

CITY OF REDMOND: TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision

A vibrant community where every person is welcomed. Our diversity, active lifestyle, access to nature, and culture of innovation offers experiences that inspire exploration, foster enthusiasm, and leave a lasting impact on all who visit.

Goal 1: Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Enhancing the visitor experience has many benefits – from the potential to extend the length of stay of existing visitors to Redmond, to the potential to attract new markets. Enhanced experiences also strengthen a destination’s value proposition.

1. Promote and utilize the light rail stations to increase compression traffic from large events in other parts of the region such as Seattle.
2. Encourage the development of retail spaces that will attract culinary, beverage, and nightlife businesses to Redmond.
3. Utilize the appeal of Redmond's breweries and proximity to Woodinville Wine Country as foundations for developing effective promotion campaign strategies.
4. Support public/private partnerships to develop indoor event space to host larger conferences in the city.
5. Support Redmond’s transportation programs that provide visitor infrastructure.
6. Evaluate and support infrastructure including walkability and bicycle trail systems to enhance visitor information and wayfinding that improves access within the city.
7. Position and promote Redmond as an intercultural destination showcasing various cultures through arts, events, and dining options.
8. Partner with Woodinville to expand wine programming, partnerships, and events in and around Redmond.
9. Promote and encourage extending leisure stays during business trips to facilitate additional nights for travelers to experience the destination's offerings.
10. Position and promote Redmond as a recreation destination within the region.

11. Regularly assess the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) funding application criteria to attract events that can draw visitors to Redmond during periods and locations with low hotel occupancy rates.
12. Increase the allocation of lodging tax funds to tourism grants by removing the 9% fixed allotment equaling approximately \$40,000, to better align with historical budgeted amounts of \$150,000. This adjustment aims to incentivize event attraction by encouraging overnight stays, thus maximizing the economic impact of tourism initiatives.
13. Foster the development of an annual multi-day event featuring innovations and opportunities in technology.
14. Expand existing winter programming and signature experiences that broaden awareness and attract visitors to Redmond for winter hotel and retail expenditures.
15. Develop a reliable visitor shuttle or transportation program designed to efficiently transport guests from hotels to various destinations.
16. Promote parks in Redmond's urban centers as a destination, fostering a diverse range of programming to maintain its vibrancy and activate the surrounding area.
17. Encourage piloting and expanding new event concepts with the potential to drive overnight stays.
18. Curate and package Redmond's distinctive and intimate venues and activities as tailored options for breakout meetings and team-building events and promoting the city as an attractive destination for business travelers.
19. Spotlight the vibrant artistic community and public art through targeted promotional campaigns, curated itineraries, and an enhanced digital experience.
20. Foster partnerships and programming that highlight Redmond's globally known gaming industry to attract visitors.
21. Develop a "dine around" or business passport program over a multi-week winter period.
22. Foster Redmond as a welcoming and belonging destination by creating inclusive visitor experiences for a variety of abilities and considerations including accessibility, neurodiversity, and language.
23. Foster attraction of an additional accredited cycling event to take place on the streets of Redmond to attract visitors from more than 50-miles away.
24. Harness Redmond's reputation as a dog and pet-friendly destination to enhance marketing efforts.
25. Explore implementation of an innovative technology experience showcasing or introducing Redmond's unique companies, gaming characters, activities, events, and more.

26. Explore if interest and market would support a stand-alone venue highlighting Redmond's gaming industry and work with private sector for creation.
27. Foster the growth of event tourism audiences by offering marketing workshops and toolkits to empower event organizers.
28. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a visitor center or kiosk, with a focus on selecting a prime location near a light rail station, or additionally, a mobile visitor kiosk to provide flexibility in location or to showcase at various events.

Goal 2: Building Collaborative Partnerships

Building strategic relationships with key partners provides access to new resources, expertise, and communication channels. It also builds ownership and long-term equity in the value of the destination and the importance of the visitor economy.

