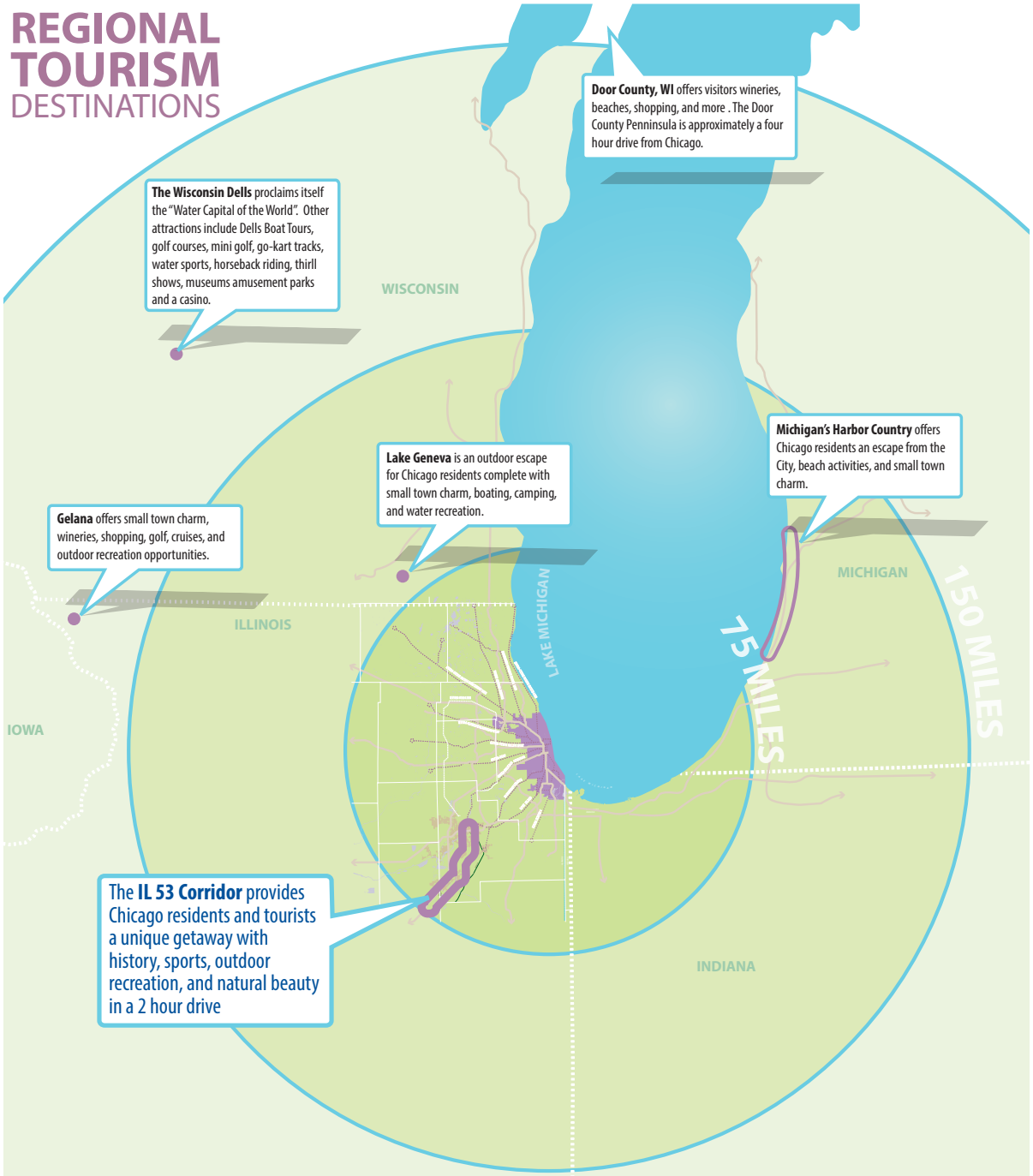
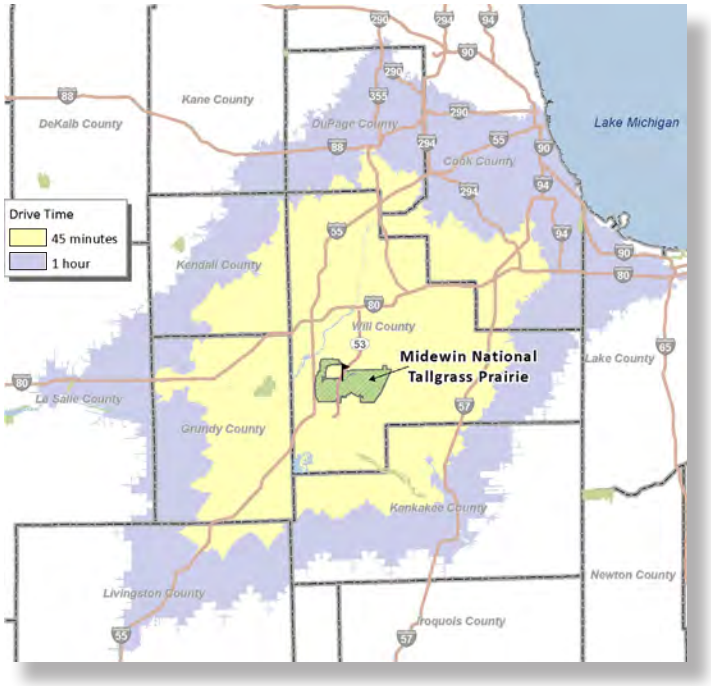
2

