Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session

This document contains a summary of the notes recorded by participants at the March 27 2012 vision and goal-setting session. Eight sets of materials are presented, one for each of the eight goal themes.

The eight goal theme areas were identified based on evaluation of the previous plan and preliminary discussion with a subset of the Travel Commission. The eight theme areas are (in alphabetical order):

1. Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnerships
2. Funding and Financing
3. Natural Resources and the Environment
4. Product Development
5. Promotion, Marketing, and Communications
6. Public Policy and Government Support
7. Research and Technical Assistance
8. Service Excellence

Discussion was led by a team of trained MSU facilitators. There were three main activities, focusing on: (i) defining the theme and understanding its significance to Michigan’s tourism industry; (ii) defining the future of the theme, i.e., how it would look in an ideal future state; and (iii) first drafts, or elements of a first draft, of a goal statement.
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Collaboration, Cooperation and Partnerships

Defining the Theme and its Significance

MEDC, Pure MI = great partnership opportunity – everybody happy with Pure MI
MLTA, MEDC, MACVB have great collaboration
But, less collaboration/discussion between e.g., downtown associations, DDA’s, MML, chambers, especially with smaller communities in rural areas
Moving in a great direction with industry partnerships, especially those offered by Travel MI.
However, we sometimes highlight our state’s best known destinations rather than introduce new locations to current/potential visitors. Sometimes territorial (geographically)
Good start. Still have regional rivalries/competition. Some have stepped up to the plate in a big way others are not engaged
Regional partnerships strong, but partnerships outside region still not common
Need to fund partnerships based on verticals/interests rather than geography
Lots of concentration on SE MI needs to incorporate more areas
Haven’t identified many of the possible collaborators
Potential is much greater than the accomplished

Defining the Future of the Theme

Every group is well connected
Communication is open
The industry has a clear leadership
There are no losers in the industry
Themed tours/trails by interest, not geography
Infrastructure which is consistent throughout state (quality of roads, signage)
Destinations talk outside of region on regular basis to see what is working
All destinations are connected (including urban/business with rural/leisure)

Elements of a Goal Statement

Public/private partnerships
Common understanding of mission
Multi-dimensional partnerships
Reduce fragmentation and duplication among promotional entities
Encourage public and private, state and federal organization to work together and maximize their resources
Collaboration statewide with manufacturers, tourism, and agriculture- common industry goals to promote state at business and consumer level. Common messaging (not competitive)
True synergy, work as one
Identify and categorize all potential parties of interest who could be part of the collaborative process - Identify the barriers to these potential parties becoming part of the collaborative process - Identify means to tear down the barriers
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Funding and Financing

Defining the Theme and its Significance

Today: adequate for promotion, inadequate for capital/infrastructure investment
Positive (more than before) but not long term
Non stable

Defining the Future of the Theme

PM funded at $60 million/year
PM international at $5 million/year + in kind + match
220K tourism jobs
Permanent (with indexing for inflation)
“State funded” hospitality training
PM campaign is known worldwide
MI has great roads
The full legislature understands and supports investment in promoting MI tourism product
MI is the envy of other states
Sustainable
Legislative priority
Promotion funding has increased to move MI from 14th in total spending to 5th or 6th
Funding for industry research is now available from private sector or an industry foundation

Elements of a Goal Statement

Measureable improvements/results
Create sustainable increases in total tourism spending (move MI from 14th to 5th or 6th)
Create 55-65,000 new tourism jobs by 2017
Achieve $29 billion in tourism spending
Obtain legislative support for funding
Receive adequate funding to effectively promote MI
Employ more people in tourism industry
Generate measurable, verifiable data
Consistent, competitive funding
A commitment to grow the tourism industry
Sustainability
Adequate, secure, permanent funding for all strategic plan initiatives
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Natural Resources and Environment

Defining the Theme and its Significance

Spectacular background, endless recreation. It helps us reconnect to what is important
Stressed- low budgets for promotions and preservation
Our natural resources are a major contributor to our tourism
Great Lakes freshwater capital
They are being used, but not all showcased
Michigan wouldn’t be the same with polluted air and water. We need to take care of the environment
Slowly people are realizing the importance and starting to do things to help
Natural resources and environment are the foundation of what make the MI experience unique or pure. There needs to be an effective way to increase knowledge and understanding of natural resources
Not enough awareness. Tourists don’t cherish the resources. They don’t know to recycle
MI’s parks, trails, harbors, and boating access sites provide access to experiences in outdoor adventure, while improving quality of life and supporting local economies
A balance between protection and preservation and exploitation and marketing
Future land use planning essential
Intact ecosystems are essential to the tourism business
People are looking for clean air + water, beautiful scenery, healthy and wildlife
Great deal of beautiful and relatively healthy ecosystem
Asian carp, invasive species
The change in seasons is magnificent
Year round opportunities
Need better promotion of nat res, need more funding for management and enforcement

