

**Destination Development, Inc. Response to Tourism Task Force Concerns about  
specific items in the Draft Action Plan document:**

*Steering Committee recommends increasing budget item #17: CVB Marketing Event Coordinator to \$50,000 in year 2007. After some discussion the Committee decided to let DDI determine where to take the funds.*

We think you meant to say “in 2008.”

1. We recommend that the contract with the Chamber of Commerce for tourism services end as of December 31, 2007.
2. The CVB would be an official organization by then and would assume all tourism duties as of January 1, 2008, under a contract with the city for these services. In 2008, this single CVB employee would continue to operate as they currently do, through the year so there is no gap in providing ongoing tourism services.
3. At the end of 2008, the job description would change substantially, and a search effort should take place for the two “new” positions at the CVB.
4. The Brand Development Committee will act as the initial CVB board for through 2009. The 2008 employee will report to this CVB board, and the Board will be in charge of the hiring process for the two new positions, which will start in 2009.
5. Currently the CVD position is a paid city employee position as best as we can tell, because it’s salaried through the City, even though it operated under an agreement with the Chamber. This could continue through 2008, after which the CVB would have its own contract “employees” beginning January 1, 2009.
6. The position of “Brand Development contract” would be that: a contracted position geared to implementing this plan.
7. We agree the funding should be increased to \$50,000 and that these funds come from the following items as follows:
  - a. Marshall Railway museum would be reduced to \$10,000 from \$15,000
  - b. County Historical Museum would be reduced to \$5,000 from \$7,500
  - c. The Regional Arts Council funds would be reduced to \$12,500 from \$20,000
  - d. Activities Guide budget would be reduced to \$20,000 from \$30,000

*Recommendation #6: Steering Committee requests that the function of the Event Recruiter and Event Coordinator be described in more detail so that the reader can better understand their functions.*

1. Both of these positions will report to the CVB Board directly and will be employees of the organization.
2. Event Recruiter – This CVB staff employee would be charged with recruiting events, entertainment, vendors, and activities in downtown Marshall, pending the development of venues.
3. 80% of the Recruiter’s time would be devoted to this function (a minimum of 32 hours a week). This person will not attend endless meetings, perfunctory tourism

- conventions and trade shows, but WILL go where the prospective entertainers, producers, booking agents, and performing artists are.
4. This person will NOT be charged with managing the organization, it's books, minutes, organizing meetings, annual budgets, etc. The board that will assign tasks among its members will perform this work. This will be a "working board" not just a passive board providing strategic direction.
  5. The Event Recruiter should have extensive experience in the "entertainment and performing arts" industry. It will be their job to make sure there are multiple activities taking place in downtown Marshall at least 100 days in 2008, 140 days in 2009, and 200 days in 2010. These "events" can include street performers, public markets, clubs and organization events (car clubs, art guilds, theater troupes), musical groups, culinary education, artisans in action, etc. This person will not operate or manage any public markets or events, but would contract with others to manage and maintain activities such as farmers markets. This position would work with regional entertainment booking agencies, concert companies, art guilds, universities and colleges, other educational institutions, and event management entities in recruiting events to Marshall. This position is largely an "outside sales" position. In essence, Marshall will provide the stage and various organizations would be invited (i.e. recruited) to perform in Marshall. Marshall, through a strong public relations effort, would promote both entertainers and events.
  6. The event recruiter would be the senior position at the CVB and would also coordinate and work with professional Public Relations services to market Marshall's brand bringing visitors and locals into downtown Marshall. The goal is to have multiple entertainers/artists in various venues simultaneously so that visitors have a choice of venues and activities that specifically cater to them, or so that they can move between different acts and activities. Think Branson, MO.
  7. The year 2008 calls for a minimum of 100 event days in downtown Marshall. This does NOT include Wonderland of Lights, Fire Ant Festival, Stagecoach Festival, but performance-based events and public markets. For instance, the initial 100 event-days might include a 30 week "season" that would have events on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays (3 days x 30 weeks = 90 days) plus another ten days of entertainment-oriented events scattered throughout the year. On each of these event-days, there would be a minimum of two or more performances, PLUS public market events. One weekend might feature a "battle of the bands" with a dozen or more bands showcasing their talents, and during this there might be a farmers market or arts fair downtown, so there is a variety of options for attendees. Another weekend might feature an arts guild event with various artists in action. The CVB (event recruiter) would not organize these events, but would invite art guilds, booking agencies and other organizations to hold their events in Marshall. This could also include classic car shows, motorcycle clubs, as well as other clubs and organizations.
  8. This position would be one the CVB needs to do a nationwide search for. It's quite possible the talent is already in Marshall or the immediate area, but it will be critically important that this person, above all, be an excellent sales professional with strong ties to the entertainment industry. Perhaps a concert promoter, by

