



**Resident Sentiment of Tourism
Report
September 2021**



Background

- The Henderson County TDA is a public entity with the mission of attracting visitors to the county to spend money with local businesses, providing jobs and generating tax revenues.
- The TDA recognizes that it is important for tourism to be beneficial for residents, and they are sensitive to the impacts of visitation. The TDA wants the brand image they project to be consistent with community values.
- The Henderson County TDA surveyed residents to gather input and understand resident sentiment about tourism, gain insights about how to promote the county in a way that is authentic for residents,
- This information will be a resource for the “voice of the resident” for strategic planning and will serve as a baseline for future efforts.

Methodology

- With this type of research, there are two inter-related goals:
 - To gather information that is representative of the population of the county
 - To invite widespread participation and input from the public.
- To accomplish the first objective, SMARInsights worked with national sample vendors to survey residents that match the overall characteristics (age, race, income, gender) of the population (of people who live in Henderson County) to produce a “representative sample.” A total of 202 representative surveys were completed online and by phone June 4-15, 2021. These respondents are referred to as “sample” and “resident” throughout the report.
- Because the sample is designed to be representative, it is projectable – in other words the result can be applied to represent the total population.
- It is also important to give all community members an opportunity to participate and express their views. The survey was available to the public and heavily publicized. An additional 641 residents completed the survey June 15-July 1, 2021. These respondents are referred to as “opt-in” throughout the report. With the opt-in survey, typically respondents are those people who have strong opinions about the subject – usually both strong positive and negative. Therefore, the opt-in surveys are not generally representative of the total population. But this sample is important because it represents those who are actively involved, and who will most often be “heard” in the community.
- In total 843 residents of Henderson County completed the survey.

Insights

- Residents of Henderson County express high levels of community pride. They give high ratings for a range of county attributes with natural scenery and recreation topping the list. The friendliness of the community is strongly correlated with feelings of pride for the county.
- Nearly half of residents are employed in a job that is directly supported by tourism or is a supplier for tourism-focused companies.
- Residents believe that tourism is beneficial for the area. Strong majorities agree that tourism is good for the community and that more tourism is generally a good thing. They support tax-funded tourism promotion, especially when they are aware that the tax is paid by visitors to the area.
- Despite these positive feelings, half of residents feel that there is too much tourism and there are too many tourists coming to the area. Concerns about traffic and too many people moving to the area are more prevalent among the Opt-In respondents. Residents want the benefits of tourism, but the impacts need to be managed to maintain and enhance quality of life for residents and the quality of the destination for visitors.
 - Traffic concerns are most prevalent among Hendersonville residents, but only one-third say there is too much tourism in their community and fewer only 18% say that tourism is bad for their area.

Insights

- Residents associate jobs, tax revenue and small business support with *tourism*, but less so with the TDA. It would be beneficial for the TDA to strengthen community awareness of their role in economic development.
- The TDA should play a role in supporting aspects of the community that are most prized by residents, including the preservation of natural beauty and quality parks.
- Addressing these issues will support the development of tourism in way that is focused on community benefits and long-term sustainability.

Who took the survey?

- A total of 843 residents of Henderson County completed the survey.
 - The “Sample” is representative of residents and can be projected to the county population.
 - Opt-In respondents responded to publicity that promoted the availability of the survey.
- Opt-In respondents are older and more often retired than the representative sample.
- 17% of residents are employed in a job that is directly related to tourism, and an additional 30% are indirectly supported by tourism.

	Sample	Opt-In	Total
Business owner	14%	16%	15%
Employed full-time	37%	32%	33%
Employed part-time	19%	8%	11%
Un-employed	6%	1%	3%
Retired	19%	47%	41%
Not working outside the home	5%	4%	4%

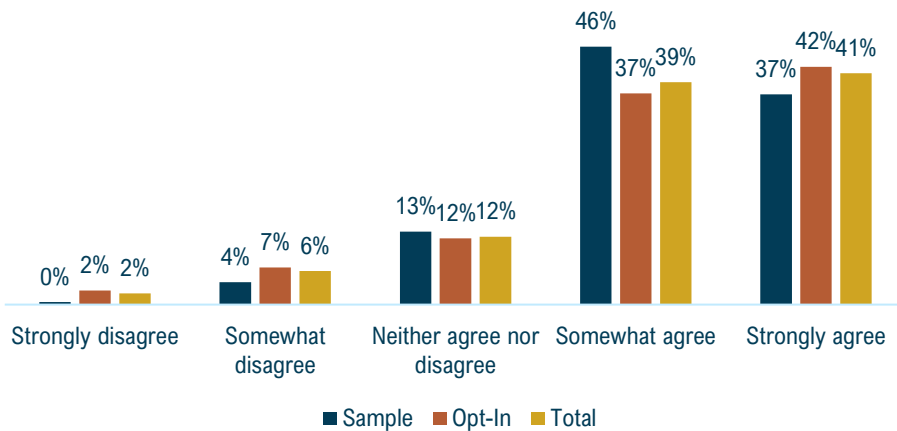
	Sample Mean	Opt-In Mean	Total Mean
What is your age?	45	60	56
How many years have you lived in Henderson County?	14	19	18

	Sample	Opt-In	Total
My job depends directly on tourism; I work at a hotel, attraction, etc.	17%	18%	17%
My job is indirectly supported by tourism; I work for a supplier that supports tourism-focused companies	30%	9%	16%
My job is not related to tourism	52%	73%	67%

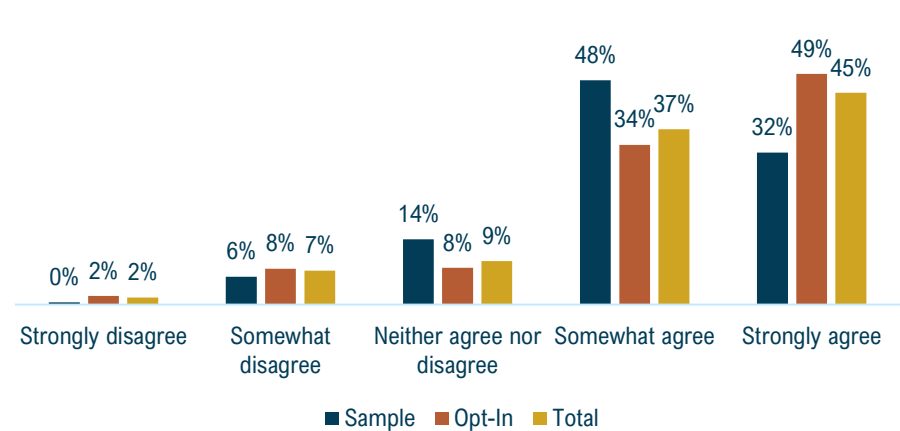
Community Pride

- Residents of Henderson County are proud of the state and the county where they live. 83% of residents agree that they are proud of North Carolina and 80% are proud of Henderson County.
- Opt-in respondents expressed more enthusiastic pride for the county, with 49% saying they strongly agree, compared to 32% of the representative sample of residents.

