



Mendocino County Tourism Commission, Inc.
DBA: Visit Mendocino County:
Fiscal Year 2021–2022

SUBMITTED TO MENDOCINO COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION & COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

APRIL 13, 2023



visitmendocino.com

VMC Annual Report Fiscal Year 2021-2022:

Executive Summary

The 2020-2021 fiscal year (FY) started incredibly strong with growth following easing of the COVID-19 health restrictions. The 2021-2022 fiscal year (FY) continued to be an incredibly strong year with further growth in tourism in Mendocino County (MC). The pent-up demand for travel continued to lead consumers to visit Mendocino County at historic levels. The Visit Mendocino County (VMC) team continued to push forward with cross-platform Brand Awareness marketing to ensure that MC was top-of-mind for potential visitors as Northern California's premiere road-trip destination. This program was three pronged: first: focus on brand awareness, second: target A-list media who wrote for multiple publications to gain extra coverage from each press visit and third: redevelop and coordinate with partner non-profit organizations to bring back annual festivals and events. Again, there were massive financial gains for our partners & stakeholders as well as growth in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and Business Improvement District (BID) assessment. With these increases, VMC was able to expand its marketing presence to television and radio allowing the organization to reach beyond social media and programmatic ad placements garnering the attention of the time affluent demographic. The team worked with Bay Area TV personality Roberta Gonzales and her firm Roberta Gonzales Productions (RoGoPro) to develop and launch a video podcast series "Mendocino County: Room to Roam" that was extremely successful.

This report will outline the strong placement of Mendocino County as a tourism destination and other necessary highlights for the fiscal year.

- While the organization remains financially strong, the current state of Mendocino County's finances no longer provides the ability to continue to support tourism promotion in the long-term, putting VMC's annual contract and 50% match in jeopardy. This led the BoD to direct the ED to consult with Civitas Advisors as to potential avenues for long-term funding stability. However, in June 2022 the County BoS approved the annual contract. At the time of writing, the ED is exploring funding options under the advisement of Civitas Advisors. The BID Advisory Board will address this further in their 2023-2024 report.
- The organization undertook a complete rebrand initiative, including its website. The new brand is designed to elevate the presence and value of Mendocino County as a destination. This new generation of VMC is scheduled to launch in spring 2023.
- Continued engagement with Cultivar Strategies to further the initiative of bringing tourism-facing cannabis businesses into the marketing fold of VMC.
- Launched a video podcast series under production and using the talent of Bay Area TV Personality Roberta Gonzales. This series showed 9 episodes with an average per episode viewership of 4,389.
- The expansion of the "Room to Roam" campaign into the television and radio markets.
- Undertook the development of a festival and event funding program designed to assist local organization in launching new tourism-facing events geared to bringing visitors to MC.
- VMC welcomed Festival Coordinator (contractor) Janis MacDonald to the team.
- Continued its massively successful Public Relations program, reaching and exceeding its set goals just 5 months into the FY.
- The team attended Visit California's annual Outlook Forum in February with Visit California noting in several sessions the successes of VMC as leader in rural tourism marketing.

- As required by our county contract VMC engaged with JJACPA, Inc. for the organization's annual financial audit that again, closed with no recommendations.
- The Executive Director (ED) working in collaboration with the Business Improvement District (BID) Advisory Board completed the annual BID report and submitted it to the Board of Supervisors (BoS) for acceptance and approval at their May,17 2022 meeting.

Despite the financial challenges presented to the organization, the VMC future is bright! The team is dedicated to inspiring visitors to experience our miles of pristine coastline, the acres of old-growth redwoods and verdant inland valleys, the unique attractions, makers, and artists and of course our hospitable welcome.

By working together and with our larger community, we can raise visitation number, add to economic development, and improve the lives of our residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to promote our beautiful county.

Respectfully,



Travis Scott
VMC Executive Director

Strategic Plan

The activities in this report relate to the initiatives set forth in the three-year Visit Mendocino County (VMC) Strategic Plan that was put into action in 2021. The purpose of the plan was to realign the core strategies of the organization. (The Strategic Plan may be viewed at <https://www.mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-VMC-2021-2023-Strategic-Plan.pdf>). This report directly relates the VMC Marketing, PR, Sales and other VMC staff activities during the year to the Imperatives, Objectives and Initiatives contained in the Strategic Plan.

VISION:

A diversified and thriving economy supported by our community, offering enriching experiences for our guests.

MISSION:

Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County Experience.

VALUES:

- **Transparency:** We foster trust through openness and integrity.
- **Accountability:** We are outcome oriented and professional.
- **Partnership:** We create alignment through inclusive and meaningful relationships.
- **Community:** We contribute to the fabric of Mendocino County.
- **Innovation:** Our creativity reflects the uniqueness of our culture and landscapes.

IMPERATIVE: Optimize and demonstrate our impact through relationships and collaborations.

The PR team (Koli Communications, ED, MM and PRCM and DM) communicate with partners and stakeholders on a monthly basis informing them of media stories. The team also requests partners and stakeholders submit content and information to VMC for dissemination by Visit California. An example of a pitch made during the year and published by Visit CA on their site features the Liquid Fusion Kayaking.

The ED continues as Administrator and Treasurer of the NCTC and attends quarterly meetings with Humboldt Visitor and Convention Bureau, the Lake County Tourism Improvement District and Visit Del Norte County.

MCTC staff currently hold seats on the Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce, Anderson Valley Winegrowers, Willits Chamber of Commerce, Visit Fort Bragg, Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, Visit Ukiah, Point Arena Merchant Association and regularly attends the Destination Hopland meetings.

