



WELCOME TO OLD TOWN

NEW BUSINESS GUIDE FOR WINCHESTER

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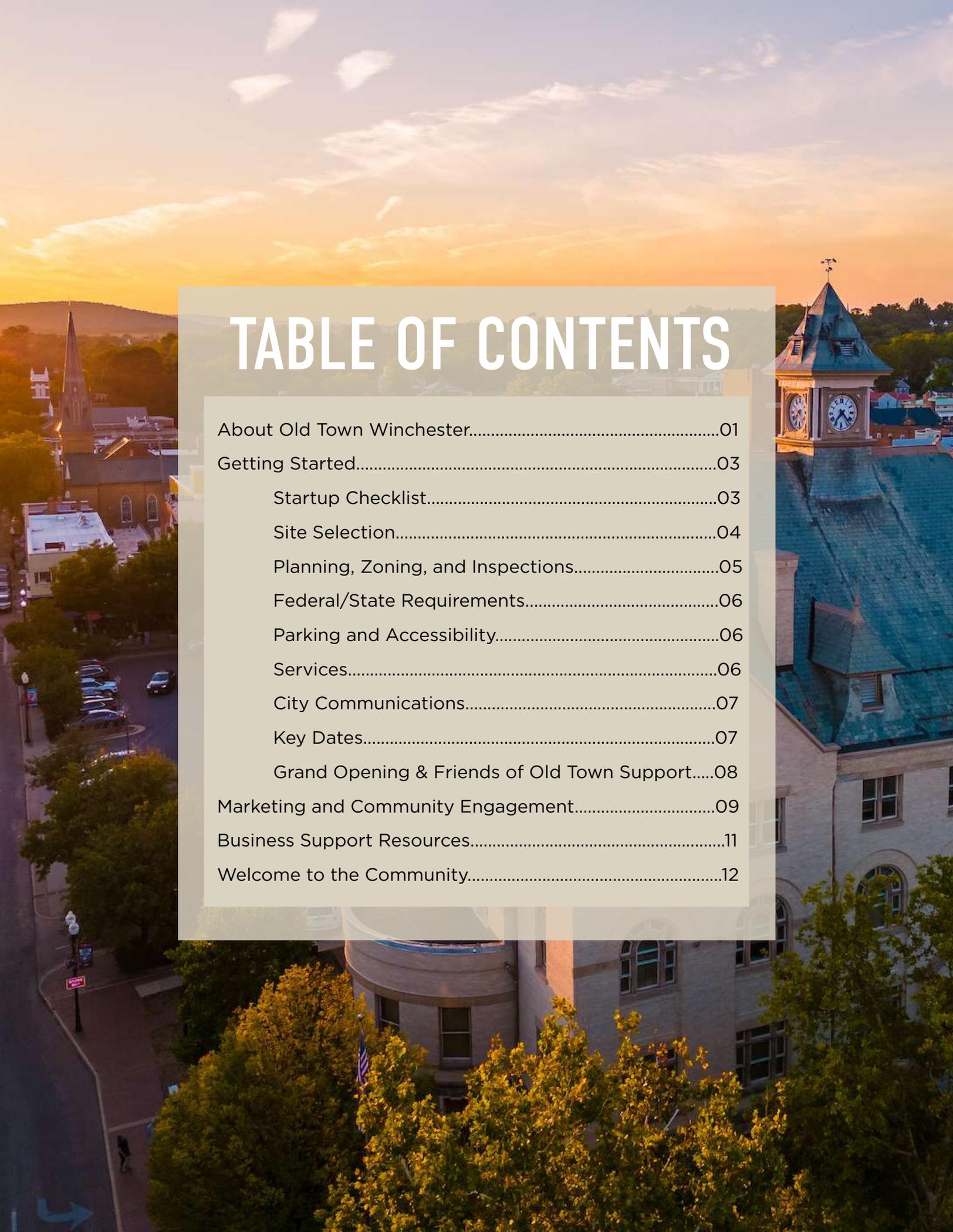
An aerial photograph of Old Town Winchester, Virginia, taken at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there are lush green trees. In the middle ground, a large, light-colored building with a prominent clock tower and a blue roof is visible. The clock tower has two faces. To the left, there's a church with a tall, dark steeple. The street below shows parked cars and a few people walking. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

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ABOUT OLD TOWN WINCHESTER



WELCOME TO OLD TOWN WINCHESTER

Old Town, located in the City of Winchester, is a vibrant, historic district in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. With its charming architecture, walkable streets, and thriving community, it offers an ideal environment for small businesses to grow and connect.

