

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
In partnership with GO Virginia Region 9



2024

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



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Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development
Central Virginia Small Business Development Center
Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau
Charlottesville Office of Economic Development
Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce
Devils Backbone Brewing Company
Economic Development and Tourism Office, Greene County
Economic Development Office, Nelson County
Fluvanna County Office of Economic Development
GO Virginia Region 9 Council
Greene County Chamber of Commerce
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1 INTRODUCTION

Regional Planning for Regional Success

This endeavor is the first of its kind for this region. The process of planning and engagement during the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) brought together each corner of the region and illuminated similarities and distinct factors in the jurisdictions that make up the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC).

A CEDS enables the region to look at the economy from a holistic vantage point and consider physical infrastructure, partnerships, networks, programs, and policies that contribute to overall prosperity.

The TJPDC CEDS will act as a guiding document for the TJPDC and its network of regional partners, allowing them to act cohesively and collaboratively to achieve their economic and community development goals. In the face of economic or environmental uncertainty, the CEDS provides a framework for the region to understand where actions will have the greatest impact and where resources can be leveraged.

Over the course of the 18-month planning process, the CEDS Committee and those involved in engagement laid the groundwork for continued collaboration, frequent feedback sessions, and openness in rethinking how to break through siloed work.

The strategies within this document aim to:

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

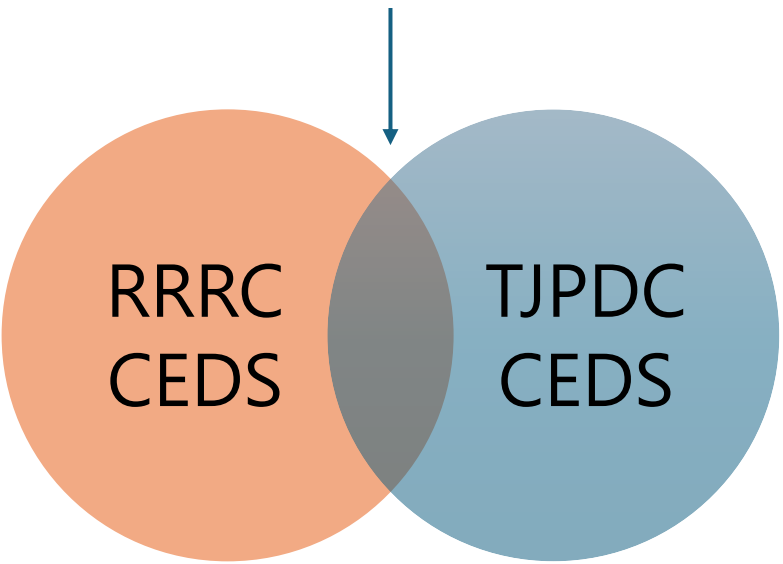


A Novel Approach to Working Across Regions

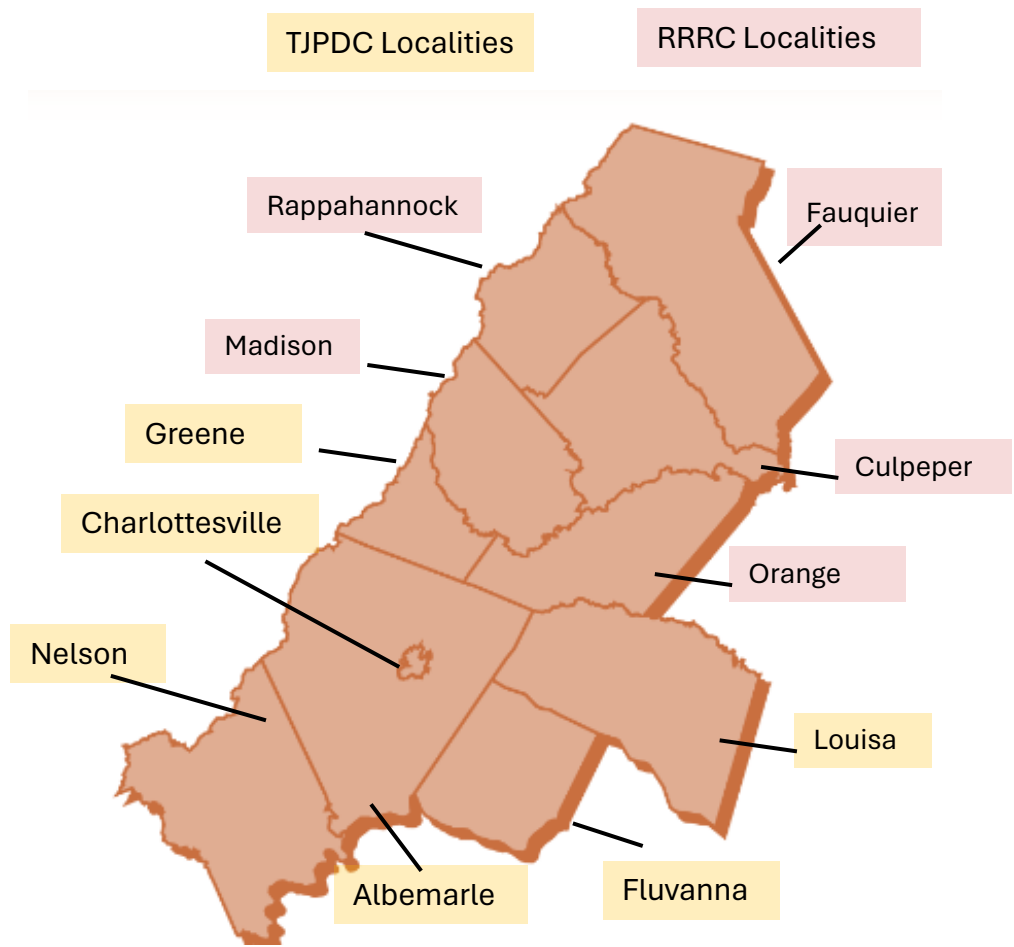
The TJPDC CEDS was completed in partnership with two other concurrent processes. The bordering planning district commission, Rappahannock-Rapidan Reginal Commission (RRRC), also went through a planning process to prepare a CEDS. The two planning district commissions coordinated these efforts to work 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 TJPDC and the RRRC will advance their own CEDS over the course of the next five years, while also working with GO Virginia Region 9 to advance super regional strategies that cover portions of both planning district commissions.

