



GO Virginia Region 3 **Synopsis**

August 2017



Growth & Diversification Investment Plan for SoVaGO Region 3 Synopsis

The Southern Virginia GO Virginia Region (“SoVaGO” or “Region 3”) is a region of monumental potential. To plan for a future that fully employs this potential, it is imperative that we remain focused on our greatest growth and diversification opportunities, and continually work to address our greatest gaps. **Our greatest opportunity is to align our workforce talent development with our economic development** in areas where we already have substantial activity and competitive advantage, transforming our existing success stories into region-wide advancement. **Our greatest gap is that we have an aging and shrinking population.** We must retain, train, and grow a sustainably sized, well-qualified workforce that meets the needs of our existing and future businesses, enabling our region to thrive.

The Growth & Diversification Investment Plan for Region 3 was completed by experts and practitioners in relevant fields, with input from local stakeholder groups. The approach to the development of the plan was designed and approved by the Region 3 Council. The plan begins with an explanation of intent and a summary of the “GO Virginia Southern Virginia Region 3 Regional Planning Data Analysis,” which is found in Appendix I and provides substantial demographic, socioeconomic, employment, business feedback and regional asset data.

The plan then delves into an analysis of three critical opportunities:

- 1) **Workforce talent development and recruitment**, including opportunities for sector partnerships, career pathways, work-based learning, talent recruitment, and broadband infrastructure development,
- 2) **Sectoral development in four target sectors**, including business services and IT data centers, advanced manufacturing and materials, high-value natural resource products, and health care, and
- 3) **Cyber infrastructure**, including novel approaches to regional collaboration in infrastructure development and opportunities to provide incentives for “middle mile” and “last mile” network completion.

The plan also includes opportunities for rejuvenated regional cohesion in:

- 1) **Entrepreneurial and small business development initiatives,**
- 2) **Quality of life and regional branding enhancement,**
- 3) **Pooling of resources for region-wide infrastructure improvement,** and
- 4) **More systematic focus on target employment sectors and career pathways.**

Throughout the development of this Growth & Diversification Investment Plan, there has been a consistent expression of hope and enthusiasm around ideas for boosting regional connectivity and learning opportunities, replicating successes, learning from mistakes, and leveraging our assets. We can revamp the image of Southern Virginia through intentional collaboration of local leaders, organizations, businesses, and citizens committed to crafting a positive regional brand. The intent of the Region 3 Growth and Diversification Investment Plan is to continue to build on these expressions of hope and “hunger,” by creating a sound framework for the Region 3 Council to use as it considers its investment opportunities.