



# EXPLORE ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY

Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

40 years of investing in and building community



# THE VIRTUOUS VISITOR CYCLE

Lodging tax investment grows the local economy

70% of visitor spending takes place outside of lodging businesses.

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

Marketing and product investment helps inspire visitor spending.



# EXPLORE ASHEVILLE & BCTDA'S STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

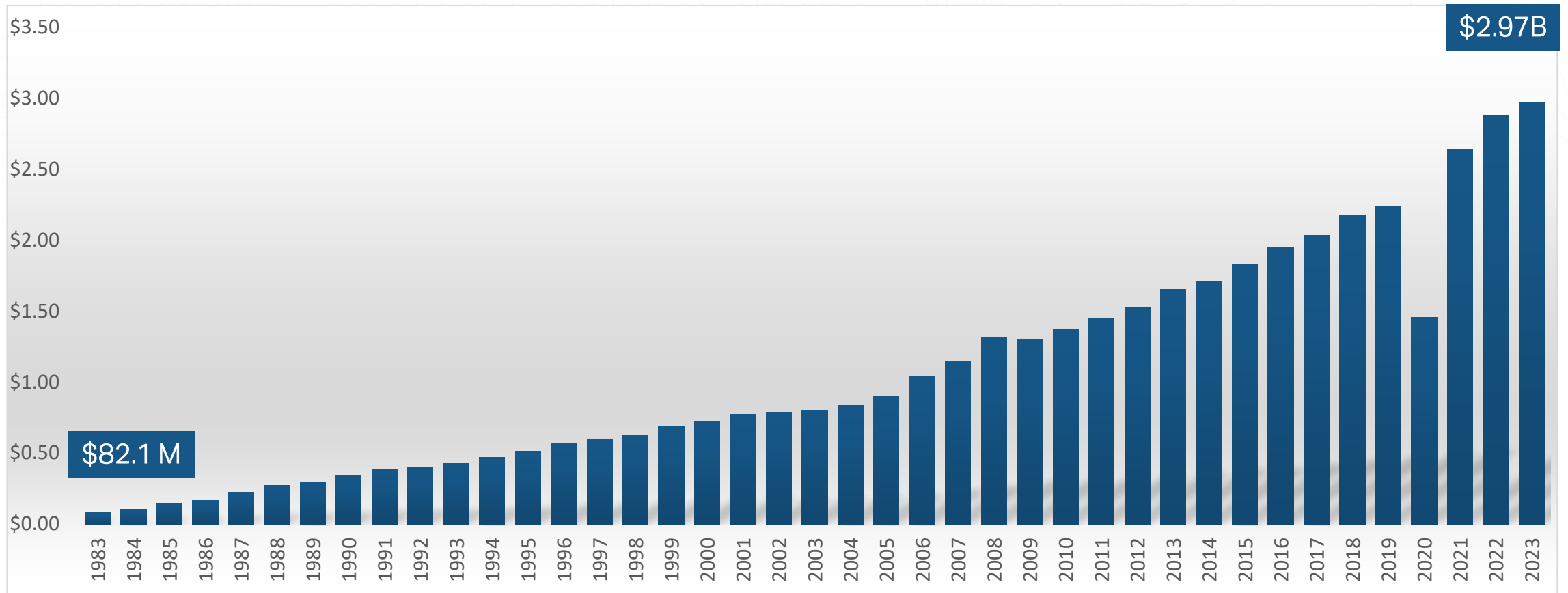
The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and Explore Asheville adopted strategic imperatives that are informing and guiding the direction of Explore Asheville's program of work and community investments going forward.

<i>Delivering Balanced &amp; Sustainable Growth</i>	<i>Encouraging Safe &amp; Responsible Travel</i>	<i>Engaging &amp; Inviting More Diverse Audiences</i>	<i>Promoting &amp; Supporting Asheville's Creative Spirit</i>	<i>Running A Healthy &amp; Effective Organization</i>
<p>Balancing resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Engaging residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences.</p> <p>Collaborating with community organizations, local businesses and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy.</p>	<p>Extending a genuine invitation to BIPOC travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQ visitors – connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses, and entrepreneurs – creating more opportunities for all to win.</p> <p>Supporting product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.</p>	<p>Sharing stories of creators and makers who help differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences and more.</p> <p>Supporting product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.</p>	<p>Investing in people, policies, and practices to serve our community with integrity within the organization's legislative requirements.</p>

Explore Asheville staff generates quarterly reports on progress made toward these strategic imperatives and relevant initiatives that support them.

# VISITOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Visitor spending 35X greater than 1983



Source: Tourism Economics; Visit NC



# NEARLY \$3 BILLION IN VISITOR SPENDING BENEFITS A WIDE VARIETY OF LOCAL, INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES

70% outside of lodging businesses



## LODGING

\$901M

30%



## FOOD & BEVERAGE

\$787M

27%



## REC / ENT

\$366M

12%



## RETAIL

\$541M

18%



## TRANSPORT

\$372M

13%

Source: Tourism Economics; Explore Asheville



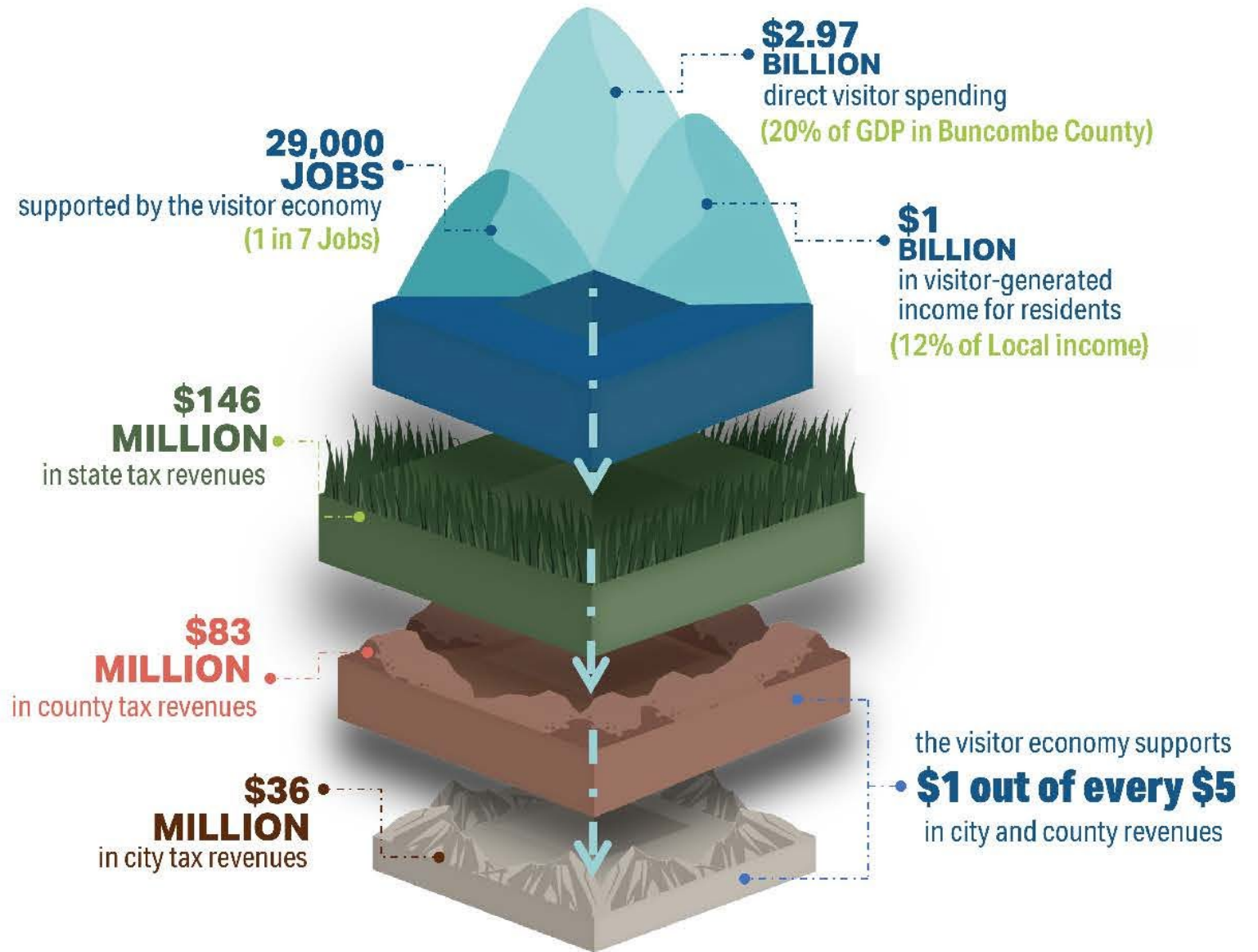
# THE BENEFITS OF VISITORS IN ASHEVILLE & BUNCOMBE COUNTY RUN DEEP

The visitor economy supports local businesses and contributes to local government revenues.

**\$265 Million**

in state & local tax revenues are generated by the visitor economy.

Buncombe County households would need to pay an additional **\$2,600** in taxes annually to replace the visitor-generated taxes received by state and local governments.



Source: Tourism Economics – Economic Impact of Visitors in Asheville and Buncombe County 2023

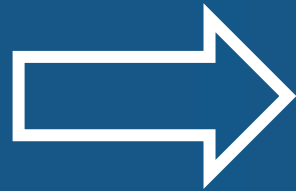
# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & GROUP SALES

