



# THE IMPACT OF TOURISM



FY 2018-2019 Annual Report

A Year of Exciting Travel Accolades

# RICHMOND REGION

Articles and accolades in trusted travel and lifestyle media outlets greatly influence travel plans.

By pitching news, hosting media visits, conducting editorial meetings and hosting media events in target markets, Richmond Region Tourism makes sure information about our community appears in the content consumers are following.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS BY THE NUMBERS:

**60** journalists, writers & influencers hosted

**250 million** earned media impressions

**100** articles produced about the Richmond Region as a travel destination



“These days, Virginia’s capital city is a creative hub waiting to be explored. Urban mural projects burst with color throughout neighborhood streets while over 20 traditional art institutes and galleries can be found around town.”

—Off Metro

“The city’s lure has led to a culinary renaissance, due in large part to talented chefs returning from plying their trade in far-flung cities. The hip kitchens of Richmond may be full of tattooed arms but they’re also dotted with James Beard Foundation Award (for culinary excellence) nominees.”

—National Geographic Traveler UK



“Beer has blossomed in Richmond, and it’s time we all take notice. As the recently revamped Richmond Beer Trail will tell you, this Southern city is now rich with breweries.”

—VinePair.com

“Virginia’s riverside capital has reached critical mass for having a blast. Adding to solid cultural, culinary, urban rafting and biking scenes, Richmond entrepreneurs are making “getting social” something you do out on the town, instead of on cellphones.”

—Dallas Morning News



“While the Richmond of my youth is recognizable, something happened while I was away: It has become downright cool ... and delicious. Yes, its charm, friendliness and easy parking remain.”

—Washington Post

“14 Up-and-Coming US Cities You Should Try to Visit in 2019”

—PureWow

“30 Best Cities for Stunning Art and Architecture”

—Travel Pulse

“12 Underrated Urban Escapes That Make Great Honeymoon Destinations”

—The Cut

# TOURISM IS A PUBLIC GOOD

Did you know that 95% of local residents recognize the benefits of tourism to our community BUT they consistently underestimate its size and value?

Tourism pumps more than \$2 billion into our local economy every year. The likelihood of visitors recommending the Richmond Region for travel, business and a place to live rises with each visit. Tourism impacts the Richmond Region's reputation, prosperity and quality of life.

Tourism brings us great benefits. But it doesn't just simply happen. Before visitors come here, they have to know that we are here. And that's the job of Richmond Region Tourism. Through compelling travel promotion, targeted sales and excellent customer service, we work every day to drive visitors to our community.

Tourism is a regional effort, and we're proud to work in partnership with the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, the City of Richmond and the Town of Ashland to promote the Richmond Region to the world.

Take a look at the impact of tourism on our community. And remember, a thriving tourism community takes all of us. Thank you for your continued support!



**Jack Berry**  
President and CEO

## NEW FOOTPRINT:



# TOURISM STIMULATES OUR ECONOMY

Destination promotion is an engine of economic development in our community.

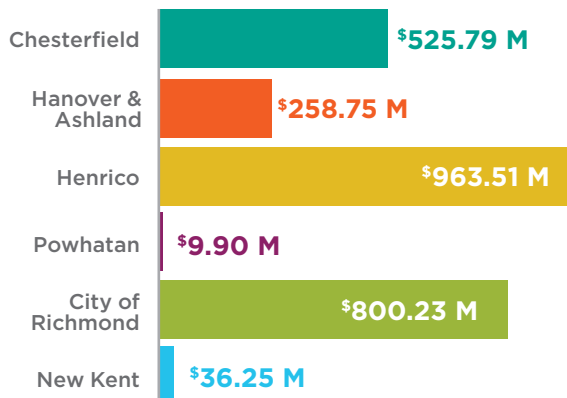
This year, the Richmond Region hosted **7.7 million visitors**

