

March 28, 2025

Makala Barton  
Visit Broken Arrow  
123 N Main St  
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma 74012

Dear Ms. Barton,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our response to Visit Broken Arrow's RFP for the creation of a Tourism Strategic Plan. Clarity of Place provides innovative tools and insights needed for developing and implementing destination planning and management initiatives. In partnership with Visit Broken Arrow and your hospitality and tourism stakeholders, we will create a Tourism Strategic Plan that guides the strategic direction for Visit Broken Arrow and fosters alignment across key partners throughout the City to further position Broken Arrow as a premier destination and pave the way for the long-term vitality of its visitor economy.

Clarity of Place was founded on the principle that proper planning can help destinations align, measure, and deliver value across the entire community. Together with Kimley-Horn, our team leverages a combined 80+ years of experience in tourism, economic development, and place-making to produce plans that guide the direction of our clients while better positioning them within the context of other key public and private partners across their communities.

Our process relies on several connected steps including:

- Mapping of current destination assets and lodging supply,
- Analyzing both competitive and aspirational destinations to understand market opportunities and gaps,
- Gathering stakeholder input through focus groups and surveys,
- Investigating trends in traveler behavior to help guide destination product investments,
- Setting priorities and providing recommendations to advance implementation of the resulting Plan, and
- Advising Visit Broken Arrow on ways to continue to engage stakeholders in the Plan's implementation.

In the proposal that follows, you will find our approach to supporting Visit Broken Arrow and our qualifications. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [tina@clarityofplace.com](mailto:tina@clarityofplace.com) or 919.492.4751 should you have any questions or require additional information. If our team is chosen for this engagement, I will be the primary contact.

Sincerely,

  
Tina Valdecanas, CDME  
Principal

Clarity of Place | 4030 Easton Station, Suite 300, Columbus, OH 43219



CRAFTING A

# Tourism Strategic Plan for Broken Arrow, OK

Prepared for



Submitted by :



March 28, 2025



## Research + Practitioner Expertise

Clarity of Place and Kimley-Horn will work with Visit Broken Arrow to craft a Tourism Strategic Plan to ensure the City's visitor economy is optimized in a way that generates activity for the tourism and hospitality industry and is aligned with the City's vision for economic vitality.

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## About Us

Clarity of Place prides itself on having walked in your shoes—either as the leaders of destination organizations, senior staff, or economic development partners working to enhance the “places” we call home. If given the opportunity to work alongside the Visit Broken Arrow team to develop a Tourism Strategic Plan, Clarity of Place will contribute our broad and deep understanding of aligning a destination’s visitor economy to the goals and vision of the communities it serves. In doing so, we will leverage our partnership with Kimley-Horn to ensure we understand the local and regional context as we analyze current destination product offerings and identify opportunities for community alignment through programming aimed at optimizing Broken Arrow’s visitor economy and balancing the needs of its businesses and residents.

We approach tourism strategic plans knowing that the residents of Broken Arrow will be asked to share their “place” with the guests we inspire to enjoy the City. Hence, over the course of this project, our team will actively engage with the Visit Broken Arrow team, elected officials and other community leaders, and hospitality stakeholders to ensure the resulting direction for tourism in Broken Arrow complements the City’s overall goals.

In addition to active stakeholder engagement, our process is rooted in data collection, comparative analysis, and research interpretation. This approach ensures that the resulting plan provides Visit Broken Arrow and the City an actionable roadmap to continue to grow and leverage the destination as a leisure, cultural, and recreational destination.

## Our Value

Within our team, we have expertise to recommend and inform decision-making. Through this planning process we will:

- Identify existing tourism product strengths and gaps for leisure, cultural, and recreational visitors;
- Facilitate input from Visit Broken Arrow, attractions, event planners, accommodations, venues, real estate developers, and community partners to ensure the resulting visitor economy addresses prioritized needs;
- Benchmark Broken Arrow’s destination product mix against peer and aspirational destinations;
- Confirm the future vision for the destination and ensure that it aligns seamlessly with broader economic and community development efforts;
- Apply existing visitor data, market research, and plans to guide direction and substantiate recommendations, bolstered as needed with additional data sources; and
- Set priorities and provide clear recommendations that easily convert into implementable actions and tourism investment strategies.

The following pages describe Clarity of Place, Kimley-Horn, and our proposed approach for creating a Tourism Strategic Plan for Broken Arrow. Also included are samples of how we have helped other destinations maximize the community shared value of their visitor economies.

## Who We Are

Clarity of Place is the advisory services subsidiary of Longwoods International. We assist destination organizations and municipalities in optimizing their visitor economy. Utilizing our data-driven, proprietary methodologies, we will examine how Broken Arrow's destination assets, tourism promotion operations, and programs are interconnected and how they influence the community's competitive position. Our goal is to discover ways to enhance both the economic value of tourism and the residents' quality of place.

Founded by two place-based industry veterans with tourism and economic development expertise, Clarity of Place works to understand destination needs and crafts actionable strategies that leverage our client's unique product mix, vision for tourism, and relationships with destination partners.

Kimley-Horn is a premier planning and design consultancy known for creating lasting, community-driven solutions with a focus on collaboration and cultural stewardship. Clarity of Place and Kimley-Horn have partnered on various tourism plans and research projects. Kimley-Horn's in-depth understanding of place ensures that the resulting recommendations align with the community's character and broader vision.

By utilizing both structured and unstructured data to assess the destination within the context of the community, we will collaborate with Visit Broken Arrow to create an actionable and realistic Tourism Strategic Plan that serves as a catalyst for the City's future growth and development.

## Clarity of Place and Kimley-Horn Partnerships



## Clarity of Place: Tourism Planning Projects





**Tina Valdecanas, CDME**

Tina is a Principal and co-founder of Clarity of Place and helps clients understand their community alignment to strengthen their destinations for the benefit of visitors and residents. Tina will be the project lead and day-to-day contact for the engagement.

Tina employs her passion for understanding how communities “work” and how place-making and destination promotion can be leveraged to help clients build community shared value and foster the sustainable growth of their visitor economies. In her nearly 30-year career, Tina has proven herself a dynamic leader and strategist in the field of place-making and destination development.

Prior to starting Clarity of Place, Tina was part of the Global Tourism and Destinations team of Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels Group. Tina conducted market and feasibility studies for visitor-facing venues and place-making developments. Tina honed her economic development skills as a senior consultant for Garner Economics and as a practitioner serving the Research Triangle Park and the Greater Phoenix Economic Council. Tina received her undergraduate degree from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and her graduate degree from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. She is a Certified Destination Management Executive.



**David Holder, CDME**

As a tourism professional for over 25 years, David co-founded Clarity of Place with a hands-on understanding of what destination leaders need to be successful. David will contribute his expertise to the opportunity identification and recommendation formation stages.

In leading a variety of destinations, David proved himself to be an industry innovator, taking new perspectives on what it means for destinations to be competitive and specializing in setting and meeting marketing, sales, and product development results.

Before starting Clarity of Place, David served as Vice President of Jones Lang LaSalle's Global Tourism and Destinations team. In David's earlier career, he served as the President of Visit Syracuse (the Syracuse CVB) and led all advocacy, operations, and programming. While there, his innovative branding efforts helped deliver return on investment: increasing visitor flow and travel spending, measurably improving hotel performance, and garnering the region recognition as the “Official Home of Winter”. Prior to leading Visit Syracuse, David was Vice President for CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity.

David received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Tourism Management from North Carolina State University. He is a Certified Destination Management Executive.



**Hailey Post**

Hailey will lead stakeholder engagement and travel trends and best practice analysis, leveraging her background in managing community input and translating data into actionable insights. Her skills in mixed-methods research, project management, and public communication will be instrumental in aligning community perspectives with strategic growth opportunities for tourism in Broken Arrow.

With a Master's degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management from NC State University and a B.A. in Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality from UNC-Greensboro, she has developed expertise in both academic and practical aspects of the industry. Hailey has served as a Destination Data Manager at Visit Raleigh, where she evaluated market trends, managed data quality, and led community engagement efforts through programs like Tourism U. Her experience also includes conducting research on DMO community engagement strategies and facilitating public learning tracks that communicate the value of tourism.

Hailey is a member of the Destinations International "30 under 30" program, representing the class of 2024.



**Jeremy Stahle**

Jeremy has over 25 years of engineering design and project management experience with a broad and diverse background in public works and site design. His experience includes arterial street widening, street extensions, intersection improvements, roadway rehabilitation and reconstruction, non-arterial rehabilitation, traffic signalization, sidewalk extensions, pavement inspection, commercial and residential development, water distribution and sewer collection system improvements, hydrologic/hydraulic studies and drainage reports, capital improvement planning, project bidding, construction observation and construction administration services.

As a resident for over 20 years, Jeremy calls Broken Arrow his hometown, as well as his family's. Having designed numerous private and public improvement projects within the city since 1999, he has a proven passion for improving infrastructure within Broken Arrow, and for serving the City with enthusiasm and excellence.

As recently as last year, Jeremy served the City of Broken Arrow as Project Manager to prepare construction documents for all public infrastructure within Events Park. This project was developed to complement an amphitheater development coming to the park. The planned improvements to the park included multiple different design elements that Jeremy and the Kimley-Horn team provided in-house.

## Our Approach

Our client-centered, data-driven approach will craft a Tourism Strategic Plan for Broken Arrow that identifies opportunities for short and long-term tourism growth by leveraging and guiding Visit Broken Arrow's (VBA) management of its destination in a way that is aligned with the City's needs and overall vision.

We understand the important role tourism amenities play within a thriving and diverse community. Our personal experience working within similar destinations will help identify appropriate destination programming and development options needed to optimize the City's visitor economy. Broken Arrow's diversity of place-based assets, vibrant neighborhoods, and culinary scene help draw visitors and generate economic activity for local businesses.

Through the Tourism Strategic Plan, we will work with the VBA team, municipal elected officials, and hospitality stakeholders to identify opportunities for destination development, market efficiencies, and organizational priorities. This

### Plan Goal

Create an evidence-based Tourism Strategic Plan that positions Visit Broken Arrow to achieve its vision to leverage tourism to generate economic activity and support the City's vitality and growth.

### Our Solution

Facilitate a highly inclusive process which collaboratively builds a Tourism Strategic Plan that identifies opportunities to grow and strengthen the positive impacts of the visitor economy in Broken Arrow.



