

PROJECT

# ENABLE

ENABLING A **BETTER LIFE** ECONOMICALLY.

2019  
2022

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGIC PLAN





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**Albemarle County's focus on economic development has developed significant momentum in recent years.** The County has taken a very deliberate, thoughtful, and strategic approach that works within the framework of the community's vision as established in the Comprehensive Plan and other established policy items.

## SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES ALONG THE WAY:

**2008**

**Updating the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan** – to reflect a more up-to-date strategic focus on desired industries.

**2009**

**Economic Opportunity Fund created** – for the first time, established a dedicated source of funding to support desirable economic development activities, used in several instances to match state grant funds for capital investment and above average wage jobs.

**2010**

**Economic Vitality Action Plan/Target Industry Study** – action plan adopted by the Board in 2010 with five specific goal areas; one of the most significant outcomes was a regional target industry study commissioned to identify industry groups with greatest chance of success given community assets and preferences – analyzed assets, workforce, existing industry clusters, etc.

**2012**

**Zoning ordinance modernized** – a complete modernization of the zoning ordinance to provide more flexibility and location options for businesses in target industry sectors.

**2015**

**Economic Development Office created** – hired the County's first Economic Development Director.

**2016**

**Restructured Economic Development Authority (EDA)** – streamlined procedures that allow the EDA to operate as a more effective economic development partner.

**2016**

**Economic development identified as critical focus on Strategic Plan** – FY17-19 Strategic Plan adopted last year identifies redevelopment and revitalization of County's urban areas, including focus on economic development, as top priorities.

**2016 and 2017**

**Support for economic development in Two Year Plan and FY18 Annual Budget** – dedicated money to support initiatives that promote capital investment, quality jobs, and economic vitality for urban areas.

## CONTRIBUTING POLICIES/DOCUMENTS:

Existing County policies and documents provide an overarching structure and parameters to help define priorities in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY – UPDATED IN 2008:

The purpose of this Economic Development Policy is, first and foremost, to provide the local citizenry an improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life. Economic growth and vitality are required to sustain and enhance the human economic, cultural, and natural characteristics of our community. By creating and sustaining a high quality, diversified economic environment, citizens will enjoy improved job opportunities, competitive wages, workforce development opportunities, and the community will enjoy a growing and diversified tax base.

## County's Vision Statement:

Albemarle County envisions a community with...

- Abundant natural, historic, and scenic resources
- Healthy ecosystems
- Active and vibrant development areas
- A physical environment that supports healthy lifestyles
- A thriving economy
- Exceptional educational opportunity

...for present and future generations.

### ECONOMIC VITALITY THREE YEAR ACTION PLAN PREAMBLE – ADOPTED IN 2010:

The Economic Development Policy of the County's Comprehensive Plan has a stated purpose to "provide the local citizenry an improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life." This Action Plan is intended to translate the purpose and goals of the Economic Development Policy into concrete and measurable actions, being very mindful of the need to adhere to already established growth management objectives and natural resource protections. While this Plan is focused on accomplishing specific action items within the next three years, the County recognizes the need for a long-term commitment to economic vitality. This Plan is intended to establish a sustainable pathway for the long-term health of our local economy.

### TARGET INDUSTRY STUDY – COMPLETED IN 2012:

The Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development directed consultant work on a Target Industry Study for its member jurisdictions, including Albemarle County, which was completed in April 2012. This study identifies types of industries that have the strongest potential to succeed and offer the best prospects for "good jobs," meaning jobs that offer a higher quality of life (security, higher wages, opportunities for advancement, training, flexibility), and strong investment both in our larger region and specifically in Albemarle County. The Board of Supervisors endorsed the targets recommended for Albemarle County in May 2012. It is important to note that while identified target industries are the particular focus of many of the strategic plan goals and objectives, the County continues to recognize the value of and to support the many businesses outside of the target industries that benefit our community's economy.

