Destination Workshop

Stakeholder Feedback

Jul 02, 2025

Oakland County Department of Economic Development

OAKLAND
COUNTY MICHIGAN

Workshop Overview

When, Where, Who

Our Goal

To create an open forum for cross-sector stakeholders to interact with one another and discuss key topics pertaining to the brand pillars of the destination and brainstorm ideas/opportunities for the tourism economy.

The open house format of the public workshops (Sessions 2-3) was intended to allow free flow access to the event without requiring an extended time commitment on the part of stakeholders.

40+ attendees

June 16 – 9:00-11:00am

Waterford Oaks Activity Center –
2800 Watkins Lake Rd,
Waterford Twp, MI 48328

Session 01

An internal workshop was held for key stakeholders within County government, including County Executives and County staff from across several divisions such as Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, and Communications.

Session 02

60+attendees

June 16 –18:00-20:00am

Sundquist Farmington Pavilion
33113 Grand River Ave,
Farmington, MI 48336

An evening public workshop was held for members of the public, industry stakeholders, including members of the steering committee.
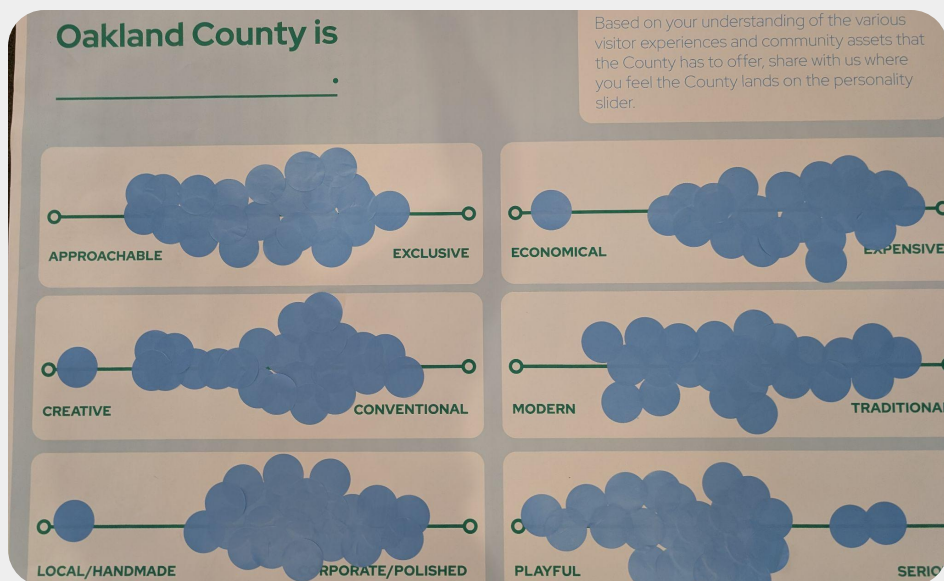
Session 03

60+ attendees

June 17 – 9:00-11:00am

Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm
1005 Van Hoosen Rd, Rochester Hills, MI 48306

A morning workshop was held primarily for members of the steering committee but also made public for other industry stakeholders to attend at their leisure.
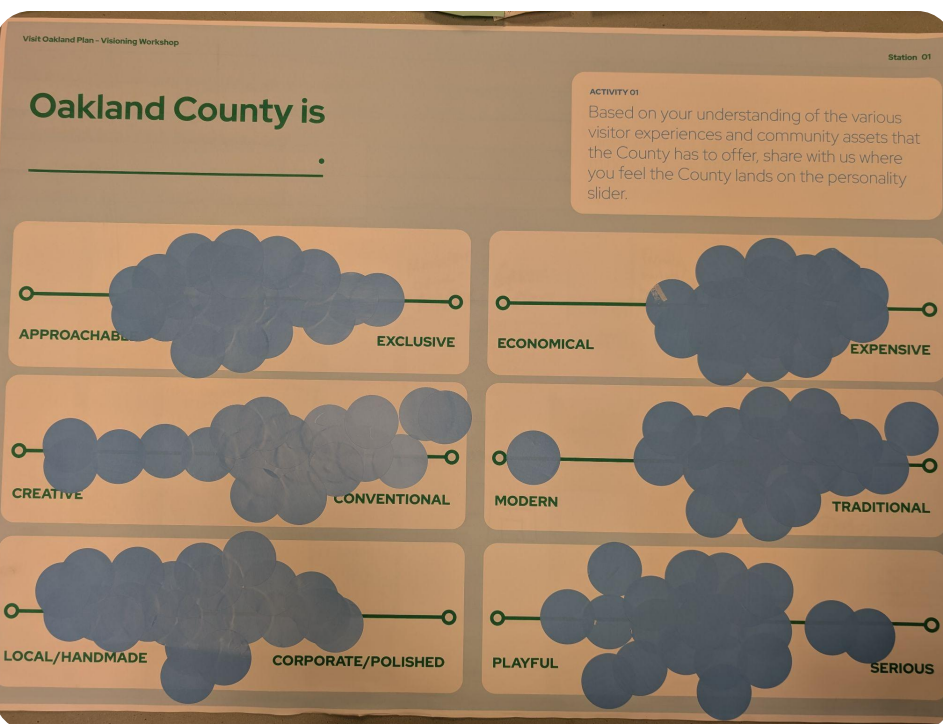
01
Summary of Findings

Station 01

Station 1: Our Brand & Who We Are

Activity 1 – Oakland County is: _____

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to distil the types of personalities that stakeholders associate with the County to help inform the direction of the place brand.

"Based on your understanding of the various visitor experiences and community assets that the County has to offer, share with us where you feel the County lands on the personality slider. Note: Each slider is treated as an 11-point scale (0 = Far left (e.g., Approachable); 10 = Far right (e.g., Exclusive)). Sticker density and position are used to estimate the average sentiment score for each slider."

Big Takeaways

- Oakland County is seen as relatively expensive and leaning traditional/conventional. However, it still retains a moderate local and approachable feel, more playful though slightly tempered by corporate polish and formality.
- Consistently seen as expensive, serious, and somewhat polished and exclusive
- Most personality traits are near the midpoint, suggesting mixed perceptions but leaning toward formality and affluence, otherwise leaning heavily toward 'expensive' and 'corporate/polished' yet 'playful'.

Station 1: Our Brand & Who We Are

Activity 2 - When someone visits Oakland County, I want them to feel: _____
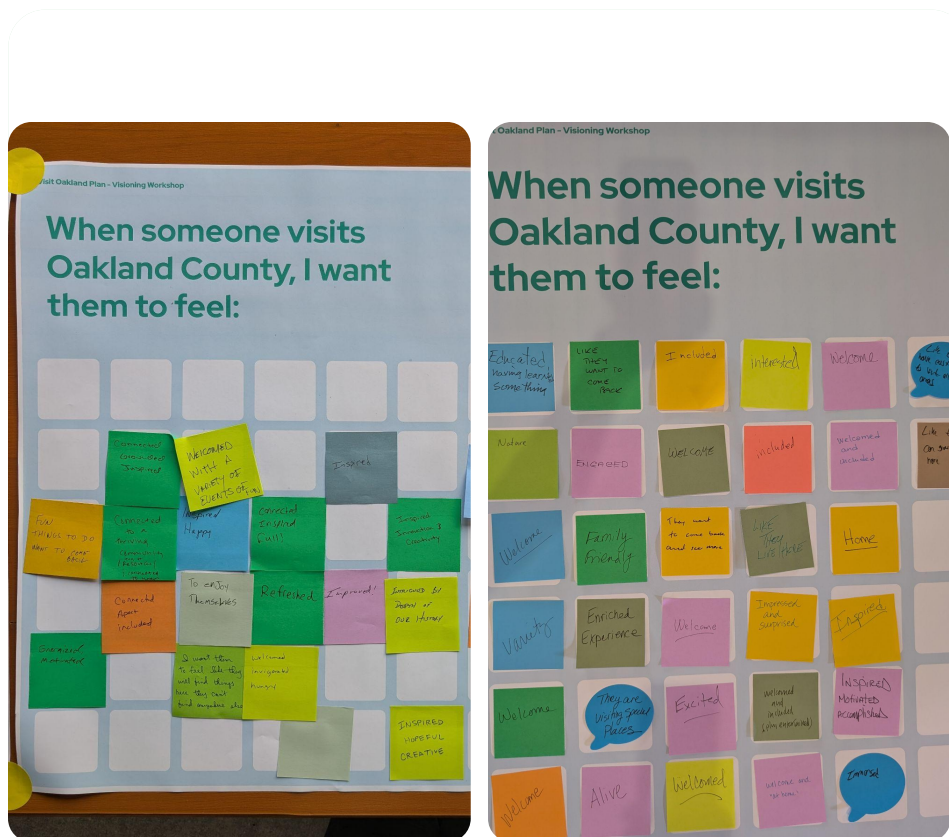
Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to distil the color palette or scheme that is closely attached to the types of feelings that stakeholders would like to evoke in visitors to the County.

"Pick a color that resonates with the emotion you're thinking about and write your response on the corresponding colorful sticky note."

Big Takeaways

- **A feeling of belonging is the top priority shared by stakeholders** – "Welcome", "At home", and "Included" dominate. Residents strongly want visitors to feel a sense of belonging, familiarity, and warmth.

- **Relaxation matters** – Residents want Oakland County to feel peaceful and healing. There's an emphasis on slowing down, unwinding, and enjoying natural surroundings.

- **Stakeholders want Oakland County to leave visitors feeling uplifted, thoughtful, and engaged**. Residents hope Oakland County is experienced as energizing and thought-provoking, and is also envisioned as a place of meaningful learning—not just leisure.

- **Balance of fun and meaning** – There's an ideal mix of joyful exploration and deeper connection. Respondents want visitors to feel engaged, curious, and entertained. Visitors should feel that the experiences are rich and worth repeating.

- **Colors represented**:
  - Blues and greens dominate, reflecting calm, welcoming, and nature-oriented emotions. Used frequently for words like Welcome, Relaxed, and Peaceful, Connected to Nature, Sense of Community, Welcome
  - Yellows and oranges are used for energetic, joyful, and curious responses. Used for energetic/emotional responses like Joyful, Childlike wonder of nature, Fun, Creative / Artsy, Curious
  - Pinks and reds highlight creative or bold sentiments.
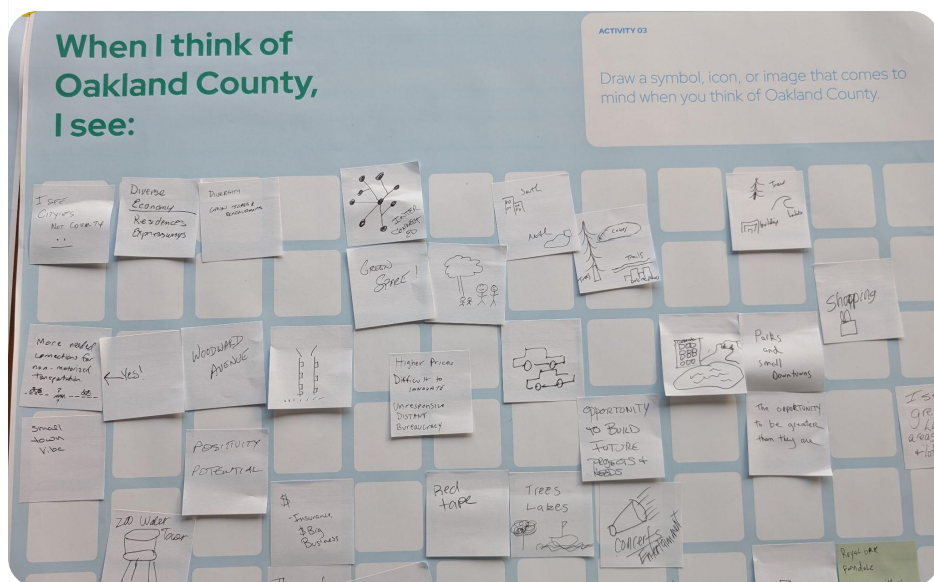
Station 1: Our Brand & Who We Are

Activity 3 - When I think of Oakland County, I see: _____

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to distil core visual cues that stakeholders closely associate with their experience of the County to inspire brand graphics and illustrations.

