



Downtown
LYNCHBURG
— association —

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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DOWNTOWN LYNCHBURG ASSOCIATION

Downtown Lynchburg Association (DLA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, works to create a strong, vibrant, and welcoming downtown through marketing initiatives, business support & attraction efforts, beautification, placemaking, cultural events, and more.

We are an accredited program of Virginia Main Street and the National Main Street Center, and a member of International Downtown Association. **For 25 years**, DLA has worked in partnership with the City of Lynchburg to sustain and develop Downtown as a vital economic, cultural, recreational, residential, and historic center for our community.

CORE VALUES

- **Bring the energy.** Passion for a strong, vibrant, and welcoming downtown.
- **Everyone is welcome.** Dedication to inclusivity.
- **Do the right thing.** Integrity and excellence in all that we do.
- **Be curious, flexible, innovative, and bold.** Addressing the challenges and opportunities of the changing needs of our downtown.
- **Listen to evolve together.** Collaboration for a stronger community.



2022 PRIORITIES

- **Foster a thriving and diverse storefront economy** that supports Downtown Lynchburg's business community, excites visitors, and meets the needs of residents.
- **Cultivate a lively and engaging downtown atmosphere** that identifies Downtown Lynchburg as a destination for locals and tourists alike.
- **Create a truly welcoming environment** that enhances the experience of Downtown Lynchburg visitors and residents.



DOWNTOWN BY THE NUMBERS

- Dining Tax Revenue: **\$1,756,347** (14% increase over 2021)
- Shopping Tax Revenue: **\$372,659** (27% increase over 2021)
- Amusement Tax Revenue: **\$114,508** (48% increase over 2021)
- Property Tax Revenue: **\$259.8M** (8% increase over 2021)
- Lodging Tax Revenue: **\$656,719** (15% increase over 2021)
- Overall Visitation: **3,800,000** (3% increase over 2021)



INTERNAL GROWTH

In 2022, DLA welcomed two new staff members to expand our impact. **Anna Pretty**, our new **Director of Programs & Events**, oversees our signature events like Movies in the Park and Fireworks on the Riverfront, our placemaking projects and volunteer coordination, and will also be designing our new holiday installation and events on the Bluffwalk for 2023.



Kelvin Whitehurst also joined the team as our new **Business Development Coordinator**, where he assists in the retention and attraction of businesses in Downtown Lynchburg. This is a brand new position for DLA and one that we have been eagerly anticipating for many years. Kelvin will provide daily support for our existing businesses, while also working to attract and recruit new amenities to our empty storefront locations.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Last year, we developed the **2023 Downtown Lynchburg Strategic Plan** with the help of Progressive Urban Management Associates out of Boulder, CO. The plan will guide our organization's evolution over the next five years and beyond, and was informed by input from the DLA staff and Board of Directors, a project working group, and City leadership, along with broad community feedback, current market trends, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and best practices from comparable downtown markets.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Billy Hansen
Hansen Realty Advisors

Brandon Jones
Pacific Life

Todd Leap
Bailey Grey

Rick Loving
BWXT (Retired)

Dennis Marcink
The Virginian Hotel

Don Pendleton
Consensus Real Estate

Jannett Spearman
Spearman Artisanry

PROMOTION & MARKETING

DLA uses a variety of tools to market and promote the many businesses, attractions, amenities, and events in Downtown Lynchburg. With creative blogs, engaging webpages, exciting videos, and informative newsletters, we highlight a downtown experience that entices the community to come and support our local businesses. Thanks to our community that engages with our content, we are able to continue providing helpful information that highlights the downtown experience.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

We continue to utilize our social media presence as an essential way of getting information to the community. Throughout 2022, we continued to see a jump in followers, engagement, and video content views on our various platforms. With our social media following, website traffic, and newsletter engagement, there is an opportunity to quickly and effectively promote all things Downtown — including events, new businesses, public art installations, shopping promotions, restaurants, and more.



