

CCVB Strategic Planning – Stakeholder Notes

May, 31, 2017

Context Map: get lay of land--30,000 foot view

When talking about quality of life, events and culture. Visitors bureau sees lots of traffic from people considering Carson City to move to. Have to showcase arts and culture, outdoor activities, family friendly.

List trends: political, technology, economic, environmental

Trends:

- Away from traditional travel and more to alternative,
- Bike lanes, applying for silver level ????, mountain bike races, multi-use trails.
- ATV group came to Courtyard. Used hills behind courtyard—usually go to Carson Valley or east of Carson City
- Immerse into culture of a region for an extended period of time, called Cultural Immersion
- Stewart Indian School preservation. Working on the cultural center. Will be displays about the 90-year history of the Indian boarding school here as well as across the US. Want to become a cultural heritage center, 65 building on campus. Begin construction July 1
- Historic tourism. Stories of the people who started our area.
- Increased connection to where our food comes from. Give people opportunities to feel connected to the source of their food
- Youth sports activities—see extended families
- Growing popularity of Carson cultural/art/music experiences
- Trend is warming and seeing longer seasons for outdoor activities.
- Alternative transportation can be used longer throughout year
- Skiing

Political

- With our current environment, people are looking for commonality.
- Based on experience has, looking or authenticity
- As our society becomes more and more disperse politically, seeing trend of extended families sharing experiences

Other

- New residents to Carson who have ties to outside areas, so their friends come to visit and become attracted to our quality of life.
- Farmers are the rock stars now, and some of them are making incredible strides in sustainable farming. Restaurants should focus on offering local, sustainable food.
- WNC—great opportunity to promote preparing students to be skilled or the high paying STEM jobs in our community.
- Technology--Ability to work from home, work remotely, you can come here, recreate and work, so you can have the quality of life.
- Political—elected officials in our community that understand the need to invest in our quality of life. Some of the smaller, rural communities don't have that.

Suggestions:

- Access to art—make it easy to find arts/culture listings, offerings
- Carson City needs to use language like: eat like a local, etc
- Need to appeal to the millennials—more exciting language and highlight more exciting experience.
- Authenticity is the key word for millennials and they know what they want. They are looking for specific experiences.
- Students are taking ownership of their future at a younger age.
- Kids at CHS have a lot more disposable income than people think that they do, and they don't have a lot of places to go. They are open to trying new things, and they are chained to their phones.
- Promote mobile information with everything.
- Very philanthropic community. Seeking experiences where they feel they're giving back.
- Trends—No NV has been so event driven, and it cannot be underestimated in its importance.
- Health and wellness—young family came to CCVB yesterday, they had participated in Epic Rides last year, and because they are both nurses, they can move anywhere, and chose Carson City.
- Sees with visitors that they say Carson is my second home, and we visit it as often as we can. Our people are welcoming.
- Carson City is a natural stop for people traveling across the country and will use it as a rest day to experience Capital, bike ride, etc.
- There are people who travel all over the country just visiting capital cities
- Carson City still feels like a small town that is welcoming, and visitors say they feel like they are part of the family very easily

SWOT Analysis

Distinction—weaknesses—are internal whereas threats are external, strengths internal vs opportunities—external

Strengths

- feels like a small town
- mountains in town
- volunteerism
- location
- wildlife in town
- historic buildings
- interesting history
- easy to get around
- athletic fields
- safe environment
- local and administrative support
- Sunshine
- Stewart Indian site. It's a large facility that can be used for multiple purposes.
- easy to connect with elected officials, who are very involved
- easy to feel like individuals can make a difference
- emerging arts and culture
- sense that you have control over the direction of your life and family.
- Downtown
- Experiences that have become traditions—NV Day,
- Growing industrial sector that brings good new jobs
- Access to higher education
- Access to state representatives
- Access to good health care
- Local school system
- State museum
- Community collaborations and businesses working together and private-public partnerships
- Prison—historic and recreational, get calls about groups wanting to have paranormal events. Train ties into the prison.
- We have a diverse brand. We've identified ourselves for years as being just a historical destination. You can count on a visitor who has had a good experience in a community to return 6-7 times in lifetime, except not true for historical visitors
- Thriving music scene, Levitt Amp, concert under the stars, do online RSVPs—see they get visitors from all over coming to see these shows. Feel we don't have enough locals attending.
- Deep sense of pride and independence and individuality.