Old Town is a hub for shopping, dining, art, and entertainment. The pedestrian-friendly Loudoun Street Walking Mall serves as the centerpiece, surrounded by historic buildings, local boutiques, and restaurants. The area hosts numerous community events throughout the year, drawing residents and visitors alike.

Key Highlights:

- Over 250 businesses in the downtown district
- Year-round festivals and events
- Strong community partnerships
- Historic charm with modern amenities

CITY OF WINCHESTER - THE NUMBERS



POPULATIONS AND PEOPLE

Total Population
28,120



EMPLOYMENT

Employment Rate
60.5%



BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Total Employer Establishments
1,373



INCOME

Median Household Income
\$63,974



FAMILIES

Total Households
11,492



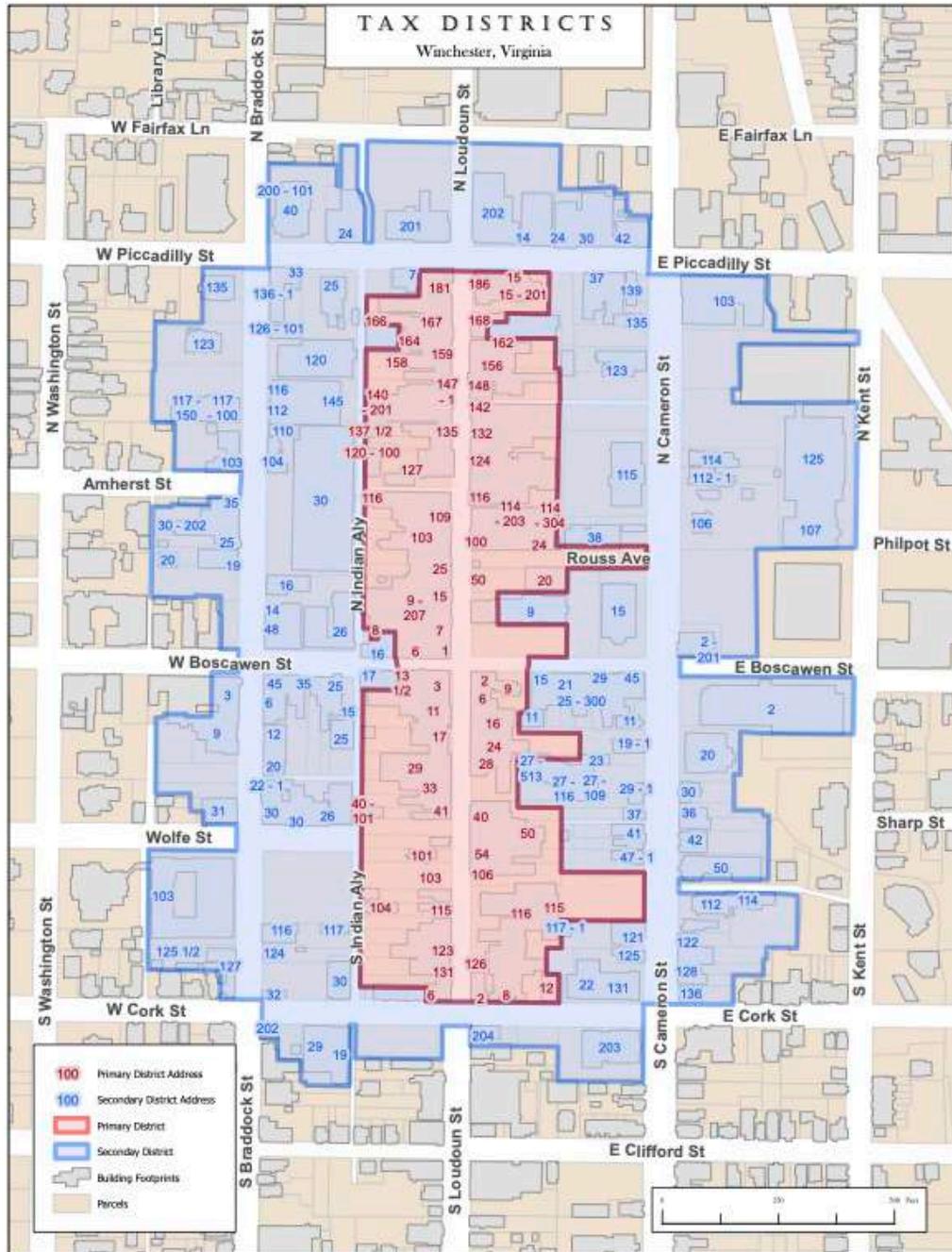
EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree or Higher
31.3%

