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EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA REGIONAL PLAN

FY 2018-2028

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EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA REGIONAL PLAN

Letter from the Commission

The contents of this document comprise the Regional Plan for Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission for fiscal years 2018-2028. Our organization, its board and staff leadership are positioning for a future that will create appropriate and targeted opportunities to serve the communities of the region through regional planning and community and economic development services.

We have undergone a rigorous process to examine the needs of the region, the Commission's strengths and our pathways for improvement. This process has underscored our continued commitment. We are very excited about future partnerships, public engagement and new opportunities that will leverage even greater results.

Accomack-Northampton PDC continues to fulfill its legislated role as an important regional agency and to carve the best approaches to serve our communities and their residents. We are ready to use this plan as our guide to a regional response and strategy.

Sincerely,



Donald L. Hart, Chairman



Elaine K. N. Meil, Executive Director

January 16, 2018

Stakeholder Process

Stakeholder input was obtained through a multi-faceted approach which included ANPDC staff, Commission members, county leaders and input from community stakeholders and citizens. Collection of a 582-person survey of the community was developed, completed and analyzed. On May 10, 2015 the survey questions were tested at the Mother Earth Festival on Chincoteague Island. After some minor changes, the survey was rolled out to the general population July 14, 2015 and continued to September 15, 2015. Two hundred eighty five Accomack residents took part and two hundred and thirty residents of Northampton took part. The detailed report, “Accomack Northampton 2015 Community Survey”, is available on www.a-npdc.org.

Community Segment	Surveys Received
Women	326
Men	178
White/Caucasian	359
Black/African American	111
Two or More Races	11
Latino	8 (5 from Spanish language surveys)
Human	7
Age 71+	39
52-70	241
39-51	63
23-38	110
0-22	43
Accomack	285
Northampton	230

Collected Demographics for the 2015 Accomack-Northampton Community Survey

Along with the other stakeholder input, the results of the survey were used to help set the goals of the Commission going forward, and to inform the

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direction of this Regional Plan. Several of the most important themes emerged.

JOBS

The community clearly stated the most important regional priority is obtaining more jobs, better paying jobs, and better quality jobs. These jobs should improve the lives of the poor, retain the young and have wages that can support a family.

WATER

Water, specifically the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay, are cherished assets of the region. Protection of groundwater and surface water as well as increased access to the water were all identified.

THE PEOPLE

The community wants schools and jobs to keep their young people. The friendly people were an asset of the region.

NATURE

The natural beauty of the region are one of the greatest assets. Individual elements include the water surrounding the Eastern Shore, the wildlife, birds, sunsets and the beaches. The community want jobs that will respect the natural beauty and natural assets of the region.

OTHER THEMES

Twenty-eight other themes were identified from Schools (27% of community surveys) to Trash & Litter (3%). While these themes are not covered individually in this regional plan, the information obtained can be used to inform individual proposed projects.

Introduction & Overview

This Regional Plan represents the culmination of an effort for citizens, community organizations and local governments of Virginia's Eastern Shore who outlined a set of values that culminated in a Regional Vision and developed strategies which can be implemented to make that Vision a reality. Additionally, this Plan builds on the work of existing regional studies. A consensus set of strategies are articulated which demonstrate responsiveness to regional needs and a readiness to execute the vision.

The document identifies ways to increase a shared regional identity, revitalize existing communities, increase affordable housing choice, support businesses, protect the region's unique rural character and natural resources, and work to put in place supportive, transparent policies which are able to attract necessary resources.

In developing this Regional Plan, A-NPDC completed a needs assessment, facilitated interviews of the counties' leadership, conducted an A-NPDC leadership retreat and an formalized an organizational strategic plan. Collection of a 582-person survey of the community was completed and responses were used, with other input, to determine the values of the region. Eleven other regional plans developed wholly or with guidance of the PDC, addressed specific topical areas and issues. More are underway. The regional values here are articulated in four vision statements to guide the development of the Regional Plan.

