

2023-2025 Draft Strategic Plan Comments

ONLINE COMMENTS THROUGH 5/17/23 (Open period: 5/10/23 - 5/31/23)	
Comment 1	
Krina Turner	<p>Arts and culture make the Pacific Northwest the best place to live, work and visit, contributing billions of dollars to state economies. When you look at Travel Seattle they position arts and culture prominently as a feature of the city. I'm glad the draft strategic plan mentions arts and culture as a priority but hope we can dive deeper. Portland would not be what it is without art and culture. On the other hand - the arts and artists who make our region what it is need our advocacy and support on a wide scale. When we need hope, healing and health the arts are there for us. Yet our art sector is struggling deeply with the need for significant community support and investment. Since partnership is clearly a core value for Travel Portland I think we need to consider how partnership with the arts and culture sector could be the tide that raises all boats.</p> <p>(From ArtsFund Economic Impact Study "The study speaks to how the arts and cultural sector creates jobs, drives tourism, and brings outside investment to the region. In 2014, the activity of nonprofit cultural organizations and their patrons in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties generated \$2.4 billion in the Washington State economy and created 35,376 jobs, \$996 million in labor income and \$105 million in taxes. Patrons spent nearly \$700 million in the 13.4 million visits to cultural organizations in 2014, with a significant percentage of economic impacts stemming from the activity of non-local patrons visiting our region.)"</p> <p>https://www.artsfund.org/articles/economic-impact-study-community-conversations/</p>
Comment 2	
Jane Ridley / Oregon Film Office	<p>After taking a quick look through the Travel Oregon 10-year Strategic Vision I didn't see anything that directly addressed Film Tourism. According to Expedia Group's 2023 Travel Trends Report, "39% of global travelers booked a vacation to a destination they saw in a movie or TV show they streamed." Indeed, https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/film-tourism-overview-and-sector-outlook noted that Film Tourism is expected to grow at a steady rate - in 2022 it was estimated at US\$66.7 Billion spent and is projected to reach US\$128.78 Billion in 2023 globally. With more than 500 movies and TV shows filmed in Oregon, plus a popular Oregon Film Trail spanning all 7 tourism regions of the State, with 41 markers installed (and growing), and a partnership with the global film tourism app, SetJetters, (that also provides data) it would seem as though there is strong evidence to suggest that investing in Film Tourism checks all the boxes of the Objectives in the 10-year Strategic Vision plan. The very nature of Film Tourism (or set-jetting as it is also referred to) also sits squarely in the sights of the three lenses of Prosperity, Racial Equity, and Regenerative Tourism. My question is - will there be any push to harness this large and exciting sector of tourism to benefit many of our towns and communities that have been backdrops, and also shining stars since the movie industry discovered Oregon in 1908?</p> <p>Attached: Oregon-Film-Trail-Signs.jpg</p>

Comment 3	
Rachel Heuser / Oregon Aviation Historical Society & Museum	<p>As Travel Oregon prepares to review its Strategic Plan, I'd like to stress the tourism value of Oregon's general aviation airports. There are 28 state-owned airports in our state, besides numerous private airports and airfields. These airports attract tourists from within the state as well as around the state. Our museum is just one example of a heritage organization that organizes community events based at a local general aviation airport, bringing in tourist dollars to our small town. Small airports open the door to additional travel and tourism.</p> <p>General aviation airports hold great potential for generating additional tourism revenue, and I hope Travel Oregon considers their value as they review their Strategic Plan.</p>
Comment 4	
Titus Tomlinson / University of Oregon	<p>There is no mention or focus on community/staff capacity, a key element needed to support communities, especially rural communities, in their drive to better align with the mission, vision, and values noted within the 23-25 strategic plan. Elevating the need for human capacity is noteworthy and something I would like to see addressed in future strategic planning activities. Thank you.</p>
Comment 5	
Jessica Mozeico / Willamette Valley Winery Association	Attached PDF
ONLINE COMMENTS THROUGH 5/31/23 (Open period: 5/10/23 - 5/31/23)	
Comment 6	
Bill Kowalik, PhD / Oregon Chapter of International Dark-Sky Assoc.	<p>The cover picture of the draft report shows a very good photo of the Milky Way over a rural Oregon scene, but there is no mention in the strategic report about the potential of astrotourism for Oregon. Taking phrases from your Vision statement - Travel Oregon has an excellent opportunity through astrotourism to drive economic prosperity in rural areas of Oregon and to simultaneously benefit the natural environment.</p> <p>The night skies of many areas in Oregon are still fairly pristine and we do have the largest part of the remaining area of pristine night skies in the lower 48, in the Oregon Outback. Related to this, you may be aware that Oregon is in competition with the Colorado Plateau states of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona for astrotourism dollars. Those states are far ahead of Oregon in recognizing dark sky places that attract tourists, and attract them on the shoulder seasons.</p> <p>Upon recognizing this disparity, three regions of Travel Oregon - Southern, Central and Coastal - have become actively involved in courting astro-tourists. And, Travel</p>

