



CITY OF
SUMNER
WASHINGTON

CITY OF SUMNER
**SUB-AREA TOURISM
MASTER PLAN**

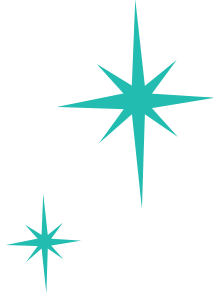


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Pierce County undertook the development of its countywide Tourism Destination Strategic Plan, the City of Sumner realized the opportunity for a long-term master plan of its own to support its desire to become an overnight leisure destination.

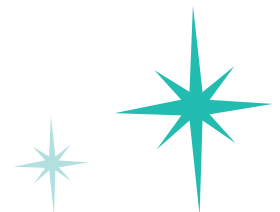


With the goal of advancing Sumner toward its vision of being a welcoming, eventful community that celebrates its connections to people and the land, this plan was guided by local project advisors with a keen interest in advancing Sumner and implementing this plan. The City of Sumner's Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan was developed to amplify existing efforts and bring fresh ideas to the community, particularly when it comes to enhancing opportunities for visitors to move throughout the community and have more reasons to visit. The impact the recommendations from this plan will increase visitation to Sumner and have a significant positive economic impact on the community for decades to come.

Through strong alignment and collaboration with Pierce County Economic Development, including shared research and shared stakeholder engagement, the two plans were developed with the goal of being aligned and complimentary. Sumner has tourism development opportunities that are aligned with those of the county, however, are unique to the place, people, and needs of the community.

Strategic GOAL #1

Enhance Tourism Infrastructure



ACCOMMODATIONS

- Develop a boutique hotel downtown, considering the upper floors of downtown buildings.
- Support farm owners and operators in developing boutique accommodations and glamping opportunities at agritourism experiences.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Ensure trail development and final connectivity with the countywide trail system.
- Develop unique-to-Sumner enhancements close to trails, including interactive artwork, breweries, farm restaurants and outfitters.
- Collaborate with the county to promote trail experiences in Sumner and the connectivity throughout Pierce County.

PLACEMAKING

- Develop consistent and sufficient placemaking and wayfinding signage that celebrates Sumner.

- Develop unique laneways, pocket parks, and plazas with Sumner-specific murals and programming.
- Incorporate more murals and public art that celebrate Sumner into downtown revitalization.

ACCESSIBILITY

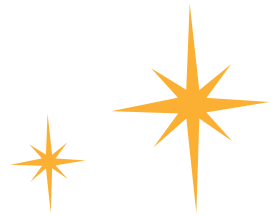
- Become a more accessible destination by widening paths and paving trails throughout Sumner, consider accessible accommodations and other initiatives.
- Develop recreation itineraries from Sumner for all abilities.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Support industry partners in adopting and participating in environmentally sustainable initiatives.

Strategic GOAL #2

Create Additional Attractions, Events, & Experiences



EVENTS STRATEGY

- Develop a comprehensive event strategy focusing on developing / expanding visitor demand-generating events in shoulder seasons.
- Ensure all aspects of the community's history, heritage, and cultures are included.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

- Further evolve Rhubarb Days into a food, craft brew, coffee, flowers, live music, farmer / maker festival that extends through the whole community.
- Add elements to Rhubarb Days that will draw new audiences; drone shows, light displays, sport competitions, or agricultural symposiums.
- Work with local business operators to support a "Doors Open" Festival to showcase all the business / industrial activities in Sumner.
- Develop a Winter Festival in January & February needs-periods to support businesses and vibrancy in the community.

AGRITOURISM

- Collaborate with the County to invest in food / farm and /or cider trail development.
- Work with experience providers to develop signature culinary or farm-based events.
- Work with businesses to develop experiential offerings including cooking classes, cidery tours, live music, etc.
- Collaborate with the County on development of Signature Farmers' & Makers' Markets.

VOLUN-TOURISM

- Work with local non-profits to develop volunteer programs and itineraries specifically for visitors, including incentives for participation.

EXPERIENCES

- Collaborate with community members to define the unique characteristics of Lucy V. Ryan Park and redevelop the space as a shared community asset.
- Incentivize businesses to stay open through evenings and weekends.



