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67-2022

Report

Accept Sport Oregon's annual report on national and international sports marketing activities and event recruiting services (Contract No. 30005536)

Accepted

Date: January 12, 2022

REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: City Council

From: Tom Rinehart, CAO

Karl Lisle, Spectator Facilities Program Manager

Subject: Accept Sport Oregon's annual report on national and international sports marketing activities and event recruiting services (Report; Contract No. 30005536)

Jim Etzel, Sport Oregon CEO, will present the efforts and accomplishments of Sport Oregon during Fiscal Year 2020-2021, and discuss the organization's goals and activities underway in Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

This annual report to Council is a requirement of the City's agreement with Sport Oregon to provide sports marketing and event recruiting services to bring major sports events to Portland. Agreement No. 30005536 was adopted by Council by Ordinance No. 188081 on November 9, 2016 and amended by Council by Ordinance No. 190421 on May 26, 2021. This is the fifth annual report to Council under the agreement.

Documents and Exhibits

[Sport Oregon FY2020-2021 Annual Report](#) (951.34 Kb)

Introduced by

[Mayor Ted Wheeler](#)

Bureau

[Chief Administrative Officer;](#)
[Management and Finance](#)

Prepared by

Karl Lisle

Date Prepared

January 12, 2022

Requested Agenda Type

Time Certain

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

February 2, 2022

Requested Start Time

10:05 am

Time Requested

20 minutes

Confirmed Time Certain

Impact Statement

 [Impact Statement](#) (173.04 Kb)

Agenda Items

67 Time Certain in [February 1-2, 2022 Council Agenda](#)

Accepted

Motion to accept the report: Moved by Hardesty and seconded by Ryan.

Commissioner Carmen Rubio Yea

Commissioner Dan Ryan Yea

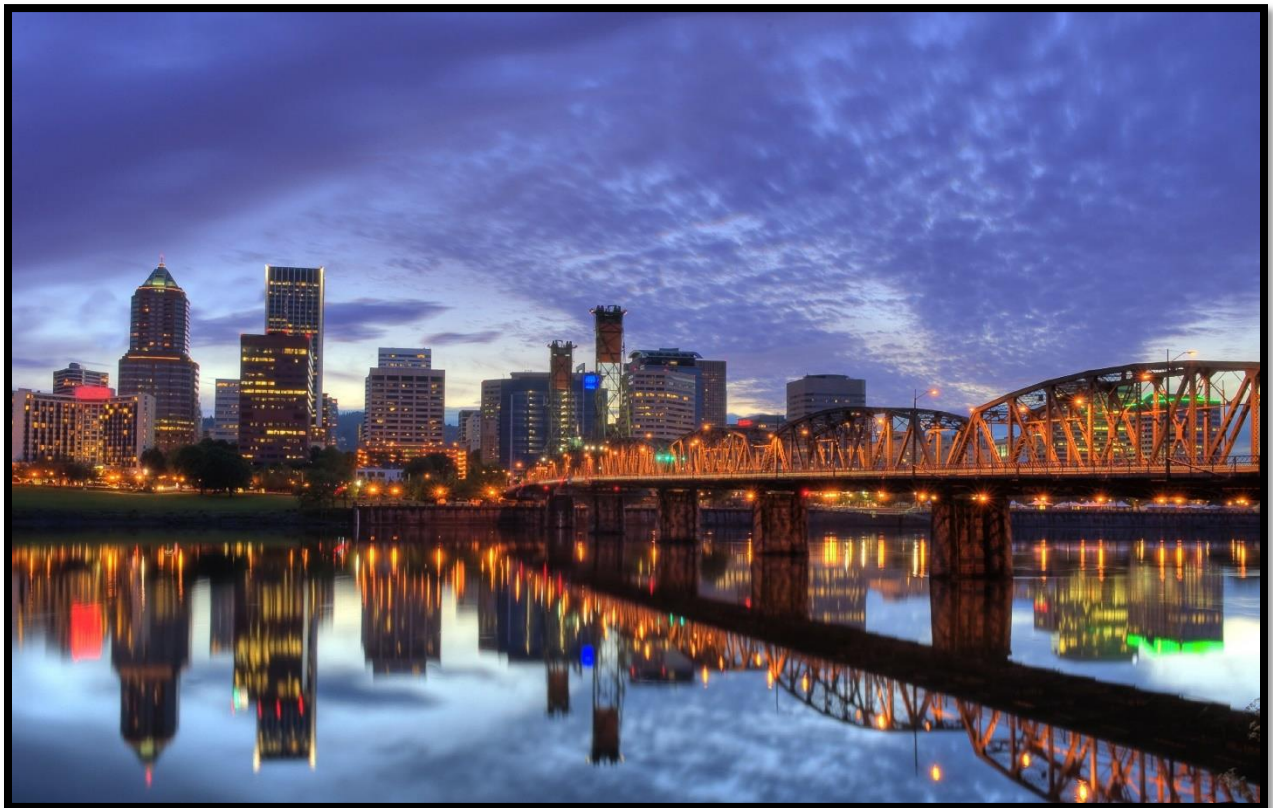
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty Yea

