

BELLEVUE-REDMOND TOURISM PROMOTION AREA ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

May 7, 2025  
12:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-113 / Virtual

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Dermarkarian, Wade Hashimoto, Kate Hudson, Cassandra Leiberman, Rocky Rosenbach, Kim Saunderson

MEMBERS REMOTE: Rashed Kanaan, Nate Moore

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Manette Stamm, Lorie Hoffman, Lizzette Flores, Jesse Canedo, Department of Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Jones, Jane Kantor, Meredith Langridge, Sheila Freeman, Megan Adams, Visit Bellevue; Kristina Hudson, Audrey Fan, Melody Lanthorn, OneRedmond,

MINUTES SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m. by Caroline Dermarkarian who presided. All members were present with the exception of Nate Moore and Rashed Kanaan, who arrived at 12:07 p.m., and Kim Saunderson, who arrived at 12:19 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Wade Hashimoto. The motion was seconded was by Cassandra Leiberman and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the February 7, 2025, minutes as submitted was made by Rocky Rosenbach. The motion was seconded was by Cassandra Leiberman and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION, DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Welcome New Board Member: Kate Hudson

Caroline Dermarkarian welcomed new board member Kate Hudson.

Kate Hudson shared being the Director of Sales at the Residence Inn in Bellevue Downtown, managed by Island Hospitality, for six years, during which there had been positive interaction with the Visit Bellevue Advisory Board.

## B. Action – Report to the City of Redmond

Cultural Tourism Specialist Lizzette Flores noted having shared with the Board members copies of the Annual Report to the City of Redmond, which is required under the interlocal agreement. The report includes data on revenues, contracts, and other TPA-related business. The Board can elect to approve the report as-is, approve the report with changes, or request substantial revisions to the report.

Cassandra Leiberman expressed no desired changes but offered a recommendation for improving future annual reports by utilizing feedback from quarterly reports.

Lizzette Flores supported the suggestion and proposed discussing key elements for the annual report during the January meeting.

A motion to approve the Annual Report to the City of Redmond without changes was made by Cassandra Leiberman. The motion was seconded by Rocky Rosenbach and the motion carried unanimously.

## C. 2024 Annual Report OneRedmond.

Audrey Fan, executive director of the tourism program, summarizing the key goals and accomplishments of the 2024 tourism efforts. It was noted that the primary objective was to increase guest room revenue in Redmond by 15 percent compared to 2023. That goal was surpassed slightly, with an increase of 15.37 percent. The hotel inventory of just under 1600 rooms across 10 hotels remains the same. The focus was on developing the infrastructure of tourism through collaboration with Redmond's tourism staff and Eastside tourism partners. There is a focus on identifying tourism partners and creating tourism programming to support the goals. The economic impact of the hospitality industry on the region was over \$200 million for parties, and almost \$75 million on a per-person scale.

Audrey Fan highlighted a breakdown of tourism strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, focusing particularly on the opportunity to develop niche hotel experiences for tech- and eco-conscious travelers. Additional initiatives included enhancing local events to attract overnight stays, expanding culinary and outdoor tourism, and forming business partnerships to create corporate packages.

The financial summary showed actual expenditures were \$111,363 below the budget. Staffing comprised the largest share of the budget, followed by facilities and administrative expenses. In terms of tools, OneRedmond explored several technological platforms for data and marketing, but chose not to adopt a new CRM due to low inbound sales leads due to the lack of a large facility. Instead, the existing internal tools were used. Research was done relative to geofencing platforms, hospitality analytics, and booking engines. In the fall of 2024 the data source moved from the Star Report to Co-Star.

Audrey Fan showcased several key partnerships and campaigns, including a wine tourism collaboration with Woodinville Wine Country and the City of Redmond, including ride-share support and tourist passes; a pilot concert series collaboration with Seattle Theater Group at Remlinger Farm in Carnation; a marketing partnership supporting the AVP Pro Beach Volleyball event at Marymoor Park, which will begin in 2026; and a unique dog tourism campaign, launched on National Puppy Day, with promotional activities at SeaTac Airport and three Saturday engagement events with Redmond Hotels promoting dog tourism.

