

strategic

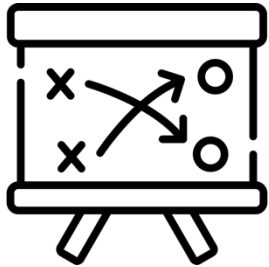
stra·te·gic

/strə'tējɪk/

adjective

adjective: strategic

Relating to the identification of long-term or overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them.



tactical

adjective

tac·ti·cal 'tak-ti-kəl

- : of or relating to small-scale actions serving a larger purpose
- : made or carried out with only a limited or immediate end in view
- : adroit in planning or maneuvering to accomplish a purpose



Strategic Plan for A Sustainable Tourism Economy 2024 - 2030

Located on an Atlantic coastal island south of Charleston Edisto, South Carolina is blessed with a spectacular coastal environment that residents respect and sustain as a great place to live, work and visit!

Mission Statement

Edisto Chamber of Commerce sustains a tourism-based economy by promoting responsible visitation to all parts of the island highlighting our spectacular natural assets and promoting our beach, local events, parks, recreation, culture, and heritage. We are advocates for business and the lifestyle of our residents and visitors alike.

The following Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Tourism Economy is research-based including input from 115 community, civic and travel industry leaders in Edisto who completed a strategic planning survey/SWOT analysis. The planning workshop and Strategic Plan were facilitated and developed by Berkeley Young, President of Young Strategies, Inc.

Organization Structure

Edisto Chamber of Commerce is a destination leadership organization focused on the sustainable growth of the economy and the preservation of the lifestyle in Edisto, SC. The economy in Edisto is deeply rooted in travel and tourism. A thriving travel industry drives the local economy while leaders respect and preserve our natural resources for the benefit of future generations.



Edisto Chamber of Commerce is committed to promoting Edisto as a sustainable coastal destination with the highest caliber staff providing leadership and innovation to drive:

- Maintain peak season visitation while not exceeding our capacity
- Increased visitation in the Shoulder and Off-season months
- Longer lengths of stay
- Increased spending per travel party
- Increased visitor satisfaction
- High resident standard of living

Edisto Chamber of Commerce Board Focus

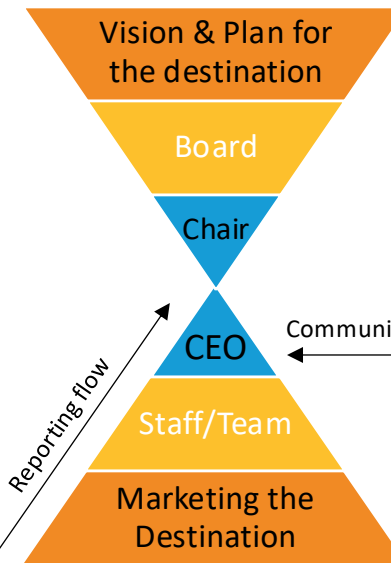
The ECoC Board of Directors will be engaged in two primary functions:

- 1) **Providing proper oversight** related to the function and ROI of the staff's research-based marketing of the destination.
- 2) **Fulfill the vision for Edisto Chamber of Commerce in 2030** in partnership with Town officials and other economic development groups. ECoC will foster, facilitate and encourage the growth and sustainability of the town's tourism assets for the benefit of all residents and vacation home-owners.

Edisto Chamber of Commerce Staff Focus

- 1) Marketing Edisto to visitors.
- 2) Providing advocacy and support for Chamber members
- 3) Coordinating the implementation of the Board Vision for the destination.

