

IOWA MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS MARKET ANALYSIS

Prepared for: Iowa Tourism Industry Partners & Iowa Tourism Office

July 2025



ABOUT WHEREABOUT



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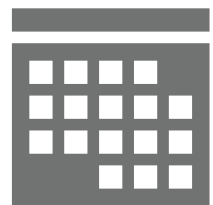
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PURPOSE OF STUDY

Iowa Travel Industry Partners (iTIP), in collaboration with the Iowa Tourism Office, commissioned this analysis to evaluate Iowa's competitiveness and potential in the meetings & conventions sector. This sector brings people and economic activity to communities, drives demand for local services, and introduces new visitors to Iowa.



METHODOLOGY



7

Months: Dec.
2024—Jun. 2025



8

Interviews of
planners



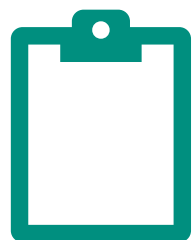
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Interviews of
suppliers



12+

Online
resources



36

Planner
survey
respondents



39

Supplier
survey
respondents



50

Points of
Interest for
Visitor Data



6

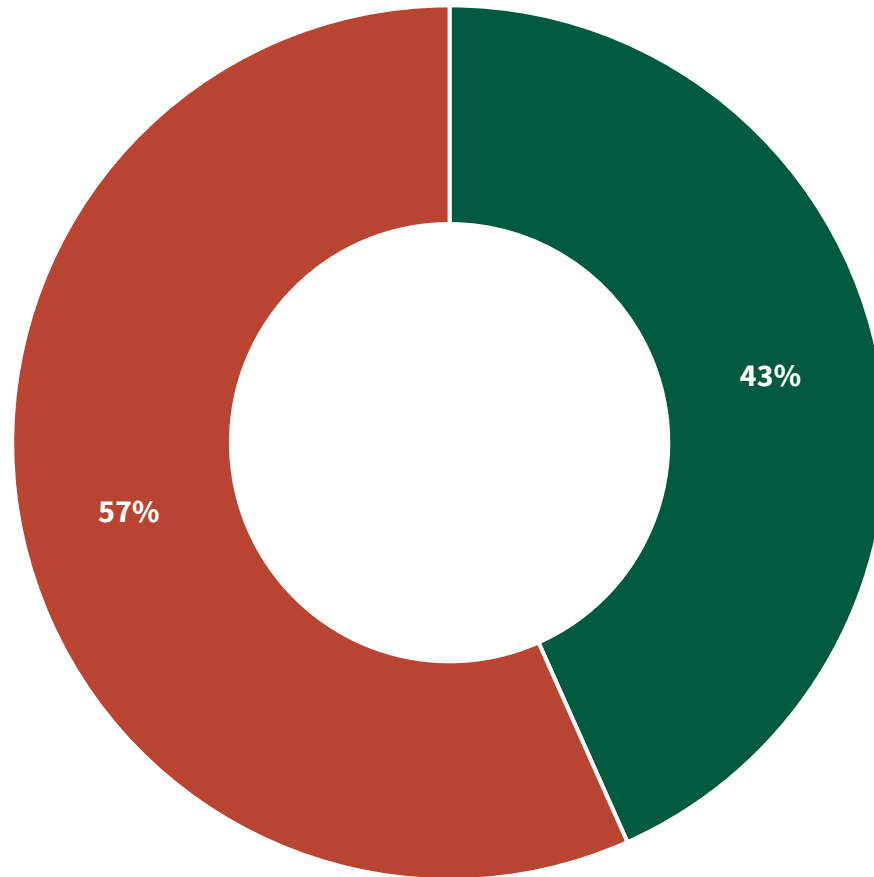
Competitor
states
assessed



99

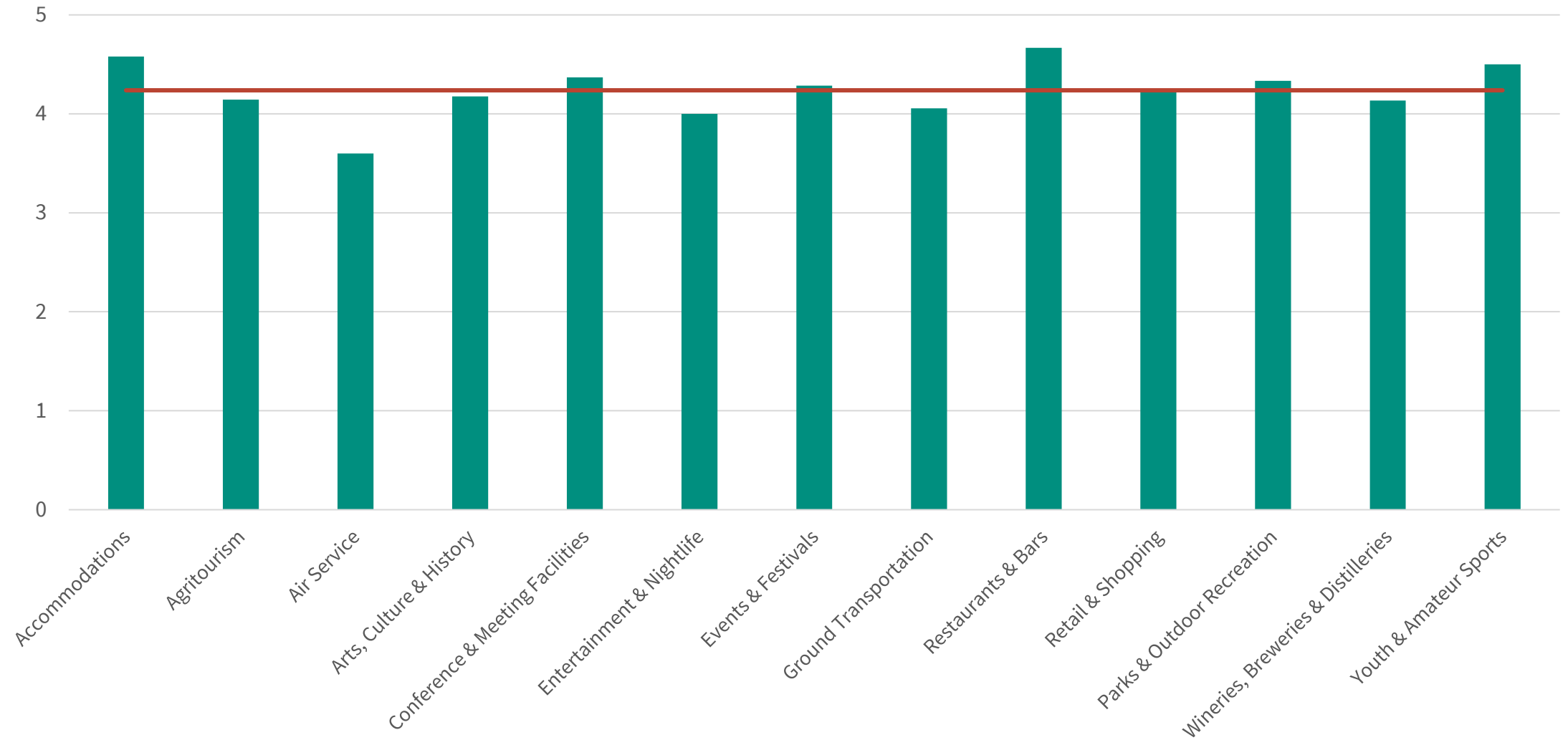
Facilities
inventoried

RESPONDENT SPLIT

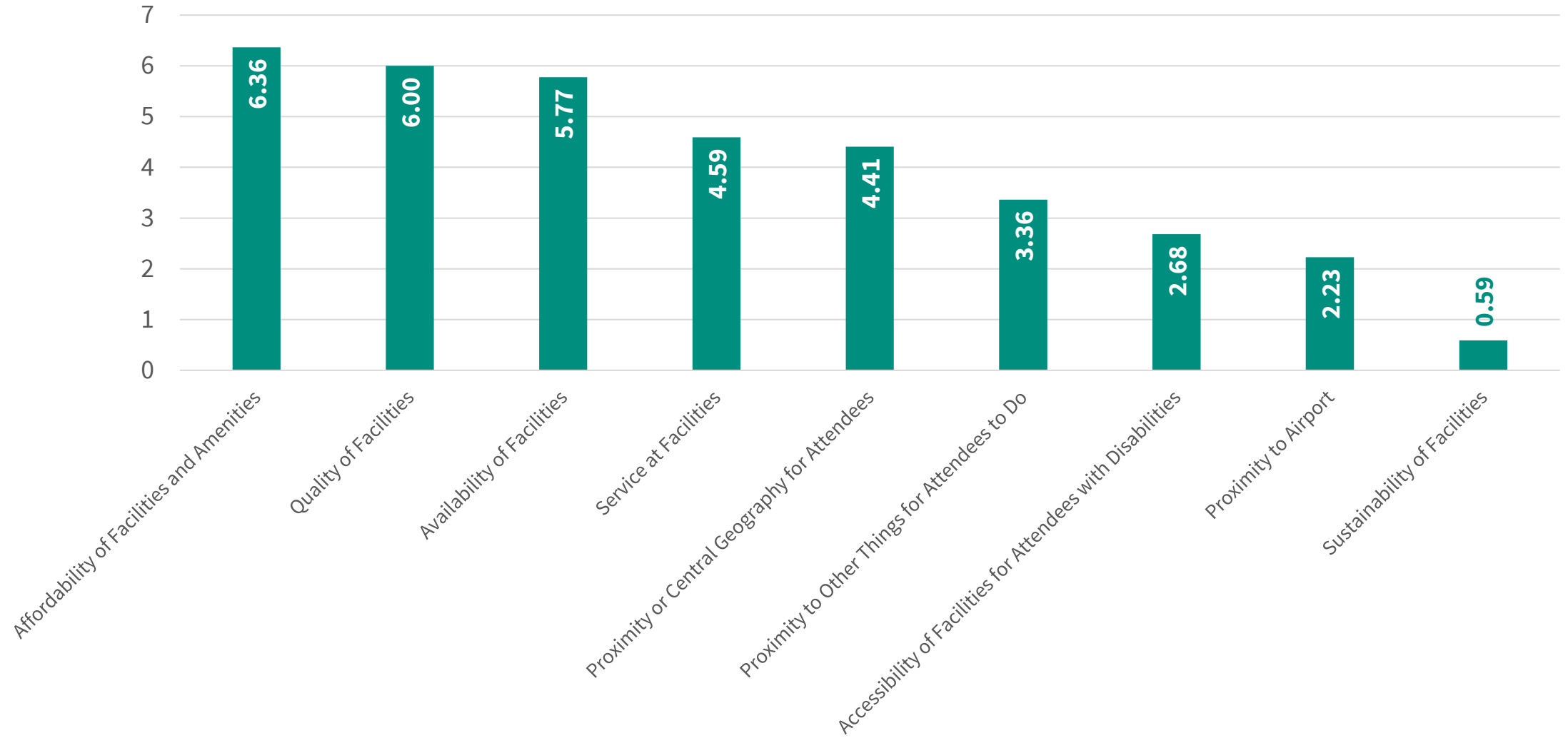


- I am a meeting planner, or somebody who is an end user of meeting or convention facilities in Iowa
- I am part of the Iowa tourism industry, and my organization provides meetings/convention space, and/or I am responsible for booking meetings, and/or I promote my destination for meetings in Iowa

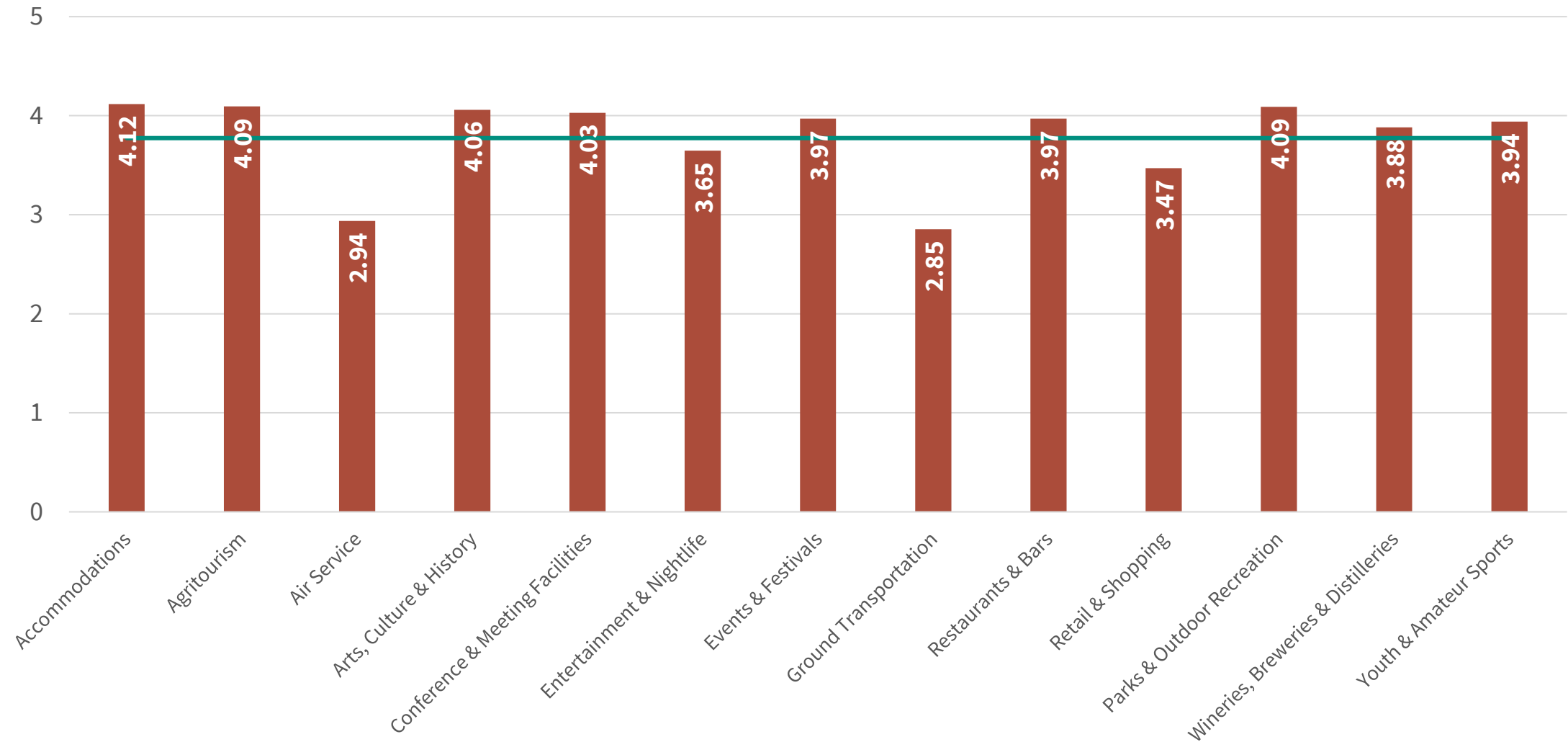
PLANNERS: QUALITY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE



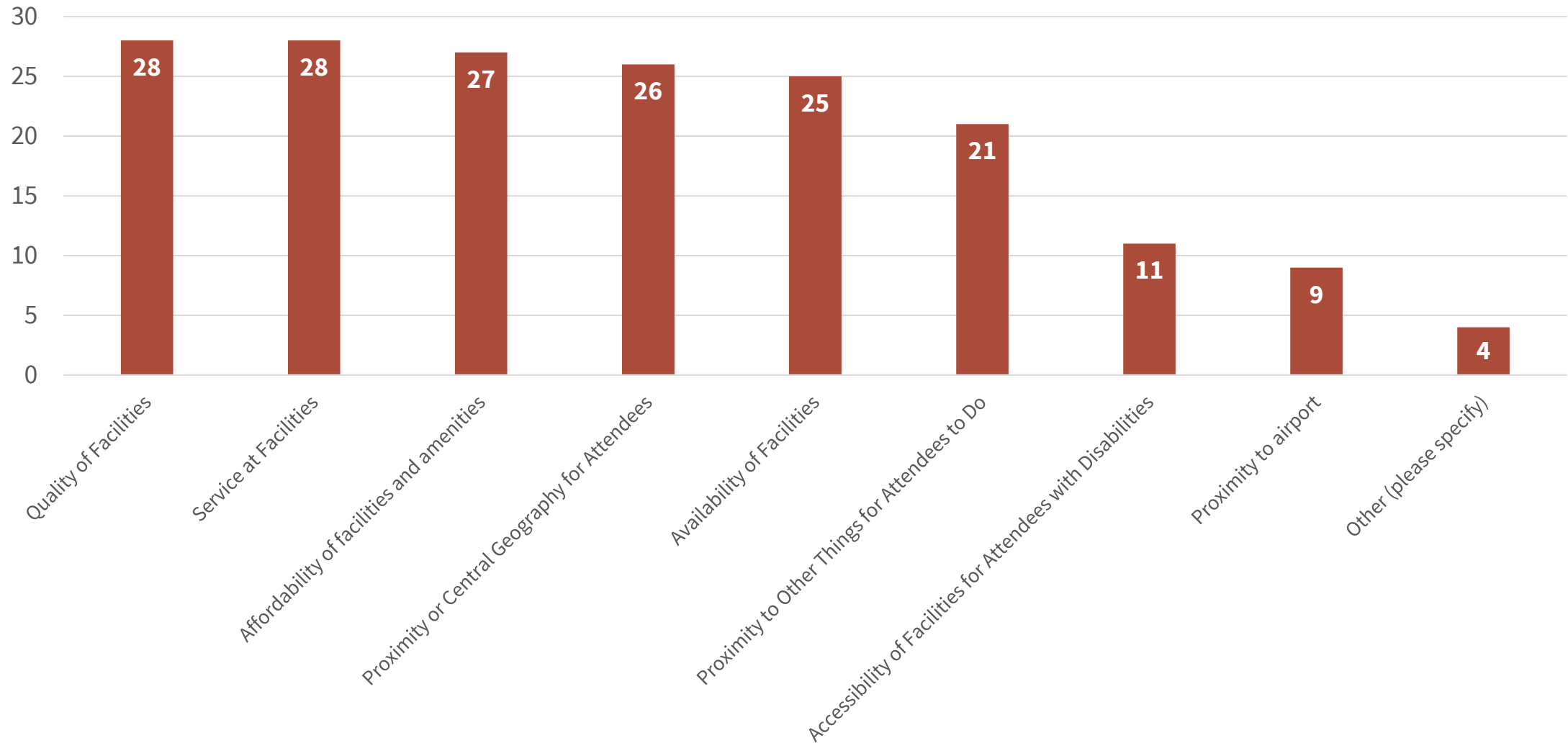
PLANNERS: VENUE ATTRIBUTE IMPORTANCE



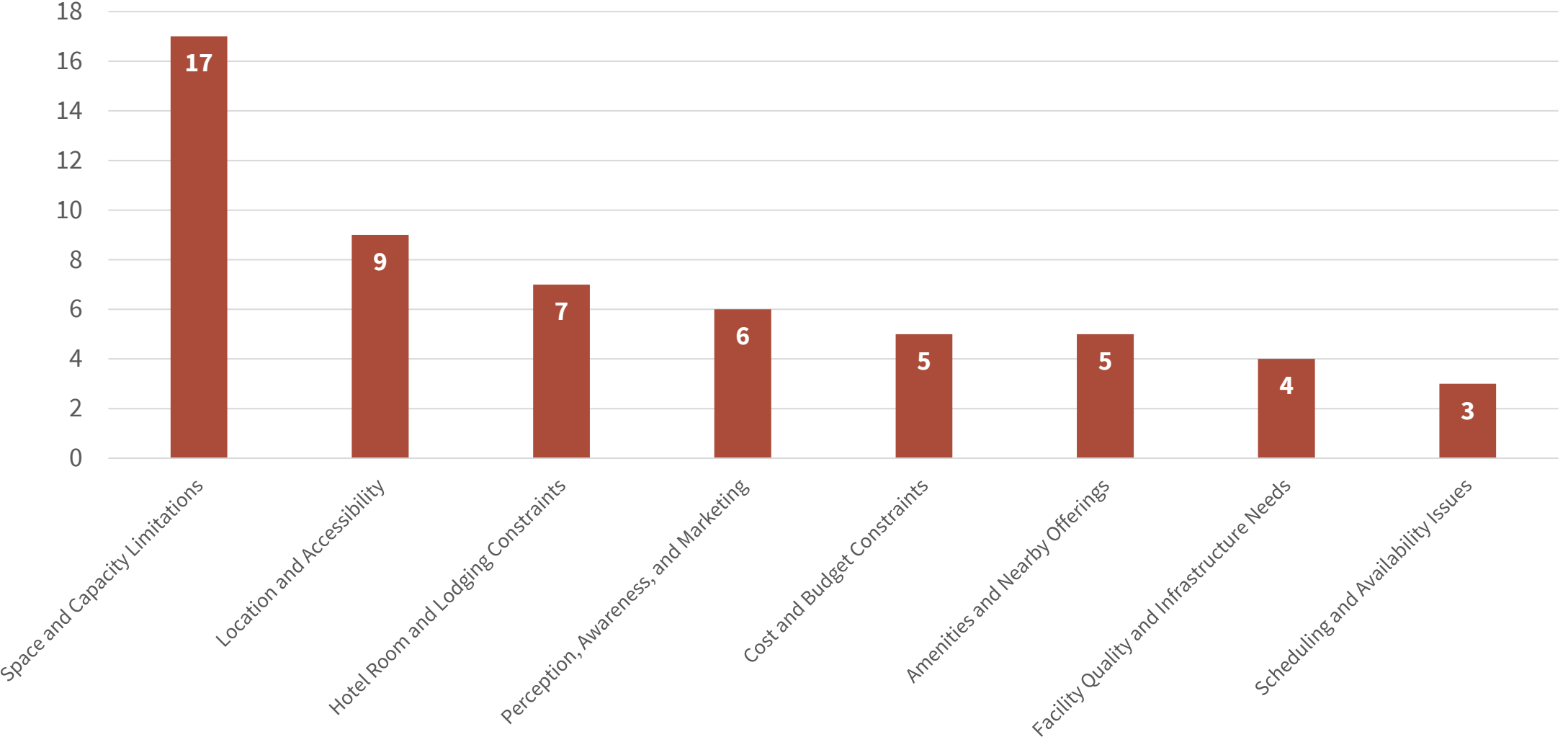
SUPPLIERS: QUALITY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE



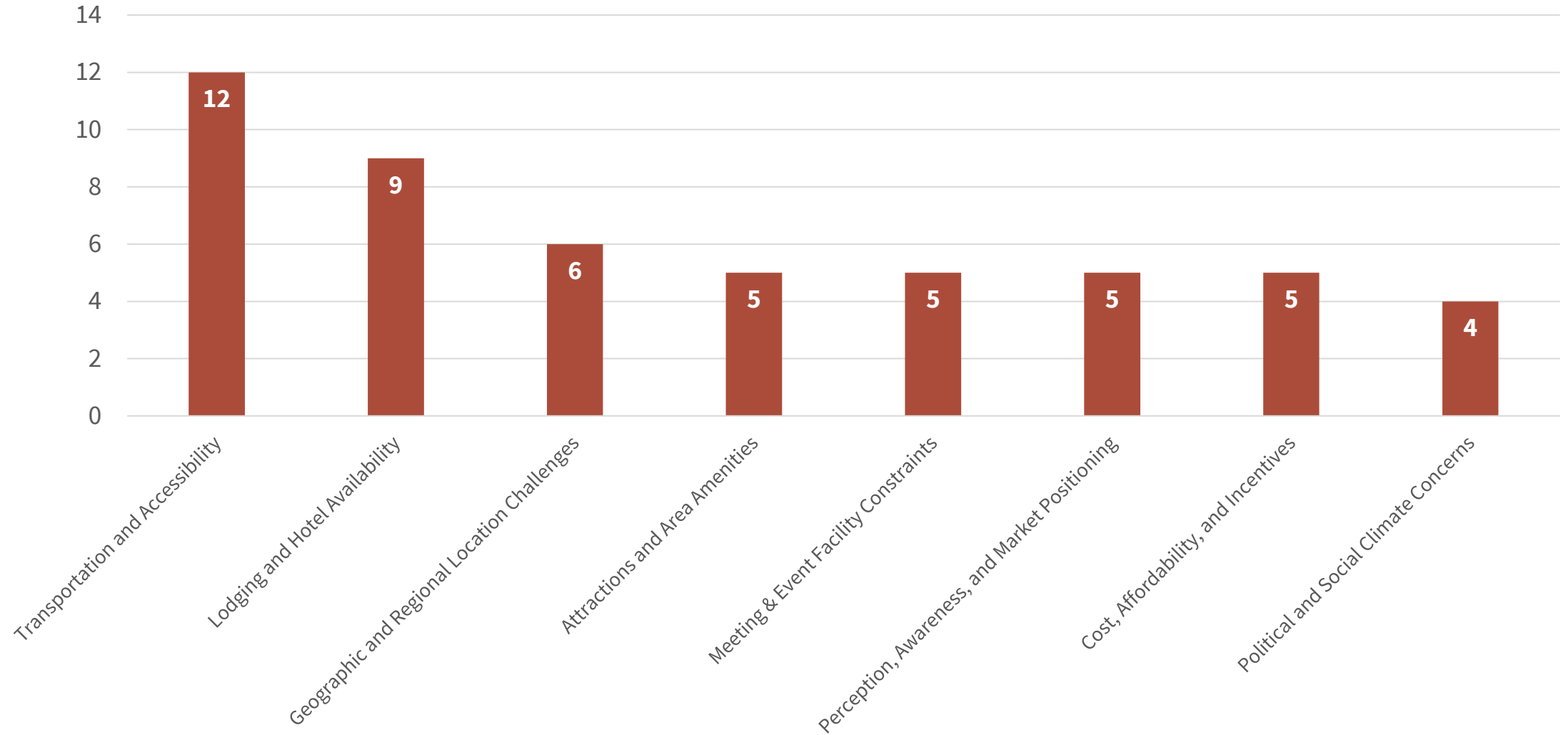
SUPPLIERS: REASONS EVENTS ARE BOOKED AT YOUR LOCATION



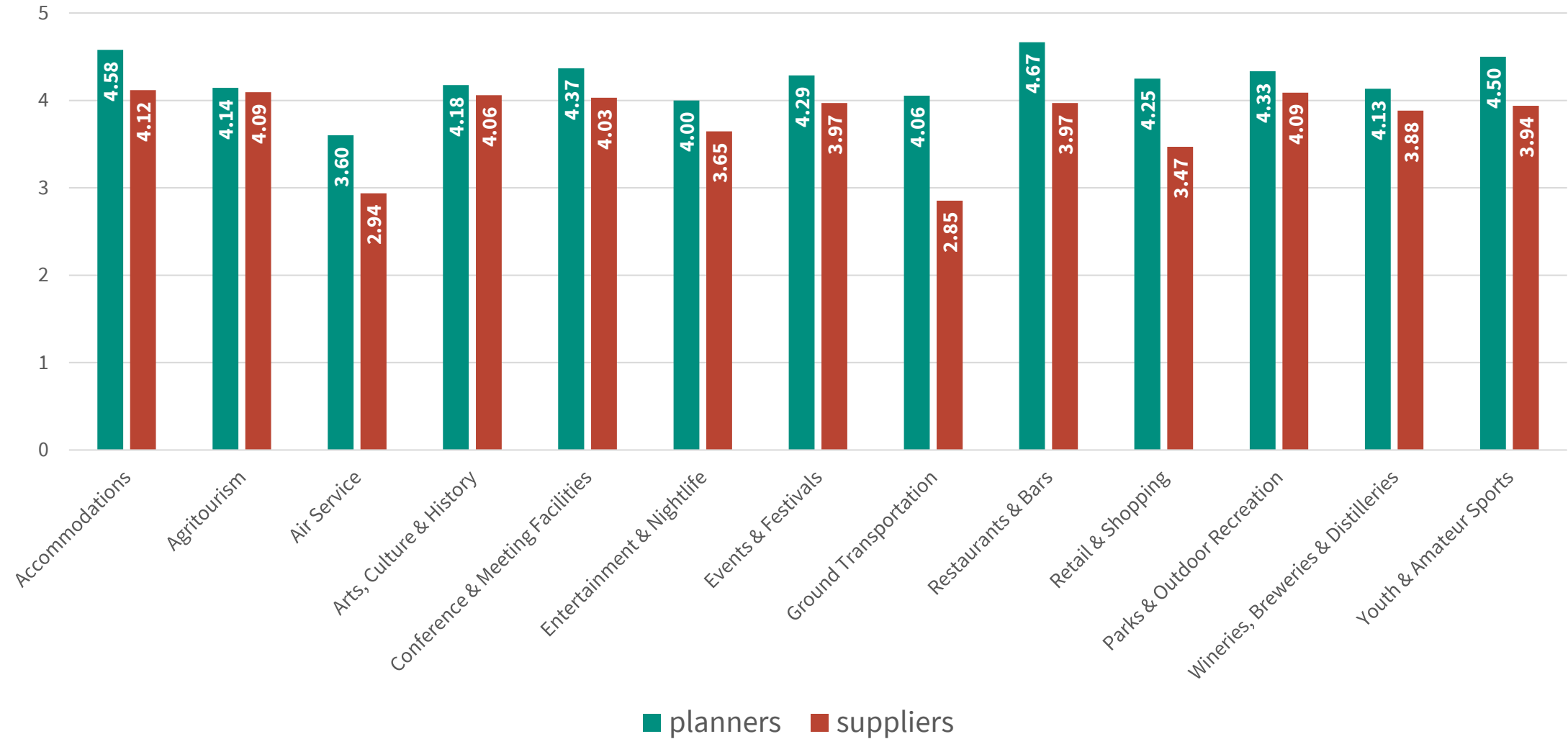
SUPPLIERS: LIMITATIONS TO BOOKINGS, FACILITIES



SUPPLIERS: LIMITATIONS TO BOOKINGS, TOURISM AREA



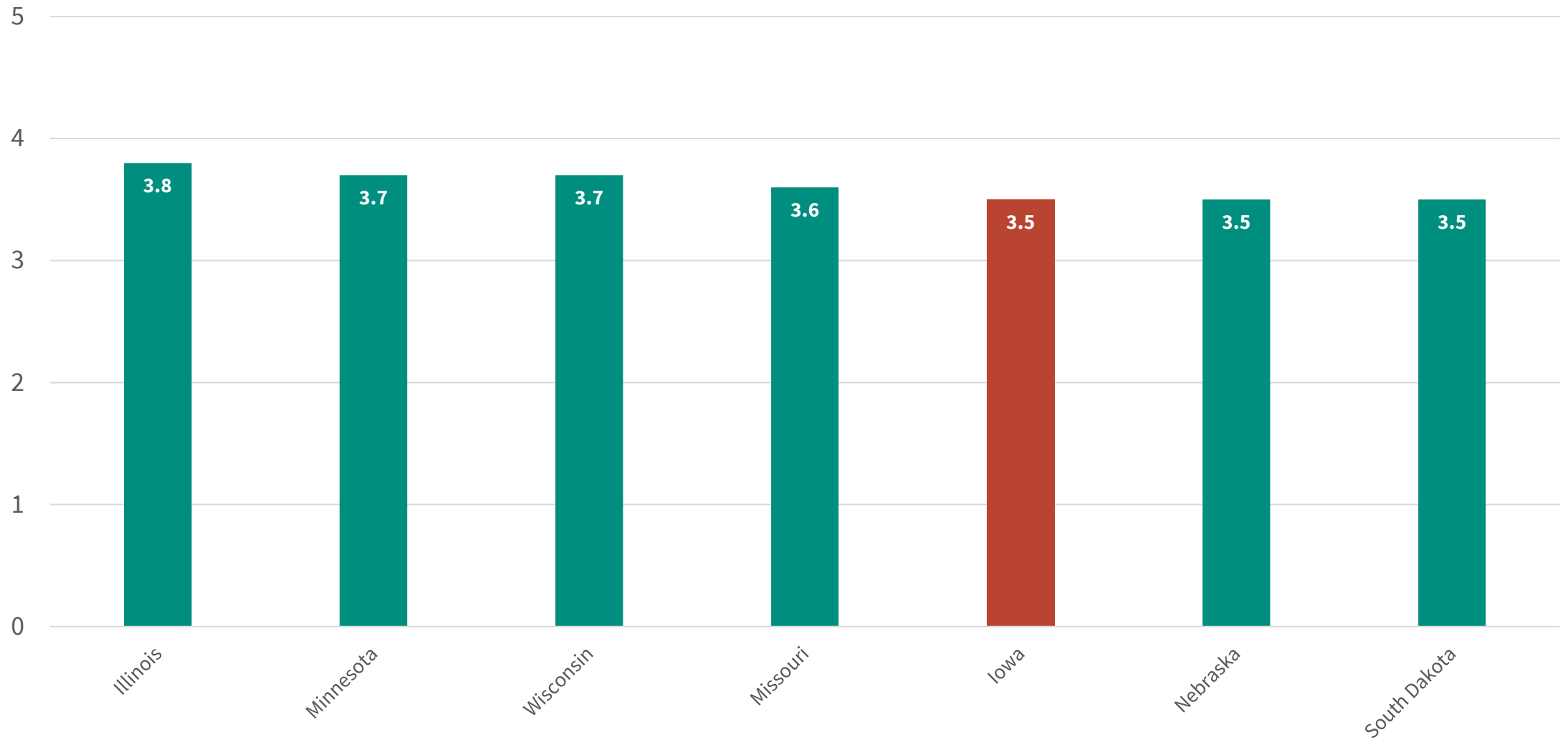
PLANNERS & SUPPLIERS: QUALITY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCE



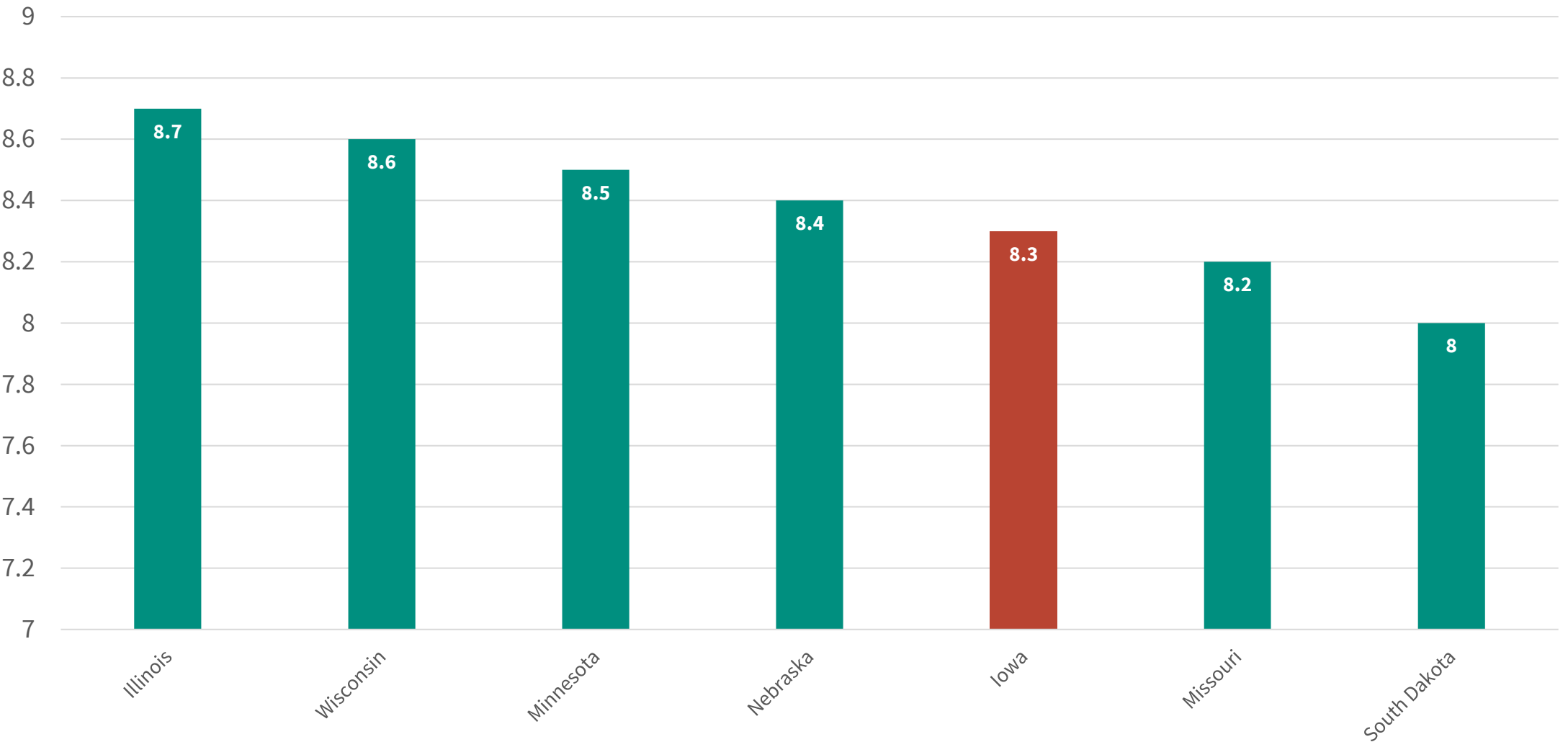
ASCE INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD

State	Aviation	Roads
Iowa	C-	B-
Illinois	C+	D+
Minnesota	B	D+
Missouri	C	D+
Wisconsin	C+	C

