



Tourism Support for Maui's Recovery

Key Findings & Proposed Actions

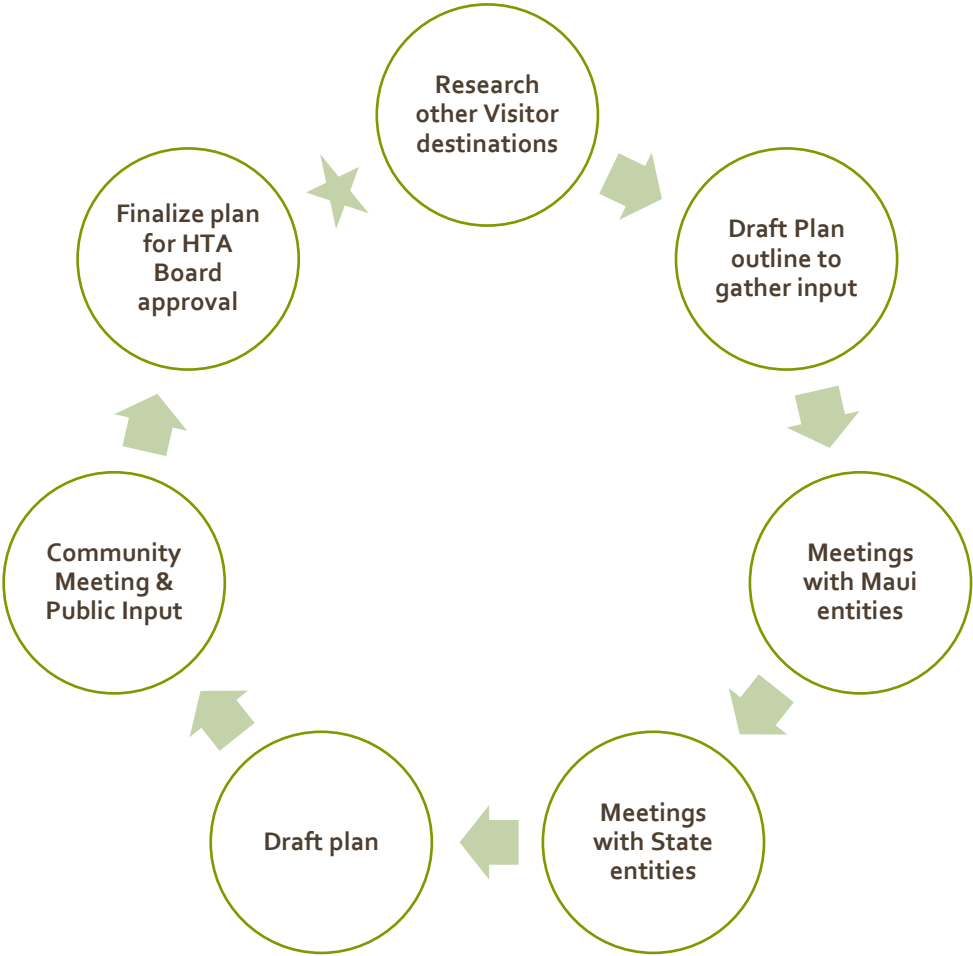
December 1, 2023



Intent for the Plan

1. Working with state and federal management officials, HTA will coordinate the next 12 months of tourist activity and tourism-related economic redevelopment in the region and enhance messaging on the appropriateness of traveling to non-impacted areas in Maui.
2. Per objective 21c, Joint Incident Action Plan, FEMA-DR-4724-HI “continue tourism and economic redevelopment coordination with the HTA with an emphasis on strategic public messaging.”
3. Governor Josh Green on August 19, 2023, authorized the HTA, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Finance, to use monies in the Tourism Emergency Special Fund to respond to the emergency and provide relief under section 2018-10, HRS.
4. This Tourism Support for Plan is to complement the current HTA Strategic Plan, Brand Marketing Plan, and Maui’s Destination Management Plan.

Planning Process



Lessons learned from other tourist destinations that have experienced a natural disaster

1. Provide consistent, ongoing communications to all stakeholders and potential visitors. Very easy for residents and visitors to get confused with multiple messages that sometimes are conflicting.
2. Clearly define the locations that open to visitors because it's easy to think the impacted area is much larger than it really is. The sooner that this is done, the faster the recovery.
3. Residents will move to where there is housing. On the continent they frequently move to the next town. Harder on an island, but the message is the same, housing is critical.

