



Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Strategic Plan 2025

Plan Developed: March – June, 2022

Draft 1 V.1



EXPLORE
CABARRUS
COUNTY • NC

This strategic plan builds on the prior plans from 2011 and 2018. It is market research-based and includes input from community, civic and travel industry leaders.

Cabarrus County, North Carolina - CHOOSE YOUR SPEED OF FUN

Positioned in the rolling countryside of the Carolina Piedmont, Cabarrus County is located in south-central North Carolina just to the northeast of uptown Charlotte, North Carolina. The Charlotte metro region is home to more than 1.8 million people and includes the Cabarrus County cities of Concord and Kannapolis as well as the towns of Harrisburg, Midland and Mount Pleasant.

Cabarrus County is defined by a collection of unique experiences. Every stop, every story adds to the character of this dynamic destination, and you're invited to explore them all. Immerse yourself in must-see main attractions and wander off the beaten path. Fasten your seatbelt for an adrenaline rush, then kick back and relax. Take part in tradition and try out the latest additions. From fresh activities at well-known attractions to brand new adventures, the offerings here are ever-changing.

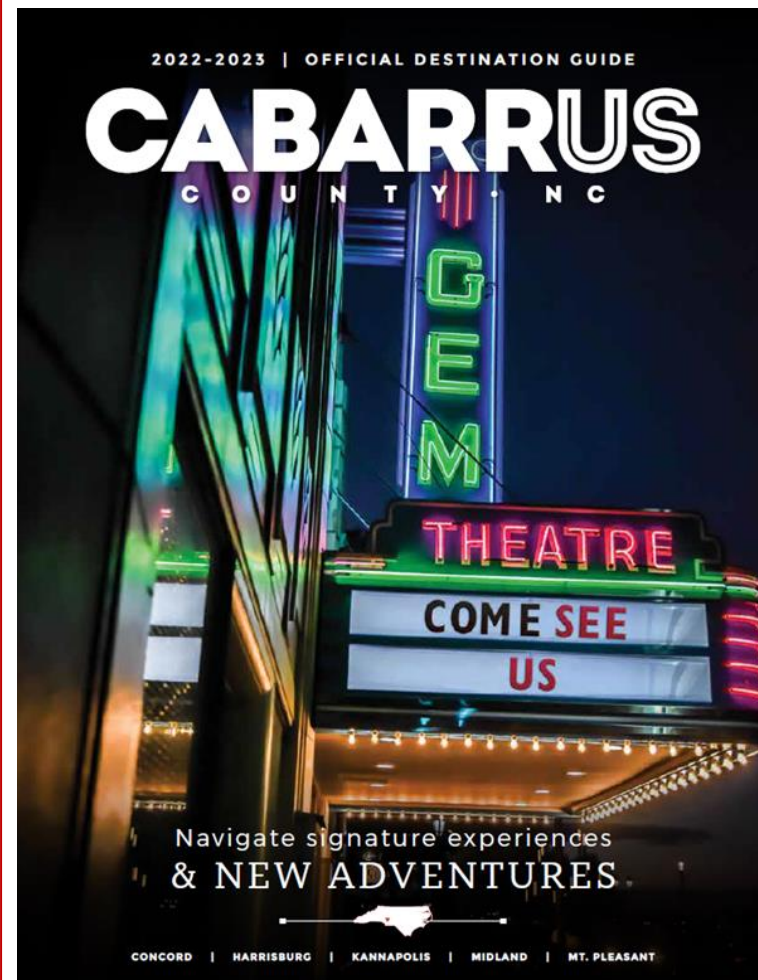
Tourism is big business in Cabarrus County and requires a smart strategy for this economic development effort. In 2019, tourism generated \$515.7 million in visitor spending in Cabarrus County (1.8% of all visitor spending statewide), ranking 12th in travel impact among North Carolina's 100 counties.

The Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) is tasked with promoting Cabarrus County as a destination. CCCVB is fully accredited with Destinations International as a destination marketing and management organization.

The Mission and Vision of the CCCVB are:

MISSION: Drive visitation to Cabarrus County to generate the maximum impact through hotel stays and visitor spending for the economic benefit of all residents.

VISION: To continually grow and sustain a dynamic travel industry to become the number one economic force in Cabarrus County.



Overall Direction

Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) operating as Explore Cabarrus County, NC is a destination marketing and management organization solely focused on the progressive growth of the travel industry in Cabarrus County. A thriving travel industry improves the local economy for the benefit of all citizens.

