

2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan – Progress to Date

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COLLABORATION, COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS (CCP)

Foster a culture of public-private collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships – across the state and beyond – to continue to unify the tourism industry and help grow Michigan’s economy.	
Objective One: Grow and strengthen partnership programs and communicate their success to the industry.	<p>Survey of official Pure Michigan Advertising Partnership Program completed in fall 2013, full report with recommendations submitted to Travel Michigan and Travel Commission in March 2014, several recommendations since implemented by Travel Michigan. Survey to be repeated late 2015.</p> <p>Listing of Michigan-based associations analysed and prioritised, several potential strategic partner associations identified for follow-up. A ‘Why Tourism Matters to You and Your Business’ piece developed and distributed to Michigan-based associations, for publication in their monthly newsletters (published by Small Business Association of Michigan, under consideration by Michigan Retailers Association). Similar material presented in person by Sarah Nicholls at the 2015 Michigan Association of Counties Annual Conference.</p> <p>Listing of Michigan-based niche activities reviewed and prioritised, five selected for focus in 2016 with intent of better connecting niche providers with Travel Michigan and other relevant industry members.</p>
Objective Two: Establish an online state-wide toolbox or clearinghouse to support collaboration, cooperation and partnerships.	A LinkedIn group – the MI Tourism Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnerships (CCP) Toolbox – was formed on September 9, 2013: “The CCP Toolbox is designed to facilitate the development of new, innovative and non-traditional collaboration, cooperation and partnerships that will increase and improve tourism activity throughout the state. Please use this site to share best practices and resources, to seek and offer assistance with current and proposed projects, and to otherwise benefit the tourism industry throughout the state.” Members as of November 7 2015 = 409.
Objective Three: Support the establishment or revitalization of regional tourism development organizations.	
Objective Four: Increase the number and diversity of participants in the annual Governor’s Conference on Tourism and in the associated industry awards programs.	<p>Conference statistics compiled and reviewed (attendance numbers and composition/diversity of attendees for MI conference for 2009-2013, registration dates/rates for all states for 2013).</p> <p>Collaboration awards program highlighted on LinkedIn page.</p>

Red = no progress; orange = some progress; green = objective achieved.

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FUNDING

Secure adequate and stable funding for all strategic plan initiatives.	
Objective One: Increase funding for the Pure Michigan tourism campaign to \$50 million by 2017 and establish Michigan in the top five highest funded states for tourism marketing.	Pure Michigan funding increased from \$25 million in 2012-13, to \$29 million in 2013-14 and 2014-15, to \$33 million in 2015-16. Ranking has dropped from 6 th in 2012-13 to 7 th in 2013-14 and 2014-15.
Objective Two: Identify sources of and raise sufficient funds to meet costs of other (non-promotion/ marketing) strategic plan initiatives.	A 501(c)(6), the MI Tourism Plan Fund, was established in early 2014. Two projects were funded in 2014: a survey of MSU’s international students (see PMC section for further details), and the development of the Michigan Tourism Advocacy Legislative Toolkit (see PPGS section for further details). The current Plan Fund balance is \$56,153 (see MTSP website for listing of contributors).

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PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Enhance infrastructure to support the delivery of a world class Pure Michigan travel experience.	
Objective One: Support the improvement and increased awareness of the quality, connectivity and diversity of tourist transportation options into and throughout the state.	Committee worked with the Travel Commission to stress the industry’s support for road improvements to state government officials and encouraged alignment with groups such as Just Fix the Roads and Safe Roads YES! MDOT Director Steudle spoke at an MTSP breakout session at the 2015 Governor’s Conference.
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.	Opportunities to better showcase Michigan’s trails continue to be discussed. Committee members Krupiarz and Radabaugh served on panel “Plug into Michigan’s Recreation Trails” at 2014 Governor’s Conference. Most committee members participated in a Marquette Trails Workshop, organised by committee member Welke and attended by ~ 60 people from MDOT, MDNR and the tourism industry. Pair of reports prepared and distributed to the industry (<i>Trails as Tourism Attractions: Best Practices from Marquette</i> and <i>A Survey of Iron Ore Heritage Trail Users</i>); the reports emphasise the role of trails as tourism attractions, and how trails can/should partner with other tourism entities to maximize impact. Update on trails-related developments including Pure Michigan trails legislation and the Iron Belle Trail included in MTSP breakout session at 2015 Governor’s Conference.
Objective Three: Enhance the visitor’s in-state travel experience.	US state-level tourism competitiveness index developed in 2013, based on 22 travel attractiveness factors; Michigan ranked 9 th according to these measures. Index to be refined and updated in 2015-16. A best practices resource kit related to the industry’s accommodation of travellers with accessibility/mobility issues is under preparation.
Objective Four: Increase access to capital for travel-related businesses.	

