



St. Maarten Hospitality & Trade Association  
**VISION FOR ST. MAARTEN**  
*A Work In Progress....*



# SHTA



The St. Maarten Hospitality & Trade Association is the largest private sector business representative on St. Maarten, representing close to 150 companies and has been in existence since 1970.

The main activities of the association are member management, destination marketing, advocacy and product development.

The SHTA operates with a small office staff of 3 and a very active volunteer board of 17.





# St. Maarten



St. Maarten is located in the North Eastern Caribbean and is 37 square miles, of which 16 square miles are Dutch and 21 square miles are French, making it the smallest island to be ruled by two sovereign powers.

More than 82% of the island's economy depends on tourism and over 95% of workers are employed in the tourism industry.

The island receives over 400,000 stay-over visitors and close to 1.3 million cruise passengers per year.

## TOURISM IS OUR MAIN INDUSTRY



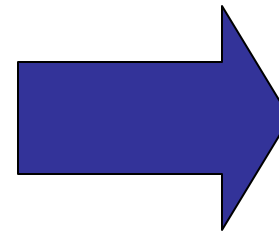


# SHTA Approach



SHTA Goals: To Improve Tourism

- Public-Private Partnership
- Hospitality Training
- Statistical Unit
- Lower Cost of Doing Business
- Flexibalize Labor Laws
- Improve Guest Experience
- Destination Promotion
- Tourism Master Plan
- Environmental Protection



Issues failed to resonate with public or government.





# Example



Due to unresolved labor issues, one airline reduced airlift by 5 flights a week:

- 5 flights of 767-aircraft per week
- 1128 seats lost
- 15% - 18% drop in occupancies
- \$1 million per week of lost revenues to the island





# SHTA Failure



SHTA failed to frame issues and solutions in a context the public could understand or empathize with.

- |                         |    |                              |
|-------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| •GDP                    | vs | Personal Income              |
| •Occupancy              | vs | Job Security                 |
| •ADR                    | vs | Career Growth                |
| •Visitor Arrivals       | vs | Traffic & Congestion         |
| •Cost of Doing Business | vs | Affordable Day Care          |
| •Carrying Capacity      | vs | Available affordable Housing |



# Strategic Re-evaluation



The SHTA re-examined the issues from 3 perspectives

Visitor

Resident

Business

GOALS AND SOLUTIONS ARE THE SAME



# Traffic & Infrastructure



## Goal: Reduction of Traffic and Congestion

Resident Impact: too many cars, congested roads, frustration, no parking

Business Impact: increase in cost of doing business, additional staff (gofers), example taxi driver

Tourism Impact: impact on image of congested island, not “relaxing”, hurts high end market



# SHTA Solutions



The SHTA aims to make the links between the resident, business and visitor impacts of these issues for proposed solutions and tie these directly to their effect on Quality of Life.





# SHTA Public Policy Agenda



Main Issues affecting businesses, residents, guests:

- Safety & Security
- Environment
- Education
- Employment
- Traffic
- Economy
- Cost of Living
- Quality of Life





# Safety & Security



## **Goal: To Make St. Maarten a Safer Place to Live, Work and Visit**

**Resident Impact:** impacts quality of life, no feeling of security in own home, impacts way of life, impacts traffic, increases cost of living

**Business Impact:** increase in cost of doing business (higher insurance, security, cameras), impacts image

**Tourism Impact:** impact on image as Friendly Island, safety deciding factor





# Environment



## **Goal: Protect Natural Environment and Maintain Accessibility for All**

**Resident Impact:** loss of access to public beaches, polluted seas, sewage and waste issues, eroding beaches, limited green land, island overdeveloped

**Business Impact:** beach erosion, “littered and unkempt” landscape, polluted seas

**Tourism Impact:** “aware” guests, trend in green tourism, main attractions are beaches and green hills



# Education



## **Goal: Accessible Quality Training and Education for All Residents**

**Resident Impact:** general level of education is decreasing, large illegal unschooled community, brain drain

**Business Impact:** lack of skilled labor, foreign labor acquiring process expensive and bureaucratic, mismatch skills and demand

**Tourism Impact:** high service levels necessary to remain competitive, large foreign community with little knowledge of the destination or local culture



# Employment



## **Goal: A Healthy Job Market Providing Secure, Well-Paying Employment**

Resident Impact: little job security, abuse 6 months contract, low earnings, little career development and upward mobility

Business Impact: cost of labor is high, restrictive labor legislation, unskilled labor pool

