



Waccamaw Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

December 2021 Annual Update

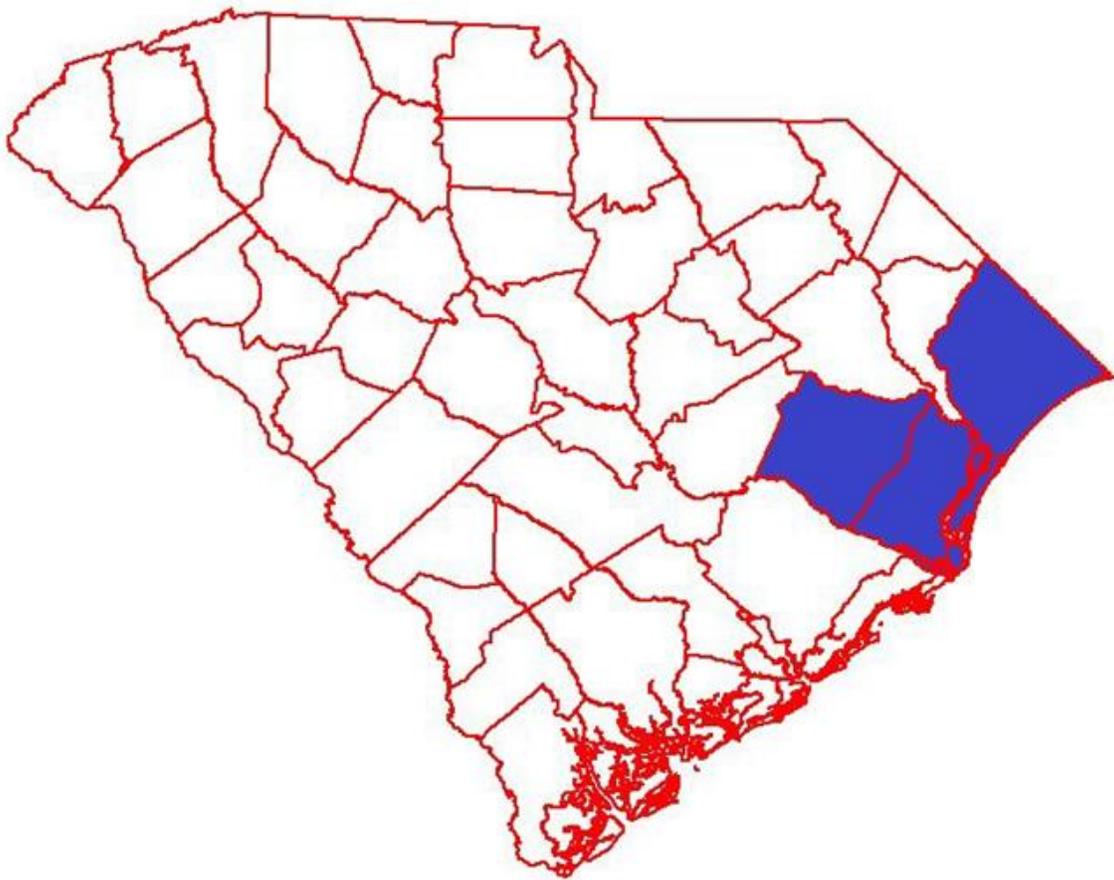
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Waccamaw Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region
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Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



EDA
U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



Chapter I
Introduction

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County

INTRODUCTION



Created in 1969, the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) is one of South Carolina’s ten regional planning agencies known as COGs. WRCOG serves Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties, including the counties’ sixteen municipalities. A twenty-five member Board of Directors oversees the agency’s budget, appoints an executive director, and serves as the agency’s policy making body. The board is appointed by the legislative delegations from the three counties and includes a mixture of public and private sector residents. A list of the WRCOG’s Board of Directors can be found in appendix B.

As part of its core mission, WRCOG provides in-depth assistance to local governments and serves as the technical planning staff for a few planning and zoning commissions, assists in securing and administering grant funds for local projects and services, and coordinates varied social service programs geared toward the elderly and economically disadvantaged. Through its workforce development program, WRCOG maintains, in coordination with the SC Department of Employment and Workforce, the area’s three SC Works Re-employment centers.

The Waccamaw Region was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the United States Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 1970. For the past forty plus years, WRCOG has partnered with EDA as the Regional EDD promoting economic development in the region. Through its community and economic development department, WRCOG assists in the administration of programs and activities related to the area’s Economic Development District designation. A major part of this responsibility is to provide staff support in the periodic update or rewrite of the CEDS.



The Waccamaw Economic Development District’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update is designed to guide regional economic growth. This planning process and the 2021 Update provides strategies for job creation, diversified economies, and increase the quality of life in the district. In addition, the CEDS promotes collaboration and coordination between the various individuals and groups, both public and private, engaged in economic development. The CEDS update is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of the Waccamaw Economic Development District.

CEDS Strategy Committee

The CEDS Strategy Committee is responsible for developing and updating the economic development planning and implementation process for WRCOG. The CEDS committee is the region’s Workforce Development Board, due to its composition of a diverse group of business leaders, educators, economic developers, and community leaders. The list of CEDS Strategy Committee members, their occupations, and the county each represents is located in appendix C.

Partnerships

Unchanged

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Chapter II
Background

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County



BACKGROUND

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Waccamaw Region is located in the northeastern coastal area of the state of South Carolina and includes Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties. The region consists of approximately 2,901 square miles and is bound to the north by the North Carolina state line; the Atlantic Ocean to the east; the Santee River which borders Berkeley and Charleston counties to the south; and Clarendon, Florence, Marion, and Dillon counties to the west. Myrtle Beach, located in Horry County, is the most populous metropolitan statistical area in the region and the 4th largest in the state. Myrtle Beach is located approximately 125 miles from Columbia, the state capital, and 315 miles east of Atlanta, Georgia. The Myrtle Beach Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is one of ten MSA's in the state. The MSA includes all of Horry County, which is 1,255 square miles and has a density of 312 people per square mile in 2020. In terms of land mass, Horry County is the largest county in the state. Williamsburg, by contrast, is very rural. With 937 square miles, Williamsburg County has a density of only 32 people per square mile. Georgetown County, which spans 814 square miles, has a population density in 2020 of 77 people per square mile and South Carolina has a density of 171 people per square mile.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

The census estimated 2020 population of the three county region was 458,627. This represents a 2.3% population annual average growth rate since 2010. Horry County has seen a rapid increase in its population. In 2020 the estimated total population was 365,449 which is a 3.1% annual average growth rate since 2010. Georgetown County's annual population growth rate was 0.5% since 2010 while Williamsburg County has experienced a steady decrease in population. Williamsburg County's 2020 population estimate of 29,825 reflects a 1.4% decrease in the annual average population growth since 2010. *Figure 1* provides a comparison of population growth over the past forty years:

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Figure 1: Population by County, Region, and State (1980-2020)

County or Area	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	10 Year % Change
Georgetown	42,461	46,302	55,797	60,158	63,353	4.19%
Horry	101,419	144,503	196,629	269,291	365,449	35.70%
Williamsburg	38,226	36,815	37,217	34,423	29,825	-13.37%
Waccamaw Region	182,106	227,170	289,643	363,872	458,627	22.88%
South Carolina	3,122,814	3,486,703	4,012,012	4,625,364	5,218,040	11.31%

Source: United States Census Bureau, STF-1 datum, 1970-2010, American Community Survey 2015-2019, Census 2020, JobsEQ

Since 1980, the region's population has grown at more than twice the rate of the state (Waccamaw Region: 151.85%, South Carolina: 67.09%). Horry County experienced a growth rate of 260.34% over this time period. Georgetown County grew at a rate moderately below the state's, with a growth percentage of 49.20%. By contrast, Williamsburg County's growth was negative with a population decrease of 21.98%.