The list of target sectors is a list of optimal targets and should not be considered to exclude related sectors. It is critical to emphasize that the Target Industry Study supports the cultivation and nurturing of existing businesses and considers employment of current residents as its most important outcome. The targets were selected based on available workforce, alignment with community preferences, and growth potential as well as strong multiplier effects that create jobs across a broad spectrum of skill sets.

#### The recommended target industries are:

- Bioscience and Medical Devices
- Business & Financial Services
- Information Technology and Defense & Security
- Agribusiness and Food Processing

#### Complementary targets are:

- Health Services
- Arts, Design and Sports & Media

### JOINT ENDORSEMENT OF MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES – COMPLETED IN 2017:

In July 2017, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Economic Development Authority jointly endorsed the Mission and Guiding Principles for an Economic Development Strategic Plan (see more on page 7). The development of specific goals, objectives, and strategies for these principles were delayed until the arrival of a new County Executive and Director of Economic Development.

### RECONSTITUTION OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE-ALBEMARLE CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU (CACVB):

In September 2018, the Executive Board of the CACVB met for the first time. Tourism will be part of Albemarle's strategic initiatives.

# OUR VISION

**COUNTY  
VISION  
STATEMENT**

**COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN**

**COUNTY  
STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

**ED MISSION  
AND GUIDING  
PRINCIPLES**

**ECON DEV  
STRATEGIC  
PLAN**

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

## Albemarle County Economic Development Guiding Principles:

**ECONOMIC DIVERSITY:** Support a diverse and vibrant economy that offers a broad range of job opportunities across the full spectrum of skill levels while delivering high quality government services to our residents.

**ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION:** Collaborate on all levels (local, regional, and state) to maximize the economic opportunities for the area in a cost-effective manner, including close partnerships with the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP/ORGANIC GROWTH:** Create an environment that encourages, values, and supports entrepreneurship and builds value from within by supporting those businesses or assets who have been a contributor to our community.

**BUILD AWARENESS OF LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES:** Build a strong level of awareness amongst students and young adults of the availability of local career and economic opportunities that keep young people here and support efforts that build a skilled and talented workforce.

**EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP:** Recognize and support the strength of our local educational institutions and promote lifelong learning opportunities.

**LEVERAGE INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL:** Strengthen and diversify Albemarle's economy by leveraging our intellectual capital to promote expansion of business interests to attract investment and enhance the livability of our community (and not detract from it).

**SUPPORT CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE:** Support social infrastructure through business offerings that recognize family, educational, and cultural needs and that help people be successful, productive employees and focus the County's capital investments in ways that support desired economic development activity, i.e. physical infrastructure that encourages placemaking.

**ENCOURAGE ATTRACTION OF PRIVATE CAPITAL/DIRECT INVESTMENT:** Focus significant effort on attracting the investment of private capital into our economy that grows jobs, creates opportunity, increases tax revenues and lessens dependence on public investment for necessary infrastructure.

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

**The next step** in the County's Economic Development Program involves the adoption of a Strategic Plan that identifies economic development priorities by establishing goals, objectives, and strategies for the following four years. Hereafter, the Economic Development Strategic Plan is called "Project ENABLE" because its primary purpose is to ENable A Better Life Economically. These priorities shall align with community development goals, the Comprehensive Plan and the County's overall Strategic Plan. Together, they create an economy driven by business, industry, and institutions in a way that complements growth management.

Project ENABLE will utilize the labor force, resources, and structures to export goods and services that reflect the County's comparative economic advantages, as outlined in the 2012 Target Industry Study and the Region 9 Growth and Diversification Plan. This approach will maximize Albemarle's economic vitality and import wealth into the area. Its success will require a cross-functional internal team as well as the inclusion of external partners. Project ENABLE will inform budgetary, capital, infrastructure, and work plans for the impacted departments and the County overall. It will provide clear direction and prioritization while remaining flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions.