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PROMOTION, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS (PMC)

Strengthen and grow the Pure Michigan brand through effective mediums at the regional, national and international levels to attract first-time and repeat visitors.	
Objective One: Increase regional and national awareness of the Pure Michigan campaign from 70% and 36%, respectively, in 2011, to 80% and 50% by 2017.	Regional and national awareness increased to 72% and 39%, respectively, in 2012; to 66% and 39%, respectively, in 2013; and, to 66% and 44%, respectively, in 2014.
Objective Two: Increase visitor spending from \$17.7 billion in 2011 to \$21.5 billion in 2017.	Visitor spending increased to \$18.1 billion in 2012, to \$18.7 billion in 2013, and to \$19.5 billion in 2014 (note: these numbers include domestic spending only; the \$22.8 billion figure presented at the 2015 Governor’s Conference includes Canadian spending and is not directly comparable to prior figures).
Objective Three: Increase the return on investment on Pure Michigan from \$4.90 in 2011 to \$6 by 2017.	Pure Michigan ROI increased to \$5.76 in 2012, to \$6.66 in 2013, and to \$6.87 in 2014. Cumulative ROI for period 2006-2014 = \$4.81.
Objective Four: Improve Michigan’s desirability as a place to visit (per the Portrait of the American Traveler Report) from 28th in 2010 to 15th or better by 2017.	Michigan’s ranking held steady at 28 th of 51 states/territories in 2010 and 30 th of 54 states/territories in 2013.
Objective Five: Increase the Pure Michigan campaign’s presence in international markets.	Most of the additional \$4 million awarded to Pure Michigan in 2013-14 and 2014-15 was directed to the international effort (expanded advertising in Ontario, including Toronto; expanded promotion in UK and Germany; new presence in China; new partnerships with Brand USA; increased presence at IPW).
Objective Six: Increase Canadian visitation to Michigan from 1.54 million in 2011 to 2.15 million by 2017.	Canadian visitation to Michigan increased to 1.61 million in 2012 (2013 and 2014 figures not yet available).

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PROMOTION, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS (PMC), CTD.

General activity in support of multiple PMC objectives:

A LinkedIn group – the Michigan Forum on International Tourism – was formed on September 30, 2013: “The Michigan Forum on International Tourism is dedicated to increasing the Michigan tourism industry’s understanding of the international market, and to improving the industry’s ability to provide superior experiences to the state’s growing number of international guests. It provides a venue for tourism industry members to share news about and seek resources regarding the international promotion and marketing of Michigan, and to discuss how to best provide for the varying needs of our international visitors.” Members as of November 7 2015 = 250.

A Michigan Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan was developed and presented to the industry during an MTSP breakout session at the 2015 Governor’s Conference. A LinkedIn group – the Michigan Bicycle Tourism Forum – has been established to support this niche (members as of March 17 2015 = 41). A companion marketing plan template has also been developed, to allow other niches to replicate the process via which the Bicycle Tourism Marketing Plan was developed. Committee is currently working with the equestrian segment to develop a similar marketing plan for horse-related tourism.

International students at Michigan universities – and their family and friends – have been identified as a major marketing, brand building and ambassadorship opportunity. A survey of > 350 international students at MSU was conducted to understand these students’ travel preferences and behaviours; results and recommendations can be found in the document *International Students at MSU: A Survey of their Travel Patterns and Preferences*. A follow-up workshop with CVBs, attractions and transportation providers is in the planning stages.

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PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Empower the industry to encourage policy-makers at all levels to support the travel industry.	
Objective One: Improve understanding of the value of tourism and support for the tourism industry among state legislators, county and local officials, businesses and residents.	<p>Michigan House Tourism Committee Chair Peter Pettalia and Minority Vice Chair Robert Kosowski attended portion of September 2013 PPGS committee meeting.</p> <p>Sarah Nicholls presented MTSP to House Tourism Committee in October 2013.</p> <p>PPGS committee members Moroz and Sheffer provided testimony to House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation in February 2014.</p> <p>The first phase of the Michigan Tourism Advocacy Legislative Toolkit (developed by TICOM with partial funding from the MI Tourism Plan Fund) is complete and available to all at http://www.mitourismadvocacy.com/.</p> <p>House Tourism Committee Chair Bruce Rendon attended March 2015 PPGS committee meeting.</p> <p>Presentation on ‘Why Tourism Matters’ under preparation by MSU(E) faculty/staff members; to be presented to County Commissions, Chambers of Commerce, etc. Expanded version presented by Sarah Nicholls at the 2015 Michigan Association of Counties Annual Conference.</p> <p>Co-Chairs of PPGS, multiple members of RE Committee, Dave Lorenz and Sarah Nicholls met with Jon Allan, Director, and Emily Finnell, Great Lakes Policy Specialist, of the Office of the Great Lakes, to discuss their draft water strategy for Michigan, “<i>Sustaining MI Water Heritage: A Strategy for the Next Generation</i>,” and the role that the tourism industry could play in the plan’s dissemination and implementation.</p> <p>Other topics that PPGS is tracking: Pure Michigan funding; transportation/road funding; Ontario Power Generation Deep Geologic Repository; New International Trade Crossing/U.S. Federal Plaza; aquaculture and microbead legislation.</p>
Objective Two: Improve existing and develop new organizational structures to enhance public sector interaction with and support of tourism policy and planning activities.	