"Draw a symbol, icon, or image that comes to mind/reminds you of Oakland County."

Big Takeaways

On a positive note, participants shared the following:

- **Natural Environment is a defining feature and seen as a civic asset.** Oakland County is strongly associated with natural amenities and outdoor recreation, and this is a clear point of pride for the community. Repeated mentions of green space, trees, lakes, and parks show that residents value Oakland County's access to nature and outdoor amenities.
- **Strong sense of belonging is evident through mentions of families, friends = family + neighbors, and community events.** People value shared spaces and experiences that bring diverse groups together. The area is associated with a high quality of life, especially for families, with good education, retail, and housing.
- **Economic and Development Potential is seen as a major opportunity.** There's recognition of economic diversity, especially in tech and manufacturing, along with a unique regional identity that's not tourist-driven.
- **Diverse Urban Identity stands out.** There's a strong association with downtown districts, small-town vibes, and walkability. The vibrancy, diversity, and human-scale character of local downtowns are viewed positively. There's an appreciation for cultural activities, arts, and a sense of belonging.
- **Education and history are foundational, but there's an urge to modernize how these are expressed—more interactive, inclusive, and relevant to today's residents.** Residents value cultural richness, but they want history to be understood as living and evolving, not frozen in time.

On a cautionary/negative note, participants shared the following:

- **Inequity and Bureaucracy are barriers.** While some celebrate diversity and community strength, there's also an implied awareness of social or spatial fragmentation across the county. Comments around high costs, bureaucratic disconnect, and a lack of inclusivity suggest that some residents feel excluded from the benefits of development or that county systems are difficult to navigate.
- **Transportation and traffic are a major pain point.** People perceive poor planning or overdevelopment as barriers to accessing amenities. Participants call out the need for better transit (especially non-motorized), and less car-dependence—all of which imply a desire for more accessible, efficient, and inclusive mobility options.

Station 1: Our Brand & Who We Are

Activity 4 – How should our destination brand look and feel?

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to uncover visual preferences and user needs for digital information, as well as served to evaluate design effectiveness across existing case studies/models to help inform mock-up of marketing tactics and strategies in the final plan.

"Reflect on the competitive destination brands presented here and share with us something you liked about each brand, something you didn't like or would improve, something you hope that will be applied to Oakland County's brand."
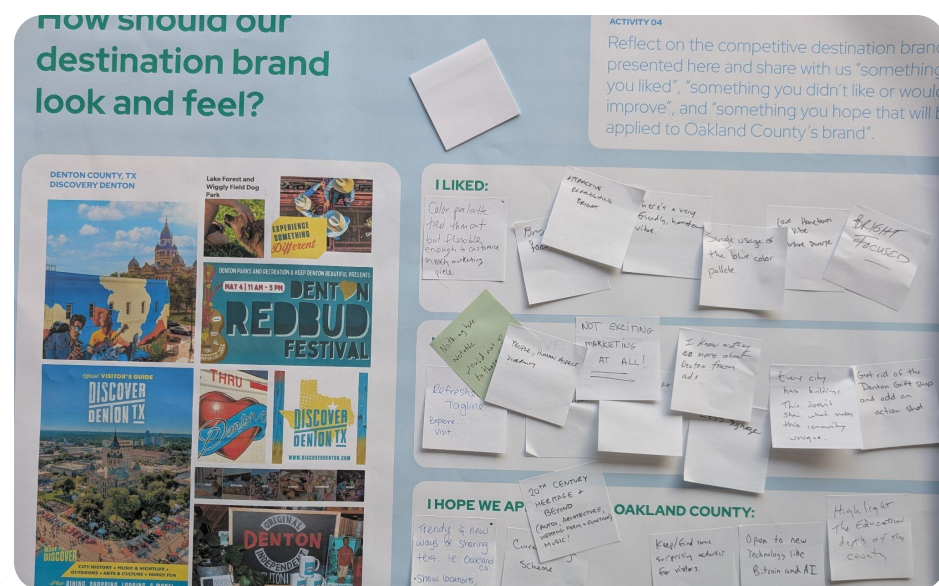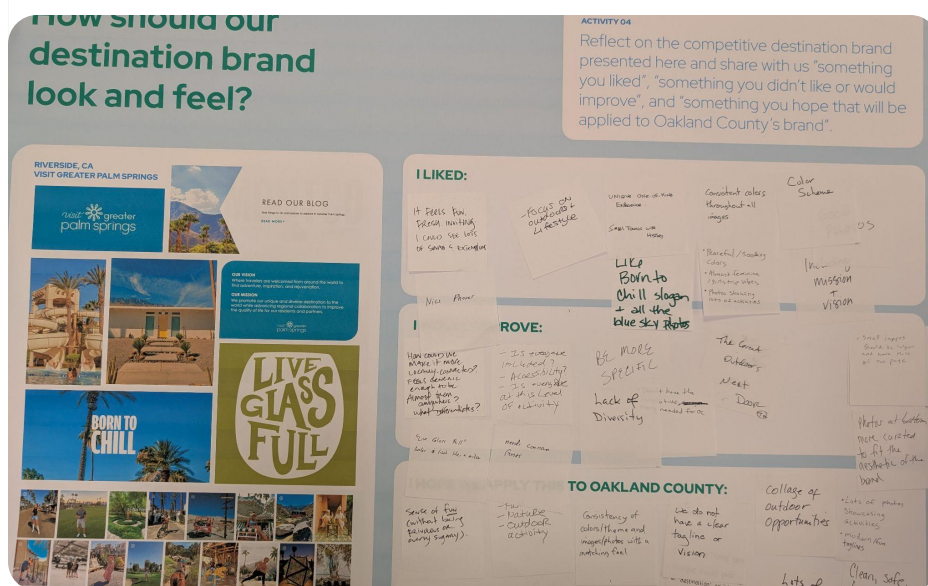
Riverside County CA

Big Takeaways

Strengths:

- Participants responded favorably to the fun, fresh, inviting tone and mood of Riverside's brand.
- Participants praised its visual clarity, vacation-like atmosphere, and modern aesthetic.
- Participants appreciate the lifestyle-driven brand of Riverside, especially emphasizing nature and relaxation.
- The brand strongly communicated a laid-back, vacation-ready identity, which resonated. Participants appreciated its emotional tone—relaxing, clear, and modern.
- The consistent use of photo layouts, clean typography, and balanced color communicated a clear identity.
- The brand's use of story-driven imagery and messaging helped convey both atmosphere and variety. People appreciated that the design suggested a narrative while remaining open-ended for exploration.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- Participants felt that a strong brand must include diverse perspectives, feel grounded in local reality, and go beyond aesthetics to show infrastructure, access, and inclusivity.
- Respondents want to see authentic local people represented—not just stylized tourism. They called for inclusive imagery that represents a diverse and bilingual audience.
- Balance emotional appeal with functional depth. Add wayfinding, guides, and planning tools directly into visual communications.

Apply to Oakland County:

- The future Oakland County brand should feel vibrant, active, and inclusive, rooted in authentic imagery and community-driven storytelling.
- Emphasize emotional appeal (e.g., relaxation, joy, escape) — not just attractions. Oakland's brand can benefit from a tone of experience, not only information.
- Participants expressed a desire for more localized and personalized content. They want to see community pride, outdoor adventure, and non-tourist experiences that reflect everyday life.
- Use high-quality, expressive photography with intentional structure.

Montgomery County PA

Big Takeaways

Strengths:

- The trail system was one of the most positively noted features. It was seen as clear, visually digestible, and effective in communicating the region's outdoor recreational opportunities. People appreciate them being featured prominently and want maps and visuals that clearly show how they link to other assets.
- People strongly valued the inclusion of local food in the brand materials and suggested using food to create a relatable, sensory connection to place.
- Participants valued that the branding showed a mix of people and family-friendly environments. Diversity — both demographic and cultural — was important to viewers.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- Respondents found the overall visual system fragmented and lacking cohesion. The disconnect between Montco and Valley Forge created confusion about identity and place.
- While the content was appreciated, the overall look and feel was described as dated, static, and flat. Respondents want a more energetic and current visual identity — including dynamic photography and updated fonts.
- While the title MontCo was appreciated for simplicity, it felt generic or overly minimal, and the brand lacked a unifying aesthetic or narrative arc.
- There was disappointment with the imagery used—many found it uninspiring and overly promotional, relying too much on publication covers instead of authentic local experiences. People wanted real, story-rich photos of places, events, and people, and suggestions pointed toward organizing content around experiences (like tours or themed guides).

Apply to Oakland County:

- The roving promotional truck was a standout idea, praised for its novelty and accessibility. Participants liked the idea of a brand that comes to people, and that can strike a balance between fun and credibility. This suggests an appetite for interactive, unexpected, and adaptive brand delivery.
- Respondents want Oakland County's branding to reflect its own identity — showcasing unique communities, nature, local pride, and family-centered activities.
- Respondents want the brand to reflect diverse activities — history, museums, food, outdoors — but in a way that feels unified and clearly connected.
- People want visitor information (like maps, guides, and interpretive content) to clearly tell the story of place and make navigation between activities easier.
- There's a strong desire to highlight diverse people and experiences, while also encouraging learning, inclusivity, and equitable representation.

Denton County TX

Big Takeaways

Strengths:

- Respondents loved the playful, bold color palette, and how Denton's visuals conveyed a vivid, creative local culture. The branding successfully projects a place-specific energy — it feels alive, refreshing, expressive, and visually engaging.
- The color palette was widely appreciated for being cohesive, yet flexible enough for various applications.
- The Denton brand evokes local character and civic pride. People felt that the visuals, tone, and layouts weren't just generic—they helped paint a picture of what it feels like to be in Denton.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- Some said the visuals were not distinctive, with nothing notable to draw attention.
- While some felt the design worked cohesively, others noted inconsistencies in logos and structure. There's a general preference for flexible but unified branding systems.
- Taglines like Explore were seen as bland or cliché. Participants want branding that tells a story and gives a deeper sense of place and purpose, not just marketing buzzwords.
- Respondents asked for more people depicted doing activities, to better showcase community life and engagement.
- Interest in better representation of local history, cultural institutions, and diversity (including racial and ethnic communities) was also mentioned.

Apply to Oakland County:

- Oakland County should lean into bold, place-specific visuals, with artistic textures, murals, and modern typography to project creative vibrancy.
- Use branding to tell a visual story of place — highlight Oakland County's distinct towns, outdoor assets, and personality traits.
- Highlight local businesses, events, and unique places to better showcase the area.
- Ensure diverse representation and unexpected activities are included.
- Ensure Oakland County's brand doesn't fracture across assets. Maintain a core identity while allowing for localized variations.
- Strong support for a unified design system: ONE LOGO ONE WEBSITE ✓, with emphasis on flexibility and consistency across media.
- Suggestions included a unique logo that reflects Denton's architecture, nature, and diversity, and branding that's ESL-friendly and accessible.

Dane County WI

Big Takeaways

Strengths:

- Participants found the Destination Madison brand to be energetic, colorful, and activity-oriented and appreciated its vibrancy.
- Preference for bright, eye-catching colors and big, bold photos.
- Respondents praised modern, fun, clean design elements.
- The use of a unique, stylized font (e.g., the M used around town) was noted as memorable and promotable.
- High contrast colors and friendly, legible typography enhance readability and appeal.
- Visual maps of destinations, explore routes, and action shots were seen as tools to help visitors easily imagine what to do.

Challenges/Opportunities:

- Participants liked the boldness and clarity, but criticized the inconsistency in visual elements. There's a call for fewer styles, tighter color palettes, and a more unified aesthetic.
- While some images were engaging, participants want to see broader community representation beyond tourists — including residents, entrepreneurs, and different demographics.
- Nature imagery is desired, with a call for more scenic and outdoor visuals.
- Keep messaging clear, inclusive, and visually driven.

