

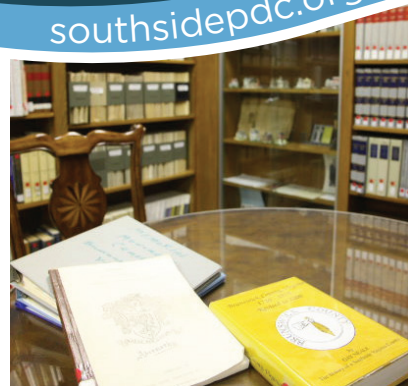
SOUTHSIDE PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION



2014-2015 Annual Report



southsidepdc.org





From the Chairman

Gregg Gordon

It has been an honor to Chair the Southside Planning District Commission for another year. As I think back through the Commission's accomplishments in FY15, I can't help to think about "Our Story", which was the theme highlighted during our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update. This year-long process was more than a requirement by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for our Commission to maintain its status as a designated Economic Development District (EDD), it was about the opportunity to reexamine ourselves, diversify our economic development strategies, reshape our educational beliefs, and foster cooperation across political boundaries. I am particularly grateful to the CEDS Committee and those that participated in the stakeholder survey in which we gained a better understanding of our vision and the creation of a unified approach which makes *Southern Virginia* a stronger, more vibrant region.

The region has endured the loss of its core industries over the last 30 years — textiles, furniture and tobacco. However, our region has found ways to survive these economic "shocks." Southern Virginia is known for its resilience, our engrained work ethic, and most important, our people. The region stands out due to its natural beauty, friendly people and favorable cost of living.

The story of Southern Virginia is about workforce development and providing people with multifaceted educational opportunities. It's about investing in each community which makes our region stronger. In short, the Southern Virginia story — which is so rich with natural resources, a growing labor force, and financial investment — is about land, people, and capital.

The Southside Planning District Commission has played a significant role in the development of the *Southern Virginia* economy which extends well beyond our three-county border. The PDC staff continues to be a vital resource for the region by providing services such as grant writing and project administration, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, trail and transportation planning, and community and economic development. It is my hope that we will continue to work with our localities and our regional partners to shape growth and development for the *Southern Virginia* region.

From the Executive Director

Gail Moody

The Southside Planning District Commission was chartered on September 15, 1969 marking 45 years of regional cooperation and partnerships. We are proud of our many accomplishments and successful record of solving common problems for our local governments, providing long-range planning and technical assistance.

We embarked this year on revamping our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to better identify our region. The process brought together public sector engagement, business interests and local officials in the development of the vision, priorities, and implementation strategies for the region. A new website (www.sovaconomy.com) was also launched as a final step in the development of the report with the inclusion of a “regional dashboard” for evaluating and updating the economic performance of the region.

As the landscape of federal and state requirements change, our staff is called upon to assist our local governments in understanding these changes. The Southside PDC staff continues to be a vital resource for the region by providing services such as grant writing, project administration, community development planning, economic development, rural transportation planning and GIS/mapping. Our dedicated staff has vast experience in connecting our community needs with creative partnerships and financing resulting in long lasting economic opportunities for the region.

As we celebrate our successes over the past 45 years, we look forward to our future and embrace new opportunities that await us. The Commission remains committed in seeking a sustainable, diverse economic future for our region while providing a better quality of life for its citizens.



A photograph of a stone wall in the foreground with the words 'VIRGINIA LAKESIDE' and 'COMMERCE PARK' carved into it. In the background, a white water tower with a logo is visible against a blue sky with clouds. The scene is surrounded by green grass and trees.

VIRGINIA LAKESIDE
COMMERCE PARK

Our Mission

The primary objective of the Southside Planning District Commission is to promote the orderly and efficient development of the economic, physical and social fabric of this rural region by assisting local governmental units in developing policies, programs and projects which directly impact the region's economic, physical and social needs.

