Virginia's Region 2000
Local Government Council
Executive Committee Meeting
828 Main Street, 12th Floor
Lynchburg, Virginia 24504

Large Conference Room
September 15, 2016
5:00 p.m.

Agenda

1. **Selection of Vice Chair**…………………………………………Gary Christie, *Exec. Director*

2. **Welcome | Moment of Silence**………………………………………...............*Vice Chair*

3. **Appreciation of Mayor Harvey for Service as FY 16 Chair**..…………….................*Vice Chair*

4. **Approval of Minutes: July 21, 2016**...……………*Vice Chair*

5. **Financial Report**…………………………………...…..Rosalie Majerus, *Dep. Dir. of Finance*

6. **Discussion of Legislative Agenda and GoVirginia**….……………Gary Christie, *Exec. Director*

7. **Update to CEDS Plan Update**….…………………….………...Gary Christie, *Exec. Director*

8. **Introduction of Samuel Gerstemeier, Government Relations, Centra**……........................
…………………………………………………………………......Gary Christie, *Exec. Director*

9. **November Selection of General Assembly Members**…....…………Gary Christie, *Exec. Director*

10. **Matters from the Council**..……………………..………………..……..…Members of Council

11. **Adjourn**……………………………………………………………….............…*Vice Chair*

12. **Information Items:**

Upcoming Meetings:

LGC Annual Fall Dinner | October 20, 2016 | TBD (Reception & Speaker)

LGC Executive Committee Meeting | November 17, 2016 - 5:00 pm | LGC Offices

No LGC Meeting Scheduled for December 2016

Executive Summary

1. **Selection of Vice Chair**

   Our Bylaws guide the rotation of LGC Officers:

   > **Article V: Section 3 - Succession to Office.** *Officers may be reelected to office, with the exception of the Chair, who may not succeed himself. This chair shall rotate on a one-year basis by governmental subdivision in alphabetical sequence until each governmental subdivision has had the opportunity of a Council member to serve as Chair before any governmental subdivision may again have representation in the Chair's position. If the Council member representing a governmental subdivision declines the chairmanship, then that particular governmental subdivision shall relinquish its turn until every other governmental subdivision has had the opportunity of a Council member to serve as Chair.*

   The Vice-Chair is currently open. Mayor Phyllis Campbell from Brookneal and Board Member Mike Rousseau from Campbell have asked to pass on the appointment. Mayor Joan Foster of Lynchburg has agreed to serve as FY17 Vice Chair.

   Chair John Sharp of Bedford County will be out of town on business.

   Recommended Action: Elect Lynchburg Mayor Joan Foster as the Vice Chair for the Local Government Council for the term expiring on June 30, 2017.

2. **Welcome | Moment of Silence**

3. **Appreciation of Mayor Harvey for Service as FY16 Chair**

   The Council recognizes and extends their appreciation to Mayor Paul Harvey for his service as Chair to the Council during FY16.

4. **Approval of Minutes: July 21, 2016**
   (See Attachments 4)

   Recommended Action: Approve minutes as presented subject to revisions noted by members of Council.

5. **Finance Report**

   A. Year-to-Date Financial Report
      (See Attachment 5A)

Rosalie Majerus, *Dep. Dir. of Finance*, will present the year-to-date financial report for period ending August 31, 2016.

Recommended Action: No formal action requested; for Council's information, review and discussion.

B. Presentation and Discussion on Dues Increase
(See Attachment 5B)

Dues were lowered in FY 11 from $0.65 to $0.575 for Cities and Counties and from $1,180 to $1,045 for Towns.

Recommended Action: Staff proposes that FY 18 dues be increased back to the 2009 levels of $0.65 for Cities and Counties and $1,180 for Towns to generate $20,173 annually for additional staffing in the areas of planning and communications support.

6. Discussion of Legislative Agenda and GoVirginia

Each year the LGC submits to the General Assembly a Legislative Agenda that identifies regional priorities that may relate to programs, projects or activities specifically relevant or important to Region 2000.

Recommended Action: For Council's discussion and consideration.

7. Update to CEDS Plan Update
(See Attachment 7)

Recommended Action: No formal action requested; for Council's information, review and discussion.

8. Introduction of Samuel Gerstemeier, Government Relations, Centra

9. November Selection of General Assembly Members

Delegate Scott Garrett will have served the Local Government Council well with his time, information and counsel since 2012. The Senate seat on the LGC is currently vacant. According to our charter it is appropriate that we should examine whether to rotate membership every two years on the LGC to other General Assembly Members:

Charter provisions: *"Each governmental subdivision which is either a city or county and a party to this charter agreement shall appoint two members to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL, one of whom shall be the Chief elected member of the governing body, or their elected designee. The other appointee shall be the Chief Appointed Official of each governmental subdivision, or their appointed designee. Additionally, one member of the Local Government Council shall represent Virginia's Region 2000 as appointed by that Board and two members shall represent Virginia's*

General Assembly. The General Assembly members shall serve two-year alternating terms so that all General Assembly members within the region shall be members of the Local Government Council on a rotating basis on a schedule as approved by the Local Government Council."

Current Region 2000 General Assembly Members:

Senate			District Description
D-15	Sen. Frank M.	Ruff Jr.	Campbell County (Part)
D-19	Sen. David	Suetterlein	Bedford County (Part)
D-22	Sen. Tom	Garrett	Amherst County (All) Appomattox County (All) Lynchburg City (Part)
D-23	Sen. Stephen D.	Newman	Campbell County (Part) Bedford County (Part) Lynchburg City (Part)
House			
D-19	Del. Terry	Austin	Bedford County (Part)
D22	Del. Kathy J.	Byron	Campbell County (Part) Bedford County (Part) Lynchburg City (Part)
D-23	Del. Scott	Garrett	Amherst County (Part) Bedford County (Part) Lynchburg City (Part)
D-24	Del. Benjamin L.	Cline	Amherst County (Part)
D-59	Del. C. Matthew	Fariss	Appomattox County (All) Campbell County (Part)
D-60	Del. James E.	Edmunds II	Campbell County (Part)

Recommended Action: For Council's discussion and consideration.

10. Matters from the Council

11. Adjourn

12. Informational Item

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

LGC Annual Fall Dinner | **October 20, 2016** | TBD (Reception & Speaker)

LGC Executive Committee Meeting | **November 17, 2016 - 5:00 pm** | LGC Offices

No LGC Meeting Scheduled for December 2016

Virginia's Region 2000
Local Government Council
828 Main Street, 12th Floor
Lynchburg, VA 24504

Large Conference Room
July 21, 2016
5:00 pm

DRAFT - Final Minutes

Members Present:

Susan Adams, Appomattox County Administrator
Carl Boggess, Bedford County Administrator, *Treasurer of Council*
Kenneth Bumgarner, Amherst Town Council
Kenneth Campbell, Amherst County Board of Supervisors
Philipp Gabathuler, Appomattox Town Manager
Jack Hobbs, Amherst Town Manager
Megan Lucas, Lynchburg Regional Economic Alliance
Dean Rodgers, Amherst County Administrator
Frank Rogers, Campbell County Administrator
Bryan Moody, Appomattox County Board of Supervisors
Bonnie Svrcek, Lynchburg City Manager

Members Absent:

Mayor Phyllis Campbell, Town of Brookneal
Waverly Coggsdale, Altavista Town Manager
Joan Foster, Lynchburg City Council
Delegate T. Scott Garrett, Virginia House of Delegates
Stacey Hailey, Bedford Town Council
Mayor Paul Harvey, Town of Appomattox
Charles Kolakowski, Bedford Town Manager
Mayor Mike Mattox, Town of Altavista
Michael Rousseau, Campbell County Board of Supervisors
Russell Thurston, Brookneal Town Manager
John Sharp, Bedford County Board of Supervisors, *Chair of Council*

Others Present:

Ben Bowman, Region 2000 Workforce Development Board, *Director*
Margaret Carmel, News & Advance
Gary Christie, Local Government Council, *Executive Director*
Nina Chambers, Local Government Council
Rosalie Majerus, Local Government Council, *Deputy Director of Finance*
Matt Perkins, Local Government Council, *Administrative Program Coordinator*

1 of **4**

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome | Moment of Silence

In John Sharp's (Chair) absence, Carl Boggess (Treasurer) called for the appointment of a Temporary Chair. Upon a motion by Bonnie Svrcek to appoint Carl Boggess as Temporary Chair, duly seconded by Megan Lucas, and upon a voice vote the motion passed in favor of appointing Carl Boggess Temporary Chair.

Carl Boggess called the meeting of the Local Government Council to order at 5:02 p.m.; opened with introduction of new members; and, observed a moment of silence.

2. Appreciation of Council Officers of FY16

In the absence of Mayor Harvey, this matter was tabled until next meeting that Mayor Harvey is present.

3. Approval of Minutes: March 17, 2016 and April 21, 2016

Megan Lucas moved and Jack Hobbs seconded the motion to approve the minutes of March 17, 2016 and April 21, 2016 as presented. With no objections, Carl Boggess declared the motion carried with Bonnie Svrcek abstaining.

4. Finance Report

Rosalie Majerus, *Dep. Dir. of Finance*, presented the draft year-end financial report for period ending June 30, 2016. Noted that operating expenses and deductions from reserves were less than budgeted.

5. Consideration and Approval of *Resolution Supporting the Central Virginia Training Center Course of Action for Adaptive Reuse*

Gary Christie noted that in the April meeting that the Council talked about making some show of support for the more detailed planning at the CVTC after suggesting that greater dialogue between Senator Newman and Amherst County.

Megan Lucas provided a recap of the meeting with Amherst and Senator Newman noting that Senator Newman understood the Region's concerns and opportunities as the Council has discussed. Lucas noted that Senator Newman's objective was to keep the facility open and operating.

Christie presented a resolution supporting CVTC course of action for adaptive reuse and provided further details and explanation of components contained in resolution. Christie noted this resolution was presented to, and was passed unanimously by, the Amherst County Board of Supervisors.

Frank Rogers moved and Philipp Gabathuler seconded the motion to approve the Resolution Supporting the Central Virginia Training Center Course of Action for Adaptive Reuse. With no objections, Carl Boggess declared the motion carried.

6. **Discussion on a Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant Application**

Gary Christie noted that since 2006 the LGC has coordinated the regional hazard mitigation plan noting that the plan is necessary for localities to be eligible to receive Federal and State disaster assistance in the event of a declared natural disaster event.

Christie noted that Virginia Tech's Center for Geospatial Information Technology has quoted a cost of $100,000. Christie noted that if all eleven participate, then sharing the match equally would cost each jurisdiction $2,500. The grant application is due in October putting the start of the project Spring of 2017.

Staff proposes that the Local Government Council encourage localities to participate in the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan at a cost not to exceed $2,500 by completing the Letter of Intent as presented. Additionally, Christie noted that the completed revised plan would then be presented to the localities governing body for formal adoption.

Christie noted that staff would distribute the Letters of Intent for the Council members to present to their jurisdictions.

Jack Hobbs moved and Bonnie Svrcek seconded the motion for Council members to survey their jurisdictions for participation in the plan update at a cost not to exceed $2500 and should not all eleven jurisdictions participate then the Council will decide on next steps at a future meeting. With no objections, Carl Boggess declared the motion carried.

7. **Discussion and Approval for Staff Reorganization**

Gary Christie provided an overview of current staff levels and staffing needs as they relate to transportation and planning/grants management. Christie asked the Council for their authorization to create a "Planning Coordinator" position.

Frank Rogers moved and Jack Hobbs seconded a motion authorizing the creation of a "Planning Coordinator" position at a Grade 114 ($57,033-$88,400). With no objections, Carl Boggess declared the motion carried.

8. **Discussion and Adoption of Council Mission Statement**

Gary Christie noted that it was important, now that the Alliance has merged with the Chamber, that the Local Government Council be able to tell our customers, stakeholders and the community who we are and what we do as part of the ongoing communication initiative. Christie noted that a good first step in that process is establishing a mission statement and asks for the Council to discuss the options presented.

By consensus, the Council voted to adopt the following mission statement for the Local Government Council:

The Mission of the Local Government Council:
- Be a dynamic public forum for matters of regional significance
- Create regional solutions by coordinating regional plans and building coalitions
- Provide excellent local and regional services to localities and the Commonwealth

9. <u>Workforce Center at Central Virginia Community College</u>

Gary Christie and Ben Bowman provided an update on the discussions on creating a workforce center facility on the campus of CVCC and the continued dialogue on exploring funding, in the short term, for a feasibility study.

Additionally, Ben Bowman noted the new location of Region 2000 Workforce Center at Odd Fellows Rd noting that it complies with the new regulations for a comprehensive workforce center. Additionally, Bowman noted existing programming and plans to develop a functioning one-stop system throughout the region.

10. <u>Matters from the Council</u>

Gary Christie presented a brief update to GoVirginia and the impending development of state-wide board.

11. <u>Adjourn</u>

Bryan Moody moved and Bonnie Svrcek seconded the motion to adjourn. With no objections, Carl Boggess declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned.

