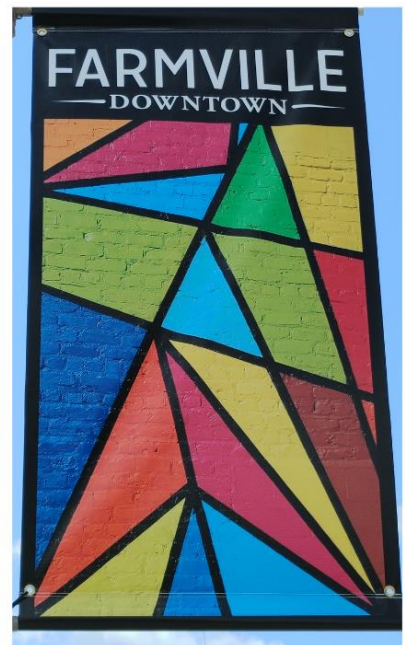


# FARMVILLE

— DOWNTOWN —

## PARTNERSHIP

# 2024 Work Plan



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# Farmville Downtown Partnership

## 2024 Work Plan

### Executive Summary

Approved: December 21, 2023

### Introduction

**The 2024 Work Plan** is designed as a living document to guide The Farmville Downtown Partnership throughout the year. Each committee's projects are summarized on an introductory page, and then each project has a planning page outlining specific details.

**Our Organization**, The Farmville Downtown Partnership, was established in 2011 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. We have been affiliated with the Virginia Main Street Program, a division of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and the National Main Street Center, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation since our inception. Our organization follows the format and recommendations of these organizations and is proud of our Main Street designation.

**The Mission** of the Farmville Downtown Partnership is to connect residents, merchants, property owners, visitors, and students in order to preserve and enhance the downtown's role as the hub of our unique historic community and continue to invigorate Farmville as a fun and profitable place to live, learn, conduct business, invest and visit.

**Our Vision** is for an attractive, fun, connected, and successful downtown district with historic character and cultural appeal that is welcoming to all.

### Transformational Strategies

The Board of Directors of the Farmville Downtown Partnership has focused the long-term plan for the downtown Main Street District on two overriding goals, or Transformational Strategies, which will guide decisions over the next three to five years.

With the start of the pandemic in 2020, the Farmville Downtown Partnership faced several organizational challenges. In 2022, the Board decided to move in a new direction by hiring a full time Executive Director and redesigning the scope of work.

The Executive Director started full time in October of 2022. The Board shortly thereafter created their 2023 Work Plan and adopted the transformational strategies and an ambitious set of tasks to support those strategies for each of the four standing committees. Each committee successfully completed the majority of their targeted 2023 projects.

While the Farmville Downtown Partnership firmly believes in our Transformational Strategies, much of our Work Plan in 2023 was focused on rebuilding the solid foundation needed to implement the adopted strategies.

As the organization moves in to 2024, the goal is now focused on solidifying the programs and projects that were established in 2023, and proactively connecting our successes with the Transformational Strategies to ensure that our efforts are generating long-term change in downtown Farmville. Projects are linked to Transformational Strategies using TS1 or TS2 notations.

### **Transformational Strategy #1 (TS1) – College Town Connections**

Farmville is home to Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney College. With Longwood University located within a minute’s walk from the core of downtown, and Hampden-Sydney College a fifteen-minute drive away, the Farmville Downtown Partnership would like to focus on developing the connection between the business district and these anchoring educational institutions.

The benefits of enhancing the town/university/college relationship are: 1) we will build on existing economic anchors, 2) we do not require significant physical changes to our landscape to accomplish this strategy, and 3) we connect many facets of the community together in our culturally diverse and architecturally rich downtown environment.

