



# DISCOVER **DURHAM**<sup>TM</sup>

## **20-Year Destination Master Plan**

A visionary, community-based plan for the sustainable, long-term advancement of Durham as the best place to live, work, and visit.

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# Executive Summary

Under the leadership of Discover Durham, this 20-year Destination Master Plan was commissioned to create a shared, long-term vision for the community. Durham is experiencing significant growth, which is projected to continue, making this community-wide strategy so important at a meaningful time in the city's evolution. With the input of over 2,300 Durham residents and stakeholders, Durham's shared aspiration is to become the most welcoming, inclusive, innovative and vibrant destination in the United States, while thoughtfully honoring its history and people.

When implemented, this plan will support the achievement of that vision, while increasing the prosperity of Durham through job development, and additional revenues from visitor spending.

**Some significant and ambitious recommendations of this 20-year Destination Master Plan include:**



**Redeveloping the Durham Convention Center with a focus on innovation to attract new overnight business.**



**Creating a green freeway cap to reconnect the Hayti area with Downtown safely and accelerating the development of more active, accessible and vibrant districts.**



**Developing a major annual festival and new family attractions, particularly in the downtown.**



**Launching a Community Foundation to support funding tourism-related development in Durham.**

The multifaceted strategic recommendations of this plan will support positive enhancements to quality of life for Durhamites, while optimizing the positive impacts of the visitor economy in Durham by growing the number of overnight visitors to the community, increasing the amount they spend in Durham, and extending the length of their stays. This will be accomplished by developing assets and experiences for residents, bring new markets and audiences to Durham and create more opportunities within the community that will give visitors reasons to stay longer and spend more, and residents more to do in their home town. This plan also includes opportunities for Durham to honor its history and people through storytelling, placemaking, art and active participation in the visitor economy.

The goals and initiatives of the plan are supported by resident and stakeholder input, visitation metrics, a comprehensive stakeholder assessment of the destination, a detailed infrastructure analysis assessment and market and industry trends.

**The strategic goals of the 20-year Destination Master Plan are:**

**1**

**Enhance Tourism Infrastructure**

**3**

**Support Purposeful Placemaking**

**2**

**Develop Attractions, Events & Experiences**

**4**

**Accelerate Community Alignment**

To achieve the vision articulated in this Plan, it will require a collective, community-wide implementation effort across multiple organizations, as well as Discover Durham, the tourism industry and community stakeholders.

# Destination Master Plan Contributors

Discover Durham and its governing body, the Durham Tourism Development Authority, would like to thank the community leaders who gave of their time and expertise as they served on the Steering Committee, providing guidance, leadership and support of the development of the Destination Master Plan.

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### **Leonardo Williams**

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# Project Team



We would like to thank the dedicated project team members who worked diligently to move this project forward, from concept to completion. We want to acknowledge the partnership with MMGY NextFactor, the lead agency on the project, and Hunden Partners for their depth of knowledge and focus they brought to the planning process.

This plan is, by design, a living document that will continue to deliver exceptional value to the community as we journey through the implementation phase and forge new partnerships along the way.



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## Imagine it's 2044

Imagine it's the year 2044 in Durham, North Carolina. Durham continues to rank highly on all the “best places” lists as a vibrant, innovative place to live and visit. Its authenticity is particularly appealing because of how it honors and celebrates the history and legacies of its people, while remaining welcoming and inclusive of different ethnicities and backgrounds.

Thanks to federal, state and private grants, part of the NC-147 freeway is in the process of being transformed into a breath-taking oasis that includes an iconic park, greenway, and amphitheater. This project can begin to rebuild connections between Hayti and downtown Durham that were severed decades ago by the freeway and bridge the physical, racial, and economic divide between the two areas through a transformative public space. The community has even begun talking about how to expand the concept several miles to the south creating contiguous caps and stitches all the way to the Research Triangle Park, which has blossomed into a bustling live/work/play destination for tens of thousands.

Long standing retail businesses in proximity to Hayti and downtown Durham are thriving, and new businesses are finding success, due to the vibrancy of connected districts with live music, pop-up events, colorful murals, and acclaimed chefs and eateries. Visitors are surprised and delighted – which spurs them to congregate both day and night – and they happily plan repeat visits throughout the year. Open spaces dot the landscape throughout Durham adjacent to new and old trails which encourages people to walk, bike, or just gather, leading them to feel even more connected to their neighbors and community.

Visitation has increased steadily in Durham thanks to a larger, state-of-the-art convention center that offers everything from augmented and virtual reality for immersive team building and training, to hologram-like displays that attendees access from their phones, web conferencing, and sophisticated audio-visual options including media walls, surround sound and advanced high-speed Wi-Fi.

It's not one of the largest centers in the region, but within a few short years of opening, it has achieved the highest occupancy rate of all centers in North Carolina.

Visitation has also increased due to the opening of a long-awaited indoor-outdoor sports complex providing tournament quality facilities in multiple sports for locals and visitors. A steady drumbeat of high-profile competitions attract some of the best athletes in the U.S. to Durham. And three major, iconic festivals have been added to a growing list of smaller events in Durham, which now attract thousands to the Bull City annually to enjoy music, food, and the arts while also celebrating Durham's innovation and creativity.

Most importantly, Durham identified a new process and funding mechanism to finance strategic product development and placemaking in a way that unites government, civic, and business interests in pursuit of community priorities. The investments have grown over the past decade as leaders provided proof of concept and support continues to grow as projects come to fruition. There is a pervasive sense of appreciation and pride in the community as it flourishes and grows. The community can't wait to move forward on a host of new projects to be unveiled during the city's Bicentennial in 2069.

When community leaders reflect back on the starting point for these remarkable community-wide initiatives, they credit Discover Durham and the visionary stakeholders the organization convened to develop a Destination Master Plan to guide the development of new experiences and increased prosperity for Durham.





# Letter from Discover Durham

There's a shift happening here in Durham. Durhamites already know exactly how inclusive, innovative, and inspiring our community is, and now, we're looking to the future to ideate all that it can be. Following years of economic recovery, a time where Durham displayed incredible acts of compassion and resilience, we are now looking for ways to maintain Durham's position as the act to follow and build upon the foundation we have now to create that vision for tomorrow.

Over the last couple of years, we've felt this shift at Discover Durham, and as the stewards of Durham's story, we were moved by it. We led the creation of this 20-year Destination Master Plan with the hope of harnessing the community's collective vision for Durham's future and constructing a road map to reach that destination. An effort to collectively gather input led to meaningful conversations with Durham's leaders, industry partners and the voices of those who know Durham best, you.

I am grateful for the community's enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the building of this plan, with over 2,300 residents sharing their opinions about where they envision Durham in 20 years. I'm equally grateful to the team at Discover Durham, driven by their own passion for our one-of-a-kind destination, for leaning into such a significant undertaking with enthusiasm and purpose. Collectively, we see this as a visionary, community-based plan for the sustainable, long-term advancement of Durham as the ideal place to live a purposeful, integrated life that benefits both visitors and residents.

With this Destination Master Plan, Discover Durham will continue its own evolution; we will champion the implementation of the goals and initiatives articulated in this plan by working closely with our stakeholders, partners, and community members to ensure we have exceptional experiences, a strong economy with good jobs and the funding available to develop the assets and integrated spaces our community needs to flourish and remain competitive.

We at Discover Durham offer our sincerest appreciation to everyone who supported the development of this process, from our city and county leaders to our peer organizations to the residents who live in, work in, and unapologetically love Durham. We look forward to continuing these conversations and being a part of the collective effort to bring this Destination Master Plan to life.

**Susan Amey, CDME**  
President & CEO  
Discover Durham





# Durham Market Analysis



To create a long-term vision for increasing Durham's leisure amenities and tourism attractions and assets, we started by reviewing and considering current visitor-facing assets and new developments planned or underway. This provided a baseline to identify and assess gaps in the landscape which, when expanded or improved, would position Durham competitively among comparable and aspirational communities.

## ATTRACTIONS & MAJOR EVENTS

Durham County has a variety of tourism-generating assets that have grown significantly over the last 20 years. Authentic redevelopments in the downtown area show organic growth and the structure of what makes downtown unique. Major events, though minimal compared to other destinations, generate significant spending and impacts.

