

Fairfax County Economic Competitiveness Strategic Roadmap

April 2026

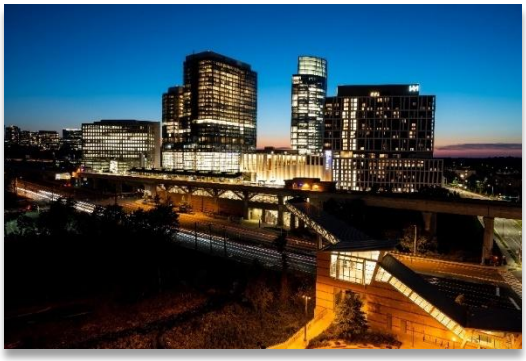


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Executive Summary



This report presents the initiatives developed by the Economic Competitiveness Task Force to enhance Fairfax County's competitive edge in attracting, retaining and expanding businesses. The Economic Competitiveness Task Force was established in response to a Board Matter introduced by Chairman McKay on August 25, 2025, "Fairfax County's Economic Competitiveness" located in Appendix A. The Economic Competitiveness Task Force conducted its work from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026. This effort informed a subsequent Board Matter focused on housing supply, which launched the Housing Task Force. The two concurrent Task Forces worked collaboratively, with shared staff and aligned initiatives.

The Economic Competitiveness Task Force (Task Force) began its work by establishing core foundational aspects of the overall task, including a clear definition of the challenge and a shared vision for success. The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) provided data on current economic trends to inform the Task Force's understanding of the competitive landscape and Fairfax County's position within it.

The Task Force convened four subgroups, each led by County staff with subject matter expertise in each of the following strategic areas: Economic Incentives, Workforce Development, Development Process and Marketing Economic Successes. These subgroups consulted with County leadership, the Board of Supervisors, and internal and external stakeholders. From November 2025 through April 2026, the Task Force met regularly to review subgroup progress and advance recommended initiatives.

The Task Force initiatives outlined in this report are organized into four strategic areas:

1. Assessing the effectiveness of financial and non-financial business **incentives**,
2. Strengthening of **workforce development** initiatives,
3. Evolving the **development process** to reduce barriers to development; and
4. **Marketing** economic successes externally and to residents.

The Economic Strategic Roadmap outlines 33 proposed initiatives spanning each strategic area. Initiatives are organized to advance a holistic approach to economic development encompassing businesses growth, workforce development, and place-based development strategies. Each initiative contributes to the Task Force's goal of enhancing Fairfax County's economic competitiveness. We plan to implement the proposed initiatives from FY26-FY29.

Introduction

Fairfax County has long been recognized as the economic engine of the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a result of strategic efforts spanning decades, Fairfax County has positioned itself as a preeminent location where businesses not only choose to locate but also thrive and grow. Despite its economic achievements, Fairfax County businesses and residents face economic challenges due to cuts at the federal level and the continued rise in the cost of housing.

Modern economic development demands a balanced, integrated approach built on three interdependent pillars across workforce, business and place development. Success in any one area reinforces and amplifies the others, making investment in and coordination across all three essential to sustainable growth.



The Task Force developed this set of initiatives to enhance Fairfax County's economic competitiveness strategy across these three pillars. Collectively, they address talent pipelines, business formation and retention, and the physical and regulatory environment that supports economic activity. The initiatives also include a focus on communicating economic successes internally and externally through clear, data-driven messaging. Taken together, these initiatives are designed to be mutually reinforcing, positioning Fairfax County for long-term, broad-based prosperity.

Organization

Leadership Structure

Board of Supervisors Leadership:

- Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay
- Supervisor Dan Storck

Executive Leadership:

- Deputy County Executive Jen Miller
- Rebecca Moudry, Director, Department of Economic Initiatives

Project Management:

- Theresa Benincasa, Department of Economic Initiatives
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- Land Development Services (LDS)
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  - Brandy Mueller
- Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
  - Tracy Strunk
  - Drew Hushour
  - Cathy Belgin
- Department of Family Services (DFS)
  - Michael Becketts
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Task Force Process

Task Force Foundational Statements

The Task Force began its work by defining the problem being solved, the vision for economic competitiveness, and the core mandate of the 2025 Board Matter, to guide its work.

Problem Statement

Fairfax County faces increasing competitive pressure as peer regions advance in key industries that drive economic growth. Compounding this challenge are federal government reductions and the region's high cost of living, both of which hinder Fairfax County's ability to retain and attract businesses and talent in its most competitive sectors and constrain economic mobility.

Vision

Fairfax County is a place where diverse businesses and people choose to locate and thrive.

Core Mandate

Report to the Board of Supervisors by February 26, 2026, findings and recommendations to mitigate economic challenges and maintain Fairfax County's role as the Commonwealth of Virginia's economic leader.

The Task Force completed the initial analysis mid-February, then pursued Board of Supervisors leadership and development community input for final revisions reflected in this report.

Process and Timeline

The table below provides a high-level overview of the Task Force process and ongoing implementation. Appendix B includes implementation timelines for all proposed initiatives in this document.

Phase	Key Activities
Fall 2025	Task Force launch and organization Initial process mapping and baseline documentation Scope shared with Chairman and Economic Initiatives Committee Chair
Winter 2025-26	Initiative development and refinement by subgroups Monthly Task Force meetings Board of Supervisors presentation on economic trends data at February Economic Initiatives Committee meeting Task Force Presentation of proposed initiatives to Chairman and Economic Initiatives Committee Chair Presentation of development initiatives to development community - survey
Spring 2026	Strategic Roadmap finalization Board of Supervisors presentation and feedback at May Economic Initiatives Committee meeting Launch initiatives
Ongoing	Tracking and reporting

Current Economic Trends

Overview

While Fairfax County maintains a mature, stable economy with a highly skilled workforce, it faces increasing competition and complex pressures. An analysis prepared by the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (EDA) concludes that while the economy is resilient, sustaining growth requires a new focus on talent attraction and retention, industry diversification, and innovation to counter rising national competition.

Key Findings:

1. **Fairfax County's economy demonstrates strength and resilience.**
   - GDP Growth remains strong: Fairfax County's GDP grew by 5.2% in 2023, accounting for 25% of Virginia's and 24% of the DC Metro's total GDP.
   - Federal procurement holds steady: procurement increased year-over-year to $41.4 billion in FY25, demonstrating minimal impact from broader federal spending shifts.
   - Sector-specific strength retained: the County significantly outperforms national averages in high-growth industries over the last five years, including computing infrastructure providers (10.2% vs. 6.2% U.S.) and satellite telecommunications (4.8% vs. 1.3% U.S.).
   - Taxable sales increased: sales tax receipts distributed to Fairfax County in March 2026 were $18.1 million, an increase of 0.5 percent compared to March 2025. For the first 8 months of FY 2026, sales tax receipts are up 5.0 percent compared to the previous year.
2. **Fairfax County faces increasing pressures on workforce.**
   - Federal workforce reduction: Northern Virginia saw an 18% January 2026 year-over-year decrease in federal workers, representing 17,000 fewer federal workers by place of work.
   - Unemployment is rising but healthy: driven by federal employment reductions in 2025, the local unemployment rate rose by 1.1% to reach 3.8% by January 2026. Fairfax County still outperforms the national rate of 4.3%
   - Talent competition sharpens: while Fairfax County ranks #2 for educational attainment among peer jurisdictions, it faces stiff competition for its workforce pipeline (age19-35), ranking #15 among those same jurisdictions.
3. **Increasing competition for emerging sectors challenges our position.**
   - Rising competition for emerging sectors: Fairfax County has the highest concentration of professional services employment in the U.S., but projected county growth in that industry is much lower than the national average. While the region is #1 for Information Security Analysts, it faces stiff competition from states that are investing aggressively in technology leadership.
   - Venture capital rebounds, but access narrows: Following a dip in early 2025, VC investment rebounded by late 2025 — driven largely by artificial intelligence and defense tech startups. However, the overall number of deals continued to decline. Rounds are growing larger but harder to secure, concentrating capital among fewer, more established players.

- Entrepreneurship lags: despite growth, startup formation and scaling continue to trail peer regions, the County faces risks of falling behind in emerging sectors like Al, cyber, and space.
- Rising costs: Virginia's ranking for the "Cost of Doing Business" has declined slightly to #31, putting stress on the county's ability to compete with lower-cost Sun Belt metros like North Carolina, Texas and Florida.

4. **Fairfax County is facing a historically high office vacancy rate, but there are signs of stabilization.**
   - Office market recovery: after five years of increasing vacancy rates, the Fairfax County market is showing signs of stabilization with a year-end 2025 vacancy rate of 17.4%.
   - Flight to quality: The Northern Virginia market is bifurcated; trophy office space saw a positive net absorption of 5.8 million square feet between 2020 and Q3 2025, while Class A and Class B/C spaces experienced significant negative absorption.

These findings underscore both the challenges ahead and the opportunity to act decisively through economic incentives, workforce development, streamlining regulatory processes, and sharing our economic successes. The initiatives and recommendations outlined in this report are designed to address these dynamics and position Fairfax County to sustain and strengthen its long-term economic competitiveness.

Sources: Fairfax County EDA Market Intelligence, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Chmura Jobs EQ, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, USA Spending, Pitchbook, Washington Business Journal, U.S. Census Bureau, and Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, CBRE. CNBC Best States for Business, Tax Foundation, JLL/CBRE Real Estate Reports and Fairfax County Economic Indicators Newsletter. Additional detail available at EIC-Economic-Update-@-20-2026-final.pdf

Strategic Area 1: Economic Incentives

Overview

The core directive of the Incentives subgroup was to evaluate the effectiveness of both financial and non-financial business incentives to spur business development and position the County for additional economic success. This work focused on an examination of the current systems, state and local resources, recent outcomes and near-term projections. We considered the following areas:

- Availability of state incentives and the suitability to leverage and/or replicate these programs in the County. We considered options at both the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.
- Alternative financing tools such as Tax Increment Financing and the utilization of New Market Tax Credits.
- Current County methodology for identifying and utilizing local matching funds to secure state-based grants.
- Innovation-based infrastructure available for local technology companies and entrepreneurs.
- State Code-based "zones" related to business development requiring changes to local ordinances, including a structured engagement with business leaders to obtain feedback on the potential application of technology zones in Fairfax County.
- Structure, effectiveness and operational dynamics of the County's Economic Opportunity Reserve (EOR) to meet EOR objectives and support economic competitiveness.
- Opportunities for differentiation associated with how economic development prospects and existing members of our business community interact with County-based agencies.
- A review of peer communities' incentives and infrastructure.

