do not think highly of the Sea. There is an inaccurate perception that it is polluted, and even unsafe for swimming. The true cause of the odor and salty content are from

natural factors. The Sea is quite safe for swimming.

Many of the DDP's recommendations have themes tied to "eco" experiences. Growing the local sustainable energies industry is a goal, as well as supporting outdoor activities, and health and wellness initiatives. Each of these could serve to leverage outdoor and environment assets and increase overall visitation. The Salton Sea's inaccurate and negative reputation represents a potential threat to these benefits.

Water Conservation

With recent water conservation controversy and issues in California, Greater Palm Springs faces some challenges with its reputation. The two Coachella Valley water agencies recently failed to meet the state-mandated water conservation. Issues related to golf course and resort water needs, development of housing, landscaping, and other consumption issues could represent a long-term challenge to the destination.

- "...the drought has been a huge issue. It's driven a lot of conversation and it touches everything from do we have too many golf courses, how should we develop for housing, how are we accounting for that, and how do we modify habits, [such as] landscaping currently so that we could be more sustainable for the future. It's been an issue that the communities really come together around, so it's generated a lot of discussion."

3.0 THE GREATER PALM SPRINGS VISITOR DEFINED

A Visitor Intercept Survey was administered at popular leisure locations throughout Greater Palm Springs. Based on data collected through this in-depth questionnaire, the following leisure-oriented findings were generated.

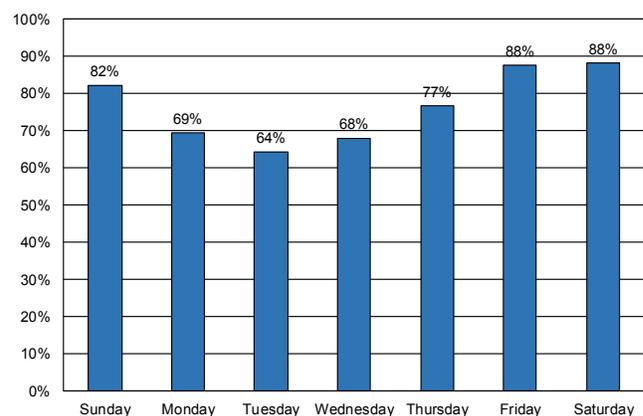
- Nearly 53 percent of responding visitors are 55 or older, and 71 percent are 45 or older.
- Over 31 percent of all visitors are retired.
- Forty-three percent of all respondents stated that they were taking a general vacation, while 29 percent said they were on a quick leisure trip. Nine percent were visiting friends or relatives, and seven percent were in Greater Palm Springs

for golf or other outdoor recreation.

- Seventy-nine percent represent domestic visitation, with 52 percent of that figure representing in-state visitation from other parts of California. Twenty-one percent come from foreign countries. Nearly 72 percent of this international visitation comes from Canada, with additional groups coming from the UK (8 percent), Mexico (3 percent), and Germany (3 percent).
- Other than California, top domestic leisure markets for Greater Palm Springs include segments from the western states such as Washington, Oregon, and Arizona, which represent eight, four, and three percent of Greater Palm Springs visitation. Illinois represents the top non-western market, at just under three percent of overall respondents. Other Midwestern states such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan also represent an important source of leisure visitors.

As shown in the following exhibit, leisure travelers visit Greater Palm Springs mainly between Thursday and Saturday, an expected preference toward weekend visitation. A major objective of the DDP is to identify opportunities to grow the midweek visitor levels through product development, positioning, sales and marketing.

Exhibit 3
Leisure Visitors – Stays in Greater Palm Springs by Day of the Week

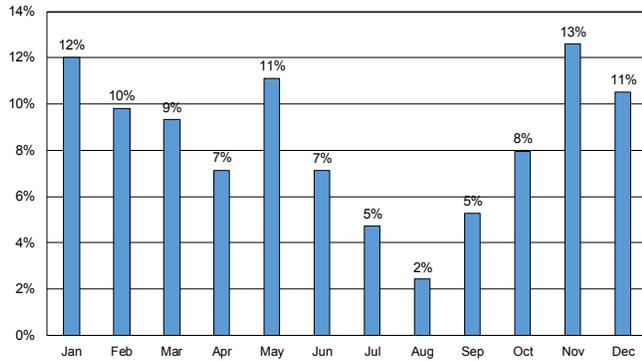


Source: CSL, Visitor Intercept Survey, 2015

Due to the number of visitors with second homes or who are visiting for an extended stay in Greater Palm Springs, a majority of respondents indicated that they would be in the destination on any given day of the week.

We have also considered the seasonality patterns of arrival in Greater Palm Springs for leisure travelers, shown on the following graph.

Exhibit 4
Leisure Visitors – Arrival in Greater Palm Springs by Month



Source: CSL, Visitor Intercept Survey, 2015

Typically, leisure travelers are visiting Greater Palm Springs in the winter and spring months, with a spike in visitation during November. Summer represents a down period for the destination, and opportunities to expand the visitor season are evaluated throughout the DDP.

Visitation to Greater Palm Springs is largely comprised of older visitors frequenting the area over the weekends during the winter and spring months. However, relative to other comparable markets, Greater Palm Springs does experience a considerable influx of international visitation. Due to sales efforts in Canada, as well as direct air access provided by WestJet, Greater Palm Springs enjoys very close relationships with the Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton markets. The recommendations in the DDP will describe ways in which the destination can continue to position itself more effectively for a changing demographic of visitor segments. How to combat current notions about the destinations will be explored. Preparing the area for the ever-evolving tourism landscape and the rapidly expanding Millennial and international segments also will be reviewed.

3.1 EXISTING DESTINATION VISITOR STATISTICS

The CVB generates and maintains an extensive amount of data and research regarding the past and current market-wide visitor industry. Within this final chapter section, base data is presented delving into visitation, room nights, and related statistics.

Greater Palm Springs Visitation Growth

The historical pattern for Greater Palm Springs visitation has varied over the decades. The significant Hollywood influence in the 1950s and 1960s evolved into recent decades of being a getaway destination for retirees and affluent families with second homes. According to the 2013 Greater Palm Springs CVB Annual Report, there were an estimated 12.2 million day and overnight visits to the Greater Palm Springs destination. Of this total, 5.5 million were overnight visits, representing an increase of 7.8 percent from 2011.

The following exhibit highlights annual increases in a wide variety of visitor industry and economic statistics within Greater Palm Springs. This data consistently shows a pattern of increase within the visitor industry and overall economy.

Exhibit 5
Greater Palm Springs Visitation Growth (2011-2013)

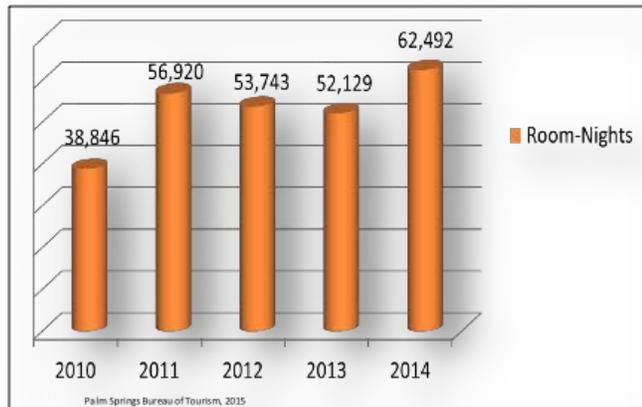
Day/Overnight Visits	Local Taxes	Overnight Visitors	Jobs Sustained	Visitor Spending
6.1% increase over 2011	8% increase over 2011	7.8% increase over 2011	2.1% increase over 2011	12.5% increase over 2011
Business Sales	Associated Income	Lodging Revenue	Room Demand	Taxes Generated
9.4% increase over 2011	7.3% increase over 2011	17.1% increase over 2011	6.9% increase over 2011	5.2% increase over 2011

Lodging revenue increased by over 17 percent between 2011 and 2013, in addition to a 12.5 percent increase in visitor spending, and a 6.9 percent increase in room demand. Conversely, overall Greater Palm Springs business sales increased 9.4 percent, with employment increase at 2.1 percent and income growth at 7.3 percent. This data suggests that growth in the visitor industry is somewhat outpacing the significant growth of the overall Greater Palm Springs economy.

Palm Springs Convention Center Room Night Generation

The Palm Springs Convention Center (PSCC) has experienced significant growth, increasing from 96 events with 182,000 attendees in 2011, to 113 events with 221,000 attendees in 2014. In addition, there has been a 10 percent growth in actual room nights. PSCC-generated events were up during that same span from 57,000 to 62,000, as shown in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 6 Palm Springs Convention Center - Hotel Room Night Generation (2010-2014)



As shown, convention activity and its resulting benefits to the destination are growing. However, local stakeholders indicate that there is opportunity to increase overall usage even more by improving midweek business.

Other Important Greater Palm Springs Visitor Industry Statistics

Overall, Greater Palm Springs' hospitality industry has experienced considerable recent success. Its performance across a number of hospitality performance metrics reflects that success. The following data from 2014 clearly demonstrates that Greater Palm Springs is heading in a positive direction:

- Airport statistics show 1,914,402 passengers used Palm Springs International (PSP) in 2014, a 9.3 percent jump from 2013.
- December passenger activity was up 6.0 percent compared to the same month a year earlier, as 188,808 fliers used PSP in December, 2014.
- Across the valley, hotel occupancy also was up in 2014, climbing 1.1 percent from 2013 to 58.4 percent in 2014, according to Smith Travel Research.

- ADR was up 7.1 percent in 2014, and revenue per available room was up 8.3 percent in 2014.
- The highest rates were in the Indian Wells and La Quinta region. Hotel rates averaged \$201.15 in 2014, a 5.3 percent increase from the year before, according to Smith Travel Research.
- The lowest rates were next door in Indio, which averaged \$82.31, a 7.6 percent increase from the year before.
- With the exception of the Cathedral City and Desert Hot Springs markets, all cities saw ADR rise in 2014.
- Rancho Mirage saw the opening of The Ritz-Carlton in May 2014. The effects of having a luxury property were reflected in average rates in Rancho Mirage going up 12.6 percent in 2014.
- Room occupancy in Palm Springs grew 4.2 percent in 2014. Average rates in the city were \$132.96, a 9.1 percent increase from the year before.
- For 2015, PKF Consulting is predicting a 4.0 percent growth in occupancy valley-wide in 2015, and a 5.0 percent growth in ADR.

This continued success with the visitor industry has also contributed significantly to growth in the Greater Palm Springs economy.

- 24.5 percent of total employment, one in every four jobs, is sustained by the tourism industry. This represents an increase of 2.1 percent from 2011.
- \$486 million in state and local taxes was generated by tourism in 2013. An additional \$372 million in federal taxes was also generated, an increase of 8 percent from 2011.
- With the income of \$1.35 billion generated by visitors, 46,863 jobs were sustained, an increase of 7.3 percent from 2011.

3.2 KEY RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Research is the foundation for any destination planning project. Various initiatives were undertaken to develop primary research from a wide variety of sources, including the initiatives described below.

- Interviews with 64 travel writers from around the country.
- Over 15,000 intercept interviews with visitors in the Greater Palm Springs area.



useful unbiased view as to the perceived and actual strengths and weaknesses of a destination.

In an effort to collect initial perceptions of Greater Palm Springs and its hospitality industry offerings, travel writers were asked a variety of questions including:

- Surveys mailed, completed, and returned by over 240 of 2014’s Greater Palm Springs visitors.
- Surveys of the 17 members of the Desert Resorts Concierge Association.
- Over 100 interviews and focus groups with local industry/business/political leaders.
- Surveys of national meeting planners.

- What characteristics define your perception of the Greater Palm Springs destination?
- What words do you associate with the Greater Palm Springs destination?
- What do you feel are the authentic characteristics or experiences that Greater Palm Springs could market to visitors?
- Comment on the characteristics of Greater Palm Springs you feel are strengths of the destination.
- Comment on the characteristics of Greater Palm Springs you feel are weaknesses of the destination.
- How have you described the area to your readers, viewers, and listeners?

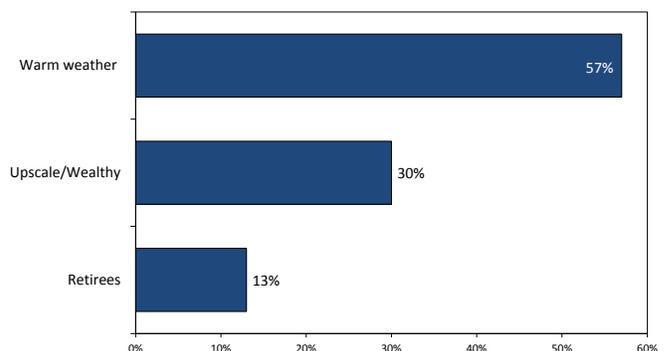
As part of the research process, numerous past planning documents were reviewed focusing on the Greater Palm Springs area. Conditions in competitive and comparable destinations were examined. The research and analysis is all drawn upon to create the Greater Palm Springs Destination Development Plan findings and recommendations. Within the remainder of this chapter, results of the specific areas of market research are summarized.

Generally, responses focused on Greater Palm Springs mainstays such as its warm weather, desert location, retirement community, and inventory of golf courses. As shown in the following exhibit, there were three frequent responses to the question “What characteristics define your perception of the Greater Palm Springs destination?”

3.2.1 THE VIEW FROM TRAVEL WRITERS

Electronic surveys of a select set of travel editors, writers, and freelancers from throughout the country were conducted. Thoughts and opinions regarding the Greater Palm Springs visitor and hospitality industry product were collected. The extensive survey process consisted of approximately 700 questionnaires being sent to members of the Society of American Travel Writers, a branding media list, and magazine writer contacts. A total of 64 responses were received. This type of research can give a

Exhibit 1
Travel Writer Survey – Perceptions of Greater Palm Springs



Source: CSL Survey, 2015

The three defining perceptions above highlight Greater Palm Springs' historical reputation as a warm, retiree-friendly destination featuring upscale amenities. There are tangible benefits to this image that have continued to uphold the high-class brand of Greater Palm Springs. But, with the continued growth of the young professional and millennial demographics' presence in the tourism landscape, it is not the most optimal positioning of the Greater Palm Springs product for the future.

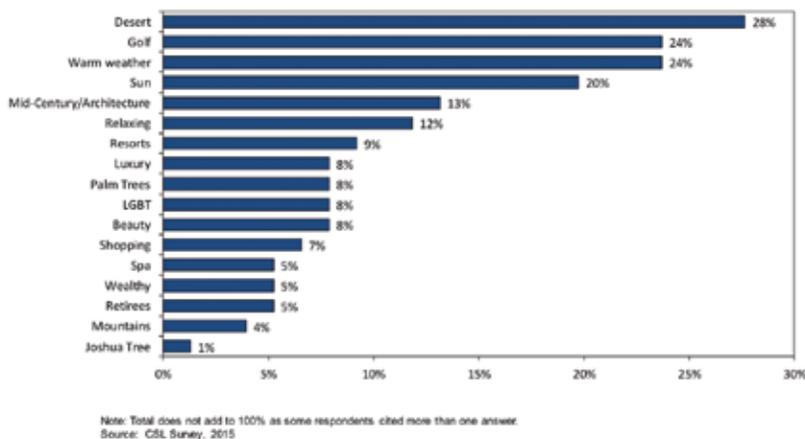
It should be noted that word association is somewhat indistinct and is comprised of California warm weather commodities. Top word association is tied to "Desert," followed by "Golf." These associations, along with the frequent mentioning of "Midcentury Architecture" (13 percent), are assets that keep the destination rooted with its past, as summarized in several of the descriptors often cited.

- *Golf, old age, heat, sun, palm trees.*
- *Golf, sun, superhot summers.*
- *Desert, retirement, LGBT, golf, midcentury modern, film festival, Bob Hope, palm trees, shopping.*
- *Luxury, retro, Mad Men, Rat Pack era.*
- *Affluent, midcentury modern, San Jacinto, desert, golf, Rat Pack.*
- *Historical, geological, golf, warm weather, relaxation.*

Comments regarding the weather, golf, and desert were used often by the travel writers. Still, many inclusions of words like "rat pack," "retro," and "midcentury" were found during our analysis. This indicated that the meaning of Greater Palm Springs also carries significant historical and cultural context for travelers.

This distinct identity represents a unique opportunity for the destination to develop cultural, historical, and artistic attractions, festivals, and experiences. This historical/cultural feature is already being leveraged by community leaders in Greater Palm Springs. Tactics presented later in this DDP are tailored to enhance these types of assets even more. An analysis segmenting the entire collection of responses is shown in the following exhibit.

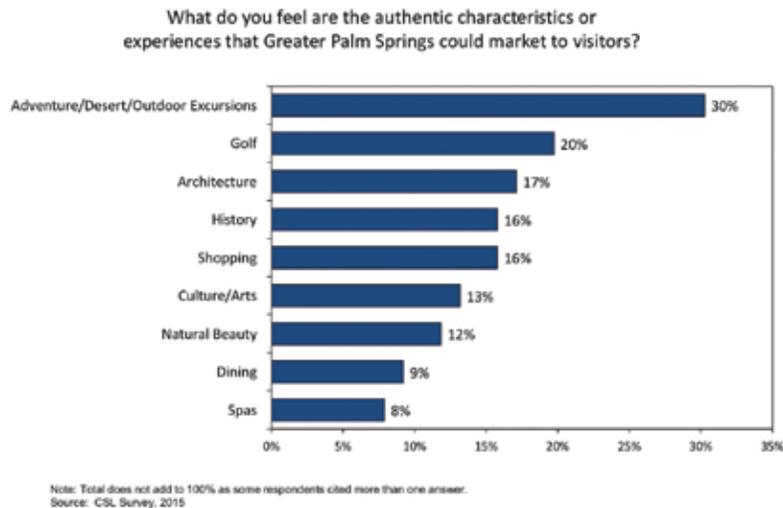
Exhibit 2
Travel Writer Survey – Word Association with Greater Palm Springs



Well-known traditional mainstays of Greater Palm Springs, such as the area's desert environs and golf offerings, dominate the travel writers' response content.

Leisure travelers and event attendees are increasingly seeking unique and authentic experiences in any destination they visit. As part of this research, travel writers were asked to identify these types of experiences existing in Greater Palm Springs. This research is summarized in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 3
Travel Writer Survey – Marketable Authentic Experiences in Greater Palm Springs



Travel writers focused on outdoor adventure themes as the number-one authentic opportunity in Greater Palm Springs. Assets such as Joshua Tree, The Living Desert, the nearby San Andreas Fault, the Salton Sea, the region's many hiking trails, biking opportunities, and other outdoor areas, can combine to create unique destination opportunities. This type of focus can be helpful in complimenting well-known assets such as golf, architecture, and shopping. For the destination to materially expand and diversify visitation, the broader set of assets will have to be further developed and marketed, building on various existing CVB initiatives.

Some examples of specific answers to the question made by the writers include:

- *You should market adventure more.*
- *Trail walks, jeep tours, food excursions, couples golf, couples tennis, winter getaways to Northeasterners.*
- *Introduction to desert wildlife and plants.*
- *The surrounding landscapes: tram, hikes, history tours, celebrity tours.*
- *Access to Joshua Tree and San Andreas Fault.*

Moreover, when asked to list strengths of the destination, 29 percent cited the weather and 28 percent cited the options for outdoor recreation. Another 23 percent reported that they have actively written about the area's natural beauty to their readers.

When asked what they perceived as weaknesses of the Greater Palm Springs destination, 27 percent of travel writers cited the expense. Heat was cited by 25 percent, and 19 percent cited its reputation as a retirement community. Some comments from responding travel writers highlighting these and other weaknesses are presented below.

- *Accessibility.*
- *Perception that it is for older people.*
- *A playland for the rich and famous, not accessible to the little guy.*
- *Cost of visiting there.*
- *Traffic on 111, lack of good restaurants outside downtown Palm Springs, distances between the towns, changeable weather in winter.*
- *Need a car to get around, sprawling nature of its cities.*

- *More upscale, adult location. Not as great for families or people on a budget.*
- *Other than pools, The Living Desert and the Tramway, it does not have a lot of family attractions (at least compared with places like Orlando and San Diego).*

As noted, issues with getting to and around the destination, along with a perceived lack of family-oriented attractions were frequently mentioned challenges. Other key findings from the travel writers' responses include:

- Regarding suggestions of improvement of the destination product, 25 percent thought that the CVB could continue to expand marketing campaigns to make the area appealing to younger people. Additionally, 20 percent thought that features other than downtown Palm Springs should be featured and highlighted.
- Twenty-one percent cited the destination's culture/atmosphere as strengths, and 25 percent cited its architecture. Furthermore, 17 percent thought that the area's architecture is an authentic characteristic that the region can market to potential visitors. Sixteen percent thought the area's history could be marketed. Thirteen percent thought that about the area's history and culture/arts. More efforts directed to building and enhancing the destination's culture, history, and authenticity are recommended. Specifics will be described later in the DDP.

3.2.2 PERSPECTIVE FROM AREA HOTEL CONCIERGE STAFF

In-depth surveys were also conducted with members of the Desert Resorts Concierge Association. Collecting perspective and advice gives insight from individuals with front-line knowledge of the Greater Palm Springs destination. These

Association members were asked what resources they use to help them in their jobs, what attractions or experiences hotel guests most often request information about, what they typically recommend to guests, etc. This section summarizes this concierge staff commentary.

Most of the responding members indicated that their hotel guests frequently request information regarding: 1) the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, and 2) the region's canyons and hiking opportunities. Correspondingly, an even larger percentage of these members actively recommend these two experiences to visitors. The most frequently suggested "off the beaten path" activity is hiking and/or canyon exploring. This signifies recognition of the area's one-of-a-kind landscape for outdoor adventure from some of the visitor industry's most knowledgeable stakeholders. There are opportunities to package these types of outdoor assets with the spa/resort, boutique hotel, "pool party," and other more traditional visitor experiences. Some of Greater Palm Springs' lesser known attractions and activities often mentioned by members are listed below.

- *Berdoo Canyon trail for all off-road activities.*
- *Sam's Family Spa, Salvation Mountain.*
- *Cabot's Pueblo Museum, the Integratron, and Pappy & Harriet's at the Old West Town near Joshua Tree. Also we love recommending the Fault tours.*
- *The Living Desert, Westfield shopping center, Shields Date Garden, Moorten Botanical Garden.*
- *Some great hiking areas, different tours offered, ATV rentals, horseback riding.*
- *Cabot's and old Palm Springs to see the homes.*
- *We recommend only "safe" areas, hiking where there are rangers or tour guides.*

Thirty percent of members said that Downtown Palm Springs is rated as a "disappointment" by guests. This was the most frequent response given when asked which attractions or experiences are reported as let-downs. Specifically, guests have said that the Downtown's shopping areas look dated. Other activities/attractions that fall short of expectations include the destination's accessibility and/or drive from the airport, the casinos, the shopping options, the nightlife, and the Salton Sea. These represent

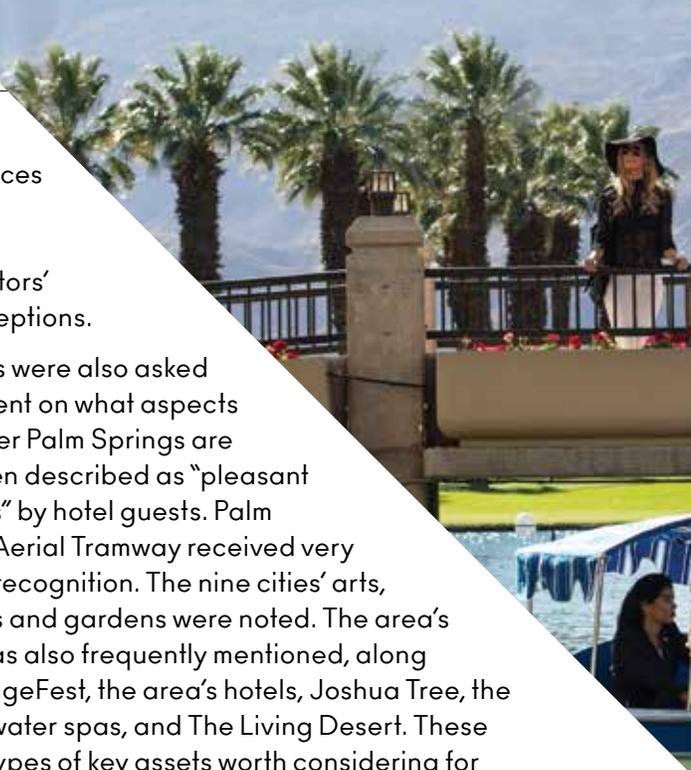
experiences that are not living up to visitors' preconceptions.

Members were also asked to comment on what aspects of Greater Palm Springs are most often described as "pleasant surprises" by hotel guests. Palm Springs Aerial Tramway received very positive recognition. The nine cities' arts, museums and gardens were noted. The area's hiking was also frequently mentioned, along with VillageFest, the area's hotels, Joshua Tree, the mineral water spas, and The Living Desert. These are the types of key assets worth considering for increased exposure, leveraging, and advertising. They can help augment and further develop the future identity of Greater Palm Springs. Some important quotes on these "pleasant surprises" are provided below.

- *The healing mineral water spas. The tram is always a big hit. Great hiking, better than expected in Joshua Tree National Park, and it's so close.*
- *The healing waters in Desert Hot Springs and little boutique spas.*
- *Everyone loves the new BUZZ trolley. Palm Springs Aerial Tramway is breathtaking, Art colony is cool, vintage shopping is great, as well as local midcentury architecture. Villagefest is a huge hit too.*

Members were asked what specific visitor amenities, attractions, events, or other features would help improve the Greater Palm Springs visitor experience. One out of four mentioned the area's need for more family-oriented attractions. This could include development of educational and entertainment assets in the area. Other suggestions include providing better information to visitors, improved maps, better access to transportation, more nightlife, and more exciting "downtown" settings.

Local concierge staff also detailed the various resources they use to access and disseminate visitor information. Seventy-one percent indicated that they use the internet. They also expressed desire for a more





central database or information provider that lists the happenings in the nine cities every day. Also, 18 percent of the members stated that they could use better access to maps for their job, including maps specifically focused on biking, hiking, and/or ATV trails.

3.2.3 EXTENSIVE VISITOR RESEARCH

Several analyses were performed with responses received from the Visitor Intercept Survey and Visitor Perceptions Survey. This was administered by the CVB and Custom Intercept Solutions (CIS). To distinguish important characteristics between key Greater Palm Springs visitor segments, various comparisons of statistics were generated. These included types of properties used, travel party size, length of stay, and related metrics. To start, an analysis of survey data segmented by visitor origination is shown in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 4
Visitor Intercept Survey – Analysis by Visitor Origination

	Canadian	Other International	In-State	Other Domestic
Spending 0 to 2 nights	2%	24%	48%	8%
Spending 3 to 7 nights	24%	37%	42%	46%
Spending 8+ Nights	74%	38%	10%	46%
1 Traveler in Party	9%	14%	14%	14%
2 Travelers in Party	72%	51%	51%	62%
3+ Travelers in Party	19%	35%	35%	24%
Over 100k Avg. Household Income	50%	44%	40%	45%
Booked via Internet	62%	60%	36%	59%
Booked via Travel Agent	4%	16%	1%	3%
Staying in Hotels	17%	46%	42%	26%
Staying in Vacation Rentals	29%	21%	7%	17%
% Under 55	26%	61%	62%	38%
% 55 and Over	74%	39%	38%	62%
First-Time Visitors	24%	69%	19%	35%
Visiting for Event/Festival	3%	5%	8%	7%
Visiting for Golf, Hiking, or other Rec	11%	2%	4%	9%
Traveled to destination by air	66%	75%	7%	61%
Flew Directly into Palm Springs	85%	12%	72%	63%
Flew into Los Angeles	8%	69%	4%	16%
Flew into Ontario	3%	1%	22%	11%
Flew into San Diego	1%	7%	1%	5%

Source: Custom Intercept Survey, 2015

There are several interesting discrepancies shown between the Canadian, other international, in-state, and other domestic visitor segments:

- Nearly three out of four Canadian visitors are spending eight or more nights in the destination. Twenty-nine percent of the segment is staying in vacation rental properties. Continued coordination and emphasis of the vacation rental market could benefit the area’s appeal to this segment.
 - Visitors from non-Canadian international markets are frequently flying into Los Angeles—69 percent compared to four and 16 percent of in-state and domestic fliers, respectively. Several of the DDP’s recommendations for “hub and spoke” marketing result from these statistics. However, it should be noted that the data from other international markets represents a relatively small sample size of under 1,000 respondents.
 - Non-Canadian international visitors are much more likely to be first time visitors, with 69 percent of respondents indicating that it was their first trip to Greater Palm Springs, which is much higher than Canadian respondents (24 percent) and American respondents.
 - Canadian visitors tend to be older (74 percent are 55 or older), and generally wealthier (50 percent have a household income of over \$100,000) than domestic and other international visitors.
 - In-state visitors are understandably having shorter stays in Greater Palm Springs than international and other domestic visitors. Nearly half of visitors are only spending 0 to 2 nights in the area.
- Visitors were also asked if they had frequented select Greater Palm Springs attractions and/or participated in various activities. Then, they provided their rating of attractions and experiences. Findings include:
- Eighty-two percent of Canadian visitors shopped at retail stores, compared with 62 percent of in-state and 70 percent of national visitors. That a higher percentage of Canadian visitors shopped at retail establishments compared to domestic visitors further demonstrates the potential spending impact of this visitor segment.

- Forty-six percent of Canadian respondents indicated that they had enjoyed live entertainment while in the destination, compared with 23 of in-state and 37 percent of national visitors.
- Interestingly, non-Canadian international visitors had a much higher propensity to visit the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway and play tennis.
- Overall, Canadian visitors had a higher participation rate in outdoor activities. They led the domestic segments in visitation to Joshua Tree, participation in both golf and tennis, and hiking. Their ratings of the various outdoor attractions and activities ranged from 4.5 to 4.8 out of 5, generally the highest of the four segments for each activity. It will be beneficial to market the region more extensively as an outdoor-oriented destination to other foreign visitors, as their outdoor participation rates were markedly lower than that of their Canadian counterparts.

A more detailed “Visitor Perception” survey was also mailed to and completed by 240 members of these international, in-state, and national visitor segments. The following includes selected data from their responses.

Exhibit 5
Visitor Perception Survey - Analysis by Visitor Origination

	Canadian	Other International	In-State	Other Domestic
Rating of Destination	4.65	4.12	4.56	4.54
Actual Experience vs. Expectation	3.74	3.75	3.85	3.76
Likelihood to Recommend GPS	4.87	4.25	4.67	4.55
Rating of Accommodations Services	4.32	4.00	4.51	4.46
Rating of Service Industry Services	4.32	4.25	4.5	4.54
Average Daily \$ spent on Accommodations	\$170	\$185	\$172	\$221
Average Daily \$ spent on Dining Out	\$174	\$160	\$148	\$141
Average Daily \$ spent on Local Transportation	\$79	\$39	\$41	\$43
Average Daily \$ spent on Recreation and Entertainment	\$64	\$44	\$162	\$117
Average Daily \$ spent on Retail Shopping	\$89	\$124	\$175	\$187
Average Daily \$ spent on Misc Expenditures	\$42	\$36	\$104	\$58
Average Total Daily \$ Spent	\$618	\$588	\$802	\$767
Average # of Party Members under 18	0.42	0.38	0.36	0.64

Source: CSPost Card Survey, 2015

- Destination satisfaction is relatively high across each segment, as well as experience in the destination compared to expectations. International visitors are the most likely to recommend the destination to a friend.
- Canadian visitors spend substantially more on dining and public transportation while visiting. In-state and other domestic visitors tend to allocate more to recreation, retail shopping, and other miscellaneous expenditures.
- As previously noted, Canadian visitors frequently spend eight or more nights in Greater Palm Springs. Their average daily spending figure may reflect efforts to spread costs over these extended stays. More modest average per-person spend on accommodations for international visitors may also be affected by use of vacation rental and other extended stay properties.

