

West Linn



Visitor Destination Action Plan

Update April 2007

Prepared For:

West Linn Chamber of Commerce

City of West Linn

with assistance from

Clackamas County Tourism Development Council

Introduction

The following *West Linn Tourism Action Plan* has been prepared based on four workshop sessions held on April 27 and 29, May 26 and June 24, 2004. A total of 35 participants were involved in this community visitor planning process representing various city departments, city elected offices, visitor industry attractions and hospitality services, visitor destination organizations, and several community advocacy groups. The Tourism Action plan was updated in a series of meetings in the fall of 2005. The list of those people participating in the planning meetings is attached at the end of the Plan. The purpose and ensuing benefits of the process were five-fold:

1. A clear understanding of the community visitor situation
2. An identification of visitor product investment opportunities
3. A determination of the community visitor positioning vis-à-vis the destination brand
4. A specification of visitor projects to advance community visitor growth
5. An enhanced destination team development among respective communities and the county.

The Tourism Action Plan is to be used as a directional and guideline document for various organizations and/or individuals interested in economic development and sustainable visitor growth in West Linn and surrounding area, especially the City of West Linn, West Linn Chamber of Commerce, various community advocacy groups and the Clackamas County Tourism Development Council. Its strategic intent is to enhance the community visitor experience, to reinforce visitor communications and to give proper support to visitor projects advancing these former initiatives, and subsequently increasing visitor economic impact.



Visitor Destination Situation

Given the SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analyses below, it was generally found:

- Visitor product strengths and opportunity expansion are centered on the Ice Age Floods and Willamette Meteorite interpretative possibilities, varied outdoor recreation/adventure travel experiences, diverse shopping experiences, arts/wellness potential and the Willamette Falls, Locks, industrial district and Willamette historic district, all with easy access from I-205.
- Areas for improvement to gain more visitor impact include user-friendly signage, a hotel and neighborhood commercial gateway development.
- Basic marketing/promotion base is in place with websites and some printed collateral with good opportunity to cooperate more fully with adjacent cities and the Tourism Development Council.
- Need to service visitors better through the Chamber of Commerce information center and with appropriate communication materials, predicated on an agreed-to destination positioning statement are required.

Product Development SWOT Analysis

Strengths

(present advantages)

- Outstanding scenery
- New zoning allowances adjacent to historic district
- Strong community pride
- Safe and secure place
- Part of metropolitan Portland with proximity to Lake Oswego and Oregon City and adjacent to I-205
- Park system and recreational facilities includes Willamette Park, Fields Bridge park, many neighborhood parks, Holly Gardens, Mary S. Young State Park Camassia Natural Area and McLean House and Park, Maddox Woods
- Willamette Falls, Locks and related paper mill, hydroelectric plant and fish ladder
- Architectural diversity
- Abundant green space at the confluence of two rivers with related water and trail activities (boating, fishing, etc.)
- Supportive and active business/civic organizations with economic resources available to support tourism plans
- Willamette Historic District
- Willamette wellness community continues to grow and develop partnerships
- Geologic and historic significance of meteorite and ice age floods
- Other recreational facilities (e.g., skate park)
- Local historical church Harvest Dinner
- Nurseries
- Numerous festivals including Farmers Market, Village of Willamette Art Festival, Art Festival in the Forrest, Old Time Fair, Lockfest and Art in the Dark
- Vibrant arts community
- Cultural Centers (Library, West Linn H.S. auditorium)

Weaknesses

(present disadvantages)

- No 'major' single attraction
- Heavy pass-through traffic on both I-205 and Highway 43 creates congestion
- Perception of I-205 splitting city
- Lack of commercial lodging
- Initial impression of West Linn at I-205 exit 6 is of a truck stop
- Limited public transit
- Insufficient parking and signage
- No large meeting space
- Perception as only a residential community
- No easily identifiable downtown/city center location
- No central entity to work effectively, in conjunction with neighborhoods, with property development/investment industry
- Inadequate and inconsistent enforcement of land use policy and decisions
- Underdeveloped historic district and lack of clear and consistent signage
- No Urban Renewal tax base

Opportunities

(potential advantages)

