

Event-Based Tourism: Off-Season Opportunities for Federal Way

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This report was prepared for the City of Federal Way by:



METROPOLITAN CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

Brad Gaolach, Ph.D., Director

Martha Aitken, B.A., Assistant Director

CARSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Mark Beattie, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Assistant Professor, WSU Everett

Byron Marlowe, Ph.D., Don Smith Professor, WSU Tri-Cities

Jenni Sandstrom, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, WSU Vancouver

Gabriella Reznowski, MLIS, Business and Economics Librarian, WSU Pullman

Shenrui Deng, MITM, Teaching Assistant, Ph.D. Candidate, WSU Pullman

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Byron Marlowe

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Executive Summary

Note about COVID-19 and this report

This project originated just prior to the March 2020 outbreak of COVID-19, an event which has brought devastating and long-lasting impacts to the tourism and hospitality industries. The pandemic has affected how we looked at the primary outcome for this project – improved off-season event-tourism for Federal Way – as well as what type of events might be compatible with a prolonged pandemic worldwide, and an extensively protracted recovery period both domestically and worldwide. Travel spending declined by 42 percent in 2020, down nearly \$500 billion from 2019. International travel (-76%) and business travel (-70%) experienced the sharpest decline, with leisure travel also declining by 27 percent. [1]. Therefore, we have tried our best to develop recommendations for event-based tourism opportunities that are not only compatible with Federal Way’s off-season and amenities, but also with COVID-19 as an active pandemic and an unknown (in time and duration) recovery period.

The scope of this project included collecting primary data from onsite observations and in-person interviews using a research methodology called Rapid Qualitative Inquiry (RQI). Due to the pandemic, we postponed those in-person activities until 2021 and issued a comprehensive report at the end of 2020 with recommendations based on available secondary data.

When pandemic restrictions eased in summer 2021, we were able to conduct the RQI onsite research and interviews with the goal of testing our original recommendations. A summary of the data obtained from the RQI has been added to our December 2020 report beginning on page 9. Data from the RQI tended to confirm the the five recommendations from our 2020 report, so we have not revised our original recommendations. However we have added brief sections immediately following each recommendation revisiting them with relevant insights gained from the RQI.

Definitions

- Event-based tourism is distinguished from general tourism in that it is any tourist activity that is driven by attendance at a planned event.
- Derived from event-based tourism, an event tourist is a tourist whose travel is motivated by attendance at a planned event. Event tourists are differentiated from event visitors in that they plan to stay at the event destination for at least one night or have traveled 50 miles or more from their residence to reach the event destination.

SWOT and PESTEL Analysis

Using information from publicly available data and observations from individual, brief site visits, we conducted an analysis of Federal Way’s strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats (SWOT) related to tourism. Highlights include

- **Strengths** - Federal Way enjoys the natural amenities of the Puget Sound area and easy access to I-5 and the urban centers of Seattle and Tacoma. It has the potential to draw large crowds to facilities such as the King County Aquatic Center and Wild Waves, while also serving as an overflow destination for events in the Tacoma Dome and some larger Seattle-based conventions and events. This creates a very family-friendly business ecosystem.
- **Weaknesses** - The city center is spread out and disconnected from the street by large parking lots, so it lacks curb appeal and a sense of community. Branding and signage are weak, and the retail mix resembles many other cities and suburbs, leaving the city without an identity.

- **Opportunities** - Federal Way has plenty of room for growth as there is currently limited local competition for event traffic. Incoming light rail will make the city an easy trip from both Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle.
- **Threats** – Restrictions and general concerns related to large events due to the COVID-19 pandemic have appeared since the beginning of the project, and their impact may be felt for years. The associated economic downturn may cause many retail and restaurants to close, reducing downtown attractions and the ability to host an increase in tourism.

We also conducted a PESTEL analysis, which shows political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors in the macro-environment which may or have an impact on the city and its ability to attract event tourists.

- **Political** - Federal Way benefits from a strong city government, and city planning documents support and envision a dense, urban city center.
- **Economic**- The city's reliance on sales tax revenue has made it especially vulnerable during COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, there was a large and growing retail market demand.
- **Social** - Federal Way's population is ethnically diverse with 111 languages spoken. It is also young, with an overall population that is younger compared to Seattle and Tacoma.
- **Technological** - Federal Way has a diverse and skilled labor force; however, a lower percentage of the population has bachelor's degrees as compared to the region and state.
- **Environmental** - Downtown is presently dominated by auto-oriented destinations and lacks the features in high demand by all demographics.
- **Legal** - The city collected 5,000 business licenses in 2013/14; 2,846 or 58 percent were owned and operated within the city. The remainder were based outside, but operating within Federal Way.

Rapid Qualitative Inquiry

In summer 2021, we conducted a series of interviews and on-site research using Rapid Qualitative Inquiry. In conjunction with an analysis of secondary data, it allows a team to develop a more robust understanding of a community. Data which appeared frequently and consistently throughout the interviews were grouped into themes.

- **What is great about Federal Way** - All interviewees expressed their enthusiasm for Federal Way and spoke of their investment in the community.
- **The Federal Way tourist** - Most interviewees felt that tourists came to Federal Way because of a specific event or meeting but had not targeted the city as a destination.
- **Coordination – the tourism ecosystem** - The issue mentioned universally by interviewees was the need for greater collaboration amongst all entities associated with tourism, and coordination across accommodations, restaurants, retail and professional services.
- **Regional hub** - While there was consensus that Federal Way does not have enough of an identity to be a major tourist draw, there was almost universal agreement that its central location is Federal Way's greatest strength with respect to tourism.
- **The City** - While some mentioned the city's efforts to increase tourism, others felt that it had not been a high priority.
- **Diversity** - There was consensus that diversity is one of the city's strengths, albeit an untapped one, which can attract tourists while also benefiting residents.
- **Infrastructure** – Both optimism and concerns exist about the impact of Sound Transit light rail on the city. Most interviewees agree that ease of transportation is important for creating a

welcoming environment for tourists, but the distance between the city's attractions and amenities makes it difficult and requires tourists to have access to a vehicle.

- **Public Safety** - While the efforts of the law enforcement were recognized, public safety is a deep concern, especially for businesses such as restaurants who rely on night-time clientele.
- **What's good for the community is good for tourists** - By improving the quality of life for current residents while attracting new companies and their workforce the city is also improving Federal Way as a destination for tourism.

Event Genres

Drawing from event literature we divided events into eight genres: cultural celebrations, political and state, arts and entertainment, business and trade, educational and scientific, sports competition, recreational sports, and private events. Federal Way's major annual events primarily fall into genres of arts and entertainment, sports competition (primarily aquatic), recreational sport, and cultural celebrations. COVID-19 has caused the cancellation or indefinite postponement of both locally produced and touring arts productions, sports competitions and all other events which rely on large gatherings of people to engage in specific activities or generate adequate revenue. Event suggestions from the 2018 LTAC retreat were also categorized by these eight genres.

An extensive review of competing events in the Puget Sound showed several key observations:

- Broadly, we are seeing events once geared toward adults, now incorporating some family/kid friendly features to attract families. Cities focusing on creating an atmosphere conducive to "experiences," adding value to events and giving visitors an escape from their daily routines.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, travelers are seeking vacations that offer opportunities to incorporate outdoor activities that are compatible with COVID-19 restrictions.
- Federal Way's reputation for family friendly events and its proximity to the natural amenities of the Puget Sound region position the city well for these recent trends in events and travel
- A comprehensive list of potential competing events in the Puget Sound region (Appendix 2:), shows that many of these events were created by cities themselves, capitalizing on existing facilities, amenities, strengths or community interests.

Evaluating Potential Events

We conducted a review of hotel specific data and interviewed hotel general managers to understanding the off-season, occupancy rate, average daily rate (ADR), revenue per available rooms (RevPAR), and hotel revenue for Federal Way. Observations include:

- High season in the market has not changed since the 2015 HVS report previously available to Federal Way (data from 2003 through June 2015). June, July, and August remain the high season. December and January represent the low season, and February-May and September-November are the shoulder seasons.
- The numbers follow a consistent pattern each year, except for February through May 2020, which illustrates the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on the hotel industry (Figure 1)
- A summary of data from three years, June through May 2017-2020 (Figure 3) shows there is room for occupancy growth every day of the week, with the highest need on Sundays. The business-focused hotels in the market can fill their hotel on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with corporate travelers. According to two business hotel general managers, corporate business is 60% of their room night volume, with the other 40% made up of leisure travelers.
- There are obvious spikes in ADR and RevPAR (e.g. June 2015) that are associated with events held at the King County Aquatic Center.

- Overall, the market experienced a year-over-year gain of 1.9% in RevPAR from 2018 to 2019. RevPAR year-to-date through May 2020 was down 38.5%.

Federal Way has very few available facilities for hosting large events (Table 9). This list will be confirmed when in-person site visits are possible post-COVID-19. The meeting facilities in the hotels are adequate only for small conferences; however, coordination among hotels, including shuttle transportation, could open more opportunities to host larger distributed events.

Recommendations to proceed

Based on our definitions of event-based tourism and tourist versus event visitor and our analyses of all data collected and provided by the city, we make the following recommendations. As noted previously, we will re-evaluate these recommendations once we are able to safely conduct the on-site research that has been restricted due to COVID-19.

Recommendation 1: Develop the vacated Target building to support mixed use internet-based opportunities.

We recommend the Target building be renovated into an *e-Vent Center* that supports internet-based event opportunities detailed below as well as supporting tradeshow space and that the city invest in economic modeling for potential revenue generated by the following events. These events, are outlined in detail in Appendix 3.

- ***Recommendation 1a: Build and market Federal Way's ability to host ESports***
Esports, as noted previously, is experiencing exponential growth, providing a ground floor opportunity for Federal Way create a new event niche.
- ***Recommendation 1b: Distributed conference hosting***
COVID-19 has decimated the conference industry; however, the ability to host virtual or distributed conferences can put Federal Way at the forefront of an emerging industry. This recommendation is compatible with the other two sub recommendations and Recommendation 4.
- ***Recommendation 1c: Events like Sneaker Events***
Sneaker shows attract international participation; they provide a space for sneaker fans ('sneakerheads') to buy, sell and trade merchandise while also providing a venue for sneaker companies to highlight their products.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Federal Way Tourism Ecosystem.

We recommend that the city create an ecosystem to draw and support tourists during their stay, focusing initially on four areas: signage, transportation, communication, and regional opportunity.

Recommendation 3: Establish the soft infrastructure necessary to support tourism.

We recommend creating a multi-sector tourism committee with representation from hotels, restaurants, arts and entertainment, retail, city government, transportation, parks and recreation, public health and the community.

Recommendation 4: Indigenous and ethnic foods and culture events

We recommend the city continue along its current trajectory and create culinary events and promotions that highlight its diverse population and connection to Indigenous foodways.

Recommendation 5: Reopening strategies post-COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic and the later “Stay Home; Stay Healthy” has dealt economic challenges to several key sectors of Federal Way’s economy. We have added a curation of reopening guides that would be helpful in planning for the near and short-term future as we emerge from the pandemic restrictions. These guidelines can help coordinate reopening strategies across the city so event tourists know their health and safety is a top priority of the all aspects of their stay.

Tourism Definitions

Event-based tourism

Event-based tourism is distinguished from general tourism in that it **is any tourist activity that is driven by attendance at a planned event**. Integrating key elements from tourism, event studies and destination management, event tourism is “inclusive of all planned events in an integrated approach to development and marketing [2, p. 405]”. Event tourism often speaks to the human need, beyond traditional tourism, for entertainment, recreation, socialization, and the desire to be exposed to new customs and experiences. The combination of attendees, the setting, and the management system all contribute to the uniqueness of an event [2].

Event management involves the planning, design, production, and management of planned events. The scope of planned events ranges from celebrations and community festivals, arts and entertainment, sports, business meetings, conferences, and exhibitions. Getz states that planned events also include hallmark and mega events, “the planning of which has largely become the realm of professionals, corporations and entrepreneurs.” [3, p. 27].

In addition to other strategies, such as special promotions and broadening the range of activities offered, event tourism can also serve as a bridge between peak, and off-peak seasons, to attract tourists and alleviate seasonality [4]. Event-based tourism can result from the expansion of events that were previously planned as community initiatives. This expansion can be planned or, at times, happens organically as an event gains popularity beyond the community. When that occurs, such events may require professional planning and management services, and next ways to recoup the added costs of producing an expanded event.

Getz (2008) [2] advocates a balanced “portfolio approach” (406) to both creating and attracting new events. As such, event-planners should consider a variety of issues, from bid feasibility (when applicable), to competitiveness, sustainability, local branding, seasonality, customer satisfaction, and event marketing. Events may include multiple goals which should be assessed to find the success of the event and plan for future endeavors. Goal setting helps to ensure that the event can both compete with, and differentiate itself, from others in the marketplace.

Event tourism planning should take into consideration the impact the endeavor will have on the community [2] [5]. The 2019 *World Travel and Tourism Council* report highlights the issue of “destination readiness,” which requires “engaging all key stakeholders including the public and private sector as well as the local community [6, p. 15]”. Todd, Leask & Ensor [7] likewise point to the importance of considering both stakeholder engagement and stakeholder roles when planning event-based tourism. Pre-event marketing and post-event evaluation are also key to event planning.

Event tourist vs. event visitor

Derived from event-based tourism, an **event tourist** is a tourist whose travel is motivated by attendance at a planned event. When applying the concepts of tourist and visitor to the event context, we assume that event tourists and event visitors share the purpose of attending an event. **Event tourists are differentiated from event visitors in that they plan to stay at the event destination for at least one night or have traveled 50 miles or more from their residence to reach the event destination**. This is following how Washington State [8] defines “tourists” - as people travelling for business, or pleasure, away from their place of residence and staying overnight in paid accommodations. Included in this definition are also people who travel at least 50 miles, or more, away from their place of residence or

business for business or leisure, and/or whose visit includes an overnight stay. Any out-of-state travelers, regardless of distance, would also be considered tourists under the parameters set by Washington State.

City of Federal Way

Using information from the Downtown Federal Way Retail Market Analysis completed in September 2019 by Marketek [9], publicly available data, and observations from our individual brief and socially distant site visits, we conducted an analysis of Federal Way's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) related to tourism. Additionally, we conducted a PESTEL analysis which shows external factors (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal) which affect the city. A summary of both analyses follows, see Appendix 1 for the complete analysis.

Ideally, data from a community engagement tool called Rapid Qualitative Inquiry (RQI) would have been included in our initial analysis, however this onsite research was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We issued a report and recommendations in late 2020 with all available documented data, then conducted an RQI in summer 2021 to incorporate beliefs from the community. We triangulated these data to assure accuracy of our analysis and final recommendations. Much has changed since the start of the pandemic. Our original analysis was based on secondary data primarily collected prior to the pandemic. Therefore, the in-person engagement conducted through the RQI provides valuable insight in informing the city's post-pandemic strategy.

SWOT Analysis

In a SWOT analysis, Strengths and Weaknesses often refer to internal factors influencing the target of the analysis, while Opportunities and Threats typically refer to external factors.

- **Strengths** – Federal Way enjoys the natural amenities of the Puget Sound area and easy access to I-5 and the urban centers of Seattle and Tacoma. It has the potential to draw large crowds to facilities such as the King County Aquatic Center, Wild Waves, and the Performing Arts Center, while also serving as an overflow destination for events in the Tacoma Dome and some larger Seattle-based conventions and events. The city center appears new and well kept, with a large and broad mix of retail options. The city's LTAC is organized, focused and current members are invested in the community.
- **Weaknesses** – As with many SWOT analyses, most strengths have a corresponding weakness. The city center is spread out and disconnected from the street by large parking lots, so it lacks curb appeal and a sense of community. Branding and signage are weak, and the retail mix resembles many other cities and suburbs, leaving the city without an identity. There is no mention of tourism in the city's comprehensive plan, and there appears to be little residential support for tourism. Federal Way has its share of crime and homelessness. Although the LTAC is currently strong there has been a lot of turnover. Finally, the city's location between Seattle and Tacoma can leave it with the 'leftovers' of these urban hubs instead of being a destination. A lack of night life and restaurants for people attending large events supports that impression.
- **Opportunities** – Federal Way has plenty of room for growth as there is currently limited competition for event traffic with only 3 attractions having annual traffic of over 300,000. Incoming light rail will make the city an easy trip from both Sea-Tac Airport and downtown Seattle. The Target building, if it is thoughtfully renovated, can supply space for multiple types of events currently gaining in popularity (such as 'retailment' – experiential plus retail

entertainment), including those which can offer social distancing. Federal Way has the potential to be a Native American and multi-cultural culinary center. Easy forms of transportation, such as a shuttle, can be added to connect retail, hotels, and other attractions in the city center to make up for a lack of walkability. While the impacts of COVID-19 are still being felt, Federal Way can be a pandemic 'pod' for athletic teams, following the model which has been successful for professional sports. Federal Way is receiving help from the general prosperity of the region with the growth of area companies such as DaVita and World Vision.

- **Threats** – Restrictions and general concerns related to large events due to the COVID-19 pandemic have appeared since the beginning of the project, and their impact may be felt for years. The associated economic downturn may cause many retail and restaurants to close, reducing downtown attractions and the ability to host an increase in tourism. Hotels may already have limited ability to house more visitors. New hotels in Tukwila, Renton and Kent may be absorbing some of the compression from Seattle, while new hotels in SeaTac and Tacoma may absorb compression from Tacoma. The most profitable events at the King County Aquatic Center are dependent upon organizations' (such as the NCAA) decisions for hosting events and housing teams.

PESTEL Analysis

A PESTEL analysis is a situational analysis which shows political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors in the macro-environment which may or have an impact on the city and its ability to attract event tourists. In the process it also shows added strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to increasing tourism and the overall environment of the city.

- **Political** - Federal Way benefits from a strong city government with an elected mayor. City's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code and the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) and VISION 2040 goals all support and envision a dense, urban city center.
- **Economic** – The city's reliance on sales tax revenue has made it especially vulnerable during COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, there was a large and growing retail market demand. However, most businesses (estimated 70%) in Federal Way employ fewer than 5 people, and 42% of businesses doing business in Federal Way are found outside the city limits. Although income has risen since the 2000 Census, when compared to Seattle, the median household income is much lower, and the poverty rate is higher.
- **Social** - Federal Way's population is ethnically diverse with 111 languages spoken. It is also young, with an overall population that is younger compared to Seattle and Tacoma.
- **Technological** – Federal Way has a diverse and skilled labor force, however a lower percentage of the population has bachelor's degrees as compared to the region and state. Information Communications Technology, (ICT) is among the strongest industries in the Puget Sound region. Downtown Federal Way is poised to serve as the community's multi-generational cultural and entertainment center with the Park and PAEC as key activity hubs.
- **Environmental** – Federal Way is part of a market area with a population of 3.7 million (about twice the population of New Mexico). The central city is sharply divided into north and south areas by 320th Avenue; conceiving of downtown as a single cohesive destination is problematic. Downtown

is presently dominated by auto-oriented destinations and lacks the features in high demand by all demographics. Over 32,000 Federal Way residents go elsewhere to work, while over 25,000 come into Federal Way to work, placing 60,000 people on the highways and streets at rush hour.

- **Legal** - The city collected 5,000 business licenses in 2013/14; 2,846 or 58 percent were based in Federal Way. An Opportunity Zone in the central city is a potential enticement to private developers. Five city-controlled sites, within the downtown city center, enable the city to influence their development, scale, and contribution to an active, pedestrian-oriented central city.

Rapid Qualitative Inquiry

Our seven-person project team traveled to Federal Way on July 20-22 to conduct a form of Rapid Qualitative Inquiry (RQI). In conjunction with an analysis of secondary data, RQI allows a team to develop a more robust understanding of a community in a brief period.

