



# LOUISA MAIN STREET WORK PLAN

2025-2028

**PRESENTED TO**

LOUISA FORWARD FOUNDATION

**PRESENTED BY**

PPR STRATEGIES





# BACKGROUND

The 2025-2028 Louisa Main Street Work Plan for the Louisa Forward Foundation (LFF) is a collaborative effort to shape the future of the Town of Louisa together. This plan is our shared roadmap for revitalizing and strengthening Louisa's Main Street Initiative, focused on enhancing economic vitality, fostering community pride, and driving sustainable growth.

Together with the LFF's team, local leaders, and the broader community, we have built this plan to reflect your vision for the Town of Louisa. Guided by best practices and lessons from similar towns, we have considered current market trends and local opportunities to ensure this plan meets the moment and sets the stage for long-term success.

Organized around key themes and actionable goals, this plan is more than a document—it is a tool we can all use to guide decisions, attract funding, and communicate our shared vision.



# ABOUT LFF

In 2021, the Town of Louisa, in collaboration with the Louisa Forward Foundation, a nonprofit born from the Louisa County Chamber of Commerce, embarked on an exciting journey to align growth efforts for the Town of Louisa. By joining the Virginia Main Street (VMS) network as an Exploring Main Street (EMS) community, the Town of Louisa took the first step in a preservation-based approach to economic and community revitalization.

The VMS program follows the National Main Street Center's proven Main Street Approach™. It offers tailored resources and support to help communities unlock the potential of their historic and neighborhood commercial districts. Supported by a passionate volunteer steering committee, LFF is leading the charge to transform the town into a vibrant hub of opportunity and connection.



## LOUISA MAIN STREET:

### MISSION

Make the Town of Louisa the place where residents are happy to live, businesses are thriving, and visitors want to return. We do this by forging community partnerships with multiple stakeholders to create a connected community that celebrates our historic and cultural character, cultivates the town's businesses, and enhances our entertainment, artistic, and recreational assets.

### VISION

The Town of Louisa is the commercial and cultural heart of a vibrant rural historic Virginia community.



# STAKEHOLDER INPUT SUMMARY

LFF's ongoing efforts to revitalize the Town of Louisa are built on a foundation of collaborative engagement. Input for this initiative was gathered through the development of LFF's Strategic Operating Plan in the fall of 2023 and through recent guided facilitation sessions earlier in 2024. This process brought together a broad range of voices, including local leaders, businesses, and members of the community.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The following themes emerged consistently from stakeholder input, providing a clear direction for the Main Street Initiative:

- 1. Business Vitality and Economic Development:** Recruit businesses that cater to local and regional needs, such as restaurants, retail, and service providers.
- 2. Community Engagement and Events:** Create signature activities that build community pride and reinforce the Town of Louisa's role as a destination and diversify events that showcase its unique identity and draw both residents and visitors, such as festivals, parades, and outdoor markets.
- 3. Cohesive Identity and Branding:** Establish a cohesive identity that aligns with community goals and resonates with residents, businesses, and visitors by promoting the Town of Louisa's unique character, blending its historical charm, rural beauty, and forward-thinking spirit through storytelling efforts.
- 4. Collaboration and Communication:** Build partnerships across local government, civic organizations, and the private sector to align goals and amplify impact through clear communication strategies to keep stakeholders engaged and fostering a sense of shared ownership.

# 2025-2028 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## GOAL ONE: DEFINE AND COMMUNICATE A STRONG IDENTITY FOR THE TOWN OF LOUISA

### OUTCOME:

A recognizable and cohesive brand that embodies the heart of the community and inspires pride in The Town of Louisa as a vibrant destination.

### OBJECTIVES:

#### 1. Create a Unified Brand for the Town of Louisa

- Develop a professional logo, tagline, and branding guidelines that reflect the Town of Louisa's unique identity and vision.
- Apply the branding consistently across signage, print materials, social media, and events to establish a unified image.
- Ensure cohesion in the the brand while marketing the appealing characteristics for each district: Historic District, Entertainment District, and Commercial District.

#### Measures of Success:

- Secure participation from at least 80% of town businesses in adopting the Town of Louisa's branding on their signage, marketing materials, or digital presence.
- Include the Town of Louisa's logo and tagline in promotional materials for at least four community events within the first two years.
- Conduct annual business performance survey to gauge awareness of the Town of Louisa and overall business sentiment.