The Cabarrus County CVB is committed to promoting and building awareness of Cabarrus County as a leisure and group destination with the highest caliber staff in the industry providing leadership and innovation to drive:

- Increased overnight and day-trip visitation
- Increased spending per travel party
- Longer average length of stay
- Increased visitor satisfaction

Cabarrus County CVB is committed to creating a total visitor entertainment destination by providing leadership and innovation from the Board of Directors and staff focused on improved and expanded overall visitor experience with new activities:

Marketing - An expanding tourism economy focused on attractors such as the Speedway and racing experiences, Great Wolf Lodge, Concord Mills Mall, SeaLife Aquarium, NC Music Hall of Fame, Cannon Ballers Baseball, Reed Gold Mine, distilleries and the downtowns of Concord, Kannapolis and Mount Pleasant.

Master Planning for County-wide growth:

- New and improved meeting/event space with lodging to support it
- Connectivity between three traveler activity hubs (Exit 49, Concord and Kannapolis)
- Improved road and pedestrian infrastructure including a recreational trail system
- Enhance and expand Concord USA air connectivity and mobility to and from the airport
- Funding to support projects that are essential for travel industry growth

Advocacy for travel industry issues and partnership with other economic development entities

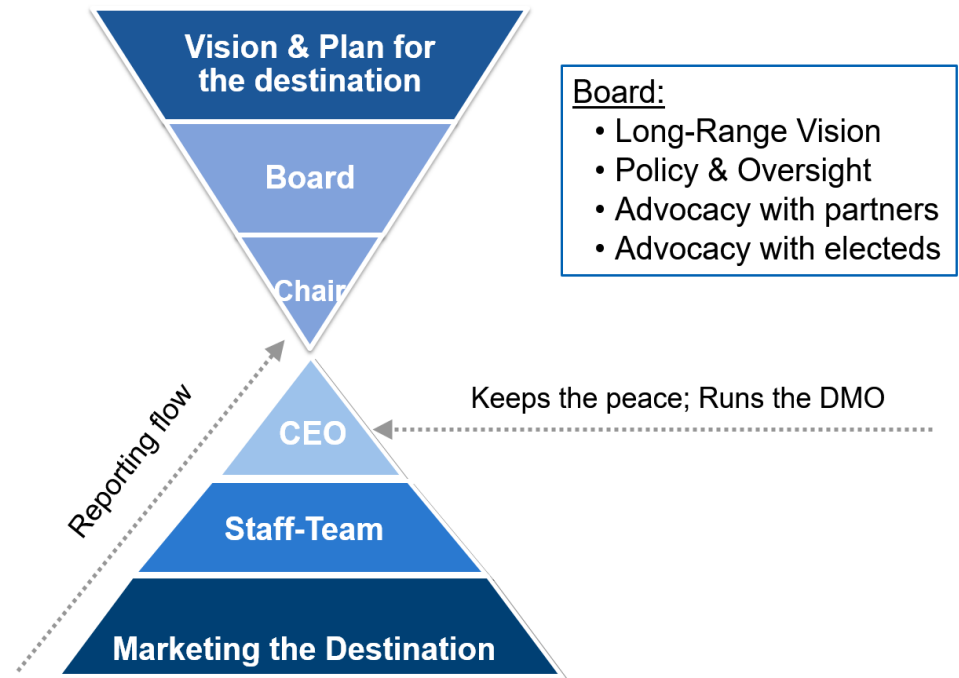
- Identify and address issues affecting the travel industry
- Workforce – fostering a highly skilled hospitality workforce to support travel industry businesses
- Maintain an updated crisis communications plan



Strategic Vision for Cabarrus County as a Destination

- Maintain high visitor lodging occupancy while not exceeding the destination's carrying capacity.
- Enhance I-85 gateway exits to welcome visitors, create a sense of place based on the brand and direct first-time visitors to the Exit 49 Visitor Center.
- Plan for a long-term visitor center and offices for CCCVB.
- Support the development of improved visitor assets, attractions and group event venues through deeper partner engagement.
 - New sports and event venues designed to drive increased destination appeal in the shoulder and off-season.
 - Support expanded or new meeting/event facilities and other tourism amenities with the lodging that meets visitor demand.
- Continue infrastructure improvements that provide safe mobility for pedestrians; encourage walking, cycling; reduce vehicular traffic; improved curb appeal for a more attractive destination. The installation of curbing, wide sidewalks, turning lanes, bike lanes, lighting, pedestrian bridges and signage.
- A well-trained and abundant hospitality industry workforce with maximum year-round full-time jobs.

