



## **SEATAC CITY COUNCIL VOTES IN FAVOR OF SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE TOURISM PROMOTION AREA**

**City of SeaTac, Wash. (Oct. 15, 2014)** – SeaTac City Council members voted last night to establish the Seattle Southside Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) and charter the Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority (SSRTA), a public corporation and separate legal entity which will manage increased funding and tourism promotion activities for the cities of Des Moines, SeaTac and Tukwila. The boundaries of the three cities make up the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA).

The City of SeaTac will serve as the designated legislative authority for the TPA following the prior approval of interlocal agreements with the city councils of Des Moines and Tukwila. The team from Seattle Southside Visitors Services, which was established in 2002, will transition to the newly created SSRTA.

“The region’s hospitality industry and our community will benefit greatly from the leadership of our City Council in taking this important step forward,” said SeaTac City Manager Todd Cutts. “We must also acknowledge and thank Katherine Kertzman and her team at Seattle Southside Visitors Services for their vision, dedication and collaboration during the process of creating the new Tourism Promotion Area.”

In 2013, Seattle Southside reported that for every dollar spent on tourism marketing there was a return on that investment of \$14.26 from an increased number of visitors to the region. To date, the revenue to support such marketing efforts was collected from a lodging tax. The TPA allows for a significant increase of funds to support these programs.

“It is well documented that tourism drives local economies and no place is that more so than in Seattle Southside,” said Frank Welton, Area General Manager of Hilton Worldwide. “Our

region's collective 8,000 hotel rooms generate jobs, tax revenue and added vitality to the community. A greater investment in marketing our destination will have a very positive impact and I am grateful for the partnership of the hotels and the cities to make this a top priority."

"Ever since Washington State eliminated the investment in tourism marketing, each region has needed to find ways to reach travelers and meeting planners on their own," said Katherine Kertzman, Executive Director for Seattle Southside Visitor Services. "The cities of Des Moines, SeaTac and Tukwila are uniquely positioned with opportunities to attract leisure visitors and business travelers. Hoteliers and city leaders alike understand the significant financial benefit from a healthy tourism economy."

A Board of Directors will be named before the end of 2014 and it will take several months for SSRTA to obtain its own legal, accounting and insurance services independent of the City.

"The City will have basic oversight of the PDA including the approval of an annual budget, confirmation of board members, review of financial reports and audits, and attendance at board meetings," said Cutts. "The SSRTA will oversee expenditures, operations and marketing. We've always believed it is better to let the hospitality experts decide how best to invest the resources to generate the greatest return on investment."

### **About Seattle Southside Visitor Services**

Seattle Southside Visitor Services (SSVS) is the leading tourism and marketing organization in South King County. The program offered jointly by the cities of SeaTac, Tukwila, and Des Moines, is responsible for competitively marketing the area as an ideal travel destination for tourists who wish to explore Western Washington. For more information, please visit [www.seattlesouthside.com](http://www.seattlesouthside.com) or call 877-885-9452.

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