

# **Tybee Island Tourism Study**

**Prepared by the**

**Armstrong State University  
Center for Regional Analysis**

**In Cooperation with the**

**Armstrong Public Service Center**

**May 2015**

# FOREWORD

---

This study of tourism on Tybee Island was produced by the Armstrong Center for Regional Analysis in cooperation with the Armstrong Public Service Center.

The report could not have been completed without valuable input from tourism industry professionals from Tybee Island.

The following Armstrong personnel played valuable roles and contributed their expertise in the production of the report.

## **Project Team:**

### Analytics

Dennis Barber, III, Ph.D.

Jason Beck, Ph.D.

Nicholas Mangee, Ph.D.

Yassaman Saadatmand, Ph.D.

Michael Toma, Ph.D.

### Graduate Research Assistant

*Public Service Center*

Kayla Nix

### Undergraduate Research Assistants

*Center for Regional Analysis*

Michelle Burghardt

David Hoover

Kayla Judah

Rebekah Sapp

Katherine Sikorsky

*Department of Economics*

Thomas Kavoori

## **University Administration:**

Linda Bleicken, President

David Ward, Provost

Chris Corrigan, VP for Business and Finance

David Wheeler, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts

Yassaman Saadatmand, Head, Department of Economics

**START STRONG**  
**Armstrong**

# Tybee Island Tourism Study

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine various aspects of the tourism economy on Tybee Island, Georgia. A survey of visitors was conducted to obtain information about economic behavior pertinent to understanding the nature of the Tybee Island visitor. Total annual visitation to the island and room-night demand was estimated along with economic impacts on employment and business revenue. Fiscal impacts for Tybee Island, the City of Savannah, and Chatham County were computed. Lastly, several findings relating to beach re-nourishment are presented.

### Visitation

- 1,044,000 annual visitors

➤ 48% from Georgia (not Chatham County)	➤ 63% day-trip visits
➤ 27% from out-of-state	➤ 37% overnight visits
➤ 25% from (off-Tybee) Chatham County	
- 23% had previously visited the island
- 4.3 persons per party (all visitors)
- Most stayed between 3 and 5 hours on the beach

### Accommodations

- 67% of overnight stays were in Tybee Island lodging
- 247,500 room-nights on Tybee Island (52% vacation rentals, 48% hotels, motels, other)
- 3.75 days per overnight visitor party
- \$763 on accommodations per party; \$203 per night per party

### Spending per person per day (non-accommodations):

- \$66 for all visitors
- \$34 Chatham County visitors
- \$91 Georgia visitors
- \$94 for persons traveling without children

### Economic Impacts

- \$93 million on-island business revenue; \$81 million off-island business revenue
- 1,225 on-island jobs; 1,643 off-island jobs (Chatham County)
- \$8.7 million in governmental revenue
  - \$3.5 million sales tax, \$2.4 million lodging tax, \$2.8 million parking revenue

### Most Common Survey Comments about Improving Tybee Island Experience

- more and better parking
- no showers, or not enough showers
- more bathrooms
- beach not clean enough

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	1
<b>1. Introduction</b>	3
<b>2. Survey of Tybee Island Visitors</b>	3
Background and Objectives	3
Survey Methodology and Analysis Method	3
Point of Origin	4
Travel Method and Previous Tybee Visits	7
Travel Party Characteristics, Demographic Information	7
Accommodations, Room Nights by Party Composition	8
Length of Stay on the Beach	9
<b>3. Visitor Expenditure Patterns</b>	10
Accommodation Spending, Average Hotel Costs	10
Average Hotel Costs	10
Expenditure Patterns per Person per Day, and by Point of Origin	11
Expenditure Patterns: Traveling with and without Children in Party	12
Recommendations from Survey Respondents	12
<b>4. Estimated Annual Visitation and Room-Nights</b>	14
Annual Visitors	14
Annual Room-Night Demand	16
<b>5. Economic Impact Analysis</b>	17
Summary Economic Impact: All Tybee Island Visitors	17
Employment Impact by Major Sector	18
Business Revenue Impact by Major Sector	18
Impact Accruing to Non-Tybee Island Businesses	18
<b>6. Fiscal Impact Analysis</b>	20
Fiscal Impact: Comparable Non-Coastal Cities in Georgia	21
Budget Analysis	24
Comparison of Municipal Government Budgets	25
Expenditure	25
Revenue	27
<b>7. Findings Related to Beach Re-nourishment Studies</b>	29
<b>8. Conclusion</b>	30

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine various aspects of the tourism economy on Tybee Island, Georgia. A survey of visitors was conducted to obtain information about travel party, trip characteristics, expenditure patterns, and point of origin. An estimate of the total number of annual visitors to the island and total room-night demand was developed. Based on visitor expenditure patterns, point of origin, and total visitation, estimations of the economic impacts on employment and business revenue were calculated. The visitors' economic behavior also creates tax revenue streams for the governments of Tybee Island, the City of Savannah, and Chatham County. The fiscal impacts on these governments were estimated. Lastly, several findings related to beach re-nourishment are provided.

## 2. Survey of Tybee Island Visitors

### Background and Objectives

Tybee Island, Georgia attracts thousands of visitors each year to its beachfront, ocean access areas, restaurants, historic sites, gift shops, and much more. This section of the report provides information about visitors to the island

Assessing and analyzing the annual expenditure patterns of Tybee Island visitors is useful from both a fiscally-oriented municipal viewpoint, but also from a local small-business perspective. Demographic, socio-economic, and geographic data of respondents was gathered. Visitors responded to a survey asking about spending on various accommodations (hotels, B&B, beach houses, friends, camping, etc.) and other categories such as (food/beverage, recreational equipment, tours/attractions, shopping and gifts, entertainment/nightlife, etc.). This information was compiled and compared across various subgroups of the visitors.

### Survey Methodology and Analysis Method

Data was collected from a survey generated by the Armstrong State University Center for Regional Analysis. The survey was administered in-person over the course of one year. Geographical survey connection points were in proximity to three location-hubs, (1) the lighthouse, (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and south, and (3) the central pier. Of the total surveys taken, 63% of the connections were in the area around the central pier, 22% were obtained near 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and points south, and 15% were obtained at north beach locations in the area around the lighthouse.

The survey was administered over the weekends during the months of October and November in 2013 and March, May, June, July, and September of 2014. Given the annual flow of visitors during the calendar, three "seasons" were identified: low (November, December, January, February), shoulder (March, April, May, September, October) and high (June, July, August). Data

gathered during each of the months was appropriately weighted, by season, to provide a representative sample of the annual characteristics of visitors to Tybee Island.

The survey requested information pertaining to demographics, Tybee-related spending, trip characteristics, and an open-ended question about how to improve the visitor experience on Tybee Island.

In total, there were 1,424 survey respondents. However, 136 of those were Tybee residents. Therefore, 1,278 total surveys were used in the following analysis of visitors' economic patterns on Tybee Island. It should be noted that not all 1,278 respondents provided information for all questions from the survey. For example, a respondent could provide nightly accommodation costs but not provide trip characteristics on size of party. As such, the maximum number of data points for any survey question is 1,278.

Much of the subsequent descriptive analysis groups respondents into 3 main geographically-originating categories.

Point of Origin Grouping	Percent of Respondents
• Chatham County (but not Tybee)	24.6%
• Georgia (not Chatham County)	47.8%
• Outside Georgia (out of state)	27.6%

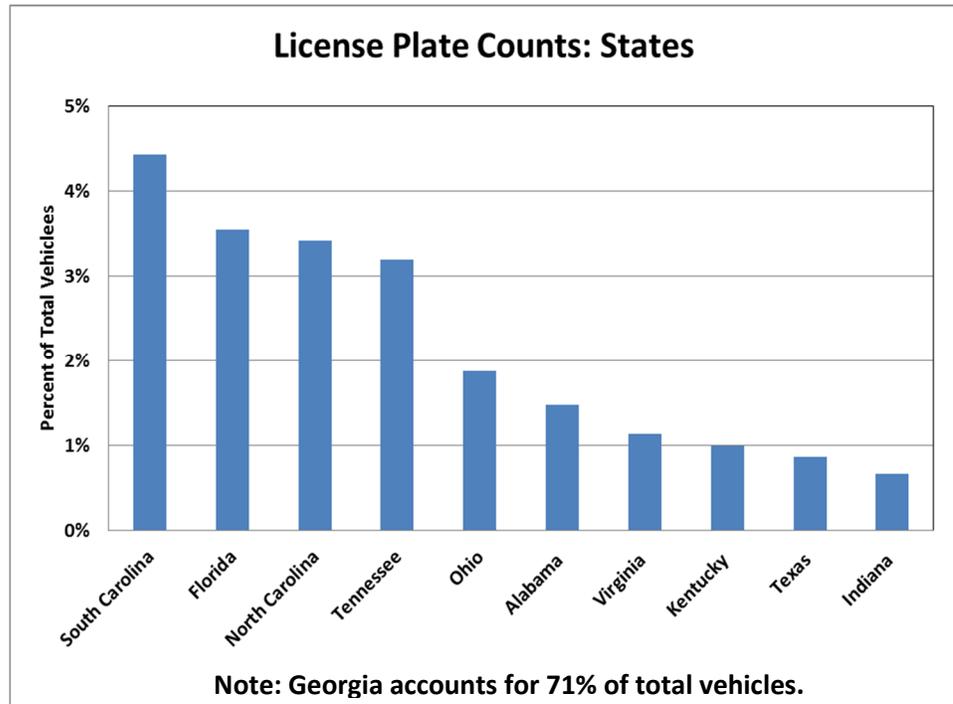
Data from the surveys were compiled in a statistical software package, compartmentalized into the desired cohorts (economic, socio-economic, demographic, geographic, etc.), and then weighted by the population regularities (season of year). Weighting is a statistical procedure often applied to survey analysis whereby the sample under consideration (the in-person surveys) is "weighted" to reflect the statistical distribution of the representative annual visitor population.

### Point of Origin

- 24% reported Savannah as the point of origin.
- In total, 37 states (plus the District of Columbia) and 7 foreign countries were represented.
- Georgia generated 72% of visitors, with another 10.3% from bordering states (AL, TN, FL, SC).
- Approximately 1% were from outside the U.S.