Signed: _____

By: _____, _____ (title)

VIRGINIA'S REGION 2000 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COU*Attachment 5A***
Budget to Actual for FY17 *pp 9 - 12*
as of August 31, 2016

	FY17 Adjusted Budget	Actual as of 8/31/16	Diff Between Budget & Actual	% of Budget Used
OPERATIONS FUND (EXPENDITURES)				
SALARY				
ADMINISTRATION	193,290	32,009	161,281	16.56%
FINANCE	133,479	22,247	111,232	16.67%
OPERATIONS	171,771	18,151	153,620	10.57%
WIA	135,916	22,925	112,991	16.87%
	634,456	95,332	539,124	15.03%
PART TIME HELP	43,280	4,158	39,122	9.61%
Total Salaries & Wages	**677,736**	**99,490**	**578,246**	14.68%
EMPLOYER COST FICA	51,847	7,265	44,582	14.01%
EMPLOYER COST V R S	41,176	6,187	34,989	15.03%
EMPLOYER COST HEALTH INS	93,890	13,753	80,137	14.65%
EMPLOYER COST LIFE INS	8,311	1,249	7,062	15.03%
WORKERS COMP	700	288	412	41.14%
Total Fringe Benefits	**195,924**	**28,742**	**167,182**	14.67%
OFFICE EXPENSES				
AUDITING SERVICES	5,100		5,100	0.00%
PAYROLL ACCOUNTING SERVICES	8,400	1,278	7,122	15.21%
LEGAL SERVICES	3,000		3,000	0.00%
LIABILITY INSURANCE	1,200	1,427	(227)	118.92%
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	21,000	1,450	19,550	6.90%
ADVERTISING	1,000	295	705	29.50%
POSTAGE	1,500	(58)	1,558	-3.87%
TELEPHONE	5,000	687	4,313	13.74%
INTERNET SERVICES	700	(2)	702	-0.29%
OFFICE SUPPLIES	6,000	1,071	4,929	17.85%
PRINTING & BINDING	2,500		2,500	0.00%
TRAVEL	7,500	535	6,965	7.13%
SPECIAL MEETINGS	9,500	589	8,911	6.20%
EDUCATION & TRAINING	6,000	2,295	3,705	38.25%
DUES, SUBSCRIPTIONS	10,800	4,447	6,353	41.18%
PUBLICATIONS	700	88	612	12.57%
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	1,000	53	947	5.30%
FURNITURE & FIXTURES	1,000		1,000	0.00%
RENTAL OFFICE EQUIPMENT	4,500	425	4,075	9.44%
OFFICE RENT	61,797	9,161	52,636	14.82%
PARKING	4,200	625	3,575	14.88%
COMPUTER EQUIP/SOFTWARE	10,000	1,204	8,796	12.04%
Total Office Expenses	**172,397**	**25,570**	**146,827**	14.83%
Total Operations Expenses	**1,046,057**	**153,802**	**892,255**	14.70%

VIRGINIA'S REGION 2000 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL				
Budget to Actual for FY17				
as of August 31, 2016				
	FY17 Adjusted Budget	**Actual as of 8/31/16**	**Diff Between Budget & Actual**	**% of Budget Used**
Total Operations Expenses (from Page 1)	1,046,057	153,802	892,255	14.70%
Direct Project Expenses				
Amherst CDBG - Old Town Madison Heights	1,000	0	1,000	0.00%
Appomattox County Comp Plan	250	0	250	0.00%
Appomattox CDBG - Meadowlark	8,500	264	8,236	3.11%
Appomattox CDBG - Planning	750	0	750	0.00%
Brookneal Streetscape	0	0	0	#DIV/0!
Campbell County Route 29 Corridor Planning (VTRC)	57,500	24,077	33,423	41.87%
DHCD	2,500	26	2,474	1.04%
DRPT / FTA	2,500	0	2,500	0.00%
EDA CEDS - LGC	64,966	22,467	42,499	34.58%
Pamplin CDBG	0	0	0	
Regional Radio Board	2,000	44	1,956	2.20%
RideSolutions	22,414	113	22,301	0.50%
TMDL Redevelopment	250	0	250	0.00%
Town of Amherst Main Street Waterline	800	41	759	5.13%
VDOT - PL	17,000	595	16,405	3.50%
VDOT - Rural	2,500	0	2,500	0.00%
WIA	198,000	16,197	181,803	8.18%
Total Direct Project Expenses	**380,930**	**63,824**	**317,106**	**16.75%**
TOTAL OPERATING & DIRECT PROJECT EXPENSES	**$1,426,987**	**$217,626**	**$1,209,361**	**15.25%**
Pass Thru Expenses				
Regional Radio Board	1,249,988	186,578	1,063,410	14.93%
VDOT - PL	85,500	3,975	81,525	4.65%
WIA	950,000	51,285	898,715	5.40%
Total Pass Thru Expenses	**$2,285,488**	**$241,838**	**$2,043,650**	10.58%
Total Expenses	**$3,712,475**	**$459,464**	**$3,253,011**	12.38%

LGC Agenda - September 15, 2016

	VIRGINIA'S REGION 2000 LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL			
	Budget to Actual for FY17			
	as of August 31, 2016			
	FY17 Adjusted Budget	**Actual as of 8/31/16**	**Diff Between Budget & Actual**	**% of Budget Received**
Revenues				
OPERATIONS FUND (REVENUE)				
Dues Town of Appomattox	1,045	1,045	0	100.00%
Dues Town of Brookneal	1,045	1,045	0	100.00%
Dues Town of Amherst	1,045	1,045	0	100.00%
Dues Town of Altavista	1,045	1,045	0	100.00%
Dues Town of Bedford	1,045	1,045	0	100.00%
Dues Lynchburg	44,777	44,778	(1)	100.00%
Dues Bedford County	44,397	44,397	0	100.00%
Dues Campbell County	32,333	32,333	0	100.00%
Dues Amherst County	18,742	18,742	0	100.00%
Dues Appomattox County	8,954	8,954	0	100.00%
Miscellaneous Revenue	12,000	0	12,000	0.00%
Total Operations Revenue	**166,428**	**154,429**	**11,999**	**92.79%**
Direct Project Revenues				
Amherst County - Old Town Madison Heights	9,000	3,000	6,000	33.33%
Appomattox County Comp Plan	2,000	0	2,000	0.00%
Appomattox CDBG - Meadow Lark	40,000	0	40,000	0.00%
Appomattox CDBG - Planning	6,000	0	6,000	0.00%
Campbell County Route 29 Corridor Planning (VTRC)	62,500	24,439	38,061	39.10%
DHCD	72,471	0	72,471	0.00%
DRPT / FTA	104,468	0	104,468	0.00%
EDA/CEDS - LGC	50,000	16,932	33,068	33.86%
Regional Radio Board	25,000	0	25,000	0.00%
Region 2000 Services Authority	169,985	26,571	143,414	15.63%
RideSolutions	44,214	0	44,214	0.00%
TMDL Redevelopment	3,000	0	3,000	0.00%
Town of Amherst Main Street Waterline	7,000	0	7,000	0.00%
VDOT-PL	111,936	0	111,936	0.00%
VDOT-Rural	58,000	0	58,000	0.00%
WIA	434,399	52,982	381,417	12.20%
Total Direct Project Revenues	**1,199,973**	**123,924**	**1,076,049**	**10.33%**
Interest	750	211	539	28.13%
TOTAL OPERATIONS & DIRECT PROJECT REVENUES	**1,367,151**	**278,564**	**1,088,587**	**20.38%**
Surplus/(Use of Fund) Balance	**(59,836)**	**60,938**	**(120,774)**	
Funding from Fund Balance for EDA CEDS	65,027		65,027	0.00%
Funding from Fund Balance	65,027	0	65,027	0.00%
	$5,191	**$60,938**	**($55,747)**	
Pass Thru Revenue				
Regional Radio Board	1,249,988	829,414	420,574	66.35%
VDOT - PL	85,500		85,500	0.00%
WIA	950,000	50,240	899,760	5.29%
Total Pass Thru Revenues	**$2,285,488**	**$879,654**	**$1,405,834**	**38.49%**
Total Revenue	3,717,666	1,158,218	2,559,448	
Net Surplus/(Use of Fund) Balance	5,191	698,754		

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
Budget to Actual for FY17
as of August 31, 2016

CASH ON HAND

Sun Trust Checking		
LGC Funds	391,954	
WIA Trainit Funds	4,429	
Local Govt Invest Pool	473,117	
Petty Cash	155	
Cash on Hand	**$ 869,655**	

CALCULATION OF ESTIMATED YEAR-END FUND BALANCE

Estimated Year-end Fund Balance	**$ 892,518**	

Year-end Fund Balance

Fiscal Year	Balance
FY08	805,675
FY09	797,166
FY10	775,534
FY11	810,675
FY12	865,736
FY13	902,952
FY14	933,423
FY15	996,780
FY16	952,354
FY17 Estimate	892,518
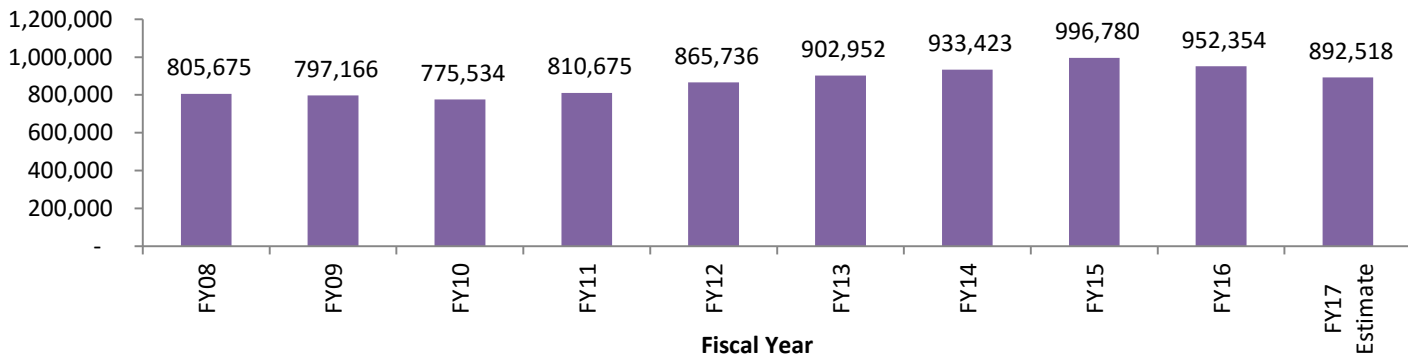
July 1, 2014 Population Estimates for Virginia and its Counties and Cities

Published on January 27, 2016 by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Demographics Research Group
www.coopercenter.org/demographics/

Locality	April 1, 2010 Census	July 1, 2013 Estimate	July 1, 2014 Estimate	July 1, 2015 Estimate	July 2015 Billing using July 1, 2013 Population Estimate @ $.575 per	July 2016 Billing using July 1, 2014 Population Estimate @ $.575 per	July 2017 Billing using July 1, 2015 Population Estimate @ $.575 per	$ Change from prior year	% Change from prior year	@$.65 Per or 13% Increase	Change from $.575
Amherst County	32,353	32,476	32,595	32,028	$18,673.70	$18,742.13	$18,416.10	-$326.03	-1.74%	$20,818	$2,401.90
Appomattox County	14,973	15,270	15,573	15,455	$8,780.25	$8,954.48	$8,886.63	-$67.85	-0.76%	$10,046	$1,159.37
Bedford County#	74,898	76,309	77,213	77,575	$43,877.68	$44,397.48	$44,605.63	$208.15	0.47%	$50,424	$5,818.37
Campbell County	54,842	56,136	56,232	56,167	$32,278.20	$32,333.40	$32,296.03	-$37.37	-0.12%	$36,509	$4,212.97
Lynchburg City	75,568	77,376	77,874	78,675	$44,491.20	$44,777.55	$45,238.13	$460.58	1.03%	$51,139	$5,900.87
Town of Altavista					$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$0.00	0.00%	$1,181	$136.00
Town of Amherst					$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$0.00	0.00%	$1,181	$136.00
Town of Appomattox					$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$0.00	0.00%	$1,181	$136.00
Town of Bedford					$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$0.00	0.00%	$1,181	$136.00
Town of Brookneal					$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$1,045.00	$0.00	0.00%	$1,181	$136.00
	252,634	257,567	259,487	259,900	$153,326.03	$154,430.04	$154,667.52	$237.48	0.15%	$174,841.00	$20,173.48

#: 2010 Census Estimate Includes numbers for Bedford City

Summary of Dues From Localities
For the Fiscal Years 2002 through 2018
Virginia's Region 2000 Local Government Council

Fiscal Year	Rate	Amherst	Appomattox	Bedford City	Bedford	Campbell	Lynchburg	Towns*	Total	% Chg From Prior Year
2002	$ 0.400	12,318	5,356	2,520	23,560	20,324	26,320	900	93,998	
2003	$ 0.450	14,352	6,167	2,835	27,167	22,985	29,371	950	106,677	13.49%
2004	$ 0.500	16,070	6,943	3,141	30,597	25,648	32,054	1,000	118,453	11.04%
2005	$ 0.500	16,070	6,943	3,141	30,597	25,648	32,054	1,000	118,453	0.00%
2006	$ 0.500	16,070	6,943	3,141	30,597	25,648	32,054	1,000	118,453	0.00%
2007	$ 0.550	17,160	7,535	3,465	34,485	27,885	36,795	1,000	131,325	10.87%
2008	$ 0.650	20,735	9,035	4,030	41,340	33,345	44,200	1,180	157,405	19.86%
2009	$ 0.650	20,735	9,035	4,030	41,340	33,345	44,200	1,180	157,405	0.00%
2010	$ 0.650	20,735	9,035	4,030	41,340	33,345	44,200	1,180	157,405	0.00%
2011	$ 0.575	18,596	8,288	3,655	38,108	30,242	40,672	1,045	143,741	-8.68%
2012	$ 0.575	18,882	8,423	3,498	38,442	30,611	41,613	1,045	145,650	1.33%
2013	$ 0.575	18,605	8,626	3,576	39,606	31,582	43,600	1,045	149,775	2.83%
2014	$ 0.575	18,685	8,637	3,529	39,893	31,486	43,958	1,045	150,368	0.40%
2015	$ 0.575	18,706	8,731		43,590	31,642	44,392	1,045	152,286	1.28%
2016	$ 0.575	18,674	8,780		43,878	32,278	44,491	1,045	153,326	0.68%
2017	$ 0.575	18,742	8,954		44,397	32,333	44,778	1,045	154,430	0.72%
2018	$ 0.575	18,416	8,887		44,606	32,296	45,238	1,045	154,668	0.15%

*Prior to July 1, 2015, Towns include Altavista, Amherst, Appomattox, and Brookneal; the town of Bedford was added July 1, 2015

DRAFT

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

VIRGINIA'S REGION 2000

Submitted by Market Street Services Inc.
www.marketstreetservices.com

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Business and community leaders from Virginia's Region 2000 have come together to update the region's five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The new strategy will help elevate the region's competitiveness for new jobs and talent, guiding the region's investments in support of economic improvement and prosperity. Upon completion, it will ensure the region's continued eligibility for federal funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in support of such investments. The four-phase research and strategic planning process will last roughly eight months, concluding in October 2016.

PHASE I: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Effective strategies are well-informed strategies. Quantitative research about the region must be complemented by qualitative input; the knowledge and opinions of stakeholders and the public at large are invaluable when identifying the assets to leverage, challenges to overcome, opportunities to pursue, and relevant investments around which the region can unite. Accordingly, the first phase of the process seeks to engage key stakeholders and the public at large through a series of interviews, focus groups, and an online survey to inform all subsequent phases of the process.

PHASE 2: REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

The Regional Assessment will provide a detailed examination of Region 2000's competitiveness as a place to live, work, and do business. The Assessment will present a set of "stories" that frame the issues facing Region 2000 as it seeks to further develop the area's economic prosperity and livability. Collectively, these stories will highlight the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges as identified by resident and business input and key trends in demographic, socioeconomic, economic, and quality of life indicators. The region's competitiveness will be benchmarked against other metropolitan areas with which it competes for both jobs and workers.

PHASE 3: COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

The third phase of the process carefully considers the strategic implications of the findings from the first two phases in developing a new five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide collaborative initiatives and proactive investments that support the community's economic development objectives. Strategic recommendations will leverage and reference best practice programs, policies, and initiatives from communities and regions around the country when relevant and appropriate. The resulting CEDS will complement a variety of other plans and initiatives that collectively help define a roadmap for the region's preferred future.

