

Activity Report Highlights

City of Staunton



STAUNTON COMMUNITY SURVEY OPEN

The City of Staunton is conducting a community survey to get feedback from residents giving them an opportunity to shape the future of Staunton. The questions will cover a wide range of topics including city services, utilities, safety, and quality of life. The survey responses are confidential. City leaders are excited to get this feedback and learn more about residents' priorities, concerns and how to best utilize resources. Approximately 3,000 randomly selected households have received a postcard in the mail. In early February, a separate, community-wide electronic survey will become available for all citizens to take part. More information will be provided on that as we get closer to that date. The surveys will close on Feb. 16. Results from the survey are expected by mid-March. This survey is being conducted through a partnership with Polco and the National Research Center, using a platform utilized by hundreds of communities in nearly every U.S. state.



December 2023

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police 2,441 ↓

Fire & Rescue 306 ↓

Average Response Time month/year

Police 3'38"/3'32"

Fire & Rescue 4'35"/4'23"

*arrows indicate if calls are up or down compared to the previous month

By the Numbers

There were **4** site plans approved in December

26 homes and **14** multi-family units on Rockway St. had their water service improved, thanks to CDBG funds.

Young adult circulation is up **13.6%** from FY23 at the Library.

Into the Future

The City is closed **Feb. 19** in observance of Presidents Day.

Keep an eye out for an upcoming West End Revitalization workshop to be scheduled in **March**.



NEW DIRECTOR FOR SVSS

Shenandoah Valley Social Services (SVSS) has hired Sherry Bowman McClanahan as their new director. She comes to the agency with over 30 years of experience with the Virginia Department of Social Services. Her diverse leadership experiences include collaborative efforts with community partners to coordinate successful trauma-informed, community-based services for children and families. Bowman McClanahan is committed to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and the community.



HINKLE AWARDED FO DESIGNATION

Master Firefighter Daniel Hinkle was awarded his Fire Officer (FO) designation by the Commission of Professional Credentialing. He demonstrated through his education, leadership, and management skills that he possesses the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities required for fire and emergency services profession. Hinkle becomes one of 707 FO designees worldwide, one of 25 in Virginia, and the only FO in Staunton.

OFFICE ON YOUTH ON DISPLAY

For the first time, the Office on Youth (OOY) participated in Celebration of Holiday Lights in Gypsy Hill Park, but more importantly, has recently partnered with Staunton, Waynesboro and Augusta County school systems to expand OOY's Check and Connect Truancy Prevention program, and through grants are funding a full-time mentor to work with homeless and truant youth in the area.



Notes from the City Manager

There will be a ceremony held in City Council Chambers at 1 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 26 to redesignate Green Street. This redesignation is being championed by Col. Melissa Patrick to honor the memories of two African American war heroes from Staunton: Captain William Washington Green, Sr. (Buffalo Solider and WWI officer, decorated for heroism on the battlefield) and Captain William W. Green Jr. (Tuskegee Airman and Korean War veteran, decorated for his aerial exploits and heroism). This redesignation will honor these distinguished war

heroes in addition to Nathanael Greene, a Revolutionary War hero. The community is invited to attend this ceremony.





MEMORANDUM

January 19, 2023

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council
Amanda Kaufman, Assistant City Manager
John C. Blair, City Attorney
Management Team
Mid-Managers

FROM: Leslie Beauregard, City Manager

SUBJECT: Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

YMCA Activity Center

The new 4,000 square foot pavilion at 575 New Hope Road, also known as the Staunton Augusta YMCA activity center, is near completion. Pictured below, the site just needs final inspections before it can officially open.



Staunton Steam – Phase #1

A temporary certificate of occupancy has been issued for the Old Staunton Steam Laundry Building at 704 Hall Street. The Laundry Building includes 28 apartments and future retail or restaurant space. *Picture following.*



Reports

Site Plans

The following are newly approved site plans:

- 2240 N Lewis Street – Transit Hub Station
- 280 National Avenue – Expansion of equipment storage lot
- 68 Woodlee Road – Minor modification for Woodlee Apartments
- 80 National Avenue – Expansion of equipment storage lot

Environmental Inspections Report

The Environmental Programs Division of Community Development completed erosion and sediment control inspections on residential and commercial construction sites throughout the City as follows:

- Residential Construction – 39 active sites with 80 inspections in December
- Commercial Construction – 10 active sites with 26 inspections in December

