

**2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
Product Development (PD) Committee Meeting
Kellogg Center, East Lansing, 9:30am – 2pm, October 1 2014
(with lunch at 1pm)**

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions – All
2. Review of May 13 2014 Meeting Notes – All
3. Update from June 27, July 2 and September 12 Travel Commission Meetings – Travel Commissioners Mike Busley and Larry Schuler
4. Objective One: Support the improvement and increased awareness of the quality, connectivity and diversity of tourist transportation options into and throughout the state.
 - a. Report from PPGS implementation committee – Sarah Nicholls
5. Objective Two: Support the establishment and showcasing of Michigan as a state with a diverse, extensive and high quality network of motorized, non-motorized and water-based routes and trails.
 - a. Report on Pure Michigan Trails legislation – Nancy Krupiarz and Jim Radabaugh
 - b. Follow-up on alltrails.com – Nancy Krupiarz
 - c. Report on Michigan Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan – Sarah Nicholls
 - d. Report on Marquette Trails Workshop and Best Practices Case Study – Mike Busley, Chris MacInnes, Nancy Krupiarz, Gordon Mackay, Michelle Plawecki, Jim Radabaugh, Bobbie Welke and Sarah Nicholls
6. Objective Three: Enhance the visitor’s in-state travel experience.
 - a. Follow up on accessibility-related issues?
7. Objective Four: Increase access to capital for travel-related businesses.
 - a. 2015 Tourism Investment Forum – Mike Busley, Chris MacInnes, Sarah Nicholls
8. Update on Michigan Tourism Competitiveness Index – Sarah Nicholls
9. Update from Other MTSP Implementation Committees – Sarah Nicholls
10. Next Steps and Next Meeting

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Meeting Notes

In attendance: Mike Busley (Co-Chair), Chris MacInnes (Co-Chair), Nancy Krupiarz, Gordon Mackay, Jim Radabaugh, Larry Schuler, Bobbi Welke, Sarah Nicholls, Eric Dobbrastine.

Absent: Debbie Alexander, Michelle Plawecki, AJ Singh.

Review of May 13 Meeting Notes – Notes reviewed and approved, no changes or additions made.

Update from June 27, July 2 and September 12 Travel Commission Meetings – The Travel MI VP position remains unfilled; it is believed that the MTSP contract between MEDC and MSU will be renewed.

Objective One: Support the improvement and increased awareness of the quality, connectivity and diversity of tourist transportation options into and throughout the state –

The PPGS implementation committee met on September 29; members Bruce Ashley and Bret Marr spoke briefly about the possibility of transportation funding being addressed during the lame duck session. Also see this article published October 3: <http://www.theoaklandpress.com/government-and-politics/20141003/michigan-gov-rick-snyder-calls-road-funding-major-priority-after-nov-4-election> Reminders that PPGS committee members George Moroz and Bill Sheffer provided testimony regarding the importance of road quality to the tourism industry at the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation on February 18; and that at its May 1 meeting the PPGS committee met with Lance Binoniemi, Vice President of Government Affairs, Michigan Infrastructure & Transportation Association (MITA). Lance encouraged members of the industry to consider joining the Michigan Transportation Team (MTT), a partnership of nearly 80 businesses, associations and citizens linked with the common goal of improving Michigan's transportation infrastructure (<http://justfixtheroads.com/>). Sarah posted this information on the CCP LinkedIn page.

At its September 12 meeting the TC discussed a resolution drafted by MDOT that will be crafted into a letter from the TC to be sent to ... {I am not sure who the target audience is – the original resolution is addressed to the Michigan State Legislature} ... Discussion of whether this letter should indicate the TC's/broader industry's support for an increase in the gas tax. There has not been an increase in the gas tax since 1997. Michigan's gas tax is

19 cents/gallon (15 cents/gallon for diesel); in contrast, the gas tax is 32 cents/gallon in Wisconsin and 28 cents/gallon in Ohio. According to MITA/MTT: Michigan loses over \$3 million each day or over \$1 billion annually in transportation assets; for every dollar invested in maintaining our roads and bridges we save at least six dollars in reconstruction costs; it has been estimated that \$1.5-2 billion/annum is required to maintain the state's road/bridge system; if Michigan motorists each paid \$120 more annually, our roads and bridges could be maintained at a high and safe level.

Committee proposal: (i) Larry to complete drafting of TC letter referenced above and share with PD members – should be a call to action with specific steps and potential mechanisms/solutions identified; (ii) letter from PD to be shared with all MTSP committee members and individuals asked to sign on; (iii) letter from MTSP committees to be presented to TC for their support/sign-on (preferably before the November 7 TC meeting); (iv) TC to share letter with industry with ask for CVBs, associations, etc. to share with their members. Timing = NOW!

