

Nov. 7, 2017

Dear Mayor Roberts and Charlotte City Council Members,

Enclosed, you will find the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) Annual Report for fiscal year 2017 (FY17). This year, the City was heavily involved in shaping the trajectory of our organizational progress in several ways. From the next phases of the expansion at the Charlotte Convention Center to the execution of major events, including the PGA Championship and 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 the past five years. This journey has promoted collaboration across all eight CRVA brands and an "employee-first" environment that works to engage employees so their enthusiasm helps drive positive customer experiences. This internal work has also helped to make the CRVA a more strategic, evidence-based 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 while our community may have faced challenges in FY17, hotel performance indicators for the hospitality industry were still strong in FY17. Visitor spending generated more than \$6.7 billion for the entire Charlotte region with visitors infusing \$5.2 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**

### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

The importance of employee engagement is well proven in generating higher productivity, happier employees and greater levels of customer service. The culture journey the CRVA has been on the past five years has been strongly committed to fostering high levels of employee engagement; it's one of the primary internal performance indicators the organization continues to keep a close eye on as it relates to the CRVA's organizational excellence trajectory.

Fortunately, the employee engagement index continues to grow year after year. This is measured through quarterly "Pulse" surveys that gauge key areas such as communications, benefits, compensation, diversity, safety in the workplace and leadership. The CRVA also conducts an annual, more comprehensive survey called VOICE.

Results from the FY17 annual VOICE survey were among the highest the organization has seen to date. The CRVA's engagement index increased to 87 percent favorability, placing the organization within reach of the top 10 percent of 1,600 benchmarked national companies across various industries, including hospitality, technology, manufacturing, service and healthcare.

### **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

As part of the CRVA's continued customer experience strategy to lead in destination visitor experience, the team made significant strides in FY17 to amplify customer service training and reinforce the organization's commitment "to deliver memorable customer experiences." The service level the CRVA strives to reach creates lifelong brand advocates and becomes synonymous with perceptions about CRVA brands and venues. The organization worked to strengthen customer experience initiatives through the following ways:

- A transition to Net Promoter Score (NPS) in evaluating customer experience. Instead of measuring CRVA brands against themselves internally, the organization began to utilize the NPS best practice, which measures CRVA brands against some of the best corporations in the world (i.e. Amazon, Lexus).  
  
NPS ultimately rates on the likelihood in which a customer would recommend a particular brand or service to someone else. The average NPS of CRVA's brands in FY17 landed at 65.7 percent, which falls in line with companies such as Southwest and Apple.
- Preparation and planning to roll out a customized online portal entitled CRVA University, which offers a wide selection of quality training and development opportunities tailored to CRVA employees.
- Exploration with journey mapping exercises for CRVA brands, which are intended to illustrate the steps customers go through when they engage with the CRVA. The overall product gives team members a holistic view of ways they can impact the customer's experience beyond transactional moments.
- Identification of customer experience ambassadors across CRVA departments to assist in leading these efforts.
- A position in Human Resources committed to building and sustaining initiatives surrounding customer experience that create engaged employees who will, in turn, provide memorable experiences to the customer.

## CRVA STRATEGIC PLAN

FY17 marks the end of the fourth year of work on the CRVA's Strategic Plan. A Kaplan Norton-style plan was developed internally by Senior Leadership and was approved by Executive Leadership and the Board of Directors in FY14. Becoming a strategically based organization has been a major shift in recent years that 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.

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 the CRVA is consistently working to drive strategy. In FY17, 27 targets were identified on the scorecard to work toward achieving. A sampling of three of these targets and associated outcomes is included in the following chart as examples of the type of work that's been taking place.

The past three years of activity on the Strategic Plan have created a solid foundation for the FY17 Balanced Scorecard. With much groundwork in activities in process and benchmark development now under the CRVA's belt, this year shifted from activity-based to results-based measurement, which marks an important evolution in the strategic journey. The organization is well on its way to accomplishing its five-year Strategic Plan.

