

Willamette Valley Visitors Association

Strategic Plan
2025 - 2031

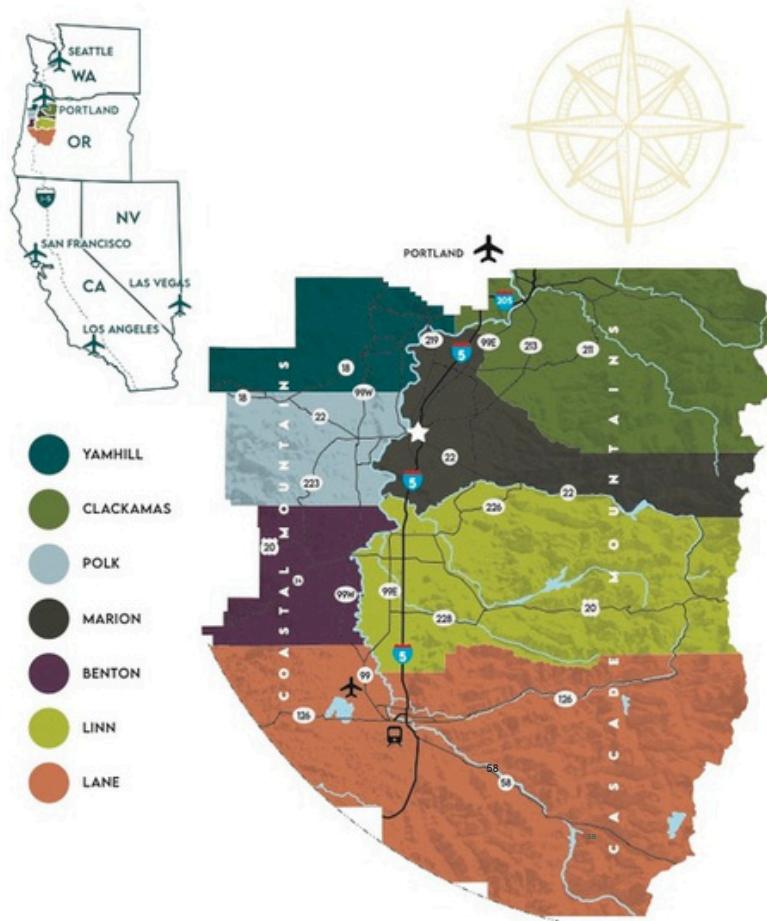


Introduction

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is a 501c6 that serves as the Regional Destination Marketing/Management Organization (RDMO) for all of Yamhill, Polk, Marion, Linn, Benton Counties, and portions of Lane and Clackamas Counties. WVVA works to drive overnight visitation to the region to support a thriving tourism economy in partnership with our Destination Marketing/Management Organization (DMO).

We inspire travel to the region through integrated marketing campaigns celebrating our unique culture, people, and landscapes. WVVA also works to support the development of tourism assets and community-based tourism programs. As the RDMO appointed by the Oregon Tourism Commission, WVVA manages the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP), its main funding source.

This strategic plan provides guiding light imperatives for the organization. Fiscal year 2025 marks year one of an eight-year contract for Regional Cooperative Tourism funding, which is broken into four biennial plans. By creating a long-term plan, WVVA can build continuity and frequency in programming that ideally builds on its successes year over year.



Mission

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is a Regional Destination Marketing/Management Organization focusing on promotion of responsible tourism and regional economic well-being that benefits residents and visitors alike. Our mission is to enhance the region's vitality by cultivating authentic experiences to support local communities, ensuring the Willamette Valley's long-term resilience and economic growth. We are dedicated to fostering the prosperity of the Willamette Valley as a welcoming and inclusive year-round destination.

Vision

A vibrant, year-round visitor economy that fuels local businesses, enriches our community and creates experiences that visitors love and residents are proud of.

Values

Community-Centric: The needs and priorities of our Willamette Valley communities guide our initiatives.

Partnership & Collaboration: We believe in the strength of partnerships rooted in trust and mutual benefit.

Integrity: We commit to high standards of integrity, accountability, and continuous organizational improvement.

Stewardship of Place and Resource: We honor and protect the Willamette Valley's natural resources and cultural heritage by promoting and implementing responsible tourism practices.

Inclusivity: We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive, diverse, and accessible environment, striving for all people to feel welcome and respected throughout our region.



Definitions

These definitions are intended to help our broader community understand we are actively doing this work; industry buzzwords should not scare them away. The WVVA Board and staff have worked to create shared definitions as they apply to the Willamette Valley as a region. It is part of WVVA's mission to help guide the tourism industry to leave the best positive economic impact, mitigate the negative impacts of tourism from over-crowding, reduce environmental impacts, and repair damaged resident sentiment toward the industry.

