

# Tourism at Washington Ports: Trends and Best Practices

Prepared for:  
WPPA Annual Meeting  
December 7, 2022



**McKINLEY RESEARCH**  
GROUP, LLC

*Formerly McDowell Group*



# McKinley Research Group



- **Offices:** Alaska, Bellingham, Spokane
- **Services:** Community Development, Economic Analysis, Business Development, Survey Research
- **Port clients:** Seattle, Anacortes, Kalama, Clarkston, Lewiston, Anchorage, Nome, Valdez, Juneau
- **Tourism/port projects:** Kalama Dock study, Clarkston/Lewiston market/impact assessment, Cap Sante Marina impacts, Alaska cruise dock studies, Seattle cruise passenger survey



# Presentation Outline

- **Washington tourism update**
- **Cruise trends**
  - Riverboats
  - Cruise ships
- **Case studies**
  - Kalama
  - Anacortes
  - Bellingham
- **Questions**



# Washington Tourism Update

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- **State of Washington Tourism**

- Re-formed in 2018 (dormant 2011-2018)
- Rebrand in January 2022
- Marketing, grants, research, resources, industry events

- **COVID impact and recovery**

- WA visitor volume up 2% in 2019
- COVID impacts varied depending on region, type of travel, mode of travel, activities, etc.
- Post-pandemic: 2021 visitor volume up 20%, still at 87% of 2019 levels



**THE STATE OF  
WASHINGTON**

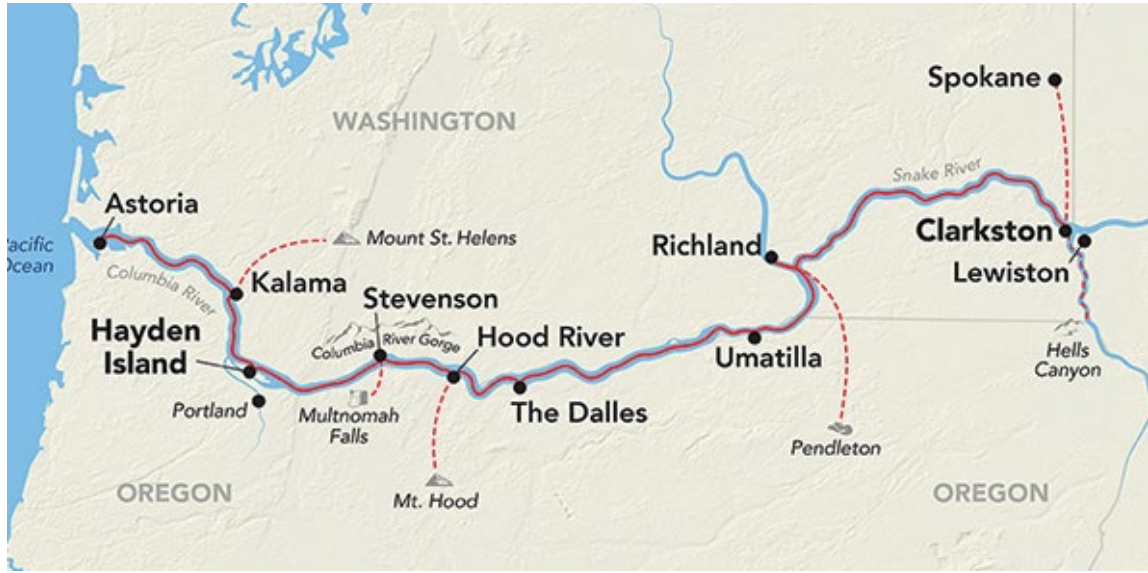


# Ports + Tourism...

- Airports
- Marinas
- Parks
- Festivals/special events
- Large cruise ships
- Riverboats/small ships
- Day cruises
- Public markets
- Retail
- Lodging
- Etc.

