



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Staunton, VA



Harrisonburg, VA



Contents

- 4 MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR
- 5 VIRGINIA MAIN STREET OVERVIEW
- 6 THE IMPACT OF VIRGINIA MAIN STREET IN 2025
- 7 VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
- 16 VMS CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Economic Vitality Begins with Opportunity

The strength of Virginia’s economy is fundamentally rooted in the resilience of our local commercial districts. As we look toward the future of the Commonwealth, the Virginia Main Street (VMS) program is not merely a preservation initiative — it builds the heart of regional economic prosperity designed to maximize the competitive potential of our historic downtowns and neighborhood Main Street districts.

Strengthening the Competitive Edge

For Virginia to remain a top state for business, we must cultivate environments where talent wants to live, work, and stay. VMS provides the strategic framework for localities to leverage their unique historic assets. By revitalizing our downtowns and Main Streets, we create cozy, high-quality, walkable “innovation hubs” that modern entrepreneurs and a highly skilled workforce desire.

Quantifiable Impact and Quality of Life

Commitment to the Main Street Four-Point Approach ensures that every dollar of public and private investment yields a measurable return. This revitalization does more than just fill vacant storefronts; it expands the local tax base and creates opportunities for local business owners to build wealth.

The Impact of Virginia Main Street in 2025

A thriving historic downtown or Main Street:

- **Attracts Private Capital** by turning underutilized historic assets into revenue-generating properties.
- **Boosts Tourism** by positioning Virginia as a premier destination for authentic heritage travel.
- **Enhances Community Health** by creating safe, walkable, vibrant public spaces that serve as the connective tissue of our social fabric.

A Framework for Resilience

By empowering local leaders with tools for economic growth and sustainable design, we ensure that Virginia’s communities are not just surviving but thriving. When our downtown and Main Streets flourish, Virginia wins.



Dr. Tamarah Holmes
Director
DHCD

VIRGINIA MAIN STREET OVERVIEW

Driving Local Prosperity

As an accredited Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, Virginia Main Street (VMS) nurtures local revitalization efforts across the Commonwealth. Housed within the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), our team supports approximately 100 communities daily. We champion hyperlocal economic development built around a community’s unique heritage, culture, and historic assets.

Through technical assistance, grant funding, and specialized training, VMS empowers localities of all sizes. We enhance quality of life and economic opportunity by building local leadership, improving physical environments, and providing the resources necessary to grow and sustain small businesses.



THE IMPACT OF VIRGINIA MAIN STREET IN 2025

Through strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to preserving their unique heritage, emerging and established Virginia Main Street communities have attracted new businesses, fostered meaningful community engagement, and strengthened their local economies.

\$41,688,861 Private Investment Leveraged

\$10,768,273 Public Investment Leveraged

1,215 Jobs Created/Retained

496 Private Investment Projects

307 Public Improvement Projects

294 Businesses Created/Expanded

VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Bristol

The Impact of “Made in Bristol”

Bristol leverages its unique sense of place to drive economic growth through the “Made in Bristol” initiative. This program – funded in part by VMS and winner of the Virginia Economic Development Association’s Community Economic Development Award – evolved from a VMS pilot study into a permanent entrepreneurial support system.

By formalizing a network of small-scale producers, Bristol provides the digital infrastructure and physical visibility local artisans need to compete in larger markets.

A second phase pairs financial and e-commerce training with a competitive pitch process. Key results include **24** businesses supported, **3** new ventures created, and **8** new jobs added.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Altavista

The “Sparklet” Reclaims Downtown Space

Altavista uses strategic design to shift district energy. The “Sparklet” – a public seating area reclaimed from a parking apron – connects historic storefronts with modern community needs.

By converting 160 square feet of asphalt into a wood-clad oasis, Altavista leveraged VMS grant funding to create a destination that encourages pedestrians to linger and dine downtown outside of the Spark Center.

This project applies the design point of the Main Street Approach, using physical enhancements to drive social and economic change and increasing foot traffic for adjacent small businesses.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Martinsville

Cultivating Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Through its Minority Business Consortium, the City of Martinsville and Henry County prioritize equity to build a competitive commercial district.