Commissioner Mingus Mapps Yea

Mayor Ted Wheeler Yea

SPORT[®] OREGON

***Sport Oregon Annual Report to the
City of Portland
July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021***



Introduction

Sport Oregon is pleased to submit its Annual Report to the City of Portland July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, as per the Amended and Restated Agreement No. 30005536 dated June 7, 2021.

At the outset of this report, we would like to note that the period covering this report has been unprecedented as we all operated under the cloud of COVID-19. The mandates from city, county, state, and federal levels impacted every aspect of life for all of us in Portland as well as those who would travel to Portland for business or pleasure. It has been Sport Oregon's goal to use its resources, relationships, knowledge, and expertise with stakeholder community partners including Travel Portland, Portland Business Alliance (PBA), Travel Oregon, Oregon Convention Center, Metro, Portland Trailblazers, Portland Timbers, Portland Thorns, Greater Portland Inc., and others to effectively drive and contribute to the economic recovery efforts in Portland through sports tourism. While we have had significant success in living up to this goal, we were regularly thwarted due to the pandemic. We were able to identify sports events that Portland has the capacity to host, and we did in fact, prepare sports bids and presentations to host new and returning sports events in Portland. Of course, our ability to conduct site visits to secure new sports events was hampered due to restrictions placed on air travel and lockdowns that many throughout the nation were subject to. All of these challenges did not hamper, however our ability to market the City of Portland to the sports event industry placing the city in a favorable position to secure and maintain economically valuable sports events.

Responses to Questions

Sport Oregon's contract with the City includes a number of required elements to be included in annual reports. The items (1-7) cited in Exhibit A, Item G.- Reports, are addressed sequentially and are bundled into a more reader friendly format below.

Sports events pursued and partnerships created to secure and support such sports events including the events' magnitude in terms of the number of Portland tourists and hospitality impact. Metrics include room nights, estimated economic impact, visitor event participant and attendee totals, total attendance numbers and various other direct and indirect community impacts including the benefit to City-owned venues

In a year unlike any other, in terms of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including postponements, cancelations, and fan-less sporting events, Sport Oregon remained actively engaged in bidding on future opportunities with a specific impact in Portland. As is the standard in the extremely competitive landscape of sports tourism, some bids were successful, some unsuccessful, and some are continuously ongoing. Fiscal year 2020/2021 was undoubtedly an outlier in terms of the quantity of sporting events hosted in Portland. Again, our strict statewide and local protocols contributed heavily to our inability to host tourism-driving events, which was the case in many urban markets across the country. That said, Sport Oregon did still achieve a few event "wins" during the timeframe, which were welcome additions to our fiscal reporting period FY 20/21.

Our goal is always to create a balance of short-and-long-term opportunities to benefit the overall hospitality community in Portland, and to continue to contribute to the recovery efforts locally. Below

are examples of sporting events and meetings that we have pursued for Portland and ones Portland hosted.

