



# culpeper renaissance

*the world's one and only*

## 2021-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN





## About Culpeper Renaissance, Inc.

Designated in 1988, Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. (CRI), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a member of the Virginia Main Street program. The main street program was organized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help revitalize the economic vitality of downtown commercial districts using the National Main Street Center's successful Four-Point Approach® of Promotion, Organization, Design, and Economic Vitality.

# Vision and Mission



127 W. Davis Street  
Culpeper, VA 22701  
[www.culpeperdowntown.com](http://www.culpeperdowntown.com)



## *Vision*



Culpeper Renaissance, Inc's vision for Culpeper is an Enjoyable, Vibrant, and Walkable Downtown that actively leverages its cultural assets to connect businesses with visitors and residents, and is **WELCOMING TO ALL.**

## *Mission*



Culpeper Renaissance, Inc's purpose is to stimulate a growing and stable commercial center in downtown Culpeper by:

- Increasing the use of downtown as a destination for local residents and visitors
- Promoting and developing a diversified business mix
- Fostering residential opportunities in and near downtown
- Continuing to strengthen a unified and enduring sense of place

# Strategic Planning Goals & Objectives

Adopted January 1, 2023



The 2021-2026 Strategic Plan for Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. (CRI) is intended to guide programming efforts of the organization over the next 5 years with strategized goals. Each year the CRI committees review the organization's vision, mission, and goals while planning their yearly workplan. Each project, event and program must meet at least two of the five goals. The CRI Board of Directors holds a Board Retreat every 3 years to review the vision, mission and goals for updates based on stakeholder feedback, market trends, economic and global impacts, and best practices from comparable downtown markets.

A Culpeper Downtown Market Assessment and Enhancement Strategies was prepared by John Accordino, Ph.D, FAICP, Jeff Milner, and Fabrizio Fasulo, Ph.D with the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis at VCU a division of the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs Virginia Commonwealth University in May 2015. A Strategic Planning Visit with completed Culpeper Transformation Strategies was held in 2018 with Kathy La Plant with the National Main Street Center and Kyle Myer with Virginia Main Street.

The CRI Board of Directors is looking towards the future. Based on the 2023 CRI Service Plan with VMS, the CRI Board of Directors held a Strategic Market Planning Session in June 2023 in partnership with Main Street America (MSA) and Virginia Main Street (VMS). The Strategic Market Planning Session defined our organization's transformation strategies as Family Friendly/Family Serving. This planning session is to ensure CRI maintains a strong market-based understanding that informs the organization's project development and downtown vitality efforts. In partnership with MSA, VMS provided support to help CRI translate market data and community visioning into district-specific family friendly strategies that spur transformative, measurable change and to guide our organization's work.

The CRI Board of Directors will review the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan with a focus on Family Friendly/Family Serving in Fall 2026 to see what changes will need to be made to reflect the current and growing customer base and business needs of the downtown district.

## Goal 1

### Expand physical and economic revitalization along entry corridors & secondary streets

- Provide ongoing support and advocacy for existing storefront businesses
- Proactively recruit diverse and targeted businesses to fill vacant spaces
- Provide wayfinding signage through various methods – banners, sidewalk signage, and kiosks
- Animate and enliven public spaces through small-scale activations and programming increasing the use of downtown as a destination for local residents and visitors
- Placemaking through public art projects such as murals and power box art wraps
- Provide supplemental cleaning for areas in need of improvement
- Provide beautification such as flower baskets, planters, and banners
- Provide temporary beautification such as First Friday String Street lights, and seasonal decor



## Goal 3

### A diversified funding stream including: Raise \$25,000 in private donations & increased grant funding

- Implement a Friends of CRI Campaign
- Increase Town of Culpeper budget request by \$50,000
- Hold two online auctions
- Participate in Give Local Piedmont and Giving Tuesday
- Apply for available local, state, and federal grants to assist in projects and programming efforts.
- Maintain and grow a digital presence and CRI brand
- Elevate CRI's profile and influence in the community
- Increase sponsorship opportunities through various CRI events and projects
- Integrate storytelling that celebrates and promotes CRI's history and ongoing downtown revitalization efforts
- Highlight successful projects and partnerships of those projects through various social media outlets, press releases, and website postings annual