The area includes sixteen municipalities. Population change within the area's cities and towns including the 2019 estimates are provided in *Figure 2*:

Figure 2: Population Change for Regional Municipalities 2000-2019

City/Town	2000	2010	2019	19-Year Growth
Andrews	3,068	2,861	2,859	-6.8
Atlantic Beach	351	334	445	26.8
Aynor	587	560	967	64.7
Briarcliff Acres	470	457	593	26.2
Conway	12,719	17,103	25,956	104.1
Georgetown	8,950	9,163	8,742	-2.3
Greeleyville	452	438	380	-15.9
Hemingway	573	459	395	-31.1
Kingstree	3,496	3,328	3,063	-12.4
Lane	585	508	452	-22.7
Loris	2,079	2,396	2,761	32.8
Myrtle Beach	22,759	27,109	34,695	52.4
North Myrtle Beach	11,251	13,752	16,819	49.5
Pawleys Island	138	103	108	-21.7
Stuckey	263	245	219	-16.7
Surfside Beach	4,425	3,837	4,525	2.3

Source: United States Census Bureau, STF-1 datum, 1970-2010; US Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Resident Populations April 1, 2010- July 1, 2019.

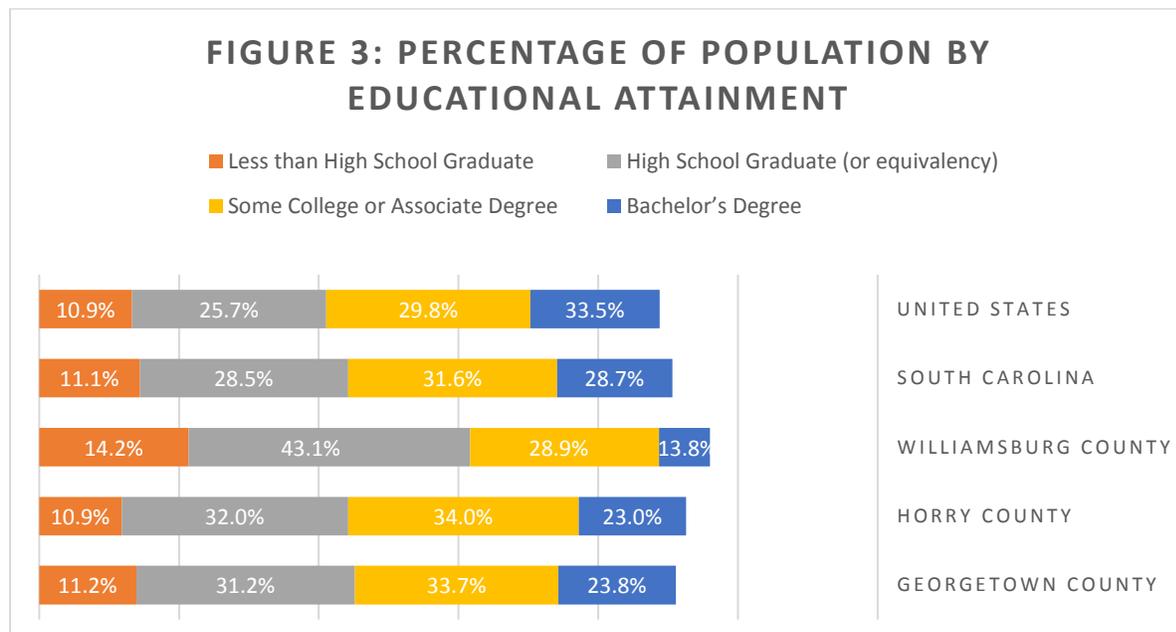


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Eight of the region’s sixteen municipalities lost population between 2000 and 2019. Those losses include all municipalities in Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties with the City of Georgetown experiencing a 2.3% population decrease.

Educational Attainment

According to the US Census, 2017 marked the first time 90 percent of the American population age 25 and older attained a high school diploma or higher. In 2019, 89% attained a high school diploma or higher. Based on the 2019 estimates from the American Community Survey, the Waccamaw region’s educational attainment has shown improvement since the 2010 Census. Horry County fared as well or better than the state and nation in the percentage of residents with less than a high school diploma (10.9%) as well as the percentage of residents with a high school diploma or higher (89%). Of the three counties in Waccamaw, Williamsburg County’s rate was the lowest at 85.8% of residents holding a high school diploma or greater; however it should be noted that Williamsburg County witnessed the biggest improvement, rising from 65.6% in 2000. Figure 3 provides a comparison of rates among the three counties as compared to the state and nation.



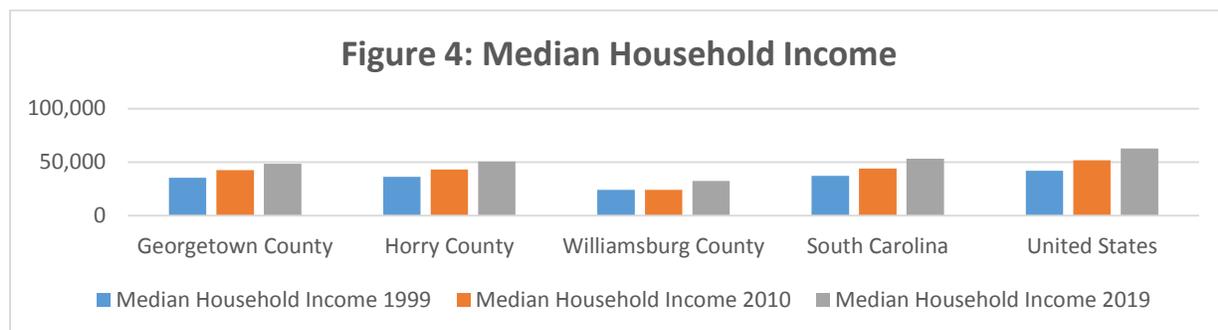
Source: Stats America 2015-2019 American Community Survey; JobsEQ

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The nation tops South Carolina and the Waccamaw region for percentage of persons with a bachelor degree or greater. 33.5% of the United States have attained bachelor degree or greater while 28.7% of South Carolina residents have attained a bachelor degree or greater. Within Waccamaw, Georgetown leads the region with 23.8% of persons with a bachelor, graduate, or professional degree. Horry County has 23.0% and Williamsburg has 13.8% of its residents earning a bachelor or advanced degree.

Median Incomes and Poverty

Median household and per capita income vary significantly across the region. Historically, income rates for Georgetown and Horry County have been at or just slightly below the state's average, while Williamsburg has historically recorded incomes far below the regional and state average. The 2019 numbers show that this trend continues. The most recent American Community Survey data reported that median household and per capita incomes for Williamsburg County were almost one-half the national average. *Figure 4* provides a comparison of median household incomes for the region's three counties.



