

City and Borough of Wrangell  
Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau  
AGENDA

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Tuesday, June 17, 2025  
12:00 PM

Location: Borough Assembly Chambers  
City Hall

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

- a. [Economic](#) Development Director Report May 2025
- b. [Visitor](#) Economic Report & OSU Study Summary
- c. [Wrangell](#) Visitor Industry Report 2025
- d. [OSU](#) Resident Sentiment of Tourism Report

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

**7. PERSON'S TO BE HEARD**

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

- [a.](#) Review and approval to move forward with American Cruise Line negotiations.
- [b.](#) Cruise Ship Season Debrief – Ruby Princess & Grand Princess Visits
- [c.](#) Review and input on the 3rd and 4th of July Logistics

**10. MEMBER REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Date:** Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025

**To:** Economic Development Board

**From:** Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director

**Subject:** Department Report Highlights

1. Fourth of July Cruiseship Logistics
2. Community Addressing Project
3. Waterfront Master Plan Work Session
4. American Cruise Line Presentation
5. Trust Land Office Partnership and Prospective Land Exchange
6. Entitlement Lands and Timber Initiative
7. Lumber Grading Certification Workshop
8. Relocation Guide
9. Alder Top Village Subdivision
10. Deep Water Port Project and Land Disposal
11. Chamber of Commerce Update
12. Downtown Signage Project
13. Conferences, Conventions and Events Manual
14. Planned Unit Development – SEARHC Prospective Housing Development
15. Industrial Land for Sale
16. Wrangell Medical Center
17. Tlingit and Haida Childcare
18. Parks and Recreation Playground Fundraising Campaign
19. Oregon State University Tourism Academic Research
20. Data Center
21. CBW Title 16 – Public Lands - Repeal and Replacement
22. Sales Tax Cap Increase and Tax for Sales on board Cruise ships within Borough Waters
23. Digital Marketing Certification Course 120 Hrs.



Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Visitor Economic Report & Tourism Sentiment Report  
June 2025

## Wrangell Visitor Industry 2025

*Prepared by Rain Coast Data*

This detailed economic report evaluates the performance and projections of Wrangell's tourism sector, with a particular focus on cruise activity, visitor spending, accommodations, and business sentiment.

### Key Highlights:

- 2024 Performance:
  - Wrangell hosted 25,000 visitors, a 3% decline from 2023, mostly due to cruise cancellations.
  - Visitors spent \$5.9 million in 2024; air travelers spent the most per person.
- 2025 Forecast:
  - Projected to be the largest tourism year in 20 years, with 40,000–45,000 visitors expected.
  - Cruise passengers projected to make up 92% of all visitors.
  - Visitor spending projected to reach \$7.6 million, with a 74% increase in cruise capacity.
  - 117 port calls from 20 ships expected.
- Cruise Sector:
  - Cruise visitation declined in 2024 due to industry disruptions but is expected to rebound.
  - 2026 projections suggest a record-breaking 80,000 cruise visitors, with expanded large-ship arrivals.
- Employment & Revenue:
  - Tourism accounts for 10% of Wrangell's private sector jobs.
  - The visitor sector generated \$3.5 million in earnings in 2023 from 108 annualized jobs.
- Accommodations:
  - 2024 hosted 2,000 overnight visitors with \$2.4 million in total local spending.
  - STRs earned \$327,155 in 2024; hotel spending exceeded \$1 million.
  - 109 rooms/units available in Wrangell across various formats.

- Visitor Activities:
  - Anan Wildlife Observatory, Stikine River, and LeConte Glacier tours generated \$1.36 million in 2024.
- Business Sentiment:
  - 89% of visitor industry leaders report a positive outlook for 2025.
  - Primary concerns include transportation reliability, infrastructure readiness, workforce shortages, and increasing federal regulations on guided fishing.
- Challenges Identified:
  - Loss of independent travelers due to ferry service cuts.
  - Lack of capacity for growth at Anan limits high-end tourism expansion.
  - Increasing competition from other Alaska ports like Klawock.

## **Wrangell 2025 - Resident Sentiment of Tourism**

*Prepared by OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab*

This report focuses on Wrangell residents' attitudes toward tourism, particularly in relation to community quality of life, infrastructure, and sustainable growth.

### *Key Findings:*

- Overall Sentiment:
  - 52% of residents believe tourism's benefits outweigh the costs.
  - 64% report tourism positively impacts their quality of life.
  - 20% believe costs outweigh the benefits.
- Demographics:
  - Survey sampled 241 respondents (~12% of the community), using stratified random sampling.
  - Majority were long-term residents; most respondents were not employed in hospitality.
- Perceptions by Age & Residency:
  - Older and newer residents are more supportive of tourism than middle-aged, long-term residents.
  - Positive sentiment decreases with mid-length residency (6–15 years).
- Common Perceived Benefits:
  - Job creation, tax revenue, economic support for businesses.



- Common Perceived Costs:
  - Overcrowding (ranked unusually high for a small community), infrastructure strain, and traffic congestion.
- Vacation Rentals & Environment:
  - Residents view vacation rentals more favorably than in most peer destinations.
  - Environmental concerns exist but are less pronounced than in other cruise communities.
- Policy Priorities for Tax Revenue:
  - Top priority: Community projects (e.g., beautification, parks, trails).
  - Secondary: Economic development.
  - Least priority: Environmental projects.
- Cruise-Specific Findings:
  - Residents are generally supportive of current cruise ship schedules and sizes.
  - Few feel they directly benefit from tourism (employment/business), but indirect benefits likely go unrecognized.
- Benchmarking:
  - Compared to similar destinations, Wrangell exhibits stronger pro-tourism sentiment and lower perceived costs.
  - Resident understanding of tourism economics is above average.

# Wrangell Visitor Economy 2025



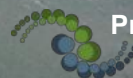
June 2025

Prepared for



CITY & BOROUGH OF

# Wrangell



Prepared by  
Rain Coast Data

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# Wrangell Visitor Economy Summary

Wrangell's 2024 tourism season brought in 3% fewer tourists than in 2023, despite original projections for a larger number of visitors. However, Wrangell's 2025 tourism season is expected to be its biggest in terms of visitor volume in twenty years as large cruise ships visit the community. Wrangell is expected to attract 40,000 to 45,000 tourists, depending on how full the cruise ships are.

**Total Tourist Arrival and Spending:** In 2024, visitors spent an estimated \$5.9 million in Wrangell. Based on current visitor projections, tourists are likely to spend \$7.6 million in Wrangell during the summer of 2025 (assuming 88% capacity for the cruise ships).

**\$5.9 million**  
tourist spending  
in Wrangell in  
2024

## Overnight Visitors in Commercial

**Accommodations:** In 2024, an estimated 2,000 overnight guests stayed in Wrangell at hotels, inns, bed & breakfasts, and short-term rentals. These visitors spent \$1.38 million on lodging. Including other local expenditures, their total estimated spending in Wrangell reached \$2.4 million.

**2,000**  
Hotel, short-term rental and  
other overnight  
visitors in  
2024

**Cruise Projections:** Wrangell welcomed 21,207 cruise passengers in 2024. If ships run at full capacity in 2025, 41,968 cruise ship passengers would visit the community, a 74% capacity increase from 2024. In 2025, Wrangell is scheduled to receive 117 port calls from 20 ships. Cruise passengers are expected to make up 92% of the community's tourists in 2025. Based on the current schedule, in 2026 Wrangell is expected to have a record breaking tourism season with nearly 80,000 cruise visitors.

**74%**  
Projected  
increase in cruise  
ship passenger  
capacity in  
2025

**Positive Outlook:** The 2025 business climate survey of Wrangell's visitor industry indicates strong optimism, with 89% of respondents holding a positive economic outlook for the upcoming year, including 44% of Wrangell's business leaders that expect their prospects to be better or much better over the next year.

**89%**  
positive outlook  
for 2025 visitor  
season

# Overview of Tourism in Wrangell

In summer 2024, Wrangell welcomed just over 25,000 air, cruise, ferry and yacht visitors—about a 800 less than in 2023— and well short of the originally projected 35,000.

The shortfall resulted from losing 15 cruise visits. The cancellations were due to the bankruptcy of American Queen Voyages; three vessels opting to visit Klawock instead of Wrangell; and the Westerdam cancelling its 4th of July visit because of staffing concerns associated with the holiday.

As of June 2025, seven scheduled Wrangell visits have been canceled, with those ships choosing Klawock over Wrangell.

While Wrangell briefly experienced an influx of large cruise ships in the early 2000s, its tourism model over the past two decades has centered on ferry passengers, smaller cruise ships, and independent travelers. While that model had success, the market has changed. Deep reductions in Alaska Marine Highway System service resulted in an 92% decline in ferry-based independent tourism over the past decade. At the same time cruise numbers are increasing. Wrangell is scheduled to receive four port calls from large cruise ships in 2025, in addition to a strong number of visitors on small and mid-sized ships. In 2026, for the first time in more than two decades, Wrangell is expected break tourism visitation records as nearly 80,000 cruise ship passengers are scheduled to visit the community.

Wrangell is an attractive port, known for its authentic “working waterfront” atmosphere, offering visitors an experience distinct from ports with a stronger retail focus. Situated at the mouth of the Stikine River, the area is rich in wildlife and cultural heritage with historical significance, such as Chief Shakes Island, Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park—home to the largest concentration of rock engravings in Southeast—and the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness. Wrangell’s nature-based attractions are world-class. The Anan Wildlife Observatory is renowned for its bear viewing; however the area’s July–August peak access is limited, meaning that attraction has very little room for the large-scale growth needed. To fully benefit from shifting visitor patterns, Wrangell must adapt its tourism strategy.

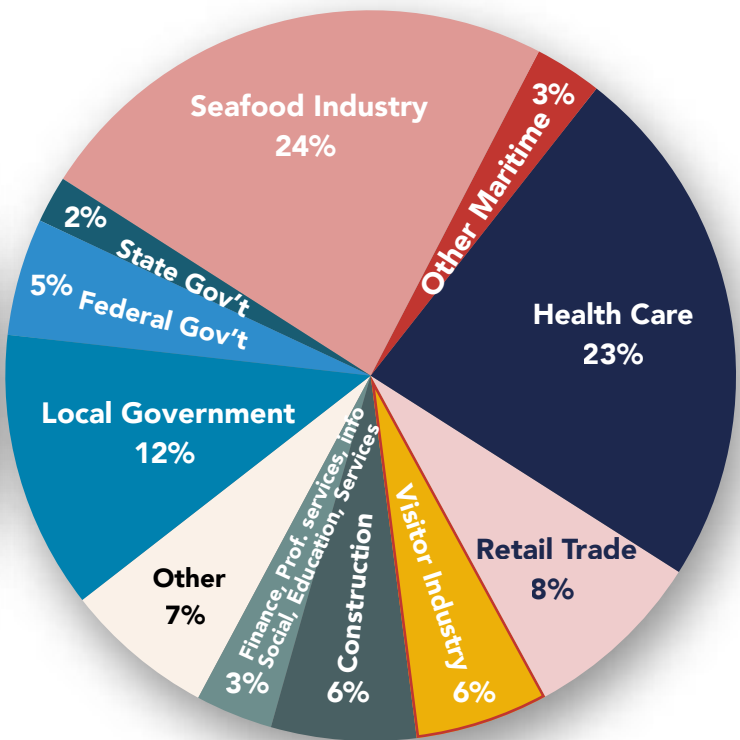
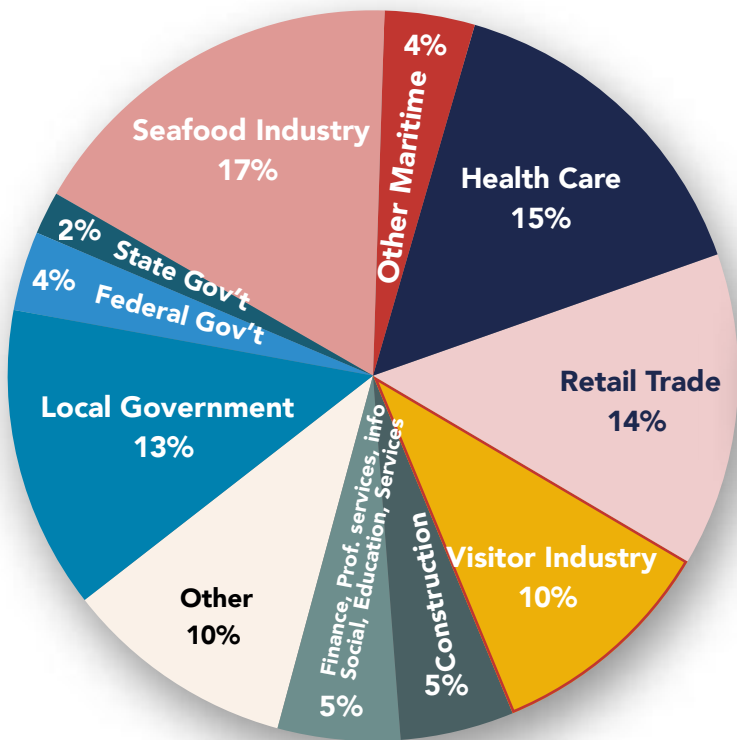
To fully be successful Wrangell must present itself as a competitive port, as other tourism-friendly destinations vie for the same customers. Developing more shore-excursions that appeal to higher-volume cruise markets presents both a challenge and a critical opportunity for Wrangell’s tourism future.

# Visitor Industry Employment

Wrangell had 1,052 year-round equivalent jobs and nearly \$60 million in workforce earnings in 2023. In 2023, visitor industry employment made up 10% of all private sector employment in Wrangell, accounting for 108 annual average jobs with associated workforce earnings of \$3.5 million.<sup>1</sup> The visitor industry accounted for 6% of total Wrangell workforce earnings in 2023. All four quarters of 2024 data is not yet available.

Annualized **Jobs**  
1,052 Total Jobs  
108 **Visitor** Sector Jobs

Employment **Earnings**  
Total Earnings \$59 million  
**Visitor** Sector \$3.5 million



Wrangell’s visitor sector is smaller than the region as a whole; the Southeast Alaska visitor industry represented 18% of all jobs and 13% of all employment earnings in 2023.

<sup>1</sup> **Sources:** Alaska Department of Labor Employment & Wage data; US Census Nonemployer (self-employment) Statistics. **Notes:** Due to data confidentiality, some figures are estimates by Rain Coast Data, based on all available inputs. Since annual average employment measures monthly jobs on an annual basis, a visitor industry job that lasts three months counts as one-quarter of an annual average job. Therefore total people employed by the visitor industry last year is a much higher number. 2024 data is not yet fully available.

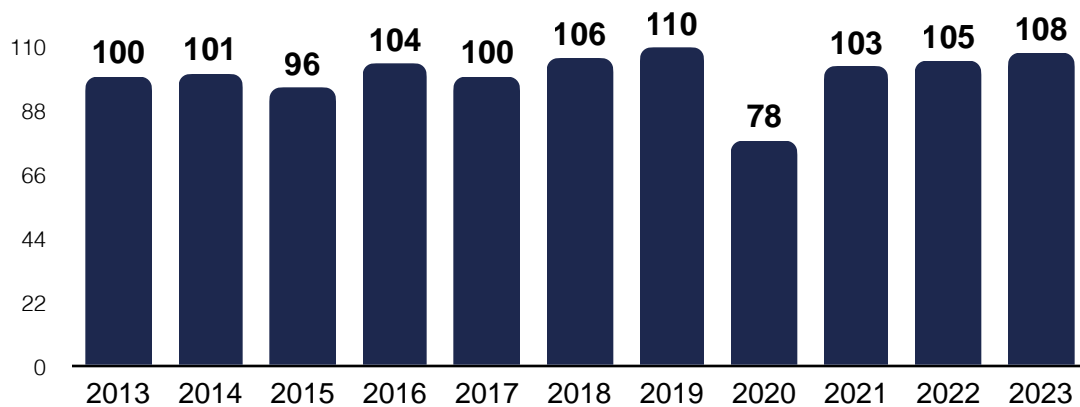
## Annual Visitor Industry Employment 2014-2023

Visitor sector employment in Wrangell has been remarkably steady (with the exception of pandemic year 2020) at just over 100 annualized jobs over the past decade. While peak worker count is significantly higher, using an annualized count (year-round equivalent job analysis) allows tourism jobs to be compared across sectors, and is a better way of making annual comparisons.

The average visitor sector wage increased by 4% between 2022 and 2023, while total workforce earnings in that sector increased by 3%.

	Year 2014	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023	% Change 2022-2023
Average Visitor Industry Wage	\$22,227	\$24,066	\$27,259	\$31,955	\$30,961	\$31,293	\$32,520	4%
Total Visitor Industry Employment	101	100	106	110	103	105	108	3%
Total Visitor Workforce Earnings in millions	\$2.24	\$2.40	\$2.89	\$3.52	\$3.19	\$3.29	\$3.51	7%

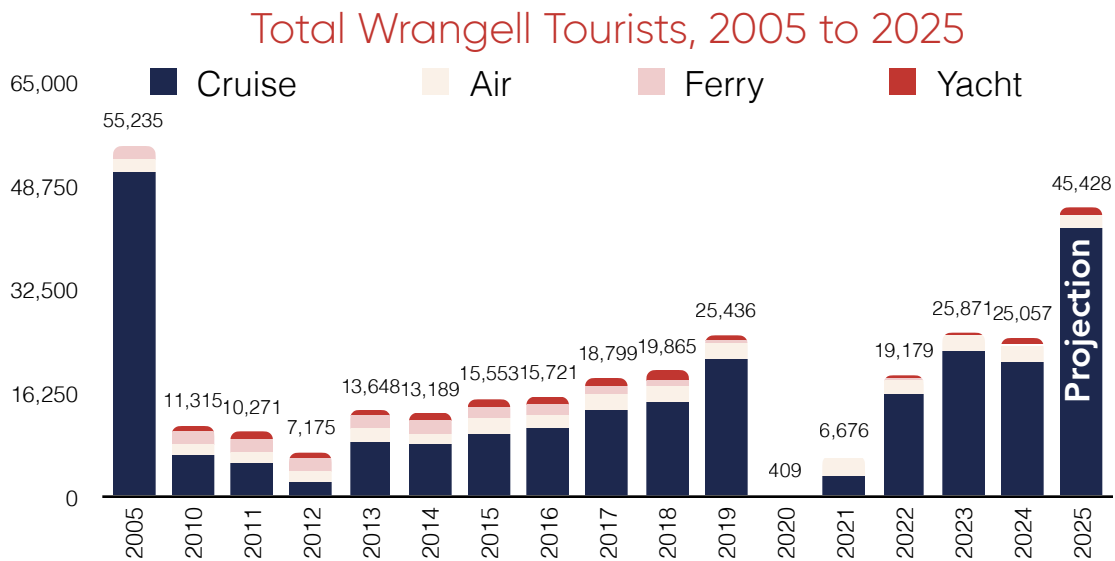
## Wrangell Visitor Sector Jobs, Annualized: 2013 to 2023



**Note:** Annualized employment (or year-round employment) tracks total workers each month of the year, sums the monthly total, and divides that number by twelve. **Source:** Alaska Department of Labor and US Census Nonemployer (self-employment).

# Change in the Visitor Industry

## Total Tourist Arrivals



In 2025, Wrangell is projected to host 45,428 tourists in the community, assuming ships are at full capacity, and 40,400 if they are at 88% capacity, as they were in 2024. Either way, it will be Wrangell's biggest tourism year since 2005. Wrangell receives tourists from cruise ships, airplanes, ferries, and yachts.

Wrangell has developed a boutique visitors sector, supporting just over 100 annualized jobs - a number that does not change much over time. The tourism industry in Wrangell has long focused on Anan. Because the number of people allowed to visit Anan each year is capped by Forest Service permits, and the season for Anan is quite limited, tourism growth in Wrangell has been partially capped as well.<sup>2</sup> The community had focused on ferry tourism—visitors who would spend multiple days and nights in the community, taking several high-end tours—but reduced and unattractive ferry schedules due to budget cuts have all but eliminated ferry tourism. Wrangell's current challenge is how to monetize growth once the boutique tours are fully booked.

<sup>2</sup> The Forest Services caps the permits due the bears' natural behavior and tolerance for human interaction while fishing. Before the permits were regulated by the Forest Service, Wrangell guides worked together to manage visitor/bear interactions safely.



## Estimated Summer Tourists to Wrangell 2010-2025

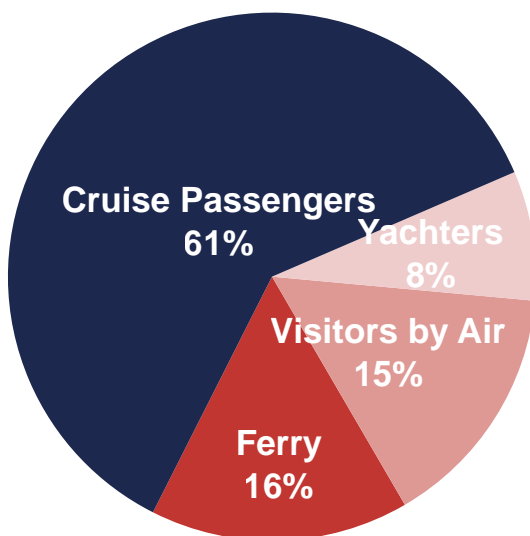
Summer Visitors to Wrangell	2010	2014	2024	2025	% Change 2024-2025
<b>Total Visitors</b>	<b>11,907</b>	<b>13,256</b>	<b>25,057</b>	<b>45,428</b>	<b>73%</b>
Cruise	6,779	8,096	21,207	41,968	98%
Air	1,768	2,008	2,600	2,300	-12%
Ferry	2,000	2,100	170	160	-6%
Transient Vessels (includes yachts)	960	1,052	1,080	1,000	-7%

**Air:** US Bureau of Transportation Statistics RITA arriving passengers. **Cruise Passengers:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska. Small cruise ship schedules with research regarding total capacity. **Alaska Marine Highway System:** Annual Traffic Volume Reports and direct data request. **\*Yacht** counts provided by City and Borough of Wrangell. Due to a change in the counting process, these figures are no longer comparable to past years. "Summer tourists" are calculated in a variety of ways. All yacht and cruise passengers are considered "tourists." Air and ferry passengers are calculated by subtracting October to April average passenger arrivals from monthly summer passenger arrivals. From this number total seafood processing workers in Wrangell per summer is subtracted.

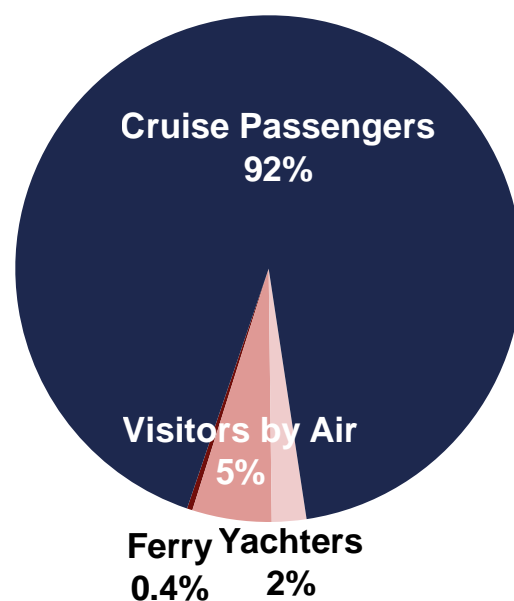
### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival

In 2025, 92% of all tourists are expected to arrive via cruise ship, while 5% will arrive by air. Based on current ferry schedules, less than 1% of all tourists will arrive via ferry. In 2014, 61% of all tourists were from cruise ships, and 16% arrived by ferry.

Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival  
in Wrangell 2014



Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival  
in Wrangell 2025



# Summer Visitation and Spending Analysis

In 2024, summer tourists spent nearly \$6 million in the Wrangell economy. The visitor spending analysis was conducted using a full accounting of visitor spending through the City and Borough of Wrangell sales tax receipts for businesses serving visitors. Depending on the category, total sales tax receipts for winter months were subtracted from summer months to determine "visitor spending." Accommodation tax and short term rental sales figures were also used. Using this analysis, Wrangell's visitors spent \$5.9 million in 2024.

## Total Tourist Spending, 2024

Summer Spending by Visitors by Category	2024
<b>Total estimated summer tourist spending</b>	<b>\$5,914,820</b>
Food, Beverages	\$1,969,159
Excursions and Transportation	\$1,602,187
Accommodation	\$1,383,618
Visitor Retail Spending	\$959,854

Note that Wrangell has a sales tax cap of \$3,000 that applies both to goods and services. Sales may have been missed by this analysis if they were over \$3,000; however only for the portion over \$3,000.

Using this analysis, and combining it with how many days each type of visitor stayed, depending on mode, and estimates of much spending per person occurred per spending category, estimates of spending by visitor type can be established.

## Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2024 Estimates

	2024	Total Estimated Spending Per Passenger	Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2024
<b>Total Tourists</b>	<b>26,307</b>	<b>\$238</b>	<b>\$5,914,820</b>
Cruise Passengers	21,207	\$146	\$3,098,947
Visitors by Air	2,600	\$954	\$2,480,761
Yacht and Ferry	1,250	\$268	\$335,116

If the assumptions from analysis are applied to 2025 projections, it is estimated that tourists will spend approximately \$7.6 million in the Wrangell economy this year, based on 88% capacity of cruise ships.

## Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2025 Projections

	2025	Total Estimated Spending Per Visitor	Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2025
<b>Total Tourist Projections</b>	<b>40,392</b>	<b>\$189</b>	<b>\$7,618,017</b>
Cruise Passengers	36,932	\$146	\$5,396,818
Visitors by Air	2,300	\$827	\$1,901,163
Yacht and Ferry	1,160	\$276	\$320,036



# Cruise Passengers

Southeast Alaska cruise passenger arrivals hit a new regional record in 2024 of 1.73 million cruise passengers, surpassing the 2023 record by 4%. Wrangell's cruise numbers declined by 8% in 2024 to 21,207 passengers. The projection had been for a capacity of 31,437 cruise passengers. Several things occurred.