CCCVB STRUCTURE



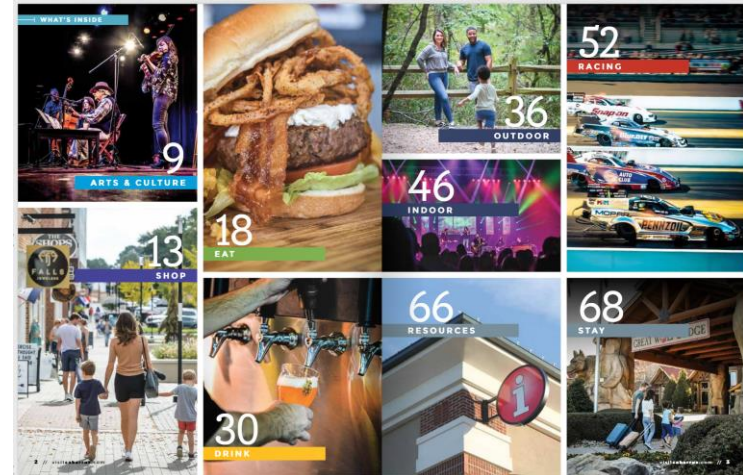
Board Focus

The CCCVB Board of Directors will be engaged in two primary functions:

- 1) **Providing proper oversight** related to the function and ROI of the staff's research-based marketing of the destination.
- 2) **Fulfill the vision for Cabarrus County in 2025** in partnership with County Officials and other economic development groups. CCCVB will foster, facilitate and encourage the growth and development of the destination.

1. Marketing - An expanding tourism economy focused on attractors such as the Speedway and racing experiences, Great Wolf Lodge, Concord Mills Mall, SeaLife Aquarium, NC Music Hall of Fame, Cannon Ballers Baseball, Reed Gold Mine, distilleries and the downtowns of Concord, Kannapolis and Mount Pleasant. Visit Cabarrus (CCCVB) will meet the highest standards of accreditation and performance (research driven ROI) with measurable results as a research-based DMO (destination marketing and management organization).

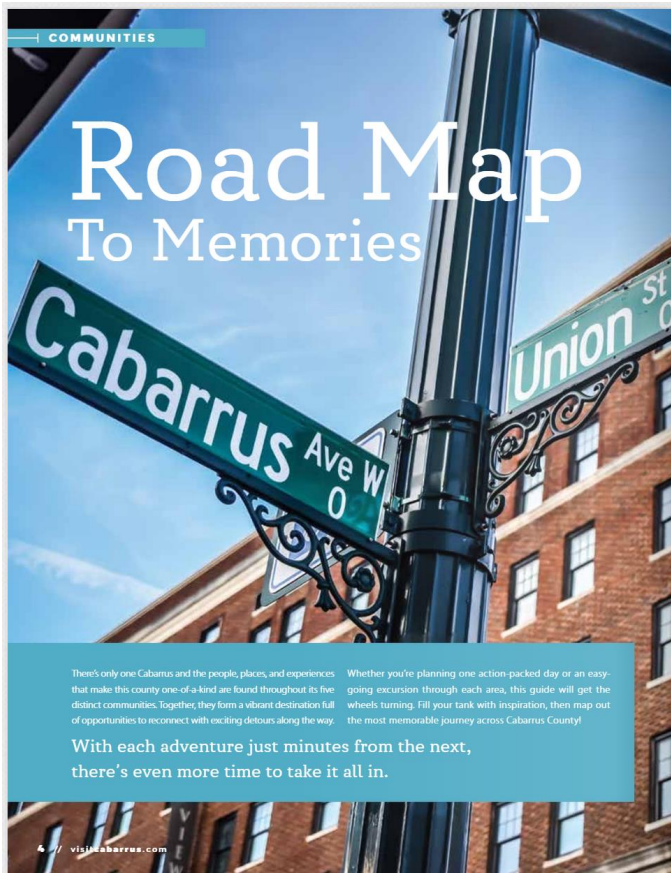
- CCCVB is a research-based marketing organization meeting the highest standards of DMO operations. Maintain accreditation with Destinations International. Update research and marketing strategy continually as part of an annual plan that is supported by the local travel industry.
- Deliver on the brand and expand the brand as an entertainment destination to appeal to new and varied audiences. Broaden reach into new geographic territories and increase demand for inbound air travel to Cabarrus County.
- Support the staff in achieving the highest standards of excellence and performance through on-going education, certifications, measurement and accountability. Maintain competitive wages/benefits and foster a creative and supportive work environment where the team thrives and continues to produce award winning sales and marketing programs.
- Partner with Charlotte region, North Carolina and southeast travel industry partners to leverage the brand and reach a wider audience.
- Provide leadership to the Cabarrus County travel industry through training, co-op sales/marketing programs, and workforce development.
- Provide dynamic visitor information services for individual, group and event visitors to drive increased spending in-market.
- Tracking and accountability to demonstrate highest possible Return-on-Investment (ROI) – Lodging market segmentation research of key performance metrics (KPIs) and lodging revenue tracking/analysis.



