

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

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 | 9:00 a.m.

Via Zoom Webinar due to NC Covid-19 State of Emergency – [Attending Public – Register Here](#)

Agenda

9:00 a.m.	Call to Order the Joint Virtual Meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation	Himanshu Karvir
9:05 a.m.	Approval of 05.26.21 Meeting Minutes	Himanshu Karvir
9:08 a.m.	May 2021 Financial Reports	Don Warn
9:15 a.m.	President & CEO's Report	Vic Isley
9:20 a.m.	Acknowledgement of Closure of Electronic Comment Period of Public Hearing	Himanshu Karvir
 <i>Pursuant to N.C. General Statute 166A-19.24 (e), a virtual public budget hearing took place on May 26, 2021, and the public was invited to submit comments on the proposed FY 22 budget via email to Reply@ExploreAsheville.com through Tuesday, June 29, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.</i>		
9:25 a.m.	Approval of Proposed BCTDA FY 22 Operating, Earned Revenue, & Tourism Product Development Fund Administrative Budget Ordinance	John Lockett
9:30 a.m.	BCTDA Nominating Committee	Gary Froeba
9:35 a.m.	Advertising Agency Selection	Marla Tambellini
9:40 a.m.	Tourism Product Development Fund Project Updates a. River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project (RADTIP) b. YMI Cultural Center	Pat Kappes Dewana Little, Catherine Miller, Philippe Rosse, YMI Team
10:05 a.m.	Asheville City Council Update	Councilmember Sandra Kilgore
10:10 a.m.	Buncombe County Commission Update	Commissioner Robert Pressley
10:15 a.m.	Miscellaneous Business	Himanshu Karvir
10:20 a.m.	Comments from the General Public	Himanshu Karvir
10:30 a.m.	Recognition of Outgoing BCTDA Chair Himanshu Karvir	Vic Isley
10:35 a.m.	Adjournment	Himanshu Karvir

The next joint BCTDA meeting is on **Wednesday, July 28, 2021**, at 9:00 a.m., in the Explore Asheville Board Room at 27 College Place. Please contact Jonna Sampson at jsampson@ExploreAsheville.com or 828.258.6111 with any questions.

BCTDA Mission Statement

To be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.

Explore ASHEVILLE

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

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

Via Zoom Webinar due to the COVID-19 Pandemic/State of Emergency

Virtual Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Present (Voting):	Himanshu Karvir, Chair; Gary Froeba, Vice Chair; Leah Ashburn, Andrew Celwyn, Brenda Durden, John Luckett, John McKibbon, Kathleen Mosher, James Poole
Absent (Voting):	None
Present (Ex-Officio):	None
Absent (Ex-Officio):	Asheville City Councilmember Sandra Kilgore Buncombe County Commissioner Robert Pressley
CVB Staff:	Victoria Isley, Marla Tambellini, Marshall Hilliard, Pat Kappes, Jennifer Kass-Green, Jonna Sampson, Daniel Bradley
BC Finance:	Don Warn, Buncombe County/BCTDA Fiscal Agent
Legal Counsel:	Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bisette
Online Attendees:	Glenn Cox, Kathryn Dewey, Connie Holliday, Sarah Lowery, Kathi Petersen, Tina Porter, Charlie Reed, Whitney Smith, Dodie Stephens, Landis Taylor, Nicole Will; Explore Asheville Staff Jane Anderson, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association Madison Davis, Asheville-Buncombe Regional Sports Commission Kit Cramer, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Sharon Tabor, Black Mountain/Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce Bob Michel, Asheville Homestay Network Meghan Rogers, Asheville Downtown Association Chip Craig, John Ellis, Jim Muth; Past BCTDA Board Members Rick Bell, Engadine Inn & Cabins/Asheville B&B Association Jason Sandford, Ashvegas Shelby Harris, Asheville Citizen-Times Daniel Walton, Mountain Xpress WLOS TV Sunshine Request

Additional tourism community partners and members of the public registered in advance and viewed the online meeting.

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Karvir called the virtual joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m.
- Minutes from the April 28, 2021, BCTDA regular monthly meeting were approved with a 9-0 vote.
- The April 2021 financial statements were approved with a 9-0 vote.
- In her President & CEO's report, Ms. Isley provided a comprehensive lodging market overview that covered metrics from the past five years.
- Mr. Luckett shared a finance committee report and Ms. Isley and Ms. Kass Green presented two proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget scenarios.
- An amendment to the BCTDA's financial management policy was approved with a 9-0 vote.
- Chairman Karvir presented two proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget ordinances. A motion that the board accept the proposed ordinances as presented for the purposes of the public hearing and to hold the public hearing was approved with a 9-0 vote.
- A virtual public hearing on the proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget took place and an electronic public comment period to receive input on the budget through June 29, 2021, was established.
- Under Comments from the General Public, one written comment was discussed and a live public comment was heard.
- With a 9-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Call of the Joint BCTDA Meeting to Order

Chairman Karvir called the virtual joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, to order at 9:00 a.m. He said meeting documents are provided on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com) and additional materials will be posted after the meeting.

Board Member Roll Call: Board members responded as Chairman Karvir called roll verifying all BCTDA members were virtually in attendance, except for Councilwoman Kilgore and Commissioner Pressley, who were absent, and Mr. Poole, who was having connectivity issues and joined the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Celwyn made a motion to approve the April 28, 2021, regular meeting minutes as presented. Ms. Durden seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0.

Financial Reports

April 2021 Financial Reports

Mr. Warn reviewed the April 2021 financial reports. There were no questions.

Ms. Ashburn made a motion to approve the April 2021 financial reports as presented. Mr. McKibbin seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0.

President & CEO's Report

Lodging Market Overview

Ms. Isley said Mr. Warn's financial report demonstrated how travel was impacted by the pandemic. She shared a PowerPoint presentation in which she provided a comprehensive lodging market overview of metrics by lodging type, based on research provided by Smith Travel Research and AirDNA. The data was broken down into the categories of hotels, vacation rentals, and hotel comps, covered a five-year period to include 2016 through 2020, and focused on average occupancy, average daily rate, revenue per available room, number of properties, rooms available per night, and room demand. Ms. Isley clarified definitions of what types of properties are included in the vacation rentals and hotel comps categories, and noted that those average daily rates include cleaning fees but not other service fees or taxes.

Throughout her presentation, Ms. Isley noted there was a common theme of the upward trend of vacation rentals metrics in all areas over the past year of the pandemic, compared to hotel metrics, which fell significantly and continue to lag in FY 21. This trend is a direct benefit for area residents who own vacation rental properties in Buncombe County.

Following the presentation, Ms. Isley received comments and answered all related questions. Chairman Karvir thanked her for providing the information. The PowerPoint slides can be found on AshevilleCVB.com.

Other Updates

The CVB Staff Recap, Destination Dashboard, and Quick List are posted on AshevilleCVB.com.

Proposed BCTDA FY 22 Budget

Finance Committee Report

Mr. Luckett, BCTDA finance committee chair, said the committee met this month to review the details of the proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget. He reminded everyone that at the March meeting, the board approved a revenue objective of \$27,159,586 on which to base the FY 22 budget, which represents a 9% increase over revenue received in FY 19 and includes the total projected revenue for the marketing and the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) budgets.

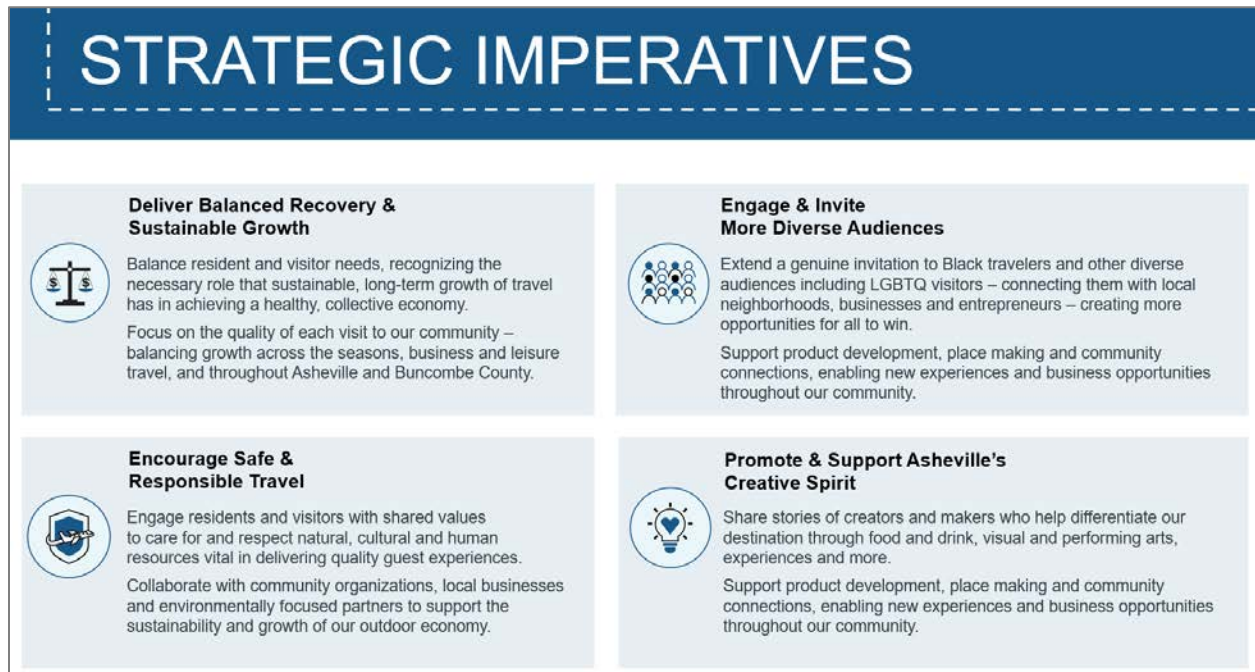
Mr. Luckett said the proposed budget takes into consideration potential legislative changes that, if introduced and passed, will impact the allocation from the current three-quarters/one-quarter split disbursement to operating/TPDF respectively, to a two-thirds/one-third split. He noted the proposed percentage split is the maximum amount allowed under North Carolina's occupancy tax guidelines and the local hotel community is advocating for this change. Mr. Luckett said should the legislation change pass and more funding is allocated for TPDF expenditures, the committee recommends allocating \$2 million from fund balance into the FY 22 operating budget.

Additionally, Mr. Luckett shared changes to the financial policy are being recommended:

- Include a designated contingency fund of 6 months of operating costs in accordance with organizational best practices.
- The Earned Revenue fund will maintain 50% of the beginning fund balance each year, with CEO approval authorization of up to \$25,000 for any one sponsorship, and the board chair having the authority to approve expenditures over \$25,000.

BCTDA Proposed FY Budget Presentation

Ms. Isley reviewed the strategic imperatives that Explore Asheville has adopted to drive how occupancy dollars are invested.



Ms. Kass-Green shared a PowerPoint presentation in which she reviewed the status of the current FY 21 budget and forecasted year-end fund balances. She explained that staff has created two proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget scenarios, one of which will be approved based on the current occupancy tax legislation in place at the time of the June 30, 2021, BCTDA meeting.

Ms. Kass-Green then shared the proposed fund balance amounts based on the recommended change to the financial management policy as previously shared by Mr. Luckett. She said since the designated contingency will now be increased to reserve six months of operating expenses based on best practices, the undesignated fund balance will decrease in FY 22. She reviewed the parameters under which those dollars can be spent.

Next, Ms. Kass-Green reviewed the proposed budget amounts based on the two legislative scenarios. It was noted that if the proposed change in legislation does not happen and we stay at the current 75%/25% split, there will not be a \$2 million appropriation from fund balance.

Regarding Earned Revenue as noted by Mr. Luckett, Ms. Kass-Green said for FY 22, the finance committee approved including a recommendation to establish a practice of maintaining 50% of beginning fund balance in reserves each year. Additionally, the President and CEO would have the authority to approve Earned Revenue expenditures up to \$25,000 for any one sponsorship/event, and the BCTDA's board chair can approve amounts more than \$25,000, which increases the previously board-approved amount of \$5,000. In response to Mr. Celwyn's question regarding how Earned Revenue (income received from advertising not subject to occupancy tax restrictions, which is primarily used to support local events) will be spent, Ms. Isley said an application and review process will be established, in alignment with the strategic pillars. A brief question and answer period on this topic took place.

Ms. Isley presented a top-level overview of strategies and initiatives in each area of the proposed budget related to Salaries and Benefits, Administration and Facilities, Marketing, Group Sales, Community Engagement, and the Tourism Product Development Fund. She then summarized the information previously shared by Mr. Luckett and Ms. Kass-Green related to the two budget scenarios and changes to the BCTDA's financial management policy.

During and after the presentation, Ms. Isley and Ms. Kass-Green received comments from board members and answered all related questions. The PowerPoint presentation and related budget documents are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Chairman Karvir thanked Mr. Luckett, Ms. Isley, and Ms. Kass-Green for the proposed budget presentation, noting it was more complex this year due to the need to present two different scenarios. There were no additional questions posed by board members.

BCTDA Financial Management Policy

Mr. Luckett made a motion to approve the revised BCTDA Financial Management Policy as presented. Vice Chairman Froeba seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0. The revised policy reads as follows:

BCTDA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

(Adopted April 24, 2013; Revised November 19, 2014, May 25, 2016, October 30, 2019, May 26, 2021)

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority adopted the following Financial Management Policy on April 24, 2013, revised November 19, 2014, May 25, 2016, October 30, 2019, May 26, 2021, to direct the allocation of surplus funds.

The purpose of the Financial Management Policy is to comply with state guidelines, ensure stability, employment, and ongoing operations of the organization. This policy sets forth the different operating reserves of the BCTDA, whether each can be accessed and under what conditions.

A fund balance equal to 8% of tax receipts identified for operations (4.5% collections) will be maintained to satisfy state guidelines for county government reserves. This fund will be identified as "State Required Contingency."

A designated contingency of six (6) months of the average operating costs will be maintained in alignment with best practices for emergency, crisis management, and recovery. This fund will be identified as the "Designated Contingency." The calculation of average monthly operating costs includes all recurring, predictable expenses. The amount of the Designated Contingency target will be calculated each year after approval of the annual budget, reported to the Board of Directors, and included in the regular financial reports. Any use of the Designated Contingency must be approved by the BCTDA Board upon the presentation of a request for such use that includes an analysis of the use, its compliance with this policy and applicable law, and plans for replenishment of the Designated Contingency to meet the requirements of this policy. If the use of the Designated Contingency will result in a replenishment time of 12 months or more, the BCTDA Board must approve the use by a vote of two-thirds of its voting members.

Additional funds may be held in an undesignated fund for non-recurring investments as needed and may be appropriated by the board. This fund will be identified as "Undesignated." This fund also acts as the operating reserve, holding unspent budgeted earnings and is available for cash flow management.

Earned Revenue Fund. Funds earned by the BCTDA (not tax receipts) will be maintained in the Earned Revenue Fund. The BCTDA will maintain 50% of the beginning fund balance in the Earned Revenue Fund each year. The President & CEO is authorized to approve expenditures from the Earned Revenue Fund for any one sponsorship or event for amounts up to \$25,000. The Chair of the BCTDA may approve such sponsorships or event expenditures from the Earned Revenue Funds for amounts greater than \$25,000.

Proposed BCTDA FY 22 Budget Ordinances

Chairman Karvir presented Proposed Budget Ordinance #1, which is based on potential legislative changes that, if introduced and passed, will change the occupancy tax allocation from the current three-quarters/one-quarter Operating/TPDF split, to a two-thirds/one-third split. Ms. Isley said this budget ordinance includes the proposed operating budget, totaling \$20,107,297 (includes a \$2 million transfer from fund balance), the TPDF administrative budget, totaling \$440,000, and the Earned Revenue budget, totaling \$200,564.

Next, Chairman Karvir presented Proposed Budget Ordinance #2, which is based on the current occupancy tax legislation, directing 75% to the operating fund and 25% to the Tourism Product Development Fund. He said this budget ordinance includes the proposed operating budget, totaling \$20,369,690 (does not include a transfer from fund balance), the TPDF administrative budget, totaling \$440,000, and the Earned Revenue budget, totaling \$200,564.

Mr. Celwyn made a motion that the board accept the proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget ordinances as presented for the purposes of the public hearing, and to hold the public hearing. Ms. Mosher seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0.

The proposed budget ordinances are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau and are posted on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.exploreasheville.com).

Public Hearing on Proposed BCTDA FY 22 Budget

At 9:54 a.m., Chairman Karvir opened the public budget hearing which, pursuant to N.C. General Statute 166A-19.24 (e) during the COVID-19 state of emergency, may be held electronically. He announced the board will receive public comments on the proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget via email to Reply@ExploreAsheville.com through Tuesday, June 29, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. Chairman Karvir then closed the public budget hearing at 9:55 a.m.

Asheville City Council Update

Councilwoman Kilgore was absent from the meeting, therefore, there was no Asheville City Council update provided.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Pressley was absent from the meeting, therefore, there was no Buncombe County Commission update provided.

Miscellaneous Business

There was no miscellaneous business shared at this meeting.

Comments from the General Public

Written Public Comments

Chairman Karvir said members of the public were invited to submit comments via email to reply@ExploreAsheville.com through 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 25, 2021. He reported there was one comment received and it was sent to the board.

Mr. Celwyn noted that the comment received was from Mary Standaert, who suggested expanding upon some of the work Explore Asheville has been doing on the African American Heritage Trail (AAHT) to include including a walking tour into other parts of Buncombe County. He said he hopes this suggestion will be taken into consideration at some point.

Ms. Kappes said she met with Ms. Standaert and provided a tour of the Allen School, and discussed her suggestion to expand the AAHT outside of the downtown area. Ms. Kappes said she explained that while the initial scope and approved budget for the project does focus on the downtown area, the plan includes developing an online version of the trail, which can incorporate sites outside of the walking trail. She added this will definitely be a consideration for future expansion.

Live Public Comments

Chairman Karvir said members of the public are invited to sign-up to verbally share live comments during monthly virtual BCTDA meetings. He reported that as of yesterday's 12:00 p.m. deadline, one request to speak had been received and he invited Mr. Bob Michel from the Chestnut Hills/Charlotte Street neighborhood to share his comments.

On behalf of the Asheville Homestay Network, Mr. Michel thanked Ms. Isley for providing the comprehensive and thorough analysis of market trends related to short-term rentals in her President & CEOs report. He added homestay network members anticipate things will settle into a different "new normal" in the future and her report was very informative.

Chairman Karvir thanked Mr. Michel for his comments.

Adjournment

Ms. Durden moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Luckett seconded the motion. There was no discussion and with all in favor via a roll call vote, the motion carried 9-0 and the virtual meeting ended at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting PowerPoint presentation and relevant documents are on file with the Explore Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau and are posted on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com).

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be on Wednesday, June 30, 2021, beginning at 9:00 a.m., via Zoom Webinar.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonna Sampson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Monthly Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance

Operating Fund, Budget and Actual

May 31, 2021

					(%)	Prior Year	
	Current Budget	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	Budget Remaining	Budget Used	Year to Date Actual	(%) Change From
Revenues:							
Occupancy tax, net	\$ 11,135,293	\$ 1,898,355	\$ 15,566,746	\$ (4,431,453)	139.8%	\$ 14,025,531	11.0%
Investment income	-	102	323	(323)	-	698	-53.8%
Other income	-	2	40,479	(40,479)	-	8,667	367.1%
Earned revenue	-	14,324	163,421	(163,421)	-	130,164	25.6%
Total revenues	<u>11,135,293</u>	<u>1,912,783</u>	<u>15,770,969</u>	<u>(4,635,676)</u>	<u>141.6%</u>	<u>14,165,059</u>	<u>11.3%</u>
Expenditures:							
Salaries and Benefits	2,460,163	166,511	1,878,217	581,946	76.3%	1,973,507	-4.8%
Sales	881,277	28,118	468,299	412,978	53.1%	675,035	-30.6%
Marketing	11,390,551	537,504	3,565,538	7,825,013	31.3%	8,140,074	-56.2%
Community Engagement	80,519	1,435	35,113	45,406	43.6%	18,052	94.5%
Administration & Facilities	755,684	78,458	565,734	189,950	74.9%	424,090	33.4%
Events/Festivals/Sponsorships	121,235	15,342	81,629	39,606	67.3%	295,348	-72.4%
Total expenditures	<u>15,689,429</u>	<u>827,370</u>	<u>6,594,531</u>	<u>9,094,898</u>	<u>42.0%</u>	<u>11,526,106</u>	<u>-42.8%</u>
Revenues over (under) expenditures	<u>(4,554,136)</u>	<u>1,085,413</u>	<u>9,176,438</u>			<u>\$ 2,638,953</u>	<u>247.7%</u>
Other Financing Sources:							
Carried over earned income	<u>121,235</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>				
Total other financing sources	<u>121,235</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>				
Net change in fund balance	<u>\$ (4,432,901)</u>	<u>\$ 1,085,413</u>	<u>9,176,438</u>				
Fund balance, beginning of year			<u>12,465,092</u>				
Fund balance, end of month			<u>\$ 21,641,530</u>				

As directed by State statute, 75% of the occupancy tax revenue is invested in tourism promotion (reflected in the operations budget presented here) and 25% is dedicated to the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) to be used for tourism-related community grants. The TPDF is budgeted by project ordinance due to the nature of the fund. Revenue dedicated to TPDF is projected at \$3,711,764 for FY21.

