



UNDERSTANDING THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF GREEN LAKE ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

How water quality shapes the long-term health of our community

GLA STUDY SUMMARY

This document summarizes findings from a May 2026 economic impact study of Green Lake. Focused primarily on areas within 1.5 miles of the shoreline—where the lake has the strongest economic influence—the study used three connected analyses to understand Green Lake’s role in the regional economy: a Contribution Analysis measuring current support for local businesses and jobs, an Impact Analysis examining how water quality changes could affect tourism and economic activity over time, and a Valuation Analysis exploring impacts on property values and the local tax base.

WHY THIS STUDY MATTERS

Green Lake is more than a natural resource—it is a central driver of the local economy. The Economic Impact Study of Green Lake helps quantify how closely economic activity, property values, and community stability are tied to water quality.

What We Set Out to Understand

We aimed to answer these key questions:

- How much economic activity is supported by Green Lake today?
- How changes in water quality could affect jobs, businesses, and property values?

What We Did

We analyzed regional economic data to estimate how Green Lake contributes to local business activity, employment, and property value—and how those conditions may change under different water quality scenarios.

KEY FINDINGS

Our analysis revealed several key insights:

- Green Lake supports \$88–\$123 million in annual economic activity and 973–1,400 jobs
- Housing density within 1.5 miles of the lake is more than twice the county average
- Without the lake, an estimated 53% of economic activity in this area would not exist
- **Economic losses from declining water quality are likely to occur faster than gains from improvement**
 - *If water quality improves:* the region could see up to **\$7.9 million in additional annual economic output** and up to **an additional 80 jobs supported**
 - *If water quality declines significantly:* the region could face up to **\$11.4 million in annual losses** and up to **115 jobs at risk**
- Property values and local tax revenue are closely tied to lake conditions
 - Up to **\$201 million in total property value at risk**
 - **\$470,000 to \$2.8 million** in annual tax revenue
 - **\$11,370 to \$68,220** average loss per lakefront home

What Does this Mean for Green Lake?

- The lake's economic impact extends beyond recreation—it shapes housing, business activity, and community stability
- **Declining water quality poses real financial risk to the broader community**
- Improvements provide meaningful benefit, but avoiding decline is critical
- The effects of change are felt not just along the shoreline, but across the entire region

HOW THIS SHAPES OUR WORK

- Integrate economic impact into the **Watershed & Lake Management Plan** to inform long-term decision-making
- Use these findings to support **coordinated action across the watershed**
- Engage business owners and shoreline residents as **active partners in protecting water quality**
- Use economic data to **help influence local municipal and county planning decisions**
- Reinforce the need for **long-term, locally supported investment** in watershed work

A Note on the Science

- Estimates reflect modeled ranges based on current economic conditions and comparable lake communities
- Results illustrate potential impacts, not exact predictions

Want To Go Deeper?

For a more detailed report, including methodology, model parameters, and additional findings, please visit <https://www.greenlakeassociation.org/study-economicimpact> or contact us directly. We encourage you to get involved and help us protect and improve the water quality of Green Lake!