- trade, or entertainment agency booking agent. This person must also have a working knowledge of the logistical aspects of the entertainment industry: sound, lighting, staging, etc.
9. Success will be measured based on the actual number of performance days produced, not just on efforts.

Event Coordinator –

1. The Event Coordinator will be charged with facilitating the events recruited by the Event Recruiter and other events coming to Marshall. Once an event has been recruited, this person will coordinate venues, security, city services, private industry for sponsorships, times, promotional efforts, audio/visual requirements, staging, lodging, etc.
2. This person will need to be highly organized, and will be an exceptional manager of all events recruited by the CVB. This person will NOT be involved with current existing events produced in Marshall. Remember that the Event Recruiter will spend much time outside the community working with a variety of organizations, while the Event Coordinator will stay focused on organizing the events and managing the venues in Marshall.

*Recommendation #7: This concern is related to interaction of recommendation #7 & #8.*

*Recommendation #8: Steering Committee does not understand what the money is for.*

1. The position of the Brand Development Manager is a temporary contract (two years – or longer if required) that will be largely charged with developing venues and related infrastructure in Marshall. All successful branding efforts revolve around product, not marketing. This contract position is charged with implementing this plan, particularly those items in 2008 and 2009 that are product-oriented.
2. They are also charged with business recruitment (Recommendation #48). This is a major job and much of this entire brand depends on the capabilities of this contracted effort. The job includes:
  - a. Working with downtown property owners regarding long term land leases, gifts, or purchases for the development of outdoor venues.
  - b. Working with downtown businesses regarding inclusion of entertainment, events, etc. in their business development efforts.
  - c. Working with contractors selected by the CVB board/Brand Development Committee. This would include managing the efforts of the contracts as identified in the plan: Downtown development plan, wayfinding system development, performing arts venue feasibility study, and creation of the Brand Standards & Practices Guide.
  - d. Once the “Development Plan” has been developed, this person would work regarding financing of the venues, the hiring of architectural and engineering services (once financing/funding is in place), and managing construction bids, permitting, etc.
  - e. The Brand Development Manager would also work with property owners to recruit the specific business mix to downtown. This might also include

real property exchanges, (rearranging the furniture), lease abatements, and the creation of incentives to expedite the process and to keep recruited businesses viable while the brand is being developed.

3. The Brand Standards & Practices Guide includes the following elements:
  - a. Logo usage agreements, allowable uses, color palettes, variations of the identity for various marketing purposes, usage requirements and restrictions.
  - b. Key marketing messages, slogans, and tag lines to be used for various events, organizational, and business use. Many of these would be trademarked.
  - c. Graphic standards including, but not limited to, wayfinding and gateway signage, pole banners, Washington Square banners and public art, pedestrian signage, retail signage, etc.
  - d. Templates for website development, press kits, photo library, advertising, promotional materials, etc. providing continuity among various organizations in promoting the brand. This includes the development of common graphic elements, color schemes, type styles, etc.

This Guide should be professionally produced and will be a critical element in implementing the brand within the CVB as well as with dozens of other organizations involved in promoting and “growing” the brand. It is the Bible that makes sure the brand images are protected, properly used, and available for community-wide marketing efforts.

An expert Graphic Design firm should prepare this with a solid background in branding communities and preparing documents of this nature. This is one of the four contracted recommendations that would be outsourced to professionals.

*Recommendation #22: Steering Committee wants to understand why this recommendation should be funded out of HOT funds.*

1. HOT funds are sourced for this position because of the dual role of the Brand Manager/Business Recruiter and because the need to recruit specific businesses that support the Brand. Another reason was to use the money that is readily available.
2. If there was any way possible, we recommend that the Brand Development Manager be hired to solely manage implementation of the plan and development of venues in Marshall, as well and managing the efforts of contracts as described earlier in this document. This, in itself, is a full-time job.