The Visitor Perception Survey also asked Greater Palm Springs visitors about



which of the nine cities they visited, and their primary mode of transportation while in the area. Key findings are summarized in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6 Visitor Perception Survey – Analysis by Visitor Origination

	Canadian	Other International	In-State	Other Domestic
In-Destination Visitation				
Cathedral City	48%	25%	16%	28%
Coachella	23%	0%	7%	16%
Desert Hot Springs	23%	13%	12%	19%
Indian Wells	45%	38%	32%	47%
Indio	48%	13%	43%	34%
La Quinta	55%	25%	24%	32%
Palm Desert	81%	25%	46%	60%
Palm Springs	84%	100%	60%	70%
Rancho Mirage	48%	13%	31%	38%
Other	13%	0%	1%	9%
Primary Mode of Transportation in GPS				
Personal Car	35%	50%	83%	22%
Rental Car	58%	25%	9%	57%
Public Transportation (bus, etc.)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Taxi	0%	0%	2%	4%
Walk	3%	25%	4%	8%
Trolley / Hotel Shuttle	0%	0%	0%	1%
Uber / Lyft	0%	0%	1%	1%
Other	3%	3%	1%	7%

Source: CIS Post Card Survey, 2015

- As shown, Canadian visitors generally tend to visit more of the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs. Much lower percentages of in-state and other domestic visitors go to La Quinta or Cathedral City.
- Use of public transportation, taxis, and shared ride services are very uncommon for Greater Palm Springs visitors. There may be opportunities to enhance the area’s transportation offerings. There is also room for driving increased visitation to less frequented cities such as Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, and Rancho Mirage.

There is a recognizable appeal of Greater Palm Springs to newcomers. To discover potential opportunities to market/advertise the destination more effectively, we analyzed the first-time visitors’ survey responses and compared them to those of past Greater Palm Springs visitors. These results are summarized in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7 Visitor Intercept Survey – Analysis of First-Time vs. Repeat Business

	First Time	Repeat
% International		
Spending 0 to 2 nights	25%	22%
Spending 3 to 7 nights	51%	34%
Spending 8+ Nights	24%	44%
1 Traveler in Party		
2 Travelers in Party	13%	13%
3+ Travelers in Party	58%	59%
Over 100k Avg. Household Income		
Booked via Internet	29%	28%
Booked via Travel Agent	41%	45%
Staying in Hotels		
Staying in Vacation Rentals	60%	47%
% Under 55		
% 55 and Over	6%	2%
Visiting for Event/Festival		
Visiting for Golf, Hiking, or other Rec	46%	24%
Traveled to Destination by Air		
Flew Directly into Palm Springs	16%	17%
Flew into Los Angeles	57%	43%
Flew into Ontario	43%	57%
Flew into San Diego	7%	6%
Source: Custom Intercept Survey, 2015		

Source: Custom Intercept Survey, 2015

- Many repeat visitors of Greater Palm Springs often have second homes and/or vacation rental properties in the destination. This is evident by their typical length of stay. Forty-four percent stay eight or more nights in Greater Palm Springs. Typically, these repeat visitors also have a higher household income compared to first-time visitors. Fifty-seven percent of first-time visitors are under the age of 55, compared with 43 percent for repeat visitors. Increasing the share of first-time visitors will likely require increasingly aggressive efforts that “skew young.”
- Most first-time visitors are arriving to Greater Palm Springs by air, with 35 percent of these fliers landing in Los Angeles, seven percent in Ontario, and five percent in San Diego. Extensive use of car rental is needed to access the destination.

Regarding attraction attendance and activity participation, repeat visitors evidently enjoyed a more complete experience while in Greater Palm Springs, as shown in the following tables.

Exhibit 8

Visitor Intercept Survey – Analysis of First-Time vs. Repeat Business

	First Time	Repeat
% Went to Spas	14%	21%
Avg. Rating of Spas	4.8	4.55
% Shopped	59%	26%
Avg. Rating of Shopping	4.57	4.51
% Enjoyed Live Entertainment	21%	39%
Rating of Live Entertainment	4.55	4.4
% Went to Museums/Galleries	49%	63%
Rating of Museums/Galleries	4.83	4.69
% Dined	79%	89%
Average Rating of Dining	4.65	4.62
% Enjoyed Nightlife/Bars/Clubs	23%	30%
Rating of Nightlife, etc.	4.61	4.37
% Used Rec Facilities	26%	48%
Average Rating of Rec Facilities	4.79	4.82
% Enjoyed Outdoor Rec	51%	66%
Rating of Outdoor Rec	4.71	4.74

- First-time visitors are more likely to shop. Repeat visitors are more likely to partake in all other destination experiences.
- First-time visitors gave a higher average rating to 14 out of the 16 activities listed. Greater Palm Springs' assets are being enjoyed, but not sufficiently exposed to destination newcomers.

As with the analysis of international, in-state and other domestic visitors, the results of the more in-depth "Visitor Perception Survey" were also reviewed.

Exhibit 9

Visitor Perception Survey – Analysis of First-Time vs. Repeat Business

	First Time	Repeat
Rating of Destination	4.62	4.53
Rating of Accommodations Services	4.34	4.50
Rating of Service Industry Services	4.50	4.48
Actual Experience vs. Expectation	4.12	3.70
Likelihood to Recommend GPS	4.61	4.66
Average Daily \$ spent on Accommodations	\$227	\$170
Average Daily \$ spent on Dining Out	\$178	\$141
Average Daily \$ spent on Local Transportation	\$77	\$41
Average Daily \$ spent on Recreation and Entertainment	\$121	\$132
Average Daily \$ spent on Retail Shopping	\$115	\$129
Average Daily \$ spent on Misc Expenditures	\$67	\$79
Average Total Daily \$ spent	\$785	\$692
Average # of Party Members under 18	0.45	0.48

Source: CIS Post Card Survey, 2015

- As shown, first-time visitors are enjoying the destination, giving a higher average rating to the Greater Palm Springs destination than repeat visitors, as well as a higher "Actual Experience vs. Expectation" score. This appeal to newcomers suggests that Greater Palm Springs has the potential to penetrate a broader array of market segments that do not traditionally visit the area.
- First-time visitors are spending much more on accommodations, dining, and local transportation on a daily basis than repeat visitors. This is likely due to the tendency for repeat visitors to spend eight or nights in the area, so their total spending figures during their stay in Greater Palm Springs are typically spread out over more days. Nonetheless, first-time visitors evidently represent a critical driver for the hospitality, restaurant, and local transportation industries.

To identify key characteristics of Greater Palm Springs visitors by age group, we have also segmented survey data into two age ranges –visitors under the age of 45, and those who are 45 or older. Exhibit 10 highlights the Visitor Intercept Survey results for these age groups.

Exhibit 10

Visitor Intercept Survey – Analysis of Under-45 vs. 45-and-up

	Under 45	45 and Up
% International	19%	32%
% Spending 0 to 2 nights	41%	15%
% Spending 3 to 7 nights	43%	37%
% Spending 8+ Nights	17%	48%
% w/ One Traveler in Party	17%	12%
% w/ 2 Travelers in Party	40%	67%
% w/ 3+ Travelers in Party	43%	21%
% w/ over 100k Avg. Income	30%	50%
Booked via Internet	47%	53%
Booked via Travel Agent	2%	4%
% Staying in Hotels	43%	26%
% Staying in vacation rentals	11%	19%
% Visiting for Event/Festival	7%	6%
% Visiting for Golf, Hiking, or other Rec	4%	9%
% that traveled to destination by air	36%	46%
% of above that flew Directly into Palm Springs	58%	65%
% that flew into Los Angeles	27%	18%
% that flew into Ontario	9%	7%

- As shown, the under-45 segment tended to travel with larger groups, as 43 percent indicated that they visited with three or more people. However,

their trips were generally shorter in length, and only 30 percent had annual household incomes of over \$100,000.

- As with international and first-time visitors, under-45 visitors tend to fly into Los Angeles at a much higher rate than older visitors.
- A significantly higher share of under-45 visitors stay in hotels, again reflecting a higher proportion of older visitors staying in vacation rental and extended stay properties.

Exhibit 11
Visitor Intercept Survey – Analysis of Under-45 vs. 45-and-up

	Under 45	45 and Up
% went to Spas	16%	20%
Avg. Rating of Spas	4.66	4.59
% Shopped	62%	72%
Avg. Rating of Shopping	4.47	4.55
% Enjoyed Live Entertainment	23%	38%
Rating of Live Entertainment	4.44	4.43
% Went to Museums/Galleries	44%	64%
Rating of Museums/Galleries	4.74	4.72
% Dined	81%	88%
Average Rating of Dining	4.61	4.64
% Enjoyed Nightlife/Bars/Clubs	28%	28%
Rating of Nightlife, etc.	4.51	4.4
% Used Rec Facilities	31%	45%
Average Rating of Rec Facilities	4.83	4.81
% Enjoyed Outdoor Rec	49%	65%
Rating of Outdoor Rec	4.75	4.73
% Enjoyed Tramway	32%	37%
Rating of Tramway	4.86	4.77
% went to Joshua Tree	21%	32%
Rating of Joshua Tree	4.79	4.72
% Played on Golf Course	19%	39%
Rating of Golf Course	4.83	4.88
% Played Tennis	9%	21%
Rating of Tennis	4.72	4.74
% Played on Cycled	10%	16%
Rating of Cycling	4.64	4.42
% Played on Hiking	25%	37%
Rating of Hiking	4.72	4.65
% Played on Casinos/Gaming	26%	31%
Rating of Casinos/Gaming	4.58	4.59
% Went to Living Desert	50%	50%
Rating of Living Desert	4.82	4.71

- As noted previously, the under-45 segment’s shorter trips likely caused lower participation/attendance rates of the various Greater Palm Springs attractions and activities. Many of the DDP’s later recommendations seek to encourage longer stays in order to generate more overall engagement with the destination.
- The younger segment tended to engage in dining and shopping. Very few participated in spa, golf, tennis, or other typical Greater Palm Springs activities.

This data suggests an opportunity to encourage the younger

demographic to increase visitation and length of stay. Familiarizing them to the many outdoor and entertainment activities could be boosted.

Future Greater Palm Springs CVB strategies should aim to improve communication of these offerings via social media and other marketing channels.

A summary of these segments’ responses to the more comprehensive Visitor Perception survey is listed in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 12
Visitor Perception Survey – Analysis of Under-45 vs. 45-and-up

	Under 45	45 and Up
Rating of Destination	4.53	4.56
Rating of Accommodations Services	4.40	4.47
Rating of Service Industry Services	4.40	4.51
Actual Experience vs. Expectation	3.76	3.81
Likelihood to Recommend GPS	4.60	4.65
Average Daily \$ spent on Accommodations	\$196	\$183
Average Daily \$ spent on Dining Out	\$107	\$166
Average Daily \$ spent on Local Transportation	\$50	\$55
Average Daily \$ spent on Recreation and Entertainment	\$80	\$152
Average Daily \$ spent on Retail Shopping	\$85	\$190
Average Daily \$ spent on Misc Expenditures	\$80	\$76
Average Total Daily \$ spent	\$598	\$822

Average # of Party Members under 18: 1.09 (Under 45) vs. 0.27 (45 and Up)

Source: CIS Post Card Survey, 2015

- The under-45 segment rates their experience in the destination at a very similar level as their 45-and-up counterpart, though this segment spends considerably less money.
- Recreation and entertainment expenditures, along with money spent on retail



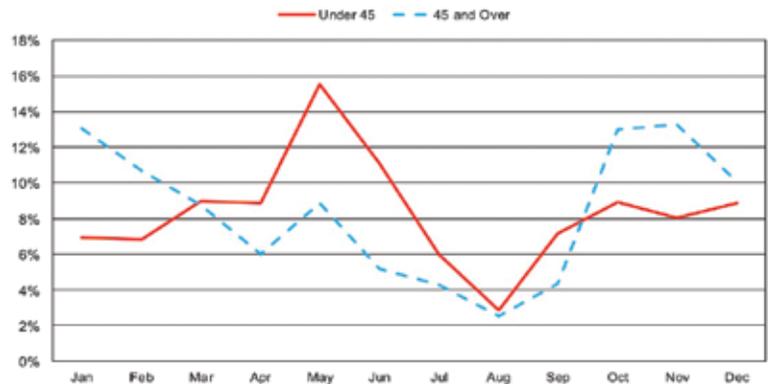
shopping, are the primary drivers of this discrepancy.

- Interestingly, the under-45 respondent averages just over one party member per group under the age of 18. Catering to the younger age demographic in various ways will be needed to encourage repeat visitation.

An analysis of each segment's in-market travel was developed to help understand the level of visitation within each of the nine cities.

In the Visitor Intercept Survey, both visitor segments were asked their date of arrival in Greater Palm Springs. Their responses are summarized in the following exhibit.

Exhibit 13
Visitor Intercept Survey – Arrival into Greater Palm Springs by Month



Source: CSL, Visitor Intercept Survey, 2015

- The under-45 segment has a higher tendency to visit the destination in the period of March through July, with nearly 16 percent of them visiting in May. Older visitors frequent Greater Palm Springs more often in the winter months.

To boost summer business, it may be important to investigate ways to improve and invest in the area's appeal to the under-45 crowd. This group represents an important opportunity to increase summer business, the traditionally low-performance shoulder period for Greater Palm Springs.

The recently initiated "Chill Pass" campaign is an important step led by the CVB to drive summer visitation by the younger demographic.

3.2.4 INTERVIEWS WITH THE BOARD

A key research effort at the CVB Board retreat was a session moderated by MYB and CSL in September of 2014 that revealed subjects needing exploration. At the retreat, the Board was asked to perform an exercise in which they ranked Greater Palm Springs on a scale of 1 to 10. The Board ranked a number of characteristics that were developed by DMAI to benchmark a destination's strength. Measuring these important characteristics is the first step toward developing a plan that will grow the destination.

The characteristics fall into two categories 1) *Established Destination*, and 2) *Strong Community Engagement*, shown in Exhibit 14-A.

Exhibit 14-A
Board Members Rating of Greater Palm Springs Attributes

1. Established Destination		2. Strong Community Engagement	
Long-term destination marketing plan	6.2	Long-term destination management Strategies	6.4
Diverse markets and customer Segments	6.2	Political Support	7.0
High awareness of the destination	6.7	Local resident appreciation for tourism	5.7
Convenient to get to and move around	4.5	High industry participation	7.6
Good scope of infrastructure and products	6.7	Businesses outside of tourism engaged with industry	5.6
Ease of doing business	7.2	High standards of customer servicing	6.7
Long-term performance success	6.3	Good alignment of partners and stakeholders	6.5
Range of activities and events	7.8	Industry respects natural and cultural community assets	7.5
Foundation of business on the books into the future	6.3	Appropriate levels of resources to market and manage	6.3
CVB is highly respected and accountable	7.5	CVB is at the table on local issues and plans	8.3
Average	6.5	Average	6.8

The average scores for *Established Destination* (6.5) and *Strong Community Engagement* (6.8) for Greater Palm Springs were mapped and placed the brand in the “destination trailblazer” quadrant, shown in Exhibit 15. While this is a sign that Greater Palm Springs is headed in the right direction, the scores also indicate the destination has room to grow. The scores of each characteristic were averaged, and used to plot where the destination falls on a conceptual map. The results of the Board retreat exercise are shown below in Exhibit 14-B.

Exhibit 14-B
Board Members Rating of Greater Palm Springs Attributes



When evaluating how the destination can grow, it is important to look at the scores for the destination. It is imperative to note that the Greater Palm Springs CVB received high scores on two characteristics, outlined in red in Exhibit 14. The average score for the “CVB is highly respected and accountable” was 7.5 and the average score for the “CVB is at the table on local issues and plans” was 8.3. These high scores point to the efforts of the Greater Palm Springs CVB leadership and staff to raise the profile of Greater Palm Springs as an integrated destination. These efforts include conducting market research, pursuing evidence-based strategies, rebranding, acting as the region’s primary marketing agent, and working with community organizations like CVEP.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB is perceived internally as trusted, respected, and being present in the community. This indicates that its actions to bring the region together have been successful. However, there are still challenges. The goal is to have all city leadership feel confident that each individual city can cultivate and market its own unique personality. At the same time, the cities need to work together to co-brand attractions and events with direction from the CVB. Highlighting the successful efforts of the CVB, and acknowledging this challenge, a stakeholder said:

- *“I think we’re seeing now a better understanding, a larger mutual respect in supporting each other’s events and ventures because the other cities are realizing it, and it may not be on the leadership level, but I know it’s on the staff levels and on the chamber levels. They can maintain their autonomy, but we’re all better off if we are supporting each other. And it’s not going to happen overnight. We realize that.”*

Data from in-market research further confirms the Board’s perception that the Greater Palm Springs CVB is an asset to the destination.

3.2.4 PERSPECTIVE FROM MEETING PLANNERS

Results from the quantitative portion of the meeting planner’s survey shown in Exhibit 15 indicate that sales contacts are accessible (94%) and helpful (93%). They provide quality service by being detail-oriented (91%) and by listening to client needs (90%). However, the Greater Palm Springs

CVB has room to fill by promoting the destination to maximize attendance. The top 2 box score is relatively high (82%), but a breakdown of the accuracy of the statement that the Greater Palm Springs CVB promotes the destination to maximize attendance is in Exhibit 16. It reveals that 39% of respondents agree this statement is completely accurate. Moving the needle up requires a joint effort among the nine cities and the CVB. The need is to develop an integrated portfolio of products that the CVB can market to meeting planners. With the transition to a partnership model, the Greater Palm Springs CVB has taken the first step toward being able to take stock of all the assets of the entire destination and promote a robust regional experience.

Exhibit 15

Meeting Planners Survey – Ratings of Greater Palm Springs CVB

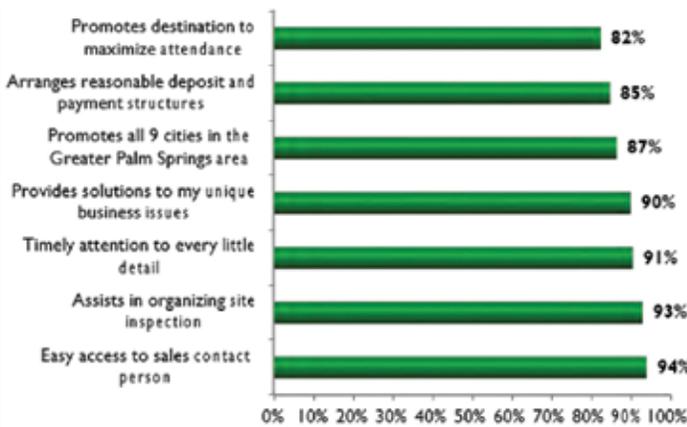
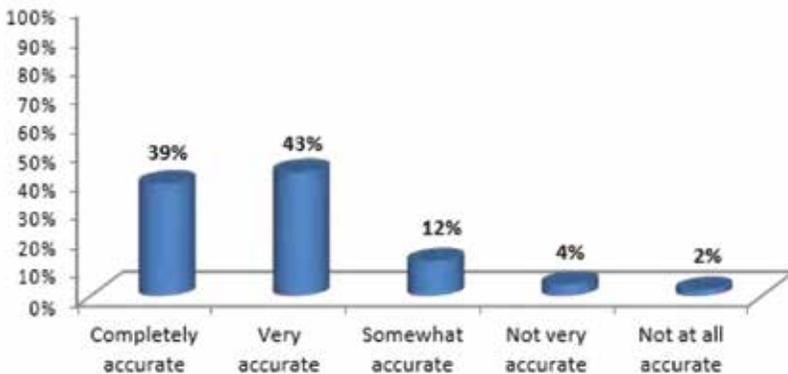


Exhibit 16

Meeting Planners Survey – CVB Maximizes Destination Attendance

Accuracy



Qualitative responses from the survey highlight that the Greater Palm Springs CVB has made a favorable impression on meeting planners who have worked with the destination.

- *"I had a very good experience with the CVB while doing site visits. We selected the Westin and also have gone to La Quinta."*
- *"Greater Palm Springs appears to be a destination a little off the beaten path that has a very rich history. This area appears to be very service-oriented, interested in bringing you in, and the physical area is very unique. The CVB is very knowledgeable about the entire package."*
- *"A great place to visit/meet. Great staff with the CVB and Convention Center."*

3.2.5 FOCUS GROUP & BOARD INPUT

Focus groups were conducted at the Professional Convention Management Association's (PCMA) Convening Leaders Annual Meeting in January 2015. These revealed that Greater Palm Springs CVB staff is cultivating positive and productive relationships with their clients.

- *"I believe the responses that I have gotten from Greater Palm Springs, it's a follow-up. They are constantly following up with me. Like hey, I know you sourced this. How is it going? Is there anything I can do to help? There is a constant reach-out. With some of my other tier-one destinations it's like thanks so much. We acknowledge that we've received it. We're moving on to the next. There's not a lot of touchy-feely. I like touchy-feely, because I'm a touchy-feely kind of person. I like to reach out and touch base, too. So, I would rate Greater Palm Springs up there, you know, nine out of ten, for sure."*
- *"[Greater Palm Springs CVB staff] always seems very responsive. The hotels I've worked with, very responsive. When I see my planners wanting to look at Palm Springs, I often get excited, as opposed to Phoenix."*
- *"...they did a phenomenal job at getting us all over the Valley from Palm Springs to La Quinta, and everywhere in between, and I feel like I can speak to it [Greater Palm Springs] better than I ever did before that, and that was a big deal. To understand it's going to take you this long to get around, and when you get there, this is what it's*

going to be like. That was a really huge benefit to being able to educate my people."

These positive internal and external impressions show that the Greater Palm Springs CVB is a trusted organization. It has the interest of the community at its core, and it is respected as a professional organization. It is seen as having a knowledgeable staff and offering exceptional customer service. This reputation is key. All stakeholders will be able to work together to overcome any challenges Greater Palm Springs encounters as it develops socially and economically.

Two challenges uncovered by the Board retreat were low scores on "Local resident appreciation for tourism" and "Businesses outside of tourism engaged with industry." These were measured at 5.7 and 5.6, which is low compared to other characteristics. These low scores could pose a threat to the success of the Destination Development Plan.

While "political support" was relatively high (7.0), ongoing political support for the Greater Palm Springs CVB is dependent upon the support of the community. As one stakeholder stated:

- *"Progress has been made, so we will continue to be at the table to promote the whole valley because we recognize there's a huge benefit in blending all these cultures and communities into one. But at the same time, we will not lose track of promoting ourselves. We have to - we need to, we owe it to our community to not just sit back and wait. We have to be proactive in promoting our community."*

Stakeholders are being proactive educating the community about how tourism dollars help the economy.

- *"I don't think there's a full appreciation of the impact of dollars from outside the valley in supporting our local economy. There was just a Facebook discussion the other day. You know, why are we advertising at the airport? We don't need part-time people and visitors. We talked to the person and pointed out that they come here and they spend their money and that helps our businesses, so I think there's not a full appreciation."*

Greater Palm Springs CVB continues to develop and market the destination, and at the same time works to gather community support. The staff showcases how

the organization can help bring tourism dollars to the area.

Local businesses need to feel the positive economic effects of the Destination Development Plan. Tourism fuels economic development of an area when the CVB and the community embrace one strategic vision. And, as the region develops, attracting large businesses does not have to be the only strategy. As one stakeholder said:

- *"Growing your own businesses and helping your small businesses succeed is just as viable a strategy in terms of economic development - you don't get the splash in the news as when a business from wherever moves here, but in the long term, the number of jobs that they create and the income brought into the community may be just as big or bigger than growing your own."*

Local businesses can be educated to support the Greater Palm Springs CVB's efforts to market the entire region as a whole. They will be inclined to support the efforts if local businesses understand the plan is to build and thrive together.

Public and private trust in, and respect for, the Greater Palm Springs CVB is crucial for building a strong network. The Greater Palm Springs CVB staff and leadership have made great strides in demonstrating it is an organization that will be successful in its mission. This capital can be leveraged in productive ways. Greater Palm Springs CVB could facilitate a valley-wide discussion about which recommendations to pursue. These courses will tighten the bond among the cities, as well as between the cities and the Greater Palm Springs CVB. This strength will enable the Greater Palm Springs CVB to address directly any obstacles that may arise in the process of developing Greater Palm Springs.



4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

The recommendations presented herein are based on the extensive research conducted as part of the Greater Palm Springs Destination Development analysis. They focus on areas of physical development, policy, and organizational structure. Within these areas, recommendations are made that are in some cases very specific. In other cases they are more general in nature to provide decision-makers with a framework for future initiatives.

As previously noted, there are six key objectives for growing leisure and group visitation to Greater Palm Springs, as summarized below. As recommendations are presented, we highlight the effect that the section's recommendations will have on each of these objectives. The recommendations contained herein simply cannot be implemented by a single entity or agency, nor are they the sole responsibility of the CVB. In fact, participation from a variety of public and private sector entities will be necessary to realize the potential of Greater Palm Springs.

Benefits to the Greater Palm Springs Destination



The success of this plan will be dependent on each of the 9 cities' ability to enhance, evolve and/or create the destination products and services in their geographic area. At the same time, each of the 9 communities are encouraged to actively collaborate with the GPSCVB to leverage the marketing and brand momentum of the Greater Palm Springs visitor experience. Together you will re-define the region in the minds of the traveler.

4.1 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and within the Greater Palm Springs destination is an oft-discussed topic. Challenges have included constraints and seasonal fluctuations of air service, high taxi costs, lack of a shuttle service from regional airports, and lack of transportation options in-destination.

Establishing efforts to add inbound air service to Greater Palm Springs during shoulder seasons represents the issue with highest priority in this section. According to industry consultants, increasing air service would further strengthen the valley's unique identity as a mid-sized international hot spot. With its identity as a tourism-focused region, Greater Palm Springs could greatly benefit from added air service.

At the same time, the visitor intercept research conducted for this destination planning process indicates that:

- 29 percent of overnight visitors travel to the Greater Palm Springs market by direct flight, 11 percent fly into Los Angeles, and a significant 49 percent drive in.
- 33 percent use rental cars while in the destination.
- 2 percent use taxi service in Greater Palm Springs.
- Only one percent of respondents arrived in the market by shuttle bus or motor coach. Less than one percent utilized public transportation during their stay.

It is fair to say that the established return visitor or seasonal resident has adapted to current transportation conditions. However, penetrating new visitor markets, particularly millennial travelers, may require a long-term approach to improving various aspects of destination transportation.

Survey research with members of the Desert Resorts

Concierge Association demonstrates destination transportation shortcomings. This includes high taxi cost and limited visitor-friendly public transportation. The Palm Springs Buzz system may offer viable transportation within a defined area, but lacks destination-wide capabilities and has limited hours of operation.

Potential initiatives designed to address current and future transportation issues are described below.

4.1.1 INCREASE AIR SERVICE TO THE DESTINATION

In order to become a year-round destination, the off-season airlift into the Palm Springs International Airport (PSP) must be increased. Increased 12-month air access can support efforts to increase both the visitor and corporate base of the economy. The CVB recently hired InterVISTAS, an air service development consulting firm, to conduct an analysis of the destination's existing air service status, identify areas for improvement, and provide recommendations for how to make such improvements. This analysis, spearheaded by the Greater Palm Springs CVB, represents a critical step in the effort to add inbound air service to the destination. Their analysis led to the following findings.

- Palm Springs origination and destination passengers (those that directly leave from or arrive at PSP as a final destination) have increased by 33 percent since 2009.
- Palm Springs is losing 29 percent of load share to Los Angeles, Ontario, San Diego, and other markets.
- Load factors, at over 80 percent each of the last three years, are preventing people from coming to the destination.

Analysis concludes that Greater Palm Springs has a robust air service profile for a destination of its size. Visitor industry stakeholders are properly exploiting every tool available to further build on this profile. They laud the CVB's efforts in leading discussions with private airlines and providing subsidies to incentivize added service. They also cite the growing symbiotic relationship between the CVB and the Palm Springs International Airport as a development that will greatly benefit the area's visitor industry in the future.

It is highly likely that an increased corporate base will be needed for Greater Palm Springs to experience

lasting incoming and outgoing air service growth in the long term, which will be important to consider in the future. They also highlighted the recent efforts of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport Authority (see following case study) as providing a creative practice that could be considered in Greater Palm Springs. The CVB could work with the Airport Authority to develop a proactive educational campaign that would garner support from community leaders for the continuing mission of adding inbound air service.

The recent air service research finds that the industry's evolving technology is enabling international travel for smaller planes, thus broadening the opportunities for smaller airports such as Palm Springs International Airport. Palm Springs International Airport officials indicate that current demand is not sufficient to support an expanded customs office. They cite similar initiatives that were undertaken in Orange County and Ontario as having failed due to overestimating future international air traffic. However, they agreed that this type of initiative should be considered as part of a long-term (8 to 10 years) plan to expand nonstop international air service.

CASE STUDY

Reno-Tahoe, NV

The Reno-Tahoe International Airport Authority recently started a one-year "hybrid" partnership with Jet Blue's service from New York City that includes financial risk mitigation, as well as free room blocks, vacation packages, etc. Opportunities exist to expand the program if its one-year run is successful. Officials cite the increased teamwork between the RSCVA and the Airport Authority as being a significant factor in the success of the initiative.

Reno-Tahoe International Airport has also started an interactive educational program called Air Service 101 that informs key tourism, business and civic influencers about the importance of growing the destination's air service. The goal of the program is to "build champions" in the community that will create change and raise funds to mitigate the financial risk for airlines investing in new service to Reno-Tahoe. Air Service 101 will feature multiple educational sessions throughout the year and was launched in September of 2015.

InterVISTAS has been conducting analysis of the current and potential fly-in market segments for Greater Palm Springs and will be developing further analysis to explore opportunities to increase air service. Their resulting recommendations include

financial route support and assistance in marketing the destination directly to airline executives. The CVB has recently supported and led these types of measures, and should continue to evaluate and pursue new opportunities as they are identified.

As a potential source of funding for route support, consideration could be given to allocation of a small portion of annual CVAG transportation funding. In order to further develop strategies, and to secure and allocate funding, consideration should also be given to forming a community task force charged with identifying initiatives and funding sources for air service generation.

4.1.2 THE SHARED ECONOMY AND DESTINATION TRANSPORTATION

Shared ride services such as Uber and Lyft are a backbone of daily transportation, particularly with a younger demographic. Uber currently has a presence in the market. The prevailing practice of a live dispatcher-oriented approach will likely fade over time.

To produce a more modern destination image, Greater Palm Springs should be supportive of these services. The CVB, working with CVAG and other nine-city organizations, could reach out to these shared-ride companies and identify opportunities to maximize service in the market.

In Myrtle Beach, the local CVB undertook various initiatives to facilitate Uber service, including providing the following to Uber in report form:

- Local market data – information detailing the demographics of the area.
- Local transportation data – data on the local transportation industry, such as the number of taxi services providers there, the number people employed by the industry, etc.
- Local traffic data – analytical reports of the area’s traffic patterns.
- Tourism data – information detailing how many people are arriving in the area, demographics, seasonality, and current transportation use.

In Indianapolis, a flat-rate policy was established with Uber to facilitate the significant influx of visitors generated during the 2015 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament.

This type of interaction should be considered by

various organizations in Greater Palm Springs in order to continue to establish and grow the shared economy transportation model.

4.1.3 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

As noted above, a large majority of visitors to the destination arrive by personal vehicle or rental car. The regional shuttle transportation could offer an alternative to these modes of travel. However, there are still significant limitations to in-market travel that can make this difficult. Lack of consistent ridership will also be difficult to overcome if establishing a viable shuttle operation.

There have been several failed attempts to establish a regular shuttle service between Palm Springs and Los Angeles. Today, transportation industry representatives are reluctant to invest in providing such service. Shuttle business owners note that there have been numerous attempts at providing shuttling service to the destination, with none lasting more than four months. The decreasing air service to Ontario International Airport and a historic lack of outgoing passengers from Palm Springs also creates disincentives to provide shuttle service.

