



ANNUAL *tourism* REPORT

2 ★ 18

VISIT
V★NCOUVER
USA
Discover the Original™

VISIT *vancouver* USA



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & BOARD CHAIR

With multiple new hotels proposed over the next five years, lauded hot spots popping up for hungry foodies, and increased attention from consumers across the river and around the region, it's clear Vancouver USA has officially emerged as the Northwest's next 'it' tourism destination. Visitor spending to the area continues to drive economic growth, which—according to Dean Runyan's 2016 Washington State Travel Impact Report—increased by 4.7 percent and buoyed local tax receipts by 7.8 percent (pg. 3).

As the lead tourism organization for Vancouver and Clark County, Visit Vancouver USA works closely with local businesses, attractions, and economic development entities to influence this tourism impact. Highlights from our work in 2017 include more than **27,000 future hotel room nights** secured by our Business Development team (pg. 5), **27 restaurants and breweries** participating in our citywide dining month promotion (pg. 6), and **10 million impressions** delivered by our tourism marketing campaign targeting key feeder markets in the South Sound (pg. 7).

Our team's work in 2017 has helped lay the groundwork for a successful year for tourism in 2018—a high point of which will undoubtedly be the opening of Gramor Development's Waterfront Vancouver USA (pg. 8). The new waterfront will serve as the catalyst for an already reinvigorated tourism destination after more than a decade's worth of downtown revitalization efforts coupled with recent developments on Vancouver's Eastside, which have spurred increased business travel and sports tourism growth.

Through partnership with the City of Vancouver's Lodging Tax Grant Program, our office will be launching wide scale campaigns in 2018 to promote these developments across a variety of platforms, including transit ads, billboards, sponsored content, radio commercials, and digital display and retargeting ads. Marketing funds provided through lodging tax enable us to build more robust campaigns and better compete against similar-sized destinations.

Of course, tourism is a team sport, and Visit Vancouver USA's work is aided by our many great community partners—including stakeholder hotels, supporting municipalities, and local businesses and attractions. Thank you for helping us make this year one of the best yet for tourism in Vancouver USA!



Kim Bennett

Kimberly Bennett, President & CEO



Mike McLeod

Mike McLeod, Chair of the Board

ABOUT US

Visit Vancouver USA 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, tourism-related earnings, tax collections, and jobs.

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

FUNDING

Visit Vancouver USA is funded by a Tourism Promotion Area (TPA). This special assessment charges hotel guests in Vancouver and unincorporated Clark County \$2. Total TPA collections in 2017 were **\$1,200,226**. Select marketing projects are funded in part through lodging tax funds provided by the City of Vancouver. Total lodging tax dollars spent in 2017 totaled **\$327,126**.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Blom*
Clark County Council

Jordan Boldt
Vancouver Farmers Market

Mike Bomar
Columbia River Economic Development Council

Steve Bowers
Hampton Inn & Suites

Teresa Brum*
City of Vancouver

Melinda Capen*
DoubleTree by Hilton

John Gush
Candlewood Suites

Ryan Hart
Port of Vancouver USA

Kari Jonassen*
Homewood Suites by Hilton

Mike McLeod*
Hilton Vancouver WA

Carla Rise*
Staybridge Suites

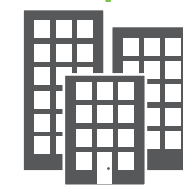
Brady Wilkerson
The Heathman Lodge

Kimberly Bennett*
Visit Vancouver USA

*** Denotes Executive Committee Member**

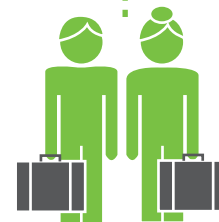
TOURISM IMPACT

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



In 2016, visitors to Clark County generated a total economic impact of **\$472 million**.

