West Piedmont Planning District Commission: Engaging Collaborative Communities

A Report From DecideSMART

April 2017

In partnership with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The West Piedmont Planning District Commission would like to acknowledge the following parties for their participation and assistance with this project.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Staff

The DecideSmart Team

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- Ken Larking, Manager, City of Danville
- Clarence Monday, Administrator, Pittsylvania County
- Autumn Morris, New College Institute
- Tom Rose, Administrator, Patrick County
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- David R. Hoback, Executive Director
- Leah Manning, Deputy Director
- Tracy Meade, Office Assistant (Photos/Conference Planning)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DecideSmart team undertook a facilitation of stakeholders in the West Piedmont Planning District (WPPDC) service area on behalf of the Commission to fulfill the requirements of a Building Collaborative Communities grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The purpose of the project was threefold:

- To assist the WPPDC in being known as the “convener of choice” for issues in the region.
- To build capacity of the PDC and the region to address common issues confronting shared stakeholders.
- To assist the WPPDC to better define and prepare the region within the context of the GO Virginia economic development initiative currently underway in the Commonwealth.

Summaries of the observations and recommendations of this assessment are as follows:

- There is a broadly shared consensus that only through collaboration and working together, will progress be made on the common issues confronting the WPPDC service area.
- There is willingness, but not consensus, that the WPPDC is the organization that fits the role of collaboration builder for the region.  As was noted in a recent SouthEast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) review, the WPPDC must strategically develop a role for itself in promoting collaboration in the region.

In doing so, DecideSmart recommends that the WPPDC:

Lead by Convening

WPPDC is without peer in its ability to assemble stakeholders in a neutral environment for the purpose of discussing regional solutions to common problems. The community trusts the WPPDC and playing to its strength, the WPPDC should selectively identify issues that require attention and develop a collaborative forum to address those issues. The success of the summit proves that point. The community is less convinced that the WPPDC should lead the efforts to address the common problems. In other words, the WPPDC must be willing to convene meetings by
The community trusts the WPPDC and playing to its strength, the WPPDC should selectively identify issues that require attention and develop a collaborative forum to address those issues. Identifying key issues and stakeholders but allowing the stakeholders to accept leadership responsibility for addressing common problems. A good start would be to follow up with the stakeholder groups from the WPPDC Regional Stakeholders Summit held October 19, 2016 that indicated a willingness to follow up on their respective issues and then convene them in a more organized fashion.

**Lead by Inventorying Initiatives**

During the after-action meeting held on November 15, 2016 held with the WPPDC staff and the Building Collaborative Communities Project Team, it became clear that a tremendous amount of work is already being done in the WPPDC service area but many organizations were not aware of the efforts. For example, as noted in both the survey and in the breakout meetings much attention was given to emphasizing the need for increased efforts on sustaining existing businesses, yet participants emphasized that numerous efforts were already happening. The WPPDC can fulfill a role in developing inventories of such initiatives. The first step would be to take the issues identified as high priorities from the pre-summit survey and work with stakeholders to develop an inventory of existing efforts to confront those issues.

**Lead by Information Sharing**

Once the inventories of initiatives are established, the WPPDC, should play a larger role in disseminating information about those programs. The WPPDC should establish itself as the entity that is the “information contact point for regional initiatives.” In doing so the community will quickly realize that their first stop in obtaining a solution is to talk with the WPPDC.

➢ The following report discusses the process of the assessment and describes the activities, observations and recommendations in further detail.
WHAT WE DID—STUDY ACTIVITIES

GETTING STARTED

DecideSmart was engaged to assist the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC) with their Building Collaborative Communities Grant awarded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

An initial planning meeting was held with staff of the WPPDC on May 24, 2016 to define the roles of each organization in conducting the engagement. DecideSmart’s role was further refined during that meeting to include the role of “facilitator” of the project. In addition, the facilitation process, desired outcomes for the engagement, and potential issues that would have to be negotiated during the engagement were discussed.

As a result of the meeting, DecideSmart was directed to develop an overall plan to facilitate stakeholder meetings that will result in the identification of critical projects that can lend themselves to regional collaboration and can be a springboard to effective participation in GO Virginia.

At a follow-up meeting on August 29, 2016 with the WPPDC staff and the Building Collaborative Communities Project Team, it was decided that the facilitation of the stakeholders could best be accomplished with a single day long meeting with a set of plenary presentations followed by four topical breakout sessions. A survey of stakeholders would be undertaken to determine the content of the topical breakout sessions.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

As part of the engagement DecideSmart requested, received, and reviewed existing reports on efforts to address common problems of the region. These documents included strategic plans and commissioned reports from previous efforts by stakeholders in the region.
**STAKEHOLDER SUMMIT**

Following the August 29, 2016 meeting with the WPPDC staff and the Building Collaborative Communities Project Team, a “Regional Summit” was initiated and set for October 19, 2016.

