# Virginia's Planning District Commissions

## October, 2026

virginia
association
of planning
district commissions

# PDCs 101

## History of PDCs

- 1966--Metropolitan Areas Study Commission (the Hahn Commission) recommended a new concept, the creation of Planning District Commissions (PDCs)
- 1968--Virginia Area Development Act (VADA) approved (1995—Regional Cooperation Act)
- Created the PDC framework "to encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance"

# PDCs 101

## History of PDCs

- Most PDCs were established the following year, with the remaining up and running over the next several years.
- 2019: Celebration of 50 years of existence.
- Names include Planning District Commission; Regional Commission; Regional Council
- Originally 22 PDCs. The HRPDC was formed in 1990 by the merger of the Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission and the Peninsula Planning District Commission.

# PDCs 101

What is a PDC?

- PDCs are composed of representatives of their member local governments, per § 15.2-4200 of the *Code of Virginia* (the Regional Cooperation Act).
- Boundaries are established by DHCD and are based on the community of interest among its counties, cities and towns.
- Boundaries are reviewed per § 36-139.7 every 10 years.

# PDCs 101

## Purposes of PDCs

- PDCs “encourage and facilitate local government cooperation and state-local cooperation in addressing on a regional basis problems of greater than local significance.”
- PDCs “promote the orderly and efficient development of the physical, social and economic elements of the district by planning, and encouraging and assisting localities to plan, for the future."

# PDCs 101

## What Are PDC Roles?

- Conduct studies on issues and problems of regional significance
- Identify and study potential opportunities for local cost savings and staffing efficiencies through coordinated local government efforts
- Identify mechanisms for the coordination of state and local interests on a regional basis
- Implement services upon request of member localities

# PDCs 101

## What Are PDC Roles?

- Provide technical assistance to state government and member localities
- Serve as a liaison between localities and state agencies as requested
- Develop regional functional area plans as deemed necessary by the Commission or as requested by member localities
- Assist state agencies, as requested, in the development of substate plans

# PDCs 101

Funding

## PDCs Funding

- Federal and state appropriations:
  - Federal, federal through state, state
  - State appropriation through Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
  - Most (18 of the 21) receive $114,971/year
- Member locality dues/contributions:
  - Most are per capita
- Grants:
  - Federal, state, local, or other

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- Planning Districts are all unique!
- They work for and with their member governments to respond to the needs of their communities.
- Build relationships and capacity across the region!!
- Convening and coordinating; collaboration and cooperation; and communication

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

### BROADBAND

- Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) 2022
- 12 PDCs/RCs awarded $570 million for broadband expansion projects.
- Awards comprised nearly 80% of the more than $720 million in total funding that was announced.
- 14 regional projects in partnership with internet service providers that leverage more than $770 million.
- Additional awards in subsequent years
- Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD)

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

### HOUSING

- Va. Housing: PDC Housing Development Program
- July 2021 announcement of $40 million in grants to PDCs for the creation of new housing initiatives
- Awards based on PDC size for local housing needs identified by PDCs and partner organizations
- Flexible funding to develop new rental, homeowner, and mixed-use housing opportunities
- Minimum requirements for 100s of units; in reality, 1000s were realized
- Capacity builder

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

### TRANSPORTATION

- Support for Metropolitan Planning Organizations/Transportation Planning Organizations
- Regional Transportation/Transit
- Rural Transportation programs
- SMART SCALE
- RIDE Solutions/RideShare/Ride Connect programs to provide alternatives to single-occupant vehicles
- Bike/walk/pedestrian and sidewalk/trails
- Transportation studies/planning

# PDCs 101

What We Do



# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- **Grant** writing/assistance and grants management/administration
- **Engagement,** education, and outreach to residents on issues of local and regional concern
- **Economic and community development**
  - Administrative support and fiscal services for GO *Virginia* activities;
  - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) - development and maintenance of five-year plan to support economic growth

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- **Environment:**
  - WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM - technical assistance partnership with the state (DEQ) to support localities with education and assistance on developing water quality plans; stormwater and other (best) management practices and watershed protection.
  - Climate and resiliency, living shoreline mitigation, coastal zone management; solid waste management; energy efficiency, disaster mitigation and preparedness education (Haz Mit)

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- **Business Support:**
  - Business assistance/Business recovery: low-interest/revolving loans for small businesses or qualifying companies that are creating jobs (revitalization planning grant assistance)
- **Human Services**
  - Continuum of Care/homeless support; Regional and Rural Health initiatives; COVID collaborations; Opioid epidemic funds administration

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- Infrastructure planning and development (water, sewer, telecommunications, industrial site)
- Emergency preparedness and emergency services planning
- Community/military partnerships-- convener for major military-related discussions among the region's communities
- Circuit riding town management assistance

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- Assisting with comprehensive/land use/small area planning, and feasibility/location studies
- Mapping services and data housing
- Tourism/tourism promotion
- Regional cigarette tax board
- Legislative affairs/services

# PDCs 101

## What We Do

- "The Commission considers itself an "arm" of their local governments – providing them with both expertise and cost savings."
- "We are always looking to work with localities on projects that benefit the region."

# About VAPDC

## What is VAPDC?

- The Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC), established in 1987, is an organization (nonstock corporation) comprised of the 21 Planning District Commissions/Regional Councils.
- The purpose of the Association is to promote coordination and cooperation among the PDCs/RCs to heighten their effectiveness and efficiency; provide mutual assistance and the exchange of ideas; and promote understanding for how PDCs/RCs can help save their regions and the Commonwealth time and money.

# About VAPDC

## VAPDC Structure

- Officers are President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President (Program Committee Chair), and Secretary/Treasurer; elected at annual meeting for a one-year term
- Board of Directors composed of 11 directors - the four (4) officers, the immediate past president and six (6) additional directors
- The Board contracts for association management services and part-time Executive Director services

# About VAPDC

The Work of VAPDC

- Committees:
  - Program Committee—develops conference, workshop and training session programming; also serves as the Awards Committee
  - Executive Directors Committee—regular meetings for interacting with state agency partners and peers
  - Nominating Committee
- Outreach/engagement; partnerships with others, including state agencies, VML, VACo, VLGMA, VAMPO, etc.

# About VAPDC

Contact Info

Thank you!

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