

MINUTES
Troutdale City Council – Regular Meeting
Troutdale Police Community Center – Kellogg Room
234 SW Kendall Court
Troutdale, OR 97060

Tuesday, September 10, 2024 – 7:00PM

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ROLL CALL, AGENDA UPDATE

Mayor Lauer called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

PRESENT: Mayor Lauer, Councilor Ripma, Councilor Caswell, Councilor Wittren, Councilor White and Councilor Wunn.

ABSENT: Councilor Glantz (excused).

STAFF: Ray Young, City Manager; Sarah Skroch, City Recorder; Ed Trompke, City Attorney; Erika Palmer, Community Development Director and Marlee Boxler, Economic Development Coordinator.

GUESTS: See Attached.

Mayor Lauer asked for agenda updates.

Ray Young, City Manager, replied there are no updates.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comment on non-agenda and consent agenda items is welcome at this time.

None.

3. REPORT: A report from the Troutdale Visitors Center.

Marlee Boxler, Economic Development Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint (attached as Exhibit A).

Councilor White stated the point of the Chamber was to fill hotel rooms; he likes to bring that up. He asked if anything special was being done concerning that.

Marlee Boxler stated the Chamber focused a lot on filling hotel rooms because they were funded through transient lodging tax and transient lodging tax is paid by hotel rooms. She is actively working on filling hotel rooms through similar promotional methods but also some different ones. She's trying to reach visitors in a day use capacity or in an overnight capacity. She stated she would love to increase overnight stays because it results in more tax dollars but she's more willing to promote the town to day visitors and not just to overnight visitors. Not

everything is geared towards filling hotel rooms, she's also looking at how she can get visitors to stop in Troutdale for lunch.

Councilor White asked if occupancy rates are known.

Marlee Boxler stated she would have to do more research, but she thinks it's comparable to pre-covid. A lot depends on what is happening at McMenamins like concerts and other events.

Councilor Wittren stated he loves to see all the social media and how Troutdale is changing and staying with the times and the younger generations.

Councilor White asked if there will be another presentation on summer events.

Marlee Boxler stated after Windy Wonderland she will do an events presentation.

Mayor Lauer asked about signage to point drivers to the visitor's center.

Marlee Boxler stated she has signage plans in the Bike Hub Plan. The blue ODOT signs are difficult to change, and the current one says 2 blocks and the center is actually 5 blocks.

Saul Pompeyo, Troutdale business owner, stated he likes how Marlee is trying to keep visitors in Troutdale and spending their money in Troutdale. The Chamber was trying to get people to stay in hotels. He wants to know how to get businesses connected with advertising and the visitor center website and how to get menus in the visitor's center.

Marlee Boxler stated the visitor's center promotes all businesses on the website. Restaurants can bring their menus and the visitor's center will give them to visitors.

4. PUBLIC HEARING / ORDINANCE (Introduced 8/27/24): An ordinance amending the penalty provisions of the Business License Requirements Chapter 5.04 of the Troutdale Municipal Code.

Ray Young gave a brief overview of the staff report and stated that the ordinance was brought forward at the request of the city prosecutor.

Councilor White asked if businesses are given a chance to correct the issue before a cite is issued.

Ray Young replied yes, they are sent a reminder letter to renew.

Mayor Lauer opened the public hearing at 7:31pm.

None.

Mayor Lauer closed the public hearing at 7:32pm.

MOTION: Councilor Wittren moved to adopt an ordinance amending the penalty provisions of the Business License Requirements Chapter 5.04 of the Troutdale Municipal Code. Seconded by Councilor Wunn.

VOTE: Councilor White – Yes; Councilor Wittren – Yes; Councilor Ripma – Yes; Councilor Caswell – Yes; Councilor Wunn – Yes and Mayor Lauer - Yes.

Motion passed 6-0.

5. PUBLIC HEARING / ORDINANCE (Introduction): An ordinance amending Troutdale Municipal Code Section 13.20.410 establishing fines that may be imposed for violations of TMC Chapter 13.20.

Travis Hultin, Public Works Director, gave a brief overview of the staff report. He stated that when the City allowed dogs in parks there was a discussion started about having enforcement and penalties involved when exclusions happen.

