

Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan Year 1 Implementation Report

Redmond's first Economic Development Strategic Plan and Tourism Development Strategic Plan provided the roadmap necessary for Redmond to be competitive in economic strength and diversity. Included within the plans are over 200 strategies and actions.

Within the first year of adopting the Economic Development Strategic Plan over 90 of 171 action have begun implementation.

Within the first year of adopting the Tourism Development Strategic Plan over 50 of 65 actions have begun implementation.

Some highlights include:

Capacity and Tool Development

To successfully deliver on the strategic plans, additional staff capacity and targeted consultant support were required. The city also procured tools to enhance communication and data reporting, including the Bludot business contact system and Placer.ai.

Key Staffing and Contract Updates:

- **Small Business Assistance Program Manager** – Hired and onboarded Domonique Meeks to expand outreach and support for small businesses.
- **World Cup Planning Program Manager** – Hired and onboarded Kristen Raftis to coordinate Redmond's planning efforts for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- **Creative Economy, Heritage, and Small Business Permit Liaison** – Refined the role led by Kim Dietz to better support the City's creative economy and streamline permitting for small businesses.
- **Tourism Marketing Consultant** – Launched a new, targeted contract with Bullseye Creative to advance tourism marketing priorities.
- **Tourism Public Relations Firm** – Led request for proposals (RFP) process and onboarded GreenRubino Public Relations to lead media outreach, influencer campaigns, and organic tourism promotion efforts.
- **OneRedmond Contract Enhancements** – Introduced a new format to include monthly reports and invoicing.
- **Placer.ai Data Tool** – Implemented to measure visitor trends and spending patterns; supported acquisition of an enterprise-wide solution for all City staff.
- **Bludot Business Contact Management System** – Deployed to improve business outreach through efficient and accurate contact information management.



Domonique Meeks, Small Business Assistance Program



Kristen Raftis, World Cup Program Manager

Studies and Planning Effort Involvement

Economic Development staff continue to refine processes to improve customer service, efficiency, and effectiveness. The strategic plan outlined the importance of being informed and lending expertise and influence in various city studies. Economic Development staff actively support and align various programs with City-wide policy and planning efforts to ensure coordinated outcomes across functions. Numerous city studies are taking place in 2025 that Economic Development staff are leading or supporting including:

SE Redmond Market Study to support the application for Countywide Industrial Center designation with King County and to identify economic development strategies to strengthen the Southeast Manufacturing Industrial Center for both existing and emerging businesses.

Business License Audit Study to fully evaluate the City's business license program to identify all customers who should be part of the business license program with the city and understand gaps in compliance and revenue leakage.

Business District Study to understand potential for the formation and management of district level organizations to partner with the city on shared strategies and programs.

Wayfinding Study to develop a comprehensive plan establishing standards for signage and wayfinding across City parks, trails, facilities, and priority points. Division staff supported this effort by serving on the RFP committee and aligning priorities such as placemaking, districting, and enhancing the ease of movement to ensure the best possible experience for visitors, employees, and residents.

Public Art Plan Update is relevant to the creative sector and tourism. Economic Development support includes developing partnerships with businesses to enhance their customer base through events and artistic presentation and fostering support and growth for creative entrepreneurs as a business sector.

Downtown Bike Storage Project to partner with Redmond hotels to pilot a secure bike storage program. The goal is to provide locked access for bikes, supporting visitors traveling with their own bicycles as well as those using hotel-provided bikes, while enhancing first- and last-mile connectivity in Redmond for all.

Downtown Circulator and Shared Parking to improve transit accessibility by connecting riders with first- and last-mile solutions through a free shuttle service. Division staff contributed to this effort by serving on the RFP committee and facilitated an introduction between the Transportation team and the Bellevue Redmond Tourism Promotion Area (BRTPA) management organization to explore potential funding partnerships.

Curbside Management Plan to represent the business perspective such as pick-up, drop-off, supply chain, and customer-based access. Division staff involvement ensures that business perspective and needs are highlighted in addition to supporting business outreach.

Environmental Sustainability Action Plan Update to represent opportunities for business support and to foster complete neighborhoods in which people who live and work in Redmond's centers have walkable, rollable, and equitable access to goods and services.

Business Relations, Assistance and Communications

A core need for the City of Redmond is to build effective relationships with businesses for trust and engagement to proactively identify challenges and provide meaningful assistance. City staff have launched many communication channels and engagement opportunities for this to take place and will leverage World Cup opportunities for business engagement and support.

