



2023 Progress Evaluation Summary of the Wilsonville Tourism Development Strategy of May 2014

November 2023

After adoption by the City Council in May 2024 of the “Visit Wilsonville” Tourism Development Strategy, the newly empaneled members of the Tourism Promotion Committee reviewed and prioritized the proposed 49 Actions for Success. The Strategy was based on research data gathered during 2013 and destination-marketing trends, and included attractions and lodging-properties research and stakeholder interviews.

Recognizing that there were too many “actions” to accomplish, the Committee prioritized 19 actions as “top priorities” of the new tourism-promotion and destination-marketing program. The Committee also listed the remaining 30 actions called for by the Strategy as lower-tier, secondary priorities to be accomplished later.

Following is an evaluation by City staff on the progress made to date on the 49 Actions for Success of the Tourism Development Strategy that the committee rated as top-tier higher priorities and bottom-tier lower-priorities to implement.

Top-Tier 19 Higher-Priority Rated Actions to Implement: pages 2-5

1.3	2.1	5.2	5.6	5.14
1.5	4.9	5.3	5.11	5.16
1.7	4.11	5.4	5.12	5.17
1.8	5.1	5.5	5.13	

Bottom-Tier 30 Lower-Priority Rated Actions to Implement: pages 6-10

1.1	3.3	4.4	4.12	4.18
1.2	3.3	4.5	4.13	5.1
1.4	3.5	4.6	4.14	5.7
1.6	4.1	4.7	4.15	5.8
3.1	4.2	4.8	4.16	5.9
3.2	4.3	4.10	4.17	5.15

Evaluation Summary Symbols Key

- Goal/Objective/Action mostly accomplished
- Goal/Objective/Action not accomplished, or attempted and subsequently declined/halted
- Goal/Objective/Action partially accomplished or being developed

1. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

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

☑ Action 1.3 Increase the Allocation of the Hotel/Motel Transient Lodging Tax (TLT).

Over the past 10 years since adoption of the Tourism Development Strategy, the City's budgeted expense for the tourism-promotion program has increased by 100%, doubling from \$125,000 in FY2013-14 to \$250,000 in FY2023-24.

Since TLT revenues vary considerably from year-to-year, the City Manager decided to use a consistent budget number so as to be able to predictably build a sustainable tourism-promotion program. The tourism-promotion program gradually increased each year after FY2013-14 to a stable \$200,000 in FY2018-19. However, expenditures were cut in half starting with COVID 19 in the FY2020-21 budget, and increased back to \$200,000 in FY2022-23.

For the next two fiscal years of FY2023-24 and FY2024-25, \$250,000 is budgeted, of which \$100,000 is allocated over two fiscal years for a new, updated Tourism Development Strategy.

Thus the City's allocation of TLT consistently increasing over time, and is increasing over the next two years.

☑ Action 1.5 Review Wilsonville Tourism Grants Program.

The Strategy recommended transferring the existing Community Tourism Matching Grant Program from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to the Tourism Promotion Committee, which occurred in 2015; subsequently, in 2022 the grant program was modified to become the Community Arts and Culture Grant Program and transferred to the new Arts, Culture, and Heritage Commission.

The Committee felt somewhat bound by prior practice of funding major community events that also had tourism nexus and maintained the grant program.

The Committee also oversaw dispensation of \$25,000 annually from the Clackamas County Tourism Community Tourism Grants Program for Wilsonville-area projects and programs starting in 2015; this grant program was discontinued in 2019.

☑ Action 1.7 Initiate ongoing partnership and relationship-building programs.

The City of Wilsonville, dba Explore Wilsonville, Collaborates with Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory (Clackamas County), Explore Tualatin Valley (Washington County), Oregon Destination Association, Willamette Valley Visitors Assn, Travel Portland and Travel Oregon.

Members of the Committee often belong to or serve on the boards of these organizations.

The City periodically participates in a co-op marketing program with Clackamas County and Travel Oregon, and notifies Committee members of relevant opportunities.

2. BRANDING AND POSITIONING

Objective: Adopt distinctive and meaningful positioning for Wilsonville as a destination.

Action 2.1 Develop a destination branding strategy for Wilsonville.

The branding for “Explore Wilsonville” has evolved overtime. The current strategy, developed in conjunction with destination-marketing consultant JayRay, is based on geolocation data and social media data focuses on a few targeted areas (shopping, liquid tourism, agri-tourism and family travel). The visual identity and tagline “in the heart of it all” were updated in the summer of 2023. The messaging with the target audience is to explore areas around Wilsonville and lodge overnight in Wilsonville.



4. Infrastructure and Placemaking

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

Action 4.9 SPORTS Support the development of all-weather, multi-purpose playing fields for sports tournaments.

