

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



PREPARED & PRESENTED BY

Carriane Ekberg, Executive Director
Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance

Welcome to the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Gig Harbor Downtown Waterfront Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2008 to unite community and Waterfront District stakeholders to encourage economic vitality and preserve historic character. The Waterfront Alliance is a Nationally Accredited Main Street Organization active in the Washington State Main Street Program.

Mission

The Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance promotes economic vitality by maintaining a historic waterfront community that attracts diverse businesses and people through collaboration, outreach and activities.

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC GOAL

TO CREATE AN ACTIVE WATERFRONT FOR ALL



A Message from the Executive Director

2024 was a **year of incredible momentum** for the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance. With a small but mighty team of two full-time and one part-time staff, we achieved so much—thanks to the unwavering support of our volunteers, sponsors, and donors. This year, our volunteer base grew from 263 to 326 dedicated individuals who contributed an astounding 3,032 hours, equating to \$101,572 in value. Their passion fuels our mission, and we simply couldn't do this work without them.

Through **10 events and programs, we brought close to 40k residents and visitors to the waterfront**, strengthening our district's economic vitality. These moments of connection—whether at the Farmers Market, Sip & Stroll, or Chowderfest—are made possible by our generous sponsors and donors who believe in the power of a thriving historic waterfront district.

One of the initiatives I'm most proud of is the launch of our **Small Business Grant Program**. In 2024, we awarded \$20,000 to 17 waterfront businesses, funding projects like lighting, façade improvements, mural art, signage, and more. These businesses are the heartbeat of our community, working tirelessly to create a vibrant and welcoming waterfront for all. It is an honor to serve them through the Alliance.



To everyone who has supported us—thank you. Your belief in our mission allows us to dream bigger, work harder, and continue making a lasting impact on Gig Harbor's waterfront. Here's to even greater things ahead!

Carrienne Ekberg

6

of new businesses that opened
in the Waterfront District in 2024

Meet the Board Of **Directors**



Jill Guernsey
President



Karrie Polinsky
Vice President



Richard Pifer
Treasurer



Tammi Barber
Board Member



Kurt Grimmer
Board Member



Trish Huff
Board Member



Katrina Knutson
Board Member



Bella Martin
Board Member



Jennifer Stiefel
Board Member



Lindsey Stover
Secretary



Ray Corpuz
Board Member



Pat Schmidt
Board Member

A Special Thanks... ❤️

to John Ross, owner of Millville Pizza and The Galley. He served for several years on Alliance committees, as a member of the board and as board president. From 2023-2024 he served one final year as past-president. We are so grateful to John & his family for their dedication and support to the Alliance and the waterfront community.

Thank You to Our **Volunteers**

In 2024, our **volunteer force grew from 263 to 326** dedicated individuals who contributed an incredible **3,032 hours of service**—equating to **\$101,572** in value. These passionate volunteers played a vital role in making our events successful, from the Farmers Market and Holidays in the Harbor to Chalk the Harbor and Trick or Treat. Behind the scenes, they assisted with office prep, ensuring every event ran smoothly.



326 # of
volunteers

3,032 # of
hours

Staff

With only two full-time and one part-time staff, there is no way we could accomplish all the events and programs we put on without the dedication and hard work of our incredible volunteers.



\$101,572

The total value in dollars of volunteer time spent supporting the Alliance in 2024.

www.independentsector.org

Our volunteer leadership also included...13 board members and over 40 committee members, serving on our Design, Promotions, Organization & Outreach, and Economic Vitality committees—the foundation of the Main Street Four-Point Approach. Their dedication strengthens our organization and deepens our impact in the community.

Events & Programs Impact Summary

Hosting events and programs is just one piece of the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance's mission, but it **plays a vital role in keeping our historic waterfront thriving**. Events bring people together, drive foot traffic to local businesses, and showcase the unique charm of our city. Beyond the fun and celebration, **they create lasting connections between residents, visitors, and businesses, reinforcing a sense of place and community pride.**



500 attendees enjoyed shopping, dining and exploring the waterfront district.
35 participating restaurants & retailers.