This analysis identified that the County already has multiple existing processes and strategies that could be further leveraged to incentivize and support business development that significantly contribute to the County’s economic competitiveness. These include:

- Bring new projects through the Economic Opportunity Reserve as a strategy to attract and fund high-return economic development projects. This includes utilizing EOR as a match to Commonwealth incentives as supported by leadership.
- Coordinate across county agencies to identify the types of local match resources and projects enabling us to quickly and fully leverage the Commonwealth of Virginia’s discretionary incentives.
- Consider coordinated innovation districts that build upon the County's existing technology corridors and business strongholds, while advancing broad-based economic growth across all areas of Fairfax County, rather than applying specific zones that may not produce the intended result.
- Sustain the County's portfolio of innovation programs and products that support a diversified economy and entrepreneurial ecosystem — including the Fairfax Founders Fund, Accelerate Breakfast Series and Accelerate Conference, dedicated

industry events (such as SpaceNEXT), and start-up and existing business support initiatives.
- Partner with state agencies such as the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership to identify and execute new opportunities that are beneficial to both the County and State.

In addition to utilizing the County's existing tools and processes, the Incentives subgroup identified a key investment to advance the innovation ecosystem and drive additional economic growth: the creation of a business accelerator focused on technology areas where the local economy has a competitive advantage.

Initiative 1.1 Technology Accelerator

Purpose: Fairfax County sits at the center of one of the world's most significant concentrations of geospatial intelligence, space, aerospace, and dual-use technology activity. The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, and a dense ecosystem of defense and intelligence contractors have made Fairfax a global hub for these disciplines — generating an exceptional pipeline of domain expertise, cleared talent, and technologies with substantial commercial potential. Yet the County lacks dedicated infrastructure to capture this potential, allowing entrepreneurs and spinout teams to migrate to better-resourced startup ecosystems elsewhere regionally or nationally, taking jobs, tax base, and long-term economic value with them.

Data from the Fairfax Founders Fund and the Accelerate Breakfast Series, along with findings from regional entrepreneurship and economic innovation development analysis, demonstrate clear demand for a County-based technology accelerator. While Fairfax County benefits from a strong concentration of research institutions, federal assets, entrepreneurs, and private-sector expertise, the availability of structured accelerator programming within the County is limited. As a result, opportunities for coordinated commercialization, firm formation, and scaling are not being fully realized.

To address this gap, Fairfax County proposes to establish a technology accelerator operated by a qualified third-party organization. This initiative will support a technology accelerator focused on geospatial intelligence, space and aerospace, and dual-use technologies. By providing early-stage ventures with structured programming, mentorship, and access to defense and commercial capital networks, the accelerator would give promising companies both the resources and the compelling reason to form and scale in Fairfax County.

The accelerator would provide structured, cohort-based support to early-stage, high-growth companies and serve as a convening platform that connects founders with customers, capital, mentors, and technical expertise. Potential operators could include university-affiliated programs, nonprofit innovation organizations, or experienced private-sector accelerator managers.

Desired Outcomes:

- Increase in the establishment and growth of high-growth technology firms
- Increase in economic diversity by growing advanced technology and innovation-driven sectors
- Increase in start-up access to capital and the number of investments across the venture capital continuum (angel, seed, Series A, and non-dilutive funding)
- Local founder ecosystem strengthened and a pipeline of successful founders able to mentor new firms developed

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number and value of new investments in technology-based businesses
- Increase in revenue for participating businesses
- Increase in jobs created by participating businesses
- Level of engagement from mentors, corporate partners, and investors

Resources Required:

- Funding: Estimated annual total is $350,000 to support a director, cohort engagement and coordination, direct services and programming. Estimate assumes County or other space is utilized.
- External Partners: Accelerator will utilize a collaborative model where an Operator manages day-to-day administration and curriculum; County provides financial support and facility access, and is supported by academic, federal and private sector entities providing mentorship and capital.

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Planning and validation. Conduct stakeholder outreach; confirm target technology focus areas; refine program model; develop preliminary budget	Q1 FY27
Development of RFP or RFI	Q2 FY27
RFP or RFI Development and Release	Q2 FY27
Proposal Review and Operator Selection. Evaluate proposals; negotiate and execute contract	Q3 FY27
Program Setup and Recruitment	Q3 FY27
Pilot Cohort Launch. Select and onboard first cohort; deliver pilot; collect performance data and feedback	Q1 FY28
Evaluation and Scaling. Evaluate pilot results; refine program design as needed; consider program expansion, additional cohorts, or sector-specific tracks	Q1 FY29

Strategic Area 2: Workforce Development

Overview

The core directive of the Workforce Development subgroup was to identify recommendations to strengthen workforce development in Fairfax County. The subgroup convened the County agencies engaged in workforce development along with external partners from Fairfax County Public Schools, Northern Virginia Community College and the regional workforce system to examine the existing gaps in workforce development and identify approaches to improve coordination across the County to support economic competitiveness.

We conducted research, benchmarked workforce development against peer jurisdictions, reviewed industry studies on employer perspectives and used polling techniques to obtain subject matter expertise and build consensus on the key recommendations. The key finding was that Fairfax lacks a central coordinating entity to integrate workforce assets focused on economic competitiveness goals.

The subgroup's primary recommendation is to establish an Office of Workforce Competitiveness and Advancement supported by four secondary Initiatives 2.1.a. through 2.1.d. These secondary initiatives are dependent upon the need for a new office (Initiative 2.1) to manage this new line of business.

We evaluated multiple approaches to standing up a new office. Our proposed staffing model establishes a new, small, centralized unit that can be stood up quickly and expanded over time as outcomes are demonstrated and budget capacity allows. Progress on the individual initiatives is aligned with the proposed level of staffing.

Initiative 2.1: Office of Workforce Competitiveness and Advancement (OWCA)

Purpose: The current workforce system is not built to respond to a rapidly changing workforce landscape. Workforce development is delivered across multiple agencies with no shared strategy for achieving outcomes and no single point of accountability. Workforce funding is restricted to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) formulas, and training programs are not consistently aligned with growth sectors employer demand, creating gaps for displaced and lower-income workers.

While Fairfax County has strong workforce assets, including world-class education partners and industry stakeholders, its workforce efforts remain fragmented. What Fairfax lacks is a single, strategic engine to unify these strengths and drive a measurable workforce competitiveness agenda that is focused on achieving Fairfax County's economic goals. Without a coordinated approach that brings together economic development and workforce development, Fairfax risks losing ground to regions that can offer employers credible workforce commitments and residents' clear pathways to prosperity.

The primary initiative is to establish a new Office of Workforce Competitiveness and Advancement (OWCA), a lean coordination layer alongside four integrated initiatives that together form a workforce competitiveness operating system for Fairfax County. The OWCA is the operations backbone for coordinating four secondary initiatives (2.1a, 2.1.b, 2.1c, 2.1.d) proposed in this report:

2.1.a. Flexible Capital Stack for Workforce Investment

2.1.b. Talent Pipeline for Displaced Federal Workers and Cleared Professionals

2.1.c. Sector Skills Accelerators to address the Skills Gap

2.1.d. Workforce Pathways for ALICE Households

Peer regions with similar coordination layers that align workforce development with economic development, include Opportunity Austin, San Diego, Seattle–King County, and Montgomery County.

Desired Outcomes:

- OWCA Director hired by end of Q4 FY26, with 2–3 staff (staff detailed from partner agencies).
- Every new EDA deal has an assigned owner for the workforce commitment, from close through execution.
- Residents have streamlined navigation to real career pathways through a single point of access to programs that lead to good jobs.
- Shared dashboard and annual scorecard operational by Year 2, giving County leadership one unified answer on workforce landscape and whether the system is responding.

Key Performance Metrics:

- All five Year 1 sequenced deliverables initiated by Q1 FY27: mapping a capital stack inventory, talent pipeline coordination protocols, EDA talent deal support, ALICE data mapping, and dashboard architecture.
- Number of agencies actively coordinating with shared outcome commitments (target: all support agencies engaged by Q1 FY27).

Resources Required:

- Staff**:** One new Director-level FTE; 2–3 staff detailed from pertinent departments for Year 1
- Funding**:** Year 1 cost is one Director-level salary plus staff time from existing agency budgets. No new county programmatic appropriation required. All initiative-level spending flows through the capital stack (Initiative 2.1.b).
- External Support: Skill Source Group (SSG); Virginia Works Northern; Northern Virginia Technology Council and NoVA Chamber (employer demand intelligence).

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Authorize OWCA Director position; identify 2–3 detailed staff from pertinent departments	Q4 FY26
Establish coordination mechanisms: shared charter, agency roles, and accountability framework	Q4 FY26
Initiative 2.2 capital stack inventory and governance design	Q4 FY26
NCS detailed staff complete ALICE data mapping and design navigator pilot framework (Initiative 2.5)	Q1 FY27
Design shared dashboard; define outcome metrics and data sharing protocols	Q1 FY27
Launch full initiative portfolio as capital stack opens and capacity grows	Q2 FY27
Present Year 1 outcomes to Board; transition OWCA's permanent home to the Department of Economic Initiatives	Q3 FY27

Initiative 2.1.a: Flexible Capital Stack for Workforce Investment

Purpose: Fairfax County's workforce investment is almost entirely dependent on WIOA formula funding, which is too slow (lengthy process from identification to deployment), too narrow (eligibility requirements preclude most employer-driven upskilling), and too inflexible (federal formula allocations limits discretionary pool to test new approaches).

This initiative will build a Flexible Capital Stack for Workforce Investment - mapping every flexible dollar currently available and pursuing those being missed. Peer regions have built similar models, managing workforce investment as a portfolio braiding employer co-investment, competitive federal grants, philanthropic capital, and state and local tools.

Desired Outcomes:

- Every flexible workforce dollar available to Fairfax mapped in a single capital stack inventory, and employer co-investment established.
- Employer co-investment built into sector partnership charters by Year 2, with return on investment modeled on peer jurisdictions.
- Full braided portfolio operational by Year 3+, supporting sector accelerators, ALICE pathways, and the cleared talent pipeline publicly reported as a workforce investment, not a grant program.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Total non-WIOA dollars mobilized annually for workforce investment (Year 1 baseline: $0; Year 2+ target set after inventory).
- Number of active co-funding partnerships established (philanthropic foundations, federal earmarks/grants, employer contributions).
- Documented return on workforce investment per dollar deployed.

