

# Southwest Michigan Three Year Strategic Destination Plan Summary

## Our DMO Purpose and Destination Direction

### Mission

The Southwest Michigan Tourist Council promotes, develops and advocates the destination experience for sustainable economic growth and quality of place for its communities.

### Destination Vision 2030

St Joseph, Benton Harbor, Stevensville and the surrounding southwest Michigan area, is the quintessential Lake Michigan beach resort community with its strong waterfront assets, accessible sports venues and spectacular year-round facilities and events showcasing unique arts and cultural heritage and agri/food tourism appeals.

## Visitor Promise

*We communicate destination information and advice to amplify memorable and repeatable community experiences.*

2025–2027



## Our DMO Culture

### Values

- Collaboration
- Visionary
- Inclusivity
- Welcoming
- Creativity
- Dynamism
- Integrity

## Partner Promise

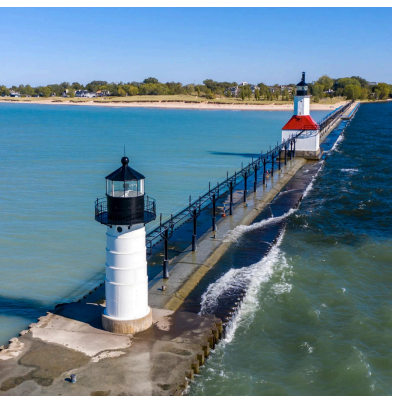
*We facilitate incremental destination sales, promotional education and tourism advocacy.*

## Our Destination/DMO Opportunity Challenges

1. Formalize a research-based destination marketing and sales plan with new directions documentation
2. Lead new/enhanced indoor business and/or leisure/sports attraction development
3. Evaluate and support effective destination/community transportation connections
4. Undertake a destination brand assessment and strategy
5. Evaluate and formulate a festivals and event strategy
6. Identify the best workforce development support role

## Community Promise

*We champion a prosperous visitor economy with resident benefits.*



## Our Mission Focus

Drive  
Visitor Demand

Enhance the  
Visitor Experience

Demonstrate Benefits  
and Viability

## Our Strategic Goal Pillars

INCREASE Cities and Area  
Brand Awareness and  
Visitor Stay

FACILITATE Impactful  
Tourism Development

ENGAGE in Influential  
Destination Partnership and  
Community Relations

AFFECT Higher DMO  
Performance and Resources

## Our 15 Priority Initiatives

- Execute a formalized annual destination marketing, sales, and business plan with allocated budget (2025-2027)
- Agree on a consistent tourism brand identity platform (2025-2026)
- Implement a group travel sales strategy and plan (2025-2027)
- Enhance internal-based digital marketing and social media engagement programming and capabilities (2025-2027)
- Activate a multiyear research/data intelligence program outline with activities (2025-2027)

- Investigate the need and best location of the SWMTC visitors center with recommendations as an influencing attractor with a partner satellite system (2025-2026)
- Undertake appropriate research and formulate an event tourism strategy (sports and leisure) with partners (2026-2027)
- Evaluate I-94 respective exit gateway welcoming/directional signage and beautification along with primary transportation corridors and related community shuttle and parking capacity needs (2026-2027)

- Prepare and execute a dedicated community/stakeholders plan with heightened attention to government relations at the community, county, and state levels (2025-2027)
- Determine tourism benefits to residents with appropriate messaging including a revised annual tourism report to the community (2026-2027)
- Identify and form mutually supporting partnerships with ongoing dialogue (2025-2027)

- Updating of rolling year strategic destination plan on a consistent basis with alignment to respective annual marketing, sales, and business plan (2025-2027)
- Analyze SWMTC staff needs given strategic plan priorities (2025)
- Strengthen Board governance through structure clarification, revised bylaws, member onboarding, and ongoing professional development (2025-2026)
- Evaluate and reformulate an integrated attraction/event grant program (2025-2026)

## Our Strategic Performance Metrics

### Destination (indirectly influenced from SWMTC program of work)

- Region and community visitor growth results
- Key attraction/event attendance growth
- Transient accommodation occupancy and related performance statistics
- Destination funding proceeds growth
- Tourism economic impact

### DMO (directly affected by SWMTC program of work)

- Meeting/sports/group travel indices growth
- Digital promotion conversion
- Social media engagement analytics
- Stakeholder and resident awareness of tourism and DMO
- Visitor services statistics