



PROSPERITY FOR GREATER CHARLOTTE

2012 ~ 2017

Economic Strategic Assessment for the Greater Charlotte Region

Including the;

Centralina EDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

And

Catawba Regional COG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



Project Supporters



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Project Consulting Team



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Introduction

Introduction to the Project

Creation of the **Prosperity for Greater Charlotte** Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy recognizes today's reality that economic dependencies and competencies require cross sector and jurisdictional collaboration, acknowledging that the Greater Charlotte region is a complex system with various subsystems. Based on this overarching and interconnected existence, this project updates the Centralina Economic Development Commission EDD CEDS with a comprehensive economic development planning approach that also analyzes and incorporates the systems and strategies that support the goal of the Greater Charlotte Region as a globally competitive, vibrant and resilient bi-state region of communities.

The primary three organizations that comprise this regional economic zone of influence are the US EDA Economic Development Districts of the Centralina Economic Development Commission in North Carolina and Catawba Regional Council of Governments in South Carolina, and, in cooperation with both North Carolina and South Carolina Departments of Commerce, the bi-state coverage of the Charlotte Regional Partnership.

This project provides the five year update to the 2007 Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) No Boundaries report and provides supporting research and data to the Catawba Regional Council of Government for their CEDS update in compliance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, (EDA). The project is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and "CONNECT Our Future", a \$4.9 million HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant through a federal HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities coalition. The CEDS Update findings, regional strategies and related county community assessments will provide input and deliver crucial economic foundation and data to the "CONNECT Our Future" planning process and ultimate outcomes.

WHY THIS PLAN?

This plan is premised on transcending traditional jurisdictional boundaries and barriers in a collaborative paradigm to assemble the most accurate and place based reality for the economic strategies and future of the entire Greater Charlotte Region.

Successful economic development today requires a plan to be in place. In fact, site selectors and companies now look to a region's plans as an indicator of where a community plans to be, how it plans to get there, and which institutions are accepting responsibility. Regions with cohesive and realistic plans will grow in a more organized fashion and better leverage the assets in each of the component counties or jurisdictions that comprise the area of economic influence.

Read the full section, "Why This Plan?" on page 13.



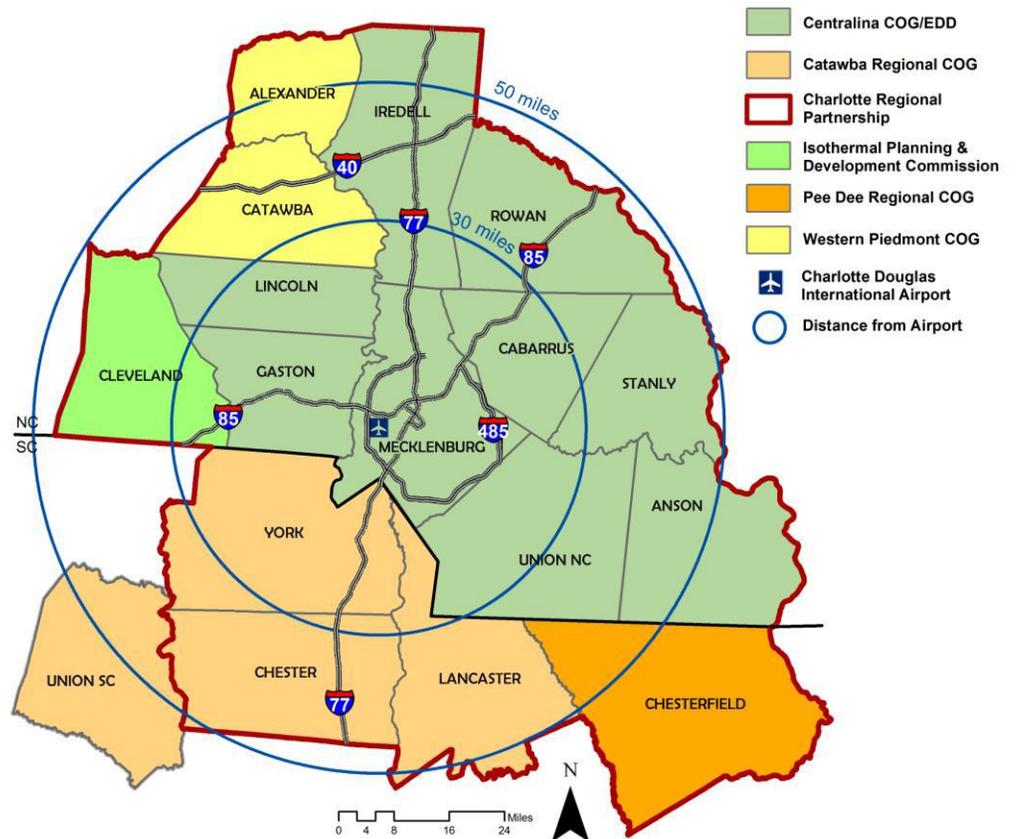
Rutherford Street in Wadesboro, NC

The **Prosperity for Greater Charlotte** project and the HUD “CONNECT Our Future” Economic Development Group collaboratively partners the Centralina Council of Governments, Catawba Regional Council of Governments, Centralina Economic Development Commission, and the Charlotte Regional Partnership in an innovative, integrated approach that is essential to support the region’s future growth and prosperity.

The Centralina EDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy outlines an approach to coordinate growth and prosperity that builds on the region’s strengths, prioritizes key regional industry clusters, and emphasizes collaboration. A key component of this strategic planning process is to help the regional economy boost its job growth rate by linking the region's workforce skills and strengths, education assets, and infrastructure to the needs of high-growth and emerging industries. The strategy will support and guide priorities for economic development in the region in order to create jobs, build community, and strengthen the local economy.

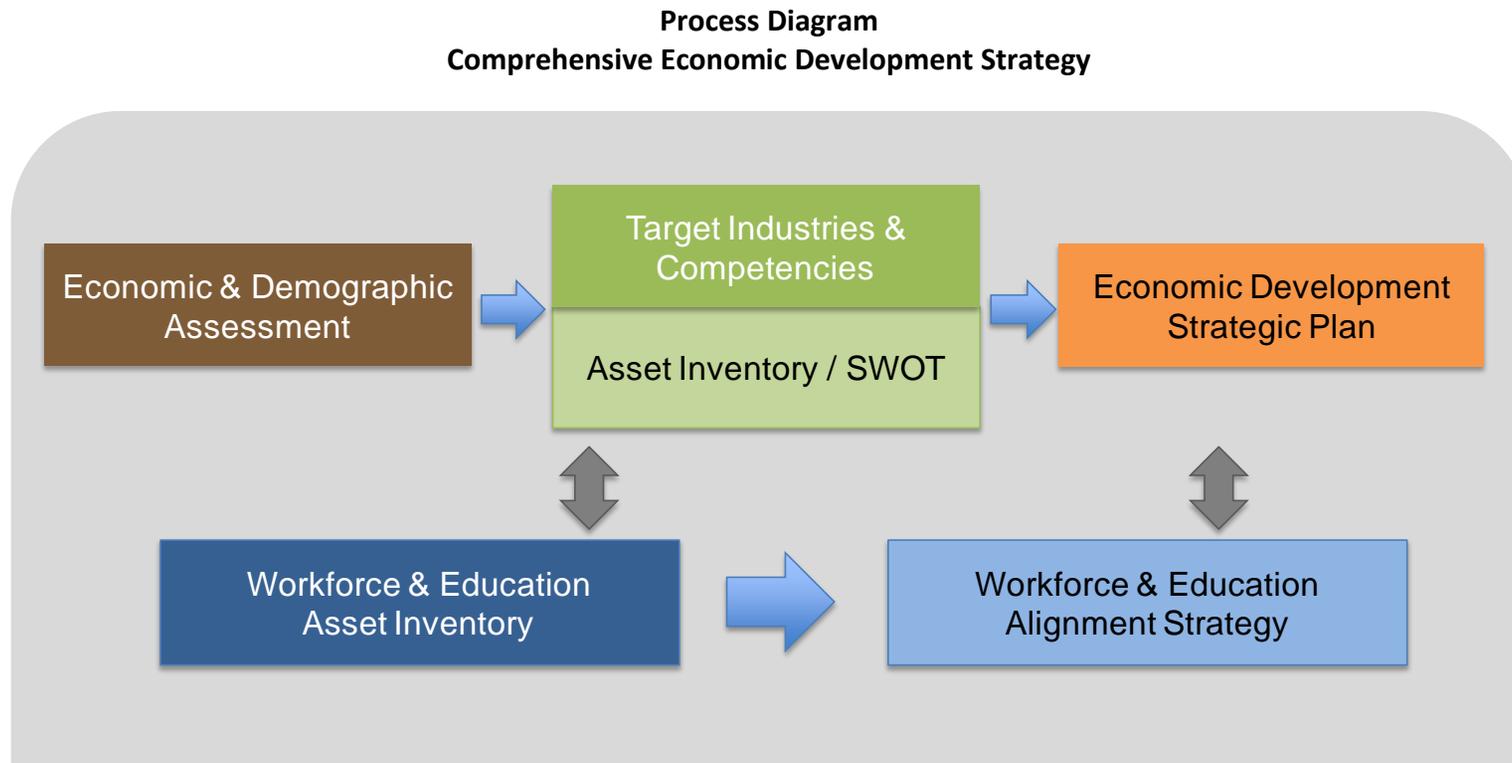
The use of “Greater Charlotte Region” in the language of this report is reflective of the larger collaborative analysis by the Centralina EDD and the additional inter-relational and centralized impacts of the 50 mile regional zone. However, all report findings and priorities with goals, objectives, and tactics are specifically endorsed and adopted only for the EDA-approved nine-county jurisdiction of the Centralina Economic Development Commission (EDD). This report in no way replaces or supplants adjacent EDD CEDS jurisdiction plans that share partial coverage within the economic zone of influence defined and analyzed for this report.

