

November 14, 2016

Dear Mayor Roberts and Charlotte City Council Members,

Enclosed, you will find the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) Annual Report for fiscal year 2016 (FY2016). This year, the City was heavily involved in shaping the trajectory of our organizational progress in several ways. From the renovations at venues such as Spectrum Center (formerly Time Warner Cable Arena) and Bojangles' Coliseum to the execution of major events, including the CIAA Men's & Women's Basketball Tournament, we thank the City for its partnership and support in advancing Charlotte's visitor economy and the positive impact it has on the residents who live, work and play here.

The CRVA is committed to furthering the "One CRVA" culture journey it has been on over the last four years. This journey has promoted collaboration across all eight CRVA brands and an "Employee First" environment that works to engage employees so that their enthusiasm helps to drive positive customer experiences. This internal work has also helped to make the CRVA a more strategic, research-driven organization, ultimately furthering the way we carry out our mission in creating jobs and opportunities for the region.

You'll see in this report that performance indicators for the hospitality industry were strong in FY2016, allowing us to set new hotel performance records for the region. Visitor spending generated more than \$6.5 billion for the entire Charlotte region, while the economic impact of tourism in Mecklenburg County grew by 3 percent, with visitors infusing \$5 billion in domestic spending into the county.

I encourage you to read more about our year in review as detailed in this document. We welcome the opportunity to address any questions or concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Murray". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "M".

Tom Murray
Chief Executive Officer
Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA)

CRVA Culture Journey

Distributed Leadership

Over the last four years, the CRVA has set out to build a strong organizational culture for its employees. At the heart of driving its mission in creating jobs and opportunities for the Charlotte community are CRVA's core values of **trust, collaboration, innovation, integrity, engagement** and **accountability**. The organization has worked to emphasize these values by defining the behaviors that best embody them. An integral behavior that has been identified in recent years is distributed leadership, which was defined and reinforced via an organization-wide education plan in FY2016.

The goal behind distributed leadership is to cultivate strong engagement by challenging employees to be a part of the organization's direction in growing team members, improving communication and making better decisions. The full definition is below.

“At the CRVA, leadership isn't intended to only come from the CEO or the names that reside at the top of the organizational chart. It's expected from every layer of the organization, ultimately yielding a culture where communication and collaboration are fundamental to how everyone interacts. It means that the voices of many help to chart the direction. Team members are expected to operate with transparency, build meaningful relationships and leverage the strengths of others to accomplish great work together. Collectively, these actions embody what distributed leadership is all about.

It's not simply a philosophy that helps to define who the CRVA and its employees are or what they should act like. Distributed leadership is meant to be a guiding principle on how team members are expected to perform their jobs. It's used as a means to channel information through each layer of the organization so employees are informed, engaged and understand how they connect to the bigger picture. It's also a tool that creates greater effectiveness in decision-making as employees are encouraged to take ownership to control an outcome rather than waiting for an invitation to do so.

In turn, the CRVA needs to foster a culture that prides itself on personal and professional growth so that every team member, no matter their title, is empowered to work toward pursuing the greater good that drives the organization, creating jobs and opportunities for the Charlotte region. It's this development that creates confident, self-aware leaders who are invested in a shared vision rooted in distributed leadership. The goal is to create inspired employees who are engaged in what we do, ultimately thrilling our customers and becoming active participants in the direction of the CRVA.”

The concept of distributed leadership is interconnected with so many other culture-defining philosophies that have shaped the organization's trajectory in recent years. These include “One CRVA,” which speaks to the collaboration and shared resources that have broken down the brand siloes that once existed. Another key area is “Employee First,” which speaks to investing in employees and creating an atmosphere that fosters strong engagement. By doing so, employees treat the customer in the same manner in which they're treated, are more invested in their work and are committed to delivering a higher level of customer service and quality.

Each concept is continuously emphasized through employee relations interactions that range from the CRVA intranet, MyCRVA.com to quarterly full CRVA Team Meetings, performance appraisals and beyond.

