

REGION 5 ANNUAL REPORT



FY2025

Prepared By:
Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable

www.roundtablehr.org



I. Introduction

Sixteen independent cities and counties form GO Virginia Region 5. The cities in GO Virginia Region 5 include Chesapeake, Franklin, Newport News, Norfolk, Hampton, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg. The counties include Accomack, Isle of Wight, James City, Northampton, Southampton, and York.

These localities comprise a dynamic metropolitan area with a rich history, a diverse landscape, and a population of more than 1.7 million people. The vibrant mix of people, places, and employment opportunities combine to make the region a popular destination for people to live, work, and play. As with any metropolitan region, there are many factors that influence the region's quality of life, such as economic conditions, education, and the environment. The table below provides a snapshot of the region's target industry sectors identified in the 2025 Economic Growth and Diversification Plan.

| Target Sector | Employment | Average Wages | Average Annual Employment Growth Over Last 5 Years | Employment Location Quotient |
|--|------------|---------------|--|------------------------------|
| Ship Repair and Ship Building | 41,764 | \$83,984 | 0.3% | 44.7 |
| Uncrewed Systems & Aerospace | 15,622 | \$98,601 | 0.6% | 1.8 |
| Advanced Manufacturing | 10,097 | \$81,322 | -0.5% | 2.5 |
| Water Technologies | 38,681 | \$94,158 | 0.9% | 1.3 |
| Port Operations, Logistics, & Warehousing | 17,774 | \$74,894 | 0.4% | 1.0 |
| Cyber Security, Data Analytics & Modeling & Simulation | 5,046 | \$88,011 | 0.5% | 0.6 |
| Energy Security | 25,400 | \$90,853 | 0.8% | 1.2 |
| Life Sciences | 7,137 | \$115,289 | 1.3% | 0.7 |

Source: JobsEq. 2025. Data as of 2024 Q3

Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable serves as the support organization for GO Virginia Region 5. The mission of the Roundtable and GO Virginia closely align – *to create more higher paying jobs through collaboration and innovation*. The Roundtable Board of Directors has 45 business, higher education, and organization CEOs and Presidents who geographically represent the region. Separately, the GO Virginia Region 5 Council has 26 members. As required, the business sector comprises 58% of the Region 5 Council membership. Currently, two members serve on both the Roundtable Board and the Regional Council. The Roundtable's priority initiatives are directly connected to the GO Virginia program and to the Region's Economic Growth and Diversification Plan.

This annual report is intended to capture GO Virginia Region 5 activity and outcomes for the period from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Region 5, with the help of the Roundtable, applied for and received three planning grants totaling **\$299,900** and one per capita grant totaling **\$305,000**. These GO Virginia funds, leveraged with an additional **\$70,196** in local and non-local match, bringing the total investment to **\$675,096**.

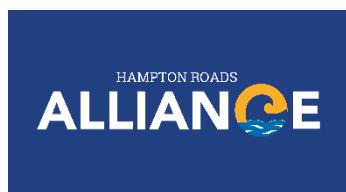
II. Growth & Diversification Plan

GO Virginia Region 5 advanced the 2023 Growth and Diversification Plan by aligning projects and partnerships with its four strategic priorities—Talent and Workforce, Sites, Industry Scale-Up, and Entrepreneurship—making progress in training pipelines, site readiness, cluster growth, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

A major focus has been on talent development and retention, building on the success of the maritime Talent Pipeline Initiative by the Hampton Roads Workforce Council and expanding similar models to emerging clusters such as cybersecurity, uncrewed systems, and data analytics. New workforce efforts, including the Western Tidewater Mechatronics program and multi-region life sciences career initiatives, address pressing gaps in middle-skill occupations while also positioning Region 5 for long-term growth. In parallel, the region advanced its out-migration and talent attraction analysis, providing critical insights into how Hampton Roads can retain young workers and compete more effectively for new residents.

The region also made progress on industry scale-up and sites readiness. Planning grants supported aviation, aerospace, and uncrewed systems cluster assessments, while continued use of the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA) created a platform to move more sites toward Tier 4 and Tier 5 readiness. These actions reflect the Growth Plan's recognition that site competitiveness remains a constraint on large-scale private investment. At the same time, Region 5 is seeking transformational federal opportunities, including Jefferson Lab's High Performance Data Facility—to advance the data science and AI cluster, a priority that links directly to federal and defense missions.

