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COMMISSION

AGENDA MEMORANDUM Item No. 8h

ACTION ITEM Date of Meeting January 24, 2023

DATE: 1/6/2022

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Dave McFadden, Managing Director, Economic Development Division

Nick Leonti, Director of Tourism Development

SUBJECT: 2023 Tourism Marketing Support Program (TMSP)

Amount of this request: \$200,000

Total estimated project cost: \$200,000

ACTION REQUESTED:

Request Commission authorization of the 2023 Tourism marketing grant program (TMSP) and authority for the Executive Director to approve execution for all related contract agreements for the 2023 selected Tourism Marketing Support Program recipients in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Tourism Marketing Support Program will be in its eighth year. It has been an impactful, collaborative, and mutually beneficial program for the Port of Seattle, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and other nonprofit organizations. For 2023, \$200,000 has been allotted for the program. The source of funds is the Port property tax levy.

The Port of Seattle's co-operative tourism marketing support program boosts the economic value of tourism across the state. This program has been effective in promoting Washington State and the use of Port facilities. The program is intended to provide matching support of up to \$10,000 to non-profit destination marketing organizations (DMO's), attractions, cities, counties, and chambers of commerce which can effectively market their destination to non-resident visitors traveling to our state.

The grant funds are used for advertising, publicizing, promoting events or conducting research to attract visitors. Marketing efforts for the Tourism Marketing Support Program include promoting our natural scenic beauty, outdoor recreation, cultural attractions, online digital marketing campaigns, promotion of Washington's growing wine and craft brewery industry, and networking with tour operators and travel media.

Applications are reviewed by committee and given a score out of 100pts. All proposed projects will be evaluated for how they address equitable, sustainable and responsible tourism. As part of

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the Port's efforts to address equity, diversity and inclusion, adjustments to the scoring system have put even more emphasis - 25% of the total score (up from 15%) - for EDI and responsible tourism projects. Projects that make overcrowding, environment, and inclusivity a priority will be scored higher than those that do not.

Since the program's inception over \$1,960,000 in tourism marketing investments have been made to market Washington State destinations and Port travel gateways.

Marketing, promotion, and outreach plans include:

- Communicating to an ever-growing data base of over 270 different organizations via email. The data base includes a roster of over 130 cities, chambers, and destination organizations, 24 cultural and ethnic attractions, 17 outdoor recreational organizations and 35 tribal contacts.
- Prominent positioning of the grant program application process information, together with video testimonials from previous recipients, will be available on the Tourism Development section of the Port's external website.
- Conducting two virtual Information Sessions which is open to all registered attendees.
- Speaking at various organization meetings, one-on-one meetings with destination marketing organizations, chambers, city officials, and nonprofit organizations.
- Direct contact via phone and email. Drawing from past emails and our data base of contacts over the course of the year, calls will continue to be made to potential applicants encouraging their participation.

Tourism Marketing Support Recipients

The Port of Seattle is advancing tourism in Washington State by implementing an annual partner grant program with local destination marketing organizations. In 2022, the Port and its partners invested over \$310,000 in grant-funded projects across Washington State. The Port made 25 grant awards for a total of approximately \$183,000 and local organizations provided over \$127,000 of match funding to support the 2022 program. These programs included digital marketing, social media, familiarization tours, media hosting, travel trade sales activity and more. Grants enabled participants to embrace destination stewardship and responsible travel, showcase cultural resources, focus on DEI, reach new audiences and keep their destinations/attractions top-of-mind for potential visitors. Within the last seven years of the program 268 applications have been received and 156 projects were awarded, netting over \$1,960,000 in additional marketing promotional efforts for Washington tourism. The matching funds program promotes use of Port facilities and tourism growth throughout the state.

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The results or benefits include generating additional travel awareness, interest and positively impacting Washington State economic development and tourism.

2022 Awarded Recipients  
Port of Seattle  
Organization Name Summary of Proposed Project  
Awarded Amount

SnoValley Chamber of Collaboratively create an outdoor recreational tourism guide, host media \$10,000  
Commerce familiarization tours for social media advertising campaign.

Create and market new tour itinerary for the Native American Heritage  
Visit Kitsap \$5,000 Program in collaboration with American Cruise Lines. Media familiarization tour included.

Ballard Alliance / Visit Marketing campaign showcasing videos targeted to direct flight markets in \$5,000  
Ballard CA and NV.

Digital, print, and broadcast advertising to target markets in CA, CO, NY and  
Burke Museum  
\$10,000 ad campaign geotargeting out-of-state visitors highlighting PNW Native  
Association  
culture exhibits.  
Create an advertising marketing campaign using geolocation technology,  
City of Renton \$10,000 highlighting multi-cultural events, global cuisine, outdoor adventurers, and  
proximity to SEA Airport.  
Create audio tour companion to Japanese American Exclusion Memorial  
Visit Bainbridge Island \$10,000 and host media familiarization tours for social media advertising to out-ofstate  
visitor markets.  
African Chamber of Create a strategic social media and online advertising marketing campaign  
Commerce of the Pacific \$9,000 for visitor markets in Africa. Revise website to promote cross-cultural  
Northwest learning, awareness of tourism events and activities in WA State.  
Print article and social media campaign, CA target markets, for Julefest,  
National Nordic  
\$8,000 Nordic holiday celebration in collaboration with Icelandair and Reykjavik  
Museum  
Sister City.  
Professional photographer to accompany diverse out-of-state social  
Visit Tri-Cities \$5,000 influencers on media familiarization tour to promote destination's wine  
country and outdoor recreation activities.