Councilor White stated most people at Glenn Otto are in bathing suits. He asked how to give a ticket if they don't have ID.

Ray Young stated the enforcement officer could ask them to identify themselves.

Councilor White stated he's not a fan of a lot of signs in parks, he likes a natural look. The signs at Glenn Otto were redone and it's now in the corner by Sugarpine and unless you come in a certain way you may not see them.

Travis Hultin stated he could look at them. The signs are evolving with the dog rules.

Mayor Lauer opened the public hearing at 7:41pm.

None.

Mayor Lauer closed the public hearing at 7:41pm.

6. MOTION: A motion to appoint a negotiating committee for the MCSO IGA.

Ray Young stated this is a follow-up discussion from the last council meeting where he reported on the Public Safety Working Group's recommendation. The City needs a smaller, nimble group to begin negotiations with the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. It was suggested to have 5 people. He suggested 2 of the 5 people should include himself and Ed Trompke and then 3 citizens.

Mayor Lauer asked what the recommendation was from the PSWG.

Councilor Wittren stated the consensus was 2 council members and 1 other member of the PSWG to join Ray and Ed. He stated it seemed like Tanney was the top of the straw poll as he has been involved in past negotiations.

Mayor Lauer stated that he's comfortable going forward with the group's straw poll recommendations.

Councilor Ripma stated Ray had mentioned having Erich Mueller on the committee.

Ray Young stated that Erich can be involved but not necessarily on the committee.

Councilor Ripma stated he is willing to be on the negotiating committee.

Councilor Wunn stated there has been a lot of work for a common goal. He supports Jordan being on the committee because he has the background knowledge and he's been there through all the steps so far. PSWG had recommended Ray, Ed, Jordan, Tanney and himself.

Councilor White stated he likes that the PSWG was asked to select on of their peers. The election complicates this slightly. He thinks it would be wise to have Dave on the committee as well. 3 councilors wouldn't be a quorum. He thinks Dave would be a valuable asset to the group.

Councilor Wittren stated he prefers to keep it at 5 members to keep chatter down and keep it streamlined. If he's on the negotiating team and he needs to be replaced, he would step down.

Councilor Ripma stated he's very interested in the subject of the fire and police contract, but he doesn't need another thing to do. He understands Councilor Wittren feels strongly about being on the committee.

Mayor Lauer opened public comment at 7:54pm.

Tanney Staffenson, Troutdale resident, stated he is a member of the PSWG presently and he's very passionate about it. He thinks it's something very important and he's glad the group is taking it so seriously to get the best product for the Troutdale residents.

Mayor Lauer closed public comment at 7:56pm.

MOTION: Councilor Ripma moved to appoint a negotiating committee for the MCSO IGA. Seconded by Councilor White.

VOTE: Councilor White – Yes; Councilor Wittren – Yes; Councilor Ripma – Yes; Councilor Caswell – Yes; Councilor Wunn – Yes and Mayor Lauer - Yes.

Motion passed 6-0.

Mayor Lauer stated he would like to appoint Councilor Wittren, Councilor Wunn, Ray Young, Ed Trompke and Tanney Staffenson to the negotiating committee.

MOTION: Councilor Ripma moved approval of the Mayor's appointments. Seconded by Councilor White.

VOTE: Councilor White – Yes; Councilor Wittren – Yes; Councilor Ripma – Yes; Councilor Caswell – Yes; Councilor Wunn – Yes and Mayor Lauer - Yes.

Motion passed 6-0.

7. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Ray Young provided the following staff communications:

- The contract for the Sandy River Trail Project has been officially awarded to Golf Construction.
- Planning Commission meeting tomorrow night with a presentation from the County for proposed plans for Halsey Street in front of McMenamins.
- The TIP annual banquet will be held 10/19, let Ray know if you would like to attend.

8. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Councilor Ripma stated he went to First Friday and was pleased with a very good turnout. A lot of fun and a great success.

Councilor White stated he went to First Friday and filled out the PSEAC survey.

Councilor Wittren stated that it's amazing how much of a destination Troutdale is becoming. It's great to see.

