

BCTDA Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023



EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY
Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board Members



Matthew Lehman, The Grand Bohemian Asheville
*Vice Chair
City Appointed*
First Hospitality Job: Bartender



HP Patel, BCA Hotels
*Treasurer of the Nonprofit
County Appointed*
First Hospitality Job: Laundry Attendant



Elizabeth Putnam, Mosaic Lifestyle Realty
County Appointed
First Service Job: Sales Clerk



Andrew Celwyn, Herbiary
City Appointed
First Hospitality Job: College Dining Hall



Larry Crosby, The Foundry Hotel
City Appointed
First Hospitality Job: Banquet Server



Michael Lusick, FIRC Group, Inc.
City Appointed
First Hospitality Job: Night Auditor



Kathleen Mosher, Biltmore
Chamber Appointed
First Hospitality Job: Marketing Firm with Hospitality Clients



Scott Patel, Pure Hospitality
County Appointed
First Hospitality Job: Front Desk Agent



Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore
Asheville City Council
Ex-Officio Member



Commissioner Terri Wells
Buncombe County Commission
Ex-Officio Member

40 YEARS OF THE BCTDA

Join us as we reflect on the significant milestones that have shaped our leisure and hospitality industry and fueled the community and economic growth of Asheville and Buncombe County over the past four decades.

1983
State legislation established a 2% occupancy tax and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA)

ALWAYS ASHEVILLE

A Message from Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Dear Partners and Friends,

We are pleased to share our Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, a comprehensive reflection of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and Explore Asheville's performance and achievements over the past year. As we navigate the evolving post-Covid landscape for our industry and our community, we are proud and grateful for the resilience, dedication, and innovation of our community, partners, and our team.

This year, we celebrated two major milestones: the 40-year anniversary of the founding of the Tourism Development Authority and 20 years of community investments through the Tourism Product Development Fund.

We also celebrate new benchmarks, including the record-breaking \$2.88 billion spent by visitors in 2022, which supported all categories of businesses in our visitor economy as well as municipal and county budgets, capital projects, and community initiatives.

The creative work of the Explore Asheville team garnered more than 7 million website sessions for potential visitors, booked nearly 400 groups and events, and shared more than 1,000 leads with our hotel partners.

We encourage you to flip through these pages to celebrate our collective achievements and where we're headed together. Take a moment to reflect on the many significant milestones captured on the 40-year timeline flowing throughout this report.

We remain dedicated to the long-term sustainability and responsible growth of our community, with you and for you, powered by visitors.



Victoria Isley
President & CEO
Explore Asheville
Buncombe County TDA
First Hospitality Job: Restaurant Server



Brenda Durden
Asheville Hotel Group
BCTDA Board Chair
First Hospitality Job: Front Desk Agent

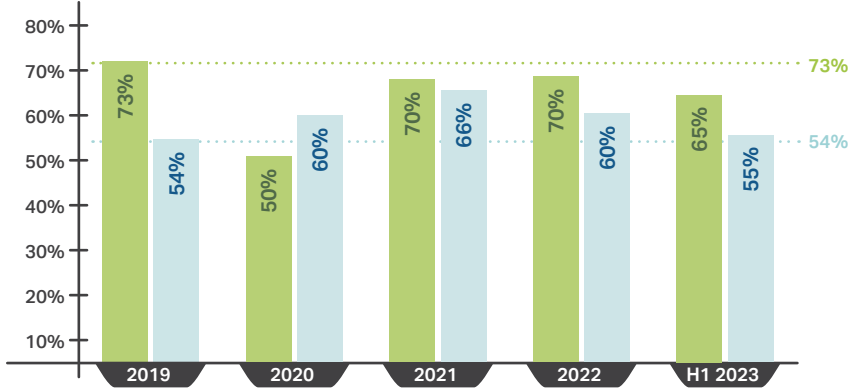
Destination Performance

The BCTDA's mandate is to attract overnight visitors for the economic development of Buncombe County. Lodging occupancy is a leading indicator of destination performance and visitor spending in our community.

Average Occupancy by Lodging Type

In 2022, hotel occupancy nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels before slightly settling in the first half of 2023. Vacation rental occupancy rose during Covid-19 years and has now leveled off to pre-pandemic rates.

■ = HOTELS
■ = VACATION RENTALS (Entire Place)
H1 2023 = FIRST HALF OF 2023
Source: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA
Average Occupancy = Percentage of rooms occupied for the period



Why Lodging Occupancy Matters

While overnight visitors make up 37% of visitation, they contribute 73% of total visitor spending, equaling \$2.88 billion in 2022. The majority of visitor spending, nearly 70%, takes place in local businesses like restaurants, shops, tour providers, art galleries, attractions, etc. (not inside lodging facilities).