Cassandra Leiberman expressed positive feedback on Redmond's direction, noting that significant progress had been made while acknowledging there was still much work ahead. It is good to see a focus on implementing a CRM system and partnering with Datafy to enhance data visibility concerning travel trends in Redmond. The booking engine and other data-driven initiatives were commended. It would be good to see more detail on event participation metrics, such as the dog tourism events.

Cassandra Leiberman asked about website traffic data for Experience Redmond. Audrey Fan said the website traffic data for Experience Redmond falls under the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) and will be reported on a separate meeting. The data from recently completed programs, including analytics for the dog tourism initiative, will likely be included in future reports, such as the upcoming annual or Q2 reports.

Cassandra Leiberman reiterated the importance of understanding web traffic and emphasized the role of the Experience Redmond website in supporting tourism initiatives. Kristina Hudson clarified that the Experience Redmond brand is funded by lodging tax dollars, whereas the presented program is entirely funded by the Tourism Promotion Area. The teams aim to keep the metrics separate. Updated data from Q1 and Q2 will offer more clarity, as the reporting period under discussion ended December 31, 2024. The dog tourism event, for example, concluded in Q2. Subsequent reporting will reflect the activity.

Kate Hudson asked if the AVP Pro Beach Volleyball event was being coordinated in part with the University of Washington. Audrey Fan said involvement by the University of Washington remains an unknown. The Seattle Sports Commission and Visit Bellevue have led the planning for the event at Marymoor Park.

Kate Hudson remarked that the use of CoStar data is valuable and helpful, and is also user-friendly.

#### D. Annual Report Visit Bellevue

Brad Jones reminded the Board that the TPA plans were initiated in early 2023 with a 15-month scope, and said it was satisfying that the forecasts and benchmarks were largely met. In 2024, Bellevue hosted 2.2 million overnight visitors, generating nearly \$2 billion in economic impact. The marketing efforts produced approximately 970 million impressions and 900,000 engagements. Bellevue was positioned effectively as a premier domestic and international travel destination during a period of recovery.

Brad Jones said the scope of work was structured around five primary focus areas: destination sales, marketing and communications, visitor experience, research and administration, and festivals and events. The team grew in 2024, enabled by TPA funding. New hires included a sales manager for small markets, an event services manager to handle post-booking logistics, and a tourism manager. Megan Adams, formerly the partnership manager, transitioned into a role focused on destination stewardship and community relations.

The TPA goals were set using 2022 as the baseline and 2025 as the target horizon. In 2024, Bellevue achieved 2.2 million overnight visitors, close to the goal of 2.4 million for 2025. Citywide hotel occupancy was 69 percent in 2024; the target for 2025 is 72 percent. Weekend hotel occupancy was 64 percent, with a target for 2025 of 66 percent. Economic impact reached \$1.9 billion; the \$2 billion mark is the goal by the end of 2025.

Brad Jones presented the historical hotel lodging metrics from 2019 through 2024, with an emphasis on supply, demand, occupancy, average daily rates, and revenue per available room (REVPAR). The Board was warned that Bellevue is facing a hotel room capacity issue.

Although there are 1500 to 1600 hotel rooms in the planning pipeline, none are under construction, nor are they anticipated to be under construction until 2026. Most are part of master developments that could take several years to complete. Competing cities such as SeaTac and Seattle have faster project timelines, which presents a challenge for Bellevue.

The destination development plan was originally created in 2017. The 224 work to update the plan, led by Residence Consultancy, took about eight months to complete. The strategic priorities were reassessed. Bellevue's strengths remain consistent with the 2017 findings, namely a strong built environment, diverse experiences, and culinary prominence. New challenges were noted, including overreliance on corporate travel, affordability issues tied to inflation, and labor shortages. Light rail was cited as a partial solution to transportation-related staffing barriers, but it was allowed that there are additional inherent issues with labor, including housing. There are ongoing discussions regarding hospitality-specific housing options to mitigate labor challenges. The updated plan will support proactive approaches to the issues moving forward.