Methods

We interviewed thirteen individuals whose work or business is impacted by the tourism industry such as restaurateurs, hoteliers, managers of tourism sites, public safety officers, public officials. Some interviewees were recommended by the city based on their role in Federal Way tourism and/or interest in participating. Other interviewees were recommended by our team. An effort was made to create a diverse slate of interviewees regarding sex, race and ethnicity, physical location, and type of work.

Interviewees all agreed to in-person 45 minute interviews on July 21 and were promised anonymity when results were published. We worked in pairs with one team member posing a standard set of questions while the second team member took notes. Interviews were also audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Our goal for the interviews was to encourage interviewees to tell us their stories and share what was important to them, instead of having them answer an exhaustive list of pre-determined questions. To do this we crafted a small set of five questions using an Appreciative Inquiry framework (see <https://cvdl.ben.edu/blog/what-is-appreciative-inquiry/> as an example) which encouraged interviewees to envision 'what could be' for Federal Way, and not focus solely on problems. We wanted them to envision a positive future related to tourism, taking into consideration the assets needed to achieve that vision – an asset-based approach to economic development. All questions were general apart from a question about Sound Transit light rail, which we hoped would elicit some specific feedback. We intentionally did not ask questions related to our initial recommendations to ascertain the interviewees' priorities.

- Q1: What do you feel is great about Federal Way? What would you recommend for a tourist to enjoy doing when visiting Federal Way? How would you describe the tourists who do (should) visit Federal Way?
- Q2: In 2 years the Light Rail will stub (reach) Federal Way. If we return in 5 years, how would you describe Federal Way?
- Q3: What is happening in Federal Way now to realize that future?
- Q4: What assets and strengths can you and your organization contribute to reaching this future?
- Q5: Is there anyone else you think we should talk to?

Interviewees were encouraged to use these questions as a starting point to speak freely and to share stories and anecdotes. Some of their comments related directly to the questions we asked, while others diverged. The team prompted for clarification if necessary but, otherwise encouraged interviewees to share broadly. While the interviews included the same set of initial questions, ultimately each interview was different.

After completing the interviews, we performed a rapid analysis and triangulation of the data, then reviewed the interview transcripts. This produced a group of themes that appeared frequently and consistently throughout the interviews, warranting inclusion in this report. Although we heard many insightful comments during the interviews, quotes were selected for this report to illustrate these consistent themes. Care was taken to select quotes which were unlikely to reveal the speaker's identity.

Yet we found that most of our recommendations mirrored the opinions of the people we interviewed. Data from the interviews tends to confirm the five original recommendations from our 2020 report.

Results

What is Great About Federal Way

All interviewees expressed their enthusiasm for Federal Way and spoke of their investment in the community. Many have lived and worked in the city for a long time. They described their community as being very engaged and desiring to be even more so. Most appreciated Federal Way's family-friendly environment, and both its proximity to - and distance from - the larger cities of Seattle and Tacoma. Several mentioned great experiences they have had at local events, parks, and venues. Our entire team felt that the concerns the interviewees expressed during their interviews all came from the perspective of making Federal Way an even better place to live, work and visit.

"People are really active and engaged, they care about this community. We see it at the council meetings."

"People feel proud to live in Federal Way, work in Federal Way."

"We found the support [in] Federal Way amazing. I felt they were very open-minded to have the kind of food that I cook. You look around us is a little more like fast food or different types of cuisine, but Federal Way surprised me on how open-minded they were to try."

"...If you just wanted to get away and maybe do a bit of shopping and have some good food, but also spend quite a bit of your day outside, lots of stuff to do."

"There's a lot of people that are very proud of Federal Way and I call them the movers and shakers of the community and just always out there advocating for our city."

"I'm very big on supporting the community and being a proactive member of the community. The community is extremely important to me. This has been my home for 36 years and I want it to be."

The Federal Way Tourist

When asked to describe the tourists who do, or should, visit Federal Way, interviewees were consistently at a loss. Nobody could describe the typical Federal Way tourist as either a business, leisure, or event traveler. Most interviewees felt that tourists came to Federal Way because of a specific event or meeting but had not targeted the city as a destination. The 'bleisure' tourist (coming to the city on

business and staying longer for pleasure) was frequently mentioned as a prime target for increasing tourism, especially the 'bleisure' tourist with a family. There was general agreement that Federal Way is primarily a family-oriented destination. Interviewees felt that Federal Way's identity is subsumed by Seattle, making the city more of an overflow site than an actual destination for people coming from outside the region.

"When people come here to the Pacific Northwest, they come to Seattle. Whether they actually are going to Seattle or not, they're coming to Seattle."

What to visit

Beyond their own venue, interviewees were unable to recommend many places for tourists to visit in Federal Way. The Pacific Bonsai Museum was most often identified as a destination, as were sporting events in general where they felt the city had developed a good niche industry. Some suggested that creating options for 'a day in Federal Way' by stringing two or more points of interest together would help tourists explore more of the city. Few interviewees mentioned Wild Waves as a tourism driver, and some did not realize it is within the city limits.

Coordination – the Tourism Ecosystem

The issue mentioned universally by interviewees was the need for greater collaboration amongst all entities associated with tourism, and coordination across accommodations, restaurants, retail and professional services. There was acknowledgement that achieving this collaboration will take central coordination and leadership which does not currently exist. Some people described effective smaller collaborations (such as within the Parks Department and Recreation Division) but no overarching body for all sectors impacted by tourism that would allow businesses to maximize the economic benefits of tourism.

Several interviewees commented that tourism is a special industry segment – part of overall economic development, and a core competency. People recognized that the city tries to support tourism but felt that city employees are doing too many jobs to be able to give tourism adequate focus. Some felt that the Chamber is in the best position to provide the necessary tourism leadership, however there were also concerns about a current lack of collaboration between the city and the Chamber. Beyond central leadership, however, interviewees felt that supporting tourism was a shared responsibility across all entities and expressed their interest in doing their part.

"I think that's one of the things we, as a community can do better is collaboration. Where it's talked about quite a bit, but it's never executed and, I'm going to be very blunt, everybody talks, and they want to be cooperative and good stewards and partners and then everybody does their own thing. And I don't know how to get everybody in there because we all want that same goal. If the bonsai museum is successful and can drive traffic here... at the end of the day, we're a successful community, but I think, there's a lot of smaller groups doing the same efforts where if we pool resources and efforts and things like that, I think we could be much more successful as a community."

"Somebody has to take ownership and whoever that is - great, but again it's just that buy-in because we're going to be much stronger and much healthier if we work together."

"From a business perspective they're very siloed here"

Communication

Interviewees were frustrated by a lack of communication-related to tourism. Businesses specifically mentioned being uninformed about, and subsequently unprepared for, events that could potentially impact their businesses, especially large events such as those held at the Aquatic Center. Although it is an element of successful collaboration, they felt that improving communication would provide immediate benefits. Many noted that the city does not have much of a social media presence and that improving that presence could be an asset for both internal and external communication.

“They've got a calendar: they know what's coming up. They should be sending it out to all of the restaurants in the city and the hotels, telling you this month there is this and this and this coming. They have done that in the past, they don't do it anymore.”

“...One thing that we... can do better is on that regional aspect and then more even within our community, letting people know that we're here because a lot of people don't know that we're here”

A Regional Hub

While there was consensus that Federal Way does not have enough of an identity to be a major tourist draw, there was almost universal agreement that its central location is Federal Way's greatest strength with respect to tourism. More than being an overflow destination, it has the potential to be an urban base camp where tourists can enjoy easy access to the amenities of the entire region, while capturing tourists' time and dollars at Federal Way businesses and points of interest. Interviewees felt that capitalizing on this strength requires regional collaboration and marketing and ensuring that tourists have positive experiences in the city.

“Federal Way needs to come out and emphasize the fact that we're that middle guy. We're the guy, we're the hub. We're the middle guy between Seattle and Tacoma and own it.”

“We're in the middle, but when they're here, they find out, “Oh my gosh, there's so many wonderful things to do in town.” They can go to our performing arts center and see a major act or performance. So I think the perfect tourist would be the one that stations themselves nearby.”

“I don't see Federal Way so much as a major destination as what it is when you're in the area, you've got to go. That's not going to be the star attraction of the area. But what we do need to make it is so that it's a supporting cast member for tourism in the area, so that when people are in the Puget Sound area, that Federal Way's someplace where they want to go to. It might not be the reason for their vacation or whatever but make it so that it's definitely a stop on their vacation.”

“We're the heartbeat of the south sound.”

Regional strengths

Some interviewees recommended that the city determine where it has the greatest advantage to draw tourists from *within* the region. While they may not all be overnight tourists, they all have the potential to patronize Federal Way businesses. Sporting events were mentioned most often in this regard.

“We have some beautiful ball fields here and getting AstroTurf on the ball field. So that attracts games, rather than people going and setting up tournaments in other areas, out at Lacey or up on the East Side, ...that can help attract people staying right here. Once again, because of our central location, that can be an attraction.”

Welcoming to tourists

Interviewees consistently mentioned that tourists will not return unless they have a positive experience. Several mentioned that their top priority as a business is not tourism, but hospitality in general. They noted that hospitality is not confined to individual interactions but extends to the city as a whole and how it creates a welcoming environment. People suggested improving tourists' ability to navigate the city with better signage and transportation. In a city dominated by chain stores, some also saw an opportunity to bring in new unique businesses such as boutiques and galleries.

"Customer service matters more than anything..."

"I think another large marquee right down at that, right where that stoplight is, would be a good investment for the city and the park. As the hundreds of thousands of cars are on 320th street, 320th so that we can advertise our events and what's happening here."

The City

Many interviewees mentioned the city and their comments were mixed based on their individual experiences. While some mentioned the city's efforts to increase tourism, others felt that it had not been a high priority. Some appreciated the city's efforts and the support, but others felt frustrated by a lack of communication. And while some praised the city's efforts to engage residents, others felt that the city could be more open-minded. Still, others expressed an opinion that the city is not friendly to small business.

"I haven't always really felt that that's been a focus for this city, the tourism. It's felt, to me, more like they want a safe, vibrant community to live in."

"Within the top key industries that the state is working on what's our strategy for business expansion here?"

"But public meetings are a strong function of [pulling people together], and the city of Federal Way does a nice job of that, I think. We do a lot of open public forum meetings. They had a town hall last Thursday. There's just a lot of commitment to listening to the constituents and the people who live in the city and see what they want."

"There are great people in the city who want to help and do things, and I think just not enough people at the higher levels in the city are willing to listen to them...They need to have a community liaison. Somebody who would work with the community and listen to their ideas, listen to what people would want to do, and then the leadership at the top of the city has to be more willing to listen and to try some of those things. ... And they need to listen to what people that are professionals in the community tell them."

"City of Federal Way does not like small business."

"I think there's some big thinkers in town, like our economic development director of the mayor and the council that are quietly working on putting the right things in place for some amazing things, maybe right at about five years, we'll see those things."

"I would say definitely how proactive the city has been in making the city better with their roads, where they're directing services like restaurants and helping locals move into the area."

“There could be multiple roles where the city helps, and they get people in the community involved in different things. They need to be more open; I think...”

Time to act

With all the differing opinions interviewees expressed about the city, there was general agreement that it was time to stop talking and studying and to act.

“[What's] going to be the biggest key, is the follow through...because I've been involved in a lot of these things and it's all great, gets closed up and on a shelf and nothing happens and I'm not saying that's going to be the case here, which I hope it's not, but you can have of all the conversations until we're all blue in the face, but if it doesn't come to be executed, then it doesn't help anybody.”

“I get frustrated sometimes because we take the time to meet with people in the city or to meet in committees, or to work on things like the farmer's market that we've been working on, some of us, for a year and a half, two years now, that we don't feel we get the support from the city on, and at a certain point you kind of just want to give up and go help others.”

Diversity

There was consensus that diversity is one of the city's strengths, albeit an untapped one, which can attract tourists while also benefiting residents. Some felt the city does not celebrate its diversity as much as it could or should and should make a greater effort to attract and engage multicultural communities in all aspects of city life. People mentioned the large and active Korean-American community, among others, and expressed a desire to have cultural events and activities less siloed and better integrated into the broader community.

“So moving forward, thinking about, I mean, you bring a lot of assets to this community. Not just physical assets with the restaurant and all that, but your presence in the community is an asset because you have ideas.”

“It's interesting, because there are so many languages that are being spoken here and I don't realize it until I listen to somebody like the school district talking about [it].”

“It's also a pretty philanthropic community and they're generally open to new ideas and strategies or I wouldn't be here. ...I think that comes from being as diverse in the populace as we are.”

“...there's a ...lot of diverse options here in Federal Way that most communities don't have from an eating perspective...”

“They come to Federal Way for the Korean barbecue. Federal Way is known for, we have about five or six of the top Korean barbecues in the whole area. They come down here for Korean barbecue, then they'll come to [other places] for dessert.”

Infrastructure

Transportation

We asked all interviewees a question about Sound Transit light rail coming to the city and they responded with both optimism and concern. While many were glad that both visitors and residents will have a new option for getting to and from Federal Way, others felt that the light rail would bring

increased crime and the negative elements from Seattle and Tacoma to Federal Way. Some noted that because the light rail travels along the freeway instead of along Highway 99, that it may be harder for businesses to realize the benefits of increased traffic. There were concerns about whether the city's long-term plan regarding light rail will produce a positive impact on the city and whether the city works effectively with King County and Sound Transit to make sure decisions being made will benefit Federal Way.

"There needs to be good city planning in working with Sound Transit on the development here at the Sound Transit station, on developing the area in the mall and the development of the area south of the mall."

"We're not interested in busing people out we're interested in busing them in whether that's for jobs or maybe visitation or something."

"Oh, five years from now. Well, I think it's going to be moving toward what I'll call urban fringe because I think the light rail will change things up, a bit."

As noted previously, some equated ease of transportation with creating a welcoming environment for tourists. Many described challenges with the 'last mile' with public transportation – getting to your destination – and the challenge of traveling east to west. Some commented that the city's attractions are so spread out and isolated that it is not possible to walk anywhere to purchase anything, especially food. Comments were mixed about the ease of availability of ride share, and noted that it impacts not just individuals, but restaurants who may be reliant on ride share for delivering take-out orders.

"Our clientele is international, so you never know where somebody's going to be flying in from or driving from, but the question I get a lot is, "Can I take public transport?" And we're just not there."

"We have beautiful stuff that's not connected. Whether, if it's a facility or a workforce...[you've] got to drive to get anywhere to spend money. "

"We've got the fields, have the Celebration Fields, where are you going to walk to spend money?"

"...it's piece-mealed. So you've got this. And then you've got the little park and then you've got the stair bay. The only restaurant really that you could walk to is the Korean Barbecue, which is a great restaurant but it's one and that's not going to obviously appeal to everyone."

Some commented on the importance of taking adjacent development into consideration when planning new city projects as a way to minimize transportation issues and maximize business and tourism opportunities.

"We want to know what the plan is for that, but what we're really interested in is what is the transit adjacent development plan? What is the arts adjacent development plan?"

Physical Structures

Interviewees recognized that Federal Way hotels, and other non-athletic facilities, do not have the meeting space and overall capacity necessary to draw large conferences and events. While we did receive some comments about the Target center, it was not on the radar of most interviewees as a potential site for events and, hence, was not often mentioned. However, interviewees did offer

thoughts about the need and use of tourism facilities, and whether the city can draw enough tourists without large spaces.

“That Target building, I would envision an open e-sports exhibit hall.... [because] you can do some neat, fun things in there, whether it's car shows whether it's a small boat show. ...but there are other niches that you could do there. You can do fly fishing exhibit or, outdoors, hunting, fishing exhibit with vendors and stuff like that... And... in the wintertime you could put in synthetic ice and have an indoor ice-skating rink.

Many people mentioned the Pacific Arts and Event Center as a wonderful, but underutilized, facility. They also noted that its impact on tourism would be increased if the city had more businesses or points of interest to engage an arts-oriented visitor.

“Do we really need more hotels? Or do we need some destination approach that celebrates culture, food, art which is what I think the answer is.”

“Where are the painters? Where are the glass blowers? Where are the chocolatiers? Where are the galleries? We don't have a single one.”

“I can guarantee nobody is coming to a show at the PAEC to shop at Target and eat at an Applebee's.”

It is interesting to note that while Federal Way was considered a family-friendly destination, few of the people we interviewed mentioned anything about activities, events, or facilities specifically for youth beyond the organized sporting events already being offered.

“I would love to see some kind of center, a free, easy access place for kids after school. A youth center somewhere, that would be amazing. I mean, there's lots of things for kids to do [but] that costs money. There's the community center, but all those programs cost money. There's the mall, costs money, they don't want you to just loiter. A really cool thing, a community, youth center would be amazing. And I think that would be a tourist drop because that's somewhere. I need to go get my shopping, then how about you guys go here and play some basketball or hang out in the game room or something like that...It would have to be kind of centrally located, easy to get to by bus, and either free or low-cost or sliding scale kind of deal...So a dedicated place for them would make them feel more welcome and just address a lot of those issues.”

“We're really focused on residents for the most part. But if you're talking about tourism, if we're trying to make the library enticing to our community, we're going to have a lot to offer for tourists because you don't have to live here to come to our programs. You don't have to live here to come use the computers or the collection.

“If you are here for an Aquatic Center event and you don't want to maybe be there for the whole event, but we have a story time, you can come up to the library, have the story time, go back to your Aquatic [event].”

Events

Interviewees had varying opinions about the type of events to bring to Federal Way. Some wished the city would reintroduce some favorite city-wide celebrations, while others see potential for new events such as e-sports and a winter festival. Some commented that the city should expand on its core strength of holding athletic events. A few people felt that Federal Way's events were too often 'one off's' which do not help the city develop a tourism identity. Finally, many interviewees commented on the potential benefit that a year-round farmer's market would bring to the community, given that the current seasonal market is located near the site of the proposed light rail station.

"[The city] used to have a big summer fair and carnival. Bring back the car show, 4th of July fest. Need more fun and silly events. Might need an event coordinator."

"One of the ideas that came up there that I think might have some benefit, would be some kind of an athletic event, whether it's a run, a walk, a bicycle, and a triathlon."

"Right now, our farmer's market is the only thing that brings us together once a week every Saturday during the summertime, and that's where people hang out actually. It's like, am I going to see you at the market?"

"There's a group of people of which I am a member in the city that would like to put together a year-round market and have them working on it. A farmer's market kind of market. We have approached the city on different spots it could possibly be and things like that. No one with the city has gotten very excited about helping with that."

Public Safety

In addition to concerns of increased crime when the light rail opens, interviewees expressed widespread concerns about the current state of public safety and its impact on Federal Way businesses. Homelessness was specifically mentioned, and there was consensus that drug abuse and mental illness are at the root of the issue. Several interviewees felt that King County government is making the issue worse by buying hotels near Federal Way to house people from Seattle experiencing homelessness. Many felt that Federal Way's reputation has been unfairly influenced by the crime that takes place in the surrounding unincorporated areas as well as in Seattle. While the efforts of the law enforcement were recognized, public safety is a deep concern, especially for businesses such as restaurants who rely on night-time clientele.

"Federal Way has a little bit of a reputation problem when it comes to crime."

"It is a concern for us as a venue and for making sure our staff and patrons are safe...[They're] leaving at 9, 10 o'clock at night and they want to feel safe. They don't want to walk into the theater or a conference and having somebody ask them for change or somebody sleeping in the bushes.... I can't get those [customers] back because that's something out of my control and that's the impression that folks are going to have."

"Like I say, it's not near as bad as Seattle. It is the single biggest challenge that we're having is that.... I mean, the locals right here are getting to where they don't want to come out to businesses because of it. That will put a damper on trying to stimulate the tourism in the city."

“Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, three beautiful cities that normally attract a lot of people because of their beauty. People are being turned off by them rather than attracted to them. And once again, with Seattle, it reflects on the rest of us. People aren't coming to Seattle, to the Puget Sound area, they're not going to do any kind of stop at Federal Way or do anything else in Federal Way.”

