

GOAL 1: Develop the Eastern Shore as a well-managed tourism destination.

A major component in the success of fueling growth in a tourism destination is marketing the region and the region’s development opportunities effectively. Destination tourism is publicized as an important source of income for the Eastern Shore. A 2013 report by the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) indicated that domestic travel in Virginia generated \$20.4 billion representing an 8% increase over the 2010 figures. Domestic travel to the Eastern Shore generated approximately \$254 million in customer spending during 2014. During the 2012 Virginia Outdoors Plan public meetings, the region established the importance of balancing economic endeavors with conservation as a regional priority. In addition, the small-town qualities of the Eastern Shore, including tourism outdoor recreation attractions in Onancock, are highly valued and are being promoted by the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission. <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/voppd22.pdf>

Objective A: Promote regional tourism events and opportunities.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact	Timeline		Activity Outcome/Output Measurements	Progress Status (As of Nov. 2017)
Complete a regional tourism strategic plan that rolls up to the state’s DRIVE tourism strategic plan	<i>Primary:</i> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission <i>Secondary:</i> Chambers of Commerce, County and Town Leadership, Eastern Shore Museum Network, Eastern Shore Public Library, Virginia Tourism Corporation	Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission); Curtis Smith (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)	Short Term	January 2018	Conduct submarket strategic planning sessions in primary tourism communities (Chincoteague, Parksley, Onancock, Cape Charles, Wachapreague, Exmore, Saxis, Eastville, Tangier) to identify submarket-specific strategies, both geographic and activity based, including boutique travel niche markets in each community.	Submarket strategic planning sessions: Chincoteague completed. Parksley to be completed in Fall 2017.
			Mid Term	January 2019	A completed prioritized strategic plan that provides a 5-10 year plan for the Eastern Shore that will identify gaps, infrastructure needs, tourism product development, legislative needs, marketing and partnerships	Project will start upon completion of short term strategy. Funding needed.
Develop a scalable technology platform to meet present and future industry and consumer demands	<i>Primary:</i> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, Web developer <i>Secondary:</i> Arts, Entertainment, Recreation & Visitor Industries Subcommittee partners, Towns, Accomack and Northampton Counties, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission	Kerry Allison, Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission	Short Term	Spring 2018	Funding acquired via state marketing leverage grant or other sources; increase in key performance measures across digital channels; decrease in tourism staff resources required to manage local industry partner information	In progress
			Mid Term	Dec. 2018	Update Eastern Shore Tourism website with desired capacities	Request for proposals underway to re-do tourism website

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATION & VISITOR INDUSTRIES REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

UPDATED NOVEMBER 2017

<p>Create marketing program to target new groups, including group tours, weddings/special events/corporate meetings, multi-generational family travel, camping</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Virginia Tourism Corporation <u>Secondary:</u> County Economic Development Staff, Town Leaders, Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, Eastern Shore Museum Network, Eastern Shore Public Library</p>	<p>Staci Martin (Virginia Tourism Corporation)</p>	<p>Mid Term</p>	<p>March 2018</p>	<p>Funding to produce marketing materials; increase in campsite utilization; increase in vacation rental occupancy rates; increase in wedding and group/bus tour bookings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chincoteague Chamber: ads in VMA Membership Directory 2017 resulting in at least one tour booked; ad in Leisure Group Travel Magazine 2017 resulted in multiple leads • ESVA Tourism Commission highlighting content in new website 	<p>Initial meeting held with submarket towns. Next meeting scheduled for Fall 2017 to try and get into the “big book” of group tour destinations.</p>
<p>Build tourism “shoulder” season to extend tourism activity beyond high season 90-day window, leveraging regional trails and key annual events</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, Virginia Oyster Trail Management Team of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Artisan Trail Management Team of the Eastern Shore of Virginia <u>Secondary:</u> Virginia Tourism Corporation, USDA-Rural Development, Virginia Dept. of Housing & Community Development, Virginia Seafood Industry & Seafood Lobby Groups, Eastern Shore Museum Network, Eastern Shore Public Library</p>	<p>Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission); Sherri Smith (Artisan Center of Virginia); Mills Wehner (Chatham Vineyards)</p>	<p>Long Term</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Development of funds to market tourism assets that bring consumers during shoulder seasons: Artisan and Oyster Trails, key annual industry events (Fall Oyster/Culinary Events; Birding/Winter Recreation; Industry partners display signage, brochures, host events; increase in trail-related business activity, increase in attendance/ROI at key events; increase in key performance measures; expansion of tourism season with increased ROI throughout the year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oyster and Artisan Trails: visibility in 2017 and 2018 Chincoteague Visitor Guide • ESVA Tourism Commission has data on ROI 	<p>Ongoing with continued expansion needed with regards to growing the budget for continued marketing efforts, finding private sector partners (ie. Chatham) and building winter time as a birding and wildlife watching destination.</p>

Objective B: Establish ESVA brand as a highly-recognized and utilized promotion tool.