By dismantling traditional barriers to entry for minority-owned businesses, the initiative ensures the local business mix reflects the community’s demographics. The program provides technical assistance, micro-grants, and a supportive networking ecosystem to foster homegrown success.

This application of economic vitality principles stabilizes the local tax base, fills persistent vacancies, and signals to investors that Uptown Martinsville is a hub for innovation.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

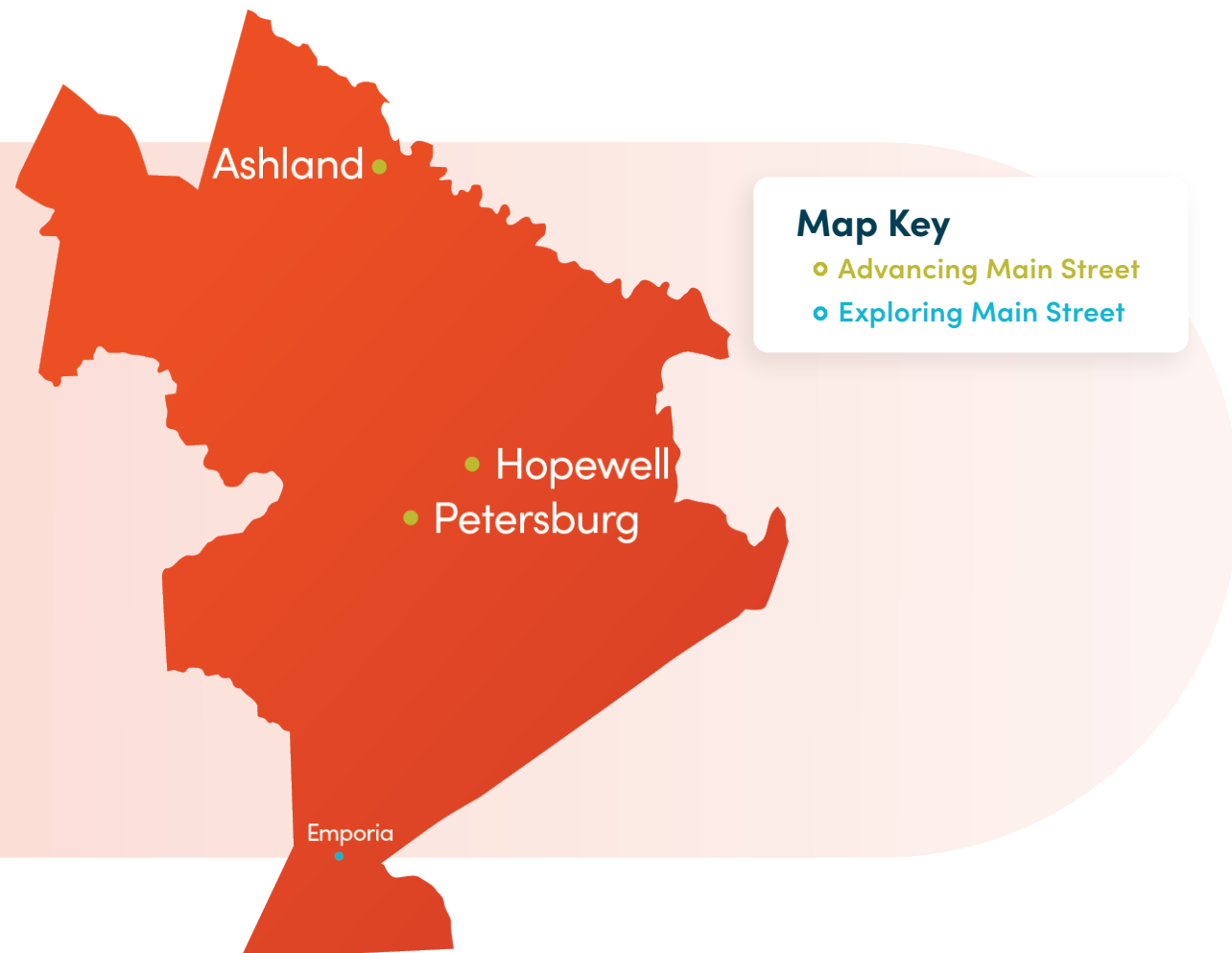
Petersburg

“Success Walk” Bridges Partnership

Petersburg Main Street and the Metropolitan Business League partnered to host a “Success Walk” in Old Towne, illustrating the power of the economic vitality and organization points.