- Native American heritage interpretation
- Art/cultural community development (writers, musicians, artists)
- Enhanced waterfront access
- Heritage/archeological/geological resource potential

Threats

(potential disadvantages)

- Potential closure of locks
- Local residents don't fully utilize community businesses due to present retail mix
- Abernethy Bridge viewed as detriment

- Willamette District restaurant and shopping development
- Winery/vineyard development
- Specialized lodging (bed & breakfasts)
- Gateway signage with design/style used consistently throughout West Linn
- Walking and biking trails
- Sports event development (youth tournaments)
- Camassia Natural Area
- Land available at former rest area on I-205
- Continued development of Willamette Historic District and other neighborhood areas
- New commercial space becoming available with visitor appeal
- Preservation funding opportunities
- Renewal and development of Robin's Nest / Willamette Falls area
- Hotel project
- Aquatic and community center

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Marketing SWOT Analysis

Strengths

(present advantages)

- Continues growth of professional leadership at Chamber of Commerce
- Available websites (City and Chamber of Commerce)
- Chamber of Commerce directory
- Growing awareness of value and appeal of local festivals and events
- Increasing local and regional media coverage
- Chamber office and Visitor's Center in historic Elliott St. home centrally located in West Linn.
- Strong neighborhood 'sense of place'
- Solid volunteer base

Weaknesses

(present disadvantages)

- Lack of consensus on roles and means relative to visitor promotion and development
- No agreed-upon destination positioning
- Lack of consensus on tourism's value to city/residents
- Lack of consensus on "tourism brand" or unique appeal for West Linn
- Little marketing to the residents regarding their visiting friend and relatives
- Lack of promotional materials
- Insufficient signage for West Linn destinations

Opportunities

(potential advantages)

- Better visitor information and linkages to existing community websites
- Information distribution and coordination with adjacent communities (Lake Oswego and Oregon City)
- Develop more fully 'The Neighborhoods of West Linn' positioning and create visitor destinations
- Develop resident public education on value of tourism, historical significance of sites and opportunities to have tourism as an economic development tool
- Oregon Solutions project to seek funding assistance for Locks
- Establishment of State and National Heritage Area (or other similar designation) for West Linn in conjunction with nearby areas

Threats

(potential disadvantages)

- Publicity on I-205 traffic congestion
- Absence of integrated internal communications
- Potential conflicts of interest among residents, visitors and businesses

Challenges

The top challenges facing the West Linn visitor destination are as follows:

1. No defined or recognized tourism main entrance or gateway to community and its neighborhoods
2. Absence of coordinated marketing and subsequently low visitor awareness
3. Limited access to riverfront
4. No overnight commercial lodging
5. Lack of visitor friendly signage
6. Better property development process to encourage new investment
7. Minimal internal marketing communications in the city.

Critical Success Factors

For the West Linn visitor destination to prosper, the following factors need to be acted upon:

- Chamber of Commerce to continue to be the lead community tourism organization with paid staff
- Chamber of Commerce to work closely with City, community based organizations and West Linn neighborhoods
- Nurture strategic partnerships for project initiatives (e.g., businesses, city budget, Tourism Development Council, public support, etc.)
- Maintain and grow the pool of dedicated volunteers to assist in efforts
- An emphasis on tourism advocacy and community relations (i.e., benefits message and hometown visitor program initiated) Adopt an “agreed upon” market position/brand



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Visitor Destination Experiences

The following product opportunities by visitor market were identified for the West Linn community.

Business Travel—*Commercial*



Type	Product Opportunity
Corporate/Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Due to central location, lodging and meeting facility development ❖ Some entertainment and retail store potential ❖ Willamette Wellness Community continued growth
Meeting/Retreat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Specialized conferences on creativity and sustainability ❖ Banquet/catering facilities and services to weddings/other special occasion events

