



# Goochland County Tourism Strategic Plan 2023-2028



*Explore Goochland!*

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## Acknowledgements

Goochland County's location, recreational amenities, access to natural resources, and history provides a solid foundation to market tourism offerings to residents and visitors alike. Home to a wide variety of craft beverage companies, corporate headquarters, healthcare providers, and construction services create a successful corporate environment. The unmatched natural beauty of rolling hills, long standing farms, access points to the James River, and established amenities have helped establish a solid foundation for a successful and growing tourism industry.

Tourism is included in the County's Economic Development strategic plan because of its current and potential contributions to the Goochland County economy. Ultimately, the Tourism function will be split between the Economic Development Department and the Parks and Recreation Department. Goochland has unique tourism experiences and staff will need to build relationships with both regional and community partners to collaborate and jointly market like-industry tourism assets.

## Tourism Mission & Vision

### Vision Statement

To become a family-friendly, popular destination for history, craft food and beverage, recreational sports and outdoor enthusiasts as well as a source of pride for residents.

### Goochland Tourism Mission Statement

To promote, develop, and offer authentic visitor and resident experiences while preserving and protecting Goochland's values, rural character, history, resources, businesses, and agriculture.



## Situational Analysis

Goochland County is in the Piedmont Plateau region of central Virginia and is located a mere thirteen miles west of the state capital in Richmond. Interstate 64 and Route 288 serve as a link between Goochland and major markets in the eastern and central regions of the United States. 55% of the nation's consumers are within a two-day truck drive of Goochland. Interstates 85, 95 and 295 are easily accessed from Goochland County, as well as several state routes and highways.

Family-owned ventures and Fortune 500 companies call Goochland home and represent industries ranging from corporate headquarters to guitar case manufacturing. Low tax rates, responsive county government, a collaborative business community, and proximity to major metro areas like Richmond and Charlottesville are among the many reasons companies choose to do business in Goochland County.

Goochland County's location also provides quick and easy access to countless cultural, historical and recreation attractions throughout the region. These amenities range from the James River and outdoor recreation facilities in Goochland to art museums and theaters in Downtown Richmond. Colonial Williamsburg, Washington, D.C., the Blue Ridge Mountains, and Virginia Beach are within a two-hour drive of the county. Goochland County provides the perfect mix of urban convenience and rural charm.





## Existing Tourism Assets

Goochland County is home to a large number of existing tourism assets in various sectors. Those sectors include agritourism, arts and culture, craft beverages, dining, historical sites, local shops, outdoor recreation, youth sporting events, and special events. Each of these sectors intertwines within the tourism industry and each other to create a unique experience to those who spend their time in Goochland County.

In more recent years the County has become known for the numerous craft beverage makers who source their materials from local farmers and producers. Many notable events, television shows, and movies have all been hosted at various event venues giving the County national recognition. Youth sports have grown with various events, and tournaments hosted throughout the year. Outdoor enthusiasts far and wide have come to Goochland to enjoy the launch points to the James River, and the Leakes Mill Park mountain biking course.

These existing tourism hot spots have individually marketed their destinations to visitors through their websites, social media, and word of mouth to attract new visitors and bring back existing enthusiasts. The goal of the tourism strategic plan is to centralize a marketing effort within Goochland County to better promote tourism destinations. Connecting each of these destinations in one central place, will allow potential new visitors to spend more time and dollars within the local business community.

## Unique Tourism Assets

The following tourism assets are unique to Goochland County and cannot be found in neighboring localities. This list is not comprehensive but a snapshot example of unique assets in the County.

