

EXPLORE ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY
Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

Update for Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
June 2023



About Us

Presenter

Vic Isley

President & CEO

Explore Asheville

Buncombe County

Tourism Development Authority

Purpose

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is the public authority created in 1983 by an act of the North Carolina Legislature to oversee the collection and investment of lodging taxes paid by visitors who stay overnight in commercial lodging establishments, such as hotels and motels, bed and breakfast operations, and vacation rentals.



Meet The BCTDA



Kathleen Mosher
Chair
The Biltmore Company



Brenda Durden
Vice Chair
Asheville Hotel Group



Elizabeth Putnam
Mosaic Realty



Andrew Celwyn
Herbiary



Larry Crosby
The Foundry Hotel



Matthew Lehman
Grand Bohemian Hotel



Michael Lusick
FIRC Group



HP Patel
BCA Hotels LLC



Scott Patel
Pure Hospitality



**Councilmember
Sandra Kilgore**
Asheville City Council
Ex-Officio



**Commissioner
Terri Wells**
Buncombe County Commission
Ex-Officio

The background features a landscape of rolling mountains under a sunset sky with warm orange and yellow tones. A white topographic map overlay is visible across the entire scene. The main title is centered in large, white, outlined, sans-serif capital letters.

RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON TOURISM

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METHODOLOGY

- Conducted by MMGY Travel Intelligence, this wave replicated a 2019 and subsequent 2022 study surveying Buncombe County residents about their awareness and perceptions of Asheville tourism and its impact on the local community.
- Online survey of a representative, random sample of residents of Buncombe County, NC
- In the field between February 2 -15, 2023
- N=400 surveys - This sample size yields an error range of +/- 5 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.
- Same sample size as the Buncombe County resident survey gauging the bond referendum last fall.

84%

of Buncombe County residents believe
tourism is beneficial to my community.





And...

52%

agree that "Tourism positively impacts me and my family."

88%

Of Buncombe County residents believe visitors to the community help support the number and variety of independent businesses, including restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment opportunities.





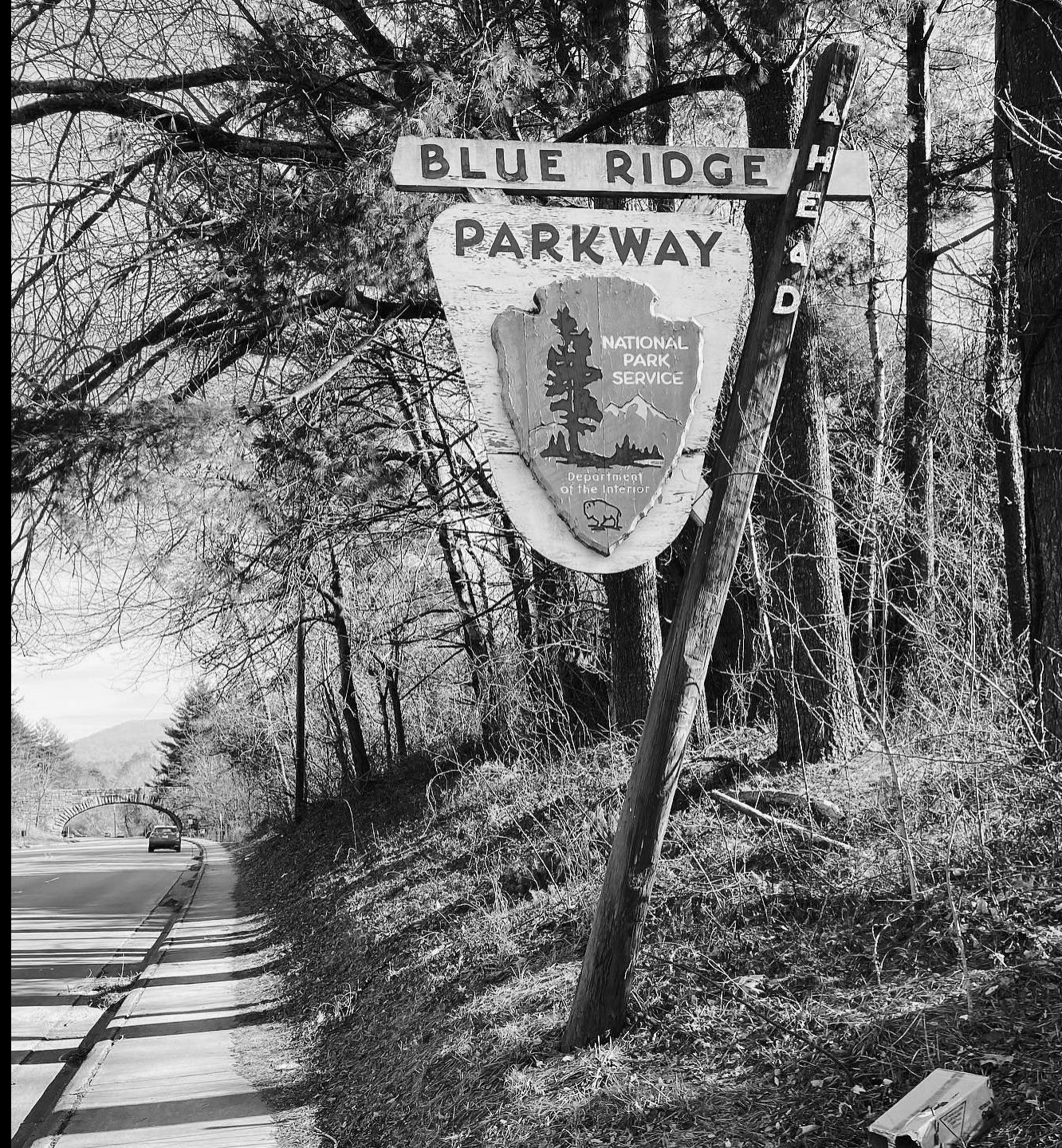
And...