Challenges (from interviews and data gathering)

- Housing availability is an ongoing primary concern as many Lahaina residents are still living in visitor-type accommodations and housing around the island.
 - Childcare is not available in many locations.
 - Many West Maui hotel workers living across the island are having a more difficult time returning to work because of transportation and childcare issues.
 - A high unemployment rate will exacerbate the housing situation as more households will have to leave their primary residence.
- Forecast for visitor arrivals to Maui is down through 2024
 - Overall, airline seats and intent to travel to Maui are down, affecting the whole island.
- Overall visitor count to the state is lower and the forecast is lower, meaning state revenue will be lower at a time we need to support Maui.
- Small businesses are seeing lower sales because of fewer visitors, loss of stores.

Challenges (continued)

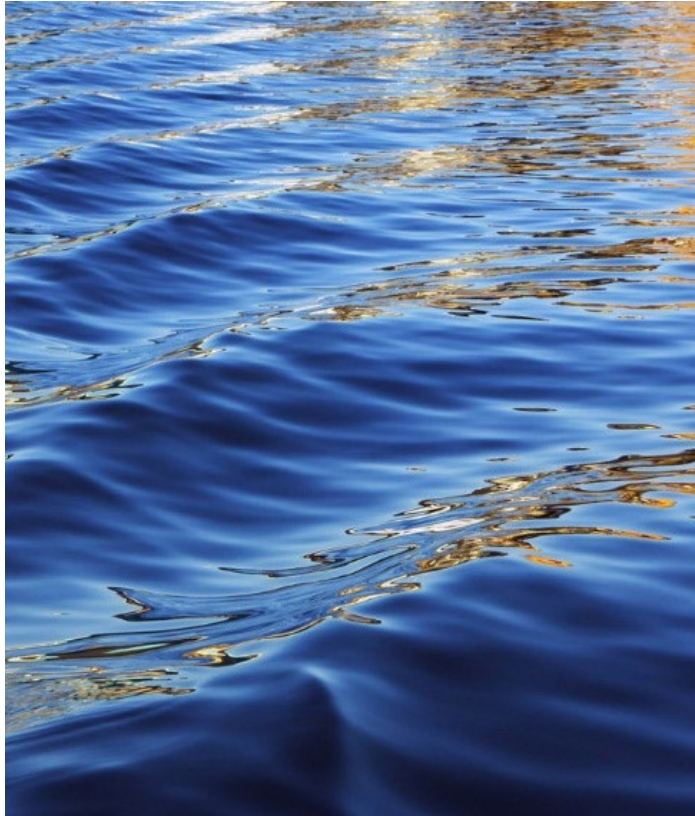
- Residents, businesses, and potential visitors are confused with inconsistent, sometimes conflicting messages.
 - Residents see too many websites and press releases, not sure where to go and which site to believe.
 - Messages not reaching the Lahaina ESL communities: Filipino and Pacific Islanders, due to primarily English messages, and different communication channels.
 - Affects signing up for assistance, job fairs, and knowing what to expect in the future.
 - Some visitors still believe that the affected area is much larger than it really is, they do not understand the geography of the state or Maui.
- In surveys potential visitors choosing not to book to Maui due to “high cost and change fees” and “out of respect for Lahaina residents.”

Key Measurable Outcomes for the Plan

- Increase in travel intent to Maui (number of visitors who say they plan to visit Maui in 2024 and 2025).
 - Westside and South Side
- Growth in the tourism economy throughout the state.
 - More visitors to Kaua'i, O'ahu, Hawai'i Island, Moloka'i and Lāna'i in 2024 to partially make up for the reduction in visitors to Maui
 - Boost the State economy and Maui County recovery.
- Maui residents continue to be included in the tourism recovery discussion.
 - December 4th Maui Community Meeting
- More visitor industry jobs filled, increasing employment.
 - Collaborate with other departments and agencies on this outcome



Proposed Actions

- Focus on what HTA does best: Regenerative Tourism & Communications
 - Actions that have a nexus with tourism.
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1a. Increase visibility and call to action for travel to Hawai'i targeting high-potential markets.

