

GO VIRGINIA REGION 9 SUPER-REGIONAL STRATEGIES



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

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
2	Current and Emerging Trends	5
3	Strategic Direction	14
4	Implementation.....	30

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.



Four additional areas were also identified for Super Regional emphasis because they were considered critical for achieving overall economic and quality of life success in Region 9:

- Tourism
- Housing
- Sites and Infrastructure
- Workforce Development

It is important to note that the GO Virginia Region 9 council is very focused on the economic importance of the issues above and has provided some support to advance sites and infrastructure and workforce activities, but these issues are not considered core functional issues managed by the Region 9 staff.

The following report provides data relating to current and emerging trends for each super-regional issue.

This is followed by a **STRATEGIC DIRECTION** section that presents a brief opportunity analysis, a strategic approach, and implementation considerations specific to the eight super-regional issues.

Finally, an **ACTION PLAN** is included that identifies organizations and/or individuals to serve as champions for moving these strategies forward.



2 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.

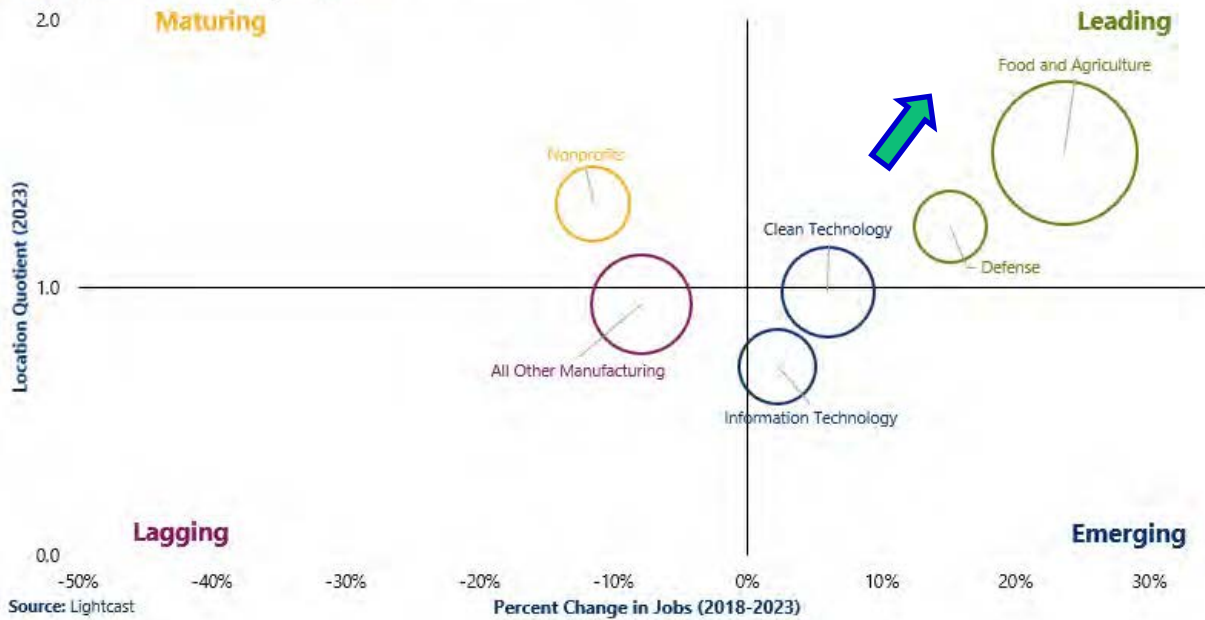
Shovel-ready sites on which to build new facilities are needed throughout the region to accommodate growth. Smaller parcels can be found but infrastructure requirements limit industry use on some sites. Acquiring and preparing sites takes many years and a full analysis must be done to identify new sites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

A. Competitive Industry Sectors

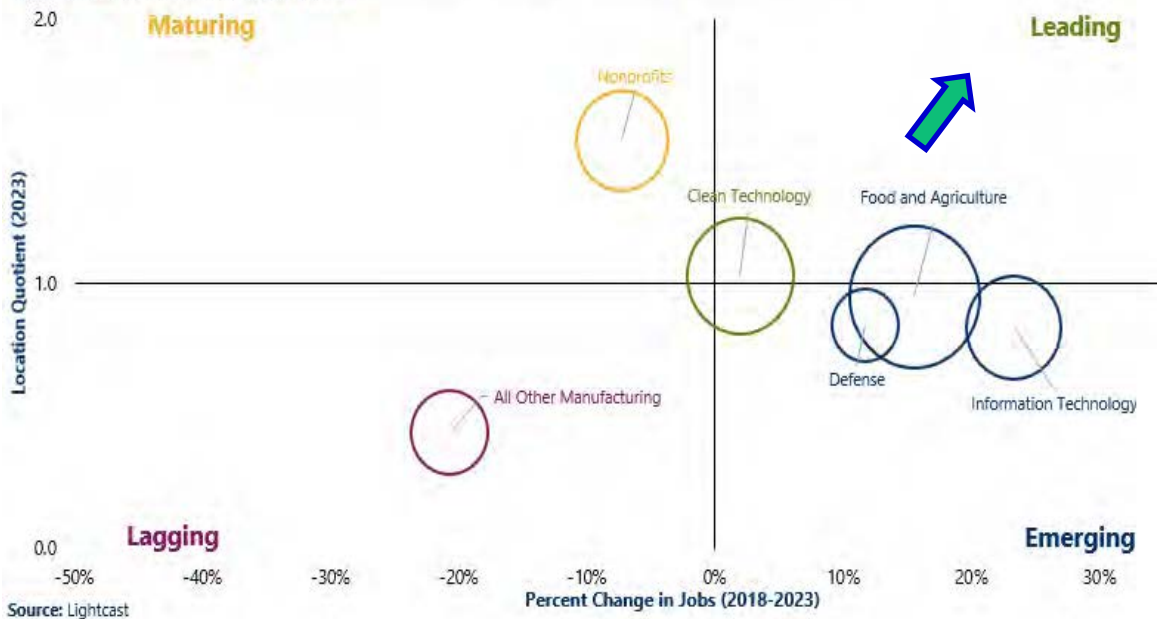
Key Metrics by Sector, Rappahannock-Rapidan Region

Bubble size indicates 2023 job count



Key Metrics by Sector, Thomas Jefferson District Planning Commission

Bubble size indicates 2023 job count



Competitive Industries: In both the Rappahannock-Rapidan and Thomas Jefferson regional planning districts, four sectors stand out as leading or emerging industries.

These are:

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

In both districts, Food and Agriculture represent the industries with a high job count, followed by Clean Technology and Information Technology.

The defense industry represents a smaller job count but is a leading industry in Rappahannock-Rapidan and is emerging in Thomas Jefferson.

Nonprofits are a maturing industry. They are essential for improving the social and economic fabric of the community and play a different role than the other industries.

