

To: Local Government Council
From: Scott Smith
RE: A Brief History of the Name of Planning District Commission #11
and the Region 2000 Brand

The following list outlines the naming history of Planning District Commission #11, which serves the Counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, and the City of Lynchburg:

1969 - 2000	Central Virginia Planning District Commission
2000 - 2005	Region 2000 Regional Commission
2005 - Present	Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership -- Regional Council <i>doing business as</i> Local Government Council

The Region 2000 Brand and Partnership

In 1989, a group of local business and economic development leaders coined the name “Region 2000” to describe the 2,000 square-mile area of the Lynchburg MSA. A regional economic entity, which ultimately became the Region 2000 Economic Development Council, was formed. By the year 2000, efforts to brand the area as Region 2000 had progressed, and the Central Virginia Planning District Commission changed its three-decade-old name to the Region 2000 Regional Commission. Five years later, the organization changed its name to Virginia’s Region 2000 Partnership -- Regional Council *doing business as* the Local Government Council. Other entities also took on the Region 2000 brand, including the Region 2000 Small Business Development Center, Region 2000 Workforce Investment Board, and Region 2000 Technology Council.

In 2005, the Local Government Council began discussions with the Economic Development Council about potentially co-locating offices. This occurred in early 2007, and most of the Region 2000 organizations operated under one “roof” on the twelfth floor of the Bank of the James Building. Efforts to create a brand identity for the partnership were successful, and earned the group kudos and awards from elsewhere in the state and nation. The Region 2000 Partnership consisted of more than a half-dozen organizations, but all fell under the umbrella of the two primary partners: the Economic Development Council and the Local Government Council.

Region 2000 Economic Development Council
Region 2000 Technology Council
Center for Advanced Engineering & Research
Future Focus Foundation
Young Professionals of Central Virginia

Region 2000 Local Government Council
Region 2000 Workforce Development Board
Region 2000 Services Authority
Region 2000 Radio Board
Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Org.

While the Region 2000 brand was recognized at the state level, it struggled to gain understanding and support from local residents. One known business, an all-terrain vehicle dealership, added the moniker to its name, and Bank of the James commercials touted that the bank served the Region 2000 area. Because Region 2000 began as an economic development initiative, organizational staff working with the Economic Development Council likely had little explaining to do about why they were part of Region 2000. However, Local Government Council staff working in the field often had to overcome citizens' assumptions that they were connected to regional economic development efforts instead of local government services.

Even though most constituents assumed that the Region 2000 brand was solely focused on economic development, most were also confused by the name. The majority of individuals with whom Local Government Council field staff interacted assumed that the word related to the year 2000, which is not an unreasonable theory since the name was first born in the late 1980s and the Central Virginia Planning District Commission changed its name to the Region 2000 Regional Commission in the year 2000. Not knowing that the number refers to the approximate number of square miles encapsulated by the Lynchburg MSA, many present-day citizens look at the name as a stale, eighteen-year-old relic of enthusiastic anticipation of the turn of the millennium.

In December 2015, the Region 2000 Economic Development Council and the Greater Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce merged to form the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance. Soon after, Economic Development Council staff vacated their portion of the twelfth floor of the Bank of the James Building and moved into the former chamber building on Memorial Avenue. In the fall of 2017, the Alliance moved into newly-developed office space on Lucado Place. When the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance formed, the Region 2000 Technology Council, one of its partner (and subsidiary) organizations also changed its name to the Lynchburg Regional Technology Council. The Region 2000 Small Business Development Center, which was not an official member of the Region 2000 Partnership, has changed its name to simply the "Business Development Centre."

This ended the economic development community's almost thirty-year involvement with the name "Region 2000" (a designation that was developed for and by them), leaving all remaining usage (including the region2000.org web site) to the Local Government Council and its subsidiaries.

Potential Names for Planning District Commission #11

The abandonment of the Region 2000 brand by the economic development community may create an opportunity for Planning District Commission #11 (currently known as the Region 2000 Local Government Council) to establish (or re-establish) an identity that is independent of the now-disfavored Region 2000 label.

Across Virginia, planning district commission names typically consist of two parts: a geographic descriptor and a functional descriptor or designation. Potential descriptors are listed below, and could be used in any combination:

Geographic Descriptor

Central Virginia
Greater Lynchburg
Lynchburg Regional
Virginia’s Blue Ridge
Heart of Virginia

Functional Descriptor

Local Government Council
Planning District Commission
Regional Commission
Local Government Services
Regional Planning Agency

“**Central Virginia**” was the designation for the Planning District Commission for thirty years. While three primary Virginia localities (Lynchburg, Charlottesville, and Richmond) often refer to themselves as being in Central Virginia, the state government bestowed the designation on many Lynchburg-area government agencies and facilities in the 1960s and 1970s. Many organizations and businesses currently use the Central Virginia designation, including:

Central Virginia Community College	Central Virginia Metropolitan Planning Organization
YMCA of Central Virginia	Central Virginia Alliance for Community Living
Central Virginia United Soccer	CASA of Central Virginia
Central Virginia Health District (VDH)	Central Virginia Governor’s School
United Way of Central Virginia	Central Virginia Criminal Justice Academy
Free Clinic of Central Virginia	Many area medical and dental practices

In fact, residents of the Lynchburg area recognize and use the designation “Central Virginia” in ways that were never achieved by the proponents of the Region 2000 brand. While people in the eastern or northern parts of Virginia might easily lump the Lynchburg area into “Southwest Virginia” (which is reinforced by Lynchburg’s share in the Roanoke media market), the exact geographic center of Virginia near Mount Rush in Buckingham County is only about five miles outside of the Lynchburg MSA. While Buckingham County is technically a part of the Charlottesville MSA, Charlottesville does not use the Central Virginia designation for government offices and nonprofits to the degree that Lynchburg does.