Greater Charlotte Region



In anticipation of dynamic economics that will drive future global competitiveness, our innovative strategic plan design dictated inclusion of seventeen counties in the global competency analysis, parallel with the Charlotte USA footprint. This collaborative community network shown on the map illustrates the fifty-mile radius economic zone that constitutes the Greater Charlotte 21st Century Global Region.

The diagram below shows the components and process of the Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):



The first phase of the Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has two primary components: the *Economic & Demographic Assessment* and the *Asset Inventory / SWOT*.

The *Economic & Demographic Assessment* examined historical growth trends in the Greater Charlotte Region and the individual counties. Economic datasets presented and discussed include overall jobs, employment by industry, unemployment, shift-share analysis of regional industries, payroll, average salaries, and gross regional product. Demographic data presented includes overall population trends, age distribution, and incomes.

The second component, *Asset Inventory / SWOT*, inventories and evaluates key economic development assets in the Greater Charlotte Region. The report identifies assets in several categories: Workforce & Education, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Infrastructure, Business Climate, and Quality of Life. For each of these topics, the report includes a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) assessment summarizing the key takeaways for the Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Alongside these components, the project team will complete a *Workforce & Education Asset Inventory*. This report inventories all college and K-12 educational programs; identifies existing workforce skills and competencies; and examines national and global workforce skill trends. This inventory provides an essential perspective for understanding regional strengths and industry objectives.

The second phase of the project builds on the previous reports, identifying and validating target industry clusters for the Greater Charlotte Region. The *Target Industries & Competencies* component includes a cluster analysis of regional industries, examining growth trends, location quotients, and employment bubble charts. The project team evaluated potential target industries by filtering candidates through numerous criteria, including the regional asset fit, national industry trends, and match to regional economic development goals. The *Target Industries & Competencies* analysis culminates in a list of target industry recommendations and profiles for each industry.

The project culminates in three strategic plans: the *Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* and the integrally linked Greater Charlotte region *Workforce & Education Alignment Strategy* with the additionally supported, but independently completed, *Catawba Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments.



NC Research Campus, Kannapolis

The economic plan defines priorities and goals, objectives, and tactics to enhance the 9-county Centralina EDD region's overall business environment and maximize target cluster development. The workforce recommendations will be customized to match the 17-county region's target industries and competencies, specifically identifying future workforce skills needs for each target sub-cluster and planning to bridge gaps in the existing regional education and training pipeline to ensure each target is matched with a steady supply of qualified workers.



Charlotte Motor Speedway

CEDS Centralina Economic Development District Committee

The CEDC EDD Committee is comprised of the Centralina Economic Development Commission Board (shown below) who has initiated and facilitated the project with support of an expanded CEDS Advisory Council (shown on next page).

Centralina Economic Development Commission (CEDC)

Chairman
George Dunlap
Mecklenburg County BOC

Vice-Chairman
Bill Thunberg
Alexander Zachary Jewelers

Treasurer/Secretary
Joel Randolph
Randolph & Son Builders

President/Ex-Officio
Mike Manis, CED Director
Centralina Council of Governments

Ex-Officio
Jim Prosser, Executive Director
Centralina Council of Governments

Local Government Representatives

Anson County
Jarvis Woodburn, Commissioner

City of Charlotte
LaWana Mayfield, Council Member

Gaston County
Joe Carpenter, Commissioner

Iredell County
Tracy Jackson, Deputy Manager

Lincoln County
George Arena, Commissioners

Town of Mooresville
Miles Atkins, Mayor

Rowan County
Jeanie Moore, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
Robert Van Geons, Salisbury-Rowan Economic Development Commission

Stanly County
Tony Dennis, Commissioner
Paul Stratos, Stanly County Economic Development Commission

Business & Industry Representatives

Thomas R. Anderson, Mountain Island Fitness

Chuck Boyle, Boyle Consulting Engineers, PLLC

Chris Carney, NC Legislature

Mark Brady, First Trust Bank, Mooresville

Robby Carney, Mooresville-South Iredell Economic Development Corporation

Astrid Chirinos, Latin American Chamber of Commerce-Charlotte

Tim Gause, Duke Energy

Manuel Rey, Fifth Third Bank

Dan Ramirez, Nova Engineering

Fred Sparger, Retired South Piedmont Community College

CEDS Advisory Council (expanded members to EDD committee)

In addition to the CEDC EDD Committee, an additional group of regional community leaders contributed their added passion and expertise to the formation of a CEDS Advisory Council that led, advised and facilitated project activities throughout the duration of the CEDS update project:

Bill Anderson, Executive Director, Meck Ed

Jimmy Chancey, Director, Career & Technical Education, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Vanessa Goeschl, VP, Marketing & Research, Charlotte Regional Partnership

Stuart Hair, Existing Industry Coordinator, North Carolina Department of Commerce

Donny Hicks, Executive Director, Gaston County Economic Development Corporation

Brad Howard, Chairman, Mooresville-South Iredell Economic Developer Council

Jack Keiser, Director of Planning, City of Gastonia

Jonathan Marshall, Deputy County Manager, Cabarrus County

Samantha Moose, Existing Industry Services, Cabarrus Economic Development Corporation

Steve Partridge, Executive Director, Charlotte Works

Michael Realon, Career Development Coordinator, Olympic Community of Schools

Mary Vickers-Koch, Dean, Corporate & Continuing Education, Central Piedmont Community College

Paul Wetenhall, President, Ventureprise

Anna Lu Wilson, VP of Business Services, Cabarrus Economic Development Corporation

Richard Zollinger, VP for Learning, Central Piedmont Community College

Geographic Area of Focus

For the purposes of this project, an established economic zone of influence was incorporated that is greater than the Centralina EDD\CEDS that covers nine NC counties centered on Charlotte, North Carolina. The Greater Charlotte Region encompasses 17 counties in North Carolina and South Carolina and multiple regional economic development organizations:

- Centralina Council of Governments (NC),
- Catawba Regional Council of Governments (SC)
- Charlotte Regional Partnership (Charlotte USA)
- Western Piedmont Council of Governments (NC)
- Isothermal Planning & Development Commission (NC)
- Pee Dee Regional Council of Government (SC)

The nationally and globally embraced “Charlotte USA” footprint recognizes the economic and demographic influences of the Combined Metropolitan Statistical Area (CBSA) of “Charlotte-Gastonia-Salisbury, NC” 13 regional counties and the additional 4 counties contiguous to this geographic US Census zone. This project examines the composite Greater Charlotte Region and also provides breakout sub-reports of trends in each individual county.