What's Good for the Community is Good for Tourists

Economic Development

By improving Federal Way as a destination for tourism, many interviewees felt the city is also improving the quality of life for current residents. Many remarked about the potential to attract new companies and their workforce.

“We always welcome visitors obviously because your first touch with an investment decision maker is generally through tourism.”

“We have no live music, and you don't have outdoor seating, but these are cultural things that attract people as a destination for tourism but also as the workforce.”

“For us it means developing Federal Way as a destination not for tourism but rather as managing the destination to attract business workforce.”

“What's it like going to be for their [employees]... not just is the infrastructure good for moving the company here and the rental rates and all the things you have to consider, but will their employees want to be living here?”

“Federal Way is very focused on bringing...not just tourism in, but economic development as far as businesses as well.”

“Within the top key industries that the state is working on what's our strategy for business expansion here?”

“You starting to see more younger people coming out. I feel in five years, Federal Way will be competing in what Tacoma is like or Seattle. So slowly but surely, I think the people, we're getting younger people, will they have financially better... because a lot of people are buying houses around here. I see definitely a financial progression in five years.”

Lessons from the Pandemic

Instead of leaving Federal Way each day, residents working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic have been rediscovering their community. They are patronizing local businesses and visiting green spaces. As of our interviews in July, many event organizers were still deciding whether to go forward with in-person events.

“But I wonder if some of this work from home, if you've got people who live in Federal Way, but work elsewhere and all of sudden they're working at home, if some of those work from home trends continue, how do you harness that for the local restaurant community and eating out and those types of things, shopping more locally versus if I get my groceries on my way home from my job in South Seattle or whatever, that maybe that is positive, more of that work from home.”

“We did targeted digital advertising to people that don't have access to green space. {There has been} so much anxiety related to the pandemic.as things have opened up, and we're primarily outside, we've really tried to encourage people who might not have access to green space, to know that we're here and available for visits.”

Potential Events

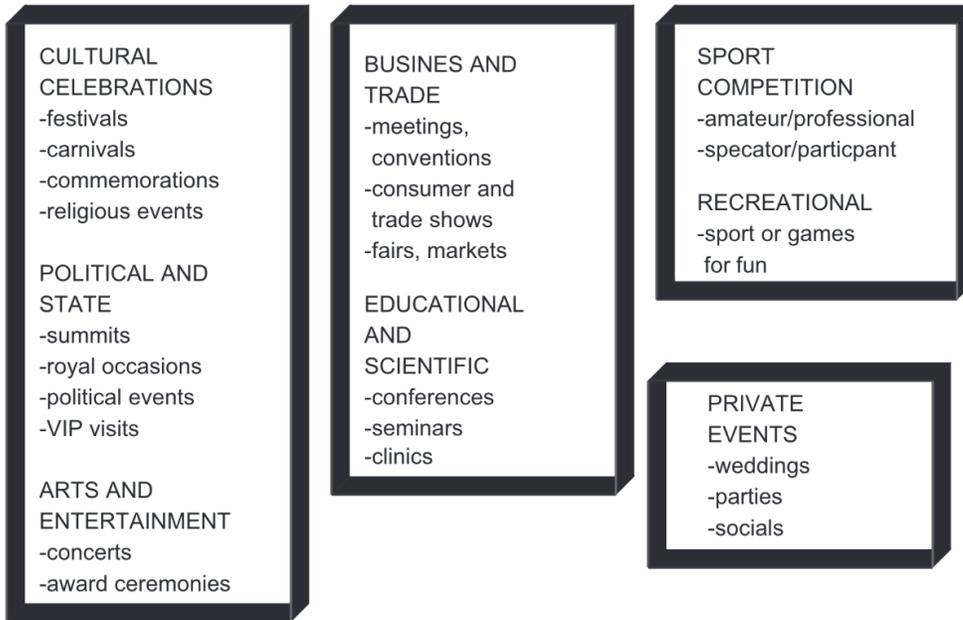
Event Genres

Event planning and the experience of the event itself are closely interconnected, with attendees at the heart of the planning process. Planned events require careful consideration of venue, theme, design, setting, consumables, security, program, and services, all of which contribute to the experience of attendees [10]. Each event experience is designed to leave personal and unique impressions on attendees. Planned events are labeled with titles that announce the form of the event itself, and most events fall into one of several genres. The following table (Table 1) supplies a typology of the main categories of planned events based primarily on their form.

Getz and Page advocates a portfolio approach to event planning, with the focus being on offering diverse types of events that appeal to different target markets, in a variety of venues, at various times of the year. The portfolio approach views events as destination assets, with “more attention paid to the long-term, sustainable values obtained by creating and supporting hallmark events that are co-branded with destinations, as well as a range of highly-targeted, iconic events for special interest groups [10, p. 237]”.

In recent years, event planning has been transformed by megatrends, including technology, individualization, and the search for authenticity [11]. As such, consumers are seeking experiences over products, where individualization and authenticity each play a significant role in what is referred to as “the experience economy [12, p. 105]”. Getz and Page described the concept of event experiences as “one of the most profound trends in the world of events,” [10] as the industry pivots to meet the needs of consumers seeking interactions that leave powerful impressions on them. Visitors and tourists seek event experiences that are rewarding and memorable, offering factors such as perceived authenticity, uniqueness, accessibility, interactivity, social opportunities, personal relevance, and learning opportunities. [10]. Many of the event genres detailed below present opportunities to incorporate these factors.

Table 1: Genre of planned events (from [13])



- **Cultural celebrations** - The use of cultural events continues to grow as a destination marketing and promotion strategy with destinations eager to broaden attraction attributes. Authenticity has been widely discussed in the tourism literature in relation to cultural events. Event planners should be sensitive to the potential for commodification, manipulation and appropriation when planning ethnic and cultural programming. They should seek input, consultation and collaboration with the ethnic community tied to the event, both for issues of authenticity and cultural agency. Getz explains that cultural event attendees seek opportunities to engage “emotionally and cognitively with places, people and dimensions of lifestyle” (2020, 262).
- **Political and state events** - Any event that is planned for or by the government or a political party falls into this category. These can include political conventions, inaugurations, VIP visits, and summits. Getz explains that these events often present security challenges for both event and civic planners (2016).
- **Arts and entertainment** - Concerts, music festivals, theater, dance shows, art exhibits, art installations, and award ceremonies all fall under this category. These events may involve artists, singers, dancers, actors, musicians, and may be categorized as amateur or professional, as well as competitive or festive (Getz 2016).
- **Business and trade events** - Even with the rise of social media, in-person conferences, exhibitions, and trade shows, continue to play a key role in business and trade (Getz 2016). Opportunities beyond the event, the location of the venue, and the image of the destination city, all play a role in attracting attendees and their families.
- **Educational and scientific events** - Education-based tourism is any type of program in which participants travel to a location either individually or in a group with the primary motive of engaging in or having a learning experience. Educational tourists are “individuals or groups who

travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than 24 hours and not more than one year” for purposes including study, business, leisure, and other activities.

- **Sports competition and recreation events** - Sport events include championships, tournaments, meets, competitions, and sports festivals. Sport events offer the opportunity for entertainment and spectacle. Attendees can range from fans, to athletes and their families, whose visit is motivated by their participation or attendance at an amateur or professional sporting event.
- **Private events** - Weddings, anniversaries, parties, and socials are considered private events. These events can contribute significantly to a local economy in terms of visitors, merchandise, services, and food. There are often strong vendor networks in this category, and private event planners may be engaged to aid with the details.

Current and pending major annual events

Federal Way’s major annual events primarily fall into genres of arts and entertainment, sports competition and recreation events, and cultural celebrations (Table 2 and Table 3). Aquatic events make up many sports competitions due to the city’s unique venue. Wild Waves Theme Park draws large numbers of visitors on a seasonal basis. The Federal Way July 4th Celebration and the Flavor of Federal Way are the only notable festivals. Events could be added to the calendar in the off season, supplying there is adequate hotel ability. The city has ability in hosting successful athletic events which could supply a foundation for seeking new events and growing its reputation as a sports center. It could also expand into other sports-related events such as e-sports or shoe expos.

Table 2: Major annual sporting events in Federal Way 2021-2025

Month	Event	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	Husky Invitational Swim Meet, 1500 athletes over 3 days	x	x	x	x	x
	Washington Open Swim Meet, 1500 athletes over 3 days	x	x	x	x	x
February	Northwest Conference College Men’s and Women Swimming Championships	x	x	x	x	x
	Pacific 12 Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving Championships	x	x	x	x	x
March	NCAA Division III, Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving National Championships	x				
	and/or					
	NCAA Regional Diving Championships back again in 2022		x		x	
	Pending announcement of Div. I Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving National Championships					x

Month	Event	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	NCAA Division 1 Swimming and Diving National Championships					x
April						
May						
June	International Underwater Unmanned Vehicle Championships pending proposal of hosting every other year starting in 2022		x		x	
July	Pending Federal Way Knights Annual Baseball Tournament					
August	DESNA Cup, Soccer Championships, 10,000 participants and spectators	x	x	x	x	x
September						
October						
November	Winter baseball events on artificial turf to begin	x	x	x	x	x
December	Pending – post-Olympic events		X			

Table 3: Other annually occurring events in Federal Way

Month	Event
May	Wild Waves Theme Park – Open Memorial Day to Labor Day
	Mother’s Day Celebration – Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden
	Blue Poppy Day – Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden
August	Flavor of Federal Way (2018 and 2019)
September	Pacific Arts and Events Center Activities – September through April
December	A Bonsai Solstice – Pacific Bonsai Museum

Federal Way Performing Arts and Events Center

COVID-19 has caused the cancellation or indefinite postponement of both locally produced and touring productions; the latter generates hotel night stays for cast and crew as well as visitors. No events appear on the PAEC calendar beyond 2021 (Table 4).

Table 4: Scheduled in-person PAEC events for 2021

Month	Event and number of nights
March	Ladies of Laughter – 1 night
	Joann Osborne and the Weepies – 1 night
	Glenn Miller Orchestra – 1 night
April	Menopause the Musical – 2 nights
October	The High Kings – 1 night

Locally generated ideas

Event opportunities identified at the 2018 Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) Retreat (Table 5) were organized into categories by the event genres detailed above (Table 1) as they often show the type of facilities and coordination needed. Some events, such as skating rink events, may be listed twice as they merit consideration in multiple categories; they are shown with an asterisk (*). General notes and recommendations generated at the retreat are listed in the bottom row of the table.

Table 5: Suggestions from 2018 LTAC Retreat

Genre	Suggestions from 2018 LTAC Retreat	
Cultural Celebrations (includes festivals, carnivals, commemorations)	General	Winterfest/Winter Carnival
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-cultural holiday event Native American events Holiday parades Light Projections Renaissance Fest Water Way, Outdoor Festival Best of Federal Way Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap a variety of events together Make Snow Christmas Tree Decorating Competition Festivals – Dickens, Nutcracker New Year’s Eve Party Jingle Bell Rock events Professional Story Telling* Boat parade during holiday* Winter Movies* Winter Music* Shopping/Black Friday*
	Food	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cider Festival/Winter Beer Brew Fest Hops Festival Chef’s Ideas for Holiday Dining Holiday sip & Shop Mac & Cheese Fest Multi Day Food Truck event 	
	Fall	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veteran’s Day ‘Plus’ Events Pumpkin Fest Day of the Dead Event 	
Political and State (summits, political events)	None noted	

Genre	Suggestions from 2018 LTAC Retreat	
Arts and Entertainment (concerts, award ceremonies)	Band Competition/Events – draw from Federal Way throughout Puget Sound Talent Competition (Evergreen State has one)	Car & Jazz, Symphony Event Winter Movies* Winter Music* Highlight Events at PAEC
Business and Trade (includes consumer and trade shows, fairs, markets)	Winter Concept conference* Pokémon Event Comic Con Retail shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping/Black Friday • Wedding Expo 	Craft Shows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knitting • Maker’s Market/Handmade • Quilting
Educational and Scientific (conferences, seminars, clinics)	Comprehensive Winter Conference Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Inclusive, Hotel, Arts, Transportation Encourage conferences in general	
Sports Competition (amateur/professional)	Focus on Aquatics Center Create and own event such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Swimmers Annually • Partner with USA Swimming • Event before Tokyo Olympics - bring in different World Teams • Other outside swimming events Electronic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotics Competition • E-Sports (Cyber Games) • Geocaching Course/Competition* Skating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Skating Rink* • Tap into NHL • Winter Apparel • Hockey Demo 	Physical Competitions Race Expo Physical competitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race Expo • Triathlon • Marathon • 10K • Trail Running • Global Yacht Race-sponsorship • Iron Kid/Indoor Triathlon • Archery Competition Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seahawks/Sounders Camp • High School Cheerleading • Olympic Trials • Olympic Trial sendoff
Recreational (sport or games for fun)	Boat parade during holiday* Geocaching Course/Competition* Skating Rink events*	
Private Events (weddings, parties)	Temporary attractions Create your own venue Team with someone else to create a temporary venue	
Other notes and suggestions	Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize use of Wild Waves 	Event types <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay and Play package • Focus on destination events

Genre	Suggestions from 2018 LTAC Retreat	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate use of other facilities (e.g. former Bally's Athletics and other empty facilities) • Assess city's sports facilities • Conduct needs assessment • Understand the demand • Incorporate the High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week-long events • Tie in with fundraising – identify charities <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect events to retail and restaurants • Pay attention to access and affordability

Competing events in Puget Sound region

Many Puget Sound cities and towns have "First Friday's" or "First Saturday's" events to draw visitors to the downtown core and nearly every city has some sort of wedding show held during the winter. Additionally, trade, wedding, and home and garden shows, such as Lynden's Home and Garden Show, sponsored by the Building Industry Association of Whatcom County, draw off-season visitors. Many festivals and celebrations incorporate participatory events, such races and contests, to engage attendees and conversely, fitness and outdoor events, such as "[Tour de Whatcom](#)," and "[Sea to Ski](#),". Various outdoor 5k "fun runs," triathlons, etc., are often billed as community events with "After parties" for such events drawing visitors to local restaurants, bars. Some events are organized by broad planning groups, such as [Whatcom Events](#), a volunteer-driven event management organization. Broadly, we are seeing events once geared toward adults, now incorporating some family/kid friendly features to attract families, and cities focusing on creating an atmosphere conducive to "experiences," adding value to events and giving visitors an escape from their daily routines.

What we are seeing during the COVID-19 pandemic are travelers seeking vacations that offer opportunities to incorporate outdoor activities following COVID-19 restrictions. Many people experienced reduced physical activity during the pandemic and are eager find experiences for physical health. Cities are highlighting outdoor opportunities, including nature walks, self-guided interpretive tours, hiking, paddle boarding, kayaking, etc. to attract visitors as they reopen. StoryWalk® trails are being installed in many Puget Sound cities to give children an opportunity to take part in an outdoor activity that is conducive to social distancing. Some examples:

- Lake Wilderness Arboretum StoryWalk® <https://www.lakewildernessarboretum.org/natural-areas/storywalk/>
- Shoreline, Richmond Beach Community Park Pop-up StoryWalk® <https://www.parentmap.com/calendar/popup-story-walk-bears-song>

During the summer outdoor movies offered in many cities; we are now seeing those transition into pop-up drive-ins e.g.: Puyallup: <https://www.thefair.com/activities/drive-in-movie-at-the-fair/>; Redmond: <https://www.epiceap.com/movies-at-marymoor/>; and Tacoma: <https://www.americascarmuseum.org/events/>.

Other cities are exploring wellness or wellbeing tourism, which integrates physical health, beauty or longevity, spiritual awareness, and a connection with community and/or nature such as the Bonsai Solstice at the Pacific Bonsai Museum <https://pacificbonsaimuseum.org/event/a-bonsai-solstice-2/> or the simple act of spending time in the forest (called forest bathing in Japan)

<https://www.japan.travel/en/guide/forest-bathing/>. Wellbeing tourism is predicted to grow in popularity as people emerge from the uncertainty and monotony of COVID-19 and seek new activities that provide comfort and structure.

Many community calendars and tourism campaigns exist in the region that develop and promote activities on a rolling basis (Table 6). In addition, there are several ‘traveling’ events which have been hosted in other Puget Sound locals that could either compete with Federal Way events or could be events Federal Way competes for, for example:

- Oddmall PNW: <https://www.facebook.com/OddmallPNW/>; “Art and craft shows are out-of-the-ordinary events featuring unusual products that a bit different: weird, freaky, bizarre, off the cob, or plain different. They host shows at various Puget Sound venues throughout the year, as well as “vendor villages” festivals and events throughout the region.”
- 14/48 Worlds Quickest Theater Festival – Seattle hosted: <https://www.the1448projects.org/twqtf>
- Earth UFO Fest hosted in Lacey in 2019: <https://www.thetriadartstheater.com/earthufofest>.

Table 6. Community calendars and tourism campaigns in the region.

Community Calendars	Tourism Campaigns
AAA Washington Five Things to Do this Weekend https://blog.wa.aaa.com/weekend/	Experience Olympia and Beyond– “Daycation” https://www.experienceolympia.com/blog/post/7-ways-to-seize-the-end-of-summer/
Greater Seattle on the Cheap https://www.greaterseattleonthecheap.com/	Puget Sound Attractions Council https://www.seattleattractions.com/about-psac/
Parent Map Family Fun Calendar – “Activities in Seattle and around the Sound” https://www.parentmap.com/calendar	Visit Seattle https://visitseattle.org/
Seattle and Sound: Attractions, Events, and Things to Do https://www.seattleandsound.com/	Snohomish County Sports Commission https://youtu.be/o5lgqby9jzo

A more comprehensive list of potential competing events in the Puget Sound is found in *Appendix 2: Potential competing events for off-season tourism in Federal Way*. For reference, driving distances to nearby cities are located in Table 7.

Table 7: Driving distances from Federal Way to other Washington cities

North	South	East
Arlington – 70.2 miles	Auburn – 5.3 miles	Ellensburg – 114 miles
Bellevue – 26.1 miles	Chehalis – 67 miles	Renton – 15.6 miles
Bellingham – 112 miles	Kent – 7.6 miles	Richland – 208 miles
Birch Bay – 133 miles	Longview – 106 miles	Walla Walla – 267 miles
Blaine – 134 miles	Olympia – 40 miles	Wenatchee – 155 miles
Bothell – 37 miles	Portland – 159 miles	Yakima – 166 miles
Fairhaven – 110 miles	Tacoma – 12.7 miles	
Lynden – 125 miles	Vancouver, WA – 145 miles	
Lynwood – 39 miles		
Seattle – 23.3 miles		
Snohomish – 48.6 miles		

Evaluating Potential Events

Understanding the off-season.

Based on our analysis of the occupancy, average daily rate (ADR), and revenue per available rooms (RevPAR) data (details supplied below), we see that the high season in the market has not changed since the 2015 HVS report previously available to Federal Way (data from 2003 through June 2015).

June, July, and August remain the high season. December and January represent the low season, and February-May and September-November are the shoulder seasons. Many markets consider February and November to be part of low season months; however, the Federal Way market is aided by the King County Aquatic Center and has the benefit of considering February and November shoulder months. December of 2019 did not follow traditional December patterns of prior years due to a large swim meet, the USA Swimming Junior Nationals (see Occupancy discussion). This swim meet will occur in the market again but has not confirmed locations beyond 2022. If this event, or other national swim meets, continues annually, or with a level of regularity (e.g., every 2 or 3 years) the off-season may be reduced further. The hotels used to analyze occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR are listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Hotels included in analysis, are all located in Federal Way (zip code 98003).

