



WALTON
COUNTY
TOURISM

— 2022 —
TOURISM
UPDATE



TOURISM DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Passion is contagious. When you see someone going above and beyond to provide exceptional service, you know they care.

You recognize they are not only passionate about providing a service but also dedicated to helping someone - whether a resident or a visitor - create a memory. It's that passion and commitment to creating memories that separates our community from many others that offer a similar beach experience.



From the frontline staff at our local accommodations to the men and women who work in our restaurants, retailers and other businesses that provide our guests with entertainment, we say thank you. Walton County would not be the premier destination it is today without YOU.

In the tourism department, our staff works daily with local business owners who are doing some really exciting things. We see new restaurant concepts coming online, new experiences taking shape and opportunity after opportunity being seized!

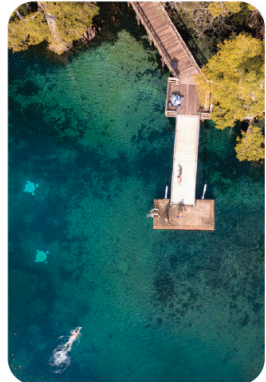
These are all positive signs pointing to a bright future. Based on what we experienced in 2022, we know Walton County will continue to see tremendous growth and success in the tourism marketplace. We saw more than 5.3 million visitors come to our community. Their direct spending, which totaled more than \$4.8 billion, contributed to an economic impact of more than \$7.2 billion for Walton County.

These numbers — all increases over 2021 — are staggering. And while this injection of spending certainly helps lower our residents' taxes (on average \$2,109 per household), it also helps put them to work, supporting more than 47,000 jobs in the county.

Tourism works for Walton County.

As we move into the future, we'll continue to explore ways to promote our destination while understanding we must also protect what makes our community special. We'll continue to explore opportunities to expand beach access, develop parking and transportation facilities, and enhance our amenities throughout the county.

From our beach operations team to our marketing, communications, sales and visitor center staff, we look forward to working with the community to keep our destination strong as we share the authentic Walton County story.



