

# Hannibal, Missouri



DOWNTOWN  
REVITALIZATION &  
ECONOMIC  
ASSISTANCE FOR  
MISSOURI

DESTINATION  
ASSESSMENT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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## INTRODUCTION

The DREAM Initiative concentrates efforts on downtown revitalization because the overall health of the community is greatly influenced by the vitality and viability of its downtown. Moreover, downtown reflects the unique attributes of a community—its heritage, its people and its future. While much of America becomes culturally homogenized, our downtowns should retain their unique identity and reflect the incredible diversity contained within the American story. For tourists, downtowns embody the character of the community and represent hidden treasures awaiting discovery.

The DREAM Initiative recognizes that downtown exists within a larger context. Tourists may visit a city for destinations outside downtown, such as a nearby natural or historic attraction, but downtown should be a part of their adventure. In order for downtown to be viable as a tourist destination, it must offer unique shopping and dining opportunities, as well as recreational opportunities.

The Destination Assessment component of the DREAM Initiative will help Hannibal better understand its potential to derive benefits from tourism. Many communities already enjoy a significant economic impact from tourism, while others have fledgling tourist industries. In either case, the assessment will help formulate an aspirational *and* realistic vision for the future. Recommendations will address potential synergies among existing features to capitalize on Hannibal’s Downtown and the surrounding area’s tourism assets.



The “Destination Assessment Team” is a collaborative effort among representatives of PGAV, the Missouri Division of Tourism, and the Missouri Arts Council. The findings and recommendations contained within the Destination Assessment, while primarily prepared by PGAV, represent a coordinated effort to address the “tourist” or “visitor” experience from independent consultants and key State agencies involved in tourism and the arts. It is anticipated that the Missouri Division of Tourism and the Missouri Arts Council will play an ongoing role in providing technical and financial resources, as applicable.

This assessment will assume, as numerous Hannibal officials, residents, and businesses noted in early meetings, that the style of tourism Hannibal desires to promote is of a controlled, sustainable, orderly nature. The City would like to avoid the connotative meanings attached to the word ‘tourist’ and are more interested in the characteristics described by the word ‘visitor’.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM

A vibrant tourism trade offers many potential benefits to a community. Tourism can help enhance the image of an area, increase local pride, and improve quality of life. As an industry, tourism is recognized as an important component of a diverse economy providing employment, redevelopment, and investment opportunity. All together, tourism can help to build a distinctive, unique, and productive community.

The economic benefits of tourism include job creation, as well as increased retail sales generation, essentially bringing new money into the community. The potential new retail sales from tourism can help to counter to the changing nature of the retail environment, which has generally lead to a decline in sales tax revenues over the last few decades. While this effect is felt community-wide, it has had a particularly strong impact on many small Downtowns. The attraction of new money to the community through tourism is an effective strategy to deal with the financial gap left by these trends as new money travels into and circulates throughout the community.

The positive effects of a successful tourism industry resonate through many business sectors, including non tourism related businesses, and the local community. The positive impacts will be felt by local businesses and residents alike. Local residents will benefit from added or improved visitor services and infrastructure, increased employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and improved shopping convenience and increased choice. A well balanced mix of retail and services will make Downtown a destination, attractive to residents, visitors, and investors.

In light of the far-reaching impacts of a successful tourism industry, and the size of the local industry, tourism should be viewed as a strategic sector in Hannibal's economic future. Any Economic Development strategy for Hannibal should

specifically address the tourism industry and its importance to the local economy.

*For everyone visiting Hannibal, the Adventure of Mark Twain's day is alive and well. Start with a tour of the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum, then continue in his footsteps as you explore the Mark Twain Cave Complex, find out where he got his pen name as you take a cruise on the Mark Twain Riverboat, then get ready for a night of entertainment at one of Hannibal's live theaters or take in a classic movie at the Star Theatre. All of this along with historic homes, like the childhood home of the Titanic's Molly Brown, and Rockcliffe Mansion awaits you in historic Hannibal Missouri. Hannibal also features fine and family dining around town at many of our great locally owned restaurants. With all of this, why not spend the night right here in "America's Hometown."*

Homepage, [www.visithannibal.com](http://www.visithannibal.com)





## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The Destination Assessment provides a snapshot of the tourism industry operating community-wide, with a focus on Downtown. The “rapid assessment” process employed consists of reviewing existing data and marketing materials, as well as, conducting field work, visiting the community, its key destinations, and meeting with tourism leaders. This report and the recommendations contained herein should serve as a foundation, providing strategic direction for Hannibal as it moves toward destination success. Understanding the framework used to evaluate Hannibal’s destination potential will provide useful context for the recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

Development of a tourism enhancement strategy, just as any business or product development strategy, begins with an evaluation of the relationship between product and customer in a competitive marketplace. The analysis of these relationships results in the development or identification of a competitive advantage. A competitive advantage gives a community an edge over its rivals and an ability to generate greater success. The more sustainable the competitive advantage, the more difficult it is for competitors to neutralize the advantage. Competitors in this scenario are other communities that are attempting to attract in whole, or large part, the same target market.

### **Product**

For the purposes of this analysis the product is Downtown, its amenities and environ including: businesses, restaurants, museums, infrastructure, people, streets, sidewalks, parks, events, etc. Downtown is evaluated in terms of a theme park or resort, striving to provide the same level of services. Downtown needs a balance of businesses and amenities that address, at a minimum, the basic needs of customers. A key to a successful product is maintaining focus on the primary product, service, or destination strengths while at the same time adapting to changes and taking advantage of opportunities.

The Destination Assessment will identify areas in need of improvement that will overlap with other DREAM Initiative tasks. Those tasks will be noted and addressed in greater detail in their corresponding analyses.

