



**Bay City Tourism Advisory Council
& Matagorda County
Eco-Tourism Partnership
FY 2025-2027 Joint Strategic Plan**

In March 2024, the Bay City Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) and the Matagorda County Eco-Tourism Partnership (MCETP) embarked on a joint strategic planning process to develop the strategic priorities for Fiscal Year 2025 through 2027. The following is the process used to reach the conclusions for the joint Strategic Plan.

On May 8, 2024, the Bay City Tourism Manager, Darve Smith, the Bay City Tourism Advisory Council, and the Matagorda County Eco-Tourism Partnership Board of Directors met at the Beachside Clubhouse in Palacios, Texas for a strategic planning workshop to begin planning for fiscal years 2025 through 2027. Alysia A. Cook, PCED, IOM with Opportunity Strategies LLC served as their facilitator throughout this process.

During the Strategic Planning Retreat, the participants received the feedback from the attendees of the Bay City Tourism/Hospitality Focus Group discussion held on March 21, 2024, at the USO Service Center.

Following the Focus Group feedback review, the participants engaged in two exercises. The first was a SWOT Analysis where the group brainstormed the strengths, weaknesses, potential opportunities, and potential threats facing the Tourism industry in Bay City and Matagorda County. The second was an exercise called Start-Stop-Accelerate where the facilitator asked the participants to list what both organizations needed to start doing, stop doing, and accelerate their efforts to achieve.

Midway through the Strategic Planning Retreat, both organizations welcomed the Associate General Counsel of the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association to present the most recent updates to the laws in Texas regarding Hotel Occupancy Taxes including the legalities around HOT monies collections, administration, and expenditures.

The following is the joint group's FY 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

Bay City Tourism Advisory Council

Mission Statement

Bay City TAC promotes and develops tourism and awareness of our beaches, birds, thriving arts and downtown culture.

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement is to be a nationally recognized as the Birding capital and finest family destination in North America.

Bay City Tourism Advisory Council

Participated:

- Darve Smith, Tourism Manager
- DC Dunham
- Amanda Garcia
- Jessica Shepard

Unable to Attend:

- Celeste Cash
- Octavio Fernandez
- Whitney Milberger
- Nicasio Perez

Matagorda County Eco-Tourism Partnership

Participated:

- Alyssa Dibbern
- DC Dunham
- Pam Oliver

Unable to Attend:

- Elizabeth Abels
- B Balboa
- Fred Beck
- Laurie Beck
- Zeinab Ghais
- Leslie Hartman
- Sara Huebner
- Tina Israel
- Melissa Laux
- V Martinez
- Kelly Penewitt
- Wilson Tarkington
- Mitch Thames
- Stacy Zahn

Board & Committee Effective Engagement – Keys to Success

1. Commitment Form
2. Proper Onboarding
3. Board Development Training
4. Strategic Plan



SWOT Analysis

The facilitator engaged the participants in an exercise to brainstorm and list the strengths and weaknesses of the Bay City Tourism Advisory Council and Matagorda County Eco-Tourism Partnership, as well as the current and/or potential opportunities and threats facing the organizations. The facilitator shared the aggregated responses with the whole group and discussed the comments collected. The results of the SWOT are listed here:

Strengths

- Blank Slate
- Environment
 - Weather
 - Wildlife
 - Water
- Motivated
- Diverse
- Open-minded
- History
 - Home of La Belle Heritage
 - Matagorda - 3rd oldest city in Texas
- Governmental
 - Backing
 - Collaboration
- Location
- Waterfront
- Fishing
- Birding
- Willingness for change

Weaknesses

- Organization of Committee
- Staffing
- Volunteers/Commitment
- Dedicated members
- Budget information
- Collaboration with other cities and local
- Lack of eating establishments
 - Variety?
- Tour guides for birding
- Wayfinding signs
- Lack of Aquatic Center
- Geographically challenged
 - Spread out
- Public education and communication
 - Who we are
 - Assets we have
- Seasonal opportunities
 - Winter void
 - 100°+ void
- Market Day \$

Opportunities

- Other funding
 - City general funding
 - County budget
 - Greater percentage of existing funding
- Create a Unique Tourist Draw/Attraction
 - Like Sulphur Springs' Mirrored Bathrooms
- Roundabout
 - Sculpture
- Cottonwood Creek
- Seafood industries
 - Celebrate and support
- Educational
 - Kids
 - Adults
- Diversity
 - Culture
- Need seafood restaurant
- Culinary
- Artists
- Collaborations
 - Marketing and organization
 - Countywide
 - Social Media
 - Event coordinator
- Harbor
 - Captive audience
- On water experiences
- Outdoor experiences

- Birding
- Beach
- Fishing
- Nature Center and more
- Unique tours
- Adopt-A-Spot
 - Litter pick-up
 - Taste of Palacios
 - Seafood Market

Potential Threats

- Shrimping industry
- HOT tax management
- Taking on too much too soon
- Beach erosion/management
- Lack of participation - Apathy
- Lack of community collaboration
- Communication
- Turnover
- Other tourism attractions - Competition
- Weather – Hurricanes

Start – Stop – Accelerate

The facilitator engaged participants in a group exercise called Start – Stop – Accelerate which divides participants into small groups and has them offer feedback on what the Bay City Tourism Advisory Council and Matagorda County Eco-Tourism Partnership need to start doing, stop doing, and accelerate efforts to do.