### ATTRACTIONS

Attractions in Durham County are diverse, with numerous university sports facilities, performing arts facilities, and mixed-use developments including the American Tobacco Campus and The Streets of Southpoint. However, Durham does not have major attractions in terms of family entertainment or non-university sports facilities outside Durham Bulls Athletic Park, Durham County Memorial Stadium, and Museum of Life and Science.

### MAJOR EVENTS

Durham has several major annual events and festivals throughout the year, diversified amongst sports, music, and arts & culture. These events are held at many different venues including Durham Bulls Athletic Park, Durham Performing Arts Center, Carolina Theatre, and Durham Central Park. Compared to other benchmark destinations around the country, however, Durham needs further investment in major festivals and events.

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Beyond its current attractions, Durham is also looking to develop additional attractions within the county, including Topgolf, indoor Karting & Games, restaurant and retail, mixed-use developments, and lodging. These types of assets are all key elements to driving tourism to a destination.

### TOURISM ASSET & EVENT FUNDING

While most events rely on sponsorships and donations to help fund costs of an event, there are also numerous ways that municipalities can help support annual events and festivals financially.

Discover Durham receives one-third of the county's occupancy tax for marketing and promotion. While most NC communities direct occupancy tax to tourism promotion and related investments, half of what is collected in Durham County is not, and could be evaluated to fund other tourism asset development including brick and mortar projects or major festivals. Outside monetary support, Discover Durham could continue to provide in-kind marketing for events on its website and other media channels.



## CONVENTIONS & MEETINGS

Meetings and events are great ways to induce travel during the weekdays that are typically slower; however, the Durham Convention Center will require a greater investment and involvement to be successful. The DCC is the smallest convention center in North Carolina, on par with the amount of meeting spaces in large hotels. It does not function as a true convention center without exhibit space and additional breakout spaces.

Other comparable destinations have exhibit space and/or larger singular ballroom spaces, and additional meeting rooms. This inhibits DCC's ability to compete with other larger in-state convention centers. Instead, the DCC mostly competes with area conference hotels, especially those in the Raleigh area. As a DCC expansion on the current site would take up plaza and public gathering space, would not have ideal circulation and pre-function spaces, and does not achieve optimal sizing, an entirely new build is recommended.

## HOTELS

The current supply of hotels in Durham is sufficient to meet current demand, but an expanded or new convention center and increased return to offices will necessitate new quality hotel development downtown. Analysis by Hunden Partners revealed downtown properties perform the best within the county, and despite reduced occupancy, increased rates have led to higher overall performance compared to pre-pandemic.

Continued investment in downtown, new major employer investments, and an expansion of the DCC will create the need for a larger HQ hotel development in the future. As additional tourism assets are developed, additional quality hotel development will be needed to support these assets.

## SPORTS MARKET

Durham is home to multiple renowned universities that bolster the sports facility offerings in the area. However, there are very few dedicated sports facilities to accommodate not only local clubs and organizations, but tournament hosting capabilities as well. While these universities have strong sports assets, Durham does not currently have any professional or semi-professional indoor arena. In comparable markets, these arenas are also a major draw for live entertainment and concerts.

**Sports Facilities Companies (SFC) was engaged by Discover Durham to conduct a market and financial feasibility study on a potential sports development for the Durham area. The following are key takeaways from the assessment and market study:**

Generally, SFC sees an opportunity for a wide array of youth and amateur sports tourism due to Durham's geographic location, reputation as a desirable destination, tourism infrastructure, and the local and regional sports and recreation market.

Coordination between the Durham Sports Commission, Discover Durham, the City of Durham, Durham County, Durham Parks & Recreation, Durham Public Schools, and several potential private and institutional partners demonstrates that there is community-wide interest in supporting a sports tourism facility development with a focus on ensuring and improving access to assets and programs that meet local needs.

Based on the goals/vision of the Client Team and aligned with previous work SFC has completed for the Durham Sports Commission, SFC are in the final stages of analyzing three primary tournament-class assets that can be used flexibly to accommodate tournaments, events, and local programs:

1. Outdoor multi-purpose fields (soccer, lacrosse, tackle and flag football, etc.)
2. Outdoor diamond fields (baseball and softball)
3. An indoor multi-purpose sports and events center that – at minimum – supports traditional court-based and flat-floor activities (basketball, volleyball, pickleball, cheer, dance, gymnastics, wrestling, etc.) SFC are also evaluating options for an indoor 200m track, an indoor turf field, and enhancements to accommodate non-sporting events (concerts, graduations, meetings, conferences, etc.)

This study recommended a combined indoor/outdoor youth sports complex on a single site. This project could also present the opportunity to develop a broader mixed-use district at and around the facility to include additional dining, shopping, and lodging developments to make the facility a new destination center in Durham. Without a dedicated sports tenant, a new, large format arena could be evaluated, as to attract family shows, comedy shows, concerts, and large exhibitions to Durham.



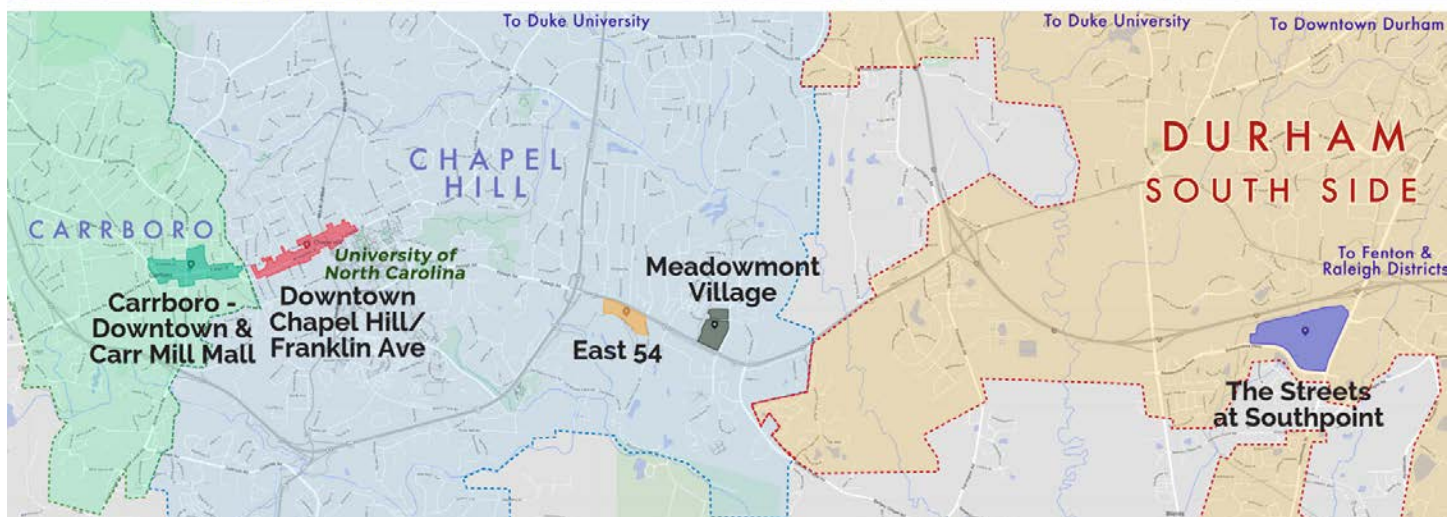
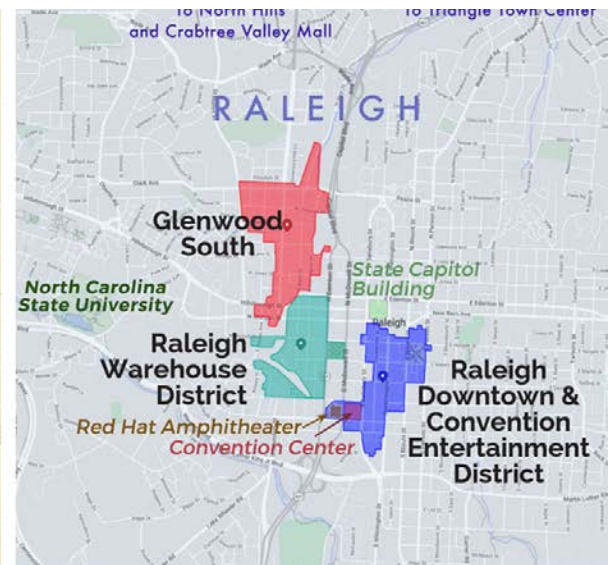


## RETAIL & DINING NODES

Durham has several retail and dining nodes and mixed-use districts throughout the county. Continued investment in unique ‘eatertainment’ options and lifestyle retail and walkable and public outdoor spaces, both in and outside downtown, is recommended.

