



STAUNTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

WORK PLAN

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Mission Statement - *As a Virginia Main Street non-profit, the Staunton Downtown Development Association nurtures a culturally vibrant and economically robust Downtown.*

Vision Statement - *Downtown Staunton will be a genuine community hub connecting customers, entrepreneurs, residents and visitors.*

ECONOMIC VITALITY ... focuses on business recruitment and retention, entrepreneurial and business development.

Awareness:

*Send press releases and weekly e-mail blasts (Downtown Lowdown) and via social media (Staunton Downtown page, Tj Collins/Shop Staunton First Community pages) to the press, SDDA members and stakeholders (Downtown business and property owners), and the community at large, once per month. Establish a positive portrait of the Downtown business environment for increased investor confidence. Feature business openings and activities, anniversaries and expansions, new ownership, location or name change, property development, for sale and for rent, SDDA accomplishments, grants, programming and events, partnerships and accolades.

Continue to establish new and/or rejuvenated connection with stakeholders and community partners. Continue to explore, develop and implement new in-person and online marketing strategies/methods.

Business Retention:

Continue to update the business packet that contains general information about doing business in Downtown which includes: Parking, store hours, storefront maintenance, window displays and cleaning, Façade and sign ordinance, refuse schedule, Facade Design Program, snow removal, SDDA event calendar, Downtown Lowdown policy, SDDA member benefits, SDDA programming, etc.

Include additional information/resources related to COVID-19.

@Stress importance of parking properly and staying open past 5PM. *Ongoing. Continue assist with sharing information (in person and online) about available paid/free parking options in downtown Staunton. In response to COVID-19, continue to encourage business owners to post changes in hours/days of operation on their doors as well as the importance of regularly updating information on social media/webpages.*

Partner with local and state resources to develop and promote educational and support programs that encourage business activity and entrepreneurial development - City Departments, Staunton Creative Community Fund, Small Business Development Center, banks, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors, educational institutions

*Continue to serve as part of the **City of Staunton's Stabilization & Recovery Team and Business Recovery Outreach sub-committee**. Continue to assist City of Staunton with promotion/execution of DINE OUT IN DOWNTOWN program. Continue to participate in the **SAW MSA Recovery Task Force** which and assist with providing/promoting available resources to small businesses to ensure a safe and speedy recovery following COVID-19. Participate in on-going networking discussions, trainings, collaborations with **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** staff and other **Virginia Main Street** directors and managers, as a way to remain connected and to increase connections/resources for our local business owners.*

@Develop and Education Plan for VA Medicaid Gatherings and classes to educate about healthcare and wellness. Find experts to assist. Engage business and community. *Reconnect with Blue Ridge Legal Clinic, Mr. Dan Sullivan to provide updates/support regarding state's progress with insurance navigation. Visit Downtown businesses and manage personal visits and through the Ambassador Program. Review Ambassador program goals/strategies and update guidelines/purpose/practices for volunteers. Focus on recruitment/training of Ambassadors.*

Continue to recruit, reward and develop team of volunteers that visit SDDA members.

KEY - BLUE TEXT are proposed notes/additions for FY20/21.

* Initiatives addressed in the City Contract

Projects Continued from the 2018-2019 Work Plan

~Projects supported by the 2016 Community Survey

Grant dependent

@Transformational Strategy

@ Get business support for using parking and public spaces for parklets – *Ongoing discussions with board members, committee members, business owners and city staff.*

Business Recruitment:

Maintain communication with property owners to encourage for rent/for sale property listings on the SDDA website and any changes to their property status.

Continue to add business development resources to the “Open a Business” tab.

~ Expand residential listings to neighborhoods around Downtown.

Expand the resources tab on the website to include service providers

Focus on opportunities and new business development in the Central Avenue Area.

* Work with city staff to coordinate recruitment efforts, incentives and define the Trade Area, facilitating leasing efforts that will reduce vacant, leasable storefronts by 50%.

Identify and promote a path for emerging entrepreneurs, cooperatives and partnerships.

Market Staunton Downtown as a great place to open or relocate your business.

~ Market Downtown as a great place to live.

* Identify and contact local and regional entrepreneurs, within selected business groups positioned for location or expansion into leasable DSD storefronts.

@Property Owners and Residents:

Determine ways to encourage upper floor development. *Recommend review of guidelines to allow for upper floor business signage.*

Work with City to determine ways to encourage property owners to rent vacant spaces.

Develop a volunteer project for residential inventory and resident outreach.

Find a resident from each connecting neighborhood to assist.

Organize resident and property owner gatherings.

PROMOTIONS ...creates awareness, loyalty and foot traffic through events, promotions, advertising and community and business engagement.

Events and Promotions

* Plan and implement a minimum of three special events per year.

* Report to the City Manager 30 days after the event.

Support community and business initiatives by assisting with event planning and promotion.

Follow event support policy for merchant initiatives.