The WPPDC staff, assisted by DecideSmart, developed a list of potential stakeholders to be invited to the summit. Over 150 people from key organizations within the region and adjacent regions were identified as potential participants.

Simultaneous with the development of the invitation list for the summit, DecideSmart developed a potential stakeholders survey. The purpose of the survey (see attachment A) was to:

- Gain an understanding of the participant’s view of common issues and help better refine the agenda for the summit.
- Gain an understanding of the view of participants regarding the WPPDC as a “convener” for collaboration in the region.
- Gauge the level of interest in regional collaboration on common issues.

The WPPDC staff secured the use of the facilities at the New College Institute in Martinsville to hold the summit. The state of the art new building was a central and inviting location.

The survey revealed, not surprisingly, the four major topics for the break out groups should be:

- Economic Development
- Education and Workforce
- Technology
- Sustainable Health initiatives

Based upon the survey, DecideSmart secured keynote speakers and facilitators for the plenary agenda and the breakout sessions (see Attachment B for the full agenda).

Participation at the summit was excellent. Of the 150+ invitees, 92 community leaders attended the summit.
The format of the regional summit began with opening remarks to acclimate participants to the reason for attending. An overview of the WPPDC and the Building Collaborative Communities grant was presented by the WPPDC Director David Hoback. A presentation by Karl Stauber, President/CEO of the Danville Regional Foundation, a neighboring regional entity, was made on the activities of their foundation along with an overview of an economic development study conducted for the Dan River Region. Charley Majors, Chairman of the Board of American Bankshares, provided an overview of the GO Virginia initiative (see www.GoVirginia.org for details of this initiative). Jane Kusiak, Executive Director, Council on Virginia’s Future, presented an overview of the WPPDC service area and how it compares to other PDCs and statewide averages. This presentation was designed to help the participants gauge where the region stood to assist in “benchmarking” and highlighting issues in the region.

Following the plenary session, the breakout sessions also had significant speakers. Jay Langston of the Virginia Department of Economic Development presented an overview of economic development issues on behalf of Secretary of Commerce and Trade Todd Haymore. Secretary of Technology Karen Jackson presented on Technology initiatives in the Commonwealth. Elizabeth Creamer, The Governor’s Advisor on Workforce Development, provided insight into the state’s direction on workforce issues. Dr. Jody Hershey, Director of the West Piedmont Health District outlined the regional issues in building a sustainable healthy population and how health relates to economic development. He also discussed the initiatives being undertaken to address health issues in the West Piedmont Health District.

In addition to the speakers, each of the breakout sessions featured a facilitated session of the participants to discuss the various issues confronting the region. At the meeting, it was decided to combine two of the sessions: economic development and technology. This was done to provide a good interaction between the participants in these closely aligned issue areas.
The discussions were as robust as they were informative with good attendance at all three sessions. In fact, the discussions generated a strong interest in the participants that resulted in two of the groups agreeing to continue the conversation with further meetings. All three groups reported back to the closing plenary session on the highlights of their discussions. These reports are noted in the “What We Found” section of this report. At the close of the meeting, 62 participants remained in the room for a closing reception geared at assisting in developing networks for the future of the region.

A follow up email containing a post meeting survey and links to the presentations was sent to all attendees. Presentations from both the plenary and breakout sessions are available for reference on the WPPDC homepage www.wppdc.org.

**AFTER ACTION MEETING**

On November 15, 2016, an after action debrief was held with the WPPDC staff and the Building Collaborative Communities Project Team to discuss the outcome of the summit and the associated follow-up survey. Results of that meeting are further discussed in the next section of this report.
WHAT WE FOUND—STUDY OBSERVATIONS

The set of activities that the DecideSmart team and the WPPDC undertook to fulfill the Building Collaborative Communities grant enabled us to understand the major dynamics of collaboration in the WPPDC service area. Our team makes the following observations:

The WPPDC can play a significant role in developing further collaboration among regional stakeholders to address issues of common concern.

General Observations

Over the course of this engagement, the DecideSmart team made the following general observations that while not new, bear highlighting.

- The WPPDC service area is confronted with a series of wide-ranging economic development, education and workforce, technology, and healthcare issues. These issues are more profound than many, if not most, other areas of the Commonwealth due to prolonged high unemployment, impact of job loss, and other economic/health factors.

- There is widespread consensus among major stakeholders in the WPPDC service area that only by working collaboratively will progress be made on the major issues confronting the region.

- The WPPDC can play a significant role in developing further collaboration among regional stakeholders to address issues of common concern. But this expanded role should be approached in a cautious, inclusive and strategic manner.

