

JANUARY 2021



# STRATEGIC PLAN

*2021-2026*

**PREPARED BY:**

Rebecca Robinson  
Marketing and Tourism Coordinator

# OVERALL GOALS

## OVERVIEW

The City of Denison's Tourism Five Year Strategic Plan provides guidance and direction for 2021-2026 program efforts and funds aimed to increase tourism related to spending within the City of Denison and defines measurements of success.

## OBJECTIVES

- Increase total tourism related revenue
- Increase total number of room nights/length of stay
- Increase destination awareness



The City of Denison also recognizes that what is attractive to tourists can also be beneficial to residents, thus providing a quality of life and business development component to the strategy.



# FORMATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This is the first strategic plan for the City of Denison's Convention and Visitors Bureau Advisory Board since it was established by City Council in January 2019. With the completion of branding and marketing materials, the Board identified the opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of the program's inaugural year and develop the next steps towards creating a robust tourism destination.

The planning process began with the review of the previous year's initiatives, challenges, and goals along with a new discovery and collaboration session facilitated by Bob Phillips. Six Focus Areas, Partnership, Tourism Product Development, A Shared Vision, Group Experiences, Money, and Marketing, were identified as areas of critical growth in order for the City to continue to expand into a year-round tourism destination.

## THE STEPS OF CREATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- Evaluated the last program year, Denison's Visitor Profile, and regional/national travel trends
- Reviewed long-term strategic plans from leading-edge Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)
- Identified the Focus Areas
  - Outlined the top priorities for each focus area
- Defined the Focus Areas
  - Key stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Created goals for each Focus Area
  - Identified actions that would drive success

# VISITOR PROFILE STUDY

## ORIGIN MARKET

- The highest frequency of visitors come from drive markets (2-3 hours)
- Outside of Texas, visitors from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, and Florida are among the highest travel markets to visit Denison
- Emerging markets are Louisiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, and Iowa

## AUDIENCE REPORT

Audience types remained fairly unchanged YoY with the most popular audiences being Casual Diner, Bargain Hunter, Fast Foodie, Pet Owner, and Business Travelers

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Overall, the home demographic characteristics of visitors to Denison tend to be white, were less than **18 years of age**, and have some college education
- The age brackets that experienced significant average **increases** year over year were among those **<18, and 35-44**
- There was a significant **decrease** in those that are **55-64, and 65+** years old year over year
- On average, there was an **increase** in **Asian, African American, and Hispanic** populations
- There was an average annual **decrease** in **Whites**
- There was an **increase** in those with a **bachelor's degree** and those with a **higher degree of education**
- There was a **decrease** in visitors with a **high school education**, and with those who have **some college education/ 2 years**
- The household income of visitors to Denison made typically within **\$30k-\$74k annually**
- Home demographics of visitors to Denison saw a median annual household income and median home value increase on average, year over year







# TOURISM TRENDS

## Important new tourism trends to watch and engage in

### 1. Solo Travel

Leisure travel used to be a family affair or something that couples undertook together. While that is still the case for many, more and more people are choosing to strike out on their own. Enjoying a solo trip is no longer so unusual and tourist trends increasingly reflect this.

### 2. Eco Travel

Eco travel includes incorporating eco-friendly elements into travel plans, such as purchasing credits to offset carbon credits when booking a flight or the option to rent an electric instead of a conventional vehicle. More sophisticated examples might include tourism with a volunteer element, perhaps working on a nature reserve or engaging in conservation work.





### 3. Local Experience

Today's tourists don't want to be insulated from the places they visit inside a cultural bubble. They want to engage with and participate in the local culture. From enjoying local cuisine to celebrating regional festivals and holidays, local experiences are set to become some of the top tourist trends to watch.

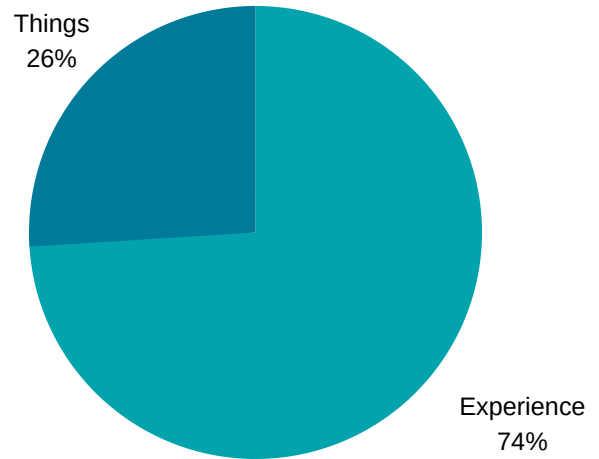
### 4. Personalization

Today's consumers expect experiences that closely match their personal preferences, from destinations to accommodation and the kinds of activities they'll engage in. The more closely an experience can be tailored to a client's desires and expectations, the more likely they are to return and to use the same service again.



