

VISIT **VANCOUVER**  
**WASHINGTON**



# 2023

**ANNUAL TOURISM REPORT**

*The official destination marketing organization*



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

The year 2022 started out strong with the launch of our refreshed brand, receiving largely positive feedback and acceptance from the local community. The project, which moved in-house after pandemic-related budget cuts in 2020, was a huge accomplishment for our small team that we are very proud of.

Marketing and advertising campaigns to disseminate the new look brought direct bookings to hotels and visitor spending to the destination, as well as spread awareness of the city's ever-changing waterfront development and area offerings. With newfound recognition beyond the Pacific Northwest, we were able to target markets farther away that show promise of moving up our top visitors list.

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 for the future. Sports continue to be a strong market for us with several notable bookings for 2023 and beyond, and other organizations are starting to emerge from virtual meeting platforms to in-person events.

We are excited for what the year ahead will bring, and what we can accomplish to continue attracting visitors and groups to Vancouver—ultimately increasing visitor spending in Clark County and positively impacting the local economy. We are committed to this mission, and we thank you for your support.



CLIFF MYERS, PRESIDENT & CEO



MIKE MCLEOD, CHAIR OF THE BOARD

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alison Hite  
TownePlace Suites

Cliff Myers\*  
Visit Vancouver WA

Mike McLeod\*  
Hilton Vancouver WA

Sue Marshall\*  
Clark County Councilor

Alkesh Patel  
Evergreen Hospitality  
Development Group

David Lenke  
AC Hotel Marriott  
Vancouver WA

Ryan Hart\*  
Port of Vancouver USA

Lindsey Shafar  
Clark County (proxy)

Brady Wilkerson  
The Heathman Lodge

Jordan Boldt  
Vancouver Farmers Market

Seidy Selivanow  
Kafix Roasters

Teresa Brum\*  
City of Vancouver

Carla Rise\*  
Sonesta ES Suites

Jenni Sandstrom  
WSU - Vancouver

Steve Bowers\*  
Hampton Inn & Suites

*\*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.



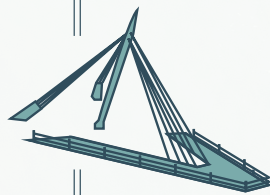
## THE IMPACT OF TOURISM

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



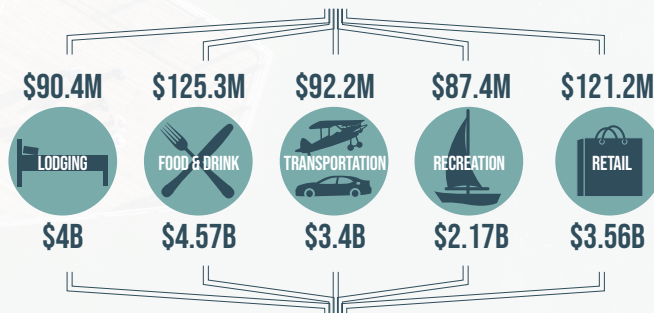
IN 2021, VISITORS TO CLARK COUNTY GENERATED A TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF **\$516.5 MILLION**

TAX REVENUE COLLECTED FROM CLARK COUNTY VISITORS IN 2021 TOTALED **\$82.3 MILLION** IN STATE & LOCAL TAXES



TOURISM IN CLARK COUNTY CREATED **\$285.9 MILLION** IN JOB EARNINGS

CLARK COUNTY 2021 DESTINATION SPENDING BY COMMODITY **\$516.5 MILLION**



LEARN MORE ABOUT US

**\$17.7 BILLION**

WASHINGTON STATE 2021 DESTINATION SPENDING BY COMMODITY

Data source: Tourism Economics

## FUNDING

Visit Vancouver WA is a non-profit 501 (c) 6 destination management organization 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 2022 were \$1,235,588.84.

Visit Vancouver WA also received \$700K from the City of Vancouver's lodging tax collections to support the growth of tourism in the area. As part of this one-year pilot program, Visit Vancouver WA developed a Destination Master Plan with these funds and acted as liaison to the LTAC Grant process.



## CONVENTION & GROUP BUSINESS

The year started off with a continuation of uncertainty and first quarter seemed to echo 2021. However, leads and bookings increased substantially in the second quarter and steadily held this pace into the third and fourth quarters of the year. The year showed great improvement with year-over-year leads and bookings trending up 89% and 72.2% respectively. Continuing to compare to 2019, we see ourselves bridging the gap and getting closer to pre-pandemic numbers and expect the trend to continue to increase into 2023. In addition, ADR for Clark County has increased 7.9% from 2021, outpacing 2019 levels, but occupancy is down 7.5% from the previous year.