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The final phase of the strategic planning process is the development of an Implementation Plan that supports the effective and efficient implementation of the various CEDS recommendations. Specifically, it will identify lead implementers, key partners, potential costs, and timelines for implementation of each recommendation. Performance metrics for gauging the effectiveness of implementation efforts will also be included.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (DRAFT)

PROCESS: ESTABLISHING A VISION AND DEVELOPING GOALS

At the onset of this strategic planning process and during the first meeting of the CEDS Steering Committee, it was emphasized that this regional strategy must go beyond mere fulfilment of federal requirements. Specifically, there is an expectation that the CEDS will serve as foundational document in guiding the program of work for the newly-formed Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA) as it seeks to fulfil a role as a catalyst for regional economic development. During its first meeting the Steering Committee also discussed the manner in which the region has changed in recent years, the most substantive challenges facing the region today, and its vision for a preferred future. This discussion centered upon a few key themes:

- ✓ Concerns about access to **economic and educational opportunities**
- ✓ Regional challenges associated with **infrastructure and connectivity**
- ✓ Desires to develop a more attractive **quality of place** with the amenities and built environment that appeals to **the next generation of workers**
- ✓ Frustration with the lack of a discernable **regional identity** or niche in the marketplace

Similar themes emerged when more than 1,100 residents responded to the following question on the community survey that speaks to their vision for a preferred future: *"Imagine that you went home, packed your bags, and didn't return to the Lynchburg region for ten years. What would you want to see different (if anything) about the community when you return?"* The Regional Assessment includes a word cloud illustrating the most frequently mentioned words when responding to this question. Echoing the sentiments of the Steering Committee, among the most frequently mentioned words by residents were:

- ✓ Words that speak to the need for continued **economic improvement**: words such as *opportunities, jobs, businesses, growth*
- ✓ Words that speak to **quality of place** and attributes that help **attract and retain talent**: words such as *downtown, shopping, restaurants, entertainment, river, activities*
- ✓ Words that speak to **connectivity and infrastructure**: words such as *transportation, airport, roads, bike, traffic*

All of the input received from the Steering Committee and residents – those that responded to the community survey, participated in interviews, and attended focus groups – was married with extensive quantitative analysis to produce the Regional Assessment, a narrative discussion of the where the region has been, where it stands today, and where it is headed in an increasingly competitive world for jobs and talent.

The eight stories that framed the quantitative and qualitative research findings in the Regional Assessment are as follows:

1. Image, Identity, and Influence: The Lynchburg Region and Liberty University

2. Regional Growth Dynamics

3. Attracting, Retaining, and Developing a Future Workforce

4. Quality of Life: What Makes Us "Family Friendly?"

5. Quality of Place: Relative Appeal to Young Professionals

6. Connectivity in Region 2000: Threats to Competitiveness

7. Economic Composition, Diversity, and Resiliency

8. Translating Regional Prosperity to Personal Well-Being

These eight stories collectively address a few common themes:

✓ the region's growth patterns and the manner in which these reflect its ability to effectively attract, retain, and develop a **sustainable workforce**;

✓ the degree to which **the region's image, quality of life, and quality of place** impact its ability to develop this sustainable workforce, and;

✓ the region's **effectiveness in nurturing a diverse, resilient, and prosperous economy** and the degree to which this prosperity is translating to **resident well-being**.

Following a review and discussion of the Regional Assessment, Steering Committee members responded to a survey that provided them with the opportunity to identify the specific findings and stories from the Regional Assessment that were most concerning to them personally. Responses were grouped according to key themes and Committee members were asked to evaluate these top concerns and, through interactive voting, identify the region's greatest priorities related to supporting economic growth and diversification from among these top concerns. Each Steering Committee member was allowed to vote for three priorities among nine themes that emerged from their feedback on the aforementioned survey. The Steering Committee's voting revealed the following priorities (numbers in parentheses reflect the number of votes received):

1. Developing **talent pipelines** that support key business sectors (13)

2. Enhancing **quality of place** (12)

3. Promoting a positive **image and identity** (9)

4. Improving **connectivity** (7)

Collectively, this information reviewed in the preceding discussion covering expectations for this strategy, and key themes emerging from Steering Committee discussions, resident input, and the Regional Assessment demonstrated that the region's strategy could reasonably be organized around four primary themes or goal areas:

1. Image and Identity

2. Economic Development Service Delivery (Business Attraction, Retention, and Development)

3. Workforce Sustainability (Talent Attraction, Retention, and Development)

4. Quality of Place (Infrastructure Provision and the Built Environment)

It was suggested to the Steering Committee that the CEDS could be guided by a vision statement emphasizing attributes that reflect strengths which residents and stakeholders wish to preserve, as well as the preferred future that they desire. Based on the words used by residents and Committee members when describing the region's key strengths and what they would like to see ten years from today, the Market Street team developed a few potential vision statements for the Steering Committee to consider. These vision statements were accompanied by a suggested set of goal statements that could communicate the manner in which the region will help advance its vision while providing structure to the CEDS recommendations. Steering Committee members reviewed the proposed vision statements and identified their most preferred attributes of the proposed vision statements. Committee members also broadly endorsed the four proposed goal statements and the themes that they addressed, while suggesting some potential augmentations in the structure and verbiage used to help improve clarity.

The vision statement which received the most votes from Steering Committee members in draft form was as follows: *"The Lynchburg region is an inviting, family-friendly, and well-connected region that is characterized by the diversity, resilience, and attractiveness of its workforce, communities, and economy."* Among other feedback, Committee members emphasized a desire to see words and themes such as inclusion, innovation, and creativity incorporated into the region's vision. It was also acknowledged that a more forward-looking, aspirational, and differentiated vision would be desirable.

This feedback informed the vision statement and goal statements that framed the first complete draft of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and twelve key initiatives includes within it. Feedback received from Committee members has informed subsequent revisions to this vision statement and the twelve key initiatives that were included in the first complete draft. Continued feedback from the Steering Committee and other regional stakeholders will inform a final set of revisions to the CEDS before development of the corresponding Implementation Plan begins.

STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

"Our vision is a prosperous, vibrant, and inclusive Lynchburg region recognized for the creativity of its workforce, the resilience of its economy, and its abundance of natural, cultural, and educational opportunities."

Collectively, the Lynchburg region will help advance this vision through pursuit of five key goals:

1. *...projecting a positive image and cultivating our distinct identity;*
2. *...facilitating the growth and expansion of our business community;*
3. *...educating and developing a sustainable workforce;*
4. *...investing in the connectivity of our region, and;*
5. *...supporting the vitality of our diverse communities and downtowns.*

These five goals are interrelated and interdependent, reflecting the nature of comprehensive economic development today. The Regional Assessment illustrated the degree to which such issues as interconnected; the Lynchburg region could struggle to develop a sustainable workforce if it fails to adequately project a positive image and support the vitality of its diverse communities and downtowns. Similarly, the region would compromise its efforts to effectively facilitate the growth and expansion of the business community if it fails to adequately educate and develop a sustainable workforce and invest in the connectivity of the region.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KEY INITIATIVES

These five statements reflect overarching goals that provide structure to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), its objectives, and a set of initiatives that support them. **Strategic objectives** define those issues that the region wishes to impact within a goal area and serve as guidance for the development of appropriate key initiatives, both in this draft of the CEDS and in subsequent annual updates. In total, the draft CEDS advances tactical pursuits within 12 such key initiatives. **Key initiatives** are specific, actionable pursuits for an organization or community. They can be programs, services, events, or investments in physical developments. Most key initiatives contain multiple tactics and could support multiple objectives in a single goal area; accordingly, individual initiatives are not assigned to a single objective. A series of "**best practices**" or "**case studies**" have been referenced throughout this document and described in an Appendix when relevant to a specific initiative. These best practices and case studies can help guide implementation.

While there is a desire among Committee members and regionals stakeholders to develop and implement a truly *comprehensive* and *holistic* economic development strategy, there has also been an acknowledgement that the region needs focus in its economic development strategy. This focus is appropriate given the recent changes in organizational structure and capacity supporting collaborative regional economic development – notably, the formation of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA). It is intended that such focus can be reinforced by narrowly focusing the region's strategy on these 12 key initiatives.

KEY INITIATIVES: OVERVIEW

1. Form an Image and Identity Partnership to guide and implement a new collaborative Regional Branding and Image Campaign.

2. Implement a collaborative, regional Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.

3. Implement a targeted economic development marketing and corporate recruitment program.

4. Launch a new regional Center for Entrepreneurship that can serve as a long-term anchor and catalyst for the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

5. Launch an Economic Gardening and Entrepreneur in Residence program to drive technology-based economic development.

6. Form a Regional Talent Coalition to coordinate sector-focused workforce development initiatives, address regional skills gaps, and enhance collaboration between the business community and educational institutions.

7. Establish a Regional Workforce Center on the campus of Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) to deliver necessary workforce training.

8. Update project priorities and implement the region's existing plans for transportation, broadband, and other infrastructure provision based on relevant takeaways from the Central Virginia Connectivity Study.

9. Deploy free wireless internet in public parks, downtowns, and other activity centers throughout the region.

10. Develop and implement a regional Site Evaluation and Improvement Program to accelerate the preparation and availability of shovel-ready industrial sites in the region.

11. Advance a Regional Riverfront Vision that seeks to "unlock" the region's riverfronts, better connecting and integrating local communities with the James and Roanoke Rivers.

12. Expand the establishment of Arts and Culture Districts throughout the region to encourage and incentivize projects that improve the aesthetic, artistic, and cultural appeal of the region.

GOAL I

...projecting a positive image and cultivating our distinct identity

EXCERPTS FROM THE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

"The old adage 'perception is reality' is an apt description of one of the unmistakable truths of community and economic development – the way you are perceived by others matters. In a world where the competition for talent is as fierce today as the competition for jobs, regions are increasingly mindful of the ways in which they are perceived – positively and negatively – by the outside world. Communities and regions that fail to cultivate an authentic brand identity and proactively broadcast that identity to the world run the risk of being defined by external forces, or perhaps worse, having no definition at all. Many of the most competitive communities in the country have well-known economic and cultural identities that are reinforced over time."

Unfortunately, many public input participants lamented the lack of a strong regional identity and felt that this lack of brand recognition has adversely impacted its competitiveness for talent and corporate investment, as well as its prospects for future growth and propensity. This lack of a strong identity leads to the possibility of being mischaracterized in a manner that inhibits a community's ability to attract and retain residents, businesses, and visitors."

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

✓ Ensure that our regional brand identity clearly communicates the region's geographic location, projects a positive image, and is embraced by the region's businesses, institutions, and communities.

✓ Cultivate the seeds of an authentic regional identity that can be recognized on a national and global scale.

✓ Effectively promote what differentiates and characterizes the region to prospective future residents and workers.

✓ Promote our economic identity and competitive advantages to targeted audiences.

KEY INITIATIVE #1

Form an Image and Identity Partnership to guide and implement a new collaborative Regional Branding and Image Campaign.

Although contrived community brands are trivial in the realm of community improvement and economic development, authentic brand identities often reflect deep associations with a place and can heavily influence perceptions of a community. Whether it is Asheville's reputation as a progressive, cultural mecca amidst the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Research Triangle's reputation as an epicenter of higher education and research activity, or Nashville's reputation as the "Music City," authentic brand associations derived from a region's attributes can have a significant impact on its relative success in attracting and retaining certain businesses, residents, and visitors.

Stakeholders and input participants have repeatedly cited a desire to see the region develop and promote a new brand identity, one that reflects resident input and sources of pride while resonating with external audiences. At present, the region lacks a structure to advance a comprehensive branding and image campaign that leverages the expertise of a variety of professionals engaged in or with a vested interest in the marketing and promotion of the region, its communities to a variety of target audiences, notably existing and prospective future residents that represent the region's future workforce.

Assemble the Image and Identity Partnership.

The Image and Identity Partnership would serve as a working partnership of organizations and professionals in the Lynchburg region that are somewhat engaged in or have a vested interest in the marketing and promotion of the region. This could include but it no means limited to representatives of economic development organizations, convention and visitors bureaus, young professionals organizations, downtown development organizations, arts and cultural organizations, higher education institutions, human resource departments, and other relevant partners. This Partnership would serve as a de facto Steering Committee in guiding the development and implementation of a comprehensive Regional Branding and Image Campaign (elements of which are described below). A subcommittee comprised of integrated marketing professionals from local creative agencies and firms (marketing, communications, advertising, branding, public relations, etc.) could potentially provide low-cost assistance in developing appropriate campaign elements.

Develop a grassroots, open-source brand identity for the region to serve as the foundation of the Regional Branding and Image Campaign.

Stakeholders repeatedly emphasized that the region lacked a strong geographic identifier; some lamented confusion surrounding "Lynchburg" and the state in which it is located while others cited a lack of awareness, recognition, or support for the "Region 2000" moniker. Many of these same stakeholders referenced the successful open-source "RVA" brand and logo developed as part of the RVA Creates initiative. Indeed, the RVA Creates initiative could serve as a viable model or best practice to emulate. The Partnership should evaluate the most cost effective method of deriving a regionally-generated, open-source brand identity and pursue the identified approach. In developing the identity, some basic level of market research regarding external perceptions will need to complement the research conducted as part of this CEDS process, and any additional relevant research, related to the perceptions and associations of existing residents. All relevant research should be conducted through the lens of talent attraction and retention, and the degree to which the region's brand identity and external image support this objective.

Develop and launch an internal resident pride initiative to promote adoption of the regional brand, and raise the visibility and patronage of existing amenities, attractions, and activities in the region.

A new grassroots-driven brand identity and associated brand elements should reflect resident enthusiasm and pride; it should be capable of uniting and unifying diverse communities and constituents. Ultimately, brand associations reflect a collection of attributes that are known or perceived about a region. Stakeholders and committee members have emphasized that the region is already home to many great amenities, attractions, and activities that simply need greater visibility to both existing and potential future residents. The Image and Identity Partnership could evaluate and implement a variety of methods to promote resident, organizational, and commercial adoption and integration of the new brand as part of a comprehensive internal resident pride initiative. This could include but is by no means limited to: creative methods of incentivizing patronage by way of a regional loyalty program; the deployment of a social media campaign; a series of weekly columns or op-eds spotlighting various amenities; or a resident competition whereby residents are rewarded for being "most experienced" in certain categories such a nature and recreation, festivals and events, downtown merchants, arts and culture, and so forth.

Engage a public relations consultant to promote positive stories about the region in targeted media outlets and markets.

