



PLACES

2025 SUMMARY & IMPACT REPORT

PLACES is Washington's annual statewide conference focused on the continued care of place through historic preservation, placemaking, and economic vitality, brought to you by the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation and the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation.

SUMMARY

PLACES 2025 was hosted in Gig Harbor on October 8-10. As we brought PLACES to Gig Harbor for the first time ever in collaboration with the [Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance](#), we were excited to feature the [Maritime Washington National Heritage Area](#) throughout the conference. With presenters and attendees from all corners of the state and all realms of preservation, placemaking, and economic development, this conference was full of learning, networking, and fun. PLACES 2025 featured:

- **4 major events**, including the Opening Plenary and Keynote and Excellence on Main Awards
- **41 breakout sessions** on topics ranging from adaptive reuse to housing to small business support
- **9 mobile tours** taking attendees around Gig Harbor, Tacoma, and Bremerton
- **6 networking**-specific events
- **9 venues**, including the Gig Harbor BoatShop and Foss Waterway Seaport in Tacoma



Conference attendees were asked to fill out a post-conference evaluation with questions related to their conference experience and economic impact. Results from our 69 responses are referenced throughout this report.

ATTENDANCE

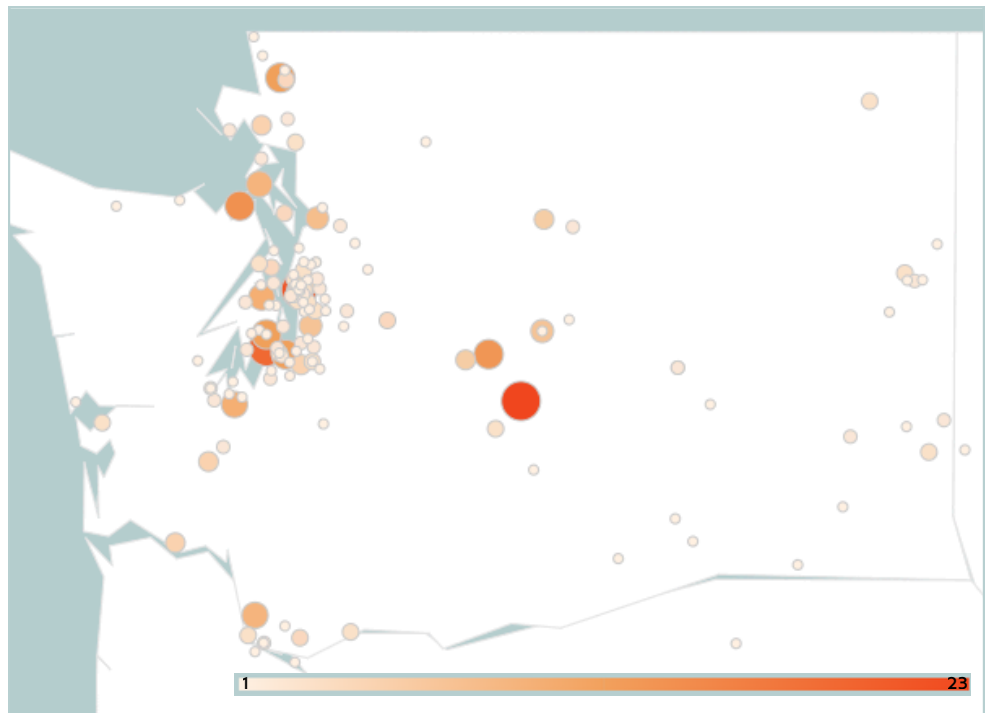
With 414 individuals registered, this year's conference was our largest to date. An additional 41 people registered for the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area Partners Meeting held in conjunction with PLACES, bringing a total of 455 people to Gig Harbor during conference week.

In our post-conference survey, 24% of respondents indicated that it was their first time at PLACES, showing we are successfully reaching new audiences.

BY LOCATION

This map shows Washington-based attendees' geographic location.

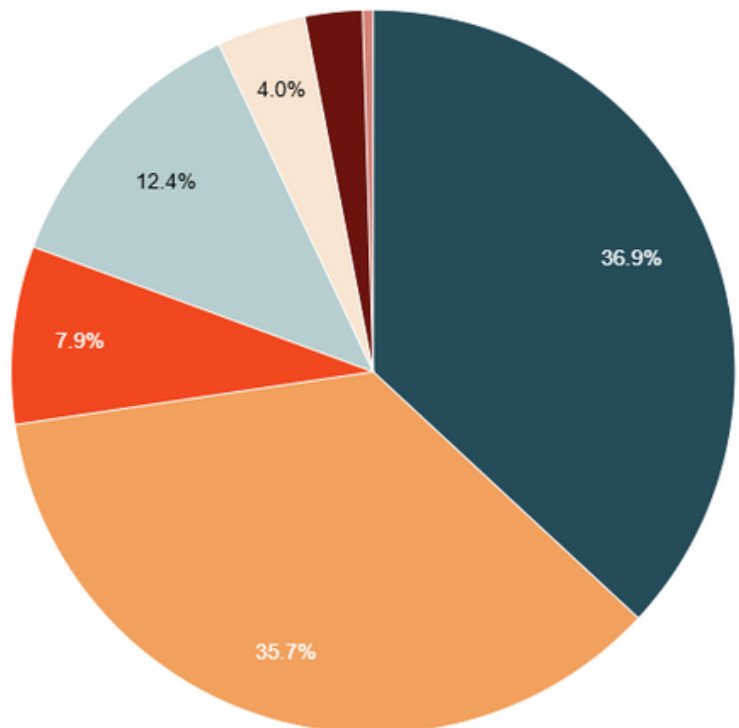
Out-of-state attendees came from California, Idaho, Oregon, Texas, and Japan.



BY ATTENDEE TYPE

This chart breaks down our conference audience based on categories they selected at registration.

- General Admission
- Washington Main Street Community
- Washington Main Street Affiliate
- Official Maritime Washington Partner
- Civic Leader
- CLG
- Student



LOCAL IMPACT

This is the first year that PLACES has been hosted in Gig Harbor, made even more special with our collaboration with the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area. Gig Harbor suited the unique structure of PLACES—using smaller venues across our host community, rather than hosting entirely in a conference center—perfectly and served as a pilot for how Gig Harbor can host other conferences in the future.

We thank local partners—particularly the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance, the City of Gig Harbor, and Visit Gig Harbor—for their assistance in planning a large conference that celebrated the preservation, economic development, and place stewardship accomplishments in the local area, as well as throughout the state.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

53%

of attendees
had never been
to Gig Harbor
before

Attendees said they were
VERY LIKELY
TO RETURN

Average rating of 4.4, with 5
being “Extremely Likely”

“ I was
ASTOUNDED

by the beauty of Gig Harbor and the
preservation work they have done
and how it’s rejuvenated their
economy! ”

- survey respondent

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Based on survey responses, we know that the average attendee stayed for **2.6 nights** and **spent \$324** (not related to lodging or registration) while in Gig Harbor. We calculated attendee lodging and spending for our **374 non-local attendees**, per registration records, and paired those figures with known expenses paid locally by the Washington Trust and the Gig Harbor Waterfront Association for things like facilities and catering.

We are proud to share the estimated impact of PLACES 2025 on the local economy.

ESTIMATED IMPACT:

\$322,036



EVALUATIONS

Overall, conference feedback was extremely positive. With a mix of qualitative and quantitative survey responses—as well as conversational and email-based feedback received by conference staff—attendees shared positive experiences with the educational content, conference format, big events, and conference venues.

BY THE NUMBERS

We asked conference attendees to rate different aspects of the conference on a 5-point scale, with 1 being “not satisfied” and 5 being “very satisfied.” Here’s how they responded:

- **Educational sessions**, including breakout sessions and mobile tours: **4.3**
- **Special events**, including the Opening Plenary, Welcome Block Party, Excellence on Main, and Farewell Picnic in the Park: **4.1**
 - Attendees particularly loved **Excellence on Main**, rating it an average of **4.6**
- **Format** (i.e., length & number of sessions, breaks): **4.5**
- **Venues** across Gig Harbor and Tacoma: **4.4**
- **Hospitality** in Gig Harbor and at PLACES: **4.8**

100%

said they will attend
or recommend
someone else attend
PLACES in the future

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Excerpts from written survey responses

- “[My favorite part was] the **interconnectedness of the town** for the conference and the **hospitality of the community.**”
- “**It was nice to have the blend of the three areas**, historic preservation, maritime and Main Street together and to see how some of the sessions approached the content from the idea of blending information across the three areas.”
- “The weather was great, the shopping was fantastic, the sessions were educational, the people were all warm and friendly and inviting. **How do you top that?!**”
- “I came back from this conference **very inspired and passionate about historic preservation.** I’m also so excited about the new connections I made during this conference and look forward to seeing them all next year. Thank you for a good conference!”

Learn more about PLACES 2025 at preservewa.org/places2025

Report prepared by Lydia Felty, November 4, 2025

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