THE TOURISM POTENTIAL

A MIDWEST VACATION DESTINATION

REGIONAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS

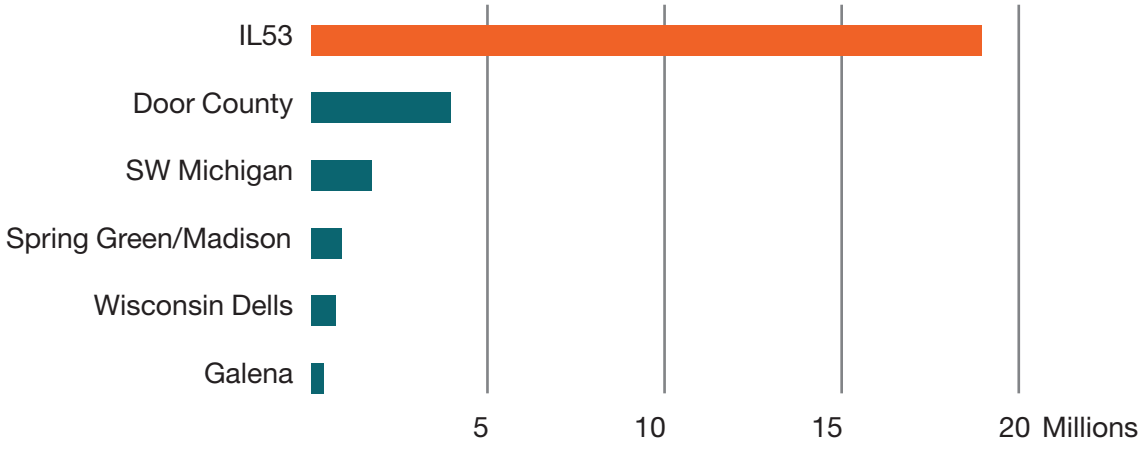




The Corridor has the benefit of being the closest to the Chicago metro area compared to other popular vacation destinations in the region.

Nearly 20 million people live within a three-hour drive of the Corridor, vastly more than the other regional vacation destinations.

Population within a Three Hour Drive

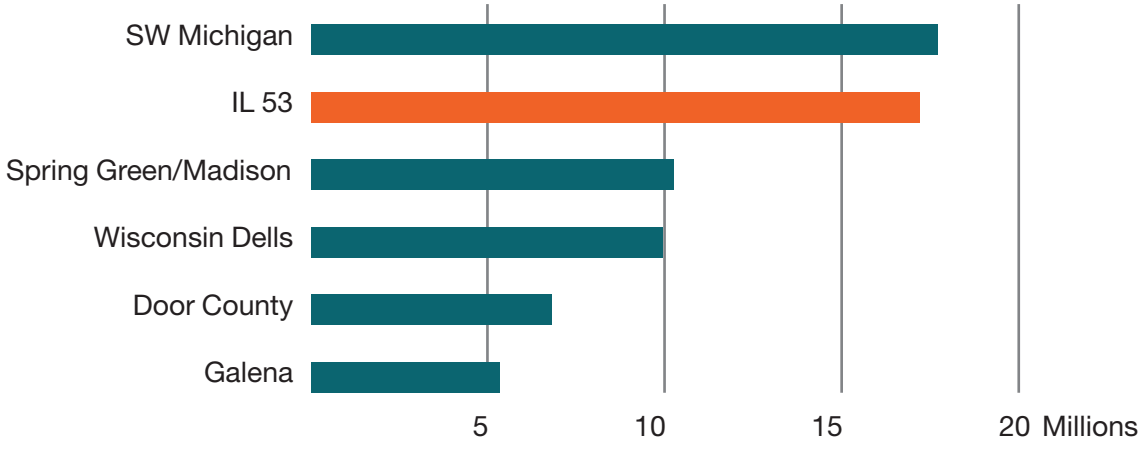


There is no mechanism in place today to accurately estimate the number of tourists visiting the corridor.