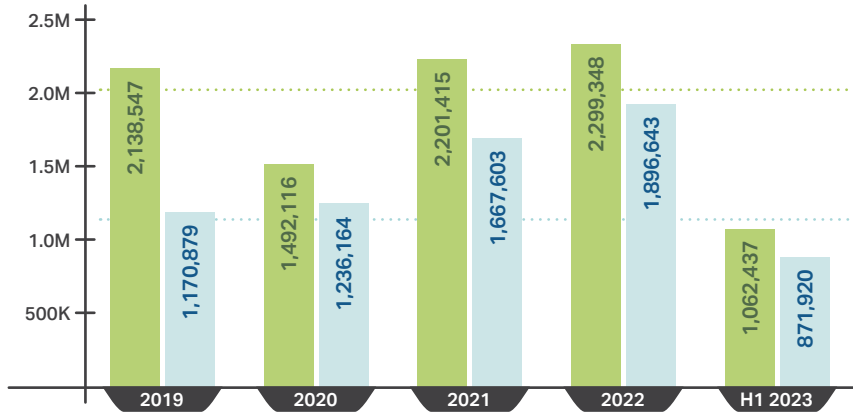
70%
2022 HOTEL
OCCUPANCY

60%
2022 VACATION
RENTAL
OCCUPANCY

2022 Yields Highest Annual Hotel and Vacation Rental Demand

Hotel roomnight demand grew 7.5% from 2019 to the end of 2022. Vacation rental roomnight demand grew 62% during the same period.

■ = HOTELS
■ = VACATION RENTALS (Entire Place)
H1 2023 = FIRST HALF OF 2023
Source: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA
Room Demand = Total number of hotel rooms or entire place vacation rental rooms (Airbnb or Vrbo/HomeAway) sold or rented (excludes complimentary rooms)

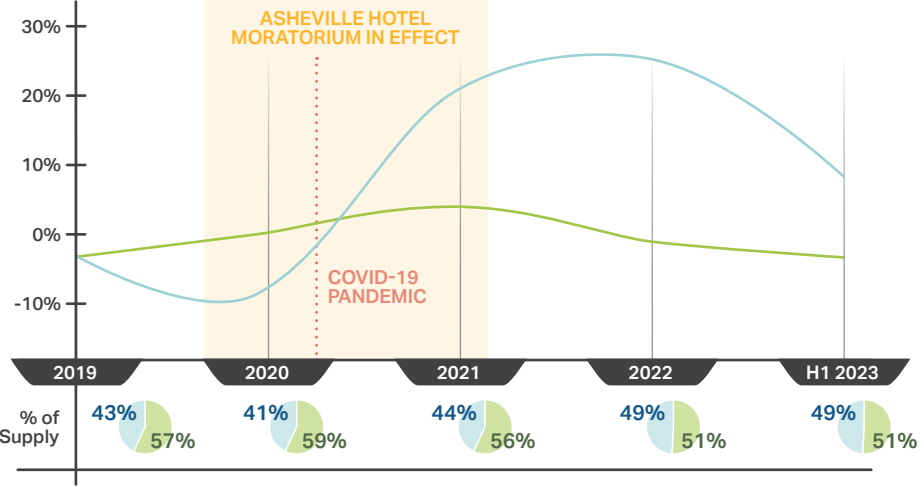


Vacation Rentals Outpace Hotel Growth

During the Asheville City Council's hotel moratorium and the pandemic, vacation rentals grew exponentially in both supply and demand compared to hotels.

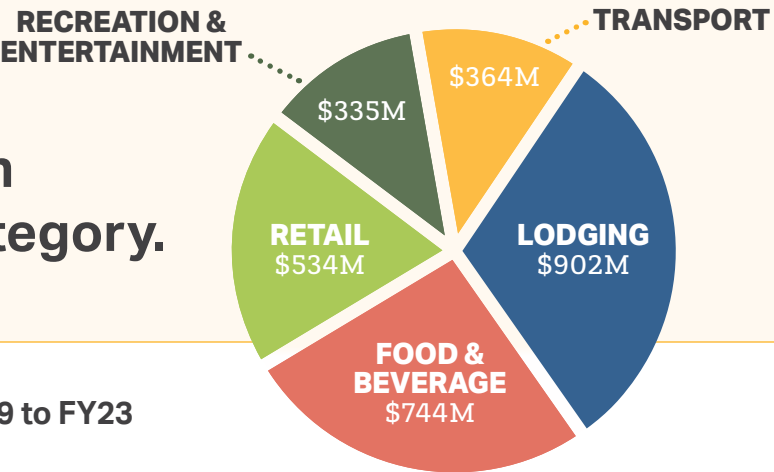
In 2019, hotels and vacation rentals maintained a 14% difference in supply. Last year that gap decreased to 2%.

■ = HOTELS
■ = VACATION RENTALS (Entire Place)
H1 2023 = FIRST HALF OF 2023
Source: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA
Room Supply = Total number of hotel rooms or vacation rental rooms available during a period



Visitors spent \$2.88 billion in 2022, exceeding 2021 levels in every local business category.