Tourism Impact: higher level of service expected





# Economy



## **Goal: Sustainable Development and A Fair Competitive Marketplace**

Resident Impact: job security and opportunities, career growth, children career possibilities, better salaries

Business Impact: net result, growth, re-investments to upgrade, reserves for disasters, employee benefits

Tourism Impact: growth of product and services





# Cost of Living/Doing Business



## **Goal: Reduction of Cost of Living / Doing Business on St. Maarten**

Resident Impact: high cost of living, housing, utilities, lower disposable income

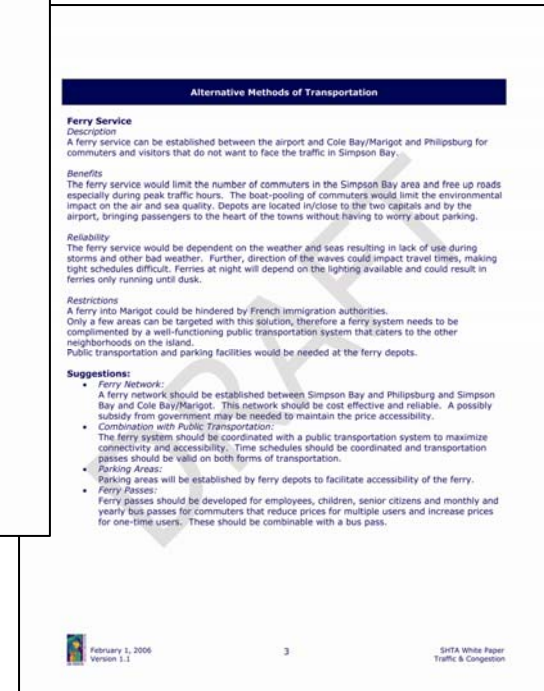
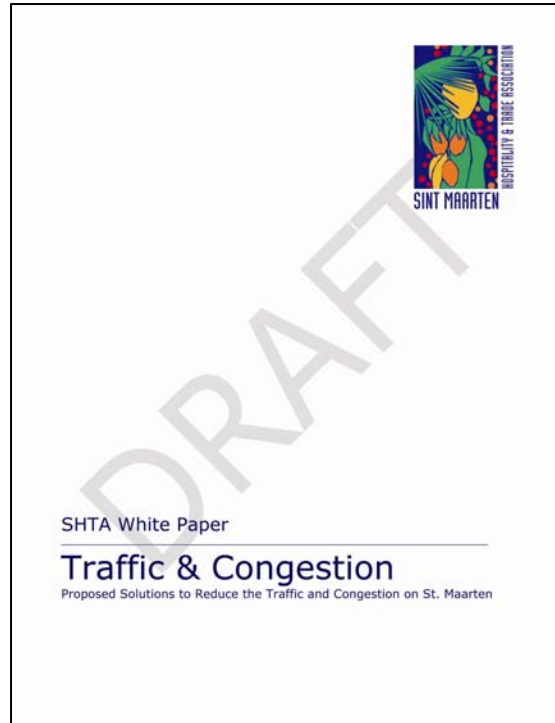
Business Impact: high cost of doing business, labor, utilities, real estate, high tax burden, increasing fees

Tourism Impact: higher priced destination, high airfares





# Next Step



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February 12, 2006



# Vision Outcome



## SHTA Goals:

- National Tourism Organization
- Destination Promotion
- Tourism Master Plan
- Environmental Protection
- Carrying Capacity
- Hospitality Training
- Statistical Unit
- Lower Cost of Doing Business
- Flexibilize Labor Laws
- Improve Guest Experience

## Vision Outcome:

- Public-Private Cooperation
- Cooperative Marketing
- Managed Growth
- Access to Beaches
- Traffic and Congestion
- Matching Skills to Labor Market
- Target Quality Visitors
- Lower Cost of Living
- Healthy Job Market
- Improve Quality of Life for Everyone

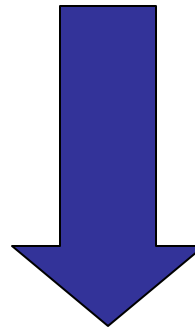




# Goals



Sensitized and Knowledgeable Public  
Focused on Quality of Life Issues



Improving Quality of Life Will Improve the Tourism Industry



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# Role of Media



Provide Information and Spark Debate  
Convert Information into Knowledge

Knowledge as defined by Tom Davenport:

“Knowledge is information combined  
with experience, context,  
interpretation, and reflection.”

The media are the guardians of democracy because  
without knowledge the public cannot make  
appropriate decisions.





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