CITY OF SEATAC
HOTEL/MOTEL TAX ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 26, 2021, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Chair: Councilmember Stan Tombs
Virtual Meeting (note below):

Special HMAC Meeting - **AGENDA**

1. **Facilitated Introductions – All**   5 Minutes

2. **Review Shuttle Funding Application and Make Recommendation**   115 Minutes

Adjournment

A quorum of the City Council may be present

2021/2022 Application for City of SeaTac Lodging Tax Funding

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE AND MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN <u>MONDAY May 24, 2021 10:00AM</u>.
Incomplete and/or late applications will not be considered/prioritized for funding cycle. Applications may not be amended or changed after the deadline for submission. The proposal and all documents filed with the City are public records.

Please submit your completed application along with the required documentation to:

> **City of SeaTac**
> **Attention: Tanja Carter,**
> **Economic Development Strategist**
> **4800 South 188th Street**
> **SeaTac, WA 98188-8605**
>
> **OR VIA EMAIL: tcarter@seatacwa.gov**

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ Completed and signed the cover sheet with this packet

☐ Completed application (attach additional sheets if necessary)

☐ A copy of your agency's current non-profit corporate registration with Washington Secretary of State *the City of SeaTac has the Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority registration on file.*

☐ Brochures and/or other supplemental information about your event/activity/facility and/or recent tourism promotion efforts *brochures and marketing collateral will be designed and produced upon acceptance of this application.*

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN <u>MONDAY May 24, 2021 10:00AM</u>.
LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED DURING FUNDING CYCLE.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

The City of SeaTac's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC); referred to as the Hotel Motel Advisory Committee (HMAC) will review the applications in June/July. It is possible they may wish to interview applicants for more information or clarification.

Should the HMAC recommend funding for your event/activity/facility, they will forward their recommendation to the SeaTac City Council for their review and authorization. It is anticipated that funding decisions will be made and announced in August/September/October 2021 and confirmed upon final budget adoption. Council will review recommendation in June 2021 and funds would be available after budget amendment approval.

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City of SeaTac
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APPLICATIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN <u>MONDAY May 24, 2021 10:00AM</u>.

Total Amount Requested: <u>$141,000.00</u> (Aug-Dec, 2021: $59,000. Jan-Dec 2022: $82,000)
Name of Event/Program/Activity: <u>SeaTac – Westfield Mall Shuttle Service</u>

ORGANIZATION/AGENCY INFORMATION

Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority   47-30311480
Organization/Agency Name   Federal Tax ID Number

Mark Everton   President & CEO
Contact Name   Title

3100 176th St   SeaTac   WA   98188
Mailing Address   City   State   Zip

206-575-0547/ 406-1575 Cell   Mark@SeattleSouthside.com
Phone   Email Address

SeaTac – Tukwila   Aug-Dec, 2021 & Jan–Dec, 2022
 Event Location   Event Date(s)

www.SeattleSouthside.com
 Website

Check all service categories that apply to this application:
X Tourism Promotion/Marketing
X Operation of a Special Event/Festival designed to attract tourists
_____ Operation and/or Capital Expenditures of a Tourism-Related Facility owned by a Municipality
   or a Public Facilities District

Check which one of the following applies to your agency:
(Note: <mark>For Profit organizations are currently not eligible for any lodging tax funding</mark>
_____ Non-Profit *(Attach copy of current non-profit registration with Washington Secretary of State)*
__x_ Public Agency
_____ Other

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APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

I am an authorized agent of the organization/agency applying for funding. I understand that my agency will be required to submit a report documenting tourism economic impact results in a format determined by the City. I also understand that:
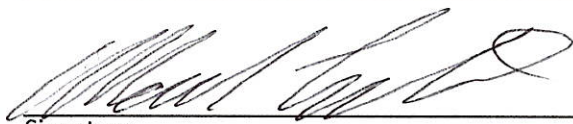
Tourism Promotion Activities or Tourism-Related Facilities:

☒ This is an application for funding and a contract with the City of SeaTac and, if awarded, my organization will honor this document as a Municipal Services Contract with the City of SeaTac .

Events/Festivals:

☒ The applicant has, or can obtain, general liability insurance in the amount commensurate with the exposure of the event/festival.

☒ The City of SeaTac will only reimburse those costs actually incurred by my organization/agency and only after the service is rendered, paid for if provided by a third party, and a completed and signed Request for Reimbursement/After Event Report (or other form acceptable to the City) has been submitted to the City, including copies of invoices and payment documentation.

_____   5/24/2021
Signature   Date

Mark Everton as CEO, Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority
Printed or Typed Name

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PROJECT INFORMATION AND USE OF FUNDS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Describe your tourism-related activity/program or event:**

This application is to fund regularly scheduled shuttle services from hotels in the City of SeaTac to Westfield Southcenter Mall, the "SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle".

2. **Describe why tourists will travel to SeaTac to attend your event/activity/facility:**

The SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle service enhances the attractiveness and competitiveness of SeaTac hotels by providing the traveler access to additional amenities beyond the modest amenity base within the City of SeaTac. The shuttle provides improved access to regional amenities, including shopping and dining, to ensure a positive visitor experience and create connectivity for travelers.

SeaTac hotels compete regionally for business. Airline crew, leisure and business travelers, and meeting and group planners are more likely to choose hotels in SeaTac with easy access to shopping and other amenities. The SeaTac-Westfield Shuttle service influences traveler's decision-making and can provide added value for travelers staying at SeaTac hotels. A positive traveler experience is an important component to visitor satisfaction and influences hotel reviews, personal recommendations, and likelihood of return visits. A similar SeaTac/Westfield shuttle operated, pre-Covid, for many years and repeat travelers have come to expect the convenience of the shuttle. SeaTac hotels have been receiving inquiries from prior guests wishing to return regarding the timing of the return of the shuttle.

SeaTac hotel's proximity to the airport and the shuttles to/from the airport provided by the hotels enables travelers to not rent a car. The SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle service is ideal for hotel guests wishing to shop and/or dine and need transportation.

The shuttle will be available only to SeaTac hotel guests.

3. **Provide an estimate of the number of participants who will attend the event/activity in each of the following categories. Please use the Calculation Methodology as defined below:**
   Please note that several statistical analytics had not been tracked in prior years. The TBD denotes that statistics and demographic data that will be tracked going forward. The use of an app is planned that will enable guests to request a shuttle and in addition provide data regarding the home location, length of time in SeaTac, purpose of their visit, # of people, and whether they are repeat visitors and if they had previously used the shuttle.

As a direct result of your proposed tourism-related service, provide:		*Estimate*	*Calculation Methodology (See options below)*
a. Overall attendance at your event/activity/facility Over the past several years, ridership averaged 2,000+ riders per month		~25,000	**xDC** □**IC** □**RS** □**IS** □**SE**

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b.	Number of people who travel more than 50 miles for your event/activity	TBD	☐DC ☐IC ☐RS ☐IS ☐SE
c.	Of the people who travel more than 50 miles, the number of people who travel from another country or state	TBD	☐DC ☐IC ☐RS ☐IS ☐SE
d.	Of the people who travel more than 50 miles, the number of people who stay overnight in UNPAID accommodations in SeaTac	0	**xDC** ☐IC ☐RS ☐IS ☐SE
e.	Of the people staying overnight, the number of people who stay in PAID accommodations (hotel/motel/bed & breakfast) in SeaTac	~25,000	**xDC** ☐IC ☐RS ☐IS ☐SE
f.	Number of paid lodging room nights in SeaTac resulting from your event/ activity/ facility *(example: 25 paid rooms on Friday and 50 paid rooms on Saturday = 75 paid lodging room nights)* ~25,000 x 2.4 (average length of stay according to Dean Runyan 2020 survey) = 60,000	~60,000	☐DC ☐IC ☐RS ☐IS **xSE**

Glossary for Calculation Methodology Options:

❖ **Direct Count: (DC)** Actual count of visitors using methods such as paid admissions or registrations, clicker counts at entry points, vehicle counts or number of chairs filled. A direct count may also include information collected directly from businesses, such as hotels, restaurants or tour guides, likely to be affected by an event/program.

