

GO GASTON NC

DESTINATION BRAND GUIDE

**Together
We Can Make
A Greater Impact
In Gaston County.**

BELMONT | BESSEMER CITY | CHERRYVILLE | CRAMERTON | DALLAS | GASTONIA
KINGS MOUNTAIN | LOWELL | MCADENVILLE | MOUNT HOLLY | RANLO | STANLEY



Where It All Connects

A Stronger Identity. A Stronger Destination.

More Than a Brand. A Shared Identity.

Standing Out in a Competitive Region

A destination brand is more than a logo or tagline, it is a shared identity that defines what makes a place unique and provides a common way to tell its story.

For Gaston County, this brand unites residents, businesses, attractions, and tourism partners around a shared vision of the experiences, people, and places that make our community distinct.

As part of a highly competitive tourism region, Gaston County competes with nearby destinations for visitor attention, overnight stays, and economic impact.

To stand out, we must clearly communicate what makes Gaston County different. The GoGastonNC destination brand provides a unified identity that showcases our outdoor experiences, heritage, communities, and local character, giving visitors a compelling reason to explore.

Why Now?

Gaston County is experiencing significant tourism growth, creating an opportunity to strengthen our position as a regional destination.

In 2025, visitor spending reached \$395 million, a 1.6% increase over 2024, marking the forth consecutive year of growth and with Gaston County sustaining 20th among North Carolina's 100 counties in visitor spending.

Now is the time to define our destination identity, amplify what makes Gaston County unique, and build on this momentum for the future.

What This Brand Will Do

The GoGastonNC brand will provide a unified foundation for telling the Gaston County story.

It Will Help Partners:

- Align around a shared identity and message
- Inspire visitors to discover and experience Gaston County
- Strengthen community pride by celebrating the people and places that make us unique

Together, we can create a stronger destination presence that supports tourism growth, local businesses, and the future of our community.

How We Are Funded

We are funded through the 6% occupancy tax paid by overnight visitors staying in Gaston County accommodations. We receive half of the tax collected to support destination marketing and other efforts that strengthen Gaston County's visitor economy. The remaining half collected within Gastonia, Belmont, and Mount Holly supports the municipal tourism development authorities in those communities.

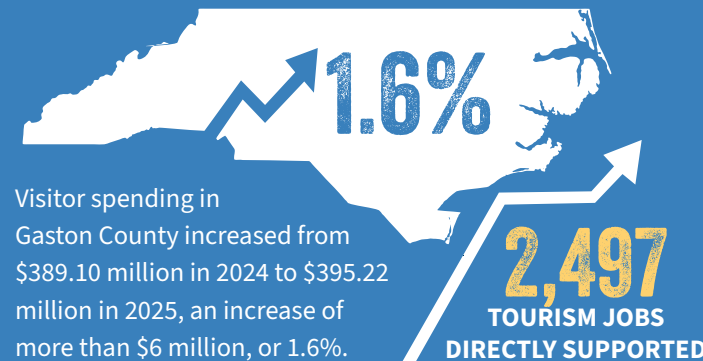
FUNDED
THROUGH HALF OF
6%
OCCUPANCY TAX

2025 Visitor Impact In Gaston County*

VISITOR SPENDING
\$395.22
MILLION



Gaston County ranks 20th among North Carolina's 100 counties in visitor spending.



Visitor spending in Gaston County increased from \$389.10 million in 2024 to \$395.22 million in 2025, an increase of more than \$6 million, or 1.6%.

Source: The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2025, prepared by Tourism Economics VisitNC.com/economic-impact

Why Tourism Matters

Strengthens Local
Businesses

Supports
Local Jobs

Generates
Tax Revenue

Enhances
Quality of Life

The Journey To A Stronger Destination Identity

Creating the GoGastonNC destination brand was a year-long process built on research, strategy, creativity, and collaboration.

04 | Research + Discovery

Listening. Learning. Understanding.

We gathered insights from residents, community leaders, tourism partners, businesses, visitors, and audiences beyond Gaston County to understand perceptions, opportunities, and what makes our community unique.

06 | Strategy + Brand Foundation

Defining What Makes Gaston County Different.

Research insights were transformed into a clear destination position, brand story, and strategic direction that would guide how Gaston County is experienced and communicated.

08 | Creative Development

Bringing the Strategy to Life.

The brand identity was created to visually and emotionally represent Gaston County including the logo, visual system, messaging, tagline, and creative expression.

10 | Activation + Implementation

Turning the Brand Into Action.

The brand provides partners with the tools and framework to consistently tell the Gaston County story across marketing, visitor experiences, and community touchpoints..