The Greater Charlotte Region is comprised of the following counties:

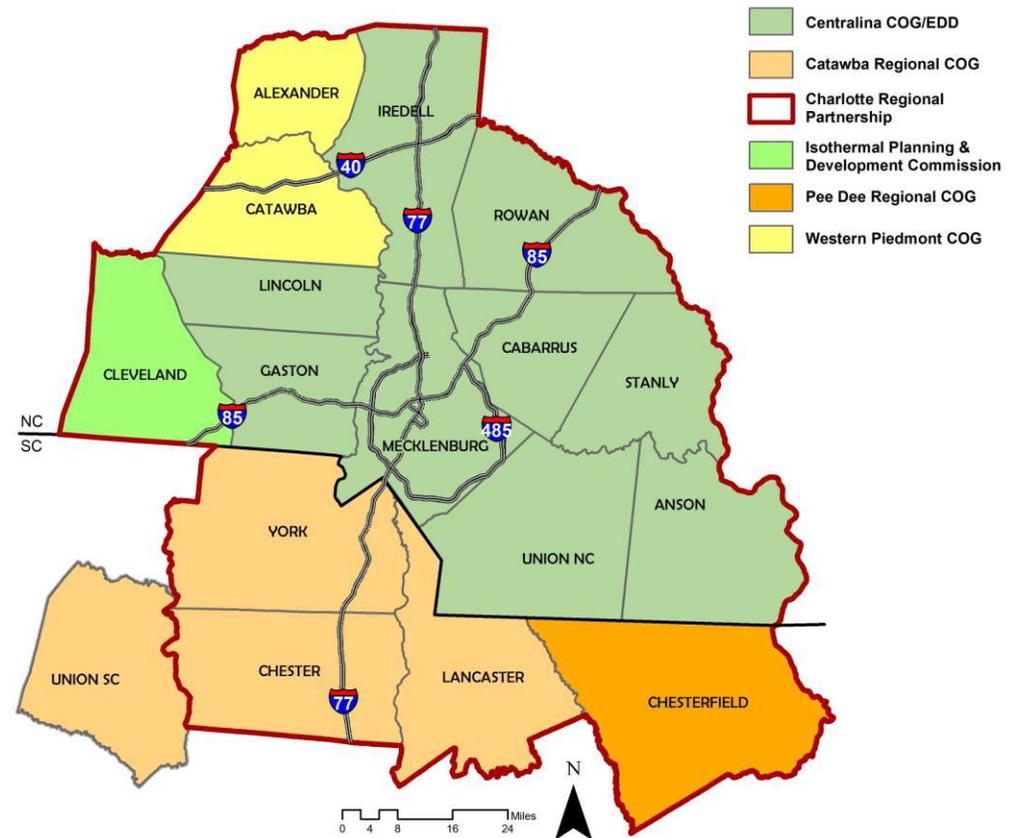
North Carolina

- Alexander County
- Anson County
- Cabarrus County
- Catawba County
- Cleveland County
- Gaston County
- Iredell County
- Lincoln County
- Mecklenburg County
- Rowan County
- Stanly County
- Union County

South Carolina

- Chester County
- Chesterfield County
- Lancaster County
- Union County
- York County

Greater Charlotte Region



Section 1:

Context for the Region's Future Economic Development

Why This Plan?

This plan has a central core foundation that is the five-year update of the Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy completed in 2007. Since then, much has happened in the Greater Charlotte Region.

Strong population and job growth experienced through 2007 sharply declined as a result of the national recession. Job growth turned negative from 2008-2010 with a loss of 88,000 jobs. High population growth rates fell to the national average, 1% per year. Despite the downturn, the future of the region remains very positive: The population of the region is expected to grow by 50 percent in 20 years and double within 40 years.

The composition of the economy has changed significantly. While the construction and financial services industries achieved high growth rates through 2007, they suffered serious declines during the recession. Strong industries in professional services, health care, and hospitality weathered the recession well. Manufacturing job losses accelerated during the region. With so much upheaval in the job market, the workforce is further challenged to anticipate changes in demand and acquire the skills needed to serve growing sectors of the economy. Large numbers of jobs are forecast to be created in health care, back office, hospitality, and logistics. Emerging, fast-growing sectors include research service and information technologies / software.

The demographics of the region's workforce present new challenges but also define opportunities. The population remains younger than the US, with a large young professional community and many families with children. These demographic characteristics are highly desirable to companies, demonstrating the presence of an existing and future workforce and revealing the capacity of the region to draw talented workers. Although the region remains young, over the past decade a significant share of growth has occurred among residents aged over 45 years. Continuation of these trends could lead to increased pressure on regional government services as the resident population ages and puts further demands upon the health care and social services systems. An aging population also has potential implications for traditional sectors such as manufacturing and logistics, where young workers will need to acquire the skills to replace a retiring workforce.

The Greater Charlotte Region is slowly rebounding from the recession. Last year, 2011, witnessed the creation of 24,000 new jobs. Regional job growth has been spurred by rebounds in professional services, health care, tourism, and government. At the same time, manufacturing, financial, and energy sectors have begun to see returned growth nationally and locally, with US exports growing rapidly and financial services reestablishing normalcy within the new regulatory environment.

The Greater Charlotte Region remains highly competitive in these growth industries. The Greater Charlotte Region is home to numerous industry leading companies such as Bank of America and Duke Energy. Additionally, regional educational facilities and research institutions support continued expertise in competency fields such as advanced materials, optoelectronics, and systems software. The regional workforce has expertise in diverse manufacturing fields, financial services operations, and health care provision. Alongside logistics, utilities, and other regional strengths, these factors set a platform for strong economic growth for the region.

The Greater Charlotte Region contains crucial infrastructure assets for supporting regional economic development in manufacturing, logistics, and other industries. The region already boasts one of the nation's busiest and most efficient airports, access to multiple rail and interstate highway lines, a high concentration of distribution centers and companies, access to high-capacity seaports, and a new, cutting-edge intermodal facility at the airport. These infrastructure assets are highly competitive, supporting the efficient movement of goods, materials, and people, an essential capacity for manufacturing centers, national and international business operations, and logistical distribution. Additionally, North Carolina boasts some of the lowest electricity rates nationally, which has aided the attraction of data centers for technology companies to the region. Communities have invested in industrial and research parks, but funding has been difficult during the recession and the region finds itself with a current shortfall of sites to accommodate projected future economic growth demand.

Commuter travel within the region continues to present infrastructure challenges. Currently, more than 50% of workers commute across a county line. As the Greater Charlotte Region has grown rapidly over the past two decades, local highway systems have struggled to keep up, and traffic remains a common concern of residents and businesses. Investments in commuter rail have provided substantial benefits to the economy and workforce, but future funding will continue to be a challenge. Strategic transportation planning will be key to supporting the region's long-term competitive viability and economic advantage in quality of life.

Entrepreneurship is gaining momentum in the region. Today, regional leaders recognize the need to have a more holistic strategy toward job creation and industry diversification. Entrepreneurial strategies are being developed to expand and mature an ecosystem of support services and organizations where a relative few exist today.

The region's quality of life assets have been improved dramatically since 2007. Major new investments in arts and culture in downtown Charlotte have enhanced the city's cosmopolitan feel that can now challenge major US metros in the northeast (where many of the financial workers have relocated from). Towns across the region continue to invest in their downtowns and trails and parks are planned to further connect the region's economic centers across the counties with local recreational assets.

Why this Plan? This plan aims to assemble a clear vision for the future of the 9-county Centralina EDD region, while recognizing the interconnected nature of the entire 17-county region. Successful economic development today requires a plan to be in place. In fact, site selectors and companies now look to a region's plans as an indicator of where a community plans to be, how it plans to get there, and which institutions are accepting responsibility. Regions with cohesive and realistic plans will grow in a more organized fashion and better leverage the assets in each of the component counties or jurisdictions that comprise an area of economic influence. Simply put, cities and counties cannot pursue a comprehensive economic development strategy without considering their role within the larger region.

With this in mind, the CEDC approved the endorsement and evaluation of a 17-county region that represented the true economy and influence zone. Political governmental boundaries were not considered to be restrictive to the process but rather were made a collaborative asset. The 17-county region covers an area in 2 states, includes 2 separate Councils of Government and incorporates border counties of 3 more, represents 7 workforce development boards that comprise an existing alliance organization, and embraced over 30 local K-12 districts, community colleges, and higher education institutions.

With the EDA and HUD inextricably linked in supporting the viability and growth of community economies and jobs creation we would be derelict in evaluating true economic conditions and strategies without assessing the composite region and fully integrating with the "CONNECT Our Future" planning effort to align multiple local initiatives for greatest efficiency and sustainable impact of regional growth for decades to come.

This plan is meant to be a guide to the entire community, not just to leadership. The project reports have been organized in a modular format so that the reader can jump directly to sections of interest. Business executives, students, workers, and elected leaders should

"Collaboration across jurisdictional lines to develop our economy is nothing new in the Charlotte region. The Charlotte Regional Partnership has long marketed our 16 counties as Charlotte USA. The Centralina and Catawba regional councils of governments work together on common infrastructure and quality of life issues to make the region a more attractive location. The seven regional workforce boards share best practices and serve as liaisons between industry and our 10 regional community colleges, which also work together and with businesses, to ensure our workforce has the training companies need. And thanks to a \$4.9 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Partnership for Sustainable Communities' grant, when the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan is finished being updated, it will include additional research that will better align infrastructure, talent and resources.