Pre-summit Survey Observations

Prior to the large stakeholder meeting, an online survey was distributed to all invitees where they were asked to assess the relative importance of five issues- education, economic development, workforce, health care, and technology- to the future of the region. In addition, the stakeholders were asked to prioritize the most important challenge within each of the five issue areas. Finally, the survey obtained feedback from the stakeholders about the role that the WPPDC could play as a regional convener. Sixty-three invitees completed the survey.
Respondents believed that all five issues that the survey identified were important to the future of the region. At least 80% of the respondents rated each of the five issues as either Extremely Important or Very Important to the future of the region. At the same time, the results indicated that the respondents felt that a few of the issues were even more important than others.

Looking only at the rating of “Extremely Important,” Economic Development, Workforce, and Education clearly outpaced Health Care and Technology - 78% rated Economic Development, 76% rated Workforce, and 71% rated Education as Extremely Important. By contrast, 57% rated Health Care as Extremely Important and 35% rated Technology as Extremely Important. In fact, results indicated that the respondents see a clear and significant nexus between Economic Development, Workforce, and Education.

**Major Issues of Importance**

Within the Education category, Educational Quality was the highest ranked sub-item, as 75% of respondents rated it as Extremely Important; 62% of respondents said that Educational Completion was Extremely Important and 60% rated Availability of Career Education as Extremely Important. Educational Access lagged the other three choices with 37% of respondents saying that it was “Extremely Important.”
**Education Category**

![Bar Chart Diagram]

In the Workforce category, Workforce Readiness received the highest rankings among the three choices - 76% of respondents rated it as Extremely Important, 61% of respondents rated Workforce Availability as Extremely Important, with 57% giving this rating to Workforce Participation.

**Workforce Development Category**

![Bar Chart Diagram]

Within the economic development category, respondents made clear distinctions among the seven choices. The top-rated item was Sustaining Existing Businesses as 81% of respondents rated this as Extremely Important, 56% of respondents rated New Business Development as Extremely Important, 44% rated Infrastructure and 34% rated Small Business Support as Extremely Important. The lowest rated items with respect to what respondents saw as Extremely Important were Availability of Ready Sites (22%), Lack of Support for Entrepreneurs (16%), and Lack of a Cohesive Tourism Development Plan (10%).
Economic Development Category

In the technology category, Workforce Readiness/Availability (62%) and Broadband Access and Availability (60%) were the respondent’s highest choices as Extremely Important. By contrast, 32% rated Cybersecurity as Extremely Important.

Among the health care choices, accessibility to Adequate Health Care was the top-rated item with 62% of respondents saying that it was Extremely Important. There was a clear second tier among the 8 Health Care Choices- 46% rated Adequate Health Insurance and Adequate Addiction Treatment Program as Extremely Important, 43% rated Adequate Mental Health Options as Extremely Important and 41% gave this rating to Shortage of Trained Health Care Workers. The three items that ranked lowest in terms of the Extremely Important ranking were Effective Emergency Care (35%), Lack of Preventive Care (32%), and Service Needs of an Aging Population (30%).

92% of respondents agreed with the statement that the WPPDC should place a “higher priority on providing the vision and leadership for the leadership to remain competitive” and 90% agreed that the WPPDC could play a “key role as a convener in finding regional solutions to common problems.”

The survey also asked respondents about the potential role of the West Piedmont PDC. It is evident that the stakeholders believe that the WPPDC is crucial to the future of the region as 92% of respondents agreed with the statement that the WPPDC should place a “higher priority on providing the vision and leadership for the leadership to remain competitive” and 90% agreed that the WPPDC could play a “key role as a convener in finding regional solutions to common problems.”

In terms of the WPPDC’s relationship with local governments, 77% of respondents agreed with the statement that the WPPDC “adequately promotes the mission of multijurisdictional cooperation among local governments,” though only 51% of
respondents agreed that local government currently looks to the WPPDC “to take a leadership role and be a key player on economic development matters.

Summit Breakout Session Reports

Economic Development and Technology

Facilitator - Will Davis, DecideSmart Attendance: 30 (counting speakers)

Jay Langston, Senior Manager at the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, gave an overview of economic development from the state perspective and centered his comments on the importance of existing business growth and sustainability. The importance of infrastructure in the site selection process was discussed. He mentioned the area has a strong history of manufacturing and understands the need for an available and trainable workforce. He concluded with a charge to leverage the region’s strengths by working collaboratively.

Karen Jackson, Virginia’s Secretary of Technology, presented an update on topical issues and opportunities. Key points included Cyber Threats (1 every 4 seconds) and the various implications for new technology for the Commonwealth such as Drones, Driverless cars, Healthcare, Data Analytics, and Workforce.

