



STAUNTON CITY COUNCIL 3-YEAR PRIORITIES TO ACCOMPLISH VISION FOR 2030

Adopted April 22, 2019

Revised at Council Work Session on June 13, 2019

On November 1 and 2, 2018, and April 22, 2019, at two separate retreats, City Council updated its Vision and developed new 3-Year Priorities to achieve its Vision for 2030. Both were finally adopted by Council on June 13, 2019.

Economic Development	
1	With a preference for employers with high-paying jobs, aggressively recruit and secure favorable development for the Staunton Crossing site to include advanced manufacturing, logistics, data centers, office park, retail, restaurants, and open space The Staunton Crossing Economic Development Business Plan includes 10 recommendations to make Staunton Crossing attractive to economic development prospects and improve the chances for landing target businesses within the development. The 10 recommendations include important initiatives the city has already set in motion over the past few years. The full report builds on that momentum and recommends other initiatives that will capitalize on the city's investment and best position Staunton Crossing for success.
2	Prepare the Staunton Crossing site for development and work with developers in a way that secures the best competitive position for the city which will include: • Completing Crossing Way access road The Virginia Department of Transportation SMART SCALE-funded project involves the design and construction of a new 4,000 linear-foot spine road connecting Richmond Avenue to Valley Center Drive. When completed, the \$8.78 million road project will make the property fully accessible and provide another step towards being ready for development. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2021. • Demolishing outmoded structures In October 2019, the city, on behalf of the Economic Development Authority, solicited competitive bids for services at Staunton Crossing involving and associated with the demolition of selected buildings, the abatement of hazardous materials, the removal and disposal of above and underground storage tanks, and the salvage of equipment and building materials. In January 2020, a contractor was selected, and the project is scheduled to begin in late February.

	• Achieving Tier 4 certification from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership In December 2019, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership completed a statewide Enhanced Site Characterization and Assessment Study. The project, funded by the Commonwealth of Virginia, will be instrumental in allowing government at all levels—local, regional, and state—to make more informed investments in site development. The next step is for the city to fund the recommendations that would move Staunton Crossing from a Tier 2 to Tier 4 site.
3	Working in partnership with the Staunton Downtown Development Association, Staunton Creative Community Fund, and Staunton Innovation Hub, maintain strategies to support local businesses, including start ups and expansions The city continues to offer innovative Enterprise Zone incentives that complement state benefits and attract and encourage the expansion of businesses in Staunton’s target sectors. Such target sectors have been selected to create higher wage jobs and diversify the local employment base. Staunton’s targeted industries include high-tech manufacturing; professional office and corporate branch locations; “creative class” entrepreneurs, including architects, engineers, and research and design, information technology, public relations, marketing, and high-tech firms; green industries; and niche retailers that serve as destinations for revitalizing mixed-use communities. The city continues to partner with Staunton Creative Community Fund for services to implement a small business and entrepreneurial development program, as well as Staunton Innovation Hub with its offerings of flexible, shared co-working space for telecommuters, startups, small businesses, and freelancers. Through the Library, the city acts as a registration site for the Staunton Downtown Development Association Downtown Discount Card and, to support entrepreneurs and business owners, provides physical collections and access to the following online databases: • <i>Reference USA</i>: business and marketing tools. • <i>Universal Class</i>: self-directed online learning with topics such as career training, entrepreneurship, and finance. • <i>Gale Legal Forms</i>: thousands of free legal forms that include small business-related concerns.
4	Continue to support tourism activities and enhance Staunton’s reputation as a tourist destination <u>Library</u> provides computer and wi-fi access, and printing, in a comfortable setting to all visitors.