This Regional Plan looks at ways for A-NPDC to support and further the aspirational visions articulated. In addressing an enhanced small community living and working environment, efforts to provide additional affordable housing, safe and adequate transportation and good jobs are in order. Helping to encourage a more productive and sustainable business environment

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includes assuring quality, well-paying jobs, and a range of opportunities, especially for younger residents. A corollary to this is assisting with access to excellent, relevant education. It became clear that residents care a great deal about the area's natural landscape and rural character, thus working to preserve rural character and cultural heritage is critical.

As a whole, the Plan acknowledges important current undertakings related to the vision, suggests a selection of priority strategies and opportunities and puts forth measurements to track implementation as activities are carried out to make the vision a reality.

Regional Plans that were reviewed include:

- *The Northampton Economic Forum, A Blueprint for Economic Growth, 1992*
- *Eastern Shore of Virginia 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2012*
- *Accomack-Northampton Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan, 2008*
- *Eastern Shore Bike Plan Update, 2014*
- *Regional Housing Assessment Accomack and Northampton Counties Virginia, Initial Draft, 2001*
- *Housing Market Study – William Hughes Apartments, 2010*
- *Eastern Shore of Virginia Groundwater Resource Protection and Preservation Plan, 2013*
- *Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, 2011*
- *Community Broadband Planning Study, Accomack County and the Towns of Chincoteague, Exmore, Nassawadox, 2007*
- *Accomack-Northampton PDC 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, 2011*
- *Route 13/Wallops Island Access Management Study, 2002*

Vision & Goals

VISION & GOALS

The Commission met and considered all the responses to the 2015 Community Survey and adopted the following vision made up of four goals for the region.

- The residents of the Eastern Shore experience comfortable, small communities infused with a strong rural influence and unique sense of place.
- Young residents take pride in the Eastern Shore of Virginia and are encouraged to remain or return by successful educational and workforce initiatives that create good, well-paying jobs.
- The Eastern Shore has a commitment to economic progress while safeguarding natural resources.
- The policy makers of the Eastern Shore develop and encourage supportive policies which engage the community, are transparent and attract necessary resources.

Vision Element One:

Residents of the Eastern Shore of Virginia experience comfortable, small communities infused with a strong rural influence and unique sense of place while continuing to secure tomorrow's opportunities.

Current Activities

- 1) The PDC staffs two organizations that concentrate on developing or rehabilitating affordable housing rental projects on the shore. Three projects are currently under development.
- 2) The PDC is assisting three towns on the shore with their community development efforts.
- 3) The PDC is completing the Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- 4) The PDC is assisting the Commonwealth of Virginia and Eastern Shore communities with writing the first Virginia Working Waterfronts Plan.

Strategic Opportunities

- 1) Continue to help ensure the affordability of quality housing in the region by developing and carrying out more housing projects generally.
- 2) The PDC will assist additional towns with downtown/commercial improvement efforts.
- 3) Assist counties and towns with preserving and enhancing their working waterfronts.
- 4) The PDC will assist the counties, as requested, with activities that create, maintain or improve opportunities for the people of the Eastern Shore while balancing the public interest in continuing traditional rural life.
- 5) The PDC will use existing planning expertise to provide planning services that increase future opportunity for the region. The PDC will take a long term view, defined as between ten and one hundred years, and incorporate the Eastern Shore's unique regional perspectives into

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the region's plans for the physical, housing, economic, social and environmental needs.

- 6) The PDC will assist the counties and towns with projects that promote the public's accessibility to government services, and public infrastructure.

Performance Metrics

- 1) At least two new affordable rental housing projects, Bailey Road Apartments and Jerusalem Road Apartments, will be developed by July 1, 2019.
- 2) Develop an assessment of community-wide affordable housing conditions by June 30, 2019.
- 3) Assist counties with official formation of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Navigable Waterways Committee. Address staffing needs of the committee.

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Vision Element Two:

Young residents take pride in the Eastern Shore of Virginia and are encouraged to remain or return by successful educational and workforce initiatives that create good, well-paying jobs.

