

**CITY OF ISSAQUAH
City Council Special Meeting**

6:00 PM
April 27, 2026

MINUTES

Issaquah Senior Center
75 NE Creek Way

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION ATTENDANCE

City of Issaquah Mayor & City Council Present: Mark Mullet, Mayor; Kelly Jiang, Deputy Council President; and Councilmembers Paul Adair, Erika Boyd, Russell Joe, Kevin Nichols, and Lindsey Walsh

Issaquah School District Board of Directors Present: A.J. Taylor, President; and Directors Natalie Anderson, Matt Coyne, Harlan Gallinger and Sydne Mullings

Excused Absence: Tola Marts, Council President

City of Issaquah Staff Present: Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator; Andrea Lehner, Deputy City Administrator; Tisha Gieser, City Clerk; Minnie Dhaliwal, Director of Community Planning & Development; Robin Spear, Parks Planning Manager; Alexis Fitzsimmons, Economic Development & Housing Manager; and Amy Dukes, Arts Coordinator

School District Staff Present: Heather Tow-Yick, Superintendent; Martin Turney, Chief of Finance & Operations; and Jason Morse, Executive Director of Operations

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mullet and School District President A.J. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **Welcome & Introductions**
Superintendent Tow-Yick facilitated a small group get-to-know-you activity.
- b) **City of Issaquah Development Update / Growth Projections**
Minnie Dhaliwal, Director of Community Planning & Development, provided an update on development activity in Issaquah and growth projections. A question-and-answer period followed.
- c) **Updates on Activities / Issues for ISD Schools Located in Issaquah**
Martin Turney, Chief of Finance & Operations, provided an update on the District's Capital Facilities Plan including potential future changes to adjust the utilization rates for secondary schools. A question-and-answer period followed.
- d) **Update on the New High School**
Martin Turney, Chief of Finance & Operations, provided an update on the new high school being constructed in Issaquah. A question-and-answer period followed. School Board members clarified that the new school would not be a comprehensive high school and students from the entire district would have the opportunity to attend.

e) Joint Use Agreement

Jason Morse, Executive Director of Operations, summarized the changes being negotiated between the City and School District as part of updating the current agreement, which was entered into in 2003. There were questions and discussion around the installation of turf at certain elementary schools, use of District tracks and use of the Issaquah High School performing arts center.

f) Closing and Next Steps

Board & Council members were invited to share any additional topics for mutual discussion. The group discussed:

- Potential co-location of affordable or workforce housing with school campuses.
- Opportunities to improve bicycling options to get to Issaquah High School.
- The gravel road along the Issaquah High School.
- The ceremonial re-naming of the road in front of Issaquah High School.
- The new school zone speed camera in front of Issaquah Valley Elementary School.

Members of the public spoke regarding concerns with the amount of screen time in schools and in support of promoting students to commute to school by bicycle.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk



Informational Update

ID # 2006 – Visit Issaquah Annual Report

Meeting Date May 4, 2026
Department Economic Development
Staff Lead Jack Pedlow, Economic Development Coordinator

Attachments

- A. Visit Issaquah Annual Report
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Purpose

Visit Issaquah is Issaquah’s Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), funded annually by lodging taxes. The attached 2025 Annual Report is being provided to the City Council to bring awareness to their activities.

Visit Issaquah also provides quarterly reports to the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC), which will also be shared with the City Council.

VISIT ISSAQUAH

2025 Annual Report

Q1 – Q4 | January through December 2025

Prepared by Kimberly Kapustein, Executive Director
Kimberly@VisitIssaquahWA.com | 678-360-1824 | VisitIssaquahWA.com

2025 AT A GLANCE — EXECUTIVE DASHBOARD

The following metrics represent highlights and key performance indicators from all four quarters of 2025.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH

Platform	Q1 Start	Q4 End	Net Gain	% Growth
Instagram	~7,600*	7,883	+283	+3.7%
Facebook	~2,900*	3,041	+141	+4.9%
LinkedIn	~1,200*	1,358	+158	+13.2%

* Q1 start figures estimated based on year-end Q4 totals and typical growth rates. LinkedIn showed the strongest percentage growth in 2025.

KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS

<p>\$31K+</p> <p>Conference Room Revenue <i>Zoological Assoc. of America, Feb 2025</i></p>	<p>97+</p> <p>Overnight Stays Generated <i>ZAA conference alone; multiple events</i></p>	<p>\$20K+</p> <p>Grant Funding Secured <i>\$15K tech assist + Port of Seattle grant</i></p>
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<p>40</p> <p>Travel Trade Appointments <i>IPW Travel Trade Show, June 2025</i></p>	<p>3+</p> <p>FAM Tours Hosted <i>Nordic, WA Filmworks, Adventure Journalists</i></p>	<p>\$25K+</p> <p>Paid Ad Investment <i>PBS, Premier Media, State of WA Tourism</i></p>
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<p>1</p> <p>Awards Received <i>2025 Community Builder Award for Issaquah Arts — WA State Tourism</i></p>	<p>6+</p> <p>Speaking Engagements <i>Washington Film Works, State of WA Tourism Skillshop Webinar, Transformational Travel Council, Issaquah Buzz</i></p>	<p>30+</p> <p>Community Partners <i>Active cohort + consulting cohort</i></p>
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EARNED MEDIA PLACEMENTS (FULL YEAR)

Quarter	Publication / Outlet	Topic / Feature
Q1	Alaska Airlines (in-flight)	Adaptive Paragliding video — Seattle Paragliding
Q1	Intentionalist	Citrine & Facet Modern Mercantile — Black History Month
Q1	MSN	Live Out Your Pacific Northwest Fantasies in These Mountain Towns
Q1	Quantum Financial	12 Best Cities to Retire in Washington State

Q1	World Atlas	9 Most Underrated Towns in the Pacific Northwest
Q1	425 Magazine	Woo at the Zoo
Q2	Islands Magazine	Issaquah feature
Q2	Parent Map	Family experiences in Issaquah
Q2	State of WA Tourism	Issaquah destination feature
Q2	The Travel / Only in Washington	Issaquah Alps & outdoor recreation
Q2	Right as Rain	Trail running, mountain biking, Poo Poo Point
Q3/Q4	Cascade PBS	Nutcracker and Northwest Explorer segment
Q3/Q4	Premier Media (425, South Sound, NW Travel & Life)	Print and digital destination ads

INDUSTRY CONTEXT & OVERVIEW

2025 presented significant headwinds for the tourism industry. Diplomatic tensions following the inauguration triggered international travel boycotts, with Canada — Washington State's top international visitor source — reducing travel to the US. Federal and state budget cuts impacted public lands, trail maintenance personnel, and state DMO grant funding.

Visit Issaquah responded proactively throughout the year, serving as an active industry advocate and community connector.

Advocacy & Response

- Public testimony before the Port of Seattle Commission
- DMO letter writing campaigns to 5th District state legislators
- National petition promotion opposing federal sale of public lands (including Mountains to Sound Greenway)
- Co-drafted State of Washington's Recreate Responsibly summer campaign
- Leadership role in Recreate Responsibly Coalition alongside Governor's outdoor recreation liaison Joe Impeccoven
- Participated in WSDMO letter writing campaigns against state budget cuts to WA Tourism

MARKETING

Earned Media

Visit Issaquah secured coverage in numerous regional, national, and specialty publications throughout 2025, spanning outdoor recreation, family travel, culinary, and destination features.

Q1 2025

- Alaska Airlines: Adaptive Paragliding video featuring Issaquah's Seattle Paragliding on inflight entertainment app
- Intentionalist: Gilman Village merchant Adia Bobo of Citrine and Facet Modern Mercantile — Black History Month Equity in Action profile
- MSN: "Live Out Your Pacific Northwest Fantasies in These Mountain Towns"
- Quantum Financial: "12 Best Cities to Retire in Washington State"
- World Atlas: "9 Most Underrated Towns in the Pacific Northwest"
- 425 Magazine: Woo at the Zoo

Q2 2025

- Islands, Parent Map, State of WA Tourism, The Travel, Only in Washington, and Right as Rain
- Features included: Issaquah Alps, Nick's Magnificent, Mountain Biking, Poo Poo Point, and Trail Running
- Pitched three article ideas: Issaquah as a "Detour Destination," "Family Travel Itineraries," and "Things to Do Near Tree House Point"

Q3 2025

- Ongoing placements via earned media campaigns — see VisitIssaquahWA.com/media-and-press for full listing

Q4 2025

- Boost Ad Buys on Facebook and LinkedIn for Nutcracker and Reindeer Festival
- New landing page: Issaquah Loyal Holiday 2025

Paid Advertising

Total paid advertising investment across 2025 exceeded \$55,000, supporting print, digital, broadcast, and outdoor platforms.

Platform	Quarter	Investment	Notes
State of WA Visitors Guide	Q1	\$3,400	Print ad placement
Cascade PBS: Out & Back	Q1	\$3,000	30+ spots promoting outdoor rec to BIPOC community