

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
Collaboration, Cooperation & Partnerships (CCP) Committee Meeting
Traverse City CVB, 10am – 4pm, June 27 2013**

Agenda

1. Welcome – Sarah Nicholls and Brad Van Dommelen *(10 mins)*
2. Introductions – All *(20 mins)*
3. Review of Plan Process and CCP Goal/Objectives – Sarah Nicholls *(30 mins)*
4. Identification of Metrics for the CCP Objectives – All *(30 mins)*
5. Consideration of Prioritization of CCP Objectives – All *(30 mins)*
6. Lunch (Thank You to Mike Busley, President, Grand Traverse Pie Company!) *(45 mins)*
7. Consideration of Formation of CCP Subcommittees – All *(30 mins)*
8. Review of CCP Suggested Strategies and Identification of Additional Strategies – All *(60 mins)*
9. Preliminary Identification of Funding and Research Needs *(60 mins)*
10. Next Steps and Next Meeting – Sarah Nicholls *(30 mins)*

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Meeting Notes

In attendance: Julie Sprenger (Co-Chair), Brad Van Dommelen (Co-Chair), Mike Busley, Michele Hirschfield, Mark Hitchcock, Patty Janes, Linda Jones, Dave Lorenz, Gordon Mackay, Sarah Nicholls, Anna Popp.

Absent: Barb Barden.

Welcome – Provided by Sarah Nicholls, Brad Van Dommelen and Julie Sprenger.

Introductions – Made by all.

Review of Plan Process and CCP Goal/Objectives – Provided by Sarah Nicholls. Committee comments/concerns re. each objective are described below.

- *Objective One: Grow and strengthen partnership programs and communicate their success to the industry.* This objective pertains to the formal TM advertising partnership program (42 partners providing \$5.5 million in 2013), other TM partnerships (e.g., Coca Cola, NASCAR/MIS, Kroger, Great Lakes USA, Circle MI, etc.) as well as all other formal and informal partnerships throughout the industry. There are concerns regarding the overuse of the Pure MI brand/logo and oversaturation of the Pure MI campaign (esp. re. the number and timing of radio ads). Appropriate use of the logo/brand is debatable, esp. re. the types of places and products that might use it. From TM's perspective, there is a need to be fair re. allowing all communities/entities equal access to use of the brand/ logo. There are guidelines regarding its use (see actions items). There is a balance between protecting the brand whilst maintaining access to it. This committee can make recommendations to TM re. use of the brand/logo, esp. new partnerships that could help strengthen the brand. Re. radio ads, the minimum partner investment for out-of-state advertising has been reduced for 2013. However, the initial start-up costs to produce radio/TV ads are high and likely never accessible to the smaller communities/entities. Use of the logo is encouraged in these cases and is free. Need to evaluate experiences of current ad partners and identify new partners whose participation would strengthen the brand.
- *Objective Two: Establish an online statewide toolbox or clearinghouse to support collaboration, cooperation and partnerships.* Toolbox could include CCP best practices – who/what has worked well together and how – as well as examples of less successful attempts. A place to share stories about individuals'/entities' experiences working with different people/groups and to spark creative new CCP opportunities. Match.com

concept: 'I need this skill/expertise/resource, can anyone provide it? I need this help/resource, and I can offer this skill/expertise in exchange. It was noted that Ohio does a good job of facilitating the sharing of industry resources – see <http://industry.discoverohio.com/> for “Marketing News & Information for the Ohio Tourism Industry.” Critical to remember that collaboration is a two-way process, a give-and-take concept in which the rewards are not always equal/reciprocal.

