



# 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.



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Dear Redmond community and visitors,

Welcome to the unveiling of the first Redmond Tourism Strategic Plan! We want to thank everyone that contributed to this plan by sharing their perspectives, expertise, and unique experiences to create a roadmap for the journey ahead. Like a book, this is the first chapter of our tourism novel, and will serve as Redmond's destination guide for the next five years. We're excited to see where this story takes us.

Tourism creates economic growth, fosters vibrant cultural exchanges, and deepens mutual understanding among diverse communities. Welcoming visitors here allows us to proudly showcase the natural beauty of Redmond, forge meaningful connections, and embark on memorable experiences. By supporting the tourism industry, we are able to share and benefit from the distinctive charm and attractions that makes our city an extraordinary destination.

Within the pages of this plan, you will find several exciting initiatives poised to enhance and transform Redmond's tourism landscape. From the development of immersive cultural and technology experiences to the enhancement and promotion of Redmond's historic Downtown core, each idea is designed to enrich the visitor journey and foster a deeper connection with our city.

In the coming years, we anticipate a number of notable milestones, including the launch of innovative and diverse tourism programs, continued expansion of public transit options, and the creation of valuable partnership agreements. These endeavors stand as a testament to our commitment to building a tourism sector that is both inclusive and resilient, capable of withstanding the challenges of an ever-evolving world.

As we look to the future of Redmond, our collective focus remains on not only elevating the City as a destination, but also on ensuring that our approach to tourism is sustainable and enriching for our community and those who visit. We are excited to take this journey with you, creating lasting memories and fostering an environment where tourism thrives. Together, we will realize the vision set forth in this strategic plan, ensuring that Redmond continues to flourish as a center of culture, connectivity, and natural beauty. Thank you for helping us author this exciting new chapter in our city's story.

Sincerely,



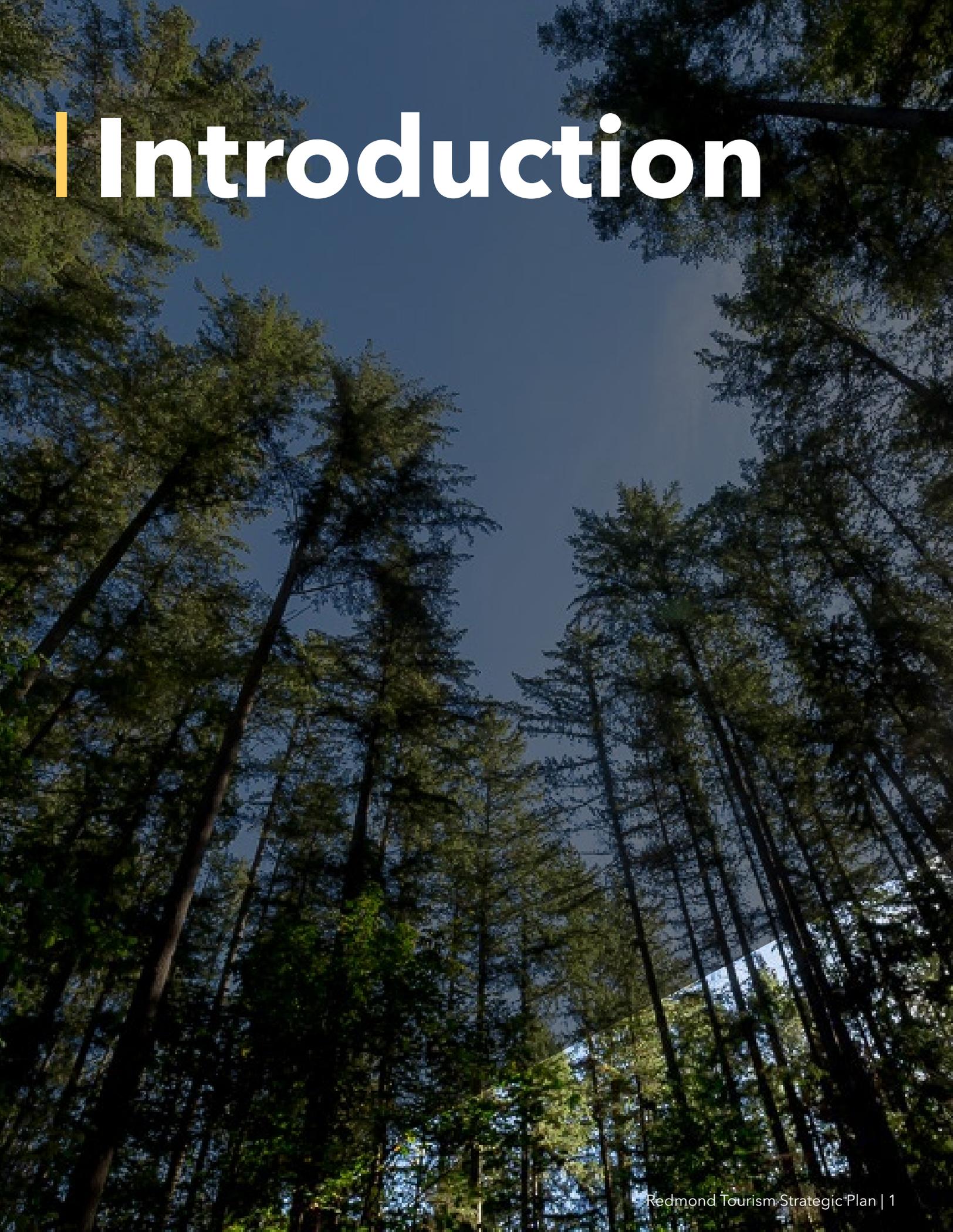
*Angela Birney*

**Angela Birney**  
Mayor of Redmond



*Carol Helland*

**Carol Helland**  
Planning Director of Redmond



# | Introduction

# OVERVIEW



Redmond is coming into its own. With a unique blend of innovative technology, natural beauty, and vibrant culture, it 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.

Visitors take many forms, from friends and relatives who come to visit, to business travelers, to out-of-town participants in sports tournaments, to weekend holiday makers – all of them are dimensions of a complex tourism economy that supports local businesses, creates jobs, and builds awareness and interest for the community. In addition, the economic contribution is substantial. Redmond’s visitor economy in 2023 was conservatively estimated at \$634M.

Indirectly, visitors encourage environmental stewardship, promote arts and culture, celebrate local heritage, and support infrastructure development - all initiatives important to the quality of life of those who choose to call Redmond home.

A singular tourism experience involves the confluence and engagement of many businesses and stakeholders – many of whom may be oblivious to their role in the process. For example, a business traveler attending a short conference may also visit a local brewery, eat at a local restaurant, purchase a gift at a boutique shop, speak to the guest attendant at the hotel, etc.

Any one of those points of engagement are occasions to elevate or diminish the overall experience and will affect either the growth or diminishment of the destination brand.

The recent COVID pandemic in 2020 underscored the scope, importance, and vulnerability of the tourism economy. Tourism marketing has evolved to tourism management as destinations focus on yield, dispersion of benefits throughout the year, and increased sensitivity to capacity limitations and impacts on the quality of life of residents. Tourism is an engine not only of economic growth but of environmental, social, and cultural sustainability.

Collaboration, focus, measuring performance on an ongoing basis, and a commitment to strategic investment are key to leveraging resources and maximizing opportunities. The timing has never been better for Redmond. Tourism funding is currently available through the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) and the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) – and there is a shared understanding among the stakeholders, that failing to utilize these resources for a common purpose would waste a significant opportunity for Redmond’s tourism economy.

A Tourism Strategic Plan for Redmond will build momentum for an economic sector with tremendous potential. The plan will be a road map for collaboration, investment, marketing, and programming. Also important, it will be a focus for both businesses and residents to understand and agree on a vision for the quality of destination to which Redmond aspires and that the community deserves.

**“Tourism done well is the collective celebration of thousands of individual experiences.”**



# APPROACH



The Redmond Tourism Strategic Plan is a five-year roadmap that includes a vision, goals, and strategic initiatives. To develop the plan the project team conducted extensive research, analysis, and broad community engagement to ensure that there is a solid foundation for further development of the tourism industry in Redmond. Input from tourism industry leaders, elected officials, residents, community leaders, and clients, was instrumental in creating the plan's recommendations. The Tourism Strategy also considers key recommendations found in other regional planning initiatives that are underway or were recently completed.

The City of Redmond's Economic Development Department is poised to have a role in coordinating the next phase of the Tourism Strategy. Because this is a road map with ideas that transcend the tourism industry, initiative planning and implementation will be shared responsibilities among the tourism industry and supporting economic drivers that engage with visitors as they journey through Redmond. The effective engagement and alignment of all stakeholders is the key element in the journey of a successful tourism strategy. It is a journey the city will take together, and one that will benefit residents, businesses, and visitors for years to come.



**1,000+**

Pages of Documents and Data Summaries Review



National & International Trend Analysis



**45+**

1:1 Interviews



**20+**

Focus Group Attendees



**45+**

Visioning Workshop Attendees



**110+**

Community-Wide Interactions in Developing this Plan



**170+**

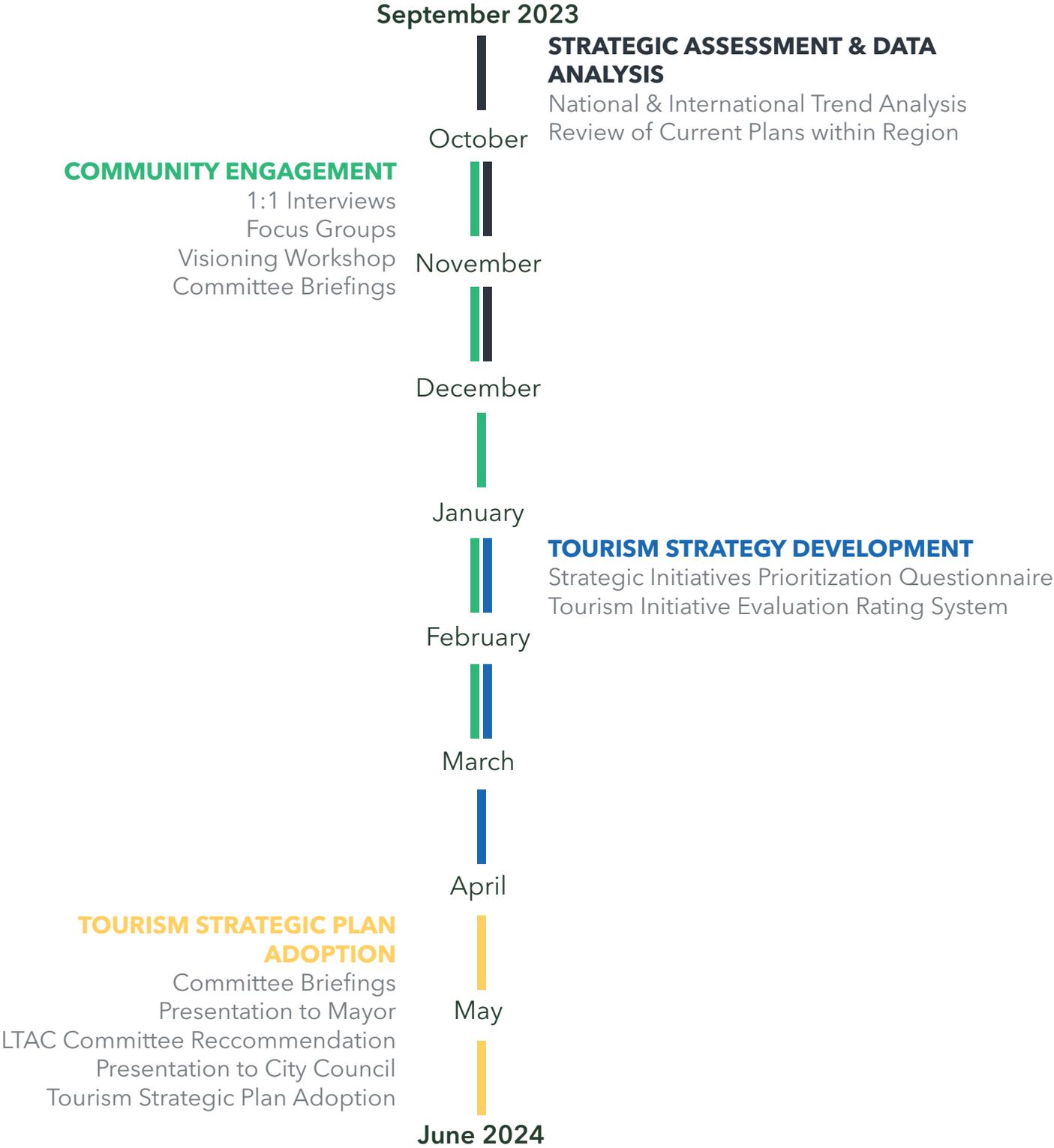
Questionnaire Outreach to Stakeholders



**20+**

Briefing Participants

# Redmond Tourism Strategic Plan Development Timeline



# Situation Analysis



## INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The plan was informed by a thorough review of international research, and the following tourism trends are found to have relevance for Redmond. Each trend has a bearing on existing and potential market demand. They are relevant in terms of the means to connect with potential consumers, the types of experiences sought out by visitors to a destination, and the need for alignment with the qualities and values also important to residents.

### SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

According to Euromonitor<sup>1</sup>, a leading provider of global business intelligence, sustainable travel packages (adventure, culture and heritage, eco-tourism, and wellness) are forecast to amount to USD134 billion in 2023 and will be the larger share of overall packages compared to typical mass-market tourism products like sun/sea-themed vacations.

More significantly, customers are willing to pay more for sustainable products and services, such as using renewables, carbon offsetting, paying specific price levels to ensure a fair or living wage, or sourcing local food and drink. In a recent

<sup>1</sup> [Top Three Travel Trends for 2023 - Euromonitor.com](#)

survey, 74 percent of Virtuoso travelers said they were willing to pay more to travel sustainably if they knew where their money was going<sup>2</sup>.

American Express echoed this sentiment with their observation that travelers want to discover lesser-known locations while helping to support local communities. The 2023 Global Travel Trends Report<sup>3</sup> found that 69% of all respondents agreed that they would be willing to spend more on a vacation if they knew it supported the local community.