In order to secure an airport/Greater Palm Springs shuttle service, some form of public subsidy would be required. Private companies such as Super Shuttle and Karmel Shuttle are interested in participating in such a program. Public support would be required to help overcome economic challenges. A model involving regularly scheduled passenger shuttles and occasional 50-person buses could be developed. A similar subsidized system is in operation between Boston’s Logan International Airport and Cape Cod (see this section’s case study).

With this type of capacity, the potential impact on visitation and room nights would be limited, and the public financial support could be significant. Going forward, we suggest that regional shuttling may be difficult to justify. However, it may be beneficial from a long-term perspective. Greater Palm Springs representatives should conduct discussions with shuttle companies to discuss capacity, scheduling, subsidy levels, and related issues.

In addition, the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) has been involved in efforts to develop increased rail transport to the Greater Palm Springs area from western California. Officials state

that the infrequency and odd hours of the current Los Angeles-to-New Orleans route with a stopover in Palm Springs is not practical for the leisure visitor segment. Adding more frequent service, which would include stops in some of the other nine cities is desirable. This would enhance the accessibility of the destination to in-state travelers tremendously and would serve to increase overall visitation to Greater Palm Springs. This is considered to be a long-term initiative that will not likely develop until 2020 or beyond. However, steps should be taken to plan, and possibly expedite the development process.

To garner public support, community leaders of Greater Palm Springs, including the cities' visitor bureaus and other tourism stakeholders, should consider establishing a specialized project team. It would include representatives from each participating organization to partner with the RCTC and the Southwest Rail Passenger Association. SWRail is a non-profit advocacy organization in the railway industry and can assist leading public forums, conducting market research, and developing action plans that would serve to support an increase in rail service and/or infrastructure in the region.

Finally, Greater Palm Springs stakeholders have often cited the scenery along Highway 60 from Orange County as unpleasantly dull, and that its roadways are extremely narrow in some sections. Consideration should be given by Greater Palm Springs leaders to invest in a beautification and expansion of the highway. Additional lanes would improve traffic flow in the short term, as well as provide better infrastructure to support future increases in drive-in visitation.

The beautification component of this initiative could be developed in conjunction with other recommendations in the DDP. Examples include the monument/installation development suggested in tactic 4.4.2, and the destination signage program that is proposed in tactic 4.5.2.

4.1.4 A MARQUEE TRANSPORTATION HUB FOR THE DESTINATION

As previously noted, there is a lack of in-market, visitor-oriented Greater Palm Springs transportation options. We believe that a creative and coordinated marquee transportation hub system should be explored that would provide more consistent, valley-wide transportation options to access key destination assets.

Under this concept, several transportation hubs would be developed. Stations would include climate-controlled waiting areas, on-site parking, extensive visitor information, on-site information personnel and other resources. The transportation options that would filter into these stations could then include:

- Traditional public transit
- An expanded Palm Springs Buzz
- Resort shuttles
- Car rental opportunities
- Shared ride inventory, i.e. Car2Go, Zipcar
- Pedicabs
- Bike rentals
- Variety of electric vehicles

Furthermore, Sunline Transit Agency currently has a bike share program in development that would install rentable bikes and bike docks around Greater Palm Springs. Transit hub locations proximate to the proposed CV Link could help activate numerous transit options including bike, pedicab, electric vehicle, and other modes.

The transportation hub concept involves encouraging the visitor (or resident) to arrive at the transportation hub. Access from the hub is provided to virtually all destination assets via various modes of transportation.

Talks have taken place between Sunline Transit Agency and representatives in both Coachella and Indio regarding a version of transit hub development. Each city would be responsible for providing land and construction resources, and Sunline would provide bus and shuttle inventory.

The CVB, CVAG, and other destination representatives should create a task force to investigate the concept of a larger-scale, visitor-oriented transportation hub system, potentially with various locations throughout the valley.

4.2 SUPPORTING EDUCATION

The overall quality within the hospitality and tourism industry depends highly on education and professional development. This is an area that can dramatically bring about positive changes to the destination going forward. Continuing and specialized education is necessary to produce top professionals and specially trained individuals in the

hospitality and tourism business. Local education is a vital contributor to keeping a constant base of labor available to service the tourism industry and promote a high quality experience throughout the industry—from food and drink to hotel management. The destination already features importantly relevant assets – for instance, the Culinary program at College of the Desert ranks #150 in the U.S. and #19 in California. Graduates in the hospitality sector are likely to stay in Greater Palm Springs and promote tourism as a knowledgeable local.

4.2.1 SUPPORT CSUSB AND COLLEGE OF THE DESERT HOSPITALITY PROGRAMS

With the knowledge that continuing education plays a vital role in the local economy and that the lack of labor pool is a main obstacle in the hospitality industry, the CVB and city Partners should support hospitality programs at CSUSB and College of the Desert. The enhanced educational opportunities will help develop hospitality workers/professionals in the community who are essential in maintaining high quality employment standards locally. A speakers' panel should be assembled with members of the CVB and Partners to extend the educational experience. Partners should be encouraged to place priority on local graduates for employment by hosting job fairs on campus or being a part of new student orientations.

4.2.2 CONTINUE TO REWARD EXEMPLARY SERVICE

The Oasis Awards has become a major vehicle for the CVB to recognize leaders in tourism, from back of the house to the frontline, as well as major contributors in specialized fields. The CVB should leverage this annual event to publicize the quality work being done in Greater Palm Springs and engage Partners who might be more active in future years in promoting their employees in various ways throughout the year and at the event.

4.2.3 PROMOTE HIGH SCHOOL CULINARY & HOSPITALITY PROGRAMS

The Culinary Institute at LQHS has been a part of the school's excelling program for the past 13 years. With a total school enrollment of approximately 3,400 students, La Quinta High School's Culinary Institute continues to grow every year and now has between 150-175 students annually. The growing popularity of this program and stellar achievements of the students

throughout the years has helped the institute earn the approval of the new facilities bond, approved by local voters, two years ago. This led to a new classroom that encompasses 12,000 square feet of commercial grade kitchen space. In March, this year's team won the state championship at California Restaurant Association's prestigious Pro-Start Culinary Cup in March which led to an invitation to compete at the national level in Minneapolis, May 3-5.

The CVB has done an excellent job in promoting and supporting Coachella Valley High School Hospitality Academy with annual awards and by utilizing students to help at CVB events. This involvement could be extended with more Partner participation.

4.2.4 MARKET THE NEW RANCHO MIRAGE HIGH SCHOOL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

Opened in fall of 2013, Rancho Mirage High School debuted with a Culinary Arts Food Education Academy. Its first graduating class will receive their achieved certificates, based on the curriculum derived from the National Restaurant Association, in June 2016. Out of the approximate school enrollment of 1,550 students, CAFE currently has approximately 150 students enrolled in its program.

Students, half of whom are at risk and 70% on reduced or free lunch, are taught the foundations of culinary arts and restaurant management in a state-of-the-art kitchen. Called CAFÉ, it is the only high school culinary program in the Palm Springs Unified School District. The goal is to develop skills that will produce professional chefs, restaurant owners, food service workers and merchandisers. The CVB and culinary Partners should support this program and engage with the high school to determine ways to promote and foster the students as they graduate.

4.3 OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

One of Greater Palm Springs' most unique assets is its variety of geographic terrain and the beauty of its natural attractions. Using these assets to help market Greater Palm Springs as a one-of-a-kind outdoor and adventure destination could attract a younger and more active demographic. It could encourage longer stays as well. Activities and attractions within the destination that fall under the category of "outdoor and adventure" can be exhilarating, such as mountain biking, the BMW Performance Center at the Thermal Club Raceway, and ATV tours. They can

also be more relaxed and leisurely such as bike tours, hiking through Joshua Tree National Park and the recently approved Sand to Snow National Monument, and riding the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

The outdoor and adventure tourism industry is growing rapidly and has had measurable effects on numerous destinations worldwide. A 2013 market study conducted by the Adventure Travel Trade Association found that the global outbound adventure travel sector was a \$263 billion industry in 2012, excluding airfares. This represents a nearly 300 percent increase from the \$89 billion value in 2009. The study also discovered that individual outdoor/adventure travelers are spending more per trip - from \$593 in 2009 to \$947 in 2012. The average age of the outdoor/adventure traveler is 36 years old. This is younger than the broader base of Greater Palm Springs visitors, while the average length of an outdoor/adventure trip is 10 days.

Additional research indicates that there are opportunities to strengthen the Greater Palm Springs position as an outdoor and adventure destination. The Greater Palm Springs area could take better advantage of a large and growing leisure sector. Thirty percent of surveyed travel writers indicated that Greater Palm Springs could market these assets in order to increase visitation to the area. Plus, when asked what they tell their readers about the Greater Palm Springs destination, the leading response related to natural beauty.

Data from the extensive visitor intercept survey research indicates significant potential for Greater Palm Springs to tout its outdoor attractions and generate longer visits with more summer/fall visitation. Over 53 percent of visitors who participated in outdoor recreation stay in Greater Palm Springs for longer than a week. Only 32 percent of visitors who did not participate in outdoor recreation stayed over a week.

There are opportunities to promote existing and potential future outdoor attractions supporting visitation to other unique assets of the Greater Palm Springs destination. For instance, 23 percent of visitors who reported participation in outdoor recreation activities also attended a spa in Greater Palm Springs. Twenty-seven percent enjoyed Greater Palm Springs nightlife, bars, and/or clubs.

These statistics suggest both a tangible linkage

between outdoor/adventure and other destination experiences. It also shows opportunities to strengthen these links through cross-marketing with a variety of other experiences. These would include outdoor with spa, adventure with night life, etc.

Research and direct field observations have led to the development of various specific recommendations which seek to enhance outdoor and adventure opportunities in the Greater Palm Springs destination. This will increase week-long visitation to the area, improve existing physical assets within the Greater Palm Springs, and capture greater market share from international segments.

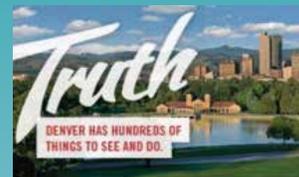
We will include potential opportunities for combining efforts that will better tie together the destination's highly varying but mutually advantageous product mix.

CASE STUDY

Denver, CO

In 2013, Visit Denver ran a \$2 million consumer ad campaign "Truth or Dare" that helped drive website visits to over six million. The campaign was targeted at Denver's top feeder markets: Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Austin, Kansas City, and the Rocky Mountain Region. Media included newspaper inserts, radio commercials, billboards, magazine ads, social media, direct mail, internet promotions, and a television commercial. These ads directed people to the CVB website, where 130 "dares" were offered in different categories, including "outdoors" and "adventure".

Visit Denver also offers the "Mile High Culture Pass", which allows visitors entrance into seven local attractions. These included the Clyfford Still Museum, Denver Art Museum, Denver Botanic Gardens, Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Denver Zoo, History Colorado Center, and Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art for the price of \$52.80, or entrance to three of the attractions for \$25. The pass can be purchased online and used over the course of five consecutive days. The pass includes discounts and deals, such as 50 percent off the Denver B-Cycle program.



4.3.1 "LINKING" OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Linking or co-branding "Outdoor Adventure" experiences first requires the development of partnerships. Various assets within Greater Palm Springs could be packaged together to create a

unique experience only found in the Oasis.

A relevant example of co-branding is the partnership between La Quinta Resort and the new BMW Performance Driving School. This is designed to entice extended weekend stay to Monday or Tuesday. “Motoring Mondays” is a great promotion between two businesses. An even more formal collaboration and go-to-market strategy is recommended. It would have impact throughout Greater Palm Springs. Multiple assets throughout the destination would be identified, and synergies would be created. These synergies would build experiences unique to the destination. The experiences will be marketed to target segments of visitors who find enjoyment and value in a vast and unique set of offerings.

Greater Palm Springs has a wealth of outdoor activities and assets. As cited in *Palm Springs Life*, “Denver can almost compete. Seattle and Portland try, but fall short. Nowhere in the lower 48 can you find more hiking trails (more than 140) or trail mileage (more than 1,250) than within the 60-mile-plus radius of Palm Springs. And nowhere in such a concentrated area will you find the diversity of topography and flora. With elevations of 11,000 feet to below sea level, this desert resort area is fast becoming one of the country’s pre-eminent hiking destinations.”

Seven of the top ten “Things to Do” in Greater Palm Springs promoted on Trip Advisor include the outdoor recreation sites of Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, San Jacinto Mountain, Indian Canyons, 4WD and Off Road Tours, Agua Caliente Indian Canyons, Coachella Valley Preserve, and Palm Canyon.

More extreme adventure enthusiasts have access to the BMW Driving School, Ultimate Mountain Biking, Hot Air Balloon Riding, Joshua Tree Rock Climbing School, EagleRider Motorcycle Rentals, Desert Adventures, ATV Adventures, and more. Tying these outdoor experiences together to a common destination theme in combination with other Greater Palm Springs’s assets can be similar to Denver’s Truth or Dare campaign (shown).

Creating a unique experience for potential visitors focused on “Outdoor Adventures” can integrate several assets together for a turnkey 3-, 5-, or 7-day vacation targeted over summer months and weekdays during low season.

For example, a 3-day “midweek adventure” itinerary could include:

Day 1 (Tuesday)

Spend the morning with Desert Adventures San Andreas fault package. Free admission to The Living Desert Zoo is included. Finish the day exploring the many shops and restaurants on Palm Canyon Drive or El Paseo.

Day 2 (Wednesday)

Take the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to reach any number of the hiking trails in the Mt. San Jacinto Wilderness. Come back and relax by the pools of the Parker Hotel.

Day 3 (Thursday)

Hike the Whitewater Canyon/Pacific Crest Trail Ridge Loop in the Whitewater Preserve. Follow the hike with a Palm Springs Windmill Tour. Round out your “midweek adventure” browsing for one-of-a-kind local artisan wares and enjoying local musicians at Palm Springs VillageFest. Treat yourself to a delicious meal of local and seasonal ingredients at Morgan’s in the Desert of famed James Beard award-winning Executive Chef, Jimmy Schmidt.

Packaging these assets for the potential visitor will increase awareness of the many outdoor assets and activities throughout the Oasis. It can also integrate other activities to round out the experience. This integration will begin a conversation among the CVB, the cities, and the partner assets.

Creating promotions and microsites similar to “2 days in Seattle” (www.2daysinseattle.com) would also allow outdoor enthusiasts to build their own itinerary. Travel writers and bloggers could be enticed to produce their own itineraries. They would be invited to launch a campaign that speaks to outdoor adventure lovers, and tie in the exploration of the entire valley, e.g. “Get your Greater Palm Springs on!

4.3.2 ATTRACTION OF EXTREME OUTDOOR ATHLETIC EVENTS

Nationally recognized touring outdoor athletic events, such as ESPN’s X-Games or Red Bull events, generate substantial room night generation and economic impact. They also draw significant PR media exposure for a host destination. The CVB’s current efforts to lure “extreme” outdoor events such as Tough Mudder should be continued. A step further could be attracting Red Bull events and/or the X Games. These events would result in high-exposure TV and/or magazine ads, and coverage by a major cable sports network.

These major events would include international participants, showcasing the destination to an international audience. Such an event would be viewed by a demographic mostly comprised of under-40 year olds- a target visitor segment for Greater Palm Springs. A number of Greater Palm Springs cities would be required to position the destination properly for such an event. The result would be creating a valley-wide initiative fostering a greater atmosphere of collaboration and cohesion.

Potential events, both amateur and professional, for consideration that fall under the “extreme” umbrella include:

- **The Warrior Dash** – international, 15,000-participant obstacle courses taking place over a five-mile trail.
- **Tough Guy Competition** – extreme, “military-like” 5,000-participant UK race featuring racers from 37 countries.
- **Red Bull Cliff Diving** – Series of Red Bull-sponsored outdoor diving events that take place in scenic mountainous areas and/or on waterfront areas. These attract an average of 25,000 attendees per event.
- **International Gravity Sports Association competitions** – street luge and downhill skate competitions, Tough Guy Competition 2013. This group wishes to organize a bigger North American event.
- **SCORE Off-Road Desert Racing** – Off-road vehicle racing events featuring 150-mph all-terrain vehicles. These events draw from 80,000 to 200,000 attendees and would require substantial square mileage. Significant interest has been expressed for developing an event near Palm Springs or Cathedral City.
- **AMA Pro Racing** – ATV and/or motocross races held at controlled tracks. This attracts up to 30,000 attendees, and promoters have indicated strong interest in competing in Coachella Valley.

These events could represent a unique opportunity to help demonstrate the variety of outdoor experiences currently available in Greater Palm Springs.

Competitions could take place in the surrounding mountains, desert, Salton Sea, or near the Tramway to showcase the Greater Palm Springs’s varied and alluring terrain.

It should be noted that CVAG’s Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan protects over 240,000 acres of land to promote the growth and safety of local wildlife. This may make it difficult to produce significant off-road events. Therefore, it will be important to consider smaller scale off-road or extreme events that could fit within specific public and/or private areas.

The unique events already in Greater Palm Springs could be boosted in creative ways, such as:

- **Tram Road Challenge** – 6k uphill run/walk presented by the Palm Springs Aerial Tram.
- **Tour de Palm Springs** – Bike and walk races on varying lengths of trails attracting over 40,000 participants.
- **North Shore Xtreme** – Inaugural 600-athlete event featuring paddle racing, camping, and yoga sessions, held in February of 2016. It has a goal to generate 6,000 different photos on social media to combat false reputations about Salton Sea being unsanitary and unsafe.

An “Outdoor and Adventure” marketing and/or co-promotion component as part of the CVB annual budget could be created. It would be established to subsidize marketing and advertising assistance that would help grow both the number of participants, and the media coverage of these events.

4.3.3 OUTDOOR TOURS TRADESHOW COMMITTEE

A number of Coachella Valley tour operators indicated that while they do receive ample support from the CVB, they are interested in revamping previous efforts. They would like to see selected tour operator owners featured at outdoor-related seminars and trade-shows in Vancouver, China, the UK, and other international markets. These shows can help introduce the unique and exquisite outdoor recreation opportunities in Greater Palm Springs. The CVB could help organize a small committee of tour operators who could represent the destination at international tradeshow, conferences, and other events in the outdoor recreation and tourism industries. Some examples of noteworthy international shows of this kind include:

- The Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show in Canada
- The Telegraph Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show in London
- The China International Travel Mart

Their expertise and knowledge of the special Greater Palm Springs outdoor assets would attract and educate potential visitors who are interested in exploration and adventure. For example, Greater Palm Springs tour operators could play footage from an ATV-mounted Go Pro and include still pictures of what the tours look like while in progress. The CVB could aid this effort by researching appropriate shows for operators. The CVB could develop and provide the operators with relevant presentation materials, send CVB personnel as needed, and contribute funding for travel expenses.

The Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism already attends the Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show in Canada. Since the outdoor/adventure assets exist valley-wide, the CVB should take a lead role. The goal will be to provide local vendors optimal opportunities to present their “adventure” services and market the broader Greater Palm Springs destination to this growing market.

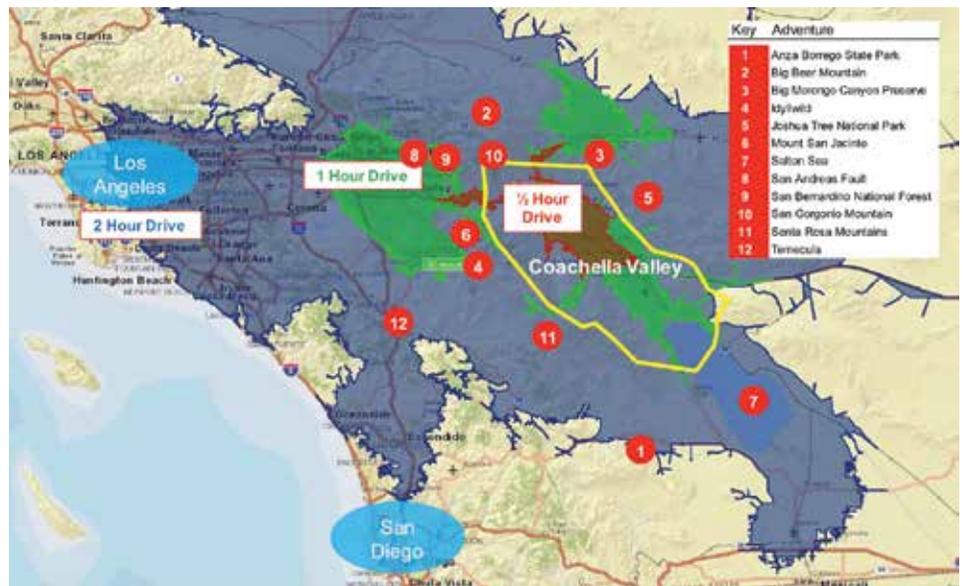
4.3.4 “HUB AND SPOKE” DESTINATION MODEL

In addition to the diverse outdoor attractions in Greater Palm Springs, there are other outdoor and adventure options within a two-hour drive of the market. The CVB should investigate opportunities to market the destination as part of a “hub and spoke” model. Greater Palm Springs would serve as a central home base for visitor during their stay in California. A simple illustration

(pictured on the following page) of this concept highlights the different experiences that are accessible from the Coachella Valley via one-hour and two-hour drives. This kind of marketing model could cater specifically to prospective visitors who would likely stay longer. By enlarging the destination’s product offerings, the way is opened for potential repeat business. Some recommended strategies include:

- Building off of its existing partnership with Visit California, the CVB could develop an “adventure portal” brand and logo on VisitGreaterPalmSprings.com, VisitCalifornia.com, and associated attractions’ and cities’ websites. There would be links to informational pages for visitors to access the outdoor recreation opportunities surrounding Coachella Valley. The CVB could emphasize the advantage of staying in a centralized and highly desirable location like Greater Palm Springs to unwind after a day of adventure.

Greater Palm Springs Hub and Spoke Destination Model



Source: Esri, 2015
Note: Drive times denote distance from Downtown Palm Springs

- Creating a “One Pass” model allowing visitors to purchase discounted admission to multiple attractions across Southern California in the same transaction. Like previous recommendations for an online itinerary creator, this would facilitate passes to attractions located throughout the region. The One Pass could include a ski access to Big Bear Ski Resort,



a day at Chuckwalla Raceway, and even a hired tour guide to lead a hike in the Palomar Mountains.

- Increasing in-market advertisement for local and regional outdoor attractions. Include ads in visitor center materials, hotel brochures, webpage banners, or potential in-app ads. This would help broaden the destination's overall product offering, and encourage current Greater Palm Springs visitors to return to the destination for future visits.

4.3.5 PALM SPRINGS OUTDOOR FAMILY ATTRACTION DEVELOPMENT

Greater Palm Springs currently does not have a substantial array of options for family entertainment. Development of such assets would help to broaden the appeal of the destination. Several planned initiatives throughout the valley that could help to address the lack of youth and family assets are described below.

The Living Desert

The Living Desert's proposed ten-year master plan includes several considerable product enhancements such as:

- 2017 – New entry experience called Crossroads of Conservation will be developed in a more centrally-located position relative to The Living Desert parking area. It will introduce guests to the zoo's conservation mission immediately upon entry. The Crossroads will also feature an Endowment Garden that showcases unique desert specimen plants.
- 2018 – 2020 – Includes new lion, hyena, and rhino exhibits, as well as a new indoor theater.
- 2021 – Laughing Springs Oasis – Includes the development of a small man-made beach attraction, with a picnic area and butterfly house.
- 2024 – Outback Adventure development – Includes zip lines leading out of the zoo, rock climbing walls, and mule and horse trail rides. A free range exhibit so visitors can walk with wallabies and lorikeets. A new restaurant, retail store, and garden area.
- 2026 – Journey to Sahel – Would feature 25,000-square-foot open space for cheetah "run demonstrations," expansive, multi-species

savanna-themed exhibits, walk-through aviary and expanded outdoor restaurant seating that would overlook savanna.

- TBD – Treasures of Cortez Aquarium – New building would have a large shark tank, a shark and ray touch tank exhibit, a reef tank, a gift shop, as well as indoor seating for 250 people.
- TBD – Magical Madagascar attraction – New interactive components in which visitors can walk in free-range lemur or wallaby exhibits, play in the splash pad's water jets, voyage across rope bridges or climb jungle gym-style nets.

The plan also proposes development of a singular main path, improved tram circulation and service paths, enhanced wayfinding, significant additions to services infrastructure and restaurant inventory, additional parking spaces, and special night-time tours (a product development that would improve the zoo's appeal during the hot summer months).

Palm Springs Aerial Tramway Developments

Plans have been proposed to add more family-friendly attractions near the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway's Valley Station. These include the development of a Tree House in the station's nearby creek area in which visitors could explore the scenic foliage atop cable-suspended platforms.

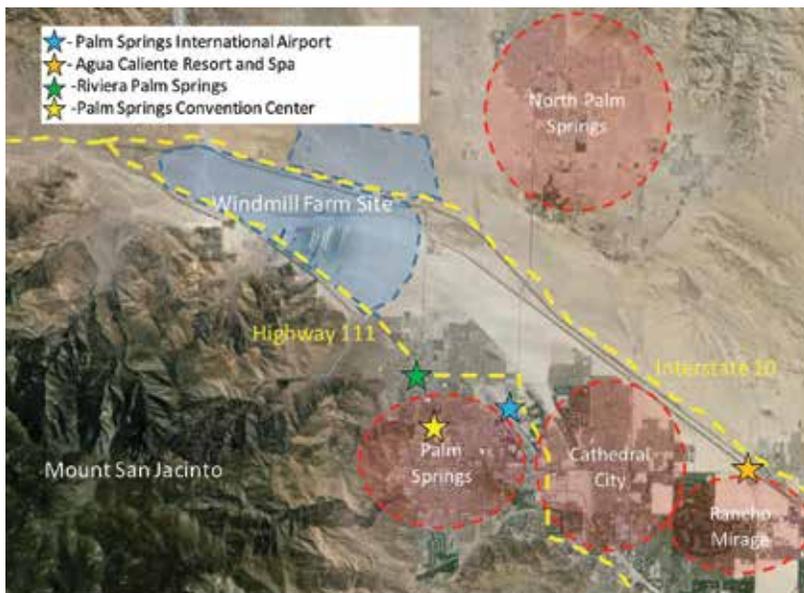
These would be individually ticketed attractions, and would likely attract more family visitation to the site via the Tramway.

Palm Springs Windmill Tours Development

Representatives from Palm Springs Windmill Tours, located just north of Palm Springs have tentative plans to redevelop a significant amount of acreage at the site in order to create an outdoor recreation park that could include:

- A zip line course that circumnavigates the entire windmill park. It would be the largest such course in California.
- Mountain biking courses through and around the windmills.
- Rock climbing walls.
- Interactive museum that could be powered by windmills at neighboring windmill farms.
- Several wind-powered educational centers located throughout the complex.

Industry consultants working on the project also note the potential to develop the area into a large environmental theme park. It would be complete with resorts, restaurants, and other entertainment options. As shown in the illustration on the following page, the site of the Palm Springs Windmill Tours is in close proximity to several complimentary assets, such as Highway 111 and Interstate 10. This provides direct roadway access to Riviera Palm Springs and Agua Caliente Resort and Spa, two of the most-visited resorts in Palm Springs according to the Custom Intercept Survey. Scenic Mount San Jacinto and the Palm Springs International Airport are also close.



Together, these projects would help to create a valley-wide critical mass of attractions geared towards a younger demographic and families. The CVB should consider formally supporting each of these adventure-related initiatives, using executive staff to assist project proponents by documenting their importance to the visitor industry in discussions with elected officials and other community organizations.

The Greater Palm Springs destination's agri-tourism product could also give visiting families and Millennials the opportunity to enjoy the valley's outdoors, as will be described in section 4.7 (Health and Wellness).

4.3.6 INVESTMENT IN ATTRACTION/ASSET DEVELOPMENT

There are numerous opportunities to create assets designed to better penetrate event and leisure

sectors. This section explores several concepts that we recommend be pursued further by the CVB and other community stakeholders.

Amateur Sports

Greater Palm Springs has been able to attract numerous room-night generating amateur sporting tournaments because of its proximity to major markets in Los Angeles and San Diego. The Big League Dreams Park in Cathedral City and Empire Polo Grounds are very successful in hosting amateur sporting events. Local officials report that there is moderate market demand for additional amateur sports fields and facilities in the

region during cooler months. However, high room rates during peak season will deter youth sporting organizations from choosing the destination. There is some opportunity to attract sporting events during shoulder season, but there tends to be limited national demand during these periods.

If a base of more affordable lodging properties is developed, there

may be a market for a large indoor sporting complex that could host major basketball and volleyball tournaments. The CVB could take advantage of the vacation rental home inventory to accommodate families attending these types of sporting events.

Improved Hiking Assets

Today, the signage and trail head amenities associated with the numerous world class hiking trails in Greater Palm Springs are seriously lacking. Each of the communities within Coachella Valley offering hiking opportunities need to evaluate ways in which they can further invest in these assets. Given the broad marketing support provided by the CVB, some form of reallocation of community destination marketing/product investment could be considered.

Water/Wakeboard Park

In addition, consideration should be given to public support for the development of a major water park and/or wake board park, located centrally with respect to hospitality properties in the Valley. This becomes a year-around asset, and a driver of visitation during shoulder and slow periods.

A "Chill" Resort/Water Focus

Several resorts in the market currently offer a cooled

pool experience during summer months. If a larger number of properties offer this amenity, the CVB could expand and enhance the Chill Campaign to include what becomes a highly unique, Valley-defining asset during the summer months.

Birding

The number of recreational birders or bird watchers nationwide, and the associated economic impact, is very significant. Opportunities exist for modest investment in amenities, particularly in the Salton Sea area, to support the birding sector. Added marketing initiatives could also be considered.

A Unique Family Asset

The family sports concept might also be taken a step further with a unique development concept that bridges amateur sports and family entertainment. San Antonio's Morgan's Wonderland is an example. The park, which opened in 2010, includes:

- Rides and attractions which are fully wheelchair-accessible.
- Rides, attractions, and areas of the park tailored to make mentally-challenged visitors feel more relaxed and to prevent over-stimulation of the senses.
- Conference center that hosts special needs-related seminars and gatherings.
- A neighboring 13-field soccer complex for major amateur sports tournaments.
- Toyota Field, an 8,000-seat semi-pro soccer stadium that is home to the San Antonio Scorpions soccer team.

Approximately 100,000 people attend the park each year. Thirty percent of this figure consists of individuals with special needs.

Millennial Focused Sports - FootGolf

Greater Palm Springs is known for its many resort golf courses, attracting visitors from all over the world. At the same time, the millennial segment is underrepresented in the broader golf industry. The visitor intercept research shows a large divide along age lines in golf participation, with 18 percent of Greater Palm Springs visitors younger than 45 playing golf compared with 39 percent of those 45 or older.

Reinventing golf for the millennial generation could be achieved by leveraging the popularity of FootGolf. FootGolf is a combination of soccer and

golf played on portions of a traditional golf course. The Riverside Golf Course in Portland experimented with the sport, drawing 200 participants a weekend over the fall season. In Greater Palm Springs, three courses presently accommodate FootGolf players.

This trend is anchored by the American FootGolf League, headquartered in the destination. The upcoming ANA Inspiration (celebrating women in sports) is also leveraging the popularity of FootGolf by hosting a FootGolf Exhibition in Greater Palm Springs March 28 to April 3. The FootGolf Exhibition game pits the USA women soccer team against Japan's team, and the conference is headlined by three Olympic woman athletes.

Consideration could be given to educating and encouraging various courses in Greater Palm Springs to experiment with FootGolf, combined with a CVB effort to market these initiatives.

4.3.7 LINKING THE BMW PERFORMANCE CENTER WITH THE CORPORATE SEGMENT

Many local stakeholders indicate the new BMW Performance Center at The Thermal Club Raceway has been a valuable addition, and that there are opportunities to grow this attraction and market it internationally for additional weekday use. Importantly, the Center represents a unique new product feature of the Greater Palm Springs destination, one that can appeal to both the burgeoning millennial visitor segment, as well as the corporate segment.