# 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.



Strategic Objective	Target	Outcome
Maximize Customer-Facing Resources	Grow CRVA economic impact faster than Mecklenburg County gross domestic product (GDP).	In FY16, the CRVA embarked on a study to measure the economic impact of the organization's brands (leisure advertising, meetings, conventions, sporting events and venues such as the NASCAR Hall of Fame, Bojangles' Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium). The goal with this measure was to examine progress against the CRVA's strategy and to support overall advocacy efforts. The CRVA was able to effectively set a benchmark for FY16 and then follow up with an FY17 study to measure progress. The CRVA will be sharing this impact with City Council in the near future and will continue to measure economic impact year-over-year.
Create a Convention District	Prioritize the convention district plan.	A study that examined the long-term competitiveness of Charlotte as a meetings destination was completed in FY16. The staff spent time reviewing the recommendations and then prioritizing what would yield the most impactful results. The result of this planning are the Charlotte Convention Center expansion priorities outlined via the \$110 million allocation approved by Charlotte City Council.
Execute Effective Decision-Making	Update 100 percent of companywide business initiatives.	The CRVA implemented a planning tool called Business Initiatives to increase collaboration and enable strategic alignment with its Executive Leadership and Senior Leadership teams. Department heads create business initiatives for the fiscal year, which outline strategic priorities fundamental to specific departments. Business Initiatives must demonstrate relevance to the Strategic Plan and connectivity to other departmental priorities. This process is also the kickoff for CRVA fiscal year budgeting and the initiatives are used as a jumping-off point for department heads to ensure alignment of priorities. The CRVA completed business initiatives companywide successfully in FY17.

This year marked the end of the third straight year of successful Balanced Scorecard measurement. The scorecard accomplished 15 points of a potential 20 points that measured 27 potential targets. As CRVA embarks on its fifth

year of the Strategic Plan, the organization will also run a parallel path in shaping the next five-year iteration of a Strategic Plan.

## **Operational Performance**

### **BOJANGLES' COLISEUM**

In FY17, Bojangles' Coliseum hosted a total of 89 events compared to a budgeted event volume of 95 events. This was an increase of nearly a dozen events over the previous year. Event highlights for FY17 included two sold-out concerts: The Chainsmokers and The Avett Brothers. Other artists this year included Anthony Hamilton with Johnny Gill, Katt Williams, Casting Crowns, the Charlotte Music Fest featuring Keith Sweat, and the OUTCRY Tour. The venue also hosted a winning season for the Charlotte Checkers and supported strong attendance for the team throughout their season, including a bid to the playoffs for the first time since 2013 and making it to the second round of the Calder Cup series. Strong promotions like Pink in the Rink, 1950s night, NASCAR night and Pooch Party continued to be fan favorites.

Graduations continue to be a staple at the Coliseum with 13 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) high school graduations, as well as graduations for Central Piedmont Community College, the University of Phoenix and Gaston College. The Coliseum rounded out its fiscal year by hosting the final five performances of Sesame Street Live with VStar Entertainment. VStar has held the rights to the show for 30 years, and Bojangles' Coliseum has had the privilege of hosting for the majority of that time. Even with the Coliseum under construction over the summer and closed until mid-October, the venue still welcomed more than 286,000 visitors to the arena.

As part of City Council's approval of funding related to the Capital Improvement Plan, the CRVA team has been actively working on the connection between Bojangles' Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium. The enhancements will aid in additional restroom capacity, concession offerings, circulation space between the venues and connectivity for CRVA staff and productions utilizing the venues. The complex has also alleviated parking issues with the EconoLodge demolition last year, which created 600 new spaces.

### **OVENS AUDITORIUM**

In FY17, Ovens Auditorium hosted a total of 106 events compared to a budgeted event volume of 100 events. The venue hosted a variety of performers from singer/songwriters, urban artists, illusionists, comedians, dancers and more. Some of the most popular events were Steve Martin and Martin Short: An Evening You'll Forget, Move - Beyond with Derek and Julianne Hough, and Dan TDM.