Collaboration is a key part of our regional economic development strategic plan. Working together intentionally across municipal, county and state boundaries spurs redevelopment, provides increased job opportunity, improves our quality of life and supports successful industry clusters for sustainable growth."

-- Ronnie Bryant, President & CEO,
Charlotte Regional Partnership

all find value in the content and data of these reports. The plan's goals, priorities and strategies were also organized to be understood: 5 overarching goals are supported by 4-5 strategic objectives within each. Language has been used to express the plan's ideas in straight-forward ways without unhelpful complication.

Finally, the plan was conceived as a first step in an ongoing process: plans are most useful when they are updated regularly, can adapt, and can be all-inclusive. While this plan will be finalized for submittal to government agencies, the Centralina Economic Development Commission and its Advisory Council aim to make this a "live plan" going forward. New web-based technologies are being considered to aid in this effort.

We hope that this plan will serve the region, its stakeholders, and residents for years to come. We invite you to get involved in the implementation of this plan: visit ProsperityForGreaterCharlotte.com to submit your ideas, attend an event, or join a strategic work committee. We thank the hundreds of residents across the region who contributed to the making of this plan, and we hope that involvement in Prosperity for Greater Charlotte economic development planning continues to grow.

-- Chris Engle, Consulting Team Leader
Avalanche Consulting

-- Michael Manis, President
Centralina Economic Development Commission

Our Input and Analysis Process

Throughout our planning process, various methods for collecting leadership and citizen feedback have occurred:

- The consulting team led workshops with **CEDS Advisory Council** on three separate trips and conducted several webinars to receive feedback on interim reports.
- EDAC, **Economic Development Advisory Committee** of the Charlotte Regional Partnership, was involved in two workshops to identify the region's strengths, challenges, and priorities
- Staff at the CEDC presented the project at numerous **Open Houses**
- An **online resident survey** was posted on the CEDC website and promoted through local media. Responses were collected for the 9 counties in the Centralina region.
- A poll was conducted at the first **Global Competitiveness Forum** in August that garnered input from more than 100 regional leaders on how the region can progress toward becoming a 21st Century Globally Competitive Economy.
- **Interviews with regional leaders** and government administrators were conducted by the consulting team
- The team **toured several communities** across the region and visited with local ED and community college leaders
- The team coordinated extensively with the CEDC Board EDD committee to ensure inclusion and outreach to all community sectors during the work effort.

In addition to community feedback and facilitation, the consulting team conducted extensive analysis of the region:

- **Economic & Demographic Assessment** of the region, plus individual county data profiles
- An **Industry Cluster Analysis** of the region, as well as each individual county in the region
- An **Asset Inventory** of areas most critical to economic development: Workforce & Education, Infrastructure, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and Quality of Life
- A **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** summary that combined all input and data findings

All of these materials, including the citizen survey results, are included as appendices to this CEDS report. We provide the SWOT summary boxes in the next section as an important element for review prior to the target recommendations and strategies sections of this CEDS report.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The use of the SWOT concept is a traditional but highly effective method to facilitate meetings with stakeholders. A SWOT discussion brings structure to a group discussion and helps participants consider where their opinions should be grouped and prioritized. Listing Strengths allows the group to come to consensus about what should be celebrated in the region. Participants voice their concerns as either weaknesses (present, having negative effects on people or businesses) or threats (if we don't fix this soon, things will get much worse). Opportunities usually reflect the hopes and ambitions of the region, either building on strengths or turning weaknesses into strengths.

The SWOT discussions were backed by detailed data produced by the consulting team. The *Economic & Demographic Assessment* provided an update on the conditions for the region's citizens, businesses, and students. The *Asset Inventory, SWOT, & Target Industries and Competencies* report provided highlights of the strongest assets and actors affecting the region's economic development. Finally, the online survey of residents in the Centralina region provided further public input to the consulting team for their analysis.

On the following pages, we present the summary "SWOT Boxes" for five focus areas:

- Workforce & Education
- Entrepreneurship & Innovation
- Infrastructure
- Business Climate
- Quality of Life

While these summary boxes reflect the focus groups, interviews, research, and survey, they are fundamentally formed from the consulting team's own assessment. The SWOT findings are written by the consulting team based on the best available information and our own expertise working with communities across the US. Many of the observations are focused on the region as a whole; some counties may determine that the findings do not apply; some observations may be specific to a single or multiple counties.

SWOTs are intended to be high-level summaries so that the community and its leadership can understand the key priorities for action in the coming years. We encourage SWOTs to be used as big picture guides, with future workgroups and activities to further define the extent of each issue.

WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, educated and growing young professional population • University of UNC Charlotte • Good work ethic and low unionization rate • Focus on up-skilling of workforce has occurred in manufacturing • Strong community colleges in every county • Strong technical institutes and private colleges • Downtown Executive MBA programs (Wake Forest University and Northeastern University) • Apprenticeship programs (Apprenticeship 2000 with Siemens) and industry-education collaboration are world-class • Competitive Workforce Alliance and Charlotte Regional Workforce Development Partnership ensures a workforce and college platform for unified collaboration with industry • Emerging collection of Career Academies 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some inefficiencies of alignment between education, workforce development, and business community • Disconnect between needed real time workforce skills and immediate industry talent demand • Soft skills lacking for some industries • Low educational attainment levels and adult literacy rates in some counties • K-12 performance varies across counties • Basic skills lacking for high school graduates • Limited medical school presence • No Chemical Engineering program at UNC Charlotte • Difficulty in transferring credits across institutions and across the state line • Limited success in focus on Adult Learners
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication and collaboration across education, workforce development, economic dev., and business • Align education and workforce development with target industry needs • Collaborate on legislative issues related to education funding • Build on K-12 programs that focus on basic skills development and workforce preparedness • Ensure ongoing technology upgrades in the classrooms will occur with industry support (hardware and software) • Continue to strengthen transitioning of military to civilian careers 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over focus on 4-year degrees will create further imbalance in workforce and discourage students from 2-year degree options (“middle skills gap” and K-12 Career path barrier) • Lack of interest in students for apprenticeship programs and technical careers • Teachers and students don’t understand which industries and occupations are growing in the region; concerns that technology being taught is already outdated • Retiring manufacturing workers mean that younger workers will need to learn adv. mfg. techniques, automation/robotics • Inadequate/threatened funding for education/workforce dev.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Centers at community colleges • Ventureprise and Packard Place resources and incubators • Growing small business sector • Increased R&D university funding with institutes in medicine, bioinformatics, optics, motorsports, visualization, software • North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis • UNCC Charlotte Research Institute • UNCC EPIC – Energy Production and Infrastructure Center • Entrepreneurs are attracted to the region’s lifestyle, amenities, and international airport • Historical innovation and industrial entrepreneur heritage 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented entrepreneurial efforts across counties • New small business formation and growth of small firms has decreased in some surrounding counties • Incentives for entrepreneurs are lacking • Angel investment, venture capital, and micro lending opportunities are significantly lacking • Relatively low concentration of S&T workers for population • R&D assets are not well known or leveraged • Lack of a Tier 1 research university • No clear success stories of modern entrepreneurs that have gone public
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase collaboration and align entrepreneurial resources across counties for larger impact through the new Charlotte Entrepreneurial Alliance; extend services across counties • Maximize utilization of Charlotte Research Institute and NC Research Campus with entrepreneurship organizations • Collaborate with education and community leaders to build an incubator/accelerator or innovation spaces • Expand entrepreneurship education into all levels of education • Tap mentor expertise; large companies for startup contracts • Widely recognized need to invest in entrepreneurship and innovation across the region 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ED focus on large industries may eclipse public support for programs for small, high-growth • Banking brand for the region will hamper the region’s entrepreneurship brand development • Nationally, VC-backed startups are gravitating to a handful of regions; successful startups may be moved out of Charlotte when they are funded by VC’s • Charlotte region is historically risk-averse and financially conservative • Concern that state research dollars will not come to the region versus established research locations.