<sup>2</sup> [Travel Trend Report: What's Next, According to Luxury Travel Experts | Virtuoso](#)

<sup>3</sup> [2023 Global Travel Trends Report \(americanexpress.com\)](#)

## SPORTS TOURISM

The global sports travel market plays a big part in strategic plans for destinations. Whether it is to view, participate, or volunteer in sports, the market continues to grow around the world. According to American Express in their 2024 trends survey, "Nearly three-quarters of global respondents are into sports, with 71% considering themselves either a "huge" or casual fan. And as easy as it is to watch from your living room, 37% have plans to travel for sports this year. Of those, 38% will average trips of 6 hours or more."

## WELLNESS

Health and wellness have become important motivations for travel. The

2023 Global Travel Trends Report shared that a large majority of respondents (75%) are planning to decrease screen time while traveling to better their mental health and/or seek to surround themselves with nature to focus on mental clarity (68%). Euromonitor expects that value-based offers such as sports, wellness, and eco-tourism are all expected to outperform standard packages over 2023-2027, with average value growth of over 12% per year.

## BLENDED TRAVEL

Closely related to the wellness trend is the growing importance of balancing work and play. Blended business and leisure travel is a growing trend, where consumers are redefining their work-



life balance and experiencing the joy of travel, whether through “workcations” or work-from-anywhere policies. Forbes<sup>4</sup> reported in 2022 that 89% of people plan to add personal vacation time to their business travel - many of whom will bring family and friends along.

## AUTHENTICITY

Travelers are increasingly seeking genuine experiences that offer a deeper connection with local cultures, traditions, and environments. This trend reflects a desire for meaningful travel that goes beyond the surface-level attractions to engage with the true essence of a destination. Authenticity provides unique, memorable experiences that resonate with travelers on a personal level.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The immersive audio-visual experience of social media can present an invaluable source of information. A recent survey from Skyscanner, a global leader in travel, revealed that around half of its respondents made travel plans that were inspired by the content they had seen on social media. Instagram was the most popular source of travel ideas, followed by Facebook, and TikTok.<sup>5</sup>

The default device for planning and booking has become mobile, and consumers increasingly look to social media for travel ideas and inspiration. American Express<sup>6</sup> reported that 75% of

<sup>4</sup> [What Is Bleisure Travel, And How Is It Transforming the Hospitality Industry? \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com)

<sup>5</sup> [Skyscanner Horizons](https://www.skyscanner.com)

<sup>6</sup> [2023 Global Travel Trends Report \(americanexpress.com\)](https://www.americanexpress.com)

respondents agree that they have been inspired to travel to a specific destination by social media, and 57% of respondents agree that they like to capture content for their social media accounts during their travels. This can have negative repercussions as destinations “off the beaten path” can suddenly become popularized with a tsunami of social media impressions.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

As reported in Destinations International 2023 Futures Study<sup>7</sup>, artificial intelligence is the most critical trend for the tourism industry to be focused on. According to the study... “The rise of generative AI provides new tools for customizing sales and marketing efforts from both a brand and content development perspective... Large online travel agencies are embedding new AI technologies into their apps that provide better personalized recommendations for customers, and from the companies’ perspective, better conversion and loyalty performance.”

<sup>7</sup> [DestinationNEXT 2023 Future Study](https://www.destinationnext.com)

**“Tourism creates economic growth, fosters vibrant cultural exchanges, and deepens mutual understanding among diverse communities.”**



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The 2023 Futures Study identifies the third most important trend in tourism across the globe to be community engagement. The report states “Communities expect to be more engaged in destination, product and experience development for locals and visitors.” Community values, such as sustainability and equity, diversity, and inclusion, and reconciliation, needs to be considered by government and industry tourism planning. When a destination incorporates its local values into the visitor experience, this creative, cultural and community energy improves the quality of experience and competitive advantage for the destination.

## CORPORATE TRAVEL

According to American Express Global Business Travel, new ways of working will continue to reshape how the corporate market travels. For example, as mentioned above, blended travel (work and leisure) significantly impacts business travel behavior. Also, American Express states “corporate responsibility

and sustainable travel initiatives will remain front and center, accompanied by a rising emphasis on measuring, managing, and reducing carbon offsets associated with business trips.”

## LEGACY IMPACTS

In the business events sector, more attention is being given to the long-term legacy impacts from hosting meetings. In addition to the immediate outcomes derived by its economic benefits, business events perform another useful role for the host destination. For example, it provides the opportunity to broaden academic, professional, and scientific networks, form trade and investment relationships, partner in innovation, secure venture capital, and attract new talent. The trend is for government and industry to view business events as a strategic tool to strengthen their communities by maximizing the long-term impacts which a meeting has on wider society.

# CURRENT STATE OF REDMOND AS A DESTINATION

The research phase of the project included a comprehensive review of information available at the city and state level. This included hotel performance data (Smith Travel Research), AirDNA (VRBO and Airbnb performance), economic, and population data - both historical and projected. TripAdvisor was also referenced for historical data on the popularity and rating of key attractions in Redmond.

There was no historical data available on the visitor experience in Redmond in terms of length of stay, reason for visit, expenditures, economic impact, or popular itineraries. Those are opportunities for future inquiry.

Detailed research findings and charts are available in Appendix A. Top-level observations include the following:

- There are ten hotels in the city with 1,598 available rooms (2023). By 2023, occupancy and average daily rate have generally recovered to pre-COVID levels (2019), but revenue per available room (RevPAR) is still tracking substantially lower (-12%).
- Short-term accommodation available through Airbnb or VRBO provides an additional 259 listings - equivalent to the capacity of an additional mid-size hotel.
- Summer is the busiest season with occupancies exceeding 80%. Winter is the low season with occupancies of 50-60%.



- Weekday occupancies track significantly higher than weekend occupancies. This implies strong business demand for hotel space and a weak leisure market (which tends to fill the weekends).
- Redmond's current population is 77,490 (2023). Over the past ten years, it has exceeded the growth of King County and is exceeding the annual growth rate to meet the projected 2050 target of 128,400. This will have implications for the provision of housing and infrastructure in the Overlake, Downtown, and Marymoor areas of the city.
- The demographic segments that have grown the fastest in Redmond are the 25-40-year cohort, with a commensurate increase in management, business, science, and arts occupations. Ethnicity has also grown substantially in the past ten years with growing Chinese, Indian, and Hispanic populations. This influences the dynamic of the city in terms of creative expression, culture, amenities, and celebration.
- TripAdvisor research suggests that there are several local attractions and amenities in the city of Redmond that have very positive reviews but are not particularly popular. That is an opportunity for cross-promotion and future itinerary development within the city.
- The tourism economy's size in Redmond can be estimated using information available on accommodation spending in the city. Visitor spending impacts many sectors of a destination's economy from accommodation to food service, retail, entertainment, and local transportation. Spending on accommodation is typically from as low as 8% in a large urban environment, to as high as 20% in rural environments. On that basis, knowing that accommodation spending in 2023 was approximately \$73M, and using 11.6% as an estimate, the total value of Redmond's visitor economy can be estimated to be \$634M.



# COMPARATIVE MARKETS

Each destination has a unique dynamic in terms of how industry, government, and residents come together to manage and promote visitation to their community.

Over time, relationships evolve and adapt as opportunities are realized and greater awareness of impacts - economic, social, and environmental are understood.

Key attributes of successful destinations include:

- 1 A broad base of communication and outreach between businesses, government, and residents;
- 2 A strategic focus in terms of stimulating and building and managing visitor demand; and
- 3 ongoing key performance metrics to evaluate performance and success.

Some examples are provided of small and mid-sized cities that may have implications and parallels for Redmond.





## BEND, OREGON

Bend is a small city on the Deschutes River, in Oregon, with a population of 102,000 in 2021. Estimated visitation annually is 4.5 million, with the bulk of the travel occurring in the summer season.

Key attractions include:

- Deschutes River: A playground for outdoor enthusiasts, offering kayaking, paddleboarding, and scenic river walks.
- Mount Bachelor: A renowned ski resort in winter and a hiking and mountain biking haven in summer.
- Old Mill District: A revitalized area with shops, restaurants, and a picturesque riverfront.

**Visit Bend** serves as the primary organization dedicated to promoting tourism responsibly on behalf of the City of Bend. Their mission is to enhance Bend's economy through cultural tourism. From musical productions to

art exhibits, film festivals, and more, Visit Bend supports cultural opportunities that draw visitors to the area.

The Bend Cultural Tourism Fund (BCTF), a grant program under Visit Bend, funds various cultural initiatives. These grants support events and projects that enrich Bend's arts and cultural assets, diversify its tourism offerings, and establish it as a premier cultural destination. Examples include the Bend Yoga Festival, Bend Design Conference, and Winter PrideFest.

The Bend Chamber of Commerce plays a vital role in supporting local businesses and economic development but is not directly involved in tourism marketing, visitor servicing, or promotion.

The annual budget for Visit Bend in 2024 was estimated at \$5.2M.



## SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Santa Fe, New Mexico's capital, is renowned for its Pueblo-style architecture and as a creative arts hotbed. It had a population of 88,193 in 2021. Estimated visitation to the county annually is 4.0 million, with the summer and fall being popular periods.

Key attractions include:

- **Historic Plaza:** The heart of Santa Fe, featuring adobe architecture, art galleries, and the Palace of the Governors.
- **Canyon Road:** Lined with art studios, boutiques, and charming restaurants.
- **Georgia O'Keeffe Museum:** Showcasing the works of the iconic artist.

**Tourism Santa Fe** is the destination marketing organization that promotes the city's history, culture, retail, and culinary offerings. Services provided include marketing, direct sales, event

creation, and a grant program for non-profit visual and performing arts organizations.

Tourism Santa Fe also markets and operates the Community Convention Center and provides support to the city for public art programming and management.

The Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce is not directly involved in tourism marketing or visitor servicing, but its efforts indirectly benefit tourism by maintaining a healthy local economy.

The annual budget for Tourism Santa Fe in 2018 was estimated at \$12.2M.



## FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

Flagstaff, Arizona, is a gateway to the San Francisco Peaks, home to Arizona's tallest mountain (Humphreys Peak) and the Arizona Snowbowl ski resort. It had a population of 76,989 in 2021. Estimated visitation to the city annually is 6.0 million, with the summer and fall being popular periods.

Key attractions include:

- Lowell Observatory: A historic observatory where Pluto was discovered.
- Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument: Explore volcanic landscapes and lava fields.
- Coconino National Forest: Offers hiking trails, camping, and stunning vistas.

**Discover Flagstaff** (the Convention and Visitors Bureau) is part of the Economic Vitality Division of the City of Flagstaff.

It acts as the destination marketing organization for the city. Discover Flagstaff is responsible for administering tourism programs for the City of Flagstaff and receives an allocation of 30% of the Bed, Board, and Beverage tax collected.

Programs include marketing to tour operators, travel agents, meeting planners, group coordinators, and individual leisure travelers, as well as the development of public outreach and educational programs, media relations, and media coverage. Discover Flagstaff is also responsible for the creation and maintenance of partnership opportunities locally and regionally.

The annual budget for Discover Flagstaff in 2023 was estimated at \$3.6M.



## BOZEMAN, MONTANA

Bozeman is a city and the county seat of Gallatin County, Montana. It had a population of 53,293 in 2021. Estimated visitation to the city annually is 1.4 million, with summer being a popular period.

Key attractions include:

- **Yellowstone National Park:** Just a short drive away, Bozeman serves as a gateway to the park's geysers, wildlife, and natural wonders.
- **Downtown Bozeman:** A vibrant area with boutiques, breweries, and art galleries.
- **Museum of the Rockies:** Home to dinosaur fossils and exhibits on regional history.

**Visit Bozeman** is the destination marketing organization, and it is comprised of two organizations, the

Bozeman Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Gallatin Valley Tourism Business Improvement District. It is overseen by the Chamber of Commerce.

Visit Bozeman partners with the State of Montana, Yellowstone Country, the Bozeman/Yellowstone International Airport, the Bozeman Area Chamber of Commerce, and many other organizations to attract visitors to the area.

Visit Bozeman also supports local events, sports tournaments, concerts, and business conferences in the form of grants through the Gallatin Valley Tourism Business Improvement District.

The annual budget for Visit Bozeman was not publicly available.



## DURANGO, COLORADO

Durango is a home rule municipality that is the county seat and the most populous municipality of La Plata County, Colorado. The city population was estimated at 19,071 in 2020. Estimated visitation to the city annually is 2.6 million, with summer and fall being popular periods.

Key attractions include:

- Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad: A historic steam train journey through the San Juan Mountains.
- Mesa Verde National Park: Explore ancient cliff dwellings and learn about Native American history.
- Downtown Durango: Lively streets with restaurants, shops, and live music venues.

Historically, the **Durango Chamber of Commerce** played a significant role in organizing tourism in the city, and was engaged in tourism marketing, visitor servicing, and promotion. However, as of 2019, a decision was made to transition to a Destination Marketing and Management Organization operating as Visit Durango. A primary motivation was the need to transition from a pure marketing organization to an entity with responsibility for destination “stewardship” – perceived as a top priority for residents of the community.

The annual budget for Visit Durango in 2024 was estimated at \$2.1M.