# Riverboats





# COLUMBIA/ SNAKE RIVER CRUISES

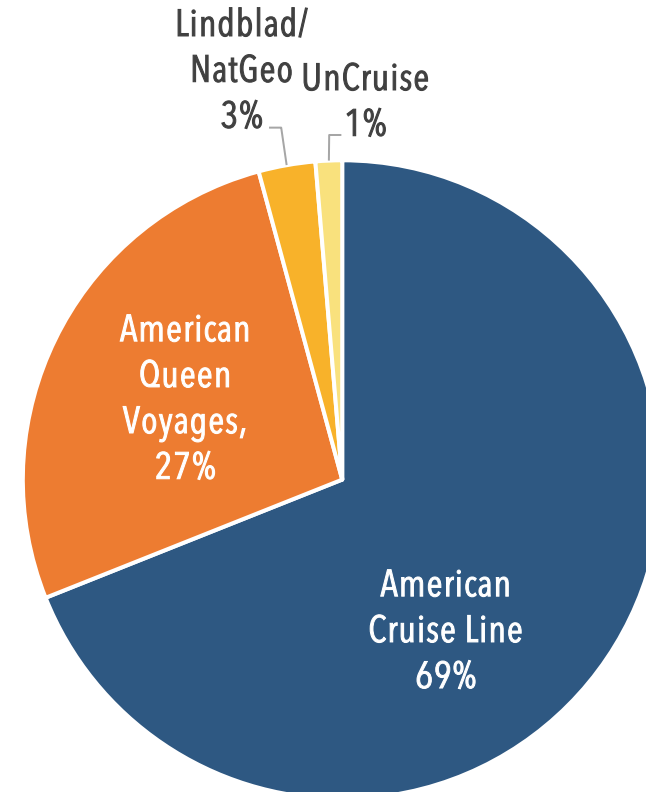
- Cruises run 7-8 days between Portland/Vancouver and Clarkston/Lewiston
- April-November season
- Stop in 6-7 ports
- Some tours included; passengers purchase add-on tours
- Pre- and post-cruise packages available





# COLUMBIA/SNAKE RIVERBOAT MARKET

- Four lines
- ~150 cruises
- Passenger capacity: 76 to 230
- Market trends
  - New infrastructure
  - Continued recovery from COVID
  - ACL growth: from 18,000 passengers in 2021 to 35,000 in 2024 (+35%)
  - Challenges: labor, dock space, weather, navigability



