

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
In partnership with GO Virginia Region 9



2024

Draft for public review – April 2024



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
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OPPORTUNITY
IN EACH REGION



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank the following individuals and organizations for their support in the preparation of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission CEDS.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Camoin Associates provided analytics, stakeholder engagement, and report production services and facilitated the strategic planning process.

Funding

This process was made possible by funding from the US Economic Development Administration and the Counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock. GO Virginia also contributed to funding for the Super Regional strategies.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Local Wins through Regional Collaboration

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, twenty-one planning district commissions are dedicated to improving the quality of life and fostering economic prosperity in their communities.

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (“RRRC”) is acknowledged among its peers for its efforts that extend beyond traditional planning initiatives. It offers invaluable technical guidance on land use and related matters while spearheading hazard mitigation, agricultural and environmental programs, transportation planning, tourism, and housing and homeless support.

The RRRC respects the uniqueness of each of its member jurisdictions. Rather than imposing one-size-fits-all solutions, it empowers individual communities to synchronize their specific objectives with the overarching regional vision. This approach to collaboration works for the RRRC by cultivating an environment where local initiatives harmonize with broader development objectives.

This marks the first time the RRRC has embarked on developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (“CEDS”). RRRC sees it as a pivotal regional planning tool to leverage economic and community assets for enduring prosperity across the area. Through the CEDS, the RRRC will help guide long-term visioning, mobilize resources, and foster partnerships across the economic, community, and workforce development sectors.

This collaborative approach respects each community's diverse needs and aspirations while harnessing the collective strength of united efforts. In this way, the RRRC helps maximize the impact of community and economic development endeavors, ensuring that regional goals are achieved efficiently and effectively.



The strategies within this document aim to:

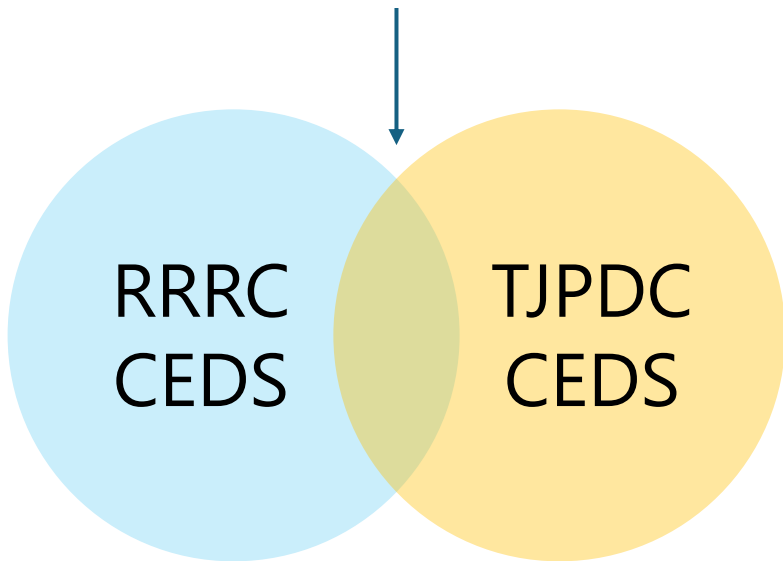
- Maximize the region’s economic activity through ambitious initiatives.
- Build on the existing values and goals of partners in the region.
- Leverage the assets being strengthened by economic developers in their localities.
- Grow emerging industries by supporting and retaining small businesses in the region.
- Showcase where large-scale investment will have the greatest impact on a range of communities.
- Help localities and the region pursue funding opportunities based on the priorities established in the strategies.

A Novel Approach to Working Across Regions

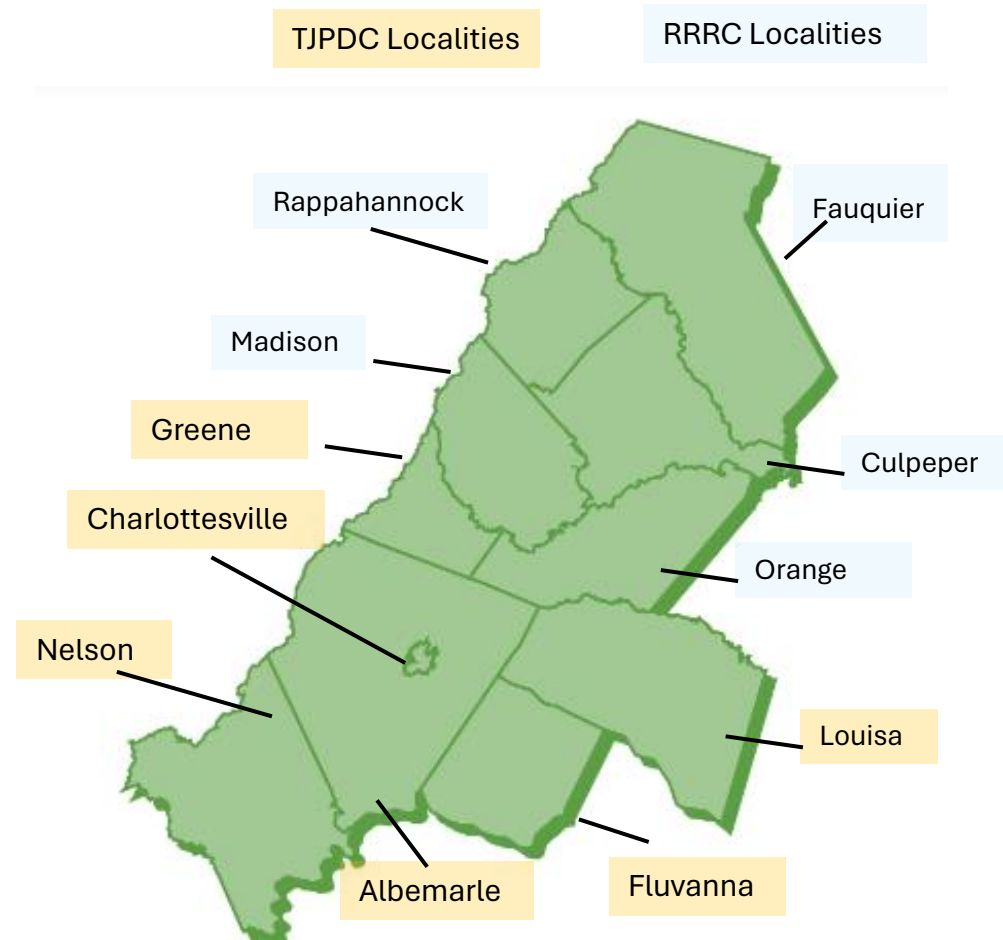
The RRRC completed its CEDS in partnership with two other concurrent processes. The bordering planning district commission, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), also went through a planning process to prepare a CEDS. The two planning district commissions coordinated these efforts to work together and address opportunities for cross-border opportunities. This cross-jurisdictional collaboration was facilitated by funding from the statewide GO Virginia initiative. Together, the RRRC and the TJPDC make up Region 9 in GO Virginia. GO Virginia’s objective is to create high-paying jobs through increased partnerships between businesses, education, local government, and workforce entities.