❖ **Indirect Count: (IC)** Estimate based on information related to the number of visitors such as raffle tickets sold, redeemed discount certificates, brochures handed out, police requirements for crowd control or visual estimates.

❖ **Representative Survey: (RS)** Information collected directly from individual visitors/ participants. A representative survey is a highly structured data collection tool, based on a defined random sample of participants, and the results can be reliably projected to the entire population attending an event/program users and includes margin of error and confidence level.

❖ **Informal Survey: (IS)** Information collected directly from individual visitors or participants in a non-random manner that is not representative of all visitors or participants. Informal survey results cannot be projected to the entire visitor population and provide a limited indicator of attendance because not all participants had an equal chance of being included in the survey.

❖ **Structured Estimate: (SE)** Estimate produced by computing known information related to the event or location. For example, one jurisdiction estimated attendance by dividing the square footage of the event area by the international building code allowance for persons (3 square feet).
❖ **Other**: (please describe)

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4. **Is there a host hotel for your event/program? Yes ☐ No ☒**
   If yes, list the host hotel(s):

   The SeaTac – Westfield shuttle provides this service to all hotels in SeaTac.

   If a host hotel(s) was/were used last year/previously, please provide an estimate/report of how many rooms were booked last year/previously at each hotel and provide totals.

5. **Describe the prior success (number of attendees, media exposure, etc.) of your event/activity/facility in attracting tourists:**

   Between 2016 and 2019, Seattle Southside RTA contracted with Seattle Express to provide this shuttle service. Seattle Express reported transporting approximately 25,000 SeaTac hotel guests to Westfield Southcenter Mall each year. In addition to supporting lodging related expenditure in SeaTac estimated at $2.5 to 3 million annually for lodging alone, these trips capture just above $4 million in estimated annual visitor spending at the Mall.

   The shuttle bus will have an attractive wrap that will highlight the generosity of the City of SeaTac for providing the free shuttle. The shuttle will act as a rolling billboard promoting the City of SeaTac throughout SeaTac and Tukwila.

6. **Describe your target tourist audience (location, demographics, etc.):**

   Seattle Southside RTA targets the following demographics:

   For Leisure:
   - Segments: Mature Traveler, Family Traveler, Practical Traveler, Cruise ship traveler, Travelers overnighting in SeaTac prior to an early morning flight out of SEA.
   - Primary Geos: Washington, Oregon, Montana, Texas, Idaho, Alaska, British Columbia

   For Meetings:
   - Segments: Corporate, Association, and SMERF (Social, Military, Educational, Religious, Fraternal)
   - Primary Geos: Washington (esp. Olympia, Spokane), Arizona, California, Oregon

7. **Describe how you will promote your event/activity/facility to attract overnight tourists:**

   The SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle is promoted on the RTA's website and in the Seattle Southside Travel Planner for the leisure audience.
   For the meeting planner audience, the shuttle is promoted on the SSRTA meetings microsite, during sales pitches, and in marketing collateral and promotions related to meetings and groups. The availability of the shuttle will provide meeting planners the opportunity to pitch SeaTac as a recommended destination for meetings as attendees can easily access a free and safe shuttle to

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shopping and dining amenities. Most destinations adjacent to a large airport have limited amenities. The shuttle will provide SeaTac a differentiating attribute over other airport destinations.

In SeaTac, the shuttle is promoted at hotels through collateral, signage, and schedule cards produced by the RTA and available at the front desk, in room, or in the lobby. SeaTac hotels will also promote the shuttle as a guest amenity on their websites and through their marketing to clients. The hotels will be encouraged to feature the shuttle in their social media posts. The hard bound Travel Planner located in hotel rooms or in the lobby also promotes the service. The Seattle Southside TV channel that is available in SeaTac hotels will also feature the shuttle.

Between the direct marketing of the shuttle through SSRTA's efforts and channels and the hotels; contact with guests and potential guests, several million impressions will be created.

8. **How do you intend to use the Lodging Tax funds if selected as a funding recipient? (Please be as descriptive as possible with the strategy, plan and reasons for your application.)**

Lodging tax dollars will be used to fund the management and promotion of the SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle service. The Lodging Tax funds will pass through the RTA, who will oversee the shuttle program. The RTA will be reimbursed for actual out of pocket expenses related to the SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle service. The RTA will incur expenses related to the SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle service that it will not seek reimbursement for (i.e. staff time, administrative time/oversight, inclusion of marketing of the service on the RTA website, newsletters, advertisement, travel guides, meeting collateral).

9. **Describe how you will promote lodging establishments, restaurants, and businesses located in the City of SeaTac. What will the City of SeaTac /Tourism and lodging industry get in return for funding (e.g. logos, links print material, radio, TV etc.)?:**

The RTA utilizes advertising, public relations, social media, content marketing strategies, and group sales strategies to market SeaTac. SeaTac hotels, restaurants, and other businesses are promoted on the website, in printed materials, paid advertising, content development, video and photography production, PR & social media, group sales outreach, etc. The shuttle is a unique amenity that few other destinations have. The larger SeaTac hotels will leverage the convenient and unique shuttle in their marketing to attract additional guests and to differentiate themselves from hotels in nearby cities.

The SeaTac – Westfield Shuttle service will have a decorative and informative wrap that will thank SeaTac for providing the shuttle. A "Thank you SeaTac for this shuttle service" is planned to be displayed prominently. The wrap's graphics and message will further promote SeaTac. In essence the shuttle will be a rolling billboard promoting areas of interest in SeaTac to people traveling along International Blvd and between SeaTac and the Westfield Mall.

The benefits derived from the shuttle program extend beyond additional guests and revenues for the hotels. Additional guests and additional groups and meetings drive higher employment and greater income for SeaTac residents employed in SeaTac hotels. In addition, other SeaTac ancillary businesses also benefit from increased tourism activity and spending in SeaTac.

10. **Are you applying for Lodging Tax Funding from another community/ies? Yes ☐   No ☒**
    If yes, list the other jurisdiction(s), amount(s) requested and status.

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11. What will you or your organization do differently this year that will improve upon last year's/previous event(s)/activities?

Prior to Covid, plans were progressing to develop an app for this shuttle service, enabling better customer service, more accurate timing, and allowing for more customer control and confidence in reserving seats. Upon reinstatement of the shuttle program, the Seattle Express in intending to activate the traveler app that they are using currently in similar shuttle operations. The app will enable robust data gathering about hotel guests/shuttle riders that have used the shuttle. The app will also enable SSRTA to include the shuttle riders in a SeaTac focused database to promote SeaTac directly to past guests.

12. What is the overall budget for your event/activity/facility? Please provide an itemized list identifying each type of expenditure to be reimbursed.
(Please see Question 15 for service level assumptions)
Please note: The budgeted costs below are a result of soliciting a bid from Seattle Express, the prior shuttle operator and the only public transportation operator authorized to operate this type of shuttle. Several bids have been received for the design and installation of the shuttle wrap. While the three bids were very similar in cost, the budgeted figure below is from the company with the strongest recommendations. The budgets for marketing expense are based on a "not to exceed' estimate of what marketing expenses should be.
The budget below reflects operating the shuttle reflected in section 15. If demand for the shuttle increases and hours or days of operation need to be increased, additional funding may be requested.