The Value of WALTON COUNTY VISITATION



47,000

Walton County jobs supported by tourism

VISITORS SPEND \$889 EVERY DAY OF THEIR TRIP

5.3 MILLION VISITORS SPEND **\$4.8 BILLION**

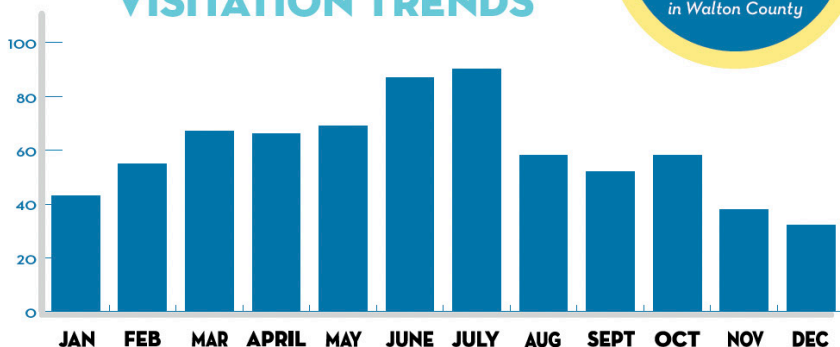
\$7.2 BILLION

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT



VISITORS SAVE **Walton County**
HOUSEHOLDS AN AVERAGE OF
\$2,109 IN TAXES

2022 VISITATION TRENDS

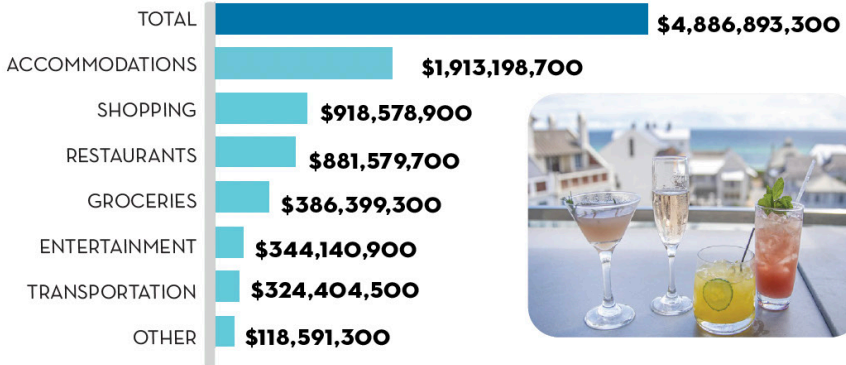


Visitors Account for

76%

of all retail spending
in Walton County

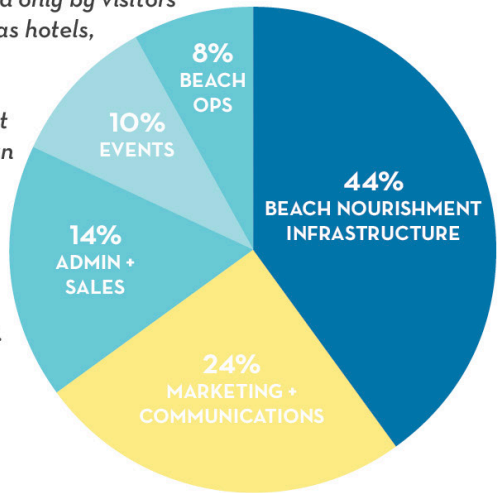
2022 VISITORS DIRECT SPENDING



FUNDED *by* TOURISM

The Tourist Development Tax is paid only by visitors staying in short-term rentals, such as hotels, condos and beach houses.

While the State of Florida has strict rules governing how those funds can be spent, many of the activities and amenities they support - such as bike trails, public beach accesses, lifeguards, and special events - enhance the lives of residents as well as visitors.



TOTAL 2022 TDT COLLECTIONS

\$261,000
NORTH OF THE BAY

\$62 MILLION
SOUTH WALTON



SHORT-TERM VISITORS FUND
the Tourism Department through a
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX

5% BED TAX IN SOUTH WALTON **2%** BED TAX NORTH OF THE BAY

MARKETING

Targeted advertising keeps South Walton **top-of-mind** with our loyal visitors, **strengthens** our brand, and **reaches** out to new markets to help create **balanced** and robust demand.

\$1 SPENT = **\$490**
on tourism marketing in visitor spending



SALES & VISITOR SERVICES

17,712 PEOPLE EXPLORED OUR
VISITOR CENTER IN 2022

18 MEETING TRADE SHOWS reaching 500 meeting planners

5 MEETING PLANNER EVENTS reaching 120 planners

6 MEETING PLANNER SPONSORSHIPS reaching 800 planners

PR + COMMUNICATIONS

Public Relations efforts result in Walton County's inclusion in media outlets such as: **Travel + Leisure**, **Wall Street Journal**, **Fodor's Travel**, **AFAR**, **Condé Nast Traveler**, and many more!



Communications works to develop the Walton County story **and help connect our community partners** with opportunities that strengthen their business.

Check our online **South Walton Expert Guide** for tons of helpful info
visitsouthwalton.com/southwaltonexpert

BEACH OPERATIONS

Regional Beach Access Updates and Expected Opening Dates

- **Scenic Gulf Drive RBA:** Located at 907 Scenic Gulf Drive, this is the second regional beach access in Miramar Beach. *Opened Oct. 2022!*
- **Seagrove Beach RBA:** In the permitting stage. *Construction expected to start in late Fall 2023.*
- **Walton Dunes RBA:** This new RBA will be located on Beachfront Trail in Santa Rosa Beach. It will have parking, restrooms and an ADA accessible boardwalk. *Design/permitting efforts are underway!*

Neighborhood Beach Access Renovations

The Walton County Tourism Department has been hard at work renovating and sometimes replacing entire neighborhood beach accesses, with the goal of keeping them in good condition and making upgrades before the integrity or appearance degrades from wear and tear.

South Walton Fire District

The Beach Safety Division, which is funded by the Walton County Tourism Department, had a budget of about \$2.5 million in 2022. In total, 55 beach safety staff were employed during 2022, the majority of whom worked to keep beaches safe during the busy spring and summer months. SWFD lifeguards performed 147 water rescues and responded to more than 400 medical calls in 2022, despite relatively calm surf conditions compared to years past. This demand for emergency services means beach safety is growing even more important in our coastal community. The SWFD Beach Safety program also enjoyed tremendous success in its 2022 Junior Lifeguard Program, enrolling a record number of participants for a summer of fun, education, and lifeguarding experience.





