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Economic Impacts of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade and Road Race

Final Report

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- Chris Camus at Brennan's Place
- Bill Stetson at Rumbleseat Bar & Grille
- Brian Montagna at Quality Beverage
- Edison and Nathan Yee at Bean Restaurant Group



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Executive Summary

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and other events and related activities in the Hampden and Hampshire County region contribute...

\$39 million total output (sales)

\$20 million

Total **value added**

275

Total **jobs**

\$11 million

Total **local wage earnings**

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and associated St. Patrick's activities represent one of the most significant annual cultural and economic events in Western Massachusetts. Drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors, participants, and spectators to Holyoke and the surrounding region, these events generate substantial spending at local businesses, particularly in hospitality, retail, and entertainment sectors. Expenditures by regional committees to host these events also stimulate the local economy and lead to broader impact.

This report evaluates the total economic impacts of the Parade Weekend and associated events, focusing on the activity they bring to Hampden and Hampshire Counties. As part of the analysis, this study included a survey of spectators, participants, and visitors. Based on the roughly 600 survey responses and the estimated attendance of the Parade and Road Race, total visitor spending at the events is estimated to be over \$23.2 million. In addition, the committee spends about \$470,000 in the two-county region each year to support its various events. In total, the direct spending in Hampden and Hampshire Counties as a result of the region's St. Patrick's activity is estimated at approximately \$23.7 million.

Using Cambridge Econometrics' [REACT](#) input-output model, this study assesses the estimated economic contribution and net economic impact of this direct spending on the region, finding:



- **The total economic *contribution* includes 275 jobs paying \$10.6 million in wages and generating \$20.5 million in value added and \$39.3 million in output (sales).**
- After accounting for displacement effects (i.e., money that might have been spent in the region regardless of the events), the **total economic *impact* includes 166 jobs paying \$6.5 million in wages and generating \$12.5 million in value added and \$23.4 million in net new sales.**

This economic activity also generates tax revenues for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Holyoke. **The state, which levies sales taxes and personal income taxes, along with meals and room occupancy taxes, earns a total of \$2.3 million in revenues based on the contribution of the St. Patrick's events. In addition, through meals and room occupancy taxes, the St. Patrick's events earn the City of Holyoke \$86,000.**

These events are made possible by approximately 200 volunteer committee members throughout the region who donate their time to planning, organizing, meetings, manual labor, and administrative tasks in support of St. Patrick's festivities and events. In total, these **volunteers spend an estimated 32,000 hours each year, completing work that would be valued at an estimated \$970,000 in the paid labor market.**

In addition to the quantitative analysis, five case studies of local businesses complement the empirical study and illustrate real-world examples of how Holyoke businesses benefit from the parade and road race events. Each of these businesses, along with countless others, benefits from the region's vibrant St. Patrick's events through increased revenues, brand visibility, and customer exposure. Some tangible impacts of the events include:

- **Log Cabin / Delaney House / D. Hotel:** Increased numbers of guests and customers on St. Patrick's Weekend drive a 30 percent increase in business revenue (closer to 50 percent for lodging). The businesses also host several events leading up to the weekend, which help support seasonal hiring and stabilizing off-peak operations.
- **Brennan's Place:** St. Patrick's Weekend is the most critical period of the year for this downtown Holyoke restaurant and bar, generating roughly 10 times typical sales and providing revenue that sustains the business well beyond the events.
- **Rumbleseat Bar & Grille:** The Road Race is a key driver of this Chicopee-based establishment,



doubling daily sales through coordinated transportation (buses) and post-race events, while attracting new customers and supporting expanded staffing and regional activity.

- **Quality Beverage:** The events generate a major surge in regional demand for beverages and serves as a strategic platform for brand visibility, product launches, and long-term market positioning.
- **Bean Restaurant Group:** Multiple restaurant locations in the region benefit from increased customers, with sales rising about 11 percent during event week and additional revenue generated through food trucks and event programming.

Overall, the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade and Road Race, and the broader network of associated events, generate significant regional economic activity while strengthening community identity and pride. The Parade and Road Race are also an important boost for Downtown Holyoke, drawing visitors and supporting local businesses while highlighting the area in a positive light and reinforcing its role as a vibrant community destination. Beyond generating measurable economic and fiscal benefits in the form of jobs, income, business revenue, and tax receipts, these events also rely on and reinforce strong local partnerships, volunteerism, and community engagement. Together, these impacts highlight the importance of continued support for these longstanding traditions, which not only drive annual economic gains but also contribute to the region's long-term vitality and visibility.



1 Overview & Introduction

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade stands as one of the largest and most distinctive St. Patrick's celebrations in the country, serving as a defining annual event for the City of Holyoke and the broader Western Massachusetts region. With origins dating back to 1952, the parade has grown into a major cultural event and economic attraction, drawing hundreds of thousands of spectators, participants, and visitors each year. The Parade follows a well-established route through downtown Holyoke, transforming the city into a regional destination and creating a vibrant atmosphere that celebrates Irish heritage, local identity, and community pride. Attendees travel from across New England and beyond, filling streets, local businesses, and event spaces over the course of the weekend.



The Parade is also broadcast on television and livestreamed online, extending its reach well beyond the city and allowing viewers across the region, country, and world to experience the event remotely. The 2026 Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade telecast attracted a strong regional television audience throughout its nearly three-hour broadcast. On average, approximately 21,000 households watched the parade on WWLP, with viewership peaking at nearly 25,000 households during the first hour of coverage. The parade earned an

average rating of just over 11, meaning approximately 11 percent of television households in the Springfield-Holyoke market were watching the broadcast at any given time.



Complementing the Parade is the annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race, attracting thousands of runners and spectators and serving as another cornerstone of the weekend's activities. Held annually on the Saturday before the Parade, the Road Race not only adds to the scale and visibility of the celebration, but also broadens participation by

engaging athletic communities and younger demographics. The race attracts both competitive athletes and recreational participants, as well as a lively crowd of supporters and fans. While the 10-kilometer run is the primary event, the race also features a 2-mile walk and a kids' fun run.

In addition to these two keystone events, there is a wide array of related events in the weeks and months leading up to Parade Weekend, including banquets, concerts, cultural events, and fundraisers organized by regional St. Patrick's committees. These events include Grand Colleen Pageant, Grand Colleen Ball and Award Dinner, Annual Colleen Gathering, Marshal Mania, Grand Marshal Reception, Tartan Party, JFK Award Dinner and Award Winner Welcome Party, Ambassador Breakfast, and many more.

Beyond cultural and community benefits, these events drive substantial economic activity in the region. **This report evaluates the economic impacts of the St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and associated events on the Hampden and Hampshire County region**, building upon and updating a previous economic impact study conducted by the UMass Donahue Institute in 2012. **The analysis presents both the total economic contribution of event-related spending, which reflects the full level of economic activity supported by the event, as well as the net economic impact, which accounts for spending that is truly new to the region after adjusting for displacement.** By distinguishing between these measures, the study provides a complete assessment of the events' role in the regional economy.

Economic Contribution and Economic Impact

Economic contribution reflects total spending supported by the events, including all visitor and committee expenditures in the local economy. This includes both the **direct economic activity**, the initial spending by visitors and event organizers at local establishment, and **total economic activity**, which captures the broader ripple effects as that spending circulates through the local economy (including indirect and induced effects).

Economic impact also captures the total economic activity, including indirect and induced effects, but measures only the share of spending that is *net new* to the region (i.e., activity that might not have taken place in the absence of the events). A key consideration for economic impact is **displacement**, which refers to spending that is shifted rather than newly created. For example, residents who attend the events may spend money at local restaurants or shops, but might have made similar purchases elsewhere in the region even without the events. As a result, this spending represents a reallocation within the local economy rather than a net increase.

By distinguishing between contribution and impact, the analysis highlights both the overall level of economic activity associated with the events and the portion that represents new economic activity for the region.

A central component of this analysis is a survey of Parade and Road Race spectators and participants, designed to capture detailed information on spending patterns, visitor origin, length of stay, and participation in local activities. The survey results, combined with attendance estimates, provide the basis for calculating total visitor spending. These estimates are supplemented by data on expenditures made by regional committees to organize and host these and other regional events, resulting in a **comprehensive measure of direct spending associated with the St. Patrick's festivities, totaling over \$23 million.**

To translate this direct spending into broader economic contribution, the analysis applies Cambridge Econometrics' REACT input-output model, which is customized to the Hampden and Hampshire County region. This model traces how initial spending circulates through the local economy, generating indirect and induced effects that support jobs, wages, business revenues, and value added. In addition to measuring these economic impacts, the report assesses fiscal benefits, including state and local tax revenues generated as a result of the economic contribution of the St. Patrick's events.

The study also recognizes the significant role of volunteerism in supporting these events. Each year, hundreds of volunteers contribute substantial time and effort to planning, organizing, and executing the festivities. This report quantifies the economic value of that volunteer labor, highlighting an often-overlooked contribution to the region's economy and civic life.

Finally, the report includes a series of business case studies that provide on-the-ground perspectives from local establishments across different industries. These case studies illustrate how increased visitation and event-related demand translate into real-world impacts for businesses, including higher sales, expanded operations, and enhanced visibility. **Together, the quantitative analysis and qualitative insights present a comprehensive view of how the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and related events contribute to the economic vitality and cultural identity of the region.**



Fostering the Region's Direct Connection to Ireland

The regional St. Patrick's committees play a central role in sustaining and deepening the connection between Western Massachusetts and Ireland. Founded by Irish immigrants and their descendants, the committees have long used the St. Patrick's festivities as a way to preserve and express Irish heritage, while also maintaining direct ties to Ireland itself. Over time, this has evolved into a strong cultural bridge that keeps Irish traditions, identity, and community networks active in Holyoke and the broader region. These ties are further strengthened through Holyoke's sister city relationship with Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland, which involves collaborative projects and civic leadership exchange events. Holyoke residents have also participated in (and even won) the International Rose of Tralee Pageant Competition.

