



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

DowntownLynchburg.com

DLA AT A GLANCE

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.

2023 PRIORITIES

- **STOREFRONT BUSINESS SUPPORT**
- **PLACEMAKING, ACTIVATIONS, AND PROGRAMMING**
- **MARKETING, PROMOTIONS, AND BRANDING**
- **ADVOCACY**

DOWNTOWN BY THE NUMBERS

(2023 CALENDAR YEAR)

- Meals Tax Revenue: **\$29,880,633** (7.8% increase over 2022)
- VA State Sales Tax Revenue: **\$39,741,502** (6.6% increase over 2022)
- Amusement Tax Revenue: **\$1,968,328** (20.4% increase over 2022)
- Lodging Tax Revenue: **\$9,860,869** (3.2% increase over 2022)
- Overall Visitation: **634,000** (7% increase over 2022)



2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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LAUNCH LYH

Downtown Lynchburg Association executed our inaugural Launch LYH Community Business Launch Program and celebrated the entrepreneurial spirit within our community. This initiative empowered aspiring business owners to open or expand their businesses in a Downtown Lynchburg storefront and provided a total of **\$115,000** in grant funds to do so. Our mission of filling vacant storefronts with new public amenities succeeded as five winning businesses opened or began construction by year-end.



SUPER RAD ARCADE BAR

NOW OPEN AT 58 NINTH ST.

Set to be Lynchburg's exclusive arcade bar, Super Rad plans to revitalize downtown nightlife with a fusion of retro and modern gaming, alongside innovative culinary offerings.



PREAM

NOW OPEN AT 409 FIFTH ST. SUITE A

Offering a wide array of houseplants and care accessories, PREAM is prepared to revolutionize indoor gardening with a unique focus on houseplant health and diversity.



MOSAIC COLLECTIVE & THREADED

NOW OPEN AT 1212 MAIN ST.

Mosaic Collective and its sustainability-focused thrift store, Threaded, embody a commitment to social and environmental justice, transforming retail into a catalyst for global sustainability.



EASY SPEAK DANCE HALL & EVENTS

OPENING SPRING 2024 AT 409 FIFTH ST. SUITE E

Here to provide an immersive dance experience with various styles, lessons, and live music events, Easy Speak Dance Hall & Events was made to be located in the heart of our city.



WOLFBANE PRODUCTIONS

OPENING FALL 2024 AT 723 JEFFERSON ST.

Wolfbane Productions plans to enrich the local arts scene with its new location, where they will aim to engage a wider audience and promote the arts community in Downtown Lynchburg.

DOWNTOWN LOFT TOUR

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023

The **Downtown Lynchburg Loft Tour** was held on Saturday, April 29, from 10am-4pm. Attendees had the opportunity to explore many unique and historic locations in the heart of our city. 400 visitors took advantage of the beautiful spring day and enjoyed a full downtown experience including antique fire truck rides, rooftop mimosas, exclusive discounts at local restaurants & retail shops, raffle opportunities, and a self-guided tour of over a dozen urban living spaces throughout the city. This event was hosted by Downtown Lynchburg Association with \$5 of every ticket benefitting the Free Clinic of Central Virginia.



OVERALL IMPACT

This 2023 Loft Tour met our goal of driving foot traffic into Downtown Lynchburg, showcasing the exciting downtown living experience, highlighting downtown restaurants and retail shops, providing a volunteer opportunity for the community, and ultimately promoting our city's assets that make it an exciting place to live, work, and play. According to Placer.ai data, **Downtown had over 17k visitors on Saturday, April 29.**

14

LOCATIONS
SHOWCASED

298

EVENT
TICKETS SOLD

60

EVENT
VOLUNTEERS

FIREWORKS ON THE RIVERFRONT

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2023

Our **Fireworks on the Riverfront** event on Friday, June 30, was a resounding success, attracting thousands of people to Downtown Lynchburg for an unforgettable evening. The event offered a blend of entertainment, food, and family-friendly activities that captivated attendees throughout the night while showcasing the vibrant and welcoming community spirit that thrives in our city. We could not have pulled this off without the generous help of our title sponsor, BWX Technologies, Inc., with additional support from Genworth Financial, First National Bank, Gentry Locke Attorneys, Freedom First Credit Union, the City of Lynchburg, and our media partners ABC 13 - WSET, New Country 107.9 YYD, JJS Radio, KD Country Radio, and The Groove AM/FM.



