

VISIT **VANCOUVER**
WASHINGTON 



2022

ANNUAL TOURISM REPORT

The official destination marketing organization.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

The year 2021 was filled with excited anticipation. The opportunities that the previous year brought to rethink every aspect of the way we do things was followed up with determination to thrive no matter the circumstances. Different hospitality and travel industry groups came together to create a stronger community, and to face the fight together.

Following a year of paused marketing campaigns and delayed launches, we found a way to responsibly and safely encourage travel to the region with poignant messaging and a focus on supporting local businesses and attractions. With Vancouver's popularity rising, we quietly designed a refreshed visual identity to match the innovative developments of the destination and not-forgotten history of the PNW—prepped and ready for the start of 2022.

While the group sales and meetings side of the industry has been slower to recover than leisure travel, the year showed several signs of hope. We hosted the DMA West Education Summit in September, showcasing our assets and sharing our challenges with similar tourism bureaus from the western states. Hosting the NAIA Cross Country Championship races in November was a city-wide effort that brought an economic boost to the entire community, including hotels, restaurants, and attractions.

The year ahead is poised for purpose. Vancouver has emerged as a desirable destination to visit, and we are confident that Clark County's place on the map is becoming increasingly distinguished—and we're ready to match that fervor and excitement with our efforts to showcase Vancouver for all that it is. Thank you for your part in making our corner of the state stand out from the rest.



CLIFF MYERS, PRESIDENT & CEO



STEVE BOWERS, CHAIR OF THE BOARD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jordan Boldt
Vancouver Farmers Market

Karen Dill Bowerman
Clark County Council

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Brady Wilkerson
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Kari Jonassen
Homewood Suites by Hilton

Seidy Selivanow
Kafix Roasters

* Denotes Executive
Committee Member

ABOUT US

Visit Vancouver WA is a non-profit 501 (c) 6 destination marketing organization. Our objective is to increase the overall economic impact of tourism on the Vancouver/Clark County economy through sustained growth in tourism spending. Our activities result in significant increases in visitor spending, overnight visitation, tourism-related earnings, tax collections, and jobs.

Our Board of Directors is composed of hospitality and business professionals, community leaders, and city and county representatives. Their volunteer duties include industry advocacy to build community-wide support for tourism, strengthen partnerships, increase productivity, maximize return on investment, and determine the future course of Visit Vancouver WA's mission.

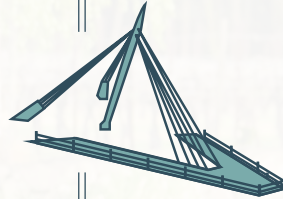
THE IMPACT OF TOURISM

Tourism provides strong benefits to our local economy and creates positive effects that ripple throughout the entire business community.



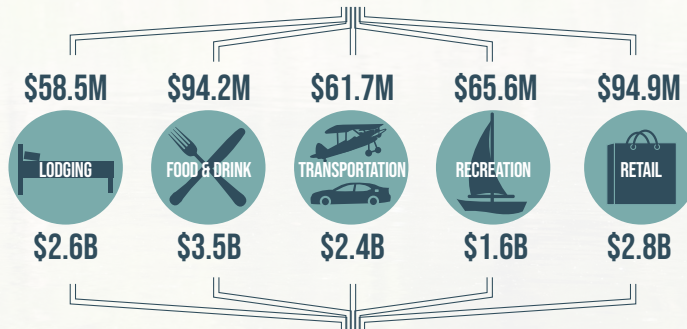
IN 2020, VISITORS TO CLARK COUNTY GENERATED A TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF **\$374.9 MILLION**

TAX REVENUE COLLECTED FROM CLARK COUNTY VISITORS IN 2020 TOTALED **\$45.3 MILLION** IN STATE & LOCAL TAXES



TOURISM IN CLARK COUNTY CREATED **\$111 MILLION** IN JOB EARNINGS

CLARK COUNTY 2020 DESTINATION SPENDING BY COMMODITY **\$374.9 MILLION**



\$13 BILLION

WASHINGTON STATE 2020 DESTINATION SPENDING BY COMMODITY

Data source: Tourism Economics

FUNDING

Visit Vancouver WA is funded by a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA). This special assessment charges all hotel guests with a flat \$2 per night charge and applies only to room night charges at hotels with 40 or more rooms. Total TPA collections in 2021 were \$1,069,647.