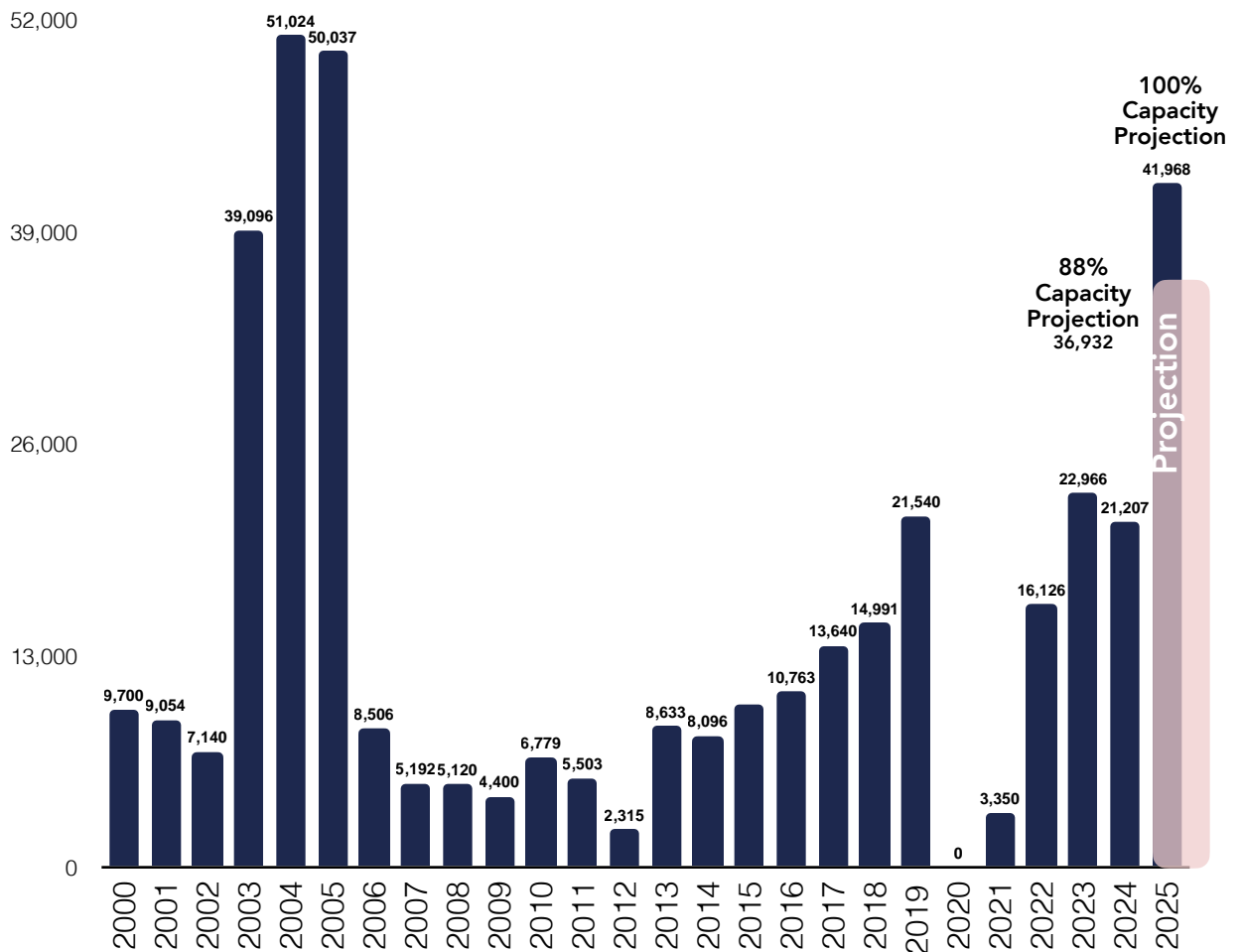
The ships visiting Wrangell in 2024 were 88% full. Wrangell lost 14 cruise visits from the 186-passenger Ocean Victory following the bankruptcy of American Queen Voyages. Wrangell lost another combined three visits from the 746-passenger Seven Seas Explorer and the 670-passenger Regatta, which chose to send the ships to Klawock instead.

## Cruise Ship Passengers 2024

2024 Ships	Total Visitors	Passenger Capacity	% Capacity
Alaskan Dream ships	1,420	1,420	assume 100%
NG Sea Bird	550	620	89%
NG Sea Lion	483	620	78%
American Constellation	2,502	2,720	assume 92%
<b>Small Ships</b>	<b>4,955</b>	<b>5,380</b>	<b>92%</b>
Crystal Serenity	574	740	78%
Seabourn Odyssey	3,278	3,600	91%
Silver Muse	2,115	2,384	89%
Silver Shadow	299	392	76%
Roald Amundsen	1,632	2,650	62%
Regatta	654	684	96%
Hanseatic Nature	400	460	assume 87%
Viking Orion	925	930	99%
Fridtjof Nansen	374	530	71%
<b>Mid-Sized Ships</b>	<b>10,251</b>	<b>12,370</b>	<b>83%</b>
Queen Elizabeth	4,008	4,162	96%
Nieuw Amsterdam	1,992	2,160	92%
<b>Large Ships</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,322</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21,207</b>	<b>24,072</b>	<b>88%</b>

**Source:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; McKinley Research Group, LLC; City and Borough of Wrangell. **Note:** Arriving passenger numbers were not available for Alaskan Dream, American Constellation, or Hanseatic Nature.

## Total Cruise Passengers in Wrangell 2000-2025



Source: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell; McKinley Research.

While 2025 cruise passenger numbers are expected to represent a recent record for Wrangell, levels will still be far below 20 years ago when more than 50,000 passengers visited Wrangell. Also it will be about 5,000 short of earlier projections. From the Wrangell Sentinel in February 2025:

*“Wrangell’s potential summer cruise ship passenger count has dropped by about 5,000 with the loss of two mid-size ships to Klawock. The Prince of Wales Island community opened up a cruise ship port last summer to attract more visitors — and economic activity — to the town of about 700 residents which is on the island’s extensive road system that links 10 communities. The 728-berth Sea Nova canceled six Wrangell stops May through August, switching to Klawock, and the 750-berth Silver Seas Explorer moved an August visit to Klawock while retaining one Wrangell stop in May.”*

In 2025, Wrangell is expected to have 117 port calls from 41,969 passengers, if all ships are entirely full. This represents a 74% capacity increase over 2024. If ships are at 88% capacity, as they were in 2024, the community would host approximately 37,000 cruise passengers.

### Cruise Ship Projections 2025

2025 Ships	Port Calls	Passenger Capacity	Total Visitors
Alaskan Dream	15	40	600
Baranof Dream	15	49	735
NG Sea Bird	10	60	600
NG Sea Lion	8	60	480
American Constitution	15	170	2,550
American Constellation	16	170	2,720
<b>Small Ships</b>	<b>79</b>		<b>7,685</b>
Hanseatic Inspiration	2	230	460
Seabourn Quest	8	450	3,600
Nansen	1	530	530
Roald Amundsen	7	530	3,710
Silver Moon	1	623	623
Villa Vie Odyssey	1	650	650
Seven Seas Explorer	1	750	750
Viking Venus	4	930	3,720
Viking Orion	2	930	1,860
Riviera	7	1,250	8,750
<b>Mid-Sized Ships</b>	<b>34</b>		<b>24,653</b>
Westerdam	1	1,848	1,848
Nieuw Amsterdam	1	2,100	2,100
Grand Princess	1	2,600	2,600
Ruby Princess	1	3,082	3,082
<b>Large-Ships</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>9,630</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>117</b>		<b>41,968</b>

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell.

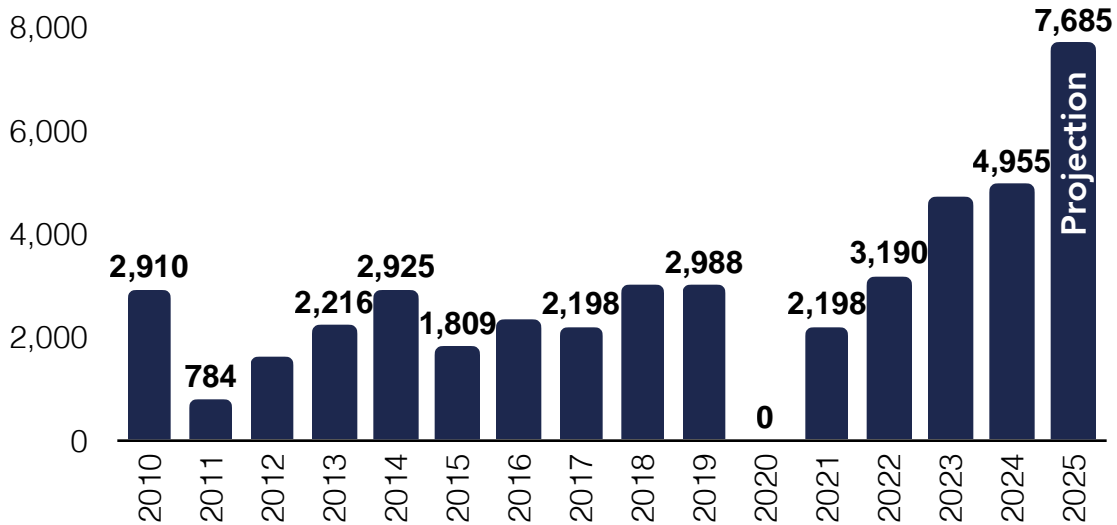
For the purpose of this analysis, small cruise ships include those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel; mid-sized cruise ships includes those with 200 to 1,299 passengers per vessel; and large ships have 1,300 passengers or more.



### Small Cruise Ships

In 2025, 6 small cruise ships with an average capacity of about 90 passengers are expected to make 79 port calls, potentially bringing 7,685 passengers to Wrangell. This represents a 55% increase in the total number of visitors on small cruise ships compared to 2024.

#### Wrangell Small Cruise Capacity 2010 to 2025



**Note:** For consistency, 2021 capacity numbers are included for small cruise ships, although actual travelers were likely lower. For the purposes of this analysis, small cruise ships are defined as those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel.

Wrangell's small cruise ship sector experienced disruptions in 2010 when Cruise West ceased operations at the end of the summer season, and again during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

### Mid-Sized Cruise Ships

In 2025, 10 mid-sized cruise ships with an average capacity of about 700 passengers are expected to make 34 port calls, potentially bringing 24,653 passengers to Wrangell if the ships are at full capacity.

### Large Cruise Ships

Four ships, Nieuw Amsterdam, Grand Princess, Ruby Princess, and Westerdam are scheduled to one port call each. At full capacity, they would bring a combined 9,630 visitors. This will represent only the third year since 2005 that large cruise ships have visited Wrangell. The Noordam made an unscheduled visit to Wrangell in September 2022, and 2024 was the first year with scheduled large cruise ships in two decades.

## Cruise Projections 2026

In 2026, based on the draft schedule, Wrangell is expected to have more than 150 port calls from nearly 80,000 passengers, if all ships are at 100% capacity - nearly doubling the number of expected ship passengers for 2025. The projection assumes a similar number of visits by small cruise ships. Based on the 2026 schedule, passengers from mid-sized ships are projected to nearly double, while passengers visiting by large cruise ship could be three times higher than in 2025. The 2026 schedule includes 47 visits from 8 ships not on Wrangell's 2025 schedule (indicated below in all capital letters).

### Cruise Ship Projections 2026

2025 Ships	Port Calls	Passenger Capacity	Total Visitors
<b>Small Ships</b>	<b>79</b>		<b>7,685</b>
Hanseatic Inspiration	2	230	460
SEABOURN ENCORE	9	600	5,400
Nansen	1	530	530
Roald Amundsen	1	530	530
SILVER NOVA	1	728	728
Viking Venus	5	930	4,650
Viking Orion	6	930	5,580
Riviera	10	1,250	12,500
WORLD OF RESIDENSEA	3	1,046	3,138
AZAMARA PURSUIT	3	700	2,100
CRYSTAL SYMPHONY	4	600	2,400
LUMINARA	6	450	2,700
STAR SEEKER	13	224	2,912
<b>Mid-Sized Ships</b>	<b>64</b>		<b>43,628</b>
ZAANDAM	1	1,432	1,432
Nieuw Amsterdam	1	2,100	2,100
QUEEN ELIZABETH	8	2,081	16,648
Ruby Princess	2	3,082	6,164
<b>Large-Ships</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>28,316</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>156</b>		<b>79,629</b>

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell.  
Ships that are capitalized were not the on the Wrangell schedule for 2025.



# Air Passengers

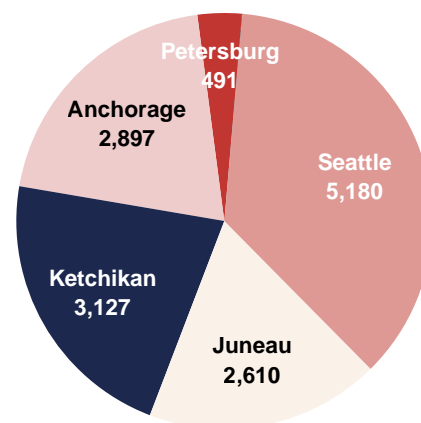
The number of air passengers arriving in Wrangell gradually increased through 2019. Passenger traffic fell steeply, and then rebounded strongly following the pandemic. Further growth occurred in 2023 as Trident Seafoods restarted local operations. In 2024, an estimated 14,297 air passengers arrived in Wrangell, a 2% increase over 2023 levels.



To estimate how many of these summer travelers were tourists (rather than locals traveling home or people traveling to work in Wrangell), average off-season monthly travel numbers were subtracted from high-season monthly travel numbers, along with summer labor estimates. Approximately 2,600 summer air travelers are estimated to have visited Wrangell for the purpose of recreation in 2024.

Looking at a full year of passenger data, the greatest percentage of passengers arrived in Wrangell via Seattle (36%), while 22% arrived from Ketchikan, 20% arrived from Anchorage, 18% arrived from Juneau, and 3% came from Petersburg.

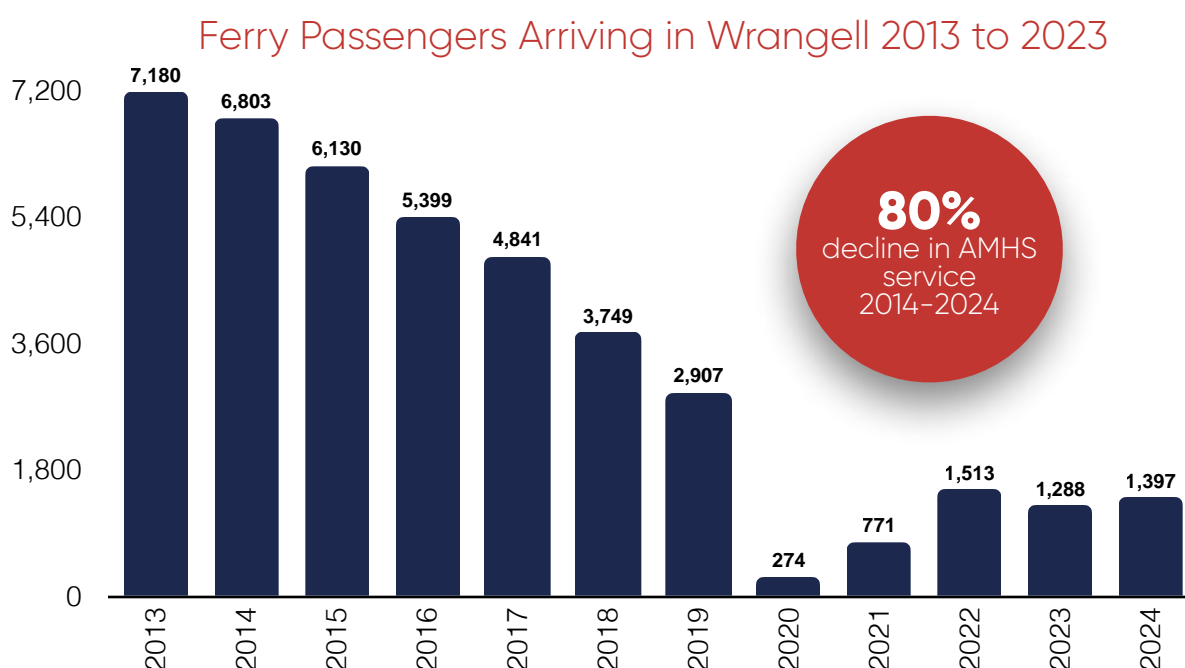
**Passengers  
Disembarkments in  
Wrangell by City 2024**



# Ferry Passengers

In 2023, nearly 1,400 Alaska Marine Highway (AMHS) ferry passengers arrived in Wrangell. Just over half of these arrived during the summer (May through September).

Since 2014, the number of passengers disembarking in Wrangell has decreased by 80% — a nearly five-fold decrease — due to service cuts and reduced sailings. However, in 2024, the number of passengers disembarking increased by about 100 passenger over 2023 levels. Wrangell received 97 port calls in 2024, down from 354 port calls in 2014.



AMHS has been hit hard by state budget reductions, yet Wrangell has been disproportionately impacted by service and port call cuts. Visitor-focused businesses built around serving ferry passengers have been further impacted by the unreliability of ferry services.

The MV Kennicott was sent to a shipyard in November of 2024 and is scheduled to be out of service until the end of 2025, while the MV Matanuska has been out of service since 2022, leaving just the MV Columbia to provide weekly summer service to Wrangell.

## Ferry Passenger Arrivals

Year	Total Arriving Ferry Passengers	Summer Tourist Passengers (Estimated)
2024	1,397	170
2023	1,288	225
2022	1,513	280
2021	771	143
2020	274	NA
2019	2,907	815
2018	3,749	961
2017	4,841	1,364
2016	5,399	1,365
2013	7,180	2,010
<b>Change 2013-2024</b>	<b>-81%</b>	<b>-92%</b>

The 2025 Alaska Marine Highway System schedule has a similar level of service for Wrangell as in the past several years: one ship serving the mainline route, with one stop northbound and one southbound each week in the summer.

# Accommodations Visitation and Spending Analysis

## Total Accommodation Spending Impact Summary

In 2024, 2,000 overnight guests are estimated to have stayed in Wrangell, including hotel, motel, and short-term rental (AirBNB). These visitors booked more than 5,200 accommodation nights. Overnight visitors spent \$1.38 million on accommodation last year.

Those staying overnight in Wrangell spent an estimated additional \$1 million in 2024, on all other costs, including excursions, food, alcohol, coffee, tips, donations, retail purchases, etc.

Altogether overnight visitors in Wrangell are estimated to have spent \$2.4 million in 2024.

## Total Accommodation Spending Impact, Wrangell 2024

Accommodation Type	Estimated Guests	Estimated Nights Booked	Total Accommodation Costs	Estimated Spending (excluding hotel costs)	Total Estimated Spending
Hotel, Motel, Traditional B&B (excludes short-term-rentals)	1,549	2,846	\$1,056,463	\$808,499	\$1,864,962
Short-Term Rentals	454	2,362	\$327,155	\$214,838	\$541,993
Total	2,003	5,208	\$1,383,618	\$1,023,337	\$2,406,955

**Note:** All figures presented in this report are based on the best available data at the time of analysis. Estimates were developed using a combination of accommodation tax records, visitor counts, historical trends, industry benchmarks, survey data, and sources such as AirDNA and the Alaska Department of Labor. Where exact data was unavailable, carefully considered assumptions and proxy data from comparable communities were used to model visitation and spending patterns.

## Accommodation Inventory

In 2025, Wrangell had 26 overnight accommodation businesses, with 109 total rooms.<sup>3</sup> The Sourdough Lodge opened in 2023, after an extended closure, significantly increasing the accommodation capacity for the community.

### Wrangell Overnight Rentals Inventory by Rooms/Units

Accommodation Name	2025
Stikine Inn	34
Sourdough Lodge	16
Wrangell Extended Stay	8
A Suite Spot	5
Chrome Chasers, LLC	4
Forget Me Not Lodging	3
Grand View Bed & Breakfast	3
Heritage Harbor Boathouse	3
ARED LLC	2
Mt. Dewey Sunset Bed & View	2
Reeves Guesthouse	2
NorthStar Reflections Guest Suite	1
Harbor Heights	1
Below Deck Apt, LLC	1
Ritchie, Bonnie & Chad	1
Maxmo Rentals	1
Huckleberry Hill Cottage	1
Love Shack	1
Fort Wrangell	2
B&B One Block from Town	4
Historic Tugboat	2
MV Adak	2
Reliance Harbor	2
Cozy Wrangell	2
Other short-term rentals	6
<b>Total Rooms/Units</b>	<b>109</b>

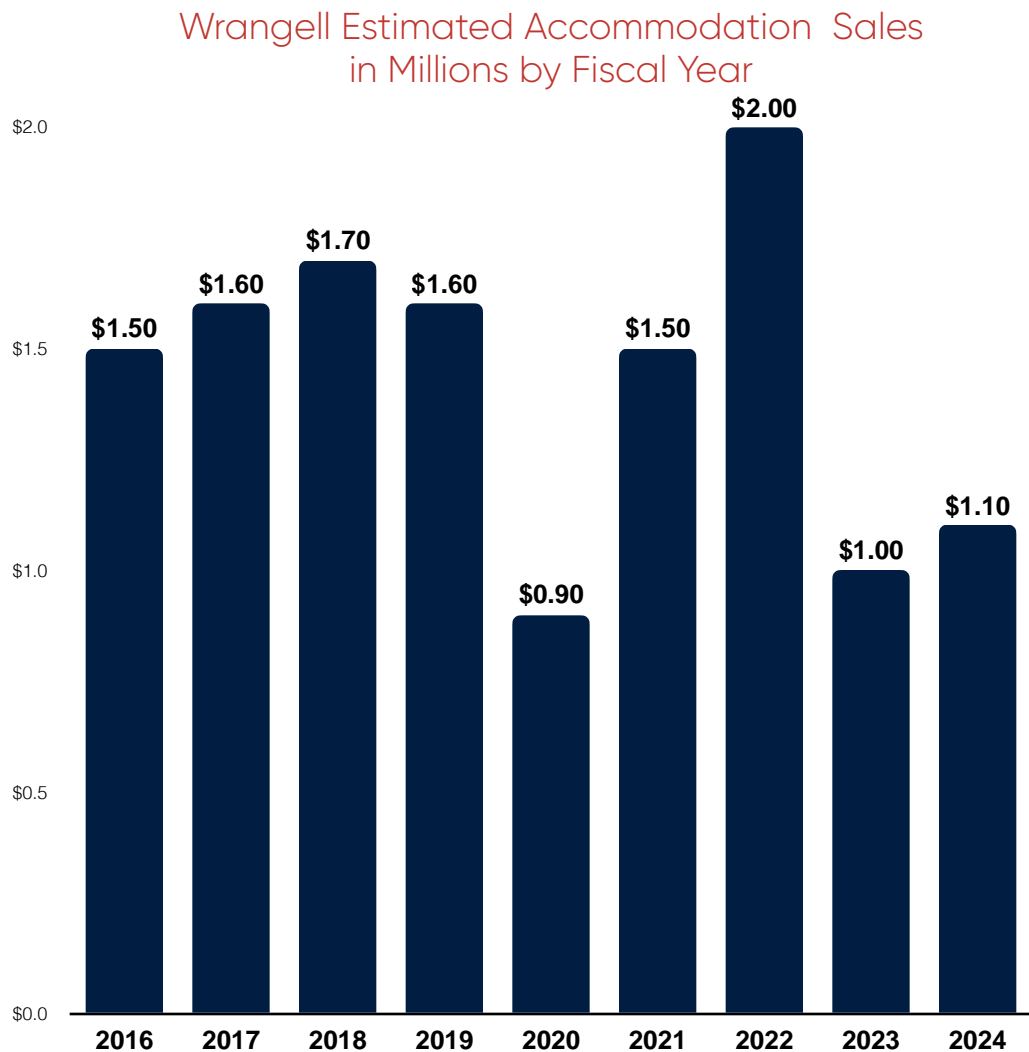
<sup>3</sup> Many of these rooms are available in summer only and a handful of the AirBNBs have very limited availability.

## Accommodation Tax

The City and Borough of Wrangell imposes a 6% transient occupancy tax on the rental of temporary lodging, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, and short-term rentals.

Based on tax collections, 12 short-term rental businesses with 20 combined rooms or units are also not currently paying local accommodation tax.

Still, the accommodation tax data is incredibly useful, because it represents a consistent group of taxpayers. For the past 9 years, excluding 2020, average Wrangell accommodation sales has been \$1.5 million.



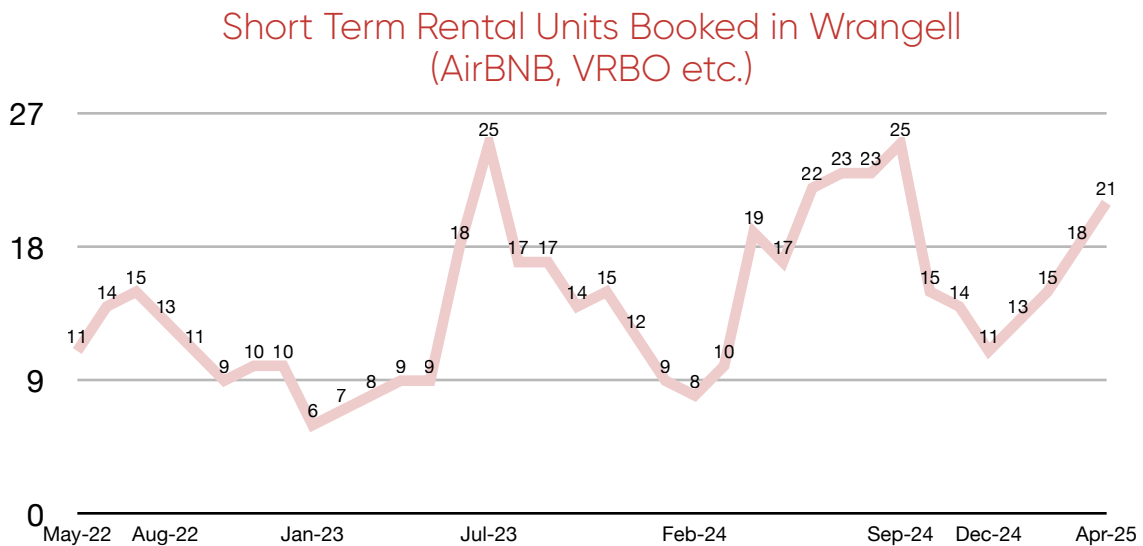
Source: City and Borough of Wrangell

## Short Term Rentals (STRs)

A total of 32 Wrangell units or rooms are currently registered with either Airbnb or VRBO, although many are inactive.