18.4K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

10% INCREASE
→ OVER 2022



19.1K
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

24% INCREASE
→ OVER 2022

BUSINESS OWNER HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout the year, DLA makes it a point to highlight downtown business owners on our social media channels. This gives us an opportunity to tell their stories and gives our audience a chance to connect with these entrepreneurs, who are ultimately their neighbors, friends, and loved ones. We do this year-round, specifically leading up to Small Business Saturday or during Women's History Month and Black History Month.

82,885

INSTAGRAM
ACCOUNTS
REACHED

161,824

FACEBOOK
ACCOUNTS
REACHED



INSTAGRAM REELS

In 2022, we continued to use Instagram Reels to showcase the exciting amenities that Downtown Lynchburg has to offer. Over the course of the year, **we posted 77 Reels that gained well over half a million views (766,246).**



WEBPAGE VIEWS



13% INCREASE OVER 2022

EVENTS PAGE — 12,705 VIEWS

DINE PAGE — 10,300 VIEWS

SHOP PAGE — 5,141 VIEWS

STANDOUT BLOGS

We use blogs as an opportunity to highlight multiple events, businesses, or activities in one location. This allows us to capitalize on our large website traffic and draw exposure to exciting happenings in a creative way. Our blogs reached over 10,000 pageviews in 2022.

✦ INDOOR ACTIVITIES

DLA compiled a list of all indoor activities to enjoy in Downtown Lynchburg during the colder months. This included trivia and bingo nights, art classes, and more!



1,492
WEBPAGE
VIEWS

✦ FALL BUCKET LIST

DLA compiled a list of 12 must-do fall activities in Downtown Lynchburg that encouraged readers to head downtown and enjoy Virginia's most beloved season.



1,450
WEBPAGE
VIEWS

✦ A DAY IN THE LIFE

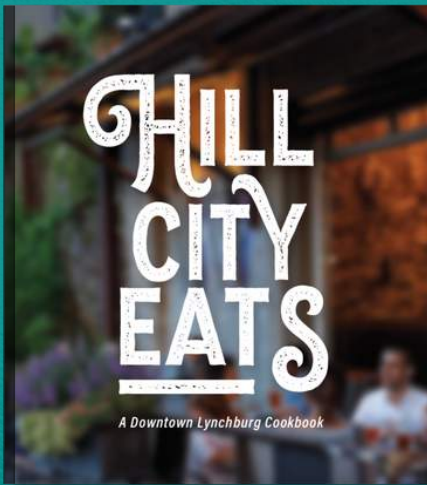
DLA created 5 unique itineraries (one for each of our Movies in the Park screenings) that provided the ultimate pre-movie guide for a day in Downtown Lynchburg.



1,004
WEBPAGE
VIEWS

HILL CITY EATS

Hill City Eats: A Downtown Lynchburg Cookbook was published in November 2022 after months of preparation and coordination with downtown business owners and chefs. This book features 35 of our fantastic downtown restaurants, showcasing the places, the food, and the people behind them. It became a celebration of Downtown Lynchburg's renaissance, and of the food that has been central to that story. Hill City Eats is a symbol of progress, born out of a deep appreciation and love for our city.



This 172-page hardcover casebound cookbook made for the perfect gift for friends and family who have an admiration for Lynchburg, selling out its first run of 1,000 copies before the end of the year. Hill City Eats has found its place being proudly displayed on household coffee tables and bookshelves, and heavily used in kitchens across the country – forever admired as a memento of this snapshot in time.

We could not have pulled this project off without our corporate sponsors, **Moore & Giles** and **Campbell Insurance**, who believed in this project and entrusted us to craft a book that promotes our city and tells the stories of these hardworking individuals. And special thanks to our individual sponsors, **Rick and Robin Loving**, two wonderful Downtown Lynchburg residents and food-lover extraordinaires. Their commitment to the city's growth and desire to see our community thrive is unmatched.