Over 30,000 tourists are estimated to drive this section of Historic Route 66 every year.

This estimate is based on tourists signing in at the Pontiac Automobile Museum, and probably does not reflect the hundreds who drive the road without stopping at the museum.

Population within a Five Hour Drive



Chicago Speedway alone brings huge volumes of visitors every year. NASCAR estimated over 150,000 people attended events at the Speedway in 2012. Speedway visitors are probably not even aware that they are right on Historic Route 66 with many other attractions nearby.

WHAT OTHER DESTINATIONS OFFER

As a tourism destination, the Corridor would compete directly with other regional destinations, including:

Galena, Illinois
The Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
Spring Green, Wisconsin
Door County Wisconsin
Harbor County, Michigan
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

When compared to these major regional tourist destinations, the Corridor has the benefit of being the closest to the Chicago metro area with the entire metro area residing within 75 miles of the Corridor.

Galena, Illinois

TOURISM AMENITIES
Galena History Museum
Dowling House
Downhill skiing
Old Blacksmith Shop
Old Market House State Historic Site
Pathway on the Levee
Ulysses S. Grant Home State Historic Site
Linmar Gardens
Galena River Bicycle Trail
Belvedere Mansion
Goldmoor Gardens
Wooded Wonderland
10 Golf Courses
Ballooning
3 Wineries

EVENTS
Turner Hall
Galena Convention Center
Apple River Stagecoach Event Center
Galena Lead Rush Half Marathon
Night of the Luminaria
Country Bicycle Ride
Massbach Wine Tasting
Annie Wiggins Ghost Tour
Galena Country Fair
LODGING AVAILABILITY:
41 vacation rental homes
10 resorts and hotels
4 motels
All within Galena or Jo Daviess County

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

TOURISM AMENITIES
35 Waterparks
10 Amusement Parks
12 Scenic Tours
River Walk
Mid-Continent Railway Museum
Circus World
Canyon Creek Riding Stables
International Crane Foundation
Timbavati Wildlife Park
Wisconsin Deer Park
Woodside Ranch
Dells Comedy Club
4 Theaters
Wollersheim Winery
Zipline Tours
Devil's Lake State Park
Ho-Chunk Gaming
6 Golf Courses
JustAGame Fieldhouse

EVENTS
Autumn Harvest Fest
Dells on Tap
Wisconsin Dells Waterslide-athon
Wisconsin Dells Music Fest
Dells Chili Cook Off
Taste of Wisconsin Dells

LODGING AVAILABILITY
6 Bed and Breakfasts
36 Cabins and Cottages
19 Campgrounds
23 Condominiums
80 Hotels and Motels
34 Resorts

ACCOMMODATION ABILITIES
Wisconsin Dells Center at Chula Vista Resort
Largest single meeting facility: 100,000 square feet
Largest single exhibit space: 90,000 square feet
Largest single meeting space: 21,000 square feet
Can host more than 50,000 guests per day
More than 8,000 hotel rooms
19 campgrounds, 3,200 sites
Accommodates approximately 3 million visitors annually
Approx. half of all visitors from out-of-state
35% of visitors from Chicago area

Spring Green, Wisconsin

TOURISM AMENITIES
House on the Rock
Frank Lloyd Wright Taliesin and Visitors Center
American Players Theatre
Gard Theater
River Valley Players
Cave of the Mounds
Cedar Grove Cheese Inc.
Rush Creek Sportsman Club
Weggy Winery
Wisconsin Artists Showcase
3 Golf Courses
Avoca Prairie
Ferry Bluff
Spring Green Preserve
Cedar Valley Preserve
Architectural Driving Tour
3 State Parks and 1 County Park

EVENTS
Spring Green Car Show
Summer Concerts
Spring Green Literary Festival
BobFest
BeatlesFest
Fall Art Tour
Spring Green Country Christmas

LODGING AVAILABILITY
6 Hotels and Motels
8 Bed and Breakfast Inns
Fireside Campground
2 RV Parks
9 Vacation Homes
2 Resorts
5 Cottages/Cabins

Door County, Wisconsin

TOURISM AMENITIES
53 Public beaches
5 State Parks
11 Lighthouses
300 miles of shoreline
Miller Art Museum
Washington Island Ferry
Washington Island Art and Nature Center
Guenzel Gallery
3 Wineries
Anderson Store
Door County Maritime Museum
Door County Historical Museum
American Folklore Theatre
Third Avenue Playhouse
Trueblood Performing Arts Center
Door Community Auditorium
Birch Creek Music Performance Center
Peninsula Players Theatre
Francis Hardy Center for the Arts