2025/2026 NCAA Women’s Final Four – Our biggest and most intense project organizationally in 2020 was our pursuit of the 2025 or 2026 NCAA Women’s Basketball Final Four. Sport Oregon led the bidding group – comprised of the Rose Quarter, Travel Portland, and Oregon State University – through numerous required steps and processes from the NCAA and organized our first-ever virtual site tour of Portland in August 2020 and the final presentation to the NCAA Women’s Basketball Committee in September 2020. While we were



unsuccessful in our bid (winning cities were Tampa and Phoenix), this event would have arguably been the largest sporting event ever hosted in Portland. Combined with the 4,000+ attendee annual women’s basketball coach’s convention, the Women’s Final Four would have produced nearly 11,000 hotel room nights and \$7 million in direct economic impact for the market. We will undoubtedly pursue this event when it is available to bid again for 2027 and beyond.

2023 USA Gymnastics Championships – Submitted officially to USA Gymnastics in July 2020, on behalf of Sport Oregon and Travel Portland, this 3,945-room night event has the opportunity to solidify Portland as a continuously viable destination for Olympic National Governing Bodies. After significant turnover in the USA Gymnastics office, multiple postponements and cancellations, and a potential change to the broadcast schedule by NBC, *we are still awaiting a final decision on the host community for this event with an estimated direct economic impact of \$2.4 million.*

Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA) Symposium – In March 2021, during a lengthy bid process interrupted by COVID-19, Sport Oregon, and Travel Portland co-hosted Sports ETA leadership in Portland for an official in-person site tour of the city, and in May 2021 Portland was confirmed as a host city for the 2024 Symposium at the Oregon Convention Center. This 3,500-room night event provides substantial impact on its own (estimated \$1.6 million for the event itself), but the value of hosting is exponentially beyond that. With 800+ sports tourism professionals (a sizable portion of which are event producers) descending upon Portland for the better part of a week, we have the opportunity to highlight our city as a true destination for future impact-inducing sporting events. Portland will become the epicenter of the sports tourism world in April 2024. Portland noted here:

<https://www.sportseta.org/events/symposium/about>

USA Volleyball HP Nationals 2024 – Sport Oregon, Travel Portland, and Columbia Empire Volleyball Association (CEVA) submitted an official bid to USA Volleyball to host its 2024 High Performance Nationals in May 2021. This event features elite high-level youth to compete as part of USA Volleyball's National Team Development Program and would be played at the Oregon Convention Center. With a training camp preceding the competition dates, the event would produce an anticipated total of 5,470 hotel room nights and an estimated \$4.9 million in direct economic impact. Changes to the event structure have been discussed at length within USA Volleyball and club circles, and we are awaiting confirmation on those potential changes, which would require an updated bid and/or an assessment of Portland's viability to host, based on those changes. This is an ongoing bid.

PK85 – After a hugely successful PK80 event – commemorating Phil Knight's 80th birthday - at Moda Center and Veterans Memorial Coliseum in 2017, local and national partners got to work on planning the next installment of college basketball's biggest nonconference showcase event for 2022. Conversations have continued well into 2021 on the exact format of the tournament. It is widely expected to include a brand-new women's bracket, which would significantly increase both the impact and exposure of the event. PK85 will take place in November 2022 and is expected to produce 7,340 hotel room nights and \$3.5 million of estimated economic impact for the region. It is expected that sixteen men's teams and eight women's teams will participate in the event at Moda Center, Veterans Memorial Coliseum, and the Chiles Center on the University of Portland campus. While official plans are not yet confirmed the planning team continues to meet. ESPN's family of networks will broadcast all games.

Vancouver Whitecaps – One hugely successful win in COVID-riddled 2020-2021 was our lengthy hosting of the MLS Vancouver Whitecaps at the Hilton Downtown Portland. With international travel limited and a 14-day quarantine mandate, it would have been impossible for the Whitecaps to return home after each U.S. match. Our partners at the Portland Timbers offered to host Whitecaps games at Providence Park. The Hilton Hotel served as the Whitecaps home for nearly 45 days in the late summer-early fall of 2020. Due to the housing of this group, the Hilton was also able to hire back a large number of staff who had been previously furloughed during the pandemic. All told, 1,645 room nights were held at the Hilton during the period, resulting in an estimate of over \$500,000 in direct economic impact to downtown Portland.