ABOUT OLD TOWN WINCHESTER

THE CITY OF WINCHESTER & OLD TOWN

The City of Winchester includes both a Primary and Secondary Downtown Tax District. Depending on where your business is located, you may have some unique opportunities and requirements related to things like [sidewalk use](#), tax rates, and [permitting](#). These guidelines help support a vibrant, well-maintained downtown while creating a great experience for businesses, residents, and visitors alike.



STARTUP CHECK LIST

- Site selection** - Get to know Winchester and pick your business location
- Contact the city's **Planning, Zoning, and Inspections** department to verify zoning and permit requirements for your business at the desired location
 - Apply for any necessary variances or zoning amendments if the location does not conform to standards or if there is renovation/building needs
 - Apply for a Business Registration and Business License through the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office
 - Review the City's [Permits & Licensing & Applications](#) page for applicable required forms and applications as well as the [City Permit Portal](#) site
 - Get a sign permit from the city if installing signage. Review BAR Guidelines for requests in the Historic District, and obtain BAR approval if necessary
- Meet **federal and state requirements**
 - Verify and obtain any state licensing requirements for your industry
 - Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS
- Determine if you need to purchase monthly **parking**
- Set up essential **utilities and services** such as electricity, water, and waste management
- Know how to contact **safety and community Services**
- Sign up for [notifications and alerts](#) from the City of Winchester
- Make note of important **key dates** of annual filings and tax deadlines
- Connect** with Friends of Old Town and the community



SITE SELECTION

When considering locations for your business, do the research! Get to know the Historic Winchester District. This will not only help you determine if Old Town is the right fit for your business, but it will also help ensure you have a smooth opening process with long term success. The City of Winchester is a special place to live and work, and there are special requirements and considerations with the locality.

Research will also help long term. Old Town businesses are asked a lot of questions by residents and tourists alike, and it is helpful to have some basic knowledge of the City!

- [Map](#)
- [Discover Winchester Virginia](#)

PLANNING, ZONING AND INSPECTIONS

ZONING & DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Before opening, confirm that your business location complies with zoning regulations.

- [Land Use Guidance](#)

BUSINESS LICENSING AND PERMITS

All businesses operating in Winchester must obtain a business license through the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office. Complete an application via the [online portal](#).

Closing, moving or selling? Businesses also need to notify the Commissioner of the Revenue's office when leaving the city with a [closing form](#).

Contact:
Commissioner of the Revenue
21 S. Kent Street, Winchester, VA 22601
Phone: (540) 667-1815
Website: winchesterva.gov

BUILDING AND SIGN PERMITS

Before opening, confirm that your business location complies with signage guidelines. You will also want to review all [building and inspection requirements](#) so you are in compliance and obtain any proper/applicable approvals. Some permits are annual, so it is important to stay on top of deadlines and expirations.

Contact:
[Planning, Zoning & Inspections](#)
15 N. Cameron Street, Winchester, VA 22601
Phone: (540) 667-1815

BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW (BAR)

Winchester includes both a Historic Winchester District (Local) and a National Register Historic District, each with different rules and benefits. All properties within the local Historic Winchester District are required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before making any exterior alterations. COAs are approved either administratively by the Zoning Administrator or through review by the Board of Architectural Review.

Property owners should review the [Historic Winchester District Design Guidelines](#) and contact Winchester Planning, Zoning & Inspections to determine what approvals, permits, or certificates are needed before beginning a project.