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Monthly Revenue Summary

May 31, 2021

Month of room sales:	Operating Fund						Product Development Fund					
	By Month			Cumulative Year-to-Date			By Month			Cumulative Year-to-Date		
	Current Year	Prior Year	(%) (%)	Current Year	Prior Year	(%) Change	Current Year	Prior Year	(%) Change	Current Year	Prior Year	(%) Change
July	\$ 1,390,343	\$ 1,946,888	-29%	\$ 1,390,343	\$ 1,946,888	-29%	\$ 463,448	\$ 648,963	-29%	\$ 463,448	\$ 648,963	-29%
August	1,576,516	1,803,567	-13%	2,966,859	3,750,455	-21%	525,505	\$ 601,189	-13%	988,953	1,250,152	-21%
September	1,598,161	1,736,622	-8%	4,565,021	5,487,077	-17%	532,720	\$ 578,874	-8%	1,521,674	1,829,026	-17%
October	2,329,272	2,206,323	6%	6,894,292	7,693,400	-10%	776,424	\$ 735,441	6%	2,298,097	2,564,467	-10%
November	1,557,487	1,771,151	-12%	8,451,779	9,464,551	-11%	519,162	\$ 590,384	-12%	2,817,260	3,154,850	-11%
December	1,517,197	1,780,020	-15%	9,968,976	11,244,571	-11%	505,732	\$ 593,340	-15%	3,322,992	3,748,190	-11%
January	1,095,262	1,115,364	-2%	11,064,238	12,359,935	-10%	365,087	\$ 371,788	-2%	3,688,079	4,119,978	-10%
February	1,044,459	1,043,672	0%	12,108,697	13,403,607	-10%	348,153	\$ 347,891	0%	4,036,232	4,467,869	-10%
March	1,559,694	504,135	209%	13,668,391	13,907,742	-2%	519,898	\$ 168,045	209%	4,556,130	4,635,914	-2%
April	1,898,355	117,789	1512%	15,566,746	14,025,531	11%	632,785	\$ 39,263	1512%	5,188,915	4,675,177	11%
May	-	383,262	-	-	14,408,792	-	-	\$ 127,754	-	-	4,802,931	-
June	-	943,662	-	-	15,352,455	-	-	\$ 314,554	-	-	5,117,485	-
Total revenues	<u>\$15,566,746</u>	<u>\$ 15,352,455</u>		<u>\$ 15,566,746</u>	<u>\$ 15,352,455</u>		<u>\$5,188,915</u>	<u>\$5,117,485</u>		<u>\$5,188,915</u>	<u>\$5,117,485</u>	

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Monthly Product Development Fund Summary

May 31, 2021

	Budget	Life to Date Actuals	Remaining Budget	(%) Budget Used
Revenues:				
Occupancy Tax	\$ 27,748,000	\$ 22,108,978	\$ 5,639,022	79.7%
Investment Income	-	1,230,921	(1,230,921)	0.0%
Total revenues	<u>27,748,000</u>	<u>23,339,898</u>	<u>4,408,102</u>	<u>84.1%</u>
Expenditures:				
Product development fund projects:				
2012 Montford Park Players (Welcome Facility & Amphitheatre Renovations)	125,000	-	125,000	-
2014 City of Asheville (Riverfront Destination Development 1.0)	7,100,000	3,300,000	3,800,000	46.5%
2016 Asheville Community Theatre (Theatre Expansion & Renovation)	1,000,000	430,000	570,000	43.0%
2017 Buncombe County Government (Woodfin Greenway & Blueway)	2,250,000	-	2,250,000	-
2018 Buncombe County Government (Enka Recreation Destination)	6,000,000	-	6,000,000	-
2018 Eagle Market Streets Dev. Corp. (YMI Cultural Center Improvements)	800,000	42,863	757,137	5.4%
2018 River Front Development Group (African-American Heritage Museum at Stephens-L	100,000	-	100,000	-
2021 African American Heritage Trail	500,000	5,358	494,642	1.1%
2021 Wortham Center for the Performing Arts (Air Ionization System)	45,000	-	45,000	-
Total product development projects	<u>17,920,000</u>	<u>3,778,221</u>	<u>14,141,779</u>	<u>21.1%</u>
Product development fund administration	<u>518,000</u>	<u>386,028</u>	<u>131,972</u>	<u>74.5%</u>
Total product development fund	<u>\$ 18,438,000</u>	<u>\$ 4,164,249</u>	<u>\$ 14,273,751</u>	<u>22.6%</u>

Product Development Funds Available for Future Grants

Total Net Assets	\$ 19,175,650
Less: Liabilities/Outstanding Grants	(14,141,779)
Less: Unspent Admin Budget (Current Year)	(131,972)
Current Product Development Amount Available	<u>\$ 4,901,898</u>

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Monthly Balance Sheet

Governmental Funds

May 31, 2021

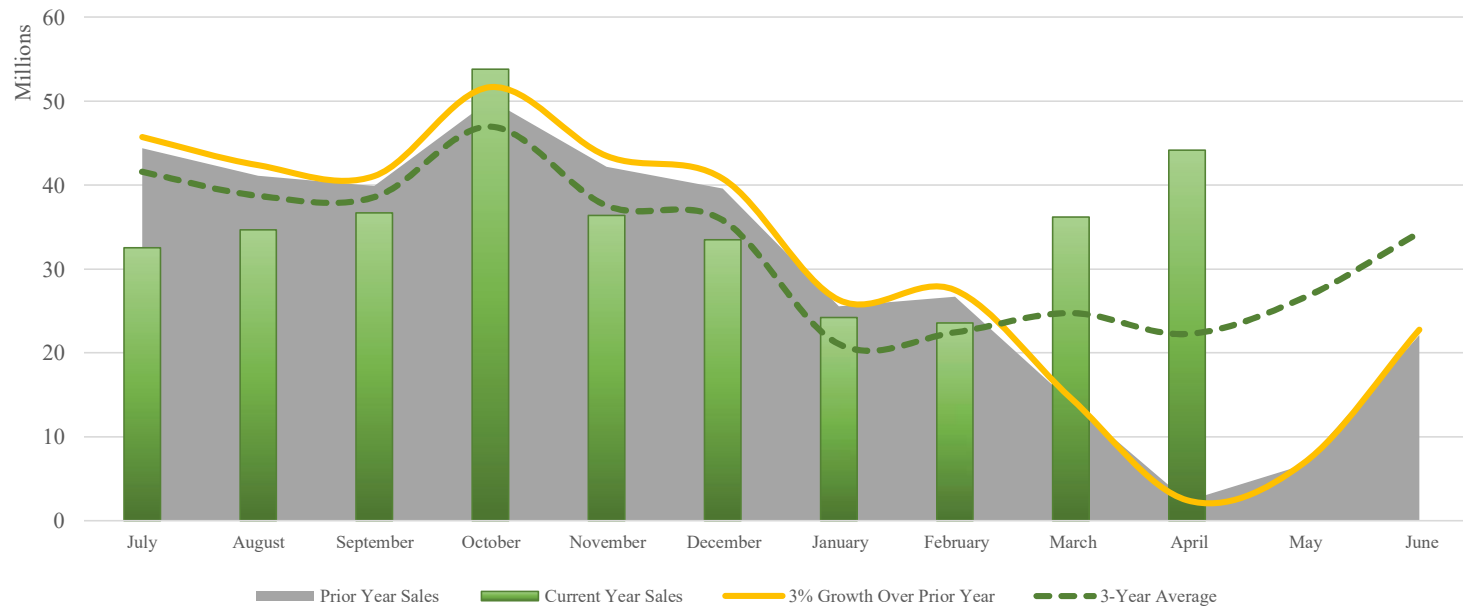
	Operating Fund	Product Development Fund	Total
Assets:			
Current assets:			
Cash and investments	\$ 21,696,277	\$ 19,175,650	\$ 40,871,927
Receivables	-	-	-
Total current assets	<u>\$ 21,696,277</u>	<u>\$ 19,175,650</u>	<u>40,871,927</u>
Liabilities:			
Current liabilities:			-
Accounts payable	\$ 22,347	\$ -	\$ 22,347
Future events payable	32,400	\$ 14,141,779	\$ 14,174,179
Total current liabilities	<u>54,747</u>	<u>\$ 14,141,779</u>	<u>\$ 14,196,526</u>
Fund Balances:			-
Restricted for product development fund	-	5,033,871	5,033,871
Committed for event support program	93,173	-	93,173
State Required Contingency	890,823	-	890,823
Designated Contingency	4,190,057	-	4,190,057
Undesignated (cash flow)	16,467,477	-	16,467,477
Total fund balances	<u>21,641,530</u>	<u>5,033,871</u>	<u>26,675,401</u>
 Total liabilities and fund balances	<u><u>\$21,696,277</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 19,175,650</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 40,871,927</u></u>

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Total Lodging Sales

Shown by Month of Sale, Year-to-Date

May 31, 2021



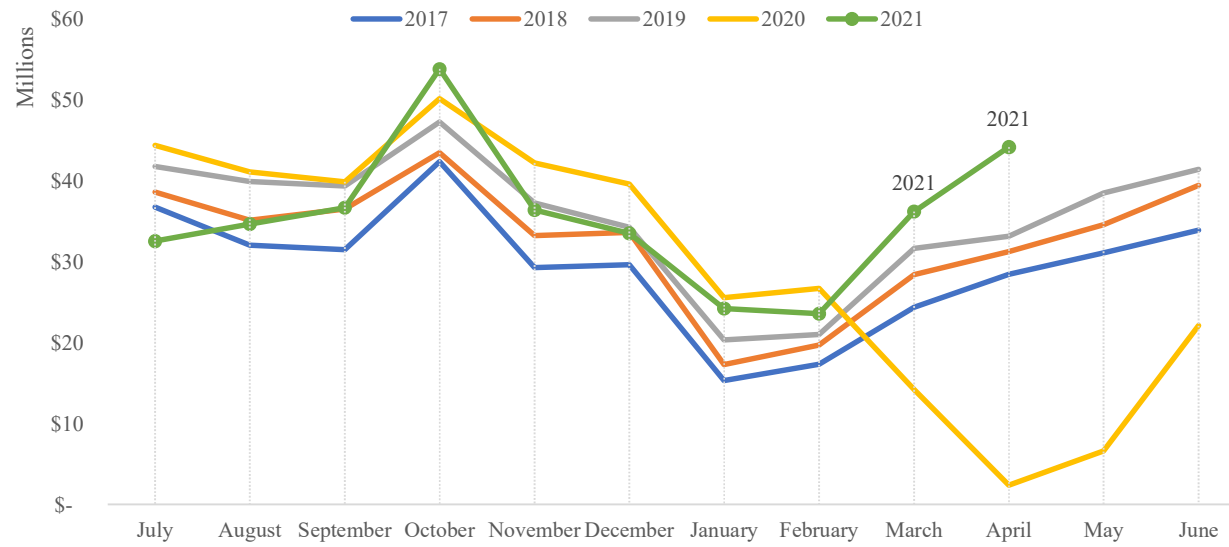
	Current Year	Prior Year	(%) Change	YTD (%) Change	3% Over Prior Year	3-Year Average
Month of lodging sales:						
July	\$ 32,547,111	\$ 44,385,965	-27%	-27%	\$ 45,717,544	\$ 41,574,284
August	34,663,339	41,113,655	-16%	-21%	42,347,065	38,716,556
September	36,683,164	39,869,174	-8%	-17%	41,065,249	38,557,347
October	53,816,499	50,148,618	7%	-10%	51,653,076	46,964,931
November	36,384,853	42,190,154	-14%	-11%	43,455,858	37,554,157
December	33,492,133	39,595,569	-15%	-12%	40,783,436	35,821,987
January	24,213,034	25,561,453	-5%	-11%	26,328,296	21,065,174
February	23,577,360	26,696,319	-12%	-11%	27,497,208	22,452,688
March	36,200,146	14,208,120	155%	-4%	14,634,363	24,750,855
April	44,160,331	2,402,461	1738%	9%	2,474,535	22,261,486
May	-	6,624,541	-	-	6,823,277	26,544,259
June	-	22,108,839	-	-	22,772,104	34,321,056
Total revenues	<u>\$355,737,973</u>	<u>\$ 354,904,866</u>			<u>\$365,552,012</u>	<u>\$390,584,780</u>

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

History of Total Sales by Month

Shown by Month of Sale, Year-to-Date

May 31, 2021



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Month of lodging sales:					
July	\$ 36,734,684	\$ 38,602,612	\$ 41,734,276	\$ 44,385,965	\$ 32,547,111
August	32,040,330	35,118,463	39,917,550	41,113,655	34,663,339
September	31,498,527	36,475,819	39,327,048	39,869,174	36,683,164
October	42,361,030	43,473,922	47,272,253	50,148,618	53,816,499
November	29,254,904	33,231,722	37,240,595	42,190,154	36,384,853
December	29,615,696	33,597,999	34,272,393	39,595,569	33,492,133
January	15,323,999	17,286,992	20,347,077	25,561,453	24,213,034
February	17,323,590	19,676,430	20,985,316	26,696,319	23,577,360
March	24,352,927	28,406,443	31,638,002	14,208,120	36,200,146
April	28,444,541	31,240,963	33,141,034	2,402,461	44,160,331
May	31,113,327	34,544,014	38,464,222	6,624,541	-
June	33,898,766	39,441,126	41,413,202	22,108,839	-
Total lodging sales	\$ 351,962,319	\$ 391,096,506	\$ 425,752,967	\$ 354,904,866	\$ 355,737,973

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Total Lodging Sales by Type

Shown by Month of Sale, Year-to-Date

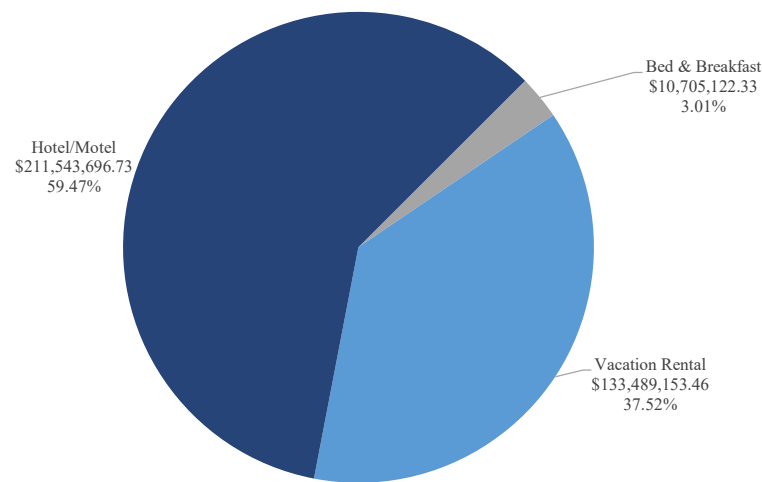
May 31, 2021

Month of room sales:	Hotel/Motel				Vacation Rentals				Bed & Breakfast				Grand Totals			
	Current Year	Prior Year	% Change	YTD % Change	Current Year	Prior Year	% Change	YTD % Change	Current Year	Prior Year	% Change	YTD % Change	Current Year	Prior Year	% Change	YTD % Change
July	\$ 19,132,318	\$ 33,587,325	-43.0%	-43.0%	\$ 12,282,646	\$ 9,342,220	31.5%	31.5%	\$ 1,132,148	\$ 1,456,420	-22.3%	-22.3%	\$ 32,547,111	\$ 44,385,965	-26.7%	-26.7%
August	19,815,648	31,112,092	-36.3%	-39.8%	13,723,974	8,698,214	57.8%	44.2%	1,123,717	1,303,349	-13.8%	-18.3%	34,663,339	41,113,655	-15.7%	-21.4%
September	22,012,507	29,886,060	-26.3%	-35.5%	13,374,865	8,638,227	54.8%	47.6%	1,295,793	1,344,887	-3.7%	-13.5%	36,683,164	39,869,174	-8.0%	-17.1%
October	36,464,280	39,606,607	-7.9%	-27.4%	15,424,578	8,715,844	77.0%	54.8%	1,927,642	1,826,166	5.6%	-7.6%	53,816,499	50,148,618	7.3%	-10.1%
November	24,630,899	32,892,802	-25.1%	-26.9%	10,514,316	7,958,525	32.1%	50.7%	1,239,638	1,338,827	-7.4%	-7.6%	36,384,853	42,190,154	-13.8%	-10.8%
December	22,871,661	30,545,959	-25.1%	-26.7%	9,579,818	7,884,309	21.5%	46.2%	1,040,654	1,165,301	-10.7%	-8.0%	33,492,133	39,595,569	-15.4%	-11.5%
January	12,224,328	16,067,073	-23.9%	-26.5%	11,496,931	8,953,299	28.4%	43.5%	491,776	541,081	-9.1%	-8.1%	24,213,034	25,561,453	-5.3%	-11.0%
February	11,355,651	17,832,201	-36.3%	-27.2%	11,721,484	8,241,069	42.2%	43.4%	500,226	623,049	-19.7%	-8.8%	23,577,360	26,696,319	-11.7%	-11.0%
March	17,985,847	11,867,918	51.6%	-23.4%	17,421,103	1,892,976	820.3%	64.3%	793,196	447,226	77.4%	-5.0%	36,200,146	14,208,120	154.8%	-3.8%
April	25,050,559	2,109,282	1087.6%	-13.8%	17,949,440	286,146	6172.8%	89.0%	1,160,333	7,034	16396.3%	6.5%	44,160,331	2,402,461	1738.1%	9.1%
May	-	4,523,980	-	-	-	1,925,692	-	-	-	174,869	-	-	-	6,624,541	-	-
June	-	11,770,482	-	-	-	9,657,143	-	-	-	681,214	-	-	-	22,108,839	-	-
Total	<u>\$ 211,543,697</u>	<u>\$ 261,801,781</u>			<u>\$ 133,489,153</u>	<u>\$ 82,193,662</u>			<u>\$ 10,705,122</u>	<u>\$ 10,909,423</u>			<u>\$ 355,737,973</u>	<u>\$ 354,904,866</u>		

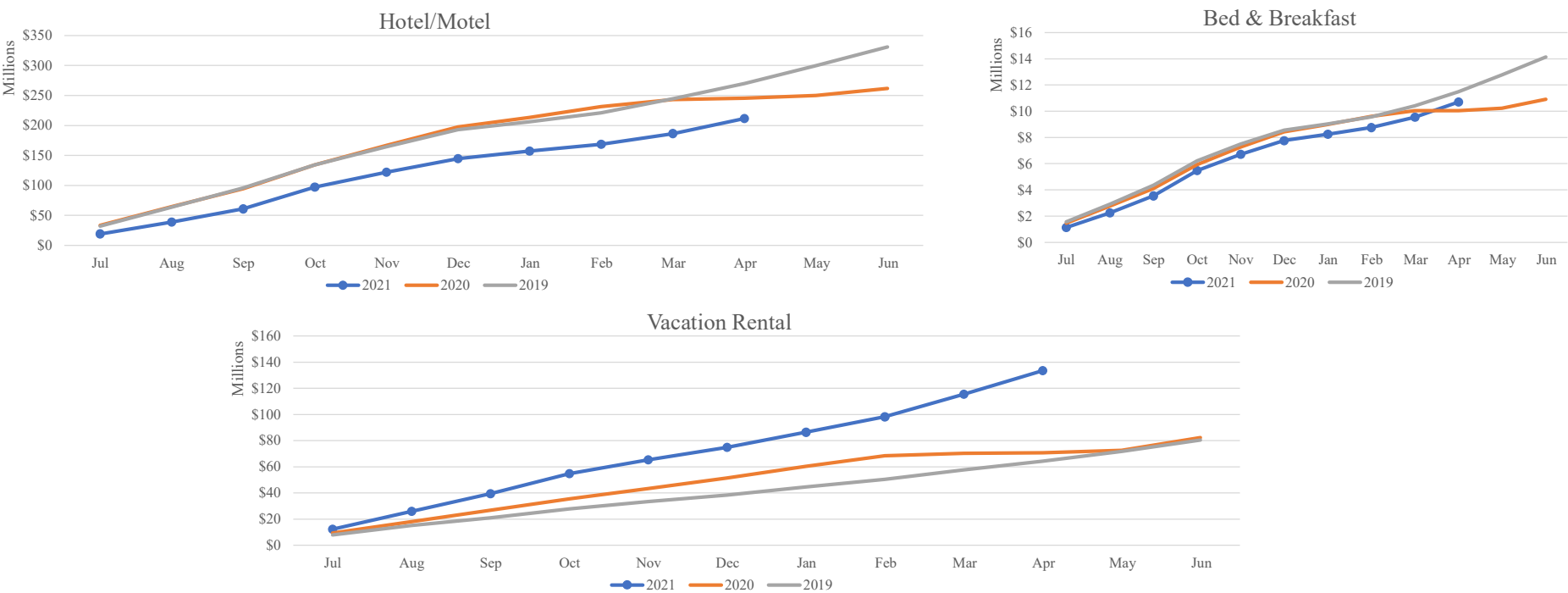
BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Total Lodging Sales by Type
Shown by Month of Sale, Year-to-Date
May 31, 2021

Total Lodging Sales by Type, Year-to-Date



Year-to-Date Lodging Sales by Type, Compared to Prior Year



Destination Performance Report



Lodging & Visitor Overview - May 2021

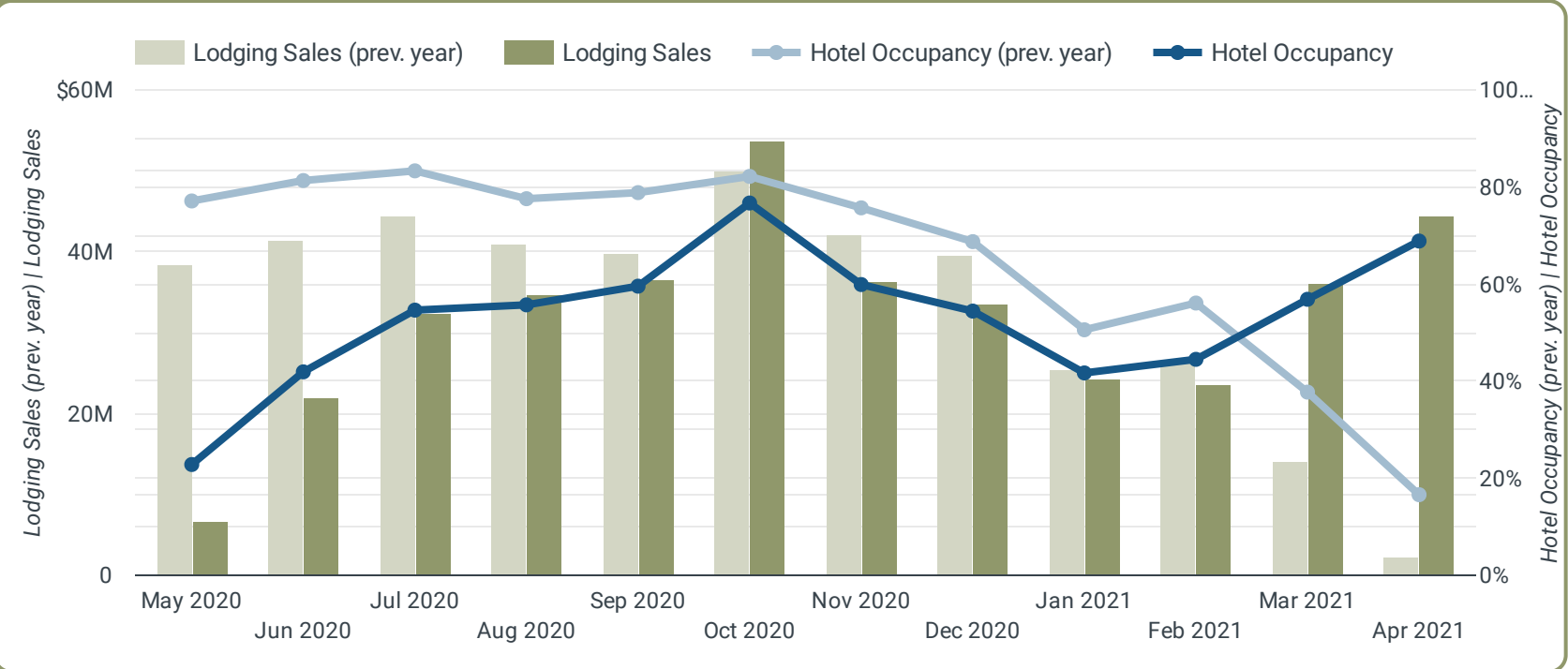
Lodging Sales \$44,431,592 (April) ↑ 1,749.4%	Hotel Occupancy* 68.9% (April) ↑ 314.7%	Hotel Demand* 180,880 (April) ↑ 457.9%	Hotel ADR* \$150.65 (April) ↑ 110.7%	Hotel RevPAR* \$103.75 (April) ↑ 773.9%
Airport Passengers 97,905 (April) ↑ 4,034.5%	Asheville Visitor Center 14,041 ↑ 4,518.8%	Pack Sq Visitor Center 0 N/A	Black Mtn Visitor Center 4,831 ↑ 2,189.6%	Travel Guide Requests 2,863 ↑ 117.9%