### Agritourism

Goochland County Agriculture  
Center  
Unique Farm Operations  
Deep Run Hunt Club

### History

Central High Cultural and  
Educational Complex  
Goochland County Historical  
Society  
Jeffersonian Courthouse  
Second Union Rosenwald School  
Museum  
Tuckahoe Plantation  
Clover Forest Plantation

Goochland Day  
Rassawek Spring Jubilee  
Sunflower Festival  
South African Wine Festival  
Autumn Festival

### Arts & Culture

Goochland Community Theater  
Goochland Drive in Theater

### Outdoor Recreation

Heart of VA Boy Scout Camp  
Hilbert Camp  
Tucker Park  
Leakes Mill Park

### Events

4th of July Fireworks  
Fall Festival

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## Undeveloped Tourism Assets

The following assets do not yet exist, but are in development. They have strong potential to become premier tourism assets should the County, organizations, or private investors choose to develop them. This list is not comprehensive but a snapshot example of opportunities of undeveloped assets.

### Agritourism

Goochland County Agriculture  
Fair  
Farm Day

### History

Guided History Tours

### Outdoor Recreation

Additional Athletic Facilities  
Increased River Amenities  
Eastern Park  
East End Trail System  
Elk Island Recreation Area

### Arts & Culture

Artisan Center

### Events

Concert Series



## Competition

Goochland County is a rural county within close proximity to the major metro markets of Richmond and Charlottesville. The most direct competition will come from these neighboring counties and localities and their ability to provide significantly more options in:

- Overnight accommodations
- Night/evening entertainment
- Dining and shopping

## Target Customer/Tourist/Visitors

The tourism assets located in Goochland County appeal to a wide variety of people and interests but fall into one of the following categories:

- Agritourism
- Arts & Culture
- Craft Beverages
- History
- Outdoor Recreation
- Sports Tourism

A majority of the assets in the County are family and pet friendly.



## SWOT Analysis

The following analysis outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats specifically surrounding tourism in Goochland County. This SWOT analysis was used to determine forthcoming goals and objectives.

### STRENGTHS

The County's main strengths lie in the existing outdoor assets already in place. The tourism strategic plan will work to build off the existing assets to strengthen other areas that are in need. These strengths include:

- Agriculture Community
- Assets ready to be developed
- Diverse History
- Easy accessibility
- Established events
- Forest Land
- Goochland Community
- Goochland Sports Complex
- Growth opportunities
- Hidden Rock Park
- Historical Society
- Identified as Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)
- James River
- Leakes Mill Park
- Local farms
- Craft Food & Beverage ecosystem
- Matthews Park
- Native beauty
- Natural Resources
- Proximity to Richmond & Charlottesville markets
- Tourism Partners
- Tucker Park
- Strong equestrian assets
- Variety of assets

### WEAKNESSES

The weaknesses outline below are areas that have not been addressed specifically since a tourism strategic has not been in place. These weaknesses include:

- Lack of opportunities for fine art enjoyment
- Funding
- Internet access is limited in certain areas
- Lack of retail space
- Lack of Press Coverage
- Lack of way-finding signage
- Limited overnight accommodations
- Limited dining and shopping options
- No central information point
- No tourism brochures
- Perception of distance
- Tourism infrastructure
- Walkability

## OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities listed below would provide the County a chance to improve on our weaknesses further strengthen our tourism impact in the region. These opportunities include:

- Access to grants
- Agritourism development
- Increase awareness of existing assets
- Education for support programs
- Enhance internet presence
- Historical tourism
- James River Access
- Lodging recruitment
- Promotion at VA Welcome Centers
- Quality of life enhancement
- Recreation opportunities
- Revenue generation
- Sports Tourism
- Regional collaboration
- Self guided tours
- Trails
- Volunteerism
- Promotion of existing overnight accommodations
- Promotion of existing equestrian assets

## THREATS

The threats the County faces are external perceptions, and weaknesses that can be addressed through an external educational targeted marketing campaign. These threats include:

- Community concerns
- Competing regional amenities
- Lack of community knowledge of assets
- Lack of funding
- Lack of overnight accommodations
- Perception of travel distance
- Unpackaged assets



## Planning & Visioning

The following have been identified as the tourism strategic plan goals, objectives, implementation measures, targets, and initiatives during the development of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The Tourism Plan replaces the strategic goals found in the Economic Development strategic plan.

