

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN for Vermont



January 2026 | Prepared by Coraggio Group
for the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing



Commissioner's Message

In December 2024, the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) embarked on a destination management planning process with the launch of a comprehensive assessment of the challenges, opportunities, and needs of Vermont's tourism industry. Through surveys, in-depth interviews, and focus groups held across the state, we listened, brainstormed and discussed a wide range of issues and priorities, and ultimately dedicated ourselves to developing a destination management plan that will lead our work in service to Vermont for the next 5-10 years.

The Destination Management Plan is intended to guide and focus the work of the tourism industry as a whole in order to promote a healthy and sustainable visitor economy. It will also guide the work of VDTM more specifically by focusing our efforts on executing programs and services that we are uniquely positioned to deliver.

Over the next five years, our hope and vision is for VDTM and our tourism partners to collaborate on four strategic imperatives, including:

- Leverage Destination Marketing to Increase Economic Prosperity Through Visitation

- Strengthen Vermont's Ability to Support a Resilient Tourism Sector
- Strengthen, Grow, and Diversify Vermont's Tourism Infrastructure and Offerings
- Enhance the Vermont Visitor Experience

Each of these strategic imperatives is supported by a set of objectives and measurable indicators that will guide the scope of our work as an industry. Beyond that, VDTM has developed actionable initiatives to directly tie our work to the strategic direction set forth in this plan, and we hope our industry partners will do the same.

On behalf of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, our tourism partners, and staff, we are grateful to all who participated in our listening sessions and surveys from across the state, and all who have continued to engage with us throughout this process. We look forward to continuing to work with you to take tourism in Vermont to the next level.

Sincerely,



Heather Pelham
Commissioner, Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing



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Executive Summary

Tourism and hospitality is a \$4.2 billion industry in Vermont (2024 Economic Impact report). Visitors to Vermont bring money into the state that not only helps local businesses and communities thrive, but visitor spending also contributes to the tax base, helping to make Vermont more affordable for residents. And while tourism has always been an important part of Vermont's economy, we can no longer just "let it happen." More destinations than ever before are competing for attention, but stagnant investment threatens the state's ability to maintain competitive marketing, attract visitors year-round, and support local tourism initiatives. It is time that the tourism industry in Vermont comes together to forge its own future, where every community reaps the benefits of a robust visitor economy.

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) can play an important role in reflecting independent voices and perspectives while also setting a common direction. With shared purpose, each of us can play to our strengths and manage our own organizations, but at the same time gain efficiencies and become more effective as a whole.

The DMP charts pathways to:

- Create a shared vision
- Strengthen the local economy
- Align marketing with management
- Improve the visitor experience
- Balance benefits and impacts
- Steward the destination
- Recommend governance and funding
- Guide investment and policy, plan for resilience, and establish metrics

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) is uniquely positioned to sponsor and steward the DMP because it:

- Serves as the statewide leader responsible for destination marketing, tourism research, and industry partnership.
- Is able to set statewide priorities, coordinate strategy, and convene partners around shared goals.
- Can model implementation through its own action steps while supporting local and regional partners to adapt and adopt the plan.

As the "backbone" of the DMP, VDTM ensures that the plan is not just developed but activated, measured, and continuously improved over time.

Why Now?

The timing of this DMP reflects both **opportunity and urgency**. Stakeholders across Vermont identified several critical factors that make this the right moment for coordinated action:

- **Shifting visitor expectations** and increasing demand for authentic, inclusive, year-round experiences.
- **Infrastructure and capacity challenges** including trailhead pressure, limited wayfinding, workforce shortages, and accessibility gaps.

- **Environmental and climate realities** that require planning for resilience and responsible stewardship.
- **The need for long-term funding strategies** to keep pace with neighboring states and competitive destinations.
- **Growing interest in business travel, agritourism, arts and culture, and wellness tourism**, each offering additional economic potential.
- **An increasingly diverse visitor base** seeking welcoming and inclusive experiences.
- **Recent disruptions**—such as flooding and economic slowdowns—highlighting the importance of readiness, coordination, and adaptation.



Purpose

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) lays out a shared roadmap for how Vermont will manage, grow, and steward its visitor economy to support a tourism industry that enhances the quality of life for residents and the health of the built and natural environment of Vermont.

The DMP charts the pathways to:

- **Create a shared vision** across government, industry, and community partners of what success looks like.
- **Strengthen the local economy** by supporting small businesses, workforce development, and year-round, dispersed visitation.
- **Align marketing with management** so promotion reflects seasonality and destination capacity, dispersing demand to underutilized places and times.
- **Improve the visitor experience** through product development, accessibility, experiences, and service quality.
- **Balance benefits and impacts** so tourism supports resident wellbeing, culture, and sense of place while reducing environmental strain.
- **Steward the destination** by protecting natural and cultural assets, managing capacity, dispersing demand, and guiding responsible visitor behavior.
- **Recommend governance and funding** opportunities, partnerships, and sustainable financing mechanisms.
- **Guide investment and policy** on infrastructure, mobility, trailheads, signage, and wayfinding.
- **Plan for resilience** with risk/crisis management, climate adaptation, and diversification.
- **Establish metrics** to track resident sentiment, visitor spending, distribution patterns, environmental impact, and destination inclusivity.

This report describes how the DMP was developed and outlines its objectives, indicators, and initiatives. Guided by data and co-created with partners, the plan provides a practical strategy to manage tourism for community prosperity and environmental stewardship.

The DMP is a collective tool to support Vermont's tourism economy by serving as a decision filter, aligning organizational workplans toward shared goals, guiding marketing and management resources, strengthening governance and resilience, and communicating a unified vision for Vermont's future.



The DMP is a shared roadmap to support Vermont's tourism economy collectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of the Destination Management Plan depends on a collective, statewide approach, with clear roles for each stakeholder group.

Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM)

Backbone agency and plan sponsor

- Leads statewide coordination, marketing, and research
- Implements direct action steps within all strategic imperatives
- Provides tools and training and collaborates with industry partners
- Tracks industry-wide metrics and communicates progress

Coraggio Group

Planning and facilitation partner

- Supported VDTM in designing and executing the engagement process
- Analyzed statewide input and facilitated strategic planning discussions
- Co-developed the DMP framework, imperatives, and implementation pathways

Local Tourism Industry Partners

On-the-ground implementers and activators

- Adopt and adapt the plan's imperatives and objectives
- Collaborate on marketing, product development, and infrastructure solutions
- Identify regional needs, opportunities, and industry-wide innovations

Elected Leaders and Local Governments

Policy champions and resource stewards

- Support investment, infrastructure improvements, and funding mechanisms
- Collaborate on wayfinding, visitor management, and community priorities
- Serve as ambassadors for Vermont's tourism identity and goals

Vermont Residents

Essential participants and beneficiaries

- Engage in planning, community conversations, and destination stewardship
- Shape Vermont's hospitality culture and visitor experience
- Influence long-term sustainability through resident sentiment and feedback

Coraggio Group

The Coraggio Group project team acted as a key planning and facilitation partner in the development of this DMP. Coraggio supported VDTM in designing and executing the engagement process, analyzed statewide input and facilitated strategic planning discussions, and co-developed the DMP framework, imperatives, and implementation pathways.