When it comes to raising awareness about a community or region, there is no substitute for authenticity. Earned media – news articles and opinion pieces that are published in respected media outlets – carries far more credibility and authenticity with prospective new residents and workers that does advertising or other forms of "owned media" (such as websites, blogs, and social media accounts). While these owned media outlets can help spread information about a community or region, earned media carries with it a much greater perception of impartiality and objectivity. A public relations consultant can help the region build upon its branding efforts by identifying and promoting positive stories from the region to targeted media markets and outlets that align with the region's talent attraction objectives. Once new brand elements have been developed and adopted regionally, the Image and Identity Partnership can take on the task of developing a master narrative and a series of targeted narratives that resonate with relevant audiences. These narratives can help provide structure for a consistent and intentional effort to promote positive stories about the region – articles, op-eds, and other media placements that help advance the region's image and identity – in major national media outlets, supported by the retention of a public relations consultant.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: RVA CREATES (RICHMOND, VA)

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: RALLY ST. LOUIS (ST. LOUIS, MO)

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: "WE DON'T COAST" (OMAHA, NE)

GOAL II

...facilitating the growth and expansion of our business community

EXCERPS FROM THE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

"What is evident from (an) analysis of economic composition is the region's reliance on (the) manufacturing and education sectors...absent the growth observed in the Educational Services sector (3,947 net new jobs from 2005-2015), the Lynchburg region would have lost more than 2,100 jobs over the course of the last decade...The region's recent reliance on Liberty University for economic growth presents a major challenge for the region."

"Diverse economies are more likely to be resilient economies. Economic diversification helps to insulate communities from uncontrollable global trends that may affect certain industries in a particularly acute way. Additionally, economic diversification is important in providing adequate job opportunities to workers of various skills sets in a way that helps to establish ladders of economic opportunity and can help overall talent attraction and retention efforts. But perhaps most importantly, it can help insulate a region and its labor force from the potentially devastating effects associated with the closure of a single, large employer. In this respect, it is important that economic diversity not only be defined in terms of business sector composition but also business size."

"Regions with employment concentrated in a few major employers may not be viewed as resilient as another economy with employment dispersed across many smaller to medium sized employers. And given the narrative that has been presented herein regarding the influence of Liberty University, one might expect to see a region where a relatively large share of employment is concentrated in its largest employers. Interestingly, this is not the case in the Lynchburg region. In fact, the Lynchburg region is the least dependent upon major employers (those with 500+ employees) among all comparison geographies. Just 48.7 percent of regional employment is concentrated in these employers, whereas at least 55 percent of regional employment is concentrated in these employers in the three comparison metros. Nearly 31 percent of employment is concentrated in small employers with fewer than 50 employees; such employers represented no more than 24.3 percent of employment in the three comparison metros. This is a somewhat surprising but nonetheless remarkably positive finding: the region has a solid base of smaller to medium-sized employers that can potentially drive future economic growth and help insulate the regional economy from shocks that come from a single employer."

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

✓ Retain and expand the region's existing business community.

✓ Attract new corporate investment in target sectors.

✓ Provide resources that help entrepreneurs and small business owners realize their potential.

✓ Pursue a model of regional economic development service delivery that is predicated upon collaboration and cooperation among local, regional, and state-level stakeholders.

✓ Promote economic diversification to support economic resiliency.

KEY INITIATIVE #2

Implement a collaborative, regional Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program.

Various studies have illustrated that expansions of existing businesses represent between 60 percent and upwards of 90 percent of a region's job creation. But when they face challenges, a layoff event or closure can be devastating to a region, impacting everything from unemployment to foreclosures to child poverty. The Lynchburg region is no stranger to the risk posed by such closures. A best practice, collaborative, regional Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program should seek to understand the challenges and opportunities facing existing businesses; help alleviate regulatory burdens and barriers to competitiveness and expansion; prevent existing business from relocating elsewhere; identify businesses poised for expansion; and support the maintenance of a competitive business climate.

The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA) should work with local economic development partners to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly defines the protocols and operating procedures for a professionally-staffed, collaborative, regional Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. Trust and confidentiality – both among regional economic development partnerships and the existing business community – are critical elements of a successful, collaborative BRE program. The program will ideally have a few core elements:

Existing Business Response Team (EBRT): The Existing Business Response Team would represent a group of partners from local economic development organizations, relevant local government departments (permitting, public works, etc.), workforce development agencies and higher education institutions, utilities, and other relevant organizations that can and should be engaged in responding to the needs of existing businesses. The EBRT would represent the backbone of the BRE program, with relevant individuals engaged as needed to respond to the unique needs of individual businesses as identified through a variety of outreach methods (site visits, surveys, industry councils, etc. as referenced below).

Target Sector Councils: Target Sector Councils would be convened to provide a forum for regular dialogue between businesses operating in specific sectors, enabling the identification of shared challenges from regulatory and legislative issues to workforce concerns to capital needs. These Councils can support and inform the efforts of the Talent Coalition (see Goal 3). They can help identify new partnerships for research and development, new buyer-supplier relationships, and other collaborative endeavors with colleges and universities or other institutions in the region. They can also help identify appropriate targeted marketing opportunities and/or corporate relocation prospects. Councils likely will not be necessary or sustainable in all target sectors (to be identified in a forthcoming Target Sector Analysis for the LRBA).

Site Visits: A site visit program is the core element of best practice Business Retention and Expansion programs. The EBRT should define an appropriate goal for the number of site visits to be conducted throughout the region in a given year, establishing parameters for determining the appropriate existing businesses to include in the site visit program. Many communities and regions focus exclusively upon their largest employers, best practice programs seek to align their BRE efforts with their target sectors while also seeking to identify medium-sized companies (varying definitions, often those from 50-250 employees) that are poised for growth and expansion. Site visits

Information Management and Survey Deployment: All information collected from site visits must be maintained in an organized customer relationship management (CRM) system, ideally one which has been customized for this specific purpose (such as ExecutivePulse or Synchronist). These systems are critical for ensuring that information is effectively recorded and tracked over time, businesses receive timely and relevant follow-up from various forms of outreach and

communication, and analysis can be conducted on individual businesses, sectors, and the existing business community at large to help identify trends, obstacles, and opportunities. A CRM system should be acquired with potential consideration given to a model where licenses are provided to local partners and/or certain members of the EBRT for consistency in data collection and dissemination. The chosen system should also be enabled to support the deployment of a customized survey questionnaire to the existing business community. This questionnaire should be targeted at those businesses who are not receiving site visits. They can help identify smaller businesses poised for growth and expansion or businesses that potentially need or merit a future site visit. They can also help gather broad information on the business climate and general business and economic trends, while broadening the reach of the region's existing Business Retention and Expansion outreach efforts.

Key Accounts Visitation Program: The LRBA and its regional and state partners in economic development should regularly evaluate opportunities to pursue cost-efficient travel to visit executives of major establishments that are headquartered outside of the region. These efforts can potentially be coordinated with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and the Governor's Office, with a very limited number of opportunities (one or two trips) pursued each year. These trips can enable a small delegation of regional economic developers, elected officials, and other regional business and community leaders to meet with executives of major employers and attempt to understand the ways in which the region can continue to support the competitiveness of their operations and facilitate opportunities for expansion.

Local-Sourcing Challenge: Buy local initiatives are common in communities and regions across the country. These initiatives typically attempt to encourage local residents to purchase from locally-owned merchants and establishments to support their local economy. The LRBA could take this concept and create and launch an analogous challenge to the business community: identify at least one local alternative to a non-local supplier of a good or service, and make the switch. The potential economic impact of a coordinated local-sourcing initiative could be substantial. Through this initiative, existing business retention and expansion – the notion of "taking care of your own" – would become further embedded in the culture of the region's business community. Potential exists to pilot this challenge within a single target sector or other relevant economic sector in the region such as agriculture: local restaurants could be encouraged to identify at least one local farmer and/or food and beverage provider/distributor that is an alternative to a non-local supplier.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: BUSINESS FIRST GREATER RICHMOND (RICHMOND, VA)

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: MEMPHIS REGIONAL LOGISTICS COUNCIL (MEMPHIS, TN)

KEY INITIATIVE #3

Implement a targeted economic development marketing and corporate recruitment program.

Multiple stakeholders communicated during the input process that a clear expectation for the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance was an effective and targeted approach to economic development marketing and corporate recruitment. Development Counselors International (DCI) conducts a frequent survey of corporate decision-makers engaged in site selection and location to solicit their opinions on the effectiveness of various economic development marketing activities. Planned visits to corporate executives and decision-makers has consistently ranked as the most effective marketing technique, exceeding the effectiveness of advertising, trade show

attendance, media relations, and other more traditional techniques. It has become evident that in economic development today, there is no substitute for face-to-face contact. Meetings with economic development organizations were perceived to be a more valuable source of information influencing an executive's perceptions of an area's business climate than their business travel, personal travel, or exposure to advertising.

In addition to face-to-face contact, digital communication and marketing are, not surprisingly, increasingly the focus of effective programs. The region should launch and intentional and targeted economic development marketing and corporate program that is predicated upon these best practice elements and customized based on the region's target sectors. Such a program should include the following components:

Targeted Contacts: The Target Sector Councils referenced in Key Initiative #2 can help refine marketing tactics by target sector. Specifically, they can help the Alliance begin by developing a network of internal (regional) and external (national or global) contacts relevant to the target sector. Internal contacts represent potential Target Sector Council members, whereas external contacts represent those individuals who are potentially valuable industry contacts supporting the region's targeted marketing and corporate recruitment efforts (business contacts that could be relocation prospects, brokers and site location consultants working in that sector, key contacts at VEDP and other economic development partners, key contacts at relevant publications and media outlets, key contacts at relevant trade and professional associations, etc.).

Outbound Travel: The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance's economic development staff currently travels out of market to meet with site selection consultants and attend relevant industry trade shows and conferences. This travel is important as relationship development and maintenance is an important component of business prospecting. Moving forward, it will be important for the Alliance to develop a targeted approach to its outbound travel, pursuing only the most valuable opportunities with the highest potential return on investment. This will necessitate the development of a system for evaluating and communicating the returns on outbound travel to ensure that techniques are modified and augmented over time. Target Sector Councils can help identify outbound travel opportunities (specific relocation prospects, relevant and appropriate industry trade shows and conference, etc.) in a given sector, and can help economic development practitioners refine the region's message related to each target sector.

Inbound Hosting: Hosting of corporate decision-makers and relocation prospects, as well as the brokers and site selection consultants that influence their location decisions, is another valuable tactic. The region already pursues such inbound hosting and should continue to do so, capitalizing upon opportunities as they present themselves. However, potential exists for the region to formalize an approach to inbound hosting via three events each year:

I.   Developer Day: This inbound event would host developers from around the region and state to tour and showcase a limited number of available properties and redevelopment opportunities. Potential exists to rotate the event each year focusing on a different community/county.

II. Broker and Consultant Day: This inbound event would host brokers from around the region and state, and site location consultants from potentially around the country, to showcase a limited number of commercial properties or industrial sites. Potential exists to rotate the event each year focusing on a different target sector.

III. Partner Day: This inbound event would host project managers and other key economic development staff from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), the Appalachian Power Company, and other relevant partners engaged in marketing various regions in Virginia. This event would seek to showcase available properties that are well-prepared or shovel-ready, as well as recent developments in the region (new assets, resources, infrastructure, etc.) that can support marketing and recruitment efforts.

Integrated Digital Marketing: The region's approach to economic development marketing cannot simply rely on relationship development and maintenance; it must proactively seek to educate target audiences and influence their perceptions of the region. A few key components of the region's approach to digital marketing merit discussion:

I.   **Economic Development Website and Target Sector Microsites:** The new yeslynchburgregion.org website (to be launched soon) will serve as the primary digital platform for communicating the region's economic identity and messages to relevant target audiences. This website must be oriented in a manner that appeals to those decision-makers seeking comprehensive, accurate, up-to-date, and readily-available information. A region's economic development website is often the first impression that it provides to such decision-makers and accordingly, it is important the region and the organization coordinating its collaborative economic development activities present itself professionally and demonstrate that it understands what this audience needs. This includes but is certainly not limited to: extensive information covering demographic, economic, and workforce attributes; GIS-enabled, easily navigable and searchable inventory of available sites and building; information on key business costs and available incentives; contact information and links to other relevant resources, and; targeted information relevant to specific sectors of the economy. The Target Sector Councils can help identify and define appropriate content and messages to include on a series of target microsites that provide customized information and messages to audiences interested in a specific target business sector.

II. **Digital Advertising:** A very limited amount of digital advertising (and potentially some print advertising) could be justified in the early stages as the region seeks to raise awareness of the new Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance and drive traffic to the new yeslynchburgregion.org website. These expenditures should be minimized and targeted to specific publications that reach intended audiences (corporate decision-makers and site location consultants).

III. **Earned Media:** Target Sector Councils can also help identify relevant industry and trade publications which the region could target for media placements. Executives and other Target Sector Council members that are subject matter experts could author articles and op-eds related to recent activities, initiatives, innovations, or business activities of interest to these target audiences, and which help promote the region and its economic messages.

Supply Chain Mapping: Existing businesses can often be a source of recruitment prospects. Potential exists to conduct supply chain mapping with the region's largest employers to evaluate opportunities for corporate recruitment; certain suppliers could benefit from co-location near a major buyer through shared labor forces, collaboration on research and development, reduced transportation costs, or a variety of other reasons. The region could most appropriately begin with its Nuclear Technology sector and its two anchor employers: AREVA and BWX Technologies.

Conference and Trade Show Attraction: The region's inbound hosting approach could also be completed by a collaborative effort with regional convention and visitors bureaus to attract conferences and trade shows that are relevant to the region's target business sectors. Great potential exists in aligning the region's tourism marketing and conference, trade show, and corporate meeting recruitment efforts (typically coordinated by CVBs) with its economic development marketing and corporate recruitment efforts. Hosting such events in the region can provide opportunities to increase the region's exposure to a relatively large pool of decision makers, workers, and innovators in the region's target sectors.