Use of short-term rentals, like Airbnb and Vrbo, remained flat at 25 peak bookings in the summers of 2023 to 2024. In April of 2025, 21 short term rental units had bookings.

The average price per night in 2024 was \$145 per night (this is a fully loaded rate that includes the cleaning fee, Airbnb fee, and taxes). Properties range from \$67 to \$1,400 per night. Half of the listings offer an “entire home,” while the other half offer a single room within a home or more traditional Bed and Breakfast.



Half of the active short-term housing listings offered availability on a seasonal basis only (available for a few days to six months of the year only). Just 16% of Wrangell listings were available all or most of the year (more than 270 days). The average length of stay at a STR in Wrangell in 2024 was 3.2 days.

An analysis of the data identifies no rental housing units that are being diverted to short-term rentals year-round.

## STR Revenue

In 2024, the short term rentals in Wrangell collectively earned \$327,155, a 21% increase over 2023 when the STRs earned \$269,722. The City and Borough of Wrangell has a 6% Public Accommodation Tax which applies to short term rentals, which would have conceptually brought in \$22,900 in tax revenue for the community, if these were fully collected.

### Revenue by STR Unit Type, Wrangell 2024

Month Registered (not all active)	Unique 6	B&Bs 6 Rooms	Apts 7	Houses 13	Total Revenue	Total Nights
January	\$3,071	\$952	\$406	\$2,666	<b>\$7,095</b>	<b>46</b>
February	\$1,797	\$1,066	\$141	\$6,131	<b>\$9,135</b>	<b>64</b>
March	\$609	\$2,251	\$	\$8,683	<b>\$11,543</b>	<b>102</b>
April	\$2,808	\$9,073	\$5,320	\$18,056	<b>\$35,257</b>	<b>253</b>
May	\$3,594	\$6,354	\$2,202	\$13,562	<b>\$25,712</b>	<b>217</b>
June	\$2,797	\$9,321	\$6,161	\$17,588	<b>\$35,867</b>	<b>275</b>
July	\$9,288	\$12,295	\$11,291	\$21,186	<b>\$54,060</b>	<b>364</b>
August	\$4,435	\$13,878	\$6,883	\$28,485	<b>\$53,681</b>	<b>361</b>
September	\$6,036	\$8,804	\$4,768	\$22,378	<b>\$41,986</b>	<b>276</b>
October	\$1,608	\$9,036	\$4,862	\$7,816	<b>\$23,322</b>	<b>182</b>
November	\$6,266	\$1,909	\$1,652	\$6,231	<b>\$16,058</b>	<b>99</b>
December	\$2,026	\$6,013	\$2,125	\$3,275	<b>\$13,439</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Total Short Term Rental Revenue 2024</b>					<b>\$327,155</b>	<b>2,362</b>

**Note:** Unique rentals include boats, tents, and tiny homes, for example.

A total of 2,362 room nights were booked in Wrangell in 2024 using AirBNB or VRBO, (the equivalent of a 6 to 7-room hotel being fully booked for a year). The total revenue for these stays was \$327,155, a figure that includes cleaning, but excludes the Wrangell accommodation tax.



## STR Visitation and Spending Analysis

In Wrangell in 2024 there were 196 STRs units booked, resulting in 2,362 room nights (see previous table), and resulting in \$327,155 in total spending to these local accommodation providers. AirDNA also provides the total length of stay by month for Wrangell. An analysis of people per booking was developed to understand total visitors. Based on available data an estimated more than 450 visitors stayed at STRs in Wrangell in 2024. In addition to spending on accommodation, they spent an additional estimated \$214,838 on food, excursions, shopping, and transportation. Based on the full analysis, visitors using STRs spent \$542,000 in Wrangell in 2024.

### Total STR Economic Impact, Wrangell 2024

Month	Length of Stay	STR Units booked	People Per Booking	Total people	Total Room Costs	Estimated Visitor Spending (excluding STRs)	Total Estimated Visitor Spending in Wrangell by STR users
January	2.19	9	1.0	9	\$7,095	\$1,833	\$8,928
February	4.45	8	1.2	10	\$9,135	\$3,984	\$13,119
March	5.38	10	1.5	15	\$11,543	\$7,355	\$18,898
April	3.85	19	2.4	46	\$35,257	\$16,577	\$51,834
May	2.97	17	1.9	32	\$25,712	\$17,061	\$42,773
June	3.1	22	2.1	46	\$35,867	\$26,003	\$61,870
July	2.77	23	3.7	84	\$54,060	\$42,034	\$96,094
August	3.23	23	3.1	71	\$53,681	\$41,239	\$94,920
September	3.69	25	1.6	39	\$41,986	\$25,936	\$67,922
October	2.94	15	4.7	70	\$23,322	\$19,093	\$42,415
November	3.78	14	1.6	23	\$16,058	\$8,098	\$24,156
December	5.61	11	1.0	11	\$13,439	\$5,627	\$19,066
<b>Totals</b>		<b>196</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>\$327,155</b>	<b>\$214,838</b>	<b>\$541,993</b>

**Sources:** Length of Stay; STR Units booked; and Total Room Costs provided by AirDNA. People Per Booking used AirDNA STR data. Estimated Visitor Spending (excluding STRs) was developed using hotel guest spending in Wrangell Alaska. All analysis is developed by Rain Coast Data.

## Hotel Visitation and Spending Analysis

Wrangell has 82 traditional hotel and bed and breakfast rooms across 12 establishments (that are not double counted by the short-term rental data). In 2024, these traditional establishments booked nearly 3,000 hotel room nights, hosting an estimated 1,423 visitors to Wrangell who spent just over a million dollars for their rooms. To understand additional spending by lodging guests, the analysis below is based on averages, and a known amount of dollars spent in Wrangell in 2024 due to sales tax remittance by spending category. The averages include those who spend nothing in the categories as well. Not every hotel guest participates in excursions or rents a vehicle, for example.

- Visitors spent an average of \$101 per person for food each day (including food, coffee, bars, restaurants, grocery, etc.)
- Visitors spent an average of \$16 per person for shopping each day (including souvenirs, fishing related purchases, etc.)
- Visitors spent an average of \$16 per person for transportation each day (including vehicle rentals, fuel, taxis, and other paid transportation options).
- Visitors spent an average of \$10 per person for excursions each day (including tours and activities).

Based on this analysis, hotel visitors spent an estimated \$1.7 million in Wrangell last year.

### Total Hotel Economic Impact, Wrangell 2024

Estimated Visitors	Estimated Nights Booked	Total Room Costs	Estimated Spending (excluding hotel costs)	Total Estimated Spending
1,423	2,850	\$1,056,463	\$644,129	\$1,700,592

## Anan, Stikine, LeConte Tours

Anan Wildlife Observatory, the Stikine River, and LeConte Glacier are three of Wrangell's most significant water-based visitor attractions. The Anan Wildlife Observatory, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, is accessible only by boat or plane and requires a permit during peak season (July 5 to August 25), with daily access limited to 60 commercially guided and 12 independent visitors. In 2023, the site welcomed a record 2,905 visitors—2,357 guided and 548 independent. Not all accessed the site from Wrangell. The Stikine River, known as “the great river” in Tlingit, flows 400 miles from British Columbia and is popular for jet boat tours that explore its rich history, geology, and wildlife; more adventurous visitors may opt for canoeing or kayaking. Nearby, LeConte Glacier—the southernmost tidewater glacier in North America—sits 20 miles from the Stikine River's mouth and offers dramatic calving displays. Tours to the glacier typically last four hours and are also conducted by jet boat.

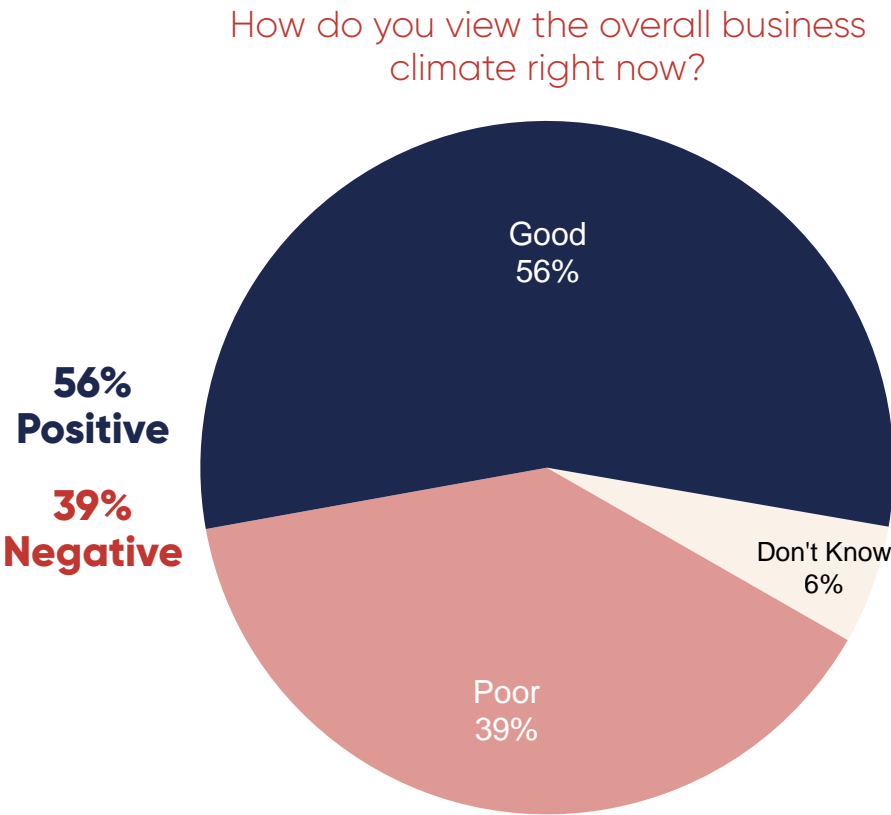
In 2024, the 8 businesses that provide these tours earned a combined \$1.36 million, 19% more than they earned for the tours in 2023 (\$1.15 million).



# 2025 Visitor Business Climate Survey

## Current Business Climate

In the spring of 2025 a total of 18 Wrangell business owners and operators in visitor related industries (tourism, restaurants, other food and beverage businesses, accommodation, excursion providers, and others providing services to visitors) responded to the Southeast Conference Business Climate survey, representing a total workforce of 175.



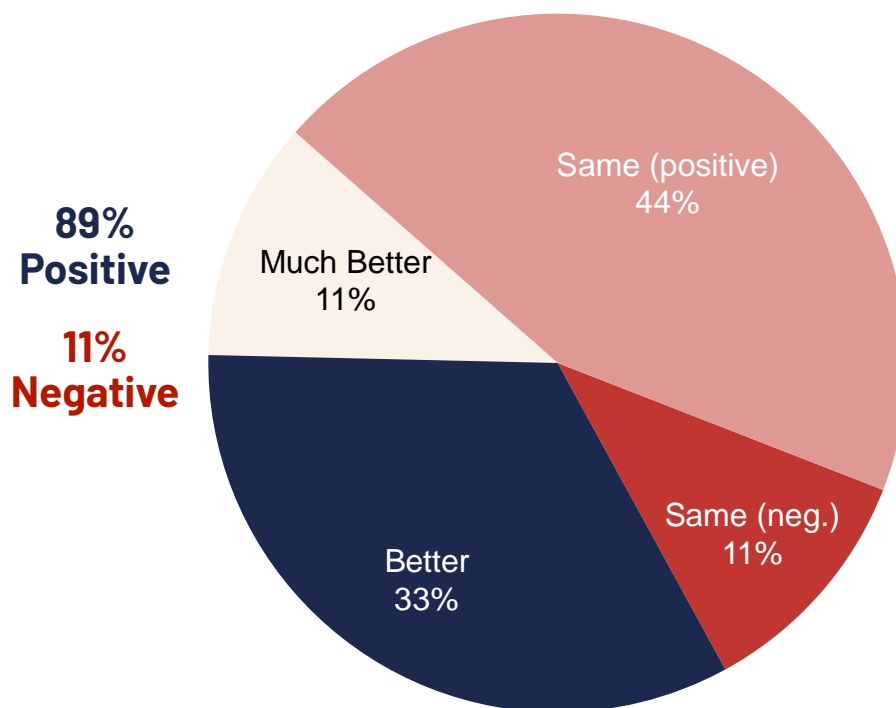
### Wrangell Visitor Economy Now: How do you view the overall business climate right now?

In 2025, Wrangell visitor industry business leaders were divided as to the state of the Wrangell business climate. Just over half (56%) of visitor industry business leaders called the business climate good or very good; while 39% called it poor.

An additional 6% said they did not know, however, a lack of business certainty regarding the economy is primarily a negative response when it comes to business.

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Economic Outlook

What is the economic outlook for your business/industry over the next year (compared to the previous year)?



Wrangell Visitor Economy Outlook: What is the economic outlook for your business/industry?

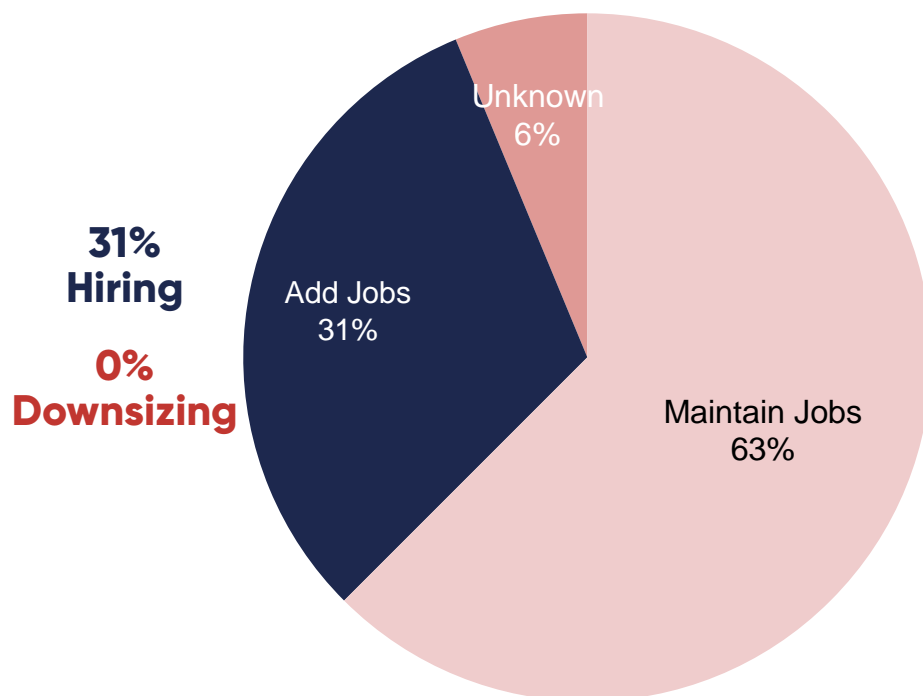
**Economic Future:** In 2025, 89% of respondents describe the economic outlook for their business or industry over the next 12 months as positive; while 11% have a negative outlook.

Nearly half (44%) of survey respondents expect their prospects to be better or much over the next year, an additional 44% of tourism business leaders say their business outlook is similar to current operations — in a positive way.

No tourism business leaders expect the outlook to worsen over the coming year; while 11% say that operations are already going poorly and no change is expected.

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Hiring Projections

Over the next 12 months, do you expect your organization to add jobs, maintain jobs, reduce jobs, or are you unsure?



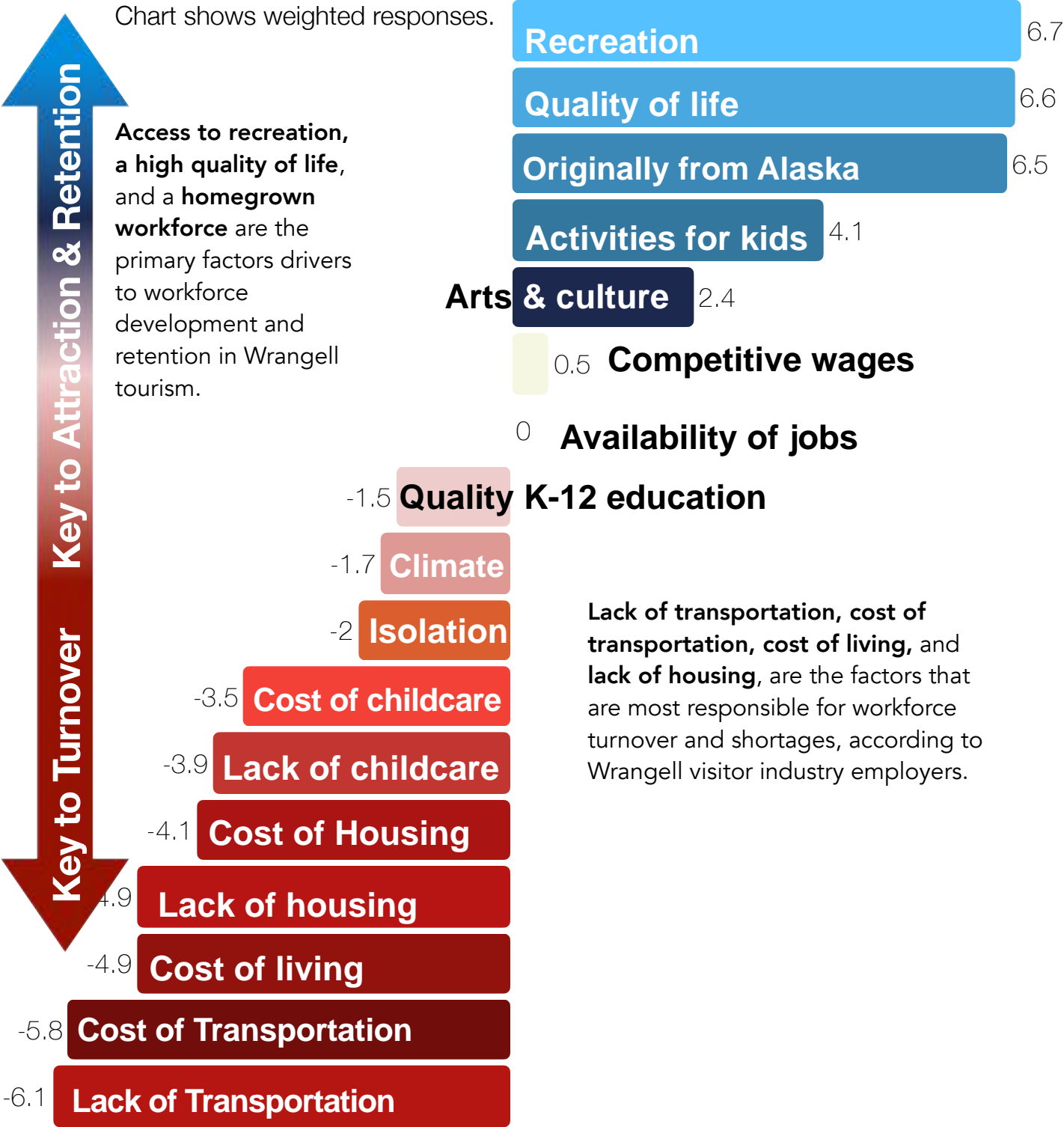
### Employment changes in the next year

When asked about staffing expectations, about a third (31%) anticipate adding new jobs over the next year, and nearly two-thirds of visitor sector business leaders (63%) expect to maintain job levels in the coming year. No business leaders expect to reduce staffing levels.



# Retention & Turnover: How do these factors impact worker attraction & retention?

Wrangell tourism business leaders were asked to rank the impact of 17 elements on workforce attraction, retention, and turnover. This is a weighted ranking of their responses.



## Wrangell Visitor Sector Economic Outlook: Open-Ended Responses

In the spring of 2025, Wrangell visitor industry business leaders were asked to describe their economic outlooks in their own words. These comments were primarily regarding their expectations of the 2025 season.

Tourism is driving strong seasonal growth in Wrangell, but businesses face challenges including workforce shortages, limited ferry and other transportation access, regulatory burdens for sport fishers and guides, and decreasing federal and state investments in infrastructure. Cruise traffic is growing, while independent travelers are seen as more valuable than cruise passengers. Business leaders are optimistic about job creation, visitor demand, and Wrangell's tourism offerings.

- *Tourism is our sector, and we will effectively double in business this year from last. We have added two new employees this year and are anticipating the season to grow significantly again next year and in 2027. So with that, we have been preemptively making plans to create more jobs. The only concerns I have will be not being able to find those employees. But I guess that's a good problem to be facing in the shadow of growth!*
- *The growth we need for stability in our business is dependent on independent travelers. Current dependance on cruise ship traffic is much like expecting every year to have a great fish return. It's the independent traveler that stays longer, spends more money in town and helps promote our community as they travel to other places. Wrangell is a difficult place to visit. Although we have Alaska Airlines flights twice a day, there is a finite number of seats and with stops in Ketchikan and Petersburg northbound, and Juneau, Petersburg and Ketchikan southbound, seats are often not available. If there are seats, they are cost prohibitive. Why fly to Wrangell for \$250 when you can fly to Ketchikan, Juneau or even Sitka for \$99. Our current ferry service is limited to one northbound and one southbound run each week. Although this is scheduled to improve over the next many years, it might help to have a ferry that operates more often from Ketchikan to Hollis, to Coffman Cove to Wrangell and maybe the Petersburg terminal for the IFA. Another ferry can run from Juneau to Petersburg. We are also concerned that the current changes and reduction in the USFS will be detrimental to small businesses if the Federal Government decides to use concessionaires for various venues. Small businesses cannot compete with larger corporations, and we may lose our access and ergo opportunities. This would be catastrophic.*



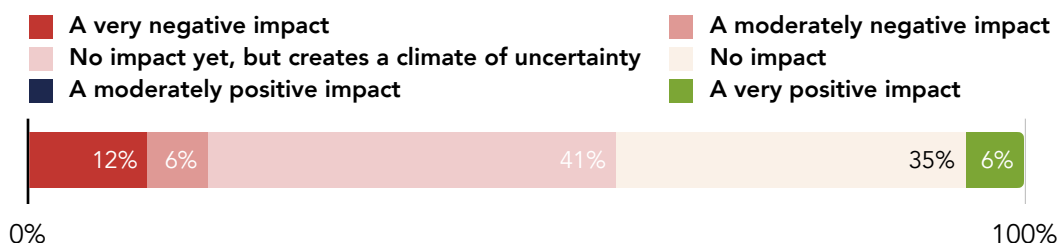
- Tourism has been the primary driver of financial growth for the business I manage. With Wrangell anticipating a 35% surge in visitors this year and further growth projected for 2026, our focus is on maximizing revenue capture from this increased tourism. Additionally, we aim to boost conference reservations, attracting groups from within Southeast Alaska and beyond to utilize our rental space, thereby fostering broader economic development in Wrangell.
- Our business is solid. The cruise industry grows in Wrangell. Sadly as the cruise industry grows the city of Wrangell doesn't have the money to build the infrastructure to maintain the growth. Not enough tour operators to meet the needs of the ships. Operators are aging out and just a few companies will survive into the future. Catch 22. Tourism is the only viable growth industry in town and not enough entrepreneurs are embracing it as an opportunity. We have an average age of 50 years plus as our population. We have a terrific opportunity with the cruise industry if we can get people to step up.
- Lack of foreign travel due to the current Presidential travesty is a huge concern for us. We are also bracing for huge increases in fuel and materials
- Government regulation with the Forest Service and Fish and Game and regulations with Sport Fishing for Halibut and other species make it very hard to sell trips to our area, Wrangell. Every year, more regulations make operating our business harder and harder. Because of all the limits on sport fishing for guests being "guided," it is difficult to meet guests' needs and expectations. They feel they are better off in a "do it yourself" fishing environment where their fish are not as limited as in a "guided" situation. This is especially true for guided, sport halibut fishing. We also guide guests for fly fishing experiences, and the Prince of Wales Forest Service recently shut down guided fishing in their district for the entire month of May for guided fishing. This affects our business greatly. Not only that, but our guests book trips with us up to a year or more in advance, and Prince of Wales Forest Service shut down guided fishing in May only two months before the season. This drastic and last-minute closure creates stress for our guides who need to make changes to our typical fishing areas last minute. We cannot apply for and get new areas added to our Operating Plan in only two months. In our business of guiding sport fishing guests, we are getting more regulations that limit us more every year. The noose is constantly closing in tighter and tighter until we can no longer sell trips to guests because we will have nothing to offer them. It seems that government agencies are trying to limit sport fishing to have an effect on

*the fish populations when the commercial fishing has so much more of an impact. But commercial fishing is not being regulated like sport fishing is. I believe this is because lobbyists pay off government officials to promote their industry. Sport fishing doesn't have the money to lobby politicians. NOAA is there for the commercial industry. They do not consider the money sport fishing brings to Alaska.*

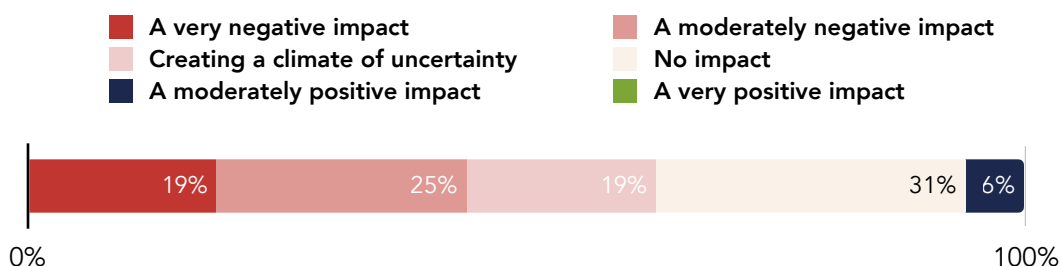
- We need employees to support the 120 days of summer tourism. Biz needs support in customer service training, marketing and signage. Bringing back a Main Street type of program would help to create a more welcoming environment.*
- With more cruise ships scheduled to make port in Wrangell over the next two years, we anticipate growth as long as local workforce can fill the seasonal positions we need to operate at higher capacity.*
- My only challenge is wanting to invite longer-term occupants (Airbnb), but the Website allows multiple, short-term reservations in a given month. I don't have an easy way to manage this any differently. It only affects me and would not alter the outlook for the community, as a whole.*
- new tariffs and discourse with the US admin have possibly had a negative impact on potential travelers to Alaska... inquiries have slowed down considerably the last couple weeks.*
- We are a B&B and Charter Company. We are located in Wrangell. We do not believe the cruise ship or tourism will sustain our community. We need industry. We are concerned about overregulating the Charter Fishing Industry.*
- I believe regionally, Southeast Alaska is struggling to remain united. As smaller communities without infrastructure connecting our economies seeing increased costs and aging populations, we need to be able to open up our economic landscapes not only regionally, but nationally (domestically) in order to encourage local and non-local investment.*

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Federal Impacts

Have the federal job or spending cuts impacted your business?