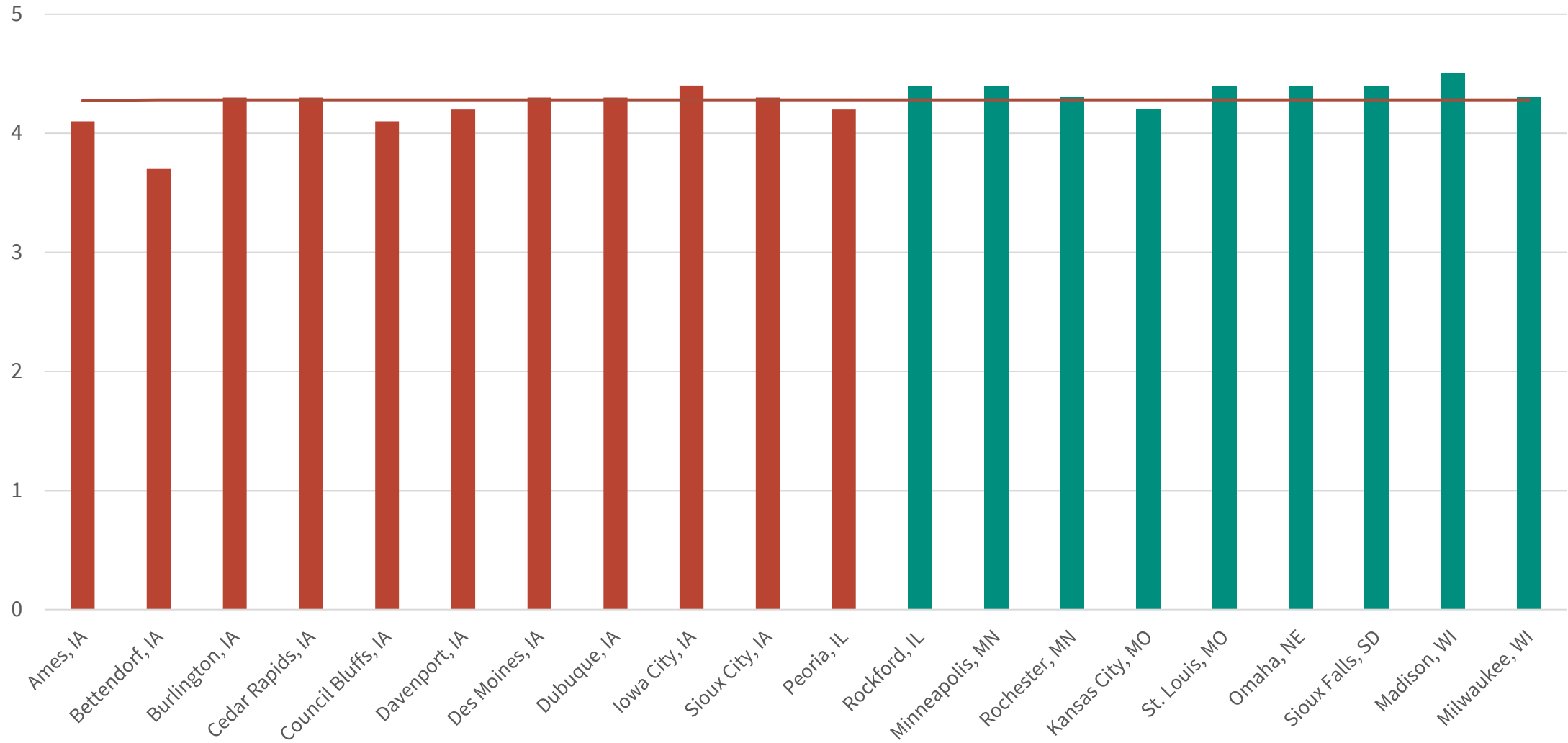
RESTAURANT RANKINGS AMONGST COMP. SET



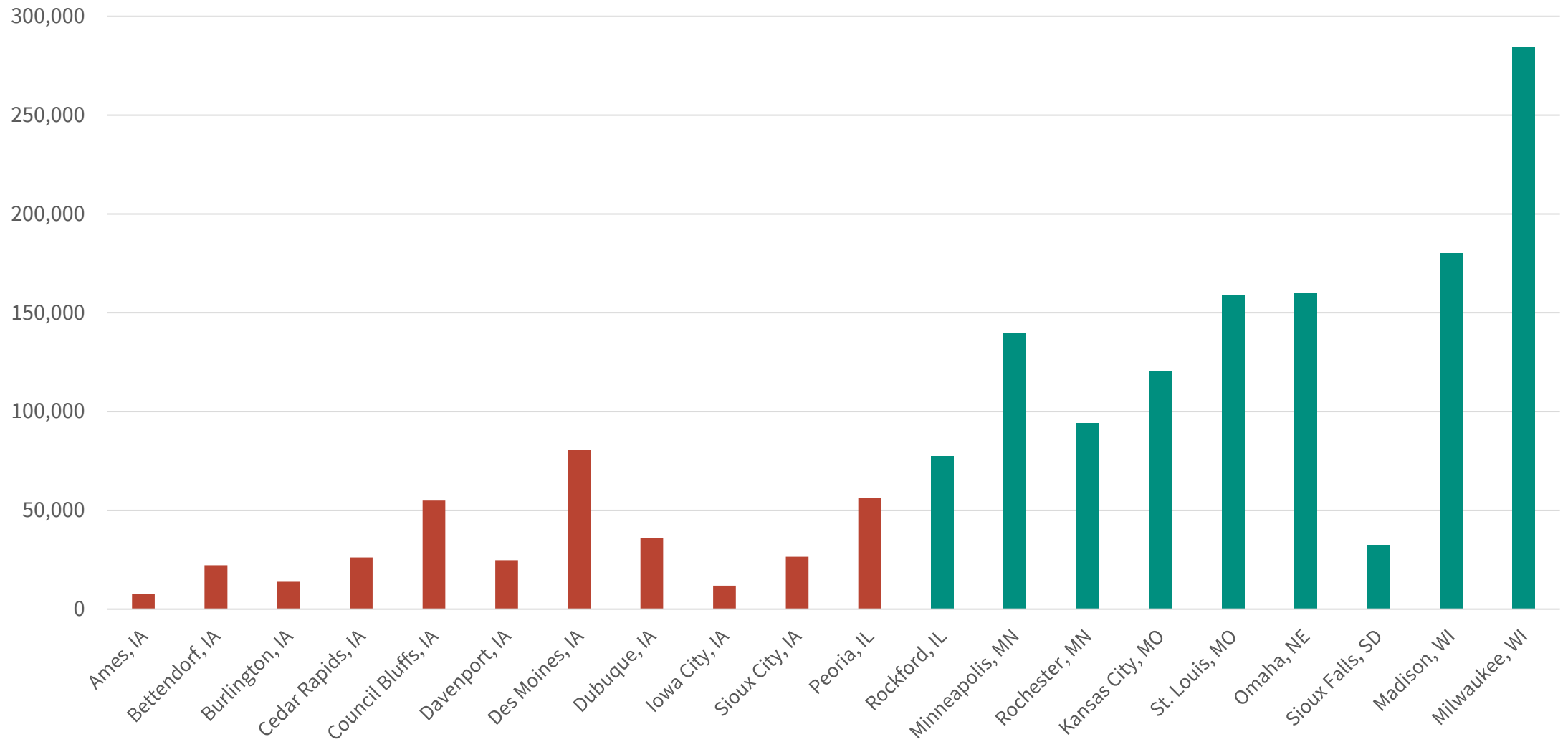
ACCOMMODATIONS RANKINGS AMONGST COMP. SET



FACILITY COMPARISON: GOOGLE FACILITY RATINGS



FACILITY COMPARISON: AVERAGE MEETING SPACE



INVENTORY: 99 IOWA FACILITIES THAT CAN HOST 150+ ATTENDEES

INVENTORY OF IOWA MEETING FACILITIES: 1-25

No.	Facility	City	Tourism Area	Google Rating	AAA Rating	Built	Renovated	Type	Guest Rooms	Meeting Space, SF	Largest Room, SF	Meeting Rooms	Exhibit Space, SF	Total Meeting, SF
1	AmericInn by Wyndham Maquoketa	Maquoketa	Scenic & Storied	3.6	—	2003	2019	Hotel	63	8,100	4,100	2	—	8,100
2	Ameristar Casino Hotel Council Bluffs	Council Bluffs	Loess Hills & Beyond	4	4 Star	1996	—	Hotel	160	8,000	4,958	3	5,000	8,000
3	Baymont by Wyndham Des Moines Airport	Des Moines	Capital Country	4.5	3 Star	1995	2016	Hotel	56	4,000	3,731	4	—	4,000
4	BEST WESTERN Holiday Lodge	Clear Lake	Lakes & Land	4.2	2 Star	1964	2017	Hotel	136	6,000	3,456	1	—	6,000
7	Best Western Plus Dubuque Hotel & Conference Center	Dubuque	Driftless Area	4.4	3 Star	1979	2022	Hotel	150	12,725	4,006	9	—	12,725
6	Best Western Plus Longbranch Hotel & Convention Center	Cedar Rapids	Scenic & Storied	4.1	3 Star	1979	2022	Resort	—	3,711	3,711	11	—	3,711
7	Best Western Plus Steeplegate Inn	Davenport	Scenic & Storied	4.2	3 Star	1985	2015	Hotel	118	8,200	3,737	6	—	8,200
8	Bien Venu Event Center	Cedar Falls	Driftless Area	4.5	—	2019	—	Special Event Venue	—	8,818	5,600	7	—	44,425
9	Boulders Conference Center	Denison	Loess Hills & Beyond	4.2	—	2006	—	Conference Center	400	12,446	5,640	6	—	12,446
10	Bridge View Center	Ottumwa	Scenic & Storied	4.4	—	2007	—	Special Event Venue	—	56,233	30,000	15	—	56,233
11	Burlington Memorial Auditorium	Burlington	Scenic & Storied	4.5	—	1939	2020	Special Event Venue	—	2,310	2,310	1	—	2,310
12	Cardiff Center at Fort Frenzy	Fort Dodge	Capital Country	4.7	—	2019	—	Special Event Venue	—	7,000	6500	4	—	7,000
13	Carrollton Inn	Carroll	Loess Hills & Beyond	4.2	—	1978	2015	Hotel	86	5,000	5,000	1	—	5,000
14	Catfish Bend Conference & Event Center	Burlington	Scenic & Storied	4.1	3 Star	2007	2008	Resort	185	30,000	9,060	10	9,000	30,000
15	Clarion Inn - Des Moines	Des Moines	Capital Country	4.2	—	1974	2017	Hotel	139	8,000	4,402	8	—	8,000
16	Clay County Regional Events Center	Spencer	Lakes & Land	4.6	—	2003	—	Conference Center	—	35,380	24,000	8	25,000	35,380
17	Comfort Suites Burlington	Burlington	Scenic & Storied	4.4	3 Star	2005	2017	Hotel	86	9,315	7,372	10	—	9,315
18	Courtyard Des Moines Ankeny	Ankeny	Capital Country	4.4	3 Star	2008	2018	Hotel	119	6,300	5,280	6	—	6,300
19	Courtyard Iowa City University Heights	Iowa City	Scenic & Storied	4.5	4 Star	2021	—	Hotel	140	13,310	2,501	5	—	13,310
20	Courtyard Sioux City Downtown	Sioux City	Lakes & Land	4.2	5 Star	2019	2020	Hotel	150	60,288	28,634	20	50,000	60,288
21	Courtyard Waterloo Cedar Falls	Waterloo	Driftless Area	4.2	—	2017	—	Hotel	166	4,500	4,500	1	—	4,500
22	Des Moines Marriott Downtown	Des Moines	Capital Country	4.3	3 Star	1981	2018	Hotel	413	33,851	15,340	16	—	33,851
23	Diamond Event Center	Cedar Falls	Driftless Area	4.6	—	2018	—	Special Event Venue	—	6,259	6,259	3	6,259	6,259
24	DMACC Newton Conference Center	Newton	Capital Country	4.8	—	2010	2020	Conference Center	—	7,115	2,100	8	—	7,115
25	DoubleTree by Hilton Davenport	Davenport	Scenic & Storied	3.3	—	1995	2019	Hotel	223	17,678	7,812	9	—	17,678