I am proud of the state where I live



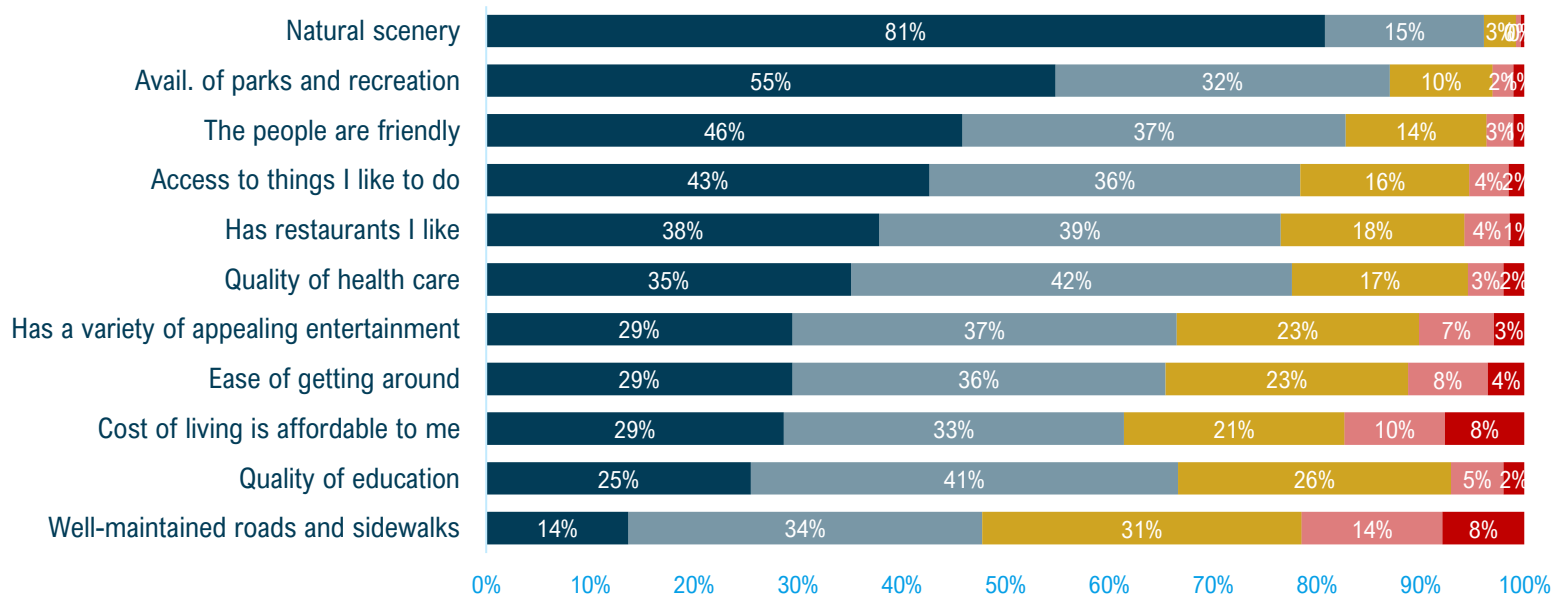
I am proud of the county where I live



Quality-of-Life Ratings

Respondents were asked to rate Henderson County as a place to live using a 5-star scale.

The county received high scores across the board, with Natural Scenery and Availability of Parks topping the list. Very few residents assigned the lowest scores to any attribute.



Quality-of-Life Ratings

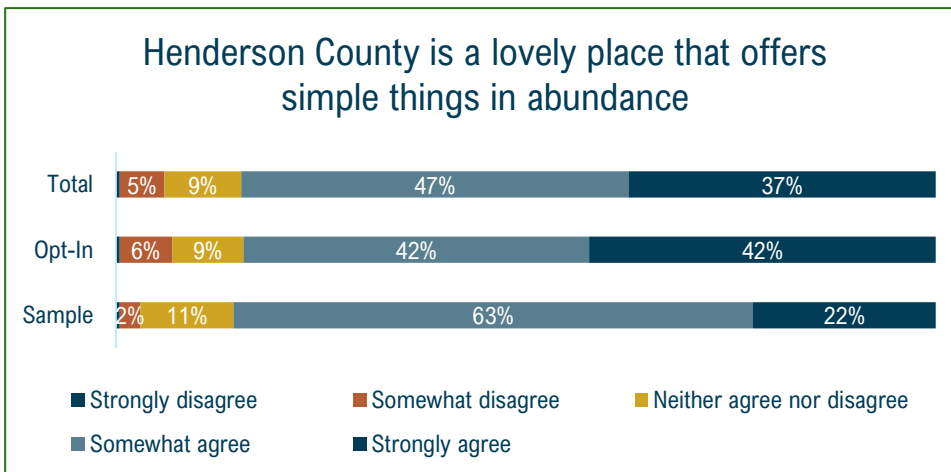
- The representative Sample and Opt-In respondents viewed quality-of-life attributes similarly, with the exception of transportation related issues.
 - Opt-In respondents rated the ease of getting around and road/sidewalk maintenance significantly lower than the representative Sample.
- The yellow columns at right show the relationship between pride in Henderson County and the quality-of-life attributes. The highest scores are the attributes most closely associated with pride. Although the county receives its highest ratings for natural scenery and parks, these factors are not strongly associated with pride.
- Friendliness, the variety of entertainment, and quality education are the factors that are most closely related with pride for the county.