### **Transformational Strategy #2 (TS2) – Destination Downtown Farmville**

As a regional hub in Southside Virginia, Farmville has many existing assets that create a unique and vibrant downtown community. Dining and entertainment abound, with several excellent restaurants and evening music venues. The home furnishings trade in Farmville draws national attention and establishes Farmville as a destination shopping center. A broad spectrum of retail shops and services provide depth and variety to both out-of-town and local shoppers. The High Bridge Trail, the Farmville Blueway, and other regional outdoor activities attract outdoors enthusiasts. The potential inscription of the Moton Museum on the List of World Heritage would make Farmville an international destination.

These multi-faceted assets combine to make Farmville a destination community. By focusing on the combination of these activities, “Destination Downtown Farmville” is the perfect opportunity to blend and leverage community assets for residents and visitors both – great restaurants, good music, outdoor recreation, and a diverse retail mix!

### **Summary**

These two transformational strategies encompass a wide scope of work. While the focus of each strategy will be slightly different, the goals to achieve both will blend well together and will serve to create a dynamic downtown Farmville that will serve multiple segments of our community for many years to come.



## Organization Committee

The Organization Committee focuses on development of the Farmville Downtown Partnership into a sustainable, stable, inclusive, well-supported, non-profit organization dedicated to implementing the Board's vision and mission.

### Overview

**Budgeting and Accounting:** This is an area of organizational management that the committee would like to focus on this year. The Organization Committee Chair and Executive Director will draft the budget and present it to the Board at the December 2023 Meeting. With the success of 2023, the Committee has a solid foundation of financial information to develop the 2024 budget and track it closely.

Our accountant has suggested that we build "classes" into our financial management program as a way to better isolate project management as we move forward. This program will be developed and implemented in January.

**Update print publications to promote downtown (TS2):** In 2023, a map of downtown businesses was created to replace an outdated downtown business guide. This map has primarily been used by the Prince Edward Visitors Center to guide visitors around downtown. The map is posted in retail windows on Main Street, and it is used by Hotel Weyanoke and Longwood University. The 2024 version will be updated and printed.

The Organization Committee would also like to generate a 2023 Annual Report to be used as a promotional tool and fundraising brochure during the fundraising campaign.

**Design and Conduct a Successful Fundraising Campaign:** An informal Fundraising Sub-committee was created to support the fundraising campaign in 2023. The focus was on asking for small contributions from a wide number of community members. The group settled on asking for \$225 to acknowledge the 225th birthday of the founding of the Town of Farmville. This concept successfully brought in over \$22,000. The sub-committee structure was successful and the Organization Committee will strengthen and formalize this structure for the 2024 Fundraising campaign.

**Board Training Sessions with Center for Non-profit Excellence:** Two virtual sessions and one in-person retreat, all with the full Board, have offered valuable insight in how to structure and manage the organization for the successful co-creative dynamic between the Board and the Executive Director. The Organization Committee would like to continue this conversation and continue to build a strong organization based on solid management practices.

**Boundary Application:** Thanks to the Virginia Main Street Program, grant funding is available to prepare the boundary amendment for our Main Street District. The Executive Director, under the auspices of the Organization Committee, will secure an internship with the Virginia Commonwealth University Urban and Regional Studies and Planning Department, or contract with a qualified consultant to prepare and submit this application in the first quarter of 2024.

**Volunteer Appreciation Event (TS1):** The supporters of Farmville Downtown Partnership have focused so heavily on implementing, that we haven't really taken time to say "thank-you" to all those who have supported the organization. A social event to acknowledge the contributions of all volunteers and supporters is key to maintaining goodwill and support.

## Promotions Committee

The goal of the Promotions Committee is to generate awareness, activity and support for the downtown district and for the Farmville Downtown Partnership. The Promotions Committee focuses on positioning downtown Farmville as the social and economic hub of our town, thereby showcasing Farmville's unique character.

### Overview

**Meet and Greet Social Event:** In the past, the Promotions Committee has brought together downtown retailers for a quarterly meeting. In 2024, the Committee would like to turn this opportunity into a bi-annual informal social event for all downtown stakeholders. This may take the form of a progressive tour of downtown businesses ending in a cocktail reception, or a social gathering in one location. The purpose of the event is to bring downtown stakeholders together to build relationships.

