

ILLINOIS VALLEY WINE TRAIL

Wine is the invitation. The Illinois Valley is the experience.

Serving the Illinois Valley | illinoisvalleywinetrail@gmail.com | 626.678.0709

Advisory Council Charter

Established August 2026

Purpose

The Illinois Valley Wine Trail Advisory Council exists to strengthen the Illinois Valley visitor experience, encourage collaborative tourism development, and provide diverse community and industry perspectives as the Illinois Valley Wine Trail develops its long-term role within the region.

The Illinois Valley Wine Trail recognizes that wine tourism does not exist independently from the broader visitor economy. Visitors may arrive in the Illinois Valley for wine, outdoor recreation, the Oregon Caves, arts and culture, events, lodging, Highway 199 travel, family visits, or other reasons. Once here, their experience is shaped by the collective strength of the valley's wineries, lodging, restaurants, recreation, makers, retailers, cultural organizations, visitor services, and communities.

For this reason, the Illinois Valley Wine Trail's initial three-year development period, 2026–2028, will also serve as a tourism incubation phase.

During this period, IVWT will continue building a strong wine-tourism identity while testing and developing collaborative approaches to the broader visitor experience. The incubation phase is intended to help determine what models of tourism coordination, destination marketing, partnership, and organizational structure are most appropriate for the Illinois Valley's unique rural and geographically dispersed communities.

The Advisory Council will serve as an important source of perspective, expertise, community knowledge, and constructive challenge throughout this process.

The incubation phase does not imply that the Illinois Valley Wine Trail itself is temporary. Rather, it recognizes that the long-term structure surrounding the Wine Trail and the broader Illinois Valley visitor economy should develop from demonstrated needs, experience, collaboration, and evidence rather than predetermined assumptions.

Role of the Advisory Council

The Advisory Council is an advisory body, not a governing board.

Its purpose is to inform, strengthen, and challenge the developing tourism model by bringing together people who see different parts of the Illinois Valley visitor experience.

The Council may:

- Identify visitor needs, opportunities, barriers, and gaps throughout the Illinois Valley.
- Share observations and information from different communities, industries, organizations, and areas of expertise.
- Help ensure that tourism planning considers the Illinois Valley as a whole, including both incorporated and unincorporated communities.
- Identify opportunities for stronger connections among wine, lodging, dining, recreation, arts and culture, makers, retail, visitor services, and other parts of the visitor economy.
- Foster collaboration among businesses, tourism organizations, community organizations, public agencies, and regional partners.
- Share relevant projects, initiatives, events, research, and community developments.
- Advise on tourism priorities and emerging visitor needs.
- Identify potential partnerships, resources, expertise, and funding opportunities.
- Help test assumptions and evaluate ideas developed during the tourism incubation phase.
- Provide feedback on pilot projects and collaborative tourism initiatives.
- Help identify measures that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the developing tourism model.
- Serve as a long-term sounding board for the Illinois Valley Wine Trail and its tourism-development work.

The Council generally works through discussion and consensus rather than formal voting. Differing perspectives may be reflected in Council recommendations, meeting briefs, or other follow-up communications.

The Advisory Council does not hold operational, financial, contractual, personnel, or organizational authority over the Illinois Valley Wine Trail. Those responsibilities remain with IVWT leadership.

2026–2028 Tourism Incubation Phase

The initial incubation period provides an opportunity to build, test, observe, measure, and refine a tourism model specifically suited to the Illinois Valley rather than simply adopting a model designed for a larger city or destination.

Areas of exploration may include:

- The role of wine as an anchor for broader destination marketing.
- Development of a connected Illinois Valley visitor network.
- Participation and needs of lodging, dining, recreation, makers, arts and culture, retail, and other visitor-serving businesses.
- Geographic representation and visitor needs throughout the Illinois Valley.
- Highway 199 visitor information, travel patterns, opportunities, and disruptions.
- Visitor wayfinding, maps, itineraries, printed materials, and digital resources.
- Destination photography, storytelling, and other shared tourism-marketing resources.
- Connections between Illinois Valley tourism and regional destination organizations.
- Opportunities to encourage longer stays and greater visitor spending throughout the valley.
- Gaps in visitor services and infrastructure.
- Collaborative tourism projects and destination-development opportunities.
- Sustainable funding and partnership models.
- The appropriate long-term role and organizational structure of the Illinois Valley Wine Trail.

Not every idea explored during the incubation period is expected to become a permanent IVWT program. Testing, learning, modifying, and occasionally discontinuing approaches are intentional parts of the incubation process.

Long-Term Organizational Evaluation

During the third year of the incubation period, IVWT will undertake a broader review of the tourism model and organizational structure.