We welcomed approximately **21,000 visitors** to Downtown Lynchburg on Friday, June 30, including **961 viewers** on the Bluffwalk and **5,160 viewers** who joined us in Riverfront Park. Approximately **47% (2,425)** of our event attendees live outside of Lynchburg city limits, according to Placer.ai data. The average amount of downtown visitors on previous Fridays in June was 9,460, resulting in a **121% increase in overall visitation** on June 30.

47%

of our event attendees
traveled from outside of
Lynchburg city limits

5.1K

individuals viewed the
fireworks display from
Riverfront Park

21K

individuals visited
Downtown Lynchburg
on June 30th

BRIGHT NIGHTS BLOCK PARTY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023

Our inaugural **Bright Nights Block Party** was a huge success! We welcomed nearly **5,000 visitors** to Commerce Street and the Bluffwalk on Sunday, November 19, to kick off eight weeks of lights in Downtown Lynchburg. Event attendees enjoyed holiday vendors, musical acts, food trucks, and more, before heading to the Bluffwalk to experience this exciting attraction. Out of the 5,000 event attendees, **1,600 (32%)** traveled from outside of Lynchburg city limits to visit Downtown for the event. As this was our first official kick-off event for our Bright Nights lights installation, we anticipate this number continuing to grow year by year as we establish this event as an annual Lynchburg tradition.



The Bright Night Block Party and installation was produced in partnership with the City of Lynchburg and was sponsored by United Bank, ABC13-WSET, Pacific Life, Innovative Wireless Technologies, Mustaches 4 Kids Lynchburg, Craddock Terry Hotel, Freedom First Credit Union, Scott Insurance, Centra, Captrust, Foster Fuels, Consensus Real Estate, NB Handy, Maddox Air & Electrical, Generac, Fratelli Italian Kitchen, 7 Rooftop Bar, Skyline, William & Henry Steakhouse, My Dog Duke's Diner, Bootleggers, El Jefe Taqueria, CLC Incorporated, Jamerson-Lewis Construction, Academy Center of the Arts, and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

5K

Number of attendees at the Bright Nights Block Party on November 19

32%

Event attendees who visited Downtown from outside Lynchburg city limits

60+

Food/artisan vendors set up along Commerce Street for the event

BRIGHT NIGHTS ON THE BLUFFWALK

NOVEMBER 19, 2023 - JANUARY 14, 2024

Our **Bright Nights on the Bluffwalk** light installation attracted hundreds of visitors to Downtown Lynchburg every evening. This immersive holiday spectacle full of dazzling lights and large-scale installations stayed up from November 19 through January 14, 2024, so that visitors could enjoy it with family and friends during the holiday season. This attraction drew more than **8,000 visitors** to the Bluffwalk, with the majority of visitors traveling from outside of Lynchburg city limits.



ATTENDANCE BREAKDOWN

For the Bluffwalk specifically, we welcomed **8,000 visitors** during these eight weeks, resulting in a **233% increase** in foot traffic over the same eight-week period the previous year. Over the same span of eight weeks in 2023, approximately 195,400 visitors came to Downtown Lynchburg, resulting in a 9% increase in foot traffic over the same eight-week period the previous year. Approximately 15% (60,500) of visitors who came Downtown during this time lived outside of Lynchburg city limits, according to Placer.ai data.

