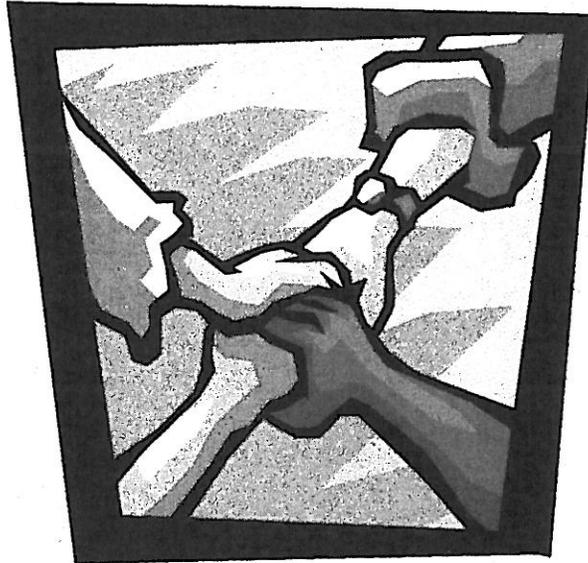


**COMPREHENSIVE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY  
for the  
CENTRAL SHENANDOAH VALLEY  
of  
VIRGINIA**



**Prepared for:  
Economic Development Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce**

**Prepared by:  
Economic Development Committee / CEDS Coordinating Committee  
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission**

**AUGUST, 2000**

# **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE CENTRAL SHENANDOAH VALLEY REGION OF VIRGINIA**

The Central Shenandoah Valley Region of Virginia consists of ten independent localities in the western portion of the Commonwealth. The region includes the counties of Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham and the cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, and Waynesboro. All ten localities in the Region participated in the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The nearly 250,000 residents of the Central Shenandoah Valley make their homes in one of the most beautiful geographic locations on the East Coast (some would say "in the World"). The Central Shenandoah Valley of Virginia covers 3,439 square miles (larger than the combined states of Delaware and Rhode Island) and is surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east and the Allegheny Mountains to the west. The region boasts a willing workforce of over 125,000 hard-working individuals, is home to nine regionally prominent institutions of higher learning, and is known for its excellent quality of life. Simply stated, the Central Shenandoah Valley Region of Virginia is a wonderful place to live and work.

## **BACKGROUND**

Congress passed the Economic Development Administration Reform Act in 1998. The Act requires all 320 Economic Development Districts throughout the country, of which the Central Shenandoah Planning District is one, to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to serve as a planning guide for economic growth in their respective regions. The CEDS process replaces the former Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP).

A major component of the CEDS planning process was the solicitation of input from representatives of various sectors affected by economic development and growth activities. A special effort was made to reach representatives of non-traditional and under-served populations.

To ensure a broad base of opportunity for our diverse communities to provide input, we scheduled five strategic planning workshops that were held throughout our region beginning May 17 and concluding May 25, 2000. Some 125 people representing nearly every targeted sector and more participated in the meetings and over 400 individuals on our regional mailing list were asked to review and comment on the results of the workshops. Co-sponsors of the meetings and planning process included the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development & Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training & Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster's Community College's

Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Services.

Over the past several months, we have been able to develop a truly regional strategy for guiding economic growth by utilizing a quality planning process and by including a wide range of interest sectors – many of whom have not been present at the regional economic development planning table before. In accordance with the Economic Development Administration’s CEDS Guidelines, the Central Shenandoah Valley Region’s strategy promotes sustainable economic development and opportunity, fosters effective transportation systems, enhances and protects the environment, and balances resources through sound management of development.

To follow is a narrative of the planning process we followed in developing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:

## **I. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

### **A. CEDS COMMITTEE**

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Board structure includes the four core committees of Executive, Economic Development, Natural Resources, and Legislative. The 11-member Economic Development Committee, which provided excellent oversight to the former Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) for the last twenty-three years and includes representatives from all ten of the District’s localities, was given the responsibility for coordinating the CEDS process on behalf of the District.

#### **1. Membership**

Membership of the Economic Development / CEDS Coordinating Committee reflects a broad representation of the Central Valley community. Its membership includes both elected and non-elected government, business, and civic representatives from communities throughout the Region. Minorities, women, retirees, employees, business owners, non-profits, and local governments are represented through the diverse mix of the Committee. A complete listing of the Economic Development / CEDS Coordinating Committee is included in the Appendix.

#### **2. Challenges**

From the outset, the CEDS Coordinating Committee and the Planning District staff recognized, as with past regional planning efforts we’ve conducted, that the geographic expanse and rural nature of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region makes it difficult to conduct planning activities from a central location. While most Valley residents share common values, culture, and heritage as they relate to the greater region, the spacial separations of population centers have also

led to the development of sub-regional hubs with more localized interests. To make matters even more challenging, Virginia operates under a system of independent cities and counties that has, in the past, fostered competition and duplication of services, rather than cooperation, among localities sharing common borders. Thus, any plan or strategy purporting to represent the Region must be sure to take into account the uniqueness and special needs of the sub-regions, localities, and communities that make up the whole of the Central Shenandoah Valley.

Thankfully, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and its planning staff have some 31 years and 57 years, respectively, of combined experience in coordinating planning efforts at the regional level for the Valley and we have developed a format that has proven especially effective in recent years. The format involves carrying the planning process out to the communities through a series of sub-regional workshops and utilizing an extensive mailing list of decision-makers and key stakeholders.

### **3. Planning Format**

The CEDS format was specifically patterned after a similarly successful process that the Commission employed back in 1997 when developing the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness for our sister organization, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP). That effort has resulted in nearly \$1.5 million of incentive investments into the Region from the State's Department of Housing and Community Development through the Regional Competitiveness Program and millions more in additional public and private sector investments.

Having funded the \$45,000 planning effort, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's Board made an excellent decision back in 1997 to adopt the work completed pursuant to development of the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness as part of the District's Overall Economic Development Program (the former OEDP) as well. This ensured consistency between the plans, programs (RCP Plan and the OEDP) and organizations (the SVP and CSPDC) by keeping everything headed in the same direction.

### **4. Sector Representation**

For the CEDS, we included five planning and input sessions, utilized a mailing list of over 400 people, and built upon the results of past planning efforts rather than trying to "recreate the wheel." However, there was one key difference between the 1997 and 2000 processes. Specific targets for representation and participation in the CEDS process were much broader and diverse than in previous efforts. They included: private sector leaders, organizations, and entrepreneurs; public sector elected officials, administrative officials, public works and social services directors; employment and training sector leaders and educators including secondary education, community colleges, universities, technical schools, and adult education; agricultural interests; natural resource and environmental conservation organizations and agencies; tourism professionals; human service and community organizations representing various interests from crisis pregnancy to migrant

education; as well as women, minorities, the aged, and the disabled. To signal a cooperative spirit and bring further legitimacy to the process and outcomes, co-sponsors of the strategic planning workshops included the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development & Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training & Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster's Community College's Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Services.

Our efforts proved successful and, ultimately, representatives from nearly all of the targeted sectors were in attendance for at least one of the strategic planning workshops. Additionally, all sectors were given multiple opportunities to review and comment on the results of the planning process as the CEDS moved towards adoption.

## **5. Results**

While the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission made every effort to comply with the spirit of the CEDS requirements and guidelines, the most appropriate way to assess compliance is to examine the results of the planning efforts - The Central Shenandoah Valley Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

One cannot help but to be impressed with the depth and coverage of the Region's Plan. With few exceptions, almost all of the 125 sector representatives who participated in the five strategic planning workshops and the over 400 individuals who were asked to review the final product felt that we have captured the "essence and pulse of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region." This can be directly attributed to the excellent strategic planning format adopted and the broad representation of regional interests that provided input and assistance in the development of the CEDS.

## **B. CEDS COMMITTEE FUNCTION**

### **1. Number of Meetings**

The Economic Development Committee held two meetings pursuant to the CEDS process. The first was on April 17, 2000 to kick off the process and the strategic planning workshops to be held in May. The second was on August 21, 2000 to receive the results of the workshops and to recommend the final version of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to the full Commission Board.

Completion of the initial CEDS document is only the beginning of the Economic Development Committee's work in coordinating the CEDS process. The Central Shenandoah Valley Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been designed as living document. The Economic Development Committee and Commission Board have instructed staff

to pursue adoption over the next several months of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region's Strategic Initiatives by all local governing bodies in the District and the various organizations involved in economic development activities around the Region.

Additionally, the Committee will continually be seeking input throughout the Region and will be proposing amendments to the CEDS as changing conditions warrant. An annual CEDS amendment process will be coordinated with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership's amendment process for the Region Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness. The Committee will keep the regional mailing list of key stakeholders, decision-makers, and representative organizations updated through periodic updates. They will also widely distribute copies of the CEDS annual update report that is produced for the localities and Economic Development Administration. Opportunities to offer text and project amendments will be provided each Spring / Summer so that changes can be adopted during July / August and included with CEDS annual update report in late September.

## **2. Staff Role**

The professional staff of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission plays a key role in the organization's programs by carrying out the Board's directives, performing extensive research and writing services, coordinating meetings, and overseeing the administrative functions of the Commission. In the case of the CEDS process, staff were tasked with the responsibility of recommending an effective planning format, conducting analysis of the regional economy, organizing and conducting the strategic planning workshops, and compiling the results for consideration by the Economic Development Committee and the full Commission Board. Staff also served as liaison between the Planning District and the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.

The primary staff involved with the CEDS process included Bill Strider – CSPDC Executive Director, Darryl Crawford – Senior Planner, and John Giles – Senior Planner. Bonnie Riedesel - Senior Planner, Scott Guillory - Contract Planner, and Rita Whitfield - Administrative Assistant, also provided assistance with the regional strategic workshops.

## **II. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND FORMAT**

As noted above, the Central Shenandoah Planning District covers nearly 3,500-square miles and encompasses an area that is roughly the size of the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. Despite the traditional commonalities of the Valley, the region is also very diverse. Each sub-region, locality, and community has its own unique interests and concerns that affect any effort to address issues at the broader, regional level. Thus, planning efforts must take a different approach in this region if they are to be effective.

The process that we used for the CEDS was more decentralized and labor intensive than one might typically utilize in more urban regions. However, we feel that the extra time and effort that our staff put into developing a strategy that “fits” the Central Shenandoah Valley was well worth the additional investments required.

In developing our approach to the Strategic Planning Workshops and Input Sessions, we actually began with the end in mind. We determined that if we were to develop a plan that truly reflected the needs and concerns of the Central Valley, then we would need a process that allowed for input from the greatest array of sectors possible. Special emphasis was placed on ensuring a place at the table for representatives of non-traditional and under-served populations.

### **A. TIME LINES, PRIORITIES, RESOURCES**

Initial CEDS planning began following the Economic Development Administration’s October 12-13, 1999 meeting in Clarkesville, Virginia with the planning of the “process.” Utilizing the CEDS Guidelines provided by EDA staff at the Clarkesville meeting and capitalizing on our staff’s combined 57 years in regional planning experience, we began by establishing time lines, setting priorities, and assessing both the resources required and those available. Resource assessments include personnel, financial, materials, and technology.