For the second year, CORO Mendocino approached the marketing team to partner with their organization on a campaign that would continue work into the 2021-2022 FY. Specific deliverables for that campaign would be placement of a billboard on HWY 101 in Hopland promoting all CORO participating producers, county-wide, co-branded with VMC. The program will also include a press release focused on a CORO specific visit to Mendocino County, in Micro-Trip format. The partnership also included a month-long digital campaign in Fall 2021 that drove: 179,572 reach, 824,512 impressions, 7,123 clicks, \$0.98 cost per click.

The ED continues to hold a seat on and work closely with the Visit California (VCA) Rural Regional Committee and upholds a partnership with Shasta Cascade. The partnership with Visit California has proven to provide strong name recognition for VMC with Visit California, with VMC often being used in VCA presentations as following best DMO practices.

- VCA has provided 12,000 partner handoffs to connect the Visit Mendocino website, as well as 152-plus social media posts and 748,000 website page views.

• **OBJECTIVE: Increase participation rate in VMC Programs**

- ↳ VMC contracted with Festival Coordinator (FC) Janis McDonald to rebuild and expand VMC’s umbrella festivals: Harvest Festival Mendocino and Seafood & Sips Mendocino and develop new event offerings such as the Spring Beer Trail, and Sparkling Wine Trek.
- ↳ Partner Relations & Communications Manager (PRCM) worked with Mendocino County Lodging Association (MCLA) to host monthly industry mixers to engage partners and stakeholders in the work of VMC.
- ↳ At the direction of the Festival and Marketing committees and subsequently, the Board of Directors (BoD) PRCM and FC undertook the development of a new event grant funding program focusing on supporting new tourism-facing events.
- ↳ VMC team continued to meet with partners and stakeholders one-on-one as frequently as possible under the Hospitality Awareness Program allowing the team to introduce programs and initiatives directly.
- ↳ The PR team diversified its communication pillars with the goal of garnering more attention for a wider variety of tourism-facing businesses and to highlight the natural assets of Mendocino County.
- ↳ The organization in its second year of engagement with Cultivar Strategies continued to build the County’s tourism-facing cannabis marketing program to integrate with existing campaigns, and communication pillars. The focus was direct engagement with cannabis stakeholders to gain participation in VMC programs.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS: VMC SITE TOP TEN	
OUTBOUND REFERRALS 2021/2022	
July 2021 - June 2022	
Property	Opens
Total Page Views	42,957
Glass Beach	7,935
Skunk Train Railbikes	6,863
Lake Mendocino Recreation Area	4,540
Skunk Train - Fort Bragg	4,666
Stanford Inn	3,744
Little River Inn	3,426
Bowling Ball Beach	3,371
Orr Hot Springs	3,264
Vichy Springs Resort	2,717
Montgomery Woods State Reserve	2,431

- ↳ The website (Hit Report) has been a useful tool for both VMC and partners & stakeholders. The report is sent monthly to every stakeholder and partner for whom VMC has an email address associated with their online listing, and informs them of:
 - » Total number of visitors to VMC website
 - » Number of referrals from VMC website to stakeholder’s website
 - » Number of click-throughs from the VMC website to the stakeholder’s website.

This information provided monthly to both partners, stakeholders, and VMC staff allows deeper interaction between the organization and businesses. The team communicates this information regularly.

- **OBJECTIVE: Increase VMC Communication Engagement Rate**

- ↳ To deepen engagement with VMC's extensive consumer email list, the team expanded upon its email campaign program which previously engaged once monthly, to an average frequency of 2.25 consumer emails per month.
- ↳ The organization contracted with Travel Analytics Group (TAG) to prepare a visitor and resident sentiment study to give VMC a baseline to grow programs and communications based on the needs outlined in the survey. See the link for the full results of the study: www.mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Visit-Mendocino_Res-Vis-Study_Summary-Presentation-1.pdf
- ↳ To engage with consumers in a new format the team worked in collaboration with Roberta Gonzales Productions (RoGoPro) to create a video podcast series. The program launched in February 2022 and was released monthly to an average of 4,839 views per episode.

- **OBJECTIVE: Boost community's support of the tourism industry**

- ↳ As mentioned above, under the contract with TAG the organization sought community input of the organization, its effectiveness, and shortcomings to understand the community's views and needs surrounding tourism in Mendocino County. As of writing, the team is developing a proposed plan to address the outcomes of the survey. For the full results of the study view the link: www.mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Visit-Mendocino_Res-Vis-Study_Summary-Presentation-1.pdf

- **INITIATIVE: Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses**

- To address this initiative, at the direction of the BoD, VMC contracted again with TAG to create a website influence return on investment study (ROI). The preliminary results show per-party trip spending of \$1,830 per stay, annual direct visitor spend of \$39,352,206, and an additional indirect (supply chain spending) of \$8.1 million plus an induced (labor income spending) of \$7.5 million for a total economic activity attributed to VMC of \$55 million with a total annual tax impact of \$6,674,000 for a total ROI of \$62 per dollar spent. Upon delivery of the final report from TAG, the team will create a campaign to leverage this data with partners and stakeholders, and the community. To view the preliminary results of the study view this link: www.mendocinotourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Mendocino-County-Influence-and-ROI-Presentation-ResultsPRELIM.pdf

- **INITIATIVE: Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners**

- This initiative has been addressed by the team and upon completion of the full ROI study this new assessment can be undertaken.

- **INITIATIVE: Enhance VMC's portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources**

- As addressed above, the organization strives to continue to address this initiative as part of daily organizational development.