LPGA – The LPGA Cambia Portland Classic, in its 49th year – longest on the tour – was nearly called-off not only due to COVID-19, but also historic forest fires throughout Oregon. With no fans in attendance and murky, suffocating skies, the event was reduced to a 54-hole event due to player safety. Historically, with fans in attendance and sponsor/partner activations on the course, it could reasonably be estimated that the Classic would produce upward of 900+ hotel rooms in the market. A scaled-back 2020 event produced just over six hundred hotel room nights; however, it was a win to host in an otherwise disappointing year of event cancellations.

Premier Sports Network's Player Care Conference – Premier Sports Network (PSN) is a UK-based organization that serves as a connector for individuals working in professional sports around the world. They have partnerships with European soccer clubs/leagues, as well as the NFL and MLS. PSN was interested in sourcing locations for their Player Care Conference, so Sport Oregon and Travel Portland worked with the client on finding a solution here in Portland. This 900-room night event focuses on all aspects of care – physical, mental, financial, emotional – for the athlete and will be a great fit for the

Portland market in the future. Plans were put on hold for site selection due to COVID-19. We believe there will be an opportunity to bid on the next opportunity when it develops.

Women’s International Champions Cup (WICC) – Sport Oregon, the Portland Thorns, Travel Portland, and Relevant Sports Marketing collaborated to host the WICC at Providence Park in early summer 2021. The Thorns, NWSL’s Houston Dash, France’s Lyon Olympique, and Spain’s FC Barcelona competed at Providence Park in August 2021. Sport Oregon was an official sponsor for the event. 954 Portland hotel rooms were booked and 24,000+ total tickets sold for this quick-turnaround event. Its success has resulted in new discussions to return to Portland for 2022 with an additional two (2) teams in the competition.

Sports Coalition – Starting in early summer 2020 and extending throughout the fall, Sport Oregon led a group of franchises and universities in a united front to engage with the Governor’s Office to stay informed on updated protocols and actions pertaining to COVID-19’s effect on Oregon sports. With new processes and protocols being developed on a near-daily basis, it was essential to advocate and communicate with state leadership as a formal group, to avoid confusion and duplication of efforts from a sports standpoint. Several members of the group were based in the Portland metro area, including the Timbers/Thorns, Trail Blazers, University of Portland, Portland State, and the Portland Winterhawks, among others.



Our goal was to provide clarity and information to the Governor’s Office from the sports community, and to contribute to developing safe and effective protocols for a full return to sports in our state.

Tourism Investment District (TID) – No partnership or initiative in fiscal 2020-2021 was as significant for our organization than our work in solidifying our relationship with Travel Portland and the Portland hotel community through the increased TID tax. Beginning in December 2020 and spanning through the official acceptance of the tax in March 2021, Sport Oregon engaged in several meetings, conversations, and presentations with the hospitality community around our everyday work and our future potential with additional funding. Travel Portland was a strong ally for us in telling our story to the TID Board, and we expanded our relationship with Travel Portland via partnership agreement in June 2021 to receive a portion of the new funds. Already, these funds have helped us hire additional staff specifically to focus on sports tourism in Portland, increase our travel budget and presence by a significant multiple to compete for business, and has allowed us to provide bid fees and financial enhancements to clients which we previously would not have been able to offer. All told, this new funding has helped us become more

competitive nationally among our sports commission peer group and will help in the overall tourism recovery in Portland.

Work Around Covid with Creative Thinking.

While submitting bids on events through a traditional process is core to the Sport Oregon mission, as noted above, the destructive impact of COVID-19 on the goals and expectations for the 2020-2021 fiscal year was massive. However, at Sport Oregon, we worked diligently to turn the malaise into an opportunity to think creatively. Employing our strong partnerships in Portland, we were able to initiate and drive several conversations around non-traditional, short-term, “bubble-like” events for our local venues and hospitality partners in the market. Again, due to statewide and county mandates and protocols, the opportunities we created were not able to come to fruition. We felt that it was our responsibility to construct these ideas in order to be ready to execute should the mandates and guidance change in a favorable manner.