TOWN OF SOUTH HILL

West Main Street Project, Phase One

The Town of South Hill received Community Development Block Grant funding in the amount of \$1,180,882 to address the needs of the West Main Street, Phase One project area. The West Main Street Project, Phase One is a multi-year project with \$600,000 allocated for Multi-Year One and \$580,882 allocated for Multi-Year Two. The Town entered an Agreement with DHCD on November 29, 2013 for MY-One Activities. A total of four (4) units were rehabilitated, three (3) units were substantially reconstructed, and three (3) dilapidated, vacant units were demolished under this phase. The Town entered an Agreement with DHCD on December 10, 2014 for MY-Two Activities. To date, two (2) units have been rehabilitated, two (2) have been substantially reconstructed, and one (1) unit is currently under construction. Additional project activities that were completed throughout the project include the installation of an 8' PVC gravity sewer line, the installation of curb and gutter, and storm drainage improvements to eliminate flooding in residential yards.

The South Hill West Main Street Project is located in the west central area portion of town,

between the Virginia Primary Highway 47, and US Highway 58. This area lies closely to downtown, and is an older, primarily residential community and is bordered in all directions by residential development and some commercial businesses.

TOWN OF SOUTH BOSTON

Washington-Coleman Housing Project

In January 2014, the Town of South Boston was awarded a Community Development Block Grant agreement with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) for the Washington-Coleman Housing Rehabilitation Project. The Multi-Year One contract was executed in May 2014, in the amount of \$600,000, to rehabilitate and/or substantially reconstruct eight (8) low- and moderate-income (LMI) households, one (1) of which is a first-time homebuyer. To date, three (3) investor-owned LMI households have been rehabilitated, two (2) owner-occupied homes have been substantially reconstructed, and three (3) owner-occupied homes are under contract for substantial reconstruction. The Town anticipates executing the Multi-Year Two contract by January 2016, in the amount of \$400,000, to serve six (6) more LMI households and demolish four (4) vacant, dilapidated homes.

Community Development/ Housing

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Tiny Road Project

Mecklenburg County received Community Development Block Grant funding in the amount of \$949,242 to address the needs of the Tiny Road Community. The Tiny Road Project is a multi-year project with \$600,000 allocated for Multi-Year One and \$349,242 allocated for Multi-Year Two. The Town entered an Agreement with DHCD on June 8, 2012 for Multi-Year One Activities. A total of eight (8) units were rehabilitated, one (1) unit was substantially reconstructed, and three (3) dilapidated, vacant structures were demolished under this phase. The Town entered an Agreement with DHCD on November 20, 2013 for MY-Two Activities. To date, eight (8) units have been rehabilitated, one (1) unit is currently under construction, and four (4) dilapidated, vacant structures were demolished. Additional project activities that were completed throughout the project include the installation of an 8' water line, installation of eight (8) fire hydrants, thirty (30) homes were connected to municipal water, and storm drainage improvements which eliminated flooding in residential yards.

The Tiny Road community is located one-half mile northwest of the Town of South Hill, along State Primary Highway 47. The Project Area encompasses the homes on Crenshaw, Ivy, Rainey, and Tiny Road.

Indoor Plumbing Project



Southside PDC Planning Technician, Stephanie Puryear, presents homeowner with keys to his new house.



Tiny Road - Before



Tiny Road - After



W. Third Street - Before



Washington-Coleman - Before



Radio Road - Before



W. Third Street - After



Washington-Coleman - After



Radio Road - After

Community Development Housing Projects



West Main Street - Before



West Main Street - After



Thomas Street - Before



Thomas Street - After



Economic Development

CHASE CITY

Sewer System Improvement Project

In March 2012, the Town of Chase City was awarded a United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) loan in the amount of \$1,944,000 and a USDA-RD grant in the amount of \$695,000 to improve its sewer lines and Waste Water Treatment Plant. The project was completed under budget, and the Town was able to use left over funds to purchase needed equipment. Construction was completed in September 2014, and equipment purchases were completed in April 2015.