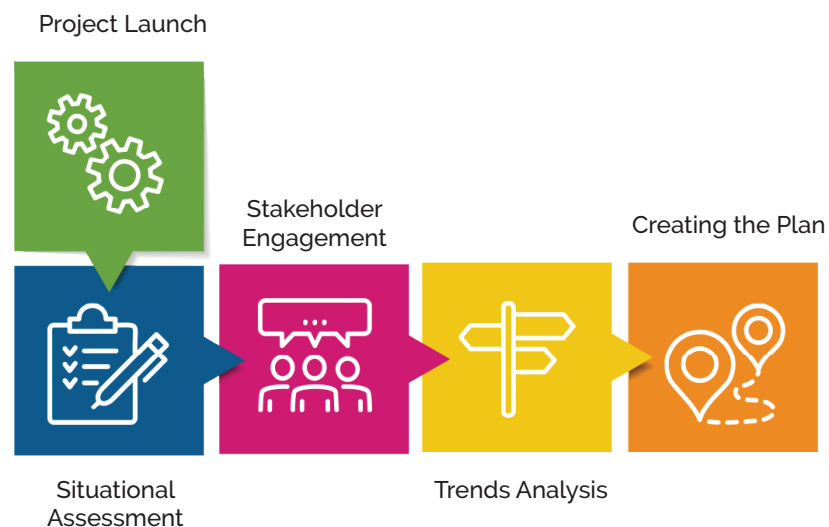
work will competitively position Broken Arrow's offerings for success through recommendations for potential destination development investments and by building a long-term framework for ensuring that VBA nurtures the City's visitor economy to optimize the positive impacts of tourism.

The Plan will also seek to align activities within the visitor economy to ensure that outcomes are balanced and supportive of the City's values, culture and character, while protecting the area's vibrant environment.

Clarity of Place and Kimley-Horn are excited for the potential opportunity to partner with VBA to develop this Tourism Strategic Plan and build upon the organization's success.

The following pages describe the assessments, competitive analysis, stakeholder engagement, and strategy building process we would undertake to build an actionable plan for optimizing Broken Arrow's visitor economy.

## Proposed Phases



## Project Launch

We believe that successful strategic planning requires close collaboration with the client throughout the engagement. To start things off, we will schedule a video call with the Visit Broken Arrow project team to discuss the current state of both the destination and any dynamics among your staff, key stakeholders, and municipal leadership that will impact the plan. We will discuss research and data available from VBA and its partners, as well as identify key participants in the stakeholder engagement phase, milestones, and timelines. This will serve as the Scoping Phase of the project, confirming all facets of our work and expected deliverables.

1

Confirm agreement of the overall project plan and deliverables

2

Collect needed data and inputs, previous research, and existing data sets commissioned by VBA, the City, and other partners

3

Discuss the stakeholder engagement strategy and begin building a list of individuals to include in the process

4

Review the project timeline, make adjustments as needed, and set a schedule for regular check-in calls



# Phase I: Situational Assessment

**To understand how Broken Arrow currently competes and performs as a destination, we will first understand the destination product available for visitors and how the visitor economy “fits” within the City. We will begin the project by assimilating data and inputs highlighting product offerings and supportive hospitality amenities and infrastructure to understand the destination’s current competitive position and tourism’s impact.**

## How It Will Work

We will work with Visit Broken Arrow to assemble the data needed to capture a holistic view of Broken Arrow’s visitor economy. Given tourism’s integral role in Broken Arrow’s economy, we will conduct a comprehensive analysis of the visitor economy and its interactions with other economic sectors. If VBA does not currently maintain the necessary data, we will work with leadership to identify appropriate proxy sets, identify partners who may have the data, or curate the data needed to inform the process.

## Task 1: Product and Infrastructure Mapping

To augment the data provided by VBA, Clarity of Place and Kimley-Horn will assemble economic data along with existing infrastructure and transportation data sets, CoStar data, and other relevant public documents. We consider Broken Arrow’s destination assets as a subset of the area’s overall quality of place and a key component of what makes the area a desirable, competitive, and vibrant place to live and visit. We will also consider events and attractions in the larger region that are proximate to the City and which Broken Arrow can leverage and promote.

These assets either serve as the primary reason and motivation for both overnight and day trip travel to Broken Arrow, or they complement other attractors, offering additional activities for visitors already in the area for different reasons (indirect demand drivers).

The resulting inventory will include a list of visitor-facing amenities in the City and the current lodging supply, along with strategies to leverage these current amenities to grow the visitor economy.

By overlaying existing destination assets onto the City’s infrastructure, product, and planned developments, we will gain a deeper understanding of the physical elements needed to fill any gaps in offerings that could affect Broken Arrow’s competitiveness to attract visitors. This holistic approach enables us to track and assess aspects, activities, and investments (current and planned) that influence whether visitors continue to choose Broken Arrow as a destination and how residents interact with and benefit from tourism.

## Task 2: Comparative Analysis

Attracting visitors to a destination is a competitive endeavor. Leisure, sports, and cultural travelers have a tremendously wide variety of options for where to go and how to spend their money. Similarities across destinations mean that places need to clearly articulate their unique offerings to each visitor segment. Broken Arrow's tourism success will rely on differentiating the City's tourism drivers from other destinations (and communities within the Greater Tulsa MSA) with which it competes.

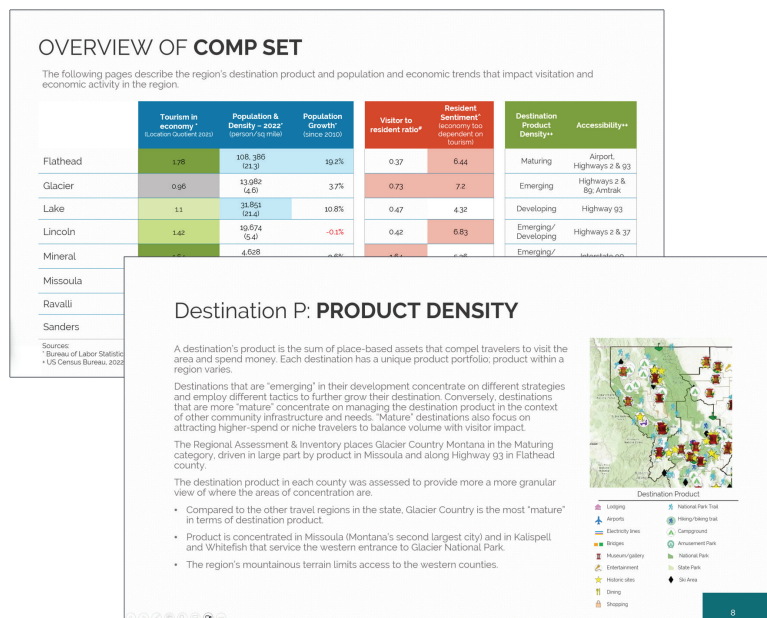
The comparative analysis will compare Broken Arrow to three peer or aspirational/model destinations. We will employ high-level assessments of the other destinations' product, hospitality infrastructure, budget, and structure, alongside feedback from the Broken Arrow leadership team, to evaluate how Broken Arrow compares to the peer or model destinations. This will help identify ways Broken Arrow can stay competitive and potentially surpass other destinations.

## Task 3: Visitor Economy "Fit"

Destination organizations function as part of their collective communities' growth and place-making efforts. They are part of a system in which different parts (e.g., destination marketing, destination management, educational institutions, economic development, government, residents, companies, etc.) interact with each other to make their community a better place to live, work, and visit. During this task of the situational assessment, we will assess how Broken Arrow's programming currently fits into the City's current economic development growth and place-making efforts. We will inform this task with a literature review of the comprehensive and economic development planning documents within Broken Arrow and Kimley-Horn's extensive knowledge of place-making in the City.

By understanding and uncovering areas of synergy among Broken Arrow's efforts and other long-term place-making initiatives and priorities in the City, we will begin to build a snapshot of the many impacts that Broken Arrow's visitor promotion and destination management programs have on the larger community. The assessment will also uncover opportunities through which the resulting Plan efforts could and should support the overall quality of place of Broken Arrow and its long-term economic, environmental, and social goals.

## Understanding Where Broken Arrow Stands



An important element of building a Tourism Strategic plan, is understanding the product Broken Arrow has and how it compares with others. The graphic above illustrates the output of the Phase I assessments.



## Task 4: Visitor Profile

To build a high-level visitor profile for Broken Arrow, we will analyze current visitation patterns, leveraging both regional data and VBA's internal resources and data. As applicable, Clarity of Place will draw on data available within Longwoods International's Travel USA study. This initial assessment will provide a foundation for understanding the types of visitors already attracted to the City and travel behaviors.

## Phase I Outcome

The assimilation of data and view into assets, amenities, and comparative destinations from these assessments will provide a sense of Broken Arrow's current position and the enhancements and foundations needed to leverage and optimize the visitor economy. Clarity of Place will summarize the findings of this phase in presentation format and organized data sets.

## Phase II: Engaging Stakeholders

Destinations are reflections of their community's future vision and goals. Stakeholders provide the backbone of a destination's marketplace, as well as providing the support—both financial and tacit—to accomplish the destination goals. Interaction with Visit Broken Arrow's key public- and private-sector stakeholders will allow us to validate and enhance our understanding of the area beyond the collected statistics and data points.

### How It Will Work

Data mining and understanding destination product are key components of our work in the Situational Assessment; however, we still need to meet face-to-face with key partners and community leaders to lend nuance to the numbers and hear about their perspectives of Broken Arrow as a destination.

### Task 1: Stakeholder Focus Groups

Time spent in-destination with community, business, government, and industry leaders in small, focus group discussions produces the highest level of destination market intelligence. We will work with Visit Broken Arrow to identify stakeholders and thought leaders for these conversations.

These individuals should include VBA's key stakeholders who are able to provide perspectives on how Broken Arrow should be positioned as a destination and potential new ways to better leverage the visitor economy.