The RRRC and the TJPDC will advance their own CEDS over the next five years, while also working with GO Virginia Region 9 to advance super regional strategies that cover portions of both planning district commissions.

GO Virginia Super Regional Strategies



GO Virginia Region 9



Elements of the super regional strategies can be found in Appendix IV.

Principles of the CEDS

The CEDS aims to incorporate the community's values throughout the strategy. The CEDS Committee discussed the region's approach to equitable economic development as part of the planning process.

The Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED) previously enshrined how the region defines the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion, which is explained below. This definition was developed in partnership with CVPED's Board's Diversity Task Force, which is advised by the University of Virginia's Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Community Partnerships, Dr. Kevin McDonald.

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. This includes, but is not limited to, race, color, gender expression, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language(s), mental or physical ability, age, political perspective, veteran status, education, marital status, and learning styles. We recognize that many people identify with multiple characteristics.

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while also striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups. We believe this is attainable when it's built on RESPECT and it's a process that begins by acknowledging an unequal starting place and making a commitment to correct and address the imbalance. We will work together to identify and eliminate barriers that may prevent equality for everyone.

Inclusion is a sense of belonging and the outcome when everyone authentically feels welcomed, valued, supported, and able to fully participate so that they can do their best at work.

What principles should anchor the CEDS?

A selection of abbreviated responses from the RRRR CEDS Committee in February 2023.

"Equity among outcomes – not just benefitting a few"

"Support for current industry and future growth"

"Less focus on big wins over cumulative small ones"

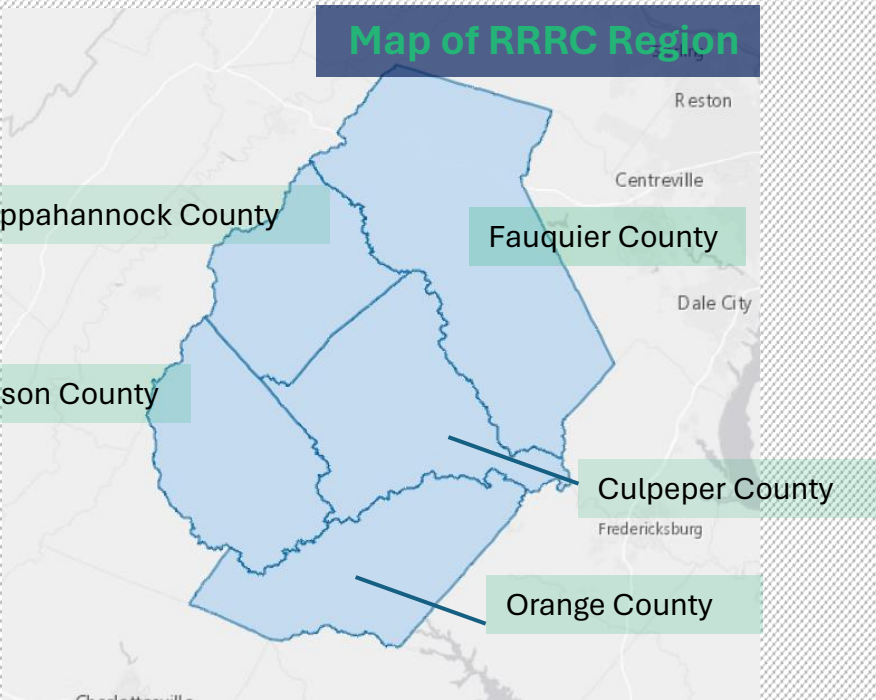
"Collaboration vs competition among jurisdictions"

"Equity, support for entrepreneurship, promoting context-appropriate local opportunities"



2 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

RRRC covers thirteen member governments: Orange, Madison, Fauquier, Culpeper, and Rappahannock Counties. This includes the Towns of Culpeper, Gordonsville, Madison, Orange, Remington, The Plains, Warrenton, and Washington. See Appendix I, II, III for more data analysis.