	Sample	Opt-In	Total	Correlation Score*	Correlation Rank
Natural scenery	4.6	4.8	4.8	.267	10
Availability of parks and recreation areas	4.4	4.4	4.4	.264	11
The people are friendly	4.2	4.3	4.2	.476	1
Access to things I like to do (hobbies and leisure activities)	4.0	4.2	4.1	.397	4
Has restaurants I like	4.1	4.1	4.1	.357	6
Quality of health care	4.1	4.0	4.1	.384	5
Quality of education at all levels	4.0	3.8	3.8	.403	3
Has a variety of appealing entertainment	3.9	3.8	3.8	.430	2
Ease of getting around	4.2	3.7	3.8	.324	7
The cost of living is affordable to me	3.8	3.6	3.6	.272	9
Well-maintained roads and sidewalks	3.9	3.1	3.3	.278	8

* A score of 1 is a perfect correlation.

Vacation Destination Ratings

- 88% of residents agree that Henderson County is a good place to visit. Natural beauty again tops this list of highly-rated attributes.
- The representative Sample was more favorable in rating the county as a place where people forget about their problems, feels like a different time, and has things to do that provide an adrenaline rush.
- There is also a high level of agreement with the positioning statement shown below.



	Sample	Opt-In	Total
Inspires people with natural beauty	4.5	4.5	4.5
Is a place where a family can spend quality time together	4.4	4.3	4.3
Is family friendly	4.4	4.2	4.3
Is a good place to make memories	4.3	4.2	4.2
Has simple pleasures	4.3	4.2	4.2
Is safe and wholesome	4.2	3.9	4.0
Is laid back and relaxing	4.1	4.0	4.1
Is fun	4.0	3.9	3.9
Is a place where people can be themselves	4.0	3.8	3.9
Is filled with history and culture	4.0	3.8	3.9
Is rejuvenating	4.0	3.8	3.8
Is a place where I connect with local people	3.9	3.9	3.9
Is a place full of traditions that connect with the culture and values of the community	3.9	3.7	3.7
Is authentic and not "commercial"	3.8	3.7	3.7
Makes me forget about my problems	3.7	3.2	3.3
Feels like a different time	3.6	3.1	3.2
Has things to do that provide an adrenaline rush	3.4	3.1	3.2

Benefits of Tourism

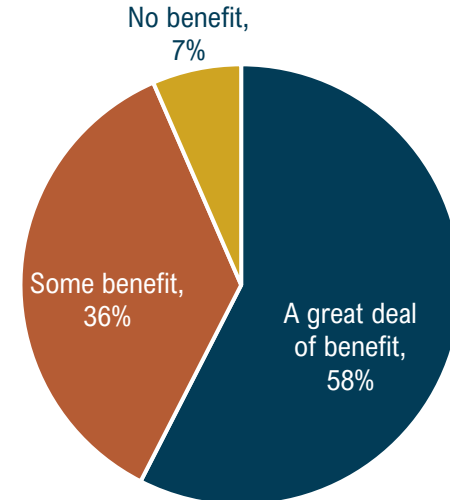
When asked what one word they would use to describe tourism, “necessary”, “fun,” “money,” and “good” topped the list. Concerns about crowds and traffic also emerged.



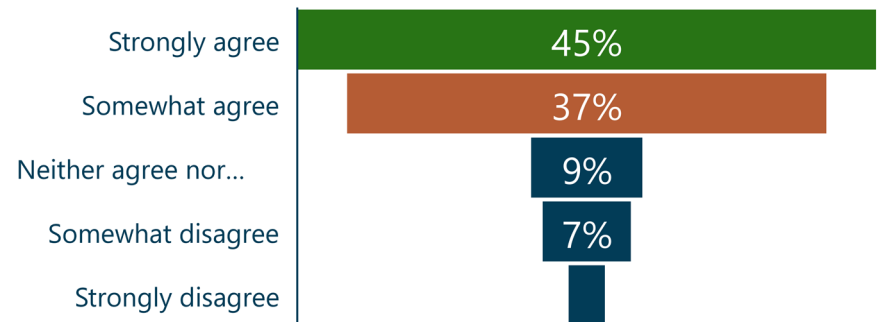
Tourism Sentiment

- A majority of residents say that the area where they live receives a great deal of benefit from tourism (58%), and fewer than 1-in-10 say there is no benefit from tourism.
 - 99% of the representative Sample and 92% of the Opt-In respondents said the place where they live receives some benefit or a great deal of benefit.
- Most residents agree that tourism is good for their community.
 - Slightly more Opt-In respondents disagree (12%) compared to the representative Sample (4%).

How much benefit does the place that you live receive from tourism?



Tourism is Good for My Community



Tourism Sentiment

- A majority of residents agree with the positive statements about tourism that are shown here.
 - More than 9-in-10 agree that visitor spending is important to the economy, tourism helps local businesses, tourism helps share local culture, it attracts relocations and provides jobs.
 - More than 8-in-10 say tourism generates tax revenue, provides enjoyable businesses, and makes the community a nicer place to live.
 - 75% agree that more tourism is generally a good thing.
- The representative Sample of residents report higher levels of agreement across the board, with the exception of jobs.
- The Opt-In respondents differ most significantly on issues of enjoyment. Fewer agree that they enjoy tourism-related businesses, and that tourism makes the community a nicer place to live. Thus, they are less likely to agree that more tourism is generally a good thing.