We would expect to meet with industry partners and community leaders such as (but not necessarily limited to):

- Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator
- City Departments (e.g., Community Development, Economic Development and/or Parks & Recreation)
- Representatives from Chambers, Downtowns, Main Streets and/or Neighborhood Associations
- Tourism and hospitality industry businesses
  - Hoteliers, B&B owners, Short Term Rentals
  - Restaurateurs, Craft Beverage establishments, Retailers, Entertainment, and Attractions
- Community and Industry Leaders
  - Sports facilities, Meetings facilities, Event Planners
  - Outdoor Interests, Golf, Biking, etc.
  - Heritage, Arts & Culture, BIPOC

Our team will travel to Broken Arrow and hold 4 focus groups with the above representatives. If there are key individuals with whom we cannot meet during the focus groups, we will schedule up to 5 phone or Zoom calls to gather those perspectives individually.

## Task 2: Destination Stakeholder Survey

Recognizing the value of perspectives from stakeholders who cannot participate in the focus groups, we will launch a user-friendly online survey to collect similar insights on priorities and future vision. This survey will quantify stakeholder perspectives on destination development and its impact. We will work with VBA to distribute the survey and encourage broad participation.

## Phase II Outcome

We will compile notes and takeaways from the engagement streams and create a feedback matrix and maps key themes to guide Phase IV.



## Phase III: Tourism Trends

**In addition to the data collection and stakeholder input in the first two phases, the planning process will consider changed travel behavior in the post-pandemic landscape and trends Broken Arrow can leverage to attract visitors.**

### How It Will Work

To provide the context for ways to increase visitation—especially overnight—to Broken Arrow, the project team will assemble and summarize key trends influencing travel behavior since 2020 and the study period of VBA's most recent strategic plan. Given the existing assets in Broken Arrow and the observed profile of the City's visitors, these trends will inform recommendations for VBA to take advantage of increased demand for domestic and regional travel, as the pandemic heightened preference for destinations closer to home and short-haul travel.

Understanding the trends will also identify targeted travel experiences catering to the specific interests and preferences of leisure travel audiences.

In addition to summarizing trends for travel demand, the project team will also survey the effect of technological advancements that influence travel behavior, including digital solutions to visitor service, virtual tours, and AI-driven customer service.



### Phase III Outcome

We will summarize the results of trends affecting visitation since 2020 and consider how the trends impact, validate the data collected in the first two phases.

## Phase IV: Crafting the Tourism Strategic Plan

Create a strategic plan and road map for Visit Broken Arrow to optimize the visitor economy. By leveraging the City's quality of place to strengthen the destination's competitiveness, the resulting plan will increase economic activity for the City's tourism and hospitality businesses and grow the positive impacts of tourism.

### How It Will Work

The project team will share its expertise in developing similar plans and provide honest feedback based on assessments and industry best practices for leveraging Broken Arrow's visitor economy. Additionally, we will offer recommendations derived from insights gathered during the first three phases to assist in creating the Plan. The project team will provide decision-ready materials and recommendations that will be the basis for building broader support for the Plan by stakeholders and community partners.

### Identifying Opportunities & Mitigating Challenges

We will approach Broken Arrow's destination opportunities with a lens towards increasing overnight visitation. The graphic illustrates the SWOT for a previous engagement.



management efforts can support the overall quality of place of the City and other economic development efforts.

The broader approach of looking beyond the tourism vertical and considering the entire community and all of Broken Arrow's assets will enhance the traditional SWOT analysis and outputs. It will uncover the area's opportunities and vulnerabilities in the context of activities of other entities in the area, how the collective community wants the visitor sector to grow, and where the VBA can have an impact.

### **Task 2: Strategic Plan Development**

The project team will apply the data and findings from the SWOT and earlier phases to develop an actionable road map for Visit Broken Arrow to continue to grow the City's visitor economy. The road map will evaluate and prioritize opportunities uncovered during the SWOT exercise and map out impactful and cost-effective actions VBA can take.

While we do not yet know what the specific strategies and initiatives of the Plan might be, we anticipate that they will include imperatives to:

- Identify investments needed to strengthen current attractions, events, lodging supply, and place-based assets to encourage more overnight visitors;
- Build on Visit Broken Arrow's initiatives to connect existing attractions and experiences to increase visitation from audiences that are already drawn to the City's product mix; and
- Leverage natural and potential synergies among all parts of Broken Arrow to strengthen the area's visitor offerings and support a vibrant hospitality industry.

Clarity of Place will create a draft document that summarizes the Plan, presents the key findings, and the rationale for the proposed enhancements VBA should take to best manage the destination for long-term vitality. The draft will contain a list of key performance indicators tied to the identified opportunities and challenges and proposed phasing of activities.

After integrating feedback from VBA on the draft Plan and verifying that the assessments and recommendations provide sufficient guidance and proof points to support implementation, we will produce a final Tourism Strategic Plan in a format that is fit for external consumption.

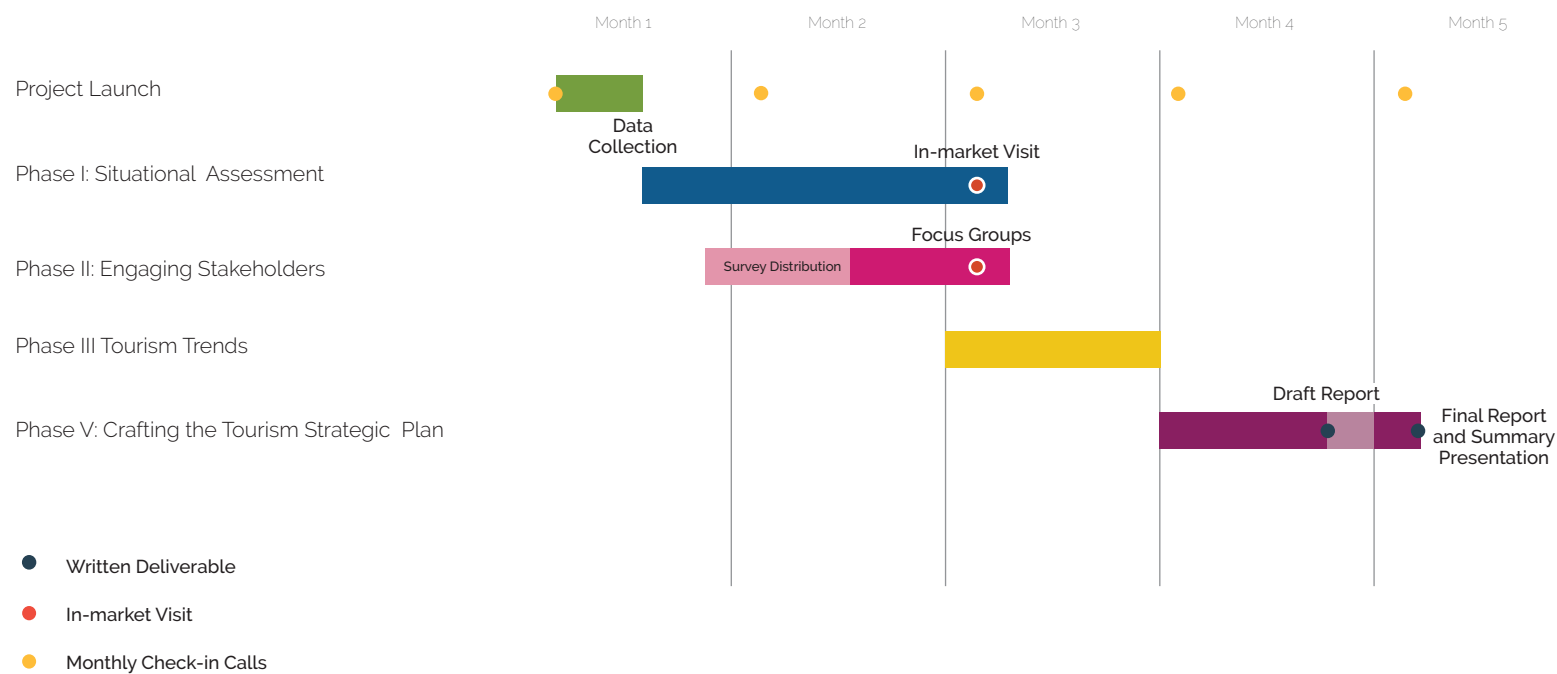
The report will translate the resulting recommendations into user-friendly collateral that can brief stakeholders and partners on:

- The goals of the Plan
- The value Visit Broken Arrow will produce in implementing the Plan, and
- The areas of needed advocacy, research, collaboration, and support among other partners in the City if the Plan is to be successful.

Lastly, we will create a summary presentation of the key takeaways for Visit Broken Arrow's use with its larger stakeholder community. The presentation will serve as a critical tool in obtaining broad-based support for implementation of the Plan. It will also allow partners, stakeholders, and community members who were involved in the focus groups and survey to see the project's results and their contribution therein.

# Project Timeline

The below timeline illustrates our plan to execute the project and present the final deliverable no later than October 1, 2025. The cadence of check-in calls and the final timeline will be adjusted at the project launch.



## Project Budget

Clarity of Place will deliver the scope described above for a fee of \$56,825 and will invoice for reimbursements for approved travel expenses.

Phase	Effort/Hours	Project budget
Project Launch & Project Administration	36	\$ 2,700
Phase I: Situational Assessment	60	12,000
Phase II: Engaging Stakeholders	50	8,750
Phase III: Tourism Trends	30	5,250
Phase IV: Creating the Strategic Plan	55	15,125
Data budget	--	5,000
Travel budget (reimbursed and not to exceed)	--	8,000
Total	231	\$ 56,825

The budget is based on a blended billable rate of \$180/hour. Clarity of Place will submit reimbursement for approved travel expenses in the month after the travel occurs.

## Relevant Work and References



Contact: Amy Zientek – Director of  
Community Development and Market  
Intelligence Visit Lubbock 806.723.8251  
[amy@visitlubbock.org](mailto:amy@visitlubbock.org)

### Destination Strategic Plan

#### Visit Lubbock

Clarity of Place worked in collaboration with Visit Lubbock, a division of the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance, to craft a destination strategic plan that addressed the demonstrative change in business activity and visitor-facing product development that occurred within Lubbock in the years following the pandemic. The planning process examined Lubbock's competitive positioning, opportunities for alignment with community and university needs, the area's traditional role as a hub city, and the continuing emergence of music and sports as pivotal sources of destination differentiation. Stakeholder input helped define priorities and establish opportunities for using the tourism economy to more effectively shape community pride around shared values.

