



FALL RIVER
MASSACHUSETTS

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Contact: Olivia Peixoto
508-324-2600

Release of the Fall River Tourism Research Report

(FALL RIVER, MA- JULY 13, 2023)- The City of Fall River is releasing a report of the quantitative data obtained in the Fall River Tourism Insights and Opportunities Research. **The long term goal of this research is to support Fall River’s economic development by leveraging the potential of the creative economy and cultural tourism.** This research report is to be followed in the fall by an addendum regarding survey research conducted over the summer at Fall River events.

The City of Fall River allocated \$50,000 of ARPA funds to this study to obtain a comprehensive research and analysis report outlining statistical and qualitative data regarding tourism insights and opportunities. The research was conducted by UMass Dartmouth’s Charlton College of Business with support from Springline Research Associates and FXM Associates. The seasoned research team has a history of working on various economic development projects in the City. This project was overseen by Viva Fall River and its 7-member Tourism Advisory Committee.

“For tourism to increase in a gateway city like Fall River, we needed valuable baseline data to give us a starting point. Working with UMass Dartmouth has helped us get the data we need to build tourism strategies,” says Mayor Paul Coogan,

The short term of this project has been to develop initial research about visitor spending, origins, and economic impact, to provide data-driven insights which will serve as crucial assets in creating targeted marketing strategies for Fall River. The scope of work included an analysis of consumer spending data in Fall River and neighboring areas, a visitor profile study to characterize visitor market segments and travel intent to target promotional campaigns, and

baseline measurement of visitor-influenced economic activity. The latter is crucial for tracking the performance and impact of tourism over time and to quantify the growth of Fall River's visitor spending in comparison with other communities in Massachusetts.

The key findings from the research study are listed below:

- **Fall River's Tourism Market Area (page i):**

The majority of the City's visitors reside within a 60-minute drive time of downtown Fall River, with most of these visitors residing within 30-minutes.

- **Current Market Conditions And Consumer Spending (page ii):**

- Fall River captures substantial retail sales from non-Fall River residents in sectors such as Retail Trade, Arts/Entertainment/Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Services.
- The retail opportunity/gap analysis reveals store types in which Fall River residents make more purchases than the sales of local stores, which represents opportunities for existing or new local stores to capture sales currently being made outside the City.
- Clothing stores in Fall River attract substantial retail sales from outsiders, and food and beverage stores in the City sell more to non-local residents than to Fall River residents.
- Per capita sales comparisons in the Food Services & Drinking Places sector indicate that Fall River has room to grow as a dining destination, particularly in the full-service restaurant category.

- **Visitor Profiles and Market Segments**

- Approximately 21.8% of visitors reside more than 2.5 hours away, suggesting the importance of marketing outside the immediate area to build awareness about Fall River's attractions and events.
- Fall River residents comprise the highest percentage of visitors to the City (6.6%). Providence (2.3%) represents the second highest percentage of visitors, highlighting the importance of Rhode Island as a market for Fall River.

- The top states of origin for visitors include the New England states, as well as New York, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and California; Non-New England states account for 17.2% of total visits.
- International visitors account for 2.3% of total visits, with a sizable portion from Canada (47%), followed by the UK, Germany, and England.

A forthcoming addendum to the current report will present findings from four intercept surveys conducted in June 2023 in the Waterfront district, including the Gates of the City. The survey data will provide richer insights into visitor spending, length of stay, and attractions visited. By leveraging this information, Fall River can develop data-driven strategies to attract more visitors, enhance the visitor experience, and drive economic growth in the tourism sector.

For any further questions, contact Olivia Peixoto, Specials Projects & Media Coordinator for the City of Fall River at opeixoto@fallriverma.org, or Patti Rego, Executive Director of Viva Fall River at prego@onesouthcoast.com.