



UPPER COASTAL PLAIN

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

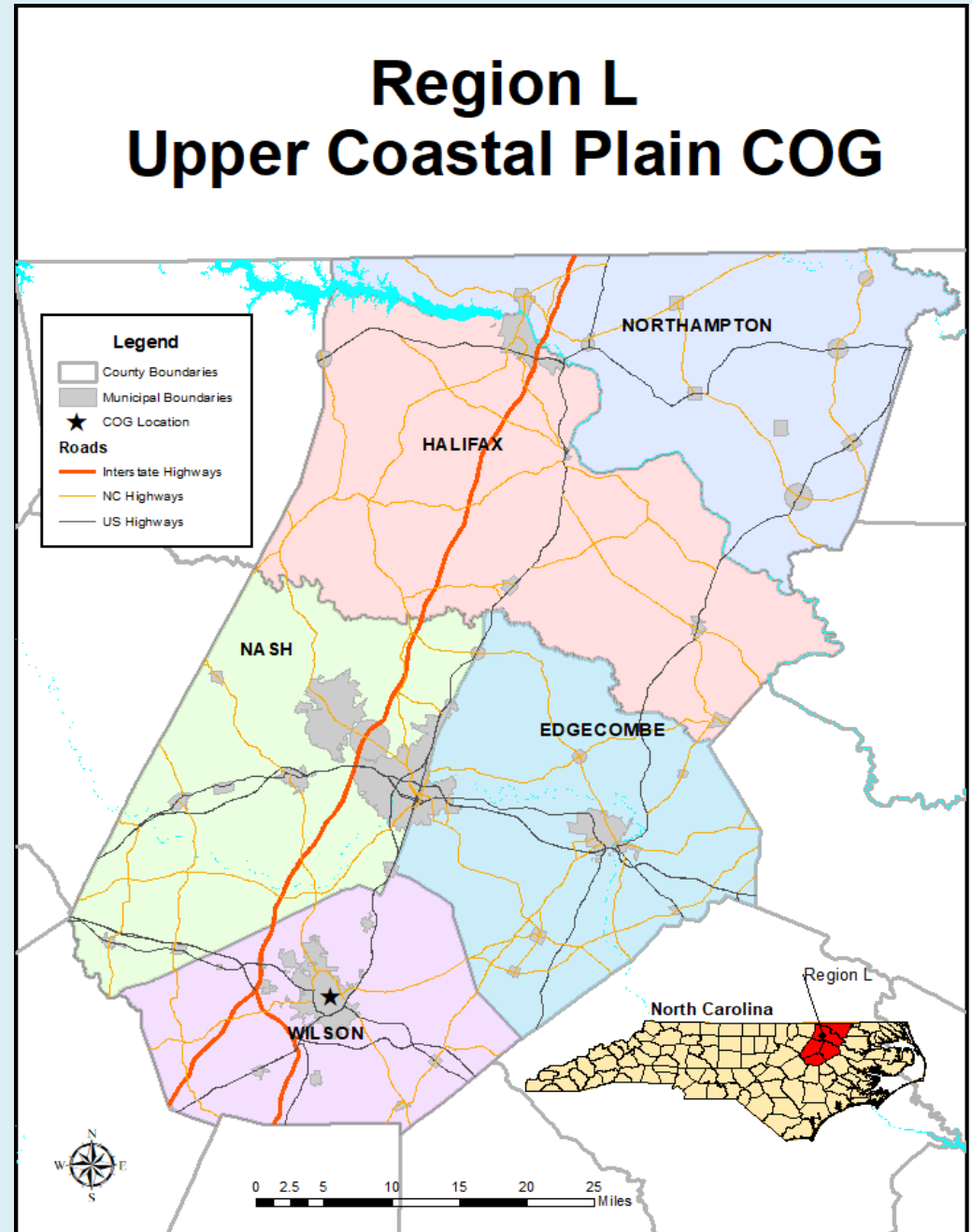
2022





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VISION

*“The Upper Coastal Plain Region will
Think Regionally, Act Locally, and Compete Globally”*

INTRODUCTION

The VISION, “Think Regionally, Act Locally, and Compete Globally” was set by the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Board of Directors who serve as the CEDS Advisory Committee. Governing both locally and regionally, their vision provides a framework for action by leadership and communities to assure prosperity and improved quality of life for residents and business.

“Think Regionally” recognizes the need for strategy and cooperation across traditional county, municipal and other boundaries for success. It has been acknowledged by leaders that competing locally for limited resources distract from presenting a unified front to attract investments in business, industry, tourism, arts & entertainment and more. **Working together works!**

“Act Locally” is deliberately taking steps at community levels of influence to enact regional strategies in a cooperative spirit. It recognizes local need and opportunity help fulfill local plans and actions supporting regional strategies. To act locally on regional interests leverages and optimizes success while minimizing risk. **The whole becomes greater than the sum of the individual parts!**

“Compete Globally” acknowledges we must compete with other areas of the state, southeast, nation, and world for this region and its localities to succeed in the future. The region’s prosperity, resiliency and culture depend on attracting new resources and people while growing from within, and improving the overall quality of life. **To compete globally is to cooperate regionally!**

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) provides a performance-based strategy that will strengthen the region. Public and private stakeholders from many disciplines and backgrounds worked together to create this new CEDS for the Upper Coastal Plain five-county area.

This CEDS recognizes area strengths and opportunities while acknowledging weaknesses and threats. It considers an analysis of the region's economy, established plans and more.

CEDS 2017-2022 incorporates guiding principles and standards of federal, state and local agencies through partnership with the State Economic Development Strategy, "NC Tomorrow". As part of the foundation for the statewide NC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the *NC Tomorrow Uniform Process* guided regions, including the Upper Coastal Plain region, to focus on:

Four Strategic Goals

- 1. Build on each region's competitive advantage and leverage the marketplace**
- 2. Establish & maintain a robust regional infrastructure**
- 3. Create revitalized, healthy and resilient communities**
- 4. Develop talented and innovative people**

These four goals were used in concert with the VISION by the CEDS Strategy Development Group for development of this regionally adopted plan.

AUTHORITY

The Upper Coastal Plain Regional Council, established in 1971 under NC General Statute 160A-47, is a designated Economic Development District (EDD) through the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The Council, in addition to other governing and management duties, in serving as the region's EDD, is responsible for developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is designed to identify regional priorities for economic and community development.



SUMMARY BACKGROUND

In 1972, the North Carolina legislature established eighteen (18) Councils of Governments—planning organizations with voluntary memberships drawn from the municipal and county governments within each region. Presently there are 16 Councils of Governments in North Carolina. The Upper Coastal Plain Region is comprised of forty-one (41) local governments within five counties: Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton and Wilson. These Counties are geographically located in the upper coastal plain area of north eastern North Carolina.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in creating a comprehensive and performance-based plan to strengthen the regional economy. A CEDS is also an advantage for the region to be eligible for assistance through EDA and various other federal programs. The CEDS serves as a guide to establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, identifying investment priorities, and assigning lead organizations the responsibility for executing the action plan. CEDS 2017-2022 is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad base and diverse public and private sector participation.

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments region borders Virginia to the north and stretches approximately 50 miles east to west and 65 miles north to south, totaling 1.7 million acres. Northampton, shares a 40-mile border with Virginia. Halifax and Edgecombe counties are within 50 miles of the nearest inlets to the Atlantic Ocean and 10 miles of the Outer Banks. Nash County is 25 miles west of Raleigh.

The Upper Coastal Plain EDD is a mix of farmland, open space and forestry, along with commercial and industrial development, particularly in the region's larger cities. The region's waterways include two primary rivers, the Roanoke River and Tar River and small portions of the Neuse and Chowan watersheds. The Upper Coastal Plain is well-served by major transportation routes including I-95, 64, 264, 301, 158 and 258. The region has excellent rail service with the major north-south rail corridor that runs parallel to I-95 and an east-west rail corridor linking the Town of Weldon, Roanoke Rapids and I-95. Passenger and freight stations are in Wilson and Rocky Mount.

According to the NC State Data Center, the population for the UCPEDD region totals 303,922. The North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management projects Nash and Wilson County will continue to experience the greatest population growth from 2010 – 2030. While other areas of the region may expect declines in population during this period, the region is projected to grow 13.5% overall.

Upper Coastal Plain Region

Includes Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton and Wilson Counties

HIGHER EDUCATION

Barton College
Edgecombe Community College
Halifax Community College
Nash Community College
North Carolina Wesleyan College
Wilson Community College

Total Population 18+ year
235,968

Total Population 65+ years
50,939

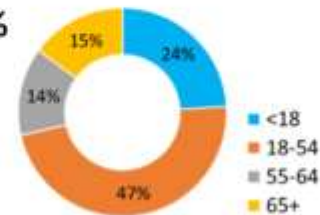
80% with at least High School Diploma or Equivalent (25+)

16% with Bachelor's Degree or higher

POPULATION¹

2010 Census Female Median Age
310,416 **52%** **41.4**

2015 Estimate Male Total Population %
306,051 **48%**



HOUSING²

Median Home Value
\$97,240

Median Rent
\$678

Homeowner Vacancy Rate
N/A

Rental Vacancy Rate
N/A

Total/Occupied Units
140,051 / 119,838

% Housing Stock Built Before 1990
65%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES³

	2012	2016	% Change
Manufacturing	20,884	20,320	-2.7%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	16,712	16,636	-0.5%
Retail Trade	14,946	14,168	-5.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	9,829	10,696	8.8%
Public Administration	8,857	8,390	-5.3%
Wholesale Trade	5,031	4,911	-2.4%
Administrative and Support and Waste Man-	4,492	4,508	0.4%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS⁴

1. BB&T
2. QVC Rocky Mount Inc.
3. Pfizer Inc.
4. Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations
5. Nash General Hospital
6. Wilson Medical/Duke Life Point
7. Cummins Inc.
8. Universal Leaf North America

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns
2. 2019 American Community Survey
3. Census Employment & Wages Average Employment
4. Department of Commerce, 2016 Q4 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Largest Employers

ECONOMIC²

Labor Force
132,369

Retail Sales
\$2,774,420,250

% of Families Below Poverty Level
23.2%

Median Household Income
\$37,814

Zero Car Households (%)
10.3%

Commuting Time
22.6 minutes

EDGECOMBE COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Tarboro

Founded in 1741

HIGHER EDUCATION

Barton College
Edgecombe Community College
 Halifax Community College
 Nash Community College
 North Carolina Wesleyan College
 Wilson Community College

Total Population 18+ years
42,309

Total Population 65+ years
9,038

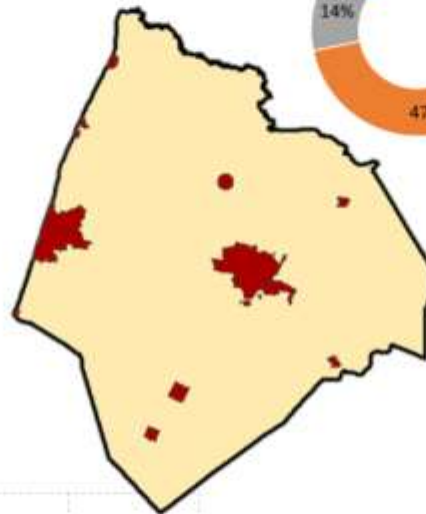
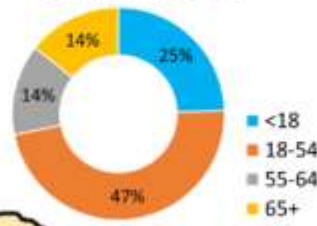
77% with at least High School Diploma or Equivalent

11% with Bachelor's Degree or higher

POPULATION¹

2010 Census Female Median Age
56,552 **54%** **39.9**

2015 Estimate Male Total Population %
55,280 **46%**



LARGEST INDUSTRIES³

	2012	2016	% Change
Manufacturing	2,928	3,331	13.8%
Retail Trade	2,683	2,728	1.7%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	2,385	2,283	-4.3%
Public Administration	2,444	2,219	-9.2
Accommodation and Food Services	1,057	1,143	8.1%
Construction	725	602	-17.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	430	515	19.8