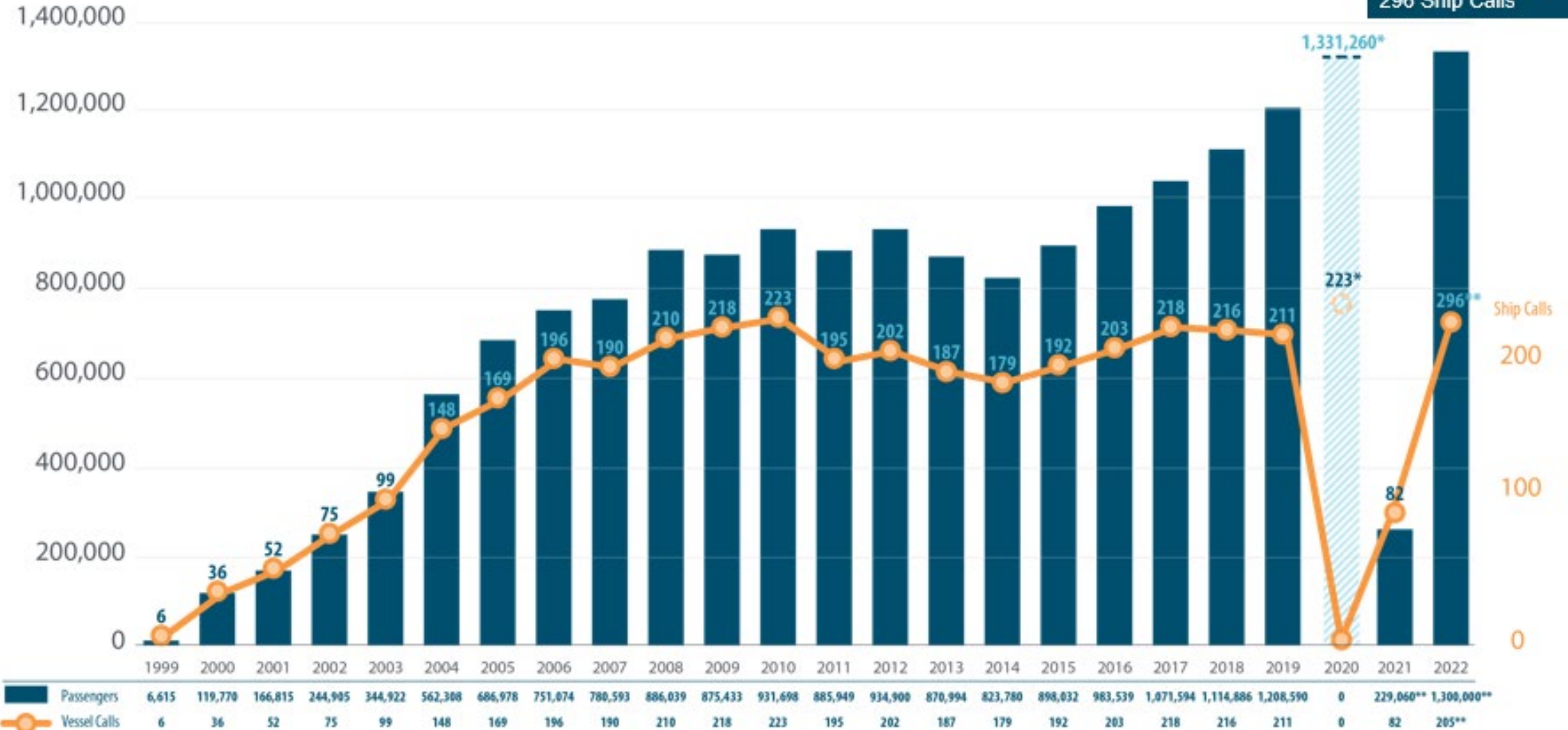


# Cruise Ships

# Cruise Operations 1999-2022

Port of Seattle

**2022 Estimate**  
1.3M Passengers  
296 Ship Calls



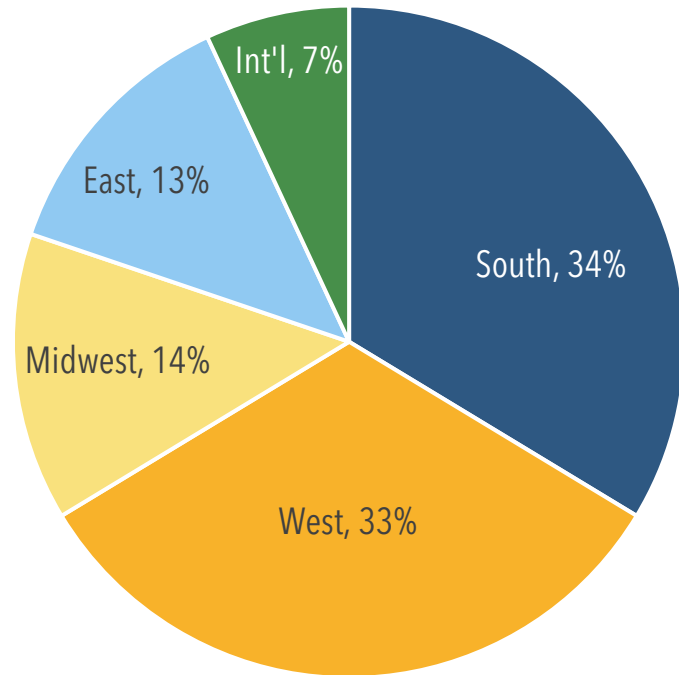
Estimate pre-pandemic\*

Estimate\*\*

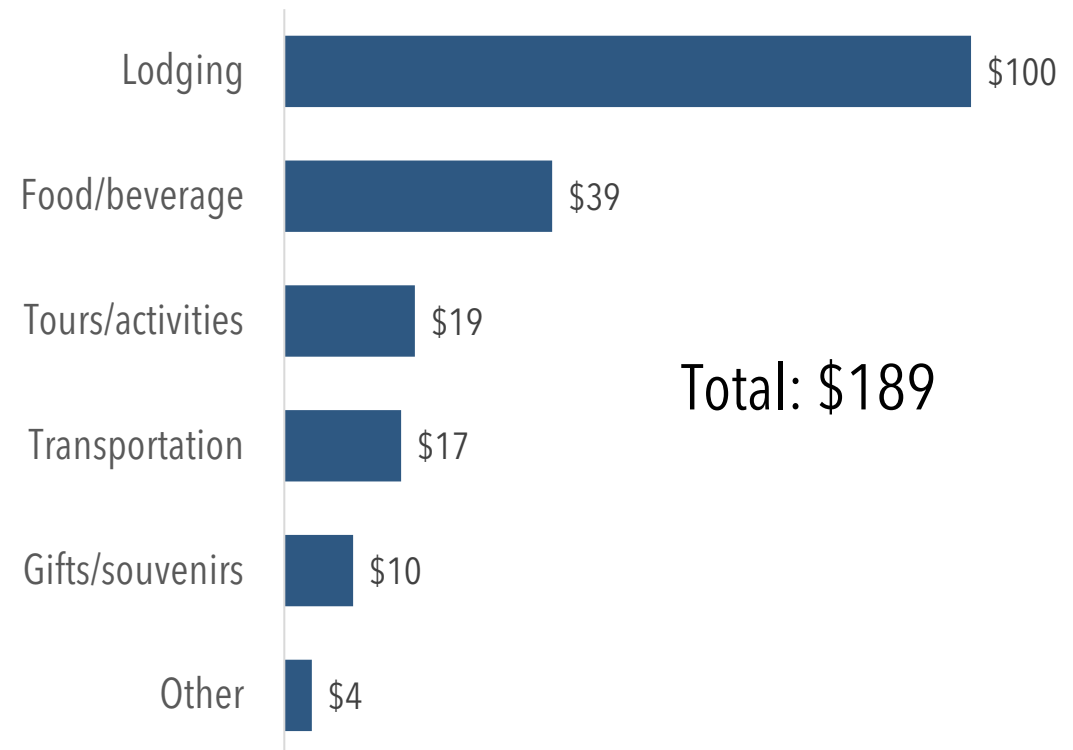
# SEATTLE CRUISE PASSENGERS

## 2019 SURVEY

Passenger Origin



Ave. Per Passenger Spending in Seattle



# SEATTLE CRUISE PASSENGERS

## 2019 SURVEY

- 10% traveled in Washington State (outside of Seattle) before and/or after their cruise
- 44% said they were likely to return to Seattle in next five years



# Case Studies





# Port of Anacortes: Cap Sante Marina

- **Marina upgrades**
  - New amenities: bicycles, disc golf
  - Food trucks
  - Additional staff
  - Improved security
- **Survey of boaters**
  - 800 respondents
  - Demographics, spending, destinations, satisfaction
  - Downtown, Farmers Market, concerts
  - Suggestions
  - Economic impact study