Importantly, the 2023 Growth and Diversification Plan was updated this year through a collaborative process that engaged the Regional Economic Development Directors (RED Team), the Regional Organizations Presidents Council (ROPC), higher education partners, workforce councils, and private-sector leaders. This update reaffirmed the region's eight priority industry clusters—advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity/data analytics/modeling & simulation, energy security, life sciences, port/logistics, ship repair and shipbuilding, uncrewed systems, and water technologies—and introduced sharper alignment with federal demand signals in defense, energy, and supply chain resilience. The update also embedded new regional initiatives, such as the Hampton Roads Investment Playbook and the Federal Funding/Policy Risks and Opportunities Initiative, as cornerstones for action moving forward.



III. Summary of Current Projects

| Project | GO Virginia Funds | Locality Match | Non-Locality Match | Investment Strategy |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Advancing Commercialization & Innovation Opportunities Jefferson Lab | \$99,900.00 | \$12,500.00 | \$42,500.00 | Cluster Scale-up |



The planning grant will be used to advance the region's AI/Data Analytics Cluster, by exploring the potential connections with local universities, the regional innovation ecosystem and other national laboratories to maximize technology transfer opportunities for the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (Jefferson Lab).

The grant, awarded to the Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable as subgrantee, will be used to benchmark best practices for engaging companies and emerging new ventures, including efforts at DOE National Laboratories and leading High Performance Computing Centers across the nation. It will build upon the 2022 *Strategy for Advancing Data Sciences in Hampton Roads* to identify and align best practices with the needs of key industry clusters in the region. In addition, it will establish connections to ongoing activities, including the development of an innovation hub or district. Finally, the grant will support the development of an action plan informed by benchmarking and a regional situational assessment.

| Project | GO Virginia Funds | Locality Match | Non-Locality Match | Investment Strategy |
|--|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Neighborhood (Economic Access Initiative) | \$305,000.00 | \$0 | \$152,500.00 | Workforce/Talent Dev. |



This per capita grant, with Neighborhood serving as the subgrantee, will increase capacity through the hiring of additional program staff; increase enrollment to 25–30 participants per class; raise class frequency from two to three classes per year; and expand existing career pathways and the Neighborhood Employer Network to increase the number of Hampton Roads residents moving into careers in Region 5's priority cluster industries.

Building on the previous GO Virginia ERR planning grant (2021), this project will expand career pathways in targeted industry clusters, including shipbuilding and ship repair; cybersecurity, data analytics, modeling and simulation; and logistics, port operations, and warehousing. Funds will enable Neighborhood to build the programmatic infrastructure necessary to diversify locations and broaden reach across multiple jurisdictions, cultivating a diverse talent pool. Using a collaborative approach, the project will focus on bridging the divide between regional employers and the untapped talent pool of individuals from low-income communities who often face barriers to careers in high-demand industries.

| Project | GO Virginia Funds | Locality Match | Non-Locality Match | Investment Strategy |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| Hampton Roads Investment Playbook | \$100,000.00 | \$50,000.00 | \$0 | Cluster Scale-up & Workforce/Talent Dev. |



The planning grant, with Hampton Roads Alliance serving as the subgrantee, will support coordination with local stakeholders. The Investment Playbook will outline a set of tangibles, high-impact project proposals that capitalize on the metro's economic assets, fully leverage federal, state, and philanthropic funding opportunities, and establish a strong foundation for the region's next stage of development. The project will be structured around the following key objectives: (1) Create a new narrative for future growth that builds on the region's authentic position in changing the U.S. economy; (2) Confirm 7-10 projects that have the potential to raise significant public funding and leverage private and civic capital; and (3) Identify relevant funding sources and support the process to raise those funds.

The Investment Playbook will result in several deliverables: a deck and memorandum that lays out the full

Playbook in forms that are clear and actionable; and presentations during the development and finalization of the Playbook made before the Hampton Roads Alliance and other key stakeholders. Each of these deliverables will lay out concrete next steps for bringing investment Playbook projects from concept to fruition, building on successful efforts in other cities and metropolitan areas.

| Project | GO Virginia Funds | Locality Match | Non-Locality Match | Investment Strategy |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| HR Economic Develop. Sites Readiness: Phase II | \$3,751,545 | \$9,826,609 | \$0 | Site Development & Infrastructure |

The per capita grant, which began in June of 2022, has been extended to June of 2026 to meet the construction timeline of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will serve the 90-acre site at Three Oaks. The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission is serving as the subgrantee. Timeline to begin construction is Q3 2025 with a completion date of late spring 2026.