#### **1. Planning the Process**

Experience has told us there are certain “windows of opportunity” during which group workshops are best attended and most effective in the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. There are a number of factors involved, including, but not limited to, weather, daylight savings time, holidays, local government meeting schedules, state organization meetings, school schedules, and vacations. The best times basically come down to early to mid-Fall (September to October) and mid- to late Spring (April to May). Given that it was too late to organize a quality planning effort for Fall, 1999, the decision was made to target Spring and Summer, 2000 for conducting the workshop and input portions of the initial CEDS process. This fit nicely with the Commission’s plans to complete two new regional economic data publications for Spring 2000 (*Economic*

*Overview for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region and the Economic Indicators – 2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley)* and with the EDA's target completion date for the initial CEDS of July, 2000.

## **2. Resource Requirements**

The Commission was well aware of the significant amount of resources required to mount a truly regional effort such as was being prescribed by the CEDS Guidelines, having successfully engineered a similar effort on behalf of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership back in 1997 with the development of the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness. Costs for conducting the 1997 efforts exceeded \$45,000, and initial estimates for replicating the process were expected to be in the \$20,000 to \$25,000 range. Those estimates were quickly revised upwards as activities designed to fully meet the intent and purpose of the CEDS legislation and guidelines were added.

In addition to the two new economic publications and broadened distribution points (we utilize over 35 distribution points throughout the region), staff also undertook the development of a complete "regional contact list". The names and contact information for over 900 regional stakeholders, decision-makers, elected officials, administrative officials, organization leaders, and a host of other individuals from throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley were entered and categorized into a Microsoft Outlook database. From there, over 400 representatives of various target sectors were identified for potential participation in the workshop and input process. They included private sector leaders, organizations, and entrepreneurs; public sector elected officials, administrative officials, public works and social services directors; employment and training sector leaders and educators including secondary education, community colleges, universities, technical schools, and adult education; agricultural interests; natural resource and environmental conservation organizations and agencies; tourism professionals; human service and community organizations representing various interests from crisis pregnancy to migrant education; as well as women, minorities, the aged, and the disabled.

Significant amounts of personnel resources were targeted towards developing, scheduling, and conducting the strategic planning workshops. For the first time, staff made use of projected Microsoft PowerPoint presentations of regional data to begin each meeting and set the stage for discussions. Conducting each workshop required the participation of at least 4 staff members and one support staff assistant back at the office. Compiling and analyzing the results of the meetings took 3 staff members once all of the workshops were completed.

Multiple mailers have gone out to the targeted mailing lists both prior to and after the workshops and input sessions in an effort to solicit as much representative input as possible and to provide opportunities for review of the draft and final products.

Further, plans have now been developed, as a result of the input we have received and upon instruction from our Commission Board, to seek adoption of the Strategic Initiatives from the region's local governments, institutions of higher learning, Chambers of Commerce, planning commissions, IDA's, and other organizations such as the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council, the Valley of Virginia Partnership for Education, and the Valley Conservation Council. Thus, the total budget for completing the CEDS process in the Central Shenandoah Valley Region may eventually reach \$50,000 or more.

## **B. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS**

Step Two of the process included conducting the initial research on the region and making preparations for pending strategic planning workshops and input sessions. Considerations for research and analysis included making decisions as to the types of data and measures to be reviewed, as well as the format in which they would be presented.

The Planning District Commission had been discussing a joint project with its sister organization, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, for the past few years to longitudinally examine some key economic indicators that could be followed annually as a barometer of the region's economic performance. The regional analysis requirements of the CEDS Guidelines for the Commission, combined with a targeted initiative of the Partnership, ultimately brought the *Economic Indicators* project to the top of the priority list. Additionally, the Commission has produced *Economic Overviews* for the various sub-regions of the Central Valley for over 15 years, but has never produced the *Overviews* in a combined, regional format. A four-panel *Facts & Figures* for the entire region and each sub-region was introduced in 1998 and the decision was made to begin production of the first-ever *Economic Overview for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region* for the Year 2000 in conjunction with the CEDS process.

Combined, the *Economic Overview - 2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region* and the *Economic Indicators - 2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region*, which were completed in February 2000, provide both a current view of some 50+ demographic and economic measures and a 10-year longitudinal view of 16 major indicators of the region's economy (see Appendix). During March of 2000, there were over 3,000 *Economic Overviews* (regional and sub-regional), 1,000 *Economic Indicators*, and 10,000 *Facts & Figures* (the 4-panel complement to the *Overviews*) distributed throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. Work was also begun on an extensive 10-year longitudinal database of nearly 100 annually reported measures for inclusion on the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's new website. The website, which went on-line in July 2000 will make a valuable addition to our already expansive knowledge about the state of the region's economy as the CEDS process moves forward through the years. Census data and multi-census comparisons will also be added once the Year 2000 Census data becomes available.

## **C. STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOPS**

Once the strategic planning format was agreed upon, thought had to be given to details such as the size of workshops, how many workshops to hold, where to hold them, how they would be facilitated, how formal they would be, whether or not audio-visual presentations were appropriate, the types of food and snacks to make available, who would be the targets for representation and participation, the length of the workshops, and the time of day, as well as the day of the week, to hold the meetings in each location. All of these factors and more affect the success of a workshop in the Valley Region.

### **1. Sector Representation**

The development and planning of the strategic planning workshops proved to be an extensive exercise. As noted previously, one of the key objectives was to ensure participation and input from representatives of non-traditional and under-served populations. This proved to be a special challenge due to the decentralized nature of many of the service providers in the region and the diverse concentrations of those populations throughout the geographic region. To ensure coverage and representation, we targeted social services agencies, human service organizations, housing authorities, community service organizations, and specific individuals that had participated in local planning activities. Areas of interest and representation included disabilities services, aging services, health services, crisis pregnancy, housing, migrant workers, minorities, and the poor.

Many of the representatives of the non-traditional and under-served sectors targeted had never been included in a regional economic development effort before. Some brought fresh perspectives to the CEDS workshops, some were very vocal, and others took more of a “let’s wait and see” approach. A few were non-responsive, but for the most part, they seemed to appreciate being given an opportunity to offer their input and suggestions.

As indicated above, there were over 400 sector representatives on our targeted mailing list. Recognizing that all of them would obviously not be able to participate in the workshops, we provided a separate track for those who could not make the meetings. Throughout the process, we mailed information packets and sought their review and input on the workshop results as we moved towards production of the final product to be submitted for adoption. This proved to be a successful formula, as we received some thoughtful and quality comments from some individuals who were unable to attend the meetings.

### **2. Workshop Locations**

Determining where to hold the strategic planning workshops and input sessions was more important than one might think for increasing participation and achieving an atmosphere conducive to promoting significant discussion of the key issues. It was decided that the best place to hold the workshops would be in non-government meeting room locations, something a little

more professional than the local fire hall, but not too high end where some participants may feel uncomfortable. We selected the Highland Inn for the Highland County workshop, the Three Hills Inn for Bath County, Hampton Inn – Col Alto for the Rockbridge County-Buena Vista-Lexington Area, Holiday Inn for Augusta County-Staunton-Waynesboro, and the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Center for the Rockingham County-Harrisonburg Area. All five locations proved to be excellent choices for the environment we were trying to create.

### **3. Timing**

All workshops lasted three hours and were designed to begin either mid-morning or early afternoon so that the meetings would conclude just prior to lunch or at the end of the workday. We avoided lunchtime meetings, but did provide break foods such as cookies and fruits and an assortment of beverages such as coffee, tea, water, and soft drinks. Many of the workshop participants commented that the extra touches (like lots of sugar and caffeine and an inviting atmosphere) made them feel much more comfortable with the process and like the time they were giving was appreciated. The breaks also provided an opportunity for networking and getting a chance to know new people.

For CEDS – 2000, the strategic planning workshops and input sessions were set up on a whirlwind schedule of five workshops over a period of seven workdays. By design, they began in Highland County on May 17, 2000 and concluded in the Rockingham-Harrisonburg Area on May 25, 2000. This was done specifically to allow for the monitoring of all the communities in the Central Shenandoah Valley Region at approximately the same time and to keep momentum for the process. To achieve region-wide success and acceptance, momentum is key.

### **4. The Setting**

The agendas for all of the three-hour workshops were scripted to help us obtain maximum input from the participants. Approximately one week in advance of each meeting, everyone that was pre-registered received copies of *the Economic Indicators – 2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region*, a regional and sub-regional *Facts & Figures*, and a copy of the Regional Strategic Initiatives developed as part of the 1997 strategic planning process. They were asked to review the information in advance and come prepared to discuss issues of economic development importance, including, but not limited to, the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and where they vision the Central Shenandoah Valley Region going over the next twenty years.

All workshop participants received a packet upon their arrival that included a detailed agenda, copies of a Microsoft PowerPoint regional data presentation, more information and results from the 1997 process, and the results of a regional workforce study prepared for the Shenandoah Valley Partnership by the Wadley-Donovan Group of New Jersey.

Seating and tables were arranged into a single horseshoe shape for all workshops, except the Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro meeting, which required two horseshoes due to the size of the meeting. This was done to promote good eye contact among the participants, to facilitate the discussion by giving everyone an “equal place at the table” and allowing all a full view of the proceedings. The setting was also conducive to the workshop facilitators who worked the middle of the “U” during their presentations. Past experience has proven this approach to be effective and that was confirmed again during the CEDS process.

Although name tags and place-cards had been prepared in advance for each pre-registered participant, each workshop was opened with introductions “around the horn” to enable everyone to get an idea of the diverse interests in the room. The introductions were followed with the primary staff facilitator providing a short background explanation of the CEDS process and why regional planning is important, even if we were not required to do so by the CEDS legislation at the federal level or the Regional Competitiveness and Regional Cooperation Acts at the state level.

## **5. Statistical Review & SWOT**

The actual workshop portion of the program began with a review by Planning District Commission staff of several of several key indicators of regional economic conditions shown in a 10-year longitudinal format. The Microsoft PowerPoint presentation coincided with information included in participants’ agenda packets and provided a good foundation on which to build further discussion. Next followed the SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats), that was conducted by another staff member. This helped participants assess existing and potential assets and liabilities for the region. To give those who were less vocal in group meetings an opportunity to provide their input, each person attending was asked to complete a written SWOT analysis worksheet and those responses were added to the verbal responses noted on our flipcharts when the total results were compiled in June. A short break came after the SWOT Analysis and participants were asked to come back imagining themselves in the Year 2020 for what we termed a “retro-vision” exercise.

## **6. 2020 Retro-Vision**

The 2020 retro-vision segment of the workshop proved to be both interesting and informative. Visioning forums typically have people envision how they want things to look over a period, such as 5, 10, or 20 years. That is why it is called “visioning.” Unfortunately, when one stands in today’s time and looks forward to some point in time, they sometimes dream well beyond their capabilities to produce the desired result. There is nothing wrong with “shooting for the stars”, but one must take into account the environment in which they operate. Especially when it comes to making decisions as to how limited resources will be dispensed. Developing an unrealistic view that seems unattainable to those asked to support it or carry it out often leads to good, even excellent planning efforts ending up on the shelf collecting dust.

A commonly heard saying in the planning field is that, “the product don’t matter, as long as your process was good.” We agree that a good process, within the bounds of one’s available resources, is paramount. However, it is our opinion that outcomes do, in the end, matter. People find it very frustrating to give their time (a precious commodity) and have nothing result from it in the end except a warm and fuzzy feeling that we were all able to reach a consensus on a goal that there is no visible means or ability to reach. It may be utopia, but it is not reality.

Therefore, we concluded that the most reasonable approach in the development of the CEDS would be to utilize the retro-visioning tool that we first employed successfully back in 1997. Workshop participants are asked to imagine themselves in the Year 2020 and then, looking back over the previous two decades, tell us the history of what happened. What does our region look like now? What are its strengths and weaknesses in 2020 as opposed to the year 2000? What were the trends? What threats did we face? Were we able to mitigate them? What opportunities were we able to capitalize on? Which ones did we miss? Why?