ALBERTA

Regional Utility Consolidation Project

CDBG grant funds totaling \$969,706 assisted the Town of Alberta with providing a regional solution to the town's severely dilapidated sewer infrastructure system through the repair and installation of new infrastructure that conveyed wastewater to Lawrenceville for treatment; two systems were consolidated into one system owned, operated, and maintained by the Town of Lawrenceville. The project benefited 219 persons, of which 131 or 60% were LMI persons. The Lawrenceville and Alberta Town Councils and the Brunswick County IDA executed regional agreements detailing the terms and conditions associated with the consolidation. Project costs totaled \$3,440,056.

Lake Country Development Corporation (LCDC)

The Commission assists with the ongoing economic development efforts within the District. Lake Country Development Corporation (LCDC) provides low-interest financing for local economic development needs through three (3) revolving loan funds:

- 1) Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund (RLF);
- 2) United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Intermediary Relending Program; and an
- 3) Intermediary Development Grant.

The Commission's is responsible for coordinating and disseminating the information and resources necessary to effectively manage this program. Since 1981, LCDC's EDA RLF has closed 50 loans, resulting in the retention of 98 jobs and the creation of 1,611 jobs. Approximately \$8.5

million in EDA revolving loan funds has been leveraged with \$6.9 million in local match or other public funding and \$46.3 million in private funding or new equity resulting in a leveraging ratio of 6.25 non-federal dollars to one (1) federal dollar. The current EDA RLF portfolio consists of five (5) active loans.

Adaptive Reuse for Mixed-Use Development

Vast natural resources and easy accessibility are just a few assets that Southern Virginia offers. Recognizing their collective strengths in the past few years, the region's localities have developed greater regional partnerships to facilitate economic development. This approach to economic development focuses on investments in each community which makes the whole region stronger and more attractive to businesses. As part of this strategy and building on years of downtown revitalization investments, two Mecklenburg County Towns have partnered with VHDA's Mixed-Use, Mixed-Income (MUMI) program to look at downtown residential development as an opportunity for economic growth.

With assistance from the Southside Planning District Commission, the Towns of Clarksville and South Hill successfully obtained MUMI funds to perform physical assessments of downtown buildings and studies to determine the market for affordable rental housing. The Town of South Hill utilized MUMI planning funds to explore the potential for adaptive reuse of

four vacant downtown properties. The Town of Clarksville is using MUMI planning grant funds to look at the opportunity for redevelopment of a significant historic, but severely dilapidated, former tobacco warehouse. Both studies will provide the localities with strategies to achieve their development priorities and help identify potential developers with the interest and experience to rehabilitate its existing building stock into mixed use, mixed income projects.



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2015

A regional strategic plan for Southern Virginia

Anticipating the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) release of revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) guidelines, the Southside Planning District Commission embarked on a total rewrite of its CEDS. The laundry-list of 10 detailed items previously required by EDA was replaced with four essential planning elements: (a) summary of economic development conditions of the region; (b) in-depth SWOT analysis of the region; (c) strategies and implementation plan that is consistent with applicable State and local economic development or workforce development strategies; and (d) performance measures used to

evaluate the Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS. The new guidelines also include how the CEDS supports and advances economic resilience in the region.

The Southside PDC CEDS Strategy Committee held two work sessions during the year-long planning process. The Committee (representing the main economic interests of the region) guided the vision, priorities and implementation strategies for the region. The



Recruitment of Retention

Investing

Commission's Executive Board and full Commission also accepted the plan as the economic development plan for the region.

Public participation opportunities were made available throughout the process of creating the 2015 CEDS, which included a 30-day public comment period, culminating in a public comment item on the April 23, 2015 Commission Agenda.

A new website dedicated to the CEDS was also created to help more effectively communicate the CEDS throughout the region and beyond (www.sovaconomy.com).



