UPDATE:
CEDS & Super Regional Strategies

GO VIRGINIA

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

Timeline for Feedback
By Region

- -

TJPDC
- Available for comment until April 27th
- https://tjpdc.org/our-work/economic-development/

RRRC
- Available for comment until May 22nd
- https://www.rrregion.org/ceds

SUPER REGIONAL – GO VA
- Available as part of either CEDS document
- Or available as separate document here
- https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:5988022a-8669-4466-9e0f-8d6a45508472

Next Steps

- **Adoption of each CEDS by their respective Commissions**
  - TJPDC 5/2
  - RRRC 6/26
- **Camoin digitally attending 6/27 Council Meeting**
  - Determine how to integrate strategies into Growth & Diversification Plan
- **Launch implementation**
  - Connect and coordinate with partners on priority items
 - Identify funding opportunities

1 INTRODUCTION

Success Through Collaboration

The Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission and the Thomas Jefferson Planning District prepared five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) during 2023-2024. The management team for each planning district, and their respective regional steering committees, met regularly with Camoin Associates to coordinate similar approaches, methodology, stakeholder outreach, and engagement activities for their respective plans.

Additionally, GO Virginia provided funds to identify "Super Regional" strategies to support these planning processes. The Super Regional strategies are intended to leverage common challenges facing each planning district, which together comprise the state's GO Virginia Region 9.

Eight strategic areas were identified as requiring a super-regional emphasis. They include four leading or emerging industry sectors, two of which relate directly to GO Virginia Region 9's targeted industry sectors, **Agriculture – Food and Beverage** and **Information Technology,** and two other promising sectors, **Clean Technology** and **Defense**.

Note: The other targeted sectors included as GO Virginia targeted industries (Biomedical/Biotechnology, Financial and Business Services, and Light Manufacturing) were concentrated most strongly in one of the two planning districts, and thus, did not share similar emphasis at the super-regional level. Those industries and related strategies to grow them are addressed in the respective CEDS.
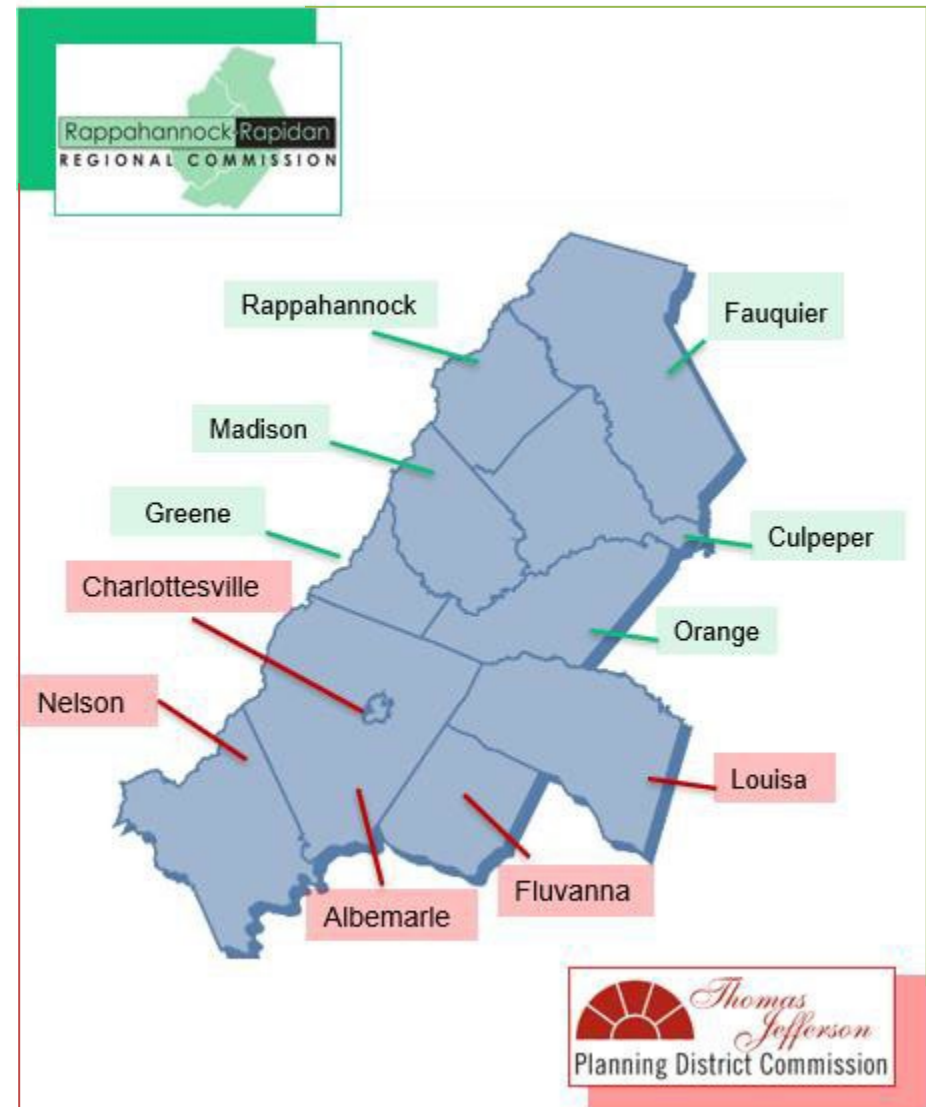
2 CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS

Focus

The following section provides a sampling of data that helped support the decisions to focus on specific Super Regional strategies.

It is organized by the four leading and emerging industry sectors, plus Tourism and Hospitality, along with three overarching areas requiring extraordinary focus and effort, namely housing, sites/infrastructure, and workforce development.

For this section, the data is organized as follows:

    A. Leading and Emerging Sectors

        ▪ Food and Beverage

        ▪ Clean Technology

        ▪ Defense

        ▪ Information Technology

    B. Tourism

    C. Housing

    D. Sites and Infrastructure

    E. Workforce Development

What **We** Know From the Data

Four industry sectors are identified as having strong location quotient factors. Three of these leading or emerging sectors have dramatically higher than state average job creation potential: Food and Beverage, Defense, and Information Technology.

Tourism performance generally tracks statewide averages for growth. However, the "slice of the pie" for Region 9 is only 5% of the statewide totals, suggesting that more can be done to market the region's assets by extending visitor stay experiences in other regions to include Region 9 and increasing overall visitation with new product development and exposure.

The ability to find safe and affordable housing is a national crisis and Virginia and its Region 9 localities are not exceptions. This is having a significant negative effect on the ability of residents and future workers to locate and prosper in Central Virginia. Several years ago, the Rappahannock-Rapidan region developed a plan of action that engaged local municipal officials. It provides a launch pad for Region 9 to address such issues holistically.

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

And, finally, the expansion of workforce development initiatives is needed to meet employer demands in all industries. Key to the competitiveness of Region 9 rests with securing more private sector involvement in preparing workers for jobs, especially those needed to propel the leading and emerging sectors identified in this report.
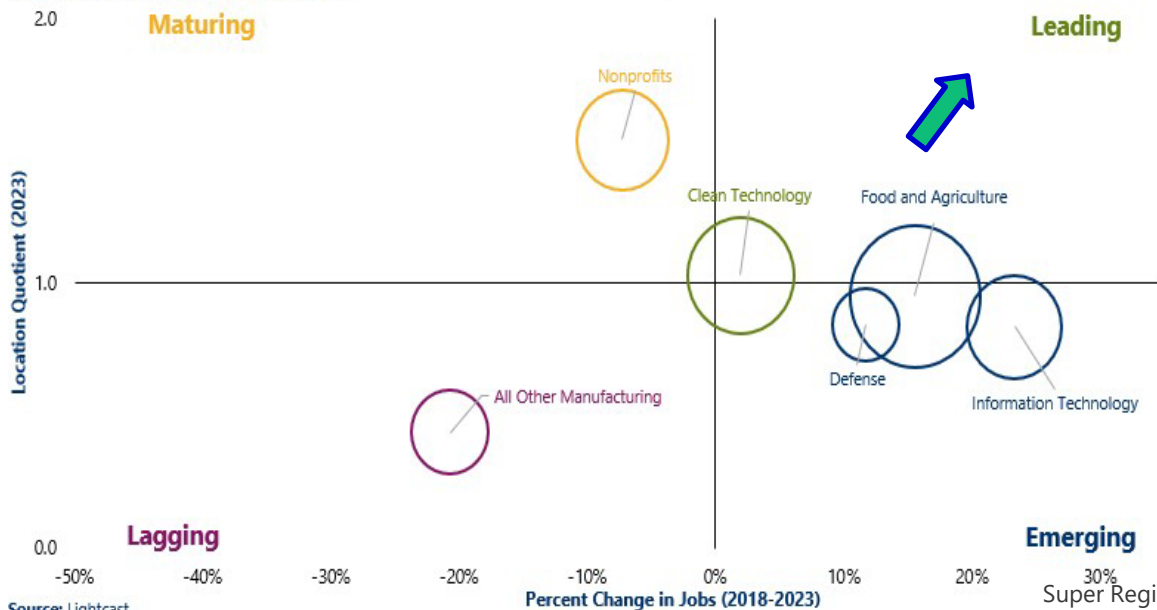
A. Competitive Industry Sectors