Strategic GOAL #3

Augment Connectivity & Mobility



LEVERAGE COMMUTER TRAIN

- Create a campaign to encourage train riders to visit downtown Sumner.
- Promote bus and train transportation combo for weekday traffic.
- Develop packaging & promotions around weekend use / festival opportunities.

CONNECT DOWNTOWN SUMNER TO INDUSTRIAL AREA

- Promote bike trails linking downtown and industrial area.
- Develop maps, marketing, and incentives to drive more commuter / business traffic from the industrial area into downtown.
- Support local restaurants in developing food truck / pop up stands in the industrial particularly for lunch specials to connect downtown with industrial area.

ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- Support private business offerings of on-demand shuttles for transportation to farms and Mt. Rainier.
- Partner with experiential transportation providers to help visitors move through Sumner (ie: Circuit).
- Develop shared itineraries with transportation options from Tacoma / SeaTac.
- Advocate for more rideshare options in Sumner (ie: Uber, Lyft, etc).

NON-VEHICULAR OPTIONS

- Support bike / e-bike rentals or outfitters in downtown and industrial area.
- Develop bike lanes throughout Sumner to encourage non-vehicular transportation and links to trails.

Strategic GOAL #4

Strengthen Identity & Alignment



BRAND

- Undertake a community-wide exercise to understand sentiment on identity and create buy-in.
- Develop a collaborative and open process with the community on Sumner brand and identity validation or refinement.
- Create opportunities for all businesses and residents to share in and celebrate Sumner's brand.
- Align with Pierce County on a cohesive countywide brand.

MARKETING

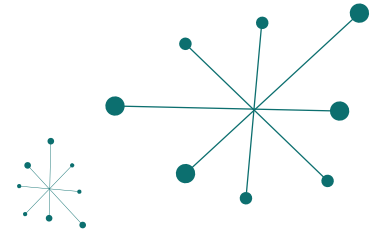
- Develop a collaborative marketing & activation strategy.
- Develop collaborative marketing & activation strategies with the business zones.
- Promote business zones in East End and Industrial areas of Sumner.

ALIGNMENT

- Actively support Pierce County's long-term tourism development and identity initiatives.

SUB-AREA TOURISM MASTER PLAN

CONTRIBUTORS



The City of Sumner would like to thank the regional community leaders who gave of their time and expertise as they served as project advisors, providing guidance, leadership, and support of the development of the Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan.

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Thank you to the staff of MMGY NextFactor who listened, explored Sumner and brought their outside perspective and expertise to drafting this plan. We appreciate their insight, their management of this project and their expertise in the tourism industry. We consider them locals and a part of Sumner now.



IMAGINE IT'S THE YEAR 2034 IN SUMNER, WASHINGTON.

Sumner’s natural beauty and stewardship of the land is a point of pride for residents, many of whom have moved to the community within the last 10 years. These new residents have been welcomed to Sumner with open arms, instilling that value in everyone in the community. Long-term and newer residents alike extend their welcoming nature to the visitors who walk Main Street, dine at local restaurants, and participate in local festivals and events.

Sumner’s annual Rhubarb Festival has grown beyond its historic footprint downtown to encompass music, local cultures, local food and multiple sites over a two-weekend period. Locals love how the festival showcases the best of Sumner and supports the local economy, while overnight visitors appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the area and explore new parts of Sumner every year.

Sumner’s industrial area is thriving and with a cohesive identity, has more distinction in its role as the largest manufacturing center in the County. As it continues to bring in business travelers from around the world, improved connectivity invites them to explore more of Sumner during their stay.

Downtown Sumner is thriving, thanks to the Main Street and Heritage Park projects and to a new boutique hotel and commuter train enhancements which have created substantial vibrancy, allowing for new businesses and extended evening and weekend hours.

Sumner has become known for agricultural experiences. Thanks to alignment with the City, policy support and funding opportunities from the county, local farms have been empowered to expand their offerings to include “glamping” and other visitor lodging amenities as well as events, culinary offerings and more.

Sumner’s economy is thriving, thanks in large part to the contributions of new visitors. With a more diversified economy, a strong local brand that aligns businesses and residents, and new infrastructure to support new experiences, Sumner is a more resilient and vibrant community that honors its past and holds true to the values of its residents.