Coraggio Group brings deep expertise in destination management and strategic planning, helping communities and tourism organizations navigate complex challenges with clarity and purpose. With a proven track record of facilitating collaborative, data-driven processes for hundreds of destinations, Coraggio partners with stakeholders to define compelling long-term visions, align organizational priorities, and design actionable strategies that strengthen both community wellbeing and visitor experiences.



How to Use This Report

This Destination Management Plan is a guidebook for everyone working to advance Vermont's tourism economy. The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing has outlined specific actions it will take to lead this effort, but the plan is also designed for regional, community, and industry partners to adopt and adapt. Together, we can ensure that tourism enhances quality of life for residents, supports local businesses, and protects the landscapes and cultures that define Vermont.



How to Use This Plan

1. As a Strategic Framework

The DMP defines four *strategic imperatives*—marketing, resilience, infrastructure and experience—that provide the overarching direction for Vermont's tourism sector.

Each imperative includes:

- **Objectives** that describe what success looks like.
- **Indicators** to measure progress.

Industry organizations, regional groups, and local partners are encouraged to adapt these imperatives and objectives to fit their own workplans and strategies. The DMP provides a structure for alignment, not a prescriptive set of requirements.

2. For Organizational Planning

Use the plan as a **decision-making** filter to:

- Align programs, investments, and policies with the shared statewide vision.
- Identify areas where collaboration can strengthen Vermont's tourism infrastructure and visitor experience.
- Build on the measurable outcomes and indicators to track your organization's contribution to collective progress.

3. As an Implementation Guide

While the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing has developed

its own **action steps** within each strategic imperative (e.g., marketing campaigns, ambassador programs, accessibility initiatives), these are intended to model the kinds of projects that others can adopt or localize.

Each imperative includes:

- **VDTM Action Steps** that demonstrate how the department will lead implementation.

For example:

- Regional partners may use VDTM's strategies for off-peak season promotion as templates for their own communities.
- Local governments can reference infrastructure and accessibility objectives to prioritize investments.
- Cultural and outdoor organizations can align with visitor experience initiatives to ensure consistent, inclusive service standards.

4. For Collaboration and Measurement

VDTM invites tourism partners to collaborate and share data, so that the collective impact of the industry can be measured consistently across Vermont. The indicators—ranging from visitor spending and geographic distribution to resident sentiment and sustainability—offer a shared set of metrics for tracking success over time.

Inputs and Engagements

The creation of the DMP began with a robust stakeholder engagement process to establish the needs and priorities of the entire Vermont tourism ecosystem. The project team gathered input through surveys, interviews, and forum groups, then analyzed it to identify macro trends, themes, and insights that informed the planning process. The goal of this work was to understand the current state of tourism in Vermont and to explore potential opportunities and roles VDTM can play in uplifting the industry.



The project team visited all 14 of Vermont's tourism regions and held listening sessions in 10 locations throughout the state. This intentional engagement and participation across regions, industries, and interests helped inform the strategic priorities and focus for the plan.



14 assessed regions



231 listening session participants



10 in-person listening sessions



40 1:1 interviews



523 survey participants



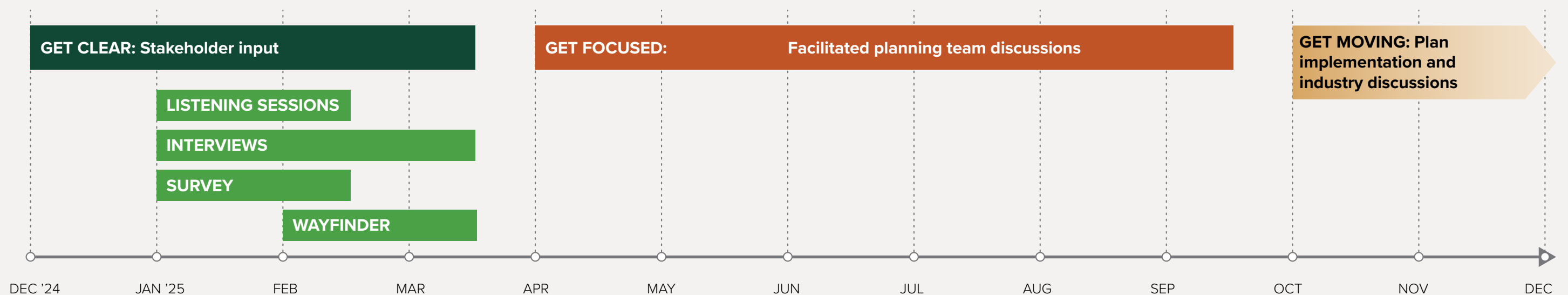
Comprehensive Wayfinder stewardship assessment