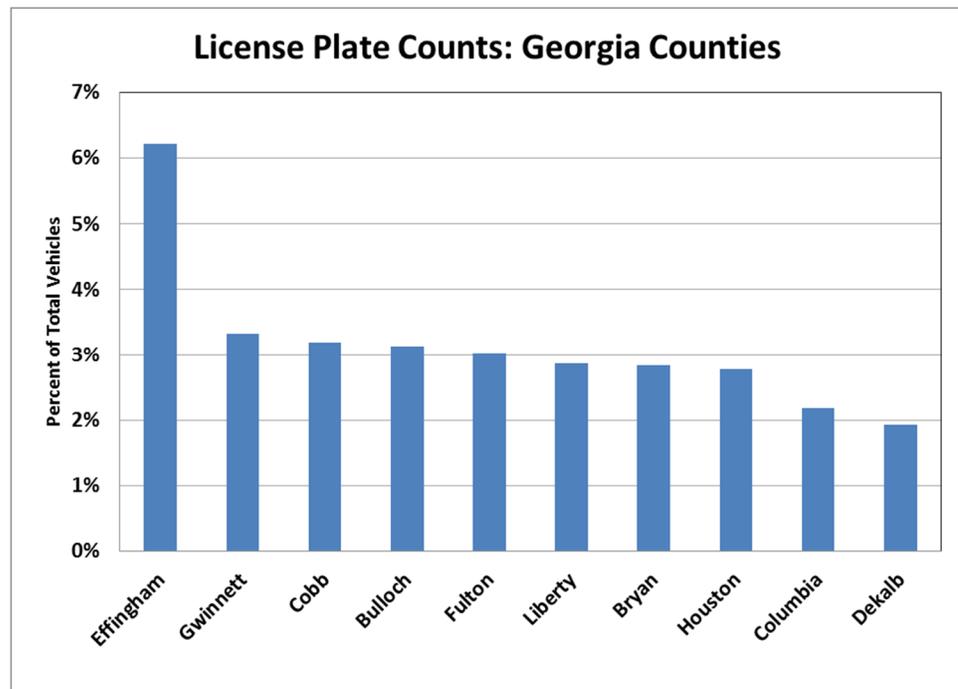
Point of Origin: State and City					
		% of			% of
State		Visitors	City		Visitors
1	GA	72.42%	1	Savannah	24.20%
2	SC	3.76%	2	Atlanta	7.48%
3	TN	3.09%	3	Augusta	3.01%
4	NC	3.02%	4	Pooler	2.23%
5	AL	2.20%	5	Statesboro	2.21%
6	KY	2.12%	6	Wilmington Island	1.91%
7	OH	1.73%	7	Richmond Hill	1.88%
8	IL	1.47%	8	Macon	1.73%
9	FL	1.25%	9	Rincon	1.28%
10	WV	0.91%	10	Warner Robins	1.22%

Point of origin information was also obtained through counts of vehicle license plates in parking areas near the pier and on-street parking from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to 18<sup>th</sup> Street. In general, the pattern in the vehicle license plate count data is consistent with the survey response data.

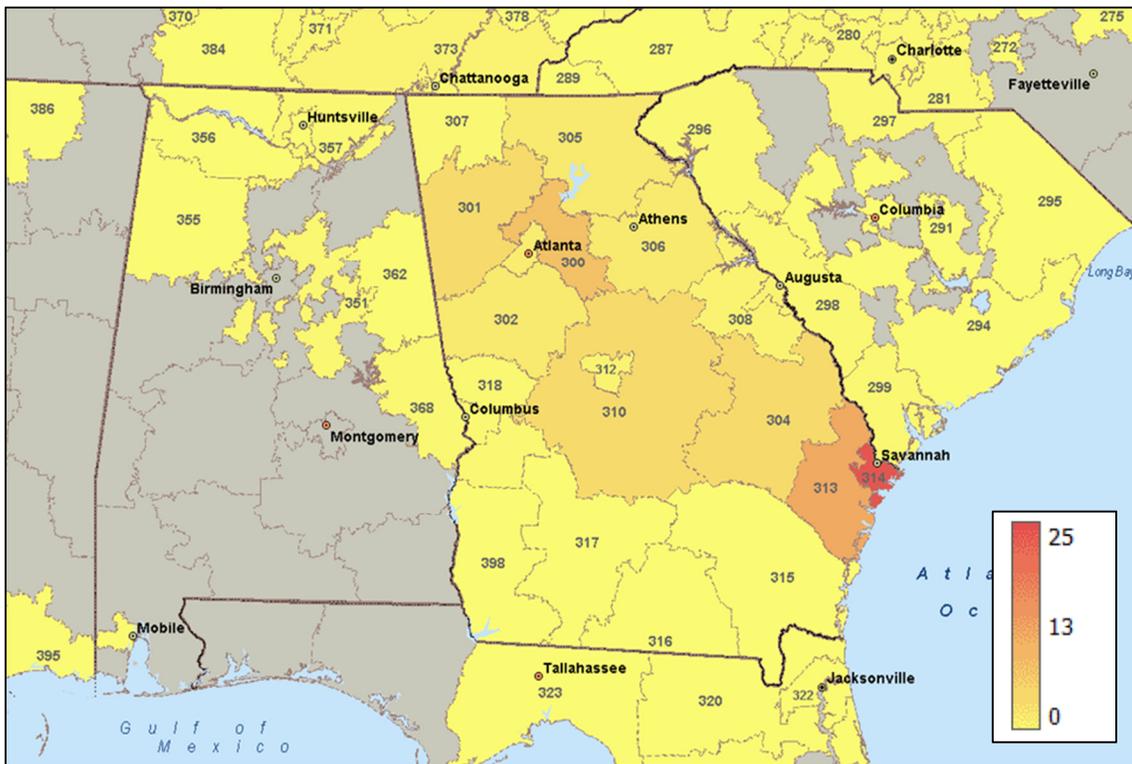
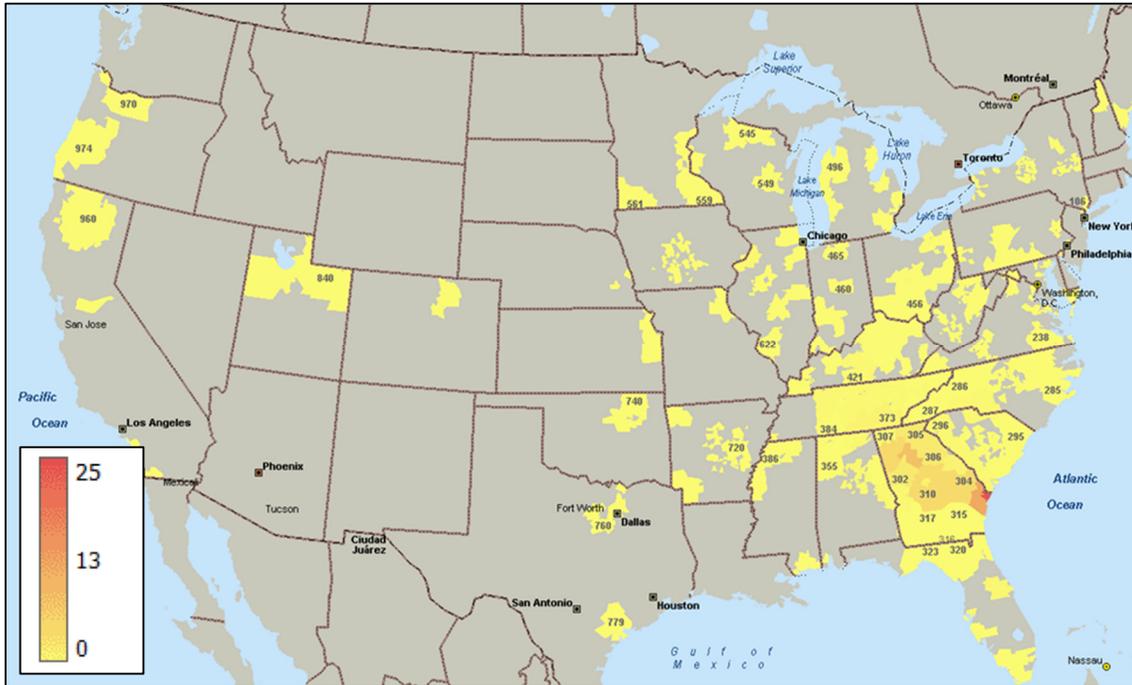


With respect to Georgia counties, vehicle license plate count data suggests that approximately 28% of vehicles were from Chatham County. This slightly higher figure than the survey data is likely attributable to counts of Tybee Island resident vehicles in the counts for Chatham County.

- Effingham County was 6.2%.
- Gwinnett, Cobb, and Fulton counties averaged 3.2%.
- Liberty and Bryan counties were 2.8%.



Lastly, the zip code survey response data was mapped by leading three-digit zip code (for example, 31419 was grouped into 314xx). Darker colors indicate higher concentrations (in percentages) of visitors.



### Travel Method and Previous Tybee Visits

Survey respondents provided their method of transportation to the island.

- The vast majority (98%) traveled to Tybee Island by car.
- A total of 4.76% of respondents reported taking a plane to Savannah and then a car to Tybee.
- Recreational vehicle may include boat or watercraft.

Transportation Method	
Car	93.1%
Plane to Savannah, car to Tybee	4.8%
Other	1.8%
Recreational vehicle	0.5%
Motor-coach/group tour/bus	0.3%
Motorcycle	0.2%
Bicycle	0.0%

Individuals were asked if they had visited Tybee Island during the preceding twelve months, and if so, for how many days in the past year.

- 22% of visitors from greater than 30 miles away had visited previously for 4.5 days.
- 24% of visitors from less than 30 miles away had previously visited for 3.6 days.

### Travel Party Characteristics

Data was collected on travel party characteristics, such as demographics, income, number of children, etc. Average party size was larger for Chatham County visitors, and had a larger number of children in each party.

- The average party size for all respondents was 4.3 people.

Travel Party Size		
	Chatham County	Georgia (not Chatham) or Outside Georgia
Party size	4.6	3.5
Number of children <18	2.7	2.2

- 40.1% reported traveling with children (54.6% of Chatham County visitors and 37.2% of Georgia or out-of-state visitors reported children present).

### Demographic Information

Survey respondents were asked to provide limited demographic information. For both out-of-town visitors and local visitors, the most represented age categories were 18-34 and 35-49 years old (around two-thirds of respondents, regardless of origin).

Age Bracket		
	Chatham County	Georgia (not Chatham) or Outside Georgia
18 to 34 years old	37.1%	29.3%
35 to 49 years old	36.0%	33.6%
50 to 64 years old	21.2%	26.9%
65 or more years old	5.3%	7.4%
Preferred not to answer	0.5%	2.7%

Household income data is provided in the table at right. The most common income category was in the \$35,001 to \$70,000 income range (for both out-of-town visitors and local visitors).

