

An aerial photograph of Seattle, Washington, featuring the Space Needle in the foreground on the left. The city's skyline is visible in the center, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The waterfront and harbor are on the right, with a large ship docked. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, suggesting a bright but slightly overcast day.

VISIT  
**seattle** 2013  
Annual Report



## Role of the Destination Marketing Organization

Visit Seattle, a private, nonprofit marketing organization, has served as Seattle/King County's official destination marketing organization (DMO) for more than 50 years. The goal of these marketing efforts is to enhance the employment opportunities and economic prosperity of the region.

Cover image: Nick Hall  
Photo this page: Jean-Marcus Strole Photography

### Dear Members and Tourism Partners,

Years of planning and promotion culminated in 2012 with the celebration of the Seattle World's Fair anniversary, not to mention some milestone arts and cultural exhibitions that jumpstarted economic growth and reminded us - those of us old enough to remember - of the 1960s Forward Thrust movement that transformed our city and inspired civic pride.

Now, the *next 50* is truly underway.

This is a time for re-building, re-invigorating, even re-branding. At the start of 2013, we say goodbye to *Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau* and hello to *Visit Seattle*. Our new corporate identity is more reflective of our role as a destination marketing organization across many client and customer bases, and we hope the evolution of Seattle's destination brand rises to meet the elegance and authenticity of our fair city.

In 2013, Seattle and the region continue to ride an optimistic wave of recovery in all segments of travel. Our foundation is strong and the building blocks are in place. 2012 was one for the record books, with record cruise travel, hotel occupancy, number of passengers utilizing Sea-Tac, world-class culture and robust growth in international tourism business. A brighter-than-expected base of citywide convention business that, in turn, buoyed restaurants, attractions, tour and transportation companies and myriad other businesses throughout the year.

Comparatively, 2013 looks to be an even stronger year for citywide convention business, with the second quarter projected to be up 40 percent over the same time period last year. This year also marks our second full year of operation for the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area (STIA), a dedicated marketing fund that allows Seattle to aggressively compete for leisure travel tourism business. Our successful *2 Days in Seattle* off-season leisure campaign will expand in target markets.

This is an election year and never before has a mayoral election been more critical for the needs of Seattle's business community. In 2012, our industry assumed "the voice of the visitor" on the downtown street scene issues, perhaps the largest unifying issue currently before our industry. In 2013, we'll amplify our voice on issues that matter to travel and tourism, from possible convention center expansion to proposed sports arena construction, waterfront access, parking and advocacy to promotion of South Lake Union, the city's most dynamic neighborhood. And we'll work to support and expand the robust pipeline of tourism development that lies as an opportunity before us, this year and in years to come.

Here's to our mutual success in 2013.

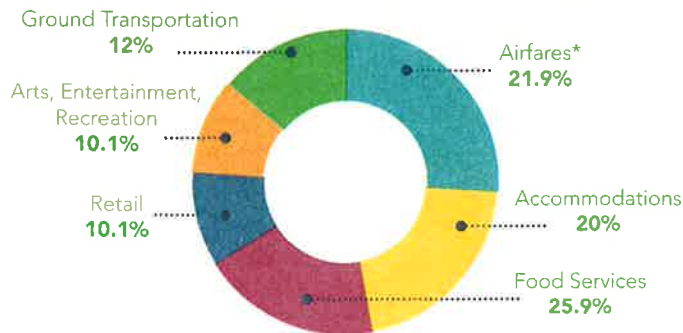
Sincerely,  
Steve Vissotzky, Chair

Tom Norwalk, President & CEO

Direct visitor spending benefits hotels, retailers, restaurants, attractions, transportation services and other businesses, and supports jobs in Seattle, King County and the region.