#### Outcomes

The Lubbock tourism story prominently features Texas Tech University, Buddy Holly, youth sports, and the uniqueness of the West Texas plains. The Destination Strategic Plan provided clear direction to reposition those attributes within the context of the agricultural roots of this thriving city. The strategic plan reconnected the destination direction to the creative, hardworking, and humble residents who call Lubbock home and form the primary reason visitors travel there – to visit friends and relatives.



**Contact:** Jodi Willard - Director of  
Tourism, Rockwall Chamber of Commerce  
972.771.5733 | [jodi@visitrockwall.com](mailto:jodi@visitrockwall.com)

## Strategic Plan

### Visit Rockwall (TX)

A community in the northeast Greater Dallas-Ft. Worth region and situated on the shores of Lake Hubbard, the City of Rockwall recently contracted with the Chamber of Commerce to create a Tourism Program to promote the destination. Once the program was established, the Chamber and City wanted to ensure the organization had a roadmap for growing the destination.

Through the planning process, Clarity of Place provided a destination assessment; conducted a half-day workshop with City and Chamber leaders; and identified strategic imperatives for Visit Rockwall to increase the visibility of the city as a destination for leisure, sports, and meetings travel. The Plan is data-driven, informed by industry best practices, and complements other place-making and economic development priorities in the city.

### Outcomes

The Plan will help focus Visit Rockwall's efforts to be more effective in responding to changes to traveler behavior and continuing development of visitor-facing products in the Dallas South/East hospitality submarket. Additionally, the Plan addresses the issue of organizational capacity and resources needed to strengthen Visit Rockwall's destination marketing approach.



Contact: Alyssa Phares, CDME - Executive  
Director, Paducah CVB | 800-723-8224  
alyssa@paducah.travel

## Destination Strategic Plan Paducah (KY) CVB

Clarity of Place delivered a Destination Strategic Plan for Paducah, Kentucky, a UNESCO Creative City (one of nine in the United States). One of the main thrusts of the work was to understand the evolution of the area's destination product and identify the linkages between the product in McCracken County—outdoor recreation and sports complexes—and those in Paducah. A second objective was to recommend potential working relationships among the County's recently created a sports commission, the County owned convention center, and the Paducah CVB. The process used to develop the plan sparked unprecedented stakeholder engagement within the community and set the stage for all visitor-facing businesses and entities that promote the County to leverage the 10th anniversary of Paducah's designation as a UNESCO Creative City (2023) to raise visibility for the community.

### Outcomes

- Reconnected the UNESCO Creative City designation with destination product and attractions throughout the County, including economic development and chamber of commerce promotion efforts
- Identified opportunities for collaboration with the McCracken County Sports and Tourism Commission, a newly formed organization formed to invest in sports facilities and drive sports related bookings
- Developed working relationships among the CVB, Sports Commission, and Convention Center to support individual group sales efforts and visitor servicing



**Contact:** Lisa Oliveira - President & CEO -  
Fresno/Clovis Convention & Visitors Bureau  
559.981.5510 | [lisa.oliveira@fresnocvb.org](mailto:lisa.oliveira@fresnocvb.org)

## Tourism Strategic Plan Visit Fresno County

Despite tremendous destination assets, a diverse set of corporate and institutional offerings including Fresno State University, and significant community population growth, California's fifth largest municipality and the region surrounding it suffers from a lackluster self-image and a rapidly shifting visitor economy. The Fresno-Clovis Convention and Visitors Bureau engaged Clarity of Place to develop a Tourism Strategic plan to set organizational and destination priorities in advance of efforts to extend and expand its Tourism Business Improvement District. A prominent recommendation of the plan was to create a shared and unified brand based on what the communities in the county aspired for the destination.

### Outcomes

Community pride needs a rallying point and Visit Fresno County leveraged the outcomes of the Tourism Strategic planning process to lead a concerted community focus on branding while also driving awareness of key place-making and product development needs around highly visible destination clusters.



[www.clarityofplace.com](http://www.clarityofplace.com)

919.492.4751

# CAPITALIZING ON A CULTURE OF CREATIVITY

Destination Strategic Plan

March 2022

**PREPARED FOR:**

Paducah Convention  
and Visitors Bureau





# THANK YOU

## *Acknowledgments*

Clarity of Place would like to thank the numerous individuals and organizations who took time out of their schedules to provide insights and context for this strategic plan. More than 120 individuals actively participated in the planning process—either by participating in one of the focus groups, giving of their time for an individual interview, and/or providing data and other contextual material.

Additionally, Clarity of Place would like to thank the leadership of Mary Hammond and the Board of Directors of Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau. Their guidance and input were integral in understanding the current state and ambitions of Paducah and the role of tourism within the city.

### **Paducah CVB Board of Directors**

**Glenn Denton**, Chairman  
Representing the Paducah  
Chamber of Commerce

**Sara Bradley**, Representing the  
Restaurant Industry

**Kelm Burchard**, Representing  
the Lodging Industry

**Sherry Kahne**, Representing  
the City of Paducah

**Michael Cochran**, Representing  
the Lodging Industry

**Vick Patel**, Representing the  
Lodging Industry

**Kristin Williams**, Representing  
the City of Paducah

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# I | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Celebrating the Evolution of Paducah's Character and Nurturing the Visitor Economy*



Steeped in a longstanding tradition in the of art and crafts, Paducah was designated as a UNESCO Creative City in 2013. One of only nine cities in the United States to hold this distinction, Paducah was admitted to this exclusive list given the commitment to "placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart" of the city's vision and goals, and "cooperating actively" with other Creative Cities with the global distinction.

The Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has served as the steward of this effort and has instilled the commitment to sustainable urban development and promotion of the destination. The Paducah CVB has translated the creative tourism value of the UNESCO designation into the destination's brand.

In anticipation of the tenth anniversary of the city's designation as a UNESCO Creative City, Paducah CVB partnered with Clarity of Place to develop a

research-driven Destination Strategic Plan ("Plan") to:

- Re-examine how the destination brand is activated given the growth of other differentiating destination assets;
- Guide the future programming and structure of the CVB to be more strategic and intentional, while keeping with Paducah's Creative City brand;
- Refine the CVB's destination promotion programming based on the city's evolved product and asset base, and
- Help meet the long-term goals of the broader Paducah community by sparking economic activity in the city through visitor spending.

The over-arching intent of the Plan is to leverage the city's rich heritage in creativity and its unique culture and spirit of innovation to extend the destination's

brand. In doing so, Paducah CVB will drive even higher levels of visitation while helping to maintain the character of the community.

Leveraging market data, other studies Paducah CVB had commissioned, and active engagement with key stakeholders, the Plan documents the current state of Paducah as a destination in the context of commitment to the tenets of the UNESCO Creative City Network. The Plan analyzes qualitative and quantitative factors that impact the city's competitiveness to attract visitors and offers observations for Paducah CVB to understand and act upon focused strategies to increase visitation and encourage economic activities in the city.

Inherent in the recommendations provided in this Plan is the belief that attaining the goals and strategic objectives of the Plan is not the task of Paducah CVB alone. Continuing to develop and steward the destination, as well as cultivate the Creative City brand is dependent on engagement by the city's leadership, destination partners, and community, as well as continued investments in sustainable urban development that further differentiate Paducah's rich heritage.

The resulting Plan details a prioritized list of marketing, product improvement, and partnership efforts for Paducah CVB. The Plan summarizes those recommended efforts and the rationale for choosing them.

More detailed tactics for implementing the Plan and recommended performance measures to determine if the Plan is meeting the set goals have been shared with Paducah CVB.

## Resources Used



### PERFORMANCE DATA

Data and research compiled by the Clarity of Place from the CVB, including annual reports and commissioned research, UNESCO frameworks, and independent verification of results



### DATA SETS

Industry available data from a small comparative set of DMOs to compare Paducah to like destinations



### INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Assessment of the Paducah CVB's program using the same criteria Destinations International employs to accredit destination organizations



### STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Real-time discussions with key stakeholders who lead or benefit from the city's tourism promotion efforts. Coupled with an online survey of a broader group of industry partners



## II | DESTINATION PADUCAH

### *How Paducah Competes to Attract Visitors*

Paducah's status as a UNESCO Creative City has distinguished the destination and remains a strong draw for visitors and a unique selling proposition for garnering attention for the city with the travel media.

The Paducah CVB has used the UNESCO Creative Cities platform to promote the city to leisure and group visitors as a place where culture, creativity, and innovation meet.

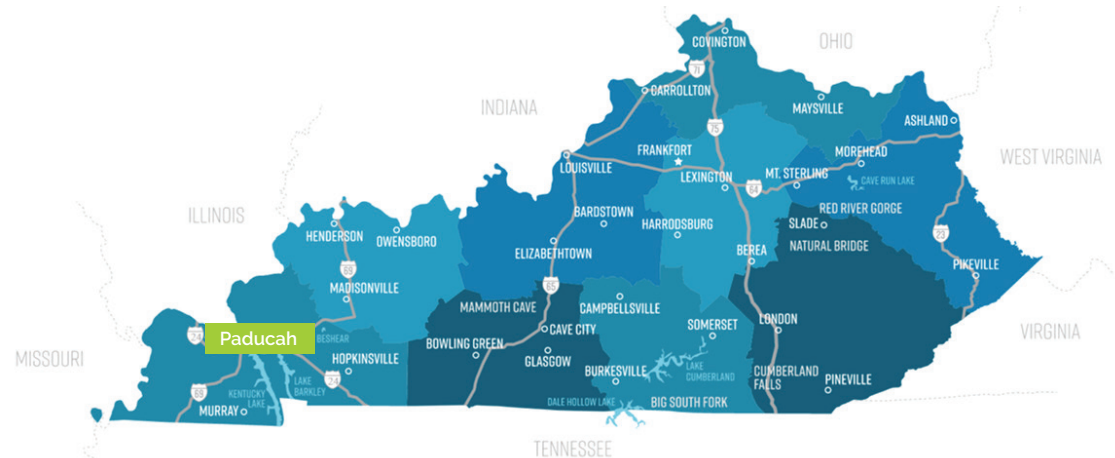
Paducah's location at the confluence of two rivers and along US Interstate 24 helps to drive visitor traffic to the city and makes Paducah a convenient stop for leisure travelers. Additionally, Paducah's size and concentration

of amenities—including those in the performing arts with the Carson Center and Market House Theatre—compared to the smaller municipalities in Western Kentucky make it an ideal base for enjoying the outdoor recreational assets of the region, such as Kentucky Lake and the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. The growth in the city's and county's parks and recreation facilities also contributes to the mix of the area's destination assets.