How do you expect federal changes in Wrangell to impact your business over the next few months?



18% of Wrangell tourism businesses say they have already been negatively impacted by the early federal job and spending cuts that hit the region.

Asked about the business impacts (positive or negative) of the federal changes (i.e. tariffs, executive orders, regulatory, staffing changes, etc.), nearly half (44%) of Wrangell tourism businesses said they expected negative business impacts, including 19% who expect the impacts to be very negative. Another 6% are expecting positive impacts.

Businesses were asked to describe the impacts in their own words: Please describe the impact (positive or negative) you expect the federal changes to have on your business or sector over the coming months (i.e. tariffs, executive orders, regulatory, staffing changes, etc.). Several businesses report negative impacts or concerns from federal changes, including reduced bookings, uncertainty from tariffs, and fewer foreign visitors. Others cite reliance on federal grants or US Forest Service staffing, with potential funding cuts affecting operations. A few see no direct impact, while some support the changes despite expected short-term challenges.

All responses are presented below:

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Federal Impacts: Open-Ended Responses

- *We will see decreased revenue with less federal employees traveling.*
- *We work with private, for profit companies whose clients are ones able to afford vacations. I don't see that we will face any impact from current federal changes.*
- *We are already seeing a dramatic pause in bookings of tours on cruise ships. Historically, our sales to non-cruise passengers increases in March and April, however these bookings have also trickled down to almost zero.*
- *We utilize grants administered by federal agencies to enhance our museum. The lack of funding could impact us in a negative way, especially since we do not have an operating expenditure currently to add & maintain our museum.*
- *Things will get worse before they get better, but I support the federal changes.*
- *Negative due to tariffs, uncertainty, lack of foreign travelers due to fear and mistrust of the USA, uncertain staffing with the USFS and other agencies.*
- *In working with employees in the Forest Service, they are upset and concerned with the budget cuts and employee reduction. We do not feel the effect in our business personally. The government is slow and difficult to work with. Rather than simplify and make processes efficient, they complicate a simple situation and create a bunch of extra paperwork for each scenario. Less funding for the nonsense is good in our opinion and for the business experience.*
- *The important jobs & money will return once this initial process is fully complete.*
- *Layoffs of Federal employees would cause private industries to have to find ways around all the Federal Permitting Processes and Policies. This will negatively impact our environment and the total visitor experience.*
- *Foreign visitors have begun to cancel their cruise trips or independent bookings because of travel concerns with entering and exiting the US. We depend on USFS seasonal staff to maintain rec sites used by tourists. Increased cost of goods essential to this industry (aluminum etc.) make*



*predicting future costs difficult. We have to lock in prices on contracts often two years in advance.*

- *People may be less inclined (or able) to travel for pleasure if it becomes too expensive an option for the use of their time and resources.*
- *We have a big Alaska Native population. As the administration cancels grants and federal funding it adversely impacts our business and our community.*
- *Continued strained US border country relations are not good for Alaska since we are separated by a country from our country. Everyone seems cautious at this time.*





# Resident Sentiment of Tourism

Wrangell 2025

## Project Mission

To protect destinations for future generations of visitors and residents.



Oregon State  
University

# Project Overview

## Why The Research

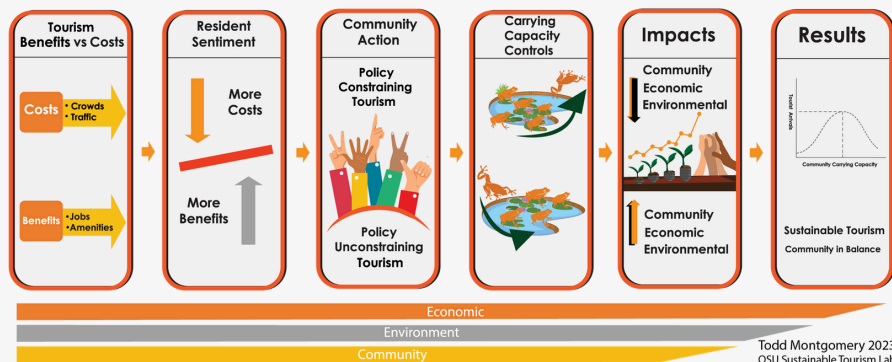
Communities around the world have grappled with tourism—its positive and negative impacts—for years. For many, it serves as the primary economic driver, meeting the basic needs of community members. However, in other destinations, the cost-benefit balance of tourism is less clear.

In the wake of the pandemic, communities are reassessing their relationship with tourism, exploring how to make the industry sustainable from economic, social, and environmental perspectives.

The goal of the OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab is to support these efforts by providing applied research, objective information, and best practices.

## Sustainable Tourism

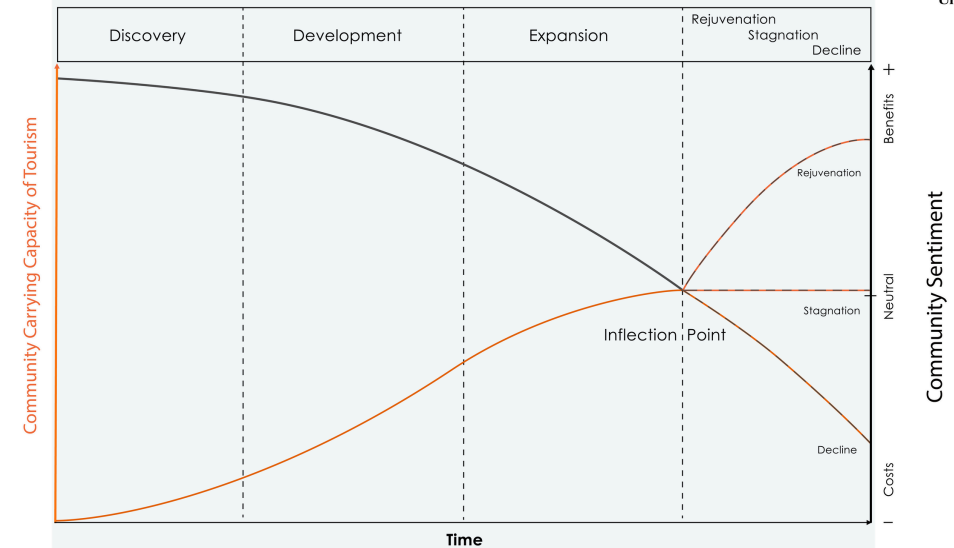
Community Carrying Capacity Model



Todd Montgomery 2023  
OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab

## Destination Lifecycle

Community Sentiment Impact



Todd Montgomery 2023

## Project Overview

Our research has shown a strong relationship between a destination's lifecycle stage and the sentiment levels within its community. Additionally, we've found that community sentiment levels influence the community carrying capacity of the destination.

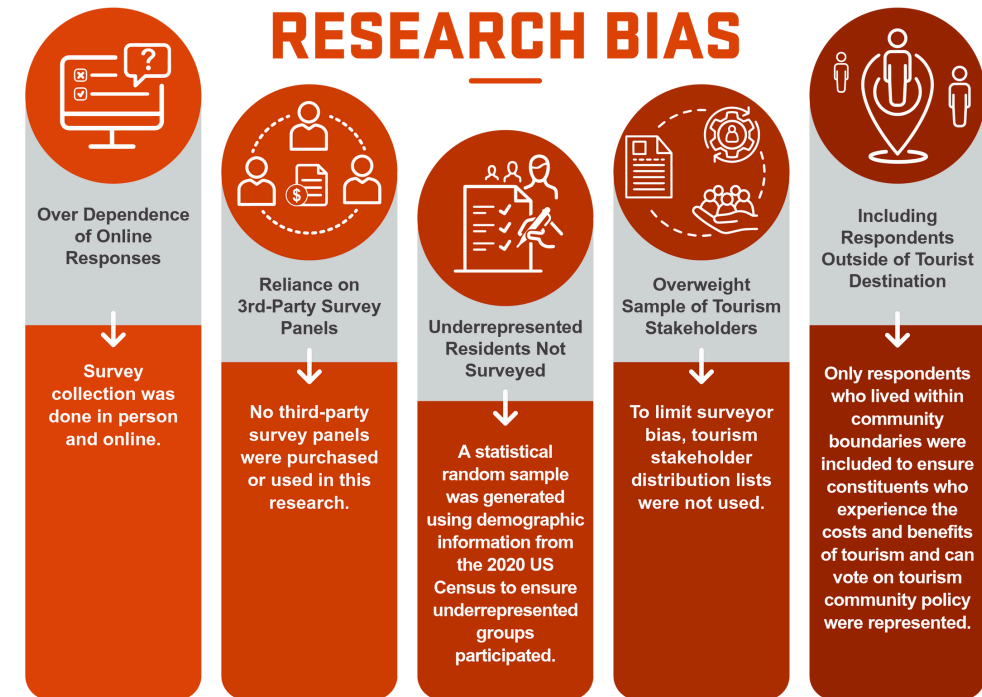
When a community's sentiment falls below neutral, it often prompts action—directly or indirectly—through political entities to reduce the area's overall carrying capacity. This may manifest as restrictions on visitor numbers, the implementation of policies aimed at preserving local resources, or changes to infrastructure planning. Such actions are typically driven by a desire to protect the community's quality of life and mitigate negative impacts on the environment and local culture.



# Methodology



## ADDRESSING RESEARCH BIAS



### Methodology

During our research, we have reviewed hundreds of studies conducted worldwide. The quality of these surveys varied greatly, with several common gaps identified, including:

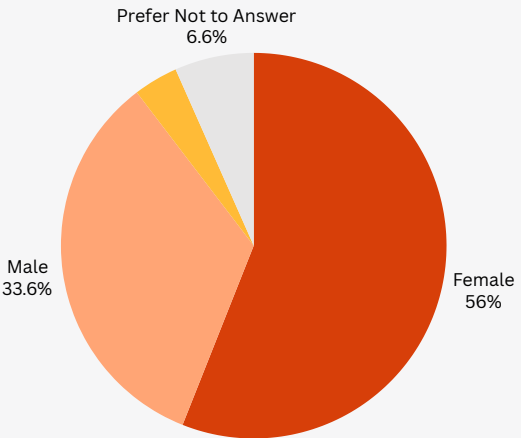
- Were underrepresented groups included in the study?
- Was the sample statistically representative of the community?
- Were non-tourism stakeholders equally represented?
- Were the studies one-off efforts, or were follow-up studies conducted to track changes over time?

Our report ensures that community-specific survey data were statistically representative of the entire population in question. To amplify the voices of all community members, we made extensive efforts to engage people where they were, conducting surveys both in person and online. After collecting the initial data, we identified and performed outreach to groups underrepresented in our sample. Despite these efforts, we recognized that more rigorous methods were needed to ensure fairness and accuracy.

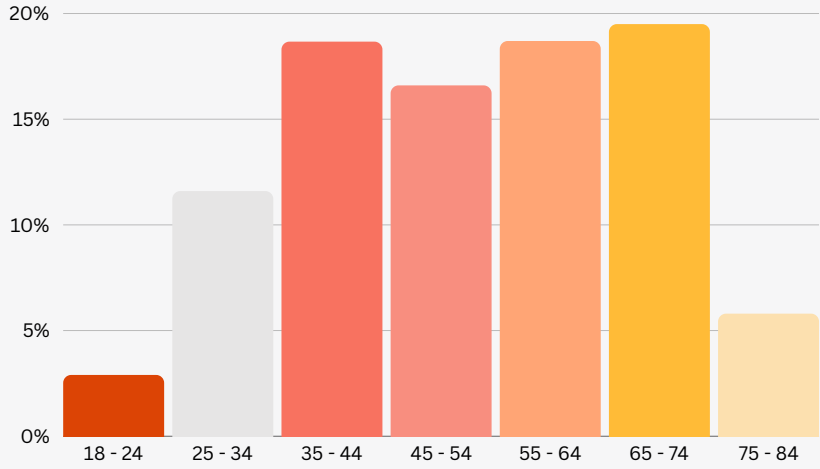
To meet this challenge, we employed stratified random sampling, followed by a downsampling technique to align category percentages with census data. Downsampling involves repeatedly drawing random samples—5,000 times in our case—as each random sample from the original dataset can yield different results. This approach allowed us to account for variability and ensure a balanced representation. The histograms in this report depict this variability, forming a bell curve that highlights the importance of repeated sampling in achieving reliable outcomes.

# Sample Demographics

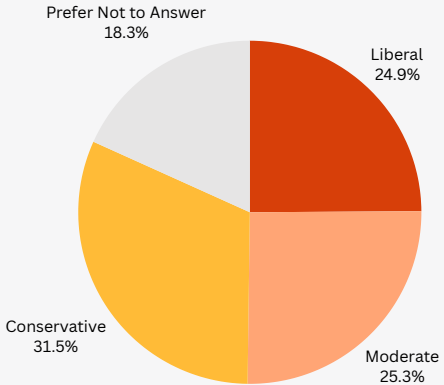
Gender



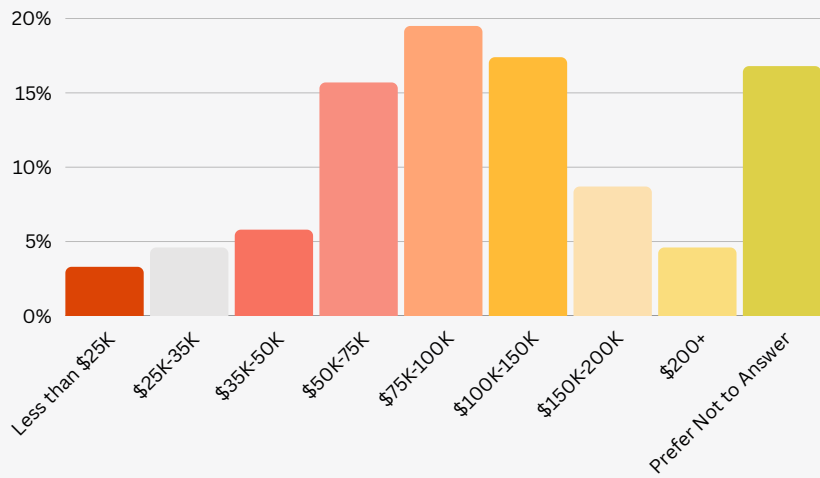
Age



Political Beliefs



Income



## Demographics

In all our projects, we strive to collect a representative sample grounded in U.S. Census data. For Wrangell—a community of approximately 2,000 residents—our sample of 241 survey responses offered a strong foundation, even prior to applying stratified random sampling techniques. The high response rate relative to the town’s population underscores the community’s engagement and lends additional credibility to the findings. This strong participation also enhances our ability to draw meaningful conclusions about local attitudes and priorities.

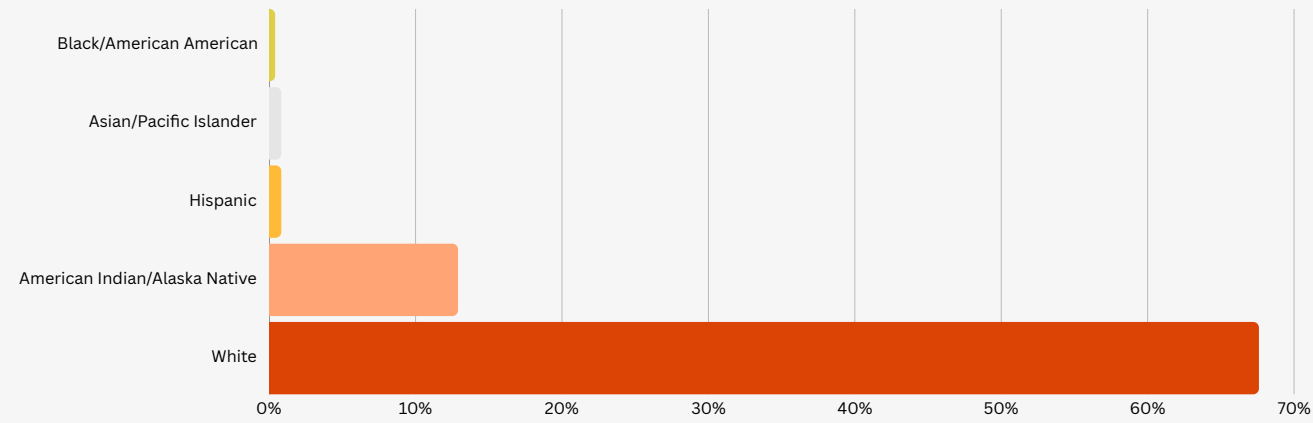
Gender representation in the sample leaned slightly female. Age and income distributions formed a balanced bell curve, with most respondents falling into mid-range categories.

The sample also captured key aspects of Wrangell’s unique demographic profile, including a high proportion of long-term residents. Notably, most participants did not work in the hospitality sector, reducing the potential for bias toward tourism-related perspectives. The majority of respondents also identified as white.

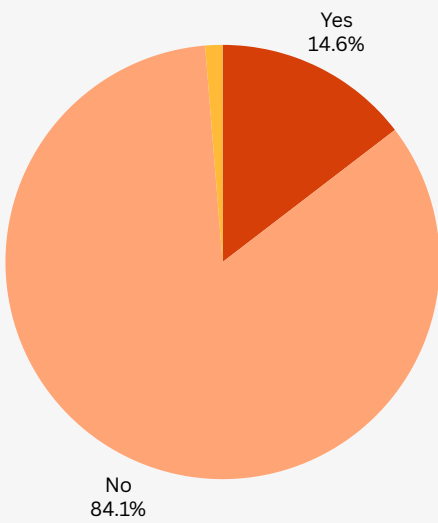
This well-rounded dataset provided a reliable basis for understanding local sentiment, ensuring our analysis accurately reflects the views and dynamics of Wrangell’s community.

# Sample Demographics

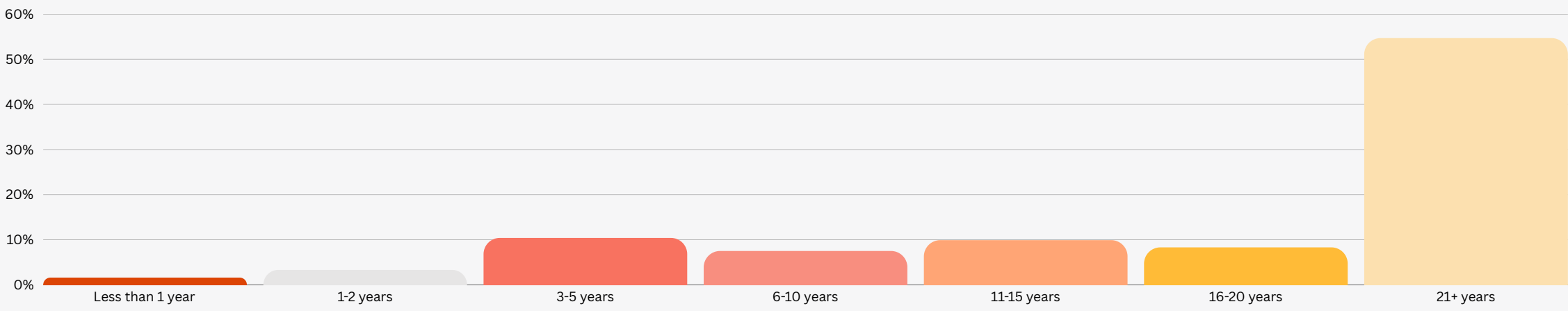
Ethnicity



Employed in Hospitality



Length of Residency



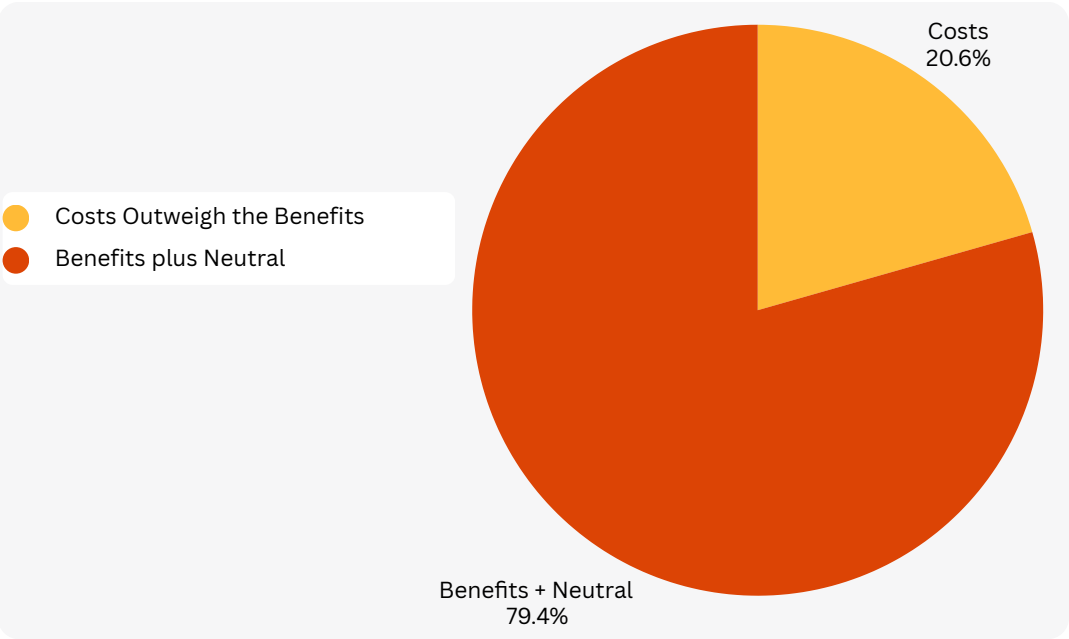
# Resident KPI: Costs vs Benefits

## Costs Vs Benefits

As part of our Carrying Capacity Model, one of the most insightful and widely adopted measures of community sentiment is the “Costs vs. Benefits” question. This question cuts to the core of how residents weigh tourism’s impact—do the positives outweigh the negatives?

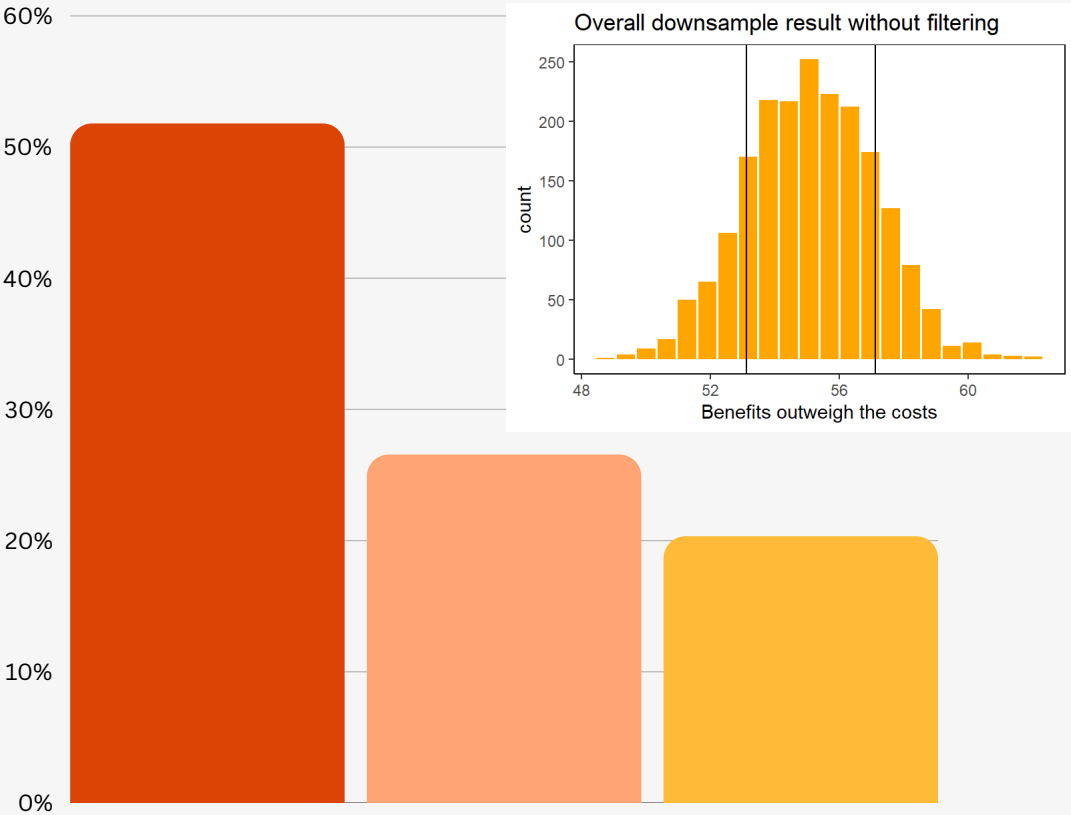
In Wrangell, about 52% of respondents believe tourism brings more benefits than costs, while 20% feel the opposite—that the costs are too high relative to the benefits.

