

**Building a Tourism Development Strategy
For the Economic Development of Surprise, Arizona**

Results of a Community Visioning Process

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Background	3
The Process	4
Core Insights from the Workshops	6
Recommendations	14
Conclusions	16
Appendices.....	17
Appendix A: Letters of Invitation to Workshops	
Appendix B: Workshop 1 and 2 Focus Group Script	
Appendix C: Tourism Development Cycle – Visual Concept Map	
Appendix D: Tourism Development Cycle – Information Needs	
Appendix E: Synthesized Workshop 1 and 2 Results	
Appendix F: Workshop 3 Focus Group Script	
Appendix G: Workshop 1 Results	
Appendix H: Workshop 2 Results	
Appendix I: Workshop 3 Results	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, the ASU Partnership for Community Development facilitated a series of three strategic visioning workshops for tourism stakeholders within the Surprise community. The goal was to create conversations about current tourism assets within the community, and about how to establish a vision for enhancing economic and life quality of the community through the development and promotion of tourism.

Three workshops were conducted – including representatives from diverse sectors such as lodging, food and beverage, parks and recreation, museums, attractions, golf, special events management, and the chamber of commerce. Workshop participants offered insights about existing tourism assets within Surprise and the surrounding region, as well as the needs of tourists visiting Surprise.

Potential marketing niches were identified that might enable Surprise to differentiate its tourism product from that of competitors. The participants offered a myriad of suggestions for the long-term development of tourism strategy, which were assembled into fifteen broad themes in this report. They also provided many suggestions for enhancing immediate success in Surprise tourism development, which were assembled into seven themes for this report.

This report offers detailed summaries of workshop discussions, which offer a strong foundation for the successful unfolding of a tourism development strategy for the City of Surprise. Drawing upon the perspectives of workshop participants, eight recommendations are offered:

- *Cultivate and empower leadership.*
- *Create a stakeholder advisory group.*
- *Develop a five-year strategic plan.*
- *Envision an asset-based, systems approach to tourism development.*
- *Ensure regional perspective and collaboration.*
- *Anchor all visioning in research.*
- *Develop a synchronized marketing strategy.*
- *Create short-term successes.*

These recommendations would serve the community well in the long-term goal of enhancing the community's quality of life through tourism development. The citizens, businesses and organizations of Surprise will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2005, the Partnership for Community Development (PCD) of Arizona State University's West campus entered into a cooperative agreement with the City of Surprise to define a vision for tourism in the economic development of that community.

As part of the agreement, three workshops were conducted with representatives of business, government, non-profit and cultural sectors to explore:

- Existing community assets around which effective tourism infrastructure could be built.
- Core tourism “drivers” that underlie the unique type of consumer demand that would be attracted to Surprise community assets.
- Potentially unique “marketing niches” or “product portfolios” in light of competitive mixes in surrounding communities.
- Potential community assets that could be assembled to further advance these niches through creative and entrepreneurial relationships among community partners.
- Specificity in developing core elements of the *vision*, and development of a practical *roadmap* to reach that vision.
- Processes needed to develop effective marketing strategy.

This report reveals the major themes that emerged from these workshops, and coalesces the myriad of impressions into a single vision of what is needed to develop tourism strategy within the City of Surprise. Ultimately, the process was designed to describe a pathway for growing tourism development in a way that builds both economic and life quality for City of Surprise residents.

BACKGROUND

The *Surprise Focused Future II Strategic Plan for Community and Economic Development* specifies that the goal of the economic development effort for the City of Surprise is to “build infrastructure to support new business growth”, “develop strategy to diversify the economy while helping current businesses thrive”, “to create a more entrepreneurial environment”, “evolve quality of life”, and “to identify and target quality businesses based upon what surprise can support”.

Throughout the *Plan*, tourism is implicated for its potential power in advancing the economic development agenda. For example, the *recreation-related, entertainment and arts/culture support business sector* is identified as one of five core sectors to catalyze and ensure positive economic growth. An “immediate” strategy of the *Plan* is to *develop a master plan for visitor destination development* and to develop a *recreation and*

entertainment marketing plan for the City of Surprise. In developing such strategies, the *Plan* implores the City to develop “policy that encourages and supports economic development”, “development of planning that supports a sustainable community”, “involve residents and stakeholders in decision-making”, and “support and coordinate with other local and regional organizations as they relate to economic development”.

In laying out this course of action, the *Plan* states that the Surprise Economic Development Advisory Board (SEDAB), the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce (NWVC), and the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC) should play central roles.

In light of the mandates of the *Plan*, the purpose of the collaboration between the PCD and the City of Surprise was to create conversations among a broad range of community stakeholders (from business, government, non-profit and culture organizations) to build a basis for establishing a *vision* for tourism development for the community. The vision was to emerge from a set of three half-day *strategic visioning workshops* to be held during the last half of 2005. The goal of the workshops was to create a *vision* that will ultimately guide the development of the City’s master plan for visitor destination management, and the City’s marketing plan for tourism, recreation and entertainment. The *vision* was to identify a strategy for developing sustainable and impactful tourism that would maximize economic cash-flow for businesses, and the quality of life for citizens of Surprise.

The workshops were to be designed to engage stakeholders from many disparate community sectors – small businesses and large businesses, direct tourism service providers and those who indirectly benefit from tourist activity, hospitality services and parks and recreation managers, special event managers and attractions managers, financial management organizations and arts and cultural organizations, new home builders and long-term residents, special interest organizations and government agencies. The intent was to create a platform, through these workshops, to develop dialogue among sectors that characteristically do not have strong pathways for inter-communication and collaboration about their common interests in developing sustainable tourism development within the community. Ultimately, the objective of the City was to encourage conversations that would begin movement within the community toward the goal of producing a master plan and marketing plan for tourism development.

THE PROCESS

The three workshops were conducted on the mornings of June 30 (Desert Palms Restaurant), August 26 (Surprise Regional Library), and November 23 (Desert Palms Restaurant), 2005. The series of workshops were designed to follow a three-step process. The first workshop was targeted to gather representatives predominately from government agencies, non-profit organizations, and arts and culture organizations. The second workshop was targeted predominately to gather representatives from the business community. The third workshop was designed to gather representatives from each of the

first two workshops, so a forum could be provided for presenting and discussing results from the first two workshops. Formal invitations to invitees were mailed by the Director of the City of Surprise Economic Development Department (Appendix A). On average, approximately fifteen tourism stakeholders participated in each workshop.

Participants were welcomed to each workshop by the City of Surprise Director of Economic Development, who spoke in broad terms about the mission and goals of the visioning process (as described above). The process was then turned over to Dr. Richard C. Knopf (Director of the PCD) and Dr. Kathleen L. Andereck (Professor of Recreation and Tourism Management) who facilitated each workshop following accepted social science focus group protocol. The participants were asked to self-introduce themselves, and make a statement about why they were attracted to the workshop. The facilitators spoke to their role in encouraging prolific conversation, and to do it in a way that would enable all participants to have equal voice to the extent possible.

Following focus group protocol, each workshop followed a pre-determined script which included a specific set of question probes. These probes were developed by the staff of the PCD with input by the staff of the City of Surprise in collaboration with the City of Surprise. The script for workshops 1 and 2 was precisely the same, and is reproduced in Appendix B. The script was designed to generate conversation in four general domains:

- Existing community assets around which effective tourism could be built
- Kinds of consumers that seem to be attracted to these assets
- Potential “market niches” that the community might offer to expand tourism
- Things that need to be done to develop effective tourism strategy

As Appendix B depicts, a myriad of sub-questions were developed for each of the four major probe questions. These sub-questions were utilized as appropriate to prompt a diversity of responses to each of the four main probes. True to standard protocol in focus group methodology, they were not intended -- and therefore were not used -- to create a linear, structured question and answer format. Specific group chemistry dictated how the questions were utilized to guide the participants into generating perspectives across all four domains.