Collaborative "Super-regional" Marketing: Opportunities may exist for cost-effective "super-regional" marketing in partnership with the Roanoke region (specifically the Roanoke Regional Partnership) or other neighboring regions that are targeting other similar sectors of economic activity. Efficiencies could be gained in outbound travel, inbound hosting, digital marketing, or any number of other areas. Super-regional opportunities will need to be evaluated on a case-by-base, sector-by-sector basis once regional objectives are advanced.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: "AUSTIN: THE HUMAN CAPITAL" (AUSTIN, TX)

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: EARNED MEDIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY (CHATTANOOGA, TN)

KEY INITIATIVE #4

Launch a new regional Center for Entrepreneurship that can serve as a long-term anchor and catalyst for the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Stakeholders and committee members have emphasized that the region needs a catalyst to drive the long-term evolution of the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. A variety of resources exist to support more traditional, local-serving small businesses from the region's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to SCORE mentors and the local and regional chambers of commerce and business alliances to retail merchants associations. Other resources, including but not limited to the Center for Advanced Engineering and Research and the Lynchburg Business Development Centre (LBDC) provide varied resources to support technology-based entrepreneurship. Potential exists to develop a new umbrella organization that can help develop and implement a new collaborative and intentional approach to entrepreneurship in the region. In the same way that the Academy Center for the Arts and a restored, historic Academy Theater can serve as an anchor or catalyst for the region's arts and culture community, so too can a new Center for Entrepreneurship serve as a center of gravity for the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Continued feedback from the Steering Committee should help define and provide specific parameters for operation but the development of such a Center will unquestionably require a more in-depth study of potential operational models and partnerships, and the necessary program of work. The following guidelines can help initiate this process:

Engage Regional Partners and Potential Stakeholders: The first step is fully engage the spectrum of partners and stakeholders from the entrepreneurial community, including but not limited to providers of small business support services, higher education institutions, leadership development entrepreneurship education programs, and entrepreneurs themselves, in a discussion of the existing gaps in the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Preliminary research and input from this CEDS process validates that the region has a relatively large base of small-to-medium employers but lacks a regional body capable of coordinating and providing entrepreneurial programming and resources (including physical space and capital for startups) on a regional level. Engagement of regional stakeholders can help ensure that a mission is developed with consideration given to existing initiatives, ensuring that duplication is avoided, existing programs are amplified, and efficiency is pursued in designing the Center. Ultimately, the Center's professional staff would work with a range of partners to enhance existing resources, increase awareness of existing resources, and ensure that various components of the ecosystem are working well together while seeking to fill identified gaps in the ecosystem.

Identify Lead Entities and an Operational Model: Regional stakeholders should collectively identify a lead organization or organizations (either existing organizations or a potential new non-profit) to develop and operate the Center. An operational model should be identified after discussing appropriate stakeholders in the Center and evaluating other operational models from around the country. A variety of public-private partnership models exist around the country, with various levels of engagement and investment from the public, private, and non-profit (particularly higher education) sectors.

Develop a Program of Work: While the Center would not seek to absorb operations of various existing partners, it can serve as a coordinating body to attempt to develop and promote a more comprehensive, seamless entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region. The region's existing resources and support services are too numerous to list exhaustively but a program of work should clearly define the Center's operations with respect to:

- ✔ Services: What kinds of hands-on assistance, market research, or other services will be provided?
- ✔ Programs: What kinds of new events, programs, and partnerships can be developed to support entrepreneurship education, networking, and other objectives?
- ✔ Physical Space: What kind of space is needed by entrepreneurs and how can we efficiently and effectively fill any gaps.
- ✔ Capital: What kinds of capital do our entrepreneurs need and how can we efficiently and effectively fill any gaps?

Identify Physical Needs and a Physical Location Strategy: A number of input participants mentioned that, while the region is home to some incubation space to support startups, they generally feel that this space is not located in an area proximate to dense, walkable amenities that certain entrepreneurs demand and/or the physical space itself may not be particularly inviting or aesthetically attractive to these same entrepreneurs. Many communities and regions have established similar Centers for Entrepreneurship on or near their urban research university campuses, while others have placed these facilities prominently in their central business districts, understanding that visibility and access are important to the Center's viability and relevance. Stakeholders will need to develop a strategy for acquiring the necessary physical space to accommodate the Center's program of work. Potential exists to consider a single, centralized location (such as downtown Lynchburg) or a model whereby services are decentralized and potentially leverage existing facilities in the region (such as the Center for Advanced Engineering and Research and/or the Lynchburg Business Development Centre). A decentralized model could create "branch" campuses of the Center, focusing specific branches and the services they provide on target business sectors or other appropriate focused activities. A more centralized model could concentrate and co-locate a variety of services in a single location such as the James River Conference Center (JRCC), the new home of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA). If partners are interested, potential exists to evaluate existing real estate arrangements and long-term real estate needs with an eye towards eventual co-location of entrepreneurial support services in such a central location.

KEY INITIATIVE #5

Launch an Economic Gardening and Entrepreneur in Residence program to drive technology-based economic development.

For nearly three decades, a handful of communities and economic regions have advanced an approach to economic development that emphasizes small business development over new firm recruitment. This approach has come to be known as "economic gardening," a practice that attempts to provide companies poised for growth with low-cost access to otherwise expensive market and business intelligence. Many of the most refined and sophisticated economic gardening programs aim to help these companies identify new market opportunities, identify sales leads and develop new business relationships, and optimize their existing business and marketing plans, among other issues. Some communities, particularly some of the early adopters and innovators in the field of economic gardening, have adopted the principles of the program as their core economic development strategy; many others seeks to incorporate economic gardening principles into a more comprehensive and holistic approach to economic development. Certain national non-profits, notably the Edward Lowe Foundation, have provided resources to communities and entrepreneurs to help advance economic gardening initiatives. These initiatives typically target second-stage companies or gazelles, characterized by their lifetime (less than five years old), recent growth (typically more than 20 percent annual revenue growth), and current size (typically 10 or more employees).

The region has an opportunity to launch a new, highly-targeted Economic Gardening Program to support technology-based economic development in the region. The initiative would most appropriately narrowly target resources and assistance to a limited number (no more than five) companies operating in one or more target sectors. Potential exists to pilot the program by focusing on one of the region's areas of technology specialization, including but not limited to Nuclear Technology or Wireless Infrastructure and Communications. The intersection of these two, and specific applications related to cybersecurity could be another area of opportunity; specifically, an effort could dovetail with the newly-established International Critical Infrastructure Security Institute (ICISI) at CAER, an organization whose mission is to "certify organizations' performance-based strategies from cyber-based threats" and catalyze innovation and business formation in the cyber security sector, particularly as it relates to nuclear energy. Specific program components – from technical resources to human resources to capital resources – should be defined based on the identified sector or technology of focus.

The Economic Gardening Program could potentially be housed at the recommended new Center for Entrepreneurship, an existing facility such as CAER, a higher education institution, or coordinated through some other relevant economic development organization. The program would be supported and led by an "Entrepreneur in Residence" (EIR) – an individual with extensive executive experience in the field/sector being targeted by the Economic Gardening Program, an academic researcher with experience commercializing relevant technologies, or a serial entrepreneur. The ideal "Entrepreneur in Residence" may not be an existing resident in the region and may need to rotate based on the focus of the program and the businesses that it currently serves. The position could potentially be part-time as well, or full-time if EIR supports other functions and roles (such as directing or supporting a new Center for Entrepreneurship).

GOAL III

...educating and developing a sustainable workforce

EXCERPTS FROM THE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

"The importance of talent in modern-day economic development cannot be overstated. Workforce sustainability can make or break a community's economy, and this harsh reality is even more-heightened in the current economic development landscape given national aging trends. Many communities will struggle in coming years to avoid worker shortages as members of the Baby Boomer generation age out of the workforce, and it will be the younger generation of workers who will be primarily responsible for filling these vacated jobs and providing much needed stability to the nation's workforce."

"As of 2014, just 22.1 percent of the region's population was aged 25-44. 4.6 percentage points lower than the share aged 45-64. This is a considerable concern for the region from a workforce sustainability standpoint. As Baby Boomers exit the workforce and this smaller cohort enters more senior positions, the region will need to considerably elevate its talent attraction and retention efforts if it wishes to continue to provide a workforce that is, at a minimum, comparable in quantity to the one that exists today."

"Over the five year period from 2009 to 2014, the Lynchburg region made more substantive improvements in the percentage of its population with a bachelor's degree or higher than all comparison geographies and the average American community. And while this rate of improvement is certainly laudable, it will need to continue if the region is to become more competitive for certain white-collar job opportunities that rely on a highly-educated workforce. As of 2014, the percentage of the adult population with a bachelor's degree in the Lynchburg region (27.2 percent) remained nearly three percentage points below the national average (30.1 percent)."

"Collectively, (the region's higher education) institutions are a tremendous advantage, and many regions would envy the position that the Lynchburg region finds itself in with such a sizeable college-aged population. But from the standpoint of regional workforce development, they are only a competitive advantage to the degree to which those graduates can be retained."

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

✓ Proactively connect our education and training institutions with regional employers.

✓ Ensure that regional training and degree programs are aligned with the needs of regional employers and target sectors.

✓ Successfully retain graduates from our region's education systems.

✓ Attract talented graduates, young professionals, and experienced workers in occupations experiencing significant labor shortages.

✓ Raise awareness about the importance of public education to the region's family-friendliness, economic competitiveness, and workforce sustainability.

KEY INITIATIVE #6

Form a Regional Talent Coalition to coordinate sector-focused workforce development initiatives, address regional skills gaps, and enhance collaboration between the business community and educational institutions.

Stakeholders have indicated that – while examples of strong partnerships certainly exist – the region generally lacks a framework to support intentional, consistent, and sector-focused collaboration between the business community and the educational and training institutions that are developing their current and future workforce. The Regional Assessment revealed that, at a high level, the region's degree production is not well aligned with the region's economic composition. Further, many of the nation's most rapidly-expanding occupations require no formal college degree, and their training and credential requirements are rapidly changing with the pace of technological innovation. The Regional Assessment also revealed that the region faces a variety of challenges in effectively attracting and retaining well-educated, young talent. A new Regional Talent Coalition can help coordinate the design, development, and implementation of workforce initiatives that attempt to create a more intentional and seamless approach to talent development, retention, and attraction. The Regional Talent Coalition would represent a formal partnership between the Region 2000 Workforce Development Board, the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA), the regional business community, and its education and training institutions at all levels (from kindergarten through executive education). The Regional Talent Coalition could be supported by professional staff from a relevant coordinating entity but would largely be driven and supported by volunteers and paid staff from partner organizations that implement and fund variety of collaborative initiatives through a committee structure. Specifically, the Regional Talent Coalition could reasonably be organized around three issues or committees:

I.   **K-12 Pipeline:** Focused on delivery of programs and initiatives that seek to reduce dropouts, enhance college and university matriculation, and increase the pipeline of graduates with basic skills that are importance in the 21st century economy and demanded by our existing business community.

Specifically, the K-12 Pipeline Committee would support a variety of existing educational improvement initiatives around the region that could benefit from heightened volunteerism and/or support from the business community. This can include existing initiatives from Young Entrepreneurs Academy and the Mini Economy/Grow One initiative to the Future Focus initiatives and Partners in Education (PIE) programs. The K-12 Pipeline Committee would also help develop and launch collaborative new initiatives that can help address common challenges across regional school systems, or unique challenges facing individual school systems. Such new initiatives could include the launch of two new programs:

i.   Reach Out to Dropouts: This program would be modelled after a best practice initiative emerging from the Houston Independent School District. The program engages volunteers and community leaders who walk door-to-door in teams to visit the families of students that have not re-enrolled in school within the first few weeks of a new school year or failed to graduate the previous year for a variety of reasons. The program is simple yet remarkably successful at reenrolling dropouts, and has been replicated throughout the State of Texas and across the country.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: REACH OUT TO DROPOUTS (HOUSTON, TX)

ii.   Financial Aid Saturdays: This program would be modelled after a best practice initiative that emerged in the Austin, Texas metropolitan rea and coordinated by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. The program engages volunteers from the business community, area financial institutions, and members of the education community to provide free, hands-on assistance to families with the completion of college and financial aid applications. This assistance is provided on Saturdays at various high schools throughout the region. The program helps mitigate some fundamental yet surmountable obstacles to college matriculation: a lack of confidence, knowledge, or financial literacy sufficient for a family to complete the necessary applications that can enable their child to attend college or university.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: FINANCIAL AID SATURDAYS (AUSTIN, TX)

II.   **Curriculum and Capacity:** Focused on reducing identified gaps in curriculum and training programs at the regions higher education and training institutions, and ensuring that regional employers are able to find qualified candidates locally for in-demand positions.

Specifically, the Curriculum and Capacity Committee would advance an intentional effort to promote long-term alignment between the region's higher education offerings and its economy, while helping identify flexible training solutions to meet more immediate needs – needs which can potentially met by a recommended Workforce Training Center (see Key Initiative #7). The Committee would first conduct a comprehensive study of the skills gaps that exist in the region, measuring current and projected future demand for specific occupations as well as the current supply emerging from relevant degree and training programs which support them. This analysis should result in the identification of specific credential, training, certificate, and degree programs that need to be developed in the region in the coming years. Through appropriate representation and engagement, commitment from the region's diverse providers of higher education and training to new program development should be pursued when a need is identified. This Committee would also be tasked with identifying funding opportunities that can help the Talent Coalition and regional partners advance collaborative workforce solutions addressing identified skills gaps. The U.S Department of Labor's TechHire initiative, which has selected Lynchburg as one of its grant recipients, is a good example of an existing federally-funded initiative.

The Region 2000 Workforce Development Board is advancing the implementation of new federal workforce development guidelines in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This includes the in-progress formation of a Business Services Team and a Talent Solutions Team that will work to ensure that the region's workforce development efforts are appropriately aligned with economic development objectives and the needs of the business community. In this regard, the Workforce Development Board will essentially address the void that this Curriculum and Capacity committee is intended to fill, and accordingly, could simply assume responsibility for the actions identified herein. Creation of new volunteer structures with similar missions to the Workforce Development Board's efforts would be duplicative and inefficient. These teams coordinated by the Workforce Development Board Committee should most appropriately include one or more representatives from each of the Target Sector Councils (see Key Initiative #2) to ensure that skills gaps and strategies are analyzed and developed with target sectors in mind.

III.   **Talent Attraction and Retention:** Focused on initiatives that seek to retain the region's best and brightest graduates while also attracting former residents (including alumni) and other prospective new residents to the region.

