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| |  | | --- | | **A green and purple logo  AI-generated content may be incorrect. Growth & Diversification Committee Meeting (06/13/2025)** | | |
| In attendance: Ed Daley, Randy Doyle, Alison Varner-Denbigh, Ann Cundy, and Jeremy Crute  Absent: Greg Hitchen, John Graves and Dave Urso |  |
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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Next steps**   * [Jeremy to send a list of remaining interviews to Randy and Alison](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/b984664d/oKK2-gB6_0mcf10pC-burA?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba64162c-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Jeremy to include rail as part of the infrastructure analysis](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/81e63005/40HcEzuQ-EWdQYfTiNTsYg?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba641ad2-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Jeremy to send draft of Chapter One (economic performance section) to the committee early next week](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/f8df4575/XGANi2MVM06P819sIapQBw?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba641d7a-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Committee members to provide feedback on Chapter One by early the following week](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e8ddd138/l1rWJ_N2Tke-_jzYiNPHIg?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba641fb4-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Alison to send out email with options for rescheduling July 4th meeting](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/91b89c4e/zZY9SjWrhUW3xXiKyGf6XQ?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba6421b2-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Randy to conduct interviews with manufacturers if possible](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/d0579518/4wvgHD6vLEyELI873_Qq-Q?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba6425cc-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Jeremy to prepare swot analysis for review at the next meeting in July](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/869dca3c/TyqU9BDN7kq3DLxMlOFr6Q?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba6427ca-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257) * [Jeremy to summarize how feedback on Chapter One was addressed (if applicable)](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/6b8855c5/RoQML9yHO0WL_U7OeoBZMA?u=https://tasks.zoom.us/?meetingId=RcxGU22XQh%252BVeXdytLm2Sg%253D%253D%26stepId=ba6429c8-4864-11f0-a0ae-8216cc320257)   **Chapter Review and Stakeholder Engagement**  Jeremy and Alison discussed reviewing Chapter 1 and the economic performance analysis, which Jeremy will send to Alison on Monday for her review. They also talked about ongoing stakeholder engagement, including interviews and focus groups, with Jeremy requesting Alison's help in conducting some interviews next week. Jeremy noted that the interviews have been productive, providing useful insights though varying levels of engagement from participants.  **Regional Workforce and Infrastructure Challenges**  The group discussed regional strengths and challenges, focusing on workforce issues as a major concern. Jeremy highlighted the valley's location, transportation infrastructure, and agricultural advantages, while noting supply chain and skilled labor shortages. Alison shared insights from interviews, particularly regarding the difficulty in attracting and retaining workers across various industries, including agriculture and manufacturing. The discussion touched on potential solutions, such as the VTOP program to provide work experiences for college students and address skill gaps. Randy inquired about barriers to business growth, with cold storage and infrastructure needs emerging as key challenges.  **Virginia Rail Development and Energy**  The group discussed energy concerns in Virginia, with Randy noting the state's vulnerability due to high electricity imports and data center growth. They explored the potential impact of rail development in Shenandoah County, with Randy highlighting its significance for agriculture, recreation, and economic development. Jeremy and Alison agreed to include rail in their analysis, while noting that Go Virginia focuses only on traded sectors. The discussion also touched on the upcoming Virginia Department of Transportation rail-with-trail assessment, which will provide cost estimates for different development scenarios.  **Project Deliverables and Schedule Updates**  The team discussed the upcoming deliverables for their project, including a draft of the economic performance chapter due on Monday and a rough draft of the SWOT analysis at the next meeting. They agreed to reschedule the July 4th meeting to July 11th, with Alison working to find a time that works for all committee members. Jeremy mentioned that they would be shifting from focus groups to targeted interviews, and the team agreed to provide feedback on the economic performance draft by the end of the week.  **Manufacturing Initiatives Focus Group Planning**  Alison and the team discussed plans for future manufacturing initiatives, deciding to align them with existing chamber manufacturing groups for better participation. They agreed to conduct in-person focus groups for manufacturing due to its size and significance. Alison mentioned wrapping up one-on-one interviews next week to gather more data, while Randy volunteered to conduct additional interviews with economic development officials. Jeremy offered to resend the list of interview questions and suggested Randy reach out to manufacturers for interviews, noting that chambers and economic development officials had already provided feedback through surveys and strategy processes.  **Strategy Report Timeline Discussion**  The committee discussed the timeline for the final strategy report, which is due to DHCD by October 31st after being presented to the Regional Council on October 28th. Jeremy will send a list of remaining interviews to Randy and Alison, who will aim to complete them next week. The team agreed to review the SWOT analysis at the next meeting in July, and Alison offered to be flexible with meeting schedules if more frequent or special meetings are needed to keep the project on track. | | | | |