## \$5.9 Billion (+5.2%)

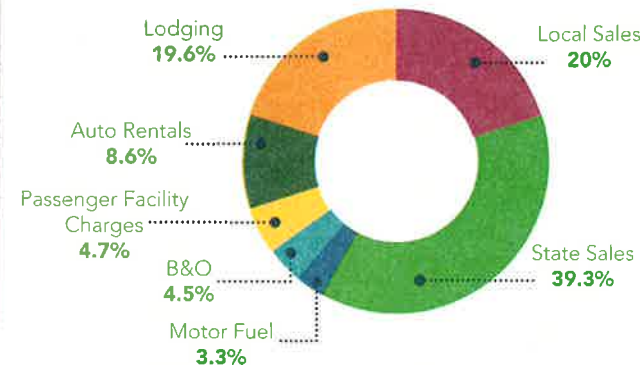
### 2012 King County Visitor Expenditures



\*One-way inbound domestic airfare of visitors

## \$479 Million (+5.7%)

### 2012 King County Visitor-Generated Tax Revenues



## 53,500

Jobs supported in King County (+2.6%)



## 10.2 Million

2012 King County Overnight Visitors (+2.9%)



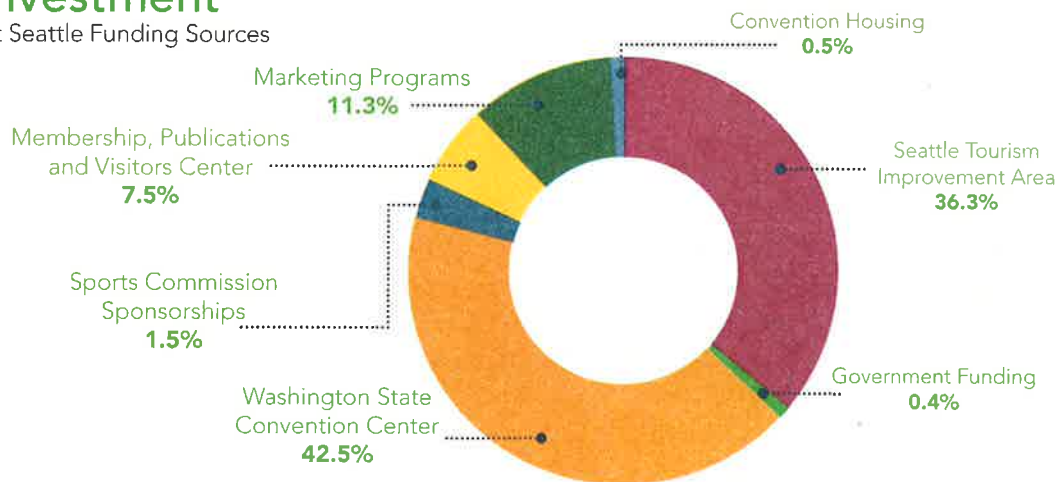
Of all travel spending in Washington State



Of all lodging tax receipts in Washington State

## Tourism Investment

### 2013 Projected Visit Seattle Funding Sources



### Funding Partnerships

- Seattle Tourism Improvement Area
- Port of Seattle
- Washington State Convention Center
- 4Culture
- Seattle Office of Arts & Culture
- Visit Seattle Member Organizations