195K

Individuals visited
Downtown during
the project

8K

Individuals visited
the Bluffwalk during
the project

233%

Increase in foot traffic on
the Bluffwalk compared
to the previous year

ART ALLEY REFRESH

In 2021, Art Alley officially opened to the public, and in 2023, we decided it was time to refresh this placemaking initiative. DLA breathed new life into this beloved downtown space by adding two additional murals, providing a fresh coat of paint to the street, and swapping in new artwork displays from individuals in our region. With the help of many amazing volunteers, we were able to revitalize this cultural gem.



MEG DAVIES MURALS

Early last year, we commissioned local artist Meg Davies to bring her creative vision to life on two garage doors within Art Alley. Through this project, we injected fresh beauty and excitement into our beloved city while providing accessible art for all. Make sure to head down soon and see this fresh new art for yourselves!



ART ALLEY AUCTION

This auction provided us with an opportunity to find new homes for the original art pieces from the 2021 opening of Art Alley while creating space for new art to be displayed this year. Twenty percent of the revenue went directly to the original artists, while the remaining funds were used to purchase new art.



FRESH GALLERY WALL ART

We commissioned local artists to create pieces that would replace the original gallery artwork from 2021, and as of today, there are now 13 stunning new pieces of art on display in Art Alley. This area has truly become a hub for cultural enrichment and artistic appreciation, further solidifying Downtown as the cultural center for the Greater Lynchburg area.

PROMOTION & MARKETING

Our organization uses a variety of tools to market and promote the assortment of businesses, attractions, amenities, and events in Downtown Lynchburg. With creative blogs, informative webpages, engaging videos, and exciting newsletters, we highlight an experience that entices the community to come and support our local businesses. Through our social media following, website traffic, and newsletter engagement, we have an opportunity to quickly and effectively promote all things Downtown, including events, new businesses, public art installations, shopping, dining, and more.



20.4K
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

10% INCREASE
→ OVER 2022



21.4K
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

11% INCREASE
→ OVER 2022



INSTAGRAM REELS

In 2023, 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 34 Reels that gained nearly half a million views (446,627).**

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 2023.

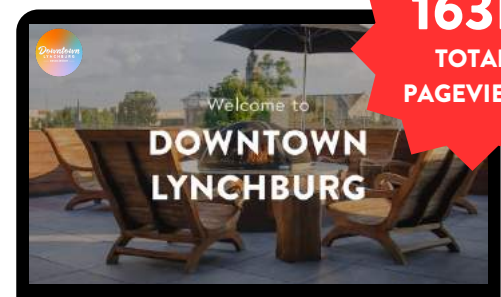


LAUNCH LYH WINNERS
2,211 WEBPAGE VIEWS



ST. PATRICK'S DAY BLOG
2,120 WEBPAGE VIEWS

WEBSITE



163K
TOTAL
PAGEVIEWS

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Our organization 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.

Public events and promotions like **Small Business Saturday** provided ways for visitors to explore and interact with new and existing businesses while programs like our **Downtown Lynchburg Gift Cards** continue to offer unique ways to support our Downtown businesses. Internally, our **Business Owner Meet-Ups** and **Business Update Emails** provide Downtown business owners with networking opportunities and resources to help them thrive in our community.



DOWNTOWN LYNCHBURG GIFT CARD PROGRAM

This program, sponsored by BWX Technologies, Inc., has continued to create new opportunities for our community to shop small and support local businesses. In 2023, we onboarded many new businesses including retail, restaurant, service, and attractions to the program, bringing the total number to 44 that accept these gift cards. We saw **\$21.3K in gift card redemptions** and **\$26K in total gift card activations**. Since the program's launch in 2020, we've seen **\$101K in gift card redemptions** and **\$171.5K in total gift card activations**.



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901 CHURCH STREET, SUITE 103
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24504

WWW.DOWNTOWNLYNCHBURG.COM
INFO@DOWNTOWNLYNCHBURG.COM