Resources Required:

- Staff: OWCA Director with 2-3 staff detailed from pertinent agencies (as referenced in Initiative 2.1); grants and development capacity drawn from existing EDA and DFS staff
- Funding**:** No new county appropriation in Year 1. Year 1 cost is staff time and capital stack mapping. County funds enter in Year 3+ after outcomes are demonstrated
- External Support: Foundations, federal earmarks and competitive grants

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Conduct capital stack inventory: map every flexible workforce dollar available from federal, state, local and philanthropic	Q4 FY26
Identify and begin cultivating 3–5 foundation partners focused on economic mobility and workforce development	Q4 FY26–Q1 FY27
Research and submit competitive federal grant applications; begin earmark identification with county's legislative team	Q1 FY27
Design and launch 1–2 pilots funded via nontraditional sources only	Q1–Q2 FY28

Initiative 2.1.b: Talent Pipeline for Displaced Federal Workers and Cleared Professionals

Purpose: Two overlapping talent gaps do not have a way to scale. An estimated 25,000+ displaced federal workers (8,000 in Fairfax County alone) hold policy expertise, program management skills, and active clearances that regional local governments and private employers could utilize. Simultaneously, 41% of Northern Virginia tech leaders cite cleared talent shortages as a top five-year growth barrier.

While Fairfax County cannot shorten federal investigation timelines or change clearance requirements, the County can expand the pipeline of clearable candidates and reduce applicant-caused delays.

Multiple programs already exist that support former federal employees and contractors' transition to public and private roles. DFS Workforce Development is partnering with Virginia Tech's School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), Local Government Management Training Program and Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) launched the Federal Expertise to Local Impact' initiative for local government placement. NOVAnext, Talent Up NoVA, and Virginia Career Works are active on the private-sector side. OWCA's role will be to scale and amplify the impact of these programs.

Desired Outcomes:

- The DFS-VT SPIA-VLGMA 'Federal Expertise to Local Impact' initiative formally integrated into OWCA's regional pipeline, with Fairfax and peer Northern Virginia jurisdictions receiving matched candidates through a shared competency-to-role mapping framework.
- Talent Up NoVA, NOVAnext, and Virginia Career Works coordinated into a unified private-sector intake channel with shared outcome reporting under OWCA.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of displaced federal workers placed in private and public sector positions

Resources Required:

- Staff: OWCA Director with 2-3 staff detailed from pertinent agencies (as referenced in Initiative 2.1); Fairfax County HR to lead competency mapping and coordinate with peer jurisdictions; EDA staff to convene employer consortium; DFS staff to support transition wraparound services.
- External Support: Virginia Tech SPIA and VLGMA (lead partners on the already-operational 'Federal Expertise to Local Impact' initiative); Talent Up NoVA, NOVAnext, Virginia Career Works (active private-sector programs); Skills Source Group (SSG); Virginia Works Northern; NVTC (employer burden study and consortium); NOVA and GMU (clearance-track pathway design).

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Formally engage VT SPIA/VLGMA to integrate 'Federal Expertise to Local Impact' into OWCA's pipeline; establish shared placement tracking and referral protocols	Q4 FY26
Map open positions across Fairfax County and peer Northern Virginia jurisdictions against federal competency profiles in coordination with County HR, VT SPIA/VLGMA, EDA, and COG	Q4 FY26
Coordinate Talent Up NoVA, NOVAnext, Virginia Career Works, SSG, and Virginia Works Northern into a unified private-sector intake channel with shared outcome reporting	Q4 FY26

Initiative 2.1.c: Sector Skills Accelerators

Purpose: Workforce training in Fairfax is frequently built around provider capacity and funding eligibility, with limited alignment to what employers in growing sectors need. For the skills gap challenges, there is no competency framework translating employer role requirements into training curricula, and no accountability mechanism for measuring success by employment outcomes rather than enrollment counts. Peer regions have solved this skills gap problem through similar skills-first systems, including San Diego's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) model.

This initiative will establish 2-3 Sector Skill Accelerators in high-demand occupations in Fairfax County.

Under the umbrella of Sector Skills Accelerators is the opportunity to expand qualifying work-based learning (WBL) within FCPS career pathways. Fairfax invests approximately $20,000 per student annually in K–12, yet without structured local employer pathways, a significant share of graduates leave the region after college, exporting that public investment to competing labor markets. Research shows students who complete WBL with local employers are significantly more likely to remain in or return to that labor market, converting per-student expenditure from an education cost into a talent retention strategy.

Desired Outcomes:

- Employer-led sector partnerships operational in 2–3 priority sectors, with employers co-defining competencies through a TPM-style process alongside NOVA, GMU, and FCPS.
- FCPS WBL opportunities expanded and connected to local employer partners.
- Fairfax Competency Framework established: employer-validated competency mapped to training inventory, serving as the shared language between employers and training providers in targeted sectors where skills gap is observed.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of active employer-led sector partnerships.
- Percentage of new EDA deals with a Talent Addendum in place at close with a named owner (target: 100% of new deals by end of Year 1).
- Number of FCPS students completing WBL placements with local employers annually; percentage remaining in the Northern Virginia labor market at 12 months post-graduation (tracked from Year 2).

Resources Required:

- Staff: OWCA Director with 2-3 staff from pertinent departments (as referenced in Initiative 2.1) to lead sector partnership convening and dashboard architecture; EDA staff to embed Talent Addenda in deal flow; DFS and DEI staff to contribute outcome data to shared dashboard.
- Funding: Dashboard and program inventory funded. Sector partnership convening uses existing agency capacity in Year 1.
- External Support: NOVA, GMU, and FCPS (training design and program inventory); Skills Source Group (SSG) and Virginia Works Northern (sector demand intelligence and training alignment); NVTC and NoVA Chamber (employer demand signals and sector partnership facilitation); Office of One Fairfax (equity integration); EDA (Talent Addendum integration).

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Conduct employer demand scan with NVTC, NoVA Chamber, SSG, and Virginia Works Northern; produce initial Sector Profiles for 2–3 priority sectors	Q4 FY27
Design dashboard architecture; define outcome metrics and data sharing protocols across partner agencies.	Q4 FY26–Q1 FY27
Engage FCPS to map current WBL programs, identify employer partnership gaps, and design WBL expansion strategy	Q1 FY27
Convene employer-led sector partnerships in 2–3 priority sectors; build Fairfax Competency Framework via TPM process with NOVA, GMU, FCPS, and SSG	Q1–Q2 FY27
Expand sector partnerships and sprint cycle to full portfolio; scale FCPS WBL employer placements	FY28

Initiative 2.1.d: Workforce Pathways for ALICE Households

Purpose: ALICE households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) represent 29% of Fairfax County's population and constitute a large, underutilized segment of the regional talent pool. Many are employed but underemployed, excluded from the workforce development system that sets up barriers that can preclude participation. This is not a social services problem; it is an economic competitiveness problem. Removing these barriers expands the labor pool, increases participation, reduces employer turnover, and grows the productive workforce.

This initiative will establish Alice Workforce Pathways that focus on 1) Targeted Assistance and 2) Paid Work-Based Learning Opportunities.

Desired Outcomes:

- ALICE workers are active participants in Initiatives 2.1.c. and 2.1.d. through navigator support, income bridge mechanisms, and childcare access expanding the pipeline to the full workforce.
- Navigator pilot operational with 2–3 employers, connecting ALICE workers to sector accelerator pathways with wraparound support modeled on Seattle–King County's coached approach.
- Paid work-based learning internships for Alice workers (paid internships are dependent on dedicated funding identified through capital stack inventory)

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of ALICE workers enrolled in sector accelerator training pathways through navigator-supported referrals (baseline established in Year 1 pilot).
- Employment and wage outcome rates for ALICE pathway completers at 6 and 12 months post-training, Number of employers in paid work-based learning arrangements with ALICE workers; retention rate at 12 months as a documented economic outcome.

Resources Required:

- Staff: OWCA Director with 2-3 staff from pertinent departments (as referenced in Initiative 2.1) will integrate ALICE pathways into the broader portfolio; NCS and One Fairfax staff to lead navigator pilot design and delivery.
- Funding: Navigator pilot and income bridge mechanisms funded via capital stack (Initiative 2.1.a.) using flexible non-WIOA dollars, philanthropic capital and competitive grants. Stipend-backed WBL funded through employer co-investment and foundation partnerships. Fairfax County Guaranteed Income Pilot provides an existing model. No new county appropriation in Year 1.
- External Support: Virginia Career Works (navigator coordination); NOVA (training pathway alignment); Fairfax County Office for Children (childcare access); Office of One Fairfax (equity framing and integration); Skills Source Group (SSG) (sector alignment for ALICE pathways); foundations focused on economic mobility (cultivated via Initiative 2.1.a.)

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Map ALICE household data against sector accelerator pathways; identify where eligibility, income, and childcare barriers most exclude participation; establish baseline	Q4 FY26
Design navigator pilot with NCS, Virginia Career Works, and 2–3 anchor employers; define wraparound support package.	Q4 FY26–Q1 FY27
Launch navigator pilot; begin connecting ALICE workers to sector and talent pipeline pathways with active navigator support	Q1–Q2 FY27
Formalize paid WBL arrangements through Talent Up Fairfax	Q1–Q2 FY27
Publish ALICE outcomes in first annual public scorecard; build evidence base for expanded county investment	Q3 FY27

Strategic Area 3: Evolving the Development Process

Overview

A critical driver of Fairfax County's economic success is the development and maintenance of infrastructure that is critical to allowing commerce and innovation to flourish. Historically, the County pursued visionary land-use strategies that have resulted in mixed-use, transit-oriented communities that attract employers and provide desirable places to live and work.

The Task Force included representatives from departments that are central to the development process. These representatives formed a subgroup to determine ways to streamline the development process and boost predictability to further enhance economic competitiveness. Development process initiatives will primarily be led by Land Development Services and the Department of Planning and Development.

This strategic area is also a crucial component of the work completed by the concurrent Housing Task Force. Various initiatives within this section are also represented in the work of the Housing Task Force, given the relationship between both efforts. To maximize efficiency in industry engagement, all initiatives in this section were included in the Housing Task Force's engagement with the development community. Initiatives identified by industry via survey as the most impactful include Comprehensive Plan Flexibility and Alignment (Initiative 3.3), Limit Site Plan Review (Initiative 3.16) to Regulatory Requirements, Transportation Communication (Initiative 3.22) and Improve Clarity During Zoning Processes (Initiative 3.2). Speeding up review times and reducing any unnecessary steps in the development process were key themes highlighted in the outreach conducted.

