

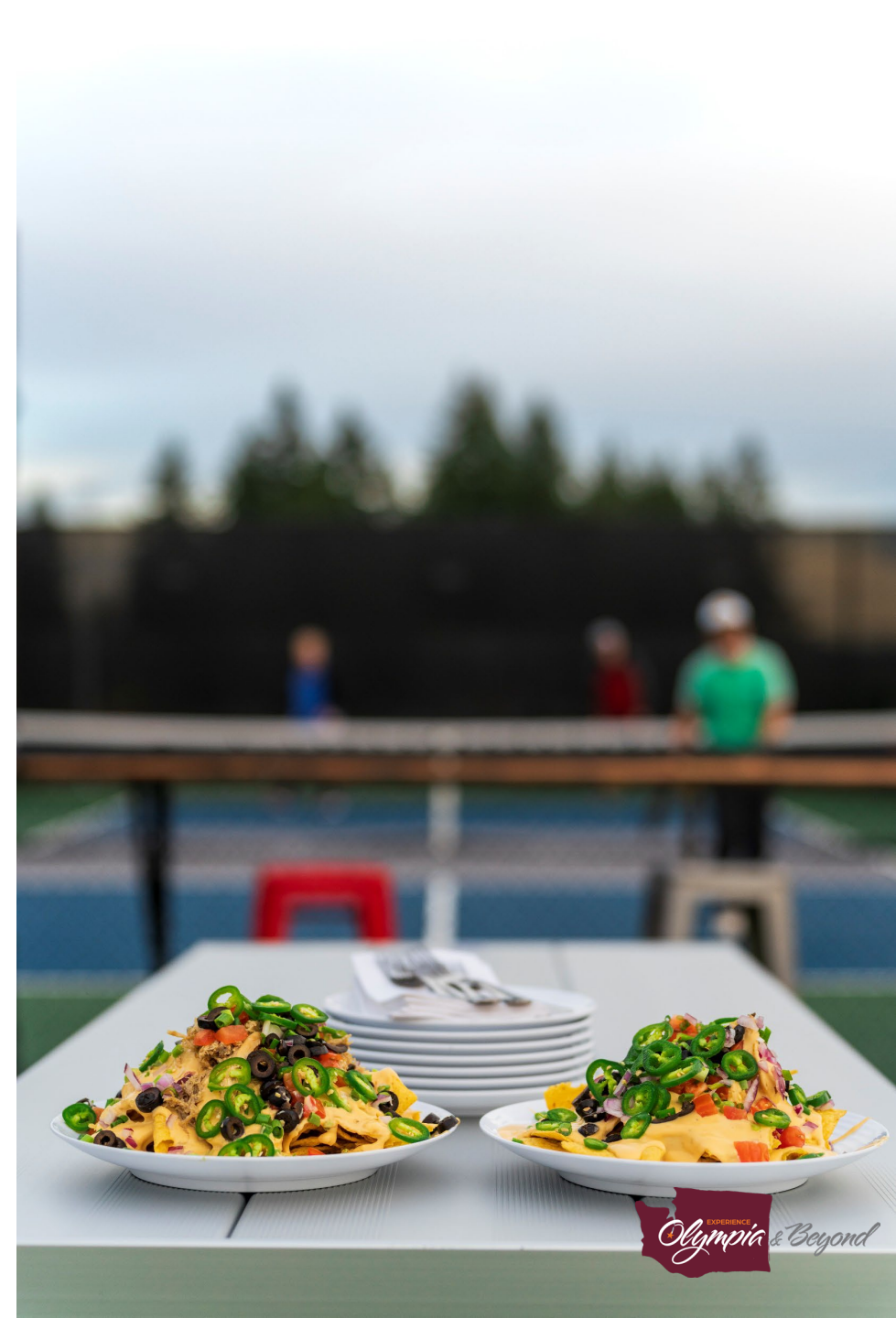
Thurston County 10-Year Destination Master Plan City of Olympia



September 17, 2024

Today's Agenda

- Problems we're aiming to solve
- Process
- Plans moving forward
- How you can plug in
- Q&A



What are the Problems the DMP Aims to Solve

Why did we do it?

- When evaluated via the dNext Assessment model in both 2016 and 2021 Thurston County was determined be **weak as a destination and weak in terms of community alignment**.
- Experience Olympia & Beyond was operating organizationally in what the industry would consider a **dated organizational model** and a shift from marketing-only to marketing and destination management was to be explored.
- Thurston County was still **struggling to rebound from lost hospitality jobs** (COVID).
- **The Destination Master Plan provided a framework** to coordinate community alignment, foster a strategic path forward towards job growth by bolstering destination strength through a management and marketing approach.