GO Virginia Super Regional Strategies



GO Virginia Region 9



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

Principles of the CEDS

The CEDS aims to incorporate the community's values and align strategies with the group's principles. As part of the planning process, the CEDS Committee discussed the region's approach to equitable economic development. 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.

The Center for Nonprofit Excellence, located in Charlottesville, also offers an understanding of the concept of equity.

"The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups."

-7 Actionable Principles for a Strong Social Sector, Center for Nonprofit Excellence

What principles should anchor the CEDS?

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

"Economic Resiliency for All not some"

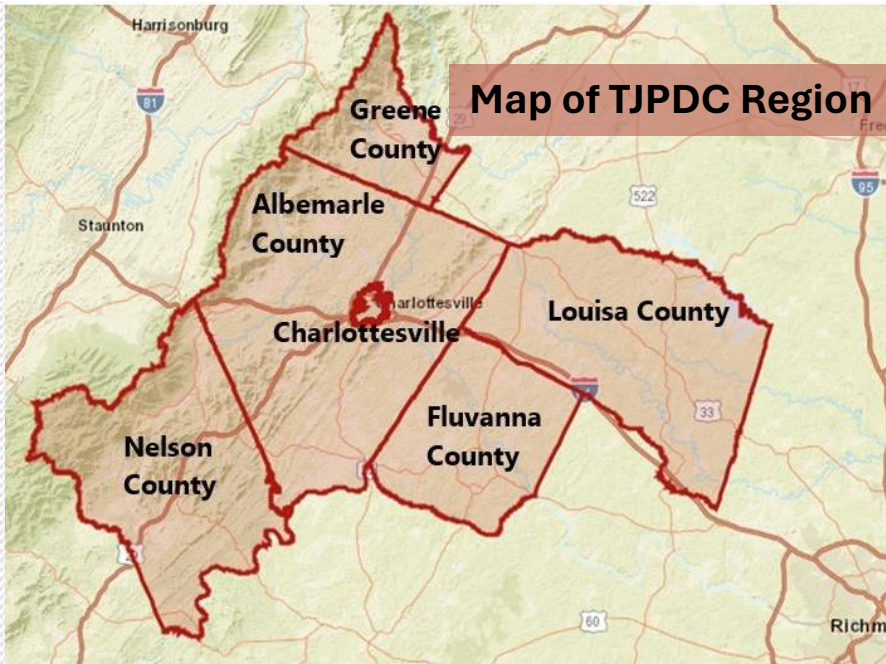
"Access & engagement equity"

"Balanced goals reflective of reality"

"[The] uniqueness of our area and why it's a great place to live and work"

2 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Spanning 2,140 square miles, the TJPDC region includes a wide range of geographies in Central Virginia. It covers six member governments: Albemarle County, Fluvanna County, Louisa County, the City of Charlottesville, Greene County, and Nelson County. See Appendix I, II, III for more data analysis.



QUICK REGIONAL FACTS:

Population: 270,319

Compound Annual Growth Rate - Population

- 2000-2010: 1.6%
- 2010-2020: 1.2%
- 2020-2022: 1.3%

Household size: 2.41

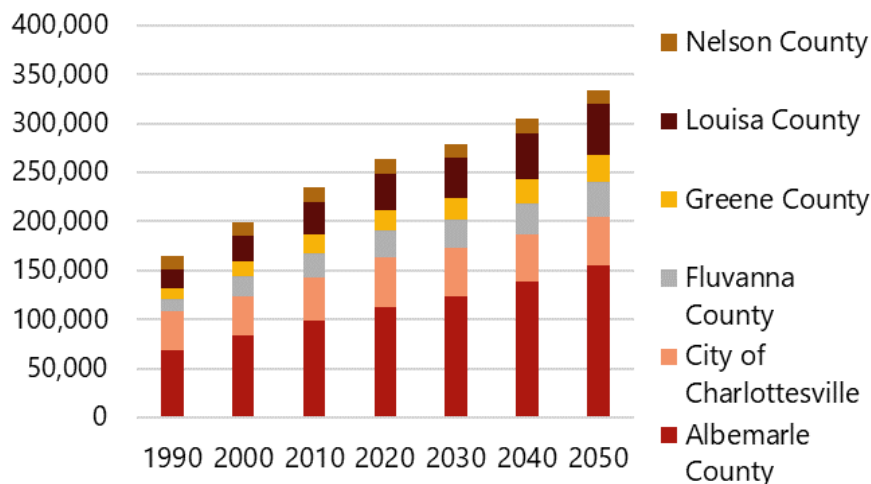
- **Household growth 2010-2020:** 12%

Median Age:

- **2010:** 37.6
- **2022:** 39.5

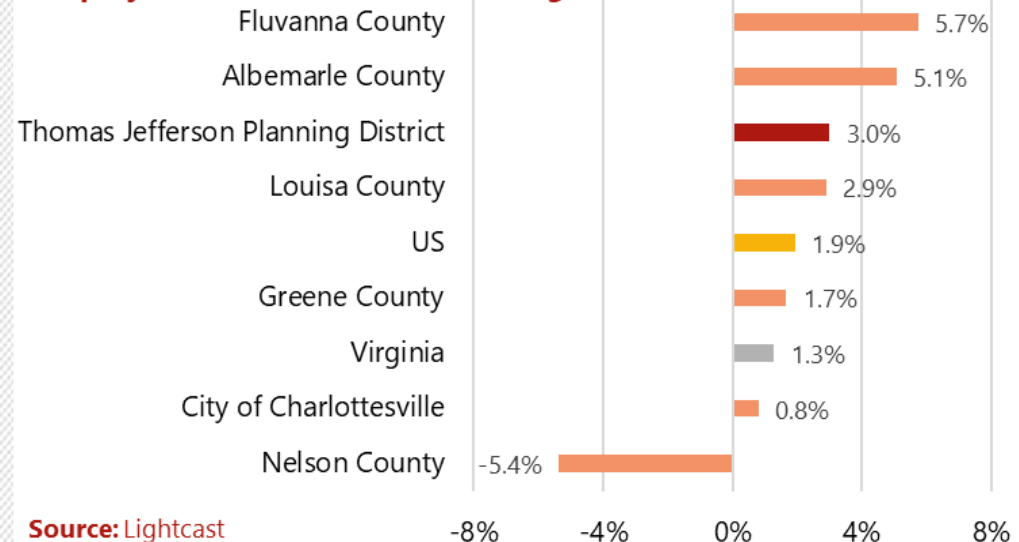
Median Household Income: \$81,318

Total Population by Decade



Source: Weldon Cooper

Employment Growth, Percent Change, 2017-2022

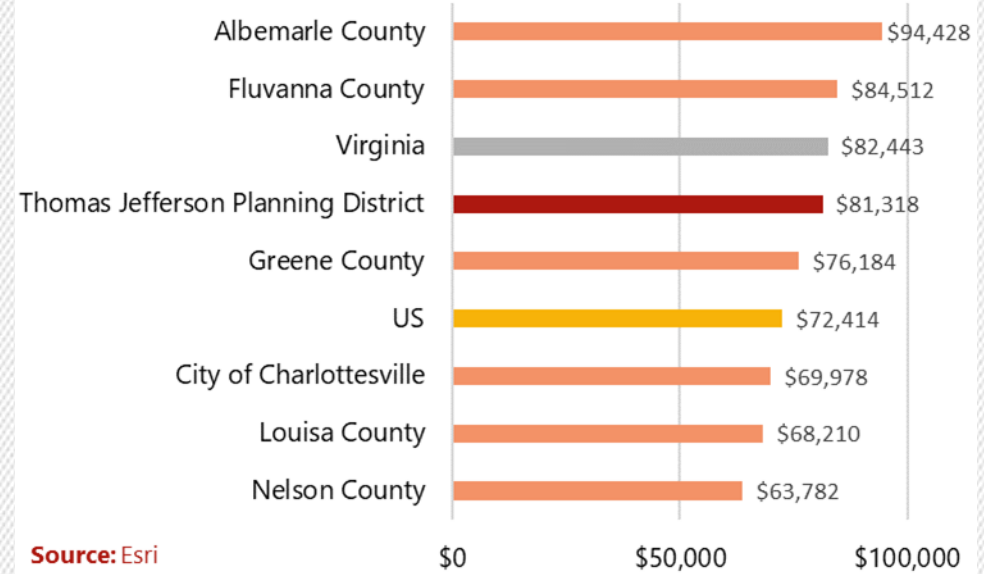


Source: Lightcast

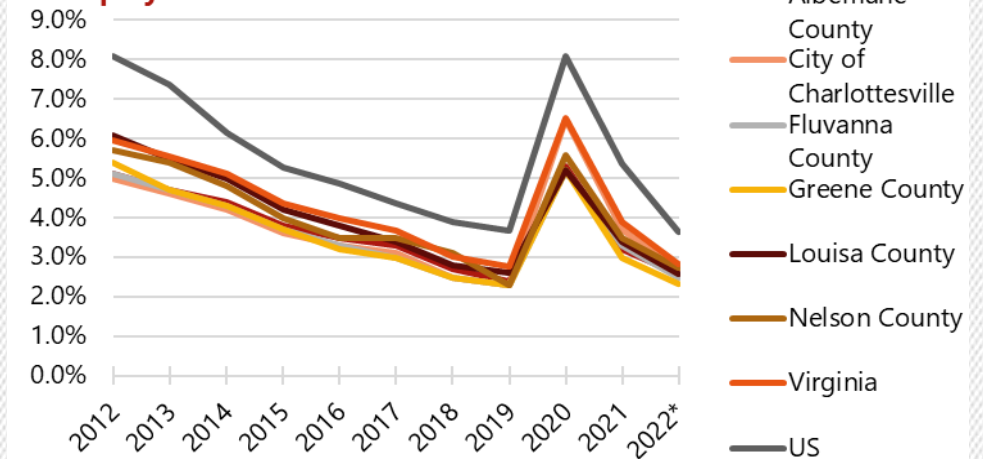
QUICK REGIONAL FACTS:

- The TJPDC region is a net importer of workers. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the population live and work in the region, and 39% of workers commute from outside the region.
- The region's average annual earnings for 2022 are significantly lower than the state and US. The average annual earnings for the TJPDC is \$69,173, in comparison to \$78,710 and \$77,767 for the state and US, respectively.
- From 2017-2022, the region's employment base grew by 3%, significantly outpacing both the state (1.3%) and nation (1.9%).
- The region increased the number of payroll business locations by 5% between 2017-2021. This did lag the state and nation, which saw increases of 10% and 11%, respectively. However, Fluvanna County and Louisa County saw bigger increases than the state and nation (13.1% and 11.7%, respectively).
- The region's unemployment rate steadily decreased from 2012 to 2019. During the pandemic, unemployment rates spiked to over 5.5% in some localities but have since rebounded to pre-pandemic rates.

Median Household Income, 2022



Unemployment Rate



Methods of Engagement

A wide variety of voices helped identify assets, challenges, and opportunities in the TJPDC region.

CEDS Committee

The committee represents a cross-section of activities in the region, drawing from the private, public, non-profit, and philanthropic communities. The CEDS Committee met regularly over the course of the planning process. They gave feedback digitally and in person.

Economic Data Analysis