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RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Establish a central, easily accessible and inclusive information system to capture and share timely, relevant and reliable industry research.	
Objective One: Define and prioritize the research and technical needs of the other seven plan goals.	This responsibility has effectively been shifted to the Travel Commission as a result of the development of the Funding/ Governance Structure (presented at the 2014 Annual Implementation Committee Meeting). No future action anticipated/required.
Objective Two: Develop a financially sustainable online information system to capture and share relevant industry research.	Survey of CVBs’ research activities and needs conducted. State and county-level economic impact identified as one of the most critical needs. This need will be partially addressed by the Tourism Economics research commissioned by Travel Michigan (sample size is too small to confirm accuracy of data in less visited counties). RTA is investigating: (i) conceptualization and acquisition of funding to support a centre like the former MSU Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Centre; (ii) availability of fine-scale data from U.S. Travel Association; (iii) addition of a few critical survey questions to the form used for online requests for the Michigan travel guide; (iv) installation of touch screen survey kiosks at selected Welcome Centres; (v) development of a protocol for a visitor survey, for use by interested CVBs; protocol would contain suggested questions as well as information about how to conduct a random survey and collate the results.

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RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Be internationally recognized for our stewardship of – and rich opportunities to experience – our natural, cultural, and heritage resources.	
Objective One: Support and expand efforts to inventory resources critical to Michigan tourism and communicate results to relevant entities.	
Objective Two: Identify key issues facing and threats to the integrity of Michigan’s tourism resources and raise awareness of and support for these issues.	Water-related issues and historic preservation identified as the two most significant areas of concern based on industry survey conducted in 2014. Co-Chairs of PPGS, multiple members of RE Committee, Dave Lorenz and Sarah Nicholls met with Jon Allan, Director, and Emily Finnell, Great Lakes Policy Specialist, of the Office of the Great Lakes, to discuss their draft water strategy for Michigan, “ <i>Sustaining MI Water Heritage: A Strategy for the Next Generation</i> ,” and the role that the tourism industry could play in the plan’s dissemination and implementation. A poster about the MTSP was presented at the 9th Biennial State of Lake Michigan/15th Annual Great Lakes Beach Association Joint Conference.

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RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, CTD.

Be internationally recognized for our stewardship of – and rich opportunities to experience – our natural, cultural, and heritage resources.	
Objective Three: Raise the profile of Michigan’s tourism industry as a national leader in resource quality and stewardship.	A Michigan tourism resource stewardship award, the Pure Award, has been conceptualised, for inaugural presentation at the 2016 Governor’s Conference. A zero-waste best practices toolkit for event organisers is under development.

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SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Foster a culture of service excellence that allows us to deliver on the Pure Michigan promise.	
Objective One: Define “service excellence” and “The Pure Michigan Promise” and share these definitions with the industry.	Based on a survey of > 500 industry members, definitions of “service excellence” and “The Pure Michigan Promise” were developed and presented to the industry at the 2014 Annual Implementation Committee Meeting. The committee will present an outline of a proposed state-wide “Pure Michigan Promise” hospitality training program at the Fall 2015 Annual Implementation Committee Meeting.
Objective Two: Improve our D.K. Shifflet leisure visitor satisfaction scores and maintain a ranking in the top five states.	
Objective Three: Establish and increase satisfaction and intention to return/recommend levels among national and international visitors.	A survey of satisfaction and intent to return/recommend was developed but requires piloting prior to fuller distribution.

General activity in support of multiple SE objectives:

A LinkedIn group – the Michigan Forum on International Tourism – was formed on September 30, 2013: “The Michigan Forum on International Tourism is dedicated to increasing the Michigan tourism industry’s understanding of the international market, and to improving the industry’s ability to provide superior experiences to the state’s growing number of international guests. It provides a venue for tourism industry members to share news about and seek resources regarding the international promotion and marketing of Michigan, and to discuss how to best provide for the varying needs of our international visitors.” Members as of November 7 2015 = 250.

SE committee member Pingston served on panel on Certified Tourism Ambassador Program at 2014 Governor’s Conference.

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