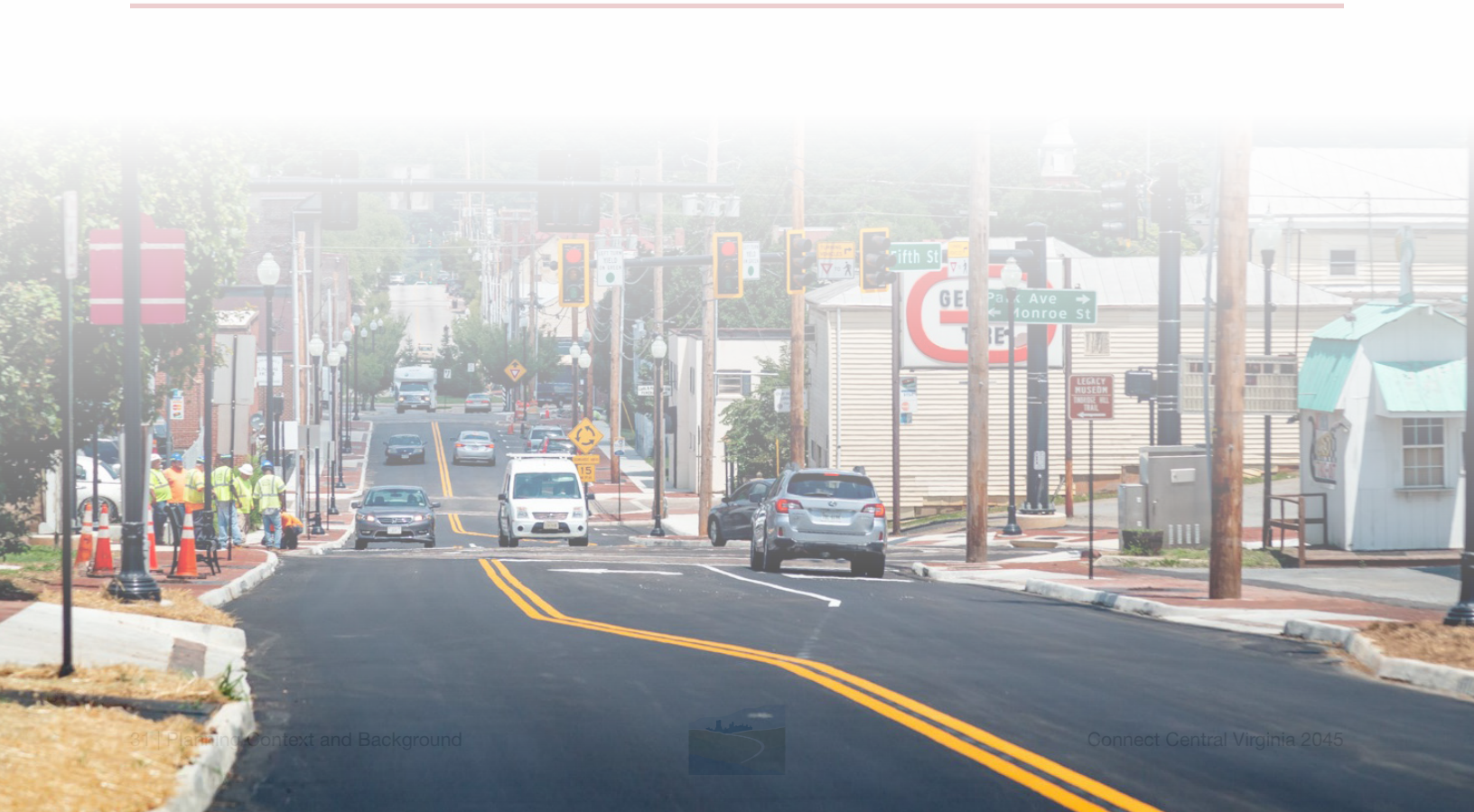


CHAPTER II

PLANNING CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Connect Central Virginia 2045 process operates against an increasingly complex backdrop of regional, state, and federal policies, standards, and requirements. There are three primary contexts in this framework – goals, factors, and targets:

- » **Goals:** the purposes that direct “why we plan,” such as keeping people safe, building the economy, and protecting the environment. Goals are the underpinning for regional plans as well as for state and federal policies. They are closely linked to factors, which help operationalize the goals into planning guidance.
- » **Factors:** the considerations that direct “how we plan” and the considerations that must be considered when preparing a plan, such as efficiency, sustainability, accessibility, etc.
- » **Targets:** the federal or state-mandated targets that direct “how we measure success,” such as asset maintenance targets or system performance targets.



FITTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

The Goals, Factors, and Targets are all pieces of the puzzle that need to fit together in the process of developing a transportation plan for the region. In general, the goals drive the factors, which in turn drive the targets. The chart below shows how this plays out at the federal, state, and regional levels.

GOALS

The CVTPO LRTP, the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan, and the Lynchburg Connectivity Plan have different foundational goals. However, there is a very close parity among previous plans from a goal and policy standpoint. In addition, the Lynchburg Connectivity Study had a set of strategies rather than goals, which is consistent with its role as an implementation framework. It helps to implement and operationalize the LRTP and the RL RTP, which are long range, big picture planning frameworks.

Connect Central 2045 Goals

- » **Economy:** Retain and increase business and employment opportunities.
- » **Safety:** Provide a safe and secure transportation system.
- » **Mobility and Accessibility:** Provide a transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.
- » **Community and Nature:** Improve the quality of life and protect the environment.
- » **Efficiency:** Preserve the existing transportation system and promote efficient system management.

FACTORS

Both the federal MAP-21 legislation and state programs such as Virginia's SMART SCALE are grounded in a series of broad planning factors. SMART SCALE has been in place for four years and preceded the adoption of the MAP-21 federal factors. However, they are closely compatible and related.

TARGETS

MAP-21 first developed a set of target policies for states to follow as a basis for federal transportation funding programs. Virginia's recent deployment of the State and MPO-level targets derives from these MAP-21 factors. CVTPO has adopted its own targets for both system performance and asset management.

LYNCHBURG CONNECTIVITY STUDY

Connect Central Virginia 2045 considers these goals, factors, and targets, by merging them into the project selection process. The Lynchburg Connectivity Study, RL RTP, state factors, and federal requirements guided the Connect Central Virginia 2045 transportation planning process.