Like Bojangles' Coliseum, Ovens Auditorium also has rich history hosting graduations; the venue hosted eight CMS high school graduations as well as the graduations for Brightwood College and Charlotte School of Law. Beyond graduations, Ovens also has a long history of hosting dance recitals and competitions. In FY17, Ovens hosted six local dance recitals and competitions, including the 25th anniversary recital for B.B. Dance Productions. During all of these performances and community events, Ovens welcomed more than 127,500 visitors.

## **SPECTRUM CENTER**

The CRVA continued a successful partnership with the Charlotte Hornets to provide back-of-house services at the Spectrum Center in FY17. The partnership with the team is evaluated on the ways the CRVA provides effective and economically efficient services to the Hornets and the members of the Charlotte community who attend the events there. In FY17, the operations of the CRVA were billed to the Hornets at a cost of \$7.5 million in support of 96 events.

The CRVA provided support in the execution of the venue's capital expenditure programs as well as the City of Charlotte's ongoing Capital Improvement Plan projects. These included the construction of a new fan shop and box office. Technical audio, IT upgrades, and energy efficiency upgrades such as improvements to Spectrum's HVAC and lighting systems were also included in FY17.

## **CHARLOTTE CONVENTION CENTER**

During FY17, the Charlotte Convention Center hosted 268 events with 265,046 in total registered attendance, including 34 conventions and trade shows, 15 assemblies, 20 consumer shows, and 199 local events. These events enabled the Convention Center to surpass budget by 9 percent and generate approximately \$17.7 million in revenue for the year.

Noteworthy events hosted by the Convention Center in FY17 included Herbalife International of America, Association for Molecular Pathology, and the Bojangles' Restaurants Inc. 2017 Annual Convention. The venue completed several important capital projects in FY17, including the modernization of the restrooms in exhibit halls A and B.

The CRVA also unveiled an expansion proposal for the Convention Center in FY17. The proposal encompasses expanding breakout space on the south side of the building and adding a pedestrian bridge connection to The Westin Charlotte. The expansion will ensure the Convention Center remains competitive as meeting planners are requiring increased breakout space flexibility and a greater connection to Charlotte's Center City amenities. Charlotte's City Council has endorsed the project and approved funding to complete design work and a future allocation for the expansion.

## **NASCAR HALL OF FAME**

After completing the seventh year of operations, the NASCAR Hall of Fame has evolved to a successful and balanced model to achieve the CRVA's vision in creating a premier sports hall of fame, a leader in defining what it means to honor a sport, and a defining destination asset for the Charlotte region. Operating revenue for the Hall for FY17 totaled \$6.7 million, up 7.6 percent from \$6.2 million in FY16.

The Hall generates \$40.3 million in direct spending. A large piece of this direct spending is achieved from visitors. More than 90 percent of the Hall's guests travel more than 50 miles, and 60 percent travel more than 200 miles or more. More than 40 percent indicate that their primary reason for visiting Charlotte is to explore the Hall, and the average spend per party when visiting is \$708. This demonstrates what a bucket-list experience the landmark has become.

Another important component of this direct spending is related to the event volume the venue sees. Meeting planners are often searching for venues that represent the one-of-a-kind experiences found in Charlotte, and the Hall has become a go-to option, hosting more than 300 events annually. The Hall has increasingly become the choice destination for industry announcements and press events as well. Dozens of paint scheme unveils, media days and sponsorship announcements happened at the Hall throughout the year, ultimately providing insider access that enhances guest experiences.

Additional events and programs have also been bolstered in FY17 to increase revenue potential including a robust education program with 14,000 students participating over the past year, the membership program, the Racing Insiders Tour and community events targeted at local audiences. The latter includes sold-out “Breakfast with Santa” and “Easter Egg 400” holiday events in addition to many others that further cement the Hall’s appeal to diverse audiences.