@ Greenspace events/seasonal, outdoor music. *Continue to improve upon Downtown Staunton Street Performance application/permit process. Support BUSK STAUNTON initiative during summer/fall 2020.*

@ Downtown services and insurance fair or gatherings

Determine opportunities for securing sponsorship dollars and creative fundraising to support events.

Develop programming that responds to the needs of the community, based on the consumer survey results and creates a contiguous District.

Advertising, Marketing and Campaigns

Investigate and continue to pursue regional advertising, cooperative advertising and social media opportunities for Downtown businesses.

Continue to develop local media partnerships.

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Utilize website and Downtown Lowdown(s) for business outreach, education and community awareness with Downtown promotional activities, information, events and SDDA branding.

~~Continue to promote the Downtown Lowdown and the SDDA, TJ Collins, #Shop Staunton First Facebook/Instagram to increase awareness and participation.~~ *Retool the look/content/distribution of Downtown Lowdown e-blast. Continue to increase frequency of social medias posts through Facebook and Instagram.*

*Update, produce and distribute 30,000 Shopping & Dining Guides and continue to update the digital version on website. *Reduce number of hardcopy guides. Continue to retool/improve upon digital guides. Increase promotional efforts to grow effectiveness/reach of digital guide.*

Continue to implement/expand Shop Staunton First Saturdays/StauntoNites. *Review/evaluate effectiveness and/or desire to be continued and/or shift of StauntonNites program. Retool Shop Staunton First Saturdays program/advertising to include broader scope of businesses in the DSD.*

~ Continue to develop posters and distribute them to merchants, around town and display in kiosks.

Customer Loyalty

~~Continue to expand Gift Card promotion and customer base with the goal of increasing Gift Card sales by 10% between July 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021.~~

~~Investigate a Support local gift card program to improve its performance.~~ *Remain in communication with Mr. Darren Smith of TRAIPE as "Local Token" gift card program is developed. Continue support and collaboration, with launch of pilot program during annual meeting prior to holiday season 2020.*

Continue to develop and expand the Buy Locally campaign to increase community awareness about the benefits of buying from locally owned, independent businesses and develop customer loyalty.

@Develop a strategy for enhancing the connection between Downtown and Mary Baldwin University/Stuart Hall/Grace Christian Academy students and employees, increasing awareness for Downtown programs, activities and businesses.

Continue discussions/collaboration with Mary Baldwin University staff and students. Establish connections with Stuart Hall and Grace Christian Academy staff members.

Downtown Lowdown/Discount Card sign ups.

Event and activity promotion through MBU TV and e-communication.

Create intern project to define low-cost and free activities, products and services Downtown ~~Student Orientation Welcome Party/store decals.~~ *Continue to provide MBU welcome stickers as needed.*

Continue to recognize business accomplishments and milestones through the Thumbs Up! Award to be presented to a different business each month, as designated by the committee.

Committee to determine how to best continue the THUMBS UP! program with a new format/method of recognizing those who go above and beyond.

Celebrate business Anniversaries as an SDDA member benefit.

~# Continue to implement and expand the Downtown Discount Card.

Register merchants and employees.

Develop more restaurant and better offers.

Create a calendar of activities for DC Ambassador to attend each month to sign up new customers and or businesses.

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DESIGN ...fosters a walkable, sustainable and user-friendly Downtown by capitalizing on its unique physical assets and historic architecture and act as a proactive agent for implementation of the Streetscape Plan.

Streetscape Elements

*Facilitate the installation and maintenance of hanging flower baskets on light poles along Beverley Street from May until Labor Day, per City contract. *Review flower basket program. Discuss/develop designs and/or expansion of coverage of flowers/planters in the district. Explore opportunities for rejuvenated interest and support of flower basket program from stakeholders and community members.*

*Provide financial support of \$10,000 for the Downtown trolley.

Expand the transit advertising program, in conjunction with the CSPDC.

Attend Transit Advisory Committee meetings.

@~ Maintain pedestrian signs and maps. (Public transit, bike racks, free parking)

@ Pursue greenspace development. (On-street locations--as part of new development: *Innovation Hub Plaza*)

Supporting events, activities and promotion of Public Art, alleyway clean-up, murals, etc.

Support Community cultural arts and education

Develop new/rejuvenated partnerships/*collaborations* with Historic Staunton Foundation, Staunton Innovation Hub, Tourism Department, Staunton Secular Humanists, The Arcadia Project, etc.

~~Support The Arcadia Project development by applying for a Feasibility Study Grant through VAMS —~~

Streetscape Maintenance

*Conduct two maintenance tours per year with committee members and Public Works and track completed repairs and ongoing projects with consideration of the Streetscape Plan, adopted by City Council. *Explore possibility of online/remote meeting options for fall 2020 tour, allowing for social distancing.*

*Continue to improve communications between Public Works and the Downtown businesses regarding advance notice of any capital improvements, repairs, street closings, parking disruption or other streetscape projects that might have an effect on DSD businesses.

Support Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Provide feedback related to decorations, lighting, street furniture in the DSD when needed and as determined by the committee.