Initiative 3.1: Incentivize Quality Submissions

Purpose: Much of the time that it takes to process an entitlement application is spent negotiating for better quality-controlled or complete submissions, which takes valuable time away from evaluating and improving design and project outcomes early in the review process. This initiative seeks to enumerate baseline standards that, if met, would support applications being reviewed faster and with fewer submissions. Through establishing a baseline as to what defines a quality submission, what that submission should include (like early proffers, early design commitments, etc.) the number of iterations of plan review, and therefore overall review time, can be reduced, leading to increased efficiency and speed of review.

Desired Outcomes:

- Establishment of a baseline for what a quality submission is
- High quality plan submissions, reducing an applicant's number of submissions
- Faster application processing and earlier public hearings

Key Performance Metrics:

- Time from application filing to Board of Supervisors approval.

- Number of submissions made during the review process.
- Number of staff hours spent on review. This could be compared to a standard application of similar size/type/complexity.

Resources Required:

- Need the staff levels available to be able to quickly turn around application review/submissions, hold up our end of the bargain.
- No anticipated funding needs.

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Determine what defines a quality submission, develop the baseline/markers for applicants to achieve	Q3 FY26
Determine an appropriate review timeline	Q4 FY26

Initiative 3.2: Improve Clarity and Understanding During Zoning Review

Purpose: Much of the confusion or frustration in the zoning process comes from misunderstanding County comments, or, in other words, assuming the worst possible reading of any comment the County provides. The initiative seeks to streamline, standardize and prioritize language and comments to build trust and encourage better submissions all around.

Desired Outcomes:

Implementation of training program for planners in DPD and Sister Agencies for how to provide effective comments. Establish guide that planning and development staff use to create consistent template for providing organized and prioritized comments, consistent in tone, language and format for comments across the board.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Track that template is created and maintained.
- Review comments on periodic basis to make sure the comments are clear and concise and follow style guide.
- Outreach to industry to gauge their satisfaction with format and understandability

Resources Required:

- Staff (FTEs, skill sets, reallocation of positions)
- Funding (existing or new, order-of-magnitude estimate, source of funding)
- External support (consultants, partners, state/federal agencies) Mostly other agencies need to follow pattern as set up by DPD.

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Training and Guide	Q2-Q4 FY 26

Initiative 3.3: Comprehensive Plan Flexibility and Alignment

Purpose: Streamline the dual-process timeline for rezoning applications that are not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan ("Plan"). Site-specific Plan recommendations often necessitate a Plan amendment before rezoning action, creating additional steps, time, and staff coordination challenges. The lack of a clearly defined, consistent approach to managing these parallel processes contributes to inefficiencies and uncertainty for staff and applicants. Additionally, recent efforts with Plan Forward Phase 1, the update to the Comprehensive Plan's Policy Plan Land Use element, was the first of two steps in providing additional flexibility regarding interpretations of the Plan when it comes to planning concepts, uses, and density/intensity recommendations.

Additional amendments to the Area Wide guidance within the Plan are needed to fully enable this Plan flexibility and limit the number of future site-specific Plan amendments.

Desired Outcomes:

Dual Process:

- Shorter and more predictable review timelines for applications that require both a Comprehensive Plan amendment and a rezoning.
- Clear, consistent expectations for applicants, staff, and decision-makers through well-defined guidelines for dual-process cases.
- Improved coordination and communication among county staff throughout the review process, reducing delays and duplicative reviews.
- Broad understanding and confidence in the process from applicants, community members, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors.

Area Wide Guidance:

- Reduced reliance on site-specific Plan amendments due to increased flexibility and clarity in Area-wide guidance.

Key Performance Metrics:

Dual Process:

- Average total review time for dual-process cases.
- Percentage of dual-process applications processed in accordance with the accepted guidelines.
- Percentage of applicants and staff rating the dual-process review as "clear" or "very clear" in a post-implementation survey.

Area Wide Guidance:

- Number of site-specific Plan amendment nominations received during the nomination period.

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Dual Process Improvement Actions (Informed by a recent DPD and Industry Whiteboarding Exercise in December 2025.)	
Improve internal communication on dual-process cases; formalize expectation to immediately begin conversations on timing, schedule, process for any dual-process case	Underway
Debrief / after action on recent dual-process cases, to include DPD staff and other stakeholders	1Q 2026
Conversation with Fairfax County Dept. of Transportation on coordination of transportation studies, current process, opportunities for efficiencies and process improvements.	1Q 2026
Conversation with FCPA, HCD, FCPS, and other agencies regarding the current process and opportunities for efficiencies and process improvements.	1Q 2026
Identification of categories of dual-process cases, and the characteristics of each	1Q 2026
Conversations with other jurisdictions on similar processes	2Q 2026
Formalization of guidelines; includes coordination with Planning Commission and BOS	2Q 2026
Area Wide Guidance Actions	
Request BOS authorization* **Note: The Area Plans consist of four volumes and staff will request authorization of one or two areas subject to staff resources and workload. Additional areas will be amended in the future as directed by the BOS/identified by staff.*	2Q 2026
Define scope of work/ key considerations; required analysis; project timeframe; stakeholder engagement plan	2Q 2026
Review analysis; internal coordination; draft recommendations	3Q-4Q 2026
Stakeholder engagement	ongoing
Finalize recommendations/ PC-BOS Committees	4Q 2026-1Q 2027
Publication/ PC & BOS Hearings	1Q-2Q 2027

Initiative 3.4: Flexibility in Zoning Case Interpretation

Purpose: Enable flexibility in making minor adjustments to development proposals post-entitlement approval that remain in keeping with the spirit and intent of the approval. This can be best achieved by empowering the right staff within the review process to make correct and effective decisions to keep the application moving forward efficiently. This is already achieved in part by triaging issues within the site/subdivision review processes. LDS staff review zoning approvals for substantial conformance with zoning cases and may raise the issue to their Branch Chiefs if they have questions. If there is still uncertainty, the Zoning Evaluation Division compliance planners are tasked with answering questions about whether a proposal is in conformance and may sign off on the proposed change or may refer it to the more formal but still administrative minor modification process.

Desired Outcomes:

- Staff empowerment to enable flexibility with minor adjustments to proposals that do not:
    - Compromise what was promised to community members
    - Unduly constrain developers in making needed or desired changes that enhance their ability to develop the property as intended
    - Add unnecessary additional time and cost as may occur with a revision of the entitlement

Key Performance Metrics:

- Volume and extent questions brought to the compliance planners
- Percentage of questions that can be solved without elevating further

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Prepare and Implement Training Materials	Q1-Q2 FY 26

Initiative 3.5: Reporting on Zoning Application Processing Times

Purpose of the Initiative: In a legislative process, processing time is subject to variables outside of County staff or applicant's discretion. However, reporting the known processing time and tracking such information provides an overall benefit to the development process. This initiative proposes putting reporting processes into place.

Desired Outcomes:

- Development of an automated report that gives snapshot of processing times for zoning application types. Report would be publicly available online.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Consistent availability and maintenance/reliability of content in report

Resources Required:

- Staff: May need at least one staff member assigned to this for 25% of time.

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Reports developed and created	Q2-3 FY 26

Initiative 3.6: Integrate Economic Development Policy Plan Objectives into Areawide Planning Studies (and Possibly Zoning Entitlement Cases)

Purpose: Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan Countywide Policy Plan contains robust economic development objectives and policies. These objectives and policies are being refined through the ongoing Plan Forward process to reflect priorities including economic diversification, quality job creation, innovation sector growth, and equitable development. However, there is currently no systematic mechanism to identify when Areawide Planning Studies or proposed zoning entitlement cases support or advance these economic development objectives and policies.

Desired Outcomes:

- Discussion of economic policy objectives within land use objectives
- Acknowledgement of the economic impact of proposed plan revisions or development while continuing to prioritize land use issues
- Economic development statement or input for decision-maker knowledge

Key Performance Metrics:

- Percentage of entitlement applications that identify or discuss economic development policy plan objectives and policies
- Percentage of economic, fiscal, and/or market impact analyses conducted to inform Areawide planning recommendations

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Establish internal staff team to determine parameters, criteria, processes and template	Q2 2026
Seek review and approval	Q3 2026
Pilot Implementation	Q3-Q4 2026

Initiative 3.7: Improve Customer-Facing Metric Dashboards

Purpose: Enhance transparency and predictability in the development review process by evolving existing metrics into clear, intuitive, project-based performance tools that reflect overall project timelines and integrate FMO and DPD performance data. Enable the public, applicants, and decision-makers to more easily understand progress and trends.

Desired Outcomes:

- The public can clearly see how long each stage of the development review process typically takes and how current performance compares to established targets.

- Applicants have predictable, easy-to-understand information about project status and expected timelines, improving planning and investment decisions.
- Performance data is publicly available, consistently reported, and shows trends over time to support transparency and accountability.
- Leadership can use reliable, project-based metrics to monitor performance, benchmark results, and identify opportunities for process improvement.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Percentage of projects meeting established review time targets by phase
- Average review duration by project type
- Variance between projected and actual project timelines

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Identify & validate data inputs for site records	Q4 FY26
Identify & validate data inputs for building records	Q4 FY26
Develop site requirements document for each record	Q1 FY27
Develop building requirements document for each building record	Q1 FY27
LDS IT staff evaluate requirements and build customer-facing dashboards	Q2 FY27 – Q3 FY27
Conduct User Acceptance Testing (UAT) with business SME's; Refine dashboards with IT	Q3 FY27– remaining timeline subject to results from user testing
Conduct final UAT and approval by Project Manager	Q3-Q4 FY27
Obtain Director approval	Q3-Q4 FY27
Publish dashboards and communicate availability via Industry Notice	Q3-Q4 FY27

Initiative 3.8: Launch the Tenant Support Services (TSS) Pilot

Purpose: Formally launch the Tenant Support Services (TSS) pilot program by creating a dedicated webpage, an online application, and publishing program criteria. The pilot will also evaluate service lanes to support small business project reviews. Its primary goal is to identify opportunities to streamline review processes for small tenant projects, reduce duplicative effort, and assess resource needs for potential permanent establishment of the program.