Economic Development Priorities

- Development of workforce training programs
- Leveraging of resources for infrastructure improvements
- Increased provision of freight service in support of industries that can benefit from rail
- Expand broadband communication networks for attracting new entrepreneurship and businesses to the region
- Effectively promoting the region

Regional Strategic Plan Goals

- **LAND:** Build on and improve the fixed assets of the region — water, sewer natural gas, broadband, transportation, downtowns, industrial site, and natural assets — to attract and support business and industry growth and provide a high quality of life throughout the region
- **PEOPLE:** Invest in and develop the human capital of the region — the youth, the workforce, and the disenfranchised — to effectively provide the education and training needed for a workforce ready for a wide variety of careers such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, modern agriculture, and entrepreneurship.
- **CAPITAL:** Pursue a wide range of financing opportunities to improve public school infrastructure, utilities, transportation, industrial parks, brownfields, recreational amenities, and capital for start-up companies.

The Vision

A sustainable, diverse economy that promotes a skilled workforce for 21st Century employment sectors including advanced manufacturing, modern agriculture, healthcare and entrepreneurship, while celebrating its natural heritage through tourism.



GIS/Planning & Technical Assistance

GIS/GPS Activity during FY15

- Produced map documents including (print and electronic):
 - Application maps for CDBG Planning Grants and Housing Grants
 - Maps for tourism publications in Brunswick County
 - Existing pre-2015 Enterprise Zone maps for several localities
 - 2015 Enterprise Zone application maps for Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties
 - Created 23 maps for use in the 2015 Clarksville Comprehensive Plan

- Created webmaps for the following projects:
 - Tobacco Heritage Trail (for public use)
 - Mecklenburg Enterprise Zone – 2015
 - CDBG Housing Projects – Planning Maps for each project
 - Shows units with rehab conditions
 - Displays unit numbers, tax parcel information, housing unit information
 - Shows flood zones, wetlands, and other environmental features
- Worked with South Hill to create a South Hill Marketing Book.
- Began working with Brunswick County Planning Office to assist in GIS improvements and training to planning staff.
- During the period of Jan 1, 2015 through June 30, 2015, map production increased by 83% compared to the same time in 2014 (from 47 to 86 maps.) GIS/GPS activities increased by 84% (25 to 46). Requests for Census/Demographics have increased by 36% (25 to 34).

Completed Maps (Paper, Electronic, & Webmaps)	Completed Maps (Webmap only)
159	8

Requests for Existing GIS Data	General GIS/ GPS Activities	Requests for Census, Demographics, & Geographic Info.
6	75	56



Rural Transportation

Virginia Department of Transportation
(MAP — 21) projects submitted in
November 2014:

- TOWN OF BRODNAX
Brodnax Depot Renovation Project
\$306,348
- TOWN OF ALBERTA
Tobacco Heritage Trail Extension
\$211,250
- TOWN OF SOUTH HILL
Downtown Project – Phase IV
\$155,495

House Bill 2 (HB2) — Funding the Right Transportation Project

Southside PDC staff has worked closely with localities throughout the region to help them better understand VDOT's HB2 process. Governor McAuliffe signed HB2 into law in 2014, which directs the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop and use a scoring process for project selection by July 2016. Projects will be scored according to key factors—congestion mitigation, economic development, accessibility, safety, environmental quality and land use and transportation coordination. Projects that stimulate economic growth may be more important for rural areas in the state.

ABOUT HB2

House Bill 2 (HB2) is about investing limited tax dollars in the right projects that meet the most critical transportation needs in Virginia. At the heart of the new law is scoring projects based on an objective process that involves public engagement and input. Once projects are scored, the CTB will have the best information possible to select right projects for funding.

The information shared with our localities will enable them to submit applications for several transportation projects. The Southside Planning District staff also plans to submit applications to expand the Tobacco Heritage Trail throughout the region.







Wild Blueway

Brings New Opportunities for Tourists in Southside

A 'Grand Launch' opening ceremony for the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway, a regional water trail, was held on June 16th at Staunton River State Park in Halifax County. The water trail spans across Halifax and Mecklenburg Counties and encompasses more than 100 miles of navigable water along the Banister, Dan and Staunton (Roanoke) rivers offering a paddling experience unlike anywhere else in the country. Over 80 miles of this water trail has been designated as Virginia Scenic River with more than 30 access points as well as access to state parks and numerous U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-operated day use areas and campgrounds. Some sections of the Blueway rivers pass through historic towns, but far more is completely underdeveloped allowing you to paddle for miles to see wildlife such as ospreys and bald eagles.