IMPERATIVE: Raise visitor awareness of Mendocino County and strengthen tourism's contribution to County vitality.

In 2017 TheorySF (TSF), then agency of record for Visit Mendocino County, conducted a brand awareness study. The results were that Mendocino County as a destination was virtually unknown to our target markets leading TSF to deliver a verbal report of no awareness. In FY 21/22, under the engagement of TAG for ROI study, the ED requested that the completed ROI report include baseline awareness statistics of the use of www.visitmendocino.com. Preliminary results of the study place consumer awareness far above that of five years ago, 57.66% of respondents knew of and had already decided to visit Mendocino County. As work continues with TAG further brand awareness baselines will be delivered.

The organization continues its two-prong approach to direct marketing, the first being brand awareness, with the goal of placing Mendocino County top of mind with potential and returning visitors (see the next data set for additional information). The second, focuses on and promotes tourism-facing events designed to bolster shoulder season visitation and Business Improvement District (BID) collections.

Public relations (PR) is a major driver of visitor awareness. Our PR team strategically plans annual communication pillars that are designed to partner with our direct marketing efforts. During the fiscal year the team realized their goals early with an overwhelming amount of media attention.

The PR team was pleased to introduce a string of A-list features that hit throughout the year in publications and on stations such as: Conde Nast Traveler, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, SF Chronicle, LA Times, NBC Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Diego, KRON 4, and KTVU 2 Fox to name a few. The data below shows the PR team’s direct impressions, advertising equivalency, and familiarization program data for the year.

One of the shifts made during COVID-19 was to maximize media pitches and placements along with decreasing the number of press visits by pitching to media with a broader reach and access to multiple publications because the team realized this approach maximized VMC’s public relations resources. By welcoming media to experience a broader view of Mendocino County they could use one trip for various works. This direction allowed staff to host fewer in-person visits to the county while ensuring our goals were met.

COVERAGE	2021/22 GOAL	2021/22 TOTAL	2020/21 TOTAL
Placements	500	958	590
Impressions	250 Million	2.604 Billion	1.73 Billion
Advertising Equivalency	\$10 Million	717.065 Million	\$617.53 Million

RELEASES ISSUES	GOAL	TOTAL
	11	10

GOAL	TOTAL	
20	21	
7/20-7/22	Edmund Vallance	Freelance
7/26-7/30	Tanvi Chedda	Travel & Liesure
8/22-8/23	Jared Stern	Maxim
10/8-10/10	Freda Moon	SF Gate
10/20-10/22	Chelsea Davis	Forbes
10/23	John Bartell	ABC TV
12/8-12/10	Carole David	Forbes
12/21-12/23	Michelle Bigley	VIA
12/20	Winston Ross	Freelance
2/19-2/21	Kim Westerman	Forbes
2/19-2/21	Michael Schoeck	RunTheAtlas
3/1-3/3	Verena Wolff	Associated Press/Germany
3/7-3/9	Kathy Leong	Champagne Living
3/25-3/27	Kim Westerman	Forbes
4/19-4/21	Brian McIntosh	Influencer/Canada
5/18-5/20	Dana Rebmann	Freelance
5/20-5/22	Christine Lai	Tiny Beans
5/28-5/30	J'Nai Gaither	Wine Enthusiast
6/16-6/18	Steph Key	Haute Living
6/16-6/19	Melanie Haiken	Marin Magazine
6/16-6/21	Betsy Andrews	Food & Wine

• OBJECTIVE: Increase website traffic

Audience Overview



Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022
Compare to Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021

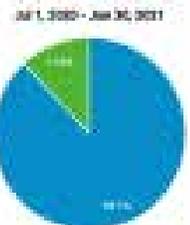
Overview

Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021



Users 47.11% <small>334,700 of 710,000</small>	New Users 47.12% <small>550,000 of 1,167,000</small>	Sessions 50.91% <small>391,000 of 768,000</small>	Number of Sessions per User 2.58% <small>1.26 vs 1.22</small>
Pages 30.00% <small>1,222,000 of 4,073,000</small>	Pages / Session -13.86% <small>1.70 vs 2.00</small>	Avg. Session Duration -17.60% <small>30:07.67 vs 36:03.12</small>	Bounce Rate 5.85% <small>19.40% vs 15.42%</small>

New Visitor Remaining Visitor



City	Users	% Users
1. San Francisco		
Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022	78,405	11.57%
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021	91,034	13.04%
% Change	-13.34%	-4.75%
2. San Jose		
Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022	21,108	3.09%
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021	20,997	3.00%
% Change	73.05%	19.66%
3. Sacramento		
Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022	14,439	2.12%
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021	21,085	3.02%
% Change	-30.94%	-13.05%
4. San Jose		
Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022	14,100	2.05%
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021	16,382	2.31%
% Change	-13.91%	-10.80%
5. San Francisco		
Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022	9,688	1.40%
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021	8,487	1.20%
% Change	+14.26%	12.50%
6. San Jose		
Jul 1, 2021 - Jun 30, 2022	9,034	1.30%
Jul 1, 2020 - Jun 30, 2021	5,732	0.81%
% Change	57.24%	57.99%
7. San Jose		

↳ The topline data for FY 21/22 website analytics reveal:

- » 21/22 visitors have increased 47.11% from the previous FY 20/21 (379,813 vs 558,750)
- » Most traffic is from Northern California: San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento, and Oakland with Los Angeles rounding out the top 5.
- » Demographics are holding to the 25-44 age range
- » Highest interest website visitors are: Arts & Entertainment/Celebrities & Entertainment News, Food & Dining, Shoppers/Value Shoppers, Lifestyles & Hobbies/Outdoor Enthusiasts, Sports & Fitness/Health & Fitness Buffs.
- » For the second year the Room to Roam campaign drove the most page views (81,767)

