

# Colonial Beach Economic Development & Tourism

**Actions to Support our Visitor Economy**



Washington Avenue. Credit Tim Kerr, 2021

### STATE IMPACT STATS

**114.5M VISITORS TO VIRGINIA**

**\$35.1B VISITOR SPENDING**

**328,365 TOTAL JOBS SUPPORTED**

**\$3.3B STATE AND LOCAL TAXES**

# Our Very Roots Are As A Visitor Destination

Colonial Beach was initially platted in 1882 as the business center of a **fully planned resort** along the Potomac River seeking to **attract residents of Washington D.C.**

Our Historic District's **diverse collection of 81** contributing vernacular or high-style commercial or residential buildings represent the whole of its **nearly century-long period of significance**—circa 1875 to 1970.

Compared to similar waterfront resort communities in Virginia, the **District's level of preservation** overall remains moderate to strong.

Information sources: Virginia Department of Historic Resources and Virginia Tourism Corporation

# Tourism is a Powerful Economic Development Strategy



## WESTMORELAND COUNTY TOURISM IMPACT STATS

**\$38.7M VISITOR SPENDING**

\$21.7M Lodging

\$5.7 F&B

\$5.7M Retail

**158 TOTAL JOBS SUPPORTED**

**\$2.9M STATE & LOCAL TAXES**

- Tourism boosts the local economy, generates jobs, and drives infrastructure investment by leveraging local assets and acts as a catalyst by stimulating hospitality and retail while improving quality of life and fostering community pride.
- A lack of effective, targeted marketing, combined with inconsistent communication about local attractions has significantly contributed to the decline in Colonial Beach tourism, with local businesses struggling due to reduced foot traffic and visibility.
- The town has historically relied on limited attractions—the beach/pier and limited gaming—without adapting to modern marketing strategies that highlight the area's charm.
- **WE'RE CHANGING THAT TRAJECTORY!**

Information source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

## Job #1 – Make Colonial Beach visible in the marketplace!



Emphasizes our natural assets –  
river, bay, beach

Powerful urge to action –  
DISCOVER

Heart connects with  
Virginia is for Lovers

- The first fully functional tourism stakeholder group came together in October 2025 comprised of industry sector representatives.
- Subgroups are focusing on the most valued tourist interests – history and heritage, arts and culture and outdoor experiences. Their job is to identify compelling messages, develop itineraries and guide creation of targeted marketing tactics.
- Steps to success: Develop an embraceable brand highlighting all that is special about CB – beach, river, bay, marinas, friendly atmosphere, quaint and quirky creative community, unique historic sites, amazing natural surroundings. Created pro bono; market tested.
- Next: revamp Web Site. Increasing use of AI rendered “visitcbva” ineffective (pointed to Chesapeake Bay). Interim URL identifies correctly, but not action oriented. Imagery is dull and uninspiring. Messaging is incohesive. New URL action oriented – Discover Colonial Beach. Imagery and narrative vividly tell our story in a **Wonder Full** way!
- In the works: Digital & print ads. VA250 collaboration. Prep for CB135.

## Thank you to the CB Tourism Representatives

### Co-chairs:

Karen Grisevich – Grow RVA

Patti Woodside – The Boathouse

Jennell Johnson – CB Tiki Cruises

Kelly Woods Vaughn – Riverview Inn

Wendy Short – Hawthorne Mercantile

Kathi Moran – CB Creative

Phil Bolin – Marina Way

Chris Flemer – Ingleside Winery

Dr. Lenny Levin – James Monroe

Birthplace & Boyhood Home

Dale Hendon – Westmoreland County

Economic Development & Tourism

Charlotte Cole – Town of Colonial Beach

Economic Development & Tourism

### Council Liaison:

Lisa Grandstaff

# Questions?