**Holidays on Main (TS2):** Originally designed as an annual program of retail events centered around multiple holidays, this term has come to represent several holiday activities centered around November and December. A poster sharing the dates of downtown activities will be created and distributed throughout downtown. Ideas for holiday bazaars, pictures with Santa, carolers strolling the streets, and open houses will be structured based on the trial-and-error experience of the prior year.

**Halloween Costume Contest:** The Promotions Committee will hold a costume contest as part of the Farmville Recreation Department's Halloween Parade.

**Rock the Block (TS1 & TS2):** After the launch of this event in August 2023, the Committee has a strong sense of how to improve and build on past experience. This event will become an annual fundraiser, as well as a flagship event for the community and Longwood University.

**Farmville Art Walk (TS2):** This event will be primarily organized by Central Virginia Arts, but will be supported by the Promotions Committee. The event will focus on fine art being featured by various artists along the High Bridge Trail from Main Street to the Train Station. Downtown stores will be encouraged to have in-store or sidewalk art related shows as well. The event is designed to encourage people to walk through out the downtown community.

**Retail Merchants Subcommittee (TS2):** This is a subcommittee created in 2023 to focus strictly on retail-oriented events and issues. The committee is separately chaired and meets independently. The Promotions Committee coordinates with and supports the Retail Committee.

**Marketing Subcommittee to Maintain Robust Website and Social Media Presence (TS2):** Significant strides were made to our website presence in 2023, including the addition of an interactive business directory, an "available property" listing page, and a "help wanted" page. Events have been added and highlighted as the site has continued to develop.

In concert with Longwood University, a social media intern has focused her senior project on developing a social media plan for the organization. Media and social media are important tools to promote downtown. A marketing sub-committee is being created to develop this aspect of the organization.



## Economic Vitality Committee

The goal of the Economic Vitality Committee is to guide and facilitate the retention and further development of a strong, economically sound downtown Farmville. This Committee focuses on building a solid entrepreneurial ecosystem through the development of financial tools, creating a supportive environment for new businesses, and serving as a catalyst for property development.

### Overview

**Building/Property Inventory:** As the Boundary Application is developed by the Organization Committee, an added benefit will be that the building/property inventory will be updated. The Economic Vitality Committee will use this information to update the Air Table Data base and ensure that this information is available through the website for potential developers to easily access.

**Real Estate Development Project:** Pending the success of the efforts to secure IRF funding for the 109/111 North Main Development Project, the committee will be invested in supporting the implementation of the project in concert with the Town of Farmville Industrial Development Authority. Should the project not be funded, the Committee will focus on the following:

- **Second Floor Housing Opportunities:** Downtown Farmville has a significant amount of unrenovated second floor space that could provide downtown apartments. The Committee will research the requirements and costs of second floor residential renovations and create a “how-to” booklet to assist potential developers and property owners that would like to consider this option.
- **Business Recruitment/Retention Plan:** While there are currently few retail rental ground floor spaces available, a pro-active approach to determining what spaces could be renovated to be more rentable, and what market needs could be met through a recruitment program would both have significant impact on developing downtown. The Committee would like to research the creation of a Recruitment/Retention Plan to support ongoing development.
- **Parking Plan for Downtown Residential and Commercial Tenants:** The Committee would like to research existing parking requirements, compare these requirements to other Main Street communities, and prepare recommendations for the Town Council to consider.

**Business Education Workshops:** The Economic Vitality Committee organized two educational workshops in 2023. This program will be continued in 2024. Topics for the 2024 Workshops will focus on business management, employee management, and fiscal responsibility for small businesses.

**Support Non-Main Street Businesses (TS2):** To date, the primary focus of the Farmville Downtown Partnership has been on Main Street retail businesses. There have been multiple requests to provide services and support beyond this focus area. The Committee is intent on finding ways to encourage pedestrian movement throughout the district and provide services to all businesses within the district.

## Design Committee

The goal of the Design Committee is to support the community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the district apart and to support the ongoing development of downtown Farmville by finding ways to enhance the built environment and preserve the architectural integrity of historic downtown Farmville.