### **Customer**

The customer, in this evaluation, is the visitor or patron including residents of the community, neighboring areas, traditional tourists, etc. The community must understand who their current customers are, who is currently visiting Downtown, and why, as well as who they might be able to target and how. To understand and target customers, it is helpful to categorize visitors. A common categorization of visitors is by the reason for their visit:

Business Travelers—Most likely to travel during the week, driven by businesses, primarily basic needs of lodging, restaurants, services, gift shopping, and evening entertainment, potential to impress and return for pleasure.

**Family Travelers**—Most likely to travel during the weekend, driven by relatives, less likely to need lodging, potential needs of services and restaurants, general shopping.

**Ethnic and Cultural Seekers**—Looking for exposure to new experiences, development, and education. Interested in the areas 'way of life' and people. Adventurous and looking for more than basic needs. Museums, galleries, concerts, festivals, and performances. Likely to shop for unique items.

**Heritage and Passive Recreation Enthusiasts**—This visitor enjoys the scenery and feel of the area more than the interaction with the people. They are more inwardly focused and reflective. Their needs are similar to the culture seeker, but are just as likely to enjoy a drive through town to look at architecture or a walk in the local parks.

**Active Outdoor Adventurers**—Intense enjoyers of the parks and natural areas. These sportsmen enjoy a wide variety and are not always young. Outdoorsmen, boaters, hikers, or golfers; they are on the move. They are devoted and spend money on their chosen sport.

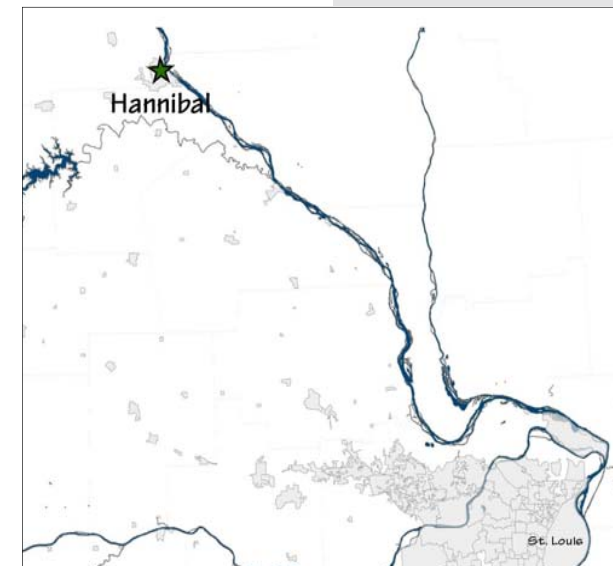
**Urban Entertainment**—The shoppers, team sport spectators, college visitors, night owls, or amusement park attendees. They tend to travel in groups and have a higher expendable income. Internet connectivity and cell phone access is important to them.

### **Market Positioning and Brand**

Once an understanding is reached on exactly what the product is and who the customers or target markets are, the focus turns to identifying the market positioning. An important component of a competitive advantage is a distinct market positioning and brand—something that draws on the strengths of the destination, its authenticity, and leverages customers' desire for unique experiences.

It is essential to understand how customers currently perceive the destination, especially relative to competitors. This perception is the community's image or brand. The destination must craft a strategy that builds on the positive aspects of its current image and, if necessary, repositions it to a more advantageous and competitive position. Repositioning takes time, patience and persistence as it typically involves modifying previously held perceptions about your destination.

Customers carry a preconceived idea of the destination's brand. The brand represents what people think of you—your image. The destination's brand is important as it is essentially a promise to provide a product or service in a consistent way.



Destination brands have four distinct components that make up brand image in the mind of the customer. Each component represents an opportunity to differentiate from competition and offer a unique consumer benefit. Destinations can reach their maximum potential by leveraging all four components.

***REALM ONE—PLACE:***

If you visit the Empire State Building, you go to a building with the city surrounding it. Up at the observation tower, the **place** becomes an oasis high above bustling Manhattan. What benefits does the place provide for the guest? Some people like the high energy feeling of being in the city, but they may also like taking a break from the intensity. People go to a destination. It exists in a physical place. A destination should try to get the most out of the power of its place.

***REALM TWO—EXPERIENCE:***

Hike in the canyon. Ride the coaster. Attend a show. People want to *do* something at a destination—something unique, something to brag about, or something to share. The experience of a destination can provide key benefits to guests and a fundamental part of its brand. A destination can reach its full potential when it promotes the benefits of a unique experience and delivers.

***REALM THREE—MINDSET:***

Sometimes a destination epitomizes or evokes an attitude, value, or mindset that has meaning beyond the physical limits of the site. Colonial Williamsburg set out to “own” the concept of Colonial America, and people might feel more patriotic just thinking about it. When a destination can symbolize an aspirational concept, it can form a powerful connection with its guests. The destination becomes a touchstone for the concept and people return to renew their connection with it.

***REALM FOUR—ORGANIZATION:***

What role does the organization behind the destination play in the brand? The Niagara Parks emblem conveys tremendous trust among regional guests who want to spend their money with the organization that helps preserve the nature and heritage of Niagara Falls. The organizational dimension of a destination may also make a big difference to future employees, donors, business partners, granting agencies, or other organizations. People want to associate with a cause or organization they feel good about, one that expresses their own values and aspirations.

