

Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden Learning Center

Proposal to Fund Feasibility Study for Municipal Building

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I. Introduction

The Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden is a one-of-a-kind heritage location that was created to preserve some of the area's most treasured gardens. More people visit gardens annually in the United States than Disneyland and Disney World combined, and according to Richard W. Benfield, author of the popular book, "Garden Tourism," gardens attract more visitors than Las Vegas in any given year.

In 2019, a team of interested parties including members of the Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority and the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden, came together to discuss the tourism potential of the Garden. The Garden Tourism Taskforce reviewed the 2018 Site Workshop Master Plan for future development, examined other destinations' garden tourism strategies, and researched market potential for an expansion that would attract travelers from outside a fifty-mile radius.

The Garden Tourism Taskforce is proposing to capitalize on the assets we already have by enhancing the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden's potential to increase overnight visitation.

Seattle Southside RTA has noticed the growing interest in visiting gardens in our own region, which has paralleled emerging garden tourism growth throughout many countries. Designing an expanded garden will inevitably lead to increased visitation locally, however, our proposal will emphasize creating a tourism-focused Garden Learning Center with multi-day programming that will drive overnight stays in SeaTac hotels. The Garden Learning Center will help to position the City as a central hub regionally and set the stage for establishing a garden network for the Puget Sound Region.

II. Background

The City, as lessee from the Port of Seattle, holds a leasehold interest in the land occupied by the Garden, and all roads and trails within it, and owns all improvements (including art) funded by the City. In order to use lodging tax dollars for a capital expenditure, it must be for a tourism-related facility owned by a municipality. Therefore, the Garden Learning Center could be constructed as a municipal facility, thereby qualifying for use of lodging taxes per RCW 67.28.1816. The City could continue to contract with the 501c3 garden foundation for garden operations and maintenance while contracting with the Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority to manage the Garden Learning Center with a tourist generating focus in collaboration with the City, garden foundation and area hoteliers.

In 2018, in partnership with the Highline Botanical Garden Foundation, the City of SeaTac contracted with Site Workshop to complete a master plan for 5 ½ acres of undeveloped property that is part of the original agreement with the City for a public garden. Site Workshop, a Seattle-based landscape architectural firm, was selected to work with community stakeholders, City staff and members of the Foundation Board of Directors to develop a plan. The major features of the completed Master Plan include a visitor center, outdoor and indoor space for private and public events, an amphitheater and performance space, a children's play garden, an apiary, a canopy walk and restored woodlands, a boardwalk and restored wetlands, and development of housing foundation ruins into a memorial garden.

III. Vision for Expansion

The already established garden is a prominent tourist destination in the City of SeaTac and holds a unique and impressive collection of historic and culturally diverse exhibits. The Garden Tourism

Taskforce's goal of garden expansion is to augment these attributes with design elements that will maximize visitation by tourists and traveling groups, adding to the 2018 Site Workshop's Master Plan.

To further solidify plans for the Garden, a feasibility study is recommended to frame the design concept into a marketable tourist educational attraction. This study will evaluate design elements for a municipal building that supports tourism and fills a niche in the market, takes advantage of already impressive garden attributes, and grows existing facilities to meet the needs of tourists, gardeners, and traveling groups. This is not a request of the general fund; it is a utilization of special excise tax on lodging for tourism promotion.

The City of SeaTac has held \$8 Million in reserves for nearly 20 years. The intention is to invest this in an activity that will generate hotel stays in the City. The time is right to focus on amplifying this already established and beloved attraction to create that activity. The Hotel Motel Advisory Committee was formed to distribute money for the advancement of tourism. The Garden supports this direction and is asking for \$50,000 to conduct research on the viability of this vision.

IV. Market Prospects

According to PR Newswire, gardening is the most popular hobby in the United States. Prior feasibility studies regarding sporting facilities, conducted by the City of SeaTac, have determined that the market is saturated. However, we believe there is a viable opportunity to consider constructing a gardening learning center that would fulfill a unique and underserved market niche.

With over one hundred public gardens in the Pacific Northwest, SeaTac is primed to become a garden tourism destination. The Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden has the potential to become the hub for regional gardens. Much like Seattle Southside's "home base" campaign and the City of SeaTac's "everything is possible" slogan for economic development, this advantageous centralized location and connectivity lends itself to become the nucleus for regional tourism.

Asian gardens are of growing interest, and the Seike Japanese Garden attracts many visitors. Within a 25-mile radius from SeaTac is the Kubota Garden, the Washington Park Arboretum with the Japanese Tea House, and the Chinese Garden at South Seattle Community College. This unique cultural collection is attractive to tourist and traveling groups as an example of the Pacific Northwest's history and relationship to the Asian diaspora.

