



9815 David Taylor Drive | Charlotte, NC 28262
Centralina Economic Development District
CEDS Steering Committee Meeting

MINUTES: April 21, 2022 4-5:30 pm Virtual
MEETING CALLED BY: Chairman Mile Atkins
PREPARED BY: Connor Choka
IN ATTENDANCE: ***CEDS Steering Committee Members***
Leigh Altman
Miles Atkins
Melinda Bales
Jenn Bosser
Mark Brady
Antony Burton
Astrid Chirinos
Anna London (Danielle Frazier)
Donny Hicks
Candice Lowder
Ryan McDaniels
Patrick Mumford
Kelly O'Brien
Panico Peres
Bill Thunberg
Melanie Underwood
Anna Lu Wilson

Centralina Regional Council Staff
Connor Choka
Christina Danis
Geraldine Gardner- Ex-officio
Luke Lowry

Guests
N/A

Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

DISCUSSION

Welcome & Committee Icebreaker Activity

The Steering Committee members discussed the following question as a part of their homework assignment:

Q2: What regional or local public sector investment would make the biggest positive impact on the work that you do?

See attached submissions.

Level Set: Existing Conditions Introduction

Geraldine Garner, President & COO, and Christina Danis, Community & Economic Development Assistant Director, gave an overview of the key data points and resources being utilized for regional economy assessment in the 2022 CEDS update process. Three key categories and twelve measurable variables inform the Prosperity Profile Framework across both equity and geographic lens, see slides 10-21.

Category	Resilience	Community	Mobility
Measurable Variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Median Hourly Full-Time Wage age 25-64 - NEA • Health - Air Pollution Exposure Index - NEA census tract • Disaster Risk - Community Resilience Estimates – at risk neighborhoods - Census Bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Poverty <200% - NEA • School poverty >75% FRL - NEA • Neighborhood poverty – census tract >30% poverty - NEA • Housing burden >30% income on housing (rent/own) - NEA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment – pop. > BA degree - NEA • Disconnected youth – 16-24 no work/school - NEA • Unemployment - NEA • Commute time – avg. one-way minutes - NEA • Occupation characteristics - JobEQ • Housing + Transportation affordability index - CNT

Not Your Average SWOT!

Geraldine Gardner and Christina Danis led the CEDS Steering Committee through an interactive SWOT exercise in breakout groups that drew on existing resources and presented fresh perspectives, see slides 23-27. The following reflects the input from the conversation for the 2023-2028 CEDS SWOT.

See attached results.

Setting the Course: Vision Brainstorm

Geraldine Gardner led the CEDS Steering Committee through an engaging exercise that assessed the current CEDS vision statement and considered what enhancements should be made to better reflect the aspiration of the region, see slides 29-35.

Currents CEDS Vision

The current CEDS Vision “The Charlotte region invest together to enforce its position as a global leader in business, innovation and talent.” was determined by participants to be **82% Relevant** and **18% Very relevant**.

Regional Engagement & Working Group Structure

Geraldine Gardner provided feedback on the regional engagement approach for the strategy development portion of the CEDS process, including the proposed structure for steering committee working groups, see slides 37-41.

Wrap Up & Next Steps

Project timeline, see slide 4; Next Steps, see slides 27, 35; Meeting Schedule, see slide 43.

Links to Previous Centralina EDD CEDS Documents

- [Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022](#)
- [Centralina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2012-2017, Executive Summary](#)

CEDS Reflections about Top Economic Success and Threats to Regional Prosperity Results

Q1: Tell me what you believe is the greatest threat(s) to our region’s prosperity and what may be needed to address this threat?

Respondent	Question 1
<i>Senator, Vickie Sawyer</i>	Transportation congestion for the purpose of delivering goods and services to homes and businesses.
<i>Mayor Pro Tem, Melinda Bales</i>	The biggest threat is roads and the not in my back yard residents. People from all across the country moved here for opportunity. Its one of the fastest growing areas in the Country. All land has the right to be developed, what is important is good planning. Creating Boards with residents with NO experience in development is dangerous and wrong. The Town needs a big vision and needs to understand people habits today and what our young peoples future needs will be. To develop a Town properly you need proper roads. The create massive traffic then widen roads is so backwards. You build great roads and you will have a great community. We need to lobby the State and get impact fees approved. These fees will pay for growth and make an amazing community. EVERYONE will pay them.
<i>Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (Devin Collins)</i>	<p><i>ESO focused on women entrepreneurs</i> - Affordable housing/ Affordable space for small businesses – our Charlotte metro area rentals and housing are not affordable to 2 parent working families paying child care, even if they are at a mid-income level. Affordable house is no longer affecting our low income population, but also our workforce at all levels. Which in turn affects access to employees and affordable office/retail space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ESO focused on African American entrepreneurs</i> - Growing rate of poverty in Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the Metrolina area. Forward thinking and caring, mindset shifts in designing our systems, and intentionally educating our people through a fair, equitable, truthful lens. Real focus on ending poverty. Affordable and safe Housing, Accessible transportation, affordable childcare, and healthcare. • <i>ESO focused on Hispanic entrepreneurs</i> - Understanding how to navigate red tape for licensing or even the process of access to capital. For immigrant entrepreneurs in particular, there are even more challenges, such as limited or no resources in their native language, lack of knowledge in the legal system, accounting, taxation, and licensing aspects of a business, limited knowledge of the U.S. financial system, different business cultures and processes. Latino immigrants are entrepreneurial by nature, and when they arrive here, they quickly learn that starting a business is their best chance to achieve financial independence, a process in which they don’t account for risk.Their chances of failing are high if they don’t get the support they need. • <i>ESO focused on African American entrepreneurs</i> - Income inequality and the wealth gap (between African Americans and their White counterparts) are the two big threats. The ability to create family-sustaining income and moving from survival to "thrival" must be reckoned with, because a large income-insecure underclass is an anchor to regional economic growth. When the structural impediments to African American wealth creation are removed, the entire region thrives. While the adage that a rising tide lifts all boats might seem apropos, that only applies to boats without holes. Addressing these issues starts with the following correctives: 1) a willingness to really make change, 2) these changes need to be secured at a policy level, that redressing how systems, structures, policies and laws have been either the source of or the inertia