- Launched Monthly Economic Development Newsletter with 1,848 subscribers and growing
- Launched Small Business Advising Office Hours and Startup425 Coworking Hours
- Inaugural Downtown Merchant Business Meeting at Centro de Mexicano
- Hosted Startup425 Space Panel and Founders Institute Graduation
- Created a Business Marketing 101 webinar
- Created a Business Finance 101 webinar
- Created Small Business Permit Assistance Program
- Created Small Business Siting and Permitting video series (in postproduction with Communications)
- Launched Business Improvement Code Package
- Completed operational procedures and waiver guidance for Home Childcare providers
- Created Creative Economy Work Program
- Completed legislative amendments for streamlining permitting and design review procedures
- Reached over 150 businesses through door-to-door outreach

Business Displacement: Assisting businesses who are being displaced due to redevelopment continues to be the greatest business assistance challenge, however, Redmond has emerged as a thought leader in this field participating in many national conversations.

- Completed HUD contract for Thriving Communities Residential and Small Business Displacement Technical Assistance.



Startup425 is proud to announce the launch of the Startup425 accelerator program, in partnership with the Founder Institute! This intensive program offers two tracks: one for **startup** founders who plan to seek venture capital investment; the other for traditional entrepreneurs building sustainable **small businesses**.

The program is free to anyone living or building their business in a Startup425 partner city (Bellevue, Bothell, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, and Renton). Sessions will be held virtually with optional in-person events from the end of September until late January with breaks for holidays, final dates TBD.

Sign up for more information at startup425.org/accelerator/

Supported by:

- amazon
- Port of Seattle
- CITY OF KIRKLAND WASHINGTON
- Redmond WASHINGTON
- CITY OF BELLEVUE WASHINGTON
- CITY OF ISSAQUAH WASHINGTON
- CITY OF RENTON
- City of Bothell



Get Support for Your Business

Due Soon: Startup425 Cohort 3 Accelerator Application

The Startup 425 Accelerator is a 15-week educational program designed to help new entrepreneurs rapidly develop their business idea and launch a company while learning essential business skills. With multiple tracks to meet the needs of different founders, the Accelerator is designed for first time small business entrepreneurs looking for guidance or support, potential founders considering a startup idea, and early-stage founders looking to raise capital for the first time. Apply by Monday, Sept. 1.

[Learn more and apply](#)

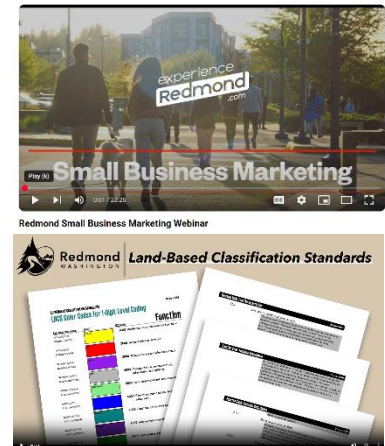
September CoWorking Day and Office Hours with Startup425 and OneRedmond

Looking to grow your business, get advice, or connect with other entrepreneurs? Join us at Redmond City Hall (15670 NE 85th Street) for two great opportunities designed to support founders, small business owners, and aspiring entrepreneurs. In September we will combine both OneRedmond office hours with Shawn Palmer and Startup425 CoWorking and office hours with Jonathan Blanco.

Next Session: Tuesday, Sept. 9
Time: 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Office Hours with OneRedmond

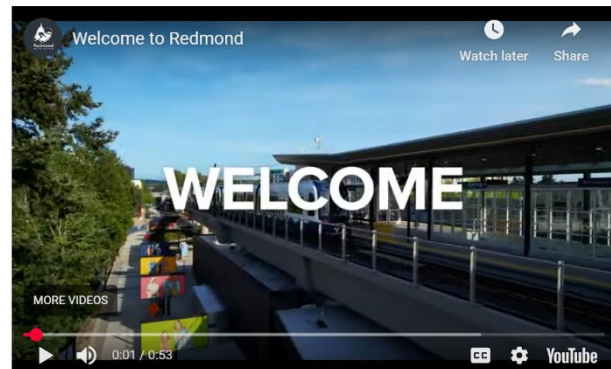
- Participated as panelist in Small Business Anti-displacement Network on commercial displacement in residential development
- Initiated business displacement and storefront activation priority with four commercial brokers
- Design Standards Adoption - requirement for active use retail requirements at high volume pedestrian intersections
- Encouraging the SE Redmond Industrial Study to look at potential for rehoming of Marymoor Village businesses that are displaced due to redevelopment.
- Researching code language to assist with business



Business Attraction:

Redmond is fortunate to be home to many successful technology companies and Redmond's workforce is attractive to many companies looking to locate or expand. However, it's important to maintain a clear open and welcome sign for companies to bring their economic impact to Redmond.