REPORTING STRUCTURE



Board:

- Long-range vision
- Policy & oversight
- Advocacy with partners
- Advocacy with elected officials

Visionary Strategic Plan

- Sustainable long-term funding
- Destination Management
- New Product Development
- Measurable ROI - Accountability

Communications & Reporting; Runs the Chamber

OVERALL STRATEGIC DIRECTION



Edisto Chamber of Commerce advocates for a sustainable visitor economy by providing leadership and innovation from the Board of Directors and staff. We are focused on the following three strategic initiatives to provide a better and expanding visitor experience that also enhances the quality of life for our residents:

- 1. SMART MARKETING OF A COASTAL DESTINATION** to drive growth in visitation during slow periods of the year when the occupancy in lodging dips below 60%. We promote an active, outdoors, coastal destination to high value visitors who will respect and sustain our spectacular natural environment and way-of-life.
- 2. AN EVER-IMPROVING VISITOR EXPERIENCE** – We support and encourage the preservation and expansion of unique activities that provide memorable experiences for our residents and visitors alike. Our top priorities are: outdoor/recreation-trails; rentals/outfitters & guides; signage and wayfinding; ride sharing for evening dining; trails and bicycle lanes; disability access.
- 3. A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECONOMY** – The Board of Directors at Edisto Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to: fiscal management of our tax-based funding; nurturing our staff/team; supporting our hospitality industry businesses and workers; and advocating for a sustainable tourism economy.
 - a) Edisto Chamber of Commerce Team** – We recruit, retain and support the highest caliber team to lead our travel industry and market Edisto as a unique coastal destination.
 - b) Workforce** – The development of a qualified and abundant workforce for Edisto hospitality businesses is critical to future success and growth. Our businesses are understaffed and need our support.
 - c) Advocacy for travel industry issues** – We are the collective voice for the travel industry and we speak out in support of our partners in hospitality, tourism, events and recreation.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Annual reviews of this five-year strategic plan will take place in lieu of annual retreats. The annual review takes place with staff and Board leadership. There is no need for a retreat if the plan implementation is on track and there are no external factors that change overall strategies and goals. If significant changes are needed, the Board/staff may schedule a retreat to adjust the plan. ECoC invests in market research to guide future sales and marketing efforts and track ROI of programmatic work.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



SMART MARKETING OF A COASTAL DESTINATION to drive growth in visitation during slow periods of the year when the occupancy in lodging dips below 60%. We promote an active, outdoors, coastal destination to high value visitors who will respect and sustain our spectacular natural environment and way-of-life. We will sustain our summer and holiday peak season visitation. We will drive growth in visitation during slow periods of the year (October – March, and Sundays/Mondays year-round) when the occupancy in lodging dips below 60%.

A. External Marketing – inviting visitors to stay overnight to sustain our economy year-round.

- 1) Deliver on a brand built around the soul of our **unique and authentic coastal island. We know Edisto is unlike other coastal islands and we want to keep it that way.** We brand and expand the messaging built around an active coastal adventure destination to include small scale meetings and events based on facilities ability to host groups.
- 2) Focus marketing on **Attractors** – the beach, the coastal estuaries, scenic beauty, boating, kayaking, fishing, golf, state and County parks, and events while continuing to promote other reasons to visit.
- 3) Promote **active lifestyles by day and evening.** Focus evening and weekend promotions on events, music, craft beverages, farm-to-table/local dining and shopping.
- 4) Provide **dynamic visitor information services** for all visitors to drive increased spending in-market.
- 5) An aggressive **PR strategy targeting coastal, outdoor and lifestyle publications** will deliver travel press stories about Edisto as destination for fall, winter and spring travel.
- 6) **Tracking and accountability** to demonstrate highest possible Return-on-Investment (ROI) –

B. Internal Marketing – building awareness of the impact of travel with the citizens and elected officials within Edisto.

- 1) **Provide leadership** to the Edisto travel industry through training, co-op sales/marketing programs, and maintaining a community events calendar. ECoC leadership from the Board and staff will foster job growth and new business development.
- 2) **Host events** and speak at civic meetings about the positive impacts of the travel economy. NTTW – National Travel and Tourism Week (May) promotions and events to raise awareness of tourism impact.