### **Sports continues to be a big presence with notable bookings in 2022:**

- NAIA Cross Country National Championships – contracted 2026 & 2029
- USTA – contracted 3 tournaments in 2023
- HoopSource Presidents Day Tournament – contracted 2023
- Timbers Alliance – contracted 2 tournaments in 2023

### **Other notable 2022 conferences:**

- American Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association – 2022 Conference
- National PKU Alliance – 2022 Conference
- Pacific Fishery Management Council – 2022 Management Council & Advisory Bodies
- WA State Council of Fire Fighters – 2022 WSCFF/IAFF Joint Conference
- American Rhododendron Society – 2022 Conference

## WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING

**“EVERYONE WE WORKED WITH AT VISIT VANCOUVER AND THE HILTON HOTEL WAS ABSOLUTELY STELLAR, VERY PROFESSIONAL, AND HELPED MAKE OUR EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS! WE WILL DEFINITELY BE RETURNING IN THE FUTURE.”**

– WA Retail Association

**“WE HAD SOME FOLKS WALK THE COLUMBIA RIVER TRAIL, SOME VISITED THE UNDERBAR OPEN MIC NIGHT, MOST STAYED AT THE HOTEL FOR EVENTS WE HAD THERE. EVERYONE SAID THEY REALLY ENJOYED THEIR TIME.”**

– WA Education Association

## 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. 2022 was about getting back to business as usual, with more organizations starting to emerge from virtual meeting platforms and back to in-person events. The Sales Team executed an overwhelmingly successful Olympia Luncheon Blitz with our hotel partners and 28 planners in attendance. We also continued working with our hotel partners to help incentivize more booked business by offering sales incentives and sponsorships. 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. The campaign garnered 570 ad clicks and 44,848 impressions.

## LOOKING AHEAD

We are looking forward to increased business opportunities in 2023 to help close the gap to pre-pandemic business levels. Our team is poised to make 2023 a year of connection with a full tradeshow schedule, including attending new events like Small Meetings Market Conference and MPI Cascadia. Our focus will also be reconnecting with trade associations such as SGMP, MPI, and WSAE by attending quarterly events. We have expanded our outreach on Cvent, targeting new meeting planners and locations.



## 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
- State of Washington Tourism
- Travel Portland
- U.S. Travel Association
- Washington Society of Association Executives
- 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.

### 5 NEW HOTELS

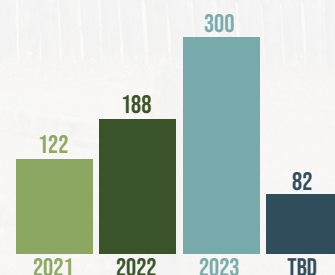


### MULTIPLE LOCATIONS



WATERFRONT  
NORTH VANCOUVER  
CENTRAL VANCOUVER  
SURROUNDING AREA

### 692 ROOMS





## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- The year started out fast with the launch of our new brand in January, including refreshed logos, colors, fonts, and more. An accompanying brand awareness marketing campaign helped get the word out of our new identity and make the destination more recognized in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.
- Visit Vancouver WA hosted nine influencers and travel writers to experience the destination throughout the year, creating positive and diverse digital content about the city. Highlights included a 5 out of 5 rating for Comfortability as a Black Person from Seattle couple Traveling While Black, a TikTok reaching viral status with 176.5K views, and Instagram Reels reached 13K new accounts.
- Even with a new domain, our website continued to see an impressive amount of traffic, ranking high on SEO and search lists. In 2022, the website saw nearly 686K sessions, with our Things To Do pages leading the way with the most web visits. We published 39 new or re-purposed blog posts in 2022, including a family-friendly and accessible travel itinerary, a low carbon footprint day on foot and on the water, and a history lesson of the surrounding mountain peaks.

## DESTINATION PROMOTIONS

Visit Vancouver WA worked with Bandwango to launch (or re-launch) four mobile-friendly passes to encourage destination interaction and experiences, as well as drive customers to local restaurants and wineries. Each pass was incentivized during different months via check-in challenges and prize drawings.

October marked the return of Visit Vancouver WA's popular dining month promotion, Dine the Couve. Two price points (3 for \$25 and 3 for \$35) 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.

## 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 2022, the Vancouver Waterfront was featured in various publications for the unveiling of the upgraded Vancouver Landing space and the opening of the AC Hotel Marriott. A feature in *The Seattle Times* highlighted the dining, sipping, and strolling opportunities that the area offers, and *Willamette Week* did a large spread on day tripping across the Columbia River in their special summer guide. SW Washington's planned AVA designation received attention from *Sip Northwest* and KOIN TV, while north Clark County's scenic drive and Chelatchie Prairie train caught the attention of *Portland Monthly* and *AAA Western Journey*.