Customer Experience

This year, a major customer experience initiative was rolled out to assist in developing a consistent customer service philosophy that aligns with CRVA's overall culture. Customer service is critical to all CRVA brands when it comes to ensuring repeat visitation, positive word-of-mouth referrals and providing an overall interaction that keeps customers satisfied.

One of the first hurdles the CRVA explored was the intrinsic difference between customer service and customer experience. Some sample definitions are included below:

"Customer experience encompasses every aspect of a company's offerings. From the quality of its customer care to its reputation management, marketing, product and service features, ease of use, reliability and beyond." – Disney

"Customer service is the bare bones transaction. Customer experience considers everything the customer goes through, everything the customer touches, tastes, smells, hears and sees throughout the experience with the brand." – *Forbes*

The CRVA sought to build a program that addressed customer experience as a whole rather than just the transactional nature of customer service. By delivering a customer experience that is memorable, as opposed to simply doing a job well, the customer is more apt to come back again and again or provide a glowing testimonial that impacts the bottom line in a more significant way. The team utilized a training team from Asheville's Biltmore Center for Professional Development, which has worked with brands such as Chick-fil-A. The CRVA developed the service philosophy and service standards below in addition to training content and appearance standards, including new uniforms and name tags.

CRVA Service Philosophy

Every CRVA team member is an ambassador for Charlotte. We represent our city by setting the standard in Southern hospitality. By living out our core values, we offer an authentic, personalized and memorable experience for every customer we serve.

(A condensed Service Theme was also created based on this philosophy, which is prominently displayed on all CRVA name tags worn by the employee population. This reads, "We deliver memorable customer experiences.")

CRVA Service Standards

1. Observe and proactively initiate the customer experience with a personalized greeting and smile.
2. Engage the customer with thoughtful questions and active listening.
3. Take ownership and offer a complete solution to the customer's needs.
4. Look for opportunities to deliver exceptional service and exceed expectations.
5. Ensure all customer needs have been met and offer an authentic closing with appreciation.

All full-time CRVA employees have been trained during FY2016 and the organization is in the midst of training its part-time employees, who account for more than 800 workers. Full-time training concluded in the latter half of FY2016, and early indications through CRVA's survey methodology show that the program began to yield positive results in the fourth quarter.

CRVA Strategic Plan

FY2016 marks the end of the third year of work on the CRVA's Strategic Plan. A Kaplan Norton-style plan was developed internally by Senior Leadership and was approved by the Executive Leadership team and the Board of Directors in FY2014. Becoming a strategically-based organization has been a major shift in recent years, which has led to significant improvement in financial performance, engagement, employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. The Strategy Map below continues to be the focal point for all Strategic Plan objectives, and activities are built out based upon it.

OurStrategy

OurVision

Charlotte will be recognized as a leading destination, delivering experiences that uniquely enrich the lives of our visitors and community.

OurMission

The purpose of the CRVA is to lead the effort in maximizing the region's economic potential through visitor spending; creating jobs and opportunities for our community. Our valued employees achieve this through leadership in destination development, marketing and venue management expertise.



Each year, the organization establishes a Balanced Scorecard, which is a tool that identifies and measures targets attached to Strategic Plan initiatives. Essentially, it is the check and balance to ensure that the CRVA is consistently working to drive strategy. In FY2016, 24 targets were identified on the scorecard to work toward achieving. A sampling of three of these 24 targets and associated outcomes is included in the following chart as examples of the type of work that's been taking place.