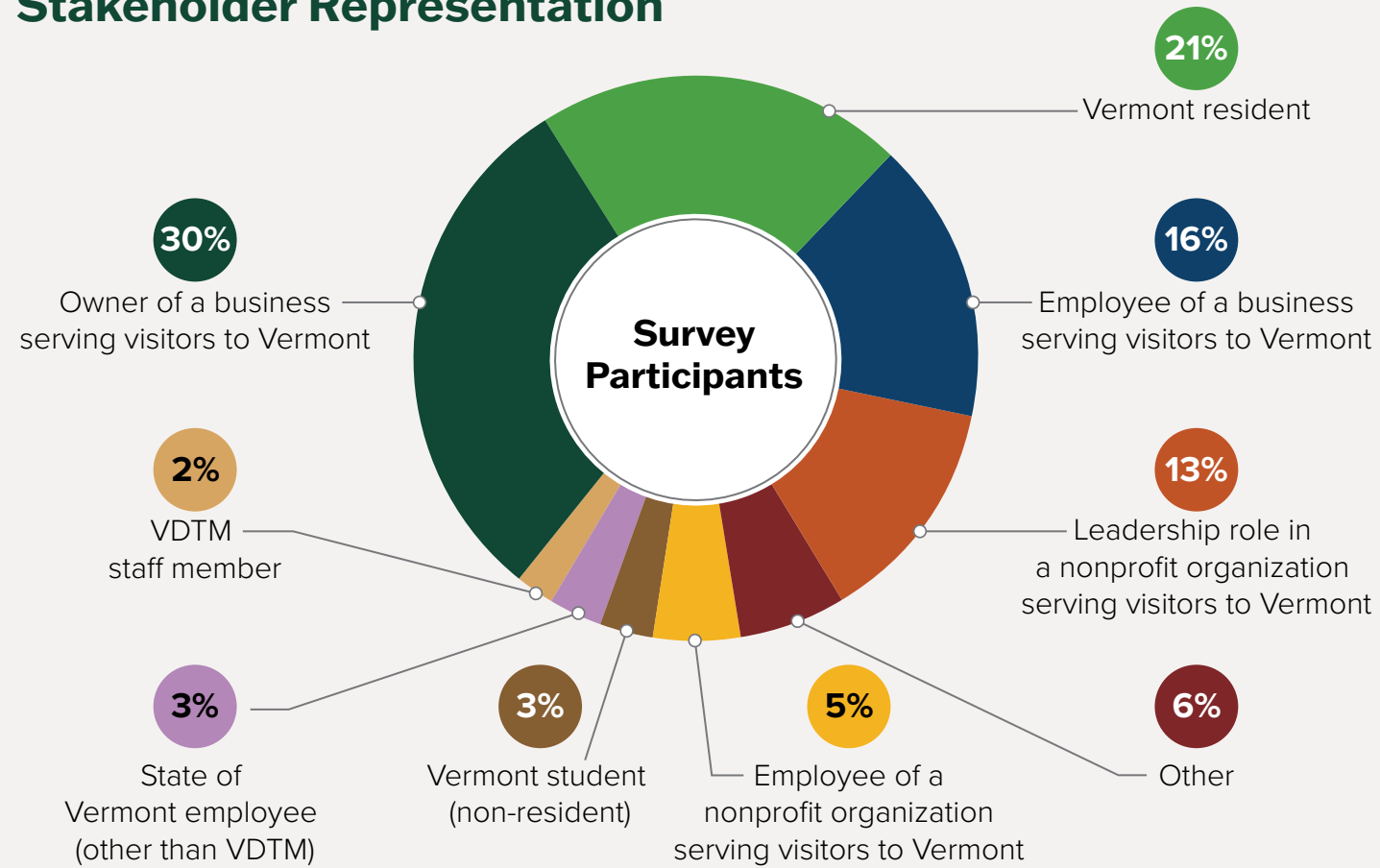
73 virtual participants

Sectors included: food and beverage, agritourism, recreation, arts and culture, attractions, local government, and Vermont residents