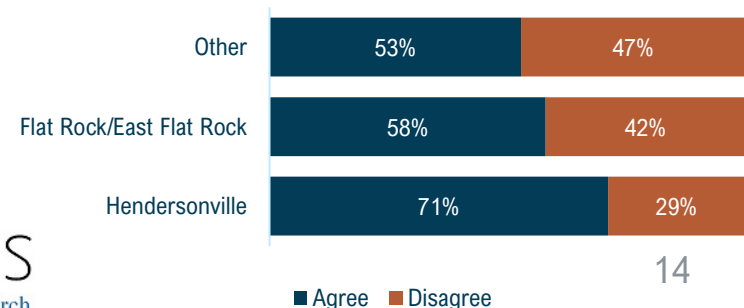
	Sample	Opt-In	Total
	% Agree		
The money visitors spend in my community is important to the economy	98%	90%	92%
Tourism helps the local businesses in my community	97%	92%	93%
Tourism provides the opportunity to share local culture with others	94%	83%	85%
Tourism shows people that my community is a good place to relocate	94%	86%	88%
Tourism provides jobs in my community	90%	89%	89%
The tax revenue generated by tourism helps pay for services my community needs	88%	81%	83%
I enjoy the attractions and businesses that are here because of tourism	82%	70%	73%
Tourism makes my community a nicer place to live	80%	55%	61%
More tourism is generally a good thing	75%	58%	62%

Tourism Sentiment

- Half of residents think there is too much tourism in the community and there are too many tourists coming to the area. The sentiment is less prevalent among Opt-In respondents.
- But, the resident Sample is less concerned about traffic and relocation than the Opt-In respondents.
- Traffic concerns are driven by location, with 7-in-10 Hendersonville residents agree that tourism is creating too much traffic.
 - But, only 37% of Hendersonville residents say there is too much tourism in my community.
 - And, only 18% say that tourism is bad for their area.

	Sample	Opt-In	Total
There is too much tourism in my community	50%	37%	41%
There are too many tourists coming to my area	50%	42%	44%
Tourism is creating too much traffic	37%	71%	62%
Tourism is causing too many people to move here	33%	59%	53%
Tourism only helps the large businesses in my community	28%	16%	19%
Locals can't enjoy the community because of all the tourists	22%	39%	35%
Tourism is bad for my area	8%	18%	16%

Tourism is creating too much traffic



Tourism Promotion

- Henderson County residents support the idea of advertising the area for tourism. Among the representative sample that can be projected to county residents at-large, 97% agree that tourism promotion supports local businesses.
 - 88% agree that tourism advertising is a good investment. 85% agree that the tourism office spends money responsibly, and that tourism-related taxes should be used, at least in part, to pay to promote the area for tourism.
- A majority of Opt-In respondents also agree with these views but the level of agreement is not as strong.
- The Opt-In respondents are more likely to be retired (47% v. 19%) and less likely to be employed in a tourism-related job (48% v. 28%).

Tourism Employment



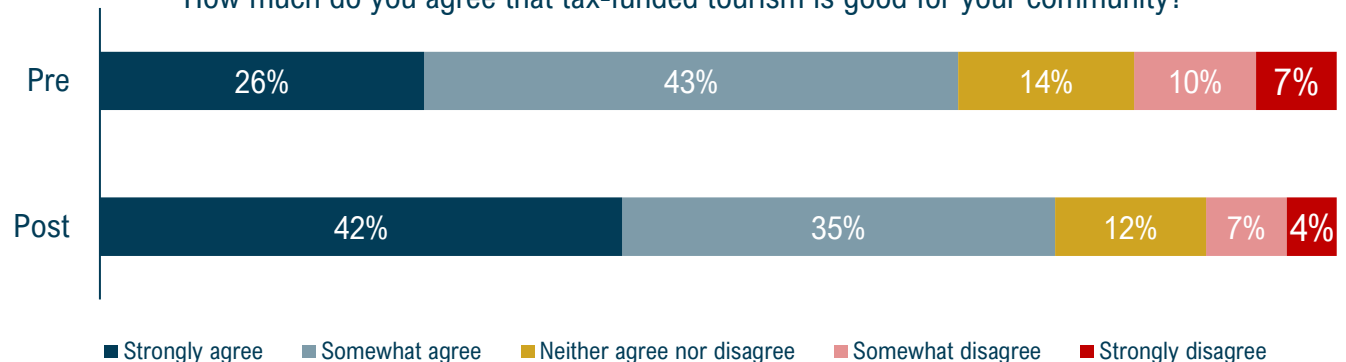
	Sample	Opt-In	Total
Promoting my community as a place to visit attracts customers for local businesses	97%	90%	91%
Advertising to attract visitors generates a good return on investment	88%	69%	74%
The tourism office spends money responsibly	85%	74%	77%
The taxes generated when visitors spend money should be partially reinvested to pay for marketing the area for tourism	85%	64%	69%

Tourism Promotion

- Most residents believe that tourists would continue to visit the county if advertising was stopped.
- Despite this view, they do not agree that there shouldn't be any local funding for tourism promotion, nor do they agree that advertising is a waste of money.
- There is strong agreement that tax-funded tourism promotion is good for the community. When respondents know that the funding comes from visitor-paid taxes, they are even more likely to support tax-funded tourism promotion.

	Sample	Opt-In	Total
Tourists will continue to come to my community even if we stopped all tourism advertising	52%	70%	66%
There shouldn't be any local funding for tourism promotion	18%	29%	26%
Advertising to bring visitors to my community is a waste of money	14%	26%	23%

