



Tourism Five Year Strategic Plan

Committee Message

The promotion and expansion of tourism in Surprise is one of the primary goals of the Tourism Committee. Surprise is poised to present a “unique” local flavor that will sustain the community while capturing the tourism element to improve its return on investment in quality programs and services. Economic activity in Surprise will be enhanced as we infuse tourism dollars into the local economy. Tourism is a natural extension to enhance the work that has already been done at the local and regional level.

Surprise developed rapidly, and now, as we enter a new and exciting phase of sustainability and progress in the development of our tourism industry; we are exquisitely aware of the consumer climate. Our, marketing approach and end products must be based on consumer feedback which call for high levels of service, value and uniqueness.

The Surprise Tourism Committee is committed to pursuing the key results areas using the strategies outlined in this five year plan which emphasizes collaborative industry partnerships, entertainment corridors, establishing the viability of a resort in Surprise while preserving the natural amenity of the White Tanks, and promoting Surprise as the gateway to the Western Heritage Trail.

Sincerely,

Charles Klar – Chair, President/CEO Trivest International, Inc.

Jeanne Blackman - Vice Chair, Development Manager APS

Kendra Amburgey, former Interim Director West Valley Arts Museum

Robert Pasley, Director of Sales Holiday Inn Express and Resident Inn Marriott of Surprise

Lise Rodgers, Retired participant in the 2020 General Plan Development Process

Susan Thompson, Managing Partner Outback Steakhouse

Roman Yasinsky, General Manager/Owner Vogue Bistro

Mark A. Coronado, City of Surprise Community & Recreation Services Director

Ken Lynch, City of Surprise Communications Director

John Hagen, City of Surprise Economic Development Manager

Skip Hall, City Council Member District 6

PURPOSE

This report provides a summary of the Tourism Committee's Strategic Planning sessions. The goal of the planning sessions was to develop a strategy to attract tourism to the city of Surprise.

This report includes an overview of the strategic planning process and recommended outline goals and objectives for attracting tourism to the City of Surprise. It also reveals the strong correlations between the Moses Anshell study and the goal of the committee to create a strong entertainment infrastructure. The committee held five monthly planning sessions beginning in April, 2009 to develop the recommended goals and objectives. The following areas were covered:

- Facilitated visioning process
- Conducted a SWOT Analysis
- Identified areas/items that would increase tourism
- Develop goals and create action steps
- Discussed the Moses Anshell study and it's correlation with the Tourism Committee's recommended goals and objectives

VISIONING PROCESS

The tourism committee identified the City of Surprise's past, current, and future opportunities for success. The committee wants **Surprise** to be a place where people come to embrace history, culture, and entertainment in a way that differentiates Surprise from neighboring cities. The City of Surprise should be known as the place for "**Experiential tourism**". Even the city's residents will be **surprised** by how much their city has to offer.

ANALYSIS

An analysis was conducted to assess the city's current realities; strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

During the SWOT analysis, the tourism committee identified the following:

Strengths:

- Surprise has an opportunity to differentiate itself from West Valley cities
- The Name "Surprise"
- City Center and recreation campus
- White tanks, Luke Air Force Base, Lake Pleasant, and medical community

Weaknesses:

- Undefined identity
- Lack transportation
- lack of identifiable entertainment center

Opportunities:

- The Tourism Committee viewed many of the City's strengths as opportunities

Threats:

- Perception
- National/economic climate
- Political Climate
- Goodyear

TOURISM ATTRACTIONS

Through a brainstorming process, the group identified *four* key results areas the city should pursue to attract more tourism to the City of Surprise. The five categories are:

- Entertainment
- Partnerships
- Resorts
- White tanks

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The committee identified specific goals and objectives that should be completed within the next five to ten years. They have also identified possible funding sources and responsible parties. There is a strong correlation between the items highlighted in a recent marketing study, the Moses Anshell study, and the five categories the Tourism committee outlined in their brainstorming and planning sessions.

The remainder of the document will outline the each category and their respective goals, objectives and timelines.

Key Result Area

Category 1: Entertainment

Key Result Goal

Establish a level of varied and accessible entertainment opportunities for our community and visiting tourists.