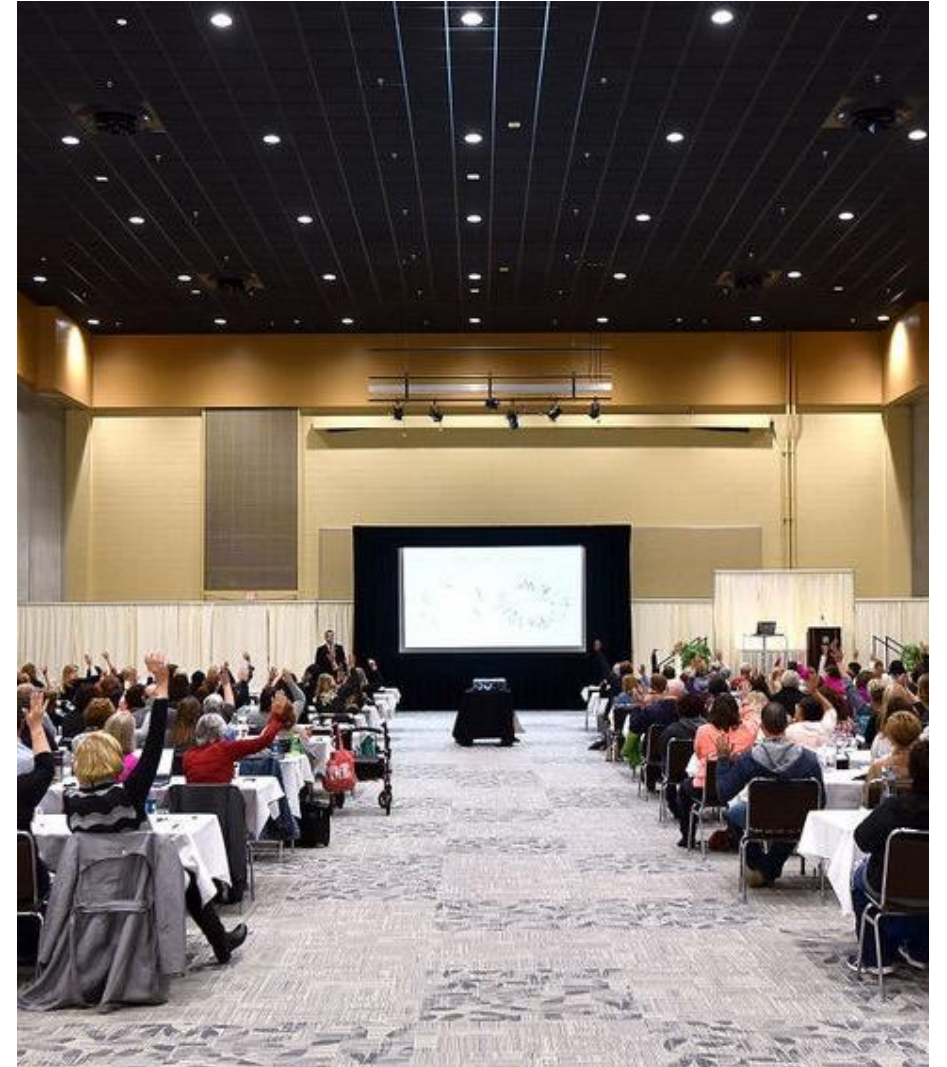
MEETING & CONVENTION VISITOR PROFILES, BY TOURISM AREA

- Based on visitor origin data spanning one year at meeting & convention facilities within each Tourism Area:
 - Demographic Information
 - Psychographic Segmentation
 - Consumer Behavior & Market Potential
 - Media Preferences
 - Travel Preferences



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Invest in facilities
2. Grow airlift
3. Develop engaging convention center-adjacent places



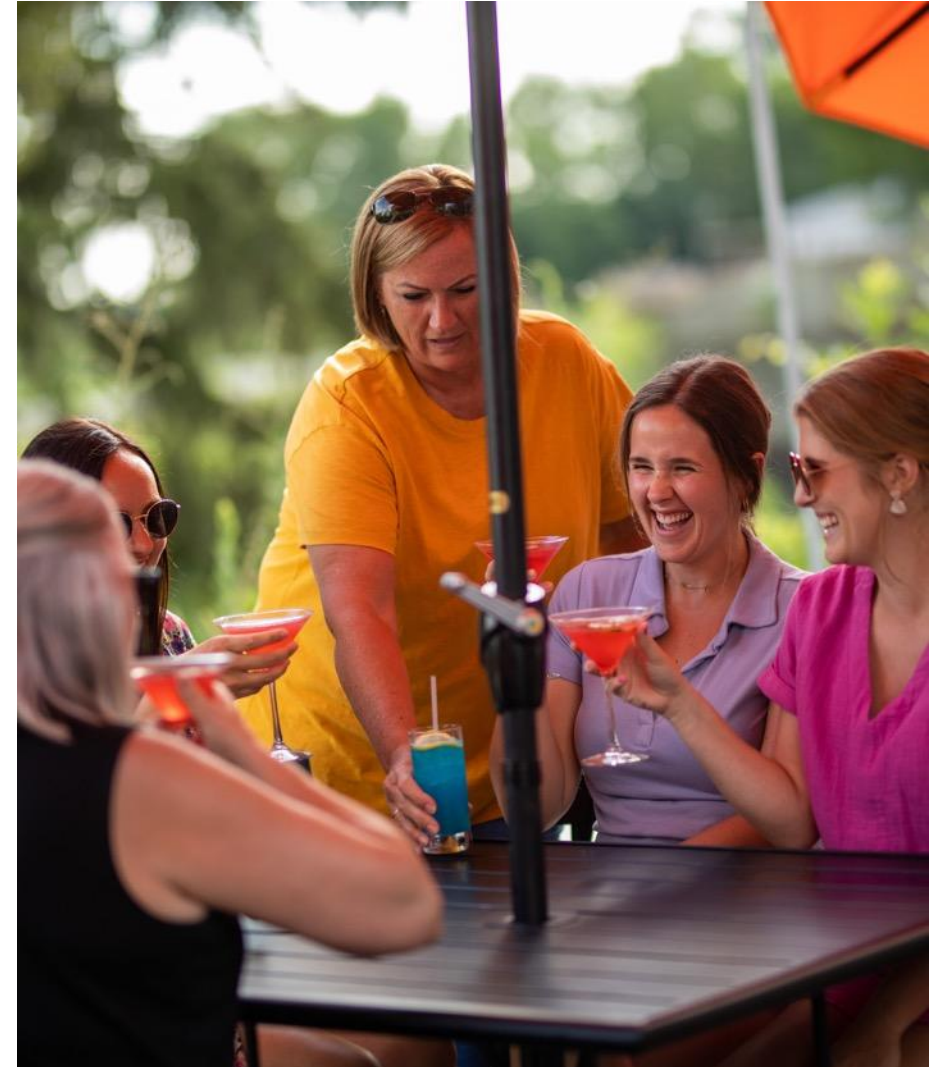
MARKETING & MESSAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Tell a compelling story of Iowa's facilities
2. Play to your destination's strengths
3. Welcome plus-ones



COLLABORATION & RELATIONSHIPS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue being “Iowa Nice”
2. Support trade show presence
3. Continue to focus on inter-agency relationship building