Source: Dean Runyan Associates February 2013

## Tourism Advocacy

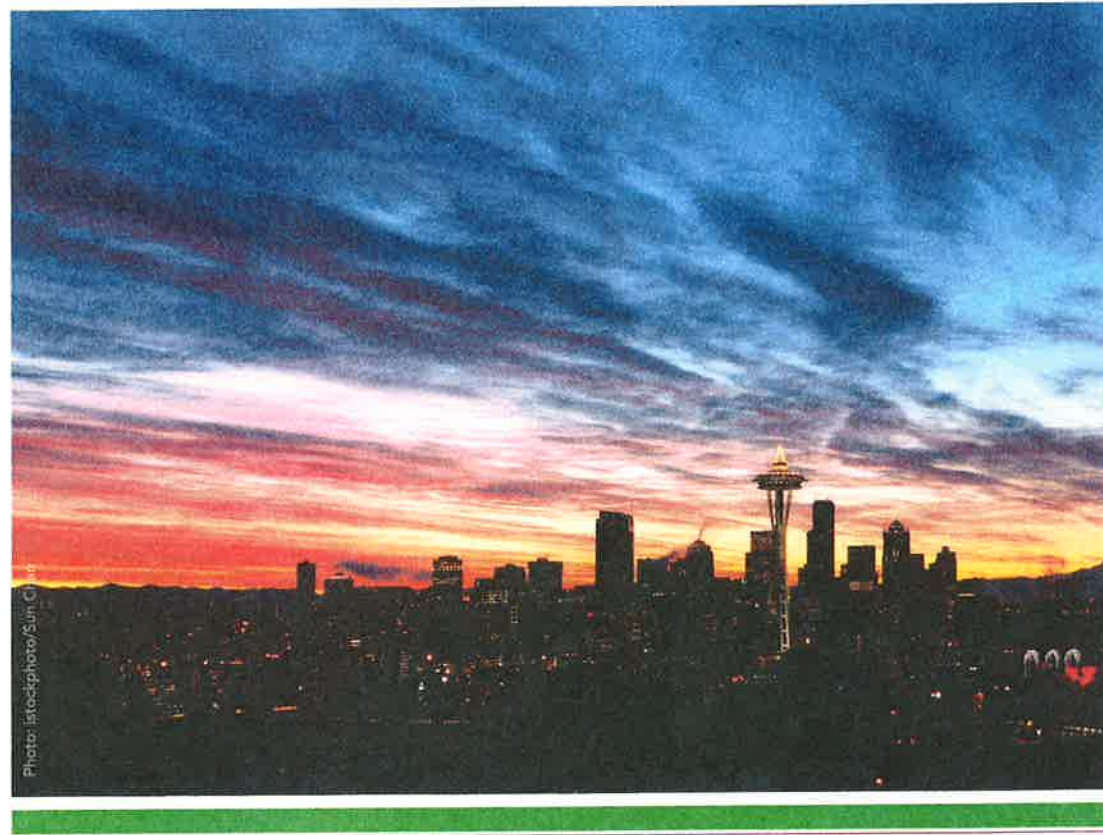
Work cooperatively with the U.S. Travel Association to effectively communicate the *Benefits of Travel* and *Travel Effect* campaigns to consumers, policymakers and business leaders. Continue to support Brand USA in order to ensure the maximum possible success in attracting international visitors to America. Promote and defend the value of meetings and conventions from indiscriminate government and corporate budget cuts. Expand the highly successful *Why Tourism Matters* advocacy campaign throughout the state.

## Washington Tourism Alliance Support

Play a leadership role in advocating for short-term bridge funding for WTA and support combined efforts to establish a successful long-term funding solution for an ongoing state destination marketing program.

## Elevate the Downtown Visitor Experience

Work to improve visitor wayfinding, information, signage, the taxicab experience and to expand visitor services. Continue to amplify the "voice of the visitor" in the civic dialogue on downtown streetscene concerns, working with partner organizations and Mayor McGinn's Center City Initiative.