2021	Activities	Amount
Q1		$
Q2		$
Q3	Shuttle Bus Wrap (Design ($3,000), production and installation ($17,000))	$20,000
	Design & Production of brochures and key packet cards	$ 5,000
	Shuttle operating contract (Seattle Express)	$13,000
	Digital Marketing	$ 500
	TOTAL	$38,500
Q4	Shuttle operating contract (Seattle Express)	$19,500
	Digital Marketing	$ 1,000
	TOTAL	$20,500
	Total estimated expenditures August – December, 2021	$59,000
2022	Activities	Amount
Q1	Shuttle operating contract (Seattle Express)	$19,500
	Digital Marketing	$ 1,000

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2021/2022 Application for City of SeaTac Lodging Tax Funding

			TOTAL	$20,500
Q2	Shuttle operating contract (Seattle Express) Digital Marketing			$19,500 $ 1,000
			TOTAL	$20,500
Q3	Shuttle operating contract (Seattle Express) Digital Marketing			$19,500 $ 1,000
			TOTAL	$20,500
Q4	Shuttle operating contract (Seattle Express) Digital Marketing		TOTAL	$19,500 $ 1,000 $20,500
	Total estimated expenditures January – December, 2022			$82,000

13. **What percent of your total budget are you requesting from Lodging Tax Fund? 100%**

	2021	2022	TOTAL
Cost of operating the shuttle via Seattle Express at $65/hour	$32,500	$78,000	$110,500
Shuttle Wrap	$20,000		$ 20,000
Marketing collateral	$ 5,000		$ 5,000
Digital Marketing	$ 1,500	$4,000	$ 5,500
Total	$59,000	$82,000	$141,000

14. **Please identify your top 5 sources of revenues anticipated for your 2021/22 event/program, not including requested City of SeaTac LTAC funds. (Please do not include in-kind contributions.)**

Source of Revenue	Amount	Confirmed? Y/N	Date Funds Available

15. **What will you cut from your proposal or do differently if full funding for your request is not available or not recommended?**

If the funding is reduced, the shuttle hours of operation will be reduced. The budgeted hours of operation, as proposed are: **Aug, 2021 – Dec 2022:**

Thursday	**3pm – 6pm**	**3 hours/day**
Friday	**3pm – 9 pm**	**6 hours/day**
Saturday	**noon – 9pm**	**9 hours/day**
Sunday	**noon – 5pm**	**5 hours/day**

16. Funding History

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Was this event/program previously funded with lodging tax funds in the past four years?
___X____YES   _____NO

17. **If yes, how much funding did you receive in:**

2017: $144,000 for shuttle operations + $29,575 for marketing of the shuttle service = **$173,575**
2018: $148,320 for shuttle operations + $33,650 for marketing of the shuttle service = **$181,970**
2019: $160,000 for shuttle operations + $30,000 for marketing of the shuttle service = **$190,000**
2020: Contracted for $164,000 in operations + $30,000 in marketing = $194,000
2020: Actual: Spent $41,199 for operations + $7,500 = **$48,699** in marketing for 3 months in 2020.

2021 (Request): $32,000 for shuttle operations (5 months) + $20,000 shuttle wrap + $6500 in marketing = **$59,000**
2022 (Request): $78,000 for shuttle operations (full year) + $4,000 in marketing = **$82,000**

Beginning in 2016, the RTA assumed the shuttle program contract with 100% of the cost funded by SeaTac lodging tax (prior to that it had also been split with lodging tax funding from Tukwila). The shuttle program costs have been incorporated as part of the annually approved tourism marketing initiatives the RTA provides to the City of SeaTac.

18. **Number of total years you have received City of SeaTac lodging tax funds:** 20 years

19. **If you received a <u>2019 Lodging Tax Funding</u>, please explain below how awarded funds were used. If you were not a 2019 funding recipient, please skip this question.**

Please see RTA Board approved 5-year Strategic Plan and 2019 Annual Report attached.

20. **How did you hear about the City of SeaTac Lodging Tax Funding Program?**
Historical knowledge as the SSRTA has been a recipient of SeaTac Lodging Tax for 20 years ending in 2021.

21. **Please list the risks and challenges to your success and how you plan to mitigate these? Examples include: space, staff, money, time, marketing etc.**

Securing future funding to support this service: Inconsistency in offering the SeaTac – Westfield shuttle service leads to a decline in customer confidence, poor destination reputation, and poor visitor experience. The marketing and promotion of this service is a long-term strategy that promises the visitor a valuable amenity that they will rely on. If approved, the reliability of this shuttle service should be envisioned.

The shuttle app will enable hotel guests to contact, reserve and receive confirmation of their requested shuttle request. Guests boarding the shuttle will be required to show the driver their room key and/or their shuttle app confirmation.

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Seattle Express has experience in compliance with all of the CDC required safety precautions related to Covid prevention. Seattle Express drivers are trained in first aid, CPR and rider interactions.

State Law Excerpts and Notes

(RCW 67.28.1816)

Use of Lodging Tax Fund
Lodging tax revenues under this chapter may be used, directly by any municipality or indirectly through a convention and visitor's bureau or destination marketing organization for:
    a. Tourism marketing;
    b. Marketing and operations of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists;
    c. Supporting operations and capital expenditures of tourism-related facilities owned or operated by a municipality or a public facilities district; 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.

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.

Note that, the State Auditor's Office is interpreting the law to mean that all users of funds, including municipalities, are considered applicants and must follow relevant application procedures. So, cities and counties should submit applications for their own projects to the LTAC.

Note that, a city or county does not have to fund the full list as recommended by the LTAC and can choose to make awards in the recommended amounts to all, some, or none of the candidates on the list.

RCW 67.28.080 - Definitions.
    1. "Acquisition" includes, but is not limited to, siting, acquisition, design, construction, refurbishing, expansion, repair, and improvement, including paying or securing the payment of all or any portion of general obligation bonds, leases, revenue bonds, or other obligations issued or incurred for such purpose or purposes under this chapter.
    2. "Municipality" means any county, city or town of the state of Washington.
    3. "Operation" includes, but is not limited to, operation, management, and marketing.

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4. "Person" means the federal government or any agency thereof, the state or any agency, subdivision, taxing district or municipal corporation thereof other than county, city or town, any private corporation, partnership, association, or individual.
5. "Tourism" means economic activity resulting from tourists, which may include sales of overnight lodging, meals, tours, gifts, or souvenirs.
6. "Tourism promotion" means activities, operations, and expenditures designed to increase tourism, including but not limited to advertising, publicizing, or otherwise distributing information for the purpose of attracting and welcoming tourists; developing strategies to expand tourism; operating tourism promotion agencies; and funding the marketing of or the operation of special events and festivals designed to attract tourists.
7. "Tourism-related facility" means real or tangible personal property with a usable life of three or more years, or constructed with volunteer labor, and used to support tourism, performing arts, or to accommodate tourist activities.

Applicant Reporting Requirements

In a municipality with a population of five thousand or more, applicants applying for use of revenues must submit their applications and estimates to the local lodging tax advisory committee 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.

(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.

Note that, local governments, as part of their contract with recipients, should require that the final report be provided immediately after the event or activity. Local governments will then, in turn, report this information annually to JLARC using their on-line reporting system.

An additional Municipal Services Contract with the City of SeaTac may be required.

Please see:

2020HMACAfterEventReport&ReimbursementApplication
20200410HMACLodgingTaxFundingProgramProcedures
2020HMACFundingApplicant Scoring Sheet

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVE NAME _MARK EVERTON_
APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE _Mark Ty 8 as CEO for SSRTA_
DATE OF SIGNATURE _5/24/2021_

CITY OF SEATAC PRESENTATIVE NAME _____
CITY OF SEATAC REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE _____

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DATE OF SIGNATURE　　　　　_____

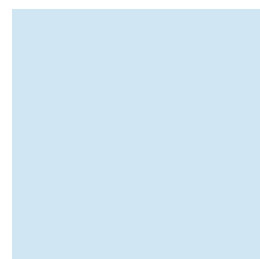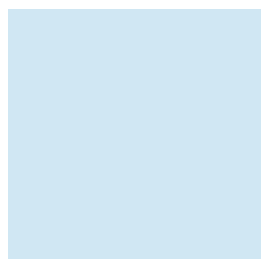APPROVED AS TO FORM BY (NAME)　　_____
APPROVED AS TO FORM BY (SIGNATURE)　_____
DATE OF SIGNATURE　　　　　_____