Housing and Grants Coordination

As a Community Development Block Grant Entitlement (CDBG) Community, the City is required to submit to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) a Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) every December. The purpose of this report is to summarize the activities the City has done over the past year with its CDBG funding to benefit persons in the community with Low-to-Moderate Incomes (LMI) in the areas of housing, public services, and public facilities and infrastructure. During Fiscal Year 2022 (Oct. 2022–Sept. 2023), the City of Staunton completed the following high priority tasks:

- Assisting with legal services provided by Blue Ridge Legal Services to LMI individuals and families facing eviction and other housing issues.
- Helping clients of the Valley Mission with initial housing support assistance to transition out of the shelter to permanent housing.
- Providing transportation to medical appointments and other necessary services to City residents 62 or older through the VPAS Senior Transportation Program.
- Supplying seniors and persons with disabilities nourishing meals through the VPAS Meals on Wheels program.

- Supporting children's advocacy services through funding to train volunteer advocates to serve CASA.
- Providing Rebuilding Homes of Greater Augusta financial assistance to make repairs and accessibility modifications to homes of seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Funding kitchen and gym renovations at the Salvation Army to better serve the public, specifically LMI persons with their soup kitchen and other public activities.
- Using CDBG funds, the City was also able to complete the Rockway Street waterline, improving direct water service to 26 homes and 14 multi-family units.

Road Diet/ Roundabout projects

City staff from Public Works and Community Development participated in a kick-off meeting with Virginia Department of Transportation representatives on the Richmond Avenue and Greenville Avenue Road Diet and Roundabout projects. Preliminary engineering for the projects will begin in April, with a public meeting tentatively scheduled for October.

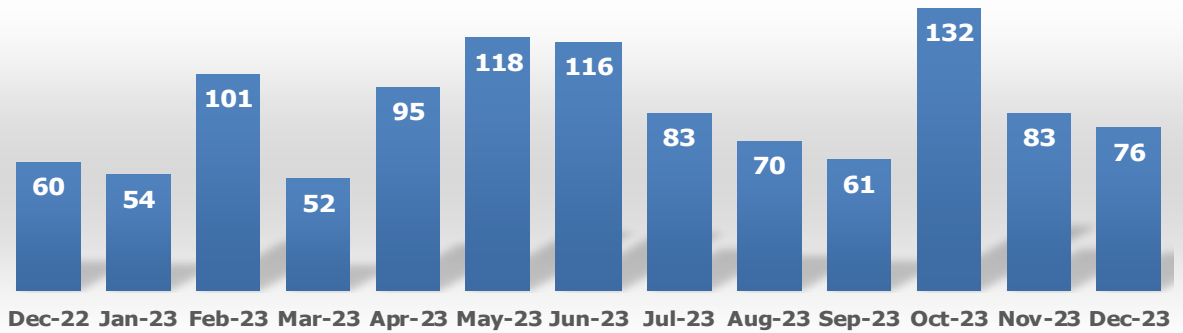
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Members of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee met with the directors of Public Works and Parks & Recreation to plan for additional safety features and signage in Gypsy Hill Park. These measures will be implemented in the spring/summer along with an educational campaign, with the goal of improving the safety of all users of Constitution Drive – a designated Play Street.

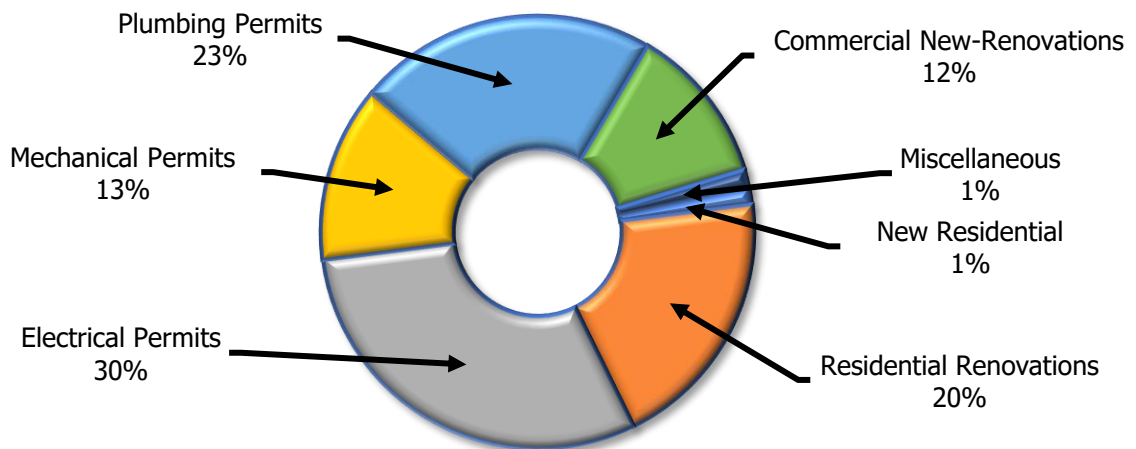
Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	Dec-23	Dec-22	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	1	3	-2	-66.7%
Residential Renovations	15	10	5	50.0%
Electrical Permits	23	19	4	21.1%
Mechanical Permits	10	6	4	66.7%
Plumbing Permits	17	14	3	21.4%
Commercial New-Renovations	9	5	4	80.0%
Miscellaneous	1	3	-2	-66.7%
Total	76	60	16	26.7%