Durham’s strongest shopping asset is The Streets at Southpoint, which provides not only indoor shopping, but also outdoor walkable elements. Plans to become a more diversified mixed-use district, with additional surrounding development in multifamily, hotel, and additional restaurant and retail will help ensure The Streets at Southpoint remains competitive in the market, given ongoing struggles with big-box retailers.

Durham can create more unique shopping and dining experiences by connecting its existing assets downtown and creating more centralized hubs where people can gather, hang out and enjoy the destination. These offerings could also be developed near a new youth sports complex or major family attraction to increase its destination appeal and increase visitor spending. Further investment in Durham’s strong-performing The Streets at Southpoint will help ensure it remains a popular tourist destination in the future.





## WINERIES, BREWERIES, DISTILLERIES & FOOD HALLS

Durham has a strong presence of local breweries and has found success in models like Durham Food Hall and Boxyard RTP. Durham's downtown also has a strong presence of unique dining establishments. However, there is a gap in the market for a singular location that brings all the uniqueness of Durham into one location. Due to a lack of return to office, these establishments still struggle during the day at the beginning of the week, and there is additional opportunity for more nighttime entertainment and more walkability and wayfinding between downtown nodes of activity.

There is opportunity for additional downtown district development comprised of breweries, local eateries, event space, and outdoor community areas. A future expansion of the American Tobacco Campus should focus on these types of developments along with F&B offerings near to new major tourism assets, such as a youth sports complex or family entertainment attractions.

## PARKS, TRAILS & OUTDOOR SPACES

Durham offers strong assets for outdoor recreation and parks and nature-oriented activities with its American Tobacco Trail, Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Central Park, Eno River, Falls Lake and planned additional development for outdoor recreation and amateur sports.

Durham's American Tobacco Trail is approximately 22.6 miles long and built on an abandoned railroad corridor that stretches from the downtown area in Durham to the western edge of Apex. The American Tobacco Trail connects Durham to Chatham County and is frequently used by walkers and joggers.

Additional trail development in the planning stages includes the Durham Rail Trail, with 1.8 miles of walking and biking trails from North Durham to downtown, and the Three Rivers Rails Trail, an 18-mile pedestrian and bike trail from Durham to Roxboro. Because this trail goes through Durham's rural areas, this project will also improve access to some of Durham's hidden gems, including Stagville State Historic Site, Horton Grove and Penny's Bend Nature Preserve.

The surrounding area consists of many outdoor recreation assets and trails that can be found in parks, lakes and within the local universities' campuses.

Durham can further invest in outdoor assets through additional developments that reconnect communities and neighborhoods through additional public gathering spaces, which also present the opportunity for events and dining opportunities such as locally inspired food trucks.



# Asset Assessment

Based on the analysis in this report, Hunden Partners presents the following details that support the opportunity to grow tourism assets in Durham.

## SUMMARY MATRIX: OPPORTUNITIES

	Convention, Conference	Entertainment	Hotel Supply	Sports	Retail & Dining Nodes	Winery, Brewery, Distillery & Food Hall	Parks, Trails & Outdoor Space	Major Attractions & Events
Opportunity	Strong	Good	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Priority Level								
1	Convention Center expansion	Flexible flat-floor venue / amphitheater	HQ Hotel	Indoor / Outdoor youth sports complex	Expanded / connected retail & dining nodes	Public gathering spaces	Major annual event(s)	
2		Arena	Add'l diverse hotel supply at multiple chain scales to support tourism assets	Arena	F&B and district build-out for youth sports complex and major family entertainment attraction	Existing / new downtown asset / node connectivity	Major family entertainment attraction	

## SUMMARY MATRIX: WHERE YOU ARE NOW

	Convention, Conference	Entertainment	Hotel Supply	Sports	Retail & Dining Nodes	Winery, Brewery, Distillery & Food Hall	Parks, Trails & Outdoor Space	Major Attractions & Events
Supply Durham, NC	Limited	Good	Good	Limited	Strong	Good	Good	Limited
Top Assets Durham, NC	Durham Convention Center Sheraton Imperial Duke conference hotels	DPAC Carolina Theatre	Downtown / Duke hotels	Durham Bulls Duke / NCCU facilities	The Streets at Southpoint Downtown restaurants	Durham Food Hall Breweries Boxyard RTP Bullpen Social District	American Tobacco Trail Sarah P. Duke Gardens Durham Central Park Falls Lake	American Tobacco Campus Duke University
Hotel Room Night Generation	Limited	Moderate	Strong	Good	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited





# International Market Trends

Internationally, the travel and tourism market has seen significant shifts since the global pandemic of 2020. Six of the top international market trends that might impact Durham include:

## UNEVEN RECOVERY

Not every destination recovered as quickly or as robustly as others in the aftermath of the global pandemic. While outdoor destinations fared better than others, recovery has largely been uneven.

## RESILIENCY OF MEETINGS

In the midst of the global pandemic and in the early stages of recovery, there was speculation that meetings, conferences and conventions would not return to the large-scale events they had been, and that virtual or hybrid meetings would overtake the industry. The opposite has proven to be true; delegates have continued to seek - and demand - the in-person experience.

Meetings, conventions, and conferences have been a resilient segment of the tourism and hospitality industry with forecasts predicting this will continue.

## TECHNOLOGY IMPACTS

Technology is changing how visitors choose and book vacations, how meeting and event planners source destinations and how DMOs and CVBs, along with experience and accommodation providers, market and engage with customers.

The impacts and opportunities for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other digital technologies will continue to evolve.

## OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

The global pandemic spurred a significant interest in outdoor experiences, and that trend is not dissipating.

Visitors are still seeking opportunities to be outdoors, whether for adventure, walking and sightseeing, or dining.

## PURPOSEFUL TRAVEL

Travelers are increasingly seeking experiences that support personal improvement and a departure from their routines. Offering these types of experiences for different audience segments will be key to attracting new visitors.

## FIERCE COMPETITION

Travel has returned in a significant way. Not only are Americans traveling more, but international visitation to the United States has also returned.

This is driving fierce competition amongst destinations globally, and a critical reason to be focused on experience development, staying aligned with consumer trends and being prepared with resiliency plans.



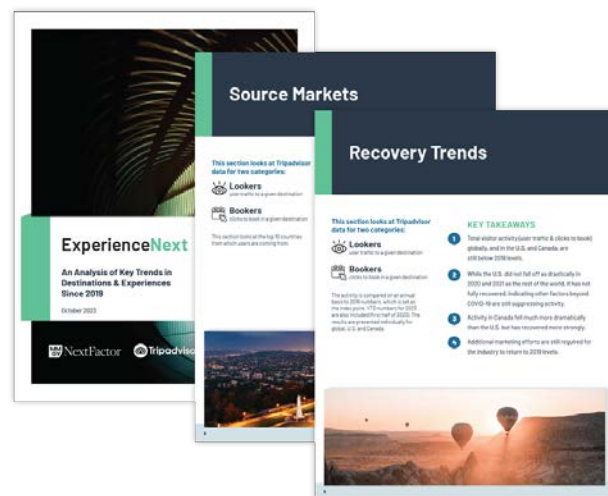
# Industry Overview: ExperienceNext

Tripadvisor and MMGY NextFactor have partnered to produce ExperienceNext, an analysis of key trends, interest, and demand for experiences in a post-pandemic world.

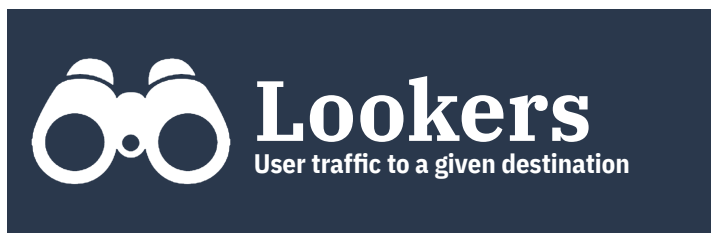
The last few years will be remembered as the most challenging ones yet for our visitor economy.