1. Strengthen the ongoing relationship with Marymoor Park with regular check-ins, updates, and support for existing events.
2. Promote recreational fields, trails, and water for tournaments, competitions, and events to recreational and athletic organizations.
3. Develop strong partnerships with restaurant, retail, and entertainment establishments, showcasing them as integral components of the visitor experience through targeted tourism marketing efforts.
4. Enhance partnership with Redmond Town Center as a tourism retail asset and a venue for events.
5. Explore the feasibility of establishing a dedicated Destination Management Organization (DMO).
6. Continue fostering partnerships with neighboring and other East side cities to collaboratively drive forward regional tourism initiatives and programs for mutual benefit.
7. Support strategies related to transportation solutions and ensure they are in place for visitors in addition to commuters.
8. Collaboratively develop annual work plans between LTAC and TPA.
9. Explore the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the LTAC and TPA, delineating respective responsibilities for different tourism initiatives.
10. Engage closely with Visit Seattle, as well as participate in the Washington State DMO network which meets monthly.

11. Explore avenues to streamline partnerships, organization structure, and decision-making channels in Redmond's tourism eco-system.
12. Engage with the Seattle Sports Commission to bid on future events and leverage their network to extend Redmond's reach and visibility as a host destination and accommodation supplier for local and regional activities.
13. Engage with the Port of Seattle to reach international markets.
14. Engage with the State of Washington Tourism to reach international markets.

Goal 3: Developing Support for the Tourism Industry

Tourism depends upon a sustained investment in resources and support over the long term to be successful. Building destination brand awareness, stimulating interest, converting to visitation and expenditure, and exceeding expectations involves the collaborative efforts of many stakeholders.

1. Work with the LTAC to prioritize support for events and festivals that include an overnight component.
2. Evaluate the city's banner policy to increase awareness, promotion, and celebration of the unique Redmond events, experiences, and history.
3. Consider adopting industry best practice for lodging tax budgeting by transitioning from budgeting based on fixed percentages to a model centered on prioritization and need.
4. Consider acquiring an event-based economic impact model through Destinations International to measure the economic contribution of each event supported by the LTAC.
5. Explore and allocate resources towards advanced tools and data software systems aimed at analyzing visitor data.
6. Increase the allocation of lodging tax funds to staffing by removing the 2% fixed administrative allotment, which equals approximately 4 hours of staffing a week. A funding increase should consider fully supporting the staffing needs essential for efficient management of the LTAC and tourism program.
7. Conduct a benchmark economic impact study on the visitor economy for Redmond.

Goal 4: Building Destination Awareness

Building destination awareness is about connecting through channels and intermediaries with audiences who are interested and motivated to visit because of the brand appeal of the destination. The entire path to purchase process from awareness to visitation may take several years and a sustained commitment in marketing from the destination.

1. Incorporate translated content into blog posts and social media feeds.
2. Leverage Redmond's innovations in space, gaming, and technology in tourism promotion.
3. Track visitor segmentation and partner with media influencers that reach Redmond's diverse traveler populations.
4. Leverage Redmond's historic downtown core and historic assets for destination branding and asset development.
5. As Redmond continues to expand, prioritize additional investments in storytelling and the development of digital photo and video assets.
6. Consider working with a creative institution such as the DigiPen Institute of Technology to tell the story of nature, technology, and creativity in Redmond.
7. Encourage district development, placemaking, and branding initiatives to enhance tourism assets, with a particular focus on districts accessible via light rail.
8. Promote awareness of the Overlake Intercultural District offerings.
9. Consider investment in targeted publications through advertising buys and earned media.
10. Ensure planning and programming considers the importance of maintaining Redmond as a clean, safe, and welcoming destination for visitors, as well as locals.
11. Work with the Port of Seattle to build awareness for Redmond among trade servicing cruise passengers as a destination easily accessed by light rail, home to technology giants, and close to Woodinville Wine Country.
12. Develop a media kit to have information on hand in the event of questions and/or leads.
13. Develop a meetings and convention strategy which focuses on key economic sectors of Redmond.
14. Allocate resources towards technology solutions for capturing event and conference contact leads, strategically enhancing opportunities to generate hotel business.
15. Invest in tools for analyzing tourism feeder markets, then pilot targeted advertising and promotional campaigns to attract overnight stays from those markets.