## Project ENABLE

The County recognizes that economic development is most successful as a "team sport" which requires successful internal and external partnerships to fulfill the mission of Project ENABLE. The strategic plans of key partners at the local and state level have been considered in the development of this plan, including UVA., the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, and the Virginia Partnership for Economic Development.

*To help clarify the role played by the County in these partnerships, a glossary of terms is provided on the following page. This glossary provides context-specific definitions to better understand the roles and responsibilities of the County throughout Project ENABLE.*



**Agribusiness:**

The business of agricultural production, including breeding, crop production, distribution, processing and seed supply

**Business Process Optimization:**

A County-wide effort to improve service delivery through better collaboration and a reduction in the duplication of efforts

**Business Cluster Strategy:**

Convening a group of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and others in a local geography to increase productivity and competitiveness within a given sector

**Consumptive business:**

An establishment that primarily provides a good or service locally (within the Charlottesville MSA)

**Controllable barriers:**

The County's administrative policies and processes that are discretionary in nature, not regulatory

**Rapid Response Team:**

A parallel organization comprised of several team members from internal departments (such as Community Development, Finance, Parks and Recreation, County Attorney, and County Executive's Office) that collaborate on Economic Development projects on an as-needed basis

**Economic Gardening:**

An economic development strategy aimed at growing second-stage companies (i.e. primary businesses with 10-100 employees)

**Follow:**

Respond, "Do no harm"

**Institution(s):**

Governmental and quasi-governmental organizations

**Lead:**

Develop, initiate, organize, coordinate, direct, guide, manage the effort and be accountable for the result

**Monitor:**

Regularly observe and take notice of collected data or efforts by others

**Charlottesville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):**

Currently defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as Albemarle, Greene, Nelson, Fluvanna and Buckingham counties, as well as the City of Charlottesville

**Participate:**

Actively cooperate, engage, collaborate in the effort and contribute to the result

**Partner:**

Collaborate to equally share the responsibility of leading an effort and sharing accountability for the result

**Primary business:**

An establishment that produces a good or service locally and primarily sells it outside of the Charlottesville MSA

**Refer:**

Encourage the use of other resources

**Scorecard:**

A graphical representation of the Economic Development Office's performance

**Support:**

Actively or passively contribute by providing consultation and/or financial resources to purposefully avoid duplicating efforts

**Technology Transfer:**

The process of transferring technology from its origination to wider distribution

**VEDP's VALET Program:**

A two-year business acceleration program aimed at increasing international exports



# ORGANIZATIONAL KEY

**ACPS:** Albemarle County Public Schools

**CACVB:** Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau

**CIC:** Community Investment Collaborative

**CVPED:** Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development

**CVSBDC:** Central Virginia Small Business Development Center

**EDO:** Albemarle County Economic Development Office

**EDA:** Albemarle County Economic Development Authority

**GO Virginia, Region 9 Partners:**

Albemarle County, City of Charlottesville, Culpeper County, Fauquier County, Fluvanna County, Greene County, Louisa County, Madison County, Nelson County, Orange County, Rappahannock County

**PVCC:** Piedmont Virginia Community College

**SCORE:** Service Corps of Retired Executives

**TJPDC:** Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

**VEDP:** Virginia Economic Development Partnership





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MISSION:

To attract additional financial resources into the community through responsible economic development activities that enhance the County's competitive position and result in quality job creation and career employment opportunities, increased tax base, enhanced natural resources and community character, and an improved quality of life for all citizens.