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS⁴

1. QVC Rocky Mount Inc.
2. The Hillshire Brands
3. Vidant Medical Center
4. Mebtel Inc.
5. General Foam Plastics Corp.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns
 2. 2019 American Community Survey
 3. Census Employment & Wages Average Employment
 4. Department of Commerce, 2016 Q4 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Largest Employers

HOUSING²

Median Home Value
\$82,200

Median Rent
\$639

Homeowner Vacancy Rate
1.6%

Rental Vacancy Rate
8.9%

Total/Occupied Units
24,707 / 21,026

% Housing Stock Built Before 1990
67%

ECONOMIC²

Labor Force
22,849

Retail Sales
\$327,274,028

% of Families Below Poverty Level
26.3%

Median Household Income
\$32,659

Zero Car Households (%)
12.2%

Commuting Time
21.2 minutes

HALIFAX COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Halifax

Founded in 1758

HIGHER EDUCATION

Barton College
 Edgemcombe Community College
Halifax Community College
 Nash Community College
 North Carolina Wesleyan College
 Wilson Community College

2010 Census

Total Population 18+ year
42,073

Total Population 65+ years
9,509

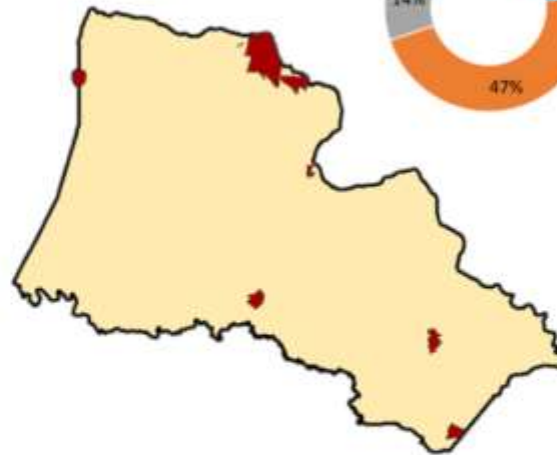
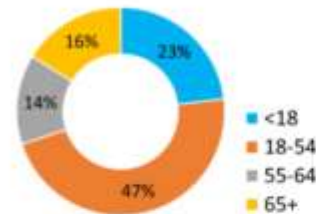
77% with at least High School Diploma or Equivalent (25+)

13% with Bachelor's Degree or higher

POPULATION¹

2010 Census Female Median Age
54,691 **52%** **42.1**

2015 Estimate Male Total Population %
53,407 **48%**



LARGEST INDUSTRIES³

	2012	2016	% Change
Healthcare and Social Assistance	2,875	2,789	-3.0%
Retail Trade	2,338	2,287	-2.2%
Manufacturing	1,858	2,007	8.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,787	1,945	8.8%
Public Administration	1,650	1,542	-6.5%
Educational Services	1,749	1,235	-29.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	520	535	2.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS⁴

1. Halifax Regional Medical Center
2. Resers Fine Foods Inc.
3. Kapstone Kraft Paper Corporation
4. Aaa Carolinas
5. Rural Health Group Inc.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns
 2. 2019 American Community Survey
 3. Census Employment & Wages Average Employment
 4. Department of Commerce, 2018 Q4 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Largest Employers

HOUSING²

Median Home Value
\$86,600

Median Rent
\$662

Homeowner Vacancy Rate
1.6%

Rental Vacancy Rate
5.2%

Total/Occupied Units
25,719 / 21,468

% Housing Stock Built Before 1990
73%

ECONOMIC²

Labor Force
20,806

Retail Sales
\$458,191,165

% of Families Below Poverty Level
26.3%

Median Household Income
\$32,245

Zero Car Households (%)
12.6%

Commuting Time
23.9 minutes

NASH COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Nashville

Founded in 1777

HIGHER EDUCATION

Barton College
 Edgemcombe Community College
 Halifax Community College
Nash Community College
North Carolina Wesleyan College
 Wilson Community College

Total Population 18+ year
72,905

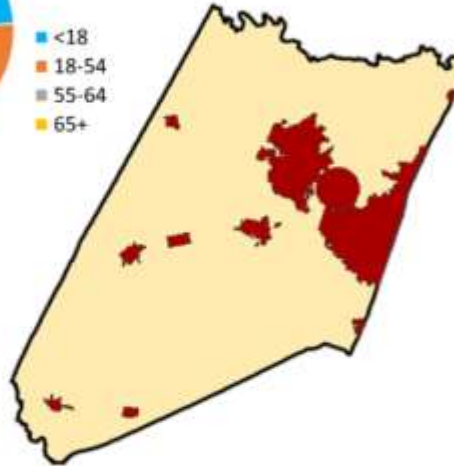
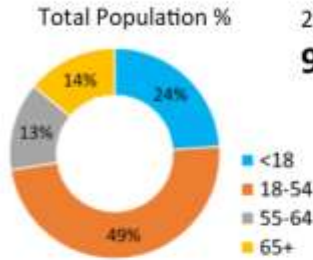
Total Population 65+ years
14,791

84% with at least High School Diploma or Equivalent (25+)

19% with Bachelor's Degree or higher

POPULATION¹

Median Age	2010 Census	Female
41	95,840	52%
Total Population %	2015 Estimate	Male
	94,772	48%



HOUSING²

Median Home Value
\$118,600

Median Rent
\$728

Homeowner Vacancy Rate
2.4%

Rental Vacancy Rate
7.0%

Total/Occupied Units
42,387 / 36,711

% Housing Stock Built Before 1990
61%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES³

	2012	2016	% Change
Manufacturing	7,055	7,288	3.3%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	5,613	5,647	0.6%
Retail Trade	5,188	5,100	-1.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	4,071	4,292	5.4%
Wholesale Trade	1,774	2,194	23.7%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,412	1,798	-25.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,521	1,702	11.9%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS⁴

1. Pfizer Inc.
2. Nash General Hospital
3. Cummins Inc.
4. Universal Leaf North America
5. Alorica Inc.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns
 2. 2019 American Community Survey
 3. Census Employment & Wages Average Employment
 4. Department of Commerce, 2016 Q4 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Largest Employers

ECONOMIC²

Labor Force
44,072

Retail Sales
\$987,814,638

% of Families Below Poverty Level
18.5%

Median Household Income
\$53,889

Zero Car Households (%)
8.2%

Commuting Time
25.9 minutes

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Jackson

Founded in 1741

HIGHER EDUCATION

Barton College
 Edgemcombe Community College
 Halifax Community College
 Nash Community College
 North Carolina Wesleyan College
 Wilson Community College

Total Population 18+ year
17,499

Total Population 65+ years
4,643

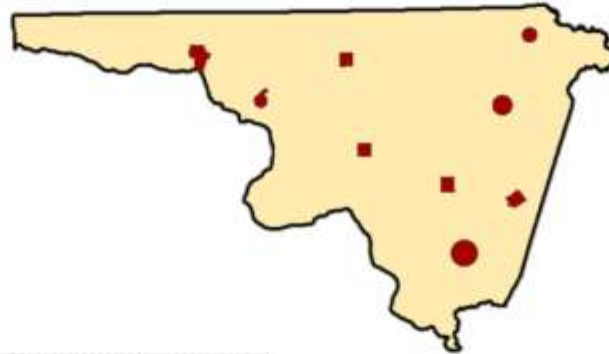
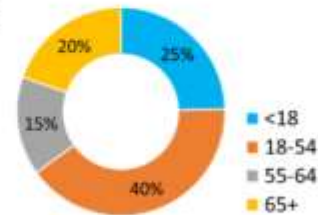
76% with at least High School Diploma or Equivalent (25+)

11% with Bachelor's Degree or higher

POPULATION¹

2010 Census Female Median Age
22,099 **51%** **45.5**

2015 Estimate Male Total Population %
21,011 **49%**



HOUSING²

Median Home Value
\$82,500

Median Rent
\$644

Homeowner Vacancy Rate
1.3%

Rental Vacancy Rate
5.1%

Total/Occupied Units
11,567 / 8,630

% Housing Stock Built Before 1990
67%

LARGEST INDUSTRIES³

	2012	2016	% Change
Public Administration	722	695	-3.7%
Wholesale Trade	424	617	45.5%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	692	615	-11.1%
Manufacturing	342	447	30.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	319	300	-6.0%
Retail Trade	1,119	279	-75.1%
Construction	211	186	-11.8%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS⁴

1. Lowes Home Centers Inc.
2. Meherrin Agricultural & Chem Co.
3. West Fraser Inc.
4. Smithfield Foods Inc.
5. Enviva Management Co. LLC

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns
 2. 2019 American Community Survey
 3. Census Employment & Wages Average Employment
 4. Department of Commerce, 2015 Q4 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Large Employers

ECONOMIC²

Labor Force
7,925

Retail Sales
\$92,012,357

% of Families Below Poverty Level
28.1%

Median Household Income
\$30,429

Zero Car Households (%)
12.2%

Commuting Time
23.8 minutes

WILSON COUNTY, NC

County Seat: Wilson

Founded in 1855

HIGHER EDUCATION

Barton College

Edgecombe Community College

Halifax Community College

Nash Community College

North Carolina Wesleyan College

Wilson Community College

Total Population 18+ year

61,182

Total Population 65+ years

12,958

80% with at least High School Diploma or Equivalent (25+)

18% with Bachelor's Degree or higher

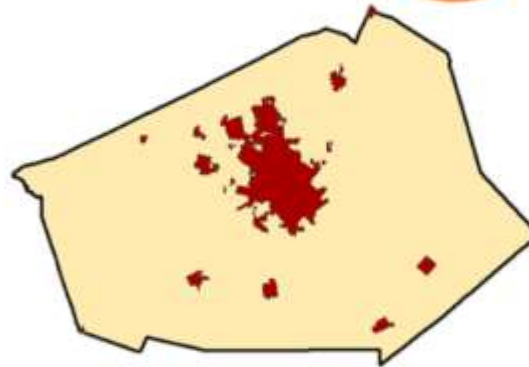
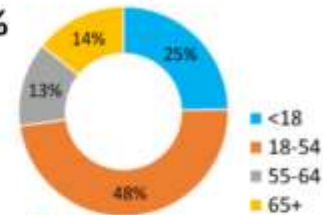
POPULATION¹

2010 Census Female Median Age

81,234 **52%** **38.7**

2015 Estimate Male Total Population %

81,581 **48%**



HOUSING²

Median Home Value

\$116,300

Median Rent

\$715

Homeowner Vacancy Rate

2.7%

Rental Vacancy Rate

4.5%

Total/Occupied Units

35,671 / 32,003

% Housing Stock Built Before 1990

63%

ECONOMIC²

Labor Force

36,717

Retail Sales

\$909,128,062

% of Families Below Poverty Level

23.1%

Median Household Income

\$39,847

Zero Car Households (%)

9.5%

Commuting Time

20.4 minutes

LARGEST INDUSTRIES³

	2012	2016	% Change
Manufacturing	8,701	7,247	-13.7%
Healthcare and Social Assistance	5,147	5,302	3.0%
Retail Trade	3,618	3,774	4.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	2,798	3,155	12.8%
Construction	2,619	2,706	3.3%
Public Administration	2,307	2,373	2.9%
Educational Services	2,543	2,170	-14.7%

LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS⁴

1. BB&T
2. Bridgestone Americas Tire Operation
3. Wilson Medical/Duke Life Point
4. S T Wooten Construction Co Inc.
5. Alliance One International Inc.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns
2. 2019 American Community Survey
3. Census Employment & Wages Average Employment
4. Department of Commerce, 2016 Q4 Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, Largest Employers

SWOT ANALYSIS

In the spring of 2017, Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments conducted a leadership survey and analysis of the region' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – known as a SWOT. SWOT identifies what local government staff, elected officials, community members and other stakeholders consider important. This helps identify regional priorities for economic and community development.

The 2017 SWOT analysis¹ had 92 respondents in the five counties of Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton and Wilson. The primary results are shown below accompanied by the Strategy Development Group's input. This is not a comprehensive list, only top tier items.

