



# 2023–2024 Business Plan

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**Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau**

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[www.visitRaleigh.com](http://www.visitRaleigh.com) • [#visitRaleigh](https://twitter.com/visitRaleigh)



# **About the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau**

## **MISSION**

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, as the official destination marketing organization of Raleigh and Wake County, accelerates sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business.

## **INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED DESTINATION ORGANIZATION**

The destination organization is accredited by the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) of Destinations International, 2025 M St., N.W., Ste. 500, Washington, D.C., 20036, U.S.A., Ph. 202.296.7888.

## **ORGANIZATION VISION**

To be the prime visitor advocate and regional leader of destination marketing and product development.

## **GRCVB PHILOSOPHY AND CUSTOMER COMMITMENT**

We perform effectively by adhering to values and guiding principles, and delivering on customer promises:

- Customer-centric
- Entrepreneurial
- Collaborative
- Innovative
- Ethical

## **PARTNER PROMISE**

We pledge, as an accountable and supportive partner, to offering enhanced exposure to visitor market opportunities and to appropriate community leadership through increased promotion of destination experiences and extended professional advocacy commitment.

## **ADVISORY BOARDS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES AT GRCVB**

- GRCVB Board of Directors
- Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance Advisory Board
- Cultural Presenters Forum
- Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force
- Destination 2028 Key Attractors Working Group

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# Visitor Profile for Raleigh and Wake County, N.C.

## BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES

- There were 15.8 million visitors in 2021—up 22.6% from 2020. These international (0.2%) and domestic (99.8%) visitors directly spent \$2.341 billion on Wake County trips in 2021—up 39.7% from 2020.
- Average overnight party size was 2.7 in 2021; average day-trip party size was 2.5 in 2021.
- Overnight travel totaled approximately 8.37 million visitors in 2021. Some 79% of 2021 overnight travelers to Raleigh/Wake County are repeat visitors; 56% of overnight travelers had visited before in the prior 12 months.
- Per traveler spending was \$148 in 2021.

## VISITOR BREAKDOWN

- Average age of Raleigh/Wake County's overnight visitors is 44 years old (2021). Distribution is:
  - 18–24 years: 12%
  - 25–34 years: 27%
  - 35–44 years: 16%
  - 44–54 years: 17%
  - 55–64 years: 14%
  - 65+ years: 14%
- Overnight travelers to Raleigh/Wake County in 2021 have children in their household as follows:
  - no children under 18: 58%
  - any 13–17: 18%
  - any 6–12: 25%
  - any child under 6: 18%
- Overnight travelers to Raleigh/Wake County in 2021 have household sizes as follows:
  - 1 member: 26%
  - 2 members: 34%
  - 3 members: 18%
  - 4 members: 12%
  - 5+ members: 10%
- Overnight visitors' transportation used to get to Raleigh/Wake County (2021) is: 79% own car or truck – 20% plane – 17% online ride or taxi service – 12% rental car – 10% camper or RV – 8% train – 6% bus – 11% other.
- The most popular overnight travel seasons for Raleigh/Wake County (2021) are Oct. to Dec. (27%), followed by April to June (25%) and July to Sept. (25%). Day-trip visitors predominantly arrive in the fourth quarter as well.
- Household income distribution of Raleigh/Wake County's overnight travelers (2021) is: 49%, <\$49.9K; 16%, \$50–\$74.9K; 17%, \$75–\$99K; 14%, \$100–\$149.9K; 4%, \$150K+.
- Accommodation type for Raleigh/Wake County visitors (2021): 41% hotel – 29% home of friends/relatives – 16% motel – 12% resort hotel – 8% rented home/condo/apartment – 7% B&B – 5% campground/RV park.

## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

- Some 44% of Raleigh/Wake County's overnight visitors in 2021 came from North Carolina. Other top states (2021) are: 7%, Virginia; 7%, Florida; 6%, South Carolina; and 6%, New York.
- Some 67% of Raleigh/Wake County's day-trip visitors in 2021 came from North Carolina. Other top states (2021) are: 5%, Virginia; 4%, New York; 4%, Florida; and 4%, South Carolina.

## VISITOR ACTIVITIES AND MOTIVATORS

- The main purpose provided by overnight visitors for a Raleigh/Wake County trip (2021) is: 62% visiting friends/relatives – 7% touring – 6% city trip – 6% special event – 3% outdoors – 5% other leisure – 1% conference/convention – 4% other business trip – 3% bleisure.
- By activity grouping, Raleigh/Wake County overnight travelers (2021) are participating in: 61% entertainment activities – 45% outdoor activities – 32% cultural activities – 22% sporting activities – 19% business activities.
- Specific activity and experience participation of Raleigh/Wake County overnight visitors (2021):
 

32%, shopping	13%, local parks/playgrounds
19%, sightseeing	12%, landmark/historic site
18%, attending celebration	12%, beach/waterfront
16%, bar/nightclub	11%, business meeting
14%, museum	11%, swimming

## AVERAGE OCCUPANCY, AVERAGE DAILY RATE AND VISITOR-RELATED TAX REVENUE HISTORY

The following is a summary of the collections from Wake County's hotel occupancy and prepared food & beverage taxes as well as the average occupancy and average daily rates for 2022 and for the previous 10 years in Raleigh/Wake County paid accommodations:

	<u>AVERAGE OCCUPANCY</u>	<u>AVERAGE DAILY RATE</u>	<u>OCCUPANCY TAX REVENUE</u>	<u>F&amp;B TAX REVENUE</u>
2012	61.6%	\$85.34	\$16,707,165	\$20,261,838
2013	63.6%	\$86.53	\$17,948,940	\$21,126,371
2014	67.9%	\$91.31	\$20,261,653	\$23,015,254
2015	69.7%	\$95.87	\$22,401,795	\$25,262,981
2016	70.1%	\$100.85	\$24,273,522	\$26,910,616
2017	69.1%	\$102.90	\$25,144,387	\$28,326,065
2018	70.3%	\$106.55	\$27,899,926	\$30,004,566
2019	73.8%	\$109.22	\$30,617,786	\$32,536,123
2020	44.2%	\$86.68	\$14,287,830	\$25,055,592
2021	57.2%	\$97.03	\$22,665,333	\$34,149,993
2022	66.8%	\$119.39	\$32,951,657	\$40,855,292

## Talking Points for the 2023–2024 Fiscal Year

Talking points recommended for GRCVB staff, board members, economic development allies, stakeholders and area hospitality partners during the 2023–2024 fiscal year are three themelines that are core to the Raleigh, N.C., destination brand platform.

### RALEIGH, N.C., DESTINATION BRAND THEMELINES

Each of these major themelines encapsulates the strongest and most central attributes of the destination's brand, based on 2014–2015 research and articulation of brand strategy. (See the Raleigh, N.C., Destination Brand Strategy Manual at [www.raleighncbrand.com](http://www.raleighncbrand.com) for full information on messaging.)

**Smart:** Continually fueled by one of the world's most significant research and educational epicenters, Raleigh benefits from a stream of savvy students- and professionals-turned-residents who are collectively driving the city and area's cultural renaissance forth, creating experiences for enrichment and learning.

**A Modern Establishment:** Driven by the desire to innovate, a pursuit of prosperity and the need to live well, Raleigh's community is embracing a modern vision for their historic capital city area. This has given life to business big and small, new music, arts and cultural experiences that join Raleigh's existing cultural assets, expansive green spaces and institutions to create an appealing destination.

**Undiscovered:** Raleigh's unassuming stature as a destination has allowed it to develop organically and sustainably, evolving naturally for the greater good of those who live here and those who will visit. It is that genuine element that defines many of the destination's handcrafted experiences and provides the visitor with an assurance that discovery in Raleigh will always be authentic and unique—qualities rarely found in today's more established destinations.

## Destination Strategic Plan and Implementation for Destination 2028

In 2017, GRCVB commissioned a Destination Strategic Plan (DSP), to develop a platform through which destination partners can work together seamlessly to strengthen the area's destination product and increase overnight visitation over 10 years (to the year 2028). The CVB engaged JLL's Hospitality and Tourism Group to facilitate and lead this yearlong, countywide planning effort, which culminated with the Aug./Sept. 2018 release of the DSP final report and presentation of specific municipality plans to each of Wake County's 12 municipalities.

The DSP final report identifies actions that destination partners, stakeholders and allies can take, in conjunction with GRCVB, to impact overnight visitation along three visitation channels: meetings and conventions, sporting events and leisure visitation. It is meant to serve now as a blueprint for the area's destination development, with Wake County government, the 12 municipalities, GRCVB and many destination partners having collective and individual roles in its implementation, transforming Raleigh/Wake County into the ideal destination it can be in 2028. The final plan and the Destination 2028 implementation are organized according to eight priorities.

Throughout this 2023–2024 Business Plan, when departmental objectives, audiences and strategies directly relate to year-five implementation of any of the DSP priorities, they are marked with one or more of these symbols:

- ① Meetings & Conventions
- ② Sports
- ③ Events
- ④ Key Attractors

- ⑤ Individual Leisure
- ⑥ Destination Development
- ⑦ Regional Demand Drivers
- ⑧ Quality of Place

## Marketing and Communications Department

The Marketing and Communications Department is responsible for the Bureau's integrated marketing communications efforts, through which various destination marketing tools work together to maximize their total impact on (mostly external) target consumers or stakeholders. Based on consumer market research and other GRCVB marketing data, these efforts comprise the advertising, brand communications, cooperative partner programming, publications and tourism strategies that lead to consideration of Raleigh, N.C., as a destination for the sports, convention and leisure tourism vertical markets. The primary goal of the department is to increase overall visitation to the destination and area hotel and restaurant revenues.