	<u>Tourism</u> continues to pursue earned media for the City of Staunton. Highlights include: • <i>50 Best Cities to Live in the U.S. - USA Today</i> • <i>Why This Region of Virginia Could Be the South's New Foodie Hotspot - Vogue</i> • <i>Best Places to Propose in the U.S. - Expedia</i> • <i>American Shakespeare Center - Virginia's Not-To-Be-Missed Vacation Destination - O Magazine</i> • <i>Best Small Town Cultural Scene - USA Today</i> • <i>The South's Best Restaurants in Every State: The Shack Staunton, VA - Southern Living</i> <u>Tourism</u> also administered six digital marketing campaigns to promote the City of Staunton in 2019, targeting Northern Virginia/DC, Richmond, and Hampton Roads: • Staunton User-Generated Content Campaign • Staunton Adventure Campaign • Staunton 48-Hour Getaway Campaigns (Northern Virginia/DC, Richmond and Hampton Roads) • Staunton Unique Experiences Video Campaign • 50 Years of LOVE Mural Video Campaign • Staunton 48-Hour Getaway Video Campaign
5	Review and revise ordinances that are related to economic development to ensure that the city is business friendly and aligned with Council's vision including: • Review of the Zoning Ordinance • Review of the Corridor Overlay Ordinance ○ Enforcing and defending the ordinance as necessary ○ Bringing additional properties on each route into compliance, noting that the opportunity to model city's commitment only arises as properties improve or turn over ○ Bringing existing properties into voluntary compliance A new Site Plan chapter of the Zoning Code was drafted, reviewed and amended and, after a public hearing, recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. The proposed chapter will be presented to City Council for consideration in February. Once adopted, the chapter should provide clarity to property owners and developers. Staff initiated several additional Zoning Code changes (setbacks, parking, etc.) that provide more flexibility in the development of real estate. Staff drafted a rewrite of the chapter of the Zoning Code concerning nonconforming lots and structures that should also provide greater flexibility. As all new businesses and developments along the corridors are proposed, including Staunton Crossing and Frontier Center developments, they are reviewed and evaluated under the adopted regulations of the specific corridor. Staff has begun the process of reviewing the corridor overlay regulations and guidelines with an eye towards clarifying and simplifying them.

6	Build and implement a strategy to attract private and non-profit investment, specifically in Staunton's Opportunity Zones, to include: • Identifying properties (land/buildings) available for development • Identifying potential projects • Developing a list of potential Opportunity Fund investors • Educating members of the community on the potential of Opportunity Funds In November 2019, in the planning and preparation for the Opportunity Zone program, staff worked closely with GISWebTech, Inc., along with city GIS staff, to develop a new interactive mapping application to connect property owners, brokers, and investors. The application allows easy review of available properties within the city's West End Opportunity Zone and searches of relevant data for sites. Access is also provided to a list of potential fund investors.
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Education	
1	Provide resources to support the School Board's efforts to attract and retain high quality employees In FY2020, all school staff and teachers received a 3% cost of living salary increase. The city and Schools, as they review FY2021 budget requirements, will consider additional salary increases.
2	Continue and strengthen the commitment to supportive relationships with the School Board and school division administrators to achieve the excellence and growth of our school system <u>Library's</u> outreach efforts include public school teachers and students in the form of classroom visits and an annual welcome letter to teachers following summer break. <u>Police</u> assigns full-time school resource officers to the middle school and high school. Administrative staff from the department sit on the school safety committee and routinely collaborate in conduct of risk assessments to keep the school population safe. <u>Parks and Recreation</u> provides support for all Staunton High School athletic programs and works closely with the athletic director on all sport facility issues. <u>Information Technology</u> delivers fiber-optic data connectivity to all school facilities, manages telephones, and provides support for human resources, financial, physical and cyber security systems. <u>Office on Youth</u> • Provides Family Life education to students in 4th - 10th grade. • Collaborates with truancy officer at Shelburne Middle School and Staunton High School concerning various services, resources and truancy prevention program.