In addition to drawing visitors to enjoy the unique experiences within the city and surrounding area, Paducah CVB encourages visitor spending by introducing travelers to the visitor services and hospitality infrastructure Paducah has to offer.

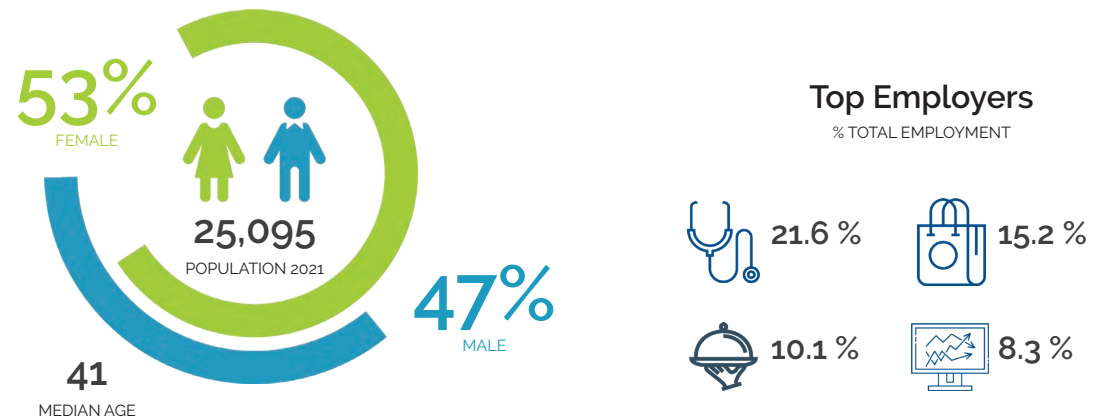
Located in Western Kentucky, Paducah is an approximately 2-hour drive from Nashville, TN and approximately 3-hour drive from St. Louis. The city has a population of approximately 25,000 with a median age of 41. The city's population has been relatively steady over the past 5 years. The Health Care and Social Services industries are the top employers in the city, followed by retail; accommodation and food services; and professional, scientific and technical services. The majority of businesses in the city (87%) have 19 or fewer employees. Paducah sits within McCracken County which has a population (including Paducah) of nearly 65,800.

## Kentucky's Travel Regions



Source: Kentucky Tourism

## Demographics & Employment



Source: Team Kentucky Community Profiles, 2021

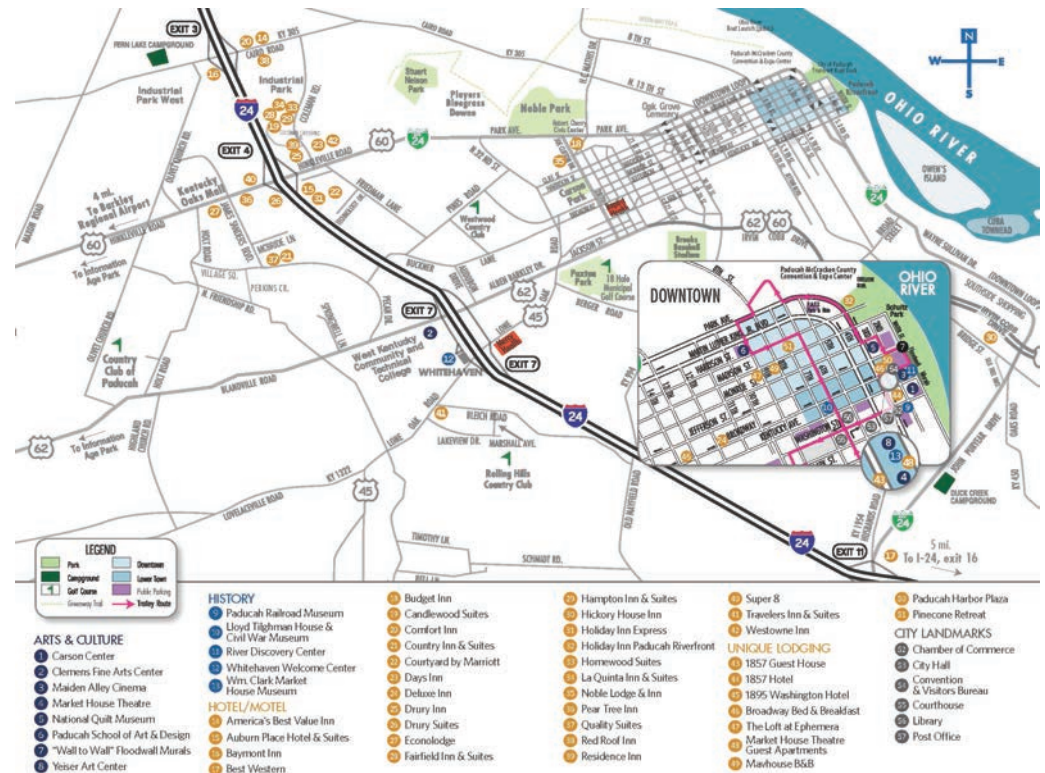
## Paducah as a Destination

Although Paducah is recognized worldwide as a mecca for quilters and fiber artists, the destination's unique selling proposition and differentiators extend well beyond quilting.

Given the proximity to outdoor recreation areas and hunting and fishing assets, Paducah also attracts guests looking to enjoy those experiences. Additionally, the Port of Paducah affords riverboat passengers the opportunity to easily visit the many art galleries, shops, and restaurants in Downtown; learn about the city's history; and experience the National Quilt Museum, Paducah's River Discovery Center, Hotel Metropolitan, and other cultural assets.

## DESTINATION DIFFERENTIATORS:

- Commitment to sustainable destination development that considers all aspects of Paducah as brand elements
- Combination of destination attractions can leverage the Creative Cities brand, its historical and cultural heritage, and locational assets
- Well-established tradition in the quilting and fiber arts that extends into other artistic mediums
- Proximity and level of hospitality infrastructure to service outdoor recreation enthusiasts



## Visitor Areas

The Paducah CVB and the Paducah Hospitality Association describe the concentration of visitor assets in the city around four core areas:

- **Interstate 24 Exit 3:** Contains mostly lodging product
- **Interstate 24 Exit 4:** Contains lodging product, dining and retail
- **Midtown:** Contains mostly dining; site of redeveloped Coca-cola plant
- **Downtown (including Lower Town):** largest core of visitor assets; along the Ohio River and includes Lower Town, the National Quilt Museum, performing art venues, dining, retail, and the Convention/Expo Center



## Core Visitor Areas



## DEMAND DRIVERS AND ATTRACTIONS

### What entices visitors to come to Paducah

The assets and attractions in a destination greatly influence the types of visitors it attracts or can convince to make a visit. Assets or attractions in a destination that "cause" a visit are known as "demand drivers." Assets or product in a destination that enhance a visit or are reasons to extend a stay are known as "attractions." Paducah and the surrounding area have a mix of both demand drivers and attractions.



The most well-known of Paducah's demand drivers is the National Quilt Museum of the United States. With more than 30,000 square feet of gallery space, the Museum is the largest of its kind in the world and features a collection of more than 300 pieces of contemporary and traditional quilts. Events celebrating and sharing the creative culture of the city such as the American Quilter's Society (AQS) QuiltWeek, workshops and training for artisans have also lured travelers to visit Paducah.



Regional travelers are drawn to visit Paducah and the surrounding area thanks to the city's proximity to Kentucky Lake and the Land Between the Lakes. In addition to water activities, the area offers a bounty of walking and riding trails. When taking part in outdoor recreation, visitors often take advantage of the visitor amenities the city has to offer.



Large-scale, signature events serve not only residents, but also encourage day and overnight visitors to the city. Historically, events such as Barbecue Off the River, the Lower Town Arts and Music Festival, and the River's Edge International Film Festival have drawn visitors to attend and explore the area.



Increasingly Paducah and the surrounding area have attracted youth and amateur sports travelers given existing venues and outdoor fields. Individuals, families, and athletes competing in these events drive a level of hotel demand for the area. The planned sports complex should add to this demand.



Multiple riverboat cruises bring guests to Paducah as they journey along the Ohio River. The passengers often stay overnight on the riverboat, but have options to disembark and tour Paducah. The riverboat companies that dock in the city represent the luxury end of the river cruise spectrum.



Performing arts venues such as the Market House Theatre and Carson Center provide world-class cultural amenities not usually found in cities of Paducah's size. The city hosts groups (e.g., regional association meetings and sporting events) that take advantage of the Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center.



Data from the Travel USA Visitor Profile for the Western Waterlands region suggest that 48% of people visiting the region are visiting friends and relatives. While this visitor market does not tend to generate overnight stays in the city's lodging properties, it does contribute to visitor spending at the city's retail and dining establishments.

## HOSPITALITY INFRASTRUCTURE & LODGING

### Services that enhance a visitor's stay

As one of the larger communities in the region, Paducah has an established hospitality infrastructure (restaurants, retail, hotels, and camping options) compared to surrounding areas. Visitor amenities along the Interstate tend to be national or regionally-based chains; Paducah's local restaurants and breweries are concentrated in the core of the city, as are many of the local galleries and art-related retail establishments.

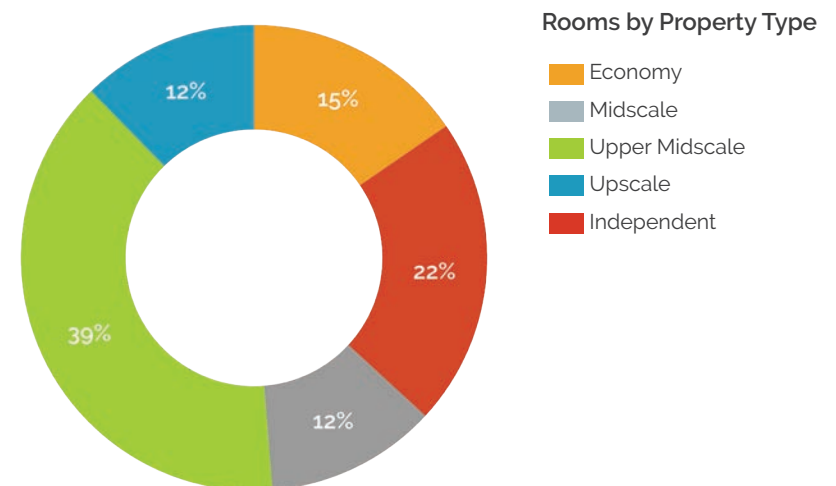
The Paducah Hospitality Association represents many of the businesses throughout the city. The organization works to provide experiences for guests that tie back to Paducah's history, arts and culture.

