



LONGBOAT KEY | SARASOTA | LIDO KEY | SIESTA KEY | VENICE
CASEY KEY | MANASOTA KEY | ENGLEWOOD | NORTH PORT

2020 TOURISM STRATEGIC VISION

VISIT SARASOTA COUNTY VISION

Sarasota County will be a vibrant, cutting-edge destination that offers the finest mix of culture, art, nature, sports, entertainment and business opportunities with the most beautiful, award-winning beaches in America.

VISIT SARASOTA COUNTY MISSION

To position Sarasota County as the must-experience destination on Florida's Gulf Coast.

2020 TOURISM STRATEGIC VISION

GOAL ONE:

CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE THE DESTINATION'S BRAND ESSENCE

Objective A

Analyze consumer and industry research regarding the Sarasota County Experience to identify shifts in visitor perceptions.

Tactic: In its annual business plans, VSC will budget for research programs and focus group studies.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective B

Monitor global consumer and industry trends to identify new markets that would resonate with the Sarasota County experience.

Tactic: In its annual business plans, VSC will budget for research programs and involvement with national and international tourism organizations to monitor consumer and industry trends.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective C

Update and refine the brand message and marketing mediums, as dictated by research, to effectively tell the Sarasota County story.

Tactic: In its annual business plans, VSC will take the Colors campaign and its public relations programs to a new level of engagement.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective D

Diversify the destination's traditional domestic leisure visitor base with meetings, groups and international business.

Tactic: In its annual business plans, VSC will plan for strong sales programs for meetings, groups and international markets.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective E

Develop collaborative promotions to highlight the arts and culture of Sarasota County.

Tactic: In its annual business plans, VSC will create opportunities for collaborations, cooperative marketing and public relations opportunities for this key market segment

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective F

Establish Sarasota County as a premiere culinary destination.

Tactic: Build on culinary promotions such as Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week and agri-tourism assets to reach national culinary media outlets.

Timeline 2014-2016

Objective G

Develop new promotions for outdoor recreation and ecotourism.

Tactic: Utilize popularity of bicycling and birding to expand Discover Natural Sarasota.

Timeline 2014-2016

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES by 2020:

- ***Achieve 1 million overnight visitors per year.***
- ***Achieve top-of-mind awareness as an international destination.***

GOAL TWO:

ADVOCATE FOR DESTINATION ENHANCING DEVELOPMENT

Objective A

Fully utilize regional assets to position Sarasota County as a national and international sports destination.

Tactic: Working with the Sarasota County Sports Commission and area facilities, VSC will submit bids for national and international events that can best utilize regional assets. It is envisioned that there will be strong collaboration in this effort with neighboring DMOs and the Florida Sports Foundation.

Timeline: 2014-2017

Objective B

Support development of additional eco-tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Tactic: Working with Sarasota County Government, State Parks and private entities such as Audubon, VSC will identify new or expanded eco-tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities using the Discover Natural Sarasota platform.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective C

Partner with the Sarasota County Arts Alliance to be more proactive in cultural tourism product development.

Tactic: VSC will engage and encourage the Arts Alliance to pursue opportunities for the development of new arts projects throughout the County.

Timeline: 2015-2017

Objective D

Engage area colleges and universities as partners in enhancing the visitor economy.

Tactic: VSC will work with the County's colleges and universities to maximize campus attractions and facilities as well as attract visitors to their campuses and events.

Timeline: 2015-2017

Objective E

Support efforts to increase hotel development in Sarasota County.

Tactic: VSC will provide research data to public and private sector concerns that have an interest in appropriate hotel development in the County.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective F

Work to protect and promote existing air service into the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport (SRQ) and support strategic opportunities for new service to SRQ and seek partnerships with area DMOs for regional airlift.

Tactic: VSC will take a more proactive role in attempting to secure additional routes into the region.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective G

Engage Sarasota County and municipal governments regarding the importance of enhancing the aesthetics of the destination.

Tactic: VSC will work with area governments to encourage wayfinding signage programs and enhance entrances and the aesthetics of major thoroughfares.

Timeline: 2017-2020

Objective H

Support the continued maintenance and enhancement of the destination's waterfront experiences.

Tactic: VSC will work with area governments to elevate the Sarasota County beach experience to the highest possible level.

Timeline: 2017-2020

Objective I

Provide expertise in the community discussion of a public meeting facility and, if developed, ensure that government provides adequate and appropriate funding for the sales effort to position the facility for success.

Tactic: VSC will serve as the community's resource for data and analysis regarding the feasibility and viability of a public meeting facility.

Timeline: 2017-2020

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES by 2020:

- **Sarasota County successfully hosts national and international sports events.**
- **Sarasota County is recognized as a preferred meetings destination.**
- **Enhanced visual and wayfinding aesthetics and signage make Sarasota County a top destination.**
- **Sarasota County will see the addition of two full service hotels and three select or limited service hotels.**

GOAL THREE:

ELEVATE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE THROUGH ENHANCED VISITOR SERVICES

Objective A

Encourage resident engagement in promoting Sarasota County.

Tactic: VSC will develop programs to utilize the passion of area residents to invite and welcome visitors to Sarasota County.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective B

Utilize the Visitor Information Center and Visitor Information Vehicle to deploy trained destination ambassadors.

Tactic: VSC will develop training programs designed to enable ambassadors to provide a superior level of customer service to visitors.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective C

Develop training programs to prepare residents to welcome an increasingly diverse visitor.

Tactic: VSC will develop education and training programs for area residents to create a welcoming environment for visitors from around the world.

Timeline: 2014-2016

Objective D

Continue to utilize technology in delivering visitor services.

Tactic: VSC will continue to monitor and deploy the latest technologies to attract and meet the needs of the travel consumer.

Timeline: 2014-2020

Objective E

Continue to make the online Calendar of Events on visitsarasota.org the central source of information for destination events and activities and enhance services with a centralized ticketing program.

Tactic: VSC will develop the region's premier source of event information and ticketing.

Timeline: 2014-2020

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES by 2020:

- ***Attract one hundred more residents to be ambassadors for Sarasota County.***
- ***Increase visitation and visitor spending through engagement of authentic invitations from residents.***

GOAL FOUR:

INCREASE INVESTMENT INTO TOURISM PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective A

Increase public and private investment into tourism marketing.

Tactic: VSC will research, analyze and propose funding strategies to increase the destination's competitiveness.

Timeline: 2014-2017

Objective B

Continue to work with the Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (FADMO) on destination development initiatives and incentives on a Statewide level.

Tactic: VSC will provide leadership for Statewide efforts to develop new ways to increase visitation to Florida and Sarasota County.

Timeline: 2016-2020

Objective C

Work with Destination Marketing Association International and the U.S. Travel Association on issues such as streamlining beach renourishment and visitor access to visas.

Tactic: VSC will engage both national and international trade associations in advocating for measures that will increase visitation to Florida and Sarasota County.

Timeline: 2014-2017

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES by 2020:

- ***Increase public and private Investment in VSC to at least \$10 million.***
- ***Creation of destination development incentives that spur destination defining developments.***
- ***State and national tourism priorities reflect Sarasota County's needs.***