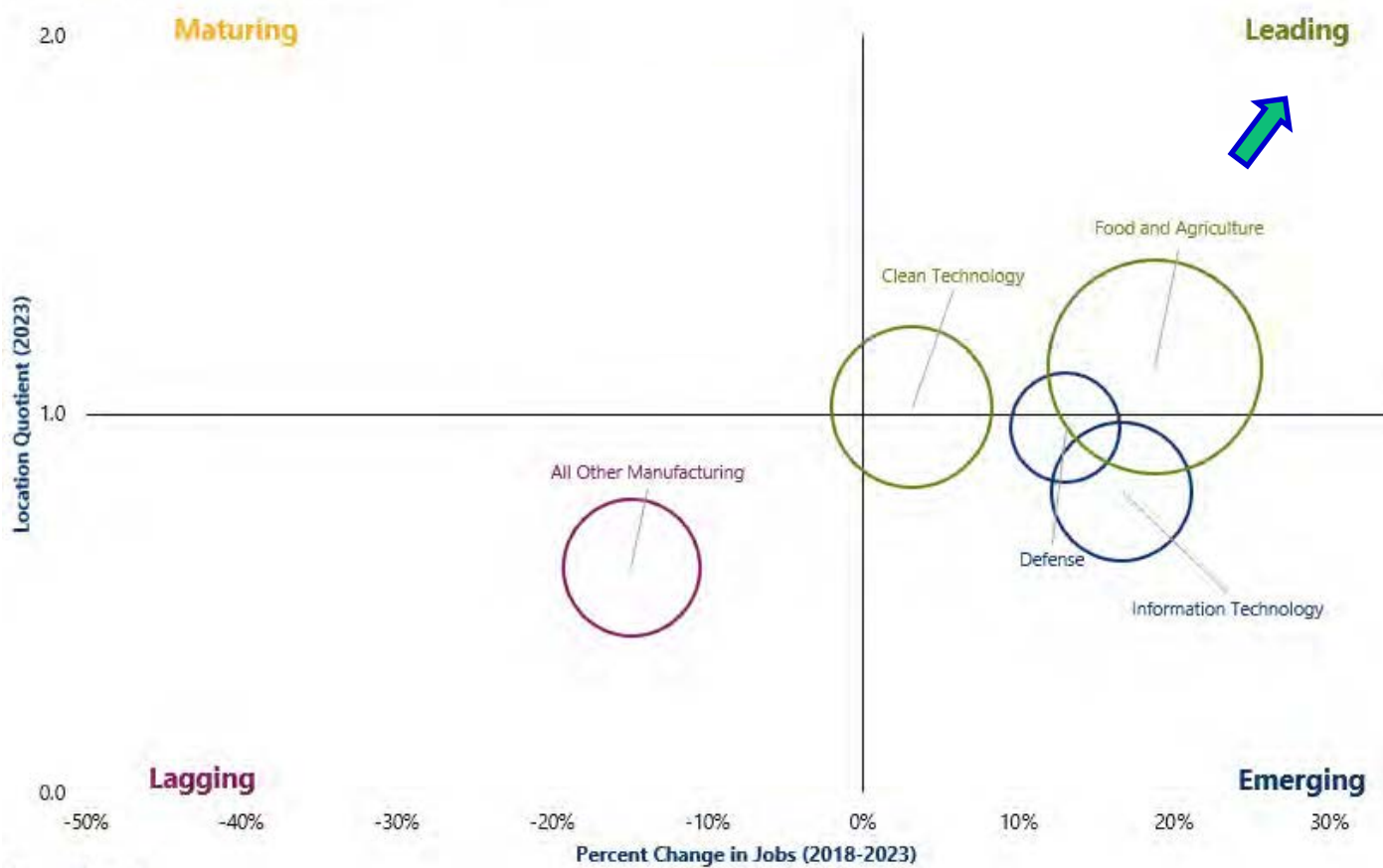
Region 9 Industry Sector Focus: The leading industry sector in Region 9 is Food and Agriculture. It has the highest concentration of job count and is projected to continue to grow.

Clean Technology employs the next largest number of employees, and it also is considered a leading industry with strong growth potential.

The Information Technology sector is considered an emerging growth industry for Region 9. Defense-related industries, driven largely by spill-over from Northern Virginia, plays an important across the region.

These four sectors represent the core focus of the Region 9 Super Regional industry strategies.

Key Metrics, GO Virginia Region 9
Bubble size indicates 2023 job count



Leading and Emerging Industries for Super Regional Focus

Source: Lightcast

Location Quotient: The location quotient (LQ) measures industry concentration (specialization) relative to other geographic areas. In the chart below, Region 9 is compared to statewide computations. An LQ at or above 1.0 indicates that the region has more employment in that sector than the state or nation. It typically produces more than is consumed locally and can export to other markets.

Two of the super regional sectors, Clean Energy and Food and Agriculture have strong LQs. Three of the industries (Clean Energy, Information Technology, and Defense) have less of an LQ than does the Commonwealth of Virginia, indicating that more growth can be leveraged if given more focus.

Job Increases: All four of the super regional sectors have experienced a stronger rate of percent increase over the past five years than the rest of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Three of these four have posted dramatically higher increases than the rest of the Commonwealth:

- Food and Agriculture: 19%
- Information Technology: 17%
- Defense Intelligence: 13%

Clean technology job growth in Region 9 was slightly higher than the statewide averages.

Industry Location Quotients, 2023

Industry Group	RRRC	TJPDC	Region 9	Virginia
All Other Manufacturing	0.94	0.44	0.59	0.81
Clean Technology	0.98	1.03	1.02	1.15
Information Technology	0.71	0.84	0.80	1.65
Defense	1.23	0.84	0.96	1.83
Food and Agriculture	1.50	0.95	1.12	0.74
Nonprofits	1.31	1.54	1.47	1.17

Source: Lightcast

Job Change by Sector, 2018-2023

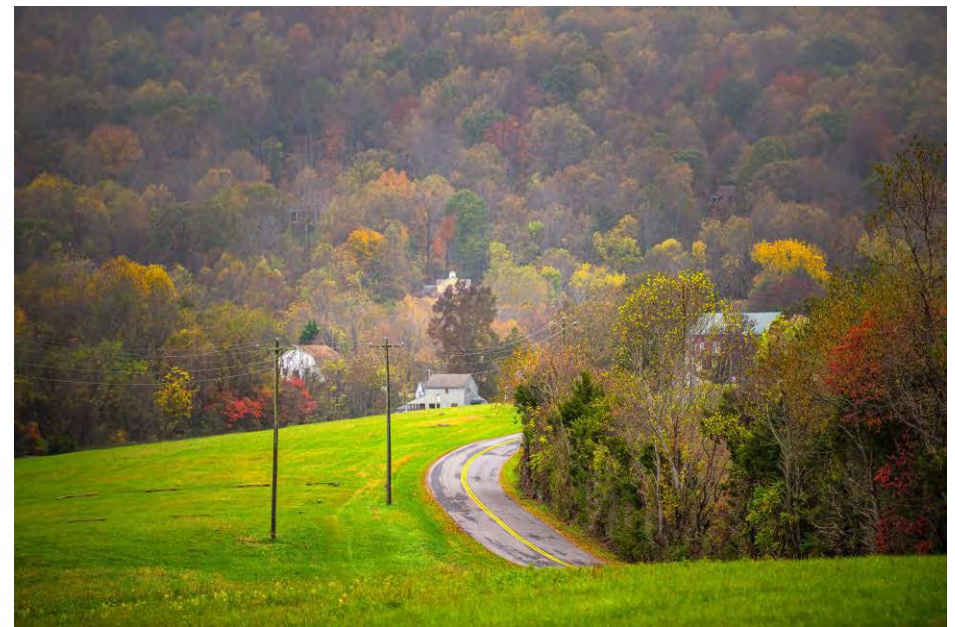
Industry Group	RRRC	TJPDC	Region 9	Virginia
All Other Manufacturing	-8%	-21%	-15%	5%
Clean Technology	6%	2%	3%	2%
Information Technology	2%	23%	17%	7%
Defense	15%	12%	13%	1%
Food and Agriculture	24%	16%	19%	5%
Nonprofits	-12%	-7%	-8%	2%

