



Houston First Corporation: Strategic Tourism Plan

Houston First Corporation retained Parter International and ESI to prepare a Strategic Tourism Plan for Houston and the 29-county region, including an economic impact analysis undertaken by ESI. The goal of the Strategic Plan was to ensure that leisure tourism is a major contributor to the area's economic growth and prosperity, and to improve Houston and the region's overall image as a tourism destination regionally, nationally and internationally.

The consulting team was tasked with analyzing the current tourism environment by assessing and evaluating leisure tourism activities, resources, and potential for Houston and its surrounding region. We analyzed and assessed improvements, enhancements and additions in product attractions and infrastructure, marketing and organization. For the purpose of this project Parter International prepared a detailed SWOT analysis-describing the findings of primary and secondary research as well as a comparable cities study-comparing Houston's tourism environment to six similar destinations. In order to provide a set of strong recommendations, we conducted 54 interviews with local leaders, conducted multiple informal interviews with locals, and visited more than 40 attractions in Houston and the region during the 38 person days we spent onsite – our public participation efforts included creating a working group of local experts, making presentations, and briefing community leaders. We reviewed tourism related materials and data for the region and comparable destinations including reports, planning documents, marketing materials, websites and online sources, tourism association studies, etc.

The consulting team suggested a short, medium, and long term implementation of strategies as well as preliminary implementation expenses for new and enhanced services and physical improvements. Upon the completion of the report, we were retained to help implement the recommendations. The result of implementing the key recommendations has been a dramatic increase in the number of tourists visiting Houston, from 14.8 million annually when we began the study in 2014 to 22.3 million in 2018.

Project Information

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