Hotel	STR Class	Conversion Date	Open Date	# Rooms
Extended Stay America Seattle - Federal Way	Economy Class	Aug 1999	Aug 1999	101
Courtyard Seattle Federal Way	Upscale Class	Jun 2000	Jun 2000	160
Best Western Plus Seattle Federal Way	Upper Midscale Class	Oct 2010	Oct 1999	165
Hampton by Hilton Inn Seattle/Federal Way	Upper Midscale Class	Aug 2010	Aug 2010	142
Quality Inn & Suites Federal Way Seattle	Midscale Class	Aug 2002	Aug 2002	65
Red Lion Inn & Suites Federal Way	Midscale Class	Sep 2014	Sep 1982	90
La Quinta Inns & Suites Seattle Federal Way	Upper Midscale Class	Nov 2018	Jun 1983	116
Days Inn Federal Way	Economy Class	Jun 2007	Aug 1994	54
Comfort Inn Federal Way Seattle	Upper Midscale Class	Nov 1998	Nov 1998	117

Changes in Supply and Demand

The changes listed here represent changes that have occurred since the HVS Report was created in mid-2015.

- The newest hotel in the market is the Hampton Inn, which was built-in 2010
- LaQuinta converted from Clarion in 2018 with a significant remodel. Their room count changed from 115 rooms to 116 rooms, increasing the overall room count in the market.
- Smaller hotels are not part of the competitive set and do not supply accommodations for out-of-town travelers

Occupancy

Below are charts illustrating occupancy and percent change in occupancy year-over-year for the Federal Way market from 2012 through May 2020 (see Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3). These data extend the

HVS findings, which includes these numbers for 2003 through June 2015. The numbers follow a consistent pattern each year, except for February through May 2020, which illustrates the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on the hotel industry (Figure 1). The pattern for year-over-year occupancy change is less predictable than year-over-year occupancy (Figure 2). The peak occupancy year was 2017. The market experienced a decline in 2018, with a negative year-over-year change from 2017 to 2018 in 10 of 12 months, starting in March and running through the rest of the year. The occupancy decline continued in 2019 with a negative change in 5 of 12 months. Positive year-over-year growth from December 2018 to December 2019 was due to the USA Swimming Junior Nationals, which led to a strong ending for the year. January showed a positive start to 2020. However, after two months of growth, COVID-19 travel restrictions led to dramatic double-digit declines March through May. The market continues to creep back but will not see the equivalent of 2019 numbers soon.

The last occupancy chart is a summary of data from three years, June through May 2017-2020 (Figure 3). In this chart, you can see that there is room for occupancy growth every day of the week, with the highest need on Sundays. The business-focused hotels in the market can fill their hotel on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with corporate travelers. According to two business hotel General Managers, corporate business is 60% of their room night volume, with the other 40% made up of leisure travelers. The hotels that are not purpose-built for business travelers experience a higher volume of leisure travelers and have lower occupancy numbers during the week than the business-focused hotels.

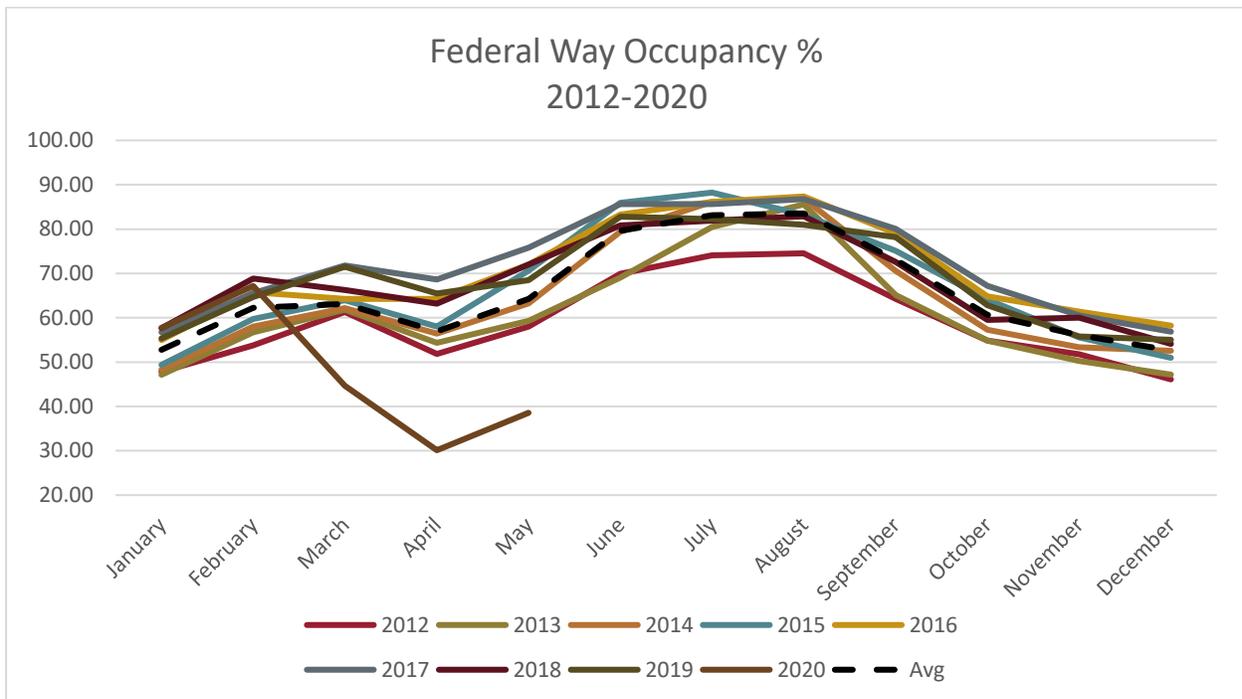


Figure 1. Federal Way occupancy percent 2012-2020

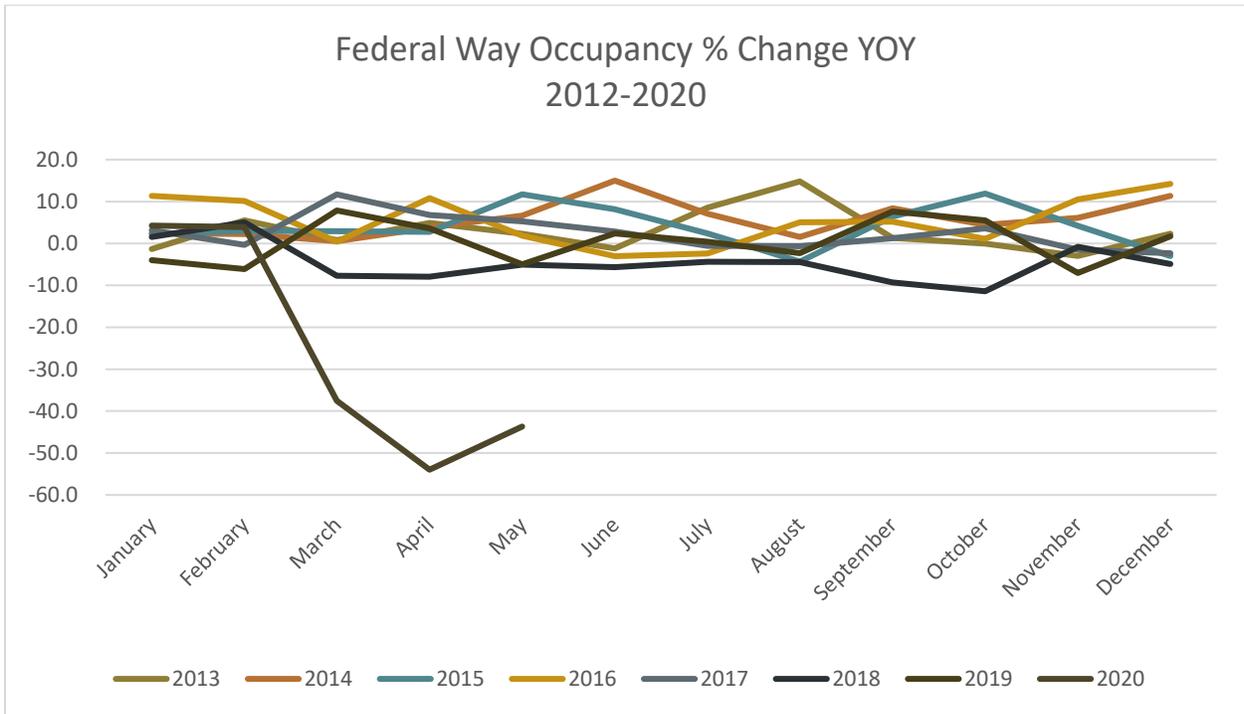


Figure 2. Federal Way occupancy percent change year-over-year (YOY) for 2012-2020.

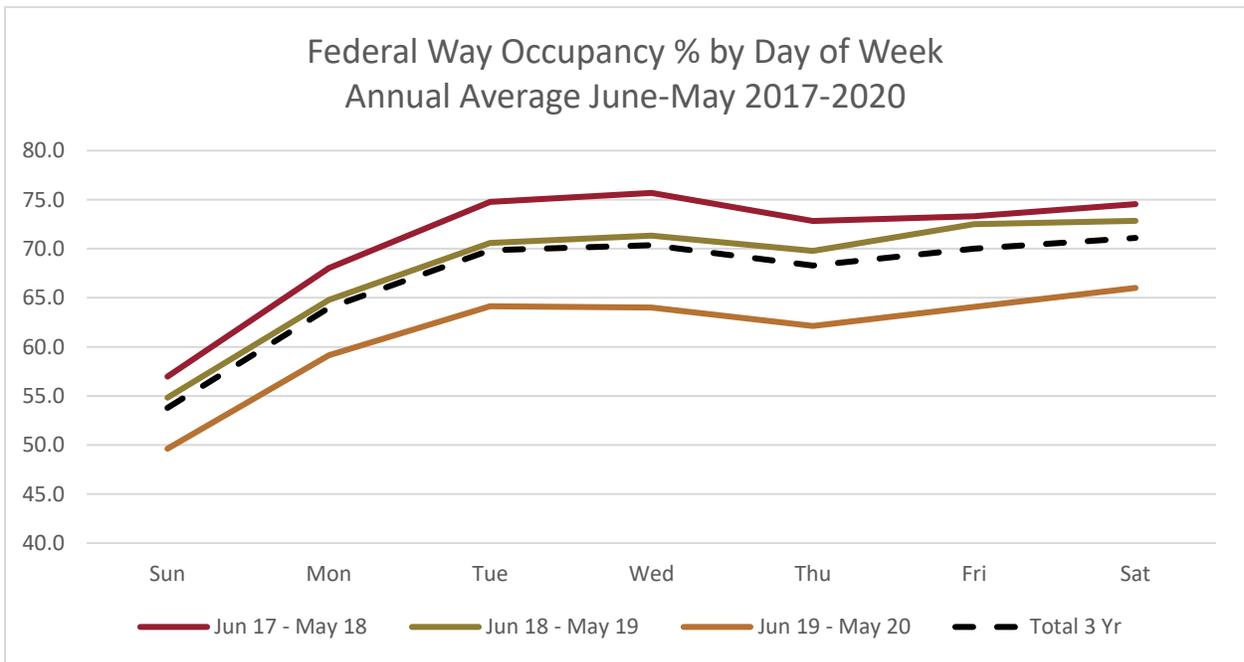


Figure 3. Federal Way occupancy percent by day of week as an annual average for June-May 2017-2020.

Average Daily Rate and RevPAR

There are some interesting spikes in ADR and RevPAR (e.g. June 2015) that are associated with events held at the King County Aquatic Center. In these instances, prebooked groups allow hotels to increase rates for non-group guests and result in ADR (and RevPAR) spikes. Other year-over-year changes are

explained by the growth in occupancy for the prior year. For example, since 2017 was an outstanding year for occupancy, there was a push for higher room rates in 2018 (Figure 4 and Figure 5). The Average Daily Rate (ADR) increased by an average of 3.4% in 2018, while occupancy posted a year-over-year loss of 2.4% (Figure 6). These changes combined resulted in a 1.6% year-over-year decline in Revenue per available room (RevPAR) in 2018, which suggests the rate increases were too aggressive, resulting in an overall decline in revenue. RevPAR gained ground in 2019 with an annual growth of 1.9% (Figure 7), which was driven by year-over-year rate growth of 1.4% and occupancy holding firm.

The Federal Way market showed year-over-year RevPAR growth in 2018 in their low seasons, but experienced declines during peak season that year. Patterns were unpredictable in 2019 and did not show a pattern like 2018. RevPAR showed growth in January, March, April, June, July, September, October, and December and declines in February, May, August, and November. Overall, the market experienced a year-over-year gain of 1.9% in RevPAR from 2018 to 2019. RevPAR year-to-date through May 2020 was down 38.5%. The day of week RevPAR mirrored occupancy, showing the greatest room for growth on Sunday (Figure 8). While the day of week ADR was similar, it showed room for growth most notably on Sunday, but also opportunities on Friday and Saturday nights as well (Figure 9).

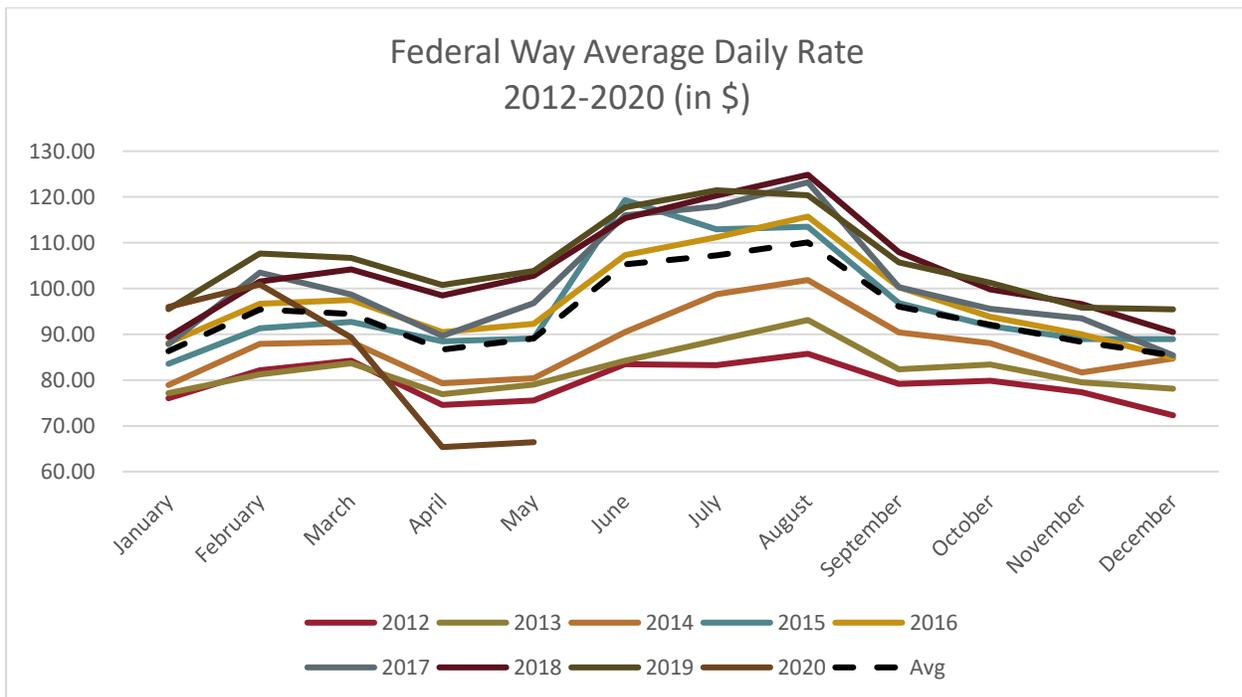


Figure 4. Federal Way average daily rate (ADR) for 2012-2020 (in \$).

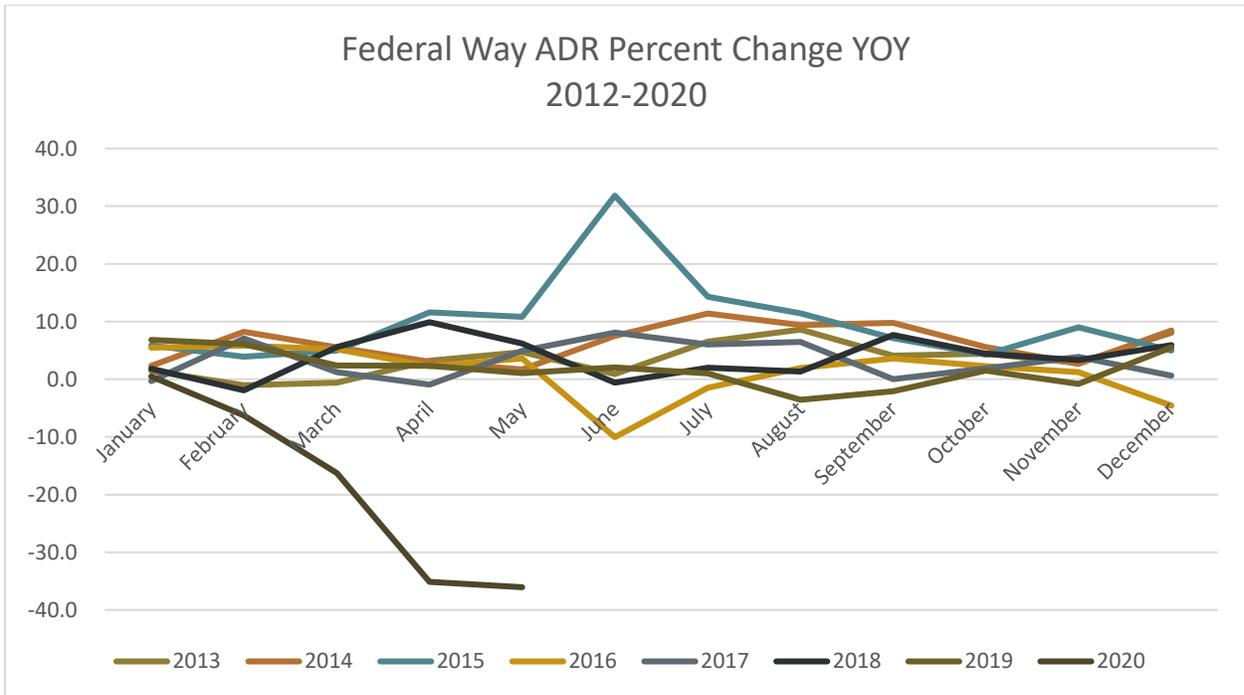


Figure 5. Year-over-year (YOY) percent change in the average daily rate (ADR) for hotels in Federal Way from 2012 to 2020.

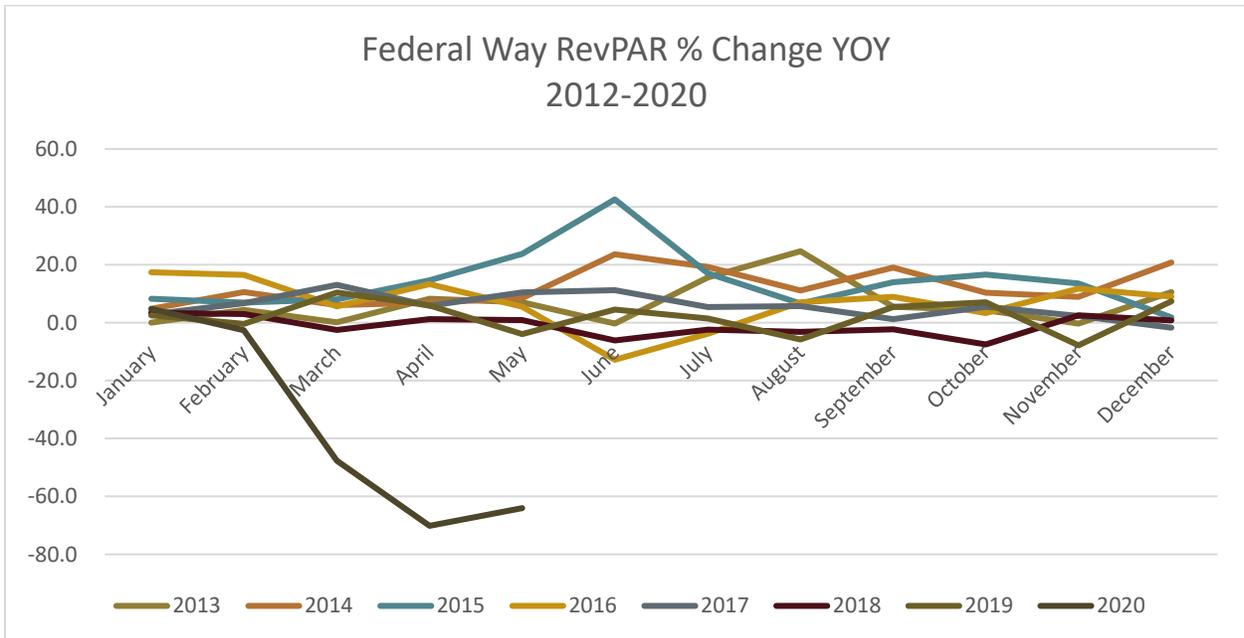


Figure 6. Year-over-year (YOY) percent change in revenue per available room (RevPAR) for Federal Way hotels from 2012 to 2020.

