



Tourism Development Council Meeting – Minutes **Approved 2/14/24**

Wednesday December 13, 2023, 2:00 – 5:00pm

In person: Ironlight 525 3rd St. Lake Oswego

Members Present: Katen Patel, David Penilton, Luke Spencer

Staff Present: Samara Phelps, Ithaca Janzen, Lizzie Keenan, Amber Johnson, Aaron Liersemann, Casey Knopik, Danae Burke Jones, Janice Nilson, Jim Austin

Others Present: Marci Jory, Shatrine Krake, Liz Hartman, David Snider, Melanie Wagner, Elaina Turpin, Juliana Allen, Amanda Lowthian, Mac Corthell, Jaimie Stickel, Tyler Nyzer, Mike Quinn, Thelma Haggemiller

2:10 - 2:16pm Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions & Declaration of Conflicts - David Penilton, Chair

2:16 – 2:18pm Welcome to the Ironlight - Stephen Galvan, General Manager
Stephen provided an introduction to his role and what Iron Light offers as a luxury event space.

Discussion

2:18 – 2:52pm Resident Sentiment Survey – Results & Initial findings discussion - Samara Phelps, Executive Director, Ithaca Janzen, Tourism Specialist, Sr. & Amber Johnson, Digital Marketing & Social Media Sr. Specialist

Samara gave a warm welcome and encouraged attendees to participate, discuss and be in community with others in the tourism industry. Samara shared context and background information for the Resident Sentiment Survey including that in 2019 Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory worked with George Washington University to complete a global sustainable destination assessment of the region which included a resident sentiment survey at that time. It is best practice in the industry to do regular resident sentiment surveys of the community, so OMHT fielded another sentiment survey in November 2023. Gathered responses have been further broken down into three regions; Urban, Mountain and Willamette Valley, along with individual zip codes and these reports will be shared with community leads.

Amber Johnson, Mt. Hood Territory's digital marketing specialist, presented objectives and methodology for the survey. The primary goal of the survey was to understand resident attitudes toward tourism in Mt. Hood Territory as a follow up to the baseline survey completed in 2019. The second goal was to make sure we ensured good representation and participation across all three regions of the county. The survey was aimed to balance casting a wide net to get a lot of responses, but at the same time be intentional to achieve balanced representation. The survey was designed as an online, non-scientific survey in Survey Monkey. The survey was based on the 2019 version with some new questions added. Participation was voluntary and most questions were optional. Tourism provided an incentive for completion by offering a chance to win one of several \$50 gift cards to area businesses.

Promotion and outreach included paid social ads, county channels, organic social media, direct email, email newsletters, county website and direct outreach with community planning organizations. Paid Facebook ads reached more than 40,000 people. At first the majority of the social media reach was in the urban area, adjustments were made to shift resources into promoting it specifically into the other two regions for balance.



The survey was open from November 2nd – November 30th, 2023 and had 1847 total responses with a 80% completion rate.

A question was asked how many responses were received in 2019? The 2019 sentiment survey received around 1100 responses compared with almost 1900 in 2023.

Ithaca presented a PowerPoint of survey results starting with a general overview of the demographics of survey respondents and reviewed a few of the questions that were new on this version of the survey. She noted that overall community members seem to feel they have positive interactions with visitors. Graphs showed the comparison of sentiments between 2019 and 2023 results, along with common themes from open responses. Preliminary thoughts and takeaways from the team's initial review include:

- Sentiments towards tourism's impacts are trending more negatively than they did in 2019. Thought is that this likely impacted by covid travel.
- Largest area of negative impact that arose was around tourism's impact on the environment.
- There were fewer neutral answers than seen in 2019 and generally seem to have stronger opinions.
- Positive trend of sentiments toward resident involvement in tourism.

2:52 – 3:30pm Breakouts by Region – Discussion

Attendees broke into groups based on region. Each regional small group was provided a table host who had fully reviewed the breakout data to help facilitate and lead the discussions.

3:30 – 3:44pm Data – Resources available to community leads- Lizzie Keenan, Regional Program Coordinator

Lizzie gave an overview of how Datafy works and how the County utilizes the data. Datafy numbers show trends. Data uses cellphone location data. Datafy can be used to gather information such as visitor demographics, visited destinations, average length of stay, unique visitors and can be broken down further by dates and seasons. The data can be correlated with other locations to determine other locations the same person visited on the trip. An example of data gathered from Sandy's Main Street area was presented and showed that the area had lots of repeat and returning visitors. Sandy Ridge Trail System data was also used as an example showing the difference in visitor habits between Clackamas County Residents versus those that came from more than 50 miles away to visit the trails.

A question was raised as to how length of stay is determined and if this is limited to just hotel visitors. Lizzie responded that the data is directly based on how long a specific phone pings in the area and includes all stays so could include those staying in hotels as well as with friends or family. Lizzie is available for one-on-one consulting for any community leads looking to start utilizing Datafy reporting.

3:44 - 3:46pm Open Forum - TDC Members & Guests

Invitation to stay and network

3:46pm Adjourn Meeting

3:46 -5:00pm Social & Networking Opportunity