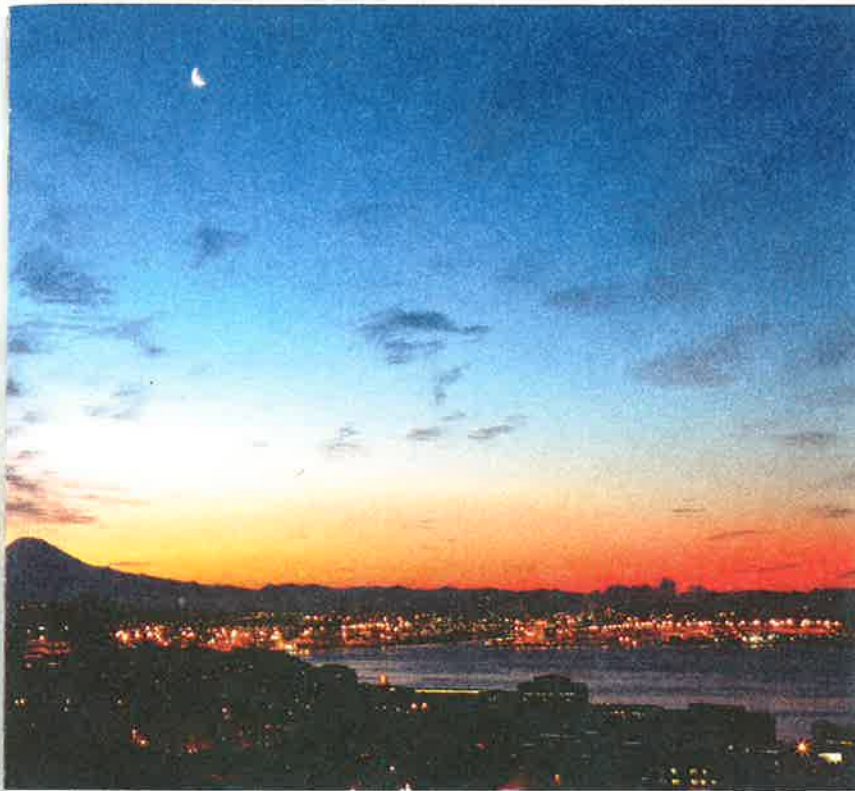


**\$852 Billion**

2012 U.S. Visitor Expenditures

**\$125 Billion**

2012 International Visitor Expenditures in the U.S.



## Waterfront Restoration, Access and Construction Mitigation

Promote a world-class central waterfront while also working to ensure downtown mobility, access, parking and economic prosperity for local businesses throughout construction of the voter-approved seawall and deep-bore tunnel. Support the stability of existing neighborhood businesses as well as new attractions and mobility-enhancing proposals such as the Union Street Gondola and linkage of the city's streetcar lines that would enhance mobility between neighborhoods.

## Support and Advocate for Washington State Convention Center Expansion

The Washington State Convention Center (WSCC), is significantly undersized for a market of Seattle's size and appeal. The WSCC is the smallest big-city convention center on the West Coast, with *Trade Show Executive* magazine ranking it 55<sup>th</sup> in size among major American meeting facilities. Relative size and lack of available dates have forced the WSCC to leave \$1.5 billion in documented convention business on the table since 2005. A long-overdue expansion to an already superb facility will help grow the region's share of lucrative association and corporate business.

## Establish a Cascadia Region Global Tourism Marketing Coalition

Explore and build upon opportunities for the destinations of Seattle, Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. and Portland to work together strategically for common tourism success. Leverage geographic proximity, cross-border mobility and growing tourism infrastructures to stimulate incremental tourism for the region as a whole.

**7.7 Million** **\$199 Billion**

Employed by  
U.S. travel industry

Travel industry  
payroll in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Travel Association 2012 estimates

The Seattle Tourism Improvement Area (STIA) completed its first full year of operation in 2012, doubling the destination's annual leisure marketing spend and, for the first time, amplifying Seattle's story in key visitor markets through new consumer travel campaigns, marketing partnerships and special events.

The STIA is a leisure travel marketing fund that enables Seattle to compete and grow tourism market share primarily in the off-season. It was approved by the Seattle City Council in late 2011 and is administered by Visit Seattle. A group of 54 downtown hotels contribute \$2 per occupied room night to the fund.

## STIA Ratepayer Advisory Board

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Sheraton Seattle Hotel

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Inn at the Market

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General Manager  
Silver Cloud Hotel -  
Seattle Stadium



## 2 Days in Seattle

Launched in January 2012, the *2 Days in Seattle* consumer travel campaign quickly spread by social media influencers via a unique partnership with Klout, as well as through marketing and advertising in its primary markets of Vancouver, B.C., Portland and San Francisco and additional markets such as Eastern Washington, Sacramento, Los Angeles and Dallas. Travel consumers proved receptive and the campaign extended through the year, increasing social media destination brand impressions of food, art, culture and more, growing revenue per available hotel room (RevPAR) and stimulating consumer calls to action. The popular campaign will grow in 2013 with increased engagement of social media influencers, new affinity targeting in California and use of new online and mobile outlets.



