VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

Shenandoah Valley



2024 Annual Economic Impact

STATE OF THE REGION

The Shenandoah Valley pairs nationally known outdoor destinations with historic downtowns, caves, scenic drives, universities and agritourism. Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive, Luray Caverns and the Blue Ridge Parkway draw visitors, while Staunton, Winchester, Harrisonburg and Lexington add arts, history and dining.

$1.6B	14.98K	$472.1M	$48.8M	$76.7M
Total Direct Spending	Total Employment Jobs	Total Labor Income	Total State Taxes	Total Local Taxes

STRENGTHS

RECREATION & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive, Luray Caverns, Natural Bridge State Park and the Appalachian Trail • Blue Ridge Parkway

ARTS & CULTURE

JMU and its Forbes Center for the Performing Arts • American Shakespeare Center • Historic museums and cultural venues • Civil War heritage sites

HISTORIC DOWNTOWNS & PUBLIC PLACES

Walkable Staunton, Winchester, Lexington, Harrisonburg, Buena Vista and Waynesboro • Architecture, shopping and local festivals

WEAKNESSES

Winter seasonality • Limited air access • Long distances between major attractions • Uneven lodging and group-meeting capacity

OPPORTUNITIES

CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

Meeting and ballroom space with full-service lodging • Group travel from D.C., Maryland and Pennsylvania

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY

Upscale boutique hotels in walkable downtowns • Resort-style meeting and overnight options

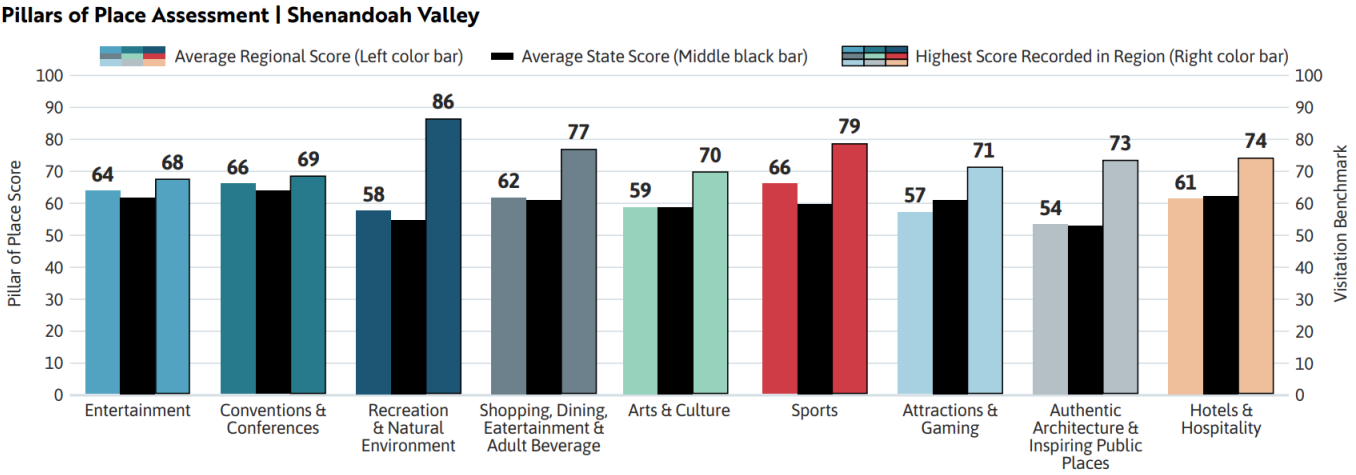
DINING, RECREATION & NICHE EVENTS

Family eatertainment, winery-restaurant connections • River access, mountain biking and outdoor events

THREATS

Competition from NC and TN mountain destinations • Need to reinvest in trails, visitor amenities, lodging and year-round experiences

PILLARS OF PLACE – REGIONAL ASSET PERFORMANCE



The region has standout attractions across several pillars, supported by strong outdoor and cultural assets. Conventions, Hotels & Hospitality, and Shopping & Dining show opportunities to strengthen the overall asset base.

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

Shenandoah Valley

SCAN HERE TO ACCESS THE STP

vatc.org/STP

AUDIENCE PROFILES

C BOOMING WITH CONFIDENCE

Established couples and families
Value comfort, quality and shared experiences
Enjoy outdoor, cultural and family-oriented trips

A POWER ELITE

Accomplished professionals who value refined, authentic experiences
Enjoy premium dining, culture and heritage
Seek curated experiences and upscale stays

J AUTUMN YEARS

Mature, long-settled couples
Value familiar, quiet routines, scenic drives, heritage and relaxed outdoor trips

COMPETITORS

Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania • Asheville, Blue Ridge Mountains and Boone, North Carolina • Great Smoky Mountains Region and Chattanooga, Tennessee

WHAT MAKES THE REGION UNIQUE

Nationally recognized parks, caverns and scenic landscapes combine with authentic historic downtowns, universities, wineries and farm experiences, offering visitors a blend of outdoor adventure, culture and small-town charm.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

RECREATION & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT | SPORTS

Build on Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive and Luray Caverns by improving Shenandoah River access, trail links and mountain biking. Grow niche sports and outdoor events around the Virginia Horse Center and existing recreation assets.

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY | CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

Expand boutique lodging in walkable downtowns and explore full-service meeting facilities that capture group travel. Assess resort-linked conference opportunities at Massanutten Resort and meeting demand near major drive markets.

ARTS & CULTURE | ENTERTAINMENT | ATTRACTIONS & GAMING

Connect the American Shakespeare Center, JMU Forbes Center for the Performing Arts , museums and Virginia Safari Park with family-friendly, year-round itineraries. Explore complementary indoor entertainment and events in existing cultural hubs.

SHOPPING, DINING EATERTAINMENT & ADULT BEVERAGE | HISTORIC DOWNTOWNS

Strengthen Staunton, Winchester, Harrisonburg and Lexington as overnight hubs. Connect wineries, breweries, local restaurants, farms, shops and downtown festivals to increase spending.

TACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

- Assess 30K–40K sq. ft. ballroom space
- Pair with 250+ room full-service hotel
- Explore resort-linked conference options

HOTELS & HOSPITALITY

- Pursue 80–120 room boutique hotels
- Focus on walkable historic downtowns
- Feature local farms, wine and breweries

RECREATION & NICHE EVENTS

- Expand river access and mountain bike trails
- Grow signature outdoor sporting events
- Connect trails, downtowns and longer stays