Desired Outcomes:

- Small tenant projects experience shorter review times compared to pre-pilot baselines.
- Fewer small tenant projects require resubmission due to errors or incomplete information.
- Projects are completed within target timelines, providing applicants with a clearer understanding of review expectations.
- Insights from the pilot inform decisions about resource needs, process improvements, and the potential permanent establishment of the program.
- Ensure small businesses meet eligibility criteria while receiving consistent, fair support throughout the review process.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Average review time for small tenant projects in the pilot compared to baseline review times pre-initiative
- Percentage of small tenant projects completed without need for resubmission
- On-time completion rate for projects in the program
- Evaluate the effectiveness and timing of the different avenues in which staff review small tenant projects and identify opportunities for streamlining and improvement

Resources Required:

- Pilot phase: partially utilize two existing Building Division FTEs
- Long term: utilize the PACA Code Specialist IV (S30) position proposed under LDS Economic Initiative #2

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Publish webpage, online application and program criteria	Q2 FY26 - Q3 FY26
Launch TSS pilot program using Existing FTEs	Q3 FY 26
Conduct a work study to evaluate long term resource needs using TSS pilot insights	Q4 FY26 – Q1 FY27
Draft Position Description & Org Chart to show how the new structure would be created and supported	Q4 FY26 – Q1 FY27
Share findings with LDS leadership for informational review and future direction. No implementation or policy change is implied.	Q1 FY27 *(final decision dependent on pilot results + available funding)*

Initiative 3.9: Create Tiered Building Plan Review Options

Purpose: Develop tiered review pathways that differentiate projects by class and complexity, automate workflows in PLUS, and provide dashboard visibility for both staff and customers. This initiative addresses inconsistent workflow routing and lack of transparency in project status. By tailoring review pathways and automating steps, we can reduce delays, improve predictability and provide clearer information to applicants and staff.

Desired Outcomes:

- Projects are routed through the appropriate workflow based on complexity and project type, reducing unnecessary steps for simple projects and ensuring thorough review for complex projects
- Automation in PLUS decreases manual processing, handoffs, potential errors and inconsistencies
- Dashboards provide staff and customers with real-time visibility into project status, milestones, and timelines
- Data-driven decision making: tracking performance by project type to identify bottlenecks and refine workflows
- Applicants experience more predictable timelines and clearer guidance throughout the review process

Key Performance Metrics:
Updated dashboards to publish metrics based on project and complexity

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Define project classes and complexity tiers (Phase 1)	Q3 FY26
Deploy manual workaround until PLUS SaaS migration completion (Phase 1)	Q3 FY26
Design tiered review pathways and define automated workflow rules (Phase 2)	Q3 FY26 – Q4 FY26
Submit a PLUS System Change Request (SCR) to implement automated workflows (Phase 2)	Q3 FY26 – Q4 FY26
Confirm PLUS SaaS migration completion and readiness for workflow automation (Phase 2)	TBD – dependent on DIT and vendor
Update staff and customer dashboards to reflect changes (Phase 1 & Phase 2)	Phase 1 Q3 FY26 – Q4 FY26 Phase 2 TBD - dependent on SaaS migration
Monitor performance metrics, collect feedback, and refine workflows as needed (Phase 1 & Phase 2)	Q1 FY27

Initiative 3.10: Evaluate Feasibility of Allowing Field-Approved Deviations During Building and Fire Inspections

Purpose: Currently, limited authority exists to approve certain field deviations from approved plans during inspection for commercial alteration permits and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing permits. Because of this limitation, for new commercial buildings, even minor or equivalent changes that meet code and life-safety requirements typically require a formal plan revision, resulting in delays, additional review cycles, and increased workload for both applicants and staff.

LDS will partner with the Fire Marshal's Office to evaluate whether this field-approval authority can be safely and consistently extended for new commercial construction, allowing inspectors to approve equivalent, code-compliant deviations in the field. The evaluation will focus on maintaining life-safety standards while reducing unnecessary plan revisions, inspection delays, and administrative burden. LDS will initiate discussions with FMO to assess opportunities for broader application, where appropriate.

Desired Outcomes:

- Reduced plan revision burden by minimizing the need for formal plan resubmittals when field conditions change but proposed deviations meet equivalent code and life-safety standards.
- Improved inspection efficiency by enabling inspectors to resolve minor, code-compliant deviations in the field, reducing inspection delays and repeat visits.
- Field-approved deviations that meet building and fire code requirements.
- Clear criteria to appropriately allow field deviations and promote consistent decision-making across inspectors and projects.
- Clearer, more predictable understanding of when plan revisions are required versus when field approval may be allowed, reducing uncertainty.

Key Performance Metrics:

LDS will refine building inspection outcome data by creating an "approved as noted" option for inspectors. This will allow us to track field approvals that do not require revisions or amendments. This data will support establishing a target ratio for "approved as noted" outcomes and evaluating performance against that benchmark. This requires a system change request in PLUS which cannot occur until after SaaS migration is complete.

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Initiate discussions with the Office of the Fire Marshal to evaluate feasibility, risks, and constraints of allowing field-approved deviations. Any further action or implementation	Q3 FY26

Action	Timing
will be subject to the outcome of these discussions and separate approvals.	

Initiative 3.11: Enhance LDS Building Pre-Submission Consultation Services

Purpose: Promote and track multidisciplinary pre-submission meetings to ensure early coordination among departments, including the participation of FMO when appropriate. This initiative addresses delays and misalignment that can occur when applicants receive conflicting guidance or incomplete input prior to formal submission. By formalizing and tracking these meetings, LDS can improve project predictability, reduce review bottlenecks, and provide clearer guidance to applicants.

Desired Outcomes:

- Improved coordination across departments by ensuring all relevant stakeholders, including FMO, are engaged early in the process to prevent downstream delays
- Resolution of potential permitting and code issues before formal submission, decreasing the number of revisions or conflicting feedback
- Early and consistent guidance for applicants, leading to a more predictable and transparent review process
- Data-driven process improvements that track participation and meeting outcomes to identify recurring issues and refine pre-submission meeting processes

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of pre-submission meetings held per quarter tracked using SharePoint
- Percentage of pre-submission meetings with full participation from all relevant departments, including FMO, tracking using SharePoint
- Create a standardized survey so LDS can collect and evaluate applicant satisfaction scores or survey feedback after pre-submission meetings

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Identify all departments and stakeholders that should participate in pre-submission meetings, including FMO	Q4 FY26
Define criteria for which projects require multidisciplinary pre-submission meetings	Q4 FY26
Evaluate standardized meeting request and tracking process (form, calendar, system) for possible enhancements and create survey	Q4 FY26

Action	Timing
Pilot tracking process with a subset of projects to validate workflow	Q1 FY27
Monitor participation, meeting outcomes, and applicant feedback	Q1 FY27 – Q2 FY27 *(final timing dependent on volume of requested meetings)*
Analyze data to identify recurring issues and refine process	Q1 FY27 – Q2 FY27
Report on metrics and improvements to leadership	Q1 FY27 – Q2 FY27

Initiative 3.12: Process Mapping & Optimization for Commercial Building Records

Purpose: Conduct a comprehensive workflow review for commercial additions/ alterations and new commercial permit records to identify opportunities for parallel processing and automation. This initiative will evaluate and address inefficiencies, bottlenecks, and redundant steps that slow permit reviews. By streamlining workflows, LDS can reduce processing times, improve predictability, and make better use of staff and system resources.

Desired Outcomes:

- Reducing redundant or sequential steps by introducing parallel processing where feasible
- Leveraging of automation opportunities to minimize handoffs and reduce staff workload
- Decreased average processing time for ALTC and BLDC permits
- Data-informed improvements through identification of recurring bottlenecks and implement targeted process improvements

Key Performance Metrics:

- Average number of workflow steps per permit record (before vs after review)
- Average processing time per permit type
- Reduction in staff time spent on repetitive administrative tasks

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- Will require completion of the PLUS SaaS Migration to enable full automation or additional PLUS enhancements identified during the review

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Document current ALTC and BLDC permit workflows	Q1 FY27
Identify bottlenecks, redundancies, and opportunities for parallel processing	Q1 FY27
Evaluate automation opportunities in PLUS or other systems	Q1 – Q2 FY227

Action	Timing
Design streamlined workflows incorporating parallel steps and automation	Q2 FY27
Confirm PLUS SaaS migration completion and readiness for workflow automation	TBD – Target Q2 FY27 - *dependent on vendor, DIT and volume of system change requests (SCRS) once PLUS SaaS migration concludes.*
Monitor performance metrics, collect feedback, and refine processes as needed	TBD - *dependent on SaaS migration completion & SCR implementation*

Initiative 3.13: Code Clarity & Efficiency Initiative

Purpose: Conduct a comprehensive review of county policies and codes (including site, building, and zoning ordinances) to identify and remove redundant or conflicting provisions. This initiative addresses inefficiencies, inconsistencies, and potential confusion caused by overlapping or contradictory code language. Streamlining and clarifying code provisions will improve staff interpretation, simplify review processes, and provide clearer guidance to applicants.

Desired Outcomes:

- Elimination of overlapping or contradictory provisions to simplify interpretation and application.
- Uniform application of code provisions by staff, reducing errors and conflicting guidance to applicants.
- Enhanced applicant understanding. Clearer, more consistent code language increases predictability for applicants.
- Established methodology for ongoing code maintenance to prevent future conflicts or redundancies.
- Identification of systemic issues in code organization or structure.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of redundant or conflicting code provisions identified and resolved
- Percentage of code sections reviewed and updated
- Establishment of a code review schedule or process for ongoing maintenance

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Phase 1 – Technical Bulletin Policy Review	
Inventory documented policies established under the county's Technical Bulletins/Letters to Industry	Q4 FY25 – Q3 FY26 [Site = Complete / Building Due Q3 FY26]

Action	Timing
Identify redundant, conflicting or outdated provisions contained in Technical Bulletins/Letters to Industry	Q1 – Q3 FY 26 [Site = Complete / Building Due Q3 FY26]
Conduct stakeholder review (staff SMEs)	Q2 FY26 [Site = Complete / Building Due Q3 FY26]
Update webpage with current/relevant LTIs – removing outdated/redundant policies	Q3 FY26 [Site = Complete / Building Due Q3 FY26]
Issue Notice to Industry	Q3 FY26 [Pending]
Phase 2 **–** Ordinance Review	
Inventory all relevant site, building, and zoning code provisions	Q3 FY26 – Once completed, the remained schedule can be updated.
Identify redundant, conflicting, or outdated provisions	Q3 FY26-Q4 FY26
Request OCA assignment and review	Q3 FY26-Q4 FY 26 (final timing dependent on OCA input)
Conduct stakeholder review (staff SMEs, planning) of proposed revisions	TBD
Draft consolidated, clarified, and updated code language	TBD
Solicit public feedback / conduct public review process	TBD
Finalize and adopt code amendments (via separate schedule)	TBD

Initiative 3.14: Publish a List of Most Common Errors in Building & Site Submissions

Purpose: Publish a list of common errors and omissions that most frequently delay the approval of building and site plans. By making this information publicly available, the initiative will help industry applicants proactively address these issues during plan preparation to avoid these common issues, reducing review cycles, expediting approvals, and eliminating time spent reviewing and addressing these issues during the submission process.

