

APRIL 2025

Exhibit A to Marana Resolution No. 2025-070



DISCOVER
MARANA
— AZ —

TOWN OF MARANA

TOURISM MASTER PLAN
2025-2035

Photo: Deirdre Rosenberg

THE TOWN OF MARANA is widely recognized as a great place to live and raise a family. This reputation is reflected in the growth of our population. Year over year, thousands of people move here to enjoy our quality of life and to make Marana their home. Residents enjoy our outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, rich cultural heritage, and family-friendly experiences. It is no surprise that these same attributes also make Marana an appealing destination for visitors.

Marana has been seeing growth in visitation, with people coming to experience world-class shopping, hike magnificent trails, and relax in luxury resorts. In 2023 alone, visitors contributed an outstanding \$202.8 million in economic impact through their local spending.

Recognizing the potential to build on this momentum, we began the process of creating a Tourism Master Plan in 2023. We know that with intention and collaboration, we can take what we have already achieved with travel and tourism and amplify it. This Tourism Master Plan is a roadmap for the future, one that will elevate Marana as a destination, develop new attractions, and bring the community along for the adventure. This Plan presents a shared vision of what Marana can be in ten years and what is possible by working collectively toward our goals.

This Plan outlines the steps we need to take for a vibrant future, one that celebrates our history, grows and strengthens key sectors of the tourism economy, invests in the expansion of existing tourism facets, and most importantly tells the Marana story. It will serve as a guide that helps our Town not only achieve its vision for a thriving visitor economy but also achieve a strong local economy.



The Tourism Master Plan has been over a year in the making. In December 2023, we contracted with Whereabout, a nationally-recognized destination futures studio, to lead us through the process. Whereabout conducted extensive research, including interviews, surveys, and an on-site destination assessment. In the Fall of 2024, Whereabout took those findings and worked with our Planning Team to define a vision, ten objectives, and nearly four dozen strategies to carry out over the next ten years. Accountability is built into the Plan, with timelines, key partners, and key performance indicators to track our progress.

I would like to thank the residents, business owners, and visitors whose voices have informed this Plan. I also want to thank the Planning Team for their dedication throughout this process. Finally, thank you to the Mayor and Council for their guidance and leadership in establishing the vision for this great community. I encourage everyone to stay engaged and find a way to contribute to making our shared vision a reality. Marana is ready and eager for a future in which tourism brings us together, supports our local economy, and enhances our overall quality of life.

Respectfully,



Terry S. Rozema
Town Manager, Town of Marana



CONTENTS

5	Introduction
7	Process & Methodology
13	Competitive Position
15	Destination Vision Narrative
19	Evolution of Key Tourism Drivers
23	Destination Objectives, Strategies, & Indicators
47	Implementation: Collective Impact Model
51	Acknowledgments

INTRODUCTION

Travel and tourism plays a central and powerful role in community and economic development. People like to visit places where people like to live, and these are places that offer a high quality of life, opportunities for prosperity, pleasant weather, good food, and scenic beauty.

Tourism has had a positive impact on Marana. Conducted in 2023, the Economic Impact of Travel report demonstrated that the Town hosted over 375,000 overnight visitors in hotels and other accommodations. Through their local spending, these visitors created an annual economic impact of \$202.8 million. Direct travel supported 55 new jobs in 2024, a 4.2% increase over the prior year.

Travel and tourism is not just the experience of a visitor; it is also the experience of the community as a destination. Travel and tourism is successful when the resident sentiment remains positive, when there is a positive impact on the local economy and the ability of small businesses to thrive, and when the natural beauty that makes Marana extraordinary remains intact and attractive, even with higher visitation.

This Tourism Master Plan serves as a guide for intentionally growing the travel and tourism experience of Marana. It provides a vision of the destination of Marana in 2035 and the strategies to help make that vision a reality. This Plan outlines strategies to develop attractions, create jobs, and enhance assets in service of the vision. It provides a phasing of strategies over the planning horizon, considering actions that are already underway, some early significant wins, and dependencies between strategies. By establishing a vision, strategies, and phasing, the Plan ensures that tourism development is coordinated, efficient, and tailored to the unique conditions of Marana.

With Marana being a relatively new town and thousands of new residents calling Marana home every year, this Tourism Master Plan—in concert with other Town communications efforts—can help grow residents' connection to the Town. Tourism assets considered in this Plan will bring a stronger sense of identity and enable the celebration of what makes Marana unique.



Photo: Steven Meckler

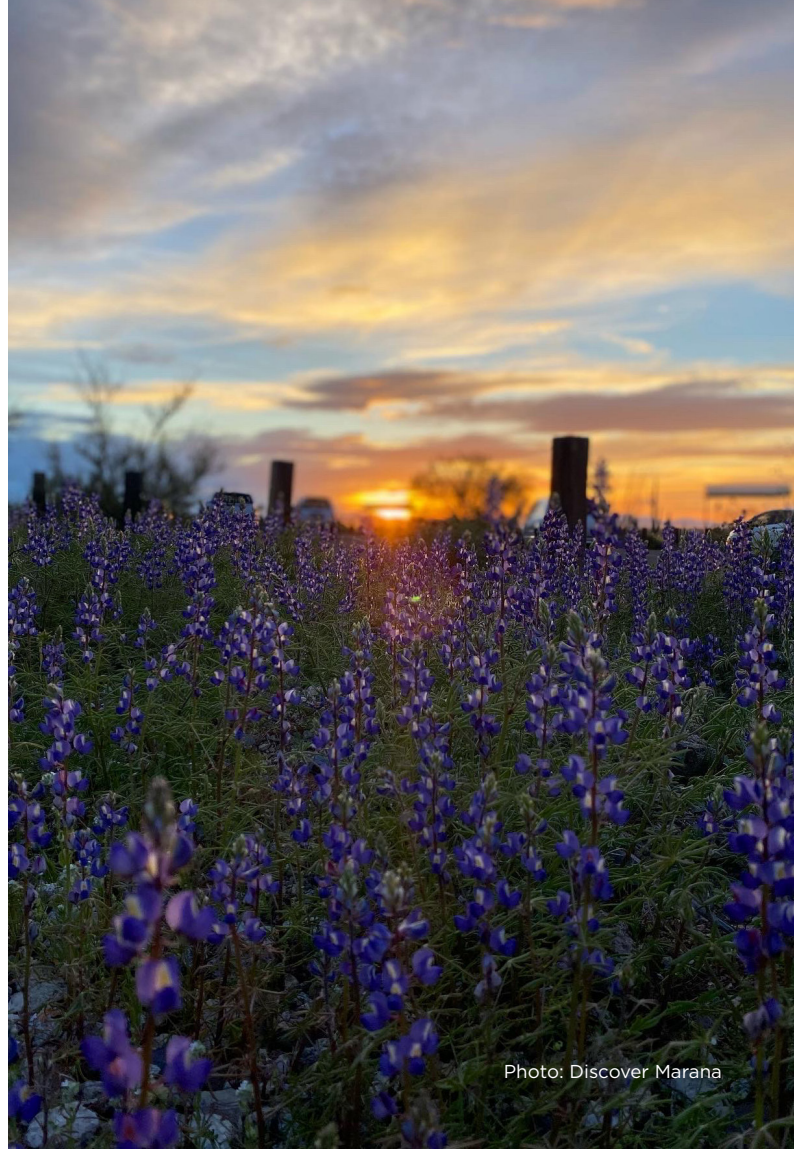


Photo: Discover Marana



Photo: JD Fitzgerald



Photo: JD Fitzgerald/Marana Parks & Recreation

PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

February 2024 – June 2024: Discovery

From February to June 2024, the Whereabout team of destination strategists dove into learning about the destination using a variety of information sources, including the following:

Background Document Review: The consulting team reviewed documents provided by the Town of Marana regarding the visitor economy, including data on economic impacts, visitor spending, hotel performance, and related planning efforts.