Lodging & Visitor Overview - Fiscal Year 20-21

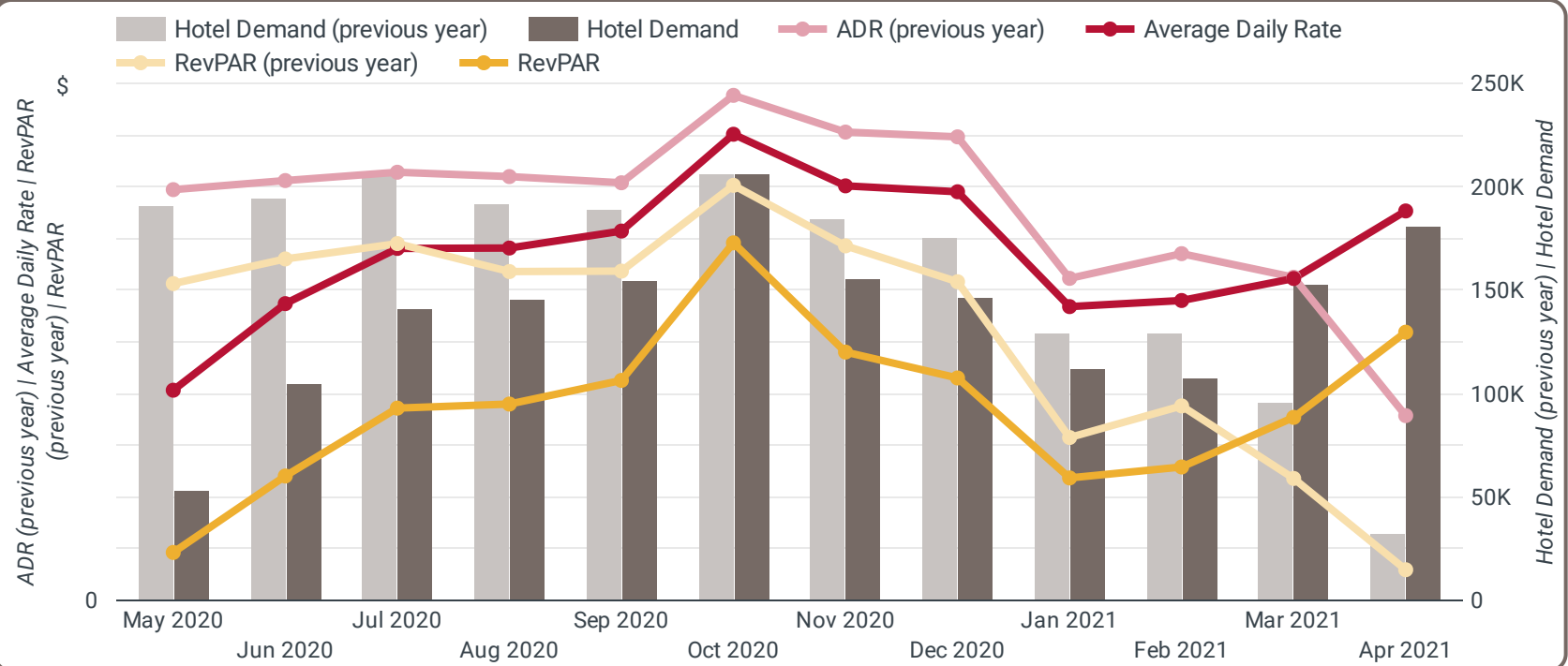
Lodging Sales \$356,009,231 ↑ 9.2%	Hotel Occupancy* 57.4% ↓ -9.8%	Hotel Demand* 1,505,243 ↓ -2.3%	Hotel ADR* \$144.99 ↓ -10.4%	Hotel RevPAR* \$83.21 ↓ -19.2%
Airport Passengers 630,065 ↓ -46.8%	Asheville Visitor Center 85,317 ↓ -42.1%	Pack Sq Visitor Center 0 ↓ -100.0%	Black Mtn Visitor Center 27,628 ↑ 47.5%	Travel Guide Requests 25,339 ↑ 2.2%

Lodging Sales and Hotel Occupancy*

* Source: STR, Inc. Republication or other re-use of this data without the express written permission of STR is strictly prohibited.



Hotel Demand*, Average Daily Rate* and Revenue Per Available Room*



Destination Performance Report



Short Term Rental Data - April 2021

Occupancy	ADR	RevPAR	Demand
68.1%	\$108.75	\$74.10	137,673
↑ 40.9%	↑ 27.2%	↑ 79.2%	↑ 144.7%

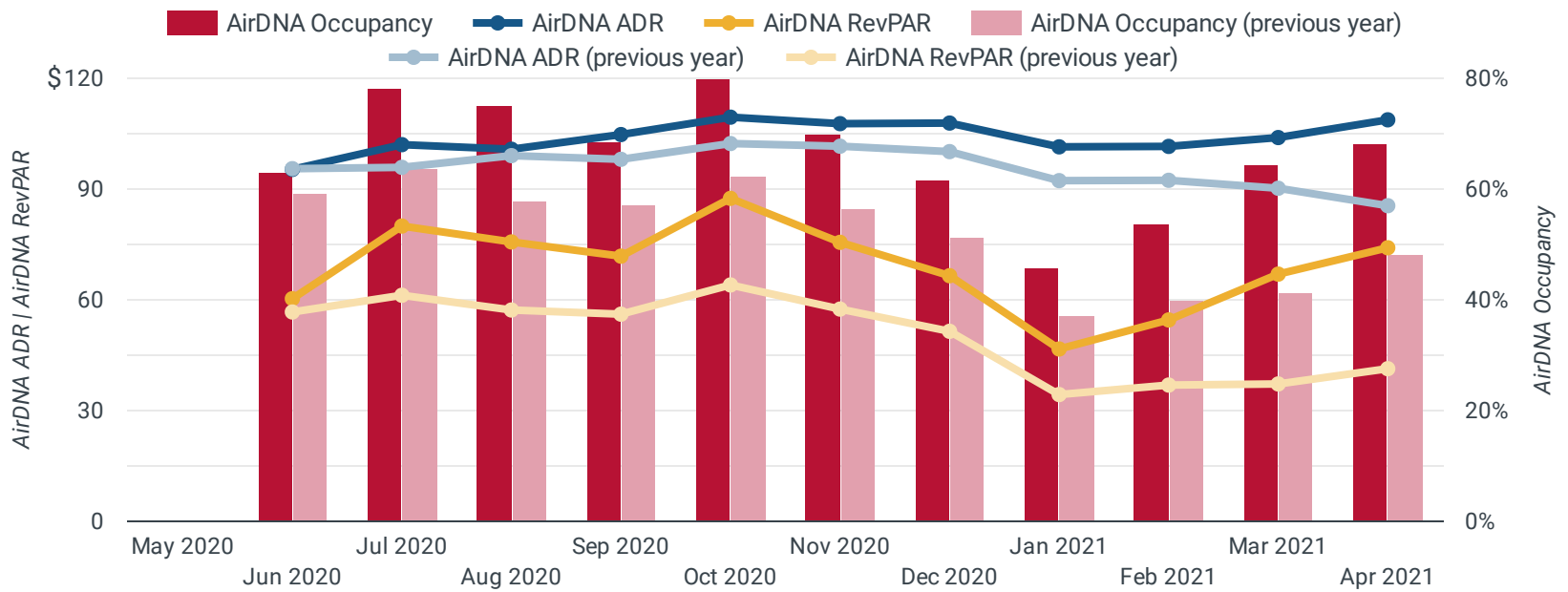
Short Term Rental Data - Fiscal Year 19-20

Occupancy	ADR	RevPAR	Demand
66.9%	\$105.13	\$70.31	1,208,353
↑ 28.3%	↑ 8.5%	↑ 39.2%	↑ 23.7%

AirDNA ADR, RevPAR and Occupancy

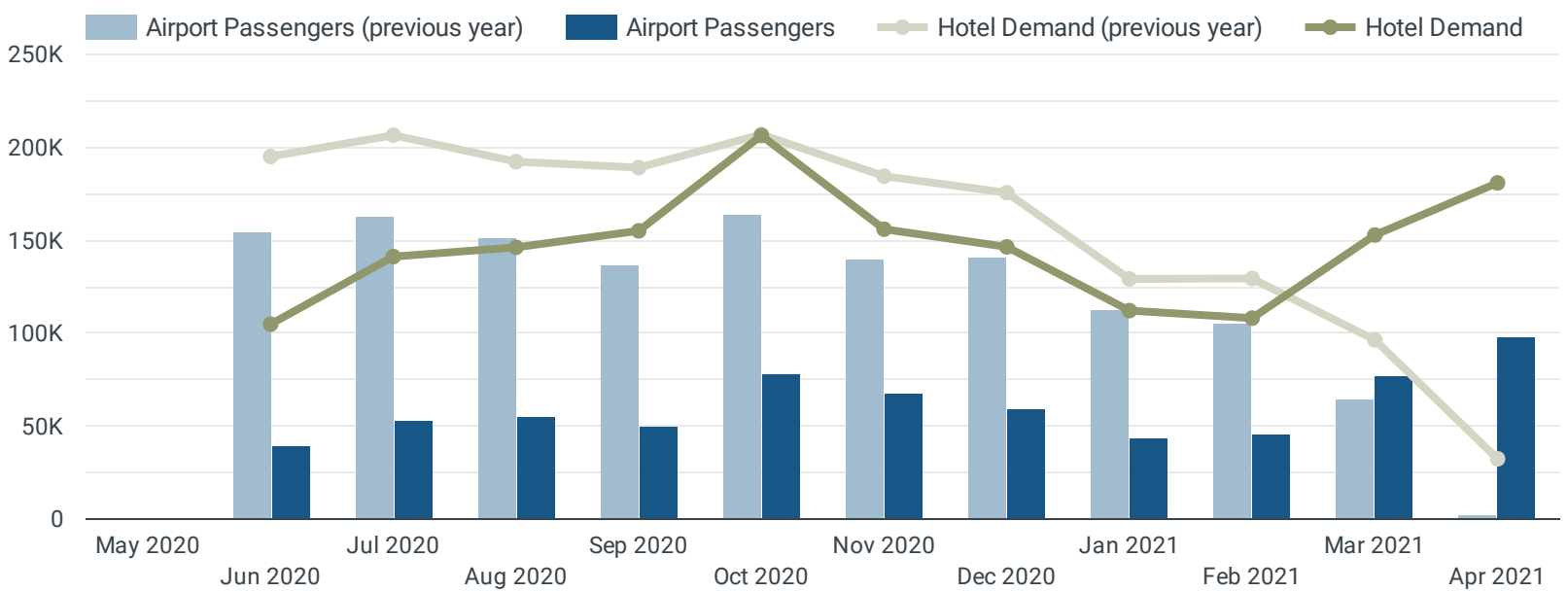
* Short Term Rental Data Source: AirDNA

**See AirDNA Cancellation Accuracy note on Report Glossary (Page 8)

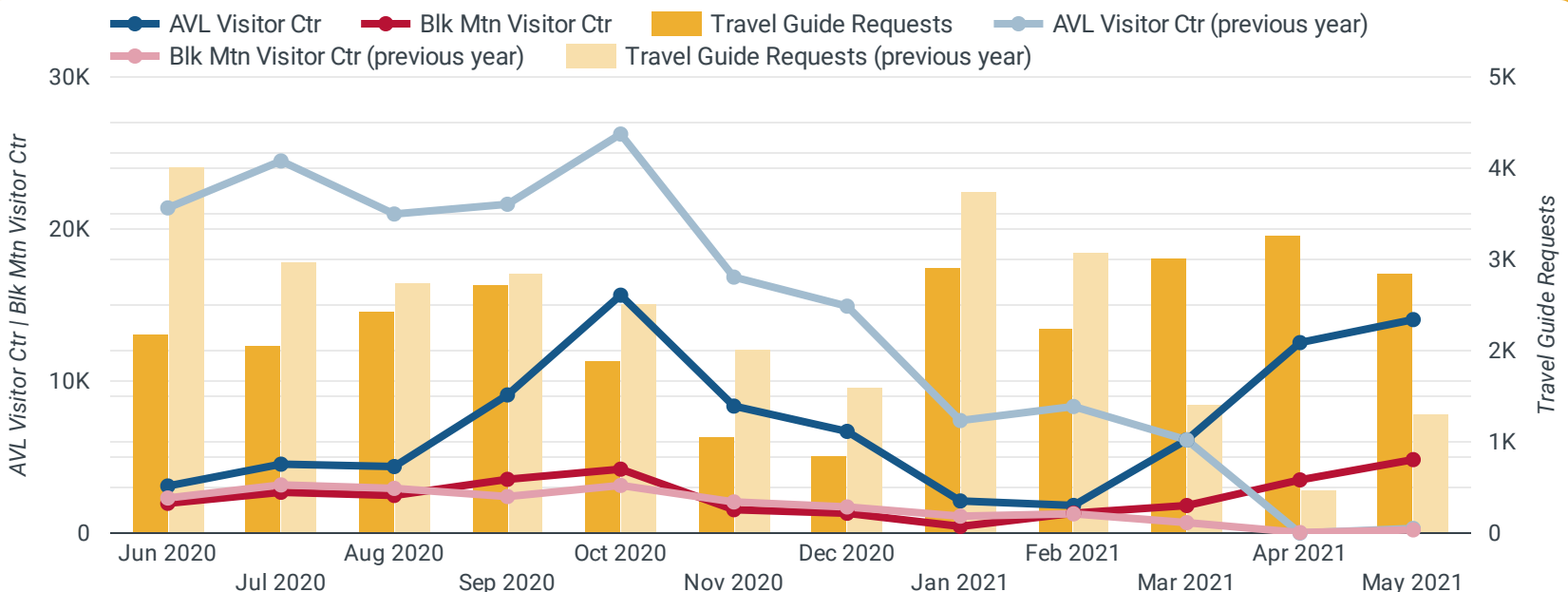


Airport Passengers vs. Hotel Demand*

* Source: STR, Inc. Reproduction or other re-use of this data without the express written permission of STR is strictly prohibited.



Visitor Center & Travel Guide



Sales Department Performance Report



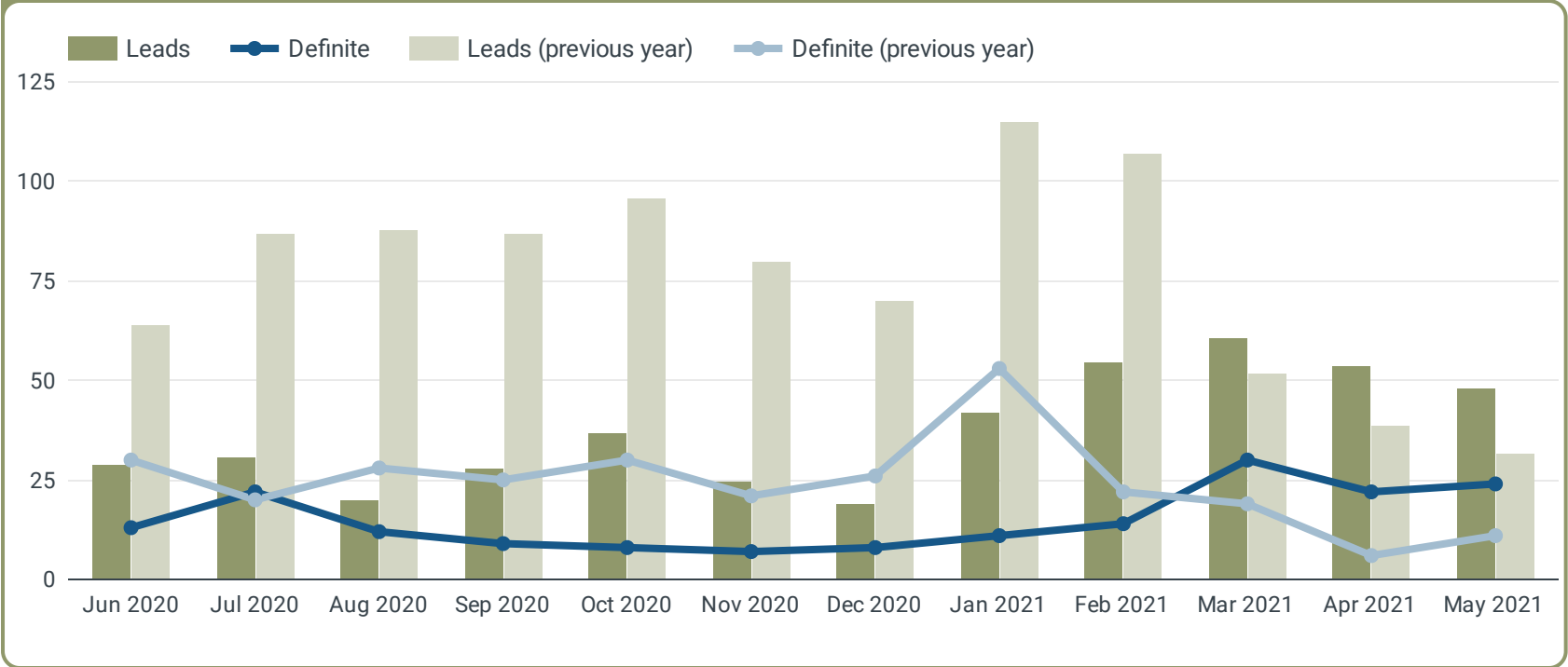
Sales Leads and Outreach - May 2021

Sales Leads Issued 48 ↑ 50.0%	Room Nights (Leads) 12,153 ↑ 69.5%	Leads Turned Definite 28 ↑ 115.4%	Room Nights (Definite) 4,325 ↑ 351.9%	Estimated Revenue \$1,030,051 ↑ 451.0%	
P2P Outreach 562 ↓ -39.4%	Indirect Outreach 12,663 ↑ 1.6%	Group Events 11 ↑ N/A	Room Nights Generated 710 ↑ N/A	Actualized Revenue \$113,507 ↑ N/A	Groups Served 23 ↑ 130.0%

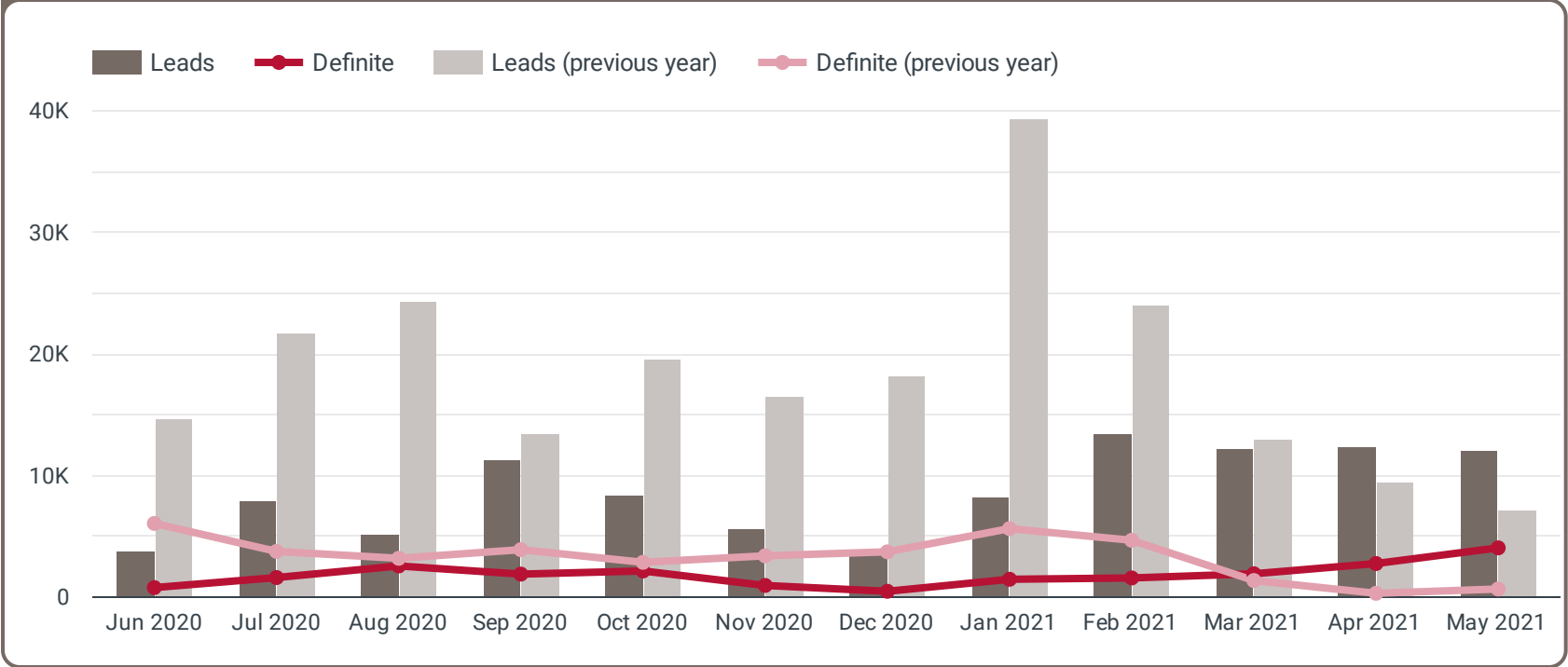
Sales Leads and Outreach - Fiscal Year 20-21

Sales Leads Issued 420 ↓ -50.8%	Room Nights (Leads) 101,352 ↓ -51.1%	Leads Turned Definite 203 ↓ -29.3%	Room Nights (Definite) 24,497 ↓ -36.5%	Estimated Total Revenue \$5,695,938 ↓ -45.7%	
P2P Outreach 8,502 ↓ -20.3%	Indirect Outreach 134,525 ↓ -0.4%	Group Events 114 ↓ -63.2%	Room Nights Generated 17,850 ↓ -76.3%	Actualized Revenue \$3,831,291 ↓ -83.4%	Groups Served 174 ↓ -41.8%