### ***Economic Development Strategic Plan:***

#### ***Goal 3: Promote, enhance, and expand tourism offerings in Goochland County***

#### **Objective 3.1: Effectively market tourism assets to increase visitor spending**

**Objective 3.1:** Effectively market tourism assets to increase visitor spending

**Strategy 3.1.1:** Utilize website and social media to market county's tourism assets

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff, Community Engagement Staff

##### **Action Plan:**

- Launch the tourism website and promote its existence
- Keep website updated and accurate with information
- Examine various social media platforms, select 1 platform, and begin to utilize
- Develop social media content strategy marketing plan
- Research and create 1 tourism specific hashtag
- Host a calendar of tourism specific events for community
- Add all tourism assets to Virginia is for Lovers site
- Continue to update/promote *Goochland Guide to Food Beverage & Fun*

##### **Targeted Result:**

- 1) Launch website and social media campaigns
- 2) Steadily increase website traffic and social media following year over year by 5%
- 3) Create community calendar of events

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** July 2023 and Sustain

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**Objective 3.1:** Effectively market tourism assets to increase visitor spending

**Strategy 3.1.2:** Increase market awareness by hosting media, tourism promoters, and event site selectors in County

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff

##### **Action Plan:**

- Compile a list of trade publications and advertising dates and costs
- Establish a media list based on targeted tourism industries, events, sports tournaments, and media contacts
- Host media tour to promote targeted tourism sectors

##### **Targeted Result:**

- Host media tour

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** January 2024 and Sustain

## Objective 3.1: Effectively market tourism assets to increase visitor spending

**Objective 3.1:** Effectively market tourism assets to increase visitor spending

**Strategy 3.1.3:** Create and publish tourism marketing materials

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff, Community Engagement Staff

### Action Plan:

- Create 6 day trip itineraries available for tourists, visitors and citizens
- Create at least 6 maps showcasing existing tourism assets of Goochland County
- Create tourism branded logo to use on all marketing materials
- Upload materials to tourism website
- Publicize materials on social media and send to media contacts
- Build stronger relationships with hotel, and local tourism destinations to cross promote and provide information on things to do in Goochland
- Create a resource guide for film, sporting events, and event venues

### Targeted Result:

- 1) Develop a comprehensive library of marketing materials
- 2) Create a minimum of 10 variations of marketing materials
- 3) Create a resource guide for film, sporting events, and event venues

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** January 2024 and Sustain

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**Objective 3.1:** Effectively market tourism assets to increase visitor spending

**Strategy 3.1.4:** Increase awareness of tourism assets within Goochland County and region by creating a tourism ambassador program and working with Goochland Chamber

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff, Community Engagement Staff

### Action Plan:

- Develop ambassador program guidelines
- Recruit citizens and businesses with large social media presence to visit tourism destinations in the County and post experiences on social media using specific hashtags
- Work with Goochland Chamber of Commerce to promote Small Business Saturday and other shop small campaigns

### Targeted Result:

- 1) Develop ambassador program guidelines
- 2) Engage citizens and businesses to become ambassadors
- 3) Track social media engagement to determine success of program
- 4) Shop Small/Shop Local campaign creation and implementation

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** January 2024 and Sustain

## Objective 3.2: Document Goochland's historical tourism assets and increase interest/visitation

**Objective 3.2:** Document Goochland's historical tourism assets and increase interest/visitation

**Strategy 3.2.1:** Document and Promote existing historical assets

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff, Community Engagement Staff

### Action Plan:

- Create a comprehensive list of all existing historical assets in the County including historical venues, markers, and buildings
- Publish list to tourism website and on social media platforms
- Research National Register of Historic Places for additional sites
- Promote Historical Society office through economic development and tourism newsletter and tourism website to existing citizens and tourists

### Targeted Result:

- 1) Comprehensive list of existing historical assets
- 2) Build relationship with Historical Society