Each year, events in the region actively engage both the Irish cultural organizations, performers, and civic leaders. The parade and related events include visiting musicians, dancers, and civic representatives from Ireland, creating a direct exchange between Holyoke and Ireland. These interactions reinforce shared identity and help keep the relationship between Ireland and its diaspora community in Western Massachusetts dynamic and active rather than symbolic alone.

Beyond the Parade itself, the committees help facilitate educational and cultural programming throughout the year that deepens this relationship, including scholarships, youth involvement, and cultural exchanges. By supporting Irish music, dance, language, and civic engagement, the committees help sustain an intergenerational connection to Irish identity within Western Massachusetts.



Photo taken in Holyoke on March 17, 2023, featuring (from left to right) 1) Massachusetts Representative Richard E Neal, 2) Current Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister), then Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Micheál Martin, 3) then US Ambassador to Ireland Claire Cronin, 4) 2023 Parade President Karen Casey.



Photo taken in Holyoke on March 17, 2023, featuring Current Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister), then Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Micheál Martin with then US Ambassador to Ireland Claire Cronin and escorts.

2 Data & Methodology

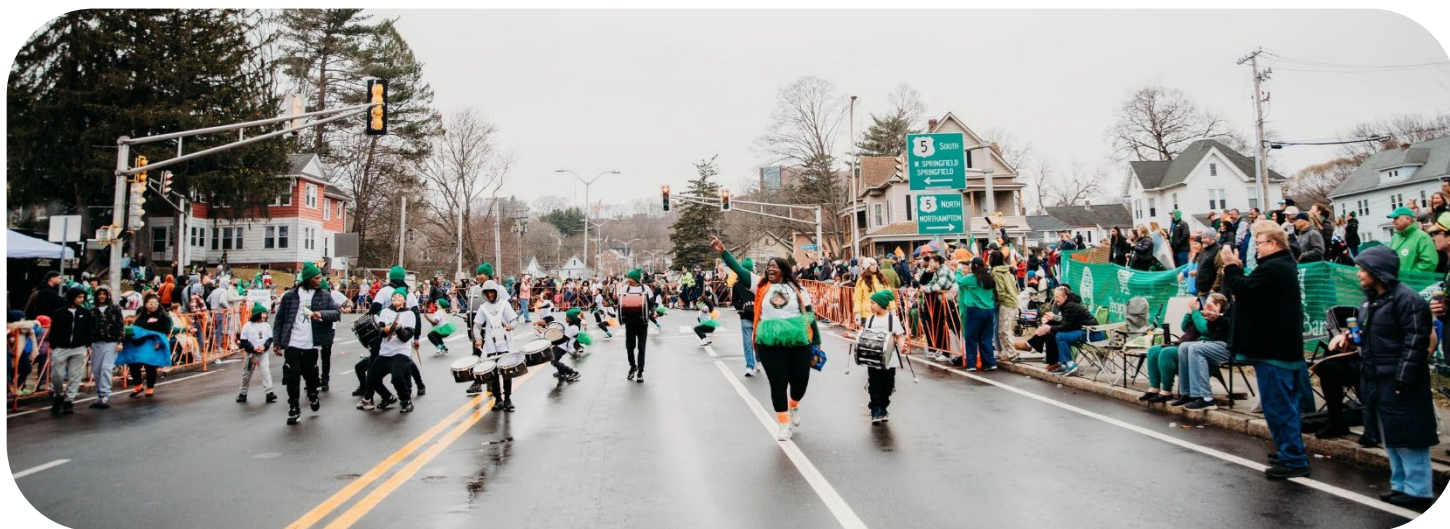
2.1. Data

This section summarizes the data collected and assessed in support of this economic analysis, organized around data indicator topic.

Event Attendance

Event attendance estimates were compiled using local news sources and information provided by the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Committee. For the Road Race, the Committee estimates 56,000 individuals attend each year, including 50,000 spectators and 6,000 runners.¹ Parade attendance was estimated using available local news reports published between 2022 and 2026, which placed the event's attendance between 300,000 and 400,000 people.² Averaging these reports, typical Parade attendance was estimated to be 350,000.

The Parade attendance estimate used in this study is slightly lower than the previous UMass Donahue Institute report estimate of 400,000 spectators. However, this does not reflect a decline in annual attendance to the Parade, but rather an estimate that represents a typical year, averaging attendance across years with both favorable and unfavorable weather conditions. This more conservative estimate provides a stable, representative value for economic impact analysis by reducing the influence of unusually high-attendance years.



¹ Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee. <https://holyokestpatricksparade.com/statistics>.

² Local news sources reporting attendance over the years included Western Mass News: <https://www.westernmassnews.com/2022/03/21/officials-over-300000-people-attended-holyoke-st-patricks-parade/>; Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade attracts thousands to the city, and Spectrum News 1: <https://spectrumnews1.com/ma/worcester/news/2023/03/19/holy-st-patricks-parade-031923#:~:text=This%20year%27s%20grand%20marshal%20was,whatever.%22%20said%20one%20woman.,>

Survey on Visitors and Spending

To understand the spending patterns of event attendees, a survey was conducted during both the Road Race and Parade. The survey was distributed in-person by volunteers, promoted on the Committee's social media pages, and distributed via the Road Race email list. As an incentive to participate, respondents were entered into a raffle for one of three \$150 prizes.

The survey was designed to collect information on visitor origin, event attendance, and spending patterns. Respondents were asked which events they attended, where they live, the size of the group they were responding for, and their estimated spending per day on various spending categories, including food and drink, retail, transportation, and entertainment. For non-local visitors, the survey also asked if they were staying the night in the region. For respondents indicating they were staying overnight, the survey asked for the number of nights spent in the region, the type of accommodation, and estimated spending per person per night on accommodation. For a copy of the complete survey form, see the Appendix.

In total, the survey received 602 responses. After cleaning the data and removing outliers, 591 responses remained, representing 1,650 individuals (participants could respond for their entire group or party). Of these responses, 24 percent attended only the Road Race, 45 percent attended just the Parade, and 31 percent attended both events. Among the individuals represented in the survey, 79 percent were locals (residents of Hampden or Hampshire County), 15 percent were day visitors (i.e., live outside of Hampden and Hampshire Counties and traveled to the events each day), and 6 percent were overnight visitors.

Committee Expenditures

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Committee provided detailed financial records of expenditures leading up to and including the Parade and Road Race. These expenditures covered the coordination, operations, and events organized by the Holyoke Committee and other regional committees throughout the year, along with the Committee's scholarship program.

To capture the spending in Hampden and Hampshire Counties, expenditures were sorted based on the location of the vendor providing the good or service. Purchases made from businesses located within the two-county region are considered as part of the economic impacts. These local expenditures were matched with industry sectors based on the vendor's primary business activity as part of the economic impact modeling.

To account for annual fluctuations and to best represent a typical year, expenditures were collected over three fiscal years, between 2024 and 2026. Purchases from the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years were adjusted to account for inflation and reported in 2026 dollars. The total Committee expenditure for each sector was then averaged across the three fiscal years. The average spending for each industry sector is used as a key input into the REACT economic impact model described in the following section.

Fiscal Benefits

Fiscal benefits to Massachusetts are assessed based on state tax rates for meals, room occupancy, general sales tax, and wage income.³ The income tax analysis also considers federal and state standard deductions. Fiscal benefits to the City of Holyoke are evaluated using the local option meals tax and room occupancy tax rates provided by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Division of Local Services.

³ Mass.gov Massachusetts Tax Rates. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-tax-rates>.

Volunteer Contribution

To estimate the economic contribution of the roughly 200 volunteers that make the St. Patrick's events possible, members were asked to provide their estimates of annual volunteer hours, broken down into a few tasks. Volunteer hour estimates reported by respondents were scaled to estimate total volunteer contributions across all volunteers.

