



# 2030 Strategic Plan

Approved July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025



# Henrico EDA's Purpose, Mission and Vision:

---



## Purpose

*We believe:*

Our role is to grow Henrico's Economy for All



## Mission

*So, we:*

Solve challenges and provide opportunities for existing businesses, fuel startups, attract new businesses, and support the community drivers of economic growth.



## Vision

*In order to become/achieve:*

A vibrant, innovative, and dynamic community where everyone thrives.

# Henrico EDA's Strategic Plan Goals:

---



- 1.** Strengthen Henrico's economic vitality by enabling businesses—both established and emerging—to innovate, expand, and thrive through tailored support, collaborative partnerships, and proactive strategic investment.

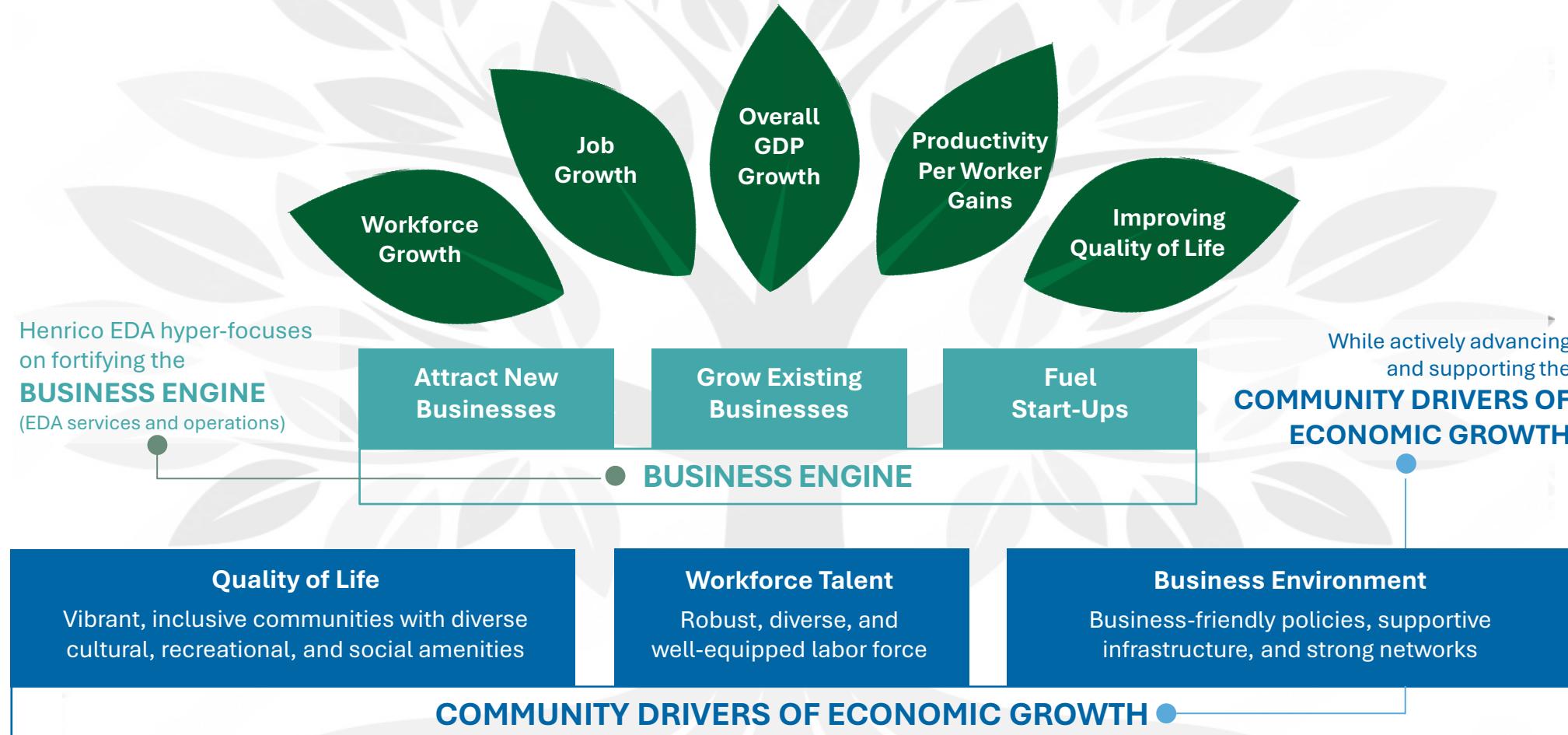


- 2.** Position Henrico County as a leading regional destination by cultivating an exceptional quality of life, future-ready workforce, and integrated community and industry initiatives that attract talent, investment, and sustained economic growth.

# Henrico Economic Development

An Integrated Approach to Building a Thriving Community for All

VISION: *Henrico is a vibrant, innovative, and dynamic community where everyone thrives.*



### Goal 1:

Strengthen Henrico's economic vitality by enabling businesses—both established and emerging—to innovate, expand, and thrive through tailored support, collaborative partnerships, and proactive strategic investment.

# Strategic Plan Overview

### Goal 2:

Position Henrico County as a leading regional destination by cultivating an exceptional quality of life, future-ready workforce, and integrated community and industry initiatives that attract talent, investment, and sustained economic growth.

## 1.

### Enhance Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion Efforts

1. Systematically capture and address Henrico business community needs
2. Provide specialized support for new and existing businesses to scale operations and overcome operation barriers.
3. Develop, offer, and promote a suite of tools for helping businesses enhance and/or scale their key assets)
4. Proactively identify and address common business challenges through targeted programming and resources.
5. Communicate a compelling, unified vision for Henrico's future to businesses, residents, and stakeholders