EVENTS
Fall Corn Festival and Maze
Fourth of July Celebration
Pumpkin Patch Festival
Door County Half Marathon
Cherry Fest
Fall Fest

LODGING AVAILABILITY
13 Lodges/Inns
10 Resorts
6 Hotels
Nelson House
Square Rigger

GETTING THERE
Accessible via I-43
Ferry access from eastern shore of Lake Michigan
Commercial airport, Austin Straubel International Airport, located in Green Bay, Wisconsin

Harbor County, Michigan

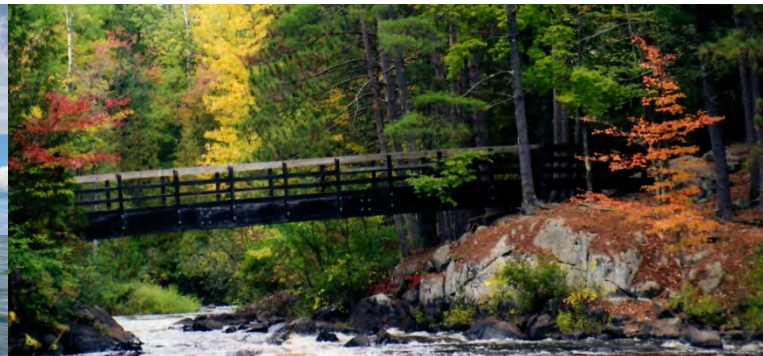
Harbor Country, Michigan is the Southwest portion of Berrien County, which includes Michiana, Grand Beach, New Buffalo, Union Pier, Lakeside, Harbert, Sawyer and Three Oaks. ESRI data was taken using Union Pier as its focal point.

Tourism Amenities
Eleven Michigan wineries
15 miles of beach front along Lake Michigan
Four Winds Casino
Warren Woods State Park
New Buffalo Railroad Museum
Lake Michigan Shore Wine Trail
Warren Dunes State Park
Capt. Mikes Fun Park
U-Pick Farms
Acorn Theater
Fernwood Botanical Gardens
Grande Mere State Park
12 Bicycle Routes

Lodging Availability
10 Hotels, Resorts, and Inns
9 Bed & Breakfasts
13 Cottages and Rentals

Events
HCPAI Birdhouse Auction
Harbor County Chocolate Classic
Art Attack tour
Annual Flag Day Celebration
Ship and Shore
Harvest Days
Music in the Park

Visitation
Amtrak station in New Buffalo
36 miles from South Bend, Indiana
70 miles from Chicago, Illinois
78 miles from Kalamazoo, Michigan
110 miles from Grand Rapids, Michigan
160 miles from Indianapolis, Indiana
195 miles from Detroit, Michigan



AN ABUNDANCE OF UNDISCOVERED TREASURES

The Corridor has an abundance of undiscovered treasures, unknown to the majority of potential visitors. Coupled with the magnitude of the market, these amenities have the potential to draw significant visitation to the area.

Visitors to individual destinations may not be aware of all the other nearby attractions. Collectively, these destinations have the long term potential to create a major vacation destination serving Chicagoland and the Midwest.

ACTIVITIES

- Hiking
- Biking
- Picnicking
- Hunting
- Horseback Riding
- Archery
- Star Gazing
- Scenic Drives
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Boating
- Snowmobiling
- Cross Country Skiing
- Plant Identification
- Fossil Collecting
- Wildlife Watching
- Camping
- And many more...

HISTORIC, CIVIC & CULTURAL

HISTORIC ROUTE 66

- Launching Pad Drive-In
- Gemini Giant statue
- Polk-a-Dot Restaurant
- Rialto Square Theatre
- Von Heindecke's Chicago Festival & Ballet
- Joliet Area Historical Museum
- Joliet Area Sports Hall of Fame
- Jacob Henry Museum
- P. Seth Magosky Museum of Victorian Life & Joliet History
- Slovenian Woman's Heritage Museum
- Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery
- Joliet Union Station
- Manhattan Metra Station
- Mar Theatre
- Briscoe Burial Mounds
- MANY LOCAL ANCHORS