Traveling student groups, including schools that travel to Seattle for educational purposes, band or sporting events, will incorporate visits to local attractions that can offer their students a historical, cultural, or STEM lesson while also entertaining them and their chaperone parents. Adult tour operator-led groups are designed around a theme (local history and culture, food, gardening, etc.) and will see the uniqueness of the Garden's exhibits. They will not include an itinerary stop into a tour schedule if the customer can get the same experience at home.

The Garden contains hundreds of plant species, each of which has local, state, regional and national organizations with specialized interest in the growth of these plants, shrubs, and trees. Each of these organizations have training workshops, conferences, and conventions. There are five spectacular partner gardens representing five regional, national and international organizations within the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden: the American Rose Society, The American Daylily Society, The American Iris Society, The National Fuchsia Society, and the American Fuchsia Society. In addition, the Garden has the capacity

to become a regional training site for Master Gardeners, plant enthusiasts, urban agriculture interest groups and apiarists. With several hotel and venue options in the city of SeaTac, offering both high and low price-points, the region is primed to host a range of conferences and multi-day educational programs.

Expanding the Garden in a way that focuses on the above audiences' needs can increase visitation to the city by filling this niche. The city of SeaTac needs an attraction with the unique elements already established at the Garden but is designed for the needs of tourists and traveling groups. The Garden provides a solid foundation for tourism growth by offering a link between the number one hobby in the nation and interested traveling populations.

V. Design Elements

In addition to an attraction's visitor experience, it is important to incorporate practical facility needs. The following elements will be evaluated with tourists and traveling groups in mind:

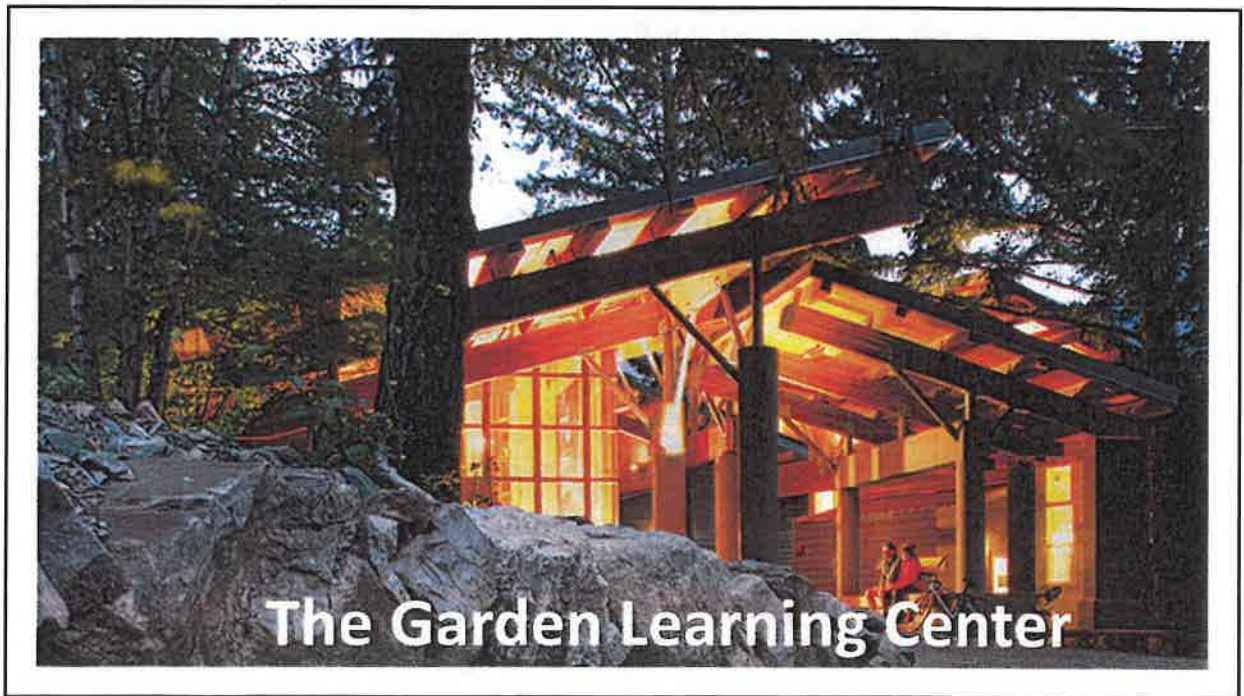
- An Experiential Learning Pavilion
- A Demonstration Kitchen
- A Lecture Hall/Amphitheater with modern technology
- An Indoor Atrium with variable table arrangements
- A bus turn-around and parking lot access
- An Office and Workshop/Storage Area
- Plentiful Bathroom Facilities
- Breakout Conference Rooms
- An Apiary