## 6. Market All the County and EDA Have to Offer



### Vision:

A vibrant, innovative, and dynamic community where everyone thrives.

### As a Business Ecosystem Catalyst

## 3. Focus and Strengthen the Region's Workforce and Talent Pipeline

1. Align educational and workforce training programs with current and future industry skill requirements
2. Expand apprenticeships and retraining pathways in target industries.
3. Facilitate employer-driven upskilling initiatives.

## 5.

### Build Strategic Industry-Specific Coalitions

1. Build sustained partnerships in the county's target industries to overcome barriers, close gaps, and spur long-term economic growth
2. Strengthen public-private partnerships to accelerate and de-risk targeted development projects.
3. Drive regional collaboration around shared economic priorities and industry needs.

## 4.

### Align Infrastructure and Development with 2030 Vision

1. Align zoning and redevelopment efforts with market demands for mixed-use, live-work-play hubs.
2. Support the expansion of robust, future-ready digital infrastructure county-wide.
3. Repurpose underutilized county assets to foster business innovation hubs.
4. Improve universal mobility and transportation infrastructure county-wide.
5. Integrate Quality of Life measures into economic development decision-making.

## 6. Market All the County and EDA Have to Offer

S.I.R.



# Enhance Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion Efforts

**Objectives:** Deepen support for existing Henrico businesses, helping them overcome operational barriers, seize opportunities, invest in growth, and remain long-term contributors to the County's economic vitality.

## 1. Systematically capture and address Henrico business community needs to enhance retention

1. Re-evaluate the objectives and benefits of *Business First* information gathering efforts
2. Execute regular BRE surveys of Henrico's business community to identify and prioritize needs

## 2. Provide specialized support for new and existing businesses to scale operations and overcome operation barriers.

1. Create a "Business Solutions Desk" within the EDA that fields requests for advice and support (e.g., market expansion support, workforce recruitment and training assistance, supply-chain logistics).
2. Evaluate the benefits of a more consistent project management system to track and collaborate on EDA activities.
3. Implement a subsidized consulting program featuring local executives (e.g., a SCORE-like program).