End of Application

2020 Annual Report

SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority
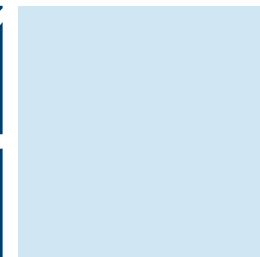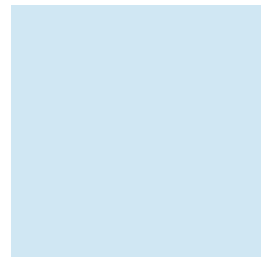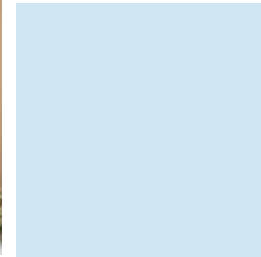
Travel & Tourism Impact

$787.9 Million
in Visitor Spending*
(highest on record)
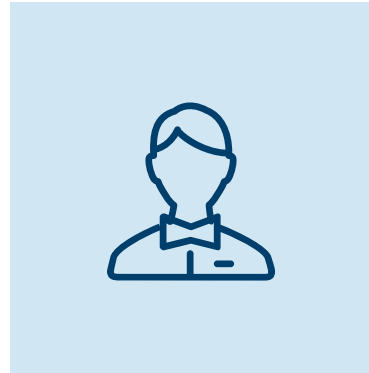
5,110
Employed*

$80.9 Million
in Tax Receipts*
(highest on record)

$1,425 Tax Savings
for King County households**

2.3% Increase
TPA Hotels Demand
(Rooms Sold)
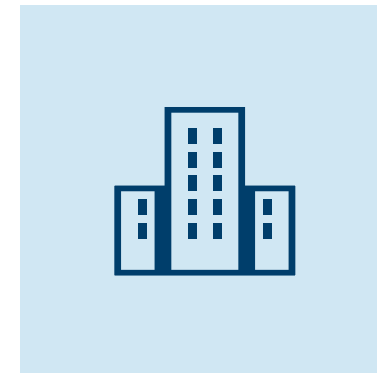
4% Increase
Hotels Supply

*2019 Travel Impacts, Dean Runyan Associates Report (preliminary)   **2019 Tourism Economics

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Measurable Outcomes

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

=

Return on Investment:
$41.86

+

RTA-Generated Room Nights
620,658

New Programs

A new **Mobile Visitor Center** was launched and deployed at **21 events** engaging with **481 people**.

New tear away map was designed and distributed to hotels for front desk staff to use with guests.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

New Programs

In the second year of the **Seawolves sponsorship** the RTA logo was placed on team jerseys, in-stadium exposure was received with banners and sponsored PA announcements deployed during games. The **mobile visitor center was present at home games** and the RTA printed gameday programs. There were **49 RTA commercials on Root Sports and CBS** throughout the season. Congratulations to the two-time champions!

Seattle Southside TV, the RTA's television show promoting the region, is now airing in **1,776 hotel rooms**. More rooms and new content will be coming soon.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

New Programs

The **RTA** and the **City of Burien** wrapped up a **two-year advertising partnership** including dining familiarization tours for hotel front desk staff, website, social and print ads, and public relations.

The **RTA earned accreditation and staff CDME** (Certified Destination Management Executive) **certifications** from **Destinations International**.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Marketing & Communications

The leisure marketing campaign included a local awareness component on Seattle Refined and Evening Magazine for the 2nd year and reached **3M impressions** of more than **40M total marketing impressions**.

A *New Side to Seattle Southside* video was developed and released **earning multiple awards**.

SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Marketing & Communications

Website conversion study:
28% of website visits result in an overnight stay within 12 months and visitors on average stay 3.8 nights.

A **23 media and sales familiarization tours** and site visits were conducted, including a 3-day media fam tour hosting 7 writers, that resulted in **many positive stories**.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Marketing & Communications

125 news and lifestyle articles were written and resulted in **99.7M impressions** that generated **$280,000 in ad equivalency**.

2,047 signups of the free mobile coupon *Do More Save More Passport*.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Marketing & Communications

540,182 website visits with **202,453 visitor engagements** (actions that express intent to travel such as Travel Planner requests, itinerary downloads, information requests, etc.).

15,217 social media engagements across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Sales & Services

A new meetings market campaign was launched including the development of a *Meeting Planner Toolkit* with video planner tips, attendance marketing tools and customizable content.

Expanded partner outreach and engagement: **4 partner meetings**, **2 partner seminars**, **1 open house**, and launched new *Southside Insider* **e-newsletter**.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority
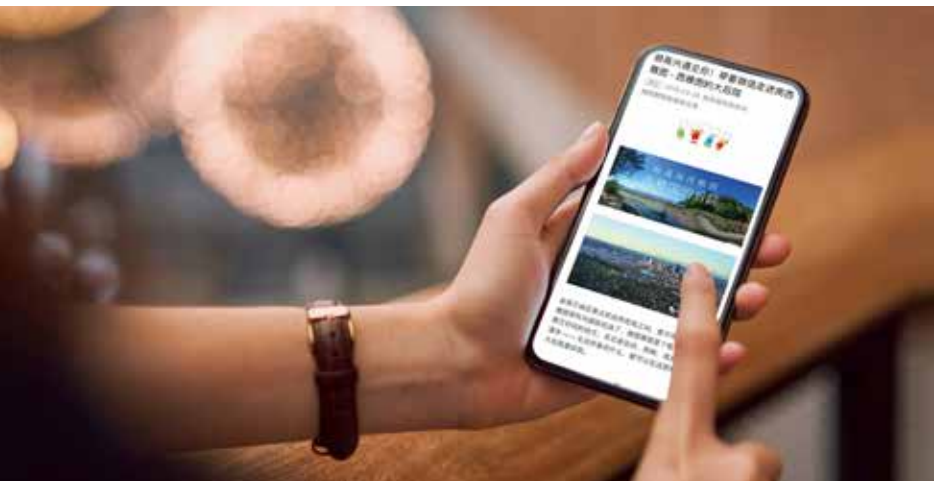
Sales & Services

International marketing through **Weibo** and **WeChat** resulted in 19,614 followers and the **RTA's Chinese hosted website** had **42,369 visits**.

24,619 Westfield Southcenter shuttle riders generated **$4,234,543 in visitor spending**.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Sales & Services

1,836 welcome bags were delivered to meeting attendees.

439 planner one-on-one meetings were held with RTA Business Development staff.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Sales & Services

8,034 rooms were booked by meeting and event attendees through the RTA.

19,906 community business referrals were given to visitors.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
Regional Tourism Authority

Strategic Plan

2016–2021 Attracting more visitors to the cities of SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines

Quaint Des Moines offers small town feel with big-time views of the Sound.

Strategic Plan 2016–2021

Vision:

To position Seattle Southside as a destination of choice for practical travelers to Seattle while enhancing the image and economic strength of the region.

Mission Statement:

As a brand-driven and entrepreneurial destination leadership organization, Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority (RTA) provides advocacy and innovative services to competitively market the destination. This function helps create jobs, grow tax revenues and improve quality of life for our businesses and residents.

Goals:

These goals are the core mission of Seattle Southside RTA:

1. **Increase the number of tourists and groups** coming to Seattle Southside with an emphasis on shoulder season. The shoulder season includes dates in the spring and fall on each side of the summer visitor season—October to May. (*2015:* 3.85 million overnight visitors total[1])

2. **Increase the average length of stay.** (*2014:* 3.4 days[2]; *2015:* 2.4 days[1])

3. **Increase visitor spending** at businesses within the cities of SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines. (*2015:* $665.2 million in travel spending[1])

4. **Demonstrate an increase in the RTA's return on investment.** (*2015:* $1/$21.41)

Strategies:

The Destination 2020 Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority (RTA) Strategic Plan's five focus areas are:

1. **Own the region.** Build toward being the destination that visitors and groups know and prefer for accessing everything the Seattle region has to offer, emphasizing the experiences within Seattle Southside.

2. **Drive value and results through leadership excellence.** Be the catalyst for bringing partners together to meet the RTA's goals.

3. **Build destination experiences.** Create and build on existing experiences to create critical mass and reasons to visit.