QUICK REGIONAL FACTS:

2022 Population: 186,145

Compound Annual Growth Rate - Population

- 2000-2010: 2.1%
- 2010-2020: 1.0%
- 2020-2022: 0.9%

2022 Household size: 2.68

- **Household change 2010-2020:** 10%

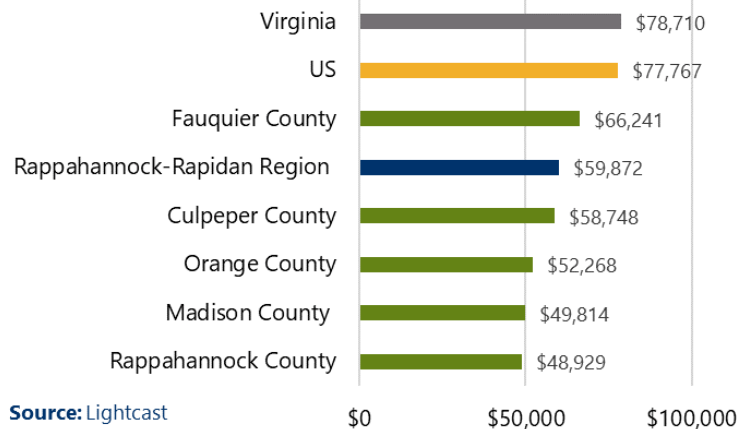
Median Age:

- **2010:** 41.1
- **2022:** 42.6

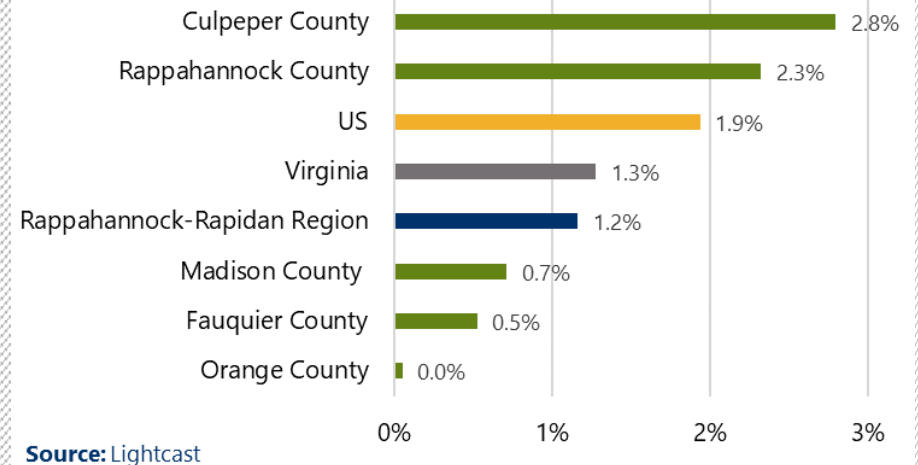
Average earnings (2022): \$59,872 vs. Virginia \$78,710

Employment (2022): 59,588, **2017-2022 Job change:** 1.2%

Average Earnings, 2022



Employment Growth, Percent Change, 2017-2022



The data analysis for the region covers a range of demographic data, including existing and projected trends for population, households, median age, race and ethnicity, and education. Economic indicators revolve around industries, the labor market, employment, and commuting trends. These data helped set the foundation for the region’s economic status and showcased potential opportunities. This information is intended to be a resource for RRRC jurisdictions’ economic development efforts. See Appendix I, II, III for more data analysis.

Demographics

- The Rappahannock-Rapidan Region is projected to grow in the coming decades, with gains concentrated primarily in Culpeper and Fauquier Counties.
- The number of households in the region grew by 10% from 2010-2020. Notable household growth in the towns includes:
 - Town of Culpeper – +16%
 - Town of Orange – +8%
 - Town of Warrenton – +7%
- 1/3 of Rappahannock-Rapidan Region residents work in the region, while 2/3 commute elsewhere. The most prominent commuter destinations outside the region include Fairfax, Prince William, Loudon Counties, and the District of Columbia.

Industry Activity

Agriculture: Farm income in the region more than doubled between 2012 and 2017, going from \$15.3 million to \$31.5 million. Farm tourism and recreation income increased from \$1.2 million to just over \$3 million over the same period.

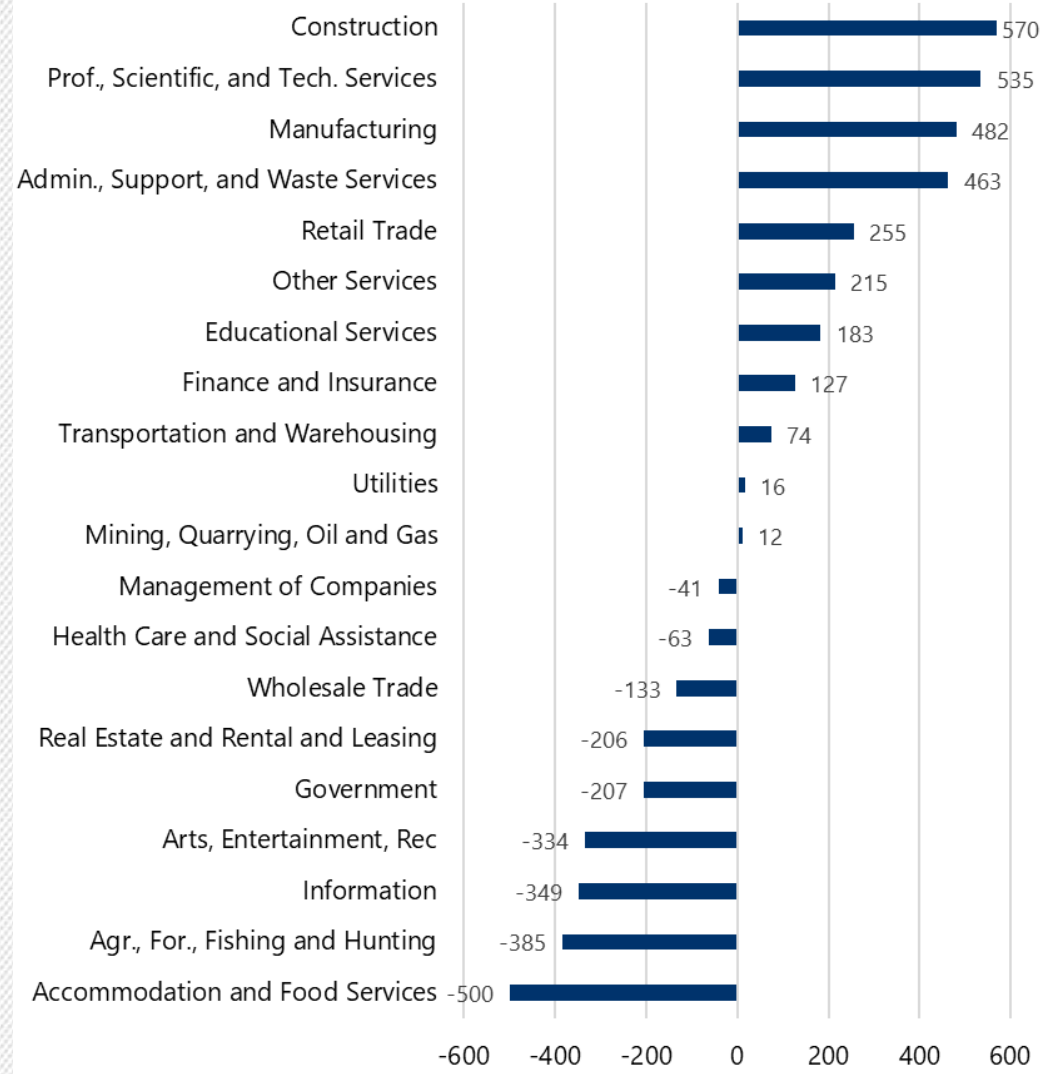
Manufacturing: +12% job growth 2017-2022