Strategic Objective	Target	Outcome
Lead in Destination Asset Development	Utilizing the Jones Lang LaSalle study commissioned in FY2016, develop an activation plan for recommendations.	A study that examined the long-term competitiveness of Charlotte as a meetings destination was completed in FY2016. The staff spent time reviewing the recommendations and then prioritizing what would yield the most impactful results and which items were key priorities. Many of these results were presented to Charlotte City Council on Sept. 12, 2016.
Advocate the Value of Hospitality and Tourism	Develop a benchmark for measuring stakeholder reputation and resident perception.	The CRVA strives to continuously and proactively educate stakeholders on the value of the CRVA and the tourism industry as a whole. Surveys were developed to measure the awareness that key audiences have when it comes to the CRVA's brands as well as to gauge their support of them. For key stakeholders (i.e. economic development partners, government staff, tourism partners), more than 95 percent have a positive sentiment about the CRVA. For residents in the community who tend to have a lower awareness level of the CRVA as the umbrella brand for eight individual brands, that positive sentiment reached nearly 74 percent.
Develop a Highly Engaged Team	Provide customer experience training for all full-time employees.	On the heels of the development of the CRVA's customer experience program, the goal in FY2016 was to ensure that all 220-plus full-time employees were trained and activating the program by year's end. The CRVA was able to successfully do so and will continue to reinforce the service standards company-wide.

This year marked the end of the second straight year of successful Balanced Scorecard measurement. The scorecard accomplished 21.75 points of a potential 24.0 points that measured the 24 targets. The last two years of activity on the Strategic Plan have created a solid foundation for the FY2017 Balanced Scorecard. With much groundwork in activities in process and benchmark development now under the CRVA's belt, next year will shift from activity-based to a results-based measurement, which marks an important evolution in the strategic journey. The organization is well on the way to accomplishing its five-year strategic plan.

CRVA Operational Performance

Bojangles' Coliseum

In FY2016, Bojangles' Coliseum hosted a total of 78 events compared to a budgeted event volume of 98 events. Despite falling short on the number of budgeted events, the facility did meet projections on budgeted revenue due to the sought after events and performers in its event volume makeup. Event highlights for FY2016 for the coliseum included Future, Katt Williams, Tool, Martin Lawrence and Anthony Hamilton & Fantasia. The venue closed for renovations at the beginning of the summer and resumed operations in late October for the Charlotte Checkers regularly scheduled season. The return of the Checkers to the venue was a great success for the venue in FY2016. The venue doubled its overall revenue from \$1.6 million in FY2015 and \$3.4 million in FY2016.

Both Bojangles' Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium also welcomed more than 100,000 guests, including 8,000 graduates for 30 commencement and graduation ceremonies for area high schools, colleges and universities in May and June. Graduations aren't a new type of booking for the venue, but the popularity of holding graduations at the complex has grown in recent years.

Ovens Auditorium

In FY2016, Ovens Auditorium hosted a total of 131 events versus a budgeted event volume of 98 events. The strong space demand, especially for concerts, Broadway and comedy helped contribute to this success. Event highlights for FY2016 for Ovens Auditorium included a three-week run of "Wicked," Tony Bennett, John Cleese & Eric Idle, Bill O'Reilly & Dennis Miller, Brian Regan, Hall & Oates, Jill Scott and Gabriel Iglesias. The CRVA continues to work on a long-term needs evaluation in partnership with Gantt Huberman to further expand the life of the venue. The study is evaluating needs such as seating capacity, lobby configuration, dressing rooms and technological capabilities in comparison to other venues. As future needs are determined, the CRVA will work closely with the City on next steps.

Charlotte Convention Center

During FY2016, the Charlotte Convention Center hosted 522 events compared to a budgeted event volume of 408 events. The difference between budgeted and actual events is primarily due to local event volume exceeding expectations. The convention center hosted 31 conventions and trade shows, 17 assemblies, 15 consumer shows and 459 local events. These events enabled the Charlotte Convention Center to surpass budget by 8 percent and generate \$15,174,670 in revenue for the year.

Noteworthy events hosted by the Charlotte Convention Center in FY2016 include the National Association of Counties – Annual Conference and Exposition, Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and Universal Spirit. The venue completed several important capital projects in FY2016, including the continued renovation of restrooms on the meeting room level, upgrading LED light fixtures and replacing the moveable wall system in the exhibit halls.