### Overview

**Façade Improvement Grant (TS2):** The Design Committee was awarded a \$50,000 Downtown Investment Grant to create a Façade Improvement Grant Program in 2023. The implementation of this grant program will be the major focus of this committee in 2024. Grant Applications will be open in November 2023 and awards will be announced in early January 2024. Projects must be completed by September 2024.

**Plaza Redevelopment Project (TS2):** Frazier Associates completed concept plans for the High Bridge Plaza in 2023. The Design Committee wants to meet with town officials to discuss the plans, and then search for grant funding to implement the projects. It is projected that the plan will be divided into smaller, doable projects and implemented by securing targeted grant funds for specific projects.

**Downtown Design Assessments:** The Design Committee will plan a group walk through the district to consider various design aspects of the streetscape, including building conditions and needed repairs, sidewalk conditions, the location of amenities such as benches and trash cans, and the condition of street trees. They will develop a plan to work cooperatively to improve deficiencies they identify.

**Promote Seasonal Décor (TS2):** The Design Committee will encourage downtown businesses to decorate using seasonal themes, including sidewalk planters during the growing season, fall/Halloween decorations, and festive holiday decorations such as wreaths, lights, and garlands. The Committee will research a May Day flower basket project similar to the May Day promotion in Annapolis, Maryland.

**Support Public Art (TS2):** The Design Committee will research mural programs and look toward bringing murals back to downtown Farmville. At the same time, some existing murals are in poor condition and the Committee would like to evaluate them and make recommendations for their repair or removal. The Committee will pursue the idea of life-sized paintings of business owner's dogs being attached to their buildings at the ground level, with a fixed iron bowl holder and custom-made ceramic water bowl being placed on the sidewalk next to the pet portrait.

# Appendix 1

## Staff General Responsibilities

While work items of the Executive Director will vary based on the projects and plans in process, there are a number of standard activities that are required each month. This is a general listing of those items.

### Monthly Activities

- Send out meeting reminders for all meetings
- Attend all committee meetings. At the end of each meeting, prior to adjournment, review a list of action items with responsible parties to clarify commitments and expectations
- Attend Monthly Board Meeting
- Attend Monthly Meetings of Town Council and Board of Supervisors as needed
- Implement activities determined by committees and Board assigned to staff
- Manage financials: pay bills, balance accounts, provide report to Treasurer
- Post at least 3 times a week on Facebook and Instagram
- Collect data for VMS Monthly Report of investment and employment changes in district
- Coordinate with Treasurer/CPA to provide Financial Reports and prepare and file the Tax Return
- Coordinate Executive Committee/Committee Chair Planning Meetings

### Standard Annual Activities

- Work with Board to create agenda for annual Board Retreat and organize the event (September)
- Work with Board and Committees to create annual Work Plan based on results of the Board Retreat (December)
- Prepare data for the Virginia Main Street program request for “Data Bonanza” (January)

## Appendix 2

### 2024 Work Plan Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Budgeting</b>												
<b>Print Publications TS2</b>												
<b>Fundraising Campaign</b>												
<b>Board Training</b>												
<b>District Boundary</b>												
<b>Volunteer Event TS1</b>												
<b>Meet &amp; Greet Socials</b>												
<b>Holidays on Main TS2</b>												
<b>Halloween Contest</b>												
<b>Rock the Block TS1 &amp; TS2</b>												
<b>Farmville Art Walk TS2</b>												
<b>Retail Subcommittee TS2</b>												
<b>Marketing Subcommittee TS2</b>												
<b>Building Inventory</b>												
<b>RE Development Project</b>												
<b>Business Education</b>												
<b>Non-Main Support TS2</b>												
<b>Façade Grant TS2</b>												
<b>Plaza Redevelopment TS2</b>												
<b>Design Assessments</b>												
<b>Seasonal Décor TS2</b>												
<b>Public Art TS2</b>												

**Transformational Strategies =  
TS1 or TS2**