Defining the Future of the Theme

People socially responsible
Every public place has “green” items
People having taken pride in their natural surrounding and have an awareness.
The culture in MI is one that appreciates and utilizes natural resources
Local communities have collaborated on regional assets to promote
Visitors have gained an appreciation for MI’s natural resources
DNR and DEQ MDARD quality of life group have developed mutually beneficial public policies to protect and preserve MI’s NR
The industry (including its partners) have been outstanding stewards of the state’s natural and cultural heritage
The industry is a model of the best sustainable practices
Control of invasive species
Sustainable tourism leader and residents practice it
World-class parks
Active state
Farm to table is common practice
People take pride in their resources
Recognized as the nation’s leader in eco/environmental tourism practices and visitors
Recognized as having the greatest value and accessibility to its NR in the US
People love so much that they keep it clean and spread the knowledge
Add NR to curriculum
Increased usage appreciation by locals and visitors
Award winning sustainable eco-recycling programs/systems
Keep it local (agriculture/wine/beer)
International recognition as a destination
Resurrection of family farms/agriculture

Elements of a Goal Statement

Preservation
Accessibility
Stewardship
Acquire/foster/develop statewide awareness of the place
Natural resources and the environment play in our ID as a state
Educate, discover, inspire
Historic and cultural resources
Raise awareness
Protect and preserve
Outstanding stewards of natural and cultural resources (heritage)
Model of sustainable practice
Preservation
Heritage
Cultural
Sustainable
Increased emphasis on or between agriculture and tourism
Majestic-magnificent- unspoiled- Michigan will be recognized
To be recognized as an international steward in preserving sustainable natural and agricultural resources
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Product Development

Defining the Theme and its Significance

PD is important especially the way technology is changing the way we travel
New products mean new opportunities to attract visitors and get regulars to come back again
There are great products in MI- need to find ways to collaborate and cross promote
Themed itineraries, immersive experiences, take what we have and repackage it
Transportation systems
Food, art, golf, wine, beach/water, beer, outdoor, festivals and events
Encourage people to post video experiences
Ultimately, the industry is sustained by the attractiveness of the MI product offering
If we want to be a global player, we need globally attractive product
MI is the product
People- ambassadors
We need to continue to invest back into the state to build year round value
Getting much better, but need to work better together throughout the state

Defining the Future of the Theme

All hotels and restaurants have charging stations
Businesses have properly trained employees in customer service
Real life, unique experiences
Simple/clear/consistent products and message
Cutting edge technology
I can take rapid transit anywhere and connect to remote places via green transport systems
Michigan citizens are excited and happy to speak positively of their state
Multilingual
Pure MI a way of life

Elements of a Goal Statement

Creating a tech savvy and eco friendly MI with ease of access for visitors to our state (and the Michiganders will be proud to call home)
Deliver enhanced visitor expectations
Improve/focus on Pure MI's most important, or first, product: people
To create a unique and diverse program of experiences for tourists
Advocate for statewide transportation that services all tourists
Leader, eco focused, tech friendly, energetic, systematic, forward thinking
Enthusiastic and living attitude of pride in Pure MI
Educate diversity- ready for global communication
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Promotion, Marketing, Communications

Defining the Theme and its Significance

Pure MI advertising campaign - national recognition + player in Brand USA
It is a core focus to truly create economic impact with a call to action focus
Very collaborative and broad
People want to experience uniqueness
It is how we communicate our brand. It sets the stage for the visitor
Pure MI has helped unify our industry and residents
The brand is out and people love the campaign. Now we need to share and communicate with those individuals less familiar with MI and the state’s offerings. Travelers are focused on experience travel. There are so many experiences to share about MI
Communication among the org and all tourism industry people seems a little lacking- could be better; we need to communicate better with the infrastructure (CVB directors, hoteliers, etc.)
Marketing and promotion can deliver a packaged idea, image, call to action, invitation, frame an experience in ways communication cannot do
Ability to draw tourists is only as good as marketing that drives them here
Voice of the state
Using all available resources to communicate to the public about Michigan's product
It means communicating with audience sharing our “secrets” so they're not secrets anymore - they're things/experiences/adventures to be discovered
Putting a visual and story telling aspect to our state
Creating, participating in and being the focus of conversation
Creating interest and spurring the desires in people to explore MI and turning that into action