For workshop 3 (combined stakeholders), a tutorial on the six components of an effective *Tourism Development Strategy* was presented by reviewing the contents of the visual aid reproduced as Appendix C. As the model in the visual aid suggests, there are six fundamental steps to developing an effective tourism development strategy:

- Conduct a Situation Analysis (Environmental Audit)
- Select Specific Target Market(s)
- Position the Product/Service
- Determine Marketing Objectives
- Develop and Implement Action Plans

- Monitor and Evaluate Actions

After providing a general overview of these six steps by discussing the general model, the workshop facilitators gave details of specific information needs that are required for each step in the process. A handout entitled *Tourism Development Cycle Notes* was produced for the workshop to summarize these information needs, and the facilitators reviewed the handout in detail with workshop participants. This handout is reproduced as Appendix D. A second handout was developed that imputed points of insight about Surprise tourism emerging from workshops 1 and 2 that pertained to the specific information needs articulated in the *Tourism Development Cycle Notes*. This handout is reproduced as Appendix E. As page one of the Appendix describes, cell entries within the left column of Appendix E signify discussion points from workshop 1 (government, non-profit and cultural stakeholders), and cell entries within the right column pertain to discussion points from workshop 2 (business stakeholders). Grayed cells indicate discussion points emerging within both workshops. This handout was distributed to workshop 3 participants, and the results from workshops 1 and 2 were reviewed by following the format of this handout. Then, the group was facilitated through a focus group discussion by using the script reproduced as Appendix F. The script was designed to generate conversation in three general domains:

- Long-term direction needed to facilitate successful tourism development
- Short-term “successes” that could be accomplished by stakeholders working together
- Specific sectors that need to be engaged as tourism development strategy is developed

This report provides a summary of the primary themes that emerged across the three workshops, and concludes with recommendations for defining long- and short-term vision for tourism development in Surprise through involvement of stakeholders. This vision is anchored in the ideas expressed by these stakeholders in the three workshops.

CORE INSIGHTS FROM THE WORKSHOPS

The analysis that follows summarizes the core themes that emerged from the stakeholder discussions. The reader is directed to Appendices G, H and I for detailed chronicling of the discussion points that emerged in each focus group. Appendix G presents the insights that emerged from participants in workshop 1 (June 30 - government, non-profit and cultural stakeholders). Appendix H presents insights that emerged from participants in workshop 2 (August 26 – business stakeholders). Appendix I presents insights from workshop 3 (November 23 – combined groups). In addition, the reader is directed to Appendix E for a detailed summary of workshop 1 and 2 insights as interpreted through the *Tourism Development Strategy* model. Page 1 of that Appendix describes how to interpret these participant insights in the context of that model.

Community Assets Valued by Residents

The first set of questions asked of the participants in workshops 1 and 2 pertained to their perceptions of what Surprise residents value as core assets of their community life. From a marketing perspective, the notion is that the very assets that residents value would as likely be valued by potential tourists. And, in marketing campaigns, these assets could be used as descriptors of the community in ways that would differentiate the destination from its competitors – particularly those within the Phoenix metropolitan area.

In general, the participants described Surprise as a community offering a sense of newness with a small town feel. It is treasured for the abundance of open space, a semi-rural flavor, and proximity to mountainous settings such as the White Tanks. It carries an image of forward movement, excitement, freshness, cleanliness, diversity, and affordability. There is a strong sense of community, with friendly, authentic people and accessible city leaders. There is a sense of pride about the prevalence of volunteer work. It is seen as relatively safe community. All of these values define a unique, marketable image to assist in the differentiation of Surprise from other tourism environments within the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Other Surprise Assets Capable of Attracting Tourists

The second set of questions in workshops 1 and 2 focused on identifying Surprise assets that would be particularly appealing to attracting tourists. In addition to the above features, the participants were quick to draw attention to the potential drawing power of the Surprise sports and recreational campus. Also mentioned were the opportunities for general recreation activity, special events, golf courses, the desert and mountain backdrops, the view sheds, the open space, the rich history and cultural fabric of the City, the arts and culture organizations, the overtones of Southwest culture in general, and the weather. The fast growth of the City – including fast growth of the retirees and the senior housing market -- was seen as fuel for attracting business travelers, the family and friends market, and the home prospector market. Existing business sectors, such as the proving grounds, hospital and health care industry and agriculture were seen as potential tourism magnets.

Regional Assets that Surprise Could Capitalize Upon

The third set of questions in workshops 1 and 2 asked participants to identify numerous regional assets that could be incorporated into Surprise tourism development strategy and tourism. These include Luke Air Force Base, the zoo, the Art Museum, West Valley shopping and nightlife, and West Valley meeting and convention space. The White Tank Mountains Regional Park and other regional outdoor recreation resources offering nature walks, hiking, mountain biking, camping, horseback riding, nature-oriented pleasure drives, and off-road vehicle riding would be appealing to many tourists. Synergy could be developed with the many emerging West Valley sports, recreation and special event

venues to position Surprise well in the tourism arena. The emerging West Valley growth in general could be capitalized upon as an asset for tourism potential. West Valley transportation networks, though challenged within Surprise proper, could be positioned as providing quick access from other areas of the state and metropolitan area.

Needs of Tourists

The fourth set of questions in workshops 1 and 2 asked participants to identify the needs that tourists might carry as they considered Surprise as a tourism alternative. Common themes included: ease of transportation and access, good parking, entertainment options, nightlife/evening activities, special events, golf, attractions, conventions and meeting space, fine dining opportunities, resort amenities, and shopping and theatre complexes. There was a clear sense that further infrastructure development is needed within surprise to support these needs.

The Potential for a Unique “Marketing Niche” or “Tourism Product Portfolio”

The fifth set of questions in workshops 1 and 2 invited participants to imagine what might be particularly effective market niches to establish in a Surprise tourism development and marketing strategy. This is a particularly important goal, given the need for Surprise to differentiate itself from the myriad of relatively similar communities with campaigns of their own. While details are provided in Appendices G and H, general themes that emerged include:

- The southwest desert experience – natural and cultural features
- Sports and recreation packages – particularly integrating local with regional assets of amateur sport opportunities, youth-sports, professional sports
- Friends and family travel packages
- Multi-generational marketing for families and extended families (e.g., grandparents traveling with grandchildren)
- Golf packages
- Business traveler and convention packages
- Snow bird packages
- Housing and job relocation market packages
- Special events packages – particularly those with potential for regional draw
- Arts, cultural, and history packages
- Attractions packages (e.g., Speed World)

Importantly, the need was recognized to build product portfolios that would offer multiple “benefit bundles” to particular target segments. Several possibilities emerged:

- Events/festivals/sports/recreational packaging
- African / Native American / Hispanic arts, culture and history packaging

- Natural environment packaging – cactus, flowers, open space, mountain vistas, outdoor recreation opportunities
- Family-oriented packaging – attractions, sports facilities, shopping, recreation areas
- Clustering assets for high spending tourists – sports, arts, culture, natural environment, attractions (e.g., health care research, proving grounds, Sports World, affluent senior amenities, hospital visitors) with potential for international draw

As the numerous ideas were advanced, it seemed clear that many participants in the process were intrigued to consider the notion of Surprise adopting a multi-asset packaging to target specific, potential markets – and enjoyed the creative brainstorming process in general, and the ideas of others in particular. As the community proceeds to expand its vision for targeted multi-asset marketing, it would be well served by the study of how this approach is used in nearby tourism destinations. Not only would the repertoire of possibilities be expanded, but a more clearly defined sense of the competitive environment would emerge.

Stakeholders that Need to be Involved

The sixth set of questions in Workshops 1 and 2 asked the participants to reflect upon the kinds of stakeholder groups that need to be involved in the process of defining a Surprise tourism vision. Participants recognized that the tourism enterprise is rich, complex, and varied, and the impacts permeate throughout the fabric of the community. Consequently, the stakeholder groups that need to be represented in the tourism development process are diverse. In addition to the repertoire of stakeholders already invited to the workshops (tourism businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and arts and culture organizations), participants suggested several other sectors that need representation. These include, but are not limited to: the ASU Sundome, the proving grounds, local foundations, sports facilities from throughout the Valley, faith-based organizations, historians, land developers, home builders, public information officers, chamber of commerce, home owner associations, schools, and media.

Processes Needed to Create Tourism Development Strategy

The seventh, and final, set of questions in Workshops 1 and 2 invited participants to offer suggestions for the development of short- and long-term strategy for tourism development in Surprise. Specific suggestions offered during Workshop 1 (government, non-profit, and cultural sectors) are listed on page 4 of Appendix G. Specific suggestions offered during Workshop 2 (business sector) are listed on pages 4 and 5 of Appendix H. Since these questions are revisited by the participants in Workshop 3, an integrative review of the major themes that emerged is provided below in a subsequent section of this report.

Insights from Workshops 1 and 2 Pertaining to the Tourism Development Cycle

As described in the process section of this report, insights from the Workshop 1 and 2 discussions were synthesized and reported in the context of a six-step *Tourism Development Cycle* framework (Appendices C and D). The results of this synthesis are presented in a matrix reproduced in Appendix E. The matrix is important for several reasons.

First, the matrix provides a mechanism for conducting a quick “compare and contrast” analysis of the core results from Workshops 1 (government, non-profit, and cultural sectors) and 2 (business sector). For each topical area, results from Workshop 1 are presented in the left column, and results pertaining to the same area from Workshop 2 are presented in the right column.

Second, the matrix provides a mechanism for highlighting communality of insight that spanned both Workshops. For each topical area, the shaded rows depict insights common to both Workshops.