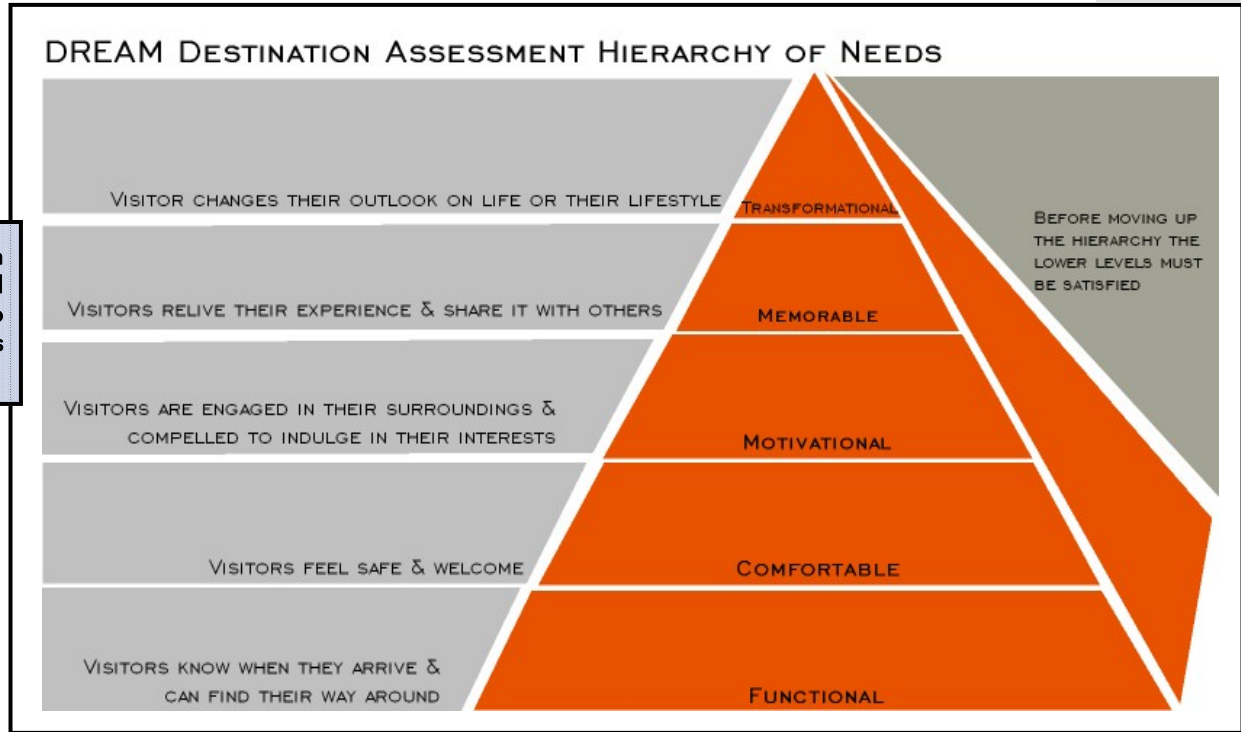
When people think of your destination, do they long to be in the place, get excited by the experience, aspire to the values represented, and trust the organization behind it? When you can answer ‘yes’ to all four, people will attribute a high value to your destination brand. That value is your destinations competitive advantage, which relates directly to attendance and financial success.

### HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Destinations and, in a larger sense, downtowns are basically customer-oriented businesses and therefore should always take the customer point-of-view. As stated earlier, when destinations conduct product development and determine marketing decisions they must address what the customer wants and needs. During the Destination Assessment Kick-Off Meeting, the Destination Assessment Team introduced the concept of a destination consumer “Hierarchy of Needs,” which hypothesizes that customers must have their most basic needs met before they can attain higher levels of fulfillment. This customer-focused theme will recur throughout the recommendations for each community.

For the purposes of this Destination Assessment, PGAV uses the hierarchical scheme shown here, listed from bottom to top, to illustrate and describe the motivations of the typical, “downtown” Missouri tourist.

There are a great number of reasons or desires that drive an individual consumer’s decision to travel and their choice of destination. The “Hierarchy of Needs” describes the requirements a typical visitor has to have met in order for them to have a fulfilling destination experience. Questions a destination community may ask themselves regarding whether or not their community’s destination assets meet these needs are:



1. Functional: Does the City provide adequate wayfinding to make travel throughout the area easy and somewhat intuitive? Do visitors know when they have “arrived”? Does the City adequately provide basic comforts, such as parking, bathrooms, and a place to rest? Is information about destinations and events easily attainable?

2. **Comfortable:** Is the downtown pedestrian friendly and well lit? Are the building facades and streetscape designs aesthetically pleasing? Are numerous lodging and dining options present throughout the municipality? Does the downtown provide adequate comforts so that the visitor can relax and get away from home?
3. **Motivational:** Does the downtown provide visitors with activities in which to participate? What will move the visitor to get out of their car and get involved? Does the downtown provide a chance to learn, interact with others, and an opportunity for adventure or escape?
4. **Memorable:** Does the downtown leave the visitor with positive memories? Do visitors repeatedly return to downtown? Do visitors recommend a visit to downtown to others? Is there positive word-of-mouth about downtown?
5. **Transformational:** If the City meets the aforementioned needs, then they've created a fulfilling experience to the visitor, which, hopefully, will positively change the visitor; thus imbuing the visitor with not only a valuable rejuvenative experience, but also a new and positive outlook on life. The visitor will want to return to and reconnect with the destination to renew that positive outlook in the future. The visitor will actively seek to bring others and share the rejuvenative experience.

In the case of a visit to a destination like a resort, zoo, or theme park, a single organization manages the tourist experience to ensure a “seamless” experience; one that flows smoothly and consistently from parking and restrooms to attractions, food and shopping without breaks in the “brand.” People have come to expect this level of product and service. Destination communities would benefit from emulating this model to the degree they can considering the complexity of their destination environment (i.e. multiple tourism product owners and interests). For example, Destination communities can develop organizational structures that support a coordinated aesthetic presentation of downtown; manage a consistent and unified marketing plan; administer special event planning; and guide businesses towards consistent business standards (i.e. uniform business hours).

Although Destination Assessment focuses on tourism and arts, many of the recommendations promise to improve quality of life for both visitors and residents. Conversely, many of the recommendations in other parts of the overall DREAM initiative, such as streetscape improvements and traffic management, will provide essential infrastructure to support tourism. This synergy of benefits illustrates the key strategy of the initiative—that an integrated approach to planning and implementation will achieve the best results for Hannibal.