Respondent	Question 1
	<p>behind the perpetuation of the aforementioned impediments, 3) lastly, we need to make investments in human, social and financial capital, in order to unleash untapped innovation that is generated from the bottom-up rather than the top-down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Business Counselor Charlotte Region</i> - Supply chain uncertainties. They will have an impact on every level of our economy. From running businesses to inflation to being able to purchase needed items and technology. I think a way to address this would be to bring more manufacturing to the area. It will create jobs and address uncertainty. However, it will require a shift in corporate thinking because US based manufacturing will be unlikely to be as inexpensive as foreign. There will be non-cost-based advantages but getting corporations to see that might be difficult. Also, consumers may have to deal with some higher prices because of it. Lots to unpack, but it needs to be unpacked and resolved. • <i>Business Counselor Charlotte Region</i> - The greatest threat to our region's prosperity is the inability of small and medium size businesses to find and retain experienced and qualified workers, whether on the factory floor or in operations in the back office. For various reasons, many workers have either quit their jobs, retired or moved on to other areas without the owners being able to plan their replacement in time during this pandemic. Recent school graduates (high school or college) are not experienced enough to either hold or be trained for these jobs. Up-training (my words, meaning qualified workers need additional training to take on the jobs left open by the more seasoned and experienced workers who have left) programs need to be developed and made available at no-cost or little cost to these business owners. • <i>Business Counselor Charlotte Region</i> - Greatest threat in my opinion is the continued automation of standard jobs, creating a gap between those available to work, jobs that pay living wages, and a robust local economy.

Q2: What regional or local public sector investment would make the biggest positive impact on the work that you do?

Respondent	Question 2
<i>Senator, Vickie Sawyer</i>	I think we need to rework the CRTPO voting weighting so that smaller communities have a better chance of receiving desperately needed funding.
<i>Mayor Pro Tem, Melinda Bales</i>	<p>Impact fees and building roads. NC is so backwards its really a shame. If NCDOT has roads planned 3, 4 8 years out, why don't the Towns borrow the money issuing Bonds interest only. The Town can borrow 100 million with a State Backed Guarantee at 3.5% all day long. That cost to the Town is 3,500,000 a year.... pennies per hundred in tax dollars. The Town builds all the roads today, we pay the interest on the debt and as our projects come up the State makes a principle payment on the Bonds reducing the debt and our interest carry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town wins and gets the roads they need today, the Town gets great projects, jobs and increases the quality of life and increases tax revenue. Roads are improved today at todays costs, not 5 years future cost. This concept is so simple a 5th grader can figure it out. • The same with impact fees, the Town can borrow the money, build great roads, schools and parks and the impact fees pay the debt. Impact fees are not a few dollars, they are thousands, a home would pay 20,000, commercial tens of thousands. I friend of mine just did a Goodwill in Naples and paid 367,000 impact fee.

Respondent	Question 2
	<p>All problems can be resolved with people with a vision and that know what they are doing. Putting a resident on a board that means well but has NO development or business experience is wrong.</p>
<p><i>Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (Devin Collins)</i></p>	<p><i>ESO focused on women entrepreneurs</i> - Investment in supporting small businesses and mostly in the crescent area of Mecklenburg county, to include Albemarle Rd corridor. Increase public transportation to areas that offer high employment opportunities...and again, invest in affordable housing and retail space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ESO focused on African American entrepreneurs</i> - Investment in the development of an Intentionally Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem to close the economic and empowerment divide in our city, county, country. Making our city and our economy more entrepreneurial, creates more growth, jobs, wealth, and innovation. • <i>ESO focused on African American entrepreneurs</i> - Regarding City Startup Labs, we are training formerly incarcerated persons, through the ReEntry Entrepreneurship Program (REEP), to build a career as an entrepreneur or a value-added employee. Considering entrepreneurship within the context of 21st Century workforce development, can mean an array of new opportunities to scale our efforts in working with local, state and regional workforce boards. Additionally, our efforts through BlkTech Interactive, which are focused on the development of Black tech talent and the Black tech entrepreneurs and ventures, can be augmented through an alignment with regional economic development initiatives. For example, what if every new econ dev effort had a component that was designed to cultivate Black tech entrepreneurial activities in support of that development project or activity. • <i>Business Counselor Charlotte Region</i> – Increasing funding for small business development. The SBTDC and SBC network can be a big part of that solution, which would be a positive impact on our job. If we have the funding to do our jobs in more creative ways and to really focus on the current economic challenges, that will benefit both us and the region's economy as a whole. • <i>Business Counselor Charlotte Region</i> – Remembering that my position is to help businesses with developing export opportunities, there is a lack of availability of international marketing data to small and medium size businesses. A Charlotte or Mecklenburg County program where the local government buys access to databases from companies such as Kompass, Euromonitor, RISI, etc... would help the SBTDC and the small businesses we serve be able to enter appropriate international markets faster than they can today, and grow substantially. Large businesses not only can afford to fund their own market development department, but they can also afford to pay the large yearly fees the research companies charge for access to their databases. • <i>Business Counselor Charlotte Region</i> – Startup funding for entrepreneurs akin to Pell Grants for students - access to one-time funding ~ \$25k.