A legal issue with the Southampton Commerce and Logistics Center has been resolved and positions the County to move forward with the project.

| Project | GO Virginia Funds | Locality Match | Non-Locality Match | Investment Strategy |
|--|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Demonstration Site for Clean Energy Transition to Green Hydrogen HRH2 | \$1,497,452 | \$0 | \$1,305,480.77 | Cluster Scale-up |



The per capita grant, which began in April 2023, has been extended to April of 2026. The Demonstration Site for Clean Energy Transition to Green Hydrogen HRH2 has been renamed to The Secure Energy Future Center. The Secure Energy Future Center (SEFC) is designed to be a hub for energy innovation. It brings together businesses, researchers, and decision makers to accelerate new energy technologies, develop workforce talent, and attract investment in the Hampton Roads region. Through the identification of multiple energy projects, state-of-the-art indoor energy interactive demonstration exhibits, and education/training program series, this initiative will drive innovation, solve complex energy challenges, and enable strategic growth for the region, the Commonwealth, and beyond.

The grant has ongoing challenges due to shifts in federal policy, among other factors. The Roundtable and subgrantee Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center are working with DHCD to realign the milestones and timing. The Secure Energy Future Center will be launched on October 29, 2025, as part of the Hampton Roads Investment Playbook. The Center will have the ability to host educational training sessions in person, virtually, and in hybrid formats.

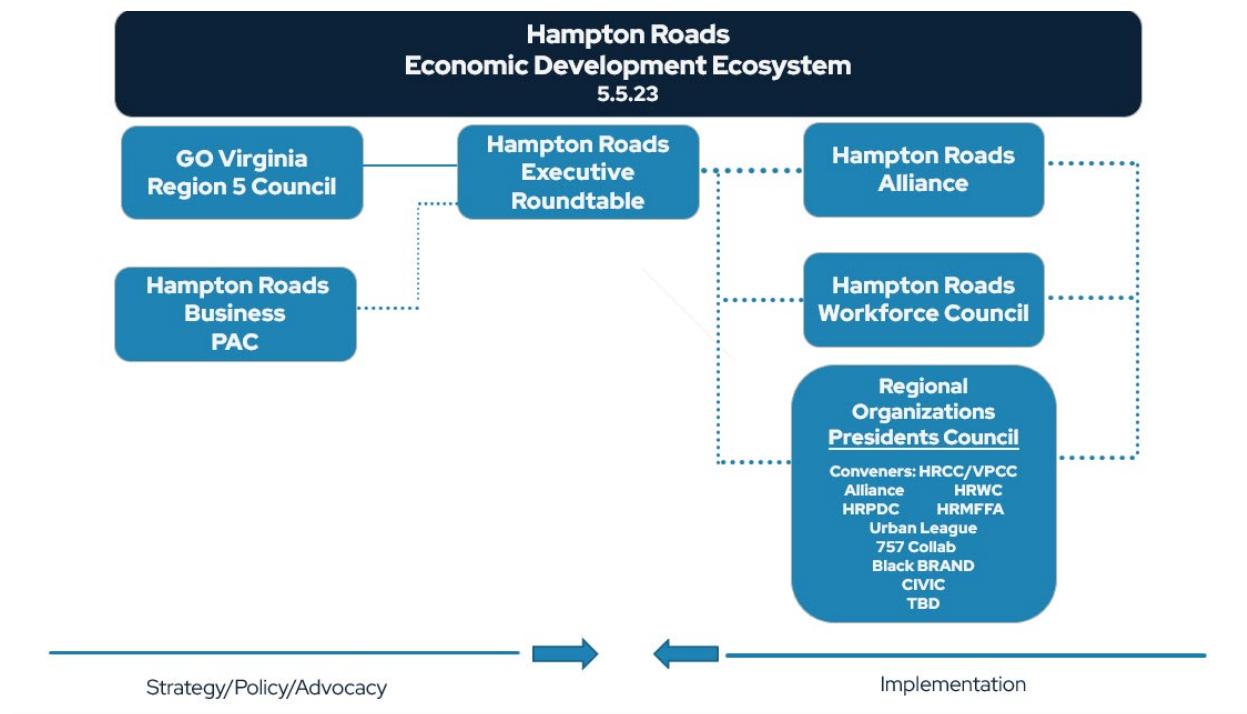
IV. Regional Collaboration & Partner Support