	• Administers Check and Connect, a dropout prevention program, for referred students and families. • Collaborates with guidance counselors and principals regarding resources and parenting support programs. • Has conversations with school administration to explore options around concerns of vaping/tobacco use.
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Culture	
1	Continue to support festivals with the provision of in-kind services and logistical assistance by city departments such as public works, police, fire and rescue, tourism, and parks and recreation <u>Library</u> offers improved space for community and cultural groups to meet and plan activities with new audiovisual equipment in the meeting room and refurbished chairs to enhance the comfort and appearance of the space. <u>Police</u> works closely with the organizers of all special events that are scheduled in the city. In addition to the logistics of crowd control, traffic direction/control, and other public safety measures, also try to incorporate community outreach into the events. <u>Information Technology</u> provides mapping for event planning as well as additional wi-fi capabilities, portable cell sites and security cameras to support attendees and event support staff. <u>Parks and Recreation</u> provides maintenance support for all festivals and events scheduled in the park system. <u>Staunton Fire & Rescue</u> provides the following at special events: • Emergency Management planning personnel to include multiple meetings and planning prior to the event to develop the Incident Action Plan (IAP). • Emergency Management personnel on scene for command and control of event and any incidents that may occur. • Emergency Medical standby personnel. Usually 2-4 personnel depending on event size with special ATV vehicle. • Vendor inspections performed by fire marshal personnel prior to the event and during the event. • Special apparatus and personnel needed at launch area for July 4 fireworks display. <u>Public Works</u> provides varying degrees of support depending on needs for both private and city-sponsored festivals/events. This includes temporary electrical services, litter collection, trash removal, traffic control, and street closures.

	<u>Tourism</u> provides marketing and promotional services for all tourism-related events and festivals in the city through earned media, e-newsletters, blog posts, and social media.
2	Implement improvements consistent with the adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as funding becomes available The Capital Improvement Plan includes \$125,000 a year starting in FY2021, to implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
3	Review and adopt the Greenways Plan The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee drafted a Greenways Plan that will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and considered for adoption by City Council early in 2020. <u>Information Technology</u> developed and modified maps for the Greenways Plan.
4	Continue to support the efforts of organizations that are enhancing arts and culture in Staunton Through the Library, the city provides ongoing art and cultural programming opportunities to engage the community, such as partnering with or hosting: • Heifetz - summer reading program to introduce children to classical music and to promote young musicians. • The Library of Virginia - traveling displays including <i>Strong Men & Women of Virginia</i> and <i>Teetotalers and Moonshiners</i>. • American Shakespeare Center - outreach event at Shakespeare's birthday celebration and in-library programs for teens and children. • Frontier Culture Museum - outreach event at <i>Nonfiction Nights</i> and in-library programs for children. The city continues to successfully apply for and receive grant funding to support various arts organizations through the Virginia Commission for the Arts Creative Communities Partnership Grant.

Inclusiveness	
1	Conduct a citizen survey and use results to develop and implement a proactive strategy to achieve more citizen engagement In 2019, the city conducted a citizen survey which evaluated citizen perspectives on a variety of topics including quality of life, housing, transportation, safety, tax, government, community engagement, education, and services. A report has been drafted on the survey results and will be presented to City Council in February.

	<u>Police</u>, additionally and separately, conducts an annual survey of residents who received services from the department. These results are routinely very positive. The department also conducts monthly citizen satisfaction surveys from a random sampling of calls to its E-911 Center, and these results are also generally very positive.
2	Review and modify as necessary all city policies to ensure that they are aligned to achieve inclusiveness, including attention to the diversity of staff and management and salary equity • During Fall 2018, all staff completed Diversity/Inclusion Training. • In January 2019, implemented the use of TalentEd Recruit and Hire which posts all city job advertisements to external job boards and a more diverse pool of candidates. This will also allow Human Resources to better track demographic metrics as they relate to applicants and new hires. • Conducted a Gender Pay Equity Study in Spring 2019.
3	Enhance and support efforts to promote the complete and diverse history of the city so that we enhance civic pride, instill ownership among all citizens, and create momentum for the vision <u>Tourism</u> received grant funding from the Virginia Tourism Corporation to commission muralist Christy Baker for the <i>You Belong Here</i> mural located in downtown Staunton at 102 West Beverley Street. The message of the mural is one of hope, renewal, inclusiveness, and community - you belong in Staunton, Virginia. <u>Library</u> • Purchases and promotes diverse voices in the Library's collections via staff picks and displays. • Collects and provides guided access to materials of value to local history: books, microfilm, family histories, and more. • Applied for and received an American Library Association grant to host <i>Great Stories Club</i> for underserved teens to discuss racial justice. • Hosts annual exhibit created by the Staunton African American Research Society. • Committed to outreach at a variety of community events including Staunton Pride Festival.