- **Largest subsectors:** wineries, aerospace products and parts, wood products

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: +19% job growth 2017-2022

- **Largest subsectors** Computer system design, veterinary services, office of lawyers

Rappahannock-Rapidan Region Job Growth by Sector, 2017-2022



Source: Lightcast



Community Input

Stakeholder input and business engagement was a large part of strategy development. Elements of the engagement channels are showcased below.

Site Visits

The consultant team visited Culpeper, Madison, Fauquier, Rappahannock, and Orange Counties in June 2023. These visits included sit-downs with economic development leadership, tours, and CEDS Committee meetings. This firsthand assessment highlighted the unique factors of the region, drawing out shared challenges and opportunities.

Business Survey

A digital business survey was sent out through channels in each locality during the fall of 2023. While the survey was a small sampling of regional businesses, it provided insights into existing businesses' future expectations and current conditions. Some highlights of the results include:

- Businesses reported that recruiting workers was the most significant challenge. However, retaining workers was not listed as a notable challenge.
- Businesses noted that they expected to grow in the next five years.
- Respondents were also confident that they could handle disruptions to their businesses.
- Respondents noted that they did not have a clear instinct of what agency to contact when they sought business support or used alternative organizations.

Summary Background

The Summary Background is a deep-dive data analysis into the RRRC Region's economic condition. This data can be used as a resource by all localities. Partners and local sources vetted this data.

This data can be accessed in Appendices II and III.

Interviews

Economic and community leaders were interviewed both in person and digitally to gather on-the-ground information for the region. The RRRC Commissioners were also engaged in this process.

CEDS Committee







The RRRC CEDS Committee represents economic, community, non-profit, philanthropic and private sector interests. The CEDS Committee was involved digitally and in person throughout the entire planning process. They vetted strategies and provided feedback to ensure that the actions proposed were ambitious but attainable.

Public Comment Period

A 30-day public comment period concluded the engagement for the CEDS. Comments will be taken in an online form and considered for the final product.

SWOT Analysis – Regional

Based on the elements of engagement, data analysis and additional stakeholder input, a variation of a SWOT analysis was developed to account for the unique factors in the different localities. The regional summary of the SWOT indicates where the greatest needs are, however, it is acknowledged that there is great variation among the region. Even if a subject is marked green, there is an opportunity to improve or expand efforts in this category.




Economic Topic	RRRC Region
State of the local economy (Includes: business vitality, tax revenue, strength of primary industries etc.)	
Industry diversity (Includes: mix of businesses and amenities, etc.)	
Risks to economy – economic and environmental (Includes: supply chains, resilience, growth issues/pressures, natural hazards, etc.)	
Infrastructure availability (Includes: ease of access, condition of major systems, energy needs, broadband, etc.)	
Environmental (Includes: natural resources, development balance, etc.)	
Collaboration (Includes: In/external dynamics, level of collaboration among partners across workforce, education, private sector etc.)	

LEGEND

-  High perceived need and/or opportunity to develop strategies for economic growth
-  Moderate perceived need and/or opportunity to develop strategies for economic growth
-  Lower perceived need and/or opportunity to develop strategies for economic growth

SWOT Analysis – by Locality

Through qualitative stakeholder feedback and input from the CEDS Committee, a SWOT was developed to determine the localized status of each topic. These nuances, along with data findings, were considered in the strategy development process and will be important to document as the annual updates are drafted each year.

-  High perceived need and/or opportunity to develop strategies for economic growth
-  Moderate perceived need and/or opportunity to develop strategies for economic growth
-  Lower perceived need and/or opportunity to develop strategies for economic growth