Destination Strength Variables



Attractions & Experiences



Arts, Culture & Heritage



Dining, Shopping & Entertainment



Outdoor Recreation



Conventions & Meetings



Events & Festivals



Sporting Events



Accommodation



Local Mobility & Access



Destination Access



Communication Infrastructure



Health & Safety

Destination Alignment Variables



Business Support



Community Group & Resident Support



Government Support



Organization Governance



Workforce Development



Hospitality Culture



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



Funding Support & Certain



Regional Cooperation



Sustainability & Resilience



Emergency Preparedness



Economic Development

Tourism's Cycle of Impact

1. Visit

If you build a place where people want to visit, then you have built a place where people want to live.

2. Live

If you build a place where people want to live, then you have built a place where people want to work.

3. Work

If you build a place where people want to work, then you have built a place where business & residents will invest.

4. Invest

If you build a place where business & residents will invest, then you have built a place where people will want to live.



Destination Master Plan

What is it?

A comprehensive framework outlining the vision, goals, and strategies for the sustainable development of Thurston County's tourism sector balancing visitor needs with Thurston County resident priorities based on collective impact.

The completed DMP should serve as a well that stakeholders can draw from to support their ongoing work and priorities.

CSL



Ten Year Destination
Master Plan for
Thurston County, WA

A Community-Driven Sustainable Tourism Plan

June 2024

Destination Master Plan

Inclusive Leadership (Meetings monthly Sept.-June)

Patty Belmonte, CEO, Hands on Children Museum

David Burnett, Corporate Executive Officer, Island Enterprises, Squaxin Tribe

Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston Economic Development Council

Todd Cutts, Executive Director, Olympia Downtown Alliance

Amy Evans Harding, Commissioner, Port of Olympia

Tony Liberal, Director of Business Development, Medicine Creek Enterprises, Nisqually Tribe

Jennica Machado, Economic Development Director, Thurston County

Harry Pickernell, Director of Operations, Chehalis Tribal Enterprises

Lisa Parks, City Administrator, City of Tumwater

Annette Pitts, CEO, Experience Olympia & Beyond

Mike Reid, Economic Development Director, City of Olympia

Line Roy, Director of Recreation & Communications, City of Yelm

David Schaffert, Executive Director, Thurston County Chamber of Commerce

Sarah Schelling, Senior Project Planning Mgr., Community and Economic Development, City of Lacey

George Sharp, Rural Program Manager, Thurston Economic Development Council Representing Tenino, Bucoda, Grand Mound and Rochester

Satpal Sohal, Owner, La Quinta Inn & Suites, Tumwater



Destination Master Plan

How did we do it?



Over 1,000 participants throughout the process

**Over 100 strategic, comprehensive, and/or economic development plans submitted, reviewed and integrated*





29 Countywide Priorities Resulted Implementation Prioritization Set by the DMP Steering Committee

1. Initial Implementation

- Agritourism and the Thurston Bountiful Byway
- Arts, Entertainment, Live Music, and Nightlife
- Conference and Meeting Space
- Destination Stewardship
- Events, Festivals, and Seasonality
- Expanded/Diversified Lodging
- Family Attractions
- Quiemuth Resort Complex
- Retail and Commercial District Development
- Sporting Events & Facilities
- Waterfront Activation