<b>Household Income</b>		
	<b>Chatham County</b>	<b>Georgia (not Chatham) or Outside Georgia</b>
\$35,000 or below	10.6%	9.1%
\$35,001 to \$70,000	24.0%	20.5%
\$70,001 to \$100,000	18.2%	19.5%
\$100,001 to \$150,000	17.8%	14.4%
More than \$150,000	7.8%	8.9%
Preferred not to answer	21.5%	27.6%

### **Accommodations**

Survey responses indicate that 37% of visitors stayed overnight during their stay which included a visit to Tybee Beach. Of visitors from Georgia (not Chatham), 42% reported overnight accommodations, while 31% of out-of-state visitors stayed overnight. This suggests that numerous Georgia and out-of-state visitors had overnight accommodations elsewhere and were taking day-trips to Tybee Island.

Visitors who had accommodations were asked about the location of their lodging. Approximately two-thirds of all overnight visitors stayed on Tybee Island, while about one-third stayed in Savannah, with 90% of those reporting lodging in the historic downtown area. Most of the remaining 10% of responses indicated lodging in the Midtown area of Savannah.

Nearly 90% of overnight visitors indicated that they stayed in paid accommodations, while the remaining stayed with friends or family.

<b>Accommodations</b>	
	<b>Visitors</b>
Hotel/motel/resort	41.2%
Beach house, condo, or timeshare	39.6%
Private home or friends or family	10.6%
Campground	6.2%
Historic Inn/Bed & Breakfast	1.9%
Other	0.4%

### **Room Nights by Party Composition**

Of the survey respondents who indicated they stayed in paid accommodations, the number of room-nights (number of rooms multiplied by number of nights) was 4.7 for all visitors. Visitors

from Georgia (not Chatham County) and outside Georgia averaged 5.0 and 4.9 room-nights, respectively.

<b>Room Night Calculation</b>		
	Georgia	Outside Georgia
Average number of rooms per travel party	1.3	1.3
Average number of nights stayed per party	3.9	3.5
Average room-nights per travel party	5.0	4.9
Average nights per person	1.5	1.9

### **Length of Stay on the Beach**

Most visitors tended to stay at the beach between 3 and 5 hours. There was sensible variation across visitor type by point of origin. Local visitors tended to stay on the beach longer than non-locals who were much more likely to have accommodations on Tybee Island.

Length of Stay:

- 4.8 hours for local visitors
- 4.4 hours for non-local visitors
- 3-5 hours was most common
- 12.4% of locals stayed more than 8 hours

<b>Average Number of Hours at Beach</b>		
	Locals (<30 miles)	Non-Locals (> 30 miles)
<1 hour	2.5%	2.5%
2-3 hours	16.5%	19.6%
3-5 hours	44.8%	50.6%
5-8 hours	23.8%	22.2%
>8 hours	12.4%	5.1%

## Visitor Expenditure Patterns

### Accommodation Spending

Average accommodation spending by overnighters is calculated by multiplying the reported nightly room cost by the total number of rooms per party, multiplied by the number of nights stayed.

<b>Average Accommodations Spending per Party:</b>	\$763.17
• <b>By visitors from Georgia (not Chatham):</b>	\$894.90
• <b>By visitors from Out-of-State:</b>	\$663.39
• <b>By visitors from Chatham County:</b>	\$479.79

The higher amounts reported spent by non-Chatham Georgia visitors (\$894.90) compared to out-of-state visitors (\$663.39) is likely a consequence of the former having scheduled visitation and overnight accommodations on Tybee Island, perhaps because they are more familiar with accommodations on the island, whereas the latter are more likely to schedule the primary visitation and accommodations around Savannah while taking day-trips to Tybee Island.

One reason for the relative differences in accommodation spending per group could be driven by the amount spent by Atlanta visitors which would be included in the expenditures of visitors from Georgia (not Chatham). Total accommodation spending per party from Atlanta visitors was \$758.88.

### Average Hotel Costs

The table to the right provides reported nightly cost for hotel, motel, B&B, and resort rooms, excluding taxes and fees. Among all overnight visitors, the average cost was \$161.09 per night. The average cost per night for visitors from Georgia (not Chatham County) and out-of-state travelers was \$176.76 and \$149.97, respectively. On average, visitors from Georgia (not Chatham County) stayed 3.9 nights, while those from outside of Georgia stayed 3.5 nights.

<b>Average cost of hotel/motel/resort/B&amp;B (per night, excluding taxes)</b>		
<b>Cost (\$)</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Outside Georgia</b>
< 50	1.3%	7.3%
51-100	26.4%	27.2%
101-150	18.9%	21.5%
151-200	23.5%	27.3%
201-250	7.0%	4.4%
> 251	22.9%	12.4%

The greatest proportion (26.4%) of Georgia visitors (not Chatham County) reported an average nightly cost of accommodations ranging from \$51-100. However, a large portion of Georgia visitors, 23.5% and 22.9%, reported spending \$151-200 and greater than \$250, respectively. The majority of out-of-state visitors (roughly 76%) reported spending from \$51-200 per night on accommodations.

## Expenditure Patterns per Person per Day

Tybee Island visitors were asked about their expenditures on food and drink, recreational equipment, tours, groceries, shopping and gifts, entertainment, local transportation, parking and other expenses which were non-accommodation related.

## Expenditure Patterns by Point of Origin

The survey results show that Georgia visitors (not Chatham) outspent out-of-state visitors \$90.76 to \$60.62. The average expenditures by person per day were \$65.92. The average expenditures per person per day from Atlanta visitors was \$89.24 which is reflected in greater expenditures by Georgia visitors and compared to out-of-state visitors. These data reflect the averages for respondents providing expenditures for all expenditure categories.

<b>Daily Average Expenditures, All</b>	<b>\$65.92</b>
• <b>by Chatham County Visitors:</b>	<b>\$33.79</b>
• <b>by Georgia (not Chatham) Visitors:</b>	<b>\$90.76</b>
• <b>by Out-of-State Visitors:</b>	<b>\$60.62</b>

**These figures do not include spending on accommodations.**

The expenditures by categories (for respondents providing spending data for any category) were as follows:

	Average per person per day		
	Chatham County	Georgia	Outside Georgia
Dining and Beverage	\$18.71	\$27.32	\$22.82
Recreational Equipment	\$3.01	\$5.37	\$1.42
Tours/attractions	\$3.19	\$3.58	\$4.51
Groceries	\$4.56	\$10.29	\$6.94
Shopping and Gifts	\$11.28	\$9.55	\$8.02
Entertainment/nightlife/non-food drinking	\$6.07	\$10.20	\$7.11
Local Transportation	\$0.65	\$0.51	\$0.43
Other Expenses	\$0.20	\$3.07	\$3.11
Parking	\$2.83	\$2.76	\$2.33

Dining and beverage constituted the highest levels of expenditure across visitors from Chatham County (\$18.71), Georgia (\$27.32), and outside Georgia (\$22.82). As one would expect, Georgia and out-of-state visitors spent more on groceries than did those from Chatham County. Interestingly, visitors from Chatham County had the highest expenditures per person per day for shopping and gifts. This could be because it is less burdensome to transport the items purchased back to homes in Chatham County than it is for out-of-area visitors to carry the goods back home.

Note that the sum of the average spending per day here (across the three groups) does not equal the reported daily expenditures from above because some respondents only provided responses for some of the categories. Surveys with missing values for a particular category were excluded from that particular calculation, but could have been used in calculations for another category.

**Expenditure Patterns: Traveling with or without Children in Party**

The figures below pertain to expenditure patterns based on party composition depending on whether travel took place with or without children in the party.

<b>Avg. reported (non-accommodation) per person/day spending</b>	
<b>Traveling without children (59.3%):</b>	<b>\$94.01</b>
<b>Traveling with children (40.7%):</b>	<b>\$27.70</b>

Respondents without children reported non-accommodation expenditures over three times the reported expenditures by respondents with children in the group. The majority of respondents (59.3%) reported visiting without children.

<b>Spending Per Person/Day by Group Type: Traveling with and without Children</b>		
	<b>Traveling without Children</b>	<b>Traveling with Children</b>
Average spending per person on:		
Food	\$30.61	\$13.09
Recreation equipment	\$4.57	\$2.22
Tours	\$4.78	\$2.01
Groceries	\$10.43	\$3.84
Shopping & gifts	\$10.72	\$7.57
Entertainment	\$10.49	\$5.41
Local transport	\$0.67	\$0.38
Other expenses	\$3.42	\$1.00
Parking	\$3.17	\$1.77

The greatest degree of expenditure differentials for parties without children relative to those with children arise from other expenses (3.42x), spending on groceries (2.72x), and spending on tours (2.38x).

**Recommendations from Survey Respondents**

Visitors who responded to the survey were asked to provide open-ended comments about recommendations to improve their experience while at Tybee Island. The survey shows that 69% of respondents provided at least one comment. Of all Chatham County respondents to the survey, 11.1% provided a comment that was considered favorable or satisfactory, while 9.3% of Georgia (not Chatham County) and out-of-state respondents did the same.

The higher proportion of qualitatively positive comments from Chatham County visitors could be because of better knowledge about (or lower expectations about) parking, cleanliness, vendor and bathroom location.

The table reports the proportion of total respondents from various groups (Chatham County, Georgia, outside Georgia) who left comments pertaining to various factors. For example, 28.6% of total respondents from Chatham County reported parking as an area for improvement on Tybee Island. Aside from parking, about which both locals and visitors complained the most often, the need for more bathrooms and showers was frequently mentioned. Less prominent, but still warranting attention, visitors voiced some displeasure over the “cleanliness” of the areas they frequented as well as the “no pets” policy on the beach.

Frequency of Comment		Recommendations from Survey Respondents
Chatham County	Georgia (not Chatham) or Outside Georgia	Areas Identified for Improvement
28.6%	29.0%	Parking
11.3%	15.7%	Lack of bathrooms
8.2%	7.0%	No showers (or not enough)
6.9%	6.1%	Not clean enough
5.0%	7.3%	Displeasure over “no pets” policy
3.9%	1.3%	Displeasure over no vendors on beach
3.5%	1.6%	Not enough hotels/desired better hotels
1.8%	4.4%	Lack of food options
1.5%	1.8%	Not enough trash cans
Percentages will not add to 100%. Multiple comments from respondents.		

Non-Chatham Georgia and out-of-state visitors reported displeasure towards the perceived lack of food options, while those from Chatham County identified more/better hotel options and a desire for vendors on the beach as areas of potential improvement.