In-Market Destination Assessment: The consulting team visited the Town of Marana to get a first-hand view of the visitor experience. This four-day visit focused on destination facets like lodging, retail, outdoor recreation, entertainment, and dining. For each facet, the team visited several places throughout the community and rated their experience based on nine dimensions: mix, accessibility, location, hours, authenticity, quality, service, price, and appeal.

Surveys: Three surveys were conducted in March and April 2024. They were crafted to gain input into the destination and included an industry stakeholder survey (172 respondents), a resident survey (321 respondents), and a visitor survey (111 respondents). Questions focused on:

- ▶ Tourism drivers, assets, and experiences
- ▶ Visitor destination perceptions
- ▶ Tourism support and enablers
- ▶ Tourism opinions
- ▶ Challenges and opportunities

Interviews: In March and April 2024, the Whereabout team interviewed 14 individuals to gain greater qualitative insights into the destination. Interviewees included

government partners, industry experts, and individuals active in the local tourism economy.

In June 2024, the findings from the Discovery Phase were synthesized into a holistic assessment of the Town of Marana tourism landscape. This analysis highlighted nine key themes:

1. Dream big and make it so
2. People want to visit places people want to live
3. Create buzz through festivals and events
4. It needs to be built for them to come
5. The great outdoors is Marana's greatest asset
6. Teamwork makes the dream work
7. The past can be a window to the future
8. A stewardship mindset will foster long-term success
9. A strong destination requires a solid organization

The Current State Analysis served as the foundation of the tourism master planning process, gathering insights into the industry's current state and identifying current and emerging opportunities and challenges.

September 2024 – October 2024: Tourism Master Plan Development

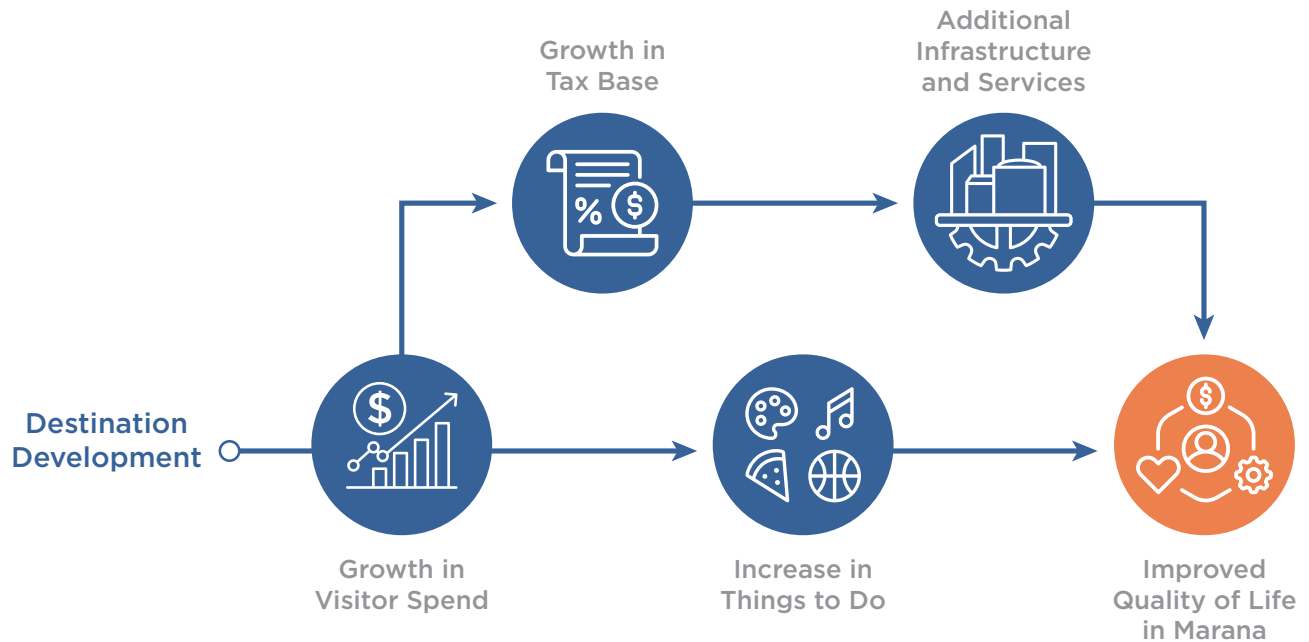
The Whereabout team led a process to craft the Tourism Master Plan, leveraging a Planning Team with representation from the Town and tourism industry stakeholders. Between September and October 2024, the Team met six times to review the Current State Analysis and develop the Tourism Master Plan. Two additional community conversations were part of the process: a September 19 Open House to share progress with the public, held in parallel with the Concerts in the Courtyard event, and a Town Council Study Session on October 29, 2024.

During this time, the Planning Team crafted the following:

- ▶ **Competitive Position:** This describes what makes Marana singularly unique as a destination today and what it has to share with potential visitors. ([see page 13](#))
- ▶ **Destination Vision Narrative:** This statement describes what will be different in the Town of Marana if it successfully shapes a compelling destination and a thriving visitor economy. ([see page 15](#))
- ▶ **Tourism Drivers:** These are a general set of tourism drivers unique to Marana: Welcoming Family Travel, Exciting Outdoor Recreation, and Unique Agri-Western Experiences. The Team articulated a foundational, promotional, and aspirational level of actualization for each. ([see page 19](#))
- ▶ **Ten Objectives:** These are high-level areas of strategic focus that will guide the development of the destination over the coming ten years and help make the Destination Vision Narrative a reality. ([see page 23](#)). Each Objective is further defined by:
 - ▶ A set of Strategies that, when implemented, will help make the Objective a reality. Each Strategy has an accompanying rough order-of-magnitude cost and key partners to carry out the work. In all, there are 44 Strategies.
 - ▶ Two to three Indicators per Objective that specify how to measure progress toward achieving the Objective.
- ▶ **Collective Impact Model:** This model recognizes that the work of the Tourism Master Plan is greater than what Discover Marana can accomplish alone and that a collective approach is needed to work toward its success. ([see page 47](#))

The outcome of this process—the Tourism Master Plan—is rooted in the idea expressed in the following graphic: a deliberate shaping of the experience will result in a better quality of life for its residents.

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT





Town of Marana Process and Efforts

Parallel to Whereabout's work, the Town of Marana and Discover Marana pursued additional actions as part of their ongoing work and in support of this Tourism Master Planning effort.

- ▶ **State of the Town:** Discover Marana team members encouraged participation in the Master Plan survey at the March 28, 2024 event. As the guests took their seats, a video highlighting the Tourism Master Plan process was also played. As of February 2025, this video had been viewed 11,000 times on YouTube.
- ▶ **Civic Committee:** On April 10 and 23, 2024, the Discover Marana team met with the Town's Civic Committee. This group is selected by the Mayor and Council to review topics important to the community. Marana Insights: The Discover Marana team presented the latest updates from the Tourism Master Planning teams efforts at the September 26, 2024 meeting of local community leaders. This event was hosted by the Marana Chamber of Commerce.
- ▶ **Roadrunners Hockey Game:** The Town of Marana was featured at the April 12, 2024, Roadrunners game at the Tucson Arena.

In addition to showing videos about Marana's community, the Discover Marana team hosted a table about tourism and encouraged participation in the Master Plan survey.

- ▶ **Town of Gilbert and Queen Creek visit:** On May 2, 2024, Discover Marana organized a visit to the towns of Gilbert and Queen Creek to better understand their journeys from smaller towns to tourist destinations. These visits included presentations and Q&A with staff from both communities and explorations of some key tourism attractions.
- ▶ **Impact Marana:** Discover Marana presented to the Marana Chamber's Impact Marana class on May 7, 2024.
- ▶ **Local Real Estate Agent meeting:** On July 10, 2024, the Discover Marana team presented on tourism to local real estate agents in Dove Mountain.
- ▶ **Additional information-gathering visits:** Discover Marana visited additional locales in Marana to gather information and insights on the future of tourism. These visits included: Southern Arizona Heritage and Visitor Center; The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain; Luxury Traveler Learning Session; and Heritage River Park.