The Center is grateful for the support it has already received from the Greater Palm Springs CVB and would like to continue the relationship. Within five years, it is believed that the facility could attract 30,000 high income attendees per year. To accelerate the Performance Center's market penetration into the corporate/group segment, consideration should be given to establishing a partnership between the Palm Springs Convention Center and the raceway. A real or full-sized novelty BMW vehicle advertising the Performance Center could be brought in and showcased at the Palm Springs Convention Center, and there could be similar opportunities to co-promote at other meeting venues throughout the valley during select events.

4.3.8 CV LINK DEVELOPMENT

The proposed Coachella Valley Link will enable bikes and electric vehicles to traverse through the

middle of Greater Palm Springs. This trail would help to enhance the destination's outdoor and adventure product. A local stakeholder recognized the potential of the CV Link:

- *"I think CV Link could be a significant piece of that messaging. They need to feature the biking, hiking, and trails. That reaches a segment of the American population and even the European population. It's appealing to them that I could come, I could swim, I could be in a hotel, but I could also have this great outdoor experience that isn't golf. It's something other than golf."*

Several potential applications of the CV Link to the broader destination visitor industry product are summarized below.

- **Health and wellness offerings** – Lining the Link with features such as solar panels and charging stations are proposed. This could be a one-of-a-kind trail attracting outdoor and environmental enthusiasts from around the world.
- **Transportation** - Sunline Transit is currently in the process of developing a valley-wide bike share service. Throughout the nine cities, bike rental "docks" would be installed. The CVB should be supportive of a partnership between Sunline Transit and the future operator of the CV Link. This would ensure the bike share service will complement the trail.
- **Event development opportunities** - Outdoor event development should be considered for the proposed Link. More traditional events such as running or bicycle races would be plausible considerations. There are opportunities to incorporate sustainable technology sectors. Electric or solar-powered vehicle competitions and/or races could be hosted on the trail. Cutting-edge races could help introduce the unique CV Link development to a national audience. They would bring more attention to Greater Palm Springs' strong "green" industries. The CVB could partner with the nine cities' Chambers of Commerce and the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership by supporting and marketing such an event. This could establish opportunities for local "green" companies from around Greater Palm Springs to advertise to attendees.

4.3.9 "ONE PASS" CONCEPT

Several national companies, such as Smart Destinations and City Pass, enable visitors to pre-plan itineraries online. The itineraries are based on varying themes that tie back to the destination. They include purchase admissions to multiple attractions at one discounted price. This feature would help draw visitors into specific areas of the community based on their interests, and could create a greater valley-wide participation in the visitor industry.

An extension of the existing "Chill Pass" product could provide coupons to popular attractions across Greater Palm Springs, and also serves as a shopping cart platform. Visitors could purchase their admissions to events and attractions easily online. The CVB should consider contacting one of several of the national vendors to explore this option.

Each designated individual attraction would need to partner with a "One Pass" vendor. The CVB would aid the development of these relationships. As a leading destination asset, the Aerial Tramway will necessarily have to be one of the anchors to make the program feasible.

Smart Destinations' Explorer Pass product specifically serves destinations with six to eight major attractions. Representatives indicate that their product could be tailored effectively for a market like Greater Palm Springs within five years. This idea could also be pursued for several other product segments in Greater Palm Springs and could eventually grow into a platform similar to Visit Salt Lake's Connect Pass (described above).

4.3.10 INTERACTIVE MAPPING

Consideration should be given to partnering with a company such as Xplorit. This is a destination-mapping company that uses drones, satellite imaging, handheld cameras, and computer graphics to fully capture a city or landscape on video. Internet users can then view the destination in intricate detail online. Almost like a video game, the software allows users to visually experience any point of a given destination just by clicking specific locations. Users are then able to take a virtual walk through these indoor and outdoor locales from a first-person perspective. This interactive map could be featured as a link on the Greater Palm Springs and Visit California websites, in addition to the webpages of individual attractions. Advertisement of the interactive map could then be included at in-market kiosks and in other promotional materials. Visitors could

be encouraged to access the website and preview their bike route near Joshua Tree, their ATV tour in the desert, or even the golf course they will be playing later in the day. After their trip, visitors could show their friends an enticing firsthand look at where they adventured in Greater Palm Springs. The software can also be linked to social media web pages such as Facebook and Twitter. Past clients of Xplorit range from Las Vegas to Yosemite National Park. Their product could help showcase to website visitors the natural beauty and opportunities for adventure throughout Greater Palm Springs.

4.3.11 DEVELOP MOBILE APP

The Greater Palm Springs CVB should build on the hiking app concept currently in development. The inclusion of a checklist of outdoor attractions would encourage a broad range of adventures within and around the Coachella Valley, as well as longer stays. This could be similar to the Dares ad campaign in Denver, Colorado (<http://www.truthordaredenver.com>). The app features a customizable checklist for trip planners. In addition to providing information and directions to each outdoor attraction, it provides links to Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Visitors could take photos or write comments on their experiences at each attraction, and other visitors in the proximity of Greater Palm Springs would be able to view these updates in real time. Visitors could even share their checklists online before, during, and after their stays. Word-of-mouth-consumer reviews will lead to more widespread discovery of some of Greater Palm Springs' lesser known outdoor assets.

4.3.12 LIVE CHAT ON GREATER PALM SPRINGS WEBSITE

A part-time CVB employee could be designated to make suggestions for outdoor attractions via live chat on the website. This staffer could also provide customers with relevant information on each attraction, current deals, contact information and other details. Online chatting could connect visitors to a full range of popular and obscure unique outdoor experiences.

4.3.13 SOCIAL MEDIA SHOWCASE

Consider a partnership with Tagboard or similar vendor. The online software tracks designated "hashtags" on Instagram and Twitter posts, and posts them in a centralized location. Tagboard could develop an outdoor adventure social media display on VisitGreaterPalmSprings.com. It would feature daily updates of visitors enjoying and photographing the Coachella Valley's great outdoors in addition to other attractions.

While helping generate enthusiasm among visitors to share their Greater Palm Springs experiences online, it could informally monitor the success of some marketing campaigns or taglines developed by the CVB. For example, #DesertOasis could be featured on marketing materials. The hashtag would encourage these visitors to go online using the hashtag, and share photos illustrating the unique and/or exciting activity enjoyed in Greater Palm Springs.

To motivate this social media participation, the CVB could develop contests or random drawings for users of the designated hashtags. Rewards could include free trips or other gifts. The CVB could easily track the frequency of the use of the hashtag online, and could determine whether or not a tagline or slogan is achieving significant visibility.

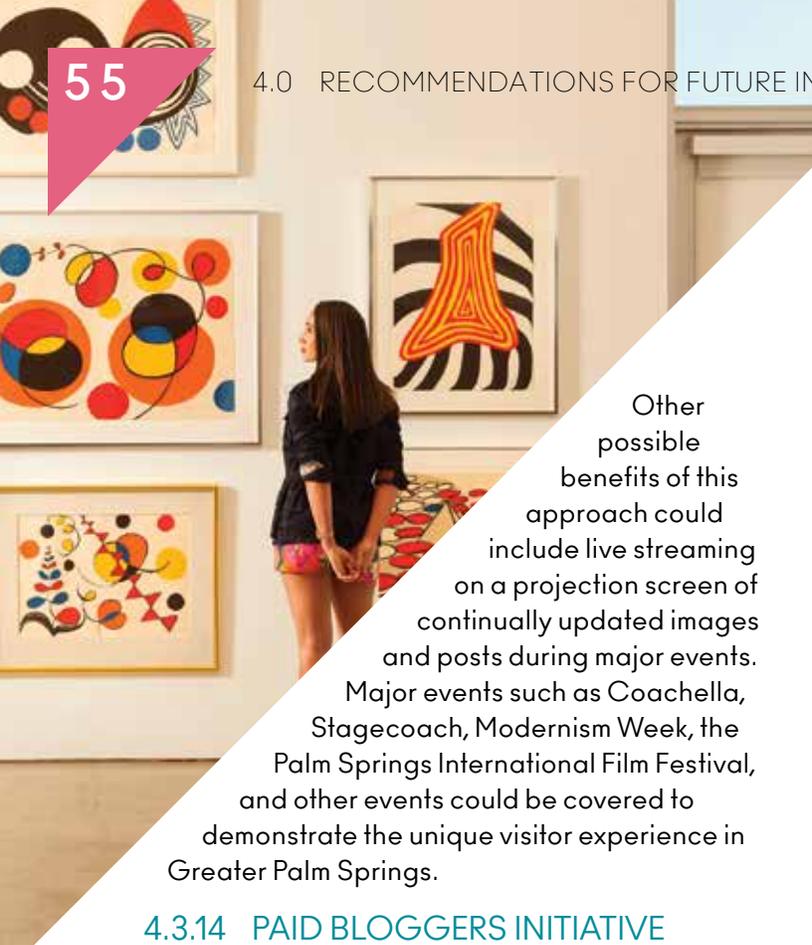
We can consider this type of outdoor/adventure social media initiative as a type of "hour glass" marketing. Tagboard could collect data from a variety of social media sources; analyze and select exciting posts from Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and/or Instagram; and push this refined content back out to a broad audience via the various Greater Palm Springs CVB social media platforms. Submitted photos could also be used as content for web, social, broadcast, outdoor and hard copy marketing material.

CASE STUDY

Salt Lake City, UT

The Visit Salt Lake Connect Pass provides access to thirteen of Salt Lake's most famous and fascinating attractions. The purchased pass is activated upon first time use, and remains active for the designated number of consecutive days. It can be purchased on the Visit Salt Lake website, at the Visitor's Center, or through tour operators and partner hotels. A one-day pass is available for \$29, which amounts to \$86 of savings. Annual passes are also available for \$75. They are in the process of digitalizing the product and creating an interactive smart phone application. Partner attractions include cultural and outdoor destination mainstays such as the Clark Planetarium, the Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort, and Utah's Hogle Zoo.

Similarly, the Visit Salt Lake website provides the ability to book flights, lodging, and activities through a partnership with Travelocity. Users of the site have the ability to make reservations and pay for admission to attractions, outdoor activities, shows, and tours.



Other possible benefits of this approach could include live streaming on a projection screen of continually updated images and posts during major events.

Major events such as Coachella, Stagecoach, Modernism Week, the Palm Springs International Film Festival, and other events could be covered to demonstrate the unique visitor experience in Greater Palm Springs.

4.3.14 PAID BLOGGERS INITIATIVE

CVBs around the country have developed successful online blogging campaigns involving their keystone events and attractions. This helps spread publicity to millions of web users around the country. Greater Palm Springs CVB representatives indicate that bloggers and travel writers participate heavily in programs developed by the CVB. There is opportunity to create greater structure and media impact by strategically selecting and compensating high impact social media personalities. Tied to the outdoor/adventure (and other) sectors, their visits should be selectively planned by the CVB. The blogger could discover attractive assets such as the Aerial Tram, Joshua Tree, and ATV tours through the desert. These, and lesser known but unique destination assets, would then be amplified through the blogosphere.

4.4 THE INTERSECTION OF ARTS, CULTURE, AND THE VISITOR INDUSTRY

The arts and cultural community within any destination can help identify and promote features that are unique and authentic. This helps to give clarity to the question “what defines us as a community?” From a Destination Marketing Association perspective, the arts and cultural fabric of the community support elements that help to create first-time and repeat visitation.



In Greater Palm Springs, the wide diversity of assets includes an internationally-known inventory of midcentury modern architecture, a highly significant Native American heritage, and cultural festivals that celebrate film, music and art. The destination has a growing and potentially untapped artistic community with opportunities to intersect with the visitor industry. Events such as Modernism Week, the Palm Springs International Film Festival, and the La Quinta Arts Festival establish a national and international art and culture presence. Institutions such as the Palm Springs Art Museum, the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum, and others draw thousands of art enthusiasts, both locals and visitors to the destination.

Forty-one percent of surveyed members of the Desert Resorts Concierge Association cite the arts, museums, and gardens as the most frequent “pleasant surprise” among resort guests. Visitor surveys show that approximately 58 percent of visitors have attended a museum or gallery in Greater Palm Springs. Seventy-nine percent of these visitors gave their experience at these venues a five out of five rating, with an overall average rating of 4.75 out of 5.

The intersection between art and culture within a community and the visitor industry can be clear and direct, such as with a major international festival. At the same time, the connection can be less tangible, but still critically important to establishing something unique and authentic for a destination. Additionally, the local community plays a role in shaping the arts and culture scene, and should be used as a resource. A local stakeholder recognized the impact of the community on developing the arts by saying:

- *“Arts and media are popular and will be growing. I think it’s a combination of factors; proximity to where the industry is in LA, and the residents here. We’ve got a large number of people in the community that has been in that field; it’s where they’ve spent their careers. And then just the general population. They’re high users of the arts industry whether it’s film, whether it’s theater. When you start looking at our McCallum Theatre, the film festival, et cetera, art is one of their staples.”*

Recommendations concerning art and culture are designed to provide a direct return in terms of room nights, and also encourage a long-term focus on art and culture. This would help support a critical Greater Palm Springs destination brand element that is used as part of many other destination marketing efforts.

4.4.1 A NEW EVENT - EXCITING, INCLUSIVE AND UNIFYING

The diversity of economy, culture, heritage and life perspective within the nine Greater Palm Springs cities and the Native American community can certainly create challenges to unifying, but it can also offer an opportunity for a highly integrated, inclusive, and thoroughly entertaining multi-day cultural event. As part of this Destination Plan, we have defined the outline of an event concept that combines the local artist community and residents throughout the valley. Eventually, it aims to include the visitor sector.

The multi-day community celebration would combine art, music, culinary, history, children’s activities, artist demonstrations, and related activities. This event, ideally held during the shoulder season, would highlight a spirit of unity and collaboration within the community, appealing to both visitors and residents. Specific elements of this event, with the CVB taking the lead in supporting any planning momentum, are described below.

- An event planning committee would be formed to select a specific destination brand relevant theme. This could include Native American history, desert oasis, iconic architecture, Hollywood history, or other unique feature.
- Artists would be selected from each community. Each would create a single art piece that is a component, or puzzle piece, of a single larger work of art. Each piece, when completed, would be displayed in their local market for a designated period of time.

- At the culmination of the multi-day event, each individual piece would be moved to a specific central location. Under cover, the individual pieces would be combined to fulfill the original vision established at the outset of the event.
- A competition could be developed to encourage residents and visitors to visit each individual piece and offer a guess as to the nature of the combined work. Prizes would include a variety of local hospitality amenities.
- Family components of the multi-day event could include chalk art, display of works from local schools, and creation of temporary murals.

CASE STUDY

Art Prize (Grand Rapids, MI)

Art Prize is an international art competition held across the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, with its seventh annual event held in October of 2015. The event was started and managed by Art Prize, a 501(c)3 non-profit entity. Marketing and advertising is funded and managed by Visit Grand Rapids, the city’s local convention and visitor’s bureau. The event heavily involves the local community, featuring over 800 volunteers from around the area, totaling 13,000 total man hours.

Attracting 1,500 competitors from 45 states and 47 countries, and over 225,000 attendees per year, the event generates over \$22 million in total new economic output for Grand Rapids. An estimated 45 pieces of sculpture or mural art have either remained in their installation site in Downtown Grand Rapids, or have been used as decorative pieces for other towns across Western Michigan.

At the event’s culmination, the completed work of art would be unveiled. After, it would be displayed on a temporary basis in communities throughout the valley. New works of art would be created each year, supporting a more robust, unique, and authentic public art program that can be appreciated by both residents and visitors.

4.4.2 ART PRIZE FOR THE COACHELLA VALLEY

ArtPrize, a highly prominent national art competition event, is held annually in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Two grand prize winners each receive \$200,000, while several runners-up receive \$20,000 each. The event was privately developed and operates with a significant production budget (see case study).

A version of this event could be considered for

Greater Palm Springs. Event organizers would establish a particular brand-relevant theme (i.e. desert beauty) under which artists would work to create art pieces of varying scale. The event could be held in partnership with the La Quinta Arts Foundation and each of the nine cities. The La Quinta Arts Festival draws 200 artists and 25,000 attendees per year and has been voted as one of the top fine arts festivals in the nation by several arts publications. The Art Prize concept would build on this established institution, increasing national and international exposure for the destination.

Similarly, consideration could be given to partnering with more modestly-sized events such as the Southwest Arts Festival (15,000 attendees annually). Festival planners indicated interest in a partnership to grow the event and include a competitive component consistent with a version of the Art Prize concept.

However implemented, a Greater Palm Springs Art Prize could also include a live competition with artists creating works in public spaces within a defined time frame. Similar to the 24-hour Mural Marathon in Reno, Nevada, spectators could observe the artistic process with a juried component for the event. Selected pieces could even be included in CVB destination advertising and marketing initiatives.



On a larger scale, Art Prize could serve to generate new iconic pieces of art for installation throughout the valley. Works of art generated from the competition could be placed throughout the destination. The artworks created would have a lasting impact on the area, serving to enhance the vibrancy and aesthetic appeal of important high traffic areas.

This strategy specifically targets creating

installations and “hardscape” improvements that could beautify some of the barren areas off the valley’s freeways. A component of the annual event could focus on creating pieces of monumental signage. This would enhance both wayfinding and the aesthetic appeal of the destination’s major roadways. These issues are also discussed in section 4.5 (Destination Wayfinding and Entry Conditions).

4.4.3 ART INTERSECTS VISITOR

The local arts community in many destinations can be thriving and vibrant, but remain isolated from the heart of the visitor community. In many cases, Greater Palm Springs visitors are not actively seeking out the arts community. They gravitate instead to a resort, spa, or escape-oriented vacation.

This should not be a reason or excuse to downplay the arts and cultural community as a component of the visitor sector. Rather, the CVB has, and can continue to leverage destination-unique art and culture. The arts can draw valuable distinctions between Greater Palm Springs and other competitive markets. As part of the Destination Development Plan, we offer the following suggestions for continuing to infuse important and valuable art and cultural assets into destination marketing efforts:

One if By Land, Two if By Sea, Three if By Air?...

Engage the local arts community to create an annual and sometimes portable exhibition. It would be tied to a brand-relevant theme, with works of art that engage the unique desert landscape, that offer a nod to the Salton Sea, and that engage the blue skies and clean, crisp environment within the valley.

The artworks will be appealing for visitors and residents, drawing from land, water, and air. The portability of the exhibit would establish a presence at the Palm Springs Convention Center, Palm Springs Airport, the many major local festivals, resorts, shopping districts, downtowns, and other areas. This concept also promotes commissions for artists. They would create works of art that can be used to enhance the entryways into each of the nine Greater Palm Springs communities, as well as line local highways. Instead of the generic, this initiative will utilize the local arts community to emphasize a sense of place. The visitor would have the feeling that they have arrived someplace that is not simply a cliché resort. It is a place that is unique. A place imbued with Native American history. A place fine-tuned to cutting edge

art, music, architecture, fashion and design. This type of endeavor could also result in the development of an iconic art piece in a scale similar to the Marilyn Monroe statue previously located in Downtown Palm Springs.

Laser Art

The world of laser art is emerging. Dramatic and technologically advanced, it has a highly relevant application to the visitor industry. We suggest that the natural landscape within the valley offers opportunities to create a laser art show with a mountain backdrop that would be unparalleled within North America.

Opportunities to create a music festival encompassing laser art components have been evaluated. The results call for caution as emphasizing the music theme can make it difficult to attract a broad regional and national audience.

Therefore, a “start small” approach seems warranted. Working with emerging regional artists, a “story through laser art” could be created. This approach could use the natural mountainous backdrop within the valley. Laser art is not just stationary points of light - a presentation could be an animated, artistic, and engaging display creating a Greater Palm Springs presence. Awareness could then expand to draw people regionally and, eventually, nationally.

Consider the “WaterFire” display in Providence, Rhode Island. This is an example of a monumental, natural-engaging art installation which draws very significant visitation. The inset highlights the scope and impact of WaterFire on the local market and offers insight into opportunities for a Greater Palm Springs laser art version of this same concept.

Native American Cultural Immersion

The Agua Caliente tribe has a tremendous foundational presence in the community. Their highly significant economic development influence calls out for greater engagement with destination exposure to feed visitor generation. We suggest a simple “clip art” approach is insufficient. Celebrating the decidedly notable Native American culture warrants a serious, collaborative, and significant approach.

Opportunities should include specific event initiatives. A greater emphasis on infusing unique Native American culture on various aspects of destination development and marketing should be considered.

- A Native American art exhibit partnering with the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum. This would be similar to the massive American Indian Cultural Center and Museum (opening 2017) and the Cowboy Western Heritage Museum, both in Oklahoma City.
- A national exhibit and auction geared towards Native American works of art, sponsored and supported the tribes locally.
- An effort to develop Native American iconography into destination branding and marketing material.

The CVB should continue to elevate their efforts to engage local Native American representatives to help create this arts and cultural foundation. A recent history on the part of the tribe focused on a more quiet engagement. But this may be an important opportunity to help support and promote this unique destination asset.

Public Art App

Consider development of a system of information access to public art throughout Greater Palm Springs. This could be accomplished using a system of QR codes to allow for wireless access to information on the artist, art piece, the destination and other art and cultural assets within the destination.

CASE STUDY

WaterFire (Providence, RI)

An award-winning sculpture by Barnaby Evans installed on the three rivers of downtown Providence, Waterfire has been praised by Rhode Island residents and international visitors alike as a powerful work of art and a moving symbol of Providence’s renaissance. WaterFire has captured the imagination of over ten million visitors, bringing life to downtown, and revitalizing Rhode Island’s capital city. In 1997, WaterFire Providence expanded to 42 braziers, and attracted an estimated attendance of 350,000 people during thirteen lightings.



The Greater Palm Springs Chautauqua

Starting as an adult education movement which gained tremendous prominence in 1920s America, the name “Chautauqua” attained a great degree of caché. It became shorthand for an organized gathering intended to introduce people to great ideas, new ideas, and issues of public concern. These gatherings were community-oriented and inclusive of art and culture.

The Greater Palm Springs destination has unique assets perfectly suited to foster this type of activity. These would include health and wellness assets, as well as a culture that emphasizes creativity of spirit and engagement in discussion of conditions that impact how we live. For example, Greater Palm Springs is home to Sunnylands, an internationally known destination for high level discussions.

Community leaders could engage with local partners in establishing an annually or even quarterly, multi-day Chautauqua-type event. It would be designed to engage a regional, national, and international audience on current topics.

4.4.4 ARTLAB: AN ARTISTS’ OASIS

As noted, the arts and culture of Greater Palm Springs is emerging and diverse. Inspired to become a world-class region within the artistic community, there has been growth and great momentum raising the profile and awareness of Greater Palm Springs as an arts and cultural destination. The recent addition of a Film, Arts, and Entertainment Manager at the CVB, and the CA Desert Arts Council are examples of this effort. A spirit of innovation most certainly resides within the valley. The Coachella Valley iHub is an incubator that provides programs, services, and incentives to start-up businesses focused on clean technology and renewable energy. These two concepts could combine to create a facility that embraces local and visiting emerging artists. It could establish a community of artistic exploration and celebration in the form of ARTLAB: An Artists’ Oasis.

Similar to the Coachella Valley Art Center, an outgrowth of the Coachella Valley Arts Alliance, the facility would allow for individual work or group collaboration. It would offer studio and exhibit space, and residence facility. ARTLAB would offer classes at all levels and a visiting artist series. Artists chosen for the program could include winners from the Art Prize competition and minority artists from the Latino and Native America communities. Affiliating with the Artists Council or another pillar in the Southern California art community would bring positive attention to an already growing arts movement in the Coachella Valley.

Ventura, California has created just such a facility. The Working Artists Ventura (WAV) is a remarkable, state-of-the-art community designed for artists and creative businesses, located in the Downtown Cultural District of Ventura. WAV offers affordable living and work space for painters, photographers, sculptors, dancers, musicians, writers, actors, filmmakers, and more.

Similarly, Ox-Bow is a 95-year-old summer school of art and artists’ residency that offers one- and two-



week intensive courses. It is located in the vacation community of Saugatuck, Michigan, and affiliated with the Art Institute of Chicago. Ox-Bow offers a wide range of opportunities for artists at all stages of their careers. Year-round programs cater to degree-seeking students, professional artists, and those new to the field. Ox-Bow is a protected place where creative processes break-down, reform, and mature. There are a variety of ways to engage in the program, from student or fellowship student to artist-in-residence, faculty member, or visiting artist.

As much as Ox-Bow is a place, it is also an experience. Through its affiliation with the Art Institute, Ox-Bow offers courses for credit and non-credit for beginning, intermediate, and advanced students. Ox-Bow's courses are diverse, ranging in focus from the functional to the sculptural, from traditional to contemporary, and from representational to conceptual. It is the synthesis of this diverse range of studio practices and the artists who come to engage with them with diversity of opinion, viewpoint, and discussion that makes the Ox-Bow experience so rich.

The natural beauty and stillness of the desert environment has inspired artists for centuries. The extraordinary natural lighting, unusual flora and fauna, and influence of Native American culture and history have beckoned artists to tell the stories of the Coachella Valley. The scenic beauty of the San Jacinto Mountains helps to disconnect from daily responsibilities and connect with oneself. It opens the spirit to explore creativity. Establishing a residential space for artists of all kinds to gather, create, and learn would be a step toward cultivating a singular and renowned arts community.

We suggest that the CVB support such an effort, potentially led by CVEP and/or other economic development organizations to fulfil it. A large facility and/or districts within the valley could be developed, likely in markets that would be highly affordable and in areas that provide access to transportation, shopping, and related amenities. The model for this effort is the 43,000-square-foot development of the CVEP Accelerator Campus, designed to incubate clean technology and renewable energy companies. If a similar effort could be undertaken for the artistic community, it would significantly stabilize and grow this sector in the community.

4.4.5 "SXSW GREATER PALM SPRINGS" EVENT DEVELOPMENT

Events such as SXSW in Austin, Texas, are not created overnight. In most cases, attempts at replicating such events are not successful at all. However, Greater Palm Springs does offer elements that can contribute to a successful cultural event drawing on the unique aspects of the destination. Outdoor adventure, health and wellness, art and culture, access to southern California music, entertainment and technology—all these are within the valley. These assets could be fused to begin an event that could ultimately have broad national appeal.

The public/private supported "Life is Beautiful Festival" in Las Vegas exemplifies this type of holistic entertainment, cultural, and educational event (see case study).

Representatives from the Palm Springs Film Society, organizers of the 140,000-attendee Palm Springs International Film Festival, have expressed interest in expanding the event. They want to include new educational and tradeshow-related components and possibly add a first-rate concert experience. Film Society Board members have visited SXSW in Austin to observe best practices in how to manage a multi-segmented national event.

CASE STUDY

Life is Beautiful Festival (Las Vegas, NV)

Founded in 2013 by Rehan Choudry, the Life is Beautiful Festival is a public-private partnership festival. It was designed for business leaders, activists, technologists, and artists to share their inspirational journeys to living a beautiful life. It features four different components: music, art, food, and education. The festival spans an entire weekend in the heart of Las Vegas, taking over 18 city blocks and generating approximately \$20 million in economic impact over its three days.

This year, the Festival will feature over 75 musical acts in a concert series taking place at several stages throughout the city. An exhibition for artists competing to create their own mural on the interior and exterior of the "Art Motel" adds to the event. Other top artists are also invited to decorate various other buildings across the city.

The event's "Learning" component features lectures from top creative talent, entrepreneurs, and innovators from dozens of industries, as well as "underdogs from humble beginnings", all in the middle of Downtown Las Vegas. The high-quality catering is a distinct component of the Festival, as top chefs from around the country offer their foods in the event's Culinary Village.

If an exploratory committee was formed to evaluate the potential for such a broad cultural event tied to Greater Palm Springs-centered themes in Coachella Valley, the CVB could support the study. This has to be considered a long-term initiative, and success is anything but guaranteed. However, the payoff in terms of visitation and national/international exposure is significant, and worthy of at least initial exploratory efforts.

There are opportunities to continue to grow the Palm Springs International Shortfest. This seven-day event in mid-June draws 600 to 800 filmmakers, and 25,000 short film enthusiasts annually. The event celebrates “shorts” and more documentary-style films, and the art is a bit more experimental than that featured at the International Film Festival. There is more of an educational component to the event, drawing producers, directors, cinematographers, and various industry technical experts.

Continued CVB support for the event, and incorporating the local film community, could also develop initiatives to increase film industry production throughout Greater Palm Springs.

4.5 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

According to Health and Wellness Tourism: Emergence of a New Market Segment, health and wellness tourism is a growing global phenomenon and one of the destination’s “authentic” experiences. The industry is generating \$494 billion internationally per year or 14.6 percent of overall tourism-related expenditures. The average health and wellness visitor spends approximately 130 percent more than the average tourist.

In some cases, a traveler visits primarily because of health/wellness assets.

Or, the health/wellness asset is simply a beneficial add-on component for other types of visits. Travelers motivated primarily by health and wellness tend to look for a

destination containing spas, fitness, yoga, outdoor, and culinary offerings. Greater Palm Springs has these features in abundance.

There are increasing opportunities to market a health and wellness component to visitors in sectors such as group, adventure, nightlife, special event, medical, cultural, sports, and others. Visitors can come to Greater Palm Springs for a convention, golf outing, outdoor adventure or weekend getaway. Then, they can take advantage of easily accessible health and wellness opportunities in the area. Visitors from all segments can be offered packages which include the health and wellness offerings.

This type of cross-pollination of assets represents a distinct opportunity in Greater Palm Springs and is discussed elsewhere in the DDP. The diversity of the nine cities is a decided advantage.

These recommendations seek to leverage Greater Palm Springs’ existing health and wellness offerings for visitors which are strongly tied to outdoor adventure experiences.

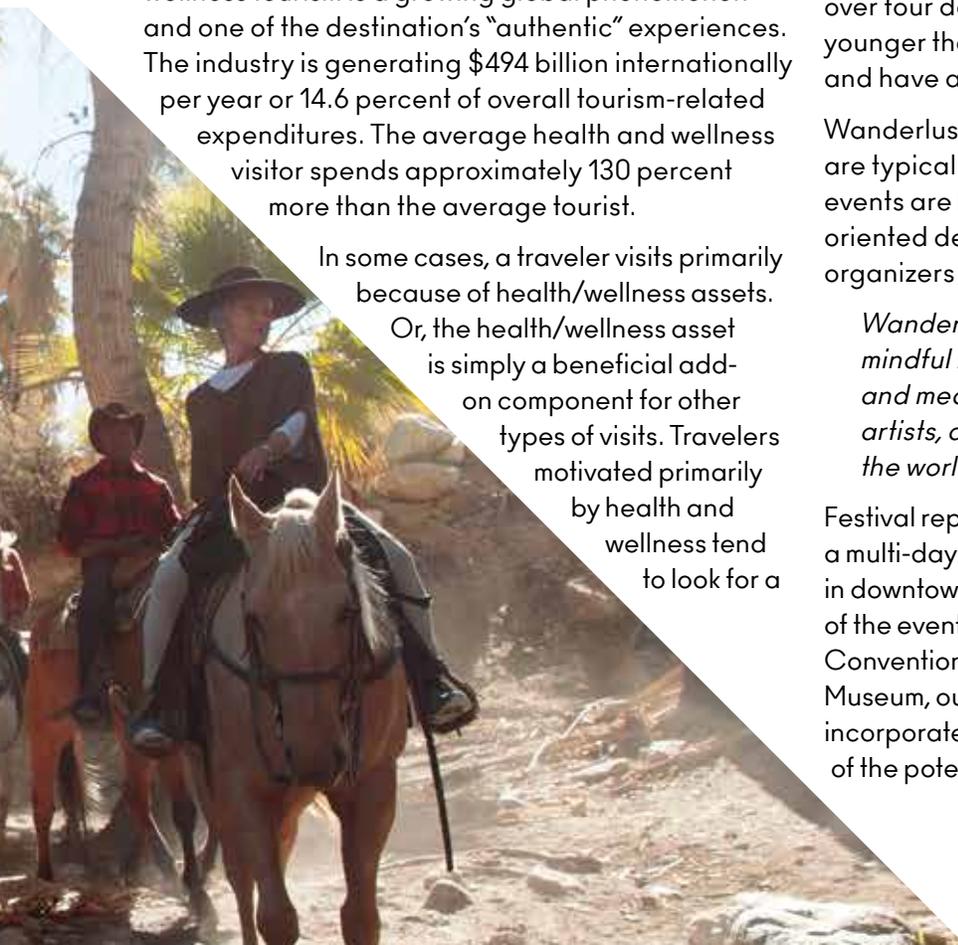
4.5.1 WANDERLUST FESTIVAL

PS Resorts, the CVB and other Greater Palm Springs entities have been active in trying to attract The Wanderlust Festival. This touring yoga event averages 2,000 to 3,000 yoga participants per day over four days. Attendees to the event tend to be younger than the typical Greater Palm Springs visitor and have a relatively high per-person spend.