Measurable Success:

*Annual plan with trackable ROI	*Maintain critical peak season visitation in summer and on holiday weekends.
*Longer lengths of stay	*Increased visitor spending *Increased visitor satisfaction
*Increased Oct- Mar visitation	*New travel industry businesses *Growth in lodging room demand & ADR



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



AN EVER-IMPROVING VISITOR EXPERIENCE – Edisto is an active-lifestyle destination that allows

visitors and residents to easily walk, hike, cycle and paddle throughout the area. We support and encourage the preservation and expansion of unique activities that provide memorable experiences for our residents and visitors alike. Improvement and expansion of outdoor and indoor recreation facilities will appeal to individuals and groups who will love coming to Edisto to get active. Our top priorities are outdoor/recreation-trails, river access through rentals/outfitters & guides, etc.; signage, wayfinding; ride sharing for evening dining; trails and bicycle lanes; disability access.

- a) **Focus on that which drives visitation**, developing and expanding upon existing experiences, while branching into new experiences that complement the outdoor brand of Edisto.
- b) **Improve and add new hiking and bicycle trails** making it easier for visitors to travel from lodgings to dining, shopping and activities without a vehicle. Add bicycle lanes to roadways. A walkable/cycle-friendly community makes it easy to get outside and get active.
- c) **Support outdoor outfitters and guiding companies** in providing excellent services for visitors through marketing, increasing access, and developing partnerships throughout Edisto to promote local businesses.
- d) **Develop October - March activities** to drive off-season growth.
- e) **Host and manage events** to build recognition as an active-lifestyle coastal destination—runs/races, fishing, arts, etc.
- f) Work with elected bodies and economic development groups to lobby the **cellular and wi-fi providers for expanded service** throughout Edisto particularly in the rural areas where outdoor activities abound. Focus on the most heavily traveled roads, waterways and visitor gathering areas around the rivers and parks.
- g) **Support development of new activities in Edisto** by promoting dining, shopping and events that drive visitation.
- h) Coordinate a **Island-wide tourism master plan** that coalesces all plans and agencies on tourism related planning and development.

Measurable Success:

*Development of an Outdoor Recreation Committee	*Development of a tourism master plan	*New trails for kayaks and bikes
*New businesses - outfitters and guides	*New winter activities	*Growth in off-season visitation
*New recreation events to drive visitation	*Creation of new activity venues	*Expanded cellular service in the north

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECONOMY – The Board of Directors at Edisto Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to: fiscal management of our tax-based funding; nurturing our staff/team; supporting our hospitality industry businesses and workers; and advocating for a sustainable tourism economy. We work in partnership with local governments to support their decision-making as it affects the economy and lifestyle.

- a) **Edisto Chamber of Commerce** – a strategic advocate for the business community and quality of life
 - I. We recruit, retain and support the highest caliber team to lead our travel industry and market Edisto as a unique travel destination. We support the staff in achieving the highest standards of excellence and performance through on-going education, certifications, measurement and accountability. We maintain competitive wages/benefits and foster a creative and supportive work environment where the team thrives and continues to produce award winning sales and marketing programs.
 - II. We represent our business and resident members, we produce events for the community, we instill civic pride and all of our efforts are supported through hours of volunteer service from the community.
- b) **Workforce** – The development of a qualified and abundant workforce for Edisto hospitality businesses is critical to future success and growth. Our businesses are understaffed and need our support. The ECoC will coalesce the travel industry businesses with schools, governments and workforce organizations on a long-term plan to inspire younger generations to seek out careers in hospitality, to provide training/education for those entering the workforce and to address competitive pay and benefits to retain a qualified workforce.
- c) **Advocacy for travel industry issues** – We are the collective voice for the travel industry and we speak out in support of our partners in hospitality, tourism, events and recreation. A policy/action committee of travel industry leaders will conduct regular listening sessions and surveys with travel industry leaders to identify issues that affect their growth and success. Possible issues of concern are workforce/wages, affordable housing for workers, childcare, taxation, travel industry disruptors, regulations, signage, etc.

Measurable Success:

*Increased applicants for hospitality jobs	*Higher visitor satisfaction ratings with service	*Minimal staff turnover
*Part-time jobs converted to full-time jobs	*No vacant travel industry jobs	*Priority list of policy initiatives