As referenced in section II regarding the Economic Growth and Diversification Plan, the **Regional Organizations Presidents Council (ROPC)** represents multiple regional partners listed below:

- Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable
- The Hampton Roads Alliance
- The Hampton Roads Workforce Council
- The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- The Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
- The Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance
- 757 Collab
- Black BRAND
- CIVIC Leadership Institute
- Urban League of Hampton Roads

The ROPC, as well as the Regional Economic Development directors (RED Team) from 14 localities are actively engaged in the development, review, and implementation of the strategies and goals outlined in the Economic Growth and Diversification Plan. It is also important to note that we continue to engage individuals/organizations based on specific topics requiring expertise (i.e., VEDP, VIPC, etc.).

The graphic below of the *Hampton Roads Economic Development Ecosystem* was included in the 2023 Annual Report. This visual shows the alignment of key regional organization with the Roundtable:



Over the last 7+ years, our region has developed a very collaborative approach to regional economic performance. The pace of collaboration accelerated and took on a sense of urgency and importance during the COVID pandemic. The teamwork approach remains strong among regional agencies, non-profits, the business community, and educational institutions and encourages ownership of advancing the strategies contained in the 2023 Economic Growth and Diversification Plan.

V. Outcomes & Impact

The list of the current and closed projects in FY25 below includes the outcomes/milestones achieved to date on each project, compared to the deliverables/products at the end of the grant, as listed in the executed agreement. This report reflects progress made on each project through June 30, 2025.

Open through FY25

1) Maritime Entry-to-Employment Training (MEET) – Old Dominion University Research Foundation

The Maritime Entry to Employment Training (MEET) project ended July 31, 2025, and advanced GO Virginia Region 5's Growth and Diversification Plan by modernizing maritime workforce training, addressing industry demand, and expanding talent pipelines. Using simulation tools, hybrid delivery, and direct industry alignment, MEET trained 522 students, exceeding its goal—while engaging 14 businesses and helping retain over 185 jobs. The model improved proficiency, reduced waste, and built student confidence, with fiber optics courses meeting regional needs and partnerships with schools, broadening access. Sustainability is ensured through integration by major employers and institutions, while national recognition highlights MEET's scalability and value to the maritime sector.

Five Grants Closed – FY25

1) Life Science Virginia – Virginia Bioscience Foundation

The Life Science Virginia planning grant concluded on August 21, 2024, with the goal of building a statewide talent pipeline for students pursuing life science studies and careers, with a focus on minority and underrepresented students.

The pilot ECB program successfully demonstrated how industry scientists and students can engage in meaningful, hands-on experiences that stimulate interest in life sciences. Outcomes exceeded expectations, with student engagement reaching 150% of the goal and all planned industry surveys and debriefs completed. Based on strong interest from schools and companies in Regions 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9, the program is now preparing for statewide expansion.

Phase two will be launched gradually, supported by industry donations and an estimated \$50,000 in costs for teacher stipends, student travel, and materials. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of early teacher-scientist collaboration, aligning projects with classroom instruction, creating short but practical engagements, and integrating both technical and soft skill development.

2) Workforce Development Plan for Western Tidewater Mechatronics Program – Paul D. Camp Community College

The Western Tidewater Mechatronics Workforce Planning project concluded in June 2025, producing valuable data and actionable strategies to strengthen workforce development in the region. A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted with input from 32 stakeholders, leading to the creation of a workforce development plan for Camp Community College and a companion report identifying regional gaps and strategies to address them. An advisory committee of industry and government partners was also established to guide planning and ensure alignment with GO Virginia objectives.

Key outcomes include stronger employer relationships, a foundation for customized training and work-based learning opportunities, and a detailed plan with clear, actionable goals tied to local economic drivers such as port and logistics. Lessons learned highlight the importance of early and continuous employer input, consistent messaging about "mechatronics," and flexible, modular training programs that meet industry timelines.

Overall, the project demonstrated that targeted research, strong partnerships, and clear planning can meaningfully improve workforce readiness and regional competitiveness while laying the groundwork for future mechatronics training and education initiatives in Western Tidewater.

3) UAS BVLOS Key Site Initiative – Hampton Roads Alliance

Per capita grant began September 2024 and closed out April 2025.