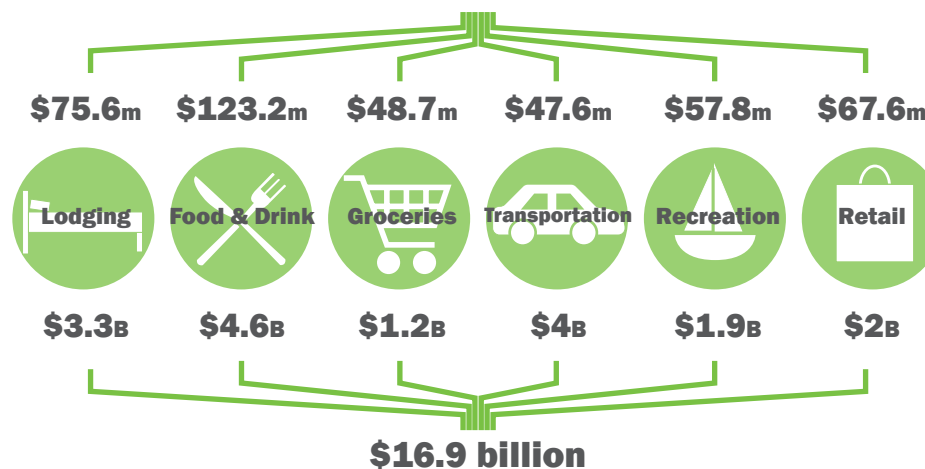
Tax revenue collected from Clark County visitors in 2016 totaled **\$14.3 million in local taxes & \$32.1 million in state taxes**.



Clark County tourism created **\$142 million in job earnings**.

Clark County 2016 Destination Spending by Commodity

\$420.5 million



Washington State 2016 Destination Spending by Commodity

Source: Dean Runyan Associates, Inc. on behalf of the Washington State Department of Commerce, Olympia. All figures are from 2016, the most recent at the time of printing.

HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS

Visit Vancouver USA tracks all new hotel supply proposed for the area. While room counts and actual hotels completed may differ from initial proposals, this supply pipeline provides an important gauge of Clark County's future tourism outlook.

11 PROPOSED HOTELS

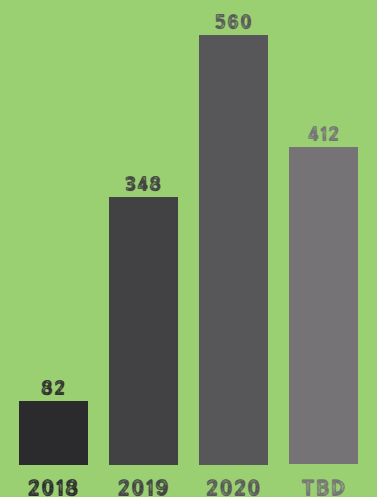


MULTIPLE LOCATIONS



SURROUNDING COUNTY
DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT
EAST VANCOUVER

1,402 NEW HOTEL ROOMS



CONVENTION & GROUP *business*



VANCOUVER USA SPORTS

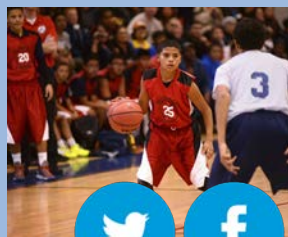
BRAND OVERVIEW

Vancouver USA Sports promotes Vancouver USA and Clark County as a sports event destination. Our sports development efforts bring numerous youth, amateur, collegiate, and professional sports events to the community.

The Sports Development team here at *Visit Vancouver USA* serves as the on-the-ground, driving force responsible for recruiting sports events to Vancouver USA. Their focus is to foster relationships with area sports groups and to continue growing existing sports events in the community. Athletes and attendees from these events create a positive economic footprint by dining in area restaurants, shopping in the community, and staying in local hotels.