The event led stakeholders through a corridor experiencing new investment, highlighting entrepreneurs who used DHCD grant funds and local resources to launch businesses.

This collaboration aligns organizational goals with regional partners, builds sustainable leadership, and creates a resilient support network.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Phoebus

“Walk the Block” Strengthens Civic Ties

Phoebus: “Walk the Block” Strengthens Civic Ties In Hampton’s historic Phoebus district, the “Walk the Block” initiative connected elected officials directly with small business owners.

These intentional interactions helped to bridge the gap between policy and the daily realities of entrepreneurship. When leaders see the impact of facade improvements or hear startup success stories firsthand, they become invested partners in the district’s health.

This grassroots engagement transforms the local Main Street organization into a robust network of advocates working in lockstep.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

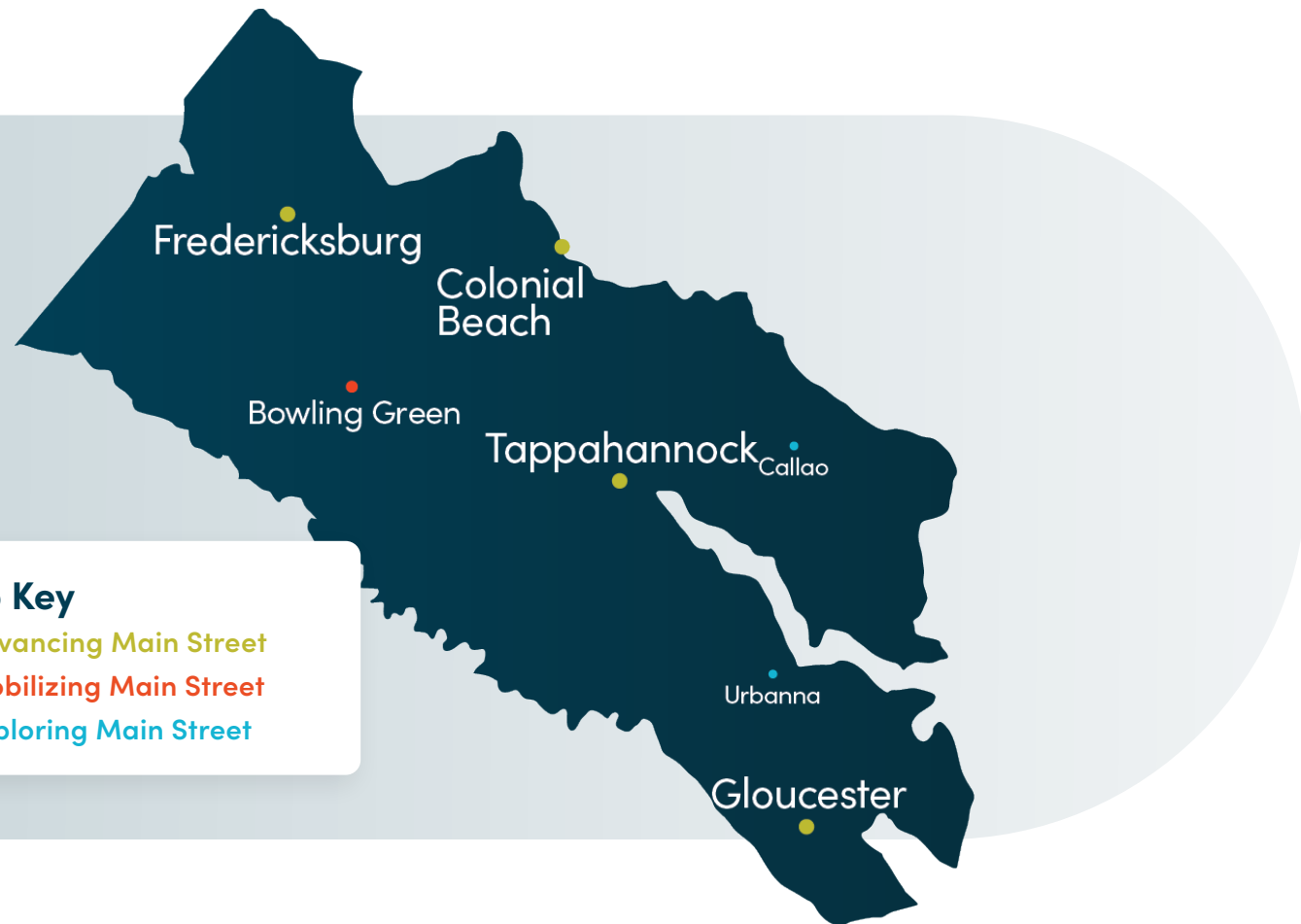
Colonial Beach

Transforming Connectivity into Economic Growth

Since completing its VMS-funded Connectivity Plan in December 2025, Downtown Colonial Beach (DCB) has launched its first Economic Vitality Committee.

This committee uses the plan as a roadmap to transform the downtown into a safer, more walkable destination. By prioritizing multimodal infrastructure – such as accessible sidewalks and expanded golf cart networks – DCB is strengthening its physical identity.

This strategic focus recently catalyzed the “100 Washington” project, a new mixed-use development that will bring two commercial spaces and four residential units to the heart of the district.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Manassas

“Pass the Mic” Amplifies Small Business Voices

Historic Manassas Inc. (HMI) launched “Pass the Mic,” a modern storytelling campaign to coincide with HMI’s 40th anniversary.

The organization produced short-form video content featuring the entrepreneurs behind downtown storefronts who passed the mic to one another. By featuring business owners, the campaign built an authentic brand that resonated across social media.

These digital invitations increased customer engagement and foot traffic, proving that local voices are a district’s strongest competitive advantage.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Harrisonburg

A Strategic Framework for Growth

Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) uses VMS design services to provide a framework for long-term economic expansion. Through a collaborative planning process, HDR identified infrastructure needs to enhance walkability, connectivity, and historic preservation.

From streetscape enhancements to the activation of underutilized spaces, these physical improvements support Harrisonburg’s “Friendly City” reputation.

This proactive strategy ensures that as the population grows, Harrisonburg’s downtown remains an accessible hub for private investment.



VMS COMMUNITIES IN FOCUS | REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