Leisure Travel—*Vacation/Holiday*



Type	Product Opportunity
Outdoor Recreation/ Adventure Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Better waterfront access to allow kayaking and canoeing ❖ Hiking, biking and walking trail system ❖ Hostel and bed & breakfast operations to be considered ❖ Recreation retail services (e.g., bike rentals)
Shopping/Culinary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Distinctive/complementary shopping (clothing, gift and specialty/art supply stores and galleries) ❖ Weekday Farmers and Artists Market
Cultural/Heritage/Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ With local support, industrial tours of West Linn Paper Company, Locks and Sullivan Hydroelectric Plant tied into Willamette Falls access from Oregon City ❖ Willamette Valley Ice Age Floods: Willamette Meteorite interpretive trail in Fields Bridge Park and Ice Age Museum at the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City. West Linn and Oregon City become collaborative partners in marketing and product development.
Festival/Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Specialized seminars (e.g., wellness, learning, sports training) ❖ 'Taste of West Linn' to showcase community restaurants ❖ New events (i.e., sports, birding, salmon, folk festival)

VFR Travel—*Visit Friends and Relatives*



Type	Product Opportunity
Local Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Better informed of local events/activities through the Chamber Visitor's Information Center ❖ Discovery/'volks' walks (Willamette Greenway Trail) and promotion of West Linn Parks ❖ Community outreach programming using Willamette Falls Television ❖ Visit hometown campaign
Referred Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Portland resident potential by promoting cultural and industrial site tours in conjunction with shopping and dining in commercial districts

Visitor Destination Future Direction

A visitor destination vision statement for West Linn was prepared as follows:

In 2015

With a focus on an accessible riverfront, its heritage and related hospitality/entertainment venues, the West Linn community of neighborhoods is proud to share its prominent historic preservation and nature conservation through a balanced engagement of sustainable development, varied recreational parklands, trail ways, arts, education, wellness and outdoor experiences.

Visitor Market Positioning

The destination images of the West Linn area were identified as such:

- ☞ Pervasive nature (trees, hills and rivers)
- ☞ Abundance and appreciation of green spaces/parks
- ☞ Scenic vistas and river bridges
- ☞ Geologic importance with significant features and inclusion on the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail.
- ☞ Quaint, safe and authentic neighborhoods
- ☞ Three mountain/river views
- ☞ Industrial heritage (paper mill, locks, hydroelectric plant and fish ladder)
- ☞ Rural legacy and 20 minutes from City of Portland
- ☞ Calm pace of living with friendly inhabitants
- ☞ High quality of life.



Given the above images, the unique appeals for the city were considered to be:

- ☞ Riverfront exposure
- ☞ Willamette Falls and Locks
- ☞ Community arts and wellness
- ☞ Education and learning
- ☞ Variety and depth of the eleven neighborhoods.

To reinforce these appeals, the positioning of the West Linn visitor destination could involve the following additional descriptions:

- ☞ ‘Hill town picture postcard’
- ☞ ‘Living on the edge’ and ‘Bend in the river’
- ☞ ‘Great trails, great food, great walks’
- ☞ Meteorite discovery.

A visitor market positioning statement for West Linn was then composed as follows:

West Linn, a place of discovery, conveniently close to Portland on I-205, is an urban river community of historic and contemporary neighborhoods and amenities nestled in the natural splendor of dramatic landscapes for superior lifestyle recreation and learning.

Visitor Destination Activities and Accountability

The projects to be undertaken to realize the destination vision for West Linn are as follows.

Project	Priority Status	Timing	Lead Organization(s)
<p>Willamette Falls Locks preservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Development of a long-term plan with funding ❖ Support for continued public education and awareness of heritage area at Locks 	1	2007-2009	Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation
<p>Interpretive master plan for river corridor from mouth of Clackamas to mouth of Tualatin</p>	2	2007-2008	West Linn – Oregon City Regional Tourism Planning
<p>Ice age floods / Willamette Meteorite – natural and cultural interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coordinate with Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City to establish Willamette Valley Ice Age Museum 	3	2007-2010	Lower Columbia Floods Chapter
<p>Review of Neighborhood Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ From perspective of commercial/visitor development potential, implement visitor destination projects outlined in Neighborhood Association plans adopted by the City 	4	2007-2010	Chamber of Commerce
<p>Visitor communications such as Visitor Information Center, coordinated signage, brochures and community festival & event promotion</p>	5	2007-2010	Chamber of Commerce / Arts Commission
<p>Develop a health and wellness brand for West Linn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Recruit a spa and wellness center to support local health practitioners and wellness destination reputation. 	6	2007-2010	Chamber of Commerce – City of West Linn
<p>Recreational facilities development and utilization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Build on skateboard park, aquatic and community centers with sports playfields and associated retail/rentals available 	7	2007-2010	City of West Linn