# GOAL 1

## STRENGTHEN EXISTING BUSINESS RETENTION AND/OR EXPANSION (BRE) TO HELP EXISTING BUSINESSES BE SUCCESSFUL

**OBJECTIVE 1** | Lead the formalization of the existing BRE program

### STRATEGIES:

- Lead the creation of a schedule to visit a representative sample of target industries and primary businesses at least once every two years
- Develop a systematic approach for using business visitation data to improve retention and expansion
- Refer consumptive businesses to existing community resources like the CVSBDC, CIC, SCORE, etc.
- Monitor the small business survey of CVSBDC
- Lead an enhanced level service for primary businesses by providing customized support
- Partner with the private sector, City, UVa. and CVPED to examine a business cluster group strategy



# GOAL 2

## IMPROVE THE BUSINESS CLIMATE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT ARE CRITICAL PARTNERS

**OBJECTIVE 1** | Improve Efficiency by Removing and Reducing Controllable Barriers

### STRATEGIES:

- Partner with Community Development Dept. to support Zoning Code and Zoning Map amendments that permit business expansion and retention consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Support Community Development Dept. led improvements to expedite the development review process consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Support the efforts of on-going Business Process Optimization

**OBJECTIVE 2** | Clarify and improve customer experience for starting and operating a business

### STRATEGIES:

- Create a separate website the contains clear guidelines on how to open a business
- Work with Rapid Response Team on Business Process Optimization for starting a business



# GOAL 3

## LEAD THE COUNTY'S READINESS TO ACCOMMODATE BUSINESS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT ARE CRITICAL PARTNERS

**OBJECTIVE 1** | Lead the growth of targeted industries, existing primary businesses, and emerging opportunities

### STRATEGIES:

- Lead, partner or support site work that escalates at least two Development Area sites to a higher tier as defined by VEDP's Business Ready Sites Program (sites may be less than 100 acres)
- Lead an economic development planning exercise for the Broadway Street corridor called the "Broadway Blueprint."
- Recruit and refer primary business to VEDP's Economic Gardening pilot program and international VALET program
- Partner with the Chamber of Commerce through the Defense Affairs Committee on the retention and expansion of Department of Defense facilities
- Lead efforts to help businesses take advantage of state and federal brownfield grant programs
- Partner with the University of Virginia and University of Virginia Foundation to advance the Research Park

**OBJECTIVE 2** | Represent economic development interests in County and institutional partners' planning processes

### STRATEGIES:

- Partner with the Community Development Dept. to evaluate the sufficiency of land inventory designated for commercial and industrial uses within the Development Areas
- Partner with the Community Development Dept. to increase the inventory of land available for business by re-designating land within the Development Areas
- Partner with the Community Development Dept. to examine privately-held and County-owned property that could be rezoned for business in the Development Areas
- Participate in Albemarle County departmental planning processes and work functions by representing Economic Development interests in projects like the Climate Action Plan, Southwood, High School Center One, etc.
- Support internal staff efforts to engage in issues of diversity, equity and inclusion

- Participate in planning efforts of external economic development partners, including the partners in GO Virginia Region 9, UVa., PVCC, CVPED, TJPDC, ACPS, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

**OBJECTIVE 3** | Lead the creation and implementation of economic development incentives, programs, and policies

### STRATEGIES:

- Lead the formalization of a policy for public-private partnerships (P3)
- Revise guidelines of the Economic Opportunity Fund (EOF) to permit matching for the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP)
- Lead efforts to help businesses take advantage of grant programs, state and federal financing opportunities







**OBJECTIVE 4 | Support the integration of economic development analysis and fiscal impact in the development review process**

**STRATEGIES:**

- Partner with Rapid Response Team to identify when fiscal impact analyses are desired and provide timely analysis of appropriate projects
- Partner to revise the existing criteria of the Priority Review Process to capture more business opportunities aligned with Project ENABLE

**OBJECTIVE 5 | Support a skilled and trained workforce**

*ACPS, ACDSS, Piedmont Workforce Network, UVA, and PVCC are critical partners for this objective*

**STRATEGIES:**

- Support Albemarle County Public Schools, PVCC’s Network2Work, CATEC, Piedmont Workforce Network, and/or the City of Charlottesville’s GO workforce training programs