- Created Overlake, Marymoor and Downtown District Zoning Illustrations to assist with storytelling and business attraction
- Updated District Profiles with district level information and benefits
- Created a Business Attraction Video
- Secured Mayor's appointment to Greater Seattle Partners Board
- Hosted Select USA Spin off event at Microsoft with 30 global ready to invest businesses
- Launched SE Market Study to preserve manufacturing in Redmond
- Continue to lead Innovation Triangle updates and strategic initiatives



The future is written in Redmond

If you want to build the next great anything, you need the vision to push forward, the culture to inspire you, and the talent to get you there. Redmond is a place where all three come together. Whether you aspire to create a startup or relocate an already thriving business, here you can find the re



Tourism Program:

Guided by the direction of the Tourism Strategic Plan, with a unique blend of innovative technology, natural beauty, and vibrant culture, Redmond is evolving from a suburb into a city with its own unique personality and sense of place. The values and distinctive character that are a source of pride to residents are the same qualities that appeal to visitors. Redmond features outdoor concerts, community events, first-class lodging, craft breweries, and eclectic shopping and dining.



Tourism Marketing & Brand Oversight:

The City continues to elevate the Experience Redmond brand, focusing on storytelling and outreach that highlight what makes Redmond special.

Key initiatives include:

- Developing and implementing a new communications strategy aligned with the Tourism Strategic Plan.
- Managing brand oversight and content strategy for the Experience Redmond channels.
- Administering contracts with Bullseye Creative and GreenRubino Public Relations to ensure consistent, high-quality marketing and PR efforts.
- Planning, executing, and evaluating advertising campaigns using performance metrics to guide future investments.

Tourism Strategic Development and Implementation:

Through strategic partnerships and coordinated efforts, the Tourism Program works to strengthen Redmond's position as a regional visitor destination. Projects and partnerships include:

- Implementing the Tourism Strategic Plan
- Conducting ongoing needs assessments and updating priorities as needs evolve to align initiatives with community and visitor demand.
- Overseeing the program budget, consultant contracts, and project deliverables.
 - Building and maintaining local and regional relationships, including BRTPA (Bellevue Redmond Tourism Promotion Area)
 - WTA (Washington Tourism Alliance)
 - Port of Seattle
 - Woodinville Tourism
 - Eastside Tourism Alliance

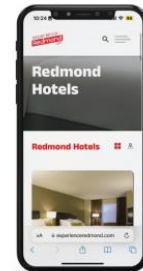
2024 Experience Redmond Engagement



WEBSITE
USERS
196,375

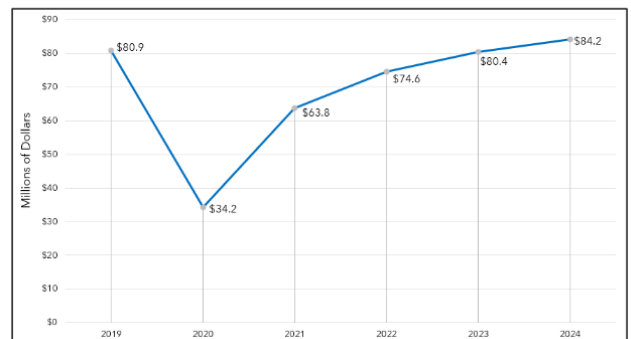
SOCIAL MEDIA
IMPRESSIONS (ORGANIC)
1,049,661

E-NEWS
SUBSCRIBERS
4,976



Historic Economic Impact

Source: Placer.ai Travel & Tourism Advanced Report Pulled 7/15/25



Tourism Event Grant Management:

The Tourism Program manages the City's Tourism Program Grant process, which supports events that attract visitors and enhance Redmond's destination appeal.