# Guest Boater Activity, 2021

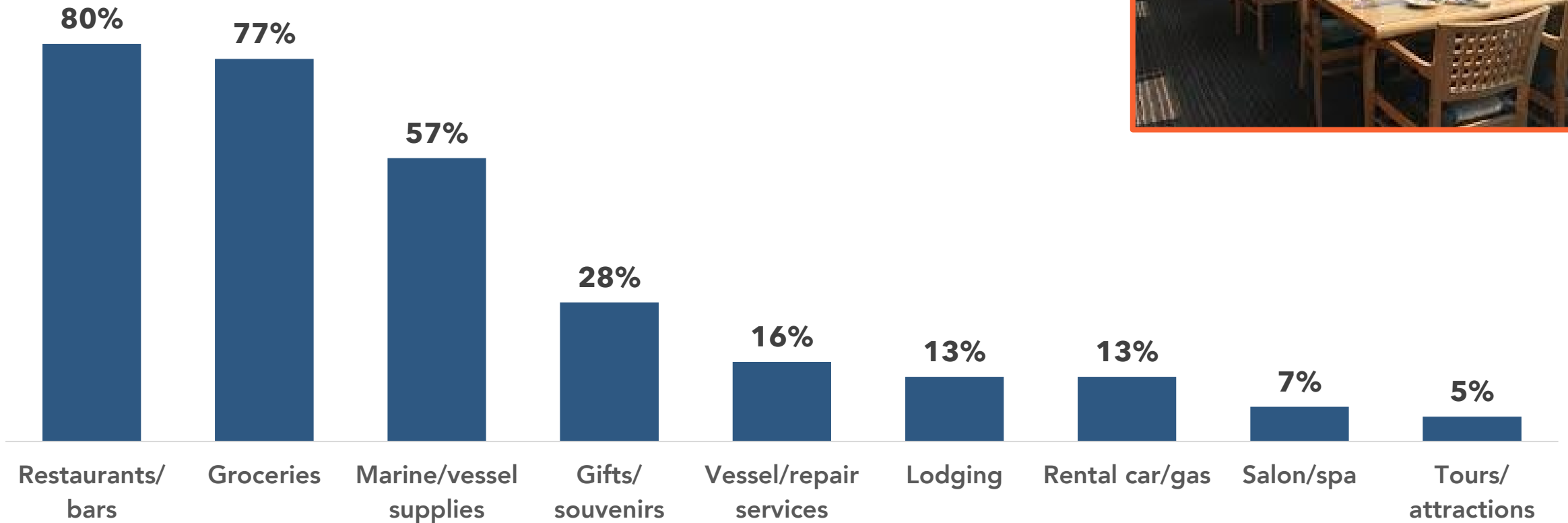
- 7,400 non-local vessels
- 23,000 visitors
- 2.7 nights: average stay
- 20,000 moorage nights



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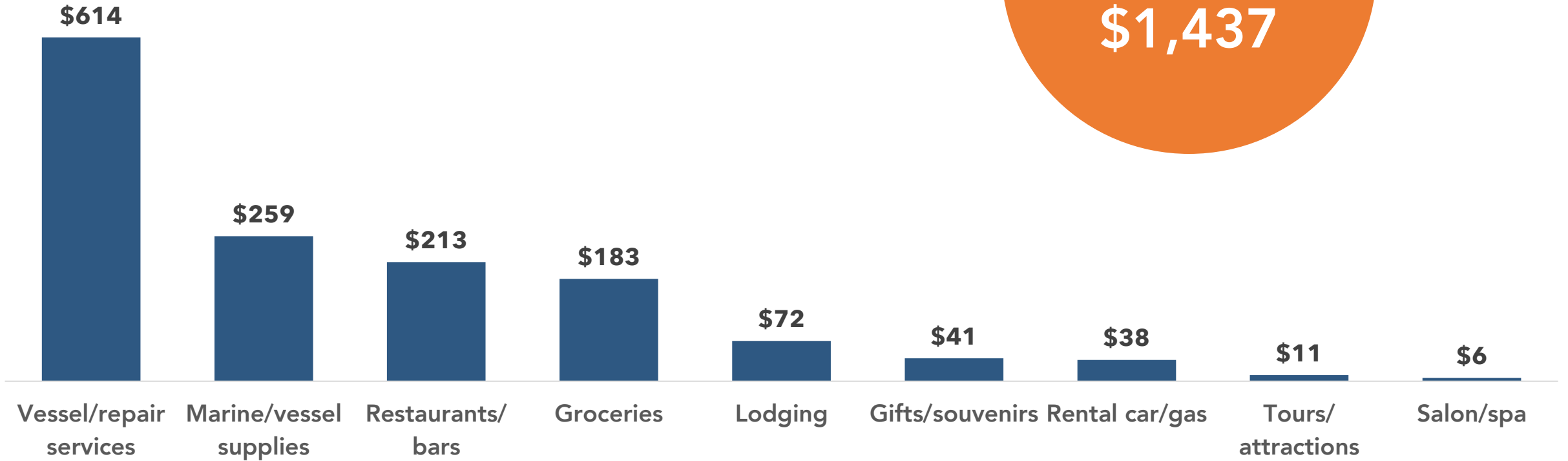
# Where are they spending money?



