VERSION DATE: June 15, 2018

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TOURISM IN AMITY

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# VISION, MISSION, VALUES

## Vision

A better life for the residents of Amity and the surrounding areas through a strong, sustainable local economy.

## Mission

We inspire travel that stimulates sustainable economic development in Amity that is consistent with the rural and historic character of the city. Through innovation and partnerships, we share stories, create experiences and promote businesses that attract visitors and deliver an appealing, memorable experience.

## Values

Integrity. Collaboration. Inclusiveness. Innovation. Leadership. Frugality.

# INTRODUCTION

Ordinance 648, adopted by the City Council of Amity on July 1, 2015, concluded (among other things):

“People are increasingly searching for authentic experiences in unique places. Amity could establish development policies to maximize capture of wine-related tourism in the local economy through restaurants, shops, and overnight accommodation.”.

In March, 2018, the City of Amity organized a Tourism Committee charged with:

* Development of a long-range strategic plan aimed at promoting tourism in the city through the use of a transient room tax.
* Recommendation to the Council on programs for use of the fee and annual budget appropriations for the tourism fund.
* Working with the City Administrator on implementation of tourism promotion programs and development of tourism-related facilities.

​The membership of the initial Tourism Committee is as follows:

City Council Rudy van Soolen

Amity DIG  Erin Rainey

Tourism Industry Barbara Bond

Resident Member Melissa Bradley

Resident Member Christy Wilkins

*​*Following discussions at two initial meetings (March 26 andMarch 5, 2018) the Tourism Committee invited a marketing/management consultant to help formulate plans for a Strategic Plan. Luanne M. Lawrence, owner of LML Marketing and Communications (<http://www.lmlmarcom.com/>), met with Committee members on 4/7/18 on a pro bono basis. The Tourism Committee appreciated her time and expertise, and many of the ideas in this Strategic Plan are traceable to ideas from LML Marketing and Communications. However, the Strategic Plan is a product of work by the Tourism Committee and contributing members of the Community. LML Marketing is not liable or responsible for any errors or inadequacies.

# OPPORTUNITIES

## What are our assets?

* Robust local wine industry. International reputation of the Eola-Amity Hills AVA.
* Entries to town that are beautiful: 233, Wheatland Ferry and Amity Road, Bellview-Hopewell Highway connecting to 5th Street
* Pastoral beauty of the surrounding environment
* Locally-owned businesses that (although more development is needed) create a “one of a kind” character as opposed to a mass-produced character
* Bicycle-friendly environment in and around the city
* Amity lies on a major transit route connecting Portland, Salem, Corvallis, Eugene and the Oregon Coast. Thousands of travelers are already driving through the city (we need to encourage them to stop, stay, and shop!)
* Other important local assets: the Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Linfield College, The Evergreen Air and Space Museum,
* Also see next section, “what is different and authentic about this place”

## What is different and authentic about this place?

* Daffodil festival
* Historical character
* The name of the city, Amity, connotes a friendly, welcoming place
* The Brigittine Monastery and their well-known fudge
* Alpaca farm on north end of town
* Regionally-famous pies from Blue Raeven
* “Reach the Beach”
* Local museums and events featuring wine and agriculture
* Pancake breakfast and Christmas tree lighting; strong collaboration of our volunteer fire department in local events

## Tourism in the Local Area

Although Amity does not have the resources to conduct a formal analysis of Tourism opportunities and trends specific to our city, we can glean a great deal of information from other local and regional organizations. We can also make important inferences from the few tourist-related businesses that currently exist in and near the city.

According to the web pages of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA; citing a 2015 study by Dean Runyan), the direct visitor spending for the entire valley is estimated to be $1.5 billion, of which 72% I from overnight visitors and the remaining 28% from day visitors. For the entire valley, lodging occupancy growth is increasing by 1.2% per year. 49% of the visitors are retired or not employed and are well-educated. 67% travel without children under 18. The WVVA concludes that the primary tourist attraction of the area is fine wine. The area attracts soft-adventure seekers, people who enjoy outdoor activities but also appreciate the heritage and culinary offerings of the region. They also mention that collegiate activities and venues are extremely important to the economy of the region. In Amity’s case, visitors to Linfield College could provide an important “spillover” to Amity.