MAJOR NATURAL ASSETS

- Billie Limacher Bicentennial Park
- Birdhaven Greenhouse and Conservatory
- Braidwood Dunes & Savanna Preserve
- Channahon State Park
- Des Plaines Dolomite Prairies Reserve
- Des Plaines Fish & Wildlife Area
- Des Plaines River
- Dresden Cooling Lake
- Forsythe Woods County Forest Preserve
- Fossil Rock Recreation Area
- Goose Lake Prairie State Park
- Grant Creek Prairie Nature Preserve
- Heidecke Lake
- Hitts Siding Prairie Nature Preserve
- Illinois River
- Kankakee River
- Kankakee River State Park
- Laughton County Forest Preserve
- Mazonia State Fish and Wildlife Area
- McKinley Woods County Forest Preserve
- Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie
- Pilcher Park Nature Center
- Rock Run Rookery
- Round Barn Park
- Route 66 Park
- Sand Ridge Savanna Nature Preserve
- Sugar Creek County Forest Preserve
- The Children's Garden Project of Elwood
- Wilmington Island and Dam
- Wilmington Shrub Prairie Nature Preserve

SPORTS & RECREATION

- Autobahn Country Club
- Bicentennial Park Theatre
- Chicagoland Speedway
- CPX Paintball Park Raceway
- Haunted Trails Family Entertainment and Amusement Park
- Hollywood Casino Joliet
- Inwood Ice Arena
- Joliet Motorsports
- Joliet Slammers Professional Baseball Team
- Joliet Splash Station Waterpark
- Leisure Hours Raceway
- Route 66 Raceway
- Town and Country Bowling Lanes