## 3. Develop, offer and promote a suite of resources and tools (e.g., incentives, grants) for helping businesses enhance and/or scale their key assets (e.g., building, workforce, equipment)

1. Inventory, improve accessibility of and connect businesses to county-, state- and national-level incentives, programs and grant opportunities (e.g., manufacturing extension services).
2. Expand enterprise zone incentives for existing businesses to upgrade equipment, invest in R&D, or adopt new technologies (e.g., AI, automation).
3. Organize and package programs that include a mix of funding sources and applications to solve common challenges (e.g., *Henrico Tomorrow*)
4. Develop programs specifically for small businesses owned by historically underrepresented groups.

# Enhance Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion Efforts

## 4. Proactively identify and address common business challenges through targeted programming and resources.

1. Host “Barrier-Breaker Workshops” pairing businesses with service providers (e.g., HR consultants, AI/IT experts, supply chain specialists) to share best practices and craft solutions.
2. Strengthen programming that connects local business owners to valuable knowledge, skills and resources (e.g., CATALYST)

## 5. Communicate a compelling, unified vision for Henrico’s future to businesses, residents, and stakeholders.

1. Articulate what the EDA’s 2030 vision (*A vibrant, innovative, and dynamic community where everyone thrives*) tangibly means to key local stakeholders
2. Publish a forward-looking “Henrico 2030” narrative showing how the County is preparing for tech growth, workforce evolution, and infrastructure enhancements.
3. Offer a “Vision Tour” program for local business leaders—site visits and presentations on major upcoming projects and redevelopment zones.

# Enhance Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion Efforts

## **KPIs:**

### **Inputs:**

- Annual budget dedicated to retention programs
- Number of EDA staff assigned

### **Outputs:**

- Number of businesses surveyed through the annual BRE survey
- Number of consultative engagements held per year.
- Number of “Barrier-Breaker Workshops” conducted annually
- Number of attendees to CATALYST/BB-Workshops annually

### **Outcomes:**

- Percentage increase in business retention rate year-over-year.
- Number of businesses utilizing incentives for expansion.
- Business satisfaction rating with EDA services (annual survey).

# Connect and Grow the Startup and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

**Objectives:** Cultivate a dynamic, inclusive environment where innovative startups can launch, thrive, and scale – solidifying Henrico as a regional magnet for entrepreneurial talent, venture capital, and cutting-edge ideas.

## 1. Establish a robust pipeline of startups around the county's target industry clusters

1. Organize and strengthen partnerships with local incubators, accelerators and universities
2. Funnel student-led ventures into local incubators.
3. Encourage multi-institution labs and maker spaces that share specialized equipment and expertise.

## 2. Connect early-stage entrepreneurs to existing and new co-working spaces and maker labs

1. Conduct an “Entrepreneurial Infrastructure Audit” to identify co-working spaces, maker labs, and real estate suitable for conversion.
2. Offer small grants, lease subsidies, or property tax incentives to developers who create new collaborative workspaces.

## 3. Coordinate networking events and pitch competitions to encourage collaborations and attract investment.

1. Explore and launch regular “StartUp Henrico” pitch events, awarding small cash prizes and in-kind services.
2. Support and organize monthly sector-focused meetup nights to strengthen networks and drive collaboration.

## 4. Engage local banks, venture capital, and philanthropic organizations to expand funding sources.

1. Support “seed fund” initiatives that pool capital from local banks, philanthropic foundations, and EDA matching dollars.
2. Facilitate a “Venture Matching Portal” where startups can pitch and connect with local investor groups.

## Connect and Grow the Startup and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

### **KPIs:**

### **Inputs:**

- Annual funding invested in startup ecosystem initiatives (incubators, events, seed funds).
- Number of EDA staff assigned

### **Outputs:**

- Number of networking/pitch events hosted annually.
- Number of active partnerships with incubators/universities.

### **Outcomes:**

- Number of startups reported annually.
- Number of startups that remain active after 1-3 years.
- Amount of new venture capital or angel investment attracted each year.
- Jobs created annually by local startups.

# Focus and Strengthen the Region's Workforce & Talent Pipeline

**Objectives:** Develop a robust, future-proof workforce capable of meeting the needs of Henrico's diverse industries through strong education-industry partnerships, skill development programs, and pathways to high-demand careers.

