
Minutes of Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) Meeting

Dated January 27, 2022

Members

Present: Shawn Walker – LTAC Member, Lodging
Debbie Copple – LTAC Member, Tourism
Georgia Borg-Leon – LTAC Member, Lodging
(All present through Zoom conferencing)

Absent: Council Member Stephanie Wright – LTAC Member, Chair
Adrienne Hall – LTAC Member, Tourism

Staff: Neepaporn Bounjaktha – Executive Office, Sr. Executive Management Analyst
Trudy Soriano – Executive Office, Tourism Promotion Fund Coordinator
Richard Porter – Executive Office, Marketing Specialist
Molly Spector – Executive Office, Regional Projects Coordinator

Documents:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft Minutes from 10/8/21
- DVA Marketing 2021 Recap Slides

Opening:

Meeting called to order at 10:05 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comments made.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Destination Development and Marketing 2021 Recap– Christian Folk, with DVA Advertising & PR, Snohomish County’s marketing firm of record, presented on the 2021 Marketing Campaign Recap. The County tracks and reports on visitation to the County, Hotel/Motel lodging metrics, and marketing interaction and activity on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.

Christian explained that the County DMO uses 2019 numbers as a benchmark baseline for normal visitation to Snohomish County. Visitation in 2021 was down 15 percent from 2019, with unique visitors down by 38 percent from 2019. Throughout 2021, visitors took longer trips, which equate to higher value trips within the County. About 40 percent of trips taken in 2021 were over five days, compared to 28 percent in 2019. Lodging numbers mirrored the recovery we saw through visitation numbers. Hotel occupancy was up 22 percent over 2020, and down about 15 percent over 2019. Month by month the county has seen occupancy rates tick up, closing the gap between 2019 numbers. Marketing efforts are tracked through monitoring brand awareness, intent & consideration, and conversion to room nights. Due to the newness of the DMO work, all numbers were up over both 2019 and 2020.

Snohomish County Hotel / Motel Fund Lodging Tax Advisory Committee

Snohomish County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism
6705 Puget Park Drive, M/S 303, Snohomish, WA 98296

Lastly, Christian Folk reported on the overall economic impact seen by hotel and the overall destination as a direct result of DMO marketing efforts.

Board members spoke to the importance of tracking corporate versus leisure traffic in the County, because of the local hotel/motel reliance on group business and travel. Staff reiterated the intent to integrate tourism with economic development and tourism in current and future recovery marketing campaigns. Board members and staff had an extensive discussion on ways the County DMO plans to optimize use of the data throughout the recovery campaign.

2022 Microsite Planning – Amy Coelsch, with DVA Advertising and PR, presented an outline for microsite development planning for 2022. Microsites continue to be a key project executed by the County DMO to promote local communities, extend use of existing digital tools, increase creative content planning and development between the DMO and communities, and provide a platform to connect local communities to the large Seattle NorthCountry sales funnel.

The general scope for microsites includes 10 page limit, high value curated directories, top destination mapping feature, and a strict production timeline for each microsite stakeholder participants. The DMO and DVA team plans to provide a production timeline to the LTAC board within two weeks.

LTAC Housekeeping -- County staff proposed meeting quarterly throughout the year of 2022, and timing these meetings around the 2023 Grant Cycle, which would open in mid-June and close mid-September.

Opportunity Fund – A board member proposed a possible opportunity fund that would be designated to the Snohomish County DMO to allocate to projects that arose throughout the year. This fund would allow greater flexibility of LTAC funds outside of the grant round. The board discussed pros and cons the opportunity fund. No decision was made at this meeting.

Proposed Indoor Sporting Facility Complex -- A LTAC board made an update on the proposed indoor sporting facility. The Snohomish County Sports Commission is planning to apply to the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) Fund to update the 2018 RFP to look into potential locations in the County, as well as alternative funding sources from outside Snohomish County tourism funds.

ACTION ITEMS:

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 p.m.

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