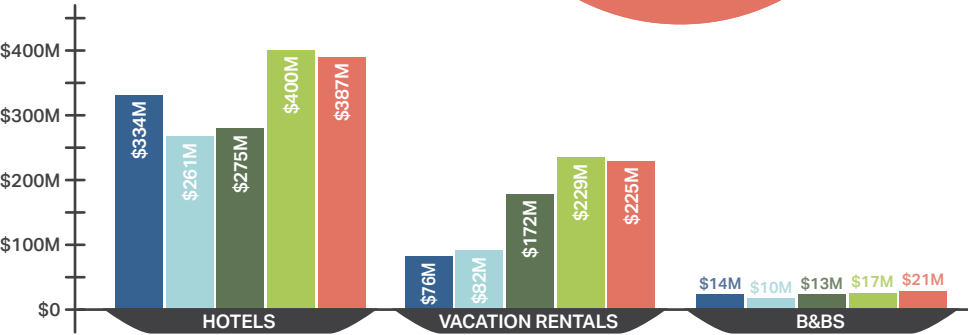
Source: Tourism Economics, Visit NC



Total Lodging Sales Grew 49% from FY19 to FY23

Over the course of five years, hotel sales grew 16%, vacation rental sales grew 196%, and Bed & Breakfast sales grew 42%.

■ = FY19
■ = FY20
■ = FY21
■ = FY22
■ = FY23
FY = JULY - JUNE



1985
County occupancy tax was increased to 3%

1997
Uniform guidelines of the occupancy tax were established

2000
Foodtopia campaign launched

2001
Lodging tax was increased an additional 1% to create the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF)



2002
With TPDF support, the Grove Arcade reopened, marking the rebirth of downtown Asheville

Organizational Productivity



\$71M
DIRECT SPEND
BY GROUPS &
MEETINGS



394
EVENTS &
GROUPS
BOOKED

65,123
GROUP ROOMS
BOOKED

5,342,110
WEBSITE USERS
Up 1.25% from FY22

7,169,277
WEBSITE SESSIONS

12 TRADE
SHOWS
ATTENDED



FACEBOOK
14.7% organic
engagement rate
774K organic post clicks
1.1M organic impressions
+324K followers

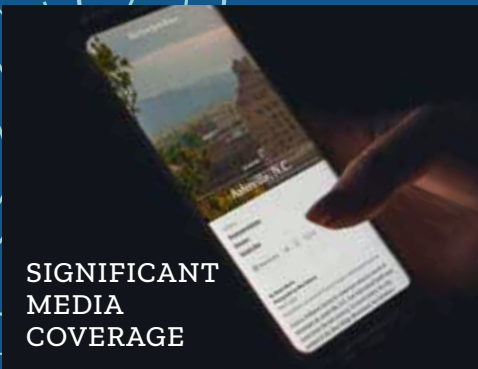


INSTAGRAM
63M organic impressions
1% organic engagement rate
+674K organic
engagements
+139K followers