VI. Recommendation

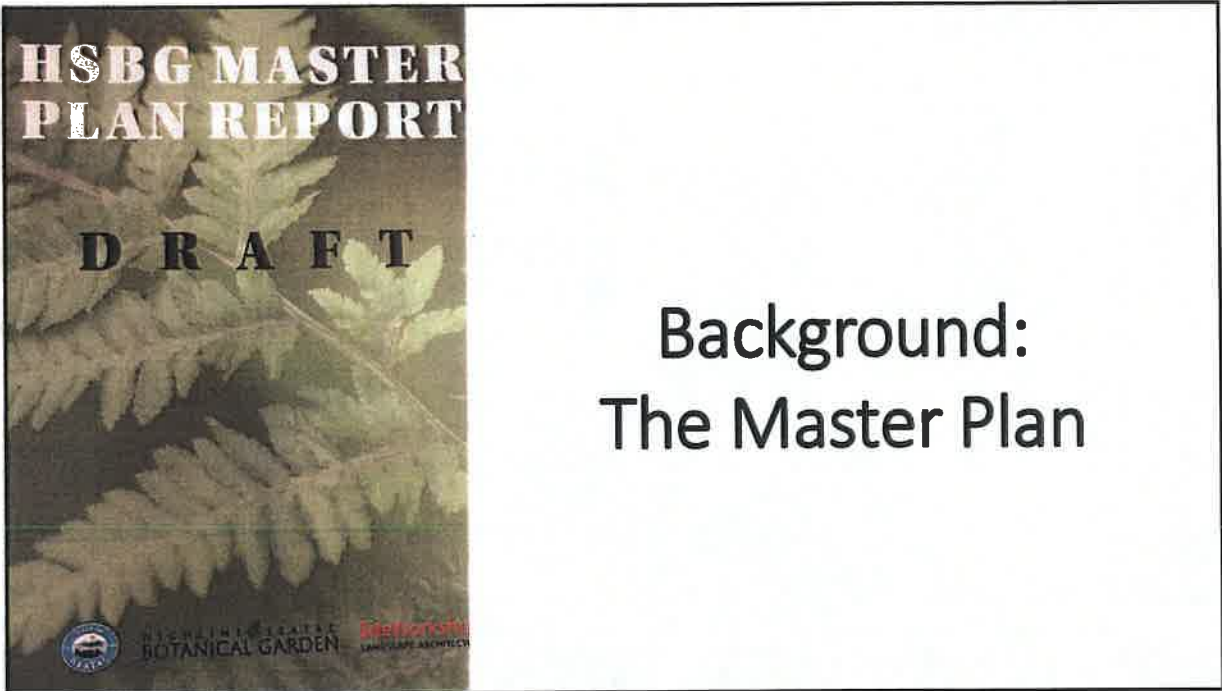
The Garden Tourism Taskforce is requesting the Hotel Motel Advisory Committee make a recommendation to SeaTac City Council in support of funding a research project, not to exceed \$50,000 of lodging taxes, to study the feasibility of constructing a successful Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden Learning Center for the purpose of generating increased overnight tourism activity. Prior to creating and advertising the Garden Learning Center research RFP, the Garden Tourism Taskforce in partnership with City staff, will deliberate with the Port of Seattle about the long-term viability of expanding the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden and building a Garden Learning Center on leased Port property.