INFRASTRUCTURE

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly connected road and rail network to first tier markets • Relatively low traffic congestion versus peers • Low electric costs • Accessible geographic location • Excellent air service (domestic and international) Charlotte/Douglas International Airport • Commuter rail • Key location on freight rail of NFS and CSX railroads • Successful initial Light Rail project with funded extension to UNCC that will double size of system 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many industrial sites not currently certified by the State Department of Commerce (though some are) • Dwindling number of land sites and buildings suitable for industry use means the region could decline in prospect opportunities • Traffic congestion beginning to make mobility within the region difficult • Telecommunications outside of Charlotte can be lacking • Adequate funding of cost for water/sewer needs • Alignment of efficient utility services within the counties • Lack of Fiber Cable access in some rural counties
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support new intermodal facility and significantly enhance the capacity and integration of the regional distribution network of rail, highway, air, and seaports • Become a “multimodal” region for passengers: rail, highways, bikes, shared vehicles, streetcars, walkable streets • Increase the availability of shovel-ready sites and business parks • Support the expansion of commuter rail lines in congested corridors (such as Charlotte to Mooresville) • Continue to invest in transportation and basic infrastructure to support population and business growth • Good regional planning will mean more efficient (read: lesser cost) financial investment in roads will occur over time • Complete the Freight Mobility Study 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic congestion is projected to be a significant problem as the region grows (over 50% of workers cross a county line to get to their job); “preferred growth corridors” in the region are also where most congestion exists • Inter-basin transfer of water will continue to be an issue • Lack of a single regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) means that prioritizing regional transportation investments will require significant government collaboration and citizen participation • Some concern that counties will duplicate facility / industrial park investments – need a strategic regional product mix • Lack of diversified housing in some counties means workers are forced to commute more and industries rate it a negative • Some counties are hesitant and restrictive of growth due to lack of water

BUSINESS CLIMATE

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-business environment • Long history of a “Can Do” attitude of region • Relatively low property taxes • Low unionization rate • Local jurisdictions use business investment grant programs • The Charlotte Regional Partnership, Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, and 16 EDC organizations comprise one of the leading and awarded mega-region ED partnerships in the country • Greater Statesville EDC and Mooresville - South Iredell EDC are the national No.1 Micropolitan Site Location Award winner for multiple years including 2012. • Collaboration by all Economic Development Organizations across region 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High state corporate income tax rates • Some reduced and misaligned state incentives inhibit competing effectively • Inability to offer local property tax abatements • Regulatory environment can still be a burden
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline government processes across all counties • Identify and expand the availability of competitive incentives throughout the region • Continue to explore local incentives options; consider the benefits of voter-approved ED sales tax in cities • Affirm and support perception that strong political leadership will be required to carry the region forward • Support collective visioning and align initiatives such as the Advantage Charlotte, “Create It, Make It, Move It” strategy, and CONNECT Consortium 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state loses relocation prospects due to the state’s inability to keep project information confidential, e.g. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) • Local incentives should aim to grow jobs with above-average wages • A bi-state jurisdiction region brings various governmental and collaborative challenges • Potential failure of urban and rural communities to achieve collaborative solutions

QUALITY OF LIFE

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low cost of living, affordable home values for average and upper income residents, Low crime rates • Plentiful recreational amenities • Open spaces, greenways, and bike trails are expanding • Positive recognition of Carolina Thread Trail program in counties • NASCAR and professional sports teams • Thriving arts and culture community in Charlotte • Diverse, open, and progressive community • Uptown Charlotte has been strengthened/modernized and growing downtown population has brought new retail • Small town charm remains throughout region • Close driving distance to both mountains and beach • Region remains a great place to raise a family 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12 education is improving but still considered a weakness affecting quality of life and the attractiveness of the region to outsiders; “depends on where you live” is not an acceptable answer when asked about K-12 quality • Limited public access to lake • Lack of connectivity in some towns and counties via sidewalks, bike trails, etc. is lacking • Air quality – nonattainment • Affordable housing issues remain in many jurisdictions • Nightlife for young professionals is improved but still lacking • New edgy districts are emerging but still lacking to meet demands of younger growing demographic (22-44 age range)
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate on regional tourism marketing campaign • Expand convention tourism and junior sports competitions • Embrace growing ethnic diversity from incoming populations to make the region more globally-oriented (incl. tourism) • Generally agreed upon viewpoint (consensus) to avoid the mistakes made by other large metros (transportation planning, extreme commutes, misalignment of work-live-play assets) • Consensus that the next generation of community leaders exists but needs to be better engaged; reenergized leadership plan is needed 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism marketing is often fragmented and inefficient • External perceptions are that Charlotte doesn’t have cultural amenities or nightlife • Growing non-profit community competes for funding and experienced board leadership • Limited local jurisdiction authority limits local funding control and potential future investment • Lack of local funding mechanism make public-private partnership difficult for medium and small cities

Target Industries and Competencies

Why Target? Companies in the same industries often benefit from locating in close geographic proximity. Geographic clustering can increase productivity through shared access to clients and suppliers in other industries. Clustering also allows for access to a larger trained workforce and sharing of research and knowledge. These benefits make clustering a smart strategy for businesses, increasing efficiencies, and saving money and time.

Targeting specific industry clusters also allows a community to focus economic and workforce development resources on those that achieve local goals and generate the highest return on investment. Because organizations have limited funding and staff, they must prioritize activities. Targeting focuses a community's activities on those expanding industry clusters in which the community is most competitive. Economic development organizations commonly have up to six target industries, concentrating on supporting and attracting primary employers (see side bar).

To be most effective, target clusters must include detailed target sub-clusters that reflect knowledge of these industry needs and a community's matching assets. When well chosen, a target cluster strategy yields greater job creation results when aligned with local educational curricula, workforce development programs, public policy, and infrastructure investments.

Finally, targeting specific clusters over others does not imply that non-targeted clusters will remain stagnant. Instead, targeting increases overall economic growth and regional wealth, and all local businesses benefit from this increased economic activity and job creation.

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What is a Primary Employer?

Primary employers are businesses that export goods and services outside of the local economy. These exports inject new dollars into the economy, resulting in increased wages and jobs as revenue earned by the business is spent on employee salaries and goods and services that it purchases from local suppliers. As this funding is earned, it is redistributed throughout the rest of the economy, multiplying in impact. Manufacturing and software companies are examples of primary employers.

What is a Secondary Employer?

Secondary employers serve the local community. A majority of the goods and services created by those organizations are consumed within the community. While these goods and services are important staples of a community, the multiplier effect of spending is less than that by primary employers. Retail and construction are examples of secondary employers.

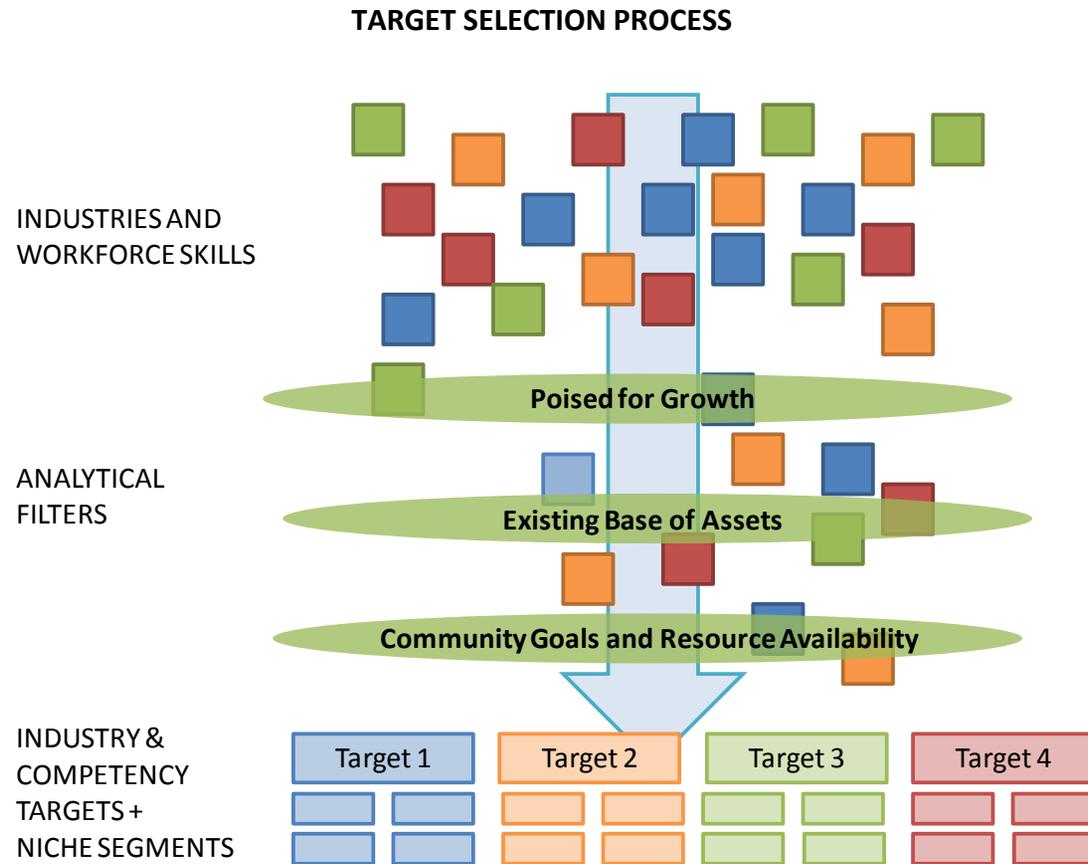
Target identification is not a perfect science. Numerous factors inform business location decisions. As a result there is no single mathematical formula for determining the eligibility of potential target industries for a community. Instead, target identification is an iterative process that considers both quantitative and qualitative inputs. The process is further complicated because modern industry definitions are broad and traditional government terminology, including NAICS codes (North American Industry Classification System), do not always ideally describe industries as they exist today, particularly for marketing purposes. To develop a clear understanding of local dynamics, target clusters and sub-clusters must be tailored to a specific community through the identification and definition process.