STRENGTHS

- Roads & Rail Connectivity
- Natural Environment (especially water)
- Agricultural Lands
- Community Colleges
- Geographic Location (Proximity & Climate)
- Cost of Living
- Diversity of Residents
- Business Sites & Real Estate Values
- Family Friendliness
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Local Environmental Preparedness
- Public Safety

WEAKNESSES

- Local Economies
- Talent Development & Recruitment
- Workforce Delivery
- Young Professionals & Youth Retention
- Housing Supply
- Employment & Wage Opportunities
- Race/Ethnic Relations
- Recreation & Entertainment
- Rural Broadband Access
- Aging Infrastructure
- Inability to Attract Population
- Image as a Destination
- Public Transportation
- Bike & Pedestrian

OPPORTUNITIES

- Industrial Recruitment & Expansion
- Logistics Cluster
- Existing Business Retention & Expansion
- Entrepreneur Support & "Local" Economy
- K-12 Education
- Workforce Skills & Training
- Talent Development
- Broadband Connectivity
- Sustainability
- Tourism
- Urban – Rural Connectivity
- Retirement Destination & Senior Services
- Government Efficiency

THREATS

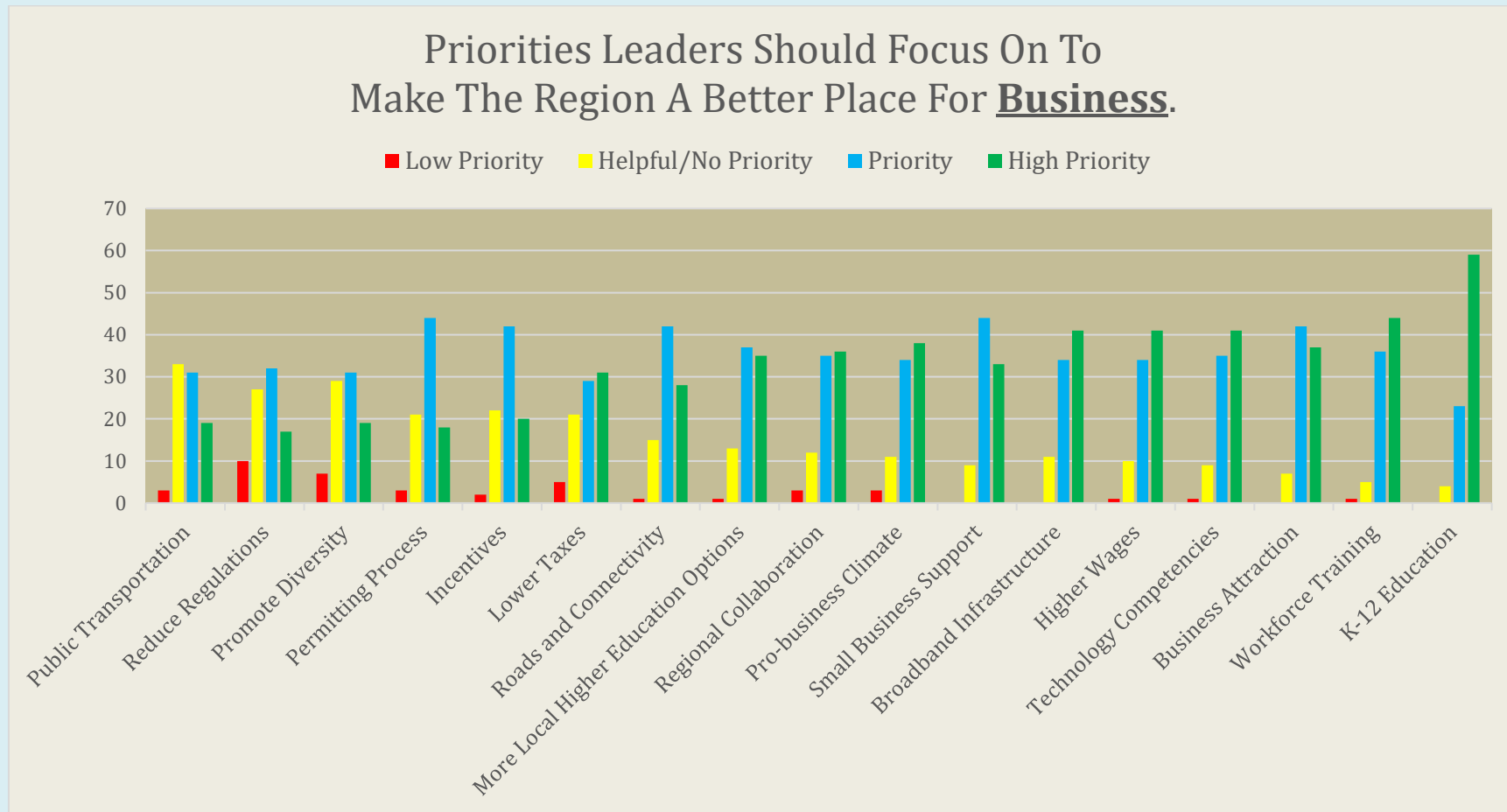
- State & Federal Priorities
- Job Availability & Career Advancement Opportunities
- Education Funding
- Shrinking Population (rural flight)
- Vacant Downtowns
- Brownfields
- Lack of Industry Diversity
- Healthy Food Access
- Federal & State Nat. Disaster Response
- Access to Capital
- Regional Fracturing
- Drugs and Opioids
- Health Care Costs

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES are generally **internal** to the region – leaders and communities have more power and influence over them. OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS are generally **external** impacts to the region - but influencers can choose how to capitalize upon, prepare for, and react to those externalities through opportunity focus and creation.

¹ See CEDS SWOT Analysis Charts at Appendix __ or www.ucpcog.org/pds/ceds/... for complete results

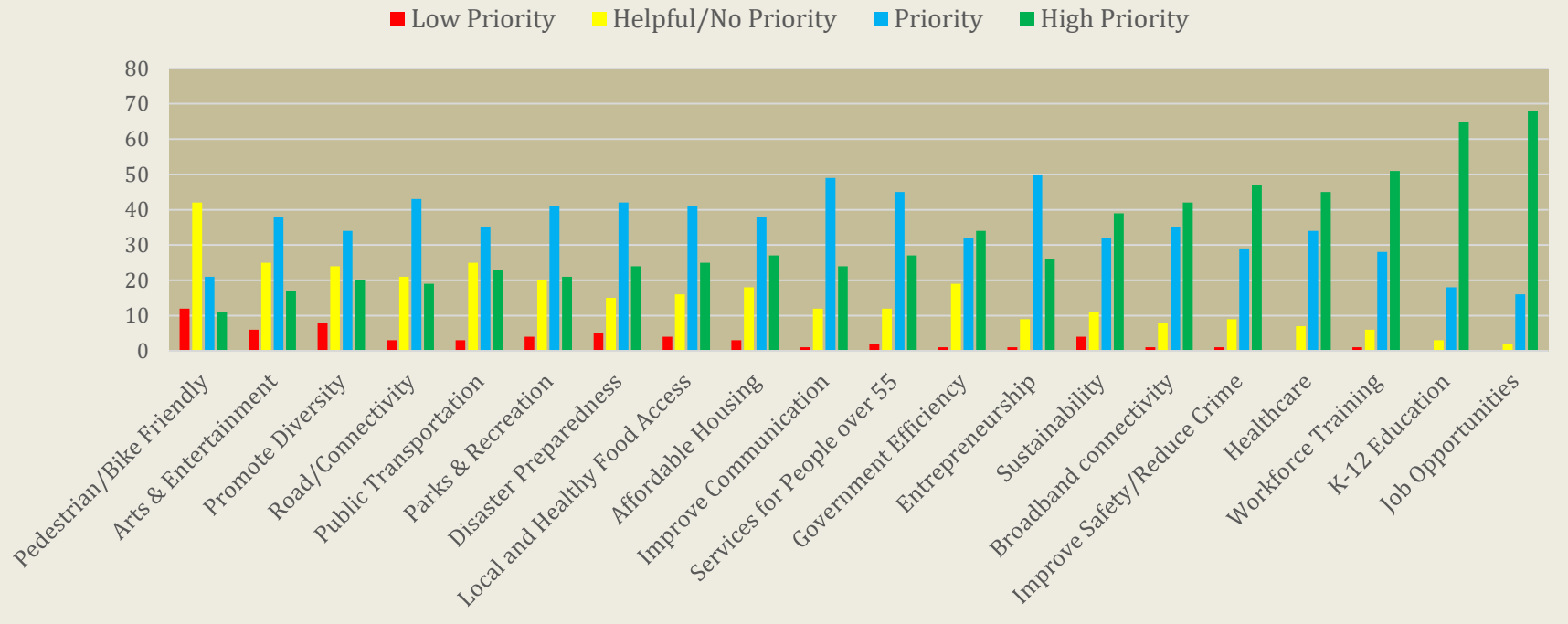
REGIONAL SERVICE PRIORITIES²

These charts represent Regional Service Priority results of an online survey conducted in April and May of 2017. Respondents were asked to rank the relative priority of many general topics. Responses are weighted and shown with a progression from lower priority issues on the left to the highest priority issues on the right. While the survey requested rankings for both business and residents, many priorities overlap.



² UCPCOG CEDS 2017 Leadership Survey Question #25 & #24 respectively

Priorities Leaders Should Focus On To Make The Region A Better Place For Residents.



All areas ranked above are considered a priority for both regional and local attention by leadership to fulfill the CEDS Vision, “*Think Regionally, Act Locally, Compete Globally.*” While lower priority rankings may receive less regional emphasis, many of these same priorities will rank higher at the local level and for organizations and special interest groups charged to focus on the topic. Local entities are strongly encouraged to focus on areas of local priority in an effort to fulfill the overall regional priority.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Resilience is defined as, “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.”³ Planning for resilience includes a multi-phased approach that anticipates risk, evaluates the potential impact on key assets, and develops a response. In the context of economic development, economic resilience becomes inclusive of three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly, the ability to withstand, and the ability to avoid a shock. Often, the shocks/disruptions to the economic base of a region are manifested in three ways:

- Downturns or other significant events in the national or international economy which impact demand for locally produced goods and consumer spending;
- Downturns in specific industries that constitute a critical component of the region’s economic activity; and/or
- Other external shocks (a natural or man-made disaster, closure of a military base, exit of a major employer, the impacts of climate change, etc.).

The Economic Development Administration provides guidance on integrating regional economic resilience through a two-pronged approach:

1. *“Planning for and implementing resilience through specific goals or actions to bolster the long-term economic durability of the region (steady-state), and*
2. *Establishing information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communication between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges (responsive).”*⁴

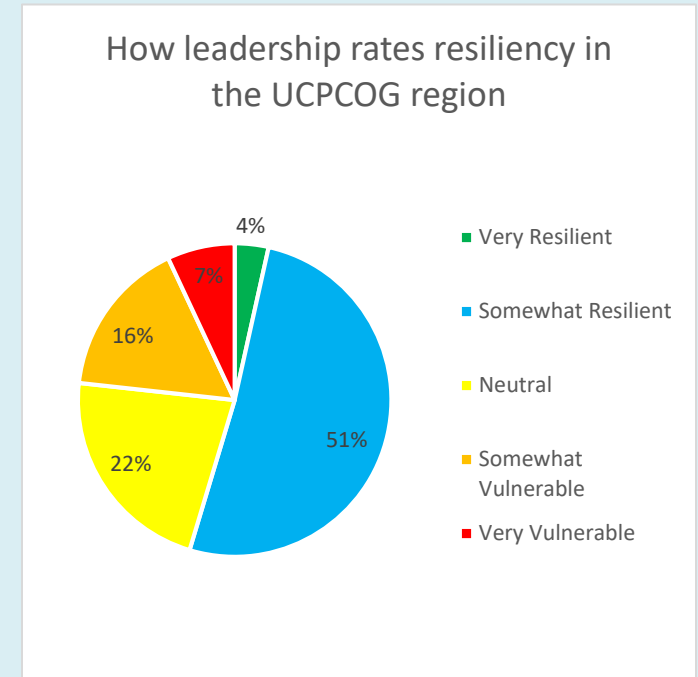
The Upper Coastal Plain region strives for resilient communities and regional economic prosperity through regional self-reliance, while building a strong economic base that minimizes dependence on forces over which the local areas have no control. This two-pronged approach is outlined in the development and support of strategies, tactics, and performance measures in the following pages.

