

OCEAN CITY TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 → 2020 → 2030



Ocean City, Maryland
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STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE OCEAN CITY TOURISM COMMISSION

Strategic Planning Model for the Ocean City Tourism Commission

Value-based principles that describe the preferred future in 15 years

VISION

Destination
“You Have Arrived”

Strategic goals that focus outcome-base objectives and potential actions for 5 years

PLAN

Map
“The Right Route”

Focus for one year – a work program: Action agenda for City Tourism Commission, management agenda for staff; major projects

EXECUTION

Itinerary
“The Right Direction”

Principles that define the responsibility of town government and frame the primary services – core service businesses

MISSION

Vehicle
“The Right Bus”

Personal values that define performance standards and expectations for employees

CORE BELIEFS

Fuel
“The Right People”

OCEAN CITY TOURISM VISION 2030

Ocean City Tourism *Vision 2030*

**OCEAN CITY 2030 is a YEAR ROUND ^(A) FAMILY-FRIENDLY
RESORT COMMUNITY ^(B) which is a
DESTINATION FOR THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION ^(C)**

**OCEAN CITY 2030 is the ideal destination for:
WATER BASED ACTIVITIES ^(D), AMATEUR SPORTS ^(E),
CONFERENCES/CONVENTIONS ^(F) CULTURAL ARTS AND PERFORMANCE ^(G) and
SPECIALTY WEEKEND CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS ^(H).**

**OCEAN CITY 2030 offers: WORLD CLASS BEACH AND BOARDWALK ^(I);
ATTRACTIVE, WELL MAINTAINED AND MODERN HOTELS AND CONDOS ^(J), a
CHOICE OF QUALITY, AFFORDABLE RESTAURANTS ^(K)
and ABUNDANCES OF LEISURE CHOICES ^(L)**

***In 2030, our OCEAN CITY Tourists leave with TRULY ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES AND
LIFELONG MEMORIES ^(M) and look forward to their return visit.***

Ocean City Tourism Vision 2030

PRINCIPLE A

YEAR ROUND

► Means

1. Primary Season: March 15th to November 15th
2. 2nd Season: November 15th to March 15th

PRINCIPLE B

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RESORT COMMUNITY

► Means

1. Families feeling safe and secure
2. Activities for all family generations
3. Reputation: a great destination for families
4. Opportunities for families to spend valuable time together
5. Ocean City vacation: a family tradition and memory making
6. Perception of value
7. All definitions of "family" feeling welcome

PRINCIPLE C
DESTINATION FOR THE
MID-ATLANTIC REGION

► **Means**

Primary Targeted Areas

1. Baltimore/Maryland
2. Washington, D.C. Metro Area (including Northern Virginia)
3. Philadelphia and Suburbs
4. Central Pennsylvania
5. New Jersey
6. New York

Other Areas of Interest

7. Pittsburgh Area

PRINCIPLE D
WATER BASED ACTIVITIES

► **Means**

Primary Activities

1. Beach
2. Boating/Jet Ski
3. Ecotourism Paddle Boarding, Kayaking, Canoeing
4. Surfing

Secondary Activities

5. Beach Sports: Volleyball, Soccer, Lacrosse, etc.
6. Fishing/Crabbing
7. Daily Sports Fishing
8. Fishing Tournaments

PRINCIPLE E

AMATEUR SPORTS

► Means

Primary Sports

1. Beach sports tournaments: volleyball, over-the-line baseball, soccer, lacrosse
2. Regional youth outdoor sports tournaments: baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, football
3. Cheerleading, dance competitions
4. National youth sports tournaments: baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse

Secondary Sports

5. Emerging sports tournaments: Quidditch, extreme sports
6. Indoor regional sports: volleyball, basketball, soccer, wrestling
7. Local Maryland youth sports tournaments: baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, football
8. Sports camps

Major and Local Sports

9. Major and local running events/triathlons

PRINCIPLE F

CONFERENCES/CONVENTIONS

► Means

1. Regional professional associations
2. Major business meetings
3. Social, military, educational, religious, fraternal
4. Educational/government associations
5. Consumer shows

