



**Destination
Downtown South
Boston**



2025 Annual Report

A Review of our Accomplishments



DOWNTOWNSOBO.COM



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As we reflect on 2025, I am proud of the progress and impact achieved by Destination Downtown South Boston. This year marked continued momentum as we strengthened our organization, expanded partnerships, and delivered meaningful programs that support a vibrant, welcoming, and economically strong downtown.

Throughout the year, DDSB advanced its mission through well-executed events, strategic beautification efforts, and consistent advocacy for our businesses and community. We continued to invest in professional development for staff, updated internal policies and procedures, and reinforced strong governance practices that position the organization for long-term success.

Our funding structure remained diverse and stable, supported by municipal investment, sponsorships, fundraising initiatives, grants, and earned interest—allowing us to responsibly steward resources while expanding our reach and impact. Collaboration with the Town of South Boston, local businesses, volunteers, and community partners remained central to everything we do, and their continued support is essential to our success.

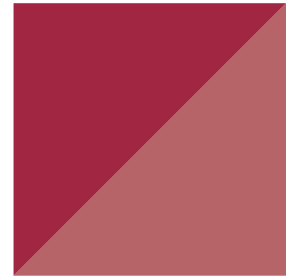
None of this work happens in isolation. I extend sincere thanks to our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance, our staff for their dedication and creativity, our volunteers for their help, and our stakeholders for their trust and engagement. Together, we are building a downtown that reflects the pride, energy, and potential of South Boston.

As we look ahead, DDSB remains committed to strategic growth, thoughtful planning, and delivering programs that enhance our downtown experience for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. We are excited for what's next and grateful for the opportunity to serve this community.

Tamyra Vest
Executive Director



Destination Downtown South Boston (DDSB) Focus on the Future



OUR MISSION: To ensure the long-term viability and growth of Downtown South Boston as a center of commerce, civic activity and community pride, while maintaining its unique and historic character.

OUR VISION: Downtown South Boston will be a strong, vibrant heart of the community.

The 2025 theme was “GO Downtown”! The theme revolves around several different ideas to make downtown the place where families, friends, and visitors choose to *go* for lots of reasons.

In addition to visiting all of the downtown shops and restaurants, the historic theater, historical sites, and other downtown attractions, we give people plenty of reasons to GO Downtown. In 2025, we focused on activities and events that have people going downtown to take advantage of all we have to offer. From local businesses and the Kayak Adventure Tour, to Wednesdays at the Market and the Annual July 4th celebration - it’s all about going downtown where people and fun meet!

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES: (1) Family-Friendly, Family-Serving
(2) Agricultural Economy

Our Leadership



Tamyra Vest
Executive Director

Emily Powell
Events & Planning Coordinator

Bianca Meeler
Administrative Assistant &
Assistant Market Manager

DDSB has successfully maintained professional staff management to ensure continuity, expertise, and effective execution of the organization's mission and goals. DDSB employs an experienced Main Street Director with over 30 years of dedicated service to Downtown South Boston, providing leadership in carrying out the program's strategies, initiatives, and annual work plan.

In anticipation of the future, DDSB is proactively implementing succession planning. Although the Main Street Director is not planning to retire in the near term, DDSB is taking deliberate steps to prepare staff for a smooth transition when retirement occurs, ensuring institutional knowledge and program continuity are maintained.

DDSB's professional team also includes a full-time Events Coordinator/Farmers Market Manager who manages programming, volunteer coordination, and community engagement. Also, a part-time Administrative Assistant further strengthens operational capacity. Through strategic staffing and succession planning, DDSB ensures stability, professionalism, and long-term sustainability in carrying out the Main Street Program.

Our staff actively engages in ongoing professional development and training opportunities to enhance their expertise and effectiveness in downtown revitalization. These activities include participation in Virginia Main Street trainings, national Main Street conferences, and other workshops relevant to nonprofit management, event coordination, volunteer leadership, and economic development.

In 2025, DDSB updated staff job descriptions and performance evaluation processes to better reflect current roles, responsibilities, and organizational priorities. These updates support clear expectations, accountability, and staff growth while aligning professional performance with DDSB's mission and strategic objectives.

Board Members

Lin Hite
President
Longwood Small Business Development
Center

Chase Weddle
Vice President
Mid-Atlantic Broadband

Les Powell, III
Treasurer
Powell Funeral Home

Amy Cole
Secretary
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center

Amy Barber
First Horizon Bank

Bob Hughes

Brandee Sharpe
Golden Piedmont Labs

Cynthia Haugh

Mallory Lawter
SOVA Innovation Hub

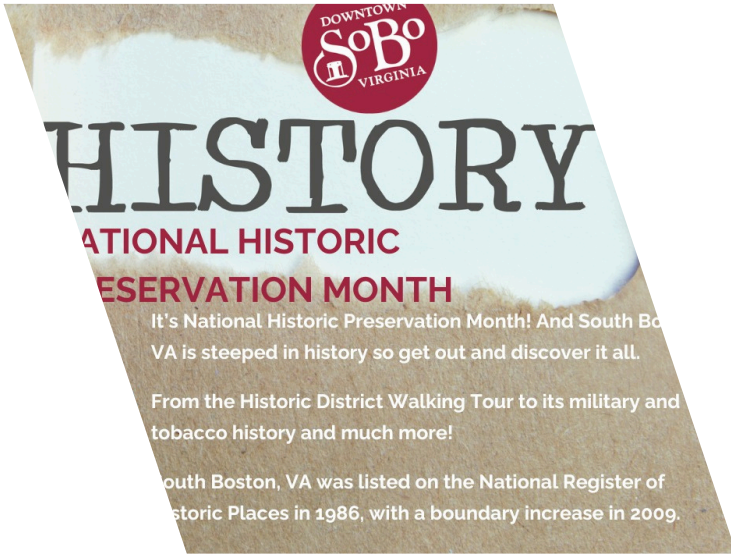
Monica Mears
1st Care at Home

Travis Moore
Drumlogic

Trey Burkholder
1st Care at Home

Gray Ramsey

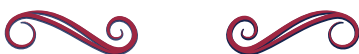
Downtown Transformation Strategies



Destination Downtown South Boston focuses on two (2) key transformation strategies to drive activities and events in the downtown corridor. These strategies are designed to engage the community, attract and retain businesses, and capitalize on the rich heritage to bring people downtown where individuals, families, and businesses come together.

During 2025, DDSB successfully delivered programs and services to address these strategies. Event planning focused on the creation of activities and events that offer compelling reasons for people to engage in downtown. Our creative and constantly evolving events continue to position downtown South Boston as a family-friendly hub of activities, shopping, events, and friendly interaction. Maintaining the historical significance of events while incorporating some of the more modern aspects of activities ensures there is something for everyone downtown.

The Downtown South Boston Farmers Market was an integral component of the 2025 strategies and it continues to grow in popularity. Wednesday at the Market kicked off with record-breaking attendance and the event continues from May through September. Saturday morning at the market has also been a favorite event, attracting locals and visitors from far away. The Downtown South Boston Farmers Market welcomed many new vendors this past year, bringing new locally grown and handmade items to the market.



TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY #1

Family Friendly, Family Serving:
Leverage the “Go Downtown” theme to focus on activities and events to help promote downtown as a family-friendly destination for locals and visitors.



TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY #2

Agricultural Economy:
Leverage the many agricultural assets of the community to expand events and activities offered through the Downtown South Boston Farmers Market.



2025 Accomplishments

Economic Vitality

SoBo Keep Entrepreneurs Program

DDSB received a \$50,000 grant from Virginia Main Street – Department of Housing and Community Development for the SoBo Keep Entrepreneurs Program.

We also received notification of a \$24,000 plus-up grant from Virginia Main Street – Department of Housing and Community Development for SoBo Keep Entrepreneurs Program.

These funds and programs enable many of our downtown businesses to make necessary repairs, enhancements, and additions to their physical space to expand their businesses. Through the SoBo Keep Entrepreneurs Program, businesses are able to creatively adapt their existing businesses and position them for ongoing growth and success. We are grateful for the opportunities to partner with downtown businesses and give them the support they need to prosper.

Board Retreat

DDSB held their 2026 Work Planning Board Retreat in October, 2025. A representative from Virginia Main Street facilitated a collaborative session to help refine and update a comprehensive work-plan to evaluate current initiatives and identify new mission-aligned activities. This ensures that DDSB adopts a strategy-driven work-plan that encourages collaboration, fosters consensus, and focuses on collective action in pursuit of shared goals and objectives.

Our Board members actively participated with creative ideas and discussed potential initiatives to continue making downtown South Boston the best it can be. With the updated work-plan in hand, we are prepared to move forward in 2026 with a solid plan and measurable results to ensure economic vitality.



Downtown South Boston Events

Special Events Downtown

- South Boston Bassathon Fishing Tournament – Kayak Adventure Series
- Movies on Main
- Halifax County/South Boston 4th of July Celebration
- South Boston Harvest Festival
- Downtown South Boston Cruz-In
- Downtown South Boston Christmas Open House
- Small Business Saturday
- South Boston Christmas Parade



Farmers Market Events

- St Patrick's Day at the Market
- Go Green at the Market
- Saturday at the Market Grand Opening
- Easter at the Market
- Mother's Day at the Market
- Wednesday at the Market Events (May-August)
- Touch a Truck
- Summer Breeze
- Splish Splash Bash
- Celebrate National Farmers Market Week
- Watermelon Crawl
- Harvest Market
- Halloween Extravaganza



Downtown South Boston Farmers Market is Growing!