Evaluate effectiveness of existing Eastern Shore brand, "You'll love our Nature" and enhance brand integration to all local industry	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission; Virginia Tourism Corporation</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce, , Brand Expert, Eastern Shore Museum Network, Eastern Shore Public Library</p>	Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission); Staci Martin, Virginia Tourism Corporation	Short Term	January 2018	Attain funding to hire brand management experts and evaluate brand equity, opportunities, sub brands and enhanced industry integration across the region	Ongoing - Completed merchandising plan. Next step is to consult with brand expert from VCU
Educate the frontline tourism workforce and community on regional assets and customer service	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore Community College</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, County Economic Directors, Eastern Shore Public Library</p>	Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce); Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission); Evelyn Shotwell (Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce); TJ Johnson (Eastern Shore Community College)	Short Term	Dec. 2017 and ongoing annually	Tourism trainings/workshops with at least 50 frontline workforce staff completing at least 1 training/workshop each year	Complete for 2017 and ongoing annually
Leverage local industry to sell Eastern Shore products	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission</p> <p><u>Secondary:</u> Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce</p>	Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce); Curtis Smith (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)	Short Term	Jan. 2018	Conduct regional inventory of retail shops on the Eastern Shore to establish baseline for how many carry locally made products from artisans or food producers, such as items from the Artisan trails, Eastern Shore oysters, Moonrise jewelry, Eastern Shore Coffee Roasting, Chatham Vineyards wine, Annie's Chocolates, Blue Bay Crab, or Chincoteague salt water taffy	Robie and Curt to meet in November 2017 to formulate plan and timeline. Curt to conduct regional products inventory during winter 2017/18
		Mid Term	March 2018	Assess inventory and define percentage of shops to be considered for regional goal	To be started upon completion of inventory	

			Long Term	Mar. 2019	Achieve an increase of 5% in local sales of Eastern Shore products from 2017 baseline. At least 20% (need to refine this goal based on inventory findings) of retail shops on the Eastern Shore carry locally made products from artisans or food producers	Ongoing
			Long Term	June 2019	Develop in-store/point of purchase signage program for retailers. Signage could align with “Shore Made/Shore Grown” campaign	Not started.
Develop marketing program to encourage 5 million annual passengers along U.S. Route 13 to stop and spend money in the region	<u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission <u>Secondary:</u> Virginia Tourism Corporation	Kerry Allison, Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission	Long Term	Spring 2019	Funding to deploy a tactical, measureable marketing program to divert 10% of passersby off U.S. Route 13. Tactics could include a combination of physical signage, radio, digital strategies	Will begin upon completion of Eastern Shore Tourism website development to allow for measuring with technology

GOAL 2: Implement an ambassadorship, mentorship, and internship program to educate workers and citizens on hospitality and tourism opportunities.

To better prepare the Eastern Shore of Virginia tourism industry and frontline staff to concierge the traveling public and encourage visitors to explore the region. Currently, the closest accredited hospitality management programs are located at Tidewater Community College, J. Sargeant Reynolds, Northern Virginia Community College, and George Mason University requiring at least an hour or more travel time from the Eastern Shore.

Objective A: Establish at least 2 tourism certification programs by 2018.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact	Timeline		Activity Outcome/Output Measurements	Progress Status (As of Nov. 2017)
Launch tourism internship program through regional universities and local business partners	<u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore Community College, Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce <u>Secondary:</u> Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce	TJ Johnson (Eastern Shore Community College), Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce)	Mid Term	May 2018	At least 5 students participate in a tourism internship program annually. At least 10 students will attend seminars on tourism careers and opportunities	Unknown

<p>Create hospitality curriculum with a certification and/or Associates Degree</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore Community College, Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce <u>Secondary:</u> Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>TJ Johnson (Eastern Shore Community College), Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce)</p>	<p>Mid Term</p>	<p>May 2018</p>	<p>A curriculum leading to a certificate and/or Associates Degree implemented at the Eastern Shore Community College per currently SCHEV-approved curriculum currently taught at Tidewater Community College</p>	<p>Started - four modules established</p>
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Objective B: Increase the understanding of regional tourism industry stakeholders on the value of tourism.

