

Middlesex County

A Strategic Economic Development Plan



1998

Middlesex County
A Strategic Economic Development Plan
1998

Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority

Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Introduction	1
Map of Middlesex County	
Welcome to Middlesex County	
Explanation of the Strategic Planning Process	3
Overview of the Economy	
Input from Existing Businesses and Industries	
Stresses and Sources of Stress to the Economy	
Opportunities and Unique Market Niches	
Vision Goals and Objectives	
Strategic Initiatives and Short Term Projects	
Economic Overview	4
Stresses and Sources of Stress to the County's Economy	8
Market Niches, Vision, and Strategic Economic Objectives	10
Specific Work Plan of the Industrial Development Authority	17
Appendices:	
Appendix A: Rapid Economic Assessment "Quiz"	19
Appendix B: Overview of the Work Session with Input from Existing Businesses and Industries	21
Appendix C: Overview of the Opportunities and Unique Market Niches Workshop	26
Appendix D: Duties of the Industrial Development Authority	28
Maps:	
Map1: Employment by Sector, Middlesex County	30
Map 2: Existing Land Use, Middlesex County	32

**Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority
A Strategic Economic Development Plan
Abstract**

This Strategic Economic Development Plan was prepared by the Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority (IDA). This Plan carries out the mission of the Middlesex County IDA to promote the orderly economic growth of the County by establishing a strategic and tactical Economic Development Plan and providing information and financial assistance to new and existing businesses. (See Appendix D.) This mission was established by the Board of Supervisors, as recommended by the Middlesex County Economic Development Committee.

The members of the Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority include:

David B. Adams, Vice-Chair

Robert A. Gary, III, Chair

Frank A. Johnson

Floyd W. Jones

Chauncey E. Mann, Jr.

Betty R. Miller

Donald M. Wagner

The IDA received staff assistance in the preparation of the Plan from:

Neal J. Barber
Executive Director
Virginia's River Country

Michele Mixner DeWitt
Regional Planner
Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

Tim Wilson, IDA Secretary and Treasurer
Planning Director
Middlesex County

Executive Summary

Middlesex County's economy, while sound, has not experienced the growth in employment, income and population as other areas of Virginia. The County's economy has been sluggish with a transition from a traditional agriculture and seafood base to more dependence upon tourism, retirement, and outcommuting to metropolitan employment. Housing and real estate have not rebounded from the recession of 1990.

The rapid diversification and expansion of the County's economy is dependent upon the provision or expansion of central water and sewer to the growth areas of the County, particular Deltaville, Saluda, and greater Urbanna. Because of the long timeframe and uncertainty of expanded utility systems, this plan focused on activities that will build upon those unique characteristics and market niches that are not totally dependant upon central water and sewer. If expanded central water and sewer service was proceeding aggressively with a definite development schedule, it would be necessary to revisit this plan and evaluate alternate economic objectives which could include the development of an industrial park.

Since most of the unique features of the County relate to Tourism and small business activity, the following objectives were established:

- **Become a Center for Exceptional Small Business and Entrepreneurship Opportunities**
- **Triple the Expenditures of Tourists in the County within the next 10 years**
- **Become a Marine and Fishing Capital of the Southern Chesapeake Bay by the Year 2010**

Middlesex is truly an economy made up of hundreds of small businesses, many of which are related to tourism. Small business and tourism development can occur with greater promotion of the resources of the County and assistance from the County to help the small businessman expand or launch a new venture. The following is a listing of specific tasks considered most appropriate for leadership by the Industrial Development Authority:

- **Facilitate the creation of a central point of contact to help guide fledgling businesses through the regulatory structure.**
- **The County needs to be pro-active in support of small business development and expansion. An initial policy of the Board of Supervisors indicating an "Open for Business" policy would be accompanied by assistance and advocacy by the Industrial Development Authority and individual Board members. The County could establish a joint review process of business projects to help speed the process along, identify critical issues, and assist business in overcoming some of the regulatory hurdles.**
- **Facilitate the development of additional public access areas to the water.**

Middlesex County Strategic Economic Development Plan
Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority

- Create a section within the Middlesex County web site that would include information about services and facilities related to tourism and other economic development activities.
- Work in cooperation with VIMS to expand its marine research facilities in the County and to attract other complementary marine research facilities to the County.
- Develop a public relations campaign related to the benefits of compatible economic development, including tourism to the County.
- Locate a hotel and additional bed and breakfast establishments in the County.
- Facilitate the expansion of local marine related activities.
- Develop a tourism marketing program.
- Work with civic organizations, the private sector, and travel organizations to promote saltwater fishing and saltwater fishing tournaments.
- Create an inventory of available business properties that would be available on the County's web site.
- Work with civic organizations in the County to develop a museum on boating and the boat building industry of the County.
- ⊙ Create a visitors center in the County.
- Facilitate the development of various travel packages for niche markets; such as, charter fishing, canoeing, sailing, history tour, etc.
- Promote the establishment of a marine aquarium in the County in cooperation with other County organizations.
- ⊙ Acquire a waterfront location for a public marina and privately managed restaurant.

While the Industrial Development Authority is established to promote the orderly economic growth of the County, including the promotion of industrial development, the support of industry, and the development of trade, this goal has to be shared by governmental officials, the Board of Supervisors, the Chamber of Commerce, local civic organizations, private businesses, and the citizens of the County. Only through our combined efforts can we achieve the prosperity that we wish for our children, our businesses, our families, and ourselves.