12 participating restaurants offered special menus and deals during this week-long culinary celebration.



75 flower baskets sponsored.
43 watering volunteers, spent 245 hours over the summer watering the flower baskets along Harborview Drive from May - Sept.



Over **200 people enjoyed free weekly walking tours** on Wednesdays and Saturdays between June-Aug.



Over **50 kids entered the Youth Cover Art Contest** and one lucky winner was selected.
3,000 free books were printed and distributed.

sip & stroll

600 attendees enjoyed wine tasting and small bites throughout the district.

43 restaurants, retailers & service businesses participated in the event.

CHALK
THE HARBOR
ALONG GIG HARBOR'S WATERFRONT

1,200 estimated attendees.

Free community activity that brought people to chalk, as well as shop, drink and dine along the waterfront.

TRICK OR
TREAT

An estimated **1,500** ghost, goblins and witches (aka attendees) enjoyed this event.

35 participating locations handed out candy and put together fun, interactive displays during this free community event.

SHOP
SOCIAL

800 attendees enjoyed special shopping and dining deals during this holiday kick off.

44 participating restaurants, retailers & service businesses.

2024 SPOTLIGHT EVENT

HOLIDAYS IN THE HARBOR

In partnership with Visit Gig Harbor, several thousand families enjoyed free photos with Santa as well as access to free lighted photo displays at Donkey Creek Park during the month of December.



2024 FARMERS MARKET

FACTS & FIGURES

The **2024 season was one of growth and community**, with a 15% increase in attendees from 2023. The vendor count rose by 5%, with an average of 41 vendors per market and a total of 73 unique vendors participating throughout the season. The 2024 season goals focused on attracting diverse vendors, qualifying as a true farmers market, providing access to Food Access Programs, aligning Kids Corner activities with the market theme, and improving traffic flow.

The Kids Corner hosted 70+ participants weekly and offered activities such as a live worm bins and seed planting.

This year, efforts were made to ensure access to food for all attendees, including those utilizing Food Access Programs. The market offered SNAP/EBT, Market Match, WIC, and Senior FMNP options in order to serve as a true community market.

23

of live musicians who played over the course of the 12 week season

66%

 sales from farms & food processors

921

 # of volunteer hours crucial to market success

\$409,036

Vendor sales increased by 18%, reaching \$409,036. The total Alliance income, generated from vendor fees, sponsorships, and food access administration, amounted to \$36,673.



34,324

of people who visited the Farmers Market during the June - Sept season, averaging 2,994 per market.

FARMERS MARKET PHOTOS



By the Numbers

Below is a summary of some of amazing numbers the Alliance logged in 2024! We couldn't do any of these things without the support of our sponsors, donors, partners, volunteers, businesses and the community.

10

of
community
programs &
events

138

of
businesses
supported

6

of new
businesses
opened

41,274

of
program &
event
attendees

326

of
volunteers

3,032

of volunteer
hours logged

17

of B&O Tax
Credit Donors

19

of business
sponsorships

17

of grants given
to small
businesses

\$20k

amount of
grant funds
given

56

Wonderfront
private donors

Design Committee Highlights

The Design Committee, chaired by Marlene Druker, focuses on enhancing the aesthetic appeal and functionality of the waterfront area, creating a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. This includes wayfinding signage, parking and placemaking efforts. **Highlight: In 2024 the committee managed sponsorship of 74 flowers baskets, and a watering team of 45 people as well as researched and designed two new historic home signs.**

FLOWER BASKET
PROGRAM

HISTORIC HOME
SIGNS

POP UP PLANTING
& CLEAN UP

PLACEMAKING
PROJECTS

WAYFINDING &
SIGNAGE

SURVEYS & DATA
COLLECTION

Economic Vitality Committee Highlights

The Economic Vitality Committee, chaired by Marci Tyler, is primarily focused on strengthening and diversifying economic vitality in the Waterfront District while balancing heritage and community identity. **Highlight: In 2024 the committee gave away \$20,000 in grant money to 17 businesses in the waterfront district for lighting, facade improvements, signage, art murals etc...**