Centralina

Economic Development District

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Steering Committee Meeting #2

April 21, 2022



CENTRALINA
Community Economic
Development

Mayor Atkins, CEDD Board Chair

Welcome!

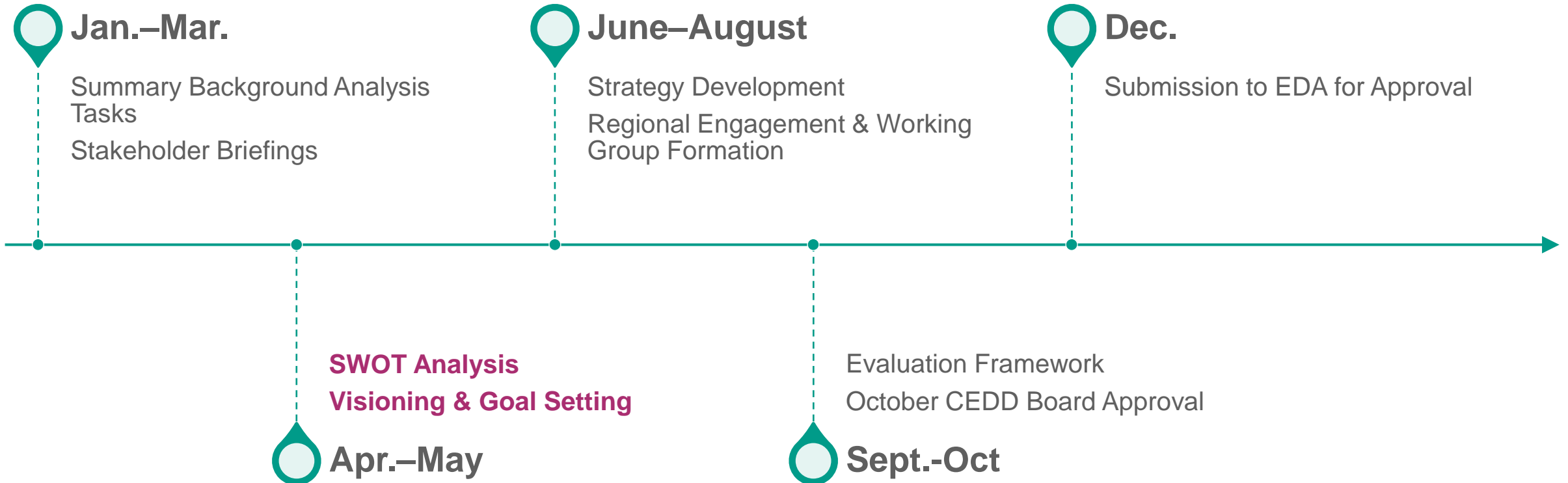
Today's Objectives

Online Engagement

- Complete an interactive SWOT
- Launch CEDS visioning process
- Discuss regional engagement opportunities and working group structure



Project Schedule



Role of the Steering Committee

1. Engage to provide feedback and leadership throughout the process
2. Guide regional visioning
3. Contribute to strategy development
4. Identify opportunities for your organization in implementation

HOW

- Attend Board and Special Steering Comm. Meetings
- Participate in and/or chair a Working Group
- Host and lead county engagement process
- Provide technical expertise on work components
- Use your platform to disseminate information and help us engage stakeholders