Middlesex County, Virginia

Rt 17

Urbanna

Rappahannock River

Saluda Rt 33

Rt 3

Hartfield

Deltaville Stingray
Point

Piankatank River

Introduction

Welcome to Middlesex County

(from the Middlesex County Comprehensive Plan, 1994)

Middlesex County is located at the eastern end of Virginia's Middle Peninsula. The County is bounded by the Rappahannock River to the north, by the Chesapeake Bay to the east, by the Piankatank River and Dragon Run Swamp to the southwest, and by Essex County to the northwest. The County has a land area of 132 square miles (83,392 acres) and 135 linear miles of shoreline.

Settlement of the area began around 1640, and, in 1669, Middlesex County was officially formed from Lancaster County. Urbanna, the County's largest town, was established in 1680, serving initially as a port for shipping agricultural products and later as the County's commercial and governmental center. The Town of Urbanna remains the County's largest commercial center and its only incorporated area. However, the County seat of Middlesex is located in the Village of Saluda.

To the east, almost to Stingray Point, the Village of Deltaville is situated between the mouths of the Rappahannock and Piankatank rivers. Once a major center for wooden boat building, Deltaville remains a commercial and recreational center. Numerous fine marinas dominate the waterfront east to Stingray Point, particularly on Broad Creek.

Over the years, Middlesex has retained a rural image with farming, forestry, fin and shell fishing providing the principal elements of the economic base. The relatively remote geographical location of the County combined with difficulties of early ground transportation contributed to the retention of Middlesex's rural character.

However, highway systems and vehicles have been improved dramatically, making Middlesex readily accessible to the Richmond and Hampton Roads metropolitan areas. Nationwide, economic conditions have . . . provided the general population with increased disposable income and, subsequently, greater leisure time. Concurrently, the urban population has increasingly viewed rural areas as desirable places to live. Earlier, this desire manifested itself in the form of vacation and retirement homes. However, there appears to be a . . . trend in the greater number of individuals willing to commute from Middlesex to the employment centers in Richmond, Williamsburg and the Tidewater Area. With increases in recreational and health amenities in adjacent communities, the County has become an attractive location for retirees or families planning retirement. The increased importance assigned to waterfront living and recreation has made residential construction, recreational boating and tourism major growth industries in the County.

Strategic Planning Process

The Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority (IDA), formed by the Middlesex County Board of Supervisors in July 1997, began a strategic planning process in the fall of 1997. The process was designed to analyze the characteristics of the County's economy and to present a plan of action, to the County Board of Supervisors, that will expand the County's economic base.

Historically, the foundation of the County's economy has been agriculture, forestry, and seafood, with the farmers and watermen as the mainstay of County's economic activity. More recently, tourism, retirement, and second home developments have replaced the traditional basic industries. Many local residents commute to employment in adjacent metropolitan areas because of a lack of adequate job opportunities in the County. The County has not experienced the job and income growth that other areas in Virginia have enjoyed. Economic opportunities have gone to other communities because of the lack of basic infrastructure in Middlesex.

If economic trends are to improve, the County must take positive steps towards building the infrastructure and encourage business development. This strategic plan outlines those activities and actions that are necessary to expand the County's economic base.

Over a series of monthly public meetings, the IDA, with the assistance of staff from Virginia's River Country and the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, analyzed the economy, determined unique market opportunities, held a public forum with business and community leaders, created a vision of what is desired, identified future projects required to achieve that vision, and analyzed the implementation of these projects. This report is the culmination of this work.

Overview of the Economy - A Rapid Assessment

Through discussion and presentation of the "20 Question Economy Quiz" (See attachment.), the IDA analyzed the major components of the County's economy, its growing sectors, its declining sectors, and those characteristics that make Middlesex's economy unique. The primary source of materials will be the *Economic Profile of the Middle Peninsula*, prepared by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Virginia Employment Commission.

Input from Existing Businesses and Industries

The IDA recognizes the importance of sustaining and nurturing existing businesses and industries within the County. The IDA invited spokesmen from existing businesses and industries to give reports and enter into a discussion with the IDA. Current industries include the service sector, agriculture, aquaculture, real estate, builders, and waterfront services.

Reports from these areas provided the IDA with insight into the workings of the current economy. Discussions included stresses in the economy, positive and negative aspects of the County's economy, and simply, what the IDA can do for existing businesses. (Overview attached in Appendix B.)

Stresses and Sources of Stress to the Economy

Given an understanding of the economic characteristics of the County, the IDA identified the stresses on the economy and the causes of the stresses. The IDA evaluated its identifications with a checklist and through a facilitated discussion that analyzed economic performance, business vitality, and resource capacity of the County.

Opportunities and Unique Market Niches

This session was devoted to a discussion of the competitive characteristics of the County. What are those unique features of the County that provide a competitive advantage for the County over other localities? What economic opportunities are present due to these unique features? These issues were explored through a facilitated workshop. The topic question of the workshop asked, "What does the world need that Middlesex County can provide better than other localities?" Brainstorming began by discussing unique market niches in other regions and communities (i.e., Hanover tomatoes, Maine lobsters, Colonial Williamsburg) and the unique market niches that have been part of the County's past (i.e., Rappahannock Oysters, and Deltaville, the Boat Building Capital of the World). After this warm up exercise, the IDA brainstormed and organized opportunities for the County. Evaluation of the brainstorm results included reflections about the easiest and most difficult items to achieve, the least and most expensive items, and the best place to start. (Overview attached in Appendix C.)

Vision Goals and Objectives

This session established a vision for the economy of the future. The IDA envisioned and then described a prosperous future. Visual aids and displays encouraged the creative element of this work. Through a facilitated discussion, the IDA identified the goals and objectives that must be met to reach its vision.

Strategic Initiatives and Short Term Projects

This session focused on establishing those specific initiatives and projects required to accomplish the IDA's vision, goals, and objectives. Through a facilitated group process, the IDA identified those initiatives and established both short term and long range projects necessary to achieve the goals and objectives. For example, an initiative to capitalize on the tourism in the area could provide an immediate project, while the installation of water and sewer systems could represent a long term project.