At a later date the committee would also like to focus more on the issue of connectivity, e.g., connecting DTW to downtown Detroit and beyond.

Objective Two: Support the establishment and showcasing of Michigan as a state with a diverse, extensive and high quality network of motorized, non-motorized and water-based routes and trails –

- a. Report on Pure Michigan Trails legislation – A set of six bills signed by Governor Snyder on June 26 2014 that amends Part 721 of PA 451 of 1994 (the MI Trailways Act) to reflect the 2013 Comprehensive Trail Plan (see handout provided by Jim Radabaugh). Recognises the importance of land- and water-based trails to Michigan. Allows for the designation of Pure Michigan Trails and Trail Towns (by the Director of MDNR); DNR is working with MTGA to develop designation criteria. Legislation allows for four new trails staff within DNR Parks and Recreation Division. Program should be put into operation in 2015.
- b. Follow-up on alltrails.com – This is a trails-related, user-driven site that includes information such as trail location; driving distance from a location to a trail head; trail length; trail duration (time); trail difficulty; and, activities and features along the trail. Question = how to get appropriate data into the system? A student could be employed to enter the ones for which MDNR or MTGA have the necessary data; trail organizations could also be encouraged to join and to enter their information.
- c. Report on Michigan Bicycle Tourism Forum/Marketing Plan – The Michigan Bicycle Tourism Forum was held April 16 in Lansing with more than thirty MTSP implementation committee members, CVB representatives and bike event organisers/ bike tour operators/bike shop owners in attendance. Included three major activities focusing on identification of Michigan's bicycle tourism assets/strengths, other cities/states/countries that excel at bicycle tourism, and what MI needs to do to improve its bicycle tourism offering. Based on this input, Sarah is working with Dave Serino (from the PMC committee) and other PMC committee members to develop a Michigan Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan. The final plan – in combination with

documentation of the process of plan development – will serve as a model for other activities to replicate (several activity representatives have already expressed interest in this possibility). A draft of the final plan will be presented at a workshop the afternoon of October 24 in Gaylord.

- d. Update on Marquette Trails Workshop and Best Practices Case Study – Mike, Chris, Nancy, Gordy, Michelle, Jim, Bobbie and Sarah (as well as Sarah’s Master’s student Jacquelyn) were able to attend the workshop; thanks again to Bobbi and her team for organizing. Sarah returned to Marquette with two students September 26-28 to collect a first batch of trail user surveys on the Iron Ore Heritage Trail (approx. 70); the Welcome Centre continues to distribute the surveys to out-of-town users. Preliminary survey results will be available in December. Jacquelyn’s project will include: (i) a history of the trail and its development; (ii) a list of best practices based on the IOHT’s experiences; (iii) a list of outstanding issues/needs and associated recommendations for infrastructural and marketing improvements/additions/ opportunities. Committee asked that the report include a section on accessibility issues. Jim noted that the Top of Michigan Trails Council is working with Corbin Design of Traverse City to develop a statewide standard for trails wayfinding/signage (within MDOT requirements) (“With hundreds of successful wayfinding projects across the United States and Canada, Corbin Design is a national leader in wayfinding consulting and signage system design. Our clients include 110 hospitals, 60 cities and 40 universities” <http://www.corbindesign.com/>).

Objective Three: Enhance the visitor’s in-state travel experience –

Follow up on accessibility-related issues, e.g., presentation by Cindy Burkhour from the Access Recreation Group at January meeting, discussion of ‘The Disabled Traveler’ website, idea for industry to sponsor accessibility-related awards. Group decided to focus on transportation for now, will come back to accessibility issues next year. Two key aspects are: (i) improving levels of access (i.e., infrastructural change) and (ii) promoting what the state already offers in terms of accessible travel/tourism resources/programs.

Objective Four: Increase access to capital for travel-related businesses –

Proposed 2015 Tourism Investment Forum: A series of breakout sessions on this topic will be included in the 2015 Governor’s Conference (Grand Rapids, March 22-24). Mike will contact Steve Yencich (MLTA) to acquire further details.

US/Michigan Tourism Competitiveness Index –

Sarah is working with a student to update the index with 2013-14 numbers and to recalculate the results on a per capita basis.

Next Meeting – Sarah will create Doodle by end of week in attempt to find possible date for joint meeting with MITA and MTF in November.