



## DESTINATION MISSOULA: REENVISIONING TOURISM

### OUR VISION

A vibrant and inclusive quality of life, place, and experience for both our community and visitors.

### OUR MISSION

Promoting responsible and sustainable year-round tourism.

### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:

*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, while addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.*

**Traditionally, destination marketing organizations have gauged their success by the number of “heads in beds.”** But this single metric does not tell the whole story. Our industry has begun to expand our viewpoint, better analyze data, and redefine performance markers for our destinations. In broadening the scope, we are seeing destinations become “over-loved” from the combined effects of successful marketing and the rise in travel and “rapid-mobility.”

**Destination Missoula began to reevaluate its “traditional role” of destination marketing.** It became clear that creating a roadmap for the future of tourism is vital, not only for our organization, but for our community members and natural environment as well. We began to apply these insights and values four years ago with a tourism master plan, but COVID-19 put everything on hold as we shifted our focus to educating and uplifting our community, as well as inspiring future travel when it was safe.

**As restrictions were lifted and other destinations struggled to recover from the loss of visitors, Missoula’s tourism increased at an incredible rate.** This brought new challenges, such as a lack of hospitality and service industry workers, a sky-rocketing housing market, and negative impacts to our natural resources. The growing interest in rural destinations and its impacts raises the question: is this a “COVID bubble” or are these trends now mainstays?

**The potential long-term economic, social, and environmental strains on our community create a new lens through which we must re-examine our role.** As we shift from “destination marketing/management” to “destination marketing/stewardship,” our new measure of success is equilibrium between the community’s values, low-impact/high-quality tourism opportunities, and economic stability.

**“The goal is to curate more immersive destination experiences, manage sustainable visitor growth, promote equitable economic development and elevate quality of life and place.”**

*DESTINATION NEXT – Futures Study 2019*

**TOURISM NEEDS TO GROW IN AN ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE MANNER, MEETING THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS, VISITORS, AND ENVIRONMENT.**

DESTINATION  
**Missoula**  
MONTANA



## WHY A DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN (DSP)?

A DSP for Missoula and the five surrounding valleys would serve as a 10-year roadmap, providing an organized and structured framework for inclusive, value-based, sustainable tourism development and promotion that helps to preserve quality of life for residents. The plan would effectively define:

### 1 WHO WE ARE:

- + Who are our current and potential visitors?
- + What is the breakdown of regional, in-state and out-of-state visitation?
- + What attracts/does not attract people to our destination?
- + What is the present environment in terms of community values, safety, cultures, religions, infrastructure, resources, facilities, events, etc.?
- + What is the visitor, resident, and business sentiment around Missoula tourism and current policies governing it?
- + Who is our competitive set and what key takeaways can we learn from them?
- + Who are our key stakeholders and who should be involved in planning and/or implementation?
- + What current community plans exist and what is our role within them?

### 2 WHERE WE WANT TO GO:

- + What is the current trajectory of tourism in our area and opportunity/risk assessments?
- + How do we encourage community-wide insight for the future and goal setting for our region?
- + How do we create an all-inclusive plan that represents Missoula's diversity?
- + What KPIs need to be used to measure short and long-term success and economic impact?

### 3 HOW WE GET THERE:

- + Define implementation strategies that engage our community stakeholders/partners, local/regional/state governments, and investors.
- + Create a timeline for implementation defining ownership/responsible entity.

Through this plan our goal is to:

**Balance** residents' quality of life with quality visitor experiences.

**Define** our ideal visitor as one who appreciates and helps to preserve what makes this place special.

**Create** strategies for responsible growth and management of the industry and destination development planning through collaboration.

It's critical that Missoula's DSP **honor** the potentially disparate objectives of myriad public and private partners in the region, while revealing and calling attention to where there is common ground and value for all involved. The process must define a **shared vision**; engage and inform the public, local thought leaders, government agencies, businesses, relevant nonprofit organizations and private industry; and develop an implementation roadmap for **collective action**.