How to Use This Plan

The work to be done is centered around ten Objectives:

1. Target, attract, and develop new amenities to elevate Marana as a destination
2. Roll out the welcome mat for multi-generational families
3. Leverage and evolve Marana's world-class outdoor recreation and parks
4. Promote, enhance, and expand Marana's award-winning festivals and events
5. Celebrate and preserve Marana's unique arts & heritage
6. Expand, diversify, and promote Marana's accommodations and conference offerings
7. Incubate and grow small tourism-focused businesses and locally owned restaurants
8. Generate a sense of place, excitement, and pride in the identity of Marana
9. Identify funding sources and invest strategically in Marana's visitor economy
10. Use data to amplify Marana's authentic story and measure and demonstrate success

Each of these Objectives is supported by a set of Destination Strategies that are distributed over three phases.

Phase 1, Seeding Growth ([page 28](#)), covers the first four years of the planning timeframe and includes 21 strategies.

Phase 2, Supporting Growth ([page 36](#)), covers years five through seven of the planning timeframe and includes 16 strategies.

Phase 3, Reaping Rewards ([page 43](#)), covers the last three years of the planning timeframe and includes eight strategies.

While work may be happening on several strategies at a time, each is denoted by a number that indicates the phase in which they should occur. The timeframes for the three phases are approximate, but they should serve as a guide to the major divisions of the work.

To ensure that Objectives and Strategies track toward success, Discover Marana will convene a team dedicated to implementing this plan. The membership of this team will include key stakeholders, with other partners brought in for task-specific endeavors ([see Collective Impact Model, page 47](#)). Regular meetings will track progress and—more importantly—identify opportunities for course correction. Working teams should be identified to undertake each of the Strategies that are underway at a given time, and those teams should identify the action steps necessary and how they will know when the Strategy has been completed. They should regularly report on their progress to the broader team.

This Plan is not meant to be a rigid to-do list. Rather, it is meant to be a living document that can evolve and respond to what is happening on the ground. Discover Marana and the team will revisit this Plan in three years to ensure it remains the right course of action, making adjustments as needed.

COMPETITIVE POSITION

COMPETITIVE POSITION

Marana is *the* destination to be close to everything, yet far from ordinary:

- ▶ Experience the one-of-a-kind Tortolita Mountains, the Saguaro National Park, Ironwood Forest National Monument, Sonoran Desert, and breathtaking desert landscapes in close proximity to Town
- ▶ Have the sky be equal to the landscape experience, with 250 species of birds, skydiving, hot air balloons, Urban Dark Skies, and tangerine sunsets
- ▶ Engage in world-class biking on the Loop, hiking on the Wild Burro Trail, golfing, and horseback riding
- ▶ Enjoy award-winning festivals celebrating the Town and its agricultural roots
- ▶ Experience first-hand what it is to be a cowboy, and not just play cowboy
- ▶ Explore layers in history, from early Native American settlements to farming and ranching, to the role of the region in World War II
- ▶ Make exciting finds at destination shopping centers
- ▶ Indulge in pure luxury at the The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, with ease of access through the Marana Regional Airport



Photo: Discover Marana

DESTINATION VISION NARRATIVE

DESTINATION VISION NARRATIVE

Marana in 2035

As it passes the 50-year mark of being incorporated as a Town, Marana, Arizona will continue its trailblazing journey as a great place to live, work, play, and visit. With its focus on being a great place to raise a family, business-friendliness, and destination shopping, Marana will continue attracting new residents, businesses, and visitors for years to come.

In 2035, Marana will be on the map as a premier destination for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. Avid cyclists will come here for some of the safest and most seamless access points to the Loop and for training and racing events year-round. Hikers will choose Marana as a home base for exploring the Tortolita Mountains, Saguaro National Park, Ironwood Forest National Monument, and other trail systems in the region. Other visitors will enjoy Marana's exceptional birdwatching, including at the El Rio Preserve. Golfers will enjoy the fantastic greens on the courses throughout the Town. The private sector will respond to this increased interest with guided hikes, horseback rides, birding walks, and cycling outings. At the same time, outdoor equipment providers

will cater to visitors who need to rent a bike or purchase other outdoor equipment.

Marana's ranching and farming history, its multi-cultural heritage, and its deep Indigenous histories will shine through to our visitors. The Town's Fall Festival, an expanded Pumpkin Patch, on-farm experiences, and an agritourism-focused district will create a critical mass of agrarian tourism. A greater focus on Los Morteros and the region's petroglyphs will connect present-day visitors to Marana's ancient residents. Guided ranch tours and western heritage events, expanding on facilities like the Western Heritage Arena, will round out the experience, allowing visitors to be a cowboy for a day.

Marana's food and beverage scene will entice visitors with authentic Sonoran cuisine, trendy new restaurants featuring local ingredients, and gathering spaces centered around food and families, and have offerings for people at all budget points. A seasonal food festival will highlight local produce, locally raised meats, and award-winning craft beverages and tie into a vibrant Farmer's Market. A centralized commercial kitchen

will be an incubator for start-up restaurants, food trucks, and catering businesses. Even more breweries will call Marana home, and a thriving beverage sector will flourish on Brewery Row.

Marana's award-winning Town-produced signature events, such as the Founders' Day Parade and Festivities, will continue to delight, some expanding into multi-day events. The Town will work to build capacity through training programs or grants to help new independent events get started. New events will connect to Marana's history, such as a specialty rodeo highlighting the barrel racing tradition in Marana, an aviation festival underscoring the region's contribution to the training of WWII pilots, or a Taste of Marana farm-to-table event. And a new performing arts facility will help Marana grow

its reputation as a place to experience music and theater.

The Town will continue to be a great place for families to visit—whether visitors are coming to stay with family or in hotels for a fun-filled getaway, coming with their children, or with their pets. A youth sports park will introduce many families to Marana when they visit for tournaments, and the ease of traveling with a family in Marana will keep them coming back.

Digital Discover Marana apps will spotlight kid-friendly trails, Southern Arizona's only destination water park, kid-friendly restaurants, museums, the Marana Aquatic and Recreation Center, and where to find things like drop-off child care or changing tables. New amenities will cater to active adults,



ensuring those aged 55+ find a destination ready to welcome them. Marana will also be a more accessible destination, gaining certification as an IBCCES Certified Autism Destination and Destination Verified by Wheel of the World.

The Marana of 2035 will have a more dense and walkable town center with shopping, restaurants, bars, and other entertainment like live music that encourages visitors to stay out after dinner. Public art will provide a sense of arrival in this district, and the built environment will make access easy through abundant parking and enhanced pedestrian experiences. Local businesses will thrive here, offering local dishes at restaurants, Marana-brewed beers, or locally produced goods.

Marana's accommodations offerings will be more abundant and diverse in 2035. A hotel with a conference center will provide a venue to attract business group travel to Marana for mid-week stays while also providing venues for larger social engagements on weekends. Leisure travelers will be drawn

to more unique accommodations, such as stays at a dude ranch, short-term rentals, and glamping options. A breadth of mid-range hotels will still serve the thoroughfare of I-10, while more hotels will also operate away from the Interstate and closer to Marana's highly active commercial areas. All of these stays will be supported by expanded flights into the Tucson International Airport. At the same time, the Marana Regional Airport's new control tower will accommodate exclusive luxury travel and additional corporate and domestic commercial flights.

An expanded and reinforced branding and awareness campaign will support all of this wonderful growth as a destination, and the Town of Marana will gain brand equity as its own destination. Residents, visitors, and businesses will truly understand that they are in Marana. Through advertising, social media, signage, roadside art, enhanced integration with online mapping services, and the development of branded merchandise, Discover Marana will help Marana be the place where visitors want to go and residents are proud to live.



EVOLUTION OF KEY TOURISM DRIVERS

EVOLUTION OF KEY TOURISM DRIVERS

To help craft this Tourism Master Plan, three primary tourism drivers were identified. These travel motivators are already present for Marana and drive a significant segment of its current visitation. These drivers can be understood through three levels:

Foundational drivers: These include those facets of travel and tourism that already exist. These have created a basis for the travel economy upon which to grow the travel & tourism industry.