Our industry was rocked by several developments:

- COVID-19, a global pandemic, with over 767 million confirmed cases and 7 million deaths around the world.
- Socio-political turmoil causing widespread riots and protests in several countries and cities.
- Unprecedented natural disasters including hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, & floods.
- Many communities struggling with public safety, gun violence, and homelessness.
- Conflicts in Ukraine, Israel, and Gaza are destabilizing Europe and the Middle East.



This analysis looks at Tripadvisor data from 2019 to the end of Q2 2023 in two categories:



The following data can be found in the upcoming ExperienceNext report to be published by MMGY NextFactor and Tripadvisor:

## RECOVERY TRENDS

The activity is compared on an annual basis to 2019 numbers, which is set as the index point. YTD numbers for 2023 are also included (first half of the year).

### KEY TAKEAWAYS: U.S. RECOVERY

- Visitor activity (user traffic and clicks to book) are still significantly below 2019 levels.
- While the U.S. did not fall off as drastically in 2020 and 2021 as the rest of the world, it has not fully recovered, indicating other factors beyond COVID-19 are still suppressing activity.
- Additional marketing efforts are still required for the industry to return to 2019 levels.

## U.S. MARKET SHARE

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The U.S., more than twice the size of any of the other markets, has increased its global market share.

# Industry Overview:

# ExperienceNext

## ATTRACTION TYPES

This page looks at the trends in attraction types, based on looker statistics.

### IN THE U.S.

- Outdoor, nature, & parks were the dominant attraction type as well in the U.S. at 29.5% of all attractions in 2019. That number increased to 39.4% and 33.4% in 2020 and 2021 respectively, before falling back to a more normal level in 2022, but still ahead of 2019 at 30.1%.
- Three other attraction types have stayed steady during the period: sights & landmarks; museums; and shopping.
- Food & drink as well as amusement parks have moved up.
- Some types have fallen off, including: tours, and performances, theaters & concerts.

## U.S. - LOOKERS

Attraction Type	2019 % Share	2020 % Share	2021 % Share	2022 % Share
Outdoors, Nature, & Parks	29.50%	39.43%	33.36%	30.06% ▲
Sights & Landmarks	13.89%	13.23%	13.31%	13.55%
Museums	10.03%	8.03%	9.27%	10.36%
Shopping	8.81%	8.78%	9.05%	8.97%
Tours	5.90%	3.99%	4.63%	4.60% ▼
Performances, Theater, & Concerts	5.05%	2.70%	3.31%	4.79%
Amusement Parks	4.44%	3.13%	4.12%	4.27%
Amusement*	3.72%	3.05%	3.52%	3.68%
Food & Drink	3.28%	3.88%	3.90%	3.72%
Bars, Clubs, & Nightlife	2.54%	2.25%	-	2.56%
Zoos & Aquariums	-	-	2.52%	-

\*Examples of Amusement attractions include bowling alleys, mini golf courses, arcades, etc.

## U.S. - BOOKERS

Attraction Type	2019 % Share	2020 % Share	2021 % Share	2022 % Share
Tours	20.48%	22.45%	21.89%	20.62%
Sights & Landmarks	17.19%	15.77%	15.11%	14.51% ▼
Nature & Parks	13.70%	12.81%	13.22%	12.07% ▼
Outdoor Activities	11.79%	14.90%	15.46%	13.69% ▲
Museums	8.24%	7.10%	6.77%	6.47% ▼
Boat Tours & Water Sports	6.72%	8.69%	9.63%	8.45% ▲
Shopping	5.59%	4.65%	4.45%	4.36% ▼
Theater & Concerts	3.27%	2.53%	2.71%	2.71% ▼
Food & Drink	2.92%	2.68%	2.33%	2.27%
Fun & Games	2.26%	-	-	1.54% ▼
Nightlife	-	1.86%	-	-
Zoos & Aquariums	-	-	1.62%	-

# 2023 Futures Study

In 2023, MMGY NextFactor conducted the largest global survey of tourism industry leaders, with 837 tourism executives from 62 countries participating. This extensive process led to the development of 50 Trends and 50 Strategies.

Of the 50 Trends identified through the extensive process of the Futures Study, the consulting team identified four top trends relevant to their findings throughout the course of this project. Four transformational opportunities for our industry emerged that relate directly to Durham's 20-Year Destination Master Plan – and to the future of the destination:



**1**

**Customers are increasingly seeking a unique, authentic travel experience**

**2**

**Communities expect to be more engaged in destination, product, and experience development for locals and visitors**

**3**

**Destinations are looking at sustainability/regeneration more broadly, encompassing economic, social, and environmental impacts**

**4**

**Greater industry, community and government alignment is driving destination competitiveness and brand**

The survey also identified the top strategies and trends in the tourism industry, many of which align with Durham's strategic direction for the visitor economy and were considered during the development of this Plan.



# Destination Master Plan Development Considerations



## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Existing city, county, and regional plans, policies, and regulations were used to inform Durham's 20-Year Destination Master Plan. The project team recognizes and respects the work that has already been done in this region and considers it a solid foundation to build upon.

**The following is a list of planning documents referenced during project research engagement:**

- Durham Sports Complex Feasibility Study Overview, Report and Action Plan (2021)
- Durham, NC 2022 Tourism Economics Economic Impact Study (2023)
- Fayetteville Street Corridor Report (May 2022)
- Longwoods Travel USA Visitor Profiles (2019)
- International Downtown Association Advisory Services Panel Recommendations (February 2023)
- Arrivalist visitor geolocation dashboard data (2023)
- STR lodging performance data (2023)
- Zartico visitor geolocation & spend dashboard data (2023)
- Discover Durham Geolocation Profile
- New Development Tracker
- Duke Strategic Community Impact Plan
- NCCU Campus Master Plan
- HUB RTP plans
- Durham County Transit Plans
- DSC Multisport Complex
- DDI Blueprint
- Cultural Arts Roadmap
- Southpoint Plan Implementation
- RTP 3.0
- Comprehensive Plan Implementation
- Durham Parks and Rec Master Plan
- American Tobacco Campus Expansion
- Hayti District Plan
- Duke Gardens 5 Year Strategic Plan

# Innovation in Action in Durham

Durham has long been known as a community that innovates. Examples include repurposing of tobacco and textile warehouses from the 1800s, to the countless institutions and entrepreneurs that have made life-changing medical, social, scientific, and business advancements to Research Triangle Park.

**A few of the innovative and purposeful developments planned or already underway in the community that will support leisure and business travel to Durham include:**

## HUB RTP

A mixed-use development of 1 million sq ft with commercial, lab space, hotel, retail, multi-family residential and 16 acres of green space, parks and trails.

## T3 AMERICAN TOBACCO

An 11-acre mixed-use project with 782,000 sq ft with office, multi-family residential, experiential retail (including a grocery store, shops, and restaurants), plus a central plaza actively programmed with events and experiences.

## DURHAM RAIL TRAIL

(formerly Duke Beltline Greenway)

1.8-mile multi-use trail including public art and places to linger. Recently received a \$9 million federal grant to start construction. Expected completion in 2024.

## SPLASH AND PLAY

Skating rink, aquatics center with water slides and lazy river, plus community events space along with improvements to adjacent Long Meadow and East End Parks. Expected opening 2024.

## THE STREETS AT SOUTHPOINT

Expansion to include additional multifamily residential, additional retail, office space and hotel.

## HAYTI DEVELOPMENT

The City has set aside \$10 million for residential and commercial real estate programs, small business support, and location enhancement.

## ANDRETTI INDOOR KARTING

The site plan calls for a 89,150-square-foot space with a high-speed karting track and a large arcade game room, plus laser tag, a bar and restaurants, virtual reality simulators, eight bowling lanes and private event suites.

## TOPGOLF

Marketed as a premier entertainment destination, with climate-controlled hitting bays for year-round comfort, a sports bar and restaurant.







# Stakeholder Engagement

**MMGY NextFactor met with over 170 stakeholders through a series of focus groups, in-depth interviews, and community town halls, all which took place between June and September 2023.**

The primary purpose of this engagement was to identify key opportunities and challenges for the future of Durham as a destination for visitors and a quality place for residents to live, work, and play.



## ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Steering Committee sessions that included 21 community leaders
- 22 one-on-one interviews
- 11 focus groups with over 120 participants
- 2 community town hall sessions with over 40 participants
- Resident survey with over 2,100 responses

### STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee of 21 community leaders from Durham was assembled to guide the process, advise on key considerations, ensure alignment with existing strategies and initiatives, and champion the 20-Year Destination Master Plan from development through implementation. The Steering Committee met for working sessions throughout the process, in addition to many participating in interviews, focus groups, surveys and assessments.

### INTERVIEWS

22 in-depth interviews were conducted in-person and virtually with community leaders and stakeholders who provided specific insights into Durham.

### FOCUS GROUPS

11 sector-specific focus groups were facilitated with more than 120 total participants. These focus groups were highly interactive sessions that fostered new relationships amongst the following groups:

- Accommodations and Dining
- Arts, Culture, History and Attractions
- Outdoor Recreation and Festivals
- Sports
- Makers, Entrepreneurs and Young Professionals
- Economic Development, Real Estate and Business
- Retail, Neighborhood Businesses and Tourism Districts
- Hispanic Community (conducted in Spanish)
- Universities and Healthcare
- Government, Transportation and Infrastructure
- Discover Durham Staff



## COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

MMGY NextFactor facilitated two community town halls in July 2023. These community town halls were attended by 44 residents, combined. These sessions were intended to offer residents further opportunity to share their vision for the future of tourism in Durham and were focused on solution-oriented exercises and discussion.

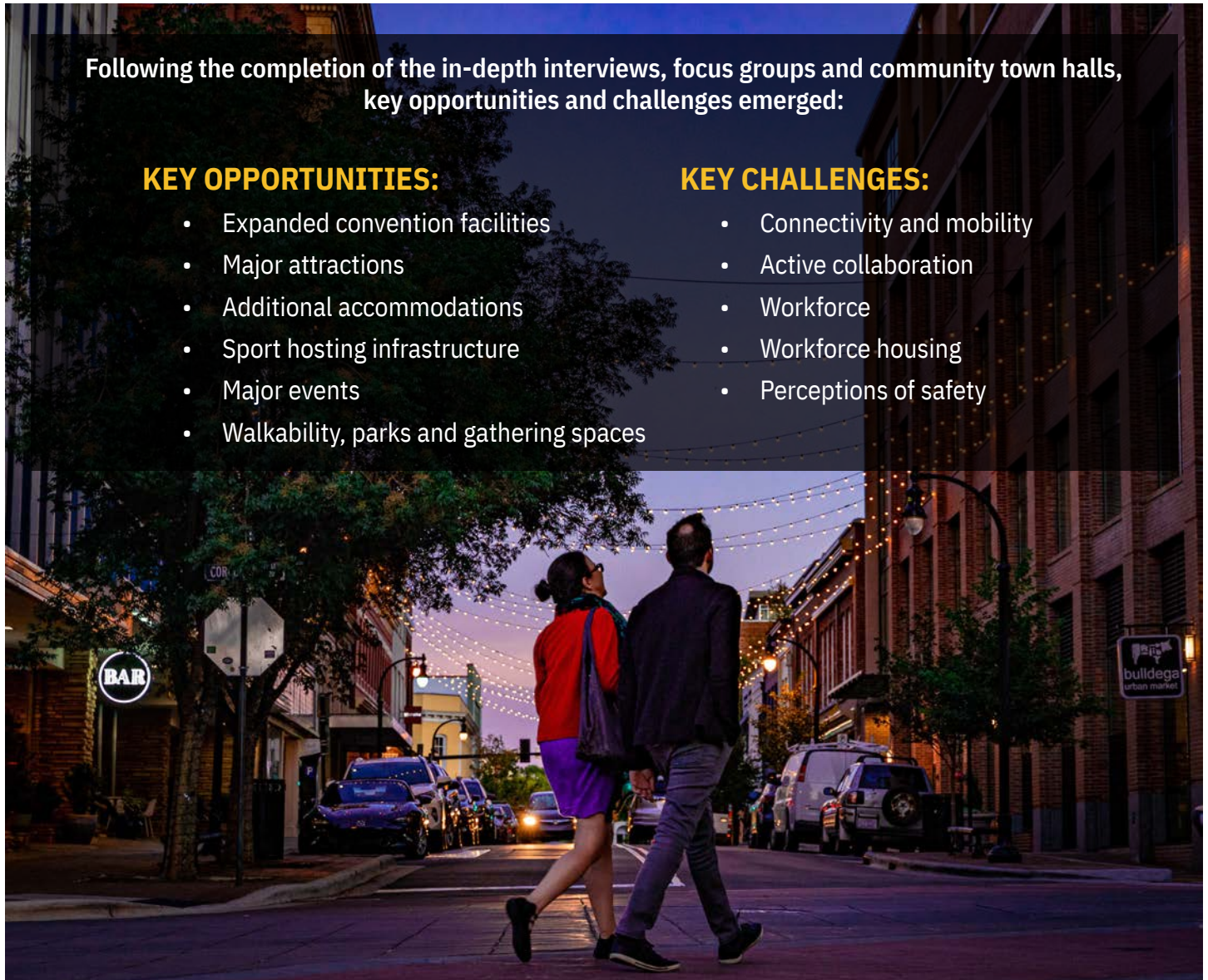
Following the completion of the in-depth interviews, focus groups and community town halls, key opportunities and challenges emerged:

### KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Expanded convention facilities
- Major attractions
- Additional accommodations
- Sport hosting infrastructure
- Major events
- Walkability, parks and gathering spaces

### KEY CHALLENGES:

- Connectivity and mobility
- Active collaboration
- Workforce
- Workforce housing
- Perceptions of safety



## VISIONING SESSION

The results and insights gleaned from these research activities were then used in a visioning workshop with the Steering Committee to envision the ideal future of tourism management in Durham and to develop priorities for the plan.

## VALIDATION SESSION

The results of the workshop were then compiled into a Destination Master Plan, which was presented to the Steering Committee, Discover Durham staff and other key stakeholders for feedback and validation.

# Resident Survey

In consultation with Discover Durham, MMGY NextFactor developed an online survey to identify residents' perceptions on a variety of key characteristics regarding tourism. The survey was open to both resident and non-resident community members in the Durham area and was made available in Spanish and English.



The survey was available between July 10 and September 11, 2023, and was completed by 2,106 residents of Durham. 1,876 respondents were residents of Durham, while 214 responses were from non-residents. 16 community members completed the Spanish version of the survey.



80% of respondents believe that tourism helps support community amenities, attractions and businesses that could not be supported by locals alone.



Respondents also agree that fair wages (93%), public infrastructure (93%), and diversity, equity, and inclusion (90%) are among the most important considerations to address regarding the impacts of tourism in Durham.



Finally, residents are proud to live in Durham, with an average 83% rating. Residents are likely to recommend Durham as a place to visit to friends and relatives (82%), and 76% of residents believe the tourism is an important component of the local economy in Durham.





# DestinationNEXT Assessment

## DESTINATION ALIGNMENT VARIABLES



Business Support



Community Group & Resident Support



Government Support



Organization Governance



Workforce Development



Hospitality Culture



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



Funding Support & Certainty



Regional Cooperation



Sustainability & Resilience



Emergency Preparedness



Economic Development

MMGY NextFactor conducted a detailed assessment of Durham's visitor economy utilizing a comprehensive stakeholder survey that measures perceptions of destination strength and destination alignment, based on a series of 24 variables.

## DESTINATION STRENGTH VARIABLES



Attractions & Experiences



Arts, Culture & Heritage



Dining, Shopping & Entertainment



Outdoor Recreation



Conventions & Meetings



Events & Festivals



Sporting Events



Accommodation



Local Mobility & Access



Destination Access



Communication Infrastructure



Health & Safety

The results were then used to plot Durham into a Scenario Model, which shows the specific opportunities to build upon.