Specifically, the Talent Attraction and Retention Committee would initially be responsible for advancing three initiatives:

i. **Talent-Focused Website:** The first task would be the development a new website, leveraging the brand elements developed as part of Key Initiative #1, which intentionally targets prospective new residents and workers who are seeking information and the Lynchburg region and what it has to offer. As the lines between economic and workforce development have blurred, communities and regions are increasingly focused on the manner in which they present themselves to prospective talent and not simply prospective companies. Accordingly, they are reengineering their web presence so that key community and regional messages are directed appropriately. While no two regions should present themselves in the same manner, some best practice elements are beginning to emerge as necessary features of such a website: a clear connection to available job opportunities; information about the region's distinct neighborhoods and amenities; connections to a robust social media strategy, and; connections to real people living in the region that are able to engage with prospective new residents on some level. No region or community has developed the perfect, model website; rather, a variety of best practice elements are featured in various communities. The final draft of this CEDS can incorporate a few references to such practices and the specific elements that could be emulated if desired.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: CARPE DM (DES MOINES, IA)

ii. **Internship Challenge:** Internships have been proven to be a tremendously effective tool for talent retention. They can create meaningful and lasting connections between a student and a regional employer, and between that student and a community. By providing employment opportunity and a wage before graduating, students can begin establishing roots – physically, socially, and economically – in a particular region. In fact, a recent survey of roughly 900 businesses by the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicated that more than half of all interns accept full-time employment with the company where their internship was completed. The Talent Coalition should issue a challenge to the business community to develop one or more internships targeting rising seniors and recent graduates from the region's colleges and universities. Some small incentive could be developed to help encourage internship creation. A portal on the recommended talent-focused website (see bullet above) would provide students with an opportunity to create a profile, upload their resume, and link to the LinkedIn account. The portal would help students find opportunities and help employers find potential interns.

iii. **Alumni Reintroduction:** The Talent Coalition should also seek to take advantage of the immense alumni base that has emerged from the region's institutions of higher education. As these institutions grow, so too will the relative size of this alumni base. Many communities have recognized that alumni are particularly appropriate targets for talent recruitment – many refer to them as boomerangs – and the CEDS Steering Committee has recognized this opportunity as well. The Talent Coalition should seek to work with alumni offices, athletic departments, performing arts departments, and other relevant representatives from area colleges and universities to identify opportunities to engage alumni located outside of the Lynchburg region and "reintroduce" them to the Lynchburg region and what it has to offer a working professional. The Coalition can host a series of events in the region around key alumni weekends and events – events that engage alumni socially and expose them to new developments, amenities and happenings in the Lynchburg region. The Coalition can also potentially host a limited number of out-of-market events to engage alumni. For example, alumni in the Piedmont Triad could be invited to join a group of young professionals and community leaders at a Lynchburg Hillcats road game in Winston-Salem.

The Talent Attraction and Retention Committee would most appropriately be comprised of one or more representatives from the Image and Identity Partnership (see Key Initiative #1) that helped develop brand elements capable of supporting a regional talent attraction and retention campaign.

KEY INITIATIVE #7

Establish a Regional Workforce Center on the campus of Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) to deliver necessary workforce training.

The CEDS Steering Committee members identified the lack of a single point of contact for workforce training as detriment to the region's talent development, business retention, and business attraction efforts. Specifically, it was noted that CVCC's existing space for flexible, responsive industry training is inadequate and physically constrained.

A new Regional Workforce Center would attempt to alleviate these capacity concerns, enabling a more rapid and comprehensive response to the needs of existing and prospective future businesses. It would also serve as a physical "center of gravity" for workforce services, much like the recommended Center for Entrepreneurship and its role as a catalyst for the entrepreneurial ecosystem, or the role of the Academy Center of the Arts as a center of gravity for the arts and cultural community. In this respect, it could serve as the home for the Workforce Investment Opportunity Area's One-Stop services (also known locally as the Region 2000 Workforce Center) as well as the community college's targeted technical training programs.

The ideal space would not simply satisfy the region's and/or CVCC's physical requirements for technical training, but rather, would also seek to provide a welcoming "front-door" for both job seekers and employers. It would need to provide an adequate environment to support meeting between One-Stop service providers and job seekers, sufficient technology to enable job searches, and provide ample meeting space to support the needs of the community, including the recommended Talent Coalition (see Key Initiative #6).

GOAL IV

...investing in the connectivity of our region

EXCERPTS FROM THE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

"According to business leadership (business owners, executives, and managers) who were surveyed on various business climate factors, the Lynchburg region's lack of interstate connectivity and air connectivity are seen as competitive disadvantages that have and will continue to inhibit economic growth. The disconnectedness of the Lynchburg region from major air and highway transportation assets was often mentioned in stakeholder input sessions as among the region's greatest competitive disadvantages...The overall roadway connectivity of the region and access to broadband internet service were also mentioned during input sessions as being noncompetitive and potentially disconnecting citizens in outlying parts of the region from economic opportunity. The qualitative input gleaned from the Lynchburg Regional Connectivity Study, running concurrently to this CEDS process, provides similar conclusions about how residents view the region's lack of highway and air connectivity as competitive challenges."

> *"...the region's connectivity challenges – from interstate access to direct flights to broadband – place considerable constraints on the types of economic activity that are likely to be attracted to the region relative to the abundance of other competitive communities and regions that companies are evaluating."*

",,,the relative lack of large, ready-to-go (infrastructure-served) sites places the region at a competitive disadvantage relative to many of its competitors which have inventories of industrial land that include multiple ready-to-go or partially-prepared sites over 100 acres...Although the region is home to many smaller acreage opportunities, local, regional, and state level economic developers all cited the region's available sites and building –particularly large acreage parcels in the 100 – 200 acre range – as one the region's greatest barriers to new economic development projects in the region.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ Facilitate the efficient movement of residents, workers, and visitors throughout our region.

- ✓ Facilitate the efficient movement of goods and raw materials throughout our region.

- ✓ Provide necessary infrastructure to accommodate desirable economic growth and development.

- ✓ Ensure that the region provides competitive, available sites and buildings to support the location and growth of existing and prospective new businesses.

KEY INITIATIVE #8

Update project priorities and implement the region's existing plans for transportation, broadband, and other infrastructure provision based on relevant takeaways from the Central Virginia Connectivity Study.

Upon completion of the Central Virginia Connectivity Study, regional transportation, broadband, and other infrastructure plans and priorities should be reevaluated based on any new funding opportunities. This includes an update to this regional CEDS. This recommendation can be regularly updated by the CEDS Steering Committee – given appropriate guidance and support from the Local Government Council – with a list of relevant priority infrastructure projects with regional economic significance that could qualify for federal funding from the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Public Works program, as well as any other relevant funding sources.

Transportation: The Local Government Council regularly updates the region's transportation plan – the Central Virginia Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (Plan 2040) – and can update its priority projects (with requisite input) if necessary based upon the findings of the Central Virginia Connectivity Study. A number of priority transportation projects from Plan 2040 and the Connectivity Study have been referenced below; these projects and others identified in these plans range from critical roadway infrastructure serving industrial parks to priority greenway projects supporting bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to enhancements of airport infrastructure. Accordingly, other regional transportation plans should be reviewed and evaluated for relevant projects that merit inclusion in this recommendation. This includes but is certainly not limited to local government Comprehensive Plans, the Lynchburg Regional Airport Master Plan, and the Region 2000 Greenways, Blueways, and Trails Plan.

At present, the draft Lynchburg Regional Connectivity Study recommends priority pursuit of a few key projects and strategies identified in the region's Long Range Transportation Plan (reference project number in parentheses, or HB2 reference number), in order to support inter- and intra-regional freight connectivity and labor market access:

- ✓ Implement downtown Lynchburg complete streets (LRTP 95)
- ✓ Roundabouts, road diet, rail to trail on Campbell Ave. from Edmund St. to Florida Ave. (LRTP 93)
- ✓ 5th Street from Taylor Street to NS Rail Bridge road reconstruction with added streetscape elements (LRTP 86)
- ✓ 5th Street from Jackson to Taylor streetscape improvements (LRTP 85)
- ✓ Route 622, Lynbrook Rd (HB2 523)
- ✓ Candlers Mountain Rd Widening and Capacity Extension (LRTP 91 and LRTP 94)
- ✓ South Amherst Highway (BUS 29)/ Route 163 interchange (LRTP 31)
- ✓ Lakeside Drive (221)/Lynchburg Expressway (501) (LRTP 88)
- ✓ Route 221 – intersection improvements (LRTP 90; HB2 595)
- ✓ Wards Road (US 29) access management, traffic ops, safety improvements (LRTP 67 and LRTP 68)
- ✓ Lynchburg Expressway (BUS 29)/Candlers Mountain Road Interchange (LRTP 84)
- ✓ US 501 Widening (LRTP 92)

Other priority transportation-related projects and investments identified in the draft Lynchburg Regional Connectivity Study include but are not limited to:

✓ Continue to work towards implementation of the CVMPO Priority Accommodation Corridors as identified in the Region 2000 Bicycle Plan.

✓ Work to improve digital and other wayfinding in the region.

✓ Support improved multimodal connectivity between institutions of higher education and (downtowns).

✓ Enhance outreach to the business community through partnerships between RIDE Solutions, the Region 2000 Workforce Development Board, and the LRBA.

✓ Consider implementation of an activity-based commuter rewards program.

✓ Work with the Greater Lynchburg Transit Company (GLTC) and major regional employers and higher education institutions to examine the feasibility of a transit pass program.

✓ Investigate opportunities for the region to benefit from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) emphasis on expanding vanpooling in the region.

✓ Continue to market Amtrak service, particularly travel to and from northeast markets.

✓ Participate in state and multi-state level planning conversations regarding further rail service enhancements.

✓ Continue to build a coordinated regional narrative on the value of Lynchburg Regional Airport (LYH) relative to other alternatives (e.g. driving, using other airports).

✓ Advocate for service to Dulles in coordination with the Governor's 2017-2018 $50 million incentive program to reduce cost per enplanement at Dulles and thus support expansion of the hub for United Airlines.

✓ In the very near-term, coordinate a region-wide conversation regarding potential startup incentives for United Airlines service to Dulles.

✓ Strengthen channels of communication between the economic development community (facilitated by LRBA) and the airport manager so that "leading indicators" can be communicated to airlines on an ongoing basis.

✓ Build awareness within the regional economic development community of funding available from the Rail Industrial Access Program administered by DRPT and the program's scoring criteria.

Broadband: In 2015, the Technology Council hosted a Broadband Summit whereby participants heard from a representative from the Center for Innovative Technology (a nonprofit whose mission is, in part, to facilitate broadband deployment) regarding recent statewide efforts to map broadband connectivity in all cities and counties, as well as information on resources available to support communities and regions seeking to develop a strategic plan to enhance broadband connectivity. Broadband coverage remains a challenge for much of the region's more rural areas, an issue identified in both the Regional Assessment and the Central Virginia Connectivity Study.

The draft Connectivity Study recommends the pursuit of a minimum target of 25 megabits per second (mbps) for coverage throughout the region, the pursuit of state and federal funding to support community-based broadband improvement efforts, and the consideration of publicly-owned utility models of service delivery.

Upon completion of the Connectivity Study and the corresponding identification of any relevant best practices for broadband deployment, the Local Government Council can evaluate interest among regional partners in starting a collaborative Regional Broadband Needs Assessment, potentially with support from the Virginia Office of

Telework Promotion and Broadband Assistance, and the Center for Innovative Technology. Such an effort would pool resources for maximum efficiency in assessing regional needs before transitioning to a process of local strategic planning and implementation. That is to say, a Regional Needs Assessment could be completed by LGC on behalf of all communities and counties in the region, enabling these communities and counties to pursue their own individual deployment strategies and pursue relevant and differentiated funding mechanisms. The LGC can support communities and counties with their strategic planning and deployment in a variety of ways, from the facilitation of inter-city visits and the study of deployment strategies in other regions in Virginia to the potential provision of financial and/or technical assistance to support local strategic planning efforts.

The One Amherst Economic Development Strategic Plan that is currently in draft form and under review calls for a potential broadband needs assessment in Amherst County.

A completed Regional Needs Assessment should appropriately inform a list of relevant broadband infrastructure projects to include in this section of the CEDS moving forward by way of annual updates.

KEY INITIATIVE #9

Deploy free wireless internet in public parks, downtowns, and other activity centers throughout the region.

In a world where the workforce is increasingly mobile, increasingly connected to smart devices, and increasingly flexible in their work schedules and arrangements, wireless infrastructure is as important as ever. The deployment of free public wireless internet in public parks, downtowns, and activity centers (the airport, major amenities, etc.) throughout the region can help attract customers to certain businesses, drive traffic to gathering places, and better integrate and enable the concepts of living, working, and playing in the same neighborhood or space. Free public wireless internet in such locations can improve overall regional access and increase attractiveness to tourists as well as prospective entrepreneurs. In many ways, the deployment of such a network serves multiple purposes beyond infrastructure provision; deployment would support the region's positive image and identity, contribute to an entrepreneurial climate, and help engender more vibrant downtowns and activity centers.

The region should evaluate interest among local governments in advancing an initiative that could study the viability of deploying free public wireless internet in various locations throughout the region. Potential exists to identify a variety of potential corporate or non-profit partners; many different corporations have sponsored free wireless deployment in communities around the country, including but certainly not limited to Toyota, Google, AT&T, Comcast, and other telecommunications companies. Potential also exists to engage organizations and associations such as the Retail Merchants Association (RMA) that could help coordinate sponsorships and/or technology deployment within specific areas. It should be noted that the 2013 Opportunity Lynchburg Strategy also calls for the deployment of free public wireless across the City of Lynchburg.

KEY INITIATIVE #10

Develop and implement a regional Site Evaluation and Improvement Program to accelerate the preparation and availability of shovel-ready industrial sites in the region.

During the stakeholder input process, numerous individuals lamented the fact that the region is home to many industrial sites that are not shovel-ready (fully served by various forms of infrastructure, graded land, completed environmental and/or engineering assessments, etc.) and many others where private land owners do not see the value associated with enhancing their site to improve its marketability or sale price. The region should develop a Site Evaluation and Improvement Program to accelerate preparation of such sites to support near-term economic development projects. Not surprisingly, a relative lack of attractive, shovel-ready sites can drastically inhibit an area's ability to effectively recruit new corporate investments and, to a lesser degree, support the expansions of existing industries. A few steps should be taken to advance program development and implementation.

Engage the Regional Economic Development Team (RED Team): A regional Site Evaluation and Improvement Program can reasonably be coordinated by the LRBA with support from a variety of relevant partners. The LRBA should engage the RED Team, comprised of local economic developers from the region's various counties and communities, and assemble a small working group with other relevant partners (VEDP representatives, relevant local government staff and leadership, utilities such as Appalachian Power, etc.) to guide program development and implementation.

Develop evaluation criteria: The working group should discuss program objectives, review the region's site inventory, prioritize sites for evaluation, and develop evaluation criteria that are consistent with best practice Site Certification programs, particularly the requirements of the new Virginia Business Ready Sites Program. A system for prioritizing sites based on their readiness, and prioritizing necessary improvements to individual sites, should be established.

Begin evaluations: The assembled working group should determine the most appropriate and cost-effective method for completing evaluations in a timely manner. Potential exists to retain the services of a local engineering firm to perform an impartial assessment. Some national site selectin consultants are willing and able to provide similar services.

Identify priority projects, incorporate into the CEDS, and pursue funding: Once evaluations are completed, the working group should develop a list of priority sites upon which to focus resources for preparation and shovel-readiness. These priority sites, and their associated priority improvements, should be reviewed with the CEDS Steering Committee and incorporated into this portion of this CEDS over time, consistent with annual updates required by the EDA. A variety of dunging mechanisms for individual projects should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Some communities or counties may feel that capacity exists to finance multiple projects at once using local funding options while others may solely pursue available state and federal funds such as those available through VEDP, the Department of Rail and Public Transportation's (DRPT) Rail Industrial Access Program, the EDA, or other sources.

