

# Agriculture & Forestry Strategic Plan



Essex County, Virginia  
2015-2020

Presented to the Essex County Economic  
Development Authority Board

# Project Purpose



Develop a strategic plan that will serve as a roadmap  
for how to support and grow  
**the agriculture and forestry industries**  
within Essex County.

# AFID Grant

(Agriculture & Forestry Industries Development Fund)



Source: Va. Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services

*“The AFID planning grant program encourages local governments to promote agriculture and forestry and incorporate the needs of these important industries into their economic development planning efforts.”*

*Gov. McAuliffe News Release, 01/29/14*

# AFID Grant



## January, 2014

- Essex County EDA received AFID grant to develop a strategic plan for agriculture and forestry industries.
- Matching funds: 50% Essex County funds; 50% AFID grant

## February, 2014

- Essex County EDA issued RFP for strategic plan development.
- Price is not to exceed \$34,000.

## April, 2014

- Contract awarded to International Consulting Services, LLC.
- Completion date is no later than February, 2016.

# AFID Advisory Board



Keith Balderson, Advisor to the Board  
Virginia Tech, Essex County Extension Agent, ANR

N. Page Ball, Board Member  
Tidewater Lumber Corporation

Barry Bates, Board Member  
Mount View Farm, Inc.

Bill Croxton, Economic Development Authority Board Member  
Essex County Economic Development Authority

# AFID Advisory Board



Benjamin Ellis Jr., Board Member  
Benjamin B Ellis Inc.

Winston Ellis, Board Member  
Ellis Farms

Ronnie Gill, Board Chairman  
Colonial Farm Credit

Jay Hundley, Board Member  
Cloverfield Enterprises

# AFID Advisory Board



John Magruder, Board Member  
Three Rivers Forestry

Mike O'Malley, Board Member  
O'Malley Timber Products, LLC

David Taliaferro, Board Vice Chairman  
Montague Farms, Inc.

# Planning Process



- Phase 1: Current industry state/trend analysis (including a SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
- Phase 2: First draft of the strategic plan
- Phase 3: Public comment period
- Phase 4: Final version of the strategic plan



# Planning Process



## MEETINGS

- May 20, 2014
- July 10, 2014
- August 6, 2014
- August 29, 2014
- 30-day Public Comment Period
- November 21, 2014