Draft Report

Staff compiled the material generated throughout these sessions, provide cost estimates, and create sequencing information in an initial draft report to the IDA. The IDA reviewed and modified the draft, resulting in a final document, for presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

While this effort was facilitated by staff, the IDA and other invited guests provided its core elements. Those living and working within the community know best the community's current position and its potential vision for its future. Staff provided technical assistance, facilitation skills, and guidance. However, the final document should reflect the economic direction that the County wishes to take.

Economic Overview

Middlesex County's economy is sound and stable. The County's economy depends on the bounty of its natural resources for its vitality, past, present, and future. Much of the economy is linked to the prosperity of the national economy and the growth of the Hampton Roads and Richmond metropolitan areas.

Because of the close ties to the Richmond and Hampton Roads metropolitan areas, Middlesex County is projected to grow at a rate parallel to the State. It is estimated that the current population of 9,300 will grow at a rate of 0.2% faster than the state by the year 2000. Personal income is projected to grow by 3.2% or 0.7% faster than the State in the same time frame. Employment growth is projected to parallel the State's employment growth of 1.6%.

Increasingly older, more affluent people are making up Middlesex's population. Half of the population is over 45 and 23% is over 65. Middlesex ranked fourth highest in median age among all Virginia localities; Middlesex median age 44.1, Virginia, 33.9.

Middlesex depends upon people moving into the County to continue its growth. Deaths exceeded births by 300 between 1990 and 1996 but immigration of 1,000 people resulted in a 700 increase in population. Much of the immigration is either retirees or people commuting to the Richmond or Hampton Roads metropolitan areas. An active real estate sector is needed to maintain the past growth of the County.

Approximately, 4,000 people are in the labor market. Only 56.4% of those age 16 and older actually work. This is considerably below the State percentage of 69%. Forty-three percent of County workers commute to employment outside the County.

The service sector employed the most people in the County (879) followed by government employment (757). Retail trade was third leading sector with 676 employed. The three largest employers in the County are government, the School Board, the Community Services Board, and the Department of Transportation. The County has become a center for regional government and non-profit operations.

Tourism has become the County's largest business sector, contributing \$43,000,000 of travel spending to the County. Much of the retail trade and service sector employment is directly related to tourism. Tourism related employment is estimated at 671 jobs. Local taxes generated from tourism is estimated to be in excess of \$3M.

The unemployment rate for the County consistently averages two-thirds of the State. The 1996 unemployment rate of 3.6% was well below the State unemployment rate of 5.4%. Underemployment (working below qualifications or not being able to support a family) are larger factors than unemployment.

Per capita income in the County is below both U.S. and Virginia averages: Middlesex-\$20,768;

U.S.-\$21,696; and Virginia-\$22,493. Historically, the County's personal income has grown at a slower rate than the State but projections indicate that with the influx of higher income people, personal income growth will exceed the State growth rate. While the County is attracting higher income people, the percentage of poverty in the County is higher than the State: Middlesex-13.9%; Virginia-12.0%.

Those workers employed in the County earn 61.4% of the average weekly wages paid in Virginia. Often workers must commute outside the region for adequate wages and salaries to support their families. The average weekly wage is only \$323 as compared to a State average of \$526.

The recession of 1990 had a devastating effect upon the housing and real estate sectors. In 1996, housing permits were only 42.7% of the permit activity in 1990. This is also reflected in fewer jobs in the real estate sector and fewer sales per agent. Since retirement and second home living are so important to the County's economic vitality, this decline has dampened the economic growth of the County during this decade. With the supply of lots and homes readily available and excess equity accumulating as a result of an unprecedented bull market, the prospect for recovery of the real estate industry is likely in the near future.

While only 2/3 of the population has a high school education, the County's 11th grade students score above the State average on average composite test scores.

The County has weathered the decline of seafood and agricultural employment over the years. Forest products continue to be important employment and income sources to the economy but have not shown growth of other industry sectors. In recent years, tourism related to the marine trades and regional government activities have provided much of the increases in employment in the County.

Stresses and Sources of Stress to the County's Economy

As mentioned earlier, the historic foundation of Middlesex County's economy has been the agriculture, forestry, and seafood industries, and the farmers and watermen were the mainstays of the County's economic activity. More recently, tourism, retirement, second home development, and regional government have replaced the traditional basic industries.

Economic Performance

Over time, the County has experienced low employment growth – less than 1/2% annually. The County's population has less per capita income than the state average (\$20,768 in Middlesex vs. \$22,493 in Virginia). The income distribution within the County tends to have high levels of families with high incomes and a higher percentage of families with lower incomes, as illustrated by the County's poverty rate exceeding the state average (13.9% in Middlesex vs. 12.1% in Virginia). The average wage rate in the County is only 61.4% of the average wage rate in Virginia (\$323 per week, third quarter 1996, in Middlesex vs. \$526 per week, third quarter 1996, in Virginia). Additionally, a significant number of people (41%) commute to work outside the County because of a lack of adequate job opportunities within the County. Many who work within the County have taken jobs at skill levels below their training and education.

Business Vitality

The County is losing economic opportunities by exporting its resources and opportunities. With few exceptions, the County exports its agriculture, forest, and seafood products without much processing. One of the County's most valuable resources, its labor, is exported to other areas, with 41% of the workforce commuting to other localities. Additionally, educated youth are leaving the area to find jobs at higher skill levels.

While the County attracts significant outside capital, much of it is based on the seasonal tourism industry. Much of the County's retail, wholesale, and service sector spending is carried to adjacent localities. The County's per capita taxable sales are far below the statewide average (\$4,892 in Middlesex vs. \$8,076 in Virginia). With the large number of small businesses in the County, wages are lower than surrounding metropolitan areas.