- ▶ Visiting friends and relatives in “Southern Arizona”
- ▶ Day visitation for outdoor recreation
- ▶ Day visitation for festivals and experiences

Promotional drivers: These represent immediate growth opportunities for the Town to expand its travel and tourism reach and to build upon its foundational drivers.

- ▶ Visiting friends and relatives with brand awareness of Marana
- ▶ Multi-day visits for outdoor recreation activities and events
- ▶ “Piggyback” events on the day before or after established festivals

Aspirational drivers: These demonstrate where the Town seeks to expand its tourism footprint, gain new visitation, and evolve its reputation as a destination.

- ▶ Choosing Marana as a family travel destination
- ▶ Reputation as an outdoor adventure destination
- ▶ Multi-day festivals and experiences driving overnight stays

2025 **Foundational** **Promotional** **Aspirational** 2035

**Welcoming
Family Travel**



Choosing Marana as a Family Travel Destination

**Exciting
Outdoor Recreation**



Reputation as an Outdoor Adventure Destination

**Unique Agri-
Western Experiences**



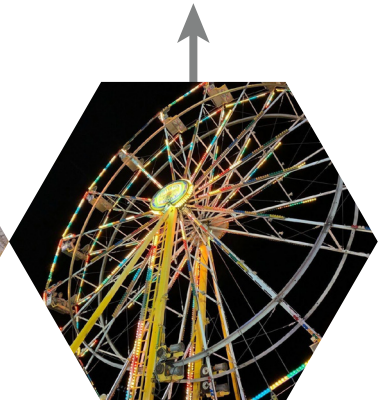
Multi-Day Festivals and Experiences driving overnight stays



Visiting Friends and Relatives with Brand Awareness of Marana



Multi-Day Visits for Activities and Events



"Piggyback" events on the day before or after established Festivals



Visiting Friends and Relatives in "Southern Arizona"



Day Visitation for Outdoor Recreation



Day Visitation for Festivals and Experiences



Photo: Deirdre Rosenberg



Photo: Deirdre Rosenberg



Photo: Discover Marana



Photo: Discover Marana

DESTINATION OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, & INDICATORS

DESTINATION OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, & INDICATORS

Target, attract, and develop new amenities to elevate Marana as a destination

Strategies

- 1.1 Support Downtown development in service of the visitor economy
- 2.1 Develop all-season recreation
- 2.2 Study Heritage Park as a tourism asset
- 3.1 Attract a family-friendly destination hotel

Indicators

- ▶ Increase length of visitor stay year-over-year
- ▶ Expand indoor visitor attraction square footage by 20% by 2035

Roll out the welcome mat for families at all life stages

Strategies

- 1.2 Inventory family-friendly amenities
- 1.3 Incorporate family-friendly amenities in new developments
- 2.3 Expand family-friendly gathering spaces
- 3.2 Recruit family-friendly attractions
- 3.3 Pursue accessibility certifications

Indicators

- ▶ Achieve two certifications indicative of inclusivity across ages and abilities by 2035
- ▶ Double the number of family-oriented itineraries published by Discover Marana by 2035

Leverage and evolve Marana's world-class outdoor recreation and parks

Strategies

- 1.4 Develop a food-oriented gathering space
- 2.4 Encourage outdoor-related businesses
- 2.5 Expand outdoor recreation tourism assets
- 3.4 Create a signature bike event
- 3.5 Develop and begin implementing a sports tourism plan

Indicators

- ▶ Grow shared-economy/rental recreation options over 2025 baseline
- ▶ Increase the number of visitors to Ironwood Forest National Monument 5% year-over-year
- ▶ Increase funding for outdoor amenities by 25% by 2035

Promote, enhance, and expand Marana's award-winning festivals and events

Strategies

- 1.5 Streamline the community event planning and permitting process
- 1.6 Develop and execute a 50th Anniversary celebration for the Town
- 2.6 Expand capacity for Town festivals and events
- 3.6 Conduct preliminary planning for a performance event space

Indicators

- ▶ Increase count of multi-day festivals and events to six per year
- ▶ Attract five new sporting events over the ten-year planning horizon
- ▶ Increase average daily overnight visitor spend by 30% by 2035

Celebrate and preserve Marana's unique arts & heritage

Strategies

- 1.7 Develop a history and heritage storytelling system
- 1.8 Expand the Public Art program
- 2.7 Create a facility to share Marana's history and heritage

Indicators

- ▶ Double the number of heritage-focused itineraries published by Discover Marana by 2035
- ▶ Introduce two new annual events that celebrate Marana's arts and/or heritage by 2035
- ▶ Grow earned media value on Marana's arts, culture and heritage



Expand, diversify, and promote Marana's accommodations and conference offerings

Strategies

- 1.9 Create and execute a "Stay in Marana" campaign
- 1.10 Engage developers to consider accommodation development in Marana
- 1.11 Diversify and grow short-term rental offerings
- 1.12 Inventory Town-wide conference space
- 2.8 Encourage meeting and conference development

Indicators

- ▶ Expand meeting space by 20% over 2025 baseline
- ▶ Increase the number of meetings and conferences generated by outside-of-region users by 20% by 2035
- ▶ Increase hotel room inventory 20% by 2035

Incubate and grow small tourism-focused businesses and locally owned restaurants

Strategies

- 1.13 Partner with the Restaurant Task Force to grow food and beverage options
- 1.14 Perform an outdoor recreation business gap analysis
- 2.9 Support the development of high-end bespoke tours and experiences
- 2.10 Develop maker spaces for microbusinesses
- 2.11 Establish partnerships with organizations serving small businesses

Indicators

- ▶ Increase the number of food & beverage small businesses 15% by 2035
- ▶ Increase the number of other tourism-supporting small businesses 15% by 2035



Photo: Discover Marana

Generate and amplify a sense of place, excitement, and pride in the identity of Marana

Strategies

- 2.12 Establish an ambassador program
- 2.13 Strengthen residential community identity
- 3.7 Articulate and distinguish Marana's "House of Brands"

Indicators

- ▶ Grow earned media value for "Pride of Place" stories in local media
- ▶ Raise brand awareness score on visitor survey by 25% over 2025 baseline

Identify funding sources and invest strategically in Marana's visitor economy

Strategies

- 1.15 Create a strategy for purchasing land for tourism-supportive development
- 1.16 Explore outside funding for tourism-related activities
- 1.17 Create a crisis communications plan
- 2.14 Investigate mutually beneficial tourism partnerships
- 2.15 Develop an infrastructure investment strategy for outdoor assets

Indicators

- ▶ Increase funding for tourism investments 25% by 2035
- ▶ Increase bed tax collections by 5% year-over-year

Use data to amplify Marana's authentic story and measure and demonstrate success

Strategies

- 1.18 Establish internal mechanics in alignment with the Tourism Master Plan
- 1.19 Update the Discover Marana website to support the Tourism Master Plan
- 1.20 Delineate Town of Marana and Discover Marana roles
- 1.21 Develop a data dashboard
- 2.16 Explore signage on Town property
- 3.8 Research strategies to maximize off-season visitors

Indicators

- ▶ Increase overall visitation by 10% by 2035
- ▶ Increase web traffic by 50% by 2035

PHASE 1: SEEDING GROWTH, YEARS 1-4

The first stage of the Discover Marana Tourism Master Plan focuses on fine-tuning efforts that are already underway, establishing baseline inventories and gap analyses so that future investment is well-informed, and launching catalytic actions. Some efforts will immediately affect the visitor experience and tourism economy, while other efforts are the seeds for long-term flourishing. Many of these efforts seek to plant the seed for Marana as a distinct place and destination and to celebrate its heritage through its 50th anniversary.