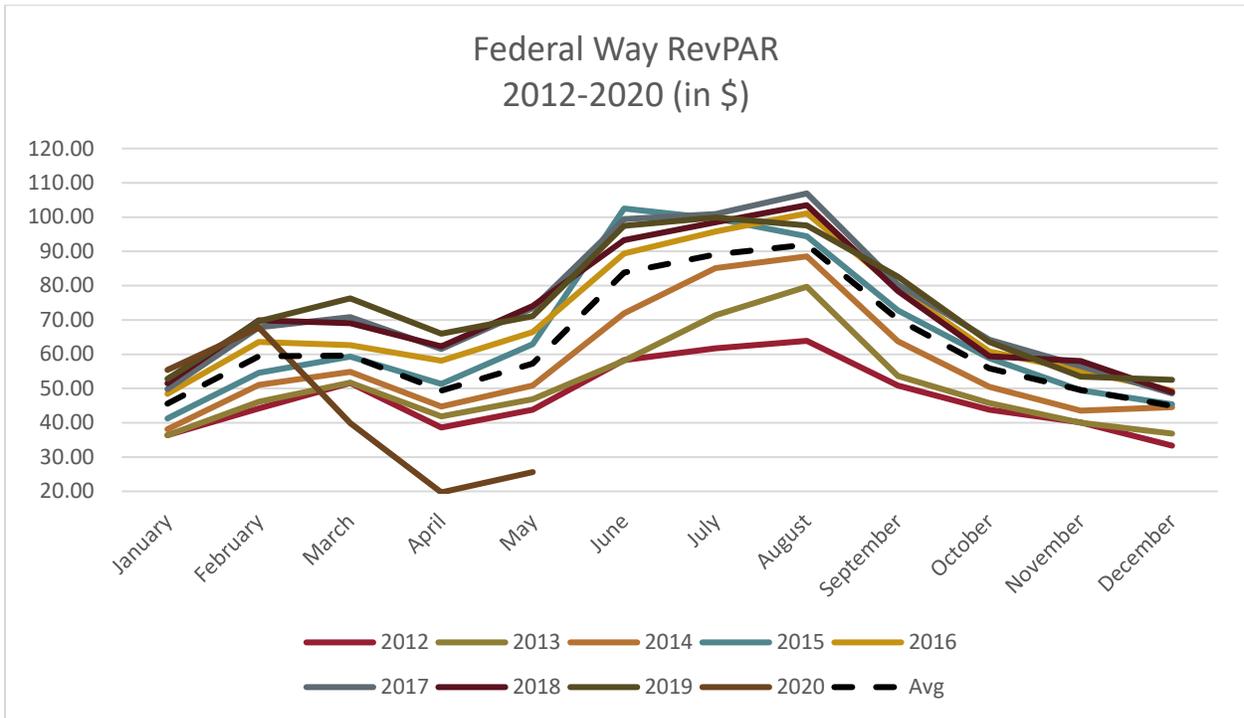


Figure 7. Revenue per available room (RevPAR) for Federal Way hotels 2012-2020 (in dollars).

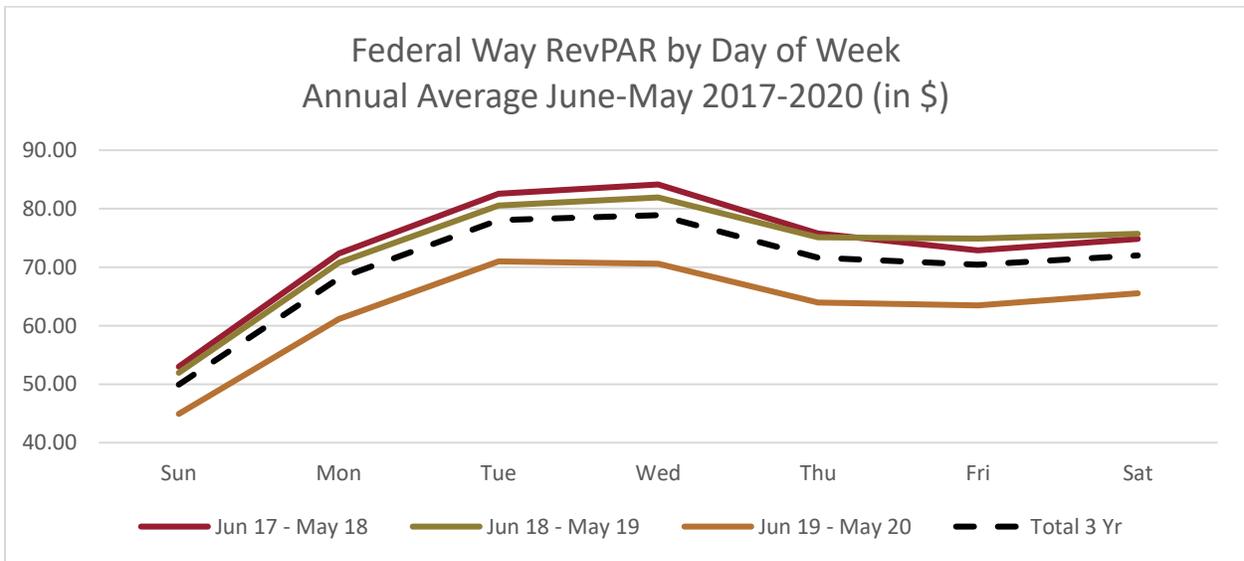


Figure 8. Day of week annual average revenue per available room (RevPAR) for Federal Way hotels from 2017-2020 (in dollars).

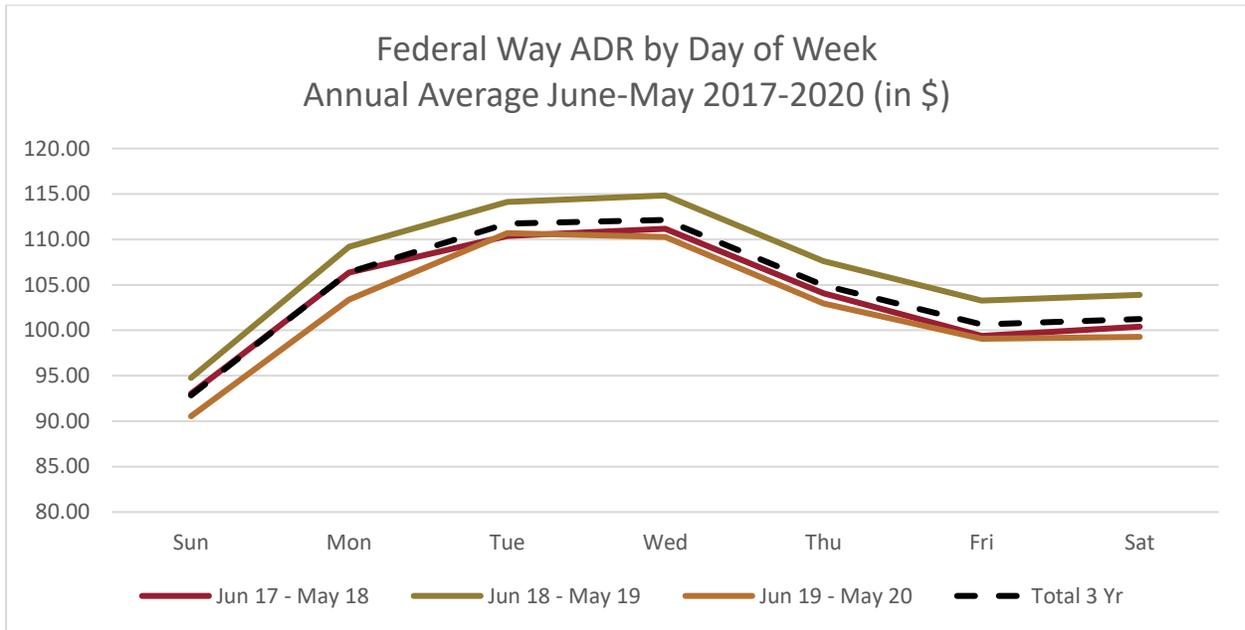


Figure 9. Day of week average daily rate (ADR) for Federal Way hotels from 2017-2020 (in dollars).

Federal Way Revenue

For completeness, we are included data provided to us by Tim Johnson on hotel revenue for Federal Way (Figure 10) and lodging tax revenue to Federal Way (Figure 11. Lodging tax revenues for Federal Way 2013 - 2019 (in dollars). These charts illustrate market revenue over the past 7 years. The numbers for 2020 will be reduced from 2019 with the dramatic reductions in occupied rooms due to COVID-19. For both revenue charts the 2018 revenue and tax totals included numbers through November. The 2019 numbers are based on an estimate made from previous years for the year 2019: The revenue for 2020 is made based upon a forecast of revenue.

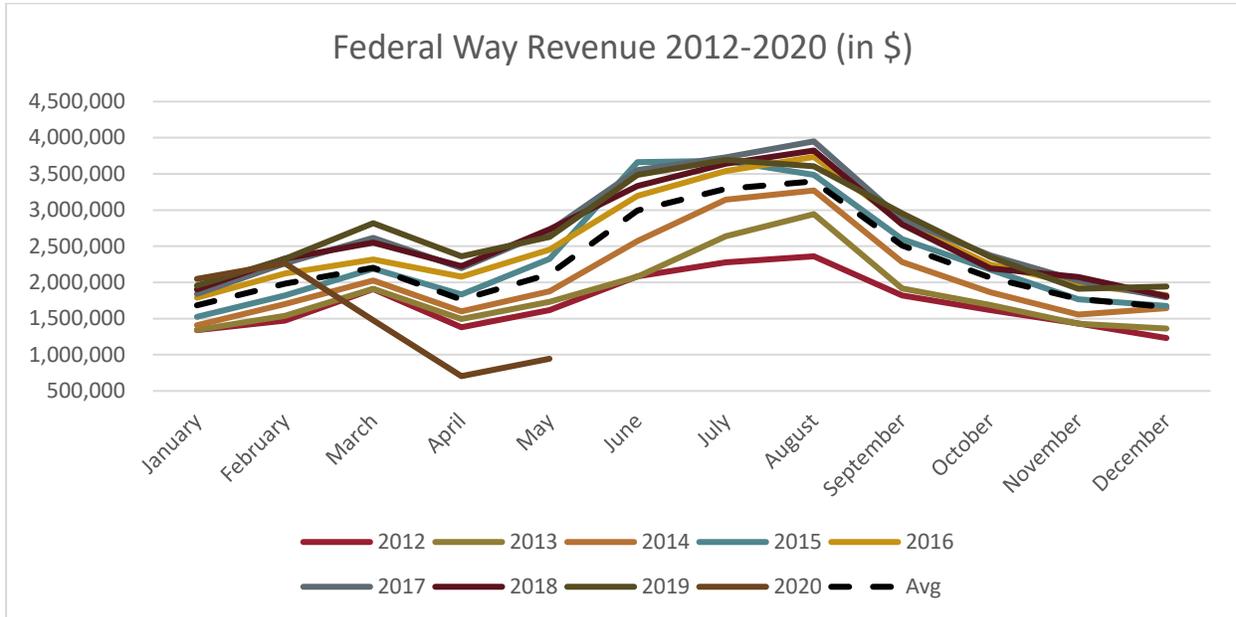


Figure 10. Lodging revenue in Federal Way 2012-2020 (in dollars).

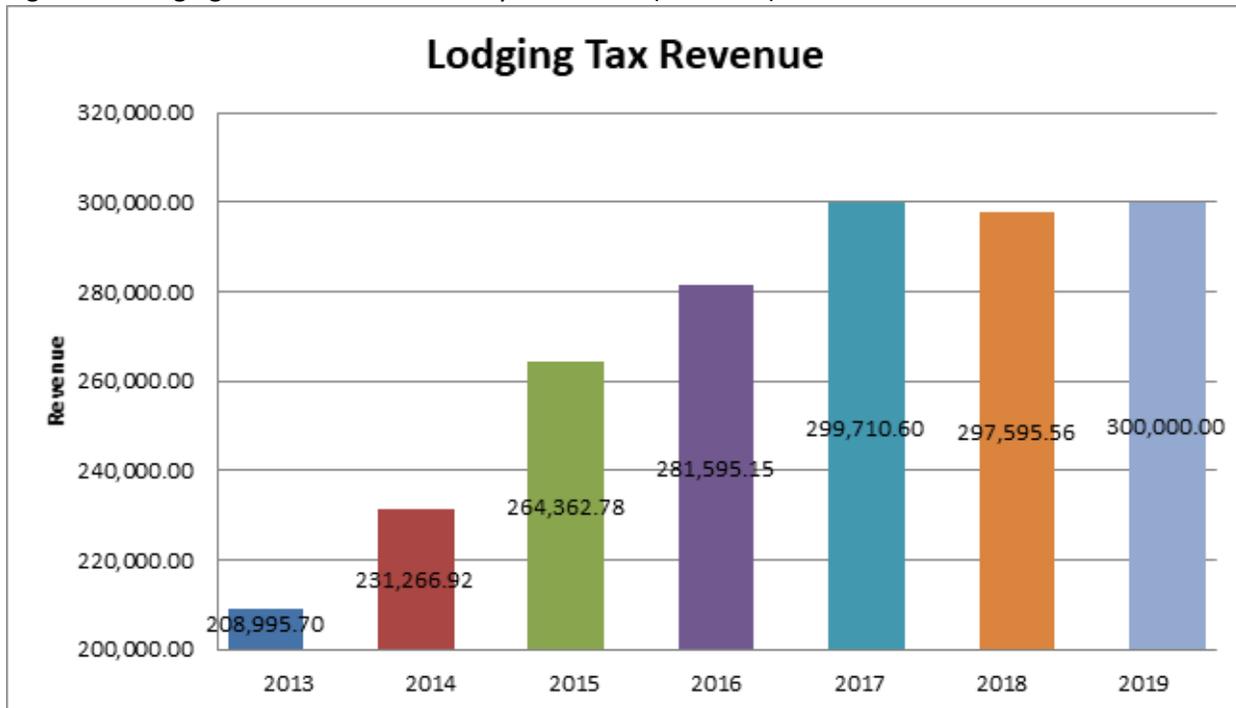


Figure 11. Lodging tax revenues for Federal Way 2013 - 2019 (in dollars).

Public and private event facilities in Federal Way.

What we notice from this list (Table 9) is that Federal Way has few very facilities for hosting large events. This list will be confirmed when in-person site visits are possible post-COVID-19. The meeting facilities in the hotels are adequate only for small conferences, relegating hotels to just proving lodging instead of being event centers. Coordination among hotels, including shuttle transportation, could open more opportunities to host larger distributed events. Hotels could also collaborate with other venues to

offer event/lodging/transportation packages. Facilities at the Performing Arts and Events Center may allow for hosting remote events or distributed conference.

Table 9: Federal Way meeting spaces

Location	Square footage	Rooms	Total seating
Best Western	2784	4	
Courtyard	1640	3	56
Dumas Bay Theater		1	234
Dumas Bay Meeting Rooms	280	5	
Hampton Inn		3	75
La Quinta	2493	3	
PAEC	7817	4	1050 (700 theatre)
Aquatic Center – banquet hall	10,000	2	400
Community Center		5	340
Bonsai Garden - outdoor			125
Wild Waves – outside deck		1	50
Target Building	110,000		
Christian Faith Center	150,000		2000

Recommendations and Reasons to Proceed

Based on our definitions of event-based tourism and tourist versus event visitor and our analyses of what the Federal Way off-season is; the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified in the Marketek report; data from the 2021 RQI interviews; current, future, and outstanding proposals events in Federal Way; potential opportunities identified in the 2018 LTAC retreat; reviewing other genre of potential and potentially competing events; and understanding the current and potential facilities within Federal Way that can contribute to tourism-based events, we make the following recommendations.

While our recommendations focus strongly on activities that can be added to the off-season tourism mix, many can be expanded throughout the year to build overall economic resiliency and reduce Federal Way's reliance on single-establishment or single-sector economic activities and opportunities. This will help the city adapt to inevitable changes, position businesses in the current COVID-19 environment, be prepared to pivot during the evolving post COVID-19 environment, and plan for the arrival of Sound Transit Link light rail and beyond. These recommendations can and should be put in place during 2022 so the city is ready to implement, and take full advantage of, events in the 2022-23 off-season.

Recommendation 1: Develop the vacated Target building to support mixed use internet-based opportunities.

We recommend the Target building be renovated into an *e-Vent Center* that supports internet-based opportunities detailed below as well as supporting tradeshow space. The city does not have many facilities that can accommodate substantial numbers of people and the existing facilities are not very flexible. The Target building provides the city with an opportunity to expand tourist activities in the downtown core and within walking distance of the transit center. The costs to retrofit, equip and staff the facility would be substantial. We recommend the city invest in economic modeling for potential revenue generated by events listed below.

We did not ask a question specifically about the Target building during our RQI and, potentially as a result, only one or two interviewees specifically mentioned it. Those who did felt that developing it would provide the city with more opportunities for hosting events. However, our interviews did mention that the current hotels do not have the capacity to host conferences. If the city wants to expand beyond sporting events a new facility may be necessary. A facility that is flexible would allow the city to bring in conferences and host new types of events meant to draw a different demographic or expand opportunities within a demographic already drawn to Federal Way, e.g., family-oriented sporting events, or business / conference travelers. Utilizing this building may be the quickest way to increase the city's capacity to host these larger events. Our interviews did not yield enough information to reinforce our recommended event genres of e-gaming, distributed conferences, and events unique to the region (such as sneaker events); however, as noted in our original report, we believe our next two recommendations are still critical to the success of e-vents and other activities that would be held at the Target center as well as important, stand alone, recommendations to support overall tourism growth in the city.

Reasons to proceed

- The impact of COVID-19 will continue into 2021 and beyond even the widespread distribution and adoption of vaccines. Therefore, people's willingness to congregate in large groups may not return for a significant amount of time. With a large, and flexible space, the city can adapt as physical distancing regulations, and comfort, change over time. Distance = safety – something that a large facility can provide.

- While we highlight the opportunities for e-Vent Center, building out the facility to be flexible provides options for event genres across both the e-commerce and traditional in-person tradeshow.
- Such an e-Vent Center takes the long view of increasing tourism – it will be a unique space in the region/state.

Recommendation 1a: Build and market Federal Way's ability to host ESports

Esports, as noted previously, is experiencing exponential growth, providing a ground floor opportunity for Federal Way create a new event niche. Outfitting the Target building to host ESports will set the high-end level of infrastructure needed for what will be the multi-use e-Vent Center around which all other activities can be built. Federal Way will need to both build the space and be willing to help build the local, regional, and multi-state growth of Esports. Federal Way can then position itself to hold events from high school competitions (e.g. state finals), collegiate competitions (e.g. PAC-12; NCAA regional), and regional qualifying events for other existing national and international competitions. Examples and analyses of existing ESports events are available in *Appendix 3: Event examples*.

