

GO VIRGINIA Region 9: CEDDS & Super Regional Strategies Final Update



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

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-Rapidian 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
- Leverage the assets being strengthened locally.
- Grow emerging industries by support in the region.
- Showcase where large-scale investme a range of communities.
- Help localities and the region pursue the priorities established in the strate

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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



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 RRRC CEDS Committee in February 2023.

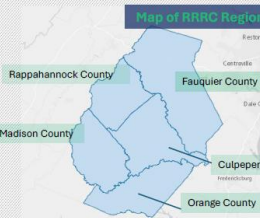
- "Equity among outcomes – not just benefiting a few"
- "Support for current industry and future growth"
- "Less focus on big wins over cumulative small ones"
- "Collaboration vs competition among jurisdictions"
- "Equity, support for entrepreneurship, promoting context-appropriate local opportunities"



Rappahannock-Rapidian Regional Commission CEDS | 7

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%

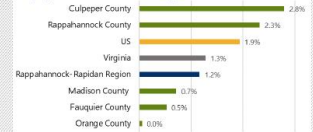
Median Age:

- 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%

Employment Growth, Percent Change, 2017-2022



Status of the CEDS

- Public Comment Period: April-May
- Final CEDS Committee meetings: May
- TJPDC Adopted CEDS: May 2
- RRRC Meeting to Adopt: June 26

Accessing the CEDS

RRRC –
Available here

TJPDC -
Available here

Super Regional
Strategies only –
Available here

GO VIRGINIA REGION 9 SUPER-REGIONAL STRATEGIES



1 INTRODUCTION

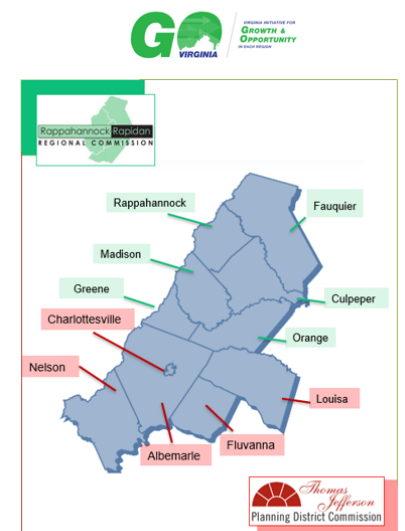
Success Through Collaboration

The Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District prepared five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) during 2023-2024. The management team for each planning district, and their respective regional steering committees, met regularly with Camoin Associates to coordinate similar approaches, methodology, stakeholder outreach, and engagement activities for their respective plans.

Additionally, GO Virginia provided funds to identify "Super Regional" strategies to support these planning processes. The Super Regional strategies are intended to leverage common challenges facing each planning district, which together comprise the state's GO Virginia Region 9.

Eight strategic areas were identified as requiring a super-regional emphasis. They include four leading or emerging industry sectors, two of which relate directly to GO Virginia Region 9's targeted industry sectors, **Agriculture – Food and Beverage** and **Information Technology**, and two other promising sectors, **Clean Technology** and **Defense Intelligence** (not a current GO Virginia target industry).

Note: The other targeted sectors included as GO Virginia targeted industries (Biomedical/Biotechnology, Financial and Business Services, and Light Manufacturing) were concentrated most strongly in one of the two planning districts, and thus, did not share similar emphasis at the super-regional level. Those industries and related strategies to grow them are addressed in the respective CEDS.



Leveraging the CEDS

- Help localities pursue funding opportunities based on the priorities established in the strategies.
- Communicate to private and non-profit sectors on themes within the plan.
- Being ambassadors of implementation.
- Identify additional funding opportunities through GO VA.
- Identify where existing resources can be leveraged.
- Funding opportunities – watch US EDA and others; economically distressed areas can apply for Public Works and EAA programs.

1. US EDA EAA Criteria

a. Competitiveness Review Criteria

Each project will be reviewed on a pass/fail basis according to the following criteria in the Competitiveness Review process (detailed below):

- i. Whether the project is responsive to this NOFO.....
- ii. The project's demonstrated alignment with EDA's current Investment Priorities.....
- iii. The availability and committed nature of proposed matching funds; and
- iv. The project's alignment with the regional CEDS or other CEDS equivalent EDA-accepted economic development strategy if a CEDS does not exist.

Implementation for the CEDS

- ➔ CEDS Committee Meeting
Bi-Annually
- ➔ Metrics
- ➔ Implementation
Committee
- ➔ Identifying funding sources
to leverage

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
VBRSP: 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

CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS

Focus

The following section provides a sampling of data that helped support the decisions to focus on specific Super Regional strategies.