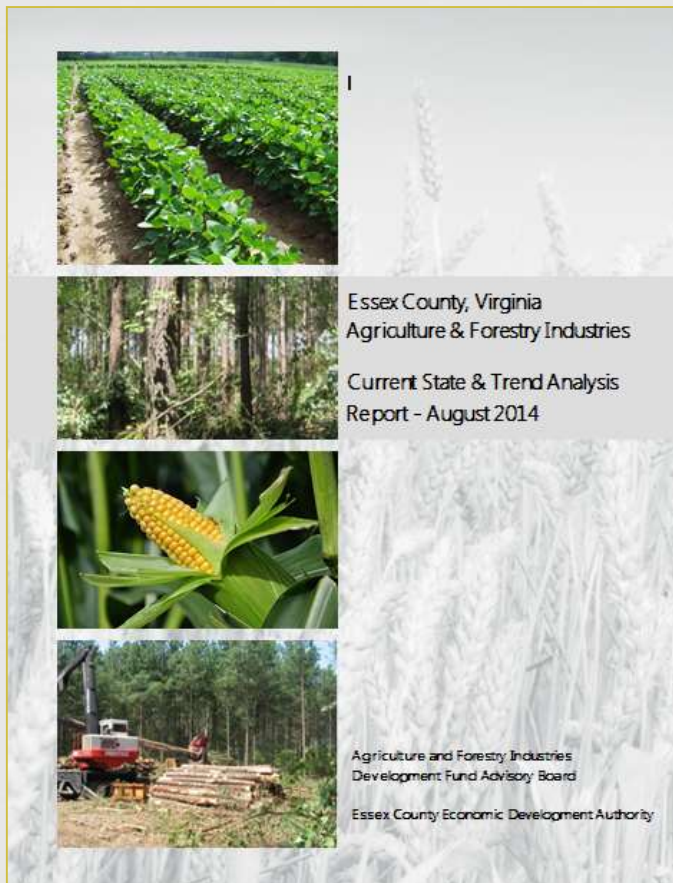
# Planning Process



## PROJECT LAUNCH – First meeting

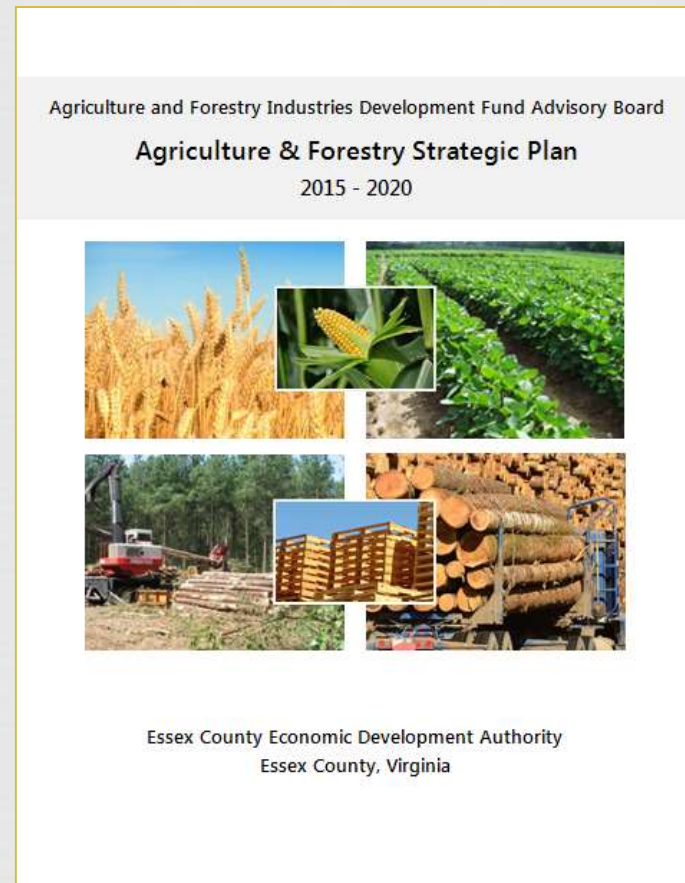
- Purpose of the project
- Strategic plan's audience and owner
- Role of the AFID Advisory Board
- Format for the strategic plan
- Information to gather on the current state of the industries

# Products



Essex County, Virginia  
Agriculture & Forestry Industries  
Current State & Trend Analysis  
Report - August 2014

Agriculture and Forestry Industries  
Development Fund Advisory Board  
Essex County Economic Development Authority



Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund Advisory Board  
**Agriculture & Forestry Strategic Plan**  
2015 - 2020

Essex County Economic Development Authority  
Essex County, Virginia

# State/Trend Analysis



## Agriculture and Forestry in Essex County

Annual economic impact of \$90 million (2011)

75 percent of land in Essex County is in agriculture & forestry.

# State/Trend Analysis



## Agriculture and Forestry in Essex County

### **AGRICULTURE (2012)**

98 farms

38,720 acres of cropland

\$22.8 million market value

# State/Trend Analysis



## Agriculture and Forestry in Essex County

### **FORESTRY (2012)**

86,940 acres of forest land

\$4.4 million forest harvest value

In addition, the county has forestry-related manufacturing companies.

# Strategic Plan Goals



1. Improve local leadership's understanding and support of the agriculture and forestry industries.
2. Increase the public's understanding of and appreciation for the agriculture and forestry industries.
3. Promote financial investment and expand economic opportunities for agriculture and forestry businesses.

# Strategies for Goal 1



- 1. Improve local leadership's understanding and support of the agriculture and forestry industries.**
  - A. Establish permanent agriculture & forestry advisory committee to Board of Supervisors.
  - B. Engage EDA director.
  - C. Educate and involve county leadership.
  - D. Develop directory of agriculture & forestry economic development resources.



# Strategies for Goal 2



- 2. Increase the public's understanding of & appreciation for the agriculture and forestry industries.**
  - A. Evaluate agriculture & forestry educational programs for students and public.
  - B. Develop/use programs to provide agriculture & forestry education/experiences for students & public.

# Strategies for Goal 2

*(continued)*



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- C. Expand work experiences/internships in agriculture & forestry businesses.
  - D. Maintain current agriculture & forestry information on Essex County website.

# Strategies for Goal 3



- 3. Promote financial investment and expand economic opportunities for agriculture and forestry businesses.**
  - A. Diversify/create new industry products.
  - B. Establish local foods programs.
  - C. Define/communicate required skill sets for agriculture & forestry careers.

# Strategies for Goal 3

*(continued)*



- D. Establish process to obtain information on emerging markets, grant funding, research, new business opportunities.
- E. Support continuation of Use Value Taxation Program and contribute to public understanding.
- F. Support continued funding and incentives for land conservation.

# Additional Outputs



Processes for:

- Work groups
- Annual operating plans
- Progress monitoring
- Strategic plan 5-year update

# Transition



- The strategic plan was presented to the EDA director.
- The AFID Advisory Committee would like to transition to an EDA committee on agriculture and forestry.

# Next Steps



- Determine priorities from the plan for the next fiscal year.
- Establish work groups to address the priorities.
- Implement a process for monitoring progress.

# Questions?



# Thank you.