

MADISON DESTINATION VISIONING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Final Report Prepared for
THE GREATER MADISON CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

z Prepared by *GainingEde*

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION



The Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) commissioned the Madison Destination Visioning initiative to:

- **Establish a dynamic, future vision for greater Madison as a destination and the GMCVB as the area's official Destination Marketing Organization.**
- **Identify entities that the GMCVB can collaborate with as an industry and community leader to achieve this future vision.**
- **Clearly identify community expectations of the GMCVB.**
- **Incorporate DMAI's Destination Next diagnostic tool into the process**
- **Identify recommendations for future destination product development, including infrastructure enhancements, experiences and other improvements to enhance Madison's competitive position, assist in increasing visitor volume and spending within the Greater Madison area and further enhance the awareness and appeal of the destination to potential visitors.**
- **Uncover new opportunities for tourism development and promotion.**
- **Define the deployment of GMCVB resources needed to achieve goals and expectations.**

This Madison Destination Visioning report summarizes the research carried out and the recommendations made by *GainingEdge* with support from *InterVISTAS* between January and October 2016.

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This Madison Destination Visioning initiative is a strategic assessment and visioning process that responds to two key questions:

What is it that the GMCVB and community stakeholders would like to accomplish together in the coming decade and beyond?

What, then, are the key actions for the GMCVB and its partners to ensure the continued success of the visitor economy?

Using the results from the DestinationNEXT assessment and other research conducted, Madison's tourism leaders and stakeholders worked together to develop a destination vision and strategy. Second, an organization vision and considerations for organization structure were developed to support pursuit of these destination goals.

A broad range of input and ideas have been considered as part of this process, with 218 surveys completed, 66 participants in workshops, six panel discussions, and 23 one-on-one interviews completed by the consultants. Based on this input, along with a documentation review, research and analysis, key issues and opportunities for potential products, amenities, programming and experiences were identified.

The DestinationNEXT assessment revealed that Madison needs to focus on efforts to improve the strength of the destination in areas such as convention center development, accommodation enhancements and air access improvements. The assessment also showed that Madison needs to improve its community support and engagement through stronger government support and advocacy effort, greater certainty around funding and stronger community involvement.

The DestinationNEXT results were supported by the feedback received during the one-on-one interviews with local stakeholders as well as clients. In fact, the perspectives were closely aligned between those who sell and market Madison, and those who visit and book meetings and events.

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The consistent messages conveyed during the engagement sessions, and supported by the surveys, were that Madison should:

- Align community leadership on the destination vision.
- Ensure Greater Madison is considered, not just downtown.
- Address key product development opportunities in particular the Alliant Energy Center.
- Develop Madison's brand.
- Enhance experiences that are authentic to greater Madison.
- Create and grow events that have appeal to residents and visitors.
- Secure enhanced support from the community and government stakeholders.
- Engage key stakeholders to strengthen the resource base and remain competitive in the visitor economy.

Following the research phase, stakeholders gathered in a series of focus group panels and workshops to discuss the destination vision and strategies. A great deal of debate went into these deliberations. Key themes that emerged in the discussions were that the vision and strategies should be customer focused and encourage more visitors coming to Madison, while ensuring the community support of the industry is enhanced. There was a clear consensus that Madison aspires to be a destination that people all over the world will talk about in the future.

Destination Vision

Greater Madison will be recognized as one of the worlds most vibrant and innovative places to live, work and visit.

Destination Strategies

25 strategies were identified, organized within the following six strategic goal areas.

- **Streets, neighborhoods and regions**
- **Destination development**
- **Event mix**
- **Product development**
- **Destination branding**
- **Organization viability**

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The second phase of the Madison Destination Visioning initiative shifted to the Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB). Similar to the first phase, an organization vision was developed and key organization strategies were identified for the GMCVB to focus on in the future.

The engagement involved the boards of the GMCVB and the Madison Area Sports Commission (MASC), an organization affiliated with the GMCVB. The vision for the GMCVB is designed to link to the destination vision and to position the organization in a manner that aligns with trends in the destination marketing industry and industry best practices.

GMVCB Vision

The GMCVB aspires to be an exceptional organization for stakeholder and community engagement that inspires a thriving visitor destination.

Organization Strategies

Five strategies were identified, organized within the following three strategic areas:

- 1. Build organization awareness**
- 2. Enhance and align organization resource base**
- 3. Engage in destination leadership**

In addition, the project looked at innovative practices in other destinations and how they structure their organizations to serve their destination and industry partners. Based on case studies from Copenhagen and Newport Beach, it is recommended that the GMCVB consider incorporating some of their ideas to ensure that the organization structure and business model support achievement of the destination strategies.

Finally, it is critical that this plan is implemented. To that end, the report suggests that the Advisory Committee that supported this project be re-engaged to assist in implementing the recommendations of this Destination Visioning Initiative.