WHO SPENT **\$2.6 billion**

OR **\$7 million PER DAY**

## VISITOR SPENDING

*in Millions*



## TOURISM SUPPORTS

**24,483**

**JOBS**

WITH WAGES AND SALARIES TOTALING:

**\$592 million**



**LOCAL TAXES COLLECTED:**

**\$73 million**



**HOTEL SALES & OCCUPANCY REVENUE:**

**\$375 million**

**▲ UP 2%**

Source: U.S. Travel Association, calendar year 2018

**Best Places to Go in 2019**

—Frommer's

**#3 Best Beer Scene**

—10Best

**America's Next Great Restaurant-Obsessed Town**

—Bon Appétit

**6 Best Southern Destinations for Art Lovers**

—This is My South



# Attracting Leisure Travelers

## TOURISM MASTER PLAN

In November 2018, Richmond Region Tourism (RRT) embarked on an exciting initiative to create a Tourism Master Plan for the region. Critical to the success of this ambitious project along the way has been the input, candid feedback and engagement of key stakeholders, the overall Richmond Region community and previous visitors to the region.

The Tourism Master Plan serves to identify and articulate potential products, amenities, programming and experiences —along with corresponding policies and protocols—that will guide the long-term, sustainable planning and design of the Richmond Region as an exceptional tourism and sports destination.

RRT’s staff and board have worked with some of our industry’s most experienced consulting firms— Resonance Consultancy and Huddle Up Group—throughout the Tourism Master Plan process. The comprehensive master plan process included one-on-one and small group meetings with a total of 130 stakeholders, as well as a destination survey that generated responses from 2,100 residents and 1,000 visitors. A two-day Visioning Workshop identified ideas and opportunities that will enable us to differentiate our region from our competitors, and explored positioning that will inform the region’s leisure, meetings and sports development strategies in the years ahead.

RRT’s Board of Directors is using the Tourism Master Plan as a springboard to launch RRT’s strategic direction for the next 10 years and beyond. So, stay tuned. The Richmond Region is positioned for an exciting and successful future as a world-class destination!

### DIGITAL STATS

**229,516**

Partner Event Clicks from VisitRichmondVA.com  
19,000 PER MONTH

**256,554**

Partner Listing Clicks from VisitRichmondVA.com  
21,000 PER MONTH

**1,008,237**

UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS

**2,855,892**

WEB PAGES VIEWED

**392** MILES

Average distance traveled by visitors exposed to our marketing

**5** TOP FIVE ORIENTATION MARKETS\*

- 1 • Northern Virginia
- 2 • North Carolina
- 3 • Maryland
- 4 • New Jersey
- 5 • Pennsylvania

*\*based on total room nights booked*

MARKETING **ROI**

WEBSITE:

**41 TO 1**

PAID ADVERTISING:

**17.4 TO 1**





# TOURISM ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE

Tourism supports the places that make living in the Richmond Region wonderful. Visitor spending supports local businesses including: restaurants, retail, breweries, transportation and attractions.

## SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS:



### INSTAGRAM

- Top Instagram post generated **more than 3,780 likes**.
- Gained **7.5K new followers** for a total of **51,300 followers**.
- **98,659 views** on Instagram Stories
- Our brand-new "Unique RVA" IGTV video series launched late-April 2019 and videos received **63,386 views** in the first two months.



### TWITTER

- Total followers increased to **over 48,800**.



### FACEBOOK

- Gained **2.3K new followers** for a total of **40,600 followers**.
- Facebook videos received a total of **3.9M views**, a **130% increase** over 1.69M views last year.



### RVA BLOG

- Top blog post earned **24,195 unique views** with users spending an average of 3:04 minutes on the page.
- RVABlog.org garnered more than **141,907 unique views**, with users spending an average of 2:43 minutes on the blog.