The selection of the target industries and competencies for the Greater Charlotte Region follows an iterative process used by Avalanche Consulting. Individual target areas (industries and competencies) are examined:

- Does the cluster have a regional presence?
- Does the local asset base match the needs of the industry? Avalanche considers physical infrastructure, current businesses, workforce skills, and cost conditions.
- Is the industry growing at the national level and/or offer opportunities for communities to compete for corporate expansions?
- Does the local community exhibit areas of relative competitiveness, which would compel an industry to relocate or expand locally versus elsewhere in the US?
- Does the industry's "ROI" match the community's vision? We consider the impact on job creation and increasing the average salary.
- Is there adequate State support for the cluster?
- Does the target provide some type of "strategic" value to the community, such as creating synergies with assets or industries already found in the region?
- Do local economic development organizations have sufficient resources to recruit, expand, and support entrepreneurship of companies in the cluster?

A target list should consider that each audience will require a different mix of organizational efforts. Recruiting manufacturing companies may focus on an external marketing campaign, for example, while entrepreneurial targets require program development focused on the local community. Targets can be any combination of the following: Recruitment, Retention, Expansion, and Startup.

Research and a stakeholder/employer input process were conducted as part of our review and the broader list of potential targets was narrowed down to a final “best list” for the region. “Niche” targets are identified under a smaller set of macro targets. The following diagram demonstrates our target selection process.



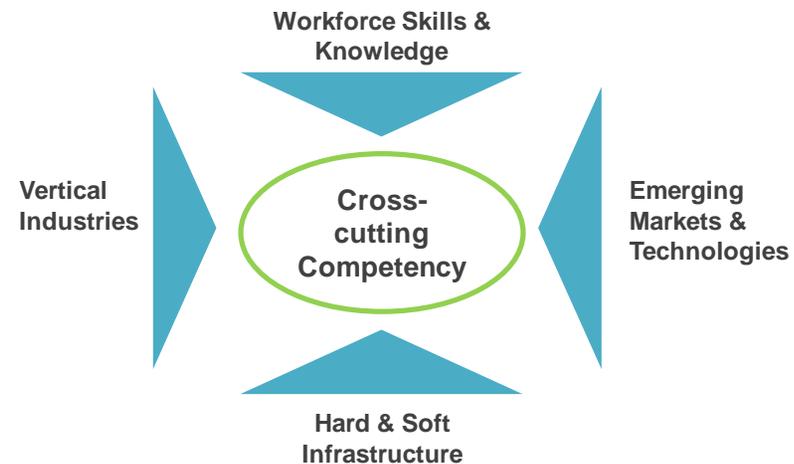
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What Are “Competencies” and Why Include Them as Targets? Avalanche Consulting believes that the concept of “target industries” is no longer sufficient to guide economic development alone. In fact, many “industries” that we discuss are actually end-consumer markets (e.g. the defense industry sells any kind of product to the military; the tourism industry include the hotel and restaurant industries that serve tourists). Sometimes industries are products, as in the case of the Energy industry, which includes any combination of supply chain activities such as extracting inputs to feed into specially designed equipment which make energy products that are ultimately distributed to energy consumers. We can also move in the other direction away from the end-market and toward the worker that creates a product. Is “Information Technology” an industry or a worker skill?

For these reasons, we encourage communities to embrace 21st Century language about the value-add within their community. In fact, communities are the unique combination of their workforce skills, technology and product knowledge, ability to produce and manufacture, and ability to market and deliver products to their consumers. Globally-oriented companies know they must do all of these things well; communities must now do the same under a highly coordinated and collaborative effort across organizations, workers, and industry clusters.

Today’s challenge for communities is to build multiple competencies that spark new industries and products – to not work just to protect what you have, but to focus on the new products and markets that will create new jobs. This is the future of globally competitive communities in the US.

Competencies Form at the Nexus of Industry, Workforce, Technology and Infrastructure

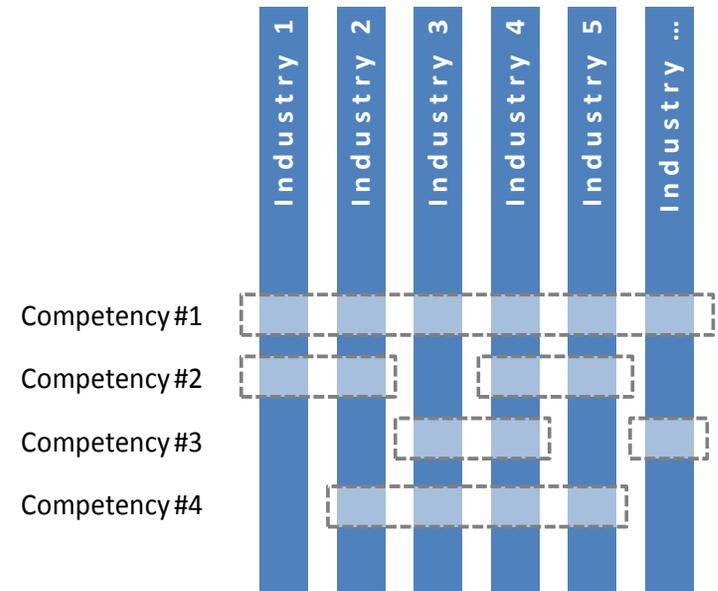


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A **vertical industry** is one that is focused on a specific market or product, such as aerospace, automotive, and biomedical. These are the “industries” that usually comprise a target industry plan, and are usually listed on an economic development website as the region’s focus.

A **horizontal (or platform) competency** can consist of a unique technology, workforce skill, or physical asset that supports numerous vertical industries. A multimodal transportation network (port-rail-highway) is one example, as it can serve any number of industries that might manufacture, test, or distribute their goods locally. Competencies are also workforce-specific, such as skills in machining, IT, advanced materials, or design. Competencies can influence some or all industry targets in a region.

As shown in the diagram to the right, the combination of industries and competencies form a lattice of connections that make a region unique. The Greater Charlotte Region’s future economic development activities should focus both on its vertical target industries and its horizontal competencies that support target and other industry success.



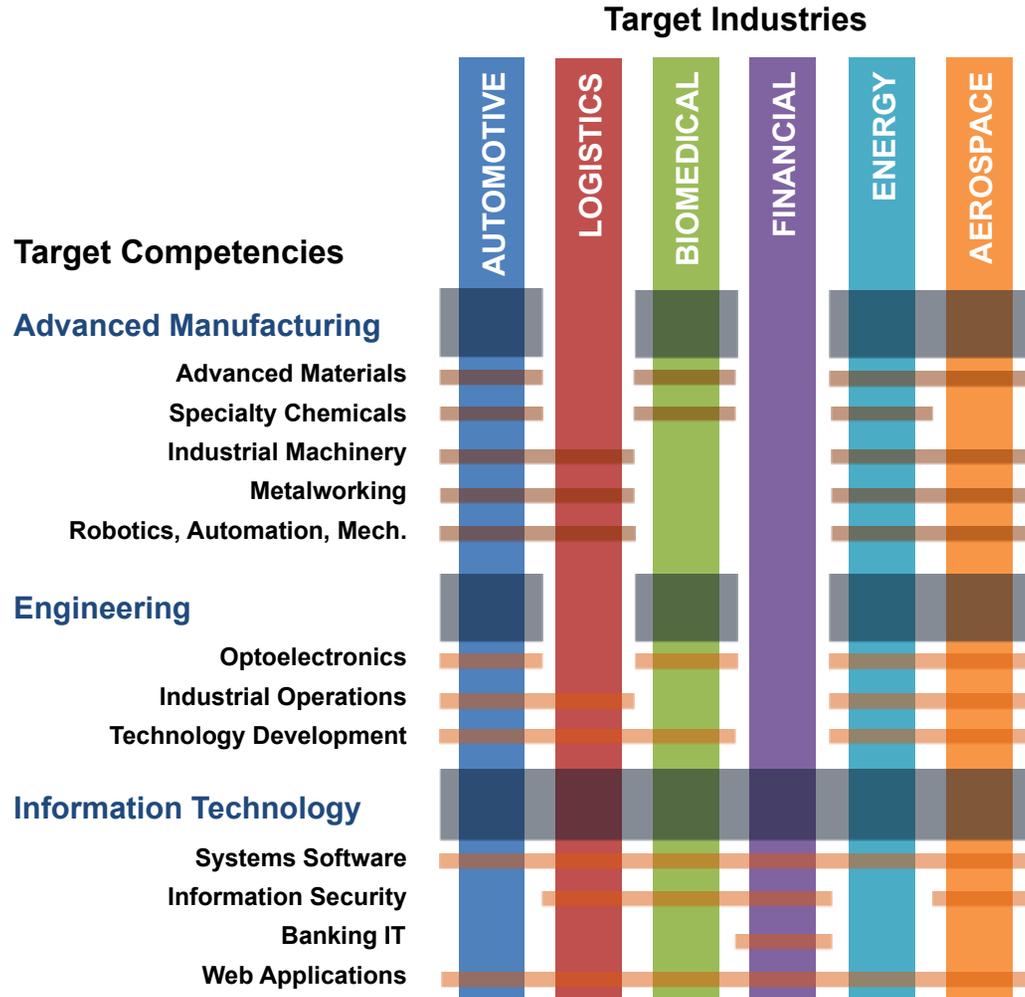
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The Greater Charlotte Region has numerous Competencies supporting industry growth, from specializations in Advanced Materials and Robotics to Engineering expertise in Optoelectronics and Industrial Operations. The diagram to the right illustrates the identified and recommended Target Industries and Target Competencies for the Greater Charlotte Region and how they intersect.