Source: Lightcast

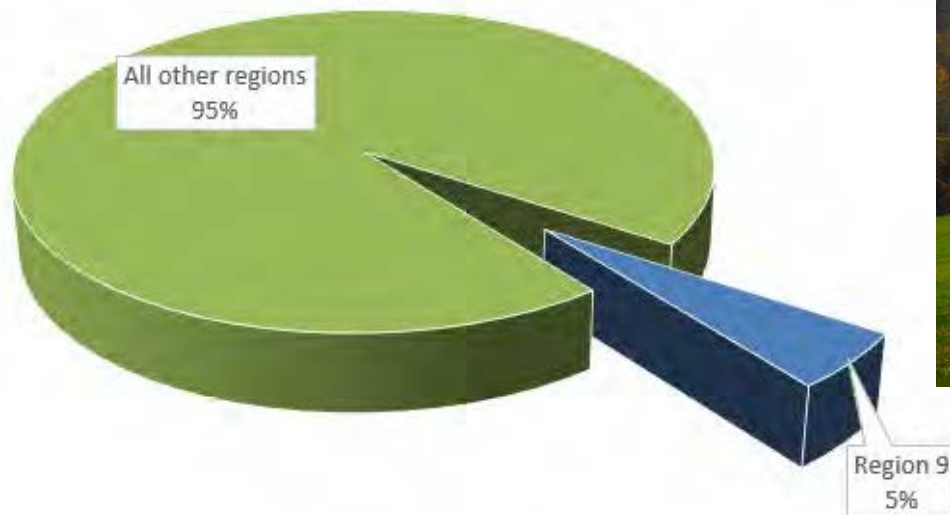
B. Tourism

Data compiled by the Virginia Tourism Corporation shows that Region 9 hospitality-related employment decreased 5% from 2018-2022. This is consistent with overall statewide figures showing a similar 5% decrease across the Commonwealth in both jobs and visitor expenditures. In 2022, the net jobs in this sector for Region 9 were 11,128, down 573 jobs from 2018. The total tourism expenditures in 2022 for Region 9 amounted to \$1,501,404,842.

The good news is that in 2024, both the region and the state have posted gains and have recaptured most of the pre-pandemic employment and economic benefits. The data presents another interesting fact: The counties represented in Region 9 also account for 5% of the total tourism jobs and visitor expenditures in Virginia.



Virginia Tourism Jobs & Visitor Expenditures



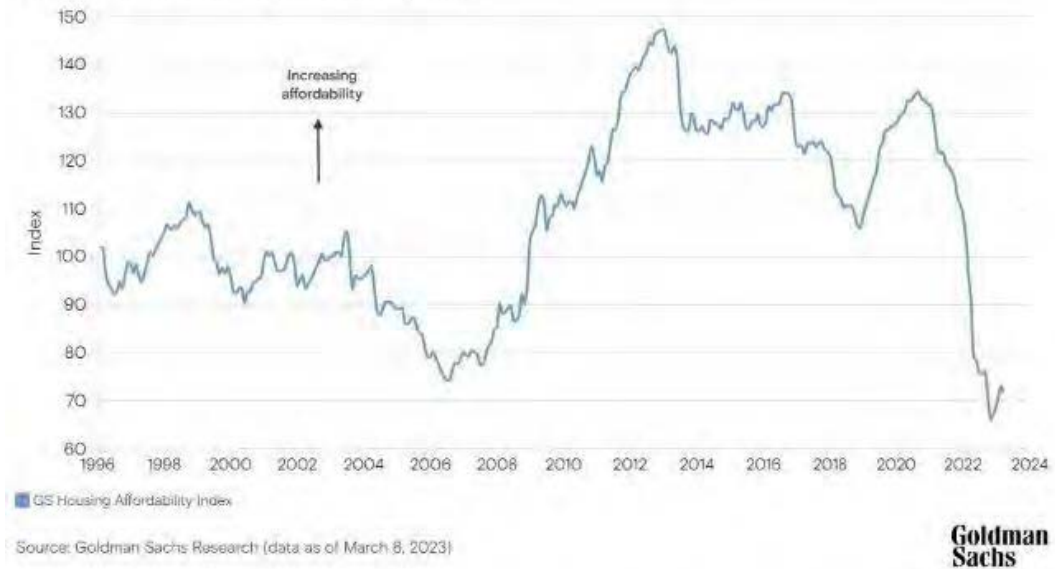
C. Housing

The United States is facing a national housing crisis that is financially impacting millions of people like no other time in recent memory. This is stifling economic growth in communities across the nation.

In 2020, with the assistance of Camoin Associates, the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Planning Commission prepared an in-depth baseline and demand analysis, conducted zoning ordinance reviews for each county and three towns, and developed strategy recommendations as a first step towards addressing the situation.

US housing affordability at lowest levels in history

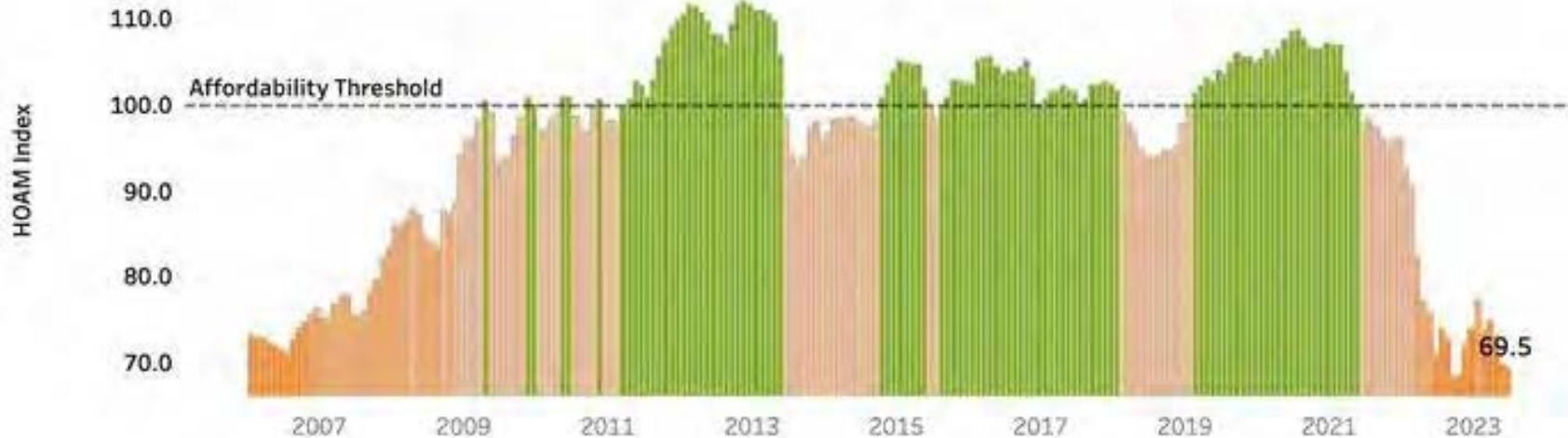
Goldman Sachs Housing Affordability Index



Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta National Home Ownership Affordability Monitor (HOAM) Index

Data through June 2023

Updated: 8/16/2023





Hundreds of communities across the nation have produced their own strategies to address housing shortages in recent years.