GETTING STARTED

FEDERAL/STATE REQUIREMENTS

www.scc.virginia.gov | register a trade name/fictitious name, partnership or corporation

www.irs.gov | apply for a EIN

www.workcomp.virginia.gov | workers compensation information

<https://www.tax.virginia.gov/sales-and-use-tax> | file and pay state sales tax

SERVICES

PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

Old Town Winchester offers approximately [2,000 public parking spaces](#) on streets, in parking lots, or in one of four parking garages all accessible 24/7. Metered parking is enforced M-F from 9am-6pm. Rates and time limits vary based on location. Meter fees can be paid by coin or with the [ParkMobile App](#). Weekends and holidays are free. Parking garages offer hourly and monthly rental options. Review the [City's Parking website](#) for additional information on costs, schedules, payments, processes, and event exceptions.

Contact:

128 N. Cameron Street, Winchester, VA 22601

Phone: (540)722-7575

Website: wincparking@winchesterva.gov

UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Set up essential services such as electricity, water, and waste management.

Utilities Providers:

- Electric: [Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative](#)
- Water/Sewer: [City of Winchester Public Utilities](#)
- Waste Collection: [City of Winchester Public Works](#)



SAFETY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The [Winchester Police Department](#) and [Fire & Rescue Department](#) maintain a strong presence in the downtown area to ensure safety and support for local businesses. Emergency: Dial 911

Winchester Police Department
Timbrook Public Safety Center
231 E. Piccadilly Street, Winchester, VA 22601
Non-emergency Phone: 540-662-4131

Winchester Fire and Rescue
21 South Kent Street, Suite 301
Winchester, Virginia 22601
Non-emergency Phone: (540) 662-2298

GETTING STARTED

CITY COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Sign up for [notifications and alerts](#) to stay up to date with the latest events, holidays, trash changes, and weather alerts from the City of Winchester.

Sign up for the City's [Emergency Alerts](#) to receive severe weather and emergency notifications.

Subscribe and follow local publications and partners, including:

- [Old Townist](#); a free monthly magazine dedicated to Old Town Winchester
- The Winchester Star: daily local newspaper ([subscribe/follow](#))
- Winchester Economic Development Authority (EDA) [monthly newsletter](#)
- Old Town Winchester Merchants (Facebook)



KEY DATES

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **March 3rd:** File business license renewal applications and applicable forms and make payment to the Treasurer's Office
- **May 1st:** File business personal property ([Schedule A, B, and C](#)) | Payment due to the Treasurer's Office by December 5th.

PERIODIC FILINGS:

- **Meals Tax:** File and Pay by the 20th day of calendar month following month being reported
- **Lodging Tax:** File and Pay by the 20th day of calendar month following month being reported
- **Admissions Tax:** File and Pay by the 20th day of calendar month following month being reported
- **Short Term Rental Tax:** File and Pay quarterly by the 20th day following the end of each calendar quarter

GRAND OPENING & FRIENDS OF OLD TOWN SUPPORT

Friends of Old Town can help you launch your business with a ribbon cutting to announce your arrival to the community! A Grand Opening is a meaningful way to celebrate an important milestone in your business journey and officially introduce your business to the community. This special event creates visibility, builds excitement, and helps establish your presence in Winchester.

A ribbon cutting ceremony offers your business the opportunity to:

- Gather and recognize the individuals who helped make your business opening possible
- Promote your opening through local media coverage and Friends of Old Town's social media channels
- Capture professional photo opportunities that may lead to post-event publicity
- Welcome the public and potential customers into your space to showcase your location, products, and services
- Build relationships with community leaders, local officials, and fellow business owners

Friends of Old Town support does not end with your ribbon cutting or grand opening. We are committed to your continued success. Friends of Old Town offers programs, services, and partnership opportunities to help your business grow and thrive in Winchester.

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Participate in signature events to increase visibility and connect with the community.

2026 DOWNTOWN EVENTS

LET'S BE FRIENDS.