PRINCIPLE G

CULTURAL ARTS AND PERFORMANCE

► Means

Primary Activities

1. Concerts: national tours at Performing Arts Center
2. Regional/local productions: plays or concerts
3. Entertainment/theater packages with hotels
4. Music festival/concerts on the Beach

Secondary Activities

5. Public art throughout Ocean City
6. Amphitheater with permanent stage (at Northside Park)
7. Arts Building(s) displaying the visual arts

PRINCIPLE H

SPECIALTY WEEKEND CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

► Means

Primary Events

1. Family oriented events
2. Privately sponsored daily events (St. Patrick's Day)
3. Town programs/activities

Secondary Events

4. Tall ships events
5. 50 + oriented events
6. Destination weddings and family celebrations
7. Halloween events

PRINCIPLE I

WORLD CLASS BEACH AND BOARDWALK

► Means

Primary Importance

1. World class free Beach: nationally recognized, well maintained and safe
2. World class Beach Boardwalk: beautiful, clean/safe and personally inviting; "appropriate" business activities
3. Quality artistic/musical performers
4. Non-smoking Beach and Boardwalk
5. Preservation and retention of landmark attractions businesses on the Boardwalk

Secondary Importance

6. Successful businesses on the side streets leading to the beach
7. Easy access with convenient parking for Ocean City residents and tourists
8. Restaurants with opportunities for outside dining
9. Boardwalk extended around to the Bay
10. Well maintained public infrastructure

PRINCIPLE J

ATTRACTIVE, WELL MAINTAINED AND MODERN HOTELS AND CONDOS

► Means

1. Locally owned hotels/motels: well maintained and updated
2. Condos for monthly/weekly/daily rental
3. National hotel chains: recognized for quality and consistent products
4. Accommodations affordable for families
5. Quality apartments: updated and meeting current codes; older replaced
6. Hotels/condos owners and Town working together
7. Housing for seasonal employees

PRINCIPLE K
CHOICE OF QUALITY, AFFORDABLE
RESTAURANTS

► **Means**

1. Locally owned, family oriented restaurants
2. Specialty "gourmet" restaurants
3. Renovation and upgrade of older restaurants
4. Upgrade national/local grocery store: Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, Fresh Market
5. Prepared foods for "take home"

PRINCIPLE L
ABUNDANCES OF LEISURE CHOICES

► **Means**

1. Outdoor Amphitheater
2. Major Movie Theater/IMAX
3. Eco-tourism Amenities/Tours/Programs
4. Additional Free Events/Programs/Activities
5. Aquarium
6. Golf

PRINCIPLE M
TRULY ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES AND
LIFELONG MEMORIES

► **Means**

1. Creating lifelong memories
2. Safe vacation environment and experiences
3. Family tradition
4. Desire to return
5. Sense of value for limited leisure family budget
6. Friendly customer-oriented service delivery

OCEAN CITY TOURIST MARKET

Targeted Geographic Areas

Tier 1

Baltimore/Maryland

Washington, D. C. Metro Area (including Northern Virginia)

Philadelphia And Suburbs

Central Pennsylvania

New Jersey

New York

Pittsburgh Metro Area

Targeted Population

Tier 1

Traditional Families

Extended/Nontraditional Families

Conference Attendees

Sports Tournament Participants

Tier 2

Special Event Attendees

50 + Oriented Special Events

Golf Groups

TOWN OF OCEAN CITY: TOURISM MISSION

Town of Ocean City: Tourism Mission

Our Primary Mission is to

***MARKET OCEAN CITY FOR TOURISM,
MAINTAIN/ENHANCE THE BOARDWALK,
MAINTAIN A TOP QUALITY BEACH,
PROVIDE FREE/PAY FOR EVENTS/ACTIVITIES,
BUILD/MAINTAIN AN ATTRACTIVE CITY,
OPERATE/MAINTAIN/PROGRAM CONVENTION CENTER, and
DEVELOP/PROVIDE RECREATIONAL
PROGRAMS/CAMPS/ACTIVITIES.***

Our Secondary Mission is to

***BUILD/MAINTAIN FACILITIES THAT SUPPORT TOURISM,
GATHER TOURISM RELATED DATA,
ASSURE A SAFE TOURIST EXPERIENCE,
PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING, and
PARTNER WITH OTHERS FOR
RECREATIONAL/SPORTS FACILITIES.***