Social Media Results YOY FY 2021 vs FY 2023					
FACEBOOK			INSTAGRAM		
	FY 2021	FY 2022		FY 2021	FY 2022
Impressions	15,297,893 Total (14,239,893 Paid / 1,058,636 Organic+Viral)	33,538,268 Total (32,691,066 Paid / 847,202 Organic+Viral)	Impressions	3,808,332	4,944,443
Engagement	235,567	337,271	Likes Received	70,697	58,451
Link Clicks	154,330	266,207	Comments	700	763
Posts	117	106	Posts	108	110
Impressions/Post	130,751	316,398	Likes/Post	655	531
Engagement/Post	2,013	3,282	Comments/Post	6.5	6.9
Fan Base	59,996	61,008	Followers	22,561	25,353

↳ The role of social media in driving visitors to www.visitmendocino.com is fundamental in not only increasing website users, but in raising brand awareness. The above dataset shows they YoY metrics. The total number includes paid impressions and organic and viral impressions. Impressions/posts are based on the latter number to avoid skewing the figures.

• **OBJECTIVE: Grow BID Fund 5% over 3 years**

TREASURER - TAX COLLECTOR
COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
(Data as of 10/31/2022)

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Collections by Calendar Quarter					
Fiscal Year	1st Quarter (July-Sept.)	2nd Quarter (Oct.-Dec.)	3rd Quarter (Jan.-March)	4th Quarter (April-June)	Fiscal Year Collections
2014-15	\$ 1,483,327.89	\$ 997,260.83	\$ 779,025.16	\$ 1,199,048.43	\$ 4,458,662.31
2015-16	\$ 1,651,009.69	\$ 1,074,781.45	\$ 835,844.53	\$ 1,299,992.81	\$ 4,861,628.48
2016-17	\$ 1,780,216.37	\$ 1,167,144.03	\$ 829,814.09	\$ 1,468,462.17	\$ 5,245,636.66
2017-18	\$ 2,019,644.14	\$ 1,227,713.38	\$ 1,026,731.35	\$ 1,463,623.39	\$ 5,737,712.26
2018-19	\$ 1,977,385.88	\$ 1,280,880.02	\$ 961,022.83	\$ 1,575,991.66	\$ 5,795,280.39
2019-20	\$ 2,147,423.50	\$ 1,384,005.43	\$ 802,609.14	\$ 316,554.17	\$ 4,650,592.24
2020-21	\$ 2,024,631.64	\$ 1,665,875.86	\$ 1,305,497.08	\$ 2,265,156.69	\$ 7,261,161.27
2021-22	\$ 2,888,831.93	\$ 1,925,364.42	\$ 1,457,063.23	\$ 2,175,686.89	\$ 8,446,946.47

Business Improvement District (BID) Assessment Collections by Calendar Quarter					
Fiscal Year	1st Quarter (July-Sept.)	2nd Quarter (Oct.-Dec.)	3rd Quarter (Jan.-March)	4th Quarter (April-June)	Fiscal Year Collections
2014-15	\$ 259,245.43	\$ 167,947.01	\$ 139,735.12	\$ 204,452.24	\$ 771,379.80
2015-16	\$ 273,600.95	\$ 178,894.32	\$ 147,456.87	\$ 222,164.94	\$ 822,117.08
2016-17	\$ 306,111.45	\$ 192,168.41	\$ 149,161.15	\$ 249,550.90	\$ 896,991.91
2017-18	\$ 336,333.39	\$ 214,398.57	\$ 172,188.75	\$ 252,939.31	\$ 975,860.02
2018-19	\$ 345,414.74	\$ 208,182.17	\$ 169,013.36	\$ 266,870.80	\$ 989,481.07
2019-20	\$ 356,681.19	\$ 228,223.25	\$ 151,009.41	\$ 79,074.22	\$ 814,988.07
2020-21	\$ 345,912.88	\$ 258,702.54	\$ 215,421.63	\$ 367,722.16	\$ 1,187,759.21
2021-22	\$ 455,894.60	\$ 297,723.80	\$ 228,586.87	\$ 344,553.64	\$ 1,326,758.91

PLEASE NOTE: The collections reflected above represent the actual quarters in which the lodging establishments collected the taxes and assessments. If applicable, penalties and interest collected by the County are also included in the above totals. Prior fiscal year totals indicated above also reflect any past due amounts collected to date.

- ↳ In October of 2022 the Mendocino County Treasurer-Tax Collector Office published their annual TOT/BID collections report. The report shows that revenue from lodging businesses increased 11.7% YoY with a total growth of 57.6% since the inception of this strategic plan in July 2021.

BookDirect Referrals	
July 2021 - June 2022	
Month	18,707
July	2,308
August	1,656
September	1,245
October	971
November	1,535
December	1,025
January	1,503
February	1,537
March	1,608
April	1,198
May	2,059
June	2,062

- ↳ In FY 2020/21 The team implemented the Simpleview lodging booking link on www.visitmendocino.com allowing potential visitors to book lodging reservations via the VMC website. While there is no exact way to know how many visitors booked through the link, we can show that the widget pushed 18,707 potential visitors as far as the book now button on stakeholder web reservation systems. This information provides another point of contact between staff and partners.