Measurable Success:

- ☐ Destinations International Accreditation
- ☐ Annual Plan with trackable ROI
- ☐ Awards & Certifications
- ☐ Increased participation in partner programs
- ☐ Growth in lodging room demand & ADR
- ☐ Staff Retention
- ☐ Group sales growth
- ☐ Increased visitor center attendance
- ☐ Longer length of stay
- ☐ Increased Spending
- ☐ Increased visitor satisfaction
- ☐ Increased inbound air travel

Strategic Initiatives



2. Master Planning for County-wide growth – CCCVB will facilitate a destination master planning process pulling-in elements from plans throughout the County to provide a comprehensive vision for travel industry growth and sustainability. CCCVB will also monitor destination trends to ensure that Cabarrus County remains competitive as a destination within a larger metro area. Identify opportunities to secure funding for project vital to growth.

- a) Improved pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails – additional pedestrian and bicycle paths/trails will make it easier for visitors to migrate from hotels to dining, shopping and activities without using a vehicle. Access to rental bikes, golf carts, etc. will increase use of non-motorized transportation.
- b) Improved gateways and connectivity between communities within the County.
- c) Enhance and expand ConcordUSA air connectivity
- d) Meeting/event space – Cabarrus County has excellent facilities for conferences and meetings that operate at near capacity most months of the year. Additional meeting space attached to lodging would facilitate increased demand.
- e) Team sports/competition facilities – build on the success of current sports facilities and add new facilities to drive demand during the weeks with the lowest hotel occupancy.
- f) Unique shopping & dining – The addition of local boutique/style, unique shopping and dining in the downtown areas of Kannapolis and Concord will increase the appeal of these communities.
- g) Attractions – increase activities and attractors in Kannapolis, Concord and Harrisburg to distribute visitors throughout the County.

Measurable Success:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improved gateways from I-85 and into communities | <input type="checkbox"/> Expanded/New Meeting Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expanded trail networks with bicycle rentals | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports facilities to drive slow demand periods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown lodging in Kannapolis & Concord | <input type="checkbox"/> New/expanded retail in the downtown areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New upscale dining | <input type="checkbox"/> New or expanded/improved attractions/activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expansion of ConcordUSA | <input type="checkbox"/> Funding of projects critical to growth |

- 3. Advocacy for travel industry issues and communication within the travel industry and the County is critical to the sustainability of travel industry growth** – CCCVB will regularly convene travel industry businesses and conduct research to identify issues affecting the Cabarrus County travel industry. Partnership with other economic development entities and DMOs in the state and region will leverage the industry’s voice when reaching out to state and federal officials. Further, CCCVB will conduct annual updates and training of the crisis communications plan that addresses a wide range of potential incidents that could negatively affect the long-term success of the destination.
- a) Create a policy/action committee of travel industry leaders and conduct regular listening sessions and surveys with travel industry leaders to identify issues that affect their growth and success. Possible issues of concern are workforce/wages, taxation, disruptors, crime, regulations, traffic congestion, signage, etc.
 - b) Maintain a series of white papers/position statements addressing the issues identified by the travel industry.
 - c) Retain lobbyist as necessary to address issues at the state or federal level.
 - d) Support the development of a qualified and abundant workforce for hospitality industry businesses is critical to future success and growth.
 - e) Conduct bi-annual travel industry updates to elected bodies, economic development and civic organizations. Communicate the impact of the travel industry to those not in the travel industry.
 - f) Maintain an annually updated crisis communications plan. Conduct training sessions with travel industry business owners & managers reviewing procedures and communications hierarchy in the event of a crisis.
 - g) Maintain reserve funds equal to three months operating budget to cover crisis-related expenditures.

Measurable Success:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy/Action Committee meets quarterly | <input type="checkbox"/> Increased applicants for hospitality jobs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis plan posted at all travel industry businesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Less turnover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Priority list of policy initiatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher visitor satisfaction ratings with service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biannual presentations to elected bodies | <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time jobs converted to full time jobs |