	<p>Oregon itself has organized Dark Sky Industry workshop meetings with good participation from TO Regions, OPRD and ourselves.</p> <p>An important aspect of astrotourism is that we should not take the natural resource of Oregon's dark skies for granted. Our measurements show that starry night skies are receding in Oregon, away from our population centers, annually. This does not have to be. Recognition of starry night skies as a natural resource is a first step toward stewardship.</p> <p>So, considering the ongoing activity in TO and the good potential for economic and stewardship benefits, it seems reasonable to include mention of astrotourism in the TO 2-year strategic plan. At a minimum, you could include "astrotourism" in the table listing of Prioritized Strategies –</p> <p>Reduce high visitation pressures and increase community livability by investing in the development of niche tourism product that is based on growing visitor demand and Oregon's competitive advantage (e.g., outdoor recreation, culinary, agritourism, arts and culture).</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment!</p>
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Comment 7	
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<p>Nunzie Gould / Deschutes County Resident</p>	<p>Chair Boyle and members of the Oregon Travel Commission</p> <p>Thank you for taking comment on your draft 2023-25 budget.</p> <p>In your effort to become more diverse with equity and inclusion I would suggest that your budget provide educational materials to highlight the indigenous peoples on whose land Oregon has imposed itself. Celebrating indigenous foods and stewardship of land for the 7th generation has great value.</p> <p>With the desire for regenerative tourism; it seems that evaluating the carrying capacity of our lands, air and waters should be a priority for this budget such that the environment is quantified and can be balanced in a sustainable way in light of increasing tourism.</p> <p>For instance, in Central Oregon, carrying capacity has overflowed during the main tourism seasons and shoulder season tourist events are now sought after. Trails are over run and just adding more people to the trail does not regenerate the trail, the land nor the environment. We need to balance our environment with where new trails might be developed. OSU's sustainable tourism lab's Jan 2023 review gives a hint to these things. Campaign slogans to teach what each of us might think everyone knows are still very much needed: clean up after your pet, pets on leach, stay on the trail, pack it out, smile, say hello...</p> <p>Your draft highlights beautiful night sky images, but nothing in your budget actually protects the dark skies of today. So for instance setting some tourism standards for outdoor lighting to meet 2700 kelvin, amber lighting that is downward shining and is shielded so that light is not blasted everywhere would be a good start. Turning lights off when they are not needed will keep our skies dark at night. This is</p>
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how you protect Dark Skies for Astrotourism. Amber color lighting when needed allows birds and humans better health and sleep (Amber not the blinding blue LED's that impede sleep).

Since "Environment" is one of your Three Pillars (per your 5/18/23 ppt) and is mentioned multiple times in your draft; shouldn't there be an environmental representative on your board? Perhaps someone from ODFW or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission, or from Trout Unlimited or from WaterWatch of Oregon?

With the Governor's climate action request and increasing uses of electric mobility, E-scooters, E-bikes, hoverboards, and electric vehicles I have a couple of suggestions:

- 1) Travel Oregon and it's ODOT partner should require a helmet law for all riders and passengers on electric mobility devices e-bikes, hoverboards, power assisted bicycles. Instead of each community trying to write their own helmet rules or not having any helmet rules at all; it would behoove Oregon to have a statewide policy of HELMETS REQUIRED-- it's smart to keep your brain power !
- 2) If you have been following the motorized recreation industry, you'll see that Class of vehicle evolves over time to the same class but with larger distances, larger wheels, larger speeds. As such since 2019 the speed limiters on E-Bikes were known to be decommissioned making Class I, II, III E-bikes run much faster than the 20, 25 or 28 mph referred to in today's Class [of bikes]: Electric Bike Classes 1, 2, 3 | E-Bikes | Aventon

Because E-bikes are made these days to travel 45 mph, it's really a good idea to implement a statewide Helmet law so that when folks decommission the speed limiter on a Class I, II or III e-bike, at the least a helmet will be worn.

I suggest that E-bikes are classified based on total possible speed; not on class because a speed limiter is installed.

3) The Hwy 97 corridor needs more DC Level 3 electric vehicle charging stations. Waiting 7 hours to charge with a Level 2 charger is not practical and though that might have been the cat's meow, the EV technology and sales of EV vehicles has far outpaced the charging station network available

4) The E-W Hwy 20 also known as the Central Oregon Highway that runs from Bend to Ontario also needs a more robust set of Level 3 DC EV charging stations : perhaps one at the junction of Hwy 395 and 20 or additional Level 3 DC charging stations in Burns?

5) Fishing, rafting and healthy rivers need water; Real wet water not just a paper water certificate. Travel Oregon could be funding the acquisition of water rights for our Oregon rivers such that these rivers are wet with water and resilient for future generations in the face of drought and climate change.

6) Travel Oregon should be encouraging DEQ to uphold water quality standards in Oregon's rivers such that fishing, rafting and healthy rivers can be improved waterways for healthy clean water public enjoyment.

Funding: delete the 4% COVID funding and use those funds for the investments I've suggested above.... after all tourism is well on it's way reaching beyond year 2020 levels thankfully!

Thank you for all you do to Keep Oregon Oregon !
[Additional weblinks provided to support comments]

Comment 8

Tori Middlestadt /
Executive Director,
Visit Grants Pass

Dear Todd Davidson & the Oregon Tourism Commission-

My name is Tori Middelstadt, Executive Director for Visit Grants Pass. I am providing public comment for the Travel Oregon 2023 - 2025 Strategic Biennial Plan. First, I'd like to thank Travel Oregon and the commission for allowing my organization the space and opportunity to provide feedback. My goal in my comments is to explain why my stakeholders in rural Oregon (Josephine County) do not feel the strategic vision, or this plan represents or includes the needs of rural Oregon. I would be happy to continue this conversation to help find solutions to help rural Oregon feel seen.

I have heard repeatedly from my stakeholders; they don't know how to see themselves in this plan. The strategy they most align with is 'support the development of new and existing tourism-related facilities and products to better serve historically and currently underserved and under-resourced communities.' However, this strategy was not picked as an initial priority, and it is not clear if this is a top priority after the initial wave or a 'we will get to it by 2025'.

Overwhelmingly, the Destination Development Department has been the most visible in rural Oregon over the years. They have been on the frontlines, providing space for the community to embrace their local visitor economy through stakeholder-driven workshops. It is clear that this branch of Travel Oregon understands the importance of respecting these small, close-knit communities by encouraging them to drive decision-making and priority-setting instead of being told what their destination needs should be in order to fit a mold and vision. Nowhere in the plan is it addressed where Destination Development and Community Based Services will be operating within Travel Oregon organization. I see the Destination Development department as instrumental in stewardship work as well as continuing to develop new experiences. This department still needs to be able to get out in the communities across Oregon. The workshops are not enough, as we have seen with the work over the last two years addressing COVID. It is important for this team to be able to bring funding to support the quick wins that build the grass root projects teams into communities ready to embark on larger-scale projects and successfully apply for grant programs. Lastly, for rural communities, working with our RDMO partners to help up-level public relations and newsworthy stories is essential to getting media attention. Public Relations seems to be lost in this plan regarding how and where this vitally important collaboration will plug in.

I have had several stakeholders voice to me the linguistics of this plan sounds like "Portland rolling in telling us what to do" (a number one pet peeve of rural Oregon, especially my community). With my history of Travel Oregon, I know this not to be the case, but the vision and plan have my community leery. In the past years, Travel Oregon has really been able to dodge this sort of label. Once again, I think the

	<p>Destination Development & Community Based Services department was instrumental in keeping Travel Oregon focused on serving communities by meeting them where they are.</p> <p>Oregon's brand stewardship should include incorporating the broader picture of Oregon's experiences. I, like my colleagues, want and support getting Portland's brand back on track. It does seem that the Portland brand and Oregon brand are starting to become synonymous which is not the case with our varied experiences across the state. While we all work to help bring Portland back, it does seem important for Brand Stewardship that Portland and Oregon have complimentary but distinctly different brands and are not viewed as one and the same.</p> <p>It is mentioned in the initial wave that Travel Oregon will 'Reduce high visitation pressures and increase community livability by investing in the development of niche tourism product that is based on growing visitor demand and Oregon's competitive advantage (e.g., outdoor recreation, culinary, agritourism, arts, and culture).' At what point, will marketing be a part of helping reduce high visitation pressures? Campaign after campaign continues to be a highlight reel of our highest-used places, which began back with the 7 Wonders campaign. If communities are building products to alleviate pressures, the marketing work needs to reflect these new products and work on better understanding the broader states' needs. For example, not all communities have the same shoulder and off-season. This opens opportunities for new communities to get more marketing while others are 'full'. This same priority is missing a call out of a key stakeholder, our local wine industry. This industry contributes to local and visitor economies providing year-round activities. My wine stakeholders are feeling missed in this call language.</p> <p>Visit Grants Pass continues to support and partner with Travel Oregon and our local RDMO, Travel Southern Oregon. I am grateful for the time and space to provide feedback to the Tourism Commission on Travel Oregon's biennial plan. If any Travel Oregon staff or commissioners want to talk more about the needs of rural Oregon, I can be reached at 541-916-9605 or tori@visitgrantspass.com.</p>
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Comment 9

<p>Steve Kruger / Trailkeepers of Oregon</p>	<p>Trailkeepers of Oregon (TKO) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that partners regularly with Travel Oregon, RDMOs and DMOs across the state for protecting and enhancing the Oregon hiking experience in a number of ways. We've received a number of grants, sponsorships and fee for service contracts to help boost our shared interest in destination stewardship activities that we have a shared interest in. Hiking trail systems across local, state and federal lands in urban and rural areas are in constant need of repair and pursuits of trail system development - from a local, neighborhood park in Portland to signature trail projects to connect the Oregon Coast Trail.</p> <p>We are very supportive of the strategic vision, mission and values and see that the strategies and objectives being laid out will continue to help our shared interest in stewarding the outdoor recreation economy and Oregon's hiking trails infrastructure. Images throughout the document communicate clearly that access</p>
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to scenic sites by way of trails and pathways are foundational in the Oregon outdoor recreation experience. We support the reorganization of merging functional teams in Destination Development, Grants and RCTP and will only strengthen relationships and processes for working together.

TKO is very supportive of the emphasis on integrating equity. The priority strategies highlighted in the key objective of "Oregon delivers remarkable experiences." will only strengthen TKO's shared interest in:

- Reducing high visitation pressures;
- Increasing livability;
- Responding to climate change;
- Offering resources for wildfire resiliency;
- Partnering in advancing educational and career opportunities;
- And so much more!

As work plans are developed starting in July 2023, please consider ways to integrate support for community engagement in hiking trail stewardship and visitor experiences for organizations such as TKO to feel empowered to partner in this next fiscal cycle. Thank you for offering a chance to give feedback, looking forward to continued partnership in the future!

Comment 10

Kevney Dugan /
Visit Bend

Thank you for publishing the draft Strategic Plan and accepting comments. We appreciate the size and scope of the work Travel Oregon has been undertaking to elevate the statewide tourism industry to the next level and prepare for the future.

On behalf of Visit Bend, I would like to submit feedback for your consideration. While very aspirational, at this point in the process, the plan seems lacking in specifics. What are the key goals and action items to reach those goals? Besides the new departmental designations, what is the new organizational structure and staffing plan – particularly for areas such as public affairs and policy – where key staff has been missing and positions have gone unfilled? What are the improvements and changes that will be made to the RDMO/RCTP process to more effectively impact local DMOs and improve the chain of communication?

Without more precise information, it is difficult to anticipate how the restructure and reorganization will impact those of us continuing to work at the local level to move the industry forward.

Thank you for your time, and we remain dedicated to successful collaboration and partnership in the years to come.

To: Travel Oregon Board of Commissioners

From: Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA)
 Oregon Wine Board (OWB)
 Oregon Wine Council (OWC)
 Oregon Winegrowers Association (OWA)
 PDX Urban Wineries Association
 Rocks District Winegrowers
 Rogue Valley Vintners

Topic: Public Comment on Travel Oregon 2023-2025 Biennial Strategic Plan

Date: 5/16/23

Dear Travel Oregon Board of Commissioners:

Thank you for asking for public comment on the proposed 2023-2025 Biennial Strategic Plan.

Context

Oregon’s wine industry contributes \$7.21B economic impact and \$894M of wine related tourism to the state’s economy (see Exhibit 1). However, our industry has experienced a 30% decline in visitation to our tasting rooms vs. 2019 (see Exhibit 2) and the decline is more pronounced in spring and summer months in which we have historically seen out of state visitors. Increasing tourism is vital to our industry.

Exhibit 1: Economic Impact Study

WINE IN OREGON 2019 & 2020

ECONOMIC IMPACT

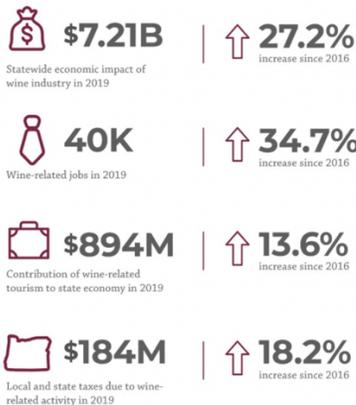
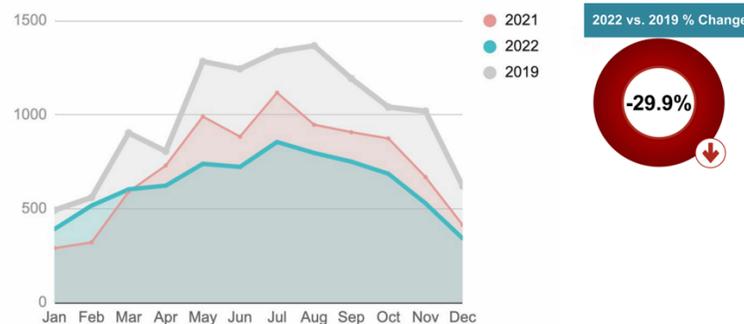


Exhibit 2: Community Benchmark Visitation

Oregon 2022 Visitation Down ~30% vs. 2019



Feedback on Proposed Strategic Plan

We are supportive of the four objectives of Economy, Equity, Experiences, and Environment in the proposed Strategic Plan and agree that they are interconnected. To that end, we request

that the objective of Experiences be modified to prioritize high value experiences. More specifically, we submit that “Oregon delivers remarkable experiences” be modified to “**Oregon delivers remarkable and high value experiences.**”

Not all experiences are created equal and high value experiences contribute disproportionately to the objective of “Oregon’s tourism economy is flourishing.” Wine tourism contributes not only to wine purchase, but also to lodging and other purchases (see Appendices 3 and 4 for 2018 data). Simply put, wine tourists spend highly while in market, which disproportionately contributes to a flourishing tourism economy. This is more economically valuable than activities which may contribute less to the tourism economy in terms of lodging, food, and retail purchase spend and should thus be explicitly prioritized.

Appendix 3: Destination Analysts WVWA Report



Appendix 4: Destination Analysts WVWA Report



The reason this is important is that the Strategic Plan will drive resource allocation. **We would like to see the \$9.2M dedicated to the Experiences objective focused on high value experiences.** What this would look like is focusing on those experiences such as wine that drive economic value based on spending in market when targeting potential visitors and providing a reason to visit.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with Travel Oregon and its regions in prioritizing high value experiences in execution of the strategic plan.