Third, the matrix consolidates information from Workshops 1 and 2 that has direct bearing on building an effective tourism development strategy. Participant observations about what is known that might be helpful in the development of effective tourism strategy are recorded in the matrix. This provides a useful starting point for building a model of tourism development for the City of Surprise that begins with what is known about the customers, the community’s assets, and the competitive environment. At the same time, the data in the matrix should be understood as limited by the reality of their inherent nature: valuable insights based on sound intuition, but in fact needing validation and expansion through empirical research.

Fourth, and importantly, the matrix reveals specific issues and questions in the six-step Tourism Development process that remain as yet unaddressed and unexplored. Lack of insight abounds for many issues within the first three steps (*Situation Analysis*, *Selection of Target Market(s)*, and *Positioning of Product/Service*), which begs for further scrutiny and research. Without complete development of perspective for these first three steps, the stakeholders are not yet ready to complete the last three steps (*Determining Market Objectives*, *Developing and Implementing Action Plans*, and *Developing Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies*). Nonetheless, the participants offered many useful reflections on needed steps for *Action Planning*. These reflections are summarized on pages 7 and 8 of Appendix E.

Participant Recommendations for Long- and Short-Term Tourism Development Strategy

During Workshop 3 (Combined Stakeholders – November 23), an overview of *The Tourism Development Cycle* was presented (Appendices C and D) – as well as the synthesis of results from Workshops 1 and 2 in the context *The Tourism Development Cycle* (Appendix F). As described in the process section of this report, participants were

then asked to ponder upon the information presented, and offer their reflections on: (1) long-term direction needed for successful tourism development, (2) short-term “successes” that could be accomplished by stakeholders working together, and (3) what sectors need to be engaged as tourism development strategy is to be developed (Appendix F). A detailing of themes that emerged for the three domains is presented in Appendix I. Many insights were offered in response to questions 1 and 2. These insights both reinforce and supplement the insights produced in response to the last phase of questioning during Workshops 1 and 2 (see pages 8 and 9 of Appendix E). For the third question (sector involvement), little additional insight was provided beyond that offered in Workshops 1 and 2 (see *Stakeholders that Need to be Involved* section above).

Taken as a whole, participant suggestions on important characteristics for *long-term* tourism development in Surprise can be synthesized into fifteen major categories. They are:

1. *Multi-stake holder collaboration.* Tourism must be recognized as a complex economic and life quality engine that carries impacts within diverse segments of the community. As such, long term planning needs to involve representatives from many stakeholder groups working in collaboration to achieve a long term and unifying goal.
2. *Cooperative marketing ventures.* There needs to be a coherent marketing strategy for the community, and opportunities for cooperative marketing of multiple tourism assets, products and services. This will result in greater visibility of Surprise as a tourism destination, more attractive and “bundled” tourism benefit portfolios to target markets, and economies of scale in tourism promotion.
3. *A research-driven strategy.* While insights about the consumer, Surprise tourism products, and the competitive environment abound, it is clear that objective research is needed. There are many unknowns about the decision-making process of tourists, and how competing tourism destinations successfully develop marketing campaigns to increase tourism-related cash flow in their local economies.
4. *Regional alliances.* Surprise cannot be successful in the highly competitive tourism market operating in isolation of other West Valley communities and surrounding tourism assets. As tourism marketing and development strategy unfolds, it needs to be done in the context of a regional perspective. Representatives of other communities and tourism assets need to be incorporated into the visioning process.
5. *Leadership for tourism development.* It is not clear what entity carries the responsibility for developing a community tourism vision, and there is little evidence that a process for synthesizing and coordinating such an effort has yet emerged compared to other tourism destinations throughout the country and within Arizona. A focal point for leadership needs to be identified, and clear organization and resources need to surround this focal point.

6. *Strategic partnerships between Surprise city government and the business community.* Implicit in the leadership development process is the need to develop synchrony between the interests of business and the resources of city government. Working together, the potential for developing strategically targeted, successful tourism-related economic and life quality initiatives would be greatly increased.
7. *Creation of an explicit, long-term strategic plan for tourism development.* Following the tourism development model depicted in Appendix D, a Surprise tourism plan detailing mission, vision, environmental assessments, trends, goals, objectives, action plans and evaluation strategies must be written. The plan must reflect the interests of a broad range of community stakeholders, including citizens who must have their interests for an ideal community reflected. The plan should guide the development of marketing, and the cultivation of new assets with the power of attracting desired tourism flow.
8. *The tourism product(s) must be defined.* In order to compete in the marketplace, the specific “unique selling proposition” for surprise tourism must be explicitly defined. This definition includes specification of desired target markets, and articulation of specific “product portfolios” that will be captured in marketing campaigns to position and differentiate Surprise as a unique and lucrative destination for the target market.
9. *A strategy for tourism infrastructure development.* The participants perceive that the attractive draw of the community for tourists is challenged by the lack of infrastructure that tourists deem important. Examples include: major resorts, nightlife, attractions, and efficient transit systems. An important element of tourism vision development must include creation of a specific plan for assessing needed infrastructure, and an action plan for developing it.
10. *Transit and access.* A specific strategy and action plan must be developed to address the community challenges of access and transit. Regionally, the City must position itself as readily accessible to tourism markets internally, nationally, state-wide and within the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. Internally, transit systems are required to connect tourism assets, products and services within the community. Parking and traffic problems need to be removed as barriers to the promotion of tourism.
11. *Barriers to tourism development.* There are many forces that undermine the development of a coherent tourism strategy beyond limited infrastructure. Lack of leadership, inadequate communication among stakeholders, lack of vision, lack of information on best practices, and other limitations thwart progressive movement in the tourism arena. These barriers need to be inventoried, and a strategy for overcoming them needs to be developed.
12. *Gateway for Surprise tourism.* There needs to be both a psychological and physical focal point for Surprise tourism activity. The purpose of this focal point is to serve as a beacon for attracting tourists to Surprise, and to provide a mechanism for grounding tourists in local assets and opportunities once they arrive in Surprise. This focal point could be developed physically through construction of a tourist visitor center, or the encouragement of multiple tourism

assets to assemble in one geographic local (such as the Glendale sports and entertainment district).

13. *Promotional items to communicate existing tourism assets.* There is a sense that there is inadequate cross-sector communication about existing tourism assets, products and services – including those of a time-bound nature such as special events, special promotions, and one-time venues. In the same way, tourism assets are judged not to be coherently assembled and disseminated to existing and potential tourists. There is a need for a coordinated promotional plan that communicates existing tourism assets to both stakeholders (so cross-promotions can transpire) and tourists.
14. *Branding for promotion and marketing.* In the context of tourism promotion, there is a need for a research-based branding initiative, which includes the development of a logo, slogan, an orchestrated set of positioning statements, and templates for ads and collateral development. The branding should capitalize on the unique character of the city's name.
15. *Begin with a focus on small successes.* Given the lack of history within Surprise of coordinated tourism development, it is important to recognize the complexity of the task ahead. Much needs to be accomplished, and the broader outcomes will be accomplished only after significant investment of time and resources. It is important to allow for the production of immediate, bounded, limited scope achievements to provide encouragement for those engaged in the process, for example: development of a City tourism-oriented web-site or monthly calendar of events.

Participant suggestions on important considerations in the *short-run* that would set the stage for these *long-term* activities can be synthesized into seven categories. They are:

1. *Regular meetings of stakeholders.* The participants expressed favor about the positive benefits that accrued from conversations within the workshops, and articulated the importance of convening multi-stakeholder gatherings on a regular basis to create energy for developing a tourism development strategy for the community. The meetings should provide a platform for open expression of interests of community stakeholders, and a mechanism for building collaboration among them.
2. *Identification of leadership.* A task force should be created to evaluate scenarios for developing individuals and organizations that might provide leadership for tourism development within the community.
3. *Formal designation of a tourism development task force.* A formal board or committee should be created, and charged to create forward movement in the creation of a tourism development plan.
4. *Electronic communications.* To facilitate communication among stakeholders, the participants recommended the development of a list-serve, e-mail distribution list, web-site, and a monthly calendaring of events.

5. *Promotional template.* The participants recommended the development of a template for creating flyers and handouts for visitors announcing special events or promotional programs. Even in absence of a permanent brand and logo, the template would ensure consistency and quality among otherwise disparate promotional activities of stakeholders.
6. *Placement of initial cross-marketing advertisements.* Stakeholders could pool marketing resources to place a limited number of strategic advertisements in local tourist-oriented media.
7. *Initiate selected out-of-state promotions.* Relationships can be developed with the media, travel writers, tourism offices, and the business community (e.g., real estate offices, proving grounds) to place stories on Surprise tourism opportunities.

