



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: City Council
Meeting Date: May 20th, 2024
From: David Snider, Economic Development Manager
Subject: Funding Request: Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce

DECISION TO BE MADE:

Whether to approve funding assistance for the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce.

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE:

To provide the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce with funding assistance to help build and promote tourism in the region.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

At the conclusion of the review of the Special Service Contract Program (SSCP) applications for the current biennium at the September 18th, 2023 City Council meeting, members of the Council expressed a desire to consider the SSCP applications for the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce (SACC) and the Sandy Historical Museum separately from the rest of the SSCP applications.

Following that direction, two additional meetings took place: a February 5th City Council work session and an additional discussion on April 5th with Mayor Pulliam and Councilors Walker and Sheldon, where it was emphasized that area tourism promotion should be a direct focus and expected outcome of these proposed funding enhancements. Both organizations agreed that expanding and promoting tourism in the area would be a primary focus of future activities.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / ANALYSIS:

The Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce is proposing a tourism marketing initiative called **Travel26**, which would be the beginning of a regional program to promote tourism and the businesses that benefit from it along the section of the Hwy 26 corridor from Boring to the Mt. Hood Villages.

In the first year of the program, funding would be used primarily to complete a large amount of convening work to develop a strong stakeholder's group of tourism-facing businesses to serve as a de-facto board of directors to guide future marketing and promotional work, and to create basic infrastructure (dedicated website, branding and brand promotion) for the program. This work will require significant time spent convening and organizing local business owners, particularly in the Villages where the closure of the Mount Hood Chamber of Commerce has left local businesses without leadership in this area. Work would also include a first year promotional campaign to introduce the Travel26 brand to visitors and prepare for future campaigns.

After the first year, work processes would shift to the creation of advertising and promotional campaigns driven by the stakeholder's group to publicize tourism assets and tourism facing businesses along the corridor using multiple channels including print ads, radio, social media marketing and other internet based channels, and tourism partners like Oregon's Mount Hood Territory, Experience Mount Hood and the Gorge, Travel Oregon, the ski resorts, and area lodging partners. This would also include the potential creation of tourism-facing events to begin boosting visitation to the area, such as hosting mountain bike events at Sandy Ridge, or the restoration of the Bite of Mount Hood. The ultimate long term goal of this program would be to establish Travel26 as a destination marketing organization (DMO) at some point in the future, establishing a permanent funding source to continue this work.

BUDGET IMPACT:

The amount of the Chamber's funding request is **\$28,000**. To supplement this funding, the SACC was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant from Experience Mount Hood and the Gorge, a DMO funded through Clackamas County Tourism, to assist with the convening work that will be required to get this program going – the grant award announcement is included as an attachment to this report.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE:

"I move to approve the funding request from the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce, as included in the agenda packet."

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS / EXHIBITS:

- Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce proposal & funding request (Travel26)
- Contract budget (Travel26)
- Mt Hood Gorge Strategic Investment Funds award notice 4_23_24