## CURRENT ENVIRONMENT AND ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

### ASSESSMENT VISIT EXPERIENCE



The approach to Hannibal is very pleasant and provides a wonderful transition to this historic town. Traveling from St. Louis on Highway 61, wayfinding is provided by highway signs and billboards. As in many Missouri tourist destinations, billboards announce your arrival to Hannibal. Several attractions are highlighted by billboards, followed by signs for a few hotels and restaurants. However, once inside Hannibal the route to downtown is not as well defined. At the intersection of Highway 61 and Broadway, we were compelled to turn off and find downtown. Approaching downtown on Broadway, there are many commercial and residential buildings, as well as public infrastructure, that are in disrepair. There are no signs along this route to direct visitors to the historic downtown district, riverfront, or to the Visitors

Center. However, if you continue on Highway 61 north pass Broadway, signage directs you to downtown via Highway 36 and 3rd Street. This approach also contains a number of vacant properties and commercial businesses in a state of disrepair. The existing signage provided guidance to downtown but there was no direct or clearly defined route to downtown Hannibal. (However, visitor survey results discussed later indicate that a strong majority of visitors find Hannibal's Downtown easy to find and navigate).

The first impression a visitor has of a destination is typically a lasting impression. As stated earlier, both approaches from highway to downtown and riverfront lead visitors past a mix of businesses and residences with a wide range of conditions – from well maintained to very neglected. The journey to downtown and the riverfront creates the impression that Hannibal is an ordinary town.

However, entering the historic downtown district, Hannibal appears to be a quaint, small town. The Destination Assessment Team could see evidence of some streetscape improvements – sidewalks, street light banners, and tent signs helped to demarcate the area - although the sidewalks are not ADA compliant. The locations of Main Street leads visitors to the riverfront. Once on the riverfront, there is ample parking, an attractive park and green space, and an active marina. The riverfront is definitely a strategic part of Hannibal's downtown destination.

There are a good range of Mark Twain attractions that appeal to visitors of all ages. From our assessment, the Mark Twain Cave and Mark Twain Boyhood



Home and Museums, are often the first stop on a visit to Hannibal. They are also perceived as a couple of the “must see” attractions. In addition, Sawyer’s Creek, Lover’s Leap, Becky Thatcher House, Molly Brown Birthplace & Museum, Hannibal Trolley Sightseeing Tours, Historic Haunted Hannibal Tours, Train Town and Rockcliffe Mansion present other opportunities for adventure and entertainment for visitors and residents of all ages.

The riverfront area is easily accessible to visitors, and the activity surrounding the regular Mark Twain Mississippi Riverboat tours on the Mississippi River provides another authentic Mark Twain attraction that can appeal to visitors of any age. Again, the ability to see and experience the Mississippi River in Mark Twain’s home town is important and a valuable asset for Hannibal.

There is a large community of artists and performers who actively promote events related to arts and crafts in the community. Writers’ workshops and other activities that promote creativity for participants relate to the storytelling and imagination and expressed in Mark Twain’s books and essays. The art community views this as a natural outgrowth of the inspiration of Twain.



There is a nice variety and density of shops and galleries in downtown Hannibal, mingled in with restaurants and bars. This provides a pleasant pedestrian experience with opportunities for dining and shopping in-between riverboat rides or other activities. It was noticeable that the shops do not share the same closing hours. In fact, in a tourist brochure that promotes “Hannibal After 5”, the publication did not print the shops’ hours, leaving the burden of determining hours of operation on the visitor, and leaving the suggestions that some of the shops may not be open after 5pm.

Hannibal’s lodging stock is varied and appears able to accommodate most visitors. There are several bed and breakfasts for individual or small groups of travelers, as well as camping grounds, which appeal to small groups and families alike. However, the closing of one of Hannibal’s larger hotels will likely create a

gap in lodging for tourists and businesses travelers; the impact of which will likely be realized in the Summer 2008. Remaining hotel and motel lodging is not located near downtown historic Hannibal. This is another very important reason to clearly define a corridor that leads directly to historic Hannibal and the Riverfront, and to possibly provide public transportation (at least during the summer or peak travel periods) from major accommodation locations to major attractions, Riverfront, downtown, etc.

PERCEPTIONS, UNDERSTANDING & CURRENT POSITIONING



The town of Hannibal is proud of its place as Mark Twain’s boyhood home and successfully promotes its mix of history, attractions, theatre and shops. As first-time visitors to Hannibal, the Destination Assessment Team initially perceived Hannibal’s position in the destination market as a famous, yet quaint, river town enhanced by Mark Twain and the adventures of characters Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Upon reflection, the Destination Assessment Team views Hannibal as a town facing challenges, but with many strengths and opportunities to improve the visitor experience.

It is not a news flash, but Mark Twain is the main reason visitors from around the world visit Hannibal, Missouri. There are attractions near downtown and in the environs that authenticate Hannibal as the home of Mark Twain and the inspiration for many of his stories. Mark Twain Cave, Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum, Tom Sawyer Diorama Museum, Twains Yarn, and the Tom & Huck Statue at the end of Main Street present a complete backdrop for Mark Twain and his famous characters.

Extensive Arts, and Theatre and Musical performances enhance the attractions and provide additional activities for visitors and residents alike to attend. The “Music Under the Stars” sponsored by Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum was a success, consistently drawing 200 – 300 visitors each performance. Theatrical and storytelling performances enhance the “Mark Twain” setting and provide visitors with entertainment in the evening. Visiting several Mark Twain attractions, combined with dinner and performance, provides the basis for a personal and enriching tourism experience.