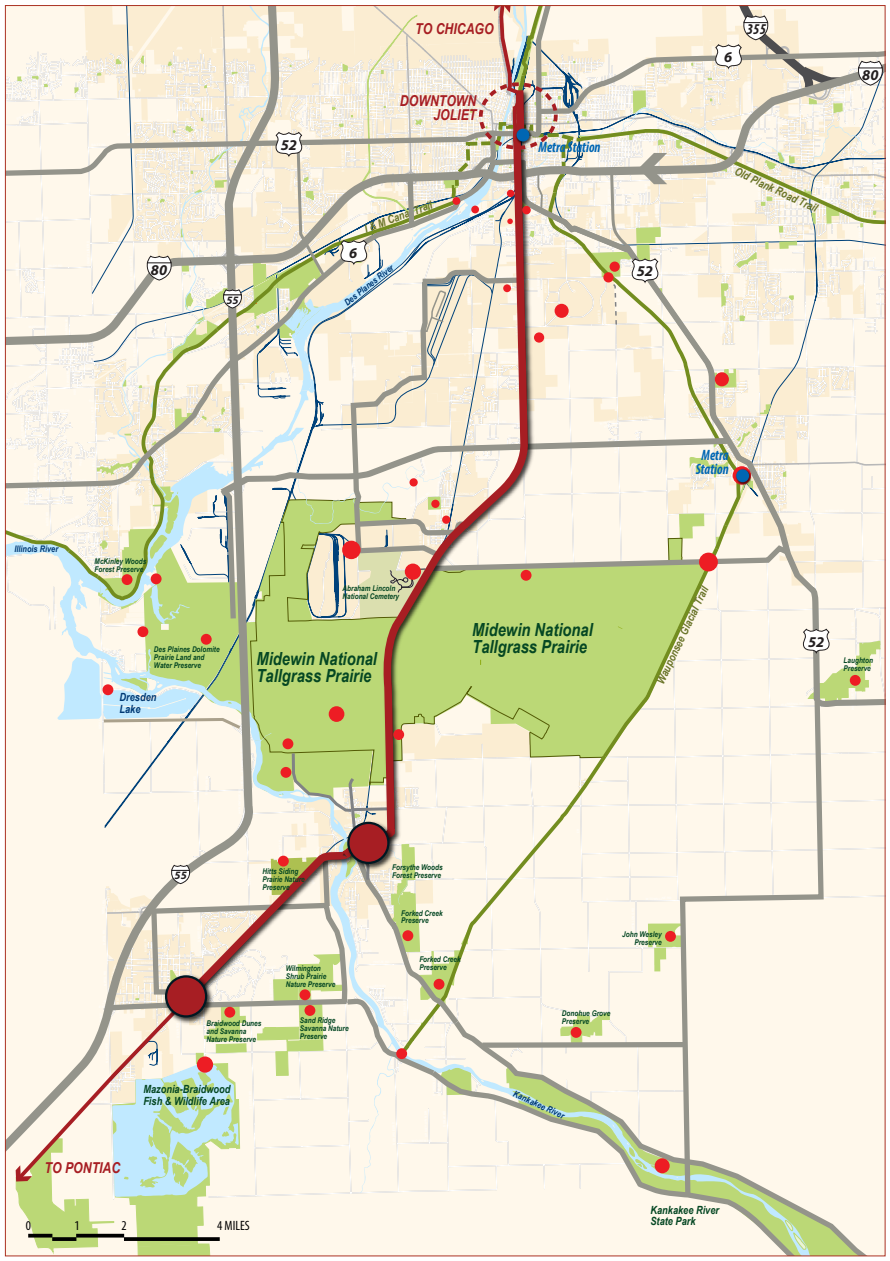
TRAILS

- Wauponsee Glacial Trail
- I & M Canal Trail
- Old Plank Road Trail
- Kankakee River Trail
- Illinois Route 66 Trail
- Midewin Trails
- Forest Preserve District of Will County Trails
- LOCAL TRAILS

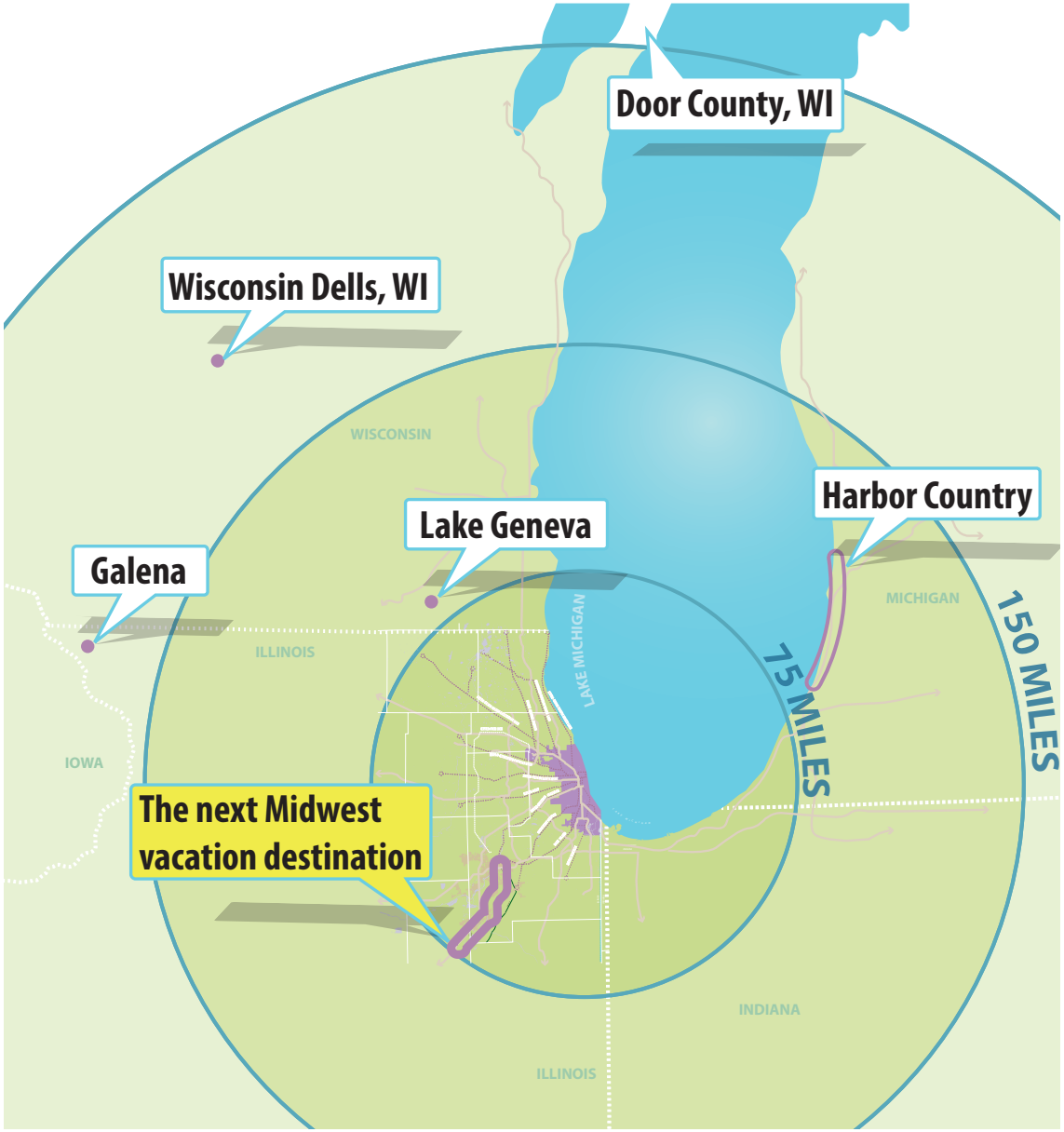
OTHER ASSETS & ANCHORS

- Intermodal Port
- Joliet Quarry
- Three Rivers Marine Service
- Harborside Marina
- Tammen Treeberry Farm
- Dollinger Family Farm
- Exotic Deer Farm
- Restored Train Depot Museum
- Junk Yard Sculptures
- Braidwood Zoo
- Diamond Mine Monument
- Dresden Generating Station
- Braidwood Generating Station
- Glasscock Farm