In January 2017, the Hall remained committed to its mission to honor the history and heritage of NASCAR by inducting another class of icons: Richard Childress, Rick Hendrick, Mark Martin, Raymond Parks and Benny Parsons. To date, the Hall has inducted 40 icons. In addition, the Hall honored H. Clay Earles as the Landmark Award winner and Benny Phillips as the Squier-Hall Award winner. The CRVA also refreshed and created several exhibits in FY17, including the “Memorable Moments” installation in the Theater Lobby, the third iteration of Glory Road, and the “Smoke: A Tribute to Tony Stewart” and the “PETTY: Building a Family Legacy” exhibits.

## **VISIT CHARLOTTE**

Visit Charlotte continued to provide destination sales and marketing services to the surging Charlotte hospitality market in FY17. Mecklenburg County hotel performance accounted for year-over-year growth in many categories.

- **Occupancy** – 71.6 percent, down 2.1 percent over previous 12 months.
- **Average daily rate (ADR)** – \$111.43, up 3.6 percent over previous 12 months.
- **Revenue per available room (RevPAR)** – \$79.43, up 1.4 percent over previous 12 months.
- **Total county revenue** – \$733.9 million, up 4.8 percent over the previous 12 months.
- **Demand** – 6.59 million rooms sold, up 1.2 percent over the previous year.

In FY17, Visit Charlotte booked 375 total events for future years. Approximately 44 of those events were Charlotte Convention Center events. Of the 350,741 room nights associated with the 375 events, 142,324 were tied to the Convention Center. Amateur sports accounted for 77 events and 210,151 room nights, representing 59 percent of Visit Charlotte’s total room night production in FY17 and 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 FY17. Visit Charlotte Convention Services provided support to 172 events. Visitor Information Center operations, which include the Visitor Info Center at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, serviced 240,973 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 final stages and will open in late fall 2017.

Regarding impacts related to House Bill 2 (HB2), the CRVA and Visit Charlotte remained steadfast in the commitment to demonstrate to visitors and customers how much the city values diversity via the Always Welcome campaign. Many impacts may be felt in future years as meeting planners tend to book three to five years in the future. Although the CRVA experienced \$83.9 million in cancellations for current and future years related to HB2, the number of clients who removed Charlotte from the consideration set altogether is difficult to quantify. The team worked hard to keep groups from canceling by conveying how important their business was to Charlotte.

## **CHARLOTTE FILM**

Charlotte Film continues to serve as a subset of Visit Charlotte given its strong connectivity to creating jobs and opportunities through visitor spending. Film does exactly that for the community. Crews who 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 FY17 include season two of "Outcast" and "American Animals." The Charlotte region served as a backdrop for various commercials, including, but not limited to, Honda, Wendy's, McDonald's, Under Armour, Lending Tree, Toyota, Land Rover, Pepsi, Volvo Truck, Meineke and others. A sampling of reality shows included "The Real Housewives of Atlanta," "What Would You Do?," "Boat Buyers," "My Big Fat Fabulous Life," "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" and others. Total spending in the Charlotte region was \$43.8 million, with 5,997 hotel rooms booked, 2,097 crew positions filled and 167 leads on projects.

## **Operational Summary**

### **CAPITAL SUMMARY FOR VENUES**

In FY17, approximately \$6.2 million was invested in capital improvements for CRVA-managed venues. Noteworthy projects included schematic designs for future expansion, bathroom and office space renovations, new exhibit hall LED lighting at the Charlotte Convention Center, modifications to the Hall of Honor and the replacement of the exterior video board at the NASCAR Hall of Fame, improvements to the Red Line Club at Bojangles' Coliseum, new stage risers and LED Lighting at Ovens Auditorium, and a number of audio and technical upgrades at Spectrum Center.

### **FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

For FY17, CRVA venues generated revenues of \$38,318,817 and received external financial support totaling \$30,418,552. Operational and capital expenses for the fiscal year totaled \$64,579,048. The resulting \$4,158,321 surplus is part of the CRVA fund balance.

As of June 30, 2017, after adjusting for non-cash items, the CRVA pre-audited working fund balance is \$15,244,574. The final audit is available as of November 2017.

