

**Wilsonville Tourism
Development
Strategy**



**Executive Summary
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May 2014

Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy

May 2014

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A New Era for Tourism in Wilsonville

Tourism in Wilsonville is entering a new era that will be characterized by the introduction of new attractors, events, infrastructure and innovative digital marketing. This will require the City of Wilsonville to establish new goals, responsibilities and strategies for the organization that will be responsible for the City's future tourism development and marketing contract.

The Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy is a masterplan that provides strategic directions for the city to take optimal advantage of the opportunities that are likely to arise over the next decade. It is not a marketing plan or operational plan, but is designed to act as a guidance system in the development of more specific and tactical annual programs and budget allocations. This is a living document that will be updated as new opportunities and challenges arise.

Actions for Success

Tourism is a growing and important sector of the Oregon economy. The Portland metro region's visitor economy is worth over \$4.1 billion (2012). A key objective of this strategy is to secure a higher share of this for Wilsonville. It is designed to provide guidance for the future development of tourism in Wilsonville. It provides directions to increase market share, identifies development opportunities for new attractors and events, makes tourism a catalyst for businesses, and improves the experiences of visitors to Wilsonville visitor experiences.

Win-Win for Residents & Business

An important principle underpinning the strategy is that what can be attractive to visitors can also be appealing to residents and investors. As the cultural, natural, sporting and recreational attractors are improved, they will also improve the quality of life and business opportunities for residents.

Executive Summary

A Holistic Approach

This strategy adopts a holistic approach which addresses all of the elements necessary to communicate and deliver outstanding visitor experiences. Tourism is a complex economic activity where success requires cross-agency cooperation involving public, private, and nonprofit organizations. It also involves consideration of the interests of all customer groups including visitors, government, partners, local businesses and residents.

The Vision

In 2023, Wilsonville is a welcoming, family-friendly community that is one of Oregon's premier destination cities, investing in tourism, meetings, leisure and recreation strengths, amenities and services to provide compelling year-round experiences.

Our Mission

To facilitate the thoughtful development of Wilsonville's visitor economy for the benefit of visitors and partners, and to enhance the quality of life for those who live and work in the community.

Opportunities and Challenges

This strategy has been guided by consideration of the opportunities relating to the development of new attractors, growth of key markets, the rising popularity of the Portland metropolitan area, and the interest of local stakeholders. The strategy also recognizes the challenges posed by limited resources, increased competition, and the need for a holistic approach to sustainable tourism development.

Strategic Directions

The strategy has been designed to build Wilsonville's tourism capacity, increase market share, revenue, employment and new business opportunities. The following are key elements for the strategy:

Priority Markets:

- Horse show participants and organizers
- Meetings and conventions participants and organizers
- Northwest getaways
- Sports tournaments participants
- I-5 motorists in transit

Priority Experience Themes

- Horse shows and equestrian events
- Meetings and conventions
- Sports tournaments
- Northwest getaways

The Tourism Action Plan

1. Leadership and Organization

Provide clear direction, partnerships and sustainable funding for Wilsonville tourism through leadership and management that is recognized for its innovation, collaboration and effectiveness.

- 1.1 Establish an Independent 501 (c) (6) Not-for-Profit DMO to be named Visit Wilsonville.
- 1.2 Establish Board of Management for Visit Wilsonville.

- 1.3 Increase the Allocation of the Hotel/Motel Transient Lodging Tax.
- 1.4 Request a project budget to launch Visit Wilsonville DMO.
- 1.5 Review Wilsonville Tourism Grants Program.
- 1.6 Actively seek grants for Visit Wilsonville.
- 1.7 Initiate ongoing partnership and relationship-building programs.
- 1.8 Enhance local-area destination knowledge of frontline staff.

2. Branding and Positioning

Adopt distinctive and meaningful positioning for Wilsonville as a destination.

- 2.1 Develop a destination branding strategy for Wilsonville.

3. Visitor Experiences

Enhance Wilsonville's tourism attractors, events and experiences to meet and exceed the expectations of visitors and event organizers.

- 3.1 Encourage active participation by local product-suppliers and farm operators to participate in agri-tourism experiences, including the new Wilsonville-West Linn-Milwaukie Farm Loop.
- 3.2 Establish Wilsonville as a bike-friendly city and one of Oregon's premier leisure cycling cities.
- 3.3 Initiate and attract cycling events.
- 3.4 Initiate programs to ensure that Wilsonville consistently presents outstanding experiences for horse show organizers, participants and attendees.
- 3.5 Investigate the feasibility of establishing a signature event in Wilsonville to celebrate the start of horse show season.