Understanding What Makes Gaston County Unique

A successful destination brand begins with understanding the people and the place it represents.

GoGastonNC partnered with North Star Place Branding + Marketing, a nationally recognized destination branding agency, to lead a three-month discovery process. Through extensive research and strategic analysis, North Star helped gather, interpret, and synthesize insights from partners, stakeholders, residents, visitors, businesses, community leaders, and external audiences to uncover how Gaston County is perceived, what differentiates it from competing destinations, and the opportunities that would shape a distinctive, authentic destination brand.

The process included an immersive tour of the county, a review of existing marketing materials and strategic plans, one-on-one interviews with community leaders, six focus groups representing residents, attractions, hospitality partners, and government departments, and a resident survey. North Star also conducted a Consumer Awareness & Perception (CAP) Study across the Raleigh, Greensboro, and Western Carolinas markets to better understand how potential visitors perceive Gaston County. Additional conversations with neighboring destination organizations helped identify regional strengths, opportunities, and challenges.

Together, these insights provided a deeper understanding of Gaston County’s current position and future potential. The findings highlighted represent the culmination of this discovery process and served as the foundation for the destination brand strategy.



Our Strengths

Gaston County’s greatest assets are its accessible outdoor experiences, authentic communities, and local character.

- Natural assets including Crowders Mountain and Daniel Stowe Conservancy
- A collection of 13 unique municipalities, each with its own personality and experiences
- A strong sense of heritage rooted in mill history, agriculture, and local traditions
- Distinctive food, beverage, and cultural experiences that create a sense of place

Our Challenges

Research also identified opportunities to reshape perceptions and create a more unified destination story.

- Outdated perceptions that do not reflect today’s Gaston County
- Strong competition among destinations throughout the Carolinas
- The need for greater collaboration and consistency across municipalities
- Growth pressures, including infrastructure and connectivity challenges

Our Opportunities

Research revealed opportunities to elevate Gaston County as a destination by leveraging what already makes it special.

- Converting day visitors into overnights
- Expanding food, beverage, agritourism, and local experiences
- Strengthening sports tourism and event opportunities
- Celebrating downtowns, historic assets, and community stories

61% of residents believe Gaston County needs more visitors to support a thriving tourism economy.

Most Important to Identity

- Unique offerings from each city
- Mills history
- Nature / outdoors
- Agricultural heritage
- Trails
- Christmas Town USA®
- Proximity to everything
- Community events (Outdoor concerts)
- Local businesses

Greatest Assets

- Crowders Mountain
- Daniel Stowe Conservancy
- Access to nature
- Local flavor (Tony’s, Sun Drop, BBQ)
- Individual downtowns
- Proximity to Charlotte Airport
- Schiele Museum of Natural History
- Sports fields
- Location / Highways
- Mills / Textiles
- Belmont Abbey College
- Carolina Thread Trail
- Two Kings Casino
- Christmas Town USA®

Focus For GoGastonNC

- Earn positive media coverage
- Advertise tourism assets online
- Bring mtgs, conf. & sport events
- Coordinate regional tourism efforts
- Educate about history and nature
- Organize events for residents
- Advertise tourism assets in person
- Provide resources for travelers
- Speak on behalf of local businesses

Space To Savor The Moment

Whether visitors seek adventure, relaxation, or time together, Gaston County offers the flexibility to create days that feel as full, or as relaxed as they want.

Where Experiences Connect

Our compact footprint brings together nature, food, culture, recreation, and hospitality, allowing visitors to experience more in less time.

6 Six Pillars Of The GoGastonNC Brand

Defining the experiences, emotions, and qualities that make Gaston County a destination worth discovering.

Small-Town Connections

Beyond attractions, Gaston County is defined by welcoming communities, local pride, and authentic experiences created by the people who call this place home.

A Legacy Worth Exploring

Our story is shaped by generations of makers, innovators, and communities built around hard work and creativity. That heritage continues to influence who we are today.

Nature Within Reach

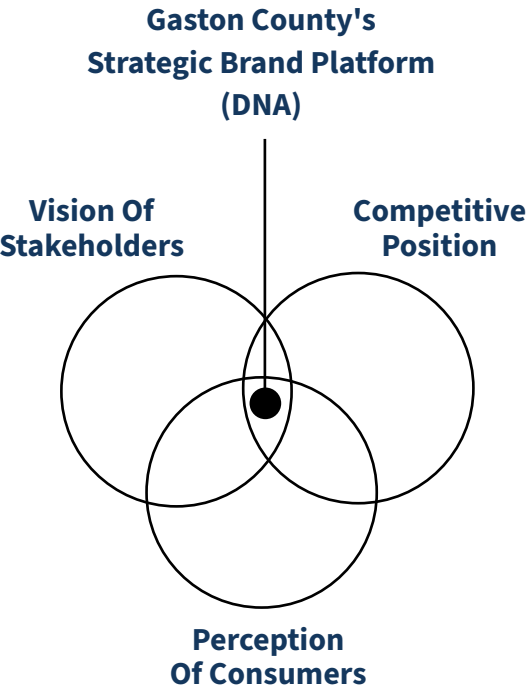
Gaston County offers outdoor experiences that feel expansive yet accessible—from mountain views and river adventures to miles of trails. Here, adventure is never far away.