1

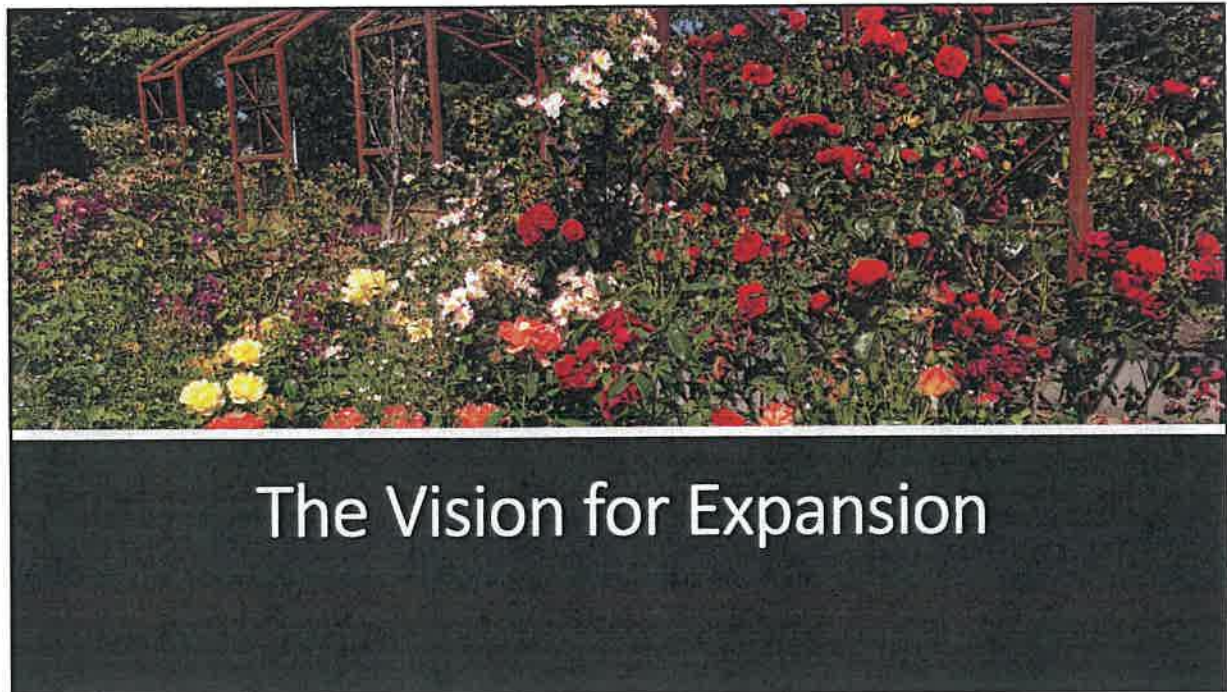


2



Background: The Master Plan

3

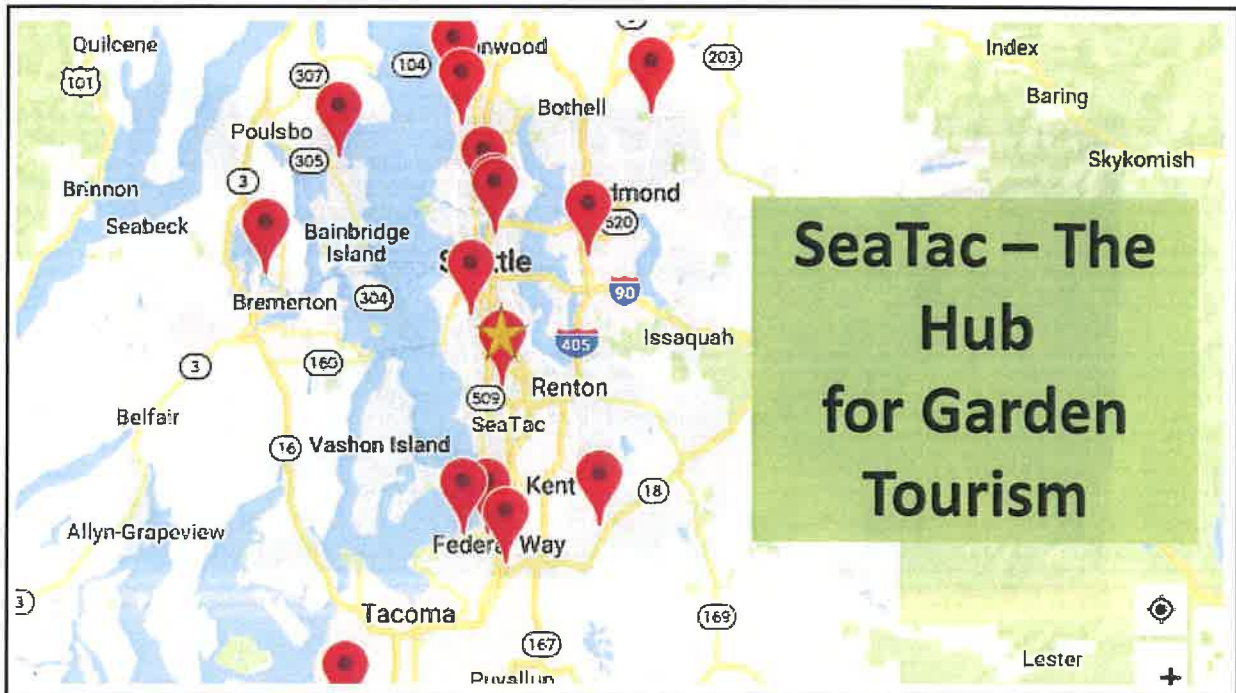


4



A Garden Tourist Educational Attraction

5



6



Garden Tours and Traveling Groups

7



8



An Experiential Learning Pavilion

9



10



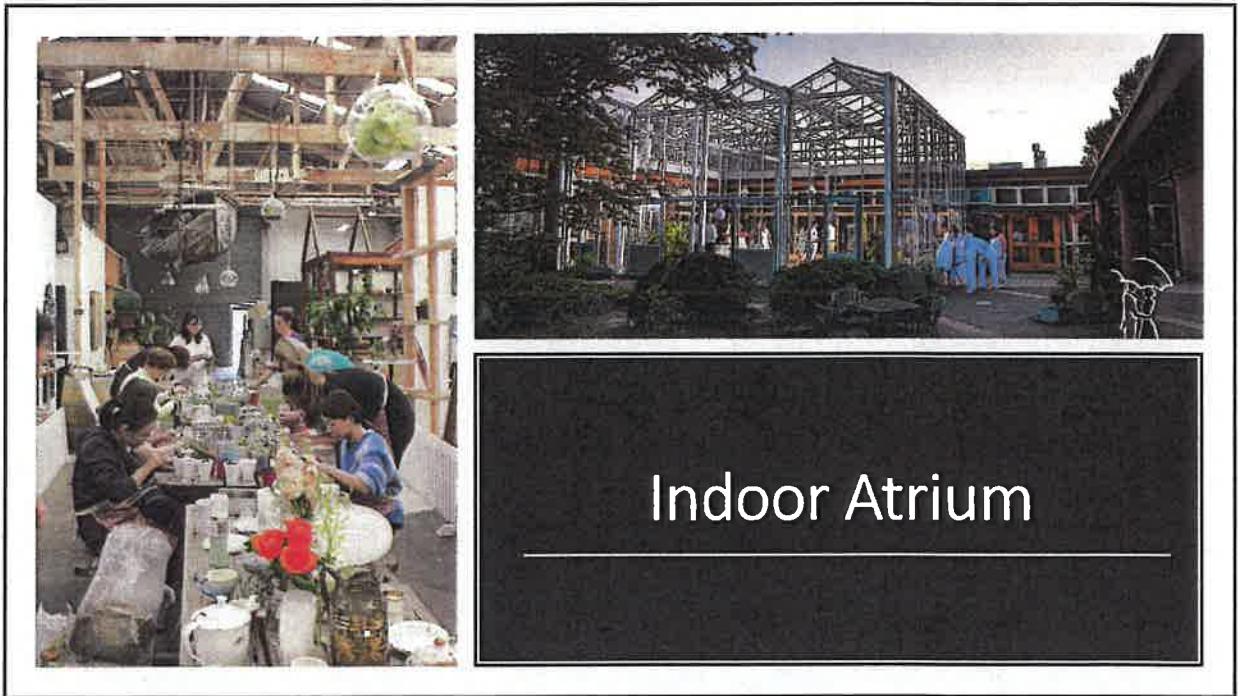
A Demonstration Kitchen

11



Lecture Hall

12



13



14



Office Space and
Workshop/ Storage Area

15



Plentiful Restroom Facilities

16



Breakout Conference Rooms

17



An Apiary

18



Recommendation:

Fund a Feasibility
Study Not to Exceed
\$50,000

19



We Look Forward To Working with the
City of SeaTac
On This Very Special Community Project

20

5/7/2019

RCW 67.28.1816: Lodging tax—Tourism promotion.

RCW 67.28.1816**Lodging tax—Tourism promotion.**

(1) Lodging tax revenues under this chapter may be used, directly by any municipality or indirectly through a convention and visitors bureau or destination marketing organization for:

- (a) Tourism marketing;
- (b) The marketing and operations of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists;
- (c) Supporting the operations and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by a municipality or a public facilities district created under chapters 35.57 and 38.100 RCW; or
- (d) Supporting the operations of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by nonprofit organizations described under 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(3) and 26 U.S.C. Sec. 501(c)(6) of the internal revenue code of 1986, as amended.

(2)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, applicants applying for use of revenues in this chapter must provide the municipality to which they are applying estimates of how any moneys received will result in increases in the number of people traveling for business or pleasure on a trip:

- (i) Away from their place of residence or business and staying overnight in paid accommodations;
- (ii) To a place fifty miles or more one way from their place of residence or business for the day or staying overnight; or
- (iii) From another country or state outside of their place of residence or their business.