<p>Articulate the tourism brand on a regular and ongoing basis across the region via a regional tourism newsletter and presentations</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Northampton County Chamber of Commerce <u>Secondary:</u> Town business associations, Virginia Tourism Corporation Advocacy Team, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission</p>	<p>Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission); Evelyn Shotwell (Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce); Robie Marsh (Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce); Elizabeth Dodd (Northampton County Chamber of Commerce)</p>	<p>Mid Term</p>	<p>Oct. 2018 and ongoing annually</p>	<p>Create a Tourism Ambassador community program with at least ten (10) individuals identified and trained to deliver the Eastern Shore tourism story to at least 20 civic organizations, churches, community groups, and other local stakeholders annually</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No program established to date; however, over 20 presentations occurred during 2016-2017, but were given by fewer than 10 individuals. •Ambassador program still needs to be formally established – perhaps ESVA Tourism Commissioners???
<p>Develop program to enhance industry connections and assist partnership and product formation</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce – Young Professionals Group <u>Secondary:</u> Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce, Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, Town business associations</p>	<p>Robie Marsh, Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Mid Term</p>	<p>May 2018 and ongoing annually</p>	<p>Ten (10) networking events held in the region each year with at least 15 businesses participating in each event to enhance partnerships, networking, and economic development initiatives, using face-to-face, webinars, blogs and other tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESVA Chamber created Young Professionals Facebook group to act as a social avenue for workforce to meetup, plan activities, and become engaged in the community. Local restaurants, ecotour guides, etc. will be invited to post activities and events to act as conductor for engagement and networking with goal of employee retention. • Chincoteague Chamber holds many networking events per year focusing on various topics. 	<p>Ongoing</p>

GOAL 3: Engage local governments in enhancing support for tourism.

Build regional consensus that a robust tourism economy will transform the Eastern Shore of Virginia from one of Virginia's poorest areas to one of its most prosperous. Accomack received \$5.27 million in local taxes from domestic travel in 2014 (4.4% increase from 2013) and employed 2,000 people. Northampton received \$1.37 million in local taxes from domestic travel in 2014 (1.8% increase from 2013) and employed 780 people (Virginia Tourism Commission).

Objective A: Educate local government officials on the economic impact of regional tourism.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact	Timeline		Activity Outcome/Output Measurements	Progress Status (As of Nov. 2017)
Inform local government leaders annually on tourism economic impacts via in-person presentations	<u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission <u>Secondary:</u> Virginia Tourism Corporation Advocacy Team	Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission)	Short Term and Ongoing	January (Annually)	Report to 10 government bodies on Eastern Shore tourism impacts based on Virginia Tourism Commission and local tourism indicators.	Complete for 2016 and ongoing
Inform local government leaders regularly on tourism economic impacts via regional tourism newsletter	<u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission <u>Secondary:</u> Virginia Tourism Corporation Advocacy Team	Kerry Allison (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission)	Short Term and Ongoing	December 2017 and ongoing	Report to all local government elected officials and staff on Eastern Shore tourism impacts and activities via regularly distributed regional tourism newsletter	Complete and ongoing
Host at least 1 familiarization tour for local government officials each year	<u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission <u>Secondary:</u> Eastern Shore Public Library	Steve Potts (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission)	Short Term and Ongoing	May (Annually)	Invite and encourage all local government elected officials and at least 2 members of each government staff participate annually; fold into Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission annual May meeting.	Complete for 2016, 2017 and ongoing

Objective B: Increase tourism marketing and tourism budget.

Increase tourism related tax revenues by 5% per year for the next 5 years.	<u>Primary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission <u>Secondary:</u> County and town government officials	Steve Potts (Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission)	Short/ Mid/ Long Term	January 2017-2022	Total tax revenues will increase from 2017 baseline for tourism by 25% by 2022.	Transient Occupancy Tax revenues have increased, but 2017 baseline unknown
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Encourage new business formation that brings new tax revenues to the regional tourism economy	<u>Primary:</u> County and Town leaders <u>Secondary:</u> Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission	County and Town Economic Development Representatives	Long Term	January 2020	One Eastern Shore of Virginia town participates in the Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development's Main Street program; Region participates in the Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development's Entrepreneurial Challenge program for high school students	Main Street Program – Complete (Cape Charles) Virginia Entrepreneurial Challenge – no participation in 2016 Other: CBDG Downtown Revitalization Projects (Parksley underway and Onancock initial discussions held)
Designate region as a "Tourism Enterprise Zone" to facilitate significant investment of \$50 million in tourism-related projects	<u>Primary:</u> Virginia Tourism Corporation, Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, County and Town officials	Staci Martin (Virginia Tourism Corporation), Curt Smith (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)	Long Term	January 2022	Major investment in strategic tourism product	Ongoing - Initial discussions held but next steps not identified

GOAL 4: Grow the Arts Industry into a Primary Economic Driver for the region by 2022.