Sales Leads vs. Definite



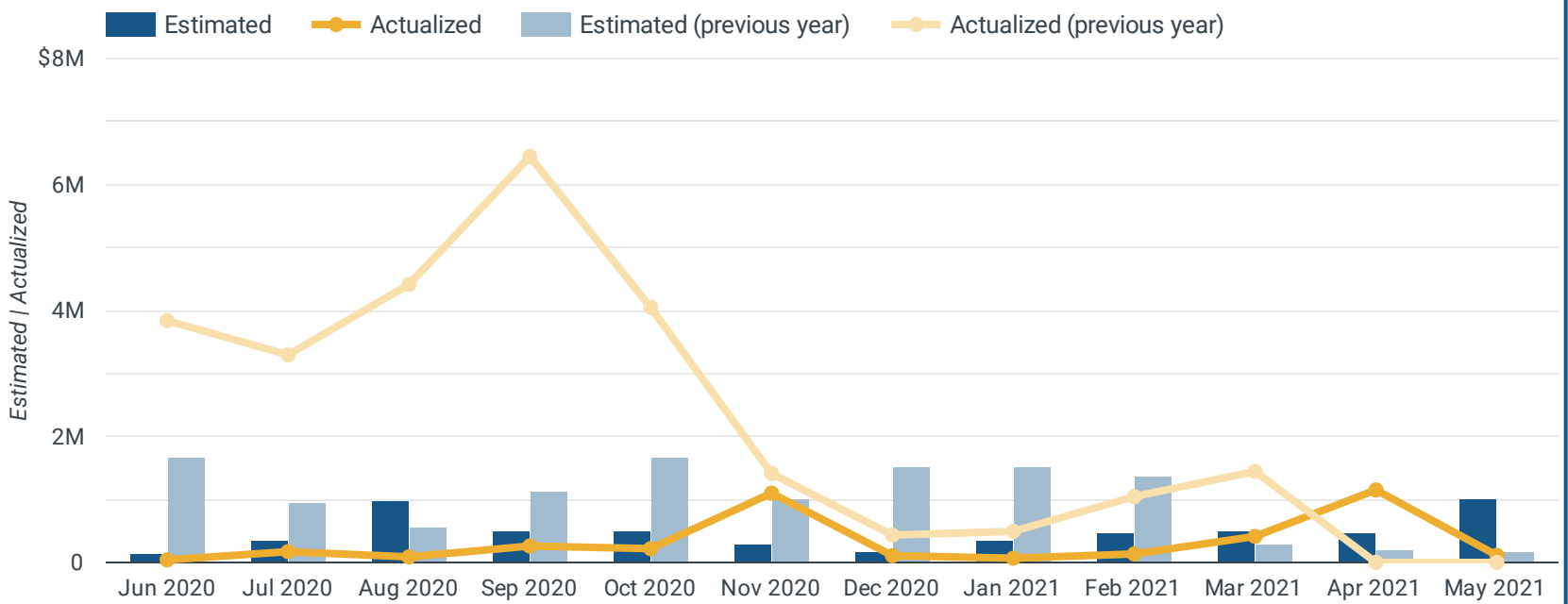
Room Nights Represented in Leads vs. Definite



Sales Department Performance Report



Estimated vs. Actualized Revenue



Sales Outreach 2021 by Month

	Month of Year ▾	Person-to-Person Outreach		% Δ	Indirect Outreach		% Δ
1.	May 2021		562	-39.4%		12,663	1.6%
2.	Apr 2021		732	7.3%		0	-100.0%
3.	Mar 2021		875	11.7%		26,983	2.1%
4.	Feb 2021		996	9.8%		12,628	149.5%
5.	Jan 2021		856	-1.9%		23,467	77.3%
6.	Dec 2020		734	-25.7%		12,759	118.7%
7.	Nov 2020		757	-30.9%		17,150	4,637.6%
8.	Oct 2020		918	-19.2%		7,653	-19.9%
9.	Sep 2020		616	-42.0%		6,414	-65.6%

Group Events by Month and Room Nights Generated

	Month of Year ▾	Group Events This Month		% Δ	Room Nights Generated		% Δ
1.	May 2021		11	null		355	null
2.	Apr 2021		21	null		1,709	null
3.	Mar 2021		7	-58.8%		1,474	-61.1%
4.	Feb 2021		3	-83.3%		670	-71.9%
5.	Jan 2021		1	-90.9%		124	-92.1%
6.	Dec 2020		6	-75.0%		232	-76.7%
7.	Nov 2020		10	-75.6%		2,129	-23.9%
8.	Oct 2020		25	-65.3%		567	-89.9%
9.	Sep 2020		13	-75.0%		548	-89.7%

Marketing Department Performance Report



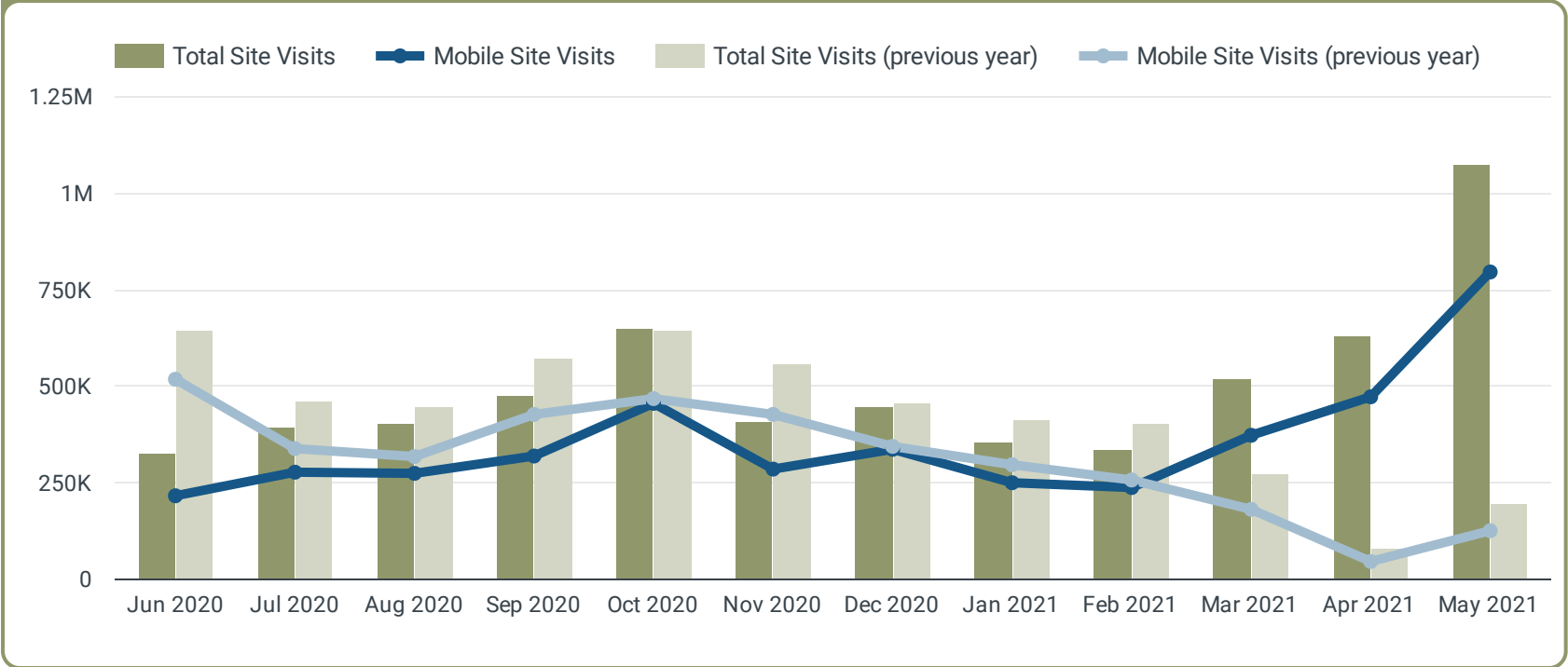
Marketing Metrics Overview - May 2021

Website Visits 1,094,132 ↑ 452.3%	Mobile Site Visits 808,257 ↑ 536.2%	aRes - Room Nights 59 ↑ 883.3%	aRes - Room Revenue \$11,786 ↑ 9,464.3%	Total Facebook Fans 302,949 ↑ 1.9%
PR Publicity Value \$1,476,590 ↓ -39.9%	PR Estimated Impressions 477,316,901 ↑ 91.6%	Significant Placements 16 ↓ -23.8%	Media Touchpoints 71 ↑ 294.4%	Video Views 35,868 ↓ -66.9%

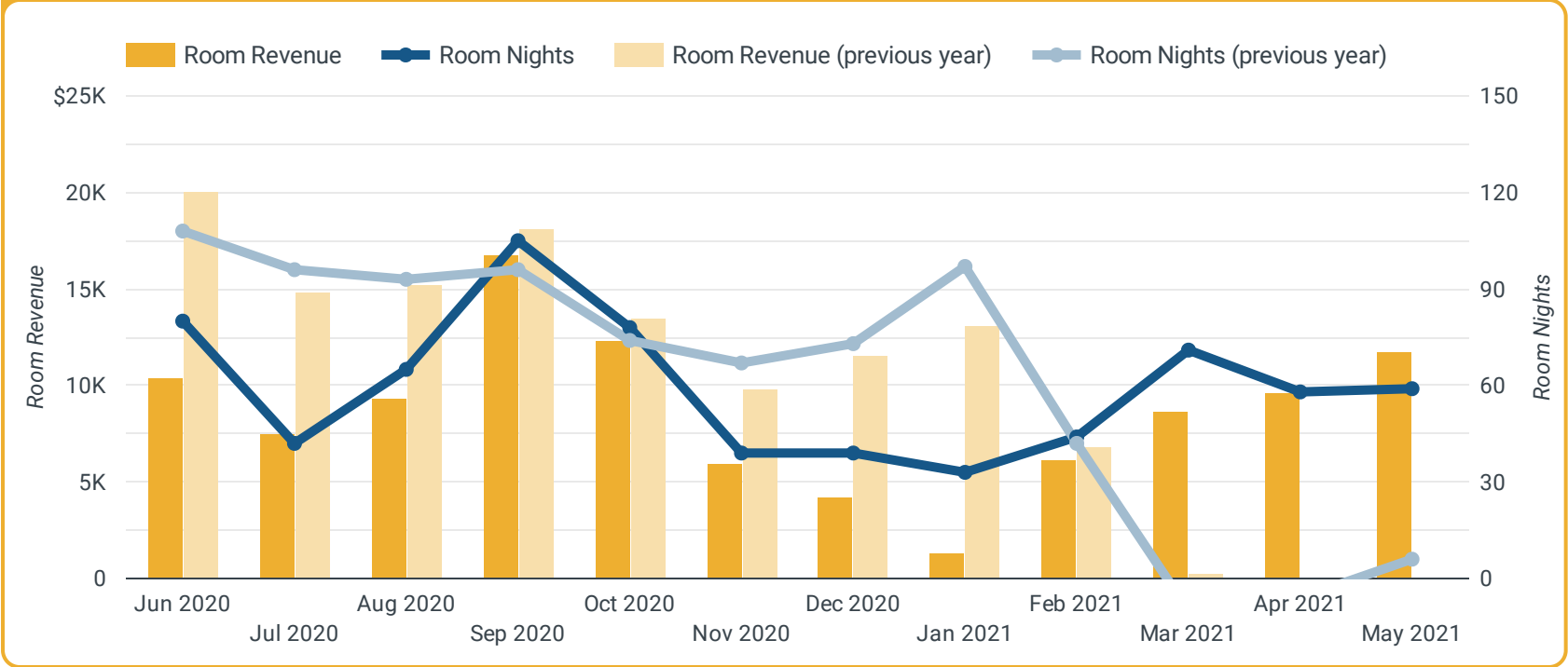
Marketing Metrics Overview - Fiscal Year 20-21

Website Visits 5,717,819 ↑ 26.0%	Mobile Site Visits 4,081,720 ↑ 26.0%	aRes - Room Nights 633 ↑ 0.8%	aRes - Room Revenue \$93,982 ↓ -7.9%	Avg. Total Facebook Fans 299,503 ↑ 1.5%
PR Publicity Value \$21,274,625 ↓ -64.2%	PR Estimated Impressions 8,398,599,000 ↑ 218.4%	Significant Placements 362 ↑ 6.5%	Media Touchpoints 638 ↑ 12.3%	Video Views 420,408 ↓ -39.2%

ExploreAsheville.com Web Stats



Online Reservation (aRes) Data



Marketing Department Performance Report



Print & Broadcast Value & Impressions

	Month of Year ▾	Publicity Value - Print/Broadcast	% Δ	Editorial Impressions - Print/Broadcast	% Δ
1.	May 2021	\$632,434	-68%	6,004,725	71.81%
2.	Apr 2021	\$606,066	602%	2,693,412	566.28%
3.	Mar 2021	\$168,396	132%	2,126,617	925.76%
4.	Feb 2021	\$1,864,896	-15%	8,406,237	206.22%
5.	Jan 2021	\$172,581	-98%	8,873,652	14.77%
6.	Dec 2020	\$76,207	-96%	470,974	-93.55%
7.	Nov 2020	\$43,979	-98%	175,847	-96.36%

Online Publicity Value and Impressions

	Month of Year ▾	Publicity Value - Online	% Δ	Estimated Impressions - Online	% Δ
1.	May 2021	\$844,156	83%	471,312,176	91.58%
2.	Apr 2021	\$671,684	-36%	372,298,752	-32.88%
3.	Mar 2021	\$1,692,840	53%	900,829,988	52.95%
4.	Feb 2021	\$1,426,820	2,234%	761,356,074	286.24%
5.	Jan 2021	\$1,405,853	490%	747,794,055	556.23%
6.	Dec 2020	\$1,863,214	3,327%	991,071,366	765.1%
7.	Nov 2020	\$1,443,514	859%	767,826,179	308.06%

Media Placements & Touchpoints

	Month of Year ▾	Media Touchpoints / Interactions	% Δ	Significant Placements	% Δ
1.	May 2021	71	294.4%	16	-23.8%
2.	Apr 2021	54	86.2%	29	-6.5%
3.	Mar 2021	30	-58.3%	41	46.4%
4.	Feb 2021	77	97.4%	29	38.1%
5.	Jan 2021	53	-31.2%	22	-40.5%
6.	Dec 2020	64	60.0%	37	54.2%
7.	Nov 2020	37	-9.8%	31	-18.4%

Facebook Fans & Video Views (All Platforms)

	Month of Year ▾	Total Facebook Fans	% Δ	Video Views	% Δ
1.	May 2021	302,949	null	35,868	null
2.	Apr 2021	300,297	null	22,709	null
3.	Mar 2021	300,023	null	22,627	null
4.	Feb 2021	299,753	null	33,048	null
5.	Jan 2021	300,544	null	40,088	null
6.	Dec 2020	299,322	null	32,752	null
7.	Nov 2020	299,114	null	25,690	null

Destination Performance Report - Glossary



Destination Performance Metrics

Lodging Sales - Total lodging sales for all property types reported for the previous month. Data is provided by the Buncombe County Finance Department.

Hotel Occupancy - Percentage of available rooms sold during the previous month. Occupancy is calculated by dividing the number of rooms sold by rooms available. Data is provided by Smith Travel Research.

Hotel Average Daily Rate (ADR) - A measure of the average rate paid for rooms sold for the previous month, calculated by dividing room revenue by rooms sold. Data is provided by Smith Travel Research.

Hotel Demand - The number of rooms sold in the previous month (excludes complimentary rooms). Data is provided by Smith Travel Research.

Hotel Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) - Total room revenue for the previous month divided by the total number of available rooms. Data is provided by Smith Travel Research.

Total Airport Passengers - Total monthly air traffic reported for the previous month. Data is provided by Asheville Regional Airport.

Asheville Visitor Center - Total monthly visitors to the Asheville Visitor Center. Data is provided by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Pack Square Park Visitor Center - Total monthly visitors to the Pack Square Park Visitor Center. Data is provided by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce.

Black Mountain Visitor Center - Total monthly visitors to the Black Mountain Visitor Center. Data is provided by the Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce.

Travel Guide Requests - The number of travel guides requested monthly via the website and leads. Data provided by Simpleview CRM.

AirDNA Listing room nights - the sum of all AirDNA listing nights that were available for rent times the number of rooms per listing. As of 2/1/19, AirDNA data includes both Airbnb and HomeAway short term rental data for 1/1/17 to present.

AirDNA Occupancy - Booked AirDNA listing room nights divided by available AirDNA listing room nights in the given month. This only counts listings as being available if they had one booked night in the month. Data is provided by AirDNA.

AirDNA ADR (Average Daily Rate) - Total AirDNA monthly revenue divided by the total number of AirDNA listing room nights booked in a given month. ADR includes cleaning fees but not other AirDNA service fees or taxes. Data is provided by AirDNA.

AirDNA RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) - Total AirDNA monthly revenue divided by the total number of AirDNA listing room nights available in a given month. Data is provided by AirDNA.

Sales Performance Metrics

Sales Leads Issued - Monthly tentative sales leads sent to hotel partners. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Room Nights (Leads) - Monthly room nights represented in the tentative leads sent to hotel partners. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Leads Turned Definite - Monthly leads sent to hotel partners that have resulted in a rooms agreement. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Room Nights (Definite) - Monthly room nights represented in definite leads. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Estimated Revenue - Estimated monthly revenue of definite leads. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

P2P Outreach - Monthly person-to-person interactions between the sales team and clients. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Indirect Outreach - Monthly communications from the sales team to more than one client at a time. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Group Events - The number of groups who were sourced through the bureau and met in Asheville during the given month. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Room Nights Generated - Room nights generated by the groups who were sourced through the bureau and met in Asheville during the given month. Data is provided by hotel partners and compiled by Simpleview CRM.

Actualized Revenue - Room nights generated by the groups who were sourced through the bureau and met in Asheville during the given month. Data is provided by hotel partners and is compiled by Simpleview CRM.

Groups Serviced - Groups who met in Asheville who received or were offered additional planning services by Explore Asheville during the given month. Data is provided by Simpleview CRM.

Marketing Performance Metrics

Website Visits - Number of monthly website sessions to ExploreAsheville.com. Data is provided by Google Analytics.

Mobile Site Visits - Number of monthly website sessions from mobile and tablet devices to ExploreAsheville.com. Data is provided by Google Analytics.

aRes - Room Nights - Number of monthly room nights booked through aRes Travel third party booking engine at reservations.ExploreAsheville.com. Data is provided by aRes Travel.

aRes - Room Revenue - Total monthly room revenue for rooms booked through aRes Travel third party booking engine at reservations.ExploreAsheville.com. Data excludes cancellations and is provided by aRes Travel.

Total Facebook Fans - Total number of Facebook fans for the Visit Asheville Facebook page reported monthly. Data is provided by Facebook.

PR Publicity Value – Estimated ad equivalency cost of clips secured across multiple mediums reported for the previous month. Data is provided by Cision.

PR Estimated Impressions – The circulation of the publication and the estimated gross impressions for broadcast and digital articles by the placements reported for the previous month. Data is provided by Cision.

Significant Placements – Clips from online, print or broadcast media that Explore Asheville had a hand in securing or that feature Asheville predominantly and have a reach of certain threshold. Reported for the previous month. Data is provided by Cision.

Media Touchpoints – Monthly contact that members of the PR team had with various media outlets or journalists. Data is provided by Explore Asheville PR Team.

Video Views (All Platforms) - Figures for total monthly video views on all platforms. Data is provided by YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, and Instagram and does not include advertising campaign views.

*** Source:** STR, Inc. Republication or other re-use of this data without the express written permission of STR is strictly prohibited.

**** AIRDNA Cancellation Accuracy** - The AIRDNA booking algorithm determines whether unavailable dates are due to a reservation by a guest or a blocked date by the host. AIRDNA can only pick up cancellations if the unavailable days changes back to available on the listing calendar. If the dates remain unavailable, then there is no way for AIRDNA to have any visibility on these cancellations. During periods of unusually high cancellations, AIRDNA may overestimate room night demand for short term rentals.

June 30, 2021

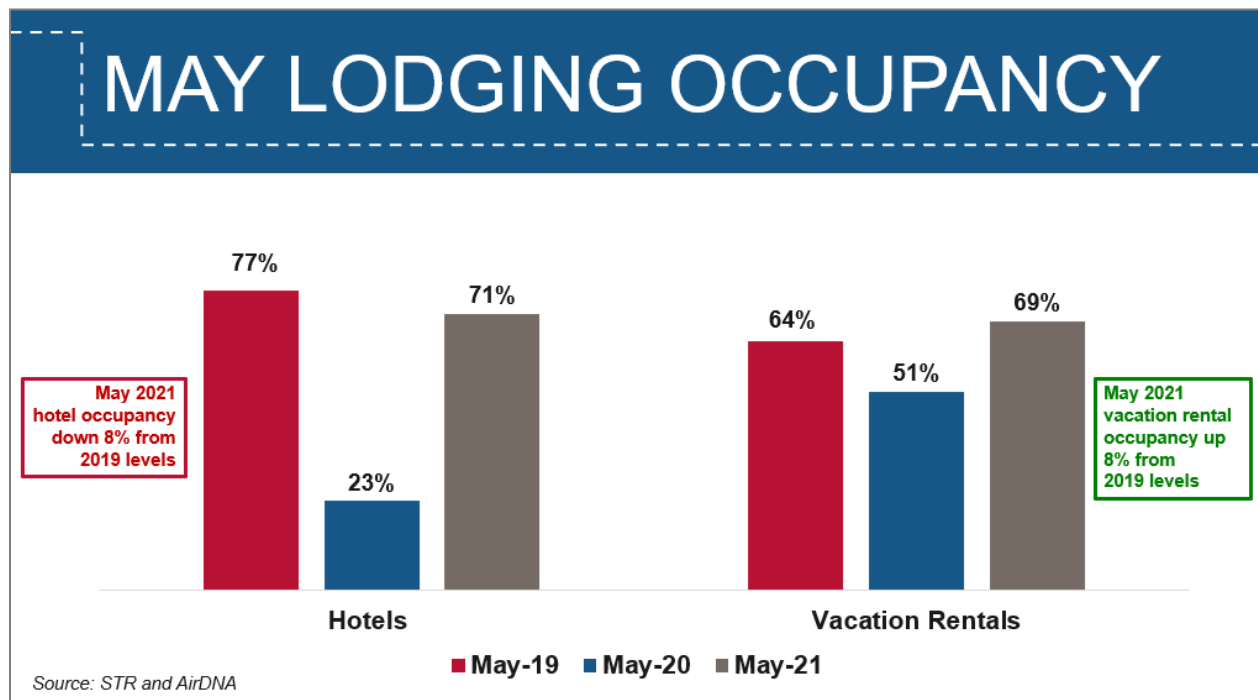
To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

From: Vic Isley

Subject: President & CEO's Report of May 2021 Activities

Hotel occupancy for the month of May 2021 reached 71 percent, up significantly from the 23% in May 2020, though still down 8% from May 2019 levels.

Short-term vacation rentals reached 69% in May 2021, up 8% from the benchmark year of 2019. This continues to be good news for local residents owning vacation rentals and earning more and benefitting from the return of visitors to our community. It also marks the first month since the pandemic that hotel occupancy eclipsed vacation rental occupancy.