³ http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/resilience

⁴ <http://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm>

Steady-state initiatives include:

- Monitor global, national, regional economic trends and work to anticipate periods of macro-level growth and contraction;
- Conduct comprehensive planning that includes the integration of hazard mitigation, transportation, and other planning efforts;
- Monitor key corporate activity of major local employers and target clusters;
- Support stable economic clusters and target development of emerging clusters or industries that build on the region's assets;
- Promote and develop value-chains of target sectors that close economic gaps and build on the region's strengths;
- Build a resilient workforce that is educated in STEM and can shift between jobs or industries;
- Encourage local government fiscal practices and policies to increase sustainability of core services, tackle new initiatives, and support improvement with current revenues while maintaining available reserves during economic stress;
- Continue to develop and maintain key infrastructure assets like high speed broadband, water/sewer improvements, rail/roads/pedestrian access, etc.



Responsive initiatives include:

- Identify and pursue immediate, short and long-term, opportunities for economic growth through leveraging and emerging trends in areas within 200 miles of the region;
- Collaborate regionally on hazard mitigation plans and other environmental hazard planning efforts;
- Review and evaluate condition of area companies similar to, or reliant upon, major employers announcing layoffs or closures;
- Strengthen coordination between the Turning Point Workforce Development Board, economic development entities, and support services to address short, intermediate, and long-term recovery needs of specific sectors;
- Establish a process for greater regional communication, monitoring, and updating of business community needs and issues;

STRATEGIC TARGET SECTORS

AGRICULTURAL & WORKING LANDS

- Crop & Timber research
- Domestic Production of Foreign Cash Crops
- Organics and Quality Foods
- Value-added Products and Value Chain Development (both food and timber)
- Local and Healthy Food Systems development
- Farm to Table & Farm to Institution
- Next Generation Farmers & Support Models
- Farmers Markets and Food-Hubs

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

- Aviation and Motor Vehicle Parts
- Biotech and Natural Products
- Craft Beverage
- Custom Fabrication
- Electronics

CONSTRUCTION

- Modular Assembly
- Home and building renovation
- Infrastructure
- Fabricated Metals

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

- STEM Development
- Soft-Skills Development
- Leadership Development
- Workforce Development
- Job Training

ENERGY

- Industrial Solar
- Alternative Fuels and Advanced Transportation
- Natural Gas

HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Senior Care and Aging Services
- Healthy Living and Wellness Services
- Hospital and Medical Services
- Childcare services
- Pharmaceuticals & Biological Products

LOGISTICS

- Multi-Modal Hub
- Trucking
- Warehousing

PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

- Back office support
- Programming and software development
- Home-based businesses and entrepreneurship
- Utilities and clean energy

TOURISM

- Accommodations
- Outdoor Recreation
- History & Cultural Heritage
- Leisure and Recuperative
- Sports (Amateur and Youth)

TRANSPORTATION

- Commercial and Passenger Rail
- Road Construction and Maintenance
- Bike and Pedestrian

Summation for Target Sectors

Several key issues are associated with potential drivers of economic target sector cluster activity for the Upper Coastal Plain Region.

- Access to I-95, I-40, passenger rail, and the coming CCX multi-modal terminal, coupled with proximity to major populations offer the sectors major advantages including getting raw materials into the region and finished products out, tourism revenue, and access to skilled laborers and professionals.
- Regional efforts should focus attention on activities that bring new money and people into the community and region. Importing revenue streams and youth opportunity are necessary for the future. Sectors such as healthcare are also important as they offer employment and quality of life opportunities.
- Clusters are based on trends within existing known sectors and do not consider new emerging industries in the region. Therefore, the region must not dismiss “Aspirational” clusters, clusters and jobs that do not exist in the region now, but could in the future.
- A small number of large firms dominate the employment within many of the region’s key clusters, particularly those related to advanced manufacturing. Consequently, any significant change in the companies can alter future development of key clusters in the region.
- There are many issues relating to competitiveness of key clusters and companies that are outside of the region’s influence. It is important to focus primarily on issues that can be influenced or controlled, such as developing an appropriately trained workforce.
- Numerous companies indicate difficulty attracting the most skilled and educated workers. This remains true for technical jobs as well as white collar positions that require advanced degrees. The region will work to further leverage both available degree and customized training programs.
- Energy costs and sustainability are proactive concerns of many firms. Support efforts will be made to ensure knowledge and resources on sustainability and energy efficiency are accessible and available to regional companies.
- Promotion of local businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurship.

ACTION PLAN

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy addresses regional priorities and needs by working to fulfill the Regional Vision to, “**Think Regionally, Act Locally, Compete Globally.**” This CEDS recognizes NC Tomorrow’s goals, key tactics, and some strategies that were identified from priorities at the regional level. Regional focus on key statewide strategies will lead to a stronger, more economically resilient region and state. Evaluating consistent performance metrics at local and regional levels will eventually be elevated to a statewide analysis of economic development. NC Tomorrow metrics are marked with an asterisk (*).

Goal 1: Build on the Region’s Competitive Advantages & Leverage the Marketplace

Goal 2: Establish & Maintain a Robust Infrastructure

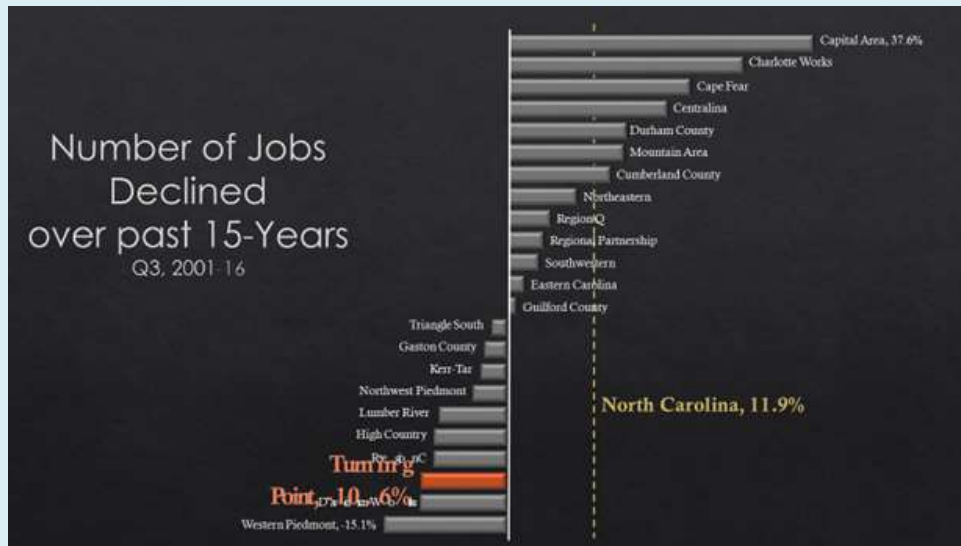
Goal 3: Create Revitalized, Healthy & Resilient Communities

Goal 4: Develop Talented and Innovative People



4. Collaborate on Marketing Regional Economic and Community Development assets.

- a. Analyze existing regional identities and brands, and develop Regional Brand.
- b. Create and execute a joint vision of how to best market assets for Economic Development.
- c. Initiate active leadership role in managing statewide branding and integrating with regional branding.
- d. Foster niche regional branding and product marketing initiatives that engage networks of small businesses in industries needing collaboration to build scale (e.g., agricultural products, local foods, viticulture, recreation and tourism, etc.).
- e. Facilitate regional collaboration of travel, tourism, arts & entertainment marketing to maximize funding and increase impact.



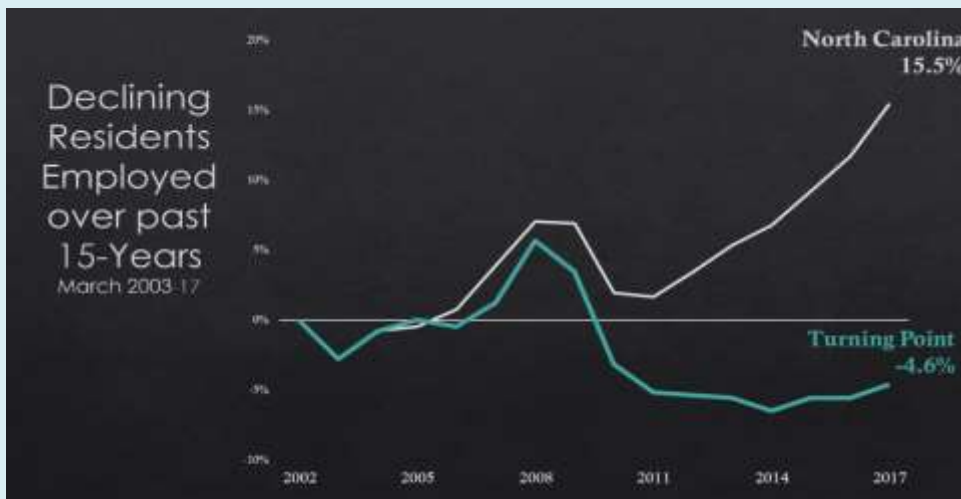
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Milestones:

- New regional collaborations and partnerships created
- Completed regional brand analysis
- Ongoing collaborative marketing campaigns for key industries willing to work together (e.g., agricultural and local foods, recreation, tourism, arts & entertainment, etc.)

Metrics:

- Number of new industries and major businesses relocating to region
- Proportion of business executives in targeted industries that recognize UCP regional brand
- Revenue growth for key industries
- Number of collaborations within key industries
- Number of existing firms receiving business services
- Increase in percentage of residents employed and new jobs within Region



Jeff DeBellis, Director of Economic & Policy Analysis,
LEAD, NC Department of Commerce, 2017

CHALLENGE 2: *The Region requires an effective “entrepreneurial ecosystem” to encourage development of new start-ups, support existing small business growth, and develop other entrepreneurial initiatives.*

Communities must concentrate efforts on development of entrepreneurs, service providers and resources in the facilitation of a successful entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the region. To build entrepreneurial communities, we must engage and invest in activities that focus on developing the entrepreneur. By developing the entrepreneur, we increase their capacity to achieve their goals resulting in individual and community wealth. An entrepreneur’s level of development includes: *technical skills* or the ability to perform the key operations of a business; *managerial skills* or the ability to organize and manage the operations; *entrepreneurial skills* or the ability to identify opportunities and create solutions; *personal maturity* or self-awareness, willingness and ability to accept responsibility, emotional development, and creative ability.⁶

STRATEGIES & TACTICS

1. Increase entrepreneurial activity through creation and coordination of *entrepreneurial support programs*.

- a. Create and expand the region’s offering of co-working space, pop-up-shops or other shared services/spaces as part of broader downtown revitalization, redevelopment, and Main Street improvement efforts.
- b. Support and expand entrepreneurial education and training programs through seminars and workshops and in partnership with K-12 and community college small business centers.
- c. Coordinate services across multiple programs and provide tools to help small businesses to become more innovative and proficient in competing for local and global business.
- d. Integrate and actively market business assistance program services (including financing, exporting, management planning, site selection, workforce development, and other services) as an integrated and seamless network that help companies access any type of assistance through “no wrong door.”
- e. Expand access to equity and risk capital through micro-lending, crowd funding, slow capital, distress funds, angel investment, etc.



⁶ Lichtenstein, Lyons and Kutzhanova, 2004

2. Create and strengthen dynamic networks for the entrepreneurial and small business environment that supports “home grown”, diverse, local and regional job creation, especially for young adults in creative, mobile and place-based professions; while also keeping in mind the significant contributions of older adults.
 - a. Strengthen and expand existing entrepreneurial support networks in small towns and rural areas.
 - b. Collaborate with partners to improve urban-rural market connections.
 - c. Recognize, support, strengthen, and empower the region’s community colleges, the Area Agency on Aging, and the local aging network, toward these efforts.

3. Improve access to direct assistance aiding businesses and industry in becoming more globally competitive.
 - a. Coordinate business services across multiple programs and platforms to help small businesses become more innovative and proficient in competing for global business.
 - b. Actively market business assistance program services from a variety of organizations (including financing, exporting, management planning, site selection, workforce development, and other services) as an integrated and seamless network that helps companies access any type of assistance through “no wrong door.”