(b)(i) In a municipality with a population of five thousand or more, applicants applying for use of revenues in this chapter must submit their applications and estimates described under (a) of this subsection to the local lodging tax advisory committee.

(ii) The local lodging tax advisory committee must select the candidates from amongst the applicants applying for use of revenues in this chapter and provide a list of such candidates and recommended amounts of funding to the municipality for final determination. The municipality may choose only recipients from the list of candidates and recommended amounts provided by the local lodging tax advisory committee.

(c)(i) All recipients must submit a report to the municipality describing the actual number of people traveling for business or pleasure on a trip:

- (A) Away from their place of residence or business and staying overnight in paid accommodations;
- (B) To a place fifty miles or more one way from their place of residence or business for the day or staying overnight; or
- (C) From another country or state outside of their place of residence or their business. A municipality receiving a report must: Make such report available to the local legislative body and the public; and furnish copies of the report to the joint legislative audit and review committee and members of the local lodging tax advisory committee.

(ii) The joint legislative audit and review committee must on a biennial basis report to the economic development committees of the legislature on the use of lodging tax revenues by municipalities. Reporting under this subsection must begin in calendar year 2015.

(d) This section does not apply to the revenues of any lodging tax authorized under this chapter imposed by a county with a population of one million five hundred thousand or more.

[2013 c 196 § 1; 2008 c 28 § 1; 2007 c 497 § 2.]

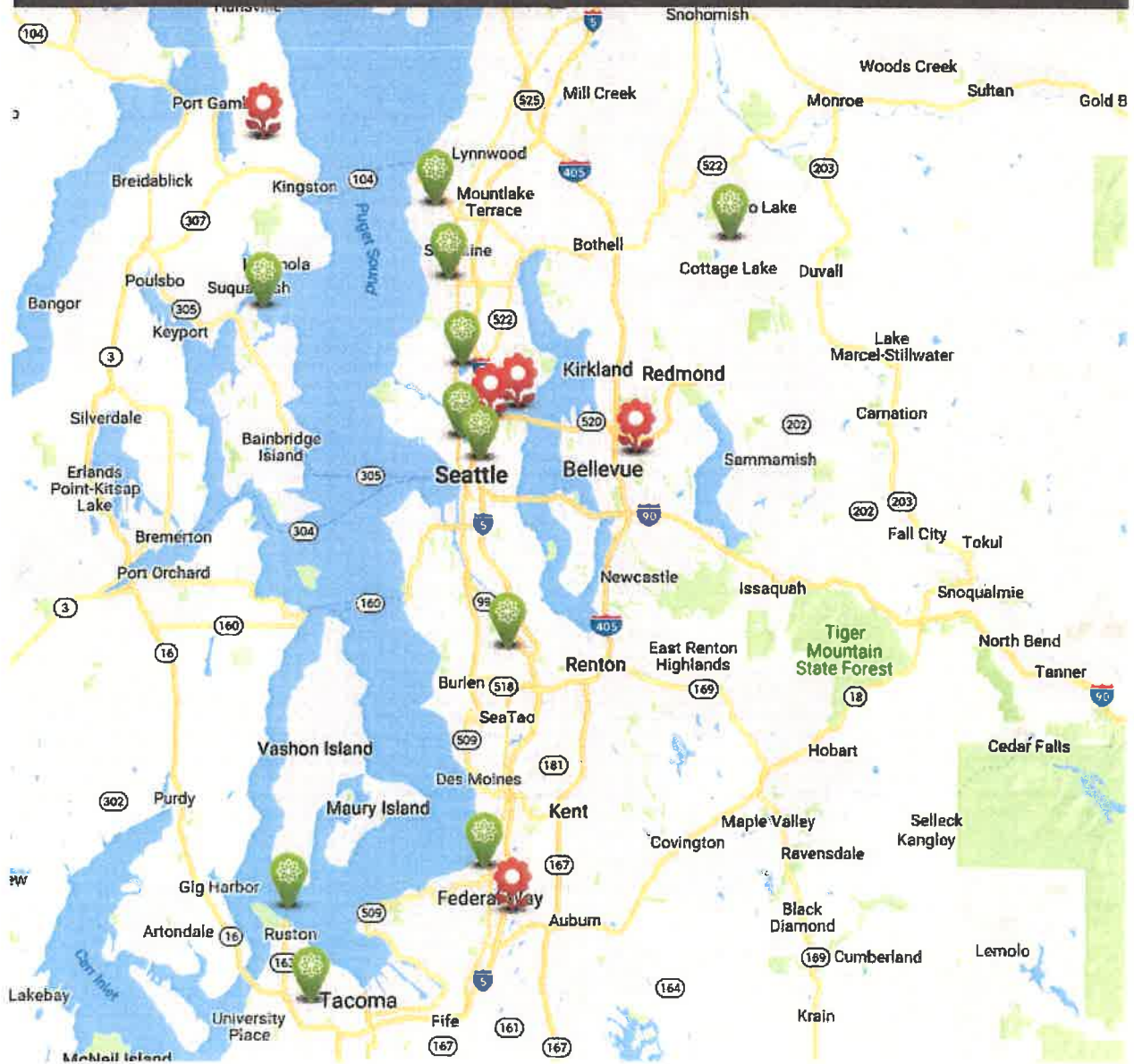
NOTES:

Effective date—2013 c 196: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2013." [2013 c 196 § 3.]



American
Public Gardens
Association

About Us About Public Gardens Gardens Week Members Programs Professional



<https://www.publicgardens.org/about-public-gardens/gardens/all>



Partners: Account Recap

Date Generated: 04/16/2019
Date Filter: 01/01/2018 to 04/01/2019

Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden / 1200

Status Partner (City/Chamber/Business Associate)
Region SeaTac
Address 13735 24th Ave S
City SeaTac
State/Province WA
Zip/Postal Code: 98168
Country: UNITED STATES
Phone: (206) 391-4003
Fax:
Tollfree:
Email:
Website: <http://www.highlinegarden.org/>
Date Created: 04/08/2014 by Meagan McGuire
Date Last Updated: 01/29/2019 by Admin/Web

Articles

Article Date	Headline	Circulation	Value	Publication Name
04/01/2019	Rosle The Riveter dedication 4/1		120	Seattle Southside Facebook
03/22/2019	Highline Botanical Garden 3/22		120	Seattle Southside Facebook
03/20/2019	Highline Botanical Garden 3/19		120	Seattle Southside Instagram
03/19/2019	Highline Botanical Garden 3/19		22.82	Seattle Southside Facebook
03/05/2019	Botanical Gardens		22.82	Seattle Southside Facebook
02/14/2019	Botanical Gardens		22.82	Seattle Southside Facebook
10/16/2018	Thanks to Thrifty NW Mom for the Seattle Southside Family Guide!		10	Seattle Southside Facebook
10/14/2018	Take a look around Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden.		1497.42	Seattle Southside Facebook
10/11/2018	Seattle Southside Guide for Families - Fun for any Season		120	Thrifty NW Mom Instagram
09/28/2018	seattlesouthsideIt's a beautiful day at the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden! #nofilter #seattlesout		120	Seattle Southside Instagram
09/21/2018	Thrifty NW Mom Instagram Stories		120	Thrifty NW Mom Instagram
07/31/2018	How Does Seattle Southside Help Visitors?	7300	900	Seattle Southside Blog
07/18/2018	Washington Recreation and Park Association 2018 Conference	400	120	PCMA
07/13/2018	Nothing spooky going on at the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden		120	Seattle Southside Instagram
06/26/2018	Eat, Play, & Explore In Seattle's Backyard!	7300	900	Seattle Southside Blog
06/15/2018	The secret is out! Explore Seattle's Backyard with Seattle Refined.		970.08	Seattle Southside Facebook

05/31/2018	WeChat Posts Q2 2018		1500	Seattle Southside WeChat
04/19/2018	Stop by the Highline SeaTac Botanical Garden for a tranquil, traditional Japanese garden.		1015.2	Seattle Southside Facebook
04/15/2018	Need some ideas for Mother's Day?		6672.12	Seattle Southside Facebook
04/12/2018	Mother's Day in Seattle Southside	7300	900	Seattle Southside Blog
04/10/2018	Parks, trails, beaches, and more, there's plenty of outdoor fun to be had.		2103.72	Seattle Southside Facebook
04/09/2018	Explore the Great Outdoors!	7300	900	Seattle Southside Blog
02/28/2018	Have any plans for the weekend?		1015.2	Seattle Southside Facebook
01/16/2018	January 2018 Travel Update E-newsletter	20000	300	Seattle Southside RTA Travel Update e-Newsletter
01/09/2018	Time to start thinking about Valentine's Day!		767.04	Seattle Southside Facebook