Spending Category	Direct Annual Spending
Lodging	\$17,483,601
Food and Beverage	\$8,473,687
Entertainment	\$2,103,522
Retail Shopping	\$3,274,730
Transportation	\$2,474,676
Other Recreation	\$2,340,483
Other	\$3,201,508
Total	\$39,352,206

Source: Visit Mendocino Database Survey

Efficiency and ROI Measures

	Amount
Cost per user to the website	\$1.27
Cost per trip party	\$39.15
Program ROI	\$62:\$1

- ↳ As part of the TAG ROI Study conducted, the organization received the above data showing direct annual visitor spending attributed to VMC programs. This information provides the BoD and staff with baseline consumer spending by category. This data will assist in developing spending growth strategies for the industry and business segments. The report also validates VMC's programming by reporting a return on investment of \$62 per marketing dollar spent. Further scenario analysis offers the organization areas of improvement and growth that will advance this objective.

- **OBJECTIVE: Increase shoulder season visitation rates**

- ↳ According to the Treasurer-Tax Collector TOT report above, we can see that Q2 and Q3 TOT collections have increased an average of 13.8% YoY with a total growth of 54.7% since the inception of this strategic plan in July 2021.

- **INITIATIVE: Evaluate and diversify visitor target market segment and competitive set**

- In January 2023, the delivery of Travel Analytics Group Visitor and Resident Perspective Study outlined several key West Coast markets that are currently under-advertised by destinations. This research comes with other data that must be analyzed for the team to make market recommendations to the marketing committee. This data could allow VMC to retarget its marketing efforts to a new demographic, if necessary to capture the largest share of marketing attention.

➤ **INITIATIVE: Refresh our brand identity to align with target segments and competitive advantage.**

→ The BoD and public was offered a preview of the new Visit Mendocino County brand sporting the tagline “Magic is Real”. The new branding allows the organization to lean into the natural assets of Mendocino County in a more cohesive manner. This new brand will allow the VMC team to expand on the successful “Room to Roam” branding that the organization has been promoting. The focus groups presented with this brand concept found that this new generation of branding will resonate more with potential travelers to further capture the attention of the markets and demographics identified in our Visitor Study by TAG. The team is working toward a spring launch of the “Magic is Real” brand and the launch will include a newly crafted website that optimizes the user experience to extend the length of time spent on the site. This brand platform relies heavily on photo and video assets. It will allow the team to expand on the successful “Room to Roam” campaign.

➤ **INITIATIVE: Create process and framework for the evaluation and investment in event promotion with an emphasis on shoulder season.**

- At the February 2022 meeting of the Festival Committee a discussion was held to look at current local events, identify their success and strategy and outline a “grading” system to assist in the identification of successful events (tourism drivers) this system will allow the committees and team to partner with the appropriate organizations to better market successful events, year-round.
- The Festival Coordinator and PRM worked to create an “event grant” program framework. This framework is scheduled for approval by the Marketing, Festival, and Visitor Services committees at their August and September meetings, and tentatively launching Winter 2023.

IMPERATIVE: Steward and advocate for the Mendocino County Experience

As a steward and advocate for the Mendocino County Experience, it is important for VMC to promote the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and unique character of the region. This means working to encourage protection of the environment and support sustainable practices that benefit the local community and economy. It also means showcasing the diverse array of activities, events, and attractions that Mendocino County has to offer to visitors and residents alike. By emphasizing the county’s natural assets, rich history, and welcoming community, we can create a memorable and authentic experience that encourages visitors to return and fosters a sense of pride among residents. Ultimately, by stewarding and advocating for the Mendocino County Experience, we can ensure that Mendocino County continues to thrive and evolve in a way that benefits everyone.

• **OBJECTIVE: Increase County investment in Tourism products and infrastructure**

↳ The current state of Mendocino County’s finances no longer provides the ability to continue to support tourism promotion in the long-term, putting VMC’s annual contract and 50% match in jeopardy. This led the BoD to direct the ED to consult with Civitas Advisors as to potential avenues for long-term funding stability. However, in June 2022 the County BoS approved the annual contract. At the time of writing, the ED is exploring funding options under the advisement of Civitas Advisors. Due to the above circumstances this objective will not be addressed until the County of Mendocino has a firm grasp on their finances.

• **OBJECTIVE: Increase Mendocino County sales tax receipts over 3 years**

Economic Impact of Travel, 2021p
 Authored by Dean Ryan Associates, Inc.
 State of California VS Mendocino County

Total Direct Travel Spending (\$Billion-California VS \$Million-Mendocino County)	California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino					
	2015	YOY %	2016	YOY %	2016	YOY %	2016	YOY %	2017	YOY %	2017	YOY %	2018	YOY %	2018	YOY %	2019	YOY %	2019	YOY %	2020	YOY %	2020	YOY %	2021	YOY %	2021	YOY %
Destination Spending	111.3	3.6%	384.3	5.6%	114.9	3.2%	421.8	9.8%	121	5.3%	451.8	7.1%	127.9	5.7%	435.2	-3.8%	131.1	2.5%	468.8	7.3%	65.12	-50.3%	294.1	-37.0%	100.2	40.8%	422.8	43.8%
Other Travel	10.7	7.0%	14.4	-11.1%	11.5	7.5%	12.8	-11.1%	12.3	7.6%	14.4	12.5%	12.7	3.3%	16.5	14.6%	13.8	8.7%	17.2	4.2%	NA	NA	6.2	-64.0%	NA	NA	10.2	65.2%
TOTAL	122	3.9%	398.70	4.3%	126.4	3.6%	434.60	9.0%	133.3	5.5%	466	7.2%	140.6	5.5%	451.7	-3.1%	144.9	3.1%	484	7.2%	65.12	-55.1%	300.30	-38.0%	100.2	40.6%	433.00	44.2%