### POSTS ON GOOGLE

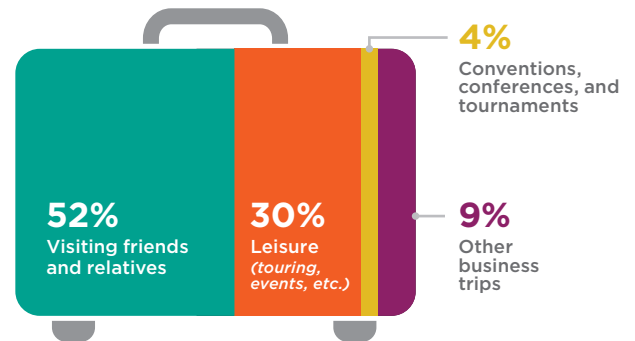
- Posts on Google content generated **2.7 million views**
- RRT's posts on Google success and best practices were featured in a presentation at eTourism Summit
- Results generated from posts are among the top 3-4 destination marketing organizations in the program



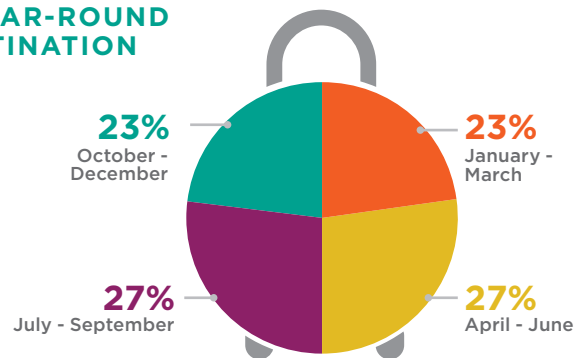
### GOOGLE CONTENT

- RRT owned content/images on Google generated **4.5 million views**.

## PRIMARY PURPOSE OF OVERNIGHT TRIPS



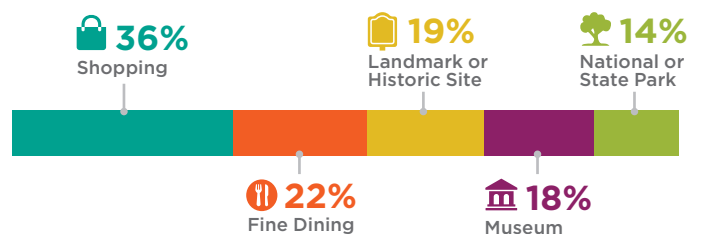
## A YEAR-ROUND DESTINATION



**59%** of repeat visitors will come again in the same year

▲ **15% INCREASE**

## TOP 5 MAIN PURPOSES OF TRIP:





## Recruiting Events

### MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS AND TOURNAMENTS BOOKED BY RRT held in the Region in FY18-19

**\$122,810,296** ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT

**293,949** ASSOCIATED ATTENDEES

**158,804** ASSOCIATED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS

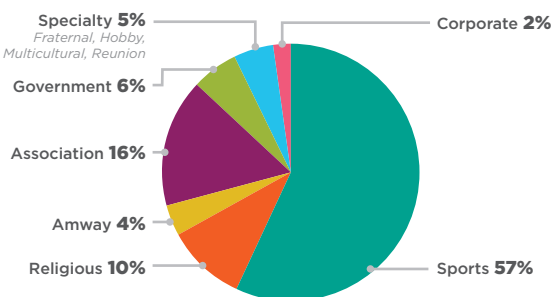
### FUTURE MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS AND TOURNAMENTS BOOKED BY RRT

**\$94,379,598** ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT

**234,018** ASSOCIATED ATTENDEES

**115,882** ASSOCIATED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS

### HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS BY MARKET SEGMENT booked in FY18-19



## Services Drive Satisfaction

In the meeting, convention and tournament business, service is critical to retaining clients. With unmatched expertise, the RRT Convention and Sports Services team facilitates the best event experience for customers. The team drives business locally by serving as a community liaison. RRT adds value to the customer by providing an array of complimentary services including: access to knowledge base and innovation, cost savings, attendance driving tools and delivering unique experiences.