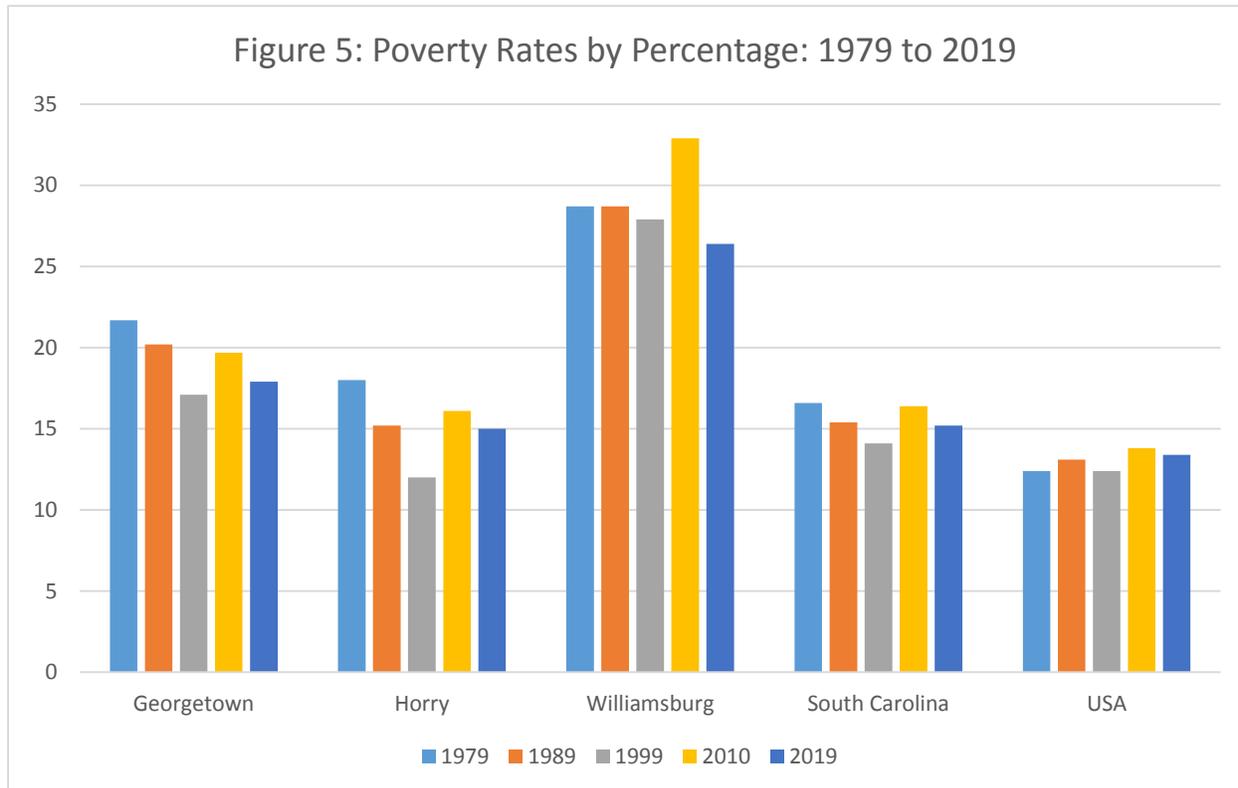
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey, JobsEQ

Poverty is the result of a lack of basic necessities such as health care, good nutrition, education, and essential public services. These needs are different from, but related to, economic development needs. The American Community Survey from 2019 estimates that 15.2% of the population of South Carolina and 13.4% of the nation live in poverty. According to 2018 percent of total population in poverty data from the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, South Carolina is ranked among the 10 states and District of Columbia with the highest poverty rates (15-20%) in the nation. Of the population in the Waccamaw region living in poverty, Horry County had the lowest percentage (15.0%) and Williamsburg County continues to have the highest percentage (26.4%). Williamsburg County is one of the fifteen counties in South Carolina that is designated as a “Persistent Poverty County” by the Economic Research Service.



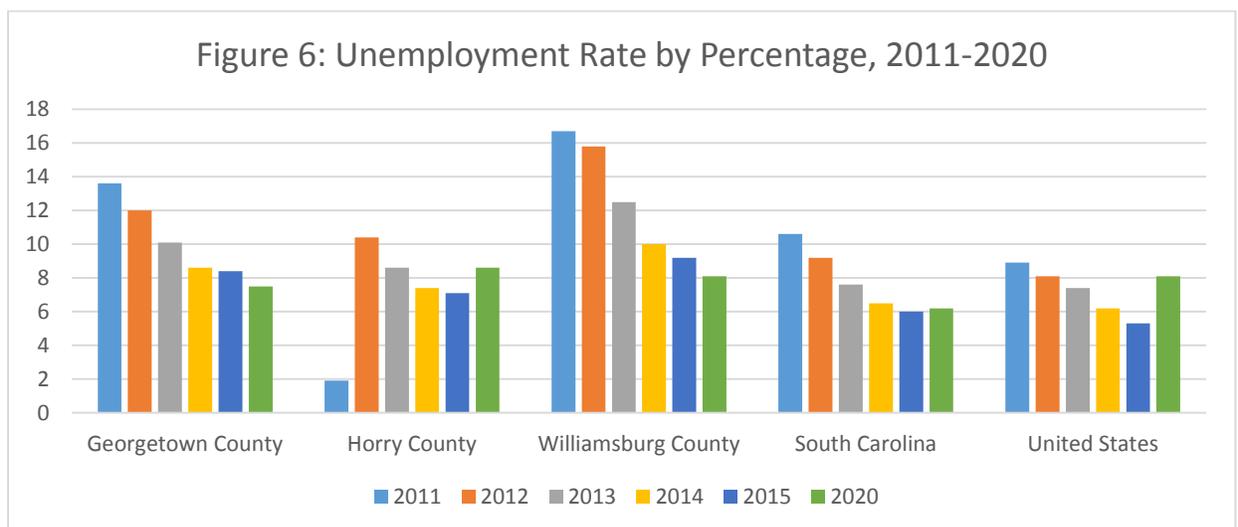
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This means that poverty rates persistently surpassed 20% over the last thirty years. However, it should be noted that Williamsburg’s percentage of poverty is down from 32% in 2012, but is significantly higher than other counties in the region.



Source: US Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2015-2019; JobsEq.

Unemployment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020 LAU.

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Unemployment rates peaked in 2012 and 2013 at the height of the Great Recession. Unemployment rates in each county, the state and the nation all began to take a downward turn in 2012 and continued the turn through the present. In 2011 the state of South Carolina and the Waccamaw Region suffered from double digit unemployment rates. The region's unemployment rate remained low until March 2020. The nation, including the Waccamaw region experienced a major shock to the unemployment rate in 2020 due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Waccamaw experienced double digit unemployment rates for a period, the region made a strong recovery which is illustrated by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020 annual local area unemployment statistics data. The state and the Waccamaw region recovered to single digits but the rates were not as low as the pre-pandemic rates. In 2020 the annual average unemployment rate for the nation was 8.1 percent. Waccamaw's unemployment rate was slightly lower than the national average at 8.06 percent. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Williamsburg County had an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent. Georgetown County's unemployment rate was 7.5 percent, and Horry County's rate was the highest at 8.6 percent (which was higher than both the state and national average unemployment rates).

In 2020 the unemployment numbers skyrocketed throughout the region, state, and country due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic. Statewide work-or-home orders were issued in South Carolina which resulted in business closures and layoffs for thousands of non-essential workers. Horry County experienced the highest unemployment rate in the region and state at 22.5% in April 2020. The unemployment rate for Georgetown County reached a high of 15.1% in April 2020 and Williamsburg reached its highest rate in May 2020 at 12.7%. The state implemented the Accelerate SC program in April 2020 to assist with reopening businesses after the statewide work-or-home orders slowly began to be lifted. Accelerate SC served as the coordinated COVID-19 advisory team to consider and recommend economic revitalization plans for South Carolina. In September 2020, the unemployment rate was down in Horry falling to 6.0% and Georgetown was slightly lower at 5.8%. Williamsburg County had the highest unemployment rate in the region at 6.6%. As most businesses have begun to reopen, the unemployment rates have improved significantly. As of October 2021, the Waccamaw Region averaged 3.8%, slightly higher than the state average of 3.1%, however much lower than the national average of 4.3%. Horry County held the lowest unemployment rate in the region for October at 3.8%, while Williamsburg County had the highest rate at 4.8%. Georgetown County averaged 4.3% unemployment in October. Governor McMaster allowed the state of emergency in South Carolina to expire on June 6, 2021. While the region has continued to see fluctuating numbers of COVID-19 cases, the area has seen continued growth in tourism for the coastal regions, while inland areas remained steady.



Average Wage per Job

The Waccamaw Region continues to fall behind the state in terms of the average wage per job; this gap has widened since 2010. Horry County residents fared worst in the region earning 76.67 percent of the state’s average wage per job in 2020, but earned 93.0 percent in 2010. Williamsburg County has slightly decreased its state wage gap since 2010 levels, however the average wage is still 13.04% lower than the state average wage. All three counties have lost ground in comparison to the 2010 national average wage. *Figure 7* provides the average wage rates for the region’s counties as compared with national and state averages.