4. **Encourage easy connections to and within Seattle Southside and regional destinations**, including light rail, shuttles, tours and more.

5. **Create a participatory sports focus.** Recruit and leverage sports-related experiences to be known as the place for active sports fun.

[1]2015 Dean Runyan Report, [2]2014 H2R Conversion Study

The Promise:

Do more.
You can do more when you visit Seattle Southside because its location, transportation, affordability and unique attractions stretch your time, money and opportunities further.

The Promise is what the RTA will help the Seattle Southside region deliver and what we want to emphasize as the region's unique differentiator to visitors.

Seattle Southside farmer's markets feature local harvests and global flavor favorites.

Table of Contents

Plan Process and Summary

The RTA exists to help visitors understand why Seattle Southside is a destination of choice for leisure, group and business travelers while enhancing the image and economic strength of the resident and business community in the Seattle Southside region. The results are more local jobs, more local tax revenues and improved quality of life for residents and businesses in the Seattle Southside region. The RTA is funded by a hotel room occupation assessment and lodging tax dollars and operates a visitor center, website and shuttle, among performing other destination marketing activities.

The RTA, working with local civic and business leaders and strategic planning consultant GreenRubino, developed the Strategic Plan to focus on those activities with the largest return on investment for attracting groups, tourists and business travelers to Seattle Southside. Because it spans a six-year period, this Strategic Plan will give the RTA and its partners the ability to strengthen and more effectively promote activities that will best drive more local, regional, national and international visitors to the Seattle Southside region.

The Strategic Plan is designed to keep Seattle Southside residents, retail businesses and the hotel community working together in partnership toward a common goal, based on a single promise, with continued momentum during the entire six-year period. The strategic plans of the RTA member cities—SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines—were also considered in this process. City electeds were interviewed as part of the discovery process, and city representatives attended many of the working sessions. Working closely with the cities will be instrumental to successful Strategic Plan implementation.

Many people that come to the region are attracted by the pull of downtown Seattle; the RTA can leverage the success of the Seattle brand to enhance Seattle Southside as a regional destination and increase the Seattle Southside share of visitor nights and dollars. This Strategic Plan is designed to make that happen.

The Strategic Plan was developed through the hard work of a group of stakeholders in a working committee, including the RTA's Sales and Marketing Board Advisory Committee, RTA Board of Directors, RTA staff and other interested participants.

The Sales and Marketing Board Advisory Committee met nine times from December 2015 through April 2016. The first step in the strategic planning process was discovery, which included:

- One-on-one phone interviews with businesses, residents, stakeholders and meeting planners.
- An online survey with past visitors.
- Review of existing research and materials, including Dean Runyan reports and H2R conversion studies.

RESEARCH	COMPLETES
Businesses	14
Stakeholders*	37
Visitors/tourists	57
Local residents	15
Meeting planners and groups	13
Total	136

*Hoteliers, electeds and RTA board members.

From this discovery process, the working group generated the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, and the Strategic Plan's Promise, strategies, actions and measurements in a series of workshops led by GreenRubino. All RTA stakeholders were kept apprised of the strategic planning progress via monthly e-newsletter updates, public board meetings and hotel/motel advisory meetings.

Each part of the Strategic Plan builds from the part before: the research led to the SWOT analysis, which led to the Promise, which led to goals and strategies, which led, finally, to the actions and metrics to achieve each strategy. At each point in the process, the strategic planning committee used the following to judge if a Strategic Plan strategy or action was sound:

- Did it create value for all three cities?
- Did it build the Seattle Southside brand?
- Was the idea attractive to locals, tourists and/or business travelers?
- Would it achieve the goals of the RTA?
- Did it create value for both residents and businesses in the RTA cities?

This Strategic Plan becomes the foundation for additional activities by the RTA. The next steps are to use this Strategic Plan to create:

1. A Marketing Action Plan, which outlines how the RTA will help to market the region against the Strategic Plan's overall strategies and goals.
2. A sales plan, which will identify the strategies and tactics for attracting groups.
3. Action work plans, which identify who is the project lead, the contact, the steps to completion, the milestones and the metrics which will result in completing each action in the Strategic Plan.

These plans and their resulting implementation will result in the RTA meeting its goals and attracting more people to come, stay longer and spend more in the RTA cities.

RTA SALES AND MARKETING BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

David Sullivan, *Co-Chair, Cedarbrook Lodge*
Ken Stockdale, *Co-Chair, Crowne Plaza Seattle Airport*
Raquel Wheeler, *Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport*
Mollie Mad, *Hospitality Concepts, BMI Hospitality Management*
Tiffany Hart, *Marriott International*
Owen Leinbach, *Courtyard by Marriott Seattle Southcenter*
Peter Philips, *Philips Publishing*
Mike Bush, *Scosh Marketing*
Jill Andrews, *Certified Folder Display Service, Inc.*
Patti Denny, *Port of Seattle*
Linda Botts, *Crowne Plaza Seattle Airport*

RTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Board Chair: Maureen Huffman, *Embassy Suites Seattle-Tacoma International Airport*
Vice Chair: Sanjay Mahajan, *Radisson Hotel Seattle Airport*
Secretary: David Sullivan, *Cedarbrook Lodge*
Treasurer: Barbara Brunetti, *Ramada Tukwila Southcenter*
Barry Baxter, *Home2 Suites by Hilton*
Bill Murray, *Four Points by Sheraton Seattle Airport South*
Frank Welton, *Hilton Worldwide*
Ken Stockdale, *Crowne Plaza Seattle Airport*

RTA STAFF:

Katherine Kertzman, *President & CEO*
Ashley Comar, *Vice President of Marketing & Communications*
Meagan McGuire, *Vice President of Sales & Services*
Brenda Rolph, *Chief Financial Officer*
Autumn Lingle, *Operations Administrator*
Kristina Thorne, *Sports Sales Development*
Jené Santos, *Sales Manager*
Nick Tolley, *Social Media & Content Manager*
Sherri Scott, *Graphic Design & Creative Services Manager*
Noelle Cueto, *Partner Services Coordinator*
Shawn Woods, *Visitor Center Coordinator*

Line of Sight

Promise
The visitor value RTA will build.

Strategies
The few areas of focus that will create the greatest value.

Actions
What you'll do to achieve your strategies.

Benefits
Stakeholders accrue value from your delivered promise.
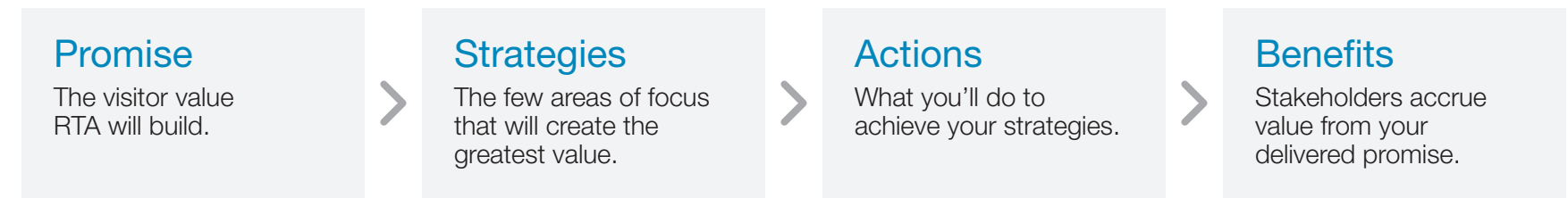
RTA Strategic Plan Components

SWOT Analysis Results

Seattle Southside has many strengths and opportunities and a few weaknesses and threats that drove the strategic planning process.
A thorough audit of the region identified the following key elements:

STRENGTHS

- Many attractive local and regional destinations, including Westfield Southcenter, Starfire Sports Campus, Des Moines waterfront, Mt. Rainier, Museum of Flight and more
- Diversity of activities and cultures, including outdoor, sports, entertainment and one of the most diverse ZIP codes in the nation
- Not the big city with all its hassles—many cited Seattle's parking and traffic issues as reasons to avoid staying there
- Convenience, including a central location close to the airport, easy and inexpensive transportation and a lot of free or low-cost parking
- Great for families, in terms of affordability, good family attractions and familiar restaurants
- Location between Tacoma, Seattle and Bellevue, near Mt. Rainier and next to the Puget Sound
- Effective RTA organization and staff