Warm Up

Icebreaker

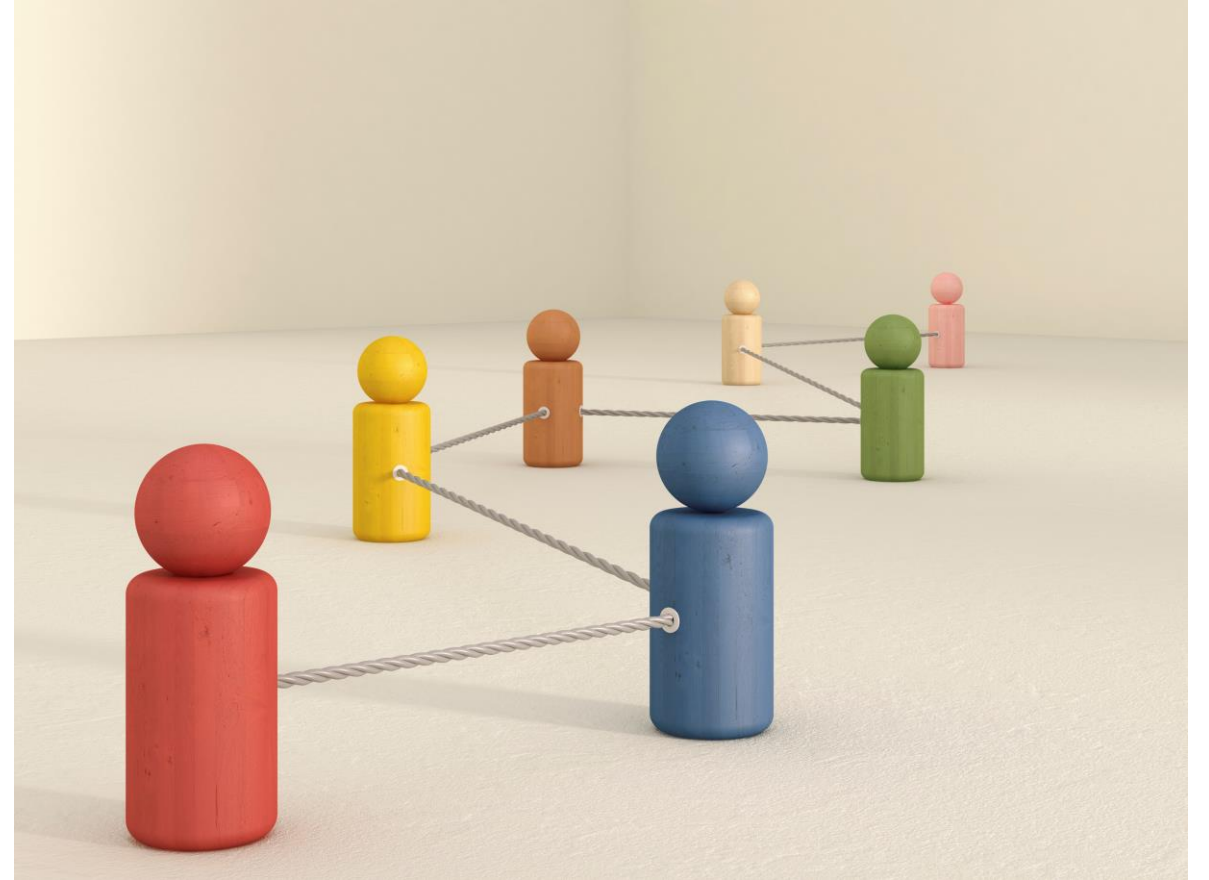


**Share Your Name & Organization
(then pick who goes next)**



Homework Assignment

What regional or local public sector investment would make the biggest positive impact on the work that you do?



Level Set

Existing Conditions Introduction

CEDS Required Components

1. **Summary Background** – understanding of current economic conditions and regional assets
2. **SWOT Analysis** – assessment of competitive advantages, disadvantages, externalities
3. **Strategy Development** – a framework for action: vision, goals, implementation plan
4. **Evaluation Framework** – approach to measuring implementation progress and impact on the regional economy



Summary Background

Technical / Economic

- Target Industry Cluster Analysis (EY, Complete)
- Supply Chain Survey (EY/CRBA, Complete)
- AI/Automation Risk Analysis (EY, Complete)

Demographic / Community

- Regional Data Evaluation & Mapping (Centralina, In Process)
- **Prosperity Profile – (Centralina, In Process)**



Why – Prosperity Profile

How was it developed?

- Examine national/regional best practices for economic mobility and equity data monitoring – *that is available in all 9 counties*
- Distill findings based on equity conditions identified as important for the Centralina region
- Focus on a strong visual/communication tool that is relevant and able to measure what matters

How will it look over time?

- In short-term, will inform CEDS update evaluation framework and metrics
- Core ‘equity framework’ will remain consistent over time
- More detail or data may emerge in future iterations depending on the changing needs of the Centralina region



What - Profile Framework

Three categories, drawn from the CEDDS, inform the Prosperity Profile Framework

Resilience	Community	Mobility
Ability to withstand economic shocks and <u>bounce forward</u> as a result (Risk Exposure)	Local economic and social capital conditions that may <u>inform quality of life</u> and participation in the economy (Where You Live)	<u>Access</u> to economic prosperity through transportation, economic, social resources (Ability to Succeed)



What – Prosperity Indicators

Currently includes - 12 measurable variables

Resilience

- Median Hourly Full-Time Wage age 25-64 - NEA
- Health - Air Pollution Exposure Index – NEA census tract
- Disaster Risk - Community Resilience Estimates – at risk neighborhoods - Census Bureau

Community

- Family Poverty <200% - NEA
- School poverty >75% FRL - NEA
- Neighborhood poverty –census tract >30% poverty - NEA
- Housing burden >30% income on housing (rent/own) - NEA

Mobility

- Educational attainment – pop. > BA degree - NEA
- Disconnected youth – 16-24 no work/school - NEA
- Unemployment - NEA
- Commute time – avg. one-way minutes - NEA
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Prosperity Profile - Equity Lens

- Three components are used as an additional 'equity lens' on the data:
 1. Race
 2. Age
 3. Educational attainment
- Not available for all 12 variables
- Allows for more nuanced view, but does not define equity



Social Equity, from the American Planning Association



Prosperity Profile - Geographic Lens

- Significant differences exist across the counties and municipalities
- Used to classify different population characteristics across the region