Another study conducted by Full Glass Research (“The Economic Impacts of the Wine and Wine Grape Industries on the Oregon Economy”, Feb. 2018) highlights the increasing impact of the wine industry to the state, including tourism. In just three years, between 2013 and 2016, wine-related tourism doubled in the state of Oregon, generating a whopping $787 billion from tourism alone (Appendix 1). The report does not provide information about wine-related tourism on a local scale, but the data do show that the overall wine industry in Yamhill County accounted for approximately 25% of the total for the entire state (Appendix 2). It is safe to say that wine-related tourism in Yamhill County isn’t close to 25% of the total wine-related tourism of the state (which would be a little under $200 billion). Nevertheless, there is no denying that there is enormous potential for wine-related tourism in Amity, as the “gateway city” to the Eola-Amity Hills (EAH) wine region (the EAH is actually split between Yamhill and Polk Counties).

## Opportunities for Partnerships

* Amity DIG
* Eola-Amity Hills AVA
* Travel Oregon, Travel Salem, and the Willamette Valley Visitors Association
* Amity’s businesses
* Volks Marches ..(?)
* The new Hospitality Program at Linfield College as well as the hospitality program at Chemeketa Community College.
* The Rural Studies Program at Oregon State University

## Opportunities for Small Grants

* Travel Oregon
* Business Oregon
* The USDA –
* The EPA –
* The Ford Family Foundation

# CONSTRAINTS

* Budget! The Amity Tourism Committee operates solely on the basis of transient lodging taxes, which currently provide a budget of about $5,000 per year.
* Hwy 99 runs right through the middle of town, limiting the development of a central core that feels “quaint” and is easily and safely walkable
* Lack of parking
* Many unsightly and unkempt buildings and yards detract from the visual appeal of the city
* Uncertainties about safety, especially at night, due in part to the local drug culture

# ANALYSIS

Tourism is growing very rapidly in Oregon, including the Willamette Valley. In our area, wine-related tourism offers particularly great opportunities, and the broader arena of agricultural tourism along with culinary tourism and bicycle tourism are very promising. Nature-seeking and history-oriented tourists are also likely to be attracted to our area.

However, most of the other small and medium-size cities in the Willamette Valley see similar opportunities, and many already have well-developed tourism strategies to capture a large share of these opportunities.

How can Amity compete? LML Consulting suggested looking to the experiences of Napa and Sonoma for insight. Both Napa and Sonoma are premium wine-growing regions, and they have similar tourism opportunities as we do here in the Willamette Valley. By the second half of the 20th Century, Napa had developed an exceptionally robust and internationally-recognized tourism industry. Rather than compete head-on (according to LML Consulting), Sonoma initially focused on creating a more “quirky”, “off the beaten path” image, relying on its authenticity and distinctiveness rather than its sameness to Napa. If Amity chooses to follow this model, a key starting point will be to identify a theme (or brand) for our own “quirky, authentic” identity, and to adhere to it consistently.

In addition to competing for a similar tourism audience as our neighboring communities, Amity also must deal with having extremely limited resources for tourism development. To be successful, it will be important to set modest, achievable goals, to develop and rely on strong partnerships, and to seek funding actively from outside sources.

Finally, it is important to note that Amity is a community of modest-income families who may not relate well, at least initially, to growth in tourism. A two-fold approach may help: 1. Targeting tourist audiences who seek an authentic experience in a small community, and 2. Involving the community as much as possible in decision-making. A consequence of the first approach is that tourism-related changes in infrastructure will also need to be compatible with quality of life in our small town. The second approach should help to generate “buy in”, and will also allow opportunities to educate townspeople about the benefits of tourism to the city’s coffers.