There are six strategic priorities: urban lifestyle and placemaking, arts and innovation, recreation and experiences, culinary destination, conferences and events, and the built environment and enabling conditions. The priorities were previously reviewed in detail by Chris Fair and were emphasized as essential for keeping the TPA connected with the Destination Development Plan, along with the Bellevue Convention Center Authority and the work with the city. It is imperative for everyone to be operating from the same strategic plan.

In 2024, the destination sales efforts resulted in 295,000 room night leads, with a goal of reaching 375,000 in 2025. The team booked 75,000 room nights; the goal for 2025 is 80,000. The data indicates a 21 percent increase in leads and a 26 percent increase in booked room nights over 2023.

The marketing and communications section enjoyed 345,000 paid media clicks at a cost of under fifty cents per click during 2024. Social media engagement reached 701,000 interactions, and content marketing was emphasized as a primary asset. The website attracted 605,000 unique users and over 630,000 sessions. The public relations program, initiated with TPA's creation and supported by Madden Media, yielded 138 placements with an estimated media value of nearly \$7 million. There has since been a transition to a new PR agency.

Continuing, Brad Jones said the international marketing efforts began in 2024 with Japan as a pilot location. The lessons learned included the importance of local agencies and cultural sensitivity. While domestic marketing remains the focus, international campaigns will be strategically developed.

The visitor experience initiatives were a central focus of 2024, which was dubbed a "tourism development year." Festivals and events generated 16,000 weekend room nights and 26,000 overnight visitors, with an economic impact of \$28 million. The goal for 2025 is to grow event-generated room nights to 18,000. A shift has occurred from recruiting events to being approached by event organizers.

Brad Jones highlighted several visitor-facing programs, including the Mobile Welcome Center, which interacted with 26,000 visitors, and the Bellhop program. Continued investment in mobile and concierge services, as well as multicultural collaborations, were also highlighted.

With regard to the tourism development programs, Brad Jones noted the launch in 2024 of the Bellevue Lake Cruises, the Savor Bellevue Food Tour, the Bellevue Airport Shuttle, the Bike Hop program, and the Waterfall and Wine Tours. Some of the initiatives were more

successful than others. It was learned that tourists prefer hyperlocal experiences rather than travel outside the city. Localized programs like hiking in areas such as Coal Creek are more sustainable and are better aligned with visitor interest. A Bellevue-only focus will not be the guiding star for all programming, but it is clear visitors are looking for local options.

With regard to the financial report, Brad Jones said the TPA collections totaled over \$3.6 million in the 15-month cycle, which was slightly under the projection by \$67,000. Expenses were reported at \$3.3 million, which was under budget by \$398,000, which was budgeted in as a contingency reserve heading into 2025.

Wade Hashimoto asked about a discrepancy in the economic impact figures for festivals and events. Brad Jones confirmed the discrepancy might be a typographical error.

Wade Hashimoto also inquired about marketing trends and the regional focus. Brad Jones explained that campaigns avoided targeting locals, focusing instead on domestic markets over fifty miles away. The top markets include cities in California, Texas, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, and New York. Internationally, the primary focus is on Japan. The campaign strategy was not centered on events but rather on general awareness of Bellevue as a destination. The campaigns utilize digital marketing to target consumers during the consideration phase of travel planning. Intercept marketing techniques allow the team to focus on individuals who have already expressed interest in visiting the region.

S02 asked about the 1,600 hotel rooms in development that had not yet broken ground. S01 confirmed the figure and explained that most of the 75,000 room nights booked in 2024 were scheduled for fulfillment within the next twenty-four months. This timeframe had compressed significantly since the pandemic.