Strengths that are obvious to visitors: downtown, access to Tahoe and Reno, outdoor recreation, friendliness of citizens, historic buildings, access to outdoor lifestyle

Weaknesses

- As a smaller community, we don't have the nightlife and party scene some visitors seek
- Labor force is too small
- Difficulty of getting to and from the airport. Even though we have JAC and bike trails, JAC doesn't cover enough for visitors to get around Carson and access the outdoor lifestyle

Opportunities

- One of the best investments we can make in our community is the preservation of the Stewart Indian site. It's a large facility that can be used for multiple purposes.
- Partner with RTC to expand public transportation
- The airporter—is not marketed and doesn't run frequently enough, or to the right places
- Trend in visitors getting info, use mobile device 90% of time, and many of our restaurants and stores don't have mobile websites and social media
- Opportunity—Stewart—unique cultural experience
- Off the beaten path—we're not Las Vegas or Reno
- V&T railroad
- Need to reach out to other areas to increase the cultural experience opportunities by promoting all you can do in our area
- projects.
- Creating a foodie reputation and marrying that with our agriculture. Package tours that include farm to table experience.
- Marriott will put together some of these tours.
- At CHS level, the counselors need to be better educated on what is available here as a career path. Huge opportunity here.
- Silver Saddle ranch needs to be better utilized.
- All of our open space acquisition needs to be better utilized and marketed.
- There's a lot of stuff going on at CHS, and many businesses do a good job, but we can be doing more. Need to work more on placement and intern opportunities. Feel that students that have these opportunities stay in the community or return to it.
- Develop an arts and culture scene in Carson City. The return will be measured by arts and culture attendance.
- Need to attract more artists, opportunity as housing and loft spaces are becoming too expensive in Reno-Sparks-Tahoe.
- More signage along bypass.
- More Boutique shopping downtown

- Opportunity—for those people who don't like change, get them to focus on shoring up the existing
- Carson City—many visitors consider bike-friendly communities when choosing where to vacation.
- Better collaboration and coordination of events: create ways to have public transportation between events. In particular, if there's an event in Virginia City, offer free train rides to keep people staying in Carson City and to minimize drunk driving.
- Oct-Nov are so beautiful here, need to offer more events during this time.
- Restaurant tour in Reno, need to develop closer ties to what's going on in Reno. So there's an exchange among our neighbors—restaurants, arts, culture.
- Reiterated that we need a single access point for all activities
- Reiterated that our local arts and culture and events are not literate enough on social media.
- too many places to market events. Have to blast 30+ sites to promote an event.
- Don't underestimate our rural communities—they consider Carson City in their backyard and the place to go for cultural experiences.
- Photographers and artists—looking for places to go to get great landscape and building subjects.
- Need to create tours, ambassador programs, familiarization tours. Get our community to tour the NV State Museum, Stewart Indian School, ride the train. Promote—easy walk tours to locals.
- Stewart Indian School—renovate one of the spaces for a convention.
- Opportunity—with development of Tesla and regional park, will start to see Carson City as destination or executives traveling as well as locating here.
- We have not yet seen Carson City having much Airbnb and VRBO. Our two B&B's have failed.
- Re: room tax revenue, we have a couple of properties that are blighted and don't meet needs of visitors. Need to create a hostel. Need to offer more in-town camping. We have RV opportunities, but not camping.
- Mountain bikers spend more money on bike and beer and not on lodging. However, daytime spending is higher with this group. Does not always have to equate to heads in beds. Need to look at great good of community.
- Arts & Culture:
 - Events
 - Tribal Culture
 - Diversity in programming
 - Frequency
 - Getting the word out is key
 - Keep them here for multiple days so help them tag on items to pique their interest.
 - Arts and culture events need to set themselves apart. Create a niche. Create a unique experience.
 - More year-round
 - Diversity: More family-friendly, more nightlife, more single-focused activities.
 - Find a way to tell our welcoming, community cohesiveness story better. Minden-Gardnerville is doing a great job with this.