*Continue to update the Streetscape addendum with improvements, *pursue a Streetscape Plan refresh with Frazier Associates.*

Education

Provide clear signage guidance for property owners by maintaining city links on the website

Promote the free design services and Façade Design grants through Virginia Main Street

Maintain photographic documentation of physical changes in the DSD

When construction begins, provide support for businesses and property owners in the Central Avenue corridor to ease the construction burdens and interruptions associated with streetscape improvements -

@ Provide one-sheet for employee parking.

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ORGANIZATION ... DEALS WITH MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, FUNDRAISING AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL HOUSEKEEPING CHORES.

Housekeeping

Organize an Annual Celebration, Volunteer Appreciation and board election.

*Host a minimum of 2-3 Downtown Round Tables per year as a forum for stakeholder and Community input and education. *Explore possibility of online/zoom meetings to allow for increased participation/safety during COVID-19.*

Temporary Art, Store Hours, Holiday, QCMM, etc.

Maintain and update the procedural contingency plan and Main Street member database.

Continue to use the Main Street handbooks for Committee and Board education.

Membership

Evaluate membership structure and policies.

Establish clear boundaries for member vs. non-member services.

Retool the SDDA Member brochure, update benefits and include member feedback

*Make member report to City Manager in January 2021

~~Change to~~ Maintain a monthly invoicing system

Engage the Board and Ambassadors in monthly outreach (*once program resumes*)

Continue to develop Anniversary acknowledgement plan

Make service listing on website available to outside DSD businesses for a fee.

Communication

Create press releases and Facebook posts about SDDA accomplishments, services, volunteer opportunities, member benefits, etc.

Maintain ~~Develop~~ consistent SDDA message and calendar for outreach.

Connect with Media, stakeholders, City Council/Management and the community. *Ongoing.*

*Produce and e-communicate Downtown Lowdown and Downtown Biz *eblasts*

@Continue to administer the website.

~~Add a volunteer area for the Ambassador program, events, Streetscape projects~~

~~Add a jobs page~~ *Completed. The "jobs page" on the SDDA website was first utilized during 2019 for recruitment of Executive Director and again in 2020 for recruitment of Marketing Manager.*

~~Add a separate service business and resource section~~

Post Annual Report, Work Plan and Budget

@Continue outreach to MBU, SHS, GCHS, SHS, etc.

Develop NEW Student Intern Projects

Green space development and implementation

Student discounts and store support (Adopt-A-Business)

#Fundraising

Assist Board with fundraising plan.

Website, promotional pieces and community outreach.

Pursue grant opportunities

Expand campaign for Transit Sign sales

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Main Street

Assure that all requirements for remaining a Virginia and National Main Street Community are met. Attend all required Main Street trainings and other meetings/trainings pertinent to the efforts of the SDDA.

Implement the Main Street America approach to the Four Points.

@ Review and implement Main Street Refresh approach.

Review and develop Transformational Strategies

Review Strategic Work Plan

Board, Committee, Staff and volunteer assignments and roles

Asset-based decisions

Reporting

Submit Main Street quarterly and year-end data reports.

Make reports to the City Manager on the following:

* Annual Plan of Work that reflects SDDA's mission statement and the objectives of the DSD as reflected in Chapter 3.60 of the Staunton City Code by January 15, 2021.

* A progress report based on the work plan and SDDA's implementation of this Agreement in the four primary activity areas of economic development, design, promotions and organization, no later than January 15, 2021, and July 1, 2021.

* A list of all members of SDDA as of January 15, 2021, as contained in the Annual Report.

* A monthly financial report.

Public Relations and Ambassadorship

* Be the resource for information, particularly pertaining directly to Main Street, for SDDA members, downtown businesses and property owners and other Main Street organizations.

Build relationships with other Main Street Directors and Communities

Keep SDDA accomplishments and initiatives publicly visible by being the organization's main

spokesperson/educator via television interviews, radio interviews, public speaking and press releases.

Represent the SDDA at related Main Street and local community functions.

Trainings, celebrations, Downtown events, etc.

@ Build relationships with City Council and management

Permission for green space on public property

Departmental support for greenspace: security, refuse, maintenance

@ Active role in establishing relationships with schools and universities: MBU, SHS, GCHS, LHS, etc.

Board Education

Conduct a Board Orientation.

Educate new board about Main Street refresh and officer expectations

Have the Board create at least one independent project and create a corresponding work plan.

District Expansion

Outdoor Greenspace

Upper Floor Development

@~ Implement strategies from Community Survey/Top 25 List

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Implement strategic planning for a new Board President and Vice President
Involve Board in Membership Drive and volunteer recruitment.
Each Board member purchases an SDDA membership.
Assist with constructing membership benefits and rates.

Fundraising

Strategize a plan for fundraising that will support SDDA initiatives.

Explore additional employee hours and benefits

Technical review

~ Project funding

Revised/Updated 06/2020

Adopted 07/01/2020

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