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** July 2023 and Sustain

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**Objective 3.2:** Document Goochland's historical tourism assets and increase interest/visitation

**Strategy 3.2.2:** Share Goochland's story with visitors and citizens

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff, Community Engagement Staff

### Action Plan:

- Research and write a creative piece on the history of Goochland County
- Add section to the website with imagery and creative story telling on Goochland's history incorporating the different tourism sectors
- Link to other materials written about Goochland to share with visitors and citizens on website
- Examine opportunities to support historical society
- Share the story with County businesses, elected leaders and County staff to improve knowledge of County history and tourism assets available

### Targeted Result:

- Share the founding story of Goochland County on website for public viewing creating community pride

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** July 2023 and Sustain

## Objective 3.3: Develop Tourism Assets

**Objective 3.3:** Develop tourism assets

**Strategy 3.3.1:** Define and evaluate existing and emerging local and regional tourism sectors

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff, Parks & Recreation Staff, Agricultural Center, Agricultural businesses, County Administration, Community Engagement Staff

**Action Plan:**

- Review existing tourism sectors in Goochland and regionally
- Identify 3-5 targeted tourism sectors to promote
- Research targeted sectors to understand needs
- Create full listing of existing tourism assets, businesses, and venues in the County
- Visit with existing sector businesses, assets, and key players in target sectors to identify gaps
- Create marketing materials geared toward target sector recruitment, and improving tourist and citizen visitation
- Identify and attend trade shows geared towards target sector event recruitment
- Evaluate business policies, ordinances, and codes that may impact visitation and tourism business growth

**Targeted Result:**

- 1) Targeted tourism sectors selected
- 2) Create 3-5 marketing pieces for tourism sectors
- 3) Recruit 1 new tourism opportunity for Goochland County

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** July 2024 and Sustain

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**Objective 3.3:** Develop tourism assets

**Strategy 3.3.2:** Explore financial opportunities available to develop assets

**Owner:** Economic Development Staff

**Action Plan:**

- Meet with Virginia Tourism Corporation to understand additional grant funding offered through their office
- Explore regional partnerships and benefits to County and local businesses
- Research and identify additional potential funding sources for tourism sectors, events, and marketing
- Receive and spend ARPA Tourism funding before expiration date
- Research tourism incentives and recruitment plan to attract unique tourism destinations that fit Economic Development targeted industries, and tourism sector gaps
- Research funding opportunities for way-finding signage for tourism attractions

**Targeted Result:**

- 1) Identify additional funding sources for tourism development
- 2) Build relationship with external tourism partnership
- 3) Spend ARPA tourism funds

**Expected Timeline for Target Result:** January 2024 and Sustain

## Conclusion & Timeline

Goochland County recognizes the significance of tourism and its potential economic impact. The steps taken by the County prior to the development of a tourism strategic plan serves as evidence of that recognition. This plan is intended to build upon those accomplishments to help create awareness of all Goochland County tourism assets.

County Government support and stakeholder participation is required for this plan to be successful. The Goochland Tourism initiative will be housed within the Economic Development department. Future assistance from various Departments, community organizations, and interested citizens will be vital to the plans success.

The goals and objectives outlined in this plan will be reviewed on a regular basis. Additional metrics are being reviewed and tracked in line with the objectives and strategies outlined in this plan. Any adjustments and updates will be made upon review. Once a majority of the targets have been met, a new or updated plan will be developed.

### Objective Completion Timeline & Ownership

Objective & Ownership	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
3.1.1 Economic Development & Community Engagement	→					
3.1.2 Economic Development		→				
3.1.3 Economic Development & Community Engagement		→				
3.1.4 Economic Development & Community Engagement		→				
3.2.1 Economic Development & Community Engagement	→					
3.2.2 Economic Development & Community Engagement	→					
3.3.1 Economic Development & various other partners			→			
3.3.2 Economic Development		→				

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