# PLAN

## Target audiences

* Agricultural/culinary tourists (local, national, international), especially wine tourists
* Seattle/Tacoma/Portland/ residents who are looking for a great weekend experience
* Maybe: Portland/Salem/Corvallis/Eugene small businesses who are looking for great place for a weekend retreat for managers and employees
* Wedding parties
* We don’t want to target just wealthy people, we want to target people who appreciate small, authentic communities coupled with great amenities.

## Goals

1. Create and market a distinct and appealing “persona” for Amity that capitalizes on assets: < *We need to consider alternatives and select a single “persona/tagline”. Two options have been discussed so far, “Farmers and Fermentation”, and “Amity: Eccentric, authentic, and tasty”*. We need to choose ONE and build stories and experiences around it.
2. Create a sub-section of the City’s web page devoted to tourism and opportunities for tourists
3. Enhance the visual appeal as well as opportunities for experiences and lodging in the city.
4. Market Amity as a tourist destination by leveraging partnerships

## Tactics

1. Identify a single “persona” identification for the City of Amity as a tourist destination that is endorsed by the City Council, local residents, local business leaders,
2. Create and market “Tourism Routes” along purposefully chosen entries

* Create and distribute maps that rely on existing routes into the city
* Commission interesting and quirky art along entries and within the city to reinforce and emphasize our persona

1. Collaborate with and encourage the City Council and the City Manager and staff to expedite action on implementation recommendations in Ordinance 648 in ways that are complementary to an agreed-on “persona” for the city.

* Creation of a specific and cohesive economic development strategy to strengthen, preserve, and revitalize the Central Business District.
* Definition, development and promotion of Amity through a coordinated marketing strategy designed to attract businesses and visitors.
* Improvement of the Development Code, amending the Amity Development Code to more efficiently guide the development that is both supported by the community and most likely to drive economic growth.
* Full implementation of the Central Business District Zone to support efficient growth and provide an aesthetic design theme for the commercial center.

1. Leverage existing marketing efforts by Travel Oregon, Travel Salem and Willamette Valley Visitors Association, the Eola-Amity Hills Winegrower’s Association and others to market Amity’s story and appeal as a tourist destination
2. Actively seek grant support to develop sites, activities, marketing and aesthetics that will be attractive to tourists, including walking and bicycle routes, support to enhance local events, marketing, and improvements of the community’s visual appeal. The specific grants and activities must necessarily depend on the funding opportunities that become available.

# ACOUNTABILITY

## Key Performance Indicators (by 2023)

1. A persona for Amity is defined and agreed on. Marketing materials and other developments are consistent with this theme.
2. Attractive “tourism routes” into and around Amity are identified. A map is created and distributed as a hard-copy brochure as well as an on-line resource.
3. A subsection of the web page of the City of Amity is created that includes links to websites and/or contact info of local businesses involved in tourism. [potentially a small additional source of revenue to offer businesses outside the city limits an opportunity to pay to be represented on this page??]. Metrics provided by Google Analytics show that traffic to this page increases by at least 10% per year, and that at least 30% of the visitors to the site proceed to click on contact information for a local business.
4. A competition for artwork by local artists is commissioned to complement the city’s persona, and at least two works of art are completed and installed.
5. Evidence of significant progress on Ordinance 648
6. Travel Oregon, Travel Salem, the WVVA and the Eola-Amity Hills Winegrower’s association all include marketing information and links to the Amity Tourism Website. There is evidence from Google Analytics as well as visitor feedback that these organizations are sending web traffic and foot traffic to the city as tourists.
7. At least one grant proposal per year is submitted to promote tourism and tourism infrastructure in Amity.