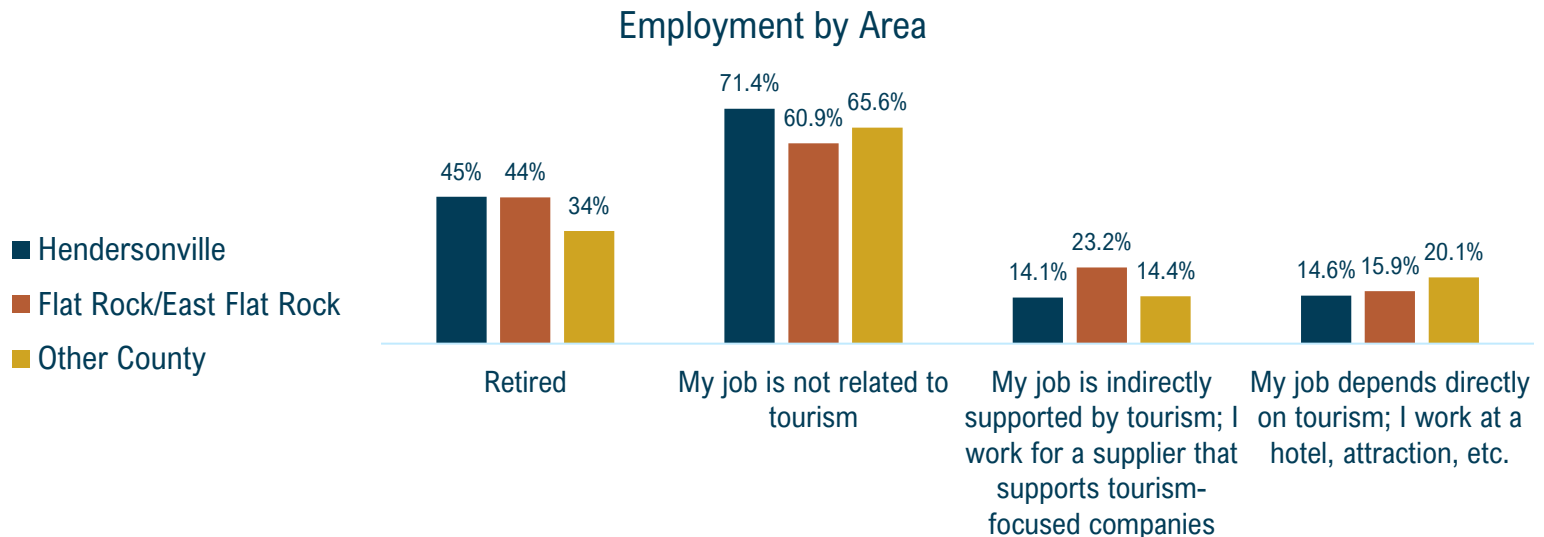
How much do you agree that tax-funded tourism is good for your community?



In Henderson County, the money to promote tourism comes from a lodging tax paid by overnight visitors.

Comparison by Area

- Survey participation was widely distributed across the county with every town represented. Responses were grouped to compare views of residents of Hendersonville, Flat Rock/East Flat Rock and the remaining areas of the county.
- Hendersonville and Flat Rock residents were more likely to be retired than those in other areas of the county. Among workers, Flat Rock residents were most likely to have a job that indirectly benefited from tourism, and those in other parts of the county were most likely to be directly employed in a tourism-related job.

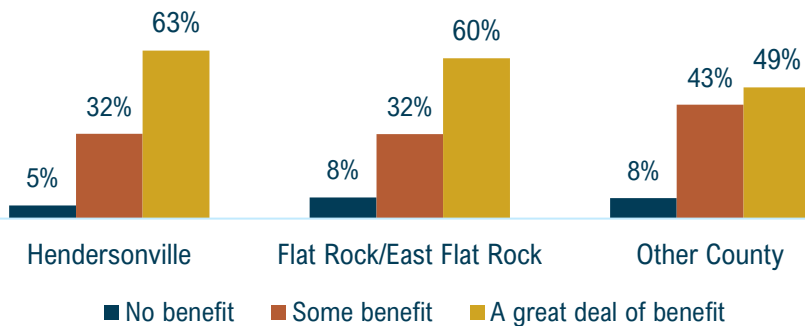


Comparison by Area

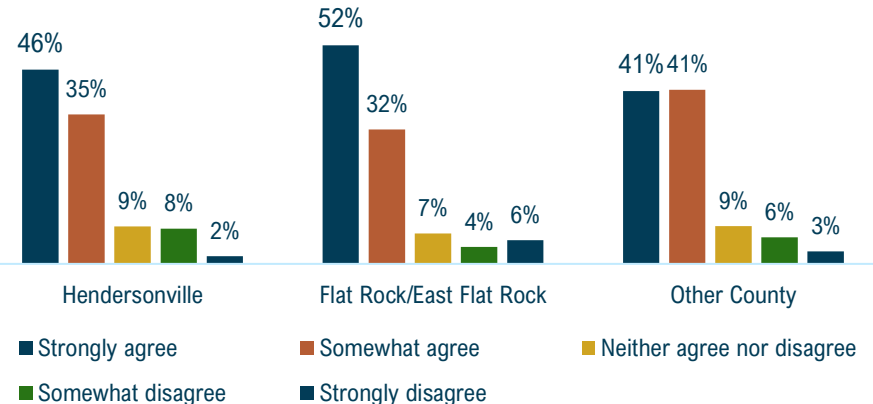
- Hendersonville and Flat Rock residents see more benefit from tourism than residents outside of those areas.
- Flat Rock residents have the highest level of agreement that tourism is good for their community, but all areas have low levels of disagreement.
- Ratings for quality-of-life issues are similar across the county with the exception of how easy it is to get around and the maintenance of roads and sidewalks – these issues were lower-rated in Hendersonville.

	Hender sonville	Flat Rock	Other County
Ease of getting around	3.70	4.01	3.84
Well-maintained roads and sidewalks	3.17	3.44	3.46

How much benefit does the place that you live receive from visitors?



Tourism is good for your community



TDA Responsibilities

- Most respondents associate the TDA with operating the visitor center (81%), attracting visitors (77%), operating events (65%), and maintaining a website (74%).
- Fewer respondents associate the TDA with generating tax revenue (47%), despite the recognition that tourism generates revenue that pays for services the community needs (83%, page 12).
- There is also a low level of association with the TDA supporting local jobs (41%) even though tourism is credited as a job creator (89%, page 12).
- The image of the TDA could be strengthened by connecting the dots between its role of attracting travelers, supporting local jobs, and generating tax revenue that provides services for residents.