**DAYS IN  
SEATTLE**



The 2 Days in Seattle campaign continues in 2013 with ads on Vancouver's SkyTrain, Portland Max light rail, billboards, bus boards, radio and online throughout the West Coast.

## Food and Wine

One of the first initiatives of the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area, Bravo's *Top Chef* filmed its 10th season in the city. *Top Chef* is the number-one food show on cable TV, airing in more than 20 countries with an audience of approximately 1.6 million viewers per episode. A media value for Seattle's worldwide exposure was conservatively estimated by Visit Seattle to be \$10 million.

In 2013, Visit Seattle and the STIA will build on Seattle's "top" food and wine reputation with a continued partnership with the Washington State Wine Commission and production of Taste Washington, the nation's largest single-region wine and food event, as well as 20something -The New Vintage wine event.

## Holidays in Seattle

The *Holidays in Seattle* campaign, a partnership between Visit Seattle, the Downtown Seattle Association/Metropolitan Improvement District and Seattle Center, continues for its fifth year in 2013. The campaign is targeted to leisure travelers in Seattle's key feeder markets of Portland, Vancouver, B.C., Spokane and Northwest markets, driving prospective holiday visitors to Seattle's wealth of seasonal culture, events and hotel packages and programs. Campaign components include advertising, public relations, social media, a photo scavenger hunt and more. [holidaysinseattle.com](http://holidaysinseattle.com).

## Cruise

The Port of Seattle estimates 188 scheduled cruise ship calls and more than 425,950 cruise passengers in 2013. Visit Seattle continues to work with local and regional industry representatives to expand pre- and post-cruise visits and to increase destination cruise product by tour operators, travel agents, group leaders, airlines, rail and other travel suppliers.

## Sports and Events

As Seattle's professional sports profile rises, Visit Seattle and the Seattle Sports Commission will work closely together to market the destination to sports travelers, in addition to promoting the region's outstanding access to nature and outdoor recreation. A wealth of professional and amateur events will strengthen destination awareness in 2013, including the Pac-12 Women's Basketball Tournament in March, the Seattle Urban Trek in April and the NCAA Division Women's Volleyball Championships in December.

## LGBT Travel

As Visit Seattle builds on more than a decade of destination marketing and public relations in the LGBT travel market, the passage of Referendum 74 and marriage equality presents yet greater opportunity to expand and develop this important market. In partnership with the Greater Seattle Business Association (GSBA), Visit Seattle will promote Seattle as a destination for LGBT marriage and related travel, hotel packages, tours, culture, recreation and more.

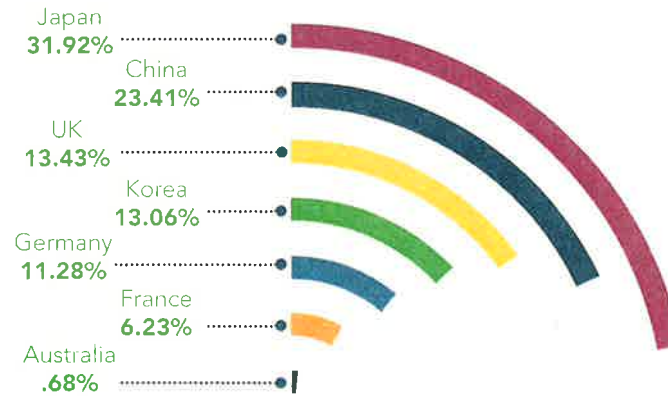
As seen  
on Bravo's



Approximately 20 percent of the region's visitors come from other countries. International tourism growth is stronger than domestic and, during the past five years, Asian and European flight service to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport has grown 50 percent to catch up with demand.

Recognizing that overseas visitors stay longer and spend more than domestic visitors, Visit Seattle is working in partnership with the Port of Seattle to target key overseas markets, operating tourism offices overseas and working closely with tour operators and media to leverage tourism business from dynamic growth in the overseas travel segment.