These results are later benchmarked against other destinations to provide context and reveal how Wrangell stacks up. Overall, the data suggests a relatively healthy sentiment toward tourism. Still, without thoughtful planning and management, public opinion could shift—potentially resulting in policies that limit tourism growth down the line.



## Wrangell 2025

- Benefits Outweigh the Costs
- Neutral: Equal Amount of Benefits and Costs
- Costs Outweigh the Benefits



In general, do you feel the benefits of tourism outweigh the costs or the costs of tourism outweigh the benefits of tourism?

# Age & Residency

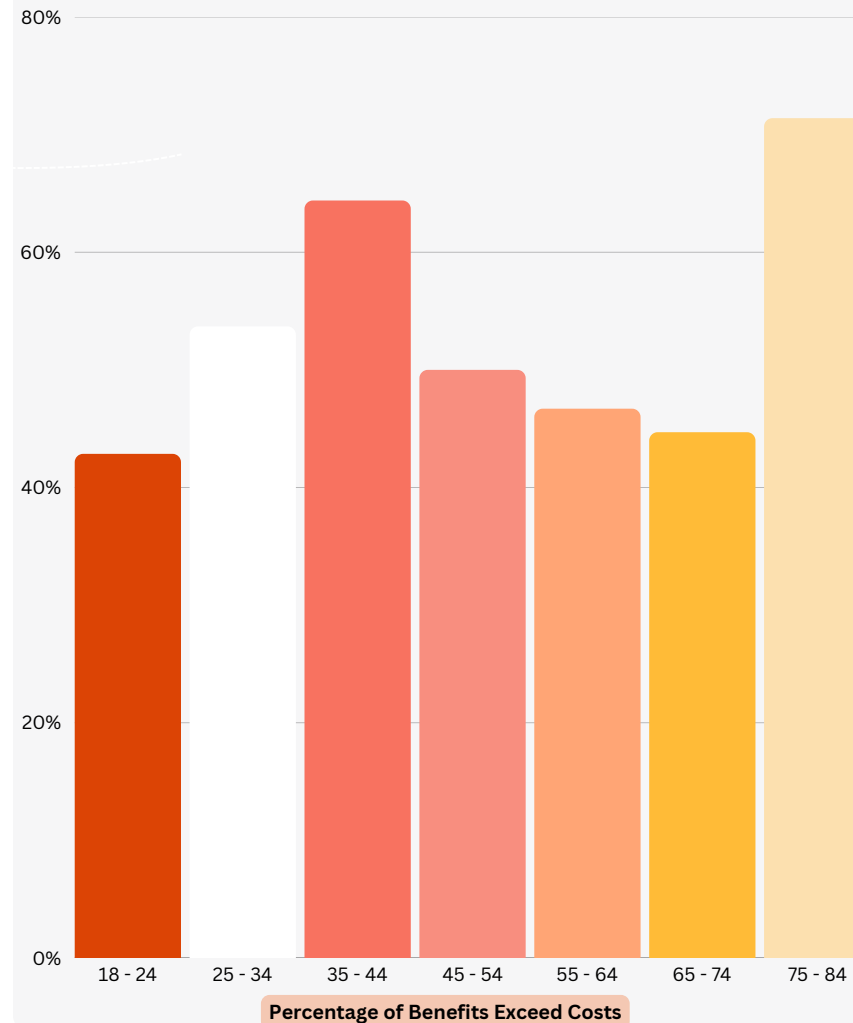
## Age & Residency Benefits vs Costs

In a departure from trends seen in many other destinations, older residents in Wrangell view tourism more favorably than their younger counterparts. This may reflect the community's strong base of long-term residents who are well established and continue to benefit from tourism's economic contributions.

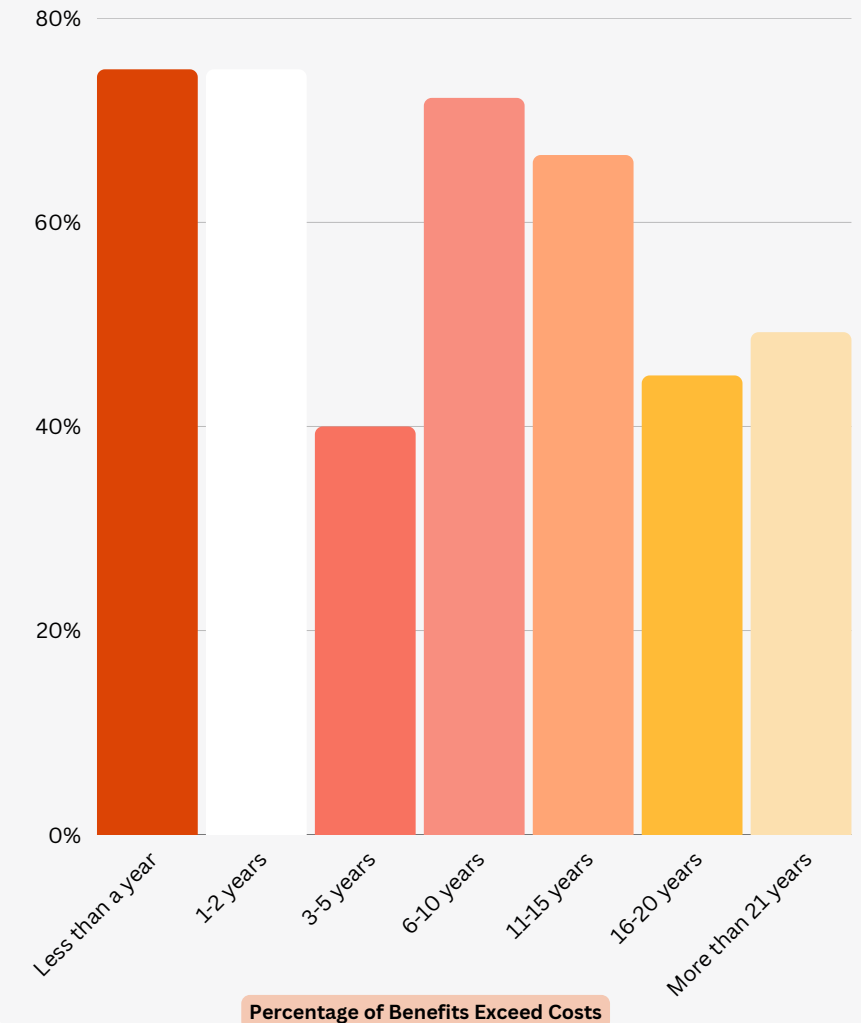
Conversely, newer residents—those who have lived in Wrangell for a shorter time—also report high levels of perceived benefit. This likely stems from choosing to move to an active tourist destination, drawn by its opportunities and amenities tied to the tourism economy.

What makes Wrangell especially interesting is how this pattern diverges from what we typically see elsewhere. In many places, longtime residents tend to express much greater skepticism, often yearning for the quieter, pre-tourism version of their community. Having witnessed substantial change over time, they may be more cautious about the pace and direction of tourism growth.

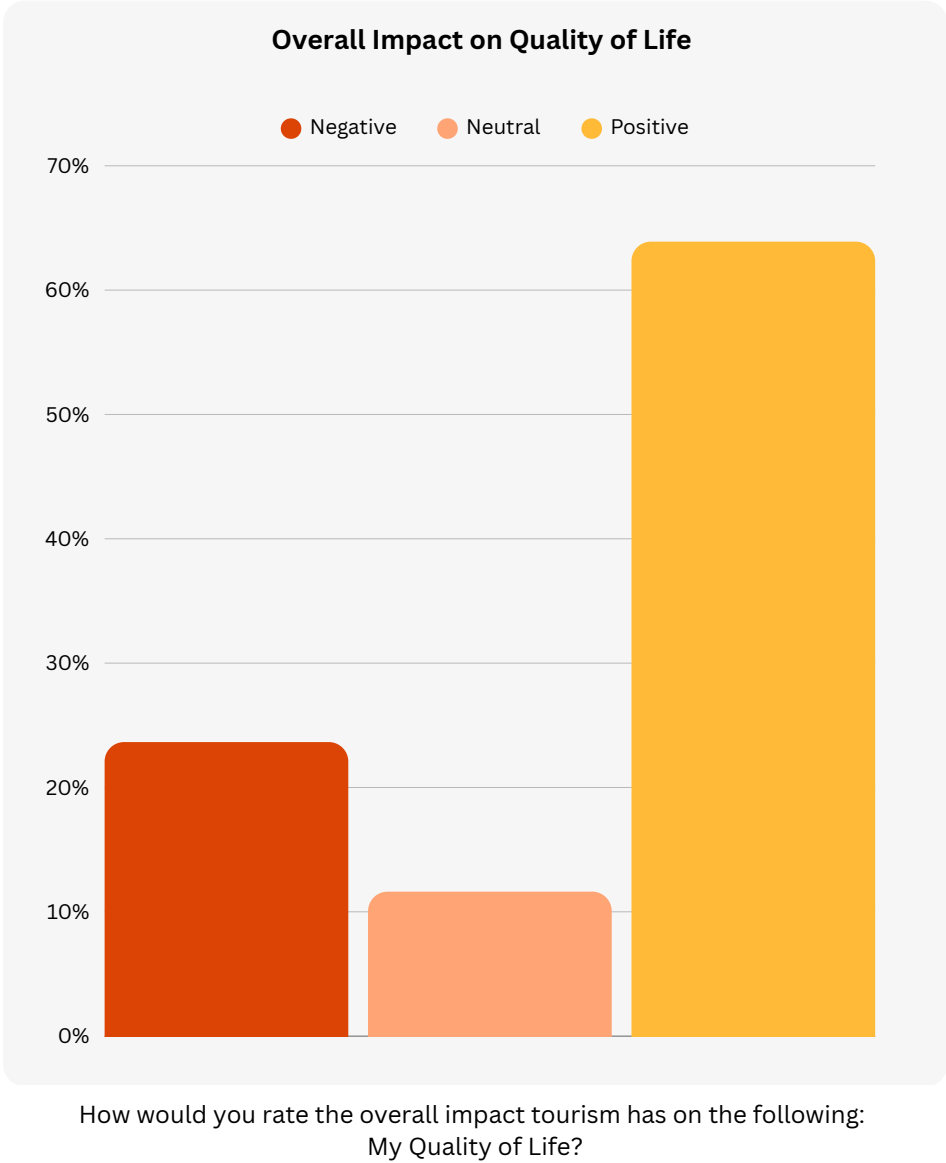
### Perceptions of Tourism by Age Group



### Perceptions of Tourism by Length of Residency



# Resident KPI: Quality of Life

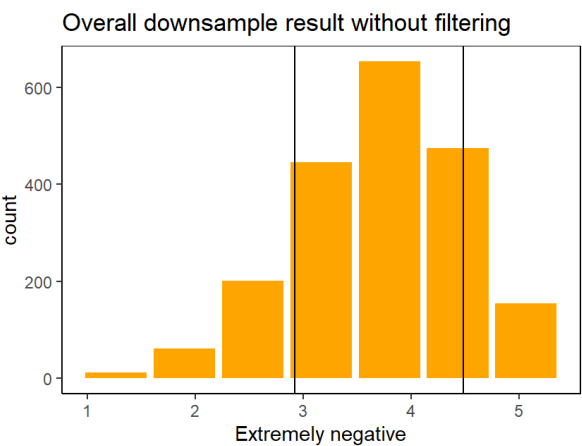
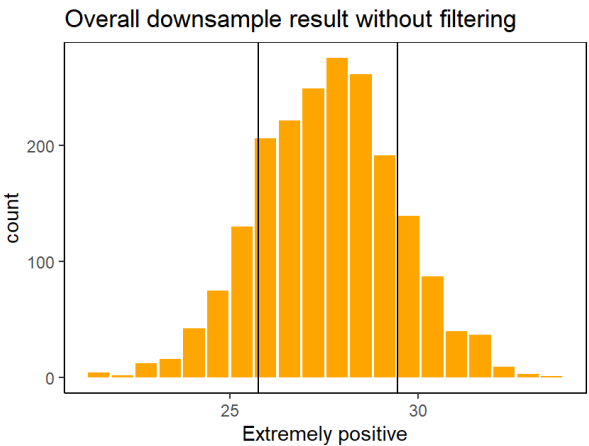


## Quality of Life

Our second key indicator for assessing tourism’s impact is its effect on residents’ quality of life. Unlike broader economic or community-wide measures, this metric serves as an early warning signal—often predicting future shifts in how residents weigh tourism’s overall costs and benefits unless efforts are made to address negative impacts and amplify the positives.

In Wrangell, 64% of residents say tourism improves their quality of life, while about 24% report a negative impact. These numbers tend to be less favorable than responses to the "Costs vs. Benefits" question, likely because quality of life taps into how tourism affects individuals on a personal level, rather than its broader community value.

The takeaway is clear: sustaining positive sentiment requires a deliberate balance—ensuring tourism supports, rather than erodes, the day-to-day experience of local residents. Without that, support for tourism can quickly erode over time.



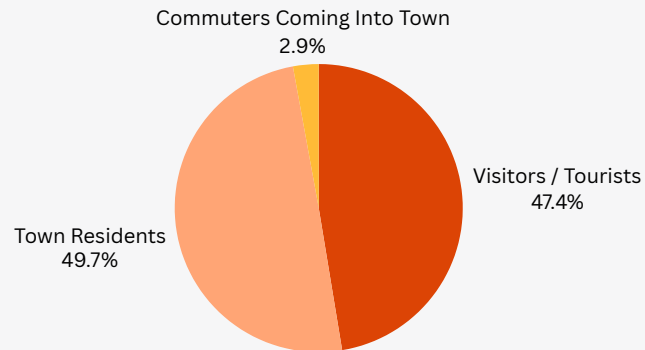
# Common Costs of Tourism

## Common Tourism Costs

Globally, vacation rentals, traffic, overcrowding, and environmental degradation are among the most commonly cited costs of tourism. In Wrangell, resident concerns mirror broader trends when it comes to traffic and environmental impacts.

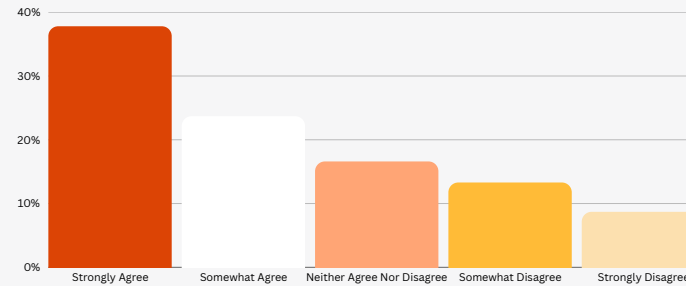
However, perceptions of vacation rentals stand out—generally viewed in a more favorable light compared to many other destinations. This divergence may be linked to Wrangell’s cruise-centric, day-trip tourism model, where fewer visitors stay overnight, reducing pressure on local housing. While this pattern is noteworthy, it warrants further investigation to better understand the underlying dynamics.

Source of Traffic



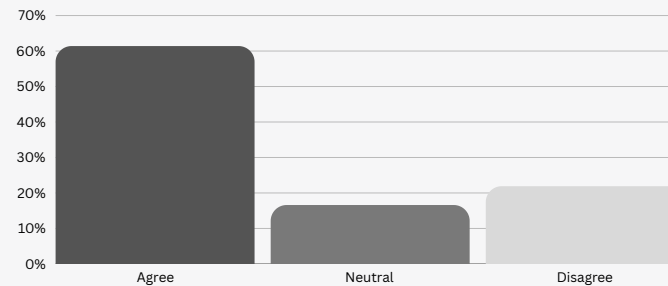
Who contributes most to traffic congestion in your town?

## Perceptions of Vacation Rentals



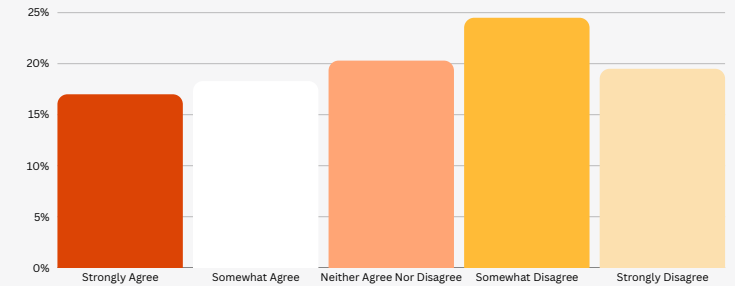
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about short term rentals (i.e.: Airbnb, VRBO) in your town? Vacation rentals are a positive addition to our town.

## Perceptions of Vacation Rentals



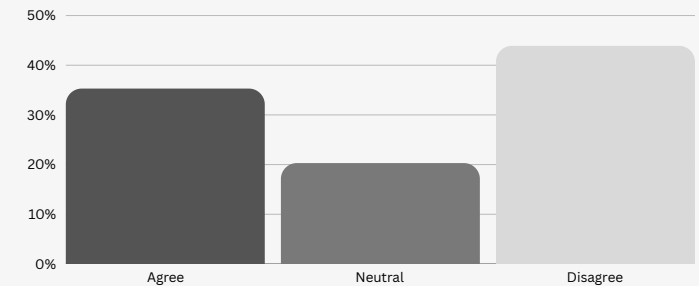
Perception of Vacation Rentals

## Perception of Impact on the Environment



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about tourism and the environment? Tourism causes more positive environmental effects than negative ones.

## Perception of Impact on the Environment



Perception of Tourism Impact on the Environment



# Priority for Tourism Tax Revenue

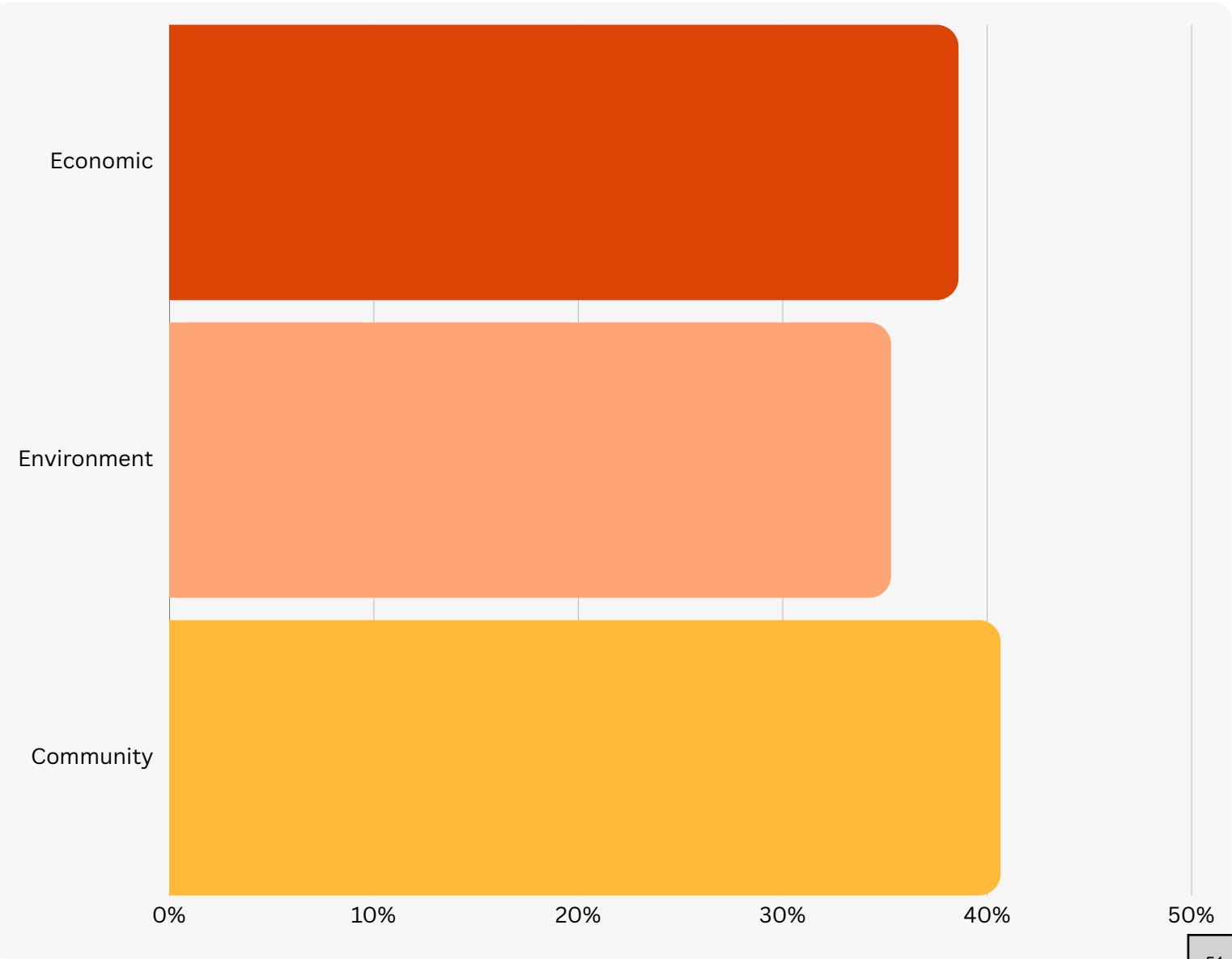
## Tax Revenue Priorities

Wrangell residents voiced opinions on how tourism tax revenue should be spent, with an emphasis on projects that directly benefit the community. While environmental initiatives and economic development also received notable support, they trailed slightly behind community-focused investments.

As we've observed in many destinations, the definition of "community benefit" can vary widely. For some, it means upgrading public infrastructure like parks, roads, or waterfronts. For others, it may involve support for social services, education, or the preservation of local culture and heritage.

A key takeaway from this data is the importance of digging deeper into what specific types of community projects residents prioritize. Clarifying these preferences can help ensure that funding decisions truly reflect the community's shared vision. Just as importantly, involving residents in these conversations can foster a greater sense of ownership, increase transparency, and ultimately lead to more successful and sustainable project outcomes.

Tourist destinations often have a lodging tax (aka a tax on tourists) for anyone staying in a hotel, vacation rental, or other short-term lodging. Please rank how you feel tax revenue should be reinvested in your town.



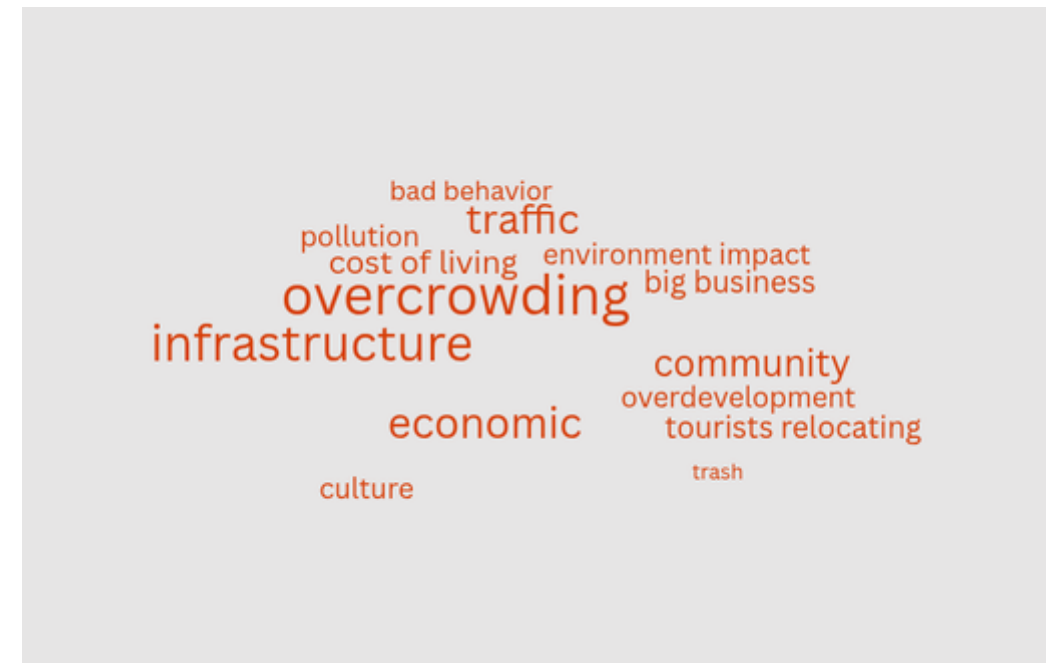
# Biggest Costs & Benefits

What are the biggest benefits of tourism?



In a few words, what is the biggest benefit of tourism to your town?

What are the biggest costs of tourism?



In a few words, what is the biggest cost of tourism to your town?