That review may consider whether the Illinois Valley's long-term interests are best served by:

- Continuing an integrated Illinois Valley Wine Trail model that includes broader destination-development activities;

- Developing a broader Illinois Valley destination identity or destination-marketing function while maintaining the Illinois Valley Wine Trail as a distinct wine-tourism program;
- Developing the Illinois Valley Wine Trail into a more focused wine-tourism or wine-association organization alongside a separate destination initiative; or
- Adopting another structure that emerges from the experience and needs identified during the incubation period.

No particular outcome is predetermined.

The purpose of the three-year period is to develop sufficient experience, partnerships, community input, and practical evidence to make that decision responsibly.

Council Structure & Representation

The Advisory Council is intended to bring together a cross-section of the Illinois Valley visitor economy and regional tourism community.

Council composition is based on the perspectives, relationships, and expertise needed to inform IVWT's tourism-development work. Advisory Council representation does not need to directly mirror IVWT's tourism partnership categories.

Types of Council Participation

Advisory Council participation may occur through several types of representation. The type of participation determines how a seat is maintained or filled if representation changes.

Winery Partner Seats

Each participating Illinois Valley Wine Trail winery may designate one representative to the Advisory Council.

All four inaugural IVWT wineries will be invited to participate.

The seat is associated with the winery rather than an individual representative. If the designated representative is unable to continue participating, the winery may designate another appropriate representative.

Founding Partner Seats

Certain IVWT partnership levels may include Advisory Council participation as a partnership benefit.

These seats are associated with the qualifying partner organization rather than an individual representative. The partner organization may designate an appropriate representative and may change that representative when necessary.

Eligibility for a Founding Partner seat is maintained according to the terms of the applicable IVWT partnership.

Invited Seats

IVWT may invite organizations, sectors, communities, or individuals to hold Advisory Council seats because their perspective, expertise, geographic knowledge, or role is important to the Council's work.

Invited seats do not require the purchase of an IVWT partnership.

Invited representation may include perspectives such as:

- Regional tourism and destination marketing
- Local business and economic development
- Community development
- Arts, culture, heritage, and makers
- Nature, recreation, conservation, and environmental education
- Media, communications, and visitor information
- Other perspectives identified as important during the tourism incubation period

When an invited representative is no longer able to participate consistently, IVWT may work with the represented organization, sector, or community to identify another appropriate representative.

IVWT retains responsibility for appointment of invited seats and for maintaining balanced Council representation.

Invited Guests & Subject-Matter Experts

IVWT may invite additional individuals, organizations, public agencies, businesses, community representatives, or subject-matter experts to participate in a particular

meeting, project, or agenda item when their perspective would benefit the Council's work.

Participation as an invited guest does not create an ongoing Advisory Council seat.

One Seat Per Organization

To encourage broad and diverse representation, an individual business or organization may hold only one designated Advisory Council seat at a time.

When a business or organization qualifies for representation in more than one area, it will participate through the seat that most appropriately reflects its primary relationship with IVWT or the Council.

For example, an IVWT winery partner that also operates lodging, food and drink, retail, recreation, or another visitor-facing business will participate through its Winery Partner seat and will not simultaneously occupy an additional Council seat.

The one-seat limitation does not prevent a Council member or organization from contributing knowledge or perspective related to other sectors in which it operates.

Geographic Perspective

Because the Illinois Valley includes multiple incorporated and unincorporated communities with different visitor assets, needs, and challenges, geographic perspective will be considered when selecting Council members and invited participants.

The Council should seek awareness of conditions and opportunities throughout the valley, including Cave Junction, Kerby, Selma, O'Brien, Takilma, Holland, and surrounding rural areas.

Geographic representation does not require a permanent Council seat for every community. Instead, IVWT will seek a membership mix that brings knowledge of different parts of the valley to the table and may invite additional community voices when particular geographic issues are being discussed.

Membership Guidelines

Council participation is intended to provide meaningful representation without creating an unnecessarily large or cumbersome body.

- One organization may hold only one Advisory Council seat.
- Council members should bring the perspective of their organization, industry, community, or area of expertise while considering the visitor experience of the Illinois Valley as a whole.
- Council composition may evolve during the incubation period as new needs, sectors, geographic perspectives, and partnerships emerge.
- Council seats are intended to remain actively represented.
- IVWT retains responsibility for Council composition and for maintaining an appropriate balance of perspectives.

Member Expectations

Advisory Council members are asked to:

- Attend and participate in Council meetings whenever possible, either in person or virtually.
- Share relevant information, observations, and expertise.
- Raise visitor-related opportunities, challenges, and emerging needs.
- Provide candid and constructive feedback.
- Challenge assumptions when appropriate.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration rather than duplication.
- Share relevant projects, events, initiatives, and community developments.
- Help connect the Council with additional expertise or resources when appropriate.
- Consider perspectives beyond their individual organization or sector.
- Communicate when changes in availability, employment, responsibilities, or organizational circumstances may affect their ability to participate.
- Serve as ambassadors for collaborative tourism development throughout the Illinois Valley.