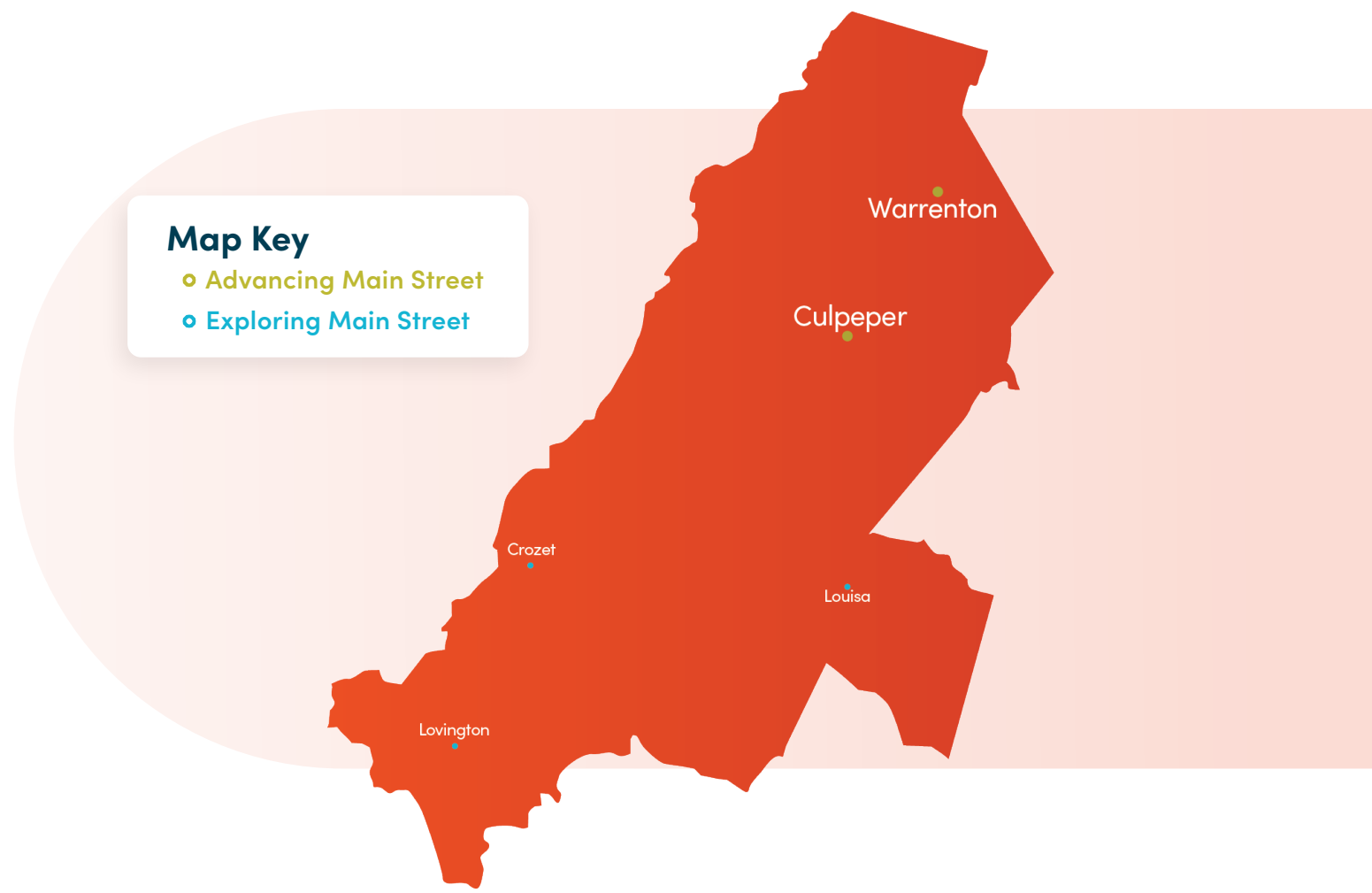
Warrenton

Reimagining District Sustainability

In 2025, VMS supported Love Old Town Warrenton’s planning for organizational sustainability through a more diverse funding portfolio.

Moving beyond single-source funding, Warrenton implemented a multi-layered strategy pairing community events with mission-driven donor campaigns. By diversifying revenue through corporate partnerships and “Friend of Main Street” programs, Love Old Town Warrenton secured the capital necessary for catalytic projects.

This approach enabled a well-funded organization to be the engine that keeps historic downtown Warrenton competitive.



VMS CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

As Virginia Main Street celebrates its 40th anniversary, we honor 4 decades of transformative growth while sharpening our focus on the future. This milestone marks a strategic pivot toward data-driven revitalization. To ensure our communities remain competitive, VMS partnered with the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Friends of Southwest Virginia to guide 10 pilot communities through an analysis of market data. By grounding local aspirations in evidence via the **Building Opportunities on Main Street (BOOMS)** tracker, these towns now possess actionable roadmaps to align their business mix with modern consumer demands.

Furthermore, Virginia's selection for the national **"Unlocking Capital on Main Street"** initiative provides a critical toolkit to bridge capital access gaps. This program empowers historic districts in Danville, Portsmouth, and Roanoke to dismantle funding barriers, and provide entrepreneurs and developers with the financial resources necessary to rehabilitate historic assets.

These initiatives reinforce the Main Street Approach by fostering intentional, evidence-based leadership. Our commitment to state and local partnership remains the bedrock of this success. By combining historic preservation with cutting-edge economic tools, we continue to build resilient, inclusive communities. As we enter our fifth decade, Virginia Main Street stands ready to turn local goals into tangible realities, ensuring our historic commercial corridors remain the heart of Virginia's economic landscape.



✉ mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov

🌐 dhcd.virginia.gov/vms

🌐 virginiamainstreet.com

☎ 804 371 7000



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Better Communities