## Overseas Tourism Markets for Seattle/Washington State



Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, International Trade Commission, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, Jan. - Aug. 2012, Seattle as port of entry.

## 2012 International Inbound Activity



### 42 Press Trips

Hosted media  
(group and individuals)



### 32 FAM Trips

Hosted tour operators/travel professionals  
(group and individuals)

### Overseas Tourism Markets

#### Primary

Japan  
China  
UK  
South Korea  
Germany  
France

#### Emerging

India  
Australia

### Overseas Marketing Offices

Tokyo  
Beijing  
London  
Seoul  
Frankfurt  
Paris

### Travel Trade Clients and Customers

Tour operators  
Travel agencies  
Media  
Airline partners and other travel suppliers

### New Sea-Tac International Air Service

Delta – Shanghai-Seattle, June 2013  
Delta – Tokyo Haneda-Seattle, spring 2013  
All Nippon Airways (ANA) – Tokyo-Seattle, 2012  
Emirates – Dubai-Seattle, 2012  
Condor – Frankfurt-Seattle, 2011 (seasonal)  
Delta – Osaka and Beijing, 2010  
Icelandair – Reykjavik-Seattle, 2009  
Hainan – Beijing-Seattle, 2008  
Lufthansa – Frankfurt-Seattle, 2008



Meetings and conventions are the only segment of Seattle tourism that consistently stimulates long-term group business. The Visit Seattle convention sales team works cohesively with its counterparts at regional hotels, meeting venues and other businesses to maintain a competitive advantage for the destination.

Visit Seattle was named most-favored convention and visitors bureau/destination marketing organization in the Watkins Research Group 2012 *Survey of Veteran Meeting Planners*. The survey registered responses from 730 meeting planner professionals for 46 major cities in the U.S. and Canada.

## Key Objectives

### New Group Business Development

- Re-deploy citywide and in-house sales team to more proactively grow new business opportunities for the region.
- Focus on future citywide pace strategies for 2015 and beyond.
- Launch the Visit Seattle Business Development Task Force to help identify new group business utilizing the *Bring It Home* campaign, an outreach launched last year and designed to share Visit Seattle's resources to support local influencers in bringing their conferences home to Seattle.

### American Society of Association Executives

Visit Seattle is working to expand its ASAE partnership to further promote Seattle and Washington State as a group destination.

### Convention Services

Continue to provide personalized service to help build attendance as well as ensure the most excellent attendee experience. Share more historical information and business opportunities for each of the 2013/2014 citywide conventions.

### Voluntourism

In partnership with Seattle Works, Visit Seattle's nationally recognized "Voluntourism" program taps the charitable spirit of Seattle convention attendees, tour groups and leisure and business travelers to benefit Seattle's community organizations and causes. To learn more, visit [visitseattle.org/meetings/voluntourism](http://visitseattle.org/meetings/voluntourism).

### Environmental Sustainability

Visit Seattle's web site ([visitseattle.org/greenmeetings](http://visitseattle.org/greenmeetings)) features a green page designed for meeting planners, convention attendees and business travelers with a sampling of Seattle's environmentally progressive hotels, eco-friendly and LEED certified meeting and convention venues and links to regional leadership and sustainability programs.