## REDMOND, WASHINGTON

Redmond is a city in King County Washington and is part of metropolitan Seattle. It is located fifteen miles east of downtown Seattle and has a population of 77,490 in 2023. Annual visitation to Redmond is not known but Seattle and King County estimated visitation of 33.9 million visitors in 2022, including overnight visitors of 18 million.<sup>1</sup>

Key attractions include:

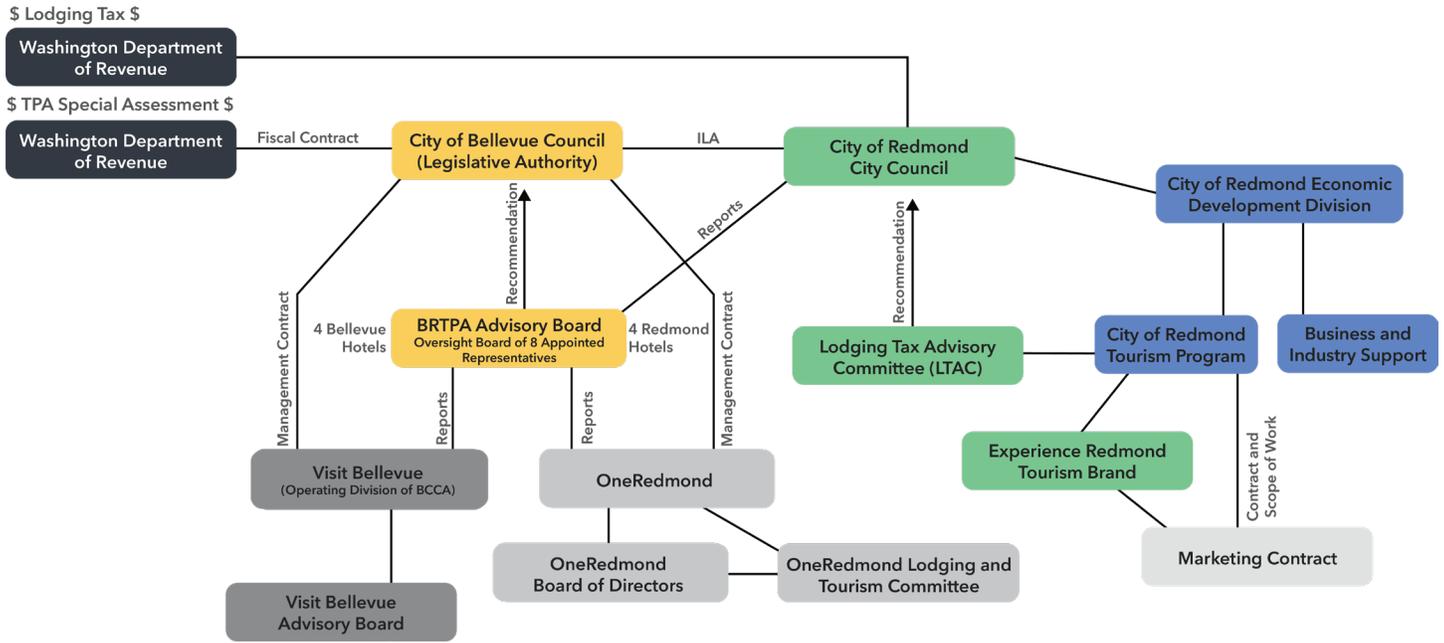
- Marymoor Park: A suburban park with over 550 acres providing opportunities for biking, rock climbing, tennis, and picnicking.
- Sammamish River Trail: A scenic route along the river enjoyed by bicyclists, dog walkers, and families.
- Microsoft Visitor Center: Located on the Microsoft headquarters campus, the visitor center offers insights into Microsoft's innovations and technologies.

<sup>1</sup> [Visit Seattle Releases 2022 Visitation Data at Annual Meeting | Visit Seattle](#)

There is no dedicated Destination Marketing Organization in the City of Redmond and oversight for tourism is provided by three entities. A Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) was recently created, and management is provided by OneRedmond. OneRedmond also manages the Chamber of Commerce. The Economic Development Division of the City manages a visitor-oriented website, a marketing brand (Experience Redmond), and contracts out marketing, advertising, and media placement. This includes the publication of a visitor guide, social media activities, and basic research. A committee of the city - the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) - provides financial support for festivals and events and underwrites the tourism activities of the Economic Development Division.

Redmond's expected annual budget from all sources for marketing and managing tourism in 2024 is estimated at \$1.4M.

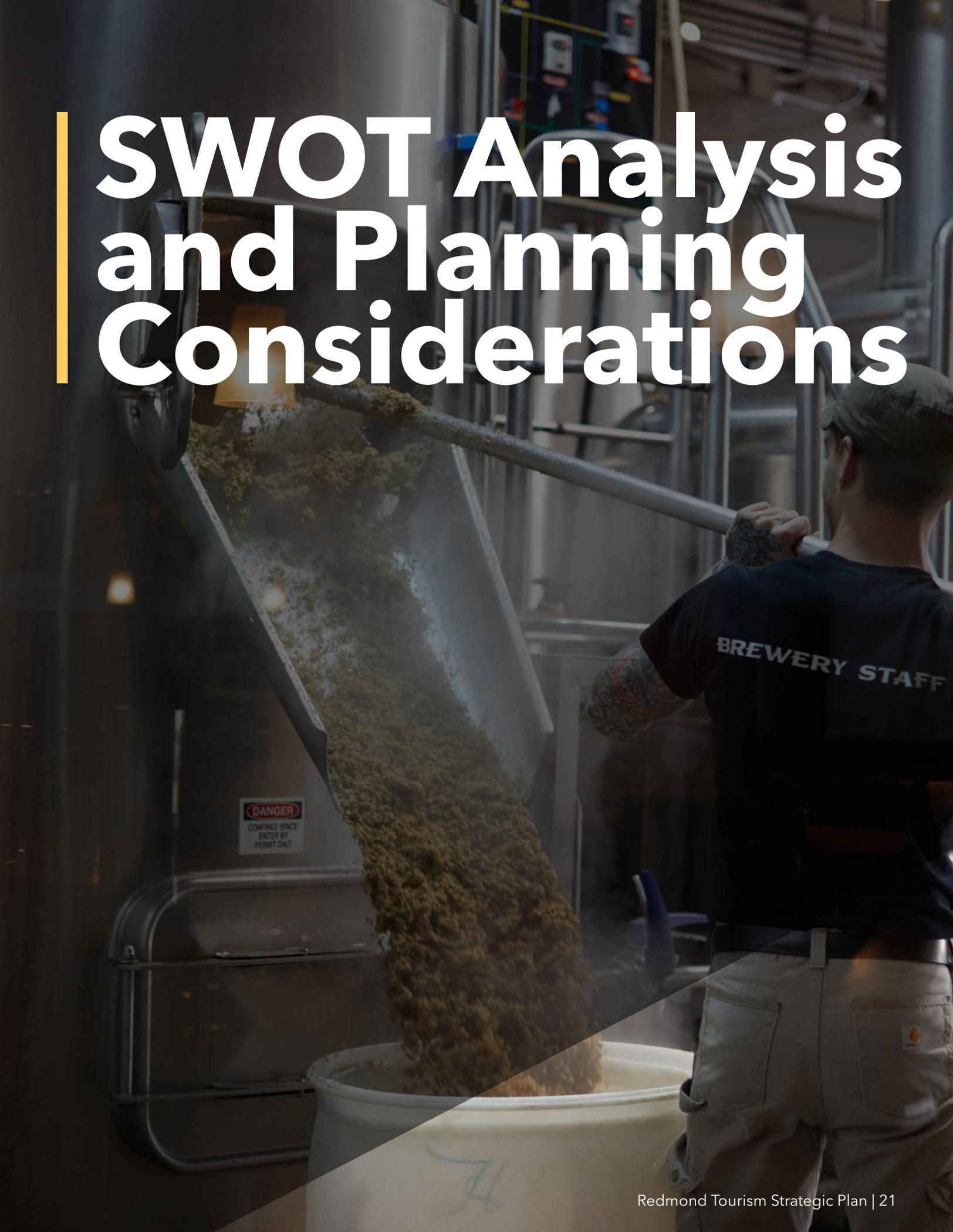
# CURRENT TOURISM STRUCTURE WITHIN REDMOND



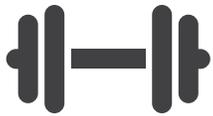
## COMPARATIVE MARKETS TABLE

City	Population	DMO (Y/N)	Responsibility for Tourism	Visitation	Annual Budget
Bend, Oregon	102,000	Y	Visit Bend	4.5 million	\$5.2 million
Santa Fe, New Mexico	88,193	Y	Tourism Santa Fe	4.0 million	\$12.2 million
Flagstaff, Arizona	76,989	Y	Discover Flagstaff	6.0 million	\$3.6 million
Bozeman, Montana	53,293	Y	Visit Bozeman	1.4 million	N/A
Durango, Colorado	19,071	Y	Visit Durango	2.6 million	\$2.1 million
Redmond, Washington	77,490	N	TPA/OneRedmond & LTAC/City of Redmond	N/A	\$1.4 million

# SWOT Analysis and Planning Considerations



# SWOT ANALYSIS



## STRENGTHS

- Redmond’s population has grown at almost twice the rate of King County’s since 2010 (2.8% vs. 1.5%/year).
- Redmond in 2023 is much more ethnically diverse than in 2010, with growing Indian, Chinese, and Hispanic communities.
- An Economic Development Strategic Plan, including vision statements, goals, and strategies is being completed and will provide important context for tourism management.
- Marymoor Park is a strong recreational asset for the community with a diverse events calendar, playing fields, and a velodrome.
- Redmond contains 59 miles of public trails, of which 39 miles are owned and operated by the city.
- Redmond is a community rich in public art with over 30 separate pieces on display.
- Redmond operates and maintains an extensive system of 47 parks comprising 1,351 acres of land in a variety of neighborhood, community, and resource parks.
- 60 Acres offers premium athletic fields. It is the largest soccer complex west of the Mississippi (when configured for soccer).
- Redmond has a strong technology connection as the home of Microsoft and Nintendo of America.
- Redmond has a growing commercial space sector including Aerojet Rocketdyne, SpaceX, Project Kuiper, and Honeywell Aerospace.
- Experience Redmond has already invested in a web domain, STR research, marketing materials, and a visitor’s guide.
- The Redmond Town Center is an eclectic mix of retail and services in downtown Redmond and a popular venue location for events.
- Redmond, as part of Metro Seattle, is an evolving city attracting new residents and young professionals.
- The Light Rail will provide improved access to downtown Seattle and the airport.
- The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) has actively partnered with festivals and events for several years.
- The recently formed Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) is an opportunity to expand the scope and focus of market programming.
- Summer is the peak season for visitation.
- The summer event, Derby Days, has a long history and is well attended and supported by the community.
- The nearby communities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville, and Issaquah have their own unique sense of place that complements a visit to Redmond.
- The city is actively addressing housing and planning to accommodate an estimated 128,400 residents by 2050.
- The daytime population base (2019) is estimated to be 130,523 versus the resident base of 77,490 (2023).
- Redmond is the “Bicycle Capital of the Northwest.”



## WEAKNESSES

- There is a lack of indoor venues, leading to no capacity to host indoor events above approximately 300 people.
- LTAC investments in events and festivals are not linked to the generation of incremental demand.
- Tourism - the visitor economy - is a relatively new industry for Redmond and the economic implications are not well understood.
- Very little data is available on tourism spending, travel patterns, profiles, and length of stay in Redmond.
- Redmond has little experience collaborating with other cities or the state in terms of attracting visitation, sports, or events.
- The trail system is not well integrated into the streetscape, particularly in the downtown area.
- Overnight visitation is heavily skewed towards business travel with weekends being less busy.
- Downtown parking can be a constraint.
- Overlapping jurisdictions related to trails could lead to confusion and inefficiency regarding programming, signage, and interpretation.
- There is no tourism industry, hotel association, or advocacy group within Redmond.
- There is limited capacity for meetings and conferences.
- Tourism performance data on an ongoing real-time basis does not exist.
- There is a lack of nightlife.



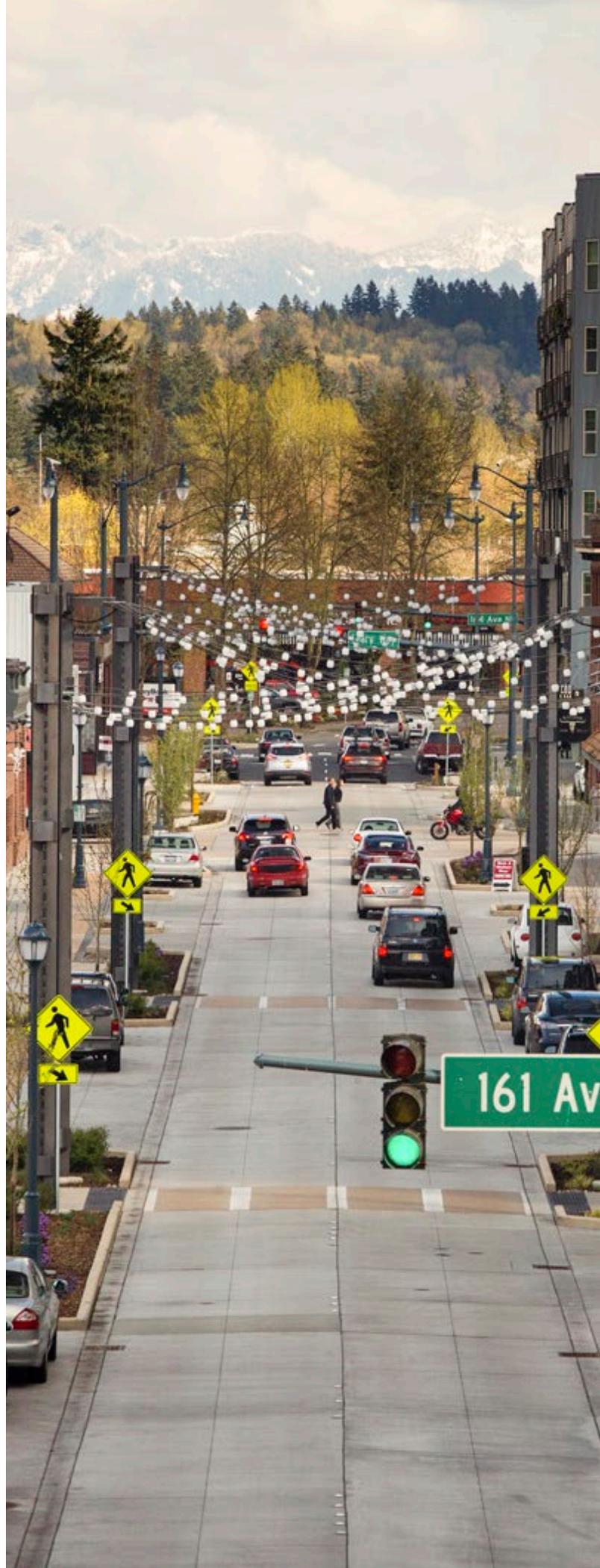
## OPPORTUNITIES

- Create a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Redmond responsible for marketing and managing tourism.
- Leverage investments through the support of the LTAC and the TPA to finance an independent DMO.
- Marketing and programming for the Redmond Town Center could be integrated into the broader strategy of marketing the destination.
- Partner on programming with the wineries and tasting rooms in nearby Woodinville.
- Leverage the relationship with the State of Washington and the Port of Seattle.
- Leverage the potential of sports in Redmond (soccer and cricket in particular) through affiliation with the Seattle Sports Commission.
- Developing the city of Seattle's potential as a source market for Redmond by building awareness.
- Redmond can support a broader regional approach to soliciting meetings, sports, and conference business.
- Improve web/social media exposure for themes, experiences, and retail within the city.
- Capitalize on the interest and appeal of craft beers and iconic restaurants.
- Leverage the TPA relationship with Bellevue into a strategic relationship.
- Enhance Redmond's reputation as the "Bicycle Capital of the Northwest."
- Capitalize on the technology and innovation strength with an annual mini-tech conference; showcasing innovation, careers, and trends in the sector.