Apply to Oakland County:

- Participants want the brand to tell a story — not just list activities. There's interest in narrative continuity and meaningful content that builds identity and purpose.
- The branding should celebrate local experiences, joy, and community pride — not just tourism. Participants are drawn to playful, interactive place-making elements and authentic visuals.
- Strong emphasis on regional cohesion, especially with a Metro Detroit identity.
  - There's a strong desire for inter-municipal connectivity in branding.
  - This includes collaboration on events, cohesive narratives across cities, and making it easy to navigate between communities.
- Showcase the diversity of people and interests across Oakland County. Include photos of people actively enjoying parks, cities, and experiences.
- Showcase the region's technological strengths, 21st-century transportation, and creativity.
- Highlight the educational system as a point of pride and appeal.

02
Summary of Findings

Station 02

Station 2: The Great Escape

Activity 1 - My best kept secret about Oakland's great outdoors is: _____

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to distil core visual cues that stakeholders closely associated with outdoor recreation experiences in the County, across all seasons, to inspire brand graphics and illustrations, and provide photography direction during brand implementation.

"Draw a picture of a great outdoor activity/location in the County that you would share with someone (draw the memorable scene/location, include a message about what makes the experience enjoyable/tips on how to get there, and who you'd like to enjoy this experience with)."

Big Takeaways

- **Popular Natural Trails & Preserves**: Many responses highlight specific trails and preserves like Bald Mountain, Clinton River Trail, Friendship Woods, and Pine Leap Lookout Trail. These are appreciated for:
  - Peaceful, hilly, or wooded terrain
  - Walking, biking, and hiking experiences
- **Lakes and Water Recreation**: Locations like Lake Orion, Cass Lake, and Crooked Lake feature frequently, often with drawings of:
  - Boats
  - Swimming
  - Fishing
- **Family-Friendly Fun**: Several notes emphasize kid- or family-oriented spots such as:
  - Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve
  - Addison Oaks (picnic and recreation)
- **Hidden Gems:** Places that suggest people value quiet, less-discovered spaces.
  - Turtle Woods
  - Nature Patrol
  - Local lookouts and tucked-away parks
- **Local Downtowns with Outdoor Appeal**: A few downtowns were noted for being both social and scenic—indicating a desire for walkable places that combine urban and natural vibes.

Station 2: The Great Escape

Activity 2 - Spot the differences

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to uncover visual preferences and user needs for digital information, as well as served to evaluate design effectiveness across existing case studies/models to help inform mock-up of marketing tactics and strategies in the final plan - specifically to tackle the challenge of disjointedness/lack of physical connectivity between the great outdoor assets in the County.

"Take a look at how other destinations (Oregon vs Anaheim vs Maine vs Lake Tahoe) are promoting outdoor recreation experiences, note the differences. Reflect and share with us something you liked about each approach, something you didn't like or would improve, something you hope that will be applied to Oakland County."
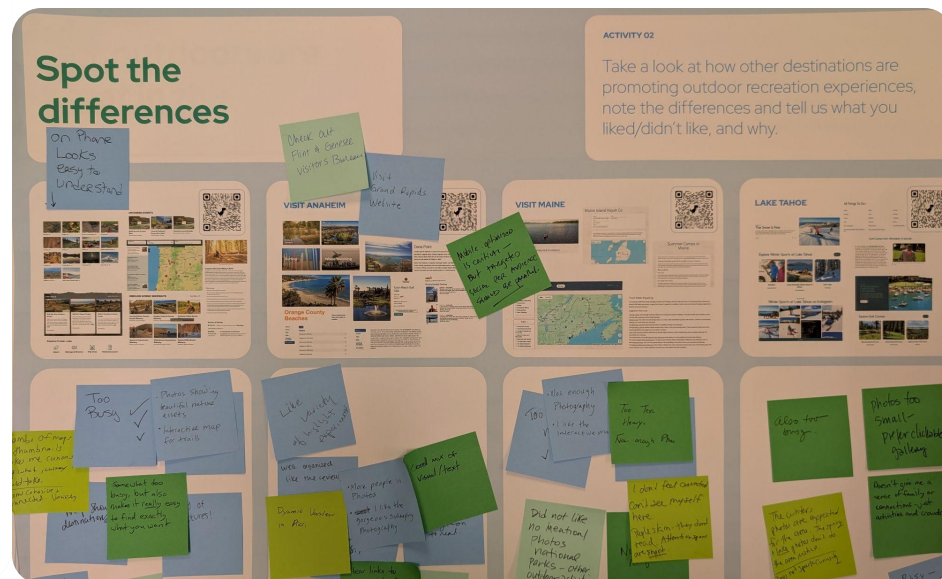
Big Takeaways

On a positive note, participants shared the following:

- **Clean and Organized Design:** Respondents appreciated sites with clear layouts, clean interfaces, and simple, readable fonts. Examples like Anaheim were seen as "very scrollable" and "well organized."
- **Effective Use of Visuals:** Sites showing beautiful nature scenes, diverse visitors, and engaging imagery were praised. The use of interactive maps, especially for trails, was positively highlighted.
- **Mobile-Friendly Experiences:** One board mentioned a site "looks easy to understand on phone," which suggests mobile optimization was appreciated.
- **Diversity and Representation:** Participants liked when images showed diverse people and felt inclusive.
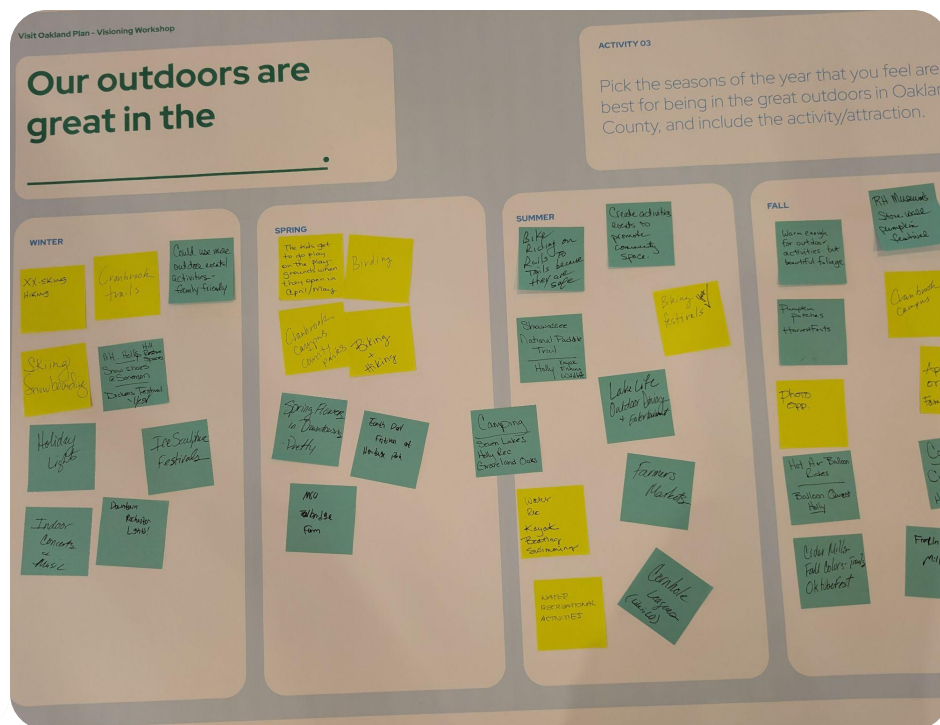
On a cautionary/negative note, participants shared the following:

- **Cluttered or Text-Heavy Layouts:** Words like "too busy," "too much text," and "plain" appeared multiple times. Respondents disliked having to "look fast" due to visual overload.
- **Lack of Compelling Visuals:** Many noted "not enough photography" or "photos too small." Several respondents felt the imagery lacked appeal or failed to spark interest.
- **Lack of Emotional or Experiential Pull:** Some said the sites "don't give me a reason to go" or "don't evoke many feelings." Respondents wanted a sense of excitement or reason to visit, not just information.
- **Unclear or Weak Content Strategy:** Sites with no clear call to action or confusing information hierarchy were criticized. Comments suggested some pages lacked depth, direction, or local storytelling.

Station 2: The Great Escape

Activity 3 - Our outdoors are great in the: _____

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to encourage stakeholders to identify year-round outdoor activities to build on the County's breadth of great experiences in the warmer months.

"Pick the seasons of the year that you feel are best for being in the great outdoors in Oakland County, and include the activity/attraction."

Big Takeaways

Winter in Oakland County is valued for its combination of outdoor adventure and cozy charm, with opportunities to be with family.

- **Winter Sports:** Sledding, snowboarding, skiing, and snowshoeing were common highlights, with Mt. Holly and Pine Knob named specifically.
- **Light Shows & Events:** Holiday markets and light tours (especially neighborhood displays), and ice sculpture events contribute to the festive atmosphere.
- **Cozy Experiences:** Glamping and tubing offer relaxing alternatives to winter sports.
- **Infrastructure Notes:** Some feedback pointed to improvements like adding lights/music to sledding hills. Indoor venues are appreciated for colder months.

Spring is associated with renewal, nature education, and community exploration, highlighting the county's parks and ecological diversity.

- **Nature Discovery**: Mushroom hunting, wildflower spotting (e.g., trillium), and maple syrup tapping are popular.
- **Family Exploration**: Parks and nature trails were praised, and spring beauty is tied to educational and family-friendly discovery.
- **Seasonal Markets**: Spring-themed farmers markets were mentioned as desirable. Earth Day celebrations across downtowns and local farms also have family appeal.

Summer is Oakland County's most socially active and water-centric season, valued for family fun, accessible trails, and park-based relaxation.

- **Water Activities:** Kayaking, swimming, and river access are top picks.
- **Park Recreation:** Playgrounds, biking, and picnic areas encourage family engagement.
- **Evening Events:** Sunset watching and outdoor concerts represent ways to enjoy long summer days.
- **Leisure Staples:** More leisurely summer staples also appeared in suggestions including youth sports, golf tournaments, and outdoor eats.

Fall is cherished for its aesthetic beauty, nostalgic seasonal charm, and outdoor exploration.

- **Color & Scenery:** Fall foliage is a major draw, with multiple mentions of "leaves changing color" and "great fall colors on trails."
- **Historic Experiences & Traditions:** Classic fall activities like cider mills, pumpkin patches, and orchards were highly favored.
- **Outdoor Movement:** Trails and boardwalks remain popular, especially for hiking and scenic views.
- **Community Events:** Fall festivals (including Oktoberfest) and soccer

03
Summary of Findings

Station 03

Station 3: Inviting Curiosity

Activity 1 - Chart an adventure for the ____ curious

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to begin an itinerary-building process with stakeholders based on areas of interest, as well as identify clusters of activity across the County that will need to be better connected and aligned through communications.

"Use the set of visitor-ready downtowns and top tourism attractions/assets to create a cross-county adventure for one of the following personas."

Big Takeaways

- **There were four primary clusters of activities geographically:** a) Woodward Avenue (from Royal Oak to Pontiac), b) Route 96 in the southwest corner of the County from Farmington to Kensington Metropark, c) Northeast of the County, primarily around Rochester and Lake Orion, and d) Northwest of the County primarily around Holly. Connecting these four hubs of activities through interest-based, itinerary building and easy access/visibility on connector roads will be critical.
- **The strongest mix of activities that meet different interests are in the (a) cluster along Woodward Avenue (from Royal Oak to Pontiac),** and will likely serve as the gateway hub for visitors.
- **Secondary hubs with unique niches include:**
  - Cluster (c) with architecture/ art/history points-of-interests and outdoor points-of-interest particularly around Lake Orion
  - Cluster (d) with a strong niche of outdoor points-of-interest.

Station 3: Inviting Curiosity

Activity 2 - Making Headlines

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to inspire stakeholders to envision the breadth of events and gatherings that the County should position itself to host to grow group and business travel to the area.