Key outcomes achieved during the study include:

- Early completion of the Key Site Selection Report, incorporating feasibility analysis, stakeholder engagement, and comparative review of nine regional airports
- Delivery of formal recommendations for the preferred Key Site to stakeholders, supported by criteria such as technical readiness, infrastructure alignment, spectrum availability, and suitability for multi-use operations
- Comprehensive documentation of planning, engineering, and regulatory preparedness to facilitate a smooth transition into Phase 2

These accomplishments complete Phase 1 and support the Committed Outcomes Report by preparing for future jobs and training, providing a long-term workforce plan, and outlining the infrastructure and airspace needs for FAA BVLOS compliance. With this foundation established, the project is prepared to advance into Phase 2.

4) HR Economic Sites Readiness – Hampton Roads Planning District Commission

The Region 5 Site Advancement project closed in October 2024 and directly addressed the shortage of project-ready economic development sites by advancing three properties to Tier 4. Building on the Enhanced Site Characterization study, this project leveraged GO Virginia funding and local partnerships to improve infrastructure, support business investment, and strengthen the region's competitiveness for large-scale projects.

Innovation Park advanced with a new sewer system (completion Oct 2025) and the consolidation of AGI into a 400,000 SF headquarters, manufacturing, and warehouse facility, representing a \$42.5M investment and 500 retained jobs. At Holland Park, a 42-acre site was sold to W.M. Jordan Co., with construction underway on a 352,000 SF cross-dock warehouse and a rezoning effort to open an additional 47 acres for light manufacturing and distribution. At the Tech Center Research Park, \$12.4M in city and GO Virginia-funded infrastructure upgrades improved connectivity, enabled the completion of two R&D/office buildings housing 420 jobs, and advanced a master plan for ten buildings and community amenities such as Drillfield Plaza.

Together, these site advancements represent significant progress toward expanding Region 5's inventory of competitive, project-ready sites, aligning with GO Virginia's goals of supporting business investment, job creation, and long-term regional growth.

5) Hampton Roads Workforce Council Talent Pipeline Implementation (TPI) – Hampton Roads Workforce Council

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council (HRWC), in partnership with GO Virginia Region 5, commissioned the Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI) study to evaluate workforce needs in two of the region's fastest-growing industry clusters: Data Analytics, Cybersecurity, Modeling & Simulation; Aerospace and Uncrewed Systems. Building on HRWC's prior success addressing maritime workforce shortages through the Regional Maritime Training System, this study examined current skills gaps, job readiness, and workforce development capacity to meet employer demand in technology-driven sectors. Conducted by Chmura Economics & Analytics, the study revealed that degrees in cybersecurity show the largest gap between graduates and available job postings, and that local companies face shortages in specialized fields such as aerospace engineering, software development, and unmanned systems technology. Across both clusters, the analysis identified fundamental skills gaps in areas including Microsoft Excel and Outlook, mathematics, Python, Linux, and teaching or training. To address these challenges, the study underscores the importance of creating internships and apprenticeships that build entry-level talent pipelines, ensuring the region can grow and sustain its workforce to meet the needs of these high-demand industries.

VI. Communication and Outreach

Communication and outreach remain central to GO Virginia Region 5's work. The Roundtable ensures broad awareness about GO Virginia through its ongoing community engagement and its alignment with regional priorities by incorporating GO Virginia updates into every presentation, meeting, and engagement.

As the Region 5 support organization, the Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable engages with multiple regional networks, including the Regional Organizations Presidents Council (ROPC) and the Regional Economic Development (RED) team, among other regional and city organizations. These forums provide regular contact with business, higher education, and government partners, highlighting GO Virginia projects and reinforcing the program's role as the Commonwealth's leading model for regional collaboration.

Over the past year, the Roundtable delivered approximately 32 total presentations, of which 8 were on the *Talent Attraction Initiative* (Start in Hampton Roads) and 9 were on the Federal Policy and Funding Initiative. These engagements highlighted Region 5's activities and emphasized the Roundtable's support role. *Talent Attraction Initiative* briefings addressed out-migration and workforce branding, while Federal Policy updates positioned Hampton Roads as a proactive leader in adapting to shifting federal priorities.

Digital Communication



The Roundtable expanded digital communication to increase awareness. The website was updated regularly with project announcements, Council updates, and news. Social media efforts reached broader audiences, particularly around milestone events.

Press statements were released on major initiatives, including the regional airspace and uncrewed systems studies, the Talent Pathways Initiative report, the expansion of the Economic Access Initiative, and new Council member appointments. These announcements received strong coverage and raised the visibility of GO Virginia projects across multiple industry clusters.