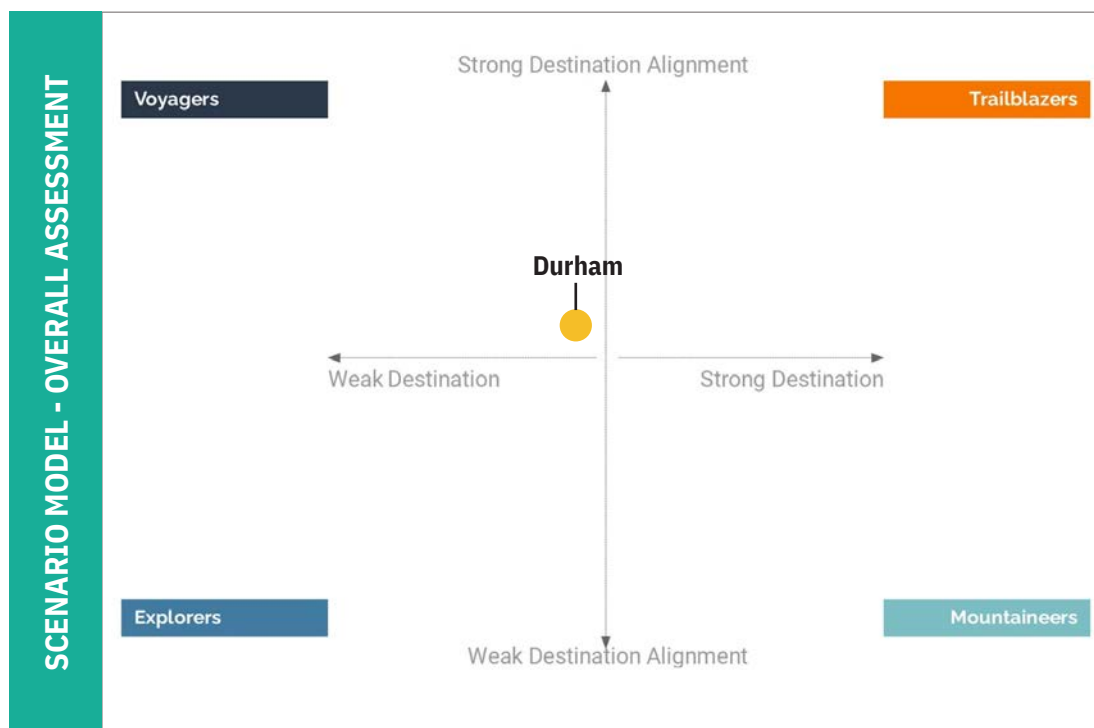


# DestinationNEXT Results

## VOYAGERS

With 96 responses from a variety of stakeholders including tourism partners (41.7%), community leaders (21.9%), government leaders (5.2%), customers (4.2%) and others, respondents placed Durham in the Voyagers quadrant, indicating above average scores for community alignment and an opportunity to further develop destination assets and experiences.

This score is consistent with Durham's DestinationNEXT Assessment results from 2016, which also placed the community in the Voyagers quadrant.



## DESTINATION STRENGTH

Durham's stakeholders rated the strength of the destination as slightly below average. They rated Durham's Dining, Shopping & Entertainment, Arts, Culture & Heritage, Access, and Communication Infrastructure highest, while Sporting Events, Events & Festivals, Accommodations and Local Mobility & Access rated amongst the lowest.

## DESTINATION ALIGNMENT

From a community alignment perspective, Durham rated above average, with Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Sustainability & Resilience, Government Support, Organizational Governance, Community Group & Resident Support and Emergency Preparedness rated highest. Only Workforce Development rated below the industry average.

Each of the opportunities highlighted in the DestinationNEXT Assessment results were validated by stakeholders through the engagement phase of this Plan. By continuing to focus on the development of Durham, including expanding or redeveloping the Convention Center and building a headquarter hotel, developing more festivals & events, and developing Durham's unique districts and a freeway cap connecting downtown and Hayti, Durham will move into the Trailblazer quadrant.



# Overarching Key Findings

Combined, the research, stakeholder engagement and assessments of Durham culminated in the following key findings:



There is a significant opportunity to grow Durham's meetings and conventions market.



Stakeholder alignment is strong in Durham. Further leveraging this alignment will benefit new experiences and development for residents and visitors.



Outdoor spaces, venues and experiences can be elevated and enhanced.



Efforts to enhance perceptions around safety in Durham should continue to be prioritized.



Durhamites are very proud of their city and eager for events, festivals and other opportunities to create more vibrancy.



Transportation, mobility, and accessibility throughout Durham need to be addressed.



There is an opportunity to further leverage and share the extensive history of Durham.



# Destination Vision



A shared vision for Durham was created to guide the direction of this 20-Year Destination Master Plan.

A successful vision incorporates three key elements: first, it should be inspirational, meaning it is a vision that the community is inspired to achieve. Next, it should be aspirational, meaning that it is not a reflection of the community at the time it was created. Finally, the vision should reflect key priorities.

**Based on the information from the comprehensive assessments and research, and the input from stakeholders and residents, the Destination Master Plan Steering Committee developed the following long-term vision for Durham:**

## **IN 2044, DURHAM WILL BE:**

**The most welcoming, inclusive, innovative and vibrant destination in the United States, while thoughtfully honoring its history and people.**

It was important to the Steering Committee that even in 20 years, Durham has maintained its welcoming nature and that it continues to be an inclusive destination for everyone. Complimenting that theme is the strong desire of ensuring that as Durham grows and continues to evolve, the history of the people and the place is preserved, and those stories continue to be shared.

It was also important to the Steering Committee that Durham's strong history and track record in innovation continues to be a strategic priority in the future of the community. That level of importance was also applied to the vibrancy of Durham; the Committee feels strongly that Durham must be an active, energetic and vital community with lots to see and do for both locals and residents.

Finally, the Steering Committee added the aspirational element of ensuring that in 20 years, Durham stands out as a destination of choice in the United States.

To ensure these inspirational and aspirational elements are achieved, they have been included in the strategic goal and initiatives of this plan.





# Discover Durham's Role in Implementation

The strategic goals and recommendations in this plan are a result of this collective process and represent the ideas and aspirations of the people who live in, and contribute to, Durham.

To achieve the destination vision articulated in this Plan, it will require a collective, community-wide implementation effort across multiple organizations, as well as Discover Durham, the tourism industry, and community stakeholders.

Discover Durham doesn't own the assets and experiences related to the local visitor economy, and therefore, it cannot single-handedly move this Destination Master Plan forward. Their roles in implementing this Plan forward will take many forms, including:

## Advocate

There will be instances where Discover Durham advocates for the advancement of strategic initiatives that will advance Durham for the benefit of visitors and residents.

## Convene

Discover Durham may be the conveners of groups and those in positions to advance initiatives.

## Lead

There will be instances where Discover Durham takes the lead as the organization to advance initiatives.

## Support

Finally, Discover Durham will be the supporting or partnering organization on initiatives with other leading organizations.



# Strategic Goals

Emerging from this process are four strategic goals that offer guidance on how Durham will achieve its shared vision.

The initiatives included below are not exhaustive, rather they are ones that will support the positive impact of the visitor economy on the community, through driving increased visitation, lengthening stays and providing opportunities for visitors to spend more while in Durham.

Each theme is supported by initiatives that — to be successful — must be contributed to by multiple partners and stakeholders throughout Durham. When successfully implemented, these goals and subsequent initiatives will make a positive impact on the quality of life, quality of experience and quality of economy in Durham.

1

**ENHANCE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE**

2

**DEVELOP ATTRACTIONS, EVENTS & EXPERIENCES**

3

**SUPPORT PURPOSEFUL PLACEMAKING**

4

**ACCELERATE COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT**





## STRATEGIC GOAL #1:

# ENHANCE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

**Durham has a strong base of venues and mobility options that support tourism; however, more can be done to drive new and repeat business to the city.**

Expanding or redeveloping the Durham Convention Center (DCC) with an adjacent headquarter hotel is a critical element of this mix. Meetings and events are great ways to induce travel during the weekdays that are typically slower; however, the DCC will require a great deal of public investment and involvement to achieve success at an expanded size in a more competitive marketplace. The DCC is not a true convention center given that it does not have any exhibit space. It also has limited smaller breakout spaces. Other comparable destinations have exhibit space and/or larger singular ballroom spaces, and additional meeting rooms. This inhibits its ability to compete with other larger in-state convention centers. Instead, the DCC mostly competes with area conference hotels, especially those in the Raleigh area. As a DCC expansion on the current site would take up plaza and public gathering space, would not have ideal circulation and pre-function spaces, and does not achieve optimal sizing, an entirely new build is recommended. Feasibility and funding studies exploring the potential of this project are underway.