Analysis by City staff determined it would be difficult to secure properties with enough acreage to accommodate an outdoor tournament-sized sports complex within City-limits. An outdoor tournament venue to accommodate soccer, baseball, and softball would also see its highest usage in the summer months when lodging properties are already at their peak usage. The decision was made to focus on a facility that could accommodate indoor sports (volleyball, basketball and futsal) and would allow year-round scheduling to better serve hotel occupancy rates during the winter and shoulder seasons. The RFP process for this multi-use facility was put on hold right before the consultant was notified of their selection due to the pandemic.

5. MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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

Action 5.1 Establish a stand-alone Wilsonville tourism website.

One of the first actions that the City and Committee took was to commission the destination-marketing contractor at the time to build a tourism promotion website, www.ExploreWilsonville.com. Over time, the website content and features have evolved.

Action 5.2 Introduce an ongoing internet marketing campaign.

Another early action that the City and Committee undertook was to have the destination-marketing contractor commence various internet marketing campaigns, often as a form of co-op

advertising and other social media engagements. The internet marketing campaign continues today, including utilizing social media on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

Action 5.3 Develop social media programs relevant to key markets.

Tourism-promotion consultant JayRay had developed a series of social media programs aimed at relevant markets that includes utilizing social media influences and promotions on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

Action 5.4 Develop database and email marketing programs.

The tourism-promotion contractor has over time set up a database to collect emails from prospects who request more information, which is sent via US Mail by City staff.

The email database is periodically utilized for marketing promotions.

Action 5.5 Optimize the online use of video.

To date, the tourism-promotion program has utilized little video, opting instead to use funds to acquire high-quality photographs for marketing use. The tourism program has used limited video content and mostly focused on static images or reels on social media. A planned video/ photograph session in October 2023 to update file image and develop video content was cancelled at the last minute due to unfavorable weather conditions.

Action 5.6 Optimize linking strategies.

The ExploreWilsonville.com website features partner DMO agencies' logo and website links, as well as links to local-area attractions and events. The City shares the Explore Wilsonville logo and encourage other businesses to share our work and provide website links.

Action 5.11 Develop and maintain a library of high-quality images and videos.

All tourism-promotion contractors for Explore Wilsonville have developed and maintained a library of high-quality images for use online, in marketing promotions and to share with media. However, video footage has not been acquired to date.

Action 5.12 Optimize the use of website and social media analytics.

All tourism-promotion contractors for Explore Wilsonville have optimized the use of website and social media analytics for the tourism-promotion program.

Action 5.13 Develop an active content management and co-op marketing program.

The City has sought to optimize targeted coverage of Wilsonville through Clackamas County, WCVA and Travel Oregon by actively participating in selected marketing programs and by providing the content for marketing and media communications with media outlets.

 **Action 5.14 Increase public awareness of the benefits of tourism.**

The City of Wilsonville shares the benefits of tourism with elected leaders at City Council updates and periodically in local articles in the City's monthly newsletter to residents. ExploreWilsonville.com website analytics indicate that more local residents are using the tourism website.

 **Action 5.16 Conduct ongoing visitor-satisfaction research.**

Other than conducting a visitor profile project that included in-person and online survey mechanisms, there has been no ongoing visitor-satisfaction research. Due to other priorities, time and expense, this action has not been implemented.

 **Action 5.17 Conduct visitor research for each major event in Wilsonville.**

This program has not been implemented due to staffing time and costs. Due to other priorities, time and expense, this action has not been implemented. Additionally, COVID 19 pandemic halted most large public gatherings for a two-year period in 2020 and 2021.

1. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

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

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

Members of the Tourism Promotion Committee and the Wilsonville Chamber of Commerce agreed that the community was not in a position to support another business-promotion nonprofit organization; the Chamber was not inclined to take on such a role, and indicated a preference to be a business advocacy organization.

Thus, in the alternative, the City created the 12-member Tourism Promotion Committee to oversee the tourism-promotion and destination-marketing program and provide budgetary and policy recommendations to the City Council. This action supported Strategy Action 1.2 to Establish Board of Management for Visit Wilsonville DMO.

The Chamber recommended modifying the name from “Visit” to “Explore” in order to differentiate from other DMOs with “Visit” and to expand the area of Wilsonville tourism promotion/coverage to be greater than the city itself, and the Strategy consultant and committee agreed with the recommendation.

Action 1.2 Establish Board of Management for Visit Wilsonville DMO.

A volunteer committee was formed by the City to make recommendations on the “Explore Wilsonville” program. Since many organizations were using “Travel” or “Visit,” and since there was a perception of not much to ‘visit’ in Wilsonville per se, the committee agreed with a Chamber of Commerce recommendation to change from “Visit Wilsonville” to “Explore Wilsonville,” which is perceived to be more adventurous.