Figure 7: Comparison of Average Wage per Job						
Years 2010 and 2020						
	2010	2010		2020	2020	
		% National Average	% State Average		% National Average	% State Average
Georgetown	37,340	79.4	96.2	44,320	62.02	89.44
Horry	36,119	76.8	93.0	37,994	53.17	76.67
Williamsburg	33,252	70.7	85.7	43,095	60.31	86.96
South Carolina	38,821	82.5		49,554	69.35	
United States	47,046		121.2	71,456		144.20

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey; 2015-2019 American Community Survey; Statistica.com, Economy 2020

Housing

In 2019, the region had an estimated 265,664 housing units. This is an estimated 30,641 housing units increase from the total in 2010. The numbers from 2019 also show a 60.1% increase from the 2000 Census (165,919) and 113.6% increase from the 1990 Census (124,359). The region’s housing stock has outpaced population growth. This increase in housing units can be attributed to coastal tourism-based housing construction which has accelerated during the late 1990’s and slowed with the financial crisis of 2008.

As a result, the area’s housing stock is relatively new with over half of the regions’ housing construction coming after 1990. Obviously Horry County, home to Myrtle Beach, has seen the most significant spike in growth. 59.8% of the units were built after 1990 and 40.3% of construction was completed after 2000. Georgetown County has the second highest increase in housing stock with 50.2% of construction completed after 1990 and 24.1% completed after 2000. Williamsburg County, which has seen declining populations in some places, understandably has the lowest increase in housing stock.

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The rural county has seen 48.9% growth in housing stock since 1990 and 24% since 2000. Both Georgetown and Horry County have higher rates of housing stock compared to national averages. The United States as a whole has seen 34.1% growth in new units since 1990 and 20.4% increase in housing construction since 2000.

As the housing market continues to bounce back, the Waccamaw Region will also continue to be an attractive destination for retirement and a smart place for those looking to invest in real estate as homes, apartments and condos increase in value.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the region may see another spike in population and the housing market as many consider relocating from large cities and urban areas to metropolitan, mid-size, and small cities and towns in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the coronavirus quickly spread throughout communities in New York City and other large urban areas partly due to high density residential developments. The pandemic seems to be reinvigorating the desire for single unit housing or duplexes and the ability to “spread out” rather than living so closely to large numbers of others. During Spring 2020, there was a decrease in regional single family building permits (10.6%) but there was an increase in median sales per square foot for both new and existing single family homes of 4.7% and 4.5% respectively. In October 2021, Horry County’s average sale price of a home was up 18.4% since the previous year and up 30.3% in Georgetown County. Williamsburg County experienced a 36.2% increase in average sale price of homes.

Figure 8: Housing Stock

Housing Type	Georgetown	Horry	Williamsburg	SC	US
Total Units	35,345	214,839	15,480	2,351,364	139,686,209
Single-Family	23,504 (66.5%)	116,128 (54.1%)	8,235 (53.2%)	1,581,281 (67.2%)	93,778,298 (67.1%)
Duplex	459 (1.3%)	2,246 (1.0%)	201 (1.3%)	42,193 (1.8%)	4,867,434 (3.5%)
Multi-Family	4,666 (13.2%)	67,983 (31.6%)	820 (5.3%)	364,778 (14.9%)	32,421,942 (23.2%)
Mobile Home	6,645 (18.8%)	28,482 (13.3%)	6,207 (40.1%)	363,112 (15.4%)	8,608,598 (6.2%)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates Data Profiles, Selected Housing Characteristics (2019)



SUMMARY OF AREA CHARACTERISTICS AND SIGNIFICANT TRENDS

The preceding sections provide an overview of the region’s characteristics and background data, however, many of the characteristics have not changed since the 2017-2022 CEDS rewrite. A review of this data reveals the following trends within the Waccamaw Region:

- The Waccamaw Region has experienced tremendous population growth. This growth is projected to continue through the year 2030, with the estimated regional population approaching one-half million within the next twenty years.
- Regional growth has not been evenly distributed. The region’s rural areas, Williamsburg County and western Georgetown County, have seen stable to declining populations. Population growth has not been centered in the area’s municipalities, as most municipalities have also witnessed stable to declining populations.
- The population of the Waccamaw Region is aging. The region’s median age exceeds the state and national average. The aging of the population is attributable to national demographic trends but is amplified by the relocation of retirees to the area.
- Education levels are improving in the region with Georgetown and Horry counties approaching parity with national and state averages in percentage of residents with a high school diploma. Williamsburg County remains below regional, state, and national averages.
- Household incomes in Georgetown and Horry counties are below the state median household income but the gap is greatest for Williamsburg County. Household incomes in Williamsburg remain low with poverty rates persistently so low that it is nationally classified as a persistent poverty county.
- The rate of growth in the region’s housing stock has surpassed the rate of population growth. As a result, the region’s housing stock is relatively new. The region provides a diversity of housing by type and value.
- The lack of interstate access provides an impediment to economic development in the Waccamaw region.
- The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the unemployment rate. However, the region has made substantial improvements to reach pre-pandemic rates. The unemployment rate is declining but there is a labor shortage which has left many jobs throughout the region vacant. The labor shortage is a new and emerging trend that has been illuminated since the end of the federal pandemic unemployment benefits in South Carolina.

STATE OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

FIGURE 9: HISTORICAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

MONTH YEAR	Georgetown County	Horry County	Williamsburg County	South Carolina
AUGUST 2018	4.5%	3.8%	5.9%	3.4%
AUGUST 2019	4.1%	3.9%	4.7%	3.2%
JANUARY 2020	4.2	4.4	5.0	3.0
APRIL 2020	15.1%	22.5%	12.1%	12.2%
MAY 2020	13.4%	18.2%	12.7%	12.0%
JUNE 2020	10.1%	11.4%	11.1%	8.9%
JULY 2020	10.3%	11.0%	11.7%	8.9%
AUGUST 2020	8.1%	8.3%	9.5%	6.7%
SEPTEMBER 2020	5.8%	6.0%	6.6%	4.7%
SEPTEMBER 2021	3.9%	4.0%	5.2%	3.3%

Source: SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Unemployment rates; Alfred Archival Economic Data.

The Waccamaw Region continues to be described as having two economies: that of the Grand Strand, which includes Horry County and parts of Georgetown County, and that of the rural inland which includes western Georgetown County and all of Williamsburg County. The regional economic impact of the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic which began to impact the United States in late March/April 2020, illustrates the “two economies”. The Grand Strand’s economy is fueled by hospitality and retail while the more rural inland portion of the region’s economy is driven by manufacturing and agriculture. This section provides an overview of regional economic conditions.

Hospitality and Tourism are the main economic drivers and employers in Horry County. Hotels, dine-in restaurants, leisure and tourist attractions were shuttered in response to the global health emergency. On April 7, 2020 South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster issued statewide work-or-home orders which closed non-essential businesses and services. The executive order also suspended short-term rentals in South Carolina



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(which included hotels, B&B's, timeshares, etc.) unless the rental was for medical personnel, military personnel, first responders, and truck drivers. The order had an immediate impact on the hospitality and retail industries in Horry County and eastern Georgetown County. As a result, unemployment in Horry County went from 3.9% in March to a high of 22.7% in April. Horry County experienced the greatest unemployment rate in the state as a direct result of COVID-19 business closures and lay-offs. On May 4, 2020 the work-or-home order was lifted but restrictions were placed upon on businesses which often impacted their level of operation and staffing. Governor McMaster implemented the Accelerate SC plan which was an economic recovery plan to safely re-open businesses with guidelines and restrictions that would help “slow the spread” of COVID-19. As a result, unemployment remained high as restaurants, retailers, and other businesses were bound by statewide COVID-19 safety restrictions which prohibited dine-in services, limited occupancy in stores and other places of businesses, instituted social distancing guidelines, and other restrictions.