Appendix 1. Revenue generated by the wine industry in Oregon in 2016 (Full Glass Research)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sector** | **Revenue** | **Wages** | **Jobs** |
| Vineyards | $189,592,021 | 30,384,000 | 1,053 |
| Wineries | $561,908,387 | 99,790,133 | 2,993 |
| Tourism | 786,827,053 | 215,855,209 | 7,625 |
| Suppliers (indirect) | $84,930,564 | 24,627,625 | 421 |
| Wholesalers | $76,793,648 | $2,296,816.95 | 47 |
| Retail tier | $106,752,500 | $20,016,150 | 902 |
| Induced | $98,164,018.15 | $28,242,799.45 | 626 |
| **Total 2016** | $1,904,968,191 | $421,212,733 | 13,667 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Counties** | **Wine-Related Revenue ($)\*** | **Related Wages ($)\*** | **Related Jobs\*** | **Indirect & Induced Jobs** | **Property**  **Taxes** |
| BAKER | $19,256,476 | 3,112,476 | 107 | 92 | $906,560 |
| BENTON | $88,289,493 | 12,297,324 | 675 | 286 | $2,560,493 |
| CLACKAMAS | $137,644,382 | 13,181,189 | 723 | 543 | $4,044,913 |
| CLATSOP | $17,619,024 | 3,231,187 | 140 | 108 | $718,707 |
| COLUMBIA | $3,946,860 | 684,410 | 31 | 26 | $162,874 |
| COOS | $10,958,222 | 1,952,274 | 86 | 66 | $320,664 |
| CROOK | $1,038,375 | 147,510 | 8 | 11 | $47,741 |
| CURRY | $1,931,488 | 274,384 | 17 | 21 | $107,133 |
| DESCHUTES | $51,767,931 | 9,172,981 | 376 | 283 | $1,914,838 |
| DOUGLAS | $107,337,623 | 21,875,092 | 786 | 327 | $2,468,818 |
| GILLIAM | $252,461 | 35,864 | 2 | 3 | $17,954 |
| GRANT | $1,528,111 | 321,118 | 13 | 6 | $67,189 |
| HARNEY | $161,856 | 22,993 | 2 | 2 | $9,023 |
| HOOD RIVER | $59,888,336 | 11,983,276 | 423 | 167 | $1,201,327 |
| JACKSON | $201,716,821 | 40,056,839 | 1,451 | 659 | $5,030,518 |
| JEFFERSON | $1,109,017 | 165,382 | 10 | 11 | $49,885 |
| JOSEPHINE | $48,123,121 | 9,707,332 | 356 | 162 | $1,028,935 |
| KLAMATH | $5,483,145 | 987,000 | 45 | 38 | $245,065 |
| LAKE | $26,435,931 | 4,976,144 | 151 | 3 | $16,141 |
| LANE | $75,943,264 | 14,159,440 | 600 | 449 | $2,588,775 |
| LINCOLN | $12,960,978 | 2,063,385 | 93 | 89 | $493,485 |
| LINN | $45,045,079 | 9,946,131 | 384 | 194 | $1,495,272 |
| MALHEUR | $2,550,194 | 480,942 | 23 | 18 | $87,820 |
| MARION | $167,723,512 | 33,454,969 | 1,236 | 603 | $4,509,879 |
| MORROW | $912,698 | 129,656 | 5 | 7 | $39,904 |
| MULTNOMAH | $470,682,529 | 91,035,126 | 3,441 | 1,982 | $11,884,060 |
| POLK | $180,982,148 | 38,184,923 | 1,356 | 490 | $3,686,634 |
| SHERMAN | $1,896,593 | 360,482 | 16 | 11 | $96,210 |
| TILLAMOOK | $10,213,706 | 1,965,533 | 77 | 43 | $313,193 |
| UMATILLA | $40,867,084 | 8,214,689 | 305 | 145 | $944,553 |
| UNION | $1,195,695 | 169,859 | 12 | 15 | $63,157 |
| WALLOWA | $599,997 | 85,235 | 5 | 6 | $26,521 |
| WASCO | $27,373,438 | 5,452,161 | 195 | 84 | $616,446 |
| WASHINGTON | $224,720,596 | 43,615,662 | 1,636 | 887 | $6,300,565 |
| WHEELER | $719,859 | 102,262 | 5 | 6 | $25,761 |
| YAMHILL | $687,116,905 | 132,267,139 | 4,497 | 2,261 | $15,187,663 |
| % total in Yamhill | 25.1% | 25.6% | 23.3% | 22.3% | 29.1% |

Appendix 2.