

# Virginia's RIVER REALM

## Marketing Stats & Analytics

### 2024 Recap & Observations

#### Tourism Spending Growth:

Visitor spending (according to VTC/Symphony Data) **increased from \$75.1M in 2016 to \$111.3M in 2023**, with significant growth in lodging, food & beverage, and retail sectors.

#### Aggregated Geographies - Spending and Economic Impact

Essex County, Lancaster County, Middlesex County

Year  
2023

Geography  
Multiple values



**\$153.3M**  
Visitor Spending  
YOY: ▲ 7.3%



**12.2%** is the share of all area  
jobs sustained by tourism



Visitors generated **\$8.6M** in  
state and local taxes

##### Spending



##### Employment



##### Labor Income



##### State Taxes

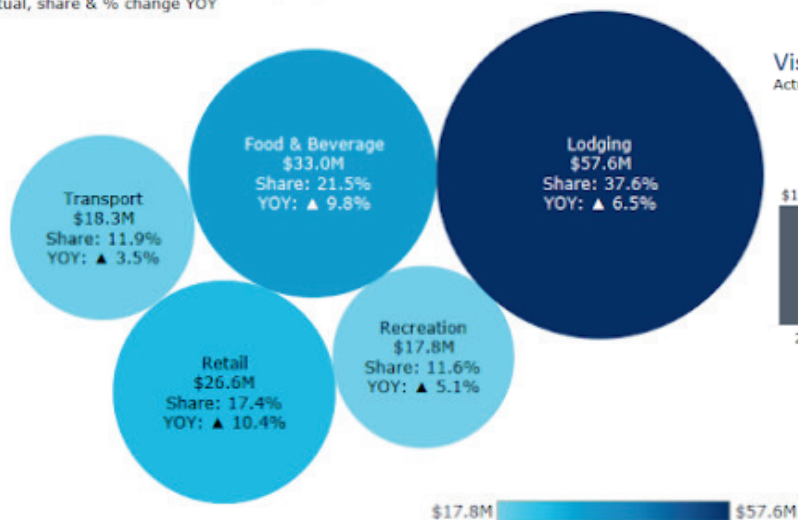


##### Local Taxes



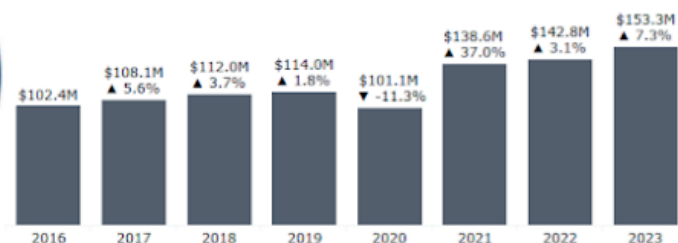
#### Visitor Spending by Category in 2023

Actual, share & % change YOY



#### Visitor Spending

Actual & % change YOY



SYMPHONY TOURISM ECONOMICS

#### Social Media & Influencer Impact:

Instagram followers **grew by nearly 21% (7,538 total)**, driven in part by **strategic collaborations with influencers** whose audiences primarily engage on the platform.

## Continued

### Data-Driven Marketing:

Integrated **VTC POI Data and Arrivalist Data** to more effectively target high-value visitor markets and optimize marketing efforts.

### Expanding the River Realm:

**Welcomed Tappahannock to the Virginia's River Realm brand**, fostering regional cross-promotion and encouraging visitors to explore beyond a single destination.

### Website Redesign & Enhanced Content:

Revamped the Virginia's River Realm website to **uniquely showcase each town and county while maintaining a cohesive brand identity**, and introduced **new tools for building guides and creating more activity-based content**.

### Virginia's River Realm App Launch:

Launched the **new VRR app at the end of 2024, built with Visit Widget**, as a seamless trip-planning tool to enhance visitor experiences. **Total Users (Web & Mobile): 7,382; iOS Downloads: 169; Android Downloads: 39.**

## New Programs

### Virginia's River Realm Loop

Designed to attract an untapped market of cruising boaters by encouraging them to take a scenic detour up the Rappahannock River, discovering marinas, waterfront dining, and local attractions.

### By River / By Road / BY AIR

Building on the success of By River By Road, the program expands to By River By Road By Air, targeting pilots and aircraft owners with a strategic marketing plan to encourage fly-in visits to the River Realm via Hummel Airfield in Topping.

## Upcoming Grants

The following **VTC DMO Grants (\$20,000 each)** have been applied for:

### PTO/Extended Weekends

Encouraging use of Paid Time Off for extended weekends in VRR

### "Where The Wild Things Are"

Highlighting flora and fauna experiences targeting outdoors enthusiasts.

### Trail & Tide

Highlighting all of our water-based activities targeting outdoor enthusiasts.

## Ongoing Marketing Efforts

### Social Media Marketing

**Facebook:** 15,000 Followers

**Instagram:** 7,538 Followers

**Frequency:** 5-7 Posts Per Week

**Influencers Contracted:** 8

### Email Marketing

**Subscribers:** 25,607

**Email Campaigns:** 30

**Total Sends:** 598,759

### Website

**Average Monthly Visitors**

**Shoulder Season:** 1.1K Visitors

**Busy Season:** 4.2K Visitors

# Virginia's RIVER REALM

## Annual Marketing Plan

### January - February

#### Restaurant Week & #EatLikeALocal

**Objective:** to position the area as a top culinary destination by increasing awareness of the many dining opportunities, as well as supporting local restaurateurs in the shoulder months.

**Target Audience:** Hyper-Local (within 25 mile radius); Richmond, DC and Hampton Roads

### May - August

#### Tide & Trail Adventures

**Objective:** Position the River Realm as a premier destination for on-the-water adventures—boating, kayaking, and more—highlighting its scenic waterways and outdoor recreation opportunities.

**Target Audience:** Outdoor enthusiasts in DC and Raleigh, NC.

#### Touch Down & Take Off

**Objective:** Showcase the River Realm as a family-friendly fly-in destination by promoting Hummel Airfield and tailored experiences for pilots and aircraft owners.

**Target Audience:** Aircraft owners and pilots in Maryland and Western Virginia.

#### PTO/Extended Family Fun

**Objective:** Encourage young professional families to take advantage of paid time off and school breaks by experiencing affordable, engaging family fun in the River Realm.

**Target Audience:** Families in DC and Maryland.

### Mid-November - December

#### Small Towns, Big Holiday Fun

**Objective:** to promote the holiday charm and spirit of VRR's small towns during the holiday season, driving visitor engagement and boosting local businesses.

##### Marketing Channels

##### Target Audience

- Influencer Marketing
- Paid Advertising
- Organic Social Media
- Partner Promotions
- Email Marketing

- Families with young children
- Designated Market Areas

### March - April

#### Family Spring Break

**Objective:** To attract families looking for unique and enriching experiences during spring break by showcasing the diverse attractions and activities available in VRR.

**Target Audience:** Families with young children in DC, RVA and Hampton Roads

#### Virginia's River Realm Loop

**Objective:** Capture cruising boaters making their way along the Chesapeake Bay, enticing them to extend their journey with a scenic and enriching side trip into the River Realm.

**Target Audience:** Boaters within the Chesapeake Bay cruising region.

#### Where The Wild Things Are

**Objective:** Invite outdoor enthusiasts to explore the unique flora and fauna of the River Realm, experiencing nature in its most untamed form.

**Target Audience:** Nature lovers and adventurers in DC and Raleigh, NC.

### September - Mid-November

#### Foodies & Festivals

**Objective:** Drive attendance at food-forward festivals and boost interest in culinary experiences, attracting visitors to VRR during the fall season.

##### Marketing Channels

##### Target Audience

- Influencer Marketing
- Paid Advertising
- Organic Social Media
- Print Media & Press
- Email Marketing

- Men & Women, Age 30-65
- Interest in culinary experiences & festival events.
- Designated Market Areas

#### Shoptober

**Objective:** to increase foot traffic at local retail businesses during the month of October.

##### Marketing Channels

##### Target Audience

- Paid Advertising
- Organic Social Media
- Print Media & Press
- Email Marketing

- Women, Age 30-65
- Designated Market Areas
- Hyper-local: within 25-mile radius