Defining the Future of the Theme

Embrace the use of peer recommendations (Social Media and Brand Ambassadors)
Pillars themes (one of a kind) used to build brand
Win more awards
More to spend nationally and internationally
Easy, cool and interactive website to plan from (Michigan.org)
Awesome video content
Place to read amazing stories of other Michigan travelers
Stronger national and international reach/media coverage
Delivering on Pure MI brand
Different regions and destinations are part of PMC, but have distinct identities
Detroit does not drive the image of MI outside of MI
There is a tremendous mix of international travelers
The huge influx of travelers has not only increased travel economic impact but led to new business development
Theme (art, beer, music, food, et.

Employees are delivering the best customer service I've ever had

Everyone around the state talks about how great MI is because the collective self esteem of the state is awesome!

Service people and industry leaders are highly aware of everything MI has to offer

MI products are famous worldwide, MI is known worldwide

State speaks with one voice

Welcoming and friendly residents

MI is ranked in the top 3 summer tourism destinations in America

All businesses are actively promoting the products and services in a positive way working with their communities

Social media real people's experience shaping much of the industry

Cohesive industry - awareness and reinforcement of state’s brand/image

Visitors are more aware of statewide offerings as a result of a consistent campaign and connected messaging

No county is left behind

Elements of a Goal Statement

Deliver the Pure MI brand to all visitors

Promoting the Pure MI brand with innovative energy in all channels. Nationally and internationally

Build collaboration through creative funding and partnerships with a unified Pure MI focus

Enhance, create, develop, and deliver

Grow the brand and deliver the promise

Create and develop experiences, ambassadors, passionate, collaborative, diversification, uniqueness, education

Emphasizing the diverse assets from culture to urban

Welcoming travelers from around the world

Inspire residents - everyone to communicate and to proclaim the best of MI to the world, nation, state, and community

Inspire everyone to communicate the Pure MI experience

Explode myths (weather and accessibility)

Empower, educate our residents to all become advocates for our state

Full implementation of the Pure MI brand throughout all counties, regions, and governmental agencies for tourism, economic development, and natural resources

Translate our web info into Chinese, Hindu and Portuguese

Create a marketing/promotions/communication plan which meets the customer’s need and inspires the Pure MI experience
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session:
Public Policy and Government Support

Defining the Theme and its Significance

Public officials are starting to get economic significance of tourism, but need more info; also fluid due to term limits
Good public policy can help the industry advance and grow. Bad public policy can inhibit and diminish the industry's advancement and growth
Involve native Michiganders. Government should be offering incentives to Indian Tribes to invest into tourism (non gaming) infrastructure + facilities
Creating and introducing policies that allow MI's natural resources to be accessible to all
Current elected officials seemed to be embracing the fact that tourism is an economic driver. On the other hand state agencies are lagging in reducing unnecessary rules and regulations that deter tourists from engaging in outdoor activities
Not enough movement on Asian carp
Government must commit and be held accountable for all levels to achieve agreed objectives

Defining the Future of the Theme

Improved roads and pathways
Improved culture of hospitality with ambassador certification
Inclusive pricing of all goods
Visitors are king- everyone recognizes the value on tourism spending
Full state department of tourism with a cabinet level head
The state has significantly increased its financial investments in the industry (promotion, research, experience development)
The state has taken an active and leadership role in attracting international visitors
Tourism representatives accompany all economic development missions overseas
A central agency for all industry statistics (all sectors)
Tourism promotion funding is totally funded by revenue generated by all industry segments
Regulations and taxes that hinder investment and job growth ruthlessley eliminated
Natural and cultural resources supported and enhanced
Michigan's sense of place the envy of all other American destinations