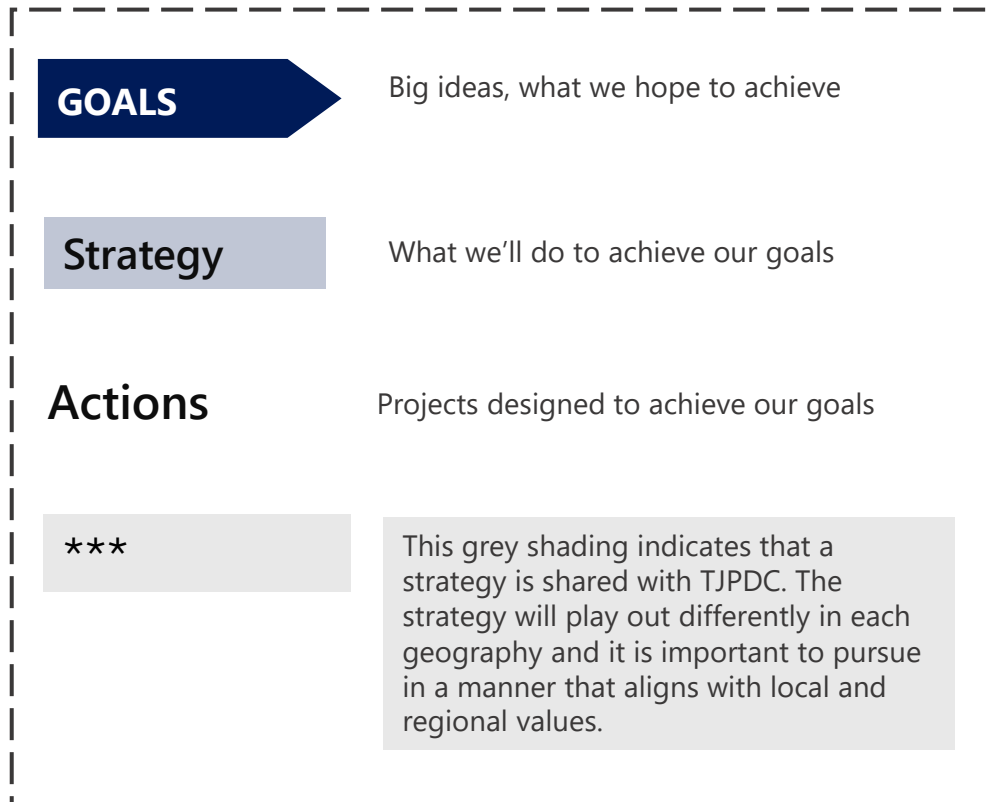
	Rappahannock	Madison	Orange	Culpeper	Fauquier
State of the local economy (Includes: business vitality, tax revenue, strength of primary industries etc.)					
Industry diversity (Includes: mix of businesses and amenities, etc.)					
Risks to economy – economic and environmental (Includes: supply chains, resilience, growth issues/pressures, natural hazards, etc.)					
Infrastructure availability (Includes: ease of access, condition of, major systems, energy needs, broadband, etc.)					
Environmental (Includes: natural resources, development balance, etc.)					
Collaboration (Includes: In/external dynamics, level of collaboration among partners across workforce, education, private sector etc.)					

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION / ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan Matrix is the tool that will direct strategy implementation over the next five years. It serves as a roadmap, guiding resources and efforts toward areas where they can yield the most significant returns. The Matrix is intended to evolve and grow over five years and will be referred to during the annual CEDS updates.

By identifying key strengths and existing initiatives in particular localities, the strategy ensures that resources are allocated intentionally, amplifying the impact of ongoing work and fostering sustainable growth. It enables communities to leverage their assets and capitalize on emerging opportunities, ultimately driving regional progress and prosperity.

Legend



Partners Legend

- 4H:** Youth organization
- AFT:** American Farmland Trust
- BEAD:** Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program
- BOR:** Businesses of Rappahannock
- CIC:** Community Investment Collaborative
- CTE:** Career and technical education
- CCC:** Culpeper Chamber of Commerce
- CR:** Culpeper Renaissance
- CVPED:** Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development
- DEQ:** Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
- DHCD:** Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- FCC:** Fauquier Chamber of Commerce
- GCC:** Germanna Community College
- GO Virginia:** Growth and Opportunity Council – Region 9
- GWC:** George Washington Carver Agriculture Research Center
- LRCC:** Laurel Ridge Community College
- MCOC:** Madison Chamber of Commerce
- OCOC:** Orange County Chamber of Commerce
- PATH:** PATH Foundation
- PEC:** Piedmont Environmental Council
- RRRC:** Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
- SBDC:** Small Business Development Center (Central Virginia)
- TJPDC:** Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
- UVA:** University of Virginia
- VATI:** Virginia Telecommunication Initiative
- VBFR:** Virginia Beginning Farmer & Rancher Coalition
- VBRS:** Virginia Business Ready Site Program
- VC:** Venture Central
- VCW:** Virginia Career Works (Piedmont Region)
- VDOE:** Virginia Department of Education
- VDOT:** Virginia Department of Transportation
- VEDP:** Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- VTC:** Virginia Tourism Corporation

Implementation Scale

Each of the strategies is evaluated on its level of implementation readiness. There are three different levels: emergent, evolving, and launch-ready. Where possible, leads and partners for each strategy are also documented. Documenting the readiness scale will help direct additional resources where needed and allow other strategies to surge ahead as the right stakeholders and resources come into place. Each locality in the region may fall within a different level of implementation readiness. However, the bubble in the Action Plan Matrix indicates the overall status at the regional level. Within the Action Plan Matrix, the list of partners for implementation per action is not exhaustive, and we anticipate that partnerships will grow and evolve as the strategy is executed.



Emergent Strategy

Status:

Needs additional conceptualization and planning.

These actions represent opportunities to chart new territory and develop breakthrough strategies and leadership capabilities.

Since this is a new endeavor, there is room for developing innovative approaches, frameworks, and leadership paradigms.

These strategies are likely to be resource intensive to startup.



Evolving Strategy

Status:

Needs a clear leader and/or resource allocation.

These actions represent initiatives that build on or re-purpose resources or partners that are currently in the economic development system.

Resource allocation, leadership, and approaches may need to be adjusted or enhanced to implement these strategies. These strategies have moderate resource needs.



Launch-Ready Strategy

Status:

Ready to be executed.

These actions represent items that can be accomplished within the current economic development system.

These strategies have a clear leader and dedicated resources. They can always benefit from growing partnerships.