On the following page, a detailed matrix indicates the specific niche industries within the six major industries to be targeted. Emerging industries are identified in italics.

Profiles of the target industries and competencies are provided in the *Target/SWOT* report.

Target Competency Matrix – Greater Charlotte Region



Target Industries*Italics = emerging*

Automotive	Logistics & Global Commerce	Biomedical & Health
Motorsports	Intermodal Distribution	Biomedical Supplies & Labs
Battery Technology	Warehousing	Regional Health Care
Automotive OEMs	International Logistics HQs	Medical Device Mfg
Auto Suppliers, incl. Plastics	Food Processing & Distribution	<i>Bioinformatics & Genomics</i>
Electronic Components	Paper & Wood Product Mfg/Dist.	<i>Nutritional Sciences</i>
Financial Services	Energy	Aerospace & Defense
International & Domestic Banking	Nuclear Components	Aircraft parts suppliers
Investment Banking	Energy Equipment & Components	UAVs
Insurance	Energy Generation & Dist.	Defense Contractors
Back Office	<i>Clean Energy</i>	Defense Research
<i>Financial IT</i>		
Corporate Headquarters	Tourism	Film

Target Competencies

Advanced Manufacturing	Engineering	Information Technology
Advanced Materials	Optoelectronics	Data Centers
Specialty Chemicals	Industrial Operations	Systems Software
Industrial Machinery	Technology Development	Information Security
Metalworking		Banking IT
Chemicals		<i>Web applications</i>
Robotics, Automation, Mechatronics		

Aspirational Targets

Software	Health Care	Financial Services
Logistics IT	Clinical Testing	Mobile Banking IT
Data Visualization	Health Care IT	

Section 2:

Regional Priorities

The Centralina EDD Region's 7 Priorities

The following priorities are the update to the Centralina CEDS 2007 plan findings and incorporate research and input from the current planning efforts that specifically overlay the Centralina EDD. While these priorities are the adopted findings of the Centralina CEDS Advisory Committee and Centralina Economic Development Commission Board for the EDA authorized nine-county district at the core of the region, the project and committee work incorporated the influences of full geographic engagement and data within the greater regional framework to serve a unified strategic alignment and promote a relevant globally competitive place competency for the Greater Charlotte region:

- 1. Improving basic K-12 education remains a pressing concern and priority for the region.**
- 2. College and university participation in economic development must be strengthened so feedback mechanisms are in place to allow faster deliberate response by the education community to changes in industry needs and alignment of training\curriculum of the future.**
- 3. The region must achieve realignment of its existing workforce skills toward the targeted industries and competencies that will generate new jobs in the future as well as enhance the same career pathways link to students and younger generation.**
- 4. New and emerging industries and technologies must be supported through improved entrepreneurial support systems and targeted infrastructure improvements.**
- 5. The region's industries must increase integration of new technologies to remain competitive (build on 2007 CEDS Advanced Manufacturing strategy) and leverage new logistics assets and infrastructure to access global markets (such as new intermodal facility at the airport and regional telecom infrastructure).**
- 6. Regional collaboration is strong in economic development but should be strengthened by strategic collaboration in entrepreneurship, infrastructure planning, education and workforce development planning.**
- 7. Marketing initiatives will be needed to broadcast the new and "updated" Greater Charlotte Region image to its local citizens and global businesses and tourists.**

These priorities are addressed in further detail in the following Goals, Objectives, and Tactics section. The use of "Greater Charlotte Region" in the language of the section is reflective of the larger collaborative analysis by the Centralina EDD with centralized impacts of the 50 mile regional zone. However all Goals, Objectives, and Tactics are specifically endorsed and adopted only for the EDA approved nine-county jurisdiction of the Centralina Economic Development Commission (EDD). This report in no way replaces or supplants adjacent EDD CEDS jurisdiction plans that share partial coverage within the economic zone of influence defined and analyzed for this report.

Section 3:

Goals, Objectives, and Tactics

Workforce & Education

Goal: The Greater Charlotte Region prepares its workforce and students with skills, competencies, and knowledge that align with target industry needs.

OBJECTIVE 1:	Increase programs and real time information links in K-12 and higher education that support target industries and competencies
OBJECTIVE 2:	Ensure region-wide collaboration between K-12 school districts, community colleges, universities, and industry
OBJECTIVE 3:	Communicate career opportunities and associated learning and credentialing programs to K-12 students, university graduates, and adult workers
OBJECTIVE 4:	Communicate to citizens, businesses, and leaders that education and lifelong learning are important drivers of economic development and will be a fundamental requirement for the long-term success of the region, its citizens, and its businesses

Tactics identified by the project participants and consulting team include:

OBJECTIVE 1: CONTENT & PROGRAMS

- Continue to expand the availability of college-credit classes in high schools
- Expand entrepreneurship education at the college level
- Expand available of apprenticeship programs that serve high-growth industry needs
- Expand programs that boost soft skills in students and demonstrate their importance to students and parents

OBJECTIVE 2: COLLABORATION

- Continue to strengthen the Competitive Workforce Alliance, the workforce development partnership across the 16-county region (<http://www.agreatworkforce.com>)
- Consider the creation of a "CRM" system (customer relationship management) to capture employer feedback and direct local institutions
- Survey employers once a year as previously done by the Centralina Workforce Development Board
- Conduct ongoing (6 month or annual) assessments of the supply-demand gap in the workforce (skills, occupations, education)

OBJECTIVE 3: COMMUNICATION

- Communicate to K-12 students and parents the value of STEM degrees
- Create a regional career portal to serve as a “one-stop” for students, parents, and guidance counselors on careers. Information should include the education requirements for occupations, their wage rates, and growth forecasts in the region and counties
- Expand the availability of guidance counselors and educate them on career realities
- Leverage the CPCC's management of the local public television station to communicate career choices to the public

OBJECTIVE 4: CONTEXT

- Complete the Education Alignment Study and communicate the findings to elected leaders and industry
- Support non-profits such as MeckEd.org and other regional entities in their efforts to communicate the need for an education focus for all communities of region
- Ensure education and workforce providers remain involved in the region’s economic and competitiveness events and agendas

The region is currently conducting an Education Alignment Study that will identify additional tactics for regional partners to achieve these goals. This CEDS will incorporate this additional tool into the plan as soon as the study results are available and can be integrated (presently projected by December 2012).

Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Goal: The Greater Charlotte Region has a highly innovative entrepreneurial climate that drives the creation of high-growth firms.