Key Metrics by Sector, Rappahannock-Rapidan Region
Bubble size indicates 2023 job count
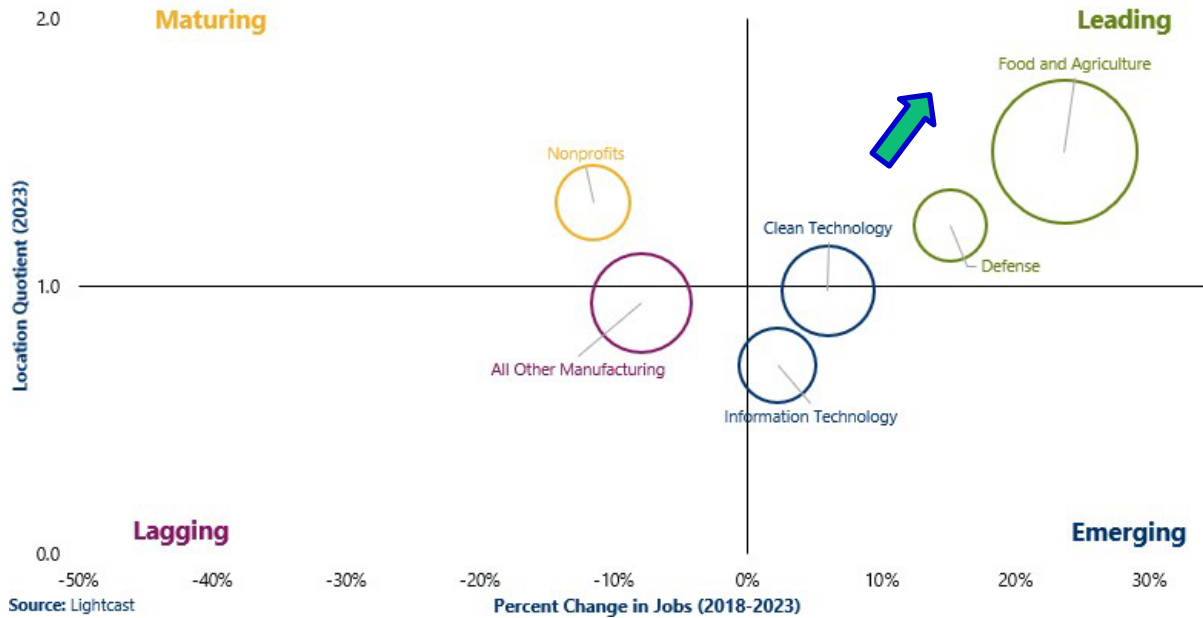
Key Metrics by Sector, Thomas Jefferson District Planning Commision
Bubble size indicates 2023 job count

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

These are:
- Food and Agriculture
- Clean Technology
- Defense
- Information Technology

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

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

Super Regional Strategies – Summary

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

GOAL 1 Expand economic opportunities in the Food and Beverage industry

GOAL 2 Leverage Virginia's clean tech assets to establish an expanded hub for innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

GOAL 3 Designate a Defense and Intelligence industry corridor

GOAL 4 Optimize the economic impact of the Information Technology and Digital Communications sectors

GOAL 5 Expand tourism-based product development and marketing

GOAL 6 Advance recommendations for a regional housing approach

GOAL 7 Assess cooperative infrastructure development models to enhance site readiness initiatives

GOAL 8 Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline

3   STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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

GOAL 1   Expand economic opportunities in the Food and Beverage industry

A. Provide specialized training, peers, and mentors to reach young people, recruit talent for specialized positions, and assist businesses with start-up, expansion, and access to new consumer markets.

B. Leverage and overcome resistance to new technologies for agricultural biotechnology advances in animal and crop sciences and environmental resilience; promote greenhouses and controlled environment agriculture ("CEA") and continue to expand rural infrastructure.

C. Monitor land competition and conditions and support climate change research and investments in resilient infrastructure.