Advertising Opportunities

Promotion	Ad Type	Amount	Ad Category	Cash Amount	Trade Amount
TourOperatorLand Newsletter Mar2019	Newsletter	\$500.00	eBlast -	0	500
Your Military Reunion Connection Mar 2019	Advertisement	\$500.00	Display Ad -	0	500
ReunionsMag.com 2019	Online Profile	\$100.00	Online Profile -	0	100
TourOperatorLand.com 2019	Online Profile	\$500.00	Online Profile -	0	500
B&E Wedding Resource Guide	Full Page	\$500.00	Print Ad -	0	500
Tukwila Reporter Blog Post Sep2018	Article Section	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Normandy Park Blog Post Sep2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Waterland Blog Post Sep2018	Article Section	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Seatac Blog Post Sep 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
B-Town Blog Post Sep 2018	Article Section	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
White Center Blog Post Sep 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
White Center Blog Post Aug 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Normandy Park Blog Post Aug 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
B-Town Blog Post Aug 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Seatac Blog Post Aug 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Waterland Blog Post Aug 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
Tukwila Blog Post Aug 2018	Article	\$250.00	Newsletter Ad -	0	250
TourOperatorLand.com 2018	Online Profile	\$500.00	Online Profile -	0	500
ReunionsMag.com 2018	Online Profile	\$100.00	Online Profile -	0	100
Cvent Profile 2018	Online Profile	\$1,000.00	Online Profile -	0	1,000

Fams/Site Inspections

Role	Event Name	Event Start/End Dates	# of Attendees	Inspection Lead	Lead Account	Event Type	Activities
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Activity Host Media FAM Adam Sawyer Sep 5-7, 2018 1

Media/PR FAM Tour of Highline SeaTac Botanical Gardens

Activity Host Media Visit Request: Kallynn Mann, Aug. 17 p1 Aug 17-17, 2018 1

Media/PR FAM Tour of Highline Botanical Garden



Horticulture-Based Tourism Development

Gardening is one of the most popular hobbies in the United States, especially in the Puget Sound. Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs (WSFGC) lists over 100 regional clubs throughout the State. Expanding the list to the other 50 states, as well as national and international organizations, most organizing annual fundraising events, galas, field trips, and conventions, the opportunity is apparent. Affinity groups, as well, whose travel and meeting plans may be attracted to a botanical garden facility include supply corporations, community organizations, ecological or environmental studies, school groups, medicinal studies, cultural or historical organizations, and more. In addition, gardening tours are a popular type of niche tourism, and one of the most important amenity attractions can provide to motorcoach tour groups is plentiful bathroom facilities and a place to gather.

Below we have provided examples of three major conferences that may be attracted to the Seattle Southside region based on the draw provided by Highline SeaTac Botanical Gardens. With several hotel options, offering both high and low price-points, the region is primed to host a range of conferences, while acting as a home base for statewide exploration of other nearby botanical gardens or attractions. Attendance data, length of stay, time of year, and estimated economic impact is provided.

International Master Gardener Conference (IMGC)

Estimated Attendance: 500+

Length of Event: 5 days

Estimated Number of Rooms: 1,200

Time of Year: June

Economic Impact: \$1,177,500

IMGC teaches the latest research-based sustainable horticultural and environmental stewardship best practices while sharing knowledge of the introduction and development of horticulture. Provides networking opportunities with other Master Gardeners. Tours of public and private gardens are available, showcasing the Seattle Southside and PNW.

National Children & Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS)

Estimated Attendance: 100

Length of Event: 5 days

Estimated Number of Rooms: 300

Time of Year: July

Economic Impact: \$235,500

NCYGS explores innovative sustainable gardening curriculum and practices, exploring "green" career resources, and highlighting model partnerships for attracting the human, financial, and intellectual capital needed to sustain youth gardening endeavors.

International Japanese Garden Conference

Estimated Attendance: 100+

Length of Event: 3 days

Estimated Number of Rooms: 150

Time of Year: October

Economic Impact: \$141,300

This conference features individual speakers and panels with simultaneous translation in Japanese and English as well as hands-on workshops in gardening skills. Attendees spend time exploring relevance and functions of Japanese gardens in different settings throughout the world and training in technical skills and cultural context for gardeners while exploring the regions gardens.

Other Potential Audiences for Tourism Development

Regional Associations

Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs

Pacific Region Garden Clubs

Greater Seattle District Garden Clubs (multiple chapters)

Plant Amnesty

Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association

The Seattle Garden Club

King County Master Gardener

Washington Native Plant Society

National Associations

Garden Club of America

The Gardeners of America

American Rhododendron Society

American Horticultural Society

American Public Garden Association

The Garden Conservancy

National Garden Bureau

Botanical Society of America

AmericanHort

Corporations

John Deere

Husqvarna

Stihl

Honda

Burpee

Avalanche

Bosche

Fiskars

Florian Tools

Letters of Support