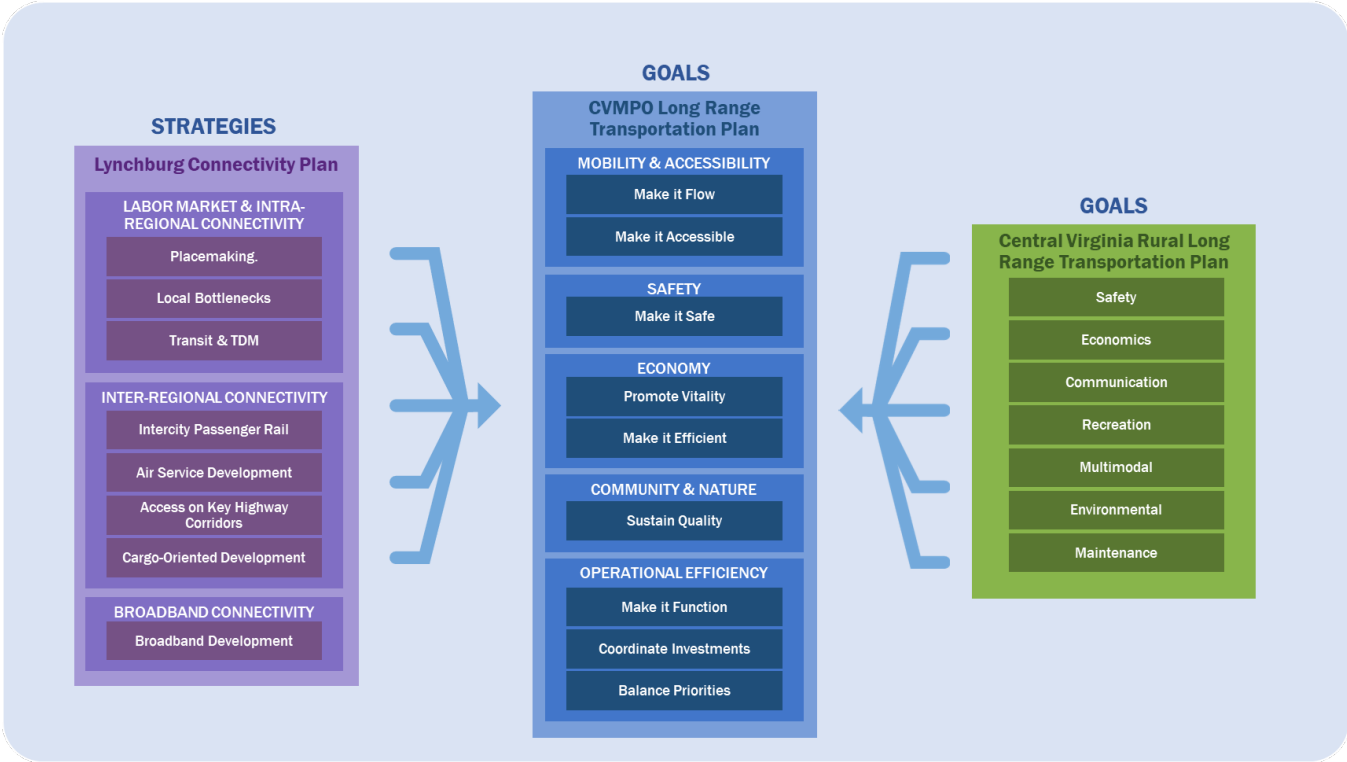
BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Lynchburg Connectivity Study was completed for the region under a grant from the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI). The connectivity study had a goal of strengthening the Lynchburg regional economy through promoting connectivity across multiple modes and defining connectivity into three dimensions. It included a diagnosis of the way that connectivity supports the economy currently, as well as proposing opportunities for connectivity improvements. It included a broad range of regional stakeholders in a collaborative process to develop the recommended strategies and was done in concert with the Local Government Council and its parallel Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) effort.

The Connectivity Study culminated in a series of specific actionable strategies. The strategies were structured into three categories: those addressing labor market access and intra-regional connectivity, those that deal with physical connectivity between Lynchburg and markets elsewhere, and those addressing digital connectivity. Within those categories, individual strategy areas were defined, and each strategy area proposed specific actions. A summary document was prepared in which each of the eight strategies and its associated actions were prepared in one-pager formats. A final summit



Figure 3: This simplified chart shows the close compatibility between the goals of the CVLRTP and the RL RTP as well as the strategies of the Lynchburg Connectivity Study. This framework forms Connect Central Virginia 2045.



meeting of stakeholders was conducted where each stakeholder chose which strategy/action they would commit to implementing. The strategies and strategy areas are listed below.

LABOR MARKET AND INTRA-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Strategy Area 1: Placemaking

Continue and enhance efforts to build an urban environment that is livable and appeals to younger workers and entrepreneurs. Focus on developing a community that is connected by quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, with a strong sense of place. Work to strengthen downtown Lynchburg, an asset for the entire region, by addressing issues such as wayfinding and intra-regional connectivity between activity centers (such as higher education, health, and the arts). Additionally, support place-making enhancements in other local activity centers in the region.

Strategy Area 2: Local Bottlenecks

Focus on maintaining and enhancing the outstanding reliability of the network in the region. Invest strategically to preserve performance on the region’s

road network, continuing to support quality intra-regional travel. Target intra-regional transportation bottlenecks and work to ensure patterns of growth do not erode the current quality of commuting in the region.