Making the facility larger and more technologically advanced will increase the DCC's competitiveness in the market, particularly in generating midweek business; however, a new headquarters hotel must be included to complete the package so it is an attractive and viable option to win future business.

Downtown Durham has strong performing arts venues such as DPAC and Carolina Theatre, with a few other smaller spaces nearby to complement them. However, Durham does not have sufficient large capacity flat floor venues or multi-purpose black box theater space. This is a need in Durham as is an amphitheater, which would provide additional outdoor public gathering space and recreational opportunities for residents and guests.

In addition to the need for enhanced convention and hosting facilities, there are very few dedicated sports facilities to accommodate tournament hosting capabilities in Durham. Many of Durham's facilities are purposed for schools and universities (e.g., Duke, NCCU, and Durham Public Schools) or specific teams (e.g., Durham Bulls Athletic Park, Durham Bulls Miracle League Park, and Triangle Curling Club). Although there are additional fields and facilities available for rental (e.g., Durham County Memorial Stadium, Historic Durham Athletic Park, and facilities owned and operated by Durham Parks and Recreation), there aren't nearly enough to accommodate the huge demand.

There is growing demand for sports such as baseball, softball, and soccer within the Durham area. Current facilities are not able to accommodate the demand with limited field availability. Within the Research Triangle region, sports facilities catering to youth sports specifically is limited. However, within the state and greater regional area there are many tournament facilities that a new development would compete with.

With a strong demand base for various sports, Durham has ample opportunities to induce sports tourism with new sports facility development. Ideally, a new sports complex would include both indoor and outdoor components in one central location that is surrounded by commercial assets such as hotels, restaurants, and shops to increase visitor spending.

Finally, by enhancing transportation connectivity in Durham, visitors and residents will have more opportunity to move around the city with ease, and in their mode of choice. Many participants noted that it's difficult to get around Durham if you don't have a car. A university administrator interviewed for this plan commented, "Transportation will be the key to keeping college students here after graduation," but it's equally important to visitors. In a survey of more than 2,000 residents, having adequate public infrastructure, including transportation options, was the top priority in a survey question about how to achieve the greatest benefits of tourism.

A 20-year transit plan was approved in Durham in the spring of 2023. Along with plans underway and recently completed to identify Freeway and Street-based Transit (FAST) corridors and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) speed and reliability studies, much attention is being given to this item. Still, it will be years — or even decades — before much of this infrastructure gets built.



# 1

## STRATEGIC GOAL #1: ENHANCE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

# Recommended Initiatives

### CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION / REDEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 Develop an awareness campaign to help residents and stakeholders understand the benefits and possibilities of a larger convention center in Durham.
- 1.2 Expand / redevelop the Durham Convention Center with a high-tech, innovative focus and determine appropriate group sales structure.
- 1.3 Develop adjacent headquarter hotel.
- 1.4 Expand adjacent dining and vibrancy options.

### EVENT VENUES

- 1.5 Build an outdoor amphitheater.
- 1.6 Build smaller, flexible hosting facilities for 100 to 500 people.
- 1.7 Enhance existing indoor venues, including the Carolina Theatre.
- 1.8 Upgrade Durham Athletic Park to be a multi-use facility. Consider including amphitheater development in these upgrades.

### SPORT TOURISM

- 1.9 Pursue indoor sport hosting arena / multi-purpose venue for tournament hosting with adjacent amenities (accommodations, dining, retail and experiences).
- 1.10 Pursue outdoor athletic park for tournament hosting.
- 1.11 Upgrade Durham County Memorial Stadium.

### TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIVITY

- 1.12 Support a two-way loop around downtown to allow for easier flow of traffic and pedestrian mobility.
- 1.13 Advocate to GoDurham, GoTriangle and other entities for user-friendly public transportation routes and increased connectivity within Durham and regionally.
- 1.14 Collaborate with GoDurham Transit and the arts community to make public transportation more experiential (pop-up performances, artistic elements, etc.).
- 1.15 Develop opportunities for entrepreneurs and youth to innovate Durham-specific opportunities to increase ridership.
- 1.16 Support funding a pilot for connection shuttles between districts, particularly on weekends.
- 1.17 Collaborate with NCDOT and others to make rail crossings more accessible and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.



# 2

## STRATEGIC GOAL #2:

# DEVELOP ATTRACTIONS, EVENTS & EXPERIENCES

**Durham residents and business owners are calling for more events in the community, including major events that will draw overnight visitors.**

Major events contribute to the brand of a destination as they draw awareness and create reasons to travel. They support local businesses and accommodations with an influx of out-of-town visitors and create vibrancy. Done right, events can support innovation while honoring the people and history of the community.

Creating special events cannot be the responsibility of one organization or entity, however, given the City services required to support major events, the City of Durham will likely want to be a prominent partner of major events.

In addition to major events, Durham is underserved in the realm of iconic experiences and family attractions. Based on Discover Durham's Visitation Geolocation Profile (July 2022 – June 2023), visitors spend several hours at locations like the Sheraton Imperial Convention Center, Duke Hospital, and Falls Lake, however, they're less likely to visit other attractions. The research also indicates that there isn't a standout attraction in the top drivers of visitation that captivates visitors for several hours and generates significant cross point of interest visitation.

Durham is encouraged to consider attractions that will appeal to multiple members of a family, including entertainment destinations with exciting activities for different interests that will drive long-distance visitation. This is often achieved with multiple attraction types.

To round out the attractions and events in Durham, supporting cultural groups and the Cultural Master Plan, as well as activating the outdoor recreation spaces and amenities of the community will ensure Durham has unique experiences for all to enjoy and share.





# 2

## STRATEGIC GOAL #2: DEVELOP ATTRACTIONS, EVENTS & EXPERIENCES

# Recommended Initiatives

### MAJOR EVENTS

- 2.1 Develop a robust office of special events for Durham that would create and support the awareness, advocacy, partnerships, logistics, and funding for festivals and major events.
- 2.2 Develop a Special Events Fund and an Event Coalition, beginning with building a case for increased funding for events.
- 2.3 Develop a major event strategy that focuses on needs-periods throughout the year.
- 2.4 Attract or develop a major annual music festival, possibly at the Carolina Theatre.
- 2.5 Develop a SXSW-type event showcasing Durham's technology & innovation sector.
- 2.6 Collaborate with tech, life sciences and innovation ecosystem partners to pilot a "Doors Open" festival.

### ICONIC EXPERIENCES & ATTRACTIONS

- 2.7 Incorporate iconic activations downtown or at American Tobacco Campus or Golden Belt Campus, which could include lighting or drone shows, pop-up concerts, or murals and artistic installations.
- 2.8 Consider developing large-scale, iconic family attractions, potentially adding a satellite visitor center adjacent to a new attraction.

### PERFORMING ARTS

- 2.9 Continue to promote the work of Durham's performing arts organizations and encourage them to adopt innovative ways to engage new audiences through activities like pop-up performances.
- 2.10 Encourage cultural groups to get involved by offering spaces and opportunities for performances and celebrations.

### OUTDOOR RECREATION

- 2.11 Expand parks and pathway connectivity throughout Durham.
- 2.12 Complete Rails-to-Trails connections.
- 2.13 Attract outfitters, rentals of e-bikes, etc. in locations accessible to trails and parks.