- **College Basketball “bubble”** – Throughout fall and early winter 2020, when men’s and women’s college basketball was in a state of flux pertaining to crowds, travel, and overall competition logistics, Sport Oregon engaged with local venues and hospitality partners to pitch a “bubble” concept for local conferences looking to compete in one location over an extended period of time. The West Coast Conference in particular was interested in playing its



entire conference season in Portland, due to anticipated strict measures in California that would have affected several teams. Ultimately, California did

not enact the interstate travel ban on its teams, which led to the conference abandoning the idea of a bubble concept in Portland.

- **April National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL) “bubble”** – Similar to the college basketball bubble initiative, Sport Oregon worked in early January 2021 with the Portland Thorns, Travel Portland, and the Hilton Downtown Portland on hosting the 5-team NWSL Challenge Cup in one market for essentially the entire month of April 2021. When the league decided to have teams play in their home markets – other than in a one-location bubble – our efforts were concluded.

- **Youth Basketball at Oregon Convention Center (OCC)** – In addition to the potential NWSL effort in January 2021, Sport Oregon also engaged with Travel Portland and a local youth basketball event producer – *Hoopsource* – on creating and hosting a large-scale summer basketball tournament at the Oregon Convention Center, utilizing the exhibit halls at OCC. Again, the statewide and county COVID guidance did not allow for this idea to reach fruition. The OCC was used as a vaccination site. Nonetheless, considerable progress was made with *Hoopsource* as an important local client (located in Hillsboro). We plan to develop new concepts and possibly executing those that were hampered by COVID in the future.

National and international visibility brought to Portland from events secured and pursued.

The efforts to “pitch” Portland as the city to host a variety of sporting events is complex. Certainly, the national media’s portrayal of Portland, particularly during the period this report reflects required extra effort to first dispel the flawed perception, before beginning to promote Portland’s attributes. Sport Oregon has been able, through its leadership, members, and professional and college sports teams to bring visibility to our city as one that is “sports centric.” By working past the barriers placed in our way by COVID, Sport Oregon still participated in scores of Zoom and Microsoft Teams meetings and conferences. When we were able travel to other cities to engage and pitch with event promoters we were enthusiastically welcomed. There is no doubt that after each and every meeting and bid opportunity, Portland secured a position as a formidable competitor for sporting events. With the events we were able to secure, online posts highlighted our city and the comments from participants were for the most part positive with a desire to return.

Progress on Sports Franchise Pursuits and Sports Facility Development in Portland

The Portland Diamond Project (PDP) continued its efforts to bring a major league baseball team and a privately financed ballpark to Portland. Due to COVID and other climate related events during this period, the efforts slowed considerably. However, at the close of FY 20-21 the PDP efforts returned to pre-Covid levels of activity.



Sport Oregon entered into conversations with the leadership of the Albina Sports Complex during FY 20-21. The Albina Sports Complex’s vision is for a sports-oriented community center in Portland, Oregon. The complex’s mission will be to develop the talents of young athletes and encourage them to do their best no matter what the endeavor. The proposed Albina Sports Complex is situated at the South end of Fernhill Park in Northeast Portland. The complex would include an indoor running track, flexible indoor court spaces, and underground parking. Retail spaces along Northeast 42nd Avenue could provide space for new neighborhood

businesses and create a lively walkable streetscape that would encourage social interaction. The Sports Complex proposal includes outdoor spaces as well, including a 400-meter track, four baseball fields, and a one-mile cross country running path. The Sports Complex would also feature a 300-meter indoor running track within an interior space constructed with advanced mass timber framing techniques. The flexible court spaces include basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer. An expansive skylight will provide an abundance of natural light. The two parcels of land that the complex would rest upon are owned by Portland Public Schools and the second Portland Parks. This location and initiative are of particular interest to Sport Oregon, as it aligns with our mission to provide access to sports in underserved communities, and also would allow us to leverage the facility from a sports tourism standpoint. Sports-focused facilities are at a premium in the Pacific Northwest, and the vision, leadership, and progress in developing the facility warrants our attention and support.