YOUTUBE
+137K views
+578K impressions
4,427 subscribers

1,047
LEADS ISSUED
TO HOTEL
PARTNERS
Up ~11% from FY22

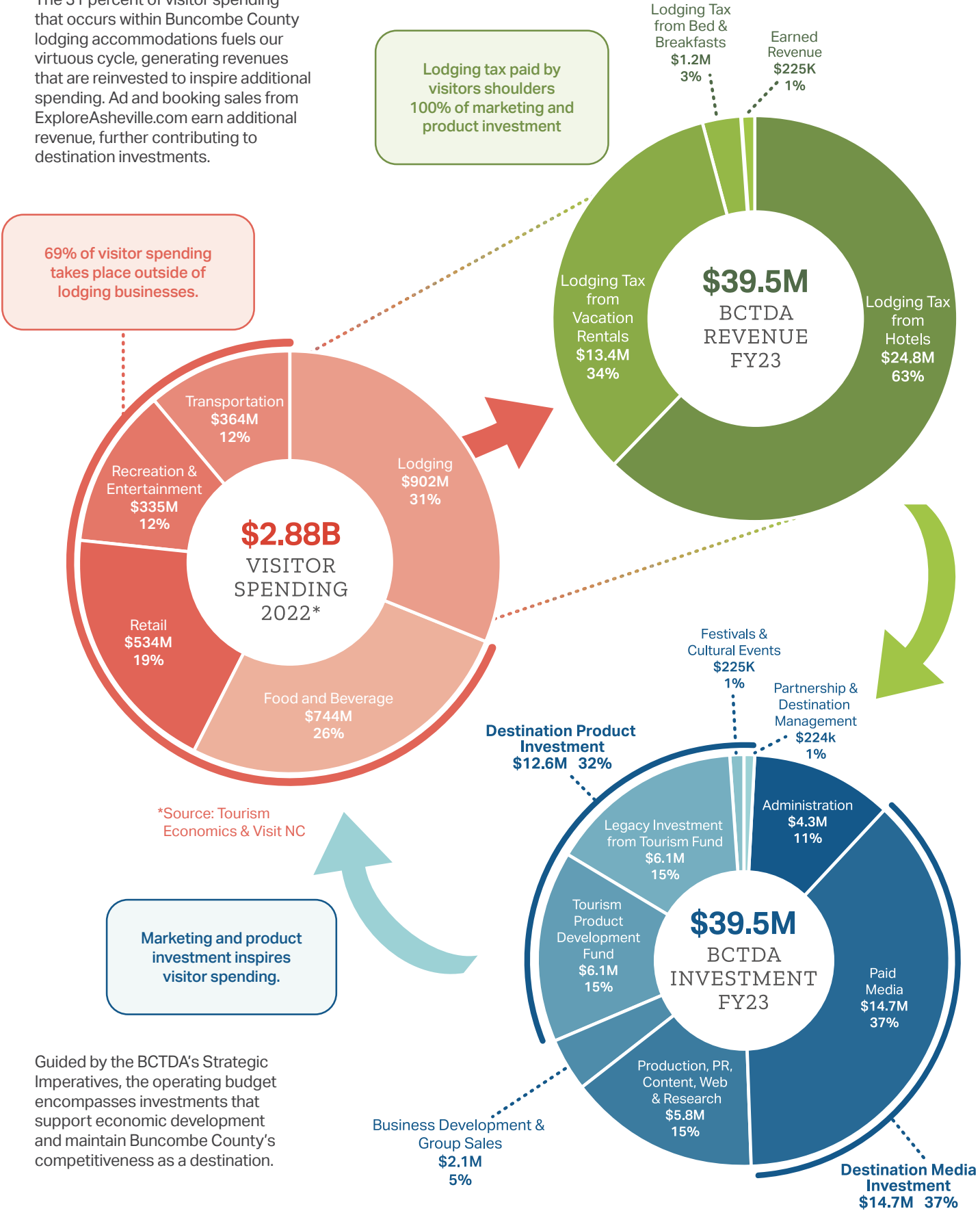


SIGNIFICANT
MEDIA
COVERAGE

EATER: *Where to Eat in 2023*
MEN'S JOURNAL: *What's Behind Asheville, North Carolina's Huge Success as a Craft Beer Hub? You'll Have to Visit to Find Out*
THE WASHINGTON POST: *The Latest Hot Food Destination is Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains*
THE NEW YORK TIMES: *36 Hours in Asheville, N.C.: Things to Do and See*

THE VIRTUOUS VISITOR CYCLE

The 31 percent of visitor spending that occurs within Buncombe County lodging accommodations fuels our virtuous cycle, generating revenues that are reinvested to inspire additional spending. Ad and booking sales from ExploreAsheville.com earn additional revenue, further contributing to destination investments.



BCTDA Investments Powered By Visitors



Tourism Product Development Fund

The BCTDA has committed **\$80 million to 45 community tourism projects since the fund's inception**, with more than half invested in City-owned or operated amenities. The Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) is solely funded through a lodging tax paid by visitors who stay overnight in Buncombe County in commercial lodging facilities including hotels, vacation rentals, and bed-and-breakfasts. Investment in these transformational projects reinforce Asheville's sense of place through the preservation of historical community assets, modernization of our cultural destinations, and enhancement of natural amenities.



Scan this QR code
to learn more about
TPDF's legacy

HISTORIC McCORMICK FIELD INVESTMENT

The BCTDA approved nearly **\$23 million in multi-year funding** for the City of Asheville's McCormick Field Centennial Restoration & Capital Improvements Project. This investment marks the **first debt service project** and the **largest TPDF investment ever granted**.

This investment will modernize the stadium into a multi-use public facility with the necessary infrastructure to operate year-round events. The project also includes the necessary capital improvements for McCormick Field to meet new Minor League Baseball facility standards passed in 2019. Construction is expected to begin Sept. 2024 and be completed by March 2026.

2022 TPDF Grant Cycle Recipients

In addition to approving **\$15.6 million** for new investment in **12 community projects**, the BCTDA recently approved McCormick Field improvements through the Major Works Pathway for the benefit of both visitors and residents.

City of Asheville
Swannanoa River Greenway
Asheville Muni. Golf Course Phase I
WNC Nature Center

UNC Asheville Foundation
Karl Straus Track Renovation
& Expansion

RiverLink, Inc.
Karen Cragnolin Park –
Greenway Phase

North Carolina Glass Center
Glass Center in Black Mountain

Asheville on Bikes
AVL Unpaved Phase I

Asheville Museum of Science (AMOS)
Museum Beautification Project

Wortham Center for the Performing Arts
The Wortham Center Phase II

Buncombe County Government
Woodfin Greenway & Blueway
Enka Recreation Destination



2002
John B. Lewis Soccer
Complex became the
first project to receive
TPDF investment

2004
Pack Square Park received its first
allocation of \$2.55 million in total
TPDF investments

2009
Asheville was first
recognized as "Beer
City USA" by Imbibe
Magazine



Supporting Local Culture & Events through Grants & Sponsorships

Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund

Contributing to the financial viability and long-term sustainability of festivals and cultural events, the Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund (F&CE) seeks to stimulate new events and expand on existing ones that are enjoyed by residents and visitors.

\$90,000 was invested in 22 festivals and cultural events in this year alone.

More than **\$783,000** has been invested in festivals and cultural events since the creation of the support fund.