In 2019 and over previous years, regional employment growth in the Spring/Quarter 2 (March, April, May) has been led by Horry County. However, in 2020 Horry County experienced an employment decrease of -13.2% which was the highest in the region. Hotel occupancy was down -36.8% and retail sales were down -23.5% compared to the previous year. Georgetown County's employment was down -7.4% and Williamsburg was down -8.8% compared to Quarter 2, spring 2019. Retail sales decreased in Georgetown County by -8% and increased by 1% in Williamsburg County during the same period. Tourism and travel for summer and fall 2020 experienced losses/decreases across the board from airport deplanements to hotel occupancy.

In 2021, there was a dramatic change in the regional economy which was driven by the record-breaking tourism which began in the spring, continued through the summer, and has tapered during the fall/winter. Tourism typically slows during the fall/winter, however, during 2021 the fall/winter tourism is on track to rival pre-Covid pandemic rates. Data released from the Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce show that occupancy rates were approximately 30% higher in October 2021 than 2019. The hotel occupancy rates during the summer 2021 was 34% higher than 2019. The unemployment declined as tourism increased in the region. In September 2021 the unemployment rate fell to 4.0% in Horry County, 3.9% in Georgetown County, and 5.2% in Williamsburg County.

Myrtle Beach International Airport set a record for the highest monthly passenger count ever recorded in South Carolina in July 2021. More than half a million (547,933) total passengers arrived/departed from the airport which was an increase of 49.1% from July 2019. Additionally, Myrtle Beach was rated the 3rd most popular summer 2021 destination by the Tripadvisor's 2021 Summer Travel Index. Tripadvisor's 2021 Fall

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Travel Index has rated Myrtle Beach to be the fourth most popular destination in the US.

The region is currently experiencing an unusual shift. Although the unemployment rate has decreased significantly since the height of the pandemic (September 2021 regional unemployment rate 4.0%), there is now a labor shortage. Employers in traditionally low skill low wage industries such as hospitality and retail have struggled to find employees. Those with the most success have increased their wages. However, there is uncertainty in regards to the exact cause of the post-pandemic labor shortage or how long it will last. Other possible factors include: (1) decrease in workers age 55 and over returning to workforce; (2) decrease in women with children returning to workforce due to childcare and remote learning; (3) workers have shifted to other fields. Although there are labor shortages, businesses have fared well economically, especially in the hotel, restaurant, retail, and air travel industries. Employers have had to do more with less employees and pay higher wages. The demand for tourism, leisure, and dining has resulted in one of the busiest years on record. Due to the region's geographic location and warm weather and natural amenities such as beaches, rivers, state parks, and other outdoor recreational attractions, Waccamaw has reaped the economic benefits of a nation-wide post-pandemic desire for Americans to pursue domestic travel to locations with plenty of open space, fresh air, and affordable outdoor leisure and recreational options.

The housing sales prices for newly constructed homes and existing homes continued its strong growth and is the only category that has not seen a decrease at any point since the pandemic began. According to Redfin, In October 2021, Horry County home prices were up 18.4% compared to last year, selling for a median price of \$270K. Georgetown County home prices were up 30.3% compared to last year, selling for a median price of \$417K. The average sale price of a home in Williamsburg County was \$175K which is up 36.2% since last year. The forecast predicts that the demand for housing will continue to grow as the region's population continues growing as well.

Large Regional Employers and Sectors of Employment

Unchanged.

Clusters identified by the SC DEW remains unchanged



ECONOMIC PROFILES OF REGIONAL COUNTIES

Georgetown County



Front Street in Historic Downtown Georgetown

Georgetown County economic profile remains unchanged from the 2017 -2022 CEDS rewrite. The county continues to drop in new business openings and expansions. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic impacted retail and small business in the county resulted in numerous closures and layoffs, however since statewide work-or-home orders have been lifted, the area has seen an increase in economic activity. The largest lay off occurred in 2020 with the closing of Liberty Steel USA, one of the largest employers in the county. Challenging market conditions presented by the pandemic has resulted layoffs of 130 employees and contractors. Liberty Steel Officials reported that the demand for its products had softened considerably since the outbreak of COVID-19. In October 2021, the city of Georgetown announced that Liberty Steel would have until February 2022 to reopen the facility-otherwise the manufacturer would lose their zoning permit, and would be forced to use the land differently.

There have been some positive economic activities within the past year.

- Georgetown County Water & Sewer District was awarded a \$1.45 million EDA disaster grant in November, 2020 (\$364,740 local match funds) for wastewater system improvements in Murrells Inlet.
- In January 2021, an EDA Disaster Grant was awarded to Georgetown County in the amount of \$3.47 million to make storm-water system improvements to protect business in the East Andrews area from severe flooding. The EDA grant will be matched with \$866,977 in local funds.
- The City of Georgetown (Georgetown County as co-applicant) was awarded an EDA Disaster Grant in the amount of \$3.36 million to make upgrades to the storm-water system serving the city's Historic District to prevent rising tidal waters from

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damaging businesses located along the waterfront. The EDA grant will be matched with \$841,353 in local funds.

- The City of Georgetown was awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding in the amount of \$375,000 to improve the West End community. The grant is aimed at ridding unwanted activities in the neighborhood and will allow for redevelopment. Approximately twenty-five properties have been identified to be demolished.
- The Town of Andrews was awarded \$469,876 under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for a water upgrade on N. Beech Avenue. The project requires a local match of \$69,025 resulting in a total cost of \$538,901. Approximately 2,500 linear feet of 1.5 inch galvanized waterline will be upgraded to 6 inch C900 PVC waterline in order to maintain adequate service and alleviate service interruptions for residents on N. Beech Avenue.
- The City of Georgetown was awarded \$453,292 under the CDBG program for water upgrades of the West End District of the city. The project will require a local match of \$36,620 (using in-kind city engineering services), resulting in a total cost of \$489,920. Approximately 2,680 linear feet of new 6 inch PVC water line and 4 new fire hydrants on Bourne, Henry, John, Emanuel, and Davis streets will provide improved water quality, water pressure, and fire protection to the area and surrounding streets.
- Georgetown County was awarded CDBG funding in the amount of \$750,000 for drainage improvements along Lincolnshire Drive. The project requires a local match of \$222,000 and will cost a total of \$972,000. The project will upgrade the drainage system along Lincolnshire Drive and side streets to alleviate storm water flooding for 113 residential units.
- Georgetown County received \$4,379,772 from the U.S. Department of Transportation to rehabilitate their airport runway.
- The Town of Andrews received a USDA Rural Development grant of \$475,000.00. This investment will be used to purchase 18 vehicles and maintenance equipment for the patrol and public works departments. The vehicles and equipment will include several police cars, a service truck, mini excavator, utility van, zero turn mower, and equipment trailers.
- Georgetown County announced that Sherpa 6, Inc. and Sherpa Air will open new facilities at the Georgetown County Airport that will create 43 high-paying specialized



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jobs. The company will invest \$19 million over a five-year period. The announcement comes as an effort to create a new Aviation Economic Development Area at the airport that would attract aviation-centered businesses, increase use at the airport, and raise public awareness about the importance of aviation to the community and the economy. The new development will be located on a previously unused area of the airport's old, closed runway. The project will include constructing new private hangars on the site via a long-term land lease, as well as acquiring aircraft and staffing to support operations. The addition of Sherpa's operations at the airport will double the airport's fuel sales immediately, with further increases in the future. It will also double the airport's overall annual economic impact. Sherpa will also partner to run an apprenticeship program for students at Horry-Georgetown Technical College. Sherpa 6 is a service-disabled veteran-owned technology company that operates with a diverse team of veterans and engineers to analyze and develop solutions for the battlefield at every level of command and control. The small business designs and develops emerging technologies for assessing and integrating technological efficiencies to enhance soldiers' performance on the battlefield.