It can sometimes be difficult for the participants to get their mindset right as they go through this retro-visioning exercise. Many still try to look at how things will be rather than how things were over the period. Yet, once things get going, most seem to grasp the concept and lots of good information comes out. The results turn out to be much more realistic about what people perceive will happen during the 20 years as they take environmental concerns and limited resources into account. Another added advantage to the process is that it can help in the identification of potential threats, gaps, and roadblocks that might not otherwise have been identified in the initial SWOT Analysis. It provides a foundation from which forward visioning can then take place. By assessing where we think things will go, we can make better plans for how we plan to get to where we really want to be. We can still “raise the bar,” but we find that there is a greater likelihood to set more attainable goals and a greater understanding of the actions that it will take to achieve them. Hopefully, offering up a vision that stretches the region, but still has a high potential for success will increase the chances that the strategy will be applied over the long term and not be viewed as just another plan to be filed.

Discussion during the retro-vision 2020 exercise for the CEDS – 2000 process were occasionally localized, but also centered around common regional themes and issues that transcend borders and need to be addressed at all levels.

## **7. Shenandoah Destiny & Regional Strategic Initiatives**

Utilizing the information gathered in the 2020 exercise, the next phase of the workshop involved amending the region’s existing vision / mission statement (Shenandoah Destiny) and the Regional Strategic Initiatives. Changes were proposed to the text and new initiatives were proposed in an attempt to get a better feel for the pulse of the Central Shenandoah Valley. We found that we had been pretty close before, but the addition of a more broad-based group of sector representatives helped us refine the previous efforts. Especially helpful was a

change we made this year to request written amendments in addition to those recorded on the flipcharts. Again, this allowed those who were less vocal to provide valuable input that we would not otherwise have received had we depend solely on verbal responses. Additionally, participants were also asked to rank each strategic initiative based on its importance for achieving the desired “Shenandoah Destiny”.

All five workshops proved successful and were well received. Many individuals who are typically critical of such generalized planning meetings expressed their appreciation for both an effective process and a quality end product. While this buoyed our prospects for developing a successful CEDS plan, the work was not finished with the completion of the strategic planning workshop phase of the process. The results of the five meetings had to be compiled and a draft of the combined product needed to be drafted quickly if the process was to maintain its momentum.

#### **D. COMPILING THE WORKSHOP RESULTS**

The task of compiling the workshop results was not as simple as it might appear. It can take eight hours or more just to enter all of the responses received during one three hour session as a result of the meetings’ format being designed to promote significant input. Responses, once entered into the computer, were then grouped according to their commonality and ranked based upon the number of similar responses received. It wasn’t very scientific in the purest sense, but it was effective in helping us determine themes that were consistent across the region. The results were first reviewed and revised by the staff members who participated in the facilitation of the workshops, and then they were packaged for review by the 125 workshop participants. The format proved effective in that only minimal changes and interpretations were offered. We received congratulations from several participants for being able to distill the vast amounts of input we received from the strategic planning workshops.

Our confidence in the validity of the results was also bolstered when we compared the results of our findings with those of a November, 1999 poll conducted by the well respected Mason-Dixon Polling & Research firm on behalf of the Valley Conservation Council. Although their poll of 1,114 adult residents covered the Greater Shenandoah Valley Region (from Botetourt County to our south to Frederick County to our north), their findings were essentially the same as ours. The Mason-Dixon / VCC poll found that, by a better than 2-to-1 margin over any other issue, the most important issue facing the Greater Shenandoah Valley Region was “management of growth and quality of life.” Likewise, 89 percent of respondents expressing an opinion in our workshops’ written exercises indicated that smart growth management and protection of the quality of life should be high priority for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. An executive summary of the Mason-Dixon / VCC poll has been included in the Appendix.

Feeling comfortable with the accuracy of our workshop results, we solicited additional input from those on the entire 400+ member mailing list before moving towards the development of the draft goals and objectives (the Central Shenandoah Valley Region's Strategic Initiatives). Most felt that the workshop results reflected the opinions of the broader Valley, but we did receive clarifications on a few issues, such as the difference between interpretations of the words "heritage" and "historic".

## **E. ADOPTION OF THE CEDS**

As noted previously, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Board incorporated the 1997 Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness into its Overall Economic Development Program. Doing so ensured consistency amongst the region's economic development plans and the two organizations charged with oversight of the plans, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and the CSPDC. Whereas the CEDS process built upon the '97 planning work that we did for the Partnership, it was agreed that we should maintain the uniformity between the two plans by having both the Partnership and Commission Boards consider the proposals concurrently. Thus, amendments to the text of the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness were brought forward to the Partnership through their Strategic Planning & Research Committee and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was brought forward to the Commission through our Economic Development / CEDS Coordinating Committee.

We chose to ask the Shenandoah Valley Partnership Board to consider the proposals before the CEDS was brought to the Commission Board for adoption. This afforded one more regionally representative review of the plan and offered additional legitimacy to the Regional Strategic Initiatives proposed in the CEDS. Following this route delayed our target for adoption of the CEDS by the Commission Board from June, 2000 to August, but it paid immediate dividends in our ultimate goal of having the strategy fully embraced by the entire region.

On recommendation from the Economic Development / CEDS Coordinating Committee, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Board unanimously adopted the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with only minor administrative amendments at its August 21, 2000 meeting. Acting on further recommendation from the Economic Development Committee, the Commission Board has instructed staff to seek adoption of the Regional Strategic Initiatives from all ten local governing bodies in the Central Shenandoah Valley, as well as the various boards, councils, commissions, and organizations that are involved in economic development around the region.

In addition to the local Boards of Supervisors and City Councils, we will seek adoption and/or endorsement of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region's Strategic Initiatives from the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council, the Valley of Virginia Partnership for Education, the Valley Conservation Council, the local Boards of Blue Ridge Community College and Dabney S.

ncaster Community College, the Chambers of Commerce, planning commissions, and industrial development authorities. Other potential targets include the local Farm Bureaus, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and the various organizations whose representatives participated in the CEDS strategic planning process.

## **F. NEXT STEPS – KEEPING THE MOMENTUM**

Momentum is clearly building for the combination Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy / Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness. The prospects of having everyone “singing off the same sheet of music” are very exciting. Additionally, the potential to “raise the bar of regional accomplishment” is clearly within our grasp if the localities and all the major organizations, boards, councils, and commissions in the region are willing to work towards a common set of goals and objectives.

Having a plan that belongs to the entire region and is not viewed as the proprietary property of any one or two organizations has residual benefits as well. Turf battles will be significantly reduced as each player sees their unique role and contribution to the overall regional puzzle, which fits together to form one regional face in terms of economic development and growth. Duplication of services will be reduced and partnering will become the norm. Many possibilities for improvements exist. But, we must keep the momentum!

To date, many activities are already underway to keep the momentum going. The Comprehensive Economic Strategy has been the subject of a news feature by locally-based WHSV – TV-3 (serves the Rockingham County-Harrisonburg and Augusta County-Staunton-Waynesboro markets of the Central Shenandoah Valley), staff will be presenting the Regional Strategic Initiatives to the local Board of Blue Ridge Community College on September 13, and Commission staff have been in negotiations with the staffs of the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council and the Valley of Virginia Partnership for Education to make similar presentations to their Boards. At some point in the future, plans call for a joint regional press conference of the Commission, Partnership, and all of the other organizations adopting or endorsing the Strategic Initiatives.

By far, however, the most exciting prospect of all is the potential for a one-day retreat for all ten local governing bodies on October 31, 2000. Plans are currently underway for the first-ever “Shenandoah Summit.” Through this forum, local elected officials and leaders will be able to come together on neutral ground to discuss issues of common interest and concern. A key component of the proceedings will be the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy work completed over the Spring and Summer.

### III. REGIONAL ANALYSIS

#### A. THE STATE OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

##### 1. Components of the Regional Economy

As we see it, the economy Central Shenandoah Valley Region of Virginia consists of five components. They include: **Financial & Technical Assistance, Business Sites & Infrastructure, Business Climate, Workforce, and Quality of Life.**

Financial & Technical Assistance covers items such as availability of public and private grants, loans, and investment. It also includes professional, educational, and political support for targeted business sectors and small business.

Industrial Sites and Infrastructure is the "bricks and mortar" part of our economic development picture. It includes things such as land, business/industrial sites, water & sewer, electrical, natural gas, telecommunications, technology, and transportation enhancements and capacities.

Business Climate deals with the "health of the economy," local regulations, tax rates, history of public/private ventures, political support for economic development, unemployment levels, and the number of plant closings and layoffs.

Workforce is self-explanatory in that it entails the overall labor pool, job skills, and available training.

Quality of Life involves things such as the sense of community, the Region's natural beauty and resources, environment, lifestyle, crime rate, educational opportunities, cost of living, housing availability and affordability, and cultural / recreational opportunities.

##### 2. Demographic and Economic Trend Analysis

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission has long been recognized for the wealth of demographic and economic information that it maintains on the localities of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. Serving as an affiliate of the Virginia Employment Commission's State Data Center, the Commission has maintained a complete hardcopy library of annually reported measures and census data for nearly twenty years. Many records go back to the 1970's, or even the 1960's. We have also been producing extensive *Economic Overviews* (partially funded through planning grants from the Economic Development Administration) for our key sub-regions for over fifteen years.

In years past, it has often been difficult to compile significant amounts of relevant data, primarily because of the amount of labor required to gather all of the information from the numerous sources. Now, the reverse is almost true. The advent of electronic databases and the Internet have nearly resulted in information overload for most researchers. As a result, the Commission staff's role with regard to data collection has changed from one of trying to find and maintain records on as much information as we could on the region, to one of sorting through the vast amounts of data available in an attempt to pull out that which is pertinent for the region and its localities.

Towards that end, the format of the *Economic Overviews* was completely revamped in FY1999 and FY 2000 saw the introduction of two new regional data publications (*Economic Overview-2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region* and *Economic Indicators-2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region*). Additionally, a new informational website was launched in July, 2000 which includes electronic .PDF versions of all of the Commission's economic data publications, regional and locality economic indicator profiles, and a 10-year longitudinal data center for nearly 100 annually reported measures. There is no known equal source for demographic and economic data on just the Central Valley and its ten localities available anywhere in Virginia or on the Internet. The data center combines information from numerous hardcopy and Internet sources over the last 10 years. It also provides an extensive listing of data and research links for those needing to locate source data.

As noted earlier, the *Economic Overview - 2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region* and the *Economic Indicators - 2000 for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region*, which were completed in February 2000, provide both a current view of some 50+ demographic and economic measures and a 10-year longitudinal view and analysis of 16 major indicators of the region's economy, respectively. During March of 2000, there were over 3,000 *Economic Overviews* (regional and sub-regional), 1,000 *Economic Indicators*, and 10,000 *Facts & Figures* (the 4-panel complement to the Overviews) distributed throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley Region.

Analysis of the available data seems to indicate that the Central Shenandoah Valley Region has fared well over the past decade. For most indicators, the regional trends followed state trends throughout the 1990's. The region has experienced steady, but not rapid growth since 1993. When the more rural regions follow the state closely during prosperous times, this indicates that the state's prosperity is more wide-spread and not limited to the metropolitan / urban centers. There were some variations at the sub-regional and local levels that were not reflective of the general trends, but the information was masked when the data were aggregated to the regional level. Thus, we included breakdowns for each locality and/or sub-region so that a better picture was provided of the true state of the regional economy. This also helps in determining "pockets" that may need special attention.