"This has been a great collaborative effort" Mecklenburg County Tourism Coordinator Justin Kerns said. The ceremony marked the finalization of a journey that began nearly a year ago when the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia State Parks, the Dan River Basin Association and the Roanoke River Basin Association's Upper Reach Project teamed up with Mecklenburg and Halifax Counties and the Southside Planning District Commission to envision a marketing strategy to better utilize the beautiful

waterways in the area for recreational and tourism benefits. With assistance from Virginia Tourism, the team pulled together a marketing initiative that developed the name, logo and website (www.sovawildblueway.com).

Speakers at the ceremony included Kerns, Senator Frank Ruff, Virginia Secretary of Commerce Maurice Jones, 60th District Delegate James Edmonds, Halifax County Tourism Coordinator Linda Shepperd, Halifax Town Manager Carl Espy, Staunton River State Park Ranger Adam Layman, Department of Conservation and Recreation Director Clyde Cristman, Sandra Tanner of the Virginia Tourism Corporation and Michael Womack and Col. Steven Baker of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Secretary Jones spoke about how resilient the people are in Southern Virginia and said that "This is the sort of thing that we have to do. We have to use the assets we have to journey back to prosperity."

"Halifax and Mecklenburg are very rich in ecological diversity, and the river system presents abundant opportunities for low impact outdoor recreation, heritage tourism and wildlife protection" Espy said. "These opportunities provide a positive and sustainable economic development impact for small town revitalization and rural preservation."

Town of Halifax - Banister River Gateway Project

Since identifying the significance of the surrounding natural resources found along Banister Lake and the Banister River in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Halifax continued working with the Southside Planning District Commission and other organizations to secure VDOT Enhancement Funds for the construction of the Banister River Gateway Project. On April 24, 2015, the Town of Halifax hosted an official opening and dedication ceremony marking the completion of the project. The gateway project was awarded the 2015 President's Award (top honor) by the Virginia Municipal League.



"This is what a great transportation project looks like."

—SHANNON VALENTINE, *Commonwealth Transportation Board*





Blueway Project receives National Excellence in Partnership Award

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recognized the Roanoke River Basin Association's Upper Reach Program as the recipient of the 2014 U. S. Corps of Engineers National Excellence in Partnership Award. This award recognizes the steps taken by the Roanoke River Basin Association- Upper Reach to provide ecotourism, recreational therapy and environmental tourism throughout the Roanoke River Basin. The project also provided an innovative universally accessible canoe and kayak launch creating recreational opportunities that empower communities to connect with the outdoors through waterways. The partnership has resulted in a greater appreciation and involvement by the community and has acted as a springboard for larger partnerships including the creation of the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway marketing and branding campaign. The completion of a second universally accessible launch downstream provides one of the first fully accessible blueways on the east coast.

This award was presented to the Roanoke River Basin Association — Upper Reach in April of 2015.

Golden Leaf Half Marathon 13.1 Miles



Tobacco Heritage Trail

The Tobacco Heritage Trail (THT) is a regional, long distance, non-motorized trail in Southern Virginia. Plans for the trail are to span 150 miles across Mecklenburg, Halifax, Brunswick, Lunenburg and Charlotte Counties. Currently, there are approximately 54 miles of completed trail with an additional 1.1 mile to be added with the completion of the newest section of trail in Boydton.

The trail is an important community asset and provides tourism dollars to localities in the region. More than 100 Geocachers from across the State flocked to Lawrenceville this year to take part in this activity developed for the trail by Southside Planning District Commission Trail Coordinator, Heather Susee. And just this year, the trail was awarded the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail Status, an honor that proves the trails are an attractive venue for exercise and the appreciation of nature. This recognition will put the THT on the map for birders and trail lovers from all around the world.