- Horry Georgetown Technical College continues to build both certificate and associate degree programs for the new Advanced Manufacturing Center at the Georgetown, SC campus. The 30,000 square foot facility is home to welding technology, machine tool technology, and mechatronics technology programs. The \$13.5 million building was funded through an EDA grant, the state capital reserve fund, and contributions from Georgetown County and the Georgetown County School District. Although the center is primarily for college students, high school students are also able to take courses for college credit and companies are able to use the facility for customized trainings for employees. The first class of graduates (20 students) are expected to graduate in Spring 2022. The facility continues to expand its apprenticeship program for Mechatronics and Welding/Pipefitting by signing with EnviroSep, a local manufacturer who will enable students to train and work on the job while earning certifications.

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Horry County



Downtown Myrtle Beach

Horry County's economy has traditionally been divided between agriculture in the western portion of the county and tourism in the areas adjacent to the beach, with scattered light manufacturing. In the last 40 plus years, tourism has outgrown other segments of the county's economy. The Myrtle Beach area has been consistently highly ranked as a premier vacation destination.

Horry County (The Grand Strand) continues to be by far the most popular tourist destination in the state, attracting up to 14 million visitors a year who are drawn to its award-winning beaches, dozens of golf courses, and amusement opportunities ranging from kid-friendly to adult-only. Horry County has been the fastest growing county in South Carolina over the past decade, with its population growing by 30%, according to 2020 Census data just released.

Horry County is now the 4th most-populated county in South Carolina, behind Greenville, Richland, and Charleston counties. Horry County's population has grown farther away from the beach areas, along major highway corridors. Carolina Forest, Conway, Forestbrook, North Myrtle Beach, and Little River have seen the most growth. US census data reveals Myrtle Beach was the second fastest-growing metropolitan area in America between 2010 and 2018 (27.7% growth from 376,555 to 480,891).

Dr. Robert Salvino, Research Economist and the Associate Director of the Grant Center for Real Estate and Economic Development at Coastal Carolina University, said some of the driving factors behind the growth are low cost of living, low taxes, warm weather and a leisure lifestyle for retirees. Based on reports from the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, 65 to 70 percent of Horry County's employment is tourism related.



In 2015, Horry County led all South Carolina counties in travel expenditures, payroll income, and jobs directly generated by domestic travels. Travel expenditures reached nearly \$4.8 billion and accounted for over 83,000 jobs for regional residents based upon the Imagine 2040 report for Horry County. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the US the tourism industry was greatly impacted in Horry County. The Governor instituted Work-or-Home executive orders which also included a periodic halt on short-term rentals and later quarantine periods for those traveling from “hot spot” states. Even after some restrictions were lifted, the hotel, restaurant, and tourism industry continued to suffer in Horry County.

Businesses including entertainment, hospitality, and retail were impacted tremendously by the 2020 pandemic. Many restaurants and retail stores closed permanently while others have had temporary layoffs. A large hotel permanently laid off 67 employees (including sales executives, business managers, and front desk staff) due to dramatic decrease in resort occupancy and sales tours while another laid off 118 employees in July 2020 which is traditionally one of the busiest months of the year. During 2020, retail stores within the shopping malls observed a decline in business and resulted in closures and major layoffs. Broadway at the Beach saw stores and restaurants close throughout the property.

Data from the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce (MBACC) showed significant recovery during 2021 summer tourism season. June, July and August lodging numbers in 2021 were at least 30% higher than 2020 and at least 24% higher than 2019. The Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR) set a record for passenger traffic with more than half a million total passengers in July, the highest monthly passenger count ever recorded at an airport in the history of South Carolina. In July 2021, the number of people arriving on flights, or deplanements, totaled 274,709 compared to 185,485 in 2019. Total passenger traffic, which includes both arriving and departing passengers, totaled 547,933, a 49.1% increase from 367,620 passengers in July 2019, MYR's previous best July on record.

Economic activities and major announcements in Horry County occurring in the last year include:

- The City of Conway was awarded a \$6 million EDA Disaster Grant to make critical wastewater system infrastructure upgrades to protect local businesses and allow for new development in the area by eliminating overflow during flood events. The EDA grant will be matched with \$1.5 million in local funds.

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- The City of Myrtle Beach received a \$55,000 grant from the South Carolina Department of Commerce’s Office of Innovation to support innovation and entrepreneurship downtown. The city project “Building Myrtle Beach’s Local Entrepreneurial Ecosystem” will bring together collaborative spirit to the city’s business and investment environment. The local project will build on existing work of local organizations (TAG, eMyrge, One Grand Strand, and the city of Myrtle Beach) to grow the entrepreneurial ecosystem, build a program to attract additional investors, develop mentor programs to assist with entrepreneurs, develop interactive “edutainment events” to attract entrepreneurs and investors to participate, and develop an informative newsletter with information on regional events and resources for local entrepreneurs and investors. The grant is funded by the Relentless Challenge Grant Program.
- Skutchi Designs, Inc., a national contract office furniture company announced plans to expand operations in Horry County. The more than \$3.5 million investment will create 41 new jobs. Founded in 2005, Skutchi Designs manufactures a variety of workplace products including office cubicles, interior glass walls, office desks, and conference room furniture. The company plans to relocate their facility to Ascott Valley Park in Conway and will include a newly constructed 85,000 square-foot facility. The expansion is expected to be completed by 2022.
- Conway Medical Center has announced and has been approved by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) to construct a new 50 bed hospital, including eight labor and delivery rooms, two C-section rooms, six ICU beds, three operating rooms, and a six-bay infusion center. The \$160-million facility will be constructed on International Drive in Carolina Forest and will offer the full range of services to the community including women’s health, surgical, emergency, cancer care, orthopedics, and imaging. The hospital will create more than 250 new jobs.
- The Funplex, a tropical-themed amusement park announced the construction of a new park located between 14th and 15th avenues on Ocean Boulevard near downtown Myrtle Beach. This park will serve as the first location in South Carolina, with two additional parks located in New Jersey. The park will feature a roller coaster and six rides and will include a walk-up bar, restaurant, arcade, games, and party rooms for private events. When completed in June 2021, the complex will represent a \$6.5 million investment and will create approximately 100 new jobs.



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- The Myrtle Beach Police Department received a Department of Justice grant for \$35,000. This funding will allow the Myrtle Beach Police Department to purchase anti-terrorism barriers to protect pedestrians at events.
- The Loris Fire Department was awarded a \$31,000 grant from the Volunteer Strategic Assistance and Fire Equipment program. This funding will be used to purchase life-saving fire equipment.
- Coastal Carolina University received \$662,905.00 from the National Science Foundation. This award will fund the project entitled, “RUI: Development and application of genomic resources for ascidian taxonomy and holobiont evolution.”
- 235 Holdings, LLC (Conway) received a USDA Rural Development grant of \$20,000.00 under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Loans and Grants program. This investment will be used to help purchase and install HVAC units at their medical building.
- Coastal Carolina University (Conway) received an award of \$258,344.00 from the National Science Foundation. This funding will support the project, entitled “NSF-BSF: The biomechanics of long-distance flight in large beetles: Do smaller individuals fly better?”
- Little River Medical Center, Inc. received \$200,000.00 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Health Center Program Service Expansion School Board Service Sites (SBSS).
- Careteam Plus, Inc (Conway) received \$825,375.00 under the American Rescue Plan Act Funding for Look-Alikes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the following Little River Medical Center, Inc. \$892,601 in funding under the Health Center Infrastructure Support Program.
- Shoreline Behavioral Health Services (Conway) received FY21 funding of \$300,000.00 under the Strategic Prevention Framework – Partnerships for Success from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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- The City of Conway received approximately \$305,000 in Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation funding from the South Carolina Office of Resilience for a Stormwater Master Plan.
- Coastal Carolina University (Conway) received an award of \$10,000.00 from South Carolina Humanities. This award will help sponsor a series of programs featuring dialogue about the persecution of African American and Jewish communities. The project is titled, “Children of our Time: African American and Jewish Lamentations and Longings.”
- Wild West of Myrtle Beach, Inc. has announced an expansion of retail operations in Horry County. The more than \$2.5 million investment will create 40 new jobs over the next five years. Founded in 1996, Wild West is a family owned and operated company that retails and distributes men’s, women’s, and children’s boots and accessories. Located at 3683 Ralph Ellis Boulevard in Loris, the expansion will include a 50,000 square foot distribution center to support the company’s e-commerce division. The Coordinating Council for Economic Development has approved a \$100,000 Rural Infrastructure Fund grant to Horry County to assist with costs related to the project.
- Healthcare services continues to develop in the Waccamaw Region, as numerous projects have been approved. Black River Medical Center is currently under construction in Williamsburg County and will be an extension of the Medical University of South Carolina. The hospital will have 25 licensed beds, full operating and diagnostic services, a 16-bay emergency department and telehealth capabilities. Horry County is also seeing an increase in healthcare with the construction of 3 hospitals: Tideland Health Carolina Bays Hospital is an \$80 million investment and will be located at the interchange of highways 31 and 707 in Socastee. The hospital will have 36 beds and will employ 140 people; McLeod Health plans to construct a 48 bed hospital on its existing campus located at the intersection of Hwy 31 and International Drive. The four level building will be a \$58 million investment; Grand Strand Health plans to expand and renovate South Strand Medical Center to include an emergency room expansion, four new operating rooms and will add another 59 beds. The total investment for the project will be \$146 million.



