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# Build a Bar Chart

Use bar charts to compare data across categories. You create a bar chart by placing a dimension on the **Rows** shelf and a measure on the **Columns** shelf, or vice versa.

A bar chart uses the **Bar** mark type. Tableau selects this mark type when the data view matches one of the two field arrangements shown below. You can add additional fields to these shelves.

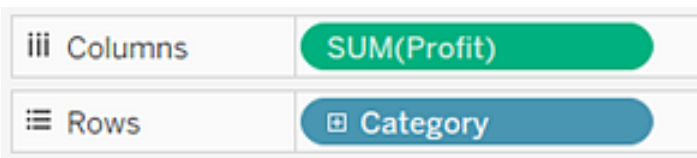
For more information about the **Bar** mark type, see [Bar Mark](#).

**Note:** At the end of the procedure is an extra step you can take to display totals at the tops of the bars.

## Creates Vertical Bars



## Creates Horizontal Bars



To create a bar chart that displays total sales over a four-year period, follow these steps:

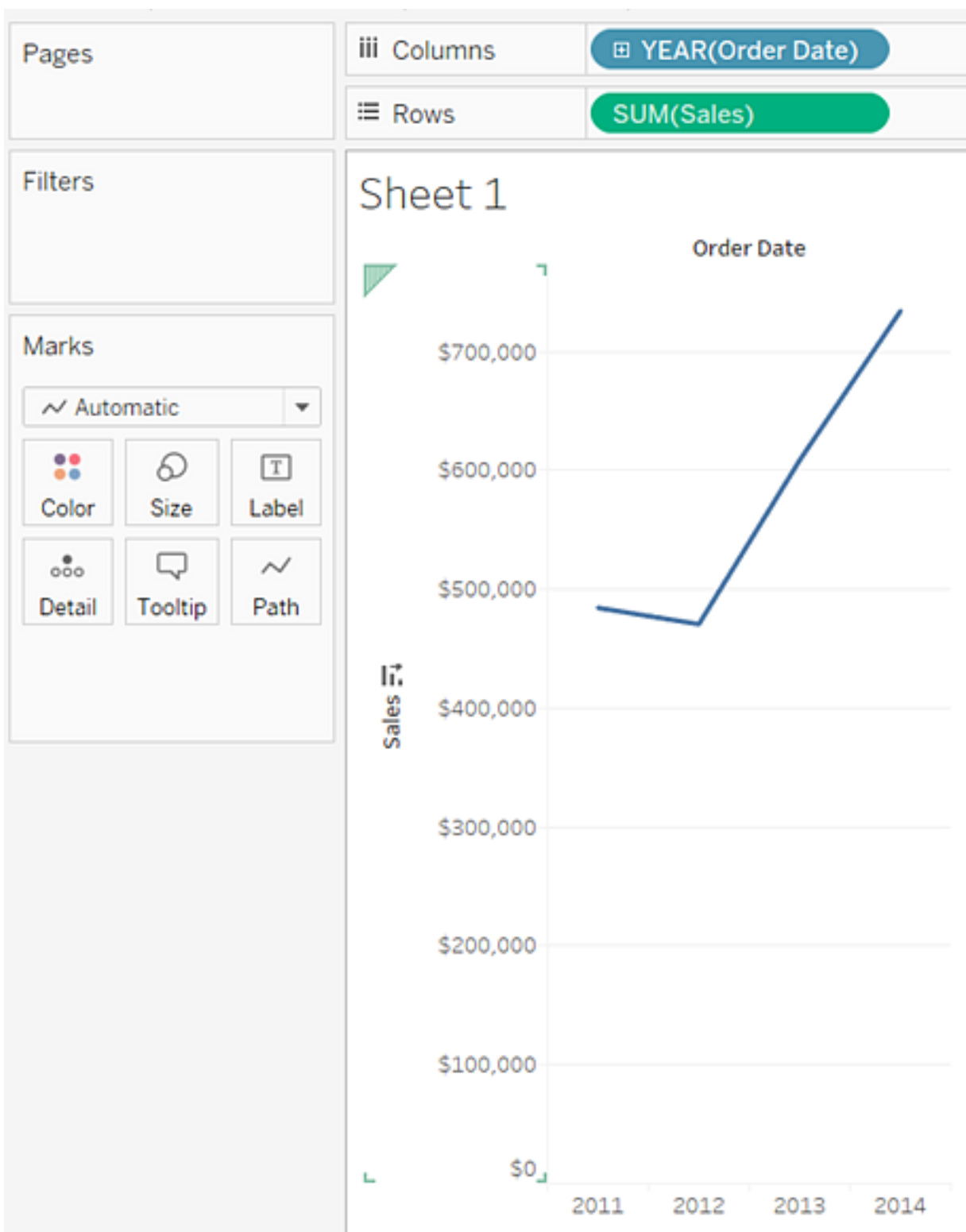
1. Connect to the **Sample - Superstore** data source.
2. Drag the **Order Date** dimension to **Columns**.