# 3

## STRATEGIC GOAL #3:

# SUPPORT PURPOSEFUL PLACEMAKING

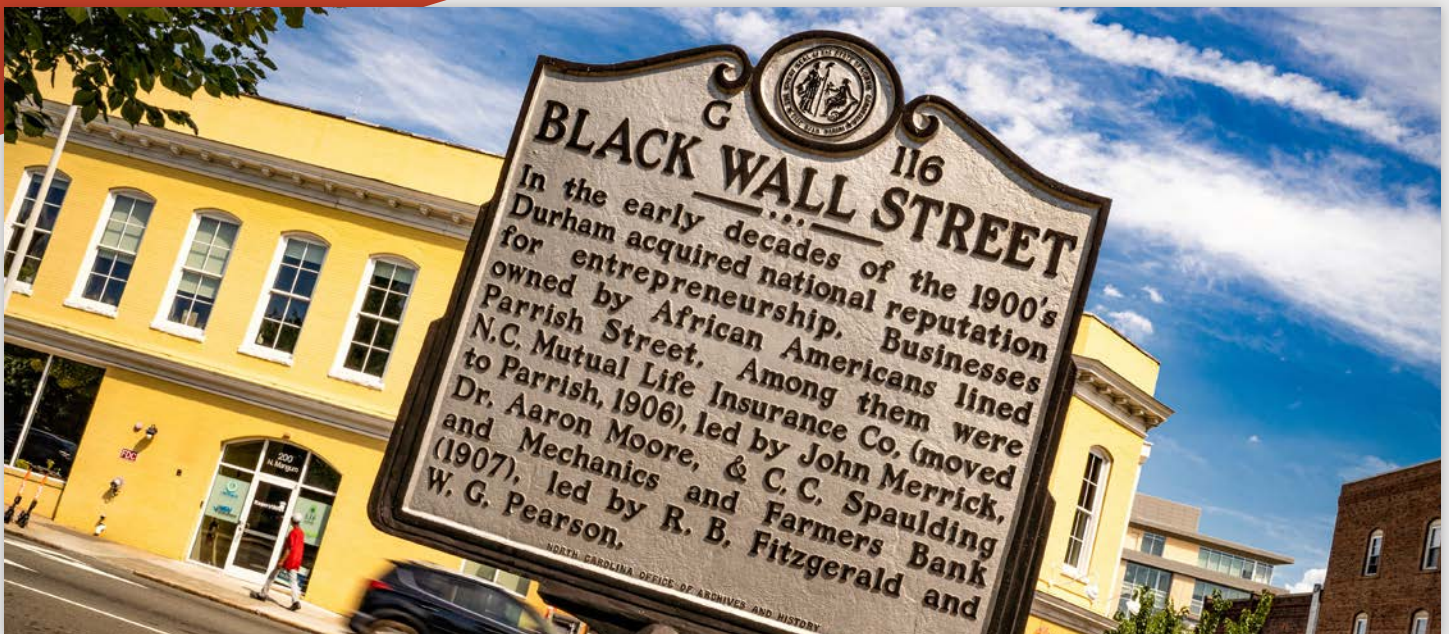
**Purposeful placemaking contributes to communities in both tangible and intangible ways. Placemaking can serve to communicate stories and history through art and activations as well as the expected behaviors of visitors to the area and the values of the community. It can also create spaces for people to gather, linger, make memories, and share in experiences.**

In Durham, numerous unique historic buildings have converted into mixed-use entertainment and dining nodes around the City Center. These districts drive long-distance visitation to Durham very effectively. However, the lack of a “strolling” retail cluster (or other activities or attractions) in these districts often leave visitors with little to do between meals.

Additional unique and experiential restaurant and retail concepts are needed that offer public gathering or event space (food halls, “eatertainment”) and pop-up stalls for artists & local makers. Local shops and retail could enhance the district connecting downtown to Duke campus.

In addition to districts, outdoor spaces play a critical role in successful placemaking. There is greater opportunity to leverage the outdoor recreation and trails to contribute to the destination package for Durham with community events and entertainment.

For placemaking initiatives to be fully embraced by the community and visitors, they must support connectivity and be accessible to all abilities. This includes developing a freeway cap connecting the Downtown and Hayti, supporting residents with increased connectivity and connection points, both physically and culturally, as well as new outdoor spaces.





# 3

## STRATEGIC GOAL #3: SUPPORT PURPOSEFUL PLACEMAKING

# Recommended Initiatives

### PARKS, GREEN SPACES & WALKABILITY

- 3.1 Find iconic and functional ways to promote walkability including a freeway cap over Fayetteville Street overpass to connect downtown with Hayti.
- 3.2 Develop coordinated and walkable food & craft brew flavor trails.
- 3.3 Support community ideas to purposefully develop green spaces in districts with more pedestrian friendly areas and potential for street closures for festivals and events.
- 3.4 Consider “adopt-a-park” and “adopt-an-alleyway” programs to share the care and maintenance of outdoor spaces.

### PUBLIC ART

- 3.5 Expand public art trail of murals and other art offerings throughout Durham, including on public buildings.
- 3.6 Encourage initiatives that would utilize local artists from all backgrounds to participate in creating public art throughout Durham.

### WAYFINDING

- 3.7 Apply consistent and multi-language wayfinding signage throughout Durham.
- 3.8 Have local artists participate in creating wayfinding.

### DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

- 3.9 Develop connected cultural or thematic districts: “Hispanic District,” “Heritage District,” etc.
- 3.10 Develop connected experience districts: “Convention District,” “Arts District,” “Entertainment District,” etc.
- 3.11 Support revitalization initiatives in Hayti.
- 3.12 Incorporate immersive African American and Hispanic experiences in districts through technology and other advanced storytelling technologies and initiatives.
- 3.13 Support further engagement with the Social District through activations, promotions, and events.
- 3.14 Ensure additional local retailers and shopping nodes throughout the districts.
- 3.15 Develop consistent district identifiers / place markers and branding.
- 3.16 Encourage daytime events and other vibrancy-creating experiences in districts.

### ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.17 Undertake an accessibility audit to ensure all places and experiences are accessible to all.



# 4

## STRATEGIC GOAL #4:

# ACCELERATE COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT

**Durham is a collaborative community with engaged stakeholders, corporations, educational institutions, and residents.**

The critical task at hand is leveraging that collaboration to continue to develop assets within Durham that will advance the community for its residents and its visitors.

A critical aspect of this will be to address opportunities to fund the strategic initiatives recommended in this plan. That work will involve strong advocacy amongst governments, as well as educating those in office, their administrations, and residents about the benefits of tourism and the positive impact of the visitor economy on Durham. This may include exploring public-private partnership to achieve shared goals and initiatives for the benefit of the community.

Accelerating community alignment will also require the tourism and hospitality industry to demonstrate collaborative leadership in the community, showing a united front in support of developing new drivers of visitation that will attract new visitors to Durham, encourage them to spend more in the community and to stay longer, making for a more prosperous community.





# 4

## STRATEGIC GOAL #4: ACCELERATE COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT

# Recommended Initiatives

### ADDRESS FUNDING

- 4.1 Educate key stakeholders about the value and impact of tourism in Durham, including building a public business case for investment in the industry.
- 4.2 Advocate for appropriate, dedicated funding streams to support product development and placemaking.
- 4.3 Explore the development of a Community Foundation to fund experience and product development initiatives that would pursue state and federal grants, private donations, and public funding for experience and product development initiatives.

### RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

- 4.4 Further strategies to communicate with and engage all resident demographics, including multi-language messages.
- 4.5 Undertake annual or biennial resident sentiment survey, measuring against established benchmarks.
- 4.6 Celebrate community pride with campaigns for residents to explore Durham and share what they love about their community.
- 4.7 Determine how a resident advisory panel could be most effectively leveraged.

### INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT

- 4.8 Expand industry advisory panels to foster greater alignment and collaboration toward shared goals.
- 4.9 Implement new community-aligned processes for moving large-scale ideas from concept to reality.
- 4.10 Develop an awareness campaign that leads to a strong pipeline of hospitality workforce. Consider developing internship programs to foster a new generation of hospitality workforce.
- 4.11 Ensure collaboration and alignment with other community plans and initiatives.
- 4.12 Develop a training program to create champions and ambassadors of frontline hospitality workers.
- 4.13 Advocate for workforce housing developments, workforce transportation, and childcare options.
- 4.14 Support community safety and crime-reduction initiatives.





## Next Steps

**To be successful, long-term strategic planning requires significant focus on implementation. To support the implementation of this plan, a corresponding implementation guide has been shared with Discover Durham.**

The implementation plan prioritizes actions for the first three years of the plan, articulates which organizations should be included, and outlines roles and responsibilities.

It is recommended that as stewards of the Destination Master Plan, Discover Durham appoint a champion responsible for the implementation and ongoing work on the Plan. It is further recommended that there is public reporting on the progress of the Plan, to demonstrate accountability and highlight the efforts and organizations involved.

It is also recommended that hospitality and community leaders consider funding sources to enable the implementation of the initiatives outlined in this plan.





[discoverdurham.com](https://discoverdurham.com)

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