2022 F&CE Support Fund Recipients

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program
ASAP Farm Tour | \$5,000

Asheville Celtic Group
Asheville Celtic Fest | \$5,000

Asheville Creative Arts
Peace Gardens and Market
Annual Spring Fling! | \$5,000

Asheville Downtown Association
Asheville Holiday Parade | \$5,000
Downtown After 5 | \$5,000
Pritchard Park Summer Series | \$3,850

Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR)
Taste of Asheville | \$5,000

Asheville Makers Inc.
Maker Faire Asheville | \$2,500

Asheville Mardi Gras
Asheville Mardi Gras Parade
& Queen's Ball | \$4,000

Asheville Symphony Society, Inc.
Symphony in the Park | \$5,000

Aurora Studio & Gallery, Inc.
Zelda Fitzgerald Week | \$800

Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce
Sourwood Festival | \$5,000

Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
{Re}HAPPENING 11 | \$3,500

Blue Ridge Pride
Blue Ridge Pride Festival | \$5,000

Center for Honeybee Research
Asheville HoneyFest | \$5,000

Connect Beyond Festival
Connect Beyond Festival | \$5,000

Green Built Alliance
CiderFest NC | \$3,500

Johnny Shields Productions LLC (Open Doors Asheville)
Beer City Comic Con | \$2,500

LEAF Global Arts
LEAF Downtown AVL | \$5,000

Outdoor Gear Builders of WNC
Get in Gear Fest | \$2,500

Swannanoa Valley Museum
Walk Through History | \$2,000

The Center for Craft, Creativity, & Design Inc.
Krafthaus | \$5,000

Event Sponsorships

Sponsorship funding is available to Buncombe County-based nonprofits providing professional and community development opportunities that serve the local community.

In FY23, Explore Asheville offered 27 sponsorships to local community partners, totaling **\$132,500**.



2022 Sponsorship Recipients

Skyview Golf Association
Skyview Golf Tournament

East End/Valley Street Neighborhood Association
East End/Valley Street
Community Heritage Festival

Chow Chow Asheville
Chow Chow Asheville Food Festival

Asheville Museum of Science
Under the Stars 2022

American Institute of Graphic Arts
Asheville Design Weekend

Center for Craft
Cherokee Basket Public Art Project:
Opening Weekend & Celebration

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)
ASAP's Business of Farming Conference

UNC Asheville
UNCA Our Turn to Play
Scholarship Dinner
Asheville Ideas Festival

Daniel Boone Council — Boy Scouts of America
80th Annual Distinguished Citizen Dinner

The North Carolina Arboretum
Bloom with a View

Asheville Symphony Society, Inc.
Asheville Amadeus Festival 2023

Asheville Choral Society
A Sonic Diaspora: Music of Life

Black Wall Street AVL
GrindFest AVL (May 2023)

Weaverville Business Association
Music on Main

Hola Carolina
Hola Asheville

The Blue Ridge Bonsai Society
Bonsai as Fine Art

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Asheville and Buncombe County
Celebrating the History and Legacy of Juneteenth

Southern Highland Craft Guild
Southern Highland Craft Guild July Fair

Black Mountain Center for the Arts
Art in Bloom

Asheville Tennis Association
Asheville Open Tennis Championships

Leicester Artists
Come to Leicester Artists Studio Tour

Folk Heritage Committee
Shindig on the Green (July 1, 8, 15, 22, August 12, 19, and 26, 2023)
Mountain Dance & Folk Festival (August 3, 4, and 5, 2023)

ArtsAVL
ArtsAVL Arts Trolley

James Beard Foundation
James Beard Taste of America Series



2010

County-wide wayfinding program funded through the TPDF launched with more than 300 vehicular, pedestrian, and informational signs and kiosks



2012

Asheville was named "Most Beautiful Place in America" by Good Morning America



2014

River Arts District received its first allocation of more than \$7 million in total TPDF investments

2015/2016

The occupancy tax was increased from 4% to 6%, and began including short-term vacation rentals. 1.5% of tax revenue is dedicated to the TPDF

Explore Asheville's strategic imperatives emerged from extensive community listening sessions and broader community goals that frame and guide our work

Delivering Balanced & Sustainable Growth

GOALS

- » **Balancing resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy**
- » **Focusing on the quality of each visit to our community — balancing growth across the seasons, business and leisure travel, and throughout Asheville and Buncombe County**

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Invested \$38.6M in community capital projects and nearly \$223,000 in festivals and cultural events this year for both residents and visitors to enjoy



Introduced a new brand anthem and storytelling foundation to further differentiate Asheville and Buncombe County from competing destinations and inspire higher quality visits



Improved the quality of each visit by inspiring a two percent increase in weekday business from last fiscal year, with 61 percent of room nights now booked from Sunday to Thursday



Convened current and potential council members of the Asheville Business Events Council (ABEC) for the first time since the pandemic



Majority of Residents Agree that Tourism Benefits their Community

Each year, Explore Asheville surveys Asheville and Buncombe County residents for their perspectives on tourism. In the early 2023 survey, an **overwhelming majority (84%) of residents agreed that tourism benefits their community.**

- » Seven out of 10 resident respondents agree that investment in tourism via the lodging tax collected by overnight visitors fuels the local economy.

Asheville residents are proud of their community, the emphasis on inclusivity and diversity, and the culture and character of Asheville.

- » 88% agree that visitors help support the number and variety of independent businesses, including restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment opportunities.