## **FY17 Highlights**

### **ALWAYS WELCOME**

House Bill 2 (HB2) passed in the third quarter of FY16, and the CRVA worked to launch the Always Welcome campaign, which was designed to have a unifying theme that showcased the diversity and inclusiveness of the Charlotte community. It removed the current political atmosphere in North Carolina from the conversation and provided a way to express the city's can-do business climate, while also serving as a way residents could express how open and accepting Charlotte is.

The CRVA continued to utilize the Always Welcome campaign throughout FY17, primarily through meeting and convention sales avenues. Always Welcome was a powerful message that spoke to meeting planners during the height of HB2 concerns because it spoke directly to the values the Charlotte community holds dear and the atmosphere that meeting attendees will experience when they come to Charlotte. To date, the CRVA has invested approximately \$100,000 in the campaign in outdoor display and promotional efforts. A large majority of activation was grassroots by organizations ranging from economic development agencies to small and large business owners.

Next-generation branding for the destination brand seeks to capture the essence of Always Welcome by highlighting how the differences of many make us a stronger community. The campaign will phase out, but its ultimate purpose will be carried forward with strong destination visuals and intentional messaging.

### **STRATEGIC EVENTS**

Since FY15, the CRVA has referenced a powerful study that was released as support for its continued advocacy of the region's tourism industry and, specifically, its visitor economy. Conducted by Oxford Economics, the study, "Destination Promotion: An Engine of Economic Development," points to how promoting a city for tourism can elevate its overall competitiveness on the economic development front. These include "building transportation networks, raising the destination profile, raising the quality of life and attracting strategic events."

Regarding strategic events, the CRVA has been strongly committed to recruiting and executing events of this caliber. These types of events create valuable exposure among business decision-makers, while also creating direct opportunities for economic development agencies to deepen valuable connections with attendees.

A strong example of this is the PGA Championship, which sold tickets in 49 of 50 states and 66 countries in addition to airing 28 hours of coverage that reached 500 million households globally. A monetary marketing value couldn't be placed on the amount of exposure an international event of this magnitude generates. The CRVA supported the strong leadership of Johnny Harris and the PGA team, working to ensure execution was exceptional via parking operations, volunteer support, citywide welcome signage, VIP assistance, and marketing and communications efforts to bolster exposure for the event.

The CRVA was also pleased to welcome back into its schedule future strategic events following concerns surrounding House Bill 2. The 2019 NBA All-Star Game and the 2018 ACC Football Championship will once again be held in the Queen City. The CRVA will continue to recruit major strategic events that create value well beyond

economic impact for the Charlotte community. They produce valuable marketing exposure that helps to brand the city, which in turn positively positions Charlotte for jobs and opportunities that benefit quality of life for its residents.

## **CHARLOTTE CONVENTION CENTER EXPANSION**

Expansion plans for the Charlotte Convention Center are moving forward with the recent approval by Charlotte City Council for \$8.5 million in design/development phase costs and an allocation of \$110 million from the Convention Center tax fund debt capacity. Expansion recommendations were based on a study commissioned by the CRVA in FY16 to see how the Convention Center could remain competitive long-term. Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), the company that completed the study, examined other city convention centers and how they're utilized as well as the surrounding destinations themselves.

To recap conversations throughout FY17, proposed improvements to the 22-year-old Convention Center include increased breakout space on the Stonewall Street side of the venue; expanded accessibility to Center City amenities, hotels and transportation options via a pedestrian bridge; and the addition of flexible breakout space in the Richardson Ballroom. Related to square footage, the expansion will increase the capacity of the existing meeting level by 26,000 square feet of breakout space composed of 15 meeting rooms ranging from 940 to 2,600 square feet, 24,000 square feet of pre-function space and the ability to configure the Richardson Ballroom into four meeting rooms (7,700 square feet each).

TVS was awarded the design contract for schematic design work. TVS has led design work on more convention centers than any other architectural firm (more than 80 venues since 1968). Once underway in spring 2019, the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. During this time, the Convention Center will remain open and able to accommodate groups based on the availability of meeting and exhibit hall spaces. The CRVA will continue to work closely on the expansion with the City and share updates as the project progresses.