Reasons to proceed

- Builds on the business ecosystem and brand the city has already created for hosting other high school, collegiate and Olympic sporting events
- Positions Federal Way at the forefront of a growing industry
- Provides versatility and opens new opportunities

Recommendation 1b: Distributed Conference Hosting

COVID-19 has decimated the conference industry and those impacts may be felt for many years. However, even before the pandemic, distributed conferencing has been used to connect rural communities for attending conferences and economic development opportunities (e.g. see Washington State University Extension's [Women in Agriculture](#) conference). In addition to people's health concerns about gathering in-person, travel may be deemed too expensive for some businesses and industries which are still recovering. The ability to host virtual or distributed conferences can put Federal Way at the forefront of an emerging industry. This would leverage the infrastructure in place for the ESports events.

Reasons to proceed

- During COVID-19 people have discovered the ability to connect without traveling great distances. While Zoom will never replace people's desire to connect in person, there will be greater demand for hybrid opportunities to convene both in person and online.
- Zoom in general, and at-home zoom, makes it difficult to produce high-end presentations with quality lighting, sound and knowing no 'family bombs' or dropped connections will occur.
- The virtual events industry is expected to grow tenfold by 2030, becoming a \$774 billion business. In addition, several virtual event software companies are raising capital to expand [14], the opportunity to partner with these companies in a hybrid model could be lucrative for Federal Way.
- Resources for how to successfully develop hybrid conference experiences are being developed, and the city can utilize that body of knowledge to avoid pitfalls [15].
- Federal Way can leverage existing expertise within WSU, including WSU Conference Management and academic personnel in business, community and economic development and hospitality to build and promote events.

Recommendation 1c: Events like Sneaker Events

Sneaker shows provide a space for sneaker fans ('sneakerheads') to buy, sell and trade merchandise while also providing a venue for sneaker companies to highlight their products. Attendees come to purchase and view rare sneakers, as well as new sneaker releases. Large-scale sneaker events attract international participation and have contributed to the notoriety of sneaker events in general. While Sneaker Con is the cornerstone of sneaker events, competing and smaller events are also regularly held. Some sneaker events are held in the same location each year, while others travel, providing a potential opportunity for Federal Way to attract an existing event. Examples and analyses of existing sneaker events are available in *Appendix 3: Event examples*.

Reasons to proceed

- In-person sneaker events can also be held simultaneously online, using apps like Instagram and Twitch. Due to COVID-19 considerations, it is likely that hosting cities will offer expanded virtual opportunities for attending, once in-person events resume. Such a hybrid approach would leverage the distributed conference approach in producing the on-stage activity for both in-person and on-line audiences.
- It would introduce a unique event to the region.
- It builds on the city's reputation for hosting sporting events.
- This is just a single example of a type of event that the tourism committee (see Recommendation 2) would help identify, attract, and support through multi-sector engagement and economic development.
- Federal Way can leverage existing expertise within WSU, including WSU Conference Management and academic personnel in business, community and economic development and hospitality to build and promote events.

Note: We believe that the following Recommendations 2 and 3 are critical to the success of Recommendation 1, as they build the community-wide infrastructure needed to successfully to support major events. We would recommend working on all three recommendations concurrently to ensure the community wide infrastructure is in place upon opening and attracting events to the e-Vent Center

Recommendation 2: Develop a Federal Way Tourism Ecosystem.

Federal Way has many positive qualities that make it a desirable place to live, but as mentioned in the SWOT analysis it lacks both an identity and the amenities that attract and hold tourists. The city is fortunate to draw tourists for multi-day aquatic events and to Wild Waves Theme Park, yet there appears to be little in place to enhance the tourist experience. We recommend that the city create an ecosystem to draw and support tourists during their stay, focusing initially on four areas: signage, transportation, communication, and regional opportunity. All elements working together can help Federal Way create a visitor friendly brand that it currently lacks. This recommendation is reinforced by the findings and recommendation in the draft Operation: FWVX report [16].

- **2.a. Signage** – Our team saw minimal evidence of wayfinding signage to points of interest or key tourist basic amenities (e.g. transportation, lodging, restaurants). Existing signage is small and does not provide visitors with sufficient 'breadcrumbs' along the route to successfully lead them to these key locations. The city should evaluate and improve signage from a visitor's perspective. This could include having outsiders conduct a walking audit of the town, using tourist personas, to help highlight opportunities and deficiencies for the city.
- **2.b. Transportation** - Visitors without vehicles are challenged to move easily within the city, not just to points of interest, but also to basic amenities such as restaurants and shopping. In

addition to longer term city-sponsored options, such as a trolley, shorter term solutions may exist such as hotels working together to utilize their vans as ‘circulator’ shuttle to support tourists accessing the various parts of the city. Developing the system now will not only provide immediate benefit but also position the city well for the arrival of the light rail when more tourists arrive in Federal Way without transportation.

- **2.c. Communication** – There are many ways to communicate a welcoming environment to visitors, both prior to and during, their visit. The visitfw.org website could be updated to be more attractive and versatile, such as the website that caters to visitors to Snohomish County, seattlenorthcounty.com. An excellent hotel concierge is an essential guide for visitors to a new city. Hotels or the city could explore creating a city-wide ‘concierge’ service utilizing online, print and in-person communication to help visitors navigate to and amongst amenities within Federal Way and points of regional interest.
- **2.d. Regional opportunity** – Federal Way serves as a lower cost base of operation for Seattle sports fans, Tacoma concert-goers, and visitors enjoying natural amenities in the Pacific Northwest. Federal Way should find ways to work with regional entities and leverage this opportunity through joint marketing and other collaborative endeavors, with a goal of not simply being the least expensive choice, but an appealing choice as well. This regional opportunity will be expanded with fall 2021 launching of the Seattle Kraken NHL franchise.

Without exception, interviewees during the RQI acknowledged that Federal Way’s greatest asset is its potential to be an urban base camp within the ecosystem of tourism in the Puget Sound region. By creating a welcoming environment for tourists, the city can encourage them to stay a little longer and take in the sights and restaurants the city has to offer. This overall focus on hospitality and the tourist experience can reap benefits for tourists and locals.

Reasons to proceed

- Federal Way has many assets that need to be connected to support tourism in Federal Way in both the off-season and beyond.
- Although a short-term answer to increasing tourism may be adding single large events, the long-term solution involves investment of infrastructure including signage and improving curb appeal. These obvious signs of welcome keep the city from simply being a place to pass through and, instead, provide visitors with something to remember.
- Without engaging in a formal branding process, these improvements can help redefine Federal Way’s theme and brand, and potentially act as a precursor should the city decide to engage in a future formal branding process.

Recommendation 3: Establish the soft infrastructure necessary to support tourism.

We recommend creating a multi-sector tourism committee with representation from hotels, restaurants, arts and entertainment, retail, city government, transportation, parks and recreation, public health, and the community. Federal way has several entities working to support tourism, but there is no overarching tourism committee. This committee would work collaboratively to (a) build the tourism ecosystem detailed in Recommendation 1 as well as (b) plan, develop, and implement specific tourism activities described below and future ones the committee envisions. This will support maximizing the economic impact of tourism across all sectors. Creating the committee would require an initial investment of staff time to engage participants, create a vision and mission, map out a plan of work, and determine general rules of operation. The expense of this effort would be determined by the individuals or sectors who agreed to undertake this initial work. Costs to operate the committee would be minimal initially and may grow over time depending on how the committee chooses to operate. Such a committee

exists in Spokane, to help with the planning of large-scale city-wide events (e.g. Hoopfest and Bloomsday); Federal Way may wish to talk with this committee to learn how they originated, current process, and operational details.

Data from the RQI confirmed our belief that this recommendation remains an essential step in increasing the economic benefits across the city for existing tourism, as well as drawing new events and tourists. The data from the interviews clearly indicated the lack of, and desire for, such soft infrastructure and related tourism ecosystem. The city should seek tourism expertise to lead this effort, engage a diverse cross section of individuals from all sectors related to tourism, and prioritize improving communication across these sectors for both immediate and longer-term impact. We further recommend that someone be paid to provide central leadership for this work (whether they are employed by the city or another entity) as a committee alone is unlikely to make sufficient and timely progress.

Reasons to proceed

- Tourists visiting Federal Way will interact with multiple sectors during their stay. To create a positive experience for tourists, a collaborative approach makes sense to increase the collective impact of tourism on the city. In addition to addressing cross-sector opportunities for currently scheduled events, the committee could play a valuable role in attracting and creating new events and creating a favorable image to event producers looking for a venue. Event producers know they have support from the city's tourism ecosystem.
- Opportunities to create inclusive 'packages' for tourists attending specific events, or to encourage overnight stays in general. Unlike recruiting new, large-scale events these packages can be created in the short term and require less up-front planning and organizing costs.
- Recovery from COVID-19 will require collaboration. Tourists coming from outside the county, the state and the country will be unfamiliar with Federal Way's response to the pandemic. The city can appeal to tourists' desire to remain healthy by coordinating on consistent messaging and materials for how to safely lodge, dine and travel around the city. Federal CARES funding could be used to develop and support these activities.
- A collaborative approach allows the city to better evaluate the positive and negative impacts of events on all sectors.
- The cost of operating an effective committee would be outweighed by the economic benefit of even a single successful event.
- An overview of competing events in Appendix 2 shows that many events in the region were created by cities themselves or grew out of smaller events. These include 'Winterfest' type of activities such as those suggested at the LTAC retreat (Table 5). This is best done through a collaborative body.
- As noted earlier in the first section of the report, event tourism planning should take into consideration the impact the endeavor will have on the community [2] [5]. The 2019 *World Travel and Tourism Council* report highlights the issue of "destination readiness," which requires "engaging all key stakeholders including the public and private sector as well as the local community [6, p. 15]". Todd, Leask & Ensor [7] likewise point to the importance of considering both stakeholder engagement and stakeholder roles when planning event-based tourism.

Recommendation 4: Indigenous and ethnic foods and culture events

Federal Way takes pride in its diverse population and has already taken steps to highlight this diversity through its foodways with the planning of the Indigenous and multi-cultural culinary program. We

recommend the city continue along this trajectory and create culinary events and promotions that highlight this asset. This recommendation has the potential to link multiple facilities such as the Performing Arts and Events Center and tradeshow space in the e-Vent Center, with outdoor locations such as Celebration Park, the city plaza and even retail parking lots. These events need not require large gatherings and can be distributed throughout the city, such as a restaurant week promotion. Culinary events are infinitely varied and, as with many of the competing events listed in *Appendix 2: Potential competing events for off-season tourism in Federal Way* they can be designed by the tourism committee in Recommendation 2 to fit the needs and capacity of the city, and provide a positive economic impact to multiple business sectors. We provide an example and analysis of such a food-based event (Jerky Jam) in *Appendix 3: Event examples*.

Diversity was consistently mentioned during the RQI as a strength of Federal Way; therefore, we still see tremendous potential for the city to celebrate its diversity as a way of increasing tourism and overall community economic health and resiliency. While an Indigenous and multi-cultural culinary program may draw tourists from across the region, and the country, a focus on local multi-culturalism has the potential to increase quality of life for all residents of Federal Way. Since we learned that many cultural groups are siloed in their events, this effort will require time and patience, and start with baby steps. Steps to implement this recommendation can be combined with steps in Recommendation 3. Success in this effort could even create a new identity for the city.

Reasons to proceed

- The Federal Way School District is known as having one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation. While leveraging this diversity to support tourism, these events also communicate messages of an inclusive community to both residents and visitors.
- The city already has a culinary television presence which supports the food culture of the city and can be used to promote additional activities.
- Federal Way can leverage existing expertise at WSU's School of Hospitality Business Management and the Metro Center to support the creation and management of culinary focused events.
- These events can build around the rich restaurant sectors in the city to build tourist packages that include tickets to the events, lodging deals, restaurant and shop discounts, and opportunities with out-of-town attractions that are part of the tourism ecosystem of Federal Way.

Recommendation 5: Reopening strategies post-COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic and the "Stay Home; Stay Healthy" orders have dealt economic challenges to several key sectors of Federal Way's economy. Tourism, retail, restaurants, and events have been amongst the hardest hit. Reopening businesses with attention to employee and customer safety will garner confidence with consumers and public health officials. We have added a curation of reopening guides that would be helpful in planning for the near and short-term future as we emerge from the pandemic restrictions.

Each person we spoke to during the RQI has found ways to adapt to or survive through the pandemic. With people working from home, many people who would have patronized businesses near their work location are now patronizing businesses near where they live. We believe the pandemic has shown that what is good for tourists is also good for residents – a focus on hospitality, communication, ease of access all helped to keep businesses afloat. With teleworking becoming a common way of working, Federal Way has the potential to draw new residents interested in a family friendly community that

offers easy access to large cities with the amenities of neighborhoods, activities, and access to the outdoors. Eighteen months into the pandemic we still see potential in e-conferencing.

Events

PCMA Recovery Dashboard

[Current Events Bring Guarded Optimism for Business Events Recovery \(pcma.org\)](#)

Greater Tacoma Convention Center

[The Greater Way Forward \(tacomaconventioncenter.org\)](#)

Lynnwood Convention Center

[Our Commitment to Health & Safety \(lynnwoodcc.com\)](#)

Restaurants

National Restaurant Association

<https://go.restaurant.org/rs/078-ZLA-461/images/National-Restaurant-Association-COVID19-Safe-Operating-Guidance.pdf>

Tasting Rooms and Taverns

https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Phase%20%20Restaurant%20industry%20re-open%20proposal_FINAL.pdf

<https://www.washingtonwine.org/trade/documents/details/phase-2-reopening-guidelines-best-practices-and-ch>

Retail

Carson College of Business Retail Study

[Holiday Retail Study | Carson College of Business | Washington State University \(wsu.edu\)](#)

Washington Retail Association

<https://washingtonretail.org/initiatives/covid-19-coronavirus/>

Public health and safety

OSHA Guidance

[COVID-19 - Control and Prevention | Emergency Response Workers and Employers | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

Homeland Security

[COVID-19 Info for First Responders | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

EMS

[Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources for EMS](#)

Transportation

State of Washington

<https://coronavirus.wa.gov/resource-topics/transportation-and-travel>

Port of Seattle

https://www.portseattle.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/COVID-PortResponse_5-1-2020_0.pdf

Sound Transit

[Staying safe on board trains and buses | Sound Transit](#)

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Appendix 1: SWOT and PESTEL analyses

Table 10: SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Location between Seattle and Tacoma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access from I-5. • All Tacoma Dome events supply compression. • Some Seattle events provide. compression (usually conventions with 15,000 room nights or more and major stadium events). <p>Facilities and amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall impression upon entering Federal Way (downtown north) is new and well kept. • Retail mix not unique but still a potential draw friends/family of athletic event participants, especially those from rural areas with limited shopping options. • Performing arts center. • Aquatic center. • Water park. • Area lakes and parks. <p>Internal support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTAC is well-organized and focused, current member GMs are invested in the community. • Tourism Enhancement Grants available to companies. 	<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown center is spread out and disconnected, no curb appeal or community feel. • Location between Seattle & Tacoma is a strength and a weakness – often feels like Federal Way gets “leftovers” from these two cities. • Weak branding, no identity. <p>Facilities and amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 restaurants noted in the Marketek report. • Not enough nightlife or bars. <p>Internal support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mention of tourism in the Comp Plan re: the downtown core (Chapter VII). • Little residential support for tourism. • LTAC has a lot of turnover. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation for higher crime rate. • Homelessness. • Few new industries coming to town.
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited competition for event traffic. Only 3 attractions have annual traffic over 300,000 (Wild Waves, Aquatic Center, Perf Arts/Events Center), the next most popular (Bonsai Museum) draws only 1/10th that amount 30,000. • Light rail. • Shoreline. • Pandemic pod for sporting events. 	<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hotels in Tukwila, Renton, & Kent absorb some of the compression from Seattle. New hotels in SeaTac and Tacoma absorb compression from Tacoma. • Marketek claims ‘solid’ occupancies in hotel rooms year-round. If so, is there room to accommodate more event visitors? • NCAA has contracted with Anthony Travel, a company known for tight restrictions, cut-off dates, etc., and not

<p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target building. • Native American culinary kitchen (also mentioned as an opportunity in Marketek report). <p>Other opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Retailment” (experiential + retail entertainment) is a growing retail niche (ex. bowling, ice skating, e-gaming etc.). • Airport promotion for weather events and airline cancellations (once light rail is complete). • Growth of area companies (DaVita, World Vision, new company in Weyerhaeuser building). 	<p>easy to work with for the hotels. Host hotels for some events are in Des Moines.</p> <p>Other vulnerabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic downturn. • Retail flight. • Social distancing incompatible with many athletic competitions and sports. • Long term COVID-19 impacts.
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Table 11: PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal) Analysis

Political	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor-council form of government since 2009. • City’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code and the Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) and VISION 2040 goals all support and envision a dense, urban city center. • The electorate is moderately liberal with 60% of voters voting democratic in the 2016 presidential election. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on sales tax revenue. • LTAC committee distributes city tax money for tourism focused projects. • 3 hotel general managers sit on the committee to award Tourism Enhancement Grants. • According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5 year estimate 2009-2013, the median household income is \$55,872, average household income is \$66,663 and per capita income is \$26,508. These numbers are all up from the 2000 Census. • According to the Census Bureau, 16% of the population lives in poverty. • Large and growing retail market demand prior to COVID-19. • Most businesses (estimated 70%) in Federal Way employ fewer than 5 people, and 42% of businesses doing business in Federal Way are found outside the city limits.
Social	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnically diverse population with 111 languages spoken. • 57% Caucasian, 14% Asian, 10% Black or African, 8% Other race, 7% Two or more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Communications Technology, (ICT) is among the strongest industries in the Puget Sound region. Estimated total

<p>races, 3% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 1% Native Indian/Alaskan Native (2010 Census).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young population compared to Seattle and Tacoma. • Several hotel general managers live in the area and are personally as well as professionally invested in the area. 	<p>employment in this sector in King County is forecasted to be 137,484 by 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse and skilled labor force. • Low rate of population with bachelor's degrees as compared to region and state. • Downtown Federal Way is poised to serve as the community's multi-generational cultural and entertainment center with the Park and PAEC as key activity hubs and other anchors planned such as the E-gaming center and University of Washington satellite campus.
Environmental	Legal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a market area with a population of 3.7 million (about twice the population of New Mexico). • Located along Interstate 5 and US 99. • Close to international airport and deep-water marine terminals of the ports of Seattle and Tacoma. • Good parks and recreational facilities • Affordable housing. • Low crime rate (although negative reputation for high crime around hotels persists). • The central city is sharply divided into north and south areas by 320th Avenue. • Conceiving of Downtown as a single cohesive destination is problematic. • Downtown is presently dominated by auto-oriented destinations and lacks the features in high demand by all demographics. • Housing target for the urban center has been set at 2,521 units, which is 30% of the overall city target of 8,100 residential units. • The total number of jobs for the year 2035 for the urban center has been set at 6,823, which is 28% of the overall city target of 12,300 jobs. • Jobs-Housing Balance: Over 32,000 Federal Way residents go elsewhere to work, while over 25,000 come into Federal Way to work, placing 60,000 people on the highways and streets at rush hour. • Sound Transit's light rail station (expected 2024) will improve Federal Way's access and connectivity to the Seattle-Tacoma region and bring 35-40,000 riders /day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city collected 5,000 business licenses in 2013/14; 2,846 or 58 percent were based in Federal Way. Of these businesses, an estimated 70 percent employ less than 5 employees. • Meanwhile, 2,064 or 42 percent of the licenses collected were from businesses found outside of Federal Way that are doing business in Federal Way. • Opportunity Zone in the central city is a potential enticement to private developers. Five city-controlled sites, within the downtown city center, enable the City to influence their development, scale, and contribution to an active, pedestrian-oriented central city. • BPA transmission lines which cut through Downtown Federal Way are both a visual and development obstacle. Development is limited one hundred fifty feet on either side of the towers/lines.