ONE CORRIDOR, MANY DESTINATIONS



THE NEED FOR ONE NAME, ONE IDENTITY, ONE BRAND



So many unique assets and destinations, and so much history. Yet this corridor is still an unknown place to many.

There is a need for a cohesive identity as one place: a clear brand, and one easy to remember name.

The idea of one name, one identity and one brand for the corridor has generated great consensus from all who participated in the crafting of the plan.

Many names and branding themes were suggested with great passion from the stakeholders. While the one Final Name remains to be selected, there is consensus that the name should refer to Route 66 and Will County. The selection of a final name and brand should be one of the priorities of the next steps of the plan.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A UNIFYING NAME

Will 66

Route 66 Stops

Prairies @ 66

66 Prairies

Will County 66

South Will's Route 66

Route 66 Prairies

Will County and Route 66

Will County's Route 66

" EXPLORATION" AS A MAJOR THEME FOR BRANDING

SUGGESTED THEME FOR BRANDING

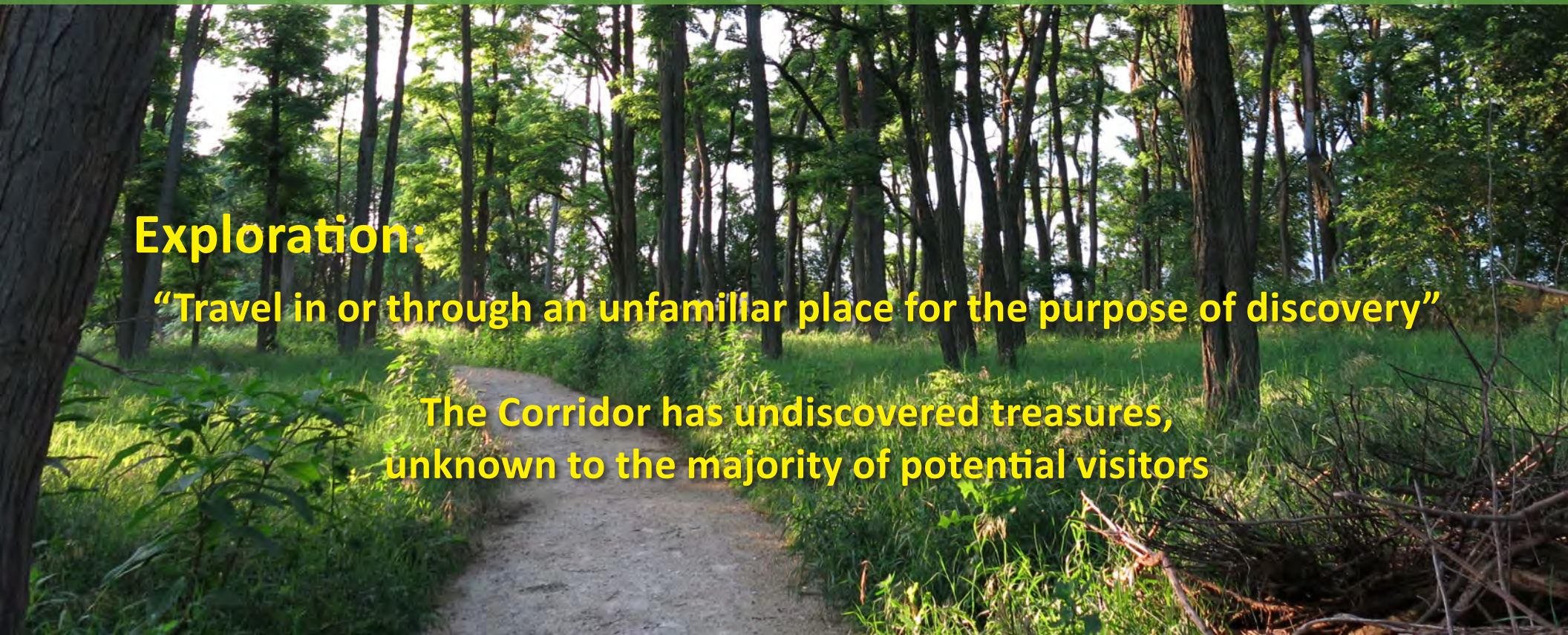
Exploration

"Travel in or through an unfamiliar place for the purpose of discovery"

The Corridor has undiscovered treasures and is unknown to the majority of potential visitors. The exploration theme should be a part of the brand for the corridor. The urge to explore and discover new places can motivate people to visit the Corridor amenities.