In a report prepared in 2023 for Virginia Housing, titled, [*Housing as an Economic Development Strategy for Virginia*](#), some findings for GO Virginia's Region 9 were described as follows:

"Barriers to housing include **limited available land** for development, **competition** between home and commercial development for land, complicated **zoning and approval processes**, and **high costs** of home building. The city and counties charge unreasonably **high fees** for utility connections, especially for higher numbers of units. Further, **high property taxes** make home affordability difficult. Stakeholders report there is a **lack of funding** for affordable housing in the area, as HUD funds are limited and PDC development grants provide only some incentive for affordable housing. Getting materials for construction remains a challenge as the **supply chain** is still backlogged. Labor and construction costs are high, as well as interest rates. Participants also perceived a **lack of education** around housing." Chmura, November 10, 2023



Thirteen recommendations were outlined in the Virginia Housing report that reinforce the 42 recommendations in the Rappahannock-Rapidan 2020 housing report. The Region 9 Super Regional strategies include some critical steps that need to be taken to move some of those recommendations forward and begin to address similar needs in the Thomas Jefferson region.

Specifically, the Super Regional housing strategies attempt to address the fact that new partnerships are needed to meet the housing crisis head-on with a focus on land-use optimization to expand the inventory of diverse housing options for all people.

D. Sites and Infrastructure

Improving the regional product is often synonymous with site development.

Land on which to build new industrial, research, and office-based facilities is in high demand across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Prior to the pandemic, there were no Tier 3-5 sites available in Region 9 (that is, sites zoned properly, due diligence completed, or project ready.)

GO Virginia provided three grants to help address this situation. In 2018, \$58,675 was secured to benefit eight counties and eight sites. A second grant of \$600,850 was awarded to support Shannon Hill Regional Business Park, resulting in Tier 3 Certification and 700 acres advancing on the scale of readiness. A third grant for \$786,333, received in 2021, brought Shannon Hill to Tier 4 and assisted Wingspread and neighboring sites in Culpeper County.

In 2019, VEDP characterized 27 sites in the region, determining that there were three Tier 4, three Tier 3, and 21 Tier 1 and 2 sites. In 2023, a Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Development Award Grant provided \$11.59 million for Shannon Hill in Louisa County and \$3 million for North Fork in Albemarle County.

Site development is a very long process, taking years to reach “project-ready” status. Currently, the Central Virginia Partnership reports that Region 9 is missing out on prospective businesses and investors because it does not have enough sites.

Sites most frequently submitted for consideration over the past 3 years to VEDP, site selection consultants, and individual businesses:

- Albemarle Business Campus, Albemarle County
- North Fork – A UVA Discovery Park, Albemarle County
- Shannon Hill Regional Business Park, Louisa County
- Dalro, Culpeper County
- Kent Corner, Culpeper County
- SLC Financial, Culpeper County
- Stonehaven, Culpeper County
- Thomas E. Lee Industrial Park, Lot 10, Orange County (leased)
- Villages at Terrace Greene, Greene County
- Wingspread, Culpeper County

Source: Central Virginia Partnership

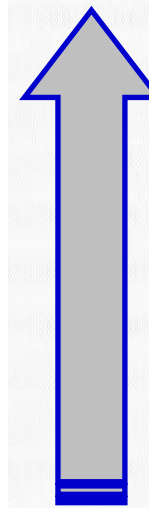
Blue text in Thomas Jefferson Regional Planning District,
Black text in Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Planning District.

E. Workforce Development

As industries continue to evolve and new technologies disrupt traditional business models, the demand for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce exceeds any moment in recent history. At the same time, interviews and engagement with businesses documented that entry-level and mid-level positions are just as hard to fill as upper-level management jobs. These workforce limitations hinder the economic potential of businesses of nearly every size and across a myriad of industries.

Workforce development also plays a vital role in fostering inclusive and equitable economic growth across Region 9. By increasing the accessibility and awareness of training, education, and upskilling opportunities, communities can empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to gain the necessary skills and qualifications to secure well-paying jobs and contribute to the local economy. This not only enhances individual economic mobility but also strengthens the overall economic resilience of a region by cultivating a diverse and capable talent pool.

The ability of the system to draw in expertise from regional businesses and encourage industry-led initiatives will allow for a more adaptive approach where skills training can respond to what is happening on the ground floor of the region's industries. Prioritizing workforce development initiatives that collaborate with public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors is essential for creating a robust and sustainable economic landscape that benefits all community members, from urban to rural settings.



Region 9 Occupations with the Highest Growth, 2018-2023

1. General and Operations Managers (1,442)
2. Stockers and Order Fillers(957)
3. Business Operations Specialists (681)
4. Project Management Specialists (614)
5. Software Developers (470)

“ Finding and developing talent must happen while skill profiles continue to morph — it’s a moving target. ”

— *Shifting Skills, Moving Targets, and Remaking the Workforce*, May 2022, BCG, The Burning Glass Institute, Emsi/Burning Glass

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The goals and initiatives are summarized below, and specific actions related to each initiative are detailed in the following pages.

GOAL 1

Expand economic opportunities in the Food and Beverage industry

- A. Provide specialized training, peers, and mentors to reach young people, recruit talent for specialized positions, and assist businesses with start-up, expansion, and access to new consumer markets.
- B. Leverage and overcome resistance to new technologies for agricultural biotechnology advances in animal and crop sciences and environmental resilience; promote greenhouses and controlled environment agriculture (“CEA”) and continue to expand rural infrastructure.
- C. Monitor land competition and conditions and support climate change research and investments in resilient infrastructure.

GOAL 2

Leverage Virginia’s clean technology assets to establish an expanded hub for innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

- A. Develop a clean energy technology sector plan in Region 9 that focuses on R&D, innovation, and product manufacturing.
- B. Focus on building support for Clean Energy R&D and small-scale manufacturing initiatives.
- C. Support university-based collaboratives to advance R&D in next-generation commercial applications.
- D. Evaluate and build out the Clean Energy supply chain.

GOAL 3

Designate a Defense and Intelligence industry corridor

- A. Market corridor (Rtes. 15 and 29) expanding from Fauquier to Orange, Greene, Culpeper, Albemarle counties and Charlottesville.
- B. Promote incentives such as a defense production zoning overlay.
- C. Focus on infrastructure investments to ready sites with necessary security precautions.
- D. Partner with existing employers to meet needs and provide job training and recruitment for specialized roles.

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

GOAL 4

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

- A. Direct development to desired locations and demand the most advanced build-out to reduce the environmental impacts of data centers.
- B. Continue to target rural broadband deployment.
- C. Develop the workforce pipeline into one with cross-sector skill sets.
- D. Focus on supply chain high-technology manufacturing opportunities.
- E. Leverage private sector involvement for community improvements.