- Better educate locals on our arts/culture/events/activities. Perhaps create a “did you know” marketing campaign.
- Cross-promote with other communities.
- Stop fearing competition among other stores/facilities—encourage collaboration. Rising tide lifts all boats.
- Better diversity of how things are promoted. Not just focus on social media. Accept that our locals will still rely on fliers and whatnot.
- Encourage locals to get more involved in helping visitors have a great experience.
- More Spanish language promotions.
- With train and trails, we have an opportunity to market to other parts of the world. Especially in Asian markets, so need to have our marketing materials translated in multiple languages
- We are in top 3 wind patterns in world for soaring, need to collaborate more with Carson Valley to promote this.
- Infrastructure
- Convention space
- Signage(wayfinding)
- Downtown revitalization-retail
- Support for business success
- Niche or unique experience to have business synergy
- Increase technology usage amongst retail owners, response websites, social media, square, etc
- Property Owners—what can they do to help retail thrive?
- Not just promote downtown businesses: Z Bistro, Sassafras, Bead Store,
- Promote places to stay or different interests and different economic levels.
- Encourage downtown living/residences
- Financial mechanism, working as a community, to invest in infrastructure.
- What can we do, that is of a public nature, that is not taxation?
- Tag on support concept: When community members pay for things, give them an option to pay an additional \$\$ to maintain, support, etc (\$5, \$10).
- Have we considered establishing a “main street movement” Carson? It is like the downtown business association, but it takes it to a community level: there are about 6 different prompts to it. Minden has an event every month designed to draw people downtown.
- Outdoor Recreational
- Open space—few communities have as much and as accessible
- Mountain—expand, promote trail system
- Athletics
- Encourage a way/benefit to cross promote amongst communities.
- Embrace our outdoor brand
- Get people to stay longer through getting lost—could be a tongue-in-cheek promotional campaign

Weaknesses

- Locals say that “you’d better be careful. Carson City doesn’t like “outsiders” they haven’t seen that to be true, but there is that perception as there is a vocal minority that doesn’t like outsiders
- Vocal minority still giving the confusing message of only history
- Need to put our best face forward for visitors
- We have great outdoor trails and fields, but we don’t have it well marked, so visitors don’t know how to access.
- We have more parks than usual, but our facilities in them are falling apart.
- Lack of cultural activities. We have a large Hispanic community that we don’t promote/celebrate enough
- Need safe recreation for younger generation
- Carson downtown needs to be fully developed
- Deteriorating infrastructure in regards to roads and facilities
- We don’t have a unified place to get information.
- V&T, with governor decommissioning, there are still a few million dollars to make the train sustainable and a regional asset. Feel that today the train falls under weakness.
- Not enough activities for young kids
- No unified community calendar—weakness. CCVB needs to take this on.
- Continually reiterating we don’t have one unified place to go for events, culture and activities.
- Weakness—lack of convention space. There are niche markets available for small conventions. Shoulder season is particularly important—Oct-May. Could be a private-public partnership. Could be Horseshoe club or Ormsby house or Jacks Bar.
- Weakness—empty spaces that are eye sores.
- We are starved for convention space. Marriott, uses the Fandango. Very problematic for larger space in town.
- Different places should coordinate more to offer empty spaces for conferences/conventions.
- Needs to be easy, non-car transportation to and from the Lake.
- Limousine companies are more accessible than car rental places.
- Do we have enough rooms in Carson City? During peak seasons, we don’t. we lack about 300 rooms which are being built. In shoulder season, our top 5 properties are still not filled enough. In shoulder season, our rooms are filled by business travelers. Peak season, rooms are filled 80-90%.

Threats

- We need to make sure our leaders understand the investment of our sports fields is for visitors and citizens alike.
- Threats: even though we work together as a region, we’re seeing S Reno building a large sports facility and competing directly with our marketing. Same goes for Douglas County.

- Carson has an identity crisis—many old-timers want Carson to be rural and resent development, new people want access to the rural, but seek more culture and there's frustration between the two
- We put a lot of weight on our historical properties, but we don't provide support to property owners to help them preserve their properties. It is both a threat and a weakness. We get excited about new opportunities and stop supporting existing projects that need continual support.
- There is a continual fear that we may grow too big. Especially among the vocal minority

Key topics:

- Community Calendar
- Improved communication among the entire community
- PR seems very promotion-focused. More co-promotion is needed
- Joel wants to do a follow up meeting to this group in a couple of months to let them know what is happening as a result of this planning session.
- Alternative transportation within town kept coming up.
- Need for Convention space kept coming up
- Collaborating with local organizations kept coming up
- Celebrate our successes more
- PR for the success of Carson Street.
- Invest in PR and marketing efforts in a more regional focus.