Residents are proud of the natural beauty of Asheville and emphasize the importance of sustainable tourism.

- » In alignment with Explore Asheville's strategic imperative to deliver balanced and sustainable growth, resident respondents agree that dispersing visitors throughout the county (70%) and throughout the year (76%) are important initiatives.

For more key insights from the 2023 Resident Sentiment Survey, scan the QR code.



Foodie Cities of 2022

— YELP



100 Most Loved Travel Destinations Around the World

— TOURISM SENTIMENT INDEX



50 Best Places to Travel in 2023

— TRAVEL + LEISURE



WEAVERVILLE

Spotlighting our neighborhoods

Buncombe County is home to distinct and vibrant communities. This year we shined a spotlight on Weaverville and Black Mountain to boost visitation and dispersal throughout the county.

Scan the QR codes to view each Neighborhood Spotlight video.



BLACK MOUNTAIN



2018

TPDF reached \$44 million investment milestone in 39 projects

2019

Asheville Music Project integrated campaign garnered *Rolling Stone* headline "Why Asheville, North Carolina, Is The New Must-Visit Music City"

Encouraging Safe & Responsible Travel

GOALS

- » Engaging residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural, and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences
- » Collaborating with community organizations, local businesses, and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Leveraged Volta EV charging stations to reach like-minded visitors with a destination message that was rooted in sustainability in fall and spring campaigns



Bringing more purpose and meaning to our visitors, we connected four visiting groups to participate in community projects



Collaborated with and sponsored this year's Outdoor Business Alliance's Get In Gear Fest to grow recognition of our region as a top outdoor destination



Partnered with Outside Magazine and the PBS Docuseries The Good Road to spotlight not only our incredible landscapes but also the people that make our community so enchanting



Making History by Celebrating our Trails

2023 marks a significant milestone in North Carolina's outdoor recreation history with the state's first-ever **Year of the Trail** designation, bringing together communities across the state to celebrate our trails.

As part of this campaign, Explore Asheville continues to recognize our region's vast network of trails and the people, organizations, and businesses who contribute to them. We launched a new webpage and spotlighted guided hikes, clean-ups, education events, or group outings that all took place on trails. We are even partnering with the Great Trails State Coalition to sponsor a video on trail safety that will be released in late 2023.

★ **15th Favorite City in the United States**
— TRAVEL + LEISURE READERS, 2023

★ **Seven Hottest Honeymoon Destinations of 2023**
— PUREWOW

Hosting Adventure Travel Industry Leaders

The **Adventure Travel Trade Association™ (ATTA)**, the largest global network of adventure travel leaders, announced Asheville as the 2024 host city for its annual conference, **AdventureELEVATE North America**.

Asheville is the first city in the Southeastern US to host the conference in its 8th year. Considered one of the preeminent regionally focused industry events for adventure travel professionals, AdventureELEVATE includes an active Day of Adventure followed by two days of inspiring speakers, intensive educational workshop sessions, and one-on-one networking opportunities. We look forward to inviting leaders from the adventure travel community next June.



2020
\$5 million Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund grant program launched, supporting nearly 400 local independent businesses

2022
Visitors spent a record \$2.88 billion in Buncombe County

Engaging & Inviting Diverse Audiences

GOALS

- » Extending a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQIA+ visitors — connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses, and entrepreneurs — creating more opportunities for all to win
- » Supporting product development, placemaking, and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Established a partnership with Black Enterprise and Essence magazine to share the stories of local Black entrepreneurs and extend an authentic invitation to Black travelers



Wrote our first Spanish language press release and translated our top Explore Asheville articles to Spanish



Hosted an Everyone Welcome training for Explore Asheville staff and engaged LGBTQIA+ audiences through PRIDE media and Passport magazine



Retooled and expanded our partner diversity designations to properly demonstrate the depth of diversity within our destination

Skyview Golf Tournament



Skyview Golf Tournament, one of the nation's oldest African American golf tournaments, hosted its 63rd annual tournament here in Asheville. In addition to granting F&CE support, we provided a print placement in the June issue of African American Golfer's Digest, display banners and video running across Black-owned sites, and brought in stars from Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta as part of a multifaceted approach to engage and invite more diverse audiences and connect them with the community.

★ **Silver Visionary Award 2022**
— PREVUE

★ **Best Summer Travel Destination**
— USA TODAY, 10 BEST READERS' CHOICE TRAVEL

★ **Platinum Choice Award**
— SMART MEETINGS



Celebrating Diverse Asheville Stories

As part of Explore Asheville's partnership with NOMADNESS Travel Tribe, founder Evita Robinson conducted several in-depth interviews with local BIPOC entrepreneurs, artists, and community leaders for a new video series, sharing the rich tapestry of Asheville's Black and Latinx communities.

Bringing Affrilachian Culture to ATL

Explore Asheville teamed up with NOMADNESS Travel Tribe to host an event for the BIPOC travel network's Atlanta-based members. The Affrilachian gathering brought together 60 Black travel writers and influencers for an intimate dinner prepared by James Beard Award finalist and Chef Ashleigh Shanti. This event positioned Asheville as a destination that welcomes diversity, highlighting the outdoors through conversations about Black food traditions and its ties to the land.