Key Result Objectives

1.1 Tennis Complex / Recreation Campus Events (Immediate & on-going)

- a. Increase number of events - ongoing
- b. Develop as a multi-use facility / expansion - 1-3 years
- c. Continued expansion of Recreation Campus with facilities that are magnet for entertainment/tourism – 1-3 years
 - i) Soccer Complex
 - ii) Amphitheater
 - iii) 3K and 5K marathons, Triathlon Courses

1.2 Develop an Annual Festival Framework (12 months)

- a. Create a calendar that highlights all events in Surprise
- b. Develop RFP Process to recruit partners to hold tourism events in Surprise with defined criteria
- c. Simplify application process for 3rd parties to run a special event at the Surprise Recreation Campus

1.3 Develop a Regional Entertainment Corridor (1-4 years)

- a. Establish value proposition
- b. Identify site/location
- c. Conduct a feasibility study
- d. Identify partners
- e. Identify project costs/incentives

1.4 Identify a year-round attraction to Surprise (1-2 years)

- a. Establish value proposition
- b. Identify site/location
- c. Conduct a feasibility study
- d. Identify partners
- e. Identify project costs/incentives

1.5 Locate a conference center/convention center in Surprise (1-2 years)

- a. Establish value proposition

- b. Identify site/location
- c. Conduct a feasibility study
- d. Identify partners
- e. Identify project costs/incentives

Key Result Area

Category 2: Partnerships

Key Result Goal

Enhance partnerships for greater impact, coordination, and distribution of tourism activities.

Key Result Objectives

2.1 Create Partnerships that offer visitors a wide range of non-baseball activities (Ongoing)

- a. Hotel Associations
- b. Arts Organizations
- c. Non-baseball sports organizations
- d. Tourism entities
- e. Commerce entities

2.2 Establish private/public self sustaining partnerships to enhance Surprise area tourism (Ongoing)

- a. Casino/Indian Tribes
- b. Third party promoters
- c. West Valley Cities
- d. Transportation Industry
- e. Luke Air Force Base
- f. Travel agencies

2.3 Develop a multi-faceted/interactive visitor center (Ongoing)

- a. Chamber of Commerce

2.4 Increase repeat visitors to Surprise by improving customer service through the creation of a hospitality training partnership (One year)

- a. Communiversy – Hospitality Program Training Facility
- b. Hospitality Academy/Volunteers

World-Class Luxury Experience

Key Result Area

Category 3: Resorts

Key Result Goal

Create a world-class luxury experience in Surprise

Key Result Objectives

- 3.1 **Position Surprise as a viable ground for Resort/Hotel Development (3-5 years)**
 - a. Initiate feasibility study

- 3.2 **Attract a major world-class luxury destination resort to be located on the 500 acres at the foothills of the White Tank Mountains as identified in the City of Surprise Village 3 Planning Area (3-5 years)**
 - a. Work with State of Arizona, State Lands, and Maricopa County
 - b. Identify Partners
 - c. Develop a feasibility study and strategic plan to attract resort development in Surprise.

- 3.3 **Identify a year-round entertainment attraction to collocate adjacent to the resort (3-5 years)**
 - a. Explore funding options

Key Result Area

Category 4: White Tanks

Key Result Goal

Create a gateway to the Arizona Experience

Key Result Objectives

- 4.1 **Work in partnership with State of Arizona and Maricopa County to preserve open space acreage surrounding the White Tank Regional Park that are within the Surprise Planning Area and create destination recreational/tourism opportunities (Ongoing)**
 - a. Initiate discussions with Maricopa County to develop an ordinance permitting transfers of development rights / densities.

- b. Initiate discussions with the State Land Department to transfer densities from the state lands to other state lands within the Surprise Planning Area
- c. Coordinate an updated parks master plan for White Tank Mountain Regional Park, as per p.162 of the *2020 Surprise General Plan* (Plan approved on March 31, 2001 by 83% of Surprise voters).

4.2 Partner with Maricopa County, State Lands, BLM, museums and others to create an interpretive center and “Living Museum” at the White Tanks

- a. Identify possibility of private and corporate partnerships, and charitable events to raise money for upkeep and marketing
- b. Investigating available City, State, Federal Funds

4.3 Establishment of the White Tanks Park as a Unique Desert Eco Park Destination

- a. Investigate current state (condition) of the Park
- b. Identify current strengths and weaknesses, as well as its eco-friendliness
- c. Developing a rough plan for new White Tanks Eco Park
- d. Investigating available City, State, Federal Funds

4.4 Development of a multi-purpose entertainment amphitheater at the White Tank Mountains.

- a. Explore possibility of bringing elements of a grand performance stage for big gatherings, festivals, etc.