Williamsburg County



Downtown Kingstree

Williamsburg County's agriculture industry continues to be an important component of the county's economy despite recent declines. In 1996, the county ranked 3rd in the state for cash receipts from crops. In 2012 the county had dropped to 20th, despite a 7.1 percent increase in farm acreage since 2007. Part of this trend may be attributed to the decline of tobacco as the county's premier cash crop. In 2017 there were only 166 jobs in the industry or 1.8 percent of the county's workforce. The largest industries in Williamsburg are manufacturing and healthcare & social assistance which employ 2,216 people and 1,698 people respectively.

Williamsburg County has had very little change since the 2017-2022 CEDS rewrite.

In 2020, Sykes Enterprises, a major employer in Kingstree, closed which resulted in a loss of 99 Jobs during a time when residents were already suffering due to COVID's impact on the economy and job market.

Economic activities and major announcements occurring within the last year include:

- The Town of Hemingway was awarded CDBG funding in the amount of \$750,000 for a main influent sewer line upgrade. The project requires a local match of \$111,845 and will cost a total of \$861,845. The project will upgrade the main

Chapter II. Background

influent gravity sewer line which serves every customer. The existing gravity sewer line begins near the intersection of Oakland Street and N. Main Street and traverses northeastward towards the Flannigan Branch Pump Station.

- The Town of Kingstree was awarded CDBG funding in the amount of \$962,195 for drainage improvements of the Upper Kingstree Branch. The project requires a \$125,495 local match and will cost a total of \$1,087,690. The Kingstree Branch Drainage Improvements project was identified in a 2019 drainage study. Soil erosion, sink holes, property damage, and road damage have occurred as a result of flooding from rain events in the Upper Kingstree Branch. The drainage improvement project will upgrade storm drain pipes as recommended by the drainage study report. Additionally, the open channel will be widened to increase the flow conveyance capability by clearing parts of the canal.
- USDA Rural Development approved a grant of \$97,385.00 for Mary's Home Care Service, Inc (Hemingway). This investment will be used to purchase a seven-passenger van and install a new generator. Mary's Home Care Services, Inc. will be utilizing the van to transport clients to rural health clinics and to offer support for other non-profit organizations that provide access to education and mentoring for rural entrepreneurs. It is anticipated that three small businesses and two non-profit organizations will benefit from this investment.
- USDA Rural Development approved a loan guarantee of \$872,250.00 for OM 2020, LLC (Hemingway). This investment will be used to purchase a gas station with a convenience store and will save 12 existing jobs.
- Citadel Brands LLC, a clothing and apparel company, announced plans to establish operations in Williamsburg County. The more than \$7.5 million investment will create 116 new jobs and is expected to be operational by June 2022. The company's new operations will increase distribution capacity and promote future growth for new products and brands. The Coordinating Council for Economic Development has approved job development credits related to this project. The council also awarded a \$200,000 Rural Infrastructure Fund grant to Williamsburg County to assist with costs related to the project.
- MUSC Health is building a new hospital location in Williamsburg County, north of Kingstree. The new building will have 25 beds, a 16 bay emergency department, and the latest in telehealth. Construction for the hospital, which will be named Black River Medical Center, began in January 2021 and is expected to be open for



operations by January 2023. The plan is for the new hospital to replace two currently in use in Williamsburg County and neighboring Florence County (Lake City).

REGIONAL ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

Economic clusters are defined as groups of businesses or institutions that have some similarity in industry type, method of operations, technology, or supply chain. Businesses or institutions which fall within a cluster may, in some cases, be competitors within the same industry or directly compete for the same raw and finished materials. The clustering of similar or complementary business can be beneficial to the local economy in that they tend to promote a workforce with a compatible skill set, promote focused workforce training programs, and reduce infrastructure expenditures by concentrating needed improvements to smaller geographic areas. Economic clusters can also promote collaboration in production fields leading to greater innovation and efficiency.

The regional economic clusters have not changed since the 2017 -2022 rewrite of the CEDS. Within the Waccamaw Region, several economic clusters were identified. These clusters include those which are prominent and longstanding, as well as those which are emerging. Regional clusters include: Hospitality and Retail, Healthcare-Health Science, Manufacturing, Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics and Agriculture and Forestry. In 2019, The Greater Pee Dee workforce region (includes Waccamaw) developed their first sector strategies business leaders partnership. Despite the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Pee Dee Healthcare Partnership completed its first year and has developed goals and objectives which have included workforce development needs, training needs, and some discussions centered around the continuum of care for patients. The initiatives that will be birthed from this partnership will help grow the workforce by helping post-secondary institutions to better educate and train students for the jobs that are currently available and for jobs of the future. The partnership will help inform secondary schools, community agencies, and the workforce about the types of employment available, preparation needed. In addition, the partnership will show that the healthcare industry is vested in the community and in developing pipelines to economic success through employment in the healthcare industry. Future sector partnerships include the hospitality and manufacturing sectors.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County



OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis is an important planning and economic development tool. This tool requires a review of existing factors and trends, a consideration of likely and possible future consequences, and a review of policy choices that can promote or abate both desired and undesired outcomes. SWOT analysis is considered a first step toward developing achievable goals and objectives.

For the purposes of this plan, the individual components of a SWOT analysis are defined as follows:

Strengths are attributes of the region that are helpful in achieving economic development.

Weaknesses include anything that is harmful, restricts, or limits economic development in the region.

Opportunities are external conditions or circumstances that are helpful in achieving economic development in the region.

Threats are external conditions, circumstances, or events that adversely impact economic development in the region.

The CEDS Strategy Committee reviewed existing economic trends and regional conditions. From this review, regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were identified during the planning process of the 2017-2022 CEDS rewrite and remain unchanged.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Chapter IV
**Strategic Direction/
Action Plan**

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County



STRATEGIC DIRECTION/ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE

An important part of a comprehensive economic development strategy is defining an overarching vision for the region. In this section, goals and implementation strategies are developed to guide future decision making. The Waccamaw Region’s *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2017* contained an overarching vision statement and a series of regional goals and implementation strategies.

The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments’ economic development staff, working through the CEDS Strategy Committee and WRCOG Board of Directors, reviewed the vision statement and goal in preparation for the 2017 CEDS rewrite. Upon review, it was determined that many of the goals and accompanying objectives were still pertinent. In addition to new goals and implementation strategies developed as part of this plan’s rewrite, this section retains many of the goals found in the 2012 CEDS.

