

Destination 2028

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Raleigh)-led **Destination Strategic Plan (DSP)** for the future of tourism in Wake County

OVERARCHING GOAL:

- To support the tourism industry's growth to reach 21.7 million visitors annually in Wake County by 2028.

ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS:

- A steering committee made up of members of both the public and private sectors within Wake County was formed to oversee the planning process.

Members included:

- John Q. Adams—Red Hat
- Dan Ault—Town of Cary
- Jenn Bosser—City of Raleigh Economic Development
- Jason Cannon—Town of Wake Forest
- Angela Caraway, MMP—TCMG, Inc.
- Deanna Crossman—The Mayton Inn
- Robert Doreauk—AT&T
- Katharine Eberhardt—North Carolina Football Club Youth
- Sherry Fadool—Triangle Volleyball Club
- Jim Greene—City of Raleigh
- Scott Manning—North Carolina State University
- Jennifer Martin—Greater Raleigh Merchants Association
- Eleanor Oakley—United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County
- Christine Quante—Holly Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Ian Sauer—Summit Hospitality Group
- Lesley Stracks-Mullem—Taste Carolina Gourmet Food Tours
- Jason Widen—HQ Raleigh

- The DSP process has been a collaborative and cumulative effort, encompassing all that Wake County and its 12 communities within have to offer.

- The process to build the DSP is grounded in three, complementary platforms:
 - Stakeholder consensus
 - Tourism infrastructure and destination development
 - Increase all visitor flows across conventions and meetings, sports and leisure tourism
- More than 1,800 individuals were engaged in the planning process
 - Leaders from Wake County, City of Raleigh and 11 other municipalities engaged
 - 11 steering committee meetings
 - 1,044 resident survey responses
 - 380 stakeholder survey responses
 - 36 focus groups held

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Eight Priorities of Focus for Wake County to Grow Tourism:

- Meetings & Conventions
- Sports
- Events
- Individual Leisure
- Key Attractors
- Destination Development
- Regional Demand Drivers
- Quality of Place

[See more on next page >](#)



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10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. A two-phased renovation and expansion of the **Raleigh Convention Center** (RCC) to include more space and, at a minimum, a 400+ room headquarters hotel (adjacent or connected to the RCC).
2. A 100-150k-square-foot, multi-use, **indoor sports complex** (including 12-16 courts and the ability to seat 4,000-5,000 spectators arena style) to host youth and amateur events and tournaments and add to the year-round inventory of fields and courts used for basketball, volleyball, wrestling etc.
3. A multi-use **MLS stadium** (regardless of location) that can host 75+ events annually including other sporting events, entertainment, small conferences/meetings and consumer or public shows.
4. The development of the **Blue Ridge Corridor** into a sports, entertainment, arts, scientific, medical and agricultural campus, including renovations and upgrades to PNC Arena to enhance the visitor experience and allow the arena to book more events, concerts, meetings and conventions year-round. (NOTE: Only if a lease extension with the Hurricanes is agreed upon)
5. Strategies to identify and increase **signature events and festivals** in the area as well as blockbuster traveling or permanent exhibits at area arts and cultural institutions.
6. Adding **iconic design elements/features and unique visitor experiences** to planned future development projects within Wake County such as Dorothea Dix Park to draw visitors, not just provide quality of life/place benefits to residents.
7. Strategies to grow the area's reputation around **eSports** including hosting major gaming events, developing production and high-performance training facilities and even a possible interactive attraction to draw visitors—playing off the area's rich culture within the gaming industry.
8. Strategies to grow unique and authentic visitor experiences such as **People-First Tourism**.
9. Recommendations to increase **international visitation** from Canada, Europe and emerging markets such as China and India through working with the area's corporate sector, academic institutions and other destination partners regionally.
10. Consistent **guidelines, standards and direct measurement principles** for future projects funded through the Wake County and City of Raleigh Interlocal Fund.

WHAT'S NEXT:

- Going forward, the implementation phase of the DSP project will be called "**Destination 2028**."
- The DSP Steering Committee which oversaw the planning process will now be replaced with the **Blue Ribbon Task Force**, which will oversee the implementation of the plan.

Members include:

- **Harvey Schmitt**—President Emeritus; Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce (Chair)
- **Shelia Ahler**—Retired; Cherry Bekaert
- **Kacie Fore**—Duke Energy Corporation
- **Jim Hansen**—PNC
- **Thomas "Skip" Hill III**—Highwoods Properties
- **Kevin Howell**—North Carolina State University
- **Aly Khalifa**—Designbox
- **Geoff Lang**—MetLife
- **Doyle Parrish**—Summit Hospitality Group
- **Orage Quarles III**—Retired; The News & Observer
- **Sepi Saidi**—SEPI Engineering & Construction
- **Nate Spilker**—Citrix
- **Richard Stevens**—Smith Anderson

To keep up-to-date with implementation efforts, go to visitRaleigh.com/2028 and follow the hashtag [#visitRaleigh2028](#) on Twitter.

Action Items:

- JLL will be back in Raleigh/Wake County to meet with stakeholder groups (area municipalities, civic and community leaders etc.) in Sept. to review key recommendations of the plan as well as to review DSP reports being customized to each town.
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force of leaders who have agreed to serve in Destination 2028's implementation also will convene in Sept.
- Stakeholders and partners are encouraged to spend some time reading the DSP, especially as it relates to their areas of interest. (Send plan-specific feedback or comments to JLL at wakecountydsp.com/comments until Sept. 30.)
- The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Raleigh) will have devoted staff resources to managing the implementation of Destination 2028 by Late 2018/Early 2019. Destination 2028 recommendations applicable to the GRCVB will be fully integrated into the Bureau's annual business plans starting in 2019-2020.
- Regular progress updates will appear in the GRCVB's [Tourism Talk blog](#) and e-newsletters.