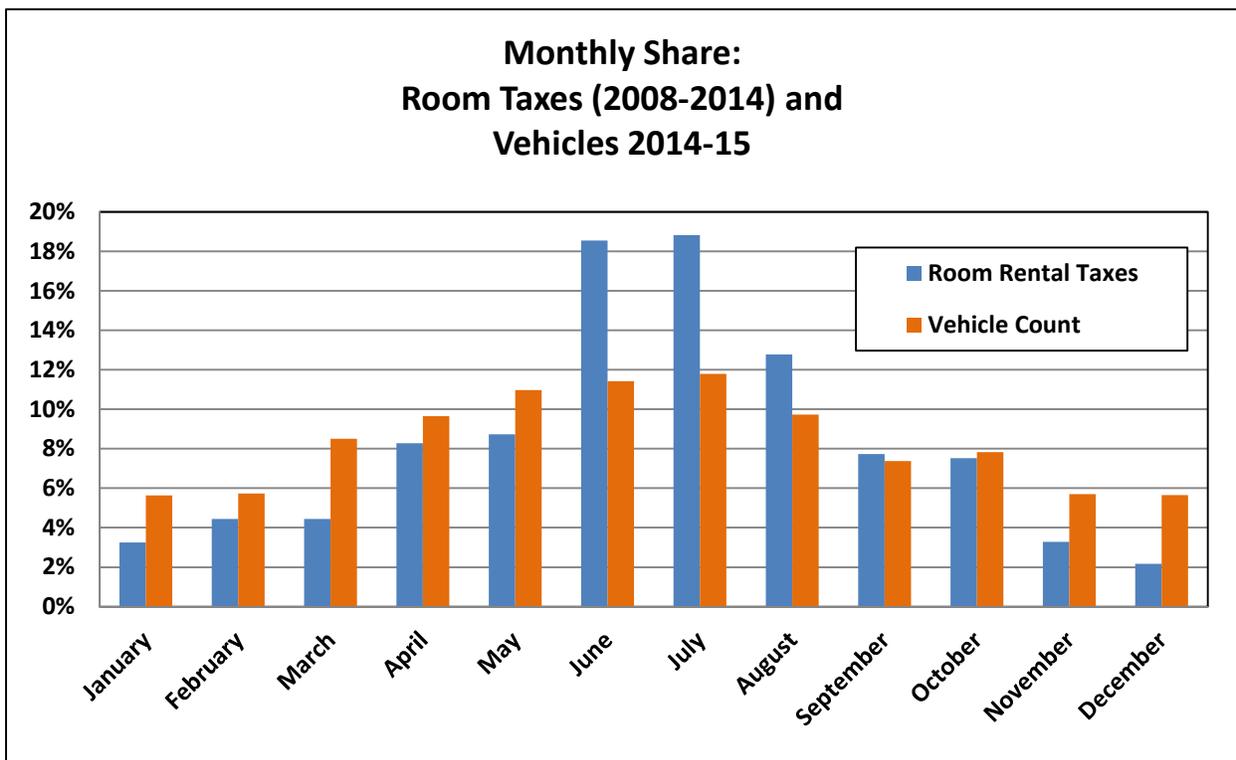
## 4. Estimated Annual Visitation and Room-Nights

### Annual Visitors

The estimated annual visitation and room-night demand on Tybee Island was computed using several methodologies based on data available from the survey of visitors, industry-provided confidential information, and the total dollar volume of gross room sales revenue (hotels and vacation rentals) derived from room sales tax receipts on Tybee Island.

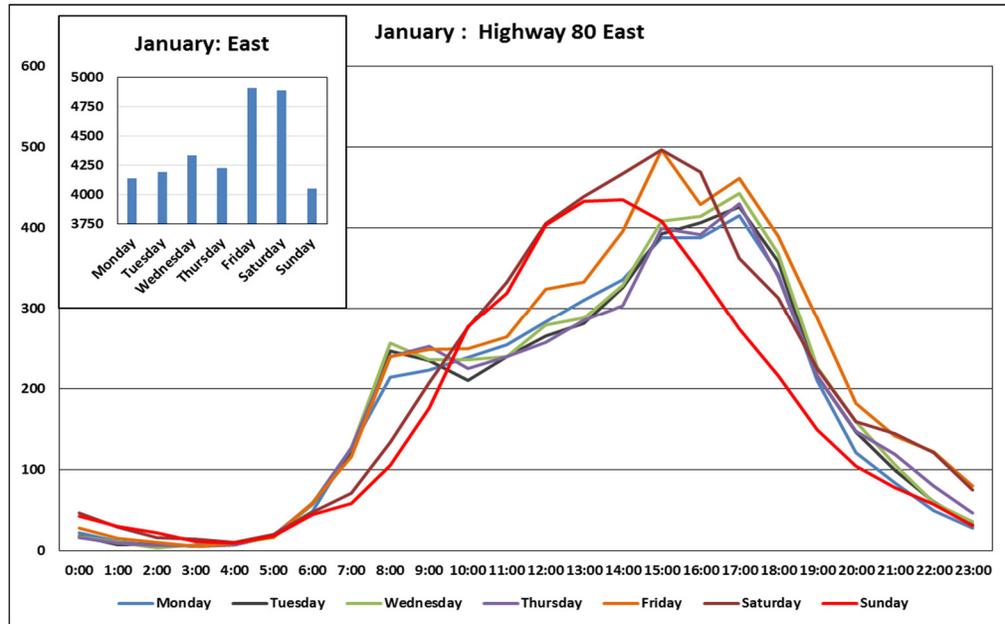
Estimated Annual Visitors to Tybee Island	
Estimation method primarily based on:	Estimated Annual Visitors
Gross room sales and industry spend data	956,400
Gross room sales and survey spend data	993,400
Industry spend data and survey accommodation data	1,183,500
<b>Average</b>	<b>1,044,000</b>

Based on the three methodologies, estimated annual visitation was 1.04 million persons. This estimate was further evaluated based on annual eastbound and westbound vehicular traffic on Highway 80 gathered from May 2014 to April 2015. Vehicle traffic displays less variance than room rental taxes. The large spike in room rental taxes relative to vehicle traffic occurs because hotel and vacation room rates increase during the peak season.

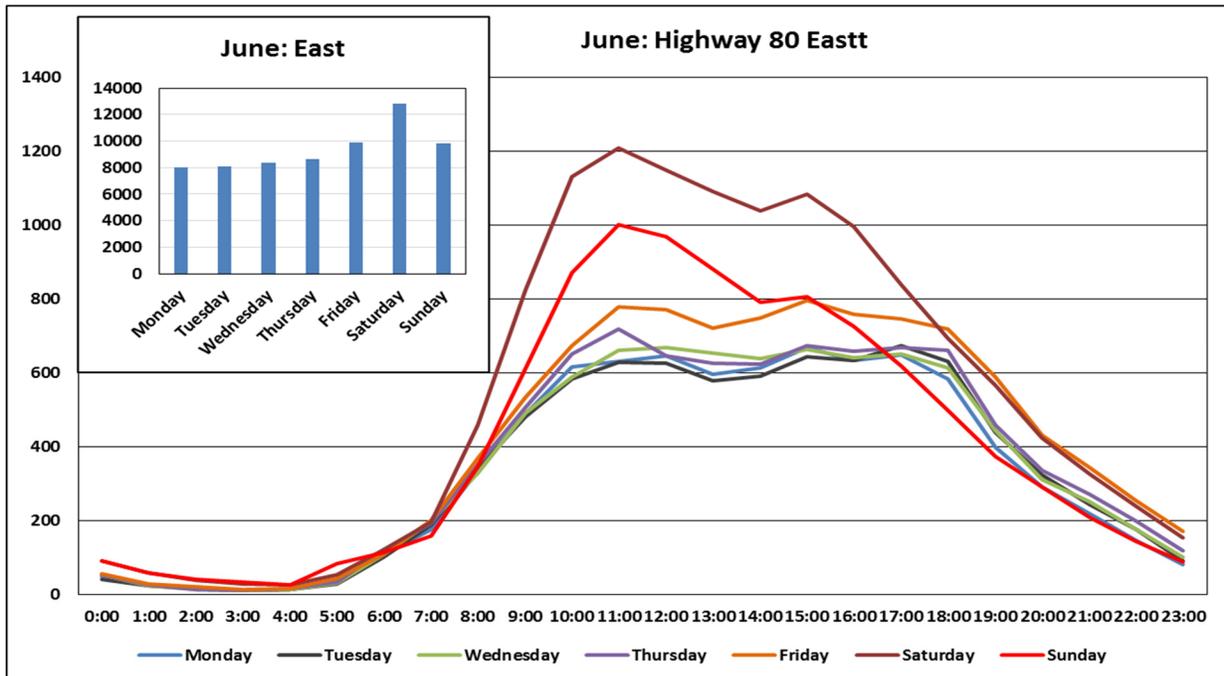


The volumes of vehicle flow during January (low season) and June (peak season) are below.

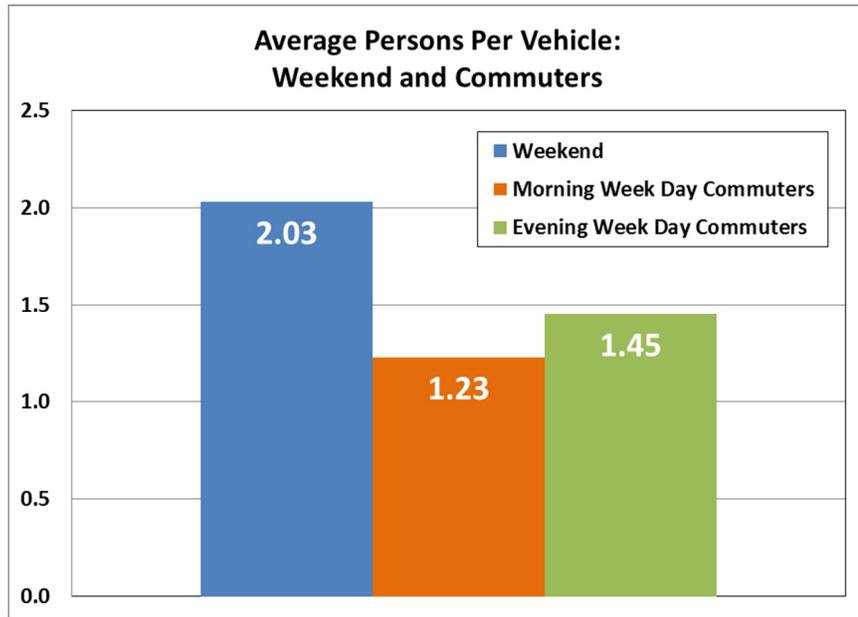
Typical weekday low season vehicle flow increases from about 4,100 to about 8,000 (peak season) on Monday through Thursday. Similarly, Friday flow increases from about 4,800 in low season to about 10,000 in peak season, while Saturday traffic increases from about 4,800 to 13,000.



On weekends during the peak season, the time period with the highest eastbound (on-island) volume is from 10am to noon, while in the low season, the most frequent arrival time is between 1pm and 3pm, reflecting more favorable temperature conditions later in the day during the winter months.