OCEAN CITY TOURISM PLAN 2015 – 2020

Ocean City Tourism Goals 2020

**OVERARCHING: MAINTAIN STATUS AS MARYLAND'S
NO. 1 TOURIST DESTINATION BY INCREASING
THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS WHO STAY IN OCEAN CITY**

**EXPAND TOURISM YEAR ROUND PRIMARY SEASON
AND 2nd SEASON**

**IMPROVE THE " CURB APPEAL" OF OCEAN CITY – MORE
ATTRACTIVE, MORE INVITING**

**ENHANCE THE TOURISTS' EXPERIENCES – MORE ENJOYABLE,
MORE MEMORABLE**

**BECOME A MAJOR SPORTS DESTINATION – MORE
TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIONS**

**MAINTAIN/ENHANCE THE BEACH AND BOARDWALK – WORLD
CLASS DESTINATIONS**

Goal 1

Expand Tourism Year Round Primary Season and 2nd Season

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase room occupancy for all seasons
2. Increase the number of tourists during the mid week Summer Season
3. Increase spending per visitor
4. Increase length of stay
5. Increase the number of tourists during the 2nd Season
6. Increase the number of return tourists during each season and overall during the year

VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Greater room occupancy
2. More income to Ocean City businesses
3. Return on the Town investments in tourism related facilities
4. Recognition as Maryland's #1 tourist destination
5. More revenue to the Town to support municipal services

**SHORT TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Events that may create a negative image and increased demand for public safety resources for Ocean City
2. Trend for shorter vacations: less than a week
3. Poor weather during winter, uncertain weather during shoulder seasons
4. Increased competition for leisure dollars
5. Teen/young adult events that may create a negative image for Ocean City
6. Summer competition from other resorts: Delaware, Virginia Beach, New Jersey
7. Competition for non-traditional locations/destinations for tourism

**LONG TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Some businesses close in September and open again in June
2. Expanding the geographic range of tourists: beyond a 4 hour drive
3. Poor quality accommodations needing upgrade or replacement
4. Prices of hotel rooms with limited months for a profit
5. Some landlords not taking responsibility for maintenance and upgrade of their properties
6. Retaining "traditional" experiences and providing new and "fresh" experiences

Goal 2

Improve The "Curb Appeal" Of Ocean City – More Attractive, More Inviting

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain reputation as a "safe beach" and "family safe community" for all
2. Well maintained Boardwalk and Beach
3. Well maintained public infrastructure: streets, parking lots, sidewalks, streetscape and signage
4. Non-smoking Beach and Boardwalk
5. Strict enforcement of inappropriate business activities on the Boardwalk and throughout the community
6. Free of litter and trash

VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Attractive and clean contributing to a feeling of personal safety and security
2. Tourist desire to return to Ocean City
3. Message to tourist: "Welcome to Ocean City"
4. Opportunities to enjoy the view: beach and Boardwalk
5. Protection/enhancement of property values

**SHORT TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Town funding for maintenance and upgrade of infrastructure: streets, parking, sidewalks, streetscapes and signage
2. Property owners who neglect the maintenance of buildings and homes, and are not investing in upgrading their properties
3. Private sector signs: amount, appearance, the message, and location
4. Tourists in a "throw away" society
5. Achieving compliance with Town codes and regulations
6. Role of Town government in regulating appearance and personal property rights

**LONG TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Legal obstacles to regulating types of business
2. Aged buildings needing major upgrade or demolition
3. Determining definitions of "attractiveness" in the community and among businesses

Goal 3

Enhance the Tourists' Experiences – More Enjoyable, More Memorable

OBJECTIVES

1. Have every tourist leave with positive, lifelong memories
2. Enhance/expand free tourist activities and experiences
3. Develop public-private partnership to enhance the tourists' experience
4. Develop new tourist venues, events and activities
5. Focus on "family friendly" venues, events and activities
6. Keep tourist venues "fresh" and feeling new

VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Ocean City for all family generations
2. New tourist venues, events and activities to experience and enjoy
3. Memories for a lifetime
4. Creation of "Family Traditions"
5. Desire to return to Ocean City, again and again