## THREATS

- Limited access to labor markets to support a service-intensive tourism industry.
- Destination marketing and development is a long-term proposition requiring sustained political and funding support. Lack of continuity can compromise success.
- An aging population may put increasing demands on the labor force and the city's infrastructure.
- Climate change may have longer-term repercussions regarding seasonality, innovation, careers, and trends in the sector.



# PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

During the engagement phase of developing this plan, several themes started to emerge as key takeaways that helped to guide the development of the vision, goals, and initiatives. Planning considerations below are grouped by their corresponding goal.

.....

## Planning considerations in relation to enhancing the visitor experience include the following:

- 1 The growing diversity of Redmond will be a catalyst for changing programming in traditional festivals/events and the creation of new opportunities.**
  - Redmond in 2023 is much more ethnically diverse than in 2010, with growing Indian, Chinese, and Hispanic communities.
  - Redmond has also seen growth in young families with parents employed in the professional and managerial sectors.
- 2 Tourism growth must be considered along with the resident demand for infrastructure and services.**
  - A growing population base creates a growing demand for infrastructure and services. Those same assets can be enjoyed and supported by visitors to a community but need to be considered in the context of carrying capacity and access to avoid friction.
- 3 Programming and events at Marymoor are opportunities for packaging and extending length of stay.**
  - Providing value-added opportunities to stay and experience Redmond could be a value-add to any event and persuade participation.
  - Working with event organizers and communicating well in advance with potential participants is key.

- 4 Parks and green spaces serve diverse recreational needs for both residents and visitors.**
  - Signage, interpretation, and communication through key channels (e.g. hotels, websites) will stimulate awareness and participation by visitors to the city.

- 5 Public art is an integral part of Redmond's identity and conveys a strong and unique sense of place.**
  - Public art, combined with aesthetically beautiful and natural surroundings, invites exploration by residents and visitors. It also invites sharing on social media and is easily integrated into visitor programming.

- 6 The trails are a strong asset of the city and could be leveraged as a connector for visitors.**
  - Integrating the trail system into the downtown core with standardized signage and interpretation is key to elevating access and use by visitors to the city.

## Planning considerations in relation to building strategic partnerships include the following:

- 7 Work with recreation partners across the region to program and draw visitors to the region year-round.**
  - Organizers for recreational events are often interested in working with tourism organizations to help with logistical support and the provision of opportunities to enhance delegate participation.

## **8 Leverage and work in partnership with other organizations within the state to create opportunities to connect with long-haul markets.**

- Visit Seattle, the Seattle Sports Commission, the Port of Seattle, and the State of Washington Tourism are some of the organizations that can create opportunities to connect with external markets.

## **9 Adjacent communities have their own assets and identities that complement a visit to Redmond.**

- Adjacent communities (Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville, Issaquah, etc.) have their own assets and identities that complement a visit to Redmond and could be integrated into programs and itineraries.

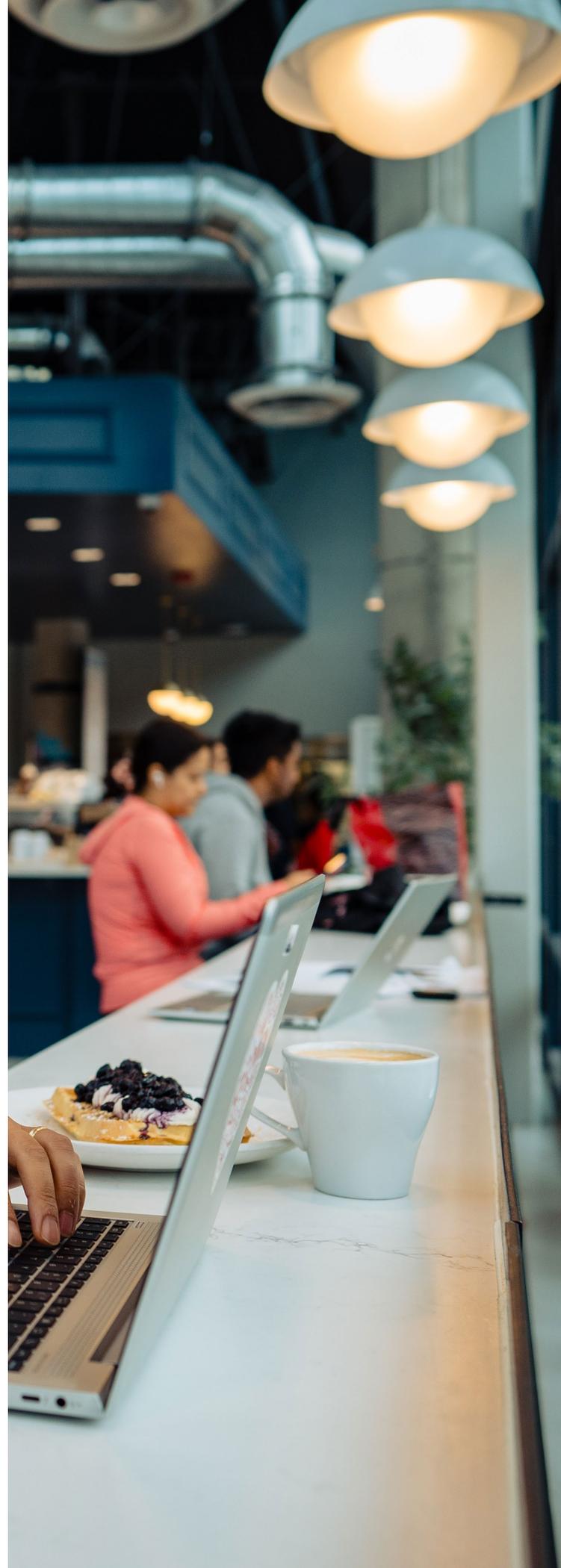
## **10 The LTAC and TPA could provide a base for funding an organization to market and manage tourism in Redmond.**

- Multiple sources of funding for marketing and managing tourism in a destination are not uncommon. Ideally, there is alignment and focus in terms of how funds are invested to support economic growth.

### **Planning considerations in relation to developing support for the industry include the following:**

## **11 The City of Redmond and its partners have established relationships with tourism stakeholders which has provided a strong foundation for the destination.**

- The work that has gone into developing the Experience Redmond brand is an example of a local initiative that has already engaged and empowered the tourism community. There is a foundation of interest and goodwill that can be built on and focused as part of a tourism strategy.



## **12** Lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities of tourism partners has created confusion and misalignment in support of the tourism industry.

- There is an expectation among tourism stakeholders in Redmond that alignment and focus will avoid duplication and inefficiency going forward. It's an opportunity to maximize and leverage resources toward building a stronger tourism economy.

## **13** Creating a dedicated Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in Redmond could further enhance a collaborative approach to destination marketing and management.

- Developing the visitor economy will require investment, collaboration, and a multi-year strategic focus.
- Marketing must be complemented by an engaged understanding of resident sentiment and destination stewardship that respects community values and aspirations.

## **14** The TPA's current relationship with Bellevue and potentially other communities could be leveraged into a long-term collaboration.

- Longer term, the lessons learned, and intelligence gathered from the TPA relationship could be used to build a business case for TPA development in other jurisdictions.

## **15** The lack of indoor space for programming, events, meetings, and conferences is a constraint.

- The lack of indoor space has obvious implications for events that may be vulnerable due to season or weather. It is a constraint for residents and certainly for potential visitors who may be trying to plan for weeks or months in advance.

## **16** LTAC investments in events and festivals should have stronger tourism economic benefits.

- Ideally, investment are linked to the generation of incremental demand for the city, with the highest yield being overnight visitation. Local events can be an important source of market and economic intelligence if organizers are sufficiently trained in basic research, sampling, and survey techniques.

## **17** Tourism is a newly recognized industry for growth in Redmond and the awareness of its economic and social benefits should be emphasized within the community.

- Tourism is a complex industry that touches many sectors of a destination's economy - accommodation, foodservice, retail, entertainment, transportation, etc. It is also dependent upon the interrelationships of many stakeholders to be successful. Understanding its contribution to the quality of life in a destination is important for ownership and support.

## **18** Improved data and research are needed to better measure success, understand visitor dynamics, and set targets for performance goals.

- Engagement and communication are important to ensure alignment with community values.
- Community members such as residents and business owners can be important advocates and champions for tourism.
- Understanding the economic value of the visitor economy, including gross domestic product (GDP), taxes, and employment is one way to build political and community support for tourism.
- Developing a strong visitor economy needs political support over the long term.

**Planning considerations in relation to building destination awareness include the following:**

**19** **More effort should be spent on developing weekend leisure travel experiences.**

- Weekends are a need period and an opportunity to stimulate leisure demand for Redmond. Extending business travel into the weekend through pre/post opportunities as a value-added offer is also an option.

**20** **Internationally renowned companies based in Redmond that have strong international brand identities can be leveraged to build awareness for the city.**

- International brand recognition already creates equity for the destination where they are located. The key is creatively connecting the sense of place to the brand in ways that are compelling and that stimulate interest in visiting.

**21** **The Sound Transit 2 Line is an opportunity for building day trips and overnight visitation from residents and visitors in the Greater Seattle Region.**

- Ease of access is an ideal opportunity to build awareness of Redmond and its assets within a metro population that remains largely unaware of what is so close at hand. Creative programming and engagement can stimulate interest, increase visitation, and create local ambassadors for Redmond.

**22** **Redmond has recreational assets such as fields, trails, and access to water that will attract incremental sporting events.**

- The Seattle Sports Commission is one example of a potential strategic partner that could be an advocate for Redmond's recreational assets.

**23** **Broadening digital/social media awareness of the breadth of products and experiences in Redmond is a marketing opportunity.**

- The web is an obvious venue for theming, suggested itinerary development, imagery, and testimonials about Redmond. Ideally, the site engages user participation so that endorsements, photography, and recommendations are driven organically rather than through paid media. Content and imagery should be regularly updated and fresh.

**24** **Leverage earned media and visitor testimonials to drive market awareness organically.**

- Passionate and inspired consumers are the best source of information and insight about a destination. Creative ways to engage and elevate user testimonials and influencers are a key tactic to connect with like-minded audiences.



# | Vision



# VISION FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN REDMOND

A destination vision should ultimately describe the state of the destination if it is to be successful in all its strategic activities. In other words, a destination vision is a desired future state. It needs to be both aspirational and inspirational. The language should be simple to make the statement as memorable as possible. Ultimately, a strong destination vision is one which residents can rally around, and visitors will ultimately want to experience.

Themes to be considered for the destination vision emerged through the visioning workshop, focus groups, one-on-ones and a digital questionnaire. The following five themes resonated the most with the participants and form the basis of the destination vision.

## **INNOVATION**

We celebrate our connectedness through innovation and leadership

## **DIVERSITY**

We are a community enriched by a myriad of people and perspectives

## **VIBRANCY**

We are a city which feels healthy and alive

## **WELCOMING**

We are excited to share our love for Redmond with visitors

## **CLOSE TO NATURE**

We are a place to enjoy and participate in outdoor activities

Therefore, the recommended destination vision for Redmond is...

**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.**





# Strategic Goals and Initiatives



An illustration in the top left corner shows a stylized yellow figure of a person holding a suitcase and standing next to a signpost with two arrows pointing in opposite directions. The signpost is also yellow. The background is white.

# Goal 1: Enhancing 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.

## INITIATIVES

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1. Position and promote Redmond as an intercultural destination showcasing various cultures through arts, events, and dining options.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Develop a "dine around" or business passport program over a multi-week winter period.
6. Support Redmond's transportation programs that provide visitor infrastructure.
7. Position and promote Redmond as a recreation destination within the region.
8. 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.
9. Foster the development of an annual multi-day event featuring innovations and opportunities in technology.
10. Promote and utilize the light rail stations to increase compression traffic from large events in other parts of the region such as Seattle.
11. Promote and encourage extending leisure stays during business trips to facilitate additional nights for travelers to experience the destination's offerings.

## INITIATIVES

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12. Utilize the appeal of Redmond's breweries and proximity to Woodinville Wine Country as foundations for developing effective promotion campaign strategies.
13. Spotlight the vibrant artistic community and public art through targeted promotional campaigns, curated itineraries, and an enhanced digital experience.
14. Foster the growth of event tourism audiences by offering marketing workshops and toolkits to empower event organizers.
15. Harness Redmond's reputation as a dog and pet-friendly destination to enhance marketing efforts.
16. Evaluate and support infrastructure including walkability and bicycle trail systems to enhance visitor information and wayfinding that improves access within the city.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. Foster partnerships and programming that highlight Redmond's globally known gaming industry to attract visitors.
20. Encourage the development of retail spaces that will attract culinary, beverage, and nightlife businesses to Redmond.
21. Explore implementation of an innovative technology experience showcasing or introducing Redmond's unique companies, gaming characters, activities, events, and more.
22. Develop a reliable visitor shuttle or transportation program designed to efficiently transport guests from hotels to various destinations.
23. Explore if interest and market would support a stand-alone venue highlighting Redmond's gaming industry and work with the private sector for creation.
24. Partner with Woodinville to expand wine programming, partnerships, and events in and around Redmond.
25. Encourage piloting and expanding new event concepts with the potential to drive overnight stays.
26. Support public/private partnerships to develop indoor event space to host larger conferences in the city.
27. Expand existing winter programming and signature experiences that broaden awareness and attract visitors to Redmond for winter hotel and retail expenditures.
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.

### INITIATIVES

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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 Eastside 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 the 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.

## INITIATIVES

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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.

### INITIATIVES

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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.

### INITIATIVES

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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.

## INITIATIVES

13. Develop a meetings and convention strategy which focuses on key economic sectors of Redmond.
14. Invest in tools for analyzing tourism feeder markets, then pilot targeted advertising and promotional campaigns to attract overnight stays from those markets.
15. Allocate resources towards technology solutions for capturing event and conference contact leads, strategically enhancing opportunities to generate hotel business.