Urban → Mixed Urban → Mixed Rural → Rural

- Population density ≥ 500 people/sq mile

- 90 % of pop in urban areas

- Urban pop $\geq 50,000$

- Does not meet Urban or Rural definition

- Population density ≥ 320 people/sq mile

- Does not meet Urban or Rural definition

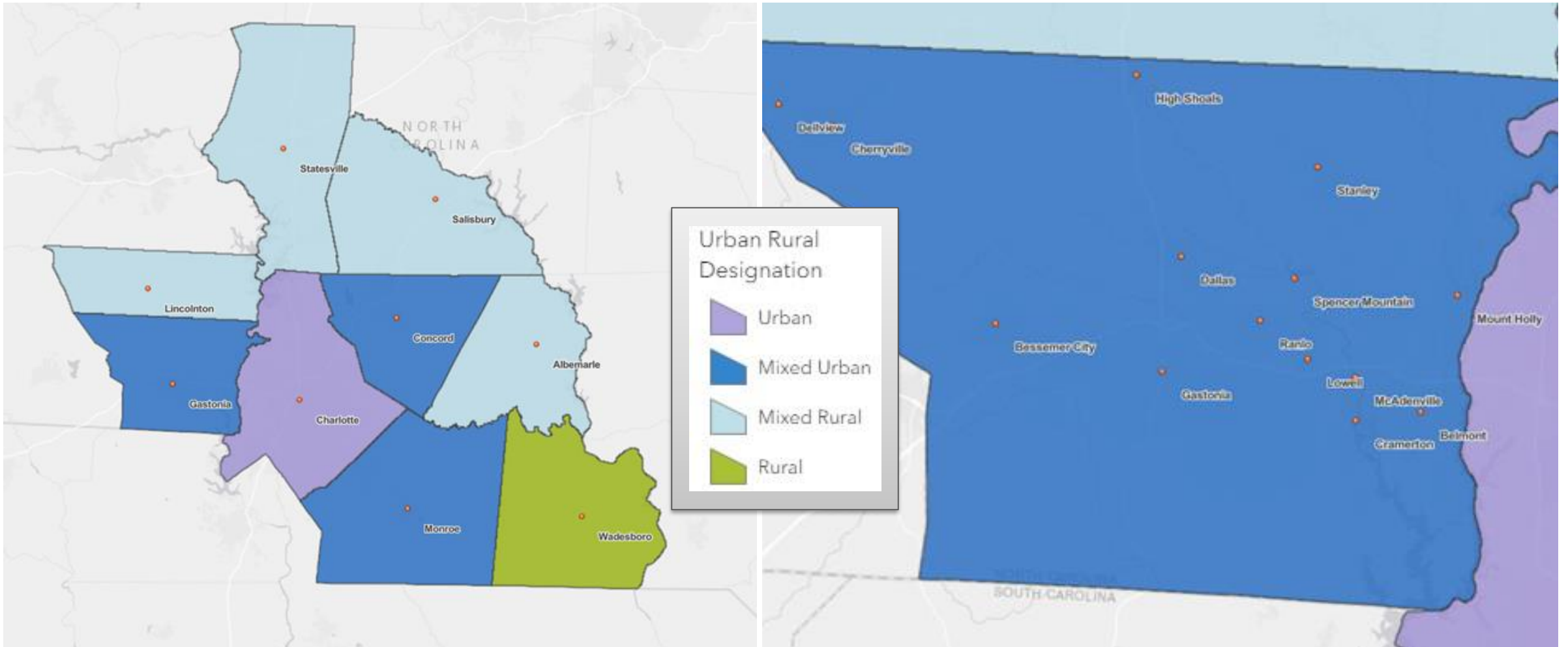
- Population density < 320 people/sq mile

- Population density < 500 people/sq mile

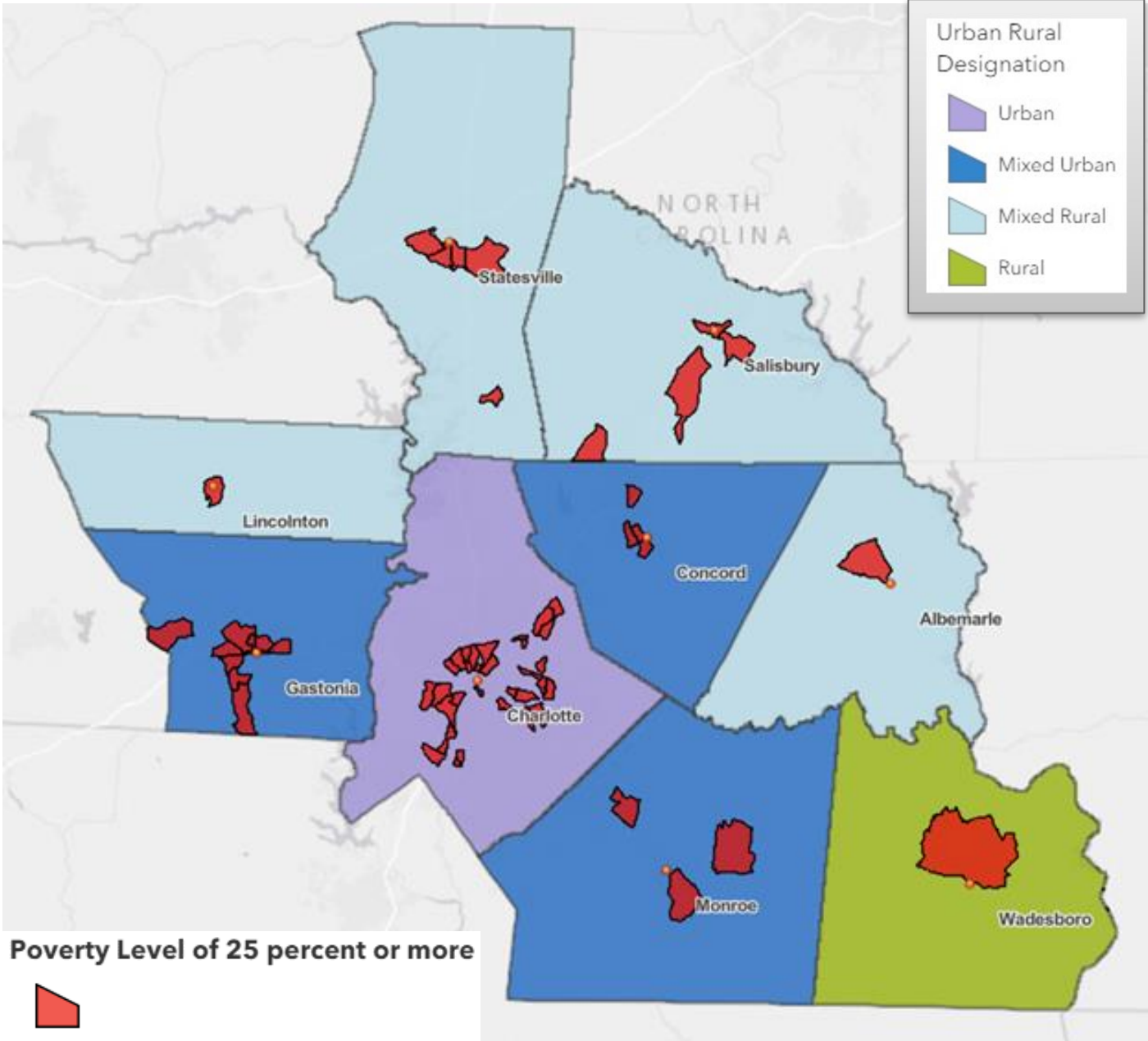
- 90 % of pop in rural areas OR no urban area with pop $> 10,000$