### MARKETING OBJECTIVES

- Continue to grow Raleigh/Wake County's destination brand equity overall, as recommended in the Raleigh, N.C., Marketing Blueprint (2015), and build upon the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance (GRSA) brand within the sports vertical market, according to GRSA's positioning statement.
- Increase hotel occupancy and revenue through compelling domestic or international marketing programs—advertising, online, packaging, promotions—targeted primarily at leisure tourists.
- Establish Raleigh, N.C., as the convention and sports destination of choice through compelling advertising, collateral and online marketing communications targeted to industry professionals (or local connections to outside industry professionals).
- Encourage visitors to do and spend more by creating accurate, compelling content showcasing what Raleigh, N.C., promises and delivers to its visitors and gain exposure for the official tourism content/promotions in visitor welcome centers, on mobile-friendly online and social media marketing platforms and in local areas with high visitor traffic.
- Increase visitor attendance for signature events/festivals, with signature experiences and at special performances and venues, as well as convert day-trippers to overnight visitors (when possible), through online messaging and content marketing strategy.
- Increase website traffic levels (users) through a research-based, user-optimized visitRaleigh.com/raleighsports.org presence and via search engine optimization, search engine marketing, content marketing and other tactics.
- Enact GRCVB's Digital Content Marketing Strategy to continue to establish visitRaleigh.com as the single, official source for the area's tourism, restaurant, hotel, attraction/experience and event, meeting, sports, travel media and partner/local resident information.

### MARKETING STRATEGIES, ALL VERTICALS

- Steward the destination brand strategy for 2023–2024 and future years. Use the Raleigh, N.C., Destination Brand Strategy Manual and Marketing Blueprint to guide and reinforce well-aligned marketing, messaging/content and communication across all Bureau departments. Continue to shape the Bureau's future as the primary source or curator of a wide variety of tourism/destination content and for a wide variety of local and destination customer audiences. ③
- In all content produced, ensure as much cultural/social, racial/ethnic, gender/sexual and age/physical diversity as possible to promote all of the aspects of Raleigh/Wake County and also to include as many kinds of visitors as possible in diverse representations. Include notes on accessibility where possible in written content. Keep Bureau diversity, equity and inclusion goals in the conversation, internally and externally, at all times.
- Collaborate with local economic development allies to build consistent messaging and synergy between their traditional economic development strategies and GRCVB's visitor-related economic development strategies, e.g., convention sales strategy, destination brand, joint public affairs tactics in the Raleigh area. In 2023–2024, encourage allies and diverse stakeholder groups to participate in redevelopment of an area brand strategy for both tourism and other municipal or economic development uses. ③

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ① Meetings & Conventions, ② Sports, ③ Events, ④ Key Attractors, ⑤ Individual Leisure, ⑥ Destination Development, ⑦ Regional Demand Drivers, ⑧ Quality of Place

- With the Destination Data and Technology Department, further optimize and increase website usage by implementing an improved design for all site sections, based on a fresh usability study initiated in 2023.
- Continue to enact a GRCVB/GRSA Social Media Marketing Strategy to take as much advantage as possible of social conversations, engagement and networking, brand ambassadorship and shareable content, and strive to position Raleigh competitively among its peer destinations in these areas. Focus on not only creating and sharing original written content published on visitRaleigh.com but also social media video content—its reach on Bureau social media accounts proven far and wide during the 2022–2023 fiscal year (more than 2.5 million video views on Instagram Reels).
- Continue to empower the area’s visitor sector partners representing all industries/verticals to “help themselves” to GRCVB’s marketing programs and co-op opportunities (self-service) through Bureau projects, such as PIXL (Partner Information eXchange Login), Visit Raleigh Studio or advertising on the official website, while also retaining contracted resources to help maintain partners’ event content at the highest levels. This year’s approach again includes collaborating with Destination Data and Technology to implement a new Customer Relationship Management (destination database) software version, mitigating any impacts of the change on partner and stakeholder relations. ③, ③
- Continue to nurture new business relationships directly with select local producers or suppliers (entrepreneurs), providing GRCVB with brand-compliant promotional products for all verticals, while maintaining a business relationship with an outside promotional consultant who can facilitate all other product needs of Bureau departments. Explore deployment of an online retail store featuring products that reinforce the destination brand and that could be purchased by individuals or arriving groups. ⑤

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, CONVENTION SALES**

- Continue collaborating with Destination Data and Technology to template all the steps of the personal selling process, enabling convention sales and services staff to fully deploy prospecting, lead-nurturing, deal-closing, attendance-promoting or relationship-building emails or other tactics in accordance with the Bureau’s Digital Content Marketing Strategy and refined tactical steps of strategic selling.
- Arm sales staff with new designs, prepackaged themes, collateral, promotional products and social media marketing strategy, in accordance with the destination brand, to supplement tradeshow booth installations, stunts or activations at all shows throughout the year.
- Continue to put Raleigh on the list for consideration with convention and meeting planners through compelling advertising, the Meetings Watch e-newsletter, official Meeting Planners Guides, enhanced bid books, video content, the visitRaleigh.com website section for Meetings & Conventions and visitRaleigh meetings insider blog.
- Through the content marketing manager role, continue to articulate and fill-in additional marketing strategy/tactics that can aid the four Meeting Districts beyond Downtown in selling to outside meeting professionals; these interrelate to the Destination Services Department’s reimagining of GRCVB See For Yourself Tours in 2023–2024. ①

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, DESTINATION SERVICES**

- Work cooperatively with Services team to automate/digitize and otherwise enable the online implementation of Destinations International’s handbook of CVB Attendance Promotion Practices and other new and revised programs/tools for Raleigh area convention and visitor services including a social media strategy that showcases attendee engagement/experiences of key arriving convention/sports groups.
- Lend event production and promotional support to the Destination Services Department’s forthcoming Event Services Provider Summit—which will engage area hospitality partners with Event Services & Suppliers Listings via more education, best-practice discussions and business networking—as well as reimagined See For Yourself Tours for frontline staffs of area hospitality business partners.
- Continue to enhance conversion to visitors at in-state points of sale (state welcome centers) and increase circulation among Raleigh visitors at local information desks by proactively distributing collateral at major sites. Continue to redefine the official Visitor Information Center as a pivotal, physical space for fulfilling the sale of new signature experiences with individual leisure tourists or arriving groups. ⑤



## MARKETING STRATEGIES, DOMESTIC TOURISM

- Promote the following to the Bureau's target audiences\*, inspiring overnight stays and day-trips for leisure purposes, the conversion of day-trips to overnight stays and brand ambassadorship:
  - Raleigh, N.C.'s destination brand;
  - entrepreneurial locals as well as the museums (especially including opening of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences' *Dueling Dinosaurs* permanent exhibit), arts, live music, craft culinary and beverage scene, handcrafted goods and historic experiences they are responsible for and have fostered here; and,
  - other compelling tourism product offerings (e.g., hotels, things to do, signature experiences, leisure tourism events, restaurants).

Always focus on promoting Raleigh experiences that leave visitors feeling enriched and energized. ⑤

\*Backyard Boosters, Lifestyle Chameleons and Pulse Keepers (as defined in Marketing Blueprint)

- Constantly and strategically influence and inspire potential visitors at key touchpoints through Internet platforms (e.g., articles and social media, email activations, search engines) in order to increase awareness of and preference for the Raleigh, N.C., destination brand and to inspire potential visitors to travel and/or stay overnight. Contract to again publish an inspirational, content- and photography-heavy Official Visitors Guide for 2024 designed to send readers to visitRaleigh.com for more detailed trip-planning/conversion.
- Use the 2023–2024 Leisure Tourism Editorial Calendar, the Digital Content Marketing Strategy and the Social Media Marketing Strategy as guides to continually steer all tourism marketing tactics (Internet marketing activities, print advertising, point-of-sale initiatives) toward annual goals/objectives. Engage with area hospitality partners to create and curate inspirational content that supports themes and promotion; keep partners updated with co-op partner program opportunities as they arise under each theme, timeframe and editorial emphasis. Leverage Moore County's hosting of the 2024 U.S. Open especially to promote Wake County hotel offerings to tournament spectators, with Internet marketing tactics maintained throughout the year. Digitize/outsource the Raleigh Beer Trail's fulfillment through new technology/vendor relationships.
- Establish and/or strengthen relationships with Raleigh, N.C.'s smart and passionate residents (in some cases through local third-party introductions) who are shaping the growth of the historic city's emerging creative businesses, innovative festivals and food establishments, passionate music and sports scenes and modern cultural experiences—to generate content that will entice visitors to experience the destination, become brand ambassadors and make return visits. ⑤
- Continue to strengthen initiatives with People-First Tourism (P1t) Inc. to influence and guide creation of one-of-a-kind, signature experiences that will inspire memorable visits when marketed well; this includes continuing to build healthy, new relationships with area microentrepreneurs, non-profits or entrepreneurs/small businesses that can associate with GRCVB/the visitor sector to begin serving visitors (tourists or groups) in uniquely brand-compliant ways. ⑤
- Strengthen relationships with hospitality partners and with area allies/municipalities (e.g., City of Raleigh Housing & Neighborhoods Department, Downtown Raleigh Alliance, Hillsborough Street Community Service Corporation, Midtown Raleigh Alliance, 12 town tourism task forces/committees) to collaborate in the best ways possible for content or tourism product to enhance the Raleigh, N.C., destination brand and attract or better serve visitors.
- Create and/or maintain strategic partnerships statewide and nationwide with Airbnb, IGLTA, OpenTable, P1t, Priceline, Visit North Carolina, Yelp and others and augment GRCVB's destination marketing efforts.