Both during and after the presentations, there was active audience participation and numerous questions. This transitioned into a three-point approach to summarize thoughts:

- What are the current issues / opportunities that need to be addressed in the region? (that can be resolved)
- What organizations/ resources currently exist that could assist with these issues?
- What are the initial priority issues that could be potentially resolved with additional resources?

Education and Workforce Session

Facilitator: Lane Ramsey DecideSmart Attendance: 32 (counting speakers)

Elizabeth Creamer, Advisor for Workforce development, Office of Governor McAuliffe. Petrina Carter, Manager, Danville Office of the Virginia Employment Commission was recorder for this session.

Mr. Ramsey reminded the group that Education and Workforce received the highest priority after Economic Development in the surveys completed by the participants prior to this session. “Workforce Development” and “Economic Development” were
the words most mentioned in the written comments given by participants of the survey.

Elizabeth Creamer gave a very thorough and interesting overview of the various workforce issues that her office monitors and includes in reports to the Governor and various senior staff. She encouraged the participants to continue to be engaged and involved in workforce issues and said that they are critical to continued progress in this area.

The participants in the group agreed that they would have an interest in exploring regional project opportunities to further coordinate workforce efforts.

The balance of the session was moderated by Mr. Ramsey and centered around two issues:

1. What are the region’s accomplishments in Education and Workforce and what accomplishments are they most proud?

2. What are the most important issues and opportunities in the region regarding Education and Workforce?

After much discussion of the accomplishments and opportunities which follow in appendix C (attached), the participants in the group agreed that they would have an interest in exploring regional project opportunities to further coordinate workforce efforts. Several commented that the discussion that day had only scratched the surface. Lisa Fultz agreed to spearhead this effort and David Hoback agreed that the PDC could coordinate and host the effort.

**Sustainable Health**

Facilitator: Nancy Bell, West Piedmont Health District  Attendance: 28 (counting speakers)

This well-attended session opened with a presentation by Dr. Jody Hershey (West Piedmont Health District Director). The overview provided a glimpse of health profiles for communities within the West Piedmont Planning District (where rates of chronic disease are higher than state average) as well as an explanation of Population Health. Dr. Hershey highlighted several partnerships that are designed to lower chronic disease rates in the district including several initiatives funded by a $1.7 million chronic disease prevention grant offered by the Centers for Disease Control. These include:

- **Diabetes Prevention Program** – Free classes for pre-diabetic adults that are designed to counter the onset of diabetes Type II.

- **Million Hearts** – Faith-based intervention to prevent 1 million strokes.
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- **Community Giving Gardens** – 30,000+ pounds fresh produce grown for and distributed to area food banks and soup kitchens.

- **Complete Streets** – Making communities within the district more “walkable” by completing walkability assessments and lobbying municipalities to invest in sidewalks, signage and other infrastructure that encourages walking or biking.

Additionally, the West Piedmont Health District (WPHD) is partnering with law enforcement and prevention organizations to help curb the abuse of opioids and other drugs. Drug Free MHC is using a 5-year SAMSA grant to identify community assets, create a strategic plan detailing how the community will address drug abuse issues, and initiate effective interventions. The WPHD is heavily involved with these efforts.

Law enforcement partnerships also include a successful door-to-door campaign with members of the medical reserve corps and police officers that helped get Zika prevention information into the hands of 3,000 households.

In the discussion that followed, hospital CEOs, medical practitioners, economic developers and others attending the session agreed that a population health based approach is needed to reduce social determinants to health. The connection between a healthy community and economic development was emphasized. A healthy workforce attracts new business and levels health care costs for existing businesses. Healthy workers miss fewer days from work, saving employers money. The group agreed Wellness infrastructure, i.e. walking trails, programs and community-specific interventions, help improve the health of the community while also attracting new business. Community Health Workers trained in various aspects of health and wellness will be essential for a healthier future in the district.

The WPHD leads a Community Action Network comprised of stakeholders throughout the district. Those interested in advancing a health agenda were encouraged to join the network, which meets quarterly in locations throughout the district.
**WHAT WE RECOMMEND—KEYS TO EFFECTIVE FUTURE COLLABORATION**

The WPPDC community is committed to working collaboratively on common issues. However, collaboration will require a stronger leadership role by the WPPDC. In exerting this new role, the WPPDC must strategically develop a role for itself in promoting collaboration in the region. By that, we mean that the WPPDC must adeptly maneuver the existing entities and facilitate their involvement in the broader issues.