1.1 Support Downtown development in service of the visitor economy

The Town of Marana owns 20 acres, and a private developer owns 40 acres in the area slated to be developed as Marana's Downtown. The Town and developer have partnered to envision, master plan, and program the full 60 acres. The Town will continue its commitment to this partnership and advocate for development in the Downtown area that supports the visitor economy, such as walkability, a mix of uses, a visitor center, an adventure center that offers rentable equipment for exploring the area,, and visitor-friendly businesses, such as restaurants, shops, and nightlife venues. This will position Marana's Downtown to be a destination in its own right.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Downtown Developer, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Pima County, Local First Arizona
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

1.2 Inventory family-friendly amenities

To realize the evolution of *Welcoming Family Travel* as a tourism driver, Discover Marana will conduct an assessment of what it currently offers families. This should include inventorying specific attractions, itineraries, and amenities tailored for family travel. Once a complete inventory has been compiled, Discover Marana will then determine the gaps it has in meeting the needs of family travel. These findings will help

inform other strategies in the Tourism Master Plan and help to further tailor and refine implementation.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Parks & Recreation, Town of Oro Valley, Visit Tucson, National Park Service
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.3 Incorporate family-friendly amenities in new developments

Destinations that are genuinely welcoming of families have amenities in developments that help to support them: changing tables for babies in all bathrooms, play areas in open spaces for older children, ramps for everyone dependent on wheels for mobility regardless of age, and handrails on ramps and stairs for those needing some assistance. In this Strategy, the Town of Marana will first identify the types of family-friendly amenities it wants in its built environment, then determine how to incorporate them into new developments and redevelopment of existing buildings.

Partners: **Town of Marana Legal**, Town of Marana Development Services, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, hotels, restaurants
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.4 Develop a food-oriented gathering space

People—residents and visitors alike—often enjoy being able to people-watch, gather, and enjoy a meal at the same time. A gathering space with a mix of uses provides for

community, passive entertainment, a critical mass of people, and a way to showcase local cuisine and shopping. The Town of Marana has been pursuing the development of a food-oriented gathering space on Town land, with the goal of developing something akin to the Silos in Waco, TX or The Churchill in Phoenix, AZ.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Town Council, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office, Town of Marana Development Services, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Pima County Health Department, restaurants
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.5 Streamline the community event planning and permitting process

Discover Marana will ensure the event planning and permitting process is as streamlined as possible to allow for new and larger events and festivals. Components of this effort include identifying and pursuing third-party organizations to support and fund events, reviewing the current permitting process and making efficiencies where possible, and creating a training program to support organizations that are putting on events in the community. Further, Discover Marana will want to confirm that all events hosted in Marana are branded as Marana events and not as other communities in Southern Arizona.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Town of Marana Development Services, Town of Marana Public Works
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.6 Develop and execute a 50th Anniversary celebration for the Town

Incorporated in 1977, the Town of Marana is quickly approaching its 50th anniversary. Celebrating this milestone can help elevate the Marana brand for residents and visitors alike. The Town should craft this celebration in a way that reinforces a strong sense of place, so that residents can have enhanced clarity and pride in their hometown. The three primary drivers of tourism should be considered when developing the themes for this celebration, as these are drivers the Town is actively seeking to evolve into longer stays with more visitor spend. These drivers are *Welcoming Family Travel*, *Exciting Outdoor Recreation*, and *Unique Agri-Western Experiences*. This effort will tap the entire town government and its various expertise to successfully carry out a memorable anniversary celebration.

Partners: **Town of Marana Town Manager's Office**, Town of Marana departments
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

1.7 Develop a history and heritage storytelling system

Marana's history runs deep. From Indigenous people living in the area for millennia to early ranchers and cotton farmers who located here in the 19th and 20th centuries to a role in aviation during World War II, Marana has a wealth of history and heritage to celebrate. In this Strategy, the Town will develop a robust and user-friendly storytelling system accessible to residents and visitors. This will empower residents to learn more about the place they call home and will draw visitors to explore this rich history.

Partners: **Town of Marana Cultural Heritage**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Communications, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Town of Marana IT
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$



Photo: JD Fitzgerald/Marana Parks & Recreation

1.8 Expand the Public Art program

Marana already has a Public Art program that raises funds to place art in public spaces. In this Strategy, the Town will look at the program through a visitation lens to ensure the program serves as an asset in the visitor experience. First, the location of art can be specified such that the placement enhances place-making efforts. Visitors like to go to places that are interesting, have flair, and are inviting. Art placement plays a role in this. Second, the Town may consider criteria for art installations that demonstrate a connection to and honor the Town's different historical eras. Next, the Town can consider expanding the program to integrate art into redevelopments and future developments, thereby expanding the range of places where art is located. Last, to ensure the art is accessible to residents and visitors alike, the Town will develop tools like printed maps or an app to share where and how to find art installations.

Partners: **Town of Marana Town Manager's Office**, Town of Marana Communications, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Public Works, Town of Marana Development Services, Town of Marana Economic Development
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.9 Create and execute a "Stay in Marana" campaign

One goal of this Tourism Master Plan is to grow the brand awareness of Marana so that people know they are in Marana when they are here and not in a surrounding community or just in Southern Arizona. One way to reinforce the location of Marana is through a

"Stay in Marana" campaign in which existing hotels and resorts are promoted as the places to stay to explore the Town and Southern Arizona. Further, this campaign could emphasize that the Town of Marana is also the place for weddings and other social events where guests Stay in Marana. Last, the execution of this campaign will also include reaching out to local corporate businesses to ensure they know what Marana has to offer to attract business travel: meeting spaces, hotel rooms, and dining.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Marana Regional Airport, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority, hotels, retail partners, wedding and event planners
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$



Photo: Vic Hathaway



Photo: The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain

1.10 Engage developers to consider accommodation development in Marana

The Town of Marana and Discover Marana know the growing promise of the community as a destination and are positioned to draw development interests to Marana to help make the future vision a reality. One component of this is fostering the awareness and desire of accommodation companies and developers to consider Marana for their future hotels and resorts. To this end, the Town of Marana will conduct an accommodations needs assessment that inventories current lodging options and current room nights, forecasts needs for the ten-year horizon, makes projections for future room nights, and offers recommendations to bridge the difference. These findings can then be shared with investors and developers to entice them to consider Marana.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Discover Marana, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority, Arizona Office of Tourism, Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association, Local First Arizona, hotel developers, Downtown developers and landowners
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.11 Diversify and grow short-term rental offerings

Some travelers look for unique and memorable accommodations and a departure from more corporate hotel fare. To attract these travelers to Marana, the Town will examine the current environment of the short-term rental (STR) market, what development codes allow, and what steps can be taken to broaden the community's offerings. In addition to residential-style STRs, the Town will also look at options for travelers seeking the glamping experience or traveling in RVs.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Community Services, Town of Marana Finance, STR host companies
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.12 Inventory town-wide conference space

To increase the Town's attractiveness for the meeting market, it will need to have resources in place to meet the demand. To do so, Marana first needs to know what resources it has. In this Strategy, the Town will inventory the available meeting and conference space. This inventory will consider the overall size of facilities, number of meeting rooms, largest meeting room, connection to nearby hotels, year built and/or renovated, and both a Google and AAA rating.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.13 Partner with the Restaurant Task Force to grow food and beverage options

The Town of Marana already knows how important a range of dining options are to the vibrancy of a community. The Town started the Restaurant Task Force to diagnose hurdles to developing new restaurants and to devise strategies to attract new restaurants to town. This Strategy continues that concerted effort, building on the understanding that a variety of food and beverage establishments also drives visitation.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Discover Marana, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Restaurant Task Force, Town of Marana Development Services, restaurants
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.14 Perform an outdoor recreation business gap analysis

While Marana has the natural landscape and some built infrastructure for the outdoor recreation industry, much more can happen, especially when building toward the aspiration for the *Exciting Outdoor Recreation* tourism driver: *Reputation as an Outdoor Recreation Destination*. Building the destination as an outdoor recreation locale will take investment in connecting people to activity and growing local businesses that support recreation. In this Strategy, the Town will inventory the current array of outdoor recreation businesses, compare that to what will be needed in the future vision of Marana's outdoor recreation offerings, highlight gaps, and then provide actionable recommendations to address each gap.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Pima County
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$



Photo: Discover Marana

1.15 Create a strategy for purchasing land for tourism-supportive development

As Marana learned from the Town of Gilbert field trip in May 2024, having property owned by the Town facilitates future development that achieves Town goals. In this Strategy, the Town will continue to purchase land with an eye toward those parcels that help to achieve development visions.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Discover Marana, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Town Manager's Office, Town of Marana Legal Department, Real Estate Division
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.16 Explore outside funding for tourism-related activities

The Town of Marana and Discover Marana will be able to make more of this Tourism Master Plan a reality through effective public-private partnerships. Increasing funding for tourism-related activities through partnerships, grants, or other arrangements with outside companies will not only bring more financial resources to bear on this plan but will also bring more voices together in support of the community's vision.

