



# Economic Development Strategic Plan Update

January 8, 2025

# Background

**July 2021** – the County approved a contract with Platinum PR to facilitate the creation of an Economic Development Strategic Plan.

**January 2022** – Platinum PR held individual interviews with members of the Board of Supervisors and the Economic Development Authority. In addition, three focus group sessions were conducted: one group comprised of staff and two groups of community stakeholders. Data collected from these meetings was used to draft the proposed Strategic Goals.

**April 2022** – Platinum PR presented the proposed Economic Development Strategic Goals to the Board of Supervisors. Feedback from this discussion was used to prepare the draft strategic plan.

**August 2022** – the Board of supervisors reviewed and discussed the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan at their planning retreat.

**September 2022** – Fluvanna's first Economic Development Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

# Fluvanna Forward

Fluvanna County's Economic Development Strategic Plan reflects the county's commitment to fostering a vibrant, business-friendly environment that drives growth and opportunity. Guided by four strategic goals, the county has made significant strides in streamlining the business process, supporting entrepreneurship, enhancing tourism, and addressing workforce challenges.

These achievements underscore a collaborative approach to economic development, leveraging partnerships, community engagement, and innovative initiatives to positioning Fluvanna County as a business and tourism destination.

# Goal 1:

## **Position Fluvanna County as a business-friendly county with competitive assets in the Central Virginia region.**

- ◆ **Reorganize and communicate steps of streamlined and standardized business permitting process to new and existing businesses in Fluvanna County.**
  - ✓ Created “Starting Your Business in Fluvanna County” Guide
  - ✓ Established Development Team (planning, buildings, economic development, admin)
    - Monthly meetings to review economic development projects
    - Pre-submittal meetings with developers
- ◆ **Design potential business incentive offerings in Fluvanna County.**
- ◆ **Promote the “Fluvanna County Shovel-Ready Sites” program to landowners, businesses, and the community at-large to encourage the creation of higher tiered pad-ready sites (as defined by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority in its Virginia Business Ready Sites Program in accordance with Section 2.2-2238.B of the Code of Virginia of 1950) in Fluvanna County.**
- ◆ **Continue to invest in key growth areas in Fluvanna County, including but not limited to Fork Union, Columbia, Palmyra, and Zion Crossroads.**
  - ✓ Partnered with SBDC to secure an SBA Grant to begin Business Revitalization Strategy in Fork Union
    - Hired part-time SBDC Business Advisor for Fork Union
    - Fork Union Brand Compass
      - 2 Business Owner Meetings
      - 1 Community Meeting
      - 1 Branding Workshop
      - 1 Brand Compass Meeting
    - Applied for Year 2 funding

# Goal 2:

**Foster entrepreneurship, business growth, and expansion in Fluvanna County through business retention efforts.**

- ◆ **Continue to collaborate at the regional level to provide programs and services; share resources and assets to reduce costs and improve quality.**
  - ✓ Member of the CV SBDC Advisory Board
  - ✓ Member of CVPED Economic Development Partners
  - ✓ Participated in the focus group for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy led by Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission
  - ✓ Participated in the focus group for the Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative led by Community Investment Collaborative and Venture Central
- ◆ **Formalize a County Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program.**
  - ✓ Between 2022 and 2024:
    - Business Visits Conducted – 457
    - Small Business Referrals – 52
    - Business Education Series Sessions – 7
- ◆ **Create a business database of existing businesses for tracking business metrics in Fluvanna County.**
- ◆ **Support, advocate, and promote the new community commercial kitchen.**
  - ✓ Permitted by Health Department in November
  - ✓ Board of Supervisors decreased hourly fees in December 2024
  - ✓ Exploring partnership with CV SBDC to create food accelerator program

# Goal 2:

**Foster entrepreneurship, business growth, and expansion in Fluvanna County through business retention efforts.**

- ◆ **Explore entrepreneurial support opportunities such as the development of a coworking space, business incubator, or maker space.**
  - ✓ Paused, waiting for the updated Regional Entrepreneurial Initiative
- ◆ **Work towards the creation of a new position geared towards marketing and tourism promotion and business retention within the Fluvanna County Economic Development Office.**
  - ✓ Small Business Development and Tourism Specialist position was created and funded in the FY 24 budget
- ◆ **Develop a comprehensive hazard mitigation plan for businesses within Fluvanna County.**
  - ✓ Joined the restructured Local Emergency Planning Committee
    - Participated in the revision of the All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan

# Goal 3:

**Develop new and enhance existing tourism experiences, activities, and events in Fluvanna County to increase tourism attraction.**

◆ **Devise and implement shop local incentives and programs.**

- ✓ Formed a group of community stakeholders:
  - Created the “Buy Fluvanna First” brand
  - Launched a Holiday Passport Campaign

◆ **Promote local tourism experiences in agritourism, viticulture, artisans, events, parks, and outdoor recreation.**

- ✓ Established the Find Fluvanna brand to include:
  - Find Fluvanna Website
  - Rack Cards
  - Visitor Guide
  - Social Media (Facebook and Instagram)
- ✓ Created monthly newsletter to promote events

◆ **Research and apply for grants to support tourism initiatives in Fluvanna County.**

- ✓ Applied for and received several Virginia Tourism Corporation grants:
  - 2022 ARPA Tourism Recovery Program - \$60,000
  - 2024 Spring Marketing Leverage Grant - \$13,000
  - 2024 Fall Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Grant - \$6,000

# **Goal 4:**

## **Support Fluvanna County businesses with talent recruitment and retention challenges.**

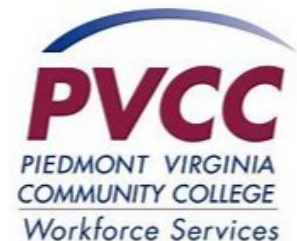
- ◆ **Establish partnerships with local educational institutions and workforce partners to develop a talent pipeline to fit local skills needs.**
  - ✓ Continued partnership with Virginia Career Works
    - Employer Coalition Meetings
    - Fluvanna Agriculture Producers Roundtable
  - ✓ Member of Fluvanna County High School CTE Advisory Group
  - ✓ Continued partnership with Piedmont Virginia Community College Workforce Development
  - ✓ Continued partnership with Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development
- ◆ **Advocate for the Fluvanna County business community as the county addresses its infrastructure challenges.**
  - ✓ Attend meetings with Dewberry Engineers to discuss Zion Crossroads and Fork Union Utilities Infrastructure



# Community Partners



Virginia  
Economic  
Development  
Partnership



# Looking Forward

Building on these successes, the Economic Development Office remains focused on sustaining momentum and exploring new opportunities for growth.

With Fluvanna County continuing to invest in infrastructure, expand support for local businesses, and enhance the county's tourism profile, the strategic plan aims to ensure long-term economic vibrancy.

# QUESTIONS?