"In 2035, Oakland will be hosting the:__INSERT GEOGRAPHY___ ___INSERT INDUSTRY____ ___INSERT EVENT TYPE____. Fill in the blanks by picking an industry/sector, geographic audience (global, national, North American, Americas, Michigan, SE Michigan), size of event (meeting, summit, conference, trade show)"

Big Takeaways

- Participants' responses indicate the ambition to host both large, global format events in Oakland County, as well as smaller- to mid-sized format, out-of-the-box meetings and events.
- More traditional industry events cited center around business and economic development, and auto/auto-tech/robotics. However, respondents also shared enthusiasm for more lifestyle-focused events centering around food, hospitality, and outdoor recreation.
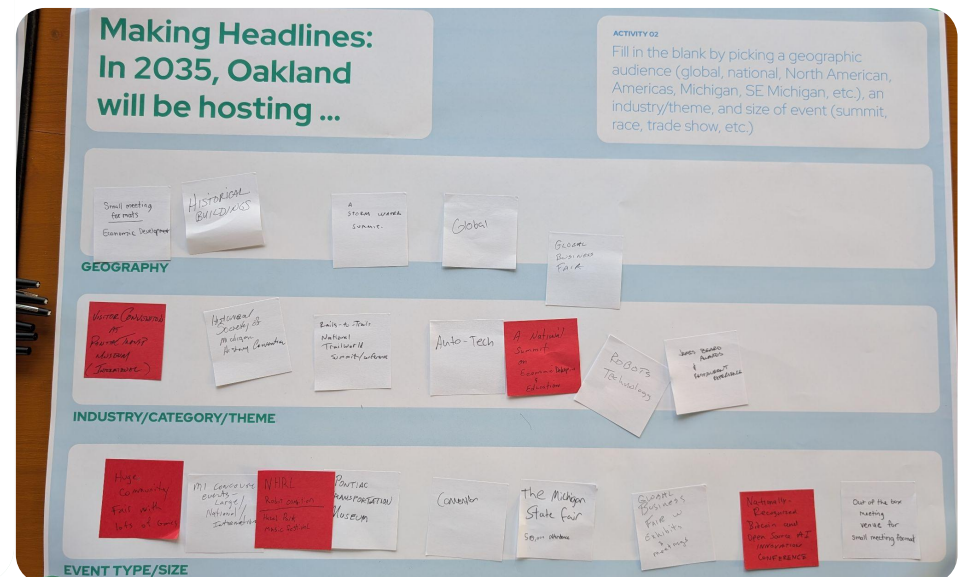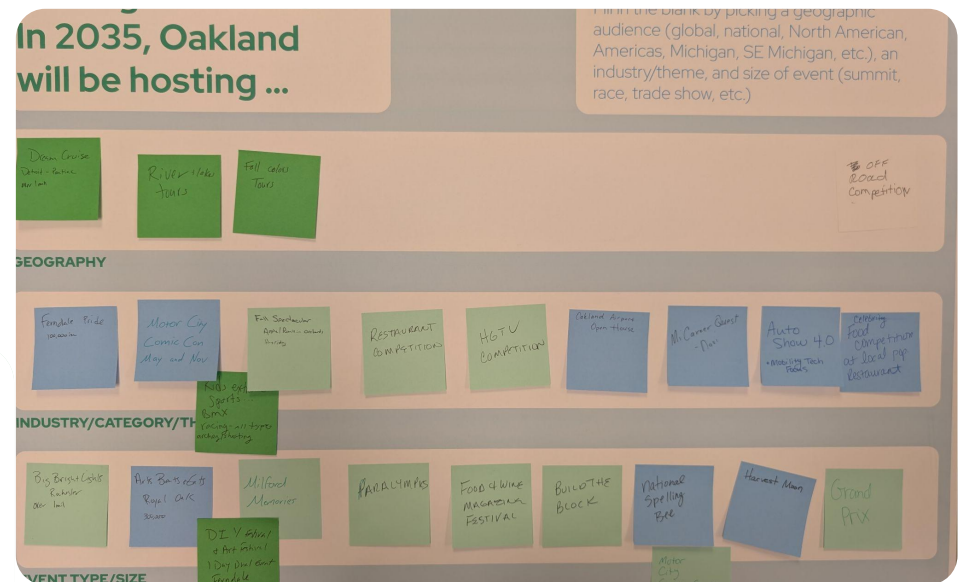
04
Summary of Findings

Station 04

Station 4: Finding Your Hometown

Activity 1 - Match the persona to the hometown

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to distil stakeholders' perceptions about their hometowns (or places they are most familiar with) and how they feel each would best suit the various types of personalities and lifestyles of potential new residents and businesses.

Participants were most engaged with this activity and many found this activity as a great way to reflect on their current/past living/work choices.

"Grab a string from one of the personas and connect them to a community in Oakland County that you think might be best suited for their lifestyle and interests. Read the personas carefully."

Big Takeaways

- **Founders** who are leaders with a vision and looking for a place to grow a company, team, and young family are most likely to find their footing in the following communities in Oakland County.
  - **Top Tier Mentions: Rochester Hills, Auburn Hills, Troy**

- **Seekers** who are new graduates open to job opportunities and finding diverse communities to be a part of are most likely to find their footing in the following communities in Oakland County.
  - **Top Tier Mentions: Royal Oak, Ferndale, Oak Park**
- **Newcomers** who are part of the immigrant community, looking to build a prosperous life for my multi-generational and multi-cultural family are most likely to find their footing in the following communities in Oakland County.
  - **Top Tier Mentions: Farmington Hills, Troy, Novi, Pontiac**
- **Legacy Builders** who are retired/counting down their days to retirement and ready for life's next big adventure and finding ways to give back to their community are most likely to find their footing in the following communities in Oakland County.
  - **Top Tier Mentions: Birmingham, Rochester, West Bloomfield**
- **Explorers** who are proud southeast Michiganders returning to the region and looking for a place to plant their new roots and build a home and community are most likely to find their footing in the following communities in Oakland County.
  - **Top Tier Mentions: Clarkston, South Lyon, Milford, Farmington**

Station 4: Finding Your Hometown

Activity 2 - Building on our hometown events
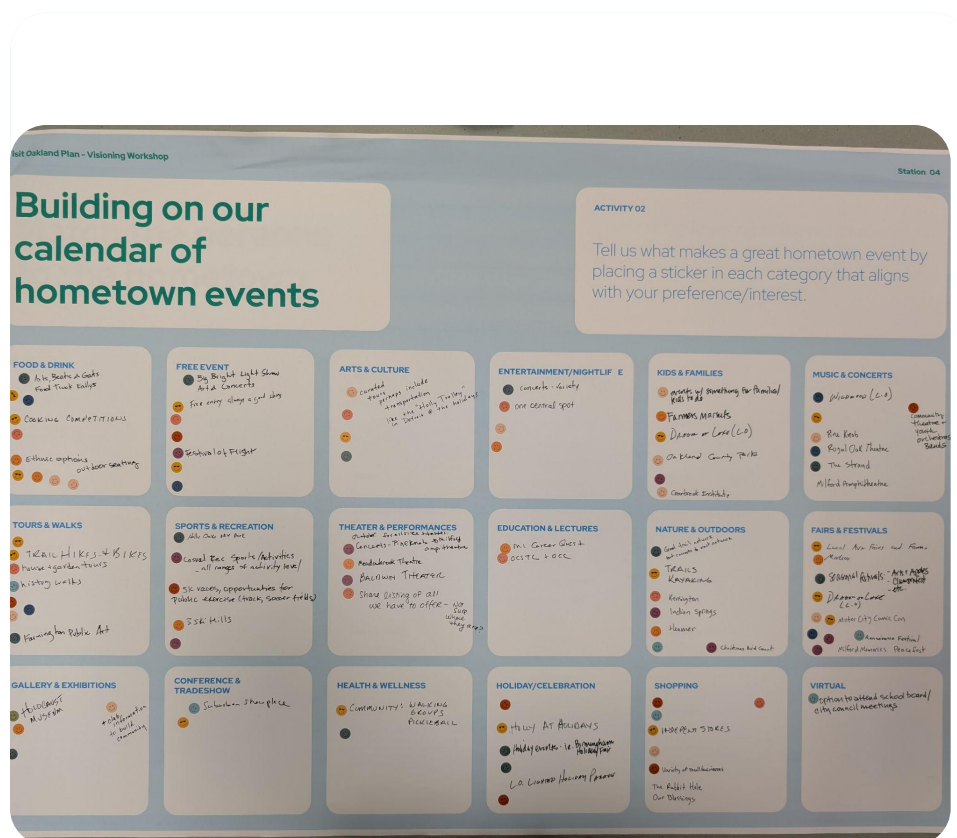
Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to distil stakeholder preferences for hometown events and products that should be fostered and/or developed (whether through financial or marketing support) to grow year-round business and leisure visitation to the County.

"Tell us what makes a great hometown event by placing a sticker in each category that aligns with your preference/interest."

Big Takeaways

- Respondents showed the strongest interest in active, outdoor, and family-oriented events. Nature-based recreation, festivals, and kid-friendly events clearly resonate the most.
- Respondents also strongly prefer vibrant, social, and in-person community events. Top categories reflect a desire for social interaction, celebration of local culture, and multisensory experiences. Respondents value events that offer entertainment, community gathering, and fun atmospheres.
- Categories that include events with remote or passive participation like virtual, galleries, and traditional lectures or theater received relatively low engagement, suggesting these may need reinvention or better promotion to gain traction.

# 05
Summary of Findings

Station 05

Station 5: Getting The Work Done

Activity 1 - The Value of Place Brand To You

Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to wrap up the workshop exercises by urging stakeholders to reflect on the potential use of the County's place brand in their day-to-day life, whether in their professional settings or within personal capacities. .

"How do you think you/your organization will use the Oakland County place brand? Tell us how. If a place brand won't be valuable to you, tell us why.."
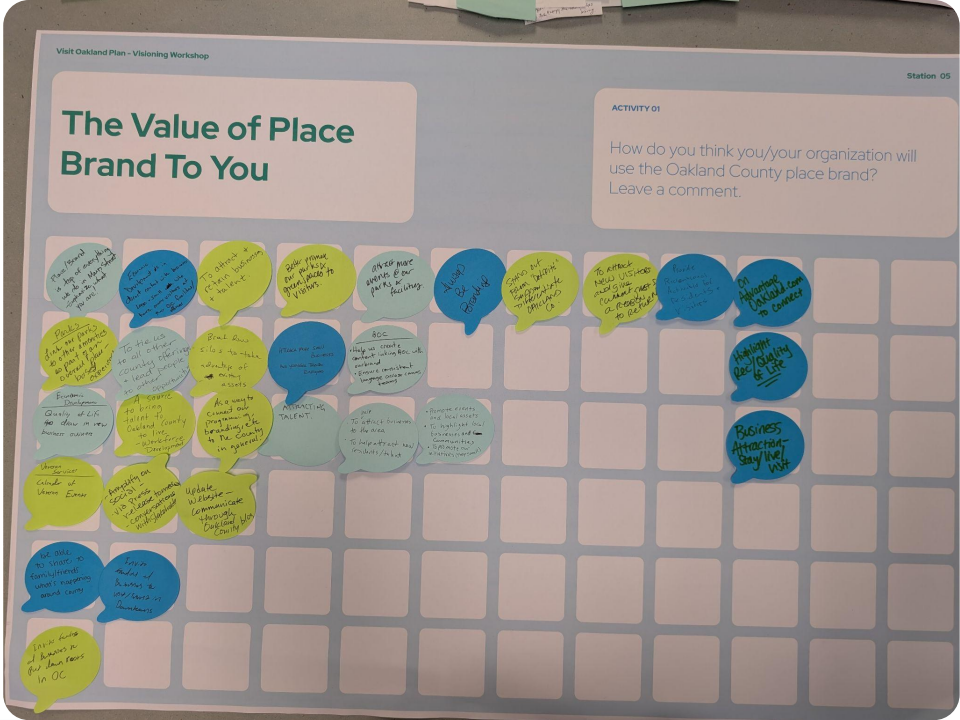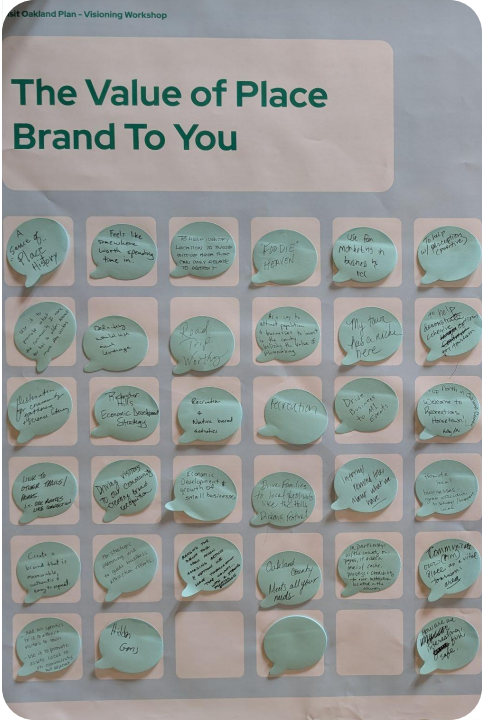
Big Takeaways