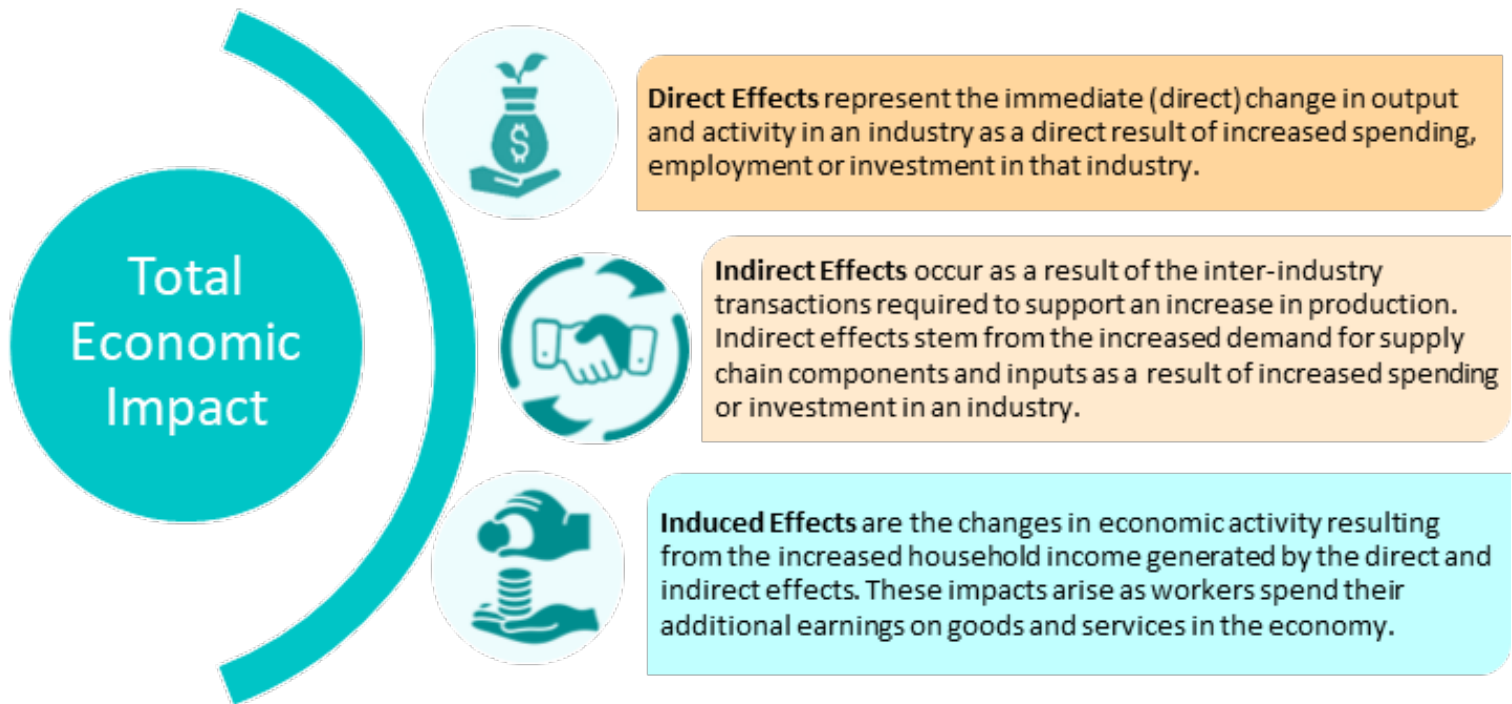
Average wages in the Hampden and Hampshire County region, broken down by industry sector, were used to translate the volunteer hours by task into an estimated volunteer contribution value. This detailed wage data was sourced from [data-Fab](#), a provider of unsuppressed employment and wages data at the county level. The volunteer contribution assessment is independent of the broader economic impact analysis and not included in the multiplier effects.



2.2. Economic Modeling Methodology

Total visitor spending and committee expenditure estimates by sector serve as the key inputs for the economic analysis. The analysis uses CE's [REACT](#) model to estimate the broader economic impacts the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and other associated events have on the economy in Hampden and Hampshire Counties in Massachusetts. REACT is an input-output modeling tool that provides comprehensive and tailored quantitative assessment of how local and regional economies *react* to policy, investment, or industry activity. The model estimates direct, indirect, and induced effects (often known as multiplier effects), as described in the figure below, shedding light on the supply chain and spending impacts that ripple through the economy.

Figure 2.2.1 Direct, Indirect, and Induced Impacts



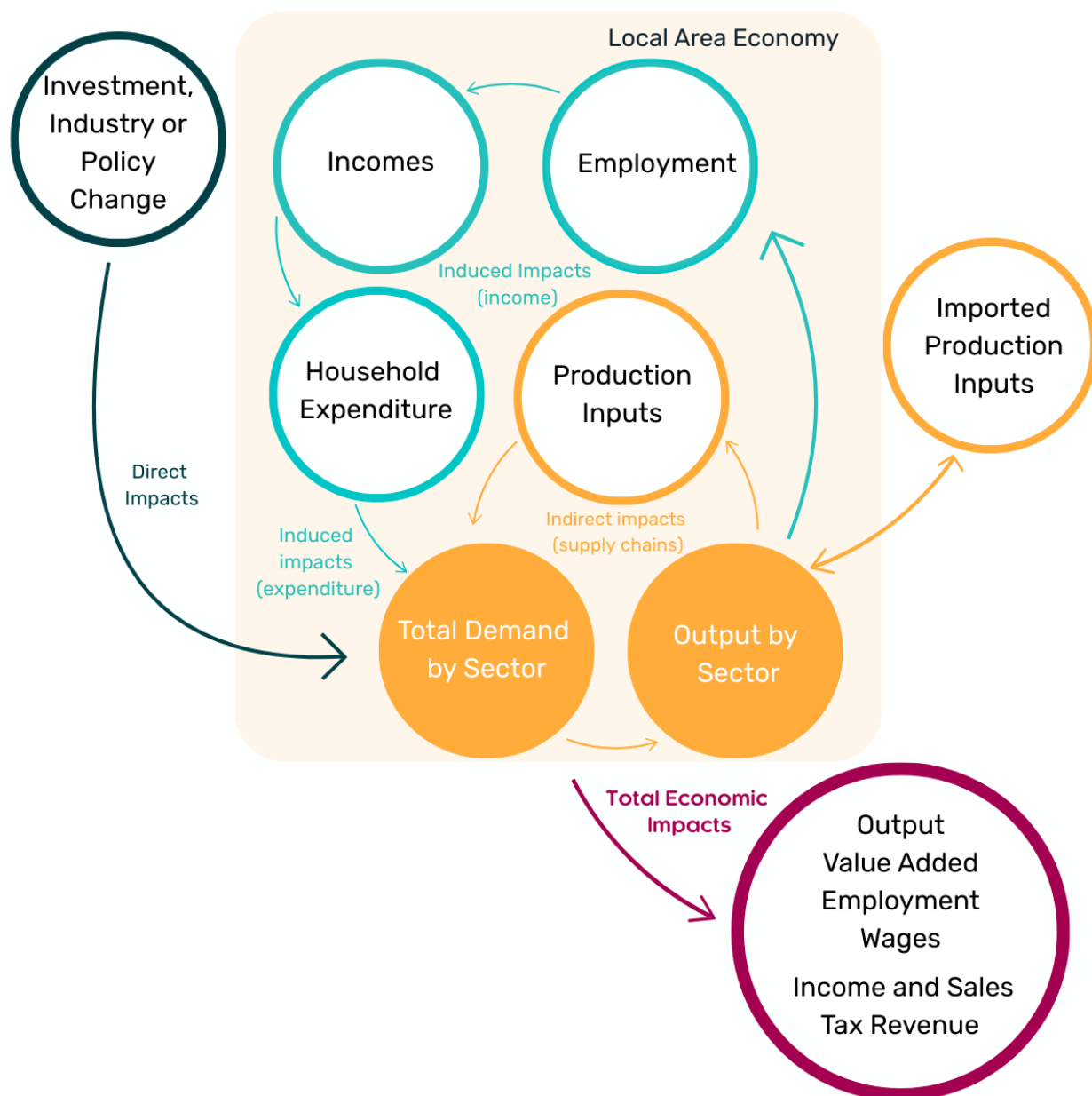
As an economic impact model, REACT is a tool for input-output analysis, providing detail on 166 industry sectors with data customized for a chosen geography. For any given economic activity or investment (the direct impacts), REACT generates estimates of the wider economic effect, based on a sectoral depiction of a region's economy, as represented by input-output tables. These wider impacts capture:

- Local supply chains and import linkages, recognizing that local areas are rarely self-sufficient in productive capabilities, leading to region-specific *indirect* economic impacts, through those supply chains
- Employment and income, leading to *induced* economic impacts as a result of income-expenditure effects

Figure 2.2.2 shows the core economic logic in REACT, demonstrating how economic activity flows through the economy to produce ripple effects.⁴

⁴ For more information on the REACT model and to read the technical documentation, visit <https://www.camecon.com/react>.

Figure 2.2.2 REACT Model Economic Logic



To assess the economic impacts of the St. Patrick's events, the process starts with spending estimates by industry sector. The derivation of these estimates is described in the Total Direct Spending section. Spending by industry serves as the model input and is run through the REACT model to estimate the broader economic impacts that stem from the events. In this way, the model has an integrated set of output, value added, employment, and wages by industry sector, informed and customized using county-level data from Mass Economics data-Fab (unsuppressed employment and wages data), the US Census Non-employer Statistics (self-employed workers), and the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (value added/GDP by industry).

3 Total Direct Spending

The economic contribution of the Parade and Road Race is driven by two primary sources: expenditures by the St. Patrick's Committee and spending by visitors throughout the weekend. This section describes how total spending from these sources was estimated and used as the foundation for the economic analysis. Because the study examines both overall economic contribution and net economic impact, this section also outlines the displacement assumptions used to distinguish net new spending generated by the events from spending that might have occurred in the region even without the St. Patrick's events.

3.1. Visitor Spending

Visitor spending in the community is one of the primary sources of economic activity generated by the weekend's events. As participants, spectators, and other event attendees travel to and attend the Road Race and Parade, they spend money on food and drinks, accommodation (hotels, Airbnbs, etc.), entertainment, retail, and transportation. These expenditures generate revenue for local businesses and contribute to economic activity throughout the region. To estimate the total visitor spending throughout the weekend, this analysis uses: 1) the estimated total number of participants and attendees; and 2) the average spending per visitor by visitor type.

Total Participants and Attendees

Calculating visitor spending first requires an understanding of event attendance. Based on an average of local news estimates from the past few years, attendance for the St. Patrick's Day Parade was estimated to be 350,000 people.⁵ For the Road Race, the Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee estimates a total of 56,000 individuals, which includes 6,000 race participants and 50,000 spectators.⁶



⁵ The Parade attendance estimate used in this study is slightly lower than the previous UMass Donahue Institute 2011 report estimate of 400,000 spectators, which helps to reflect a typical year accounting for weather variations.

⁶ Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee. <https://holyokestpatricksparade.com/statistics>.

Spending per Visitor

As described in the Methodology section, a survey was conducted during the Road Race and Parade and serves as the main data source to estimate spending per visitor. The survey asked respondents about their event attendance and spending across key expenditure categories.