The data is aggregated by year and column headers appear.

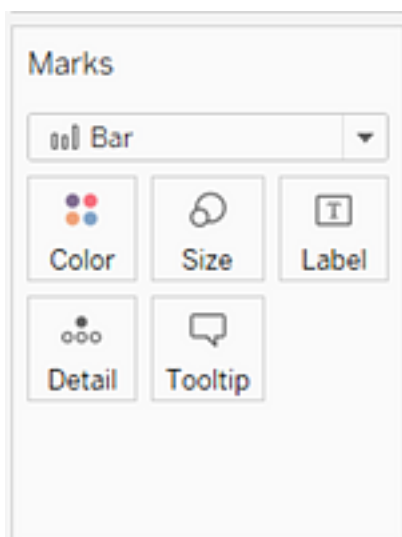
3. Drag the **Sales** measure to **Rows**.

The measure is aggregated as a sum and an axis is created. The column headers move to the bottom of the view.

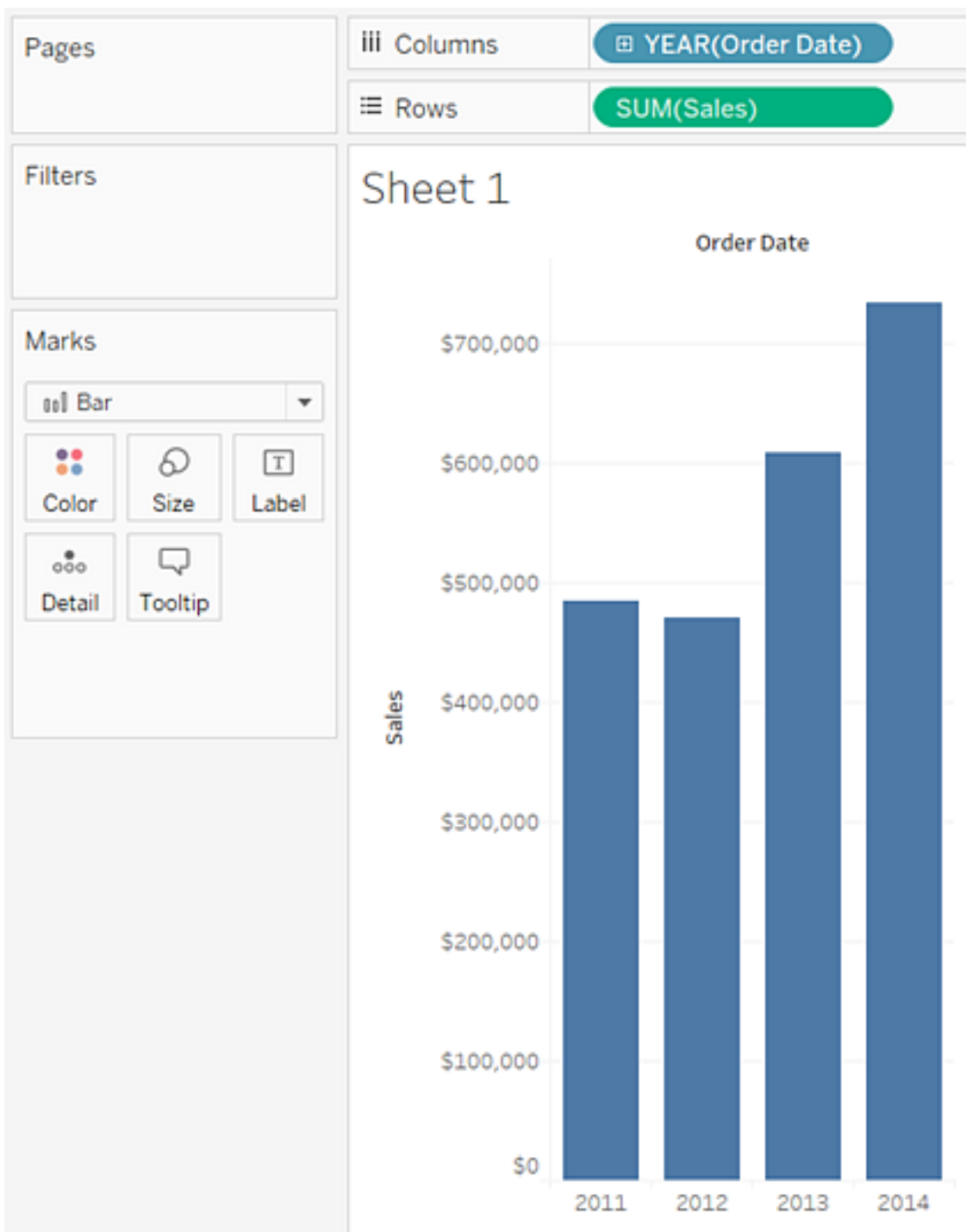
Tableau uses **Line** as the mark type because you added the date dimension.