Summary of Goals & Initiatives

The goals and actions are summarized below. The Action Plan Matrix includes an additional description of the rationale and ongoing work.

GOAL 1

Expand economic potential for existing industries and prepare the region to take advantage of growing markets.

- A. Focus on growing small to medium businesses and retaining them in the region.
- B. Continue investment in value-added food production systems and innovative agriculture production.

GOAL 2

Implement or adapt industry-focused initiatives that draw on cross-sector collaboration for worker retention, advancement, and attraction.

- A. Prioritize collaboration and shared knowledge between workforce and economic development partners.
- B. Innovate ways to involve the private sector in workforce training programs.

GOAL 3

Support elements of the built environment that meet today's demand and lay the foundation for advancing a dynamic economic future.

- A. Invest in commercial centers and downtown as economic and community hubs.
- B. Improve transportation connections among commercial and residential hubs.
- C. Advance housing options across the region in connection with market demand.
- D. Proactively prepare the business community for economic and environmental crises.

GOAL 4






Make strategic investments in critical infrastructure systems that will elevate the competitiveness of the region's production.

- A. Prepare due diligence for high-impact sites and obtain corresponding funding to implement infrastructure needs.

GOAL 1

Expand economic potential for existing industries and prepare the region to take advantage of growing markets.





Strategy 1.A) Focus on growing small to medium businesses and retaining them in the region.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.A.1	Consider funding to identify supply chain gaps for industries in RRRC and within nearby metro areas, and then build this into a coordinated outreach effort.		CVPED RRRC TJPDC Local economic developers Private sector
1.A.2	Develop protocols to share business retention information and build a knowledge base that can be tracked to document trends in the regional business environment.		CVPED VEDP SBDC
1.A.3	Initiate more opportunities for business-to-business connections in emerging sectors to cultivate economic growth.		CVPED VEDP SBDC VCW Local chambers
1.A.4	Market the region as an alternative to NOVA for target sectors, especially smaller-scale defense-related companies and contractors.		CVPED VEDP Local economic developers
1.A.5	Pursue emerging state and federal resources (IRA, CHIPS Act, USDA, NIST, EDA) that will advance the conceptualization of new technologies that can improve business operations and encourage sustainability.		VEDP AFT

GOAL 1

Expand economic potential for existing industries and prepare the region to take advantage of growing markets.

Strategy 1.A) Focus on growing small and medium businesses and retaining them in the region.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.A.6	Establish collaborative workshops and virtual innovation spaces that bring together industry experts and researchers to address specific business challenges, such as bio-ag and renewal energy. Link these efforts to research centers in VA that offer specialized equipment and assistance.		VA Universities CVPED LRCC GCC RRRC
1.A.7 ***	Connect rural communities to growing market opportunities and make investments to advance their ability to access these opportunities.		SBDC Locality ED departments Private sector Virginia Rural Center
1.A.8 ***	Expand relationships with Minority, Women, and Veteran Enterprises and address barriers within these communities in partnership with trusted community non-profits and other entities. For sectors where this is already strong, like agriculture, use as a model for other sectors.		There are many partners advancing efforts in this strategy. A few examples include: United Way SBDC CIC Local chambers Venture Central
1.A.9 ***	Expand opportunities for entrepreneurs to access capital and microlending in all stages of business, from seed to Series B.		Venture Central SBDC CIC CEO alliances Entrepreneurs across numerous sectors






SPOTLIGHT: Purely Piedmont is a comprehensive brand of food and beverage producers, artisans, and agritourism locations and activities in the RRRC region. The brand highlights businesses, events, partners, and products throughout the year. The brand highlights the connections in the regional food systems and shines a light on the incredible producers in the region. <https://www.purelypiedmont.com/>



GOAL 1

Expand economic potential for existing industries and prepare the region to take advantage of growing markets across the RRRC region.





Strategy 1.B) Continue investment in value-added food production systems and innovative agriculture production.

Action	Description	Status	Partners	
1.B.1	<p>Advance existing goals set by the RRRC Food Council. The RRRC Food Council is actively advancing priority projects that enhance the regional food system and agriculture producers.</p>	<p>The priority items most relevant to economic development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster food business entrepreneurship • Improve financial literacy among producers and local food businesses • Improve farmland access for underserved producers and beginning farmers 		<p>RRRC Virginia Cooperative Extension Local agriculture departments</p>
1.B.2	<p>Invest in the next generation of agricultural workers through recruitment, workforce training, diversification of farm product, and increasing awareness.</p>	<p>The agriculture and value-added production industries require a vast array of positions that range from technology and robotics to land cultivation. Exploring the range of positions and expanding the perception of what agriculture includes will help strengthen the economic potential of this sector. This also includes exploring new sectors of agriculture production including cannabis operations.</p>		<p>4H GWC VBFRC Existing businesses</p>
1.B.3	<p>Work closely with planners to examine future land use documents to monitor land competition.</p>	<p>Quality land is essential to maintain the region's ability to produce superior products. As the region grows and climate change has impacts on land, it is essential to work with agricultural leaders to assess and monitor productive land.</p>		<p>Local planning departments PEC Regenerate Virginia</p>
1.B.4	<p>Increase output of controlled environment agriculture (CEA) and greenhouse sites and build off existing assets to grow the cluster.</p>	<p>As consumer demand grows for healthy food on-demand, regional CEA and/or greenhouse operations have significant economic potential. Workforce availability and talent will be critical to leveraging these opportunities.</p>		<p>4H GWC VBFRC Existing businesses</p>
1.B.5	<p>Facilitate resource match-making for agriculture producers who are poised to expand into value-added production.</p>	<p>There is a wide spectrum of needs to grow or enter into value-added production. This support may include help obtaining equipment or finding shared resources, training and hiring, product testing, connections to end users, finding leads, marketing and promotion, and identifying modes of transportation.</p>		<p>4H GWC PATH</p>

GOAL 2

Implement or adapt industry-focused initiatives that draw on cross-sector collaboration for worker retention, advancement, and attraction.