38%

**believe visitors detract from the
culture and character of our
community.**

48%

of Buncombe County residents believe tourism reduces available public green space in the community.





And...

79%

agree that our visitor economy helps support natural and cultural amenities such as parks, greenways, performing arts and museums that residents enjoy.

A scenic view of mountains at sunset with a topographic map overlay. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow, transitioning into a deep blue over the mountain ranges. The foreground shows a dense forest of trees with some autumnal colors. The topographic map overlay consists of white contour lines on a dark blue background.

VISITOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY

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VISITOR CONTRIBUTIONS

IN CONTEXT



\$2.6B

Visitor Spending

The \$2.6 billion in visitor spending means that nearly \$7.2 million was spent EVERY DAY by visitors in Asheville.



\$915M

Workforce Income

The \$915 million in total income generated by tourism is the equivalent of \$8,700 for every household in Buncombe County.



27,000

Total jobs

The number of jobs sustained by tourism (27,000) supports 14.4% of all jobs in Buncombe County.



\$238M

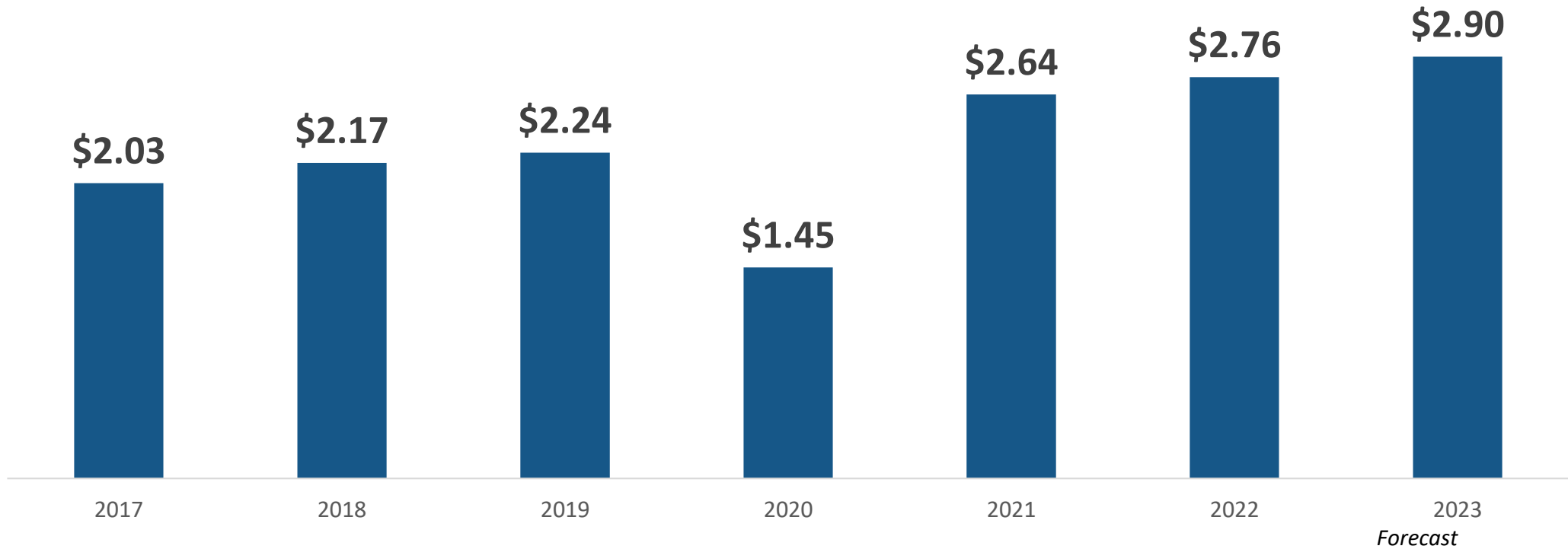
State & Local Taxes

Each household in Buncombe County would need to be taxed an additional \$2,261 to replace the visitor taxes received by the state and local governments in 2021.

VISITOR SPENDING

Asheville & Buncombe County Total Visitor Spending

Amount in Billions



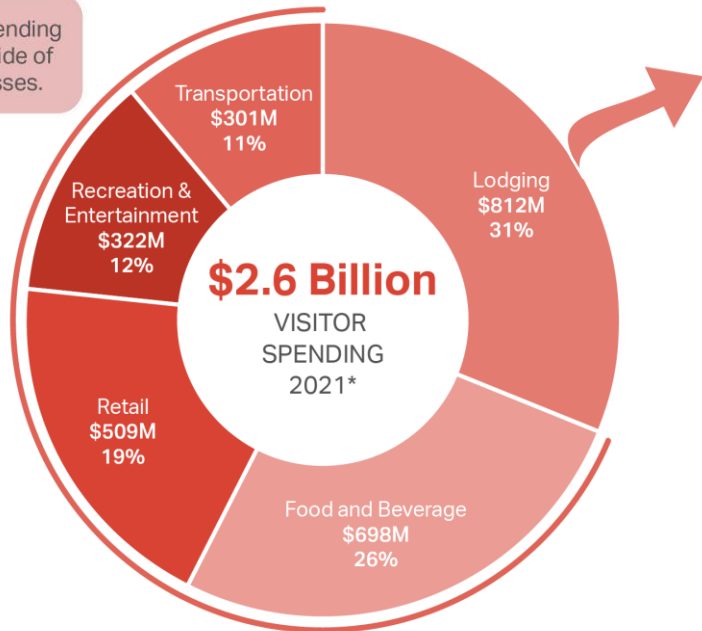
Source: Tourism Economics



TRAVEL PROMOTION'S VIRTUOUS CYCLE

Vast Beneficiaries of Tourism

69% of visitor spending takes place outside of lodging businesses.