A thorough analysis of the region's economic condition informed the opportunities identified. This included demographic trends, labor market trends, opportunity sectors, workforce, as well as resilience indicators. This data can be found in Appendices II and III.

Site Visits

Site visits to each of the TJPDC's localities helped provide on-the-ground context for nuances in the regional economy. In-person meetings with the CEDS Committee were prioritized during strategy development.

Interviews

To gain intelligence directly from stakeholders on the ground, various one-on-one interviews and follow-ups were conducted to collect information, as well as vet strategies and next steps. Interviewees included business leaders, educational institutions, business support organizations, and non-profits.

Business Survey

A business survey was promoted in the fall of 2023. Findings helped determine where the greatest needs were felt among a variety of types of industries.

Respondents indicated that the significant challenges facing them included retaining workers, recruiting workers, and unexpected changes in economic conditions. Businesses responded that they were confident they would see an increase in revenue over the next five years. Fifty percent (50%) of businesses were unsure of who to turn to when they faced challenges.

Public Comment

The CEDS was released for a 30-day comment period and members of the public, along with existing stakeholders, were invited to provide feedback on elements of the CEDS.

SWOT Analysis – Regional

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

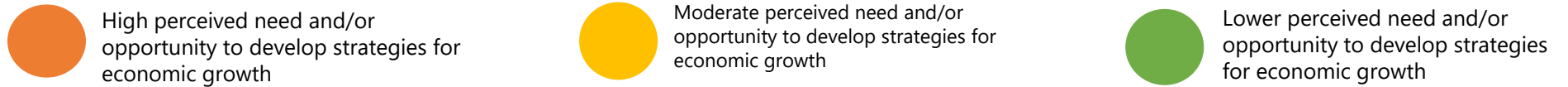
Economic Topic	TJPDC Region
State of the local economy (Includes: business vitality, tax revenue, strength of primary industries etc.)	
Industry diversity (Includes: mix of businesses and amenities, etc.)	
Risks to economy – economic and environmental (Includes: supply chains, resilience, growth issues/pressures,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