### Lead by Convening

WPPDC is without peer in its ability to assemble stakeholders in a neutral environment for the purpose of discussing regional solutions to common problems. The community trusts the WPPDC and playing to its strength, the WPPDC should selectively identify issues that require attention and develop a collaborative forum to address those issues. The success of the summit proves that point. The community is less convinced that the WPPDC should lead the efforts to address the common problems. In other words, the WPPDC must be willing to convene meetings by identifying key issues and stakeholders but allow the stakeholders to accept leadership responsibility for addressing common problems. A good start would be to follow up with the stakeholder groups from the summit that indicated a willingness to follow up on their respective issues and then convene them in a more organized fashion. Specifically, these groups include stakeholders from the workforce development and sustainable healthcare initiatives summit groups that expressed an interest in continuing a conversation on potential future regional approaches in their interest areas.

### Lead by Inventorying Initiatives

During the after-action meeting held on November 15, 2016 with the WPPDC staff and the Building Collaborative Communities Project Team, it became clear that a tremendous amount of work is already being done in the WPPDC service area but many organizations were not aware of the efforts. For example, as noted in both
the survey and in the breakout meetings much attention was given to emphasizing the need for increased efforts on sustaining existing businesses, yet participants emphasized that numerous efforts were already happening. The WPPDC can fulfill a role in developing inventories of such initiatives. The first step would be to take the issues identified as high priorities from the pre-summit survey and work with stakeholders to develop an inventory of existing efforts to confront those issues.

### Lead by Information Sharing

Once the inventories of initiatives are established, the WPPDC, should play a larger role in disseminating information about those programs. The WPPDC should establish itself as the entity that is the “information contact point for regional initiatives.” In doing so the community will quickly realize that their first stop in obtaining a solution is to first talk with the WPPDC.

### Conclusion

The WPPDC service area is well aware of both the problems confronting them and the need for strong collaboration to address them. They want to collaborate but leadership is necessary to be successful. The WPPDC can, and should play the preeminent role in developing collaborative models for the community. It was established for just that purpose and possesses the exact skill set for doing so.
APPENDICES
## Appendix A: Presummit survey questions

### West Piedmont PDC Stakeholders

1. Please rate each of the following issues on how important it is to the West Piedmont PDC right now.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important at All</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Economic Development</td>
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<td>Workforce</td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Healthcare</td>
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2. Please rate how important each of the following education issues is to the region right now.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important at All</th>
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<td>Educational Quality</td>
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<td>Educational Access (including advanced degrees)</td>
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<td>Educational completion</td>
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<td>Availability of effective career education</td>
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3. Please rate how important each of the following workforce issues is to the region right now.

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<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important at All</th>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce availability</td>
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<td>Workforce Readiness</td>
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<td>Workforce Participation</td>
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4. Please rate how important each of the following economic development issues is to your region right now.

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important at All</th>
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<td>New business development</td>
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<td>Sustaining existing business</td>
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<td>Availability of &quot;ready&quot; sites</td>
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5. Please rate how important each of the following technology issues is to your region right now.

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important at All</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accessibility (broadband access and affordability)</td>
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<td>Workforce readiness and availability</td>
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<td>Systems security and cyber attacks</td>
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6. Please rate how important each of the following health care issues is to your region right now.

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<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely Important</th>
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<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not very Important</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accessibility to adequate health care (availability and cost)</td>
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<td>Adequate health insurance (affordability and options)</td>
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<td>Healthcare workforce shortages</td>
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<td>Lack of mental health options</td>
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<td>Adequate addiction treatment programs</td>
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<td>Service needs of an aging population</td>
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<td>Lack of preventive care and wellness programs</td>
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<td>Effective emergency services response</td>
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7. Are there any other issues that we have not touched upon that are extremely important or very important to the region right now that you would want to mention?

8. Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- The West Piedmont PDC can play a key role as a "convenor" in finding regional solutions to common problems.
- Local government officials look to the West Piedmont PDC to take a leadership role and be a key player on economic development issues.
- The West Piedmont PDC adequately promotes the mission of multi-jurisdictional collaboration among local governments.
- As a regional entity, the West Piedmont PDC should place a higher priority on providing the leadership and vision necessary for the region to remain competitive.