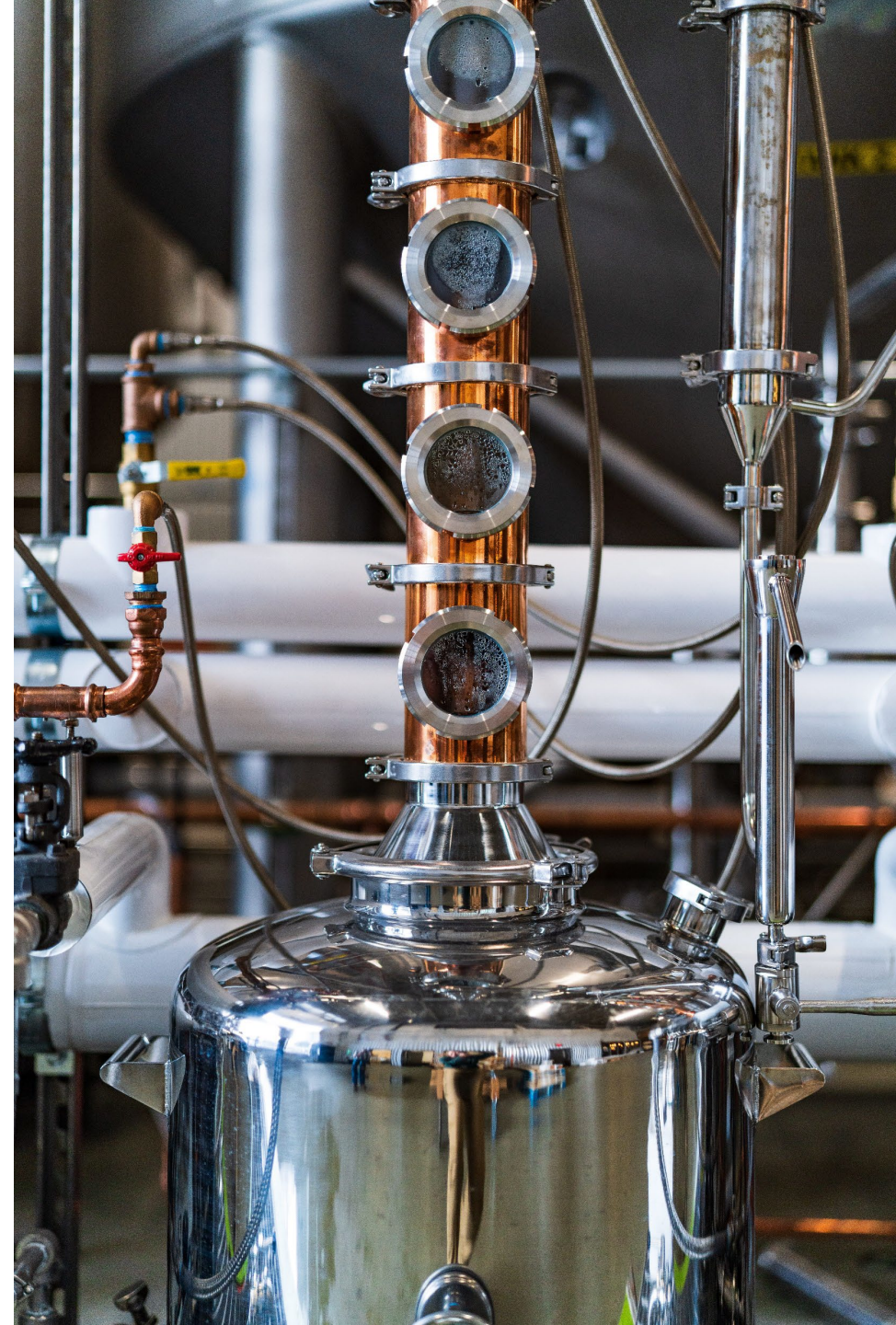
2. Advocacy

- Aviation Planning
- Culinary Destination
- Downtown Olympia
- Mental Health/Unhoused/Drug Use/Safety and Security
- Outdoor Recreation
- Tourism Funding
- Trails & Networks



3. Monitoring

- Craft Beverage Marketing & Promotion
- Doing Business / New Investments
- Equestrian Tourism
- Innovation and Technology
- Public Gathering Spaces
- Rural Development
- Workforce Housing



EOB Board Initiatives & Initial Priorities

- Agritourism & Thurston Bountiful Byway
- Community Engagement
- **Connectivity***
- Craft Beverage Marketing & Promotions
- Destination Stewardship
- Equestrian Tourism
- Events, Festivals & Seasonality
- **Outdoor Recreation***
- **Sporting Events & Facilities***
- **Tourism Funding***
- **Tribal Relationships & Tourism***

*Identified by the EOB Board as initial priorities for EOB implementation.

Olympia

First Tier

- Arts, Entertainment, Live Music, and Nightlife
- Downtown Olympia
- Events, Festivals and Seasonality
- Outdoor Recreation
- Tribal Relationships & Tourism

Second Tier

- Community Engagement
- Conference and Meeting Space
- Destination Stewardship
- Family Attractions
- Mental Health / Unhoused / Drug Use / Safety and Security
- Public Gathering Spaces
- Retail and Commercial District Development
- Tourism Funding
- Trails & Networks
- Waterfront Activation

Third Tier

- Connectivity
- Craft Beverage Marketing & Promotion
- Culinary Destination
- Doing Business / New Investments
- Expanded / Diversified Lodging
- Innovation and Technology
- Sporting Events & Facilities
- Workforce Development & DEIA
- Workforce Housing

Fourth Tier

- Agritourism and Thurston Bountiful Byway
- Aviation Planning
- Equestrian Tourism
- Quiemuth Resort Complex
- Rural Development

EOB Board

Key Takeaways & Actions

- Research tourism funding options.
- Explore creating a 501(c)3 organization.
- Advocate for statewide tourism funding.
- Seek guidance and assistance from AIANTA.
- Build and strengthen current partnerships.
- Identify new partners and partnerships.
- Reach out, listen, and learn with and from partners.
- Develop an inventory of known assets that support each initiative.
- Communicate, build support, explain the “why”, and articulate the benefits.
- Strive to be more competitive for scarce resources.
- Speak and advocate collectively and with one voice .

