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.
RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES ON TOURISM

EXPLORE ASHEVILLE
POWERED BY Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
• 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.
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.
agree that our visitor economy helps support natural and cultural amenities such as parks, greenways, performing arts and museums that residents enjoy.

And...

79%
VISITOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY
### Visitor Contributions

#### IN CONTEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Spending</td>
<td>$2.6B</td>
<td>The $2.6 billion in visitor spending means that nearly $7.2 million was spent EVERY DAY by visitors in Asheville.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce Income</td>
<td>$915M</td>
<td>The $915 million in total income generated by tourism is the equivalent of $8,700 for every household in Buncombe County.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total jobs</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>The number of jobs sustained by tourism (27,000) supports 14.4% of all jobs in Buncombe County.</td>
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<tr>
<td>State &amp; Local Taxes</td>
<td>$238M</td>
<td>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.</td>
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VISITOR SPENDING
Asheville & Buncombe County Total Visitor Spending

Amount in Billions

Source: Tourism Economics
Vast Beneficiaries of Tourism

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

Delivering Balanced & Sustainable Growth
Encouraging Safe & Responsible Travel
Engaging & Inviting More Diverse Audiences
Promoting & Supporting Asheville's Creative Spirit
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

TWO FUNDS

2/3

1/3

$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.
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.
1,500 LOCAL BUSINESSES & ENTREPRENEURS