In general, the workshops were quite productive in providing a forum for expressing a needed long- and short-term strategy for tourism development. The expressed ideas provide fertile grounding for developing Surprise as an effective competitor in the tourism marketplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Across the three workshops, the perspectives of the various stakeholders were both rich and consistent. It is clear that a cogent, organized strategy for Surprise tourism development needs to emerge. It is also clear that leadership needs to be cultivated (and empowered with resources) to champion this development. Toward that end, eight core recommendations are offered through this assessment. These recommendations are developed to resonate with the voices of the workshop participants as they expressed their perceptions of what is -- and a vision for what can be -- in the arena of tourism development within the Surprise community. The eight recommendations are:

1. *Cultivate and empower leadership.* Clear leadership needs to emerge for the Surprise tourism development initiative. The function of the leadership is to engage all stakeholders in a collaborative process to produce a vision for tourism development, and to develop an accompanying marketing strategy. The City of Surprise is best positioned to offer this leadership, and empower leadership with necessary resources to begin the process of strategic development.
2. *Create a stakeholder advisory group.* A stakeholder board needs to be designated to serve as counsel to the leadership. The board should be comprised of representatives from major stakeholder groups, including -- but not limited to -- the following sectors: lodging, food and beverage, attractions, sports and recreation, parks, transportation, arts and culture, golf, home building, healthcare, and businesses indirectly benefited by tourism. Citizen representation should be included on the board. Also, liaisons should serve on the board representing the Surprise Economic Development Advisory Board (SEDAB), and the Northwest

Valley Chamber of Commerce. The board should meet monthly to advise the tourism development process.

3. *Develop a five-year strategic plan.* A five-year plan must be developed to guide the tourism development process. The vision for the plan must engage all community stakeholders. It should describe the community's vision for tourism development, including statements of mission and values. The plan should provide an assessment of tourism trends, existing customers, competition, tourism assets, barriers to development, and required community infrastructure. Goals, objectives, action plans, and evaluation plans must be explicit. The plan should guide the development of a marketing plan – including specification of target markets and “product portfolios” to differentiate the Surprise tourism offerings from those of competitors. It should follow the six-step framework of the tourism development model depicted in Appendices C and D.
4. *Ensure an asset-based, systems approach to tourism development.* The tourism development plan must provide a mechanism for building upon the unique assets that differentiate the community from others. Also, it must reflect the synergy between the interests of the business community and the life quality interests of families living in Surprise. The plan must recognize the amenities that define a high quality of life for the City's residents, and enhance them as additional tourism infrastructure is developed. The potential contributions of tourism to a diverse array of community stakeholders must be considered in the plan – direct tourism providers, general citizenry, home builders, land developers, restaurants, retail outlets, and other small and large businesses that gain indirectly by increased tourism.
5. *Ensure regional perspective and collaboration.* The emerging vision needs to be anchored in regional perspective. There should be representation of organizations and interests affiliated with regional assets on the board (such as regional sports organizations, attractions or parklands). The strategic plan needs to position Surprise as delivering opportunities for experiencing regional clusters of product and service portfolios.
6. *Anchor all planning in research.* The entire scope of tourism development within Surprise needs to be anchored in empirical research. Three forms of research are required: a visitor survey, a resident survey, and a competition best practices survey. For the *visitor survey*, ten categories of data are needed: visitor demographics, patterns of behavior (e.g., length of stay, services used, party size), product/service preferences, consumer psychographics, travel motivations, travel decision-making dynamics, expenditure patterns, competition analysis, image analysis, and customer satisfaction. For the *resident survey*, eight categories of data are needed: demographics, knowledge levels of tourism opportunities, attitudes toward tourism development, perception of tourism costs and benefits, frequency and characteristics of out-of-town guests, travel behaviors of out-of-town guests, perceptions of products and services needed to maximize retention of guest expenditures within Surprise, perceived barriers to maximizing retention of guest expenditures within Surprise, and decision-making processes of guests and

residents related to tourism. The *competition best practices* survey would provide valuable about what other communities are doing well to maximize financial and life quality gains from tourism development.

7. *Develop synchronized marketing strategy.* As part of the tourism development plan, a marketing plan needs to create a tourism brand for community. The branding must include a logo, slogan, positioning statements, and templates for advertising and collateral development. The marketing plan must specify promotional strategies, including channels to be utilized in image development and product placement. It should identify strategies for developing resources to implement the marketing plan – including the creation of multi-sector strategic alliances to pool resources.
8. *Create short-term successes.* While focused on the long-term, leadership must partner with the stakeholder advisory group to create short-term success stories. Quick, immediate products to benefit the whole of the community will galvanize commitment to the planning process, and provide energy to ensure its forward movement. The workshop participants have provided a litany of possibilities including development of: list serves, web-sites, monthly event calendars, promotional templates, cross-marketing ads, and media promotions.

CONCLUSIONS

Workshop participants offered illuminating insights about the potential of tourism in enhancing the economic and life quality of the Surprise community. A strong foundation was laid for the unfolding of a Surprise tourism development plan, and a vision was established for a process to create it. Important tourism assets from both a community and regional perspective were identified, as well as primary needs of tourists visiting Surprise. Potential marketing niches were identified that might enable Surprise to differentiate its tourism product from that of competitors. The participants offered a plethora of suggestions for the long-term developed of tourism strategy, which were assembled into fifteen broad themes in this report. They also provided many suggestions for enhancing immediate success in Surprise tourism development, which were assembled into seven themes for this report.

The eight recommendations offered in this report would serve the City well in the long-term goal of enhancing the community's quality of life through tourism development. The citizens, businesses and organizations of Surprise will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

Appendix A

Letters of Invitation to Workshops



Office of Economic Development

To: Community Leaders Interested in Tourism
From: John Hagen, Economic Development Director
Date: June 17, 2005
Re: Tourism Visioning Meetings

The City of Surprise would like your help in defining a vision for tourism in the economic development of our community.

To do this, we are conducting some group meetings with business and community leaders to gather and exchange ideas. Researchers from Arizona State University at the West Campus will be helping the City by conducting these meetings during June and July. The first meeting will take place on June 30th from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Your experience in the area gives an important perspective we would like to include in our planning effort. This meeting represents a unique opportunity to voice your opinion about the direction for tourism development in Surprise.

Your time commitment on the 30th would be about three hours. Please let us know if you are able to attend, either by phone (623) 875-4273 or e-mail (Kathryn.guthmiller@surpriseaz.com). We are still confirming the location, but will have that for you when you confirm your attendance.

If you know of other individuals in our community or region who would be appropriate participants, please let us know so that we may contact them.

We look forward to hearing from you and gaining your participation in this important project.



Office of Economic Development

To: Community Leaders Interested in Tourism
From: John Hagen, Economic Development Director
Date: July 27, 2005
Re: Tourism Visioning Meetings

The City of Surprise would like your help in defining a vision for tourism in the economic development of our community.

To do this, we are conducting some group meetings with business and community leaders to gather and exchange ideas. Researchers from Arizona State University at the West Campus will be helping the City by facilitating these meetings.

The next meeting will take place on August 26th from 8:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. We have reserved the conference room at the Surprise Regional Library, located at 16089 N. Bullard Avenue. Please let us know if you are able to attend, either by phone (623) 875-4273 or e-mail (kathryn.guthmiller@surpriseaz.com).

Your experience in our community gives an important perspective we would like to include in our planning effort. This meeting is a unique opportunity to voice your opinion about the direction of tourism development in Surprise.

If you know of other individuals in our community or region who would be appropriate participants, please let us know so that we may contact them.

We look forward to hearing from you and gaining your participation in this important project.



Economic Development Department

To: Community Leaders Interested in Tourism
From: John Hagen, Economic Development Director
Date: November 8, 2005
Re: Tourism Visioning Meeting

The City of Surprise has held two visioning meetings over the past few months. Now, we would like to bring participants from those meetings together to refine our direction for the future with respect to tourism development.

Researchers from Arizona State University at the West Campus will again facilitate this meeting.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday, **November 23, from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.** We have reserved the back room at Desert Palms Restaurant, located at 12425 West Bell Road (right next to City Hall). Continental breakfast will be provided. Please let us know if you are able to attend, either by phone (623) 875-4273, or e-mail (kathryn.guthmiller@surpriseaz.com).

We look forward to hearing from you and gaining your continued participation in this important project.