Themes for other destinations

Door County, WI: "Like Nowhere Else"
Lake Geneva, WI: "It's always been the place"
Wisconsin Dells: "The Water Park Capital of the World"
Galena, IL: "A Place you will always want to return to and you'll never want to leave"
Mackinak Island, MI: "Pure Michigan"
IL Route 66: "Where the Mother Road Begins"
Visit Joliet: "I played in Joliet, you should too"



A Major Disadvantage for the Corridor is the lack of hotels, resorts, and other lodging options to support overnight visitation. Existing lodging options are mostly north of I-80 or west of the Des Plaines River, and not at the heart of the Route 66 Corridor.

Lodging Availability Today

Best Western Joliet Inn & Suites
Comfort Inn North – Joliet
Comfort Inn South – Joliet
Fairfield Inn & Suites Joliet North/Plainfield
Fairfield Inn South
Fossil Rock Recreation Area
Hampton Inn I-55
Hampton Inn I-80
Harrah's Joliet Casino & Hotel
Holiday Inn Express Joliet
Leisure Lake Resort
Marriot TownePlace Suites
Motel 6 Joliet South
Race View Farms
Ramada Limited – South
Red Roof Inn
Wingate by Wyndham

The Corridor's greatest short term tourism potential lies in the daytrip market

For two main reasons, the Corridor's greatest short-term potential lies in the daytrip market originating mainly from the Chicago metro area. First, the Corridor has excellent access to the large Chicago population base with the majority residing within a one-hour drive. Second, the Corridor currently lacks the infrastructure needed to support overnight visitation, including a variety of hotel and other overnight lodging options.

As the wealth of Corridor amenities develop and marketing efforts take hold, the area will become more known as a destination and day trip visitation will increase.

Because of the Corridor's proximity to the City of Chicago, the area also has the ability to become an amenity of Chicago and a potential day trip excursion for Chicago tourists. Eventually, visitors to the area will want more time to explore the Corridor's attractions, leading to demand as a weekend getaway. Established day trip visitation will also encourage and justify lodging development. Longer stays in the Corridor will also expand the potential market to other areas in the Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana Tri-state area. Ultimately, the Corridor will become a vacation destination for the Midwest.

Established daytrip visitation will encourage and justify lodging development.

Developing natural attractions and expanding boating, fishing, and biking opportunities would lead to demand as a weekend getaway. Museums, shopping, dining, and other cultural/historical attractions would round out the experience and give visitors more reasons to stay and explore what the Corridor has to offer.

The Corridor has an abundance of undiscovered treasures, unknown to the majority of potential visitors. Coupled with magnitude of the market, these amenities have the potential to draw significant visitation to the area.

With a consistent theme as a high quality destination, future potential lies in the Corridor becoming a true Midwest Vacation Destination.

The greatest Short-Term Tourism Potential lies in the

DAY TRIP MARKET

DAYTRIP EXCURSIONS
Chicago Metro Area
Young Adults
Families with Young Children
School/Camp Groups

WEEKEND GETAWAYS
Tri-State Area
Nature & Recreation Enthusiasts
Empty Nesters
Families

VACATION DESTINATIONS
Midwest Region
Extended Families
Social and Corporate Groups

As the area gains a reputation as a **daytrip** destination and **amenities** and **attractions** develop, the Corridor will begin to attract **OVERNIGHT STAYS** eventually becoming a **weekend getaway** and **vacation destination.**

MARKET THE UNIQUE HISTORY OF THE LAND IN A UNIFIED WAY

This land has so many stories that need to be shared.
Each destination has its own story that can be highlighted with signage, new museums and visitors centers, festivals and events.
Many such local efforts are already underway.

This Plan provides a unified framework to weave all these stories into one.

The story of how the mighty Kankakee Torrents formed this land after the great glacial meltdown.

How paleontologists have found many fossils in nearby Sand Prairies and coal mines, like the Tully Monster, the State Fossil of Illinois.

Stories of exploration - LaSalle's expedition of 1679 through Illinois country to the Kankakee River and then on to the Mississippi.

Stories of Route 66, one of the most legendary roads in the world, as highlighted by the Byway Enhancements underway.

Stories of how a prairie became an arsenal, and a prairie again

And much more.