1

SMALL BUSINESS
GRANT PROGRAM

2

HISTORIC WALKING
TOURS

3

MONTHLY
BUSINESS MEET UP

4

FARMERS MARKET
SUPPORT

5

COMMITTEE
DEVELOPMENT

Promotions Committee Highlights

The Promotion Committee, chaired by Karrie Polinsky, focuses on creating vibrant events programs that promote the downtown waterfront as the center of commerce, culture, and community for residents and visitors. **Highlight: In 2024 the committee supported the first ever Chowderfest which brought 500 visitors to the district to enjoy Gig Harbor's unique food and beverage scene in a very 'maritime' way.**

CHOWDERFEST /
RESTAURANT WEEK

SIP & STROLL

CHALK THE
HARBOR

TRICK OR TREAT
IN THE HARBOR

SHOP SOCIAL/
GIRLS NIGHT OUT

HOLIDAYS IN THE
HARBOR

Org & Outreach Committee Highlights

The Org & Outreach Committee, chaired by Ray Corpuz, is focused on raising awareness about the Alliance, its goals and mission and to attract people and funding to ensure financial needs are met. The committee is also responsible for maintaining a robust volunteer base. **Highlight: In 2024 the committee held their first ever fundraiser, bringing in \$25,000 to support the grant program. The committee also raised \$206,000 under the B&O Tax Credit Program.**

1

B&O TAX CREDIT
PROGRAM

2

ALLIANCE
FUNDRAISER

3

VOLUNTEER
RECRUITMENT &
SUPPORT

4

EVENT
SPONSORSHIPS

5

WONDERFRONT
PRIVATE DONOR
PROGRAM

6

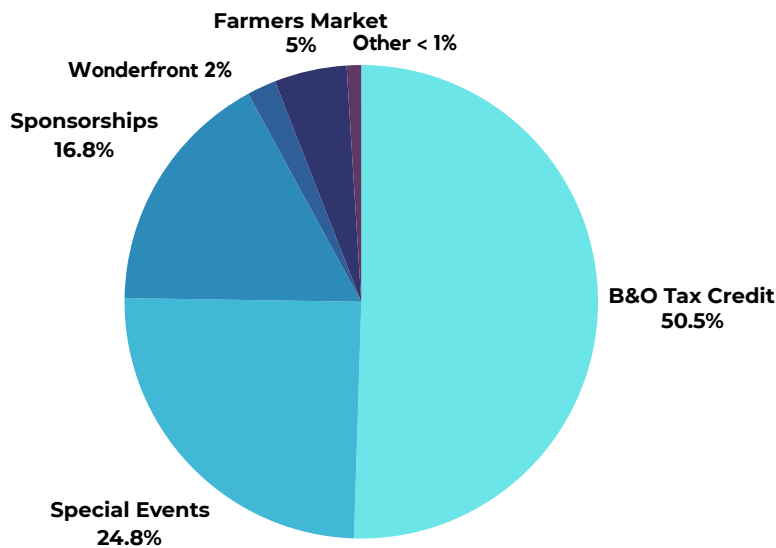
SPONSOR & DONOR
APPRECIATION

Financial Highlights

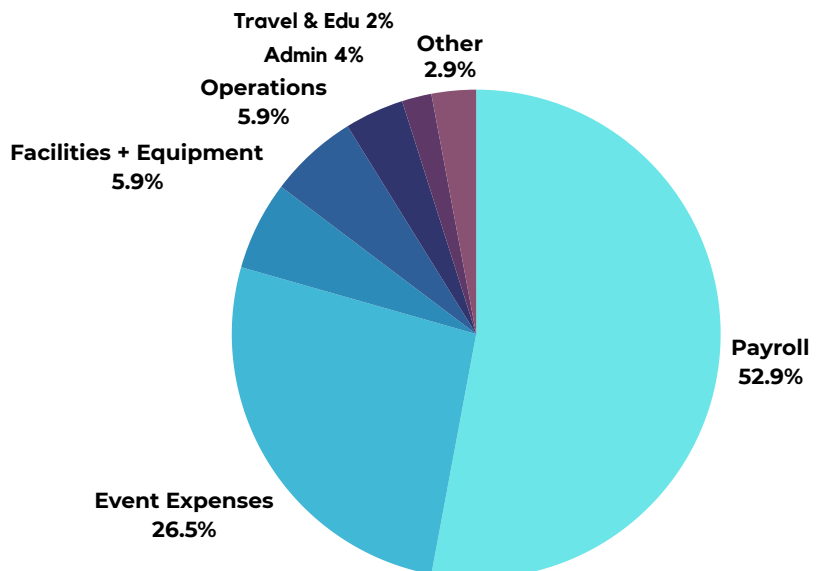
In 2024, the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance’s funding primarily came from the Main Street Tax Credit Incentive Program (B&O tax credits), sponsorships, and participant fees from our events. These sources allowed us to host impactful programs, support small businesses, and strengthen our district.

