

# SHELBYKY TOURISM

2020-2025 V.2

## STRATEGIC PLAN:

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### Overview:

ShelbyKY Tourism Commission & Visitors Bureau (STC&VB) is a destination marketing and management organization solely focused on the progressive growth of the travel industry in Shelby County, KY. A thriving travel industry improves the local economy for the benefit of all citizens.

STC&VB will promote and build awareness of Shelby County as a leisure and small group destination with the highest caliber staff in the industry providing leadership and innovation to drive:

- Increased overnight and day-trip visitation
- Increased spending per travel party
- increased engagement in local businesses
- Increased visitor satisfaction

STC&VB Board and staff are committed to creating a total visitor destination by partnering with local governments and economic development agencies to develop, improve and expand the overall visitor experience with new activities. The pillars of this strategic plan are:

- **Marketing the Destination** – ShelbyKY is a small destination in close proximity to much larger destinations. Marketing ShelbyKY as a destination will have to be very targeted to avoid losing room nights and spending to the neighboring counties.
- **Visitor experience enhancement, expansion** – focus on downtown(s) shopping, activities and entertainment, small meetings facility, expanded horse experiences for visitors, active lifestyle outdoor experiences, evening entertainment and visitor parking/mobility.
- **Support the development of new facilities for group business** to drive year-round room demand in local lodging. The meetings and social markets have the best potential for growth.
- **Workforce** – fostering a highly skilled hospitality workforce to support travel industry businesses is critical. Support local workforce & employers in the recruitment/training of new hospitality ready workers. Partner with secondary, vocational and higher education institutions to produce a highly skilled workforce.
- **Advocacy for travel industry issues** and partnership with other economic development entities. Address issues affecting the travel industry. Maintain an updated crisis communications plan.

# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

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**Market Shelby County as a destination with the highest skilled and most dynamic sales and marketing team.** ShelbyKY is a small destination in close proximity to much larger destinations. Marketing ShelbyKY as a destination will have to be very targeted to avoid losing room nights and spending to the neighboring counties. Shelby County does not have the travel experiences, lodging, facilities or budget to compete with Louisville, Frankfort and Lexington. Therefore, Shelby County must be very strategic to grow as a travel destination. It can and will be done!

- a) **STC&VB is a research-based marketing organization** meeting the highest standards of DMO operations. Meet the highest standards of financial and ethical accountability.
- b) **STC&VB will update research and marketing strategy continually** as part of an annual plan that is supported by the local travel industry.
- c) **Develop a brand as the Saddlebred destination with many other experiences** to appeal to a wider audience. Focus on the five-hour drive market.
- d) **Support the staff in achieving the highest standards of excellence** and performance through on-going education, certifications, measurement and accountability. Maintain competitive wages/benefits and foster a creative and supportive work environment where the team thrives and continues to produce award winning sales and marketing programs.
- e) **Partner with the Kentucky Department of Tourism and other DMO's within the region** as well as travel industry partners to leverage the brand and reach a wider audience.
- f) **Provide leadership to the Shelby County travel industry** through training, co-op sales/marketing programs, and workforce development.
- g) **Provide dynamic visitor information services** for individual, group and event visitors to drive increased spending in-market.
- h) **Tracking and accountability** to demonstrate highest possible Return-on-Investment (ROI) – Lodging market segmentation research of key performance metrics (KPIs) and lodging revenue tracking/analysis.

**Visitor experience enhancement, expansion** – focus on downtown(s) shopping, activities and entertainment, expanded horse experiences for visitors, active lifestyle outdoor experiences, evening entertainment and visitor parking/mobility.

- a) **Destination dining** – Encourage the updating of existing and development of new unique dining that builds on the brand and experience. This strategy will attract people from the two-hour “day-trip” drive market as well as drive overnight visitation. A well-known chef, exceptionally good food, unique atmosphere, and scenic locations are just some of the unique elements that create destination dining.
- b) **Unique shopping** – the expansion of local boutique/style unique shopping in the downtown areas will increase the appeal of Shelby County and will enhance the experience of those visiting for group activities and events.
- c) **Improved and new pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails** – additional pedestrian and bicycle paths/trails will make it easier for visitors to travel within and among the communities in Shelby County and from hotels to dining, shopping, sports venues and activities without using a motorized vehicle. Add bicycle lanes to roadways. Provide bicycle racks in downtown and other gathering sites.
- d) **Create a kayak and fishing trail.** The lakes and creeks in Shelby County can provide great outdoors recreation. Provide recreation and outdoor engagement for residents and visitors alike.
- e) **Recruit outfitters/guides** to provide access to rental bikes, kayaks, paddleboards, etc. Visitors want to engage with the waterways not just look at them. Access means providing the equipment as well as the points to park and “put-in” on the trails and waterways.
- f) **Signage, wayfinding, parking and ride-sharing** are all critical to delivering visitors to experiences in Shelby County.
- g) **Evening entertainment** at local restaurants and venues to attract visitors and convert day-trippers to overnight visitors.