Timeline

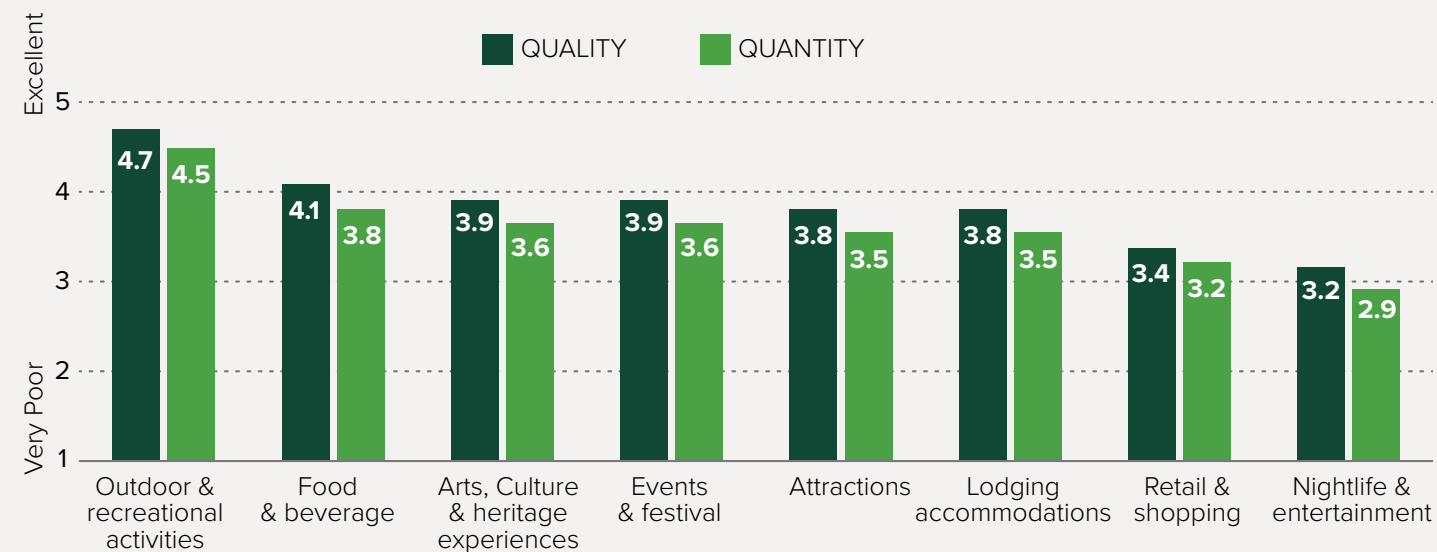


Stakeholder Representation



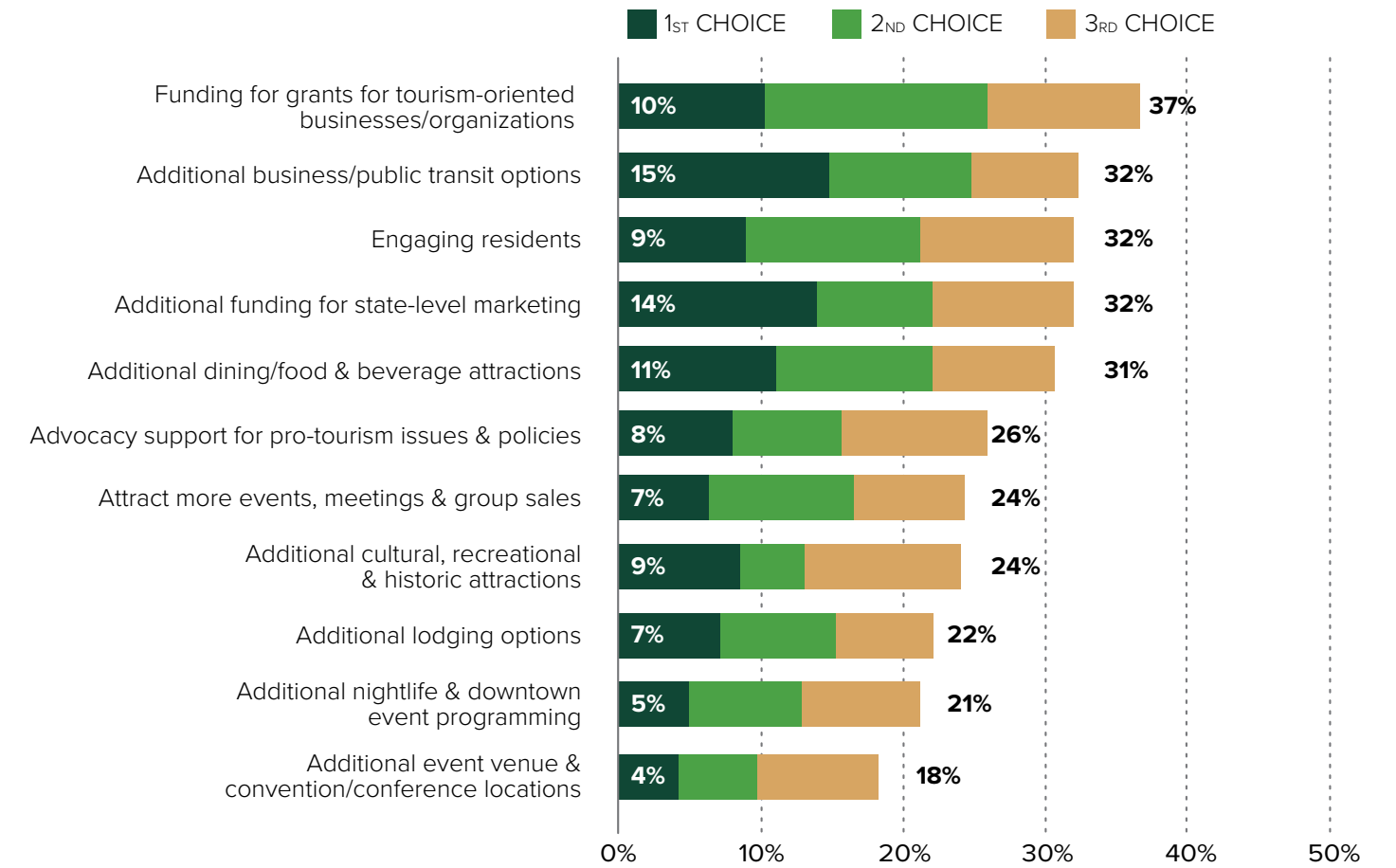
Perceptions and Attractions

We asked participants to rate their perception of the **quality** and **quantity/variety** of each of the following tourism offerings based on the area in Vermont where they spend most of their time:



Opportunities

Below are various opportunities that could enhance the tourism industry in Vermont. Participants were asked to sort the list below, placing what they believe is the **best opportunity at the top of the list**.



Listening Session Locations



What we heard:

“Vermont tourism needs long-term, stable funding to continue to accelerate the economic impact of tourism for the state.”



“Vermont’s current destination assets, particularly its rural character, natural beauty, and the creativity of its residents, are strong and should continue to be promoted and protected.”

“Collaboration with residents, small businesses, and other industry partners is key to addressing existing challenges and new opportunities.”

“Business travel represents a new opportunity for increasing visitation and evolving the destination’s meetings and conference infrastructure.”

“Vermont’s identity as a tourism destination is evolving and is well positioned to invite a broader diversity of visitors.”



Planning Process

A cross-sector, collaborative planning team developed the DMP over 10 sessions. The team—representing the accessible recreation, regional marketing, hospitality, attractions, and events sectors, as well as state agencies—reviewed stakeholder input, aligned on five-year priorities, defined success metrics, and outlined initiatives to support the Vermont tourism experience.

Planning Team Members

Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing

Sara DeFillippi, Director of Partnerships and Community Engagement

Kristina Kiarsis, Grant Programs Manager

Maureen McCracken, Director of Marketing Strategy and Research

Heather Pelham, Commissioner

Abby Sessock, Director of Digital Communications

Industry Partners

Kristen Carrese, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Karen Duguay, (formerly) Vermont Chamber of Commerce

Maricela Ehmman, Ehmman Events

Kim Jackson, Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports

Jeff Lawson, Hello Burlington

Brian Maggiotto, The Inn at Manchester

Selina Rooney, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Gillian Sewake, Discover St. Johnsbury

Carrie Simmons, (formerly) Stowe Area Association

Kelsey VonDerLinn, ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain

The Destination Management Plan



VISION:

Vermont offers authentic experiences and a deep sense of belonging amid inspiring landscapes where independence and community thrive.

IMPERATIVE 1: Leverage Destination Marketing to Increase Economic Prosperity Through Visitation

Objectives

1.1 Increase Year-Round and Geographic Distribution of Leisure Travelers

If we can fill in the spaces between peak times and popular destinations within our state, we can help more organizations and communities benefit from tourism dollars, and we can guard against overtourism impacting resident quality of life.

1.2 Increase Total Visitation by Expanding Brand Reach and Awareness Beyond Traditional Markets

We value our visitors from nearby markets and recognize that they bring the largest portion of out-of-state dollars to our state and communities. However, a prosperous future demands that we look beyond “drive” markets. Encouraging visitation from US regions and areas further afield will help build a resilient tourism sector.

1.3 Increase Midweek and Off-Peak Visitation by Growing Meeting, Conference, and Group Travel Business

Business travelers represent an important opportunity to mitigate the downturns that tourist-facing sectors see midweek and in less popular seasons. We believe that by building on the infrastructure that our already thriving wedding industry supports, Vermont is well positioned to support small meetings and retreats across the state. Providing opportunities in the slower times will help businesses stay open more consistently, benefiting the workforce and residents as well.

1.4 Increase Diversity of Vermont’s Visitor Base

Our communities will gain in ways beyond just financial when people of all backgrounds visit our state and enjoy what we have to offer. When we recognize the full diversity of world travelers and make Vermont an attractive and welcoming place for all, our communities will build both prosperity and heart.

1.5 Expand Brand Reach and Awareness in International Markets to Encourage Future Visitation

Similar to the goal of bringing in visitors from distant US locations, this objective to encourage international visitation will help our communities thrive. We understand this objective will take more time than developing US-based markets because there are more barriers to overcome with the international visitor base. Yet, we also recognize that this work needs to start now in order to be successful in the future.