Mayor Lauer stated he loves living in Troutdale. He reminded everyone that school has started, please slow down and pay attention.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Councilor Ripma moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Wunn. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.



Randy Lauer, Mayor

Dated: September 25, 2024

ATTEST:



Kenda Rimes, Deputy City Recorder

**City Council – Regular Meeting
7:00PM**

PLEASE SIGN IN

[illegible]

September 10, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting - Zoom Guests

Name (original name)	Email	Join time	Leave time	Duration (minutes)
Troutdale Conferencing	troutconf@troutdaleoregon.gov	9/10/2024 18:17	9/10/2024 20:05	109
speaker table		9/10/2024 18:17	9/10/2024 20:05	109
City Recorder's Office	sarah.skroch@troutdaleoregon.gov	9/10/2024 18:23	9/10/2024 20:05	102
Councilor Ripma (Troutdale Court)		9/10/2024 18:29	9/10/2024 20:05	97
MetroEast		9/10/2024 18:49	9/10/2024 20:05	77
Alison Caswell		9/10/2024 18:51	9/10/2024 18:51	1
Jordan Wittren		9/10/2024 18:52	9/10/2024 20:05	73
Alison Brown		9/10/2024 18:55	9/10/2024 20:05	71
Marlee Boxler		9/10/2024 18:55	9/10/2024 19:29	34
Glenn White		9/10/2024 18:56	9/10/2024 20:05	70
Randy Lauer		9/10/2024 18:58	9/10/2024 20:05	68
Geoffrey Wunn		9/10/2024 18:58	9/10/2024 20:05	67
Troutdale Conferencing	troutconf@troutdaleoregon.gov	9/10/2024 19:01	9/10/2024 20:05	65

GATEWAY TO THE GORGE VISITOR CENTER

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

EXPLORE
TROUTDALE
GATEWAY TO THE
COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

Exhibit A

9/10/24 Council Mtg. Item #3



AGENDA

- Background
- Overview of Daily Operations & Merchandise Sales
- Congestion Management through Multnomah Falls Parking Permits
- Data Dive into Google Analytics and Downtown Visitation
- Next Steps



BACKGROUND

Troutdale is situated at the confluence of the Sandy and Columbia Rivers, on the western boundary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, where the Historic Columbia River Highway begins. Hundreds of thousands of visitors pass through Troutdale every year to see these iconic outdoor attractions and recreation destinations.

In 2022, the City of Troutdale launched Explore Troutdale to manage marketing and destination development for the community and opened the Gateway to the Gorge Visitor Center on April 30th.

By providing information and resources on the area's attractions, the visitor center is actively strengthening Troutdale's relationship with the Columbia River Gorge, namely the Waterfall Corridor. As we continue to enhance the visitor experience and provide memorable interactions, we live up to our title as The Gateway to the Gorge.

DAILY OPERATIONS

Summer Hours:

- Every Day 9 am - 5 pm

Winter Hours:

- Monday - Thursday 9 am - 3 pm
- Friday - Sunday 9 am - 5 pm

Visitation:

- 2022 - 3.4k visits
- 2023 - 2.8k visits
- 2024 - 2.6k visits
 - 30% increase in visits over this time last year and consistent with visitation from 2022

Busy Season:

- June - September

Top Questions:

1. How do I get to Multnomah Falls?
2. What should I see/do in the Waterfall Corridor?
3. Where should I get lunch/dinner?