#### 2. Launch and Maintain an Online Presence

- Set up and actively manage social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) with engaging content that highlights town businesses, events, and initiatives.

#### Measures of Success:

- Launch social media accounts and reach 100 followers across all platforms within the first year, with at least 10% monthly engagement rates.

# GOAL TWO: INCREASE VISITATION TO THE TOWN OF LOUISA

## OUTCOME:

A vibrant destination that attracts consistent foot traffic through engaging programming, improved public spaces, and creative marketing efforts.

## OBJECTIVES:

### 1. Enhance the Citizen and Visitor Experience

- Clearly define the area, appeal, and identity for the three distinct districts; Historic District, Entertainment District, and Commercial District.
- Identify gaps, types of business, amenities, and attractions to enhance each district.
- Augment existing countywide vehicular wayfinding system by introducing pedestrian-level signage to help visitors easily navigate after parking and improve non-vehicular connection between the Historic District and Entertainment Districts.
- Work with local community groups to invest in beautification efforts, such as public art installations and landscaping.

#### Measures of Success:

- Achieve a 20% increase in foot traffic to The Town of Louisa within three years, as measured by local business reports.
- Conduct annual visitor surveys; at least 70% report a positive experience and a likelihood to return.

### 2. Promote the Town of Louisa Through Targeted Marketing

- Develop a cohesive marketing campaign showcasing the unique offerings of the Town of Louisa, including its shops, dining, and events.
- Leverage social media, email marketing, and partnerships with regional tourism boards to reach a wider audience.

#### Measures of Success:

- Grow social media engagement by 50% within three years, including followers, shares, and event RSVPs.
- Partner with at least three regional organizations to promote the Town of Louisa through their channels.
- Secure media coverage for a minimum of two events or initiatives annually, showcasing Louisa's impact and activities.



### 3. Develop Programming to Attract Visitors

- Host six "Market on Main" programs over three years, resulting in 1,000 cumulative attendees.

#### **Measures of Success:**

- Achieve a total of 1,000 attendees across six "Market on Main" programs over three years, with an average growth of 10% in attendance year-over-year.
- Attract attendees from outside the immediate Louisa area, with at least 20% of attendees traveling from neighboring counties or towns by Year 3.



# GOAL THREE: SUPPORT AND SCALE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS TO DRIVE ECONOMIC VITALITY

## OUTCOME:

Serve as a thriving hub for local entrepreneurs, fostering a supportive ecosystem that drives economic growth and builds community identity.

## OBJECTIVES:

### 1. Provide Opportunities for Idea-Stage Entrepreneurs to Launch and Grow

- Host bi-annual "Market on Main" programs to showcase local entrepreneurs and connect them with the community.

#### Measures of Success:

- Host six "Market on Main" programs over three years with 20 unique vendors.
- Post-program surveys show 50% of vendors report increased community engagement or business growth.

### 2. Empower Idea-Stage and Growth-Stage Businesses with Tools to Thrive

- Develop a centralized directory of resources, funding opportunities, and educational programs to be hosted on the LFF website.
- Formalize collaborations with regional resources for small business training workshops.
- Establish a micro-grant program to provide seed funding for early-stage entrepreneurs.

#### Measures of Success:

- Create and launch the centralized resource directory by Year 1, with at least 50 users (measured as webpage views) annually by Year 3.
- Support at least 20 entrepreneurs annually accessing business training workshops or funding resources.
- Award micro-grants to at least 10 early-stage entrepreneurs within three years, with 50% reporting measurable growth within 12 months of receiving funds.

### 3. Create Accessible Spaces for Innovation

- Identify and promote existing spaces in the Town of Louisa for new businesses, co-working, or shared retail opportunities.

#### Measures of Success:

- Maintain a database of available spaces with a high response rate to small business inquiries.



# GOAL FOUR: ESTABLISH LOUISA MAIN STREET AS A TRUSTED AND FOUNDATIONAL EFFORT AND ORGANIZATION

## OUTCOME:

A resilient and sustainable organization recognized as a cornerstone of revitalization, respected by the community, and celebrated for its leadership.