GOAL 2   Leverage Virginia's clean tech assets to establish an expanded hub for innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

A. Develop Clean Energy plans most relevant to Region 9.

B. Focus on building support for Clean Energy R&D and small-scale manufacturing initiatives.

C. Support university-based collaboratives to advance R&D in next-generation commercial applications.

D. Build out the Clean Energy supply chain.

GOAL 3   Designate a Defense and Intelligence industry corridor

A. Market corridor expanding from Fauquier to Orange, Greene, Albemarle counties and Charlottesville.

B. Promote incentives such as a defense production zoning overlay.

C. Focus on infrastructure investments to ready sites with necessary security precautions.

D. Partner with existing employers to meet needs and provide job training and recruitment for specialized roles.

GOAL 4

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

A. Direct development to desired locations and demand the most advanced build-out to reduce the environmental impacts of data centers.

B. Continue to target rural broadband deployment.

C. Develop the workforce pipeline into one with cross-sector skill sets.

D. Focus on supply chain high-technology manufacturing opportunities.

E. Leverage private sector involvement for community improvements.

GOAL 5

Expand tourism-based product development and marketing

A. Maximize public access to rivers and build accessible trailheads.

B. Attract outdoor outfitters to complement recreational uses.

C. Grow boutique hotels, B&Bs, resorts, glamping, and other accommodations with connections to smaller downtowns and commercial corridors.

D. Consider marketing the region as Virginia's Recreational Ridge (R&R) to include the Northern River Blueridge/Western Piedmont-Foothill, spanning the counties of Nelson, Albemarle, Greene, Madison, and Rappahannock.

GOAL 6

Advance recommendations for a regional housing approach

A. Aggressively expand inventory with new build, infill, and redevelopment projects.

B. Pursue land assembly to align local land use with desired housing, incorporate data for informed decisions, and monitor plans for unnecessary displacement and gentrification.

C. Strengthen partnerships with regional planners and public/private partnerships and establish creative financing mechanisms.

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

GOAL 7 **Assess cooperative infrastructure development models to enhance site readiness initiatives**

A. Advance municipal support for existing and new sites.

B. Streamline infrastructure-related approval processes.

C. Retain an engineering firm to identify new sites and planned future development.

GOAL 8 **Reimagine the employer-led talent pipeline**

A. Recommit 2-3 sector verticals that have committed C-level participation.

B. Reassess the talent pathways initiative to be more responsive to employer needs.

C. Quantify demand for critical occupations every six months and evaluate primary goals such as talent retention, talent attraction, or direct learning.

D. Continuously verify that credentials and skills taught in educational systems transfer to the private sector.

E. Provide messaging directed to needs at different skill levels, engage employers in training and mentorship programs, and evaluate best-practice pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, returnships, micro-trainings, and paid training programs.

F. Determine and measure the talent pipeline for in-demand occupations.

G. Continuously measure results, adapt curriculum, learn from worker experiences, and use real-time intelligence from joint business retention and expansion visits with economic developers.

H. Advocate at the state level for changes to the community college funding model.

I. Continue to target messaging to retain talent in Central Virginia.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

Team Effort

Implementing the Super Regional Strategies will be a team effort.

Four of the goal areas directly relate to GO Virginia's high-growth industry priorities and initiatives and are expected to become part of its agenda moving forward. They are not intended to replace existing target industries. These four are:

GOAL 1 **Agriculture/Food & Beverage**

GOAL 2 **Clean Technology (Related to IT-Manufacturing**

GOAL 3 **Defense**

GOAL 4 **IT-Digital Technology**

Working with GO Virginia, partners for Goals 1-4 would be regional planning commissions, the workforce development system, and county economic developers, SBDC/Venture Central, and the CVP.

For Goal 2, consideration might be given to having the Charlottesville Renewable Energy Alliance and the Community Climate Collaborative Green Business Alliance take an active role.

GOAL 5 **Tourism**

GOAL 6 **Housing**

GOAL 7 **Infrastructure**

GOAL 8 **Talent**

Implementation roles and responsibilities for Goals 5-8 need to be determined.

Goal 5 may be advanced by current hospitality and tourism professionals in the region, together with support from the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Goal 6 is best coordinated by the respective regional planning commissions continuing to work closely together.

Goal 7 is currently a primary interest of the Central Virginia Partnership. To further all counties in Region 9, CVP would need the support of a representative from Fauquier County.

Goal 8 is best coordinated by workforce development professionals and community college administrators committed to working in closer partnership with private sector leaders.