## Goal 2

### Expand the volunteer base by 25%.

- Create volunteer opportunities through event and programming efforts
- Create an easily accessible online volunteer sign up form
- Hold an annual volunteer appreciation event with yearly awards for volunteer of the year, champion of the year, and partner of the year.
- Share cross promotional requests for volunteers with partnering entities
- Create a fun and organized experience where volunteers know what is expected of them and know what to expect from CRI

## Goal 4

### Maintain and increase the success of Downtown's retail market

- Provide ongoing support and advocacy for existing storefront businesses
- Collect, maintain, and disseminate key downtown market data
- Provide ongoing support to downtown property owners through assistance in filling vacant properties located within the downtown district
- Distribute pertinent grant, loan, and training opportunities to downtown businesses via CRI Culpeper Downtown Business Private Chat Room, email, and the CRI website.
- Advocate for policies important to downtown's future and that align with CRI's mission
- Provide various promotional opportunities for downtown businesses



## Goal 5

### Building a strong community connection that establishes Downtown Culpeper as a destination for visitors, businesses, and residents

- Maintain and grow a digital presence and CRI brand
- Create and maintain a new and mobile friendly Culpeper downtown website
- Integrate storytelling that celebrates and promotes Culpeper Downtown and its local merchants and small businesses
- Increase promotional efforts in key locations denoted by zip code survey results of identified possible promotional gaps
- Create and/or encourage other events and festivals that will bring people downtown throughout the year
- Encourage, assist, and promote storefront businesses in their own programming and special event efforts, and the production of the Culpeper downtown shopping and dining guide
- Continue the production of CRI's signature calendar of events
- Maintain a strong relationship with the Town of Culpeper and other key partner organizations.
- Be a catalyst for priority strategic initiatives and projects that CRI's constituents want to see in our downtown

# CR9 Work Plan

July 2026 - June 2027

Adopted: January 22, 2026

## Transformation Strategy - Family Friendly/Family Serving

Designated in 1988, Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. (CRI) is a member of the Virginia Main Street program. The main street program was organized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help revitalize the economic vitality of downtown commercial districts using the National Main Street Center's successful Four-Point Approach® of Promotion, Organization, Design, and Economic Revitalization.

In partnership with the Town of Culpeper, CRI will provide the following services:

- Coordinate volunteers to assist in the work of the organization and maintain a record of the total number of volunteer hours worked.
- Organize, advertise, and promote events, activities, promotions, shows, ribbon-cuttings for new businesses and festivals in the downtown area.
- Promotion Purpose: Marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens, and visitors.
  - Orchestrate the following Special Events:  
The CRI Special Events highlight the downtown district by showcasing a vibrant and appealing retail enterprise on Main Street sending a signal to commercial interests with an eye on Culpeper, that the downtown historic district is a good place to do business. The Events create a gathering place and central hub of activities in the community pulling a greater collaboration of community involvement through volunteers and local organizations, resulting in joint ventures that will bring greater awareness, foot traffic, and revenue to Culpeper.
    - Culpeper Downtown Carnival – Saturday prior to Mardi Gras/ Fat Tuesday
    - Fall Culpeper Downtown Restaurant Week – March
    - Gnarly Culpeper Block Party & Brew Fest – April
    - 3rd Thursday Summer Concert Series – May, June, July, August (Rain Date September)
    - Spring Culpeper Downtown Restaurant Week – October
    - Hop N Hog Culpeper Block Party & BBQ Competition – October
    - Downtown Trick-or-Treat – October
    - Haunted Hustle 5K & Kids Spooky Sprint – October/November
    - Downtown Holiday Open House & Community Tree Lighting - November
    - Pink Friday, Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, Monday, Sunday Funday for Kids – November - December
    - Santa Visits – November/December
  - Develop the Culpeper Downtown Farmers Market as a major on-going event May 1 – October 31, Winter Market December  
CRI's Downtown Farmers Market highlights local farmers in the area creating awareness among consumers of the importance of buying locally produced goods.