## 1. Align educational and workforce training programs with current and future industry skill requirements

1. Implement a "NextGen Workforce Development" framework that brings together major employers, K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities to co-design programs addressing immediate and emerging skill demands
2. Advocate for and support initiatives that encourage the development of STEM, AI, and advanced manufacturing tracks in schools.

## 2. Expand apprenticeships and retraining pathways in target industries.

1. Partner with manufacturing associations (or new, sector-based groups) to scale formalized apprenticeship models (e.g., the apprenticeship programs in Germany or South Carolina)
2. Offer EDA grants to help small and medium-sized businesses create or expand apprenticeship programs, with a focus on building in-demand skills in target industries.

## 3. Facilitate employer-driven upskilling initiatives.

1. Create an "Upskill Henrico" platform offering shared training resources and group purchasing discounts and promote it regionally.
2. Recognize and publicize employers who demonstrate best-in-class upskilling programs

## Focus and Strengthen the Region's Workforce & Talent Pipeline

### **KPIs:**

### **Inputs:**

- Funds invested in workforce training initiatives
- Number of EDA staff assigned

### **Outputs:**

- Number of new education-industry training programs initiated
- Number of apprenticeship slots created annually
- Number of participants in the “Upskill Henrico” platform

### **Outcomes:**

- Percentage increase in industry-relevant certifications awarded
- Employment placement rate of workforce program participants in targeted industries
- Reduction in local employer-reported skill gaps

# Align Infrastructure and Development with 2030 Vision

**Objectives:** Integrate infrastructure, land use, and quality of life (QoL) enhancements so that Henrico remains competitive, attractive, and future-ready, enabling both businesses and residents to thrive.

## 1. Align zoning and redevelopment efforts with market demands for mixed-use, live-work-play hubs.

1. Collaborate with the County Planning Department and local developers to create or update zoning overlays
2. Conduct a “Redevelopment Readiness Study” targeting underutilized or aging commercial areas (e.g., Innsbrook 2.0, Regency Square).

## 2. Support the expansion of robust, future-ready digital infrastructure county-wide.

1. Collaborate with DHCD, ISPs, and regional partners on broadband deployment initiatives.
2. Identify broadband education and access gaps and accelerate the process of closing them.
3. Advance the Global Internet Hub strategic plan.

## 3. Repurpose underutilized county assets to foster business innovation hubs.

1. Inventory county-owned land and vacant commercial buildings to identify prime sites for co-working or small-business innovation hubs.
2. Deploy specialized incentives (e.g., property tax abatements, subsidies) to encourage redevelopment that includes retail, parks, labs, or open workspaces.

## 4. Improve universal mobility and transportation infrastructure county-wide.

1. Collaborate with County’s transportation development division and planning department on accessibility and quality-of-life enhancements in enterprise zones
2. Advocate for mobility enhancements that complement workforce development and placemaking efforts

## Align Infrastructure and Development with 2030 Vision

### 5. Integrate Quality of Life measures into economic development decision-making.

1. Launch a “Henrico Thrive Index”, clearly communicating how improvements in QoL metrics correlate to business attraction and talent retention (e.g. metrics like living conditions and real estate costs, educational outcomes, the strength of social support networks, environmental quality, democratic participation, health outcomes, happiness levels, and other measures beyond traditional economic indicators).
2. Regularly present QoL findings to local policymakers and industry leaders for policy alignment.

#### KPIs:

#### Inputs:

- Land and properties allocated for mixed-use and/or innovation hubs
- Number of EDA staff assigned

#### Outputs:

- Number of zoning plans updated
- Number of Wi-Fi hotspots installed

#### Outcomes:

- Increase in mixed-use development or redeveloped commercial spaces
- Increase in broadband access countywide (% of coverage)
- Mobility improvements (e.g., public transit ridership, miles of new mobility infrastructure offered)

# Building Strategic, Industry-Specific Coalitions

**Objectives:** Develop robust, industry-tailored coalitions that proactively identify and overcome sector-specific barriers, leverage local strengths, and drive coordinated action among public, private, and regional stakeholders to fuel sustainable economic growth.