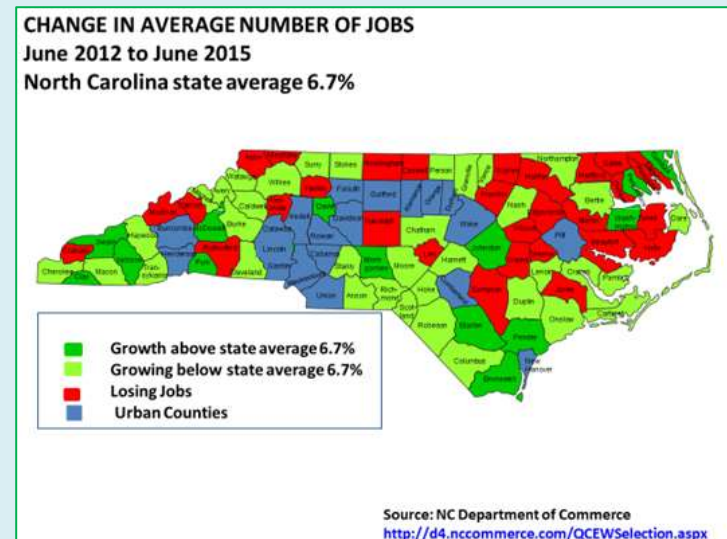
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Milestones:

- Increase awareness of entrepreneurial needs versus service provider offerings. Most service providers specialize in a particular area of business
- Increase focus on execution and implementation of the idea
- Create an entity that will take responsibility for managing the pipeline of entrepreneurs, service providers and resources
- Inventory available equity and risk capital
- Complete marketing plan to promote entrepreneurial service providers
- Routine organized regional entrepreneurial networking sessions

Metrics

- Amount of incubator space available and occupied
- Number of new entrepreneurs (businesses)
- Number of very high growth firms (doubling employment or sales during the past five years)
- Number of businesses and entrepreneurs receiving services from chambers, community colleges, workforce and other service providers.
- Volume of equity/risk capital available and invested, including small business lending by local community development financial institutions



CHALLENGE 3: The Upper Coastal Plain region must focus on our unique areas of proficiency and innovation and how best to exploit competitive advantages.

With limited resources available for economic development investment, the region must focus attention on helping industries with the greatest potential grow faster than they might otherwise. We must identify highly integrated groups of businesses with strong vertical and horizontal linkages, local and regional resources, assets, economic trends, and forecasted industry trends to sets the path for future economic development. All these components together, when matched with emerging trends and technology, can create a clear road map of actions the region and counties should be taking for expansion and attraction efforts and provide focus for economic development resources that hold the greatest potential for sustained growth.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS:

1. Develop sector-based approaches for policy and program implementation.
 - a. Coordinate data-driven regional economic analysis, including vertical and horizontal linkages among businesses in the region.
 - b. Update the UCP Region Industry Cluster Analysis.
 - c. Coordinate data development to identify target sectors.
 - d. Identify economic benefit and needs of target industry sectors.
 - e. Target growth of emerging sectors and ancillary businesses.
 - f. Identify new data collection methods to develop well-connected supply value-chains.

2. Establish a more evidence-based process for making investments in economic and community development.
 - a. Provide cutting-edge analytical tools to the state's local and regional leaders (including economic developers, decision makers, elected officials, etc.).
 - b. Identify supply chain networks related to key industry clusters and determine key network gaps that should receive targeted attention and investments.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Milestones:

- Development of a research agenda to support economic development planning and implementation
- Creation of a sustainable business model to provide planners and economic developers access to ongoing analysis of state economic development data and analysis
- Completed plans for promoting the use of advanced and innovative technologies

Metrics

- Job creation in targeted clusters
- Private and public-sector investment in support of technologies
- Number of organizations using available data and research tools

CHALLENGE 1: *There are increasingly divergent economies of scale in water and wastewater systems. Large and small systems have increasing costs in operations and maintenance, and respond with associated fee increases. To create economies of scale, water and sewer systems can be better integrated and coordinated. Deferred maintenance creating operational efficiencies can also be addressed.*

Water and sewer systems represent one of the most significant local government fiscal requirements and the investment in these systems is often inadequate. According to the ASCE infrastructure report card, North Carolina has an estimated \$830 million in annual water and wastewater investment requirement over the next 20 years.⁸

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Establish water and wastewater resources management, planning, coordination, and investments to help ensure long-term water supply and processing throughout the region.
 - a. Coordinate planning to encourage strategic, regionally important water and sewer infrastructure investments.
 - b. Target investment in cooperative, integrated and resilient systems to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. Incentivize planning and implementation of strategic regional asset management and regional strategies in anticipation of future droughts and floods.

2. Build technical capacity within local water and sewer utility providers.
 - a. Provide technical assistance to water and sewer utility systems to help address fiscal and operational challenges.
 - b. Increase digital access to up-to-date service availability maps, diagrams, and capacity attributes to improve water and sewer planning and management activities.
 - c. Identify capacity of systems to accommodate future growth.
 - d. Identify water supply associated with dams.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Build inventories of water and sewer capacity
- Completed asset management plans that influence state, regional, and local water/sewer infrastructure investments

Metrics

- Number of linked water and sewer systems
- Volume of water and sewer capacity that is integrated through linked water and sewer systems
- Reduction in the number of systems with Special Order of Consent being issued



⁸ American Society of Civil Engineers, 2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/north_carolina/north-carolina-overview/

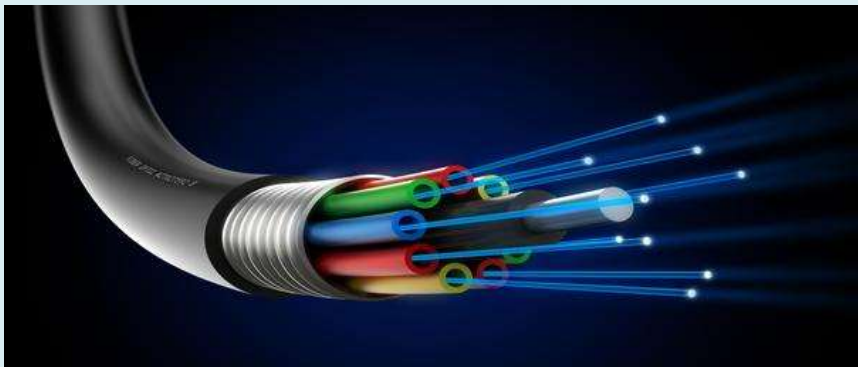
CHALLENGE 2: *Areas of our region lack adequate broadband access. High-speed broadband is a necessity for the development of resilient and successful communities. It is required for businesses to thrive and ultra-high-speed broadband is critical to global competitiveness.*

Broadband is a crucial driver of job creation and economic growth. To compete in the 21st Century economy, companies must move vast quantities of information at the speed of light. Research demonstrates a link between technology innovation and overall economic prosperity. Broadband access and affordability are especially important in rural communities which rely on sole proprietors and entrepreneurs more than densely populated places. Broadband now represents a basic utility for these very small companies to keep them competitive.

Connecting North Carolina, State Broadband Plan, outlines the issues that the State and our region are facing and provides a blueprint for a path forward. Areas that have this infrastructure in place have a tremendous economic advantage. Our region must develop an intentional strategy to seize this advantage.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Improve robust and affordable broadband access to un-served and underserved areas to meet present and future needs.
 - a. Establish a regional broadband task force.
 - b. Identify and prioritize areas where High Speed Internet and Broadband for middle and last mile is needed.
 - c. Identify barriers that prevent innovative programs designed to leverage public and private investment that can improve broadband services in the region.
 - d. Create opportunities to optimize return on public and private investments in broadband infrastructure and capabilities.
 - e. Identify incentives (e.g., grants, loans, tax programs) to encourage greater private investment by the telecoms in the broadband infrastructure.
 - f. Allow for public investment in broadband infrastructure.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Creation of Regional Broadband Task Force
- Survey the Region on its Broadband capacities and needs
- Identification of best practices for delivering broadband to rural areas

Metrics

- Expansion of affordable high-speed broadband last-mile coverage throughout the Region
- Utilization of access by both citizens and businesses
- Increased Wi-Fi internet connection accessibility in public places

CHALLENGE 3: *Continue progress in emerging clean energy sectors while maintaining necessary traditional energy sources in a manner that sustains growth while increasing resiliency.*

Critical energy needs must be met in an optimum manner that assures a reliable, safe, clean, and affordable supply. Future development of critical energy infrastructure shall further the area's competitive business climate, grow jobs, and provide affordable rates for all customers. The appropriate use and application of energy efficiency, alternative energy technology, and renewable energy technologies is consistent with the goal of assuring reliable, safe, clean and affordable energy. The region must leverage all energy resources and promote the development of critical energy infrastructure necessary for sustainable economic growth.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Encourage balanced use of all available energy sources and promote accessibility to communities throughout the region.
 - a. Facilitate collaboration between private energy providers, local and regional planners, and economic developers.
 - b. Incentivize investment in the development of appropriate energy infrastructure and related facilities.
 - c. Support alternative fuels and advanced transportation infrastructure like electric vehicle recharging and CNG stations.
 - d. Support grid modernization: (1) smart grid and advanced metering infrastructure, (2) utility business model improvement, (3) regulatory reform, (4) utility rate reform, (5) energy storage, (6) microgrids, and (7) demand response.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Creation of partnerships working on clean energy infrastructure needs and investments
- Develop programs and/or incentives to increase use and access to energy sources
- The development of an inventory of major energy sources and planned future sources, considering reliability, sustainability, and cost efficiency

Metrics

- Local Government plans policies supporting or incentivizing clean energy use
- Number of new clean energy assets in the region (industrial solar farms, EV & CNG fueling stations, etc.)
- Percentage of residential and industries with access to and/or utilizing emerging energy options;

CHALLENGE 4: *The region must continue its vigilance and ensure a fair share of both state and federal transportation funds. Also, the region has had limited multi-modal transportation options, particularly in the more rural areas.*

Transportation capacity demand is increasing throughout the region. The North Carolina State legislators increased transportation funding over the next ten years and developed a scoring process to prioritize projects through the Strategic Transportation Investments Act. This process includes local input strategies. From an economic and community development standpoint, the region must continue a comprehensive approach to moving goods and services, that complements an overall mobility strategy.

Of a special note, in July 2016, the state of North Carolina, the Carolinas Gateway Partnership and CSX Transportation announced Rocky Mount, North Carolina as the home for a new intermodal rail terminal - the Carolina Connector or CCX. This \$270M+ critical infrastructure project will serve as a major transportation hub in the Southeast, and is a catalyst for substantial economic growth throughout the state of North Carolina.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Continue collaboration in and between the regional MPO and two RPO transportation planning groups and State to ensure that critical transportation needs are met.
 - a. Develop relationships with adjoining MPO's and RPO's to encourage better regional transportation planning, in consideration with transportation funding geographies and planning regions.
 - b. Plan for and implement multimodal transportation options that ensure choice for transportation alternatives.
 - c. Encourage local elected officials to participate within their local Rural Planning Organizations and Metropolitan Planning Organizations.
 - d. Develop a strategy to help smaller local communities meet the required local match for non-highway transportation projects.
2. Design and implement a regional strategy to take the fullest advantage of CCX multi-modal distribution and transportation hub.
 - a. Consider a local joint transportation committee to specifically discuss regional issues associated with the CCX facility.
 - b. Improve freight access options to and from key CCX multi-modal hub and resulting new business facilities using the hub.
 - c. Take advantage of local Amtrak stations in Wilson and Rocky Mount. Leverage future station in Weldon.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Continued identification of priorities in the Statewide Mobility Plan, TIP, and other plans of region's MPO and RPOs
- Continue to monitor local Comprehensive Transportation Plans for annual updates
- Develop and/or update local Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans
- Consider need for possible new MPO for Wilson area
- Upgrade US 64 and US 264 64 to Interstate Standards
- Upgrade and improvements to US 158
- New Amtrak passenger station in Weldon

Metrics

- New collaborative efforts between region's MPO and RPOs
- Miles of roads repaired or rehabilitated number of bridges replaced in adequate condition
- Number of transit services for workers
- New miles of bike and pedestrian transportation options
- Identify and seek funding for transit planning priorities
- New miles of Greenways



CHALLENGE 5: *Incorporate the region's natural "Green and Blue Infrastructure" assets into development strategies, particularly the area's primary rivers, the Roanoke and the Tar, as well as nature trails.*

There is increasing demand for opportunities associated with the area's natural amenities. There is a regional need to understand, upgrade and expand "green infrastructure", the interconnected system of green spaces that provide recreational opportunities while conserving ecosystems, sustaining clean air and water, and providing benefits to people and wildlife. With a green infrastructure plan and/or strategy, communities can work to more effectively preserve and connect open spaces, watersheds, wildlife habitats, parks, and critical landscapes to further quality of life and development opportunities.