Cassandra Leiberman asked if the social media content is handled in-house. Brad Jones confirmed that all of the organic social media content is managed in-house by the Visit Bellevue team, with the exception of international efforts, which are handled by PacRim due to language and cultural needs. The marketing agency paid programs do use social media, but they are advertising and not organic.

With regard to weekend hotel occupancy rates, Kate Hudson asked if the data is tracked quarterly. Brad Jones confirmed that quarterly internal tracking exists and agreed to include those metrics in future quarterly reports. The focus remains on increasing occupancy during the lower-performing first and fourth quarters.

Cassandra Leiberman asked if it is primarily a space issue that Downtown Bellevue is running out of land on which to build more hotel capacity. Brad Jones said the main issue that the rooms in the pipeline are all part of master developments that include elements such as housing, office and retail. To get the market and the cost of money to a point of building all of those elements at once is very difficult currently. A freestanding hotel development would be a completely different story. The Wilburton upzoning is also concerning given that there are existing hotels there that will be lost as part of the upzoning and redevelopment. New homes for those hotel rooms will need to be identified in the new developments, which will of course take time to get to the market.

Kate Hudson offered praise for all the tour programs and asked how guest preferences regarding local versus regional experiences were determined. Brad Jones explained that the feedback originated from booking behavior, pricing sensitivity, and resistance to longer tours. Experiences requiring transportation were more expensive and less appealing, while hyperlocal experiences proved more desirable and feasible.

Rocky Rosenbach asked which program was believed to be the most successful in 2024. Brad Jones suggested the nature of the entire team's efforts are interwoven, but cited three key areas: exceptional destination sales performance, the successful launch of new programs and tours, and a high-performing marketing team that advanced content strategy.

Caroline Dermarkarian expressed appreciation for the team's work and inquired whether the 75,000 booked room nights were helping to balance the weekday versus weekend demand. Brad Jones replied that although no specific goals have been established for shifting the demand, the team provided incentives to encourage bookings on need dates, such as weekends. The market, however, still lacks a strong value proposition to persuade clients to shift from high-demand weekdays to lower-demand periods. The market is not yet at a point where incenting need dates can become a consistent and actionable strategy.

Kate Hudson asked if it would help if the hotels were to become more involved in destination sales. Brad Jones highlighted the need to have everyone working together. There continues to be a need to be more creative in terms of the associated actionables.

Caroline Dermarkarian emphasized the importance of shifting business patterns given the lack of new room supply. A coordinated effort led by Jane Kantor and supported by all stakeholders is necessary to encourage business throughout the full week rather than concentrating activity during peak midweek periods.

#### E. Staff Update – Finance, Schedule, Listening Session

Lizzette Flores reported that work plan discussions were held individually with each Board member to collect ideas for the 2026 work plans. The ideas were compiled into a report that was shared with Visit Bellevue and OneRedmond, and it was included in the meeting packet. The common themes from both zones focused on improving occupancy rates, particularly during weekends and shoulder seasons, and on destination development and branding. The Redmond-specific feedback highlighted the need for more data and performance metrics, and the value of collaborative tourism development with Bellevue and other local partners. The Bellevue feedback emphasized increasing group travel and FAM tours.

Lizzette Flores said the revenue reports were also included the packet, with an outline of all remittances, interest earned, and invoiced amounts for each bucket category for both zones. It was noted the precise details were included in the packet.

Arts Community Manager Lorie Hoffman addressed the upcoming workload for the BRTPA Board, noting that the Board would soon review draft scopes and budgets from the two administrative partners. The work will inform the recommendations to the City Council. It was acknowledged that quarterly meetings may no longer suffice due to the expanding scope of responsibilities. A full discussion about adjusting the meeting frequency is anticipated to occur at the next regular meeting following completion of the July deliverables. That meeting will also include a discussion of the Board's bylaws.

#### F. 2026 Budget and Scope of Work OneRedmond

Audrey Fan reiterated that the tourism program is being built from the ground up. OneRedmond is committed to increasing overnight stays during need periods by supporting tourism programs, and by collaborating with all stakeholders. OneRedmond does not receive LTAC funds but does collaborate closely with the City of Redmond and Experience Redmond to ensure unified tourism development. The holistic approach will involve the assistance of multiple staff and contractors along with unique programming to drive overnight stays during the need period.