Resource Capacity

The County has a limited resource capacity as it looks to economic development. The small population of the County (9,300 persons) results in a small labor force with limited skills. Youth have left the County in order to find higher paying and higher skilled jobs. While the County has been blessed with abundant natural resources, there has been a decline in seafood, particularly oysters, and public access to the abundant waterways is limited. The entrepreneurial talent of the County has not been nurtured. While there is assistance available from various sources, prospective businesses still lack adequate

support and venture capital.

One of the greatest impediments to business growth and development is the lack of water and sewer service. Economic opportunities have gone to other communities because of the lack of this basic infrastructure within the County. The only public water and sewer systems within the County are located within and operated by the Town of Urbanna, and these systems are nearing capacity. If economic trends are to improve, the County must take positive steps to build infrastructure and encourage business development.

The County traditionally has not projected an aggressive economic development posture, so many of the systems required to support development are not in place. However, this strategic planning process has allowed the IDA to face these realities within the community, and discover the opportunities that lie within the County. The economy's stresses must be understood in order to develop an effective plan to overcome them.

Sources of Stress on the Middlesex County Economy

- Insufficient value-added processing of the County's seafood, agriculture and forest resources.
- Insufficient marketing of local resources and niche market opportunities, particularly tourism.
- insufficient investment in small business support systems (business planning, technical assistance, and venture capital).
- Macro-economic forces causing major changes in the retirement and second home market of the County.
- The County has not aggressively planned for the tourism potential of the County nor taken advantage of the nature and heritage-based tourism opportunities.
- The school and workforce training does not prepare the youth and adults adequately for local jobs of the future.
- Modern planning is not used extensively in the transition from forest and farmland to more intense usage.
- There is poor quality of well water in the Deltaville area.
- Insufficient investment in the development of central water and wastewater systems in the County has hindered the growth particularly in existing development area.
- Insufficient investment in the education of our youth, related to the future employment base of the County.
- Insufficient investment in services that will transition individuals and families from welfare to work.
- Insufficient investment in community services, particularly public access to the water.

Market Niches, Vision, and Strategic Economic Objectives

Having a vision of the future helps establish long term goals and provides purpose to our efforts.

The IDA analyzed those special characteristics of the County that sets it apart from its neighbors and provides a sound basis for unique market opportunities not present in those other localities.

Some of the special features of the County that could be developed into economic opportunities include:

- The resting place of General Puller
- The Urbanna Oyster Festival and other festivals
- The best campground in Virginia–Bethpage
- Unique local personalities, past and present
- Auto racing– Mid Bay Race Track
- Minor league baseball–The Delta’s
- Established Fishing Tournaments
- Strategic location for accessing the Chesapeake Bay and prime fishing holes
- Numerous marinas and charters fishing boats
- Fishing Bay Yacht Club
- Numerous regional government and non-profit agencies
- A new marine research facility–Regent Point
- The Dragon Run
- The famed “Rappahannock River Oyster”
- Charter sailing fleet
- Piankatank River Golf Course

These unique characteristics support the premise that the County has untapped potential to further develop tourism, marine trades, sport fishing, and a variety of small businesses that support these industries. The cluster of activities related to the quality of the natural environment would indicate the potential for added retirement, second home, and vacation living in the County.

Given these rare and unique features, the IDA established three priority objectives for the future that establish the vision of what the County’s potential could be. Those Strategic Economic Objectives are:

- Become a Center for Exceptional Small Business and Entrepreneurship Opportunities
- Triple the Expenditures of Tourists in the County within the next 10 years
- Become a Marine and Fishing Capital of the Southern Chesapeake Bay by the Year 2010

Other laudable objectives were considered but did not demonstrate the promise of the above or create a future unique to Middlesex County.

Action Items to Accomplish the Objectives

While the objectives of a plan will energize the community by inspiring a lofty ambition, strategies and action items will address realistic ways to achieve the objectives. The IDA developed several

strategies to address each of its objectives. During the development of the strategies, the IDA asked the following questions:

1. Will our strategies achieve our objectives?
2. If not, what needs to be done in order to accomplish our noble objectives?
3. What strategies are best suited for IDA implementation and what strategies are best suited to other organizations?

After identifying numerous strategies for each of its three objectives, the IDA identified organizations which could implement each strategy. The following pages outline the results.

Objective: Become a center for exceptional small business and entrepreneurship opportunities

Strategies:

Potential Implementing Organizations(s):

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Create a central point of contact (person with booklet, forms, etc.) within the County to guide businesses through the permitting and regulatory processes. The central point of contact would serve as an ombudsman for small business wishing to expand or locate in the County. This person would advocate for the business and assist the business as it struggles through the many regulations and permits required by various agencies of State and local government. | Industrial Development Authority. Create an Ambassador core to help guide fledgling businesses |
| 2. It is recommended that the permitting agencies of the County and State establish a joint review process for business developments that are proposed in the County. This process will help resolve cross cutting issues, establish consistent review timeframes and identify issues early in the development process. | Industrial Development Authority |
| 3. It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors establish a policy of "Middlesex County is Open for Business." This policy would be communicated to each regulatory agency operating in the County and would be supported by individual Board member monitoring the progress of proposed business in the development process. | Board of Supervisors, Industrial Development Authority |
| 4. The Industrial Development Authority would serve as an advocate to the appropriate regulatory agencies during the development process when new or expanded business is proposed. | Industrial Development Authority |
| 5. Develop a public relations campaign on the benefits of economic development to the County, including a weekly business article. | Industrial Development Authority |
| 6. Create a County "support" committee to carry out the public relations campaign and advocate pro business changes to government regulations. | Chamber of Commerce |

Objective: Become a center for exceptional small business and entrepreneurship opportunities