Regenerative Tourism

Regenerative tourism is **community-led**, focusing on improving the economic, ecological, and cultural health of our destination. It supports local businesses, uplifts authentic voices, and fosters collaboration to create experiences that benefit visitors and residents. By facilitating meaningful connections and prioritizing local leadership, regenerative tourism ensures our communities thrive and grow stronger with every visit.

Equity

Equity is **recognizing the unique needs of each community**, partner, industry member, and visitor tailoring support to help them thrive. It means listening, understanding, and providing the right tools and resources to address individual challenges and opportunities. Being intentional with resource allocation and advocating for communities at every level, equity ensures we're not just filling gaps but creating meaningful, lasting solutions that strengthen our destination.

Inclusion

Inclusion is practiced through **intentionally inviting diverse voices to the table** and creating opportunities for meaningful participation. It goes beyond highlighting traditionally marginalized communities by empowering them to share their authentic and impactful stories. Through listening, collaboration, and shared goals, inclusion fosters a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and represented in shaping the future of our destination.





The Plan

This plan works to build continuity across multiple operating biennia to build momentum over time. Four key imperatives have been identified that encompass the full scope of WVVA work and strategies.

Some strategies might be operational and ongoing while others might be checklist items that, once complete, lead to the reevaluation or new creation of necessary strategies. Biennial reviews of the strategies will allow for the short-term tactical adjustments needed to keep the work focused.



Imperative 1: Elevate Community Engagement, Education & Advocacy



The first imperative is focused on the most important regional audience - the Willamette Valley-based tourism industry. WVVA needs to effectively communicate with the industry as well as collect information to be shared with Travel Oregon and other key partners.



Strategies

Align industry priorities and advocacy needs

- Become a responsive convener to deliver information, resources, and advocacy efforts for DMO partners.
- Have a clear crisis communication plan that is focused on supporting valley partners in times of need.

Build industry engagement and training opportunities

- Regularly update and maintain the WillametteValley.org industry resources page.
- Prioritize increasing audience engagement of our Industry e-newsletter and other messaging platforms.
- Provide training for the industry partners.

Conduct, analyze, and share data

- Invest in regional data collection and the analysis of the data to be shared.
- Measure and track resident sentiment on the tourism industry.
- Regular reporting of data to the industry.

Reach valley visitor industry partners and build a feedback cycle

- Define key terms that engage and ground communities in industry work.
- Create and distribute educational materials regarding how to best participate with the region and industry partners.
- Continue to participate in relevant community and industry events.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Monitor regional community engagement by tracking WVVA involvement with community meetings, attendance at WVVA meetings, sign-ups and engagement with WVVA e-newsletter, and Valley participation with Tourism Industry Partner Surveys.
- Regularly publish reporting of data to support regional partners.
- Hosting annual free or low-cost training for valley partners.





Imperative 2: Support community-focused/lead tourism development

Destination development is the most prudent tool to grow the visitor industry into something that serves our communities instead of only taking from or changing them. Working alongside communities to identify areas that can be developed or areas that are being underutilized helps the region focus our efforts and serve our communities in the most beneficial way.

We recognize that our small organization size means WVVA cannot be in all places or be all things for the region, however, by working through a regional lens we foster continuity and collaboration, identify trends, and fill gaps across localities. WVVA will evaluate its role with partner communities by categorizing staff involvement as **lead, collaborate, or advocate**.



Destination Stewardship Role Definitions



This is the highest level of WVVA involvement. High-level support can be WVVA leading the project and/or funding the work. This level of involvement means the work will impact multiple WVVA sub-regions. Ideally, this role is for a limited period to launch projects and then transition long-term ownership and sustainability to relevant partners.

This mid-level involvement means WVVA is on the team helping get the work done, not leading or the main funding partner. In this role, WVVA will leverage regional knowledge and contacts for the team.



WVVA is aware of the work and project, listening and subscribing to newsletter updates. WVVA staff is monitoring when work might escalate to higher involvement. Support may involve WVVA providing information on financial resources or letters of support for grants.

Strategies

- Assess projects with a lens of lead, collaborate, and advocate.
- WVVA's role within each project will be decided based on the level of need, the perceived impact of the work across our sub-regions, and the direction of the community.
- Identify and implement opportunities to elevate cross-visitation within WVVA's sub-regions and cross-regionally.
- Revisit past development projects and evaluate them for enhancement, such as the scenic byways program.
- Foster inclusivity in developing projects.
- Connect development and WVVA marketing/PR arms to ensure understanding and anticipate content timelines for promotion of development work.
- Use the Regional Strategic Investment Fund as a catalyst for community-driven work.



