



EXPERIENCE
Olympia & Beyond

BUSINESS & MARKETING PLAN *2024*





Cover: Capitol Theater – Downtown Olympia

This page: Washington State Capitol Building and Campus

Images throughout the report are courtesy of Nate Burgher Photography



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 Business & Marketing Plan sets a strategic course for Thurston County's destination marketing, sales, and development throughout the year to support strategic objectives and goals. This year's plan continues to be informed by the 2021 Experience Olympia & Beyond Three-Year Strategic Plan produced by MMGY NextFactor which included results from the Thurston County dNext Assessment.

A broad spectrum of primary and secondary research was completed and integrated into this year's plan. See the Research Tools and Methodology section of this plan on page 14 for detailed information. Through this aggregate of findings, we derived three overarching strategic objectives for 2024:

1. **Build trust by fostering and nurturing relationships.**
2. **Grow the economy through strategic destination leadership.**
3. **Develop the organization we need to accomplish objectives 1 & 2.**

All work completed throughout the year will support the successful completion of these objectives. The 2024 Business & Marketing Plan provides details around the "why" of our scope of work for the year. Details around the "how" are outlined in our annual work plan which outlines the tactics, budgets, timelines, and accountabilities in detail.

INTRODUCTION

Experience Olympia & Beyond (EOB) leads the charge for Thurston County's hospitality and tourism industry by serving as our area's definitive resource for tourism information, creating opportunities for visitors to form meaningful connections with our destination that yield unique memories they cherish for a lifetime. We support Thurston County's economic growth and resilience by targeting high value visitors—those with the highest likelihood of generating the most significant positive economic impact on the region with the least impact on the destination. We rely upon current, industry-leading data, and research techniques to inform our strategic decision-making. We share our research and serve as an information resource for our peers in the community. We value and maintain our "seat at the table" working hand in hand with fellow economic development practitioners ensuring that destination leadership is proactive, intentional, and balances

the wishes of visitors with the needs and priorities of residents.

EOB complies with the terms of our Board-approved bylaws, interlocal agreements, and contracts associated with enabling legislation tied to our performance. We serve as Thurston County's Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) Manager and are responsible for administering the activities and programs of the TPA as outlined in [RCW Chapter 35.101](#). Our performance is also tied to the terms as outlined in [RCW Chapter 67.28.1816](#) dictating permissible uses of lodging tax funding for tourism promotion by destination marketing organizations. We market our destination to individuals and groups 50+ miles away from Thurston County, we nurture relationships with our stakeholders and residents, actively advocating for the Thurston County hospitality and tourism industry and Thurston County resident priorities.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2021, Experience Olympia & Beyond contracted with MMGY NextFactor to develop a [3-year Strategic Plan](#) to include an updated vision and mission, short-term strategic goals, and actionable initiatives. MMGY implemented their NextFactor program and engaged the Experience Olympia & Beyond staff, Board of Directors, local government leaders, key stakeholders, industry clients, and residents. The plan was produced by Deb Archer, Executive Consultant, and Shirin Jafari, Destination Development Director.

Four key pillars were the backbone of the plan: Sales & Marketing, Destination Management, Sustainable Organization, and Community Alignment. Their associated initiatives were integrated into the EOB 2022 and 2023 Business & Marketing Plans. These initiatives continue to be evaluated and are integrated into the 2024 Business & Marketing Plan. Upon completion of the Thurston County 10-Year Destination Master Plan, the strategic objectives and initiatives identified through that planning process will supersede the 3-Year Strategic Plan.



See *Destination Master Plan Summary* (p. 26) for complete details on the project, work completed in 2023 and work to follow in 2024.

2022–2024 KEY INITIATIVES

SALES & MARKETING	DESTINATION MANAGEMENT	COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT	SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify ways to extend overnight stays b. Clarify target markets and expand geographical reach c. Identify new niche markets for leisure and groups d. Improve ways for event spectators to explore the area e. Continue focus on data analytics for marketing ROI f. Regrow group business during-and after-the pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the future development of additional venues and lodging b. Support transformation of existing destination assets to reach their full potential c. Improve visitor guidance throughout the community/destination d. Develop a destination master plan e. Support the growth of marquee events f. Help cultivate new businesses to help address unmet service & product gaps g. Be part of the solution pertaining to crime & cleanliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Further alignment with community partners to help guide the future of tourism b. Continue to grow the CTA (Certified Tourism Ambassador) program c. Help stakeholders understand the impact of crime & cleanliness on tourism d. Educate the community on the power of tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue investment in EOB staff retention, development and capacity b. Inspire and support board engagement c. Formalize and diversify EOB board composition d. Assess funding levels to ensure EOB effectiveness and destination's competitive positioning



GOVERNANCE

OUR MISSION

We reveal the most iconic
Thurston County experiences
for the world to discover.

OUR VISION

To be known as a top
travel destination in the
Pacific Northwest.



shown left to right:
Kelly, Melissa, Annette, Heidi, Jeff
*Emily Lawrence not pictured

OUR VALUES

Accountability

We take responsibility for our words, actions, results, and everything in between.

Collaboration

We do our best work when we recognize one another's strengths—we listen, support, and adapt together.

Respect

We value diverse perspectives and treat people with dignity and professionalism.

Trust

The relationships we build are rooted in our ability to instill confidence that we are experts in our field, our actions are fair, and our behavior is responsible and reliable.

Integrity

Our organization is transparent and firmly rooted in the highest ethical standards.

Empathy

We care about the well-being of others and show kindness and caring every day.