Desired Outcomes:

- Reduced submission errors due to applicants proactively addressing common mistakes, decreasing incomplete or deficient plan submissions.
- Fewer resubmittals and correction cycles allow LDS staff to process plans more quickly and consistently.
- Clear guidance on frequent errors helps applicants better understand expectations and regulatory requirements
- Predictable and transparent processes in which applicants gain clarity on common pitfalls, reducing confusion and improving success in the submission process

Key Performance Metrics:

- Publicize this new resource and update annually
- Identify where this resource can be linked from existing webpages, share it at pre-submission meetings and EOD counter, and share with Industry organizations
- Assign to the senior QC reviewers to evaluate and update annually

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Note: the below schedule is specific to the site plan effort as the building plan effort is complete and has been published online at Building Plan Review | Land Development Services

Action	Timing
Assign senior QC reviewers to develop a list of the most common errors on plans and vet with SDID branch chiefs for consensus.	Q3 FY26
Draft a clear, plain-language list of common errors with examples and guidance for avoiding them.	Q3 FY26
Publish the finalized list on the LDS website, cross reference from other webpages as appropriate, and communicate to industry through LTI notice and stakeholder outreach.	Q4 FY26

Initiative 3.15: Evaluate Site Plan Submission Requirements

Purpose: Host a collaborative workshop with industry stakeholders to evaluate current site plan submission requirements and identify elements—such as landscape plans, interpretation sheets, or other non-essential materials—that can be reduced or eliminated and then update our submission requirements and train staff appropriately. The initiative aims to streamline submission requirements, focus review on critical items, and improve overall efficiency, reducing review time and administrative burden for both staff and applicants.

Desired Outcomes:

- Reduction of unnecessary or redundant submission elements to simplify the site plan process
- Scope of review limited to essential items, decreasing processing time and staff workload. Reduce number of review cycles necessary to address non-essential plan elements
- Enhance industry collaboration by engaging applicants and industry professionals in identifying practical, effective changes, and recognize the design professional's ultimate responsibility in the design
- Applicants clearly understand what is required, reducing confusion and rework

- Workshop feedback guides permanent changes to submission requirements and improvement of resources available to Industry for successful plan preparation.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Completion of Industry workshop and final recommendation report generated
- Establish plan review guiding principles that will inform the elements we determine are necessary to show on the plan
- Identify the number/type of submission elements eliminated or reduced
- Percentage reduction in total Site Plan checklist items required

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Plan and schedule industry workshop(s) with relevant stakeholders	Q3 FY26
Prepare materials: current site plan requirements, examples of elements for evaluation	Q3 FY26
Conduct workshop(s) and collect feedback on submission elements	Schedule for End of Q3 FY26 – *Remaining schedule to be updated based on workshop input*
Analyze feedback to identify elements to reduce or eliminate and prepare report of final workshop recommendations.	TBD – Dependent on workshop
Draft updated submission requirements and internal review procedures	TBD – Dependent on workshop
Conduct internal review and refine based on staff and industry input (may include OCA review)	TBD – Dependent on workshop
Implement new requirements and train staff on review philosophy and requirements.	TBD – Dependent on workshop

Initiative 3.16: Limit Site Plan Review Recommendations to Regulatory Requirements

Purpose: LDS SDID will continue to enforce and educate staff on site plan review guidance, ensuring that all review comments are based solely on code- or policy-related requirements, rather than discretionary recommendations. The LDS site review team has published its comment philosophy online and actively reinforces it with staff.

To support consistent application, SDID leadership has established recurring meetings with outside agency review partners to educate and collaborate on this shared philosophy. Industry is further encouraged to reach out to leadership whenever review

practices appear misaligned with these expectations. These efforts aim to improve clarity, consistency, and predictability in site plan reviews while reducing unnecessary or non-mandatory recommendations.

Desired Outcomes:

- Site plan review comments are consistently rooted in regulatory or policy requirements, avoiding discretionary or non-mandatory recommendations.
- Staff and outside agency partners apply the shared comment philosophy consistently across all projects.
- Applicants clearly understand which comments are mandatory versus advisory, reducing confusion and unnecessary rework.
- Review staff are supported with clear expectations and leadership oversight, encouraging alignment with published guidance.
- Outside agency partners understand and adopt the shared review philosophy, improving coordination and reducing conflicting guidance.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Existing Comment QC Report: Use the LDS quality control report of plan review comments to track common errors and omissions and to ensure use of code references.
    - Expand this report to include outside agency review comments in addition to LDS staff reviews and publish the results online to provide transparency and guidance for applicants

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Most of the preparations for this initiative are complete and fully implemented. Recurring industry meetings, outside agency collaboration sessions, LDS' comment philosophy and performance metrics are in place to provide ongoing feedback and ensure proper evaluation of the initiative. These structures will continue to support consistent application of the comment philosophy, monitor alignment with industry expectations, and guide any necessary adjustments over time. Revamping existing metrics is underway and separately tracked under the LDS Metrics Initiative.

Action	Timing
Publish the LDS QC Comment Report online	Q3 FY26

Initiative 3.17: Evaluate Reliance on Professional Engineering Seal for Certain Site Plan Review Elements

Purpose: Benchmark practices from other local jurisdictions to evaluate whether certain engineering design elements can rely on the seal of a registered design professional instead of requiring full county review during site plan submission. OCA will be engaged

as part of the initiative to provide legal review and analysis of applicable authorities, risks, and any findings or recommendations resulting from this benchmarking. The initiative aims to identify opportunities to streamline review processes, reduce duplicative effort, and maintain design quality and regulatory compliance.

Desired Outcomes:

- Best practices data for if and how other jurisdictions rely on professional seals for certain engineering elements during site plan review
- Clarification of which types of design elements could be candidates for reliance on professional certification without full county review
- Inform Future Considerations: LDS leadership will review objective data and evaluate potential efficiency gains and risk implications in future policy decisions

Key Performance Metrics:

- Document number of jurisdictions surveyed and summarized for comparison.
- Reported assessment key design elements, review processes, and reliance practices.

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Identify and select localities for benchmarking and lead business SMEs	Q4 FY26
Perform benchmarking - gather data	Q4 FY26
Summarize findings in benchmarking and highlighting practices, potential opportunities and considerations	Q4 FY26-Q1 FY27
Share findings with LDS leadership review for informational purposes and future direction. Note: No formal implementation or policy change is implied.	Q1 FY27

Initiative 3.18: Digital Modernization and Automation

Purpose: Explore and pilot technology solutions to improve efficiency, accuracy, and consistency in permit review and processing. Implementation will occur in two phases, depending on departmental resources and availability. LDS will first identify opportunities to further automate and modernize PLUS permit processing including intake, review, and inspections, to streamline workflows and enhance service delivery. In parallel, LDS seeks support from DIT to evaluate or pilot AI-enabled plan review tools that can automatically flag common code issues, perform initial compliance checks, and improve routing accuracy. These tools aim to reduce manual workload, accelerate review timelines, and ensure consistent application of code requirements, though the pilot timeline is dependent on DIT vetting and authorization.

Desired Outcomes:

- Permit intake, review, and inspection processes are more automated in PLUS workflows, reducing manual effort and improving efficiency.
- AI-enabled plan review tools help flag common code issues and ensure consistent application of code requirements (pending DIT support).
- Automation and AI-assisted tools accelerate permit processing and reduce delays caused by manual routing and review.
- Insights from pilot efforts provide LDS leadership with information to guide future modernization decisions.
- Clear roles and responsibilities that distinguish between LDS-controlled automation efforts and DIT-supported AI initiatives, setting realistic expectations for timelines and resource needs.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Average time saved per permit due to automated intake, review, and inspection workflows (Phase 1 & 2).
- Number of manual steps eliminated in PLUS permit processing (Phase 1 & 2).
- Number of code issues correctly flagged by AI-enabled plan review tools during the pilot (Phase 2 - pending DIT authorization).
- Completion of AI pilot and documentation of lessons learned, challenges, and potential for broader implementation (Phase 2).

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Phase 1 – PLUS Automation	
Identify & implement opportunities to automate PLUS permit processing, including intake, review and inspections	Q1 FY27
Document baseline processing times and manual steps in PLUS workflows for comparison after automation.	Q1 FY27
Develop and refine requirements documentation and draft necessary system change requests for PLUS	Q1 – Q2 FY27
Implement System Changes (Post-SaaS Migration)	TBD – Target Q2 FY27
Phase 2 – AI Pilot w/DIT	
LDS IT to coordinate with DIT to evaluate feasibility and requirements for piloting AI-enabled plan review tools.	Q1 FY27 – *remaining timeline subject to DIT input*
Conduct AI pilot test case (pending DIT vetting and authorization) and document results.	TBD

Action	Timing
Summarize findings and lessons learned from PLUS automation and AI pilot and share with LDS leadership for consideration of next steps.	TBD

Initiative 3.19: Evaluation of the Public Facilities Manual

Purpose: Identify an internal project manager, supported by consultants as needed, to conduct a comprehensive, cross-agency review of the county's Public Facilities Manual (PFM) with the objective of simplifying and focusing the content to regulatory information only. The initiative will be implemented in two phases. Phase one will focus on modernizing streetlight requirements. Phase two will tackle regulatory disciplines in sub-phases to identify non-regulatory content that can be permanently relocated to more appropriate resources, addressing inefficiencies and confusion caused by regulatory and non-regulatory material being combined. Together, these efforts will improve clarity, accessibility, and usability for staff and industry.