SPORTS SPOTLIGHT



In 2017, HoopSource Basketball brought its President's Day Tournament of Champions to venues throughout Vancouver USA and will return again in 2018. The event attracts more than 425 youth basketball teams to the area from 38 states across the nation. Visit Vancouver USA's Business

Development team has worked closely with tournament directors, hotel partners, and local sports venues to showcase Vancouver as the ideal sports destination for the event and its 4,000 participants. Other regional tournaments returning in 2018 include Adidas Clash at the Border, WA Timbers Summer Slam, and US Rowing events at Vancouver Lake.

www.VancouverUSASports.com

DESTINATION SERVICES

Destination Services provides support services to groups that have booked their events in Vancouver USA. These services include custom maps, referral lists, off-site opportunities, and community connections.



The **Show Your Badge program** is provided to select meetings and conventions to incentivize their attendees to visit downtown businesses offering special discounts. In 2017, the program:

- Expanded upon 2016 offerings
- Added six new downtown businesses
- Served more than 10,276 convention delegates and event attendees

DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGN

The 'How to Vancouver' direct mail campaign enabled Visit Vancouver USA to drive further awareness and build stronger relationships with clients. 70 branded packages were mailed to top meeting planners and prospective clients throughout the Northwest. Each package invited the recipient to visit Vancouver and put the enclosed items to use, including five items custom made to represent the destination and three items from local businesses. The campaign assisted in booking site tours and building momentum with open leads.



WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING

"WE COULD NOT HAVE HAD SUCH A SUCCESSFUL EVENT WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE VANCOUVER USA STAFF. THEIR HARD WORK, AND DEDICATION TO HELPING US CREATE A FIRST CLASS EXPERIENCE FOR OUR MEMBERS WAS REMARKABLE! THANK YOU VANCOUVER USA!"

-Association of Washington Cities

"VISIT VANCOUVER USA WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL NOT ONLY WITH SUGGESTIONS, BUT WITH HANDLING DETAILS WITH THE HOTEL AND MAKING SURE I HAD EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL MEETING."

-WA Career Development Association

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- Assisted the hospitality community in booking **27,255 guest room nights** for conventions and meeting delegates, teams, vendors, and event attendees in 2017.
- Confirmed more than **32,350 room nights booked** in the Vancouver USA region from 2018 to 2021 and beyond.
- Prospected **80,151 potential room nights** for the Vancouver USA region from various markets for all future years.

CONVENTION BUSINESS CONVERSION

	2016	2017	% CHANGE
Definite Room Nights	27,699	27,255	-1.5%
Total Bookings	111	112	+1%

CONVENTION BUSINESS IMPACT

2017 was an incredibly eventful year for Visit Vancouver USA, with the booking and hosting of numerous conferences, conventions, tournaments, and meetings. Below is a select list of groups that Visit Vancouver USA assisted in influencing to meet here, rather than another destination. The estimated economic impact to the Vancouver USA region from all 2017 bookings is more than \$10.1 million.

Administrative Office of the Courts - 2018
Nutritional Therapy Association - 2018
WA State Association of College Trustees - 2018
CMIT Solutions - 2018
American Union of Swedish Singers - 2019
WA Library Association - 2019
WA Recreation and Park Association - 2019
American Contract Bridge League - 2019 & 2020
Faculty & Staff of Color in Higher Education - 2020
National PKU Alliance - 2020
WA City/County Management Association - 2020
WA State Labor Council - 2025

TARGET MARKETS

The business development team at Visit Vancouver USA regularly attends meetings, conferences, and reverse tradeshow around the Northwest to assist in soliciting business from the following markets:

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

TRADE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

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

- Destination Marketing Association International
- Destination Marketing Association of the West
- Meeting Professionals International Washington & Oregon Chapters
- National Association of Sports Commissions
- Oregon Society of Association Management
- Oregon Sports Authority
- Pacific Northwest Society of Government Meeting Professionals
- Professional Convention Management Association
- Religious Conference Management Association
- The Alliance of Military Reunions
- The Military Reunion Network
- Travel Portland
- U.S. Travel Association
- Washington Society of Association Executives
- Washington Tourism Alliance