## VISITOR PROFILE

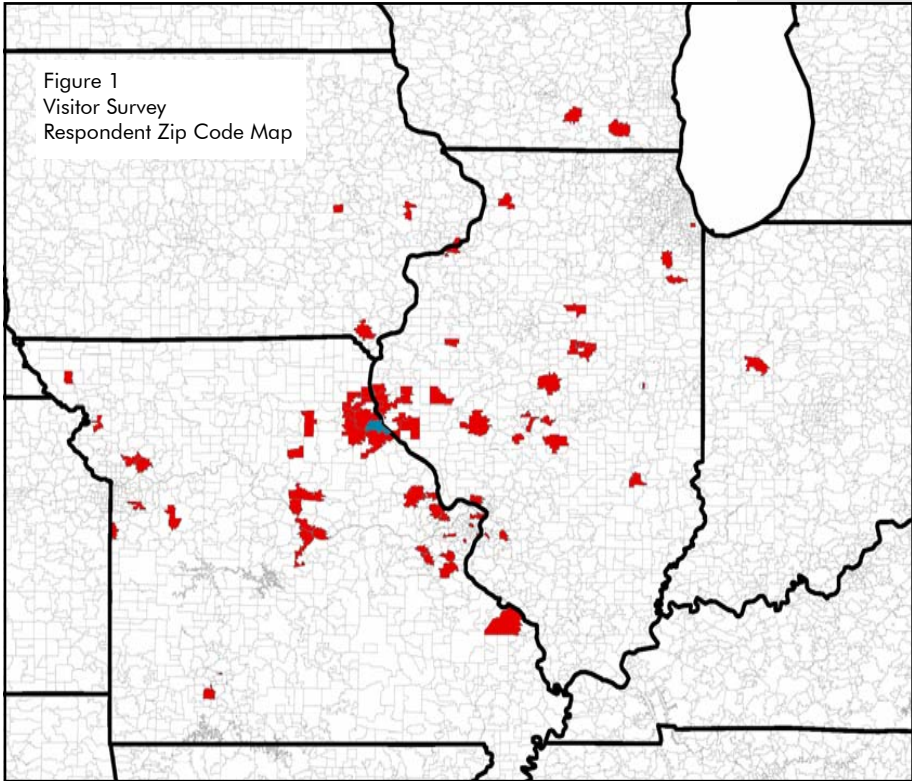
People visit Hannibal from all over the world. It is the birth place of Mark Twain and it is the inspiration for his internationally known stories about Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Many visitors stay overnight; and many are families. In fact, Hannibal's audience is as diverse as the readers of Mark Twain's books and essays. The attractions and restaurants appeal to families with children, and there are some events and shops that appeal to smaller audience of adults. The dominant form of lodging is hotels and motels as well as Bed & Breakfast's (B & B's), which is very suitable for families and adults alike.

In late 2007 and early 2008, the DREAM Initiative conducted a Visitor's Survey of visitors to Hannibal. Most of these surveys were completed during special events downtown, therefore most respondents indicated that their reason for visiting Hannibal was to attend a special event. Interesting responses include:

- 51% of respondents indicated they had visited downtown Hannibal to attend a special event
- 37.9% said they visit downtown more than once a year, but less than once a month, and 52% visit once a year.
- Dining, Shopping & Special Events are the main reasons stated when respondents planned to visit downtown.
- 35% of respondents thought they would spend less than \$50 on their visit to downtown & another 30% stated they would spend up to \$100.
- A larger majority of respondents (74%) stated they do not bring children under the age of 18 with them to downtown Hannibal, and a majority of those who visit are over 50(68%) .
- 82.2% of respondents thought downtown was "very" or easy to navigate.
- 58% of respondents thought the downtown business hours "very" or "somewhat" convenient.
- Less than 15% of respondents felt that downtown parking was "somewhat" or "very" inconvenient .



- 25 % of the respondents were staying with friends or relatives.
- A majority of respondents (39%) felt that “more/better restaurants ” would make them more likely to visit downtown. Other answers included a specific type of shop. (in order; clothing stores, art galleries, movie theater, antique shops)
- “More restaurants”, “bands/live concerts”, “family events”, and “special events” were the top responses for recreation or entertainment opportunities likely to make a visitor come to downtown.
- “New or better sidewalks”, “ benches & more green space” ,“better maintained buildings”, and were the top physical improvements indicated by respondents.
- A large majority of the number of visitors are female (61%).
- Respondents were asked their primary zip code and Figure 1 illustrates those results. Not included in the map were respondents from; Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, and New York.



## REACHING DESTINATION POTENTIAL

### General “Brand” Strategy



Hannibal is successfully branded as “America’s Hometown”, capitalizing on being hometown and inspiration for the “Great American Novel”. This brand also aims to capture the essence of the hometown character, spirit, and history to which many Americans relate. The range of events and attractions appeal to families, art lovers, fun lovers, and intellectuals alike. In particular, the combination of activities, galleries and shops provide an integrated “destination experience” by virtue of combining unique beauty, history, socialization and recreation.

## SUGGESTED POSITIONING

### Hannibal: Adventure with Mark Twain

Mark Twain has been the driving force for the great majority of visitors to Hannibal. The adventures described in Twain’s novels are timeless and inspire daydreamers and adventure-seekers to this day. Visitors travel from all parts of the world to visit the boyhood home of Mark Twain and see the sights that provided the settings for so many of his stories. The most appropriate strategy for Hannibal is to continue to draw on the boyhood experiences and adventures that Twain experienced. Hannibal should aspire to provide more than the opportunity to “see” the inspiration for Twain, but also experience the adventure associated with it.

The experience should extend beyond adventure. Hannibal should strive to provide opportunities for visitors to interact with arts throughout its activities. Relative to other small towns along the river in Missouri, Hannibal is unique because of Mark Twain and its ties to literary history and the arts. The arts and culture component of Hannibal’s product offers it a competitive advantage. Additionally, the arts community has made significant efforts to develop arts festivals and workshops that appeal to Hannibal’s wide range of visitors, extend the stories and inspiration of Twain, and provide ways to make Twain’s inspiration personal to each visitor.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based on the Hierarchy of Needs, there are different levels of improvements that Hannibal can follow in order to reach its destination potential. Improvements can range from better integration of existing community resources to developing excellent customer service and guest practices common to successful destinations. Moreover, these steps will reinforce its position as “America’s Hometown”. Addressing basic needs of visitors and coordination of existing resources and attractions can have a significant impact in helping Hannibal realize its potential.