LEGEND

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

SWOT Analysis – by Locality

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



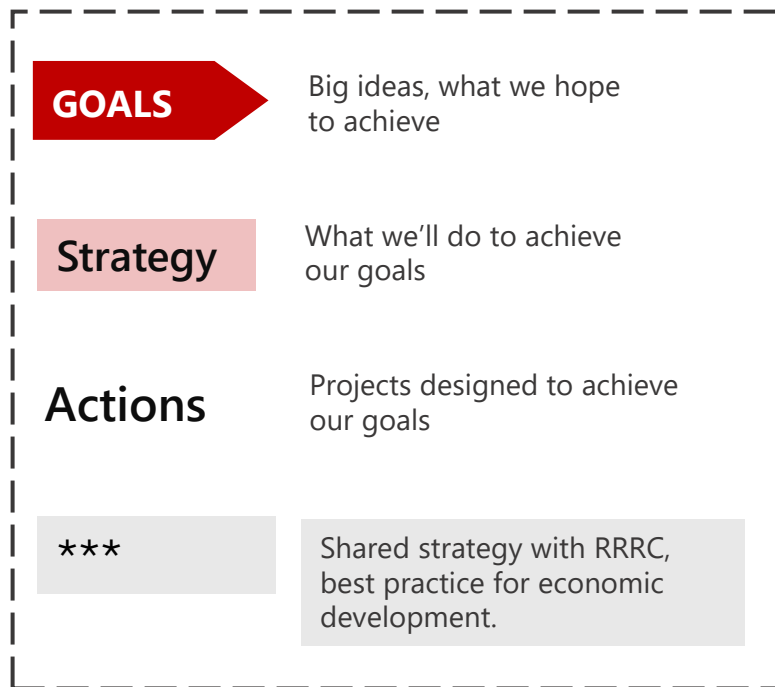
Economic Topic	Albemarle County	City of Charlottesville	Fluvanna County	Greene County	Louisa County	Nelson County
State of the local economy (Includes: business vitality, tax revenue, strength of primary industries etc.)	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Industry diversity (Includes: mix of businesses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

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION / ACTION PLAN

The following Action Plan Matrix highlights and emphasizes topics that hold the greatest opportunities for the region over the next five years. It serves as a roadmap, guiding resources and efforts toward areas where they can yield the most significant returns.

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

Legend



Partners Legend

434 Accelerator: Central VA long-format accelerator
BEAD: Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program
CA-MPO: Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization
CACVB: Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau
CAT: Charlottesville Area Transit
CIC: Community Investment Collaborative
CNE: Center for Nonprofit Excellence
CRCC: Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce
CVPED: Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development
CvilleREA: Charlottesville Renewable Energy Alliance
DHCD: Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
GO Virginia: Growth and Opportunity Council – Region 9
iLab: W.L. Lyons Brown III Innovation Laboratory
iTHRIVE: Integrated Translational Health Research Institute of Virginia
PEC: Piedmont Environmental Council
PVCC: Piedmont Valley Community College
RRRC: Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
SBDC: Small Business Development Center (Central Virginia)
TJPD: Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
UVA: University of Virginia
UVA LVG: University of Virginia Licensing and Venture Group
VATI: Virginia Telecommunication Initiative
VBRSP: Virginia Business Ready Site Program
VC: Venture Central
VCW: Virginia Career Works (Piedmont Region)
VDOT: Virginia Department of Transportation
VDOE: Virginia Department of Education
VEDP: Virginia Economic Development Partnership
VTC: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Implementation Scale

Each of the strategies is evaluated on its level of implementation readiness. There are three different levels: emergent, evolving, and launch-ready. Where possible, leads and partners for each strategy are also documented.

This list of partners is not exhaustive, and we anticipate that partnerships will grow and evolve as the strategy is executed. Documenting the scale of readiness will help direct additional resources where needed and allow other strategies to surge ahead as the right stakeholders and resources come into place.



Emergent Strategy

Status:

Needs additional conceptualization and planning.

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

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

These strategies are likely to be resource intensive to startup.



Evolving Strategy

Status:

Needs a clear leader and/or resource allocation.

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

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



Launch-Ready Strategy

Status:

Ready to be executed.

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

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

Summary of Goals & Initiatives

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

GOAL 1

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

- A. Advance the region's leading industries and seek opportunities to fill unique niches in the regional economy.
- B. Invest in resources that will elevate the region's capabilities in hosting and growing life science startups and second-stage companies.
- C. Evaluate needs for visitation-related businesses as the sector evolves.

GOAL 2

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

- A. Capitalize on labor market data and real-time employer feedback to deploy workforce resources.
- B. Innovate ways to involve the private sector in workforce training programs.

GOAL 3

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

- A. Invest in commercial centers and downtowns as economic and community hubs.
- B. Advance housing options across the region in connection with market demand.
- C. Improve transportation connections among commercial and residential hubs.

GOAL 4

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

- A. Increase the number of site-ready development parcels throughout the region.
- B. Proactively prepare the business community for economic and environmental crises.

GOAL 1

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

Strategy 1.A) Advance the region's leading industries and seek opportunities to fill unique niches in the regional economy.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.A.1 Coordinate business development initiatives across North Fork UVA Discovery Park, Greene County, and Rivanna Station (Albemarle County).	Collaborate to determine the correct mix of suitable industries and the unique role that each site will play in encouraging distinct cluster development. Success will be facilitated by growing industry participation in this process.		Greene County Albemarle County PVCC CRCC UVA Lead: UVA Foundation
1.A.2 Develop programs to support the formation of new companies focused on clean technology.	A "pilot manufacturing" location could help support the development of these technologies in partnership with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and regional incubators. These industries can be further supported by specialized training within educational institutions, scholarships, and apprenticeships.		CvilleREA Private sector
1.A.3 Expand program and service offerings provided by existing business support groups with a stronger emphasis on Clean Tech, Cybersecurity, and IOT (Internet of Things)-related start-up companies.	Several of the region's assets are well-positioned to expand translational research, commercialization, and new company formation in these emerging and high-growth industries.		Venture Central UVA LVG and i.Lab 434 Accelerator
1.A.4 Invest in the specialized workforce and technical assistance that supports the evolving Agriculture sector, especially the advancement of value-added product manufacturing.	Agriculture-related sectors are a driving force in the region. Setting up producers to take advantage of value-added possibilities with specialized training or technical assistance will grow this sector. This also includes the technology and infrastructure related to Controlled Environment Agriculture, which is a strength in the region.		VCW