IMPERATIVE 2: Strengthen Vermont’s Ability to Support a Resilient Tourism Sector

Objectives

2.1 Strengthen the Effectiveness of Local and Regional Tourism Organizations to Attract Visitors

Developing and marketing visitor attractions and services is best done by those “on the ground” in local communities. This objective centers around giving local tourism-focused organizations the resources they need to drive visitation.

2.2 Explore Strategies to Secure Sustainable Tourism Funding

Whether talking about local tourism-focused organizations or the state Department of Tourism and Marketing, funding for destination marketing in Vermont is woefully below our neighboring states and other competitive destinations. The future of Vermont’s visitation economy—indeed much of what is laid out in the vision of this Destination Management Plan—requires funding.

2.3 Align and Strengthen Statewide Tourism Advocacy

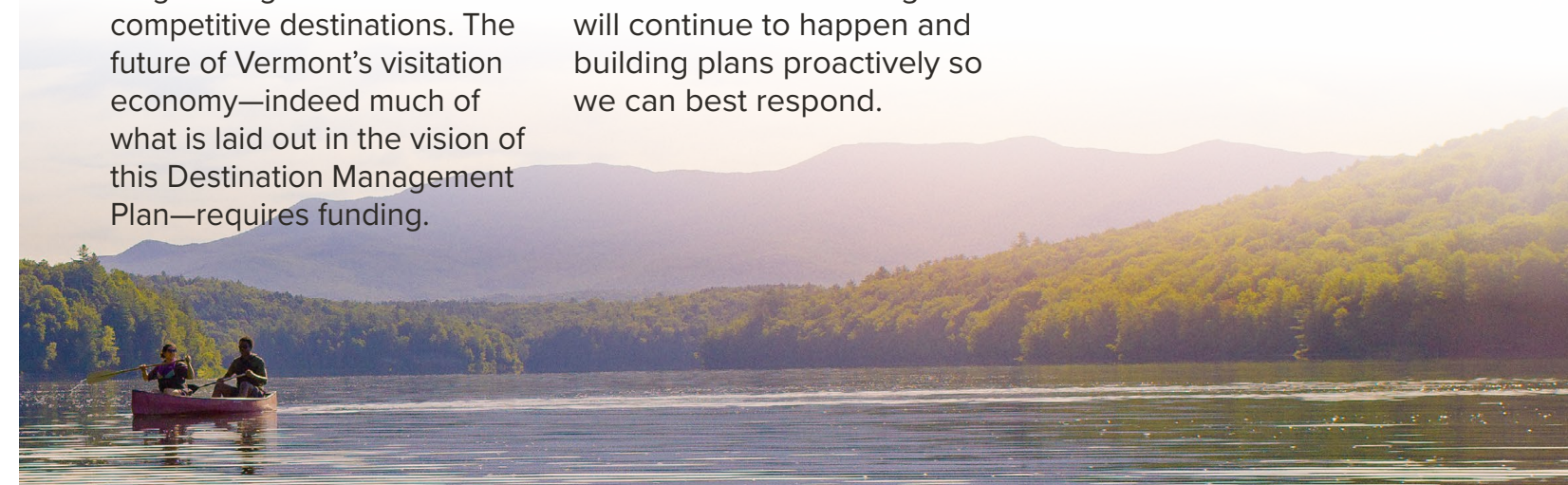
This objective is about bringing Vermont’s tourism-facing organizations across the state together to agree on common principles and goals. Only by purposeful coordination can our tourism economy evolve from organically grown and disparate to next-level prosperity that benefits all corners of the state.

2.4 Improve Statewide Tourism Resilience and Coordination

Vermont has seen its fair share of disruptive events, be it flooding or economic boycotts from neighboring countries. True resilience comes from acknowledging that these kinds of things will continue to happen and building plans proactively so we can best respond.

2.5 Strengthen Resident Support for Tourism

We in tourism-facing sectors are also residents. We love living here and recognize that tourism should not just bring money to our state but should add to our quality of life. We know through the 2025 Vermont Poll from the Center for Rural Studies at UVM that a large majority of Vermonters believe tourism is important to the state economy, and that tourism brings more benefits than challenges to our state. Our goal is to maintain and even increase those numbers. Woven throughout this plan are initiatives that are good for tourists, but good for residents, too.



IMPERATIVE 3: Strengthen, Grow, and Diversify Vermont's Tourism Infrastructure and Offerings

Objectives

3.1 Increase Off-Peak Visitor Offerings

Attracting visitors during off-peak times and stabilizing Vermont's tourism economy requires ensuring that activities and services are available year-round. Solutions could range from local restaurants coordinating schedules to guarantee daily dining options, to industry leaders collaborating to develop new experiences available only in off-peak seasons. Vermont's arts and culture community can be a key partner in leveraging the state's robust cultural offerings to increase visitation year-round.

3.2 Improve Infrastructure that Supports Visitation

The visitor economy in Vermont has developed organically. Now is the time to bring focus to the state's infrastructure to improve the visitor experience and encourage purposeful growth. New local trails, ample parking, and bathroom facilities can improve the visitor experience and bring visitation dollars to smaller communities. With improved transportation solutions, we can help more visitors access what we have to offer and bring tourism dollars to different areas of the state.

3.3 Expand Emerging, Underdeveloped, and/or Overlooked Tourism Sectors

Vermont is a premier destination for outdoor recreation, particularly hiking, biking, and skiing. While these activities remain core to our tourism economy, we can strengthen and diversify our appeal by identifying, building, and promoting experiences around emerging travel trends. Broadening our offerings will create new business opportunities for residents and attract visitors throughout the year. Like the other objectives under this imperative, this work requires active participation by leaders across sectors and communities statewide.

IMPERATIVE 4: Enhance the Vermont Visitor Experience

Objectives

4.1 Enhance In-market Visitor Information

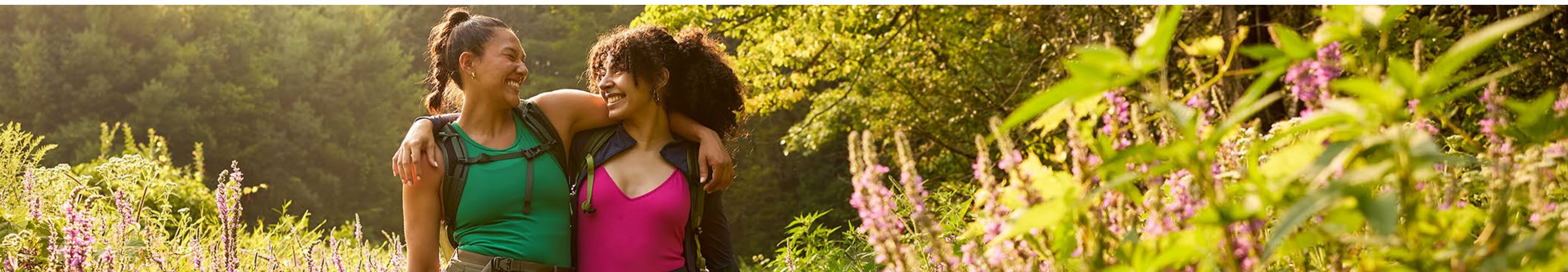
Vermont offers many things to do, places to eat, and activities to enjoy. The travelers who get the most out of their visit already know what to look for when they arrive, as in-state wayfinding is very limited. This objective speaks to the desire to make travel information more available, both outside and inside of the state's boundaries.