- There is strong interest in using the place brand to promote small businesses, attract talent, retain graduates, and support local entrepreneurs.
- Several comments emphasized the role of parks and green spaces as assets that should be promoted. The brand should help highlight the county's recreational offerings to both residents and visitors.
- Clear desire for Oakland County to differentiate itself from Detroit, while still tying together multiple offerings and making the County's value proposition clearer. Many also shared the need to use the brand to attract events, promote local assets, and give guests a reason to return was a recurring idea.
- The place brand is seen as a tool to unify messaging across departments, break down silos, and connect programming.
- Many comments suggest integrating the county brand into existing communications, events, and partnerships to promote unity and visibility.
- There's a strong push to use the brand to draw visitors and support local economies. Several respondents want the brand to help draw in tourists by highlighting "hidden gems," festivals, and family-friendly attractions.
- Branding is seen as a way to make the county feel approachable and exciting to outsiders.
- Respondents emphasized the importance of having a place brand to define what makes us special or unique, and creating a "sense of place," "niche identity,"

Station 5: Getting The Work Done

Activity 2 - In 2035, Oakland County will lead/support ...
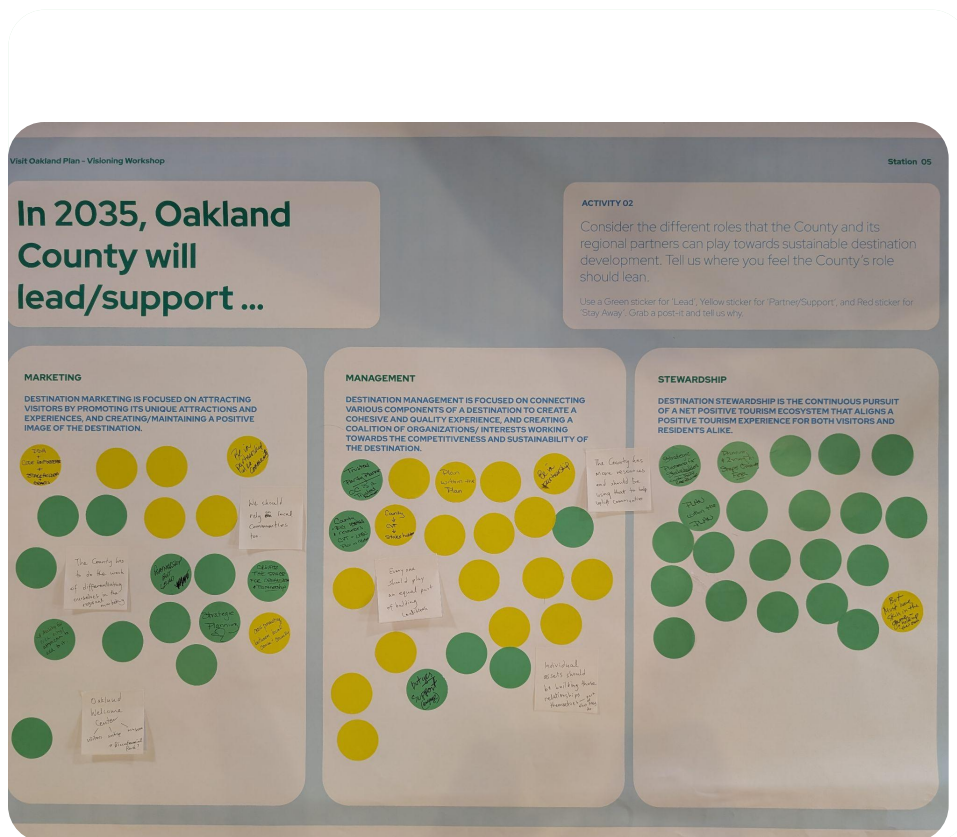
Station Objectives & Instructions

This station activity aimed to wrap up the workshop exercises by urging stakeholders to reflect on where they feel the County (as an organization) may be best suited to play a role in the work of destination development.

"Consider the different roles that the County and its regional partners can play towards sustainable destination development. Tell us where you feel the County's role should lean and which other partners should fill the gap."

Big Takeaways

The County's clearest lane lies in Destination Stewardship, or in playing the role of aligning the visitor's experience with local communities' needs and interests. In doing so, the County should ensure a net positive tourism ecosystem in the County through supporting quality-of-life enhancements such as transportation, housing for workforce, education, etc.

While participants agreed the County has a role to play in destination marketing, many shared that the County would be best suited to partner with Visit Detroit to differentiate itself from the region while leveraging Visit Detroit's existing reach and audiences. Many also shared that the County is best positioned to serve as stakeholder coordinator in order to ensure local communities' content and attractions/assets are well-incorporated in marketing efforts.

To learn more, visit:
VisitOaklandCounty.com/Strategic-Plan

Stakeholder Feedback

Jul 02, 2025

Oakland County Department of Economic Development

OAKLAND
COUNTY MICHIGAN

06
Appendix

Station 01 | Activity 01

Session 01

Approachable → Exclusive
- Heavy cluster around 3–5
- Tapering off by 6–7
- Estimated average: ~4.2

Economical → Expensive
- Majority of dots cluster between 6–8
- A few as high as 9–10
- Very few in the 0–4 range
- Estimated average: ~7.5

Creative → Conventional
- Distribution leans toward 4–6
- Some skew toward 7–8
- A few scattered in the 2–3 range
- Estimated average: ~5.8

Modern → Traditional
- Most dots between 5–8
- Cluster heavy on 6–7
- Estimated average: ~6.7

Local/Handmade → Corporate/Polished
- Strong concentration between 4–6
- Moderate spread from 2 to 7
- Estimated average: ~5.2

Playful → Serious
- Cluster from 3-6
- Estimated average: ~4.5

Session 02

Approachable → Exclusive
- Cluster concentrated between 4 and 7
- No dots extend below 3
- Estimated average: ~5.8

Economical → Expensive
- Broad spread from 3 to 10, heaviest around 7–9
- No dots extend below 3
- Estimated average: ~7.6

Creative → Conventional
- Broad spread from 3 to 10, with most around 5–6
- Balanced but slightly more weight on conventional side
- Estimated average: ~6.2

Modern → Traditional
- Relatively even spread from 2 to 9
- Bulk of responses around 3-5
- Estimated average: ~4.5, skews modern

Local/Handmade → Corporate/Polished
- High concentration above 5, with a few up to 9
- Cluster centers around 6-7
- Estimated average: ~7.4, skews corporate/polished

Playful → Serious
- Heavy concentration from 5 to 8
- Few dots left of center
- Estimated average: ~6.5

Session 03

Approachable → Exclusive
- Cluster centered between 3–7
- No dots extend above 7
- Estimated average: ~5.0

Economical → Expensive
- Wide spread from 4 to 9
- Peak density around 7–8
- Estimated average: ~7.2

Creative → Conventional
- Distribution mostly between 3 and 7
- Cluster centered around 6
- Estimated average: ~5.8

Modern → Traditional
- Heavy middle spread from 4 to 6
- Few dots at the far ends
- Estimated average: ~5.0

Local/Handmade → Corporate/Polished
- Cluster between 5 and 7, centered around 5–6
- Estimated average: ~5.6

Playful → Serious
- Heavy left spread from 1 to 5
- Peak cluster around 4-5
- Estimated average: ~4.2

Station 01 | Activity 02

Session 01

Welcome, Belonging, and Comfort (Most frequent)
- Welcome (appears 5+ times)
- At Home, Comfort, Like they are at home, Cozy / Homelike
- Included, Family, Sense of community, Connected

Peace, Relaxation, and Safety
Many responses reflect a desire for a peaceful and de-stressing experience:
- De-stressed, Relaxed (twice), Peaceful / Safe, Peaceful
- Connected to nature

Fun, Joy, and Play
Several notes focused on light-hearted enjoyment:
- Fun (mentioned twice)
- Joyful, Explore, Curious, Adventurous, Surprised

Creativity & Discovery
Ideas about novelty and cultural richness included:
- Creative, Creative / Artsy, Hidden gems, INSPIRED
- Childlike wonder of nature

Session 02

Welcomed, Included, and at Home (Most Common)
Many notes emphasize visitors feeling embraced and comfortable:
- Welcome, Welcomed, Supported community, Community center
- A sense of belonging, Connected / Apart / Included
- Comfortable, Happy, Safe

Connected to People, Place, and Nature
Strong focus on both social and spatial connection:
- Connected to a thriving community (parks, events, etc.)
- Connected to park features + history
- Connected / Inspired / Will

Inspired, Empowered, and Creative
Several notes highlight motivation and creative energy:
- Inspired, Empowered to innovate, Empowered / Diversity
- Organized / Motivated, Inspired by resilient community

Fun, Joy, and Excitement
- Fun, Excited, Things to do / Want to come back
- To enjoy themselves, Curious

Calm, Safe, and Refreshed
Some participants focused on well-being and emotional reset:
- Refreshed, Peaceful, Freedom from overbooked vacation
- Safe

Session 03

Welcome, Inclusion, and Belonging (Most Common Theme)
- Welcome (appears 7+ times)
- Included, Welcomed and included, Welcome and 'at home'
- Like they can grow roots here, Like they live here, Family friendly

Inspired, Motivated, and Engaged
Several notes express a desire to spark curiosity, reflection, or enthusiasm:
- Inspired, Inspired, motivated, accomplished
- Interested, Engaged, Excited
- Enriched experience, Impressed and surprised

Connection to Place & Nature
A few notes reference emotional or physical connection to the environment:
- Like they live here
- They are visiting special places
- Immersed

Learning & Discovery
- Educated, having learned something
- Enriched experience

Return & Lasting Impact
Multiple notes reflect a desire for repeat visits and long-term connection:
- Like they want to come back
- They want to come back and see more

Station 01 | Activity 03

Session 01

- Green Spaces, Things To Do, Quality Of Life
- A Place Where You Don't Feel Like A Tourist
- Manufacturing, R&D, Tech
- Green Spaces
- Farmers Markets / Balance Of Urban With Farming Areas
- Great Outdoors (Sketch Of Skyline, Sun, Lake)
- Cool, Fun Downtowns (Music, Crowd, Nightlife)
- Trails Inside / Nature (Sketch Of A Trail & House)
- Arts Fairs & Community Events
- Upscale Restaurants, Retailers And Shopping
- Isolated Pockets
- Trail Connectivity To Downtowns (Sketch Of A Map With Trails)
- Lakes
- Crowded Roads, Overloaded Infrastructure
- Home/Family
- Diverse food/restaurant offerings - great for foodies!
- (Sketch Of Tree)
- Diverse, Young Community, Many Blessings, Greater Pontiac!
- Beautiful Downtowns
- (Sketch Of Downtown & Park With People)
- Parks

- Diverse Downtowns
- Friendships (Within Community & Business)(Stick Figure Drawing of friends)
- School (Sketch Of A school Building)
- Cars / Traffic
- Traffic! Poor Infrastructure
- (Sketch Of Road Signs)
- Traffic Traffic Traffic
- Happy Family
- Congested Traffic Is Required To Travel Between Good Destinations
- I Think Of Nightlife
- Cozy Downtowns