## MARKETING STRATEGIES, GREATER RALEIGH SPORTS ALLIANCE

- Collaborate with Destination Data and Technology to template all steps of the sports marketing process, enabling GRSA staff to fully deploy new prospecting, lead-nurturing, deal-closing, attendance-promoting or relationship-building emails or other tactics in accordance with the Bureau's Digital Content Marketing Strategy. Continue to re-conceptualize the printed/online bid proposals used by GRSA staff with sports event planners.
- Continue to build upon the GRSA brand within the sports vertical through compelling advertising, collateral, promotional products, social media marketing tactics, video content and content development on raleighsports.org—this year emphasizing with promotions the 25th anniversary of our sports marketing department's inception.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM**

- Ensure the Bureau's overall content and social media strategies promote the positive media coverage garnered for the area, encouraging consumer sharing.
- Align the Marketing and Communications Department and Public Relations Department editorial calendars to foster consistent messaging to the domestic tourism vertical and media.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES, MARKETING RESEARCH**

- Update visitor volume and spending estimates through calendar year 2023 with research from Longwoods International, the U.S. Travel Association or other research vendors.
- Update and disseminate research on the overall annual economic impacts (direct, indirect and induced) of visitors to Wake County, as a Bureau performance indicator and as a communications tool for government relations and community engagement (Tourism Economics).
- Revive an annual partner marketing survey, distributed in winter to all area visitor-sector businesses and organizations, to better understand their needs or wishes for Bureau partner programs and their desired levels of participation in prospective domestic tourism opportunities/tactics, prior to finalizing departmental plans for the next fiscal year; determine whether desired outcomes have changed post-pandemic compared to prior survey results and adapt future marketing plans accordingly.
- Explore commissioning a "halo effect"/marketing ROI research study and/or an advertising effectiveness research study to confirm how destination marketing being tuned-up is really working to effect more incremental visitation, increased visitor spending and other Bureau goals.
- Assist the Destination Data and Technology and Administration Departments in evolving the Bureau's business intelligence platforms made possible by research and measurement vendors such as Arrivalist and Longwoods. Continue provision of some of this destination data in summary to partners/stakeholders, whether through the ETA Wake County E-newsletter or through individualized new forms of dashboard access that could better inform the strategic decision-making on their part as well as the Bureau's own marketing decisions quarter-to-quarter.
- With the Administration Department, continue to encourage local arts/culture/leisure tourism event partners to track event impact data about their annual events/festivals and provide additional research, destination brand training, marketing consultations and other stakeholder education to organizers identified for further development of signature events. ⑥

## Public Relations and International Tourism Department

The Public Relations and International Tourism Department is responsible for managing all external communication activities, which include media relations, public affairs, community awareness and advocacy as well as crisis, issues and reputation management functions. Additionally, the department is responsible for overseeing international tourism marketing, sales and travel trade efforts for the Bureau. Media relations efforts include local and out-of-market earned media utilized to generate visitation and community awareness in the meetings, leisure, group tour and sports markets. Public affairs efforts include advocating for the value of the visitor economy to Wake County and the role the Bureau plays in creating and fostering the visitor experience. International tourism marketing and travel trade efforts include working with airlines, tour operators, wholesalers and travel agents as well as media in key feeder markets (Canada, U.K. and France) abroad to increase brand awareness and drive foreign individual travelers (FIT) to Wake County.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES

- Elevate GRCVB brand awareness to residents, media and partners in the Wake County hospitality community.
- Engage in strong relationships with local media (all platforms), updating them on the tourism industry and initiatives in Wake County.
- Work with Public Information Officers from Wake County municipalities to develop communication objectives for promoting events, festivals and news of interest to leisure and meeting visitors.
- Work with communications and public relations representatives in local organizations to collaborate on story ideas and ensure consistent messaging on the area to expand quality-of-place themelines. ⑥
- Enhance local connectors' network of writers to pitch "hometown" travel articles to national publications.
- Generate earned media placements outside of Wake County through proactive media outreach.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, CONVENTION SALES AND DESTINATION SERVICES

- Facilitate ongoing joint discussion between the Bureau and Wake County Economic Development in developing a comprehensive sales and marketing strategy around key industry clusters inclusive of tradeshow attendance and promotion, sales missions and fostering local connectors.
- Work with Raleigh Convention Center and meeting industry partners to promote successes and new initiatives or developments of local hotels, venues and meeting facilities through media relations.
- Collaborate with Convention Sales to identify relevant topics and trends in the meeting industry in which the Raleigh area has a relevant claim (e.g., smart) for major media push.
- Identify the major meetings and conventions within key industry clusters to develop a comprehensive local and national public relations plan to maximize exposure.
- Revise the "Do It Yourself Media Relations Toolkit" for meeting and convention planners to include best practices for garnering local media exposure for their meeting or event.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Work strategically with Marketing to promote tourism messaging to all audiences and potential visitors—including backgrounders on ambassadors and spotlighting area's passionate people.
- Develop integrated marketing campaigns and editorial that utilize the 2023–2024 Leisure Tourism Editorial Calendar of brand themelines, tourism assets and campaigns.
- Update and maintain the media B-roll library of stock video footage available on-demand to journalists.
- Refresh content on visitRaleigh.com Media section to reflect the Raleigh, N.C., brand and tell the story of the entrepreneurial Raleigh residents who enhance the area's visitor appeal.

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ① Meetings & Conventions, ② Sports, ③ Events, ④ Key Attractors,  
⑤ Individual Leisure, ⑥ Destination Development, ⑦ Regional Demand Drivers, ⑧ Quality of Place

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, GREATER RALEIGH SPORTS ALLIANCE**

- Maintain local sports, esports business, industry trade and traditional media lists and relationships by providing timely story ideas, facts and figures such as attendance, room-nights and economic impact figures.
- Craft releases on major sports events to position the Raleigh area as a key market for amateur sports and premier sports destination and GRSA as an industry leader in sports destination marketing.
- Develop strategy around increasing leisure and destination messaging in traditional competition-based media coverage of professional, amateur and collegiate sporting events within Wake County.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, ADMINISTRATION**

- Sustain positioning as the singular voice for tourism in Wake County and position executive staff as travel industry experts for journalists to use as top-of-mind sources for stories on local and national tourism.
- Maintain community awareness campaign to advocate for the value that tourism and hospitality bring to Wake County and educate the public on the impact of the visitor economy.
- Develop a comprehensive public relations campaign around GRCVB's ongoing efforts to implement the Destination 2028 Strategic Plan for Wake County. ⑥
- Provide a series of canned quotes regarding meetings and conventions, tourism initiatives and local policies that affect the tourism industry.
- Develop and execute an integrated tourism and economic development campaign strategy centered around quality of place in conjunction with Wake County Economic Development and the City of Raleigh. ⑥

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES, MEDIA RELATIONS**

- Promote the positive impact of tourism through public awareness initiatives and a series of pitches and/or press releases detailing travel figures specific to Wake County.
- Cultivate new and existing media relationships through one-on-one connections including media tours, targeted pitches, networking events and site visit facilitation.
- Encourage journalists to infuse stories with destination brand messages, seasonal/niche story ideas, calls-to-action and conversion-oriented elements including online resources, social accounts, hashtags and events.
- Integrate advanced earned media analytics through new media measurement software to guide earned media strategies, advanced analytics and key performance indicators moving forward.
- Work with Visit North Carolina to participate in media missions in key target markets as well as in-state.
- Pursue qualified media to visit the destination on individual visits or planned group press trips with customized pitching efforts and in conjunction with firms representing local hotels, restaurants and attractions.
- Keep the online press room updated with press releases, backgrounders, media alerts, quotes and accolades as well as industry facts and figures to communicate news and information for easy access to media.
- Attend targeted media marketplace events, as well as hold desk-side visits with key out-of-market media writing for travel, leisure and lifestyle outlets.
- Develop a public relations campaign around blockbuster exhibitions at area attraction partners and the opening of destination restaurants. ③

## **INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AND TRAVEL TRADE OBJECTIVES**

- Elevate awareness of the value of the international visitor market within Raleigh/Wake County by working with local partners to create single- and multi-day itineraries for tour operators and travel agencies to sell. ⑦
- Generate increased room-nights for Wake County lodging partners through selling via tour operators, bedbanks and other wholesalers working in the FIT market. ⑦

- Work with local hoteliers to sign contracts with and get product into tour operators and travel agencies portfolios in key markets (Canada, U.K. and France) and develop a proactive sales training program with tour operators and travel agencies to generate more bookings of FIT in Wake County. ⑦
- Collaborate with regional economic development to develop strategies around increasing international bleisure travel (extending business travel into leisure time). ⑦
- Execute proactive outreach programs to generate earned media ensuring the destination brand message is conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements in key international feeder markets. ⑦

## **INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AND TRAVEL TRADE STRATEGIES**

- Work with Wake County hotels, attractions and restaurants to educate them on the importance of the international business, how to work with that market and help generate business for our partners. ⑦
- Attend tradeshows, sales and media missions targeted towards the international market with an emphasis on supporting our international flights from Canada, the U.K., France and Iceland. ⑦
- Work closely with Brand USA, Travel South USA and Visit N.C. to participate in strategic marketing and sales initiatives, campaigns, travel trade sales and media missions and hosted site visits/familiarization tours. Additionally, source applicable research from these groups to help drive overall departmental strategy. ⑦
- Conduct and maintain effective networking relationships within the international travel trade industry representatives including tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, media and airlines. ⑦
- Develop and execute a proactive sales training program with key tour operators, wholesalers and travel agencies to generate more FIT in Wake County and leads for hotels, attractions and other partners from both domestic and international travelers alike. ⑦
- Compile and maintain a database of international tour operators, wholesalers and travel agents within the CRM and create ongoing communications outreach strategy for contacts. ⑦
- Develop and execute marketing and sales promotions and collateral for key international markets. ⑦
- Research emerging international markets and create destination-specific strategies based on demand drivers of new or emerging markets including Germany, Mexico and India. ⑦
- Revamp strategic-integrated marketing, communications and sales strategies with airlines that serve RDU with international service to increase awareness/exposure for routes and generate bookings. ⑦

## Convention Sales Department

The primary goal of the Convention Sales Department is to promote Raleigh/Wake County as a convention and meetings destination and establish a strong regional, national and international presence in the meetings industry, thus initiating direct economic impact by increasing room-night production for our area hotel partners.