Current Activities

- 1) The PDC is working to develop new economic opportunities within aquaculture, the arts and small business development.
- 2) The PDC is assisting the Department of Environmental Quality with the Conservation Lands Economic Impact Study.
- 3) The PDC is implementing the Eastern Shore of Virginia Stronger Economies Together Plan.

Strategic Opportunities

- 1) Participate in GO Virginia and other statewide economic development initiatives that create well-paying jobs.
- 2) Continue housing counseling initiatives for pre-purchase clientele.
- 3) Young people express very different priorities for the region, as identified in the surveys submitted for persons between the ages of 23 and 38. Recognize and incorporate additional projects and programs that specifically address these priorities.

Performance Metrics

- 1) Beginning March 2018, at least two entrepreneurial classes, such as ecotourism and aquaculture tailored to the economic climate of the Eastern Shore, will be in place.
- 2) Assist at least four families with purchasing a house each year.
- 3) Develop a subset of the 2015 Community Survey themes for the age group 23-38 for consideration by the Commission for publication by January 2018.

Vision Element Three:

The Eastern Shore has a commitment to economic progress while safeguarding natural resources.

Current Activities

1. The regional plan “Stronger Economies Together” has been developed and is being implemented.
2. The PDC staffs the Eastern Shore of Virginia Groundwater Committee.
3. The PDC staffs the Accomack-Northampton Comprehensive Economic Development Study (CEDS) Subcommittee.

Strategic Opportunities

1. The PDC will continue to find opportunities for waterfront communities to build on their natural potential and assets.
2. Staff will secure funding and provide development services for projects that meet local and regional priorities. Staff will incorporate low impact design methods that are affordable and efficient into the siting, and construction of projects.
3. The PDC will provide planning services, grant and project administration, and construction management services for projects identified in the Stronger Economies Together (SET) Plan and the CEDS Plan.
4. The PDC will also support for local efforts by offering planning services, administration, and construction management to the counties and towns for local economic development projects, as requested and with authorization by the Commission.
5. The PDC will secure funding and provide services and public infrastructure that increase economic opportunity for residents of the Eastern Shore.

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Performance Metrics

- 1) During 2017 and 2018 the PDC will assist at least two Eastern Shore towns, Town of Parksley and one to be identified, in elements of downtown/commercial revitalization.
- 2) The economic strategies laid out in the SET plan will be implemented according to timeframe in the SET framework.

Vision Element Four:

The policy makers of the Eastern Shore develop and encourage supportive policies which engage the community, are transparent and attract necessary resources.

Current Activities

- 1) The PDC completed a 582 person survey of community input and used the responses to determine strategic values and develop a regional plan.
- 2) The Commission adopted a new A-NPDC Title VI (Civil Rights) Plan and Procedures in 2016.
- 3) The PDC staffs the Eastern Shore of Virginia Housing Alliance, the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority, the Accomack-Northampton Transportation Committee, and the GreenWorks Committee.

Strategic Opportunities

- 1) The PDC will encourage policies that protect natural ecosystems and resources.
- 2) The PDC will provide opportunities for public and stakeholder input and will review the 2015 Community Survey prior to adoption of regional policies.
- 3) The PDC will conduct a new Community Survey in 2025. The PDC will obtain over 500 collected surveys and will design a process that has a respectable response from all segments of the community including but not limited to, race/ethnicity, gender, county residence and age. The success of this initiative will be measured by the total number of surveys collected by each segment in relationship to the measurement of that segment for the region in the 2020 U.S. Census.
- 4) The PDC will continue to write and update single element plans, as needed by the region. The PDC recognizes that these single element

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plans provide greater detail on the particular subject and also give the community greater access to the planning process for that particular topic.

Performance Metrics

- 1) The PDC, in conjunction with the Counties and Towns, will conduct at least one public input session annually to obtain citizen and community thoughts on the region's health, direction and sustainability of its policies and status.
- 2) The A-NPDC will maintain Second Language Resources.
- 3) Conduct a new Community Survey in 2025.
- 4) Begin review and rewrite of the Regional Plan in 2026.

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