The Tourism Promotion Committee is comprised of community members with experience in tourism or related fields including operating overnight lodging properties, wineries, breweries, restaurants, area attractions, etc. Seven voting members are drawn from the area hospitality and tourism industry, and four ex-officio members from nonprofit organizations or the City Council provide policy and technical expertise.

Action 1.4 Request a special project budget to launch Visit Wilsonville DMO.

The City, doing business as the “Explore Wilsonville” Destination Marketing Organization program, has a dedicated website (www.Explorewilsonville.com) in addition to dedicated social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest). Brochures, marketing collateral, and picture library have been produced. During calendar fiscal year 2023-24 an updated photography and video project is underway.

The City has budgeted an average of \$200,000 per year over the past several years on tourism promotion and destination marketing. During the pandemic years, the budget dropped to \$150,000/year. For FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25, \$250,000 per year is budgeted.

Since a DMO has not been created, office equipment has not been secured.

Action 1.6 Actively seek grants for Visit Wilsonville.

The City, in conjunction with our advertising agency of record, JayRay, dba Explore Wilsonville, applies for grants and co-op tourism advertising when applicable. Additional staffing would allow for more grant applications.

Action 1.8 Enhance local-area destination knowledge of frontline staff.

The City participated for several years in the Travel Oregon/Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association's "Q" Quality Customer Service Training Program for front-line lodging property staffs, none of whom lived in Wilsonville and were unfamiliar with local attractions (instead sending visitors for example to OMSI and the Zoo).

However, the City found that the level of front-line staff turn-over was so high as to require constant training that the Q program was abandoned.

3. VISITOR EXPERIENCES

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

Action 3.2 Establish Wilsonville as a bike-friendly city and one of Oregon's premier leisure cycling cities.

The City has over time improved internal bike/ped connections and completed portions of the Portland metro-area Tonquin Ice Age Trail. A 45-bike locker at the Wilsonville Transit Center has been lightly used; a new, larger walk-in facility for bike storage is now planned.

The City is working with ODOT on the proposed French Prairie "Bike-Ped-Emergency" Bridge over the Willamette River parallel to the I-5 Boone Bridge, which would connect the Tonquin Ice Age Trail with the Willamette Valley Scenic Bike Route. Until that major connection is made, Wilsonville is close to being a 'bike island' with limited safe rural roads around the city.

Action 3.3 CYCLING Initiate and attract cycling events.

The Tourism Promotion Committee awarded over two years a city tourism and county tourism grant programs awards to a resident who sought to develop a bike-themed event that included a salmon bake. Attendance at both events was low, and the organizer decided to no longer pursue producing the events.

Action 3.4 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS Initiate programs to ensure that Wilsonville consistently presents outstanding experiences for horse show organizers, participants and attendees.

After developing this strategy and implementing the program, it became clear that horse shows are very specific and the city could not influence the participants. During the time of developing the Strategy, the local organizers of the County Classic Hunter-Jumper Horse Shows were active in the community.

However, over time, the organizers were no longer local and coordinated horse shows across the West. Additionally, a separate organization formed to sponsor horse shows across the state

eventually went out of business. The city no longer focuses on the horse show community as a part of our tourism efforts.

Additionally, worker's compensation and insurance liability issues caused most horse-riding establishments to close shop due to high additional costs and potential liability issues.

✘ Action 3.5 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS Investigate the feasibility of establishing a signature event in Wilsonville to celebrate the start of horse show season.

See Action 3.4.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLACEMAKING

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

✘ Action 4.1 Support a feasibility study for the development of the area surrounding Regal Cinemas or another area as an entertainment, sports, and leisure precinct.

The City started the process to evaluate a sports complex/conference center in the Town Center area with possible hotel but the project ended with on the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The City adopted a Town Center Master Plan, and the city has started to focus on the arts and culture, with the adoption of an Arts Culture and Heritage Strategy and establishment of a commission.

✔ Action 4.3 NEW INFRASTRUCTURE Investigate the feasibility of developing additional facilities within the City specifically designed for weddings, reunions and community events.

The availability of and demand for meeting spaces and event spaces within the city has changed, in large part due to the pandemic. The new Hilton Garden Inn has a few meeting spaces, Bullwinkle's, Holiday Inn and Black Bear Diner were remodeled to provide additional meeting spaces. Langdon Farms Golf Club's Red Barn facility has been popular with weddings and events.

The City has developed the historical Stein-Boozier Barn that is hosting an increasing number of weddings and events. Additional covered space has been created at Memorial Park and neighborhood parks in Villebois.