- *Objective Three: Support the establishment or revitalization of regional tourism development organizations.* No clear structure, e.g., formal or informal, has been predetermined for these organizations, the objective simply reflects the desire of some industry members to be better connected with other direct and indirect tourism entities. Some such organizations already exist, e.g., West Michigan Tourist Association (WMTA, <http://www.wmta.org/>), Upper Peninsula Travel & Recreation Association (UPTRA, <http://www.uptravel.com/>), Great Waters (astern Upper Peninsula Nature Tourism Alliance, <http://www.thegreatwaters.com/>), The Wilds of Michigan (Gogebic and Ontonagon counties, <http://thewildsofmichigan.com/>), Michigan's Great Outdoors (central West Michigan, <http://michigansgreatoutdoors.org/>), Michigan Beachtowns (<http://www.beachtowns.org/>). Broader examples (beyond tourism) include the Big 400 in Chelsea (<http://www.thebig400.com/> “The mission of the Big 400 is to prepare and execute plans which stimulate commerce in the communities sharing a common border local and state public lands, while concurrently partnering with the stewards of these public lands to promote and encourage their use and preservation”). Question/discussion: could this objective impose a threat to existing organizations? Group discussed/agreed on need to find ways to engage small communities/CVBs. Intent of this objective is to unite CVBs and other entities in regions, to streamline their operations, and to facilitate cooperation, especially between smaller entities that have less experience with (in)formal CCP.
- *Objective Four: Increase the number and diversity of participants in the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and in the associated industry awards programs.* There is a perception that the conference is still dominated by the lodging sector (resulting in part from the history of the conference, as a merger of the three former MHMRA, TM and MSU conferences). The price of the conference is a significant concern for smaller entities (full registration in 2013 was \$329 (\$299 for early bird), excluding accommodations and transportation). Location of the conference (in the lower part of the LP two or more years out of every three) is also a limiting factor for northern and UP entities in terms of travel time and cost. Several CCP members also serve on the conference planning committee (CPC) and can bring this concern to that full group (see action items). Committee members wonder about conference finances, esp. in light of perception that this is a government-organised/sponsored conference. Does the conference make a profit and if so, where do those monies go? Where/how are sponsorship monies spent? With regards to content, are there opportunities to record sessions and make them available post-conference (to all, or just to conference attendees)? Industry awards include MLTA's Stars of the Industry Awards and TICOM's Governor's Awards for Innovative Tourism Collaboration.

Identification of Metrics for the CCP Objectives –

- *Objective One: Grow and strengthen partnership programs and communicate their success to the industry.* Hardest objective to identify metrics for. Number of official TM ad partnerships is one measure, but this does not address concerns re. brand dilution and ad oversaturation. Number of non-traditional partnerships facilitated could be another measure. Measuring effectiveness is more important but also more difficult.
- *Objective Two: Establish an online statewide toolbox or clearinghouse to support collaboration, cooperation and partnerships.* Establishment of site. Number of members. Number of posts.
- *Objective Three: Support the establishment or revitalization of regional tourism development organizations.* Tabled for now.
- *Objective Four: Increase the number and diversity of participants in the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and in the associated industry awards programs.* Easiest objective to identify metrics for. Possibilities include: total number of participants in conference; proportion of conference participants in various categories (lodging, CVBs, economic development, etc.); number of submissions to MLTA Stars of the Industry awards; number of submissions to TICOM Governor's Awards for Innovative Tourism Collaboration.

Consideration of Prioritization of the CCP Objectives – Group agreed that objectives one, two and four are currently of higher priority than objective three, and that the online toolbox (obj. 2) can serve as one means of communicating success of partnerships (obj. 1). Group agreed that obj. 2 will be quickest and easiest to address (see action items for further details). Focus on obj. 4 (conference + awards) once historical data acquired and summarized.

Consideration of Formation of CCP Subcommittees – Group agreed that formation of subcommittees is premature at this point. Will reconsider this option at a later date as/when appropriate.

Review of CCP Suggested Strategies and Identification of Additional Strategies –

There are other suggested strategies from the summer meetings that could still be reviewed and discussed.

- *Objective One: Grow and strengthen partnership programs and communicate their success to the industry.* To help focus this objective into more manageable and tangible elements, the group spent time identifying/categorising different types of partnerships. These include partnerships with/between:
 - Public – private – non-profit.