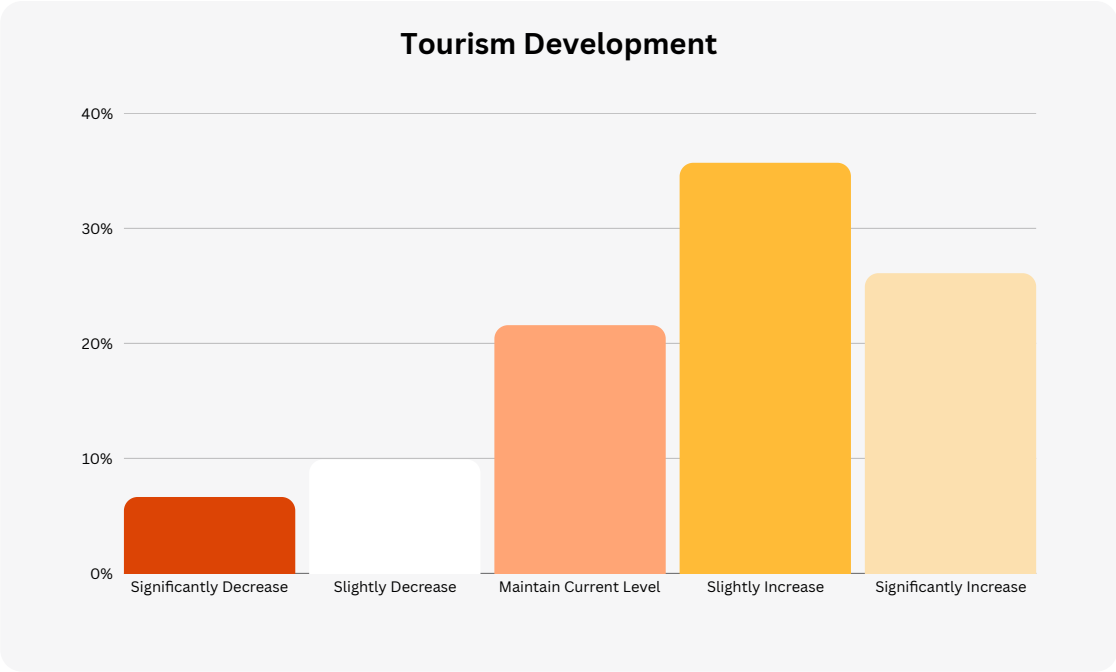
## Perceived Costs & Benefits of Tourism

Around the world, communities tend to view tourism primarily through an economic lens—and Wrangell is no exception. Residents most frequently cited economic benefits such as tax revenue, job creation, and increased local spending as the key advantages of tourism.

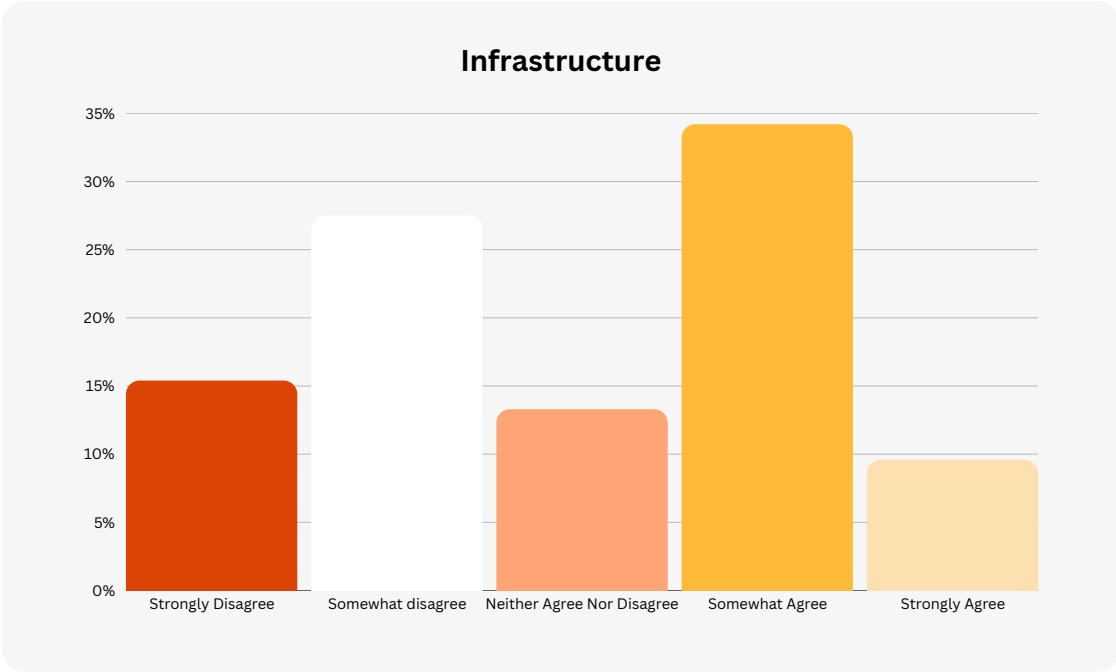
When it comes to perceived costs, Wrangell showed both alignment and divergence from broader trends. While concerns about community, infrastructure, and traffic echoed those seen in other destinations, Wrangell stood out as only the second destination in our research to rank overcrowding as the top concern. This finding contrasts with nearby Skagway, where cost-related concerns leaned more heavily toward community strain and affordability.

Upcoming sections on tourism development and greenspace will offer deeper insight into how these concerns connect to residents' broader views on quality of life.

# Positive & Negative Impacts of Tourism



Do you support more or less tourism development in our town?



Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
The current infrastructure and visitor services can support the volume of tourism in my town?

## Tourism Development & Infrastructure

In 2024, the OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab introduced new questions exploring resident views on tourism development and existing infrastructure. Wrangell residents expressed a clear preference for expanding tourism development—one of the strongest pro-development sentiments recorded across all destinations in the study. This is particularly noteworthy given Wrangell’s current stage in the tourism lifecycle, where communities often become more cautious about growth.

Perceptions of infrastructure were more mixed. A majority of residents felt the existing infrastructure could adequately support current tourist volumes. This stands out, as most destinations typically show broad support for infrastructure expansion. Wrangell’s response suggests a degree of confidence in current capacity, or perhaps a measured view of the scale of tourism growth needed.

# Wrangell Greenspaces

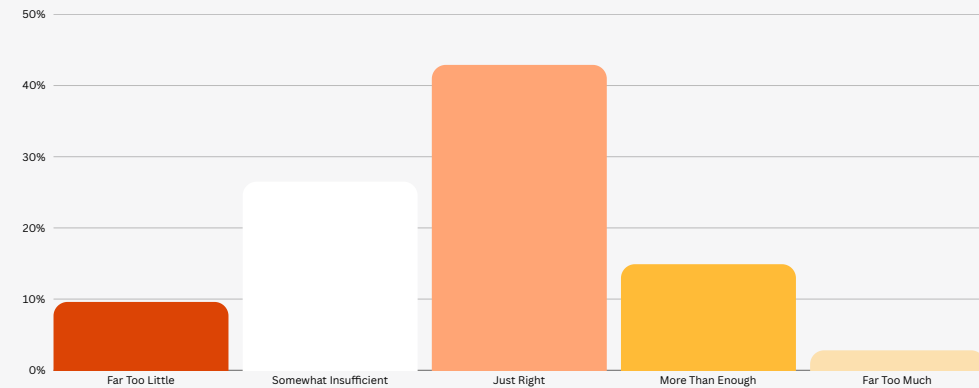
## Greenspace

Wrangell residents' views on greenspace reflect a balanced and measured approach, closely aligning with sentiment in other Alaskan cruise destinations. Unlike many global tourism hotspots—where the lack of accessible greenspace is considered a major cost of tourism and a growing source of resident frustration—Wrangell has not yet reached a critical threshold in this regard. This suggests that while concerns exist, they are not as acute as in more densely developed destinations.

The open-ended comments section of the survey adds valuable context to this finding. Many residents expressed a desire for more parks, gardens, and natural gathering spaces that could serve both locals and visitors. A recurring theme was the call for expanded waterfront development, particularly through the creation of additional trails and recreational areas that showcase Wrangell's natural assets while promoting health, accessibility, and tourism appeal.

In addition, respondents highlighted the need for further beautification of the downtown core. Suggestions included landscaping, public art, and cleaner, more welcoming streetscapes—elements that could enhance the visitor experience while also fostering local pride. These responses point to a community that values its natural environment and recognizes the opportunity to make strategic, low-impact improvements that support both resident well-being and tourism development.

Green Space



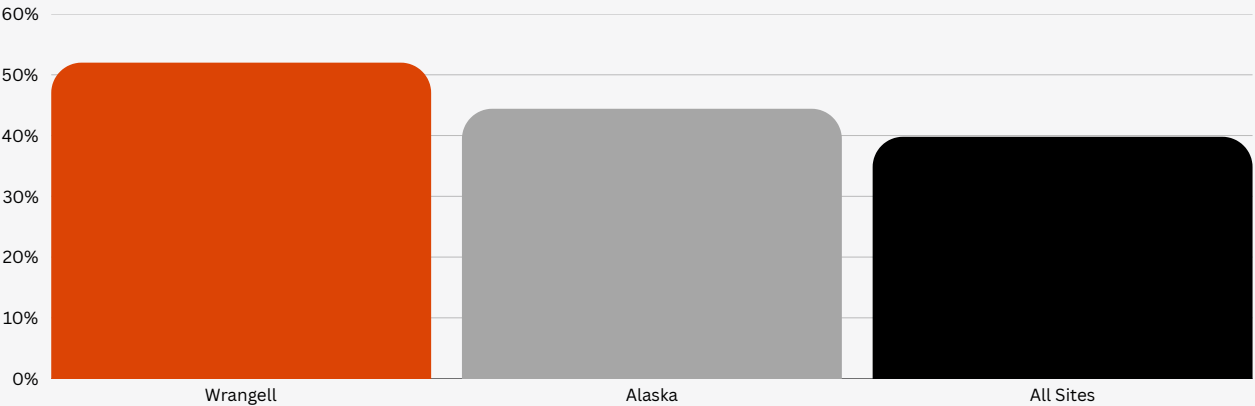
What is your opinion on the current amount of green space in our town?

rest areas  
community gardens  
playgrounds and family amenities  
waterfront redevelopment  
maintenance of existing green spaces  
improved and expanded parks  
reallocation of industrial space  
downtown beautification and greening  
more trails

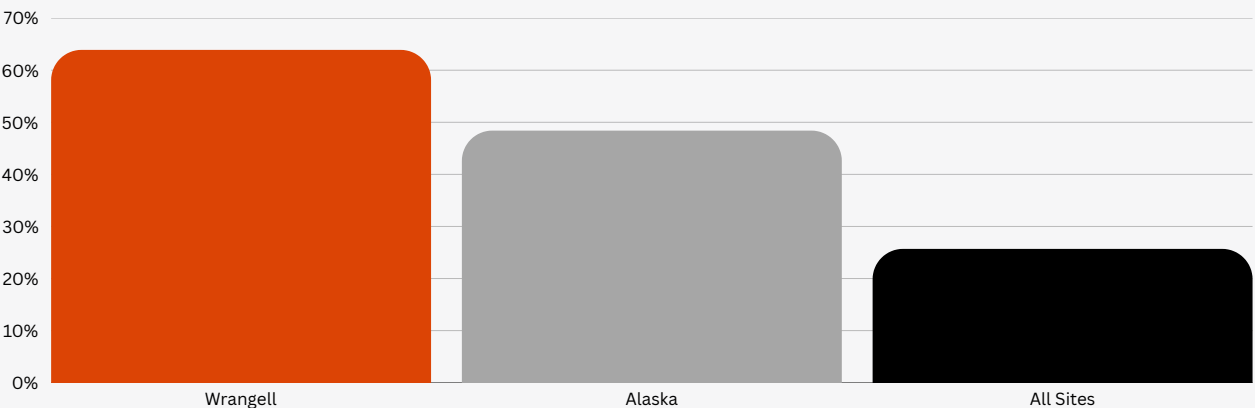
# Destination Benchmarks

# Benchmark: Impacts of Tourism

Benefits vs Costs of Tourism



Positive Impact on Quality of Life



## Tourism Impacts

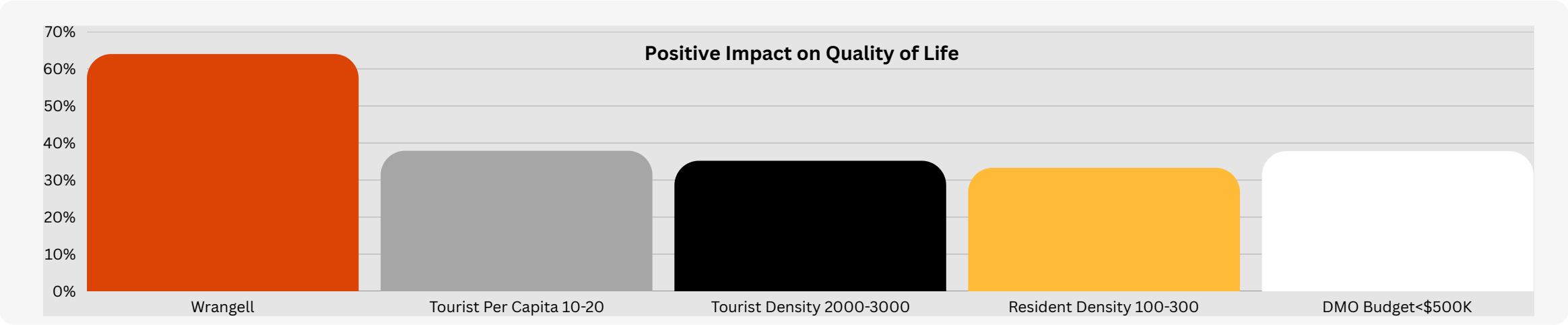
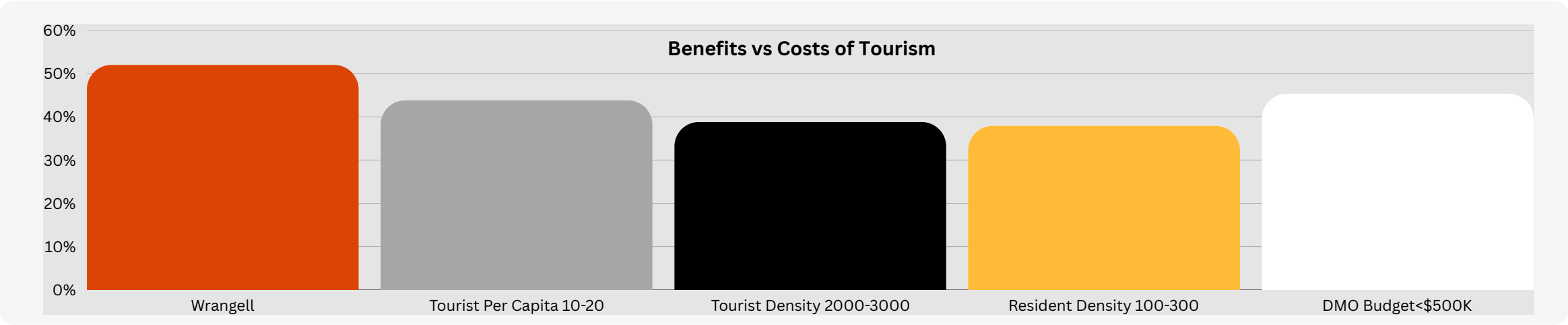
Wrangell stands out as a distinctive destination with its own mix of opportunities and challenges. Still, comparing it to other destinations—including those across Alaska—can offer valuable context and insight.

Across the 300 destinations we monitor as of 2025, including several in Alaska, residents generally report less favorable views of tourism than those in Wrangell. However, it's important to interpret these comparisons carefully. Community-level data doesn't always align neatly with regional trends—especially when some Alaskan residents live in areas with little to no tourism, which naturally shapes their perceptions.

One interesting finding was Wrangell's notably positive quality of life ratings compared to other Alaskan communities. This contrast may again reflect differences in exposure: in areas where tourism is minimal, residents may not experience either the benefits or the challenges firsthand. These differences underscore how the scale and visibility of tourism can significantly shape public sentiment—especially when residents are closely connected to its local impact.

It also points to the importance of localized planning efforts that reflect each community's unique tourism profile. For Wrangell, maintaining this positive sentiment will likely depend on balancing growth with a continued focus on resident well-being.

# Benchmark: Destination Metrics



- 1. Tourists per Capita:  $\text{Tourists per Capita} = \frac{\text{Annual Tourist Arrivals}}{\text{Resident Population}}$
- 2. Tourist Density:  $\text{Tourist Density} = \frac{\text{Annual Tourist Arrivals}}{\text{Land Area (in square miles)}}$
- 3. Resident Density:  $\text{Resident Density} = \frac{\text{Resident Population}}{\text{Land Area (in square miles)}}$
- 4. DMO Budget Total Budget: Total DMO Budget



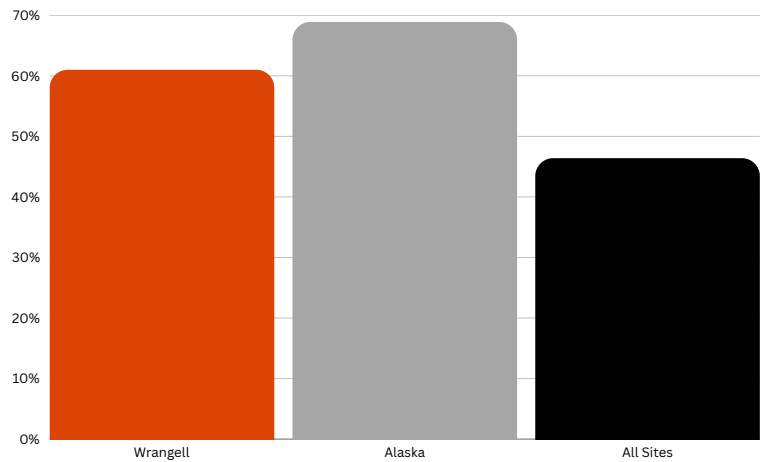
# Benchmark: Age and Residency Length

## Benefits vs Costs of Tourism

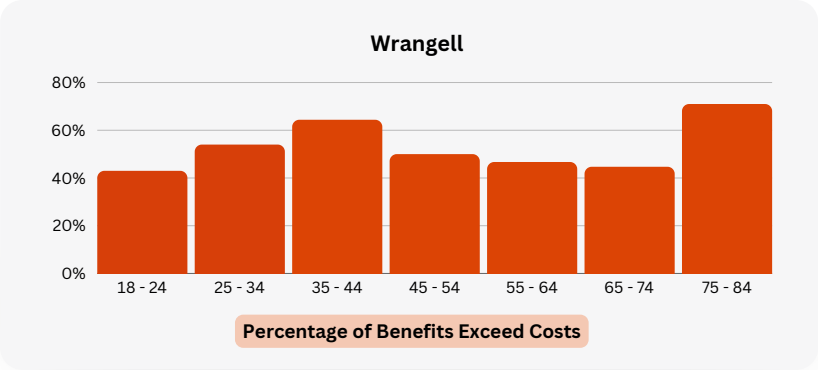
Shorter-term residents generally view tourism more favorably, likely because they benefit directly from tourism-related jobs. This trend holds true in Wrangell, where newer residents expressed more positive perceptions of tourism. Attitudes by age group were less consistent, though the 35–44 and 75+ age groups showed the highest levels of approval.

Traffic concerns are often tied to tourism, and Wrangell follows this pattern: 61% of residents attributed traffic problems to tourists. However, this figure is lower than in other Alaskan destinations, suggesting Wrangell faces a distinct set of challenges—particularly related to day-cruise visitors.

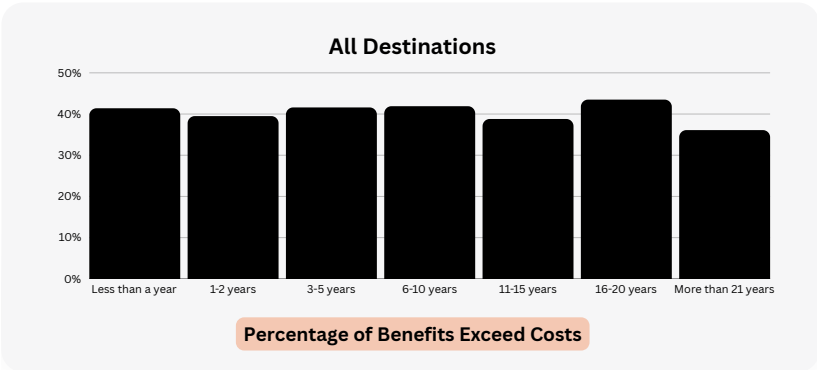
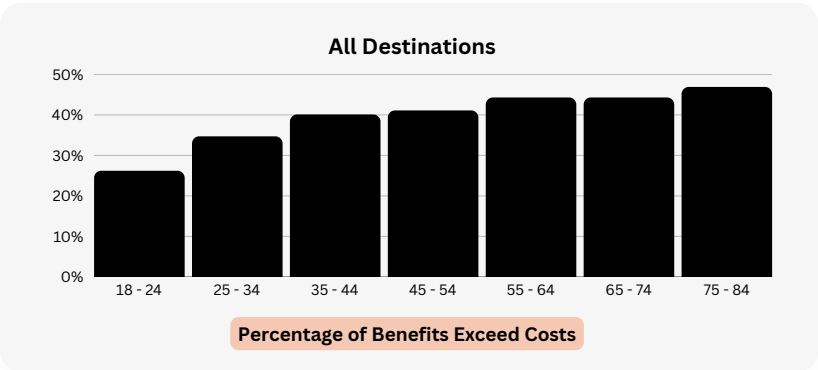
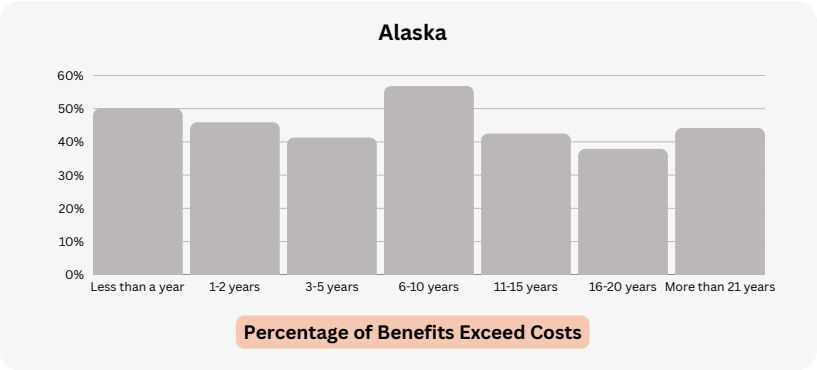
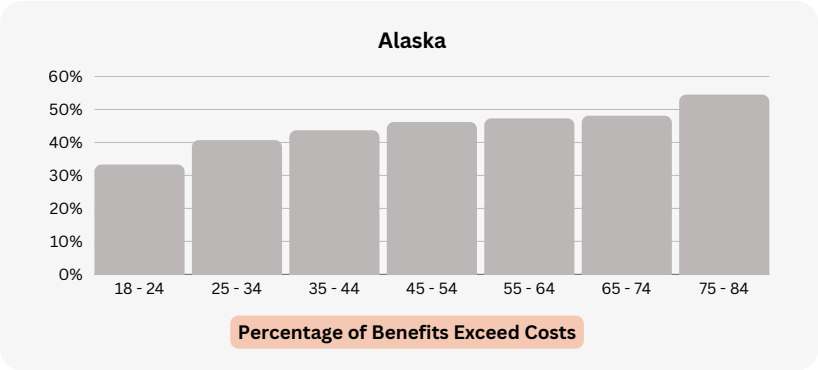
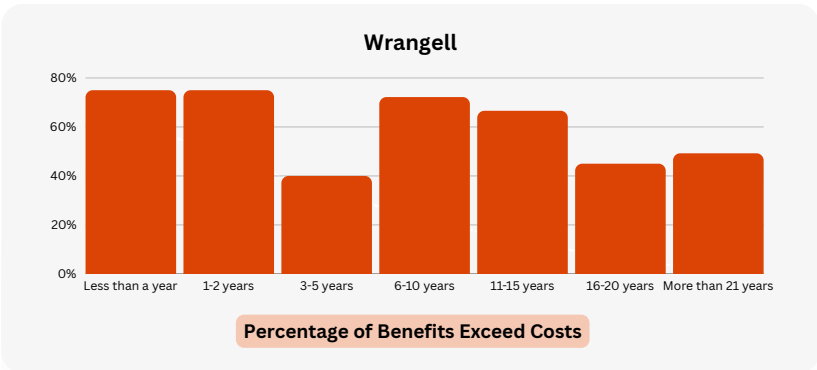
Percentage Blame Tourists for Traffic



Perceptions of Tourism by Age Group



Perceptions of Tourism by Length of Residency



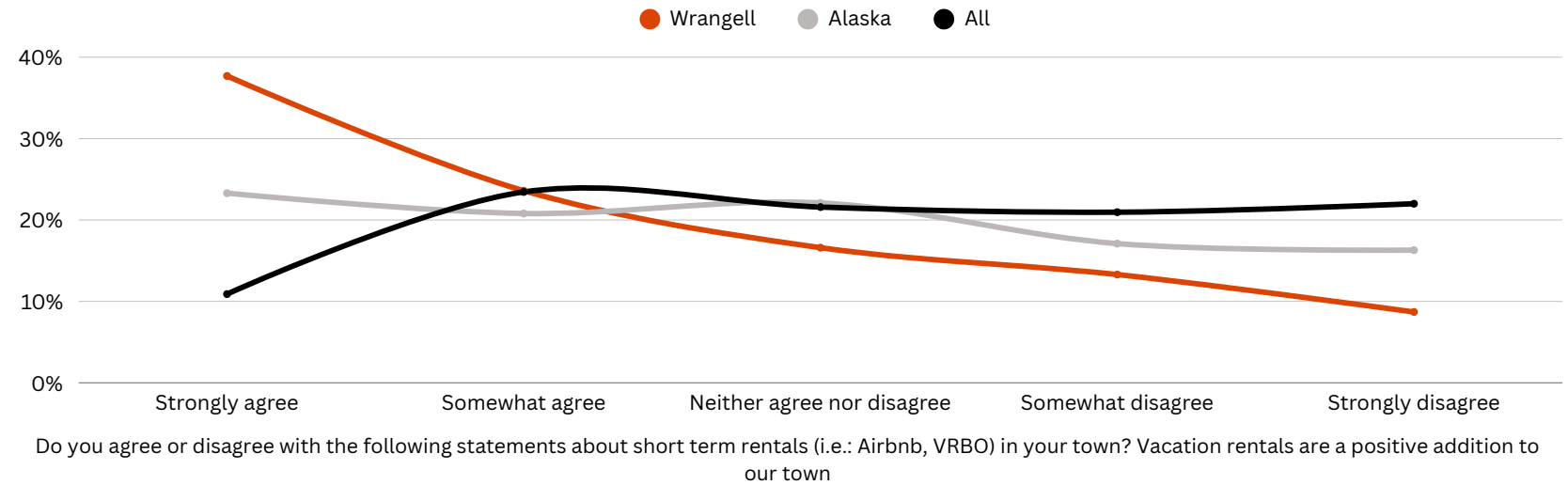
Vacation Rentals & Environment

Vacation rentals are currently viewed more positively in Wrangell than in many other destinations. This likely reflects their relatively limited presence in the community, as Wrangell hosts a smaller volume of overnight visitors compared to more heavily trafficked areas. However, as tourism grows, resident sentiment may shift—making it important to track future changes in attitudes.