GOAL 5

Expand tourism-based product development and marketing

- A. Maximize public access to rivers and build accessible trailheads.
- B. Attract outdoor outfitters to complement recreational uses.
- C. Grow boutique hotels, B&Bs, resorts, glamping, and other accommodations with connections to smaller downtowns and commercial corridors.
- D. Consider marketing the region as Virginia's Recreational Ridge (R&R) to include the Northern River Blueridge/Western Piedmont-Foothill, spanning the counties of Nelson, Albemarle, Greene, Madison, and Rappahannock.

GOAL 6

Advance recommendations for a regional housing approach

- A. Aggressively expand inventory with new build, infill, and redevelopment projects.
- B. Pursue land assembly to align local land use with desired housing, incorporate data for informed decisions, and monitor plans for unnecessary displacement and gentrification.
- C. Strengthen partnerships with regional planners and public/private partnerships and establish creative financing mechanisms.

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

GOAL 7

Assess cooperative infrastructure development models to enhance site readiness initiatives

- A. Advance municipal support for existing and new sites.
- B. Streamline infrastructure-related approval processes.
- C. Retain an engineering firm to identify new sites and planned future development.

GOAL 8

Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline

- A. Organize and maintain 2-3 private sector coalitions that have committed C-level participation.
- B. Reassess the talent pathways initiative to be more responsive to employer needs.
- C. Determine and measure the talent pipeline for in-demand occupations, quantify demand for critical occupations every six months, and evaluate primary goals such as talent retention, talent attraction, or direct learning.
- D. Continuously verify that credentials and skills taught in educational systems transfer to the private sector.
- E. Provide messaging directed to needs at different skill levels, engage employers in training and mentorship programs, and evaluate best-practice pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, returnships, micro-trainings, and paid training programs.
- F. Continuously measure results, adapt curriculum, learn from worker experiences, and use real-time intelligence from joint business retention and expansion visits with economic developers.
- G. Advocate at the state level for changes to the community college funding model.
- H. Continue to target messaging to retain talent in Central Virginia.

GOAL 1 **Expand economic opportunities in the Food and Beverage industry**

Opportunity Analysis: The Food and Beverage ecosystem presents a significant opportunity to grow through innovation and talent development. A regional focus on this sector promises not just economic growth but also strengthens connections with the broader economy while supporting local agriculture production. By addressing supply chain gaps and leveraging advancements in ag-tech and biotechnology, Region 9 can drive sustainable growth and create a more inclusive economic environment. Investing in the Food and Beverage ecosystem aligns seamlessly with GO Virginia industry targets, offering opportunities that span across the entire region. By embracing new technologies, it can help bridge rural-urban divides and unlock the potential to generate new jobs and economic investments. Additionally, exploring ag-tech and biotech research and application opportunities fosters connections between technology and sustainability, paving the way for a resilient industry ecosystem.

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
1.A	Provide specialized training, peers, and mentors to reach young people, recruit talent for specialized positions, and assist businesses with start-up, expansion, and access to new consumer markets	Alignment with GO Virginia Targets: Investing in this endeavor aligns perfectly with GO Virginia industry targets, contributing to the growth of the sector while advancing broader economic development goals.	Entrepreneurship/Resources/Training: Nurturing entrepreneurship within the sector involves providing resources, training, and mentorship opportunities. By making these accessible to youth and marginalized communities, we ensure a diverse and vibrant industry landscape.
1.B	Leverage and overcome resistance to new technologies for agricultural biotechnology advances in animal and crop sciences and environmental resilience; promote greenhouses and Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA); and continue to expand rural infrastructure.	Advancements in Ag-tech and Biotech: Delving into ag-tech and biotech opens doors to greater potential, forging connections between technology and sustainability and driving innovation in the industry.	Technology: Embracing technology is crucial for driving growth in the food and beverage sector. Investments in agriculture biotech and advancements in areas like greenhouses and CEA hold immense potential for innovation and expansion.
1.C.	Monitor land competition and conditions and support climate change research and investments in resilient infrastructure.	Regional Opportunities: This initiative offers opportunities that span nearly the entire region, bridging the gap between rural and urban economies and fostering a more cohesive economic landscape.	Land Management: Monitoring land competition and conditions is essential, along with supporting research into the impacts of climate change. Investing in resilient infrastructure will be vital for ensuring the sector's long-term sustainability.

GOAL 2

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

Opportunity Analysis: By focusing on the clean energy sector, Central Virginia can capitalize on R&D coming out of the Commonwealth’s academic institutions, research facilities, technology companies, and industry partnerships to foster innovation and develop cutting-edge solutions to advance statewide alternative energy strategies. The focus is for rural Virginia — specifically GO Virginia Regions 2 and 9 — to become an expanded hub that supports national growth opportunities. Region 9 is well positioned to support small-scale manufacturing related to the supply chain of Clean Energy industries, such as component manufacturing for solar energy, advanced small-scale nuclear, and energy storage systems. By strengthening the Clean Energy ecosystem in Central Virginia, anchored by the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and supported by Virginia Tech and the University of Lynchburg in the surrounding area, both regions can leverage their inherent resources to increase and attract investment, create high-quality jobs, and drive economic growth. This will spread the benefits throughout all communities in Region 9.

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
2.A	Develop a clean energy technology sector plan in Region 9 that focuses on R&D, innovation, and product manufacturing.	State Clean Energy Portfolio: Virginia is committed to diversifying its energy portfolio, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and enhancing energy security and resilience.	Integrated Energy Planning: Support the development of a comprehensive energy plan that integrates resources to meet Central Virginia's energy needs sustainably and reliably while preserving forestry and farmland.
2.B	Focus on building support for Clean Energy R&D and small-scale manufacturing initiatives.	Job Creation and Economic Growth: By focusing on R&D initiatives and small-scale manufacturing in the Clean Energy sector, Central Virginia can create high-quality jobs, attract investment, and drive economic growth. These efforts will support the region's workforce, stimulate local businesses, and position Central Virginia as a leader in the clean energy economy.	Public-Private Partnerships: Foster collaboration between government, industry, academia, and other stakeholders to support small-scale energy projects and initiatives, leveraging successful examples seen in Fauquier County, Charlottesville, and Orange County. Establish partnership models that facilitate resource sharing, risk mitigation, and project financing while preserving forestry and farmland.