Visit Vancouver WA also received 15 percent of lodging tax collections from the City of Vancouver to support the growth of tourism in the area, which amounted to \$227,845 in 2021. For 2022, in addition to our ongoing support services on behalf of the City, Visit Vancouver WA is participating in a one-year \$700K pilot program to produce a Tourism Master Plan and act as liaison to the LTAC Grant process.

CONVENTION & GROUP BUSINESS

The year started off with a continuation of uncertainty and cancellations or postponed booked business due to COVID-19. However, leads and bookings were increasing by summer, and summer and fall conferences were held successfully. By mid-August the Delta variant brought leads and definites back down to a trickle. Q4 finished resiliently with year-over-year leads and bookings trending slightly up from 2020. Encouragingly, we saw overall market improvement with occupancy up 28.5% and ADR up 20.9% from 2020. Clark County ADR had a higher year-over-year increase than the state increase of 17.7%.

Sports led the market with tournaments starting up again for summer and fall:

- NAIA – 2021 Cross Country National Championships
- Timbers Alliance Tournaments
- USTA Adult Tennis Competitions

Other notable 2021 conferences:

- American Soybean Association 2021 Annual Meeting
- 2021 DMA West Education Summit and Vendor Showcase

WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING

“OUR MEETING WAS A BIG HOME RUN. EVERYBODY LOVED THE LOCATION. THE HOTEL WAS PERFECT WITH SPACIOUS MEETING ROOMS, FRIENDLY STAFF, AND GOOD FOOD.”

– American Soybean Association

“WE SINCERELY APPRECIATE ALL THAT THE VISIT VANCOUVER USA TEAM DID TO HOST THEIR INDUSTRY PEERS—PROGRAMMING CONTENT, THE EXPERIENTIAL SESSIONS, THE THURSDAY EVENING EVENT, REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE, AND MUCH MORE!”

– DMA West

COMPETITIVE OUTREACH & PROMOTIONS

The Group Sales team employs a variety of strategies to keep Vancouver competitive with other destinations, lobbying for the attention of key meeting planners. 2021 was about working with our hotel partners to help incentivize more booked business by offering sales incentives and sponsorships. We distributed 300 nostalgic viewfinders to carefully selected meeting planners around the country to give them a virtual view of how our destination has changed. Display ads on Cvent position Vancouver in front of meeting planners during the site selection phase, influencing their decision-making process and encouraging them to choose Vancouver over similar destinations.

LOOKING AHEAD

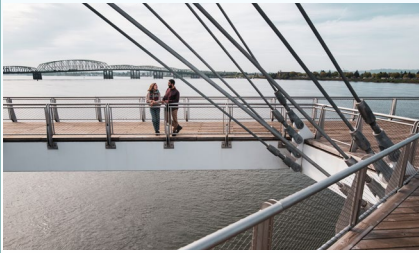
While market recovery expectations continue to predict 2023 or 2024 to get back to pre-pandemic business levels, our team is poised to make 2022 a year of opportunity. We are ready to get Vancouver back out in the marketplace with a full tradeshow schedule for the first time in two years. We have expanded our outreach on Cvent, targeting new meeting planners and locations. And we have employed an aggressive new business prospecting strategy with MINT, a business data search system integration.



TARGET MARKETS

The Group Sales team at Visit Vancouver WA actively solicits group and convention business from the following markets:

- Association – State/Regional/National
- Corporate
- Fraternal & Ethnic
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government/Military
- Environmental
- Religious/Faith-Based
- Sports
- Social & Special Interests



TRADE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

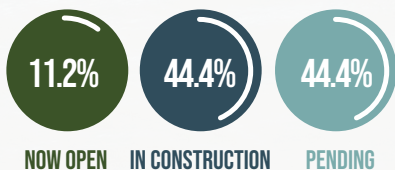
Visit Vancouver WA actively participates in a variety of associations for business development, marketing, and educational opportunities.