The region has an exceptional track record of successful entrepreneurs growing art and artisan businesses to employ hundreds. Resources exist to assist existing and start-up art businesses but need expansion to fully capitalize on this opportunity.

Objective A: Drive scalable artisan business growth for existing businesses and start-ups with a goal to create 50 new artisan jobs and 5 new businesses from a baseline of 2018.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact	Timeline		Activity Outcome/Output Measurements	Progress Status (As of Nov.2017)
Develop an art apprenticeship or internship program to teach business owners interested in significantly growing their business essential skills outside of general management skills (i.e. marketing/branding, scaling, systemizing, etc.)	<u>Primary:</u> To Be Determined <u>Secondary:</u> Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, Eastern Shore Community College, Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center, Others (To Be Determined)	Sara Baldwin (Accomack-Northampton Economic Development Committee)	Short Term	March 2018	Conduct meeting to have exploratory discussion. Refine objective and identify key stakeholders.	Not started
			Short Term	April 2018	Develop strategic plan for establishing apprenticeship/internship program	Not started
			Mid Term	December 2018	Conduct inventory to establish 2018 baseline for number of scalable artisan production jobs and number of existing businesses	Not started
			Mid Term	February 2019	Initiate apprenticeship/internship program	Not started
			Long Term	November 2022	Have 10 business owners complete program with 5 businesses creating a total of 50 new jobs.	Not started

Objective B: Grow regional artisan and artist opportunities by establishing one program that provides additional recognition by 2019.

Establish a Regional Artisan Champion Competition to provide additional marketing capacity for artisans and encourage growth in number of artisans.	<u>Primary:</u> To Be Determined <u>Secondary:</u> To Be Determined	To Be Determined	Short Term	March 2018	Conduct meeting to have exploratory discussion. Refine objective and identify key stakeholders.	Not started
			Short Term	June 2018	Develop competition guidelines and identify artisans to invite to competition	Not started
Hold first Regional Artisan Champion Competition and establish long-term operational and management plan for continuity.	<u>Primary:</u> To Be Determined <u>Secondary:</u> To Be Determined	To Be Determined	Mid Term	December 2018	Schedule initial competition and have commitments in place for artisans	Not started

GOAL 5: Develop recreational facilities and opportunities to better serve local residents and employees and attract prospective visitors and residents.

Construct recreational facilities and opportunities to enhance the overall health and quality of life for working families and individuals. The region currently ranks among the lowest in the Commonwealth according to multiple health metrics. Facilities including recreational-focused buildings, parks, and trails would be developed by 2022.

Objective A: Develop a regional network of pedestrian facilities by increasing the number of trails, sidewalks, road shoulders, and crosswalks.

Strategy	Responsibility	Key Contact	Timeline		Activity Outcome/Output Measurements	Progress Status (As of Nov.2017)
Construct and promote a regional bicycle trail.	<u>Primary:</u> Accomack-Northampton Transportation Technical Advisory Committee <u>Secondary:</u> Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, Virginia Department of Transportation	Accomack-Northampton Transportation Technical Advisory Committee Members, Barb Schwenk (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)	Short Term	July 2018	Update the regional Bicycle Plan – policy decisions regarding establishing bike routes on low-volume secondary roads awaiting from VDOT. Bay Coast and ANEC initial discussions regarding use of right of way held. Regional sidewalk inventory nearing completion.	Underway
			Mid Term	July 2019	Construct local trails within highest priority areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southern Tip trail - feasibility study to be completed Spring 2018 Assateague/Chincoteague trail - planning during 2018 Onancock/Only trail – initial discussions held with property owners and town representatives. Additional exploratory discussions needed. 	Underway

			Long Term	2020	Identify and pursue funding to construct connections between existing trails	Ongoing
Objective B: Increase recreational non-motorized boat use for residents and visitors.						
Enhance and promote existing water trails.	<u>Primary:</u> Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission <u>Secondary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission	Shannon Alexander (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)	Short to Mid Term	October 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Update Seaside Water Trail documents and website. •Establish Eastern Shore water trail brand •Integrate water trail with the Virginia Oyster Trail •Incorporate local businesses as stops along water trail 	Grant verbally awarded but awaiting federal budget adoption before finalizing contract
Establish and promote new water trails	<u>Primary:</u> Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission <u>Secondary:</u> Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission	Shannon Alexander (Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission)	Mid to Long Term	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Create water trails for selected Bayside creeks •Incorporate local businesses as stops along water trail •Integrate new trails with Captain John Smith National Historic Water Trail and Eastern Shore water trail brand 	Grant verbally awarded but awaiting federal budget adoption before finalizing contract