4.2 Improve Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities

We already know that roughly 10% of our visitors experience one or more of the following: blindness or serious vision loss; deafness or serious hearing loss; a physical, mental, or emotional condition that increases difficulty of learning, remembering, or concentrating; or a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities. Supporting visitors of all abilities will help us offer best-in-class service and truly be welcoming to all. Importantly, a focus on accessibility will better support Vermont's current and soon-to-be residents as well.

4.3 Elevate Hospitality and Service Excellence

Vermont is well-practiced at welcoming visitors and does it well. We believe the human-scale of our businesses and infrastructure are key to an authentic experience. At the same time, this human scale can lead to some variability in experience. This objective points to the opportunity to offer consistent, best-in-class hospitality in every corner of our state.



Turning the Plan into Action

IMPERATIVE 1: Leverage Destination Marketing to Increase Economic Prosperity Through Visitation

This work focuses on promoting the unique experiences, culture, and assets of Vermont in ways that inspire travel in all parts of the state and during all times of year. It also includes marketing to broader audiences than Vermont typically sees, including people who live further away than drive-distance (e.g., distant US markets and International), people with diverse backgrounds, and even organizations/business travelers. Expanding target markets and messaging that supports all-season and all-region visitation can encourage longer stays, higher spending, and repeat visits. By increasing visitation, the community can benefit from greater economic activity, including job creation, business growth, and enhanced public revenues. Ultimately, the aim is to create a sustainable cycle where effective marketing draws visitors, visitor spending fuels prosperity, and that prosperity supports ongoing investment in the destination's appeal.

Indicators

Preliminary indicators for this imperative are based on current VDTM capacity, resources and available data.

- Increase in total visitor spending statewide
- Increase in state and local taxes generated from tourism
- Track distribution of visitor spending across all regions of Vermont compared to the baseline year
- Track distribution of tourism employment share per county compared to the baseline year

Objectives

1.1 Increase Year-Round and Geographic Distribution of Leisure Travelers

If we can fill in the spaces between peak times and popular destinations within our state, we can help more organizations and communities benefit from tourism dollars, and we can guard against overtourism impacting resident quality of life.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- Promote all 14 tourism regions of the state year-round with consideration of regional visitor patterns and opportunities to showcase lesser-known destinations
 - Partner with content creators (influencers) to showcase all 14 regions on a consistent basis
 - Feature all 14 regions in owned and paid email marketing
 - Feature all 14 regions in owned and paid social media marketing
 - Feature all 14 regions in owned (website) and paid content creation (sponsored content)
- Promote off-peak seasonal activities throughout the state
 - Inventory off-peak tourism offerings and opportunities
 - Facilitate regional discussions to understand existing and new opportunities for off-peak experiences

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

1.2 Increase Total Visitation by Expanding Brand Reach and Awareness Beyond Traditional Markets

We value our visitors from nearby markets and recognize that they bring the largest portion of out-of-state dollars to our state and communities. However, a prosperous future demands that we look beyond “drive” markets. Encouraging visitation from US regions and areas further afield will help build a resilient tourism sector.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- Assess and refine strategy to efficiently reach target audiences in distant domestic markets
 - Research emerging visitation trends, market potential studies, and existing spending and visitor profile data
 - Communicate domestic visitation trends with the industry to encourage amplification of targeted efforts
 - Collaborate with the Leahy Burlington International Airport to understand new and existing direct flight markets and coordinated marketing opportunities
 - Refine media plan and marketing strategy to reflect priority markets
- Utilize direct-to-consumer opportunities to promote Vermont to national audiences
 - Engage in earned, owned, and paid national media opportunities as budget allows
 - Evaluate and prioritize participation in consumer travel and outdoor recreation shows across the country
- Evolve Vermont’s brand representation
 - Evolve the brand representation of the state to balance traditional iconic imagery and storytelling with innovative, contemporary, and authentic Vermont experiences
 - Develop a new tourism consumer brand for the state that is separate and distinct from the ‘Moon over Mountains’ logo that represents all of Vermont state government

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

1.3 Increase Midweek and Off-Peak Visitation by Growing Meeting, Conference, and Group Travel Business

Business travelers represent an important opportunity to mitigate the downturns that tourist-facing sectors see midweek and in less popular seasons. We believe that by building on the infrastructure that our already thriving wedding industry supports, Vermont is well positioned to support small meetings and retreats across the state. Providing opportunities in the slower times will help businesses stay open more consistently, benefiting the workforce and residents as well.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- Support regional organizations and properties in hosting more business retreats, small group meetings, and conferences
 - Develop sponsorship process to help regional DMOs or properties offset financial minimums required to host meetings or conferences in Vermont as budget allows
 - Develop sponsorship process to help properties attend meeting planner trade shows as budget allows
- Facilitate industry discussions on potential collaborations to increase meetings and business travel
- Evaluate feasibility of developing of an inventory of available meeting and conference venues and participating in meeting planner trade shows
- Participate in research and planning process to develop additional conference and event facilities

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

IMPERATIVE 2: Strengthen Vermont’s Ability to Support a Resilient Tourism Sector

A successful visitor economy brings benefits to visitors and residents alike, and it requires a shared effort to ensure that Vermont’s economy continues to thrive. Building a thriving and resilient tourism sector means improving coordination across the state and developing steady and sustainable funding mechanisms. It means giving local organizations and communities the tools, resources, and partnerships they need to promote and build their tourism offerings, adapt to changing conditions, and continue to thrive following challenges like economic downturns or natural disasters. It also means addressing resident values and balancing the benefits of tourism from the perspective of various stakeholders. This imperative focuses on creating a tourism sector that is steady, adaptable, and supportive of communities over the long term.

Indicators

Preliminary indicators for this imperative are based on current VDTM capacity, resources and available data.

