



City of Danville, Virginia
Office of Economic Development
www.discoverdanville.com

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Danville unveils new brand for the River District: 'Reimagine That'

DANVILLE, Va. – Danville’s River District, which today boasts a new look and vibe thanks to added amenities and a repurposing of buildings, introduced a new brand Friday to capture the spirit of the changes taking place and to send a clear message within and outside the Danville community about what makes the district special.

The brand uses the tagline slogan: “Danville River District: Reimagine That.”

“Our message is clear, ‘here in the River District, the status quo is a no go,’” Corrie Teague, assistant director of the Danville Office of Economic Development,” said Friday. “We have a development model in place for the River District. We have had great success with it, and now we want to celebrate that success and challenge everyone to see things not as they are, but as they could be.”

Danville officials unveiled the new branding Friday night amid great fanfare at the Crossing at the Dan, with fireworks, free live entertainment by Dueling Pianos International, activities for kids and giveaways including t-shirts and hats with the tagline and new logo.

Deputy City Manager Ken Larking said a small committee of design-oriented locals worked closely with a branding consultant to develop the tagline and logo. “They spent several meetings working through options and in the end developed a tagline and logo that we believe captures the essence of the River District in visual form,” Larking said. “The River District is all about taking our proud historic character and reimagining it as something new and relevant for today and the future.”



The celebration will continue with daily events and activities scheduled through Thursday, May 7:

- Saturday, May 2: **Reimagine A Clean Community** with the second annual Make Danville Shine Expo. This home improvement expo will be held from 7:30 a.m. to noon in conjunction with the opening of the Farmers Market at the Community Market.
- Saturday, May 2: **Reimagine The River** with a spring river cleanup hosted by Parks and Recreation from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The meeting location will be at the Train Station at The Crossing at the

Dan.

- Saturday, May 2: **Reimagine Entertainment** with a new concert series, Covers at the Crossing. Slippery When Wet; the Ultimate Bon Jovi Tribute Band will headline the first show in the series. Tickets are \$7 for this event, and they will be available at the gate.
- Sunday, May 3: **Reimagine Balance** with a free outdoor yoga session hosted by Hot Asana Yoga Studio. The event will be held at 4 p.m. on the grass in front of the Community Market.
- Monday, May 4: Reimagine Family Time with an evening at the YMCA on Riverside Drive. Beginning at 5:30 p.m., the pool and basketball court will be open to the public and a family-rated movie will be shown.
- Tuesday, May 5: **Reimagine That** walking tours of the River District. The Office of Economic Development will host three walking tours (9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.). To participate, sign up at www.discoverdanville.com.
- Wednesday, May 6: **Reimagine Fitness** with a workout session hosted by Get Fit Dan River Region at 5:30 p.m. at the JTI Fountain.
- Thursday, May 7: **Reimagine Running** with a special River District run hosted by The Brick at 6:15 p.m. For details, go to www.thebrick.com.
- Thursday, May 7: **Reimagine Nightlife** with the first-ever River District bar crawl. The event begins at 5 p.m. Participating businesses include Jakes on Main, Dell'Annos and Golden Leaf Bistro.

The “Reimagine That” brand is designed to complement the city’s development plan for the River District, which encompasses the heart of the city, where downtown and the Tobacco Warehouse District – both national register historic districts – are tied together by the Dan River. This area has been the commercial and administrative heart of the city since the 1790s.

The city is in its fifth year of implementing the River District Development Plan, which includes strategic public planning and investment to spur private investment. Today, nearly 40 different businesses are flourishing in the River District, with private investment outpacing public investment by threefold.

With so much investment underway, the city undertook an effort to officially brand the River District. The conceptual process kicked off in the summer of 2013 when the City of Danville contracted with North Star Destination Strategies, a community-branding expert based in Nashville, Tenn.

"We knew what we were trying to do in the River District was working, but the question was how to best tie all of this together into one unified message, and then use that message to our competitive advantage" Teague said. "We wanted the outside perspective of a company that conducts quantitative and qualitative research through data and talking to a lot of people. North Star did just that."

Under the guidance of a local steering committee, North Star proceeded to develop a strategy to define and describe what is authentic, ownable and distinct about the River District.

“This process was not about a new advertising campaign with a logo and a slogan,” Teague said. “It was about a believable, shared destination identity that frames the Danville River District. The brand concept is flexible enough for organizations and groups to adapt the message to what they are trying to do.

“We encourage the Danville community to embrace it and use it whether it is for an event or in their own individual business. We want the outside community – whether it is a business looking to expand or relocate or the creative class of young professionals looking for a walkable, urban experience – to know that we are pushing new ideas and championing change in the River District, so take a look at what we have to offer.”

Under the River District Development Plan, the city has adopted design guidelines for the look and feel of the district. The guidelines list appropriate materials, outline procedures and explain what types of architectural elements are expected for the district’s existing buildings and new construction. A seven-member commission enforces the guidelines.

In addition, two phases of streetscape improvements are complete, with the latest featuring the JTI Fountain and Main Street Plaza. Public, outdoor Wi-Fi hotspots are now available in the 300, 400 and 500 blocks on Main Street, with expansions coming. Utilities upgrades are in place. Patton Street now allows two-way traffic to provide better access to businesses and parking lots serving stores on Main Street. A new parking lot is open at 500 Main St., and a parking study for the full district is finished and serves as a guide for the future.

Private investments continue in the district, and in June, construction will begin on a pedestrian lane on the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Bridge to connect walking trails on the north and south side of the Dan River.

A wayfinding signage project accompanies the branding effort, and the next streetscape phase will begin this summer on Craghead Street.

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