9. By working together, what major issues can we solve as a region?

Done
## Appendix B: Summit Agenda

**West Piedmont Planning District Commission Regional Summit: Engaging Collaborative Communities**  
**October 19, 2016**  
**New College Institute, Lecture Halls A/B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
<td>Jim Adams, WPPDC Board Chairman/Henry County Board Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 AM</td>
<td>Meeting Expectations: 1) About the WPPDC 2) Building Collaborative Communities</td>
<td>David Hoback, WPPDC Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>Survey Results</td>
<td>DecideSmart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 AM</td>
<td>Danville Regional Foundation: Regional Economic Study</td>
<td>Karl Stauber, President and CEO, Danville Regional Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>GO Virginia: 1) Background 2) Status Report</td>
<td>Charley Majors, Chairman of the Board, American National Bankshares Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 PM</td>
<td>Virginia Performs: Regional and State Comparisons</td>
<td>Jane Kusiak, Executive Director, Council on Virginia’s Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>DecideSmart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 PM</td>
<td>Instructions &amp; Charge to the Breakout Session</td>
<td>DecideSmart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 PM</td>
<td>Concurrent Topical Break Out Sessions/Facilitated Discussions (with break)</td>
<td>Facilitated by DecideSmart Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 1 Lecture Hall A Economic Development</td>
<td>Jay Langston, Senior Business Manager, Strategic Ventures, Competitive Initiatives Division, Virginia Economic Development Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 2 Lecture Hall B Education and Workforce</td>
<td>Elizabeth Creamer, Advisor for Workforce Development, Office of Governor McAuliffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 3 Lecture Hall C Technology</td>
<td>Karen Jackson, Secretary of Technology, Office of Governor McAuliffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 4 Room 107 Sustainable Health Initiatives</td>
<td>Dr. Jody Hershey, West Piedmont Health District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>Reconvene for Session Reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Meeting Adjourns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Education and Workforce Responses

Appendix, Charts from session on Education and Workforce:

**Proud**

- Career coaches in high schools
- Credentialing
- Career Expo-middle school students
- Wait list for manufacturing programs
- CAFM-PHCC (film manufacturing)
- Faculty and teacher engagement and collaboration
- Programs with direct pathway to living wage
- High tech equipment in high schools
- Employer led programs
- Scholarship money
- Industry credential tie
- Robust OJT (on the job training)
- Moving to
  - Demonstrative
  - At your own pace classes
  - Adjust cost to usage/ not semester
- Context/Relevance

**Issues and Opportunities**

- More communication of available programs (to students and parents)
- Personal finance skills
- Struggle with recruiting students
- Cultural barriers
- Changing cultural ideology-work communication
- Poster with student in precision training
- Machining – with number of job offers
- Incumbent worker (bureaucracy)
- Streamline workforce system (get rid of bureaucracy)
- European model
  - Early on decide what they want to do
  - Identify skills early
  - Careful we don’t limit children or begin tracking
- Push opportunities
- More students they know coming back (peer selling)
  - Program-good, exciting and engaging
- Coming together as a group
  - Lisa Fultz (West Piedmont Workforce Development Board) will spearhead
  - WPPDC will host
- Think of 1 thing we are not doing
  - Reentry
  - High School/peers and mentors
Appendix D: Southside Region Performance Trends

The following graphs, charts and data were provided by Jane Kusiak with Council on Virginia’s Future. This information depicts pertinent demographics, trends, and serves as a “snapshot” of Southside Virginia and the West Piedmont Region for Economy, Education and Workforce, Health, and Technology.
Trends Over Time: A Regional View

**Economy**
- Annual Percentage Change in Employment
- Per Capita Personal Income
- Unemployment Rate

**Education**
- 3rd Grade Reading SOL Advanced Pass Rate
- On-Time High School Graduation Rate
- Educational Attainment, 25 and Over (2009-2013)
  - Bachelor’s or Higher
  - High School or Higher

**Health and Family**
- Physical Inactivity
- Life Expectancy

**Key**
- Nation
- Virginia
- Southside Region
A Snapshot of Your Community: Economy

Key:
- Nation
- Virginia
- Southside Region
- West Piedmont PDC

1. Annual Percentage Change in Employment
2. Startups as a Percentage of Total Establishments
3. Per Capita Personal Income (2014 Dollars)
4. Unemployment Rate
A Snapshot of Your Community: Education and Workforce

**Ed. Attainment of WPPDC’s Working Age Population**

- High School
- Some College
- Associate’s Degree
- Bachelor’s Degree
- Advanced Degree

**On-Time High School Graduation Rate**

- Nation
- Virginia
- Southside Region
- West Piedmont PDC

**Two-Year College Degrees per 100K Residents**

**Four-Year College Degrees per 100K Residents**

- 2011 to 2015
A Snapshot of Your Community: Health

Percentage of Citizens Reporting Physical Inactivity

- Nation
- Virginia

Obesity Rate

Southside Region
West Piedmont PDC

Diabetes Rate

Cancer Death Rate per 100K Population
A Snapshot of Your Community: Health and Technology