Elements of a Goal Statement

A concise description of the economic and social power of tourism that serves as a benchmark for public policy decisions
The state should take tangible steps to strengthen and grow the industry through investments in tourism. Promotions, tourism research, and visitor experience development and regulatory reform
Involve everyone
Knowledge of the Pure MI brand by legislators
Be a business friendly state
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Research and Technical Assistance

Defining the Theme and its Significance

Need for statewide database with ability to model and project; statewide and county level Data driven decisions, neutral party, funded, database of visitors/motives Provable metrics Now - weak, accessible only to those who have resources Research needs include things like where tourism employees see future needs and what types of education are needed for jobs that may be available. What do international and domestic travelers want/expect of our tourism brand. Funding a model or stats that benefit all industry Research/tech vital because technology is one of the primary ways people use to plan and integrate trips. This means seeking out and using emerging tech to help people help themselves Individually businesses maintain info but need statewide consolidation/dissemination Better metrics and key performance indicators (current ones not reliable) Ability to capture info that helps increase tourism to MI I believe research is one of the most important aspects of tourism programming, planning and advocacy. Research defines our audience, their needs and desires, and substantiates our work. It also gives us benchmarks for future planning and allows us to effectively explain tourism’s benefits to our elected officials Should be central reporting for state and county research, provide economic impact numbers

Defining the Future of the Theme

Publicly accessible, sustainable, used at all levels (state, county, local), inclusive Clear understanding of the state's tourism assets Provable, consistent, reliable Clear statewide understanding of what success looks like-metrics understood by all Local communities have info that is relevant, recent, and accessible for them to make more sound business decisions As a state we know our visitors and are able to better communicate with them based on that data from a state perspective as well as on local levels Public/privately funded and centrally located somewhere, online, one portal Data is dynamic, changing with emerging trends and shifting demographics

Elements of a Goal Statement

Funded, accessible, online system that has accurate data about travel to MI. Also set and monitor aligned statewide tourism goals/metrics for success Develop a statewide repository of research data through a public/private funding source Inclusive, dynamic, accurate, accessible, reliable, valid, current; informs decision making Establish a set of balanced leading and lagging indicators, a set of processes and systems to capture and report this info Includes both qualitative trend and consumer behaviour info as well as quantitative data
Summary of Notes from March 27 Visioning and Goal-Setting Session: Service Excellence

Defining the Theme and its Significance

Making Michigan a “Welcome” state; customer service should be a priority
In 5 years... being more welcome to international travel guests
Refers to all interactions the visitor has with people in the state – gas stations, welcome centers and hotels, law enforcement, residents
Imperative. Pure MI will get them in the door. SE will get them in the drawer
Very average, variable. Improving but have much more to improve
Service excellence means first impression should be consistent. Only strong as weakest link.
Excellent service brings repeat visitors. Demonstrates pride
Service excellence can/should/will set us apart from all other states. It carries through on the tone and feeling set in the Pure MI commercials
If I say I’m great, that’s advertising. If someone else says I’m great, that’s the truth

Defining the Future of the Theme

There is consistency in the way that our cities in Michigan are delivering on the Pure Michigan promise. Michigan is recognized as one of the friendliest states in the country.
Full time program- statewide. Consistent- workbooks- certificates- national recognition program.
Funded state $250,000/ year- full time staff
All employees that come in contact with guests are well educated on their area. All travelers are welcomed to the state and thanked for visiting. A positive attitude is evident by MI resident
Places of business - tourism and non-tourism - display certificates of custom service training.
All people/businesses are truly welcoming to visitors – ambassadors, promoting their state
Put the money in the area of training and development of awareness starting with high school students, college, and all public works; seek companies for sponsorships
Multi-lingual
Consistency around the state has been established within service and hospitality. Employees within the hospitality industry are proud of their state as a travel destination
Customize PowerPoint presentation supported by video vignettes for small business orientation.
Pure MI rating system. Pure MI service excellence manifesto of service standards

Elements of a Goal Statement

Michigan Service Excellence can be obtained through a consistent desire to improve on delivering excellent service to those visiting Michigan
Funded, full time, statewide program adopted and implemented by industry. Trained trainers.
10,000 people per year trained via certified program
Genuine welcoming spirit, infectious enthusiasm, culture of extreme hospitality, diversity, pride in Pure MI
Yes, I can! What can I do for you? How can I add value? Experience beyond expectations
Consistency, not cookie-cutter, not just front line, create a welcome that is “Pure”
Commitment to service excellence to deliver the Pure Michigan Promise