## 1. Build sustained partnerships in the county's target industries to overcome barriers, close gaps, and spur long-term economic growth

1. Conduct systematic “Target Industry Needs Audits” to pinpoint urgent needs (site readiness, labor shortages, supply-chain gaps) among the county’s target industries.
2. Produce and distribute tailored “Opportunity Briefs” or playbooks for each target sector (e.g., Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing) to guide business and investor engagement.
3. Convene focused forums where industry leaders and stakeholders align on challenges, share resources, and develop solution roadmaps.
4. Provide ongoing support to cross-sector working groups that address industry-specific pain points and opportunities

## 2. Strengthen public-private partnerships to accelerate and de-risk targeted development projects.

1. Formalize an “Executive Roundtable” of key corporate, civic, and government leaders to advise on policy improvements and keep major projects on track.
2. Simplify/digitize permitting steps based on best practices (e.g., Charlotte Development Center and other unified permitting portals).
3. Develop a “Partnership Incentive Program” that rewards private partners who commit resources (capital, expertise) to large-scale infrastructure or redevelopment efforts.

## 3. Drive regional collaboration around shared economic priorities and industry needs.

1. Identify shared regional industry priorities and opportunities.
2. Partner with regional industry and jurisdictional leaders to jointly address identified priorities and opportunities.

## Building Strategic, Industry-Specific Coalitions

### **KPIs:**

### **Inputs:**

- Budget allocated annually to coalition building
- Number of EDA staff assigned

### **Outputs:**

- Number of industry audits completed
- Number of “Opportunity Briefs” or playbooks published per industry

### **Outcomes:**

- Measured reduction in identified barriers

# Market All the County and EDA have to Offer

**Objectives:** Bring to life the presence and success of the Henrico EDA's **BUSINESS ENGINE** and **COMMUNITY DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH** (QoL, Workforce Talent, and business environment) to advance EDA's purpose and vision. This focus area seamlessly supports the other five.

## 1. Establish a unified Marketing Communications Plan that aligns internal and external efforts, strengthens the Henrico EDA brand, and communicates key strategic priorities effectively.

1. Define responsibilities and channels for external marketing (e.g., Greater Richmond Partnership, site selectors, trade shows) and internal communications (within Henrico/RVA region) to ensure collaboration and cohesive messaging.
2. Demonstrate how EDA marketing directly contributes to the other five strategic focus areas (business attraction/retention/expansion, startups, workforce/talent, infrastructure/development, industry coalitions)
3. Establish measurable objectives (SMART) for external and internal marketing, backed by key performance indicators.
4. Roll out the integrated Marketing Communications Plan with EDA staff, ensuring clarity on mission, responsibilities, and timelines.
5. Update and tailor the message architecture for different audience segments, reinforcing Henrico's unique assets and advantages.
6. Implement a year-round editorial schedule anchored by major marketing campaigns to sustain momentum and visibility.

# Market All the County and EDA have to Offer

## **2. Capture and deploy authentic testimonials and personal stories in EDA communications**

1. Develop and launch marketing campaigns that star real people telling their stories, experiences and perspectives
2. Equip EDA leaders and staff with personal branding strategies on LinkedIn.
3. Allocate a dedicated advertising budget to boost particularly high-potential human-centered content.

## **3. Foster real-time engagement and community-building.**

1. Continue to celebrate companies that have operated in the county for extended periods of time (e.g., *Legacy, Recognition Luncheon Awards*)
2. Host interactive virtual events or live streams featuring local business leaders, employees, or newly relocated families.
3. Create a #HenricoStories or #HenricoConnects social media hashtag for ongoing user-generated content.

## **4. Develop and expand mutually beneficial marketing and promotional programs.**

1. Continue to support *Small Business Boost* program
2. Assess and enhance the effectiveness of *Henrico Global Business Gateway* program
3. Explore partnership opportunities that support and enhance local events

## Market All the County and EDA have to Offer

### **KPIs:**

### **Inputs:**

- Marketing and communications budget
- Number of EDA staff assigned

### **Outputs:**

- Number of campaigns, events, and virtual engagements per year.
- Frequency of updates to social media, newsletters, and other digital content.
- Number of personal branding training sessions for staff.