- Destinations International
- Destination Marketing Association of the West
- Meeting Professionals International - Washington Chapter
- Sports Events and Tourism Association
- Sport Oregon
- Pacific Northwest Society of Government Meeting Professionals
- Professional Convention Management Association
- Travel Portland
- U.S. Travel Association
- Washington Society of Association Executives
- Washington Tourism Alliance
- Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations

HOTEL DEVELOPMENT

Visit Vancouver WA tracks all new hotel supply proposed for the area in the next five years. While room counts and actual hotels completed may differ from initial proposals, this supply pipeline provides an important gauge of the local tourism industry's future outlook.

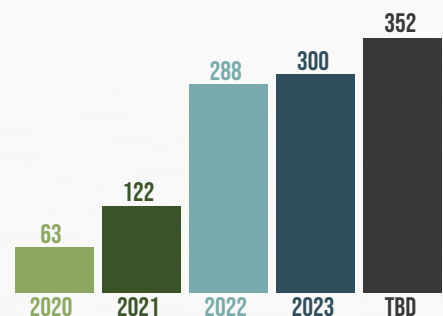
9 NEW HOTELS



MULTIPLE LOCATIONS



1,125 ROOMS



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- Our team re-launched external facing marketing efforts for a campaign focused on safe visitation in spring through summer. The “breathtaking views with breathing room” concept highlighted the outdoor opportunities of our region, as well as patio dining and wine tasting with a view. This campaign included social and digital media, video, and sponsored content. It was also paired with an incentivized Clark County Parks & Trails Pass to showcase the area’s best outdoor summer spots.
- We created a new visual identity for Visit Vancouver, trading in the “USA” for “WA” along with a new logo, colors, fonts, and messaging. While the brand refresh was not launched until January 2022, much of the work took place in 2021 including in-house designing, printing collateral, shooting videos, destination photography, organizing promotions, ordering promo items, scheduling website and email transfers, and more.
- Our website continued to be a resource for supporting local businesses and providing travel guidelines to our county. Creating a blog homepage allowed us to re-purpose popular and seasonal content, and we focused on bringing in a wider variety of voices and diverse representation. Some examples of this include a Spanish landing page with travel ideas for Spanish-speaking visitors; blog posts featuring LGBTQIA-friendly businesses, Black-owned businesses, and wheelchair accessible excursions; and hiring BIPOC guest writers and photographers.

DESTINATION PROMOTIONS

October marked the return of Visit Vancouver’s popular dining month promotion, Dine the Couve. Two price points (3 for \$20 and 3 for \$30) allowed for a wider array of special menus, and a mobile-friendly pass contained all the information in one spot—restaurant addresses and open hours, Dine the Couve menus, and which meals were offered for takeout.

Savor the Couve, created in partnership with the Greater Vancouver Chamber and local restaurateurs, gave restaurants a needed winter boost and gave back to local charities simultaneously. The collaborative takeout dining experience earned a 2021 Best Idea Program Award from DMA West and continues to grow in its second year.

ANNUAL TRAVEL MAGAZINE

- 95,000 copies distributed annually to convention groups, leisure travelers, area hotels, Puget Sound area ferries, and visitor points of interest along the I-5 corridor and international gateways.
- Showcasing diversity and supporting local businesses were the primary content goals for this edition.



MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Visit Vancouver WA works regularly with travel writers to influence positive stories about the area. In 2021, Vancouver’s waterfront was ranked in the top 15 best riverwalks in the United States by Fodor’s Travel; the city was named one of the best 10 places to visit in America during the pandemic by Forbes; Vancouver garnered international attention through the Tokyo Olympics from local Team USA gymnast Jordan Chiles; and just upstream, the Columbia River Gorge landed in National Geographic’s Best of the World 2022 list for its scenic beauty and sustainable tourism.