### Create a Literary Arts Focus for Tourism

Throughout the state of Missouri authors, poets, and writers have created a significant body of works that have influenced the cultures of the state, nation, and the world. Hannibal played a significant part in Missouri and the nation’s role, as the epicenter of the American novel. Hannibal’s unique characteristics and assets have been the inspiration for many artists and writers. The creative influence inherent in Hannibal should be capitalized upon again.



Hannibal’s history provides it the opportunity to inspire current, and up-and-coming, artists and writers to create a new literary and artistic tradition and re-establish its prominence. This would provide Hannibal with an additional avenue to attract visitors and investment in addition to its already established and successful Mark Twain focus. Recently Hannibal has experienced significant success in arts other than the literary arts. This renewed focus on the literary arts will require significant investment to create a critical mass of features needed to be successful.

The opportunity exists to create writing workshops, seminars, and writing oriented events lead by outstanding writers all hosted in Hannibal. Partnerships with local colleges and universities such as Hannibal-Lagrange College and Quincy University offer a fast start. The partnership can work to establish an active writers organization, writing forums and workshops, author lecture series, prose and poetry readings, book exhibits, and other book-related activities at local bookstores and libraries. Currently there are very few opportunities for authors, writers and book enthusiasts to take part in such activities in this part of the state, and for that matter in the Midwest. Other opportunities exist to create partnerships such as; the Ozarks Writers League, Washington University, Saint Louis University, University of Missouri Extension, etc.

Hannibal’s most notable works have been set in the past, therefore the town’s identity has been characterized by Hannibal’s past. It is time for authors to find inspiration in the present and future Hannibal. Literature can be used to spur excitement about Hannibal’s literary past and its future.

## Hannibal, Missouri

### Improve Signage and Wayfinding

It is important that Hannibal establish a sense of place, define the Downtown boundaries, and differentiate the Hannibal brand from other cities. Hannibal could achieve this by communicating simple, clear signage and wayfinding, which is a basic functional need that will provide direction to the Downtown and featured attractions, events, and amenities. A coordinated system can improve communication and eliminate confusing visual clutter of non-coordinated signs. Signage also reinforces a sense of place and brand once visitors arrive in the Downtown. The visual style of the graphics can project an attitude that reflects the aspirations of the community.

The wayfinding should focus on providing a primary entry corridor into downtown with corresponding signage directing and informing visitors along that route. An improved and clearly defined corridor from Highway 61, to Highway 36, to 3rd Street, to the Downtown district and Riverfront Improvements on that route should focus on improving the appearance of residential and commercial structures and public infrastructure.

These improvements will establish a sense of place for visitors, introduce the community's brand, and begin to add a bit of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn adventure to the visitor's journey. The use of banners, improved streetscapes, and signage that is coordinated with signs on the interstate will make the drive to downtown Hannibal and the Riverfront easy for any visitor.

Once in the Downtown and riverfront area, there should be signage that defines a "Mark Twain" zone or other signs to highlight the elements in and around Hannibal that inspired Twain's writings or formed the basis for the adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. For example, this signage could help connect Mark Twain Cave and Sawyers with the Riverfront and Mark Twain's Boyhood Home and Museum.

While there should be a primary entry corridor into downtown, there is a significant secondary entry into downtown which follows Broadway from Highway 61. This is another corridor in which wayfinding and signage improvements should be utilized. Additionally, there are substantial improvements to the residential and commercial structures and public infrastructure along this route.



Wayfinding Signage  
(Webster Groves, Missouri)

### Improve Streetscape & Buildings

First impressions make for lasting impressions, the first impression of Downtown will be the streetscape and buildings. There are several building and infrastructure projects currently occurring in Downtown and these efforts should be encouraged and expanded to provide visitors and residents with a pleasant experience.

The existing streetscape should continue to be improved with attention paid to wayfinding, sidewalk repair, benches, lighting, and landscaping. Improving these elements of comfort will enhance a visitor's first impression as well as the entire Downtown experience. Hannibal has a streetscape plan that focuses on improvements along Broadway. These investments will encourage private investors and create an increasingly desirable destination.

Hannibal's historic architecture is an important asset and the City should make every effort to protect the character of Downtown. An existing revolving loan fund program can be used to assist property owners in improving their façades and the City should search for other avenues to supplement this effort. Additionally, empty storefronts should be filled with civic displays, merchandise, or art.

### Coordinate Attractions

Hannibal has a diverse mix of attractions and character that make it a unique destination; however these attractions must work in concert in order to be successful. A simple way to improve the integration is through increased communication and coordination of visitor-oriented retailers, service providers, attractions, and event activities. It is important that all businesses in Hannibal work together to provide visitors with a seamless experience. Mark Twain attractions may provide the main draw to the City, but only through the coordination of all businesses can the basic and higher level needs of a visitor be met. Additionally, if businesses share market information they can better utilize pricing and packaging strategies along with developing improvements in their own internal operations.

It is commendable that the arts organizations are active and committed to adding more workshops and events that appeal to a wide range of audiences, including a more adult audience with activities in the "off" or "shoulder" tourist seasons. It is also notable that attractions like Mark Twain Cave and the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum are the first places most visitors go when they arrive in Hannibal, and they are the attractions with some of the highest attendance numbers each year. Increased cooperation among the businesses in the tourism industry will increase the opportunity for visitors to discover the lesser-known or newer events and activities. For example, arts-based events can be packaged with one or several attractions; or a writers' workshop can begin at Mark Twain Cave or at the statue of Tom and Huck with the venue providing inspiration for the writers.



Additionally, the coordination among businesses can include improvements as simple as shops and galleries agreeing to stay open until 7:00pm, and restaurants open until 9:00pm. This would provide visitors with other places to go after attending performances, riding the riverboat, or exploring in the caves.