### **Outcomes:**

- Growth in EDA digital engagement (followers, website visits).
- Increased inquiries from prospective businesses, investors, partners, etc. attributed to marketing efforts.

# APPENDIX

- EDA Programs – Existing and New
- Economic Development Model Concept
- Related Insights
- Best Practices
- Roles for the EDA



# EDA Programs – Existing and New

Focus Area	Program	New/Existing	Keep?	Enhance	Implications
<b>0. General &amp; Administrative</b>	Board of Directors Management	Existing	Y		
	General Operational Agency Management	Existing	Y		
	Business First	Existing	N?		
	BRE Survey	New			
	Business Solutions Desk	Existing	Y		
	Henrico Tomorrow	Existing	Y		
	Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs)	Existing	Y		
	Company Incentives	Existing	Y		
	Under-Represented/Minority Program(s)	New			
	CATALYST/"Barrier Breaker" Workshops	Existing	Y		
<b>2. Startup and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem</b>	Startup Virginia Partnership	New	Y		
	Entrepreneurial Infrastructure Audit	New			
	Startup Henrico Pitch Events	New			
<b>S.I.R.</b>					

# EDA Programs – Existing and New

Focus Area	Program	New/Existing	Keep?	Enhance	Implications
<b>3. Workforce and Talent Pipeline</b>	“Upskill Henrico”	New			
	Apprenticeship program grants	New			
<b>4. Infrastructure &amp; QoL</b>	Redevelopment Readiness Study	Existing	Y		
	Henrico Thrive Index	New			
	State of the County Event	Existing	Y		
<b>5. Industry &amp; Regional Coalitions</b>	Target Industry Audits & “Opportunity Briefs”	New			
	Executive Roundtable	New			
	Partnership Incentive Program(s)	New			
<b>6. Marketing</b>	Legacy	Existing	Y	Consider ways to better integrate w/ Marketing	
	Small Business Boost Program	Existing	Y	Consider ways to expand reach and impact	
	Henrico Global Business Gateway	Existing	Y	Consider ways	

# Henrico Economic Development 2030: An Integrated Approach to Building a Thriving Community for All

**Vision:** Henrico is a vibrant, innovative, and dynamic community where everyone thrives.

Henrico EDA hyper-focusses on fortifying the **BUSINESS ENGINE** (EDA services and operations)

## Business Engine

Job Creation  
Workforce Growth  
Productivity Per Worker Gains  
Overall GDP Growth  
Improving Quality of Life

While actively advancing and supporting the **COMMUNITY DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### Attract New Businesses

### Grow Existing Businesses

### Fuel Start-Ups



### Quality of Life

Vibrant, inclusive communities with diverse cultural, recreational, and social amenities

- Working culture
- Parks
- Libraries
- Athletics
- Infrastructure
- Schools
- Environment
- Arts & Culture
- Healthcare & Wellness
- Housing options
- Public safety
- Transportation & mobility

### Workforce Talent

Robust, diverse, and well-equipped labor force

- K-12 Schools
- Colleges, Universities
- Adult/continuing education
- Mentorship
- Networking
- Apprenticeships/internships/on-the-job training programs
- Vocational schools
- Educational pathways

### Business Environment

Business-friendly policies, supportive infrastructure, and strong networks

- Regulatory and policy climate
- Infrastructure and utilities
- Financial and capital access
- Start-up support
- Real estate and site selection
- Regional connectivity
- Placemaking – Sense of community and culture

## Community Drivers of Economic Growth

# Enhance Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Efforts

## Relevant Insights and Best Practices:

- **Systematic Outreach** programs like “Business Walks” or “Listening Tours” (used by many EDAs) provide real-time feedback.
- **Targeted Incentives** for existing businesses (seen in Lansing’s insurance sector, FloridaMakes for manufacturing) can boost R&D, digital transformation, and workforce development.
- **Celebrating Milestones** fosters goodwill, as recommended by stakeholders who emphasize the importance of recognizing business anniversaries and expansions.