Time Warner Cable Arena

The CRVA successfully maintained its partnership with the Charlotte Hornets to operate Time Warner Cable Arena, now the Spectrum Center, in FY2016. In this relationship, the CRVA's operational performance is evaluated by its ability to provide effective and efficient service to the team and the patrons of the arena. In FY2016, CRVA operations in the arena were billed to the Hornets at a cost of \$7.9 million in support of 102 events. The CRVA placed additional emphasis on supporting major renovations at the facility, which included the new scoreboard, suite upgrades, locker room modernizations and event support improvements.

NASCAR Hall of Fame

Following the completion of work in FY2015 in conjunction with the City of Charlotte, NASCAR, Bank of America and Wells Fargo to adjust certain aspects of the NASCAR Hall of Fame's collective business model, CRVA teams began the process of developing a longer term plan for the venue. This process is rooted in the vision and mission of the Hall.

VISION: Be the premier sports hall of fame; be the leader in defining what it means to honor a sport; and be a defining destination asset for the Charlotte region.

MISSION: Drive economic impact for the Charlotte region; honor the history and heritage of NASCAR; and cultivate loyalty for both the NASCAR Hall of Fame and NASCAR through delivering a multifaceted experience that is interactive, entertaining, educational, immersive and engaging.

Several initiatives were continued and embarked upon in FY2016, including further developing programs such as education, membership, the Rookie Racer's Kids Club program, consumer and civic groups, and industry/driver integration; hosting all sizes of national, regional, local and NASCAR industry events; and beginning assessments for the next generation of interactive technology.

Initiatives that are under further evaluation for potential implementation in the future include evaluating the most effective use of all spaces such as the entry areas, plaza and expansion space; continuing work on the community relations program; and identifying longer term capital project needs.

Some results from FY2016 include:

- Operating revenue for the NASCAR Hall of Fame was \$6.2 million, with consumer sales making up roughly 50 percent, at \$3 million, with increases in the membership and educational program; event rentals and food and beverage were approximately 21 percent, at \$1.3 million, and parking revenue were approximately 11 percent, at \$694,000.
- Attendance for FY2016 was 170,500 compared to 166,559 in FY2015 and 169,724 in FY2014.
- Provided three unique, signature exhibits in the Great Hall, including "Cars of the NASCAR Stars," "24: A Tribute to Jeff Gordon," and "50 Years of Excellence," highlighting Team Penske's 50 years in motorsports.
- Updated and changed out key annual exhibit areas, including Hall of Honor inductees, Memorable Moments, 2015 Champions, Squier-Hall Media award and Whelan Hall of Champions.
- Hosted another successful series of Induction week events in January 2016, including scheduling adjustments necessitated by an ice storm that week.

Visit Charlotte

Visit Charlotte continued to provide destination sales and marketing services to the resurging Charlotte hospitality market in FY2016. Year-over-year growth in Mecklenburg County hotel performance set new records in all categories. Mecklenburg County tax collections recorded single-year highs as well, mirroring performance in this industry.

- Occupancy: 73.1 percent, up 2.1 percent over previous 12 months.
- Average daily rate (ADR): \$107.27, up 5.3 percent over previous 12 months.
- Revenue per available room (RevPAR): \$78.41, up 7.6 percent over previous 12 months.
- Demand: 6.51 million rooms sold, up 2.6 percent over the previous year.

In FY2016, Visit Charlotte booked 508 total events for future years. Approximately 57 of those events were Charlotte Convention Center events, while 451 were booked outside of the center. Of the 424,512 room nights associated with the 508 events, 189,306 were tied to the Charlotte Convention Center. Amateur sports accounted for 57 percent of Visit Charlotte's total room night production in FY2016, demonstrating the demand and sizable impact this market segment has on the region.

Within Visit Charlotte, the CRVA provided services to a wide range of clients and visitors in FY2016. Visit Charlotte Convention Services provided support to 187 events. Visitor Information Center operations, which include the Visitor Info Center at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, serviced 254,365 inquiries via phone, email, letter, mail, ad responses and walk-in traffic. Expansion of the operation to include an additional Visitor Info Center City location on Tryon Street is in the planning stages.