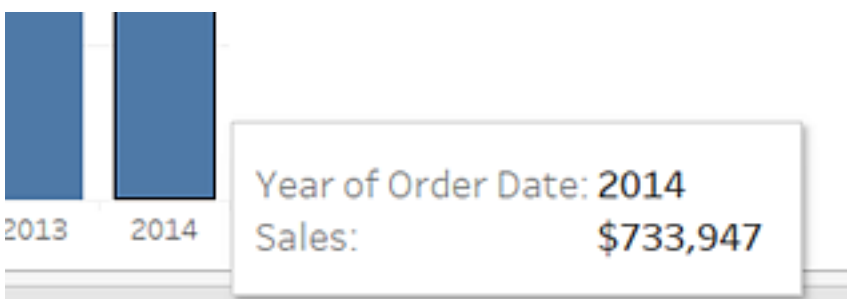
4. On the **Marks** card, select **Bar** from the drop-down list.



The view changes to a bar chart.

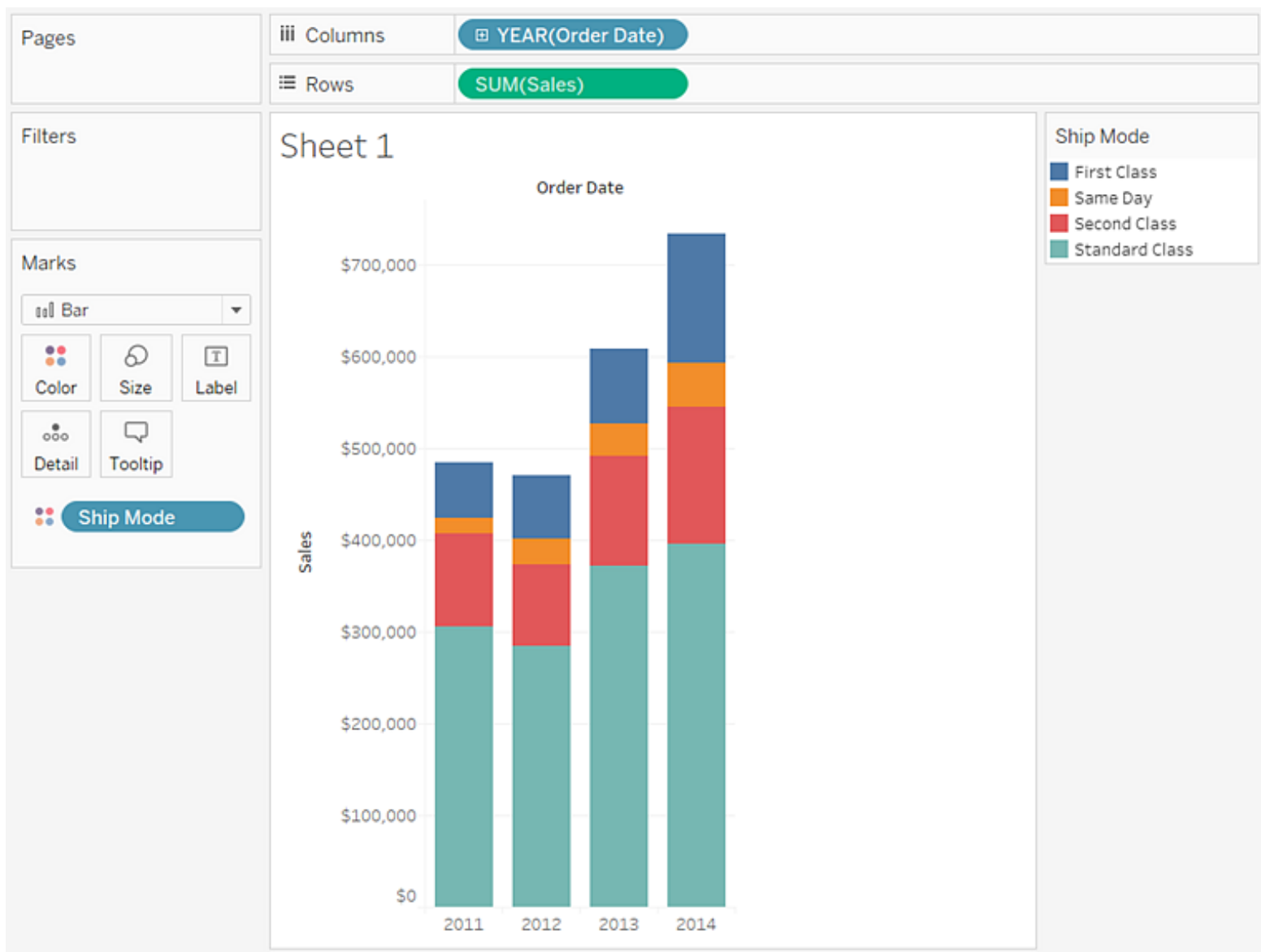


The marks (which are bars in this case) are vertical because the axis is vertical. The length of each mark represents the sum of the sales for that year. The actual numbers you see here might not match the numbers you see—the sample data changes from time to time.