MAY BY THE NUMBERS

- During May, the sales team posted 562 personal contacts (down 39%). May sales activities generated 48 sales leads (up 50%) and 28 convention bookings (up 115%), representing 4,325 rooms (up 352%). Eleven months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are down 29 percent and room nights represented are down 37 percent.
- CVB sales leads generated 11 group events in May (up 100%), with corresponding revenue of \$56,755 (up 100%). The services team assisted 23 groups (up 100%).
- The PR team landed 16 significant placements in May (down 24%), with 71 media touchpoints (up 294%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$632k with reach of 6 million (up 72%). Online placements added \$844k in value and reach of more than 471 million (up 92%).
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 1,094,132 visits (up 452%), including 808,257 to the mobile site (up 536%). Our Facebook fan base total is 302,949 (up 2%) and video views totaled 35,868 (down 67%).
- In May 2021, there were 2,863 Asheville Visitor Guide requests compared to 1,314 the previous year.
- Paid search generated 92k site visits in May with average time on site of 1:24 and an average of 2.02 pageviews per visit; click through rate was 18.4 percent.
- Online hotel reservations totaled 59 room nights (up 883%) with total room revenue of \$11,786 (up 9,464%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 14,041 visitors (up 4,519%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion remains closed. The Black Mountain Visitor center welcomed 4,831 visitors (up 2,190%).

LODGING & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$44,431,592 in April (up 1,749%).
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 62.8 percent during April (up 120%). The average daily room rate was \$138.68 (up 24%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$87.09 (up 173%). Room demand increased 159 percent with 333,704 rooms sold.
- AirDNA reported short term rental occupancy of 68 percent (up 41%), ADR of \$108.75 (up 27%), and RevPAR of \$74.10 (up 79%). Total demand for short term rentals increased 145 percent to total 137,673 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased percent to total 175,767 in April.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Project Updates:

- Spring Ad Campaign: Launched final advertising campaign creative assets in May for spring campaign which will extend through July.
- Nonstop Flights: Developed and launched paid social campaign to raise awareness of nonstop flight service in the following markets: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, DC, NYC, and

Philadelphia. Additionally, a new nonstop flight / transportation webpage was created and launched dynamic content via Bound geotargeting for homepage sliders and on advertising landing page.

- Matador Content Partnership: Produced two influencer videos to be distributed via Matador travel site social channels, REI's social channels and EA owned channels.
- Contracted and delivered assets for participation in the Pride Journey's LGBT travel directory.
- Signed sponsorship agreement for American Cornhole League tournament. Sponsorship package included on-air commercial during broadcast, graphics on graphic boards throughout the arena, and b-roll video exposure.
- Worked with SMARI to launch creative testing of new advertising assets. Initial results should be delivered in June.
- Received 15 agency responses from our RFP process. Narrowed down to 4 finalists for next round of the selection process in June. Selection should be finalized and presented to board in June.
- Created first of three videos for new social/web campaign focused on area trails/waterfalls told through the lens of local naturalists and outdoor tour guide with emphasis on sustainability/Leave No Trace. First one featured Catawba Falls.
- Created content series around month-long Wilma Dykeman Greenway/RADTIP celebration.
- Developed new web story and social media content around self-care experiences in Asheville authored by Black Travel Alliance influencer Jewels Rhode.
- Revamped Wildflower Bloom Schedule on EA.com to add more viewing locations and added in July blooms to extend season.
- Logged 71 media touchpoints, initiated 37 pitches, and supported 9 media on the ground in Asheville in May.
- Hosted the *Samantha Brown's Places to Love* (PBS) crew of eight for five nights in the destination. The PR Team provided local connections, shoot logistic support, accommodations, b-roll/photo assets, and other details as needed. Filming locations include Citizen Vinyl, Biltmore, Moogseum, Blue Ridge Parkway, Folk Art Center, Smoky Park Supper Club, Eda Rhyne Distilling, Chai Pani, The Block with DeWayne Barton and Noir Collective.
- Provided story support for *TripAdvisor*, *Eater*, *Today.com*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Thrillist*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *The Points Guy*, *SHAPE*, *PrideJourney.com Country Magazine*, *Southern Living*, *Southbound Magazine*, *Ultimate Road Trips Guidebook* and *Sunseeker In-flight Magazine*.
- Photo support provided for *Chicago Tribune*, *Going on Faith*, *AmericanSparkTV*, *VIP Murfreesboro Magazine* and *Carolina Traveler*.
- Outreach: Team attended the Black Travel Alliance Wavelength event for content creators and influencers. Team conducted 15 one-on-one meetings and hosted another 20+ people in the Explore Asheville booth.
- Crowdriff file review and clean up for streamlined media asset support moving forward.
- Cision Media Database dashboard review and organization to update media targeting searches and earned coverage by theme. Moving toward incorporating pillar searches/dashboards for tracking and onboarding new Cision premier support rep.
- Updates of press sheets (general and culinary), accolades and online newsroom highlights.
- Assessed COVID-related policies for media site visits moving forward, looking at what other DMOs are doing to update or phase out current protocols.
- Wrote and produced 9 community stakeholder/partner newsletters and alerts – a total of 13,474 emails delivered with the unique open rate as high as 42.17% and averaging 34%. These included the Tourism Community Update and several alerts related to the Tourism Summit 2021 webinar series.

- Assistance provided to local media and/or coverage received: Included April board meeting, budget for FY 22, and projected lodging tax revenues, especially from vacation rentals; tourism jobs and the shortage of workers in tourism sector; selection of Asheville on a places-rated article in Money magazine; \$45K grant to Wortham Center; strategic pillars and Tourism Summit 2021 webinar series; Business NC Power List (includes Vic, current and former BCTDA board members); funding issues around Asheville Tourists McCormick Field; growth of vacation rentals occupancy and slower recovery of hotel industry; GRINDfest 2021 (Explore Asheville is a sponsor); SoCon Basketball Championships (Vic spoke at press conference); completion of RADTIP (Explore Asheville mentioned as supporter)
- Content on AshevilleCVB.com included Tourism Summit 2021 webinar series (speakers, recordings of discussions, explanation of strategic pillars); a perspectives piece on responsible tourism by County Commissioner Terri Wells; post on the Explore Asheville staff community service project (litter cleanup); other routine updates.

Future Updates:

- Hire new agency.
- Hire new positions in marketing: research analyst, PR manager and PR coordinator.
- Second & third videos for the Explore Asheville trails video series.
- Develop interactive map for EA.com homepage for the towns/neighborhoods' microsite project. Will develop new profile video on River Arts District in July.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES

Project Updates:

- Connie Holliday and Marshall Hilliard attended South Carolina Society of Association Executives annual meeting in Spartanburg. Marshall participated in a panel discussion on the benefits of using CVB services.
- American Bus Association's Virtual Marketplace: meeting one-on-one with 30 tour operators.
- Hosted ConferenceDirect third party planner out of Atlanta with her corporate client AGCO, a tractor manufacturer.
- Attended a meeting with REI Program team along with Marketing.
- Attended a new sports tradeshow Sports Express. Conducted 26 one on one appointments with sports planners and attended networking events. Met several new sports planners that have potential to come to Asheville. Received 1 RFP from the show at this point.
- Attended Connect Diversity and conducted 40 one on one appointments with meeting planners. Attended several education and networking events. We have received 3 RFP already from attending this show.
- DLP Real estate in Asheville for a site inspection. Group contracted 720 total hotel rooms after their visit.
- May bookings include (but are not limited to):
 - Alabama Natural Gas Association 2023 Annual Meeting – 817 rooms
 - DLP Real Estate Elite & Prosperity Event - Summer 2021 – 720 rooms
 - Asheville Lacrosse Classic (Girls) 2021 – 400 rooms
 - North Carolina Association of Municipal Attorneys 2022 Summer Conference – 352 rooms
 - Blue Ridge Furfest 2022 – 279 rooms
 - Gulf Games 2023, 2024, and 2025 – 177, 175, and 177 rooms respectively
 - 2021 Khrais / Soliman Wedding – 120 rooms
 - 2022 Martin / Cobb Wedding – 120 rooms

- Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange 2022 Summer Board Meeting – 108 rooms
- Work began with Miles Partnership to update the online meeting planners guide to reflect new brand messaging.
- The team took steps internally and with Simpleview to improve Account market segments to help with prospecting and reporting of industries aligned with organization goals.
- In preparation of the first in-person tradeshow this June and July, five new tabletop banners design were completed this week. Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility projects is the focus of one of the banners.
- Explore Asheville has advanced to the Finalist Round in the [2021 Stella Awards](#) from Northstar Meetings Group.
- An e-newsletter was sent to 12,661 meeting planners. Open Rate:13.7% and Click-To-Open Rate: 6.2%.
- In prep of more in-person meetings occurring, bulk attendee gift items and welcome gift inventory was filled.
- Met with KemperLesnik clients and Sports Commission staff to discuss building an event microsite promoting the event and ticket sales for a November sport event.
- Team members attended/participated in the following community events/projects.
 - Marshall Hilliard met with area Directors of Sales individually as part of his onboarding.
 - Explore Asheville Service Day in the River Arts District.
 - Civic Center Commission Monthly Meeting.
 - Attended the Blue Ridge Parkway Association Board Meeting.

Future Updates:

- Prepare for Quarterly DOS Meeting
- Meetings Database Institute
- Client FAMILIARIZATION Trips
- Chicago Client Event

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Project Updates:

- In May, 179 calendar event listings were processed, and 37 partner records were updated in May including: 8 Attractions, 4 Food & Drink, 9 Lodging, 15 Retail, and 1 Wedding Service.
- Four new partners were added in May: Glamorous Picnic Company, ASAP Farmers Market, Enka-Candler Tailgate Market, & Black Mountain Tailgate Market.
- Cancelled Accounts: five accounts were cancelled in May. Fresh Quarter, Oakley Farmers Market, and Asheville City Market South closed due to Covid 19. Green Sage Westgate closed but their locations (Merrimon Ave, Downtown, and South) remain open.
- Three One-on-One Wednesday sessions were held: two with current partners and one prospective partner.
- Visitor Guide distribution included 2,863 Individual Out-of-Market requests fulfilled; and 2,552 books or 58 cases of In-Market delivered to 25 industry partners; and 4,992 books or 114 cases of Out-of-Market delivered to 26 welcome centers/AAA offices/etc.
- Sent partner survey to collect short-term group services information for the Group Sales team. 121 partners responded with updated information.
- Audited listings in the tailgate and farmers markets category, cancelling accounts for discontinued markets and adding new.
- Created a new industry-specific YouTube channel to separate partner and industry specific recordings from the consumer-facing channel, which will house extranet training videos.

- CE team members attended community meetings and events including: African American Business Association, the Chamber's Member Advisory Council, AIGA Business Outreach Committee Meeting, Chamber Challenge 5k, Lunch & Leads, River Arts Business Association (RADBA), Partners in Progress with the Weaverville Business Association (WBA), and Town Hall: Addressing Homelessness.
- Sponsorships: EA provided sponsorship for GRINDfest, the Big Crafty and the Asheville Downtown Association's Downtown After 5 series, Holiday Parade and Fourth of July.
- Partner Events: The Tourism Summit 2021, a four-part virtual series of panel discussions on the four new pillars with partners and community partners took place on May 10, 12, 17, and 19.
 - *'Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth'* panel discussion on May 10 had 132 registered and 84 attendees; panelists included: UNC Asheville Chancellor Nancy Cable; Asheville City Manager Debra Campbell; Buncombe County Manager Avril Pinder; Kit Cramer, President & CEO, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce.
 - *'Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel'* panel discussion on May 12 had 129 registered and 73 attendees; panelists included: Amy Allison, Director, NC Outdoor Recreation Industry Office; Dawn Chavez, Executive Director, Asheville GreenWorks; Peyton O'Connor, Director, Buncombe County Parks & Recreation; and Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
 - *'Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences'* panel discussion on May 17 - 171 registered and 84 attendees; panelists included: Aisha Adams, Program Developer, Lenoir Rhyne Equity & Diversity Institute; Adriana Chavela, Founder & Executive Director, Hola Carolina; Himanshu Karvir, President & CEO of Virtelle Hospitality; Chair, Buncombe County TDA; Catherine Mitchell, Executive Director, River Front Development Group, Inc.; Anthony Thomas, Board Member, YMI Cultural Center; Tina White, Executive Director, Blue Ridge Pride.
 - *'Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit'* panel discussion on May 19 - 183 registered and 82 attendees panelists included: Franzi Charen, Director, Asheville Grown Business Alliance, Co-Owner, Hip Replacements; Katie Cornell, Executive Director, Asheville Area Arts Council; Cleaster Cotton, Artist; Founder, Youth Artists Empowered; Inventor, ALNUGE Codes; Jessica Tomasin, Founder, Connect Beyond Festival; Studio Manager, Echo Mountain Recording; and Lucious Wilson, General Manager, Wedge Brewing Co.; President, River Arts District Business Association.
- Staff Service Day: EA staff participated in a clean-up on May 7 in the River Arts District on May 7 in coordination with GreenWorks, RAD and RADBA to assist with the RAD community's month-long grand opening celebrations
- Wayfinding: Continued efforts for the kiosk content refresh project are in progress including updating localized maps to include walk times in the downtown area. An order to replenish the final inventory was placed with local artists. Safety messaging panels at each kiosk location will be replaced with updated Bear message that welcomes back guests and a reminder to be kind and have patience as the community emerges from lockdown.
- TPDF: The City of Asheville submitted a request to waive the punch list requirements and receive balance of grant award to close out the project. The amendment will be presented to the board in June. The YMI will present an update on project and a refined scope at the June board meeting.
- African American Heritage Trail: Conducted three working sessions with research project team to review research, develop trail content themes and possible routes, and start planning next round of Community Engagement sessions. Consulted with MERJE on best practices for market content organization. Solicited proposal for equity review consulting services of the project process.

Future Updates:

- Partner event strategy is in development for FY 21-22. Early planning underway for partner event focusing on the responsible travel pillar in combination with a summer social.
- Earned Revenue: Plans underway to update the Festivals & Cultural Events grant program and Sponsorship.
- Business equity support working group: Pat is planning to convene municipal and community partners to learn and collaborate on shared resources.

PRESIDENT & CEO + EXECUTIVE OFFICE**Project Updates:**

- Executed the BCTDA's regular monthly board meeting virtually on May 26, 2021. Highlights of the meeting included: Vic provided a lodging market overview of trends and hotel/motel compared to short-term rentals metrics; the proposed FY 22 budget presentation, including two ordinance scenarios, one of which will be approved on June 30 based on the current legislation at the time; and a public hearing took place to open a period in which to receive public comments related to the budget. Public comments will be received via email through June 29, 2021.
- Onboarded two new staff members in May: Marshall Hilliard, VP of Sales, who joined the team on April 26, and Holly Oakley, Marketing and PR specialist, who started on May 3.
- Starting May 3, staff began returning to the office following over a year of mostly working remotely. Two departments returned at a time on alternating weeks to allow for social distancing. Based on the Governor removing restrictions on indoor gatherings, all staff will return to the office on July 6, 2021.
- The BCTDA agreed to sponsor the historic Sky View Golf Tournament for the first time with a \$8,500 grant using funds from Earned Revenue.
- Health benefits were finalized for the 2022 fiscal year. Medical coverage moved from Aetna back to United HealthCare with far better rates and better coverage for all team members. After four years, the vision insurance moved from Community Eye Care to Lincoln Financial. Again, team member costs were decreased with increased coverage.
- Vic and Jenn met with the finance committee to review the details of the proposed FY 22 BCTDA budget, which was presented to the BCTDA board at the May 26, 2021, meeting.
- Vic and other staff participated in Explore Asheville's four Tourism Summit panel discussions/webinars in May, which focused on the new strategic pillars.
- Vic was appointed to the AIR Board and attended the general membership meeting. She and Marla presented Explore Asheville's program of work to members at a special AIR meeting.
- Staff participated in an Explore Asheville service day to clean up the River Arts District, coordinated by the Community Engagement team.
- Vic met one-on-one with each BCTDA member in the month of May.
- Vic attended the NC Travel & Tourism Coalition's virtual board meeting.

Future Updates:

- Prepare for and execute the BCTDA's June meeting, to be held in person on June 30, 2021.
- The BCTDA Board will vote on the proposed FY 22 budget at the June 30, 2021, meeting.
- Finalize job descriptions and work with our partner, Craft HR Solutions, on the hiring process to fill five staff positions.
- Review contracts and think through upcoming expenditures to see where changes can and should be made to align purchases with our new Strategic Imperatives.

BCTDA
May 2021 Quick List

- Source: Smith Travel Research, Monthly Report

	May	Running 12 Months
Occupancy	70.7% (210.0%)	57.3% (-7.3%)
ADR	\$165.94 (104.1%)	\$145.47 (-8.7%)
RevPAR	\$117.40 (532.6%)	\$83.37 (-15.4%)
Supply	271,405 (15.1%)	3,144,514 (8.5%)
Demand	192,015 (256.6%)	1,802,114 (0.6%)
Revenue	\$31,863,139 (627.8%)	\$262,148,832 (-8.2%)

Running 28 Days, Ending June 13, 2021

- Source: Smith Travel Research, Weekly Report

	Weekday	Weekend	Total
Occupancy	73.0% (123.4%)	92.5% (98.6%)	78.6% (114.3%)
ADR	\$149.38 (56.0%)	\$232.40 (85.1%)	\$177.29 (66.3%)
RevPAR	\$109.11 (248.5%)	\$214.97 (267.7%)	\$139.36 (256.5%)

May 2021 AIRDNA

- Source: AIRDNA, Monthly Report

	Hotel Comparable	All Short Term Rentals
Occupancy	71.30% (32.8%)	68.80% (35.7%)
ADR	\$143.79 (21.9%)	\$241.15 (25.5%)
RevPAR	\$102.50 (61.9%)	\$165.84 (70.2%)
Room Nights Booked	28,232 (81.3%)	150,460 (103.5%)

AIRDNA Cancellation Accuracy - The AIRDNA booking algorithm determines whether unavailable dates are due to a reservation by a guest or a blocked date by the host. AIRDNA can only pick up cancellations if the unavailable days changes back to available on the listing calendar. If the dates remain unavailable, then there is no way for AIRDNA to have any visibility on these cancellations.

ORDINANCE # 06.30.21

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
NORTH CAROLINA
BUDGET ORDINANCE
FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 30, 2021

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority of Buncombe County, North Carolina on this the 30th day of June, 2021:

Section 1: The following amounts are hereby appropriated and revenues estimated to be available in the Operating Fund for the operation of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022:

APPROPRIATION

Salaries and Benefits	\$ 2,889,975
Marketing	15,321,894
Group Sales	1,236,063
Community Engagement	123,178
Administration & Facilities	798,580

TOTAL APPROPRIATION:	<u>\$ 20,369,690</u>
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REVENUE

Occupancy Tax Revenue	\$ 20,369,690
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TOTAL APPROPRIATION:	<u>\$ 20,369,690</u>
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Section 2: The following amounts are hereby appropriated and revenues estimated to be available in the Tourism Product Development Fund for the operation of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's Tourism Product Development Fund Administration Budget and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022:

APPROPRIATION

Product Development Administration	\$ 190,000
Wayfinding Administration	250,000

TOTAL APPROPRIATION:	<u>\$ 440,000</u>
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REVENUE

Occupancy Tax Revenue	\$ 440,000
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TOTAL APPROPRIATION:	<u>\$ 440,000</u>
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Section 3: The following amounts are hereby appropriated and revenues estimated to be available in the earned income fund for the operation of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's Earned Revenue Budget and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022:

APPROPRIATION	
Local Support from Earned Revenue	\$ 200,564
TOTAL APPROPRIATION:	<u>\$ 200,564</u>
REVENUE	
Earned Revenue	\$ 150,000
Fund Balance - Committed for Event Support Program	\$ 50,564
TOTAL APPROPRIATION:	<u>\$ 200,564</u>

ATTEST:

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR
FOR THE COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE:**

<hr/>	By: <hr/>
Jonna Sampson, Executive Operations Manager	Himanshu Karvir, BCTDA Board Chair

TPDF Funded Projects

May 2021

Company/Organization	UPDATED PROJECT NAME TO CORRELATE WITH COUNTY FINANCE DEPT	Year Grant Awarded	Amount	\$ Paid to date	\$ Remaining	Current Contract Date	Break Ground Date Required by Contract	Estimated Commencement Date	Completion Date Required by Contract	Date of First (or only) Disbursement (if known)	Date of Second Disbursement (if known)	Date of Third Disbursement (if known)
Montford Park Players	2012 Montford Park Players (Welcome Facility & Amphitheatre Renovations)	2012	\$125,000	\$0	\$125,000	December 3, 2012	June 3, 2014	May 2014	June 2022 ²	upon project commencement	1/2 completed	upon completion
City of Asheville ³	2014 City of Asheville (Riverfront Destination Development 1.0)	2014 & 2017	\$7,100,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,800,000	Effective January 15, 2015	October 31, 2015	Fall 2015	May 31, 2021	\$650,000 upon completion of Phase I, Disbursement paid August 2018	\$2,650,000 upon completion of Phase II, Disbursement paid September 2019	Balance due upon project completion
Asheville Community Theatre	2016 Asheville Community Theatre (Theatre Expansion & Renovation)	2016	\$1,000,000	\$430,000	\$570,000	Effective January 15, 2017	June 30, 2018	January 2017	November 30, 2021	43% upon completion of Phase I \$430,000 paid in August 2017		Balance upon completion of Phase II
Town of Woodfin & Buncombe County Government ⁸	2017 Buncombe County Government (Woodfin Greenway & Blueway)	2017	\$2,250,000	\$0	\$2,250,000	Effective May 1, 2018	January 31, 2018	January 2018	December 31, 2023	\$465,773 upon completion of French Broad River Greenway 1		upon completion
										\$650,000 upon completion of Silverline Park		upon completion
										\$380,000 upon completion of French Broad River Greenway 2		upon completion
										\$140,000 upon completion of Riverside Park Expansion		upon completion
										\$600,000 upon completion of Whitewater Wave		upon completion
										\$14,227 upon completion of Beaverdam Creek		upon completion
Buncombe County Recreation Services	2018 Buncombe County Government (Enka Recreation Destination)	2018	\$6,000,000	\$0	\$6,000,000	Effective January 15, 2019	September 1, 2019	September 1, 2019	September 1, 2022	May 2020 disbursement request withdrawn by grantee	2/3 complete	upon completion
YMI Cultural Center (YMICC) ⁷	2018 YMICC (YMI Cultural Center Improvements)	2018	\$800,000	\$42,863	\$757,137	Effective January 15, 2019	April 30, 2019	January 2021	December 31, 2022	Up to \$40,000 upon completion of roof/elevator repair and building assesment & financial feasibility analysis ⁷		\$42,863.00 Disbursement paid November 2020
										Up to \$130,000 draw for structural repairs & design development		upon completion
										1/3 complete		
										2/3 complete		
										upon completion		
River Front Development Group	2018 River Front Development Group (African American Heritage Museum at Stephens-Lee Community Center)	2018	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	Contract pending MOU						
Project managed by BCTDA/Explore Asheville	African American Heritage Trail Project ⁹	2018	\$500,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2022	n/a	n/a		
Pack Place Performing Arts - dba Diana Wortham Theatre	2016 Diana Wortham Theatre (The Wortham Center 2.0) - /Air Ionization	2021	\$45,000	0	\$45,000	Effective June 1, 2021	June 1, 2021	n/a	July 31, 2021	Full disbursement upon completion		

Highlighted sections signify a change from the previous TPDF Project Update/Timeline

² Contract does not include a completion deadline date.