Key:  
- Nation
- Virginia
- Southside Region
- West Piedmont PDC

Cardiovascular Disease Death Rate per 100K Population

Uninsured Rate

Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births

Broadband Coverage Rate
## West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td>319,607</td>
<td>370,291</td>
<td>245,241</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment Growth</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Start-Ups as a Percentage of Establishments</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>33,853</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita Personal Income</td>
<td>$21,340</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>$18,890</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Virginia Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Above</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Virginia Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Above (Age 25-64)</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Time High School Graduation Rate</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults 25-64 in the Labor Force</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults with a Bachelor's Degree (Age 25-64)</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults Diagnosed with Cancer (per 100,000 Residents)</td>
<td>188.6</td>
<td>216.0</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults Diagnosed with Heart Disease (per 100,000 Residents)</td>
<td>193.6</td>
<td>235.9</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<td>Percentage of Adults Diagnosed with Stroke (per 100,000 Residents)</td>
<td>189.6</td>
<td>216.0</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults Diagnosed with Diabetes (per 100,000 Residents)</td>
<td>179.0</td>
<td>260.0</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults Diagnosed with Mental Health Conditions (per 100,000 Residents)</td>
<td>191.2</td>
<td>275.6</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults Diagnosed with Obesity (per 100,000 Residents)</td>
<td>194.8</td>
<td>373.6</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Adults with Access to Broadband</td>
<td>182.4</td>
<td>253.4</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sources:
- U.S. Census Bureau (Population, Per Capita Personal Income, Educational Attainment of Population Age 25-64, Without Health Insurance)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (Employment Growth, Unemployment Rate)
- U.S. Census Bureau, Statistics of U.S. Businesses (Business Startup Rate)
- Virginia Department of Education (On-time High School Graduation Rate)
- State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (Associate's Degrees, Bachelor's Degrees)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Physical Inactivity, Obesity, Diabetes)
- Virginia Department of Health (Age Adjusted Cancer Death Rate, Age Adjusted Cardiovascular Death Rate, Infant Mortality Rate)
- Office of Telework Promotion and Broadband Access (Broadband Percentage)

### Notes:
- Data was prepared by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia.
- N/A = National data is not comparable to state, regional, and locality data used in this snapshot.

for more information: covr@virginia.edu
984-371-2346
Regional Workforce Development Conversation
West Piedmont Planning District Commission

April 10, 2017
Virginia Museum of Natural History
Martinsville, VA
Introduction

On April 10, 2017, the West Piedmont Planning District Commission (WPPDC), through a Building Collaborative Communities (BCC) grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), organized and sponsored a Regional Workforce and Health Conversation which was held at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, Virginia. The purpose of the event was to engage regional stakeholders from K-12 education, higher education, workforce development, private sector employers, local government, health care organizations, and economic development to consider broad challenges and issues related to workforce development and specifically the impact of the opioid crisis as it affects the capacity of employers to find and retain productive and competent employees. There were 34 participants at the event entailing a four-hour session featuring informational presentations, a moderated panel discussion, and facilitated group conversations among the participants.

Background

The genesis of the meeting developed from the West Piedmont Regional Summit held in October 2016 at New College Institute in Martinsville. This BCC grant sponsored activity attracted over ninety (90) stakeholders from across the West Piedmont Region who gathered for a daylong event featuring informational presentations and facilitated group discussions in the areas of economic development, education/workforce, technology, and sustainable health initiatives. As a result of this event, stakeholder groups from the areas of education/workforce development and health expressed an interest in meeting again to further discuss and explore opportunities for future regional collaboration.

Informational Presentations

From workforce to opioids, experts provided information about the make-up, opportunities, resources, and challenges of the region’s workforce and the impacts on economic and community development these have. Presenters included Rhonda Hodges, Vice-President, Workforce, Community and Economic Development, Patrick Henry Community College; Dr. Julie Brown, Director of Advanced Learning, Institute for Advanced Learning and Research; Lisa Fultz, Director, West Piedmont Workforce Development Board; and Beth O’Connor, Director, Virginia Rural Health Association. PowerPoints from their presentations are available at www.wppdc.org.

Panel Discussions

Seven community leaders including Dr. Jared Cotton, Henry County School Superintendent; Mike Burnette, Franklin County Economic Development Director; Lisa Fultz, Director, West Piedmont Workforce Development Board; Dr. Jody Hershey, Director, West Piedmont Health District; Josh Elliot, HR Department, Eastman Chemical Company; Dr. Angeline Godwin, President, Patrick Henry Community College; and Linda Green, Director, Southern Virginia Regional Alliance served on the panel to respond to questions and to provide comments, ideas, and concerns regarding the workforce needs and assets in the region.

Questions ranged from general to specific and included the following:
• Share what you believe are the top 3 required hard and soft skills and/or supports necessary for a productive ready to hire workforce for local industries and businesses in this region. And if you wish, what do you see as the barriers to these?

• What do you believe are the barriers to career readiness through participation in educational programming in this region? What could help?