Partners: **Town of Marana Grant Manager**, Discover Marana, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance, Arizona Office of Tourism, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.17 Create a crisis communications plan

One key strategic investment in Marana's tourism economy is to create a crisis communications plan to be deployed in the unfortunate event of a catastrophic natural disaster or other disruptive event. This communications plan will guide communications to Marana's visitors and industry partners during and after such a crisis. Components of the plan will include the identification of triggering events that would indicate deployment of the plan; a delineation of the roles and responsibilities of different parties; framing for key messages, tailored by audience; a monitoring approach for understanding how media is reporting the situation; adaptive messaging strategies within a fluid situation; post-event communication of Marana's recovery, and a framework for post-event evaluation of the effectiveness of the response.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Communications, Town of Marana Emergency Management, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office, Town of Marana Police
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$



Photo: JD Fitzgerald/Town of Marana

1.18 Establish internal mechanics in alignment with the Tourism Master Plan

The Town of Marana has already started to be intentional about its approach to tourism by crafting marketing strategies, partnering with kindred organizations, and allocating budget to priority efforts. This Strategy will continue and deepen this intentionality, with a focus on marketing strategies, partnerships, and project plans that support this Master Plan.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Marana Regional Airport, Arizona Office of Tourism, Town of Oro Valley, Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority, third-party marketing agency
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

1.19 Update the Discover Marana website to support the Tourism Master Plan

Discover Marana will continue to update its website and leverage emerging technologies to reflect the vision set forth in this Plan and to share strategies underway. Changes may also be made that are part of the execution of Strategies in this Plan, lending visibility or promotional support to those initiatives.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Communications, Arizona Office of Tourism, representatives of all assets as needed
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.20 Delineate Town of Marana and Discover Marana roles

There is currently some lack of clarity around the roles and responsibilities of Discover Marana other Town departments, especially when it comes to marketing, communications, and branding. In this Strategy, roles and responsibilities will be clearly delineated, thus empowering both Discover Marana and other Town departments to more effectively carry out their respective work.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Communications, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Marana Regional Airport
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

1.21 Develop a data dashboard

Building transparency into how Discover Marana shares progress on its work will help build confidence in the organization as it expands its efforts to grow tourism in the Town. To that end, Discover Marana will develop a data dashboard that demonstrates progress on achieving the objectives of this Plan, as well as infographics demonstrating the broader tourism economy and its evolution as this Plan is implemented.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Communications, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Finance Department
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

PHASE 2: SUPPORTING GROWTH, YEARS 5-7

Phase 2 begins to see the investments of Phase 1 come to fruition and then takes a multi-prong approach to expanding from that point. In Phase 2, Marana will implement strategies to more clearly distinguish itself as both a community and destination and launch unique “Of Marana” events, festivals, and sporting events. This phase sees the Town and Discover Marana further grow and invest in their networks to strengthen the local tourism economy. Last, this phase sees the Town continue to invest and grow its existing assets to meet the needs and wants of residents and visitors.

2.1 Develop all-season recreation

While Marana has delightful weather from October through April, its average temperature exceeds 90° for six months of the year. This reduces the appeal of Marana as a destination for many visitors, and those who do come may have fewer options on what they can do since the outdoors is one of the community’s biggest draws. To counter this, the Town will develop covered outdoor or indoor gathering spaces to facilitate summer visitation and gathering. This could include developing indoor recreation spaces, an indoor park, an indoor or covered venue for small concerts, and other covered outdoor gathering spaces.

Partners: **Town of Marana Parks and Recreation**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Town Manager’s Office, Town of Marana Finance, Town of Marana Development Services
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

2.2 Study Heritage Park as a tourism asset

Heritage Park and nearby Gladden Farms Community Park are already assets for the Marana community. That said, some additional study of Heritage Park will provide the Town and Discover Marana more insight into how it could be developed to be a stronger

asset to residents and visitors alike. To do so, the Town will want to launch surveys and collect ideas for year-round usability, prioritize ideas, and craft a master plan. The master plan will also include a more rigorous feasibility study of various amenities and events that could be considered, everything from the more common—covered play spaces and splash pads—to the more unusual, integrating some of the agri-western heritage of Marana into the programming and design.

During and beyond this process, the Town will begin coordinating the marketing and programming of Heritage Park and Gladden Farms Community Park. While these are two distinct places, their proximity allows for this coordination to attract target markets to come and experience Marana.

Partners: **Town of Marana Parks and Recreation**, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office, Discover Marana, Marana Heritage Conservancy
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$



Photo: Marana Parks & Recreation

2.3 Expand family-friendly gathering spaces

Welcoming Family Travel is one of the primary drivers of tourism to Marana. To grow this driver from visiting friends and relatives in Southern Arizona to choosing Marana as a family travel destination, Marana will expand its family-friendly spaces throughout the community. This could include amenities like indoor play parks, encouraging restaurants to have family-friendly policies and spaces, and supporting interactive educational museums.

Partners: **Discover Marana, Town of Marana Economic Development**, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, restaurants and retail, and other private-sector partners
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

2.4 Encourage outdoor-related businesses

Marana and the immediate environment have abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, spanning hiking, road biking, mountain biking, and bird watching. With only a few outdoor-related businesses in Town, however, any visitor without their own gear will be unable to engage in these activities fully. To support resident and visitor use of outdoor recreation amenities and to grow awareness of all that Marana offers, the Town will explore opportunities to encourage outdoor recreation-related businesses to locate near recreation access points.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development, Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Pima County, Arizona State Parks & Trails, retail partners
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$



2.5 Expand outdoor recreation tourism assets

Marana is blessed with a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities: hiking, birding, road cycling, mountain biking, and equestrian sports. These currently generate primarily day visits to Marana, and while many of these experiences are world-class, they suffer from low awareness. In order to grow the outdoor recreation tourism driver from day visits to multi-day visits and to grow Marana's reputation as an outdoor adventure destination, the Town will expand on these tourism assets, pursue noteworthy recognitions, and seek to attract new events, from cycling road races to rodeos.

Partners: **Discover Marana, Town of Marana Communications**, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Pima County, Arizona State Parks & Trails, Tucson Bird Alliance
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

2.6 Expand capacity for Town festivals and events

The Town of Marana has four signature events: Founders' Day Parade and

Festivities, the Star-Spangled Spectacular, the Fall Festival, and the Holiday Festival. These are well received by the local and regional populations and those visiting during those times. The Town has limited capacity to expand these festivals or consider taking on new events or festivals. To address this, Marana will explore partnerships with entities that bring the capacity to expand existing events and festivals or introduce new ones. Some events that align with its destination brand and goals that Marana may consider are the Taste of Marana festival, events that celebrate its aviation history, and events that celebrate its ranching history, such as a specialty rodeo.

Partners: **Town of Marana Parks and Recreation**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Economic Development, Marana Regional Airport, Pima County
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

2.7 Create a facility to share Marana's history and heritage

There is no museum or other facility in Marana that is a central collection space for stories and artifacts of the Town's history and heritage. In this Strategy, Marana will plan and then implement the development of a location to house, exhibit, and promote its history. This facility will help Marana continue defining itself and its story and give visitors another attraction to enjoy.