Total Monthly Building Permits Issued



Permits Issued

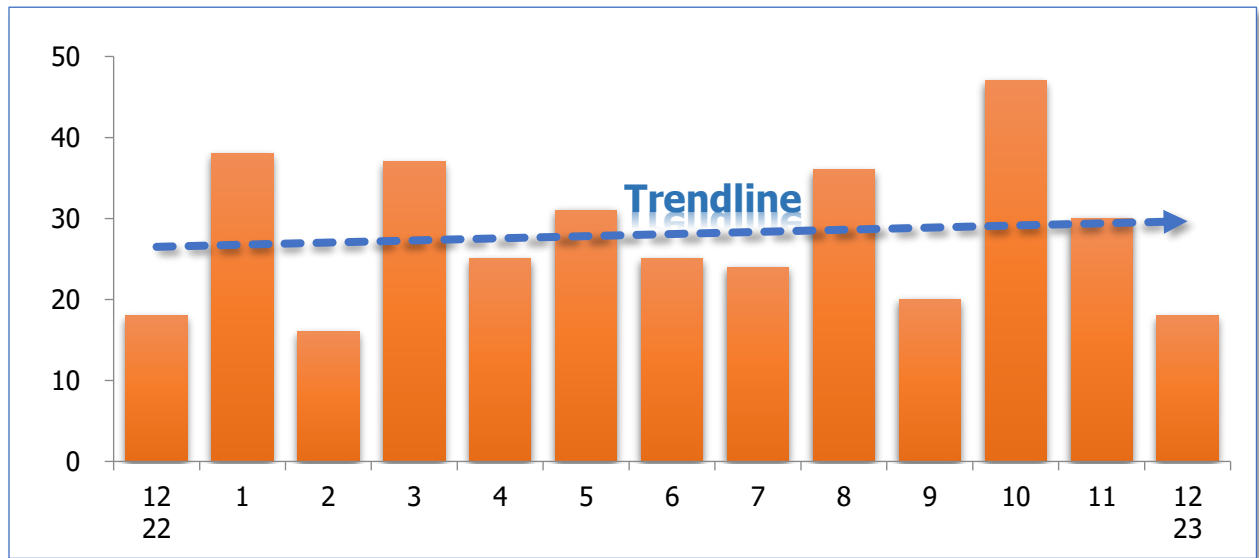


Permit Fees Collected	Dec-23	Dec-22	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	\$291	\$24,233	-\$23,942	-98.8%
Residential Renovations	\$1,526	\$1,039	\$487	46.8%
Electrical Permits	\$2,142	\$10,558	-\$8,416	-79.7%
Mechanical Permits	\$949	\$931	\$18	1.9%
Plumbing Permits	\$1,046	\$10,104	-\$9,058	-89.7%
Commercial New-Renovations	\$8,154	\$2,659	\$5,495	206.7%
Miscellaneous	\$0	\$200	-\$200	-100.0%
Total	\$14,107	\$49,724	-\$35,616	-71.6%

