



Explore **ASHEVILLE**
Convention & Visitors Bureau

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

July 2022

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS OVERVIEW

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) has charted a new course for tourism aligned with broader community priorities. This includes the adoption of [strategic imperatives](#) (outlined below) that are informing and guiding the direction of Explore Asheville's program of work and community investments going forward.

The [Monthly Highlights](#) report, released at the BCTDA Board meetings, provides a brief update of our progress toward these strategic imperatives. You can also find information from the discussions and presentations at [Buncombe County TDA meetings](#), in our [newsletters](#), at [partner events](#), and via other communication channels.



Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth

Balance resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy.

Focus on the quality of each visit to our community – balancing growth across the seasons, business and leisure travel, and throughout Asheville and Buncombe County.



Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel

Engage residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences.

Collaborate with community organizations, local businesses and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy.



Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences

Extend a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQ visitors – connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses and entrepreneurs – creating more opportunities for all to win.

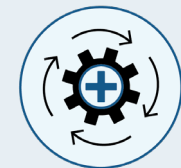
Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.



Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit

Share stories of creators and makers who help differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences and more.

Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.



Run a Healthy & Effective Organization

Invest in people, policies and practices to serve our community with integrity within the organization's legislative requirements.

DELIVER BALANCED RECOVERY & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Balance quality of life for residents & experience for visitors through project investments

- Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF): Phase 2 of the grant cycle is underway, and the application deadline is set for August 31

Protect and evolve Asheville's brand to further differentiate from competing destinations and inspire higher quality visits

- Family Content: Published "[Top 10 Family Friendly Parks and Playground in the Asheville Area](#)" blog in coordination with local creator Family Friendly Asheville; featured locations focused on dispersal and TPDF recipients

Improve quality of each visit by inspiring increased length of stay & dispersal

- Peter Greenberg Eye on Travel: Released [Podcast episode](#) on July 9
- Running Itinerary: Published new [Running Guide](#) in coordination with local creators, Authentic Asheville, that highlights running routes, group runs, races and running stores in the Asheville area
- Wayfinding: Conducted annual signage audit for updates and repairs to be made in fall 2022

Accelerate proactive sales efforts to increase net new business to the destination

- [Small and Boutique Meetings](#): Attended event by Northstar Meetings Group in Greenville, SC and had 20 scheduled appointments
- Asheville Business Events Council: Confirmed two new leads received from council members
- LinkedIn Promo: Developed a [National Hammock Day LinkedIn promotion](#), offering the chance to win an ENO Hammock that resulted in two new RFPs

Drive revenue in need periods through updated group sales strategy

- Director of Sales Meeting: Included hotel marketing and revenue management teams to the quarterly Director of Sales meeting to further collaboration on reversing recent occupancy declines

ENCOURAGE SAFE & RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Identify, qualify and engage purpose-driven companies for purposes of holding meetings here

- [B Local Asheville & WNC](#): Joined organization and will be an upcoming meeting sponsor
- Outdoor Industry Meeting: Met with the new Executive Director of [Outdoor Gear Builders](#) and the [NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office](#)

Influence visitors to respect, protect and preserve natural, cultural and human resources

- Earned Media Coverage:
 - CNN Travel: [Video: This rare truffle has been the Appalachian Mountains' secret for over a decade](#)

ENGAGE & INVITE MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Extend a genuine invitation to diverse audiences

- The Block: Highlighted Evening on The Block event on web and created new [Instagram Reel](#) spotlighting Noir Collective as part of Indie Retailers Month
- James Vester Miller Trail: Created [new listing](#) for James Vester Miller Trail, which further supports the [digital trail](#) that is hosted on ExploreAsheville.com
- Latinx: Secured contract with Ground Level Media to develop comprehensive year-long content campaign focused on Latinx audience; deliverables will include new blogs, photo/video assets and social media packages
- NOMADNESS Partnership
 - Focus Groups: NOMADNESS and Tourism RESET conducted BIPOC focus groups with eight local community members
 - Content: Filmed NOMADNESS video content campaign
 - Participants: Alexandria Ravenel, Noir Collective; Bruce Waller, Black Wall Street AVL; Luis Serapio, Asheville Multicultural; Dewana Little, YMI; Claude Coleman, SoundSpace; Caleb Owolabi; Andrea Clark, James Vester Miller Trail; Julieta Fumberg, artist; Tanya Marie Pender, Pathways to Parks; Valeria Watson, artist; and Matthew Bacoate
- [East End / Valley Street Heritage Festival](#): Provided local goods for annual festival taking place in August