Regarding impacts related to House Bill 2, the CRVA and Visit Charlotte remained steadfast in its commitment to demonstrate to visitors and customers how much the city values diversity in the fourth quarter of FY2016 and beyond. The CRVA continues to focus on what it does best: promoting the destination and recruiting events and conventions to Charlotte that produce a valuable economic impact for the community. The organization will remain focused on efforts that strive to make each and every visitor feel welcome in our city in FY2017. Additional information on the Always Welcome campaign to support these efforts can be found in the accompanying Highlights section.

Charlotte Film

Visit Charlotte assumed operations for Charlotte Film in FY2015 from the Charlotte Regional Partnership, which was an ideal fit given the CRVA's mission of creating jobs and opportunities through visitor spending. Film does exactly that for the community. Crews that utilize Charlotte as a backdrop stay in area hotels, eat in local restaurants and use services in the region, creating valuable tax revenue that benefits Charlotte.

Highlights of filming in the Charlotte region in FY2016 include the new TV series from FOX's "Shots Fired," starring Helen Hunt, Richard Dreyfuss and Stephen Moyer. Another major highlight is the new TV series "Outcast" from Robert Kirkman, creator of "The Walking Dead" series. Major motion pictures that filmed in the region were "Sully," directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Tom Hanks, and "Logan Lucky," directed by Steven Soderbergh and starring Daniel Craig and Channing Tatum.

The Charlotte region served as a backdrop for various commercials, including, but not limited to, NBC Sports, Pep Boys, Gatorade, Busch Beer, Coca-Cola, Nationwide, Travelers Insurance and American Airlines. A sampling of shows included MTV's "Catfish," Food Network's "BBQ Blitz" and CBS's "Undercover Boss." Total spending in the Charlotte region was \$83.75 million, with 7,400 hotel rooms booked, 2,924 crew positions filled and 142 leads on projects.

Operational Summary

Capital Summary for Venues

In FY2016, approximately \$3.9 million was invested in capital improvements for CRVA-managed venues. Noteworthy projects included bathroom and movable wall renovations, a new digital signage system, new exhibit hall LED lighting at the Charlotte Convention Center, modifications to the Hall of Honor at the NASCAR Hall of Fame, replacement of the scoreboard hoist system and an upgrade to the Chiller system at Bojangles' Coliseum, and replacement of the stage curtains at Ovens Auditorium.

Financial Summary:

For FY2016, the CRVA's venues generated revenues of \$35,950,144 and received external financial support totaling \$25,625,314. Operational and capital expenses for the fiscal year totaled \$59,699,692. The resulting \$1,875,766 surplus is part of the CRVA's fund balance.

As of June 30, 2016, after adjusting for non-cash items, the CRVA pre-audited working fund balance is \$12,985,069. The final audit was completed in October 2016.

FY2016 Highlights

1. **International Soccer:** In FY2015, the CRVA secured two major international soccer events that were played in July 2015. First up on July 15, the CONCACAF Gold Cup drew more than 50,000 attendees with two matchups, including Mexico vs. Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba vs. Guatemala. Ten days later, the International Champions Cup took to the field, with more than 61,000 fans filling the stadium and generating \$18.7 million in economic impact. Both demonstrate the growing grip that soccer has on the Charlotte region. The International Champions Cup was once again booked for July 2016 as well, drawing more than 53,600 fans.

The games are a result of five free dates that the CRVA has been allotted for partnering on Bank of America Stadium renovations. Ultimately, the availability of these dates should garner events that create sizable visitor spending and benefit the community through lasting economic impact. International soccer has proven to be a valuable investment to date, and the interest level from the community and prospective teams shows no signs of slowing down.