## Washington State Convention Center Celebrates 25 Years

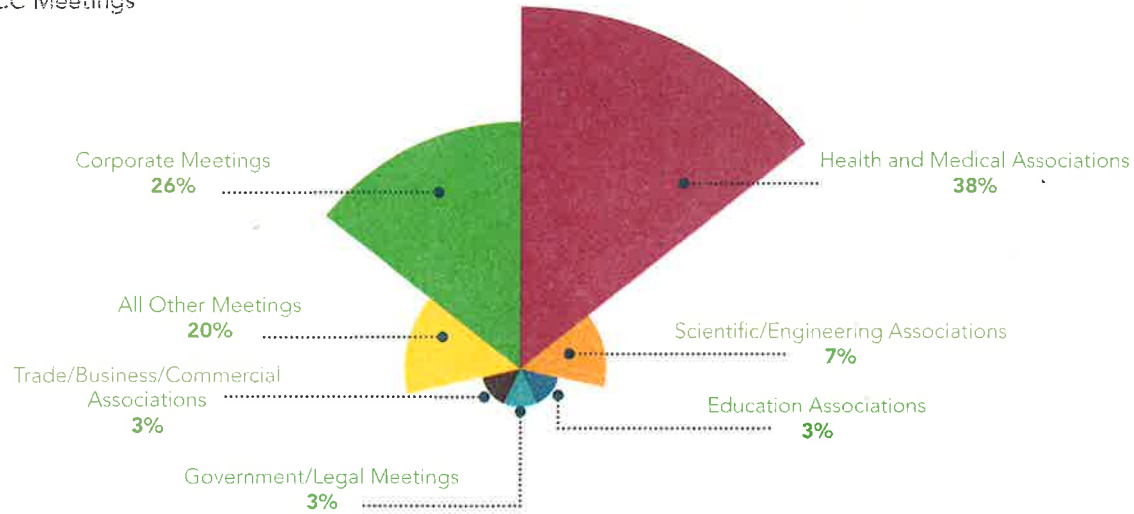


In June 2013, the Washington State Convention Center (WSCC) will celebrate its 25th anniversary. During its quarter century of operation the WSCC has attracted some \$4.5 billion in direct spending by convention delegates from outside the state, representing new money and jobs for Washington businesses and new tax revenue for the state and local governments. The WSCC remains the region's premier event facility and, to maintain this distinction, a \$20 million upgrade of finishes, furnishings and signage will be completed this year. The upgrade uses elegant colors and sustainable materials throughout, creating a warm and inviting environment that connects visitors to the beauty of the Northwest.

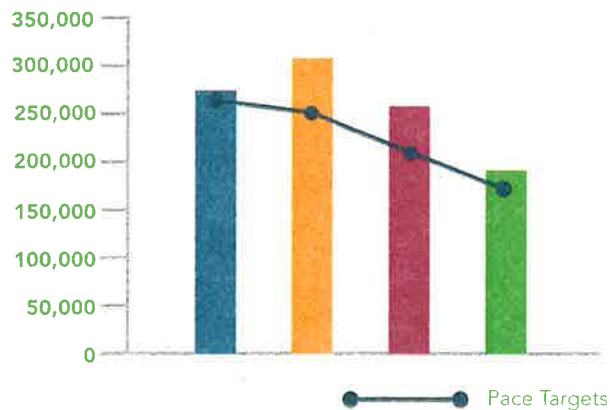


## 2013 Meeting Market Segments

WSCC Meetings



## Washington State Convention Center Definite Room Nights



	2012	2013	2014	2015
Definite Room Nights	269,763	308,284	252,224	198,075
Pace Targets	256,152	252,918	220,415	185,750
Pace Percentage	105%	122%	114%	107%
Variance	13,611	55,366	31,809	12,325
Consumption Targets	275,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Source: TAP Trends Analysis Projections				
WSCC Citywide Bookings	51	39	37	25
Source: Visit Seattle				

## Executive Committee

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Managing Director  
Grand Hyatt Seattle and Hyatt at Olive 8

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**Matt Van Der Peet**

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**Kevin Clark**

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**Carla Murray**

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Starwood Hotels

**Kathleen Paulson**

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and Strategic Partnership  
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Senior Director, Worldwide Partner  
Community Events  
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President & CEO  
Space Needle LLC

**Shannon Sheron**

General Manager  
Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue

**Tom Waithe**

Regional Director of Operations  
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**Bill Weise**

General Manager  
Silver Cloud Hotel - Seattle Stadium

**Jeffrey Wright**

Chairman  
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Port of Seattle Commissioner  
Port of Seattle

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Executive Secretary  
M.L. King County Labor  
Council, Seattle



**Brad Walker**

Walker & Associates

VISIT  
**seattle**

THE OFFICIAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION

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**visitseattle.org**

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