Session 02

- I see cities — not county
- Diverse Economy, Residences, & Expressways
- Diversity, chain stores and restaurants
- Interconnected (Sketch: Connected dots/network)
- South, North (Sketch of buildings and open space)
- Trees, building, lakes (Sketch of a tree, wave, squares)
- (Sketch: Park with trees, a person, a bench) — no text visible
- Lakes, Trees, Trails, workplaces (Sketch: Trees, water/lake, and sun)
- Food, Library, Lake (Sketch: Tent, tree, library sign)
- More needed connection to non-motorized transportation (with sketch of a bike and path)
- WOODWARD AVENUE (with vertical sketch of road/dividers)
- Higher Prices, Difficult to innovate, Unresponsive distant bureaucracy
- (Sketch: Another road/line drawing) — no clear text
- Parks and small downtowns (Sketch: building, hill and water)
- Shopping (Sketch: shopping bag)
- Small town vibe
- Positivity + potential
- $ — Insurance & Big Business
- Red tape

Station 01 | Activity 03 (continued)

Session 03

- Trees, lakes
- Opportunity to build future projects & needs
- The opportunity to be greater than they are
- Green space
- Zoo (Sketch: water tower)
- The need to be more business friendly
- (Sketch: Stop signs) — no text
- (Sketch: Group of people) — no text
- (Sketch: Car and road) — no visible text
- (Sketch: Trees and lake with boat) — Trees, Lakes
- (Sketch: Megaphone with sound waves) — Concerts / Entertainment
- Royal Oak, Ferndale - expansive with no parks and rec
- (Sketch: Vehicles, buildings) — no text
- I see green/blue lush natural areas, lakes and lots of $

- (Sketch: water tower at the zoo)
- (Sketch: Dollar sign $)
- walk/explore (Sketch: Hills)
- Historic architecture (Sketch: House with chimney)
- Lots of people (Sketch: People)
- Lakes, Parks
- (Sketch: Oakland County and Detroit divided)
- Oakland County | Detroit (Wayne County) (sketch: dividing line between county and detroit)
- Places + activities that bring people together and create community
- History (Sketch: Building)
- Active lifestyle
- (Sketch: People, small and tall buildings) - no text
- Diverse population
- History / Culture
- (Sketch: Tree, people, community)
- (Sketch: County outline labeled) – Oakland County / Wayne County
- Green, Recreation, Infrastructure, Industry
- main street (Sketch: Buildings)
- Parks (Sketch: Tree)
- Music (Sketch: Music note)
- Walkability – Ease of getting around without car. Green space
- Parks
- (Sketch: Money bills)
- a home for all!

- Native American trails, history, trees
- Families
- OU – Oakland University - faculty/students/alumni
- Diversity & History
- Events, community, Nature/green space
- Friends & family & neighbors (Sketch: Community with heart + arrow)
- (Sketch: Shopping area/building) – Shopping
- LOCAL HISTORY
- ideas, innovation, community, economy (Sketch: light bulb, dollar sign, heart, star)

Station 01 | Activity 04

Session 01 - <u>Riverside County CA</u>

Strengths	Challenges/Opportunities	Apply to Oakland County

Strengths

- It feels fun, fresh, inviting.
- I could see the sense of sun & serenity.
- Focus on outdoors / active lifestyle
- Nice photos
- Variety of photo subjects
- Photos showcasing lots of activities, small towns with history
- All the blue sky photos
- Unique & one-of-a-kind destination
- Slogan/tone is inviting
- Consistent colors throughout all images
- Color scheme, Peaceful / soothing colors
- Born to Chill slogan
- Mission & vision inclusion and clarity

Challenges/Opportunities

- Be more specific
- How could we make it more locally-connected. Feels generic enough to be almost from anywhere? What differentiates?
- Lack of diversity
- Photos of outdoors were not curated or reflective of the brand
- Need common fonts
- The Great Outdoors – Next Door
- Is everyone included? Accessibility? Is everyone at this level of activity?

Apply to Oakland County

- Use nature-based, outdoor activity
- Sense of fun without being frivolous)
- Consistency of colors/theme and images/photos with matching feel
- We need a clear tagline or vision statement
- Modern and fun taglines
- Lots of photos
- Collage of outdoor opportunities
- Lots of photos showcasing activities

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 01 – <u>Montgomery County PA</u>

Strengths	Challenges/Opportunities	Apply to Oakland County
- Unique situational ad forms (truck) and finding ways to meet people where they are. - One big title pulls it together. - Clean trail network map. - Simplified title: 'MontCo'.	- Feels disjointed — could be a cleaner design. - Pictures in publications not exciting 'Montco' seems sort of blocky and simplistic. Almost un-branded - Montco brand looks disconnected from Valley Forge brand - making it a bit confusing - Design doesn't feel cohesive - too many colors and designs that don't feel connected - Unclear message. - Cohesiveness and storyline connect the city and county - Not consistent. - Add more photos of local opportunities instead of publication covers. - Create/group experiences together (tours, etc.).	- The sense that it can be a more serious or fun place, while always being enjoyable. - Show pics of things & places — not just publications. - Innovative & interactive installations of the brand (roving truck)

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 01 – Denton County TX

Strengths	**Challenges/Opportunities**	**Apply to Oakland County**
• Fun, bright colors really capture a sense of Texas vibe • Typeface cohesive feel • Feels cohesive even when designs seem different • Very modern & hip; feels like it would be very Instagram-able • Aerial shot of the town looks cool • Focus on Art & culture • Eclectic, creative vibes • Welcoming and friendly feel • Bright welcoming colors • Fantastic sense of place • Colorful, inviting things to do • Fantastic sense of place! • Color palette tied throughout, but flexible enough to customize in each marketing piece	• More cohesion of color and consistent use of Discover Denton logo • 'Explore something different' feels so generic & overused; better to create a brand that doesn't need a slogan • Refreshed tagline: Explore … Visit … • For Oakland County – I would use the distressed old-timey-font • Graphics look vintage	• Creative/artistic feel • Branded murals • Textured personality • Can feel the city's pride in itself • Unique colors + feel/character organized by theme or type of experience • Creative font choice • Doesn't tell me of a story (i.e. need narrative) • Agree we might have too many logos and styles - less cohesive • Trendy and new ways of sharing text, i.e. Oakland Co. • Show locations, events, local bits in imagery & type • Explore Oakland: our trails, our parks, our downtowns

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 01 – Dane County WI

Strengths	Challenges/Opportunities	Apply to Oakland County
- Clear ideas/directions to destinations or events a visitor might enjoy - I enjoy the city visuals. They included a lot of colors. - Friendly / bold feel - Consistency and use of stylized M - Diversity of photos + things to do - Bright and inviting colors - modern design - Peaks curiosity - Bold + exciting - Photos of people having fun	- More diversity in photos – age / culture / ability - More wording to know what you're clicking on - More photos storytelling action + stuff! Variety and diversity - Too many colors and fonts - Diversity in photos - Lack of cohesive message - More diversity - More cohesive color - Large fonts, modern posts reflecting social brand - Where do I start? How do I know what to do/where to go? - Pictures of growing families, opportunities to explore by bike/walking trails	- Images of our important/interesting locations - Sense of joy / curiosity - Welcoming home-like feel - Exciting, adventurous and friendly feel - Clear brand - Fonts - Clear/consistent messages - Fun/playful or inviting to create a trip or experience - Props used in placemaking - photo opps and user-generated content (selfie spots)

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 02– Riverside County CA

Strengths

- Vacation Relaxed attitude conveyed
- The vibes very cohesive, clean, colors
- Lots of photos
- Photo grid uses shapes
- MODERN
- Colorful, clean, fresh
- Luxury vacation feel
- Vacation / Relaxation / Chill vibes / Fun
- BRAND FEELS LIKE A VACATION

Challenges/Opportunities

- Not impressed
- Add link to map of outdoor activities
- Diversity in photos
- Love the photos but make it more diverse
- ADD MORE GUIDE-LIKE INFO SECTIONS like montco
- More business highlight/ opportunities

Apply to Oakland County

- Canoe meets Cadillac (recreational, creative, builder, industrial design)
- Zoo busy - don't bother to focus
- Develop a unique color palette for Oakland as a destination
- Diversity in images w/ colors outside of general branding
- Welcoming brand to all!
- A blog showing the 'secret' destinations of Oakland – would be fun

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 02 - Montgomery County PA

Strengths

- Trail Network
- Dedicated trail map to feature that attraction.
- Print guides - people pick one up even if they're usually digital
- Warmth, family
- Inclusion
- Inclusion of families, diversity and vibrant pics
- Culture
- Connecting families

Challenges/Opportunities

- Modernize the design and add more in-action images
- Needs to advertises events
- More exciting & more inviting
- Community connection
- Groomed trails – low cost snowshoe rental
- Doesn't speak to who they are

Apply to Oakland County

- History, culture, arts — from Cranbrook, Lakes to innovation traits and local farms
- Informal education
- Metro Detroit's playground: cars, lakes, parks, summer, family, festivals (holidays + family events)
- Visuals of who we are and what we offer
- More focus on diverse populations

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 02 - Denton County TX

Strengths

- Color palette tied throughout but flexible enough to customize in each marketing piece
- Bright and focused
- There's a very friendly, hometown vibe.
- Attractive refreshing bright
- Love hometown vibe. inclusive, Diverse.
- Single usage of the blue color palette
- Bright, focused

Challenges/Opportunities

- Nothing here notable - would not go to these places
- People, human aspect lacks diversity
- Refresh tagline (Explore…Visit …)
- Not exciting marketing at all!
- I know nothing more about Denton from ads
- Every city has buildings. This doesn't show what makes this community unique.
- Less signage
- Get rid of the Denton gift shop ad and add an action shot

Apply to Oakland County

- Trendy & new ways of sharing text: ie Oakland Co.
- Show locations, events, local businesses in imagery & taglines
- 20th century heritage & beyond– (i Autos, architecture, Music)
- Keep/find some surprising activities for visitors
- Open to new technology like AI
- Highlight the Educational depth of the county

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 02 - Dane County WI

Strengths	Challenges/Opportunities	Apply to Oakland County
• REGIONAL COLLABORATION – Celebrate METRO DETROIT • Feature on activities with colorful pictures • Bright and inviting colors • Nature pictures and eye catching colors • Food, outdoor opportunities • Feel everything you need is here • Variety of offerings • Modern, colorful, diverse, big photos – less text	• Showcase all communities – they all have something that makes them special • Include photos of people enjoying the cities, parks, etc. • Showcase things for everyone to do year-round • Needs more scenic/nature images	• Sense of curiosity • Welcoming and home-like feel • Focus on state of the art, creativity • 21st century transportation and technology • Show our school systems/educational aspect • Assortment of options and destination • Showcase sports tourism – indoor and outdoors • Diverse appeal of interests

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 03– Riverside County CA

Strengths

- Love 'Live Glass Full' brand + notion.
- Good use of color and font.
- Showing examples of relaxing options.
- The chill + calm feel.
- Color palette promotes the FEEL.
- Instantly recognizable and tells a story. You know what to expect but still can explore
- Good books – shows themes, diversity, & what to do.
- Cohesive visual aesthetic – focus on social media.
- I love all of the vibe, color, arty bold graphics, photos.
- The colors.
- I like the adventure / inspiration / rejuvenation
- Simple clear messaging with images

Challenges/Opportunities

- DIVERSITY OF INTERESTS
- Lacks diversity in people.
- Very resort-focused.
- Nice photos BUT more Need kicker to identify & ATTRACT.
- Fewer small pics – not the big wording.
- Too blue.