Tax Receipts Generated by Travel Spending (\$Million)	California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino		California		Mendocino	
	2016	YOY %	2016	YOY %	2016	YOY %	2016	YOY %	2017	YOY %	2017	YOY %	2018	YOY %	2018	YOY %	2019	YOY %	2019	YOY %	2020	YOY %	2020	YOY %	2021	YOY %	2021	YOY %
Local Tax Receipts	4.9	8.9%	17.4	0.7%	5.3	8.2%	18.5	8.3%	5.8	5.7%	20.1	8.6%	5.9	5.4%	22.3	10.9%	6.3	6.8%	21.3	9.6%	3.9	-38.1%	19.6	-19.5%	5	28.5%	25.7	31.1%
Visitor	NA	NA	11.0	9.4%	NA	NA	12.2	5.2%	NA	NA	13.5	10.7%	NA	NA	15.6	15.8%	NA	NA	17	9.0%	NA	NA	12.4	-27.1%	NA	NA	17.3	39.5%
Business or Emp	NA	NA	5.8	1.8%	NA	NA	6.3	8.6%	NA	NA	6.6	4.8%	NA	NA	6.7	1.5%	NA	NA	7.2	7.5%	NA	NA	7.2	0.0%	NA	NA	8.4	16.2%
State Tax Receipts	5.2	0.0%	19.5	0.0%	5.3	1.9%	20.3	4.1%	5.3	0.0%	20.9	3.0%	5.9	11.3%	20.5	-1.9%	6	1.7%	22.1	7.8%	3.5	-41.7%	14.7	33.5%	4.8	38.6%	20.5	39.3%
Visitor	NA	NA	13.6	0.7%	NA	NA	14	2.9%	NA	NA	14.6	4.3%	NA	NA	15.2	4.1%	NA	NA	18.4	7.9%	NA	NA	9.1	44.5%	NA	NA	13.8	50.6%
Business or Emp	NA	NA	5.9	1.7%	NA	NA	6.3	6.8%	NA	NA	6.3	0.0%	NA	NA	5.3	15.9%	NA	NA	5.7	7.5%	NA	NA	5.5	-3.5%	NA	NA	6.7	21.8%
Total Local & State Tax	10.1	9%	36.9	3.1%	10.6	10%	38.8	5.1%	10.9	6%	41	5.7%	11.8	17%	42.8	4.4%	12.3	8%	46.4	8.4%	7.4	-79.76%	34.3	-26.1%	9.8	67.10%	46.2	34.7%

The table above shows a side-by-side analysis of direct visitor spending and tax receipts generated by visitor spending for both California and Mendocino County. These figures are taken from the [Economic Impact of Travel in California 2011-2021p](#) report, commissioned by Visit California.

↳ Visit Mendocino County aims to increase Mendocino County sales tax receipts over the next three years. In 2019, the county generated \$24.3 million in sales tax receipts, but this figure dropped to \$19.6 million in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on businesses and consumer spending. However, in 2021, the sales tax receipts increased to \$25.7 million, indicating that the county’s economy is gradually recovering. This represents a 5.6% increase from 2019 to 2021. Visit Mendocino County played an active role in achieving this goal by utilizing digital, social, television, and radio marketing, as well as its website, to promote Mendocino County as a destination of choice for visitors. Through targeted marketing efforts, Visit Mendocino County aims to drive increased tourism, resulting in a boost in consumer spending and sales tax receipts in the county.

➤ **INITIATIVE: Advocate for the development of pro-business county regulations**

→ As the needs assessment of partners and stakeholders is completed, it will become clearer to the BoD as to the direction of the organization under this initiative. Once we understand where the advocacy of the organization is best utilized with the county, the BoD will direct staff in its efforts toward accomplishing this goal.

➤ **INITIATIVE: Advocate for County investment and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure**

→ The organization will work together with the BID Advisory Board toward identification of infrastructure projects and place those recommendations in this report moving forward. This will allow the BoS to review and understand the long-term sustainability goals and needs of the tourism community and visitors to Mendocino County.

➤ **INITIATIVE: Align destination development activities to Visit California’s Stewardship objectives**

→ As the organization moves forward with marketing the brand of Mendocino County, it remains top-of-mind with staff, committees, and the BoD through our strategic plan to embrace and practice Visit California’s Destination Stewardship and Sustainable Travel Plan. This plan identifies 5 key points that should be addressed in all VMC programs. Those points are:

- ▶ Expand: Sustainable Practices Through the Mendocino County Tourism Industry
- ▶ Encourage: Responsible Tourism
- ▶ Develop: Approaches to Shape Visitation Patterns
- ▶ Infuse: the Mendocino County brand with Stewardship Ethics
- ▶ Amplify: the sense of pride Mendocino County residents have in their county