**Projects:**

Wayfinding Program, Kayak Trail, Stargazer Plaza (events)

**Develop facilities for group business** to drive year-round room demand in local lodging. The meetings and social markets have the best potential for growth. A downtown boutique hotel with in close proximity to event space will be a game changer for the destination and wont compete with the chain affiliated lodging.

- a) **New Shelbyville Event Center** – lead the sales and marketing effort to fill the new event center with small groups that will fill local lodging with overnight visitors. Target meeting during weekdays and social groups (weddings/reunions) and events to drive weekend visitation.
- b) **Downtown boutique lodging** – encourage the development of a uniquely themed boutique hotel in the downtown area. A boutique hotel would make Shelby County more appealing as a unique getaway destination. Boutique lodging would also attract wedding, reunion and meeting groups and would not compete with the chain affiliated lodging.
- c) **Support the development and expansion of distilleries in Shelby County** as visitor attractions and event facilities. Market research showed the impact of events at Jephtha Creed at driving room nights. Bulleit
- d) **Host recreation & sports events** to build recognition of Shelby County as an active-lifestyle destination – runs, races, competitions, etc.

**Projects:**

Conference Center, Chamber Support, Industrial Foundation Support,

**Workforce** – fostering a highly skilled hospitality workforce to support travel industry businesses is critical. Support local workforce & employers in the recruitment/training of new hospitality ready workers. Partner with secondary, vocational and higher education institutions to produce a highly skilled workforce.

- a) **Support local workforce & jobs entities** in the recruitment/training of new hospitality ready workers.
- b) **Partner with secondary, vocational and higher education institutions (Whitney Young)** to produce a highly-skilled workforce. programs should be offered to:
  - i. Generate interest in hospitality industry careers.
  - ii. Provide training and skills for careers in hospitality. Identify potential hospitality workers, provide training, conduct job fairs, provide transportation, etc. to move people from part-time jobs into full-time employment.
- c) **Develop a system to conduct regular surveys with travel industry businesses** to identify the number of open full-time and part-time positions. Develop a job vacancy/employment rate monitoring tool and work to have every job filled as this provides the maximum revenue generation from visitors who receive the best service.
- d) **Monitor the residence location of hospitality industry workforce** to determine the availability of affordable housing within Shelby County. The cost of housing and transportation to work are two of the issues behind lack of workforce to fill vacant positions at many local hospitality industry businesses.

**Projects:**

Scholarship, Hospitality Training (Dine & Discover), Certificate Program

**Advocacy for travel industry issues** and partnership with other economic development entities. Address issues affecting the travel industry. Maintain an updated crisis communications plan.

1. **Maintain long-term, sustainable and competitive funding for STC&VB.** Destination marketing and development is very competitive within Kentucky. STC&VB must have adequate funding to compete and push Shelby County forward as a destination. Shelby County is surrounded by some of the largest destinations with the largest budgets in the state. It will take aggressive funding and messaging to compete.
2. **Identify and address issues affecting the local travel industry** – issues that are likely to require attention in the coming years include lodging development and the home rentals market; event venue development; transportation, roads, parking.
3. **Maintain an updated crisis communications plan** and operating reserve account for emergencies.
4. **Maintain a series of white papers/position statements** addressing the issues identified by the travel industry.
5. **Retain lobbyist as necessary** to address issues at the state or federal level.
6. **Conduct bi-annual travel industry updates to elected bodies, economic development and civic organizations.** Communicate the impact of the travel industry to those not in the travel industry.

**Projects:**

Political Luncheon, Destination Frankfort (KTIA), Year End Review Presentation, Crisis Communications Plan