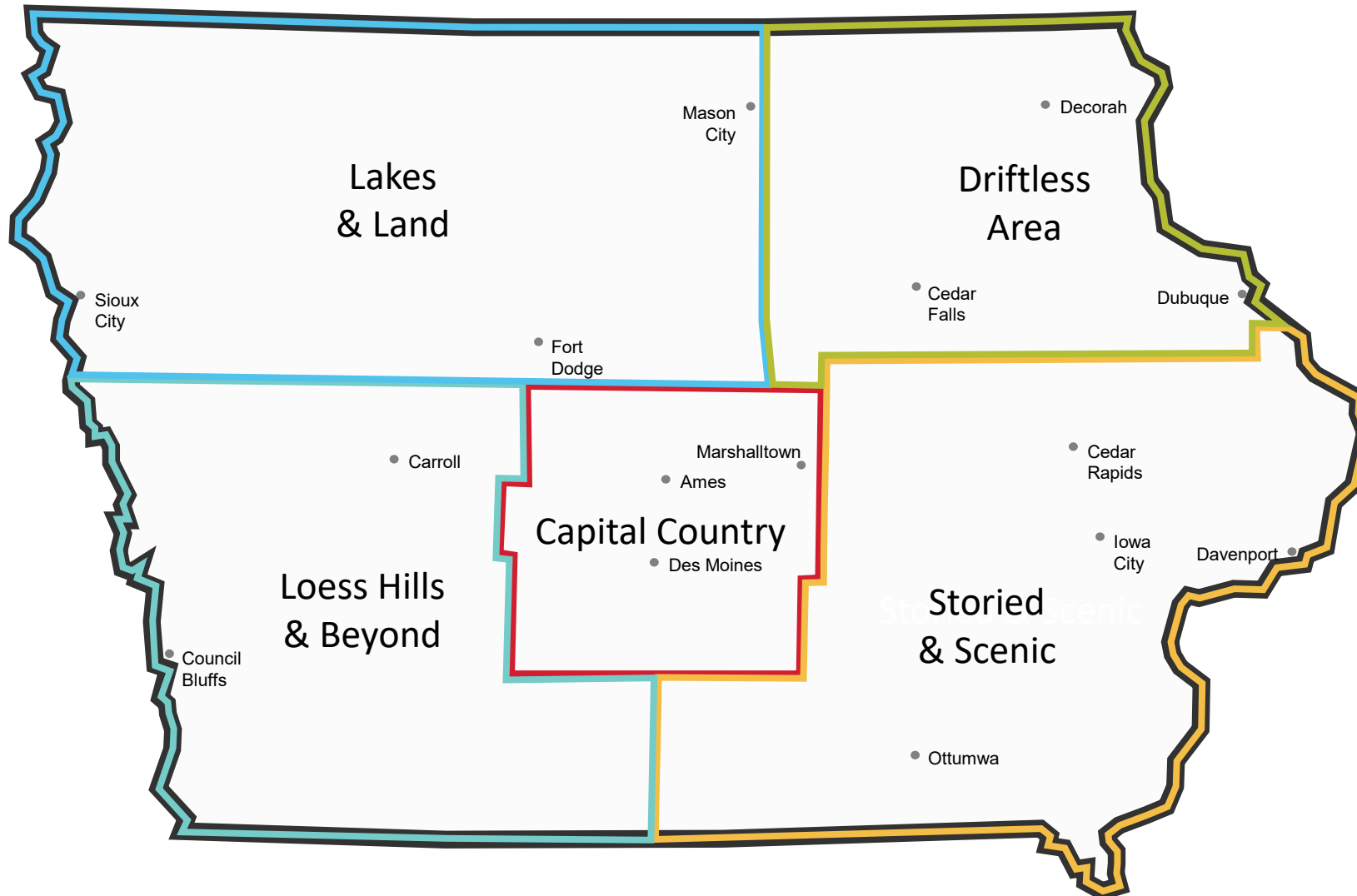


ADVOCACY & EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue policy advocacy and incentive creation in support of meetings & conventions
2. Provide education on the value of tourism, and of meetings & conventions in particular



MAP OF IOWA'S FIVE TOURISM AREAS



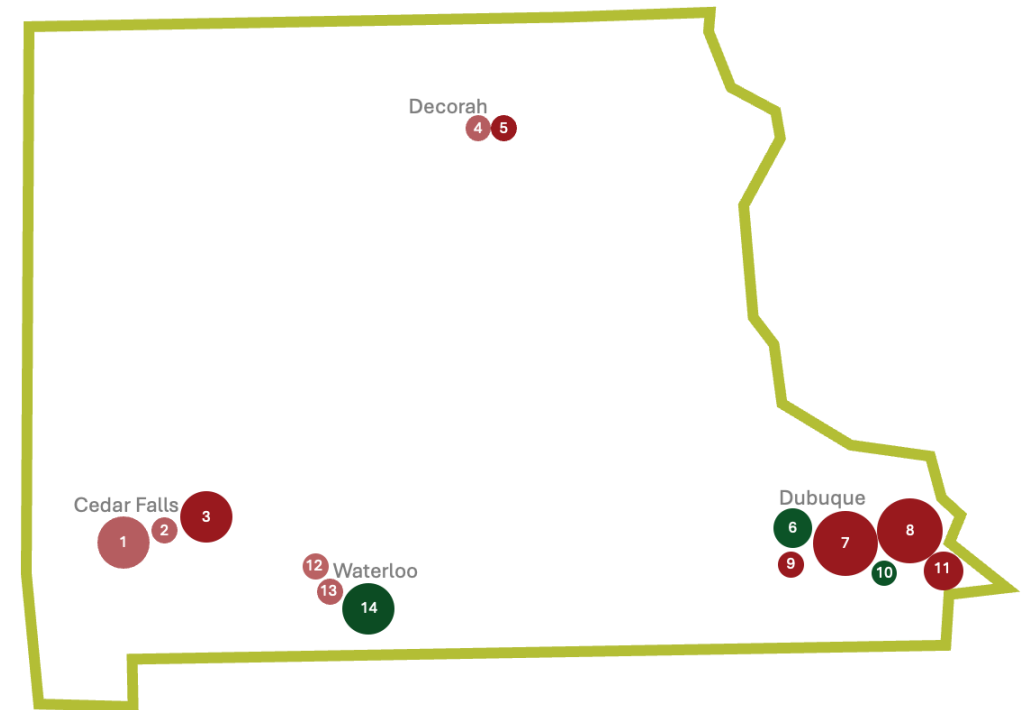
CAPITAL COUNTRY OPPORTUNITIES

- Invest in facilities, especially updating older stock of meeting facilities
- Welcome plus-ones, especially among the Urban Adventurer demographic
- Grow airlift



DRIFTLESS AREA OPPORTUNITIES

- Invest in facilities, especially older facilities and those in need of renovations
- Play to your destination's strengths (Eco-Curious Explorers and outdoor recreation)
- Focus on development of experiences adjacent to facilities



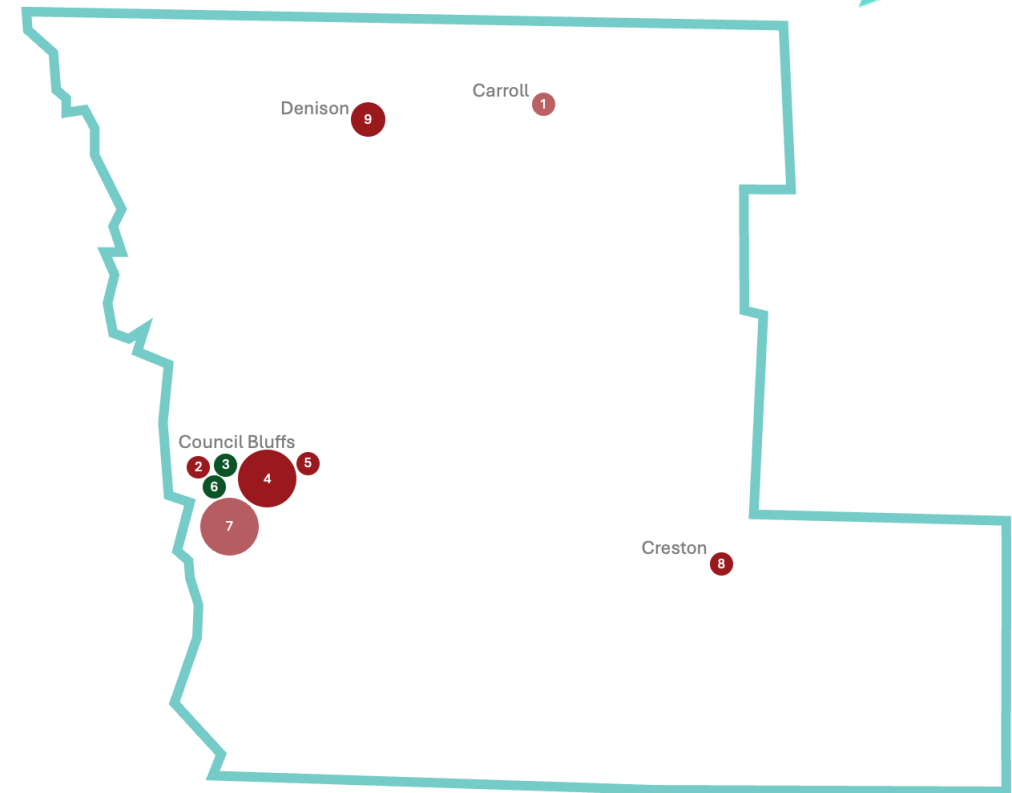
LAKES & LAND OPPORTUNITIES

- Play to your strengths in visitor experiences
- Welcome plus-ones
- Bolster lower-ranking visitor experience facets



LOESS HILLS & BEYOND OPPORTUNITIES

- Focus on development of amenities around convention facilities
- Welcome plus-ones (heartland suburbanites, outdoor activities)
- Tell a compelling story of Loess Hills & Beyond's facilities (updated meeting space, highly-rated accommodations)



STORIED & SCENIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Play to your destination strengths
- Focus on development near meeting facilities
- Welcome plus-ones (out-of-region niche)