OVERVIEW

MERCHANDISE SALES

2022

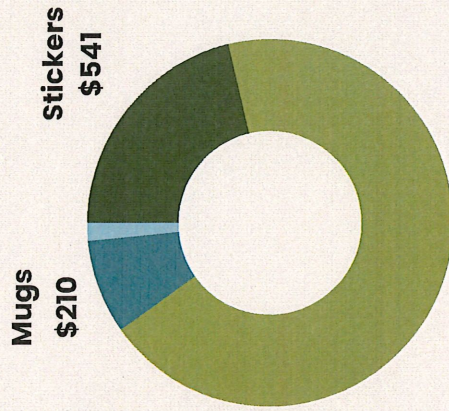
324 Items at \$2535

2023

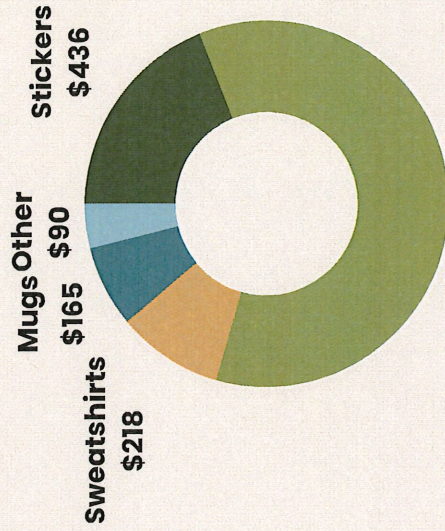
286 Items at \$2298

2024

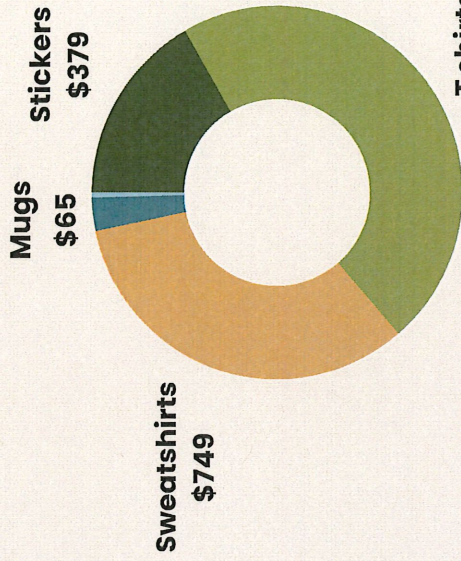
217 Items at \$2266



2022 - April 30 - Dec 31



2023 - Jan 1 - Dec 31



2024 - Jan 1 - Sept 9

MULTNOMAH FALLS PARKING PERMITS

The Visitor Center has partnered with ODOT and the Forest Service to provide free, same-day, in-person permits for the Multnomah Falls I-84 parking lot. This program was created to reduce congestion and improve safety during peak visitation times, while encouraging visitors to take transit or shuttles. Visitors who don't or are unable to purchase permits in advance are able to pick one up at the visitor center on a first come, first serve basis. The program has successfully reduced congestion and improved safety at the I-84 parking lot, while still increasing the number of visitors able to access Multnomah Falls.

2023

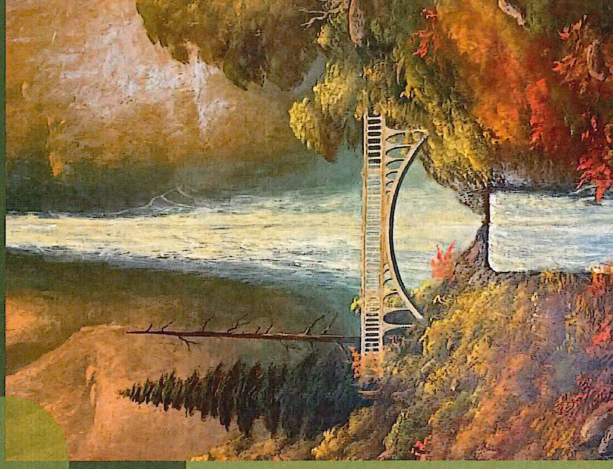
- 422 permits handed out
- Busiest to slowest days of the week
 - Friday, Monday, Saturday, Sunday, Thursday, Wednesday, Tuesday

17%

2024

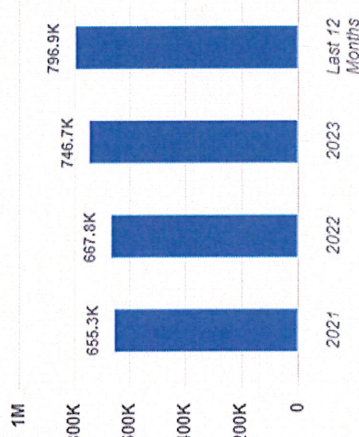
- 1072 permits handed out
- Busiest to slowest days of the week
 - Monday, Sunday, Friday, Saturday, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday
- More consistently busy across each day of the week.