Given typical weekend and commuter vehicle per person data gathered from road-side monitoring stations, the increased traffic volumes are generally consistent with the estimated amount of annual visitation. Weekend persons per vehicle is substantially higher than weekdays, while evening commuter-time eastbound traffic has more passengers than morning off-island commuter-time traffic.



### Annual Room-Night Demand

Estimated annual room-night demand on Tybee Island was computed using several methodologies based on data available from the survey of visitors, industry-provided confidential information, and the total dollar volume of gross room sales revenue (from accommodations establishments) derived from room sales tax receipts on Tybee Island. Annual room-night demand is estimated to be 247,500 with 52% in vacation rentals and 48% in hotel, motel, and other accommodations.

Estimated Annual Room-Night Demand on Tybee Island	
Estimation method primarily based on:	Estimated Annual Room-night Demand
Gross room sales and survey spend data	239,333
Industry spend data and survey accommodation data	241,436
Gross room sales and survey accommodation data	261,733
<b>Average</b>	<b>247,500</b>

## 5. Economic Impact Analysis

This section reports the estimated economic impact of visitors to Tybee Island in terms of employment and business revenue. The aggregate economic impact is based on the day-trip and overnight visitor expenditure patterns and the estimate of total annual visitation to the island.

The **first set of results** provides the **gross (or total) economic impact of spending activity by all visitors** to Tybee Island. This includes the spending of those who visited Tybee Island from Chatham County and also from outside the local area.

The **second set of results** provides a breakdown of the economic impact **of Tybee Island on five selected sectors**, including lodging, restaurants, hotel, retail trade, recreation/touring, and local transportation. This includes spending by visitors who live outside of Chatham County and also Chatham County residents who have a lesser effect on sectors such as accommodations spending.

### Summary Economic Impact: Tybee Island Visitors (On-Island Impact)

The estimated gross economic impact on Tybee Island of visitation to Tybee Island is reported in the table below. The total business revenue impact is \$93 million. This includes \$57 million in direct spending with a multiplicative economic ripple effect of about 1.6 in magnitude. This means that for every one dollar of Tybee-related spending, an additional \$0.60 in spending was generated on Tybee Island. A total of 1,225 jobs on Tybee Island are supported by its tourism economy. Of these jobs, 965 are directly supported by visitor spending while the remaining 260 jobs are the result of supply chain and other ripple effects.

<b>Economic Impact Summary: Tybee Island Visitors (On-Island Impact)</b>			
	Direct Impact	Total Impact	Multiplier
Employment	965	1,225	1.3
Business Revenue	\$57,062,000	\$93,163,000	1.6
Note: Dollar figures reported in 2015 dollars.			

In 2012, Georgia Department of Labor data indicated that total employment (by place of work) on Tybee Island was approximately 1,500 persons.<sup>1</sup> This implies that roughly 82% of Tybee Island's jobs are attributable to tourism on the island.

<sup>1</sup>The U.S. Census Bureau reports 1,328 employed persons (civilian labor force data) on Tybee Island in 2013. Note this figure is the number of persons who live on Tybee Island who have jobs, but not necessarily work on Tybee Island. For example, an employed Tybee resident could work in the City of Savannah.

## Employment Impact by Major Sector

Details on the employment impact are provided by selected sector in the table at right.

1,225 jobs in the following categories:

- Lodging: 517 jobs, 42% of total.
- Restaurants: 257 jobs, 21% of total.
- Retail: 126 jobs, 10% of total

The remaining impacts, collectively recorded in the “Other” category, comprise just over 23% of total employment impact, and include sectors such as real estate, employment services, management, and accounting, for example.

<b>Employment Impact: Selected Sectors Tybee Island Visitors (On-Island Impact)</b>			
	<b>Direct Impact</b>	<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>Percent Of Total</b>
1. Lodging	515	517	42%
2. Restaurants	240	257	21%
3. Retail stores	120	126	10%
4. Recreation & Tours	30	32	3%
5. Transportation	4	6	0.5%
6. Other	56	287	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>100%</b>
Note: Impacts reported in 2015 dollars.			

## Business Revenue Impact by Major Sector

Details on the business revenue impact are provided by selected sector in the table at right.

\$93.2 million in sales, as follows:

- Lodging: \$42.7 million, 46%.
- Restaurants: \$14 million, 15%.
- Retail: \$4.5 million, 5%.

The remaining impacts collectively recorded in the “Other” category are \$30 million in business revenue, which is 32% of total revenue.

<b>Business Revenue: Selected Sectors Tybee Island Visitors (On-Island Impact)</b>			
	<b>Direct Impact</b>	<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>Percent Of Total</b>
1. Lodging	\$42,500,000	\$42,683,000	46%
2. Restaurants	\$12,986,000	\$13,984,000	15%
3. Retail stores	\$4,343,000	\$4,519,000	5%
4. Recreation & Tours	\$1,876,000	\$1,987,000	2%
5. Transportation	\$26,000	\$116,000	0.1%
6. Other	\$1,511,000	\$29,871,000	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$57,062,000</b>	<b>\$93,163,000</b>	<b>100%</b>
Note: Impacts reported in 2015 dollars.			

## Impact Accruing to Non-Tybee Island Businesses

Of the business generated by Tybee Island visitation, a significant portion of the revenue and employment impact “leaks” off the island. That is to say that a large portion of the revenue brought into Chatham County by Tybee Island visitation is accrued by businesses not located on the island itself, but elsewhere in Chatham County.

For the purposes of the discussion that follows, the impacts focus on the flow of “new” money into the county from spending by Tybee’s visitors from outside Chatham County. It can

reasonably be assumed that the spending of Chatham County’s visitors to Tybee Island is a normal component of these households entertainment budget, and had the Chatham County visitor not gone to Tybee Island, those funds would have been re-directed to other entertainment options in the county.

Further, it is assumed that day-trip visitors to Tybee Island from outside Chatham County who have overnight accommodations in Savannah have extended their visit to the region by one additional day because of their day-trip to Tybee Island. Thus, all visitor spending for the day is attributed to their visit to Tybee, even though part of the Tybee day-trippers’ visit may have been spent in Savannah or other off-Tybee locations in Chatham County. Thus, the impacts that follow represent an upper bound of the estimated impacts accruing to off-island businesses.

Lastly, an effect described as “cross-hauling” occurs in that while some visitors to Savannah take a day-trip to Tybee and inject spending into Tybee’s economy, there are also Tybee visitors with accommodations on Tybee Island whose spending “leaks” off the island as they make their own day-trips to visit Savannah or simply patronize a restaurant or retail trade establishment off Tybee Island. The impacts reported below represent a net effect of this “cross-hauled” economic activity.

The largest sectors in which Tybee-related spending occurs off-island are restaurants, lodging, and retail trade. Total estimated off-island business revenue is \$81.1 million.

Off-Island Economic Impacts:

- 75% of total restaurant sales
- 75% of total retail sales
- 28% of hotel sales
- 1,643 jobs

More jobs (1,643) off-island in Chatham County are supported by Tybee-related tourism than on Tybee Island itself (1,225).

<b>Off-Island Economic Impacts Employment and Business Revenue</b>		
	<b>Business Revenue</b>	<b>Employment</b>
Restaurants	\$46,600,000	864
Lodging	\$16,400,000	199
Retail stores	\$13,600,000	523
Other	\$4,500,000	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$81,100,000</b>	<b>1,643</b>
Note: Impacts reported in 2015 dollars.		

## 6. Fiscal Impact Analysis

One method of assessing the impact of Tybee Island tourism on municipal government finances is to review the sources of general fund revenue that are related to tourism on Tybee Island. The following table does this for the City of Tybee Island, City of Savannah, and Chatham County. Total Tybee related tourism tax revenue is \$8.7 million, including Tybee parking revenue. For Tybee Island, tourism related lodging and sales tax revenue is 23% of total general fund revenue.

<b>Role of Tybee Tourism Related Tax Revenue in Government Finances</b>					
	Tybee Tourism Related			Total General Fund Revenue	Percent of Total General Fund Revenue
	Lodging Tax (Part of 6%)	Sales Tax (3%)	Total (Lodging, Sales Tax)		
Tybee Island <sup>2</sup>	1,280,500	1,201,000	2,481,500	10,784,880	23.0%
City of Savannah <sup>3</sup>	581,000	1,655,000	2,236,000	171,153,273	1.3%
Chatham County <sup>3</sup>	79,000	628,000	707,000	163,272,718	0.4%

Next, the effect on real property tax millage rates is computed under the assumption that in the absence of the tax revenue generated by Tybee Island tourism, municipalities would simply raise the millage rate to offset the absence of the Tybee-related tourism tax revenue. For Savannah and Chatham County, the computation is straightforward: replace the Tybee tourism related tax dollars with increased property taxes resulting from higher millage rates on real property. It is further assumed that the portion of the Tybee Island lodging tax (\$427,000) for the Trade Center would be funded instead by Chatham County, and county millage rates would rise accordingly.

Offset Increase in Mills:

- City of Savannah: 0.68 mills
- Chatham County: 0.58 mills

For a home of \$230,000, assessed at 40% of fair market value with a \$12,000

homestead exemption, the offset increase in property taxes is \$55 in Savannah and \$46 in Chatham County.

<b>Comparison of Property Tax Rates</b>				
	2015 Millage Rate	Mills	Offset Millage Rate	Mills
City of Savannah	0.039299	39.299	0.039983	39.983
Chatham County	0.030389	30.389	0.030965	30.965

<sup>2</sup>Tybee lodging tax is the undedicated portion (50%) of 6% room tax. An additional \$427,000 is generated to fund the International Trade and Convention Center. Estimated tourism-related sales tax on Tybee is based on 82% of budgeted LOST revenue. Tybee also budgeted \$2.8 million in parking revenue from meters, decal sales, and parking fines (FY15 budget).

<sup>3</sup>City of Savannah and Chatham County lodging tax revenue based on 2014 average daily hotel room rate and estimated number of room-nights purchased in Chatham County; then apportioned based on estimated number of hotel rooms in city and county. Lodging tax revenue does not include revenue share for tourism bureau. Savannah and Chatham County sales tax based on 3% of restaurant and retail sales (\$78.7 million: on-island and off-island), apportioned by 58% to Savannah and 22% to Chatham, based on negotiated distribution of LOST revenue.

For Tybee Island, computing the required increase in property taxes to replace tourism related tax revenue and parking revenue should take into consideration a reduction in identifiable beach related expenditures in the city budget if there was no tourism. The most obvious examples are Fire Ocean Rescue, Police Beach Patrol, Public Works beach division, beach improvement, and parking. However, these combine to less than \$800,000 in the FY15 budget. Beyond these, other expenditures would fall as the demand for police, fire/ems, waste disposal, and other services required to accommodate island visitation would diminish greatly. Attempts to estimate the reductions in these other categories are subject to large margins of error that undermine the relative usefulness of the exercise. Thus, a different approach is used to estimate the impact on millage rates for Tybee Island.