Increase outreach in recruiting diverse meetings and events

- 48-Hour FAM: Used diverse membership channels, such as LGBT Meeting Planners Association, to target FAM attendees, which resulted in an attendee for the August FAM

Promote minority owned businesses through group sales initiatives

- Black Wall Street AVL: Toured meeting/event space and discussed ways to collaborate in the future

Develop and invest in community projects that attract and engage diverse audiences

- Skyview Golf Tournament: Sponsored this event, staffed a welcome table and gave out gift bags to participants
- African-American Heritage Trail (AAHT): Finalized content review of nine stories with the AAHT Advisory Committee
- Mountain Xpress: [Destination Diversity: TDA Seeks To Boost Black Asheville Travelers](#) (Cover story resulted from reporter who attended Tourism Summit and the [photo on cover](#) is of actual visitors who posted on Instagram; the story also included in e-newsletter [Local Matters](#))

PROMOTE & SUPPORT ASHEVILLE'S CREATIVE SPIRIT

Elevate Asheville's creative experiences to differentiate and inspire visits

- Travel + Leisure: [This North Carolina City Was Just Named the No. 1 Food Destination in the U.S. — Here's Why](#)

Create opportunities for partners to learn about and support creative spirit

- [2022 Summer Social](#): Hosted the social at Marquee on July 12
 - Featured Creative Partners: [AVL Charcuterie Company](#) and [Saint Brigid's](#) for refreshments and [DJ Captain EZ](#) for musical entertainment; [Marquee's vendors](#) gave live demonstrations during the event

RUN A HEALTHY & EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

Demonstrate organizational commitment to local, diverse creators, makers & vendors

- New Partners: Added 3 new accounts to ExploreAsheville.com: [Amanda McLenon Fine Art](#), [Morgan's Transportation and Rental Services](#) and [Mountain Mural Tours](#)

Prioritize individual professional development, trainings and team benefits

- Healthcare Medical Meetings (HCMM): Connie Holliday has earned a certificate in HCMM, joining the medical meetings community of 4,000 people throughout the US and world, part of MPI's offerings
- Wellness: Provided staff a Calm subscription to promote better mental health

Focus on events and communications strategy to increase community engagement

- E-newsletters, E-alerts: [7 sent in July](#); delivered a total of 12,963 with open rates as high as 52.1% and an average of 42%

Focus on events and communications strategy to increase community engagement (continued)

- Local News & BCTDA/Explore Asheville coverage:
 - Occupancy Tax Legislation
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [Less money for Buncombe tourism advertising after occupancy tax bill passes NC Legislature](#)
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [Boyle column: Is there hope for Asheville to retain some livability?](#) (Article mentions/endorse change in occupancy tax allocation)
 - Mountain Xpress: [GA short session yields both change and inertia for WNC](#) (Article includes roundup of actions in the NC General Assembly included coverage of occupancy tax legislation)
 - Tourism Product Development Fund
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [Answer Man: TDA promoting itself in ad?](#) (Reader questioned TPDF grant cycle public awareness program funded with earned revenue)
 - General
 - Asheville Citizen Times Op-Ed: [Asheville Ideas Fest proves to be incubators of new concepts, fresh ideas](#) (Isley is quoted)
 - WLOS: [How much have short term rentals impacted rent, mortgage rates in Buncombe County?](#)
 - WLOS: [Interim Executive Director announced for Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission](#) (Explore Asheville is recognized)