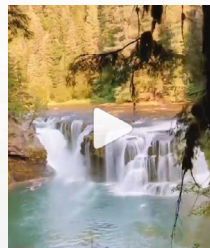
## THE COUVE IN THE NEWS

In 2022, Vancouver WA appeared in a variety of media outlets and print publications including:

- 1959: Oregon's Magazine
- AAA Western Journey
- Eater PDX
- Fodor's Travel
- KATU Channel 2
- KGW Channel 8
- KING-TV
- KOIN Channel 6
- KPTV Channel 12
- New School Beer
- Northwest Travel & Life
- OPB Channel 10
- The Oregonian
- Portland Business Journal
- Portland Monthly
- ROVA Magazine
- The Seattle Times
- Sip Northwest
- Sports Illustrated
- Travel Weekly
- Tri-City Herald
- Willamette Week

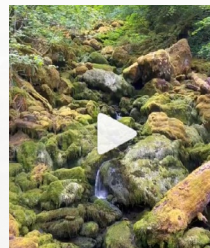
## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Visit Vancouver WA social media fan base grew exponentially across multiple platforms in 2022. Our social media efforts have increased user engagement and have made well over a million impressions on potential visitors.



PLAYS/REACH: 21,600

949 21 219 193



PLAYS/REACH: 22,307

975 18 196 164



PLAYS/REACH: 20,932

647 22 217 35

### CHANNEL GROWTH



**1K NET FOLLOWERS**  
4% INCREASE FROM 2021



**1.2K NET FOLLOWERS**  
98% INCREASE FROM 2021



**3.8K NET FOLLOWERS**  
24% INCREASE FROM 2021



**282 NET FOLLOWERS**  
5% INCREASE FROM 2021

## CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT

In addition to reaching as many people as possible with our new look and identity, one of the main goals of our brand awareness campaign was to position Vancouver geographically in Washington state. We used two slogans that helped achieve that goal: North of Weird, South of Sound and Close to Everything, Far from Typical. Breathtaking images of the waterfront and two new destination videos (produced by local company Harter Creative) further solidified our destination's unique features to distinguish us from Vancouver B.C. and the negative perceptions Portland is continuing to face.

**DIGITAL TRACKING:** Targeted display ads helped influence consumer decisions to book hotel rooms in Vancouver, and tracking strategies monitored mobile devices in destination and in hotels. These campaigns generated a total of 6M ad impressions and an estimated \$1.76M in hotel revenue.

**SPONSORED CONTENT:** Two sponsored articles in *The Seattle Times* and two on OregonLive.com generated 13,490 total reads, with above average read times and clickthrough rates for adjoining headline ads.

**AIRPORT ADVERTISING:** Coming out of the pandemic, it was important for us to target people willing to travel. We placed display ads in PDX Airport and SEA Airport in Q1. We focused on the drive market in other strategic ways, although gas prices and inflation greatly discouraged people from road tripping over the summer months.





## A LOOK AHEAD

The future is bright for Washington's Vancouver. With two brand new hotels on the Columbia River's north shore, and the 300-room ilani hotel slated to open this spring, there is great potential for continued growth in attracting visitors from all around the nation. Other developments led by community partners, like the Waterfront Gateway project, Main Street Promise revitalization project, and Fourth Plain Community Commons, will continue to move Vancouver forward as a modern destination, while preserving the historic and welcoming feel of the city.

Using what we learned from the Destination Master Plan, we will continue to grow and discover new ways to promote Clark County responsibly and sustainably, strategically marketing the city to draw visitor spending to the area. We are also committed to showcasing the cultures of our city, and supporting diversity through the stories we tell and the people we partner with.

There is no doubt that Vancouver, and the surrounding Clark County area, is growing—and we are enthusiastic to grow alongside it.

## OFFICE & VISITOR CENTER

### VISIT VANCOUVER WA BUSINESS OFFICE

1220 Main Street, Suite 220  
Vancouver, WA 98660  
[www.VisitVancouverWA.com](http://www.VisitVancouverWA.com)

### VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

Operated by the National Park Service  
1501 E Evergreen Blvd.  
Vancouver, WA 98661

## VISIT VANCOUVER WA STAFF

### OPERATIONS & ADMINISTRATION

Cliff Myers  
President & CEO

Debra Ingram-Payne II  
Office Administrator/Manager

### GROUP SALES

Tanya Minor  
Director of Sales

Barb Fuller  
Group Sales Manager

### MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Erica Lindemann  
Director of Marketing

Taylor Pulsipher  
Art Director

Shara Howard  
Communications Coordinator