Wanderlust events in larger metropolitan areas are typically a one-day function. Several multi-day events are held throughout the world in more resort-oriented destinations. The events are described by organizers in the following way:

Wanderlust Festivals are all-out celebrations of mindful living. We bring together exceptional yoga and meditation instructors, musicians, speakers, artists, and chefs for transformational retreats in the world’s most awe-inspiring natural resorts.

Festival representatives are very interested in hosting a multi-day fall event in Greater Palm Springs, possibly in downtown Palm Springs. The yoga component of the event might be held at the Palm Springs Convention Center. Other area hotels, spas, the Art Museum, outdoor spaces, and event venues could be incorporated into the Festival. There is local awareness of the potential of linking spas with the festival.



There is also moderate interest in establishing an outdoor yoga component in La Quinta. With flourishing yoga markets in nearby San Diego and Los Angeles, officials believe this event could attract over 5,000 attendees and possibly take place every three to four years.

With the advent of the Wanderlust Center in Hollywood, California, officials have indicated that there are partnering possibilities with existing large-scale events such as Coachella. Boutique hotels in Greater Palm Springs, for instance, could introduce wellness components during large-scale events.

Efforts to build an event-based relationship with Wanderlust should continue, focusing on establishing a more ongoing relationship. An aggressive joint effort between the CVB, Palm Springs Tourism Bureau, and PS Resorts with this goal should be developed.

The CVB could take a lead in developing creative marketing materials for a Greater Palm Springs Wanderlust Festival. Providing support in facility booking and logistics management would aid the creation and facilitation of such an event.

4.5.2 FITNESS MEETS VISITOR

There are travelers in virtually all segments eager to engage in fitness-related activities. Whether in the destination for a convention, festival, leisure vacation or some type of group getaway, accessing fitness-related amenities is important to travelers. Greater Palm Springs can provide vacation fitness options that are unique and authentic. This will boost the brand and help influence traveler destination decisions.

Elements of the “Fitness Meets Visitor” concept to be considered include the following:

- Incorporate a CVB-sponsored app to facilitate visitor access to the wide range of fitness opportunities. Spas, yoga, CrossFit, weight training, running, biking, hiking, etc. would be included. The app would highlight facility locations, give links to websites, contain an interactive map and other features. It would be made available from hospitality websites throughout the destination. The “Fit Pass” concept in San Antonio could be adapted to this type of approach.
- To add to the fun and generate greater interest,

the app could allow for the visitor to receive points for each fitness activity undertaken and enter into a drawing for wellness-related prizes. Their score would be given to them prior to departure.

- The CVB could develop an approach for more dedicated wellness travelers. A local partner health organization could give an initial physical/lifestyle evaluation. An in-destination action plan would be custom-created that would include participation in CrossFit classes, healthy eating classes, yoga sessions, mountain biking, speed biking, or even swimming in the Salton Sea. Visitors would leave the destination with a roadmap for future lifetime wellness.

4.5.3 MEDICAL TOURISM INITIATIVES

According to Patients Beyond Borders, the medical tourism market is defined as “anyone who travels across international borders for the purpose of receiving medical care.” It is a \$38.5 to \$55 billion market (USD) and accounts for approximately 11 million cross-border patients worldwide spending an average of \$3,500 to \$5,000 USD per visit. This includes all medical-related costs, transportation, inpatient stays, and accommodations. The market is growing as the world population ages, becomes more affluent, and sees the demand surpassing quality for healthcare resources. The US is one of the top 11 international medical tourism markets.

Greater Palm Springs could benefit from a focused effort on medical tourism targeted to the established Canadian marketplace, as well as other cold weather climates. The CVB could support the efforts of the three main hospitals—Eisenhower Hospital in Rancho Mirage, Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs, and JFK Hospital in Indio. Through targeted web-based and digital marketing channels, Greater Palm Springs could capitalize on and increase market share of medical tourism. This could be accomplished in partnership with the “Fitness Council” discussed later in this section. A model used in San Antonio under which the major private healthcare companies of the region pool funding for medical-focused international campaigns could be adapted for Greater Palm Springs. Partners should consider creative health and wellness program options such as the successful “Biggest Loser” program at JW Marriott Desert Springs.

4.5.4 YOGA FOR ATHLETES AND VETERANS

Train with Yoga is a private California-based yoga company with experience in leading classes for athletic teams and associations. The company has expressed considerable interest in partnering with Greater Palm Springs organizers to help develop a regular yoga program. This would be organized to focus on serving visiting amateur and professional athletic teams, injured and rehabilitating athletes, retired athletes, and injured or elderly non-athletes. Such an initiative could also be adapted for veterans recovering from various injuries. Local Bhakti Fest representatives include a component for veterans and would like to expand it. National Veterans Foundations and/or the Veterans Yoga Project (a non-profit devoted to helping veterans with PTSD) could be engaged to provide an immediate national scope to the event.

At the onset, the visitor element associated with this initiative may be limited. However, there are important opportunities for national and international PR to be tied to an important destination brand pillar. Over time, with an aging population and increases in the veteran population, more significant room night activity could be generated.

To be successful, this program would likely require dedicated space, perhaps tied to an existing resort campus. Initially, space for approximately 200 participants would be needed. There may be significant corporate sponsorship and resort partnership interest in this concept.

4.5.5 TRAVEL YOGI PROGRAM AND DESTINATION EXPOSURE

GAIAM, a leading fitness product and media corporation, has a program called The Travel Yogi. Some of the most recognizable figures in yoga travel to a destination to immerse themselves in the local culture and yoga community. Greater Palm Springs would benefit from this concept given the significant social media impact generated. Nationally recognized yoga instructors would leverage their considerable social media followings to highlight positive experiences in Greater Palm Springs. This high-profile program could boost direct access and positive Greater Palm Springs messaging to hundreds and thousands of domestic and international visitors in the yoga community.

The CVB should consider actively pursuing these events. The program requires smaller, more low-key resorts and ties to themes of seclusion and intimacy. Showcasing these lesser-known traits of Greater Palm Springs would effectively position the destination to previously untapped and growing market segments, and would provide ample opportunity to showcase the world-class spas in Greater Palm Springs.

4.5.6 SUPPORT PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS FESTIVAL

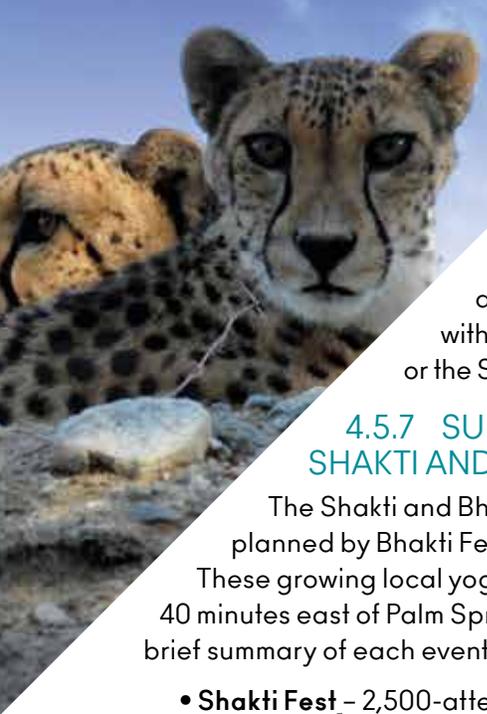
The Palm Springs International Health and Wellness Festival is a three-day interactive and educational festival showcasing sustainable and holistic living. The inaugural event was held at the Palm Springs Air Museum in November 2015. Event planners estimate attendance in the first year will approximate 2,500 attendees. They fully expect it to grow to over 20,000 within ten years and foresee moving to the Palm Springs Convention Center to accommodate the growth. Some of the unique and exciting aspects of the Festival include:

- Adult obstacle course
- Bicycle Agility Course
- NFL autograph signings
- Live music
- Craft beers
- Healthy food samplings from local restaurants
- Informative lectures

The Festival already has a strong network of support including PS Resorts, the City of Palm Springs, the Palm Springs Office of Sustainability, and the Police and Fire Departments of Palm Springs. However, planners of the Festival see important value in an even closer relationship with the CVB to grow the event in future years.

Event organizers state there is potential to accelerate growth by creating an alliance with other wellness organizations and public entities from around Greater Palm Springs, including various California





associations. The CVB could help facilitate these connections. There are also potential synergies with Train with Yoga initiatives or the Shakti/Bhakti Festivals.

4.5.7 SUPPORT GROWTH OF SHAKTI AND BHAKTI FESTIVALS

The Shakti and Bhakti Festivals are planned by Bhakti Fest as non-profit events. These growing local yoga festivals are located 40 minutes east of Palm Springs near Joshua Tree. A brief summary of each event is presented below:

- **Shakti Fest** – 2,500-attendee event held in May which bans both alcohol and unhealthy foods. The primary focus is on yoga.
- **Bhakti Fest** – 4,000-attendee event (expected to grow to 10,000 within five years) held in October. It is similar to Shakti Fest, but includes music, dance, and additional food and beverage components. Approximately 50 percent of attendees come from out of state.

Event organizers suggested that the CVB and other entities could help increase attendance (and associated room nights) by providing marketing assistance. This would include making outreach efforts to potential national partners such as youth and veterans organizations. Organizers are also interested in improving shuttle services from the Greater Palm Springs destination to the event site.

Unlike the Wanderlust Festival, these events are not intended to be mainstream outdoor parties. They are highly focused on a “pure” yoga experience, maintaining strict enforcement codes on tobacco, alcohol, etc.

Officials also reported interest in starting a local outreach program. Yoga teachers would travel to the nine cities and lead sessions with underprivileged youth in the area. Assistance is needed to secure funding and sponsors for such an initiative, potentially through the Fitness Council described below.

4.5.8 GREATER PALM SPRINGS FITNESS COUNCIL

Internally, the CVB has discussed the concept of a Greater Palm Springs Fitness Council. Such an entity could be viewed as an advisory body to all

Greater Palm Springs fitness initiatives, including those targeting the visitor. This might be modeled after an initiative in San Antonio that involves a type of health and wellness advisory board comprised of local healthcare companies. In Greater Palm Springs, such an entity could include representatives from local yoga and/or CrossFit studios, doctors from the area, and even non-local health and wellness organizations.

There is positive momentum being generated by developments such as the International Health and Wellness Festival, and the potential attraction of the Wanderlust Festival. Greater Palm Springs can be in prime position to implement this type of concept quite successfully. The establishment of such an organization could be highly valuable to the CVB, CVAG, and other organizations. Maintaining a current and impactful approach to health and wellness also helps to reinforce an important brand pillar for the destination.

4.5.9 “LINKING” HEALTH AND WELLNESS

As similarly discussed in the Outdoor and Adventure recommendations section, the CVB could play a crucial role in establishing strategic partnerships. The goal is to link and co-brand health and wellness activities both with, and among, individual destination assets. This alliance of marketing efforts could help brand the Greater Palm Springs destination as a safe haven for one’s mind and body, or perhaps earn the designation as “Fit City USA” in the travel marketplace. Local assets include 1) the valley’s top-flight spas; 2) locally-sourced and diverse produce; 3) yoga studios; 4) crossfit gyms; and 5) high-quality medical facilities. Important to note, this list includes some of the destination’s lesser-known but well reviewed assets, such as its renowned spas. All would benefit from a shared effort to enhance the valley’s health and wellness brand.

The CVB could work to identify and execute strategies that would synergize promotional efforts. For example, all the assets could be included in comprehensive health and wellness promotional material, or could be packaged together at discounted prices for the visitor. The end goal would be to attract the full range of visitors. Millennials to retirees could incorporate health experiences into their visits. Massages, steam baths, locally-sourced foods, meditation, bicycling, Tai Chi, medical consultations, exercise, and other related activities

have broad appeal. Packaging these health and wellness assets targets specific leisure segments and enhances the experience for the broader visitor base.

4.5.10 INVESTMENT IN AGRITOURISM

Second only to tourism in terms of its economic presence in the Coachella Valley, the agricultural sector is an under-leveraged destination asset. The valley is renowned for its three-season growing period of grapes, dates, citrus fruits, lettuce, carrots, and bell and chili peppers. The 70,000 acres of farmland concentrated on the east side of the valley boasts both delicious organic produce and breathtaking scenery. These two unique and authentic aspects may help to motivate visitation, particularly from the younger traveler.

The CVB has “Always in Season” and “An Oasis of Flavor: Local, Fresh, Crafted” promotional videos on its website. This represents an effective showcasing of the valley’s “farm to fork” locally sourced, organic food. These offerings engage viewers by educating them on the valley’s farmland and its history. It also shows the visually tantalizing food selection at some of the finest locally sourced restaurants. The videos do a good job of bringing the valley’s agricultural industry to the mainstage of the destination. It ties it to the CVB’s overarching brand, and successfully introduces this destination aspect to potential Greater Palm Springs visitors.

Building on this effort, it is also important to empower the individual farms that make up the foundation of this key asset. Consider an initiative similar to Colorado Office of Tourism’s Cultural, Heritage/ Agritourism Mentor Program (CHAMP). Business mentors from the state’s agriculture sector provide peer assistance and training programs for agritourism businesses wanting to improve or expand their attractions. The CVB could start an enrollment program that would invite owners and managers of some of the region’s more commercially successful agritourism businesses. These mentors could then lead workshops or make site visits to farms and other agritourism businesses and help to educate on how to market better or develop their product offerings.

Volunteers for this program could come from College of the Desert or large nearby schools such as USC or UCLA. The CVB could start a part-time or internship program that would staff two or three new agritourism positions, using students such

as business majors enrolled in an undergraduate program or even MBA students working toward their theses. Possible projects could include developing a branded signage program that could unite the various agri-tourism businesses or farms. Strategizing entryway access into the agricultural attractions could be addressed. Another project might be providing individual agri-tourism properties preliminary plans and recommendations for future product development. This could stimulate the development of high-quality cultural and heritage-related agri-tourism experiences for travelers in Greater Palm Springs.

The CVB could also head efforts to support and promote agricultural site visits. Partnerships with the various farms and agri-tourism companies of the valley could be promoted, especially with the help of east valley city Partners. For instance, many other markets such as Sacramento, which brands itself as the “Farm to Fork Capital,” have advantageously implemented outdoor dining parties. These take place on the actual farm fields where the party food was harvested. The CVB could work with the local region’s farms to develop these “farm dine outs” and motivate Greater Palm Springs visitors to try them by marketing these dining events on the CVB website.

Consider supporting the development of a farm-to-table festival such as the “Sample the Sierra Festival” in South Lake Tahoe, which was started by a joint effort between the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce and the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority. Similarly, the CVB could work with CVEP, Riverside County, the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs, and other agriculture-related entities. Helping to establish partnerships between locally and nationally renowned chefs and the valley’s farms, could result in a world-class food and wine tasting festival that could also feature entertainment.

Farms would have the opportunity to sell their produce at the festival, while providing the ingredients for chef-prepared gourmet meals in front of a live audience. In the future, “Sample the Sierra” will also include a competition. Chefs will vie with one another using the same pre-set basket of ingredients provided to them by local Lake Tahoe farmers. This type of event could draw prestigious chefs from the Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco markets to come out to Greater Palm Springs and get a firsthand taste for its outstanding produce offerings.

Alternatively, this type of farm-to-fork celebration could be tied in as a major component of the new and already planned Palm Springs International Health and Wellness Festival.

4.5.11 CONSOLIDATE HEALTH AND WELLNESS TACTICS AS “BLUE ZONES”

Blue Zones is an advising organization of renowned medical professionals who work with communities throughout the world to establish goal-oriented action plans that improve the overall health of their residents. These plans are based on findings from extensive past research that identified and analyzed several areas around the world in which residents experience substantially longer life spans. The organization has achieved rapid and lasting success in a variety of markets.

As part of the DDP, consideration could be given to having the Desert Healthcare District, CVAG, the CVB and other community leaders coordinate efforts to develop a Blue Zones enrollment program for the nine cities. Importantly, a community must have significant local buy-in in order to qualify for the program, so the District could head a preliminary marketing campaign that challenges the nine cities to improve their well-being and work with other community leaders to encourage valley-wide participation.

This type of valley-wide initiative could serve as a platform that threads together the various health and wellness recommendations presented herein, and would bring the nine cities together for a common cause. Moreover, it would give the destination positive exposure that is highly brand-relevant, while also providing important benefits to Greater Palm Springs residents.

4.6 DESTINATION WAYFINDING AND ENTRY CONDITIONS

Simply by virtue of the dispersed nature of the destination and the nine cities, destination wayfinding can be challenging. Visitor attractions, event facilities, and hotels/resorts are distantly spread out throughout the valley. The lack of a unifying signage and wayfinding platform can magnify this challenge for the visitor.

As mentioned in previous sections, there are entrance routes into the destination that are not inviting to the visitor. These corridors could benefit from hardscape

enhancements such as added signage, the development of landmark identifiers and other highway beautification initiatives. For example, the sense of arrival into Palm Springs from I-10 lacks any kind of visitor appeal.

Addressing these issues is necessarily a long-term effort, involving each city and possibly state government. We have identified several initiatives that should be considered by the CVB for advocacy to various governmental and economic development entities.

4.6.1 HIGHWAY 111 BANNER INITIATIVE

There are opportunities to create a more destination-consistent system of banner advertising along Highway 111, connecting many of the communities within the valley. Consideration should be given to initiating a program under which major events would be advertised along the entire corridor. From the La Quinta Arts Festival to the Palm Springs Film Festival, such a program would create a consistent theme and cross-marketing opportunity. Each of the nine communities and the Tribe would have opportunities to advertise events.

4.6.2 BROADER DESTINATION WAYFINDING

An informative and flexible wayfinding system in high-pedestrian traffic areas, at events, future transportation hubs, and other areas is needed. It would improve the ability of the visitor to seek out various destination attractions and could also serve to publicize events and attractions.

A newly developed product called “Points” could address various signage challenges in the destination. The Points product allows for remote programming to



change signage as needed – displaying hours of operation, special events, and other information for each attraction. The individual signs can rotate as the menu of attractions included in a particular sign changes.

A set of attraction categories can be programmed and allows the visitor to view food/beverage outlets, events, nightlife, outdoor/adventure or any other category.



A wireless connection could be developed at some point to link handheld devices to the Points sign, which would allow a download of directions and other information.

Points could be used either permanently at various higher-traffic sites, or temporarily at one of Greater Palm Springs's many trademark events. The CVB should organize representatives from various governmental and economic development organizations to evaluate this and related products for installation throughout the Valley.

A nine-city approach to evaluating, funding, and implementing such a program would be needed. However, the benefits to visitors (and residents) can be substantial, and likely would justify a fairly significant investment.

4.6.3 DESTINATION SIGNAGE MONUMENTS

Numerous communities throughout the country have embarked on comprehensive and branded signage programs. Consideration of such a coordinated program in Greater Palm Springs should be considered, blending a unifying component yet with a distinct element for each city. Several such examples are described below.

Miami Beach

In 2005, the city of Miami Beach hired a wayfinding design firm to help establish a unique design. It would represent the city's image, mission and aspirations in a consistent way. The Miami Beach architectural style influenced the modern and elegant signage structures found throughout the city. All have different features that tie to the same branded elements.



San Diego

Civic San Diego, a non-profit urban planning firm, worked with the City of San Diego and the Unified Port of San Diego to rebrand their destination. Initiatives included new wayfinding signage which emphasizes the vibrancy and active lifestyle elements of San Diego's brand identity. Visitor and community enhancements were incorporated into existing downtown signage.

Application of these types of initiatives in Greater Palm Springs could involve participation of the local arts and design community. Possibly the "art prize" concept described in the Creative Arts Event Development recommendation section could be included. Under this approach, a juried competition would be developed to create monumental signage. These would be installed at the key interstate and highway junctions in each community and at various high pedestrian traffic areas. Artists and designers would be given a set of design standards reflecting a common destination theme. Within this framework, contestants would develop creative and unique art pieces to serve as destination markers.

The previously described Points signage system could also be used in combination with an overarching design that helps tie the nine cities together. With this concept, there could be entry monuments for each

city placed along their entryways from Highway 111. These monuments would include a modest common valley-wide element, along with unique city-specific graphics. Consideration should also be given to incorporating a digital, interactive component that announces events, attraction locations, and other visitor information.

This digital component could be considered as a “Did You Know?” campaign that highlights the diversity of nearby unique attractions. This program would help steer visitors to Greater Palm Springs’s assets that are more difficult to locate such as hiking trails, ATV tours, spas, museums, galleries, restaurants, and other destination amenities.

4.6.4 MAJOR I-10 DIGITAL SIGNAGE

There are challenges and opportunities associated with the significant vehicle traffic along I-10 through Coachella Valley. The communities of Greater Palm Springs are largely located distant from the various I-10 intersections, resulting in a lack of awareness of the assets within the destination. At the same time, the I-10 corridor represents a significant advertising opportunity. Consideration should be given to a large-scale digital signage inventory along I-10. The signage program could be coordinated to advertise events and attractions within the destination. Such signage would include high-definition imagery and information that portrays unique destination assets.

4.7 ECO SUSTAINABILITY

“Ecotourism” is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel into one experience. It is another fast-growing sector of the tourism industry. Due to Greater Palm Springs’ notable amount of green technology companies and initiatives, there is ample opportunity to use these industries to enhance destination visitation.

Ecotourism is defined by a broad set of characteristics that aim to enhance the typical visitor’s experience in a destination, is in harmony with the environment, and sustains the well-being of local community members. The unique green components of Greater Palm Springs can most certainly deliver a positive, memorable experience for both visitors and residents. As one local stakeholder said:

- *“I think what is really resonating is the valley’s interest in renewable energies, and what the efforts are whether it is the windmill farms or what could potentially be occurring with the Salton*

Sea or our solar generation. When I talk with my younger nieces and nephews, they think that we are on the cutting edge, and love the energy responsibility and efficiency of this valley. In their minds, we are taking a very, very strong leadership role, and they want to be involved. They want to be interested.”

The sustainable technology industries are growing rapidly nationwide. Local stakeholders claim, however, the valley’s windmill, solar, and thermal energy industries are being underexposed to Greater Palm Springs visitors. The area might be missing out on opportunities to benefit from potential economic growth. These industries are also vying for increased recognition from the public sector, and local residents report that they view one another as competition.

By starting initiatives aimed at leveraging and developing projects to unite these local “green” industries, Greater Palm Springs can help generate more local involvement in the tourism industry. Incorporating a green component of the local economy will act as a pull to the destination. It will not only draw visitation, but could attract new companies to the area. This would lead to generating lasting incremental economic impact and capital investment into local infrastructure. One stakeholder recognized the potential of eco-sustainability to attract people to the valley:

- *“Being able to say you’re [in] an environmentally focused community sometimes can be an attractor for people to come visit. For example, we only use solar power and our hotel is completely environmentally friendly; people are actually into that. They drive their Prius out here or their Leaf, right? So if we continue to expand how we are as a valley focused on the environment, that could also be a drawer and attractor.”*

This set of recommendations aims to highlight important opportunities to grow this sector for the benefit of Greater Palm Springs.

4.7.1 CONTINUE AND INCREASE THE SUPPORT OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ENERGY AND WATER SUMMIT

The Southern California Energy Summit is an annual event at the Palm Springs Convention Center. Public and private leaders gather from around the state of California to discuss sustainable energy industry issues and opportunities. The event has grown

from 250 attendees in 2009 to 600 in 2014. Event representatives believe that there is considerable potential to substantially increase this figure to over 1,000 within the next few years. There is also a possibility to attract notable politicians and corporate executives from around the country. In the long term, both event planners and Convention Center management feel the event could not only attract several thousand people, but it could become a meeting place for green project leaders from Fortune 500 companies.

To capitalize on this event's growth, event officials suggested that the Greater Palm Springs CVB and CVEP focus their efforts on recruiting private businesses from around the country. Promotional opportunities for solar, thermal, and windmill companies in the Coachella Valley could be provided. Similar programs are run by Visit Denver or Visit Columbia (South Carolina). The CVB could start a program that enables visiting green companies from around the country to tour the destination, make connections with the local businesses, and even make a stop at CVEP's iHub. With the end goal of recruiting businesses for permanent establishment in mind, a program like this could lead to substantial economic development for Greater Palm Springs.

Another tie-in could be with the nearby Windmill Tours of Palm Springs. Officials note that they have not yet been approached to participate in any kind of partnership with the event. Free or discounted windmill tours for Summit attendees would be an appropriate off-site activity that would give them a chance to see a part of Greater Palm Springs' history as a center for alternative energy.

With sufficient investment and buy-in from the valley's cities and community leaders to promote its success, the Summit could eventually include a consumer component. By becoming a more encompassing "sustainability" summit, non-industry members could be drawn from around and outside the Greater Palm Springs. They would be able to observe the various alternative energy

technologies being developed for the future. The event could be transformed into a nationally recognized cornerstone eco-sustainability event. It could attract college students and business professionals to the region. Consider moving the event's date to align with other major Greater Palm Springs events such as the International Film Festival or Coachella Music and Arts Festival. In this way, the Summit could represent the "educational arm" for a SXSW-like event.

4.7.2 STUDENT COMPETITION/FAIR

Greater Palm Springs can attract youth to the destination as well as provide academic opportunities for local students to excel. Greater Palm Springs CVB should investigate possible partnerships with the USC Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies and Cal Tech's Resnick Institute. A statewide academic competition could be established in which students compete to develop applications of sustainable technology or draft sustainable business plans. Officials from both departments expressed serious interest in developing this type of event in Greater Palm Springs. The state's Department of Education indicated it could potentially receive support from the Green Ribbon program. This is a certification program that identifies notable practices of sustainability at schools around the country.

This type of event could serve as a showcasing opportunity for college students seeking a job in the sustainable industries sector. Local solar, thermal, and wind businesses could attend the event and recruit future employees. These businesses could help establish challenges for business case competitions to generate ideas on how to improve some of the major issues in green industries. For example, California's issues with water conservation could be a potential theme, and the winning idea could be featured in *The Desert Sun*. There is potential for this to become a bi-annual event. The starting and ending ceremonies for year-long competitions could be held at the Palm Springs Convention Center.

Wintec and Windmill Tours of Palm Springs noted that they would eagerly support the event and would provide free tours of their windmill farms. With proposed developments at the site of the tours, such as mountain biking trails and a zip line course, this could be a fruitful partnership. It would provide educational



opportunities for students at the event and exciting entertainment for these young participants.

This fair or competition could take place at the Palm Springs Convention Center and could benefit from an association with the existing Southern California Energy Summit. Again, national companies are likely to be attracted to Greater Palm Springs for the Summit. This would then enrich the opportunities for fair/competition participants. They can become more familiar with the national industries, learn about current environmental and sustainable issues, and even be exposed to potential career paths.

There are many different routes that an event like this could take depending on the types of partnerships that are established. To make the most of such an academic fair or competition, the nine cities each need to organize local support. Schools and colleges would need to be involved in such a program, as well as the respective solar, thermal, wind, and water companies.

4.7.3 MAXIMIZE THE POTENTIAL OF THE CV LINK

The CV Link development, barring further pushback, hopes to break ground by 2017. This leaves ample time to consider best ways to structure and position the end product. Link representatives indicate that there are multiple development components that could help make the trail a legitimate tourist attraction. These include solar panels lining its path, and power charging stations for electric vehicles. Officials also expect the development to spur nearby economic development and cite the possibility of having businesses lining the Link.

An idea that builds on this concept involves coordinating with the nine cities to tailor the Link's master plan for a trail. Plans should include specifics for private business property investment. As planning moves forward, consideration should be given to policies that ensure the recruitment of environmentally certified businesses. This could involve a partnership with "Green Business Certified," or a similar organization that would assist in bringing these types of businesses to the area. These businesses could be bike or electric vehicle rental shops and conveyances that are partially or totally powered by the Link's solar panels. Imagine a half-mile-long section of the trail that resembles a mixed-use entertainment complex and is completely reliant on solar power. This end product could put Greater Palm Springs at the

forefront of the "eco sustainable" industry. This would be a destination asset that could build shared pride among the nine cities.

CVAG officials report that 61 percent of the trail will run through lower income areas. This will provide much-needed economic and transportation benefits to the people of these communities. The Link's development could also be a major opportunity to engage community members and to collect some of their input for the final structure of the trail. This approach was used in the development process of the High Line in New York City. A former railroad-turned-public park with various eco-friendly innovations, residents were invited to vote on specific features of the trail. From the type of plants used to decorate its sections to the gradient of the access points from the highways, their input was noted.

The CV Link development also represents a very unique opportunity to connect "green" with tourism. The Link could generate national press coverage, while also improving and refreshing the heart of the Coachella Valley. The CVB could even organize support from visiting tourists and provide opportunities to comment on how an alternative transportation route could enhance the Greater Palm Springs experience.

Likewise, Southern California Energy Summit attendees could receive a Segway/electric vehicle/bike tour of the trail. Perhaps private funding would be available to help pay for the trail's ever-evolving development ideas. This type of private recruitment would not be solely performed by the Greater Palm Springs CVB. CVAG and CVEP could assist in the process, but the CVB could be helpful for the first step in the process by getting companies to the Summit, then on the Link.

Consideration should be given to placing a series of exhibits and displays along the trail. These could highlight the local green businesses and educate local residents and visitors about sustainable



practices. It could be an opportunity to develop ideas for making the Link more tourist-friendly. “Portal” signs could be installed that direct to the Aerial Tramway, to the Salton Sea, or other areas. Concepts discussed in the transportation section of these recommendations could be used along parts of the Link.

4.7.4 ALTERNATIVE ENERGY EDUCATION CENTER AT WINDMILL TOURS SITE

As described in the Outdoor and Adventure recommendations section of the DDP, Wintec and its Palm Springs Windmill Tours are seriously considering several significant entertainment and educational developments on its vast acreage. The educational components could include the development of several workshop buildings around the complex providing interactive exhibits, classrooms, and other helpful learning resources. Visitors could discover the benefits and science behind the wind power industry, as well as other alternative energy industries.

Though this is not a certainty, it is important for the CVB and other local entities to realize the importance of such a development. This site would be optimal due to its proximity to Greater Palm Springs. A well-advertised, world-class education center and/or museum could generate increased visitation from younger demographic segments.

To assist in ensuring such a development, consideration should be given to supporting the idea of a council. This team of officials from the valley’s alternative energy industries could oversee its development and organize support for its funding. As with many other recommendations in the DDP, the need for additional investment into the education sector is important for the growth of the Greater Palm Springs destination as a whole. Not only would an alternative energy museum and interactive education center be an attractive asset for tourism, it could directly benefit the youth of Greater Palm Springs.

4.7.5 TRACKING CONSERVATION AND A PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT

The significant water use in Greater Palm Springs and the environmental issues associated with Salton Sea can cause public relations challenges for the destination. CVB leadership has considered the creation of a destination wide, web-based initiative to inventory and aggregate the numerous conservation efforts undertaken by public and private entities within Greater Palm Springs. This would likely create

significant data that could be used in creating public relations and marketing campaigns to help counter negative perceptions that may exist, and to help support an energy conservation brand for the destination. The significant initiatives in wind, solar and thermal energy could help support this effort.

4.8 SOCIAL MEDIA

As noted throughout many of the recommendations of the DDP, social media enables destinations to employ a variety of methods to better brand, package, and advertise their assets. Social media engagement can attract younger visitor segments, increase Greater Palm Springs website visitation, and give visitors easy opportunities to share their experiences in the area.