The front porch of traditional economic development

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400

GROUPS



\$50M

DIRECT SPEND



# CONFERENCES & GROUPS BOOKED FOR 2024

Aligning with economic development sectors



**WHEN:** June 11-13, 2024

**DIRECT SPEND:** \$447,000

**ATTENDEES:** 300

**MARKET:** Outdoor Industry



**WHEN:** July 22-26, 2024

**DIRECT SPEND:** \$200,000

**ATTENDEES:** 250

**MARKET:** Climate & Environment



**Programs & Events**

**WHEN:** November 18-20, 2024

**DIRECT SPEND:** \$60,000

**ATTENDEES:** 40

**MARKET:** Nonprofit Board Mtg



# BCTDA COMMUNITY PROJECT INVESTMENTS (TPDF & LIFT FUND)

Two decades of investment in community projects in Buncombe County

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51

PROJECTS

\$96M

INVESTED



# TPDF & LIFT FUND INVESTMENTS

79%

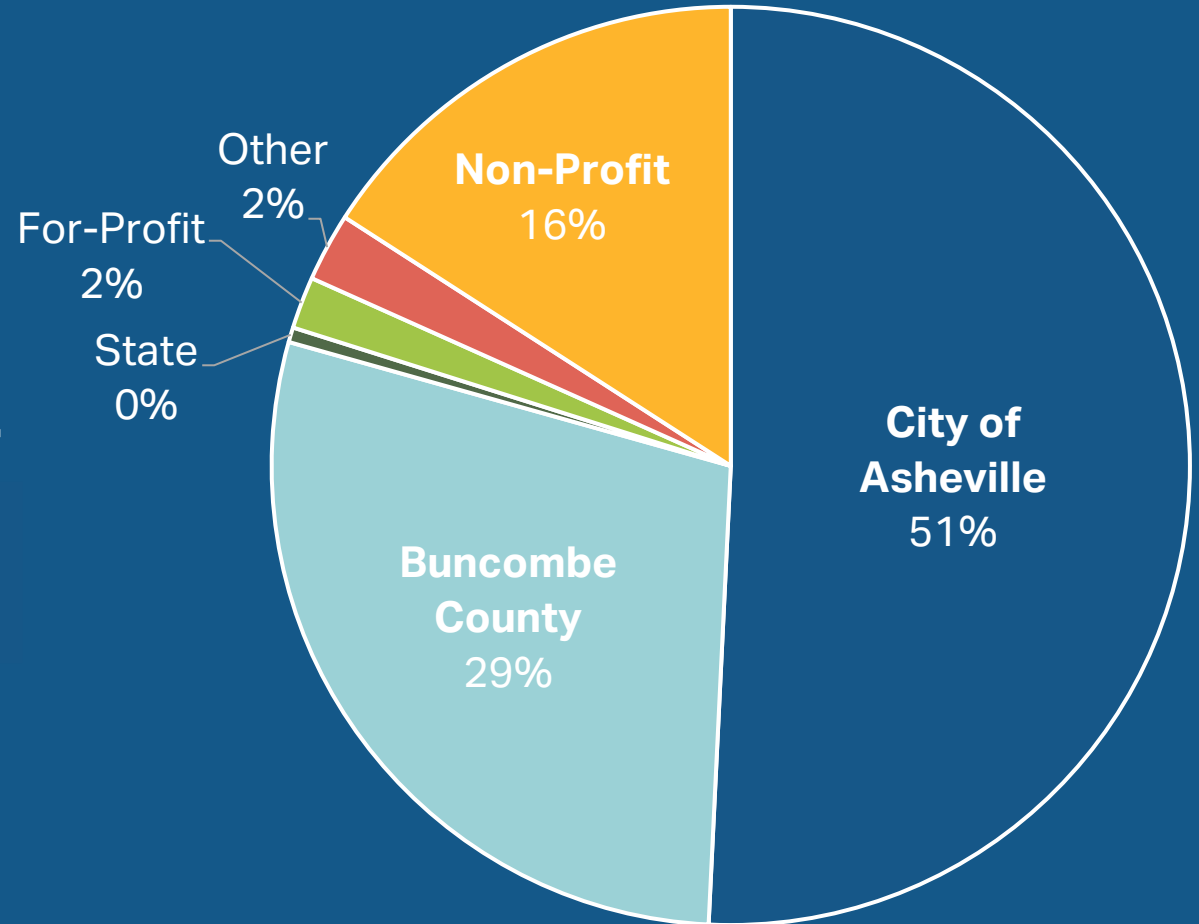
TO CITY AND COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

\$49M

TO CITY  
GOVERNMENT  
PARTNERS

\$27M

TO COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT  
PARTNERS



# BLACK CULTURAL HERITAGE TRAIL

Exploring the rich heritage of Black communities in Asheville

A long-awaited trail dedication event was held December 15, 2023

- Community members gathered at Black Wall Street to celebrate the trail's debut
- After remarks from leaders and a ribbon cutting, shuttles were available to transfer guests to trail sections (Downtown, Southside, or River Area)
- Guides for each area offered personal stories and demonstrated the interactive components of the interpretive panels to participants

**Digital content and augmented experiences invite people to learn more:**

- QR codes at each trail marker can be scanned to hear voiceover narration by local performer Stephanie Hinkling Beckman
- [Asheville Black Cultural Heritage Trail Website](#) with 18 articles supplements the stories on the panel
- A [video of local musician Leeda "Lyric" Jones](#) singing the "Swannanoa Tunnel Song" in remembrance of the workers who lost their lives building the tunnel
- [A video about Black church life in Asheville](#)







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