- FEB: BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- FEB 7: CHOCOLATE ESCAPE
- FEB 23 -MAR 1 RESTAURANT WEEK
- MAR 14: CELTIC FEST
- APR 24-25: APPLE BLOSSOM WINE FEST
- MAY 1: APPLE BLOSSOM FIREFIGHTER'S PARADE
- MAY 2: APPLE BLOSSOM GRAND FEATURE PARADE

- JUN 5: FIRST FRIDAY
- JUN 6: HOP BLOSSOM
- JUN 13: KIDZ FEST
- JUN 19: JUNETEENTH
- JUL 3 : FIRST FRIDAY
- JUL 4: VA250 OLD TOWN JUBILEE
- AUG 7: FIRST FRIDAY

- SEP 4: FIRST FRIDAY
- SEP 12: FIDDLES & FIFTHS
- SEP 19: CELEBRACIÓN OF WINCHESTER
- OCT 2 : FIRST FRIDAY
- OCT 24: HALLOWINCHESTER
- NOV 27-29: WINDEPENDENT WEEKEND
- DEC 4-6: WINTER VILLAGE
- DEC 31: NYE APPLE DROP





MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMOTION

Businesses are encouraged to tag and collaborate with Old Town Winchester's official social media accounts to be better informed of the happenings in Winchester as well as for cross-promotion opportunities.

- Facebook: [Friends of Old Town](#)
- Instagram: [@friendsofoldtownwinc](#)
- Website: [friendsofoldtown.org](#)

Through these social media accounts, Friends of Old Town draws positive attention to the Winchester business community and helps promote the community's support for local business. Winchester City businesses may contact Friends of Old Town to be featured on either Facebook or Instagram.

Friends of Old Town can also assist in creating posts about local business events such as grand openings/ribbon cuttings, events, and promotional activities. It's a great way to connect and engage!



LET'S BE FRIENDS.

GET INVOLVED!

Businesses are encouraged to attend monthly community meetings hosted by the Friends of Old Town. Community meetings are held on the third Wednesdays of the month, from 6-7pm at Handley Regional Library in the Auditorium. We share updates, upcoming projects, and ways to get involved downtown. We'd love to see you there!

Friends of Old Town partners with other nonprofits in the region. We can make introductions and facilitate connections to help networking and partnership opportunities.

Friends of Old Town also has volunteer opportunities not only for events, but for projects and initiatives within the four committees: Design, Economic Vitality, Organization, and Promotion. Reach out to [Brady Cloven](#) to learn more, or submit an [application](#) if interested!



BUSINESS SUPPORT RESOURCES

OLD TOWN WINCHESTER MAIN STREET PROGRAM - FRIENDS OF OLD TOWN

Friends of Old Town celebrates and enhances Old Town Winchester through local events, public art, and design projects. We work with residents, businesses, and visitors to keep our historic town vibrant, creative, and welcoming for everyone to enjoy.

Contact:
Friends of Old Town
124 Amherst Street Winchester, VA
Phone: (508) 414-5138
Email: mainstwin.bcloven@gmail.com
Website: friendsofoldtown.org



WINCHESTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)

The EDA provides [resources](#) for business growth, including [grants](#), [loans](#), and site selection assistance. Local incentives are available, such as facade improvement grants through the Exterior Improvement Grant Program (EIGP) which provides funding (up to \$20,000) for half the project cost for qualifying property owners or tenants who complete exterior improvements such as painting, awnings, and signage to commercial, industrial, or mixed-use buildings

Contact:
Economic Development Authority
2 N. Cameron Street Suite 100, Winchester, VA 22601
Phone: (540) 313-3030

TOP LOCAL PARTNERS

- [Top of Virginia Regional Chamber - Networking and advocacy](#)
- [Laurel Ridge Small Business Development Center - Free business counseling and training](#)
- [Laurel Ridge Community College Workforce Solutions - Professional development and training](#)





WELCOME

Old Town Winchester flourishes thanks to its engaged community and passionate business owners. As part of this historic district, each business contributes in a special way—preserving the area’s rich heritage while supporting its ongoing growth and economic vitality.

Collaboration, creativity, and community spirit define the Old Town experience—welcome to the neighborhood!

Questions?

Please contact: Brady Cloven, Friends of Old Town Executive Director

Phone: (508) 414-5138

Email: mainstwin.bcloven@gmail.com



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INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. ALL LINKS AND RESOURCES HAVE BEEN REVIEWED AND ARE CURRENT AS OF FEBRUARY 2026.