When local leaders look back at the positive changes over the last decade, they acknowledge the leadership of those involved with this Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan as a catalyst for the growth in the visitor experience and economy.



LETTER FROM THE CITY OF SUMNER

Each year, Sumner welcomes many visitors and tourists. They come as part of their jobs to visit the Manufacturing Industrial Center. They come for a special event on Sumner’s classic Main Street, or they come through as part of the regional trail system to walk or bike along the White River on the Sumner Link Trail, connecting the Interurban and Foothills trails from Seattle to Mt. Rainier. People come for rhubarb pie and to visit farms around the city, enjoying year-round produce and photos ranging from tulips to pumpkins.

Sumner needs visitors for its local businesses to be successful. At the same time, we need partnership with key attractions, like Mt Rainier and the Washington State Fair, to be attractive. For this reason, we piggybacked onto Pierce County’s contract to hire MMGY NextFactor to provide outside perspective on what’s working and what could be better to invite visitors to Sumner. Yes, “piggyback” is the actual, technical term. This synergy is important for two reasons. First, it made the study more cost-effective, which saved limited financial resources to go farther in working to bring in tourists. Second, it makes sure Sumner’s plan aligns seamlessly with Pierce County’s plan.

With all of its fantastic qualities, Sumner is rarely a destination unto itself, especially when it’s so close to other opportunities. Any effort to bring in visitors must recognize that and leverage regional partnerships so that visitors have reasons to spend quite a bit of time, and a few nights, in Pierce County, which must include a visit to Sumner.

The plan is the start, not the finish of this journey. For Sumner businesses to truly reap the benefits of increased visitors (customers), all areas of hospitality must work together, along with the City, the county and our destination marketing organizations, to keep working through this plan and continue to increase visits to Sumner and our region.

Sincerely,

Carmen Palmer
Communications Director

MARKET TRENDS

Internationally, the travel and tourism market has seen significant shifts since the global pandemic of 2020. Four of the top market trends that are most relevant to Sumner include:



UNEVEN RECOVERY

Not every destination recovered as quickly or as robustly as others in the aftermath of the global pandemic. While outdoor destinations fared better than others, recovery has largely been uneven.



PURPOSEFUL TRAVEL

Travelers are increasingly seeking experiences that support personal improvement and a departure from their routines. Offering these types of experiences for different audience segments will be key to attracting new visitors.



OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES



The global pandemic spurred a significant interest in outdoor experiences, and that trend is not dissipating. Visitors are still seeking opportunities to be outdoors, whether for adventure, walking and sightseeing, or dining.



FIERCE COMPETITION

Travel has returned in a significant way. Not only are Americans traveling more, but international visitation to the United States has also returned. This is driving fierce competition amongst destinations globally, and a critical reason to be focused on experience development, staying aligned with consumer trends, and being prepared with resiliency plans.



2023 FUTURES STUDY



In 2023, in conjunction with the Destinations International Foundation, MMGY NextFactor conducted the largest global survey of tourism industry leaders, with 837 tourism executives from 62 countries participating. This extensive process led to the development of 50 Trends and 50 Strategies.

Of the 50 Trends identified through the extensive process of the Futures Study, the consulting team identified four top trends relevant to their findings throughout the course of this project.



Four transformational opportunities for our industry emerged that relate directly to Sumner's Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan – and to the future of Pierce County:

- Customers are increasingly seeking a unique, authentic travel experience.
- Communities expect to be more engaged in destination, product, and experience development for locals and visitors.
- Destinations are looking at sustainability / regeneration more broadly, encompassing economic, social, and environmental impacts.
- Greater industry, community and government alignment is driving destination competitiveness and brand.

TOP TRENDS & STRATEGIES

The survey also identified the top strategies and trends in the tourism industry, many of which align with Sumner's strategic direction for the visitor economy and were considered during the development of this Plan.

SUB-AREA TOURISM MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Sumner’s Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan was informed based on local, county, state, national, and international industry trends, and studies. It was also informed by significant stakeholder engagement, both locally in Sumner and in partnership with Pierce County’s Tourism Destination Strategic Plan. The countywide stakeholder engagement led to important insights and takeaways that validated the sentiment of Sumner’s stakeholders.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Existing city, county, and state plans, policies, and regulations were read, considered, and referenced in the context of Sumner’s Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan. The project team recognizes and respects the work that has already been done in this region and considers it a solid foundation to build upon.