MARKETING & *communications*



2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- Promoted local businesses and events during the shoulder season through sponsored content with *The Oregonian* and endorsements on Portland radio stations. Stories like “Cozy Up in the Couve” and “Head North for Autumn Events” **generated 25,000 article views and 5,550 engagement clicks.** Some of the businesses and events highlighted included Vancouver Farmers Market, Campfires & Candlelight, Willem’s on Main, Trap Door Brewing, Wild Fern boutique, and the Uptown Village Block Party.
- Produced print advertising campaigns for travel and lifestyle publications such as *Portland Monthly*, *Northwest Travel*, *1889 Magazine*, and *Northwest Meetings + Events*. Full page advertisements and accompanying editorial ran in June and October editions of *Alaska Airlines Beyond Magazine*, **reaching an estimated 2.6 million passengers.**
- Authored articles and influenced positive media coverage of the region through targeted media pitches, which resulted in Vancouver USA being featured in **more than 100 print and online pieces.**

DESTINATION PROMOTIONS

October marked the return of Visit Vancouver USA's popular dining month promotion, **Dine the Couve**. The event expanded to 27 participants across the city (up from 19 in 2016), with participating restaurants offering 3 for \$23 menus and select breweries and taprooms touting \$3 drink specials. Thousands of visitors and residents attended the event, dining at one or multiple establishments throughout the month of October. Success stories include one participating downtown restaurant that reported nearly 700 diners. The website landing page hosting menus for the event attracted **more than 30,000 total page views.**

TRAVEL MAGAZINE

- 95,000 copies distributed annually to convention groups, leisure travelers, area hotels, and visitor points of interest along the I-5 corridor and international gateways
- Additional 25,000 copies distributed to subscribers of *Portland Monthly*
- Additional 21,000 copies distributed to subscribers of *Seattle Met*
- 141,000 Total Distribution**



WEBSITE REDESIGN

A responsive redesign of **VisitVancouverUSA.com** provided an important upgrade to the award-winning website. Launched in July 2017, the new design ensures that the site's functionality and appearance remains consistent across all devices. This important upgrade also added expanded event calendar offerings and a blog and storytelling platform, which has been used to highlight new businesses, seasonal offerings, and itinerary ideas. In 2017, the site tallied **nearly a half-million unique page views.**



LET'S GET SOCIAL

There's a conversation going on about Vancouver USA! The Visit Vancouver USA social media fan base grew exponentially across multiple platforms in 2017. Our social media efforts have increased user engagement and have made over a million impressions on potential visitors. Share what you love about Vancouver USA by tagging your posts with **#DiscoverVanUSA!**

@Vancouver_USA

Followers: **4,500+**

+15% from 2016

Visit Vancouver USA

Fans: **14,800+**

+38% from 2016

@Vancouver_USA

Followers: **5,600+**

+36% from 2016

MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Visit Vancouver USA works regularly with travel writers to influence positive stories about the area. In 2017, Vancouver commanded media presence as the Northwest's emerging “it” destination. The *New York Post* sparked a media flurry after dubbing Vancouver the most “hipster-friendly place” in the country, and *Food & Wine* wrote an ode to Vancouver's annual dining month stating “Vancouver, Washington will not be ignored.”

The editors at *Sunset* magazine cast the spotlight on Vancouver USA, not once but twice to much acclaim. A video submitted to *Sunset* by Visit Vancouver USA resulted in the selection of Vancouver's Main Street as among the five best in the West. This exposure was further leveraged with a feature spread that called Vancouver “where Portlandia goes to grow up” and highlighted local favorites like Thirsty Sasquatch, Boomerang, and the Vancouver Community Library.