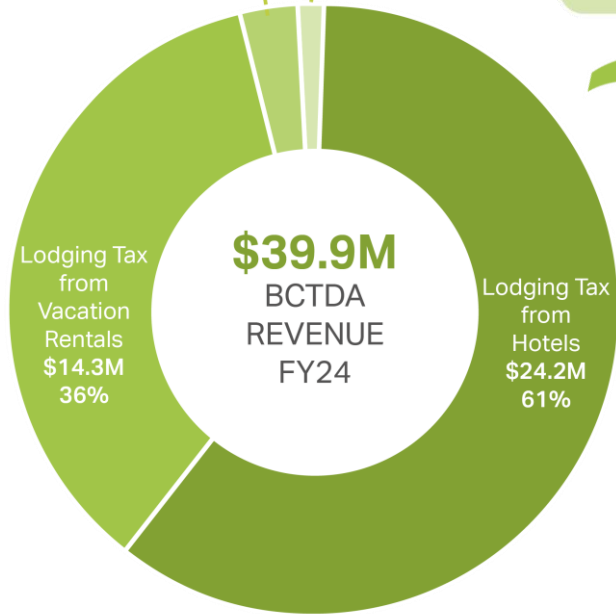


*Source: Tourism Economics

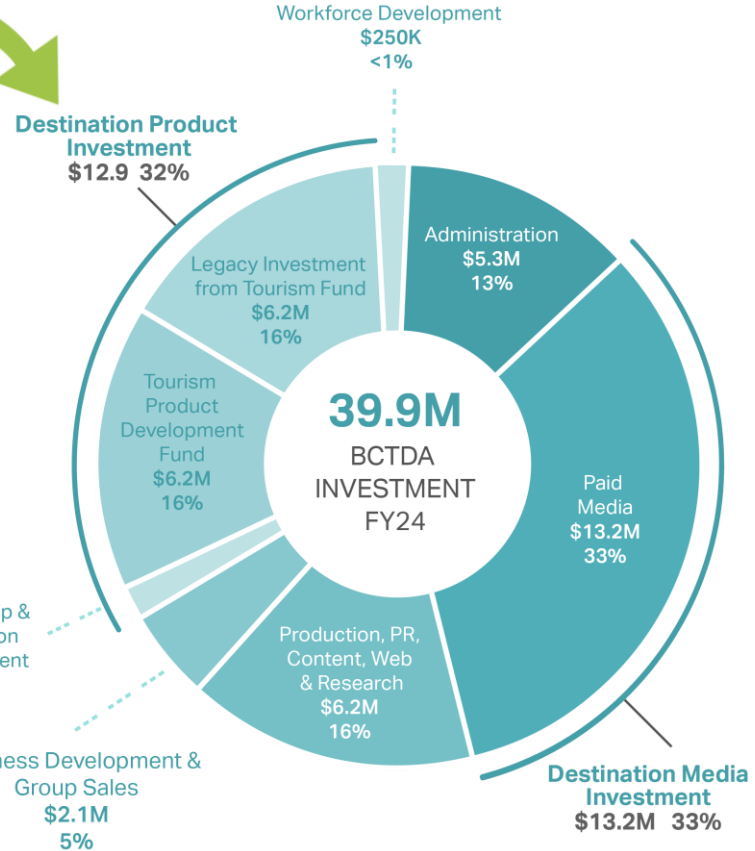
Note: Lodging spending is calculated as an industry, including meetings, catering, etc. Spending also includes dollars spend on second homes. Transport includes both air and local transportation.

Lodging Tax from Bed & Breakfasts \$1.2M 3%
Earned Revenue \$250K <1%

Lodging tax paid by visitors shoulders 100% of marketing and product investment.



Marketing and product investment helps inspire visitor spending.



CHANGE IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE FEE

BUNCOMBE COUNTY TO RECEIVE \$2 MILLION IN LODGING TAX ANNUALLY

- Legislative changes advocated for by local hoteliers and passed last summer will impact the administrative support contract between Tourism Development Authority and Buncombe County.
- Historically, the administrative fee has been approximately \$500,000 annually.
- For FY24, we anticipate Buncombe County to receive an additional \$1.5 million in administrative fees, totaling \$2 million, or 5% of the lodging tax annually going forward.

\$2
MILLION
ANNUALLY

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OUR STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES



Delivering Balanced &
Sustainable Growth



Encouraging Safe &
Responsible Travel



Engaging & Inviting More
Diverse Audiences



Promoting & Supporting
Asheville's Creative Spirit

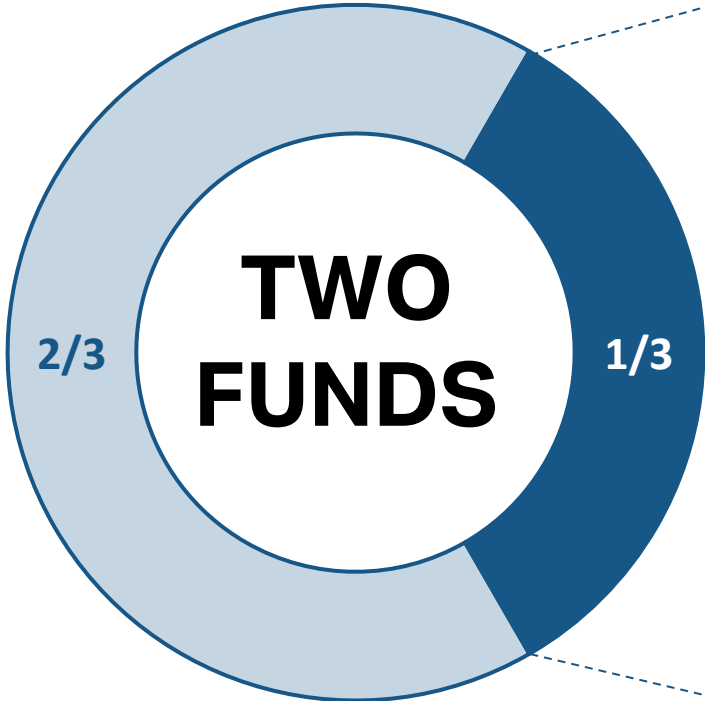
DELIVERING BALANCED & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH



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

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

ONE-THIRD: DEFINITION OF TWO FUNDS



\$8
MILLION
THIS FALL

**Tourism
Product
Development
Fund**

Provides financial investment for **major tourism capital projects** in order to increase patronage of lodging facilities in, and **further economic development in Buncombe County.**

\$10
MILLION
**NEXT
SPRING**

**Legacy
Investment
From Tourism
(LIFT) Fund**

Provides financial investment for **tourism-related capital projects** in order to increase patronage of lodging facilities and **benefit the community at large in Buncombe County**, including maintenance, design, project management, restoration, rehabilitation, enhancement of natural resources, or expansion of necessary infrastructure.

ENCOURAGING SAFE & RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL



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

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

THE GOOD ROAD

Positive, powerful stories

An edgy, self-contained nationally-run PBS docu-series about two best friends who go where few dare—the world of extreme philanthropy—to reveal incredible places and tell their stories of the surprising people that give it all.

One (1) 26-minute episode of Season 4 to take place in Asheville, North Carolina featuring an informative and exciting travel adventure profiling passionate characters who are at ground zero of change.

Shot this month to air in September or October

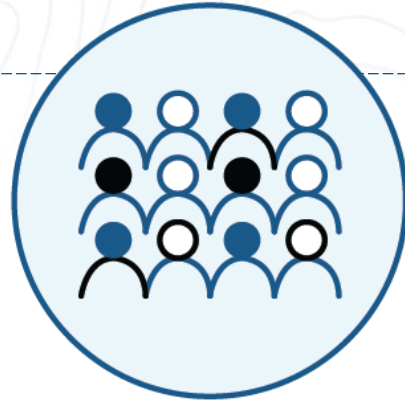
Asheville receives five (5) second billboard ad during full season of Season 4 (2 years)

50 Million+ estimated impressions

Three (3) mini-episodes created specifically for Asheville + *G&G* promotion



ENGAGING & INVITING MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES



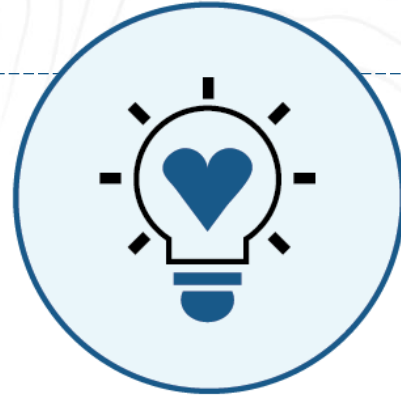
Extend a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQ visitors – connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses and entrepreneurs – creating more opportunities for all to win.

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

BLACK CULTURAL HERITAGE TRAIL DEBUTS LATE FALL



PROMOTING & SUPPORTING ASHEVILLE'S CREATIVE SPIRIT



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

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

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1,500 LOCAL BUSINESSES & ENTREPRENEURS

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