GOAL 1

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

Strategy 1.A) Advance the region's leading industries and seek opportunities to fill unique niches in the regional economy.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.A.5 ***	Connect rural communities to growing market opportunities and make investments to advance their ability to access these opportunities.		SBDC Locality ED departments Private sector Virginia Rural Center
1.A.6 ***	Expand relationships with Minority, Women, and Veteran Enterprises and address barriers within these communities in partnership with trusted community non-profits and other entities.		There are many partners advancing efforts in this strategy. A few examples include: United Way SBDC CIC Local chambers Venture Central
1.A.7 ***	Expand opportunities for entrepreneurs to access capital in all stages of business, from seed to Series B.		Cville BioHub Venture Central SBDC CIC CEO alliances Entrepreneurs across numerous sectors

SPOTLIGHT: The Community Investment Collaborative (CIC) emerged from a need established during the 2008 recession. Launched in 2012, the CIC's mission is to help entrepreneurs start or expand their businesses. This is accomplished through educational programming, mentoring, startup financing, and networking opportunities within the entrepreneurial community. As a certified CDFI, financing support must serve low-income populations and minority communities. The CIC is also the host of the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center, which offers an expansive catalog of free business support services across the region.

GOAL 1

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

Strategy 1.B) Invest in resources that will elevate the region's capabilities in hosting and growing Life Sciences startups and second-stage companies.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.B.1 Develop shared labs and common spaces that have specialized biotechnology equipment for more researchers and entrepreneurs in the region.	It can be a struggle for early-stage businesses to find equipment and facilities to advance their discovery and research activities. Develop more spaces and consider university-business arrangements for growth firms lacking ready access to UVA facilities.		UVA Cville BioHub Venture Central SBDC Private sector Community colleges
1.B.2 Explore establishing a clinical trials network in the Charlottesville region.	This is needed to complement the work of the Manning Institute of Biotechnology, which is expected to attract the interest of pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Clinical trials that include a diverse set of participants work towards more meaningful and equitable health outcomes.		iTHRIV UVA – Manning Institute of Biotechnology
1.B.3 Collaborate with partners to expand access and awareness of the available technical assistance programming for women and minority entrepreneurs seeking SBIR/STTR funding. <i>*SBIR – Small Business Innovation Research</i> <i>*STTR – Small Business Technology Transfer</i>	Virginia ranks among the top states for SBIR/STTR award funding. Nationally, however, there are persistent disparities in outreach and support to underrepresented groups which is becoming more of a priority for federal agencies to address.		Cville BioHub Venture Central

SPOTLIGHT: The regional Life Sciences ecosystem is expanding substantially with the development of the Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology. With a groundbreaking in December 2023, the facility is poised to accelerate research and innovation in fields like cellular therapy, gene therapy, nanotechnology, and drug delivery. The facility will also enable the growth of clinical trials and additional testing locations for treatment. The Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology joins a growing Life Sciences ecosystem in the region, supported by organizations like Cville Biohub, which aspires to double the size of the industry by 2030. Cville Biohub acts as the bridge between entrepreneurs, scientists, investors, and the community, providing access to funding and resources for business in the sector.

GOAL 1

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

Strategy 1.B) Invest in resources that will elevate the region's capabilities in hosting and growing Life Sciences startups and second-stage companies.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.B.4 Anticipate future growth in the Life Sciences industry by adopting proven successful models to strengthen existing investor funds and networks.	Building out the Life Sciences ecosystem in the region will require increased support of translational and commercialization activities and grants (i.e., Ivy Biomedical, 3 Cavaliers, CRCF), angel groups, and venture funds (i.e., CAV Angels, CAN, etc. There is a statewide effort to generate Virginia's own version of North Carolina's Research Triangle. *CRCF – Commonwealth Research Commercialization Fund *CAN – Charlottesville Angel Network		Cville BioHub Venture Central VEDP GO Virginia Region 9
1.B.5 Align the region's Life Science resources to take advantage of growing submarkets and statewide strategies for Life Sciences growth.	Virginia Bio-Connect is a valuable resource to learn from for the other four Life Sciences clusters in the state. Piloting or adapting programs from other regions will build on recent successes and help to strengthen the statewide network of startups, researchers, large employers, educational institutions, and intermediaries.		Cville BioHub Virginia Bio-Connect GO Virginia Region 9