- Traditional vs. non-traditional (though varying definitions of non-traditional seem to exist).
- Travel/Pure MI.
- Professional associations (lodging, retail, grocers, petroleum, etc.).
- Niche markets.
- Others: academic, small business, residents (ambassadors), sports, events, packaging.

Group ranked the various types and voted to prioritise: (i) Travel MI (8 votes); (ii) professional associations (8 votes); intergovernmental (7 votes); (iv) niche markets (7 votes) [other items: DMO to DMO (2); public-private (2), event coordination (2)].

Discussion re. top four types summarized below:

- Travel MI: Desire to strengthen the brand via the identification of key brand partners and recommendation of priority partnership opportunities to TM. Need to identify most appropriate categories for brand development, e.g. sports, transportation (e.g., PM logo on all charter buses in the state). Need to define/differentiate between co-op program and broader collaboration opportunities.
- Associations: Need to demonstrate importance of tourism industry to associations that have not traditionally been involved (retail, gas stations, transportation, etc.). First, need to identify all relevant associations. [Note: Funding group is also in process of developing and prioritizing a list of relevant industry associations – see Funding July 2 notes]. Second, need to show these groups how tourism positively impacts them (e.g., via NAICS code analysis – is this possible? See action items) and demonstrate why partnering with tourism industry would be beneficial. Most associations have a monthly magazine that group could develop some content for. Could invite association executives to CCP meetings. Also need to develop educational tracks that appeal to these groups and encourage them to come to the conference. Alternatively, we should try to attend/speak at their conferences.
- Intergovernmental: Many scales – local, county, regional, state, national, international. Which would be easiest and/or most effective to focus on? Communication/cooperation/collaboration is beginning to occur between state agencies, less so at the federal level. There is a state-level Interdepartmental Collaboration Committee (ICC) (see action items – request for 2012 Annual Report). Travel MI is the industry’s entry point to/liaison with state government.
- Niche markets: Partnerships have traditionally been defined by geography, niche approach offers opportunity for broader geographic coverage. Niche associations can become official advertising partners, e.g., like Michigan Snowsports Industry Association (MSIA). Can also post events on michigan.org. [Note: : the PMC group also discussed ways to engage more niches – see PMC July 9 notes – group plans to survey CVBs re. their top current and emerging niches, to identify a preliminary set to focus on – these results could be useful for CCP too.] Could develop a CCP toolbox that is applicable to any niche group on

how to develop their tourism resources, how to post on michigan.org, etc. (perfect content for LinkedIn site, obj. 2).

- Other general strategies discussed:
 - Work with Pure MI Business Connect to create regional MEDC “speed dating” events to connect industry members (<http://www.michiganadvantage.org/Business-Connect/>).
 - Engage international student organizations. [Note: the PMC group also discussed ways to engage international students – see PMC July 9 notes – Sarah is collating a list of MI universities/colleges, numbers of international students, and international student clubs/groups.]
 - Develop a “Tourism Readiness” index to rate how prepared entities are for tourism. Would need to define readiness and identify factors that determine level of readiness.
 - Consideration/inclusion of minorities and the tribes.

Preliminary Identification of Funding and Research Needs – Not discussed in detail.

One preliminary idea was to identify where industry members go for information, especially the smaller entities, and to assess how many industry members use various resources. Funding and research = important agenda items for next meeting, especially if the group has any short-term funding needs. Funding committee is in process of preparing call for preliminary funding needs.

Next Meeting – The group is keen to meet in person rather than via telephone to the greatest extent possible. The option of dovetailing the next committee meeting with the next TC meeting (in Grand Rapids on Sept 20) was discussed – those options would be the afternoon of Thurs Sept 19 or the afternoon of Fri Sept 20. Please let Sarah know your availability on those two days at your earliest convenience.