Audrey Fan said the OneRedmond goal for 2026 is to increase overnight visitors by five percent over the annual occupancy rate of 2025. Redmond boasts a diverse culture with numerous cultural offerings. The city is home to tech giants like Microsoft and Nintendo. Redmond's downtown, Overlake and Marymoor Village are designated growth centers. By the end of 2025 the city's population is expected to reach 85,000. The Sound Transit two-line light rail will connect Redmond with Seattle with reliable service.

Audrey Fan said as executive director, the team is also managed by CEO Kristina Hudson. There are plans to expand staffing to four by 2026 to support the research and implementation of the tourism initiatives. The strategic priorities include the use of tourism data analytics, transportation improvements, leveraging the FIFA 2026 event in Seattle, targeted destination sales, advertising, corporate visitation programs, and ongoing collaboration with Visit Bellevue.

One of the buckets involves marketing and communication expenses. For 2026, that will include agency fees and content development, tourism development, pilot programs, signage, and infrastructure, and destination sales in the form of trade shows, site inspections, and memberships. The total proposed TPA budget for 2026 is \$1,514,741, encompassing administration, research, and event sponsorships.

Kim Saunderson asked if the revenue projections for 2026 include any concerns about being able to meet the mark given potential downturns in international travel. Audrey Fan clarified that the budget is optimistic, with adjustments to be made in response to actual revenue performance.

Lorie Hoffman added funds cannot be spent unless they are in the respective accounts. It is a strategic choice of the Board to decide to spend it all or to keep some funds in reserve. The Redmond account has current reserves totaling approximately \$650,000, and there are likely to be additional reserve funds from 2025.

Cassandra Leiberman asked if it would be possible to incorporate a more detailed breakdown of occupancy data, particularly targeting weekends and the shoulder seasons. Audrey Fan committed to providing additional detail using COSTAR data in future quarterly and annual reports. Kristina Hudson added that everything being done is driving toward need periods and weekends. No resources will be wasted on programs aimed at filling rooms that are already booked.

Cassandra Leiberman agreed with the focus on increasing staff as the programs grow and asked if there could be a way to leverage some of the partners' from the perspective of setting goals for 2026. Kristina Hudson said it is all about collaboration. Everyone will get to where they want to go faster if they all work together. There are regular meetings with the various partners.

#### G. 2025 Budget and Scope of Work Visit Bellevue

Brad Jones explained that the department directors would present their individual scopes. Visit Bellevue is Bellevue's destination management organization and it operates under the Bellevue Convention Center Authority, a public development authority established by the City of Bellevue. Visit Bellevue is a division of the BCCA, which receives 100 percent of the lodging tax, and a portion of the tax is handed over to Visit Bellevue for its operations. The TPA layer is on top of that. All of the revenues are programmatic. Only a small fee of \$6000 per month is charged for administration and overhead.

The organization operates under the oversight of the City of Bellevue, the BCCA, and the BRTPA board. A Visit Bellevue Advisory Board was formed with members of the community and industry who meet every other month to discuss and advise on the scope of work. Visit Bellevue's four departments are destination sales, marketing and communications, visitor experience, and destination stewardship and community relations.

The vision for 2026 includes full implementation of the updated Destination Development Plan, continued departmental programming, and a strategic focus on innovation and resilience. Visit Bellevue aims to reach 2.5 million annual overnight visitors and generate \$2.1 billion in economic impact by the end of 2026. The guiding principles are creative, safe, diverse and sustainable. The six strategic priorities guiding the work are urban lifestyle and placemaking, arts and innovation, recreation and experiences, culinary destination, conferences and events, the built environment and enabling conditions. With regard to the latter, there will be some recommendations coming forward that are innovative and different and which will require third party development partners to effectuate. Ultimately there will also need to be sites and development partners onboarded.