Desired Outcomes:

- Modernized Streetlight Requirements (Phase 1): Consolidate and simplify streetlight standards to improve efficiency and provide clear design expectations to Industry
- Clarified Content (Phase 2): Working with subject matter experts throughout County agencies, associated each discipline covered by the PFM, distinguish regulatory versus non-regulatory content in the PFM.
- Non-regulatory guidance relocated to more appropriate resources (e.g., guides, manuals, websites) for easier staff and public access
- Users can quickly identify applicable rules, reducing misinterpretation and questions
- Established process for maintaining clarity and organization in the PFM going forward

Key Performance Metrics:

- Phase 1 (Streetlight Modernization)
  - Average number of review cycles to resolve streetlight related comments, or number of streetlight-related comments at first submission using existing Power BI Dashboard data
- Phase 2 (Clarified Content)
  - Percentage of PFM sections reviewed and categorized as regulatory or non-regulatory
  - Number of non-regulatory items successfully relocated to alternative resources.
  - Establishment of a formal process for ongoing PFM updates and content maintenance.
- Track the time between identification of each change needed until the PFM update is adopted by the Board, with the goal of implementing each PFM change within one year

Resources Required:

- Funding: budgetary support required to cover consultant services
- External support: consultant support

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Phase 1 – Streetlights Modernization	
Inventory existing streetlight requirements	Completed
Review inventory to identify conflicts, redundancies, outdates provisions	Completed
Define simplified, consolidated requirements	Completed
Coordinate with key stakeholders	Ongoing – finalizeQ3 FY26
Amend the PFM following the Board approval process	Ongoing – finalize Q4 FY26
Publish and communicate updates	Effective July 1, 2026 *(dependent on Board approval)*
Phase 2 – Clarify Content	
Identify an internal project manager and secure consultant support	Remaining Schedule TBD - based on funding & consultant input
Inventory all PFM content and classify sections as regulatory vs non-regulatory	
Review non-regulatory content to identify appropriate alternative resources	
Draft recommendations for content relocation and PFM restructuring	
Solicit internal review and stakeholder feedback	
Finalize recommendations and update PFM and associated resources	
Outreach - communicate changes to staff and public; update guidance and reference materials	

Initiative 3.20: Expand LDS Project Management (PM) Support Role

Purpose: Establish dedicated small-business project management support (including housing initiative projects) using specific criteria; providing a single point of contact for coordination (housing) and less complex reviews (small tenants).

Desired Outcomes:

- Small-business and affordable housing project inquiries receive timely guidance through a single, dedicated point of contact, reducing response time and confusion.
- Less complex review processes for small tenants are streamlined, reducing administrative burden for applicants and staff.
- Affordable housing initiative projects benefit from coordinated oversight, a proactive project approach, ensuring interdepartmental alignment and clear progress tracking.
- Applicants experience a more predictable, transparent, and supportive review process.

- Collect and track metrics on project timelines, review complexity, and outcomes to continuously refine the small-business and housing project management approach.
- Ensure small businesses and housing projects meet eligibility criteria while receiving consistent, fair support throughout the review process.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Average review time for small tenant projects compared to baseline pre-initiative
- Percentage of small tenant projects completed without need for resubmission
- On-time completion rate for projects in the program
- Project milestone visibility – percentage of milestones updated and visible in the PM tracking system (Smartsheet)

Resources Required:

- New FTE: Code Specialist IV (S30) position

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Draft Position Description / Org Chart to show how the new structure will be created and supported	Q3 FY26
Perform Work Study to evaluate resource needs using TSS pilot insights	Q4 FY26
Obtain leadership approval for new position and org structure	Q4 FY26
Develop internal procedures and criteria for project assignment (small-business vs housing projects)	Q4 FY26
Recruit and onboard dedicated project management staff	Q1 FY27-Q2 FY27 *(dependent on Board approval)*
Launch dedicated small-business and housing project support	Q2 FY27
Monitor early implementation metrics and adjust process as needed	Q2 FY27

Initiative 3.21: Creation of Real Estate Opportunities Team

Purpose: The County currently lacks a dedicated real estate function with the mandate, capacity and resources to proactively identify, evaluate, and execute real estate opportunities across the full project lifecycle for initiatives outside the affordable housing portfolio. Establishing this capacity will allow the County to better leverage assets to advance critical County priorities including residential development, commercial growth, and community-serving infrastructure. A centralized real estate opportunity function would give the County an integrated decision-making structure, more nimble acquisition and development processes and shorten transaction timelines. This team would act as a development ombudsmen and coordinator for strategic development opportunities, which would also improve the private sector experience in Fairfax County.

An expanded Real Estate Opportunities Team could focus on advancing strategic redevelopment and public-private partnerships through: engaging commercial property owners to facilitate redevelopment of high-vacancy buildings; packaging and delivering County redevelopment tools and assistance, including incentives; identifying and marketing county-owned parcels that could be leveraged for development; evaluating strategic acquisitions and parcel assembly opportunities; soliciting and managing project dispositions; negotiating and managing the commercial lease portfolio; coordinating major public-private real estate development projects not under the ownership of the FCRHA from concept through completion; and supporting regulatory coordination for affordable housing developments led by HCD.

This team's cross-departmental coordination role in executing residential and commercial projects also positions it to effectively manage and report on implementation of the Housing and Economic Competitiveness Task Force recommendations.

Desired Outcomes:

- Initiate projects that address critical needs including housing, business opportunities, and community amenities
- Structure acquisitions, dispositions, ground leases, and partnerships that achieve fair market value and provide competitive returns to the County
- Create sustainable income streams through lease payments, revenue-sharing agreements, and property appreciation that strengthens the County's long-term fiscal position
- Advance economic diversification, attract target industries, and create employment opportunities by assembling, positioning, and developing sites in partnership with the private sector
- Build out development ombudsman role to guide property owners and developers through the County's development process and coordinate with regulatory agencies on critical projects. This role would also serve as a liaison to HCD and its affordable housing development practice.
- Implementation of the Board Approved Housing Task Force and Economic Competitiveness Task Force recommendations. Serve as the Project Office for ensuring implementation by the staff and reporting to the Board and industry.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of housing units enabled through team-facilitated transactions (workforce, market-rate)
- Square footage of commercial/mixed-use development catalyzed
- Number of strategic real estate opportunities identified, evaluated, and successfully executed annually
- Annual County revenue generated through real estate transactions and activation of public property for private leasing
- Successful implementation of Housing Task Force and Economic Competitiveness Action Plans

Resources Required:

- Staff: Five additional real-estate professionals

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Request Board Support for Real Estate Development personnel (potential Board consideration item)	Q3 FY26
Finalize staffing roles and inter-departmental coordination plan	Q4 FY26

Initiative 3.22: Improve Transportation Communication Between FCDOT and VDOT

Purpose: Convene senior leader led VDOT and FCDOT working group to address various topic areas.

Desired Outcomes:

- Applicant-FCDOT-VDOT meeting process for comment reconciliation
- Process for communicating when FCDOT or VDOT review times at risk
- Discussion of minimizing conflicting comments and/or establishing comment priorities
- Identifying opportunities for developers/applicants to discuss comments directly with the commentors/reviewers
- Identification of and publishing process for formal VDOT approval on submittals (including traffic studies)
- Avenues to propose innovative solutions to VDOT that may not meet traditional standards
- Informal communication methods and criteria for tackling small, fixable issues

Key Performance Metrics:

- Metrics to be determined

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Establish VDOT-FCDOT senior led Working Group	Q4 FY26
Publication of above-listed topics and proposed completion dates	Q1 FY27
Begin quarterly meetings with updates on established topics	Q1 FY27

Initiative 3.23: Enhanced Coordination for Transportation Analyses

Purpose: Establish a working group—comprised of VDOT Traffic Engineering, traffic consultants, and FCDOT— aiming to address recurring issues and concerns related to Comprehensive Traffic Analyses (CTAs) and Traffic Impact Analyses (TIAs). The group will focus on improving how traffic studies are coordinated with adjacent development sites, so that analyses reflect cumulative impacts rather than isolated projects. It will also work to establish clear criteria for when a study is considered complete and how formal completion and approval are communicated to applicants and other stakeholders. A central goal is to better align the timing and scope of studies across multiple applicants whose projects interact in the same area. By coordinating studies for adjacent sites and overlapping applications, the group seeks to reduce duplication of effort, avoid inconsistent assumptions, and provide a more accurate, shared understanding of traffic conditions and mitigation needs.

Desired Outcomes:

- Clear, consistent criteria for CTA/TIA completion and a standardized process for formal notification to applicants.
- Better coordination of traffic studies among adjacent or related development sites, minimizing conflicting assumptions and duplicated work.
- More accurate, comprehensive assessment of cumulative traffic impacts across multiple projects.
- Improved collaboration and communication among VDOT, FCDOT, and traffic consultants throughout the study process.

Key Performance Metrics

- Percentage of CTAs/TIAs that document coordination with adjacent or related sites.
- Reduction in instances where multiple uncoordinated studies are required for the same corridor or area.
- Average time from final submittal to formal completion notification.
- Percentage of studies requiring major revisions due to inconsistent assumptions with adjacent-site studies.
- Stakeholder satisfaction (VDOT, FCDOT, consultants, and applicants) with the clarity of criteria and coordination process, measured via periodic feedback surveys.

Resources Required

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action Item	Timeline
Establish working group	Q4 FY26
Develop list of topics and proposed schedule	Q1 FY 27
Begin monthly meetings on listed topics	Q1 FY 27

Document outputs and agreed upon solutions	starting Q1 FY 27, ongoing thereafter

Strategic Area 4: Marketing Economic Successes

Overview

The Marketing Economic Successes subgroup focused on strengthening how Fairfax County communicates its economic position, performance and value—both externally to key audiences and internally to residents and stakeholders. This work recognized that while the county continues to perform strongly across key economic indicators, there is not a consistent, coordinated narrative that clearly connects economic success to resident outcomes, fiscal stability and long-term competitiveness.

To address this, the subgroup focused on simplifying and aligning how the county talks about its economy. This includes closer coordination between the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), the Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Department of Economic Initiatives (DEI) and the Department of Management and Budget (DMB) to provide clearer and more consistent messaging across channels, and translating complex economic and fiscal data into plain-language content that residents can understand and use.

Key accomplishments include the development of a centralized economic success and fiscal context framework, the integration of economic messaging into broader county communications (including budget-related outreach), and the expansion of earned media opportunities to reinforce Fairfax County's competitive position. Together, these efforts establish a foundation for more proactive, coordinated and strategic communications that support economic development goals and improve public understanding.

Marketing initiatives will be primarily led by OPA, with key partners to include the EDA, DEI, DMB, the Office of the County Executive (OCE), and BOS offices.

Initiatives

Initiative 4.1: Launch Revenues and Returns Public Education Series

Purpose: Residents and stakeholders often lack clear, shared understanding of how state funding structures and economic performance affect Fairfax County's budget. This initiative translates technical analyses such as the Weldon Cooper Revenues & Returns report into clear, plain-language explanations.