The market makes downtown alive with social and economic activity with direct benefits to local farmers, artisans, business owners in the downtown district and has become an incubator for potential business owners. The market increases job creation and employment. Growing our market from 8 full-time vendors to over 46 full and part-time vendors, the market has made downtown the place to be on Saturdays, resulting in greater foot traffic and revenue for our downtown merchants and therefore the Town of Culpeper.

- Develop a packet for the new vendors of rules & regulations and other pertinent information
- Provide a paid Market Manager
- Focus on unique local producers, paying close attention to those with agricultural and horticulture goods
- Recruit new vendors
- Promote regionally
  - Printed Market Guide
  - Radio Co-op Advertising
  - Social media pages
  - CRI website
- Partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension- Culpeper Branch for creation of nutritious, kid friendly recipes, along with recipe preparation.
- Provide SNAP Matching Dollars Program
- Secure funding for Nutrition Programs
- Partnership with Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission for implementation of monthly children's cooking classes.
- Partnership with Kid Central to provide a paid Market Assistant each market.
- Special Events/Activities
  - Kids Farm Fresh Dollars Program
  - Monthly children's cooking classes
  - Scheduling live entertainment on various days
  - Grand Opening Celebration of the Market
    - ❖ Live entertainment
    - ❖ Children's Face Painting
    - ❖ Corn Hole Games
    - ❖ Bouncy House
    - ❖ Various giveaways throughout the day
  - Customer Appreciation Day (June and September)
    - ❖ Live entertainment
    - ❖ Corn Hole Games
    - ❖ Drawing for a Gift Basket Give Away
    - ❖ Bouncy House
    - ❖ Balloon Artist
    - ❖ Various giveaways throughout the day
  - National Farmers Market Week (August)
    - ❖ Live entertainment
    - ❖ Children's Face Painting
    - ❖ Games and crafts

- ❖ Various giveaways throughout the day
- Trick or Treat at the Market (October)
  - ❖ Live entertainment
  - ❖ Costumes encouraged/Treats giveaway
  - ❖ Farm/Fall themed Photo Op/Display
- Culpeper Downtown Winter Farmers Market (December)
  - ❖ Santa Visit
  - ❖ Live entertainment
- General promotion of downtown through
  - Website
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - Monthly Newsletter
  - Event Postcard/Flyers
  - Event Posters
  - Destination Downtown Culpeper – a Bi-Annual Downtown publication, mailed to every home in the county (dependent upon merchant advertising buy in)
  - Culpeper Quarterly – Printed & Distributed to over 22,000 mailboxes within the County.
  - Printing of 28,000 Culpeper Downtown Shopping & Dining Guides
  - Paid advertisements in local and regional print, radio, and social media outlets
- Organization Purpose: Building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process
- Staff, Board, and Volunteer training
  - CRI staff and Board of Directors to attend VMS/DHCD webinars
  - CRI staff and Board members to attend the National Main Street NOW Conference - May
  - CRI's Executive Director to attend the Annual Virginia Main Street Directors Retreat with Main Street America and/or Virginia Main Street Representative – Spring/Summer
    - Review: vision and mission statements, 5-year goals, and strategic workplan
  - Staff and Board members to attend VMS online Regional Rev Up
- Grants
  - Staff and board members to research grants that can be applied to 2026-2027 projects
  - Staff to apply for grants
- Develop a strong volunteer base
  - Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event – September
- Build/Maintain Good Community Partnership
  - CRI staff and/or Board members to attend various partnering entities meetings:
    - Culpeper Economic Development Advisory Council

- Parking Authority meetings as needed
- Town Department meetings as needed
- Architectural Review Board meetings as needed
- Work with community groups and businesses with various events including:

Blue Ridge Chorale	Brennan's Balloons
Culpeper Baptist Church	CCHS Band
Culpeper Center & Suites	Culpeper Chamber of Commerce
Culpeper County Fire Department	Culpeper County Library
Culpeper County Public Schools	Culpeper Festival Committee
Culpeper Food Closet	Culpeper Garden Club
Culpeper Girl Scouts	Culpeper Media Network
Culpeper Police Department	Culpeper Sheriff's Department
Culpeper Tells a Festival of Words	Culpeper Times
Danny's Bouncy House	Department of Economic Dev.
Department of Human Services	Department of Tourism
EVHS Band	Flavor on Main
Fauquier Times	Harmon's Carriages & Training
International Therapy Dogs	Karen's Line Dancing
Lilly Rose & Company	Museum of Culpeper History
Parks and Rec.	Piedmont Comm. WJMA/SAM-FM
Piedmont Steakhouse	Rapidan River Master Gardeners
Rapp-Rapidan Regional Commission	<u>The Refinery</u>
<u>Richardsville</u> EMS	Sandy's Face Painting
SAFE	Seven on Davis
Soapbox Derby	State Climb
Town of Culpeper	Virginia Cooperative Extension:
Virginia Regional Transit	<u>Windmore</u> Foundation for the Arts

- Personnel Management
  - Ongoing oversight
  - Perform annual reviews
  - Raises/Bonuses
- Fundraising Campaigns
  - Give Local Piedmont - May
  - Giving Tuesday - November
- External Reporting
  - Quarterly reports required by Virginia Main Street for Culpeper to be a designated Main Street community for the state of Virginia
  - Yearend Data required by Virginia Main Street and Main Street America for Culpeper to be a designated Main Street community for the state of Virginia
  - Quarterly reports to Town Council
- 2027-2028 Workplan
  - Set Goals/Mission
  - Set Priorities
  - All CRI Committees Develop Master Workplan for committee to review
    - Committee review and prioritize projects, evets and programs

- Compile workplans and budgets to present to the Board for approval
- As a designated Virginia Main Street Community CRI is entitled to Virginia Main Street Services (please see attached a full list)
- Design Purpose: Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems and long-term planning.
- Encourage pedestrian-friendly streets
  - Creating pedestrian-friendly streets increases attractiveness of the area to visitors and improvement of the overall environment attracting increased social interaction in the community by creating a space resulting in increased revenue to Culpeper
- Upkeep of the E.B. Wood Community Park for use by both locals and visitors
  - Replace spring and fall plants as needed
  - Spring clean-up – removal of leaves and debris
- Hanging flower baskets and other plantings
  - Purchase replacement hardware as needed
  - Purchase plants
  - Purchase cocoa and plastic liners as needed
- Seasonal Banner Placement
  - Purchase banner hardware replacements as needed
  - Purchase banner replacements as needed
- Placement of the Culpeper Hometown Heroes banners highlighting those in our community who have served
  - Review possible weathering and fading of banners to see when the committee will need to schedule reopening the program
- Culpeper Downtown String Lighting System
  - Placement of string lights on East Davis, Commerce, and the 100 and 200 blocks of North and South Main Street
  - Purchase replacement bulbs, electrical wire and support wire as needed
- Holiday decorations
  - Meeting with Light & Power and Public Work Department to schedule holiday décor placement
  - Purchase nylon cable ties
  - Purchase C-7 replacement bulbs for all lighting décor as needed
  - Purchase replacement hardware as needed
  - Purchase replacement ornaments as needed
  - Purchase additional and replacement “Snow Fall” lights
  - Purchase additional wreath bows
  - Purchase additional community tree ornaments
- Holiday Door and Store Front decorating contest for downtown businesses
- Harvest streetlamp décor (cornstalks and bows)
- Free Façade design services provided to downtown businesses and property owners
- Free Feasibility Study Grant(s) available to Town and property owners

- Implementation of the Façade, Interior, Sign and Awning Grant program in the amount of \$15,000
- Culpeper Downtown Art Program
  - Installation and/or retouch of at least one mural
- Downtown Clean-Up Day
  - Committee to tour downtown and determine a area to focus effort on hosting a clean-up day
- CRI Website
  - Maintain updates as needed
- Provide a pet waste unit in the Grassy area at the Depot

➤ Economic Vitality Purpose: Strengthening the district's economic base while finding ways to meet new challenges from outlying development.