**OBJECTIVE 6 | Lead and support agribusinesses**

**STRATEGIES:**

- Partner with others “to promote agriculture, forestry, and agribusiness enterprises in the Rural Area that help support the Rural Area goals for a strong agricultural and forestal economy” consistent with the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 6, Strategy 1b. of the Comprehensive Plan)
- Connect existing primary businesses to state and federal resources such as AFID grants, USDA
- Convene stakeholders from the winery, brewery, cidery, and distillery industries to identify opportunities to successfully become or grow as a primary business
- Monitor existing agribusiness roundtables led by the Chamber of Commerce, VADO, and other similar institutional partners
- Monitor existing non-profit and private sector agribusiness organizations like the Farm Bureau and Community of Charlottesville Wedding and Event Professionals (CCWEP)

# GOAL 4

## SEEK PRIVATE INVESTMENT TO FURTHER THE PUBLIC GOOD

**OBJECTIVE 1 | Partner with others to develop projects that result in a public good or enhance natural resources**

### STRATEGIES:

- Partner with willing developers to jointly create a built environment with public components consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

**OBJECTIVE 2 | Support development projects that capitalize on our assets, inspiration, and potential to create unique and community-based public spaces**

### STRATEGIES:

- Partner with Community Development Dept. on placemaking, mixed-use, and redevelopment opportunities

**OBJECTIVE 3 | Lead the development of public-private partnerships that increase direct private investment**

### STRATEGIES:

- Review County-owned properties for a higher and better use
- Recommend criteria that allows anyone to share partnership ideas or interests with Albemarle County
- Recommend customized solutions to enable economic development projects to go forward that otherwise infeasible through the use of synthetic tax increment financing, historic tax credits, parking, infrastructure, grants, etc.
- Lead the promotion of Opportunity Zones

# GOAL 5

## EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY AND ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS/COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS IS A CRITICAL PARTNER

**OBJECTIVE 1 | Build community awareness for ED initiatives**

### STRATEGIES:

- Lead the development of an EDO website
- Lead the creation of a recurring communication to the public
- Utilize social media to inform and educate the public and highlight successes
- Lead the creation of a written and verbal annual report

**OBJECTIVE 2 | Identify, track and publish regular analytics that benchmark performance**

### STRATEGIES:

- Report progress to the Board of Supervisors, EDA, business community, and other stakeholders via an economic development scorecard



# GOAL 6

## LEAD EXTERNAL EFFORTS TO CREATE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

FINANCE DEPARTMENT IS A CRITICAL PARTNER

**OBJECTIVE 1** | Create partnerships to advance County's strategic and economic development goals

### STRATEGIES:

- Support Region 9 Growth and Diversification Plan

**OBJECTIVE 2** | Lead the formalization of operating protocols with regional partners to further develop the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem

### STRATEGIES:

- Support UVA, PVCC, ACPS and CATEC to leverage technology transfer
- Support GO Virginia and similar grants that are consistent with Project ENABLE
- Support TJPDC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) effort

- Partner with UVA, City of Charlottesville and others to work collectively by developing a more cohesive, regional community of entrepreneurs and supporters that help new high growth ventures form, survive and expand. The partners will work cooperatively to solicit ideas, establish a vision, create a plan, secure buy-in from stakeholders, and begin implementation with alacrity (i.e. create an innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem)

**OBJECTIVE 3** | Strengthen effective working partnership with the Economic Development Authority

### STRATEGIES:

- Research and benchmark specialized roles and fees charged by other communities
- Partner with the Board of Supervisors and EDA to clarify the EDA role and create specific goals
- Schedule regular information sessions to discuss direction and activities







# GOAL 7

## PARTNER TO EXPAND EFFORTS TO BUILD THE COUNTY'S TOURISM SECTOR

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS/COMMUNITY RELATIONS IS A CRITICAL PARTNER

Objective 1 | Partner with CACVB Executive Board and staff to support regional tourism priorities

Objective 2 | Support existing and new tourism products in Albemarle County

Objective 3 | Partner with others to leverage Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) resources





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