According to Pew Research, a substantial 82 percent of 30- to 49-year-olds currently use the medium, an increase from 54 percent in 2010. Meanwhile, 50 percent of members of the age group use mobile devices to interact with social media. According to DMAI, 71 percent of millennial travelers post online ratings and reviews of their experiences while traveling. Eighty-nine percent post pictures of their vacations on social media sites.

Increased social media participation can respond to the 25 percent of the surveyed travel writers who indicated that Greater Palm Springs should develop campaigns to attract younger people to the area. There is significant potential to tie in Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with existing youth-focused events. These include the Coachella Festival, Stagecoach Festival, and potentially other music or cultural events. According to Eventbrite, the Coachella Music and Arts Festival made up approximately seven percent of all social media “buzz” generated by the country’s music festivals. This ranks the event in fifth place among national festivals, representing a key launch point for potential Greater Palm Springs social media endeavors. This set of recommendations intends to capitalize on these kinds of existing Greater Palm Springs assets to broaden its marketing reach to young travelers.

It is important to note that an enhanced Greater Palm Springs presence on social media could benefit from additional part- or full-time staffing. Devoted to managing Greater Palm Springs’s interactions on the various platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., the staffer would help optimize the execution of the following recommendations.

4.8.1 DEVELOP SOCIAL MEDIA-COMPATIBLE MAP

The CVB could emulate the “2 Days in Seattle” campaign (shown), initiated by Visit Seattle. The Tourism Marketing District (TMD) could provide funds to develop an interactive destination map that identifies live tweets from specific locations in the destination and highlights their contents on the map. Map users can click on these tweets to read real time reviews of visitors’ experiences and get a better inside look at the destinations’ specific features. Someone whose intent was to shop in Downtown Palm Springs may be later drawn to the spas in Desert Hot Springs, or the hot air balloon rides in the east valley. Another person might discover some lesser-known restaurant because of same-day reviews seen on Twitter.



2-Days in Seattle Interactive Map, 2015

The map’s programming also allows users to build an itinerary online by clicking on various points on the map. This feature is also compatible with social media, and a map user can post the map as a link on either Facebook or Twitter. Afterwards, their friends or other social media followers can give suggestions as to which points in the map to visit or which hotel/shop/restaurant on the map is the best and why. This kind of platform would propel website visits from the under-40 demographic and would better connect young social media users to the many attractions of the Greater Palm Springs destination.

This application could also help generate new kinds of Greater Palm Springs events. For example, an “Oasis token” could be hidden in each of the nine cities. This map could receive updates from an anonymous tweeter dropping hints of each token’s location, or visitors would have to go to each location where the mystery tweeter is tweeting.

Also, there could be an annual, monthly, or weekly “Best Itinerary” award. Greater Palm Springs visitors who visited many attractions, posted interesting pictures, and provided reviews of their experiences could participate to win another free trip to the destination (or other prizes).

4.8.2 USE INTERNET RADIO

Similar to the Monterey County CVB, the Greater Palm Springs CVB could work with Pandora Radio to create a branded radio station. Greater Palm Springs officials could select four to five songs that define the destination. These songs, or what Pandora terms as “seeds,” would then grow into a playlist for an online radio station. It would pull from a database of thousands of similarly themed songs. Listeners can then enjoy a continual stream of songs that coincide with Greater Palm Springs themes. This station’s web page would also include pictures of Greater Palm Springs, as well as links to the Greater Palm Springs CVB website (see case study).

Like Monterey County, a two-month (or longer) campaign could be pursued in the San Diego and Los Angeles markets. Consideration could also be given to applying the campaign in foreign markets such as Canada or the UK. The station could be advertised to Pandora listeners in these markets during station commercial breaks. Pandora expressed considerable interest in developing such a station for the CVB. A start-up station would be up within one to two months after initial contact.

CASE STUDY

Monterey County, CA

In 2014, MCCVB launched a radio station on Pandora called Monterey Radio (pictured below). More than 33,800 people added the station to their playlists and listened to the station for over 19,000 hours. The station includes a collection of music the MCCVB feels represents the area, and allows for targeted web-based advertisements of Monterey businesses and attractions (www.pandora.com/montereyradio).

Pandora and the CVB also ran two 2-month “flights” of advertisements for the station between 2013 and 2014 in the San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego market. The target demographic was males and females between the ages of 25 and 54. Costs approximated \$150,000 per campaign “flight” (\$300,000 total). The station was started simply by choosing four songs which then generated a full playlist of similarly-themed songs. The list featured “Beautiful Day” by U2, “Road Trippin’” by Red Hot Chili Peppers, “Upside Down” by Jack Johnson, and “Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina and the Waves. CVB representatives indicated that the station achieved significant success. The campaign helped introduce the “look and feel” of the destination and each of its cities to younger travelers.

Also, the station could spur new in-market advertising. Listeners near, or within a defined Greater Palm Springs-designated geographic limit would hear commercials about the station. Advertising for local businesses and things to do in Greater Palm Springs could also be included.



4.8.3 TIE IN SOCIAL MEDIA WITH LARGE EVENTS

The CVB of Irving, Texas created a branded sign that is featured in a promotional photo contest (pictured). Likewise, a Greater Palm Springs CVB sign could be featured at events such as Coachella Music and Arts Festival, the International Film Festival, the new International Health and Wellness Festival, and others. Event attendees could take a picture in front of this sign and tie it to a CVB-designated hashtag. After posting it to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. the attendee is in the running for a prize.

This motivates visitors to post their destination experiences to the internet. The resulting “retweets” or “shares” creates a social media marketing campaign with potential for exponentially growing reach.

The branded sign idea could become more long-lasting by permanently

installing “selfie” stations in each of the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs. Perhaps each city would provide their own backdrop and hashtag, and visitors could take and post pictures with all or most of the nine backdrops to be eligible for a prize drawing or a picture on the Greater Palm Springs website.

4.8.4 HIRE SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTATORS

The CVB of Irving also hires well-known “Instagrammers” or bloggers to comment on their AT&T Byron Nelson Golf Tournament in real time. While connecting the event with a younger audience, this strategy exposes the destination’s assets with the bloggers’ insightful first-hand commentary on their experiences.

For instance, several hand-picked Instagrammers could be hired to provide their photography and commentary skills and report on the activities at Greater Palm Springs’s events and attractions or the celebrity appearances at the Film Festival.

This type of component could also be incorporated with potential future events, such as the Wanderlust Festival, Tough Mudder, new concerts and others. Planners of these events could then collaborate with the CVB and the Instagrammers to create a tailored hashtag or other social media elements.

4.8.5 PHOTO CONTEST

Consider an online photo contest. Greater Palm Springs visitors would be encouraged to submit their own photos of the valley into a competition. The winning photo would be featured on the Greater Palm Springs website. This could help develop usable content for future marketing projects, such as billboards, pamphlet illustrations, etc. Door County in Wisconsin runs a similar program that costs only \$1,000 per month. This includes all fees for website setup, hosting, maintenance, and content database management, etc. Photo submission is open to anyone who signs up at the County’s CVB website. Site members can also vote on the photos and are encouraged to share them on their own social media networks.

4.8.6 PROTECT SALTON SEA’S REPUTATION

Although the results have been mixed, The CVB’s license plate program represents an important step in the right direction toward protecting the Sea’s

identity. As the largest body of water in California, the Salton Sea represents a key asset in Greater Palm Springs' outdoor and adventure product category. Support is needed to defend its reputation. Local officials and stakeholders feel the Sea is inaccurately perceived as polluted and unsafe. To combat this misconception, the CVB and nine cities should partner with SEAthletes and SEArtists. These two 501(c)3 organizations have the missions to reshape the narrative of the Sea by hosting amateur sports and art exhibit events on its waters. At the organizations' inaugural North Shore Xtreme event, attendees will be asked to post at least ten pictures to Instagram or Facebook to capture and broadcast the beauty and safety of the waters.

These efforts could be complemented by the CVB and the nine cities by:

- Providing extended marketing support.
- Continuing to promote the event on the CVB website.
- "Co-broadcasting" the event across the CVB's and cities' social media channels.
- Contributing to a feasibility study on the positive impact of recreational activities at the Salton Sea.

It is important to note that the tactics listed above are not specific or limited to this one particular event. The communities of Greater Palm Springs need to identify other outdoor showcase events to promote. The destination's environment and overall appeal would benefit by the exposure on social media. Continued support will optimize the PR benefit and result in positive economic impact.

In this case, the Salton Sea needs extensive branding assistance. North Shore Xtreme could serve as a successful vehicle to relay relevant and impactful messaging to local, national, and international markets.

4.8.7 ALIGN SOCIAL MEDIA TO GAIN ADDITIONAL REACH AND AVOID CONFUSION

Twitter's hashtag has become a ubiquitous social media tool that simplifies messaging and galvanizes a common call to action, whether on Instagram, Facebook, or Pinterest. Hashtags lead the reader to a specific message or a call to action, and the power of the hashtag is in its simplicity and consistency of use.

The Greater Palm Springs visitor experience and brand growth can be accelerated if the nine cities were to align their social media strategy. This would reduce visitor confusion between the cities and the region. It would align the communication and engagement through one key channel: the Oasis brand.

For an example, there are four different styles of Twitter handles among the nine cities. These are @cityofdhs, @PalmSpringsCA, @RelxRnchoMirage, @VisitPalmDesert, @IndianWellsCA, @LaQuintaCA, @CityofIndio, and @CityofCoachella. Cathedral City does not have a Twitter account. There are even more hashtags for each of the individual festivals and events, venues, and so on. Aligning handles and hashtags that are unique to each city but unite them under a common brand umbrella could create a common, more powerful social media strategy.

4.9 SALES AND MARKETING

This section will look at Sales and Marketing efforts from two perspectives. The first includes ideas to assist internal stakeholders within the community to "come together as one destination." The second shifts the focus to that of the visitor and provides ideas that will grow and advance the Greater Palm Springs brand. This section outlines recommendations that apply to all segments and visitors including leisure, group and tour/travel.

Coming Together as One Destination

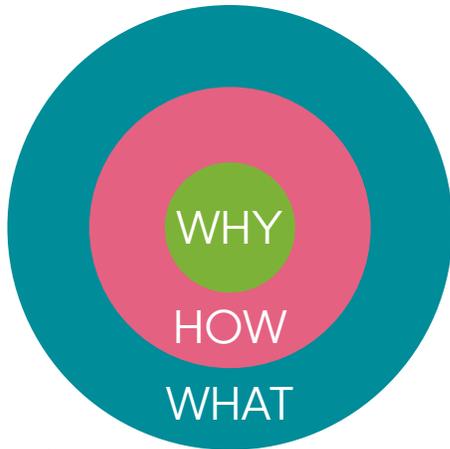
As noted earlier in this report, the GPSCVB has a very favorable reputation among meeting planners. The group meetings market is increasingly competitive as other destinations, hotels and convention centers compete for a greater share of the meetings business. With today's technology, meeting planners are more informed and more savvy in how they evaluate and make purchase decisions for their meetings and events. The Greater Palm Springs area will benefit from their current favorable positioning as they continue to enhance their meeting planner and attendee experiences in the Coachella Valley.

4.9.1 CREATION OF A "BRAND BRAIN TRUST"

There is a variety of sophistication and marketing investment across the nine-city Greater Palm Springs. This leads some individual cities to compete for marketing "mind-share" because they feel their individual brands might not work with the Greater Palm Springs "Oasis" brand.

Building on the addition of the new VP of Brand Marketing position, consider creating a Brand Brain Trust made up of marketing representatives from across the nine-city destination. This group will help identify the destination's core belief (see below) and collaborate on branding strategy and execution.

Currently, all cities have their own websites, and together they do not align with the "Oasis" brand. Inadvertently, they can also be competing for public awareness and diluting the potential impact of the "Oasis" brand.



Source: Simon Sink

The City of Palm Springs has a solid campaign, yet efforts are duplicative and there has been a sense that Greater Palm Springs has leveraged their brand equity. Stakeholder interviews revealed that there was a willingness to collaborate with the Greater Palm Springs CVB, so perhaps the development of the Brand Brain Trust could provide a seat at the table to define how best to align all cities under the "Oasis" umbrella.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB would gain the brain power of the valley's marketers while enhancing the

current brand. The "Oasis" branding would evolve to align with the needs and expectations of the nine-city stakeholders. This strategy increases the probability of a single-destination brand.

Consider utilizing the new VP of Brand Marketing position and the CVB's website redesign to motivate unified branding. The VP of Brand Marketing would be an internal brand consultant to the Greater Palm Springs nine cities and set web-marketing standards. This would give the individual cities a featured presence on the CVB website.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB would guide individual city marketing while unifying messages through the CVB website. It would help the individual cities accomplish what they can't do alone and engage those cities with established brands as part of a Brand Brain Trust that sets the standards.

4.9.2 BRAND ARCHITECTURE THAT MIRRORS A MAJOR HOTEL CHAIN MODEL

The nine cities compete against each other for tourism business, but research indicates that there is value in unifying the destination. Consolidation increases the perceived value to leisure travelers, group, and travel industry sales.

In order to accomplish this, the nine cities would create a brand architecture that would follow a traditional corporate brand structure such as Hilton Hotels. Hilton Worldwide, as the "parent" brand, has firmly established itself in the hearts and minds of their customers and the public at large. Within the Hilton WW brand are 12 sub-brands —Hilton Hotels, Waldorf Astoria, Conrad, Curio, Doubletree, Embassy Suites, Home2, Canopy, and Hilton Grand Vacations. Each brand offers a unique customer experience, from luxury to limited service hotels. Each city has its own brand within a family of brands linked together by a common, unifying branding umbrella.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB would be able to brand the destination, while allowing individual cities to retain their own unique personalities and communications messages.

4.9.3 BRAND POSITIONING FOR THE DESTINATION

When the DDP initiative began in the fall 2014, gaps were identified in the alignment and execution of the destination brand positioning of Modern Oasis, as it was relatively new. Since that time the Greater Palm

Springs CVB has made great strides to develop a solid, cohesive brand positioning plan that supports the promise and truly connects the nine destinations into one modern oasis. The following is an overview of the refreshed brand positioning for Greater Palm Springs, which we believe is spot-on given today's competitive tourism environment. Of note is the introduction of brand "cultures," which capitalize on legacy assets and provide launching points and direction for new ideas into the immediate future.

Brand Promise: Modern 'Oasis'

Greater Palm Springs provides today's traveler with a distinct destination choice for leisure, meetings or tour group travel. Quickly emerging as a preferred destination among millennials, the brand promises to deliver an "oasis of relaxation, midcentury modern cultural experience."

Recognized around the world, Greater Palm Springs and each of its unique cities encompasses a rich array of attributes and experiences which allows the CVB to effectively heighten brand awareness, overcome misconceptions about the destination and communicate a greater set of experiences targeting today's modern travelers. Collectively, as one integrated destination, Greater Palm Springs allows visitors and residents to experience an extensive array of festivals, activities, attractions, cultures, and entertainment. This broad appeal finds favor among all genders, age groups, and social classes.

This flexible identity is a fairly recent development. Greater Palm Springs has been slowly shedding its image as being exclusively a retirement/relaxation getaway and instead becoming known around the world for its brand identity as a Modern Oasis.

Greater Palm Springs CVB Tagline Working Seamlessly With Campaign Tagline

There are two key statements included in all Greater Palm Springs CVB marketing communications:

"9 resort cities. One beautiful oasis." is used to define Greater Palm Springs CVB. Graphically, this phrase will act as a footer in all communications. It is used to define and promote what exactly Greater Palm Springs CVB is, both factually and emotionally.

"Find your oasis" is the brand position tagline. It is used to create both an emotional appeal to prospective visitors while validating the promise of being one beautiful oasis.

Brand Positioning

Greater Palm Springs is inarguably a Modern Oasis.

Modern as reflected by today's lifestyles, fashion, entertainment, sports, recreation, culinary scenes and cultural opportunities.

Oasis as reflected not only by its geography and naturally occurring hot springs, but by a heartfelt attitude cultivated and preserved over the years; embraced and refined by the day. And by the nights.

Greater Palm Springs embodies an **"attitude of chill."** An attitude that says welcome, relax, enjoy, and experience something unique in all the world and firmly rooted in our DNA.

From this long-lived attitude, a **"chillosophy"** has emerged. A mindset and belief system that, by sharing in our marketing and communications, will both promote and preserve Greater Palm Springs' brand as a Modern Oasis.

Brand Pillars: Unifying 9 Cities by Sharing Common Attributes

The Greater Palm Springs CVB brand is built upon its Brand Pillars. These pillars (physical and emotional attributes) reflect what the nine resort cities have in common relative to appealing to various visitors.

- **Adventure**

Pick an adventure. Any adventure. In Greater Palm Springs, the extreme of rock climbing and mountain biking coexists with the tranquility of nature walks, a ride on an aerial tram—even a trip down a water slide with your kids. Adventure in all its forms abounds in Greater Palm Springs.

- **Arts**

The Greater Palm Springs arts scene is exploding and attracting a new and younger generation of visitors and residents. Symbols of emergence of art are the College of the Desert's new \$5.6 million visual arts building (2014) and the new Architecture and Design Center (2014). To name a just a couple. Art touches every aspect of life with an array of offerings including events, activities and programs, providing cultural enrichment and opportunities for residents, visitors, and artists destination-wide.

- **Escapism**

Greater Palm Springs affords visitors a welcomed respite from life in the city. The area is renowned for its collection of spas, resorts, and natural wonders. To be here is to escape the ordinary.

- **Relaxation**

Spending time in Greater Palm Springs helps put back all that day-to-day living takes out of us. Pamper yourself at one of the world-class spas and along the Spa Zone. Experience the restorative powers of our naturally occurring hot springs. Do whatever you need to recharge and rejuvenate. And take whatever time you need. Perhaps a little more than you need.

- **Romance**

Romance fills the air in Greater Palm Springs! Sun-filled days. Star-filled skies. Breathtaking views. Fine dining. Pampering spas. Luxury resort accommodations. Charming hideaways. It's everything you need for a romantic retreat.

- **Sports and Recreation**

Greater Palm Springs offers both in abundance. LPGA and PGA golf tournaments. Championship tennis, miles of hiking, mountain biking, cycling and water parks and aquatic centers. 120 golf courses. Aerial Tram rides. Horseback trail rides. Jeep and Hummer Tours. You will have no trouble filling up your days with things to do. And you will be doing things you will never forget.

- **Style**

Greater Palm Springs has a style all its own. Its own vibe and energy. One part classic, as a Hollywood hot spot. One part urban hip, as it's quickly emerging as a preferred destination for those who enjoy modern music, art, and cultural events. Fashion to food, music to art, there's no defining style. But rather, all the styles that define us.

- **Sunshine**

You can count on consistently sunny blue skies in every month. In fact, we average 350 days of sunshine a year. Which means you can make plans knowing the weather won't be an issue.

Brand Cultures Built with the Brand Pillars

Greater Palm Springs is comprised of nine distinct cities and nine distinct identities that define its culture, character, and allure for attracting nine different types of visitors.

1. Midcentury Modern Culture

"Midcentury modern" means more than "all that cool stuff from the '50s and '60s." It's a specific era in the history of architecture and design that leads to an

architectural movement in Greater Palm Springs. Greater Palm Springs now proudly boasts more midcentury modern buildings per acre than any other region in the world.

2. Luxury Lifestyle Culture

Greater Palm Springs is a jetsetter's oasis. Dotting the Coachella Valley is a rich variety of retreat styles, ranging from the private to the historic and from opulent resorts to retro-boutique hotels. Many of these destinations consistently appear on top travel lists, giving visitors a choice of style, ambience, and amenities, allowing them the escape of a lifetime.

3. Natural Wonder Culture

Greater Palm Springs's natural underground springs have for centuries been one of California's most prized natural wonders. In addition to the picturesque canyons and mountain backdrops, it's easy to see why discoverers of the area once considered it sacred ground. For those who enjoy all things outdoors – from hiking and biking to rock climbing and hot air ballooning – it still is.

4. Celebrity Culture

Since the era of Charlie Chaplin and Rudolph Valentino, the destination has been a playground of the stars. Today, with The Palm Springs International Film Festival (widely considered a mini-Cannes) growing in popularity and prominence, a new generation of celebrities is turning to Greater Palm Springs to stage their escape.

5. Coachella Culture

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Annual Festival "Coachella" has evolved to become our nation's annual, modern-day Woodstock, presenting a culture that sets Greater Palm Springs apart with younger travelers. Not only does Coachella host the world's bestselling musical acts and heralded newcomers, but also some of most exciting emerging artists.

6. Golf Paradise Culture

Greater Palm Springs is known as "The Golf Capital of the West." Greater Palm Springs features more golf courses per capita than any other destination. No less than 124 golf courses stretch from the City of Palm Springs to Indio. Greater Palm Springs also hosts a number of PGA and LPGA tour events each year.

7. Tennis Lover's Culture

When Palm Springs was little more than a quaint

resort village, much of the action centered around the Historic Tennis Club Neighborhood. Tennis still holds court as a major attraction for our visitors. The BNP Paribas Open, hosted in Indian Wells, has been heralded as tennis' fifth major. Not surprisingly, Greater Palm Springs's renowned Tennis Garden attracts tennis legends from around the world, including Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Serena Williams, and Maria Sharapova. The tennis culture of old is alive and well in Greater Palm Springs.

8. LGBT Culture

Greater Palm Springs has more gay-themed hotels and resorts than any other city in the world. The City of Palm Springs also plays host to several LGBT festivals and events throughout the year. Biggest among them are the "White Party" and "The Dinah", billed as "the world's largest lesbian event."

9. Arts Culture

No longer just a retirement community, Greater Palm Springs is now attracting a younger crowd to its growing arts scene. A new crop of 18- to 35-year-olds are making art, many of them developing new forms of art working with materials only found in Greater Palm Springs. Other signs of a vibrant art scene include the College of the Desert's new \$5.6 million visual arts building (2014) and the new Architecture and Design Center (2014). Clearly, Greater Palm Springs has an edge and vitality that's fueling – and fueled by – the evolving arts scene.

Brand Expression: *Find Your Oasis*

To '*find your oasis*' in Greater Palm Springs is to find your personal oasis for adventure, art, golf, recreation, relaxation, self-discovery and rejuvenation.

Find your oasis is one part a call to action, one part emotional appeal. It is a mantra that resonates with leisure travelers, meeting professionals, and group travelers looking to find their own private and distinctly personal oasis. Executions will align to each of our cities own character and local flavor. And in its flair.

Evolving the *Find Your Oasis* Story

With the foundation of our "find your oasis" brand established through marketing efforts started in 2013, it's time now to evolve the marketing communications to reflect emerging marketing trends, competitive issues and, most important, to keep the Greater Palm Springs "Modern Oasis" brand relevant and "cool."

Chill. It Isn't Just About Summer. It's a lifestyle and culture promised and delivered.

The "chill is on" promotion and campaign of 2014/15 is proving

successful. Clearly, the concept of chill-imbued with a pop culture attitude and emotional resonance—connects with our consumers. And Greater Palm Springs CVB Partners.

To "chill" is just one of the ever-growing number of ways to "find your oasis." And likely, given the success of the summer promotion, one of the most important. It's the overriding emotional driver for choosing Greater Palm Springs as a travel and/or meeting destination.

Spreading the "Chillosophy" of Greater Palm Springs

Brand marketing is, ultimately, an expression of a products/service belief system. Greater Palm Springs believes in its "find your oasis" position and continues to create a destination that allows people to find their personal oasis—to find their way to chill.

And by thoughtfully expressing that belief—both in the design of products and services and in the execution of marketing—is building one of the most recognized and respected brands in destination marketing today.



Chillosophy. It's a belief system. It's part of a brand voice and brand expression.

Adopting "chillosophy" is a natural way to evolve the brand narrative. It allows for the ability to speak to all Greater Palm Springs attributes in a clever, fresh and relevant way to all the various consumer demographics.

The chillosophy of Greater Palm Springs is something families can believe in. As can foodies, adventurers, golfers, spa enthusiasts, art lovers, music lovers, and naturalists, all target markets can be covered under the chillosophy campaign.

*Everyone **can find their oasis** in Greater Palm Springs **because of the chillosophy** upon which its experiences, products and services are built.*

In sum, evolving the brand narrative to leverage the strength found in the Chill message and articulating it by adopting the Greater Palm Springs "Chillosophy" is a logical and prudent move. This will assure the continued sustainability of Greater Palm Springs' marketing efforts.

4.9.4 THE GREATER PALM SPRINGS CVB – REDUCE REDUNDANCY TO EXTEND RESOURCES

At the heart of the positioning challenge for Greater Palm Springs is the balance of the brand equity and Unique Value Proposition (UVP) between the CVB and the nine cities. The nine cities are competitive with each for tourism market share. The critical objective is to find a balance of maintaining the individual brands of each city, while creating an overarching brand that has the ability to compete effectively on a regional, national and international level against the destination's competitive set.

Throughout the course of this study, positive movement was made between the CVB and all nine cities to develop programs that are cooperative and allows the destination to extend the overall reach. Greater Palm Springs has worked diligently in the past two decades to recapture the brand equity that had diminished in the 70s and 80s. It has been successful in recent years revitalizing the brand assets and infrastructure within the entire region. At the same time, the visitor experience in Greater Palm Springs is much more than the sum of its parts. All cities significantly benefit by virtue of the events, resorts and attractions throughout the valley.

We recommend exploring more opportunities to be cohesive and linking the unique aspects of each community. The region can be more effective and impactful if it is able to reduce the redundancy between the CVB and the nine cities. Identifying the UVP for each city will allow the individual cities to become more targeted, and the CVB can develop more co-op programs that positively impact each city's UVP.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a UVP for each city and review and compare brand guidelines for each city. Ensure the guidelines are unique for each city, but are also complementary and aligned with the overall destination brand.
2. Identify how best to support one another and the entire valley to achieve the collective vision as a destination. Provide the flexibility and independence to all communities as they develop UVP and targeted campaigns for each respective city.
3. Find areas to collaborate on go-to-market strategies/campaigns for the mutual benefit of each city and the overall region. For example, can more "KTLA" type co-op marketing programs be created?
4. Eliminate redundancies in sales and marketing efforts, especially those directed at the national and international markets. Can the "KTLA" approach be utilized in the international markets? Can it be integrated into social media?
5. Consider a facilitator to work with each city and the CVB on the above questions and discussion points.





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Working closely with industry partners, the CVB identified key guiding principles that steered decision-making throughout the planning process and framed the overall plan structure.

- Build and refine the Greater Palm Springs brand.
- Do what the individual cities and industry partners cannot achieve on their own.
- Focus on domestic out-of-market and international audiences.
- Grow and develop emerging markets through brand awareness.
- Leverage existing assets and alliances for greater impact.
- Collaborate and align efforts with partner cities, Visit California and Brand USA leadership to drive visitation.

As each city utilizes the Destination Development Plan to map out long-term strategies, it is critical that their product development is complementary to the overall destination brand. An ideal situation would be that the nine unique experiences do not compete with each other, but rather help each other succeed and grow. Since the consumer does not recognize city boundaries, the sum of all parts is critical for a healthy tourism industry, and more collaboration is vital to long-term success. Regional collaboration will strengthen the tourism industry, attract new development and minimize the impact of a future recession/downturn in the economy.

4.9.5 TRAVEL TRADE AND MEDIA RELATIONS COLLABORATION

Based on research, there is not 100 percent agreement on how Greater Palm Springs should be marketed to the regional, national, and international visitor. The Greater Palm Springs CVB and each city have limited resources to commit to getting the message out. Building on the “guiding principles” outlined in the 2015 Business Development Plan, the synergies that exist between Greater Palm Springs CVB and each community for all print and digital media buys and promotions should be carried over to the travel trade and media relations areas.

Through collaboration, each city would align the various channels and impact each key segment. All messaging would filter through each channel and to each key segment. It would also align each of the nine cities’ sales, marketing, and talking points.

With this approach, the Greater Palm Springs’s Travel Trade and Media Relations would benefit from a consistent message, a message that is relevant for each segment of traveler.

It is recommended that the “Brand Brain Trust,” along with the Greater Palm Springs CVB and other key stakeholders, review and agree on the guiding principles and outline their strategies. This would bring clarity to the audiences, channels, umbrella, and target messaging for each market. It would be developed from research which locates and defines needs, wants, and desires, and then uncovers actions that serve to motivate from interest to purchase.

4.9.6 FOCUSED INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Even with increased funding, there will always be a limited amount of human and financial resources available to the Greater Palm Springs CVB. As technology makes the world smaller, it also makes it more complex. It’s simply harder to cut through the clutter to get a specific message across. One theory suggests that the further away from a destination, the more blurred the lines become between the specific cities that comprise that destination.

Each of the nine cities has its own target market focus and limited resources. A more coordinated international strategy should be embraced by all

destinations and be coordinated by the Greater Palm Springs CVB.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB has invested in four international offices in the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and China. These serve as important outlets for their international sales and marketing efforts. The nine cities should collaborate and leverage these assets to grow inbound international travel volume. Additionally, it is recommended the Greater Palm Springs CVB continue to dedicate funds and effort to consumer promotions in these markets.

After further analysis and discussion, it may be prudent for both the group and international travel industry efforts to limit the focus to fewer, more impactful feeder destinations and/or segments. This would drive more stays to those markets that are established, the markets most likely to draw visitors to Greater Palm Springs.

The international destinations targeting could include one to two mature markets such as the UK and Germany, plus one to two emerging markets such as China and Australia.

There could also be one wild card international destination, such as a South American country. Since the seasons there are opposite from ours, their winter getaways could feed our summer need periods.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB's list of secondary international markets represents opportunities for accelerated business

growth. Further cultivation of relationships with tour operators and travel companies are feasible from the following countries:

- France
- Japan
- Mexico/South America
- Scandinavia

The Greater Palm Springs area benefits by drawing more business during key need periods from specific international markets and traveler segments.

4.9.7 DASHBOARD OF KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

In cultivating and growing the destination's tourism performance, there are always external influences not within the control of the CVB. This will always require a DMO to have a plan that is nimble, flexible, and responsive to the changing market forces. While the times and leadership may change, the metrics for long-term success remain stable.

The creation of a dashboard of key performance metrics will measure the Greater Palm Springs CVB's performance consistently and holistically over the years. This will give the entire Greater Palm Springs community a comprehensive, easy-to-read trend line that measures progress toward "moving the needle." Beyond occupancy/ADR and REVPAR, this dashboard could include total visitors. It would detail information on each key segment such as the number of Canadian visitors, regional/international visitors, association groups, corporate groups, etc. The metrics could also note length of stay, time of year, age, spend, etc., as well as subjective measurements such as visitor/attendee satisfaction and net promoter score.

Through the consistent use of this dashboard, the Greater Palm Springs CVB will be able to articulate the successes more clearly. It will measure how the destination is doing in the continuum of a 10-year destination development journey. Along the way, it will also allow for celebration of milestones and the creation of more tourism evangelists.

4.9.8 MORE DEDICATED MARKETING RESOURCES

Time is money, and attention to group meetings and travel industry segments are critical. However, salespeople do not always think like marketers, and



marketers do not always think like salespeople.

To be more effective and streamlined for sales efforts, it is recommended that more marketing resources be dedicated to the group and travel industry sales effort.

Create an annual planning calendar. This blueprint will show the solid marketing activities for the tourism segments and help to translate them to the group and travel industry markets. Creating an ongoing communications strategy is encouraged. It should support the goals, align with each audience segment, and position the Greater Palm Springs area to these key audiences in an effective and consistent way.

With more dedicated marketing resources, the Greater Palm Springs CVB would utilize the strength of the marketing team. This will free up time, allowing the salespeople to sell more.

4.9.9 GREATER PALM SPRINGS SUMMIT

Destination sales are rooted in the experience. Group and travel industry customers are more likely to book business in Greater Palm Springs when they have experienced the destination first-hand. They are also much more likely to become advocates and evangelists for the Greater Palm Springs area. Skift.com reports that DMOs today are positioning themselves as “gateways to their intellectual capital, versus just another city with a collection of convention centers, convention hotels, and ‘unique local experiences.’” The report goes on to say “To differentiate themselves, cities are formalizing networks of local intellectual and business influencers to attract convention organizers operating in those influencers’ industry sectors. Basically, that base of knowledge expertise is now part of the meeting and convention product lineup in the destination.”