Unexpected Discoveries

From hidden gems and local flavors to unique experiences around every corner, Gaston County rewards those willing to explore beyond the expected.

From Research To Brand DNA

The research data was analyzed to uncover trends and insights that reveal the authentic Gaston County story. These insights were funneled into a strategic brand platform, also known as your strategic DNA. Just as an individual’s DNA influences everything from how that person looks to how that person acts (as well as their health and vibrancy), Gaston County's DNA should be the foundational touchstone for all positive planned action in your community, from marketing to events to product development.



The Gaston County DNA

TARGET AUDIENCE: To whom Gaston County has the most appeal

For those who crave places with character shaped by nature and time

FRAME OF REFERENCE: Geographic context of Gaston County

Gaston County, where the Catawba River flows and the Piedmont rises to Crowders Mountain

POINT-OF-DIFFERENCE: What makes Gaston County special

Blends mill-town legacy and local food culture with outdoor discovery in a compact footprint

BENEFIT: Why it should matter to the consumer

So your days can be as packed or relaxed as you like.



The Meaning Behind The Tagline

Where It All Connects is more than a tagline, it is the central idea that defines the GoGastonNC destination brand. It reflects the way Gaston County's rivers, trails, downtowns, communities, attractions, restaurants, and people naturally connect to create experiences that are greater than any single destination alone.

The brand invites visitors to discover those connections while encouraging partners to create them. Every attraction, business, event, and community plays a role in building a more connected visitor experience. Rather than promoting individual destinations in isolation, the GoGastonNC brand celebrates how each experience leads naturally to the next.

This philosophy extends beyond marketing. It provides a shared framework for collaboration, helping tourism partners, municipalities, and organizations tell a consistent story while strengthening the entire destination. When partners embrace the brand together, every recommendation, partnership, and visitor interaction reinforces the idea that Gaston County is a place where adventure, community, and discovery are connected.

Logo

The logo was designed to reflect the natural assets that make Gaston County unique. The Crowders Mountain skyline serves as a recognizable symbol of place, while the two blue lines represent the Catawba and South Fork Catawba Rivers. The design also intentionally connects to the Gaston County Government brand through similar visual elements, creating a sense of alignment and shared identity.



Primary Logo

The primary GoGastonNC logo is the official mark for promoting Gaston County as a destination. This is the logo partners should use when marketing tourism experiences, attractions, events, and visitor-focused content.



Secondary Logo

The secondary Gaston County logo provides flexibility for applications where a broader county representation is needed, such as merchandise, signage, or situations where a clear connection to Gaston County is important.



Wordmarks

Supporting brand elements used when space, format, or design needs require a simplified treatment.

Typefaces

The typography balances heritage with clarity. Veneer was selected as the display typeface to reflect Gaston County's mill-town legacy and authentic character, while Source Sans provides a friendly, modern, and highly readable foundation for both print and digital communications.

Veneer

Two Regular
Primary Headline Font

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Source Sans 3

Regular
Primary Body Font

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Color Palette

The GoGastonNC color palette builds upon the established Gaston County Government brand, maintaining a strong visual connection while expanding the palette to provide greater flexibility and expression. Guided by research, blue and green became the foundation of the brand, reflecting Gaston County's waterways, trails, forests, and outdoor experiences while reinforcing the destination's strategic focus on outdoor recreation.

HEX #1B365D CMYK 100, 71, 0, 51 RGB 27, 54, 93	HEX #FDD26E CMYK 0, 11, 62, 0 RGB 253, 210, 110
PANTONE® 534 C	PANTONE® 134 C

HEX #1A658F CMYK 87, 42, 7, 20 RGB 26, 101, 143	HEX #FF8F1C CMYK 0, 49, 96, 0 RGB 255, 143, 28
PANTONE® 2152 C	PANTONE® 1495 C

HEX #007681 CMYK 95, 6, 30, 28 RGB 0, 118, 129	HEX #DC582A CMYK 0, 75, 93, 0 RGB 220, 88, 42
PANTONE® 7474 C	PANTONE® 7479 C

HEX #00B2A9 CMYK 81, 0, 38, 0 RGB 0, 178, 169	HEX #78BE21 CMYK 54, 0, 100, 0 RGB 120, 190, 33
PANTONE® 326 C	PANTONE® 368 C

HEX #00B5E2 CMYK 76, 0, 0, 0 RGB 0, 181, 226	HEX #008C46 CMYK 99, 0, 95, 5 RGB 0, 140, 70
PANTONE® 306 C	PANTONE® 6166 C



A Shared Vision. A Shared Opportunity.