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of a Southside destination pull
- Walkability
- Suburban/industrial—limited "main street"/ downtown appeal
- Wayfinding and connections between SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines and destinations of interest
- Lack of compelling brand awareness and marketing—lack of strong brand identity
- Lack of art, music and museums
- Crime perception
- Lack of nightlife and independent restaurants

OPPORTUNITIES

- Light rail and other transportation options
- Engaging with younger demographic
- Ethnic diversity
- International flight growth
- Many flight-related destinations of interest
- Relationship with airport
- Family-friendly destinations of interest
- Soccer-related destinations of interest
- Low-cost business development opportunities; spillover from rest of region's growth
- Increase local resident engagement in local retail community
- Des Moines waterfront development

THREATS

- Lack of an aligned Southside value proposition, story and brand
- Separate cities' agendas
- Limited number of cities involved in the RTA
- Perception that it rains all the time
- Competition from regional players (especially Seattle/Bellevue)
- Perceived lack of Southside destinations/city centers/local flavor
- Lack of independent mid-to-higher-end restaurants not connected to hotels
- Lack of partnership with the Port

SWOT ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Focus your efforts. Build awareness of Seattle Southside through an umbrella concept that connects your events, destination and attractions.
- Build toward making Seattle Southside a more compelling destination. The ultimate goal is for people to plan to come to Seattle Southside for its internal attractions, in addition to what is nearby.
- Embrace your own unique flavor—such as your diverse cultures and unique attractions; people like visiting places that are different from where they came from.
- Build iconic, visible manifestations of Seattle Southside with the cities, such as the Hollywood sign or I AM STERDAM.
- Get the local population thinking about you so they are aware of your attractions and recommend them to their visiting friends.

This SWOT analysis also led the team to identify the following as the region's Promise.

With Link light rail stations in Tukwila and SeaTac, Seattle Southside visitors can get to downtown Seattle or the Stadium District in just minutes.
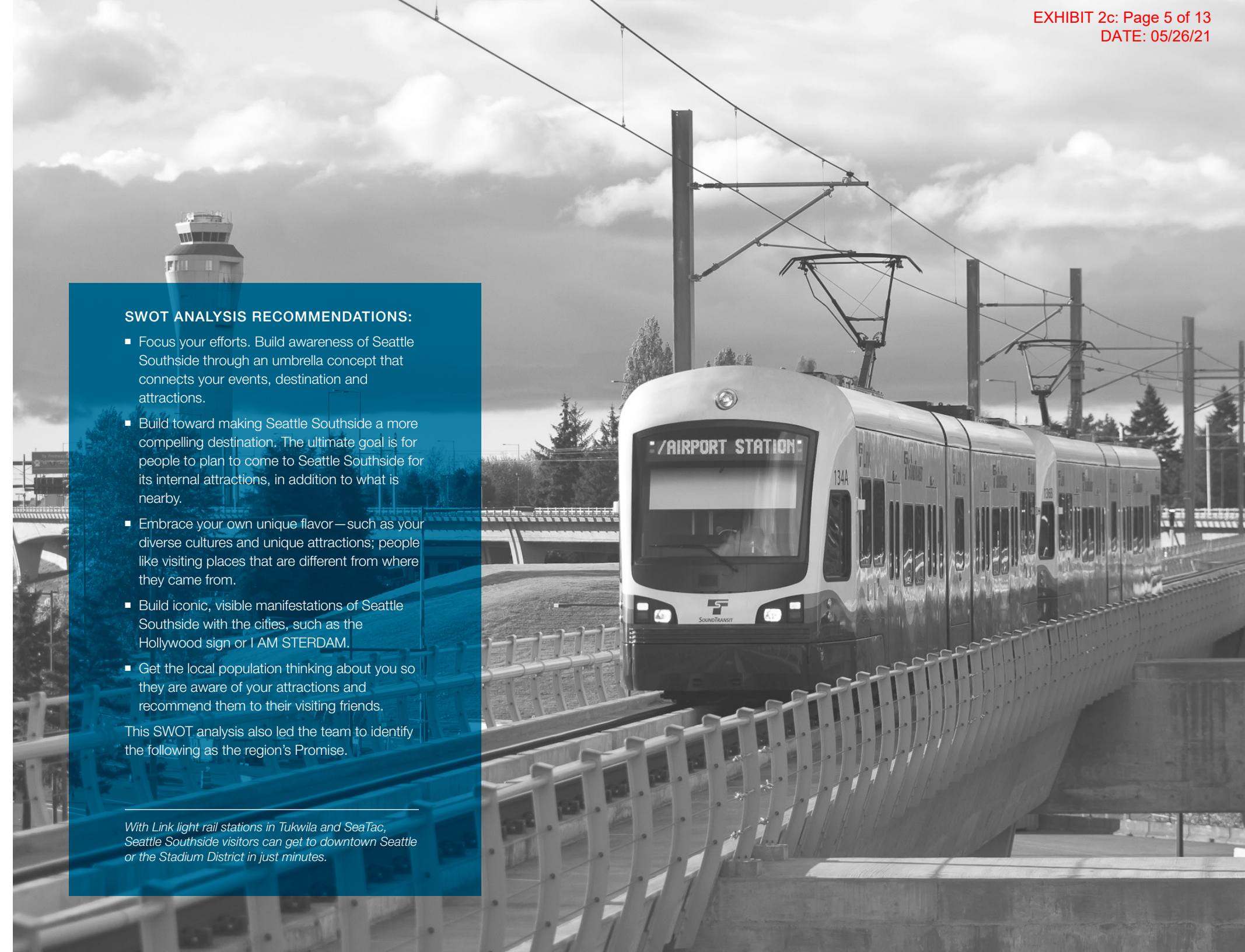
The Promise

A strategic plan needs a north star, something it is moving toward and promising to deliver to stakeholders. It is aspirational.

The Promise is what the RTA will help deliver and what we want to emphasize as Seattle Southside's unique differentiator to visitors. The Promise is something the RTA will build on over the next six years as we enhance the attractiveness of the Seattle Southside experience through the actions in this Strategic Plan. The Promise will be further strengthened through the following strategies: Owning the region, Driving value and results through leadership excellence, Building destination experiences, Encouraging easy connections to and within Seattle Southside and regional destinations, and Creating a participatory sports focus.

What is Seattle Southside's Promise? *Do more*.

This Promise:

- Is supported by our affordability and unique experiences.
- Is something Seattle Southside can uniquely offer right now based on having easy, fast access to anything visitors want to do and anywhere they want to go in the region.
- Leverages the fact that visitors view Seattle as the entire region, not just the City of Seattle.
- Will resonate with our visitors right now—it captures both Seattle Southside's existing and aspirational value from the visitor's point of view.
- Is ownable and differentiated: no other competitor can demonstrate this Promise in the way we define it.
- Will benefit every stakeholder.
- Is something Seattle Southside will become known for as the RTA completes the actions in this Strategic Plan and markets the results.

Seattle Southside's Promise:

Do more.
You can do more when you visit Seattle Southside because its location, transportation, affordability and unique attractions stretch your time, money and opportunities further.

Strategies

Strategies are areas of focus for RTA actions. Focus areas enable RTA to invest its limited time and resources on those things that will best make the Promise come to life. If the Promise is Do More, then what strategies will help people do that? The following five strategies optimize the visitor experience, build the Seattle Southside brand and provide a focus for businesses and electeds to rally around.

1. Own the region. Build toward being the destination that visitors and groups know and prefer for accessing everything the Seattle region has to offer, emphasizing experiences within Seattle Southside. This strategy is about both brand building for awareness and linking the Seattle Southside name with popular regional attractions.

2. Drive value and results through leadership excellence. Be the catalyst for bringing partners together to meet the RTA's goals, and continuously improve the RTA's capabilities.