2. **Always Welcome:** In mid-April, the Always Welcome campaign launched. Always Welcome was designed to have a unifying theme that showcases the diversity and inclusiveness of the Charlotte community. It removes the current political atmosphere in North Carolina from the conversation and provides a way to express the city's can-do business climate, while also serving as a way residents can express how open and accepting Charlotte is. To date, the CRVA has invested approximately \$86,000 in the campaign.

The CRVA is not the only entity leading this campaign. Instead, it's been activated by a number of organizations across Charlotte ranging from economic development agencies to small and large business owners through promotional, earned media and grassroots efforts.

Always Welcome has been an important tool in addressing the concerns of meeting planners. It's a message that speaks directly to the values the Charlotte community holds dear and the atmosphere that meeting attendees will experience when they come to Charlotte. The CRVA has received feedback from several meeting planners who have shared how the campaign has been a helpful asset with the hosting organization's boards and meeting attendees in showcasing why Charlotte continues to be a viable and valuable destination for their events.

3. **Bojangles' Coliseum Renovation:** In FY2016, the CRVA completed phase one of a \$16 million renovation for Bojangles' Coliseum that enabled the Charlotte Checkers to return to the venue in fall 2015 and commenced on phase two of the renovation in summer 2016. Phase one included new seating, updated dressing rooms, a new Checkers locker room, renovations to concessions and the Coliseum Club (VIP area), a new scoreboard and sound system, and new sports lighting. Intense collaboration with the Charlotte Checkers, the City of Charlotte and the CRVA has been instrumental in this process. Phase two includes a new ice system for the ice floor and mechanical and electrical improvements.
4. **Jones Lang LaSalle Competitiveness Study:** Conducted by Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), a study commissioned by the CRVA provides a long-term outlook for the Charlotte Convention Center to keep it competitive, while also examining other city convention centers and how they're utilized as well as the surrounding destinations themselves. To provide a 360-degree perspective, JLL interviewed staff, customers, partners, constituents, meetings industry leaders, and major architects and designers. The study focused on six major areas, including the following:
 - Plan for expansion: Looking into the future, long-term suggestions were provided to make use of new convention center design approaches that create flexible, multipurpose space.
 - Maximize the impact of One CRVA: The CRVA has a unique advantage over other destinations because it combines the convention and visitor bureau expertise with venue management of the Charlotte Convention Center, NASCAR Hall of Fame and other venues. Traditionally in other cities, these are all separate entities. This recommendation seeks to position the CRVA as a "one-stop shop" for planners that ultimately yields more optimal results for the business they book here.

- Enhance the meeting experience: As the way meeting attendees do business evolves, the spaces in the center need to as well. This area speaks to designing effective meeting and public spaces that encourage networking, informal gatherings and effective learning environments.
 - Increase the amount of breakout space: Breakout space refers to the room configurations available to planners. Trends indicate the abundance of breakout space is essential to planners during the site selection process. We have previously lost business due to a lack of space. Options to increase the divisibility of current space were provided.
 - Create pedestrian-friendly connections: Meeting planners don't just select a convention center to host their event; they select a destination. Connectivity to a city's urban core from the convention center is also becoming increasingly important. The center is uniquely positioned given its location, but during further expansion and/or via the current development taking place, the visitor experience should be taken into account.
 - Develop a competitive technology plan: Technology needs for meeting attendees are ever-changing. To accommodate these needs, expansion of offerings as well as in-house or management-fee based technology operations that put pricing in the CRVA's control would be ideal.
5. **Growth of visitor spending:** The economic impact of tourism grew by 3 percent in 2015, with visitors infusing \$5 billion in domestic spending into Mecklenburg County. Mecklenburg County represents nearly 23 percent of all travel expenditures in the state and is the number one county in terms of travel spending. That spending is nearly 2.5 times the size of the next-largest county (Wake County is second at \$2.1 billion). State and local tax revenues from travel to Mecklenburg County totaled \$361 million, representing a \$349 tax saving for every county resident.