## Recommended Role for Henrico EDA:

- **Proactive Partner:** Regularly check in with local businesses, learn about needs and obstacles, and offer or broker solutions.
- **Catalyst for Growth:** Provide or facilitate consulting, technical assistance, and specialized financing to help businesses modernize and scale.
- **Voice & Vision:** Communicate a clear vision of Henrico’s future to instill confidence among local employers and residents that the County will continue to invest in shared success.

# Connect and Grow the Startup and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

## Relevant Insights and Best Practices:

- **Incubator-Accelerator-University Partnerships** (e.g., Boulder, CO's integrated approach, or BYU's role in Provo) show how aligned support drives a continual pipeline of new ventures.
- **Public-Private Funding Collaborations** (e.g., Colorado's SBDC TechSource, Life Science Washington Institute) demonstrate how local capital can be leveraged with state or federal grants.
- **Ecosystem Mapping** is widely used in top startup hubs (like Raleigh-Durham, NC and Colorado Springs, CO) to systematically identify and plug resource gaps—particularly for early-stage ventures.

## Recommended Role for Henrico EDA:

- **Ecosystem Builder:** Identify gaps in entrepreneurial support (co-working spaces, seed funding) and coordinate resources with universities, incubators, and accelerators.
- **Capacity Builder:** Provide technical assistance, mentorship programs, and access to local, state, and federal financing mechanisms.
- **Connector & Promoter:** Connect startups to local banks, venture funds, and philanthropic groups and highlight Henrico's entrepreneurial success stories to attract broader interest.

# Focus and Strengthen the Region's Workforce & Talent Pipeline

## Relevant Insights and Best Practices:

- **Apprenticeship & Retraining Programs** in advanced manufacturing hubs (e.g., Spartanburg, SC; Ogden, UT) have proven effective in closing talent gaps.
- **Employer-Driven Upskilling** successes in the tech and advanced manufacturing sectors (e.g., Utah Advanced Materials Manufacturing Initiative, Silicon Slopes) demonstrate that public-private partnerships can rapidly align training with new technology needs.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Workforce Councils** (e.g., Workforce Boulder County, Lansing Insurance Council) create consistent feedback loops between industry and education.

## Recommended Role for Henrico EDA:

- **Workforce Convener:** Bridge connections between K-12, higher education, workforce development training organizations, and employers to align curricula and training with in-demand skill sets.
- **Funding & Resource Connector:** Link businesses and educational institutions to grants, apprenticeship programs, and technical training resources.
- **Champion of Upskilling:** Encourage employer-led training initiatives that foster continuous learning and retention.

# Align Infrastructure and Development with 2030 Vision

## Relevant Insights and Best Practices:

- **Mixed-Use Innovation Zones** (e.g., Provo's Silicon Slopes) demonstrate how flexible office/innovation districts can retain young talent and encourage cross-industry collaboration.
- **Broadband and Digital Infrastructure expansions** provide a foundation of high-speed connectivity for modern businesses, encourage expansions and relocations from tech-centric industries, and support the economic mobility of residents.
- **QoL Metrics** used by progressive EDAs go beyond job count—measuring housing affordability, wellness indicators, social support networks, happiness levels, educational outcomes, environmental sustainability, and other societal progress indicators to guide economic decisions.

## Recommended Role for Henrico EDA:

- **Policy Advocate:** Work with County leadership to align zoning, redevelopment, and transportation decisions to business and community needs.
- **Quality-of-Life Champion:** Promote local amenities and advocate for QoL investments (e.g., parks, broadband, mixed-use developments) that support workforce attraction and retention.
- **Connector:** Facilitate partnerships among developers, utilities, technology providers, and community groups to ensure modern infrastructure meets business demands.