Apply to Oakland County

- Pictures of people experiencing everything Oakland has to offer
- Creative merchandise for communities to offer
- Bold color scheme, arty photos, bold graphics
- Bright colors something that brings a feel when you look at it
- Highlight outdoor activities (but not just golf

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 03 - <u>Montgomery County PA</u>

Strengths	**Challenges/Opportunities**	**Apply to Oakland County**
• Showing dining options & examples • Focus on local food & history • Trail network • Trail focus • Food Magazine / Trail Magazine • Font in the logo and graphics on the truck • Mentioning visitors guide and including magazine • A range of things to do and see • Images showing families in action/doing something	• Needs more in-action photos • More excitement • More focus on clear theme • Clearer, crispier imagery	• Needs to be more modern for Oakland • Trail networks, etc. – clearly show how things are connected • Distinct between communities but cohesive • Food and trail highlights • Outdoor & downtowns & history • Museums and communities • Variety of offerings but more cohesive

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 03 - Denton County TX

Strengths	Challenges/Opportunities	Apply to Oakland County

Strengths

- Vibrant colors eye-catching
- The separate blocks for EAT, EXPLORE, ART, repeat — that made me want to look further into Denton
- Design texture draws you in
- Liked the color – can be different but colors
- The fonts feel Texan
- I like the pictures of each box showing what's available and the drone shot
- Heavy use of imagery – arts, culture, businesses – active, fun
- Local aspect in bottom image
- Good logo
- Discover Denton logo is readable

Challenges/Opportunities

- No call to action to visit
- Why am I going there?
- More people doing things
- Horizontal & vertical logos
- More places, more small towns or historical buildings
- Less murals and ads - Show people enjoying the community, not the thing
- This seems chaotic
- Needs more cohesiveness or an identifying graphic, not just the 'Denton' word
- Have a design system that is flexible
- Create a unique logo that is reflective of architecture/nature/diversity
- Showing what the actual activity is or what's going on
- Font needs to be ESL friendly
- Connect photos to something useful and engaging - not stagnant
- Should reflect history/historical society and museums

Apply to Oakland County

- Where city meets country
- Automotive connection +1
- ONE LOGO ONE WEBSITE ✓
- Shop Local Focus +1
- One logo - a graphic, fun, toolkit that is easy to use
- FUN! ADVENTUROUS
- DRAW PEOPLE IN TO a variety of ASSETS
- Show positive flair / aspect of our diversity

Station 01 | Activity 04
(continued)

Session 03 – Dane County WI

Strengths

- Highlighting specific activities/industries
- Targets specific interests
- Visual – without reading. Clearly stated. Variety.
- Unique, stylized M font used around the town to promote
- Modern, good design, fun, cool graphics
- Clear, high contrast colors
- Friendly, clean typography
- Strong initiatives in parks
- Playful, legible, pictorial
- Simple, relatable
- Photo examples and readability
- Use of imagery to tell the story and set the tone – little text

Challenges/Opportunities

- Cohesiveness of color scheme
- Consistency across ads, needs to simplify
- Connectivity between municipalities
- Too busy, need to simplify
- Look into what businesses need for their employee retention – quality of life is a huge deal these days
- Add historical elements/downtowns
- Visual maps of destinations

Apply to Oakland County

- Action shots
- Explore map on routes for different interests
- Variety of communities and activities
- Large, high impact photos – easy to read and image 'what if'
- Photos – especially historic
- Show the variety of experiences/highlight variety
- Cohesiveness/connection to each destination – maybe a campaign that begins with overall consistency but with flexibility to add unique destination content
- Photos targeted to specific areas
- Highlight history and small towns
- Collaboration of events between cities

Station 02 | Activity 02

	Strengths	**Challenges**
Oregon	- On phone. Looks easy to understand - Photos showing beautiful nature scenes - Love the interactive map for trails - Clean look – Nice photos – simple to read	- Too busy - Somewhat busy. But also makes it really easy to find exactly what you want
Anaheim	- Like variety of highlighted experiences - Good mix of visual/text - Clear links to things a lot of visitors would be interested in - Clean, nice photos, simple to read - Well organized. I like the review info.	
Maine	I like the interactive map	- Doesn't evoke many feelings, but I love the availability of the maps - Not enough photography - Too text heavy – Not many photos - Did not like – no mention/ photos – National Parks – Other outdoor activities - Plain – Too much text - I don't feel connected - can't see myself here. People skim, they don't read. Attention spans are short - Needs links to who/what people would be interested in
Tahoe		- Also too busy - Prefer clickable gallery - Photos don't spark curiosity, especially for spring activities - Doesn't give me a sense of family or connections - just activities and crowds

Station 02 | Activity 03

Winter

- Feeding birds
- Snowshoeing
- skiing – Alpine Valley, Mt. Holly, Pine Knob
- Glow tubing
- Holiday Markets
- Snowboarding - some olympians have got their start here!
- Neighborhood Christmas Light tours
- Feeding the birds
- CUT sledding hills – more are adding lifts/magic carpets
- Hygge, cozy experiences
- Zoo light show
- Winter trails/snowshoes – cross country skiing
- XX-skiing / Hiking
- Cranbrook trails
- Skiing / Snowboarding
- Holiday Lights
- NH, Holly, Pine Knob – Great ski season. Dickens Festival!
- Ice Sculpture Festival
- Indoor centers / Music
- Downtown Rochester lights!

Spring

- Trillium & mushroom hunting
- Parks
- Walk at Indian Springs
- Southfield Carpenter Lake Park
- Farmers Markets!
- Shop the greenhouses like Bogie Lake Greenhouse and Zoners
- Hiking trails
- Heritage park farmington hills
- Spring bounty + maple syrup + morels + forage local
- Hiking Trails
- Maple Syrup tasting/tapping
- The kids get to play on the playgrounds
- Cranbrook campus / sculptures
- Biking & Hiking
- Birding
- Spring flowers in downtown – pretty
- Earth Day Festival at Heritage Park
- MSU Tollbridge Farm

Station 02 | Activity 03
(continued)

Summer

- Hess Hathaway Park in Waterford
- Rochester (W of Roch Rd / E of Roch U.) – steep slopes, vistas, pavilions
- Sunset at Crooked Lake (Indian Springs)
- Golf Courses – all across/places
- Youth sports - swimming, boating
- Hiking trails
- Kayaking in milford
- Kayaking anywhere
- Being a farmer at local community gardens
- Pools and lakes!
- Bike riding on Rails to Trails because they are safe
- Showcase national paddle trail
- Holly - kayak, fishing, wildlife
- Camping – Seven Lakes, Indian Springs, Groveland Oaks
- Water Rec – Kayak / Canoe / Swimming
- Water recreational activities
- Cornhole leagues
- Farmers markets
- Lake life - outdoor dining and entertainment
- Biking festivals

Fall

- Cider Mills – most Oakland County locations
- Orchards / Pumpkin Patch
- Sports walks
- Walks, cider mills
- Hiking Trails – Holly Rec Area, Ortonville Rec Area
- Soccer tournament
- Holiday Festivities
- Leaves changing color
- Fall into artistry projects – Oakland County Parks
- Great fall colors at trails
- Franklin Cider Mill
- RH Museum and pumpkin festival
- Cranbrook campus
- Apple orchards
- Hot air balloon rides
- Cider mills, fall colors, trails, and oktoberfest

Station 03 | Activity 02

Top Mentions

Geography

- Global
- Michigan
- Midwest
- National
- International
- State

Industry

- Economic Development
- Business
- Education
- Environmental/Stormwater
- Visitor/Tourism Economy
- Historical Society/History
- Rails-to-trails
- Rivers and lakes
- Auto-tech
- Auto
- Robots/technology
- James Beard/ Food/hospitality
- Bitcoin and Open Source AI Innovation
- Off-road
- Fall
- Motor City Comic Con
- Paralympics
- Food & wine
- Grand prix
- Harvest Moon

Event Type

- Summit
- Fair
- Convention
- Conference
- Awards
- Competition
- State Fair
- Exhibits Fair
- Meetings
- Tours
- Open House
- Show
- Spectacular
- Festival

Station 04 | Activity 01

Session 01

Founder
- Milford
- Auburn Hills
- Rochester Hills
- Rochester Hills
- Auburn Hills
- Rochester Hills
- Addison
- Pontiac
- Auburn Hills
- Troy
- Pontiac
- Rochester
- Troy
- Troy
- Ferndale
- Lyon
- Berkley
- Southfield
- Bloomfield Hills
- Milford
- Rochester Hills
- Southfield

Seeker
- Milford
- Berkley
- Royal Oak
- Royal Oak
- Clarkston
- Royal Oak
- Ferndale
- Royal Oak
- Ferndale
- Madison Heights

- Royal Oak
- Waterford
- Pontiac
- Oak Park
- Pontiac
- Franklin
- Oak Park
- Hazel Park
- Royal Oak
- Auburn Hills
- Madison Heights
- Royal Oak
- Troy

Newcomer
- Oak Park
- Bloomfield Hills
- Sylvan Lake
- Pleasant Ridge
- Pontiac
- Farmington Hills
- Waterford
- Berkley
- Troy
- Farmington Hills
- Pontiac
- Royal Oak
- Royal Oak
- Farmington Hills
- Madison Heights
- Ferndale
- Southfield
- Commerce Township

- Novi
- Wixom
- Pontiac

Legacy Builder
- Huntington Woods
- Birmingham
- West Bloomfield
- Pleasant Ridge
- Brandon
- Rochester
- Brandon
- White Lake
- Farmington
- Rochester
- Rochester
- White Lake
- White Lake
- Commerce Township
- Milford
- Birmingham
- Pleasant RIdge
- Clarkston
- Lake Orion
- Waterford
- Orion

Station 04 | Activity 01
(continued)

Session 01 (continued)

Explorer
- Lake Orion
- Clarkston
- Clarkston
- Wixom
- Groveland
- South Lyon
- Commerce Township
- Novi
- Southfield
- Southfield
- Orion
- Southfield
- Berkley
- Oxford
- Ferndale
- Rochester
- Fenton
- Leonard
- Royal Oak
- Farmington

Session 02

Founder
- Bloomfield Hills
- Clarkston
- Rochester
- Rochester Hills
- Novi
- Bloomfield Hills
- Bloomfield
- Farmington
- Wixom
- Farmington Hills
- Birmingham
- West Bloomfield
- Orchard Lake
- Novi
- Southfield
- Southfield
- Novi
- Bloomfield Hills
- Novi
- Novi
- Farmington Hills
- Commerce Township
- Rochester
- Clawson
- Auburn Hills
- Troy

Seeker
- Royal Oak
- Royal Oak
- Oak Park
- Franklin
- Royal Oak

- Troy
- Novi
- Franklin
- Hazel Park
- Royal Oak
- Auburn Hills
- Royal Oak
- Auburn Hills
- Royal Oak
- Northfield
- Royal Oak
- Oak Park
- Ferndale
- Madison Heights
- Milford
- Farmington
- Novi
- Lathrup Village
- Ferndale
- Ferndale
- Royal Oak
- South Lyon

Newcomer
- Waterford
- West Bloomfield
- Novi
- Royal Oak
- Farmington Hills
- Royal Oak
- Southfield
- Northville
- Berkley

Station 04 | Activity 01
(continued)

Session 02 (continued)

- Farmington Hills
- Farmington
- South Lyon
- Birmingham
- Troy
- Farmington
- Wixom
- Madison Heights
- Troy
- Oakland
- Farmington Hills
- Lathrup Village
- Northville
- Novi
- Ferndale
- Franklin
- Farmington Hills
- Farmington
- Birmingham
- Pontiac
- Waterford

Legacy Builder
- Rochester Hills
- Birmingham
- Royal Oak
- Rochester Hills
- Rochester
- Sylvan Lake
- Huntington Woods
- Birmingham
- Franklin
- Rochester
- Farmington Hills

- Rochester Hills
- Bloomfield Hills
- West Bloomfield
- Oakland
- Orchard Lake
- Wolverine Lake
- Orion
- Bloomfield Hills
- Northville
- Lake Orion
- Clarkston
- Farmington Hills
- Farmington
- Royal Oak
- West Bloomfield

Explorer
- Farmington Hills
- Farmington
- South Lyon
- Berkley
- West Bloomfield
- Madison Heights
- Novi
- Farmington
- Ferndale
- Troy
- Clarkston
- Wixom
- Clarkston
- South Lyon
- Lake Orion
- Northville
- Milford

- Walled Lake
- Milford
- Commerce Township
- Novi
- Lake Orion
- Farmington
- Ferndale
- Clarkston
- Rochester Hills
- White Lake

Station 04 | Activity 01
(continued)

Session 03

Founder
- Southfield
- Rochester Hills
- Auburn Hills
- Clawson
- Lake Angelus
- Milford
- Pontiac
- Troy
- Farmington
- Auburn Hills
- Fenton
- Farmington
- Auburn Hills
- Milford
- Birmingham
- Holly
- Lyon
- Pontiac
- Sylvan Lake
- Clawson
- Southfield
- Auburn Hills
- Commerce Township
- Madison Heights
- Rochester Hills
- Royal Oak
- Lake Orion
- Novi
- Troy
- Ferndale
- Rochester
- Bloomfield Hills