Additionally, the World of Speed (large event center) closed a few years ago.

✔ Action 4.4 CYCLING AND WALKING Support the expansion and integration of Wilsonville's trails system and brand the main trails with distinctive themes and names.

The City of Wilsonville adopted a Signage and Wayfinding Strategy in 2019 that includes signage and kiosks for walkers and cyclists throughout the City and on the Cities trail system.

The wayfinding signs will be installed as budget is available. Trails and paths in the City are proposed to be named.

Action 4.5 CYCLING AND WALKING Support the construction of the proposed Bike-Ped-Emergency Bridge across the Willamette River.

The City worked with ODOT and federal transportation agencies to develop the proposed French Prairie “Bike-Ped-Emergency” Bridge over the Willamette River near the I-5 Boone Bridge. The project has advanced to 30% design, and is being incorporated into ODOT’s larger I-5 Boone Bridge and Seismic Improvement Project now under development.

Action 4.6 CYCLING AND WALKING Support the completion of the Ice Age Tonquin Trail. Encourage Metro to complete the trail through areas that are unincorporated.

The City has constructed portions of the Ice Age Tonquin Trail in the city, and encourages Washington County to do so also. The reality is that this project is many years away from completion.

Action 4.7 CYCLING AND WALKING Support the introduction of creative bike racks in areas popular with cyclists.

The City of Wilsonville supports this concept but has not actively pursued this with local artists or developers. The newly formed Arts, Culture and Heritage Commission may be in position to advance.

Action 4.8 HORSES Support a feasibility study to develop a covered venue for equestrian events.

The City of Wilsonville supports this concept but has not actively pursued this with local artists or developers.

Action 4.10 SPORTS Support the development of the proposed push trail and new skate park.

The City has redeveloped an older skate park that has become popular. The local skate community continues to advocate for a larger Community scale skate park. Both the bike pump track and skate park projects are also included in the 2018 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan, however, a proposed push trail has not been developed.

Action 4.11 RIVER RECREATION Support the improvement of river foreshore and water access for active and passive recreation, including boat launch.

River access at Memorial Park is available by trails for passive activities such as fishing but does not easily accommodate watercraft access. The City undertook a Boones Ferry Park master planning effort in 2020. Non-motorized river access from Boones Ferry Park is being evaluated

and the City has received a grant to complete a feasibility study and conceptual design. The Clackamas County Boones Ferry Marina accommodates motorized watercraft.

Action 4.13 PLACEMAKING Support enhancements to the character and attractiveness of Wilsonville’s key precincts.

The City of Wilsonville adopted a Signage and Wayfinding Strategy in 2019 that includes signage and kiosks for walkers and cyclists throughout the City and on the Cities trail system. The wayfinding signs will be installed as budget is available. Trails and paths in the City are proposed to be named.

Action 4.14 PLACEMAKING Consider establishing public art program.

The City adopted an Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy in November 2020 and then established an Arts, Culture and Heritage Commission in December 2021 with a focus on elevating the arts and creating a public-arts policy and program. The City also hired a full time staff person to support this program. The City Council approved the City’s Public Art Policy and Guidelines in 2023 and staff is currently working on the creation of a large scale mural at the Memorial Park Skate Park. Funding measures for the public arts program are being considered.

Action 4.15 PLACEMAKING Support improvements to the attractiveness and sense of welcome at city gateways.

The City updated the I-5/Wilsonville Road Interchange gateway signs with new facades as a part of the Signage and Wayfinding Strategy.

Action 4.18 Support the establishment of a museum/interpretive center and commemorative sculptures for the Oregon Korean War Memorial.

Working with the nonprofits Korean War Memorial Foundation of Oregon and Korean War Veterans Association, the City is advancing the Oregon Korean War Memorial Interpretive Center in the Parks and Recreation Administration building in Town Center Park. The project should be complete by early 2024.

5. MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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

Action 5.7 Produce a Wilsonville Visitors Guide annually.

The Explore Wilsonville Brochure was recently updated to reflect the new branding. There is also a kiosk advertisement for Explore Wilsonville at the I -5 northbound French Prairie Rest Area south of Wilsonville.

However, a true Wilsonville Visitors Guide with a map that highlights various attractions and facilities has never been produced. Rather, the tourism program has relied on Google Maps and visitors’ mapping phone apps to provide directions.

□ Action 5.15 Encourage local residents to discover Wilsonville and surrounding area.

Many community members follow Explore Wilsonville Social media which introduces them to the wonderful activities in and around Wilsonville. Additionally, the City periodically runs articles in the all-city newsletter, The Boones Ferry Messenger, about the tourism promotion program.