**SHORT TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Consistent culture of “top quality” customer service
2. Deteriorating older apartments, motels and hotels
3. Improving mobility during the visit: bus, bikes, etc.
4. Developing new venues, events and activities to experience and enjoy
5. One negative experience could ruin Ocean City for a family and a lifetime
6. Different generations having different leisure and recreational preferences and expectations

**LONG TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Lack of parking at specific locations
2. Families looking for free or low cost activities
3. Aging tourist venues needing upgrades or replace
4. Funding for new major attraction: theater, aquarium, indoor sports facility
5. Lack of collaboration among the hotels, condo owners/managers and Town of Ocean City

Goal 4

Become a Major Sports Destination – More Tournaments and Competitions

OBJECTIVES

1. Expand facility capacity for sports tournaments through partnerships with other governments
2. Increase the number of sport tournaments on the beach
3. Develop reputation as “Sport Resort” and Champion Events
4. Increase the number of non-traditional or emerging sports tournaments: Quidditch, etc.
5. Increase the number of golf tourists
6. Develop an indoor sports facility
7. Develop a reputation as "Maryland's No. 1 Amateur Sport Resort Capital"

VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Opportunities for others to discover Ocean City
2. Youth sports participants having a traveling family entourage
3. When not playing, need other activities
4. Filling rooms during weeklong tournaments
5. Tournaments likely in the 2nd Season, particularly shoulder months

**SHORT TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Expanding partnerships to promote and expand sports tourism
2. Limited land available in Ocean City for sports facilities or fields
3. “Stay to Play” housing agreement
4. Lead time to establish relationship and secure a major tournament
5. Lack of County indoor facility during winter months or for indoor competitions or tournaments
6. Working in partnerships for additional sporting venues
7. Attracting new and emerging sports that do not have tournament destinations

**LONG TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Price of lodging for weekends
2. Attracting golf groups and amateur golf tournaments (e.g. weekends on shoulder season)
3. Beach based tournaments may focus on summer months

Goal 5

Maintain/Enhance the Beach and Boardwalk – World Class Destinations

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain reputation and receive national/international recognition as a "World Class Beach and Boardwalk"
2. Well maintained, free clean beach and Boardwalk
3. Maintain a safe beach and Boardwalk
4. Non-smoking beach and Boardwalk
5. Maintain bayside and channel for recreational purposes
6. Extend the Boardwalk around to the bayside
7. More successful businesses on the side streets leading to the beach and Boardwalk
8. Continued beach replenishment initiative

VALUE TO RESIDENTS

1. Preservation of Ocean City's major assets: the beach and Boardwalk
2. Family friendly beach and Boardwalk
3. Feeling personally safe and secure
4. Activities for all family generations – day and night
5. Places to sit and enjoy the view

**SHORT TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Expanding business activities on the side streets leading to the Boardwalk: type of businesses
2. Working with property owners to extend the Boardwalk around to the bayside
3. Role of Town government in regulating businesses and activities
4. Different perspectives on smoking and a smoke-free beach and Boardwalk

**LONG TERM CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1. Competition from other beaches and Boardwalks and other leisure activities/vacation destinations
2. Maintaining buildings along the Boardwalk
3. Town funding for increase in beach and Boardwalk activities
4. Funding for Boardwalk maintenance and upgrade
5. Limited space to expand activities during the Summer Season
6. Federal and state funding for beach renourishment

OCEAN CITY TOURISM ACTION AGENDA 2015

Ocean City Tourism Actions for 2015

TOP PRIORITY

Tourism Marketing Plan

Planning Convention Center Expansion Phase III

State Tourism Dollar Advocacy

Tourist Data Collection System/Media Purchase Evaluation Report

School Year Advocacy (Start of School Year After Labor Day)

Model Block Development

HIGH PRIORITY

Halloween Event Expansion

Sport Tournaments Expansion Strategy and Action Plan

New York/New Jersey Marketing Program

New Smoking Policy For Beach and Boardwalk

Northside Park Report

MODERATE PRIORITY

3rd/4th Streets Public Lot Parking/Beach Area: Maintenance

Boardwalk Enhancements

50 + Events Expansion