The following is a list of specific planning documents referenced during project research engagement:

- Sumner Tourism Strategic Plan
- Sumner Comprehensive Plan
- White River Restoration
- Main Street Vision / Alley Activation & Heritage Park Redesign
- Sumner Parks, Trail & Open Space Plan
- Town Center Plan
- East Sumner Neighborhood Plan
- Pierce County Comprehensive Plan
- Pierce County Tourism Funding Strategic Plan



The following exciting new developments in Sumner were toured and / or reviewed by the project team:

- Heritage Park redevelopment
- Hops Alley
- Future new library
- New housing

The following compelling new experiences in the Sumner area were taken in or studied by the project team:

- Night and Artisan markets in the area
- New farm experiences including sunflowers and tulips
- Sumner’s proximity to Mt. Rainier and State Fair





STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sumner's Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan was informed by significant stakeholder engagement, both at the local and county-levels, in partnership with the Pierce County Tourism Destination Strategic Plan.

SUMNER-SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT

MMGY NextFactor met with over 60 stakeholders through a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews, all which took place between April and August 2023.

The primary purpose of this engagement was to identify key opportunities and challenges for the future of Sumner as a destination for visitors and a quality place for residents to live, work, and play.

INTERVIEWS

5 in-depth interviews were conducted in-person and virtually with community leaders and stakeholders who provided specific insights into Sumner.

FOCUS GROUPS

3 sector-specific focus groups were facilitated with more than 55 total participants. These focus groups were highly interactive sessions that fostered new relationships amongst the following groups:

- City of Sumner Staff
- Downtown and Events
- Agritourism

PIERCE COUNTY ENGAGEMENT

MMGY NextFactor met with over 100 stakeholders through a series of focus groups, in-depth interviews, and community town halls, all which took place between April and August 2023. The results of the broader county engagement have helped to inform elements of Sumner's Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan.

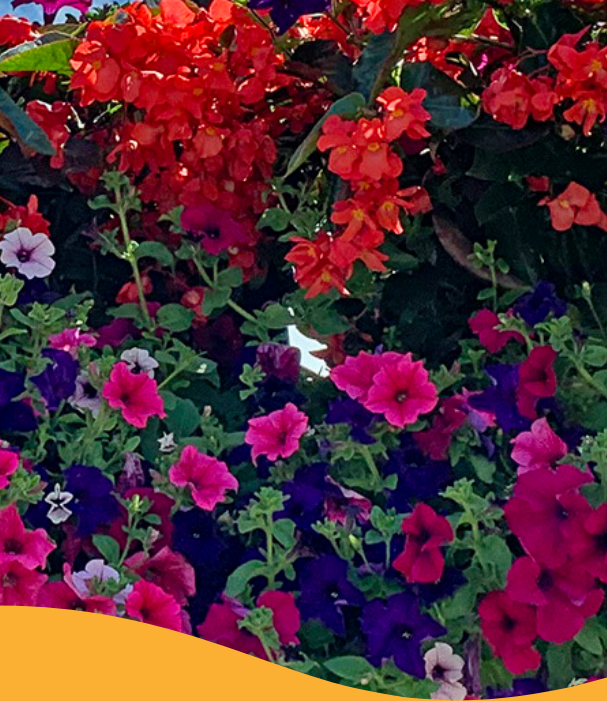
ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- 15 one-on-one interviews
- 10 focus groups with more than 55 participants
- 2 community town hall sessions with over 40 participants
- Resident Survey with 612 responses

INTERVIEWS



FOCUS
GROUPS



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

MMGY NextFactor facilitated two community town halls in May 2023. These community town halls were hosted in downtown Tacoma and in Puyallup and were collectively attended by approximately 40 residents. These sessions were intended to offer residents further opportunity to share their vision for the future of tourism in Pierce County and were focused on solution-oriented exercises and discussion.

VISIONING SESSION

The results and insights gleaned from these research activities were then used in a visioning workshop with the project advisors to envision the ideal future of tourism management in Sumner and to develop priorities for the plan.

VALIDATION SESSION

The results of the workshop were then compiled into a Draft Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan, which was presented to the project advisors, City of Sumner staff, and other key stakeholders for feedback and validation.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Agritourism
- Lodging
- Branding
- Commuter train & public transportation
- Experience development
- Expanded target demographics
- Strategic events
- Outdoor recreation



KEY CHALLENGES:

- Business development
- Connectivity & mobility
- Brand promise & marketing
- Infrastructure
- Destination access
- Lodging

REVIEW OF SUMNER'S BRAND & IDENTITY

by Stewart Colovin, EVP Global Brand Strategy, MMGY Global

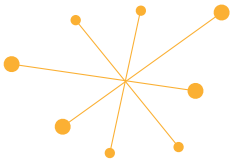
BRAND PROMISE

A clearly articulated brand promise is integral to bringing your brand to life. It should give your partners a clear path to deliver upon the brand, while creating an expectation of what your guests and customers can expect to receive from you every day.

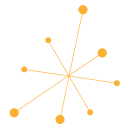
While your current frame of reference speaks to many of the positive attributes of the community, it doesn't inspire an emotional connection. By going a little deeper into what makes Sumner, Sumner you could create a promise that gets to the heart of your unique experience and inspires your partners to create unique and memorable experiences.

SUMNER'S CURRENT BRAND PROMISE:

Sumner is an authentic small town that has well planned infrastructure and easy access to a vibrant region.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:



- Many small towns describe themselves as “authentic”. What does that mean in Sumner? How are we authentic? How can people experience our authenticity?
- What is the benefit of our “well-planned infrastructure”? How do we bring that to life?
- While having easy access to the rest of the region is important, it could also be misinterpreted that Sumner is a great place to pass through, rather than spend time. How can we make it clear that unless you're in Sumner, you haven't truly experienced the region?

THE INSIGHTS THAT HAVE INFORMED SUMNER'S CURRENT BRAND PROMISE:

SUMNER IS GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC	SUMNER IS PERSONAL AND INVOLVED	SUMNER IS INSPIRING	SUMNER'S POINT OF DIFFERENCE
<p>Pro-business.</p> <p>Highly-educated and down-to-earth.</p> <p>Real, practical solutions to environmental and other wide-spread challenges.</p> <p>Planned community with history/heritage.</p> <p>Solution-oriented.</p>	<p>Seeks input.</p> <p>Values differing opinions.</p> <p>Comes together for solutions.</p> <p>Gets to be involved.</p>	<p>Asks why not instead of why.</p> <p>Lots of partners ready to come together.</p> <p>Fun, loves traditional celebrations.</p> <p>Will always try what's thought best – new, old, or never been tried before.</p>	<p>Not a theme park of 1957.</p> <p>No uncontrolled growth.</p> <p>Not a “presto-community”.</p> <p>Not interested in doing things one way just because that's what everyone else is doing.</p> <p>Not a lot of talk with no action.</p>

REVIEW OF SUMNER'S BRAND & IDENTITY

by Stewart Colovin, EVP Global Brand Strategy, MMGY Global

Sumner's insights highlight many potential areas your brand could explore. It begins to speak to your unique vibe and attitude as a community. And most importantly, these are the areas that will build community pride – because they speak to what makes Sumner different from other places.

A community that focuses on “why not instead of why” tells people about the attitude and culture of Sumner. “Not interested in doing things one way just because that's what everyone else is doing” speaks to an independent community that follows its own path.

In those two statements, you've begun to tell people who you are and what you stand for. It's that type of insight and attitude that could be the foundation for creating an emotionally connected brand. It sets an expectation for how you do things differently than other places, while creating a reason to visit.



Sumner can create a brand that embodies the attitude and spirit of the community while building bridges between its residents, visitors and public and private sectors. One well-crafted brand can connect emotionally with each of your audiences without Sumner as “something for everyone”. It can tell people who you are, why they would want to live, work and play, visit or run a business in Sumner, and be the thread that ties all brands within the town together.

Sumner is evolving as a community. Its projected growth will change the community. This raises the question of the continued relevancy of the community's brand of small town charm.

It is possible to continue to deliver on a brand focused on small town charm, if the community is aligned to it, businesses are providing exceptional personal customer service, the business zones offer a community feeling through infrastructure, art and experiences and the events in the community foster the sentiment.

To achieve this, Sumner's brand promise should be updated to reflect the commitment to small town charm and experiences that match that promise. Businesses and residents should be engaged in living the brand promise and it should help guide decisions for the community.

AN EFFECTIVE BRAND CAN:

**CAPTURE THE
ESSENCE AND SOUL
OF SUMNER.**



**CREATE
CONSENSUS IN THE
COMMUNITY.**



**BUILD A
PLATFORM FOR
DECISION-MAKING.**

Overarching

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1. MORE ACCOMMODATIONS ARE NEEDED, PARTICULARLY DOWNTOWN.**
- 2. SUMNER'S BRAND PROMISE AND IDENTITY SHOULD EVOLVE TO REPRESENT THE BROADER COMMUNITY.**
- 3. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND CONNECTIVITY SHOULD BE ENHANCED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF VISITORS.**
- 4. THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP MORE AGRITOURISM EXPERIENCES IN COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL FARMS.**
- 5. TRAIL DEVELOPMENT, CONNECTIVITY, AND SERVICES ARE NEEDED TO ENHANCE OUTDOOR RECREATION.**
- 6. EVENTS SHOULD BE LEVERAGED TO SUPPORT VISITATION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**
- 7. EXTENDED EVENING AND WEEKEND BUSINESS, EXPERIENCE, AND RESTAURANT HOURS ARE NEEDED.**

VISION

A shared vision for Sumner was created to guide the direction of this Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan.

A successful vision incorporates three key elements: first, it should be inspirational, meaning it is a vision that the community is inspired to achieve. Next, it should be aspirational, meaning that it is not a reflection of the community at the time it was created. Finally, the vision should reflect key priorities.

The project advisors developed the following long-term vision for Sumner, based on the research, input, and alignment with the broader Pierce County Tourism Destination Strategic Plan:

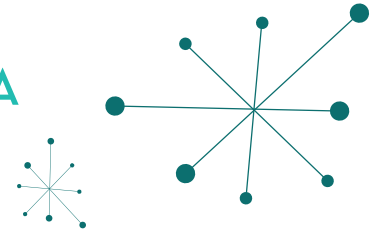
**IN 2034,
SUMNER WILL BE:**

**A WELCOMING, VIBRANT
COMMUNITY THAT CELEBRATES
ITS CONNECTIONS TO PEOPLE
AND THE LAND.**

It was important to the project advisors that Sumner's welcoming nature be reflected in its long-term vision. Equally important was that Sumner continue to grow the vibrancy of the community, through new businesses, extended hours, events and festivals and other initiatives that lead to a prosperous and welcoming community.

Finally, in looking to the future, the project advisors were keen to note that connecting with new and long-term residents will be critical, as will opportunities related to agritourism and respecting and stewarding Sumner's natural assets.

THE CITY OF SUMNER'S ROLE IN THE SUB-AREA TOURISM MASTER PLAN



The strategic goals and recommendations in this plan are a result of this collective process and represent the ideas and aspirations of the people who live in and contribute to Sumner and Pierce County.

To achieve the shared vision articulated in this Plan, it will require a collective, community-wide implementation effort across multiple organizations as well as Pierce County Economic Development, the tourism industry and community stakeholders.

Neither Sumner nor Pierce County Economic Development owns the assets and experiences related to the local visitor economy, and therefore, cannot single-handedly move this Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan forward. Their roles in implementing this Plan forward will take many forms, including:

ADVOCATE

There will be instances where the City of Sumner advocates for the advancement of strategic initiatives that will advance the city and county for the benefit of visitors and residents.

CONVENE

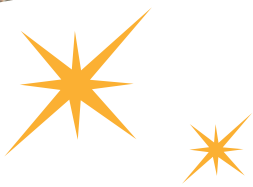
The City of Sumner may be the conveners of groups and those in positions to advance initiatives.

LEAD

There will be instances where either the City of Sumner or Pierce County Economic Development takes the lead as the organization to advance initiatives.

SUPPORT

Finally, the City of Sumner will be the supporting or partnering organization on initiatives with other leading organizations.



STRATEGIC GOALS

Emerging from this process are four strategic themes that offer guidance on how Sumner will achieve its shared vision.

Each theme is supported by initiatives that - to be successful - must be contributed to by multiple partners and stakeholders throughout Sumner and Pierce County. When successfully implemented, these goals and subsequent initiatives will make a positive impact on the quality of life, quality of experience and quality of economy in Sumner and Pierce County.

It is important to note that Sumner's Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan Strategic Goals align with those of the Pierce County Tourism Destination Strategic Plan yet are specific to the needs and opportunities of Sumner.

**ENHANCE TOURISM
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**CREATE ADDITIONAL
ATTRACTIONS, EVENTS
& EXPERIENCES**

**AUGMENT
CONNECTIVITY
& MOBILITY**

**STRENGTHEN
IDENTITY &
ALIGNMENT**

Strategic GOAL #1

ENHANCE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Sumner has a strong opportunity to enhance its comprehensive tourism infrastructure offerings from accommodations to accessibility, in ways that will support the preservation of the community's small city charm.

Adding boutique accommodation offerings downtown will give visitors more opportunity to add to the vibrancy of Main Street, the new Heritage Park, and Hops Alley, and even arrive to the area using the commuter train. Adding boutique accommodations both downtown and in the agricultural areas will accelerate Sumner's desire to welcome more leisure visitors, while ensuring the hotels in the Industrial Area can continue to welcome business travelers.

Other tourism infrastructure opportunities in Sumner include enhancing outdoor recreation offerings, its local placemaking and visitor signage as well as accessibility and sustainability measures that will benefit residents as well as visitors.

ACTION ITEMS

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Develop a boutique hotel downtown, considering the upper floors of downtown buildings.
- Support farm owners and operators in developing boutique accommodations and glamping opportunities at agritourism experiences.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Ensure trail development and final connectivity with the countywide trail system.
- Develop unique-to-Sumner enhancements close to trails, including interactive artwork, breweries, farm restaurants and outfitters.
- Collaborate with the county to promote trail experiences in Sumner and the connectivity throughout Pierce County.

PLACEMAKING

- Develop consistent and sufficient placemaking and wayfinding signage that celebrates Sumner.
- Develop unique laneways, pocket parks, and plazas with Sumner-specific murals and programming.
- Incorporate more murals and public art that celebrate Sumner into downtown revitalization.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Become a more accessible destination by widening paths and paving trails throughout Sumner, consider accessible accommodations and other initiatives.
- Develop recreation itineraries from Sumner for all abilities.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Support industry partners in adopting and participating in environmentally sustainable initiatives.

Strategic GOAL #2

CREATE ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS, EVENTS & EXPERIENCE



Sumner has a strong base of community events and experiences for residents and visitors, and continuing to build upon those will enhance them as drivers of overnight visitation.

With its signature event of Rhubarb Days, Sumner has the opportunity to evolve and expand the annual festival to include more food, craft brew, agricultural, and live performance draws, and even extend the length of the event to pull more visitors from outside the county to Sumner.

Another significant opportunity in Sumner is with agritourism. As travelers are seeking more unique and authentic experiences, agritourism is one way Sumner can differentiate itself from others.

ACTION ITEMS

EVENTS STRATEGY

- Develop a comprehensive event strategy focusing on developing / expanding visitor demand-generating events in shoulder seasons.
- Ensure all aspects of the community's history, heritage, and cultures are included.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

- Further evolve Rhubarb Days into a food, craft brew, coffee, flowers, live music, farmer / maker festival that extends through the whole community.
- Add elements to Rhubarb Days that will draw new audiences; drone shows, light displays, sport competitions, or agricultural symposiums.
- Work with local business operators to support a "Doors Open" Festival to showcase all the business / industrial activities in Sumner.
- Develop a Winter Festival in January & February needs-periods to support businesses and vibrancy in the community.

AGRITOURISM

- Collaborate with the County to invest in food / farm and /or cider trail development.
- Work with experience providers to develop signature culinary or farm-based events.
- Work with businesses to develop experiential offerings including cooking classes, cidery tours, live music, etc.
- Collaborate with the County on development of Signature Farmers' & Makers' Markets.

