



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: February 20, 2025		Subject: Tourism Development Strategy Update	
		Staff Member: Zoe Mombert, Assistant to the City Manager, and Mark Ottenad, Public and Government Affairs Director	
		Department: Administration	
Action Required		Advisory Board/Commission Recommendation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance 1 st Reading Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance 2 nd Reading Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information or Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only <input type="checkbox"/> Council Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Consent Agenda		<input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Denial <input type="checkbox"/> None Forwarded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable Comments: N/A	
Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends Council provide feedback on the draft Tourism Development Strategy.			
Recommended Language for Motion: N/A			
Project / Issue Relates To:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Goals/Priorities:	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopted Master Plan(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Review the draft Tourism Development Strategy and provide direction.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The original Tourism Development Strategy (“Strategy”) was adopted by the City Council on May 5, 2014 (Resolution No. 2468). The Strategy was developed with input from a 17-member volunteer Tourism Development Strategy advisory task force with input from the community. Over the past 10 years, the City has made considerable progress on the actions outlined in the strategy (Attachment 2), the community has grown, and the tourism landscape continues to evolve.

In 2023, the Tourism Promotion Committee included the Tourism Development Strategy project in their Five-Year Action Plan and Annual One-Year Implementation Plan that was approved by City Council. The draft Tourism Development Strategy (Attachment 1) was developed by Whereabout Destination Services (consultant) with input from the Tourism Promotion Committee members, other tourism stakeholders and the community. The draft Strategy includes the vision for the tourism-promotion program, the existing attributes of the community and the draft strategy. The strategy includes nine (9) objectives, which will be achieved by implementing nearly 30 actions in three phases over the next 10 years. As a “living document,” the Strategy is updated annually, and actions will be prioritized by the Tourism Promotion Committee’s yearly Five-Year Action Plan and Annual One-Year Implementation Plan.

BACKGROUND

Originally produced in 2013 and adopted by City Council in May 2014, the *Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy* (“Strategy”) provided fieldwork research and a general blueprint for local-area Tourism Development Strategy services, together with a set of recommendations for both short- and long-term actions. The Strategy established the “Visit Wilsonville,” later modified to “Explore Wilsonville,” destination-marketing program and called for the creation of a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) or Tourism Promotion Committee (“Committee”), together with development of a tourism website and other tourism marketing efforts.

The Committee prioritized in 2015 key components of the Strategy and is working through those elements via annual approval of a larger five-year action plan and a more specific one-year plan targeted for implementation the following fiscal year. Thus, the Strategy is updated annually by a *Five-Year Action Plan and Annual One-Year Implementation Plan for the Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy* (“Plan”) that acts as a business plan approved by the Committee and adopted by the City Council.

The Plan is implemented primarily through a *Tourism Development Strategy Services Program* (“Program”) developed by the City’s destination-marketing and tourism-promotion contractor, JayRay Ads & PR of Tacoma, Washington, with input and direction by the Committee and approved by City Council concurrent with the Plan. The Program consists of a specific set of marketing-communications deliverables, as well as general ongoing professional services, including website development and management, social media, public relations, marketing and advertising.

Over the last 10 years, many recent activities have prompted the City to seek an update to the 2014 Tourism Development Strategy. During the intervening time, many steps such as establishing an oversight committee and creating a tourism website and visitor itineraries were completed. The Covid pandemic created a disruption to traditional travel plans for both business and leisure visitors. A “new normal” may have evolved in terms of travel. Local attractions, including the World of Speed (motorsport museum) and Regal Cinemas movie theater closed, while a new 4-star hotel, Hilton Garden Inn, opened in 2018 and Holiday Inn Wilsonville/South Portland undertook a major remodel. The new Tourism Development Strategy is to act as the ‘guide’ for the Explore Wilsonville destination-marketing and tourism-promotion program for the next 10 years. As a “living document,” and noted above, the Strategy is updated annually by a Five-Year Action Plan and Annual One-Year Implementation Plan.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

The updated Tourism Development Strategy outlines the work of the Committee over the next 10 years. By implementing the actions within the Strategy, the City can become “alive with a vibrant sense of community, culture and heritage.”

TIMELINE:

The City posted a request for proposals (RFP) for a Tourism Promotion Strategy on September 7, 2023, and received three (3) proposals by the October 27, 2023, deadline. The Tourism Promotion Committee reviewed the proposals on November 9, 2023, then interviewed the consultant teams on November 29, 2023, before selecting Whereabout Destination Services to complete Wilsonville’s Tourism Development Strategy. The same consultant team had successfully worked with both of the City’s tourism partner agencies, Clackamas County’s Oregon’s Mt. Hood Territory and the Washington County Visitors Association, dba Explore Tualatin Valley.

The Tourism Promotion Strategy project kicked off in January 2024. During the spring of 2024, the consultant team interviewed 10 individual stakeholders including government partners, industry experts and active individuals in the tourism industry. They gathered qualitative insight into the City’s tourism challenges and strengths. A tourism destination survey was also conducted from February – May 2024, which yielded a moderately low sample size of respondents. Finally, the consultants conducted a three-day in-market assessment in June 2024.

A small planning team made up of City of Wilsonville and industry stakeholders met five (5) times during September – October 2024 to develop the vision, competitive position, keys to destination evolution, objects and collective impact model for the strategy,

The Committee received updates and provided input on the project at their February 28, May 1, September 13, and October 11, 2024, meetings as well as their January 29, 2025, meeting. The Committee will meet to discuss and recommend the Strategy for adoption at the scheduled March 19, 2025, meeting.

CURRENT YEAR BUDGET IMPACTS:

The Tourism Development Strategy project budget, of \$100,000 was split between fiscal year 2023-24 and fiscal year 2024-25. Tourism Promotion Committee projects are funded by transient lodging tax (TLT) revenue paid by overnight guests at Wilsonville’s lodging properties.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS:

The consultant team reviewed several master plans, including but not limited to, the Parks Comprehensive Master Plan, Town Center Plan, and Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy as well as the 2024 Citizen Survey. The consultant team interviewed 10 individual stakeholders including government partners, industry experts and active individuals in the tourism industry. They gathered qualitative insight into the City’s tourism challenges and strengths. A tourism destination survey was also conducted from February – May 2024 which yielded a moderately low sample size of 54 respondents. The strategy was also discussed at six (6) Tourism Promotion Committee meetings that are open to the public.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OR BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY:

The Strategy is intended to increase overnight lodging in Wilsonville.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council can direct staff to proceed with the Strategy, make modifications to the draft Strategy, or choose not to provide any direction.

CITY MANAGER COMMENT:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Tourism Development Strategy
2. 2023 Progress Evaluation Summary of the Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy of May 2014