# How much are they spending?

Excluding fuel/moorage

Average  
Per Party  
Spending:  
**\$1,437**



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# Happy Boaters!

**Anacortes is a great town, and the marina is well located and a pleasure to stay at.**

**Beautiful and friendly marina, waterfront, restaurants, and convenient shopping.**

**Clean, very professionally run modern marina in a great location**

**Friendly staff, easy access to amenities, clean marina that also serves working boats.**

**Great location and a very nice town to visit**

**Just a great place for a boater. Provisioning, eating, everything is beautiful**

**We love Anacortes and Cap Sante has the best staff and facilities**



## Port of Kalama: Waterfront

- McMenamins
- Interpretive Center
- Amphitheater
- Park/beach/trail upgrades
- Parking
- Marina upgrades
- Riverboat dock
- More in store...

# McMenamins Kalama Harbor Lodge

- **Constructed by Port; opened in 2018**
  - McMenamins finished interior
  - Local artwork
  - Rooms named after locals
- **Amenities**
  - 40 rooms
  - Retail shop
  - Restaurants and pubs
  - Satellite pub: Ahle's Point Cabin
- **By the numbers...**
  - 185 employees (pre-COVID)
  - Food/lodging tax revenues up 171% in 2018, another 19% in 2019



# Riverboat Dock

- **Pre-Dock**

- Beach landing; short stay; St. Helens focus; no “Kalama” experience

- **New dock dedicated April 2022**

- Construction cost: \$3.5 million
- Joint venture with ACL

- **Benefits**

- Located next to McMenamins, path, beach
- More vessel calls
- Longer port calls
- More passengers disembarking and experiencing Kalama
- Improved passenger experience
- More opportunities to spend



# Coming Soon...

- **Mountain Timber Market**
  - 33,000 square feet
  - \$21 million investment
  - Local retail, food trucks, eateries
  - Craft distillery
  - Event space
  - Business training: 17 in first cohort
- **Other developments**
  - Pedestrian overpass
  - Third McMenamins site: Pub at the Marina





## Port of Bellingham: Waterfront

- Pump Track
- Portal Container Village
- Granary Building
- Public parks
- Walking paths
- New bike festival: Northwest Tune-Up



# Alaska Cruise Passengers Their Seattle Experience



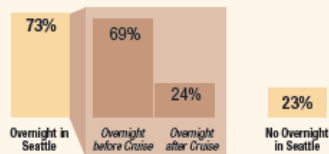
## How many cruise passengers stay in Seattle?

Nearly three-quarters of Seattle cruise passengers overnighed in Seattle before or after their cruise, while 23% did not overnight. An additional 4% were Seattle residents.

Passengers were much more likely to add nights before their cruise than after (69% versus 24%).

The average length of stay is 1.5 nights among pre-cruise overnighers, and 1.6 nights among post-cruise overnighers.