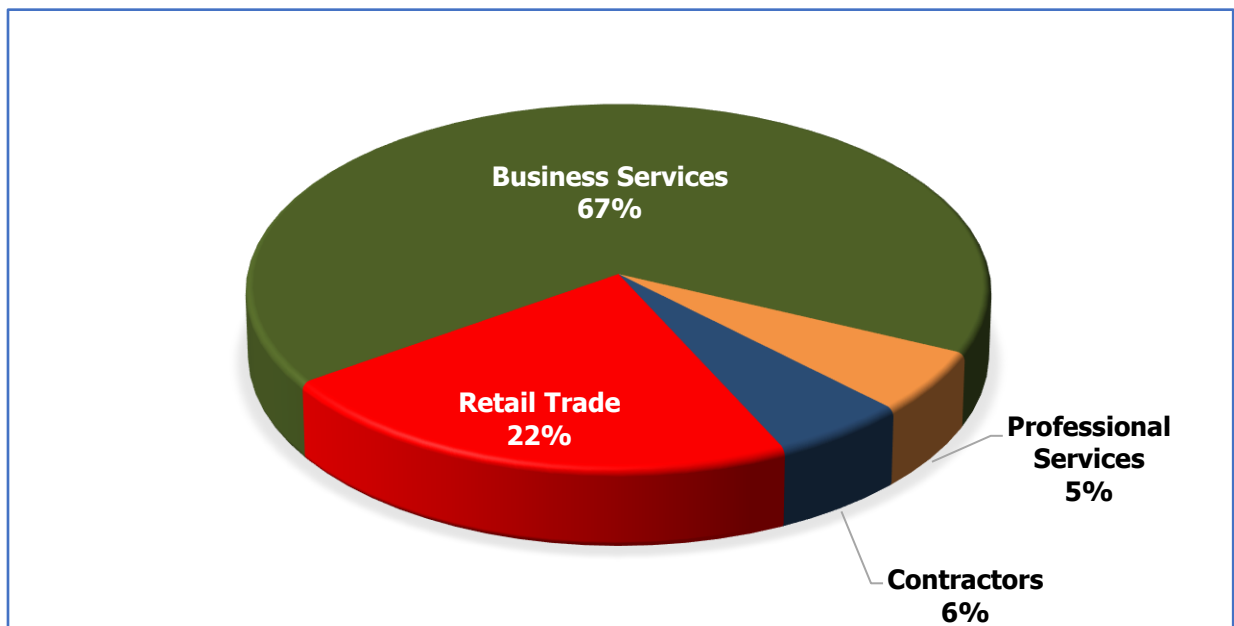
Economic Development

Business License Activity

During the month of December, the Commissioner of Revenue's Office issued 18 business licenses compared to 30 the previous month, representing a 40% decrease. This month a year ago, 18 business licenses were issued. The following bar chart provides a monthly comparison for the total number of business licenses issued for the past year.



As seen in the following pie chart, the services sector accounted for 78% of the total licenses issued in December.



Finance

- The department issued 7,194 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,359,552 during December.
- Collection activities in December resulted in the recovery of \$2,715 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,419 receipts in the amount of \$968,941 during December.
- The department processed 318 City and 166 School accounts payable checks totaling \$2,670,548. 1,274 City and 566 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,787,584; and 21 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$1,973,844 during December.
- The FY2023 audit was presented to City Council at the Dec. 14 meeting by Kristen Holland from Brown Edwards LLP, the City's independent auditors. The City received an unmodified opinion and the audit was completed without any issues.
- The FY2025 Budget development has begun. In-person budget meetings will continue into January. A new outside agency online request form was developed for the FY2025 budget process and the link to the new form was sent out on Dec. 20, with a deadline of Jan. 25.
- The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Committee held another meeting on Dec. 18 to continue their work on the FY2025-2029 CIP. A draft was presented to the Planning Commission on Jan. 18.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 306 incidents in December, totaling 4,214 emergency incident responses for 2023. The average response time for December was 4 minutes and 35 seconds. The average response time for 2023 was 4 minutes and 23 seconds.
 - Fire Station No. 1 responded to 210 incidents in December.
 - Fire Station No. 2 responded to 96 incidents in December.
- Staff received over 493 hours of training in December. Personnel totaled 8,350 training hours for 2023, averaging 21 hours per person every month.
- Staff conducted 42 business fire safety inspections and 14 re-inspections in December, totaling 716 business fire safety inspections and 334 re-inspections during 2023.

- Staff conducted 14 public education visits in December and 184 public education visits during 2023.
- Master Firefighter Daniel Hinkle was awarded his Fire Officer (FO) designation by the Commission of Professional Credentialing. He demonstrated through his education, leadership, and management skills that he possesses the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities required for fire and emergency services profession. He becomes one of 707 FO designees worldwide, one of 25 in Virginia, and the only FO in Staunton.



Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time—2

Part Time/Seasonal—1

Hired:

Full Time—3

Part Time—1

Retired—2

Activities

Human Resources staff members took part in the following activities in December:

Recruitment

- Initiated recruitment for the following positions:
 - Director of Community Development
 - Public Safety Dispatcher
 - Firefighters/EMTs: Part-Time
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Equipment Operator I – Utilities
 - Equipment Operator II – Utilities

- Equipment Operator I – Streets
- Sanitation Worker
- Police Officer – Certified Only

Orientations

- Conducted orientations for four full-time employees.

Professional Development:

- Staff participated in Citizen Response to Active Shooter Event training coordinated through the City's Safety Committee and Police Department.
- Staff participated in Society of Human Resource Management webinars, Why Leadership is More than a Job Title and 2024 Trends: 5 HR Priorities You Need to Know.

Information Technology

Information Technology staff took part in the following activities in December:

- Completed a comprehensive hardware and major software upgrade the 911 call handling system.
- Updated video feeds for the Public Access and the Staunton City Schools channels to GloFiber's network for broadcast.
- Zach Henry completed the AWS General Cloud Practitioner certification.
- Completed preliminary configuration of a new server backup appliance. The new appliance will replace three that are no longer supported by the manufacturer.
- Continued work on building security projects including several camera upgrades to the City Courthouse and design for access control in the Library and City Hall.

Library

- Special kids' programs included Gingerbread Tales with 44 people attending; a holiday storytime; a holiday open house evening for families with a visit from the Staunton High School choir; a Merry Crafts art event; and a Percy Jackson Fan Club program.
- Library staff replaced the two early literacy and education computers in the children's department with brand new models.

- The library ended the year with two major facility issues: the elevator broke for three weeks and the heat went out at the end of December for six days. Both issues have since been resolved.

Monthly Statistical Report: December 2023

CIRCULATION	Month	YTD		SERVICES	Month	YTD
Adult	9,490	60,394		ILLs Borrowed	13	87
Young Adult (YA)	708	4,379		ILLs Lent	0	0
Juvenile	5,578	39,895		Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	4	39
Digital	4,507	27,639				
Total Circulation	20,283	132,307		PROGRAMS		
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,049	7,221		Adult	12	63
				Attendance	108	922
Items Checked In	18,532	119,761		YA	3	47
				Attendance	456	4,515
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,718	11,633		Juvenile	32	228
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,905	10,517		Attendance	1,340	8,893
Total Holds Filled	4,503	30,088				
				PEOPLE		
Added to Collection	427	5,309		Library Visits	11,170	75,812
Withdrawn from Collection	75	8,089		Curbside Visits	61	538
				Computer Users	536	4,130
Database Use/Sessions	667	8,082		Juvenile Computer Users	510	3,438
				Meetings Held	4	19
				Volunteer Hours	47	885
				New Card Registrations	123	947
				Total Registered Cards		17,045

Items of note when comparing the statistics for the first half of Fiscal Year 2024 to the same period of Fiscal Year 2023:

- Total circulation is up 7.4%
 - Young adult circulation is up 13.6%
 - Digital circulation is up over 30%
- Event attendance has increased 5%
- Library visits are up roughly 40%
 - Public computer use has increased 17%
 - New card registrations are up 15.2%

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- Planted 150 additional daffodil bulbs at Staunton Crossing and Augusta/Lambert traffic islands.
- On Dec. 14, Horticulture staff planted the last of the 142 replacement trees, to counteract what was lost to the July 2022 storm.
- Reviewed four site plans for planning department for compliance to our landscape plan.

Maintenance

Park Maintenance completed the following:

- Worked with inmate labor to cut brush and small trees from the crosses at Betsy Bell.
- Provided maintenance support for the Celebration of Lights in Gypsy Hill Park.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities:

- Offered trips to Bizarre Bazaar and Short Pump Town Center.
- Assisted Celebration of Holiday lights with displays.
- Continued indoor athletic leagues

Police

- The City's IT Department completed an upgrade to the Intrado call-handling equipment in the E-911 Center; the project was funded through a \$150,000 grant from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 2,842 telephone calls during the month, including 1,182 9-1-1 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,441 incidents during the month, including 1,259 citizen calls for service, 577 officer initiated activities, 206 administrative calls, and 399 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 38 seconds; it is 3 minutes and 32 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- The Utility Office established 20 new owner accounts, 21 new rental residential accounts, and six commercial accounts.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$48,735 in payments.