These are individual recommendations and not necessarily agreed to by all participants. The responses are as follows:

Start

- Hotel roundtables
- Budget and staff support
- Support TAC
 - Organize TAC
- ID target audience/diversity
- Arts sub-committee
 - Festival/events

Stop

- Organizational chaos
 - Apathy
 - Vague expectations

Accelerate

- Signage
 - Wayfinding
- Tourist Itineraries
- Arts - support projects
- Eco-tourism sub-committee
- Advisory Council expectations/roles
- Kiosk project
- More staff

The organizations joined together to create the following Goals.

Goal #1: Organizational Structure

To review and revise tourism organizational structures.

Goal #2: Visitor Center

To re-establish the Visitor Center Kiosk.

Goal #3: Marketing and Data

To create and execute a Marketing Plan.

Goal #4: Build Relationships

To enhance tourism collaboration.

Goal #5: Events

To support and promote Matagorda County events.

Goal #6: Art/Culture

To increase the presence of public arts and culture.



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FY 2025-2027 Joint Strategic Plan**

Goal 1

Organizational Structure

To review and revise tourism organizational structures.

Goal 4

Build Relationships

To enhance tourism collaboration.

Goal 2

Visitor Center

To re-establish the Visitor Center Kiosk.

Goal 5

Events

To support and promote Matagorda County events.

Goal 3

Marketing and Data

To create and execute a Marketing Plan.

Goal 6

Art/Culture

To increase the presence of public arts and culture.

Goal 1 Organizational Structure

To review and revise tourism organizational structures.

Strategies	Who's Responsible?	Complete Year	Metric/KPI
1.1 Solidify names of council and sub-committee	Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Create board/council commitment forms	TAC & Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Create onboarding binder	TAC & Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Schedule board/council training	Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Determine Tourism staffing needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Coordinator/Social Media (see 5.1) • Marketing and Research • Destination Services (See 3.4) 	Communications and Cultural Arts Director	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>

Goal 2 Visitor Center

To re-establish the Visitor Center Kiosk.

Strategies	Who's Responsible?	Complete Year	Metric/KPI
2.1 Turn on power/new door lock/clean	Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Establish regular hours and consider special event hours	Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Gather updated materials	TAC, MCETP & Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Market Visitor Center to local entities	Tourism Manager	2025	# of other entities: _____
2.5 Monitor materials in kiosk	Tourism Manager	2025	# of percentage used: _____

Goal 3 Marketing and Data

To create and execute a Marketing Plan.

Strategies	Who's Responsible?	Complete Year	Metric/KPI
3.1 Gathering of data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather prices on purchasing cell phone data • Gather Hotelier data (see Goal 4) • Research the Brazoria County Avatar(s) • Select a vendor to provide data 	Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Create tourist/visitor avatars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify target audience for tourism ads 	Tourism Manager	2025-2026	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Create Marketing Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website update • Visitor Guide Creation • City-owned Tourist Destination Support • Explore and purchase additional billboard(s) 	TAC & Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Build itineraries for Tourists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what to include in itineraries • Create 1-day, 2-day, & 3-day itineraries 	TAC & Tourism Manager	2025-2027	# of itineraries: _____
3.5 Diversify advertising - web based	Tourism Manager	2025-2026	<input type="checkbox"/>

Goal 4 Build Relationships

To enhance tourism collaboration.

Strategies	Who's Responsible?	Complete Year	Metric/KPI
4.1 Foster and grow local tourism/hospitality relationships			<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and contact hoteliers and other tourism contacts 	TAC & Tourism Manager	2025-2027	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule annual tourism roundtables 	TAC & Tourism Manager	2025-2027	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate and exchange ideas/data 	Tourism Manager	2025-2027	<input type="checkbox"/>

Goal 5 Events

To support and promote Matagorda County events.

Strategies	Who's Responsible?	Complete Year	Metric/KPI
5.1 Consider creating an Event Coordinator position (paid) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate Social Media • Create event checklist for processes 	City & Tourism Manager	2026	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Promote Day of the Dead, Artwalk Series, Matagorda Bay Birdfest, Camofest, Seafood Festival, Van Vleck Mud Races, and other main tourist events	TAC, MCETP & Tourism Manager	2025-2027	# of promoted events: _____
5.3 Utilize Bay City digital signs to promote events	Tourism Manager	2025-2027	<input type="checkbox"/>

Goal 6 Art/Culture

To increase the presence of public arts and culture.

Strategies	Who's Responsible?	Complete Year	Metric/KPI
6.1 Develop an Arts Committee to leverage diversity and culture through art events	Tourism Manager	2025	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Invest in more public art displays. Create a process to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an idea/identify location • Commission artist(s) • Review completion of artwork 	TAC & Tourism Manager	2026	# of displayed visual art: _____
6.3 Create visually appealing wayfinding signs using this process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research award-winning wayfinding signs • Identify the location of signs • Contact sign companies for bid • Select company and manage installation 	TAC	2026	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Facilitated by