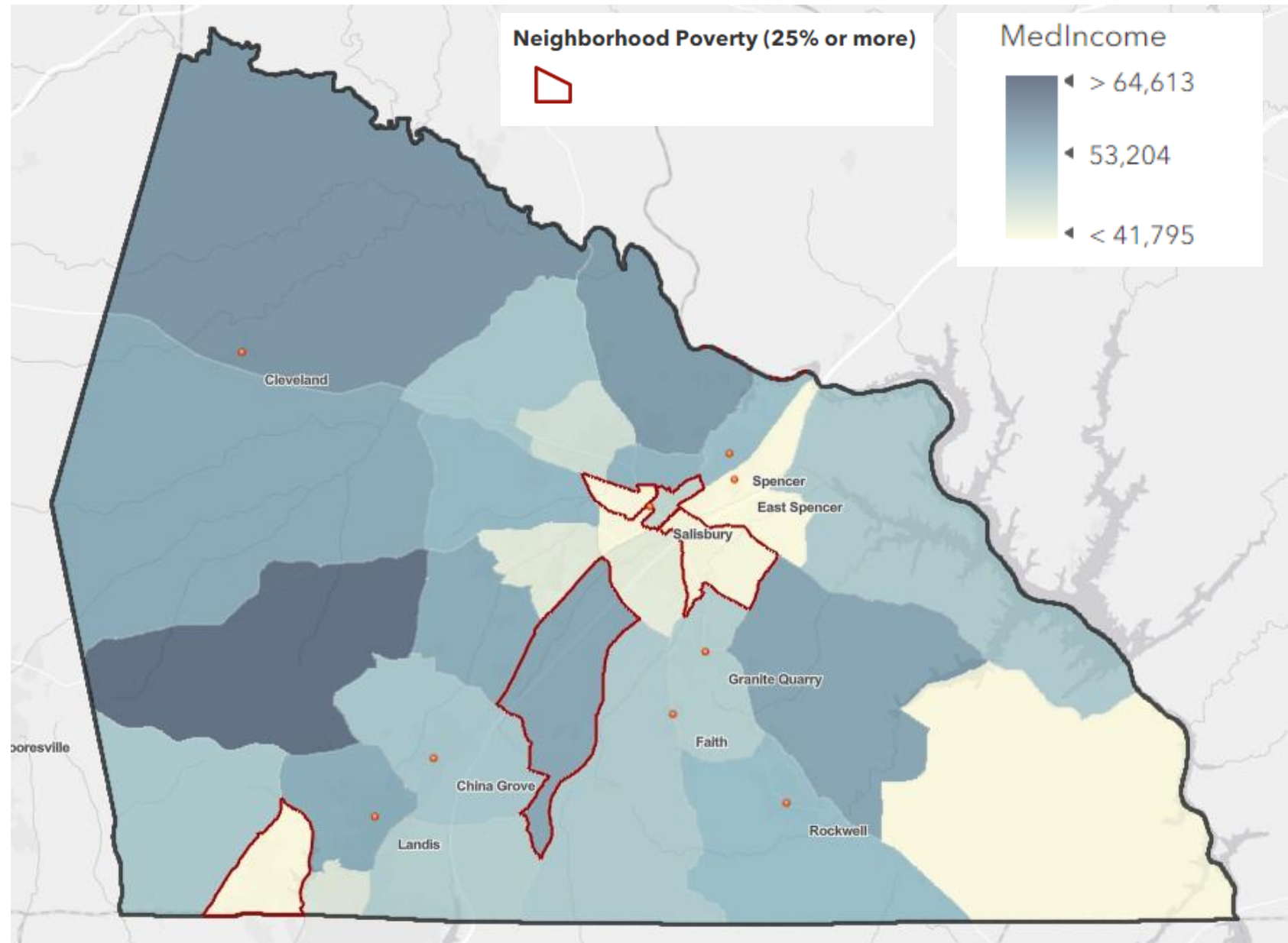
Geography Matters



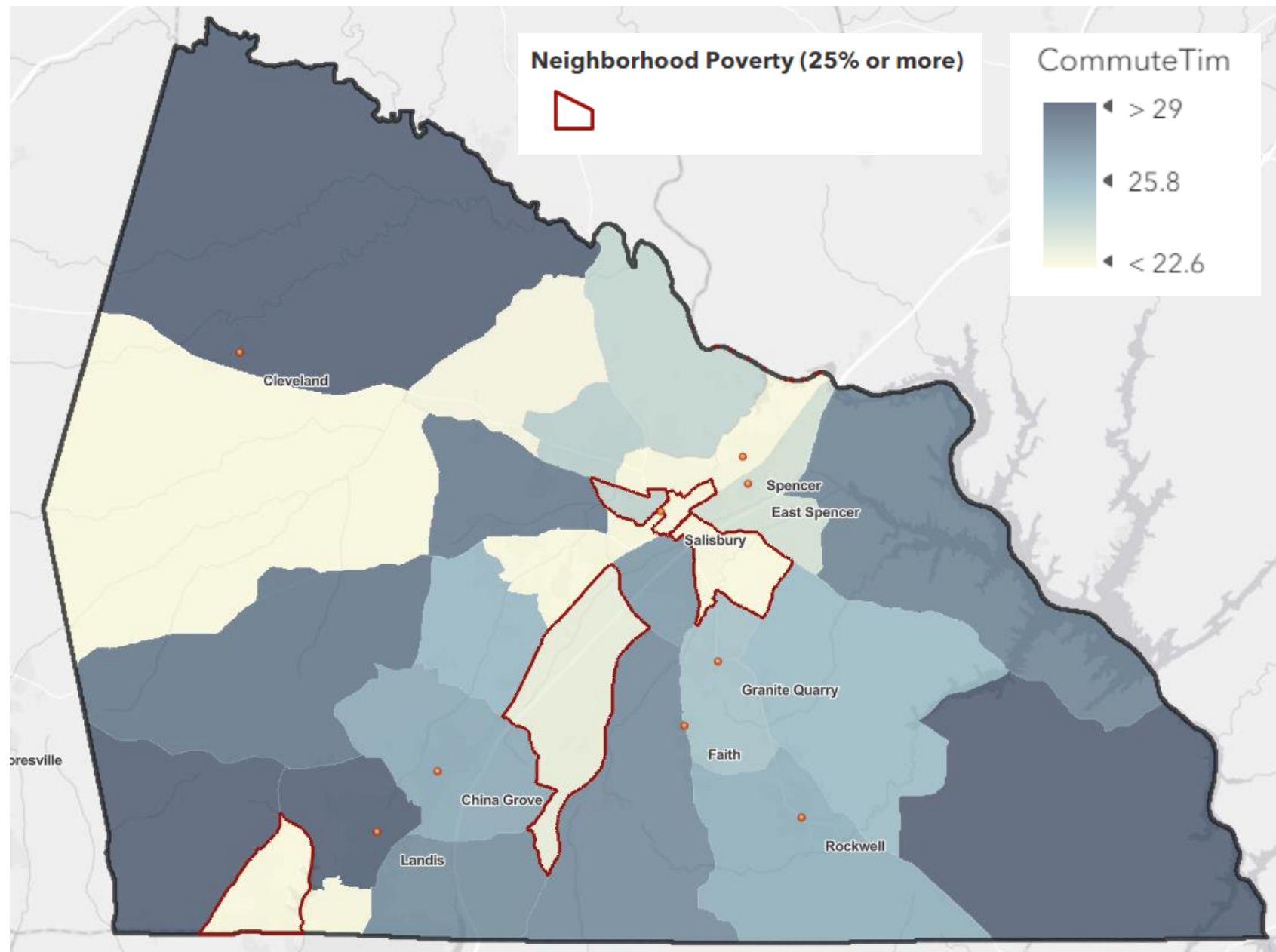
Community Indicator Example: Neighborhood Poverty



Resilience Indicator Example: Median Income – Tract Level



Mobility Indicator Example: Commute Time to Work – Tract Level



How it will be used

Now – CEDS Process

- Generates insights for SWOT - placed based approach
- Informs strategy development to respond to unique geographic types / needs across the region
- Creates prosperity baseline for CEDS evaluation

Future – County, Community

- Online tool for policy planning and grant applications
- Supports regional, sub-regional, county and local economic development strategy



Interactive Exercise

Not Your Average SWOT!

Importance

Required CEDS Content

- Identify assets and competitive positioning
- Identify factors that can keep a region from realizing its potential
- Key insights sets the direction for goal and action plan development



S + W: Internal Orientation

Strengths:
relative competitive advantages



Weakness:
relative competitive disadvantages

- Existing industry and cluster growth
- Innovation, research ecosystem
- Small business and entrepreneurship support
- Infrastructure: transportation, broadband, water, sewer
- Land use and availability
- Talent: specialized workforce skills, higher education
- Culture: collaborative, risk-averse or change-resistant



O + T: External Orientation

Opportunities: leverage for improvement or progress



Threats: negative impacts on the region (emerging or persistent)

- Demographic : aging, migration
- Technological: Internet of Things, AI
- Globalization and foreign investment
- Tax rates
- Political environment
- Energy security
- Natural or man-made hazards



Activity Instructions

Breakout Groups

- Group 1: Strengths and Weaknesses
- Group 2: Opportunities and Threats
- Groups 1 & 2 have unique spreadsheet documents - the link will be provided in the Breakout Group Chat
- **Provide feedback based on your perspective**



Next Steps

Post-Meeting Opportunity

- Centralina: Share out both Group 1 and 2 spreadsheet links to all members
- Time frame will be provided for providing additional feedback
- Centralina will synthesize outcomes and report out for the May 19th CEDS Steering Committee meeting