Additionally, the region has suffered from Hurricanes Floyd and Matthew as well as other major weather events. Storms cause immense damage at massive costs. Green infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to help manage weather related impacts including droughts.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Promote the regional economic benefits of developing a green infrastructure.
 - a. Identify and prioritize critical areas.
 - b. Work with appropriate state and local agencies to establish possible trail network.
 - c. Use green infrastructure to reduce public costs for storm water management, flood control, transportation, and other forms of built infrastructure.
 - d. Manage forests that provide wood products and contribute to clean air, water filtration, and wildlife habitat.
2. Increase collaboration and participation between jurisdictions in both recreational planning and the utilization of heritage tourism associated with the Tar and Roanoke Rivers.
 - a. Nature based recreation, such as hiking trails and recreation areas.
 - b. Landscape features, such as key river points and views.
3. Prioritize ways to connect open spaces, watersheds, parks, and other natural areas to maintain quality of life.
 - a. Prepare and adopt a Regional GreenPrint.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Identification of priorities in a regional open space strategy
- Hold appropriate regional workshops

Metrics

- Recharged areas to replenish aquifers used for drinking water supplies
- Improved water quality in Roanoke and Tar Rivers and tributaries
- New connections across the landscape for wildlife corridors
- Improved landscape settings around historic landscapes and farms



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 3: Create Revitalized, Healthy & Resilient Communities

The Upper Coastal Plain region must capitalize on its human, natural, and built environment assets to support a quality of life that promotes thriving communities supporting economic growth. Community development opportunities include increasing local food production and consumption, increasing and improving the workforce housing stock, reinvigorating downtowns, and providing better options for exercise and recreation.

Challenge 1: *Communities must develop in a way that facilitates safe and healthy outdoor activities.*

The opportunities for exercise that area agricultural and manufacturing jobs once provided are available to fewer workers in our region. Housing development with a suburban footprint can disconnect housing from amenities and recreation facilities. The region's health profile has declined and our population is among the unhealthiest people in North Carolina. Young educated adults that our region must attract and retain are increasingly interested in lifestyles that offer opportunities for exercise that is integrated into their daily lives. The region must take a more intentional approach to providing healthy lifestyle options to attract new residents while helping to minimize the costs of health care for employers and current residents.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS:

1. Raise awareness about the importance of government planning in ensuring that residents have transportation, housing, and job center choices that could contribute to healthier, safer communities.
 - a. Gather best practice examples of how local development plans can provide more opportunities for “natural exercise” (e.g., walking, biking, etc.) to improve community safety and health.
 - b. Increase access to more outdoor public space, develop pedestrian and bikeway plans, and promote senior-friendly community initiatives designed to create a greater sense of community.

2. Create new “impactful” recreational options that serve broader regional needs.
 - a. Encourage continued state funding for the water and land resource investments in partnership with local governments.
 - b. Connect recreational development to tourism and economic development.
 - c. Provide for life-long recreational opportunities.

Performance Measures:

Milestones:

- Regional mapping effort initiated
- Regional marketing of recreation assets is initiated

Metrics:

- New ordinances designed to create walkable communities
- Dollars invested in new and improved recreation facilities
- Walking tracks installed or improved



Challenge 2: Galvanize economic and community development opportunities in the healthy, local, export, and value-added foods clusters. Adequately and affordably provide healthy food options to communities. Leverage the burgeoning local foods movement in the region as consumers express a desire for fresh, healthy, and affordable produced foods.

North Carolina remains one of the nation's most important agricultural states, ranking eighth in 2015.⁹ Farm income exceeds \$8.6 billion, with more than \$3 billion associated with exports. North Carolinians spend approximately \$35 billion on food annually, representing a tremendous market potential for the region's farms and food producers. In this region, agriculture is primarily focused on commodity crops for export and livestock feed. The large share of economic benefit from agriculture through exports needs to be supported. As demand for local and organic foods continues to increase, our region's enduring agricultural economic base should better connect to the growing demand across the state and along the Atlantic Coast. There is new potential to connect our region's agricultural sector to the burgeoning logistics hub in the Rocky Mount area.

Additionally, we must continue to support and grow local food networks and smaller scale farming for food production. The local food system within our region provides additional small business opportunities, preserves land ownership, and contributes to the resilience of our region in times of natural or man-made disasters. Community gardens and community-based agriculture have the potential to provide food, exercise, community beautification, and greater cohesion in our neighborhoods and small towns.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS:

1. Develop a food network in the region.

- a. Develop a regional local foods plan with an appropriate market analysis, policies, and databases.
- b. Invest in model programs that encourage local growers and where possible appropriately link them to local market opportunities (e.g., farmers markets, "farm to fork", etc.).
- c. Support pilot programs that provide processing capacity for those food and meat producers that are too small to serve commodity markets effectively, but too large to sell directly to consumers at a scale large enough to compete.
- d. Connect local growers and food producers to the State's network of agricultural research stations.
- e. Develop programs and tools to address the need for more local food producers, farm land for local production and encourage food quality and nutritive value.

2. Increase Community Economic Self Reliance with Local Food

- a. Increase understanding of the role food production plays in the current cash economy and how it might be expanded to generate incomes.
- b. Identify resources to support establishment of local foods as a small business opportunity.
- c. Create an inventory of farmers, land, product and market opportunities.
- d. Create broad spectrum of farm and food business startup assistance.
- e. Develop greater understanding of existing food value chain with gaps and opportunities.

⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2015, "Farm Income and Wealth Statistics"
<https://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?ID=53580>

3. Promote community gardens and urban agriculture

- a. Identify resources to support establishment of community-based community gardens.
- b. Support existing community garden programs through coordination and sharing resources.
- c. Explore best practices for food access, equity and resilience.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Established regional program linking local food producers to markets
- Preparation of a Regional Plan for Local Food Opportunities
- Establishment of a funded position for a Local Foods Coordinator
- Establishment of a Food Council

Metrics:

- Volume of local foods produced and sold to regional markets
- Consumption rates of locally grown fruits and vegetables
- Jobs created in defined local food networks
- New and expanded businesses using locally grown products
- Volunteers and volunteer hours in community gardens
- Food produced for food pantries and homeless shelters
- Amount of farmland in service and amount lost over time
- Number of community gardens established
- Community gardens that persist, year to year
- Lowered Obesity Rates
- Documented economic impact



Challenge 3: Most of the region's downtowns need to attract new businesses, residents and visitors. A few are now gaining momentum with the improved state and national economy, but need additional support.

A thriving local downtown is essential, and many local governments have taken steps to improve infrastructure, recruit businesses, and market their community. These efforts must be coordinated and reinforced with the resources required to leverage private investment needed to revitalize business districts. Resources must be sustained through engaged public and private leadership in an ongoing planning and capacity building effort.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS:

1. Revitalize both large and small downtowns throughout the region.
 - a. Expand use of successful state-sponsored programs such as the Main Street Program or programs sponsored by the Rural Center.
 - b. Identify funding resources for local communities to add regionally important amenities (e.g. targeted sidewalks, bike lanes) to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns.
 - c. Encourage focused redevelopment efforts for neighborhoods adjacent to downtowns.
2. Invest in repurposing commercial and residential buildings for emerging economic activities.
 - a. Inventory and evaluate vacant buildings and Brownfields that could be used by entrepreneurs or growth industries.
 - b. Develop model regional approaches to leverage reinvestment by commercial property owners, especially absentee landlords.
 - c. Maintain and expand the UCP Regional Brownfields Coalition and revitalize Brownfields sites.
3. Ensure that local building codes and code enforcement measures are ensuring safety, while not unnecessarily deterring renovation of downtown buildings.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Revitalization funding resources database
- Vacant building and Brownfield inventories
- Evaluation and modification of small town planning and zoning ordinances, building codes, and zoning districts

Metrics:

- Identified and shared funding resources for revitalization
- City and small town inventories completed and marketed
- Number of downtown planning and zoning, ordinance and mapping changes to support revitalization
- Number of buildings reoccupied with new business and residences
- Brownfields revitalized throughout the region



Challenge 4: Our region has an inadequate supply of new and rehabilitated workforce housing to meet current demand or compete for new residents.

Lack of housing for lower income families affects every aspect of the community. There is well-documented lack of affordable housing for households of incomes at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Workforce housing includes households with income up to 120% of AMI. In parts of the region up to one half of renters spend more than 30% of their income on renting housing older than the state and national averages. These households often do not have sufficient income to purchase or rent new or substantially rehabilitated homes. Low median incomes, infrastructure challenges, and a lack of incentives have caused residential developers to overlook the region, resulting in a lack of housing choices for residents, as well as attractive options for prospective residents.

STRATEGIES & TACTICS:

1. Increase workforce housing development through financial incentives for developers
 - a. Seek additional funds for housing development.
2. Align economic development, business recruitment, and housing development efforts to ensure attractive and appropriate housing is available for new workers.
 - a. Market the region to developers based on market and economic development data.
 - b. Include consideration of workforce-appropriate housing with all large-scale business recruitment efforts.
3. Preserve historic and period homes and neighborhoods as part of a larger tourism and placemaking strategy



PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Local governments identify housing as an issue they will address
- All counties covered by up to date housing studies and plans
- Pursue additional development of low income housing

Metrics:

- Number of workforce housing units developed
- Increased public funds (local, state, and federal) invested in housing development and housing related services
- Number of period or historic structures renovated or restored

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 4: Develop Talented and Innovative People

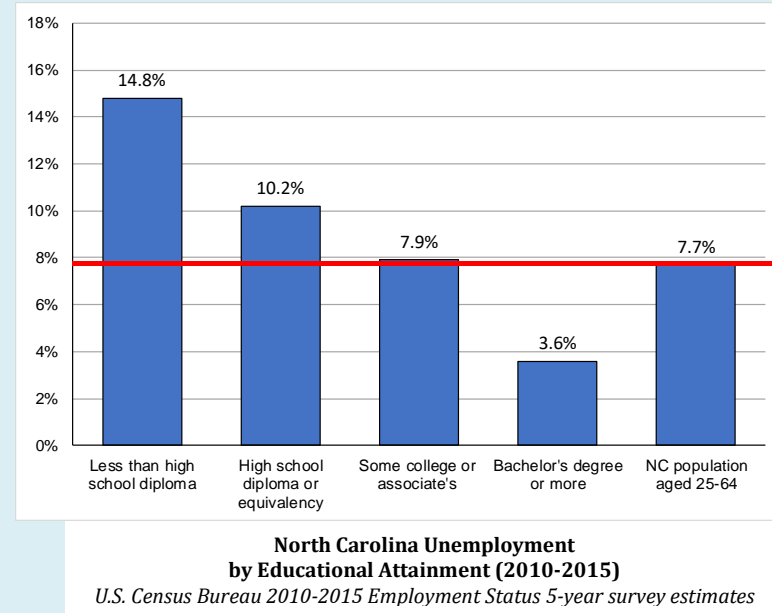
The UCPCOG region strives to develop, attract, retain, and prepare flexible, entrepreneurial, globally-oriented, and skilled workers with cross-cutting competencies that enable them to be successful employees and business owners.

Challenge 1: *Develop, attract and retain workers with the necessary skills required for today's, and tomorrow's jobs.*

The connection between earnings, employment, and educational attainment are well documented and long-standing. The region must build on its educational assets, particularly community colleges, which are functioning at a high level.

Businesses demand workers have relevant skills in STEM-related programs.¹⁰ These occupations pay average wages almost 60 percent higher than average. As industries encounter continuous changes in market conditions, workers with STEM skills adapt to a dynamic economic environment quickly and have more employment options.

The necessity of acquiring new skills has put significant pressure on workers in "middle-skill jobs." Officials must develop a more intentional system that acknowledges and communicates the critical roles that Pre-K and post-secondary academic preparation play in preparing people for success.



STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Prepare youth, unemployed and underemployed individuals for high-skill, in-demand jobs.
 - a. Launch workforce initiatives that align training and educational opportunities to target industries for critical, in-demand occupations.
 - b. Provide increased training support (such as coordinated financial, transportation, childcare support) for those seeking to access jobs that provide more promising career opportunities through the local integrated service delivery (ISD) system.
 - c. Manage the incorporation of applied economics, soft skills, and work ethics with tools like "Working Smart" and "Career Readiness Certifications" in middle and high school classrooms.
 - d. Increase attention to, and resources of, counselors and mentors to help students and jobseekers to prepare for meaningful careers.