Initiative 2.A) Prioritize collaboration and shared knowledge between workforce and economic development partners.




Action	Description	Status	Partners
2.A.1	Engage regional workforce solutions to enable specialized training at the high school, university, and continuing education levels.		VCW LRCC GCC K-12 system
2.A.2	Advocate for heightened investment in the community college system at the state level.		VCW LRCC GCC
2.A.3	Engage industry associations to work with CTE schools and community colleges to recruit industry leaders in training.		VCW LRCC GCC
2.A.4	Solidify mechanisms to expand paid training for workers to upskill.		VCW LRCC GCC

SPOTLIGHT: Early introductions to new technologies and their applications in the real world are important to building local talent and skills. Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties are working with Laurel Ridge Community College to offer local high schoolers a Robotics and Technology Academy. With funding through GO Virginia, Laurel Ridge Community College is offering this hands-on 16-credit career studies certificate program with the completion of the Academy. The program will also bring in businesses and offer field trips that build on the hands-on experience.

GOAL 2

Implement or adapt industry-focused initiatives that draw on cross-sector collaboration for worker retention, advancement, and attraction.





Initiative 2.B) Innovate ways to involve the private sector in workforce training programs.***

Action	Description	Status	Partners
2.B.1 ***	<p>Convene employers across leading industries to support novel on-the-job pilot programs, long-term programming, and industry-informed curricula.</p> <p>Offering on-the-job and real-world experience is a proven way to retain workers. Additional employer engagement across a range of industries will help build awareness of what is available in the region and support employer workforce needs.</p> <p>Apprenticeships are one model but can be modified to pre-apprenticeships, internships, shadow days, badges, boot camps, co-ops, and/or mentorships.</p>		<p>Private sector Community colleges SBDC CVPED CEO industry groups</p> <p>Lead: VCW – Business Coalition Meetings, ongoing in Food/Bev and Health Care</p>
2.B.2 ***	<p>Deepen engagement with trade unions, industry organizations, and other entities that directly represent private sector employees.</p> <p>These are valuable partners to glean real-time information and are your partners in implementing WBL programs.</p>		<p>Private sector Community colleges SBDC CVPED CEO industry groups Trade unions</p> <p>Lead: VCW – Business Coalition Meetings, ongoing in Food/Bev and Health Care</p>
2.B.3 ***	<p>Work with leading entities in the childcare sector to prioritize action-items that will enable safe, affordable, and convenient childcare access points across the region.</p> <p>Statewide and regional entities are pursuing solutions within the childcare sector. Actively participating in these conversations and piloting solutions with regional employers will be necessary to overcome significant barriers.</p>		<p>United Way Ready Region Blue Ridge VA Early Childhood Foundation VDOE</p>

GOAL 3

Support elements of the built environment that meet today's demand and lay the foundation for advancing a dynamic economic future.




Initiative 3.A) Invest in commercial centers and downtowns as economic and community hubs.***

Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.A.1	Partner with localities to assess the vibrancy and vitality of commercial corridors, small towns, and downtown districts and identify tactics that can advance meaningful, local economic activity.		Main Street Organizations RRRC Regional Tourism Committee VEDP CCC, CR, FCC, MCOC, OCOC, BOR
3.A.2	Use a regional approach to integrate housing options into Main Streets, downtowns, and other appropriate commercial hubs.		RRRC Foothills Housing Network Local planning departments Local economic developers Real estate community
3.A.3	Continue investing in digital infrastructure that supports entrepreneurship and business creation.		DHCD BEAD VATI
3.A.4	Grow the number of "third places" where entrepreneurs, small businesses and community members can gather, work and make connections.		RRRC Local planning departments Local economic developers Real estate community Main Street Organizations

GOAL 3

Support elements of the built environment that meet today's demand and lay the foundation for advancing a dynamic economic future.

Initiative 3.B) Improve transportation connections among commercial and residential hubs.




Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.B.1	<p>Partner with the private sector to find innovative approaches to pilot programs to support the movement of workers and/or monitor typical workforce needs.</p> <p>Mass transportation options across the rural region are a challenging model. Working with anchor businesses to understand where demand is concentrated can help establish a critical mass. Localities across the state are trying less traditional modes of public transportation, and monitoring and learning from these pilots could provide examples for the region in the future.</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Local governments</p> <p>Rural Transportation Committee</p>
3.B.2	<p>Implement the goals of the RRRC 2045 Long Range Plan and 2019 Active Transportation Plan.</p> <p>These planning documents lay out expectations for growth and investment needed throughout RRRC's communities. Leveraging funding sources to support these needs is beneficial across geographies.</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Regional Transportation Collaborative</p> <p>Rural Transportation Committee</p> <p>VDOT</p>
3.B.3	<p>Explore transportation options that would support people commuting into the region.</p> <p>While the region is currently an exporter of talent to Northern Virginia, there are opportunities to instead have those workers stay in the region <i>and</i> attract workers from NOVA into the region. This will occur in partnership with growing employment opportunities across the region.</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Local governments</p> <p>Rural Transportation Committee</p>

SPOTLIGHT: The Regional Transportation Collaboration (RTC) is an umbrella structure for the region's transportation and mobility coordination. This structure enables partners to share resources and ramp up or down service as needs change. RRRC is the coordinator for the RTC and seeks grant funding to expand in-demand services in the region. This is especially important for rural locations, where transportation options are limited, and for seniors, who may no longer drive.

GOAL 3

Support elements of the built environment that meet today's demand and lay the foundation for advancing a dynamic economic future.