VOLUN-TOURISM

- Work with local non-profits to develop volunteer programs and itineraries specifically for visitors, including incentives for participation.

EXPERIENCES

- Collaborate with community members to define the unique characteristics of Lucy V. Ryan Park and redevelop the space as a shared community asset.
- Incentivize businesses to stay open through evenings and weekends.



Strategic GOAL #3

AUGMENT CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY

As was noted several times through the development of this project, Sumner is split in two distinct areas; the Industrial Area and the rest of the city. By further developing connectivity options, Sumner and its businesses will benefit from becoming a less disjointed community, with commuters and travelers to the Industrial Area spending more time and money downtown. By ensuring overnight visitors to Sumner have both awareness of downtown and ease of access to it, they will spend more money in the community, and be more likely to visit again. Ease of connectivity and mobility throughout the community will remove barriers for visitors and increase the economic impact they bring to Sumner.

Further developing the commuter train and local transportation options will ensure visitors can get to Sumner without adding more congestion and traffic to the roads.

ACTION ITEMS

LEVERAGE COMMUTER TRAIN

- Create a campaign to encourage train riders to visit downtown Sumner.
- Promote bus and train transportation combo for weekday traffic.
- Develop packaging & promotions around weekend use / festival opportunities.

CONNECT DOWNTOWN SUMNER TO INDUSTRIAL AREA

- Promote bike trails linking downtown and industrial area.
- Develop maps, marketing, and incentives to drive more commuter / business traffic from the industrial area into downtown.
- Support local restaurants in developing food truck / pop up stands in the industrial particularly for lunch specials to connect downtown with industrial area.

ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- Support private business offerings of on-demand shuttles for transportation to farms and Mt. Rainier.
- Partner with experiential transportation providers to help visitors move through Sumner (ie: Circuit).
- Develop shared itineraries with transportation options from Tacoma / SeaTac.
- Advocate for more rideshare options in Sumner (ie: Uber, Lyft, etc).

NON-VEHICULAR OPTIONS

- Support bike / e-bike rentals or outfitters in downtown and industrial area.
- Develop bike lanes throughout Sumner to encourage non-vehicular transportation and links to trails.

Strategic GOAL #4

STRENGTHEN IDENTITY & ALIGNMENT



As highlighted in Sumner’s brand assessment, Sumner has the opportunity to create a brand that embodies the attitude and spirit of the community while building bridges between its residents, visitors, and public and private sectors.

A destination brand will support collaboration within the community, including new residents, and build the story that will compel visitors to want to visit Sumner.

ACTION ITEMS

BRAND

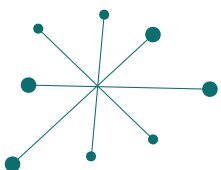
- Undertake a community-wide exercise to understand sentiment on identity and create buy-in.
- Develop a collaborative and open process with the community on Sumner brand and identity validation or refinement.
- Create opportunities for all businesses and residents to share in and celebrate Sumner’s brand.
- Align with Pierce County on a cohesive countywide brand.

MARKETING

- Develop collaborative marketing & activation strategy.
- Develop collaborative marketing & activation strategies with the business zones.
- Promote business zones in East End and Industrial areas of Sumner.

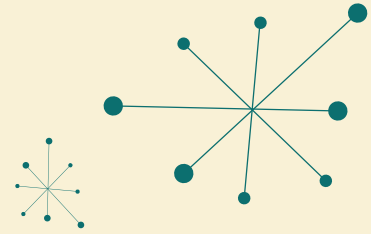
ALIGNMENT

- Actively support Pierce County’s long-term tourism development and identity initiatives.



Overarching

KEY TAKEAWAYS



TO BE SUCCESSFUL, LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLANNING REQUIRES SIGNIFICANT FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION.

It is recommended that the City of Sumner, as stewards of the Sub-Area Tourism Master Plan, appoint a champion responsible for the implementation and ongoing work on the Plan. It is further recommended that there is public reporting on the progress of the Plan, to demonstrate accountability and highlight the efforts and organizations involved.

It is also recommended that stakeholders consider funding sources to enable the implementation of the initiatives outlined in this plan.



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