Drawing on information described in greater detail in the next section, the average per capita government expenditure for eight sample cities with population relatively close (within about 800 persons) and with similar demographic and non-tourism economic characteristics is \$1,038 per person. About 23% of these municipal governments' expenditures is funded by property taxes. For Tybee, this hypothetical scenario yields expenditures of \$1,038 x 3,082 (2014 US Census estimate) for a \$3.2 million budget funded by approximately \$750,000 in property taxes. Property tax revenue in Tybee's FY15 budget was about \$1.8 million. This implies property tax millage rates could fall to 13.5 mills from the current rate of 31.682 (county and city) mills and the homesteading homeowner of a \$230,000 house would see the property tax bill fall to \$1,080, a decline of \$1,455. This hypothetical scenario effectively assumes the Tybee Island community is dropped into non-coastal Georgia away from a larger city. What would Tybee Island be without tourism? It wouldn't be Tybee Island. See the next section.

### **Fiscal Impact: Comparable Non-Coastal Cities in Georgia**

One perspective on the fiscal impacts of tourism on Tybee Island may be gained by reviewing municipal government expenditure and revenue in cities similar to Tybee Island, but with a less vibrant tourism industry. The resulting differences in expenditure categories of these municipal governments and Tybee Island can then be attributed to the presence of tourism on Tybee Island.

In this section, a set of cities demographically and economically comparable to Tybee Island (comparator group) is developed and information is presented related to these cities' municipal government revenue and expenditures. The most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau was obtained for twenty cities in Georgia and South Carolina of approximately the same population as Tybee Island, under the basic assumption that much of a local government's expenditure is related to the size of the population it serves. Of course, other factors matter such as the economic and demographic mix of the city served by the government.

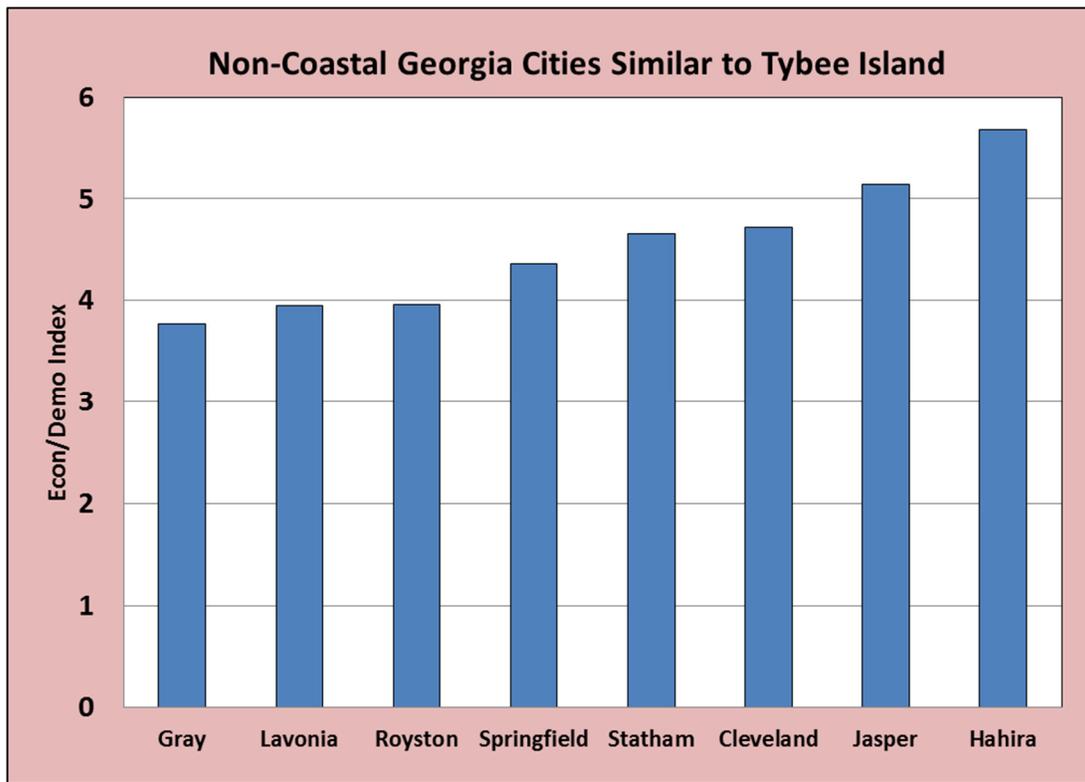
The following variables were used to characterize the economic and demographic characteristics of the comparator group of cities, and are presented in the table below:

- unemployment (number and rate)
- median household income
- population
- number of year-round residents

- number of housing units built since 2000
- percentage of occupied housing units
- persons per household
- population density (persons/square miles)
- median age of population
- percent of population that is white
- percent of population that is black
- percent of population that is Hispanic

A statistical technique that jointly compares the values of a group of variables and yields an index of similarity across the variables compared is used to develop the comparison group of cities for Tybee Island. The technique makes use of what are known as z-scores. A z-score is a measurement that compares the value of a variable to its average while controlling for the typical spread in the data analyzed.<sup>4</sup> It allows for a comparison of variables that are measured in different units and levels. In the current context, if a z-score equals zero, it means the value of the variable being considered is equal to the value for Tybee Island. A z-score greater than zero means the variable is higher than for Tybee Island while a negative z-score indicates it is below the value for Tybee Island.

In this analysis, the z-scores across the economic and demographic variables are added and divided by the number of variables to compute an index of similarity to Tybee Island for the different cities. Low index scores indicate the city is more like Tybee Island. The analysis narrowed the list of twenty cities to eight in Georgia that most closely resembled the economic and demographic characteristics of Tybee Island. These eight cities are the comparison group of cities.



<sup>4</sup>A z-score is defined by  $z = (x_i - \text{average of } x) / (\text{standard deviation of } x)$ , where  $x_i$  is what is being compared. For example, if AnytownUSA has an unemployment rate of 8% and the comparator group average unemployment rate is 4% while the standard deviation of the unemployment rate for the comparator group is 2%, then AnytownUSA's z-score for the unemployment rate is  $(8-4)/2 = 2$ . In this example, AnytownUSA's unemployment rate is two standard deviations above the group average.

The average z-score for the cities included in the comparison group is 4.5, while it exceeded 5.7 for the other cities considered in Georgia.

A review of the economic and demographic variables in the table below confirms the notion that these cities have similar characteristics along these metrics. Most averages of the economic and demographic characteristics of the inland cities are relatively close to Tybee Island’s. Of course, there is some variation across the variables in comparison to Tybee Island. However, the technique accounts for these differences to locate the cities that are most like Tybee Island across all the variables considered. The cities that comprise the comparison group are Springfield, Jasper, Cleveland, Royston, Lavonia, Hahira, Statham, and Gray.

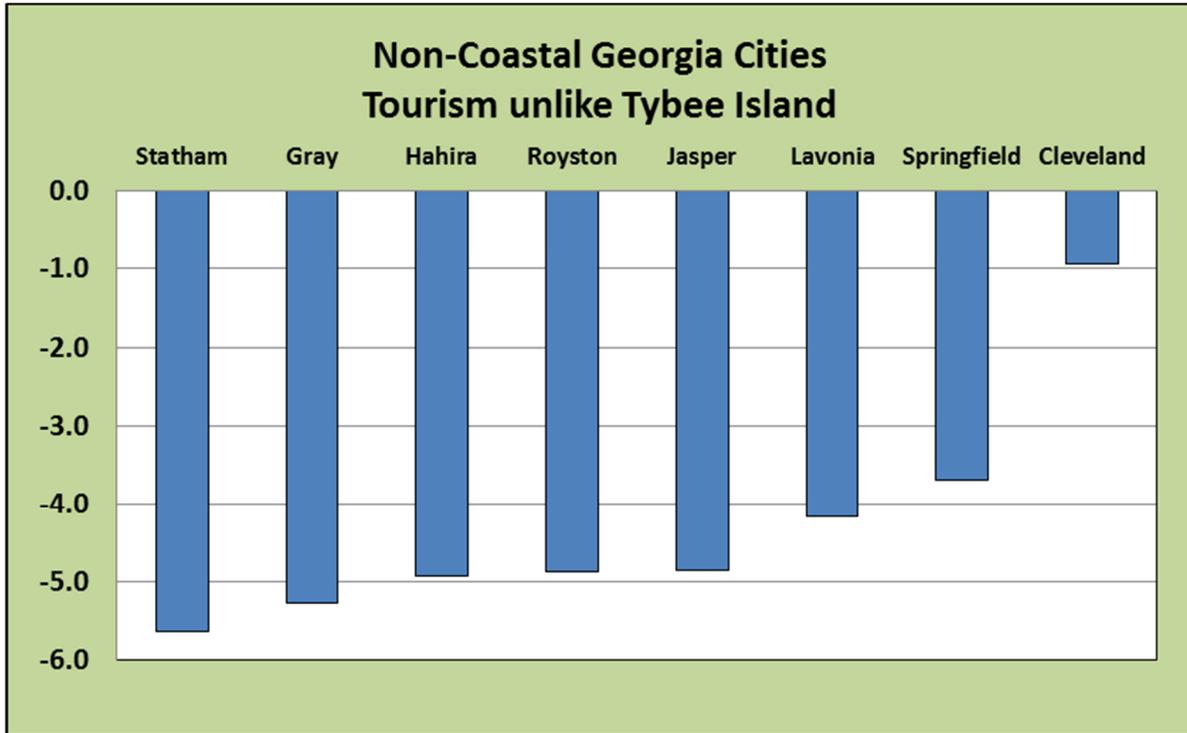
Economic and Demographic Characteristics										
City	Tybee Island	Springfield	Jasper	Cleveland	Royston	Lavonia	Hahira	Statham	Gray	AVERAGE
Population	2,990	2,852	3,684	3,410	2,582	2,156	2,737	2,408	3,276	2,899
Person/Mile	934	1,358	1,116	1,066	759	553	1,190	688	1,365	1,003
Median Age of Population	53.2	32.3	37.1	31.2	40.5	36	30.1	33.2	34.5	36.5
% White	93.5%	67.4%	93.1%	87.8%	72.3%	67.2%	76.3%	72.1%	69.4%	77.7%
% Black	3.1%	28.7%	3.1%	6.9%	22.7%	24.3%	18.6%	16.7%	28.1%	16.9%
% Hispanic	1.5%	2.8%	3.7%	4.4%	3.2%	10.7%	4.9%	12.6%	1.3%	5.0%
# of Year Round Residents	2,871	2,251	3567	3,213	2439	2156	2737	2362	3,067	2,740
% Occupied Units	40.4%	90.7%	90.3%	79.8%	87.2%	82.8%	93.3%	88.7%	90.9%	82.7%
People Per Household	2.11	2.70	2.40	2.47	2.24	2.43	2.68	2.88	2.62	2.50
% Units built since 2000	19.8%	16.4%	30.2%	23.6%	7.7%	6.6%	38.9%	17.3%	33.0%	21.5%
Median HH Income	\$57,917	\$44,031	\$39,223	\$26,141	\$28,500	\$23,684	\$43,171	\$42,500	\$52,136	\$39,700
Number Unemployed	95	88	222	153	130	50	97	211	56	122
Unemployment Rate	6.4%	7.1%	11.0%	8.5%	11.2%	6.2%	7.0%	12.8%	4.0%	8.3%