³ \$700,000 originally awarded for the French Broad River Greenway West Bank Connector was reallocated to the City of Asheville's Riverfront Destination Development project. Additionally, \$4,600,000 was awarded to the Riverfront Destination Development in the 2017 TPDF cycle.

⁴ The City of Asheville provided an updated scope in January 2019 that removed the Beaucatcher Greenway from the project and reduced the grant from \$1 million to \$25,000 for the Ambov Crosswalk.

⁷ The YMI Cultural Center presented a project update to the TDA at the November board meeting and requested a contract amendment to extend the project completion deadline from January 31, 2021 to December 31, 2022, and to request a second draw up to \$130,000 from the initial grant for structural repairs and the next stage of design development (not to exceed \$130,000). The TDA approved the request. The balance of the grant would be disbursed in thirds throughout the construction process as is standard TPDF contractual terms.

⁸ The Town of Woodfin & Buncombe County Government requested an amendment request to extend the completion date and disbursement schedule; the BCTDA approved the request n October 2020.

⁹ The BCTDA committed to fund the development of the African American Heritage Trail Project as proposed by the River Front Development Group in the 2018 TPDF grant cycle and provide staff support to manage the story development, community input process, design, fabrication and installation of the project. The BCTDA allocated \$500,000 for the completion of the project in February 2021.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Company/Organization	Project	Year Grant Awarded	Amount	\$ Paid to date	\$ Remaining	Current Contract Date	Break Ground Date Required by Contract	Estimated Commencement Date	Estimated Completion Date	Date of First (or only) Disbursement (if known)	Date of Second Disbursement (if known)	Date of Third Disbursement (if known)
Asheville Art Museum (AAM)	2007 Asheville Art Museum (Museum Expansion)	2007 2009	\$1,000,000 \$500,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	September 24, 2014	July 1, 2015	June 2015 (The terms of the contract to commence work have been met.)	Early 2019	August 2018 \$500,000 paid	October 2018 \$500,000 paid	October 2020 \$500,000 paid ¹
Asheville Buncombe Sustainable Community Initiatives, Inc. (ABSCI)	Meeting space at the Collider	2014 - 2015	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2015	July 1, 2015	Summer 2015	February 2016	n/a	n/a	March 2016 - Total payment \$300,000 pd.
Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association (ABYSA)	JBL Soccer Complex Improvements	2015	\$1,100,000	\$899,522	\$0	Effective January 15, 2016	August 31, 2016	Summer 2016	November 2017	March 2018 - Total pymt \$899,522. pd Costs came in under budget, disbursement request is less than total award		

Asheville Downtown Association	Pack Square Park Canopy	2013	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0	April 29, 2013	November 2014	July 2013	June 2014	request scheduled for June 2014 (one payment)	N/A	July 2014 - Total payment \$50,000. pd
Asheville Museum of Science (formerly Colburn Earth Science Museum)	Moving Science Education Into the Spotlight	2015	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2016	March 31, 2016	Spring 2016	January 2017	Sept 2016 \$133,333 pd	October 2016 \$133,333. pd.	November 2016 \$133,333. pd
Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center	Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center on Pack Square	2017	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	Effective February 16, 2017	February 1, 2018	January 2018	November 2018	September 2018 - Total Payment \$200,000 paid		
Center for Craft	2018 Center for Craft (National Craft Innovation Hub)	2018	\$975,000	\$975,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2019	April 1, 2019	April 1, 2019	January 1, 2020	1/3 complete August 2019 \$325,000 pd	2/3 complete October 2019 \$325,000 pd	Final disbursement paid December 2019 \$325,000 pd
City of Asheville	U.S. Cellular Center - Phase I renovations	2010	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	October 2011 \$1,750,000 pd	November 2012 \$150,000 pd	August 2013 \$100,000 pd
City of Asheville	U.S. Cellular Center - Phase II renovations	2012	\$1,375,000	\$1,375,000	\$0	July 31, 2012	January 31, 2014	April 2013	February 2014	1/3 complete August 2013 \$458,333 pd	2/3 complete	February 2014 \$916,667.67 pd
City of Asheville	U.S. Cellular Center - Phase III renovations	2013	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$0	April 11, 2013	October 11, 2014	Construction began March 2013	February 2014**	1/3 complete \$266,666	2/3 complete	August 2014 \$800,000 pd
City of Asheville/U.S. Cellular Center ³	2016 City of Asheville (U.S. Cellular Center - Theatre Creation & Meeting Room Conversion)	2016	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2017	September 30, 2017	September 2017	January 31, 2020	1/3 complete	2/3 complete	Project is complete, \$1,500,000 paid September 2020
City of Asheville ⁴	2015 City of Asheville (Riverfront Destination Development 2.0) - Amboy Crosswalk	2015	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2016	March 31, 2016	Spring 2016	Done	Disbursement paid in full September 2019		
Enka Center	Ballfields	2014	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2015	September 30, 2016	Fall 2016	June 30, 2018	January 2018 pd. \$666,667.	June 2018 pd. \$666,667.	Final disbursement paid August 2018
Friends of the Western North Carolina Nature Center	2015 Friends of the WNC Nature Center (WNC Nature Center Front Entrance)	2015	\$313,000	\$313,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2016	February 28, 2017	February 2017	December 2018	December 2018 - Total pymt \$313,000. pd		
Highland Brewing Company	Property Development	2014	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2015	March 1, 2015	Fall 2014	October 2016 ⁴	October 2015 \$283,333. pd	February 2016 \$283,333. pd	July 2016 (3rd payment) \$230,333. pd November 2016 (4th payment) \$53,000 pd
LEAF Community Arts (LEAF)	2018 LEAF Community Arts (LEAF Global Arts Center)	2018	\$705,000	\$705,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2019	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2019	February 29, 2020	30% upon completion of Phase I \$211,500 pd JAN 2020	March 2020 Total balance \$493,500. pd	
Montreat College	Pulliam Stadium-Phase II	2016	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2017	May 31, 2017	February 2017	August 2017	One disbursement upon completion		May 2017
NC Dept. of Ag. & Consumer Services - WNC Farmers Market	2016 NC Dept. of Ag. & Consumer Services (WNC Farmers Market Retail Revitalization)	2016	\$380,000	\$380,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2017	January 31, 2018	January 2018	March 2019	40% for Phase I Paid January 2019	37% upon completion of Phase II - Paid March 2019	23% upon completion of Phase II - Paid June 2019
Navitat Canopy Tours	New zipline attraction & welcome center	2012	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	August 15, 2012	February 15, 2014	July 2013	April 2014	August 2013 - 1st pymt \$68,485.88 pd	June 2014 - Final pymt \$32,884.22 pd	
										October 2013 - 2nd pymt \$45,052.10 pd		
										November 2013 - 3rd pymt \$58,198.53 pd		
										December 2013 - 4th pymt \$46,034.30 pd		
										January 2014 - 5th pymt \$58,484.10 pd		
										February 2014 - 6th pymt \$42,345.44 pd		
										March 2014 - 7th pymt \$47,208.15 pd		
										April 2014 - 8th pymt \$54,069.80 pd		
										May 2014 - 9th pymt \$47,237.48 pd		
North Carolina Arboretum Society	2018 NC Arboretum Society (Garden Lighting & Parking Enhancements)	2018	\$905,000	\$905,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2019	June 1, 2019	June 1, 2019	September 1, 2020	16.5% upon completion of Phase I, \$149,325 pd in October 2019	59.1% upon completion of Phase II, \$534,855. pd in August 2020	24.4% upon completion of Phase III paid November 2020 - project is complete
Orange Peel	Renovations/expansion	2009	\$300,000	\$50,000	\$0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	February 2010 \$50,000 pd	Orange Peel submitted bank letter in May 2014 releasing BCTDA as guarantors of the expansion loan.	
Pack Place Performing Arts - dba Diana Wortham Theatre	2016 Diana Wortham Theatre (The Wortham Center)	2016	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2017	June 2018	Spring 2018	September 2019	1/3 complete, October 2019 \$233,333 pd	2/3 complete, October 2019 \$233,333 pd	Final disbursement April 2020 \$233,333 pd
RiverLink	River Access at Pearson Bridge	2014	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	Effective January 15, 2015	June 1, 2015	Spring 2015	August 2015	n/a	n/a	August 2015 - Total payment \$25,000. pd
Smoky Mountain Adventure Center	New adventure center facility	2012	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	December 12, 2012	January 31, 2014	January 31, 2014	Summer/Fall 2015	At project launch December 2014 \$33,333 pd	1/2 complete February 2015 \$33,333 pd	Project completed December 2015 \$33,333. pd
UNC Asheville	Lights/Soccer & Baseball fields	2013	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0	April 10, 2013	October 11, 2014	September 2013	January 2014	October 2013 \$166,498 pd	February 2014 \$166,498.34 pd	June 2014 \$167,003.32 pd
City of Asheville ³ - CANCELLED, Money reallocated to Riverfront Destination Development	French Broad River Greenway West Bank Connector	2016	\$700,000	\$0	\$0	Effective July 15, 2016	December 31, 2017	December 2017	November 2018	1/3 complete	2/3 complete	upon completion

BCTDA Board Meeting | June 30, 2021
Electronic Public Budget Hearing Comments

At the May 26, 2021, meeting of the BCTDA, pursuant to N.C. General Statute 166A-19.24 (e) during the COVID-19 state of emergency, an electronic public hearing was held. The BCTDA board received public comments related to the proposed BCTDA FY 22 budget via email to Reply@ExploreAsheville.com through Tuesday, June 29, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. The comments are provided in the order in which they were received.

From: James Kammann <jlkammann@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 3:41 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: TDA Budget

Hi,
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

In looking at Marketing and Group Sales expenditures.... with 12mm visitors that is only \$1.38 per visitor.... a lot of revenue from these visitors for relatively few dollars. My suggestion is that additional money is added on to promote Asheville with a food and beverage tax or better yet an increase to the sales tax over all, maybe 1/8-1/4%, this could be used to promote and take care of most of the wear and tear that 12mm visitors make on our infrastructure.... this has been discussed for over 15 years, but nothing has been done.... I think it is time for more than Hotels and Private Lodging (new to this) to fund the entire promotion of the Asheville area and beyond.

Wishing you the best of luck,

Jim

James L. Kammann
46 Haywood Street Suite 334
Asheville, NC 28801-2758
c 828-215-8753
Email: jlkammann@gmail.com

"Try to learn something about everything and everything about something"
Thomas Huxley

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

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From: Allie E. <allie.ellenbogen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 6:48 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Input: Marketing budget increase

Hi there, I read about the increase to the marketing budget for FY 20-21 in AVL Today. I have lived in Asheville for about 4 years having moved here from San Francisco (another city with many tourists). Up until recently I lived in walking distance of downtown. One factor for my family's move was that while we were close to downtown we could not enjoy it because it was packed with tourists.

I know covid has had an impact on tourism and that so many businesses rely on tourists to survive. While there has been a dip in tourism, from what I see it looks like it's bouncing back and would still recover with a similar marketing budget to previous years. My primary feedback is to use the money to encourage tourism that can be woven into the city more gracefully so residents and tourists can coexist. In San Francisco residents relished getting the chance to tell tourists about their favorite spots, but here we are like two separate entities. I'd like to see a focus on spreading tourism out across the city and surrounding areas. I'd also prefer to see some of the money used to study how to curb over-tourism so residents and tourists can coexist happily. I found this article to be interesting on over-tourism <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/25/overtourism-in-europe-historic-cities-sparks-backlash>

Thanks for your consideration,
Allie

Sent from my iPhone

From: A. Michael Edwards <edwards.mike@charter.net>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 6:59 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Spending on tourism

Asheville should spend ZERO on tourism and disband idiotic TDA.

From: Bonnie H <BonnieBrite@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 8:17 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: TDA dollars

Re: Buncombe TDA to spend \$15 million to promote tourism in 2021-2022. The visitors are going to come, whether these funds are spent luring them or not. Wouldn't these funds be better spent on ensuring that the businesses that serve the tourism industry have sufficient staffing? Housing costs in Asheville are so high as to force service industry employees out of the area. Using TDA dollars to offset these costs, or to create affordable housing opportunities, makes more sense than attracting more tourists that can't effectively be served due to labor shortages. If businesses are fully-staffed it's a win-win for tourists and locals alike!

Bonnie

From: Cotter, Carole <ccotter@fullerton.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 8:19 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: 55% increase for marketing tourism???

Hi there,

Not sure Buncombe County TDA is spending their money wisely at all on this one. Does the area really need a 55% boost in the tourism marketing budget? It's not like people will have totally forgotten about Asheville and the area over the pandemic. Some more money in the budget for marketing seems normal but that much? I'm sure there are other things that could use development. Just dumb.

Oh well,
Carole

From: Jim Forward <jtfbuilder@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 8:28 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Tourism

Please use the 15 million to help Asheville end poverty, hunger, abuse, and homelessness. Spending that money on bringing more people here is unconscionable when so many are facing these issues. Please follow your hearts and not your pocketbooks!

Thank you,

Jim Forward
Local homebuilder for 40 years

From: mimi strang <mimistrang@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 8:35 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Stop the madness!

You have successfully turned our town into a tourist destination. Thumbs up for accomplishing a goal butit's been at the expense of our quality of life.
Put your funds towards improving things in our town.

No more HOTELS!
Deal with the puking drunks!
We need more police and fire for the increase in people(?tourists) in the town.

Im sure you have gotten this same ear full. It's time y'all listen and do something about the problems you are contributing to.

Sent

From: Cynthia Heil <cheil17@att.net>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 8:47 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: More money for tourists?

"The Buncombe County TDA has announced its plans to spend more than \$15 million on marketing tourism for the 2021-22 fiscal year. This spend would be a 55% increase from the current budget cycle and would be the TDA's biggest-ever marketing spend to date. Share your input through Tues., June 29. (Mountain Xpress)"
[From 28 May 2021 Asheville Today]

How about putting some of that money into infrastructure for those of us who live here? If the state won't allow it, then help the residents/tax payers lobby the state for more tourism money to go into local needs.

How about helping tourist-industry employees stay safe for the remainder of this pandemic by giving the industry some options for dealing with surly, rude, even threatening tourists who don't want to mask, don't want to wait for a table, etc.? If not this pandemic, the next crisis??? In fact, how about helping us residents who bore the brunt of threatening tourists, as well?

During some of the TDA and assoc'd orgs' discussions regarding a safe tourist environment, no one---NO one---addressed the tourists who dissed residents/svc workers for trying to be safe.

How about supporting svc workers so they can get a living wage? Without them, you've got nothing for tourists.

C. Heil
Asheville, NC

From: Jim personal Email <jmsf7@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 9:14 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Ads for tourists

PLEASE depict some people of color in the ads!!!!

Jim McAllister

Sent from my iPhone

From: Mark Bloom <markhenrybloom@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 9:50 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>; letters@mountainx.com
Subject: TDA's Biggest Ever Marketing Spend

Before we go hog wild on marketing Asheville to the world, can we pause (or at least more slowly ramp up) to consider what's best for the city and its inhabitants? What results came from the result study on tourism and the recent moratorium on hotel development? How can the city best heal from the effects of the pandemic?

I think having the city immediately overrun with tourists may not be the best idea, except for the hotels. Yes, the restaurants that made it through deserve to be rewarded. But there are a lot of people struggling in this town. And minimum-wage jobs (or less than minimum-wage jobs when you think of the restaurant servers) aren't helping.

\$15 million on marketing? Is that the best use of that money? I agree with Ben Williamson (Buncombe Commissioners Must Rein in the TDA) to defund the TDA until the state recognizes that Asheville needs a more useful distribution of these funds.

Sincerely, Mark H. Bloom

--

Mark H. Bloom
27 Parkway Loop
Asheville, NC 28803
828-280-1686

From: Cliff Hall <12barz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 10:10 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: TDA's budget increase

This seems to me to be a remarkably short-sighted move. Does the city have the infrastructure to support increased tourism? Putting all our eggs in the basket of tourism may also make us vulnerable to economic, social, environmental, and public-health events and changes that might effect that industry's vitality. If we don't want to risk becoming an abandoned amusement park, I believe Asheville would be better served long-term by a more concerted effort to diversify our economy. It might be better to set our sights and economic resources on ways to increase non-tourism job and business growth. To that end, maybe we should *reduce* the TDA's budget and establish a Diversified Enterprise Development Authority.
Cliff Hall

From: sharon haberfield <skhab1945@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 10:37 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: 55% inc

Perhaps this \$\$ better spent .. city run over with tourists Schools .. homeless .. child hunger .. might need an increase

Sent from my iPhone

From: Susan Waldman <namlaw@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 2:31 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Marketing for tourism

1.5 million is lots of money to bring more tourists to a town that is already inundated with tourists and hotels. It ignores the needs of most Ashevilleians and makes the city almost unlivable as hordes descend on it. Shame on you. Why not use the 1.5 million for something for the community...I am sure there are lots of better uses for that money. It is tax money going into the pockets of hotel owner who also happen to sit on the tourism board.

Susan Waldman

From: Susan L Harrison <susanh@dragonseye.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 4:01 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: \$15 million on marketing tourism

I'm an Asheville resident, and while I'm not from here, I am aware of the damage being done to this community by increasing prices, unchecked tourism, and low-paying service jobs. Spending \$15 million on marketing is obscene, when the people living here face outrageous housing costs, and the homeless rates grow. Asheville doesn't need more marketing. People who vacation domestically know this beautiful place exists, has a moderate climate, loads of touristy activities, a cool artsy vibe, and more ways to get sloppy drunk on beer than you can try without going to rehab afterward. Why not put some of that wasteful marketing money into funding healthcare for tourism employees, raising their wages, or helping out with affordable housing?

If you care about infrastructure to support tourism, how about spending a few million on public transit and reducing private car access to the city center? Convince the city to close a few streets to cars and make them strictly pedestrian spaces, like the plazas of Spain. Add small electric streetcars that run frequently, not enormous and noisy city buses that are too few and far between. While you're doing that, include residential areas in your plans and add sidewalks. All this would make the air cleaner and therefore make the city more enticing, and it would help the locals to like the TDA instead of loathing it.

What makes you think research and analysis will give people more vacation days to spend here? I'm sorry, but Asheville is a long weekend destination, full stop. People with two weeks will save longer stretches of time for more enticing things like a beach, a cruise, or foreign travel. The long weekend niche is a successful formula, so stick with it while helping the locals. We could be allies if only...

Susan L. Harrison
Asheville Resident

From: Tess Burton <thetaoftess@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 8:40 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Tourism opinion

Enough is enough! When is it enough? Absurd amount of money going to tourism when the community continues to yell and scream about all the issues of more interest and dollars going to "tourism" and NOT the community. You continue to destroy what is left. On the graph, "Good paying jobs" as a result of tourism? That's a joke. We all know the pay is low and the cost of living is high. Places have closed due to inability to find solid workers. Tourists don't care about the community here, they just want to have a good time. I have been here almost 33 years, change is inevitable but as Leni Sitnick said, "Shame on you" what happened to all the community talk years ago, save Asheville, keep it unique, save the soul of this mountain town. You are killing it and not in a good way. Not a happy camper as far as the increase in tourism energy and Dollars spent.

So nice of you to ask but as history proves, it will fall on deaf ears.
Tess Burton

From: debbie emmons <smartmacs@charter.net>
Sent: Saturday, May 29, 2021 9:14 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: tourism \$

I feel this money should be spent on updating roads and sidewalks instead. We have enough visitors, share the money for local upgrades and help the homeless. build more affordable housing for our server workers instead!!!!

Sincerely,
Debbie

A concerned local business owner

Smart Computer Solutions

☐ *Mac Sales and Service since 1987*

- Apple Certified Mac Technician
- Apple Business Affiliate
- Mac Support Specialist
- Creative Services

14 Beaverdam Knoll Road, Asheville, NC 28804 T.828-255-2660

From: Russ Towers <russtowers@charter.net>

Sent: Sunday, May 30, 2021 9:06 AM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>

Cc: 'Laurie Towers' <laurieatowers@gmail.com>; 'Buffalo McMurry' <buffalo@secondgearwnc.com>; 'Chris Webster' <chris@secondgearwnc.com>; 'Jack Igelman' <jack@igelman.com>; 'Lissa Calloway' <lissacalloway@gmail.com>; luciouswilson1@gmail.com

Subject: Occupancy Tax Allocation

Hello Explore Asheville,

I'm writing to submit a comment about the proposed change to the allocation of the Asheville hotel occupancy tax:

As a the owner of a retail business (Second Gear) that benefits from visitors to Asheville, I certainly appreciate the funding that goes towards marketing and promoting Asheville. My business has seen exceptional growth over 17 years, partly as the result of increased tourism in Asheville and more specifically in West Asheville.

As a 20+ year resident of Asheville, I've experienced the extraordinary growth of tourism in Asheville over the past two decades. The current amount of tourists visiting Asheville (11 million/year) is detracting from the quality of life for Asheville residents, is stressing the infrastructure of the city and is contributing to the unaffordability of housing here. If I were now choosing a city to relocate to, as I did in early 2000, I would not choose Asheville. We don't need to increase the number of tourists visiting Asheville.

I propose the occupancy tax allocation be changed to 50/50. That would provide nearly \$14 million each for operating budget and for the TPDF fund.

Please note, I'm writing this comment personally and may not be representative of the views of all the Second Gear owners.

Thank you.

Russ Towers

From: Karen Quasny <kquasny@hotmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 9:51 PM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>

Subject: \$15 M on marketing!

REALLY?

We have more tourists and people moving here than we can handle! Every list of top ten places to live includes Asheville in the top 3. Why in the world would we put that much into marketing a destination that already has boatloads of tourists and new residents (but, not enough housing).

PLEASE, invest in our infrastructure. Add some green space down town. Invest in our schools and educators, or or public safety and police departments. But NOT on more marketing for increased tourism!!!

How can we, the citizens of Asheville and Buncombe county, be heard? I am so frustrated by this, but feel powerless to curb the spending. This is my only option, to write to ExploreAsheville and hope it reaches the politicians deciding on this crazy budget amount.

V/R

K. Quasny

Sent from my iPad

From: Dan <dnwllms@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 10:10 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Marketing tourism budget

To spend more money to entice more tourists to a saturated tourism market is akin to the \$400 toilet seat. You are spending money simply because you have it on thicker glossy paper headed for the landfill.

Change the law to address what is needed such as; Tourism planning and management, funds to offset tourism impact in both the near and far term.

Dan Williams
Fairview

From: Bebe Kern <bebeoctober@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 11:33 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: REMARKS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The headline was there in Xpress on the page like business as usual--not surrounded by giant, bold eyeroll emojis, not displayed in 72 pt. disaster caps. I couldn't believe it. "BCTDA plans to spend \$15 M on marketing." (p. 13, June 2-8) What world are they living in? Isn't this like telling a family of eight living in a two-room house that you're persuading a couple of baseball teams to move in with them?