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Create a better-centralized tracking system for community-led projects.
- Create a standardized brief with a project summary, description of WVVA's lead/collaborate/advocate role, timeline, partners, and eventual marketing/content needs.
- Track how well development projects are integrating into WVVA's marketing and PR efforts.
- Track Strategic Investment Fund projects for success even after funding is spent.
- Create reporting metrics for tracking tourism impact in communities.





Imperative 3: Collaborative regional brand awareness and marketing integration

This imperative speaks to the external work to attract visitors to the region. WVVA will work to keep the Willamette Valley top of mind as a premier year-round destination. Marketing efforts should uplift and build the Willamette Valley brand while understanding the sub-regional needs around shoulder seasons and marketing priorities.

Strategies

- Understand sub-regional needs (e.g., seasonality, crisis communications, emerging markets) to integrate into regional marketing strategy.
- Collaborate with industry-adjacent associations (e.g., wine associations) on marketing and public relations efforts.
- Develop a cohesive marketing plan, considering partner plans.
- Measure region and brand sentiment.
- Market and measure airport traffic for the two regional airports as key access points into the region.
- Prioritize cross-regional programming to enhance WVVA's partnership with Oregon partners and support visitor travel paths.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Using the collected data to identify clear target markets and emerging markets (e.g., geography, niche interest, gender, age, marital, income).
- Facilitate cooperative campaigns with interested partners to keep media spend in marketing longer.
- Track consumer newsletter measurements.
- Collecting data from story highlights to see the impact.
- Facilitate collaboration in public relations efforts with the RDMO and community partners.





Imperative 4: Strengthen the Organization

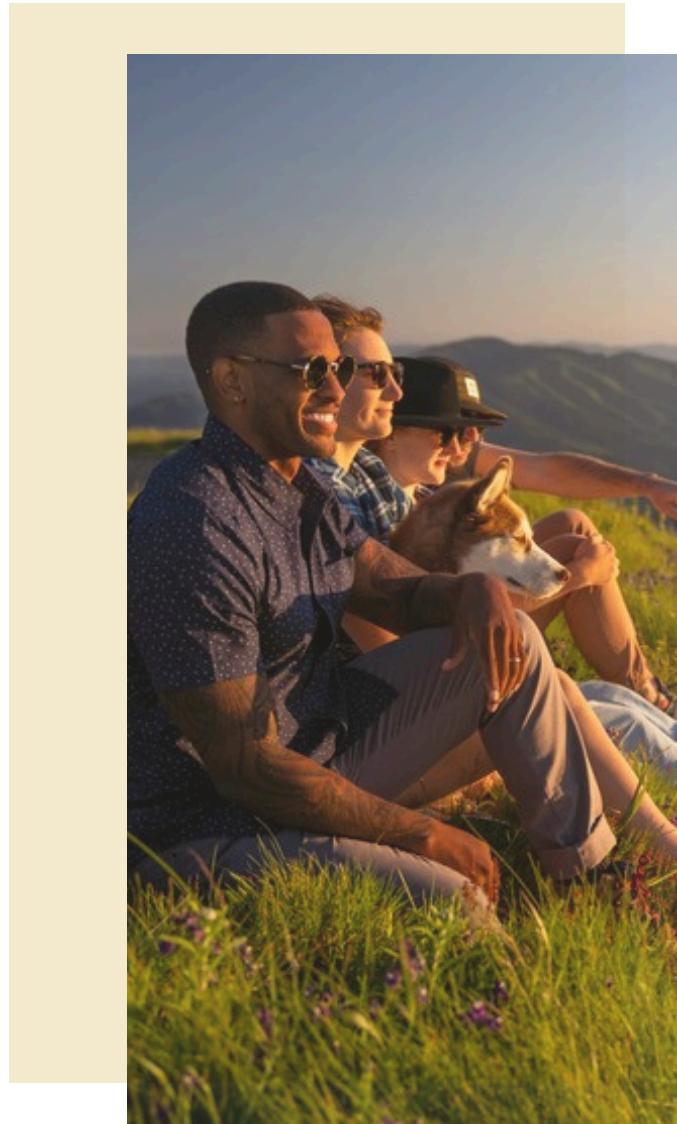
For WVVA to properly support our industry partners, the organization must have a solid foundation. This includes clear standard operating procedures, and employee and board policies.

