

## TOURISM

**Definition:** With deep historical ties to the American Revolution and Colonial America, the Greater Williamsburg local economy and tourism sector are strongly intertwined. Tourism activity within the Greater Williamsburg region encompasses not only public and private entities that leverage the region's rich history but is also inclusive of businesses that provide visitors with memorable amusement, entertainment, culinary, and hospitality experiences. Along with businesses that impact the traveler's experience when visiting the region, the tourism target also captures businesses that assist travelers with their travel arrangements.

### Justifications

- As the first permanent English settlement in the Americas and home to the concluding battle of the American Revolutionary War, the Greater Williamsburg region is the foundation of American history. The region hosts a wealth of historical sites and museums capable of consistently drawing tourists in to the community.
- Complementing the region's historical sites and museums is a host of amusement attractions and entertainment amenities such as Busch Gardens Williamsburg and Water Country USA as well as new entertainment amenities such as the Virginia Beer Company and Copper Fox Distillery that continue to create new avenues for tourist visitation.
- Tourism is a growth sector for Greater Williamsburg's regional economy – between 2006 to 2016 employment within the sector grew by 3.9 percent, or roughly 750 jobs. However, national tourism employment growth (5.5 percent) outpaced the region.
- While low wages are emblematic of the tourism sector in general, the sector does support high wage employment opportunities including food service managers, lodging managers, and archivists, curators, and museum technicians.

### Strategic Implications

- Limited higher education training capacity could curtail the region's capability to support new and existing tourism businesses. Expansion of tourism-related training at regional higher education institutions will strengthen tourism talent pipelines.
- The Greater Williamsburg Partnership should support food and beverage entrepreneurship opportunities that directly impact the growth and diversification of the regional tourism sector.
- Tourism marketing shapes national perceptions about the quality and character of Greater Williamsburg, as a result the Partnership should find opportunities to leverage existing tourism promotion to enhance the region's attractiveness as a place to grow a business.
- Improving air capacity and connectivity can allow the region to tap new tourism markets.