# | Conclusion



# CONCLUSION

The Redmond Tourism Strategic Plan is a path forward for the city to develop and capitalize on the unique assets and opportunities to grow its visitor economy. Focus is imparted by the vision which incorporates key tenets - innovation, diversity, vibrancy, nature, and hospitality - that make Redmond a special place to live, work, and play. Strategies and initiatives capitalize on specific opportunities, where possible, but more importantly provides context for longer term aspirations that may be realized as resources become available. Collaboration is an essential theme because successfully developing and managing the visitor economy requires multiple stakeholders working toward a common purpose.

At its core, tourism is about transformative experiences undertaken by visitors within a destination. Done well, tourism enriches lives, broadens perspectives, and creates lasting memories. It also provides opportunities to connect with residents and celebrate the events and culture that make life meaningful. Respect for the community and its values are core for visitors understanding their role as stewards for the places they come to experience. This engagement establishes a foundation for a destination to endure for future generations.

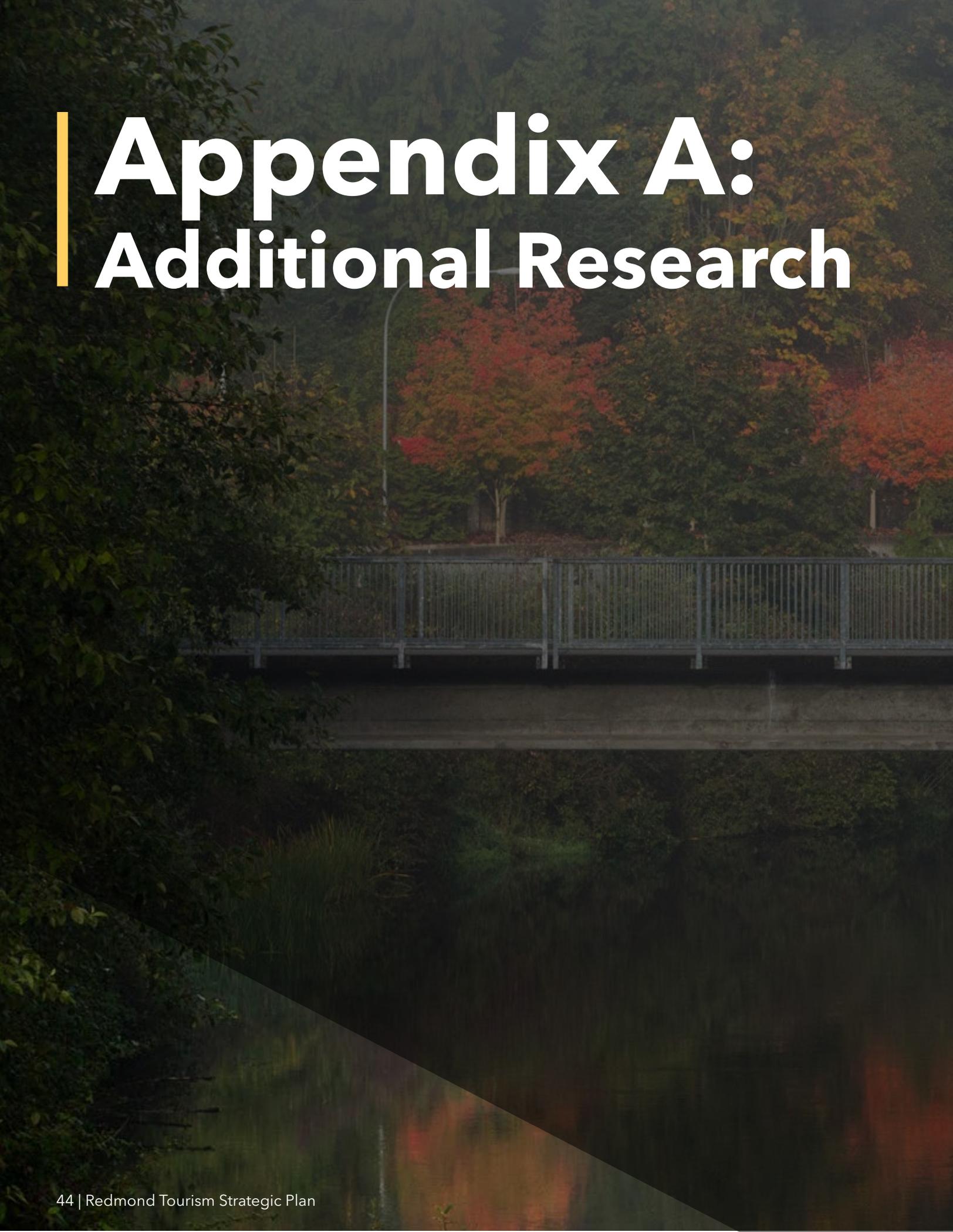
None of this though occurs by happenstance. Successful destinations engage businesses, residents, and local politicians to a common vision of what success looks like and a path forward that

is achievable. Destination management is arguably just as important as destination marketing.

Through the LTAC and the TPA, Redmond already has the key stakeholders engaged who recognize the inherent value of growing the visitor economy. Operationalizing that ambition is informed by the Redmond Tourism Strategic Plan. It is a path forward for capitalizing on the many opportunities to build a competitive advantage that is distinct and compelling.

Redmond is coming into its own as a 21st century city with a unique identity and sense of place. A healthy visitor economy will grow awareness, invite investment, encourage repeat visitation, and attract new residents. Tourism has the potential to be an important part of Redmond's economic future.





# Appendix A: Additional Research





## ATTRACTIONS IN REDMOND

The following table shows the most popular attractions in Redmond according to data

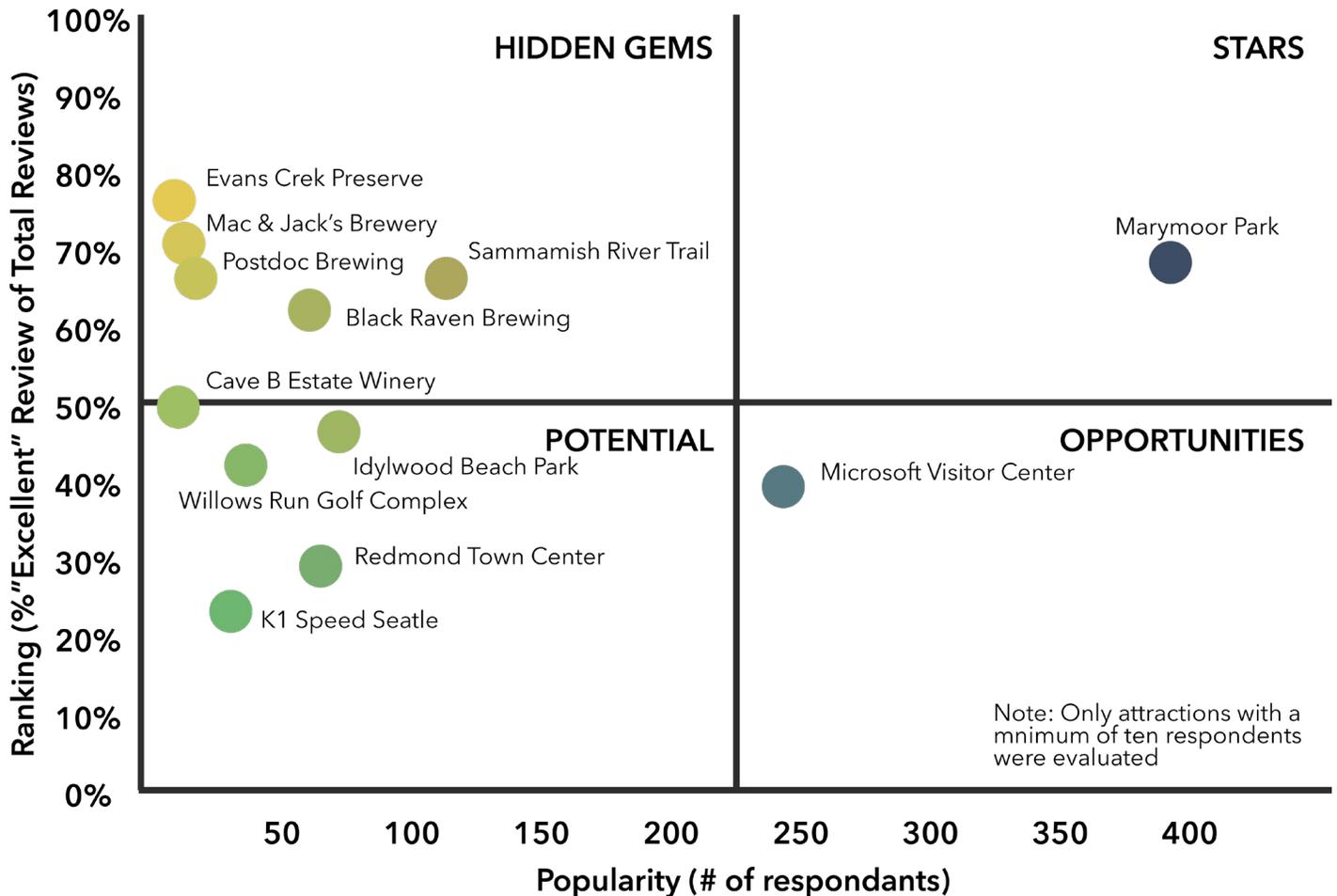
available on Tripadvisor<sup>1</sup> from 2010-2023. Data is plotted along two dimensions - "popularity" as measured by the frequency of respondents who provided a review of the attraction over the years, and "brand ambassadors" which is a subset of total reviews that provided the highest possible ranking for the attraction.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.tripadvisor.ca/Attractions-g58702-Activities-oa0-Redmond\\_Washington.html](https://www.tripadvisor.ca/Attractions-g58702-Activities-oa0-Redmond_Washington.html)

The chart is segmented into four quadrants - Stars, Opportunities, Potential, and Hidden Gems. "Stars" are the most straightforward - popular attractions with very positive reviews. They can be capitalized on immediately as important additions to just about any traveler's itinerary.

The "Hidden Gems" are the most intriguing. While availability and access may be limited due to seasonal or infrastructural factors, these attractions have a passionate fan base. Strengthening awareness among existing and potential visitors can significantly boost Redmond's appeal as a destination.

### TripAdvisor - "Best Things to do in Redmond"

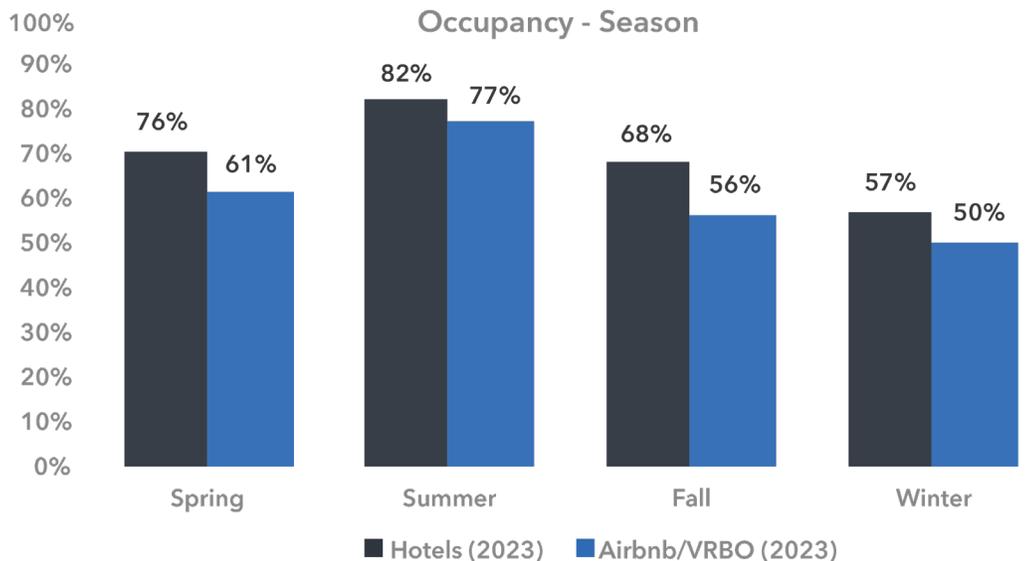
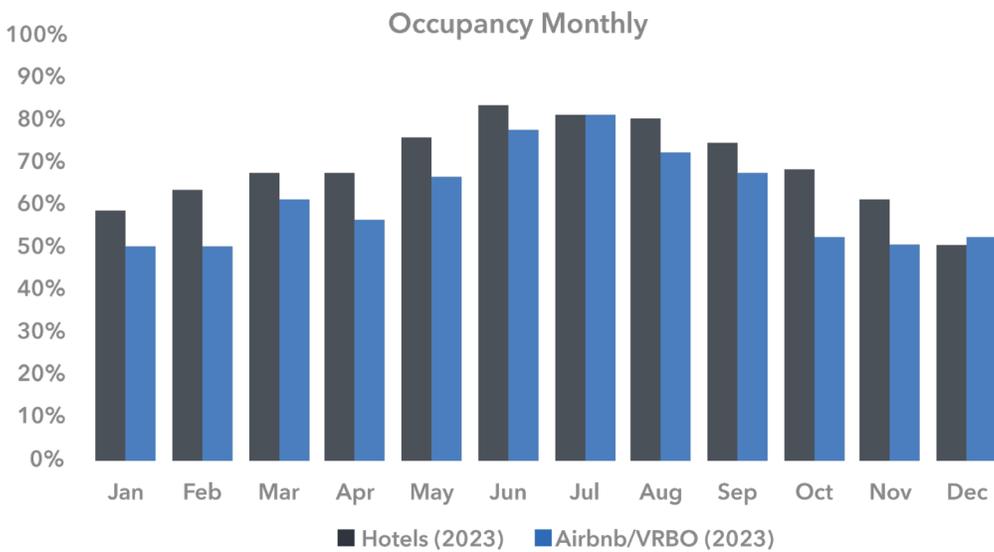