STAFF

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patty Belmonte

Hands On Children's Museum
Secretary

Jeetu Chaudhry

Holiday Inn Express

Christina Daniels

Huber's Gasthaus
Treasurer

Michael Davidson

Cabela's

Chuck Denney

City of Tumwater Parks
& Recreation

Amy Evans Harding

Port of Olympia Commissioner

Sue Falash

Regional Athletic Complex (RAC)
President

Sans Gilmore

Sans M. Gilmore, PS, Inc.
*Executive Board Member
At-Large*

Angela Jefferson

Tumwater City Council

Hanford McCloud

Nisqually Tribe

Jill Nelson

Nelson Ranch

Mike Reid

City of Olympia

Line Roy

City of Yelm

Satpal Sohal

La Quinta Inn &
Suites Tumwater
Vice President

Brandon Staff

Boeing Co.

Shina Wysocki

Chelsea Farms Oyster Bar



FUNDING

Experience Olympia & Beyond is funded through a variety of mechanisms including Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) assessments, lodging taxes, and private funds. While our funding structure is diversified, a key objective of the organization is to increase and diversify funding further.

ABOUT OUR TPA

Terms of Tourism Promotion Areas are governed by [RCW Chapter 35.101](#) and administered by an interlocal agreement between Experience Olympia & Beyond and Thurston County, the cities of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater & Yelm. Our interlocal agreement was established in 2014, carries a three-year term and was last renewed in 2022. In 2024 TPA collections are budgeted to represent 60.7% of our budget. These funds are earmarked for projects and operations dedicated to generating visitation to Thurston County with the intent to generate overnight stays.

ABOUT LODGING TAX FUNDING

Experience Olympia & Beyond applies for lodging tax funding from Thurston County municipalities with lodging properties collecting and distributing lodging tax awards. In 2024 EOB has been awarded funding from the City of Olympia, City of Lacey, and City of Tumwater, and intends to apply for funding from the City of Yelm and Thurston County. Terms of lodging tax funds are governed by [RCW Chapter 67.28.1816](#). In 2024 lodging tax awards are budgeted to represent 20.8% of our budget. These funds are earmarked for projects and operations dedicated to generating visitation to Thurston County and potentially resulting in overnight stays.

ABOUT PRIVATE FUNDING

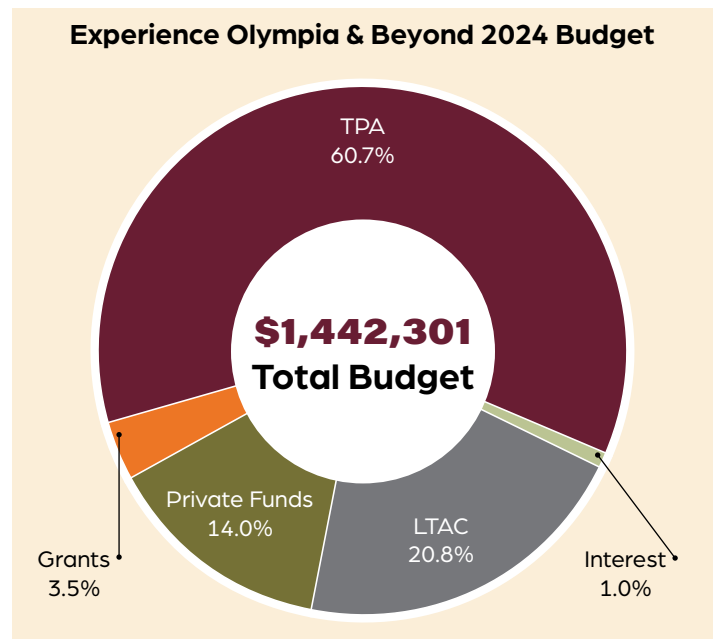
Experience Olympia & Beyond staff raise supplemental revenue from a variety of sources—paid advertising from local tourism-related businesses and organizations, paid sponsorships from Thurston County, the Port of Olympia, and event-related revenue (event sponsorships and ticket sales). In 2024 private funds are budgeted to represent 14.0% of our budget. These funds can be used to offset expenses that cannot be covered using TPA or lodging tax funding.

BUDGET

The 2024 budget was presented and approved by the following in the summer/fall of 2023:

- EOB Finance/Budget & Policy Committee
- EOB Executive Committee
- EOB Board of Directors
- Thurston County Hotel and Motel Commission (TPA Board)
- Thurston County Commissioners

A formal mid-year budget adjustment process for 2024 will begin in summer of 2024 in addition to proposing the 2025 budget. The proposal for the adjustment and upcoming budget will be presented to the same parties that reviewed and approved the 2025 budget.



GOVERNANCE

GOALS & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

In 2024 Experience Olympia & Beyond staff will aim to increase all marketing KPIs by 15% over 2023.

KPIs tracked and measured include:

- Unique web visits
- Social media audience
- Consumer e-newsletter subscribers
- Visitor guides mailed
- Earned media placements
- PR impressions

We plan to increase all sales KPIs by 5% over 2023.

KPIs tracked and measured include:

- Lead Room Nights
- Booked Room Nights
- Meeting & Event Leads
- Meeting & Event Leads Booked

We plan to train 90 new Certified Tourism Ambassadors (CTAs).

We plan to hold occupancy steady at 2019's pre-COVID rate of 68.2%.