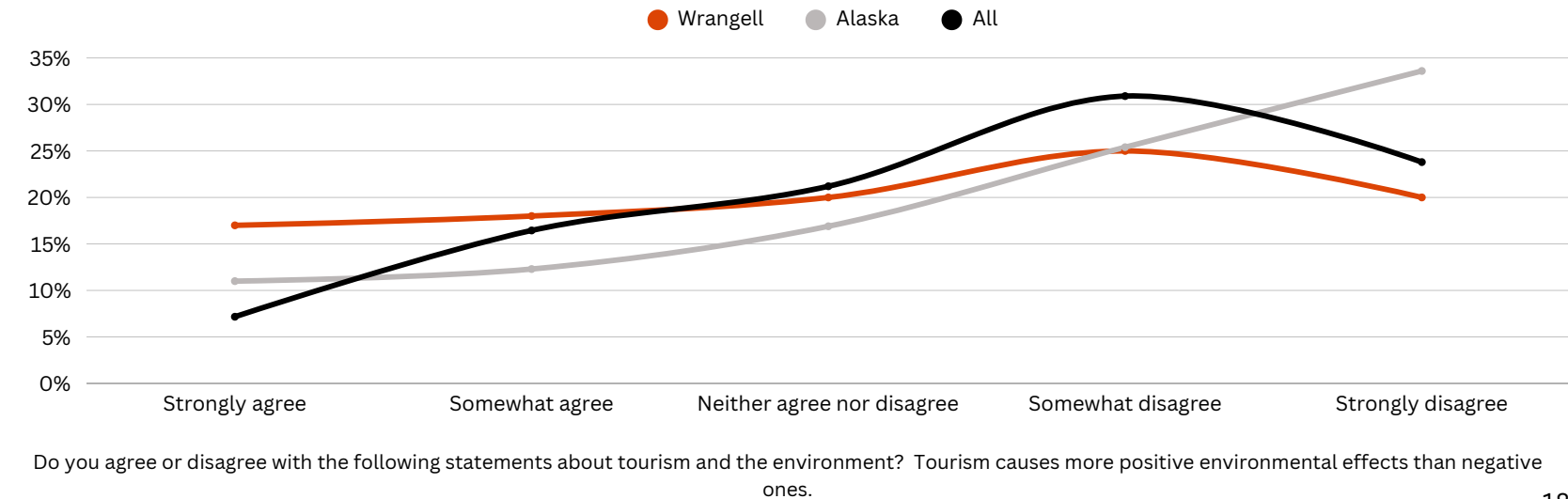
Wrangell is widely regarded as a pristine and scenic destination, and residents expressed fewer concerns about the negative impacts of tourism than respondents in Alaska and in other benchmark destinations. This is a data point to monitor, as the town’s natural beauty is a core driver of visitor demand. If residents perceive that tourism is degrading the environment, it may present a growing challenge for destination management.

Interestingly, the views on environmental impacts are in line with support levels allocating additional tax dollars to address these issues. This may also reflect uncertainty about effective solutions, hesitation to invest public funds, or a lack of consensus on who should bear the responsibility for mitigation.

Perceptions of Vacation Rentals



Perception of Tourism Impact on the Environment



## Benchmark: Most Common Benefits

### Wrangell



### Alaska



### All Destinations



In a few words, what is the biggest benefit of tourism to your town?

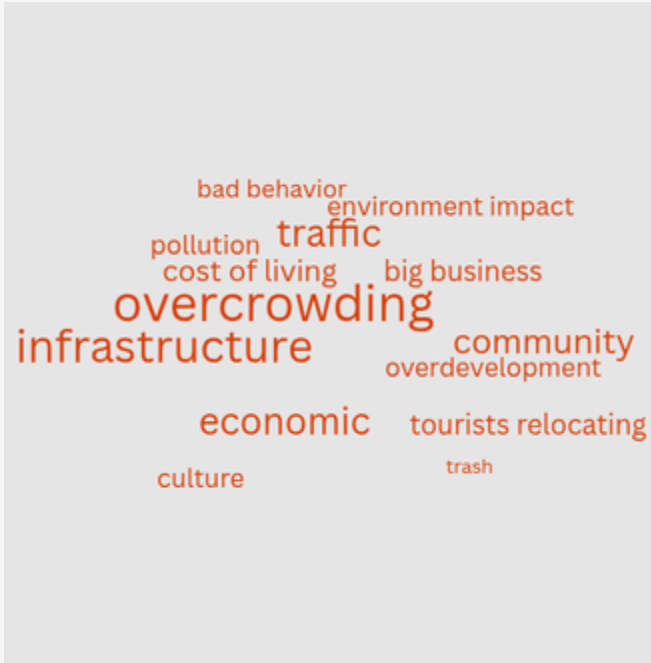
#### Benefits

As previously noted, Wrangell residents' perceptions of tourism's benefits generally align with those observed in similar destinations. Economic benefits—such as support for local businesses, job creation, and increased tax revenue—are widely recognized and appreciated. This mirrors a common pattern in tourism communities, where economic growth is viewed as one of tourism's primary advantages.

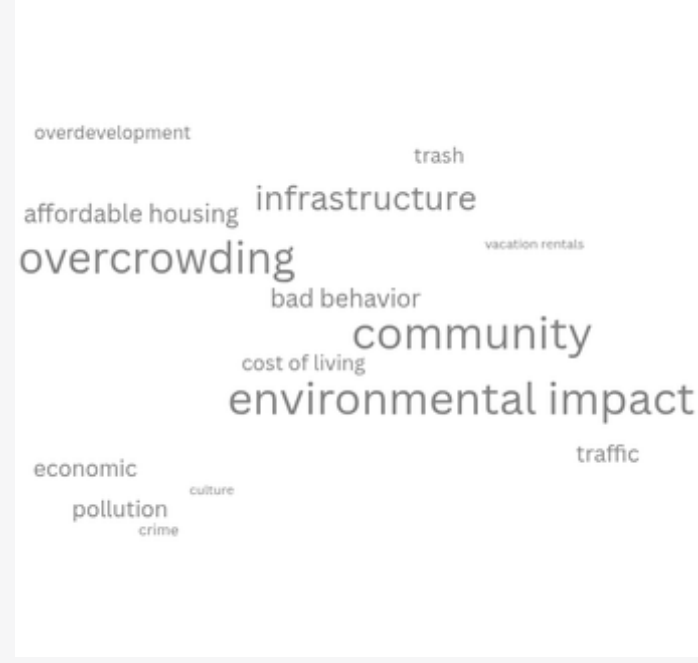
At the same time, there is a growing recognition among residents of the need for sustainable, well-managed growth. While economic gains are valued, there is likely a desire to protect the community's quality of life—a key attribute that make Wrangell appealing to both residents and visitors. This suggests a nuanced perspective: one that embraces the economic potential of tourism, but also calls for deliberate planning to ensure those benefits endure without compromising the town's character.

## Benchmark: Most Common Costs

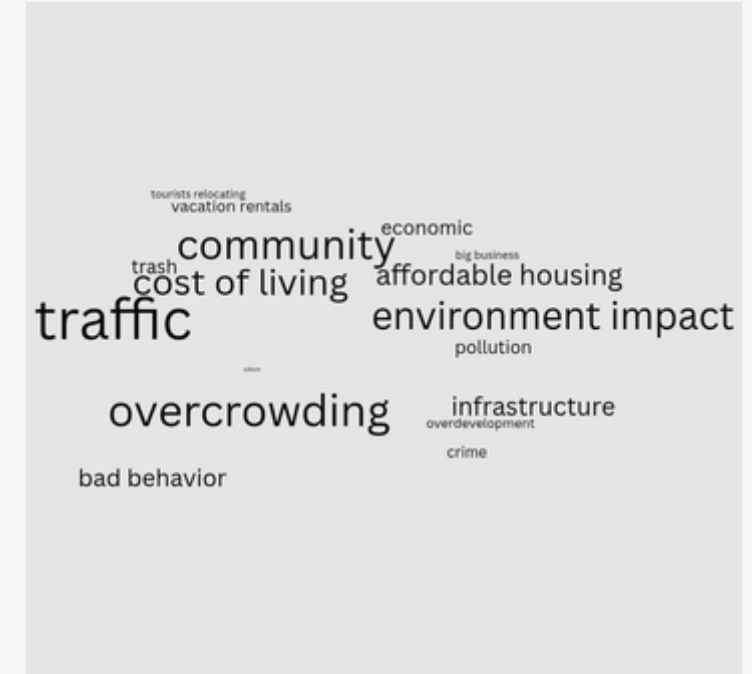
### Wrangell



### Alaska



### All Destinations



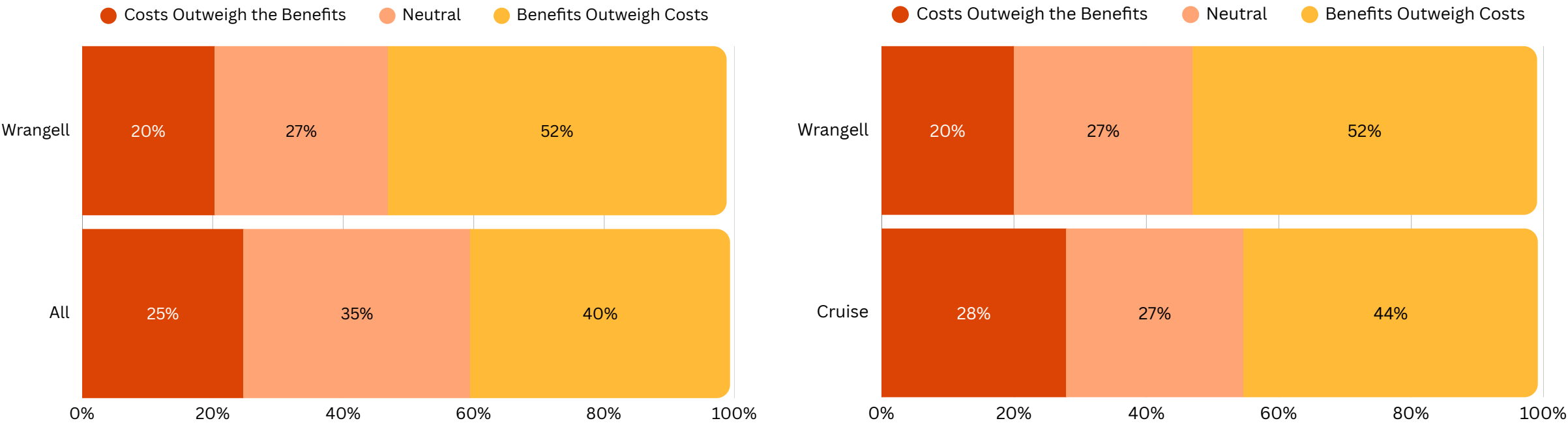
In a few words, what is the biggest cost of tourism to your town?

#### Costs

Overcrowding stands out as one of the most significant perceived costs of tourism in Wrangell—more prominently than in many other destinations. While this concern appears in other benchmark communities, it tends to rank lower on their list of tourism-related challenges. In Wrangell, however, residents also expressed concerns about infrastructure strain and traffic, underscoring a broader sense of pressure on local systems.

This pattern points to a unique challenge: Wrangell's smaller geographic footprint and high seasonal influx of visitors likely intensify the experience of overcrowding. As such, tourism-related impacts may feel more visible, suggesting the need for proactive planning to manage peak periods and protect residents' quality of life.

# Benchmark: Population & Cruise



### Benchmarks

To provide additional context for evaluating Wrangell’s performance, new benchmark sets were introduced—focusing on other cruise destinations and communities with similar population sizes.

Compared to its cruise destination peer group, Wrangell reports a more favorable overall perception of tourism. Specifically, residents in Wrangell perceive tourism-related costs to be approximately 8% lower than those reported in comparable cruise ports. This suggests that, despite recognizing some downsides, residents see the benefits—such as increased tax revenue and business activity—as outweighing the costs.

Similarly, Wrangell’s perceived tourism costs were also lower than in other small communities with similar populations. This trend may reflect Wrangell’s distinct tourism dynamics, where the seasonal concentration of visitors and relatively modest scale of tourism activity reduce the intensity of negative impacts—at least for now.

# Tax Revenue Allocation

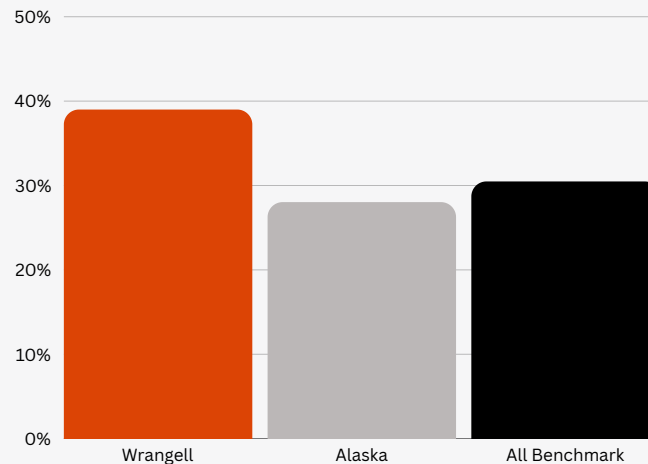
## Tax Priorities

Overall, Wrangell residents demonstrated a consistent preference for tourism tax revenue to be allocated across economic, community, and environmental priorities. Among these, community projects ranked slightly higher than economic initiatives, with environmental projects receiving the lowest prioritization.

While community investments tend to be the top priority across most Alaskan destinations, Wrangell stood out for placing greater emphasis on economic uses of tourism revenue. As noted earlier, this economic prioritization is notably higher than in both other Alaskan communities and similarly sized destinations, reflecting Wrangell's distinct perspective on the role of tourism in supporting local development.

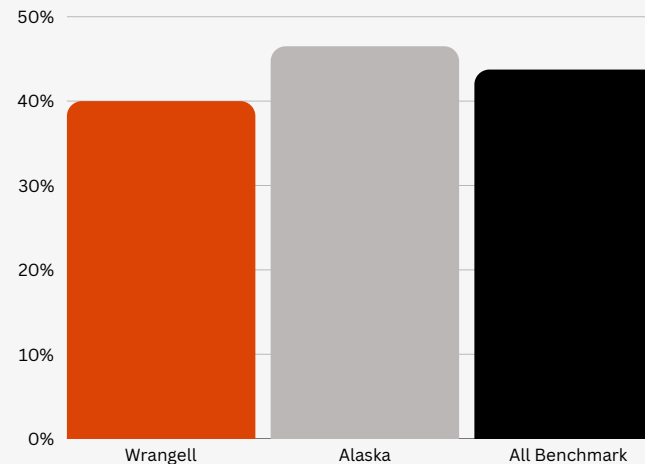
### Economic

#### Tax Priority



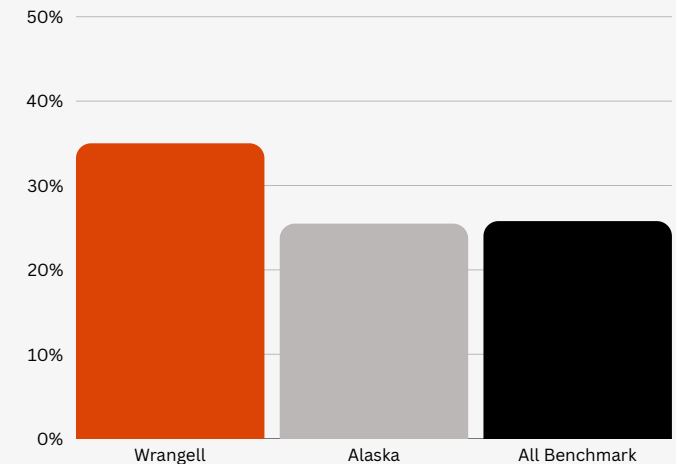
### Community

#### Tax Priority



### Environmental

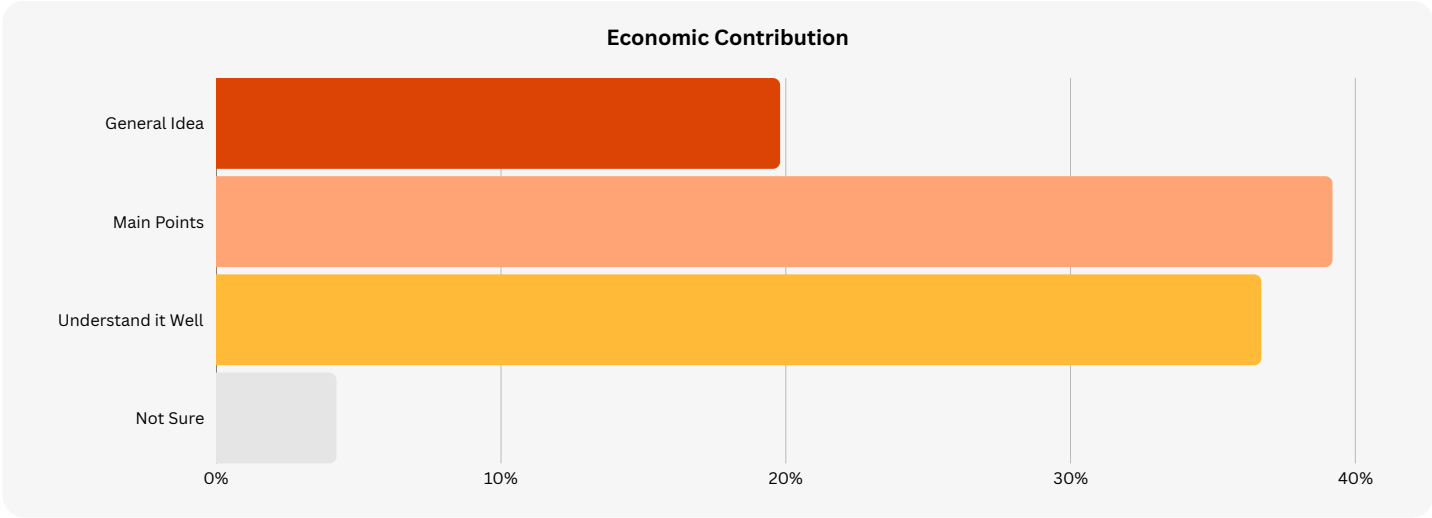
#### Tax Priority



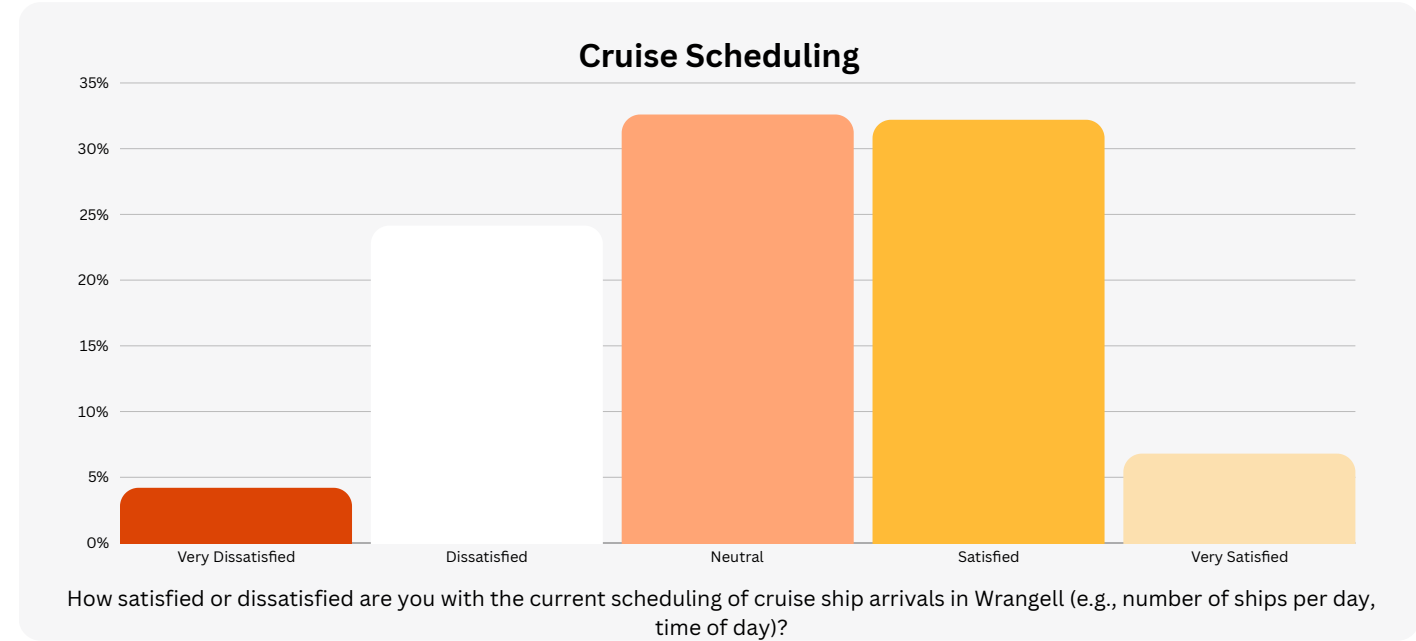
Tourist destinations often have a lodging tax (aka a tax on tourists) for anyone staying in a hotel, vacation rental, or other short-term lodging.

Please rank how you feel tax revenue should be reinvested in your town.

# Wrangell Local Questions



Which of the following best describes your understanding of the economic contribution of tourism to Wrangell (e.g. benefits of independent versus cruise ship visitors, revenue allocation, state passenger tax, port fees)?



## Local Questions

The Wrangell community believes it has a strong understanding of the economic benefits associated with tourism. Approximately 76% of respondents indicated they either understood tourism’s economic contribution well or were at least familiar with its key points. This level of awareness reinforces responses to our broader economic benefits question, which serves as a key performance indicator (KPI) across all of our destination studies. It suggests that residents are not only seeing the benefits but are also well-informed about how tourism supports local businesses, jobs, and tax revenue.

In a related question, residents also expressed support for the current cruise ship scheduling. This is particularly notable when compared to other cruise destinations, where scheduling often becomes a flashpoint for concerns around overcrowding and quality of life. Wrangell’s approval of cruise scheduling may indicate that the town has found a balance between welcoming visitors and maintaining a manageable flow of tourism activity. It may also reflect proactive planning or natural advantages—such as fewer ship arrivals—that help mitigate the more visible costs of cruise tourism. As cruise visitation patterns evolve, this will be an important area to monitor, especially given its influence on resident satisfaction in other similarly situated communities.



# Wrangell Local Questions

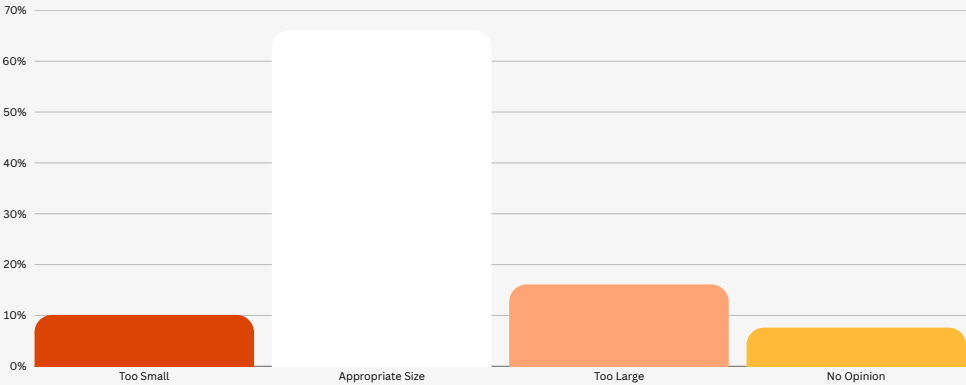
## Local Questions

The Wrangell community overwhelmingly approved of the sizes of cruise ships visiting their port. In many other destinations, ship size has emerged as a contentious issue, often linked to overcrowding, infrastructure strain, and environmental concerns. Wrangell’s approval on this front reinforces earlier findings that residents are generally satisfied with the current balance and scale of tourism activity.

The final Wrangell-specific survey questions offer several layers of interpretation. On one hand, a majority of residents indicated that they do not personally benefit directly from tourism. This lends credibility to the survey sample and findings, suggesting the results are not skewed by individuals with a vested interest in the tourism industry.