As a whole, the region's population grew at a pace slightly less than that of the state during the 1990's. Our per capita income kept pace with the state, but was nearly 20 percent less than the state throughout the period. With regards to the workforce, our civilian labor force grew at a comparable rate to the state's, and our unemployment rate was significantly less than the state's average. The region's taxable sales and traveler spending both outpaced the state, as did our growth in the percentage of single family housing permits issued and average employment for all sectors. Growth in Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE) employment and manufacturing was well ahead of the state, but the Central Valley's FIRE sector is very small and our manufacturing sector is over double that of the state. Wage-wise is where we fell well behind the state, both in average wages and in percent of increase. Only manufacturing came close to keeping pace with the state. In terms of number of business establishments, we were only slightly less than the state for growth in all sectors, nearly double the state in the FIRE sector, and somewhat better than the state in manufacturing.

Overall, the indicators point to a healthy regional economy, but there are some concerns. Key among them is the issue of underemployment. It is hard to analyze and get a true idea as to just how prevalent it might truly be, but there is common feeling among economic development professionals, private sector leaders, and many elected officials that underemployment is a major concern. Depending on how one looks at it, this can be a deterrent to recruitment of two earner families, but it can also provide an opportunity. New and existing quality employers might have a more qualified than expected pool from which to build their workforces.

One's perspective applies as well when considering the manufacturing sector. Outside analysts typically chide the region for manufacturing being such a dominant sector in today service-based economy and when both state and national trends are moving opposite that of the Valley. On the other hand, when one considers the high wages, major capital investments, and significant tax receipts provided by the sector, it is hard to argue the need to replace it with a sector that currently pays lower wages, invests in minimal capital infrastructure, and pays very little in the way of taxes. The region, instead, has been putting much effort into stabilizing and supporting its manufacturing sector by promoting the move towards high performance / 21<sup>st</sup>-century manufacturing techniques. It has also made a commitment to targeted workforce training in order to assist workers in the transition and to begin development of a high-tech skills base.

For an extensive look at regional economic data and trends, complete copies of the *Economic Overview*, *Economic Indicators*, and *Facts & Figures* publications for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region are included in the Appendix. The data center, regional and local profiles, and .PDF versions of all Commission publications can be accessed through the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's website at [www.cspdc.org](http://www.cspdc.org).

Building upon our long-standing commitment to flood mitigation and disaster preparedness, the Commission and the region are currently preparing the Central Shenandoah Flood Mitigation Plan, thanks again in part to financing from the Economic Development Administration. The Plan will identify potential flooding liabilities and prioritize future mitigation projects for every jurisdiction in our District. It will be completed by December 31, 2001.

Effective September 14, 2000, James L. Witt, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is expected to select our entire Planning District as a Project Impact community. This innovative new FEMA initiative will raise awareness about natural disasters and preparedness throughout the Region. Our selection will be the first district-wide designation in the Commonwealth and one of the first ever in the United States. The Planning District Commission's staff has been directed to administer Project Impact on behalf of all of the localities in the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. We will enter into a contract with FEMA in the winter of 2001 and complete this initiative in 2003.

Over time, all of these efforts will help reduce the impact that natural disasters (particularly floods) will have on our built environment. Most importantly, though, will be the jobs, property, and lives saved for our Region's employers, employees, and citizens. We will, therefore, continue to seek investments in mitigation efforts that will strengthen our economy and improve our quality of life.

## **2. Water Supply**

A number of comments were received during the CEDS process that emphasized the need to use our limited water resources wisely. Participants also stressed the importance of our water resources for maintaining a high quality of life and prosperous economy in the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. To this end, a new strategic initiative was added to "plan for effective use and conservation of water resources."

The region also recognizes that it cannot continue developing a vibrant economy without appropriate water and sewer utilities. Today, the communities of Augusta, Staunton, Waynesboro, Rockingham and Harrisonburg have combined a population of more than 200,000. By the year 2050, this population could conceivably exceed 500,000 if growth pressures continue. We, therefore, need to address how water resources will be protected now if we are to serve our needs in the future.

Issues such as new water supplies and protocol to interconnect water and sewer systems over the decades ahead need to be established. It is even possible that 50 years from now, we may even see one consolidated water system serving the populations of Augusta and Rockingham and mergers with other water systems over time, and as appropriate, into Shenandoah, Rockbridge and other communities.

### **3. Air Quality**

Air quality in the Central Shenandoah Valley and all of western Virginia has been diminishing for decades. The quality of the air along the Blue Ridge Mountains is often worse than conditions in Los Angeles during much of the summer period. Air quality is increasingly becoming a major economic development and quality of life threat in the Valley. As we write our CEDS, both the northern Shenandoah Valley, around Winchester, and the Roanoke Valley, to our south, are under consideration for non-attainment designation and more stringent emissions standards.

This would be a manageable issue in and of itself if it were an internal problem. Unfortunately, the issue is external and poses greater challenges for the region in how it should be addressed. The poor air quality is actually inherited from the Ohio Valley through prevailing western winds. As a result, this environmental factor will take a long time to improve and there are many potential liabilities. Cooperation will be paramount at all levels if we are to return to the air quality traditionally enjoyed by Valley residents in years past.

## **D. GAPS IN REGIONAL COOPERATION**

The Central Shenandoah Valley Region has made great strides over the past five to seven years in the arena of regional cooperation and collaboration. While much of the partnering has been out of fiscal necessity to deal with state and federal mandates, a spirit of good will and comradery has developed in more recent years as localities, organizations, and leaders have witnessed the benefits that cooperation brings. Economies of scale, the increasing costs of meeting federal and state mandates, and the rising global economy dictate that the region must work together if its localities are to provide the services that their citizens want and need, while at the same time remaining economically competitive and prosperous. Still, despite the excellent progress being made, significant gaps in region cooperation remain.

A number of gaps in regional cooperation are indigenous to the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. Some are more cultural and can be addressed over time through joint effort, trust, patience, and common sense if the political will exists. Others are geographic and somewhat harder to overcome.

### **1. Independent City/County Status and the Dillon Rule**

The primary gap in regional cooperation has traditionally been, and continues to be, the result of Virginia's handling of the independent city/county status and the Dillon Rule. Cities and counties in Virginia, as a Commonwealth, are independent localities, as opposed to most states where the cities are part of the counties. Then, since Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, the

independent localities only have authority as granted to them by the state's General Assembly. The combination of legally separated boundaries and limited authority for cooperation often promotes undue stress, competition, and divisiveness between the localities. Inappropriate economies of scale and duplication of services make it difficult to invest in the proper infrastructure necessary to sustain the communities and can lead to poor growth management decisions.

The localities of Central Shenandoah Valley Region work well together and there does not seem to be any real support among elected leaders or the public for consolidation of cities and counties. Instead, there is general agreement that there needs to be increased cooperation, partnering, and collaboration to increase efficiencies and effectiveness where the opportunities exist, while maintaining the independence to meet the specific needs of citizens in the individual localities. Regrettably, existing laws often preclude localities from having enough authority to cooperate in many key areas. This has led to a situation where some likely candidates for cooperation, especially in the economic development realm, cannot be brought to the table on anything more than an agreement in principal.

## **2. Spacial and Physical Separations**

Geographically, the Region has two primary gaps that make cooperation difficult. One is spacial separations of population concentrations (distance) and the other is physical separations between citizens of the Region (mountains). Although the Region is 98% undeveloped, it includes a significant amount of federal and state public lands, rough or inaccessible terrain, and land that is otherwise not developable for one reason or another. Between this and historical settlement patterns that were widely separated, the population concentrations throughout the Region are often miles apart. This can make cooperative efforts on services, and especially infrastructure, prohibitively expensive or inconvenient.

## **3. Land Use Policies and Zoning**

One issue that is a gap, but does not need to be, is land use policies and zoning classification. If one reads the collective Comprehensive Plans for most communities in the Central Shenandoah Valley, the text, goals, and strategies of the localities are remarkably similar. Yet, they are often contradictory when the land use regulations and zoning classifications are compared. Or, if the regulations are similar, the enforcement levels vary from very strict to non-existent. This makes it difficult for businesses wanting to locate in the region.

All of the comprehensive plans for the region's localities contain language, to one extent or another, promoting growth management. Every community from Rockingham County at over 60,000 in population to Highland County at less than 2,500 seems to be cognizant of the potential affect that unrestrained and unplanned growth can have on our quality of life, resources, and economy. Unfortunately, there are very few tools available to rural localities. Comprehensive plans in Virginia are only to be used as guides for growth, but are not legally binding, except with

regard to the placement of public infrastructure. As noted in the previous paragraph, zoning is inconsistent throughout the Valley. Additionally, the legal restraints and political concerns associated with zoning make it very difficult to serve as the primary land management tool. Nor does it offer much opportunity to coordinate with adjoining localities on issues such as telecommunications tower placement and other situations that have affects across local and sub-regional lines. The toolbox also needs to include incentives and, most of all, political will. There are some excellent, but limited private efforts to protect and conserve on a voluntary basis, but no major public efforts have yet been authorized by the General Assembly in Virginia.

#### **4. Financial and Technical Resources**

Another issue that can, and should, be overcome is the underutilization of both public and private financial and technical resources. There are a number of prime opportunities to work together to jointly address regional and sub-regional issues, but the region has, in the past, often failed to take advantage of them. For instance, representatives of the technical education and workforce training communities have pointed out that there are excellent training opportunities available throughout the Valley, especially with the advent of new technologies such as the Internet and distance learning. They can or will teach virtually anything that is needed to support the region's employers and workforce. Conversely, if classes are to be taught, they must have sufficient enrollments to justify the costs of providing the programs. The classes people need are, in many cases, already being provided in the Valley, employers and potential students are just unaware of the existing opportunities.

#### **5. Improvements in Regional Cooperation**

Fortunately, many of the above gaps in regional cooperation have begun to be addressed in recent years. In addition to the Planning District Commission, which has served as a regional planning forum for over 30 years, we saw the advent during the 1990's of more targeted public and private groups develop around specific areas of regional interest such as economic development marketing (Shenandoah Valley Partnership), technology (Shenandoah Valley Technology Council), education (Valley of Virginia Partnership for Education), and conservation (Valley Conservation Council). Joint strategic planning efforts such as the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and close collaboration between organizations like the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission have also contributed as they bring together diverse interests in the region. All of these efforts will have both immediate and long term benefits as everyone truly moves towards "singing off the same sheet of music".

We must ensure, nonetheless, that all of the various regional organizations avoid duplicative missions and turf battles if we are to be successful. To do this, we must come together as a regional puzzle, with each organization playing a defined role in the overall picture.

Therefore, we have begun by taking a number of proactive steps. The first was to consolidate the basics of the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (The Regional Cooperation Plan will also be incorporated into these plans in the near future.). The reasoning behind this is simple. It makes no sense for the region to have multiple plans, all saying the same thing.

There is an old story about a donkey standing between two identical stacks of hay. He ultimately starved to death because he didn't know which one to eat. The same applies to regional plans. We should provide one plan for the region to implement and then each locality or organization can direct their individual efforts as they see fit to promote progress towards the common objectives.

