



# *Detroit*

A DESTINATION THAT MOVES YOU

2024 VISIT DETROIT  
TOURISM AND CONVENTION SALES  
MARKETING PLAN



# LETTER FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO, CLAUDE MOLINARI

Visit Detroit partners and friends,

As we stand at the threshold of 2024, reflecting on the triumphs of 2023 fills me with immense pride. The Southeast Michigan hospitality sector reached unprecedented heights, with our hotels surpassing \$1 billion in revenue, an achievement that firmly cements Detroit as a premier destination. I extend heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Antoine Garabaldi, our esteemed past Board Chair, whose contributions have been invaluable.

Welcoming David Katz as our new Board Chair is an exciting chapter for Visit Detroit. David's vision and dedication will undoubtedly contribute to our continued success. My gratitude extends to all partners in the Southeast Michigan hospitality community; your collaboration has been pivotal.

Visit Detroit is at the forefront of our state's commitment to attracting and retaining talent that will put Michigan firmly on a growth trajectory. We are helping to create a virtuous circle of upward growth by building a community that people want to visit, which in turn is a community that people live, work, and invest in.

The momentum we've collectively cultivated is extraordinary, and I am eager to witness the unfolding opportunities and achievements that await us in 2024.

Warm regards,

Claude Molinari  
President and CEO, Visit Detroit



# LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR, DAVID KATZ

Visit Detroit partners and friends,

It is with great enthusiasm that I step into the role of Board Chair for Visit Detroit. Dr. Antoine Garabaldi's commendable leadership has set a high standard, and I am inspired by the strength of our organization. I look forward to working with Claude, his team, and all of you to increase visitation to our community.

Visit Detroit is ideally positioned to be a leader in Michigan's generational challenge, attracting and retaining more people. In 128 years of existence, Visit Detroit has never been in a more robust financial position, and we are strategically positioned to leverage that strength for future growth.

The exemplary collaboration between our dedicated team, partners, and stakeholders has been a cornerstone of our achievements. As we navigate the exciting path ahead, I am confident in our collective ability to elevate our region to new heights.

Best regards,

David Katz  
Board Chair, Visit Detroit

# Key Highlights - 2023



The year 2023 was marked by exceptional milestones for Visit Detroit, showcasing the region's growing prominence in the tourism landscape:



**17 million visitors**  
to Southeast Michigan

A testament to the allure and attractiveness of our region, attracting visitors from near and far.

**\$10 billion in**  
total economic impact 

The ripple effect of tourism, reaching far beyond traditional hospitality, contributing significantly to the region's economic vitality.

**More than \$1 billion**  
in lodging revenue 

A historic achievement that not only underscores Detroit's hospitality but also sets a new standard for economic impact.

**Growing Michigan**

As leaders in Michigan work to grow our state's population and economy, tourism, meetings, conventions, and events play a critical role. Visit Detroit is proud.



# Marketing

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, Visit Detroit's marketing initiatives propelled the organization into a new era of engagement and interaction. Several key accomplishments defined the year:

### Redesigned VisitDetroit.com

A significant overhaul of our digital presence, the redesigned website offers a more immersive and user-friendly experience, enhancing the trip-planning journey for visitors.

### Innovative Advertising Program

An introduction of dynamic promotional opportunities for our partners, aligning our advertising efforts with the evolving needs of our destination.

### Strategic Brand Campaign

The initiation of an Organizational Re-Brand, aligning our messaging with the evolving identity of Visit Detroit and the destination.

### Social Media Growth

Unprecedented growth on social media, with **87.6 million+** in impressions. This not only signifies the expanding audience but also the shared celebration of Detroit's beauty.

### Website Performance

The official website hosted **4.2 million+** visitors, surpassing the performance of 2019, with **over 571k visitors** connected to Visit Detroit partners through the platform.

### Digital Passes

Introduction of the

- \* Detroit Pizza Pass
- \* Explore Detroit Pass
- \* Dining in the D Pass
- \* Detroit Brew Trail

digitalpasses, offering unique and engaging experiences to residents and visitors.

## 2024 INITIATIVES

Visit Detroit is gearing up for a national branding campaign aimed at elevating Detroit's presence as a premier travel destination.