A similar analysis was conducted for these cities to assess how closely the tourism aspects of the cities resembled Tybee Island. The three tourism variables considered were percent of total housing units that are seasonal, estimated seasonal population (based on persons per household and non-seasonal occupied housing units), and employment in the leisure and hospitality sector as a percent of total employment. The averages of the non-coastal cities in the comparison group in the bottom

Tourism Characteristics			
City	Seasonal Population	Seasonal Housing	Tourism Employment
Tybee	33.6%	43.8%	11.2%
Springfield	6.7%	0.3%	9.2%
Jasper	15.0%	0.4%	8.0%
Cleveland	28.4%	2.5%	38.3%
Royston	9.1%	0.8%	6.3%
Lavonia	7.2%	1.1%	14.7%
Hahira	19.6%	0.5%	8.6%
Statham	6.8%	0.2%	2.0%
Gray	10.3%	0.2%	3.0%
Average	15.2%	5.5%	11.3%

row of the table affirm the notion that they have very different tourism-related characteristics as compared to Tybee Island.

The table above and the chart below demonstrate that the non-coastal Georgia cities in the comparison group have tourism characteristics not similar to Tybee Island. The z-scores for all cities are negative, and in most cases, significantly so.



The use of the z-score technique allows the identification of non-coastal cities that have similar demographic and economic characteristics but dissimilar tourism sectors. The municipal budget characteristics of the comparison group of cities are examined in the next section to highlight the differences the tourism economy has on Tybee Island’s budget.

### Budget Analysis

One means of assessing the fiscal impact of tourism on Tybee Island is to compare sources of revenue and expenditure for non-coastal cities in Georgia sharing similar economic and demographic characteristics with Tybee Island, but not a thriving tourism sector comparable to that of Tybee Island.

As identified in the previous section, the Georgia cities comprising the comparison group are: Springfield, Jasper, Cleveland, Royston, Lavonia, Hahira, Statham, and Gray.

See the map on the following page.



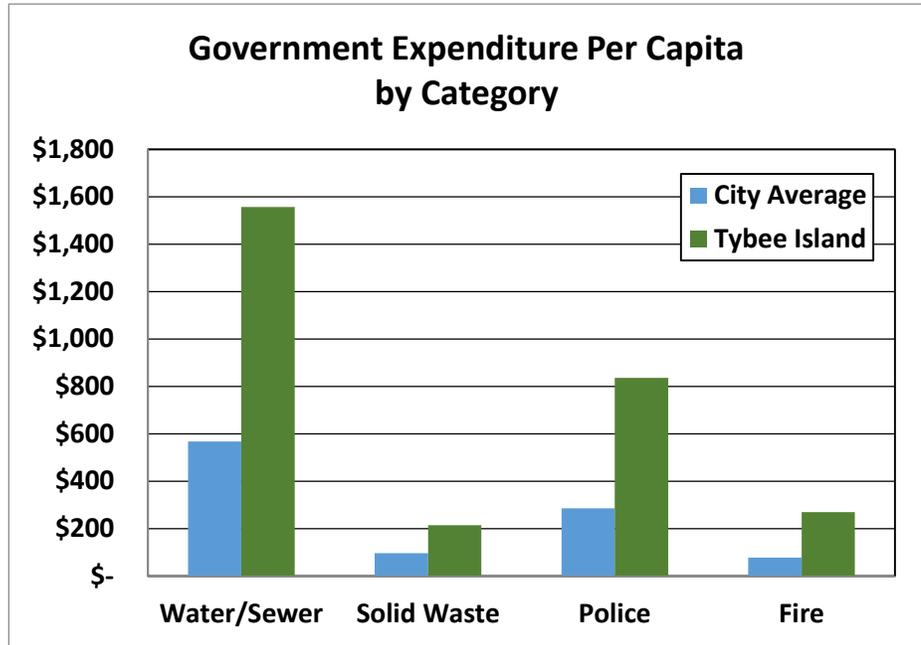
### Comparison of Municipal Government Budgets

Budget data from fiscal years 2014 and 2015 were obtained, averaged, and compared for the comparison cities and Tybee Island.

### Expenditure

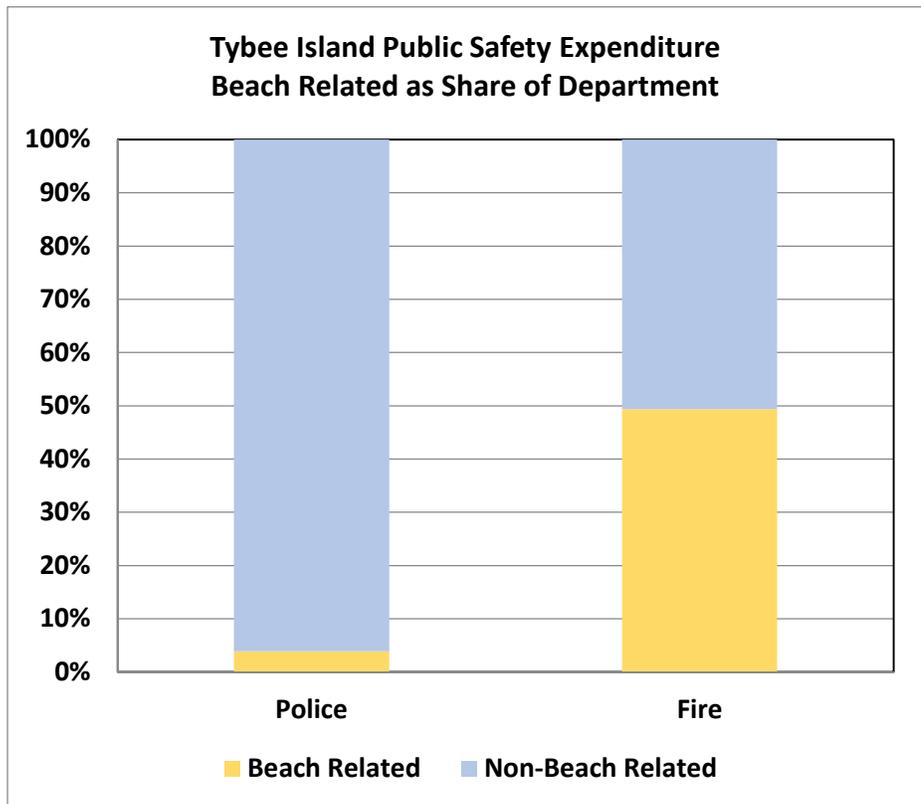
Not surprising, given the level of tourism activity, expenditures in Tybee Island are significantly higher on a per capita basis than the comparison cities. The comparison group average expenditure per person was \$1,038, while for Tybee Island it was \$2,879.

Across major functional areas, Tybee Island per capita expenditures were higher in all categories, and can reasonably be attributed to the tourism sector. Notable differences were in expenditures for police and water/sewer, with lesser differences in fire and solid waste. These differences can be attributed to the tourism economy on Tybee Island.

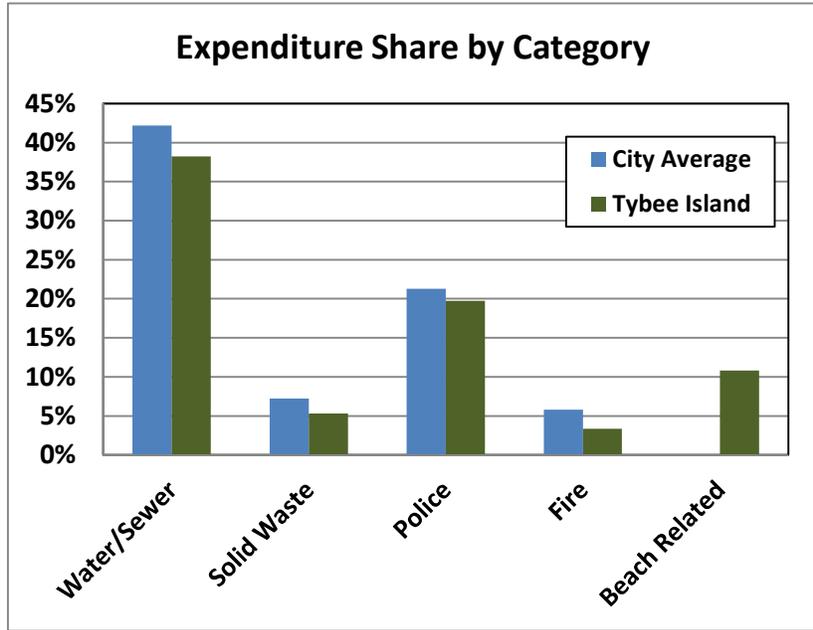


Expenditures on fire and police services for Tybee Island are 3.5 and 2.9 times the amount spent on a per person basis as compared to the average in the comparison cities. However, 49% of Tybee’s fire expenditure is for the Fire Ocean Rescue Division. Tybee’s Beach Patrol division is a relatively small component of police expenditures and does not, by itself, account for all tourism-related police expenditures.

There are other categories of expenditure attributable to Tybee’s beach community. These include the Beach Related division of Public Works, Beach Improvement, and the Parking Department, which together, consume 13.5% of general fund revenue.