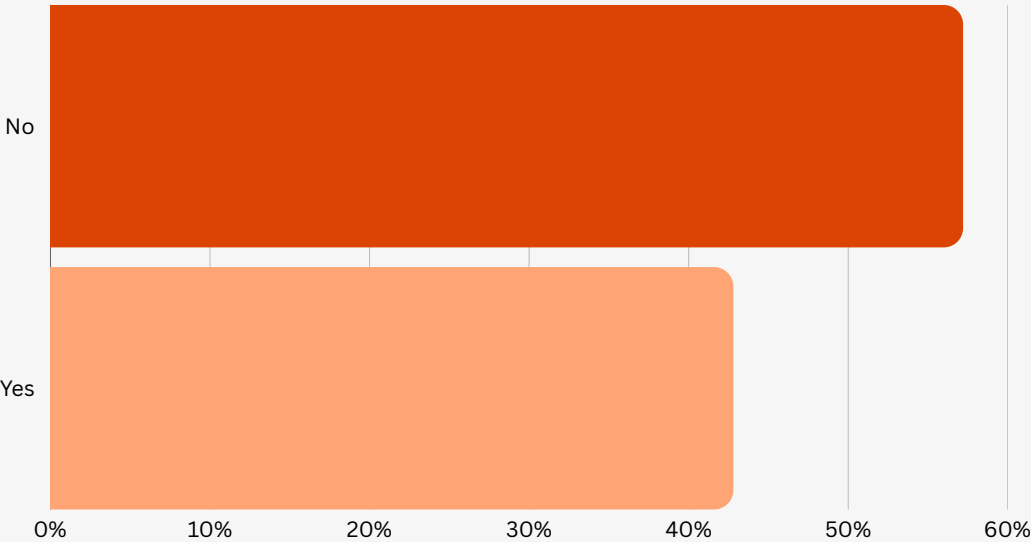
On the other hand, this response could also signal a potential gap in public understanding or recognition of tourism’s broader impact. It is likely that many residents experience indirect benefits—such as improved services, enhanced community infrastructure, or greater economic vitality—without necessarily linking these to tourism. Gaining a clearer understanding of how residents perceive and differentiate between direct and indirect benefits could provide valuable insights for future engagement and communication strategies.

## Cruise Ship Size



When you think about cruise ships visiting Wrangell, which of the following best describes your perception of their size?

## Directly Benefit From Tourism



Do you or any member of your household directly benefit from the tourism industry in Wrangell (e.g., employment, business ownership, etc.)?

**THANK YOU**

**OSU Sustainable Tourism Lab**







**Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 17th, 2025  
Agenda Statement**

**Agenda Item:** *New Business, Item 9A*

**From:** *Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director*

**Subject:** *Review and approval to move forward with American Cruise Line negotiations.*

#### INTRODUCTION

The City and Borough of Wrangell has received a formal tidelands lease application from American Cruise Lines (ACL), Inc. to lease a portion of tidelands within Parcel 02-024-600, located off Campbell Drive. ACL proposes to design, permit, and construct a new dock to accommodate its small U.S.-flagged cruise vessels. The estimated \$3 million investment would allow for more consistent and weather-resilient visitation, while improving pedestrian access to downtown businesses, the Nolan Center, and the Wrangell Museum.

The Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau is asked to review this proposal in the context of Wrangell's tourism goals and infrastructure needs, and to issue a recommendation to the Borough Assembly. Final approval is subject to further review by the Planning & Zoning and Port Commissions.

#### BACKGROUND

In 2015, the City and Borough of Wrangell adopted a Waterfront Master Plan to guide shoreline development. In spring 2025, the Borough re-engaged the public to update the plan in response to changing visitor trends and infrastructure demands. Current planning emphasizes water-dependent uses, expanded greenspace, and strategic, well-managed tourism growth.

The ACL lease proposal supports these goals. The company has identified Wrangell as a long-term partner in its Alaska expansion strategy, with vessel calls expected to increase from 16 in 2024 to over 50 by 2028. A dedicated dock would remove the current reliance on anchoring and tendering, improve schedule reliability, and enhance the visitor experience while creating new opportunities for local businesses and tour operators.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- **Lease Proposal:** 40-year lease of tidelands (Parcel 02-024-600)
- **Project Value:** \$3 million privately funded infrastructure
- **Construction Timeline:** Q3 2026 – Q2 2027
- **Community Access:** Pedestrian access to downtown; public dock access provisions under discussion

- **Tourism Growth:** ACL projects up to 7,800 passengers per season by 2028
- **Partnership Model:** Long-term agreements and infrastructure investments similar to Richland and Kalama, WA

#### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In evaluating the lease proposal, the Borough will consider the lease structure (berthing vs. long-term lease), infrastructure ownership, and terms of public access. Topics for further discussion include shared economic value, revenue models, scheduling protocols, upland improvements, public utility needs, and alignment with Wrangell's environmental, operational, and tourism management standards. Emergency coordination, right of first refusal provisions, and dispute resolution mechanisms will also be addressed in the negotiation process.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau support the lease proposal in concept and issue a positive recommendation to the Borough Assembly. This support acknowledges the potential for long-term tourism growth, improved infrastructure, and enhanced visitor access. Staff further recommend that the Assembly authorize the Borough Manager to enter into lease negotiations with American Cruise Lines, subject to applicable Commission reviews and Borough code.

#### RECOMMENDED MOTION

Move to recommend that the Borough Assembly authorize the Borough Manager to negotiate a tidelands lease agreement with American Cruise Lines, Inc. for the purpose of dock construction within Parcel 02-024-600, subject to final review by the Planning & Zoning and Port Commissions, and in support of long-term economic development.

# CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

## OFFICE OF THE BOROUGH CLERK

PO BOX 531 WRANGELL, AK, 99929 | +1 (907) 874-2381  
205 BRUEGER STREET WRANGELL, AK, 99929



### PUBLIC LAND & TIDELANDS LEASE APPLICATION

**WMC 16.08.010 - 16.08.210 & WMC 16.10.010 - 16.10.210**

**APPLICATION FEE: \$250.00 NON-REFUNDABLE - MUST BE PAID AT TIME OF FILING**

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

RECEIVED BY

DATE RECEIVED

PAYMENT

CHECK ☐

CREDIT CARD ☐

CASH ☐

Applications for tidelands leases shall be submitted to the planning and zoning and port commissions before being presented to the borough assembly for consideration. Applications for real property leases shall be submitted to the borough manager and the planning and zoning commission for review before being presented to the borough assembly for consideration.

The applicant shall provide additional information, including a development plan, designs, and specifications, as the planning and zoning and/or port commissions may request. The planning and zoning and port commissions may require the applicant to amend its development plan. All fees associated with the lease shall be paid by the applicant. Such fees include but are not limited to an application fee, survey, assessment, public notices, and recording fees.

#### SECTION I.

APPLICANT'S FULL NAME

American Cruise Lines Inc.

EMAIL ADDRESS

eric.dussault@americancruiselines.com

PHONE NUMBER

203-453-6800

APPLICANT'S PHYSICAL ADDRESS

741 Boston Post Road Suite 200 Guilford, CT 06437

APPLICANT'S MAILING ADDRESS

741 Boston Post Road Suite 200 Guilford, CT 06437

#### SECTION II.

REQUEST TO LEASE TIDELANDS OR REAL PROPERTY ..... TIDELANDS ☐ REAL PROPERTY ☒

PLEASE PROVIDE THE PARCEL ID NUMBER AS WELL AS EITHER THE PHYSICAL ADDRESS OR LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY.

PARCEL ID NUMBER

02-024-600

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

Campbell Drive

LOT:

BLOCK:

SUBDIVISION:

PROPOSED TERM OF LEASE (YEARS) .....

50

YEARS



**CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**PUBLIC LAND & TIDELANDS LEASE APPLICATION**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Item a.

**SECTION II. (CONT)**

**CURRENT ZONING OF PROPERTY**

WFD

**LOT SIZE**

**CURRENT USE OF PROPERTY**

**SECTION III.**

**INCLUDE AND LIST HERE ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (I.E. MAPS).**

See attached

**STATE THE PURPOSE AND PROPOSED USE OF THE PROPERTY.**

See attached

**DESCRIBE THE IMPROVEMENTS THAT WILL BE ADDED TO THE PROPERTY.**

See attached

**WHEN WILL THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENTS BEGIN AND WHEN WILL THEY BE COMPLETED?**

**START DATE:** Q3 2026

**END DATE:** Q2 2027

**WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED COST OF IMPROVEMENTS THAT WILL BE  
ADDED TO PROPERTY?** .....

**COST:** \$\$3,000,000.00

**DESCRIBE THE EFFECTS THAT THE PROPOSED USE WILL HAVE ON PUBLIC STREETS, PUBLIC FACILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRAFFIC, AND PARKING. INCLUDE A PLAN FOR MITIGATING ADVERSE EFFECTS ON STREETS, PUBLIC FACILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AND PARKING, AND A PLAN FOR PAYING ALL ASSOCIATED COSTS.**

See attached

**CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**PUBLIC LAND & TIDELANDS LEASE APPLICATION**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

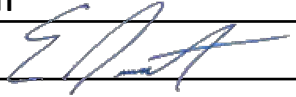
Item a.

**SECTION IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*I hereby affirm all the information submitted with this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I also agree to fulfill the tenants of any permits or approvals required by the City and Borough of Wrangell. I understand that incomplete applications will not be accepted and that all fees must be paid prior to review of this application.*

**SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT**

**DATE**



4/11/2025



***City & Borough of Wrangell  
Public Land & Tidelands Lease Application  
Additional Information***

**Applicant: American Cruise Lines**



**Section III**

***STATE THE PURPOSE AND PROPOSED USE OF THE PROPERTY.***

American Cruise Lines proposes to lease an area of tidelands located inside Parcel 02-024-600 on Campbell Drive for the purpose of constructing a new dock. This project will allow small overnight cruise vessels to operate with a consistent schedule which in turn will contribute to the local economy.

***DESCRIBE THE IMPROVEMENTS THAT WILL BE ADDED TO THE PROPERTY.***

American Cruise Lines would design and construct a dock which would be utilized by small overnight passenger vessels. Wrangell's 2015 Waterfront Preferred Master Plan outlines a need to create open green space along the waterfront. This includes area within the proposed lease area in this application. American Cruise Lines is accustomed to operating and docking in park settings all over the country. This location would provide our guests with consistent and easy access to downtown to visit the Wrangell Museum and the Nolan Center Theater.

***DESCRIBE THE EFFECTS THAT THE PROPOSED USE WILL HAVE ON PUBLIC STREETS, PUBLIC FACILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRAFFIC, AND PARKING. INCLUDE A PLAN FOR MITIGATING ADVERSE EFFECTS ON STREETS, PUBLIC FACILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, PUBLIC UTILITIES, TRAFFIC CONGESTION, AND PARKING, AND A PLAN FOR PAYING ALL ASSOCIATED COSTS.***

American Cruise Lines vessels bring sustainable and consistent tourism without overwhelming the community and with no additional vehicular access. The parcel identified would help to alleviate congestion as guests are able to walk to downtown attractions. The current location of City Dock requires American Cruise Lines to contract transportation to/from downtown. If utilities are required, American would work directly with the Borough to identify the least intrusive manner to install.



# AMERICAN CRUISE LINES & WRANGELL

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# OVERVIEW

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- ★ 100% American
- ★ The largest operator of U.S. cruise ships
- ★ 22 small ships operating in 35 states
- ★ 140 U.S. ports of call
- ★ Focus on small towns with big history
- ★ Educational & cultural programming
- ★ Boutique hotel on a ship
- ★ 2 ships in Alaska with more under construction
- ★ Adding 3 ships per year







# CHESAPEAKE SHIPBUILDING

SHIPBUILDERS & NAVAL ARCHITECTS

- ★ Family business under the same ownership as American Cruise Lines
- ★ Based in Salisbury, MD
- ★ Designers and builders of commercial vessel up to 400 feet
- ★ In-house naval architects and marine engineers
- ★ Steel and aluminum construction
- ★ Builders of every new American Cruise Lines ship
- ★ 8 cruise ships currently under construction with a new ship rolled out every 4 months



**MADE IN AMERICA**  
*with American Materials and Manpower*





## *Sharing America's Story on the Finest American Ships*

# Our Mission

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- ★ All US-flagged fleet with 100% domestic itineraries
- ★ Ability to operate in public access facilities without CBP control infrastructure
- ★ Ships between 240 and 270 feet carrying less than 200 guests each
- ★ 2 ships currently cruising in Alaska with more under construction
- ★ More time spent in port than any other Alaska cruise line to maximize guest engagement and economic impact







# Our Demographic

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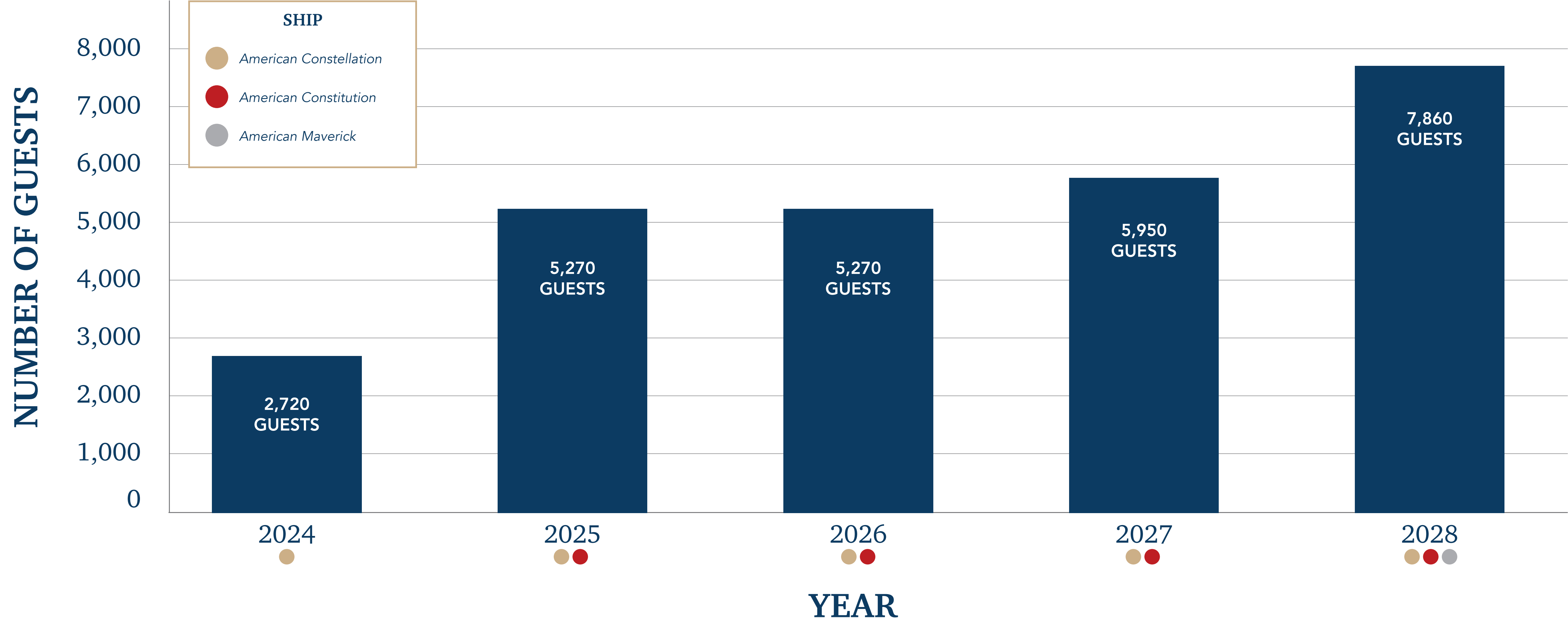
- ★ Mature affluent Americans
- ★ Former global travelers who now want to explore their own country
- ★ High net worth and retired
- ★ High willingness to spend on genuine or personalized experiences
- ★ Typical cruise costs more than \$1,000 per person, per day, plus shoreside expenses in excess of \$250 per person, per day
- ★ Where others spend 2-4 days in port, we spend 6 days in port





# Southeast Alaska

## *Sustainable Tourism Growth*







# Long-Term Partnership & Infrastructure

*Case Study: Richland, WA*

Use Agreement between the City of Richland, WA and American Cruise Lines. City sought to monetize an existing dock in a public park.

- ★ 5 years, with four 5 year options
- ★ American is anchor tenant with fixed annual payments
- ★ American has priority and manages docking schedule
- ★ American designed, permitted, managed, and paid for the construction of brand new berthing dolphins
- ★ Dock remains public access and recreational facility







# Long-Term Partnership & Infrastructure

*Case Study: Kalama, WA*

**Dock usage agreement between the Port of Kalama and American Cruise Lines. Port sought long-term commitments as part of its mixed use development vision which includes open space.**

- ★ 13-year agreement with one 7-year extension followed by two 10-year extensions totaling 40 years
- ★ American made capital contribution to project along with port
- ★ American manages dock schedule and has priority scheduling rights
- ★ Park is always a popular recreation facility for the public even when vessels are docked
- ★ Port managed construction project with input from American through concept, design, and construction



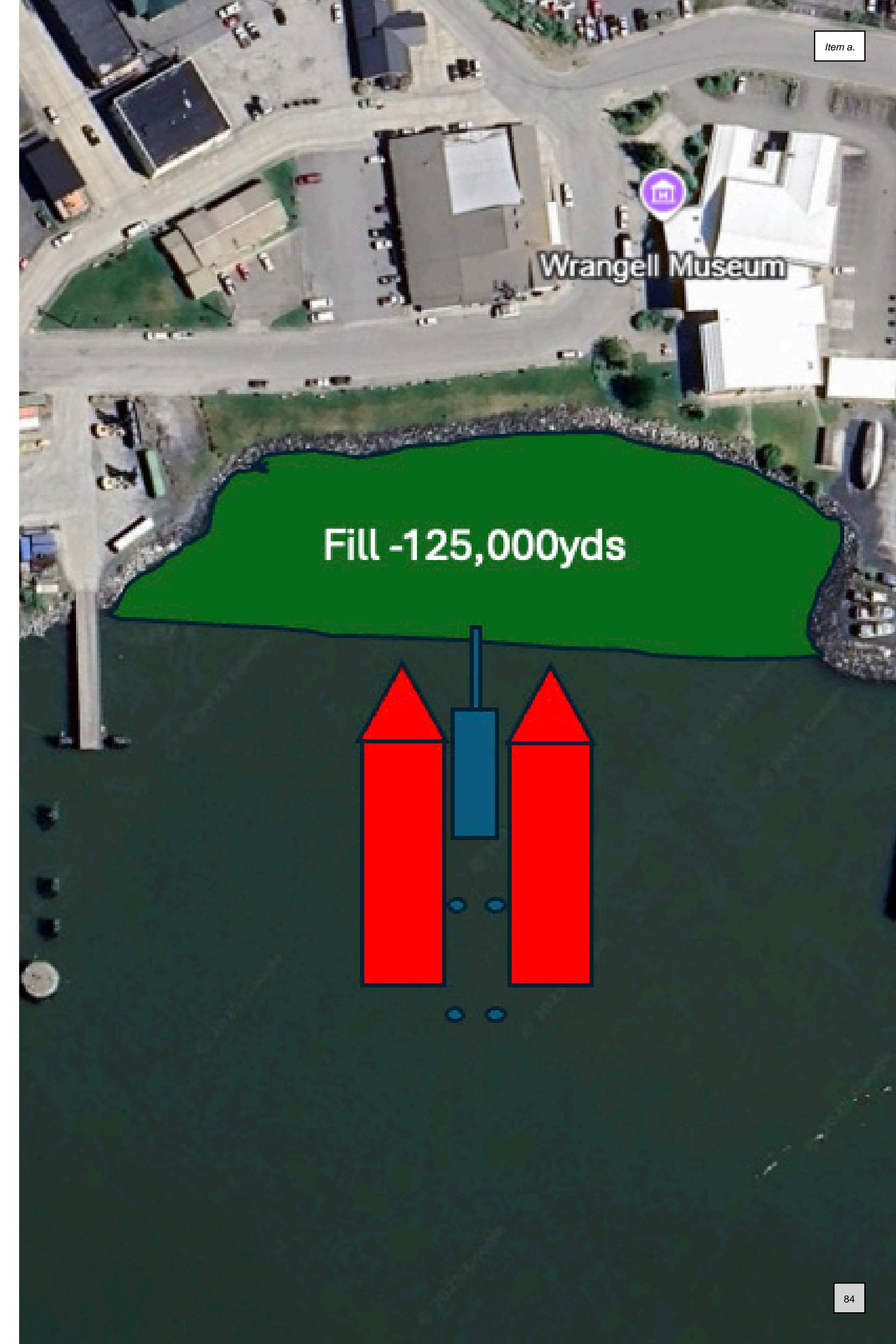


# Long-Term Partnership & Infrastructure

*Potential Partnership: Wrangell, AK*

A long term agreement between the Borough and American Cruise Lines would allow for a consistent schedule in Wrangell allowing for greater economic benefit.

- ★ Projected Dockings by year:  
2024 - 16 ★ 2025 - 31 ★ 2026 - 31 ★ 2027 - 35 ★ 2028 - 51
- ★ American is open to fully funding a dock infrastructure project or partnering with the Borough
- ★ American will work directly with Borough to ensure terms of the lease meet the needs of the community
- ★ Dedicated dock for small, U.S. flagged cruise vessels would eliminate need to anchor. Docking allows guests more flexibility to depart the vessel and explore town on their own
- ★ Docking allows greater operating constantly. 30% of planned anchorages are missed due to weather conditions, resulting in disappointed guests and last minute cancellations for vendors ashore







# Community Partnership & Economic Benefit

*Current Shoreside Excursions  
& Community Benefits*

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- ★ Wrangell Experience  
Includes a stop at Wrangell Museum
- ★ Wild Bears of Anan
- ★ Stikine River Wilderness  
Jet Boat Adventure
- ★ Experience Nature
- ★ Ancient Forest of Anan  
Jet Boat Cruise
- ★ Collaboration with local Chamber  
of Commerce





**Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 17th 2025  
Agenda Statement**

***Agenda Item: New Business, Item 9B***

***From: Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director***

***Subject: Cruise Ship Season Debrief – Ruby Princess & Grand Princess Visits***

**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this agenda item is to conduct a high-level debrief of Wrangell's largest cruise ship visits of the 2025 season. The *Ruby Princess* and *Grand Princess*, each carrying between 2,600 and 3,000 passengers, recently called on Wrangell. These were the two largest scheduled vessels of the year, visiting a community of just over 2,000 residents.

The discussion is intended to gather input from Convention and Visitors Bureau members on key aspects of the visits, including:

- General impressions of operations and logistics
- Community and visitor experience
- Business impacts
- Transportation and port flow
- Opportunities for improvement
- Notable successes or concerns

The 2025 cruise ship schedule is available for reference at [TravelWrangell.com](https://TravelWrangell.com). Feedback gathered during this discussion will help inform ongoing best practices and future visitor management planning.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Discussion only. No formal action requested.



**Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 17th 2025  
Agenda Statement**

***Agenda Item: New Business, Item 9C***

***From: Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director***

***Subject: Review and input on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of July Logistics***

**INTRODUCTION**

The City and Borough of Wrangell hosted a multi-departmental coordination meeting in preparation for the July 3–4 holiday celebrations, which are expected to bring a significant increase in both local and visitor economic activity. Attendees included representatives from Economic Development, Public Works, Police, Fire/EMS, Port & Harbor, Parks & Recreation, the Nolan Center, and the Chamber of Commerce. The meeting focused on logistics, cruise ship coordination, public safety, sanitation, and event support to ensure a successful and enjoyable holiday for all.

**KEY PLANNING OUTCOMES**

***Cruise Ship Operations***

- Eight cruise ships will call on Wrangell between July 3–5, with peak visitor traffic anticipated on July 3 (Westerdam, 1,848 passengers) and July 4 (Riviera, 1,250 passengers).
- All ships on July 3 and 4 will anchor offshore and lighter passengers into Heritage Harbor.
- Passengers will disembark via the north ramp, with dock security and visitor maps in place.
- A fireworks safety buffer will restrict vessel anchoring within 500 feet of City Dock on the evening of July 3.

***Visitor Logistics & Tour Coordination***

- Tour operators will pick up guests at the Heritage Harbor parking area; all drop-offs will occur at the AMHS lot to limit traffic through downtown.
- Economic Development staff will be stationed at the top of the dock to support visitor information and logistics.
- Coordination with AMHS and cruise line agents (CLAA) is underway to ensure clear communication across operators.

### ***Public Safety***

- The Police Department will deploy additional officers, including mutual aid from Petersburg, and coordinate with the Coast Guard for on-water support.
- Increased pedestrian activity, particularly on Case Avenue, will be monitored.
- A safety press release will remind the public of enforcement measures and general holiday safety awareness.
- Fire and EMS teams are preparing for higher-than-average call volumes and will be positioned for fast response.

### ***Fireworks & City Dock Access***

- Fireworks setup will begin at 11:30 AM on July 3; the City Dock will be closed to the public until the show concludes and safety clearance is complete.
- Public Works will clear the dock of debris immediately following the event to ensure readiness for July 4 activities and July 5 cruise operations.

### ***Public Works & Sanitation***

- Ten additional dumpsters will be deployed downtown, with three scheduled pick-ups spanning July 3–5.
- Road closures and barriers will be implemented for pedestrian zones and event areas.
- Additional portable restrooms will be available and serviced throughout the weekend.
- Street sweeping and trash removal will continue into the morning of July 5.

### ***Parks & Recreation and Nolan Center Support***

- Restrooms will be restocked and cleaned multiple times daily.
- Signage will help direct visitors to open facilities and provide contact information for maintenance needs.
- The Nolan Center will provide additional public restroom access and be staffed for visitor services during posted hours.

### ***Community Events & Chamber Coordination***

- The Chamber is finalizing the event and vendor schedule and is coordinating closely with city staff to ensure appropriate placement of vendor booths and bleachers for high-attendance events like the logging show and boat races.
- Parade participants have been asked to avoid vehicle "burnouts" due to safety concerns in pedestrian-heavy areas.