- **Increased percentage of residents that agree or strongly agree that “Quality of life in my local area is positively impacted by tourism” in annual Vermont Poll from the Center for Rural Studies at UVM**
- **Percentage increase in total tourism funding over baseline year**
- **Increased number and participation rate of industry webinars and trainings being offered**

Objectives

2.1 Strengthen the Effectiveness of Local and Regional Tourism Organizations to Attract Visitors

Developing and marketing visitor attractions and services is best done by those “on the ground” in local communities. This objective centers around giving local tourism-focused organizations the resources they need to drive visitation.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- **Provide tools and resources to businesses and organizations to promote their regions and attract more visitors**
 - Create a webinar or training series (live and recorded) for tourism industry partners on available VDTM programs
 - Meet with regional tourism organizations around the state on an annual basis for information sharing and discussion of local challenges and successes (how can we help you)
 - Prioritize on-going content development for industry-facing website (accd.vermont.gov/tourism)
- **Improve communication with local tourism businesses and organizations**
 - Grow audience on industry communication channels (subscribers to industry newsletter and LinkedIn followers)
- **Establish annual grant program to support events, asset creation, and local investments in the visitor experience as budget allows**
 - Provide timely content to tourism industry partners with the aim to be the first source of relevant industry news
 - Identify budget and establish program priorities, application process, and implementation guidelines
 - Advocate for additional funding to grow budget for grant program and staff capacity to manage

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

IMPERATIVE 3: Strengthen, Grow, and Diversify Vermont’s Tourism Infrastructure and Offerings

Vermont’s tourism industry thrives when visitors can enjoy a wide variety of experiences in every season and every corner of the state. Strengthening and expanding the state’s tourism infrastructure means investing in the facilities, services, and attractions that make travel easier and more memorable. By diversifying what Vermont offers—from accessible trails and community gathering spaces to new opportunities in areas like agritourism, wellness, and outdoor recreation—the state can attract new audiences, balance seasonal peaks, and create long-term benefits for local communities and businesses.

Indicators

Preliminary indicators for this imperative are based on current VDTM capacity, resources and available data.

- Increase in the number of VermontVacation.com Directory listings offering visitor services and experiences
- Increase in number of events offered in off-peak seasons listed on VermontVacation.com Event Calendar
- Track utilization of Vermont CORE (Community Outdoor Recreation Economy) toolkit as a measure of community interest in destination development

Objectives

3.1 Increase Off-Peak Visitor Offerings

Attracting visitors during off-peak times and stabilizing Vermont’s tourism economy requires ensuring that activities and services are available year-round. Solutions could range from local restaurants coordinating schedules to guarantee daily dining options, to industry leaders collaborating to develop new experiences available only in off-peak seasons. Vermont’s arts and culture community can be a key partner in leveraging the state’s robust cultural offerings to increase visitation year-round.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- Support the development of off-peak visitor experiences to reduce seasonal and daily fluctuations in available services
 - Collaborate with industry partners statewide to identify seasonal and daily gaps in visitor experiences and services
 - Facilitate industry discussions, collaborate on possible solutions, and amplify successful case studies to reduce the gaps in available offerings
 - Explore ways to encourage additional events during off-peak days and seasons

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

3.2 Improve Infrastructure that Supports Visitation

The visitor economy in Vermont has developed organically. Now is the time to bring focus to the state’s infrastructure to improve the visitor experience and encourage purposeful growth. New local trails, ample parking, and bathroom facilities can improve the visitor experience and bring visitation dollars to smaller communities. With improved transportation solutions, we can help more visitors access what we have to offer and bring tourism dollars to different areas of the state.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- Advocate for the development of physical structures and facilities that support visitation (public bathrooms, parking, etc.)
 - Collaborate with industry partners statewide to identify regional gaps in visitor infrastructure
 - Facilitate industry discussions, collaborate on possible solutions, and amplify successful case studies to reduce the gaps in available offerings
- Advocate for the development of outdoor recreation infrastructure (trails, trailheads, etc.)
 - Collaborate with Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) on implementation of infrastructure-related priority actions in the Move Forward Together Vermont plan
 - Collaborate with FPR to advocate for additional funding for VOREC Community Grants program
- Support on-going development of visitor services along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and similar rail trail systems
- Support expanded trail networks for hiking, biking, and paddling across lesser-known regions
- Support investments in improved access, parking, and signage at trailheads and recreational areas
- Advocate for the development of transportation services that support visitation (ride shares, shuttles, train stations, etc.)
 - Collaborate with industry partners statewide to identify regional gaps in visitor infrastructure
 - Facilitate industry discussions, collaborate on possible solutions, and amplify successful case studies to reduce the gaps in available offerings
 - Collaborate with the Agency of Transportation (AOT) to identify and develop ‘last-mile’ services for train passengers

3.3 Expand Emerging, Underdeveloped, and/or Overlooked Tourism Sectors

Vermont is a premier destination for outdoor recreation, particularly hiking, biking, and skiing. While these activities remain core to our tourism economy, we can strengthen and diversify our appeal by identifying, building, and promoting experiences around emerging travel trends. Broadening our offerings will create new business opportunities for residents and attract visitors throughout the year. Like the other objectives under this imperative, this work requires active participation by leaders across sectors and communities statewide.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- Research and prioritize opportunities to support underdeveloped tourism sectors
 - Communicate sector trends with the industry partners to encourage development of new product offerings
 - Facilitate industry discussions on potential collaborations to increase visibility of available experiences
 - Develop a content plan for each prioritized niche sector
- Partner with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFAM) to develop and promote agritourism experiences
 - Collaborate with AAFAM on market opportunities and visitor trends and expectations around agritourism
 - Inventory and add or update existing agritourism experiences on the VermontVacation.com Directory
 - Develop a content plan specific to agritourism
 - Develop a promotional marketing plan for agritourism based on available AAFAM funding

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

IMPERATIVE 4: Enhance the Vermont Visitor Experience

Every visit to Vermont should feel welcoming, seamless, and enriching. Enhancing the visitor experience involves making sure that travelers have access to clear information, high-quality services, and warm hospitality wherever they go. It also means supporting visitors in finding hidden gems across the state and ensuring that Vermont is accessible and enjoyable for people of all backgrounds and abilities. A strong focus on visitor experience will inspire travelers to not only return again and again but also recommend Vermont to others.

Indicators

Preliminary indicators for this imperative are based on current VDTM capacity, resources and available data.

- **Number and percent increase of participants in Ambassador program annually**
- **Number and percent increase of in-state bulk orders of VDTM collateral annually**
- **Increase percentage of visitors who report being satisfied or very satisfied with their visit to Vermont**

Objectives

4.1 Enhance In-market Visitor Information

Vermont offers many things to do, places to eat, and activities to enjoy. The travelers who get the most out of their visit already know what to look for when they arrive, as in-state wayfinding is very limited. This objective speaks to the desire to make travel information more available, both outside and inside of the state's boundaries.