“**Richmond Region Tourism made it easy to have our conference in the Region.**”

—**Patricia Frey**  
International Association of Business Communicators

“**The staff was wonderful! I really enjoyed working with their team!**”

—**Darla Edwards**  
Successful Innovations, Inc

# TOURISM FOSTERS COMMUNITY PRIDE

More than ever, our citizens are proud to live in the Richmond Region.



Feel proud that the Richmond Region is an attractive tourist destination\*



Believe the Richmond Region is a destination visitors want to visit



Believe tourism is good for the Richmond Region

Source: Tourism Master Plan Community Survey 2019



## RVA CHAMPIONS PROGRAM

The RVA Champions program recognizes citizens who help Richmond Region Tourism recruit their meeting, convention or tournament.

- **12 RVA Champions**
- Collective **Economic Impact** brought by the events produced by RVA Champions: **\$2.6 million**

## I AM TOURISM AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

- **12 I Am Tourism Ambassador workshops**
- **491 Ambassadors trained** representing hundreds of businesses, government and nonprofits. **2,241 total Ambassadors trained** since the program inception
- **73 graduates** of Ambassador Academy

## RICHMOND REGION TOURISM FOUNDATION

- Awarded **two \$2,000 scholarships** to VSU Hospitality Management students, bringing **total scholarships** awarded to VSU students to **\$14,000** since 2011
- Funded I Am Tourism Ambassador workshops and Ambassador Academy

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- **127 placements** in local media featuring tourism
- **31 community presentations**
- **13 Tourism Awards** presented during National Travel & Tourism Week

# TOURISM IS A REGIONAL EFFORT

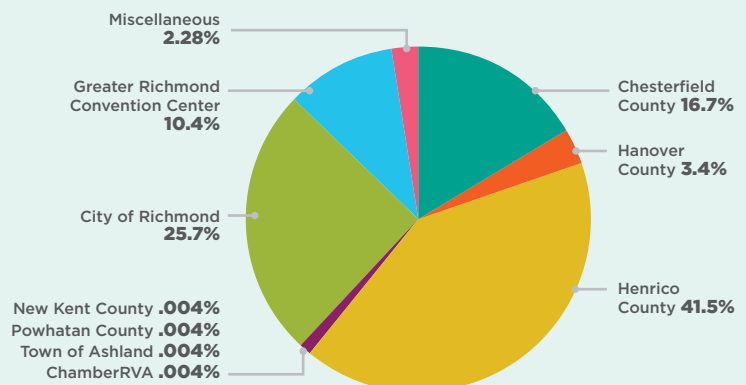
Regional investment in travel promotion leverages resources for great impact. Tourism is a leader in regional collaboration.

## RICHMOND REGION TOURISM INVESTORS

**Budget:** \$7.4 million

**Investment sources:** Counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent and Powhatan, City of Richmond, and the Town of Ashland, ChamberRVA and various sponsorships

**Sponsorships:** cash and in-kind up 13%





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PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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RICHMOND, VA  
PERMIT NO. 2917



## TOP 10 ATTRACTION ATTENDANCE

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <b>JAMES RIVER PARK</b><br>1,779,891           | 6. <b>SCIENCE MUSEUM OF VIRGINIA</b><br>523,862            |
| 2. <b>VIRGINIA CAPITAL TRAIL</b><br>976,056       | 7. <b>LEWIS GINTER BOTANICAL GARDEN</b><br>405,335         |
| 3. <b>MAYMONT</b><br>746,060                      | 8. <b>RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK</b><br>349,051    |
| 4. <b>VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS</b><br>615,547 | 9. <b>CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF RICHMOND</b><br>339,366         |
| 5. <b>HENRICUS HISTORICAL PARK</b><br>555,548     | 10. <b>THREE LAKES PARK &amp; NATURE CENTER</b><br>315,024 |