• How can school divisions and local employers work together to provide valuable learning opportunities, educational participation in available programming and internships for potential employees?

• What priority activities/programs should GO Virginia consider for funding and support in this region?

GO Virginia opportunities included: a new career and technical educational center; support for computer science instructors; more representation in the field for women, minority groups; technical training on all levels; collaborative strategies with industry to share teachers/staff; pair with certified teachers–teaching fellowships; funding for work-based learning–internships, on-the-job training; and support for manufacturing/healthcare connections. Holly Lesko, a consultant from Blacksburg, Virginia, served as the panel moderator and captured responses on flipcharts which may be viewed at www.wppdc.org.

**Group Discussion**

Following the panel segment of the program, participants moved to brainstorming around key issues that emerged from the panel questions and discussions: Health of the Workforce; Soft Skill (changed to Foundational/Essential Skills); Career Pathways/Pipelines; and Partnerships for Engaging Industry. The following issues were considered:

1) Identify key drivers/needs/underlying factors of this issue in the region
2) Group and fill in elements that were missing from individual brainstorming effort
3) Ideas for NEXT STEPS in addressing specific issues/barriers
4) Identify a hierarchy or order for taking these steps (initiating a timeline)
5) Contributions from the larger group to these concepts through presentation of their issues and process and additions from the rest of the participants
6) Opportunity to specifically support next steps by adding individual names to elements that most link to participant interests and skill sets

Themes emerged from the brainstorming session that were then ranked in order of importance for keeping this work on track:

• Shifting Workforce Culture – generational shifts (9 votes)
• Involving younger people at the beginning – engage them in development of workforce goals (8 votes)
• Asset Mapping – Services and Resources (7 votes)
• Involvement of law enforcement – all levels of work need this voice (4 votes)
• Incentivize participation in training and programming – more carrot, less stick (3 votes)
• Pipelines and Industry Partnerships focus (3 votes)
• Quality of Life – for everyone, we all win when workforce supported (3 votes)
• GO Virginia! links (1 vote)
• Certifications (1 vote)

The group concluded with discussions about how the WPPDC will drive specific elements of this work and who else needs to be involved to champion others. The PDC was seen as the driver
behind asset mapping and convening. The Workforce Development Board was identified as supporting convening as well.

Ideas for convening included these elements:
- Give participants products to leave with (skills, data, processes)
- Give access to resources through relationship and organizational connections
- Create regional connections – lots to do, no need to duplicate
- Offer topic specific trainings/meetings on a regular basis
- Give partners opportunity to share information and skills

The wrap up invited participants to give a word that described their experience with the day of engagement. The following words offered included no barriers or even passive language. The group was hopeful and empowered through the process – eager to take ACTION.

*Affirmation (x3), Collaboration, Engaging, Opportunity, Solutions, Implementation, Leadership, Creativity, Commitment (x2), Understanding, Anticipation, Ownership, Productive*

**Themes:** Develop an awareness campaign around the health needs and barriers to health (mostly focused on behaviors) with businesses and local government leaders. Action steps included Roundtable discussion of these issues this summer and assessment of more health/prevention based programming available in the region. Groups missing from the conversation were law enforcement and United Way.

**Themes:** EVERYONE needs to be involved in this work – happens at all levels. Need to find ways to engage younger students in “work” opportunities through internships, classroom work-like settings, marketing efforts, mentors. NEXT STEPS include assessment of Noblis model of industry staff in the classroom supporting/partnering with schools in curriculum and teaching (need investment for this model). Look at policy issues in industry (age restrictions) and schools (teaching to the test) to identify these barriers to the work. Seek opportunities for feedback for job candidates so they are not making the same mistakes over and over.

**Themes:** These groups worked together due to interdependency of these elements. They addressed issues of poverty, aging and lack of technical skills and job opportunities for the hardest to serve population. The need for more jobs generally was discussed and living wage jobs specifically. Mentoring and direct industry investment is a key to both elements. NEXT STEPS involved identifying current and emerging career opportunities to guide job seekers into these roles. Additionally, incumbent worker supports for current employees of industries where skill sets may need retooling to support growth and advancement for business and employees.

The group discussion facilitator, Holly Lesko, captured the above discussions on flipcharts which may be viewed at [www.wppdc.org](http://www.wppdc.org).

**Conclusion**

Using the above themes and commonly identified issues that emerged from the event, the West Piedmont Planning District will again convene a future regional workforce meeting to continue the conversation. Stakeholders will be engaged in developing collaborative approaches to advance workforce dialogue leading to potential actions and strategies designed to advance future workforce development success in the West Piedmont Region. The PDC will work in partnership with the West Piedmont Workforce Development Board in convening stakeholders for future meetings and potential initiatives.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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