BEHIND THE SCENES



COOKBOOK REVENUE

We launched pre-orders for Hill City Eats in the first week of November and received over 400 orders before the books even arrived. The cookbook was sold online and at 18 Downtown Lynchburg locations. We promoted it as a gift during the holiday season, resulting in over 1,000 copies sold by the end of 2022. This success allowed us to order an additional 500 copies.

\$9K
WHOLESALE
REVENUE

\$24K
PRE-ORDER
REVENUE

\$33K
TOTAL
REVENUE

BUSINESS FEEDBACK

"I think DLA does so much for downtown and once we started talking about it, I realized the number of restaurants and diversity of restaurants downtown and they're all highlighted. And I think people will be surprised. I mean, there's a restaurant for almost every type of food you would want for almost any budget." – **Rodney Taylor, Market At Main**

"We can't always give every single recipe out, but if we can give back a little something as a thank-you, then this is a really cool opportunity to do that. And I think it's a really cool move for our city to kind of put a stamp on who we are as Lynchburg collectively and this encourages a sense of camaraderie between businesses." – **Nicole Davidson, Batter Bar**

"It was a good opportunity for us to showcase our restaurant. But not only that, it's a great opportunity for downtown to showcase all the restaurants and businesses that are downtown that some people don't even know about. It's a great gift for Christmas. It's something great for supporting our town. There's so many positives to it." – **Timby Mukherjee, Hot & Cold Café**

PLACEMAKING & BEAUTIFICATION



MIDTOWN PARKING DECK MURALS

At the beginning of 2022, our team set out to find more opportunities for public art in Downtown Lynchburg. The Midtown Parking Deck proved to be the perfect location to add vibrant murals as it served as a double initiative: to bring more awareness to an underutilized public parking garage and to add color and vibrancy to an unattractive structure. From design to completion, this two-month project took 80+ volunteers and an estimated 240 hours of painting. The resulting murals have enlivened the corner of Commerce and 10th Streets, and have helped hundreds to discover a previously overlooked public parking location for their downtown visits. The Midtown Parking Deck Murals were generously sponsored by **Bank of the James**.

240
ESTIMATED
HOURS TO
COMPLETE

30
GALLONS OF
PAINT AND
PRIMER

15
DAYS TO
COMPLETE THE
MURALS

“
LOVE IT! WHAT A GREAT WAY TO MAKE A DRAB PARKING DECK INTO A HAPPY PLACE.
— SARAH C.
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWER
”

CITY AUDITORIUM MURALS

The long-vacant City Auditorium building at 1112 Main Street was recently condemned. With its ground-floor entrances blocked by graffiti-covered plywood, this once-beautiful building was now negatively impacting the block. To address this blight, we partnered with the wonderfully talented local illustrator and cartoonist **Stephen Kissel** to turn this challenge into an opportunity. Stephen added a fun and playful pop of color to the plywood with friendly characters, making this block feel safer and more welcoming.



"CREATING OUR CULTURE" MURAL

The "Creating Our Culture" mural came out of a desire to elevate Lynchburg's many artists of color, to provide exposure for their work, and to raise awareness for the wealth of talent we have in our community. A QR code is prominently displayed on the mural, which directs viewers to a webpage that features eight local artists of color, their work, and their stories. The mural aims to provide BIPOC artists in our community the opportunity to express their voices through mass media and to connect them to potential partnerships and opportunities.



“ THIS IS MAJOR! THE IMPRINT FROM THIS COLLABORATION IS SO IMPACTFUL!
 – ANTHONY A.
 FACEBOOK FOLLOWER ”

“ SO SPECIAL! THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR TOWN SO BEAUTIFUL AND INVITING.
 – KELLI J.
 INSTAGRAM FOLLOWER ”



Local marketing firm Blackwater Branding, headquartered at 1009 Main Street, is responsible for the project concept and creative direction of the artwork, as well as the featured website content. The mural was painted by local mural artists **Christina Davis**, **Twon Smith**, and **Jawansa Hall**. This project was sponsored by **Genworth Financial** and **Scott Insurance**, with additional support provided by the **Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation**, as well as support in part by the **Virginia Commission for the Arts**.