THE COUVE IN THE NEWS

In 2021, Vancouver WA appeared in a variety of media outlets and print publications including:

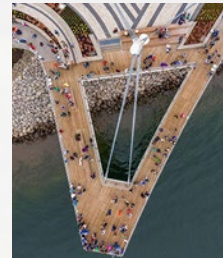
- Eater PDX
- Fodor's Travel
- Forbes
- KATU Channel 2
- KGW Channel 8
- KOIN Channel 6
- KPTV's More Good Day Oregon
- National Geographic
- New School Beer
- The Oregonian
- PBS
- Portland Business Journal
- Portland Mercury
- Portland Monthly
- Seattle Post-Intelligencer
- The Seattle Times
- SeaTrade Insider
- USA Today
- The Washington Post
- Washington State Magazine
- Willamette Week

SOCIAL MEDIA

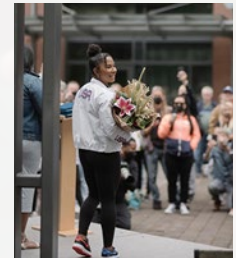
The Visit Vancouver WA social media fan base grew exponentially across multiple platforms in 2021. Our social media efforts have increased user engagement and have made well over a million impressions on potential visitors.

NEW CHANNEL: TikTok, @VisitVancouverWA

Since late Sept. 2021, our TikTok account has gained 102 followers and our 10 videos have 326 likes, 3,659 views, and 34 shares in total.



IMPRESSIONS: 13,100
 1,287 18 81 20



IMPRESSIONS: 13,300
 1,157 10 76 11

EXPONENTIAL GROWTH



19,000+ FOLLOWERS
 6% INCREASE FROM 2020



5,600+ FOLLOWERS
 2% INCREASE FROM 2020



16,300+ FOLLOWERS
 17% INCREASE FROM 2020



9K AVERAGE MONTHLY VIEW
 CHANNEL STARTED LATE 2019

CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT



In April through August, the "Breathtaking Views with Breathing Room" campaign celebrated SW Washington's less crowded outdoor locations with an added focus on where to eat and drink outside. How to travel and experience a destination safely was an important theme in 2021 as the pandemic persisted and the industry continued to adapt.

DIGITAL TRACKING: Retargeting display ads helped influence consumer decisions to visit Vancouver, and tracking strategies monitored mobile devices in destination and in hotels, and direct hotel bookings. Two different campaigns generated a total of 6.1M ad impressions and an estimated \$768K in hotel revenue.

SPONSORED CONTENT: Two sponsored articles in The Seattle Times and one on Scenic WA's website were read by a total of 17K people, with above average read times and opens to clicks rates.

DIGITAL VIDEO: Produced by Matador Network, 2.7 million guaranteed impressions, 187K views in the first week.

A LOOK AHEAD

The Grant Street Pier is becoming a recognized symbol of Vancouver, and the waterfront development continues to drive visitors to the area. In the year ahead, two hotels will open on the north shore of the Columbia River and two more renowned wineries will open satellite tasting rooms, bringing the total to eight within a few blocks of one another. Portland steakhouse El Gaucho and Seattle mainstay 13 Coins will attract diners looking for a luxurious Pacific Northwest experience, ending the evening with a cocktail at the city's first rooftop bar overlooking the river.

Beyond the waterfront, future developments spread the excitement to other parts of town. An expanded convention center plan is being evaluated as part of the Waterfront Gateway project connecting the waterfront and downtown communities. The casino just north of Vancouver, Ilani, has broken ground on a 300-room hotel slated to open in 2023. And the Fourth Plain International District will soon start construction on a mixed-use project that includes a commercial kitchen for emerging food-based businesses, a community event space, and a public plaza to support a satellite location for the Vancouver Farmers Market.

In collaboration with the City of Vancouver, work will begin on a Tourism Master Plan to provide an organized and structured framework for tourism development and promotion within the city and county. The future is bright for Vancouver, and we are enthusiastic about growing alongside it.

OFFICE & VISITOR CENTER

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VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
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