



## **A Plan for the Industry, By the Industry Michigan Travel Strategic Plan**

Tourism is one of the three major industries in Michigan, supporting 324,200 jobs, generating \$27.3 billion in direct visitor spending and \$3.2 billion in state and local government revenue in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

The Michigan Travel Commission was established in 1945 with a goal of promoting, maintaining, and developing growth of the Michigan Tourism Industry. In order to accomplish this goal, the Travel Commission has worked with tourism industry representatives throughout the state to develop an industry strategic plan that plays a vital role in the overall economic development of Michigan.

It all starts with a visit. The Travel Commission vision is to promote Michigan as North America's top four-season Great Lakes destination while educating, advocating, and leveraging the expansive cascading impact the travel industry has on Michigan's economic success by fostering strong and welcoming places that attract and retain our greatest asset, people.

This is not a marketing plan; rather it is a blueprint for identifying and taking action on the critical issues to be addressed by the travel industry to grow travel and tourism and improve the quality of life of Michigan residents and visitors alike.

The Michigan Travel Commission's intent is to provide leadership for ongoing development and implementation of the plan. Updates to the plan will be overseen by the Michigan Travel Commission with input from the travel industry. A status report will be presented to industry members at the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 numbers from Tourism Economics

## **COLLABORATION AND MARKETING**

Leverage the Pure Michigan Brand at the local, regional, and statewide levels to foster a culture of public- private collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships - across the state and beyond - to unify the tourism industry and help grow Michigan's economy.

**Ongoing Goal 1:** Create and implement a comprehensive marketing strategy targeting our key markets both nationally and internationally.

*Tactic 1: Partnerships*

*Tactic 2: Niche marketing*

*Tactic 3: National and international*

*Tactic 4: Research, data, and Return-on-investment (ROI)*

**Ongoing GOAL 2:** Educate stakeholders on the impact of the travel industry on economic growth, job creation, placemaking, and community building in all corners of the state.

*Tactic 1: Call for a robust champion to lead the Travel Michigan team and industry as the unifying voice and brand ambassador for Pure Michigan.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission*

*Tactic 2: Provide resources for the travel industry to educate and inform state and local policy makers and media on the expansive role and value of travel and tourism in Michigan.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Check with MEDC and trade associations*

*Tactic 3: Engage and inspire collaboration with other industries that will grow the state's economy.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 2:** Inform the Michigan travel industry of key issues impacting travel in Michigan and throughout the U.S.

*Tactic 1: Use the Travel Michigan weekly e-newsletter, and Governor's Conference on Tourism to highlight the key issues. Use association contacts for new prospects and media.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 2: Identify state travel best practices and share with the travel industry through e-newsletter, travel conference and training.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 3:** Provide the Michigan travel industry with affordable, timely, and accurate resources that advance and help the industry.

*Tactic 1: Use the travel industry website as a "portal" to host research findings and data developed by Travel Michigan, the travel industry, and other sources. Regularly inform the industry of these resources.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*E-newsletter*

*Quarterly email to properties on the website*

*Tactic 2: Offer website property online or in-person training program.  
Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 3: Leverage MEDC resources to provide grant writing support to DMO leaders and to share industry best practices.  
Responsible: Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 4:** Develop educational and marketing resources for use by the industry to attract and host independent, group, and special event travelers at the regional, national, and key international market levels.

*Tactic 1: Develop an international tour operator, agency, and receptive training program for the industry.  
Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 2: Partner with the Michigan Hospitality and Tourism Alliance to host industry education and networking events.  
Responsible: Travel Commission  
Consider what we can do with non-C-level marketing and sales professionals.*

*Tactic 3: Develop education and advocacy resources for travel industry members.  
Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

## **DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT**

Successful destinations are prepared to welcome visitors in every way. These destinations must feature sustainable and accessible experiences and infrastructure.

**Ongoing GOAL 1:** Support the development of best-in-class infrastructure to enhance tourism asset utilization including roads, trails, ports, connectivity resources, EV charging network and other community enriching assets in the state.

*Tactic 1: Collaborate with trail managers and other partners to develop one main mapping source for trail users.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 2: Share the MEDC Business and Community Project Services resources/tools with the travel industry.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 3: Work with other state department/partners to discuss issues regarding the state travel industry.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 4: Engage with the State of Michigan and travel industry stake holders to develop a working EV deployment plan to allow for easy access to e-charging and encourage Travel Michigan to better inform the traveling public.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 5: Encourage the state to continue to expand on broadband.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 6: Encourage development of ports for use by the cruising industry.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 7: Assist ports of call with excursion development and connections to receptive operators.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 8: Work with carriers, airports, and DMOs to advocate for, develop and collectively market new and existing routes.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 2:** Strive to provide the industry with benchmarking resources and reports which assess destination strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

*Tactic 1: Develop a dashboard to track progress of destination development.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 3:** Increase industry awareness of accessibility issues and ADA standards.