8
 BIPOC ARTISTS
 HIGHLIGHTED

CULTURAL EVENTS

FIREWORKS ON THE RIVERFRONT

Our second annual Fireworks on the Riverfront event was a smashing success. We saw large crowds (both residents and visitors) spend their evening in Downtown Lynchburg, enjoying live performers, food from local restaurants, and of course, the fireworks display. This event allowed families and friends to experience the spectacle from a variety of vantage points throughout the city. As with all of our events, this night was an important economic driver, generating foot traffic for our retail, restaurant, and arts & culture businesses in the district.



We welcomed approximately **22,000 visitors** to Downtown Lynchburg on Friday, July 1st, including **1,400 viewers** on the Bluffwalk (42% increase from 2021) and **3,000 viewers** who joined us in Riverfront Park (47% increase from 2021). This was an overall 41% increase in foot traffic in the Downtown Lynchburg district compared to the previous Friday. This event was made possible with the generous help of our title sponsor, **BWX Technologies**, with additional support from **Gentry Locke Attorneys**, **Mustaches 4 Kids Lynchburg**, **The Water Dog**, **ABC13-WSET**, **WYYD-FM**, and the **City of Lynchburg's Office of Economic Development & Tourism**.

22K

**VISITORS TO
DOWNTOWN**

3K

**VISITORS TO
THE PARK**



MOVIES IN THE PARK

Downtown Lynchburg Association teamed up with Nomad Movies to bring Movies in the Park back to Riverfront Park in 2022. This beloved summer tradition brought in hundreds of visitors to Downtown Lynchburg during the summer movie series. After a series of polls on our social media channels, we landed on the top five most requested movies: **In The Heights**, **Back to the Future**, **Spider-Man: No Way Home**, **Tangled**, and **The Incredibles**. And although two of our originally scheduled movie dates were rescheduled due to weather, we were fortunate to be able to show all five movies.

Movies in the Park was sponsored by Innovative Wireless Technologies, Ryan Homes Lynchburg, Lynchburg Hillcats, Sigora Solar, Mustaches 4 Kids Lynchburg, The Water Dog, ABC13-WSET, iHeartMedia, and the City of Lynchburg's Office of Economic Development & Tourism.



2.8K
VISITORS TO
RIVERFRONT
PARK



ADDITIONAL BUSINESS SUPPORT

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

DLA strives to always keep the lines of communication open between our organization and the downtown business owners – providing information that will help them to adapt and succeed in an ever-changing business climate. We do this through consistent email updates, newsletters, direct outreach via social media, and in-person visits throughout the year. This frequent communication allows us to keep a finger on the pulse of small business needs so that we can provide them with tools that will help them succeed.



AVAILABLE PROPERTY DATABASE

Our goal when launching the Available Property Database on our website was to connect entrepreneurs and business owners to available spaces in Downtown Lynchburg. We have a strong desire to see our empty storefronts filled with flourishing small businesses, and we believe that this effort will act as a catalyst for growth.



22%
STOREFRONT
VACANCY

DOWN FROM 24% STOREFRONT
VACANCY IN 2021



GIFT CARD PROGRAM

This program has continued to create new opportunities for our community to shop small and support local businesses. In 2022, we onboarded many new businesses including retail, restaurant, service, and attractions to the program, bringing the total number to 42 that accept these gift cards. This year, we saw **\$29.6K in gift card redemptions** and **\$46.3K in total gift card activations**. Since the program's launch in 2020, we've seen **\$76.6K in gift card redemptions** and **\$145.5K in total gift card activations**.

SMALL BUSINESS MINDSET

Our **Spring Shop Crawl** proved to be an exciting way to drive foot traffic downtown while drawing exposure for our small businesses. Over 110 individuals submitted a shop crawl card and participating shoppers received a total of \$2,500 worth of Downtown Lynchburg gift cards that could be redeemed at over 40 downtown businesses.