### CONVENTION SALES OBJECTIVES

- Generate leads and produce room-night business for all Wake County hotels, Raleigh Convention Center, PNC Arena and other county venues. ❶
- Execute convention sales strategies that align with the Destination Strategic Plan (DSP) for the Raleigh Convention Center and Wake County's five meeting districts to assist with advancing Wake County DSP prospect accounts to meet and exceed the five-year glidepath. ❶
- Continue to position the Visit Raleigh sales teams as industry experts, trusted advisors and partners to meeting clients and sales professionals at meeting venues and hotels from a local and global perspective.
- Continue to engage the region's economic development and start-up communities to gain insights and connections related to emerging markets and our four key industry clusters: Cleantech/Smart Grid, Advanced Manufacturing, IT/Technology and Life Sciences.
- Enhance relationships with connectors locally and regionally to influence business with a strong regional presence to host meetings and events at the Raleigh Convention Center and Wake County meeting hotels. This will showcase the benefits of hosting events in their own community, generating direct economic impact.

### CONVENTION SALES STRATEGIES

- Evaluate and adjust business development strategies for DSP accounts to align with our current and projected market analysis to meet and exceed the five-year glidepath. ❶
- Identify and engage with key meeting professionals and decision-makers who have potential to bring conventions and meetings to Wake County and increase awareness of Raleigh in key feeder markets (Southeast, Mid Atlantic, Midwest, Northeast).
- Enhance social selling strategy, with targeted engagement, by investing in LinkedIn Premium Professional to develop personal brands. The focus will be curating new relationships with key decision-influencers and strengthening our presence with existing connections. New initiatives will be evaluated utilizing demographic information and metrics obtained from LinkedIn.
- Activate resources from Wake County Economic Development's team to continue to strengthen knowledge of Raleigh's emerging markets and four key industry clusters: Cleantech/Smart Grid, Advanced Manufacturing, IT/Technology and Life Sciences. Initiatives will include a focus on organizational synergies, industry education and messaging to include in prospecting efforts and bid books. ❶
- Engage our list of local business and community leaders to target top-tier multicultural and diversity champions, organization members, board members and officers of groups that may consider Raleigh for their meeting destination or are faculty of higher-education institutions in the region. The team will meet with influencers to gain support and intellectual capital on potential conferences.
- Position the Sales team as industry experts through involvement as industry influencers, through speaking opportunities and serving in leadership roles, board of directors and committee positions with international, national and regional industry organizations (e.g., MPI, PCMA, AENC, SGMP and NCBMP).
- Launch the Anytime FAM (familiarization tour) series for planners. The site visits will be customized and yield a positive ROI for our Wake County partners and the planners. ❶
- Continue to utilize social media platforms in partnership with the Marketing and Communications Department, with messaging to the meeting professional audience, to promote the value of the CVB as a partner and to create awareness of Raleigh/Wake County as a viable meetings destination.

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**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ❶ Meetings & Conventions, ❷ Sports, ❸ Events, ❹ Key Attractors, ❺ Individual Leisure, ❻ Destination Development, ❼ Regional Demand Drivers, ❽ Quality of Place

- Reimagine “sales calls” by creating interactive experiences for meeting planners in all geographic regions.
- Encapsulate all countywide diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in destination proposals, prospecting and business development conversations.
- Leverage the destination brand and continue to curate passionate locals and signature experiences into client engagement tradeshows, client events, site inspections and sales missions, to showcase destination assets and to differentiate Raleigh/Wake County as a meetings destination. In an effort to provide collaboration, destination partners will also be invited to participate in the following:
  - client events in-market including the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast and Southeast, in partnership with our local brand ambassadors around themes that reflect the destination brand;
  - themed familiarization tours and networking opportunities for potential clients from our markets around signature events, concerts, festivals and sporting events, in conjunction with our hospitality community, to showcase Raleigh’s entertainment, culinary and cultural scenes;
  - select industry-related tradeshows and events to build relationships that result in direct sales.
- Contribute relevant content of interest to meeting professionals and other members of the larger GRCVB community for use in Meetings Watch, GRCVB blog posts and social media accounts.
- Launch a social media campaign in collaboration with Destination Services designed to educate meeting professionals on the benefits of partnering with the CVB, from sourcing to servicing.
- Initiate targeted quarterly engagement for full-service meeting hotels to continue to educate hoteliers on our role as a trusted partner and resource for business development, to include partner connect visits, educational opportunities, sales strategy, meetings/conventions PIXL training, best practices and business development opportunities.

## Destination Services Department

The Destination Services Department impacts the visitor experience by connecting visitors, attendees and planners to the destination's resources.

### DESTINATION SERVICES OBJECTIVES

- Event, Sports and Esports Services: Use event planning for meetings, conventions and sports events and the servicing process to provide “one-stop shop” event planning services.
- Visitor Services/Visitor Information Center (VIC): Provide visitor information, counseling and destination awareness to encourage positive experiences that result in longer stays and increased visitor spending.
- Partner Relations: Create and facilitate connections between our planners and visitors to area hospitality partners.

### PRIORITIES AND NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2023–2024

1. Work with Sales and Marketing and Communications to host a local Event Services Provider Summit to educate and network with other service providers and unique venues and facilities.
2. Continue collaborations with Marketing and People-First Tourism to promote ongoing initiatives to maximize visitor and group engagement for signature experiences.
3. Work with Marketing and Communications to help showcase and highlight our key convention and sports groups by showcasing attendee engagement and experiences through LinkedIn and other social media channels.
4. Work with Marketing and Communications and Destination Data and Technology Departments to reimagine and launch a new quarterly series of the See For Yourself Tours, focusing on meeting district assets and key tour product, to educate frontline staff at area hotels, attractions, venues and facilities.
5. Continue to collaborate and seek opportunities with local partners and institutions to help reestablish a robust ambassador/volunteer program.
6. Produce curated events and programming by partnering with local destination partners (businesses and attractions) to encourage VIC visitation and bring awareness to the destination's resources.

### DESTINATION SERVICES STRATEGIES, CONVENTION AND SPORTS EVENT SERVICES

- Work across all CVB departments to expand the services we offer, to position GRCVB as a leader in the convention, meetings, sports and esports marketplace.
- Maintain departmental servicing levels and efficiencies across convention, meetings, sports and esports services.
- Continue to host and support existing signature events by collaborating with rights-holders and local partners to strengthen the event or enhance the “event experience” through avenues such as visitor services, marketing and sponsorship support, hospitality programs, ancillary programming and VIP gifts, for the purpose of leveraging strong community support to help retain repeat business. Focus on best practices that build on the unique proposition that destination services teams provide by:
  - continuing use and tweaking of the Meeting Planners Digital Marketing Tool Kit; monitor successes and work with the Marketing and Communications Department to fine-tune as needed.
  - continuing to refine our scope of services based upon group size to ensure that our services and resources are expended appropriately and most efficiently.
  - keeping attendance promotion as the driving force for our servicing efforts and ensuring that the planners' key indicators of success (total attendance and overall attendee satisfaction) are met.
  - working with the Marketing and Communications and Convention Sales Departments to revisit and revise the services we provide to groups outside of the convention center campus, considering new sales strategies focused on major hotel-anchored meeting districts. ❶

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- Continue to focus and refine tools that are “grab and go” when servicing weddings, reunions, group tours and referral bookings (non-Bureau generated leads); the goal is to service them effectively and efficiently by preserving our resources for groups that yield higher ROI.
- Continue to collaborate and seek opportunities by connecting with local key partners and institutions to help reestablish a robust GRCVB Tourism Ambassadors program.
- Maintain participation in local host organizing committees as a key value to local host partners and local connectors who bring conventions, meetings, sports and events home to Raleigh.❶
- Maintain a high standard for convention and sport servicing by increasing the awareness of and ROI that stellar event servicing yields. Leverage our involvement in the Event Service Professionals Association to provide shared learning opportunities and more awareness and appreciation for all convention service manager and event manager roles, at all nexuses (hotels, venues, facilities etc.).
- Work with the Destination Data and Technology Department to improve our reporting and tracking:
  - Continue to expand use of uniform traces for all primary convention and sport group servicing functions to result in better and more accurate reporting of the ROIs we provide.
  - Continue hotel room-night pick-up tracking following all key sporting events, to wit (1) verify contracted room-nights and (2) utilize Arrivalist’s technology to verify uncontracted rooms for overall room demand in-market, for final direct economic impact.❷
  - Continue automation reporting of end-of-month Services key performance indicators (# of planning visits, pre/post-cons, attendance promotions).
- Grow the effectiveness of our event service provider partnerships, strengthening our relationships with them by:
  - continuing work with the Marketing and Communications Department to help recruit service providers for our local Event Services & Suppliers Listings.
  - working with Convention Sales and Marketing and Communication Departments to host an Event Services Provider Summit targeted at local event suppliers to educate, discuss best practices and network with their peers and staffs at unique venues and facilities.
  - continuing to work cross-departmentally to encourage local minority/women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) or LGBTQ-owned businesses to maximize their listings by self-identifying in either or both categories to maximize search tool capabilities on visitRaleigh.com.
- Work with Sales, GRSA and Public Relations Departments to target three to four convention and sports groups to maximize visibility and provide positive testimony through GRCVB social media and E-newsletters.
- Provide specific destination content to meeting, convention, event and sports attendees for the purpose of increasing attendee satisfaction and overall positive attendance-building for those events and meetings.
- Continue Destination Services team introductions and live engagement with new and established hotel partners and their servicing teams to build relationships and discuss service offerings and resources.