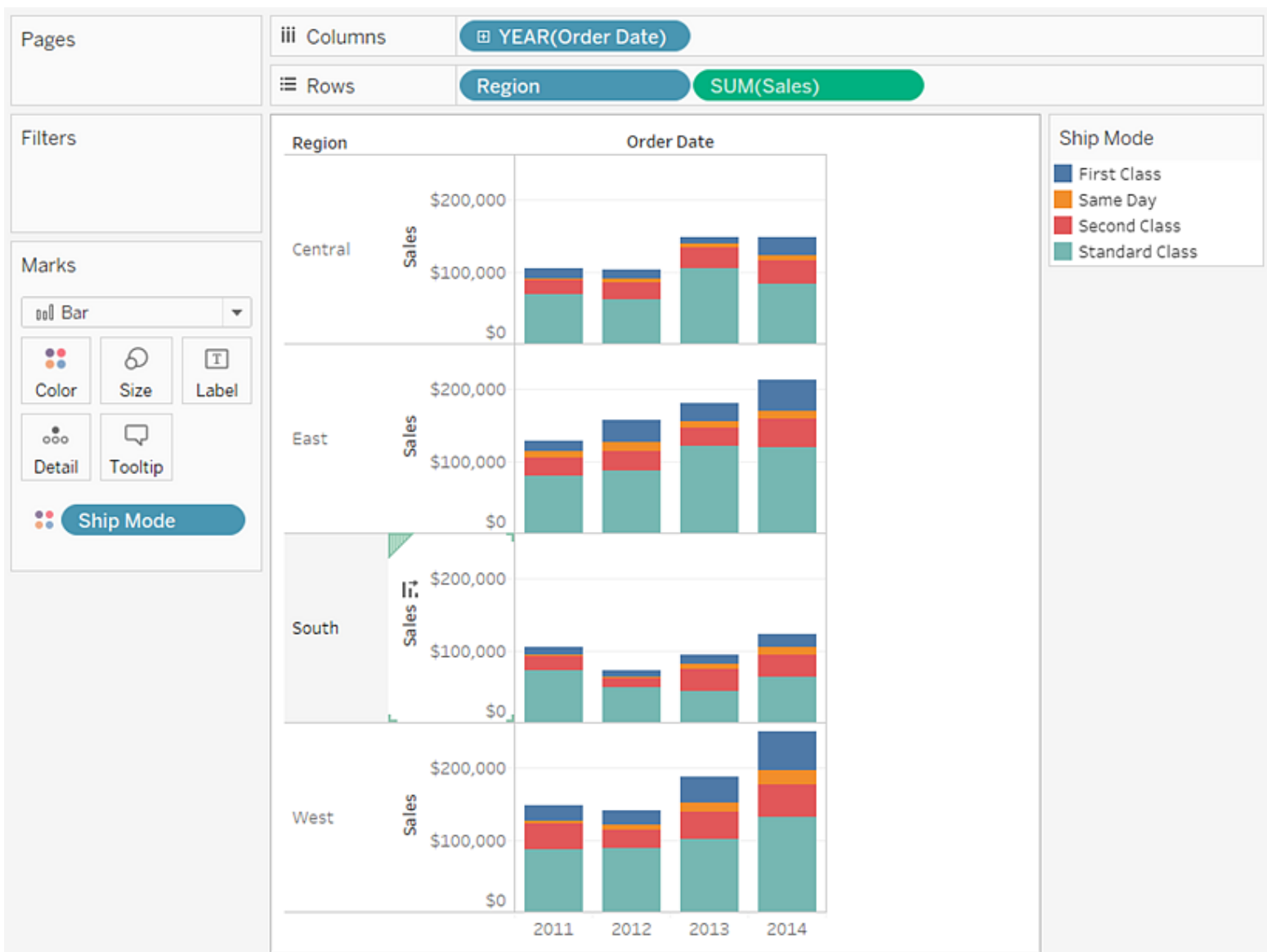


7. Drag the **Ship Mode** dimension to **Color** on the **Marks** card.

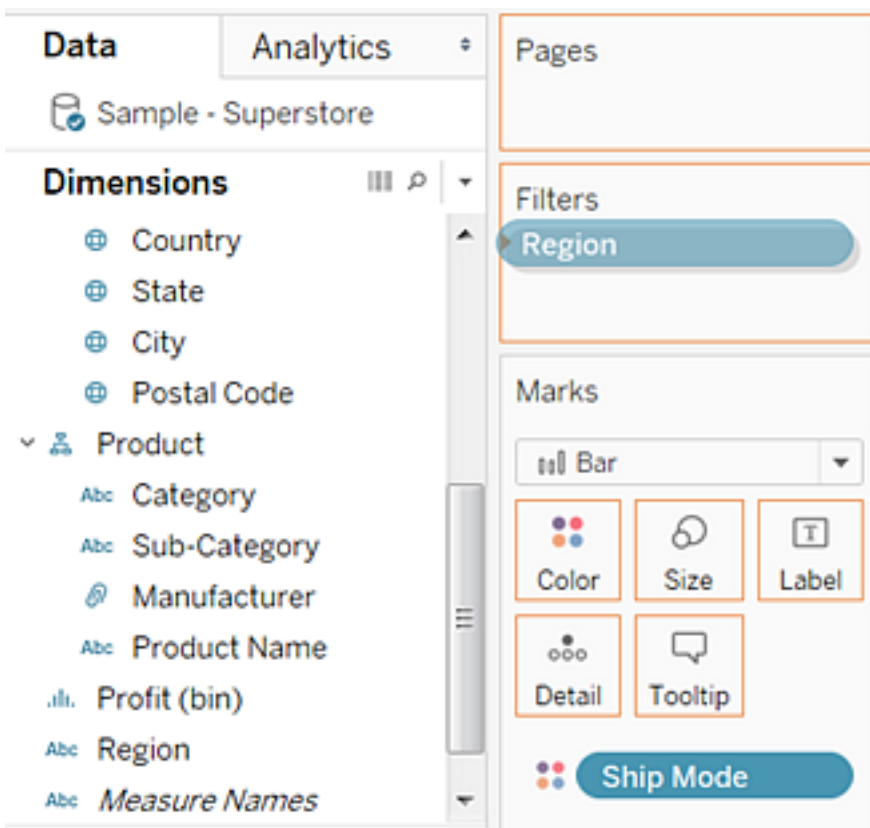
The view shows how different shipping modes have contributed to total sales over time. The ratios look consistent from year to year.



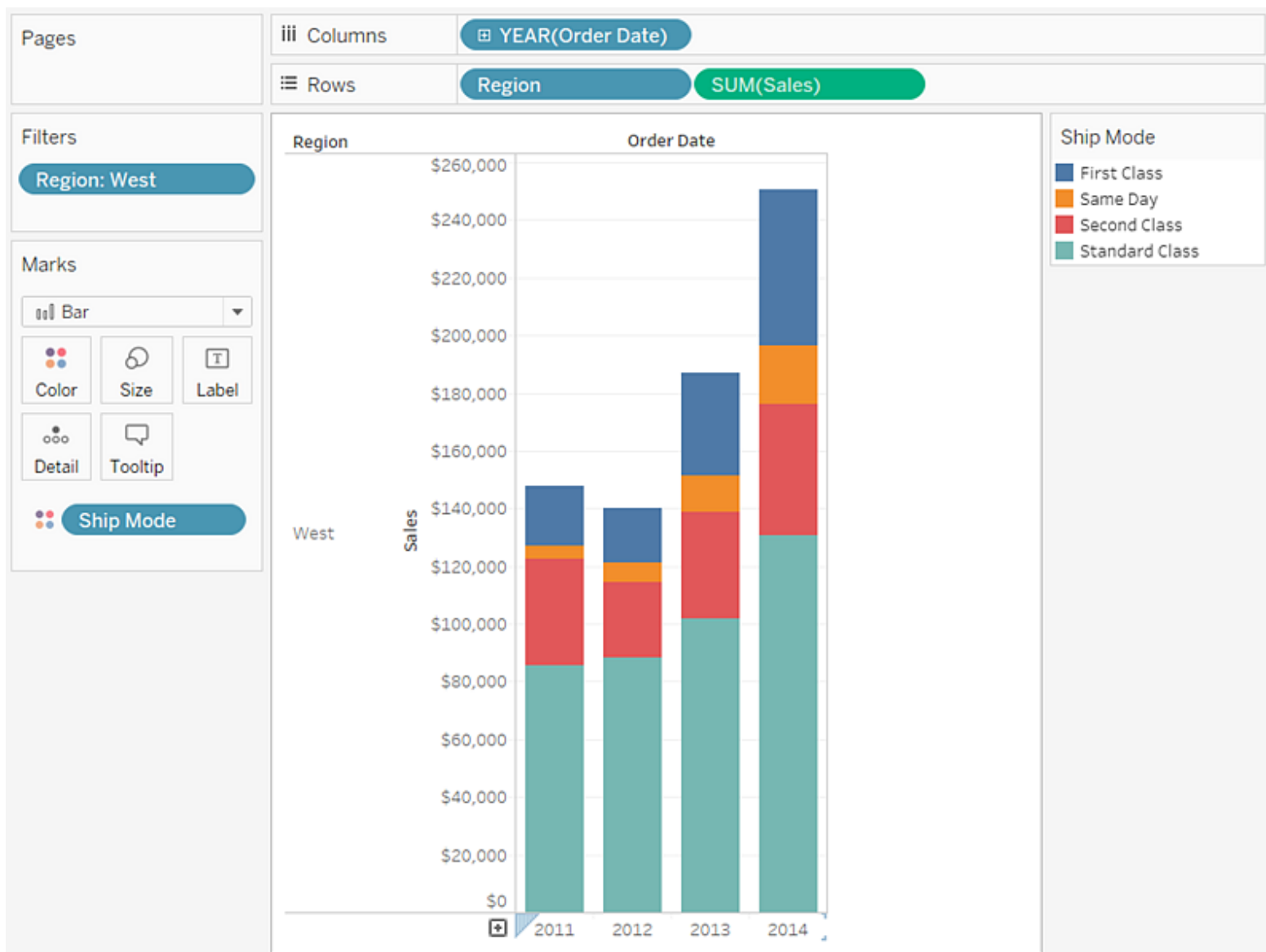
8. Drag the **Region** dimension to **Rows**, and drop it to the left of **Sales** to produce multiple axes for sales by region.



- To view data in the West region only, you can filter out the other regions. To do this, drag the **Region** dimension again, this time from the **Data** pane to the **Filters** shelf.



- In the Filter [Region] dialog box, clear the **Central**, **East**, and **South** check boxes, and then click **OK**.

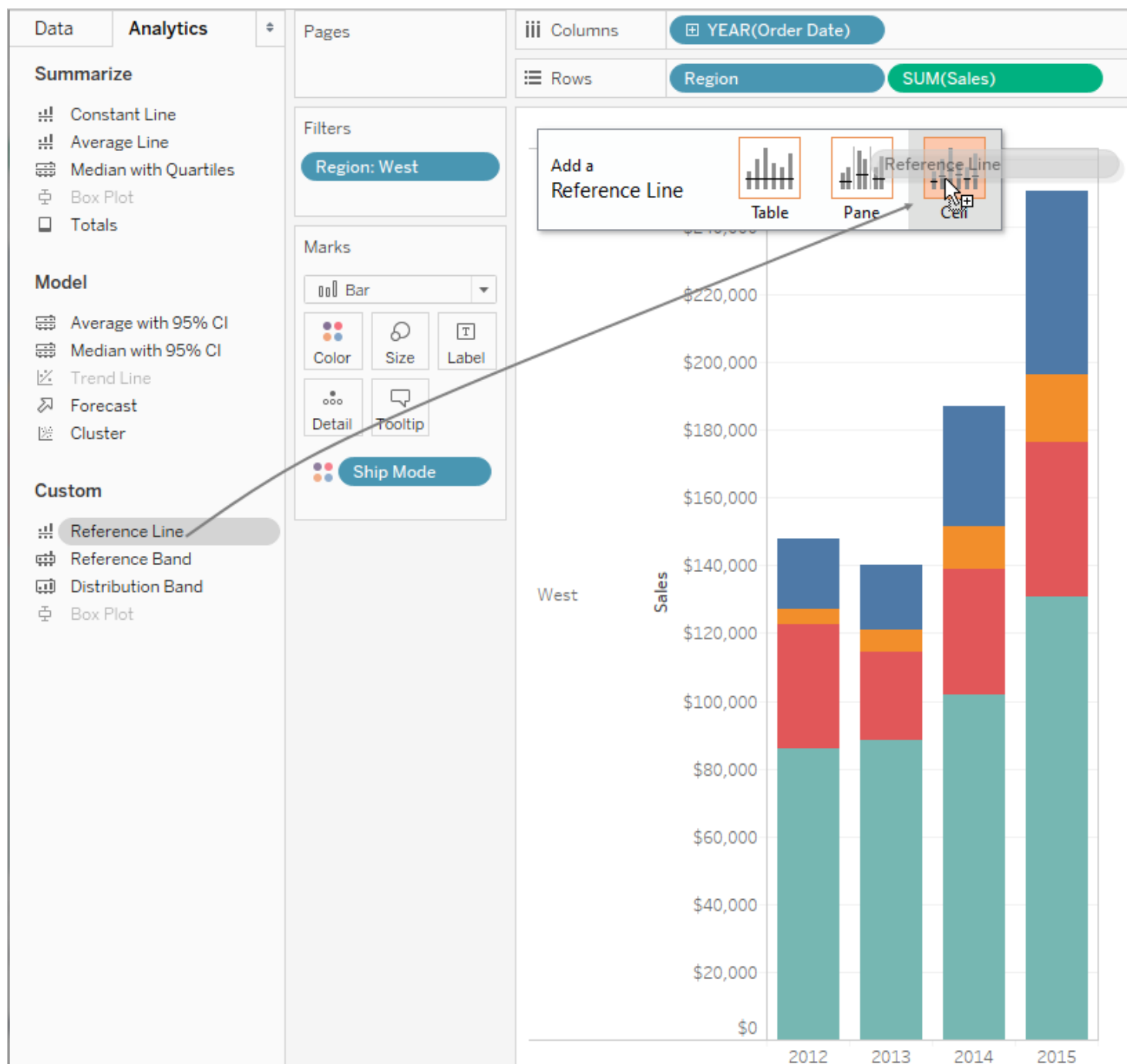


This view gives you insight into your data—for example, how the ship mode changed in the West over the four-year period.

## One Step Further: Add Totals To Stacked Bars

Adding totals to the tops of bars in a chart is sometimes as simple as clicking the **Show Mark Labels** icon in the toolbar. But when the bars are broken down by color or size, each individual segment would be labeled, rather than the total for the bar. With a few steps, you can add a total label at the top of every bar even when the bars are subdivided as in the view you just created. In the following procedure you will technically be adding a reference line. But by configuring that "line" in a certain way, you end up with the labels you want.

1. From the **Analytics** pane, drag a **Reference Line** into the view and drop it on **Cell**.



2. In the Edit Line, Band, or Box dialog box, set the aggregation for **SUM(Sales)** to **Sum**, set **Label** to **Value**, and set **Line** under Formatting to **None**:

Edit Reference Line, Band, or Box

Line Band Distribution Box Plot

Scope

☐ Entire Table ☐ Per Pane ☒ Per Cell

Line

Value: SUM(Sales) Sum

Label: Value

Line only 95

Formatting

Line: None

Fill Above: None

Fill Below: None

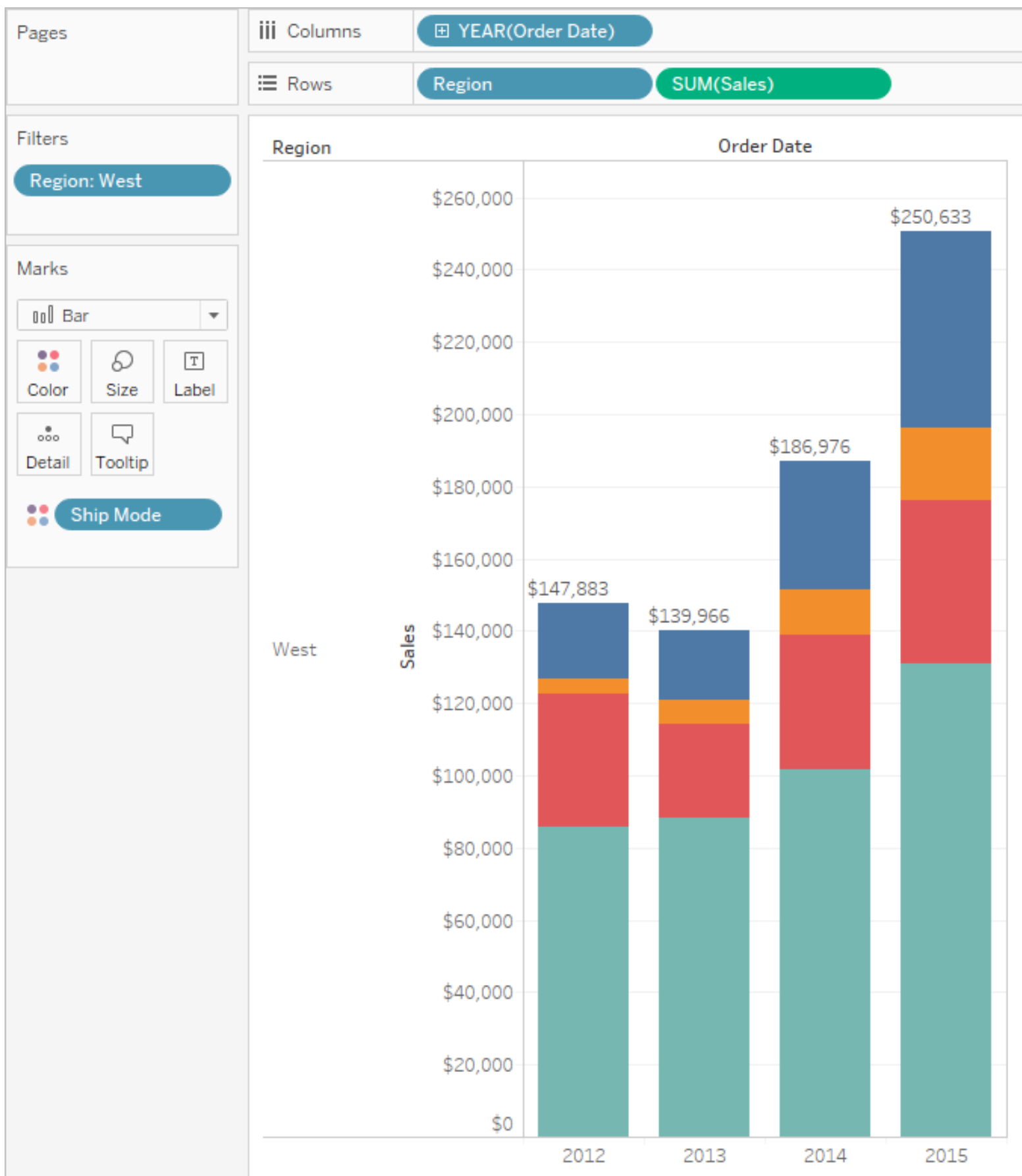
☒ Show recalculated line for highlighted or selected data points

OK

Then click **OK** to close the Edit Reference Line, Band, or Box dialog box.

Your view now has currency totals at the top of each bar:





You may need to adjust the view to make it look just right. If the bars are too narrow, the numbers are truncated; to fix this, press Ctrl + Right on the keyboard to make the bars wider. Or if you want to center the totals over the bars—by default, they are left-aligned. Do the following:

1. Right-click any of the totals on the bar chart and select **Format**.
2. In the Format window, in the **Reference Line Label** area, open the **Alignment** control and select the Center option for Horizontal alignment:

Format Reference Line

Reference Line

Line: 

None

Fill Above: 

None

Fill Below: 

None

Reference Line Label

Font: 

Tableau Bo..

Alignment: 

Custom

Numbers:

Shading:

Horizontal

Direction

Automatic

Automatic

A

Vertical

Wrap

Center

Automatic

Automatic

Automatic

Off

On

Pages

Filters

Region: West

Marks

Bar

de