	Sample	Opt-In	Total
Attracting vacation travelers	74%	78%	77%
Operating the visitor/welcome center	66%	86%	81%
Putting on festivals and events	62%	66%	65%
Maintaining a website of local things to do	58%	79%	74%
Supporting jobs for people who live here	49%	39%	41%
Attracting more customers for businesses	48%	53%	52%
Bringing the tourism business community together	48%	66%	62%
Regulating the hospitality industry	47%	24%	29%
Attracting businesses to start in/relocate to the county	44%	34%	37%
Providing funds for development of new tourism facilities and services	41%	46%	45%
Providing research and intelligence to the travel industry	30%	52%	47%
Attracting film companies to make films in the area	29%	31%	30%
Generating occupancy and sales taxes from visitors	26%	54%	47%
Attracting and servicing tour buses	21%	24%	23%
Don't know	6%	7%	7%

Visitor Center

- 63% of residents have used the Hendersonville Visitor Center.
- Of those who have used it, 60% went to get information about things to see and do, 44% got information for visiting friends/relatives, and 12% said they only used the bathroom.
- Of those who have not gone, 31% said it's only for tourists, 27% didn't know about it, and 13% said the location is not convenient.
- 70% of residents have used the website VisitHendersonvilleNC.org

	Sample	Opt-In	Total
Reasons for Using the Visitor Center			
To get information for visiting friends/relatives	44%	52%	51%
To find out about things to see and do	59%	62%	61%
Only to use the bathroom	12%	19%	18%
Reasons for Not Using the Visitor Center			
It's just for tourists	31%	26%	28%
I didn't know about it	27%	13%	19%
It isn't conveniently located	13%	1%	6%
There isn't anything I need there	31%	45%	39%

Open Comments

Of those who wrote in comments in the open-ended comment section, the topics which had more than 2 or 3 mentions were:

- Roads: 34 Comments
- Asheville: 23 Comments
- Asphalt Plant: 16 Comments
- Parks and Rec Total: 13 Comments

Open Comments -- Roads

Most roads-related comments were about either traffic and/or road conditions. A sample:

- all the tourist are ruining our roads and causing too much conjection everywhere. I just sit home now because every place would normally go is overrun with visitors.
- Apply your leverage to help improve road conditions within the city. Church Street is the worst experience for anyone visiting or living this community.
- As a result of increased tourism, Hendersonville is being built up around roads that cannot support the increase in traffic. Too much new construction takes away the beauty of this area.
- City and county need to address road repair and red light timing
- City Roads, and the bumps created by spacing between roads and bridges and roads and railroad tracks are atrocious! Work on these things first. And creating parks in the city near subdivisions for walkability is desperately needed within the city on 191. Suggestion is to buy or take over land right on 191 such as churches or open spaces that are quickly being bought up to build apartments.
- Henderson County needs help with beautifying our city before trying to attract more tourism. Main Street is great but please, look around at the state of our roadways (potholes and terrible maintenance) and the overabundance of fast food signs, traffic issues, etc. Coming off of 64 to go to downtown - consider planting trees in the middle, get rid of advertising signs planted on the road (and then never removed). It is beginning to look like a ghetto, not a place I'd like to go on vacation. Then the traffic situation at Grand Dad's Apples is bordering on a death trap - it's out of control from August to November!
- I am glad that tourism helps out our local businesses and families. BUT, hate how it has brought so many people into our beautiful homes and some many people have decided to move here. Before long we will no longer have the beautiful scenery that we have due to housing developments, apartments. Our roads are also WAY to crowded!!
- MAJOR CHANGES NEED TO OCCUR !! ROAD MAINTENANCE / PARKING IN DOWNTOWN HVILLE, IMPROVED SIGNAGE. THE RESIDENTS ULTIMATELY PAY THE PRICE FOR THE TOURISTS !!!
- Maybe some of the visitor money could get some streets repaired. Or put up signs "Welcome to HVL- Pavement ends".
- Our roads can't handle the traffic. You can add parking garages and parking space but the bottom line is our mountain air will be loaded with smog. All roads will be stuck in gridlock throughout downtown. Not just due to visitors but the amount of construction increases. You can kiss this sweet, unique piece of paradise goodbye. I've seen it up north, down south and out west. It's sad to think it's already on path for Hendersonville.
- Our roads need help & the least that could be done is paint the worn out center lines and curb lines. Left turn lanes and widening of roads is also needed in many areas.
- Parking and Traffic. Focus on these bottlenecks. Then road conditions. Church Street and King Street are in horrible condition(along with many others). I would be ashamed of it if it were my responsibility. No, I AM ASHAMED IF IT and I had NOTHING to do with it. Spend money on fixing the roads and traffic patterns and that will attract more people than you have ever had. Seriously. No one wants to spend their vacation getting a new tire or a front end alignment orto spend more time stuck at red lights and looking for parking than actually spending money at local businesses.
- Persuade the powers that be to improve roads
- Please use your influence to get our streets and roads repaired. I'm embarrassed that tourists see this.
- Proactively ensure roads are expanded proportional to influx of people visiting each year.
- Support more community at-large initiatives like roads.
- The biggest problem I have with tourism is that it really crowds the roads.
- The Henderson County needs to have more impact on: NCDOT, City Planning and Zoning, road maintenance and clean-up, clearing of abandoned properties, business frontages and limiting tourist souvenir stores (we have enough).
- The older section of 64 going from downtown towards apple orchards is dismal . Can we spruce this area up- what is being done to attract businesses, can we spruce this up. Please promote and support more than just wineries and breweries? How about more lovely outdoor spaces?
- The one thing I would suggest is to fix the d*mn roads around town. The roads at the ends of Church and King Streets are just terrible. Stop patching and repave.
- The roads in the area are terrible. I'd love to see that improved. There's so much traffic and it only gets worse during high tourist times. Something needs to be improved there as well so people can get around to their jobs and errands easier.
- the roads/infrastructure in Hooterville are NOT equipped to deal w/the amt of traffic we have from those whole actually live here, never mind influx of visitors. you're shooting yourselves in the foot until this is fixed. H'ville is now a small city still pretending to be a quaint little small town which is dumb
- Too many hotels in downtown will not be as good as you think. Hotels should be built outside of downtown along 126 and such. Build parking and fix the roads, they are atrocious.
- Too much tourism will change our lovely place to live forever and not necessarily for the good. The streets are a mess and need fixing. Finding affordable housing is a thing of the past. We came here as tourists and moved here for the friendly, small town atmosphere. That is changing in just the five years we have been here. Too fast growth will ruin this area and kill tourism eventually. It must be controlled.
- Tourism is necessary for the area but needs to be tied to development so growth is done in a way that doesn't ruin the very things we love about the area. For example, our mountain roads cannot handle an influx of traffic.
- Tourism revenue/ taxes need to be spent on beautifying roads entering Henderson County. Who enjoys seeing rusting guard rails on 64, litter everywhere, medians replaced with rocks instead of flowers. Main Street gets all the attention! Our roads in town are a mess!
- Traffic is a big issue around town. Idk how to fix that, but it is frustrating for those of us who live and work here and can make getting around in a timely fashion difficult. Top that with NOT being paid enough at our jobs to support living here because everything is SO expensive!
- Traffic is becoming a real issue and real estate prices are too high.
- Traffic is biggest issue in fall with leaf-peepers coming to mountains. Need more parking downtown too
- Traffic is terrible in the summer
- Our county lacks the proper infrastructure to adequately support the growth which has occurred in part to the increase in tourism which brought many folks in who have decided to move here, driving up the cost of housing to a level which excludes many of our local working residents and young families. Traffic problems are worsening, and I fear we are turning into another "Asheville". work with the NCDOT to maintain and widen the roads