Appendix B

Workshop 1 and 2 Focus Group Script

City of Surprise Tourism Stakeholder Focus Group 1 and 2 Script

**Focus Group 1 Stakeholders: Government, Non-Profit and Cultural
Date: June 30, 2005**

**Focus Group 2 Stakeholders: Business
Date: August 26, 2005**

Probe Questions:

Part I: Existing community assets around which effective tourism can be built

Asset mapping exercise: define “assets”

1. What are the points of pride within the City of Surprise? What are residents most proud of? Why do they enjoy living here? Why are new residents attracted here?
2. What do they enjoy in immediately surrounding areas? Communities? Natural areas? Open spaces?
3. What assets within the city can be appealing to out-of-state tourists? Business assets? Travel products? Natural resources? Parks and recreation? Cultural resources? Historical resources? Tourism services? Unique population features? Folklore? Religious/faith community resources? Special events? Political systems? Media resources? Health resources?
4. What assets within the immediately surrounding area can be appealing to out-of-state tourists?
5. What other assets within the City of Surprise would be appealing to visitors from the rest of Arizona and the Phoenix metropolitan area?
6. What other assets in the immediately surrounding area would be appealing to visitors from the rest of Arizona and the Phoenix metropolitan area?
7. What kinds of assets are “missing” from the current portfolio that would substantially contribute to tourism drive? What do competitors offer that this City does not?

Part II: Core tourism “drivers” that underlie the unique type of consumer demand that would be attractive to Surprise community assets

Tourism driver exercise: define “drivers” – travelers with certain activity/experience “need profiles” are attracted to certain “tourism setting” profiles

Existing state

1. Why do you believe current visitors come to the City of Surprise?
2. How would you describe the diversity of these visitors? Are there specific “clusters of visitors” or “visitor segments” motivated by different needs or desires? What are they?
3. Do certain “visitor segments” with different “need profiles” stay longer than others? Do certain need profiles spend more money than others?

Potential state

1. Given the existing assets of the community and its surroundings, what market segments hold the greatest potential for expansion if the assets were marketed more aggressively? What new segments might be attracted if “hidden assets” were marketed more aggressively?
2. What new segments might be attracted if new assets were added as identified in Part I, question 7?

Part III: The potential for unique “marketing niches” or “product portfolios” in light of competitive mixes in surrounding communities.

Benefit bundle exercise: define market niche/product portfolios/benefit bundles

1. What assets do we have that other communities in the metropolitan area do not?
2. Exactly who or what are our competitors?
3. Why is each our competitor?
4. Fill in the blank: From a tourism perspective, nobody but nobody is as good as the city of Surprise in _____.
5. What creative combination of existing and potential assets can create synergy to simultaneously develop a unique marketing niche and fuel demand? What product portfolios would set the City of Surprise apart from its competitors? What drivers of demand would be attracted by each portfolio? What would generate the most revenue?
6. What product portfolios or marketing niches would most favorably enhance the image of the City for community residents? What ones would most favorably enhance the life quality for community residents? What product portfolios or marketing niches would be most supported by community residents? What are the potential positive and negative impacts of each?
7. What ones would most favorably position the community to attract new industry and businesses? What ones would attract new private investment in tourism infrastructure, products, and services?

Part IV: Potential community assets that could be developed through relationships among partners to advance these niches.

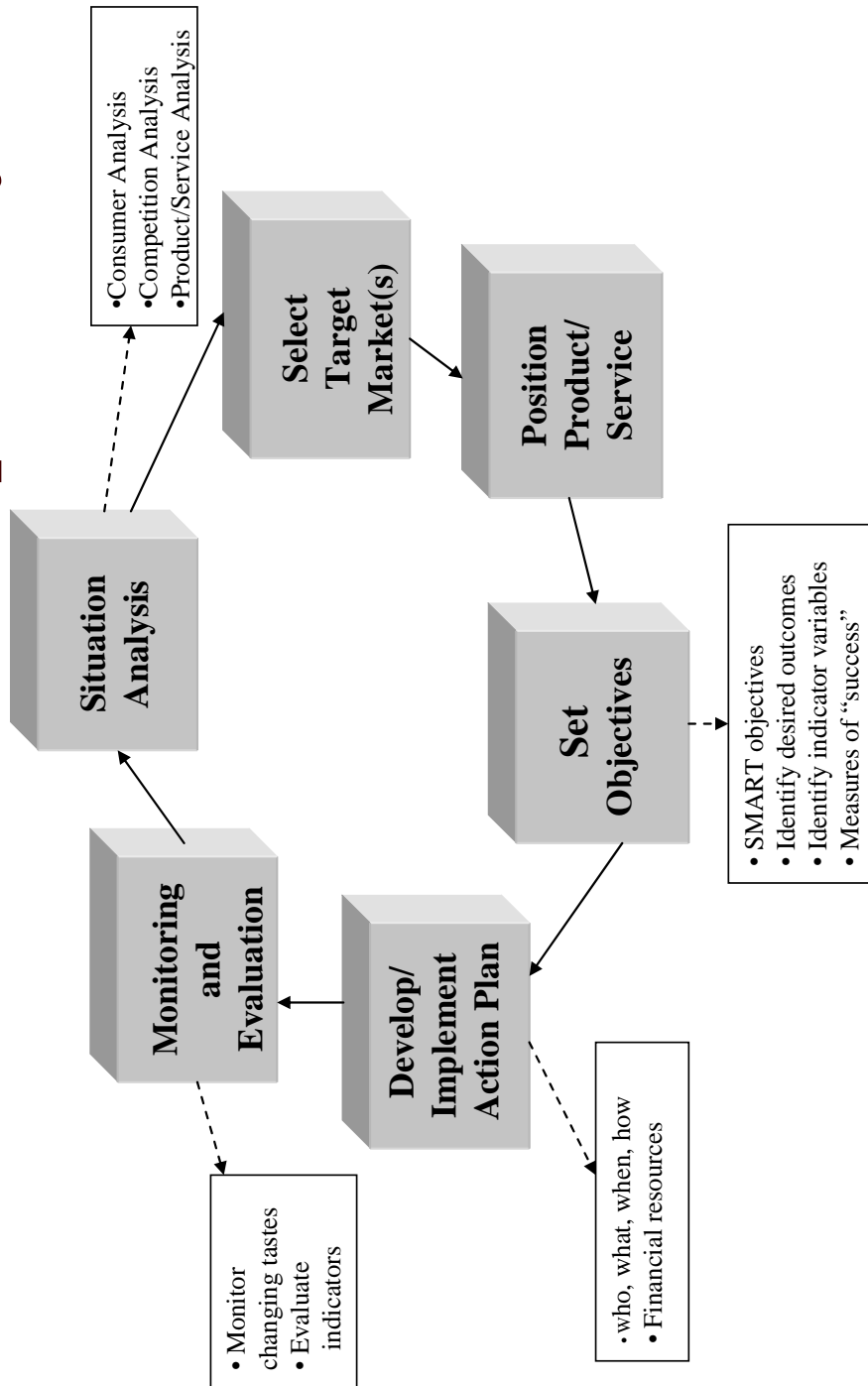
1. To develop our tourism asset base, to resonate well with our identified “drivers” of demand, and to strongly position the community in each desired market niche, what needs to be done?
2. What organizations, agencies and institutions need to become involved? Government – local, city, regional (eg MAG), state, federal? Non-profit organizations? Service organizations/clubs? Faith communities? Advocacy groups? Citizen groups? Businesses? Corporations? Utilities? Foundations? Home owner groups? Small businesses? Educational institutions?
3. How can synergies be developed? How can relationships be encouraged? How might work groups be assembled? How can they be infused with vision?
4. Where might financial resources come from?
5. In what specific ways are tourism products and services within Surprise being marketed or promoted? Individual businesses? Specific groups? Governmental units? Councils, non-profits, service clubs or collaborations? Chambers?
6. Beyond these existing efforts, what plans are being made for additional marketing or promotions?
7. How might these efforts be synchronized in the future to maximize the collective return on investment, or to provide leverage among potential beneficiaries?

Appendix C

Tourism Development Cycle

Visual Concept Map

The Tourism Development Cycle



Appendix D

Tourism Development Cycle Information Needs

**Surprise Tourism Development Focus Group
November 23, 2005**

**Partnership for Community Development
Arizona State University at the West campus**

**Richard C. Knopf, Kathleen L. Andereck
Professors of Tourism Management**

Tourism Development Cycle Notes

Step 1. Conduct an Audit (The Situation Analysis)

- Consumer Analysis

Who are the existing customers?
What are their needs and wants?
How do they make decisions?
What are the characteristics of prospective customers?
What would attract prospects to your product/service?

- Competition Analysis

What is the competition?
What are their marketing strategies?
What assets are you competing with?
What weaknesses can you capitalize upon?
What competitive benefit do you offer that the competition cannot?
What consumer groups are they serving that you are missing?

- Product/Service Analysis

What are your tourism assets?
What is your known product/service mix?
What additional assets can be brought to the mix – hidden existing assets and potential new assets?
What are your competitive strengths?
What are your competitive weaknesses?
What can you do to maximize your strengths and dissipate your weaknesses?