¹⁰ "State of the North Carolina Workforce 2011-2020", The North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development
<https://www.nccommerce.com/Portals/11/Documents/Reports/2011%20SOTW%20Full%20Final%20Report%2052311%20909am.pdf>

2. Expand student and worker awareness of career opportunities, their requirements, and the pathways available to attain personal goals.
 - a. Better inform youth, unemployed and underemployed individuals about opportunities for current and anticipated in-demand jobs utilizing coordinated Career Pathways and local Labor Market Information (LMI).
 - b. Increase and improve career pathway counseling and training for teachers/counselors through consistent professional education on higher-skill jobs in the region's top clusters.
 - c. Encourage entrepreneurship as a viable employment alternative.
 - d. Recognize importance of supplemental income opportunities and current need for people to have more than one income stream, (the gig economy).

3. Conduct a regionally coordinated marketing campaign that identifies and promotes middle-skill career opportunities to younger populations.
 - a. Increase promotion of local Career Pathways education and training in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines – target students, parents, educators, and businesses.
 - b. Increase promotion and awareness of creative arts as an economic development strategy.
 - c. Create and expand ongoing promotion of our region's NC Commerce State Approved Career Pathway Certifications in logistics, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, business service support, agribusiness, and entrepreneurship.

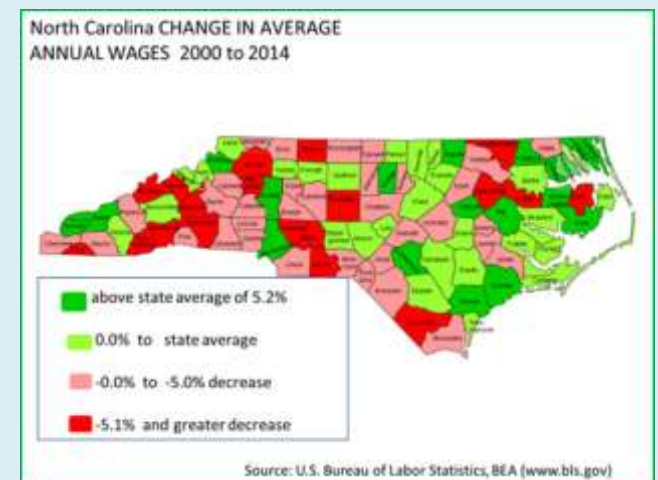
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Improved regionally coordinated partnership structure (K-12/Community Colleges/NCWorks Career Centers)
- New established NC Commerce approved Certified Career Pathways programs throughout the region
- Launch marketing campaign to promote career awareness; (Implement Career Pathways reports, marketing material, banners and website for our local partners: K-12/Community Colleges/NCWorks Career Centers; established regional WorkReady Communities)

Metrics:

- Increase educational attainment
- Number of students in career and technical education programs that are linked to in-demand jobs
- Graduation from STEM degrees and completion of industry-demanded STEM certifications and badges
- Employment in STEM occupations of workers with degrees, certifications, or badges
- Number of certificate issues for specific training programs



Challenge 2: *Further align and coordinate the region's workforce and educational systems.*

The region's schools, community colleges, and universities must offer coordinated programs that are directly relevant to area employers as well as for jobs of the future. Graduates and trainees need appropriate skills to multiple business and industry sectors.

The UCPCOG region has an extensive network of workforce education and training programs designed to meet many labor force skill requirements. They are frequently demand driven and customer focused, but ad hoc and lacking regional coordination with strategic purpose. Programs tend to be driven by vocational tracks rather than developing "cross-cutting" skillsets that can be applied to many advanced manufacturing processes. UCPCOG currently partners with educational and workforce entities such as the Roanoke Valley Educational Council, Wilson 20/20, STEP and the local Chambers to fill gaps within the systems.

Efforts to bring systems into alignment have experienced some success. The local workforce development board consortium recommended an Annual Regional Career Fair that has convened over 1000 jobseekers and approximately 70 businesses. The event met the needs of both citizens and employers regionally. The region must commit to developing a more strategic workforce initiative, organized to emphasize the region's primary economic development targets and not individual counties. The region must also seek to strengthen the linkage between education and training resources in ways that meet continuously changing needs of regionally targeted industries. This strategy must ensure jobseekers understand these needs and the tangible rewards to obtaining the knowledge and skills that industry sectors require.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Create stronger 5-county coordinated partnerships between educational institutions and key public/private workforce development interests.
2. Launch region-wide sector and industry related workforce initiatives designed to align training and educational options to the skill needs for critical, in-demand occupations.
 - a. Inventory the region's community college programs that serve targeted industries and emerging clusters.
 - b. Engage both individuals and companies through their networks (e.g. chambers and trade groups) to identify specific workforce shortages and the skills, certifications, or training required for hard-to-fill jobs.
 - c. Design, deploy, and consolidate initiatives to align job skill requirements (especially in targeted industries) with education and training curriculum under the leadership of the Workforce Development Boards, key employers, and other stakeholders.
3. Improve efforts to prepare workers for available jobs.
 - a. Promote Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) usage by employers, students, and incumbent workers.
 - b. Reframe our investments in social services to focus on prevention and treatment of social ills (e.g., crime and health outcomes) in order to ensure that workers with barriers are able to find jobs and remain gainfully employed.

4. Address the unique challenges of special populations of adult workers.
 - a. Assist veterans and service personnel exiting the military find jobs in North Carolina, especially those with in-demand technical skills.
 - b. Promote second-chance employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for ex-offenders.
 - c. Promote the abilities of Senior's (age 60+) and assist in the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Organized employer-led workforce sector initiatives in the regions
- Coordinate initiatives in similar industry sectors across the regions

Metrics:

- Number of workers trained, placed, or otherwise impacted by workforce sector initiatives
- Number of employers using Career Readiness Certificates as a part of their hiring process
- Number of workers receiving Career Readiness Certificates
- Proportion of the region's workforce that have earned industry-recognized certifications
- Unemployment rate among veterans
- Unemployment rate among ex-offenders
- Unemployment rate among seniors



Challenge 3: Further address human resource development deficits through workforce development

Each CEDS goal requires sufficient human capital to achieve. The CEDS Strategy Committee expressed concern that human development issues hamper growth. Common to rural regions, issues include poor health indicators, substance abuse, untreated mental health problems, and a lack of soft skills. The results of both systemic issues and personal decisions indicate that employers can struggle to find employees who pass screening procedures or become long-term, reliable assets.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS:

1. Increase soft skills and life skills instruction in K-12 instruction and workforce development training, utilizing such tools as "Working Smart" and "Career Readiness Certifications".
2. Leverage health related investments already occurring in the region, i.e. Partnership with Area L AHEC, the intermediary for the Turning Point WDB health awareness and sector training.
3. Philanthropic investment in Healthy Places NC.
4. Encourage older adults in the workforce to utilize services available through the Area Agency on Aging and the aging network.

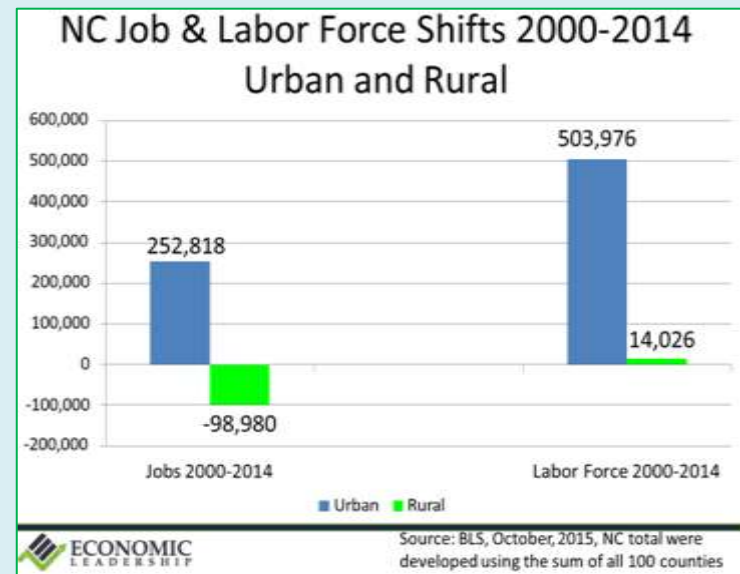
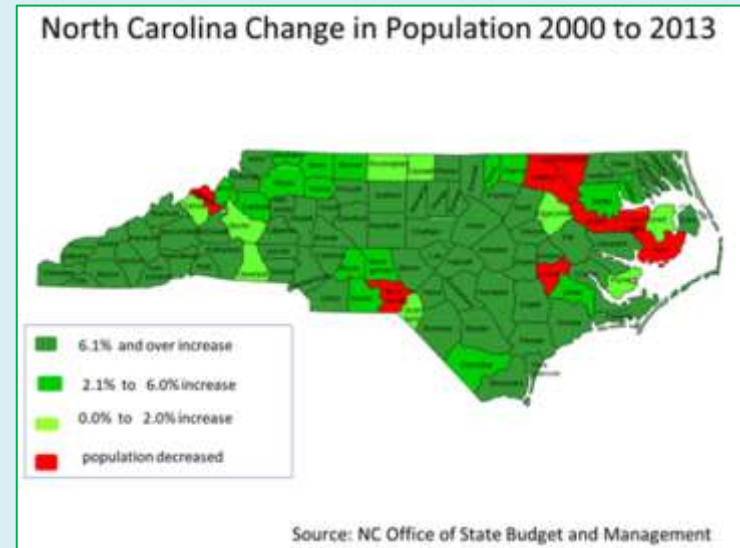
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Milestones:

- Life skills incorporated into employment training curriculum at all ages

Metrics:

- Employers report a decrease in percentage of applicants turned down due to positive drug tests



EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework is the implementation schedule for the CEDS. The performance measures for each goal are referenced with responsible entities and within an estimated timeframe for completion.

Goal	Performance Measures	Responsible Entity	Timeframe Short (1-3 years) Mid (3-5 years) Long (5+ years)
Goal 1: Build on the Region's Competitive Advantage			
	Create New Regional Collaborations and Partnerships	UCPCOG, BDC CC, EDCs, NCDOC, NCEA	Mid
	Complete Regional Brand Analysis	UCPCOG, DDC, EDC, TA, NCEA	Short
	Collaborative Marketing Campaigns for Key Sectors	UCPCOG, EDCs, NCDOC	Short
	Increase awareness of entrepreneurial needs versus service provider offerings	BDC, CC, SBC	Mid
	Increase focus on execution and implementation of the idea		
	Create hub to manage the pipeline of entrepreneurs, service providers, and resources	BDC, CC, SBC	Mid
	Inventory of available equity and risk capital	FI, NP, NCDOC, UCPCOG,	Mid
	Complete marketing plan for entrepreneurial service providers	UCPCOG, BDC, CC, EDC, NCDOC	Mid
	Organize Regional Entrepreneurial Networking Sessions	UCPCOG, BDC, CC, EDC, NCDOC	Short
	Develop economic development research agenda	UCPCOG, CC, EDC, NCDOC, U, FI	Long
	Create a sustainable business model	UCPCOG, CC, EDC, NCDOC, U, FI	Long
	Promote plans for use of advanced & innovative technologies.	UCPCOG, CC, EDC, NCDOC, U, FI	Mid
Goal 2: Establish and Maintain a Robust Infrastructure			
	Build inventories of water and sewer capacity	UCPCOG, LG, Providers, NCDEQ	Short
	Complete water/sewer system asset management plans	UCPCOG, LG, Providers, NCDEQ	Mid
	Create a regional water/sewer infrastructure taskforce	UCPCOG, LG, EDC	Mid
	Identify and implement best practices for rural broadband	UCPCOG, LG, NC BIO	Mid
	Create Clean Energy infrastructure partnerships	UCPCOG, SP, NP, NCSU	Mid
	Inventory of energy sources, existing and future	UCPCOG, UT, NP	Short
	Develop energy programs/incentives for use and access	UCPCOG, UT, NP	Short
	Continue identification of priorities in state transportation plans	MPO, RPO's, NCDOT, LG, UCPCOG	Short
	Monitor and adjust local transportation plan updates	MPO, RPO's, NCDOT, LG, UCPCOG	Short
	Develop bicycle and pedestrian plans where they don't exist	MPO, RPO's, NCDOT, LG, UCPCOG	Mid
	Consider need for Wilson MPO	NCDOT, MPO, RPO, LG, UCPCOG	Mid