2022
TDPF relaunched

2022
Hotel owners successfully advocated for long-awaited change in occupancy tax legislation, which increased the amount of funds to be invested in community projects and created the Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Fund

Promoting & Supporting Asheville's Creative Spirit

GOALS

- » **Sharing stories of creators and makers who differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences, and more**
- » **Supporting product development, placemaking, and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community**

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Engaged local arts organizations in a discovery process aimed at increasing attendance at indoor venues



Paired local culinary delights with Appalachian music for a Washington D.C. roadshow and "What Does Music Taste Like" event



Showcased local businesses and talent through nineteen activations at our partner events



Launched the Gift Bag Guide to better spotlight locally crafted goods to incoming meetings and groups

Capturing Asheville's Fall Colors

Our content team partnered with six local photographers to **capture the best and brightest color in the region** from October to November. Each week these local foliage experts shared their recommendations on where to catch the latest changes to our stunning landscapes.



7 Best Fall Travel Destinations

— FARE COMPARE



Award of Excellence

— MEETING MAGAZINE



10 Best Cities for Art Lovers

— YELP



GARDEN & GUN

Hosting the 2022 Made in the South Awards

An 18-month partnership with Garden & Gun magazine culminated with a multi-day local celebration of Asheville's creative spirit and the **2022 Made in the South Awards**. The judges selected two local businesses, Biscuit Head and Poppy Popcorn, for top honors in the food category.

Using Music to Encourage Exploration

Explore Asheville and TripAdvisor produced **intimate bluegrass concerts in unexpected, unique settings** in Asheville to encourage visitors to disperse and explore the entire Asheville area beyond top attractions. By creating an exclusive music experience, we drew visitors to Asheville and told stories through songs, highlighting Asheville as a destination where music matters.



2023
\$23M has been committed to renovating McCormick Field into a year-round multi-use facility, making it the first debt service and the largest project in the history of the TPDF



Expanding our Partner Network

Approximately 1,900 Businesses and Organizations are Partnered with Explore Asheville

Our partners make Asheville and Buncombe County a top desired destination and we are proud to shine a spotlight on the local artists, restaurants, tour providers, retail shops, and other attractions that make this place so special.

Warm Welcome to our 115 New Partners

Adventure Mountain Off-Road Tours	El Cielito	Marked Tree Asheville	Tahini Jar
Amanda McLenon Fine Art	El Kimchi	Mikasa Criolla	Tall John's
ArtPlay Studio	Element Tree Essentials	Modern Muse Gallery	Tastee Diner
Asheville Guides and Gear LLC	Elevated Kava Lounge	More To Love, Plus Size Consignment LLC	The Booth Fairy Project
Asheville Outdoor Experiences	Ella Asheville	Morgan's Transportation and Rentals Services	The Cottage Collections
AVL City Shuttle	Farm Burger	Mountain Mural Tours	The Crow and Quill
Banjoe Vacations	Fermenti	Mountaineer Motor Tours	The Flat Iron Hotel
Black Mountain Herbal	Fioreously Delicious	Nantahala Outdoor Center	The Galaxy Room
Blunt Pretzels	Garage BBQ	French Broad Rafting	The Mule
Board and Brush Creative Studio Asheville	GET HYPNOTIZED Live On Stage in Asheville	Narayani Gaia, Energy Healing	The Outpost
Breeze Yoga Space	Ginger's Revenge	Nature Spirit Weddings	The Planning Asheville
Brined and Cured Catering by Chef Steven Goff	South Slope Lounge	NC Wine Gals	The RailYard Blk Mtn
Buckeye Antiques Mall	Half Light Honey	Never Ending Finds, LLC	The Rhu
Bun Intended	Hilltop Event Center	New Origin Brewing	The Smokin' Onion
Carolina Avian Research and Education	Hilltop Ice Cream Shop	Outsider Brewing Company	The Times Bar & Coffee Shop
Cats at Play Café	Hoffer Art and Design	Over The Selvage	The Whale :: A Craft Beer Collective
City Brew Tours Asheville	Howdy Homemade Ice Cream	Paintings by Shirley Bavonese	The Whale Outpost
Cloud Cottage Creative Co.	Indigo Sun	Pashnia	There There
Codega Fiber Studio	Indulge Images	POP Rentals	Torched AVL
Coffee Curious Workshops	Inspired Getaway	RadHaus Studios	Tyger Tyger Gallery
Damn Good Beer Bus	Julia Nicole Weddings and Events	Re.Imagine Gallery and Studios	Van in Black
Darë Vegan Cheese	KidCycle Club	Retro Coffee	Van In Black Asheville Wine Tours
Darrell Cassell Photography	Kirsten Alexandria Photography	Reverie Asheville	Village Pub
Del Vecchios	Laurel Falls Weddings	rEvolve buy-sell-trade	Ware
Different Light Band	Leche Photography	RIVETER	Weaver House
Different Wrld	Little Bee Woods	Rocket Fizz of Asheville	Weaving Rainbows
DJ Molly Parti	Locals Only Gifts and Goods	Serenity Sound Healing of Asheville	Well Played Board Game Café
Dogwood Cottage Baking	Lotus Herban Spa	Smoke and Mirrors Skincare + Waxing	Zen Mountain Tours
	Love + Logistics Co.	Spirit Rose Wellness	Zen Skincare and Waxing Studio
	Marissa Irene Photography	Story Parlor	



2022 US OPEN

The US Open partnership shined a spotlight on Asheville through on-court signage in Arthur Ashe Stadium, videoboards at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, a sponsored session, and in-person client engagement through two suite sessions. It also afforded Asheville exposure through multiple US Open channels, such as marketing messages on USOpen.org, US Open radio, and US Open newsletter.