GOAL 2

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

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
2.C	Support university-based collaboratives to advance R&D in next-generation commercial applications.	University R&D: The University of Virginia (UVA) and Virginia Tech have established degree programs and research relationships to train the next generation of experts and leaders needed to support the Clean Energy sector in the US and around the world. This includes cutting-edge, nuclear-related research and development that will drive next-generation reactors such as the advanced small modular reactors (SMRs) proposed for Southwest Virginia.	Clean Energy R&D: Allocate resources to support R&D initiatives in the Clean Energy sector, focusing on advanced nuclear, solar, and energy storage technologies. Collaborate with academic institutions, research organizations, and industry partners to accelerate innovation and clean energy solutions.
2.D	Evaluate and build out the Clean Energy supply chain.	Existing Business Base: Dozens of Virginia-based companies provide research and testing services, materials, supplies, security, and engineering-related services. Region 9 can build on this base of supply-chain-related businesses.	Business Development: Create incentives and support mechanisms to encourage the growth of Clean Energy businesses in Central Virginia, including startups and small-scale manufacturers. Provide access to funding, technical assistance, and business development resources to help entrepreneurs and businesses.
2.E	Establish policies to support small scale (versus utility scale) solar industry growth that preserves natural resources and farmland.	Small-Scale (non-utility-scale) Solar: Supporting the growth of the small-scale solar industry creates job opportunities, stimulates economic growth, and attracts investment to Central Virginia. By fostering a thriving clean energy economy, Central Virginia can position itself as a leader in the transition to renewable energy.	Education and Outreach: Raise awareness about the benefits of small-scale solar energy (not utility-scale) and promote public support for clean energy initiatives that prioritize farmland preservation. Educate policymakers, businesses, and communities about the opportunities and challenges associated with integrating small-scale solar energy into Central Virginia's energy mix while supporting local agriculture.

GOAL 3

Designate a Defense and Intelligence industry corridor

Opportunity Analysis: There is a significant opportunity to bolster economic output and create job opportunities coming out of Northern Virginia across various localities within GO Virginia Region 9 in the Defense and Intelligence industries. Note: Defense is not a GO Virginia targeted sector. However, by strategically designating a Defense and Intelligence corridor, Region 9 can harness the potential for growth and prosperity in this vital sector. With a focus on strategically designating and nurturing a Defense and Intelligence corridor, the region can advance economic output and job opportunities while promoting regional development and resilience. This initiative has the potential to transform communities, drive innovation, and create a brighter future for all stakeholders involved.

Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
3.A Market the corridor spanning from Fauquier to Orange, Greene, Culpeper, and Albemarle counties and the City of Charlottesville.	Alignment: It aligns with several components of GO Virginia targets, indicating that efforts will contribute to broader regional development goals. Jobs within the Defense and Intelligence industry tend to be high-paying, offering stability and prosperity to individuals and communities.	Marketing: A compelling value proposition must be developed and marketed externally for an expanded corridor across both regions.
3.B Promote incentives such as a defense production zoning overlay.	Rural Benefits: This initiative doesn't just benefit urban areas; it cuts across rural locations as well. By promoting the development of a Defense and Intelligence corridor, Region 9 can bridge the gap between rural and urban economies, ensuring that the benefits of growth are distributed equitably.	Infrastructure: Investments in infrastructure are crucial to the success of the corridor. This includes site readiness efforts at key locations, as well as investments in water and sewer expansion, roads, traffic signals, and potentially specialized security. These investments will not only attract businesses but also support their operations and growth.
3.C Focus on infrastructure investments to ready sites with necessary security precautions.		
3.D Partner with existing employers to meet needs and provide job training and recruitment for specialized roles.	Cross-Sectoral: The Defense and Intelligence industry has cross-sector applications. By fostering its growth, Region 9 promotes long-term economic stability and resilience, as well as opportunities for innovation and collaboration across various industries.	Partnerships: Collaboration is key to success in this endeavor. The region must coordinate with existing employers in related industries to understand their needs and opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, the focus needs to be on job training and talent attraction/retention for specialized roles within and without Central Virginia. By fostering partnerships, Region 9 can maximize the impact of the corridor and ensure its long-term success.

GOAL 4

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

Opportunity Analysis: Given the dynamic evolution of technology, the Information Technology and Digital Communications sectors present a profound opportunity for economic advancement. By prioritizing quality jobs in industries driving cloud computing and digital technologies, we not only meet the demands of 21st-century industries but also align with regional targets for economic growth. This initiative promises to diversify rural economies, capitalize on exponential growth trends, and position Region 9 to capture some of the benefits of the digital revolution. Focusing on the economic impact of digital subsectors aligns seamlessly with GO Virginia targets, leveraging existing assets to amplify growth within these vital sectors. Beyond meeting immediate economic goals, this initiative addresses broader societal challenges by bridging the digital divide and fostering rural prosperity. Maximizing the economic impact of the region’s technology subsectors is not just an opportunity; it’s a necessity for the continued prosperity of communities that are part of the Rappahannock-Rapidan and Thomas Jefferson planning districts. Through strategic investment in land use, rural infrastructure, and cross-sector opportunities, the region can drive economic growth, foster innovation, and ensure a brighter future for generations to come.

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
4.A	Direct development to desired locations and demand the most advanced build-out to reduce the environmental impacts of data centers.	Land Use Optimization: Using planning tools such as Technology Overlay Districts and Innovation Corridors, Region 9 can strategically direct development to desired locations, promoting sector growth while minimizing environmental impact. Prioritizing advanced mechanisms to mitigate the environmental footprint of data center build-out ensures sustainable growth for future generations.	Stakeholder Engagement: Establish a collaborative framework involving key stakeholders from government, industry, and academia to drive implementation efforts and ensure alignment with regional objectives.
4.B	Continue to target rural broadband deployment.	Rural Investments: Targeting ongoing rural broadband deployment through initiatives like the BEAD program is essential to bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusive growth. Investing in rural infrastructure not only unlocks economic opportunities but also fosters community development and resilience.	Strategic Investment Allocation: Allocate resources to prioritize land use optimization, rural investments, and cross-sector initiatives, focusing on areas with the highest potential for economic impact.

GOAL 4

Optimize economic impact of Information Technology and Digital Communications sectors

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
4.C	Develop the workforce pipeline into one with cross-sector skill sets.	<p>Cross-Sector Opportunities: Building a robust workforce pipeline is imperative for the long-term success of the IT and telecommunications subsectors. The transferable skill sets developed in these subsectors catalyze economic growth and innovation across various industries. Exploring supply chains connected to high-tech manufacturing and leveraging private sector involvement for community improvements further amplifies the economic impact.</p>	<p>Policy Advocacy: Advocate for supportive policies at the state and local levels to incentivize investment in IT and telecommunications infrastructure and workforce development.</p>
4.D	Focus on supply chain high-technology manufacturing opportunities.		<p>Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, identify challenges, and adapt strategies accordingly to ensure continued alignment with regional goals.</p>
4.E	Leverage private sector involvement for community improvements.		

GOAL 5 **Expand tourism-based product development and marketing**

Opportunity Analysis: In Central Virginia, a compelling opportunity emerges to elevate the visitation economy through strategic investments in product development, increased marketing, and diverse entertainment amenities. By expanding offerings that cater to both visitors and residents, Region 9 can unlock the region's economic potential while preserving its rich cultural heritage, fostering job creation, and helping downtown retail. By showcasing the region's diverse offerings, the region can sustain tourism benefits by attracting a broader audience, driving economic growth and generating increased tax revenue to enable further investments in the community. This initiative not only drives economic growth and job creation but also fosters community development and preserves the region's unique outdoor assets and heritage.