Program highlights:

- Created and continuously update all grant program documentation and website content.
- Recruit applicants and manage stakeholder communications.
- Facilitate applicant meetings and lead discussions to clarify program objectives.
- Oversee the application scoring process, prepare LTAC funding recommendations, and guide the City Council approval process.
- Manage grant contracts, documentation review and compliance, and funding disbursement.

Recently updated the LTAC Committee Rules and Procedures to improve transparency and efficiency.

District Development and Placemaking:

With the opening of four new Light Rail stations, the opportunity to convene, brand and promote district level destinations is primed.

Downtown and Marymoor Village Light Rail Opening

Staff took advantage of the opportunity to leverage the Downtown and Marymoor Village opening for strategic program implementation.

- Received a \$10,500 tourism grant for District Development activations
- Intentionalist Small Business Pass -26 businesses participated, corporate partnership, 500 people registered on day 1
- Eastside Made Popup Market - 24 vendors, vacant storefront activation
- Activation of Downtown Park
- Conundrum City Scavenger Hunt with over 2,000 participants



Overlake Intercultural District

Staff executed a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Bellwether Housing for acquisition of a commercial condo space and adjacent open space to boost placemaking and district development in the Overlake Intercultural District.

Creative Economy

The creative economy spans strategies within the Redmond 2050 Comprehensive plan, Economic Development Strategic Plan and Tourism Strategic Plan. Through strategic plan development community outreach, it was discovered how prominent creative businesses are within Redmond. The economic development division is excited to launch a Creative Economy program that combines existing programs to amplify each for the benefit of the community involved in the creative sector. The program is inspired by state, regional, and local visions, plans, policies, priorities, strategies and individual work programs toward a common focus of job creation, small business success, and community vitality.

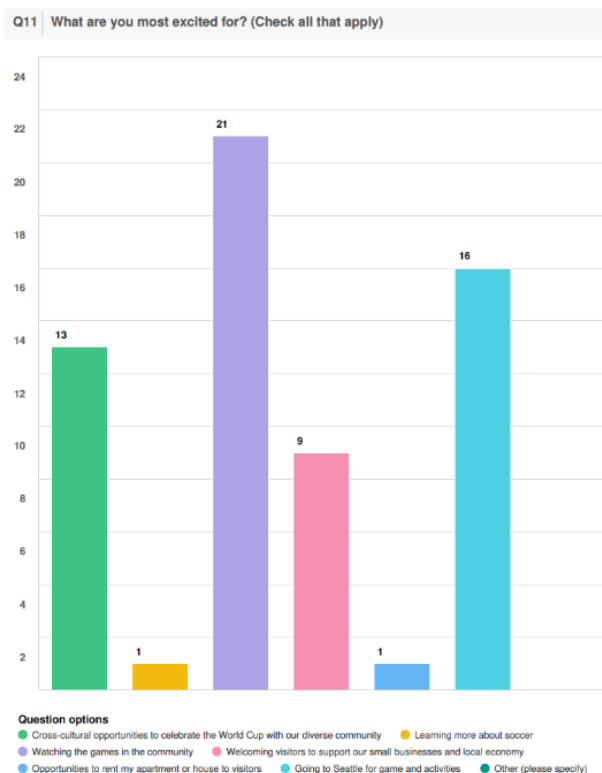
World Cup Preparations and Activations:

Interdepartmental Project Management

In March, we welcomed Kristen Raftis as our World Cup Planning Program Manager. Kris was integral in planning for the light rail opening opportunities and the Club World Cup Watch Party at Redmond Town Center. From the learnings of those two events, Kris effectively leads the organization of cross departmental core and sub-groups to prepare and manage the World Cup implementations in Redmond.



Community Outreach:



In May, a community questionnaire was developed and promoted to help learn more about the community desires. Additionally, we collected feedback at the June 23, Club World Cup Watch Party. Staff will continue promotion and analytics of a business and community questionnaire for residents, community members, business owners, or local organizations to help the city shape programs and activations related to the World Cup.

There have so far been over 50 responses with most individuals very excited to celebrate Redmond's diverse community through watch parties of the World's Game.

June 4 Business and Community Meeting

In this open session for small businesses held in early June, nearly 50 small business owners and community members gathered at City Hall to learn more about next year's tournament and resources available to assist businesses.