At 2:00 pm Tuesday, it took 40 minutes to navigate downtown traffic. Today I spent 30 minutes trying to go four blocks on Haywood Road. I couldn't find a simple breakfast anywhere without a long line of customers waiting. Montford and downtown were mobbed. If there's budget waiting to be spent, give it to public services or underserved families, and let the marketing take care of itself. Or embrace a new tag line--Myrtle Beach of the Mountains.

Bebe Kern
Emma

Bebe Kern
281 Brickyard Road
AVL 28806
336-671-6383

From: Susan Michael <s.michael3@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 11:05 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Occupancy Tax

Hello Buncombe County Tourism Board,

I am writing you to please request we change the revenue split from 75% 25% TO 66% 33%. As a resident and lover of Asheville, I feel we are being overrun by tourists. It makes it hard to enjoy the area we call home. We don't need to continue to advertise our area, we are already well known far and wide. Please give our city a break and let the residence enjoy what we moved here to enjoy!!!

Sincerely,

Susan Michael

From: kathryn liss <kathrynliss5@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 11:35 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Occupancy tax

If I had my way we'd stop spending any money advertising Asheville. We need that money for infrastructure and if we can't have that, let's get rid of the tax altogether.

Kathryn
Liss
Haw Creek

From: Jane Roman Pitt <romanpitt@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 12:04 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: To the Buncombe County Tourism Board

Dear BCTB,

Asheville is on all the "best place to . . ." lists in the country already---please do not spend money on advertising it more! Everyone knows about Asheville now, and wants to visit or move here---it's already so crowded with tourists that it makes it difficult for those who live here and want to use and enjoy the city.

There are so many serious educational, social, and justice issues here that need that money more than wasting it on advertising.

Thank you,
Jane Roman Pitt

From: Cathy Holt <cathyholt@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 1:02 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Stop advertising for more tourists!

Dear TDA,

Please spend more money on repairing Asheville's infrastructure, not bringing in more tourists!

Thanks,
Cathy Holt

--

Cathy Holt
www.heartspeakpeace.com
Coaching for health and resilience
Go slowly, breathe and smile - Thich Nhat Hanh

From: Keaton Hill <khill@jayhill.net>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 8:32 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org;
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards
<amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>;
parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: BCTDA Budget Public Comment

Dear BCTDA Board members and County Commissioners:

As an Asheville resident, parent, person of conscience, and active community member, I am writing about the BCTDA FY22 Operating, Earned Revenue, and Tourism Product Development Fund budgets.

I am deeply disturbed that in the current configuration of the BCTDA, over \$20 million of our tax dollars are controlled by for-profit tourism business owners. My understanding is that the majority of this Board does not pay their employees a living wage, yet the Board members enjoy incredible profits from the rigorous tourism industry of our region.

Budgets are moral documents. And the BCTDA's proposal that over \$15 million be used to market for more tourism does not reflect the values of our community or region. Rather than spending over \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, I believe that these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, I am asking for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until these revenues can be community controlled.

We no longer need to market our region -- the tourists are coming! As the BCTDA's own financial records demonstrate, tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point and will instead continue increasing the amount of tourism past what is already an unsustainable level. In October 2020, during the pandemic when their advertising was paused, the BCTDA reported \$53 million in room sales, a 6% increase over October 2019. It was an all-time record.

How is the BCTDA using tax dollars for repair, and not to further harm? Tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address a long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities. The BCTDA's tourism marketing has accelerated gentrification and development, and therefore accelerated the displacement of Black people and damage to our natural environment. Taxes must be used to repair this damage through investing in Black residents, Black-owned businesses and Black-led initiatives, not to grow industry profits.

Sincerely,
Keaton Hill
28804

From: W Michael Smith <wmsinavl@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:15 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear Buncombe County TDA,

Your decisions in 2021 hold opportunity for a significant change of direction. Now is the time to invest in forms of reparations that allow our black and brown neighbors to overcome the chronic barriers to accumulating inter-generational wealth, adequate housing, education for their children on par with what is available to white kids in more prosperous neighborhoods. Many studies have been done to identify barriers to thriving for our black neighbors. So we don't need new information. We need consistent political will. Make your budget choices for this year reflect that intention.

This is also the year to insist that this tax revenue be controlled by and for the public, and not by and for for-profit businesses.

Please do the right thing.

Michael

W Michael Smith
1 Faulkner Avenue
Asheville, NC 28805
828-575-7963

From: Anne Craig <ennagiarc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:25 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

I am writing to say that I oppose the BCTDA's proposal that \$15 million of occupancy tax income being used to market for more tourism. Our area is beyond its 'carrying capacity' in regards to tourism now. The money should be used in investing in our community, particularly through reparations. We need to be investing in healing and repairing the damage done to generations of Black citizens.

The use of this tax revenue should be controlled by our community rather than the for-profit businesses whose only goal is to increase their profits and not the overall welfare of our community. Getting rich on tourism needs to have some limits.

Sincerely, Anne Craig

--

Anne Craig
828-423-2087
ennagiarc@gmail.com

"I wonder how the foreign policies of the United States would look if we wiped out the national boundaries of the world, at least in our minds, and thought of all children everywhere as our own." — Howard Zinn

From: Marion Danforth <marionmdanforth@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:37 AM
To: Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org; Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>; alfred.whiteside@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear Council,

Investing in a vibrant community, using tourism tax income to contribute to ongoing reparation, creates an environment that draws others to come and visit; builds a just community that reflects a positive experience for visitors. Thank you for looking at building our community as a process of working together for the benefit of all.

Marion Danforth
9 Williams St.
Weaverville NC

From: Vivian Ellner <ellner.v@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:46 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Regarding the proposed budget:

To Whom It May Concern:

Rather than spending \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, many believe that these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations.

- Investing in our Black residents benefits us all. As the majority of occupancy tax dollars are required by state law to go towards "advertising," a case can be made that investing in community healing and repair through Reparations is advertising.
- Tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address a long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities.

- Beyond this budget vote, this tax revenue should be community controlled rather than controlled by for-profit businesses with the goal of increasing profits. In its current form, the profits of tourism rely on underpaid labor and create negative environmental impacts.
- Tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point and will instead continue increasing the amount of tourism past what is already an unsustainable level. For example, in October 2020, during the pandemic when their advertising was paused, the BCTDA reported \$53 million in room sales, a 6% increase over October 2019. It was an all-time record.
- The BCTDA's tourism marketing has accelerated gentrification and development, and therefore accelerated the displacement of Black people and damage to our natural environment. Taxes must be used to repair this damage, not to grow industry profits.

With millions of tax dollars on the table, what our community needs is for that money to go to direct financial investment through Reparations. If this can't happen, we call for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Ellner
Weaverville, NC 28787

From: Jason Krekel <jasonkrekel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 10:00 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

I am writing to demand as a longtime resident of downtown Asheville that all proceeds from ALL tourism taxes be allocated to racial equity and structural change aimed towards addressing systemic racism in our community that is being exacerbated by the status quo of TDA spending.

Jason Krekel

--
jasonkrekel.com
krekprints.com

From: mary berg <marhber@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 10:13 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

I am vehemently opposed to increasing the budget to promote tourism.
This does not help our community. There is far more need to invest in reparations and building community cohesiveness.
Thank you.
Mary Berg

Sent from my iPhone

From: Pamela Culp <130pjc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 4:06 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org;

terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: FY22 Operating, Earned Revenue and Tourism Product Development Fund Budget Comment

June 28, 2021

Dear BCTDA Board and County Commissioners,

I am a life long North Carolinian and have lived in Buncombe County for 20 years. This is a beautiful state. The Western North Carolina mountains are a rich diverse precious ecosystem that is showing signs of diminishment. In addition here in Buncombe County many of the families whose heritage makes this region rich have had to move or can hardly afford to live here. We are throwing the baby out with the bath water.

There was a time when continuing to build our tourist business was crucial. However in 2021, an increase in marketing tourism beyond its already-unsustainable levels is unacceptable. I am angry at the greed of the BCTDA to ask for 75% of their budget be used for tourism marketing or related expenses. With millions of tax dollars on the table, our community needs to refurbish and enrich all areas of Buncombe County that helped build this community and stewarded these mountain ecosystems.

Any tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address the long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities. Investing in Black residents benefits us all. Tax revenue should be community controlled, rather than controlled by for-profit businesses with goals of profit not community and ecosystem preservation and enrichment. The BCTDA's tourism marketing has accelerated gentrification and development thereby accelerating displacement of Black people and damage to our natural environment. Taxes must be used to repair this damage, not to grow industry profits.

The blemishes of profits, more profits and more profits till we bust is already evident here in Buncombe County. Please listen to the people and help preserve and restore this wondrous county. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Dr. Pamela J. Culp, M.D.

From: Sandra Brooks <brooksandra308@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 7:39 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: TDA

IMHO this machine should be stopped and NOW. Go to downtown Asheville (which people who live here never do) and see if you can stand the throngs on the streets. Next step is honky tonk. You are killing the goose that has been laying golden eggs for us all.

No more funding for advertising!! Do you think there is a soul in the U.S. now who has not heard of Asheville, NC??

--

*Best,
Sandra Brooks
Asheville resident for 14 years*

From: Joe Wilkerson <wilkerson.joseph@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:03 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Cc: County Commissioners and County Manager

Re: FY22 Operating, Earned Revenue, and Tourism Product Development Fund

I am a nearly twenty-year resident of Buncombe County. I understand you are bound by statute to spend money earned by the occupancy tax to attract tourists to Asheville. Tourism at current levels already is unsustainable, however, and increasingly contributes to long-standing inequities in our community. I support, at most, a *significant reduction* to the advertising budget, to support only those businesses that contribute public goods to the broader community (e.g. those offering living wages to all employees). *All* further expenditure on advertising for extractive businesses goes against the interests of Buncombe County's residents and accelerates community decay.

Control over moneys raised by the occupancy tax should devolve to County-level managers accountable to the public. If this change is not achieved, I will advocate to repeal the tax. The County agreed to join the City of Asheville in supporting reparations for Black residents who have long experienced the worst consequences as more and more extractive businesses have taken root in our city. Local, elected control of these funds can be one important step toward the County fulfilling its commitment. If we want to "advertise" Buncombe County, prioritize making it into a place where people of all backgrounds can flourish, and let the results speak for themselves.

Sincerely,

Joe Wilkerson
60 Mildred Avenue
Asheville, NC 28806

From: Heather Tate <heather.tate@evergreencs.org>
Sent: Monday, June 28, 2021 9:20 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear BCTDA Board members and County Commissioners:

As an Asheville native and engaged community member, I am writing about the BCTDA FY22 Operating, Earned Revenue, and Tourism Product Development Fund budgets.

I am upset that over \$20 million of our tax dollars are controlled by for-profit tourism business owners in the current configuration of the BCTDA. My current understanding is that many of the members of this Board do not pay their employees a living wage, yet the Board members enjoy incredible financial benefits from the rigorous tourism industry of our region.

The BCTDA's proposal that over \$15 million be used to market for more tourism does not reflect the values of our community or region, at least not the community I know. I believe that these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, I am asking for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until these revenues can be community controlled.

It seems we have a thriving tourist industry and anyone I talk to around the country knows about Asheville. We seem to be at max capacity and as a local, I do not feel like I am able to enjoy the town in the way I wish due to crowded streets, lack of parking, etc. As the BCTDA's own financial records demonstrate, tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point. In October 2020, during the pandemic when there was no advertising, the BCTDA reported \$53 million in room sales, a 6% increase over October 2019. It was an all-time record.

Tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address a long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities. We have the means, now it is time to take action. Taxes must be used to repair this damage through investing in Black residents, Black-owned businesses and Black-led initiatives, not to grow industry profits.

Sincerely,
Heather Tate
28805

--

Heather Tate, NBCT

She/Her/Hers

Kindergarten Lead Teacher

Evergreen Community Charter School

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." -Nelson Mandela



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From: Karen MacNeil <karenskyli@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 8:00 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Public Comment on Budget

Hello Explore Asheville,

I would simply like to ask that you do your best to keep the occupancy taxes collected in Buncombe County, in Buncombe County. By this I mean hiring a local advertising agency and other local professionals and otherwise channeling messaging through them. The millions of dollars sent out of our county every year are benefitting the businesses and communities those people work in, not the residents here. This is one of the main problems our community struggles with in regards to the TDA.

Thank you,
Karen MacNeil

From: phil cheney <logdove@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 9:55 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

No more advertising budget, please! The City has already lost ALL of its charm... Tourists can roll the dice to get the exact same experience anywhere... it isn't weird, it isn't cool and aside from the Mountains around asheville, it could be Anywhere, USA... stop it, please!

:o(

George Philip Cheney IV

Sent from my iPhone

From: Ami Worthen <amiworthen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 10:06 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; Alfred Whitesides <alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org>; Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; Parker Sloan <parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org>;

terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org

Subject: BCTDA Budget Public Comment

Dear BCTDA,

How occupancy tax revenues are spent should be determined by our community, and not by a small board of for-profit businesses. The BCTDA board currently uses tax money to commodify their version of who we are for profit. At the same time, only one member of the BCTDA (Herbiary) is Living Wage Certified. Private companies which do not guarantee living wage jobs with benefits should be precluded from using tax dollars for their own material gain. Our social services networks subsidize these low wages. This is just one of many issues I have with this tourism industry-controlled tax.

Thus, I will continue to call for the Buncombe County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until all of the revenues can go towards the public good, not private profits.

However, since you still exist at this moment, I am submitting a comment on your proposed FY22 budgets. The BCTDA has the opportunity to put the over \$15 million budgeted for marketing into the Reparations fund. This would be a start of a move towards repair of the inequities embedded in and damage caused by the tourism industry. In terms of complying with the state statute, you can simply take the stance that investing in community wellbeing is advertising.

There is no longer a need for the kind of marketing the BCTDA has been engaged in since your inception, as evidenced by record breaking sales last October after promotion was almost completely paused. Buncombe County is on the map, and tourism is already at unsustainable levels.

Our occupancy tax dollars would be better used to heal what is hurt, rather than to continue to cause increasing injury.

Moreover, the pandemic is not over and it is completely irresponsible to be inviting large numbers of people to our home at this time.

Sincerely,

Ami Worthen

From: Geneva Bierce-Wilson <biercewilson@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 10:58 AM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>

Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org;

terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org

Subject: Cut the Check

I would like county tourism tax revenue be allocated to support Reparations now.

Life long resident of Buncombe County,
Geneva Bierce-Wilson

From: TOM BELT <tombelt@icloud.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:02 AM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>

Subject: Budget Public Comment

I strongly recommend applying a substantial portion of revenues from the occupancy tax to reparations for support of historically disadvantaged black citizens of this area. Tourism has provided little benefit to this population thus far, and in fact has been damaging. If the community can't obtain control of the use of these funds, the occupancy tax should be suspended until this can be accomplished.

Tom Belt

Sent from my iPhone

From: Chris Bainbridge <creativebainbridge@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:11 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org;
terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Good morning,

My name is Chris Bainbridge and I am writing to request that Buncombe County tourism tax revenue be allocated to support reparations and investing in Black-owned businesses in our area. Our community has begun to receive positive national media attention due to our efforts to right our historic wrongs. The continued press coverage that we would receive by utilizing this revenue in this way would very much align with the state requirements to allocate this money to marketing and advertising. I see it as a win/win. Thank you.

Chris Bainbridge
828-242-2377

From: Tyler Ramsey <tylerramsey01@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:24 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org;
terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget public comment

It is time to stop dumping money into advertising Asheville to attract more tourists- let's invest in our community and gain some sense of who we are as a city rather than sell off what is left of our identity here.

From: Carol Anders <caroldec25@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:24 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Allocation of Tourist Dollars

We need to allocate more of the tourist revenues, to serving the needs of the very people who tourists come to see (the artists, musicians for example) and the people who serve the tourists (hotels, restaurants, etc) ..housing here is outrageously expensive as you know...The Black community is being priced out of housing in their own backyard (Shiloh as an example) ...what if the communities cited above disappear, move away do you think wealthy tourists will enjoy a modicum of services and entertainments for example. Let's increase the percentage allocated to the community for housing, support creatives, and specifically reparations for our Black community.

"My Asheville" that I dearly love (16 years a resident) is disappearing, going downtown - parking an issue, I rarely if ever see anyone I know (peers don't go downtown anymore too crowded, restaurants, and entertainment is too expensive - we don't need "Craft Cocktails" at a bar and grill... Retirees have a limited ability to enjoy now approx half of what they did 5 or six years ago.

Shall I assume the city doesn't want fixed income, educated retirees any more in their midst? And are we now working to make it almost impossible for our hardworking hourly workers both Black & White to enjoy the benefits of home-ownership and just allow them the Privilege of paying approx 50% of their monthly income for rent?

Will tourists come to Asheville a decade from now to "have hotel tours", purchase \$30 T-Shirts, eat at expensive restaurants, pay \$50-80 for tickets to big name regional acts and hire a tour company to drive them by some hiking trails...

A slippery slope to balance...nourish and support our existing folks now or continue to plan to attract the high end luxury seeking tourist. Even BIPOC tourism, which is now being eagerly sought out, will not continue if people do not see people who are culturally like them.

Fostering tourism does not ensure a sustainable growth for our community - young people will leave for high paying jobs, and middle income people will be priced out of the housing market and once again our Black communities will not realize economic equity. --

Thank You for reading
Carol Anders

JOIN ME for the DREAMERS & DOERS Show
AVL fm 103.3 / Stream: www.ashevillefm.org
Thursday @ 9am EST
"The World Needs Dreamers Who are Doers"

From: Jenna McLeod <jenna.marissa@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:43 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment - Jenna McLeod

Most of the revenue for these budgets comes from occupancy tax income. In the current structure of the BCTDA, Buncombe County allows for-profit tourism business owners (the majority being hoteliers who do not pay a living wage to their employees) to control \$20 million of our community's tax dollars. The BCTDA is proposing that \$15 million of their budget be used to market for more tourism. This is the largest BCTDA marketing budget to date. Rather than spending \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, we believe that these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations.

With millions of tax dollars on the table, what our community needs is for that money to go to direct financial investment through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, we call for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

We want the BCTDA to know that an increase in marketing to grow tourism beyond its already-unsustainable levels is unacceptable. Any tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address the long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities.

Thank you,

Jenna McLeod

Asheville resident

From: Stephen Wilkerson <sywilkers@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:47 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org;

terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear ExploreAsheville,

I fully support redirecting the current \$15 million of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority intended to market for additional tourism and instead to invest it in our local community in much needed and entirely suitable Reparations.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Y. Wilkerson

From: Kim Hunt <highfivetogogether@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:49 AM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>

Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget

Hi, good afternoon. Writing you all with a request for any tax dollars generated by tourism be directed towards a local community allocated reparations fund. \$15 million budget line for advertising our already tourism saturated city would only exacerbate existing problems of gentrification, displacement of workers and residents, and reinforce racial inequities. Asheville doesn't lack tourists, they will continue to come regardless of the advertising. It's not needed and is perpetuating harm. Instead, why not invest in our community, and those most impacted by the development that our city has experienced.

If this is not possible because of existing laws, then the tax should be repealed by the County Commissioners until the community can control the revenue. Our communities and environment have been damaged by the occupancy tax dollars and there is a chance to pivot, and reconsider priorities and determine as a city what and who we really want to invest in. Please choose to invest in caring for our community, it's not in the advertising to tourists but investing in the members of our community that are already here.

Thank you,

Kim Hunt

From: Jay Hill <jayhill+buncombe@jayhill.net>

Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:54 AM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>

Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear BCTDA members,

I am writing to encourage you to revisit your planned expenditures for the upcoming budget.

As a resident of Asheville and Buncombe County, I want you on our side, working to keep Buncombe County hospitable for those who live here. Please advocate with us to push for Raleigh to untie your hands with how you spend occupancy tax dollars, so we can work together to strengthen our communities instead of extracting wealth from them.

With record occupancy already, we don't need a higher-than-ever marketing spend. Take a courageous step and ask for a reduced budget. Ask to right-size the tax, the budget and the marketing spend to maintain a sustainable tourism industry that employs people with a living wage — not one that requires constant growth at the expense of workers and residents.

I know many of you make your living from the tourism industry and I don't expect your livelihoods are in jeopardy if we don't grow the industry further. Is it ever enough? I hope so.

This body exists for the benefit of the people of Buncombe County and if it cannot manage itself toward that end, then we will abolish it.

With hope and encouragement,
Jay Hill

From: Linda <linda@networktype.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 11:58 AM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Asheville Rising! Your vote is critical

Hello TDA board members and County Commissioners.

In your meeting tomorrow and in other upcoming deliberations, you will be deciding Asheville's future. As a business owner who moved here in 2017 from Chicago to grow my editorial business, and as a gigging musician in Asheville and a new homeowner in Alexander, I feel I am a good representative of the influx of folks from other states who came to Asheville first as tourists and returned to become part of this wonderful community and join in its success. Seeing Asheville thrive is important to me, and of course, as a musician, I benefit greatly from the tourist trade. In all my comings and goings around town since arriving here, however, I have grown increasingly aware of the unsavory side of the tourist business—the rising housing costs and the forced exodus of lower-income people, especially people of color.

Downtown Asheville always seemed to be a vibrant, fun, safe, and clean area to me at first, filled with smiling faces and eager shoppers. That looks like the face of success, doesn't it? And one of the big things that drew me to Asheville was its friendliness and the feeling that all were welcome and appreciated. But since Covid and then the onslaught of national repercussions regarding the police killings of Black people, Asheville has taken a hard hit. I was very proud when the Reparations Resolution was passed and the Vance Monument taken down, and I remain proud of the steps that are being taken to address our own police procedures and our racist history. If the TDA is required to invest a large portion of its budget on advertising, there can be no brighter message about Asheville than to show the world that we stand behind our commitment to reparations and the lifting up of the Black community that has historically provided the heavy lifting that built the Biltmore Estate, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Grove Park Inn, and downtown Asheville itself in the first place.

I think making a substantial investment of several million dollars to the Reparations Fund to be used by a Reparations Commission made up of Black community leaders in collaboration with City government would be the best advertising Asheville could make to the world of what a beautiful and just community we are. Ensuring the safety and happy times of our visitors is important, and it is also important for us to extend that to visitors of color. Creating a downtown that is stress-free, collegial, multi-racial, and welcoming to all is an important investment we all need to make. Let's send a loud and clear message that we are not just talking about reparations but actively contributing to it. Let's continue the good work we have begun by standing behind our promise of reparations—as individuals, businesses, organizations, and government.

I'm counting on you all to do the right thing. People the world over recognize a community that takes care of its own, and people naturally gravitate toward righteousness. Let's do this.

Thank you,
Linda Wolf
847-650-3476

Network Publishing Partners, Inc.

From: Steve Plever <steveplever@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 12:02 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley

<robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org;
terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Comment on TDA budget vote, tourism, infrastructure, and reparations

Greetings. The last thing Asheville needs is more tourism advertising. We're having room-sale records that promise to be smashed again now that pandemic restrictions are lifted. Downtown is again crowded even as us locals avoid it more and more.