Partners: **Town of Marana Cultural Heritage**, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office, Old Pueblo Archeology, Marana Heritage Conservancy
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

2.8 Encourage meeting and conference development

With a meeting and conference facility inventory in place, Marana will turn its attention to setting the stage for being a desirable place for such events. First, the Town will consider the types of meetings and conferences it may wish to attract and which organizations may find Marana a good location, especially in its Downtown area. Next, this information will be cross-referenced with the current inventory to identify gaps in meeting potential demand. Last, Marana will examine its municipal codes to ensure they facilitate conference and meeting space development at logical places.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Transportation, Town of Marana Development Services, Downtown Developer, hotel developers
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

2.9 Support the development of high-end bespoke tours and experiences

While Marana is home to the ultra-luxurious The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, resort guests don't often look for or find attractions, places, or experiences outside the grounds with which to engage. The result is that the economic impact of individual stays at The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain does not reach further into the Marana community. To address this, the The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, with facilitation support from Discover Marana, will collaborate with community partners to develop bespoke tours and experiences attractive to this high-end clientele.

Partners: **The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain**, Discover Marana, local museums and galleries, agritourism partners
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$



2.10 Develop maker spaces for microbusinesses

Creating a maker space fosters creativity and collaboration and empowers entrepreneurs to make their business ideas a reality. By providing spaces, such as commercial kitchens, office and meeting spaces, and spaces that have woodshops, metal shops, and art-making facilities, Marana can give small businesses the leg-up they need to establish themselves and contribute their creativity to the Marana community and the market at large. In addition, maker spaces play a role as community gathering spaces for creatives in the community. As such, they help promote community engagement and contribute to the strengthening of Marana's community identity.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, Pima County Health Department, Local First Arizona
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

2.11 Establish partnerships with organizations serving small businesses

Building the ecosystem of organizations that support small businesses will provide more tools to those businesses, further investing in their success. In this Strategy, Discover Marana will collaborate with the Marana Chamber of Commerce to continue their efforts to work with business owners within the travel and tourism industry to better understand their needs and then determine ways to meet those needs. Discover Marana will also establish, grow, and deepen relationships with other small business-serving organizations, like business development centers, to meet this need.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development, Discover Marana**, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Local First Arizona, Pima County Small Business Development Center, Local Financial Institutions
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$



Photo: Discover Marana

2.12 Establish an ambassador program

A destination's attractiveness is partly communicated by how its businesses and front-line staff share its value with clientele. Discover Marana will work with these entities and their employees, identify opportunities to enhance their knowledge of Marana as a destination, and share tools for them to get the word out to visitors. This may include regular training programs, periodic updates on new businesses and attractions, having identifiable ambassadors attend and support community events, and sharing event calendars. Together, these actions will enhance the quality of information shared with visitors from local tourism workers and help make the experience of visiting Marana even more enjoyable.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Cultural Heritage, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Visit Tucson, Certified Tourism Ambassadors Network for Pima County, Arizona Office of Tourism, local Native American organizations

Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

2.13 Strengthen residential community identity

Marana is a relatively young and growing town. It was established in 1977 with a population of 1,500, now growing to approximately 65,000. The Town is over 121 square miles, with about 540 people per square mile. Compare that to Phoenix (3,100 people/sq. mi.), Gilbert (3,900 people/sq. mi.) and Tucson (2,250 people/sq. mi.) In addition, many mailing addresses within the Town boundaries are assigned a different



Photo: Discover Marana

city by the U.S. Postal Service. The mix of the rapid population growth, the dispersal of population over a large area, and the confusion about town of residency results in a weaker sense of community identity.

To address this, The Town of Marana will initiate a strategy to strengthen people's ties to the place of Marana. This could include erecting branded street signs, establishing town boundary signs, creating an artistic map of Marana that is shared with all residents, developing approaches to build community pride in school-age children, or working with the community to establish district names, especially at commercial nodes that are envisioned to attract residents and visitors. These actions will help people identify with a smaller and more relatable geography.

Partners: **Town of Marana Town Manager's Office (entire, including Communications)**, Discover Marana,

Pima County, Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance, Local Native American organizations
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

2.14 Investigate mutually beneficial tourism partnerships

Growing a vibrant destination with continued residential support, a thriving local economy, and a natural environment that maintains its allure is not the job of just Discover Marana. Multiple organizations play a role in making Marana a great place to live, work, play, and stay. In this Strategy, Discover Marana will lead an effort to identify and grow partnerships with other organizations that have a role to play in travel and tourism.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Marana Regional Airport, Town of Oro Valley, Visit Tucson, Pinal County, Pima County, Arizona Office of Tourism
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

2.15 Develop an infrastructure investment strategy for outdoor assets

One of the things that has risen to prominence since 2020 is engaging in outdoor activities. Many destinations witnessed increased use of trails and a commensurate gap between infrastructure at trailheads and their ability to serve that growing demand. This infrastructure gap includes elements like bathrooms, trash facilities, and educational signage. Marana is no different. While it has fantastic outdoor assets, access points and asset amenities are lacking in some

cases. In this Strategy, the Town will develop, as part of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, an approach to identify the types of infrastructure needed at individual outdoor assets. It will then create an investment plan to implement the recommendations.

Partners: **Town of Marana Parks and Recreation**, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Public Works, Marana Regional Airport
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

2.16 Explore signage on Town property

Two of the key objectives of this Master Plan are to tell Marana's story and to generate a greater sense of place and pride in the identity of Marana. The Town will explore how it can leverage its properties as sites for billboards and signage to boost community identity. In addition to Town property, the I-10 corridor will be explored for additional billboard opportunities, both near Marana and along the drive approaching Marana from both the east and west, and Discover Marana will also seek opportunities to leverage digital wayfinding or other emerging technologies.

Partners: **Town of Marana Communications**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Transportation, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority, Arizona Office of Tourism, Arizona Department of Transportation
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

PHASE 3: REAPING REWARDS, YEARS 8-10

By the eighth year of implementation, the destination should be evolving and seeing some of the Destination Vision Narrative described in this Plan coming to fruition. Targeted visitors should be coming and staying longer. Attractions will be expanding, and new ones will be built. Tourism-supportive partnerships have been established and provide the tools for a thriving local tourism economy. The Strategies in this phase seek to deepen and diversify what tourism is in Marana, and to further establish the Town's reputation as a destination of choice.

3.1 Attract a family-friendly destination hotel

To reach the aspiration of a destination of choice for family travel, Marana will seek to attract a family-friendly destination hotel that can provide a year-round draw to come and stay. Hotels that have built-in amusement areas, such as a water park, ropes course, video arcade, or indoor mini golf, would provide such an attraction. Other amenities could include family-friendly rooms with the capacity for larger families and in-room perks for children, family-friendly dining experiences, on-site child care, and options for parent-only experiences.

Partners: **Discover Marana, Town of Marana Economic Development,** Marana Chamber of Commerce, Pima County, Visit Tucson, hotels
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

3.2 Recruit family-friendly attractions

While other Strategies in this Plan seek to enhance the family-friendliness of existing attractions or introduce a signature family-friendly resort hotel, this Strategy aims to grow welcoming family travel, and to be a destination of choice through increasing the number and variety of family-friendly attractions in the community. Attractions



Photo: Discover Marana/Ryan W.

could include elements like a youth-focused sports park open to sports tournaments, shorter and easier trails in scale with kids' abilities, a hands-on discovery museum, or indoor play parks.

Further, Marana will look to grow the amenities of interest for active adults seeking to continue an adventurous life, regardless of age. This could include more enriched cultural experiences, history and heritage exhibits, enhanced accessibility on trails and paths, and self-care indulgences like spas.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Economic Development, Visit Tucson, Southern Arizona Attractions Alliance, Arizona Commerce Authority
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

3.3 Pursue accessibility certifications

It is one thing to say that a destination is family-friendly. It is an entirely different thing to be recognized for going the extra mile to actually be a friendly and welcoming destination. In this Strategy, as Marana becomes more family-friendly and accessible for all, the Town will identify a few certifications to pursue as a way to gain recognition for how it considers and accommodates visitors with disabilities. This could include certification as an International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) Certified Autism Destination or becoming Destination Verified by Wheel the World.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, local accessibility experts, local tourism business partners
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$

3.4 Create a signature bike event

Marana is already considered one of the world's best winter cycling training areas by international cyclists. With assets like the 137-mile Chuck Huckelberry Loop (The Loop), proximity to the Tortolita Mountains, and events like El Tour de Tucson, Marana has some key foundational pieces in place for designing and launching a signature bike event for gravel, road, or mountain biking. Such an event would help elevate the Marana Brand, highlight its reputation as an outdoor adventure destination, and help it evolve this outdoor recreation tourism driver.