Where Things Get Exciting

Examples of Results

BID-led Placemaking Investment

Public Gathering Spaces



“New North” Project

Cherry Creek North, Colorado

Cherry Creek North’s BID financed and managed the design and construction of “The New North”, an \$18.5 million effort to retain and attract visitors while protecting and preserving the District’s character.

The \$18.5 million raised through general obligation bonds issued by the BID in 2009 (they were one of the first BIDs to issue bonds) included new landscaping to beautify and conserve water, new lighting, increased wayfinding signage, and 20 new “art and garden” stations.

These “art and garden” stations included flora, benches, and public art installations (bronze statues). Labor to complete the project was provided by the city of Denver, and local officials have noted a substantial increase in foot traffic and office space since completion of the project. BID management noted that the new “art gardens” have greatly enhanced the neighborhood’s sense of place, and that the flora and statues are now a significant part of their brand.

Where Things Get Exciting

Examples of Results

Integrating Local Culture & Music into Hospitality

Expanded/ Diversified Lodging



The Elizabeth

Fort Collins, Colorado

The Elizabeth Hotel in Fort Collins, Colorado, opened in 2017 in the Old Town District, is a signature boutique hotel that showcases the destination's local music culture. The hotel showcases Fort Collins' music scene with features like an Instrument Lending Library, which includes string instruments, keyboards, and over 4,000 vinyl records available for guest use, and each of the property's 164 rooms is equipped with a record player.

The hotel's art collection, curated by Denver-based NINE dot ARTS, celebrates the local outdoor adventure brand and connections to Colorado State University. The Elizabeth also serves as a cultural hub with its two popular food & drink venues, live music at Magic Rat, and the Lounge rooftop, which attracts both visitors and locals. This integration strengthens the hotel's connection to the community, complementing other local music attractions such as the Fort Collins Music Experiment (FoCoMX) and a nationally recognized studio, and demonstrates how cultural elements can be woven into the hospitality industry.

Where Things Get Exciting

Examples of Results



Creating a Culinary Destination Identity

Portland, Maine

In recent years, Portland, Maine recognized the potential of its culinary heritage and implemented a strategy to be identified as a premier culinary destination. The primary objective of the plan was to be known for diverse and high-quality dining experiences. Additional objectives included increasing visitation, enhancing economic growth, and developing its reputation as a visitor destination.

Portland initiated a campaign to garner buy-in among local residents, businesses, and culinary professionals. The city invested in culinary infrastructure, including specialized culinary schools, incubator spaces for aspiring chefs and entrepreneurs, and the enhancement of farmers' markets and local food production. Portland organized and backed culinary events and festivals to showcase its gastronomic offerings and promote collaboration among local chefs and artisans. The city additionally implemented strategic marketing campaigns to highlight the community's culinary identity through digital platforms, social media, and influential food bloggers and publications.

The city allocated a significant portion of its budget to support culinary initiatives, including infrastructure development, marketing, and event organization. Local businesses, restaurants, and culinary establishments also played a role in funding various projects, contributing financial resources and expertise to further the culinary transformation. These changes resulted in increased tourist arrivals, direct economic impact, business growth and job creation, and an enhanced reputation as a visitor destination. Through community advocacy, strategic funding, and a focused approach to culinary development, Portland, Maine successfully established itself as a renowned culinary destination.

Next Steps

- Experience Olympia & Beyond Board and staff are planning for implementation on identified priorities Q1, 2025
- DMP Steering Committee will transition into DMP Taskforce. Members of the DMP Steering Committee will be invited to participate at the level that works for them. Additional community leaders and residents will be invited to join. Meetings will be held quarterly to report on progress, share information and resources.
- DMP Taskforce members can determine if they want to help champion, support or lead implementation on Issues & Opportunities identified in the plan.



Questions?

Please contact:
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or Emily Lawrence,
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emily@experienceolympia.com

[Download the full Destination Master Plan](#)