VANCOUVER USA IN THE NEWS

In 2017, Vancouver USA appeared in a variety of media publications including:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • 1889 Magazine | • OPB |
| • Alaska Airlines Beyond | • The Oregonian |
| • Association News | • People |
| • Craft Beer Northwest | • Portland Monthly |
| • Eater PDX | • Satiating PDX |
| • Food & Wine | • The Seattle Times |
| • Meeting News Northwest | • Sip Northwest |
| • Meetings Today | • Sports Events Magazine |
| • The New York Post | • Southern Living |
| • NW Military Online | • Sunset |
| • NW Travel & Life Magazine | • Taste Washington Travel |
| • Northwest Meetings + Events | • Washington State Visitors Guide |
| • OnTrak Magazine | • Washington State Wine Guide |

CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT

Funded through partnership with the City of Vancouver's Lodging Tax Grant Program, the South Sound Tourism Marketing Campaign promoted Vancouver as a tourism destination to potential travelers residing in markets clustered around the South Puget Sound. The six-month campaign consisted of online and broadcast videos, digital display retargeting ads, displays at SeaTac International Airport, print advertising, and transit wraps.

TRANSIT WRAPS



- 12 week campaign**
- 86% reach**
- 12.8 frequency**
- 2,348,000 impressions**

BROADCAST

Both 15-second and 30-second commercial spots aired across Pierce and Thurston County, highlighting Vancouver's food scene, recreation opportunities, and summer events. In total, these 9,771 spots generated 2.7 million impressions and reached nearly one in four consumers in the marketplace. A Travel Channel program sponsorship added an additional 250 spots at no extra cost.

ONLINE MARKETING

Newsletters and sponsored content through popular travel websites such as Go Northwest, Real Food Traveler, and Experience WA delivered an additional 1.2 million impressions. A partnership with Northwest Travel referred nearly 1,000 direct requests for the Vancouver USA travel magazine from visitors around the country.

DIGITAL TRACKING

Retargeting display ads helped influence consumer decisions to visit Vancouver, and tracking pixels monitored hotel and flight bookings. The retargeting ads delivered more than four million impressions and generated an estimated economic impact of \$54,500, including:

AVERAGE DAILY RATE

\$146.76

2 NIGHTS

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY

534 ROOM NIGHTS

(176 DIRECT)

A LOOK AHEAD

Coming in 2018, the \$1.5 billion Waterfront Vancouver USA will open 32 acres of prime real estate on the Columbia River adjacent to downtown. One of the largest mixed-use projects on the West Coast, the first phase of the development will include residential units, office space, multiple restaurants, and a seven-acre waterfront park, with a six-floor, 138-room Hotel Indigo to follow shortly.

Also in progress, the Port of Vancouver USA has started work on the redevelopment of Terminal 1, which will include mixed-use buildings, a 160-room AC Marriott hotel, and a year-round public market. Both projects will add to Vancouver's existing five-mile Waterfront Renaissance Trail.

Together, these projects will help form a cohesive tourism product holding appeal for groups, leisure travelers, convention delegates, day visitors, and business travelers. Both the Marketing and Business Development teams at Visit Vancouver USA have already started promoting and selling these assets to interested parties for future years.



Renderings c/o The Waterfront, Vancouver USA

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT *by the numbers*

1.5 BILLION
DEVELOPMENT

90 FT
CABLE STAY PIER

20 BLOCKS
OF COMMERCIAL SPACE

298 ROOMS
AT HOTEL INDIGO & AC MARRIOTT

1 MILLION SQ FT
OF OFFICE SPACE

3,300
HOUSING UNITS

250,000 SQ FT
OF RESTAURANT & RETAIL SPACE



COMING 2018

VISIT VANCOUVER USA OFFICE STAFF

Kimberly Bennett, *President & CEO*
Kelsey Chappelle, *Senior Business Development Manager*
Christine Whitney, *Business Development Manager*
Michelle Hensler, *Business Development Coordinator*
Jacob Schmidt, *Director of Marketing & Communications*
Erica Thompson, *Content Coordinator*
Taylor Pulsipher, *Digital Media Coordinator*
Debra Ingram, *Office Administrator*

VISIT VANCOUVER USA

Business Development & Marketing Office
1220 Main Street, Suite 220
Vancouver, Washington 98660
www.VisitVancouverUSA.com

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

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