Strategies (continued):

Potential Implementing Organizations(s):

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 7. | Undertake an advocacy and education program for water and sewer in the County (emphasis on benefits to small and expanding business). | As an outgrowth of the public relations campaign |
| 8. | Organize a group of retired business people to provide business assistance to small and emerging businesses (mentors, facilitators, capitalization, innovation, advise, etc.). | SCORE or local ambassador group |
| 9. | Create a business incubator serving businesses of the County or the area. | Board of Supervisors, Chamber of Commerce, MPPDC, RCC |
| 10. | Develop a micro-enterprise program serving the County or the region. The micro enterprise program would train and finance start-up companies. | Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) |
| 11. | Provide a technical service center (fax, copies, conference facilities, computers, etc) for small business use. | Included as a part of the business incubator |
| 12. | Create a liaison with the real estate community for location of potential properties for development and business use. | Industrial Development Authority |
| 13. | Create an entrepreneurship education strategy for the schools | School Board and RCC |

Middlesex County Strategic Economic Development Plan
Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority

Objective: Triple the expenditures of tourists in the County within the next 10 years.

Strategies:	Potential Implementing Organizations(s)
1. Locate a hotel and additional Bed and Breakfasts in the County.	IDA in the lead, Realtors, Golf Course, Boating industry, Planning Commission, Private Sector
2. Prepare an inventory of all businesses, services, and public facilities serving tourists in the County.	Planning Commission, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Travel Council
3. Market the benefits of tourism in the County to the citizens of the County, as well as, potential visitors and investors to the County.	IDA, Travel Council, Chamber of Commerce, Virginia's River Country, M P Realtors
4. Create a visitor center where visitors to the County can obtain information on activities to see and do in the County and surrounding area.	Chamber of Commerce, Travel Councils, Virginia's River Country, IDA
5. Develop a series of brochures on activities in the County and surrounding area.	IDA, Merchants Assoc., Chamber of Commerce, Virginia's River Country, Travel Councils
6. Create a Middlesex County Web Site that includes a comprehensive listing of services and facilities related to tourism and other facets of economic development.	Middlesex County, IDA, Merchants Assoc., Chamber of Commerce, Virginia's River Country, Travel Councils
7. Develop advertisements in trade publications (Southern Living, Coastal Living, Washington Post, etc.) that extol the virtues of the County.	IDA, Merchants Assoc., Chamber of Commerce, Virginia's River Country, Travel Councils
8. Develop a packet of information on activities in the County for distribution to visitors when they inquire about the County.	IDA, Merchants Assoc., Chamber of Commerce, Virginia's River Country, Travel Councils
9. Develop an exhibit in cooperation with local tourism businesses for display at trade shows (boat, R. V., outdoors etc.).	IDA, Merchants Assoc., Chamber of Commerce, Virginia's River Country, Travel Councils
10. Prepare a weekly tourism feature in the Southside Sentinel.	IDA, as facilitator of a Public Relations Plan

Objective: Triple the expenditures of tourists in the County within the next 10 years.

Strategies (continued):	Potential Implementing Organization(s):
11. Create special local feature programs on tourism e.g. "Boatnutts", that would air on local radio, TV, and cable	IDA, as facilitator of a Public Relations Plan
12. Develop tailored travel packages for special target audiences e.g. a three day sailing package.	Private Sector, IDA as facilitator
13. Have available boats that can be rented by tourists to the region.	Private sector, IDA as facilitator
14. Develop additional public access areas to the water (boat ramps, fishing piers, harbors, etc.).	VDOT, VA Game and Inland Fisheries, Parks and Recreation, IDA, Board of Supervisors, Wetlands Board, VMRC
15. Create a Virginia Sailing Hall of Fame.	
16. Create an "In the Water" museum of maritime history of the County.	
17. Develop a center for performing arts, Tanglewood of the Chesapeake Bay, that would host summer concerts, theater, and music instruction.	
18. Develop on eco-tourism experience directly related to the wonders of the "Dragon Run."	
19. Develop a separate tour of houses for "Historic Garden Week" in the County.	
20. Create a series of activities on the colonial history of the County that would be carried out in conjunction with the 400th celebration of the founding of Jamestown.	

Objective: **Become a marine and fishing capital of the southern Chesapeake Bay by the year 2010.**

Strategies:	Potential Implementing Organizations(s):
1. Develop central public water and wastewater facilities in areas of existing concentrated development and areas for future development.	Board of Supervisors and HRSD
2. Provide greater public access to the water by improving existing public access areas and developing new public access areas.	Board of Supervisors, Game and Inland Fisheries, Parks and Recreation
3. Provide a County park and public day use area that has access to the water and provides a variety of marine and water oriented activities.	Board of Supervisors, Game and Inland Fisheries, Wetlands Board, Parks and Recreation
4. Expand the existing VIMS research facility in the County and encourage other marine research facilities to locate in the County.	VIMS, William and Mary Foundation, IDA
5. Seek the establishment of a marine aquarium in the County.	VIMS, Private Sector, M P Travel Council, IDA
6. Promote the existing sailing regattas and actively solicit national class regattas to the County.	Fishing Bay Yacht Club, Deltaville Comm. Assoc., Chamber of Commerce, MP Travel Council, Urbanna Yacht Club, Marinas/Sail Makers
7. Develop a museum illustrating the history of boating and boat building in Middlesex County.	Middlesex Historical Society, Deltaville Community Association, IDA
8. Develop a series of guided boat tours from Deltaville and Urbanna for visitors to the County.	Urbanna Merchants Association, Deltaville Community Assoc., M P Travel Council
9. Acquire a Urbanna and Deltaville restaurant/marina location	Industrial Development Authority (IDA)
10. Promote Saltwater Fishing and Fishing Tournaments	MP Travel Council, Charter Boat Captains, Marinas, Marine Dealers, Deltaville Community Assoc., Coastal Conservation Assoc., IDA

Specific Work Plan of the IDA

The IDA reviewed its strategies closely and determined which strategies the IDA could effectively implement. The IDA identified its participation in many strategies, and supports the implementation of all activities that achieve its objectives. However, this specific work plan outlines those projects which the IDA could assume a lead role.