43%

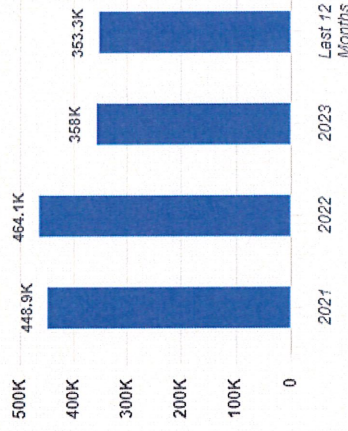


MULTNOMAH FALLS PARKING PERMITS

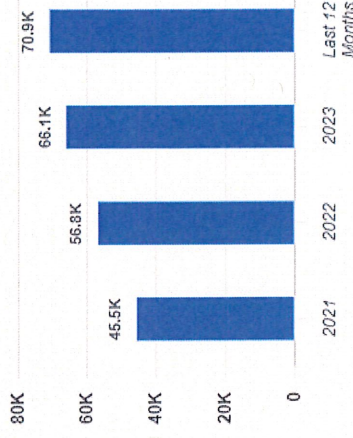
All Multnomah Falls
Visitation



I-84 Parking Lot



Historic Highway
Parking Lot



Visitation to Multnomah Falls - Annual Trends for Parking Areas

Here you can see the annual visitation trends for overall Multnomah Falls as well as the two different parking lot areas. While overall visitation is increasing annually, visitation to the 84 parking lot has plateaued. This indicates the success of the shuttle and transit options as improved access opportunities. Additionally, better flagger and parking management on the Historic Highway might be an indication for why that parking area has been able to support increased annual use.



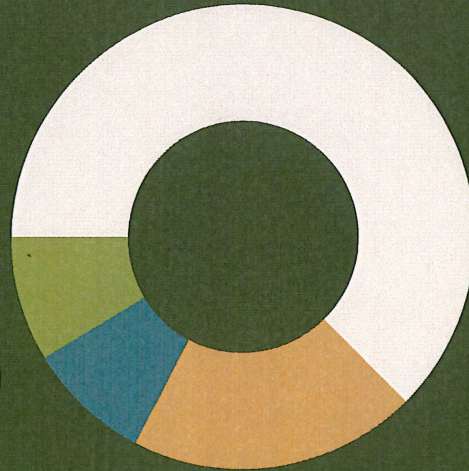
DATA DIVE
GOOGLE ANALYTICS

April - September 2024

7,234

People who viewed
Business Profile

- 63% - Google Maps - Mobile
- 20% - Google Search - Mobile
- 9% - Google Maps - Desktop
- 9% - Google Search - Desktop



1,566

Business Profile Interactions
(web click, directions, or calls)



3,203

Searches that showed
Business Profile in results

visitor center - 774

gateway to the gorge visitor
center - 757

gorge - 572

the gorge - 289

columbia river gorge visitor
center - 194

"Awesome little information center. **Staff is always helpful with activities and Troutdale and the Gorge.** They have some keepsakes for sale to remember your trip. And nice clean bathrooms. Be sure to stop in and see what's going on."

"**Pro tip:** get a free parking pass at this location."

"Very nice staff!
Plenty of free information to start a mondo adventure.
Cool town once you get away from the truck stops."

"**Extremely helpful** to us folks who were out of town."

"**Nice quaint little town"**

"This is a small visitor center and museum. We are so glad we came and visited both! Thanks for the museum tour and the great advice to drive on the scenic highway!!"

We stumbled upon Troutdale by accident and instantly fell in love with the entire town!"

"**Beautiful little town"**

"We wanted to get information on seeing the waterfalls and other outdoor attractions and spoke with a young blond lady who was super helpful and went **above and beyond** in obtaining information for us."

Based on her recommendations, we were able to have a stress-free day of exploring!

They had a lot of useful maps and pamphlets, too."