GoGastonNC markets Gaston County regionally to inspire people to visit, explore, and experience more of what our destination has to offer. When those visitors arrive, we want them to see the same Where It All Connects brand throughout their experience, in accommodations, downtowns, restaurants, attractions, and local businesses.

That’s where our partners come in. By connecting your business to GoGastonNC, you help reinforce Gaston County as one connected destination and make it easier for visitors to discover more.

Here Is How You Can Connect

Connect Your Website

Add the GoGastonNC logo to your website and link it to GoGastonNC.org. This creates a connection between your site and the destination website and can support search visibility for both.

Connect On Social

Follow and engage with GoGastonNC on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube at @GoGastonNC. Tag us when it makes sense, and let us know when you have content, events, or promotions that could be a good fit for a social collaboration.

Connect Visitors To More

Help visitors discover other places and experiences across Gaston County. The more we connect our businesses and communities, the more opportunities we create for visitors to explore, and for local businesses to benefit.

Show Your Connection

Display the Where It All Connects door cling as a visible way to show visitors that you’re part of Gaston County’s tourism community. Look for opportunities to incorporate the destination brand into your business and marketing.

Stay Connected

Stay informed about upcoming campaigns, partnership opportunities, and ways to participate through our partner newsletter and meetings. These are where we’ll share what’s coming up and how you can connect with upcoming promotions.



Who We Work With

We work with tourism-related businesses and organizations throughout Gaston County.

Partners

Businesses with a visitor-facing experience or offering tied to a specific location, such as hotels, attractions, restaurants, shops, and breweries.

Affiliates

Organizations that support tourism and visitor experiences across the community, such as municipalities, parks and recreation departments, and downtown organizations.

Become A Brand Ambassador

The GoGastonNC brand comes to life through the people who share it. We invite our tourism partners, businesses, attractions, downtown organizations, and community leaders to help tell the Gaston County story.

Share the brand. Celebrate what makes your community unique. Connect visitors to more of Gaston County. Follow and tag GoGastonNC, display the destination brand, participate in social collaborations when it makes sense, and help visitors discover what’s beyond your own doorstep.

Together, we can create a more connected visitor experience and bring Where It All Connects to life.

Partner Resources & Opportunities

- A complimentary listing on GoGastonNC.org
- Consideration for inclusion in the Gaston County Guide
- Access to the countywide event calendar
- Opportunities for social media collaboration
- Consideration for blogs, media outreach, & destination stories
- Visitor information and GoGastonNC promotional materials
- Opportunities for inclusion in the monthly visitor newsletter
- Quarterly tourism partner newsletter and updates
- Invitations to partnership meetings and industry updates
- Cooperative marketing and promotional opportunities

Get the Most From Partnership

- Keep your website listing, hours, photos, and contact information current.
- Submit public events through the online calendar.
- Share major announcements, new experiences, and seasonal updates.
- Provide high-quality photography and appropriate usage permission.
- Display GoGastonNC materials when relevant.
- Participate in meetings, newsletters, research, and marketing opportunities.
- Refer visitors to GoGastonNC.org for countywide trip-planning information.

What Success Looks Like

Increase Visitor Spending

Attract more visitors who stay longer, explore more, and contribute to Gaston County's economy.

Grow Overnight Visitation

Increase hotel stays by inspiring visitors to experience more than a day trip.

Strengthen The Visitor Economy

Support events, attractions, restaurants, retailers, and lodging partners that drive economic impact throughout the county.

Increase Destination Awareness

Position GoGastonNC as the premier outdoor recreation destination in the Charlotte region.

Build Stronger Partnerships

Create lasting collaboration among municipalities, tourism businesses, community organizations, and economic development partners.

Deliver Measurable Results

Use data and research to continually improve marketing performance and demonstrate the impact of tourism.

Great Experiences. Real Impact.

When you support tourism, you're not just welcoming visitors,
you're investing in local businesses, creating jobs, growing our economy,
and helping Gaston County thrive for future generations.

Thank you for being part of the story.

Partner With Us

Scan the QR Code or visit GoGastonNC.org/partners



Follow us @GoGastonNC |   



Where It All Connects

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