Parking Projects

393 Parking Project: This capital improvement project will have restroom facilities and approximately 90 parking spaces, including dedicated parking for ADA, LSV* and bicycles. *Construction expected to be advertised Summer 2023!*

Miramar Beach Municipal Parking Project: A 4.5-acre parcel in Miramar Beach will be used for a beach-related municipal parking project. Property development will be included in overall design/permit efforts for the Driftwood Road/Ellis Road corridor. *In conceptual design phase.*

Grayton Beach Parking Project: Located on County Hwy 283, design/permit efforts are underway. When finished, this parking area will include more than 185+ parking spaces, restrooms, landscaping, and site lighting. Dedicated parking will be available for ADA, RV, LSV* and bicycles. *Final design/permitting stage with construction is expected to be completed by Summer 2024.*

Driftwood Road Municipal Parking Project: A one-acre parcel located at 76 Driftwood Road in Miramar Beach. Plans include more than 67 parking spaces with dedicated parking for ADA, LSV*, bicycles, a public transit stop, electric vehicle charging stations and a restroom facility. *Design and permitting phase expected to be completed by early Summer 2024.*

Eastern Lake Parking Municipal Parking Facility: Once completed, this .5-acre parcel will contain 15 standard parking spaces to include dedicated ADA parking, 18 spaces for low-speed vehicles and bicycle racks. *Opening anticipated for Fall 2023.*

Other Projects

Grayton Beach Community Center: Located at the junction of Hotz Ave. and DeFuniak St. in Grayton Beach, this 1,600 sq. ft. building will house a local information station, restrooms, showers, observation deck, boardwalks to the beach and access to the South Walton Beach Tram. *Construction expected to finish Summer 2024!*

Camp Creek Lake Canoe/Kayak Launch: Located off Camp Creek Road South and North of Hwy. 30A. Plans include limited parking, landscaping, an ADA accessible pier with canoe/kayak launch and stormwater systems. *Construction expected to begin Fall 2023.*

Cessna Landing Park Improvements: Plans include improvements to two piers and two picnic pavilions, hardscape, landscape, site utilities, site grading/drainage and stormwater systems. *Work expected to begin Fall 2023.*

Kellogg Nature Center: Proposed community/nature center will be a 1,600 sq. ft. assembly-style building for nature observation and community gatherings. Park will include community center, nature trails, bayside park, canoe/kayak launch and other public park amenities. *Construction expected to start Fall 2023!*

* LSV (Low Speed Vehicle)

BEACH OPERATIONS

\$3.9 MILLION

IN DESTINATION IMPROVEMENTS

MAINTENANCE + CLEANUP



- 20 MILES OF BEACH
- 42 MILES OF MULTI-USE PATHS
- 10 REGIONAL BEACH ACCESS POINTS
Complete with parking, restrooms and lifeguard stations
- 47 NEIGHBORHOOD BEACH ACCESS POINTS
- 11 BAY & LAKE ACCESS POINTS

Garbage Collection

Beach maintenance crews removed 1,083 tons of garbage from approximately 736 garbage collection stations on the beach and bay in 2022. That's the equivalent of 108,396 individual bags of trash! An additional 26,538 Leave No Trace items were also removed from South Walton beaches. These items often include beach chairs, umbrellas, towels and other beach gear.



**WALTON
COUNTY
TOURISM**

BEACH OPERATIONS

2022-2023 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Danny Glidewell, Chairman, District 2 Commissioner
William "Boots" McCormick, Vice Chair, District 1 Commissioner
Vacant, District 3 Commissioner
Donna Johns, District 4 Commissioner
Tony Anderson, District 5 Commissioner

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

SWFD BEACH LIFEGUARD PROGRAM
TURTLE NEST MONITORING
VOLUNTEER BEACH AMBASSADORS
INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP
CULTURAL ARTS ALLIANCE OF WALTON COUNTY (CAA)
LOCAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS
SOUTH WALTON ARTIFICIAL REEF ASSOCIATION (SWARA)
STATE PARKS PARKING PROGRAM

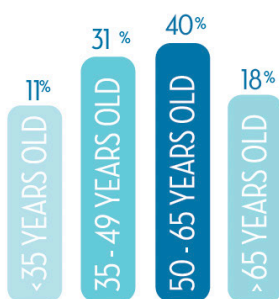
South Walton 2022 VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS



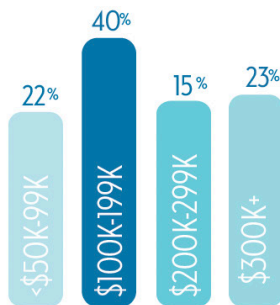
21%
FLY



79%
DRIVE



AGE OF VISITORS



HOUSEHOLD INCOME



5.4 PEOPLE
AVERAGE PARTY SIZE



AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY WAS
5.6 NIGHTS



EVERY DAY A NEW DISCOVERY



SOUTH WALTON
FLORIDA