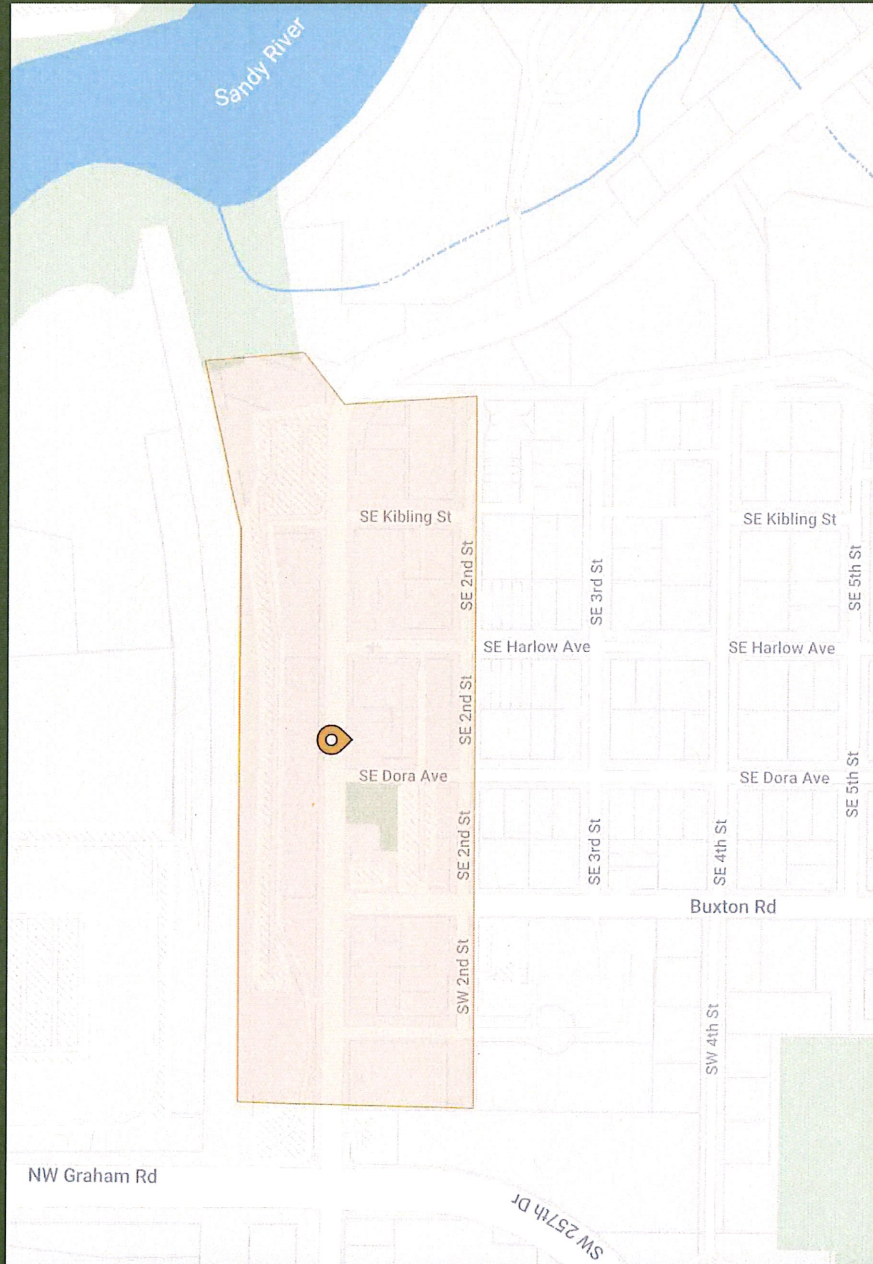
"**Honestly, the best visitor center I have ever been to.** The man and woman we found there were the sweetest humans. With my partner we rented a car last minute and embarked on a poorly planned trip around Mt hood. We went to the visitor center to get a pass to the Multnomah fall."

We left with much more than that: a wonderful and detailed plan for the day and suggestions for what became an amazing brunch (mcmenamamins edge field, quite a treat and a v interesting place).