- Clarkston
- Ferndale
- West Bloomfield
- Farmington Hills
- Ferndale
- Rochester Hills
- Birmingham
- Rochester
- Rochester Hills
- Auburn Hills
- Northville
- Troy

Seeker
- Pontiac
- Royal Oak
- Birmingham
- Clarkston
- Farmington Hills
- Independence
- Keego Harbor
- Lake Orion
- Rochester Hills
- Rochester
- Southfield
- Auburn Hills
- Novi
- Berkley
- Ferndale
- Oak Park
- Oxford
- Clawson
- Ferndale
- Oak Park

- Ferndale
- Royal Oak
- Ferndale
- Huntington Woods
- Pontiac
- Royal Oak
- Madison Heights
- Oak Park
- Pontiac
- Ferndale
- Auburn Hills
- Ferndale
- Clawson
- Southfield
- Clawson
- Fenton
- Royal Oak
- Ferndale
- South Lyon
- Berkley
- Oak Park
- Royal Oak

Newcomer
- Southfield
- Beverly Hills
- Clarkston
- Farmington Hills
- Huntington Woods
- Madison Heights
- Novi
- Pontiac
- Royal Oak
- Farmington Hills

Station 04 | Activity 01
(continued)

Session 03 (continued)

- Farmington Hills
- Novi
- Commerce Township
- Madison Heights
- Troy
- Clawson
- Rochester Hills
- Auburn Hills
- Huntington Woods
- Novi
- Southfield
- Troy
- Lathrup Village
- Oak Park
- Pontiac
- Berkley
- Troy
- Farmington Hills
- Groveland
- Ferndale
- Troy
- Berkley
- Commerce Township
- Rochester Hills
- Troy
- Northville
- Novi
- Troy
- Novi
- Auburn Hills
- Madison Heights

Legacy Builder

- Pontiac
- Wolverine Lake
- Brandon
- Groveland
- Holly
- Ortonville
- Springfield
- West Bloomfield
- Wolverine Lake
- Bingham Farms
- Birmingham
- Bloomfield Hills
- Birmingham
- Lyon
- Madison Heights
- Farmington Hills
- Franklin
- Lake Orion
- Orion
- Sylvan Lake
- Franklin
- Highland
- Lake Orion
- Ortonville
- Rochester
- Birmingham
- Oakfield
- Orion
- Rochester
- Orion
- Oxford
- Waterford
- Clawson

- Royal Oak
- Hazel Park
- Lathrup Village
- Bloomfield Hills
- Rochester Hills
- Birmingham
- West Bloomfield
- Sylvan Lake
- Rochester
- Farmington Hills
- Fenton
- Huntington Woods
- Rochester Hills

Explorer

- Sylvan Lake
- Wolverine Lake
- Addison
- Brandon
- Fenton
- Highland
- Huntington Woods
- Madison Heights
- Rose
- Walled Lake
- White Lake
- West Bloomfield
- Ferndale
- Clarkston
- Clawson
- Beverly Hills
- Milford
- Royal Oak
- Highland

Station 04 | Activity 01
(continued)

Session 03 (continued)

- Northville
- Highland
- Rochester
- South Lyon
- Southfield
- Clarkston
- Milford
- Royal Oak
- West Bloomfield
- Milford
- Orchard Lake
- South Lyon
- Farmington
- Orion
- Addison
- Madison Heights
- Bloomfield
- Wixom
- Addison
- Rochester
- Highland
- West Bloomfield
- Oak Park
- Clarkston
- Oak Park

Station 04 | Activity 02

Session 01

Top-Ranked Categories:
- Food & Drink – 18 stickers
- Music & Concerts – 18 stickers
- Fairs & Festivals – 14 stickers
- Arts & Culture – 13 stickers

Middle-Tier Categories:
- Nature & Outdoors – 11 stickers
- Entertainment/Nightlife – 10 stickers
- Conference & Tradeshow – 8 stickers
- Kids & Families – 7 stickers
- Sports & Recreation – 7 stickers
- Gallery & Exhibitions – 7 stickers
- Health & Wellness – 7 stickers

Lower-Tier Categories:
- Education & Lectures – 6 stickers
- Shopping – 6 stickers
- Tours & Walks – 5 stickers
- Theater & Performances – 4 stickers
- Holiday/Celebration – 4 stickers
- Free Event – 3 stickers
- Virtual – 1 stickers

Session 02

Top-Ranked Categories:
- Food & Drink – 22 stickers
- Music & Concerts – 21 stickers
- Fairs & Festivals – 20 stickers
- Arts & Culture – 19 stickers

Middle-Tier Categories:
- Nature & Outdoors – 15 stickers
- Entertainment/Nightlife – 13 stickers
- Education & Lectures – 11 stickers
- Gallery & Exhibitions – 9 stickers
- Sports & Recreation – 9 stickers
- Kids & Families – 9 stickers

Lower-Tier Categories:
- Health & Wellness – 6 stickers
- Conference & Tradeshow – 6 stickers
- Shopping – 6 stickers
- Theater & Performances – 4 stickers
- Tours & Walks – 4 stickers
- Holiday/Celebration – 4 stickers
- Free Event – 2 stickers
- Virtual – 2 stickers

Session 03

Top-Ranked Categories:
- Nature & Outdoors – 20 stickers
- Fairs & Festivals – 18 stickers
- Kids & Families – 17 stickers
- Food & Drink – 15 stickers
- Health & Wellness – 14 stickers
- Sports & Recreation – 14 stickers

Middle-Tier Categories:
- Holiday/Celebration – 13 stickers
- Music & Concerts – 12 stickers
- Arts & Culture – 11 stickers
- Entertainment/Nightlife – 11 stickers
- Conference & Tradeshow – 10 stickers

Lower-Tier Categories:
- Education & Lectures – 7 stickers
- Tours & Walks – 6 stickers
- Shopping – 6 stickers
- Theater & Performances – 5 stickers
- Free Event – 5 stickers
- Virtual – 5 stickers
- Gallery & Exhibitions – 4 stickers

Station 05 | Activity 01

Session 01

- Place brand is top of everything we do In Main Street – emphasize what you are!
- Economic development is in direct contact with businesses large and small who have many visitors at their OC facilities and offices
- To attract and retain business and talent
- Better promote our parks & green spaces to visitors
- Attract more events at our parks and facilities
- Always be branding
- Stand out from Detroit, differentiate Oakland County
- To attract new visitors and give guests reason to return
- Provide recreational activities for residents and their visitors/guests
- To connect to AdvantageOakland.Com
- Highlight rec/quality of life
- Business attraction - stay/live/visit
- Link our parks to other amenities as part of an overall place-based experience
- To tie us to all other County offerings and lead people to other opportunities
- Break down silos to take advantage of existing assets

- Attract more small businesses and younger talent/employees
- Help us create content linking BOC with our brand
- Ensure consistent language across comms teams
- Economic development- to draw in new business owners
- A source to bring talent to Oakland County to live (workforce development)
- To connect our programming, branding to the County in general
- Attracting talent
- To help attract businesses to the area
- To help attract new residents/talent
- Promote events and local assets
- To highlight local businesses and communities
- To promote our initiatives (Shop Small)
- Veteran Services
- Amplify on social
- Inform our conversations with stakeholders
- Update County website
- To be able to share with family/friends about what's happening around the County
- Invite families of businesses to visit in downtowns
- Invite families and businesses to put down roots in OC

Session 02

- Great place for small business
- Things to do
- Safe place to live
- We would incorporate the County's marketing mechanisms
- We could partner and promote our clients
- Build on livability and housing
- Promote our lakes, beaches, parks & trails
- We need to attract more talent
- Foster volunteer opportunities
- Use OC history to promote museum attendance (Pontiac transportation museum)
- We will tie to our museum and downtown
- Attract college grads for STEM jobs and cool villages/towns
- Help out of area visitors find out trail and our towns along the way
- Promote ourselves as a safe area
- Attract new events/people to live within the area
- Promote arts exhibits with our OC artists

Station 05 | Activity 01 (continued)

Session 03

- Create a sense of place and history
- Make the County fees like somewhere worth spending time in
- To help identify location to those outside area that can only relate to Detroit
- Foodie heaven
- Use for marketing in business + rec
- To help brand perception (positive)
- Use it to promote what the community I work for has to offer
- Attract more day visitors
- Definitely would use and leverage
- As a way to attract population and businesses to invest in the County
- To help demonstrate cohesive options
- As part of Rochester Hills Economic Development Strategy
- Drive business to M1 Events
- Help link to other trails/parks
- Drive visitors to our community and create brand recognition
- Economic development and growth of small businesses
- Drive families to local festivals like the Holly Dickens Festival
- Inform/remind folks about what we have here
- Promote local businesses, grow attention to shop/support local
- To inform strategic planning and to guide business attraction efforts

- To bring attention to hidden gems
- Use it to promote assets local to our community
- Banging the drum for how much amazing action and options we have throughout the county, with a strong Pontiac emphasis
- Use it in partnership with the County on programs, it adds a level of cache, prestige and credibility to our institution located in the County
- Communicate our place as a vital tourism area

Station 05 | Activity 02

	Marketing	**Management**	**Stewardship**
Session 01	**Total Votes: 9 Green, 3 yellow** - Improved social media, put some emphasis on existing Visit OC Main Streets platform - Need OC website like Visit Detroit to pull all OC together - Cross Collaboration - Sponsorships - Blog/social media - Greater promotion of automotive theme - ORV, Pontiac Transportation Museum, Woodward Dream Cruise - User-generated content - Support from partners through shared marketing toolkit - Empower attractions to promote themselves with a toolkit/instructions on how to add to the campaign conversation - The County should rely on local communities to create content	**Total Votes: 5 Green, 4 Yellow, 2 Red** - More partnership needed with SEMCOG, Visit Detroit - Let Visit Detroit handle the marketing, we can create content for them to share to their existing audiences - There's a need for regional tourism steering committee - could it be a sub-committee of Visit Detroit? - Strong partnerships with conventions - Passport program	**Total Votes: 9 Green** - County should take the lead in absence of other dedicated entity - Create incentive program to cross-promote each other. Encourage visitors to make multiple stops and come back and try something new

Station 05 | Activity 02
(continued)

	Marketing	**Management**	**Stewardship**

Session 02	• **Total Votes: 14 Green, 3 yellow, 1 Red**
	  ○ People need to know what's here
	  ○ Funded by government or private?
	  ○ With support of third party experts
	  ○ We must ensure diversity in people and offerings
	  ○ We need to support lesser known attractions/retail
	  ○ This needs to be a bigger effort
	  ○ We need to get a bigger audience
	  ○ Promote conventions and events in the area
	  ○ Educate visitors about our diverse county
	  ○ Focused on social media
	  ○ Promote heritage tourism
		• **Total Votes: 8 Green, 2 Yellow**
		  ○ Work w/ stakeholders
		  ○ Coordinating with small and large businesses
		  ○ Managing relationships with major business groups
		  ○ Too controlling
			• **Total Votes: 10 Green**
			  ○ Making sure everyone can be a part of it
			  ○ Making housing more affordable for younger talent
			  ○ Focus on transportation improvements
			  ○ Stakeholders need to be a part of this

Station 05 | Activity 02
(continued)

	Marketing	**Management**	**Stewardship**
Session 03	● **Total Votes: 12 Green, 7 Yellow** ○ County has to do the work of differentiating ourselves in the regional marketing ○ Be in partnership with local communities ○ We should rely on local communities too ○ In partnership but County leads ○ Cross promoting between local communities and county ○ Create an Oakland Welcome Center that includes visitor center, historic archives, and museum component	● **Total Votes: 6 Green, 17 Yellow** ○ The County has more resources and should be using that to help uplift a variety of communities ○ Individual assets should be building those relationships themselves, it's part of what they do ○ Everyone should play an equal part of building coalitions ○ Yes – support and help engage with local communities and stakeholders ○ County should be the trusted party planner ○ County has the big ideas and resources to get things in motion	● **Total Votes: 21 Green, 1 Yellow**