An annual Greater Palm Springs Summit (GPSS) could help accelerate the region’s exposure to the group and travel industry markets. Create, design, and host a unique, two-and-a-half-day event showcasing the entire valley using distinctive experiences. Engagement throughout the year with the attendees could also encourage them to become trusted sources for trends and insights. The “GPSS” agenda will tap into the issues and concerns that are top-of-mind to the participants. It will tie current social, economic, and political issues to the tourism and meetings industry in new and exciting ways. For

example, use lessons learned from the Salton Sea to highlight environmental sustainability issues in the meetings and travel industry. Or, the focus could be on Hospitality Talent Recruitment – programs that support hospitality talent in the valley. The GPSS could also focus on one aspect common to all clients, such as innovation or entrepreneurship. Participants of the GPSS could span both the group meetings and travel industry segments, with a focus on prospective or new customers.

The goal of the GPSS is to support the CVB’s positioning as a thought leader in the travel industry. Using insights from the GPSS could produce tangible assets that would benefit the entire industry. The GPSS, for instance, could produce articles, white papers, or educational sessions. Depending on the topic, these insights may also be media-worthy and could spur PR opportunities in the meetings, travel, and business media. This redesigned Customer Advisory Board will help set the standard for Customer Advisory Boards of the future.

4.9.10 SIBLING CITIES

According to SisterCities.org, a sister city, county, or state relationship is a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities in two countries. A sister city, county, or state relationship is officially recognized after the highest elected or appointed official from both communities sign off on an agreement.

Expanding upon the concept of Sister Cities, we already know that many visitors come from Vancouver, BC. The community of West Hollywood finds itself a de facto part of Greater Palm Springs during the Coachella Festival.

Even though some of the communities already have a sister city relationship, it is recommended that this momentum be mobilized by reaching out to Vancouver and West Hollywood and develop more sibling city relationships. Combine marketing resources and create campaigns that build on the energy of each individual city and fuse them. Create unique visitor experiences that tie the cities together around a common event such as a music festival, and give deeper meaning to the idea of “Modern Oasis.” This “sibling city” concept will also support other international sales and marketing efforts, specifically to the Canadian market.

Sibling city partnerships could position the Greater

Palm Springs CVB to uncover real consumer behavior and help define the Greater Palm Springs brand. They can also give valuable target audiences more reasons to visit the area. Partnerships would leverage the brand equity and marketing strength of Vancouver and West Hollywood, which will increase targeted visitation to the Greater Palm Springs area.

4.9.11 BUILD ON THE EXISTING "CHILL PASS"

Visit Seattle developed a companion site to their official visitor website called "2DaysinSeattle." The campaign is funded by the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area (STIA) and promotes overnight stays in Seattle. The event was curated by experts in wine and drinks, food, music, arts, culture, and sports and outdoors. Designed to create an authentic voice for the city, "2DaysinSeattle" targets the West Coast cities of San Francisco, Portland, and Vancouver.

Taking a cue from Visit Seattle, there is an opportunity to build on the existing "Chill Pass" campaign.

Showcase a local business, such as a locally-sourced restaurant, and describe how it represents Greater Palm Springs. Instead of an expert, have a resident testimonial describe why it is a "must try it" establishment.

Make the interface exciting and user-friendly, similar to Pinterest, and allow visitors to customize their itinerary.

Target the drive-market, especially that of Southern California. Work with existing partners and offer in-state discounts. If possible, extend the discounts to other drive-market destinations, such as San Diego or Orange County.

4.9.12 EMBRACE A 365-DAY "SUMMERTIME" POSITIONING

Images of summertime evoke feelings of relaxation and escape from the everyday. Every destination has high and low seasons to some degree, but some are more correlated to extreme or uncomfortable weather. The low season for Greater Palm Springs is the summer when temperatures exceed 100°F. By emphasizing the "summer mindset," Greater Palm Springs would downplay the negative image of being a hot, dry, desert destination. Build on the momentum of the Chill campaign and embrace a 365-day summer mindset. Other destinations promote their

off-season with events such as the Winterlude Festival in Ottawa. Closer to home, the "Summer is Vegas Season" approach uses subtle humor.

"Summer is Vegas Season" is designed to get visitors to think about summer as the best time to visit Las Vegas. In 24 hours, using a multi-pronged marketing approach, @Vegas received three times the normal account mentions and eight times the amount of normal follows. It reached a 7.59% engagement rate, which is about on par for promoted Twitter trends. The campaign also led to 46 million trend impressions and 3,365 mentions of #VegasSeason.

The "Chill" campaign plays to this positioning. It has had a significant degree of success as a campaign theme, resulting in expanded use by the Greater Palm Springs CVB and local businesses. Continue to build and leverage this positioning to meet the challenge of extreme summer temperatures. Flip the mindset to one of all of the assets and activities that are both relief from the heat and relief from the daily pressures. Simply chill.

4.9.13 SOCIAL MEDIA SITE INSPECTION

Whether the "pitch" is to a meeting planner, association board of directors, international wholesale operator, consortium travel agent, festival organizer, or concert promoter, the Greater Palm Springs region could re-define the traditional "site inspection." It could be elevated to an entirely new level. Capture key aspects of the in-person site inspection through social media and the power of videos. Create a 3-5 minute video that could be shared with the client and their stakeholders. It could be a unique marketing asset for the organization. Begin the video with a welcome clip that is sent to the client several days before the actual site inspection begins. Start to capture key moments and interactions between the Greater Palm Springs hospitality community and the planner upon arrival. Add in other "tips" that make the final video unique and inspiring, including pre-edited film segments focused on the relevant value and benefits of Greater Palm Springs.

This site inspection video could be used to reposition age-old misperceptions about the destination. It can infuse a youthful and contemporary feel to the destination and create a unique sales and marketing asset for the client organizations. With the client as part of the story, it is sure to get noticed by the other decision-makers and circumvent the traditional bid book process.



4.9.14 EXTEND NEIGHBORING CITIES CONVENTIONS INTO A “CHILL” PRE- OR POST-PLEASURE TRIP

The Greater Palm Springs area is ideally situated to offer pre- or post-trips for convention attendees as part of their conventions in Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Diego, or Las Vegas. To help boost low demand periods, the Greater Palm Springs CVB should target conventions that meet during those times and offer them an enticing bundle of offerings. These could range from discounted hotel and spa packages to restaurant discounts and value-adds for shopping, area museums, and other points of interest. In essence, build and offer a pre- or post-convention “Chill” package and offer it to large conventions scheduled to meet in neighboring cities. A direct connection could be made with the association meeting planning team or with the DMOs in that community.

At PCMA’s upcoming 2016 Convening Leaders convention in Vancouver, they have built in the traditional one-day pre- or post- trips in addition to multiple night stays at Whistler or Victoria.

4.9.15 COMMON TALKING POINTS

Hospitality personnel at each hotel, restaurant, museum and attraction will continue to change. The Greater Palm Springs CVB could expand on the already successful “new hire kit.” This would ensure that everyone in the hospitality community is articulating the same talking points when describing the destination. By coordinating the talking points among all hospitality sales partners, there will be greater alignment of the brand and the story.





The program could be incorporated into existing partner meetings as well as online modules. It will be important that not only the overall brand messaging be highlighted, but also the unique attributes of each city. Each city's contribution to the overall Greater Palm Springs visitor experience should be articulated.

4.9.16 CTA - CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Mickey Schaeffer, a well-recognized industry expert, has created the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program. It is an industry-recognized certification that aligns the destination's people infrastructure. The stakeholder businesses and the front-line workers coordinate to increase tourism by "Enhancing the Visitor Experience." With over 10,000 current CTAs, the program drives visitor spending with the implementation of several tactics. Through in-depth knowledge of the destination 'product' gives destinations a competitive advantage and ensures consistent delivery of a positive destination brand experience.

The Greater Palm Springs region could benefit tremendously from this program as it is another tool to create a more memorable visitor experience.



4.9.17 “GET YOUR GREATER PALM SPRINGS ON”

Greater Palm Springs is a diverse region. The nine cities that make up the destination all have their own distinct feel and their own unique brand. The region was described by one stakeholder as having a “mom and pop” feel. She said:

- *“As we grow, we need to keep the high-touch feel. We’re a smaller destination compared to San Francisco or Orlando. What we have done so well is kept it mom and pop. I want them to maintain that feel.”*

This diversity of each city is an asset and can be leveraged and celebrated by the CVB. To expose both visitors and residents to all the region has to offer, create a “Get your Greater Palm Springs On” campaign. A local “reporter” would travel to each city and interview the people who live, work, and visit there. Covering small business owners to patrons of a restaurant, talking with residents and visitors will give the different regional assets “air time.” It will give each city a voice in defining its own unique qualities. Create short videos and post them on social media sites or broadcast a live feed at venues throughout the region. This initiative will create buzz around the valley, give people a reason to explore the entire destination, and combat the impression that each town is isolated.

As one stakeholder said,

- *“If you live in Palm Springs, you don’t go too much further than Rancho Mirage, and if you live in Palm Desert it has to be some special event for you to drive all the way to Palm Springs. We’re like little small towns that grew together.”*

Showcasing each city’s culture will help the city promote its singularity, even as each city is under the umbrella of the valley region. The individual and regional story will tie them together in a positive, productive way.

4.9.18 BUILD THE FILM PRODUCTION BUSINESS VALLEY-WIDE

Greater Palm Springs has beautiful natural surroundings, cultural assets such as midcentury modern architecture, and a plethora of events. The area is well-suited for film and television production. The Greater Palm Springs CVB took a big step toward leveraging the destination’s assets to attract the film and production industry with the creation of the

new Film, Arts and Entertainment Manager position on staff. Recognizing that the 2016 business plan was yet to be published at this writing, the following recommendations build off of existing strategies.

Consider creating a “community cultural ecosystem.” Many agents throughout the valley operate both within communities and across the cities. These include nonprofits, commercial cultural firms, individual artists, and informal groups. This network could open lines of communication, align efforts around developing and marketing the creative economy, and help build infrastructure. Loop in the hospitality industry to help make it “film ready.” Establishing an ecosystem will also help mobilize support for offering tax incentives to make Greater Palm Springs a more competitive location.

- *“I think, and there’s a lot of talk about this, there’s another piece that we could develop if we could ever sync up all of the elements, and that is creative arts. There’s a lot of talk of a film school or a studio kind of environment that could hitch its wagon on to the international film festival, collaborate with that nonprofit, and foster a growing production, film, art, music school kind of element here. A lot of people talk about it, but it hasn’t really come together significantly.”*

Standardizing and streamlining the permit process could go a long way toward making the valley accessible to film and television production. Moreover, the Creative Economy study indicated that the Greater Palm Springs has enough production capacity to support a full-time production company/studio. Leverage the PS International Film Festival to draw attention to this by hosting an informational tour of key assets in the valley. This could be followed by an official event at a “film ready” property, where key local creative industry stakeholders could be brought in to speak about their experiences and the opportunity that exists here.

The City of Palm Springs has a section of their website dedicated to filming in Palm Springs, and the Greater Palm Springs website is in development. It would benefit the entire region to collaborate in an effort to attract producers and host film and television crews. Synergizing the marketing efforts will unify the destination from a branding perspective, and building on current infrastructure development will ensure that the region is “film ready.” The creation of a film advisory committee, made of up representatives from

all nine cities, will strengthen this effort.

4.10 BOUTIQUE/SMALL HOTELS

Greater Palm Springs is one of a few destinations in the nation that possesses a very wide diversity of small, including many high-end boutique hotels. This uncommon and brand-specific asset could be built upon to attract more visits from young and international travelers. These more intimate properties are described by CVB officials as hotels with 50 rooms or less. More informally, they are places where guests can meet and greet with the hotel owners and their staffs.

According to *Hotel News Now*, there are 659 boutique hotels in the country totaling just under 55,000 rooms. It is estimated that this room inventory is growing at a 3.1 percent rate annually. Boutique hotel design is heavily influencing the chain hotel market. HVS reports that tourists are becoming more aware of design quality, and expect a higher level of service. They are increasingly seeking an experience instead of a commoditized product. Words associated with boutique include unique, trendy, intimate, and aspirational.

These descriptors are highly relevant to the Greater Palm Springs brand. The boutique hotel asset is not only a source of room nights, but it reinforces key brand elements of the destination. Exposure to midcentury architecture has helped distinguish Palm Springs in the broader visitor market. There may be an important tie-in between midcentury modern and many of the existing small hotels.

4.10.1 HELP SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF THE BOUTIQUE HOTEL PRESENCE

Representatives from Small Hotels of Palm Springs (SHOPS) have stated that the organization's current membership only includes approximately 25 out of 59 boutique hotel properties in the Greater Palm Springs market. Primarily located in the City of Palm Springs, marketing efforts have been limited to them sharing space on a somewhat outdated website that serves as a business directory.

To capitalize on the inventory of small hotels, it will be necessary to encourage cooperation with broader destination marketing efforts. Creating a "value proposition" for the more prestigious properties of Greater Palm Springs will be key to this effort. This will be tied to greater collaboration with the CVB on specific

initiatives described later in this section, with the goal of boosting participation of the higher-end boutique hotels in the TMD.

4.10.2 CREATIVELY MARKET BOUTIQUE HOTEL INVENTORY

The CVB should position Greater Palm Springs' exceptional range of hospitality offerings. Enhanced showcasing and support of small hotel properties with specialized marketing materials should be developed. Recommended tactics include producing high-end marketing material which would contain descriptions and pictures of some of the higher-end boutique-style hotels in the Greater Palm Springs. Similar to the efforts undertaken by Greater Miami CVB, this material could include standard information such as room counts, location, and availability of amenities. Unique features such as spa services and/or in-house chefs would be included. Highlighting these features would help showcase the high-quality and diverse hospitality options in Greater Palm Springs.

4.10.3 BRING SMALL HOTELS TO LIFESTYLE EVENTS

A small hotel industry manager at the CVB could also organize a presence at selected lifestyle tradeshows and seminars domestically and internationally. For example, Greater Miami CVB brings several boutique hotel owners from around its destination and sponsors informational lounges at music and film festivals, fashion shows, etc. These events allow for exposure of boutique hotels and related destination assets to a highly relevant target market.



CASE STUDY

Miami Beach, FL

The Greater Miami CVB has created a full-time position within the Marketing department to sell and market these properties and to act as a liaison between the CVB and the boutique hotel community. This position also coordinates with marketing divisions across the CVB, and is focused on creating experiential marketing and promotions at prestigious events domestically and abroad. These include the Sundance Film Festival, Lollapalooza Chile, and London Fashion Week, trade-shows, and VIP functions.

The GMCVB spends approximately \$150,000 annually at the three signature events to promote this aspect of the destination through private parties, receptions, and experiential marketing with the "It's so Miami" lounge. The CVB also partnered with the boutique properties to produce a 130-page book "A Collection of Desire" (pictured below) that provides details on 80+ individual boutique properties. This publication is widely distributed at 25+ industry events and will be updated soon.



Events attended by this handpicked group include the Sundance Film Festival, Lollapalooza Chile, and London Fashion Week. Similar participation at Greater Palm Springs events such as Modernism Week and the La Quinta Arts Festival could also be considered. Highlight boutique and high-end hotel offerings as a competitive advantage of the

destination. Create a Greater Palm Springs small hotel tradeshow lounge to demonstrate market specific advantages of visiting the destination. Illustrations and/or models that highlight unique modernistic architecture could be incorporated, as well as the high-quality spa, and food and beverage options available.

4.10.4 INCLUDE SMALL HOTELS IN THE TMD

Due to their room counts (under 50), the small hotels of Greater Palm Springs do not participate in the TMD. At the same time, some of these properties are high end and very supportive of the unique destination brand. Recent efforts have been made by the CVB to invite these properties to join the fund. However, property owners express some concern regarding pooled money benefits for their properties. By presenting the recommendations included in this section, in addition to advertising the success that the larger resorts have had with the TMD's financial support, the CVB can offer a stronger argument as to why the TMD can help small hotels. If the higher-end boutique properties of Greater Palm Springs see the value in this section's recommendations, they should strongly consider a TMD membership that would help fund these initiatives.

4.10.5 INVOLVE TRAVEL WRITERS AND BLOGGERS

Travel writers and bloggers can provide inexpensive but credible approval of Greater Palm Springs's small, high-end hotel sector. The CVB should consider sponsoring a team of travel writers or bloggers. They would write in depth about several small properties and their experiences at each. Their write-ups could then be combined and used to produce a hard copy booklet for distribution to visitors by the CVB sales staff. To focus specifically on a younger but affluent demographic, hiring popular bloggers on Tumblr is recommended. Online personalities with large "young professional" followings would write about their time in Greater Palm Springs to reach this highly desirable demographic.

4.10.6 TIE TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS, OUTDOOR AND ADVENTURE

Just as boutique hotels represent a unique lodging offering in Greater Palm Springs, wellness and outdoor activities represent distinctive recreation options. The

CVB should consider bundling these very brand-specific assets into sellable packages. Travelers are increasingly seeking local, authentic, and unique experiences. The CVB could help to develop an online process to walk the visitor through various stages of trip planning. This would include choosing a small hotel that best fits the guest's interests or personality. The traveler would choose from a list or group of outdoor and/or wellness activities for the stay, and options would be automatically selected based on preferences.

Helping visitors to "find their own oasis" with an assist from the Greater Palm Springs CVB represents a highly valuable service. Small hotels and representatives of other unique assets in the destination could benefit. Over time, partnerships formed between selected attractions and various small hotels would create tailored, one-of-a-kind experiences specific to individual visitors.

4.10.7 ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN BOUTIQUE HOTELS AND BLLA

Higher-end boutique-style hotel properties of Greater Palm Springs should consider becoming members of the Boutique Lifestyle and Lodging Association (BLLA). BLLA has expressed interest in reviving its involvement in the Greater Palm Springs destination. It wants to include additional Greater Palm Springs properties into its membership base.

Boutique hotels are often very small businesses, commonly run by only a handful of people with limited time for developing marketing strategies or performing market research. The CVB should take the lead in an effort to connect the BLLA with the boutique hotel properties of Greater Palm Springs.

Membership fees total approximately \$300 annually, and the

CVB could consider subsidizing this fee to encourage participation from the boutique hotel properties. In addition, non-monetary incentives could involve the CVB introducing select small hoteliers to BLLA leadership. These properties would be included in a BLLA directory provided to national and international travel agents and event planners. This exposure could help to increase group and convention bookings at these smaller hotels.

BLLA also organizes national economic impact and market research studies. Membership allows access to these materials relating to the boutique hotel industry. Providing these studies to Greater Palm Springs boutique hotels would help educate the owners about the national and international market. It could give them direction for individual marketing and sales efforts, and encourage them to seek support and participate in CVB initiatives more often.

Defining the scope of the boutique hotel impact could also assist efforts to increase the properties' visibility and recognition internally among the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs.

4.11 VACATION RENTALS

The vacation rental inventory of Greater Palm Springs provides visitors with an opportunity to engage the destination in ways that hotels do not. With amenities such as garages, driveways, and kitchens, these properties enable longer stays. This caters to the international market and could increase midweek visitation. The growing inventory of vacation rental properties gives Greater Palm Springs a unique opportunity with this sector.

According to *Home Away*, the vacation rental sector is an \$85 billion dollar international industry. The demographic averages \$122,000 in annual household income, and 5.7-day stays. Furthermore, the Vacation Rental Managers Association (VRMA) reports that 22 percent of leisure travelers have stayed in a vacation rental property within the last two years. Eighty-four percent of vacation rental property owners have reported an increase in bookings between 2013 and 2014.

According to VRMA, there is untapped nationwide potential for partnerships between the local vacation rental sector and CVBs. Individual property owners, and even small vacation rental companies, can find it difficult to allocate time or financial resources to sales and marketing efforts. However,



with a critical mass of properties within the Greater Palm Springs destination, there are significant opportunities for a more collaborative approach. The CVB could play a lead role in coordinating these efforts.

Home Away estimates that the Greater Palm Springs vacation rental market generates \$272 million in economic impact per year. It employs approximately 2,500 workers. With collaboration between the nine cities, the destination’s vacation rental owners and management companies and the Greater Palm Springs CVB, there is space to improve these impact totals.

As with the boutique hotel product, it will be important to (1) create a “value proposition” for the properties tied to greater collaboration; (2) secure participation of vacation rentals in the TMD; (3) raise community-wide awareness and support for vacation rental properties throughout all nine cities of Greater Palm Springs. All three of these initiatives are necessary in order to take full advantage of the vacation rental market’s potential. Tactics to help achieve these initiatives are described herein.

4.11.1 TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN UNITING THE VACATION RENTAL MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

Local stakeholders have stated that the vacation rental owners and management companies in Greater Palm Springs currently lack a strong association that can give them a “voice” in the community. Efforts to unite this segment of the

hospitality industry should commence. This will help increase destination visitation.

CASE STUDY

Osceola County/Greater Orlando, FL

The Central Florida Vacation Rental Managers Association (CFVRMA) is the governing body of the Osceola County area, a 3,000-vacation rental property market, as well as the Greater Orlando area

The CFVRMA has become a much bigger factor in the destination. It is now comprised of over 30 local vacation rental management companies, each paying a \$300 annual fee for membership.

The benefits of being a part of the association include access to industry research, inclusion in collective marketing campaigns, and the ability to vote on CFVRMA initiatives and policies. The organization, in partnership with the Florida VRMA, engages in lobbying for additional tourism funding from the State of Florida.

The Association also includes associate members, which include catering companies, personal chefs, cleaning services, and security services. Members receive invitations to the many Florida VRMA events and trade shows, providing networking opportunities for both management companies and associate members. The revenues made from these CFVRMA-organized events make up over 25 percent of its total annual funding.

Experience Kissimmee, the destination marketing entity of Osceola County, provides \$500,000 per year in funding to the Association specifically for international marketing initiatives over the internet. These efforts have created web banner and SEO campaigns that have led to increased visitation from foreign segments, specifically from those under the age of 40.

	Grow Mid-Week Business	Grow Summer & Fall Visitation	Improve Existing Attractions & Events	Coordinate 9-City Efforts	Grow International Business	Grow Air Service
Transportation	✓	✓		✓		
Supporting Education			✓	✓		
Outdoor Adventure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arts & Culture		✓	✓	✓		
Health & Wellness	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Wayfinding & Entry Conditions			✓	✓		
Eco-Sustainability		✓	✓	✓		
Sales & Marketing/ Social Media	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boutique Hotels		✓		✓	✓	
Vacation Rentals	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

There could be a Greater Palm Springs Vacation Rental Managers Association (Greater Palm SpringsVRMA). It might have similarity to the Central Florida Vacation Rental Managers Association (CFVRMA) (see case study inset). The organization could be an expanded version of the existing Vacation Rental Managers Association of Palm Springs. However, it would include membership of properties located throughout all nine Greater Palm Springs cities. Membership fees could help fund special initiatives that benefit the industry as a whole. This would aid shared online marketing efforts, establish a political or PR response team, and facilitate meetings to discuss persistent issues and create future industry growth strategies. A more active association could also include “associate” members. Cleaning services, personal chefs, maintenance companies, and other such firms from the service industry would be joined as stakeholders in the vacation rental market.

There are some obstacles to this approach. Owners of some of the largest vacation rental companies in the valley have indicated that they would like to create a more beneficial association for all parties. However, it can be difficult to collaborate with one another because companies within the industry compete for both the visitors and the property owners. It is important for the CVB to take a leading role in emphasizing the benefits of forming a strong organization to these management firms.

4.11.2 ESTABLISH GREATER PALM SPRINGS VACATION RENTAL INVENTORY

One drawback to the current vacation rental inventory in Greater Palm Springs is the inability to package its assets effectively to visitors. This could be improved by developing a full, regularly updated database and inventory of all vacation rental properties across Greater Palm Springs. The CVB currently lacks information regarding the location of vacation rental properties. Generating such data requires outreach to each of the nine cities requesting information. The CVB could partner with an entity such as Vacation Rental Ordinance. This firm is operated by the same Palm Springs city official that helped roll out a recommended plan to establish more consistent vacation rental ordinances in each of the nine cities. This was accomplished through the California Vacation Rental Managers Association (CVRMA). With CVRMA’s assistance, a full inventory

report could be developed for the CVB. This would help to better define appropriate properties suitable for various market segments.

4.11.3 CREATE VACATION RENTAL SPECIALIST ROLE WITHIN CVB

The owner of McLean Company Rentals is now serving as a member of the Greater Palm Springs CVB Board. As a result, positive momentum is building to further leverage the vacation rental market’s potential. A part- or full-time role could be created to assist specifically in marketing the vacation rental properties. This staffer could also perform research and act on strategic opportunities to promote the valley’s industry. Specific roles could include attending relevant industry events, directing specialized marketing campaigns, or even developing contests in foreign markets to win a vacation in a Greater Palm Springs rental property. Duties specific to vacation rentals could include writing press releases, or conducting research to highlight the important visitation and economic impact of the industry. This liaison position could also serve the same role for the valley’s high-end boutique-style hotels.

4.11.4 VACATION RENTAL MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

Developing better vacation rental business practices in the destination can provide future opportunities for local residents. Consider directing an effort to establish a two-year licensing program possibly partnering with a Greater Palm SpringsVRMA and College of the Desert. Similar to CFVRMA plans for partnering with their local Valencia College, a Greater Palm SpringsVRMA could develop an initiative that could serve as a licensing program for prospective vacation rental owners and managers. This would increase the vacation rental market’s visibility within the community and demonstrate the opportunity that the industry provides for employment in the valley. The school’s classes could be either online or on-site at College of the Desert.

4.11.5 DEVELOP AND HOST INDUSTRY TRADESHOW

The CVB could offer marketing support of a new statewide or regional event at the Palm Springs Convention Center, if developed. Perhaps CVRMA, as well as the National VRMA, would explore the idea. Vacation rental industry experts from companies

such as Airbnb or Home Away could be invited to be part of the program. Vacation rental market representatives from major nearby destinations such as San Diego, San Francisco, Sedona, Monterey, or Lake Tahoe could also participate.

Activities at such an event could include educational seminars such as an exhibition for service vendors, from personal chefs to cleaning companies. An awards ceremony could be created that would recognize creative or collaborative efforts in the industry that helped pioneer new agreements between vacation rentals and governments. This could serve to 1) educate local stakeholders in the industry about how to better manage and position the local vacation rental market; 2) bring significant media attention to Greater Palm Springs and its identity as a vacation rental destination. If initially successful, the event could eventually become a national tradeshow.

4.11.6 START A REGULAR “WORKSHOP DIALOGUE”

The CVB should consider creating a regularly scheduled informal workshop. This would bring together representatives from the hospitality industry, Home Away, and/or Airbnb, and the nine cities of Greater Palm Springs. Sessions could be about opportunities to take advantage of the emerging nexus between the growing “shared economy” and the hospitality industry. Market opportunities, distinct target audiences, sales and marketing approaches, and changes in hospitality buying methods and patterns could be discussed. Other business development concepts could be considered at these sessions, which would be led by the CVB.

SUMMARY

The recommendations summarized above are designed to grow visitation throughout Greater Palm Springs by addressing the six destination goals referenced at the outset of this section and again summarized below.

The matrix on page 90 lists the ten broad areas of recommendation. The recommendations intersect with the six destination goals. It is fair to say that, to some extent, each of the recommendations will have an impact on all six goals. However, the focus will be on how those goals are more directly impacted by various areas of recommendation.

As noted in the exhibit, most of the recommendations will tend to benefit growing summer/fall visitation, improving existing attractions and events, and facilitating coordination between each of the nine cities. The growth of midweek and international business will benefit from five areas of recommendation.

The growth of air service, while indirectly impacted by each recommendation, is more directly impacted by increased outdoor/adventure visitation, enhanced vacation rental activity (which caters to the international visitor), and the continued development and refinement of the overall sales and marketing effort.



APPENDIX

THE GOAL OF THE DDP

I. Tourism and Economic development

Globally, hospitality and tourism is a growing industry. Tourism has an impact on the economy, the natural and built environment, the local population of the places visited, and the visitors themselves. Its economic impact can be measured in the following ways:

1. Income

Income is generated from wages and salaries; interests; rents; and profits. Destinations which attract more free-spending tourists who stay for longer periods of time and have more options to spend their money will generate more income.

2. Employment

Employment can be directly or indirectly related to the tourism industry. Two ways of measuring the impact of tourism on employment are:

- a. One job in tourism generates 1.5 jobs in other industries.
- b. A 10% increase in a destination's visitor-related employment relative to the US average tends to be followed by a 1.5% rise in broader employment in the short-run (approximately 2 years).

3. Investment and development

Demand for travel and tourism stimulates investment in infrastructure, the impact of which is discussed in the plan.

4. Balance of payment

The balance of payment is the credits of incoming tourism spending on goods and services minus the debits of related outgoing tourism spending in another destination.

II. Destination promotion

Destination promotion is crucial to maintaining the competitiveness of the visitor economy as it drives economic development. Successful destination promotion can facilitate structural changes in the visitor economy, such as construction of new assets. These changes can lead to improvements in transportation infrastructure, familiarity, brand, attractions, amenities and other assets. And these improvements create an environment where other

industries grow in response. Destination promotion spurs economic development in the following ways:

1. Building transportation networks and connecting to new markets

Economic development and accessibility of a destination are co-constructive. Availability and extensiveness of transportation infrastructure fosters economic development, and economic development drives transportation demand. Promoting the destination will help drive demand in the visitor economy which necessitates greater accessibility in the form of air, rail, and road. This will attract investment in other sectors.

2. Raising the destination profile

Destination promotion not only builds awareness, familiarity, and engagement with leisure visitors, business travelers, and meeting planners, it solicits the attention of commercial interests looking to invest in the area. Attracting commercial investment is essential for expanding lodging, restaurant, retail, attraction, and other asset options throughout the destination. Raising the destination profile through promotion of this new and improved infrastructure can attract new residents who bolster the skilled workforce, another component of economic development.

3. Attracting strategic events

DMO sales efforts that bring meetings, conventions and tradeshows to the destination expose professionals who visit for business purposes to the valuable assets in the region. These business decision makers are who economic development agencies want to entice to plant roots. By creating direct opportunities for economic development agencies to deepen relationships with executives, the DMO plays an important role in local economic development and attracting other sectors to the area.

4. Raising the quality of life

As the above channels highlighted, a visitor economy that is fueled by destination promotion supports amenities and standards of living that are valued by residents. However, quality of life is also essential in attracting potential residents who will invest in the local economy and broaden the tax base.

Destination promotion enables resources to be consolidated. Marketing efforts should not be

redundant between business and marketing entities. Marketing using pooled resources is a more efficient way to promote the destination because it “maximizes the share of funding that goes to actual marketing and advertising, drives down per unit advertising costs, and enables higher impact, more specialized efforts.”⁵ With a DMO taking the lead on destination promotion, individual municipalities, businesses and other assets that support the visitor economy can then direct funds toward expanding and improving the infrastructure needed to attract visitors and support increased visitation.

III. Role of the DMO

The DMO should act as a stable organization and funding base to support destination marketing. It should efficiently leverage the brand, infrastructure, and relationships it has built over time to promote the destination. However, DMOs today also act as the voice of the visitor, the convention planner and the delegate. They are advocates of the economic impact of tourism and are immersed in tourism product development. They take on a leadership role in the community.

DMOs take a long-term view of the development of a destination, and pursue tactics to help develop a visitor economy that better fits the goals of local residents and businesses. They do this by supporting destination development plans and market research, such as visitor profile studies, that help individual businesses better target market opportunities. DMOs should also work with economic development agencies to build and adopt a brand. The best brands appeal to both the visitor and investor markets. Consistency between the DMO and economic development agency messaging will, over time, produce the strongest results.

There are several challenges that can be faced by a DMO, and an important one is managing TMD funds. Components of managing TMD funds include:

1. Ongoing education of the lodging industry members and local city/council on the importance of the TMD
2. Developing a common vision for how funding should be used
3. Providing specific trackable results for district funding

⁵ Oxford Economics (2014) Destination Promotion: An Engine of Economic Development: How Investments in the Visitor Economy Drive Broader Economic Growth.