## **DESTINATION SERVICES STRATEGIES, VISITOR SERVICES/VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER (VIC)**

- Continue to review and revise all VIC standard operating procedures to reflect best practices for health and safety operations for our visitors and staff.
- Ensure that the VIC space reflects the Raleigh, N.C., brand by:
  - working cooperatively with Marketing and Communications to promote signature experiences to individuals and groups alike;❹,❺
  - continuing to coordinate efforts with Marketing and Destination Data Technology Departments to maximize use of display monitors in the VIC, to promote attractions, calendar of events, restaurants and arriving downtown convention, meeting, event and sports groups.
- Grow VIC visitation and effectiveness in these ways:
  - Continue to revisit local partnerships for development of unique programming/activations and visibility.
  - Continue to maintain relationships at other visitor and welcome centers by actively engaging with personnel and establishing ongoing partnerships.
  - Work with Marketing and Communications Department to help promote the VIC as a “one-stop shop” destination assistance location to key attractions and partners by requesting visibility on their respective websites to increase VIC visitation and awareness.

- Work with Marketing and Communications Department to produce curated events and programming with local destination partners, businesses and attractions to encourage VIC visitation and bring awareness to the destinations' resources.

## **DESTINATION SERVICES STRATEGIES, PARTNER RELATIONS**

- Use customer service as a key strategy for excellent hospitality delivery by encouraging use of existing training programs that impact experience delivery including Tourism U training and implementation.
- Support the event management development initiatives of GRCVB by continuing to serve on City of Raleigh's Events Task Force and Downtown Raleigh Alliance's Accessibility Task Force. ❶, ❷, ❸
- Reimagine and launch a new quarterly series of the See For Yourself Tours, focusing on meeting district assets, to educate frontline staff at area hotels, attractions, venues and facilities of their own destination product, for them to speak intelligently and knowingly about the facilities they recommend.
- Continue our regular, proactive Visitors Guide delivery service to local hotels and area attractions—a proven benefit in developing face-to-face relationships with frontline staff and management, allowing us to communicate key initiatives and training opportunities.
- Continue to seek partnerships and work with other hospitality partners to reestablish relationships with the offsite venue offerings for our destination and the staffs of each. ❶

## Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance

The Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance—a department of GRCVB—markets and promotes Raleigh, all of Wake County and the area’s sports venues in order to create economic development for the region in the form of sports events, tournaments, championships and meetings. The GRSA works closely with local partner organizations to successfully host and service existing events for the purpose of enhancing the product and developing repeat business. Both the sales/marketing and hosting components are designed to effectively position and brand Greater Raleigh as one of the nation’s leading sports event destinations. The Raleigh area was named Best Sports Host City in America by *SportsTravel* magazine in 2022, and this recognition is a testament to the partnerships and teamwork in place throughout this destination. The GRSA has a 23-member Advisory Board, made up of sports, government, tourism and hospitality leaders who play key roles in the sports event industry in Greater Raleigh.

### GRSA OBJECTIVES

- Create economic impact by filling hotels and restaurants with sports-related business.
- Position, or brand, Greater Raleigh as one of the nation’s premier locations for sporting events and a “championship destination.”
- Provide excellent leadership and/or support in the area of event hosting and servicing.
- Generate positive media exposure and visibility for Greater Raleigh and its venues.
- Increase local awareness of the sports event industry as a key generator of economic development in Wake County.
- Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with local host partners and sports organizations.
- Continue to strengthen the GRSA’s reputation as the foremost authority on the sports event industry in Wake County.
- Advocate for new and improved sports facilities and venues in Wake County that will spur economic impact from visitor spending. ❷

### PRIORITIES AND NEW INITIATIVES FOR 2023–2024

1. Sales efforts focused primarily on state, regional and national events along with retaining existing annual events
2. Hosting major events including visitRaleigh.com Showcase Series, NCAA DI Women’s College Cup, City of Oaks Volleyball Challenge, USA Baseball’s National High School Invitational, NCAA DI Women’s Lacrosse Championship, NCAA DII Baseball Championship and more
3. Leading and coordinating efforts with our partners for the next NCAA four-year bid cycle for hosting future championships spanning 2026-2030 (expected to get underway in summer 2023)
4. Continuing advancing Destination Strategic Plan initiatives including communication with Wake County parks & rec directors and MOU guidelines for multi-municipality events and marketing ❷
5. Managing and actively vetting esports opportunities that align with the goals and capabilities of our venues ❷
6. Working closely with host institution N.C. State University to establish and lead a Local Organizing Committee for the 2025 NCAA Men’s Basketball First & Second Rounds in Raleigh
7. Tradeshow participation and sponsorship activation pre- and post-show
8. Advocating and providing planning support for the multitude of major, new sports facility projects currently underway in municipalities throughout Wake County ❷
9. Emphasis on online platforms (website and social media) and increased focus on video/new content
10. Promoting the 25th anniversary of GRCVB’s sports marketing department through marketing, advertising and promotional efforts

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11. Leveraging PR outreach—messaging to community, local media and national industry publications
12. Utilizing Event Impact Calculator for sporting events

## **GRSA STRATEGIES**

- Attend national tradeshows to meet one-on-one with event owners and rights-holders and to promote Raleigh and Wake County as a premier sports event destination.
- Activate and utilize sponsorship opportunities with key industry tradeshows to enhance GRSA's presence.
- Focus on the following sales priorities: (1) collegiate, high school and amateur sports; (2) core sports of soccer, softball, baseball, basketball, volleyball, lacrosse, swimming, tennis, cross country and cheerleading; (3) emerging sports including esports, pickleball, cricket, disc golf, BMX, Ultimate, table tennis; (4) state, regional, national and, in some cases, international markets; and (5) multiyear event opportunities (including NCHSAA State Championships and various youth, collegiate and amateur events).<sup>2</sup>
- Prospect strategically for new business, primarily through existing contacts and client relationships and by attending tradeshows but also via "events available" databases and industry online publications.
- Research and evaluate potential events (in coordination with our host partners) to determine which ones are the "right fit" for Greater Raleigh.
- Develop and generate qualified sports leads on a consistent basis for Wake County hotels.
- Produce high-quality bid proposals and presentations for select sporting events as needed. Work closely with hotels, venues and local host organizations and partners.
- Travel as needed to make sales calls/presentations, in order to recruit and secure new sports business.
- Organize and host site inspections and client events for rights-holders and event planners to showcase the area's sports venues, accommodations and attractions.
- Contact local sports organizations, clubs and associations to learn which events they compete in at the statewide, regional or national levels, and determine which of those events might be a reasonable and desirable fit for Wake County. At the same time, determine which of those organizations would be interested in helping to recruit, manage and host the event once it has been booked.
- Plan, schedule and lead the first multi-municipality meeting of local parks & recreation directors to discuss ways that their communities can work together to leverage their collective facilities to create more effective marketing strategies and greater event hosting opportunities, and to discuss plans for future facility and venue projects and how they can be best maximized for economic development as well as local community needs.<sup>2</sup>
- Manage the Sports Event Investment Program and work closely with GRCVB Board of Directors and GRSA Advisory Board to generate new sports business opportunities and economic impact.
- Support the efforts of local organizations to bring sporting events to the area. This includes but is not limited to N.C. State University, PNC Arena, City of Raleigh, Triangle Volleyball Club, Town of Cary, NCFC Youth, USA Baseball and many more.
- Continue to build brand awareness and establish the value of the Greater Raleigh Sports Alliance within the national and regional sports event industry, as well as within the local market. The GRSA brand will continue to grow through professionalism, hospitality, reliability and a commitment to excellence—plus various marketing, advertising and proactive media initiatives.
- Continue to update and develop a comprehensive database of sports event owners and rights-holders at the state, regional and national levels.
- Continue to utilize the GRSA sports website as a primary sales and marketing tool and as the number-one information resource for the sports event industry in Wake County.
- Maintain active membership and leadership roles with the Sports ETA, N.C. Sports Association and N.C. Sports Leadership Council.

## Destination Data and Technology Department

The Destination Data and Technology Department is responsible for all cloud-based software solutions, technological infrastructure, web development, data analytics, business intelligence and social media, content and Internet marketing technologies used by the Bureau. The department's primary goal is to support the Destination Strategic Plan (DSP), the organizational business plan and the business objectives of individual departments through the effective use of data, technology and cloud-based services—providing the resources to support destination management and marketing that attracts more visitors.

### DESTINATION DATA AND TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVES

- Train, support and enable staff on all organization-related technology deployments in an effective manner, to promote productivity and empower staff with continuous learning opportunities via existing webinars and knowledge-base access.
- Identify, manage and solve all organizational data and technology-related opportunities.
- Automate the organization's use of internal information to ensure that data are organized and shared in a manner that adds value, enhances productivity, protects against loss and promotes customer retention.
- Continue to evolve and maintain enterprise data intelligence and cloud-based solutions for the Bureau and destination by working closely with each department on maintaining critical metrics and analytics.
- Work closely day-to-day with the Marketing and Communications Department to implement Internet and content marketing strategies that ultimately attract more visitors and visitor spending.
- Maintain and support infrastructure for GRCVB administrative offices and the official Visitor Information Center.
- Increase website traffic levels (sessions and users) via search engine optimization, marketing and artificial intelligence methods.
- Establish visitRaleigh.com as the single, official source for the area's tourism, restaurant, hotel, attraction/experience and event, meeting, sports, travel media and partner/local resident information through the effective application of new web technology.
- Maintain and support social media aggregation tools for user-generated content and a digital asset management system.
- Provide and support staff with business intelligence via data dashboards and data analysis on an as-needed basis for event-attendee-by-ZIP-code, device-movement, Overnight Room Demand Analyzer (ORDA) or Event Impact Calculator (EIC) analysis.