For **Small Business Saturday (SBS)** this year, DLA focused on a variety of different ways to highlight our small businesses and drive foot traffic into their stores during the holiday season. This work included co-op marketing opportunities, physical and digital marketing materials for the businesses, a retail shop crawl, an SBS webpage highlighting promotions and deals, and small business owner highlights.

WELCOME

WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

We want each and every visitor's experience to be a positive one, which is why we work to make the environment more welcoming through placemaking activities, parking signage, public art installations, holiday lights activations, and more. In addition to our new public art installations this year, DLA worked to bring color and beauty to Downtown by maintaining our current parks and takeout patios, coordinating volunteer cleanups, and advocating for more holiday lights on Main Street. A welcoming environment shows that we care about our city and allows locals and visitors to feel safe and at home.



BLUFFWALK LIGHTS

Holiday lights can make a downtown environment feel magical during the holidays. That's why we light the Bluffwalk each winter season! This year, we increased the display to include the Bluffwalk stairs, an archway over the 12th Street entrance, and additional lighting along the walkway. Stay tuned for much, much more in 2023!

NEW BUSINESSES

Following a consistent trend in recent years, we welcomed a variety of new businesses to Downtown Lynchburg in 2022. Over a dozen new storefront businesses (retail shops, restaurants, attractions, and services) joined our growing environment, providing more opportunities for residents and visitors to experience Downtown Lynchburg in new and exciting ways.



HILL CITY DONUTS



DAY & NIGHT



THE LOVING CO.

2022 FINANCIALS



- 9% Annual Business Giving
- 8% Annual Individual Giving
- 2% Foundations/Grants
- 16% Event/Project Sponsorship
- 9% Event/Program Revenue
- 23% Contracts
- 23% City In Kind
- <1% Miscellaneous Income
- <1% Interest
- 11% City Support

2021 BUSINESS GIVING: \$39,748

2022 BUSINESS GIVING: \$42,917

8% INCREASE

2021 INDIVIDUAL GIVING: \$30,870

2022 INDIVIDUAL GIVING: \$37,967

23% INCREASE

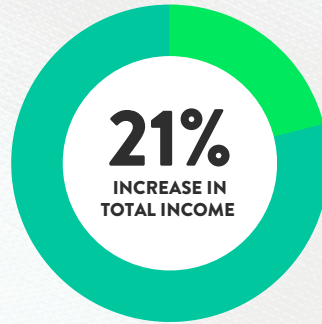
2021 EVENT/PROJECT SPONSORSHIP: \$54,250

2022 EVENT/PROJECT SPONSORSHIP: \$74,000

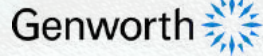
36% INCREASE

\$390,282
TOTAL INCOME 2021

\$474,496
TOTAL INCOME 2022



BUSINESS PARTNERS & EVENT SPONSORS



- Campbell Insurance Gentry Locke Lynchburg Hillcats Moore and Giles, Inc. Scott Insurance Starr Hill Brewery
 Framatome Spearman Artisanry Sigora Solar Cudd Construction Jamerson-Lewis Construction Sunbelt Rentals
 Consensus Real Estate Services Intravene LLC Stifel YMCA of Central Virginia Bikes Unlimited Architectural Partners
 The Depot Grille Freedom First Coleman-Adams Construction, Inc. Randall J. Trost, P.C. Wells Fargo Accents Flags & Gifts
 Davidson, Doyle & Hilton Three Roads Brewing Co. Edwards-Sikkema Associates Gates Family Office McCraw's Furniture Company
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Ariel Weisman
Patty & Ken West
Charlie & Kennon White
Scott & Leah Wiebe
Heather & George Zippel



The logo for the Downtown Lynchburg Association is centered on a white circle. It features the word "Downtown" in a large, black, cursive script font. Below it, the word "LYNCHBURG" is written in a smaller, black, all-caps, sans-serif font. Underneath "LYNCHBURG" is the word "association" in a black, lowercase, sans-serif font, flanked by two horizontal lines.

Downtown
LYNCHBURG
— association —

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