4. Managing lodging members or others opposed to the formation of the district

Managing these challenges can be difficult and often require continuous conversation with DMO staff and regional stakeholders. However, with successful TMD fund management, a destination can become more competitive, leading to increased awareness, visitation and economic development.

IV. Role of the Regional DMO

To increase the likelihood of successful destination promotion, stakeholders in a regional destination often pool resources and form a partnership. The chances of successful destination promotion are further increased when one entity, such as a regional DMO, acts as the “collaboration champion.”

Research indicates that one motivation for partnership formation is strategic. Strategic motivations “involve using partnership to enhance a business’ competitive advantage through market power or efficiency, gain access to critical external resources, deal with rapid technological changes in the industry, overcome financial difficulties, rapidly enter markets, or share the risk or uncertainty with their partners.”⁶

There are numerous roadblocks a partnership may face, including mistrust; political, economic, or administrative concerns; and a failure to recognize the true value of collaboration. However, strong personal relationships, frequent communication, similar operating philosophies, and a fair share of benefits and responsibilities are a few ways to overcome these hurdles. Direct outcomes of a positive and productive partnership include:

1. Competitive market advantage through cooperative branding and image building and creation of an integrated tourism product portfolio
2. A formal single marketing plan
3. Wider market reach
4. Cost efficiency
5. Increased economic impact to the region

In challenging economic times, a strategic, regional partnership can mitigate the effects of

⁶ Sandra Naipaul, Yousheng Wang and Fevzi Okmus (2009) REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH, Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 26:5-6, 462-481.

budget restraints and the constraints on tourists' discretionary spending. With a regional DMO leading the marketing efforts for the area, a destination can successfully develop and promote itself to a wider audience. Increased awareness and familiarity will increase visitation which in turn will raise the destination profile, attract strategic events, drive demand for lift and development of road and rail infrastructure, and raise the quality of life. In other words, increased visitor spending will facilitate economic development throughout the region, benefiting the entire community.

Other works cited

1. World Tourism Organization and International Labour Organization (2014), *Measuring Employment in the Tourism Industries – Guide with Best Practices*, UNWTO, Madrid.
2. Civitas and SMG (2014), *Tourism Improvement Districts: The First National Study of Results*.

THE TOURISM LANDSCAPE

The tourism landscape is important to understand when developing a destination marketing strategy. Demographic data is critical to capture, but uncovering attitudes, perceptions, motivations and cultural preferences can inform marketing strategy in more insightful ways. For example, knowing that more Brazilians and Chinese use smartphones for consuming content than the people in the U.S. market, or that the U.S. boomer generation domestic “bucket list” travelers are slightly more likely than others to associate their trip with adventure, can guide destination marketers toward promoting a destination image that will resonate with target segments. The remainder of this section will present international and domestic visitor data that will inform our recommendations.

I. International

In June of this year, the U.S. Department of Commerce released new data forecasting international visitors who stay one or more nights in the United States will reach a record 77.6 million in 2015, up more than 3.6% from total visitors in 2014. Visitors spent a record \$221 billion on travel goods and services in 2014, supporting 1.1 million total US jobs. According to the current forecast, the United States will see a 3.8 percent to 4.6 percent annual growth rate in visitor volume during the 2015-2020 timeframe. By the year 2020, it is projected that 96.4

million visitors will travel to the U.S., an increase of 29% over 2014.

The Top 10 Markets for the U.S.: International Visitation and spending

Country	2014 arrivals in millions	% of total int'l arrivals	% change from 2013 to 2014	Rank	2014 spending in billions	% change from 2013 to 2014	Rank
Canada	23	30.8	-2	1	27.2	-2	1
Mexico	17.3	23.2	+19	2	19.3	+7	3
UK	3.97	5.3	+4	3	13.2	0	5
Japan	3.58	4.8	-4	4	17.3	-2	4
Brazil	2.26	3.0	+10	5	13.0	+5	6
China	2.19	2.9	+21	6	23.8	+13	2
Germany	1.97	2.6	+3	7	7.4	+2	9
France	1.62	2.2	+8	8	NA	NA	
South Korea	1.45	1.9	+7	9	7.8	+10	8
Australia	1.28	1.7	+6	10	6.1	-10	10
India	NA	NA	NA		9.6	+7	7

Six of the top 10 international markets for the U.S. listed above are emerging economies. China is proving to be the world's biggest spender on travel. According to the UNWTO, China spent more money on travel in 2013 than any other country, spending 129 billion US dollars. This was an increase of 26% from the previous year. The International Trade Administration found that the U.S. saw a 21% increase in the number of Chinese visitors from 2013-2014, and that they spent \$23.8 billion in the U.S., an increase of 13%, the largest increase in spending of the top 10 countries analyzed. As such, they are an important segment to understand.

The International Trade Administration also found that the main purpose of traveling to the U.S. for Chinese travelers in 2013 and 2014 was leisure, seeing a 1.9% growth from 2013-2014. Shopping (89%), sightseeing (79%) and fine dining (51%) continue to be the most popular activities of Chinese travelers while in the U.S., with all three showing growth from 2013-2014. Interestingly, visiting small towns and exploring the countryside showed the most growth, with 4.9% more Chinese visitors choosing this activity. This is followed by participating in water sports, which grew by 4.2%. Demographically, in 2014, Chinese visitors were relatively evenly split along gender line, 51% adult males and 49% adult females. The average age of males was 36 and the average age of females was 33.

Visit California research shows that Chinese travelers are also the largest group to visit California. In 2014, 1,022,000 Chinese visitors came to California, an increase of 24.8%. They spent \$2,683 million, a 32.7% increase from last year. The top motivators for travel to California are Disneyland (39%), Hollywood (36%), Universal Studios Hollywood (32%) and Los Angeles (30%), all of which are in driving distance to Greater Palm Springs. If the Chinese visitor enjoys shopping, dining and exploring the countryside, attracting them to the region using these attributes could be a marketing strategy.

The GPSCVB 2015 business plan also places importance on the Chinese traveler, pursuing a number of strategies to raise awareness of Greater Palm Springs. First is to put a more strategic social media plan in place that will drive traffic to the Chinese translated website, and second is to leverage brands such as Desert Hills Premium Outlets to create awareness through a number of sales activities. These efforts can be successful over time (3-5 years as stated in the business plan), but since there are already 280 non-stop flights per month from China to California, the impact of this strategy can already be seen.

It should be noted that China is considered an “emerging market,” and even though attention should be paid to developing this segment, it is also important to maintain a presence in already established feeder markets such as the UK, Germany and Canada.

The UK is ranked 3rd in terms of total arrivals to the US according to the National Travel and Tourism Office. Visitation by UK travelers is growing, with arrivals increasing 4% from 2013 to 2014. In terms of visitor spending, they are ranked 5th, spending \$13.2 billion, an increase of \$39 million from 2013. Most UK travelers are visiting for vacation or holiday and enjoy shopping (88%) and sightseeing (81%). Third most popular is visiting national parks and monuments (38%). While camping/hiking (5%) and environmental and eco-tours (3%) are not as popular, they saw a small increase in popularity from 2013-2014. Visit California reported that the percentage of visitors from the UK decreased 11% from 2008-2013, so efforts to drive demand from this market could be ramped up.

Visitors from Germany also visit for holiday purposes and are engaging in activities similar to UK tourists.

They enjoy shopping (87%) and sightseeing (80%) and visiting national parks and monuments (44%), which saw an increase of 3 percentage points from 2013 – 2014. Additionally, camping/hiking (10%) and environmental and eco tours (7%) are seeing increased popularity. According to Visit California, California saw an increase of 14% from 2008-2013 in visitors from Germany, so marketing to this segment should remain steady.

Greater Palm Springs has an abundance of shopping and is in a prime location to act as a “home base” for day excursions to explore the surrounding countryside. If the trend of outdoor adventure in these Western European countries continues, the GPSCVB could capitalize on the development of outdoor assets and fuel visitor interest in these activities. While Visit California predicts an 18% growth in visitors from China from 2013-2016, it is important to stay proactive in promoting the destination to markets that are already established such as the UK and Germany.

Coordinated marketing efforts to drive demand in above target markets will be more effective than individual campaigns, and focusing on a limited selection of both emerging and established feeder markets will allow for strong and sustained growth as opposed to fragmented and potentially unsustainable visitation patterns.

II. Domestic

Tourism Economics forecasted that U.S. domestic travel will grow 2-3% a year through 2016. In 2013, 84% of the \$888 billion in direct travel spending in the U.S. was spent by domestic travelers. Direct travel spending in the U.S. by domestic and international travelers grew 4.7 percent to \$927.9 billion in 2014. Of this total, \$790.9 billion was spent by domestic travelers, a 5.3% increase from 2013.

However, the 2015 MMGY Global survey found that 66% of U.S. adults indicated they planned to take at least one leisure trip during the next six months, which was down from 69% for the same period last year. This may be a trend because a Google Consumer Study in early 2015 found that 42% of Americans did not take a vacation day in 2014. On average, 3.2 days per person is left on the table. If everyone used one unused day of time off, it would add \$160 billion to the economy and 1.2 million jobs.

Looking to the red wine industry’s success as being “good for you,” USTA’s day off deficit campaign

communicated the benefits of travel to shift mindsets to think of travel as being more beneficial in videos and #TravelEffect infographics.

While these statistics may seem like a lot to overcome, about 27% of respondents of the same survey said they planned to spend more on their vacations during the next six months, up from 22% for the same period last year. This is likely due to the strengthening dollar and a drop in oil and gas prices. The drive market is a big source of visitors for Greater Palm Springs, and the drop in oil and gas prices has the potential to increase the number of visitors from key target drive markets.

1. State

California is projected to be the most popular domestic tourist destination in 2015, according to Euromonitor International, with a forecasted 134,145,000 tourist visits. Next in line are Texas (87,502,000 visits), Florida (69,463,000 visits) and New York (55,383,000 visits). California is already experiencing growth in visitation and money spent, which translates into jobs and an increased tax base. In July 2014, Visit California successfully launched their "Dream Big" initiative which increased their funding from \$52 MM/year to \$142 MM/year.

Travel in California Quick Facts from Visit California:

- Total direct travel spending in California was \$117.5 billion in 2014 (preliminary). This represents a 3.6 percent increase over 2013 in current dollars and a 2.7 percent increase in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars.
- Direct travel generated employment was 1,027,000 in 2014, a 4.2 percent increase over 2013. Travel-generated employment has increased by 4.0 percent per year since 2011.
- Room demand increased by 3.9 percent in 2014.
- Visitor arrivals on domestic flights (32.3 million in 2014) increased by 3.6 percent.

2. Regional

In 2014 Q4, VisaVue calculated that domestic tourism spending in Greater Palm Springs was \$550,929,944, representing a year-over-year growth of 4.5%. The top spending MSA was Los Angeles-Riverside- Orange County, followed

by San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose. Third was Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton, WA and fourth San Diego. Interestingly, southern states are showing the most growth in spending in Greater Palm Springs year-over-year. Columbus GA-AL showed the most growth (343.8%), followed by Alexandria LA (291.4%), and then fourth was Tuscaloosa AL (142.2%). While the California drive market is important to focus on, these southern states could be target markets to consider.

CHANGING TRENDS

In a demographic shift occurring in the country today, the Boomer generation, born 1946 – 1964, became a major segment with the most economic impact in the history of the U.S. Now, Millennials, born 1984 – 2004, are quickly becoming the next major segment. There are now 84 million Millennials, compared to 78 million Boomers. The Millennial generation is not yet the core consumer of travel industry products. In five to ten years, when they enter their peak earning, spending and traveling years, they will be. Already travel spending by Millennials rose by 20% in 2010, according to a white paper released by Bazaar Voice in 2012. Millennials might not have quite as much to spend as other generations at this time. Older travelers spend an average of \$3,381 annually, while Millennials spend \$3,217 (PhoCusWright). Still, the 2014 MMGY Global Portrait of the American Traveler indicated that 24% of Millennial travelers planned to take more overnight leisure trips in 2015, versus 14% who are planning fewer trips. The 10% net difference is positive, and when compared with the net difference of -1% for Boomers, and -6% for Gen Xers, it underlines the importance of understanding the Millennial traveler.

One of the emerging trends is that Millennials want to "live like a local" at the destinations they visit. According to The Leisure Group, 78% of Millennials prefer to learn something new while traveling, and 70% indicated they expect destinations to offer immersive experiences that are interactive and hands-on. A Skift report revealed that more than 80% of 18- to 34-year-olds surveyed said they use local firms when booking travel with friends and family, versus less than 60% of those 55 and older. To capitalize on this trend, DMOs need to market an authentic destination experience. The DMO must bring together local government and businesses to develop products and infrastructure that facilitate

the experience, instead of just marketing features of the destination. DMOs need to connect with Millennial travelers via mobile devices. The Leisure Group indicated that 75% of Millennials report having travel apps on their smartphones. Millennials are more likely to use Amazon.com, Google Maps, Yelp, Hotels.com, Expedia, Kayak, Orbitz, and the travel apps of traditional airline carriers such as Delta and American Airlines. In comparison, only 47% of non-Millennials reported they use travel apps. Keeping the Millennial traveler engaged with the destination will increase exposure of the region’s tourism product portfolio. Social media blog posts, posted pictures and reviews posted on travel sites, all serve to strengthen the GPS brand.

Millennials are planning more staycations than other leisure travelers. This is defined as a trip taken within a 75-mile radius that requires overnight lodging. According to the 2015 MMGY Global Portrait of the American Traveler, 55% of Millennials took a staycation – an increase of 14% from 2014. Moreover, 34% plan on taking a staycation during the next 12 months, compared to 27% among all leisure travelers. Part of this can be explained by the life-cycle factor. Most Millennials cannot afford extensive long-distance leisure travel because they are often saving money for bigger, more international trips in the future. This may not appear to be good news. But, by

targeting regional Millennial travelers and promoting cultural tourism, a destination can begin to establish a relationship that can often lead to conversion from visitor to resident. CEO for Cities recent research found that Millennials are beginning to “plant roots” in their early 30s. Getting their attention early can raise the profile of the destination. Promoting the cultural experience and economic opportunity will attract business and a skilled workforce.

INDEX OF RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Multiple waves of research were conducted in a triangulated fashion. “Triangulated” research looks at a variety of information within three areas. After a discovery process of GPSCVB historical data where historical studies are explored, audit secondary sources are audited to continue the assessment. Finally, field research studies are designed and then fielded to deepen insights and augment the knowledge base. This research approach allows for the testing of findings across multiple data sets during the project’s progression, so that bias is avoided and the most relevant insights are obtained.

UPDATES: JANUARY 2014

TO PRESENT

A critical component to marketing a destination successfully is a robust product portfolio. On-

The following is an index of research conducted.

Background	
2014 GPSCVB Annual Report Analysis	Historical Research
Review of 2014 Business Plan	Historical Research
GPSCVB Board of Directors Strategic Planning Session – September 29, 2014	Primary Research
Trend Analysis	
Analysis and Summary of the CMI 19th LGBT Tourism Hospitality Study (2014)	Secondary Research
Analysis and Summary of DMAI “Destination Next” Road Map (2014)	Secondary Research
CIVITAS and SMG National Study on TMD Summary Analysis (2014)	Secondary Research
Existing Product Conditions Analysis	
Key Results Analysis from 2011 Economic Impact Tourism Study	Historical Research
Review of Partnership Profile Data (2014)	Historical Research
2014 Community Relations Partnership Visitor Center Statistics	Historical Research
2013 Employment Statistics Coachella Valley Economic Report	Secondary Research
Analysis of 2014 PFK Air Service Report	Secondary Research
2015 Key Tourism Statistical Summary – The Desert Sun	Secondary Research
Review of Salton Sea Tourism Economics Study (2014)	Secondary Research
Summary Online Analysis of Nine-City Branding and Attractions (2014-15)	Primary Research
In-Market Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups (2014-2015)	Primary Research
Experiential Touchpoint Mapping of Primary Destination Attractions (2014-15)	Primary Research

JPA Round-table Facilitated Discussion (2014)	Primary Research
Partnership Program Analysis and Key Partner Interviews (2014-15)	Primary Research
In-Market Segment Assessment of Family/Arts/Outdoor Attractions (2015)	Primary Research
In-Market Segment Assessment of LGBT/Style/Romance Attractions (2015)	Primary Research
In-Market Segment Assessment of Wellness/Rejuvenation/Nightlife Attractions (2015)	Primary Research
Industry Analysis	
PCMA Meeting Planner Focus Group Study on GPS Perceptions (2015)	Primary Research
On-line Meeting Planner Survey GPS Perceptions (2015)	Primary Research
Travel Writer Survey GPS Perceptions (2015)	Primary Research
GPS Concierge Attitudes Audit (2015)	Primary Research
Tourist Intercept Study - Attitudes and Usage of GPS Attractions (2015)	Primary Research
Benchmarking Analysis	
Lodging Assessments CVB Case Studies (2015)	Primary Research
Transportation Assessments CVB Case Studies (2015)	Primary Research
Economic Development Assessments CVB Case Studies (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Maui County (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Myrtle Beach (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Scottsdale (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Bourbon County (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Miami (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Cape Cod (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies New Jersey (2015)	Primary Research
City Case Studies Osceola County (2015)	Primary Research
Branding Assessment - Las Vegas (2015)	Primary Research
Branding Assessment - Pure Michigan (2015)	Primary Research
Communications Strategy Assessment - St. Louis "Hookup" Campaign (2014)	Primary Research
Review of 2014 Creative Evaluation Summary Results (December 2013)	Historical Research
Review Wave 1 Advertising Effectiveness Research (February, 2014)	Historical Research
Review 2014 Southern California Summer Creative Evaluation (April 15, 2014)	Historical Research
Review National Creative Concept Test (Phase 1 July, 2014)	Historical Research
Review Wave 2 (ROI) Advertising Effectiveness (July, 2014)	Historical Research
Existing Sales and Marketing Conditions Analysis	
Sports Market Analysis (2014)	Primary Research
Analysis of City-wide, Self-contained and Group Market (2014-15)	Historical Research
2014 Web Analysis via Monthly Measures (2014-15)	Historical Research
2015 Web Strategy Review per GPSCVB	Historical Research
Review of 2015 Destination Marketing Media Missions and Corporate Comm.	Historical Research
Analysis of Tap Reports 2013 and 2014	Historical Research
Analysis of CVB Sales Goals vs. Actuals (2014-15)	Historical Research
Monthly Measure Convention and Sales Marketing Positioning Assessment (2014-15)	Historical Research
Analysis of 2014 and 2015 Brand Pillar Strategy Evolution	Historical Research
Brand Strategy Review from 2015 GPSCVB Business Plan	Historical Research
2015 Digital Marketing Plan Review from 2015 Business Plan	Historical Research
Convention Center Performance Analysis (2014-15)	Historical Research
Review of Marketing Communications Efforts and Impact from SMARI Research (2014)	Historical Research
Analysis of SWOT Analysis from Film Production Study in Coachella Valley (2014)	Historical Research
Analysis of 2015 Travel Industry Sales Summary	Historical Research
Analysis of 2015 Tourism Business Results from Advertising Spend	Historical Research
Analysis of 2015 Advocacy and Governance Needs	Historical Research
Analysis of 2015 Media Goals and Vehicles	Historical Research

Analysis of Visitor Spend by Demographic, Age and Income vs. National (2014-15)	Historical Research
Analysis of 2015 Convention Sales Research and Strategy	Historical Research
TMD Breakdown by City - FY 2013	Historical Research
TMD Breakdown by City FY 2014 Growth from 2013 Delta to US GDP	Historical Research
Revenue and Expenses from Fiscal Year (FY) 2013/14 and 2014/15 % of total	Historical Research
Success Metrics Tied to Tourism (Source: 2015 GPSCVB Business Plan)	Historical Research
Cost Per Aware Household from Advertising to measure advertising efficiency (2014)	Historical Research

the-ground assets can be built, remodeled or rebranded to keep pace with consumer preferences. Developments in hotel stock, dining options, events and attractions contribute to growth in the visitor economy. And a rise in the number of other commercial developments show that investors are seeing opportunity in the area in other sectors as well.

According to The Desert Sun, Palm Springs is benefiting from a new economic development incentive program that awarded more than \$845,000 in grants to local businesses, but the other cities are seeing developments as well.

In an effort to ensure that the CVB is well-staffed and equipped to function efficiently and effectively, there were a number of staffing changes made in various departments over the past year and a half. The CVB also spearheaded other tourism-related developments aimed at promoting the region.

In this section, new developments in accommodations, attractions, events, and dining in Greater Palm Springs are presented. Activities from January 2014 to the present are included, in addition to a recap of internal changes at the CVB and other developments.

With the CVB at the helm, forward progress will be made, and Greater Palm Springs can continue to see growth in the visitor economy.

ACCOMMODATIONS **NEW**

The Ritz-Carlton | Rancho Mirage

Situated cliffside with stunning views, the 260-room Ritz-Carlton Rancho Mirage is the first domestic U.S. opening of a Ritz-Carlton property in four years.

Sparrows Hotel | Palm Springs

Sparrows Hotel is a 20-room ranch-style boutique property. Each room is adorned with its own outdoor fireplace, redwood and stone walls, and hand-built furniture. The property's original barn will be the focal point for communal dining and entertainment.

Triada Palm Springs | Palm Springs

This upscale boutique hotel in downtown Palm Springs has 56 rooms including 8 grand casitas and 8 suites. The property features Iluminara Restaurants & Lounge.

The Palm Springs Hotel | Palm Springs

The hotel replaces the Palm Grove, uptown and promises, "a new twist to desert modernist architecture" with 21st-century accoutrements like Apple TVs in every room and tailor-made art and furnishings by ModShop

Colt's Lodge | Palm Springs

A little bit country and a little bit East Coast against a desert backdrop, Colt's Lodge is a newly redesigned and renovated 11-room hotel located in Palm Springs' historic Deepwell Estates.

Infusion Beach & Hotel Palm Springs | Palm Springs

The Infusion is a multi-million-dollar renovation of the existing Garden Vista Hotel on Palm Canyon Drive. The property is set to reopen as the Infusion Hotel in late 2015.

ARRIVE | Palm Springs | January 2016

This 32-room contemporary hotel, ARRIVE, opened in Spring 2016 in the north end of the Uptown Design District in Palm Springs. Meticulously designed by Chris Pardo, ARRIVE Palm Springs features an open floor plan, a luxurious wet room, and an abundance of natural light.

RENOVATIONS/REBRANDING

Renaissance Indian Wells Resort & Spa | Indian Wells

Formerly known as the Renaissance Esmeralda, the Renaissance Indian Wells celebrated its 25th anniversary. Going local, much of the produce served at the new Sirocco Pizza Company comes from local farms in Thermal.

The Chateau at Lake La Quinta | La Quinta

Lake La Quinta Inn is now The Chateau at Lake La Quinta. The property recently completed renovations

including an updated lobby with a new lobby bar, a see-through fireplace, expanded patio, fire pits and a public restaurant.

Avalon Palm Springs | Palm Springs

Joining Proper Hospitality, the former Viceroy Palm Springs is now the Avalon Palm Springs. Providing guests with health and wellness is the centerpiece of the property.

Desert Princess Rebranded | Palm Springs | Spring 2016

The Desert Princess has undergone a multi-million dollar renovation to the property and has been rebranded DoubleTree by Hilton Palm Springs Golf Resort.

La Quinta Resort & Club and PGA West | La Quinta

A multi-million dollar renovation of this Waldorf Astoria property debuted in winter 2014. The resort-wide renovation encompassed upgrades of all guest casitas, starlight villas and suites as well as a re-imagined pool experience.

L'Horizon Resort & Spa | Palm Springs

The 25 bungalows built by renowned architect William Cody in 1952 have been revamped on the three-acre grounds. The property has been granted approval to construct an additional 24 guest rooms. The property was formerly called the Horizon Hotel.

Two Bunch Palms | Desert Hot Springs

The hot springs spa resort known for its mineral rich lithium-infused artesian waters underwent a multi-million dollar renovation in 2014 that included 70 rooms, restaurant, yoga dome, and Viewpoint center meeting facility. Along with its physical transformation, the property also constructed a 3.5-acre solar field, making it the first carbon-neutral spa resort in North America.

Palm Mountain Resort & Spa | Palm Springs

Palm Mountain Resort & Spa in downtown Palm Springs recently completed renovations that included 23 new rooms, a new two-story lobby, a 4-room spa and 1,000 square-feet of new meeting space.

The V Hotel | Palm Springs

The Curve Palm Springs closed for a multi-million dollar renovation. The property reopened early 2016 as an independent/lifestyle boutique hotel under a new name and brand.

ON THE HORIZON

Andaz Palm Springs | Palm Springs | Late 2016

Slated for late 2016, this 150-room, 17-suite luxury lifestyle hotel will be located in the heart of downtown Palm Springs, adjacent to the vibrant Uptown Design District and walking distance to the shops, restaurant and galleries that line famed Palm Canyon Drive.

Kimpton Hotel Palm Springs | Palm Springs | Fall 2016

Construction is underway for a six-story, 155-room Kimpton brand hotel set to open Fall 2016 as part of the Downtown Palm Springs Project.

SilverRock Resort | La Quinta

A new \$420 million project proposed for the City of La Quinta at SilverRock Resort will include a five-star, 140-room luxury hotel and spa and a four-star, 200-room lifestyle hotel. Also in the works is a 150,000-square-foot resort village, with residential units and up to 40,000 square feet of retail space and recreation areas. The project is scheduled to break ground in early 2016.

Hotel El Paseo | Palm Desert | Winter 2017

A new-build Autograph Collection property will be built in the luxury El Paseo Shopping District in Palm Desert. The \$36 million, three-story 152-room boutique hotel will be located on Larkspur.

ATTRACTIONS

Indian Wells Tennis Garden Completes Expansion

The Indian Wells Tennis Garden recently completed an \$11 million expansion. The BNP Paribas Open, hosted at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, welcomed a record 456,672 attendees in 2015, making it the largest tennis tournament in the world, outside of the four majors.

Palm Springs Architecture and Design Center

The new Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, opened in fall 2014. The new facility includes related exhibitions, educational and community programs, research space, and a storage area for the museum's growing architecture and design collections and archives.

BMW Performance Center West at The Thermal Club

A new BMW Performance Center West, the company's driver training facility opened late 2014 just outside the city of La Quinta. BMW has partnered with The Thermal Club to create a dedicated road

course and training facility for avid drivers.

The Buzz! Weekend Trolley System

New trolley service in the City of Palm Springs offers visitors an easier way to get around town. The Palm Springs Buzz, a free service, runs Thursdays through Sundays, from 11 a.m. – 1 a.m.

Palm Springs Mod Squad

Ninety-minute tours showcasing what makes Palm Springs the mecca for midcentury modern architecture. With a maximum of 5 individuals per tour, participants get an intimate, personalized experience with time left over to see other sites in Palm Springs.

New Windmill Tour Explores Sustainable Energy

Palm Springs Windmill Tours offers a windmill farm tour that takes visitors up close and personal with one of Greater Palm Springs' most recognizable landmarks. The tour goes "behind the fence" to a working windmill farm, then explores other sustainable energy production facilities nearby.

PS Architectural Tour Dives into Midcentury Modern Architecture

PS Architecture Tours is an exploration of the city, featuring in-depth information about the history and architecture of the city and the Hollywood glamour years of the 1940s, 50s and 60s that made Palm Springs famous.

Escape Room Palm Springs

Advertised as a "real life escape game," participants are challenged to solve a series of puzzles in 45 minutes. Enthralling stories unfold as the game progresses, leading to the puzzle that will unlock the escape.

EVENTS

Cathedral City Hot Air Balloon Festival, February 12-14, 2016

The unique balloon event features all the regular balloon festival fun, as well as marriages in moored balloons or the "Equality Balloon." Balloon rides and a Balloon Race was incorporated in the second year.

ANA Inspiration, March 30 – April 5 2016 | New title sponsor

For the second year, All Nippon Airways (ANA), Japan's leading airline, served as title sponsor of the first major of the LPGA season. New additions include a Women in Sports conference and Footgolf exhibition.

Rise EDM Concert, October 2016

Non-stop Electronic Dance Music concert entitled, "Rise," consisting of 20 international DJs and three headline performers including international dance diva Pepper MaShay.

CareerBuilder Challenge, January 21-24, 2016 | New title sponsor

CareerBuilder, the global leader in human capital solutions, was named the new title sponsor after entering a six-year agreement that runs through 2021.

SPECTRUM Indian Wells, March 17-20, 2016

The four-day contemporary art show took place at the Renaissance Indian Wells Resort & Spa. SPECTRUM Indian Wells is where exceptional art meets with an equally stunning backdrop to creatively fuse innovative art with a luxe venue and gorgeous desert surroundings.

NEW DINING

Tonga Hut | Palm Springs

Cello's Pantry | Rancho Mirage

Smoke Tree Supper Club | Palm Springs

Appetito | Palm Springs

IlCorso | Palm Desert

Wilma & Freida's Café | Palm Desert

Eureka! Burger | Indian Wells

The Edge Steakhouse | Rancho Mirage

Dish Creative Cuisine | Palm Springs

Bontá Offers European Latin Flavors | Cathedral City

Ernest Coffee | Palm Springs

Bootlegger Tiki Dive Bar | Palm Springs

Pho 533 | Palm Springs

SO.PA at L'Horizon Resort & Spa | Palm Springs

Bardot Nightclub at The Hard Rock Hotel | Palm Springs

BART Lounge | Cathedral City

Mr. Lyons Steakhouse | Palm Springs

Hester Social Club | Palm Springs

Eight4Nine | Palm Springs

CVB UPDATES

Staffing Developments

Digital Services and IT

In July 2015, the CVB established a Vice President of Digital and Information Technology, moving Partnership staff members to the Digital Department to increase Partner involvement on the CVB website increase advertisement sales.

The Vice President took on the responsibility of rebuilding and redesigning the CVB's website. The new website launched in September 2015.

Brand Development:

In July 2015, the CVB established a Vice President of Brand Development, responsible for continuing to grow and develop the current brand.

Film, Arts and Entertainment:

The CVB created a Film, Arts and Entertainment Manager in 2015 who will market the entertainment sector and work in collaboration with all nine cities to attract filming in the area. The manager is also working with the arts and cultural community to identify and market these important GPS assets, working with key arts leaders and city Partners.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

2015 Summer Chill KTLA Advertising Co-Op

Greater Palm Springs and KTLA television teamed up to offer Partners the ultimate advertising package aimed at reaching the Southern California market over the summer. The CVB took the 2014 Summer Chill marketing campaign to a bigger and better level with this exciting Summer Chill television campaign.

Joining with LA's top morning news station, KTLA, the CVB produced and aired 60-second destination features highlighting advertising Partners, as well as airing 30-second commercials.

The KTLA/CVB Summer Chill Program

Partner participation included a 60-second destination feature that ran on KTLA a total of 50 times. The CVB worked with Partners to integrate Partner personal branding in tandem with the CVB's Summer Chill message for the destination.

In addition, Partner participation included a 30-second Chill commercial that contained the Partner's message. Each commercial ran 200 times on KTLA and 400 times on Time Warner Cable May 4-June 21, 2015.

The Co-op was well received, and the program will expand to three seasons; fall, winter and summer.

Air Service Update

The CVB renewed the minimum revenue guarantee with American Airlines to start nonstop service to Chicago earlier in the season.

The CVB signed an agreement with JetBlue to provide media plan financing for a direct flight from New York (JFK) to PSP beginning January 2016.

CVB Website

The CVB worked with Ignited to develop and build a completely

new website.

The responsive-design website was launched in September 2015. Ignited was also hired to create a new social media strategy for the CVB, which has recently been implemented on the CVB's social media channels.

The CVB created the Chill Pass to promote summer offers and discounts, primarily focusing on mid-week business. The Chill Pass was very successful over the summer and has now replaced the "deals" section of the website to continue as a year-round promotion.






GREATER
palm springs
convention & visitors bureau

70100 highway 111 | rancho mirage, ca 92770 | 760.770.9000