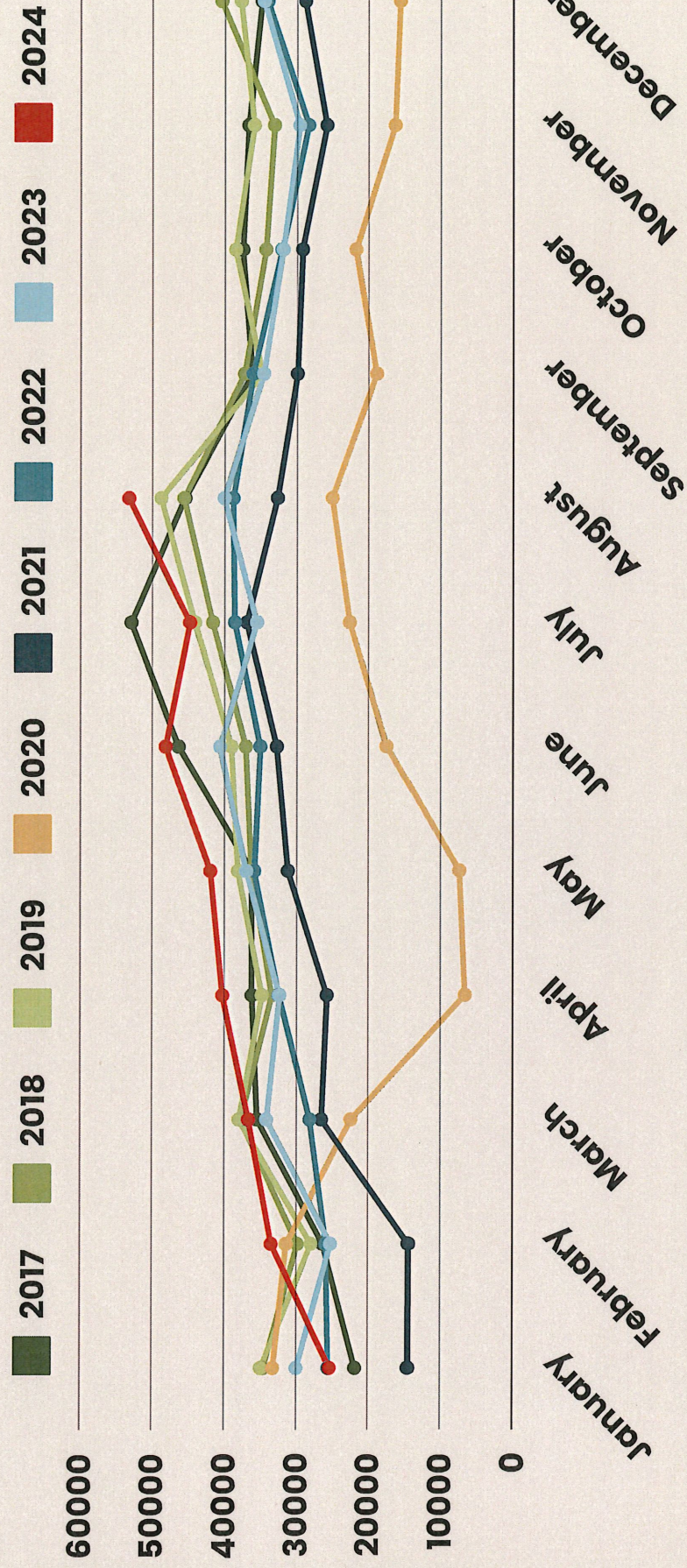
Stop by, you can get the pass, maps, suggestions and insights, and the hosts are very pleasant."

"We stopped in here to get a last minute access pass to Multnomah Falls, we were quickly given one by a pleasant person at the desk. The museum is very nice and **highlights local history** with most focus on trains and the station building. The host working here was **super pleasant and helpful.** The restroom was very clean."