Expo Development Study – Beginning in early 2020 and spanning through the year and into early 2021, Sport Oregon was invited by METRO to participate in an ongoing study by Cascadia Partners around the potential redevelopment of the Portland Metropolitan Expo Center. Several ideas for redevelopment were on the table, including fulfillment centers, workforce development facilities, maker spaces, food-based uses and even keeping Expo as-is. We were invited into the conversation to provide context as to why the Expo

site could (and should) be used specifically as a multi-sport complex. We engaged with the overall group on the lack of sports facilities in the Pacific Northwest, sports’ power as a positive and inclusive gathering point, and the economic viability of the youth sports travel market. In addition, proximity to our iconic sportswear brands as potential partners in the endeavor only enhances the viability of the concept. We will continue to engage with this process when called upon and will be a fierce proponent of a sports-specific facility being developed in the Portland metro region.

Sport Oregon continued its role on the Veterans Memorial Coliseum’s public planning process during COVID. Many meetings were cancelled with work slowed considerably.

Sport Oregon facilitated numerous discussions with interested parties to bring a Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) franchise to Portland. Due to the sensitivity of the discussions, and non-disclosure agreements, further information is not available at the writing of this report.

A summary of Sport Oregon’s focus, actions and goals within business practices that targets the organization’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work

Sport Oregon had significant progress in addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Board of Directors: Increasing representation on the Sport Oregon Board of Directors among women and the BIPOC community was and continues to be a key goal. There are 85 Sport Oregon Board members: sixty-three (63) are men, eleven (11) of whom are BIPOC. There are twenty-two (22) women, seven (7) of whom are BIPOC. Overall, thirty three percent (33%) of the Board are BIPOC (a 24.5% increase) and twenty-six percent (26%) are female (a 4% increase).

Sport Oregon has also created “community board” seats in order to engage community based non-profit organizations into the Sport Oregon family. There are twelve (12) community board seats with representation from Partners in Diversity, Trillium Family Services and Centro Cultural to name a few. Sport Oregon Staff: We increased our staff by 15%- all from the BIPOC community. We are committed to continuing to address DEI by expanding our staff and Board of Directors with additional BIPOC representation in FY 21-22.

In addition to Sport Oregon’s internal commitment to DEI, we are committed to reach diverse and economically challenged communities and to support youth growth and success through sports. In FY ’20-21, our fundraising effort, “Fuel the Future” raised over \$250,000. Approximately half of the funds raised were donated to the Hopscotch Foundation which shares our commitment to a healthy future for Oregon’s youth and to combat the issue of food insecurity in our communities. While the Sport Oregon Foundation is dedicated to breaking down the barriers youth face in engaging in physical activity and sport play, the Hopscotch Foundation complements that commitment by having distributed over five million pounds of food to Portland’s community members with a focus on North Portland. Through our foundation, the remaining funds were awarded to a host of local youth oriented organizations including Street Soccer USA, Playworks, Positive Coaching Alliance, Friends of Baseball, Maurice Lucas Foundation, and others.

Sport Oregon launched its foundation initiative, SHE FLIES, inspired by a fundamental belief that, through sports, we learn to soar as confident individuals, team players and strong leaders. A nod to Oregon’s state motto of “She Flies with Her Own Wings,” the initiative’s aim is to foster safe community spaces where all girls and women have equitable opportunities and are empowered to use sports to take flight and realize the many benefits that participation provides. SHE FLIES exists to support, engage, and celebrate girls and women in sport across Oregon. It does so by keeping girls in the game, empowering women coaches, and encouraging fitness for life.

Conclusion

The leadership, Board of Directors and staff at Sport Oregon appreciate the support we have received from the City of Portland. We are committed to moving forward with increased resolve and dynamism as we move forward in a COVID endemic environment. We look forward to meeting with the City Council in February with a presentation and look forward to answering any questions that councilmembers may have.