OBJECTIVE 1:	Coordinate and boost support services for entrepreneurs across the region
OBJECTIVE 2:	Support creation of physical spaces and virtual incubators to house entrepreneurs
OBJECTIVE 3:	Increase the available local pool of venture, angel, and other financial capital
OBJECTIVE 4:	Expand entrepreneurship education into all levels of education
OBJECTIVE 5:	Expand university research in the region and connect researchers to local companies

Tactics identified by the project participants and consulting team include:

OBJECTIVE 1: SERVICES

- Complete the study underway by the Charlotte Entrepreneurial Alliance and coordinate implementation and communication of the priorities
- Increase the roster of professional service firms that donate services to entrepreneurs through a virtual incubator or association
- Identify the entrepreneurial community's "tribal leaders" -- from successful startups -- who can champion an entrepreneurship agenda and collaboration for the region
- Survey entrepreneurs each year about how their support needs and awareness of programs; leave the survey open throughout the year

OBJECTIVE 2: SPACES

- Create a virtual incubator or entrepreneurs association that serves as the primary connector between entrepreneurs, mentors, funders, and support organizations
- Expand networking opportunities for entrepreneurs by creating a roaming event that is hosted and sponsored by companies, real estate projects, etc. that want to bring technology professionals to their space
- Promote programs to convert unused buildings or main street retail spaces into small co-working space for entrepreneurs

OBJECTIVE 3: FUNDING

- Work to attract venture capital companies to the region and promote the creation and expansion of local funds
- Create a program to connect large local corporation (Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Duke Energy, etc.) to let local entrepreneurs pitch them their products and services; challenge local startups to solve big problems for big corporations as beta projects
- Support and expand the venture funding events in the region
- Expand the availability of grants for the PowerUp Entrepreneur Challenge beyond their current levels through additional sponsorships
- Solicit national sources of entrepreneurship support funding from non-profits and foundations

OBJECTIVE 4: EDUCATION

- Increase entrepreneurship education and training programs at local community colleges
- Create after-school startup programs inside high schools such as HighSchoolStartup.com
- Bring nationally syndicated events to the Greater Charlotte Region, such as StartupWeekend.com

- Explore the creation of a regional internship program that leverages the existing network to increase opportunities
- Create more entrepreneurship programs at colleges at all levels (certificates, major/minor degrees, etc.)

OBJECTIVE 5: RESEARCH

- Continue to support the formation and expansion of technology institutes at UNC Charlotte
- Create a database of research programs (and scientists) that can be used by economic developers when talking with local companies and prospects
- Increase the use of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants by local companies; create a new program to educate and assist companies about the grant process

The Charlotte Entrepreneurial Alliance is currently completing its strategy to identify, develop, and align the entrepreneurial resources in the region as well as other entrepreneurial organizational efforts underway in some counties. This CEDS will be updated as soon as the study results are available and can be integrated.

Infrastructure

Goal: The Greater Charlotte Region has a highly connected, efficient multimodal transportation system and an abundant supply of shovel-ready sites.

OBJECTIVE 1:	Increase the availability of shovel-ready sites and business parks
OBJECTIVE 2:	Support the ongoing development of a multimodal strategy for the region that empowers global businesses to design, manufacture and distribute products from or through the Greater Charlotte region
OBJECTIVE 3:	Increase strategic planning and funding for major transportation projects to better connect residents with job opportunities and growth centers throughout the region
OBJECTIVE 4:	Support the CONNECT project's regional preferred development scenario planning initiatives

Tactics identified by the project participants and consulting team include:

OBJECTIVE 1: SITES

- Individual counties and EDCs in region prioritize the expansion of targeted industry sites and buildings in the region
- Expand the use of virtual building design and pre-permitting of sites
- Market the region's best sites and buildings through traditional collateral materials the best online mapping systems available
- Position and market the mega-site on I-77 in Chester County, SC as the region's premier site for automotive and aerospace OEMs

OBJECTIVE 2: MULTIMODAL

- Support marketing and industry utilization of the 200 acre Charlotte Intermodal facility that will generate \$9 billion in economic impact and create 5,000 jobs over the next 20 years. Projected to come online in 2014
- Continue to support investments in commuter and light rail in the region to improve the ease of mobility of workers within the region
- Educate and advocate the importance of multimodal transport funding and collaboration across regional boundaries

OBJECTIVE 3: TRANSPORTATION

- Complete a Freight Mobility and Logistics Plan. Goals and objectives of a current proposed study are:
 - Coordination: Establish a Regional Forum; Private Industry Participation
 - Transportation: Project Prioritization; Intermodal Linkages; Safety; Short-Range Strategies
 - Land Use: Redevelopment; Zoning; Rest Areas; Rail Siding Access
 - Economic Development: Freight-Oriented Property Development; Intermodal Efficiency; Technology & Trends
 - Environment and Energy: Idling Reduction; Emergency Management Coordination
- Support the efforts of the Piedmont Crescent Partnership, a group of business, civic and elected leaders working together to advocate for transportation investment in the Piedmont Crescent corridor to advance the economic competitiveness of the greater Charlotte, Triad and Triangle regions (New Charlotte Intermodal a key facility on the line)

OBJECTIVE 4: PLANNING

- CONNECT Our Future under the leadership of the Centralina Council of Government is currently conducting a long-range planning effort to prepare the region for anticipated population growth over the next 20 years
- Integrate the CEDS findings and economic assessments and strategies into the CONNECT planning process to achieve aligned efficiencies and cohesive resources planning to sustainably support job growth demands of the future

Business Climate

Goal: The Greater Charlotte Region is a globally competitive location for its target industries and has a strong business brand worldwide.

OBJECTIVE 1:	Support economic development collaboration across the region
OBJECTIVE 2:	Expand and improve policies designed to attract and grow industries to the region
OBJECTIVE 3:	“Globalize” the region’s businesses and institutions by promoting and developing the competencies of local citizens
OBJECTIVE 4:	Market the region to businesses worldwide and strengthen the region’s business brand

Tactics identified by the project participants and consulting team include:

OBJECTIVE 1: COLLABORATION

- Support the CONNECT Our Future planning project and integrate the CEDS into its planning framework
- Support collective visioning and align initiatives such as the Advantage Charlotte and “Create It, Make It, Move It” strategy
- Participate and support regional economic and workforce events

OBJECTIVE 2: POLICIES

- Identify and expand the availability of competitive incentives throughout the region
- Continue to explore local incentives options; consider the benefits of voter-approved ED sales tax in cities
- Engage the elected representatives to assess state-related policies such as FOIA that influence the state’s ability to be win competitive ED projects
- Affirm and support perception that strong political leadership will be required to carry the region forward

OBJECTIVE 3: CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

- Strengthen and promote the cross-cultural assets in the region, such as the extensive international airport service, Charlotte’s status as a designated EB-5 Center for Foreign Investment, the Import-Export Bank, World Affairs Council, and the many international Chambers of Commerce
- Champion international diversity assets such as the Charlotte Chamber the 132 different languages currently spoken at Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools and organizations such as International House among others

OBJECTIVE 4: MARKETING

- Complete an update to the Charlotte Regional Partnership’s marketing plan
- Ensure the Partnership’s website is up to date and oriented toward the target industries identified in this CEDS
- Support the Chambers and Economic Development organizations throughout the region in recruitment, retention, and expansion of their community employment and investment base

Quality of Life

Goal: The Greater Charlotte Region has the best quality of life in the US.

OBJECTIVE 1:	Continue to make the region more attractive a young professional workforce
OBJECTIVE 2:	Continue to enhance downtowns in the region and invest in arts non-profits and entertainment venues
OBJECTIVE 3:	Encourage the promotion of tourism through regional marketing campaigns
OBJECTIVE 4:	Increase awareness and understanding of all ethnic cultures and the increasing multinational community that visit or work in the region
OBJECTIVE 5:	Ensure that an adequate supply and variety of housing options are available to current and future residents

Tactics identified by the project participants and consulting team include:

OBJECTIVE 1: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

- Support Engage Charlotte as the Young Professionals group of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce
- Collaborate and promote\create links with similar programs in surrounding counties

OBJECTIVE 2: DOWNTOWNS and COUNTIES

- Evaluate advantages of a regional events calendar that links that builds on linking surrounding counties for promotion of their events to residents across the region (and tourists); Ensure online events calendars are mobile phone compatible
- Support existing and planned investments in greenways, trails, pedestrian plans and recreational venues

OBJECTIVE 3: TOURISM

- Explore and assess with counties and chambers how to leverage and coordinate tourism marketing dollars across the region to reach a larger audience / create a larger impact.
- Target and align tourism industry jobs and growth with their existing assets (targeted growing sector) in regional counties

OBJECTIVE 4: CULTURAL AWARENESS

- Support the minority outreach and diversity councils across the region to increase inclusion and economic opportunity
- Support and encourage the formation and expansion of international cultural group networks and schools
- Boost the frequency of inter-city visits
- Communicate knowledge of efforts to promote international understanding and facilitating professional and cultural exchange programs.
- Continue to promote and expand the global and cultural connections through organizations and councils

OBJECTIVE 5: HOUSING

- Promote suitable mix of housing to allow workers to be within close proximity of work and home
- Support the development of equitable housing to ensure the availability of housing for residents of all income levels
- Support the CONNECT project's planning initiatives to align the location of housing with growth and employment areas