We've hit a point where advertising and bringing in more tourists will actually hurt a sustainable tourism economy as WNC's special qualities are overwhelmed and Asheville becomes known as a tourist trap. The overgrowth of tourism is also warping our economy to the point where workers needed for hospitality businesses can't afford to live here, public transit is insufficient to support workers' needs, and the last thing we need is more people having to drive and park downtown to work in hospitality.

There is dire need for funding of basic infrastructure, including the social and physical infrastructure of justice. One great solution that would be in keeping with state law would be to use funds for reparations instead of advertising, and use free media to publicize this action. Truly affordable workforce housing and assistance to mass transit are also needed and justifiable as supports to the tourism industry.

If those things can't be done with occupancy tax money, then please just stop collecting the tax and petition the legislature to change the rules so it can fund things our region needs.

Other than Biltmore Estate which can afford its own advertising, Asheville has nothing in common with tourist destinations like those of Disney. People come here not to be in an artificial environment with other tourists, but for our landscape, and homegrown culinary, brewery and arts scenes. All of those are endangered by advertising that could put tourism well past a healthy level of quality and sustainability for our city. We have real needs. Please recognize them.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Sincerely,
Steve Plever
51 Oakwood St.
Asheville, NC 28806
828.301.3409
steveplever@gmail.com

From: Gene and Christine Callaway <58godisgood@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 12:19 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org;
avril.pinder@buncombecounty.org; brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-
ferrara@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley
<robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Hello,
As a resident of Buncombe County, I am requesting that County tourism tax revenue be allocated to support Reparations in our County. Tourism in this area, historically built upon the labor of Black people, has increased wealth for white community members and compounded the disadvantages Black folks in our area experience today.

With millions of tax dollars on the table, what our community needs is for that money to go to direct financial investment through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, we call for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

We want the BCTDA to know that an increase in marketing to grow tourism beyond its already-unsustainable levels is unacceptable. Any tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address the long history of harm

done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christine and Gene Callaway

20 Twin Hills Drive

Weaverville 28787

From: Bonnie H <BonnieBrite@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 12:30 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: public comment

To Members of the TDA,

PLEASE heed the needs of those of us who live here and find it increasingly difficult to navigate congested and ill-repaired roads, to visit local businesses and restaurants, to find affordable housing, to even enjoy an uncrowded peaceful drive or hike in the mountains.

It's past time for the TDA to allocate funds to support our residents and businesses! Use these funds to address the homeless population and to work toward a solution for housing costs that have escalated to the point that service workers cannot afford to live here. Address infrastructure and public services. Protect our natural resources before they disappear.

If these issues aren't addressed, visitors will leave Asheville and spread the word about their poor experiences. No amount of money spent on advertising will counter the negative publicity generated by unhappy travelers.

The handwriting is on the wall, the Asheville that you are promoting is fast-disappearing. You have an opportunity to turn the tide. Please use your power wisely.

Thank you,

Bonnie Holstein
Montford homeowner

From: Lori Thomas <lorithomas4@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 12:58 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget public comment

To whom it may concern:

The idea of spending \$15 million in taxpayer dollars to advertise for tourism is ridiculous and absurd. As a resident of Asheville since 2008, I am very dismayed by the increase in traffic and the number of hotels going up faster than we can count them.

This town and the tourism industry was built using enslaved labor, on the backs of uncompensated Black people and is now causing acceleration of gentrification of Black neighborhoods and increasing racial inequities. Our Black neighbors and community members deserve reparations for these harms, and tax monies should be specifically allocated for them to repair and build their neighborhoods.

PLEASE listen to the people of Asheville, don't spend more money on tourism. Pay Black people what they have earned and deserve. The time is now.

Sincerely,
Lori Thomas

From: Sabrina Delk <SDelk@ncobs.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 1:33 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Please reconsider the use of BCTDA funds to support more advertising. Asheville is full to the brim with tourist with fewer and fewer people to support them. Normal people can no longer afford to live here because of how tourism has affected the cost of living.

The BCTDA has the opportunity to put the over \$15 million budgeted for marketing into the Reparations fund. This would be a start of a move towards repair of the inequities embedded in and damage caused by the tourism industry. In terms of complying with the state statute, you can simply take the stance that investing in community wellbeing is advertising.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sabrina Delk
Disclaimer Notice

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North Carolina Outward Bound School

From: Emily Ogburn <emily.ogburn@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 1:38 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Hello,

I believe that the \$15 million proposed to go toward further marketing of the area for tourism should be redirected to go toward the actual community. There is already an unsustainable level of tourism in Asheville and the surrounding area. Real, fair-wage, sustainable jobs are needed for locals that live in the community. Hotels, most of which do not pay their own employees a living wage, should not get to decide how these tax dollars are used. These tax dollars should, instead, be invested in the local community. An investment in reparations with these tax dollars is the right thing to do with these funds. This industry has done years of harm to the local community and was built using stolen, enslaved labor. Reparations for the Black community is not only the just thing to do but it serves the entire local community and uplifts us all. In this day and age, Asheville has received significant press attention for promising to adopt plans for Reparations. A case could be made that healing our community and repairing some of the harm that has been caused by investing in Reparations is "advertising" for the justice and loveliness of the area (because state law says this money has to go towards "advertising"). If there is no way that this money can be used to actually benefit the local community and it must be used to advertise for tourism then I ask you to repeal the occupancy tax until these taxes can be controlled by the local community. I'm not sure why advertising for tourism in the area is even useful to anyone, at this point it seems like everyone has definitely heard of Asheville and visited at least once already. Continued use of millions of dollars in this way is irresponsible and a waste of much needed funds.

Thank you,
Emily Ogburn
--
Emily Ogburn

emilyogburn@gmail.com

From: Esther Cartwright - AvL <ecartwright@avlttech.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:01 PM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Hello--I would like all proceeds from all tourism taxes to be allocated to racial equity, structural change, and addressing systemic racism across the community. Thanks--

Esther Oliver Cartwright
AvLTECHNOLOGIES
15 North Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804
Office: 828.210.3522
Cell: 828.505.5005
avltech.com

From: Miranda Poe <mirandarpoe@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:06 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>; brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; avril.pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

I am writing to reiterate the call made by CoThinkk last year that, "all proceeds from all tourism taxes [be] allocated to racial equity, structural change, and addressing systemic racism across the community." The BCTDA has the opportunity to put the over \$15 million budgeted for marketing into the reparations fund. This would be a start of a move towards repair of the inequities embedded in and damage caused by the tourism industry. Investing in community wellbeing promotes Asheville as a nice place to live and visit. Everyone benefits when everyone has what they need. This is currently very far from the case.

Sincerely,
Miranda Poe

From: Heather Laine Talley <heatherltalley@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:13 PM
To: Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org; Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org
Subject: "Budget Public Comment"

Dear Commissioners,

In this moment of rising violence, intensifying gentrification, and fewer and fewer pathways to economic security, any increase in marketing to grow tourism beyond its already-unsustainable levels is unacceptable.

I am requesting that County tourism tax revenue be allocated to support Reparations in our County.

Any tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address the long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities.

Sincerely,

Heather Laine Talley

--

Heather Laine Talley
<http://www.heatherlainetalley.com/>
Buy *Saving Face* from a local bookseller.

Saving Face: Disfigurement and the Politics of Appearance
Editorial Collective, The Feminist Wire

From: Jeanne Devany Cummings <cummingsjd@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:19 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>
Subject: comments about BCTDA Budget/NO!

Rather than spending \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, these dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community by paying for roads, affordable housing, emergency services, waste and water and reparations.

This revenue should be community-controlled, rather than controlled by for-profit businesses with the goal of increasing profits. In its current form, the profits of tourism rely on underpaid labor and create negative environmental impacts.

Tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point and will instead continue increasing the amount of tourism past what is already an unsustainable level.

From: Jean Parks <jparks@grandcreative.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:16 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Please direct the vast majority of the proceeds of the occupancy tax to expenditures that will benefit the citizens of Asheville and Buncombe County directly. I can think of roads that need repair, public parks that need enhancement, programs for our most vulnerable people that need investment...

Sincerely,
Dr. Jean Parks
28803

From: Emily Peele <highfive.emily@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:35 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Reallocate the Occupancy Tax for Reparations

Thank you for taking public input on this increasingly vital matter!

I want to add my voice to the many who have named the increasingly extractive nature of tourism in Asheville at the great cost of its residents, especially our Black and brown citizens.

As we saw in 2020 when tourism advertising was largely paused due to the pandemic, hotel revenues continued to break records and garner great sums for the TDA.

We must address the massive inequalities in education, homeownership, wages and well being for Asheville's Black community.

We need persistent and brave representation to challenge the use of the occupancy tax at the state level. Ensuring access to generational wealth for Black Asheville through reparations of land and money is the best use of this occupancy tax for the very survival of our neighborhoods and local residents.

Please repeal and re-evaluate the use of the occupancy tax to stave off the unsustainable pace and outcomes of tourism currently happening in Asheville.

Emily Peele

--

Emily Peele
Brand + Culture Director || High Five Coffee
804.516.5200

From: Macon, Tamarie <tamarie@email.unc.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:45 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; avril.pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear BCTDA Board and County Commissioners:

My name is Dr. Tamarie Macon and I am a Buncombe County resident. In the current structure of the BCTDA, Buncombe County allows for-profit tourism business owners (the majority being hoteliers who do not pay a living wage to their employees) to control \$20 million of our community's tax dollars. The BCTDA is proposing that \$15 million of their budget be used to market for more tourism. This is the largest BCTDA marketing budget to date. Rather than spending \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, I believe that these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations.

With millions of tax dollars on the table, what our community needs is for that money to go to direct financial investment through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, I join the Racial Justice Coalition in calling for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

An increase in marketing to grow tourism beyond its already-unsustainable levels is unacceptable. Any tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address the long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities.

Some other points to consider:

- Investing in our Black residents benefits us all. As the majority of occupancy tax dollars are required by state law to go towards "advertising," a case can be made that investing in community healing and repair through Reparations is advertising.
- Tax revenue should be community controlled, rather than controlled by for-profit businesses with the goal of increasing profits. In its current form, the profits of tourism rely on underpaid labor and create negative environmental impacts.
- Tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point and will instead continue increasing the amount of tourism past what is already an unsustainable level. For example, in October 2020, during the pandemic when their advertising was paused, the BCTDA reported \$53 million in room sales, a 6% increase over October 2019. It was an all-time record.
- The BCTDA's tourism marketing has accelerated gentrification and development, and therefore accelerated the displacement of Black people and damage to our natural environment. Taxes must be used to repair this damage, not to grow industry profits.

Thank you very much.

Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously. ~Prentis Hemphill

Tamarie Macon, PhD (she/her/hers)
Assistant Professor, Public Health Leadership Program
UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health
Director of Community Initiatives, MAHEC



125 Hendersonville Road Asheville, NC 28803
Phone: 828.348.3661 / Fax: 828.333.5474
https://sph.unc.edu/adv_profile/tamarie-macon-phd/ / Tamarie@email.unc.edu

From: Justin Reid <jlreid@alumni.unca.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:53 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Justin Reid Budget Public Comment

Dear Explore Asheville,

I am writing today to voice my opinion about today's budget hearing and the use of hotel tax funds for TDA marketing. As COVID-19 has recently shown, a city economy built around tourism is unsustainable, exploitative and dehumanizing for front line workers, and creates Dickensian style socioeconomic inequality where you will see rude wealthy tourists side by side with extreme homelessness and poverty. Not only do I support that \$15 million dollars be earmarked for reparations to Asheville's African American community and that the occupancy tax be repealed, I feel that an organization that is run by hotel owners that also directly manages the tax dollars that are taken from those same hotels is illegitimate. This kind of oligarchic arrangement is something out of a post Soviet right-wing dictatorship, not something that's supposed to be in the USA. Even though this is a city government forum, I urge everyone to support abolishing this corrupt institution that's turning Asheville into an aristocracy that no one other than Hoteliers and wealthy business owners are benefiting from. All tax dollars should belong to the community and point towards true economic democracy and autonomy in the workplace, not towards more gentrification that is killing the community and causes problems such as racist police violence.

Respectfully,

Justin Reid

From: Ellen Sizemore <ellen.sizemore@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 2:56 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Cc: County Commissioners and County Manager

Re: FY22 Operating, Earned Revenue, and Tourism Product Development Fund

I am a nearly ten-year resident of Buncombe County. I understand you are bound by statute to spend money earned by the occupancy tax to attract tourists to Asheville. Tourism at current levels already is unsustainable, however, and increasingly contributes to long-standing inequities in our community. I support, at most, a *significant reduction* to the advertising budget, to support only those businesses that contribute public goods to the broader community (e.g. those offering living wages to all employees). *All* further expenditure on advertising for extractive businesses goes against the interests of Buncombe County's residents and accelerates community decay.

Control over moneys raised by the occupancy tax should devolve to County-level managers accountable to the public. If this change is not achieved, I will advocate to repeal the tax. The County agreed to join the City of Asheville in supporting reparations for Black residents who have long experienced the worst consequences as more and more extractive businesses have taken root in our city. Local, elected control of these funds can be one important step toward the County fulfilling its commitment. If we want to "advertise" Buncombe County, prioritize making it into a place where people of all backgrounds can flourish, and let the results speak for themselves.

Sincerely,

Ellen Sizemore
60 Mildred Avenue
Asheville, NC 28806

From: Rebekah Morrisson <morrisson.rebekah@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:23 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Brownie W. Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org;
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards
<amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>;
parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Hello,

I am requesting that County tourism tax revenue be allocated to support Reparations in our County. Tourism in this area, historically built upon the labor of Black people, has increased wealth for white community members and compounded the disadvantages Black folks in our area experience today.

Rather than spending \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations. With millions of tax dollars on the table, what our community needs is for that money to go to direct financial investment through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, I call for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

Tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point and will instead continue increasing the amount of tourism past what is already an unsustainable level. For example, in October 2020, during the pandemic when their advertising was paused, the BCTDA reported \$53 million in room sales, a 6% increase over October 2019. It was an all-time record.

Put those tax dollars into our community!

Rebekah Morrisson

From: Maria Baker <dscsmbhh@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:23 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: BCTDA budget

Hello, I would like to comment on the use of the hotel occupancy tax revenue.

I strongly believe that the revenue generated by the county tourism tax should be allocated to support Reparations in Buncombe County. However, it has come to my attention that \$15 million of the BCTDA budget is to be used to market for more tourism. This is unacceptable.

We have more than enough tourist dollars being spent in Asheville nowadays. We do not need additional marketing to bring more people here to visit. In fact, the sheer numbers of tourists detract from the atmosphere of this area.

I think the tax revenue should be controlled and used by the community, rather than by for-profit businesses. It is the purest form of advertising when a progressive city like Asheville invests money for the purpose of community healing and repair through Reparations, instead of towards capitalism.

Sincerely,
Maria Baker
Buncombe County resident

From: Cathy Scott <cathyscott1953@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:25 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear members of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority,

I am writing in support of the idea of utilizing funds that currently go to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority instead be used, in substantial amount, to support Reparations in Buncombe County.

The logic of doing this lies in the fact that in the early 1960s, members of Asheville's business community, in league with civic leaders, was developing a Civic Redevelopment Project. When that Project met the Federal Urban Renewal program, it was a match made in heaven; a way to develop Asheville's tourism industry by declaring Asheville's Black neighborhoods blighted, removing same and investing in infrastructure and business attractive to tourism.

This is a history worth reviewing, and I hope you each have the opportunity to do that. You will then understand the logic of designating the funds that the tourism industry generates, go to the community which is owed compensation. Not only were homes of Black Ashevilleians destroyed, but so were businesses, institutions, churches, and relationships. Areas that some "officials and leaders" saw as blighted, residents experienced as vibrant and supportive communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this issues and I hope you will see a way forward to bring some resolution to the ongoing effects of our dismal history of racial discrimination in Asheville.

Sincerely,
Cathy Scott
53 Mount Olive Church Road
28804
Buncombe County

Ndiaye, Prsicilla. "Southside/East Riverside: Lost—In the Name of Progress." Crossroads: A Publication of the North Carolina Humanities Council 14, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 2010): 11.

Betsalel, Ken and Harry Harrison. "Re-Storying Community: Lessons from African American Stories of Urban Renewal in Asheville." Crossroads: A Publication of the North Carolina Humanities Council 14, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 2010): 7.

Griffin, Pat. "Stephens-Lee High School & the Stephens-Lee Alumni Association." Crossroads: A Publication of the North Carolina Humanities Council 14, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 2010): 9.

Jeter, Clara and Pat McAfee. "Stumptown: A Dramatic Disruption." Crossroads: A Publication of the North Carolina Humanities Council 14, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 2010): 13. Judson, Sarah M. "The Civil Rights Movement in WNC." Lecture, African Americans in WNC Conference, Asheville, North Carolina, October 24, 2014.

--

"The world is too dangerous for anything but truth and too small for anything but love."
~ Rev. William Sloan Coffin

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."
~ Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

From: Kathryn Crawford <kac6189@mac.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:27 PM

To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

To whom it may concern,

Upon hearing of the proposed advertising budget, I feel compelled to write this email, asking that the conversation might turn towards reconsidering where this money is going.

I believe there is an immense need for reparations, and that the money would be much more helpful being used to help the lower income residents of our city. I don't believe we need more advertising for tourism, we get a lot already. What has made this city enticing for a lot of people is the eclectic nature of Asheville; imagine how enticing it would be if we invested in those people who have invested in living here, but are struggling to afford to stay here.

That could be our biggest draw: a city that takes care of its residents and the people who need the most help. I hope that we can be that.

Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Sean G <seanmgaskell@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:30 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org; alfred.whitesides@buncombecountry.org; jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org; amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org; robert.pressly@buncombecounty.org; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org; avril.pinder@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear Buncombe County Commissioners,

My name is Sean Gaskell. I'm a resident of Asheville.

Today, I write to you all with deep concern regarding the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority FY22 Operating, Earned Revenue, and Tourism Product Development Fund budgets.

Tourism in Asheville and Buncombe County has exacerbated the systems of oppression that Black people continue to endure through systemic racism and the resulting residual trauma accumulated over multiple generations dating back to slavery. How about we instead put these tourism dollars towards the Black Ashevilleans and descendants of who have consequently lost homes and businesses resulting from urban renewal in the 60s-70s and present day gentrification that have been perpetuated by white folks like myself? As a seven year resident of Asheville, I recently learned that since the 1960s, 1000+ Black homeowners have been forced out/priced out of their homes due to urban renewal of the 60s and 70s, as well as the multitude of businesses that populated the Southside during that period, prior to white gentrification and rebranding of "South Slope".

These inadequacies are not unique to Asheville and Buncombe County. This is a prime example of how white privilege and white capital is utilized, consciously and subconsciously, to uphold systems of oppression throughout the country and the world.

It is time to turn the page. Investment in reparations will be a positive step forward. A specific dollar amount to mend the results of systemic racism is incalculable considering the pain, loss and trauma that Black folks have endured. That said, reparations is a step we must take.

Most of the revenue for these budgets of concern comes from occupancy tax income. In the current structure of the BCTDA, Buncombe County allows for-profit tourism business owners (the majority being hoteliers who do not pay a living wage to their employees) to control \$20 million of our community's tax dollars. The BCTDA is proposing that \$15 million of their budget be used to market for more tourism. This is the largest BCTDA

marketing budget to date. Rather than spending \$15 million to market our community as a commodity, I believe that these tax dollars would be better spent directly investing in our community through Reparations.

With millions of tax dollars on the table, what our community needs is for that money to go to direct financial investment through Reparations. If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, I call for the County Commissioners to repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

I would like the BCTDA to know that an increase in marketing to grow tourism beyond its already-unsustainable levels is unacceptable. Any tax dollars generated by tourism should be used to address the long history of harm done by this industry, which was built using enslaved labor; played a significant role in urban renewal and gentrification; and is exacerbating today's racial inequities.

Some other points to consider:

- Investing in our Black residents benefits us all. As the majority of occupancy tax dollars are required by state law to go towards "advertising," a case can be made that investing in community healing and repair through Reparations is advertising.
- Tax revenue should be community controlled, rather than controlled by for-profit businesses with the goal of increasing profits. In its current form, the profits of tourism rely on underpaid labor and create negative environmental impacts.
- Tax-funded tourism marketing isn't needed at this point and will instead continue increasing the amount of tourism past what is already an unsustainable level. For example, in October 2020, during the pandemic when their advertising was paused, the BCTDA reported \$53 million in room sales, a 6% increase over October 2019. It was an all-time record.
- The BCTDA's tourism marketing has accelerated gentrification and development, and therefore accelerated the displacement of Black people and damage to our natural environment. Taxes must be used to repair this damage, not to grow industry profits.

Please take this to heart. Through compassion, empathy and action, we can be a better serving and more inclusive community for those who live here.

Thank you.

Sean

From: Miranda Norlin <mirandanorlin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:31 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Cc: Al Whitesides <alfred.whitesides@buncombecounty.org>; Amanda Edwards <amanda.edwards@buncombecounty.org>; Avril Pinder <Avril.Pinder@buncombecounty.org>; Brownie Newman <brownie.newman@buncombecounty.org>; Jasmine Beach Ferrara <jasmine.beach-ferrara@buncombecounty.org>; Robert Pressley <robert.pressley@buncombecounty.org>; parker.sloan@buncombecounty.org; terri.wells@buncombecounty.org
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Dear BCTDA and County Commissioners,

I fully support the Racial Justice Coalition's call to spend money that comes from taxes on tourism to actually benefit the people living in Buncombe County rather than to benefit for-profit hotels and corporations by using that money for advertising.

We DO NOT NEED more people to come to Asheville. The word is out. It'd been out for years. The fact that the number of people coming to Asheville DURING A PANDEMIC, when advertising had been put on hold, INCREASED, is abundant evidence that that advertising is not necessary.

And yet unsurprisingly, when tax funds are given into the control of private, for-profit parties, rather than into the control of the community, that money will always be spent to make more money with no regard for the harm that profit is built on.

The funds currently assigned to marketing should instead go directly towards reparations and a process that is controlled by Black people in Buncombe County. Hotels and the tourism industry have accelerated gentrification, and therefore directly contributed to harm to the Black community in Asheville for which reparations are necessary.

If this can't happen because of state restrictions, or the Board's reluctance to redirect its funds, I ask that the County Commissioners repeal the occupancy tax until those revenues can be community controlled.

Thanks for your time,
Miranda Norlin

From: BeLoved Asheville <belovedasheville@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:49 PM
To: Reply @ Explore Asheville <Reply@exploreasheville.com>
Subject: Budget Public Comment

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the BCTDA public budget.

We call on the BCTDA, as a member of our Asheville and Buncombe County community with deep responsibility for the well being of our community, to support community health and vitality through reparations for our African American community, to supporting workers and working families, and for caring for the most vulnerable in our community through policies that end poverty, increase affordable housing and create equity and opportunity for all in our community. This must be tied specifically to resources via the BCTDA budget.

Ponkho Bermejo, Carmen Ramos-Kennedy, Adrienne Sigmon & Amy Cantrell
BeLoved Asheville Team



Home, health, and opportunity for all in our community!
www.belovedasheville.com
828-571-0766