Potential Projects

- Facilitate the creation of a central point of contact to help guide fledgling businesses through the regulatory structure. Throughout its strategic planning process the IDA was impressed by information it gathered from local businesses and industries. A common theme to this information involved the difficulties of locating a business in Middlesex County. Regulations and permitting bureaucracy were identified as difficulties to expanding or new businesses. The IDA identified itself as a potential resource to assist businesses through the permitting process and recommends that the IDA establish a business assistance office associated with the County's offices.
- The County needs to be pro-active in support of small business development and expansion. An initial policy of the Board of Supervisors indicating an "Open for Business" policy should be accompanied by assistance and advocacy by the Industrial Development Authority and individual Board members. The County could establish a joint review process of business projects to help speed the process along, identify critical issues, and assist business in overcoming some of the regulatory hurdles.
- Facilitate the development of additional public access areas to the water. This IDA identified itself as a potential facilitator of this process. An inventory of existing public access areas and an assessment of public access needs would begin this project.
- Work in cooperation with VIMS to expand its marine research facilities in the County and to attract other complementary marine research facilities to the County.
- Develop a public relations campaign related to the benefits of compatible economic development, including tourism to the County. Market the benefits of tourism to Middlesex citizens, as well as marketing tourism to potential visitors and investors.
- Locate a hotel and additional bed and breakfasts in the County. Lodging has been identified as a critical need in support of the tourism businesses of the County.
- Facilitate the expansion of local marine related activities. With the number of marinas and marine trades in the County, other support businesses are potential target industries for a recruitment campaign.
- Create a Middlesex County Web Site in cooperation with the County staff and Board of Supervisors. This Web Site would contain a comprehensive listing of services and facilities that support the tourism industry and other components of a comprehensive economic development program.

Middlesex County Strategic Economic Development Plan
Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority

- Develop a tourism marketing program that includes, as a minimum: 1) a County brochure; 2) advertisement in major trade publications; 3) an inventory of businesses, services, and public facilities; 4) information packets for distribution; and 5) an exhibit for trade shows. These activities are components of a local marketing effort but could be combined with a regional marketing program.
- Work with civic organizations, the private sector, and travel organizations to promote saltwater fishing and saltwater fishing tournaments. These tournaments bring thousands of dollars to the County's economy and support local civic organizations.
- Create an inventory of available business properties that would be available on the Internet. This activity would be conducted cooperatively with the Real Estate industry.
- Work with civic organizations in the County to develop a museum on boating and the boat building industry of the County.
- Create a visitors center in the County. Contact Urbanna indicating a interest in helping to staff their proposed Old Tobacco Warehouse visitor's center.
- Facilitate the development of various travel packages for niche markets, charter fishing, canoeing, sailing, history tour, etc.
- Promote the establishment of a marine aquarium in the County in cooperation with other County organizations.
- Acquire a waterfront location for a public marina and privately managed restaurant.

To carry out these actions, the following budget is suggested as a starting point of discussion and exploration:

• Existing business assistance-	\$25,000/yr.
• Greater Public Access Study-	\$15,000
• Public Relations Campaign-	\$20,000
• Lodging recruitment effort-	\$ 8,000
• Marine Trades recruitment-	\$10,000
• Tourism Marketing Program-	\$40,000
• County Web Site	\$10,000
• Saltwater Fishing Tournaments Promotion-	\$10,000
• Internet inventory of business properties-	\$ 5,000
• Boating Museum Feasibility Report-	\$20,000
• Joint staffing of a visitor's center-	\$25,000/yr.
• Marine Aquarium Feasibility Study-	\$25,000
• Waterfront Marina and Restaurant land option-	\$20,000
• IDA Office	\$ 5,000

Appendix A

Rapid Economic Assessment "Quiz"

Middlesex County Strategic Economic Development Plan
Middlesex County Industrial Development Authority

Rapid Economic Assessment "Quiz"

1. What is the population of the County? 8,653 (1990 Census), 9,300 (1996 estimate)
 2. Is the County growing? Yes At what rate? 1.2 % annually (same as Va.)
 3. What % of the County's population is over 65? 22.8%; Va. - 11.1 (1994)
45 to 65? 26%; Va. - 20.2% (1994)
 4. What % of the County's population is Black? 26% (Va - 19.5%)
 5. How many people are in the County's labor force? 3,997 (1990)
% of population? 56.4% (Va - 68.9%)
 6. How many people work in Middlesex County? 3,867 (1994)
 7. What % of the workforce commute to employment outside the County? 41% (1990)
 8. What industry employs the most people in the County? Service Ind. How many? 879 (1994)
 9. What is the fastest growing industry in the County? Service Ind.
 10. Who is the largest employer in the County? Middlesex County School Board
 11. Is the County's unemployment rate above or below the State average? Below What is the unemployment rate? 3.6% (1996); Va. - 4.4%
 12. Is the per capita income of the County above or below the State average? Below What is it? \$20,768
What % of State? 92% (1994); Va. - \$22,493
 13. Is personal income growing faster or slower than the State average? Slower
 14. What is the largest source of personal income to County residents? Earnings
 15. What % of poverty is there in the County? 13.9% (1993); Va. - 12.1%
 16. Are weekly wages above or below the State average? Below What is the average weekly wage? \$323 (3rd Qtr. 1996) What % of the State? 61.4%; Va. - \$526
 17. What was the peak year for housing construction? 1990 What % are we now of that peak year? 43% (1990 - 180 permits; 1996 - 77 permits)
 18. What % of the County's population has achieved a high school education? 66.6%; (Va. - 75.2%)
 19. Does the Middlesex 11th grade school children rank above or below the State average composite test scores? Above (Middlesex - 59; Va. - 58)
 20. Is the County's economy projected to grow faster or slower than the State? Faster (Personal income: M'sex - 3.2%, Va. - 2.5%; Per capita personal income: M'sex - 1.9%, Va. 1.4%; Employment: M'sex - 1.6%, Va. - 1.6%)
-