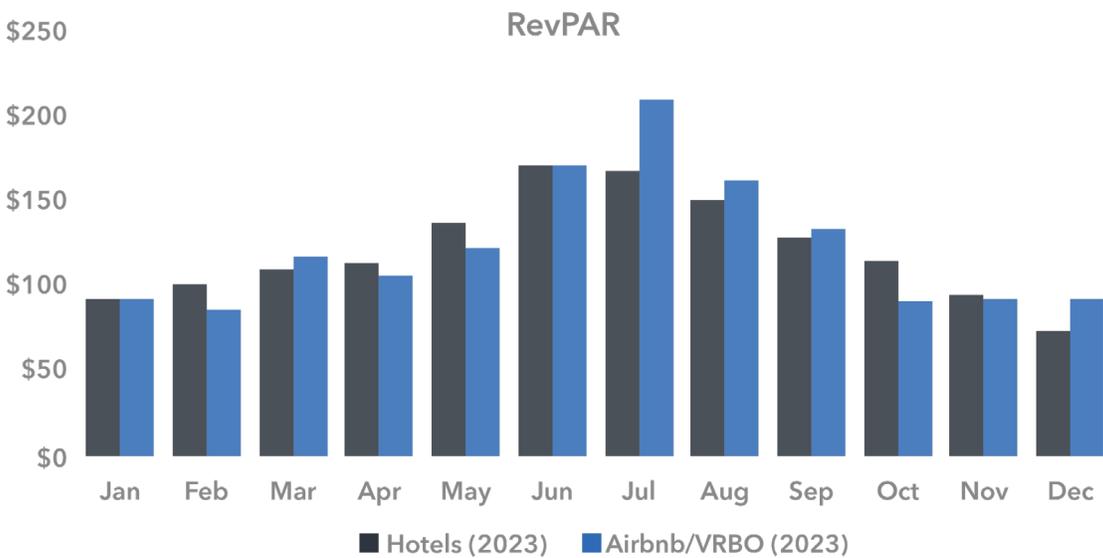
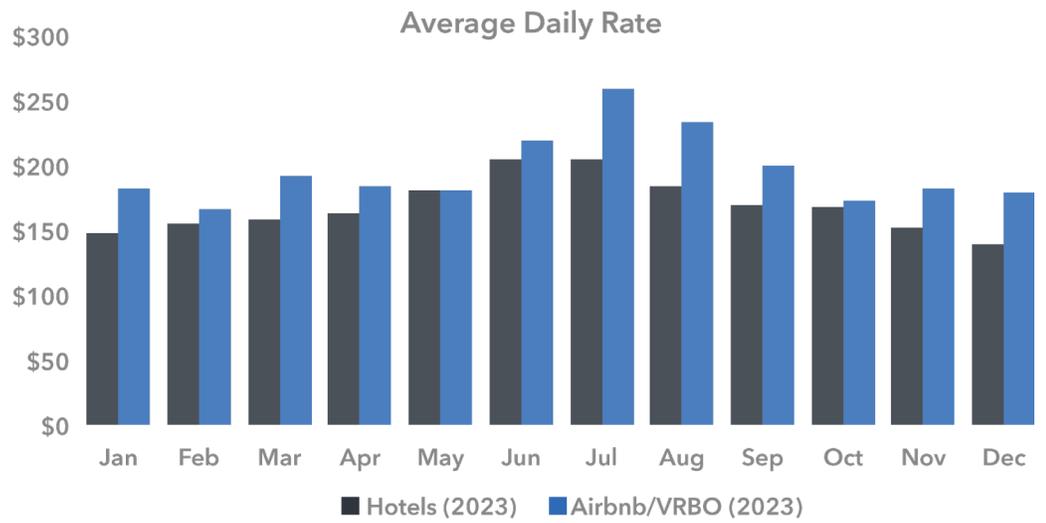


# HOTEL AND AIRBNB/VRBO PERFORMANCE

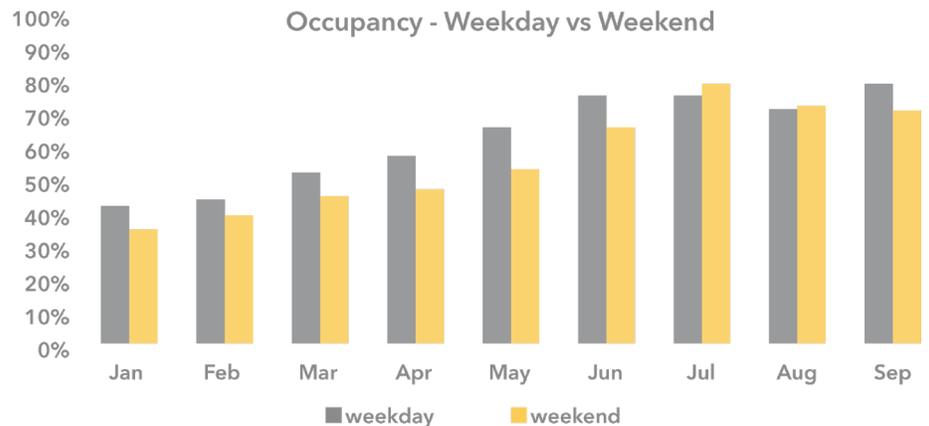
The hotel performance as recorded by Smith Travel Research (STR) is based on a sample of 10 hotels representing 1,598 available rooms in Redmond. The data is for 2023. AirDNA provides data on the performance of Airbnb and VRBOs for the city of Redmond. There were 259 listings reported for 2023.

Overall annual occupancy was 60%, the average daily room rate was \$178, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) was \$107. Occupancy and rate had recovered to pre-COVID levels, but RevPAR was still down by -12%. In 2023 there were also 259 Airbnb/VRBOs listings in operation in Redmond which is equivalent to the capacity of an additional mid-sized hotel. Comparisons are illustrated below.





Weekday occupancies for hotels are markedly different than weekend occupancies. This implies strong business demand during the week and a lack of leisure demand (which typically fills weekends). Weekday versus weekend occupancy for the period from January to September 2023 is illustrated below.

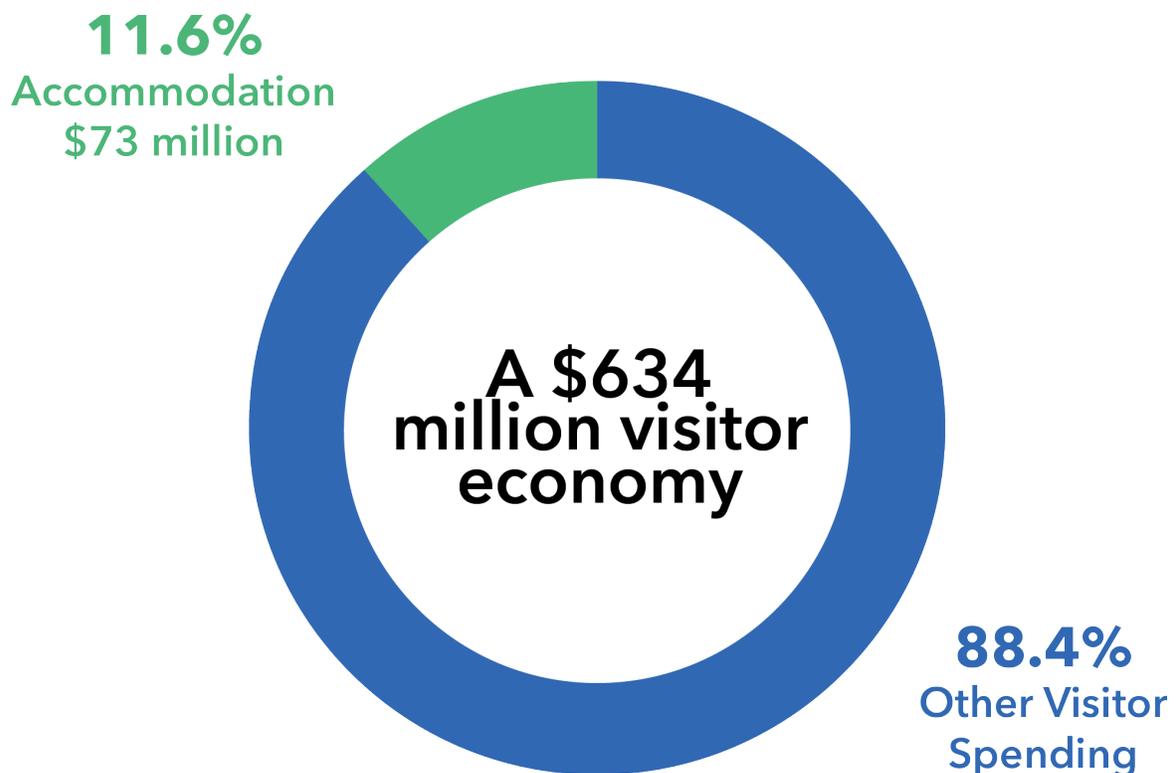


Airbnb/VRBOs are a significant economic contributor to the city with annual gross revenue estimated at \$11.0M. The STR hotel sample, by comparison, contributes an annual gross revenue of \$62.2M. Collectively, accommodation revenue in 2023 for the city of Redmond (hotels and Airbnb/VRBO) is estimated at \$73.3M.

as a proportion of the total visitor economy varies from a low of 8% to a high of 20% of total spending. On that basis, it's reasonable to estimate that the total value of the visitor economy that flowed through the city in 2023 is conservatively estimated at \$634M dollars.

Estimating the economic value of the visitor economy is more challenging because there has never been an economic impact analysis undertaken in the city. However, reviewing comparable analysis undertaken for several regional jurisdictions, accommodation spending

## Visitor Spending in Redmond (2023)





## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

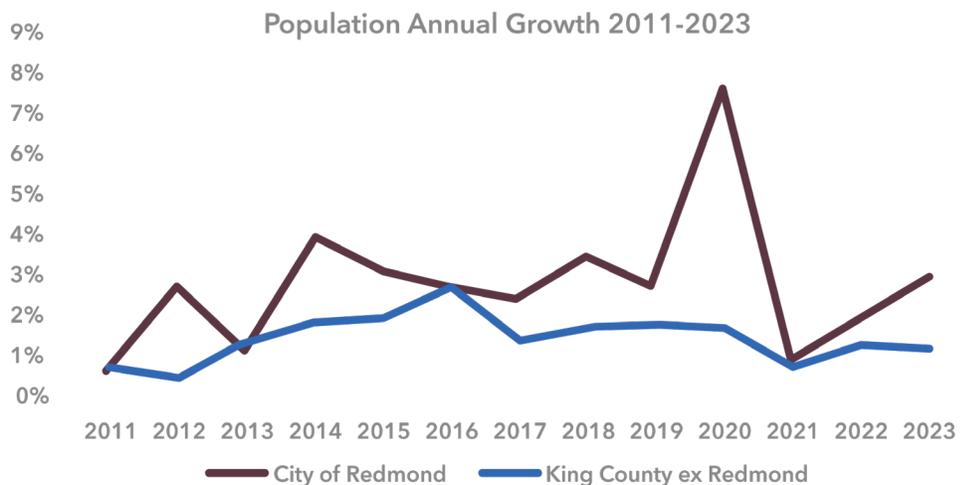
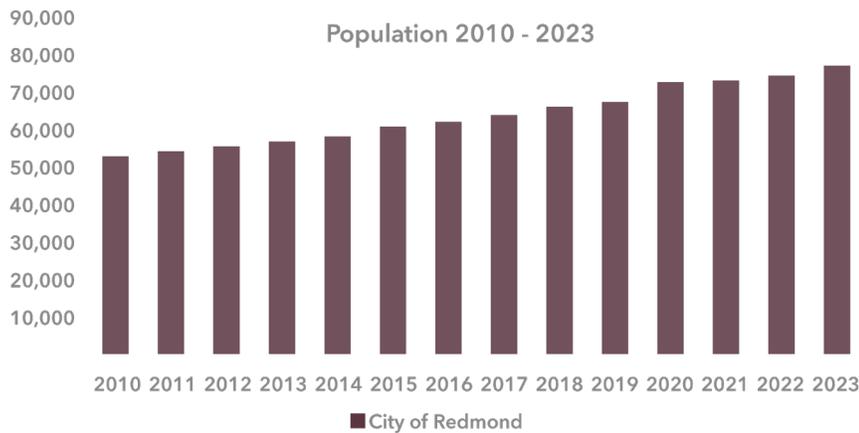
The population of the city of Redmond in 2023 was an estimated 77,490<sup>1</sup>. Since 2010 it has grown at an annual rate of 2.8%, greater than the rest of King County (1.5%), and at a rate greater than projected to meet the population target of 128,400 projected for 2050<sup>2</sup>. A growing population will have implications for the provision of housing and infrastructure in the Overlake, Downtown, and Marymoor areas of the city.

The growing population of Redmond is also getting more ethnically diverse, with growing Asian and Hispanic communities. In 2010, the Asian community for example, was 26% of the population. By 2022, that had increased to 41%<sup>3</sup>, growing particularly with an influx of residents from China and India. Growing ethnicity influences the dynamic of a community in many ways from the retail/foodservice mix to the ways in which a community celebrates its culture.