Accommodations Goals	2024 Goal
Hotel Occupancy	68.2%

Marketing Goals	2024 Goal
Unique Web Visits	413,507
Social Media Audience	34,605
Consumer E-Newsletter Subscribers	15,681
Visitor Guides Mailed	1,021
Earned Media Placements	160
PR Impressions	12,778,077

Group Sales Goals	2024 Goal
Lead Room Nights	5,164
Booked Room Nights	1,850
Leads	64
Leads Booked	25

Sports Sales Goals	2024 Goal
Lead Room Nights	7,881
Booked Room Nights	3,050
Leads	33
Leads Booked	9

Visitor Services Goals	2024 Goal
Certified Tourism Ambassadors Trained	90

OUR DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Does this align with our **mission** and/or is it in our **3 Year Strategic Plan**, or annual **Business Marketing Plan**?

NO

Do not participate.

YES

Do we have the **capability**?

NO

Identify, support and advocate but defer to others who do.

YES

Do we have the **capacity**?

NO

Seek opportunities to add capacity and resources.

YES

Can we do it **better than anyone else**?

NO

Convene and contribute to collaborations with regional partners.

YES

We **LEAD** the project.



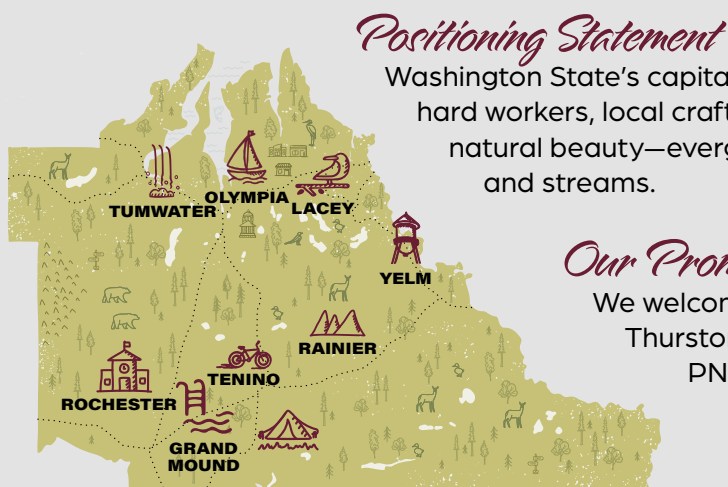
23 Kitchens – Lacey

BRAND STRATEGY

The Experience Olympia & Beyond brand was created and launched in 2017 to communicate directly with consumers and easily orient potential visitors to Thurston County's physical location and position/role as Washington State's capital.

In 2022 we added a new dimension to our branding strategy—co-brands were created for all Thurston County communities to link each community to

the Experience Olympia & Beyond brand, and further orient potential visitors to the additional opportunities just beyond Olympia. The Experience Olympia & Beyond brand will serve as the primary image for marketing and the co-brands will be used within digital and printed community guides. The co-brands are also made available to community stakeholders for their use.



Positioning Statement

Washington State's capital—a passionate community of independent thinkers, hard workers, local craftsmen, and artists inspired by the region's diverse natural beauty—evergreen forests, the Puget Sound, prairies, lakes, rivers, and streams.

Our Promise

We welcome and extend warm hospitality to all guests to Thurston County, delivering hand-crafted, authentically PNW experiences every time.

Personality/Character

Diverse, independent, eclectic, friendly, free-spirited, genuine, nature-loving.



The Kodak Room – Tenino

BRAND STRATEGY

PRIMARY LOGOS

Retangular Format



Square Format



CO-BRANDING COMMUNITY LOGOS



COLOR PALETTE – MAIN COLORS



PMS 7421
C38 M93 Y62 K45
R105 G28 B51
Hex: 691c33

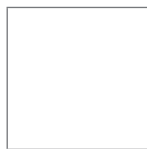


PMS Cool Gray 9*
C56 M46 Y44 K10
R118 G119 B123
Hex: 76777b

*65% black is an equipvelant single color



PMS 7761
C51 M42 Y93 K21
R117 G113 B54
Hex 757136



WHITE
C0 M0 Y0 K0
R255 G255 B255
Hex: ffffff

SECONDARY COLORS



PMS 158
C2 M66 Y99 K0
R238 G118 B36
Hex ee7624



PMS 7584
C19 M77 Y100 K7
R192 G87 B39
Hex: c05727



PMS 7493
C23 M14 Y50 K0
R188 G196 B147
Hex: bcc493



PMS 1205
C3 M9 Y53 K0
R249 G224 B142
Hex: f9308e



PMS Cool Gray 3**
C21 M16 Y17 K0
R200 G200 B200
Hex: c8c8c8

**25% black is an equipvelant single color

TYPOGRAPHY

Easy for the reader—that's the goal. We keep things consistent by sticking to our brand fonts.

Our system font is Arboria – used for page titles, subheads, and body text.

Our design font is **Acumin Pro Wide - Black** used for headers.

Arboria Book

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN

OPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

ACUMIN PRO WIDE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN

OPQRSTUVWXYZ

1234567890

RESEARCH TOOLS & METHODOLOGY

Industry-leading research tools and industry best practices are vetted and applied consistently to EOB strategic decision-making, sales initiatives, marketing programs, campaigns, and organizational operations.

Primary research completed and integrated into this year's plan includes comprehensive sentiment survey findings completed by visitors, stakeholders, and residents produced by consultant, CSL International, LLC as part of the Ten-Year Thurston County Destination Master Plan scheduled for completion and activation in the summer of 2024.

Secondary research is also employed year-round through a combination of tourism research tools including:

- Placer.ai (visitor and residential movement analysis tool)
- Datafy (media attribution tool)
- Smith Travel Research (hotel motel analysis)

- Google Analytics/GA4 (website visitation)
- Social Media (fans/follower analytics)
- Tourism Economics (economic impact)
- Destinations International/Tourism Economics Events, Meetings and Sports Economic Impact Calculators (economic impact)
- Other resources such as U.S. Travel Association/ Tourism Economics Travel Forecast, Future Partners – State of the American Traveler, Forbes.com Travel Trends 2024 Report, Food & Wine: Food-Related Travel Trends You Can Expect to See Everywhere in 2024, National Geographic: The Rise of Wellness Travel, Smith Travel Research: STR, TE Upgrade U.S. ADR and RevPAR Forecast, 2023 Destination Next Futures Study

The full research summary used to guide this plan is available in *Appendix: Research by Vertical* online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.



Squaxin Island Tribe Cultural Sharing – Port of Olympia

TARGET AUDIENCES



Race Cascadia's North Slope Enduro
Capitol State Forest

Experience Olympia & Beyond serves a variety of audiences yielding results with the highest likelihood of fulfilling our strategic objectives. We identify our target audiences by looking at these groups' needs and values, drawing as a clear of a line as possible to the experiences and attributes Thurston County can offer to exceed their expectations, creating lifelong trusted relationships. We consider travelers' decision-making process, where they travel from, what they value, what needs their lifestyle dictates, and what and who they bring to Thurston County when they visit.

TRAVEL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

When preparing marketing and development plans, EOB considers the steps potential visitors take to make their travel decisions to our destination. We employ tactics to ensure we support Thurston County travelers throughout their entire planning cycle.

INFLUENCING FACTORS AND FORCES



Dreaming

Friends and family, content creators/social media influencers, advertising, earned media/articles, visitor guides

Planning

Friends and family, content creators/social media influencers, earned media/articles, visitor guides, website, tradeshow (sales—sports, meetings, group leisure/tour & travel). FAM tours (sales—sports, meetings, group leisure/tour & travel)



Booking



Friends and family, content creators/social media influencers, earned media/articles, visitor guides, website, tradeshow (sales—sports, meetings, group leisure/tour & travel). FAM tours (sales—sports, meetings, group leisure/tour & travel), travel agent, OTA promotions (Google Travel, Expedia, hotels.com, Orbitz, etc.), review sites (Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc.)

Experiencing

Friends and family, visitor guides, website, review sites (Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc.), individuals at local attractions and amenities—services in-market, interpretation and signage, mobile apps



Influencing

Friends and family, visitor guides, website, review sites (Yelp, TripAdvisor, etc.)

TARGET AUDIENCES

TARGETING HIGH VALUE VISITORS

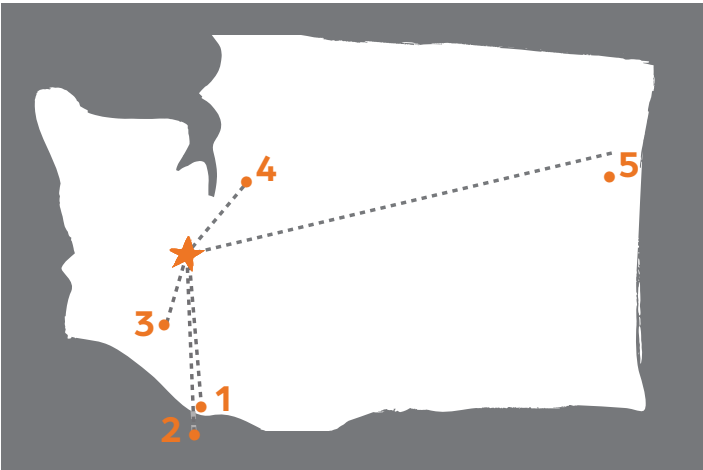
EOB targets and aims to attract high value visitors to Thurston County— those with the highest likelihood of generating the most significant positive economic impact on the region with the least impact on the destination. We evaluate the make-up of our existing audience through

a variety of research tools. The full research summary used to guide this plan is available in Appendix: Research by Vertical online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.

TARGET MARKETS

Given the initiative highlighted in our 3-year strategic plan to extend overnight stays, we prioritize targeting markets based on those who have the highest likelihood of staying overnight in Thurston County. That said, we also understand that day visitors can ultimately also convert to overnight visitors, so day visitation is also considered, but as a supporting priority.











Top Arrival Markets by Visitors Staying in Hotel (50+ Miles Away)	1. Vancouver, WA
	2. Portland, OR
	3. Longview, WA
	4. Seattle, WA
	5. Spokane, WA



Source: Datafy (Oct 1, 2022 – Sept 30, 2023)

TARGET INTERESTS/ATTRIBUTES

EOB strategies and tactics are informed by the interests and attributes important to target audiences.

Top 10 Thurston County Attributes According to Visitors				
 Dining 41.8%	 State Parks 40.9%	 Family Fun 35.0%	 Shopping 34.6%	 Attractions/ Museums 32.1%
 Cycling/ Hiking 23.6%	 Events 19.8%	 Heritage & Culture 19.8%	 The Arts 18.1%	 Health & Wellness 16.9%

Source: 2023 Experience Olympia & Beyond/CSL Sentiment Study

Personal & Core Values Influencing Decision to Visit Thurston County

accessible

women-owned

health/wellness

bipoc- owned

lgbtqia+-owned

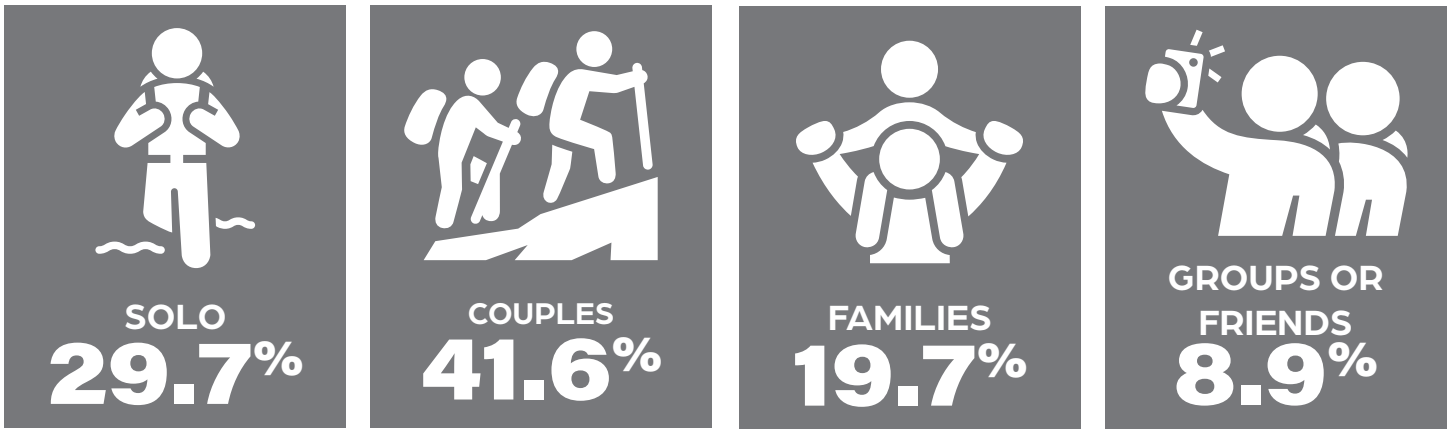
veteran-owned

TARGET AUDIENCES

TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS

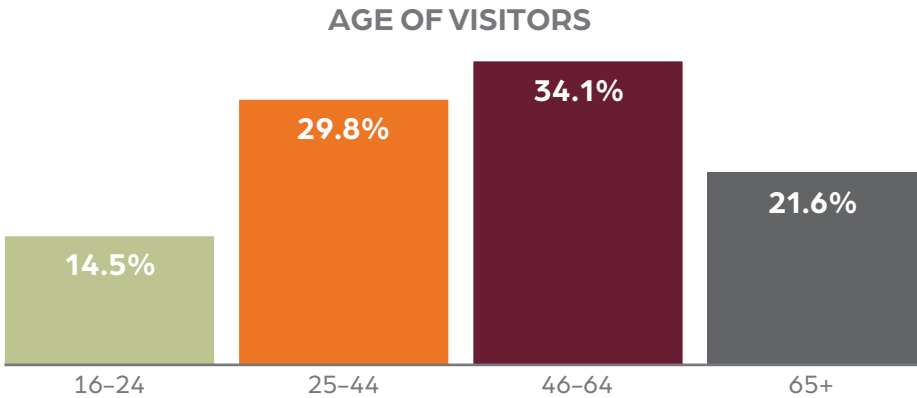
Our target demographics represent a wide range of individuals.

VISITORS PARTY COMPOSITION



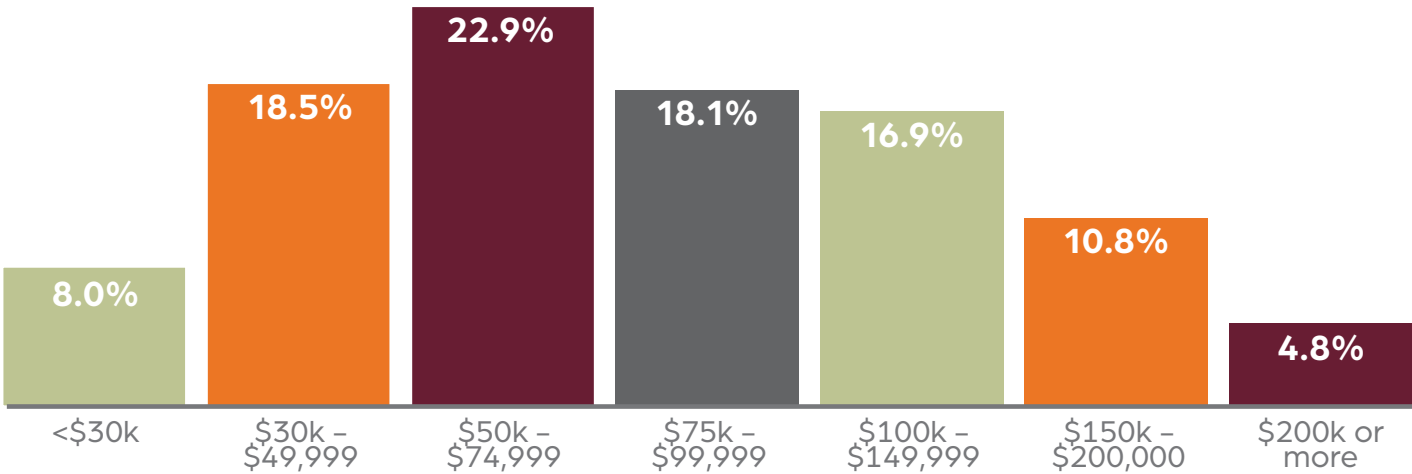
Source: 2023 Experience Olympia & Beyond/CSL Sentiment Study

Thurston County enjoys a balanced mix of visitors although it skews heavy among Gen X and Boomer audiences (ages 45 – 60). The Gen Z audience (ages 16 – 29) is an emerging segment that needs to be cultivated.



Source: Datafy (Oct 1, 2022 – Sept 30, 2023)

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF VISITORS



Source: 2023 Experience Olympia & Beyond/CSL Sentiment Study

TARGET AUDIENCES

AUDIENCE BY VERTICAL

EOB staff aggregates the audiences we serve into categories that we refer to as verticals. For each vertical we produce a customized blueprint of tactical deliverables that are based on the vertical's unique needs, preferences, and values. The verticals we serve include:

- Independent Leisure Travelers
- Group Leisure Travelers
- Tour & Travel Planners
- Meeting Planners
- Sports Event Organizers
- Residents
- Stakeholders
- Organizational: Staff
- Organizational: Board of Directors



Independent Leisure Travelers

Individuals traveling for leisure purposes.

Group Leisure Travelers

Individuals planning private group travel experiences:

- Wedding Planners
- Individuals planning family reunions or other private group excursions.

Residents

Individuals living in Thurston County.

Tour & Travel Planners

Professionals packaging and selling preset itineraries including lodging and activities for groups and FITs (interpreted as fully independent traveler when referring to domestic travelers, or foreign independent travelers when referring to overseas guests). Professional leads accessed from trade shows, referrals from other Destination Marketing Organizations, and inbound leads received via experienceolympia.com; leads generated from advertising. Lead types include:

- Receptive Operators
- Tour Operators
- Travel Trade Media

Meeting Planners

Professionals tasked with booking directly on behalf of groups seeking spaces and lodgings for small to medium-sized groups. Meeting planner professionals represent the following groups:

- Associations
- Government
- Non-Profit
- SMERF (Sports, Military, Education, Religious and Fraternal)
- Corporate

TARGET AUDIENCES



Tumwater Craft District
Market Building

Sports Event Organizers

Professionals and volunteers tasked with securing sports venues, lodging, and incentives to bring their event to the area. Sports event planners represent the following segments:

- Adult Amateur
- Collegiate – Championship level
- Youth Amateur

Outdoor Sports: Soccer, Rugby, Golf, Baseball/Fastpitch, Softball, Lacrosse, Flag Football, Cycling, Pickleball.

Indoor Sports: Basketball, Volleyball, Pickleball.

Stakeholders

Key individuals living and/or working in Thurston County in roles that affect or are affected by the work performed by Experience Olympia & Beyond. These include but are not limited to:

- Hotel/Motel owners and/or staff located within Thurston Co.
- Short term rental owners located within Thurston Co.
- Chambers of Commerce
- Olympia Downtown Alliance
- Port of Olympia
- Thurston Economic Development Council
- Local municipalities—elected officials and staff
- Other community services impacting or impacted by tourism: higher education institutions, medical facilities, real estate, etc.
- Industry peers and affiliations:
 - State of Washington Tourism (SWT)
 - Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations (WSDMO)
 - Washington Filmworks
 - Port of Seattle
 - Visit Seattle
 - Destinations International
 - DMA West

Organizational: Board of Directors

The Experience Olympia & Beyond Board of Directors is an essential audience served by organizational efforts and are Thurston County stakeholders ultimately responsible for the strategic course of the organization. EOB Board members represent a range of expertise from industry sectors throughout the county and the hospitality and tourism industry. The Executive Committee (Board Officers and At-Large members) directly oversee the performance of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and provide key recommendations to the full Board of Directors.

Organizational: Staff

The Experience Olympia & Beyond staff conducts the day-to-day operations of the organization. EOB staff report to the CEO. Current roles of the EOB team include:

- CEO
- Vice President of Sales & Development
- Vice President of Finance & Administration
- Director of Strategic Initiatives
- Content & Brand Manager
- Senior Public Relations Manager

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Experience Olympia & Beyond team will work together centralizing efforts around three key strategic objectives for 2024:

- 1. Build trust by fostering and nurturing relationships**
- 2. Grow the economy through strategic destination leadership**
- 3. Develop the organization we need to accomplish objectives 1 & 2**

This year's strategic objectives were derived from a combination of recent primary and secondary research, but also the findings of our dNext Assessment, part of the Three-Year Strategic Plan completed in 2022 by MMGY NextFactor which found that Thurston County fell into the Explorer Quadrant of their overall assessment matrix.

Thurston County was found to be weak in terms of destination strength due to low scores in the following areas:

- Health & Safety
- Destination Access
- Sporting Events
- Conventions & Meetings
- Events & Festivals

Thurston County was also found to be weak in terms of community alignment due to low scores in the following areas:

- Workforce Development
- Hospitality Culture
- Funding Support & Certainty
- Community Group & Resident Support
- Emergency Preparedness



Strategic Objective 1

BUILD TRUST BY FOSTERING AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

How we go about this will be:

1. Establish baseline.
2. Commit to deliverables, in product and/or communication.
3. Execute on deliverables, in product and/or communication.
4. Deliver proof of performance.
5. Seek Input.

This means we will take time to look at the state of the relationships we believe we have in each of the audiences we serve by examining primary and secondary research, identifying our relationship

and trust baseline, setting goals for improvement, the tactics and tools needed to deliver on the commitments we make, and providing proof of performance through systematic communications that are clear and understandable to the recipient. And lastly, we will create systems to seek and consider input from each group to make sure communication isn't one-way.

The Tactical Plan for Building Trust is available in *Appendix: Tactical Planning* online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.



Millersylvania State Park – Olympia

STRATEGIES & TACTICS



Strategic Objective 2

GROW THE ECONOMY THROUGH STRATEGIC DESTINATION LEADERSHIP

We will continue to work through the Thurston County 10-Year Destination Master Planning (DMP) process through the second quarter of 2024, working with the 16 member DMP Steering Committee and consultants with CSL International. This group is working toward envisioning the ideal future for Thurston County as a destination for visitors and residents while also identifying and building pathways for challenges such as workforce shortages, destination product supply-side shortages, and key resident and visitor sentiment that act as hurdles to tourism and hospitality industry economic growth and resilience. Building on the DMP work completed in 2023, the Steering Committee and the CSL team will participate in a 2-Day Visioning Workshop Series that invites stakeholders to review all findings to date and begin prioritizing opportunities and challenges. The public will also participate via a Public Forum. Once all work completed by the Steering Committee and CSL in 2023 is shored up with the results obtained from the Visioning Workshop & Public Forum, focus will expand into benchmarking and organizational assessment to ensure capacity and structure is in place to move the project from planning to implementation in 2024. See Destination Master Plan Summary for complete details on the project, work completed in 2023 and work to follow in 2024.

We will work to expand and stabilize Thurston County's economy by supporting the hospitality and tourism sector. We will apply our resources to grow overall visitor volumes and more significantly, focus on efforts that increase paid lodging occupancy by extending visitors' average time in market. We will

execute a year-round, comprehensive, research-based marketing, sales and development program targeting the highest value markets for our destination from 50+ miles away, AND by putting our locals to work as our informal ambassadors on the ground. We will encourage locals to invite their friends and family to Thurston County (or to come back to Thurston County). We will empower locals to share expanded, interest-based packaged experiences, including paid lodging options, to include multiple days of unique Thurston County activities. We will educate our stakeholders on how to access this information as well as local events, and how to put that information into the hands of their guests. We will continue to "double down" on the decisions made by municipal lodging tax advisory committees and offer our second year of the EOB Lodging Tax Award Recipient Support Program, to further extend the reach and success of lodging tax funded activities and events. We will increase marketing focus to support growth in all sales verticals: group leisure/tour and travel, meetings, and sports. We will also expand efforts to extend these visitors' stays in the area by providing expanded visitor information via preset, interest-based itineraries, and packaged experiences. And lastly, we will create systems to share information with the EOB Board of Directors and each member of the EOB team to ensure consistent product/service knowledge.

The Tactical Plan for Growing the Economy Through Destination Management is available in *Appendix: Tactical Planning* online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.



Strategic Objective 3

DEVELOP THE ORGANIZATION WE NEED TO ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES 1 & 2

With the Destination Master Plan scheduled to move from planning to implementation in the summer of 2024, a detailed organizational audit will take place to ensure that Experience Olympia & Beyond is positioned ideally to undertake the leadership and scope of work needed to ensure that project priorities under the per view of EOB are

completed successfully.

The Tactical Plan for Develop the organization we need to accomplish objectives 1 & 2 is available in *Appendix: Tactical Planning* online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS



Ember Goods Roasting Cabin - Olympia

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES*

Campaign Strategy

As a continuation of our 2023 campaign work, 2024 campaign strategy and tactics will support three campaign messages.

- **You Belong Here:** invites individuals within all verticals to recognize themselves in Thurston County, and know that they are welcome, valued, and play an important role in our destination. Accessibility will be highlighted in 2024.
- **Made in Thurston County:** targeting independent leisure travelers interested in authentic and transformational experiences with local-centric storytelling showcasing people, places and products that are uniquely Thurston County.
- **The Power of Hospitality:** Campaign targeting residents, stakeholders and EOB Board Directors educating them about EOB, the economic impact of the hospitality and tourism industry, and its impact on the lives of locals and guests.



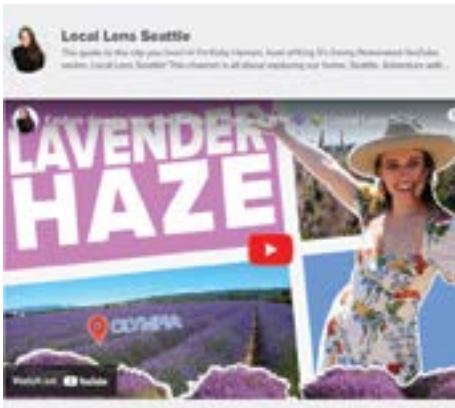
Boo-Coda Casket Races - Bucoda

Advertising Strategy

2024 advertising will reach target audiences seasonally through the following channels:

- Digital Programmatic Display Advertising
- Paid Social Media
- Print Advertising
- Event Advertising & Sponsorships

STRATEGIES & TACTICS



SUPPORTING STRATEGIES* *continued*

Public Relations Strategy

2024 public relations strategy will aim to build on the Experience Olympia & Beyond brand image. Public relations have been moved away from an agency/staff-hybrid management model to an entirely staff-driven process.



Content Strategy

2024 content strategy will be meaningful and engaging across all verticals, kicking off the travel decision-making process. We will connect prospective visitors to our content through our website, social media, advertising, earned media and products that echo consistent messaging. We'll create and share communications that resonate with each audience, aiming to grow our leisure traveler base and extend overnight stays by linking all other verticals to leisure traveler programming. We'll apply the latest technologies internally to ensure consistent, targeted content is produced accurately and efficiently.

We'll continue to build-out our content and communications to support key brand messages and image through a vertically integrated systems approach. The three campaigns will be integrated to work hand in hand to put our commitment to DEI into action, highlight those attributes that truly characterize our destination—our people and their legacy—and will visually convey the power of hospitality in Thurston County.

*The tactical plan for all supporting strategies is available in Appendix: Tactical Planning online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES*

continued

Product Strategy

2024 product strategy will connect visitors and locals to products that educate, inform, and inspire visitation to Thurston County experiences and attractions. A key objective for 2024 is to increase the exposure, awareness, and use of Experience Olympia & Beyond's products.

Promotional Strategy

2024 promotional strategy will engage with our target audiences to increase awareness and engagement with the Experience Olympia & Beyond brand. The promotional strategy will be used to support the goals of other campaign strategies.

Pricing Strategy

Experience Olympia & Beyond offers opportunities for tourism-related businesses and organizations to expand and enhance their presence through our scope of work. We employ a value-based pricing approach.

Services/products that Thurston County tourism-related businesses and organizations can purchase from EOB to broaden their exposure include:

- Custom Campaigns
- Destination Signals website advertising
- Visitor Guide advertising
- Annual Meeting Sponsorships
- Sports Awards Sponsorships

Services/products will be sold a la carte and via discounted packaging. Packaged sales will integrate all opportunities excluding Destination Signals and will integrate CTA training.

Learn more about 2024 Experience Olympia & Beyond paid services and products at: www.experienceolympia.com/industry/guide-advertising/



Tumwater Falls Fest

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

SUPPORTING STRATEGIES*

continued

Sales Strategy

A key piece to Thurston County's tourism economy is the viability of meetings, sports events, and other group experiences. Groups provide key base business that allows hotels to manage rates for leisure and other markets. Groups are also an expression of a destination's assets. As the state capital, the Olympia region has been hosting association and government business for more than a century, but the region's status as a tertiary meetings market and one with rural access is an attractive quality for planners looking for memorable meetings, events, and tours.

The sales team works diligently with meeting planners, sports event organizers, tour operators and industry professionals to bring groups with a proven economic impact to Thurston County.

Sports event organizers continue to see smaller destinations as opportunities to promote their sport because they can approach the destination knowing that their event will "take over" a smaller community and receive the undivided attention of the Sports Commission and facilities staff. Planners know that their event won't get lost in the clutter of other events that might coincide with it in larger destinations. Thurston County is well-suited for this type of planner, particularly ones planning outdoor sports events.

One commonality between all demographics is that they are all seeking authentic experiences. They will immerse themselves in local culture. They want to "get off the bus" and become a part of the destination they are visiting. Travel that is focused on "recharging" and "rejuvenating" is growing with travelers seeking a healthier work/life balance. Culinary "farm-to-table" or "tide-to-table" experiences also have remained popular for the past few years, following the vein of immersion in local culture through sampling fresh, locally sourced foods and beverages.

*The tactical plan for all supporting strategies is available in Appendix: Tactical Planning online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/



DESTINATION MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

Thurston County, its workforce, and our organization have navigated tremendous difficulty throughout the past few years as we served and supported Thurston County's hospitality and tourism industry, residents, and visitors throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have now set our vision for the future; we reimagined and rebuilt our organization, and now it's time to do the same thing for the county we serve and its workforce.

In 2023 Experience Olympia & Beyond contracted with Convention, Sports, Leisure (CSL) International, LLC to produce Thurston County's Ten-Year Destination Master Plan. CSL is an industry-leading advisory and planning firm specializing in providing consulting services to the convention, sports, entertainment, and leisure travel industries. Their team is working with Thurston County stakeholders and residents to create a meaningful and actionable blueprint for the future that will enhance Thurston County's competitive position relative to other

desirable tourism destinations, balancing visitors' needs and wants with quality-of-life protections for local stakeholders and residents. Through robust research and collaboration, the process aims to reveal Thurston County's ideal shared future and identify what resources will be needed to bring that vision to life. Components of the plan include:

- 3-day Thurston County site visit (39 stakeholder location visits and interviews)
- AI-aided comprehensive review and overlay of Thurston County municipal and strategic plans (over 100 plans compared and distilled)
- 3-day Thurston County interview series—over 100 interviews (one-on-one meetings and industry focus groups)
- Visitor, resident, and stakeholder survey—over 900 responses
- 2-day Visioning Workshop Series and Public Forum
- Community and organizational benchmarking



Chicory - Olympia

DESTINATION MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

STEERING COMMITTEE

An inclusive Steering Committee was formed to guide the process and ensure outcomes are representatives of the communities and industries that each member of the committee serves. Steering Committee members included:

Patty Belmonte

Chief Executive Officer
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

Annette Pitts

Chief Executive Officer
Experience Olympia & Beyond

Austin Ramirez

Economic Development Manager
City of Tumwater

Mike Reid

Economic Development Director
City of Olympia

Line Roy

Director of Recreation & Communications
City of Yelm

David Schaffert

Executive Director
Thurston 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

The Thurston County Destination Master Plan should be completed and ready for implementation by summer, 2024. It was paid for in part with QUEST grant funds made possible through the stewardship of Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council.

APPENDICES

The full tactical plan and research by vertical for the 2024 Business and Marketing Plan is available online at www.experienceolympia.com/industry/reports/businessplan/.



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