Pulse Check

CEDS Vision

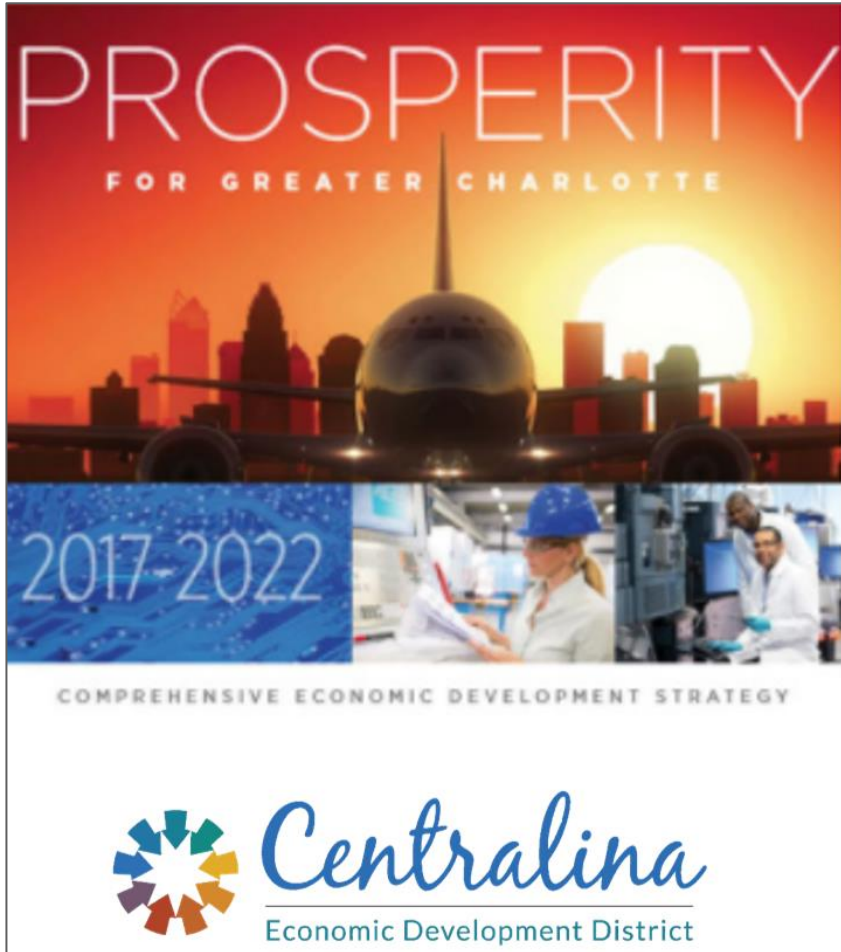
Importance

Required CEDS Content

- Answers the question “Where do we want to be in the next ten to twenty years?”
- “North Star” for the strategy development (goals & implementation/action plan)



Our Current CEDS Vision



The Charlotte region invests together to enforce its position as a global leader in business, innovation and talent.



Current Vision Elements

The Charlotte **region invests together** to enforce its position as a global leader in business, innovation and talent.

**“region invests together” –
importance of collaboration and acting together**



Current Vision Elements

The Charlotte region invests together **to enforce its position as a global leader** in business, innovation and talent.

“Enforce” – emphasizes that the region is already among the best locations for business in the world. Maintaining that position requires constant reinforcement.



Current Vision Elements

The Charlotte region invests together to enforce its position as a global leader in **business, innovation and talent.**

Continued global leadership requires having an environment that nurtures business, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and attracts talent.



Assessing the Vision

The Charlotte region invests together to enforce its position as a global leader in business, innovation and talent.

What is our region's

- Experience of the pandemic
- Desire for increased resiliency
- Opportunity to grow inclusively

Is enforcing our global position, still our “why”?



Next Steps

Vision Development

- Centralina to synthesize input and generate vision options
- Steering Committee discussion at May meeting
- Stakeholder feedback (Summer)



Discussion

Regional Engagement & Working Group Structure

Regional Engagement

Guiding Principles

- Leverage Steering Committee networks
- Engage stakeholders using existing channels, meetings, etc.
- Be strategic in what we're asking and when
- Use working groups to open action planning process



Audience Groups



Strategy: Approach 1

Briefings At Existing Meetings – May to July

- Share information about the process
- Ask strategic questions to gain insights for the process
- Feed insights back to Steering Committee & Working Groups

Steering Committee Ask

- Invite us to your meeting – *10-15min is the minimum time*
- Lead a discussion at your own meeting – *we can provide a template (script, slides and questions)*
- Connect us with other groups in your network – we can meet with them



Strategy: Approach 2

Pulse Check Survey – June to July

- 10 questions to inform strategy development
- Test vision and goals
- Gain insights on investments that will be impactful

Steering Committee Ask

- Distribute survey to your networks



Strategy: Approach 3

Working Groups – June & August

- Open to broader regional participation
- Two sessions (June & August) facilitated by Centralina
- Purpose: engage to refine specific strategic for CEDS action plan

Themes:

- Talent & Workforce
- Entrepreneurship & Small Business Supports
- Existing Industry Clusters
- Prosperity (Mobility, Resilience, Community)



Wrap Up

Next Steps

Steering Committee Forecast

- **May 19th –**
 - **Existing Conditions Findings (SWOT, Prosperity Profile)**
 - **Vision Options Discussion**
 - **Goal Setting Work Session**
- June – Individual working group meetings
- July 21st –Launch of Strategy Development Process (CEDD Board Mtg.)
- August – Individual working groups meetings (#2)
- September 15th – Action Plan and Evaluation Work Session
- October 20th – CEDD Board Mtg. CEDS Adoption

If Needed, November 17th – Special Board Mtg to adopt CEDS

