



Project ENABLE

*Draft Economic Development
Strategic Plan – 2019 - 2022*

August, 2018



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Background

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

Significant Milestones Along the Way:

- **2008 - Updating the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan** - to reflect a more up-to-date strategic focus on desired industries.
- **2009 - Economic Opportunity Fund created** – for the first time, established a dedicated source of funding to support desirable economic development activities, used in several instances to match state grant funds for capital investment and above average wage jobs.
- **2010 - Economic Vitality Action Plan/Target Industry Study** – action plan adopted by the Board in 2010 with five specific goal areas; one of the most significant outcomes was a regional target industry study commissioned to identify industry groups with greatest chance of success given community assets and preferences – analyzed assets, workforce, existing industry clusters, etc.
- **2012 - Zoning ordinance modernized** – a complete modernization of the zoning ordinance to provide more flexibility and location options for businesses in target industry sectors.
- **2015 - Economic Development Office created** – hired the County's first Economic Development Director.
- **2016 - Restructured Economic Development Authority (EDA)** – streamlined procedures that allow the EDA to operate as a more effective economic development partner.
- **2016 - Economic development identified as critical focus on Strategic Plan** – FY17-19 Strategic Plan adopted last year identifies redevelopment and revitalization of County's urban areas, including focus on economic development, as top priorities.
- **2016/17 - Support for economic development in Two Year Plan and FY18 Annual Budget** – dedicated money to support initiatives that promote capital investment/quality jobs/economic vitality for urban areas.

Contributing Policies/Documents:

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

County's Vision Statement:

Albemarle County envisions a community with...

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

...for present and future generations.

Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Policy – updated in 2008:

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

Economic Vitality Three Year Action Plan Preamble – adopted in 2010:

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

Target Industry Study – completed in 2012:

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

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

The recommended target industries are:

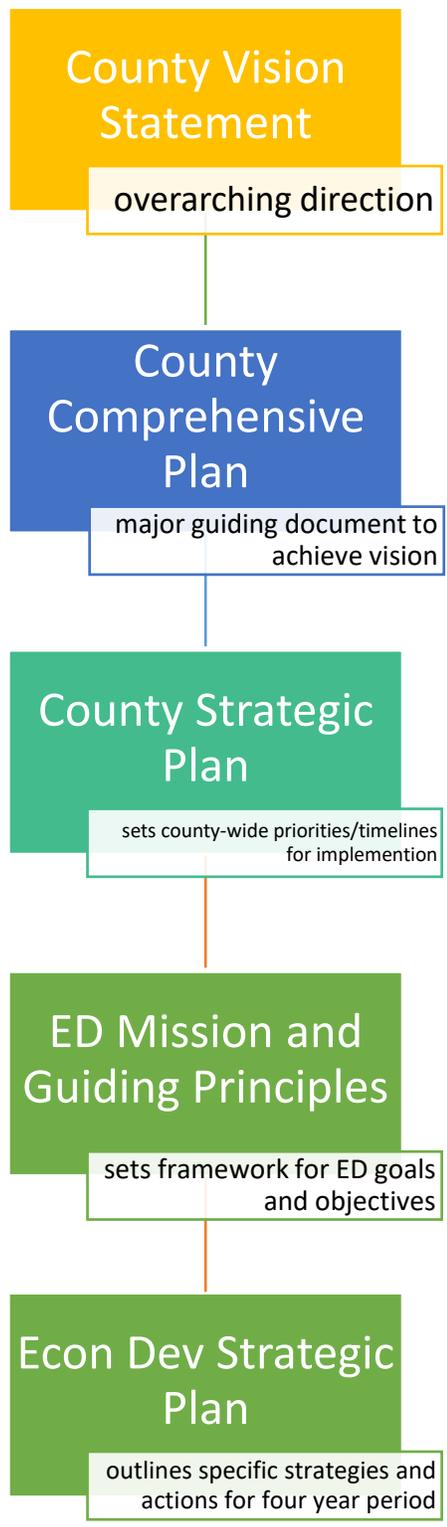
- *Bioscience and Medical Devices*
- *Business & Financial Services*
- *Information Technology and Defense & Security*
- *Agribusiness and Food Processing*

Complementary targets are:

- *Health Services*
- *Arts, Design and Sports & Media*

Joint Endorsement of Mission and Guiding Principles – completed in 2017:

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



Economic Development Mission and Guiding Principles:

Albemarle County Economic Development Mission:

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

Albemarle County Economic Development Guiding Principles:

- **Economic Diversity:** Support a diverse and vibrant economy that offers a broad range of job opportunities across the full spectrum of skill levels while delivering high quality government services to our residents.
- **Organizational Collaboration:** Collaborate on all levels (local, regional, and state) to maximize the economic opportunities for the area in a cost-effective manner, including close partnerships with the City of Charlottesville and the University of Virginia.
- **Entrepreneurship/Organic Growth:** Create an environment that encourages, values, and supports entrepreneurship and builds value from within by supporting those businesses or assets who have been a contributor to our community.
- **Build Awareness of Local Opportunities:** Build a strong level of awareness amongst students and young adults of the availability of local career and economic opportunities that keep young people here in our community and support efforts that build a skilled and talented workforce.
- **Educational Achievement and Partnership:** Recognize and support the strength of our local educational institutions and promote lifelong learning opportunities.
- **Leverage Intellectual Capital:** Strengthen and diversify Albemarle's economy by leveraging our intellectual capital to promote expansion of business interests to attract investment and enhance the livability of our community (and not detract from it).
- **Support Critical Infrastructure:** Support social infrastructure through business offerings that recognize family, educational, and cultural needs and that help people be successful, productive employees and focus the County's capital investments in ways that support desired economic development activity, i.e. physical infrastructure that encourages placemaking.
- **Encourage attraction of private capital/direct investment:** Focus significant effort on attracting the investment of private capital into our economy that grows jobs, creates opportunity, increases tax revenues and lessens dependence on public investment for necessary infrastructure.