Strategy Area 3: Transit and Transportation Demand Management

Build support and demand for transit and alternative transportation options by encouraging collaborative communication and problem-solving between major employers, regional commuters, and transit operators. Continue to build on the RIDE Solutions platform, increasing awareness of alternative transportation options and programs. Seek creative solutions that will make transit and other alternative transportation options (ridesharing, biking, walking) attractive and feasible.

INTER-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Strategy Area 4: Intercity Passenger Rail

Enhance Lynchburg’s role as a passenger rail hub for the region. Continue to build off the demonstrated success with Amtrak services to and from Lynchburg through marketing, planning, and advocacy efforts.



Strategy Area 5: Air Service Development

Consolidate regional support for the air service development activities managed by the Lynchburg Regional Airport (LYH), focusing on a three-tiered strategy of: 1) Maintain current service levels, 2) Enhance service through equipment upgrades and efforts to expand capacity and service reliability, and 3) Expand commercial air service, targeting major carrier hubs (e.g. Dulles, Chicago, Philadelphia), and potential tourism niche markets (e.g. Orlando, via Allegiant Air). This strategy mirrors the approach set forth in the Lynchburg Regional Airport's Air Service Development Strategic Plan. The first order of business for small regional airports is always to maintain demand and service levels by sustaining close relationships with airlines and demonstrating market strength. Second, airport managers work to gradually advocate for enhanced service with commercial airlines, based on demonstrated success, full planes, for example. The recent return of jet service to LYH falls in this category. And finally, there are continual efforts to convince airlines to expand into new markets.

Strategy Area 6: Access on Key Highway Corridors

Focus on maintaining good access to the interstate system and on key corridors that connect the Lynchburg region to national and international markets, including engagement with connectivity issues outside the Lynchburg region that affect the region's interstate access. The Lynchburg economy relies on the Virginia highway system to access material inputs and move goods to market, including infrastructure located both inside and outside the Lynchburg region.

Strategy Area 7: Cargo Oriented Development

Enhance local readiness to respond to freight rail oriented development opportunities. The Lynchburg region is served by two Class I railroads with no major capacity constraints. While freight rail service in the region is limited to carload rather than containerized traffic, and the region is too close to existing intermodal container terminals to be a candidate for a new one, there nevertheless may be ways for the region to capitalize on its significant freight rail infrastructure. Specific actions can be taken to align public sector actions with anticipated private sector interest.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Strategy Area 8: Broadband Coverage

Pursue a minimum target speed of 25 mbps download/3 mbps upload for broadband coverage throughout the region, as recommended by the Federal Communications Commission. Capitalize on existing fiber-optic assets by building them into economic development strategies and site selection.

RURAL LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Central Virginia Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) is part of a greater initiative to aid the statewide transportation funding process. VDOT, Virginia's Planning District Commissions, and the local governments they represent are partners in the development of this initiative to create regional transportation plans in rural and small urban areas that will complement those in the metropolitan areas to help create a uniform rating system when identifying transportation projects for funding. This feeds into VDOT's Transportation and Mobility Planning Division's development of the VTrans 2040 Plan, made up of the VTrans Multimodal Transportation Plan (VMTP), the VTrans Vision Plan, and the Surface Transportation Plan by the Transportation and Mobility Planning Division (TMPD).

The Rural Long Range Transportation Plan serves as a screen for transportation projects applying for consideration under the SMART SCALE prioritization process. OIPI leads the effort in developing the VMTP 2025 Needs Assessment, which focuses mainly on urbanized areas. The RLRTP serves as a complementary document to the VMTP 2025 Needs Assessment with a focus on rural areas in Virginia. The rural regional plan has a horizon year of 2040 and addresses the anticipated impacts of population and employment growth upon the transportation system. The RLRTP was developed as a vision plan, addressing all needs of the transportation system studied regardless of anticipated funding availability.