Step 2. Select Specific Target Market(s)

- The average customer does not exist and does not grow tourism cash-flow!
- Markets are comprised of a series of sub-markets.
- Each sub-market has its own needs, wants, preferences.
- From a marketing perspective, only certain sub-markets are lucrative.
- Identify what sub-markets will be targeted.
- These become your market niches.

Step 3. Position Your Product/Service

- Communicate your product/service advantages to the identified target markets.
- How are you unique – offering something your competitors do not?
- Communicate benefits to the target market – how their lives will be enhanced.
- How is your product/service different than your competitors?
- What is your unique selling proposition (USP)?
- One positioning statement should be developed for each target market:
Nobody but nobody is as good at _____ as we are.
- Develop logo and taglines for each market.

Step 4. Determine Your Marketing Objectives

- Articulate what you wish to accomplish (the desired outcomes of your plan).
- Objectives must be measurable.
- They should describe positive results that would transpire as a result of marketing.
- One set of objectives should be developed for *each* target market.
- Each objective must be **SMART** -- **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-oriented, **R**esearchable, and **T**ime-bound

Step 5. Develop and Implement Action Plans

- What specific steps will be taken to accomplish your objectives?
- One set of action statements for each target market.
- Action statements should address “why”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “who”.
- Must emphasize the construction of social capital – construction of *relationships* that create tourism *assets* that pull consumers toward the community.
- Costs of actions should be articulated, and sponsors found.

Step 6. Monitor and Evaluate Actions

- Measure the degree to which objectives are being met.
- Import ideas from best practices elsewhere.
- Monitor changing consumer tastes/market conditions.
- Monitoring continuously changing competitive fronts.
- Look for larger regional asset building potential.
- Continually adapt or redefine product/service based upon research results.
- Adapt or redefine market strategy as needed.
- Product/service development and marketing is a continuously evolving process.
- Importantly, success is guaranteed only through collaborative processes.

Appendix E

Synthesized Workshop 1 and 2 Results

**Surprise Tourism Development Focus Group
November 23, 2005**

**Partnership for Community Development
Arizona State University at the West campus**

**Richard C. Knopf, Kathleen L. Andereck
Professors of Tourism Management**

Synthesized Results from:

- *June 30th Focus Group discussion (involving the Government, Non-Profit and Cultural Sector)*
- *August 26th Focus Group discussion (Business Sector)*

Notes:

- *Results are presented in the context of the six-step Tourism Development Cycle.*
- *The six-step Tourism Development Cycle is described in accompanying handouts.*
- *Each step in the Tourism Development Cycle carries a variety of information needs.*
- *Focus group discussion points pertaining to each information need are summarized in boxed-cell format within the attached document.*
- *Within the boxed cell format:*
 - *columns on the **left** signify discussion points for the June 30th Focus Group discussion (involving the Government, Non-Profit and Cultural Sector)*
 - *Columns on the **right** signify discussion points for the August 26th Focus Group discussion (Business Sector).*
- *Shaded cells indicate discussion points that were common to both focus groups*
- *Information needs that contain no entries signify that no discussion emerged pertaining to that information need. This suggests the need for further research and reflection in these arenas.*

*The Six-Step Tourism Development Cycle
and Accompanying Information Needs*

Step 1. Conduct an Audit (The Situation Analysis)

- Consumer Profiles

Who are the existing customers?

Friends and family	Friends and family
Sports and recreation	Sports and recreation
Business	Business
Relocation	Relocation
	Snowbirds with disposable income
	Funerals
	Hospital visitors
	Proving Grounds Visitors
	Speed World visitors

What are their needs and wants?

How do they make decisions?

What are the characteristics of *prospective* customers?

What would attract new customers to your product/service?

- Competition Analysis

What is the competition?

Scottsdale; East Valley	Scottsdale; East Valley
Rest of Arizona	Rest of Arizona
Rest of Country	

What are their marketing strategies?

What assets are you competing with?

<i>Transportation</i>	
Transportation	Better freeways/Rail system/Intra-city
<i>Greater tourism attractions/amenities</i>	
Nightlife/Entertainment (theater, night club)	Entertainment/Evening activities (ex. theaters)
Broaden mix of attractions: events, African/Native American art, outdoor rec., desert; Variety of experiences	Attractions, events
Convention facilities	Convention/Meeting space
Resort-golf	Clear Branding
Fine dining/Food and beverage	Gear tourism toward new economic development
Greater lodging choices	
Strong and Proven Image	

What weaknesses can you capitalize upon?

What competitive benefit do you offer that the competition cannot?

What consumer groups are they serving that you are missing?

- Product/Service Analysis

What are your tourism assets?

<i>Desert Environment</i>	
White Tanks Park/Sonoran Desert	Mountains and desert
Weather	Climate
Landscape/views/empty land	Open land
Cleaner environment	

<i>Attractions</i>	
Art Museum	Art Museum
Golf	Golf
Stadium/Recreation Campus/ Potential to be sports Mecca	Stadium/Recreation Campus
Outdoor recreation	Sun Dome
Heard Museum	Challenger Space Center
Southwest culture/Native American culture	
History of City	
Event potential	
Proving grounds	
Rose fields	
<i>Regional Attractions</i>	
Zoo	Zoo
Luke Air Force Base	Luke Air Force Base
<i>Community History</i>	
Mexican/Latino culture/Migrant worker history	Agriculture/Migrant worker/Farmers market tradition
African American history	
History of City	
<i>Human Capital</i>	
Hunger to participate in community activities/Well educated volunteers	Volunteerism
Retirement Community Volunteers	Retirees with varied abilities
<i>Infrastructure</i>	
Health services	New hospitals/Medical benefits
Loop 303 will be completed	New schools
Close to amenities	
<i>“Persona” of Community</i>	
Affordable (housing)	Affordable (housing)
Friendly people	Affability

Fringe of urban/rural quality	On the fringe/small town feel
Accessible city leaders	Accessibility
West Valley activity and growth	Growth of city
Sense of community	Diversity (age)
Safe	Authentic new culture
Forward momentum	Fresh – even name is fresh
Energy	Entrepreneurial opportunities
Sense of optimism	Name
Sense of family	
Sense of excitement	
Can shape where we live	

What is your known product/service mix?

What additional assets can be brought to the mix - hidden existing assets

Highlight mix of attractions: events, outdoor recreation opportunities, desert experience; Variety of experiences	Highlight existing attractions and events
African/Native American art	
Mountain bikes/ultralights	

and potential new assets?

Nightlife/Entertainment (theater, night club)	Entertainment/Evening activities (ex. theaters)
Broaden mix of attractions: events, African/Native American art, outdoor rec., desert; Variety of experiences	New attractions and events
Convention facilities	Convention/Meeting space
Resort-golf	Branding to highlight potential
Fine dining/Food and beverage	Gear tourism toward new economic development
Lodging	High-tech jobs
Rail connection to Grand Canyon	

What are your competitive strengths?

What are your competitive weaknesses?

<i>Transportation</i>	
Lack of Good Transportation and Access	Lack of Freeways/Rail system access
Lack of Nightlife/Entertainment (theater, night club)	Lack of Entertainment/Evening activities (ex. theaters)
Lack of attractions/ events,	Lack of Attractions/ events
Lack of Convention facilities	Lack of Convention/Meeting space
Poor parking	
Resort-golf	Lack of unified branding
Lack of Fine dining/Food and beverage opportunities	
Underdeveloped Lodging Capacity	

What can you do to maximize your strengths and dissipate your weaknesses?

Step 2. Select Specific Target Market(s)

- The average customer does not exist and does not grow tourism cash-flow!
- Markets are comprised of a series of sub-markets.
- Each sub-market has its own needs, wants, preferences.
- From a marketing perspective, only certain sub-markets are lucrative.
- Identify what sub-markets will be targeted.
- These become your market niches.

THERE IS AGREEMENT ON FOUR POTENTIAL MARKET NICHEs ACROSS THE TWO FOCUS GROUPS:

Friends and family market	Friends and family market
Relocation market	Relocation market
Special Events market	Special Events market (western events, Veterans event)
Arts	Arts (bundle with golf, museums, Sundome)

OTHER POTENTIAL MARKET NICHEs FOR SURPRISE INCLUDE:

Amateur sports	Desert environment/Southwest experience
Multi-generational experiences	Affordable Golf -- desert golf, student golf, stay and play package
Family travel	Convention business
Hispanic/Mexican cultural heritage	Proving grounds (visitor center, tour?)
	Snowbirds

Step 3. Position Your Product/Service

- Communicate your product/service advantages to the identified target markets.
- How are you unique – offering something your competitors do not?
- Communicate benefits to the target market – how their lives will be enhanced.
- Each target market must offer a benefit bundle.
- How is your product/service different than your competitors?
- What is your unique selling proposition (USP)?
- One positioning statement should be developed for each target market:
Nobody but nobody is as good at _____ as we are.
- Develop logo and taglines for each market.