As we look ahead, our goal is to diversify income sources by expanding our Wonderfront Partnership Program and building stronger collaborations with local community and civic organizations. By broadening our financial foundation, we can ensure long-term sustainability and continue making a meaningful impact on Gig Harbor’s waterfront.

Total Income



Total Expenses



Click the icon below to view the Alliance most recent Form 990.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & DONORS

A heartfelt **thank you to our incredible 2024 sponsors and donors!** Your generosity and support made it possible for the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance to host vibrant community events, support local businesses, and launch new initiatives that enhance our historic waterfront. From the Farmers Market and Sip & Stroll to Chowderfest and our small business grant program, **your contributions helped us create meaningful experiences, boost economic vitality, and strengthen our waterfront district.**

SPONSORS



MAIN STREET TAX CREDIT INCENTIVE PROGRAM DONORS



WONDERFRONT PARTNERS (PRIVATE DONORS)

Gail H.
Larry B.
Bethany N.
Paul K.
Nancy J.
JD F.
Isabella M.
Stacy G.
David W.
Laura H.
Jeni W.
Jill G.

Conrad E.
Trish H.
Ray C.
Laura S.
Sandra N.
Susan B.
Julie C.
Cathay B.
Gayle D.
Lynn S.
Mary B.
Annie A.

Karyn D.
Lindsey K.
Kendra P.
Gary G.
Nichole S.
Tom and Karen H.
Mary G.
Kristie L.
Diane M.
Vicky A.
Richard P.

Charles W.
Karrie P.
Pat S.
Marilyn H.
Stacy P.
Jami W.
John F.
Shannon R.
Jennifer S.
Kurt G.
Kim S.

Joy G.
Pam P.
Jeri F.
Lindsey S.
Carol K.
Lauren H.
Jennifer C.
Marti A.
Donald M.
Carrienne E.

2025 & BEYOND

FUTURE PLANS

We have a few exciting new initiatives coming in 2025, and we can't wait to share a sneak peek of what's ahead! From enhancing our downtown streetscape with a brand-new lighting project to expanding our events and community partnerships, and hosting the 2025 WA Main Street statewide conference, we're always looking for ways to make the Gig Harbor waterfront more vibrant and welcoming.

1

ANNUAL PLACEMAKING PROJECT (2025: FINHOLM LIGHTING PROJECT)

The Alliance, along with local property owners and Outdoor Lighting Perspectives are working together to light up the Finholm District.

2

CONTINUE SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM

Our goal is to continue to grow and expand the Small Business Grant Program, giving back to the small businesses in our district.

3

EXPANDED WALKING TOURS (STARTING IN 2025)

By adding a year-round tour, our goal is to encourage visitors to enjoy the waterfront all-year round!

4

EXPANDED CHALK THE HARBOR (AUGUST 2025)

Expanding the event to include local artist showcases, hands-on demonstrations and interactive community art pieces in order to celebrate art and community.

5

WA MAIN STREET PLACES CONFERENCE (OCTOBER 8-10TH 2025)

Bringing 350 Main Street and historic preservation specialists to Gig Harbor for this statewide conference.



Thank You

For additional information or to learn more about how you can get involved with the Alliance, scan the QR code below to visit our website. We look forward to hearing from you!



MAILING ADDRESS:

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PHONE:

253-514-0071

WEBSITE:

www.ghdwa.org