Partners: **Town of Marana Parks and Recreation**, Discover Marana, Town of Marana Economic Development, Town of Marana Development Services, Marana Regional Airport, Pima County
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

3.5 Develop and begin implementing a sports tourism plan

With a prime location along the I-10 corridor, a younger population, and land to develop, Marana is in a great position to craft a sports tourism master plan that charts a vision and a path to get there for its sports tourism offerings. The benefits of such a plan are multifold. It would clarify a path for development, provide a way for the community to rally behind a vision, respond to the needs of the community and those engaged in sports tourism, and help build Marana's reputation for exciting outdoor recreation.

Once written, the Town will turn its attention to implementing its vision, including seeking out public-private partnerships to help make facilities a reality and attract more people to stay and play in Marana.

Partners: **Town of Marana Parks and Recreation**, Town of Marana Economic Development, Discover Marana, Town Manager's Office, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$\$

3.6 Conduct preliminary planning for a performance event space

With a strong foundation of town-sponsored festivals and a growing diversity of events established in earlier phases of this Master Plan, Marana will begin to investigate how to establish a performance event space. This effort will entail forecasting programming based on audience and determining the space needs of the facility. Once clarified, the Town will explore which sites within Marana can accommodate this schematic and which areas of Marana are best situated to be the home of such a space. Along with the physical programming and location of the events space, the Town will consider its role in building and managing such a facility.

Partners: **Town of Marana Economic Development**, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office, , Discover Marana, Town of Marana Parks and Recreation, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Southern Arizona Arts and Cultural Alliance, MUSD
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

3.7 Articulate and distinguish Marana's "House of Brands"

As Marana has grown as both a community and a destination, it has also developed multiple expressions of its brand to promote its reputation and promise. In this Strategy, Marana will refine these brands, clarify how and when each is used, articulate how the brands align with and reinforce each other, and how the brands help tell the story and emphasize the identity of the Town. The Town Communications Office and Discover Marana will implement action plans specific to their respective audiences: town residents and visitors.

Partners: **Discover Marana, Town of Marana Communications**, Town of Marana Town Manager's Office
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$\$

3.8 Research strategies to maximize off-season visitors

Through all the Strategies in this Plan, Marana should see an increase and solid visitation pattern in its high season. Families will be coming to Marana as a destination of choice. Sports enthusiasts will travel to experience the adventure at this destination. And festivals will draw people to events that are unique to the Marana brand. With this strong foundation, Marana will begin focusing on how to extend visitation to shoulder and off-seasons. Some strategies could include expanding and enhancing indoor attractions and promoting evening and night experiences.

Partners: **Discover Marana**, Town of Marana Economic Development, Marana Chamber of Commerce, Pima County, Southern Arizona Sports Tourism and Film Authority, Arizona State Parks & Trails, National Park Service, Tucson Bird Alliance
Estimated Resource Requirements: \$



Photo: JD Fitzgerald

IMPLEMENTATION: COLLECTIVE IMPACT MODEL

IMPLEMENTATION: COLLECTIVE IMPACT MODEL

Collective impact is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration. The concept of collective impact hinges on the idea that in order for organizations to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large scale, they need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goal. This approach of collective impact is placed in contrast to “isolated impact,” where organizations primarily work alone to solve social problems.

—Wikipedia

[Collective impact is a] systemic approach ... that focuses on relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives.

—Stanford Social Innovation Review

The Collective Impact Model forms the foundation for the ongoing management of this Tourism Master Plan. The backbone support organization, Discover Marana, will ensure that all the necessary representatives come together regularly to share progress, course-correct, and strategize the next steps. While Discover Marana is the convener and the subject matter expert on travel and tourism, it is not the sole decider in the process.



Common Agenda

The Common Agenda for this Collective Impact Model is the Destination Vision Narrative, which begins on page 15 of this document.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Mutually Reinforcing Activities are the 10 Objectives and 44 Strategies described in this Master Plan, recognizing that many of these partners are listed as collaborators on those Strategies. The 10 Objectives are:

1. Target, attract, and develop new amenities to elevate Marana as a destination
2. Roll out the welcome mat for multigenerational families
3. Leverage and evolve Marana's world-class outdoor recreation and parks
4. Promote, enhance, and expand Marana's award-winning festivals and events
5. Celebrate and preserve Marana's unique arts & heritage
6. Expand, diversify, and promote Marana's accommodations and conference offerings
7. Incubate and grow small tourism-focused businesses and locally owned restaurants
8. Generate a sense of place, excitement, and pride in the identity of Marana
9. Identify funding sources and invest strategically in Marana's visitor economy
10. Use data to amplify Marana's authentic story and measure and demonstrate success

Backbone Support Organization

Discover Marana will act as the Backbone Support Organization, responsible for

convening community and government partners in service of implementing the work of this Plan.

Government Partners

Town of Marana Economic Development
Town of Marana Parks and Recreation
Town of Marana Cultural Heritage
Town of Marana Communications
Town of Marana, Town Manager's Office
Marana Regional Airport
Pima County Tourism
Pima County Economic Development

Community Partners

Marana Chamber of Commerce
Marana Pumpkin Patch & Farm Festivals
The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain
Downtown Developer
Tucson Premium Outlets at Marana Center

Depending on the project, additional partners will be brought in on an as-needed basis to participate in ad hoc work groups. These may include other governmental agencies, local organizations, industry partners, and nonprofits. As needed, the people and businesses that call Marana home will also be called to share their thoughts.

Shared Measurement Systems

The Shared Measurement Systems are the 2-3 indicators associated with each Objective. These demonstrate how to measure progress and describe how the objective is being achieved. It is recommended that these be tracked regularly and reported publicly once a year, timed with the fiscal year.



Photo: Discover Marana

Continuous Communication

Discover Marana will ensure that energy is placed in the continuous communication of this Plan and the Destination Vision Narrative. Tools to support this include:

- ▶ Webpage
- ▶ Social campaigns
- ▶ Local print and broadcast media
- ▶ Government relations

Two meeting tracks are envisioned for the first phase of the Plan:

Tourism Master Plan Team: In the first phase, it is recommended that a core team meet quarterly to ensure progress on initial Strategies. At the fiscal year-end, an annual report on the first year and progress on indicators should be compiled. In the second and third phases of implementing the Tourism Master Plan, these core team meetings can occur 2-3 times a year.

Ad Hoc Strategy Teams: Ad Hoc Strategy teams will be convened for each Strategy. Each Strategy team will identify a point

person to manage and report on the work, set a more detailed work plan to achieve the Strategy, and meet monthly to do the actual work. The point person will report to the Backbone Support Organization on progress and hurdles it encounters in achieving the Strategy.

In addition to an annual report, two other repeating communications are part of implementation:

1. Quarterly report to the Town Council. The Council tracks progress on its major Initiatives, of which this Tourism Master Plan is a part. Discover Marana will share a report quarterly to ensure the Council is up to speed and has the opportunity to share insights as this Plan is implemented.
2. Community survey. Since the community was surveyed as part of the foundation of the Tourism Master Plan, future surveys can help demonstrate progress and resident sentiment as the tourism industry evolves. Community surveys are recommended at the 3- and 6-year mark.



Photo: Ryan Wissmann

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Curt Woody, Town of Marana, Economic Development
and the Town of Marana Civic Committee

Town of Marana Council

Jon Post, Mayor
Roxanne Ziegler, Vice Mayor
Herb Kai, Councilmember
John Officer, Councilmember
Patti Comerford, Councilmember
Patrick Cavanaugh, Councilmember
Teri Murphy, Councilmember
A special thank you to late Mayor Ed Honea who was a champion for tourism in our community

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