This comprehensive campaign will strategically target major cities, including Chicago, NYC, DC, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. Emphasis will be placed on expanding our social media reach, with a focus on YouTube and TikTok to broaden our audience.



# Communications

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023 INCLUDE:

**Media Coverage:** Collaboration with national and international travel journalists resulted in 104 stories about Southeast Michigan in renowned publications like the New York Times, Good Morning America, the Washington Post, Travel & Leisure, and National Geographic.

**Global Recognition:** Extending beyond the United States, Visit Detroit secured coverage in the U.K., Ireland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Turkey, Mexico, Brazil, and Canada.

### Awards and Accolades

- *AFAR*, *Conde Nast Traveler* and *Architectural Digest* all named **Detroit** in their places to go in 2024 list.
- *Click on Detroit* named **Rochester** as one of the country's prettiest Holiday Destinations.
- **Romeo** was named one of America's best small towns for Halloween in *TravelMag*.
- *USA Today* named the **Detroit Institute of Arts** the Best Art Museum in the country.
- *USA Today* named **Campus Martius** as the Number 1 Public Square in America.
- The **Detroit Riverfront** was named the best Riverwalk in the country for the third year in a row by *USA Today*.

### International

 **VISIT DETROIT**  
IS ACTIVELY MARKETING  
SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN IN  
**CANADA • U.K. • IRELAND**  
**GERMANY • AUSTRIA • FRANCE**  
**BELGIUM • SWITZERLAND**

 **NEW DIRECT FLIGHTS  
TO DETROIT**  
**ICELANDAIR**  
LAUNCHED MAY 2023

**TURKISH AIRLINES**  
LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 2023

# Sales

The dedicated sales team at Visit Detroit achieved remarkable milestones in 2023, solidifying the city’s position as a premier destination for events and conventions:

**Lead Generation:** The team generated a significant number of leads throughout the year, culminating in an impressive 3.4 million+ visit nights booked for future business.

## EVENTS BOOKED

Dozens of events were booked this year including:

<div>2024</div> <div>AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION EVENT WITH</div> <div>15,000</div> <div>ROOM NIGHTS</div> <div></div>	<div>2025</div> <div>SOCIETY OF MANUFACTURING ENGINEERS' RAPID + TCT CONTRIBUTING</div> <div>9,000</div> <div>ROOM NIGHTS</div> <div></div>	<div>2026</div> <div>MESSE DUSSELDORF NORTH AMERICA'S XPONENTIAL PROJECTING</div> <div>9,500</div> <div>ROOM NIGHTS</div> <div></div>
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## LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT

2028

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION IPW  
EXPECTED TO GENERATE

20,000

ROOM NIGHTS



In December the U.S. Travel Association announced Detroit would host their signature event IPW in 2028. Hosting this leading inbound travel trade show not only provides a platform to showcase Detroit to travel buyers and media but is also expected to generate an impressive 20,000 room nights. More importantly it will help inspire millions of additional trips to Detroit over the following decade, generating billions of dollars in economic impact.

## 2024 INITIATIVES

- The sales strategy for 2024 is marked by a targeted approach, with a focus on the association and corporate markets.
- Strategic engagement is planned in geographical areas, including Lansing, Chicago, and the Washington DC region.
- A top priority remains generating opportunities for industry partners, focusing on client engagement through site visits and FAMs (familiarization trips). This ongoing commitment reflects Visit Detroit’s dedication to cultivating meaningful connections and promoting Detroit as a top destination for meetings and conventions.

# Partnership and Services

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Visit Detroit provided services to 155 convention and meeting groups.

**American Bus Association Marketplace (ABA):** A successful event in February 2023, with two thousand attendees, including motorcoach/tour operators. Generated more than \$7 million in directed spending.

**Council of Engineering & Scientific Society Executives (CESSE):** Held in July 2023, with four hundred attendees. The event brought together meeting planners from STEM fields, focusing on leadership development and exploring the destination city for possible future meetings.

**International Women Forum (IWF):** In October 2023, the event hosted two thousand five hundred women from around the world, fostering significant relationships between executive-level women.



## 2024 INITIATIVES

**Tourism Training:** Introduction of a comprehensive training program, available both online and in-person, targeting essential topics such as Destination Knowledge, Customer Service, Effectively Conveying the Detroit Story through branding, and other aspects to elevate the visitor experience.

**Tourism Cares Meaningful Travel Map:** Launching Detroit's presence on the Meaningful Travel Map, dedicated to promoting sustainable and responsible tourism. Qualified partners will have the opportunity to be featured on this map, highlighting businesses and organizations positively impacting local communities, the environment, and cultural heritage.

**Hometown Tourist Day Expansion:** Expanding the footprint of Hometown Tourist Day, extending it beyond downtown Detroit and into the suburbs. This expansion will allow engagement with a broader audience, showcasing unique attractions and experiences offered by partners.



# Detroit Sports Commission



The commission has directly impacted and improved the economy and image of Detroit, attracting and hosting over 600 regional, national and international sporting events since it's founding in 2021 including:

## NFL Draft Preparation

Meticulous preparation for the upcoming NFL Draft was a major highlight of the year.

## Major League Fishing Bass Pro Tour

Hosted on the beautiful Lake St. Clair, this event provided a unique and well-executed experience for both locals and visitors.

## USA Boxing National Qualifier

The event brought top-tier talent to the region, showcasing Detroit's capabilities in hosting sporting events.

## WWE SummerSlam

A record-breaking event, setting a new North American attendance record and becoming the most-watched SummerSlam in WWE history.

## Future Bids

Submitted bids to host future Big Ten Conference Football Championship and men's and women's basketball tournaments, highlighting Detroit's ongoing commitment to major sporting events.



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Hosted the 2023 Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP) reunion, showcasing dedication to fostering a diverse and inclusive community.

Resumed the Christo Rey student program with increased participation, reflecting investment in Detroit's youth.

Sponsored and supported International Women's Day luncheon, Motor City Pride, African World Festival, Marche du Nain Rouge and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March for Justice in Detroit, where Martin Luther King Jr. first gave the "I have a Dream" speech.

Continued work on DEI, culture, and other staff initiatives with partner Miles Corragio, integrating DEI into branding strategies and future planning.

## 2024 INITIATIVES

Allocated a dedicated budget of over \$40,000 for sponsorships and educational endeavors.

Developed Event calendar that reflects commitment to celebrating a wide array of holidays and topics, embracing local culture and resources.

Continued content development to create educational opportunities that benefit Visit Detroit staff and partners throughout Southeast Michigan.

Community Engagement will continue to drive both internal DEI efforts and external marketing initiatives, influencing posts and brand collateral.



# NFL Draft



## DETROIT IS HOSTING THE NFL DRAFT PRESENTED BY BUD LIGHT APRIL 25-27

**Welcoming the Football Fans:** The Motor City will welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors and residents for one of the NFL's signature events.

**Free for Everyone:** With the main event taking place in Campus Martius and Hart Plaza, the streets of downtown Detroit will be transformed into a canyon of heroes for this free event.

**A Community Event:** Visit Detroit, the Detroit Sports Commission, and multiple other partners will be hosting an "On the Clock Tour", a neighborhood event program that will bring the fun and excitement of football to residents across the seven districts of the City of Detroit and throughout the region.

**Lasting Legacy:** Beyond Basics and Project Play were selected as the 2024 NFL Draft's non-profit partners and will benefit from a \$1 million dollar living-legacy donation from local corporate and community partners.



# Major Events in 2024

**PCMA's EduCon:** Set to transform Detroit into a bustling hub for convention planning, welcoming over 1,000 seasoned convention planners to the Motor City in June (23-26). This annual event promises to spotlight not only the city but the entire region, positioning Detroit as a prime contender for various conventions.

**Nation of Islam Saviors' Day:** Scheduled for February 23 – 25 at Huntington Place, Detroit is expecting 10,000 people to celebrate the birthday of founder Master Fard Muhammad.

**146th National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) General Conference and Expo:** Dates: August 23 – 26 at Huntington Place. Expecting 7,000 people for the annual business meeting.

**The Battery Show:** Dates: October 7 – 10. Anticipating 10,000 people, this event aims to bring together engineers, business leaders, top-industry companies, and innovative thinkers.

**D-Rover (Visit Detroit mobile visitor's center):** Plans to promote the NFL Draft and service several sporting events, including NCAA Men's Basketball Regional, NFL Draft, NCAA Women's Bowling, USBC Junior Gold Championships, and more.