4. Infrastructure and Placemaking

Ensure that tourism opportunities are optimized in government planning, development approvals, policy, infrastructure and placemaking.

- 4.1 Support a feasibility study for the development of the area surrounding Regal Cinemas or another area as an entertainment, sports, and leisure precinct.
- 4.2 Support a hotel feasibility study to assess the medium term lodging and meeting space needs of the city.
- 4.3 Investigate the feasibility of developing additional facilities within the City specifically designed for weddings, reunions and community events.
- 4.4 Support the expansion and integration of Wilsonville's trails system and brand the main trails with distinctive themes and names.
- 4.5 Support the construction of the proposed Bike-Ped-Emergency Bridge across the Willamette River.
- 4.6 Support the completion of the Ice Age Tonquin Trail.
- 4.7 Support the introduction of creative bike racks in areas popular with cyclists.
- 4.8 Support a feasibility study to develop a covered venue for equestrian events.
- 4.9 Support the development of all-weather, multi-purpose playing fields for sports tournaments.
- 4.10 Support the development of the proposed push trail and new skate park.
- 4.11 Support the improvement of river foreshore and water access for active and passive recreation, including boat launch.

- 4.12 Support study of the enhancement of Boones Ferry Landing in Old Town as a recreation and tourism precinct.
- 4.13 Support enhancements to the character and attractiveness of Wilsonville's key precincts
- 4.14 Consider establishing a public art program.
- 4.15 Support improvements to the attractiveness and sense of welcome at city gateways.
- 4.16 Support the development and implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding signage system.
- 4.17 Support the development of a comprehensive directional and event signage strategy.
- 4.18 Support the establishment of a museum/interpretive center and commemorative sculptures for the Oregon Korean War Memorial.

5. Marketing Communications

Enhance awareness of Wilsonville as an appealing visitor destination through the innovative use of traditional, digital and environmental media.

- 5.1 Establish a stand-alone Wilsonville tourism website.
- 5.2 Introduce an internet marketing campaign.

- 5.3 Develop social media programs relevant to key markets.
- 5.4 Develop database and email marketing programs.
- 5.5 Optimize the online use of video.
- 5.6 Optimize linking strategies.
- 5.7 Produce a Wilsonville Visitors Guide annually.
- 5.8 Ensure visitors have ready access to Wilsonville visitor information.
- 5.9 Assess the effectiveness of digital kiosks to provide visitor information.
- 5.10 Develop a public-relations program.
- 5.11 Develop and maintain a library of high-quality images and videos.
- 5.12 Optimize the use of website and social media analytics.
- 5.13 Develop an active content management and co-op marketing program.
- 5.14 Increase public awareness of the benefits of tourism.
- 5.15 Encourage local residents to discover Wilsonville and surrounding area.
- 5.16 Conduct ongoing visitor-satisfaction research.
- 5.17 Conduct visitor research for each major event in Wilsonville.

Methodology

The development of this Tourism Strategy by Total Destination Marketing involved a variety of actions which included:

- A diverse 17-member Task Force composed of a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of local lodging, dining, entertainment establishments; operators of agri-tourism, golf and sporting-tournament venues; Chamber of Commerce principals; officials with regional tourism agencies; and residents.
- A community survey which was accessible online and publicized by the City of Wilsonville and local media (35 responses).
- A total of 27 in-person interviews with local business and community leaders.
- Three community workshops with residents, businesses and community leaders (17 participants).
- Interviews with City of Wilsonville executives.
- Informal discussions with local businesspeople in contact with visitors.
- Interviews with individuals outside of Wilsonville who have partnership relations with the city in regard to tourism or are experts in fields of interest to Wilsonville tourism.
- On-site assessments of Wilsonville and its adjacent areas to experience the city and surrounding area through the objective and unbiased eyes of a first time visitor.
- A review of relevant past reports and plans relating to Wilsonville from a tourism, economic development, recreation and leisure perspective.
- A review of web sites and brochures relating to Wilsonville businesses and key competitors and partners to Wilsonville.
- A formal public-comment period in March 2014 to receive feedback and suggestions on the *Draft Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy, March 2014*.
- Report before Wilsonville City Council in April 2014