### Hotel and Lodging Supply

While travelers rarely visit a destination solely to stay in one of its hotels or lodging properties, a destination's hotel and lodging supply is important. The properties not only provide accommodations for the visitor, but also collect lodging taxes that are used to fund the activities of the area's destination management organization (DMO) and some placemaking investments. The Paducah CVB receives funds from the city room tax.

In 2021, there were approximately 2,200 hotel rooms in the city. The largest share of rooms are in upper midscale hotels, followed by independent properties. Of the hotel properties in the city, only one – the Holiday Inn Riverfront – is a full-service hotel.

### Paducah's Hotel Room Supply



Source: STR, Paducah CVB, Clarity of Place

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In 2022, two new (Comfort Suites, 77 rooms, and the City Block boutique hotel, 81 rooms) properties and one renovated property (Budget Inn, 56 rooms, soon to be Super 8) are scheduled to begin operations. This will result in an increase in room inventory in the city of roughly 9.2%.

In addition to traditional hotel/motel lodging product, Paducah also has a supply of shared accommodations/condos, B&Bs and unique lodging properties. With a combined total of 115 homes (per AirDNA), Paducah's properties are concentrated in the Historic Downtown, Midtown, and Lower Town areas.

The city also has 3 privately owned/operated RV parks and campgrounds. Combined, the three offer space for 200 units.

### **Retail**

Retail developments in Paducah cover the spectrum of large-scale developments along the interstate corridor (e.g.,

Kentucky Oaks Mall) to individual artisan galleries. As noted above, Paducah has a larger collection of retail establishments than surrounding, smaller cities in the area.

The retail centers along I-24 tend to represent national brands. Locally-owned specialty shops and galleries are concentrated in Downtown, Midtown and Lower Town and contribute to Paducah's sense of place.

The Paducah CVB helps market these establishments to visitors and uses many as examples of the destination's creativity and culture.

Paducah's variety of retail adds to the visitor experience and in some cases provides a reason for visitors to extend their stay in the area. The concentration of specialty shops and art galleries in Downtown and Lower Town serve as a specific draw and collection of attractions.



## VISITOR PROFILE

### Who visits

Specific demographic information for visitors and the actions they undertake while they are in Paducah could be captured through a visitor profile study. A study of this type and magnitude has not been conducted for Paducah recently, but the CVB has captured data from foot traffic at the Visitors Center and from partner organizations.

Additionally, the Western Waterlands commissioned a Travel USA Visitor Profile which provides some insights into travelers to Paducah and the surrounding region. According to the Western Waterlands Visitor Profile, 53% of visitors are female (compared to a 50% US norm) and 94% are White/Caucasian (compared to a 82% US norm). The region attracts a larger percentage of visitors between the ages of 35-44 than the US norm. Visitors in the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups also outpace the US norm, but to a lesser degree.

Age	Western Waterlands	US Norm
18-24	11%	10%
25-34	21%	20%
35-44	22%	18%
45-54	17%	18%
55-64	13%	16%
65+	17%	18%

Source: Travel USA Visitor Profile for Western Waterlands

### Frequently Visited Points of Interest in the Paducah Area\*



Landmarks/Historic sites and Museums



Cultural activities/Attractions



Exceptional Culinary Experiences

\* Travel USA Visitor Profile of the Western Waterlands Region, 2018-2019

## PADUCAH CVB PROGRAMMING

### Promoting the destination

The Paducah CVB is the primary destination management organization for the city and is funded by the city's lodging tax. Currently the organization has five full-time staff.

As the driving force behind attaining the UNESCO Creative Cities designation, Paducah CVB was an industry leader in recognizing that the organization's job is not merely to market the area to potential visitors, but to take an active role in ensuring that the city (destination) grows and evolves in such a way as to build on the area's culture, creativity, and innovation. Before many other DMOs recognized the need to enter into "destination management," Paducah CVB saw the opportunity to use those elements of the community's character to differentiate Paducah and make the case for experiencing what the city has to offer.

### Driving Overnight Visitors

In efforts to drive and service more overnight visitors to the city, Paducah CVB divides the organization's programming along three streams:

- **Destination Promotion**

The Paducah CVB has invested in an extensive customer relationship management (CRM) system that organizes its digital resources, as well as information on the city's many destination partners. Additionally, the CVB manages travel media coverage through the Lou Hammond Group. Creative' marketing content is managed through Lexington's Stablemate Creative.

- **Sales**

The primary meetings venue in the city is the Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center. The CVB collaborates with Convention Center staff to help market the venue (and other meeting space in the city) to the group market.

- **Visitor Services**

The CVB works with destination partners to help service visitors to Paducah. This includes sharing information and collateral and telling stories of experiences to be had in Paducah.



## Sustainable Destination Development

The Paducah CVB is fully committed to the principles of destination management and development set forth by the UNESCO Creative Cities. To achieve these principals, Paducah CVB is heavily engaged in creating and nurturing connections within the community and the Creative Cities network to promote the city and the creative and cultural aspects of the area to visitors.

The impact of Paducah's Creative City status reaches beyond attracting visitors and leverages the city's character and entrepreneurial spirit to launch educational and community-focused initiatives that build on the city's creativity. These include the River's Edge International Film Festival Creative Cities Showcase (2018), the "Corner Gallery" at the National Quilt Museum, and creation of the Tennessee Riverline & Riverlands Outdoor Heritage Conservation Alliance.



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**  
17 GOALS TO TRANSFORM OUR WORLD



Sharing Experiences, Knowledge & Best Practices



Studies, Research & Evaluations on the Experience of the Creative Cities



Professional and Artistic Exchange Programs & Networks



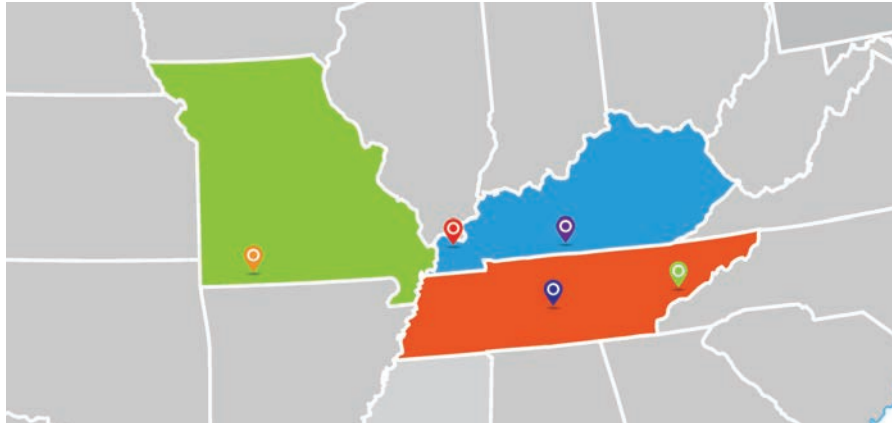
Pilot Projects, Partnerships & Initiatives



Policies & Measurements for Sustainable Urban Development



Engaging in Communication & Awareness-Raising Activities



## Competitive Markets

In building its marketing and sales strategy, the CVB takes into account the destinations it most frequently competes with in a given market segment. For example, the CVB maintains a list of destinations it competes with for leisure travel and a different set for conventions and meeting businesses. Clarity of Place used a combination of the two and compared Paducah to Bowling Green, Branson, Franklin, and Sevier County to understand how Paducah competes as a composite destination for multiple visitor segments.

	Bowling Green, KY	Branson, MO	Franklin, TN	Paducah, KY	Sevier County, TN
Demand Drivers	Corvette, Mammoth Cave National Park, WKU, youth sports,	Live entertainment, youth sports, conventions	Access to Nashville, regional population growth, youth sports	Quilting, artisans, youth sports, Ohio river traffic; UNESCO distinction; performing arts	Dollywood, Great Smoky Mountains National Park; youth sports
Attractions	National Corvette Museum, Lost River Cave	Silver Dollar City, Various attractions	Historic Downtown, Natchez Trace Parkway	Historic Downtown, National Quilt Museum; Carson Center	Gatlinburg, Various attractions
Experience	University city, sports car manufacturing	Lake access, Ozark mountains	Civil War, Small town charm & escape	Regional hub, creative community, river city, access to outdoor recreation	Family gathering, Outdoor recreation
Airport/ Interstates	BNA (70 miles, 14 airlines serving 91 cities), I-165/I-65	SGF (50 miles, 4 airlines serving 14 cities), US 65	BNA (25 miles, 14 airlines serving 91 cities), I-840/I-65	PAH (10 miles, the only destination in the comp set with a regional airport), I-24, Ohio River	TYS (38 miles, 3 airlines serving 12 cities), I-40
Population* (growth 2010-2020)	134,554 (18%)	56,066 (8%)	247,726 (35%)	67,875 (4%)	98,380 (9%)
Key Industries	Auto, Educational, Textiles, Healthcare	Tourism, Forestry, Healthcare	Healthcare, Insurance, Auto	Tourism, river industries, Healthcare, chemical, retail	Tourism
Hotel Room Supply	3,270	13,500	3,640	2,200	17,100

# III | WHAT STAKEHOLDERS THINK

## *Why Stakeholder Input Matters*

Hospitality partners and community leaders are critical to the success of any tourism and destination management program. In addition to servicing visitors to Paducah, the CVB's stakeholder group are the backbone of the destination and provide support—both fungible and tacit—to accomplish the destination's goals.



In the process to build this strategic plan, Clarity of Place met with the Paducah CVB's Board and key stakeholders. Additionally, with assistance from Paducah CVB, Clarity of Place conducted an electronic survey and focus groups to solicit input from the CVB's stakeholders on what makes Paducah competitive as a destination and how the CVB can support or is impacted by the stakeholders' work in the area. Additionally, Clarity of Place garnered ideas on how the CVB can impact and enhance these stakeholders' efforts. The survey respondents had similar feedback to the focus groups and interviewees. The below summarizes the feedback received on the stakeholders' shared vision for the destination and challenges and opportunities they see facing Paducah as the CVB works to encourage more visitation.