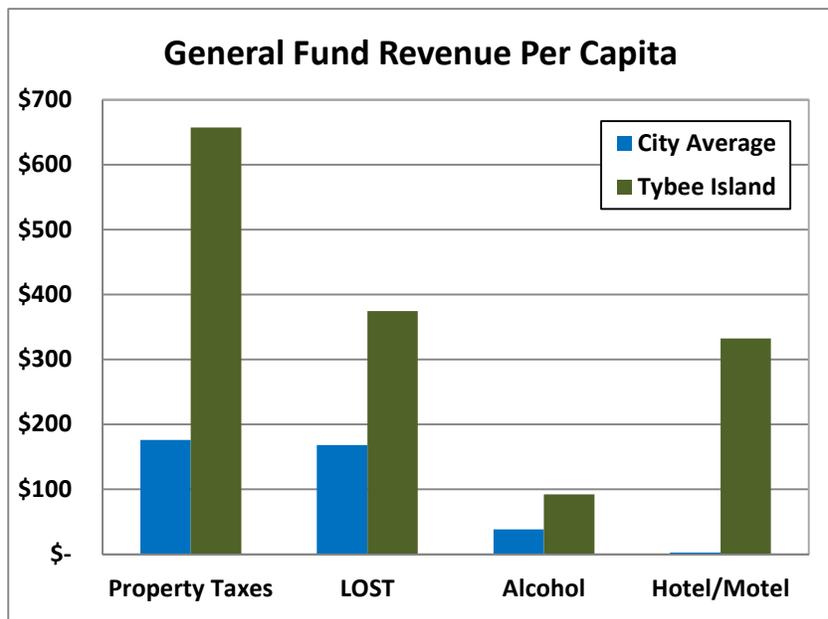
While Tybee’s water and sewer expenditures are higher on a per capita basis, they are lower in terms of a comparison to general fund and water/sewer fund expenditures (38% vs. 42%). Other budgeted expenditure categories consume roughly the same shares, but Tybee Island is faced with expenditures on beach related functions not present in the other cities.



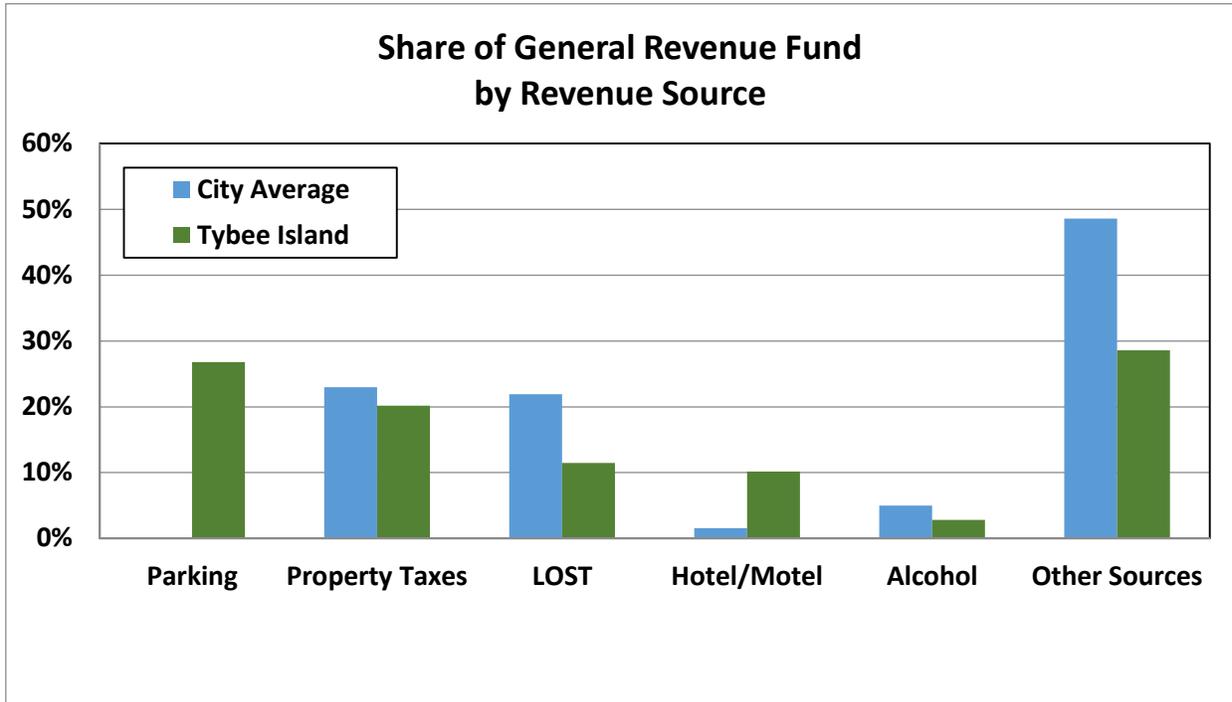
In the chart, Tybee’s expenditure on beach patrol (police) and ocean rescue (fire) are removed from the general police and fire categories and placed into the “Beach Related” category along with the parking department, the beach related division of public works, and beach improvement expenditures.

### Revenue

Sources of revenue for the comparison group of cities and Tybee Island that are likely affected by tourism activity are property taxes, local options sales taxes (LOST), taxes on alcohol, and hotel/motel sales tax revenue. Tybee’s revenue stream is clearly affected by the large tourism sector. The property tax millage rate on Tybee is relatively low at 4.16 mills as compared to the 6.75 average millage rate in the comparison cities, yet property tax revenue is 3.7 times higher than in the other cities. This is because of the higher property values associated with developed beach areas.



As a share of the general revenue fund, however, property taxes generate nearly the same percentage in Tybee and the other cities. While hotel/motel taxes and parking generates a substantially greater share of Tybee’s general fund revenue (37%), local options sales taxes are notably lower. These two categories generate a negligible portion of the comparison cities’ revenue base and only three of the eight cities levy a hotel/motel sales tax. Other sources of revenue in the comparison cities are significantly higher, and are effectively replaced by parking-related revenue on Tybee Island.



	City Average	Tybee Island
Property Taxes	23.0%	20.2%
LOST	21.9%	11.5%
Alcohol	5.0%	2.8%
Hotel/Motel	1.5%	10.2%
Parking	0%	26.8%
Other Sources	48.6%	28.6%

## 7. Findings Related to Beach Re-nourishment Studies

*“Without a beach, what’s the point?”<sup>5</sup>*

The Armstrong Center for Regional Analysis has conducted two research projects (2007 and 2012) assessing the economic impact of beach re-nourishment on Tybee Island. The survey conducted for this report included several questions pertinent for future beach re-nourishment studies. Several important statistics related to point of origin have been clarified, namely, that 27.6% of visitors to Tybee are from outside the state of Georgia. This is pertinent in the computation of state sales tax revenue collected from out-of-state visitors, and represents a clear inflow of economic activity into Georgia attributable to Tybee Island tourism.

Also pertinent to the re-nourishment studies is the question of what Tybee’s visitors would do if the beach was not present. This has a direct bearing on the amount of state sales tax revenue Georgia would forgo if beach re-nourishment would not take place.

Not only would Georgia lose sales tax revenue from out-of-state visitors failing to come to Tybee, but Georgia would see a large proportion of its residents who currently visit Tybee turn to a location outside of Georgia to expend their vacation dollars.

- Approximately 61% of out-of-state visitors would not vacation in Georgia if the beach was not present.
- Approximately 68% of Tybee’s Georgia and Chatham visitors would likely visit a beach (highly preferred) or non-beach destination outside of Georgia.
- Based on the representation of Georgia and out-of-state visitors to Tybee Island, approximately 66.1% of total taxable retail sales and lodging sales would leak out of Georgia if the visitation to the island dropped because there was no beach.

<b>If Tybee Beach was gone, you would...</b>			
	Chatham County	Georgia (not Chatham)	Outside Georgia
Go to other beaches in Georgia	19.1%	19.9%	29.6%
Go to other beaches outside Georgia	60.4%	64.0%	48.7%
Go to other non-beach destination in Georgia	9.3%	3.5%	5.8%
Go to non-beach destination outside of Georgia	6.0%	5.2%	5.0%
Stay home	2.1%	2.9%	6.8%
Other or NA	3.0%	4.4%	4.0%

<sup>5</sup>Quote from a non-Chatham Georgian visitor to Tybee Island when discussing why her group was leaving the beach as the tide encroached on their beach set-up. From Savannah Morning News, 5/13/07. <http://dining.savannahnow.com/news/2007-05-14/shifting-sands>

Survey respondents indicated that without a beach present, they would seek an alternate vacation destination. Combined, 82% of all visitors indicated that other beach destinations would draw their interest as a destination if Tybee Island did not have a beach. Another 9% to 15% of visitors would seek some other non-beach destination as an alternate to Tybee Island.

The redistribution of the visitor dollar to alternate locations would have significant fiscal impacts on municipal government finances for the City of Tybee Island, City of Savannah, and Chatham County. Based on the survey responses, it is estimated that 95% of the visitors from non-Chatham Georgia and outside Georgia would no longer come to the island. It is further assumed that 85% of the visitors from Chatham County would no longer visit the island. Combined, this yields a net reduction of approximately 92.5% of the visitors to the island.

In Section 6, it was noted that the City of Savannah derived \$2.2 million in tax revenue from Tybee-related tourism, while Chatham County's government derived about \$707,000 (not including \$427,000 in Tybee lodging tax for the Trade Center). These figures would be reduced by 95% under the no-beach scenario. Assuming property taxes would be raised to offset this loss of revenue implies that the City of Savannah would raise its millage rate to 39.95 mills from 39.299 mills, while Chatham County millage rates would rise to 30.73 mills from 30.936 mills. A homesteading homeowner of a \$230,000 house would face a property tax bill increase of approximately \$52 and \$44, respectively, for Savannah and Chatham County.

Tybee Island tourism-based revenue (sales taxes, hotel/motel taxes, parking revenue) would decline about \$4.9 million as 92.5% of the economic impact disappeared. With a steady-state budget (less explicit beach expenditures for beach patrol, ocean rescue, public works, beach improvement, and parking), combined county and city millage rates on Tybee Island would need to increase by a factor of over 3 from the current rate of 31.682 mills. The homesteading homeowner with a \$230,000 home could expect to pay a property tax bill on the order of about \$7,900, an increase of roughly \$5,350. These figures represent the upper bound on the estimated effects on property taxes and millage rates. The increase in millage rate would depend on the degree to which the city scaled back operations that directly or indirectly support tourism activity on Tybee Island. The impact would not occur suddenly and there would be ample time to make the appropriate budgetary adjustments as the beach eroded and visitation dissipated.

## **8. Conclusion**

Tourism on Tybee Island heavily shapes the economic activity on the island. Over one million annual visitors from 37 states and overseas partake of its beauty and recreational activities, creating demand for nearly 250,000 room-nights in Tybee Island accommodations establishments. Approximately 82% of the workers (1,225) in Tybee Island establishments are gainfully employed because of visitors to the island. Tybee Island businesses earn approximately \$93 million in revenue, while another \$81 million is spent in Chatham County and the City of Savannah where another 1,643 workers have jobs primarily in retail trade, lodging, and restaurants. Combined, local governments derive about \$8.7 million in tax revenue from Tybee-related tourism.