Appendix B

Overview of the Work Session with Input from Existing Businesses and Industries

**Middlesex IDA
Work Session
November 19, 1997
7:45 a.m.**

In attendance:

Invited Guests:
John I. Fleet, Jr.
George Northam, Jr.
Brendan O'Brien
Robert A. Reiner, Jr.
Charles R. Revere
Kenneth W. Williams

IDA Members:
Robert A. Gary, III, Chair
David B. Adams
Frank A. Johnson
Chauncey E. Mann
Betty Miller
Donald M. Wagner

Staff:
Tim Wilson, Middlesex
County Planning Director
Michele Mixner DeWitt,
Middle Peninsula Planning
District Commission
Regional Planner

The Middlesex County IDA held this work session in order to discuss, with business leaders, how the authority can best promote the future economic development of Middlesex County. The IDA is engaged in a process to develop a Strategic Plan for the Middlesex County Economy. The Plan will identify future projects, with time lines and cost estimates for each. The IDA solicits public input into these plans, and invites ongoing dialogue with the community.

After a brief overview of the Middlesex County economy, the IDA engaged the invited guests in a brainstorm and discussion that addressed the following question:

What economic endeavors related to your unique business perspective holds the greatest promise for the economic future of the County?

A complete list of all the responses is attached.

The group next prioritized, from the list, the actions that would have the most significant (positive) impact on Middlesex County. The actions are listed from top selection down, with the number of selections it received in parentheses.

- Install water and sewer infrastructure (8)
- Provide overnight lodging (6)
- Accent Middlesex's uniqueness (waterfront) (4)
- Protect quality of life (land use controls, growth management) (4)
- Develop pride in agribusiness (4)
 - County Fair
 - Farming incentives
- Market to tourists' preferences (restaurants, marinas, golf) (3)
- Promote tourism and recreation (3)

Travel Council
Regional promotion packages

- Build water reservoirs (3)
- Provide public access to water (3)
- Promote industrial business development, such as small fabrication industry (2)
- Work with existing groups (such as Virginia's River Country, RCC/ODU vocational education) (2)
- Invest capital to attract industry (2)
- Promote small businesses (vs. Big Box stores) (2)
Public education, Internet, increased convenience and service
- Obtain public support (2)
- Participate in HRSD to make sewer feasible (1)
- Improve transportation into the County (through West Point) (1)
- Develop an industrial site (1)
- Provide watermen with access to water (1)

Next, the group selected actions that the County could implement in a 2-year time frame:

- Establish policy to provide incentives to new and existing expanding industry
- Develop a pro-economic attitude in the County (coordinate and guide business development)
- Work with Children (Involve youth)
- Standardize and ease regulations ("fast track" permitting)
- Bring permitting agencies together to discuss business development

All invited guests were encouraged to review the IDA's work and continue their involvement in this process.

What economic endeavors related to your unique perspective holds the greatest promise for the economic future of the County?

Provide overnight lodging

Promote regional cooperation and coordination

Standardize and ease regulations

Obtain public support

Provide public access to water

Manage reasonable protection of natural resources

Provide watermen with access to water

Balance development with costs to County

Encourage farming, recreation, and light industry

Require businesses to provide their own trash containers

Require business licenses -- to create unity and funding for County promotion

Promote industrial business development, such as small fabrication industry

Balance concessions to development

Promote small businesses (vs. Big Box stores)

Public education, Internet, increased convenience and service

Develop pride in agribusiness

County Fair

Farming incentives

Promote tourism and recreation

Travel Council

Regional promotion packages

Develop County-wide pro-economic posture

Coordinate and guide business development

Improve attitudes

Obtain County consensus for capital investment

Build water reservoirs

Work with and involve children

Develop parameters and policy for economic development incentives

Develop an industrial site

Install water and sewer infrastructure

Invest capital to attract industry

Implement a land use tax

Improve secondary roads

Maintain residential value

Protect quality of life (land use controls, growth management)

Participate in HRSD to make sewer feasible

Work with existing groups (such as Virginia's River Country, RCC/ODU vocational education)

Accent Middlesex's uniqueness (waterfront)

Improve transportation into the County (through West Point)

Market to tourists' preferences (restaurants, marinas, golf)