Director of Destination Sales Jane Kantor explained that the focus of the group is to attract group business and to bring it to Bellevue. Over the last year and a half additional verticals have been added, with an increasing focus on sports verticals. Infrastructure limitations present challenges, but efforts continue to diversify and expand. Feedback from hotel partners has led to initiatives to strengthen sales collaboration among hotel staff and advisory members. The team is learning from past results to enhance successful strategies and eliminate ineffective approaches.

Sheila Freeman Director of Marketing and Communications, said the goal continues to be centered on expanding Bellevue's regional and international profile through integrated campaigns. Paid media campaigns will be driven by a brand refresh and will continue to focus on targeted programmatic advertising and intercept marketing. Organic social media, managed entirely in-house, generated 24 million impressions in 2024 and is a cornerstone of Bellevue's digital presence.

The Visit Bellevue website serves as the welcome center and central digital resource, and it is set to undergo a redesign. With 360,000 visits in 2024, the site consistently ranks highly in searches related to Bellevue.

Sheila Freeman said public relations efforts are being expanded through a new agency partnership to increase national and international visibility. There are more media missions planned along with additional hosted media visits.

The inaugural Japan marketing campaign, which introduced Bellevue to new global audiences and launched the Bellevue Bobcat mascot, was a huge success. The campaign will continue even as added attention will be given to the Indian market.

Culinary tourism is another major focus, one that is supported by a continued partnership with Chef Shota Nakajima and the launch of a dedicated culinary guide highlighting all of Bellevue's culinary offerings.

Each marketing initiative is aligned with the strategic goals to grow awareness, drive visitation, and support the overarching vision for Bellevue as a leading Pacific Northwest destination.



Brad Jones added that Visit Bellevue's goals will run through 2027. A deeper review of the goals will be presented at a future session.

Sheila Freeman said the website and public relations goals include users and sessions, placements, readership and AV.

Brad Jones pointed out that for 2025 the website has been scaled back. That is because when go is pushed on the relaunch, some SEO equity will be lost and will need to be rebuilt. Some struggles are anticipated during the year leading into 2026, which is just the reality of redoing a website and moving into more modern technologies.

Sheila Freeman said the projected TPA impact will be to create 35 million new impressions, 190,000 additional website clicks and sessions, an improved cost-per-click by \$1.81, increased social media impressions, and to generate \$15 million in earned media coverage value.

Meredith Langridge, Director of Visitor Experience, explained that visitor experience is something the team has focused on for the last couple of years, and thanks to the TPA it has been possible to explore creating meaningful, engaging experiences for visitors by enhancing existing community offerings and identifying programmatic gaps. The core initiatives include the Bellhop shuttle, the Welcome Center, the tours and trails programs, and multicultural outreach.

Megan Adams said multicultural tourism is a central pillar of destination stewardship, aligning with Bellevue's identity as a minority-majority community. The team is committed to celebrating cultural heritage and integrating it into tourism programming.

Meredith Langridge highlighted programs such as the incubator for tourism-related business, the Bellevue Airport Shuttle, and the expanding Bellhop program.

Megan Adams said Bellhop has completed some 180,000 rides to date and the program is being considered for expansion into Eastgate and Factoria, with a priority of serving the hoteliers in those areas along with key partners like Bellevue College, T-Mobile and Marketplace at Factoria. There are preliminary conversations under way with potential funders through a PSE grant to expand the scale of the service in 2026.

Meredith Langridge elaborated on festival and event planning, noting that there is much in the pipeline. One key culinary initiative, Radiant Table, is set to launch during the summer. The team is constantly in conversation about how to tell Bellevue's tech story. It is known that people travel for wellness, and conversations are being held around that topic as well. Foundational work is under way in regard to a plug and play venue aimed at activating more spaces in Bellevue.