## Summary of Stakeholder Input

### GROWING COMMUNITY; SMALL-TOWN FEEL

Stakeholders appreciate that despite the region's growth, the city has been able to maintain its friendly, small-town feel

### MISPERCEPTION OF CREATIVE CITIES DESIGNATION

Stakeholders appreciate Paducah's distinction as a UNESCO Creative City; however the perception is that the program only relates to quilting and fiber arts

### DESIRE FOR GREATER COMMUNICATIONS

Stakeholders recognize that there is much going on in the city—both for residents and visitors—but need to be reminded of where to go for information on recent developments and activities

### OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

While hunting and fishing have long been part of the area's culture, the rise in desire to enjoy the outdoors during COVID has emphasized the importance of outdoor recreational assets in close proximity to the city as a competitive advantage for the destination

### DISCONNECT OF ATTRACTIONS

Stakeholders perceive that visitors tend to come to Paducah for a specific reason and that visitor audiences tend to visit attractions only in that demand driver category

### COMMUNITY AESTHETICS

Stakeholders appreciate the investments and efforts that have gone into placemaking in Downtown, Lower Town, and Midtown. Comments from several suggest that other areas of the city would benefit from beautification efforts.

## IV

# STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

## *Building on Success*



To capitalize on opportunities, the CVB must leverage the organization's already strong ties to the community and show newer destination partners how they and their businesses can leverage the Creative Cities brand and take a proactive role in the CVB's established marketing and promotion efforts.

The Paducah CVB and destination partners have nurtured the enviable brand of being a UNESCO Creative City and have used it as a platform to promote the city and increase visitor activity and spending in the city.

While many destination partners are fully engaged in efforts to promote the arts community under the Creative City banner, many other community members do not completely appreciate the value and potential for the city in having the status. Additionally, more can be done to tie the destination's outdoor recreation and other assets under the banner as they are reflections of the culture and character of the city.

## Opportunity Assessment

### Strengths

- » UNESCO Creative City designation
- » Charm and “walkability” of downtown, including event space, boutiques, and performing arts venues (e.g., Carson Center, Market House Theatre)
- » Food and beverage distinction (e.g., Freight House, Barrel & Bond, Doe’s Eat Place, Cynthia’s Ristorante)
- » Proximity and access to rivers and lakes
- » Location of Paducah to transportation arteries (water, highways, Interstate 24)
- » Experience and knowledge base of the Paducah CVB team
- » National and International board level engagement by the CVB with US Travel Association, Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, and UNESCO Creative Cities
- » Interest of community in growing tourism

### Opportunities

- » Revise the connection between the community and the Creative City brand promise
- » Build a competitive, collaborative program to sell the area to group business
- » Connect local experiences to targeted audience groups
- » Build stronger visitor options around outdoor recreation
- » Utilize investments in media relations
- » Refocus the Paducah CVB team and the resources needed to better position the brand
- » Encourage collaborative marketing/sales among promotion entities (e.g. Sports Commission and Convention Center)

### Weaknesses

- » Lack of wide-spread understanding and embrace of UNESCO designation among community partners
- » Limited local hotel ownership
- » Pre-occupation of hoteliers and lodging leaders with daily operations; lack of time to spend on long-term destination planning
- » Signage and wayfinding missing within community
- » Lack of community understanding of the role and results generated by Paducah CVB
- » Less competitive CVB budget compared to other communities with revenue from both lodging and food and beverage tax
- » Lack of clearly defined responsibilities among entities promoting group sales bookings in the area

### Threats

- » Minimal utilization of and affiliation with the UNESCO Creative City designation throughout the community
- » Uncoordinated sales collaboration and communication among destination promotion partners
- » Stalled action to continue investment in the riverfront area between downtown and Convention Center
- » Underutilized role for the Paducah CVB’s marketing in the community’s talent attraction efforts
- » Distinctive character of the city is overshadowed by larger communities in Kentucky



v

# PLAN FRAMEWORK

## *Organizing Actions*

The evolution of Paducah's destination product provides the opportunity for Paducah CVB to refine its messaging—to visitors and the community.

In the years since Paducah was designated a UNESCO Creative City, the essence of the city—its creativity, culture, and innovation that make the city unique and are at the heart of the quality of place—has not changed.

The input and analysis compiled through this process highlight a sophisticated destination that entices discerning visitors to share experiences that show off its inventive character. However, the community's views on tourism and what makes Paducah unique have shifted in the past decade.

In addition to refining messaging to external audiences, Paducah CVB

needs to reinvigorate the community's understanding of what differentiates Paducah and re-energize community pride.

The strategic framework proposed for Paducah CVB is built on the mission and vision of the organization and outlines ways that are

- Economic-focused: strategies to increase visitation to Paducah, and
- Sustainability-focused: actions to ensure Paducah remains competitive in drawing visitors to the area and stays true to city's character.

## Strategic Framework





# VI STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES

*Increasing Visitation while Nurturing Differentiators*

## KEY OUTCOMES

Overarching goals of the recommendation to enhance Paducah as a destination and ensure Paducah CVB carries out its mission and vision

- Drive higher levels of visitation to the city
- Reinvigorate community engagement in Paducah's Creative City
- Collaborate with community partners to improve competitiveness
- Advocate for placemaking initiatives that enhance Paducah as a place for visitors and residents
- Position the CVB's internal structure to deliver success

● Economic-focused    ● Sustainability-focused

## STRATEGIES

High-level initiatives to achieve the goals and clarification of the Paducah CVB's role, priorities, and timing

## TACTICS

Actions for the Paducah CVB team to implement the strategies

## PADUCAH CVB ROLE

### LEAD

Strategies for which Paducah CVB will be the main actor and for which the organization will be held accountable

### PARTNER

Strategies within which Paducah CVB will be one of many actors and for which the organization will take an active role to ensure the strategy's success

### ADVOCATE

Community needs around which Paducah CVB will rally support and provide the case for the impact it will have on the destination




## 01 DRIVE HIGHER LEVELS OF VISITATION TO THE CITY

### WHY

Attracting visitors to a destination is a dramatically competitive industry. Travelers—especially leisure travelers—have a tremendously wide variety of options of where to go and how to spend their money. By continuing to be intentional and targeted in its promotional efforts, the CVB will be able to attain its mission to create new economic opportunities through higher levels of visitation to the city.





### OUTCOME

By revisiting the community's brand promise and targeting experiences and messaging to additional visitor market segments, the CVB will expand its reach among new audiences and promote the totality of what makes up Paducah's character and differentiates the a destination.

CVB Priorities	
L = Lead	 Short-term
P = Partner	 Medium-term
A = Advocate	 Long-term





### BRAND EXTENSION

Extend the city's brand across all visitor market segments

1. Identify meaningful brand connections to Paducah for a range of visitor market segments (e.g., traveling families, young couples, foodies, theater, business transient, sports tourism)  
2. Provide destination partners specific ways to connect to audiences leveraging existing promotional efforts and/or creating new messaging  





### TARGETED MARKETING

Redefine marketing and sales efforts around target audiences

1. Build specific targeting plans and outreach goals for each identified travel audience  
2. Communicate target marketing strategy (including methods, intended audiences, and outcomes) to community partners so they can leverage the CVB's efforts  

### BUILDING RESILIENCE

Monitor visitor trends and profiles of visitors/visitor market segments

1. Share research and data resources with community and industry partners to use in their individual marketing efforts  
2. Using resources from Kentucky Tourism, track visitor activity connected to each high-priority travel audience and communicate results  



## CULTIVATE EVENTS

Re-visit community's event strategy and encourage production of more signature events

1. Identify what's needed to make hosting existing events easier/more lucrative **P** ■
2. Identify gaps and compression in the calendar or need periods for enhanced overnight business **P** ■
3. Encourage development of new signature events that exemplify brand connections **A** ■

## SHARE EXPERTISE

Engage sales expertise and resources to remain competitive

1. Share best practices for group sales and visitor services to assist the McCracken County Sports Tourism Commission in marketing sports venues for tournaments and events that will bring overnight visitors

**P** ■

## 02 REINVIGORATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PADUCAH'S CREATIVE CITY BRAND

### WHY







The CVB has a strong program in place to market the destination to national and international audiences. Feedback from destination partners and the community at large suggests that there is an opportunity for the CVB to remind its partners of the opportunities to engage more directly in the various marketing and earned media campaigns and for destination partners to better activate the efforts within their own marketing campaigns.

### OUTCOME

By more fully appreciating the distinction and how different partners in the destination can activate the promotional and marketing initiatives underway, Paducah's destination brand will be more inclusive of the different aspects of its character, individual destination partners will understand how they can re-engage, and the CVB will be able to connect more directly with new audience groups.



### PARTNER ADOPTION

Develop internal communications campaign to reengage destination partners and the City of Paducah in the value of the UNESCO Creative City designation

1. Leverage preparations for the 10th anniversary of Creative City designation to engage destination partners  
2. Identify non-arts aspects of the community and show how they tie to the Creative Cities concept  
3. Carry forward new connections/interpretations developed in the strategy to extend the city's brand across all visitor market segments into ongoing marketing content  

### COMMUNITY PERSONAS

Cultivate a network of residents/personas who embody and can provide examples of how Paducah's character/brand can be shared

1. Highlight resulting examples/case studies into storytelling for local/internal social media content and for external marketing materials  



### 03 COLLABORATE TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS

#### WHY

External audiences look first to the overall brand of Paducah as a destination and not the individual groups serving specific visitor audiences

#### OUTCOME

By coming together around a unified brand promise for the city and leveraging each other's expertise in attracting specific visitor audiences and anticipating their needs, partners promoting Paducah as a place to visit will be more successful in converting business.

#### LEVERAGE EXPERTISE

Leverage expertise and knowledge of competing with other destinations to assist other efforts to attract overnight visitation to the city

1. Clearly define which target markets the other entities in the city are responsible for promoting activity in Paducah (e.g., Convention Center, Sports Commission) and set shared expectations for the performance of each group P ■

#### UNIFIED MESSAGING

Encourage adoption of a shared/aligned identity, unified messaging, and sales resources for external promotion

1. Coordinate sharing of resources and tools that can be leveraged by all three entities (e.g., destination CRM, visitor data/research subscriptions) P ■
2. Share collateral and message points that encourage visitors to explore the city's and county's destination assets when participating in a tournament/event P ■

## 04 ADVOCATE FOR PLACEMAKING

### WHY



In addition to demand drivers, providing a strong visitor experience relies on having both physical and soft infrastructure. Both facets serve not only visitors to Paducah, but also the city's residents and businesses.