3. Build destination experiences. Create and build on existing experiences to create critical mass and reasons to visit. This strategy is necessary to make both locals and out-of-town visitors think about coming to Seattle Southside, stay here and stay longer.

4. Encourage easy connections to and within Seattle Southside and regional destinations, including light rail, shuttles, cruises, tours and more. As part of the Do More promise, we have to continually improve how easy it is to get from place to place.

5. Create a participatory sports focus. Starting from the foundation of an inventory of facilities, recruit and develop sports-related experiences to be known as the place for active sports fun. This strategy starts to build a focus for awareness; we want visitors to equate Seattle Southside and active fun in their minds.

Actions and Key Performance Indicators

The actions required to bring these strategies to life were determined using these criteria:

- They are achievable with existing resources and staff.
- They contain a mixture of early "wins" and actions that will take longer to make happen.
- They are in alignment with the goals of the RTA cities.
- They will achieve the goals of the RTA.
- They will actually deliver on the strategies and/or the promise of Do More.

For accountability, all actions in this Strategic Plan include key performance indicators (KPIs) to track both their completion and their impact. In many cases, just getting the action started or completed is the KPI; in these cases, the KPI is called out as "progress completion." In other cases, we are tracking the action's impact on website visits and conversions, bookings, sales, inquiries and other metrics.

These actions are presented by year and by strategy.

The RTA helps organize and promote sporting events at Tukwila's StarFire Sports facility.

1. Own the Region

2016

ACTION	KPI
Reconfigure the Seattle Southside map to focus on how local, national and international visitors can do more. Include Seattle Southside attractions and transit, delivered through paper, web and mobile.	Complete all three versions of the map by Q4 2016. Determine effectiveness through web analytics to be determined in 2016.
Create an activity pass and implementation plan for attractions.	Create activity pass and implement plan by Q3 2016.
Create a business associate outreach plan including a Seattle Southside electronic weekly packet, distributed to hotels, with that week's festivals, events and attraction promotions.	Plan developed and implemented by Q2 2016.
Use billboard-type ads to raise awareness of Seattle Southside among travelers in/around the airport.	13,000,000 impressions during three-month media buy in 2016.
Develop iconic signs/attractions for SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines to attract more local, national and international visitors. Get buy-in from cities and community leaders.	Determine feasibility and level of city and community support and report back in 2016; if feasible, aim for signage to be in place by Q2 2017.
Identify co-branding opportunities with regional attractions to build awareness with local, national and international visitors and begin contacting.	Audit completed Q2 2016. All attractions contacted in 2016 with five co-branded attractions signed up.
Identify potential participation partners throughout the region, who could include additional attractions, businesses and organizations. Create a fiscally fair plan, including value proposition for RTA cities and vetting by RTA cities, which builds the Seattle Southside brand through partnerships.	Develop plan and three opportunities in 2016.
As part of the Marketing Action Plan, create marketing focused on locals to drive word-of-mouth about Seattle Southside.	Increase in awareness of Seattle Southside via benchmark survey in Q2 2017.
Rebuild website to highlight "Do More" destinations, instant booking of itineraries, packages. Provide information on the website in foreign languages such as Chinese.	Completion of phase 1: Customer relationship management (CRM) backend buildout in 2016.

2017

ACTION	KPI
Sell activity passes.	Sell 100 activity passes in 2017.
Continue co-branding with Seattle Southside attractions.	Five new co-branded attractions, venues or businesses in 2017.
Continue identifying and executing additional RTA partnerships.	Addition of three new partners in 2017.
As part of the Marketing Action Plan, continue to create marketing focused on locals to drive word of mouth about Seattle Southside.	Increase in awareness of Seattle Southside via benchmark survey in Q1 2018.
Continue to develop website.	Completion of phase 2: front end in 2017.

2018–2021

ACTION	KPI
Continue to sell activity passes.	Sell 150 additional passes each year from 2018–2021.
Continue with co-branding efforts.	Ten additional co-branded attractions, venues or businesses in 2018–2021.
Continue executing RTA partnerships.	Add three new partners in 2018–2021.
Roll out RTA-delivered Seattle Southside region ambassador training for hospitality employees/residents that is complementary to the Port of Seattle and area community college programs.	Delivery to create outcome of all hospitality employees trained by 2021.
Roll out RTA-delivered best practices seminars on topics such as military reunions, international travelers, tourism professionals.	Delivery of seminars to at least ten additional businesses each year from 2018–2021.
Improve website incrementally.	Continue to update website with additional functionality and UX (user experience) improvements 2018–2021.
Continue working with RTA cities on how Strategic Plan actions complement each city's strategic plan.	Quarterly meetings with city staff.

2. Drive Value and Results Through Leadership Excellence

2016

ACTION	KPI
Start accreditation process through Destination Marketing Association International.	Complete application in 2016 for 2017 submittal.
Create a product development plan identifying criteria and approval process for supporting additional attractions and experiences.	Complete plan by Q3 2016.
Advance RTA's interests through participation in regional partnerships.	Participate in three regional partnerships in 2016.
Create an annual Marketing Action Plan in alignment with the Strategic Plan, which will increase PR, advocacy, advertising and social media efforts locally, nationally and internationally to increase brand awareness of Seattle Southside.	Marketing Action Plan completed in 2016; implement marketing plan tactics. KPIs will be included in the plan itself to include all-up metric of 5% annual increase in awareness, measured through benchmark survey.
Create benchmark awareness survey.	Complete survey by Q4 2016.
Create a partner engagement program.	Program in place in 2016.
Create all Strategic Plan action work plans and budgeting process.	Work plans completed and in process in 2016.
Create an annual process for reviewing Strategic Plan progress with changes as needed.	Process completed 2017–2021.
Create an annual sales plan. The sales plan will leverage the Strategic Plan and Marketing Action Plan tactics to attract more groups.	Sales plan implemented in 2016 and updated as new Strategic Plan and Marketing Action Plan actions are completed. Increase RFPs by 5% over 2015.
Establish RTA values to shape the organizational culture.	Values document and delivery to staff.
Work with RTA cities on how Strategic Plan actions complement each city's strategic plan.	Completion of quarterly meetings with city staff and Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.
Expand meeting and visitor services.	5% increase year over year in meetings using services and in visits to Visitor Center.

2017

ACTION	KPI
Complete destination accreditation with Destination Marketing Association International.	Accreditation achieved in 2017.
Continue advancing RTA's interests through partnerships.	Participation in an additional three regional partnerships in 2017.
Execute product development plan, in alignment with Strategic Plan.	Three new products initiated with partners in 2017. Will designate metrics based on type of product created.
Continue implementing marketing action plan.	Plan implemented for 2017. KPIs will be included in the plan itself.
Continue implementing sales plan.	Plan implemented for 2017 and updated as new Strategic Plan and Marketing Action Plan actions are completed. KPIs will be included in the plan itself.
Report on progress meeting strategic plan goals.	Report to stakeholders Q1 2017.
Work with RTA cities on how Strategic Plan actions complement each city's strategic plan.	Completion of quarterly meetings with city staff and Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.

2018–2021

ACTION	KPI
Continue advancing RTA's interests through participation in regional partnerships.	Participation in additional partnerships in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.
Increase PR, advocacy and social media efforts to increase brand awareness of Seattle Southside.	5% annual increase in awareness, measured through benchmark survey.
Continue executing product development plan, in alignment with Strategic Plan.	Five new products initiated with partners 2018-2021.
Continue implementing Marketing Action Plan.	Marketing Action Plan updated each year from 2018-2021. KPIs will be included in the plan itself.
Continue implementing sales plan.	Plan implemented for 2018–2021 and updated as new Strategic Plan and Marketing Action Plan actions are completed. KPIs will be included in the plan itself.
Continue reporting on progress meeting Strategic Plan goals.	Report to stakeholders in Q1 of each year 2018–2021.
Continue working with RTA cities on how Strategic Plan actions complement each city's strategic plan.	Quarterly meetings with city staff.