One of the survey questions inquired about the primary residence of visitors. Based on the responses to this question, visitors were divided into three categories:

- **Local visitors**, whose primary residence is in Hampden or Hampshire Counties.
- **Day visitors**, whose primary residence is outside Hampden and Hampshire counties but did not stay overnight in the region.
- **Overnight visitors**, whose primary residence is outside Hampden and Hampshire counties and stayed the night in the region.

The share of visitors in each category based on the survey responses is then applied to the total attendance count to estimate the total number of visitors that fall into each category.⁷ Distinguishing between these three types of visitors is important because each visitor type is associated with a distinct spending profile. For example, overnight visitors tend to spend more than local and day visitors, and their spending may include accommodations such as hotel nights. As shown in Table 3.1.1, based on this estimation approach, the Road Race drew approximately 47,000 local visitors and 9,000 visitors from outside the region. The Parade included an estimated 262,000 local visitors, and 88,000 visitors from outside the region.

Table 3.1.1 Visitors by Visitor Type and Event

	Road Race	Parade
Local	46,900	262,500
Day Visitor	4,300	66,800
Overnight Visitor	4,800	20,700
Total	56,000	350,000

Source: Cambridge Econometrics with data from 2026 Road Race and Parade survey
Note: Attendance estimations are measured independently for each event. With many visitors attending both the Road Race and Parade, adding these attendance numbers across events would result in double counting.

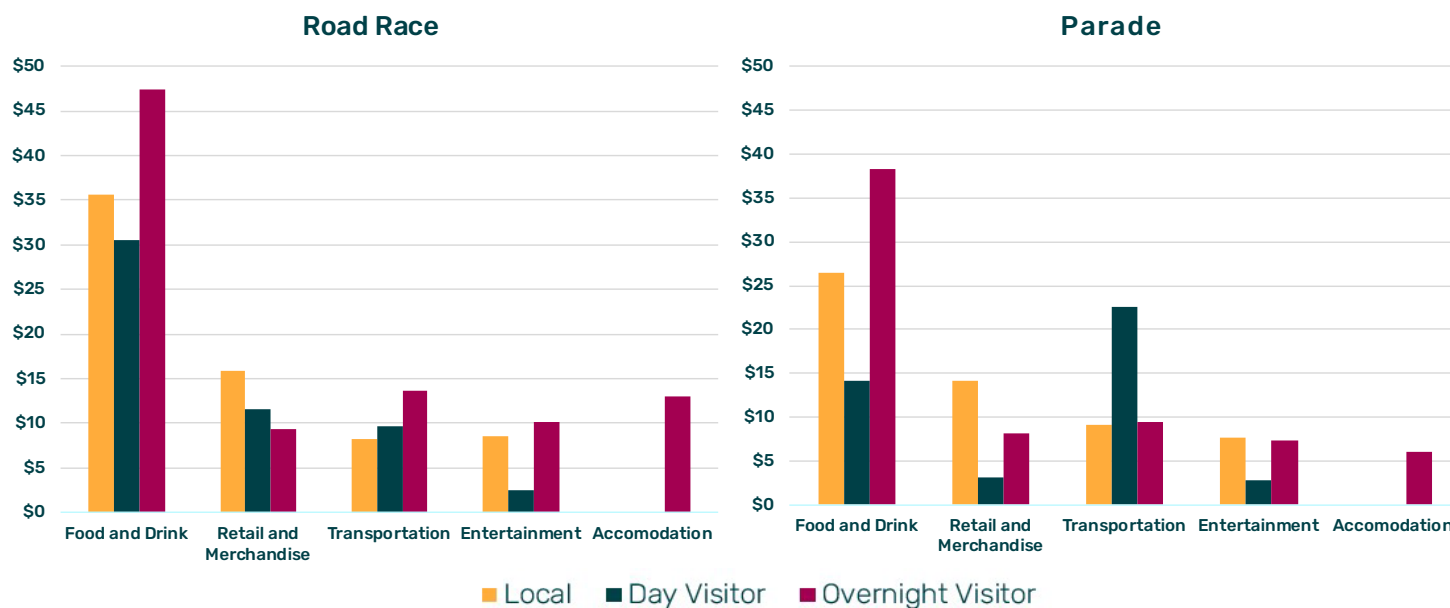
These visitors are matched with spending profiles based on information from the survey. Figure 3.1.1 shows the estimated spending profile across several spending categories for each of the three visitor types. At both the Road Race and Parade, overnight visitors spent substantially more than other visitor types, in part due to spending on accommodation. However, per-person spending on accommodations appears low because about 91 percent of overnight visitors stay with family or friends rather than pay for accommodation, bringing the average down. However, the large number of event-related visitors means

⁷ The survey was conducted in 2026, when the Parade day experienced cold, rainy weather. These conditions likely reduced travel from outside the region, resulting in an overrepresentation of local visitors in the survey. To address this bias, the estimated share of local visitors was slightly reduced, with corresponding increases applied to day and overnight visitor shares.

that even the relatively small share who use paid accommodations generates a meaningful boost for regional hotels and lodging providers (e.g., see the D. Hotel business case study below). For overnight visitors who did pay for accommodation, the average accommodation spending was about \$120 per person per night. Overnight visitors also spent more food and drink than local and day visitors at both the Road Race and Parade, with the average overnight visitor spending \$47 and \$38, respectively.

At the Road Race, spending for overnight visitors totaled \$94 per person, with the average local visitor spending a total of \$68 and average day visitor spending \$54. During the Parade, the average overnight visitor spent \$69, with local and day visitor spending totaling \$57 and \$43, respectively. Although somewhat unexpected, the survey indicates that local visitors spend more than day visitors. This finding likely reflects the tendency for local attendees to spend the entire day participating in festivities within the region, including dining and drinking, without the constraints associated with longer-distance travel.

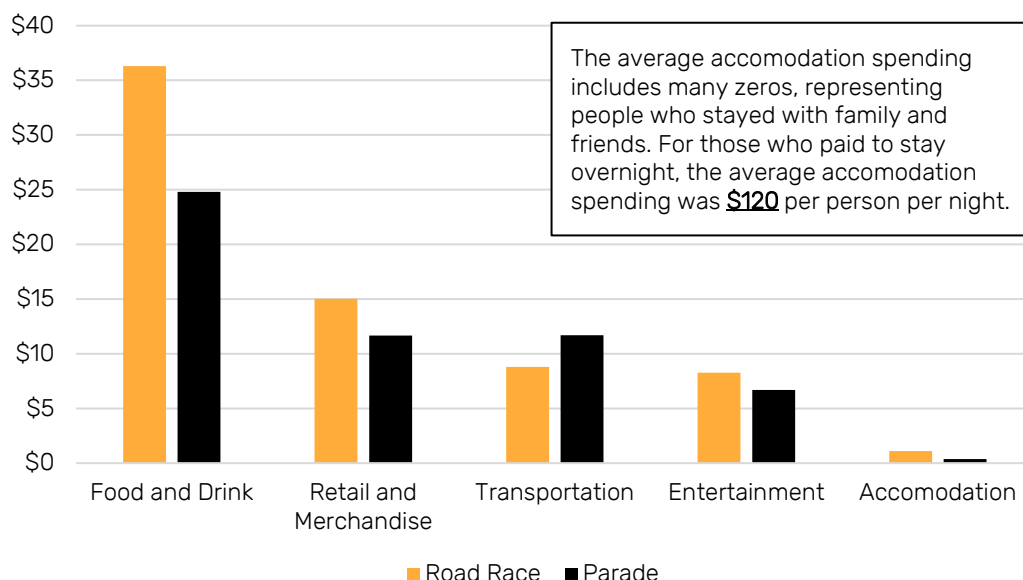
Figure 3.1.1 Spending Per Person Per Day by Visitor Type and Spending Category



Source: Cambridge Econometrics with data from 2026 Road Race and Parade survey

In total, the estimated spending per visitor was higher at the Road Race, where the average visitor spent \$71 compared to the Parade (\$55 per visitor). Figure 3.1.2 shows the average spending per visitor across defined expenditure categories. For both the Road Race and the Parade, food and drink was the highest spending category (\$36 and \$25, respectively). Reflective of the higher total spending per visitor, food and drink spending at the Road Race was 44 percent higher than the Parade. Retail spending per visitor was also higher at the Road Race (\$15 compared to \$12), while transportation spending was higher for the Parade (\$12 compared to \$9). Entertainment spending was the lowest for both events, with an average of \$8 per visitor spent at the Road Race and \$7 at the Parade.

Figure 3.1.2: Total Spending Per Person Per Day by Spending Category



Source: Cambridge Econometrics 2026 Road Race and Parade survey

Total Direct Spending by Visitors

Multiplying these spending profiles by the corresponding number of each visitor type yields the total direct spending by visitors at the Parade and Road Race. In total, the direct economic contribution from event visitors was \$23.3 million.

Parade visitors contributed over \$19 million in total direct spending, with the Road Race visitors contributing almost \$4 million. At both events, food and drink was the largest category of total spending, accounting for 50 percent of visitor spending at the Road Race and 44 percent at the Parade. At the Parade, a quarter of visitor spending was on transportation, 19 percent on retail, and 11 percent on entertainment. At the Road Race, retail accounted for 20 percent of spending, transportation 13 percent, and entertainment 11 percent.

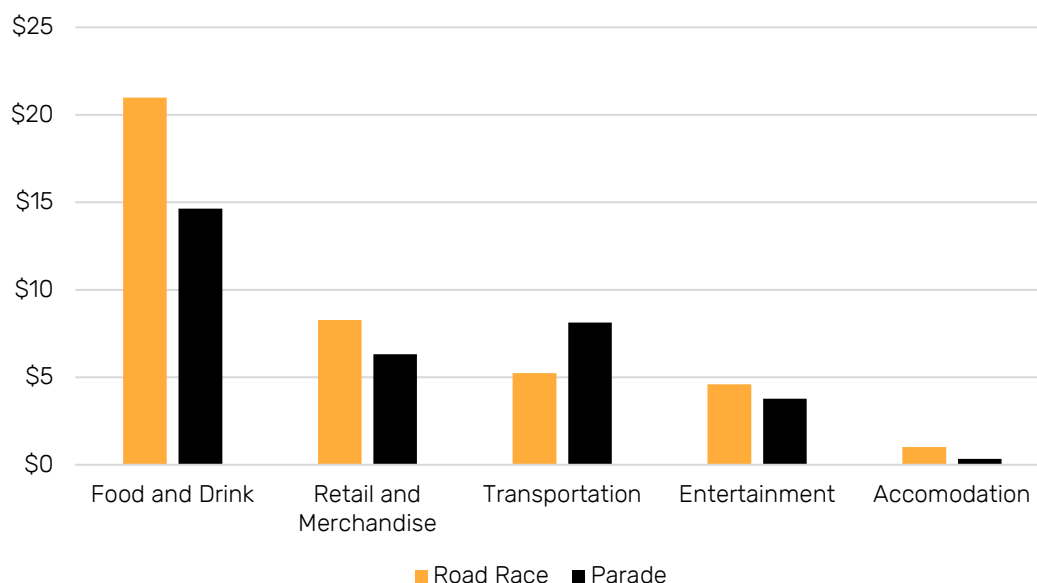
Net New Spending per Visitor

While total visitor spending includes all expenditures made by Parade and Road Race attendees, not all of this spending is *new* to the region. Total spending represents the direct economic *contribution*, encompassing all visitor expenditures associated with the events, regardless of whether it is net new economic activity for the local economy. Net new spending represents the direct economic *impact* of the events, and considers only spending that would not have occurred if not for the St. Patrick's events. Based on a concept called displacement, some visitor spending would likely have occurred locally regardless of the Parade and Road Race. For example, local residents may have gone out to eat, paid for entertainment, or spent money on other goods and services in the absence of the events. In other words, spending by local residents is more likely to reflect a reallocation of existing spending within the region (i.e., displacement), rather than a net increase. Therefore, unlike economic contribution, economic impact measures only the spending that is net new to the region due directly to the events.

Visitor types play a key role in calculating new spending. Local visitors are more likely to have spent some amount of money in the region regardless of the event, meaning a lower share of their spending can be considered new (for this analysis, half of local resident spending at the Parade and Road Race is considered net new). Day and overnight visitors are more likely to have travelled to the region specifically because of the Parade and Road Race, so a larger share of their spending is new to the region. Therefore, different displacement assumptions were applied to each visitor type to estimate the proportion of new spending for the region. For day and overnight visitors, the displacement assumptions are based on a survey question inquiring if they would have visited the region in the absence of the events, resulting in 8 percent displacement for overnight visitors and 3 percent for day visitors.

Figure 3.1.3 shows the estimated net new spending per visitor by spending category. Food and drink remains the largest spending category, with \$21 of net new spending per visitor at the Road Race and \$15 at the Parade. New retail spending was higher at the Road Race (\$8) than the Parade (\$6), while new transportation spending was higher at the Parade (\$8 compared to \$5). Entertainment generated about \$4 per visitor in new spending for both the Parade and Road Race.

Figure 3.1.3: New Spending Per Person by Spending Category



Source: Cambridge Econometrics 2026 Road Race and Parade survey

After accounting for displacement, the direct economic impact of the events totaled \$13.9 million. Of this new spending, the Parade generated \$11.6 million (83 percent), while the Road Race generated \$2.2 million (17 percent). This new spending across both events includes \$6.3 million on food and drink, \$2.7 million on retail, \$3.1 million on transportation, \$1.6 million on entertainment, and nearly \$200,000 on accommodation.

3.2. Committee Expenditures

Committee expenditures are another source of direct economic activity from the weekend events. These expenditures include all costs to put on the Parade and Road Race, as well as the numerous regional events leading up to Parade Weekend. These auxiliary events include (but are not limited to):

- **Grand Colleen Pageant**, a competition that selects the Holyoke Grand Colleen and Court to serve as ambassadors for the Irish community throughout the parade season.
- **Grand Colleen Ball and Award Dinner**, a formal event recognizing the newly selected Grand Colleen and Court and celebrating Irish heritage.
- **Annual Colleen Gathering**, a gathering of Colleens and courts from Holyoke and other Irish organizations throughout Western Massachusetts and New England.
- **Marshal Mania**, a fundraising event honoring the year's Grand Marshal and supporting parade operations.
- **Grand Marshal Reception**, recognizing and celebrating the individual selected as Grand Marshal of the parade.
- **JFK Award Dinner and Award Winner Welcome Party**, honoring an American of Irish descent who has distinguished themselves in their chosen field.
- **Tartan Party for Dobbin Event**, a community celebration featuring Irish-themed entertainment, food, and activities.
- **Ambassador Breakfast**, bringing together parade dignitaries, sponsors, community leaders, and guests during Parade Weekend while the Parade Committee, in partnership with the Irish government, recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the cultural, economic, and governmental relationship between Ireland and the United States.



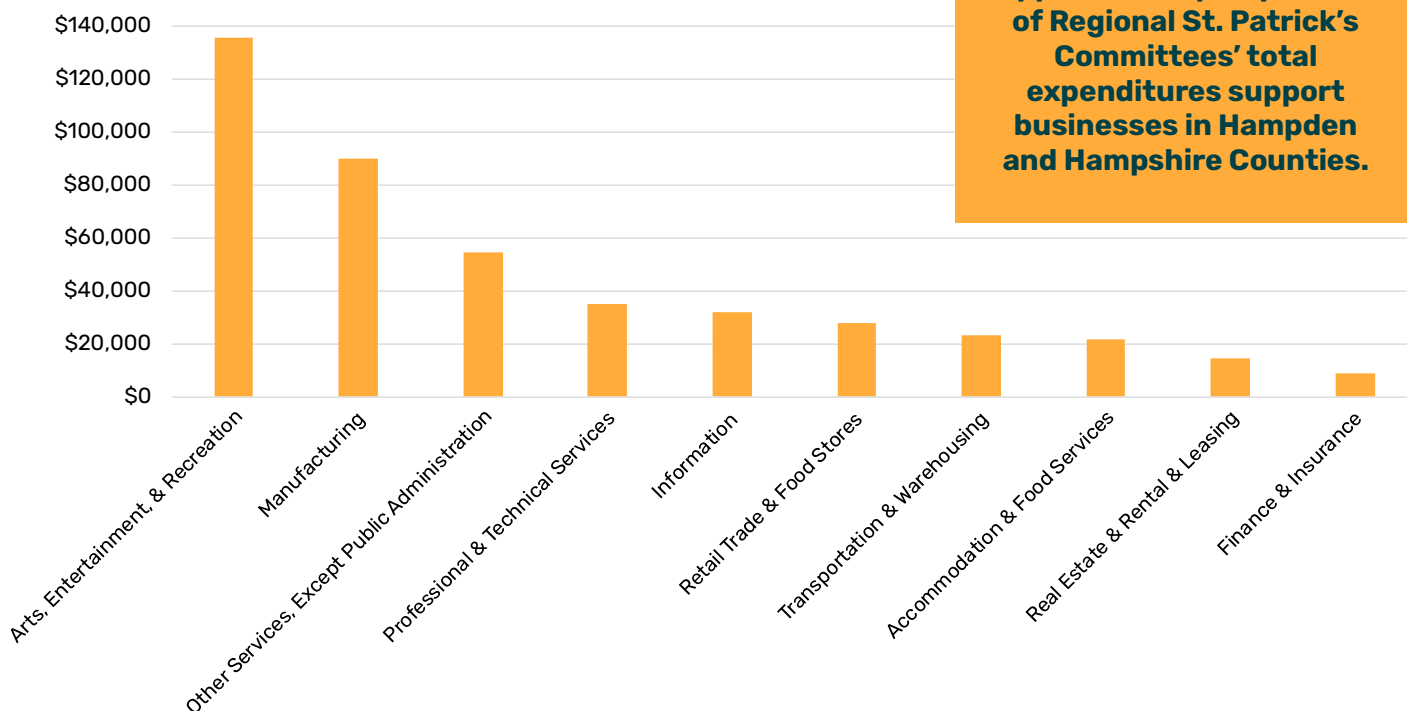
The [official Holyoke Tartan](#) is a vibrant pattern weaving together colors from the city's schools and the Irish and American flags. The Parade Committee merchandizes many items featuring its unique Tartan, including scarves, ties, and accessories. Registered in 2013, the Holyoke Saint Patrick's Tartan has become an iconic brand, emulated by regional committees.



Photo courtesy of Cooper's Gifts.

In total, annual Committee expenditures average \$660,000 to plan and organize these events, along with the Road Race and Parade. **Of the Committee's annual expenditures, approximately 70 percent are made to local vendors**, accounting for \$470,000 in annual spending in the Hampden and Hampshire County economy each year. Figure 3.2.1 further breaks down Committee expenditures, showing the top 10 sectors of spending. Arts, entertainment, and recreation was the largest sector of expenditures, accounting for \$135,000 (29 percent) of Committee spending. Manufacturing and other services were also top sectors, totaling 31 percent of spending.

Figure 3.2.1 Average Annual Committee Expenditures by Sector



Source: Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee

3.3. Total Direct Spending

Total direct spending represents the sum of visitor spending and Committee expenditures, measuring the total direct spending that occurred as a result of the Parade, Road Race, and other events. In total, the events contributed \$23.7 million in direct spending to the local economy. Visitor spending contributed the vast majority of this spending (98 percent), with committee expenditures accounting for 2 percent.

Total direct spending was calculated for each sector by combining sector level spending for visitors and the Committee expenditures. These sector specific totals were then used as inputs for the REACT model to generate the economic contribution findings in the next section.

Adding Committee expenditures and total net new spending by visitors, the new spending output from the events was \$14.3 million. Sector specific totals for Committee expenditures and new visitor spending were combined and used as REACT inputs, generating the economic impact findings discussed below.

4 Economic Analysis

The direct economic activity described above has a ripple effect through the economy of Hampden and Hampshire Counties. This impact derives from supply chain activities (indirect) and increased household income (induced). This chapter captures these broader effects, highlighting the total economic *contribution* of the St. Patrick's festivities to the regional economy as well as the economic *impact*. While the contribution analysis captures all spending associated with the events, the impact analysis focuses only on spending that is considered net new to the region, accounting for displacement effects.

This chapter also covers the estimated fiscal benefits associated with the economic contribution of the events, as well as a valuation assessment of the hundreds of volunteers that donate their time to make these events possible.

4.1. Economic Contribution

Based on the total direct spending estimates by visitors the committees, this analysis uses Cambridge Econometrics' REACT model to estimate the total economic contribution of the St. Patrick events to the Hampden and Hampshire County economies:

- The starting point for this analysis is total direct spending, both by the regional committees and by visitors to the events. As discussed in the Total Direct Spending Chapter, this **spending totals \$23.7 million in the region, which supports 214 jobs paying \$6.8 million in annual wages and generating \$12.5 million in value added.**
- This direct economic activity stimulates **supply chain (indirect) and household spending (induced) impacts in Hampden and Hampshire Counties, totaling over 60 additional jobs paying \$3.8 million in wages and generating \$8.0 million in value added and \$15.7 million in output (sales).**
- **In total, the region's St. Patrick's events support 275 jobs paying \$10.6 million in wages and generating \$20.5 million in value added and \$39.35 million in output.**

Table 4.1.1 Total Economic Contribution of Regional St. Patrick's Activities

	Direct Economic Activity	Indirect Impact	Induced Impact	Total Impact
Employment	214	33	27	275
Earnings (millions)	\$6.77	\$2.27	\$1.57	\$10.62
Value Added (millions)	\$12.50	\$5.08	\$2.91	\$20.50
Output (millions)	\$23.67	\$9.34	\$6.33	\$39.35

Source: Cambridge Econometrics REACT model

As shown in Figure 4.1.1, the economic contribution is mainly concentrated in the accommodation & food services and retail trade & food stores sectors, reflecting the high visitor spending in these categories. In total, the events support almost 180 jobs and \$20.7 million in sales in these two sectors. Economic contribution is also generated in arts, entertainment, and recreation, totaling 32 jobs and \$3.2 million in output (sales). In terms of employment, jobs are also supported in transportation & warehousing, and administrative and health care services. In terms of total sales, other sectors with the largest effects include real estate, manufacturing, and transportation & warehousing.

Figure 4.1.1 Total Jobs and Output Contribution for the Top Sectors



Source: Cambridge Econometrics REACT model

4.2. Economic Impact

In addition to the total economic contribution outlined above, this analysis considers the economic *impact* of the regional St. Patrick's events and activity, accounting for displacement to capture net new spending. The events directly support \$14.3 million in new output (sales) in the region, which helps create 129 jobs paying \$4.1 million in wages and generating \$7.6 million in value added. **This direct economic activity ripples through the economy to create a total of 166 new jobs paying \$6.5 million in wages and generating \$12.5 million in value added and \$23.8 million in output.**

Table 4.2.1 Total Economic Impact of Regional St. Patrick's Activities

	Direct Economic Activity	Indirect Impact	Induced Impact	Total Impact
Employment	129	20	17	166
Earnings (millions)	\$4.13	\$1.38	\$0.96	\$6.47
Value Added (millions)	\$7.61	\$3.08	\$1.77	\$12.46
Output (millions)	\$14.33	\$5.66	\$3.85	\$23.84

Source: Cambridge Econometrics REACT model

4.3. Fiscal Benefits

The economic contribution of the St. Patrick's events lead to fiscal benefits for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and City of Holyoke, including:

- **Meals Tax:** The state levies a meals tax of 6.25 percent, which, when applied to the total spending contribution for food and drinking services of over \$9 million, yields a tax revenue of about \$568,000. In addition, the City of Holyoke has a local option meals tax of an additional 0.75 percent, earning the city about \$68,000 as a result of the St. Patrick's activity.
- **Room Occupancy Tax:** Massachusetts has a room occupancy tax of 5.7 percent, earning the state about \$17,000 in revenues from the \$300,000 in accommodation spending. In addition to the state tax, Holyoke's local option adds another 6 percent, earning the city about \$18,000.
- **Sales Tax:** Massachusetts has a 6.25% general sales tax that applies to most other goods and services in the state. The economic contribution of the St. Patrick's events and associated spending yields state sales tax revenue of over \$1.4 million.
- **Personal Income Tax:** The state also has a personal income tax of 5 percent. Based on average wages and standard deductions, this income tax rate earns the state \$249,000 from the wage contribution of the St. Patrick's events.

Based on these tax levies, each year the St. Patrick's events are estimated to contribute \$2.3 million to the state of Massachusetts and \$86,200 for the City of Holyoke.⁸

⁸ This tax assessment is based on the total economic *contribution* of the regional St. Patrick's events, rather than the net new impacts. A tax *impact* analysis would require additional displacement assumptions for state tax receipts to account for spending reallocated from one part of the state to another.

4.4. Volunteer Contribution

The St. Patrick’s activities and events are made possible by about 200 volunteer members from around the Hampden and Hampshire County region who donate their time to plan and organize events and participate in administrative tasks and meetings.

About 20 of these members responded to a request for annual volunteer hours estimates. Based on these responses, the average annual volunteer hour contribution is 204 per member (about 4 hours per week). However, this average is driven up by several outlier values reflecting very active and dedicated members who volunteer over 900 hours each year, or about 17 hours per week. After removing these outliers, the average member is estimated to spend approximately 120 hours per year volunteering for their committee, or about 2 hours per week. Applying that average to the total volunteers yields a total volunteer hour contribution of about 32,300.

Had the volunteer hours been performed in a typical job market, the worker would be compensated. To reflect the total value of the work completed by volunteers, the estimated hourly wage for each task is multiplied by the total volunteer hours, as shown in Table 4.3.1. In total, the value of volunteers’ time is estimated to be about \$970,000.



Table 4.3.1 Estimated Volunteer Contribution

	Total Hours	Estimated Hourly Wage	Total Volunteer Contribution
Administrative	8,400	\$29.75	\$250,500
Finance	2,550	\$42.10	\$108,200
Planning	3,500	\$26.18	\$91,600
Meetings	6,950	\$29.75	\$206,100
Manual Labor	1,950	\$40.76	\$79,400
Events Support	4,350	\$26.18	\$113,300
Outreach / Communications	4,600	\$26.18	\$120,400
TOTAL	32,300		\$969,500

Note: The estimated hourly wage reflects the median pay for the task completed in a typical job market. This is a hypothetical amount showing what a fair wage might be for the task.

5 Business Case Studies

This section provides five case studies of businesses in and around Holyoke that are positively impacted by the region's St. Patrick's events. These businesses cover a wide range of industries and perspectives, including restaurants, bars, event venues, and liquor distributors. At the same time, many more industries are also positively impacted by the region's St. Patrick's events, including retail and merchandise sellers, temporary food stands, transportation and travel services, as well as event production and support industries such as tent and blockade rental companies, performers, printers for signage and promotions, apparel businesses, and more.

5.1. Log Cabin, Delaney House, and D. Hotel

Business owner Mick Corduff owns and operates the Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House, Delaney House and The Mick restaurants, and the D. Hotel Suites & Spa. These facilities feature multiple event spaces, banquet halls, and ballrooms along with fine dining and casual restaurant experiences, full-service catering, and a boutique hotel and spa.

Mick says that for these businesses, the St. Patrick's events supported by regional committees **provide crucial customer activity during an otherwise slow time of year.** Leading up to Parade Weekend, the business hosts numerous events for the regional committee, including:

- **Marshal's Reception** in January (200-300 people)
- **Pre-coronation event** at the Delaney House and the **Grand Colleen Coronation Ball** in February at the Log Cabin (350-400 people)
- **Marshal Mania** concert series in March at the Log Cabin (800-900 people)
- **JFK Award Winner Welcome Party** at the Delaney House during Parade Weekend (50-60 people)
- **JFK Award Dinner** at the Log Cabin during Parade Weekend, featuring the Mummies band (about 200 people)

Mick estimates that the average banquet check is about \$75, whereas the Coronation Ball brings in check averages closer to \$100, bringing in an estimated total revenue of about \$140,000. These large events provide a critical revenue boost during a time when tourism would otherwise be limited, helping stabilize cash flow and support business continuity through the shoulder season.



Source: MassLive

<https://www.masslive.com/living/2026/03/2026-st-patricks-parade-4-questions-with-grand-colleen-jadyn-christie.html>

Beyond formal events, the business benefit from increased demand across all service lines during Parade Weekend. **The hotel, with approximately 60 rooms, is fully booked from Friday through Sunday, with an estimated 80% of guests visiting specifically for event-related activities.** The increased demand during the weekend supports higher than normal hotel prices, further increasing the businesses revenue.



Source: D. Hotel & Suites. <https://www.stayatthed.com/>.

The two restaurants also operate at elevated capacity throughout the weekend with greater numbers of customers and diners, turning tables more quickly and offering expanded programming such as live music and special holiday menus including corned beef, fish and chips, and Irish stew. Mick says the Delaney House **restaurant is fully booked on St. Patrick's Day as well as Friday through Sunday of Parade Weekend.** That weekend, he estimates they serve 150 customers on Friday, 200 on Saturday, and about 300 for brunch on Sunday, along with an additional 150 to 200 people for Sunday dinner. With an estimated average dinner ticket at about \$55 to \$60 per person and about \$35 per brunch customer, that yields a total in-restaurant revenue over \$40,000 for the weekend. The restaurants also offer takeout specials with traditional Irish food on Saturday, which generates an additional \$7,500 in revenues.

In addition to increased sales at the restaurants, the **catering division also operates five bar kiosks and two food trucks at Saturday's Road Race.** The food trucks sell Rueben sandwiches and other Irish-inspired items until they inevitably sell out. The two trucks, which operate for about four hours on Saturday afternoon, generate an estimated \$15,000 in revenue and the kiosk bars generate another \$15,000.

The financial impact of the St. Patrick's events is substantial. **Compared to a typical late-winter period, the business reports an overall increase in activity of approximately 30 percent, with the hotel segment experiencing gains closer to 50 percent.**

The business activity and events associated with St. Patrick's celebrations translate directly into increased employment and greater revenue at Mick's businesses. To prepare for the increased activity, the businesses hire and train approximately 15 to 20 new employees each spring just to support the season's banquet events. In total, the St. Patrick's events help support 20 front-of-house jobs and an additional 6 to 8 back-of-house jobs. Additionally, the roughly 6 to 8 employees laid off for the winter months each year are able to come back in the spring to help support the businesses increased activity.

Mick also highlights that, just as important as these economic benefits, the scale and coordination of the festivities, driven by year-round planning across multiple committees, **reinforce Holyoke's Irish heritage and fosters a strong sense of community by bringing together local organizations, cultural institutions, and visitors in a shared celebration of tradition and identity.**

5.2. Brennan's Place

Brennan's is a locally owned bar and restaurant in Downtown Holyoke, operated under the same ownership since 1998. The small family-owned business maintains a year-round staff of approximately three to four employees. Manager Chris Cadmus shared that the **St. Patrick's Parade and Road Race Weekend represents the single most important period of the year for the business, drawing substantially higher traffic than any other time.**

The St. Patrick's Weekend generates a dramatic increase in revenue, with **sales estimated at roughly ten times a typical weekend. In fact, this period is critical to the business's financial health, effectively "carrying" the operation for the rest of the year.** The influx of revenue allows Brennan's to pay down outstanding expenses and operate with a cleaner financial slate for several months following the event.

To accommodate demand, Brennan's expands its footprint with a large tent located behind the building, primarily serving beverages. Food trucks are also brought in to operate from the adjacent lot, increasing service capacity. Notably, **while poor weather conditions decrease overall parade attendance, bad weather actually increases business at Brennan's by driving more customers into covered spaces such as the tent and indoor bar area.**

Sales during the weekend are driven primarily by high-volume food and beverage offerings. Popular items include widely recognized beer brands such as Corona and Guinness, along with a streamlined food menu designed for quick service. The business intentionally reduces its standard menu to a limited selection of high-demand, easy-to-prepare items, such as corned beef sandwiches, chicken tenders, fries, and mozzarella sticks. Prices are kept relatively low to encourage volume sales and sustained beverage purchases throughout the day.

To prepare for the surge in activity, Brennan's makes substantial adjustments to staffing, hours, and operations:



- **Employment:** In addition to its core staff, who work non-stop through the weekend, the business relies on approximately 10 to 15 volunteers, often including family members, friends, and former employees, to fill roles such as bartending, cooking, bar backing, and security.
- **Operating hours:** While Brennan's typically opens around 1pm, it opens earlier during St. Patrick's Weekend, beginning at 11am on Friday and 10am on both Saturday and Sunday to accommodate increased demand.
- **Inventory and Operations:** The business also partners with beer distributors, who provide support with event infrastructure (including the tent) and promotional materials. Live music is hosted in the outdoor tent, often sponsored by the business, further enhancing the event atmosphere and attracting larger crowds.



The St. Patrick's events play an important role in increasing Brennan's visibility and expanding its customer base. The weekend draws both local and out-of-town visitors, including consistent large groups of 100 people or more from Connecticut who return annually. Programming decisions, such as bringing in new bands, also help the business reach different audiences and shape public perception, contributing to a more diverse customer mix. More broadly, these events bring visitors to Holyoke who may not otherwise spend time in the city, supporting local businesses and contributing to economic activity across the community.

Overall, the St. Patrick's Day events are a clear net positive for Brennan's. The combination of significantly higher revenue, increased visibility, and exposure to new customers provides both immediate financial benefits and longer-term business opportunities.



5.3. Rumbleseat Bar & Grille

The Rumbleseat Bar & Grille in Chicopee is a family-owned business that has been in operation for 24 years. The neighborhood sports bar employs about 20 to 25 people and hosts live music on the weekends. Owner Bill Stetson discussed the impact of Parade and Road Race weekend on the bar's economic performance,

While the Parade itself has limited direct benefit to this business, the Road Race serves as a significant driver of activity and a core component of the business's strategy for the weekend. **The Rumbleseat organizes transportation to and from Holyoke on the day of the Road Race, running five full buses and hosting a lively post-race gathering at its location.** This coordinated effort has expanded over time, growing from a single bus 18 years ago to five buses today (the maximum the restaurant can support). Participants pay for a bundled package that includes transportation, a commemorative shirt, and a corned beef dinner, priced at \$25 (or \$30 after March 1). While this package is offered at a slight loss, it functions as a customer attraction tool that significantly increases overall revenue.



As a result, the business sees at least 150 visitors return from the race to its location, contributing to sales that more than double compared to a typical day. The Road Race also creates a strong sense of energy and social activity, with a large share of attendees in their 20s through early 40s, as well as visitors traveling from across the region. The event is described as both the **most enjoyable and economically impactful day of the year for the business.**

To accommodate the surge in activity associated with the Road Race, the business significantly scales up operations. **Staffing levels are approximately doubled compared to a typical Saturday,** and a corned beef dinner buffet serves as the primary food offering and key draw for customers. The transportation component also supports regional employment, with bus drivers sourced from nearby Easthampton who benefit from the additional weekend work.

Marketing for the event is largely driven by word-of-mouth (approximately 80%), supplemented by social media outreach (20%). The majority of participants utilizing the bus service are locals, living within a few miles of the business, though some customers from farther away are also drawn by the convenience of avoiding parking constraints in Holyoke.

The event also contributes to informal brand exposure. While difficult to quantify, the business reports that many attendees are likely first-time visitors who come with friends for the Road Race event and subsequently return, suggesting a role in expanding the customer base.

From the business owner's perspective, the Road Race is a highly valuable regional asset. Despite some displacement effects associated with the Parade, the weekend overall is viewed as a "win" for the

broader region due to its ability to draw visitors and generate economic activity. **The event is described as exceptionally well-run and a defining annual moment for the local economy.**

Perspectives from another local business owner:

“ES Sports is very happy to be a Holyoke company that supports the Road Race and part of what we see as a premier event in New England. We are proud to be part of its long history and to be considered a supplier and committee member. It is a phenomenal event that means a lot to the city and region.”

- Eric Suher, ES Sports, Local Supplier of Road Race Shirts

5.4. Quality Beverage

Quality Beverage is a liquor distributor specializing in malt beverages and spirits. Brian Montagna, Assistant Vice President of Sales for the western part of Massachusetts, has overseen the coordination for the Holyoke St. Patrick's events for nine years. He shared that the **St. Patrick's weekend generates a substantial surge in demand for beverage distributors, with a noticeable spike in sales compared to a typical weekend.** In the week leading up to the events, Quality Beverage helped Holyoke-based businesses stock \$30,000 worth of product, not including satellite locations.

To accommodate this increased demand, inventory planning begins approximately six weeks in advance, with proactive coordination across key client accounts and partners such as Brennan's, Francie's, the Log Cabin, and Pic's Pub. Additionally, package stores throughout the region see increased sales in the days leading up to the event, further extending the economic impact beyond the core weekend. Specific product demand shifts during this period, with strong performance from brands such as Nutril, Bud Light (including green aluminum bottles), and Michelob Ultra, reflecting consumer preferences for high-volume, event-friendly beverages.



To meet the increased demand, Quality Beverage undertakes significant logistical and staffing adjustments. This includes deploying refrigerated trucks, additional storage vehicles, and draft trailers to

support high-volume distribution needs. The company also hires additional Class A truck drivers and schedules overtime for merchandisers to ensure timely delivery and product availability.

While Quality Beverage does not directly participate in the Parade, they are actively involved in Road Race day. Leadership, including Montagna and district managers, are directly involved in overseeing on-the-ground operations, including setup and breakdown activities at major event locations. The company also contributes to event infrastructure costs, such as tent installations, as part of its partnerships with key accounts and also supports marketing efforts through on-site signage, branded installations (including 8-foot inflatable product displays on top of Francie's, as shown in the photo), and coordinated promotions with partner businesses.

Despite strong sales at the Road Race, Quality Beverage views this event primarily as **an opportunity to enhance brand visibility, strengthen market positioning, and test new products** rather than to drive significant revenue growth. Alongside the increased revenues come increased costs, including trucking, tents and infrastructure, merchandise, promotional materials, and free or discounted products. For example, the distributor provides product samples to organized bus groups traveling to the event from establishments like Rumbleseat in Chicopee and Nathan Bill's in Springfield. As a result of these increased costs, profit margins on event-specific sales are not substantial.

Nonetheless, these efforts are viewed as a **strategic investment in brand visibility and long-term market positioning and valuable platform for brand promotion and customer engagement**. These types of large-scale gatherings create opportunities for direct consumer interaction and product sampling, which are difficult to replicate through traditional marketing channels. **Notably, the Holyoke St. Patrick's**



Road Race served as an early launch point for the Nutrl brand, providing one of its first major exposures to a large audience. The event contributed to establishing a strong presence for the brand in Western Massachusetts, where it continues to perform particularly well.

Overall, the St. Patrick's events are viewed as a net positive for Quality Beverage. While short-term profitability may be modest relative to the level of effort required, **the long-term benefits, particularly in terms of brand exposure and customer acquisition, are significant.**

5.5. Bean Restaurant Group

The Bean Restaurant Group is a family-owned business that operates ten local eateries, including nine in Western Massachusetts and one in Connecticut. The locations vary in terms of food items and customer experience, from a casual bar and tavern, to diner, sushi, and upscale event space. Western Massachusetts favorites include the Boathouse, IYA Sushi & Noodle Kitchen, Student Prince and Fort Restaurant, White Hut, and Johnny's Tavern. Together, the ten establishments employ just under 500 people, including a mix of part-time and full-time jobs.

Partner Edison Yee and Operations Director Nathan Yee shared their perspectives on the St. Patrick's events impacts on their various businesses, highlighting that their restaurants from South Hadley to Springfield see a big impact. **During Parade and Road Race week, almost all Bean Group locations in that area outperformed the average from the previous four weeks, leading to a total of \$31,000 in additional revenues as compared to the prior month average (an 11 percent increase).**

Part of this spike in sales includes an additional \$11,000 in revenue generated by the White Hut food truck, which operates at the Road Race finish line and remains on-site throughout the weekend. The Bean Group has been operating the food truck at the event for five years and reports that it is consistently busy. The permanent White Hut location in Holyoke also experiences a roughly 10 percent increase in organic business during this period due to heightened traffic. Some locations offer festive menu additions at a slight price premium, such as smoked corned beef sandwiches, and Guinness is always in high demand during the season.

In addition to the increased activity during Parade and Road Race week, the business hosts a series of events leading up to the weekend, generating additional customer traffic and sales, including:

- Bishop's Luncheon of Colleens (200 people)
- Mummers Bar Crawl (400 people)
- Sarah the Fiddler (two sold out shows at the Boathouse with 200 people at each)

To prepare for these larger events, additional servers and staff are scheduled.



Overall, the Bean Group views these events as a **strong positive for the region, serving as a significant driver of visitors and economic activity.** The Parade and Road Race weekend draws large crowds from outside the area, increasing traffic, boosting local spending, and raising the profile of Holyoke as a destination. In addition to these direct impacts, the events create meaningful opportunities for the business to participate in the community and strengthen local connections and visibility. From their perspective, the events **not only generate immediate sales impacts but also help strengthen the local business environment by exposing new customers to the area and encouraging repeat visits beyond the weekend itself.**

6 Summary of Findings

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and other events and related activities in the Hampden and Hampshire County region contribute...

\$39 million total output (sales)

\$20 million

Total **value added**

275

Total **jobs**

\$11 million

Total **local wage earnings**

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and associated St. Patrick's activities represent one of the most significant annual cultural and economic events in Western Massachusetts. **Together, these events attract hundreds of thousands of spectators, participants, and visitors to Holyoke and the surrounding region, generating substantial spending at local businesses while strengthening community identity, volunteerism, and regional visibility.** Beyond the Parade and Road Race themselves, a broad network of related events, including the Grand Colleen Pageant and Coronation Ball, Marshal Mania, Grand Marshal Reception, and numerous other celebrations and fundraisers, contribute to a months-long season of economic and community activity.

Based on approximately 600 survey responses from Parade and Road Race participants and spectators, along with attendance estimates for both events, total visitor spending associated with the St. Patrick's festivities is estimated at more than \$23.2 million within Hampden and Hampshire Counties. In addition, regional St. Patrick's committees spend approximately \$470,000 annually on event operations, programming, supplies, and services purchased from local businesses. Combined, these expenditures generate an estimated **\$23.7 million in direct spending in the regional economy as a result of St. Patrick's festivities and events.**

This study quantified how that spending circulates throughout the local economy, supporting businesses, jobs, and household income, finding:

- **The total economic contribution of the St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and other regional events includes 275 jobs paying \$10.6 million in wages and generating \$20.5 million in value added and \$39.3 million in output (sales).**

These figures reflect the full level of economic activity supported by event-related spending, including direct, indirect, and induced effects. Recognizing that some spending would likely have occurred in the region even in the absence of the events, the study also estimated the net economic impact after accounting for displacement effects. Under this more conservative measure,

- **The St. Patrick's festivities support a total net economic *impact* of 166 jobs paying \$6.5 million in wages and generating \$12.5 million in value added and \$23.4 million in new sales.**

These findings demonstrate that the events generate substantial new economic activity that would not otherwise occur in Hampden and Hampshire Counties.

The economic benefits extend beyond business revenues and employment. Visitor spending and business activity associated with the St. Patrick's celebrations also generate tax revenues for both state and local governments. The analysis estimates that the **events generate approximately \$2.3 million in annual tax revenue for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Holyoke receives an estimated \$86,000 in local tax revenues.**



A critical contributor to the success of these events is volunteer labor. Approximately 200 committee members and volunteers across the region dedicate significant time to planning, organizing, fundraising, administration, logistics, and event operations. Collectively, these **volunteers contribute an estimated 32,000 hours annually. If this labor were provided through the paid workforce, its value would be approximately \$970,000.** This contribution highlights the extraordinary level of civic engagement that underpins the St. Patrick's celebrations and helps sustain their long-term success.

The quantitative findings are reinforced by interviews and case studies of local businesses that experience direct benefits from the events. These **businesses consistently report that the St. Patrick's season represents one of the most important periods of the year.** For some businesses, revenues increase by 30 to 50 percent during parade weekend, while others report sales levels ten times higher than a typical weekend. Business owners also emphasized the value of increased exposure, new customer acquisition, seasonal hiring opportunities, and the broader promotional benefits that come from hosting one of the region's most recognizable events.

The findings demonstrate that the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, Road Race, and associated events have substantial economic benefits for the region's economy while also strengthening community pride and cultural identity. The events generate considerable business revenues, support jobs and incomes, create tax revenues for state and local governments, and rely upon an exceptional network of volunteers and community organizations. As one of Western Massachusetts' premier annual traditions, the St. Patrick's festivities provide benefits that extend well beyond a single weekend, contributing to the long-term economic vitality, visibility, and sense of place that define the region.

Appendices

Survey

Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade & Road Race Visitor Survey

¿Prefiere la encuesta en español? Haga clic aquí: <https://forms.gle/E9qW8MQCRSST8Cjx6>

This survey is being conducted for research purposes to better understand the economic impact of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade and Road Race.

Individual responses will remain confidential and will not be reported publicly. All information will be analyzed and reported in aggregate form only.

At the end of the survey, you may choose to provide your email address to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three \$150 prizes. Providing your email is optional and will only be used for the giveaway.

The estimated survey time is about 5 minutes. Thank you for your participation!

* Indicates required question

1. Which of the following St. Patrick's events are you attending or participating in? *
Select all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ St. Patrick's Road Race on Saturday March 21, 2026
☐ St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday March 22, 2026

2. Where do you currently reside? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Holyoke, MA *Skip to question 7*
- ☐ Another city or town in Hampden or Hampshire County (e.g., Springfield, Chicopee, Westfield, Northampton, Easthampton, Amherst, etc.) *Skip to question 7*
- ☐ Some other part of Massachusetts outside of Hampden and Hampshire Counties
 Skip to question 3
- ☐ Some other state (not Massachusetts) *Skip to question 3*
- ☐ Puerto Rico or other US territory *Skip to question 3*
- ☐ Another country outside of the US *Skip to question 3*

Questions for non-local visitors.

3. Would you have visited Holyoke this weekend if the parade/road race were not taking place? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. How many nights are you spending in the region to attend the St. Patrick's events? *

5. Which best describes your accommodations for the weekend? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Hotel *Skip to question 6*
- ☐ Rental home (e.g., Airbnb or Vrbo) *Skip to question 6*
- ☐ With friends or family *Skip to question 7*
- ☐ At home and traveling to the event(s) each day *Skip to question 7*

Hotel or rental spending

6. About how much are you spending *per person per night* on accommodations? For example, if a hotel room costs \$200 per night for a family of four, that equals \$50 per person, per night. *

Weekend spending

The following questions ask about estimated spending on various items.

*Please indicate whether you are responding **only for yourself** or **for multiple people in your group or family**. If you choose to respond for a group, please include the total spending for everyone you are reporting on.*

Each individual in your party may also complete the survey separately for additional chances to be randomly selected to win the prize. However, please do not submit multiple responses for the same person.

7. How many people (including yourself) are you responding for? *

8. During your visit, what is your (or your group's) average or estimated spending *per day* on food and drinks? *

9. During your visit, what is your (or your group's) average or estimated spending *per day* on retail or merchandise? *

10. During your visit, what is your (or your group's) average or estimated spending *per day* on transportation, including rental car, public transit, parking, and gas? *

11. During your visit, what is your (or your group's) average or estimated spending *per day* on entertainment? *

12. *OPTIONAL: You may choose to provide your email address to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three \$150 prizes. Providing your email is optional and will only be used for the giveaway.*

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