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
5.A	Maximize public access on rivers and build accessible trailheads.	Maximizing Public Access: Enhancing public access to rivers and building accessible trailheads promotes outdoor recreation and complements recreational uses. This initiative not only attracts tourists but also encourages residents to engage in recreational activities, enhancing overall quality of life.	Infrastructure Development: Invest in infrastructure projects to maximize public access to rivers, build accessible trailheads, and support outdoor recreation activities.
5.B	Attract outdoor outfitters to complement recreational uses.	Attracting Outdoor Outfitters: Collaborating with outdoor outfitters enhances the region's appeal to adventure enthusiasts, diversifying tourism offerings and extending visitor stays.	Partnership Building: Forge partnerships with outdoor outfitters to enhance the region's outdoor recreational offerings and attract adventure-seeking visitors. Stakeholder Engagement: Establish a multi-stakeholder task force including representatives from government, tourism boards, local businesses, and community organizations to drive implementation efforts.

GOAL 5 **Expand tourism-based product development and marketing (cont'd)**

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
5.C	Grow boutique hotels, B&Bs, resorts, glamping, and other accommodations with connections to smaller downtowns and commercial corridors.	Expanding Accommodations: Actively growing glamping, boutique/B&B, resorts, and other accommodations bolsters the region's hospitality sector. By building connections to smaller downtowns and commercial corridors, we spread economic benefits across urban and rural areas.	Hospitality Expansion: Facilitate the growth of accommodations such as glamping sites, boutique/B&Bs, and resorts, fostering connections to smaller downtowns and commercial corridors.
5.D	Consider marketing the region as Virginia's Recreational Ridge (R&R) to include the Northern River Blue Ridge/Western Piedmont-Foothill, spanning the counties of Nelson, Albemarle, Greene, Madison, and Rappahannock.	R&R Initiative: Introducing the Recreational Ridge (R&R) concept in the Northern River Blue Ridge/Western Piedmont-Foothill counties (Nelson, Albemarle, Greene, Madison, Rappahannock) promotes regional collaboration and positions Central Virginia as a premier recreational destination.	R&R Initiative Launch: Launch the Recreational Ridge (R&R) initiative in designated counties, promoting collaboration and leveraging regional strengths to enhance the visitor experience.

Opportunity Analysis: Central Virginia faces significant housing pressures, presenting a critical opportunity to proactively address these challenges through tailored development approaches. Recognizing housing as an economic development issue, this Super Regional strategy aims to expand housing inventory, optimize land use, and foster strategic partnerships to ensure equitable access to housing for all residents. The housing shortage in Central Virginia not only impacts residents' quality of life but also poses economic challenges. Addressing this issue can stimulate economic growth, attract talent, and enhance overall community well-being. By advancing recommendations for a regional housing approach, Central Virginia can proactively address housing pressures and produce more sustainable development. Through collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and creative financing solutions, Region 9 can ensure more inclusive, sustained development that builds more vibrant and thriving communities for future generations.

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
6.A	Aggressively expand inventory with new build, infill, and redevelopment projects.	Expanding Inventory: Take a multi-faceted approach to expanding housing inventory, including new builds, infill development, and redevelopment projects. By diversifying housing options, Region 9 can meet the varied needs of residents and promote inclusive growth.	<p>Stakeholder Engagement: Establish a collaborative framework involving local governments, developers, community organizations, and residents to drive housing initiatives forward.</p> <p>Policy Alignment: Work closely with local governments to align land use policies with housing objectives, facilitating streamlined development processes and incentivizing affordable housing initiatives.</p>
6.B	Pursue land assembly to align local land use with desired housing, incorporate data for informed decisions, and monitor plans for unnecessary displacement and gentrification.	Land Use Optimization: Aligning local land use policies with desired housing outcomes is essential. This involves pursuing land assembly and leveraging underutilized properties, including those owned by public and educational institutions. Data-driven decision-making ensures that housing initiatives are responsive to market needs while mitigating risks of displacement and gentrification.	<p>Data-Driven Decision-Making: Invest in robust data collection and analysis to inform housing strategies and identify areas of need. Regular monitoring ensures that housing initiatives remain responsive to evolving market dynamics.</p> <p>Creative Financing Solutions: Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as low-interest loans, tax incentives, and public subsidies, to support individuals and developers in housing endeavors.</p>

GOAL 6 Advance recommendations for a regional housing approach (cont'd)

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
6.C.	Strengthen partnerships with regional planners and public/private partnerships and establish creative financing mechanisms.	Partnership Development: Creative financing mechanisms for both individuals and developers are crucial to unlocking housing opportunities. Public-private partnerships and collaboration with Planning District Commissions (PDCs) amplify resources and expertise, facilitating the implementation of comprehensive housing solutions.	Partnership Formation: Forge strategic partnerships with private developers, financial institutions, and community organizations to leverage resources and expertise in housing development and financing.

GOAL 7

Assess cooperative infrastructure development models to enhance site readiness initiatives

Opportunity Analysis: The Central Virginia region stands at a critical juncture, poised for significant economic growth and expansion. However, current constraints in zoned sites and developable acreage hinder the region's ability to compete for transformative projects. A comprehensive analysis reveals a lack of available sites that can accommodate significant investment projects. While efforts have been made to secure funding and develop key sites like the Shannon Hill Regional Business Park and North Fork, gaps persist in site readiness and infrastructure development. To capitalize on the region's potential, strategic initiatives focused on site readiness efforts and infrastructure build-out are imperative. The identified opportunity lies in identifying new sites and preparing those existing sites to attract businesses across target industry sectors. The scarcity of mega-sites coupled with the predominance of small industrial sites underscores the urgency for intervention. This scarcity poses a barrier to competitiveness in securing growth sectors crucial for economic advancement. By prioritizing site readiness efforts and infrastructure build-out, Central Virginia can unlock its full economic potential and position itself as a competitive destination for investment and growth.

	Action	Strategy Components	Tactics
7.A	Advance municipal support for existing and new sites.	Strategic Funding Allocation: Secure additional funding to expedite site readiness efforts and infrastructure development. Continued investment is critical to bring more sites to project-ready status and identify future land needs.	Establish a task force comprising key stakeholders to oversee implementation efforts. Retain a leading engineering firm to conduct a thorough assessment of available sites and formulate a development strategy.
7.B	Streamline infrastructure-related approval processes.	Public-Private Collaboration: Foster collaboration between municipal governments, private sector stakeholders, and engineering firms to streamline infrastructure-related approval processes and identify new development sites.	Work closely with municipal governments to expedite approval processes and remove regulatory barriers. Leverage existing funding mechanisms and explore innovative financing solutions to support infrastructure development initiatives.
7.C.	Retain an engineering firm to identify new sites and planned future development.	Long-Term Planning: Develop a long-term plan for infrastructure build-out, incorporating foresight into future land needs and growth projections. Investment Prioritization: Prioritize investment in projects with high potential for economic impact, leveraging data-driven insights to guide decision-making.	

GOAL 8

Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline

Opportunity Analysis: This Super Regional strategy lays the groundwork for a workforce consortium dedicated to advancing demand-based occupations. By reimagining the employer-led talent pipeline, Region 9 can ensure a steady supply of skilled workers tailored to meet the evolving needs of the region's industries. This initiative aligns seamlessly with the GO Virginia mandate, underscoring a commitment to fostering a vibrant and resilient economy. The imperative is to realign efforts with industry needs and insights, fostering agility and responsiveness to changing market dynamics. By aligning efforts with industry needs and fostering collaboration across sectors, this initiative lays the foundation for a more agile, responsive, and effective workforce ecosystem characterized by sustained economic growth and prosperity.