Our second proactive step has been to begin the preparations for a joint meeting in December, 2000 of the leaderships of all the key regional organizations such as the Planning District Commission, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council, the Valley of Virginia Partnership for Education, the Valley Conservation Council, the Chambers of Commerce, James Madison University, Blue Ridge and Dabney S. Lancaster Community Colleges, and others to discuss regional roles and identify opportunities for partnership and cooperation. By the time of the meeting, we hope to have the adoption of the Central Shenandoah Valley's Regional Strategic Initiatives by most, if not all, of the boards and councils represented. This would provide an excellent opportunity for the entire group to announce their mutual support for the common goals and objectives of the region.

## **E. THE YEAR IS 2020 – Retro-Vision**

As noted in the review of the strategic planning process utilized, one of the most interesting and informative portions of our workshops was the 2020 – Retro-vision exercise. This exercise afforded us a much more realistic foundation upon which to build our goals and objectives by taking into account the environmental factors we anticipate facing over the next twenty years. It also helped in identifying additional threats and opportunities that may not have been brought up during the SWOT exercise. Once we recognize these potentials, actions can be taken to mitigate the threats and capitalize on the opportunities.

Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the Year 2020 and look back over the history of previous 20 years since they met in the Year 2000. The most common responses fell into 13 categories as follows:

### **1. Sprawl / Growth**

Only the Rockbridge / Lexington Area was confident that they will be able to successfully control/ plan growth and to maintain natural beauty and viewsheds through Smart Growth.

All other sub-regions felt that there will continue to be land fragmentation, extensive loss of farmland, and loss or deterioration of natural beauty and scenic views. The more rural portions of the Region (Bath and Highland Counties) felt that they would see growth pressures as a residual result of sprawl and growth taking place in the I-81 corridor localities.

Most suggested that either opportunities will be missed after 2000 or that it is already too late in 2000 to have an affect on the issue. The primary reason for failure to address the problem was “lack of political will”.

## **2. Conservation/Preservation of Natural Resources/Environment /Agriculture**

There was a feeling among participants that there will be some successful, but limited, attempts to preserve and/or conserve agricultural, forestal, environmental, and heritage resources during the years from 2000 to 2020 in certain areas.

However, many felt that there will be a measurable reduction in air and water quality during the same period. Some also saw growing demands for the Region’s water resources from both inside and outside the Valley. There was a strong feeling that these issues should be addressed before it becomes too late.

Others foresaw an increasing debate between the desire to preserve the forests and the need to meet the demands for timber. They noted that conservation, rather than preservation, may be the more prudent policy for renewable resources.

There was significant concern expressed that the small / family farmers will not survive over the next 20 years. Beyond development pressures and sprawl as noted above, the primary issues raised were “economies of scale” and the increasing burden of regulations.

Along those same lines, some felt that the regulations designed to protect our natural resources and environment could end up being too burdensome on businesses and industries. Ultimately, they could be seen as a deterrent to economic development recruitment and retention efforts if not carefully planned and well thought out.

## **3. Education & Training**

Many participants in the CEDS meetings foresaw expanded educational and workforce training opportunities over they next 20 years. They pointed to the increased use of technology and distance learning as the mediums for delivery.

There was a general feeling that the Region will do a better job at matching and coordinating education and training with employment sectors and employer needs. Many noted that there would be more involvement of the private sector in education, especially in providing assistance with curriculum development and supplying training equipment and materials. There was strong support expressed for increased continuing education and workforce re-training opportunities.

#### **4. Workforce**

Participants generally agreed that enhanced workforce development efforts will pay off for the Region. Many saw the skills of the existing workforce being improved, as well as an increase in the ability to draw skilled workers to the Valley.

Others foresaw a more efficient use of the regional workforce and more flexibility in the work environment, including an expansion in telecommuting.

There was a feeling that the overall workforce would age as a result of the baby boomers retiring later and an anticipated reduction in the numbers of entry-level aged populations. However, some saw businesses being able to take advantage of the experiences of older workers and the retirees moving to the Valley from other regions.

A representative of the construction industry expressed concern that the anticipated emphasis on technology and high performance manufacturing skills over the next 20 years may lead to problems for contractors finding a qualified workforce in the “skilled trades”. Similar concerns were raised with regard potential shortages of healthcare workers, service workers, and general labor.

#### **5. Technology & Telecommunications**

It was felt that coming enhancements in technology and telecommunications will definitely benefit the Valley. Highly skilled workers and professionals will be able to stay in the area. Many thought that the Region will be able to take advantage of internet and e-commerce opportunities. As noted above, telecommuting will be more prevalent.

There was some concern raised as to the development of a “digital divide”, with the elderly, disabled, poor, and immigrant agricultural communities potentially being left behind.

#### **6. Infrastructure**

With regard to housing, a wider range of housing opportunities is expected. There is concern, however, that housing prices may become too high – especially for those with lower to moderate incomes.

A need for development of more water and sewer systems was expressed, again with a feeling that utility prices will become much more expensive over time.

## **7. Transportation**

Technology advances over the next 20 years are expected to result in many improvements in the Valley's transportation system and network. Some foresaw regional and/or sub-regional mass transit systems and a significant increase in the use of railroads.

Despite the possibilities for improvement, many saw transportation problems continuing to be a major issue throughout the period - especially as they related to Interstates 81 and 64 and increases in truck and car traffic.

The rural areas of the Region were still considered to have an inadequate transportation network, although it would not be as critical in 2020 due to advances in technology and more opportunities to benefit from e-commerce.

## **8. Industries / Businesses**

Some participants in the CEDS meetings saw potential in the hi-tech and biotech sectors between now and the Year 2020. There was also mention of expansion in value-added manufacturing, service and support businesses, and small businesses in general.

The rural areas felt that they still will not have any major manufacturing operations or industries in 2020 and will, instead, be relying more on cottage industries, e-commerce, and tourism. There will also be more value-added processing of lumber and timber products before they leave the producing regions.

## **9. Tourism**

There will likely be more tourism opportunities in the Valley by 2020, as well as more variety in lodging choices. Focus group tourism will cater to more specific sectors, with ecotourism (including agriculture) and heritage (especially battlefields) being drawing cards for the Region. The arts and culture sectors will increase significantly upon completion of the Shenandoah Shakespeare and Virginia Artisans projects. Joint marketing of the Region as a whole is anticipated.

## **10. Regional Cooperation**

Much more regional cooperation is expected over the next 20 years. Economies of scale will require localities to address regionalism on at least a sub-regional level and to seek more collaborative agreements on the broader regional level.

Consolidation of services will be commonplace, but cooperation and partnering, rather than consolidation, will most likely be the norm for local governments.

Participants in the CEDS meetings also anticipated more public-private partnerships and more cooperation throughout all levels of education.

The primary deterrents to regional cooperation and collaboration will be territorialism and lack of “common vision, political will, and funds” to make things happen. General inertia and resistance to change will be difficult to overcome in most areas and some sectors.

### **11. Population Mix / Diversity**

There was a general feeling expressed that, with the exception of the college-aged students attending area universities and colleges, the general population of the Region will age significantly between now and the Year 2020. The trend will be attributable to the aging of the baby boomers and the Valley becoming more attractive as a retirement destination.

Some believe that the continued inflow of immigrants will result in a substantial change in the ethnic mix of the Region and the growth of ethnic sub-regions by 2020.

### **12. Human Services**

As the population ages, more local and regional human service resources will be diverted to the elderly. Some see this as an opportunity for improved services and for the Valley to become a model for the retirement and elder-care communities. There are possibilities for providing services on a regional basis.

There was concern expressed, however, that there will be a lack of skilled healthcare workers in the Region and that the costs for healthcare will increase considerably for middle and lower income populations.

### **13. Quality of Life**

In general, it was felt that, in 20 years, the Central Shenandoah Valley will be a family-friendly region with a good quality of life. There will be more arts and culture and a spirit of volunteerism.

On the other hand, some pointed out that care must be taken to ensure that, if the Region’s efforts prove successful, we do not develop an “economic divide” in which the middle and lower classes are pushed out of some areas. Additionally, we must take precautions that our success does not end up creating growth pressures that result in changing the character of the Valley.

#### IV. VISION / MISSION – SHENANDOAH DESTINY

The Central Shenandoah Valley Region has set some very high standards for where it wants to go and what it plans to do. Still, they are attainable standards and can be achieved if we are able to keep our eyes fixed on our goals.

Participants proposed several amendments during the CEDS process to the vision / mission statement that the region had adopted back in 1997 during the Regional Competitiveness Plan process. CEDS offered us an excellent opportunity to refine the Shenandoah Destiny statement, while at the same time staying on the general path that we have been traveling for the past three years. The revisions were then offered to the Boards of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission for review and adoption.

The primary changes to the Shenandoah Destiny statement included reversing the order, (i.e., bringing the end of the statement to the front and moving the front to the back); moving more towards conservation of resources rather than preservation; including references to conservation of historical and agricultural resources in addition to natural resources; adding a sentence to reflect the special needs of each sub-region, locality, and community; and, including references to “new and existing businesses, 21<sup>st</sup> century manufacturing, entrepreneurs, tourism, and agriculture.” We believe that these changes have brought the Shenandoah Destiny statement more in line with the vision and mission the region seeks to achieve. It makes a clear pronouncement that the region is intent on maintaining its quality of life and rural heritage, while at the same time promoting a vibrant economy that supports targeted business sectors for its workforce and citizens.

The Shenandoah Destiny statement as revised, amended, and adopted by the Partnership and Commission Board is as follows:

**Our Region will work cooperatively, as one, to conserve our natural, agricultural, and historical resources and preserve the heritage, natural beauty, values, local character and rural traditions that continue to provide the Central Shenandoah Valley Region of Virginia with a quality of life known around the world. Equally, we will promote and celebrate our differences and diverse cultures by recognizing the uniqueness and special needs of each sub-region, locality, and community. Towards these ends, we will create a stellar economic climate, develop technologically advanced business sites and infrastructure, provide financial and technical assistance, and educate and train our workforce to support businesses and economic sectors that hold values and characteristics consistent with our Region, including both new and existing businesses, 21<sup>st</sup> century manufacturing, entrepreneurs, tourism, and agriculture. For, in the Valley of the Stars, aspirations imagined are aspirations achieved!**

Many of the federal and state partners with long standing commitments to the Valley include:

FEDERAL AGENCIES AND PARTNERS	STATE AGENCIES AND PARTNERS
Economic Development Administration	Department of Housing and Community Development
Appalachian Regional Commission	Economic Development Partnership
Rural Development	Virginia Tourism Corporation
National Park Service	Department of Emergency Management
U.S. Forest Service	Department of Conservation and Recreation
Environmental Protection Agency	Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation	Department of Environmental Quality
Federal Highway Administration	Department of Rails and Public Transportation
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Department of Health
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Department of Forestry
U.S. Corps of Engineers	Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Game Commission

## VI. EVALUATION AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

The Central Shenandoah Valley’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was established from its inception as not just a “living document,” but a “living process.” The strategy builds on previous regional efforts, while at the same time offering a fresh perspective as to the possibilities for true regional cooperation and implementation of common objectives.

A cornerstone of our intensive strategic planning process has been the opportunity for input from a broad range of sector representatives. That opportunity will not only continue as the plan moves forward, it will be expanded. Not only will we be seeking continual input throughout the year, but the Economic Development / CEDS Coordinating Committee will be conducting a formal amendment process each summer as well.

The Commission's CEDS amendment process will be designed to coincide with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership's amendment process for the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness. This will ensure continued consistency between the two plans and should not be too difficult given that Commission staff are under contract to coordinate the amendment process for the Partnership.