The integration of the activities of all attractions with the downtown shops and restaurants will benefit all business and attractions throughout Downtown Hannibal and the surrounding environs. Improved communication and coordination can help retailers and attractions develop similar hours of operation to encourage visitors to extend their stay, and provide a seamless experience while better meeting visitors needs.

#### Develop Fairgrounds as an Attraction

Also, mostly vacant land just south of downtown should be developed to become a permanent part of Hannibal's attractions and event space. In fact, not only can the additional space be utilized to enhance the Mark Twain experience, but as a multi-purpose space, it can extend beyond Twain with more arts, performance and cultural activities. Hannibal would continue to reach a broader audience, and the addition of events and performances would encourage repeat visits from folks living in nearby cities like St. Louis and Quincy. Any improvements made to the area, particularly structural improvements, should take into account the likelihood that the area can flood.

#### River Connection

Hannibal owes its heritage to the Mississippi River. While the riverfront park and various events are located on the river, greater use of this natural resource should be encouraged. Respectful of the river's dynamic natural systems, the City should promote the river as a recreational, educational and eco-tourism destination.

Renewed interest in the natural environment has seen growth of outfitters for canoe and kayaking trips on the Missouri River. The Missouri River 340 River race, from Kansas City to St. Charles, draws teams from around the world. Such events on the Mississippi River from Hannibal to St. Louis should be developed. These events would attract active and extreme recreation customers. Moab, Utah has achieved this hub status with mountain bikers and hikers.

The City should continue to develop trails and greenways along the river to attract active recreation visitors. Enhanced and continued use of the Mississippi River will foster a greater appreciation of the river as a recreation and education destination.

#### Clarify Visitor Center Brand and Improve Visibility

Providing information to visitors is a vital component of a successful destination. In Hannibal, the Visitor Center does not appear to be the first place many visitors go to for information about Hannibal. Rather, it seems the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum has become a starting point for many who visit the City. The Museum has brochures and other information about Hannibal (as do many of the businesses in historic downtown and in attractions). This seems

logical because most people visit Hannibal because of Mark Twain, and it makes sense that they would visit Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum as a starting point for their “Mark Twain Adventure.”

Hannibal does, however, have a Visitor Center, and it is in the historic district – just not on Main Street. The visibility of the Visitors Center should be improved, with better signage along the corridor from the highway to downtown. The Visitor’s Center and accompanying information should be easy to locate for any visitor traveling by any means. One way to accomplish this is through improved wayfinding and signage, a simple and cost effective solution. The information from the Visitor Center should be available 24/7, such as making brochures available outside the Center when it is closed or providing other visitor kiosks in strategic locations, one being the riverfront.

#### Provide Public Amenities for Visitors

Access to public restrooms is a basic need and important to creating a seamless experience. Public restrooms can be located in conjunction with the Visitor’s Center and public information kiosks. Furthermore, the facilities will provide shelter, a place to rest, and possibly the opportunity to purchase simple conveniences.

#### Continue Focus on Mark Twain

Mark Twain is the feature that attracts the majority of visitors to Hannibal. His writings imbue Hannibal with rich, adventure-filled experiences that visitors cannot find anywhere else. In terms of a visitor, Mark Twain’s Hannibal is filled with experiences that range from exploring caves and riverboat rides to writing workshops and crafts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mark Twain’s “hometown” is place where visitors and residents of any age can be entertained.

#### Add Lodging

Attention should be given to providing more lodging in the Downtown. Adding additional housing in Downtown will firmly establish Hannibal as an international destination that can handle a wide variety of visitors for overnight stays. The recent closing of one large hotel will leave a gap in accommodations. A new hotel with at least as many beds, and meeting or conference facilities, will greatly improve visitors’ ability and willingness to stay overnight, and will encourage more businesses to use Hannibal as a site for meetings and conferences.

#### Improve the Downtown “Living Room”

First impressions make for lasting impressions, and the first impressions of downtown will be the streetscapes and buildings that make up the Downtown “Living Room”. Buildings and infrastructure in the historic downtown should be improved, to provide the visitor, and residents, with a more pleasant experience. Streetscapes should be improved with attention paid to wayfinding, sidewalk repair, benches, lighting, and beautification; this is a straightforward way to





demarcate the historic downtown district and improve the basic infrastructure of downtown Hannibal. Adding sidewalk cuts to accommodate handicapped visitors and residents, adding flower boxes to all second floor windows overlooking Main Street and Third Street, and adding benches throughout the district are a simple and effective way to make noticeable enhancements. Addressing these elements will improve visitors' first impressions, as well as the whole downtown experience for visitors and residents

## **CONCLUSIONS, IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE WORK**

The integration of business operations, improving wayfinding and signage, and providing other and overall provision of visitors' "basic needs" will provide good customer services. Hannibal can help visitors create their personal Mark Twain Adventure by the cooperation of the attractions and performances with restaurants and shops of historic downtown. Providing a seamless experience for visitors will allow them to enjoy the arts and culture of Hannibal, as well as the adventure of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

The coordination of attractions, shops and restaurants can be presented as a "Mark Twain Adventure Pass" which visitors can purchase upon arrival at Hannibal. The *Adventure Pass* can be attached to a lanyard, and contain a card with "tear-off" tickets that can be used for popular Mark Twain attractions, such as Mark Twain Caves, Mark Twain Museum and Boyhood Home, and Riverboat rides. In addition, the pass can have "tickets" to events, such as "Music Under the Stars" or storytelling performance in the plaza outside Twain's Boyhood Home. Depending on the kind "adventure" selected by visitors, they may tour the literary Tom Sawyer haunts, follow the real story of Samuel Clemens through historic sites in Hannibal, or feature a "writer's journey" that combines writing workshops with theatre attractions. Restaurants and shops could sponsor the *Adventure Pass*, and provide visitors with some suggestions for dining and shopping.

Banners at the Visitor's Center and along the riverfront (where many visitors will park) can advertise the *Mark Twain Adventure Pass*, in addition to banners on the Hannibal websites and billboards just outside the approaches to Hannibal. Visitors may purchase the *Adventure Pass* in advance to obtain a discount or receive "front of the line" priority at selected attractions.

