

Seattle Tourism Improvement Area Proposed

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We rarely publicly celebrate the successes of our hospitality and tourism clients. Tuesday's launch of the proposed Seattle Tourism Improvement Area (STIA) initiative at The Pacific Science Center is one of the best reasons I've seen in some time to break that rule.

The [Seattle King County Convention and Visitors Bureau](#) (SKCCVB) and the [Seattle Hotel Association](#) (SHA) have much to celebrate. Tuesday's well attended press conference, which included presentations by Councilmembers Tim Burgess and Jean Godden, SKCCVB President, Tom Norwalk, Seattle Mayor, Mike McGinn, and King County Executive, Dow Constantine, was the culmination of months of hard work and planning by the SKCCVB, SHA, the Seattle City Council (specifically, Tim Burgess), the Seattle City Attorney's Office and others. Relying on Washington statutory authority that permits the formation of Business Improvement Areas ([RCW 35.87A](#)) to support economic development through a variety of authorized activities, this group of local tourism industry leaders and supporters produced an initiative that garnered the support of 41 of the 53 downtown Seattle hotels proposed to be affected by the initiative, if enacted. If successful, the initiative will assess downtown Seattle hotels with 60 or more rooms \$2.00 per occupied room per night, resulting in the creation of a \$5 – \$6 million annual fund dedicated to the promotion of leisure tourism in the City of Seattle. With the adoption of this initiative, Seattle will join the growing list of large West Coast metropolitan areas (e.g., Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Anaheim) that have resorted to self-assessed funding mechanisms to provide needed financial support to tourism.

The initiative now heads for the City legislative process, including a public hearing scheduled for August 8 at 5:30 p.m. before the City Council. If you are a member of the local tourism industry, are affected by the local tourism industry or just want to support the local tourism industry and its many benefits to the City and region, I encourage you to contact the Seattle City Council to support this important City initiative.

- Richard Conlin, Council President, Position 2
- Sally Bagshaw, Position 4
- Tim Burgess, Position 7
- Sally J. Clark, Position 9
- Jean Godden, Position 1
- Bruce A. Harrell, Position 3
- Nick Licata, Position 6
- Mike O'Brien, Position 8
- Tom Rasmussen, Position 5

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Recent Press Coverage:

7/12/2011 – Puget Sound Business Journal – [“Seattle hotels consider \\$2-per-night tourism tax”](#)

7/12/2011 – KING 5 News – [“Seattle hotels to charge \\$2-a-night tax for tourism campaign”](#)

7/11/2011 – Seattle Times, [“Seattle hotels seek \\$2-a-night tax for tourism campaign”](#)

If you would like more information about the proposed STIA, or are interested in exploring the possibility of creating your own Business Improvement Area to provide or supplement important City services or objectives, please [let me know](#).

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