List of Visitor Destination Action Plan Participants (2004)

Bob Adams, City of West Linn Councilor
Chuck Adams, Athletic Performance Training NW
Dawn Adams, West Linn Parks Board
Charles Awalt, Willamette Neighborhood
Michael Babbitt, City of West Linn Planning Commission and West Linn Chamber of Commerce
Diane Bays, Healthy Spaces
Linda Bell, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council
John Blair, Tualatin River Nursery
Mark Buser, A.G. Edwards Financial Consultants and West Linn Chamber of Commerce
Julia Corkett, West Linn Public Library
Alma Coston, Bolton Neighborhood Association and West Linn Parks Board
Ian Dunlap, West Linn Paper Company
Sandi Farley, City of West Linn Manager
Ann Fleming, West Linn Artist and Festival Organizer
Betty Folmsbee, Betty's Travel Service and West Linn Chamber of Commerce
Thelma Haggemiller, Slow Poke Tours
Cindy Haldorson, Legacy Meridian Park Hospital
Linda Hamel, League of West Linn Neighborhoods
Tim Hohl, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council
Mark Jorgenson, Postal Annex and West Linn Chamber of Commerce
Adam Klugman, Whipping Post Editorial
Alan Lewis, Willamette Falls Cultural Heritage Foundation
Jeffrey Lewis, Foundation Home Lending and West Linn Chamber of Commerce
Molly Macom, West Lake Properties
Sally McClarty, Bolton Neighborhood Association
Betty Mountain, Bolton Neighborhood Association
Janet Paulson, Clackamas Community College
Bill Pennell, Sew Special Embroidery
Wendy Popkin, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council
Loretta Schwarz, West Linn Chamber of Commerce
Roger Shepherd, West Linn Trails Advisory Group
Fran Soder, West Linn Meteorite Advocate
Cameron Steen, Bugatti's Restaurant
Carol Stowell, Black Pansy Graphics
Aysia Wright, Green Loop

List of Visitor Destination Action Plan Participants (2005 Update)

Mary Closson, Executive Director West Linn Chamber

George Mead, Chamber board member

Betsy Bensen, West Linn Artist Community

Loretta Schwarz, Chamber board member

Alice Richmond, Resident

Sandy Carter, Executive Director Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

Aysia Wright, Willamette Business / Greenloop

Diane Bays, Willamette Business / Healthy Spaces

Chris Jorgenson, Willamette Business / Postal Annex

Mark Jorgenson, Willamette Business / Postal Annex

Roger Shepherd, Volks Walkers – Bolton Neighborhood

Jeffrey Lewis, Chamber board member

Carol Stowell, Home-based business / Black Pansy Graphics

Christina Romaniuk, Chamber board member

Diane Craig, Business owner

Vernielle McIntyre, Chamber staff

John Atkins, City of West Linn

Franny Held, Resident

Jody Carson, Willamette NA

Fran Soder, Resident

David Banash, Willamette Business / Castle Homes

Mark Buser, Chamber President-elect

Charles Awalt, Willamette NA

Diane Awalt, Willamette NA

David Adams, Resident

Peter Tuomala, WLF& AM Manager

Nicole Decosta, Reporter WL Tidings

Norm King, West Linn Mayor

List of Visitor Destination Action Plan Participants (2007 Update)

Sarah Bader, West Linn Business / Lavender At Stonegate

Alice Johansson, Willamette NA

Alma Coston, Bolton NA

Roger shepherd, Volks Walkers – Bolton Neighborhood

Linda Neace, Willamette Business / Bullseye Café

David Froode, West Linn Arts Commission

Jen Harbaugh, Dancer

Lynn Woolson

Steve Hopkins, West Linn Arts Commission

Russ Coker

Christina Romaniuk, Chamber board member

Alice Richmone, Resident

Mike Watters, McLean House

Sandy Carter, Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

Norm King, West Linn Mayor

Mary Closson, Executive Director West Linn Chamber