APPENDIX 1

Visit Mendocino County

2021–2023 Strategic Plan



Vision	Mission	Position	Values	Reputation
A diversified and thriving economy supported by our community, offering enriching experiences for our guests.	Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience	In order to support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets the Mendocino County experience to key regional and domestic markets Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county. Connects people and organizations to opportunities. Provides tourism resources and information to in-county partners. Optimizes return on investment through responsible fiscal management. 	Transparency: We foster trust through openness and integrity. Accountability: We are outcome-oriented and professional. Partnership: We create alignment through inclusive and meaningful relationships. Community: We contribute to the fabric of Mendocino County. Innovation: Our creativity reflects the uniqueness of our cultures and landscapes.	Leader: We motivate and facilitate the tourism community. Accessible: We welcome—and are responsive to—input from community members and stakeholders Collaborative: We actively seek engagement and collaboration with our stakeholders and partners. Bold: We deliver on smart, effective, and forward-thinking ideas.
Imperatives	Objectives	Initiatives		
Optimize and demonstrate our impact through relationships and collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Participation Rate in VMC Programs Increase VMC Communication Engagement Rate Boost Community's Support of the Tourism Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners Enhance VMC's portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources 		
Raise visitor awareness of Mendocino County and strengthen tourism's contribution to County vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Website Traffic Grow the BID Fund 5% Over 3 Years Increase Shoulder Season Visitation Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and diversify visitor target market segments and competitive set Refresh our brand identity to align with target segments and competitive advantage Create process and framework for the evaluation and investment in event promotion with an emphasis on shoulder seasons 		
Steward and Advocate for the Mendocino County Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase County Investment in Tourism Products and Infrastructure Increase Mendocino County Sales Tax Receipts Over 3 Years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the development of pro-business county regulations Advocate for County investment and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure Align destination development activities to Visit California's Stewardship Objectives 		

Visit Mendocino County

2021–2023 Strategic Plan



Part of Visit Mendocino's strategic plan calls for the alignment of VMC's destination development and stewardship activities to Visit California's Destination Stewardship and Sustainable Travel Plan. The five objectives outlined in this plan, listed below, focus on residents, visitors and industry partners via marketing, research, communication, education, public affairs, coalition building and destination management:

1	EXPAND Sustainable Practices Throughout the Mendocino County Tourism Industry
2	ENCOURAGE Responsible Tourism
3	DEVELOP Approaches to Shape Visitation Patterns
4	INFUSE the Mendocino County Brand with Stewardship Ethics
5	AMPLIFY the Sense of Pride Mendocino County Residents Have in Their County

Mendocino County Tourism Commission

Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2022

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1005 SBMC Checking	394,085.91
1010 SBMC Contingency/Savings	1,166,145.33
1015 MLCU Checking	0.00
1020 MLCU Savings	0.00
1030 Cash drawer	100.00
Total Bank Accounts	\$1,560,331.24
Accounts Receivable	
1100 Accounts Receivable	599,974.34
Total Accounts Receivable	\$599,974.34
Other Current Assets	
1230 Prepaid Expenses	91,392.08
1250 Refundable Deposits	1,800.00
1270 Receivable Other	0.00
Undeposited Funds	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$93,192.08
Total Current Assets	\$2,253,497.66
Fixed Assets	\$14,362.23
Other Assets	\$0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$2,267,859.89
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 Accounts Payable	31,106.46
Total Accounts Payable	\$31,106.46
Other Current Liabilities	
2100 Accrued Expenses	1,970.00
2150 Other Liabilities-County Match	0.00
2300 Loan Payable	0.00
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00
Not in Use	0.00
Payroll Liabilities	39,088.18
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$41,058.18
Total Current Liabilities	\$72,164.64
Total Liabilities	\$72,164.64
Equity	
3100 Contingency-Restricted	187,622.35
3900 Unrestricted Net Assets (RE)	1,443,069.82
Opening Bal Equity	0.00
	TOTAL
Net Income	565,003.08
Total Equity	\$2,195,695.25
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$2,267,859.89

Mendocino County / Detail Trend

Direct Travel Impacts 2012-2021p

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2020-2021
Direct Travel Spending (\$Million)											
Destination Spending	345.1	349.0	365.9	384.3	421.8	451.6	435.2	466.8	294.1	422.8	▲ 43.8%
Other Travel*	17.9	16.1	16.2	14.4	12.8	14.4	16.5	17.2	6.2	10.2	▲ 65.2%
TOTAL	363.0	365.1	382.1	398.7	434.6	465.9	451.7	484.0	300.2	433.1	▲ 44.2%
Visitor Spending by Type of Traveler Accommodation (\$Million)											
Hotel, Motel, STVR	193.9	200.1	214.6	233.7	267.2	289.3	267.4	286.3	188.6	259.8	▲ 37.8%
Private Home	48.0	46.3	46.6	43.6	44.1	46.8	49.0	54.2	17.8	55.5	▲ 211.4%
Campground	40.0	40.0	40.8	41.5	41.9	44.0	46.2	49.8	41.8	52.1	▲ 24.7%
2nd Home	13.8	13.5	13.7	14.1	14.4	15.2	16.6	17.0	28.1	30.1	▲ 7.0%
Day Travel	49.4	49.1	50.2	51.4	54.1	56.2	56.1	59.5	17.7	25.3	▲ 42.8%
TOTAL	345.1	349.0	365.9	384.3	421.8	451.6	435.2	466.8	294.1	422.8	▲ 43.8%
Visitor Spending by Commodity Purchased (\$Million)											
Accommodations	80.5	85.1	93.9	104.2	121.4	130.6	123.0	134.3	109.2	148.1	▲ 35.6%
Food Service	101.5	103.5	106.9	114.8	127.7	136.4	130.1	139.0	80.2	118.6	▲ 48.0%
Food Stores	21.2	20.8	21.4	22.4	23.0	23.3	22.8	24.1	16.2	24.2	▲ 49.4%
Local Tran. & Gas	48.8	45.4	46.8	43.8	42.2	47.1	50.0	53.4	25.0	38.5	▲ 54.1%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	51.7	52.5	54.3	56.9	61.9	64.5	60.4	62.8	35.1	49.8	▲ 41.8%
Retail Sales	41.4	41.6	42.7	42.1	45.5	49.6	48.9	53.2	28.4	43.6	▲ 53.8%
TOTAL	345.1	349.0	365.9	384.3	421.8	451.6	435.2	466.8	294.1	422.8	▲ 43.8%
Travel Industry Earnings (\$Million)											
Accom. & Food Serv.	93.3	111.8	120.7	129.0	149.2	162.1	161.8	177.8	136.6	174.4	▲ 27.7%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	26.5	33.7	36.9	34.4	35.6	37.8	26.5	28.4	15.9	16.1	▲ 1.5%
Retail**	9.4	9.4	9.9	10.2	11.1	11.6	11.3	12.0	12.5	13.4	▲ 7.3%
Ground Tran.	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.6	5.4	6.4	8.4	9.3	3.6	3.4	▼ -5.0%
Other Travel*	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0	▲ 0.0%
TOTAL	134.0	159.7	172.5	179.1	202.3	219.0	209.1	228.6	169.5	208.3	▲ 22.9%
Travel Industry Employment (Jobs)											
Accom. & Food Serv.	3,000	3,490	3,560	3,560	3,880	4,120	3,920	4,160	3,210	3,700	▲ 15.6%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	1,800	2,430	2,670	2,480	2,680	2,590	1,740	1,700	860	830	▼ -3.7%
Retail**	310	300	310	310	320	330	310	320	310	320	▲ 3.7%
Ground Tran.	110	110	110	120	130	140	160	180	170	140	▼ -16.3%
Other Travel*	30	20	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	20	▲ 2.7%
TOTAL	5,240	6,360	6,690	6,490	7,040	7,200	6,170	6,400	4,570	5,020	▲ 9.9%
Tax Receipts Generated by Travel Spending (\$Millions)											
Local Tax Receipts	13.7	15.0	16.2	17.5	18.5	20.1	22.3	24.3	19.6	25.7	▲ 31.1%
State Tax Receipts	17.4	18.6	19.5	19.5	20.3	20.9	20.5	22.2	14.7	20.5	▲ 39.3%
TOTAL	31.1	33.6	35.7	37.0	38.8	41.0	42.7	46.4	34.3	46.1	▲ 34.6%
Local Tax Receipts Generated by Travel Spending (\$Millions)											
Visitor	9.1	9.7	10.6	11.6	12.2	13.5	15.6	17.0	12.4	17.3	▲ 39.7%
Business or Employee	4.6	5.4	5.7	5.8	6.3	6.6	6.7	7.3	7.2	8.4	▲ 16.2%
TOTAL	13.7	15.0	16.2	17.5	18.5	20.1	22.3	24.3	19.6	25.7	▲ 31.1%
State Tax Receipts Generated by Travel Spending (\$Millions)											
Visitor	13.0	13.2	13.7	13.6	14.0	14.6	15.2	16.4	9.1	13.8	▲ 50.6%
Business or Employee	4.3	5.4	5.8	5.9	6.3	6.3	5.3	5.8	5.5	6.7	▲ 20.7%
TOTAL	17.4	18.6	19.5	19.5	20.3	20.9	20.5	22.2	14.7	20.5	▲ 39.3%

Details may not add to totals due to rounding. Percent change calculated on unrounded figures.

Local tax receipts include transient occupancy taxes, sales taxes, and airport passenger facility charges paid by visitors, and the property tax payments and sales tax payments attributable to the travel industry income of employees and businesses. State tax receipts include sales tax payments and motor fuel tax payments of visitors, and the income tax payments and sales tax payments attributable to the travel industry income of employees and businesses.

Economic impacts are attributed to visitor trips which are defined as trips taken by individuals that stay overnight away from home, or travel more than 50 miles one-way on a non-routine trip, as defined by the California Tourism Marketing Act

Glossary of Terms

This glossary is included to explain terms used in this plan and in other reports and documents issued by Visit Mendocino County. While staff and contractors are familiar with the terminology, some of the terms need a brief explanation.

Advertising equivalency	This dollar figure represents the amount of money it would take to purchase the equivalent in advertising space in a print publication or digital equivalent. The VMC PR team uses a 1:1 ratio unlike many PR firms who use a multiplier to boost numbers.
Impressions	The number of views a print or digital article is estimated to reach based on circulation and subscription data.
Media Placement	A story (print or digital) about an aspect of Mendocino County that arises from PR efforts.
Media Mission	A trip by the PR team to a particular market, e.g., Vancouver BC, to meet local journalists and writers and inspire visitation to and coverage of Mendocino County.
Releases	This can either refer to a press release or a “hot sheet,” which is distributed to the press and highlights new and upcoming businesses and openings in the county.
FAM	Familiarization tour or trip. Media FAMs involve members of the media who are vetted by the PR team prior to a visit. Sales FAMs apply to tour group operators who are visiting the county with the aim of including Mendocino in tour packages.
Millennials	The segment of the population born between the early and the mid-1990s to early 2000s. Also known as Generation Y, they are the children of baby boomers and older Gen Xers.
Gen-Xers	The population segment born between the early-to-mid 1960s and ending birth years ranging from the late 1970s to early 1980s. Children of the Baby Boomers.
Baby Boomers	Those born between the early-to-mid 1940s up to about 1964.
Content marketing	Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.
Google Analytics	A reporting tool provided by Google that can be used to analyze traffic, ad words, digital marketing campaigns, demographics, etc. for VisitMendocino.com.
Facebook Insights	A reporting tool for analyzing traffic, advertising campaigns, and other activities on Facebook.
Activity Provider	A person located in a tourist destination who provides a unique, local activity for a visitor to do while on vacation. Examples of such activities include kayaking, bike riding or arts and crafts, among others.
Free Independent Traveler (FIT)	A person or a couple that is not traveling with a group; usually references foreign travelers out on their own (Foreign Independent Traveler).