Step 4. Determine Your Marketing Objectives

- Articulate what you wish to accomplish (the desired outcomes of your plan).
- Objectives must be measurable.
- They should describe positive results that would transpire as a result of marketing.
- One set of objectives should be developed for *each* target market.
- Each objective must be **SMART** -- **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ction-oriented, **R**esearchable, and **T**ime-bound

Step 5. Develop and Implement Action Plans

- What specific steps will be taken to accomplish your objectives?
- One set of action statements for each target market.
- Action statements should address “why”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “who”.

- Must emphasize the construction of social capital – construction of *relationships* that create tourism *assets* that pull consumers toward the community.
- Costs of actions should be articulated, and sponsors found.

GENERAL FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS PERTAINING TO STEPS 3, 4 and 5 OF THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CYCLE :

BEFORE WE BEGIN TO DEFINE MARKET NICHEs, TARGET MARKETs AND ACTION PLANS TO ATTRACT THESE MARKETs, WE NEED TO BECOME ORGANIZED AS A COMMUNITY OF TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS.

WE NEED TO DEVELOP CONNECTIONS AND SHARED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT VISION AMONG THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS:

County and City Parks and Recreation Departments
 Representatives from sports facilities around the West Valley
 Chamber of Commerce
 Business owners
 Developers/Builders
 Community Foundation
 Residents
 Sundome
 Historian
 Media
 School leaders
 Faith-based community representative
 Home Owners associations
 Proving grounds representative

AS THIS COLLABORATIVE IS BUILT, WE NEED TO BE MINDFUL OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

Realize we are all in this together, and working together we can do more for each other than simply working for our own interests
 This is a broad-based community planning effort

Sub-groups should be developed to focus on certain issues or projects, with the broad group giving coordinating oversight.

The group must build vision by focusing on the positive and the potentials

The group must think long term

The group must de-fragment the responsibility for tourism, and reconstruct a process that provides leadership for tourism

Leadership needs to be defined, and should be from both government and business.

Leadership needs to be stepped up from the city.

Budgets and resources need to be identified and assembled.

A workable organizational model needs to be developed, with a clear definition of mission and roles

The group should strive to incubate marketing partnerships

Marketing partnerships need to be within the city, developed regionally, and state-wide.

A major goal is to build communication among ourselves.

The Collaborative needs to supply the missing pieces for an overall tourism development model

The Collaborative should direct the process for defining our tourism product

The Collaborative must create a branding for the Surprise tourism product, including a slogan and high image logo that can create communality of branding and an attractive force for tourists and visitors.

The Collaborative should start with one tangible product, and move ahead swiftly to market it and create tangible results.

SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS MIGHT BE:

1. Development of branding, slogan, logo that plays upon the City's name.
2. Development of comprehensive tourism development plan.
3. Build small, early, quick success action items to build energy and connectedness.
4. Create a kit for residents – what to do with visitors to open options for keeping expenditures in the Area.
5. Develop branded promotional materials and guides for visitors.
6. Develop strategies for promoting shoulder/non-peak seasons.
7. Develop strategies for broadening tourism assets (see Step 1: Product/Service Analysis above)

Step 6. Monitoring and Evaluating

- Measure the degree to which objectives are being met.
- Import ideas from best practices elsewhere.
- Monitor changing consumer tastes/market conditions.
- Monitoring continuously changing competitive fronts.
- Look for larger regional asset building potential.
- Continually adapt or redefine product/service based upon research results.
- Adapt or redefine market strategy as needed.
- Product/service development and marketing is a continuously evolving process.
- Importantly, success is guaranteed only through collaborative processes.

Appendix F

Workshop 3 Focus Group Script

City of Surprise Tourism Stakeholder Focus Group 3 Script

Synthesis Discussion

Stakeholders: Combined Sectors – Business, Government, Non-Profit and Cultural

Date: November 23, 2005

Context:

Consider the combined reflections and insights that emerged from the June 30th Focus Group discussion (involving the Government, Non-Profit and Cultural Sector) and the August 26th Focus Group discussion (Business Sector) – See handouts:

- (1) The Tourism Development Cycle*
- (2) Tourism Development Cycle Information Needs*

Question Probes:

Part 1: What do you see as the primary long-term direction that needs to be given to help our community develop a successful tourism development initiative?

Part 2: What do you see as some short-term “quick successes” that we could accomplish by working together to help our community develop a successful tourism development initiative?

Part 3: What sectors need to be at the table as we work together to help our community develop a successful tourism development initiative?

Appendix G

Workshop 1 Results

City of Surprise Tourism Stakeholder Focus Group Results

Stakeholders: Government, Non-Profit and Cultural Sectors
Date: June 30, 2005

Part I: Existing community assets around which effective tourism can be built

1. What are the points of pride within the City of Surprise? What are residents most proud of? Why do they enjoy living here? Why are new residents attracted here?
 - Cheap housing
 - Sense of community
 - Safe
 - Hunger to participate in community activities
 - Accessible city leaders
 - Forward momentum
 - Energy
 - Well educated volunteers
 - Cleaner environment
 - Friendly people
 - On the fringe/rural quality
 - Sense of optimism
 - Shape where live
 - Sense of family
 - Weather
 - Vol. based – can connect with
 - Sense of excitement

2. What assets within the City and immediately surrounding area could be appealing to out-of-state tourists, and to visitors from the rest of Arizona and the Phoenix metropolitan area?

- Fast growth
 - Sports complex
 - Weather
 - Retirement community
 - Golf
 - Heard Museum; Southwest culture, Native American culture history
 - Landscape – Bradshaw and White Tank Mountains viewsheds
 - Hiking, mountain biking, camping, horseback riding, outdoor recreation
 - White Tank Mountains – ruins, wildlife
 - Cactus – Sonoran desert
 - Empty land – intriguing
 - History of City
 - Health services
 - Mexican/Latino culture, migrant worker history, campesino
 - African American history
 - Event potential
 - Proving grounds (cars)
 - RR connect to Canyon
 - Rose fields
3. From a broader regional perspective, what assets should the City of Surprise consider in developing a marketing campaign to attract tourists? What might tourists enjoy in immediately surrounding areas? What are some amenities that could complement the tourism draw?
- Good transportation access, particularly when loop 303 is completed
 - West valley activity and growth
 - Art museum
 - Close to amenities such as shopping and recreation opportunities
 - White Tank Mountains Regional Park
 - West Valley could be sports mecca if organized into coherent whole

- Luke Air Force Base
- Zoo

Part II: Core tourism “drivers” that underlie the unique type of consumer demand that would be attracted to Surprise community assets.

- Ease of access, including efficient transportation systems
- Parking
- Resort amenities
- Golf
- Fine dining
- Convention facilities
- A variety of experiences
- Nightlife

Part III: The potential for unique “marketing niches” or “product” portfolios in light of competitive mixes in surrounding communities.

- Visiting friends and family market
- Relocation market – individuals exploring retirement community options
- Generational marketing – e.g., grandparents traveling with grandchildren
- Amateur sports / youth sports
- Special events – with the potential for a regional draw
- Family travel
- Hispanic / Mexican culture
- Arts segment
- There is a need to broaden mix of attractions into larger packages
 - Events / festivals packaging
 - African / Native American / Hispanic art packaging
 - Cactus / flowers / ultralights / mountain bikes / outdoor recreation packaging

Part IV: Potential community assets that could be developed through relationships among partners to advance these ideas.

- Arizona Community Foundation, and other foundations
- Non-profit organizations
- ASU Sundome
- Proving grounds
- Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department
- Sports facilities throughout the West Valley
 - Develop joint capacity
 - Coordinate amateur sports authorities

Part V: What have we learned from today's reflections? What are the processes needed to develop a strong tourism development strategy for the City of Surprise?