Annual invitations to submit amendments, proposals, and modifications to the CEDS will be offered to each local government, the 125 workshop participants, the 400+ member mailing list of sector representatives, the Boards of regional organizations, the Chambers of Commerce, planning commissions, industrial development authorities, and any individual or group expressing interest in the process. Special efforts will continue on an on-going basis to identify additional representatives of non-traditional and under-served populations and to seek their input.

It would be inefficient to call for mass meetings or workshops of interested parties to amend the plan annually due to the geographic size of the region and the expense of mounting such a major effort. Further, the leaderships of many rural regions such as ours are often "meetinged to death". This can result in stakeholder burnout and delay the implementation of even the best of plans for many years. Our limited resources will instead be more appropriately directed toward soliciting input for the annual amendment process through mailers and the use of technology such as e-mail and the Internet. In addition to requests for input, all those identified above will receive copies of the annual CEDS update report which will be provided to the Economic Development Administration each Fall. We anticipate a return to the multiple sub-regional workshops format every 3 to 5 years or as conditions warrant due to the changing economic environment.

For project list updates, the Commission's Economic Development Committee will work, through staff, with local government planning staffs and planning commissions in an effort to coordinate the Regional Strategic Initiatives with their internal capital improvements program (CIP) processes. The Committee will also be drafting a more formal evaluation process during FY 2001 for all future projects to be included on the CEDS project lists in order to assess consistency with the overall plan and contribution to the region's common objectives.

The evaluation process for the CEDS will be very much like the amendment process. Input will be welcomed throughout the year and there will be a more formalized evaluation by virtue of the annual reporting process performed for the Economic Development Administration. As noted above, all of the sector representatives, localities, organizations, commissions, councils, boards, and interested individuals included in the annual amendment process will also receive a copy of the CEDS annual report. Commission staff will work with local government economic development and planning staffs to update the progress of key projects throughout the region. Each year, a select group of vital and strategically important projects will be profiled so that regional accomplishments can be highlighted.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Abraham Lincoln once said,

**“If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending,  
we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.”**

This planning effort has afforded us an opportunity to look at “where we are” and “whither we are tending.” Thus, we are in a position to “better judge what to do” and we have developed a strategy for “how to do it”. The Central Shenandoah Valley’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has provided our region with a blueprint for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is now up to us to grasp the mantle and run the race set before us!

**CENTRAL SHENANDOAH PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CEDS COORDINATING COMMITTEE ROSTER**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>RACE</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>JURISDICTION</b>
Nathaniel E. Burress	Black	M	Staunton
Dale L. Cobb	Caucasian	M	Augusta County
Steven P. Douty*	Caucasian	M	Buena Vista
Carolyn Frank*	Caucasian	F	Harrisonburg
John W. Knapp*	Caucasian	M	Lexington
R. Douglas Manning*	Caucasian	M	Staunton
Judith L. McCoy*	Caucasian	F	Bath County
Jerry A. Rexrode*	Caucasian	M	Highland County
Charles L. Ricketts, III*	Caucasian	M	Waynesboro
Nanalou W. Sauder*	Caucasian	F	Rockbridge County
William L. Vaughn	Black	M	Rockingham County

\*Elected Officials

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

April 5, 2000  
Ref.# 4-5

**MEMO TO:** CSPDC Economic Development Committee  
**FROM:** Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner  
**RE:** Meeting Notice - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A meeting of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's Economic Development Committee will be held here at the CSPDC offices prior to the regularly scheduled Commission meeting:

**Monday, April 17, 2000 at 6:30 p.m.**

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Program, which was passed by Congress in 1998 as part of the Economic Development Administration Reform Act. The Act requires all Economic Development Districts, of which the Central Shenandoah Planning District is one, to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to serve as a planning guide for economic growth in their respective regions.

The CEDS program is similar to the former Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP), which it replaces, and mandates each District to complete an initial strategic plan, provide annual updates, and revisit the plan at five-year intervals. The District's first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan is due July 1, 2000. After that date, a CEDS plan will be required in order for the region or its localities to apply for federal grants for public works, economic adjustment, and/or planning assistance programs.

To ensure consistency across the region's various economic development and general planning efforts, the information gathered and strategies developed through the CEDS process will be used in preparation of the Central Shenandoah Valley's Regional Cooperation Plan, which is required by the state. It will also provide valuable assistance in keeping the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness up-to-date. In fact, we

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will be using much of the Regional Competitiveness Program work that we did in 1997 as a foundation for the CEDS planning process.

A major component of the CEDS process will be regional meetings to solicit input from key stakeholders, including representatives from non-traditional and under-served populations. Towards that end, we have scheduled five meetings to be held around the region beginning in mid-May as follows:

<b>Highland County @ Highland Inn</b>	<b>(May 17 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)</b>
<b>Bath County @ Three Hills Inn</b>	<b>(May 18 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)</b>
<b>Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro @ Holiday Inn – I-81</b>	<b>(May 23–9 a.m. to 12 noon)</b>
<b>Rockbridge-Buena Vista-Lexington @ Hampton Inn Col Alto</b>	<b>(May 24–9a.m. to 12 noon)</b>
<b>Rockingham-Harrisonburg @ VA Mennonite Retirement Center</b>	<b>(May 25–1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)</b>

Similar to the former OEDP process, we will also be required under the CEDS process to compile a district-wide capital improvements / infrastructure projects list for the next five years. I have recently requested information on existing, planned, and proposed capital projects from all of the localities and anticipate receiving responses from most prior to our meeting on April 17.

We look forward to discussing this project with you at the meeting. Please contact me at 885-5174 or [darryl@cspdc.org](mailto:darryl@cspdc.org) if you have prior questions or comments.

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

August 11, 2000

To: CSPDC Economic Development Committee

Nathaniel Burress  
Dale Cobb  
Steven Douty  
Carolyn Frank  
John Knapp  
Douglas Manning

Judith McCoy  
Jerry Rexrode  
Charles Ricketts  
Nanalou Sauder  
William Vaughn

From: Darryl Crawford  
Senior Planner

Re: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

**There will be an Economic Development Committee meeting at 6:45 p.m., prior to the full Commission Board meeting, on Monday, August 21, 2000 to review the results of the strategic planning workshops that we conducted in May. You will be making a recommendation to the Board on the adoption of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.**

All Commission members were mailed a copy of the workshop results packet for your review and comment back in July. Additionally, copies of the results were sent out requesting review and comment from some 400 stakeholders and sector representatives around the Region, including all 125 participants in the meetings and the Board of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership.

Based upon the meetings and the input we received, we are proposing adoption of the enclosed Strategic Initiatives and Shenandoah Destiny statement as the foundations for the Central Shenandoah Valley Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

These same Initiatives and Destiny Statement were considered and adopted as part of the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness by the Shenandoah Valley Partnership's full Board on July 28.

Please contact me should you have any questions prior to the committee meeting.

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# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

April 18, 2000

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2000, 6:30 P.M.

CENTRAL SHENANDOAH  
PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Douglas C. Wine, Chairman; Nathaniel E. Burress; Rodney L. Eagle; Becky L. Earhart; Judith L. McCoy; Jerry A. Rexrode; and William L. Vaughn.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Steven P. Douty; John W. Knapp; Charles L. Ricketts, III; and Nanalou W. Sauder.

**STAFF PRESENT:** William H. Strider, Executive Director; and Rita F. Whitfield.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chairman Wine. Mr. Strider stated that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Program, which was passed by Congress in 1998 as part of the Economic Development Administration Reform Act. The Act requires all Economic Development Districts, of which the Central Shenandoah Planning District is one, to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to serve as a planning guide for economic growth in their respective regions.

Mr. Strider pointed out that the CEDS program is similar to the former Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP), which it replaces, and mandates each District to complete an initial strategic plan, provide annual updates, and revisit the plan at five-year intervals. He said the District's first CEDS plan is due July 1, 2000. After that date, a CEDS plan will be required in order for the region or its localities to apply for federal grants for public works, economic adjustment, and/or planning assistance programs.



Mr. Strider noted that a major component of the CEDS process will be regional meetings to solicit input from key stakeholders, including representatives from non-traditional and underserved populations. Five meetings have been schedule to be held around the region beginning in mid May as follows:

- Highland County at the Highland Inn – May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Bath County at Three Hills Inn – May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Augusta/Staunton/Waynesboro at Holiday Inn, I-81 May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon
- Rockbridge/Buena Vista/Lexington at Hampton Inn Col Alto – May 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon
- Rockingham-Harrisonburg at Va. Mennonite Retirement Center – May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

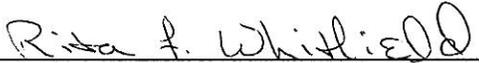
Mr. Strider stated that similar to the former OEDP process, we will also be required under the CEDS process to compile a district-wide capital improvements/infrastructure project list for the next five years. Mr. Crawford has requested information on existing, planned, and proposed capital projects from all of the localities.

Upon a question by Mrs. Earhart as to whether the Commission will have to undertake such a massive effort every year, Mr. Strider stated that this type of effort will not have to take place but every three to five years. Mr. Vaughn suggested that the notice of the meetings be submitted to the local governments to be placed on their web page.

Mr. Eagle moved to recommend that the CSPDC adopt the CEDS process as presented, seconded by Mrs. Earhart. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion for adjournment was unanimously passed at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rita F. Whitfield  
Administrative Assistant

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2000, 6:45 P.M.

CENTRAL SHENANDOAH  
PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steven P. Douty; Carolyn Frank; John W. Knapp; R. Douglas Manning; Judith L. McCoy; Jerry A. Rexrode; Charles L. Ricketts, III; Nanalou W. Sauder; and William L. Vaughn.
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** Nathaniel E. Burress; and Dale L. Cobb.
- GUESTS PRESENT:** Portia Bass, Waynesboro Planning Commission; and News Media Representatives.
- STAFF PRESENT:** William H. Strider, Executive Director; Darryl D. Crawford; John C. Giles; and Rita F. Whitfield.

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 p.m. by Chairman Rexrode. Mr. Crawford reviewed the background of the new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Program (CEDS).

Mr. Crawford stated that as directed by the Economic Development Committee/CED Coordinating Committee in April, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission conducted a series of five focus-group type workshops throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley in May to assist in the development of the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The meetings were co-sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development and Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training and Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College's Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Services. Participants in the workshops included a great cross-section of representation from the private sector, public sector, and non-profit communities. We had 125 sector representatives attend the workshops and maintained a mailing list of over 400 for input and review.

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Mr. Giles briefly reviewed the results of the SWOT Analysis and Shenandoah Destiny. He explained that he had compiled all the responses, both written and verbal, and prioritized them according to the frequency of responses. He stated that the top six responses are listed under each category. The Shenandoah Destiny Statement has been revised to reflect proposed changes.

Mr. Crawford then reviewed the Central Shenandoah Valley Region Strategic Initiatives, 2000. He reported that the Strategic Initiatives were considered and adopted by the Shenandoah Valley Partnership as part of their Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness on July 28<sup>th</sup>.

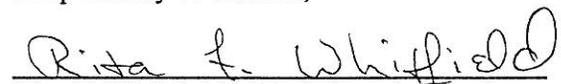
Mr. Crawford introduced and welcomed Ms. Portia Bass of the Waynesboro Planning Commission. She was present to speak on how this Plan would be used by the City of Waynesboro. Ms. Bass stated that the role of the City of Waynesboro is to be very proactive and that when it comes to implementation, the City of Waynesboro Planning Commission provide the impetus to get the job done. Waynesboro is particularly interested in the quality of life, tourism, and historic resources portions of the Plan.