Preparation of a 100+ acre VEDP-certified Business Ready Site: The region currently lacks a large, highly-marketable, shovel-ready site to support major economic development projects. Such prepared sites of 100+ acres are rare in the Commonwealth of Virginia and VEDP has developed a program (the Virginia Business Ready Sites' Program, Site Characterization Grant) to help communities "assess the level of existing development at a site and the additional development required to bring the site to a level that will enable the site to be marketed for industrial or commercial economic development." Pursuit of this grant opportunity is a natural opportunity for the region to pursue as a component of this initiative.

GOAL V

...supporting the vitality of our diverse communities and downtowns

EXCERPTS FROM THE REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

"...the location decisions of companies in a variety of sectors are increasingly driven by access to talent...(and) communities are increasingly investing in creating a sense of community and "quality of place" that attracts and retains this talent. In a country that gets more diverse (racially, ethnically, and culturally) with each passing day, tangible and intangible cultural factors are increasingly considerations that influence the location decisions of the talented individuals being sought after by both communities and companies."

"While 82 percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the region is an attractive place to raise a family, and more than 75 percent felt that it is a desirable place to retire, just 37 percent felt that it was an attractive and desirable place for young professionals. The region's counterparts in the Louisville (66 percent), Indianapolis (70 percent), Atlanta (75 percent), and Nashville (92 percent) metropolitan areas all have much more positive outlooks on their region's attractiveness to this coveted demographic."

"It is difficult to look at survey results regarding key quality of life and quality of place amenities without seeing the role that downtown Lynchburg – and other downtown areas and activity centers in the region – must play in the discussion. After all, vibrant downtowns are those that contain a host of nightlife, entertainment, shopping, and cultural amenities – all categories that received generally low marks in the community survey. Furthermore, it is impossible to ignore the overwhelming amount of evidence that is being observed in regions around the country as people of all ages and backgrounds are flocking to center cities and dense activity centers in search of the benefits that accrue from proximity between one's place of residence, place of work, and the lifestyle amenities that are more concentrated in the denser urban areas."

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

✓ Support development patterns and projects that encourage mixed-use, walkable, and well-connected environments.

✓ Support the redevelopment and revitalization of the region's downtowns.

✓ Effectively leverage the region's natural resources and recreational assets for community vitality.

✓ Increase the visibility and patronage of the region's amenities, arts and cultural institutions, and other assets that contribute to the region's quality of place.

KEY INITIATIVE #11

Advance a Regional Riverfront Vision that seeks to "unlock" the region's riverfronts, better connecting and integrating local communities with the James, Roanoke, and Staunton Rivers.

While the region's communities present a variety of redevelopment challenges and opportunities, residents, particularly young professionals, are overwhelming enthusiastic about the potential of the region's downtowns, most notably downtown Lynchburg. With a number of recent successes and evidence of new commercial and residential investment, there is a palpable feeling of momentum in downtown Lynchburg. Perhaps the greatest asset to downtown's potential growth as an anchor of mixed-use activity is the James River and the natural amenity, beauty, and recreational opportunities that is affords those who live, work, and visit downtown Lynchburg. The same can be said for other downtowns in the region – notably Alta Vista and Brookneal. In downtown Lynchburg, the riverfront is physically disconnected from the core of Lynchburg's downtown by two rail lines. On the other side of the river (Madison Heights and Amherst County), and throughout the region, opportunities may exist for further recreational development along the riverfront.

Many other communities around the country have developed highly ambitious visions for their downtowns' revitalization; examples includes the removal of two dams and decades of work to convert the Chattahoochee River in Columbus, Georgia into the largest urban whitewater course, and efforts in Springfield, Illinois to relocate miles of heavily-travelled rail lines to the eastern edge of downtown to improve connectivity, revitalize a key corridor, and improve access to the medical district for emergency personnel. Many communities yearn for an accessible waterfront or riverfront that can serve as a natural amenity for residents and tourists; the Lynchburg region should leverage these natural assets for their maximum recreational and economic potential. Given that residents highlighted the region's natural beauty and recreational opportunities among its greatest strengths, and cited downtowns more frequently than any other issues when discussing their vision for the future, it is reasonable to pursue a regional vision that seeks to unlock the region's riverfronts and effectively utilize them as a catalyst for downtown revitalization efforts. A few efforts are central to this initiative.

The City of Lynchburg's Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan was last updated in 2000. Much has changed in downtown Lynchburg and the competitive environment in which it operates; today, downtowns are experiencing an influx of residents, business, and new investments as urban areas are capturing an increasingly large share of metropolitan growth across the country. These realities in addition to the abundance of new activity and investment, including major new infrastructure projects, necessitate an update to the Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan. This update should ideally consider methods for promoting accessibility to and utilization of the James River as a recreational assets and natural amenity.

Lynch's Landing, the organization tasked with coordinating revitalization efforts in downtown Lynchburg, has recently hired a new Executive Director and intends to embark upon a new strategic planning process for the organization. Such a process would naturally complement and support the implementation of certain portions of an updated Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan. An updated strategic plan for Lynch's Landing should ideally include a strategic focus on methods to further promote engagement and interaction with the James River.

Efforts to update the City of Lynchburg's Downtown and Riverfront Master Plan and the Lynch's Landing strategic plan should give consideration to potential collaborative planning and implementation with relevant stakeholders in Amherst County. Activation of the James River and its riverfront in and around downtown Lynchburg should appropriately consider development opportunities, amenities, and accessibility on both sides of the river.

Outside of downtown Lynchburg other communities in the region have recently advanced a variety of initiatives to enhance their downtowns. This includes the Brookneal Downtown Revitalization Project in 2012, which focused heavily on issues of urban design, façade improvement, and signage and wayfinding. Alta Vista has made a number of enhancements to its historic downtown over the years, and the river remains an important asset to the vibrancy of the community.

Potential exists for the Local Government Council (LGC) or some other regional organization to support a series of planning grants that can enable evaluations of riverfront potential – recreational, residential, or commercial development opportunities – throughout the region. These evaluations can inform the identification of appropriate projects for inclusion in updated downtown, comprehensive, and organizational strategic plans, as well as this portion of the CEDS.

Potential also exists to advance a series of discussions with higher education institutions in the region regarding their physical needs and planned capital expenditures, seeking to identify any opportunities to concentrate new developments (instructional space, student housing, performance spaces, etc.) in and around the region's downtowns and riverfronts to assist with downtown and riverfront activation strategies.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: UPTOWN COLUMBUS REVITALIZATION (COLUMBUS, GA)

KEY INITIATIVE #12

Expand the establishment of Arts and Culture Districts throughout the region to encourage and incentivize projects that improve the aesthetic, artistic, and cultural appeal of the region.

In 2010, the Lynchburg City Council adopted a resolution to create the James River Arts and Cultural District to "improve the economic conditions of (the) geographic area" and to "encourage the participation of citizens and arts & cultural organizations to conduct projects, events and activities to further the arts and culture in Lynchburg." The District provides incentives, notably grants up to $5,000, to eligible projects – "events, activities, capital investments, promotions, improvements, displays or like pursuits that serve to further arts and culture in the District."

The establishment of similar districts through the region can potentially enable the development of complementary arts and cultural amenities in and around the region's downtowns; many communities already seek to advance such activity as part of their downtown revitalization efforts. The formation of new districts would simply provide a more formal mechanism for delivering incentives and programming to this end.

Communities can carve out a distinct niche through implementation of distinct district strategies. While some may focus on event encouragement, others may focus on the physical environment. One of the most glaring

opportunities for the region to further develop as it relates to arts and culture is the deployment of public art projects. While a variety of installations exist and intentional efforts have expanded these installations in recent years, the region has an opportunity to use public art to not only support the arts community and its cultural objectives, but also to enhance the region's image and identify through beautification and public art, while also enhancing quality of place. A variety of potential public art initiatives could be advanced. These include but certainly are not limited to:

I. **Sculpture Trail:** a sculpture trail could feature installations along one or more existing trail systems throughout the region that intersects an existing or potential future Arts and Culture District.

II. **Mural Project:** a mural project could be modeled upon countless best practice programs around the country and emerge as the key façade enhancement and downtown identity program for one of the region's communities.

III. **Annual Student Installation:** an area college or university could embed a new course offering in its art department whereby students are tasked with the collaborative design, development, and installation of a piece of a public art (mural, sculpture, or otherwise) in the region as a capstone project and donation to the community.

These new initiatives – such as a sculpture trail, a mural project, or a student-led installation series – could potentially be supported by a new financing mechanism to complement incentives made available through the establishment of Arts and Culture Districts: the formation of a corporate-sponsored beautification program. Under such a program, communities would create a matching grant program, potentially supported by and delivered through newly-established Arts and Cultural Districts, to provide matching funds for community beautification projects funded by corporate sponsors. Alternatively, a more narrowly-focused corporate-sponsored public art program could be developed.

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: TULSA BEAUTIFICATION FOUNDATION MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM (TULSA, OK)

BEST PRACTICE OR CASE STUDY: ARTSKC FUND (KANSAS CITY, MO)

NEXT STEPS

This document represents a revised draft of the Region 2000 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The strategic vision, goals, and key initiatives presented herein have been discussed, reviewed, and revised by the Steering Committee in recent months based on input received via committee meetings, small group discussion, conference calls, online surveys, and individual conversations, resulting in a draft that reflects the process research and input, as well as the continued guidance of the Committee.

These initiatives outlined herein will be further reviewed and revised with feedback from the Committee and other relevant regional stakeholders in advance of the Committee's meeting on October 6th. A complementary Implementation Plan will be developed to accompany this strategy and will be presented on October 6th. This Implementation Plan will include basic guidelines related to implementation roles and responsibilities, resources for effective implementation (organizational, financial, staffing, etc.), prioritization and timelines for implementation, and performance metrics to gauge implementation success and return on investment.

APPENDIX: BEST PRACTICES

RVA CREATES (RICHMOND, VIRGINIA)

RVA Creates is an initiative in Richmond, Virginia to develop and deploy an "open-source experiment in identity and creativity" that would result in a brand that the community can embrace and own. However, it is described by the various project partners as "sort of a brand, without the catchy slogans and formal rules that accompany most brands."

RVA Creates is the brainchild of Venture Richmond, Richmond's downtown development organization. Through a partnership with various community entities – The Martin Agency, VCU Brandcenter, West Cary Group, J H I, Elevation and The Hodges Partnership – Venture Richmond and the City of Richmond developed the aforementioned "experiment" to engage the community and advance "RVA." In 2009 and 2010, Venture Richmond worked with these partners and others to discover that the acronym RVA, a longstanding identifier for the region, was a concise and effective moniker for the area. The partners wanted to provide residents with an opportunity to make the RVA moniker and brand reflect their sense of place. ITO do so, they advanced an open-source platform that allowed residents to upload images and customize their version of a simple RVA logo. To support mass adoption of the RVA brand an initial order of 5,000 RVA stickers was placed. By the end of 2011, more than 50,000 stickers had been printed and distributed throughout the region based on surprising demand.

Another open-source element – a contest soliciting submissions for a television advertisement promoting downtown Richmond – was deployed in 2012.

The RVA brand is widespread today with stickers and a variety of other merchandise visible throughout the region, the state, and wherever the area's residents travel, promoting the region's brand around the world. Numerous organizations and businesses have adopted the RVA acronym in their name, marketing materials, advertisements, or other attributes and operations. By providing a basic level of ownership and input into shaping the brand identity, and by investing in resources (stickers) that would help disseminate the brand by way of the area's residents, RVA Creates was able to create a successful branding initiative that reinforced pride and sense of place among those who can be a region's greatest ambassadors: its current residents.

RALLY ST. LOUIS (ST. LOUIS, MO)

Rally St. Louis is an online platform, born out of the "St. Louis Doesn't Suck" campaign that was launched in an effort to change the negative perception outsiders had about St. Louis. The campaign sought to bring attention to and highlight the positive aspects of the community – the low cost of living, quality education options, plentiful employment opportunities, and the recreation and cultural resources. Through the suggestions and opinions of ways to market St. Louis' positive aspects, the online platform, Rally St. Louis, was created in November 2012. The online avenue allows for all residents to participate in community development and more accurately portrays the diverse region's needs by giving residents that typically aren't in positions of power to make such decisions, an opportunity to voice their opinions and desires for the community.

The success and popularity of the platform rests on this fact that, rather than rely on a singular organization to decide what is best for the community, St. Louis residents all have an outlet to submit their own ideas on how to improve and market their community. A board, made up of community stakeholders, social organizations, and local businesses, sifts through all the submitted ideas and posts those that they feel would potentially best benefit the area. The platform empowers residents to take an active part in the bettering of their community and further allows for easy access to then vote on which ideas they support. The ideas citizens submit are categorized in a range of topics that includes beautification projects, educational programs, marketing ideas, and non-profit organizations. Those ideas with the top number of votes then go through a funding phase after the budgeting committee has estimated the costs and resources needed to complete the project. Residents and organizations can then support the idea through a donation on the website to fund the project. Several projects have materialized including a children's exhibit at the airport and an urban community garden, among others.

"WE DON'T COAST" (OMAHA, NEBRASKA)

Largely to overcome Omaha's "flyover" community perception, the Greater Omaha Chamber launched a regional brand and image initiative based upon extensive research showing that Omaha ranks highly against other metro areas across the country but lacked an identity. The Chamber convened thousands to create a cohesive, recognizable brand that sought to communicate the region's attributes, character and "can do" spirit. We Don't Coast was launched as a multi-faceted campaign to use across the region to share greater Omaha's story; positively communicate its character; and grow, retain, and attract business and talent. The campaign was presented a 2015 ACE: Award of Excellence by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. Though it is not exclusively an internal brand, the We Don't Coast initiative in Omaha was nevertheless intended to serve both an external and internal awareness-building purpose to positively commute the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the greater Omaha region.

BUSINESS FIRST, GREATER RICHMOND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP (RICHMOND, VA)

Launched in 2006, Business First is a collaborative, regional, existing business retention and expansion (BRE) program of the Greater Richmond Regional Partnership and its local government partners. Professional economic development staff and trained volunteers from the business community interview CEOs and other top company officials to fully understand the company's competitiveness and its long-term prospects for growth. Interviews cover a wide range of topics and findings include hiring prospects for the next year, perceptions of the regional workforce and specific skill shortages, projected sales, and business climate issues. The data allows the GRP to gauge the health of the regional economy, develop an early warning system to foretell potential future layoffs, and provide targeted solutions to existing businesses. Companies reached by the program receive a high level of customer service and access to a wide variety of resources. The program also responds to specific requests for assistance. By partnering with local government entities, the program leverages the full suite of available resources and provides customized service to businesses.