- It is important for each of us to collaborate with others
- Planning is a community effort
- We need to seek partners to develop an effective marketing campaign
- We need to develop a strategy for communicating among ourselves as stakeholders
- We need to establish a process for working together
- The missing pieces (research, competitor information, stakeholder representation) need to be supplied
- Opportunities for forming alliances need to be explored
- All cannot be accomplished at once: there needs to be an incremental approach – starting with small successes
- Builders / Planned community developers need to be brought to the table
- We need to deal with the existing lack of tourist amenities in Surprise:
 - lodging
 - food/beverage

- entertainment – theater, nightclub
- A tourist information kit is needed – what visitors to Surprise can do in the area
- Surprise tourist promotional materials are needed – guides to attract potential visitors

Appendix H

Workshop 2 Results

City of Surprise Tourism Stakeholder Focus Group Results

Stakeholders: The Business Sector

Date: August 26, 2005

Part I: Existing community assets around which effective tourism can be built

1. What are the points of pride within the City of Surprise? What are residents most proud of? Why do they enjoy living here? Why are new residents attracted here?
 - Small town atmosphere
 - The people
 - There is an authentic new culture
 - Even the name is fresh, emanating freshness
 - Reasonable housing costs
 - Entrepreneurial Opportunities
 - Open space
 - New hospitals in area / medical opportunities
 - Diversity of age groups
 - Retirees with varied abilities / volunteerism
 - Surprise Sun-dancers engage communities
 - New schools
 - Climate
 - On the fringe of small town feeling
 - Accessibility
 - Affordability
 - Affability

2. What assets within the City and immediately surrounding area could be appealing to out-of-state tourists, and to visitors from the rest of Arizona and the Phoenix metropolitan area?
 - Stadium/Recreational Campus

- Mountains and Deserts
 - Golf Courses
 - Agriculture, Migrant Workers, Farmers Market Traditions
 - The City's name creates positive image
 - The weather
3. From a broader regional perspective, what assets should the City of Surprise consider in developing a marketing campaign to attract tourists? What might tourists enjoy in immediately surrounding areas? What are some amenities that could complement the tourism draw?
- Luke Air Force Base
 - Art Museum
 - Sun Dome
 - Space Center
 - Zoo

Part II: Core tourism “drivers” that underlie the unique type of consumer demand that would be attracted to Surprise community assets.

- Ease of transportation, including better freeways and rail to provide access
- Entertainment / evening activities (e.g., malls and theatres) is needed
- Convention / meeting space
- Special events
- Attractions
- Hi-tech jobs would drive demand
- Growth of City brings in more visitors

Part III: The potential for unique “marketing niches” or “product” portfolios in light of competitive mixes in surrounding communities.

- Snow Birds capable of bringing in disposable income and time for tourism stays. Attract by the marketing the following attributes:
 - climate

- golf
- recreation activities
- lack of tourism alternatives
- less costly
- Luke Air Force Base
- Opportunity to be with friends
- Other assets unique to Surprise
- Housing and job relocation market
- Friends and family market
- Tourist markets who spend relatively more money:
 - Baseball
 - Funeral participants
 - Hospital visitors
 - Friends and family market
 - Senior market
 - Visitors from California, Washington, Canada, East, Midwest
 - Visitors from Germany
- Business travelers, including those visiting Proving Grounds
- Speed World recreation users
- Shoulder season market

Part IV: Potential community assets that could be developed through relationships among partners to advance these ideas.

- The desert environment, a southwest experience: integrating assets of park agencies, recreation agencies, museums, art and cultural organizations
- Golf packages that integrate offerings of public and private sector:
 - Affordable golf
 - Desert golf
 - Student golf
 - Stay and play packages with local hotels

- Major events (scheduled to time other events or featured activities within the City to maximize draw): e.g., Surprise Party, Veterans event, Western Events
- Convention opportunities promoted through multiple sectors (e.g., large faith community conferences organized with hotels, golf, sports facility opportunities)
- Arts packages – created by bundling with golf, museums, Sundome venues, cultural organizations
- Proving grounds tours – create a visitor center, tour packages
- Draw on the power of the City’s name (Surprise) through multi-sector branding and logo development

Part V: What have we learned from today’s reflections? What are the processes needed to develop a strong tourism development strategy for the City of Surprise?

1. Who needs to be involved?

- Every aspect of the community must be in this together
- Historian
- A leader in needed – one from the City and one from the business community
- Media
- Developers
- Parks and recreation
- Public information officer
- Chamber of Commerce
- School representatives
- Faith based organizations
- Home Owner Associations
- Businesses

2. What processes need to transpire?

- Create small committee to work on coalescing stakeholders and building strategy
- Focus on the positive potential for Surprise, not on negative matters
- De-fragment responsibility for tourism (ensure all stakeholders are involved)
- Build market partnerships between business sector and the City

3. What are the needed next steps?

- Empower a Surprise tourism initiative with leadership
- Involve stakeholders who are already at the table now
- Provide the tourism initiative with a budget
- A tourism “brand” for the City is needed, as well as a slogan that positions the City well
- The tourism initiative should follow a workable organizational model
- There must be clear organization and defined roles for all involved in the process
- Leadership for the initiative should come from the City
- A logo must be developed -- defining Surprise from a tourist perspective
- We must define our tourism product
- We must develop strategy for dealing with the tourist access issue, including traffic
- A comprehensive strategic plan needs to be developed
- A vision needs to be established that considers long term trends, investments and returns
- The focus groups need to reconvene in 45 days or less
- Identify one thing that’s tangible to move ahead
- An information and promotion campaign needs to be developed – to communicate to tourists and residents the assets that are already here
- Gear tourism towards new economic development

Appendix I

Workshop 3 Results

City of Surprise Tourism Stakeholder Focus Group Results

Synthesis Discussion

Stakeholders: Combined Sectors – Business, Government, Non-Profit and Cultural

Date: November 23, 2005

Consider the combined reflections and insights that emerged from the June 30th Focus Group discussion (involving the Government, Non-Profit and Cultural Sector) and the August 26th Focus Group discussion (Business Sector) -- See handouts:

- (1) The Tourism Development Cycle*
- (2) Tourism Development Cycle Information Needs.*

Part 1: What do you see as the primary long-term direction that needs to be given to help our community develop a successful tourism development initiative?

- There must be a coordinated, cooperative effort involving many sectors
- Focus group results confirm that there are many missing pieces in the current state of tourism development within Surprise
- Need to create a mechanism for engaging many stakeholders -- not only for representation, but also for vision-setting
- Formal and informal partnerships must emerge – opportunities for strategic alliances need to be pursued. Individual sectors need to move beyond their silos if effective tourism development is to emerge
- Formally designated leadership for the initiative must emerge – appointed, assigned
- A stakeholder group must be formally organized to provide input and advisement to strategy development
- Resources must be found to support the development of Surprise tourism initiative leadership, advisory efforts and marketing programs (i.e., a budget)
- Organized, consolidated cross-marketing efforts must emerge involving many partners and sectors

- There needs to be a clear focal point for providing information to tourists and/or a tourism gateway to the City – i.e., a high image, easily accessible visitor center
- A clear tourism identity for the City must emerge – including icon development, branding, slogan, positioning statements
- A research-driven marketing strategy must put Surprise on the “tourism map” – leading cities conduct tourism research
- A coordinated marketing plan must position the City well against competitors
- A specific set (or sets) of “product portfolios” must be developed to establish a “unique selling proposition” to position the City well against its competitors. One potential cluster might be: “Mountains/desert/sports and recreation facilities/families/friendly”
- We need to work with surrounding communities for tourism development. A regional approach is needed to assemble assets and coordinate marketing campaigns if our community is to compete effectively against competitors
- Identified leader(s) and the advisory stakeholder group must advocate for the development of tourism resources – for tourism marketing, for tourism infrastructure development, and for articulating the potential of tourism in local economic and life quality development.
- The City needs to address significant barriers to tourism development:
 - Accessibility barriers, transportation networks and traffic congestion
 - Lack of convention center and meeting space facilities
 - Inadequate number of magnet attractions and amenities
 - Inadequate number of magnet tourism properties, including resorts

Part 2: What do you see as some short-term “quick successes” that we could accomplish by working together to help our community develop a successful tourism development initiative?

- Regular meetings involving individuals such as those invited to these focus groups to increase communication across sectors

- Development of a list serve, or monthly e-mail distribution list, to inform tourism providers of issues, special events, and other tourism-related news
- Creation of a web-site to inform tourists about, and attract tourists to, Surprise
- Creation of a monthly calendar of events and activities within Surprise to distribute at events, hotels, restaurants and tourism operations
- A structure for developing capacity to create handouts with consistent templates to promote one-time events
- A process for developing cross-marketing advertisements and collateral pieces promoting Surprise tourism opportunities
- Immediately initiate out-of-area promotions and marketing to drive tourists to Surprise
- Create a task force to identify specifically what tourism infrastructure is needed to maximize tourism-related economic development within the City of Surprise
- Create a task force to identify strategies for advocating resolution to transportation and access barriers to effective tourism development
- Immediate leadership for tourism development needs to be identified (e.g, a volunteer, the Chamber, the City)
- All stakeholders must openly and authentically reveal their interests and perspectives. They need to begin to discover the benefits of working together, learning to express disagreement openly without being disagreeable

Part 3: What sectors need to be at the table as we work together to help our community develop a successful tourism development initiative?

- Lodging
- Food and beverage
- Golf
- Attractions
- Chamber of commerce
- Parks and recreation

- Arts and culture
- City government – a staff person needs to be assigned to this process