# GENERATIONAL TRAVEL TRENDS

**74% of Americans value experiences over products/things.**



NOWHERE IS THIS SHIFT IN PRIORITIES MORE IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT THAN IN TRAVEL, AT ITS HEART AN INDUSTRY INHERENTLY BASED ON EXPERIENCES. BABY BOOMERS ARE ENTERING A STAGE WHERE “LESS IS MORE,” WHILE YOUNGER GENERATIONS, PARTICULARLY MILLENNIALS, ARE LEADING THE CHARGE IN PLACING A NEWFOUND VALUE ON EXPERIENCES, MORE THAN THINGS. WHEN IT COMES TO WHERE AMERICANS ARE SPENDING THEIR MONEY, TRAVEL IS A TOP PRIORITY, PARTICULARLY AMONG MILLENNIALS. IN FACT, THE NATIONAL STUDY FOUND THAT 57% OF AMERICANS ARE CURRENTLY SAVING MONEY SPECIFICALLY FOR TRAVEL. BUT, THIS IS EVEN HIGHER FOR MILLENNIALS, WHERE 65% OF WHICH WHO SAY THEY ARE CURRENTLY SAVING FOR TRAVEL.

## AGE & INCOME INFLUENCE TRAVEL PRIORITIES

THE NATIONAL STUDY FOUND GEN Z TRAVELERS VALUE ADVENTURE EXPERIENCES SUCH AS EXPLORING AND TRYING NEW THINGS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. ON THE OTHER HAND, BABY BOOMERS SEE TRADITIONAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCES SUCH AS SIGHTSEEING OR TOURING AS THE MOST IMPORTANT. MILLENNIALS AND GEN X DESIRE RELAXATION, SUCH AS THE BEACH OR SPA TIME, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. AGE IS NOT THE ONLY FACTOR INFLUENCING THE NATURE OF TRAVEL. INCOME BRACKETS ALSO COME INTO THE MIX. LOWER INCOME TRAVELERS PRIORITIZE SPENDING TIME WITH LOVED ONES THE MOST, WHILE MIDDLE INCOME TRAVELERS PLACE A PRIORITY ON SIGHTSEEING OR TOURISM. HIGHER INCOME TRAVELERS JUST WANT TO RELAX.

**LESS THAN 49K**

**CONNECTION TRAVEL**  
SPENDING TIME WITH LOVED ONES

**50K-74K**

**TRADITIONAL TRAVEL**  
SITE SEEING, TOURISM, ETC

**75K+**

**RELAXATION TRAVEL**  
UNWIND, DE STRESS, SLEEP IN, ETC

THE NATIONAL STUDY FOUND THAT THE LONG WEEKEND IS THE MOST PREFERRED LENGTH OF TIME FOR A LEISURE TRIP FOR MILLENNIALS, GEN Z, AND GEN X. BABY BOOMERS ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO TRAVEL FOR A WEEK OR EVEN LONGER. THEY ARE ALSO MORE LIKELY TO BOOK TRIPS FURTHER IN ADVANCE, OFTEN MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE, WHILE GEN Z IS APT TO BOOK LESS THAN 30 DAYS OUT, OFTEN WITHIN JUST A WEEK OR TWO OF TRAVEL.



# FOCUS AREAS

Partnerships  
Tourism Product Development  
A Shared Vision  
Group Experiences  
Money  
Marketing





# PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOP PUBLIC/PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS  
BASED ON TRUST

## ACTION ITEMS:

1. MAKE A LIST OF CURRENT AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
  - A. BUILD ON CURRENT RELATIONSHIPS
  - B. CREATE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER TEXOMA CITIES TO CREATE REGIONAL MARKETING PLAN
2. RAILROAD MUSEUM
  - A. BUILD A VOLUNTEER BASE
  - B. CONTINUED PRESENCE IN THE KATY DEPOT
3. COMMUNICATION
  - A. COMMUNICATE THE STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS WITH LISTED PARTNERS
  - B. SHOW HOW THE PARTNERSHIP WILL BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL
  - C. BE A RESOURCE FOR PARTNERS
  - D. MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION
4. CREATE A STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE THAT MEETS QUARTERLY





# TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

*IDENTIFY TOURISM PRODUCT NEEDS AND COMMUNICATE THOSE TO PARTNERS FOR RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.*