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
1a	<p>(ST) In early 2024, increase the visibility of Hawai'i travel to high-potential markets. This is needed because advertising and promotional dollars have been much lower, there is a decline in airline seat bookings statewide, especially for Maui, and there is still a misunderstanding about whether Hawai'i is ready & able to welcome visitors. January is the most important month for promotion because that is when travel planning for the year takes place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Mālama Maui messaging that is being used for social media because it appears to be working. Messages show Maui residents doing activities around the island. • Hold Saturation Events in markets showing signs of weakness. • Messages should include a call to action to visit the state including Maui. 	<p>(ST) Additional funding is needed to reach more markets and to ensure the message is being received.</p> <p>In addition to West Coast targets, target Canadians who love Maui.</p>		

¹ ST is Short Term or within the next six months. MT is Mid-term six to twelve months. LT is Long Term beyond 12 months

1b. Support businesses to continue providing a consistent message that Maui is open for visitors.

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
1b	<p>(ST-MT) Support businesses to continue providing a consistent message to customers and potential visitors to overcome early messages that discouraged visits to Maui.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce GoHawaii.com as the primary site for accurate information for visitors and travel agents. • Provide consistent messaging that the state and Maui welcome visitors. • Provide marketing technical support by HTA’s global marketing team – what to communicate to the various major market areas (i.e., updated info on business operations, how to utilize social media, and work with the travel trade and media.) • Support Maui visitor industry businesses through additional funding for marketing co-ops in exchange for special rates and promotions. • HTA can provide free booth space or reduced participation fees at certain domestic roadshows or travel trade events. 	<p>(ST) Support Maui visitor industry businesses through the additional funding for marketing co-ops in exchange for special rates and promotions,</p> <p>(ST) Provide financial assistance for Maui businesses to attend tradeshows.</p> <p>(ST) provide additional promotion for businesses on GoHawaii.com.</p>		

2. Support and encourage consistent messaging and outreach to all Maui residents and businesses

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but may require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
2	<p>(ST- MT) Encourage and support consistent messaging and outreach to Maui residents, visitor industry stakeholders, and businesses. A consistent message will reduce confusion, help residents feel more secure and more willing to re-enter the workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and sponsor a meeting of Public Information Officers (PIOs) with FEMA providing best practices on communications with residents. This may help guide a process to smooth out overlapping communications. • Messages are translated so they can be understood by the Filipino and Pacific Islander communities <p>(Continued on the next page)</p>	<p>(ST) Maui Office of Recovery (MOR) is in the process of developing “transparent and comprehensive public recovery communications.”</p>		<p>Maui County, the State and many non-profits have websites and are sending out press releases, in addition to coverage in newspapers, television news, social media.</p>

2. Support and encourage consistent messaging and outreach to all Maui residents and businesses (continued)

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor community outreach events to residents affected by the wildfires to share information, provide access to services such as FEMA, SBA, HUD, mental health services, job postings, etc. and offer residents opportunities to gather and enjoy camaraderie with friends they may not have seen in a while. Events should take place in Kā'anapali and Central Maui. Events should be targeted to the general community as well as the Filipino and Pacific Island communities with translators available and people they know welcome them. • Develop and air local messages that share that many Maui residents want to return to work fulltime, and it is a path to economic recovery. (Mākaukau campaign) 	<p>(ST) Work with Filipino and Pacific Islander non-profits to develop more community outreach events and provide the additional resources they will require to provide translations and assistance to connect with potential employers. Most of these non-profits are volunteers, therefore may need organizational and financial support to hold these community meetings.</p>	<p>(MT) Capacity building for Filipino and Pacific Islander non-profits to be able to support their communities through the recovery period and beyond.</p> <p>(ST) Messages about residents wanting to return to work will need to be developed, produced, and aired.</p>	

3. Support Maui small businesses that are experiencing significant reductions in sales because of the lower number of visitors on the island.