It is organized by the four leading and emerging industry sectors, plus Tourism and Hospitality, along with three overarching areas requiring extraordinary focus and effort, namely housing, sites/infrastructure, and workforce development.

For this section, the data is organized as follows:

A. Leading and Emerging Sectors

- Food and Beverage
- Clean Technology
- Defense Intelligence
- Information Technology

B. Tourism

C. Housing

D. Sites and Infrastructure

E. Workforce Development

What We Know From the Data

Four industry sectors are identified as having strong location quotient factors. Three of these leading or emerging sectors have dramatically higher than state average job creation potential: Food and Beverage, Defense Intelligence, and Information Technology.

Tourism performance generally tracks statewide averages for growth. However, the “slice of the pie” for Region 9 is only 5% of the statewide totals, suggesting that more can be done to market the region’s assets by extending visitor stay experiences in other regions to include Region 9 and increasing overall visitation with new product development and exposure.

The ability to find safe and affordable housing is a national crisis and Virginia and its Region 9 localities are not exceptions. This is having a significant negative effect on the ability of residents and future workers to locate and prosper in Central Virginia. Several years ago, the Rappahannock-Rapidan region developed a plan of action that engaged local municipal officials. It provides a launch pad for Region 9 to address such issues holistically.

Shovel-ready sites on which to build new facilities are needed throughout the region to accommodate growth. Smaller parcels can be found but infrastructure requirements limit industry use on some sites. Acquiring and preparing sites takes many years and a full analysis must be done to identify new sites for future development.

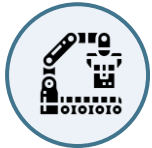
And, finally, the expansion of workforce development initiatives is needed to meet employer demands in all industries. Key to the competitiveness of Region 9 rests with securing more private sector involvement in preparing workers for jobs, especially those needed to propel the leading and emerging sectors identified in this report.

Super Regional Goals

GO VA Supported Topics



1. Expand economic opportunities in the Food and Beverage industry.



2. Leverage Virginia's clean tech assets to establish an expanded hub for innovation and Advanced Manufacturing.



3. Designate a Defense and Intelligence industry corridor.



4. Optimize the economic impact of the Information Technology and Digital Communications sectors.



5. Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline.



6. Assess cooperative infrastructure development models to enhance site readiness initiatives.

Super Regional Goals

Additional themes and opportunities



7. Expand tourism-based product development and marketing.



8. Advance recommendations for a regional housing approach.

IMPLEMENTATION

Team Effort

Implementing the Super Regional Strategies will be a team effort.

Three of the goal areas directly relate to GO Virginia's high-growth industry priorities and initiatives and are expected to become part of its agenda moving forward. They are not intended to replace existing target industries. These three are:

- GOAL 1** Food & Beverage
- GOAL 2** Clean Technology (Related to IT-Manufacturing)
- GOAL 4** IT-Digital Communication

The defense industry is not currently a targeted industry for GO Virginia's Region 9.

- GOAL 3** Defense/Intelligence

Knowledge and innovations in defense-related industries, however, such as advances in cybersecurity, can have direct impacts on other target industries – especially IT-Digital Technology.

Working with GO Virginia, partners for Goals 1 - 4 could be regional planning commissions, the workforce development system, county economic developers, SBDC/Venture Central, and the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (CVPED).

For Goal 2, consideration could be given to having the Charlottesville Renewable Energy Alliance and the Community Climate Collaborative Green Business Alliance take an active role.

Implementation roles and responsibilities for Goals 5-8 need to be determined.

- GOAL 5** Tourism
- GOAL 6** Housing
- GOAL 7** Sites and Infrastructure
- GOAL 8** Talent

Goal 5 may be advanced by current hospitality and tourism professionals in the region, together with support from the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Goal 6 is best coordinated by the respective regional planning commissions continuing to work closely together.

Goal 7 is currently a primary interest of the Central Virginia Partnership. To further all counties in Region 9, CVPED would need the support of a representative from Fauquier County.

Goal 8 is best coordinated by workforce development professionals and community college administrators committed to working closely with private sector leaders.

Next Steps

Planning District Commissions

- Transmit CEDS to EDA for approval
- Annual reporting for the TJPDC and RRRC CEDS
- Ongoing implementation coordination

GO VA

- Develop and coordinate a plan to incorporate the new targets from the Super Regional strategies into the Growth Plan (*where appropriate*)