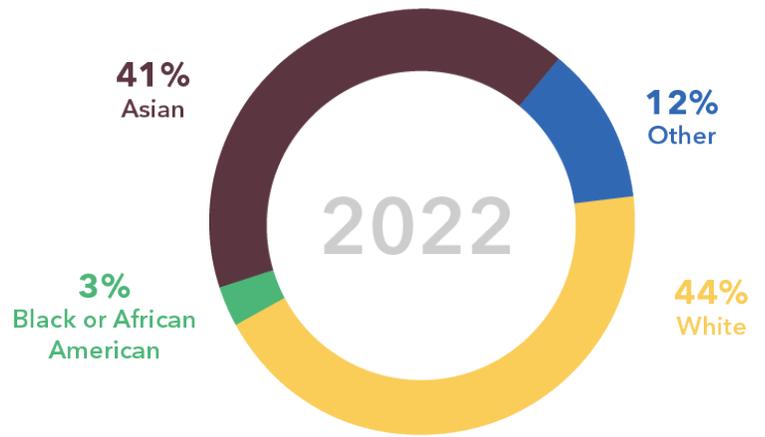
<sup>3</sup> <https://api.census.gov/data/2022/acs/acs1/cprofile>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.redmond.gov/818/Demographics-and-Statistics>

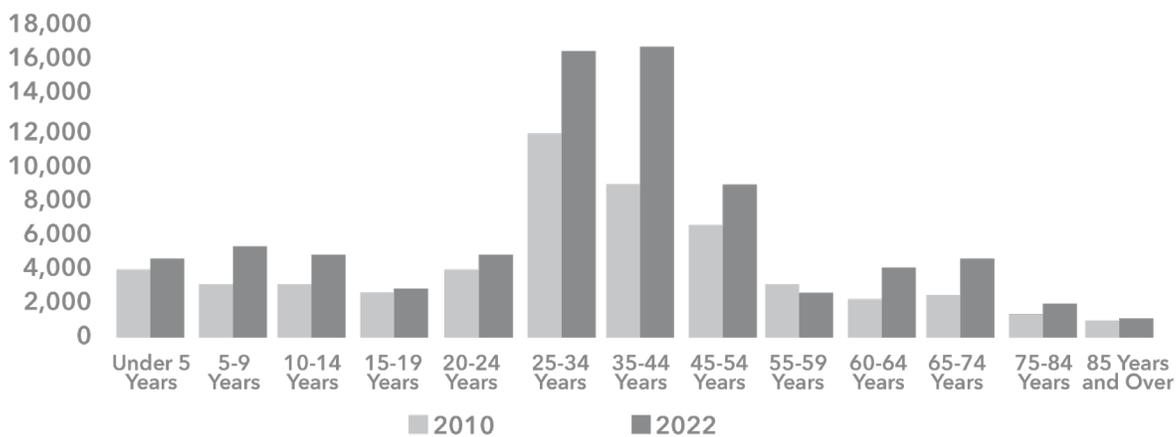
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.redmond.gov/942/Locate-and-Expand>



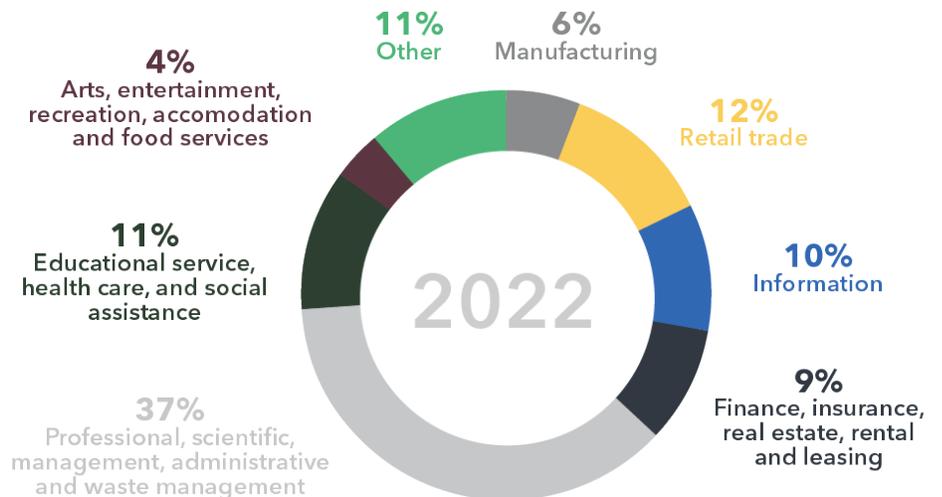
The growth of Redmond has been particularly strong in the 25-44-year-old segment, with occupations in the business, management, arts, and sciences sector also growing. This too influences the city's dynamic in terms of the demand for recreational amenities, participation in local programs, and the introduction of new events or adapted programming for existing ones.



**Population by Age**



A successful tourism strategy adapts and evolves as resident aspirations and interests also change over time. Festivals and events change their programming or introduce new elements to stay fresh and connected to their audiences. Community programming that meets resident needs will often find that those same experiences will both attract and be popular with visitors as well. Connecting with locals is a strong motivation for travel.



A smiling man with a beard and a dark t-shirt is working in a kitchen or food processing area. He is holding a large metal mixing bowl and a long metal handle. The background shows a large white mixing bowl filled with a brown, textured substance. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a dark overlay on the right side of the image.

# Appendix B: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Participants

# CONSULTATIONS

Listed below are the communities and organizations that assisted in the development of the Redmond Tourism Strategic Plan.

## Project Team

Philly Marsh, Economic Development Manager  
Jackie Lalor, Economic Development & Tourism Program Administrator  
Jordan Young, InterVISTAS Consulting  
Stephen Pearce, GainingEdge  
Paul Vallee, GainingEdge  
John Lambeth, Civitas

## Redmond Mayor

Angela Birney, Mayor

## Redmond City Council

Vanessa Kritzer, City Council President  
Jessica Forsythe, City Council Vice President  
Steve Fields, LTAC Chair  
Jeralee Anderson  
Angie Nuevacamina  
Osman Salahuddin  
Melissa Stuart

## Lodging Tax Advisory Committee

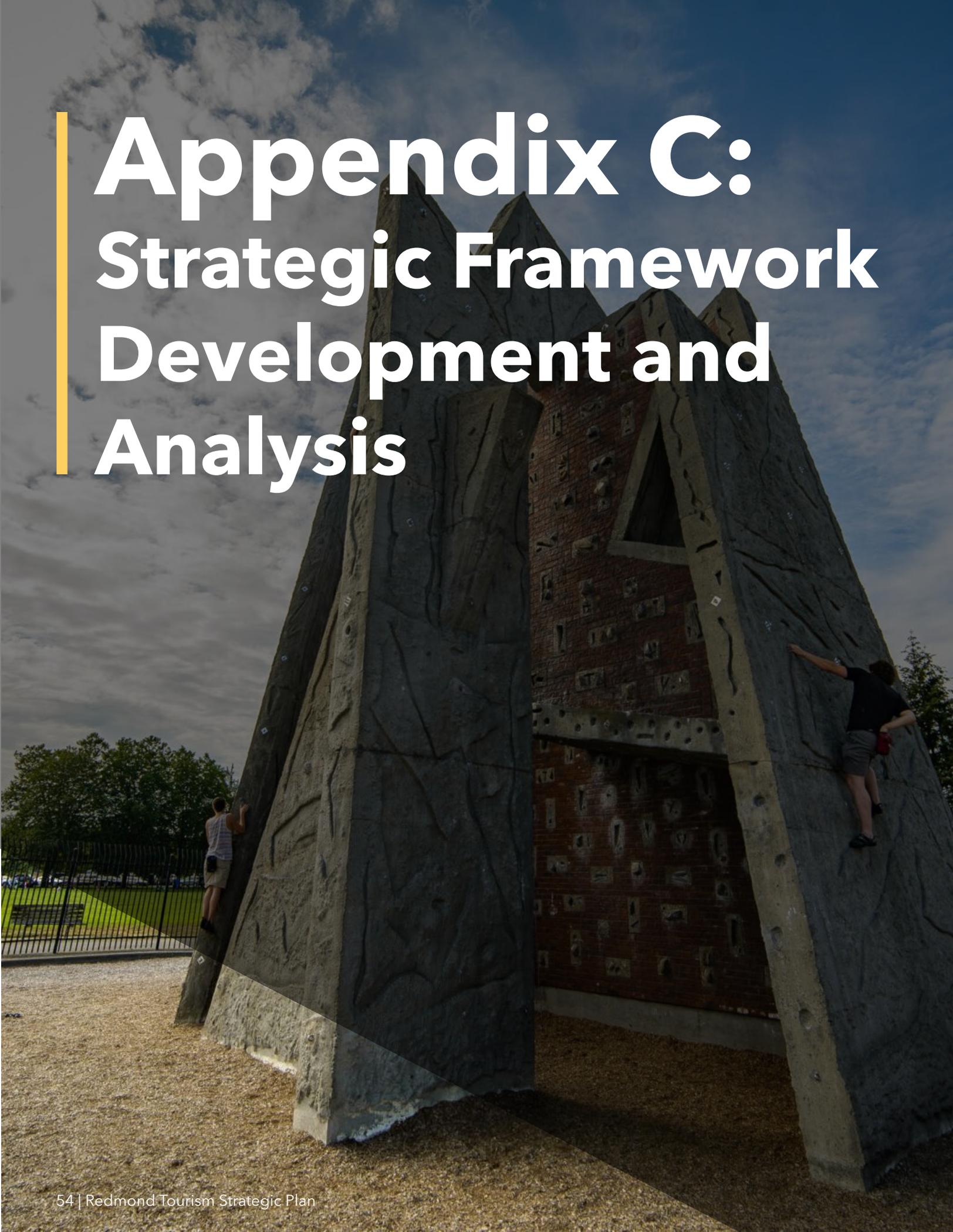
Dan Angellar  
Nancy Heard  
Melody Lanthorn  
George Manojlovic  
Latha Sambamurti

## Additional Participants

Agave Cocina & Cantina Restaurant  
Aloft Seattle Redmond  
American Diabetes Association  
AmPowering  
Archer Hotel Redmond  
Bold Hat Productions  
Brick & Mortar Books

Bullseye Creative  
Centro Cultural Mexicano  
City of Bellevue, WA  
City of Bothell, WA  
City of Issaquah, WA  
City of Kent, WA  
City of Kirkland, WA  
City of Redmond, WA  
Clo Marketing, Inc.  
Colon Cancer Coalition  
Conference Direct  
Conundroom Escape Rooms  
Dough Zone Dumpling House  
Family Holi Festival  
Flatstick Pub Redmond  
Hampton Inn & Suites Seattle-Redmond  
Hilton Garden Inn Redmond Town Center  
Hyatt House Seattle/Redmond  
Iskcon Vedic Cultural Center  
JJ Mahoney's  
Jordan T Adams Events Creative LLC  
Julie D. Merken, CMP LLC  
Kind and Company Events  
King County, WA  
Kirkland Kiwanis Foundation  
Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association  
LamontCo  
Mac and Mabel Home Store  
Marymoor Velodrome Association  
Meta  
Microsoft  
Modular on the Spot Concert  
Monse Colombian Festival  
Move Redmond  
Obliteride 2023  
OneRedmond  
OneRedmond Foundation  
Palmer's

Plantify LLC  
Pomegranate Bistro  
Port Seattle  
Pride Across the Bridge  
Redmond Arts Festival  
Redmond Historical Society  
Redmond Historical Society  
Redmond Inn  
Redmond Rotary Club  
Redmond Town Center  
Redmond's Bar & Grill  
Residence Inn Seattle East/Redmond  
Run for Good Racing Co  
Seattle Marriott Redmond  
Shaburina HotPot  
SJA Property Management  
SnoValley Chamber of Commerce  
SPIE  
State of Washington Tourism  
The Details  
The Emotional Abuse Discussion  
The French Bakery  
Vedic Cultural Center  
Visit Bellevue  
Visit Issaquah  
Visit Seattle  
Woodblock  
Woodinville Wine Country



# Appendix C: Strategic Framework Development and Analysis

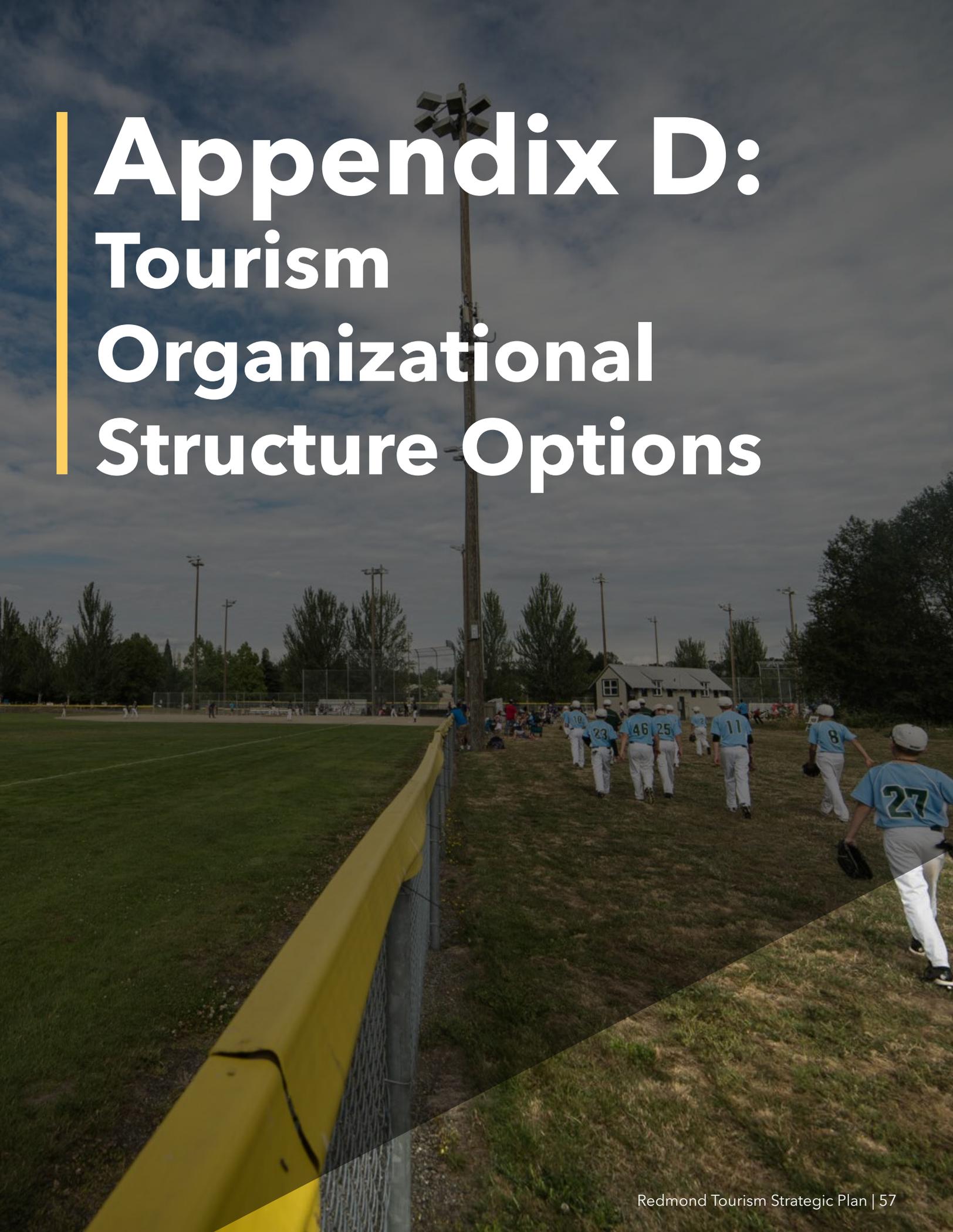
# TOURISM INITIATIVES EVALUATION RATING SYSTEM (TIERS) ANALYSIS

The Tourism Initiative Evaluation Rating System (TIERS) analysis is a framework for evaluating a broad range of proposed initiatives to bring focus to those initiatives that would be the most meaningful for the destination. It is a qualitative framework that includes criteria such as the following:

- Destination Enhancement - considers whether the initiative has the potential to generate excitement and praise for the destination/host community, whether it can be a catalyst for change, increase interest in visitation, expand the scope of products/services offered, and truly differentiate the destination/host community. Scoring options vary from "significant" to "not likely".
- Timeline to Realize Benefits - assesses the time frame for payback to the destination in terms of return on investment, economic benefits to the community, and incremental visitation or extension of visit. A short timeline is less than two years; a long timeline is greater than five years.
- Complexity of Project to Realize Benefits - assesses the capital cost required, ownership, and the number of stakeholders that need to be involved to see the project through. A low risk/uncomplicated initiative would have minimal costs and require no partners; a high risk/complicated venture would entail high capital costs, ongoing operational obligations, and a multitude of stakeholders.
- Resource Requirements - examines ongoing operational obligations in terms of staff and costs. The scope would be a low level of investment where time and costs are nominal, to a high level of investment.
- Alignment with Sustainable Tourism - assesses the fit between the proposed initiative and support for environmental, socio/cultural, and economic sustainability. The scoring system ranges from "unlikely" to "highly likely".
- Provides Opportunities for Residents and Local Business Owners - assesses the likelihood of the proposed initiative to deliver direct support for community stakeholders. Scoring options would vary from "yes" to "negligible".
- Connects and Supports the Vision for the Destination - examines the alignment between the proposed initiative and the values shaping the vision for Redmond. Range of responses would vary from "yes" (strong support) to "negligible" (not aligned with the vision).