### DESTINATION DATA AND TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES

- Collaborate with Marketing and Communications close to the end of the fiscal year to assist in brand strategy opportunities related to improvements in website technology. We will begin with advanced search engine optimization (SEO) and implement improved website sitemap-navigation based on new brand research. In addition, look for new functionality opportunities that can be implemented to improve site interaction with visitors. This will assist in identifying any new opportunities for the official tourism website related to technological innovations in the interaction of desktop or mobile devices with our website.
- Work with the Public Relations Department during the beginning of the fiscal year; Destination Data and Technology will transition our cloud-based PR solution from Cision to Muck Rack. This change is motivated by Muck Rack's documented commitment to user privacy, data security and data accuracy. Additionally, tracking of pitching within the platform and seamless Outlook integration, powered by secure email encryption, is available, providing our team with a more accurate database of PR professionals and journalists. Continue to support PR and International Tourism and Marketing and Communications Departments on provision of dynamic international content for visitRaleigh.com based on targeted localization.

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- In partnership with all departments and as artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent in our sector, use AI to engage visitors and collect data. The benefit of using AI is that it will boost our capacity to answer inquiries while gathering data on visitors' wants and requirements around the clock. This will be performed by structuring our Content Management System (CMS) website content and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) information in an AI-structured, conversational fashion to react to visitor inquiries. This knowledge of visitor inquiries and interaction patterns may subsequently be leveraged to strengthen our brand message, resulting in better digestible material for our visitors.
- For website data analysis, Destination Data and Technology will implement, manage and migrate to Google Analytics 4 (GA4), Google's new analytics platform. During the preceding fiscal year, the department has been gathering data in preparation for this. We plan to upgrade our website reporting to GA4 at the beginning of the fiscal year. GRCVB will transition toward user-based reporting and performance evaluation, with the ultimate objective of giving insights and predictions on the customer journey across devices and platforms.
- Destination Data and Technology will continue to manage and support Google SEO and Pay Per Click (PPC) in collaboration with Marketing and Communications. SEO and PPC work together to maximize visibility for visitRaleigh.com's relevant keywords. SEO will continue to help establish visitRaleigh.com as the Internet expert on what the destination offers and help our site capture impressions and clicks for a vast number of queries. At the same time, PPC maintains the visitRaleigh.com's visibility for highly competitive keywords in the search engine results pages. Additionally, a visitRaleigh.com optimized for organic search helps to increase user engagement and conversions, whether traffic comes to the page via organic search or PPC.
- Continue to use AI with Google PPC for visitRaleigh.com. Site strategies allow us to adjust keywords much more quickly and at scale than if they were managed manually, toward a goal of maximizing conversions and highly engaged users. A real-world example is how smart bidding in place on both search campaigns and the Performance Max beta, optimize the keyword bids to bid-up on users who are more likely to complete a Visitors Guide request, sign up for a newsletter, click on a DTN ad, view more than three pages or spend more than two minutes on-site. Those actions are all tracked as conversions via GA4.
- Over this and the next fiscal year, utilize a brand-new platform called Bandwango for grouping activities into free, online visitor trails that connect to the website thanks to Bandwango's unique technology, all while providing a positive user experience for attendees and visitors. The first trail passport will include a greenway path with geofenced artist activations: it will be developed in collaboration with AWAKE: Cultural Paths, Inc. Also, we are onboarding the existing paper-based Raleigh Beer Trail of more than 40 partners, so that we can track participation online utilizing a novel, gamified scoring method of luring customers while using the Bandwango's geofencing check-in technology.
- Continue to manage and support device movement data, in partnership with Arrivalist, to strengthen internal staff procedures, meeting planner interactions and partner meetings with data insights. The Convention Sales team will continue to be able to provide hoteliers with monthly or yearly statistics on their clients' origin markets, demographics, cross-visitation and resident vs. visitor breakdown. In collaboration with Marketing and Communications, provide Raleigh Beer Trail partners with device movement data reports, adding another layer of data validation to this visitor incentive program. Furthermore, Destination Data and Technology will be able to provide event planner clients with information on their guests' cross-visitation, day-of-visit and monitored origin markets in partnership with Sales, GRSA and Destination Services.
- Destination Data and Technology, in collaboration with Sales, will continue to support and distribute destination pace data to area hotel sales and management, with this data also allowing GRCVB to develop a more proactive and aligned booking strategy with our partners. The reporting contains short-term and competitive set reports in the most common hotel formats, allowing them to quickly comprehend GRCVB's production in connection with their own pace production.
- Support all staff in reporting data to partners and meeting planners using CRM's DSP EIC technologies, STR, EIC dashboard analysis, device-movement data, ZIP code analysis and ORDA. Work with staff to create metrics that will allow us to track traveler conversion, profiling and segmentation data through a research platform.
- Continue to support training on cybersecurity concerns to empower staff to be more vigilant and aware of SMS, ransomware and spoofing practices. Assess current enterprise-system security to identify areas that are lacking controls and empower staff to be more aware of potential cyber-threats either external or internal via the network.
- Collaborate on AI and the Bandwango destination tool at a strategic level with all departments. These resources will be used to help with visitor queries as well as to give participants planned activities as part of a gamified

experience. For example, as part of a meeting planner visit, journalist familiarization tour or conference attendee arrival, these tools can be used to elevate the visitor experience.

- Collaborate strategically with Sales, GRSA and Destination Services to assess and connect current DSP activities with consolidated reporting. This may be applied to all workflow processes in order to harmonize internal and external data transmission, including dashboards to assist staff with decision-making.
- Assist and support all staff with social media technology applications and social management tools. The department will continue to handle and support Google Analytics and Search Engine Marketing /PPC/YouTube, as well as troubleshoot and enhance visibility in search engine results.
- Support and manage PR, Sales and Destination Services' use of online bid proposals in their relationships with event planners and media. In coordination with Marketing and Communications, update the platform with the most recent video and destination information. Support alignment with integrated platforms such as Act-On, user-generated content, Threshold 360 and video capabilities. This will allow for strategic lead-scoring capabilities on embedded connections as well as the usage of virtual bid books by planners.
- Closer to the conclusion of the fiscal year (based on cloud software roadmap compliance), begin the migration process to the new versions of business intelligence update software for 2023–2024 with all Bureau departments; work together with all departments to maintain and support all vertical destination markets using these software solutions.
- Maintain email deliverability management and support to ensure that our cloud-based systems are in synch and that our communications reach our partners, stakeholders and visitors. Cooperate with all departments to keep contact suppression education up to date, as well as CRM data to ensure that we are reaching our partners and key stakeholders.
- Continue to support templating for all stages of the sales and sports marketing processes, allowing Sales and GRSA staff to deploy new prospecting, lead nurturing, deal-closing, attendance-promoting or relationship-building emails or other tactics by using Act-On and Outlook plugins for customized, tailored communications.
- Continue to support PR, Convention Sales, GRSA and Destination Services Departments by using the Threshold 360 platform to assist in familiarization tours and site inspections—empowering these departments to create and share custom itineraries with 360° tours and custom videos. Work with all departments to make sure data for partners is up to date and integrations with our website and bid book process via SendSites are aligned.
- Support GRSA, Sales and Destination Services in ensuring that integration, upgrades and communication between third-party online destination sales and marketing channels, such as website RFP submission and Cvent, are seamless via the CRM and that we maintain a cohesive presence that accurately represents our destination.
- Keep up and develop our data business intelligence platform, which offers an array of charts and graphs for CRM metrics, key performance indicators, economic impact, DSP and strategic partner indicators. Each Bureau department will have the ability to track key metrics. Continue to create real-time dashboards for Act-On email monitoring and behavioral score trends for community interaction, DSP prospects and partner contacts in coordination with all departments. These dashboards will be used as a tool to make strategic business decisions based on data from interactions with the Bureau CRM and Act-On. ❶
- Assist and work with various departments on a Bureau-wide marketing communications automation platform capable of assessing specific actions and interacting with partners and meeting planners. With authorized, tailored communications and electronic material from all integrated marketing communication channels, support departments in rethinking their prospecting operations by documenting critical data points for meeting profiles, allowing teams to target particular new businesses. ❷
- Maintain and support visitRaleigh.com and raleighsports.org's technological components, such as CMS and booking engine upgrades and additions, as well as Yelp, OpenTable, Google Maps and API interfaces. Using an integrated CMS, continue to support and improve functionality for visitRaleigh.com and raleighsports.org. Manage and support opportunities to serve partners' advertising on the official website and other site sections like GRSA and Meetings & Conventions.
- Maintain and improve the CRM system for destination marketing, which provides tools to increase organization and efficiency as well as power sales, services and other Bureau-wide functions. All third-party connectors from the marketing communications automation platform, economic impact, Authorize.net, Cvent and MINT+, Destinations International and pace reporting are also supported (FuturePace).

- Support the CRM's integrated partner login with staff, local hotels/meeting facilities and local hospitality partners whose data is kept in the CRM. Based on feedback, analyze modifications to the Partner Information eXchange Login (PIXL) system based on feedback.
- Oversee and maintain the Visit Raleigh Studio digital asset management system, which allows visual content to be viewed not just internally by staff but also externally by media, partners, agencies, clients and even the general public.
- Continue to advocate for technologies that will increase staff communication with partners, conference planners and sporting event organizers.