# Building Strategic, Industry-Specific Coalitions

## Relevant Insights and Best Practices:

- **Public-Private Partnership Models** from Huntsville, Boulder, and Charlotte demonstrate how early inclusion of private-sector leaders in major development projects streamlines decision-making and garners broad support.
- **Industry-Specific Councils** or coalitions (e.g., Provo-Orem's Silicon Slopes) can serve as formal bodies that provide feedback, guide workforce programs, and lead marketing efforts for each target industry.
- **Multi-Jurisdiction Collaboration** (seen in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill and Northwest Arkansas regions) shows that uniting neighbors behind common economic development goals can enhance a region's competitiveness for major industry investments.

## Recommended Role for Henrico EDA:

- **Convener & Relationship Builder:** Identify key industry stakeholders, organize regular coalition meetings, and coordinate inter-agency efforts.
- **Facilitator:** Provide data, insights, and incentives that encourage investment and collaboration; help industries streamline permitting and regulatory processes.
- **Promoter & Storyteller:** Market Henrico's business success stories and industry opportunities—locally, regionally, and nationally.
- **Risk-Sharing Partner:** Collaborate with local businesses to develop public-private partnerships that help shoulder the risk of large-scale or transformative projects.

# Market All the County and EDA have to Offer

## Relevant Insights and Best Practices:

- **Use Authentic Testimonials & Stories:** Social media algorithms inherently favor content from real people over corporate content. Testimonials and first-person stories draw more engagement than corporate messaging. Real personal experiences and perspectives drive views and likes, building awareness, familiarity, and appreciation of all that a place has to offer.
- **Deploy a Number of Perspectives:** Building a robust business story like Henrico County's works best when told from many perspectives – business leaders, non-profit leaders, successful entrepreneurs, government workers, and even residents (QoL), etc. The stories should share real-life challenges overcome, personal journeys that flourished, and impassioned stories of making a difference. These types of narratives build trust, pique genuine interest, and grow followers.
- **Cross-Promote with Local Partners:** Social marketing works best with cross-promotions, collaborating with local partners who tag and share social posts, such as businesses, local associations, universities, workforce entities, influencers, etc. This not only expands reach but also reinforces the sense of a united community.

## Best Practices for Using LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is perhaps the purest social media network left in the marketplace because the platform prioritizes *human experiences*. Here are some best practices for getting the most out of it:

- **Personal, Not Just Corporate:** LinkedIn pushes authentic user-focused content. People want relatable posts, not just corporate news.
- **Connections Drive Reach:** The algorithm favors first-/second-degree connections, which are usually people. Personal posts show up more and get seen by wider networks.
- **Visibility Follows Engagement:** When someone interacts with a personal post, it spreads fast to their contacts (e.g., "John liked this"). Business posts don't spark the same excitement.
- **Boosting Matters:** A simple, no-cost phone video with a nominal ad budget can outperform a high-end production relying on "organic" reach.
- **Pay-to-Play & Act Human:** Companies must advertise and act more like individuals if they want results.
- **Bottom Line:** Users come for people and stories, not endless press releases. Showcase the humans behind the brand.

# Market All the County and EDA have to Offer

## Recommended Role for Henrico EDA:

- **Strategic Marketer:** Develop a strategic message architecture and editorial calendar to run a continuous series of multifaceted campaigns using paid, owned, and earned media.
- **Story Identifier Repository Manager:** Gather and inventory a growing collection of authentic personal stories — entrepreneurs, employees, community champions, non-profit leaders, business leaders, and residents (story-telling partners).
- **Story Facilitator & Amplifier:** Coordinate co-creation, story release, and cross-tagging with story-telling partners.
- **Resource Provider:** Provide a digital toolkit for story-telling partners to use – templates, images, copy, etc. – to promote Henrico's strengths in a similar authentic overall brand voice.

## Example Campaigns:

- "How To Say 'Henrico'" - social media series on how to pronounce the place name "Henrico."
- "Henrico Tour" – curated tour of the County by Anthony.
- "This is My Henrico" – residents and business leaders sharing why they are here and what they do here.
- "Why Our Business Calls Henrico Home" - Personal stories from target industry leaders on the locational advantages (e.g., Life Sciences and Fin-tech).
- "Why I am Proud to Serve" - Personal stories from Henrico's staff showcasing the assets and services they manage.