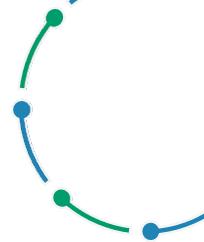
Regional Recognition

GO Virginia Region 5 is also prominently featured in the upcoming *State of the Region Report*, developed by the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy at Old Dominion University. The "Regional Collaboration" chapter documents GO Virginia's role as a cornerstone of Hampton Roads' cooperative economic development strategy.

The report highlights how Region 5 initiatives—talent development, federal policy engagement, and investment playbooks—are shaping a stronger, more cohesive regional economy.

Summary

Together, these outreach activities demonstrate Region 5's ongoing commitment to transparency, collaboration, and advancing the mission of GO Virginia across Hampton Roads.



VII. Project Pipeline

Region 5 has a robust pipeline of potential projects. The regional networks referenced under section II. of this report communicate regularly to solicit ideas to advance Region 5 priorities as outlined in the Economic Growth and Diversification Plan. Some ideas become potential GO Virginia projects like the *Hampton Roads Investment Playbook*, which went through this process.

Current GO Virginia projects in the pipeline will expand economic opportunities related to Region 5's priority clusters such as secure energy, uncrewed systems and aerospace, cybersecurity, data analytics, advanced manufacturing, and life sciences. Implementation projects that started with GO Virginia planning grants include the *FAA UAS Aerial System College Initiative & Talent Pipeline* (Per Capita) and *Airport/Uncrewed Systems/Air Mobility* (Per Capita). Other pipeline projects approved by the Regional Council and currently under consideration by the GO Virginia State Board include: *Cobotic Alliance Service Center* (Per Capita); *GWO Training Center/Hub* (Per Capita); and *Energy Resilience and Sustainability (ERAS) Program* (Per Capita). An additional 27 projects in the pipeline are in the conceptual or under construction stage of development.

As referenced in the 2024 Annual Report, we will continue to track GO Virginia grants awarded in Region 5 that successfully lead to federal resources and private investments. These investments help expand successful programs such as the Offshore Wind Supply Chain Hub (which attracted LS GreenLink), the Regional Maritime Training System (which secured additional funding to apply this model to other industry sectors), and 757 Collab (which attracted funds to create the 757 ScaleUp Alliance, the Defense Tech Accelerator, and the Hampton Roads Capital Access Hub).

VIII. Council Members - FY25

Thomas R. Frantz, Chair
Chairman Emeritus, Williams Mullen

Lynn Taylor, Vice Chair
President, Zel Technologies

Monique Adams
Former Executive Director, 757 Angels & 757 Collab

Patrick Coady
Retired Serial Entrepreneur, & Community Volunteer

Dr. Marcia Conston
President, Tidewater Community College

Steve Cook
Chief Innovation Officer, HR Workforce Council

Mayor Robert “Bobby” Dyer
Mayor, City of Virginia Beach

Christen Faatz
Senior V.P. Corporate Finance & Accounting, The Franklin Johnston Group

Sharon Goodwyn Retired Counsel, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

Jeffrey Holland
Executive Director, Chesapeake-Bay Bridge Tunnel

Bob Howard
Chief Investment Officer, Gold Key|PHR

Mark Johnson
Senior VP & Community Development Manager, Truist

Sarah Jane Kirkland
Senior Assoc. VP for Corp. Partnership, Old Dominion Univ.

Aubrey Layne
Executive VP of Governance & External Affairs, Sentara Health

Bob McKenna
President & CEO, Virginia Peninsula Chamber

Paul Nolde
Managing Director, 757 Collab

Dr. John Olson
Campus President, ECPI

Mark Perryman
President & CEO, Norfolk Airport Authority

Mayor Doug Pons
Mayor, City of Williamsburg

John F. Reinhart
Retired CEO, Virginia Port Authority

Casey Roberts
Executive Director, New Horizons Reg. Education Centers

Dr. Katherine Rowe
President, College of William & Mary

Robert Shuford, Jr.
Senior Executive Vice President, Towne Bank

Jennifer Smith
President, Owner/Operator, J. Smith McDonalds

Bryan K. Stephens
President & CEO, Hampton Roads Chamber

Thomas G. Tingle, AIA
President, Guernsey Tingle



Nancy Grden
President/CEO



Donna Morris
Executive Vice
President



Drew Lumpkin
Vice President of
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Strategic Initiatives



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Director of
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