## Overnighing in Seattle Before/After Cruise



## How do they get to Seattle?

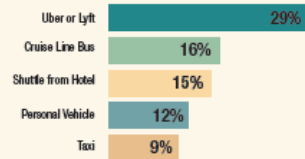
Nearly nine out of ten Seattle cruise passengers traveled to Seattle by air, with another 9% traveling by car, 1% by train, and 1% by ferry. Another 4% were Seattle residents.

Train/Ferry  
2%

## How do they get to the cruise terminal?

Almost one-third of passengers access the terminal using an Uber or Lyft. Other common methods were cruise line bus (16%), shuttle from hotel (15%), personal vehicle (12%), and taxi (9%). Other methods included limo/town car (6%), airport shuttle (5%), and walking (4%).

## Top Five Transportation Modes to Cruise Terminal



## Where are they staying?

Nearly three-quarters of overnighting cruise passengers are staying in the downtown area. One-quarter stay near the airport, and a small fraction stay in Bellevue/Redmond (4%), Northgate/Lynnwood (2%), and Tacoma (2%).

## Top Locations of Pre- and Post-Cruise Lodging Among Overnighers

Downtown 72%

# CAP SANTE MARINA

## The Impact of Our Guest Boaters

Cap Sante Marina is a critical asset for Anacortes and Skagit County. With more than 1,000 slips and a wide variety of amenities, the marina attracts vessels and visitors from around the state, country, and world. These visitors buy groceries and souvenirs, eat at local restaurants, purchase marine supplies, and much more. Their purchases create jobs, contribute to our tax base, and help make Anacortes a desirable place to live and work. A recent report commissioned by the Port of Anacortes helps illustrate these important benefits.

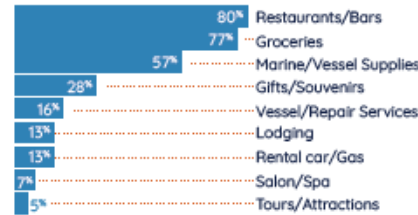
"We love Cap Sante. It's close to stores, has good restaurants, marine supplies, it's close to great crabbing and is on the way to the other San Juan Islands. It checks all the boxes!"

"Clean, very professionally run modern marina in a great location"

## GUEST BOATERS AT THE MARINA:

- Spent an average of **\$1,437 per party** with local businesses
- Represented **\$10.6 million** in local spending
- Created **70 jobs** and **\$3.3 million in labor income** including direct and indirect impacts

## GUEST BOATERS PATRONIZE A WIDE VARIETY OF LOCAL BUSINESSES



95% Guest boaters are repeat visitors: 95% plan to return to Cap Sante Marina in the future

IN 2021, CAP SANTE MARINA HOSTED:

7,400 guest vessels from outside Anacortes

Representing 20,000 moorage nights and

23,000 visitors

*\*The study period was November 2020 to October 2021. Numbers have been rounded.*

# Riverboats

## in the Lewis Clark Valley

A vibrant and growing segment of the region's visitor industry

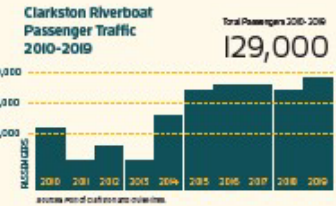


American Cruise Lines vessel at Port of Clarkston.

Riverboat cruises have been sailing to the Lewis Clark Valley for over 40 years. These vessels bring thousands of visitors to the region annually, benefiting a wide variety of local businesses such as restaurants, shops, hotels, tour operators, and transportation providers. A recent study, commissioned by the Ports of Clarkston and Lewiston, helped quantify the impacts of this important industry and identify how the region can best accommodate – and benefit from – projected future growth.

## Riverboat Traffic

Most Columbia/Snake River cruises sail one-way between Portland, OR/Vancouver, WA and Clarkston, WA with four to six additional port calls along the way. The season lasts April to November. Over the last decade, passenger traffic at the Port of Clarkston has fluctuated from a low of about 4,000 in 2013 to 19,000 in 2019. (Note that passenger volume would have reached approximately 20,000 without the unexpected closure of the Bonneville Lock in 2019.) Over the last decade, riverboats brought nearly 150,000 visitors to the area.