Initial VDTM Initiatives/Action Steps to Support this Objective

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for increased wayfinding infrastructure and encourage adoption of signage and wayfinding options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Compile information on existing state programs and guidelines on signage to encourage businesses to take advantage of opportunities for greater visibility → Facilitate interagency, industry, and community discussions on potential collaborations to increase wayfinding infrastructure statewide • Improve visibility and availability of visitor information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increase collaboration with the Department of Building and General Services (BGS) on the visitor information available at the state network of Vermont Welcome and Information Centers → Facilitate regional and community discussions on creative ways to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborate on disseminating information on available visitor facilities (public restrooms, charging stations, etc.) and tourism experiences → Promote availability of VDTM-provided free printed collateral items to tourism properties, community organizations, vacation rental owners, etc. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and expand visitor information resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Collaborate with the Vermont Chamber of Commerce on the publication of the annual Inspiration Guide and Vermont Road Map and Guide → Continually improve features and functionality of existing VermontVacation.com Directory to provide in-market visitor information → Explore opportunities to develop new collateral or content partnerships to provide visitor information |

YOUR TURN: What action steps can you and your organization take?

Additional Resources

VDTM SURVEY FINDINGS

**Want the full picture? Visit the URL below to explore the survey results:
VDTM Survey Findings**



About VDTM

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) is a department in Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Tourism is one of the largest industries in Vermont and VDTM helps increase the economic prosperity of Vermont through destination marketing, collaboration with industry supporters, and research and education.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing is committed to identify, remove, and reform barriers that prevent people of all backgrounds and abilities from connecting with Vermont as a tourism destination. With an awareness that we are on the land of ancestral stewards, we know the important role that government plays in increasing meaningful inclusion and representation. We recognize that there is much work to do, and we are committed to being a leader and collaborator on local and statewide efforts to advance equity and accessibility in Vermont.

MISSION:

To guide, connect, and champion Vermont's tourism industry through storytelling, strategic marketing, and deep partnerships that strengthen communities and grow the state's economy.

Values

1. Support

We stand beside one another in both everyday work and in our most challenging moments, offering help, encouragement, and care as a united community. We give freely of our time, knowledge, and resources, knowing that helping others strengthens our shared success.

2. Collaboration

We value inclusion, listening, and shared decision-making, working together with trust and respect to achieve goals that benefit everyone we serve.

3. Excellence with Action

We hold our work to a high standard, pay attention to detail, and deliver our best solutions, even in the face of constraints. At the same time, we are action-oriented and do not let perfection deter us from serving the people of Vermont.

4. Commitment

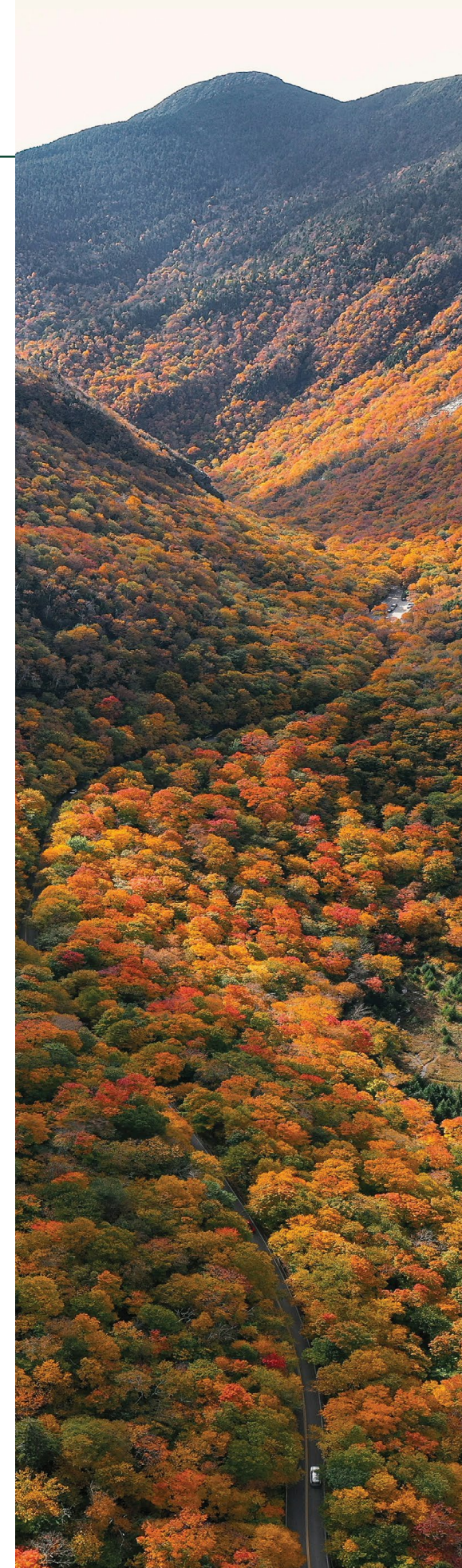
We are dedicated to our mission, our communities, and the state of Vermont, showing up every day with focus, pride, and purpose.

5. Resilience

We adapt, persevere, and keep moving forward, contributing our energy and creativity even during challenging times.

6. Equity

We consider the impact of our work on all communities and strive for fairness, inclusion, and equal opportunity in every action we take. We act with foresight and care, anticipating needs, responding with purpose, and ensuring our work is intentional and considerate.



Glossary of Terms

Agritourism

A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)

An organization that promotes a specific location as a travel destination to increase tourism and boost the local economy.

Direct-to-consumer

A sales model where a brand sells its products directly to the end customer, bypassing traditional intermediaries like wholesalers and retailers.

Familiarization tours

A trip for travel professionals, media, or industry experts designed to give them firsthand experience with a destination or service. The purpose of these tours is to help attendees build product knowledge and professional relationships to effectively market and sell the destination.

Receptive tour operators

A company that packages and sells tourism services to other tour operators, not the end customer. They act as a local expert, handling logistics like accommodations, attractions, and transportation for visitors.

Tourism improvement districts (TID)

A public-private partnership where local businesses in a specific geographic area pay an assessment to fund programs that promote tourism.

Imperative

Describes a large area of focus for the destination management plan.

Objective

Goals that describe the work needed to accomplish the imperatives.

Initiative

Finite projects that advance the work of the imperative and are measured by indicators.

Indicator

Measure of success for plan imperatives.