SPOTLIGHT: Virginia Bio-Connect is a statewide effort to grow the connections between regional Life Sciences hubs. The initiative tackles industry-wide challenges and opportunities, like workforce attraction, lab space access, and more. In addition to the Charlottesville/Albemarle Region (Region 9 in GO VA), other hubs include Roanoke/Blacksburg/Lynchburg (Region 2), Greater Richmond Biohub (region 4), Coastal Virginia (Region 5), and Northern Virginia (Region 7). A digital platform hosts available resources, jobs, organizations, and events in the industry. More information can be found here: <https://vabioconnect.org/resources>

GOAL 1

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

Strategy 1.C) Evaluate needs for visitation-related businesses as the sector evolves.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
1.C.1 Forge strong connections between outdoor recreation activities and nearby Main Street commercial and service offerings.	There is a role to play for each location in a visitation economy. Intentionally showing visitors the location of convenient food and entertainment options near outdoor recreation activities can bridge the distance between more urban and rural areas. There has been progress made in terms of clustering activities across the region.		CACVB- Tourism Master Plan (ongoing) VTC TJPDC Localities
1.C.2 Conduct an accommodation feasibility study for the region and evaluate the market need for a mix of accommodation options.	Retaining visitors for an overnight stay helps contribute to overall impact on the economy. Varying styles of accommodations fit throughout the region and coordinating where and how these accommodations are situated can help draw visitors to more rural areas, if desired.		CACVB- Tourism Master Plan (ongoing) VTC CVPED TJPDC
1.C.3 Partner with existing efforts to implement county farm tours and highlight the region's agricultural strengths to internal and external audiences.	Although the bounty of an expansive rural landscape is only a short distance from the region's urban locales, offerings in these rural areas often go unnoticed.		CACVB- Tourism Master Plan (ongoing) Virginia Rural Center VTC Local chambers
1.C.4 Invest in the region's tourism economy, including arts, culture, retail, outdoor recreation, food service, and meeting space across urban and rural areas with regional impact in mind.	The region has a range of assets spanning the many landscapes within the area. These destinations are vital drivers of the economy and also contribute to a local sense of place.		CACVB- Tourism Master Plan (ongoing) VTC VEDP Local chambers

SPOTLIGHT: Nelson County's 151 Craft Beverage Trail is a prime example of how business collaboration, an effective marketing message, and leveraging market demand can drive visitation and spending into the region. With seven wineries, six breweries, three cideries, and two distilleries, the trail bills itself as "not your average farm tour."



GOAL 2

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

Initiative 2.A) Capitalize on labor market data and real-time employer feedback to deploy workforce resources.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
2.A.1	Increase and diversify opportunities for businesses to engage in apprenticeships, micro-trainings and other work-based learning (WBL).		SBDC Lead: VCW
2.A.2	Invest in cultural competence and sensitivity training for medium to large employers.		CACVB - Tourism for all program Lead: VCW
2.A.3	Determine overlapping skills and related occupations at entry, mid, and high skill levels among the region's industries.		Private sector CVPED SBDC Lead: VCW
2.A.4	Map the regional workforce development system to determine where there are gaps in the existing system.		GO Virginia Lead: VCW

SPOTLIGHT: Virginia Career Works is leading the way on several workforce initiatives that are picking up momentum. Their work spans hosting and facilitating business coalition meetings in the region's target sectors, to identifying industry gaps and barriers, and connecting job seekers with work-based learning opportunities. This is in addition to VCW's requirements involving the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

GOAL 2

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

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

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

GOAL 3

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

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

Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.A.1	Meet housing demand through infill development, encouraging denser developments in appropriate locations, and mixed-use developments.	Broad cross-sector collaboration is needed to advance the 2022-2025 Regional Housing Group Strategic Plan and Final Report.	 Localities Real estate community TJPDC Private/nonprofit developers
3.A.2	Employ land assembly as a tactic to create developable properties.	This tactic is relevant in rural or urban settings and may take time depending on parcel ownership. Being strategic about when and where properties are acquired can help advance community visions in key hubs.	 Localities Real estate community TJPDC Private/nonprofit developers
3.A.3	Pursue placemaking activities that create dynamic and engaging spaces, foster a sense of belonging, and stimulate economic growth.	A strong sense of place and quality options for recreation and entertainment are vital to retaining and attracting a competitive workforce. Elements of placemaking bring out the unique character of each locality and apply across the rural-urban spectrum.	 Localities Real estate community TJPDC Private/nonprofit developers
3.A.4 ***	Partner with localities to assess the vibrancy and vitality of commercial corridors, small towns, and downtown districts and identify tactics that can advance meaningful, local economic activity.	The region's main streets and commercial corridors are vital parts of the economy. Evaluating the needs of each community and where they can progress will help advance scalable growth across the region.	 Localities Real estate community TJPDC Private/nonprofit developers
3.A.5 ***	Promote opportunities for localities to market local destinations and set up signage to capture visitation.	Signage is an important part of how communities attract visitors and demonstrate the offerings of their locality. This can be a big investment with significant payoffs in terms of cultivating a sense of place with visitors and residents.	 SBDC Localities Chambers CACVB