## ACTION ITEMS:

1. DEVELOP LIST OF TOURISM ASSETS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)
2. CREATE LIST OF RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND VENUES
3. CHOOSE 3 CITIES/DOWNTOWNS WITH CLIMATE THAT WE WOULD LIKE AND INTERVIEW OFFICIALS ABOUT HOW THEY ACCOMPLISHED THIS
4. CREATE FOCUS GROUPS THAT HELP IN IDENTIFYING NEEDS
  - A. COMMUNICATE THOSE NEEDS TO OUR PARTNERS
5. SUPPORT CREATION OF THE VISITORS CENTER





# A SHARED VISION

*EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND ACTIVATE THE COMMUNITY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM*

## ACTION ITEMS:

### 1. STORY TELLING

- A. INTEGRATE TOURISM STORY WITH THE VISION & MISSION OF THE CITY ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO QUALITY OF LIFE
- B. PARTNER WITH MAIN STREET, THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, PARKS & REC, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO DEVELOP A COHESIVE STORY
- C. CREATE ADDITIONAL WAYS TO TELL THE STORY USING LOCAL MEDIA

### 2. ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITY

- A. HOLD VIRTUAL MEETINGS OR Q&A SESSIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO EDUCATE AND LEARN OF ANY POSSIBLE CONCERNS
- B. PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN ABOUT PROGRAMS AND VALUES

### 3. COMMIT HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX FUNDS AND PURSUE A CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT MATCH FROM THE STATE TO COMMISSION AN UPDATED LIST OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

### 4. IDENTIFY ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA ROLES FOR ALL TOURISM RELATED ORGANIZATIONS



# GROUP EXPERIENCES

INCREASE OVERNIGHT GROUP BUSINESS

## ACTION ITEMS:

### 1. PARTNERSHIPS

- A. CONTINUE TO WORK WITH PARKS AND RECREATION TO PROMOTE TOURNAMENTS
- B. STRATEGIZE WITH MAIN STREET, THE DENISON ARTS COUNCIL, AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO MARKET AND PACKAGE THEIR EVENTS INTO OVERNIGHT STAYS

### 2. CREATE PACKAGES AND MESSAGING THAT CREATES TRANSITIONS BETWEEN MULTIPLE PROFIT CENTERS

### 3. HAVE AN ASSESSMENT DONE FOR POTENTIAL OF THE AREA FOR OTHER EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 4. CATEGORIZE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON A VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES (I.E. COVID-19, CONVENTIONS, WEEKEND TRAVEL)





# MONEY

*MAINTAIN AND MAXIMIZE FINANCIAL RESOURCES*

## ACTION ITEMS:

### 1. GRANTS

A. DESIGNATE A BOARD REPRESENTATIVE TO PARTICIPATE IN A GRANT FUNDING WORKSHOP OR OTHER CREATIVE FUNDING TRAININGS RELATED TO TOURISM

B. LOOK AT GRANT-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND ACTIVITIES AND MATCH WITH POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

2. FIND PARTNERS TO SHARE ADVERTISING COSTS WITH TOURISM

3. SET UP NON-PROFIT CORPORATION TO RECEIVE FUNDING

4. IDENTIFY HOW TO GROW CVB BUDGET THROUGH INCREASED OCCUPANCY

5. CREATE ANNUAL REPORT TO SHARE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND RESIDENTS



# MARKETING

## STRATEGIZE AND MANAGE STORY TELLING EFFORTS AND PLATFORMS

### ACTION ITEMS:

#### 1. STORY TELLING

- A. PARTNER WITH MAIN STREET AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO CREATE A CONSISTENT STORY
- B. CREATE A WEBSITE THAT INCLUDES PARKS AND RECREATION AND MAIN STREET TO HELP SHARE THE STORY
- C. CREATE A VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTER THAT TELLS OUR STORY BY PULLING IN OUR MUSEUMS AND ATTRACTIONS
- D. RELATE THE TOURISM STORY WITH THE VISION AND MISSION OF THE CITY ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATES TO QUALITY OF LIFE
- E. IDENTIFY TOURISM ASSETS AND ASSIST WITH DEVELOPING STORIES FOR EACH

#### 2. FOCUS ON WHAT MAKES DENISON UNIQUE AND CAPITALIZE ON IT

#### 3. ADVOCATE FOR A PART-TIME POSITION WITHIN THE MARKETING AND TOURISM DIVISION

#### 4. CONTINUE TO BE INTENTIONAL IN DIVERSITY

- A. RESEARCH PLACES WITH HIGH DIVERSITY APPEAL

#### 5. DETERMINE HOW TO INCORPORATE PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S STORY INTO DESTINATION PLANS

#### 6. GET FAMILIAR WITH DENISON CUSTOMERS AND RESIDENTS

- A. DETERMINE HOW BEST TO CONNECT WITH THEM