Resilience	
1	Continue to nurture the growing local food economy through strategies such as the Farmers' Market, community kitchen, food hub, etc. The Wednesday summer Farmers Market will move to Gypsy Hill Park in 2020. The Market will begin the first Wednesday in May and end on the last Wednesday in September and will run from 7:00 a.m. to noon. It is hoped the move will attract more vendors and clientele to this midweek market.

2	Explore ways in which we can cut the city’s dependence on fossil fuels and provide information to Council on cost benefit/ resources needed for strategies such as: • Installation of solar panels on a public building (i.e. demonstration of commitment) Departmental requests for solar installations have been submitted and are under consideration as part of the FY2021 budget process. • Electric cars and natural gas vehicles, including public transit vehicles During budget meetings with departments, in those instances where vehicle replacement is requested, departments are encouraged to explore the feasibility of purchasing hybrid/electric vehicles.
3	Continue Council’s engagement efforts to protect our water supply from the potential impact of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline or other threats <u>City Council</u>, in 2014, adopted a resolution opposing the pipeline. Subsequently, in 2019 and 2020, the city joined in “friend of court” briefs filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and the United States Supreme Court, respectively, in support of challenges to the pipeline. <u>City Council</u> adopted a resolution, earlier this year, that expresses support for the designation of a 90,000-acre tract of land within George Washington National Forest, between U.S. Route 33 and U.S. Route 250, as the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area. <u>Information Technology</u> developed and modified maps to identify waterways and groundwater that would be impacted by the Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

Responsive, Efficient Government	
1	Implement interactive online opportunities to engage citizens <u>Library</u> • Conducted full review of the Library’s website to ensure accessibility. • Continues to utilize social media for not just informational posts, but for conversations with the community about reading. • Curates digital displays on both the Valley Libraries Consortium catalog and Overdrive Advantage landing page, and via the online newsletter. <u>Police</u> • The department has purchased a “police to citizen” software package meant to engage citizens online and is in the process of training personnel to determine what services can be offered. This software should allow citizens to print copies

	of police reports, request extra patrol, register bicycles, submit concerns regarding animal control, and submit out-of-town house check requests. • There is positive outreach through the department's Facebook page, where personnel routinely communicate with citizens. <u>Parks and Recreation</u> • Implemented newsletter to subscribers, which keeps the public informed of upcoming events and programs. • Offered an online community survey using "Survey Monkey" to gauge the public's interest in various facilities and programs. <u>Information Technology</u> • Established online audio livestreaming of City Council meetings. • Upgraded online citizen transparency applications to improve usability. <u>Finance</u> provides public access to the city's financial data on the city's website, including accounts payable details, payroll summaries, and budget data.
2	Move more transactions to the online environment and simplify and improve the efficiency of City processes (i.e. development review process, business licenses, bill payment) • Consider tutorials • Enhance education <u>Library</u> • Increased digital circulation 35% in FY2019 through heavy promotion and patron tutorial efforts. • Instituted Overdrive Advantage account to allow patrons more ready access to popular titles in eBook and digital audiobook format. • Created reader's advisory form on website to allow patrons to request reading recommendations from home. <u>Office on Youth</u> website features online registration and payment for classes. <u>Parks and Recreation</u> offers online registration for classes and activities. <u>Citywide</u> • Initiative underway that would give citizens and residents the ability to use credit cards at counters in order to pay taxes and other bills. • Through Munis, the city offers self-service for credit card payments of real estate and personal property tax bills and utility bills.
3	Engage the communications manager to enhance communication regarding city services and initiatives such as citizen engagement, budget, inclusiveness, etc.