## OBJECTIVES:

### 1. Advance the Town of Louisa's Main Street Status

- Maintain "Exploring Main Street" status by:
  - Becoming an Allied Level Member of Main Street America to access resources, training, and networking opportunities.
  - Participating in at least one Virginia Main Street (VMS) sponsored training session annually, ensuring alignment with Louisa's development goals.
- Prepare for "Mobilizing Main Street" status by building stakeholder support, strengthening organizational capacity, and aligning efforts with Virginia Main Street criteria.

#### **Measures of Success:**

- Submission of a Mobilizing Main Street application within 18 months, supported by comprehensive documentation of readiness, such as meeting minutes, training participation, and resource development.

### 2. Establish a Louisa Main Street Committee

- Convene a diverse group of local businesses, community leaders, civic organizations, and residents to form a dedicated Louisa Main Street Committee that provides leadership and drives decision-making.
  - Subcommittees may be formed to address larger initiatives, such as the Market on Main programs, the microgrant, branding, etc.

#### **Measures of Success:**

- Recruitment of at least 10 active committee members, two of whom attend Virginia Main Street training.
- Regular reporting of committee activities and outcomes to stakeholders and the Town of Louisa, building trust and transparency.

### 3. Develop a Volunteer Base

- Create and maintain a robust volunteer list, leveraging community engagement to support programs, initiatives, and operational needs.

### **Measures of Success:**

- Creation of a volunteer database with at least 15 active participants within the first year (may include Louisa Main Street committee and subcommittee members).

### **4. Formalize Financial and Organizational Support**

- Establish a formal budget aligned with strategic goals and develop a fundraising strategy that includes grants, sponsorships, and community contributions.
- Negotiate and finalize an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Louisa to secure financial and logistical support for Louisa's Main Street initiatives.
- Develop a phased plan to grow organizational capacity, with the goal of hiring a part-time staff member after three years to manage programming and operations.

### **Measures of Success:**

- Adoption of a formal budget and implementation of a fundraising strategy that generates a minimum of \$25,000 in revenue annually to cover the costs of "Market on Main" programming, the microgrant program, and additional capacity-building efforts.
- Finalized MOU with the Town of Louisa, outlining financial and logistical support.
- Increased organizational capacity demonstrated by hiring a part-time staff member after Year 3, with sustainable funding to support the position.

### **5. Build Credibility through Communication and Transparency**

- Regularly communicate goals, progress, and outcomes to stakeholders and the public through newsletters, social media, and public meetings.
- Share success stories and impact metrics to demonstrate value and build trust within the community.

### **Measures of Success:**

- Monthly updates on progress and programming are shared via multiple communication channels, with an annual report detailing accomplishments, challenges, and financial health.
- Increased public awareness and support for the Town of Louisa, measured by attendance at programs and stakeholder engagement levels.



# YEAR 1 CHECKLIST

## GOAL ONE:

- ☐ Launch social media accounts and reach 100 followers.
- ☐ Achieve 10% monthly engagement on posts.
- ☐ Create a logo and tagline.
- ☐ Encourage town businesses to adopt branding on signage or marketing materials, such as window clings.

## GOAL TWO:

- ☐ Advocate to the Town of Louisa to adopt the proposed budget from the Wayfinding Assessment.
- ☐ Identify local partners and funding sources to complete one beautification project, such as public art or landscaping.
- ☐ Post regular updates highlighting businesses and local events on social media.



## GOAL THREE:

- ☐ Host two “Market on Main” programs, securing 20 vendors total and attracting 200+ attendees across both programs.
- ☐ Conduct post-event surveys to measure vendor engagement and business growth.
- ☐ Develop a simple, user-friendly online directory of resources for entrepreneurs and promote it.
- ☐ Partner with at least one regional organization to deliver two small business workshops.
- ☐ Identify microgrant funding sources and establish program guidelines.

## GOAL FOUR:

- ☐ Form the Louisa Main Street Committee and recruit 10 active committee members.
- ☐ Host regular meetings and report progress to stakeholders.
- ☐ Recruit and maintain a list of 15 volunteers to support programs and initiatives.
- ☐ Finalize a budget and secure \$15,000 in grants, sponsorships, or donations.
- ☐ Negotiate an updated MOU with the Town of Louisa.