The estimated media value, based on audience and airtime, totaled \$13.2 million. That means every dollar invested in sponsorship generated a nine-dollar return to date. The 2022 US Open set its highest-ever attendance record for the tournament, welcoming 888,044 fans. Television viewership also reached all-time highs, with more than 200 million global viewers, a 20 percent increase from the previous year.

The consumer research survey following the event showed that 36 percent of fans who attended matches at Explore Asheville courts recalled our branding, and 46 percent of all attendees responded that they are likely to try a product or service that is a US Open Partner. We expect this partnership to continue encouraging prospective visitors, meetings, and events to choose Asheville.

Fostering Connections within Our Industry



The Summer Social JULY 2022

The Summer Social was held at Marquee within the River Arts District in celebration of Asheville's creative spirit. Nearly 275 partners joined us for a fun afternoon of networking surrounded by the talented artistry and wares.

+1,000
ATTENDEES
FROM ALL
EVENTS



Annual Meeting SEPTEMBER 2022

The 2022 Annual Meeting brought 250 partners together for an afternoon of inspiration, storytelling, celebrating, and connections. Our partners heard from keynote speaker Wendy K. Smith on Both/And thinking and enjoyed a storytelling update from MMGY.



The Year Ahead JANUARY 2023

Debuting this year, nearly 250 partners received a preview of what's to come in the year ahead for our community. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Tourism Product Development Fund and honored the 10th Annual CVB Superstars, whose standout contributions helped establish Asheville and Buncombe County as a world-class destination.

Hospitality Outlook MARCH 2023

The 2023 Hospitality Outlook offered a Tourism Economics' market-specific forecast on Asheville and Buncombe County's lodging and travel sector a national and market forecast to 85 local lodging leadership managers and sales team partners.



National Travel & Tourism Open House MAY 2023

In celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week, more than 120 partners joined us for an Explore Asheville Open House. We celebrated travel and tourism's role in stimulating economic growth, cultivating vibrant communities, creating quality job opportunities, and inspiring new business.

Meet the Explore Asheville Team

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Vic Isley (She/Her)
President & CEO



Julia Simpson (She/Her)
Manager, Executive & Strategy

CULTURE & BUSINESS AFFAIRS



Jennifer Kass-Green (She/Her)
Vice President of Culture & Business Affairs



Josh Jones (He/Him)
Systems & Operations Manager



Glenn Ramey (She/Her)
Human Resources Coordinator



Anna Harris (She/Her)
Office Assistant

MARKETING



Marla Tambellini (She/Her)
Senior Vice President of Marketing



Luisa Yen (She/Her)
Director of Public Relations



Emilie Soffe (She/Her)
Director of Content



Carli Adams (She/Her)
Group Marketing Manager



Maggie Gregg (She/Her)
Social Media & Content Manager



Cass Herrington (She/Her)
PR Manager



Mickey Poandl (He/They/Them)
PR Manager



Elizabeth White (She/Her)
Web Manager



David Thompson (He/Him)
Digital Communications Manager



Nick Keypley (He/They)
Marketing Manager



Holly (Oakley) Watts (She/Her)
Marketing Coordinator



Sha'Linda Pruitt (She/Her)
PR Coordinator

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Michael Kryzaneck (He/Him)
Vice President of Business Development



Connie Nuckolls Holliday (She/Her)
Director of Sales



Shawn Boone (He/Him)
Senior Sales Manager



Tina Porter (She/Her)
Senior Sales Manager



Kathryn Dewey (She/Her)
Sales Manager



Khal Khoury (He/Him)
Sales Manager



Emily Crosby (She/Her)
Group Service Manager



John Dawson (He/Him)
Group Service Coordinator



Ali Wainright (She/Her)
Group Sales Coordinator



Mia Brown (She/Her)
Sales & Marketing Assistant

PARTNERSHIP & DESTINATION MANAGEMENT



Penelope Whitman (She/Her)
Vice President of Partnership & Destination Management



Tiffany Thacker (She/Her)
Director of Grants



Ashley Greenstein (She/Her)
Public Information Manager



Kimberly Puryear (She/Her)
Destination Project Manager



McKenzie Provost (She/Her)
Partner Events Coordinator

The background of the entire page is a dark blue color with a white topographic map pattern. The map features various contour lines, some solid and some dotted, creating a complex, organic shape that resembles a mountain range or a series of hills.

**EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE**

POWERED BY
Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority



EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM



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