



City of Redmond

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 RESPONSE REPORT

MARCH 2020

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Overview

This overview summarizes efforts being made to adapt our business outreach efforts and tourism messaging to the rapidly changes climate around travel and the economy.

The Tourism Program is centered around two strong pillars: support and promotion of local events, and tourism marketing. This document will share a 30, 60 and long term

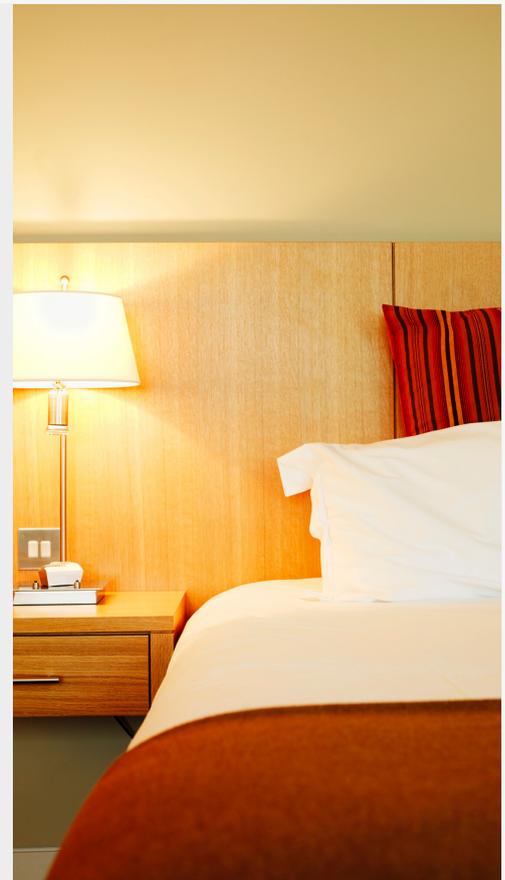
(90+ day) plan for each to support and reinvigorate tourism and the local economy during and after the current COVID-19 crisis.

Also included are the response efforts to date, aimed at supporting our local economy and small businesses during this time.

As the situation evolves, so will our plan and response.

Our Goal

Stay nimble and responsive to the ever changing state of business and tourism in our region, while simultaneously developing a longer term plan to stimulate tourism and spending back to Redmond quickly and aggressively once appropriate to do so.



Economic Development

Below is a list immediate response efforts that took place in March, focused on the economic vitality of the city and support of small businesses.

City of Redmond Staff Support:

- Execution of a comprehensive "Buy Redmond" campaign as detailed in our Tourism Marketing Summary.
- Created a business resources section within the City's COVID-19 webpages.
- City partners and staff are fielding questions from small businesses and doing our best to respond within one hour.
- Weekly calls with eastside cities and partners are taking place to coordinate efforts and share new ideas, feedback and issues that arise.
- Provided permission to utilize a street parking stall to be reserved for curbside pick-up for those with modified business models.



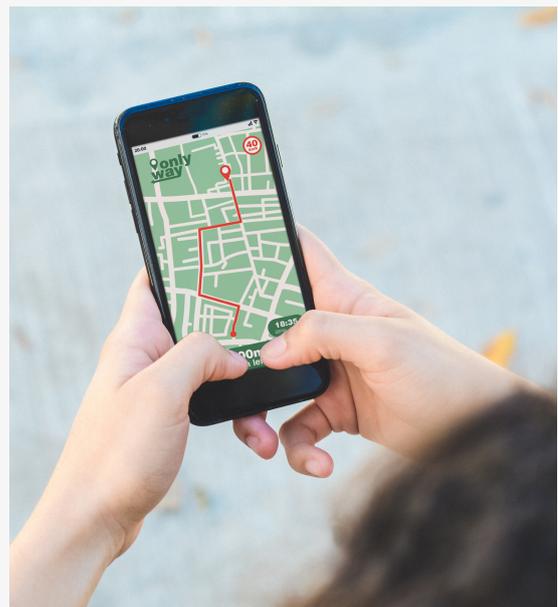
Efforts taken by OneRedmond:

- Developed a COVID-19 web page with compiled resources for businesses including a "How to Prepare Your Business" Toolkit.
- Building workforce support plan which would expedite connecting those out of work directly with organizations most urgently needing staff.
- Coordinated deployment of a small business survey and compiled data to learn where we can best support city businesses. We have received over 230 responses to date. Results will be updated weekly and shared out to City leadership and Eastside partners.
- Performing outreach to businesses in applicable sectors about temporary modifications to business models that are proving to sustain small businesses. Examples include converting restaurants into mini shops for pre-made meals, and setting up service delivery models.

Economic Development

Below is a list of updates on collaborative work among the City of Redmond, OneRedmond, and a coalition of Eastside Cities, completed in April 2020, as we continue to monitor and respond to the COVID-19 crisis:

- A five city committee has been formed in effort to provide in-depth financial services to small business owners impacted by COVID-19, and access to an eastside contact via a single phone number.
- The committee has also begun work outlining a Welcome Back campaign focused on promoting business on the entire Eastside.
- OneRedmond began hosting webinars for 700+ attendees on the CAREs Act and additional resources for small businesses and independent contractors.
- An interactive Open for Business map was developed for the community to see which services and businesses are open and their current operation format.



Tourism Marketing

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE EFFORTS (30 DAYS OR LESS)

Pivoted social media messaging to focus on local residents and safe, responsible support of our local economy.

Reallocated and redesigned all paid marketing to reflect above strategy.

Built out web page (experienceredmond.com/buyredmond) highlighting all businesses offering specials, online shopping, pick-up and delivery options, or other unique solutions to the challenges created by social distancing.

60-DAY PLAN

Consider further building out the Buy Redmond web page to add interactive features, and additional resources.

Social media content will continue to offer support of the mental, physical, economic health of our community – including encouraging safe outdoor and in-home activities, highlighting virtual events, and continued local business promotion.

Draft a more comprehensive plan to aggressively re-stimulate tourism as soon as able. There has been discussion among Eastside Cities in regards to regional level efforts, and a potential joint “Welcome Back” campaign.

Tourism Marketing

90-DAY PLAN

As soon as able (likely 90+ days), we will launch a National and local campaign to reinvigorate tourism.

In addition to a National Press Release and advertising, some local level efforts will include:

- A relaunch of our Geek Out ad campaign with themed posters and merchandise giveaways in local businesses (IE coffee shops would all have a “Geek Out on Coffee” poster, and Geek Out Redmond mugs for giveaways, etc).
- Table tents and revamped visitor guides in local hotels promoting Redmond attractions, events, and dining.
- Visual display and movie theater ads locally and regionally.



Events

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE EFFORTS (30 DAYS OR LESS)

In immediate and constant contact with upcoming events to keep the Experience Redmond event calendar up to date on cancellations and new virtual offerings.

Informed 2020 grant recipients that they will still receive the approved 2020 grant funding support, regardless of whether their event takes place, so long as they can produce receipts for non-refundable costs they incurred.

60-DAY PLAN

Will continue to monitor the climate around events based on what new information emerges and what new restrictions or release of restrictions occurs.

90-DAY PLAN

Once events are able to resume, will begin expanded marketing and promotion of Redmond's offerings.

We plan to run a campaign targeted at event producers, that will offer a one-time financial incentive outside of our standard annual event grant window, to incentive a new large event to come to Redmond.

We have recruited for and confirmed that in 2022 a sports event, which had previously left Redmond, will return to bring 6,240 athletes, and over 15,000 spectators to our City.

We have partnered with OneRedmond to sponsor their annual summer game festival which will include co-branding to align with Experience Redmond's "Geek Out" marketing campaign. The event will be branded the "Geek Out Game Fest" and will include creative collaborations with local businesses.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As revenue from the City of Redmond Lodging Tax, which directly and fully funds the Tourism Program, is likely to decrease for 2020, the program will be carefully analyzing how funds are spent over the next biennium. A current fund balance is available that will ensure the program's continuation and effectiveness regardless of loss of revenue. There will be potential to draw from the fund as needed to supplement for reduced revenue, or fund initiatives to reinvigorate tourism.

COLLABORATIONS

Throughout the past month, as indicated in the steps taken thus far, we have elevated our established partnership with OneRedmond, including aiding and assisting with their website resource updates, sharing of graphics and information, and continuous communication of collaborative efforts.

We are also involved in the Eastside COVID-19 Response Committee - a collaboration between Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah and Redmond that will share resources, and consolidate efforts whenever possible, in the interest of supporting the greater Eastside community.

Our Tourism Program also holds an annual membership to the Washington Tourism Alliance and will stay tuned in to the Statewide Initiatives.