Sounders legend Brad Evans joined as a special guest to share about the unifying power of soccer and the excitement expected over the course of the year, followed by presentations



from SeattleFWC26 Local Organizing Committee member Dylan Ordoñez and City of Redmond Small Business Assistance Program Manager Domonique Meeks highlighting activation and assistance opportunities. Finally, a panel of four local small business owners shared more about their feelings surrounding the upcoming games.



June 23 Redmond Soccer Watch Party

In partnership with Amazon and Redmond Town Center, the City's Redmond Soccer Watch Party provided a gathering space to watch Sounders FC face Paris Saint-Germain on a giant outdoor screen. Over 250 community members attended, enjoying the great weather, exciting game, and a variety of family-friendly activities, including a youth play area presented by Arena Sports, VR soccer experiences, a Pride Across the Bridge selfie station, and

City booths. Mayor Birney and Sounders legend Jhon Kennedy Hurtado joined the fun, addressing the crowd before the match about all the excitement to come in 2026!

Short Term Rental Regulation Evaluation

The Short-Term Rental Code Update project involves a cross-departmental team lead by Planning and Community Development and Finance, for proposed updates to Short Term Rental Code and standard operating procedures. A Council study session on proposed recommendations is scheduled for October 28, 2025.

Branding and Messaging

Economic Development Division staff has worked closely with Communication staff on developing messaging and branding that is reflective of Redmond and conveys the event and campaign goals. The established webpage Redmond.gov/soccer already has more than 1,500 views.

Regional Thought Leadership

Redmond continues to lead the way in proactively planning and leveraging the World Cup opportunities. Many neighboring cities and organizations have reached out or invited staff to present to share learnings and opportunities. Staff is in close communication with the Local Organizing Committee and local FIFA representatives on opportunities

Upcoming Activations

October 8, 2025 Let's Get Match Ready: World Cup Info and Strategy Session

The Economic Development Division is leading a convening on Wednesday, Oct. 8 at Redmond City Hall for an exciting World Cup Info and Strategy Session. Networking starts at 9:30 a.m. followed by a live presentation at 10:00 a.m. This free event is designed to help local businesses tap into the energy of international soccer and learn about resources that are available all year long. Enjoy light refreshments while you hear from City of Redmond staff and a Seattle Sounder legend.

World Cup City Office Hours:

The Economic Development Division is hosting Office Hours for businesses and community members to come and collaborate on ideas and activations related to the World Cup. Wednesday, October 15th, 4-6pm. Wednesday, November 12, 4-6 pm.

Mayor's Ambassador Group:

The Economic Development Division is facilitating a Mayor's World Cup Ambassador group representing major Redmond businesses, non-profits, and partner organizations. Meeting quarterly the group will guide opportunities and programming with the 2026 World Cup Coming to the region with the intention of creating an unforgettable experience for visitors, athletes, and residents by showcasing Redmond's connectivity to the region, celebrating our diverse culture, and fostering an atmosphere of excitement and hospitality. The ambassador group will help to guide strategies and programming around the objectives of: Brand and Promote Redmond, Attract Visitation and Spending for Economic Impact, Legacy Coalition Building for District Development and Branding, Foster Community Pride and Connection, Safe and Enjoyable Experience for the Redmond Community.



Match Draw Event

The teams and locations will be announced on December 5 and to celebrate this milestone the city is planning and Match Draw event in Redmond to celebrate the world's game and the teams that will be playing in the region. Staff is working with local businesses to plan activations around the Match Draw event.

Soccer Stories

Division staff is supporting Communications with concept development and promotion of Soccer Stories that profile and highlight Redmond Community members and their passion for the World Game and love of Redmond.

Futbol for All and Sports Speaker Series

Staff is in the works of creating a series of speaker events for the community to attend to learn more about soccer, fútbol and how the World's Game connects us all. The Soccer Speaker Series will kick off with a Soccer 101 class hosted this fall with Sounders Legend James Riley.

Business Promotion (Passport to World Cup Countries)

Like the Overlake Small Business Passport, Small Business Saturday Passport or business promotional campaigns around the light rail opening, the Economic Development division plans to create a business promotional campaign for January and February when business tends to be slower in Redmond that highlights our global businesses and garners excitement for the World Cup.

Tourism Promotions

The City's LTAC invested \$50,000 in Experience Redmond tourism promotion and will develop a strategic marketing and advertising campaign to promote Redmond to visitors in the region for World Cup.