MORE THT HIGHLIGHTS.....

- The Tobacco Heritage Trail website now includes an interactive map developed by Southside PDC staff of the trail. Users can see the locations of bathrooms, parking areas and bridges.
- The THT hosted several races throughout the year including the Hobbit Run, the Golden Leaf 15K and the Viper Half Marathon. Team Viper, from the UK, launched their first race on American soil in April 2015.
- The Boy Scouts of American teamed up with trail officials for a geocaching project. The project will lead geocaches at each

location of the Tobacco Heritage Trail. The geocaches are housed in bird houses constructed by the shop class at Bluestone High School in Mecklenburg County.

- The South Boston Rotary Club donated \$500 to the Roanoke River Rails to Trails for maintaining the THT website. The Rotary Club also donated two benches for the trail.
- The South Hill American Legion donated \$200 for the printing of new brochures for the trail. These brochures can currently be found throughout the region in shops and travel centers.

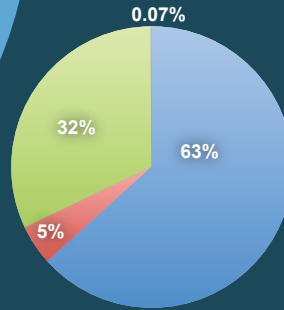


Boydton, Virginia Tobacco Heritage Trail Ribbon Cutting



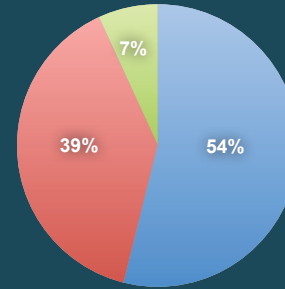
Finance Report

Year Ended June 30, 2015



Revenues

- Federal
- State
- Local/Program Income
- Interest and Investments



Expenditures

- Direct Grant Expenses
- Personnel
- Operations & Other

REVENUES — Grants and Appropriations

Federal	\$	1,038,150
State		75,971
Local/Program Income		525,436
Interest		1,024
Total	\$	1,640,581

EXPENDITURES

Direct Grant Expenses	\$	944,202
Personnel		688,028
Operations & Other		120,557
Total	\$	1,752,787

Net Change in Fund Balance	\$	(112,206)
Fund Balance - Beginning of Year	\$	1,262,754
Fund Balance - End of Year	\$	1,150,548



Secretary of Technology, Karen Jackson, was the guest speaker at the Southside PDC Annual Meeting held in October 2014. Ms. Jackson spoke on several areas where technology is important to Southside Virginia: broadband, economic development, healthcare and education.



Southside Planning District Commission Staff

Stephanie Puryear, Planning Technician II; Deborah Gosney, Chief of Project Development; Stephanie Creedle, Office Manager/HR; Robin Tuck, Regional Planner; Gail Moody, Executive Director; Andy Wells, GIS/IT Coordinator; Ashleigh Zincone, Senior Planner; Sangi Cooper, Regional Planner III; Linda Elms, Administrative Assistant; Joanne Turner, Planning Technician (not pictured).

Commission Members and Local Governments

(Served from July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

Garland Baird*

John Cataldo

Bernard Jones, Sr. – Vice Chairman*

Welton Tyler*

Leslie Weddington

TOWN OF SOUTH BOSTON

George Leonard*

Coleman Speece*

Roger Thaxton, Jr.

Tina Wyatt-Younger

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Gregg Gordon – Chairman*

Andy Hargrove

Angie Kellett

William Park*

Samuel Piercy, Jr.

Charlie Simmons*

Glanzy Spain, Jr.

Dan Tanner, Jr.

TOWN OF SOUTH HILL

Kim Callis

Lillie Feggins-Boone

Earl Horne*

*Executive Board

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*Counties of Brunswick, Halifax and Mecklenburg – Town of South Boston – Town of South Hill
Towns of Alberta, Boydton, Brodnax, Chase City, Clarksville, Halifax, LaCrosse, Lawrenceville, Scottsburg, and Virgilina*