



**Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation**

Grand Bohemian Hotel – Kessler Ballroom | 11 Boston Way, Asheville

BCTDA FY24 Annual Planning Session Minutes

Friday, March 24, 2023

- Present (Voting):** Kathleen Mosher, Chair; Brenda Durden, Vice Chair; Andrew Celwyn, Larry Crosby, Matthew Lehman, HP Patel, Elizabeth Putnam, Michael Lusick, Scott Patel
- Absent (Voting):** None
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore *(partial)*
(Full or partial session) Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** None
- CVB Staff:** Vic Isley, Tiffany Thacker, Marla Tambellini, Mike Kryzaneck, Penelope Whitman, Jennifer Kass-Green, Julia Simpson, Whitney Smith, Jay Tusa, Connie Holliday, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones
- Legal Counsel:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette/BCTDA Attorney
- Speakers:** Chris Davidson, MMGY Global
Zeek Coleman, Tourism Economics
- TPDF Committee:** Jay Curwen, David McCartney, Jim Muth, Ken Stamps,
(Full or partial session) Scott Kerchner *(partial)*
- In-Person Attendees:** John Ellis, Prior BCTDA Board Member
(Full or partial session) Greg Perlier, Mountain Xpress
Jason Sanford, Ashevillegas.com *(partial)*
Himanshu Karvir, Virtelle Hospitality *(partial)*
Jack Cecil, Biltmore Farms *(partial)*
- Online Attendees:** Lacy Cross, Movement Bank *(partial)*
(Full or partial session) Sara Coplai, WNC Bridge Foundation *(partial)*

Executive Summary of Annual Planning Session Minutes

- Mosher called to order the joint annual planning session of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, at 10:10 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Mosher shared opening remarks.
- Isley provided a progress update on Explore Asheville's strategic imperatives.
- Chris Davidson presented the results of the 2023 resident sentiment survey; group breakout discussion followed.
- Zeek Coleman presented a travel and economic outlook for Asheville and Buncombe County; group breakout discussion followed.
- Tiffany Thacker presented a draft of community project investment parameters; group breakout discussion followed.
- The annual planning session adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Call to Order, Welcome & Introductions

Mosher called to order the joint annual planning session of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 10:10 a.m.

Mosher welcomed everyone to Grand Bohemian and thanked Matthew Lehman for hosting.

Mosher acknowledged board members, present Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) Committee members, and in-person and livestream attendees from the public and media. Introductions were made around the room.

Mosher shared opening remarks about the aspirations for the session and then invited Vic Isley to present a strategic imperative progress update.

Strategic Pillars: Project Update

Isley provided an overview of the progress that has been made this year toward Explore Asheville's strategic pillars. Examples were provided of projects or imperatives aligned with each pillar's topline objectives.

A 15-minute break was taken, and the session resumed around 11:00 a.m. The livestream was paused during the break.

2023 Resident Perspectives on Tourism

Isley said under the strategic imperative of delivering sustainable growth is an objective of balancing resident and visitor needs. Explore Asheville is committed to gauging resident perspectives on tourism annually to gain insight from community members.

Isley said this year, MMGY Travel Intelligence built upon its 2022 study that surveyed residents about awareness and perceptions of destination tourism and its impact on the community.

Isley then introduced Chris Davidson, MMGY Global's Executive Vice President of Insights & Strategy, to present the report's findings and methodology.

Davidson expanded upon seven key insights gleaned from the resident sentiment survey.

Key Insight no. 1 While residents agree that tourism poses some challenges, they clearly believe that tourism also provides immense value to the community, and an overwhelming majority (84%) agree that tourism is beneficial to their community.	Key Insight no. 4 Residents are proud of the natural beauty and greenspaces of Asheville. Around half are concerned tourism may impact these natural amenities, and emphasize participating in sustainable tourism is important for visitors.	Key Insight no. 7 Length of residency has a significant impact on how residents feel about tourism in Asheville.
Key Insight no. 2 Asheville residents are proud of their community, the emphasis on inclusivity and diversity, and the culture and character of Asheville.	Key Insight no. 5 Supporting local businesses is important to Asheville residents, and most expect the same of visitors to Asheville.	Key Insight no. 8 There is still an opportunity to educate Asheville residents about how taxes paid by visitors are used to benefit residents.
Key Insight no. 3 Parking and traffic congestion problems are the primary concerns Asheville residents have for their quality of life. Dispersing visitors to areas outside of downtown Asheville and shifting to concentration of visitors to less peak times of the year are important initiatives for Asheville residents.	Key Insight no. 6 City of Asheville residents view the economic impact of tourism, and its support of natural and community amenities, in a more positive light than residents outside of Asheville.	

Davidson answered all related questions. The full report is on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com).

There was group breakout discussion for 30 minutes; the livestream was paused.

Lunch Break

The group took a 1-hour lunch break, and the session resumed around 1:00 p.m. The livestream was paused during the lunch break.

Travel & Economic Outlook

Zeek Coleman, Tourism Economics' Vice President of Americas, presented market-specific predictions for Asheville and Buncombe County's travel and lodging sector and provided context through national and regional comparisons.

Coleman answered all related questions. The full report is on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com).

There was group breakout discussion for 30 minutes; the livestream was paused.

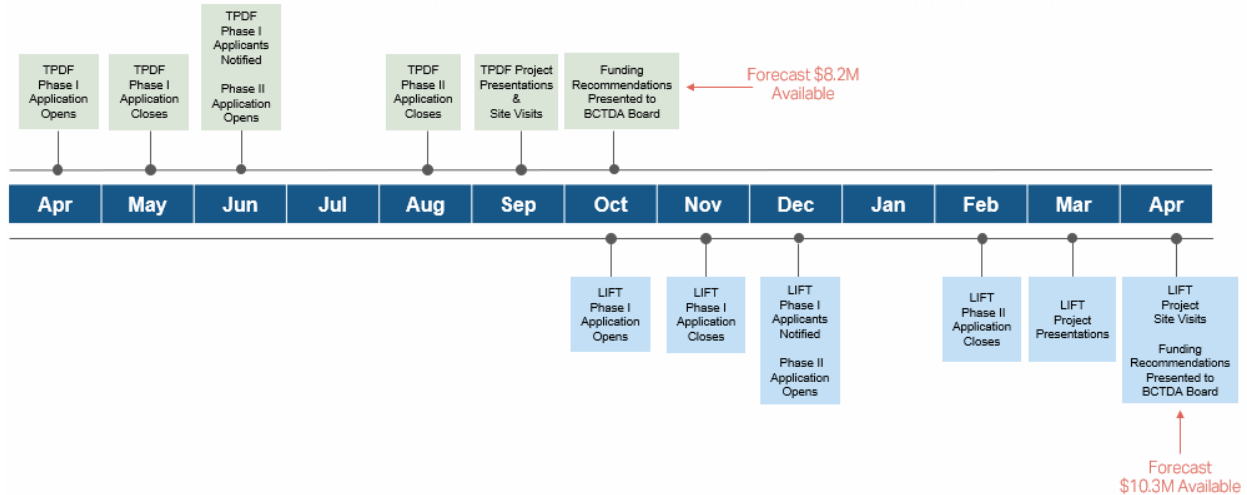
A 15-minute break followed the group breakout discussion; the livestream remained paused during the break. The session resumed around 2:15 p.m.

Community Project Investment Parameters

Isley explained that legislation changes in July 2022 resulted in updates to how lodging taxes will be invested. One-third of lodging taxes collected are now split between the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) and the Legacy Investment From Tourism (LIFT) Fund. Supplemental parameters for community project investments need to be established; staff drafted a decision-making tree to better inform applicants. Isley invited Tiffany Thacker, Explore Asheville's Director of Grants, to further explain.

Thacker presented the draft decision-making tree that includes legislative requirements and proposed guidelines, and she requested input for suggested edits or additions.

Thacker also shared timelines for the TPDF and LIFT Fund grant cycles as follows.



Thacker noted the forecast of funds available. She concluded by outlining plans for establishing the LIFT Fund committee. Thacker and Isley answered all related questions.

There was group breakout discussion for 30 minutes; the livestream was paused. The session resumed around 3:15 p.m.

Wrap-Up & Adjourn

Mosher shared closing remarks and thanked attendees. Durden moved to adjourn the meeting, and Celwyn seconded. With all in favor, the motion carried 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

The PowerPoint presentations and relevant documents are on file with Explore Asheville.

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be in-person on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Explore Asheville Board Room, located at 27 College Place.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Simpson
Julia Simpson, Manager, Executive & Strategy