## Lewis Clark Valley Cruise Activity, 2019

In 2019, Clarkston welcomed 19,000 passengers on 72 separate port calls. The seven vessels brought 335 crew members who returned every week. Cruise vessels tend to stay in Clarkston roughly 24 to 48 hours, allowing enough time for disembarkation of one group and embarkation of the next group.

7 Vessels  
72 Port Calls  
19,000 Passengers  
335 Crew Members

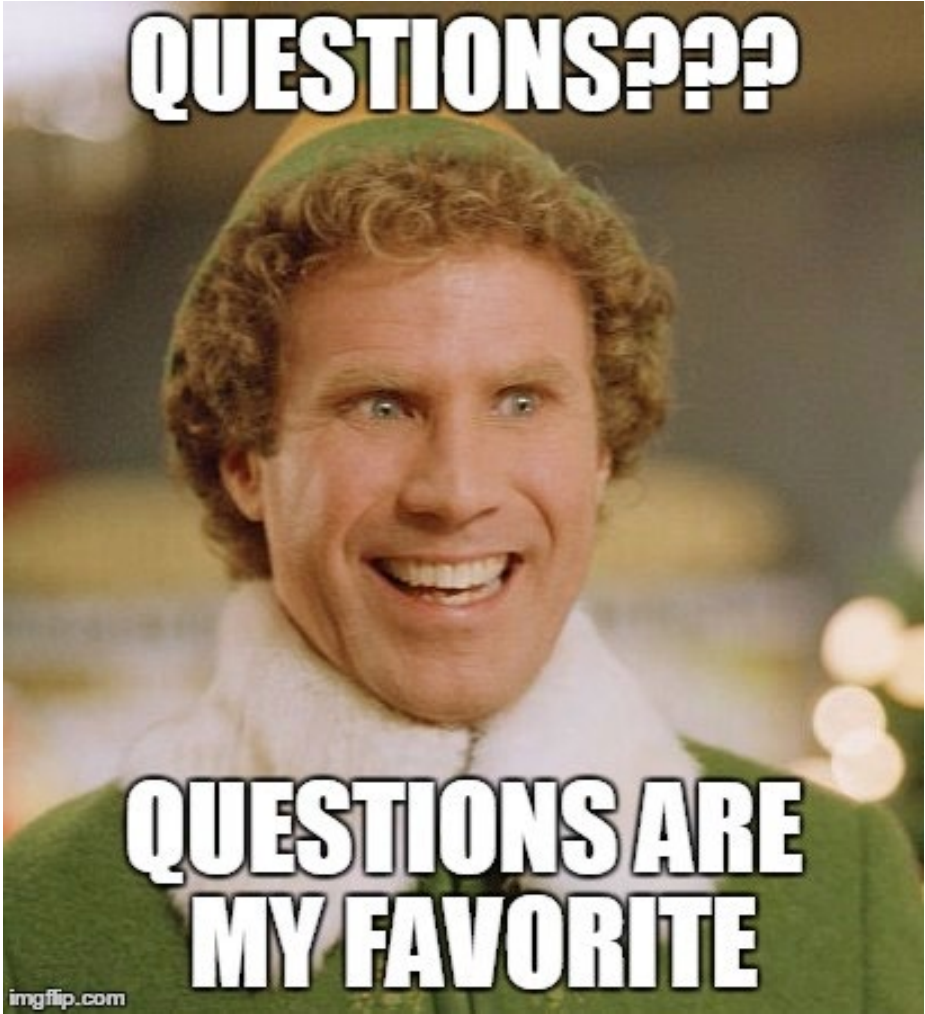
The Columbia/Snake River cruise market represents 30% of



# Resources

- State of Washington Tourism
- Reports for Ports of Kalama, Anacortes, Clarkston/Lewiston, Seattle
- Contact me!

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