### OUTCOME

The Paducah CVB depends on others to ensure the destination has the infrastructure and amenities to grow the flow of overnight visitation to the city over time. By sharing its expertise on needed placemaking initiatives, the CVB will strengthen the quality of place of the city and make its job of tourism promotion easier.


#### MISSING AMENITIES

Identify visitor services/amenities that would make better use of the city's destination assets

1. Use the "Paducah Signature Experiences" model for historic and cultural experiences/itineraries and apply it to the city's other assets to create new experiences **L** 
2. Continue to convene the participants of the outdoor recreation focus group to inform and support the experiences that are created **P** 

#### COMPLEMENTARY DEVELOPMENT

Identify developments that would enhance the ability of visitor-facing venues to attract more guests

1. Collaborate with the Convention Center to encourage investments Downtown to support more group business **P** 

#### IMPROVE WAYFINDING

Engage in conversations to create and deploy a concentrated signage, wayfinding, and banner program

1. Contribute to conversations with city, county, and state partners to develop and implement a placemaking signage program for gateways, key arteries, and at the new terminal at PAH **A** 





## 05 POSITION THE CVB TO DELIVER SUCCESS

### WHY

The programming and partnership changes recommended in this strategic plan are refinements of the existing programming. Nevertheless, the scope of changes needed and the importance of partnership engagement will require the CVB to refine its internal roles and responsibilities

### OUTCOME

By restructuring operations, Paducah CVB will ensure that the organization has the skills and resources needed to carry out the Plan.

#### REALIGN STRUCTURE

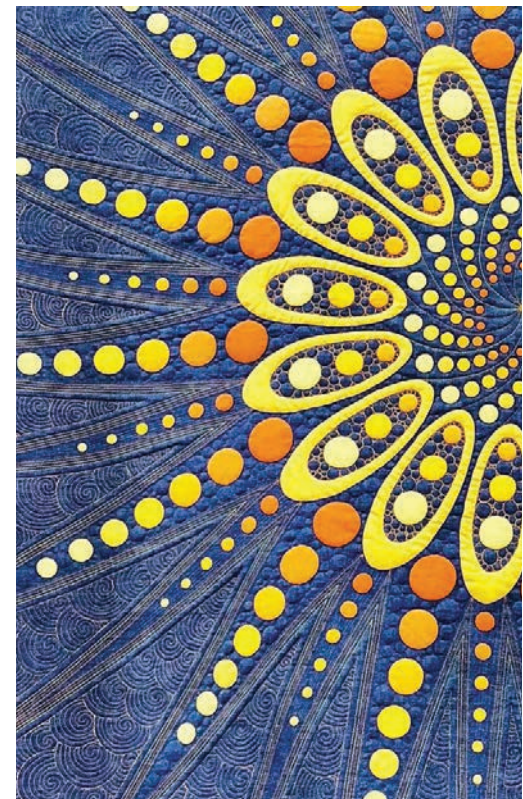
Realign internal structure to deliver the objectives of the strategic plan

1. Restructure internal operations around the strategic priorities including titles, job descriptions, goals, and communications L ■

#### COMMUNICATE TO PARTNERS

Deliver continuous and consistent communications to partners and stakeholders

1. Develop and implement an outreach program to better connect with the CVB's key destination stakeholder groups regarding CVB programs, targets, needs, and opportunities L ■
2. Concentrate communications to the community on media relations, film production, and branding initiatives beyond ongoing updates on product development and placemaking efforts L ■



# NEXT STEPS

Paducah has earned an enviable reputation as a mecca of artists and craftspeople who are steeped in the city's historical heritage and character of creativity and innovation. The Paducah CVB has harnessed this uniqueness to promote the city internationally.

The recommendations of this Destination Strategic Plan build on the Paducah CVB's solid foundation of programming and placemaking. The strategic framework offered in the Plan lays a course of engaging more actively with different parts of the community and leveraging the expertise, resources, and tools of the CVB to help community partners reach their target audiences and customers and extend Paducah's brand collectively.

To support the CVB in implementing the strategic framework and continuing to accomplish the mission to create new economic opportunities through destination marketing, management, and sustainable tourism development, the Plan offers suggestions on repositioning roles within the organization so that the team has the structure and resources to succeed.

The Plan also leverages the expertise of the CVB in nurturing and promoting the area's uniqueness to support other efforts in Paducah and McCracken County to draw visitors and spark economic activity through strong collaboration with other city and county entities.

## KEY PROJECT TAKEAWAYS

Paducah's status as a UNESCO Creative City has distinguished the destination. The city's inclusion in the elite network remains a draw for visitors and is a unique selling position to gain the destination positive coverage in the travel media. The Paducah CVB adheres to the Creative Cities Network's goals of sustainable development and works to promote the creativity, culture and spirit of entrepreneurship in the region.

Observations by Clarity of Place, coupled with feedback from the CVB, destination partners, and other community organizations suggest that there is an opportunity to further energize the Creative City distinction among the broader community. This re-engagement of Paducah's brand will allow the CVB to leverage the evolution of the area's destination assets and actively engage a more extensive spectrum of community partners to promote Paducah to a wider range of travelers—and draw more visitation.

By extending the tenets of sustainable development beyond the core of creative and artistic assets and into the area's natural and outdoor recreation amenities, the CVB will reinforce the city's uniqueness and the power of its heritage and cultural capital.





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## WHY PLAN



The Fresno Clovis Convention and Visitors Bureau (FCCVB) embarked on a strategic planning effort to define a vision for Fresno County as a destination and to prioritize actions over time that would help to strengthen the area's competitiveness to attract visitors and to spur economic activity through the visitor economy.

### Planning Goals:

- Strengthen marketing and sales programming
- Demonstrate the role and value of the visitor economy
- Ensure the FCCVB is sufficiently resourced to carry out its mission to promote the region to all travel markets.

## MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVE



To develop strategic organizational, product development, and marketing initiatives that advance the brand and appeal of Fresno and Clovis as a destination.



## ABOUT FCCVB



The mission of the Fresno-Clovis Convention & Visitors Bureau (FCCVB), a destination marketing organization, is to promote the Fresno/Clovis region to all travel markets. In partnership with the hospitality industry, the Bureau generates increased visitor spending, local tax receipts and job development.

The FCCVB serves as the owners' association for the Fresno Clovis Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID). The TBID was initially formed in 2010 to increase room night sales across all lodging properties within the city limits of both Fresno and Clovis.

## OUR VISION & MISSION



### Vision

The FCCVB delivers organizational excellence through innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness to produce tourism-related economic activity while driving the brand of Fresno County.

### Mission

The FCCVB positions Fresno County as an appealing destination to attract visitors across all travel markets delivering economic impact and encouraging quality of place across the community.

### For more information

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# Destination Master Plan

Summary of  
Strategic Recommendations

September 2022





# PLAN OBJECTIVES



The FCCVB has created this Destination Master Plan to guide its work over the next five years to market the area to visitors, improve the visitor experience, and enhance and protect the destination's assets. It provides a framework for activities needed to nurture the destination and preserve the unique balance it offers to visitors and residents—while continuing marketing and promotions initiatives that draw overnight visitors to the area.

In addition to looking at ways to provide positive economic impact to the area through the visitor economy, the Plan suggests that the FCCVB have a voice in the area's placemaking efforts.

# STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



The recommendations seek to expand the region's mindset from merely attracting leisure travelers to better servicing travelers who are already coming to the area and supporting destination partners in creating high-quality visitor experiences that highlight the area's uniqueness and understated charm.

- 1. Deliver effective brand-based marketing to lead the area forward
- 2. Ensure funding continuity and stability
- 3. Support community growth by encouraging placemaking
- 4. Develop a visitor demand driver

The FCCVB will have different roles for each of the tactics to achieve the strategic recommendations. For some, the FCCVB will be the lead or primary actor and will be held directly accountable for the success of the initiative. For others, the FCCVB will play a partnership or advocacy role, participating as one of many actors and for which the organization will take an active role to ensure the strategy's success.



# 1. BRAND-BASED MARKETING



Branding is the cornerstone of driving destination success for Fresno and Clovis. As a destination marketing organization, the FCCVB is responsible for brand development, articulation, and socialization both across the community and throughout the area's various visitor markets. The brand allows the community to better understand its unique points of differentiation and leverage them to build tourism and quality of place.

## Key Initiatives

- Construct definitive brand of the combined community
- Socialize the brand across the community

# 2. FUNDING STABILITY



Tourism Business Improvement District funding for the FCCVB allows the hotels and motels of Fresno and Clovis to engage in marketing and sales initiatives that sustain and grow the area's destination economy. The communities can support FCCVB's efforts by ensuring that their individual transient occupancy tax collections are invested into venues and product enhancements to provide more quality of place amenities broadening the appeal of the area. These different sources can live in a supportive environment.

## Key Initiatives

- Secure renewal of both Tourism Business Improvement Districts
- Deliver direct benefit to the members of the districts

# 3. ENCOURAGING PLACEMAKING



Placemaking can be a daunting task. The Destination Master Plan recommends taking on this task in an organized systematic process through clearly designated areas and partners.

The improvements created will support the region's branding and create positive actions that will inspire additional community development and economic growth, while appealing to the desires of residents and visitors alike.

## Key Initiative

Advance placemaking concepts in targeted destination districts that support and enhance the appeal of convention, recreation, and entertainment venues; sense of place attributes; and key demand drivers in the area



Convention & entertainment districts for initial action	
• Downtown Fresno	• Old Town Clovis
• Fresno Chaffee Zoo	• Fresno Yosemite International Airport

# 4. VISITOR DEMAND DRIVER



For the Fresno region to remain competitive, a place-specific demand driver must be developed. The resulting demand driver project will provide a new reason to visit the region and offer a distinctive experience to visitors while conveying the area's brand promise.

## Key Initiative

Conduct a feasibility study to determine the best direction from the below options

- National Taco Museum
- Visitors Center
- National Information Technologies Center
- Multi-purpose indoor court facility
- Cultural heritage center
- Sierra basecamp
- Agriculture center