Appendix 2: Potential competing events for off-season tourism in Federal Way

Events in this table are organized by the event genres in used earlier in the report with categories added for Gaming/eSports, Holiday/Seasonal events, and Culinary events to reflect report recommendations and LTAC interests. Events held in the off season (Nov-Feb) are listed first. Other events held at various times of the year, but not tied to a specific date or season (such as a 4th of July events), are also listed as a similar event could be held elsewhere at a different time of year.

Table 12. Potential competing events for off-season tourism in Federal Way including city, month, and thematic genre of event.

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Dia de los Muertos Festival https://www.facebook.com/events/371185553433876/	Auburn	November	X							
Holiday Wine Walk <i>"Meander around downtown shops as they host pop-up tasting rooms featuring a variety of regional wines. Attendees receive tasting tickets to redeem for the wines of their choice while retailers offer exclusive deals. With both a spring and a special holiday Wine Walk, you can enjoy this event twice a year!"</i>	Bellingham	November								X
Winter Wonderland (First day after Thanksgiving, until First Weekend in January) - "Enjoy a variety of free and paid activities: live holiday entertainment, free trampoline and unique events. Santa’s Workshop and Photos (\$27 & up), Carousel (\$4 suggested donation), Holiday Train (\$4 per rider), Skating Rink (\$7 per session includes skates), Noel fresh Tree Farm, donate to Northwest Harvest, Giving Tree,. When: the day after Thanksgiving through the first weekend in January."	Redmond	November – January							X	

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Northwest Chocolate Festival https://www.nwchocolate.com/	Seattle	November								X
Dia de los Muertos event Lake City neighborhood https://parkways.seattle.gov/2019/09/30/fall-festivities-across-seattle/	Seattle	November	X							
WashGotSole https://wgsfoundation.org/washgotsole/	Travelling	December			X					
Ring of Fire and Hope " The annual Birch Bay Ring of Fire & Hope takes place each December 31st at 7pm. Everyone heads down to the shore and lights a biodegradable road flare and places it near the water. With people all around the bay taking part, the effect is beautiful, and the entire bay looks like a string of red Christmas lights from end to end." https://birchbaywa.org/birch-bay-ring-of-fire/	Birch Bay	December							X	
Holiday Harbor Lights https://www.blainechamber.com/events/details/holiday-harbor-lights-12-05-2020-707	Blaine	December							X	

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Polar Bear Plunge (many cities host similar events, including "First-Day" Hikes): https://www.greaterseattleonthecheap.com/polar-bear-dips-and-first-day-hikes/ <i>"The annual Birch Bay Polar Bear Plunge attracts hundreds of people each year who brave the cool January 1 temperatures and run into the ocean. It is a fun (and chilly) way to celebrate the new year. Even if you do not plan to jump in, there's something fun about watching other people brave the icy water."</i> (registration required): https://birchbaywa.org/birch-bay-polar-bear-plunge/	Many cities, e.g. Seattle, Birch Bay	January					X		X	
Resolution Walk/Lake Padden Polar Bear Dip https://www.cob.org/services/recreation/races/Pages/resolution.aspx	Birch Bay	January					X			
Home and Garden Expo (spring and fall) https://www.kitsapbuilds.com/	Bremerton	Spring & Fall			X					
Home and Garden Show http://www.puyalluphideshow.net/	Puyallup	January			X					
Boombox Festival https://www.facebook.com/BigAssBoomBoxSeattle/	Seattle	January		X						
Seattle Boat Show https://seattleboatshow.com/	Seattle	January			X					
Home and Garden Show: https://tacomahomeandgardenshow.com/	Tacoma	January			X					
RV Show https://www.tacomarvshow.com/	Tacoma	January (and fall)			X					

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Stillaguamish Eagle Festival http://www.arlingtonwa.gov/eaglefest	Arlington	February	X							
Lunar New Year Festival https://lunarnewyear.bellevuecollection.com/	Bellevue	February	X							
A Cocktail Odyssey Tasting Expo and Gala: "A Cocktail Odyssey is a two-day tasting expo and gala featuring craft distilleries and spirits brands."	Bellingham	February								X
Human Rights Film Festival https://bhrff.webs.com/	Bellingham	February		X						
Kidstock Family Art Show https://www.edmondscenterforthearts.org/ . "This FREE family arts celebration features musical performances, theatre, arts education workshops, and activities for kids. As the cornerstone of ECA's programming for families, Kidstock! strives to engage children from an early age in diverse and exciting arts experiences."	Edmonds	February		X						
Whatcom Cultural Arts Festival <i>The festival will kick off with the Historic Fairhaven Fourth Friday Art Walk and run throughout the weekend. It will be a collaborative project with the Historic Fairhaven Association, Bellingham/Whatcom Tourism Bureau, Sculptures NW, Native Arts Collective and the Whatcom Artist Guild and more.</i> https://www.alliedarts.org/whatcom-cultural-arts-festival/	Fairhaven	February		X						
Northwest Flower & Garden Show	Seattle	February			X					

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Northwest Regional Yo-Yo Championships, Seattle Center	Seattle	February					X			
Seattle Home Show	Seattle	February			X					
Seattle RV Show	Seattle	February			X					
Sewing and Stitchery Expo https://sewexpo.com/	Puyallup	February			X					
Ground FROG Day http://snohomishcoc.com/groundfrog/	Snohomish	February	X						X	
Saint Patrick's Day events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellingham: https://www.stpatsbham.com/ Bremerton: https://downtownbremerton.org/event-3718433 	Many cities	March	X					X		
Spring Home and Garden Show https://www.kitsapbuilds.com/spring-home-garden-expo/	Bremerton	March			X					
Wings Over Water Birding Festival https://www.wingsoverwaterbirdingfestival.com/	Blaine	March					X			
Festival of Short Plays https://edmondsdriftwoodplayers.org/season-61/11th-annual-festival-of-shorts/	Edmonds	March		X						
Home and Garden Show https://ehgs.tinystars.us/	Everett	March			X					
Daffodil Festival https://lovelaconner.com/la-conner-daffodil-festival/	La Conner	March	X						X	
Whatcom County Home and Garden Show https://www.biawc.com/home-garden-show/	Lynden	March			X					

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Spring Craft and Antique Show https://www.stpatsbham.com/	Lynden	March			X					
Seattle Jewish Film Festival https://btt.boldtypetickets.com/events/106594683/spliff-online-streaming	Mercer Island	March	X	X						
Gold, Gem, and Mineral Show http://www.washingtonprospectors.org/index.html	Monroe	March			X					
Quilters Anonymous: https://www.vogueknittinglive.com	Monroe	March			X					
Electronics Show and Swap Meet http://www.mikeandkey.org/flea.php	Puyallup	March			X					
Bike and Outdoor Show: https://www.seattlebikeshow.com/	Seattle	March			X					
Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival http://www.cherryblossomfest.org/special-livestream.html	Seattle	March	X							
Holi Festival https://www.greaterseattleonthecheap.com/holi-festivals-puget-sound/	Seattle & other cities	March	X							
MoPOP Sound Off Band Competition http://www.mopop.org/soundoff	Seattle	March		X						
Miniature and Dollhouse Show http://www.seattleminiatureshow.com/	Seattle	March			X					
Nordic Lights Films Festival https://www.nordicmuseum.org/nlff	Seattle	March	X	X						

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Nordic Sol Festival https://www.nordicmuseum.org/nordicsol	Seattle	March	X							
Puget Sound Puppetry Festival https://www.facebook.com/events/667472580431540/	Seattle	March	X	X						
SPLIFF Film Festival https://btt.boldtypetickets.com/events/106594683/spliff-online-streaming	Seattle	March		X						
Northwest Women’s Show https://nwwomensshow.com/	Tacoma	March			X					
Remodeling Expo http://www.homeshowcenter.com/overview/tacomahome	Tacoma	March			X					
Spring Restaurant Week in many cities	Various	April								X
April Brew's Day (Depot Square) <i>"A fundraising event benefiting the Max Higbee Center, a nonprofit agency that provides recreational opportunities for teens and adults with developmental disabilities. Admission includes a collectible tasting glass and tickets for tasting beer. Local talent by various bands will be there, as well as food from some of Bellingham’s finest food trucks."</i>	Bellingham	April								X
Bellingham Beer Week https://bellinghambeerweek.com/	Bellingham	April								X

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Dirty Dan Day Seafood Festival <i>It is the annual event to celebrate the "unscrubbed" community founder of Fairhaven, Dirty Dan Harris! (family fun activities, rowing race, Steampunk costume contests, etc.)</i> https://www.fairhaven.com/event/annual-dirty-dan-harris-festival-2020/	Fairhaven	April			X					
RV Show https://puyalluprvshow.com/	Puyallup	April			X					
Wayzgoose Festival (letterpress and book arts festival) https://www.tacomawayzgoose.com/	Tacoma	April		X						
Recreation Northwest Expo Local and regional outdoor recreation expo. <i>"Meet face-to-face with health professionals, nutrition experts, local gyms, personal trainers, bike shops, running stores, paddling outfitters, outdoor media, outdoor activity clubs, stewardship organizations and representatives from your favorite local recreation events and races."</i> https://www.recreationnorthwest.org/recreation-northwest/recreation-northwest-expo-best-western-plus-lakeway-inn/	Bellingham	May			X		X			

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
<p>Ski to Sea <i>93.5-mile, 8-person relay encompassing seven different sports from the snowfields of Mount Baker, down Highway 542, and the Nooksack River and across Bellingham Bay via downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, running, canoeing, bike riding and kayaking. The Fairhaven Festival is near the Ski to Sea race finish line, with live music on two stages, food and crafts booths, beer garden and more. Ski to Sea attracts not only high-caliber athletes, but teams seeking non-competitive adventure and fun. Hosted by Whatcom Events.</i> https://skitosea.com/</p>	Bellingham	May					X			
<p>Georgetown Super 8 Film Festival https://www.georgetownsuper8.com/</p>	Seattle	May		X						
<p>Northwest Art and Fine Craft Show https://nwartalliance.org/gallery/#bnw-spring-show-2020</p>	Seattle	May		X						
<p>Northwest Folklife Festival https://www.nwfolklife.org/festival/</p>	Seattle	May		X						
<p>Seattle International Film Festival https://www.siff.net/</p>	Seattle	May		X						

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
<p>Lummi Nation Stommish Water Festival <i>"Stommish is a multi-cultural contemporary Coast Salish gathering which includes fun and enjoyment for the whole family. This annual event features athletic events, traditional singing and dancing, a traditional Lummi-Style salmon barbeque, a carnival and a moonlight concert series featuring Native comedians and local musicians all throughout the weekend. Admission is free and Stommish is open to the public."</i> https://www.facebook.com/LummiNationStommishsince1946/</p>	Bellingham	June	X							
<p>Kite Fun Fly https://www.blainechamber.com/events/details/kite-fun-fly-06-22-2021-520</p>	Blaine	June					X			
<p>Summer Fun in the Park "Summertime is one of the best times to throw a party! Come and join in a day of family fun at Marine Park with activities for the kids, delicious food, good music, and a beer garden. Then we'll wrap up the evening together with a good old fashioned outdoor movie (School of Rock) with family and friends." https://www.blainechamber.com/events/details/cancelled-summer-fun-in-the-park-661</p>	Blaine	June					X			
<p>Kite Festival https://birchbaywa.org/birch-bay-kite-festival/</p>	Birch Bay	June					X			

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Deming Logging Show <i>"Our grounds come alive the second full weekend in June each year for our annual Deming Logging Show with events and exhibitions to display the skills, tools, and technology used in the logging industry."</i> http://demingloggingshow.com/log-show/	Deming	June			X					
Seattle International Dance Festival https://seattleidf.org	Seattle	June								
Northwest Pinball and Arcade Show https://nwpinballshow.com/	Seattle	June		X						
First Friday Art Walk Organized by Downtown Bellingham Partnership <i>"Features galleries, studios, museums, shops, and restaurants showcasing the creative talent found in Bellingham's growing art scene. You're invited to stroll through the streets of downtown to enjoy art, food, and community."</i> https://www.alliedarts.org/event/first-friday-art-walk/ https://www.bellingham.org/events/first-friday-art-walk-2020-08-07/	Bellingham	July		X						
Tour de Whatcom Bellingham Tourism Bureau A one-day bicycle ride with routes varying from 22 to 100 miles Post-event venue: Boundary Bay Brewery Participants encouraged to "make a weekend" of it https://tourdewhatcom.com	Bellingham	July					X			

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Blaine's Harbor Music Festival https://www.blainechamber.com/events/details/blaine-harbor-music-festival-07-07-2021-778	Blaine	July		X						
Father's Day Classic Car Show https://www.discoverburien.org/fathers-day-car-show-information-1	Burien	July			X					
Mobile Food Fest https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/4141/Mobile-Food-Fest	Tacoma	July								X
Bollywood Festival	Blaine	August	X							
Morton Logger's Jubilee http://www.loggersjubilee.com/ "2-day Logging Show, Lawnmower Races, Parade, Flea-Market, Food, Music and more."	Morton	August			X					
Makah Days https://makah.com/activities/makah-days/ "During Makah Days, the members of the Makah Tribe of Neah Bay gather and reunite with the members who have since moved away, to commemorate thousands of years of the Makah ancient culture and the anniversary of becoming citizens of the United States. We welcome everyone to join us, as we celebrate with neighboring tribes from Washington State and First Nations members from Vancouver Island in Canada."	Neah Bay	August	X							

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Restaurant Week - Eat Local Month Based in Bellingham, but includes many Whatcom County locations https://eatlocalfirst.org/all-events/eat-local-month-restaurants/ https://www.bellingham.org/events/restaurant-week-an-eat-local-month-celebration/	Bellingham	August								X
Subdued Stringband Jamboree https://stringbandjamboree.com/home	Bellingham	August		X						
Frog Frolick, SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve https://shadowhabitat.org/frolic/	Renton	August					X			
Mount Baker Hill Climb https://bakerhillclimb.com/	Bellingham	September					X			
BrickCon (LEGO convention, hosted by BrickWorld LLC, Seattle Center) https://brickcon.org/	Seattle	September			X					
PAX West Gaming Show (streaming eSports tournament at Washington State Convention Center) https://online.paxsite.com/	Seattle	September						X		
St. Demetrios Greek Festival http://seattlegreekfestival.com/	Seattle	September	X							
Fall Restaurant Week in many Puget Sound Cities	Varies	October								X
Trails to Taps A brewery-to-brewery relay race incorporating 10 Bellingham breweries http://trailstotaps.com/	Bellingham	October					X			X

Event	City	Month	Cultural Celebrations	Arts and Entertainment	Business and Trade	Sports Competition	Recreational sports	Gaming/eSports	Holiday/Seasonal	Culinary
Rocktoberfest https://www.blainechamber.com/events/details/rocktoberfest-10-03-2020-685	Blaine	October		X						
Earshot Jazz Festival (Seattle and surrounding area) https://www.earshot.org/	Varies	October		X						

Appendix 3: Event examples

In researching examples of successful event-based tourism, we filtered our research to focus on potential events that would build upon, be compatible with, or synergistic with the type of successful events already occurring in Federal Way, e.g. more family oriented events that take advantage of current hotels, restaurants, and other local businesses. We were not made aware of any formal marketing or branding strategy in place or being developed by or for Federal Way. Based on the materials provided to us and the conversations we had, we felt the best strategy was to build on successful events such as those associated with the King County Aquatics Center and Wild Waves while also incorporating the assets in downtown Federal Way (e.g. Performing Arts Center).

ESports

The world of ESports is exploding and on an exponential growth trajectory. While many individuals play recreationally from home, there are many leagues developed at the high school, collegiate, and professional levels. Even major sports teams are aligning with Esports teams (the Minnesota Vikings launched an Esports counterpart called the Minnesota Rokkers in 2019 [17]). High-profile ‘traditional’ athletes like Michael Jordan, Rick Fox and Shaquille O’Neal are investing heavily in Esports [18]. Esports is now a fixture on the main-page newsfeed of ESPN’s webpage. Esports continues to grow with every passing year—whether it is the creativity of genres, or introduction of technology like Virtual Reality. Global esports sponsorship revenue to reach \$359 million in 2018, up 53% year-over-year.

The size of the Esports industry is exemplified by the DOTA 2 and League of Legends international competitions. The League of Legends International Final has been held in LA at Staples Center (2016, see Figure 12). The DOTA 2 International Championship series has been held in Seattle at Key Arena (2014-2017, see Figure 13). These events attracted upwards of 10,000 in-person attendees, ranging from 1 to 5 days, with prize pools near \$10M. We are not proposing that Federal Way target attracting these large, culminating events, but present them to show the size of the industry and how it scales from casual gamers to more formal team sports. The majority of Esports participants and viewers are age 18-34, with an estimated 35% of Fornite players being female. Even though most Esports players retire at the age of 25, its viewer demographic is much older than you would expect it to be. Another study by Gaming Street found that the median age for US viewers is 29, with 39% of the total audience in the 25 to 34-year-old range. The number of esports fans globally is predicted to climb 59% over the next five years



Figure 12. 2016 League of Legends World Championship finals at Staples Center (Photo: Patar Knight)



Figure 13. DOTA 2 International at Key Arena, 2014 (Jakob Wells).



Figure 14. Dallas Fuel versus New York Excelsior on June 29, 2019 at the Blizzard Arena. (Photo courtesy of Dallas Fuel)

College Esports: *Collegiate Starleague* (CSL; <https://cstarleague.com/>) began in 2009 as the first official intercollegiate gaming organization in the world, with 25 schools taking part in their inaugural competition of the game *StarCraft: Brood War*, at which the UC Berkeley team took home the victory. Today, CSL is home to over 70,000 competing students across 1,800 universities in North America. CSL has taken its Grand Finals across North America - working with major Esports events such as MLG and Dreamhack, to hosting their own standalone events in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, Toronto, and more. The *National Association of Collegiate Esports* (<https://nacesports.org/>) was founded in July 2016 and is a nonprofit membership association driven by colleges/universities in the United States that have, or are developing, official varsity esports programs on campus.

Recently the *Pack-U* (<http://pacugaming.com>) formed as a coalition of PAC-12 schools bringing competitive esports experiences to students and fans around the "traditional" NCAA™ Pac-12™ Conference. These schools have banded together during the COVID-19 pandemic to compete in an invitational of standalone show matches throughout Fall 2020. The organization is made up of students, staff and faculty coordinating to fill the gap left by the shortened or postponed pandemic-affected "traditional" Fall 2020 sports seasons.

There are 8 Washington based schools officially registered with the Collegiate Starleague, including all three University of Washington campuses, Pierce College in Lakewood, Western Washington University, and Washington State University. The UW Seattle campus has an Esports Arena and Gaming Lounge found in the HUB. It is a 1,000 square-foot full-service gaming center with 39 high-end gaming computers supporting casual and competitive gaming and virtual reality. It serves as the nerve-center and nexus between student communities, interactive media partners, and gaming culture. The UW-Tacoma has a very general-purpose game room with limited egaming options and opportunities.

High school Esports: With the general younger demographic of Esports, it is not surprising that teams are being developed at the high school level. The High School Esports League

(<https://www.highschoolsportsleague.com/>) supports schools in making Esports a varsity level sport and offers STEM.org accredited experiences through programs and curriculum. There are many Washington high schools listed as partnering with the High School Esports League (Figure 15). The PlayVS organization supports the development of Esports leagues, including state high school leagues (<https://www.playvs.com/state-leagues>); there currently is not a recognized Washington State League.