## **CONNECTION BETWEEN BOJANGLES' COLISEUM & OVENS AUDITORIUM**

Charlotte City Council approved a highly functional connection between Bojangles' Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium that solves for kitchen and production space, usable special event and promoter space within Bojangles' Coliseum, additional restroom capacity and concessions outlets, increased circulation space for both facilities, storage and overall connectivity for both venues. Additionally, a 6,000-square-foot multipurpose hospitality space will be added for pre-function space and potential event rentals.

The addition of the connector between the two venues follows renovations made to the Coliseum in FY15 and FY16. The partnership between the Charlotte Checkers and the Coliseum has been a strong one since the team's arrival in fall 2015. The \$16 million renovation provided necessary enhancements such as new seating, revamped concessions, a new sound system and a new scoreboard. This connection project is slated to be finished by spring 2019, making the historic complex more competitive for promoters and enhancing the overall customer experience for its patrons.

## **GROWTH OF VISITOR SPENDING**

Visitor spending in Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte region hit record highs again in 2016. This is a powerful metric that demonstrates how the tourism industry in the Charlotte region creates jobs, generates tax savings for residents and improves the quality of life for entire community. Mecklenburg County led all North Carolina's 100 counties in domestic travelers' expenditures at nearly \$5.2 billion, and visitors across the Charlotte region spent more than \$6.7 billion.

Mecklenburg County currently generates nearly a quarter of all visitor spending in the state, positioning the county as the leader of all 100 counties in North Carolina. Visitors are spending more money in Mecklenburg County than any other tourism-centric destination in the Carolinas, including Raleigh, Asheville, Charleston and Myrtle Beach.

Visitor spending is also fueling job growth in Charlotte. The leisure and hospitality industry represents one in nine jobs in the Charlotte region, and it grew at a faster pace than total employment in 2016. It is the fourth largest industry for employment in the region. Because of tourism tax revenues, each Mecklenburg County resident saves roughly \$352 on his or her taxes annually.

## **CRVA Requests for City Support**

### **PLACE BRANDING OF CHARLOTTE**

Destination branding has long been a top priority for the CRVA, which has proven to be a sound investment and contributor to visitor spending. For every dollar of consumer-facing paid media the CRVA spends to promote Charlotte as a destination, \$115 in new spending is generated by visitors in return. Last fiscal year, the CRVA embarked on an evolution of the destination brand, "Charlotte's got a lot." One of the top drivers of this evolution was the desire for stronger collaboration among the City and Charlotte's economic development partners, which would allow the destination to speak with a unified voice when positioning itself as an ideal place to live, work, play and visit.

This collaboration evolves to a concept internationally known as place branding. It's also a timely need. The repeal of House Bill 2 has reopened some doors in bringing back meetings and events to North Carolina, and the community continues to heal after the civil unrest by setting an aggressive agenda to tackle access to opportunity, affordable housing, job creation and trust in community policing. However, Charlotte has reputational recovery needs to consider as the city is positioned for increased visitor spending and economic development that provide opportunities to expedite these aforementioned needs.

In FY18, the CRVA will supplement its efforts with an additional \$3 million earmarked from existing hospitality tax funding streams. This will be targeted to bolster consumer-facing paid media and business development support to aid in the recruitment of meetings and events.

Although it takes years of branding and millions of positive impressions to garner long-term results, this is the first phase. The CRVA has spearheaded and funded the evolution of this city brand in partnership with City of Charlotte staff. The full launch is expected in winter 2018, and the CRVA looks forward to continued collaboration with the City,

local economic development partners and the community in the rollout and execution of sustained branding efforts that generate results.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF VISITOR ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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. Through this partnership, plans should continue to be created to invest in assets that support this development. In addition, the CRVA asks the City to continue evaluating funding needs for marketing Charlotte to visitors and to create opportunities for Charlotte to compete on a national and international level for destination-defining events such as the 2012 Democratic National Convention, the PGA Championship, 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 \$5.2 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. The CRVA strives to be a careful steward 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.