- 39 accounts were cut off for non-payment. Of those cut off, 35 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.
- Utility crews repaired eight water main breaks and four water meters. The crew responded to three sewer main blockages and three sewer lateral blockages.
- The Facilities Department oversaw the removal and replacement of the standing seam metal roof on the Cochran Judicial building and the removal of the existing roof system and the installation of a new modified bituminous roof system on the Staunton Public Library.

Tourism

Activities

The Tourism Department staff took part in the following promotional, networking, or administrative activities in December:

- December promotions included Unwrapping the Magic of the Holidays, Where to Find Santa, Bazaars and Markets, Ultimate Gift Guide, Navigating the Holiday Hours, Bringing in the New Year, and Staunton on Tap weekly special events.
- Jessica Williams attended Travel Exchange International to promote a collaboration with other destinations along Amtrak called Virginia By Rail to international travelers.
- Met with Hotel 24 to discuss marketing & promotions for their 100th Anniversary.

Public Relations

The following is a list of newspapers, websites, magazines, and television stations that published articles about Staunton:



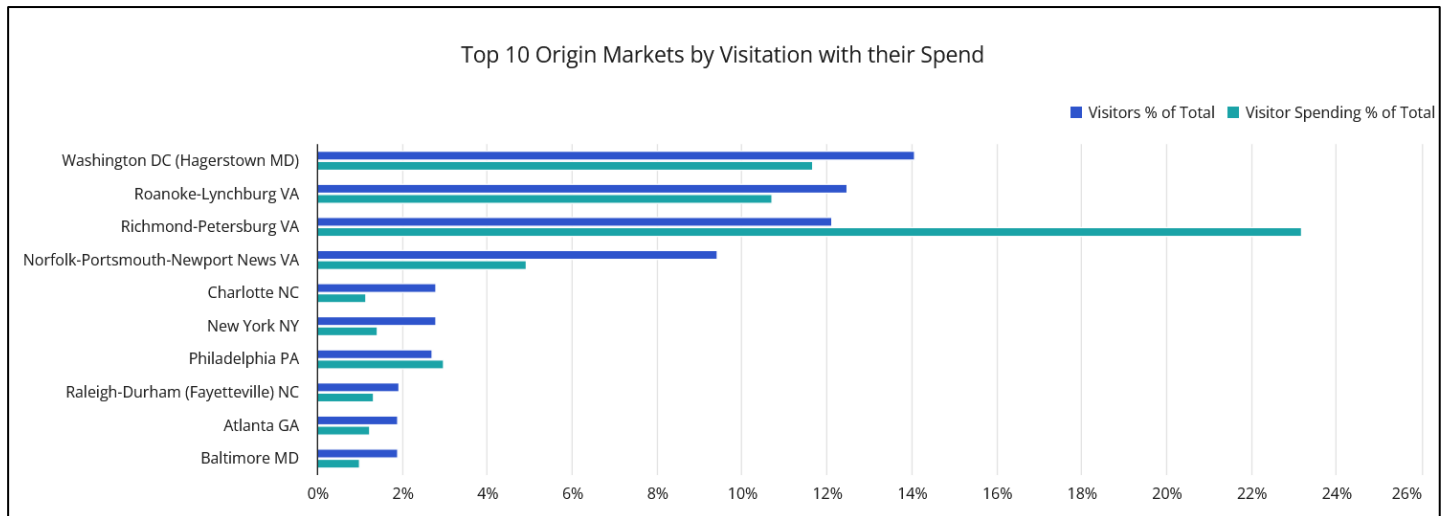
Date	Headline	Source	Reach
Dec. 01	<u>Historic Staunton Foundation to Have 48th Holiday House Tour</u>	WHSV-TV	342,395
Dec. 05	<u>Staunton's Former Odd Fellows Hall On 119 E. Beverley Street Undergoing Renovations</u>	News Leader	66,899
Dec. 09	<u>These Towns in The United States Have the Best Main Streets</u>	World Atlas	4,657,141
Dec. 10	<u>11 Of the Most Quaint Small Towns in The Southern United States</u>	World Atlas	4,657,141
Dec. 11	<u>The Cozy Small Town in Virginia That Comes Alive Under a Blanket of Snow</u>	Only In Your State	3,822,508