Power of Produce

DDSB continued focusing on the transformation strategy for Ag Economy and continued to be heavily involved in taking the Farmers Market to the next level in 2025. We worked directly with the Market Manager/Assistant Market Manager to facilitate processes and acquire funds through grants and sponsorships. Our team supported the farmers market through media and publicity campaigns and worked together to establish monthly events to bring people downtown.



We also identified activities and entertainment for the popular **Wednesday at the Market** events. The weekly events drew a crowd each week with local farmers, vendors, live music, special kids activities, and food trucks.

The **Power of Produce Program (POP)** saw significant increases again this year. Between 2021 and 2024, participation increased from 199 to 1,179 participants. In 2025, we saw this number increase significantly to 1,506 participants. POP Club provides education on nutrition and healthy lifestyles for kids, and it also contributes financially to our farmers market vendors. Thanks to POP Club participation, reimbursement to farmers increased from \$1,000 in 2022 to \$7,530 in 2025.

The **SNAP program** also experienced significant growth. This program focuses on providing healthy food for low-income populations and it grew from \$680 reimbursed in 2024 to over \$2,300 in 2025. We continue to see interest in the program grow as more people learn how they can double their money through SNAP and the Virginia Fresh Match program.



Gold Certified Farmers Market



As graduates of a 14-week course, both the Market Manager and Assistant Market Manager earned the title of a professionally trained Certified Market Manager in 2025.

As part of DDSB, The Downtown South Boston Farmers Market is a thriving hub of commerce throughout the year. We were proud to be one of the first farmers markets once again to receive Gold Level certification by the Virginia Farmers Market Association (VAFMA) in 2025.

This prestigious recognition, under the newly launched Virginia Certified Farmers Market Program, underscores the market's commitment to uphold the highest standards of excellence in serving the community. (See <https://sobofm.com/vafma-gold-level-certification/> for more information).

DESTINATION DOWNTOWN SOUTH BOSTON (DDSB)
432 MAIN STREET, SOUTH BOSTON, VA 24592
DOWNTOWNSOBO.COM

Downtown Initiatives

Market to Main Placemaking Project Alleyway Construction

The DDSB Board and project partners are transforming the Market to Main Alleyway into a vibrant community connector that enhances the overall downtown experience. This project improves aesthetics while extending the reach of the Farmers Market onto Main Street, increasing visibility, accessibility, and engagement for both residents and visitors. The initiative builds on and strengthens momentum from ongoing downtown development efforts.

To date, \$190,477 has been invested in the project through a combination of state government grants, local government grants, and private grants. Funds have supported engineering design services, construction inspection and administration, materials testing, demolition, grading, concrete sidewalks, asphalt, drop inlets, storm drainage, ADA-compliant ramps, retaining walls, pavers, lighting, electrical service and receptacles, benches, and planters. Fundraising efforts will continue to support future phases of the project.



Even in its current state, the impact of the Market to Main Alleyway has been remarkable. The improved design has significantly enhanced pedestrian flow between the downtown parking area, the Farmers Market, and Main Street. Simply transforming the space from a dilapidated corridor into an attractive, paved connector has made a meaningful difference, demonstrating the project's value even before the final amenities are installed.

Downtown Imagine Initiative

DDSB started creating unique window wraps with engaging messages to enhance and fill vacant building windows. These window wraps are also beneficial for buildings that are bare during renovations and/or transitional periods. In addition, the project includes high-quality videos, sidewalk graphics, and open houses to showcase vacant properties and engage potential investors.

The first window wraps and banners were installed at 606 Broad Street and were met with very positive feedback from nearby businesses and the general public. Window wraps are just one more way to make our downtown streets welcoming and inviting for locals and visitors.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS



VETERANS BANNER PROJECT



The Veterans Banner Project has been very successful and brings people downtown throughout the year. Over 80 banners were purchased and installed. These banners are a tribute to those who have served and are installed on LightPoles along Main Street for the public to view. This project continues to grow!

PEOPLE'S FOOD PANTRY AT THE MARKET

The Food Pantry located at the Downtown South Boston Farmers Market provides food and other essentials needed for the underserved and needy population. Downtown business owners and community volunteers continue to keep the pantry stocked at the farmers market and it has been very beneficial to those in our community who need a little help.

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