Council membership does not require members to take on IVWT operational responsibilities or serve as volunteer staff.

Attendance & Continued Participation

Consistent participation is important to maintaining meaningful representation across the Advisory Council.

Because the Council generally meets only four times each year, members are expected to make a reasonable effort to attend scheduled meetings in person or virtually.

When a designated representative is unable to attend, an organization holding a Winery Partner, Founding Partner, or organizational Invited Seat is encouraged, when appropriate, to designate another representative who can meaningfully participate on its behalf.

Council members are expected to communicate with IVWT when:

- They are unable to attend a scheduled meeting;
- Their role, availability, or responsibilities have changed in a way that may affect continued participation; or
- They believe another representative would be better positioned to provide ongoing participation.

If a Council seat is unrepresented for **two consecutive regular meetings**, IVWT may review the seat and determine whether a change in representation is needed to ensure that the perspective, organization, sector, or community associated with that seat remains actively involved.

In reviewing an unrepresented seat, IVWT may consider communication from the member, extraordinary circumstances, participation outside regular meetings, and whether an alternate representative has been provided.

For a Winery Partner or Founding Partner seat, IVWT may request that the partner organization designate another representative when continued participation by the existing representative is not feasible.

For an Invited Seat, IVWT may work with the represented organization, sector, or community to identify another appropriate representative or may invite a different organization or individual who can provide the needed perspective.

A departing or unavailable invited member may recommend another individual, organization, or business from the same sector, community, or area of expertise for

consideration. Recommendations are welcomed but do not automatically determine appointment to the Council.

The purpose of this process is not to penalize occasional absences. It is to ensure that Advisory Council seats remain active and that important perspectives are consistently represented in the Council's work.

Meetings

The Advisory Council will generally meet quarterly, with meetings anticipated in:

- **January**
- **April**
- **July**
- **September**

September will generally serve as the Council's **Annual Strategy Meeting**, with an emphasis on emerging tourism needs, collaborative opportunities, and priorities for the coming year.

Meetings will generally be 60–90 minutes, although strategic or inaugural sessions may be scheduled for a longer working period when appropriate.

Hybrid participation will be offered when feasible to support participation by members who may not be able to attend in person.

Meetings are intended to function primarily as working sessions rather than formal presentations. Agendas may include emerging tourism issues, partner and community observations, collaborative opportunities, pilot projects, visitor needs, and evaluation of incubation-phase initiatives.

Additional meetings or focused working sessions may be convened when a time-sensitive issue or significant collaborative opportunity warrants discussion.

Community & Partner Input

The Advisory Council is one source of information within a broader community-engagement process.

IVWT may also solicit input from businesses, residents, visitors, partner organizations, community groups, public agencies, and individuals who are not seated on the Council.

This may include surveys, feedback forms, individual conversations, public or invited listening sessions, partner meetings, visitor feedback, and other forms of engagement.

Prior to regular Council meetings, IVWT may invite tourism partners and relevant community stakeholders to submit observations, opportunities, concerns, or suggested topics for Council consideration.

The Council may also help identify voices or perspectives that are missing from a particular discussion.

Communication & Follow-Up

IVWT may distribute meeting agendas, working materials, project updates, or other information to Council members before and after meetings.

Following regular meetings, IVWT may prepare an **Advisory Council Meeting Brief** summarizing significant topics discussed, recommendations, collaborative opportunities, and identified next steps.

Meeting briefs and other communications will generally summarize Council discussions and outcomes rather than attribute individual comments to specific members. This allows the Council to engage in candid working discussions while keeping IVWT partners and the broader community appropriately informed.

Relevant information and outcomes may also be shared publicly or with IVWT partners when appropriate.

Council Leadership

The Founder & Executive Director of the Illinois Valley Wine Trail will facilitate Advisory Council meetings, develop agendas, coordinate community and partner input, oversee meeting follow-up, maintain Council composition, and oversee the implementation of IVWT activities informed by Council discussion.

Guiding Principle

The Advisory Council exists not because the long-term answers for Illinois Valley tourism have already been determined, but because they have not.

The Illinois Valley has its own geography, communities, businesses, visitor patterns, strengths, limitations, and opportunities. The 2026–2028 incubation period provides an intentional opportunity to learn what works here.

The Council's role is to help ensure that this process is informed by multiple perspectives, grounded in the realities of the valley, responsive to what is learned, and focused on creating a stronger and more connected visitor economy.

Wine is the invitation. The Illinois Valley is the experience.