Desired Outcomes:

- Residents see a simple, consistent explanation of the findings in plain language
- County leaders have ready-to-use messaging that stays factual and non-adversarial
- Key points are repeated over time

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of DYK assets published (5+ recap)
- Reach/engagement on DYK posts (existing analytics)
- Click-throughs to the resource hub

Resources:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Finalize "approved facts" list + consistent source language	Q3 FY26
Produce 5 DYK Tiles + Recap Graphic	Q3 FY26
Publish weekly DYK series	Q3 FY26

Initiative 4.2: Create Central Economic Success and Fiscal Context Hub

Purpose: Economic and fiscal information about Fairfax County is currently dispersed across reports, departmental content and budget materials, making it difficult for residents and stakeholders to see how economic performance, funding structures and local decisions connect. This initiative creates a centralized, publicly accessible hub that brings together economic success priorities, independent fiscal analyses and regularly updated departmental content in one place.

The Hub will be designed to support sustained understanding and engagement beyond any single report or budget cycle.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Hub page views and time on page
- Frequency of hub links in county communications
- Regular content updates from contributing departments

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Define hub structure and content windows	Q3, FY 2026
Coordinate source content with EDA, DEI, DMB	Q3-4, FY 2026
Launch hub and integrate into communications	Timing TBD
Refresh content as conditions evolve	Ongoing

Initiative 4.3: Create Economic Success to County Budget Communications

Purpose: Budget communications often focus on annual decisions without explaining the broader economic and fiscal context that shapes those choices. This initiative integrates key economic information, like the Revenues & Returns analysis, into budget communications so residents can better understand how economic performance, state funding structures, and local budget decisions are connected.

Desired Outcomes:

- Budget communications consistently reflect Fairfax County's economic role and fiscal context.
- Residents can connect economic success with budget constraints and policy choices.
- Messaging across agencies reinforces a shared narrative about sustainability and investment.
- Economic Success priorities are visibly linked to budget decisions.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of major budget communications that include economic/fiscal context.
- Use of approved integration language across milestones.
- Engagement with materials linking to the resource hub.

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Develop 2–3 approved "economic context" lines for budget materials	Q4, FY 2027
Integrate context into key milestones (Advertised Budget, tax rate, hearings, markup)	Q3-4, FY 2026
Align references with Economic Success messaging and hub resources	Q3-4, FY 2026-Q1, FY 2027
Maintain consistent cross-agency language	Ongoing

Initiative 4.4: Advance Economic Competitiveness and Fiscal Context Through Earned Media

Purpose: Public understanding of Fairfax County's economic competitiveness and fiscal context is often shaped by outside narratives or incomplete information. This initiative uses earned media and executive communication channels to highlight Fairfax County's economic leadership, long-term investments and data-driven decision-making, with independent analyses such as the Revenues & Returns report providing supporting context.

Desired Outcomes:

- Earned media coverage reflects Fairfax's economic competitiveness and fiscal context.
- Leadership communicates consistent, coordinated messages grounded in data.
- Residents and stakeholders receive clear explanations through trusted third-party channels.
- Economic success initiatives and challenges are presented in a balanced, constructive way.

Key Performance Metrics:

- Number of targeted media pitches and background briefings conducted.
- Interviews, placements, or substantive coverage achieved.
- Executive podcast episode recorded and promoted.
- Consistency of messaging across earned media and leadership platforms.

Resources Required:

- Staff time and coordination
- No new resources needed

Key Actions:

Action	Timing
Develop pitch framing focused on economic competitiveness and fiscal context	Q1-Q4, FY 2027
Prepare leadership briefing materials and talking points	February-March Q4, FY 2026
Conduct targeted earned media outreach	Ongoing
Record and publish CEX podcast episode with Chairman	Q3, FY 2026

Conclusion

The Board Matter presented in August 2025 regarding Fairfax County's Economic Competitiveness prompted a widescale, cross-agency effort to assess our position in the current economic landscape and identify innovative strategies to strengthen our regional and national competitiveness.

The work of the Economic Competitiveness Task Force reflects Fairfax County's continued commitment to build on our legacy of economic growth and resiliency, while adapting to enhance our competitive edge. The County moves forward from a position of strength, but with a renewed sense of focus on strategies that close any gaps, leverage our county resources, and align our assets to build a diversified, innovative and growth-oriented economy.

We are implementing the Economic Competitiveness Strategic Roadmap in tandem with the Housing Task Force, creating a complementary and integrated approach to address affordability challenges and enhance the County's ability to attract and retain businesses.

Appendix A: August 25, 2025 Board Matter: Fairfax County's Economic Competitiveness

Jeffrey C. McKay
Chairman

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Board Matter

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay

Fairfax County's Economic Competitiveness

August 26, 2025

Fairfax County has long been recognized as the economic engine of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Of course, none of this has occurred in a vacuum. As a result of efforts spanning decades, Fairfax County has positioned itself as a preeminent location where businesses not only choose to locate but also thrive and grow. This Board of Supervisors, building on the work of previous Boards, has made significant and strategic investments to strengthen our economic foundation.

These investments include, among other things:

- Expanding access to high-quality public education, ensuring our workforce is prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- Building and maintaining critical infrastructure that allows commerce and innovation to flourish.
- Funding workforce development initiatives to connect residents to emerging opportunities.
- Providing small business grants across industries to drive resilience and innovation.
- Partnering with institutions and employers to create a reliable talent pipeline aligned with the needs of key sectors.
- Pursuing visionary land-use and economic strategies that have resulted in mixed-use, transit-oriented communities where employers want to locate, and employees want to live and so much more.

The results of these efforts speak for themselves. Over fiscal years (FY) 2022–2024, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) assisted with the retention and creation of nearly 28,000 jobs with over 90% of these jobs being retained and created without the state's assistance. In fact, in FY2024, there were 9,247 jobs created in Fairfax with the assistance of the FCEDA as compared to 8,210 created with the assistance of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) statewide. It's clear that Virginia's economy is dependent in no small part on Fairfax County's success.

Additionally, Fairfax County accounts for more than 25% of Virginia's total private sector employment and contributes over $167 billion annually to the state's Gross Domestic Product – a figure that reflects a 9.3% year-over-year growth, outpacing the region and the nation.

And yet, despite Fairfax County's economic achievements, we know that due to cuts at the federal level, and the continued rise in the cost of housing, many of our residents and businesses are currently facing major challenges. Fairfax County has a well-earned reputation for strategic planning and now is the time for us to double down on the practices that have been foundational to our successes. Part of this effort should be grounded in being data informed.

As such, this Board Matter has several requests included in the following motion.

I move that the FCEDA provide relevant information on trends as it relates to business attraction and retention, key industry clusters, global competitiveness, comparative analysis with peer jurisdictions, and continue to monitor and report changes at the federal level and its impact on residents and businesses alike.

I also move that the Board direct the County Executive to study potential options to enhance Fairfax County's competitive edge in attracting, retaining, and expanding businesses to Fairfax County. This study should include, but not be limited to, the following areas at the state and local level, as appropriate: opportunities for streamlining regulatory processes and requirements; evaluation of the effectiveness of financial and non-financial incentives; considerations of how to strengthen workforce development initiatives; strategies for increasing housing availability and affordability to support our workforce; ideas for aligning the pace of physical infrastructure to meet business and community needs; and blueprints for how to augment Fairfax County's marketing of its economic successes while also informing our residents of our successful efforts.

The County Executive should work with all relative stakeholders as needed – including, but not limited to, the FCEDA, Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives, VEDP, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, higher education institutions, workforce partners, housing professionals, and the broader business community.

Furthermore, I move that the County Executive report back to the Board with findings and recommendations no later than six months from today's meeting. However, if there are elements of the requests listed above that could be provided sooner, the Board would welcome such updates so that we may act with urgency to continue to maintain Fairfax County's role as the Commonwealth of Virginia's economic leader for decades to come.

Appendix B: Implementation Timeline for Proposed Initiatives

Implementation Timeline for Proposed Initiatives

Initiatives by Strategic Area	FY2026 Q1	FY2026 Q2	FY2026 Q3	FY2026 Q4	FY2027 Q1	FY2027 Q2	FY2027 Q3	FY2027 Q4	FY2028 Q1	FY2028 Q2	FY2028 Q3	FY2028 Q4	FY 2029 Q1	FY 2029 Q2	FY 2029 Q3	FY 2029 Q4
1. Economic Incentives																
1.1 Technology Accelerator																
2. Workforce Development																
2.1 Office of Workforce Competitiveness and Advancement (OWCA)																
2.1a Flexible Capital Stack for Workforce Investment																
2.1b High-Trust Talent Pipeline for Displaced Federal Workers and Cleared Professionals																
2.1.c Sector Skills Accelerators																
2.1.d Workforce Pathways for ALICE Households																
3. Evolving the Development Process																
3.1 Incentivize Quality Submissions																
3.2 Improve Clarity and Understanding during Zoning Review																
3.3: Comprehensive Plan Flexibility and Alignment																
3.4 Flexibility in Zoning Case Interpretations																
3.5 Reporting on Zoning Application Processing Times																
3.6 Integrate Economic Development Policy Plan objectives into Areawide Planning Studies																
3.7 Improve Customer-Facing Metric Dashboards																
3.8 Launch the Tenant Support Services (TSS) Pilot																
3.9 Create Tiered Building Plan Review Options																
3.10 Evaluate Feasibility of Allowing Field-Approved Deviations During Building and Fire Inspections																
3.11 Enhance LDS Building Pre-Submission Consultation Services																
3.12 Process Mapping & Optimization for Commercial Building Records																
3.13 Code Clarity & Efficiency Initiative																
3.14 Publish a List of Most Common Errors in Building & Site Submissions																
3.15 Evaluate Site Plan Submission Requirements																
3.16 Limit Site Plan Review Recommendations to Regulatory Requirements																
3.17 Evaluate Reliance on Professional Engineering Seal for Certain Site Plan Review Elements																
3.18 Digital Modernization and Automation																
3.19 Evaluation of the Public Facilities Manual																
3.20 Expand LDS Project Management (PM) Support Role																
3.21 Creation of Real Estate Opportunities Team																
3.22 Improve Transportation Communication Between FCDOT and VDOT																
3.23 Enhanced Coordination for Transportation Analyses																
4. Marketing Economic Successes																
4.1 Launch Revenue and Returns Public Education Series																
4.2 Create a Central Economic Success and Fiscal Context Hub																
4.3 Connect Economic Success to County Budget Communications																
4.4 Advance Economic Competitiveness and Fiscal Context Through Earned Media																