3. Build Destination Experiences

2016		2017		2018–2021	
ACTION	**KPI**	**ACTION**	**KPI**	**ACTION**	**KPI**
Enhance 1/2-, 1-, 2- and 3-day itineraries from a perspective that enables visitors to Do More, with a focus on shoulder-season activities. Distribute with Seattle Southside and partner hotel email confirmations as technology allows.	Completed itineraries and deployment at RTA in 2016.	Identify and build out personalized and customizable "Do More" experience packages to regional attractions, including partnering with cruise lines, rental car, hotel and tour companies. Create value-added packages aimed at outdoor enthusiasts, foodies, sports enthusiasts and more.	Three new packages developed in 2017.	Explore seasonal market opportunities, such as one that is successful in Vancouver, BC.	Exploration in 2018; if feasible, begin one seasonal opportunity in 2019.
Create a coupon book, in both printed and digital versions.	Printing of coupon book and distribution plan developed by 2017.			Continue to participate in additional regional, meeting planner and international familiarization tours.	Completion of one tour per year 2018–2021.
Work with city economic development staff to develop year-round indoor/outdoor experience to highlight food/beer/wine/farmer's market.	Determine feasibility and report back in 2016.	Continue to develop food pavilion idea.	If determined feasible, develop plan in 2016.	Target specific professional planner and executive association conferences to hold them in Seattle Southside, such as Reunion Friendly Network, Washington Society of Association Executives, Meeting Professionals International.	Attract at least one travel sales conference per year 2018–2021.
		Continue to participate in regional, meeting planner and international familiarization tours.	Completion of one tour in 2017.		
Participate in and/or organize regional, meeting planner familiarization, and international familiarization tours.	Completion of one tour in 2016.			Explore attending and attracting international trade shows.	Determine feasibility and report back in 2018.
Encourage and promote Blues and Brews, International Festival, Wine Festival, Waterland Festival and other existing and new event-based attractions.	5% increase in attendance in 2016.			Continue to encourage and promote Blues and Brews, International Festival, Wine Festival, Waterland Festival and other existing event-based attractions.	5% annual increase in attendance each year from 2018–2021.
Encourage and promote marina, waterfront and scenic drive activities, experiences and visibility.	Concept developed and materials delivered 2016–2018.			Enhance existing events and festival experiences.	Deployment of attendee satisfaction survey in 2018.
Inventory attractions throughout region and identify gaps.	Completed audit by Q3 2016.			Support city economic development staffs in recruitment of new businesses like coffee houses, unique restaurants and bike rentals that will enhance the visitor experience.	10 new business leads provided to economic development staffs each year 2018–2021.

4. Encourage Easy Connections

2016		2017		2018–2021	
ACTION	**KPI**	**ACTION**	**KPI**	**ACTION**	**KPI**
Work with Des Moines to find funding and create signage that points to the waterfront to highlight this hidden gem.	Determine costs and develop implementation plan in 2016; implement plan in 2017.	Explore and, if feasible, implement a branded wayfinding system to connect the RTA cities.	Investigative committee created in Q1 2017. Feasibility completed by Q3 2017. If feasible, wayfinding system implemented in 2017–2018.	Continue working on existing initiatives based on audit recommendations.	Progress completion.
Audit existing hotel/Westfield Southcenter shuttle service to investigate how to meet more visitors' needs, how to include Des Moines waterfront and light rail stops; look into private-sector shuttle options.	Audit completed Q3 2016.	Des Moines waterfront signage plan created.	Plan creation 2017; plan implementation 2017–2018.		
		Continue to develop shuttle service options.	Options feasibility in 2017; if feasible, implemented in 2018.		
Develop promotional partnerships with Sound Transit to sell tickets, promote convenience to visitors of our three stations to regional events and attractions like Huskies/Mariners/Seahawks/Sounders games.	Completion of ticket sales program in Q3 2016, implement by Q1 2017.	As part of the Marketing Action Plan, promote Washington State scenic drives.	Promotion implemented 2017–018 and KPIs established based on plan. Review in Q3 2018 to determine continuation of the promotion.		

5. Create a Participatory Sports Focus

2016		2017		2018–2021	
ACTION	**KPI**	**ACTION**	**KPI**	**ACTION**	**KPI**
Conduct an audit of existing participatory sports and facilities.	Audit completed Q3 2016.	Implement Marketing Action Plan section to support sports.	Implemented 2017–2021.	Create another large-scale destination sports event like the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon, such as a triathlon or bike race.	Event created in 2018; results evaluated and if positive continued in 2019–2021. Specific KPIs to be determined.
Develop Marketing Action Plan section to support sports.	Plan completed in 2016.	Identify and bring in new tournaments (bowling, volleyball, curling, soccer) and sports conventions.	Attract one new tournament and/or one convention in 2017.		
Develop connections with regional tournament directors and plan a familiarization tour of Seattle Southside facilities.	Deliver familiarization tour plan in Q3 2016.	Investigate creating a destination event such as hockey, Sounders or Storm practices.	Investigation completed in Q2 2017. If feasible, support one event creation Q3 2017–2018.		
Develop partnerships with sports facilities and sports commissions.	Conduct monthly outreach in 2016. KPI to be determined.	Develop sports-focused activities like dragon boat races, milk carton boat races and others.	Create one sports-focused activity in 2017, evaluate results and, if positive, continue in 2018–2021. Results KPIs to be determined.		
Develop sports sponsorship program to attract new business or increase attendance to current tournaments.	Completion of sponsorship program 2016; program implemented 2017.	Continue to attract coaching clinics and recruiting events.	Two additional such events booked in 2017.		
Attract coaching clinics and recruiting events.	Two such events booked in 2016.				

Measuring Our Success

RTA staff will be responsible for tracking, measuring and reporting on results for each action in the Strategic Plan. The goal is to show the ROI for the program and connect actions with how the RTA and its cities are building our Promise of "Do More." Always keeping the Promise in mind ensures that we'll maximize the impact of each action. In addition to the KPIs noted on the previous pages, RTA staff will track:

- The plan's effectiveness in meeting RTA goals of more visitor nights.
- Brand awareness, via benchmarking surveys.
- Word of mouth, measured via social media scoring tools.
- An increase in intent to refer Seattle Southside attractions by locals (as measured in the above benchmark survey).

Conclusion

Creating a compelling destination is a process, not an event. By focusing on and committing to our Promise, strategies and actions, the RTA is sowing the seeds for a long-term transformation of the Seattle Southside region from a place that people pass through, to one they choose to visit because they can do more. The proof of the Strategic Plan is in its implementation; all stakeholders now have a roadmap for providing visitors with more value so they come in larger numbers, stay longer and spend more. The result is a better quality of life for all.

Questions or comments about this Strategic Plan? Want to help make Seattle Southside an even better destination? Contact Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority at 206.575.2489 or info@seattlesouthside.com.

Seattle Southside's 8,000 hotel rooms include the boutique Cedarbrook Lodge, located on 18 acres of beautiful wetlands in SeaTac.

*The 14-mile Interurban Trail South runs
on old trolley lines from Tukwila to Pacific.*

Glossary

ACTIONS:
The tactics used to achieve the strategies and goals.

GOALS:
What the organization is trying to achieve, typically measurable.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:
The agreed upon metrics used to determine successful implementation of a plan.

MARKETING ACTION PLAN:
The strategies, channels and tactics an organization will use to increase awareness and preference with its target audience.

PARTNERS:
Partners are any organization, municipality, business or individual stakeholder that engages with the RTA for mutual benefit.

SALES PLAN:
The strategies, channels and tactics an organization will use to increase leads and sales with groups.

STRATEGIC PLAN:
An overall plan, typically multi-year, that focuses the organization on the right strategies and tactics for its future.

STRATEGIES:
The focus areas that drive actions.

TACTICAL WORK PLAN:
The step-by-step actions, at a detailed level, to accomplish a larger action or goal.

Open since 1925, Foster Links Golf Course in Tukwila has provided entertainment for generations of golfers.

SEATTLE
SOUTHSIDE
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