After some discussion regarding the fifth item under the Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Strategic Initiatives – 2000, namely “inns, bed and breakfasts,” Mrs. Sauder moved, seconded by Mr. Douthy, to change the sentence to read as follows: “Recognize Tourism as a Diverse and Viable Economic Development Engine with Emphasis on Regional Heritage; Arts and Culture; Appropriate Hospitality Providers including Inns, Bed and Breakfasts; and Outdoor Recreation Sectors.” Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Knapp moved, seconded by Mr. Vaughn, to recommend that the Full Commission adopt the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Mr. Douthy offered an amendment to propose that the Commission recommend that each local government also adopt the Plan. The amended motion was carried by unanimous vote.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, a motion for adjournment was unanimously passed at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Rita F. Whitfield, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

---

Secretary

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

August 14, 2000

MEMO TO: Commissioners  
FROM: William H. Strider, Executive Director <sup>WHS</sup>  
SUBJECT: August 21, 2000 Commission Meeting

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission will hold its meeting on **MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2000, 7:30 P.M.**, at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Office, **112 MacTanly Place, Staunton, Virginia.**

**IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THIS MEETING, PLEASE CALL THE COMMISSION OFFICE.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## AGENDA

### COMMISSION ACTION

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Call to Order  | _____ |
| 2. Minutes  | _____ |
| 3. Treasurer's Report   | _____ |
| 4. Chairman's Report  | _____ |
| 5. Director's Report  | _____ |
| 6. <u>Speaker:</u> Jeffrey P. Reinbold,<br>National Park Service, Shenandoah Valley<br>Battlefields Coordinator - Update from the Shenandoah<br>Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission | _____ |
| 7. Consideration of Comprehensive Economic<br>Development Strategy  | _____ |



# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

August 25, 2000

## FULL COMMISSION

### MINUTES

MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2000, 7:30 P.M.

CENTRAL SHENANDOAH  
PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jerry A. Rexrode, Chairman; Tracy C. Pyles, Jr., Vice Chairman; Steven P. Douty, Secretary; William L. Vaughn, Treasurer; Kay D. Frye; Gen. John W. Knapp; R. Douglas Manning; Judith L. McCoy; Charles L. Ricketts, III; Nanalou W. Sauder; B. Fontaine Stone; and Stacy H. Turner.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Roland Z. Arey; Nathaniel E. Burress; Dale L. Cobb; James V. Couch; Carolyn Frank; W. Clark Jordan; William B. Kyger, Jr.; and Mack R. Smith.

**STAFF PRESENT:** William H. Strider, Executive Director; Darryl D. Crawford; Matthieu Denuelle; John C. Giles; Rebecca L. Joyce; J. Eddie Paxton; Bonnie S. Riedesel; and Rita F. Whitfield.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Portia Bass, Waynesboro Planning Commission; Jeffrey P. Reinbold, National Park Service, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission; and News Media Representatives.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by Chairman Rexrode. He introduced and welcomed Mr. Doug Manning, new representative for the City of Staunton and Mrs. Carolyn Frank, new representative for the City of Harrisonburg.

Mr. Douty moved, seconded by Mrs. Sauder, to approve the minutes of the June Commission meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

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Mrs. Sauder moved, seconded by Mrs. McCoy, for approval of the Treasurer's Report for the month of May. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman Rexrode announced that Dale Cobb will be replacing Becky Earhart, Augusta County's representative, on the Commission. He presented a plaque to Becky Earhart for her outstanding leadership and notable service to the Planning District Commission and to the people of the District, shown during her term as Commissioner.

Chairman Rexrode stated that it has become necessary, with the reorganization of our Board, to submit a new Commissioner name authorized to sign checks issued by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. Mr. Ricketts moved, seconded by Mr. Vaughn, to authorize Mr. Doug Manning to co-sign Commission checks. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman Rexrode introduced Mr. Jeff Reinbold, National Park Service, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Coordinator, who was present to give an update from the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission. Mr. Reinbold presented a PowerPoint presentation on Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District Commission and Civil War battlefields. He pointed out that a three-year-long study of how to preserve ten Shenandoah Valley Civil War battlefields will be sent to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior next month. The report recommends that the valley be broken into several areas, or "clusters," or community areas, with each cluster being interpreted as a separate battle site that had an overall impact on the war. The report from the 19 member Shenandoah Valley National Historic District Commission Board, is recommending that the battlefields be preserved by creating several separate historic areas including battlefield clusters at Cross Keys and Port Republic in Rockingham County and McDowell in Highland County. The report concludes the Commission's work that started in 1998 after Congress approved the locally based study of the Valley's Civil War history. Included in the report are recommendations to build Civil War visitor facilities at both McDowell and Cross Keys. Civil War orientation centers also would be built in or near battlefields in Shenandoah County, Frederick County, and Winchester.

Chairman Rexrode presented for consideration Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Mr. Crawford gave a brief summary on the CEDS Program. He stated that the Economic Development Committee had recommended to change the fifth item under the Central Shenandoah Valley Regional Strategic Initiatives – 2000, inns, bed and breakfasts, to read as follows: "Recognize Tourism as a Diverse and Viable Economic Development Engine with Emphasis on Regional Heritage; Arts and Culture; Appropriate Hospitality Providers including Inns, Bed and Breakfasts; and Outdoor Recreation Sectors." The Economic Development Committee had also recommended adoption of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and for the Commission to forward the Plan to the local governments and ask that they each adopt the Plan. Mr. Ricketts moved, seconded by Mr. Knapp, for approval of the Economic Development Committee's above recommendations. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman Rexrode presented Discussion on Federal Emergency Management Agency's Project Impact Program. Mrs. Riedesel gave a brief background on Project Impact, stating that the Central Shenandoah Planning District joined a select list of communities across the country when it was nominated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to become a part of the Agency's Project Impact Program. She said that Project Impact, a national initiative launched by FEMA in 1997, works with state and local governments to build more disaster resistant communities. The unique partnership joins FEMA, local governments, local citizens and businesses in a combined effort to implement strategies designed to lessen losses from future disasters.

Ms. Joyce reported on the many flood mitigation projects already in place throughout the region where houses and people are being moved out of harm's way. She pointed out that in Glasgow alone, more than 40 houses are being elevated, relocated or acquired through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Program. Ms. Joyce noted that in Buena Vista, Waynesboro, Rockingham County and others throughout our District, communities are taking proactive measures to reduce the disastrous effects of flooding. She then presented a video tape on Project Impact and how to prevent loss of life and damage to property and to prepare before these natural disasters occur.

An application from the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport Commission for construction of a Corporate Hangar for a total funding of \$1,253,000 was presented for review by Chairman Rexrode. Mr. Strider gave a brief description on the project. Ms. Frye moved, seconded by Mr. Pyles, for endorsement of the application for federal funding. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion for adjournment was unanimously passed at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Rita F. Whitfield  
Administrative Assistant

Approved:

---

Secretary

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

March 30, 2000  
Ref. #3-40

Mr. Patrick J. Coffield  
County Administrator  
Augusta County Government Center  
Post Office Box 590  
Verona, Virginia 24482

Dear Mr. Coffield:

The Economic Development Administration Reform Act, passed by Congress in 1998, requires that all Economic Development Districts, of which the Central Shenandoah Planning District is one, develop a Central Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to serve as a planning guide for economic growth in their respective regions.

The CEDS program is similar to the former Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP), which it replaces, and mandates each District to complete an initial strategic plan, provide annual updates, and revisit the plan at five-year intervals. The District's first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy plan is due July 1, 2000. After that date, a CEDS plan will be required in order for the region or its localities to apply for federal grants for public works, economic adjustment, and/or planning assistance programs.

To ensure consistency across the region's various economic development and general planning efforts, the information gathered and strategies developed through the CEDS process will be used in preparation of the Central Shenandoah Valley's Regional Cooperation Plan, which is required by the state. It will also provide valuable assistance in keeping the Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness up-to-date. In fact, we will be using much of the Regional Competitiveness Program work that we did in 1997 as a foundation for the CEDS planning process.

A major component of the CEDS process will be regional meetings to solicit input from key stakeholders, including representatives from non-traditional and under-served populations. Towards that end, we have scheduled five meetings to be held around the region beginning in mid-May as follows:

Highland County @ Highland Inn	(May 17 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
Bath County @ Three Hills Inn	(May 18 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro @ Holiday Inn – I-81	(May 23–9 a.m. to 12 noon)
Rockbridge-Buena Vista-Lexington @ Hampton Inn Col Alto	(May 24–9 a.m. to 12 noon)
Rockingham-Harrisonburg @ VA Mennonite Retirement Center	(May 25–1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

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Patrick J. Coffield  
March 30, 2000  
Page 2

We have enclosed a list of potential invitees for your sub-region. Please edit and revise the list as necessary to ensure that we invite a diverse group to the meetings. Provide an address or other contact information if you propose individuals not on our list, so that we can include them when the invitations are sent out in mid-April. We would especially appreciate your assistance in helping us to identify potential invitees from the non-traditional and under-served populations in your area. Their participation in the planning process will be key to the District's re-qualification with the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Additionally, we are including the September 1998 OEDP Projects List which needs to be updated under the new CEDS process to reflect potential infrastructure / capital improvement projects for the next 5 years. Once the CEDS plan has been developed, and approved by EDA, projects must be included on the CEDS list in order to be eligible for federal funding. To assist us in both our federal and state required planning processes, we are asking that you include both current, planned, and potential infrastructure / capital improvement projects for economic development, public works, transportation, housing, environmental management, and criminal justice.

**We would appreciate return of the CEDS regional meetings invitees lists no later than Friday, April 7 and return of the updated infrastructure / capital improvements projects lists no later than Friday, April 14.**

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter. Please contact me at (540) 885-5174 or [darryl@cspdc.org](mailto:darryl@cspdc.org) should you have questions regarding the CEDS process, the regional meetings, potential invitees, or the project lists.

In Your Service,

Darryl D. Crawford  
Senior Planner

Enclosures

Cc: Dale Cobb, Community Development Director  
Becky Earhart, Senior Planner

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

April 13, 2000

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

**To: Regional Stakeholders of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region**  
**From: William H. Strider, Executive Director**  
**Re: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Regional Meetings**

We would like to invite you or an appropriate representative of your organization to participate in an important opportunity on behalf of the citizens of Central Shenandoah Valley Region.

In 1998, Congress passed the Economic Development Administration Reform Act. The Act requires all 350 Economic Development Districts throughout the country, of which the Central Shenandoah Planning District is one, to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to serve as a planning guide for economic growth in their respective regions. After July 1, 2000 a CEDS Plan will be required in order for the Region or its localities to qualify for federal public works, economic adjustment, or planning assistance grant programs.

A major component of the CEDS planning process will be regional meetings to solicit input from key stakeholders - especially representatives of non-traditional and under-served populations. Towards that end, we have scheduled five meetings to be held throughout our region beginning in mid-May as follows:

Highland County @ Highland Inn	(May 17 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
Bath County @ Three Hills Inn	(May 18 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)
Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro @ Holiday Inn – I-81	(May 23–9 a.m. to 12 noon)
Rockbridge-Buena Vista-Lexington @ Hampton Inn Col Alto	(May 24–9a.m. to 12 noon)
Rockingham-Harrisonburg @ VA Mennonite Retirement Center	(May 25–1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

Our meetings are being co-sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development & Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training & Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster's Community College's Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Services.