If funds can be made available from other sources, we’d recommend that a *separate* real estate professional be contracted to recruit specific businesses into downtown. There is no question that these two positions are daunting and both require a full-time effort and the success of the plan depends a great deal on creating the venues, bringing others online (Memorial City Hall, Paramount), and changing the business mix downtown.

There are very few grants available for Business Recruitment efforts, and we are resistant to tapping into city general funds for this position. We have tried to create a winning brand for Marshall based on one small pot of money, but if other sources could be made available, we'd most certainly recommend that this latter position be a separate contract, which would probably last from three to five years.

*Recommendation #3: Some questioned if ATV should be added to the list. We have no facilities to market but we sell a lot to them and hotel people report that lots of people stay in rooms. Decided to let DDI determine if ATV should be added to the list.*

1. DDI concurs that ATV users are an appropriate niche market that Marshall should target. If the Marshall area is already seeing significant ATV use even though there currently are no specialized facilities, obviously something is attracting them. Presumably it's the terrain. Those specific areas where ATV riders currently go should be highlighted in direct marketing efforts.
2. This would not be a primary marketing effort, but one of facilitation and niche marketing.

*Recommendation # 5: Steering Committee recommends expanding the District to include Franklin and Lafayette streets.*

1. DDI recommends that development associated with the special downtown district remain concentrated initially. It's important to keep the effort focused, so activity is more visible, and visitors don't have to walk as far between venues, attractions, and diversions.
2. These boundaries can be expanded over time, but you MUST start with a "demonstration project" – a smaller area you can really showcase, then adding one block at a time, eventually expanding throughout downtown.
3. If dispersed over too wide an area, the "showcase" effect will be diluted, less likely to gain traction, and take longer to yield results. Once the initial effort produces quantifiable results, DDI supports the idea of expanding the boundaries of the special district to include Franklin and Lafayette Streets.

*Recommendation #17: Steering Committee wants to ensure that DDI understand that the City has applied for the \$1.8 million dollar grant. If the City receives the grant the building will need to be used for the specific purposes included in the Grant Proposal. That includes a Visitor Center and a Transportation Museum. The City should know about this grant in September 2007.*

1. DDI understands that Marshall has applied for a \$1.8 million grant to redevelop the Memorial City Hall building and auditorium, but we do not agree with the use that these funds would require.
2. We believe that using the Memorial City Hall as a transportation museum would not be its highest and best use (Marshall needs primary attractions more than it

- needs additional diversions of static museum displays), and we reject the notion that simply because money is available, that is should be put to use as a museum.
3. How far would you travel to see a transportation museum? Additionally, as with all museums, it would require operating subsidies, and substantially so in a facility such as the Memorial City Hall. Just because funds might be available does not make this a feasible project.
  4. The visitor center is already being developed in the Hotel Marshall, so there is no need for additional facilities, which would also require additional funding already in short supply.

According to January information we received from the Main Street Manager, the various grants submitted for Memorial City Hall had the following status:

- TXDOT STEP Grant – no longer available
- Preserve America – not awarded, available to reapply
- Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson – still pending.
- Senator John Coryun – still pending.
- Texas Preservation Trust Fund Grant – not awarded, available to reapply

*Recommendation #46: A member of the Steering Committee questioned if the facility at The Hotel Marshall was large enough to be a “full blown” visitor center. Do we need another space?*

1. The Visitor Center as envisioned in the grant proposal is far more elaborate than necessary. We recommend that the CVB staff go into the existing location of the Chamber of Commerce building.
2. Nationally, only 5% of visitors typically visit information centers
3. We believe the space identified in The Marshall is more than adequate to serve as a Visitor Center. It simply needs to be a place where visitors can ask questions and pick up printed information about the area. It does not need to have full-blown A/V facilities for major presentations. (The renovated Memorial City Hall Auditorium and/or the Paramount can be used for that on the few occasions it is necessary.) We know the old adage recommends not looking a gift horse in the mouth, but we believe that Marshall should not accept the funds, if granted, under the conditions stipulated in the proposal.

*Recommendation #18: Steering Committee expressed concern about changing the direction of any streets particularly Washington St. Some felt that merchants would be opposed.*

1. Politics is the killer of any branding and redevelopment efforts. Folding before you even start is a dangerous path to tread. They need to be educated and should take the time to visit communities where this has invigorated their downtowns.
2. The reasons for recommending changes regarding the direction of street traffic are:
  - a. To reduce or eliminate downtown traffic lights and replace them with 4-way stop signs, to create a more intimate and casual destination.

- b. To calm traffic in the city's most important pedestrian setting. Our recommendation calls for the development of architectural standards, including a redesign of the downtown streetscape that will incorporate wider sidewalks and narrower streets.
  - c. This will allow for sidewalk dining, entertainment, extension of window displays to exterior spaces, and the creation of landscape buffers between vehicles and pedestrians.
3. We recommend that if there are concerns about changing the traffic pattern, that a final decision is postponed until the new architectural standards and streetscape plans recommended be developed under Recommendation #18 can be reviewed in their entirety.

*Recommendation #28: Main Street Manager informed the Steering Committee that there are no grants that are available through the Main Street Program. Another funding source needs to be found for this recommendation.*

1. We recommend that Main Street contact the City of Huntsville, Texas, who implemented a "Façade Easement Program" and obtained state and federal funding for their extensive trompe l'oeil program.
2. If no grant funds are available from the Main Street Program for Trompe l'oeil, we recommend that Main Street Manager, or downtown development interests, or the Marshall Arts Council, or the Marshall Arts Center initiate a fundraising drive, or recruit local artists to volunteer to be part of such a highly visible project.

*Recommendation #34: The current CVD informed the Steering Committee that there is an effort currently underway to produce this document. Should this be reflected in the planning document?*

1. It's great that efforts to create an Activities Guide have already been initiated. We suggest, however, that these efforts be restricted to writing and editing at this point. Final execution – layout, design, photo selection, and especially printing – should be postponed until the new CVB has been installed and reviewed the work done to date. Perhaps they will think it's fine as is. If not, they should have the opportunity to make modifications before the Activities Guide is actually printed.
2. Successful Activities Guides MUST promote specific businesses, not be the typical community guide promoting the generic "list" of members or diversionary attractions.
3. It must NOT be advertising driven. If the guide under development is like past guides, do not fund it with HOT funds, but let it be self-funded through advertising revenues.
4. Visitors are looking for specifics, not the usual generic "all things to all people" brochure. Secondly, the 2008 guide (produced late in 2007) should begin promoting businesses that support the brand.
5. Ask yourself this question: If current guides went away do you think you'd see a reduction in your overnight stays? Do you really think they are effectively

- increasing overnight stays in Marshall? If this guide were promoting Granbury, would it convince you to go there?
6. The Activities Guide should be professionally produced the first year, hopefully by the same firm that develops your Standards & Practices Guide. Continuity between websites, brochures, Activities Guides, and advertising is paramount in any branding effort. This guide should be put on hold until the Standards & Practices Guide has been developed.

*Recommendation #42: The Steering Committee is concerned that there is an overlap in the event recruitment in this recommendation and the responsibilities defined in an earlier recommendation. The Steering Committee would like the scope of responsibilities better defined for each group.*

1. There are plenty of projects for everyone, as the whole community will need to support the branding effort. Our thinking is that Marshall Festivals, Inc. should focus on recruiting the street performers – the first entertainment visitors will see and the easiest to develop. This includes street performers and small groups that will perform in the downtown outdoor venues. Marshall Festivals should already be familiar with most of the local and regional talent available for this purpose. Recruiting major productions to appear in the larger venues, on the other hand, should be the responsibility of the Event Recruiter of the new MCVB.
2. It is very important that this be a team effort. It should also involve businesses that need to attract entertainment and tap into the brand. Having both of these organizations working together will create a more cohesive and effective effort.

*Recommendation #50: Steering Committee wants to ensure that this complies with state law. Can we do this?*

1. It is our understanding that Texas communities have the legal right to hold special elections regarding the sale of liquor by the drink. We can't confirm that this could apply to a restricted area only, such as Marshall's downtown district.
2. Please ask the City Attorney's office if they have information regarding this recommendation.