Discussions and input from the economic development stakeholders outlined in the CEDS document strongly influenced the review of transportation improvement recommendations in the RLRTP. Specific metrics for economic performance



were included in the VDOT prioritization matrix which was used to prioritize transportation improvement recommendations. The specific metrics are explained in detail in **Chapter VI**. In summary, the purpose of incorporating regional economic development priorities in the RL RTP project scoring matrix is to ensure that the transportation projects that best position the region for economic success are prioritized for funding.

RURAL GOALS

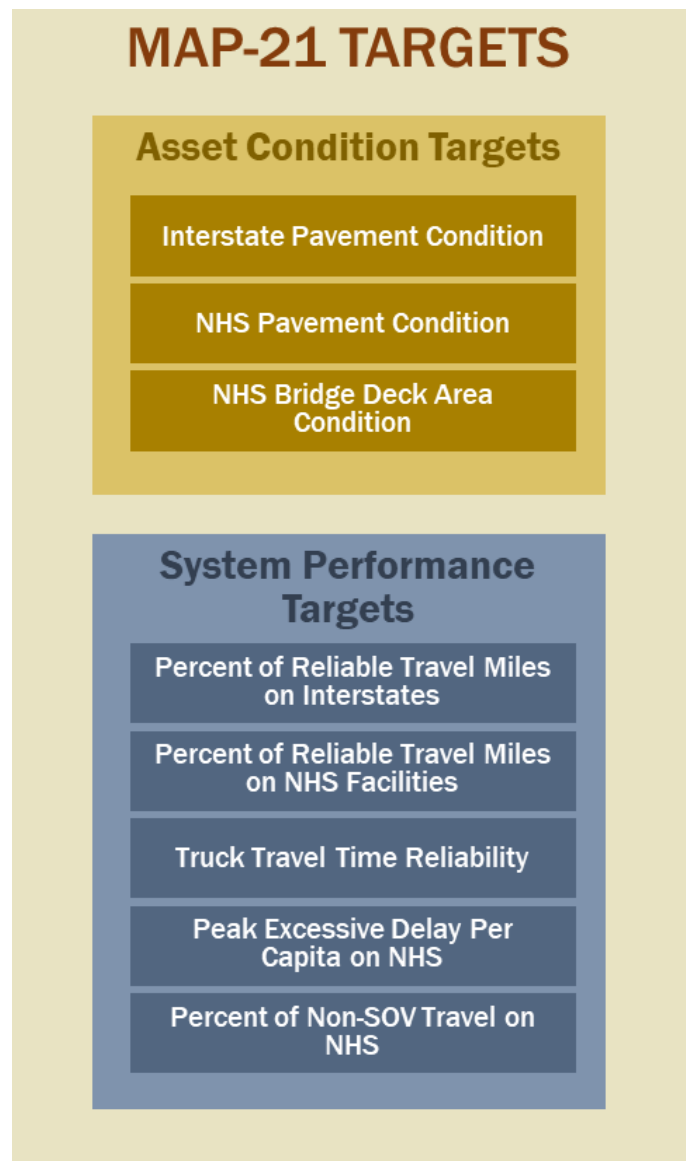
A basic goal for all transportation programs in Virginia is the provision for the effective, safe, and efficient movement of people and goods. The 2040 RL RTP was developed with this primary goal in mind, along with other goals including consideration for environmental issues and local travel desires. Planning officials from each rural jurisdiction reviewed the original goals and formulated the following goals:

- » **Goal 1: Safety** Promote transportation safety and security.
- » **Goal 2: Economics** Improve economic vitality of the region and open additional access to development opportunities.
- » **Goal 3: Communication** Create and maintain a cross-jurisdictional network.
- » **Goal 4: Recreation** Promote and enhance a regional multi-use network.
- » **Goal 5: Multi-modal** Improve multi-modal opportunities throughout the region.
- » **Goal 6: Environmental** Improve the quality of life, minimize potential impacts of transportation.
- » **Goal 7: Maintenance** Preserve and improve the existing transportation system.

ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK AND CEDS INITIATIVE

One important new development in the RL RTP planning process has been the integration of the transportation planning process with regional economic development initiatives and planning priorities. Safety and economic development are the highest weighted factors in the SMART SCALE project scoring process. Central Virginia agencies and stakeholders have been focusing efforts on fostering a regional economic vision and taking steps to enhance the region's economy in the past several years. The RL RTP presents an opportunity to align

Figure 4: The Federal planning factors that are adopted by States and MPOs

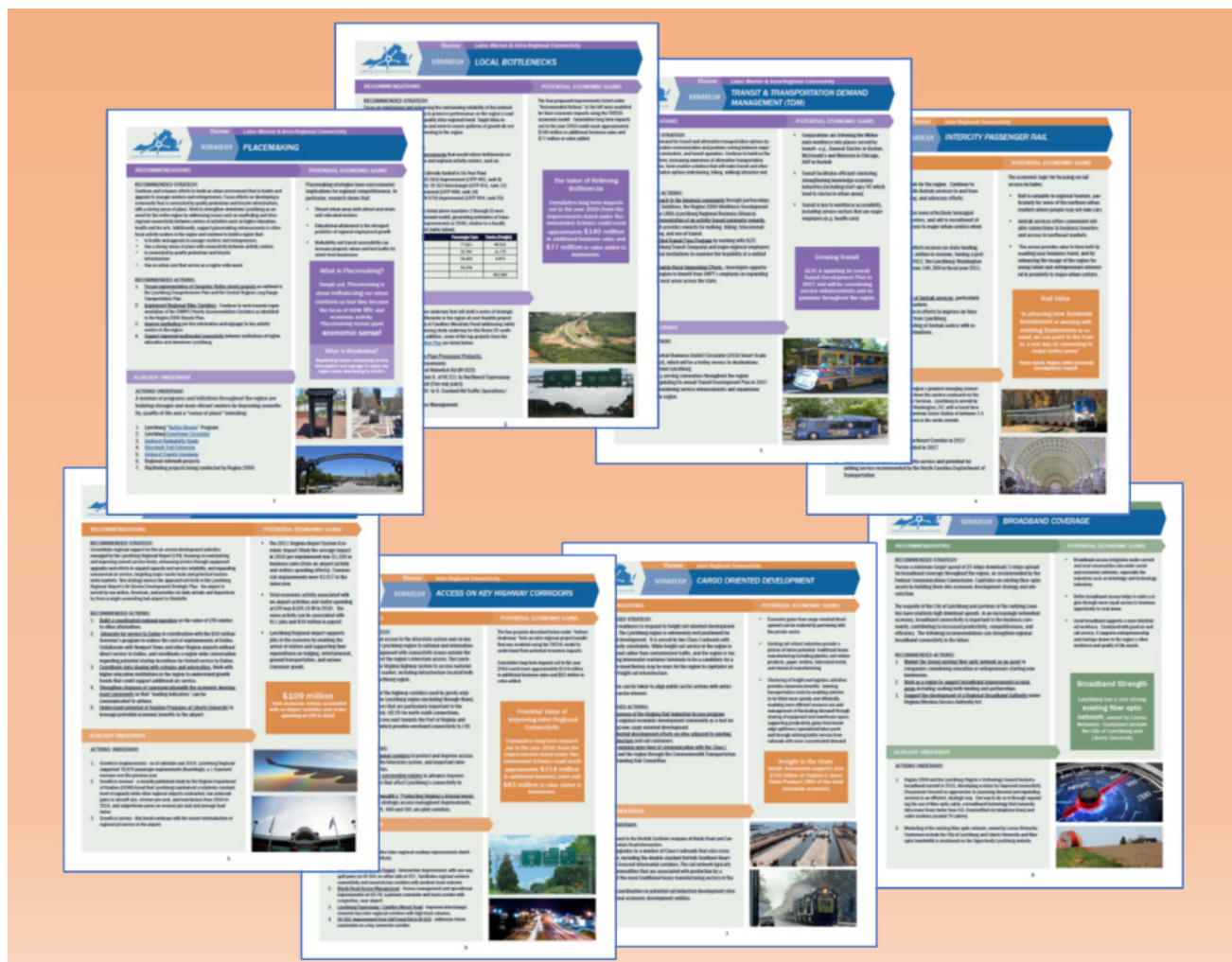


rural transportation planning efforts with regional economic plans and priorities. The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance is the primary consortium of economic interests in the Central Virginia Region and is guided by the CEDS document.