## Administration Department

The primary goal of the Administration Department is to provide managerial guidance to all GRCVB departments related to staffing, management, operational efficiencies, organizational strategic planning, education and community-based initiatives that position the GRCVB to be the leader in hospitality and tourism-based economic development for Wake County, N.C.

### ADMINISTRATION OBJECTIVES

- Continue to enhance the proactive reporting, measurements and formats of monthly and yearly tourism data through the acquisition of third-party research and economic metrics to better communicate tourism economic impacts to media, industry and policymakers.
- Directly communicate the measurements of the data dashboards reporting and benchmarking system for group sales, group booking pace and interactive analytics for visitRaleigh.com/owned media to all countywide partners. Collaborate with the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC) and downtown hotel partners on the new RCC booking pace report. These measurements will be used for both internal and external analysis, strategic decision-making and articulating the value of the Destination Strategic Plan (DSP).
- Continue to collaboratively manage the Wake County and City of Raleigh Business Development Fund for increasing citywide convention and tradeshow business at RCC. As additional downtown, full-service, convention hotel inventory is added, new guidelines will be reviewed in partnership with the Wake County Hospitality Alliance, RCC, City of Raleigh and Wake County.
- Continue serving on the Interlocal Fund committee with the City of Raleigh and Wake County to review the future of our strategic destination development projects:
  - PNC Arena: Through the Centennial Authority, engage on discussions specific to expansion, enhancements and development for the existing complex.
  - Cary Indoor Sports Complex/The Center: Participate in the focus groups around usage, design, target markets and final financing for development.
  - Full-Service Convention Hotel: Actively serve on the Review Committee to determine final selection of the developer. Maintain future committee engagement around public financing, design/build and city booking policy development for developer and hotel operator.
  - Future Focus of the Raleigh Convention Center: Actively serve on committee to review funding models, initial design review and forthcoming presentations to City Council on the future proposed expansion of RCC.
- Continue to serve on the Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy Board and give input on the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan to ensure that elements are considered for development that will be iconic and help draw overnight leisure visitation. ❸, ❺, ❻
- Continue to be the lead resource to all Wake County municipalities and facility partners for assisting in the calculation of projected direct economic impact of meetings, events and festivals using the Tourism Economics' meeting, sports and festival Event Impact Calculator, along with secondary data from Arrivalist or ETA Wake County, Overnight Room Demand Analyzer and survey intercept measurement resources managed by the GRCVB. ❸
- Add a full-time data analyst to our staff in fiscal year 2023–2024 for proactive outreach to both facility and attraction partners along with municipal leaders. Data output from economic impact projections via the Event Impact Calculator is now the countywide standard for the measurement of “highest and best use” of interlocal public funding for existing and/or proposed future tourism infrastructure sites. The full-time GRCVB data analyst will work to support the Assistant Wake County Manager in the annual evaluation of interlocal funded projects.
- Work with Wake County municipalities, economic developers and local planning organizations to continue to emphasize the need for tourism development assets and how to incorporate those assets into future developments and planning conversations. ❹
- Continue to provide data, input and support regarding future air service and other local transportation channels. ❷

**Key to Destination 2028 symbols:** ❶ Meetings & Conventions, ❷ Sports, ❸ Events, ❹ Key Attractors, ❺ Individual Leisure, ❻ Destination Development, ❼ Regional Demand Drivers, ❽ Quality of Place

- Increase proactive engagement and briefings with local municipalities, making the case for why tourism matters and is a necessity of a destination development and quality-of-place strategy. Support the ongoing implementation of municipal tourism plans and collaborative tourism committees to ensure continuity and trackable success via the new data analyst and the Community Engagement Committee. ③

## ADMINISTRATION STRATEGIES

- Host quarterly partner meetings with hotels, attractions, restaurants and other interested partners specific to GRCVB designated projects, programs and initiatives noted in the fiscal year 2023–2024 Business Plan.
- Maintain engagement with our technology partner to aggregate the data from our Customer Relationship Management system and provide a reporting and benchmarking dashboard for group sales transactions, with countywide hotels and the RCC via a group booking page, interactive analytics from visitRaleigh.com/owned media and project management and tracking of the DSP implementation. This data will be shared with our hotel, facility partners, attractions and community stakeholders for forecasting, budgeting, feasibility studies and ROI measurement.
- Continue work with community and regional organizations to promote programs, information, planner resources and events that gain our partners recognition for their tourism economic development efforts and programs. This information will be aggregated and listed in a dynamic microsite on visitRaleigh.com/2028. Topics and partners will include those that are assisting in Destination 2028 and specific examples of the collaborative work going into each of the eight DSP Priorities.
- Serve in a proactive partnership and advocacy role with local economic development allies such as City of Raleigh Economic Development, Wake County Economic Development (WCED), Raleigh and Wake County parks and recreation departments and the RDU Airport Authority specific to the following projects:
  - RDU Airport Authority and Regional Transportation Alliance
  - City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Dorothea Dix Master Plan
  - Town/municipal sports and leisure tourism master plans
  - Downtown Raleigh Alliance Master Plan Advisory Board
  - Work with partners on developing a framework for a quality of place visioning plan
  - AWAKE: Cultural Paths: Quality of place initiative around parks, greenways and art activations.
- Continue working with our elected city and county officials, municipal managers, their staffs and our hospitality partners to ensure that the Interlocal Fund review, project measurement, project selection and distribution of project funding via Room Occupancy and Prepared Food and Beverage Taxes are founded on visitation infrastructure that will deliver the best ROI and address facilities that we don't currently have in our countywide inventory. The DSP's implementation continues to provide strategic direction to various community stakeholders on the highest and best use of future visitation facilities over the next five years.
- Involve GRCVB staff with Regional Transportation Alliance, U.S. Travel Association, Visit North Carolina, the N.C. Travel & Tourism Coalition, N.C. Travel Industry Association, Destinations International, N.C. Restaurant & Lodging Association and the American Society of Association Executives, to ensure that we have a voice on local, state and national issues impacting Wake County tourism.
- Under Destination 2028 and with GRCVB staff in year-five implementation mode, a continued strategic focus will guide the scope of services delivered by one contractor position within the GRCVB to achieve year-five implementation goals related to esports event activations and the position of our global ecosystem.
- Continue to work with the EDPNC and N.C. Department of Commerce on year-three of the Esports Production Grant process and give partner input for the continued planning of the Esports Production and Performance Center at North Carolina State University and Mobile Esports Truck.
- Continue to identify signature event fund opportunities that will have measurable and significant impact on overnight visitation for the county through blockbuster exhibitions, festivals and competitions.
- Continue to work with national, state and local organizations such as U.S. Travel, the N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association and Capital Area Workforce Development to address the workforce challenges in the hospitality sector.
- Work with national and local partners along with staff to ensure GRCVB is implementing and following best practices regarding diversity, equity and inclusion. Implement new forms of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training and best practices based on results from Destinations International's EDI assessment.

- Implement an updated expense reporting, invoicing and purchase order system.
- Add a full-time administration and finance manager to the department to support the director of finance and human resources. This position will assist with accounts payable, accounts receivable, office management, Board of Directors relations and support.

## **GRCVB Community Engagement Strategy**

Beyond annual Bureau-wide goals, objectives and strategies to increase visitor and convention business for Raleigh/Wake County directly through bookings and arrivals, GRCVB also joins the interests of travel suppliers, city/town/county governments, trade and civic associations and other local stakeholders in achieving overall tourism-related economic development.

Differing from Bureau staff's day-to-day relations with the area's 4,100+ hospitality partners (attractions, hotels, restaurants and other service providers), the GRCVB Community Engagement Strategy formalized in 2018–2019 (to be updated annually) comprises specific objectives for engaging target audiences other than traditional partners. These other audiences represent high- and mid-level community leaders, including key local influencers, who can advocate strategic talking points relating to Wake County's pursuit of tourism development.

By engaging the community this way, the Community Engagement Strategy, as outlined each year by the Administration, Marketing and Communications and Public Relations Departments, can build awareness, relationships, support and resources for the Bureau and for Raleigh/Wake County's continued success as a travel destination.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- Educate locals (living or working in Wake County) on the mission, shared value/benefits and relevance of tourism and of the successful economic development work of GRCVB.
- Increase the perceived value of the Bureau in the business community and in the municipalities, giving us "seats at more tables" and expanding the network of collaborators and advocates (especially advocates for priority project investments of the Interlocal Fund).
- Indirectly persuade our area hospitality partners to be more engaged with us as leaders, as well as create synergy among stakeholders and partners with similar or overlapping missions, bringing them into the overall fold of tourism-related economic development (developing product).

### **TARGET AUDIENCES**

- Target audiences for 2023–2024:
  - Area alliance and chamber executives
  - Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force
  - GRCVB Board of Directors
  - GRSA Advisory Board
  - Key corporate/institutional leaders in the Raleigh area
  - Municipal elected officials and leaders
  - State and federal elected officials
  - University leaders from the area
  - Wake County Hospitality Alliance members
  - News media
- Other important community audiences include:
  - Area residents at large
  - Local LGBTQ and other diverse communities of residents/workers
  - Workforce from non-hospitality industries

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

- Participate in work sessions or provide updates annually with all Wake County-based town councils and chambers of commerce. Share annual tourism report cards, powered by predefined data fields from the GRCVB CRM, and participate in strategic events with all 11 towns/chambers to reinforce engagement, collaboration and the value of tourism-related economic development.