Initiative 3.C) Advance housing options across the region in connection with market demand.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.C.1	<p>Continue to use and implement the Housing Needs Assessment that was adopted in 2021.</p> <p>RRRC's 2021 Housing Needs Assessment is a strong foundation to support RRRC's housing work with the Foothills Housing Network and other activities with localities across the region. Continuing to use best practices, share common themes, and advance strategies is an important part of growing attainable housing in the region.</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Real estate community</p> <p>Local planning offices</p>
3.C.2	<p>Maintain relationships with the real estate community and attend their industry events to get the latest in real-time information about the market.</p> <p>The real estate community maintains real-time information on the housing market and is a vital partner in understanding inventory.</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Local planning offices</p> <p>Greater Piedmont Realtors</p>
3.C.3	<p>Explore funding mechanisms like public-private partnerships that will encourage employer participation in addressing housing inventory needs.</p> <p>Medium and large employers have begun to play a role in supporting the development of housing for their workers. With a combination of public, private sector, and non-profit contributions, the region is more likely to address housing needs at an accelerated rate.</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Real estate community</p> <p>Local planning offices</p> <p>Non-profit housing developers</p> <p>Private housing developers</p>

GOAL 3

Support elements of the built environment that meet today's demand and lay the foundation for advancing a dynamic economic future.




Initiative 3.C) Advance housing options across the region in connection with market demand.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
<p>3.C.4 ***</p> <p>Support municipalities as they develop appropriate local solutions to land use updates that will encourage building in existing service centers.</p>	<p>Municipalities play an important role in advancing housing development in the region. These roles include:</p> <p><i>Rezoning and future land use planning</i> – Aligning land use regulations with desired housing development is a high impact way to increase development.</p> <p><i>Identify underutilized locations</i> – There are often properties with the potential for development that have been abandoned or are otherwise challenging properties that hold potential for housing development.</p> <p><i>Inventory publicly owned land</i> – With public site control, this land may be a good fit to strategize housing solutions with the private, public and non-profit sectors</p>		<p>RRRC</p> <p>Real estate community</p> <p>Local planning offices</p> <p>Non-profit housing developers</p> <p>Private housing developers</p>

GOAL 3

Support elements of the built environment that meet today's demand and lay the foundation for advancing a dynamic economic future.






Initiative 3.D) Proactively prepare the business community for economic and environmental crises.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.D.1	Implement drought mitigation techniques and water usage programs that can support existing business and expected business growth in target industries.		Virginia State Water Control Board VAHydro DEQ
3.D.2	Advance the planning process of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and incorporate the private sector in conversations about economic resiliency.		RRRC Private sector Industry groups
3.D.3 ***	Solidify a leader or team of leaders in the community who will be the face of build-back efforts in the event of an economic or environmental crisis.		SBDC CVPED RRRC TJPDC

GOAL 4

Make strategic investments in critical infrastructure systems that will elevate the competitiveness of the region's production.

Initiative 4.A) Prepare due diligence for high-impact sites and obtain corresponding funding to implement infrastructure needs.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
4.A.1	Evaluate the location and status of parcels or areas that are suited to attract or grow target industries.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA
4.A.2	Work with EDOs to promote land banking/land assembly to generate sizeable parcels.		Local economic developers
4.A.3	Consider adopting climate-smart infrastructure standards for developers to opt-into.		RRRC Local planning departments
4.A.4 ***	Evaluate electricity needs for local communities as heavy-energy industry users come online.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA
4.A.5 ***	Pursue joint partnerships or other customized collaborations to help fund or advance infrastructure.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA

4 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



The RRRRC will act as the convener of partners over the course of implementation. While the RRRRC does not play a lead role in every strategy area, it is the lead entity for the CEDS and will maintain a role in overseeing how strategies are advanced. Three areas anchor the Evaluation Framework:

1) CEDS Committee

Each year, an annual report will be prepared to document the progress and status of the goal areas. The RRRRC will hold at least one meeting a year with the CEDS Committee to gather feedback and commentary from leaders. Actions will be adapted as necessary to adjust to new opportunities.

2) Implementation Committee

To ensure oversight and accountability, an Implementation Committee will be established. It will consist of 5-6 leaders representing the primary goal areas within the CEDS. The Implementation Committee will be a central coordinating body, drawing in collaborators to advise on particular subjects. The Implementation Committee will also report out at the twice-annual CEDS Committee meetings.

3) Metrics

A series of 12 metrics, organized by goal area, will be collected to quantify progress on the CEDS. These metrics are listed on the following page. They will be collected in accordance with the annual report each year. These metrics are a mix of “outputs” and “outcomes” and will provide a snapshot of how the CEDS progresses over time.



Metrics

Collecting quantitative and qualitative metrics will be a part of monitoring progress on the Action Plan Matrix. These indicators capture trends in RRRC and their partners may add other metrics if deemed appropriate throughout the annual review process. These indicators are intended to capture progress and movement in the strategies instead of reaching a definitive goal.

GOAL 1

Support economic growth within existing industries while leveraging emerging market opportunities to expand economic potential in the region.

- Industry growth by number and percentage for identified emerging industries, target industries, and overall economy
- Average wage of new jobs compared to living wage (*MIT Living Wage Calculator*)
- Business dynamism (business entries vs. business exits)
- Economic output of agriculture production

GOAL 2

Implement or adapt industry-focused initiatives that draw on cross-sector collaboration for talent retention, advancement, and attraction.

- Labor force participation rate
- Job placement rates by program at VCW
- Number and variety of private sector businesses participating in round tables

GOAL 3

Promote elements of community placemaking that create a public realm that is attractive to both businesses and residents.

- Residential building permits by locality - percent increase
- Increased visitation and financial support of events
- Increased ridership on public transit/bicycle and pedestrian network

GOAL 4

Invest in components of infrastructure that will enable business development opportunities and prepare the region for long-term prosperity and resilience.

- Number of sites that advanced a level on the VBRSP (by locality)
- Employers per acre