Open Comments -- Asheville

Most Asheville-related comments were some variation on “don’t turn Hendersonville into Asheville.” A sample:

- City is losing it's identity as a small friendly local and is trying to become a version of South Asheville rather than holding on and being proud of it's roots.
- Don't ruin Hendersonville like Asheville !!!!
- DON'T turn Hendersonville into Asheville. Asheville is ruined for the locals. They're moving out and starting the process of ruining the next town like Waynesville and Hendersonville. All you people think about is MONEY!
- We are somewhat connected to Asheville, but we are NOT Asheville. We should find a way to remain connected while reinforcing our own identity.
- I just hope you understand that while we appreciate tourist dollars: pretty much every resident I know absolutely dreads the major tourist events in Henderson County. Unless you actually own a business in town - tourism is a major source of frustration. I understand their dollars are important, but I am also tired of seeing small communities overrun with outsiders, and losing their charm. I see this inevitably happening in Hendersonville. Asheville had become a dump, and I think the majority of residents of Hendersonville fear it could happen here
- I know tourism is a good thing; however, I am also selfish and wish we could have the place all to ourselves. February is the best time for locals to go downtown and enjoy Hendersonville. BTW - Let's not become a "Little Asheville".
- I would hate to see Henderson County become ruined by over promotion of tourism like Asheville/Buncombe is. Excessive tourism is ruining much of what makes this place home and is killing any chance many natives like myself have of buying a home here.
- I would like to see the beer bicycle go. Doesn't fit Hendersonville. Too Asheville. I would like to see Main Street closed at dinner time. Too noisy with loud cars and motorcycle while eating outside. A turn off for visitors and residents.
- Keep it a small town don't become a Asheville
- Local people don't want tourism. Go away. Go to Asheville. Or Texas.
- Please responsibly advertise this area. We do not want to become Asheville, or attract that crowd.
- So your job is to promote tourism in the region, it would be nice to have a campaign, "How to be a good tourist." I know that sounds corny but there's some pretty rude people sometimes that come into our area. Also don't forget the tourism leads to people coming in from places where homes are more expensive, they buy our real estate and make it impossible for many people do you have a home. Again, look what happened to Asheville.
- Too many tourists will turn HVL into AVL ... unaffordable to residents, only tourism-related jobs that pay little, too much traffic. I'd rather see more corporations lured here that have good-paying jobs
- Turning Hendersonville into another Asheville is not a good thing
- WE DON'T WANT A NOTHER A**EVILLE HERE.
- We don't want Hendersonville to become another "Asheville". While tourism can be positive, too many visitors is a detriment. It takes away from the resident's ability to enjoy our own town, neighborhoods and environment. I don't even have a desire to go downtown or out to hike in the summer/fall because everything is filled with visitors. There's no place to park and you can't get into local restaurants. Hendersonville's tourism industry has exceeded the town's capacity. The growth and change is taking away from what Hendersonville once was.

Open Comments -- Asphalt

Most Asphalt-plant related comments were in opposition to the plant. Some wanted the TDA to take a side. A sample:

- An asphalt plant is attempting to build in an area that is not suitable. It will have a negative effect on our tourism, camps etc. we need the TDA to step in and help us all stop this from being built. It will hurt the Henderson County area, it's bad the tranquil and the beauty. It would project a bad image to Hendersonville, Flat Rock, East Flat Rock and Saluda. We need TDA's help to prevent this from being built. Consider the bad image among other negative impacts it will create. Please help us.
- An asphalt plant is not a tourist attraction. It would be a detriment to the area.
- I am concerned about a conditional rezoning request that has been filed and withdrawn twice in the last year (and anticipate a new application in the coming year) to build an asphalt plant at the 25 and 176 interchange. The land has been cleared and prepared for the plant construction. This would be a terrible sight for visitors as they enter into Flat Rock and Henderson County. Additionally, the noise, smell and contamination produced by this plant will negatively impact local camps and outdoor experiences. I request that the TDS consider opposing the rezoning request, when filed again.
- I am very concerned about the pollution that can be generated if we put in the asphalt plant. It is not a business that needs to be anywhere near Flat Rock East Black rock or Hendersonville. I am also very concerned about the development of properties. The more we develop the less attractive this area will be
- I feel strongly that all areas of our county should have a land development plan in place to prevent inappropriate commercial enterprises from coming in and building in area of natural beauty and desecrating them. The one that comes to mind is the asphalt plant and the massive storage facility zoning variance application for Crab Creek Road (remarkably inappropriate for the area where they propose to build it). Once these enterprises go in, the beauty of the land is ruined forever. Watershed pollution, crime, traffic, reduced property values and other undesirable effects are to be expected and would be highly detrimental in countless ways.
- NO ASPHALT PLANT IN E FLAT ROCK
- Please encourage a rails to trails to Saluda and bike paths to the parks. Also please use your influence to stop any more asphalt plants being built in our beautiful county
- Please fight against rezoning and for responsible zoning/growth. The asphalt plant conditional rezoning application in East Flat Rock is not wanted nor needed for Henderson County's growth. We need the tourism board to be a louder voice for responsible growth!
- Please speak out against the asphalt plant in East Flat Rock. It goes against everything the TDA stands for and supports.
- Please STOP the proposed asphalt plant in Flat Rock. Re-zoning is unfair to residents and being held emotionally hostage while Shipman plays games with us is ridiculous. If you want tourism you need to STOP the asphalt plant and willy nilly re-zoning for the profit of one man.
- Please stress to the commissioners that we need to keep the gateway to Hendersonville attractive and not to have an asphalt plant as welcome to town
- That the asphalt plant being proposed in the East Flat Rock area will absolutely ruin one of the most beautiful areas in the county
- Yes! Please help us keep industrial plants out of residential areas and areas that tourists visit
- You need to be more vocal and supportive of the area and residents if/when the asphalt plant is on the table again. Feel like we should have been seeing more of you at the protest meetings. It will not be good for tourism if it goes through.
- Please be very deliberate in the type of businesses and industries that are able to build in the area. For example, having an asphalt plant trying to build near the Green River and the gamelands seems like a business that would drive tourists away from our natural areas. Additionally, we don't need lots of repeats of businesses and attractions that we already have.