- Participate in an annual work session with the Raleigh City Council and with the Wake County Board of Commissioners and their management staffs to discuss and provide updates on tourism development initiatives and strategies.
- Based on results from research projects conducted with 2019–2020 and 2021–2022 target audiences, refine/expand and continue executing a multilevel training program titled Tourism U (a set of in-person presentations for a speakers bureau), which starts with the basics of tourism in Wake County and its relationship to overall economic development goals and progresses to more in-depth information about visitor-generated tax revenues and Interlocal Fund priorities. Complete the Tourism U 200 Level materials during 2023–2024.
- Field again the Stakeholder Survey and/or Resident Survey first conducted by JLL in 2017 during the Wake County Destination Strategic Plan (DSP) consulting project and analyze 2023–2024 results internally, to determine if target audiences’ perceptions have changed midway through DSP implementation and how to address any significantly changed perceptions for better community alignment toward Destination 2028.
- Finalize an Advocate Relationship Management (ARM) system within a new Community Engagement Strategy module of the Bureau’s existing CRM system, to better document target stakeholders’ attributes, their participation in/exposure to our community engagement tactics and their past tourism advocacy efforts.
- Revise, reactivate and reengage the Destination 2028 Blue Ribbon Task Force as an advocacy plan committee in a new form, to take stock of and potentially reprioritize with GRCVB the remainder of the DSP report’s implementation (2023–2028), identify specific advocacy needs remaining within its implementation, create an “ask” for those needs and match resources/advocates to those upcoming asks (using the ARM system etc.). Use the 2023 GRCVB Annual Meeting, themed around year-five of DSP implementation, to raise awareness of this milestone and facilitate more engagement.
- Produce the monthly Tourism Economic Development Report and charts, designed especially to articulate the benefits of tourism strategy and tourism economic development. Produce and disseminate the weekly Tourism Talk blog, also designed for community engagement.
- Maintain a resource kit at [visitRaleigh.com/tourismmatters](http://visitRaleigh.com/tourismmatters) that contains talking points, Tourism Talk blog posts, educational/training materials and white papers.
- Pitch and secure local media coverage of GRCVB, including news releases and announcements that highlight the importance of tourism or sports tourism to the local economy. Collaborate with other economic development allies, such as Downtown Raleigh Alliance and Wake County Economic Development, on pitches and hosting of journalists.

## Summary of GRCVB Measurable Performance Objectives

MEASURE	2022 GOAL	2022 ACTUAL	2023 GOAL	VARIANCE
1. Wake County Occupancy	64%	66.8%	68.2%	2.1%
2. Wake County ADR	\$107.19	\$119.39	\$123.89	3.8%
3. Wake County Occupancy Tax	\$27,683,686	\$32,951,657	\$34,269,723	4%
4. Wake County PFB Tax	\$36,935,514	\$40,855,292	\$42,898,056	5%

MEASURE	22-23 GOAL	22-23 FORECAST	23-24 GOAL	VARIANCE
5. Group Definite Bookings	254	295	274	7.9%
6. Group Definite Room-Nights	211,860	227,000	228,809	8%
7. Definite Economic Impact	\$136.1 million	\$145 million	\$156.6 million	15%
8. Group Leads	578	720	624	8%
9. Group Leads Room-Nights	439,548	458,000	474,712	8%
10. Economic Impact of Leads	\$308.4 million	\$301 million	\$333 million	8%
11. Website Sessions	3,538,000	3,900,000	4,236,000	20%
Website Users*	*	*	3,000,000	*
12. Net Reach/Impressions from Earned Media**	500 million	1.58 billion	2 billion	**
13. Significant Placements	70	75	75	7%
14. Speakers Bureau Presentations	51	60	64	25%
15. Groups Serviced	300	400	410	37%
16. Visitors at VIC	5,000	7,000	7,500	50%
17. Visitor Requests Fulfilled	4,250	3,600	3,200	-25%
18. Visitors Guide Delivery Service Guides/Maps Delivered	35,910	30,000	30,500	-15%
19. Visitors Guide Delivery Service Partners Serviced	445	465	470	5.6%

\* Migration to Google Analytics 4, as explained in the Destination Data and Technology Department's section, will necessitate transition to performance reporting based on website users, as opposed to sessions; a year-one users goal has been set for 2023-2024.

\*\* Year-one measurement with new vendor Muck Rack will include all device measurement reach, eliminating a comparison to prior-year goal set with vendor Cision.

## **Industry Leadership Positions Held by GRCVB Staff**

### **ANDREW H. BAKER, CGSP®**

- Grants Panel, City of Raleigh Arts Commission

### **DANA CANBY, CGSP®**

- Co-Chair, Community Activation Committee, IBMA World of Bluegrass Local Organizing Committee
- Annual Conference Committee, Event Service Professionals Association

### **TORI COLLINS**

- Co-Chair, Greater Raleigh Esports Local Organizing Committee

### **MARC DOONER**

- Community Service Committee, Philadelphia Chapter, Professional Convention Management Association
- Board of Directors, Membership Engagement, Greater New York Chapter, Meeting Professionals International
- Membership Committee, Greater New York Chapter, MPI

### **SCOTT DUPREE**

- Chair, North Carolina Sports Leadership Council
- Government Relations Committee, North Carolina Sports Association
- Board of Directors, North Carolina Baseball Museum

### **DENNIS EDWARDS**

- Board of Directors, U.S. Travel Association
- Treasurer, North Carolina Travel & Tourism Coalition
- Board of Directors, Regional Transportation Alliance
- Chair, Tourism & Business Travel, RTA
- Board of Directors, Wake County Economic Development
- Board of Directors, Downtown Raleigh Alliance
- Advisory Board, School of Hospitality Leadership, East Carolina University
- Liaison, The Centennial Authority
- Dorothea Dix Conservancy Board
- Litter Task Force, North Carolina Department of Transportation
- Board of Directors, North Carolina Travel & Tourism
- Board of Directors, Triangle Trails Initiative

### **JONATHAN FREEZE, CDME**

- Professional Development Committee, Destinations International

### **LOREN GOLD**

- Convention Sales & Services Committee, Destinations International
- MINT+ Steering Committee, Destinations International
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Destinations International
- Co-Chair, Greater Raleigh Esports Local Organizing Committee
- Tri-Chair, IBMA World of Bluegrass Local Organizing Committee
- Advisory Board, Hospitality START, Wake Technical Community College
- Advisory Board, Simpleview, Inc.
- Sales Innovation Roundtable, Simpleview, Inc.
- Liaison, Raleigh Convention Center Commission
- Advisory Board, Hospitality Academy, Broughton High School

### **MALINDA HARRELL, CMP FELLOW, CASE**

- Chair, Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, Meeting Professionals International
- Past Presidents Council, MPI–Carolinas Chapter
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, MPI–Carolinas Chapter

- Board of Directors, Association Executives of North Carolina
- Awards Committee, AENC

### **JESSICA HOLT**

- Public Relations & Communications Committee, Destinations International
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Destinations International
- Board of Directors, Raleigh Sister Cities
- Foreign Direct Investment Committee, Wake County Economic Development

### **STEPHEN JACKSON, CMP**

- Emerging Professionals, Capital Chapter, Professional Convention Management Association
- Recruitment and Retention Committee, Potomac Chapter, Meeting Professionals International
- Annual Event Committee, CVBReps
- Membership Committee, Washington, D.C., Chapter, International Association of Exhibitions and Events®
- Hospitality Tourism Advisory Board, North Carolina Central University

### **TAMMY JEFFRIES, CGSP®**

- Board of Directors, Event Service Professionals Association
- Continuing Education Committee, ESPA
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, ESPA
- Education Committee, Meeting Professionals International–Carolinas Chapter
- Co-Chair, Community Activation Committee, IBMA World of Bluegrass Local Organizing Committee
- Accessibility Task Force, Downtown Raleigh Alliance
- City of Raleigh Special Events Task Force

### **NICOLE KESHLER**

- Chapter Membership and Advisory Council, Meeting Professionals International
- Community Advisory Board, MPI
- Past Presidents Council, MPI–Carolinas Chapter
- Silent Auction Committee, MPI–Carolinas Chapter
- Silent Auction Committee, Professional Convention Management Association (Southeast)

### **ASHLEE KIRK**

- Co-Chair, Government Relations Committee, North Carolina Sports Association

### **CHRISTINA LASKORUNSKY, CGSP®**

- Co-Chair, Volunteer Committee, IBMA World of Bluegrass Local Organizing Committee

### **MARIA LOPEZ**

- Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, Meeting Professionals International

### **JOCELYN O’SULLIVAN**

- Board of Directors, North Carolina Sports Association
- Board of Directors, Women In Sports & Events (WISE) Greater Raleigh Chapter

### **JASON PHILBECK, STS**

- Board Development Committee, North Carolina Sports Association
- Local Organizing Committee, NCAA Women’s College Cup
- Local Organizing Committee, NCAA DI Women’s Lacrosse Championship

### **KATHRYN SHORT**

- Treasurer, North Carolina Society of Government Meeting Professionals
- Volunteer Engagement Committee, Meeting Professionals International
- Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Board of Directors, MPI–Carolinas Chapter
- Finance Committee, MPI–Carolinas Chapter
- Volunteer Engagement Committee, MPI–Carolinas Chapter



- FUEL Committee, Association Executives of North Carolina
- Co-Chair, Membership Task Force, Young Professionals Network, Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce

**VIMAL VYAS**

- Business Operations Taskforce, Destinations International
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Destinations International
- Event Impact Calculator Super User Group, Destinations International
- Marketing Professionals Task Force, Destinations International
- Marketing Innovation Roundtable, Simpleview, Inc.

**LORETTA YINGLING, CMP**

- Vice President of Membership, Board of Directors, Chicago Area Chapter, Meeting Professionals International
- Awards Committee, Greater Midwest Chapter, Professional Convention Management Association
- IDI Committee, Greater Midwest Chapter, PCMA
- Holiday Showcase Tradeshow Advisory Group, Association Forum