Date	Headline	Source	Reach
Dec. 12	<u>Virginia Breeze Hits Ridership Record</u>	Metro Magazine	15,107
Dec. 13	<u>12 Picture-Perfect Towns in Virginia</u>	World Atlas	4,657,141
Dec. 14	<u>All Aboard: 4 Enchanting Virginia Train Rides for A Cozy Holiday Experience</u>	The Dogwood	14,709
Dec. 15	<u>11 Best Towns in Virginia for A Winter Getaway</u>	World Atlas	4,657,141
Dec. 17	<u>13 Of the Most Underrated Towns in Virginia to Take a Trip To</u>	World Atlas	4,657,141
Dec. 22	<u>The Largest Collection of Cameras on Public Display Can Be Found in One Small Virginia Town</u>	WTVR-TV	1,016,803
Dec. 22	<u>Staunton Icon Marino's Lunch Gets New Lease on Life. The Restaurant Is Set to Reopen in 2024.</u>	News Leader	106,674
Dec. 23	<u>The 9 Best Cuts of Meat to Dry Age</u>	Tasting Table	10,189,450
Dec. 24	<u>11 Of the Most Welcoming Towns in Virginia</u>	World Atlas	4,657,141
		TOTAL	43,529,103

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
December 2022	December 2023	% Change
33,357 visitors	33,577 visitors	+.66%
29 visitor's guide requests	79 visitor's guide requests 268 online travel guide views	+172%

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending



Smith Travel Research (STR) Hotel Occupancy Report

Occupancy (%)	Year To Date													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	2021	2022	2023
This Year	40.6	45.9	54.1	60.9	65.8	65.6	61.0	60.9	60.8	67.4	53.5	50.3	59.5	58.0
Last Year	39.6	42.9	51.3	63.8	64.4	65.0	65.0	64.2	67.3	71.7	58.1	35.2	50.3	59.5
% Change	2.5	7.2	5.3	-4.5	2.2	1.0	-6.1	-5.0	-9.7	-6.1	-7.9	42.7	18.3	-2.6

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Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Fourteen youth received detention alternative services.

Community in Motion Program

- Program Coordinator attended a virtual training, *The Hidden Biases of Good People*, presented by Rev. Dr. Bryant T. Marks, Sr., a professor at Morehouse College, and hosted through The Dibble Institute on Dec. 13.

Check and Connect – Truancy Prevention

- Participants include 79 students from 12 area middle and high schools. There were 12 students from Staunton High School and 14 from Shelburne Middle School.

PREP

- 117 elementary students received Family Life Education.
- 104 high school students participated in PREP education programs.

Community/Etc.

- OOO staff assembled a *Celebration of Lights* display at Gypsy Hill Park.



Staunton Downtown Development Association¹

- Saturdays in December.** Programming and events took place Saturdays on Dec. 2, 9, and 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in downtown Staunton. Highlights included photo ops with holiday characters, musicians, performers, carriage rides and youth focused activities with Santa, Reindeer, Elves, the Grinch, Father & Merri Christmas, and the Downtown Winter Snow Court. Well over 2,500 individuals participated in the activities over the weeks leading up to Christmas. SDDA appreciated the continued support from local businesses, organizations and a dedicated small team of volunteers who share their time and talents so that these events can be offered to the community. With a blend of funding support provided by SDDA as well as multiple community sponsors, activities, treats, and experiences were provided at no cost to attendees.
- Downtown Christmas Trees and Wreaths.** Continuing to add a little extra holiday charm and encourage shopping local during the holidays, SDDA coordinated the return of Michelle's Wreaths & Trees, a local small business, to set-up in downtown Staunton for four weeks, selling fresh cut Christmas trees, wreaths and garlands at Sunspots Pavilion in the Wharf. Community members shared that they enjoyed the opportunity to shop the Staunton Farmer's Winter Market and meander through the Wharf towards Sunspots to purchase fresh cut Christmas trees and wreaths, and remarked how it added to the holiday charm of the City.



¹ The Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) is an independent, non-profit corporation, separate from the City of Staunton. Pursuant to the Staunton City Code and a contract with the City, SDDA provides facilities and services funded by the City in the City's downtown service district. SDDA furnishes information to the City Manager's Office for inclusion in this Activity Report to update the City in the performance of its obligations.