The inclusion of a project in the CEDS is a prerequisite to apply for federal project and program funding for economic development. The document outlines a number of goals and objectives for fueling regional economic development. One of the major goals outlined in the CEDS is specific to transportation planning, and aims to “promote and enhance inter-regional transportation systems.”

Given the importance of economic development scores in SMART SCALE and other transportation funding streams, a number of aspects of the RL RTP have aimed to incorporate economic development linkages into the transportation planning framework. Regional focus on economic development, greater competition for limited funding, and a need to strategically focus investments have all been motivating factors in aligning this RL RTP with regional economic development goals.

Figure 5: One-page summaries of each of the eight strategies adopted in the Lynchburg Connectivity Study



The success of the CEDS planning process for the Central Virginia Region as a whole has also highlighted an opportunity for officials in the rural planning area to engage with economic stakeholders and capitalize on mutually beneficial funding opportunities. Some key themes have evolved from the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance's ongoing CEDS discussion regarding the importance of a safe, efficient transportation network to economic development in the region. These themes are:

- » The way we define our region for transportation may not necessarily be the way that the marketplace defines our region and we may need to think at a larger scale—beyond the planning boundary—in order to maximize our economic potential for different industries.
- » A strong regional airport is key to attracting companies.
- » Quality of life—in terms of walkability, access to transit, and uncongested commuter routes—are all important factors for attracting industry. Companies all have their own corporate cultures and quality of life factors that are reflective of corporate values and are important factors in locational decisions.
- » Strong access to North Carolina and ports on the eastern seaboard is of critical importance to gain traction in today's economy.
- » Liberty University is a major growth driver in the region. Access needs of the campus should be considered in all future transportation infrastructure discussions.
- » Congestion on Route 29 through Charlottesville is a persistent issue that has yet to be solved. This congestion negatively impacts the need to pursue a southeastern bypass for Route 29 through Campbell County.

The discussions and input from the economic development stakeholders outlined in the CEDS document strongly influenced the review of transportation improvement recommendations in the RL RTP. Specific metrics for economic performance were included in the VDOT prioritization matrix which was used to prioritize transportation improvement recommendations. The specific metrics are explained in detail in **Chapter VI**. In summary, the purpose of incorporating regional economic development priorities in the RL RTP project scoring matrix

is to ensure that the transportation projects that are funded are the ones that best position the region for economic success.

INTEGRATION WITH THE LRTP

The Central Virginia region has been gradually integrating a diversity of planning processes across different agencies to ensure a coordinated vision. In particular, the region has made great strides in linking its economic development and transportation visions, recognizing that transportation is one of the fundamental tools for implementing economic development and driving regional prosperity.

The RL RTP and the Central Virginia LRTP work together to define the transportation framework for the region. In 2016, the regional CEDS plan defined the economic development vision and strategies for the region. In 2017, the Lynchburg Connectivity Study wove together the economic and transportation visions for the region into a unified “connectivity” framework.

Essentially, the LRTP updates the implementation of several of the strategy areas of the Connectivity Study, including:

- » Complete/Better Streets
- » Intra-Regional Bottleneck Relief
- » Inter-Regional Key Corridor Improvements

The constrained project list of the LRTP serves as part of the detailed implementation actions for these strategies. At the same time, this LRTP also adopts the other strategies and actions of the Connectivity Study as part of its overall planning framework. Thus, the integration of the Connectivity Study into the LRTP update forms a unified set of recommendations for transportation connectivity and economic prosperity into the next decades.