Your participation in this regional planning effort is vital. We hope that you will be able to attend the regional meeting in your area. **Please contact Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner at (540) 885-5174 or [cspdc@cfw.com](mailto:cspdc@cfw.com) should you have any questions about the meetings or the CEDS process.**

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# RSVP

## Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Meetings

### **Please Note - Seating Is Limited**

### **Return Registration No Later Than Tuesday, May 9, 2000**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to attend a Regional CEDS Meeting. Please register me.  
(You will receive advance information to assist you in preparing for the meeting.)

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I will not be able to attend a Regional CEDS Meeting, but please inform me  
of the results of the CEDS planning process.

\_\_\_\_\_ No. Thank you for the invitation, but our organization will not be  
able to participate in the Regional CEDS planning process.

**Your Name as it Should Appear on the Nametag:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization Represented: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting You Would Like to Attend:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| _____ Highland County                  | (Wednesday, May 17 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.) |
| _____ Bath County                      | (Thursday, May 18 – 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)  |
| _____ Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro      | (Tuesday, May 23–9 a.m. to 12 noon)    |
| _____ Rockbridge-Buena Vista-Lexington | (Wednesday, May 24–9a.m. to 12 noon)   |
| _____ Rockingham-Harrisonburg          | (Thursday, May 25–1 p.m. to 4 p.m.)    |

Please fax (540) 885-2687, phone (540) 885-5174, or e-mail ([cspdc@cfw.com](mailto:cspdc@cfw.com))  
your registration to the attention of: Rita Whitfield no later than Tuesday, May 8,  
2000. Questions and requests for special accommodations should be directed to  
Darryl Crawford. Thank You.

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

May 1, 2000

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

**To: Key Stakeholders of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region**  
**From: William H. Strider, Executive Director**  
**Re: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy – Regional Meetings**

Recently, we invited you and other key stakeholders throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley to participate in one of the five Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning meetings that we will be holding throughout the District beginning in mid-May.

As noted in our letter of April 13, enclosed, a regional CEDS plan will be required after July 1, 2000 in order for the Central Shenandoah Valley and/or its localities to qualify for federal public works, economic adjustment, and planning assistance grant programs. Over the years, these programs have funded development of industrial parks, water and sewer infrastructure, and flood mitigation projects in various localities throughout our Region. Planning assistance grants have provided all the District's localities with grant writing support services (resulting in nearly \$33 million in new investments since 1996) and have partially funded our annual *Economic Overviews, Facts & Figures*, and *Economic Indicators* publications (considered by many to be the best in the state).

It is very important that we achieve participation from a diverse group of key regional stakeholders in our CEDS planning process. We especially need representatives who serve non-traditional and under-served populations.

On behalf of the Region, we urge you or an appropriate person from your organization to consider attending the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning meeting in your area. **We request your RSVP no later than Tuesday, May 9** in order that we may prepare the appropriate materials for participants to review in preparation for the meetings.

**Please contact Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner at (540) 885-5174 or [cspdc@cfw.com](mailto:cspdc@cfw.com) should you have any questions about the meetings or the CEDS process.**

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# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

May 10, 2000

**MEMO TO:** Key Stakeholders of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region

**FROM:** William H. Strider, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Meetings

Thank you for your plans to attend the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meeting in your area. As we noted in our previous mailings, five CEDS planning workshops will be held around the Central Shenandoah Valley Region beginning May 17 in Highland County and concluding May 25 in Rockingham-Harrisonburg.

Congress requires all 320 Economic Development Districts throughout the country, of which the Central Shenandoah Planning District is one, to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as part of the Economic Development Administration's Reauthorization Act of 1998. In accordance with the Act, our Region's CEDS Plan should be designed in such a way as to promote economic development and opportunities that will create quality jobs, diversify the economy, and improve the quality of life for all Valley citizens, while also fostering effective transportation systems, enhancing and protecting the environment, and balancing available resources. Once complete, the results of the CEDS planning effort will be broadly distributed to elected officials, decision-makers, the business community, and numerous federal, state, and local agencies as a regional planning guide for the Central Shenandoah Valley.

For your review prior to the meeting, we are enclosing an executive summary of our Region's current *Overall Economic Development Plan* and *Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness* which was developed through a similar regional planning process by the Commission in conjunction with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership in 1997. The Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP) is a public-private regional marketing organization covering the same area as the Planning District Commission.

The Boards of both the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and the Shenandoah Valley Partnership adopted the enclosed Plan, which ultimately led to the Partnership being selected to participate in the State's Regional Competitiveness Program. As a result, the SVP has received significant incentive fund investments from the State. The funds have been used to jointly market the Region and to make investments in specified regional economic development projects throughout the Central Valley. The Planning District Commission has used the Plan as justification for a number of successful grant applications completed on behalf of the Region and its localities.

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May 10, 2000

Page 2

We have also enclosed copies of our *Facts & Figures* and *Economic Indicators* publication(s). A portion of the workshops will include a review of some of the statistics that are of particular interest to the Region's economic development community.

You are asked to review all of the enclosed documents and come prepared to discuss the following topics and questions:

- **What are the strengths / weaknesses / opportunities / threats (SWOT) for our Region? How can our Region's strengths and opportunities be maximized? How can our Region's weaknesses and threats be mitigated?**
- **What trends / events / developments are directly and indirectly affecting or have the potential of affecting our Region's economy and quality of life?**
- **What will our Region be like in the Year 2020? What will be our competitive advantages or niche(s)? How will the Region be different? How will it be the same?**
- **What should be our priority strategic initiatives over the next 5 years / 10-15 years to move us towards our vision of what we want the Region to be in the Year 2020?**
- **What will we need to do during the next 1 to 5 years to make those strategic initiatives happen?**

Your input is critical to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy planning process. Please contact Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner, should you have any questions prior to the CEDS meetings.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to seeing you at the workshops.

Enclosures

# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

June 2, 2000

**MEMO TO:** Key Stakeholders of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region

**FROM:** William H. Strider, Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Meetings

On behalf of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and our meeting co-sponsors, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development & Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training & Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster's Community College's Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Services, thank you for attending the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meeting in your area.

We held five successful CEDS planning workshops around the Central Shenandoah Valley Region beginning May 17 in Highland County and concluding May 25 in the Rockingham-Harrisonburg area. In all, over 125 people participated in the CEDS meetings. We had a great cross-section of representation from the private sector, public sector, and non-profit communities, including entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, elected officials, administrative officials and department heads, economic developers, educational institutions (post secondary, technical, higher ed), tourism professionals, agricultural interests, natural resource / environmental agencies and organizations, and human service providers.

Our staff will be compiling the results of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meetings over the next several weeks and you will be receiving a copy of the complete results packet once it has been prepared. Following that, we will be soliciting your and others comments on the draft overall plan prior to final consideration by the Commission's Board in late August (the Economic Development Administration has granted us an extension beyond the July 1 date mentioned in our previous mailings). Your continued input will be critical to the success of the process.

Thank you again for your time and attention to this matter. Please contact Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner, should you have any questions.

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# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

July 7, 2000

**MEMO TO:** Key Stakeholders of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region

**FROM:** William H. Strider, Executive Director

Enclosed are the composite results of the five Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy meetings held throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley Region from May 17 to May 25, 2000. As referenced in previous mailings, our meetings included a great cross-section of representation from the private sector, public sector, and non-profit communities, including:

- entrepreneurs,
- chambers of commerce,
- elected officials,
- administrative officials and department heads,
- economic developers,
- educational institutions (secondary, technical, higher ed),
- tourism professionals,
- agricultural interests,
- natural resource / environmental agencies and organizations, and
- human service providers.

Our staff has compiled the results from all five meetings to obtain a regional view of economic development issues facing the Central Shenandoah Valley. Each section has been color-coded for the reader's convenience, with green for the SWOT Analysis, yellow the Strategic Initiatives, blue the regional view of the Year 2020, and salmon the potential draft revision of the Shenandoah Destiny statement.

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's Board will be considering the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy at their August 21, 2000 meeting. We would appreciate receiving your comments on the enclosed information no later than Friday, July 28.

On behalf of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and our meeting co-sponsors, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development & Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training & Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster's Community College's Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Services, thank you for your interest in this very important project. Please contact Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner, by e-mail at [darryl@cspdc.org](mailto:darryl@cspdc.org), phone - (540) 885-5174, or fax - (540) 885-2687 should you have any comments or questions.

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# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

July 31, 2000

William H. Strider  
*Executive Director*

**MEMO TO:** Key Stakeholders of the Central Shenandoah Valley Region

**FROM:** William H. Strider, Executive Director

In May, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission conducted a series of five focus-group type workshops throughout the Central Shenandoah Valley to assist in the development of the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The meetings were co-sponsored by the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, James Madison University's Office of Economic Development & Partnership Programs, Blue Ridge Community College's Center for Training & Development, and Dabney S. Lancaster's Community College's Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Services. Participants in the workshops included a great cross-section of representation from the private sector, public sector, and non-profit communities, including:

- entrepreneurs,
- chambers of commerce,
- elected officials, administrative officials, and department heads,
- public works,
- economic developers,
- educational institutions (secondary, technical, higher education),
- tourism professionals,
- agricultural interests,
- natural resource / environmental agencies and organizations, and
- human service providers.

Our staff has since compiled the information received and the results were submitted to the meeting participants for review. We feel that they have provided a very good regional and accurate view of economic development issues facing the Central Shenandoah Valley. Additionally, we are also soliciting comments from other key stakeholders and decision-makers that were not able to attend the workshops. In all, over 400 people will have an opportunity to provide input in the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The Shenandoah Valley Partnership adopted the Central Shenandoah Valley's Strategic Initiatives as part of their Regional Strategic Plan for Economic Competitiveness on July 28 (see single yellow sheet). The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's Board will be considering the CEDS at their August 21, 2000 meeting.

**We would appreciate receiving your comments on the enclosed information no later than Friday, August 18. Please contact Darryl Crawford, Senior Planner, by e-mail at [darryl@cspdc.org](mailto:darryl@cspdc.org), phone - (540) 885-5174, or fax - (540) 885-2687 should you have any comments or questions.**

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# Central Shenandoah

PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

William H. Strider  
Executive Director

August 28, 2000

Mr. Nelson Bourne, News Director  
WHSV-TV3  
50 North Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Dear Mr. Bourne:

On behalf of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, we would like to thank Ms. Danielle Banks, of your Staunton bureau, for her coverage of our Board's meeting of Monday, August 21, 2000 and her excellent follow-up story on the Central Shenandoah Valley's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which aired on Friday, August 25.

Ms. Banks took the time to get the interviews from the people we needed and worked very hard to get the job done right. Her professionalism and ability to choose the sound bites that best told the story of what we wanted to convey were much appreciated. She also helped those being interviewed to feel very much at ease and comfortable.

We have heard several compliments since the story was run on Friday and we plan to purchase a VHS-copy of the story from your station to send to the Economic Development Administration in Philadelphia. They financed, in part, the region's preparation of the CEDS plan.

Over the next several month's, we hope to get adoption and/or endorsement of the CEDS plan (copy enclosed) from a number boards, commissions, councils, and organizations around the Central Shenandoah Valley Region that are involved in or are affected by economic development. The initiatives will also be presented to the governing bodies of all ten localities in the region. The process will culminate with a joint press conference of all of the organizations, localities, and leaders supporting the strategy. We hope that we will be able to count on Ms. Bank's continued coverage as we proceed through this exciting process for the Central Shenandoah Valley.

In Your Service,

Darryl D. Crawford  
Senior Planner

Cc: Ms. Danielle Banks

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