*Tactic 1: Provide accessibility awareness and educational sessions at the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 2: Share best practices on accessibility resources to be more welcoming.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 3: Utilize EDA funding to develop accessible travel co-op initiatives.  
Responsible: Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 4:** Increase industry awareness of issues and needs to improve DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion).

*Tactic 1: Use the weekly industry e-newsletter to keep the topic top-of-mind.  
Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 2: Schedule DEI educational sessions/training at the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.  
Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 3: Encourage the travel industry to showcase broad authentic diversity in marketing materials.  
Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 4: Encourage the industry to formulate a DEI Workgroup.  
Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 5: Encourage DEI marketing co-op opportunities.  
Responsible: Travel Michigan*

## **PUBLIC POLICY AND FUNDING**

For the travel industry to consistently grow, policy makers must understand the value of the industry and its challenges and opportunities. Smart fact-based policy, including adequate funding, must be encouraged at all levels of government.

**Ongoing GOAL 1:** Increase funding for the promotion of travel/tourism in Michigan as long as the ROI is greater than 2:1.

*Tactic 1: Advocate for increased funding through the executive office and state legislature.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission*

*Action: Establish a subcommittee for a travel and tourism caucus in the state legislature.*

*Members: Glenn Stevens, Liz Ware, Brian Yopp, Jamie Furbush, and Kelly Tebay Zemke*

*Tactic 2: Explore alternative funding methods for the tourism marketing campaign.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 3: Advocate for the creation of a Big Event Fund strategy in addition to appropriate funding for Travel Michigan.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

**Ongoing GOAL 2:** Identify key issues threatening the integrity of Michigan's tourism industry and raise awareness of and support for appropriate public policy to address these issues.

*Tactic 1: Identify and empower industry champions including travel commissioners to investigate and advocate for policies that address issues of importance.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 2: On a regular basis, engage with and educate policy makers.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission*

*Tactic 3: Proactively advocate and stay attuned to travel related issues such as, short-term rental policy and affordable workforce housing policy.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission*

*Tactic 4: Industry collaboration to support destinations impacted by environmental factors. Work with MEDC to research and provide a long-term solution for their economic viability.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 5: To advocate and support initiatives related to affordable childcare and housing.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan staff will research/gather information and share with the industry.*

*Tactic 6: Advocate for the development of a high school or early-stage college level education program intended to introduce the industry as a career path for diverse populations.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 7: Work with the education industry to foster tourism based vocational education programs.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 8: Inform the travel industry of H2B work visa and J1 work visa opportunities and assist the travel industry to advocate for improved temporary visitor/worker policy.*

*Responsible: Travel Commission and Travel Michigan*

*Tactic 9: Leverage the power of the Pure Michigan brand to attract and retain talent.*

*Responsible: Travel Michigan*

## Michigan Travel Commissioners

### **Patrick Brys, Chair**

Brys Estate Vineyard & Winery  
Traverse City, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (10/16/2020-8/20/24)

### **Amy Cox, Vice Chair**

The Henry Ford  
Dearborn, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (partial) (3/15/21-8/20/23)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Term (11/8/2023-8/20/2027)

### **Susan Estler**

Travel Marquette CVB  
Marquette, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (10/16/20-8/20/24)

### **Jamie M. Furbush**

Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce and  
Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Frankenmuth, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (12/6/21-8/20/25)

### **Darren J. Ing**

State Association Management of  
Self Storage Association  
Okemos, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (12/6/21-8/20/25)

### **Jim MacInnes**

Crystal Mountain  
Thompsonville, Michigan 1<sup>st</sup>  
Term (8/20/19-8/20/23)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Term (11/8/2023-8/20/2027)

### **Dale Robertson**

Grand Rapids Public Museum  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (8/20/19-8/20/23)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Term (11/8/2023-8/20/2027)

### **Julie Rogers**

Boyne Highlands Resort  
Harbor Springs, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (10/16/20-8/20/24)

### **Glenn Stevens**

MICHAuto  
Royal Oak, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (2/21/23 – 8/22/26)

### **Frank Tecumseh**

FireKeepers Casino Hotel  
Battle Creek, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (2/21/23 – 8/22/26)

### **Elizabeth S. Ware**

Mission Point Resort  
Mackinac Island, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (12/6/21-8/20/25)

### **Brian Yopp**

MotorCities National Heritage Area  
Detroit, Michigan  
1<sup>st</sup> Term (12/6/21-8/20/25)