Statement of Purpose

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

Project ENABLE will utilize the labor force, resources, and structures to export goods and services and import money. Its success will require a cross-functional internal team as well as the inclusion of external partners. Project ENABLE will inform budgetary, capital, infrastructure, and work plans for the impacted departments and the County. It will provide clear direction and prioritization while remaining flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions.

Economic Development Strategic Plan:

The County recognizes that economic development is most successful as a “team sport.” As a result, the Office of Economic Development will maximize both internal and external partnerships to fulfill the mission of Project ENABLE. The strategic plans of key partners at the local and state level have been considered in the development of this plan, including [UVA.](#), the [Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development](#), and the [Virginia Partnership for Economic Development](#).

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

Glossary

B-Corporations – a type of company that uses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems.

Follow – respond, “Do no harm”

Institutional – governmental and quasi-governmental organizations

Lead – develop, initiate, organize, coordinate, direct, guide, manage the effort and be accountable to the result

Monitor – regularly observe and take notice of collected data or efforts by others

Primary business – an establishment that produces a good or service locally and primarily sells it outside of the Charlottesville metropolitan statistical area (MSA)

Partner – equally share the responsibility of leading an effort and sharing accountability in the result

Participate – actively cooperate, engage, collaborate in the effort and contribute to the result

Refer – encourage the use of other resources

Support – actively or passively contribute to the effort by providing consultation to those leading the effort

Organizational Key

CACVB – Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau

CVPED – Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development

VEDP – Virginia Economic Development Partnership

PVCC – Piedmont Virginia Community College

ACSA – Albemarle County Service Authority

ULI – Urban Land Institute

GO Virginia, Region 9 Partners – Albemarle County, City of Charlottesville, Culpeper County, Fauquier County, Fluvanna County, Greene County, Louisa County, Madison County, Nelson County, Orange County, Rappahannock County

Proposed Goals and Objectives

These goals and objectives were developed using policy documents, data analysis, and staff review, as well as comments from external partners and a joint work session of the Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Authority. Project ENABLE requires internal and external cooperation among partners to accomplish these goals and objectives.

Goal 1 - Strengthen Existing Business Retention and/or Expansion (BRE)

- *Objective 1 – E.D. leads the formalization of the existing BRE program*
- *Objective 2 – E.D. recruits and refers potential partners to VEDP’s Economic Gardening pilot program and international VALET program*

Goal 2 – Improve the Business Climate

- *Objective 1 – Remove and reduce controllable barriers*
- *Objective 2 – Review the costs of doing business in the County*
- *Objective 3 – Clarify and improve customer experience for starting and operating a business*

Goal 3 – Lead the County’s Readiness to Accommodate Desired Businesses

Community Development Department and Finance Department are critical partners

- *Objective 1 – Lead the growth of targeted industries*
- *Objective 2 – Lead the investigation of B-Corporations as a targeted industry*
- *Objective 3 – Represent economic development interests in County and institutional partners’ planning processes*
- *Objective 4 – Lead the creation of economic development incentives, programs, and policies*

- **Objective 5 – Support the integration of economic development analysis and fiscal impact in the development review process**
- **Objective 6 – Support a skilled and trained workforce**
ACPS, Piedmont Workforce Network, UVA and PVCC are critical partners for this objective

Goal 4 – Seek Private Investment to Further the Public Good

- **Objective 1 – Lead development projects that result in a public good or enhance natural resources**
- **Objective 2 – Lead development projects that capitalize on our assets, inspiration, and potential to create unique and community-based public spaces**
- **Objective 3 – Lead the development of public-private partnerships that increase direct private investment**

Goal 5 – Enhance the Visibility of Economic Development

Office of Communications/Community Relations is a critical partner

- **Objective 1 – Build community awareness for ED initiatives**
- **Objective 2 – Create a marketing campaign to highlight the County’s desirability for start-ups, existing and relocating businesses**
- **Objective 3 – Identify, track and publish regular analytics that benchmark performance**

Goal 6 – Lead External Efforts to Create Strategic Partnerships with Economic Development Institutions

Department of Finance is a critical partner

- **Objective 1 – Create partnerships to advance County’s strategic and economic development goals**
- **Objective 2 – Lead the formalization of operating protocols with regional partners**
- **Objective 3 – Strengthen effective working partnership with the Economic Development Authority**

Goal 7 – Partner to expand efforts to build the County’s tourism sector

CACVB and Parks and Recreation Department are critical partners

- **Objective 1 – Partner with CACVB Executive Board and staff to support regional tourism priorities, including a focus on arts and culture, as well as off-season and business-related travel**
- **Objective 2– Support existing and new tourism products in Albemarle County, including County parks and other natural assets**
- **Objective 3 – Partner with others to leverage Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) resources**