Megan Adams underlined the importance of local partnerships and maximizing Bellevue's existing assets. The team is identifying and collaborating with local businesses and organizations to create accessible and authentic experiences. Work is under way to develop self-guided walking tours in collaboration with organizations such as Global Family Tourism to expand heritage and outdoor tourism. Examples include prospective partnerships with Kelsey Creek Park, Coal Creek Park, the Botanical Garden and Wilburton Trails.

Meredith Langridge noted that when transportation is added to tours, the price of the tours goes up. The question is how transportation can be added for tourists, and what things look like if the transportation element is taken out. The team is working with tour operators such as Savor, known for its Pike Place tours, to introduce scalable culinary tours in Bellevue. The

challenge continues to be how to generate enough visitor demand to make the programs sustainable. There are ongoing conversations around how to improve nightlife in Bellevue, increasing awareness of local activities, and positioning Visit Bellevue as a top resource for things to do.

Megan Adams urged the Board members to check out the calendar. In partnership with platforms such as Vibemap, a large number of new events are constantly being added. A lot of new nightlife is occurring in the city, but ways are being sought to bolster those offerings. The focus is on making sure that all programs are accessible and enabling, and of course sustainable. A lot of work locally is being done with partners to make sure there is community engagement, strong partnerships, and programs that will engage with the local community. There are also efforts under way with international partners to build certification programs that will demonstrate Bellevue is sustainable environmentally, economically and socially on the local, national and international stage. That effort is currently in the research phase.

Brad Jones said one of the programs piloted in 2024 was the Bike Hop program. The program has been doubled in scale and the plan is to expand it further in 2026 to include all hotels through a central location at Eastrail. The importance of pilot programs that evolve into citywide initiatives was emphasized.

Brad Jones said research and insights remain foundational, with data gathered through a dashboard system and partnerships with Zartico, Voyage Visa, CoStar, and other analytics providers. The partner agencies are Diamond PR for public relations; SimpleView the CRM and website provider; 62Above the new marketing agency; and PacRim the international marketing specialist. A new organization will be found in 2026 to focus on the India market.

A joint room tax study is conducted annually with the City of Bellevue to evaluate the revenue projections. The study helps the budget assumptions come to life. For 2026 the projections show TPA collections of \$3.135 million and expenses and contingencies of \$2.946 million. The established percentage allocation by department will be carried through. The contingency for 2024 has been lowered to five percent for 2025.

Caroline Dermarkarian commended the work of both organizations and recommended reviewing and adjusting the 2025, 2026, and 2027 goals in light of the strong performance in 2024. Brad Jones affirmed the importance of setting ambitious goals as aspirational benchmarks and clarified that staff incentives are not tied to performance goals, with the exception of destination sales side.

With regard to OneRedmond's 2026 scope of work, Cassandra Leiberman suggested that the timelines could be more comprehensive. Only three of the budget buckets included detailed quarterly actions. Similar details should be added across all bucket categories. Audrey Fan explained that the administration tasks are ongoing. New in 2026 will be an attempt to pull out from the administration bucket where the specific efforts are to be spent.

Lizzette Flores said if the scope is revised, it should be resubmitted for review at the next meeting. Audrey Fan committed to clarifying and submitting the needed updates, ensuring alignment with both staff expectations and Board direction.

Lorie Hoffman reminded the Board members that the robust reports are created by the administrators. The actual budget and scope of work gets developed by staff based on the data and submitted to the Board for approval and recommendation to the City Council in an open public session.

## 5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

#### A. Next Board Meeting Time

A motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes was made by Kate Hudson. The motion was seconded by Caroline Dermarkarian and the motion carried unanimously.

Lizzette Flores informed the board that, following the standard procedure from the previous year, a second meeting would be required to review the material for a final time. Several dates were proposed for additional meeting during the month of May and the consensus was to schedule the meeting for May 21 at 11:00 a.m.

#### 6. REPORTS

Lizzette Flores noted that the written reports had been included in the meeting packet.

#### 7. ADJOURNMENT

Caroline Dermarkarian adjourned the meeting at 2:01 p.m.