Open Comments -- Asphalt

Most Asphalt-plant related comments were in opposition to the plant. Some wanted the TDA to take a side. A sample:

- I recommend increasing Henderson County Occupancy Tax from 5% to 6% and use a portion of the funds to create facilities that attract visitors from other areas. Namely, A SOCCER FACILITY. Please look at how other successful other areas are with this. Wake and Mecklenburg Counties for example. Soccer tournaments are a source of revenue and will attract new people to our area. The Ecusta Trail project will be a success if proper attention and funds are allocated. Bicycle lanes are crucial. WE HAVE A LOT OF CYCLISTS relocating here.
- I think looking at sports tourism as an option - for example with a decent soccer complex it could attract tournaments which we have seen attract hundreds of families from miles away in other counties. Henderson County sports priorities are mixed up but perhaps couched as a tourism initiative. The county needs decent fields for soccer, football, lacrosse (all going to AVL right now) and this in turn creates its own tourism dollars. Would pay for itself plus provide a great space for locals as well.
- I think we should build more teen attracting sites and activity centers and stuff.
- It's sad to me how little There is to do for the young people In our community! Greenville sc has 3 water parks while we have none! Asheville has two major soccer complexes while Henderson county has one very unsafe Turf field and horrific Soccer fields in the flood plane of Jackson park! Our youth are traveling to Charlotte, Asheville, Winston Salem, etc to play soccer! Having a water park and soccer complex with turf fields would bring in so much more revenue to this area and give our youth something to do to keep them out of trouble!
- More things to do for our youth that we're going crazy
- Opportunities for growth have been missed by the parks department failure to understand the trend of new sports like pickleball
- Our community could use increased funding for parks and green space, specifically turf soccer fields that could function to attract tournamemnts to the area
- the methodology of how Henderson County generates leads is poor. this is absolutely an online, word of mouth, content driven activity. not external marketing from traditional sources, ie cut spending on billboards, tv, print. make sure organic digital is good and interconnected with businesses and hire people to actually create good content to drive online presence for Henderson County and the businesses. they should be profiled in a much better way. the remainder of tax revenue should actually go back to fund parks, family activities, athletic fields (soccer is particularly painful at this point and when you go across the state, we are basically in last place) and this generates lots of revenue for tournaments/club play. expand cycling/greenways as our area has over 1 mil visitors specific to this activity per year between Henderson/buncombe and Transylvania.
- Tourism dollars generated should provide tangible benefits to everyday residents in the way of improvements- ie parking parks gardens trails etc.
- We need better parks, recreational sites for our youth of Henderson county. Soccer fields/complex, baseball, and other youth sports are in need of adequate facilities/fields, etc. Parks are in poor shape.
- We need more things to entertain the youth
- We. To much time and money is spent for tourism. Our country parks for children is underfunded. I was told no money to build back Jackson park play ground. Why? Yesterday took our grandkids to water park in Greenville, it was so nice. As long as we cater to tourists and forget about our youth we are going in the wrong direction. Housing market here makes it hard for an average family to locate here and then nothing much for the children to do. I say direct taxes from tourism to parks and recreation. Tourists are coming one way or the other. Without a strong community for our children we are nothing
- I think looking at sports tourism as an option - for example with a decent soccer complex it could attract tournaments which we have seen attract hundreds of families from miles away in other counties. Henderson County sports priorities are mixed up but perhaps couched as a tourism initiative. The county needs decent fields for soccer, football, lacrosse (all going to AVL right now) and this in turn creates its own tourism dollars. Would pay for itself plus provide a great space for locals as well.
- Finally, we need more indoor attractions for when the weather is bad, but people need something to do. For example, Buncombe County has Mountain Play Lodge, and many places have indoor sport complexes and skating rinks that don't require a membership

SMAR Insights Tourism Survey Results – Open Comments Section Summary

- Top Open Comments related to:
 - Traffic
 - Asheville
 - Asphalt Plant
 - Parks & Rec/Outdoor Recreation

SMARInsights Tourism Survey Results – Traffic

- Roads need work, especially Church St, King St and Four Seasons Blvd – TDA should use their influence to make these improvements happen
- Parking downtown is a problem
- Traffic has gotten much heavier over recent years, especially during higher tourism seasons of summer and fall – left turn lanes may help, especially at places like Grandad's Apple Orchard
- Abandoned/empty businesses and properties, and poor road conditions are an eyesore and embarrassment to town

SMARInsights Tourism Survey Results – Asheville

- Worry that rapid growth will make Hendersonville lose its identity and charm or become too much like Asheville (we want to be unique!)
- Worry that Hendersonville will grow too large
- Over-tourism means locals can't enjoy Main Street or outdoor recreation in the summer and fall, which is why people chose to live here in the first place
- Tourism is driving relocation, which is increasing the pricing of housing (both sale and rental markets), making it harder for people who are already here to find a place to live
- Increased tourism means increased tourism jobs, which typically don't pay enough for people to live on (especially as housing prices rise)

SMARInsights Tourism Survey Results – Asphalt Plant

- There was a great deal of opposition to the proposed East Flat Rock asphalt plant, many commentators believe the TDA should take a stand or use their influence to speak out about it, as it will not make Hendersonville attractive to tourists

SMARInsights Tourism Survey Results –Recreation

- Area needs more indoor attractions
- Comments in support of the Ecusta Trail
- Many comments expressed a desire for a soccer complex that would benefit locals and draw youth sports tournaments/tourism \$
- Need for cycling lanes, greenways or more options for cyclists
- Need more spaces for young people (especially teens!)