CRVA Requests for City Support

As a political subdivision of the City of Charlotte, the CRVA cannot make significant organizational change without the support of the City's appointed and elected officials. In FY2017, the CRVA will look to collaborate with the City on the following issues:

1. **Future of the Charlotte Convention Center:** Based on the enhancements outlined in the JLL study, the CRVA has created a plan for six key areas of focus to begin to hone in on in FY2017 and beyond. The original architect of the center, TVS, was contracted with to examine how to bring these structural enhancements to life. These initial renderings were shared with City Council on Sept. 12, 2016.
 - Stonewall Expansion: This would create an additional 26,000 square feet in meeting space with up to 15 more meeting rooms. This addition would provide substantial breakout flexibility for events, which ranks as one of the biggest demands by meeting planners.
 - Pedestrian Connection: The glass exterior along Stonewall Street would also have connectivity to the light rail and adjacent development that includes the new Whole Foods. This area, which

ultimately connects people to the center, retail, dining and hotels, would have a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere similar to city projects such as New York City's High Line.

- Ballroom Terrace Expansion: The Terrace is one of the areas of the facility that has some of the best city views but has long been underutilized due to the weather-dependent nature of this outdoor space. This enhancement seeks to enclose the area to create a light-filled atrium that could be utilized for events. There would also be 8,000 square feet of meeting room space or up to three meeting rooms constructed here in addition to partitions that allow for open-air access to the revamped outdoor terrace.
 - Richardson Ballroom Divisions: The ballroom is currently divisible into four spaces but when subdivided, only three are accessible to attendees. The fourth only has access via an employee corridor. This enhancement would accommodate this fix, while also adding air walls that allow for six configurations instead of four.
 - Flex Hall/Hall C Renovation: The 80,000 square foot Hall C would still allow for open exhibit hall space for trade shows and events but would add the potential for 12 breakout configurations. To create a ballroom atmosphere as needed, removable carpet tiles and a lowering light truss system would create a more intimate environment for events that need it. This lowering light truss system is important because it will ensure the room expands (walls and ceilings included) to make the proportions feel right for any size event that the space hosts. The center would be the only venue in the nation to offer such an amenity for events.
 - Additional Opportunities: The center has also examined opportunities to enhance the space under the existing light rail, create a more dynamic entrance for Exhibit Halls A and B, construct an event space above the light rail and design informal collaboration spaces throughout the facility.
2. **Memorial Stadium:** Proposed enhancements to Memorial Stadium will be a way Charlotte can preserve and honor the history of a treasured landmark, while breathing new life into a destination that can grow soccer and amateur sports for the community. The \$24.4 million three-way partnership with Mecklenburg County, the Charlotte Independence and the City of Charlotte/CRVA will seek to start construction in 2017, with the reopening of the venue in late 2018/early 2019.

The renovation will be a connective thread for Midtown that serves as an important gateway for surrounding neighborhoods, like Elizabeth and Cherry, while also linking important infrastructure such as transit and our Greenway network.

3. **Development of Visitor Assets and Events:** The City and CRVA should continue to work collaboratively on the future of Charlotte as a destination of choice for tourism, conventions and special events. Plans should be created to invest in assets that support this development. Funding should be improved to continue marketing Charlotte to visitors and to create opportunities for Charlotte to compete on a national and international level for destination-defining events like the 2012 Democratic National Convention, international soccer and more.

Spending that supports the visitor economy continues to be a vital catalyst in ensuring Charlotte is an attractive place to live, work, play and visit. Tourism and hospitality generates approximately \$5 billion annually in Mecklenburg County. In turn, this visitor spending has supported major events that also generate economic impact as well as the creation of some of Charlotte's most notable assets. These assets include but are not limited to: BB&T Ballpark, Levine Center for the Arts, Bank of America Stadium and Spectrum Center (formerly Time Warner Cable Arena). The CRVA strives to be careful stewards of the dollars entrusted to it. The CRVA encourages the City to support the tourism industry and the long-lasting dividends it continues to help procure for the Charlotte region.