Thousands of face-to-face interviews have been conducted with business owners and chief executives throughout the region since 2006, collecting a tremendous amount of valuable information and feedback

on everything from regulatory issues to expansion plans to workforce needs. The Partnership works with a network of partners to provide a variety of support in areas such as local government services, finance, workforce development, international trade and business planning. All participant responses are confidential and used to provide direct assistance where needed. Information is also aggregated to help develop a better understanding of critical business issues facing the region at-large.

Since 2006, the program has helped create more than 2,000 new jobs from employer expansion and retain more than 2,500 jobs that were at risk of elimination from workforce reductions, closures, or relocations. During the height of the national recession (FY 2010–2011), Business First staffers and volunteers met with 567 companies. Assisted companies created 1,045 jobs, invested $68 million in capital investment, and retained 172 jobs during the year. The program has been recognized by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce for its significant contributions to economic development. The Partnership produces a detailed annual report specifically devoted to the Business First program and its successes, and has its own website which helps convey the program's intent and allow staff to "get their foot in door." This annual report and the Business First program have received numerous awards from organizations such as the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC).

MEMPHIS REGIONAL LOGISTICS COUNCIL (MEMPHIS, TN)

The Memphis Regional Logistics Council (RLC) was established in 2004 by the Memphis Regional Chamber as a way to strengthen both the Memphis metro area and the tri-state region as a whole. By addressing Memphis' ever-growing, ever-changing role in global distribution and logistics, the council works to establish the Memphis region as a leader in the industry, and to better tap into its role as "America's Distribution Center." The RLC is comprised of logistics and distribution professionals who lend their insights to the region's myriad logistics and distribution issues. Members include trucking and drainage companies, freight forwarders, steamship lines, railroads, air carriers, contractors, developers, barge lines, warehouses, and distributors.

At meetings, professionals are encouraged to share their ideas and expertise regarding how to improve Memphis' ability to be a logistics center. The council includes four main committees: infrastructure, marketing, workforce development, and strategic alliances.

The infrastructure committee recently helped execute the contract for the region's new Memphis: America's Aerotropolis strategy. The marketing committee works to brand the community and promote Memphis' assets and support the Chamber's ongoing marketing efforts, including but not limited to the targeted in-house publication HUB magazine with a circulation exceeding 20,000; hosting editors of major logistics and supply sector trade publications for the Logistics Tour of Memphis; full advertising supplemental section to Inbound Logistics; and the maintenance of a frequently updated and interactive website promoting regional logistics capabilities.

The workforce development committee focuses on promoting the city's economy by improving the quality of its workforce. The strategic alliance committee works to develop partnerships critical to logistics growth. The committee builds relationships with national and international logistics hubs, trade associations, and corporations, from the Port of Savannah to the American Railroad Association.

"AUSTIN: THE HUMAN CAPITAL" (AUSTIN, TX)

One of the key findings from Market Street's 2003 Opportunity Austin strategic process was the perception in the economic development community that Greater Austin was not "in the game" of employment growth and quality recruitment. With unemployment at near-record lows and the job market flush, regional public and private leadership did not want to risk a cannibalization of skilled workers that would result from robust job-creation efforts. As a result, economic development marketing efforts were almost non-existent prior to Opportunity Austin implementation.

A key strategic recommendation to announce to the economic development world that Greater Austin was refocused on strong employment and wage growth led to recharged efforts to "get the word out" to corporations, site selection and corporate relocation professionals, and the national media that metro Austin was again "open for business."

The result of the Greater Austin Chamber's strong push into external marketing was a new brand and tagline ("Austin: The Human Capital"), a refreshed website, and a new, multi-channel marketing effort complete with direct mail, horizontal and vertical trade publication advertising, on-line advertising, trade-show visitation, location advisor-hosting events, public relations-coordinated media placements, target-specific marketing materials, and other tools.

As a component of Opportunity Austin implementation, the Greater Austin Chamber completely redesigned its website and created an additional site specific to the technology and innovation economy. Chamber officials have received positive feedback from prospects and site-selection professionals on the comprehensiveness of the main site's data, navigability and user-friendliness, and provision of support services information. Because of the efficacy of the website, Chamber officials said they are being called later in the game by site consultants who have short-listed Austin based on web-provided information alone.

In addition, the Greater Austin Chamber contracts with a New York/Dallas-based communications firm to handle proactive media placement, crisis communications, arrangement of out-of-market interviews, and other selected services. The firm secured Austin-centered stories in such influential publications as the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Economist, Business Week, Business 2.0, and other publications.

In 2011, a survey of both site selectors and C-level executives in Austin's target sectors found that while site selectors knew about and liked Austin's "Human Capital" campaign, C-level executives had very low awareness of the slogan, although they did have strong knowledge of Austin and Texas' favorable business, talent, and quality of life rankings. The survey and phone interviews found that C-levels preferred peer-to-peer contact in making location decisions and shaping their impressions of regions for business-friendliness.

As a result, the Chamber worked to ramp up its public relations efforts to target C-levels, seeing placement in targeted industry publications read by executives—for example, Information Management—and enhancing industry segments for national and international news story ideas. These renewed efforts also leverage Austin's business leaders as the "faces" to the metro's positive rankings and position top CEOs in the region as experts and national industry leaders.

EARNED MEDIA/PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY (CHATTANOOGA, TN)

Ever since Walter Cronkite called Chattanooga the "dirtiest city in America" in the 1970s, the community has been focused on changing both its local realities and also external perceptions. Beginning in the 2000s, the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, partnering with the region's Convention and Visitor's Bureau, contracted with a national public relations firm to try to change the outside perceptions of Chattanooga as a declining industrial city with few modern assets for companies, talent, or visitors.

Focusing on strengths such as its revitalized downtown, America's first city-wide gigabit fiber network, emerging entrepreneurial climate, and other assets, the public relations (earned media) strategy has seen notable success. Since implementing the strategy, the Chattanooga region has been featured in hundreds of business media placements with more than 1 billion impressions worldwide in a wide range of national, regional trade and online outlets including The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The Economist, Fortune, CNN, Fox Business News, CNBC, and The Huffington Post. The tourism and visitation campaign was also effective, with nearly 1 billion impressions showcasing Chattanooga in outlets such as ABC News, Birmingham Parent, Baltimore Sun, Chicago Tribune, Delta SKY, Forbes.com, Georgia Magazine, National Geographic Weekend, Preservation, and Southern Living.

REACH OUT TO DROPOUTS (HOUSTON, TEXAS)

The Houston Independent School District first implemented a program in 2004 that sought to re-engage students who had recently dropped out of high school. This program – Reach Out to Dropouts – has been tremendously successful in its short history and has been adopted by other surrounding communities in Texas as well as other school districts nationwide. The program is supported by volunteers from throughout the community (concerned citizens, teachers, administrators, business leaders, and the United Way) who walk door-to-door in teams to visit the families of students that have not re-enrolled in school within the first few weeks of a new school year or failed to graduate the previous year for a variety of reasons.

During the 2008 walk in Houston, nearly 1,200 volunteers made contact with more than 680 students or parents, and 60 students began the re-enrollment process on the day of the walk. Many more re-enrolled in the following days with subsequent follow-ups by volunteers. The Fort Bend Independent School District replicated Houston's program in 2009. With only one participating high school, 68 volunteers visited 106 homes, contacted 72 students or parents, and re-enrolled 20 students. The Lamar Consolidated Independent School District, also in Fort Bend County, visited 65 homes, spoke with 37 families, and re-enrolled 26 students.

The initiative has since been expanded to at least 13 school districts in the Houston metropolitan area, with many other Texas communities joining in recent years, including but not limited to Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, and San Antonio. Similar efforts have been coordinated in Des Moines, Iowa and other parts of the country.

FINANCIAL AID SATURDAYS (AUSTIN, TEXAS)

While the Austin metro area has one of the most educated workforces in the nation, the Greater Austin Chamber recognized that much of the highly-educated population was the result of in-migration for high-technology sector jobs and University of Texas - Austin enrollment. With the support of three local school districts, six higher education institutions, and 12 community organizations and companies, the Greater Austin Chamber worked in the first phase of its "20,010 by 2010" program to boost local higher education enrollment by 30 percent over 48 months. The goal is to grow total regional enrollment in institutions of higher education to 20,010 by 2010.

A component of this effort was a program called Financial Aid Saturdays. In order to help meet increased higher education enrollment goals, the Chamber provided support to Austin, Round Rock, and Manor Independent School Districts (ISDs) to increase FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) submission by 15 percent for students graduating in 2007. The Chamber organized and trained volunteers to make calls, answer questions, and walk students and their families through the process of applying for financial aid. In the first phase of the program, the Chamber's more than 200 volunteers assisted over 500 families in filing FAFSA applications.

CARPE DM (DES MOINES, IA)

Found at the address www.SeizeDesMoines.com, Carpe DM is an online portal developed by the Greater Des Moines Partnership as a landing pad for existing and potential talent interested in the region. The Partnership built the central content with links to a comprehensive database of information on moving to and/or discovering Des Moines. Much content is expected to be user-generated, with local volunteers serving as site coordinators for various functions and topic areas.

The site launched in early 2014 with information and links to finding a career; starting a business; local primary, secondary, and higher education; housing options, including rentals and real estate broken down by community; transportation in the metro and outside of it; volunteer and network opportunities for students, young professionals, career-minded adults, families, and empty nesters; local farmers markets, health care, spiritual communities; local arts, sports, politics, entertainments, and news; and area professional organizations and leadership programs.

UPTOWN COLUMBUS REVITALIZATION (COLUMBUS, GA)

Sharing certain similarities to the Lynchburg region and its downtown (slow historical population growth, lack of direct interstate access, presence of a river downtown, presence of a major university but not located downtown, etc.) the story of Uptown Columbus' revitalization is one that is particularly relevant to the Lynchburg region.

The City of Columbus, Georgia began its comprehensive downtown revitalization efforts in the 1980s by forming Uptown Columbus, Inc. and starting a Business Improvement District (BID), a self-taxing district that would devote funds to beautification, streetscaping, and public safety enhancements that improve the vitality of Uptown Columbus.

Just a few years later, the City opened the first phase of the Chattahoochee RiverWalk, a 22-mile paved walking and biking trail that follows the Chattahoochee River through the Columbus region and serves as an anchor amenity (a riverfront boardwalk) in Uptown Columbus. Shortly thereafter, Phenix City, Alabama (located across the Chattahoochee River from Columbus) opened a 3,500 seat riverfront amphitheater in 1996 directly across the river from Uptown Columbus, a first step in many towards bi-state, regional collaboration on riverfront activation.

That same year the Olympics were hosted in Atlanta, Georgia, just 90 minutes away from Columbus. At the time, a suitable venue for Olympic whitewater canoeing/slalom was not available in Georgia and an alternate location was secured in nearby North Carolina. This sparked a vision among John Turner, the third-generation leader of W.C. Bradley Company, based in Columbus: what if the Chattahoochee River could be transformed into the world's greatest urban whitewater experience? What began as a seemingly infeasible idea was advanced over the course of many years of diligent conversations with various local, state, federal stakeholders including two state governments, two city governments, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration among many others. Nearly fifteen years later work began on the conversion of the river to an urban whitewater course. Two dams were removed and the river was rerouted during construction. The roughly $24 million project was financed by $13 million in private contributions, $5 million from the City of Columbus, and $5 million from the Corps of Engineers. The final result – the largest urban whitewater course in America at 2.5 miles completed in 2013 – has received global acclaim, won the American Planning Association's Excellence in Economic Development Planning Award in 2014, and has been featured in numerous national publications.

Meanwhile, Uptown Columbus was undergoing another transformation driven by immense investment from its largest institution of higher education. Columbus State University is home to nearly 7,000 undergraduate students. The University's main campus is located roughly six miles from Uptown Columbus. The University intended to develop new facilities to support its performing arts program, and realized that Uptown Columbus - outside of its main campus - could be a potential location for new facilities.

In the early 2000s, the City and the private sector were partnering to develop a new performing arts center, the $86 million RiverCenter for Performing Arts. After much planning, the University relocated its Art, Music, Theatre departments to Uptown Columbus, co-locating with the new RiverCenter. The University built student housing for these students and relocated additional departments in subsequent years, including Communications, History, and Geography. At present roughly 500 students currently reside in university student housing in Uptown Columbus today. The student presence has helped create a nighttime population, encourage other residential reinvestment in Uptown, and supported the opening of many new businesses from coffee shops to bookstores to restaurants and nightlife. The University also partnered with the City to create new greenspace in Uptown, Woodruff Park, which serves as a gateway to the Chattahoochee RiverWalk. Adjacent to the park and the RiverWalk are a few major revitalization projects, including the conversion of the old Eagle and Phenix Mill into condos, apartments, and a restaurant space located above the old mill's water wheel in the middle of the Chattahoochee River, and accessible via pedestrian bridge.

The City is currently working to establish a tax allocation district (TAD) that will encompass Uptown and provide another financing mechanism to support redevelopment efforts. TADs freeze property values at a

certain level within the boundaries of the district and devote all future incremental property tax revenues to support redevelopment and infrastructure needs in the district.

TULSA BEAUTIFICATION FOUNDATION MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM (TULSA, OK)

Established in 2009, the Tulsa Beautification Foundation Matching Grant Program aids neighborhood and homeowners' associations with funding beautification programs. The program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to locally-raised funds. The program is intended to incentivize local groups to raise money, engage in partnerships with businesses, and encourage a culture of local volunteerism.

In order to be eligible a project must improve or beautify a neighborhood or public space; involve neighborhood and community residents; have long-standing and sustainable benefits; have a plan before work begins; and provide a maintenance plan for upkeep of the project. Further, in addition to locally-raised money, the program allows for 35 percent of the match to be volunteer hours, which are valued at $16.19 per hour. The program requires projects to be completed within a 90 day timeline.

One of the grants in 2010 was made to the Shadow Ridge Homeowners Association (SHRA). The SHRA received $2,800 to beautify the entrance to their neighborhood, which included new trees, lighting, and a Memorial Tree to honor neighborhood residents who had passed away.

ARTSKC FUND (KANSAS CITY, MO)

The ArtsKC Fund is a united arts fund run by the ArtsKC Regional Arts Council that provides grants to artists, arts organization, and arts programs in Kansas City's five-county, bi-state metropolitan region. The ArtsKC Fund is supported 50 percent by workplace giving campaigns and 50 percent through businesses, corporate, and national foundations, local government agencies, and individual donors. Grants are divided into three categories: Ovation Grants, Catalyst Grants, and Inspiration Grants. Ovation Grants are reserved for a group of Kansas City's most well-established arts organizations, Catalyst Grants are tailored towards small to mid-sized nonprofits for either project or mission support, and Inspiration Grants are awarded to individual artists and arts professionals for projects or career development.