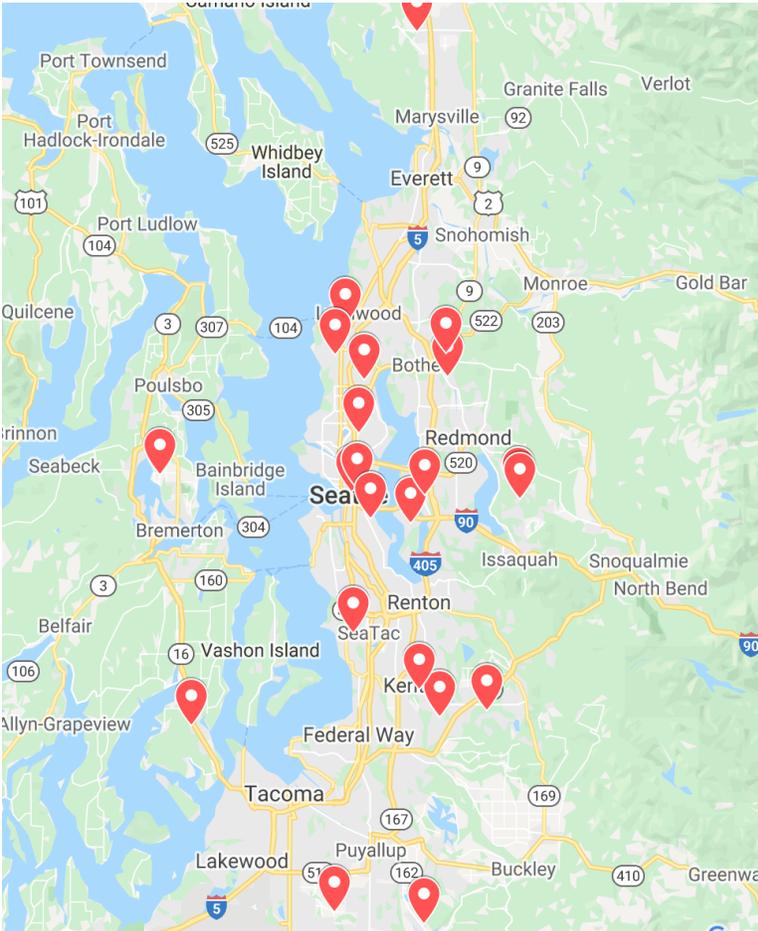


Figure 15. Map of schools partnering with the High Schools Esports League in the greater Puget Sound region (created from <https://www.highschoolsportsleague.com/high-school-partnership/#our-schools>).

Event Analysis:

The industry of Esports is so new that it is hard to identify existing events for comparison with Federal Way. Our team included this as an example because we think it is a ground-floor opportunity for Federal Way in what will be an emerging opportunity for hosting scale proper events much like Federal Way hosts high school, collegiate, and Olympic trials swimming and diving events.

Target attendee demographics:

The majority of Esports participants and viewers are age 18-34, and male. *Collegiate Starleague*, *Pack-U* and *High School Esports League* are all the targeted participants. The majority of esports fans are millennials, while data suggests that Gen Z'ers are more receptive to nontraditional sports.

Size and scope: A champion event normally attracts upwards of 10,000 in-person attendees; for a preliminary/ seasonal event, the number of attendees varies from hundreds to thousands.

Length: A champion event ranges from 1 to 5 days, with prize pools near \$10M. A seasonal tournament normally lasts for three to six months. For instance, a seasonal Dota 2 lasts around six months due to the matchmaking queue time system

Number of hotel nights and target hotel characteristics: Hotel nights vary with the tournament length. Hotels are normally recommended to be in or near a big city, or near a tourist attraction where attendees can turn the tournament into an opportunity for a vacation

Impact on hospitals or other institutions: Emergency services with minor impact expected.

Infrastructure required: Dedicated Esports venues (LED screens and digital leaderboard), movie theaters, convention centers, small arenas, pro-sports stadiums and even shopping malls could all be the targeted venues to hold Esport event. Most venues have reserved parking spots, wheelchair ramps, and elevators, and facilities conforming to accessibility guidelines.

A stable and robust power system is also necessary as well as a backup plan if the power goes down to make sure all the attendants have enough power supply support. High-speed broadband internet, technician support along with an A/V person support on site would make sure the success of operation.

Cost to produce: A small scale event under the umbrella of the World Championship tournament costs \$67,443 to host. A little over 52% of that was paid by the developers, and the rest was covered between sponsors and voluntary contributors. A champion event can cost millions.

How it was supported (grants, admission, etc.): Licenses are sold in public to Esports tournament organizers and third-party leagues. To earn a license, contact the software company well in advance.

Cost to the community: Transportation and city services

Financial requirements and support: Partnerships and sponsorships could be supporting resources.

Leadership and organization: The current top ten team organizations or ownership groups are League of Legends, Dota, Counterstrike: Global Offensive, Overwatch, Call of Duty, Rocket League, StarCraft, Class Royale, Rainbow 6, and Fortnite.

Specific successes and challenges: Venue location is one of the most crucial factors, a large number of players and spectators also need to rely on parental drop-offs or public transportation to guarantee participation. Therefore, a location with large parking lots, or shuttle access, would be ideal. Purchasing event licenses and permissions is necessary to running a smooth tournament.

For large scale event, crowd management and security control are of significance. Depending on the crowd size, event staff are used to direct players and spectators to proper areas, aid with check-in, keep times and scores.

To enhance the tournament additional activities such as a retro-style lounge, live band or DJ, a retail sales area, and carnival-style food offerings are beneficial.

Sneaker Events

Story of the origin of the event: Sneaker shows supply a space for sneaker fans ('sneakerheads') to buy, sell and trade merchandise. These events can include both new and resale shoe products from large companies such as Nike, Adidas, and Vans, as well as independent brands. Sneaker events offer a venue for sneaker sellers to highlight their products, while also attracting sneaker aficionados. Attendees come to buy and view rare sneakers, as well as view and buy new sneaker releases.

Large-scale sneaker events (including Sneaker Con <https://sneakercon.com/> and Sneakerness <https://sneakerness.com/events/>) attract international participation and have contributed to the notoriety of sneaker events. While Sneaker Con is the cornerstone of sneaker events, competing and smaller events are also regularly held. Some sneaker events travel, while others are held in the same location each year.

In-person sneaker events can also be held simultaneously online, using apps like Instagram and Twitch. Due to COVID-19 considerations, it is likely that hosting cities will offer expanded virtual opportunities for attending, once in-person events resume. Social media platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, are used to advertise and promote sneaker shows. Several examples of sneakers events are provided in Table 13.

Target attendee demographics: StockX.com, a leading online sneaker marketplace, conducted a customer survey in 2014 [19]. According to the survey, the average sneakerhead is male, 21 years old, owns 34 pairs of shoes, and has paid up to \$300 for one pair. Sneakerheads typically range from 10 to 40 years of age. With many sneakerheads falling into the 10-17 age range, it is possible that some attendees would travel to a sneaker event with a parent.

Size and scope: Sneaker events can vary in size and scope. SneakerCon New York City in 2018 attracted 19,000 attendees, however this reflects SneakerCon's status as the premiere sneaker show brand. Smaller sneaker show audiences will vary based on promotions and, if done well, will gain in momentum from year to year.

Length: Sneaker shows take place over 1-2 day for sales and displays. Sneaker enthusiasts are netizens described as loving sports, the outdoors, fashion, and gaming [20]. Shoulder events, both the day before and after could be promoted to highlight local opportunities related to their interests.



Advertisement for Jus Nice's first sneaker show since COVID-19.

Number of hotel nights and target hotel characteristics: With shoulder events, sneaker shows could attract visitors who stay 1-3 nights, particularly if other local tourist opportunities are promoted with the event. Sneaker aficionados are described as netizens so good internet connectivity will be important.

Impact on hospitals or other institutions: None expected.

Infrastructure required: The venue is important to the event. It should be open, inviting, and able to accommodate vendor tables, displays, a DJ and MC, and have strong and stable internet connection.

Cost to produce: Aside from the venue and promotions, sneaker shows require a planning team that understands sneaker culture and can network with the sneaker industry and community. Sponsors may supply items for raffles, or items may need to be bought to be raffled.

Sneaker authenticators, who are trained to recognize whether a product is legitimate or a "knock-off," are often contracted to help buyers verify their purchases. High-end sneaker releases have been a target of product counterfeits and are one of the reasons that sneaker shows were started. Sneakercon, for example, uses a rigorous authentication program to guarantee that a buyer is not buying a bootlegged item.

How it was supported (grants, admission, etc.): Sneaker events do charge an admission fee and vendors pay for table rental. Sponsorships are important, and in the case of corporate sponsors, can also help increase attendees through brand recognition. Sponsorship letters should offer distinct levels to choose from. Event planners should reach out to stores such as Seattle's Sneak City (<https://www.thesneakcity.com>) for promotion and vendor opportunities. Sneaker events can incorporate sports collaborations, such as HoopCon's affiliation with basketball (<https://www.hoopcon.net/events>). HoopCon has been held in Long Beach and Las Vegas.

Large scale sneaker shows often partner with Hip Hop artists, DJs, YouTubers, artists, and social media influencers. Social media influencers can play a significant role in attracting audiences and elevating the show's brand and exposure. Brand partnerships are important for attracting attendees and networking is an important aspect of sneaker show planning. Event sponsorships are used to help finance sneaker events and attract attendees. Some sneaker shows, such as #WashGotSole and Cleveland's Got Sole have partnered with local charities, donating some of their proceeds and attracting sponsors and participants who want to support the cause.

Table space sales are one way that event planners fund the event, with vendors and sponsors registering through the event site. Vendors are an important part of sneaker shows, as are displays. Displays are provided by collectors who own rare and limited release shoes. Events hosts may invite collectors to display coveted sneakers to attract "sneaker heads." Often incorporating some aspects of Hip Hop culture, DJs and MCs can help contribute to the atmosphere of a sneaker event.



Flyer for Seattle's hosting of the DunkXChange sneaker show, 2016

Raffles and “giveaways” can be an important aspect of a sneaker event in attracting attendees. MCs help pump up the crowd for merchandise raffles: “Having a DJ is essential for your sneaker event. Having a great DJ is even more essential. And an MC is a fantastic way for you to promote the sponsors that have supported you by having them talk about the sponsors during the event.” [21] Event sponsors might donate items, or items might be bought by the event planners to be raffled. Raffles are important to sneaker shows as they attract attendees who hope to win a coveted item.

Cost to the community: A sneaker show should not affect a community any more than the average trade show.

Financial requirements and support: Expenditures needed to support venue rental, promotions/advertising, items for raffles, and funds to hire a good DJ and MC that are familiar with sneaker culture.

Leadership and organization: Sneaker shows require careful planning, and the participation of insiders who understand the industry and sneakerhead culture. Networking has been highlighted as the most important aspect of planning a sneaker event and is critical to the event’s success and reputation going forward. It is important to reach out to potential sponsors relevant to sneaker culture, as they can also help attract attendees. The quality of the sneaker displays, and the notoriety of the vendors is also important to building and keeping an audience. As consumers’ awareness of corporate social justice increases, many sneaker events, such as Cleveland Got Sole, give back to their community by donating a part of their profits to local charities. When planning a sneaker event, it is important to make sure that the date chosen does not conflict with competing sneaker shows. The event venue is also critical to the success of the event. Sneaker aficionados are very tapped-in to social media, therefore the event should be advertised and promoted through platforms such as Instagram.

Specific successes and challenges: The success of a sneaker show is affected by several factors, including how it is promoted, and the audience it attracts. Many sneaker shows partner with influencers, athletes, and musicians to gain a following and audience. Long running sneaker shows, such as SneakerCon have grown and expanded over time, but this kind of success does not happen overnight. Smaller, grass-roots endeavors, such as #Washgotsole have tapped in to the local Washington state sneaker community and have gained momentum and experience. Many sneaker shows start small, and grow their audience each year. Sneaker events do not happen organically and require a combination of venue, sponsors, displays, vendors, raffles, DJs, MCs, and collectors.



Flyer for Portland’s Sneaker Week event.

Table 13. Examples of sneaker events.

Sneaker Con: https://sneakercon.com/
<p>Founded in 2009, SneakerCon is the best known of the sneaker shows. Sneaker Con hosts several events around the world each year, attracting industry professionals, influencers, and thousands of attendees.</p> <p>Next planned events: December 19, 2020, Shanghai, China March 20th, 2021, Cleveland, Ohio</p> <p><i>“Founded in 2009 by New York-based sneaker enthusiasts, Sneaker Con is the premier event for sneakerheads to buy, sell, and trade their shoe collections. Since its start, Sneaker Con has hosted over 1 million attendees and vendors in more than 40 cities worldwide.”</i></p>
Sneakerness: https://sneakerness.com/
<p>A large, globally known sneaker event that travels throughout Europe.</p> <p>Next planned event: May 9, 2021, Zurich, Switzerland</p> <p><i>“Our network is a global conglomerate of enthusiasts, lovers and bigwigs out of the sneaker market and the various domains related to kicks.”</i></p>
Sneaker Week: https://sneakerweekpdx.com/
<p>Founded by Pensole Academy marketing director, Herbert Smith, Sneaker Week is a Portland-based sneaker event, with an emphasis on working with partners and collaborators, such as the Portland Trailblazers. Conceptualized beyond the sneaker show itself, this is a multi-day event that highlights other elements of sneaker culture, such as music, art, and design.</p> <p>Last planned event: August, 2020, held online due to COVID-19.</p> <p><i>“Working with a core group of directors, we were able to program a series of events that help drive our mission of highlighting the diverse culture and community amongst global sneaker enthusiasts and the evolving landscape of Portland’s footwear industry and popular culture”</i></p>
Sneaker Freaks: https://www.sneakerfreakscolumbus.com/
<p>Locally organized sneaker event, taking place in Columbus, Ohio since 2013.</p> <p>Next planned event: May 31, 2021</p> <p><i>“A premier sneaker summit, where attendees can buy, sell and trade sneakers, furthermore dedicated their position in the community to help bring awareness to youth violence.”</i></p>
Sneaker Exit: https://thesneakerexit.com/
<p>Travelling sneaker show that tours various cities in Georgia. Date of last event: December 6, 2020</p> <p><i>“Curated with collectors in mind, The Sneaker Exit encompasses an array of offerings for all to enjoy, which include sneakers, art, music, and culture.”</i></p>

Jerky Jam [22]

Story of the origin of the event: Food tourism, culinary tourism, or gastronomy tourism are all terms used to describe the phenomena of tourists pursuing a food-related experience in a tourism destination. Since Native Americans did not have "fast food" and were often on the move, jerky became a favorite way of transporting food or keeping it so it would not spoil. Native Americans made jerky by cutting the meat into strips, stringing it up, and drying in sun. Unlike the Europeans, the Native Americans did not use salt to preserve meat but relied on the sun to dry the meat. The process for making jerky is quite simple, and there are places which offer this traditional delicacy today. No know event that celebrates both the traditional and contemporary forms of this lasting American cuisine, jerky, is celebrated to the level of its popularity. This becomes an off season event opportunity for Federal Way.

Food events are many throughout the county, varying from 'taste of...' to thematic events (e.g., chocolate festivals, apple tasting tours, bacon, and beer classic) and best of events (e.g., Texas Kosher BBQ Championship, Nola Wing Wars, Chicago's Best Wing Fest). One thematic area that draws Americans is meat. Taking the opportunity to build on Federal Way's Traditional & Indigenous Food Center, a near-term opportunity exists to create a jerky (dried meats) thematic event, incorporating indigenous cultures as well as Americanized versions of traditional dried meats. The Seattle Bourbon and Bacon as well and the Seattle Meat and Cheese Festival have celebrated the interest that the community in the Puget Sound have with meats.

Offering a unique "signature" event like the "Jerky Jam" can develop into an entertainment and food festival for several days (weekends). The development of the understanding of the dehydrated foods and their potential in beef, elk and salmon jerky will be highlighted. The event can act as an educational and community outreach series as the development of the proposed Native American Culinary Institute in Federal Way is planned for 2021-2023 at PAEC. Highlights of the "Jam" part of this event include music, family activities and fun including Native cultural elements as well as contemporary components. Federal Way is in a position to consider a Native / Culinary Event like this in their off season.

Culinary tourism brings people to your community. It creates bonds between authentic culture and consumers. It builds understanding, pride and respect for your food system. The experiences help urbanites reconnect with their rural roots. Culinary tourism will bring in extra income.

Target attendee demographics: Local and regional cultural culinary tourist. These are people who identify themselves with the statement "food is culture." They like to broaden their knowledge of a certain region through gastronomic experiences. They love to discover new ingredients, even better if introduced by a local person. When engaging in food tourism activities, they seek authenticity, knowledge, and connection with the local culture and community. They are willing to try new flavors and are interested in the history behind the food.

Size and scope: Approx. 2,000 in attendance, 1,750 guests and 250 vendors in participation daily.

Length: 3 days, see Table 14 for detailed event preparation timeline.

Number of hotel nights and target hotel characteristics: 400 stay overs with 250 room nights, with two night stay over average for a total of 1,000 stay overs and 750 room nights over the three-day festival.

Impact on hospitals or other institutions: Emergency services with minor impact expected.

Infrastructure required: In place, Federal Way Performing Arts and Events Center. In development, Native American Culinary Institute.

Table 14. Jerky Jam sample work plan [23].

Timeline	Activities
12 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up event committee • identify target audience and contact Jerky sponsors and partners • obtain price quotes for rentals, ice, water, beverages, entertainment, food, catering/chef • develop marketing plan, including visual identity, and set up budget
11 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jerky competition competitor confirmation • entertainment and venue confirmation • define equipment needs, double check that all things are in working order • define staff, volunteer needs, and start recruiting • create rain plan if event is outdoors (tent or move to hall) • set up ticket price (after all costs have been factored in)
10 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm all jerky vendors, exposition, food options • send save the date to community partners • confirm entertainment and PA requirements (microphones for speeches, music)
9 weeks (about 2 months) prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start to execute marketing plan • send out press releases • tickets sales start
8 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore permits (health/liquor), insurance and all Washington food and event regulations met • book rentals or arrange to borrow cutlery, glassware, linens, tables, and chairs
6 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop event program (speeches, presentations, recognition, and thank-you)
4 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule set-up, deliveries, tear-down and clean-up • create waste management/recycling plan for during and after event • set up cancel date (will depend on venue and rental contracts)
2 weeks prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm all beverages (non-alcoholic and alcoholic if serving) and ice deliveries
1 week prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create road signage, parking area and other site preparation needed • set up ride share if needed • confirm final numbers with suppliers (rentals, florals, linens, caterer/chef) • issue final payments to suppliers, caterer/chef
1 week post	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within a week of the event: send thank-you and do post-event evaluations.

Cost to produce: \$50,000

How it was supported (grants, admission, etc.): Grant consideration for local culinary events through local, state, regional and national outlets. A proposed Native event partnership with local tribal leaders for cultural support, admission revenue.

Cost to the community: Transportation and city services.

Financial requirements and support: Sponsorship to cover costs and marketing could reach up to fifty thousand dollars. Another option for the proposed event would be to partner with regional Native

American tribes such as the Muckleshoot, Tulalip, Snohomish, and others. National jerky company Oberto is based in Seattle, Washington.

Leadership and organization: Private partnerships are recommended. Working with professional event planners in the food festival vertical. Also, leadership and organization through the proposed Native American Culinary Institute.

Specific successes and challenges: David Tyda, of Phoenix, Arizona and his company PHXFEST <https://www.phxfest.com/> is an example of the inclusiveness that working with a culinary festival partner can support a community. Since 2010 in Scottsdale and Phoenix, Tyda has created a BBQ, Taco, Pizza, Donut and Fried Food & French Fry event with loyal followings and thousands in attendance. Success in cultural and culinary events are dependent upon consumption of food on site. Social gathering of large groups and in 2021 and beyond will be a variable that needs to be understood.



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