4	Develop strategies to enhance Council’s awareness of progress and engagement to include: • A strategy to enable Council to review/discuss progress on Council Priorities (i.e. possible mini-retreat) On November 1 and 2, 2018, and April 22, 2019, at two separate retreats, City Council updated its Vision and developed new 3-Year Priorities to achieve its Vision for 2030. Both were finally adopted by Council on June 13, 2019. During the retreats, a consensus emerged among Council members to review from time to time the priorities and the state of their completion. The first such review has been included on Council’s work session agenda for February 13, 2020. Updates will be provided by staff on a biannual basis. • A strategy for liaisons to report on the work that they are doing with commissions/boards
5	Continue to offer the Citizen University to build community capacity and support The 2019 class of Citizen University comprised business owners, real estate agents, new residents, and Staunton natives. The group started with the maximum 25 enrolled, with 23 graduating. Throughout the classes, participants remarked on the professionalism and thoroughness of the presenters. The session ended with a certificate ceremony and a talk by Councilman Jim Harrington encouraging the graduates to continue to stay involved with the city. Some of the participants have already applied to fill open seats on boards and commissions.

Built Environment	
1	Study changes to the city’s land use policies and ordinances to enable more mixed use development and gradually implement those changes • Encourage developers to build developments that enable more self-sufficiency • Ensure that we do not overly restrict builders so that it is too expensive to build
2	Continue to develop a long term financing strategy to ensure that we can meet major needs for public buildings that are not currently in the CIP <u>Finance</u> refinanced and restructured city debt in 2019, saving the city over \$1.4 million over the next 14.5 years, and continually works with departments to strategically schedule large capital projects in an attempt to balance the tax rate to city needs.
3	Complete and extend the streetscape plan as funds allow Elements of the downtown streetscape plan, adopted initially by City Council in 2005, and amended in 2006, have not yet been implemented. One such element is Central Avenue. The Central Avenue streetscape project was bid in 2019. Only one bid was

	received, and it was considerably over budget. The project has since been value engineered, and revised plans will be submitted soon to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Upon VDOT's approval of the revised plans, later this spring, the project will be rebid. It is expected construction will commence this summer.
4	Support regional initiatives to provide more public transit opportunities In December 2019, City Council approved a resolution committing to participate in and fund the Afton Express, a commuter bus system serving communities between the Shenandoah Valley and Charlottesville. The cities of Staunton, Charlottesville and Waynesboro, the counties of Augusta and Albemarle, and the University of Virginia have all committed to the project. With those commitments in place, the next phase is a Demonstration Grant application, which has been submitted to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The grant, if received, will help fund the service for an initial four-year period.
5	Implement policies that encourage the improvement, development, or replacement of blighted properties, with consideration of: • Options that may become available through Opportunity Funds • More robust zoning enforcement • More aggressive schedule of delinquent tax sales • Appropriate notification/education regarding compliance with historic preservation ordinances
6	Work with Augusta County to ensure adequate court facilities in downtown Staunton and to create a framework for meeting future needs City is presently coordinating with Augusta County concerning the temporary relocation of the Augusta County General District Court, Augusta County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court and the Staunton Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court to the former Beverley Manor Elementary School in the county. The two localities, together, are seeking the enactment of legislation by the Virginia General Assembly to authorize the temporary relocation. Preliminary details about the county's plans for new and/or renovated facilities in downtown Staunton are anticipated. Upon receipt, city staff will further engage with counterparts in the county.
7	Support efforts to enhance broadband access throughout the city using the latest available technologies City approved a Franchise Agreement with Shentel for a \$13+ million-dollar investment to provide fiber-to-the-home high speed internet and video. Major construction is currently underway, and initial customers will be going live in early 2020.