Each of the criterion in the TIERS analysis was ranked equally with a maximum value of 5 and a minimum value of 1. The average of each criterion was then combined to produce the overall score for the initiative and informed the project team how each initiative should be prioritized.





# Appendix D: Tourism Organizational Structure Options

# TOURISM ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OPTIONS

In 2023, the cities of Redmond and Bellevue entered into an interlocal agreement. They passed an ordinance establishing the Bellevue-Redmond Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) under the Revised Code of Washington § 35.101 et seq. (TPA Law). The TPA levies an assessment of \$2.50 per lodging unit per night of stay for lodging businesses with forty (40) or more lodging units within the TPA boundaries.

The Bellevue City Council serves as the legislative authority for the TPA, and the Bellevue-Redmond Tourism Promotion Area Advisory Board (TPA Advisory Board), consisting of representatives from assessed lodging businesses, makes recommendations to the City Council regarding the use of revenue from the TPA fee.

The City of Bellevue collects the assessment revenue. Revenues are deposited into separate accounts designated for the Redmond and Bellevue zones of the assessment, proportionate to the amount collected from each zone.

Destination management organizations selected by the TPA advisory board implement sales and marketing campaigns in line with the TPA's management plan. For Redmond's share of revenue from the TPA, OneRedmond,

the organization that also manages Redmond's Chamber of Commerce, was selected as the 2024 management organization to implement TPA programs for the city in the absence of an established destination management organization (DMO).

In addition to revenue from the TPA, the City of Redmond levies a Lodging Tax of one percent (1%) on short-term lodging stays. The City of Redmond's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) oversees the Lodging Tax revenue. The Lodging Tax funding structure currently authorizes fifty percent (50%) of the lodging tax revenue to be dedicated to tourism marketing programs, including but not limited to the Experience Redmond brand management contract. Experience Redmond serves as the city's longstanding tourism brand inclusive of a logo, brand guidelines, website, social media, advertisements, and more.

As noted, revenues from the TPA and Lodging Tax are overseen by different advisory boards. Without a strong partnership and alignment between these two governances, the risk exists of duplicated spending and missed opportunities for coordination to optimize revenues.

For a visual of the current advisory board structure of these two funding sources, see page 20.

# OPTIONS TO CREATE STRONG COLLABORATION

There are several viable options to improve collaboration and coordination between the City, LTAC, TPA Advisory Board, and TPA management organization. These include:

- **Status quo:** Currently, the City of Redmond Lodging Tax is managed by the Redmond LTAC, with Experience Redmond serving as the primary tourism marketing brand. This brand is contracted out to a marketing consultant to manage through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Meanwhile, Redmond's share of the TPA funds is overseen by the TPA Advisory Board, which contracts with a selected management organization. The current model is unique and complex, with various boards and committees involved in the absence of a traditional DMO.
- **Status quo with Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** The TPA management organization could sign an MOU with the City of Redmond and the LTAC, establishing roles and responsibilities among each entity to help ensure there is no unnecessary overlap in services.
- **Diverting Funds to One Organization:** In many destinations, two separate organizations will coordinate spending by having one organization contract with the second for marketing, sales, and other services. This integrated approach diverts revenue from the first organization to the second and centralizes revenue and marketing/sales strategies in one central organization. This structure allows both organizations to continue working towards the same goal but allocates more money to one organization where the majority of the tourism marketing occurs. The chosen organization would require additional capacity to be built in for staff time.

- **Create a New Nonprofit to Serve as the Destination Management Organization (DMO):** Many destinations have also improved their collaboration and maximized spending by forming a separate nonprofit organization to oversee marketing efforts for the destination. In this scenario, rather than one organization allocating resources to the second, both the Redmond LTAC and either the TPA Advisory Board would allocate revenue from the Lodging Tax and TPA to the nonprofit DMO, which would, in turn, centrally oversee marketing services. If this option is selected, we recommend establishing the new DMO as a nonprofit organization without members.

Regardless of the structure chosen, it would be beneficial and highly encouraged for both the TPA and LTAC to co-partner on each committee's budgeting process and seek alignment and agreement on funding initiatives.

Given the options available to the City of Redmond, it is essential to consider case studies of other destinations and their organizational structure related to lodging taxes and special assessment districts. These studies provide an overview of how other destinations coordinate revenues from multiple sources and centralize decision-making to ensure that they are getting the best return on investment for their destinations.

# CASE STUDIES



## SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Sacramento, California's capital city, is a significant destination with over 500,000 residents. Its official DMO, the Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau (doing business as Visit Sacramento), has been instrumental in drawing visitors to the city.

Visit Sacramento draws revenue from three primary sources, including a city-wide hotel/lodging tax (known in California as Transient Occupancy Tax, or TOT) and two special districts which assess local businesses in a similar model as Washington State's TPA law.

The Sacramento Tourism Infrastructure District (STID) is an assessment district levied on short-term room rentals. The assessment is one percent (1%) of gross short-term rental revenue and is designed to provide funding for capital improvements within the city. Specifically, the assessment is used to provide funding for the construction of a ballroom as part of Sacramento's SAFE Credit Union Convention Center and other infrastructure projects. Visit Sacramento administers the STID in conjunction with a Tourism District Committee consisting of Sacramento City staff, staff from Visit Sacramento, and representatives from local lodging businesses subject to the assessment.

Additionally, Visit Sacramento receives funding from a second assessment district, the Sacramento Tourism Marketing District (STMD). Established in 2012, the STMD is designed to provide funding to increase sales and marketing activity by Visit Sacramento. Similar to the STID, Visit Sacramento manages the STMD in conjunction with a TMD Tourism Committee consisting of hoteliers, and assessment revenue is directed to sales and marketing activities that directly benefit the lodging businesses paying the assessment. While the STID is focused primarily on funding capital improvement projects within the city, revenue from the STMD is used for sales and marketing efforts.

Finally, Visit Sacramento receives funding from a portion of the city's TOT. While much of the TOT is diverted to the city's General Fund, roughly \$1.6M is pledged annually to Visit Sacramento for its marketing activities.

Because all three revenue sources are centrally managed by Visit Sacramento (with input from key stakeholders within the City of Sacramento and assessed lodging businesses), Visit Sacramento is able to oversee marketing spending to maximize efficiency and reduce duplicative spending.

With more than \$12.3M in revenue in 2022, Visit Sacramento focuses its efforts on spending that may not be typical for other destinations. It has focused on drawing businesses to the Sacramento region for large events, hosting the Aftershock Rock Festival and GoldenSky County Music Festival in 2023.

Additionally, Visit Sacramento places an emphasis on drawing meeting and convention sales to city, as well as high-profile amateur sporting events such as NCAA events, USA Track & Field, Senior Softball, IRONMAN, and international rugby and soccer.

Additionally, Visit Sacramento has successfully branded the city as America's Farm-to-Fork Capital. Part of its marketing efforts have included designing and launching a Farm-to-Fork website, where visitors can find lists of Sacramento's restaurants and featured spots to get a bite to eat. Visit Sacramento also hosts an annual Farm-to-Fork festival in partnership with the City of Sacramento, which draws thousands of visitors annually to the city center.

Because Visit Sacramento centrally oversees the spending of revenue from all three sources, it is able to maximize its marketing efforts to sell Sacramento as a destination for meetings and conventions, travel trade, and leisure travelers. Additionally, because of this ability to pool resources, Visit Sacramento has created internal divisions tasked with specific aspects of the overall marketing efforts, including a Sports Commission and Event Crew, which can be funded more effectively than if the revenue streams were split between different organizations. In this way, centralizing decision-making about marketing programs has made Visit Sacramento more effective as a DMO than if the revenue was managed separately.



## OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Located across the bay from foggy San Francisco and home to one of the largest ports in the country, Oakland has turned its reputation around from a potentially dangerous city in the 1980s and early 90s to a bustling, exciting destination for tourists today, thanks in no small part to the efforts of the Oakland Convention and Visitors Bureau, known as Visit Oakland.

Founded in 1999, Visit Oakland receives revenue from two primary sources: a portion of a city-wide TOT and the entirety of the revenue from the Oakland Tourism Business Improvement District (OTBID), an assessment on short-term lodging businesses within the city.

Established in 2015, the OTBID follows a similar model to the Sacramento Tourism Marketing District and Washington State TPAs. It levies an assessment of \$1.50 per night on short-term lodging businesses within the city and is managed by Visit Oakland. Funds from the OTBID are dedicated to marketing and advertising programs that promote assessed businesses within the OTBID, and sales efforts are designed to secure direct bookings at assessed businesses.

In addition to the revenues from the OTBID, Visit Oakland are funded by a portion of the city's 14% TOT levied on short-term lodging stays. Specifically, Visit Oakland receives 1.5% of the total 14%, as allocated in a 2009 ballot measure.

Visit Oakland took in roughly \$2.5M in revenue in 2021, funding unique programs designed to draw visitors to Oakland. Rather than attempting to draw in visitors from far-away destinations, in recent years, Visit Oakland has focused on events and festivals targeted at a younger demographic from closer to home. These include Oakland's Restaurant Week, a weeklong festival celebrating Oakland's unique culinary experience and culturally distinct neighborhoods, and Oakland's Vegan Trail and Cannabis Trail, offering curated tours of Oakland's unique vegan restaurants and cannabis establishments.

With a strong focus on younger visitors, Visit Oakland has also been instrumental in sponsoring the Activate Oakland Event Sponsorship program, launched in 2023, to revitalize downtown and neighborhood commercial areas. The program provides funding for events that support Oakland's commercial district, small businesses, arts, and culture. Visit Oakland also launched an Inspiration Guide highlighting events and things to do in various neighborhoods within the city. The guide also includes an Oakland Style fashion section and music, arts, and culinary highlights.

Visit Oakland is able to centralize the implementation of tourism marketing programs for the City of Oakland in a way that would be difficult were the funding sources to be managed by separate organizations. This has allowed Visit Oakland to create marketing that spans multiple efforts, including featured restaurants from the Oakland Restaurant Week or the Oakland Vegan trail in the Inspiration Guide. By combining both revenue sources under one roof, Visit Oakland ensures its marketing efforts have the maximum effect.



## HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Home to chilly Pacific-Northwest beaches, towering coastal redwood forests, and sparse mountain ranges, California's Humboldt County is a densely forested region containing more than 40% of all remaining old-growth Coast Redwood forests. Though not traditionally considered a premier tourist destination, the county offers countless outdoor activities unique to the Pacific Northwest.

Unlike Sacramento and Oakland, where one major destination marketing organization coordinates spending from multiple sources, tourism in Humboldt County is split between two main organizations. However, though funds are divided between multiple

organizations, the two collaborate closely and coordinate spending to ensure that marketing campaigns and other spending have maximum effect.

The Humboldt County Visitors Bureau (HCVB), a nonprofit organization and the county's accredited destination marketing and management organization, receives a portion of a county-wide TOT, a 12% tax levied on short-term lodging within the unincorporated areas of Humboldt County.

Another organization, the Humboldt Lodging Alliance (HLA), administers the county-wide Humboldt Tourism Business Improvement District (HTBID). Similar

to the HCVB, the HLA is a nonprofit organization. However, the HLA is the official owners' association for the Humboldt County lodging industry and is comprised of representatives from local lodging businesses. The HTBID levies a 2% assessment on short-term lodging stays within the county.

The HCVB and the HLA collaborate closely in the management and spending of revenue from the portion of the county TOT allocated to the HCVB and the HTBID assessment assigned to the HLA. Each organization provides different marketing and public relations services, with the HLA focusing on marketing and advertising, as well as new and existing events and capital/infrastructure improvements. The HCVB, in turn, represents Humboldt County at trade shows, engages with travel writers, and creates travel guides for visitors to the region.

Additionally, there is close collaboration between the two organizations at the board level. In 2018/19, 4 of the 13 HCVB Board Members also served on the HLA Board.

Though the HCVB's revenue is small compared to many other destinations, totaling only approximately \$250K in 2021/22, HCVB puts this revenue to good use. In recent years, they have focused on printed materials for visitors, a monthly e-newsletter, and travel trade shows to draw in new visitors and improve their experience in the county. HCVB also promotes the county during cruise ship stops in the area, handing out brochures and guides to travelers.

In line with putting money to good use, HCVB funded a series of concerts, the Old Steeple Concert series, to promote live music venues within the county. These concerts were recorded and aired on public television, and while only \$1K was invested in the program, the concerts aired in 33 states and were viewable by more than 50% of the US population.

HLA, in turn, receives significantly more revenue than HCVB. In 2021/22, the HTBID netted revenues of more than \$1.8M managed by HLA. With these funds, HLA established Humboldt's "California's Redwood Coast" brand and website, and a digital and print advertising campaign, "Follow the Magic." The Follow the Magic campaign led to a significantly increased growth rate for the tourism industry in Humboldt County and included billboards, digital and print advertising, cable TV spots, and social media content. HLA also sponsors Community Funding programs and assists in creating websites and a print advertising campaign for individual cities within Humboldt County.

Though Humboldt County has multiple organizations managing two different funding streams, it has undertaken steps to ensure these two organizations collaborate closely. By splitting marketing and other efforts by organization, HCVB and HLA have ensured they are not spending money on the same task. Additionally, by undertaking efforts to overlap board members, the two have established a reliable method of coordinating and sharing information.