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Seattle Architectural Targeted social media advertising campaign to increase the number of out-of-state visitors, showcasing local architecture highlights and walking tours.  
\$7,000

Seattle Good Business

Create a print and social media advertising marketing campaign and mobile responsive website highlighting Seattle's independent manufacturing Network

culture and community to out-of-state visitors.

Washington State Refresh website, print and social media marketing of GeoTour, promotion  
\$4,000

Geocaching Association collaboration with four cities, geocaching businesses.

Produce/publish 40 videos targeting out-of-state visitors, social media

Harbor WildWatch \$6,000 advertising campaign highlighting amazing wildlife and unique eco-tourism experiences.

Create a digital video advertising campaign to targeted visitor markets from City of Kirkland \$10,000

CA. Focus on destination's nature, adventure, and outdoor activities

To attract outdoor out-of-state enthusiasts, social media advertising

Snohomish County \$5,000 campaign includes video, photos, and featured story of family-owned small business in Index to promote responsible adventure experiences.

To reach a wider visitor audience to this wine country, social media

marketing campaign will include three videos, still photography - focused

Visit Walla Walla \$10,000

on trail running, cycling, skiing and snowboarding - targeting San Francisco and Chicago visitor markets.

As a new destination marketing organization (DMO), attending identified premier travel trade shows will establish professional and media

Skagit Tourism Bureau \$10,000

partnerships - domestic and international. In addition, will host media familiarization tour.

Develop a "Tales of Adventure" trip and travel guide publication for print

Coulee City Chamber of

\$10,000 and online social media marketing campaign, including created high quality

Commerce

aerial drone footage video.

Develop core messaging highlighting outdoor recreation, stewardship and

Mountains to Sound

\$8,000 responsible visitation. Launch landing page and social media advertising

Greenway Trust

campaign to increase out-of-state visitors.

To inspire adventure travelers and nature lovers from NV, AR, CA, social

City of Westport \$7,000 media advertising campaign messaging highlights world-class fishing, surfing, beaches, responsible tourism.

Host media familiarization tour for bike influencer and filmmaker,

Cascade Bicycle Club \$7,000 advertising in newsletters and social media campaign targeting adventure seekers from CO and Southern CA.

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Host social media familiarization tours, whose out-of-state target audience

San Juan Islands Visitors

\$10,000 promotion includes visitors of color, ecotourism, adventure and sustainable

Bureau

tourism.

Marketing campaign includes creating video, photography, conducting Northwest Agriculture \$9,000 media webinar, social media advertising, hosting two media influencer Business Center familiarization tours, targeting fly-in visitor markets. Social media and print advertising campaign for two summer music Centrum \$8,000 festivals - San Francisco target market. Washington Digital ad marketing campaign, targeting direct flight cities, promoting Independent Inns \$7,000 increased out-of-state visitation to destinations statewide. Network

#### Schedule

##### Proposed Implementation Timeline

- Jan. 25, 2023 - Launch application process
- Feb. 23, 2023 - Applications due:
- Feb. 2 & Feb. 9, 2023 - Information sessions.
- March 9, 2023 - Review Selection Committee mtg.
- March 10 – Notification to recipients and non-recipients
- March – April 2023: Work with CPO to execute 2023 awarded agreements
- April-Dec. 2023 – Projects executed
- December 31, 2023: Final reports due

##### ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 – Do not provide the Tourism Marketing Support Program for 2023.

Cost Implications: \$0.

##### Pros:

(1) Reduces specific budget request by \$200,000 for 2023.

##### Cons:

- (1) Elimination of the program would impact small tourism organizations and industry partners whose marketing and promotion budgets have been dramatically impacted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (2) Because the TMSP program focus is to increase air traffic through SEA International Airport as a primary gateway for all of Washington state, the cancellation of the

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program will negatively affect leisure travel during the important industry recovery of tourism in 2023 and beyond.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 2 – Offer the TMSP Program for 2023

Cost Implications: \$200,000

##### Pros:

- (1) The TMSP program assists and demonstrates the Port of Seattle's intention to work with a diverse range of organizations and industry partners.
- (2) Because the TMSP program requires a two-to-one matching contribution, the \$200,000 positively impacts tourism and visitor marketing throughout Washington State with a minimum of \$300,000 in total marketing promotional efforts. In previous years the actual match fund levels exceeded the two-to-one match requirement.
- (3) This program will positively affect leisure travel by increasing non-resident visitor arrivals via SEA International Airport.

This is the recommended alternative.

##### ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

(1) Presentation Slides

##### PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

January 25, 2022 - Commission approved authorization for the 2022 Tourism Marketing grant Program and authority for the Executive Director to approve execution for all related contract agreements.

December 15, 2020 - Commission approved authorization for the 2021 Tourism Marketing

grant Program and authority for the Executive Director to approve execution for all related contract agreements.

December 10, 2019 - Commission approved authorization for the 2020 Tourism Marketing grant Program and authority for the Executive Director to approve execution for all related contract agreements.

July 23, 2019 – Commission briefed on 2019 Tourism Marketing Support Program awardees.

December 11, 2018 – Commission approved authorization for the 2019 Tourism Marketing grant Program and authority for the Executive Director to approve execution for all related contract agreements.

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October 12, 2018 – Update on the 2018 program, results, and recommendations for improving the program in 2019.

July 23, 2019 – Marketing support program awardees were briefed to the commission.

January 30, 2018 – The Commission was briefed on the results of the 2017 program.

April 11, 2017 – 2017 Marketing support program awardees were announced.

January 17, 2017 – The Commission was briefed on the results of the 2016 program.

November 22, 2016 – The Commission approved the final 2017 budget, including \$150,000 for the Tourism Marketing Support program.

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