Upgrade US 264 and US 64 to Interstate Standards	NCDOT, MPO, RPO	Long
Upgrade and improvements to US 158	NCDOT, MPO, RPO	Mid
New Amtrak passenger station in Weldon	USDOT, NCDOT, MPO, RPO	Short
Identification of priorities in a regional open space strategy.	UCPCOG, LG,	Mid
Hold appropriate green infrastructure workshops	UCPCOG, LG	Short
Prepare a "GreenPrint for the region"	UCPCOG, LG,	Long

Goal 3: Create Revitalized, Healthy and Resilient Communities

Initiate regional mapping effort of recreational opportunities.	UCPCOG, LG, NP, TA	Short
Initiate regional marketing effort of recreational assets.	UCPCOG, LG, TA	Short
Establish a regional plan for local food opportunities.	UCOCOG, LG, NP	Mid
Funded Local Foods Coordinator	UCPCOG	Short
Food Council Establish regional program linking local food producers to markets	UCPCOG	Mid
Revitalize funding resources database		
Create inventory of vacant buildings and Brownfields		
Evaluate and modify small town planning and zoning ordinances, building codes, and zoning maps		
Number of local governments that identify housing issues to be addressed.	LG, NCHFA,	Mid
Up-to-date housing studies and plans for Counties		
Pursue additional development of low income housing		

Goal 4: Develop Talented and Innovative People

Establish career pathway programs throughout the region	CC, U, TPWD, K-12	Mid
Improve regional partnership structure	CC, U, TPWD, K-12	Short
Create Career awareness marketing campaign	CC, U, TPWD	Mid
Organize employer-led workforce sector initiatives	CC, U, TPWD	Mid
Coordinate Initiatives in similar industry sectors across the regions	CC, U, TPWD	Long
Life skills incorporated into employment training curriculum	CC, U, TPWD	Mid

Agency Acronyms

CC – Community Colleges	NCDOT - North Carolina Department of Transportation
BDC – Upper Coastal Plain Business Development Center	NCEA – North Carolina Eastern Alliance
EDC - County Economic Development Councils or Partnerships	NCHFA – North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
EDPNC - Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina	NCSU - North Carolina State University
DDC – Downtown Development Corporations & supporting groups	
FI – Financial Institutions	NP – Non-Profits (appropriate State, Regional, and Local)
K-12 – Elementary through high school educational systems	
LG – Local Government (Officials/Managers/Directors)	RPO – Rural (Transportation) Planning Organization
MPO – Metropolitan (Transportation) Planning Organization	SBTDC - Small Business Technology Development Center
NCBIO – North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office	TA – Tourism Agents & Authorities (local, state, regional)
NCDA - North Carolina Department of Agriculture	TPWD – Turning Point Workforce Development
NCDOC - North Carolina Department of Commerce	U - Universities
NCDCR - North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources	UT –Utility Provider (Electric)
NCDEQ - North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality	UCPCOG – Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

CEDS Advisory Committee

James	Alston	Commissioner	Town of Castalia	Andre'	Knight	Council Member	City of Rocky Mount
Fred	Belfield	Commissioner	Nash County	Zee	Lamb	Manager	Nash County
Roy	Bell	Mayor	Town of Grasberg	Geraldine	Langford	Mayor	Town of Seaboard
Eddie	Braxton	Mayor	Town of Scotland Neck	Marshall	Lassiter	Town Manager	Town of Severn
Gary	Brown	Economic Development Director	Northampton County	Ellene	Leonard	Mayor	Town of Castalia
Kirby	Brown	Mayor	Town of Dortches	Charles	Lewis	Commissioner	Town of Macclesfield
Tony	Brown	Manager	Halifax County	Luther	Lewis	Mayor	Town of Middlesex
Gregory	Browning	Planning Board Chairman	Halifax County	Trey	Lewis	Mayor	Town of Macclesfield
Ian	Bumgarner	Senior Management Analyst	Halifax County	Brenda	Lucas	Commissioner	Town of Spring Hope
A.	Coleman	Council Member	City of Wilson	Sherry	Lucas	Commissioner	Wilson County
Leon	Collier	Mayor	Town of Lasker	Kenneth	Manuel	Mayor	Town of Woodland
David	Cooper	Commissioner	Town of Woodland	Julia	Meacham	Mayor	Town of Weldon
Beverly	Davis	Commissioner	Town of Sharpsburg	Harold	Meacombs	Commissioner	Town of Middlesex
Neal	Davis	Planning Board	Halifax County	Jason	Morris	Mayor	Town of Jackson
Samuel	Davis	Board Member	Edgecombe County	Ronald	Pace	Council Member/Finance Officer	Town of Momeyer
Dia	Denton	Deputy County Manager	Halifax County	Rhonda	Payne	Commissioner	Town of Sims
Jerry	Dickerson	Commissioner	Town of Gaston	Florence	Pender	Mayor Pro Tem/Commissioner	Town of Pinetops
Walter	Duke	Commissioner	Town of Conway	Esterine	Pitt	Mayor	Town of Whitakers
William	Edmundson	Mayor	Town of Stantonsburg	Blake	Proctor	Town Administrator	Town of Sharpsburg
George	Edwards	Council Member	Town of Momeyer	Kenneth	Randolph	Commissioner	Town of Speed
Eric	Evans	Manager	Edgecombe County	Hank	Raper	Town Manager	Town of Nashville
Jonathan	Felton	Vice-Chair-Commissioner	Edgecombe County	Albert	Richardson	Board Member	Nash County
Carl	Ferebee	Mayor Pro Tem/Council Member	City of Roanoke Rapids	Doris	Risper	Mayor	Town of Rich Square
Daniel	Gerald	Town Manager	Town of Princeville	Jonathan	Russell	Town Administrator	Town of Elm City
Ron	Girdley	Mayor	Town of Littleton	Elaine	Saunders	Commissioner	Town of Saratoga
Norlan	Graves	Board Member	Wilson County	Barbara	Simmons	Mayor	Town of Enfield
Fannie	Greene	Commissioner	Northampton County	Leon	Skinner	Alternate Board Member	Wilson County
Reginald	Harris	Board Member	Wilson County	Grady	Smith	Mayor	Town of Elm City
Wilbert	Harrison	Mayor	Town of Speed	Mack	Smith	Mayor	Town of Black Creek
Dana	Hewett	Mayor	Town of Sims	Marcelle	Smith	Commissioner	Halifax County
Barbara	High Tyre	Council Member	Town of Red Oak	Denise	Stinagle	Manager	Wilson County
Doug	Hughes	Board Member	Northampton County	Donald	Street	Mayor	Town of Nashville
Ron	Hunt	Assistant County Manager/Clerk	Wilson County	Robert	Sykes	Commissioner	Town of Hobgood
Linda	Ingram	Mayor	Town of Conetoe	Kimberly	Turner	Manager	Northampton County
Nancy	Jackson	Town Manager	Town of Scotland Neck	Ethel	Watkins	Council Member	City of Rocky Mount
Deborah	James	Commissioner	Town of Gaston	Mary	Wells	Commissioner	Nash County
James	Johnson	Mayor Pro Tem/Council Member	City of Wilson	John	White	Mayor	Town of Halifax
Timothy	Johnson	Town Administrator	Town of Bailey	Tim	Wiggs	Commissioner	Lucama
William	Johnson	Assistant Manager	Edgecombe County	Tim	Wiggs	Board Member	Wilson County
Bobbie	Jones	Mayor	Town of Princeville	Robert	Wilkins	Board Member	Northampton County
Jason	Kessler	Board Member	Wilson County	Othar	Woodard	Council Member	Town of Tarboro
Jae	Kim	Town Manager	Town of Spring Hope				

Strategy Development Group

Carolina Gateway Partnership
City of Roanoke Rapids
City of Rocky Mount
City of Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce
City of Wilson
City of Wilson Chamber of Commerce
East Carolina University
Eastern North Carolina Representative/Tillis
Edgecombe Community College
Edgecombe County
Edgecombe County Cooperative Extension
Halifax Community College
Halifax County
Halifax County Economic Development
Joyner Media Strategies
MidAtlantic Warehouse & Storage, LLC
Main Street & Rural Planning Center - NC
Department of Commerce
Nash County
Nash County Cooperative Extension
Nash County Health Department

NC East Alliance
NC Public Health Foundation
NC Wesleyan College
Northampton County
Northampton County Economic Development
One Hour Koretizing
Town of Tarboro
Town of Sharpsburg
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Area
Agency on Aging
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments
Business Development Center
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments
Planning and Development Services
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments
Turning Point Workforce Development
Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization
Wilson Community College
Wilson County
Wilson County Schools



UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

121 W. NASH STREET (27893)

P. O. BOX 9

TELEPHONE: 252.234.5970

WILSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27894

FAX: 252.234.5971

Memorandum

TO: EDA

FROM: Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

RE: 2017 - 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

DATE: October 19, 2017

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG) was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA) on June 26, 1996. This designation helps the region to work together for greater prosperity and for both the COG and member local governments to access to EDA funds for public works and other key projects when jobs are being created and/or saved.

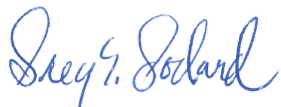
One EDA requirement of the UCPCOG/EDD is the creation and maintained of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five-county district. The CEDS is to be substantially revised every five years and reviewed annually for the UCPCOG to maintain the EDD designation, work together strategically, and provide member local governments priority access funding.

In 2017, the Upper Coastal Plain Economic Development District (UCPEDD) staff and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee, made up of the Advisory Committee (COG Board of Directors) and Strategy Development Committee (professional and community representatives), from within the five-county region prepared a new Five-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS 2017-2022).

This plan for economic development of the region includes Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson Counties. It sets forth a Vision, Goals, and an Action Plan that includes Strategies, Tactics and Performance Measures. It is based on an analysis of the region and its existing plans, a SWOT Analysis, Regional Service Priorities, as well as leadership and community input.

A 30-day public review process was completed and the UCPCOG Board of Directors approved the new 5-Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 for the Upper Coastal Plain Economic Development District (UCPEDD) on October 17, 2017.

A link to the UCPCOG CEDS 2022 and resolution can be found on the Planning and Development Services page: http://www.ucpcog.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=36&Itemid=90
A copy of the approving resolution is also attached.



Greg Godard, Executive Director

Serving Wilson, Nash, Edgecombe, Halifax and Northampton Counties

**Resolution to Approve the
Upper Coastal Plain Economic Development District
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022**

WHEREAS, the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments was designated on June 26, 1996 as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA); and,

WHEREAS, a CEDS Advisory Committee and Strategy Development Group were appointed by the UCPCOG Board of Directors to represent the five county EDD as a whole; and,

WHEREAS, the UCPCOG/EDD creates and maintains a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the five-county district to work together strategically, and provide member local governments priority access to funding; and,

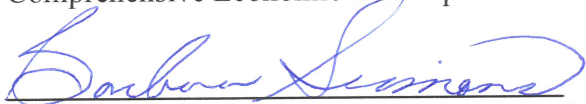
WHEREAS, the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG) EDD has a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which has been substantially updated and revised over the last 12 months: and,

WHEREAS, a CEDS Strategy Development Group was appointed by the CEDS Advisory Committee to oversee the creation of the updated and revised CEDS and to make decisions regarding the update and revisions to the CEDS; and,

WHEREAS, the five counties within the UCPCOG had representatives on the CEDS Strategy Development Group and participated in the process of updating the CEDS and are members of good standing of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments; and,

WHEREAS, the 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy provides a blueprint for economic growth in the five county COG region and benefit the citizens therein;


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Upper Coastal Plain (Council of Governments) Economic Development District Board of Directors hereby approves and adopts the Five-Year Update: CEDS 2017-2022 to the Upper Coastal Plain Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.



Barbara S. Simmons, Chairman of the Board
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments

10-17-2017
Date of Approval

Attest:



Greg Browning, Secretary/Treasurer
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments