



# Chicago Strategic Plan Update 2023-2025

May, 2023

**CHICAGO**  
CHOOSE CHICAGO



CHOOSE CHICAGO

# 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

## VISION

Elevate the brand of Chicago as a must-experience global destination

## MISSION

Enrich our community by attracting meetings, events and leisure travelers to Chicago

## TARGETS

**Achieve by 2025**

Total Visitation: 61.1M  
Hotel Room Demand: 12.1M

Storytelling KEY INITIATIVES	Selling KEY INITIATIVES	Advocating KEY INITIATIVES	Engaging KEY INITIATIVES	Leading KEY INITIATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop a comprehensive brand strategy</li> <li>b. Launch marketing/media strategy to grow leisure travel</li> <li>c. Launch a comprehensive marketing/media strategy for meetings &amp; conventions</li> <li>d. Launch a comprehensive strategy for sports</li> <li>e. Ensure equity, inclusion and diversity play a leading role within all marketing</li> <li>f. Create marketing strategy to promote exploration of neighborhoods by locals and visitors</li> <li>g. Develop a compelling story for global visitors to make Chicago a bucket-list destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Build a sales strategy to establish Chicago as the premier destination for diverse meetings, conventions and events</li> <li>b. Leverage Chicago's vast network of intellectual capital to attract meetings and attendees</li> <li>c. Build a comprehensive strategy to attract more sporting events to Chicago</li> <li>d. Expand network of global tour operators, travel trade and media</li> <li>e. Leverage large scale events and new major attractions to maximize awareness and long-term impacts for the city (NASCAR, DNC, Obama Presidential Center)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with city officials to address public safety</li> <li>b. Develop a comprehensive plan to improve international visitor experience</li> <li>c. Increase and stabilize funding through local, state and federal advocacy</li> <li>d. Advocate for accessibility options for visitors</li> <li>e. Explore developing a destination master plan</li> <li>f. Advocate for improved environmental sustain-ability at meetings/events</li> <li>g. Develop a comprehensive plan to advocate for careers in tourism with focus on ethnically diverse talent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish a diverse, civic C-suite tourism advisory council to lead major advocacy initiatives</li> <li>b. Locally promote the importance of tourism and Choose Chicago's value for the city's economic vitality</li> <li>c. Establish a greater presence in downtown to better connect with the community</li> <li>d. Integrate neighborhoods as essential parts of the visitor experience</li> <li>e. Grow partnership through increased engagement and opportunities</li> <li>f. Prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in all internal initiatives</li> <li>g. Identify and advocate for issues that affect travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify and secure new sources of sustainable funding</li> <li>b. Promote a positive organizational culture to inspire excellence and recruit/retain talented staff</li> <li>c. Create an organization that reflects the diversity of Chicago</li> <li>d. Improve Choose Chicago and Chicago Sports Commission board governance and engagement</li> <li>e. Become a data driven organization</li> <li>f. Embrace technology to improve all aspects of our business</li> </ul>
TARGETS	TARGETS	TARGETS	TARGETS	TARGETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In traveler survey, increase likelihood to visit Chicago by 10%</li> <li>• 20% increase in economic impact of leisure travel</li> <li>• 1.8M international visitors</li> <li>• 10% increase in global earned media/total articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.25 million group room nights booked in 2025</li> <li>• Double clients served by Connecting to Chicago</li> <li>• Secure 70 citywide events per year beginning in 2028</li> <li>• Book 97 Impact Nights (5,000+ peak group rooms) per year beginning in 2028</li> <li>• Host 8-10 sporting events per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve DNext public safety perception ranking</li> <li>• Increase annual scholarships awarded by Choose Chicago Foundation by 50%</li> <li>• Increase revenue sources to be competitive with other markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five positive local media hits per month</li> <li>• Improve DNext score</li> <li>• Grow partnership to 1500</li> <li>• Establish a resident sentiment survey and improve scores YOY</li> <li>• Create a benchmark to measure success across peer neighborhood sets</li> <li>• Improve diverse spending by 5% YOY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase satisfaction in employee survey to 80% across priority areas</li> <li>• Under 20% turnover rate</li> <li>• TID in place</li> <li>• Improve diversity of team to reflect demographics of Chicago</li> <li>• Implement a dashboard to integrate data across the organization</li> </ul>

# Introduction

---

- The Choose Chicago team has been working on a new 3-year Strategic Plan.
- Their efforts were supported by MMGY NextFactor, which completed:
  - Review of previous strategic planning documents
  - Stakeholder Interviews
  - DestinationNEXT 2.0 Assessment
  - Facilitation of several Board and Leadership team, including:
    - Board of Directors Strategic Visioning Session      March 28, 2023
    - Leadership Team Strategic Visioning Session      March 29, 2023



# Key Themes in Interviews

## Primary Themes

- Public safety
- Municipal politics
- Funding
- Resident/community support
- Arts & culture
- Sports

## Others

- Workforce development
- Board training & engagement
- Mission & focus of organization
- Improved competitive position for meetings
- Homelessness
- More iconic events

# Leadership Team Comments

## Opportunities

- Conventions & meetings
- International visitors
- Reinventing downtown
- Obama Center in 2025
- Integrated regional marketing campaign

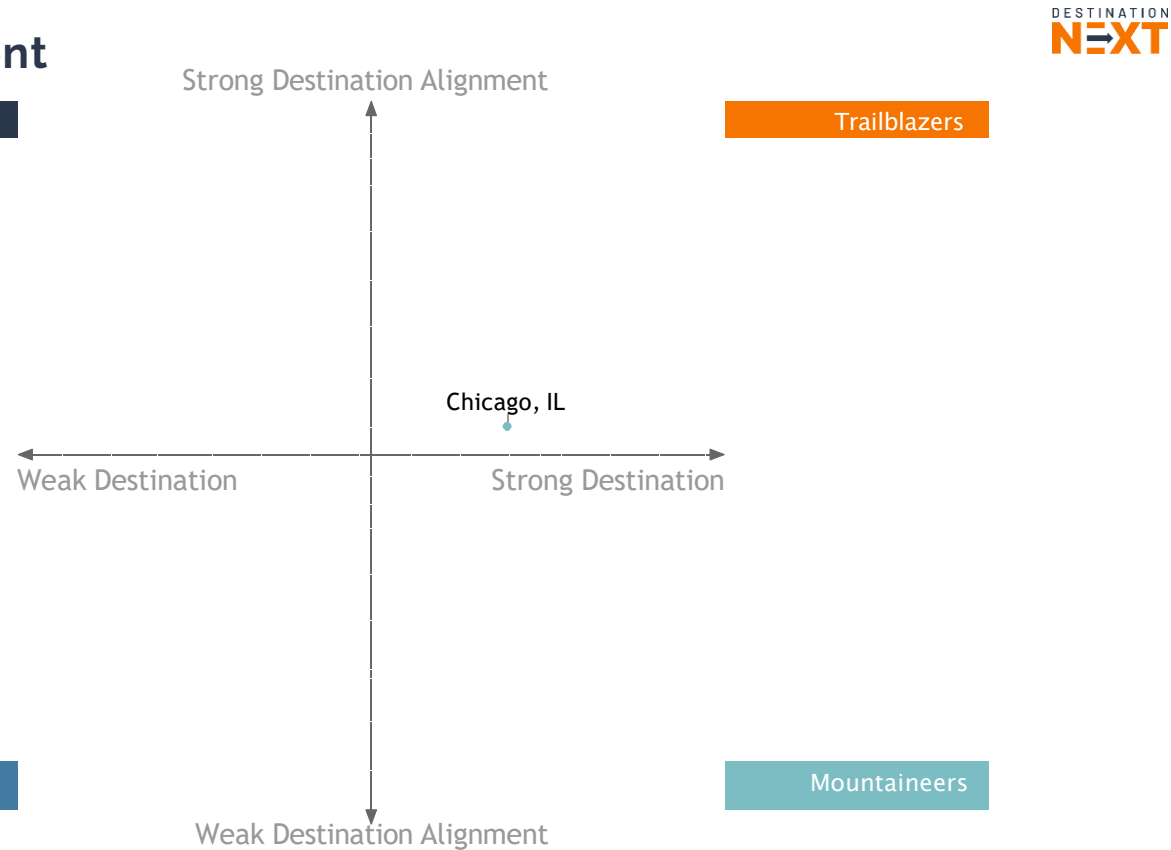
## Challenges

- Brand
- Overcrowding & seasonality
- Competitiveness
- International visitor services & wayfinding

# Key Takeaways from DestinationNEXT

- Chicago is in the Trailblazers quadrant with above average scores for Destination Strength and Alignment.
- Different stakeholder groups have a strongly aligned perception of Chicago.

## Overall Assessment



# Key Takeaways from DestinationNEXT

---

- There are several opportunities for improvement in Chicago as per the lowest rated variables shown:

## Destination Strength

1.	Health & Safety	3.00
2.	Local Mobility & Access	3.58
3.	Outdoor Recreation	3.60
4.	Communication Infrastructure	3.81
5.	Accommodation	4.22

## Destination Alignment

1.	Funding Support & Certainty	2.68
2.	Workforce Development	3.36
3.	Community Group & Resident Support	3.51
4.	Government Support	3.67
5.	Emergency Preparedness	3.71



## Mission & Vision

# Mission & Vision

---

## Mission

Enrich our community by attracting meetings, events and leisure travelers to Chicago

## Vision

Elevate the brand of Chicago as a must-experience global destination



# Goals & Initiatives

# Strategic Goals

---



**Storytelling**



**Selling**



**Advocating**



**Engaging**



**Leading**

# Storytelling

		Timeline			
		Lead	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
<p><b>Strategic Initiatives</b></p> <p><b>Targets</b></p> <p>In traveler survey, increase the likelihood to visit Chicago by 10%</p> <p>20% increase in economic impact of leisure travel</p> <p>1.8M international visitors</p> <p>10% increase in global earned media value and total articles</p>	a) Develop a comprehensive brand strategy	CMO	Q4	Q1	
	b) Launch a comprehensive marketing, media and messaging strategy for leisure travelers	CMO		Q1	
	c) Launch a comprehensive marketing, media and messaging strategy for meetings and conventions	CMO		Q1	
	d) Launch a comprehensive marketing, media and messaging strategy for sports	CMO		Q2 & Q3	
	e) Develop best practices to ensure equity, inclusion and diversity play a leading role within all our marketing and messaging efforts	Director EDI	Q4		
	f) Launch a comprehensive marketing, media and messaging strategy to promote exploration of neighborhoods by locals and visitors	VP Neighborhood Strategy	Q4		
	g) Develop a compelling story for global visitors to make Chicago a bucket-list destination	CMO		Q2	

# Selling

		Timeline		
		FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
<b>Strategic Initiatives</b>		Lead		
	a) Build a comprehensive sales strategy to establish Chicago as the premier destination for diverse meetings, conventions and events	SVP Sales & Services	Q2	
	b) Develop a strategy to leverage Chicago's vast network of intellectual capital to attract meetings and attendees	VP Client Services	Q3	
	c) Build a comprehensive strategy to attract more sporting events to Chicago	CSC Executive Director and SVP Sales & Services	Q3	
	d) Expand network and strengthen value proposition with global tour operators, travel trade and media	VP Global Development and VP Media Relations	Q2	
	e) Develop a strategy to leverage large scale events and new major attractions to maximize awareness and long-term impacts for the city such as NASCAR, DNC, Obama Presidential Center.	CMO		
<b>Targets</b>				
2.25 million group room nights booked in 2025				
Double clients served by Connecting to Chicago				
Secure 70 citywide events per year beginning in 2028				
Book 97 Impact Nights (5,000+ peak group rooms) per year beginning in 2028				
Host 8-10 sporting events per year				

# Advocating

			Timeline		
			FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
	Strategic Initiatives	Lead			
<p><b>Targets</b></p> <p>Improve DNext public safety perception ranking</p> <p>Increase annual scholarships awarded by the Choose Chicago Foundation by 50%</p> <p>Increase revenue sources to be competitive with other markets</p>	a) Develop a plan to work with public officials to address public safety	Director Corp Comms	█		
	b) Develop a comprehensive plan to improve the international visitor experience	VP Global Development		█	
	c) Increase and stabilize funding through local, state and federal advocacy	President & CEO	█	█	
	d) Develop a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy to advocate for accessibility options for visitors	Director EDI	█	█	
	e) Explore developing a destination master plan	President & CEO			█
	f) Develop a plan to advocate for improved environmental sustainability at meetings and events	VP Client Services	█	█	█
	g) Develop a comprehensive plan to advocate for careers in tourism with a focus on ethnically diverse talent.	Director EDI	█	█	█

# Engaging

			Timeline		
			FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
	Strategic Initiatives	Lead			
	a) Establish a diverse, civic C-suite tourism advisory council to lead major advocacy initiatives	President & CEO			
<b>Targets</b>	b) Develop advocacy plan to locally promote the importance of tourism and Choose Chicago's value for the city's economic vitality	Director Corp Comms			
Five separate positive local media hits per month	c) Establish a greater presence in the downtown area to better connect with constituents and the civic community	President & CEO and Director Public Policy			
Improve DNext assessment score	d) Integrate Chicago's neighborhoods as essential parts of the visitor experience	VP Neighborhood Strategy			
Grow partnership to 1500	e) Grow partnership through increased engagement and opportunities	VP Partnership			
Establish a resident sentiment survey and improve scores YOY	f) Prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in all Choose Chicago internal programs and initiatives	CFO, Director People & Culture and Director EDI			
Create a benchmark to measure success across peer neighborhood sets	g) Identify and advocate for issues that affect travel	Director Public Policy			
YOY improvement in diverse spending by 5%					

# Leading

			Timeline		
			FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
	Strategic Initiatives	Lead			
	a) Identify and secure new sources of sustainable funding	President & CEO			
<b>Targets</b>	b) Promote a positive organizational culture to inspire excellence and better recruit and retain talented staff	Director People & Culture			
Increase satisfaction rate in employee survey to 80% across core priority areas	c) Create an organization that reflects the diversity of Chicago	Director People & Culture			
Under 20% turnover rate	d) Improve Choose Chicago and Chicago Sports Commission board governance and engagement	President & CEO and CSC Executive Director			
TID in place	e) Become a data driven organization	President & CEO			
Improve diversity of Choose Chicago team to reflect demographics of Chicago	f) Embrace technology to improve all aspects of our business	CFO			
Implement a comprehensive dashboard to integrate data across the organization					



**Values**

# Guiding Principles

---

At Choose Chicago, we carry out our core values by adhering to these 4 principles:

We build **TRUST** by working collaboratively and building a shared sense of belonging in the workplace.

We treat each other with **RESPECT** and foster a workplace of communication, teamwork and appreciation.

We act with **INTEGRITY** by holding ourselves accountable to the highest standards and prioritizing diversity and equity in all that we do.

We continuously push for **EXCELLENCE** through hard work, innovative decision-making and a focus on continued learning.