DOWNTOWN VISITATION



DOWNTOWN VISITATION

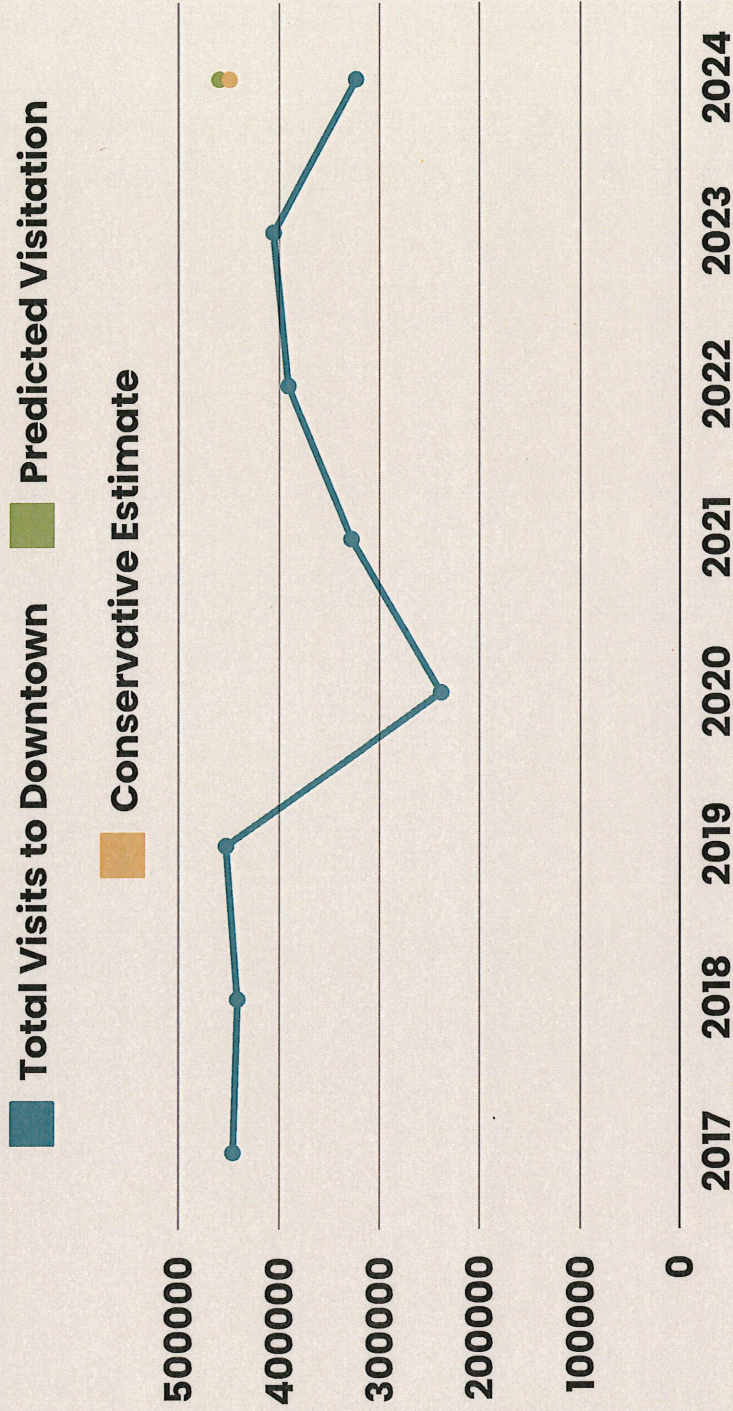


DOWNTOWN VISITATION

2024 has already seen 323,771 visitors, but is predicted to be our most visited year of the eight documented at 459,173 people.

This prediction was made by averaging monthly visitation of the previous years, excluding 2020.

A more conservative estimate, which averages monthly visitation of 2021-2023, still places visitation at 448,807, which is only slightly less than 2019 at 452,625 people.





MOVING FORWARD

NEXT STEPS

Expand Troutdale Collateral

Create a rack card brochure for Oregon Welcome Centers, Multnomah Falls, and Portland hotels, Troutdale Map with local attractions and landmarks, and Waterfall Corridor map that highlights our brand to remind visitors of Troutdale.

Welcome New Greeters

We have just hired 4 new visitor center greeters, who we are in the process of training so they're ready to welcome visitors.

Bike Hub & Sandy River Trail

Continue working on integrating the design work of the bike hub with Visitor Center public parking. Proceed with construction of the Sandy River Trail.

Explore Troutdale Website

Expand and enhance Explore Troutdale website as a tool for visitors and locals alike. Create Google Ads to attract more people to the webpage, and in return Troutdale.

THANK YOU!

CONTACT INFO:
MARLEE.BOXLER@TROUTDALEOREGON.GOV

VISITOR INFORMATION:
WWW.EXPLORETROUTDALE.COM