Other geographic designations may be appropriate to describe the area served by Planning District Commission #11, but each would have to be carefully evaluated against the following factors:

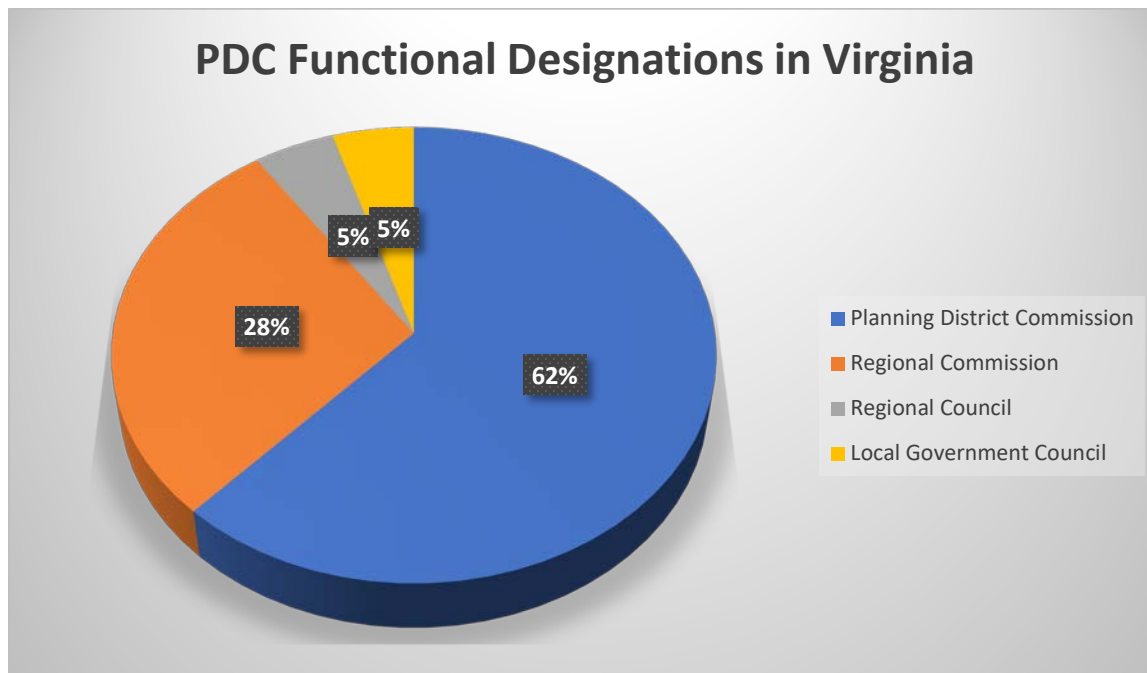
- Appropriate and agreeable inclusiveness of all Lynchburg MSA localities
- Name recognition and identification amongst residents and stakeholders
- Meaningfulness to stakeholders and partners outside the region
- Minimal ambiguity or vagueness
- Clear definition (the meaning behind the name should be easily discernable)

Analysis of Virginia Planning District Commission Names

All twenty-one Virginia Planning District Commissions have names that consist of two parts: a geographic descriptor and a functional descriptor or designation.

The Virginia Regional Cooperation Act allows for the following designations for the organization's official name. Other variations must be treated as a "doing business as" or "trading as" name.

- Planning District Commission
- Regional Council
- Regional Commission



Of Virginia's twenty-one PDCs, thirteen (62%) have geographic descriptors that are generally understandable to individuals with basic knowledge of the Commonwealth's landscape. These include:

- **Accomack-Northampton** Planning District Commission
- **Central Shenandoah** Planning District Commission
- **Cumberland Plateau** Planning District Commission
- **Hampton Roads** Planning District Commission
- **Middle Peninsula** Planning District Commission
- **New River Valley** Regional Commission
- **Northern Neck** Planning District Commission
- **Northern Shenandoah Valley** Regional Commission

- **Northern Virginia** Regional Commission
- **Richmond Regional** Planning District Commission
- **Roanoke Valley-Alleghany** Regional Commission
- **Southside** Planning District Commission
- **West Piedmont** Planning District Commission

Six others (29%) use geographic descriptors that have long been utilized in the local area and likely have strong name recognition locally, but not statewide:

- **Crater** Planning District Commission (Petersburg)
- **George Washington** Regional Commission (Fredericksburg)
- **Lenowisco** Planning District Commission (**Lee, Norton, Wise, Scott**)
- **Mount Rogers** Planning District Commission (Marion)
- **Rappahannock-Rapidan** Regional Commission (Culpeper)
- **Thomas Jefferson** Planning District Commission (Charlottesville)

The remaining two (10%) use descriptors that are either non-geographic, general in nature, or relatively recent inventions:

- **Commonwealth** Regional Council (Farmville)
- **Region 2000** Local Government Council (Lynchburg)