Strategies

- Facilitate board engagement and education as the board makeup expands.
- Build organization culture and roadmap for staff development, recruitment and retention.
- Build a reporting cadence.
- Create a resource library for understanding the industry.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

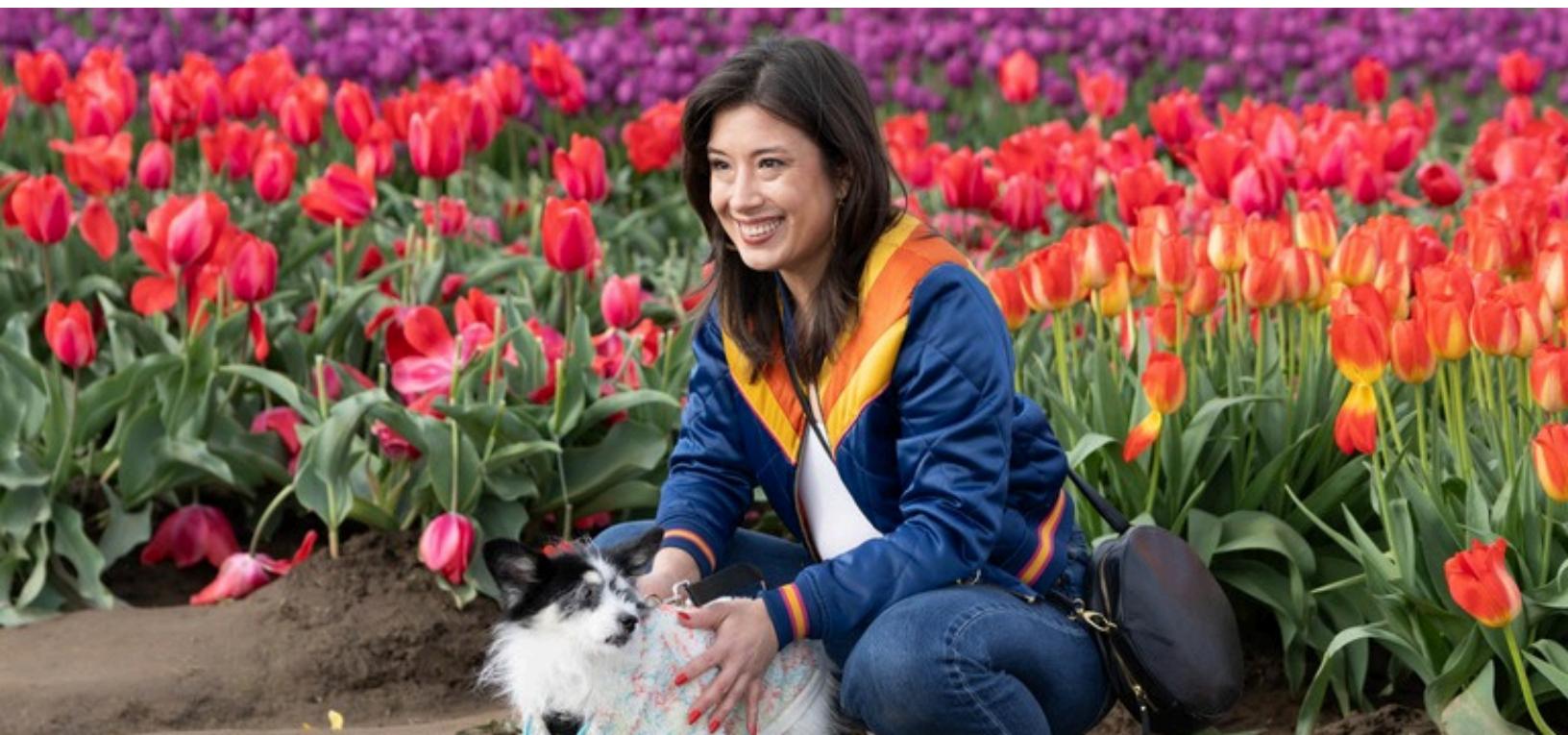
- Create clear employee policies and standard operating procedures.
- Create onboarding materials for Oregon tourism and WVVA structure.
- Work plans for staff that align with the regional biennial plan and career development.
- Expanded board that includes broader industry and more geographic equitability.





Timeline

Timeline	Notes
January - June 2025	Planning period
July 1, 2025	Begin plan implementation
June 30, 2026	Secure the last seven years of RCTP funding
July 1, 2027	Biennial reflection on Imperatives and Strategies
July 1, 2029	Biennial reflection on Imperatives and Strategies
July - December 2030	Plan and goal reflection
January - June 2031	Planning period



WVVA Industry Opportunities



Partner with WVVA to promote tourism and amplify your destination. Scan the QR code to learn more.

Meet the Team



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