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
3	<p>(ST) Support Maui small businesses that are experiencing significant reduction in sales because of the lower number of visitors on island.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Maui small business events taking place on other islands. • Promotion of websites that are offering Maui Made products during West Coast saturation visits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with local Maui OED or Chamber of Commerce to have a list of products that are available online. • Work with Maui County’s Office of Economic Development and Maui Chamber of Commerce to have a list of products that are available online. 	<p>(ST)Support Maui Made products markets were held on O’ahu, Hawai’i and Kaua’i. Additional events could be held throughout the year.</p> <p>HTA can assist by providing media releases, placement on GoHawaii calendar and assisting with finding appropriate venues.</p>		

4. Expand tourism product on Maui to provide new activities for visitors & support Maui businesses

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
4	<p>(ST-MT) Expand Tourism Product on Maui to increase visitor activities, support local businesses, and increase visitor-related revenues in communities. Capacity building for regenerative tourism activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce visitors to areas they may not have seen before, such as Upcountry, East Maui, Paia, Makawao, and Kihei, and the activities, restaurants, and small businesses that are available there. • Encourage small farmers, fishermen, and business owners to band together to provide a product that can be “sold” to tour companies, hotels, restaurants, etc. For example, no one will promote a “work in the lo’i” activity that is only available once a week, but by working together, 5 to 7 farmers can offer an activity every day, and each benefit from this additional source of revenue. • Remind hotels and shopping areas that many cultural practitioners are available to provide education and activities to residents and visitors. • On other islands, promote the availability of Maui activities that now may be limited to certain parts of the island. Day trips. • Provide potential visitors with a virtual immersive tour of the island to instill confidence in potential visitors that Maui has much to offer. This can include events and festivals to garner participation. 	<p>(ST)HTA’s current Mālama Maui campaign is introducing new areas to potential visitors. Additional funding is required for production that includes adding more areas.</p> <p>(ST) Further build resources to connect cultural practitioners to visitor industry partners for authentic Hawaiian experiences.</p> <p>(MT-LT) Tour Buses have limitations in some areas due to insufficient space to load/unload passengers, and parking. May need to work with communities to adjust, in addition to working with the government agencies for infrastructure to support activities.</p>	<p>(MT) Developing a process that encourages & enables similar groups to work together and connect them with the appropriate visitor industry “buyer” will require a skilled facilitator.</p> <p>(ST-MT) Create virtual immersive tours around Maui that allows potential visitors to explore different parts of Maui to see what is available.</p>	

5. Support providing longer-term housing for wildfire impacted households living in visitor-type accommodations by appealing to TVR owners.

	Proposed Strategy and Related Actions	Actions that are underway but require additional resources.	Actions that need start-up resources	Actions being addressed by other groups.
5	<p>(ST) Support providing housing for Wildfire households living in visitor accommodations by supporting County and State efforts to reach out-of-state owners of residential properties and encouraging them to rent for at least a year to Lahaina residents who lost their homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HTA can assist by providing resources to guide the communications effort. If a mailing is decided as the best approach then additional resources may be required. 	<p>(ST)Maui Hotel and Lodging and others have started gathering support for this action but may need assistance.</p> <p>State and/or Maui County may need assistance in getting the message out to TVR owners.</p>	<p>(ST) Will need to identify the best website and phone number for recipients of the letter to find out additional information. .</p>	<p>Providing stable housing for Wildfire households is a priority for several Maui County and State (Governor’s office and DBEDT) groups who better understand the complexity of housing. Including</p> <p>Multiple sites are available for property owners and potential renters including HHFDC Hawai’i Fire Relief Housing Program, Maui Hale March. MEO Transitional Housing Match, and FEMA Direct Leasing Program.</p> <p>Maui Tour companies have been supporting the county by providing transportation for community needs such as delivering students to school.</p>

Summary of Recommended Actions

- 1a. In early 2024, increase the visibility and call to action for travel to Hawai'i targeting high-potential markets.
- 1b. Support businesses to continue providing a consistent message that Maui is open for visitors.
2. Support and encourage consistent messaging and outreach to Maui residents, visitor industry stakeholders and businesses.
3. Support Maui small businesses that are experiencing significant reductions in sales because of lower number of visitors on island.
4. Expand tourism product on Maui to provide new activities for visitors and support Maui businesses.
5. Support providing longer-term housing for wildfire-impacted households living in visitor-type accommodations by assisting with communications efforts to TVR owners.

Next Steps

- We want to hear from you.
- For a copy of the slides go to www.smshawaii.com/hta-tourism-recovery-plan
- December 1 – 15, 2023 public comment period.
 - Leave feedback and comments by accessing the same site and click the link or use this QR code
- December 21, 2023: The updated draft of *Tourism's Support of Maui's Recovery* will be presented to the HTA Board of Directors for approval.





Mahalo