Downtown Hannibal has an appealing venue for performances – from music and storytelling to parades. Performances staged at locations such as the plaza outside the Mark Twain Boyhood Home or the Riverfront at the end of the afternoon will draw the attention of visitors tired of attractions and ready to relax. These downtown performances will extend visitor stays in Hannibal and likely attract them into the shops and restaurants on Main Street and in the downtown area. These businesses will have to extend their hours of operation to accommodate the additional visitors and additional business.

**APPENDIX**  
**INVENTORY OF ATTRACTIONS**

<b>Inventory of Attractions</b>		
<b>Type of Attraction</b>	<b>Name of Attraction</b>	<b>Comments</b>
	<b>Mark Twain Cave</b> · Cameron Cave	Open Memorial Day through October; tours available
	<b>Mark Twain Boyhood Home &amp; Museum</b> · Interpretive Center · Mark Twain Boyhood Home · Boyhood Home Gift Shop · Huckeberry Finn House · Becky Thatcher House · JM Clemen Jusitce of the Peace Office · Grant's Drug Store/Pilaster House · Museum Gallery	Open daily April through October & Sundays through the rest of the year
	<b>Mark Twain Mississippi Riverboat</b>	Open May through October; Evening Dinner Cruises
	<b>Spratt Family Dinner Theater</b>	Call for performance times & schedules
	<b>Rockcliffe Mansion</b>	Open daily; tours available; gift shop; facilities available for weddings and meetings; on-site overnight accommodations.
	<b>Hannibal Trolley Company</b>	Open Spring through Fall; Sightseeing Tours; gift shop & snack shop
	<b>Historic Haunted Hannibal Tours</b>	Call for special packages
	<b>Sawyer's Creek Fun Park</b>	Open year round; Shop, Dine & Play for the whole family; Sweet Shop & Wine Shop

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<b>Type of Attraction</b>	<b>Name of Attraction</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Festivals &amp; Activities</b>		
	<b>Winter Bluegrass Festival</b>	Annual festival providing Bluegrass Music & entertainment
	<b>50 Miles of Art Studio Tour</b>	Artisans open studios for view how work it created; Held twice a year
	<b>Just Girls Getaway Weekend</b>	Shops, restaurants, attractions & lodging focusing on women's interest
	<b>Loafers Club Car Show</b>	Features street rods, stockers, pickups & antiques
	<b>Mississippi River Arts Festival</b>	60 Midwest artists and artisans displaying and selling original works, everyone is sure to find something to their liking. A variety of food booths, entertainment groups and children's booths
	<b>National Tom Sawyer Days</b>	Hannibal tradition for over 50 years. The National Tom Sawyer Days celebration focuses on wholesome family fun
	<b>Hannibal Cannibal 10K Run &amp; 5K Walk</b>	Hannibal Cannibal 10K run and 5K walk
	<b>Wild &amp; Wack Art Adventure</b>	Art festival featuring activities for children 3-12.
	<b>Autumn Historic Folklife Festival</b>	Stroll the streets among artists and artisans demonstrating lifestyles and folk arts of the mid-1800's. Enjoy the sounds of street musicians, storytellers and the smell and taste of food and beverages prepared over wood fires.
	<b>Hannibal for the Holidays</b>	Hannibal Historic District comes alive with the sights and sounds of Christmas. Downtown merchants will be waiting to assist you with some old-fashioned customer service. The Annual Living Windows event will be part of the festivities, as well as our Trail of Lights

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<b>Wineries</b>		
	<b>Collver Family Winery</b>	Open year-round. Hours: Daily 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Sunday Noon-6:00 p.m
	<b>Sawyers Creek Wine Shop</b>	Historic Wine Shop featuring the area's largest selection of Missouri wines including, our very own Sawyer's creek selections
	<b>Indian Creek Winery</b>	Hand Vinted, Boutique Wine. Open Sat. 10-5; Sun. Noon-6 & by appointment April-November
	<b>Crown Valley Winery</b>	Crown Valley Port House features an elaborate tasting bar, indoor and outdoor seating, a bistro, gift shop and custom movie theater.
<b>Recreation</b>		
	<b>Norwoods Golf Club</b>	Established 18 hole golf course off Hwy MM & Paris Gravel Road (County Rd. 418). Practice range, chipping, & putting green, snack bar & golf shop
	<b>Community Pool</b>	Outdoor swimming pool, many play features, zero-depth entry, slides, diving board, deck area and concession.
	<b>Riverview Park</b>	465 acres of natural wooded land offering scenic views of the Mississippi River. Picnic shelters, tables and playground area.
	<b>Mark Twain Memorial Lighthouse</b>	Panoramic view of hannibal and the Mississippi River
	<b>Skate Park</b>	The Hannibal Ramp Park is an 8800 square foot ramp park featuring: below grade concrete bowls with 6 foot drop ins, banks, spines, rollers, a hubba ledge, grind block, extensions and a hand rail.

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<b>Recreation</b>		
	<b>Timber Ridge Resort</b>	One mile from Blackjack Marina. Accommodations to fit every budget. Cabins, Kitchenettes, Motel Rooms, swimming pool, game room, playground, hiking trails to the lake, pavilion, fish cleaning station and bait shop
	<b>Mark Twain Lake</b>	Mark Twain Lake consists of 18,600 acres of surface water and is surrounded by 38,400 acres of land
	<b>Indian Creek marina</b>	Slip rental, john boat, pontoon, ski boat rentals and wave runner rentals and restaurant
	<b>Black Jack Marina</b>	Yearly, daily slips for rent, regular and mixed gas, fishing and pontoon boat rentals. Convenience Store
<b>Campgrounds</b>		
	<b>Injun Joe Campground</b>	Open to the Public
	<b>Mark Twain Cave Campground</b>	Near Downtown