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
8.A	Organize and maintain 2-3 private sector coalitions that have committed C-level participation.	Talent Pipeline Management: Rigorous verification of credentials and skills ensures alignment with the private sector and educational systems. Tailored messages tailored to workers at different skill levels maximize engagement and effectiveness. Incentivizing employer-led training and mentorships fosters active involvement in the pipeline.	Stakeholder Engagement: Establish a collaborative framework involving key stakeholders from government, industry, and academia to drive implementation efforts.
8.B	Reassess the talent pathways initiative to be more responsive to employer needs.		
8.C	Determine and measure the talent pipeline for in-demand occupations, quantify demand for critical occupations every six months, and evaluate primary goals such as talent retention, talent attraction, or direct learning.	Training and Development: Evaluation of various tactics, including pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, returnships, microtraining, and paid training is essential to growing the local workforce. Leveraging programs like Virginia TOP enhances skill development and job readiness, aligning talent with industry demands.	Program Development: Design and implement tailored training programs that are aligned with industry demands and workforce needs.
8.D	Continuously verify that credentials and skills taught in educational systems transfer to the private sector.		

GOAL 8

Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline (cont'd)

	Action	Rationale	Strategy Components
8.E	Provide messaging directed to needs at different skill levels, engage employers in training and mentorship programs, and evaluate best-practice pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, returnships, micro-trainings, and paid training programs.	<p>Measurement and Adaptation: Continuous measurement of the talent pipeline for in-demand occupations facilitates progress tracking and identifies areas for improvement. Real-time evaluation and curriculum adaptation based on joint business retention and expansion (BRE) visits ensure alignment with industry needs.</p>	<p>Measurement and Evaluation: Deploy robust measurement mechanisms to track progress and adapt strategies in real-time based on industry feedback.</p>
8.F	Continuously measure results, adapt curriculum, learn from worker experiences, and use real-time intelligence from joint business retention and expansion visits with economic developers.	<p>Advocacy: Advocating for state-level changes to the community college funding model is critical for supporting workforce development initiatives.</p> <p>Messaging: Continued messaging emphasizes the importance of retaining talent in Central Virginia and underscores regional opportunities. Connecting to data from the Talent Pathways Initiative reinforces the significance of investing in the local workforce.</p>	
8.G	Advocate at the state level for changes to the community college funding model.		<p>Advocacy Campaigns: Engage in targeted advocacy campaigns to effect policy changes conducive to workforce development and talent retention.</p>
8.H	Continue to target messaging to retain talent in Central Virginia.		

4 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. For Goal 3, the Charlottesville Regional Chamber Defense Affairs Committee could be engaged for the southern part of Region 9. 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.

ABOUT CAMOIN ASSOCIATES

As the nation's only full-service economic development and lead generation consulting firm, Camoin Associates empowers communities through human connection backed by robust analytics.

Since 1999, Camoin Associates has helped local and state governments, economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses across the country generate economic results marked by resiliency and prosperity.

To learn more about our experience and projects in all of our service lines, please visit our website at www.camoinassociates.com. You can also find us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

The Project Team

Dan Gundersen, FM, HLM
Principal

Alex Tranmer, CEcD
Senior Project Manager

Service Lines



Strategic and
Organizational
Planning



Real Estate
Development
Services



Impact
Analysis



Lead Generation
and Relationships



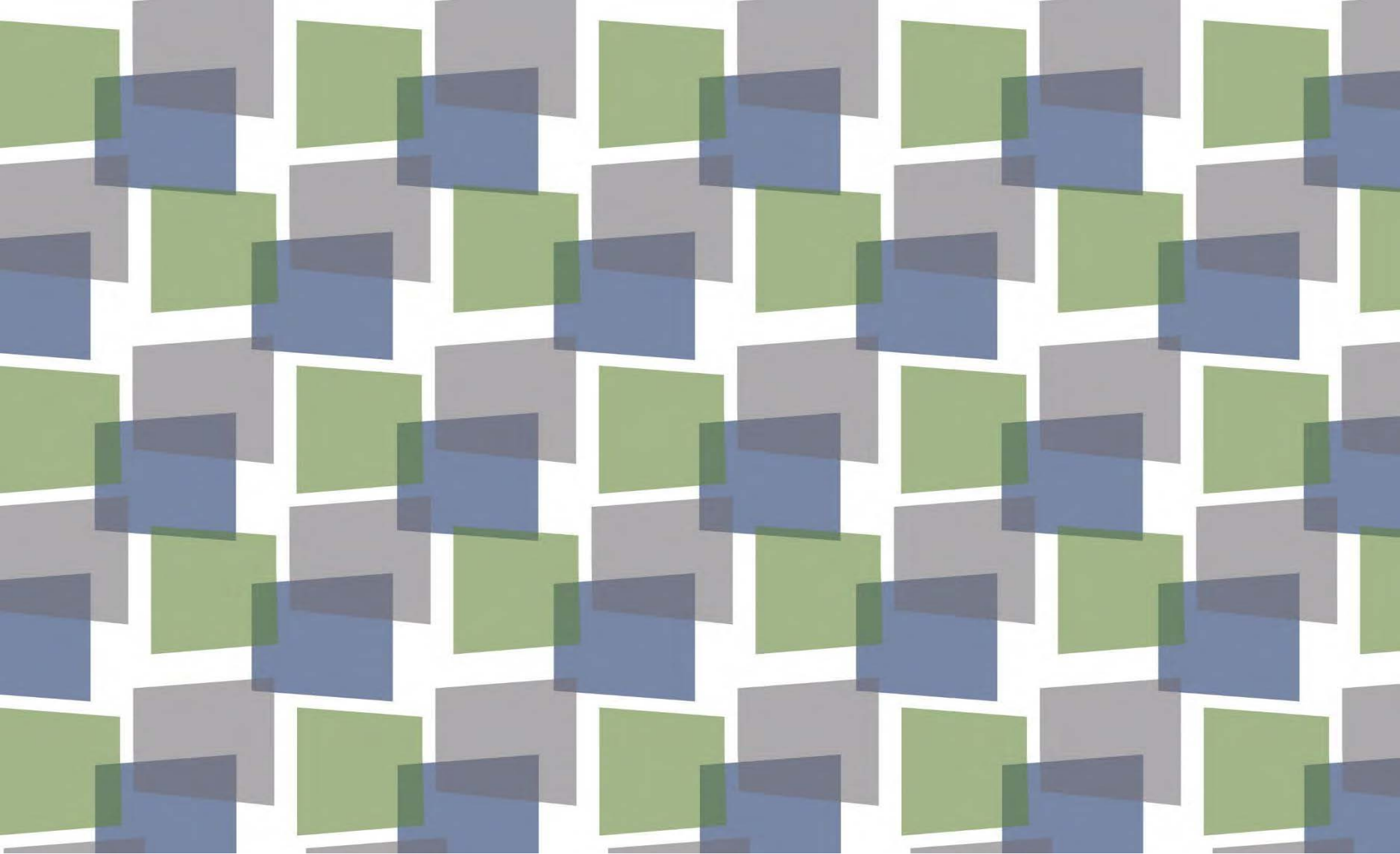
Industry and
Workforce
Analytics



Entrepreneurship
and Innovation



Business
Attraction and
Retention



 camoin
associates
www.camoinassociates.com