Promote rockfish interests

Appendix C

Overview of the Opportunities and Unique Niches Workshop

Appendix D

Duties of the Industrial Development Authority

Duties of Industrial Development Authority

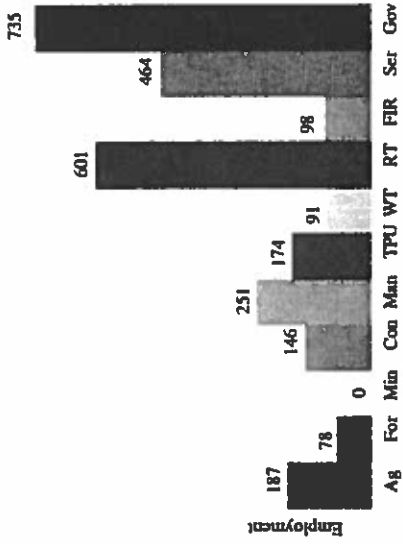
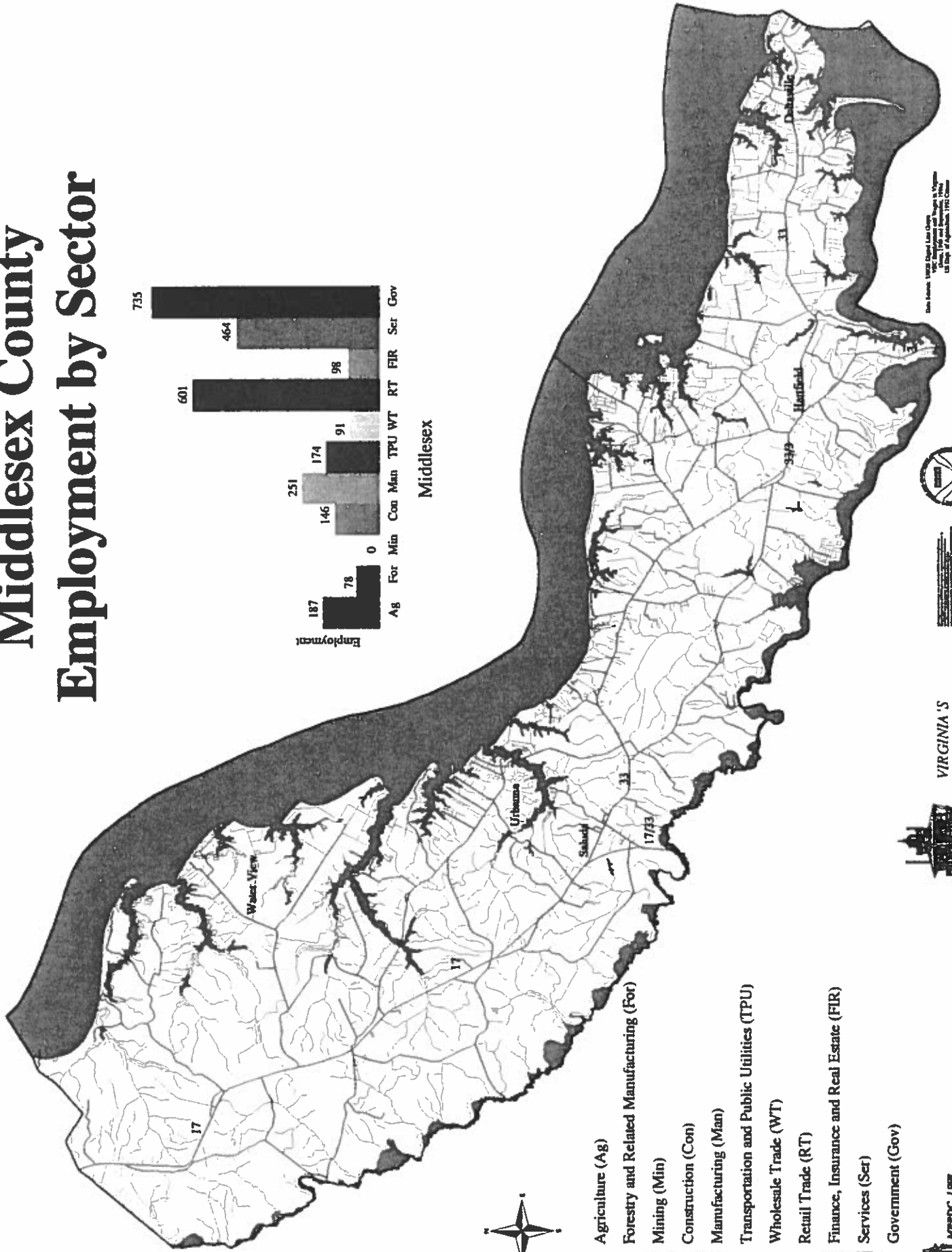
As recommended by the Economic Development Committee

1. Provide information and assistance on financing for new and existing business to promote their location and growth in Middlesex County.
2. Promote the orderly economic growth of the County.
3. Develop tactical (0-3 years) and strategic (3-10 years) Economic Development Plans, with public input and Board of Supervisor approval, to identify areas for development and promote the orderly growth of the County.
4. Primary contact for Economic Development services in the County.
5. Identify areas for Commercial development, appropriate zoning, infrastructure, and utilities required to facilitate development.
6. Coordinate and promote economic development activity with surrounding counties and the Chamber of Commerce.

Map 1

Employment by Sector

Middlesex County Employment by Sector



Middlesex



- Agriculture (Ag)
- Forestry and Related Manufacturing (For)
- Mining (Min)
- Construction (Con)
- Manufacturing (Man)
- Transportation and Public Utilities (TPU)
- Wholesale Trade (WT)
- Retail Trade (RT)
- Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (FIR)
- Services (Ser)
- Government (Gov)



MPPDC, 1988
 Although the data have been used by the Middlesex Planning District Commission (MPPDC) as the primary source of information for the county, and the information is intended by the MPPDC to be accurate, it is not guaranteed to be error-free.



VIRGINIA'S RIVER COUNTRY
 Division of Community Economic Development



Data Source: 1982 Equalized Labor Output
 Survey, 1980 and 1982, by Virginia
 Dept. of Agriculture, 1982 Census
 Division, with Data from 1st Quarter, 1986
 Scale: 1 inch = 1.5 miles

Map 2

Existing Land Use

Middlesex County Virginia

* Existing Land Use



- Legend
- Rural Communities
 - Residential Communities
 - Commercial
 - Wholesale Retail/Industrial/Mineral
 - Mobile Home Communities
 - Industrial
 - Rural Open Space
 - Towns of Unknown

Scale 1:50,000



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