GOAL 3

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

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

Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.B.2	Partner with UVA as they leverage real estate holdings to develop affordable housing for the community. UVA is actively working with community partners on an aggressive plan to develop housing for the community. Supporting this work with shared resources, knowledge, or partnership will help address the substantial housing gaps in the region.		TJPDC Localities Real estate community Private/nonprofit developers UVA
3.B.1 ***	Work with municipalities on land use updates that will encourage building in existing service centers. Municipalities play an important role in advancing housing development in the region. These roles include: <i>Rezoning and future land use planning</i> Aligning land use regulations with desired housing development is a high-impact way to increase development. <i>Identify underutilized locations</i> There are often properties with the potential for development that have been abandoned or are otherwise challenging properties that hold potential for housing development. <i>Inventory publicly owned land</i> With public site control, this land may be a good fit to strategize housing solutions with the private, public, and non-profit sectors.		TJPDC Localities Real estate community Private/nonprofit developers

GOAL 3

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

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

Action	Description	Status	Partners
3.C.1	Establish highest priority needs on the Route 29 Corridor to encourage safe, reliable connections between employment and residential centers.		TJPDC CA-MPO Localities along the 29 Corridor
3.C.2	Amplify the needs identified in the Regional Transit Vision (2022) Moving Towards 2050 Transportation Plan.		TJPDC CA-MPO Localities
3.C.3	Build out pedestrian and bicycle pathways to connect with other recreational paths and/or major community hubs.		TJPDC VDOT CA-MPO Localities
3.C.4	Increase transit ridership on existing corridors and seek to build out developments along these corridors.		TJPDC VDOT CA-MPO Localities Transit agencies including but not limited to: CAT, Jaunt, Afton Express
3.C.5	Identify parcels along the proposed east-west rail expansion for potential economic development opportunities.		TJPDC VDOT CA-MPO Localities
3.C.6	Build concentration of ridership in rural areas to maximize coverage in these areas.		TJPDC VDOT Localities

GOAL 4

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

Initiative 4.A) Increase the number of site-ready development parcels throughout the region.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
4.A.1	Prioritize an inventory of parcels or areas for water and sewer infrastructure improvements in rural localities to support site development for business growth.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA Localities
4.A.2	Advance sites on VBRSP's scale of Site Characterization Tier Levels.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA Localities
4.A.3	Analyze alternate energy project opportunities for new job creation and investment.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA
4.A.4	Leverage the state's broadband funding to build out the network in remaining rural areas.		VBRSP VEDP CVPED DHCD GO VA TJPCD Localities Private Internet Service Providers (ISP)



SPOTLIGHT: The Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) supports economic development by assisting localities in their efforts to bring shovel-ready sites to market. The program designated a tier level to sites on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being little to no due diligence complete while a 5 indicates a site is shovel-ready.

GOAL 4

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

Initiative 4.A) Increase the number of site-ready development parcels throughout the region.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
4.A.5 ***	Pursue joint partnerships or other customized collaborations to help fund or advance infrastructure.	Funding infrastructure is a costly endeavor and can be supported through shared resources in multi-jurisdictional partnerships.	 VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA
4.A.6 ***	Evaluate electricity needs for local communities as heavy-energy industry users come online.	Some of the region's industries are heavy energy users and ensuring that long-term planning accounts for the needs of the broader economy will be important when building a resilient energy grid.	 VBRSP VEDP CVPED GO VA

GOAL 4

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

Initiative 4.B) Proactively prepare the business community for economic and environmental crises.

Action	Description	Status	Partners
4.B.1	Coordinate the implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) with CEDS strategies and continue to incorporate the private sector in conversations about economic resilience.		TJPDC RRRC CVPED Private sector groups
4.B.2 ***	Solidify a leader or team of leaders in the community who will be the face of build-back efforts in the event of an economic or environmental crisis.		TJPDC RRRC CVPED

4 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Implementation will be facilitated through a structured approach that is led by TJPDC but is heavily reliant on the cooperation and partnership of the regional stakeholders.

An Implementation Committee will be formed with 5-6 leaders who represent major topic areas of the CEDS. They will be tasked with meeting regularly and supporting the coordination of partners on certain strategies.

In addition, an annual meeting of the CEDS Committee will serve as a pivotal event, providing a platform for stakeholders to review progress and recalibrate efforts. This gathering will include a thorough examination of the strategies outlined in the CEDS, with a focus on adjusting their status.

Updates will be made to reflect emergent trends, evolving priorities, and initiatives that are poised for launch. Additionally, there will be a concerted effort to adapt strategies as needed, incorporating feedback and updating significant initiatives.

Throughout this process, there will be regular check-ins with the leadership of key organizations involved in implementation. Evaluations will assess the effectiveness of implementation efforts and the communication strategies employed. By fostering a dynamic and responsive approach, the CEDS aims to ensure that economic development initiatives remain relevant and impactful over the duration of the strategy.

Economic metrics will also be collected to monitor key characteristics of the region. Those are documented on the following page.



Metrics

These metrics are intended to capture select characteristics of the region. Each organization involved in the CEDS also maintains records and metrics for their organization and the goal is not to duplicate those efforts but rather focus on region-wide factors that indicate what type of progress is being made on the strategies.

GOAL 1

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

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

GOAL 2

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

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

GOAL 3

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

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

GOAL 4

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

- Number of sites that advanced a level on the VBRSP (by locality)
- Number of units (residential/commercial) with new or faster access to broadband
- Employers per acre