Action Items and Their Status –

- General – Sarah worked with Mark Hitchcock (MSUE) to post a short update on CCP on the MSUE website. These posts must be short (<500 words) and must be first-authored by an MSUE educator. The more posts the better – MSUE is always looking for timely content.
 - General site: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/> (tourism is under the ‘Business’ tab)
 - CCP post (the third of four so far on the MTSP): http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/the_importance_of_collaboration_cooperation_and_partnerships

- Obj. 1 (partnerships)
 - Guidelines regarding brand use sent to all (see email from Amanda Munson dated June 27).
 - Survey of current ad partners:
 - Dave – do we have/how do we get permission to do this? Would need names of partners and their email addresses.
 - All – what questions would we like to ask? Some starting points:
 - How many years have you been participating?
 - Has the amount you have invested increased/decreased/stayed the same?
 - How satisfied are you with the program?
 - Do you (how do you) track the effectiveness of the program?
 - What impacts/changes have you seen as a result of your participation in the program?
 - What changes/improvements would you like to see to the program?
 - Dave – has any entity ever not renewed their participation? If so, can you tell us which ones and why?
 - Timing – suggest we wait until after Labor Day to administer survey. Aim to complete in late Sept/Oct?
 - Sarah is compiling a list of MI associations. Suggest group members each then review list and prioritise for future action. Coordinate with Funding committee since they plan to go through a similar process.
 - Suggestion to invite someone from Michigan Petroleum Association/Michigan Association of Convenience Stores (<http://www.mpamacs.org/#>) to attend next CCP meeting. Need to identify specific individual and confirm next meeting date. There is a national association known as the Service Station Dealers of America and Allied Trades (SSDA-AT) but it does not seem to have a MI chapter.
 - Sarah is checking with Dave Morris (MEDC) re. availability of NAICS code-based impact data.
 - Dave – I have the 2011 ICC Annual Report – can you share the 2012 version?
- Obj. 2 (online toolbox)
 - Sarah emailed individuals who indicated special interest in this tool during last fall's plan review period, to remind them of their interest, inform them that the CCP committee is working on this, and ask them to start thinking about possible content.
 - Sarah will develop site, with a joining process that attempts to prohibit misuse (Sarah/her student will monitor this). Sarah will invite CCP members to join and review before public launch of site (coming soon).
 - Once site established, several dozen members recruited and preliminary set of posts prepared, will ask TM/GZ to include launch of site as an item in the weekly Wednesday email. [Note: the PMC group is launching a similar site for all things

international, recommend we launch both at the same time to double the impact.]

- Based on June 27 discussions, below is a list of examples of successful and/or non-traditional partnerships and other collaborative efforts – Sarah suggests we invite individuals involved in these projects to prepare a post relating to how/why these programs were developed and how they were implemented:
 - Traverse City events committee (to address overlapping of scheduling).
 - Holland and GL Bay CVBs: ‘sunrise sunset’ Super Bowl ad.
 - TC and Holland CVBs: ad in ‘O’ magazine.
 - Farmers markets in state parks.
 - Grand Traverse Pie Company and Right Brain Brewery.
 - Michigan Snowsports Industry Association and Shell Ski Free program.

- Obj. 4 (conference + awards)
 - Draft conference sponsorship kit for 2014 sent to all (see email from Amanda Munson dated June 27, or see this link for final version of 2013 kit <http://www.milodging.org/conference/sponsorkit/2013SponsorshipKit.pdf>). There are three sponsorship levels: platinum (\$15-25k), gold (\$10-15k) and silver (\$7.5-10k). Various other lesser opportunities (starting at \$1.5k).
 - Sarah, Dave, Brad and/or Linda to raise issue of conference registration fee at future CPC meeting. Could fee be on a sliding scale based on entity size and/or could there be a discount for first time attendees?
 - Sarah, Dave, Brad and/or Linda to suggest conference break-out session on successful/effective collaboration.
 - Sarah will ask Steve Yencich (MLTA) about conference budget information.
 - Sarah has conference lists for 2009-2013 and will categorise attendees by entity type (coming soon).
 - Sarah is waiting for collaboration awards submission numbers from TICOM.
 - Sarah will prepare list of other state tourism conferences, including organizer(s), length and registration rate (coming soon).