- Provide assistance to new and existing businesses
  - As a key component of Virginia Main Street, we provide opportunities to merchants for continuing education in best business practices. This helps to increase revenue in downtown businesses and to the Town of Culpeper.
  - Identify appropriate marketing strategies
  - Merchant driven zip code survey – 2 times per year.
  - Secret Shopper Program
  - Offer free educational seminar(s) for downtown businesses and property owners.
  - Provide Ribbon Cuttings to new businesses
  - Manage the historic downtown commercial district to ensure economic stability and to continue growth
  - Provide free available retail space listing on the CRI website
  - Offer Cooperative advertising opportunities through print and radio advertising
  - Distribution of the CRI Culpeper Downtown New Business Welcome Packet
  - Provide Available downtown job opportunities web page and promote on social media outlets
- Organize the Culpeper Downtown Business Block Captain Program
- Maintain and market inventory/data base of occupied and vacant properties
  - Update the listing of available downtown properties on the CRI website as received
  - Refer prospective tenants to property owners
- Research and apply for small business grants – implement grant programs for downtown businesses
- Staff to distribute pertinent information, grant, loan, and training opportunities to downtown businesses via CRI Culpeper Downtown Business Private Chatroom, email, and the CRI website
- Maintain the Culpeper Downtown Business Private Facebook Chatroom
- Culpeper Downtown Business Coffee Connection Social Hour

- Staff to organize quarterly downtown business meetings excluding the months of November and December to discuss pertinent downtown business and open the door for new ideas and partnerships
- Culpeper Downtown Business Block Captain Program
  - Staff to organize block captain meetings to discuss pertinent downtown information
- Maintain the Culpeper Downtown Gift Card Program and promote the program during downtown holiday activities
- Maintain the Work Downtown web page
- Implement the CRI Downtown Business Collaboration Grant Program – Distribute total annual budget \$5,000 to approved applicants
- Work with local and state partners to offer free seminars to downtown businesses regarding best business practices
- Improve visitor traffic on North and South Main Street as well as side street businesses
  - Provide targeted support for businesses outside of the Davis Street section of downtown
  - Maintain 8 Kiosks in downtown parking lots
- Promote downtown through the Welcome to the neighborhood postcards distributed to local realtors as well as direct mailings

# Culpeper 2026 Downtown



January-April



Culpeper  
Downtown  
Carnival  
February 21



Spring  
Restaurant Week  
March 9 - March 15

Gnarly Culpeper  
Block Party  
& Brew Fest



April 25

May-August



3rd Thursday  
Summer Concert  
Series

May 21

June 18

July 16

August 20

September-October



Fall Family  
Movie Night  
September 18

Fall Restaurant Week  
Sept 28 - Oct 4



Haunted Hustle  
& Spooky Sprint  
October 3

Hop N' Hog  
Culpeper  
Block Party  
October 17



Culpeper  
Downtown  
Merchant  
Halloween  
Trick-or-  
Treating  
October 31

November-December

Pink Friday  
November 20

Holiday Open House &  
Community Tree  
Lighting  
November 22

Black Friday  
November 27

Small Business  
Saturday  
November 28

Cyber  
Monday  
November 30

Sunday Funday for  
Kids! & Culpeper  
Christmas Parade  
December 6

Culpeper Downtown Farmers Market  
Every Saturday May-October



Opening Day  
May 2

National Farmers  
Market Week  
August 8

Season Special Events:

Customer  
Appreciation Day  
June 20

Customer  
Appreciation Day  
September 19

American Grown  
Flowers Week  
June 27

Trick-or-Treat  
October 31

Culpeper  
Downtown Winter  
Farmers Market  
December 5, 12, 19



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## Economic Vitality



## Design



## Promotion

## Organization