REGIONAL VISION STATEMENT

To provide for the sustainable development of the region, local officials, and the public should ensure that:

- The unique natural environment and historic heritage of the region is preserved;
- A stable diversified economy with a viable balance between the industrial, agricultural, and service sectors is achieved;
- The pattern of land uses will achieve the highest degree of health, safety, efficiency, and well-being for all segments of the region;
- The developing areas of the region receive essential utilities and community services that can adequately support future industrial, commercial, and residential growth; and
- A wide range of employment opportunities are available to meet the needs of all the region’s citizens.

REGIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The regional goals and objective identified in the 2017-2022 CEDS rewrite remain unchanged for the 2021 CEDS update.

Action Plan Implementation

The regional Action Plan Implementation remains unchanged.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Chapter V
Evaluation Framework
&
Performance Measures

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County



EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL PLANS

Title 6, Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires that Comprehensive Plans for local communities incorporate an economic development element and priority investment element. These elements identify priority projects needed to, among others, foster economic development. Many of the region's nineteen units of local government have adopted Comprehensive Plans which identify economic development and infrastructure projects. In addition, Horry and Georgetown, and Williamsburg counties, have all adopted capital improvement plans (CIP) which likewise provide project listings.

The Comprehensive Plans and available CIPs from the various jurisdictions were reviewed in preparation for the 2017- 2022 CEDS rewrite. The listing provided in (Fig. 10) is intended to identify projects of regional significance. Where not in conflict with this plan, initiatives at the county or municipality level should consider, in addition to projects listed in (Figs. 11, 12, and 13), those identified by each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan and CIP.

EVALUATION

The evaluation portion of this plan will be an ongoing planning process which will be the responsibility of the economic development organization staff under the guidance of the CEDS Strategy Committee. This section will look at the economic activities that were accomplished during each year as compared to those proposed under the CEDS program.

Key economic development representatives from each county will be asked for an assessment of their county's accomplishments in regards to those proposed in the strategies and implementation portions of the CEDS document. WRCOG staff and, most importantly, the CEDS Strategy Committee will annually review the economic development activities of each county in terms of jobs created, unemployment rate, private and public investment, and other relevant factors to determine the level of performance in regards to this plan.

The CEDS Strategy Committee will continue to review both the long-term and short-term goals and objectives of the plan and may expand or delete portions as necessary. This will be a direct result of a change in the economy, availability of public and private funds, policy changes within each county or the region, and other relevant changes. Short-term goals and objectives should change annually whereas long-term goals should change less often. This will be the responsibility of the committee with the

assistance of other economic development districts, consultants, and university centers. Standards for evaluating each project will include the Economic Development Administration's investment policy guidelines:

- Can the measures be evaluated in an objective, timely, and cost-effective fashion?
- Are the measures focused on an outcome or result (i.e., data and information on the success of a specific process or engagement) rather than an output or activity (i.e., data or information on activities to help achieve an outcome)?
- Do the measures include a clear statement of the results expected?
- Do the measures support regional goals?
- Do the measures allow for meaningful trend or statistical analysis?
- Are the measures challenging but at the same time attainable?
- Are assumptions and definitions specified for what constitutes satisfactory performance?
- Have those who are responsible for the performance being measured been both identified and fully involved in the development of the measures?
- Are the measures tracking trends that are completely within the region's control or will national or global developments impact performance?

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Chapter VI
**Strategic Projects,
Programs, and Activities**

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County

STRATEGIC PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

Priority Regional Projects

Listed below are the priority economic development programs and projects for the region and member counties. These projects have been reviewed by the CEDS Strategy Committee and correspond with the economic development goals outlined in Chapter V of the 2017-2022 CEDS Rewrite. Many of the projects identified in the 2017 CEDS remain unrealized and, as such, are retained by this plan's update.

For each priority program or project, a timeframe is provided which identifies the most likely scenario for achieving implementation: Short-term projects are those in which funding could exist for implementation within a one to two-year period; Medium-term projects includes those with an implementation outlook of two to five years; and, Long-term projects are those with a time horizon of five years or greater:



Figure 10: Priority Regional Projects

Projects	Cost	Funding Source	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
I-73	\$3 billion	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Long-Term
US 521: 4 lane widening from Andrews to Interstate 95	\$300 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Long-Term
US 701: 4 lane from SC-51 to Conway	\$187 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Long-Term
Southern Evacuation Life Line (SELL)	\$300 to 600 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Long-term
US 701/521: Georgetown Bypass	\$90 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Long-Term
Coast RTA: Multi-Modal Facility and Signage	\$20 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Medium-term
I-74: Carolina Bays Parkway	\$552 million (SC-\$185 million NC-\$367 million)	US, SC	SC DOT & NC DOT	Medium/Long-Term
US 17: Bypass Widening from Shetland to Farrow Pkwy.	\$12.7 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Short/Medium-Term
US 17: Intersection improvements along US Business in Garden City	\$19.8 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Short/Medium
US 501: Widening from SC 31 to SC 544	\$41 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Short/Medium-Term
US 501: Realignment in Myrtle Beach	\$13.9 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Short/Medium-Term
US 501: Corridor improvements (Postal Way and Myrtle Ridge Ext.)	\$9 million	US, SC, Local	SC DOT	Short/Medium-Term

Priority Local Projects

Figure 11: Priority Local Projects					
Priority Georgetown County Projects					
Projects	Cost	Funding Source	Responsible Entity	Performance	Time Frame
Seeking funding to expand water to rural areas	N/A	GCWSD, USDA, CDBG, Local	GCWSD, Georgetown County		Long-Term
Establish 17 South Industrial Park	N/A	Local	Georgetown County		Medium-Term
Small Business Engagement	N/A	Local, State, EDA	Georgetown County		Medium-Term
HGTC Advanced Manufacturing Center			HGTC, Georgetown County		Complete

Figure 12: Priority Horry County Projects					
Projects	Cost	Funding Source	Responsible Entity	Performance	Time Frame
Expand Water and Sewer Systems	\$7.5 million	USDA, CDBG, Local	Horry County, GCWSD, BWS, NMBW&S		Long-Term
Airport Expansion 14 Gate Terminal	\$130 million		Horry County/City of Myrtle Beach		Complete
RJ Corman Railroad	\$17.5 million	USDOT/TIGER	Horry County		Short-Term

Figure 13: Priority Williamsburg County Projects					
Projects	Cost	Funding Source	Responsible Entity	Performance	Time Frame
Continue to provide sewer expansion		USDA, CDBG, Local, EDA	Williamsburg County		Long-Term
Continue to expand County water system		USDA, CDBG, Local, EDA	Williamsburg County		Long-Term

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Chapter VII
Economic Resiliency

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Regional Overview: Waccamaw Region Economic Resilience

The Waccamaw Region, along with most areas of the United States, was directly impacted and continues to feel the economic impacts from the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Orders from the Governor of South Carolina began to affect the Waccamaw Region on March 16, 2020 when Governor McMaster ordered the closures of all schools including public and private schools, technical schools, colleges and universities. Additional executive orders included the closure of all non-essential businesses, which significantly impacted theaters, concert venues, and festivals. Restaurants were ordered to limit inside dining, and by April 2020, short-term rentals and vacation rentals were ordered by the governor to be stopped. Additional orders limited groups of no more than 3 people and travelling and work at home orders were imposed. The state implemented the Accelerate SC program in April 2020 to assist with reopening businesses after the statewide work-or-home orders slowly began to be lifted. Accelerate SC served as the coordinated COVID-19 advisory team to consider and recommend economic revitalization plans for South Carolina. By June 6, 2021, Governor McMaster allowed the emergency declaration for COVID-19 to expire. By this time, unemployment numbers had greatly improved but were still above pre-pandemic levels.

Horry and Georgetown counties are both tourism-driven economies and most businesses depend on spring and summer tourism to survive. The Executive Orders from the Governor's office greatly impacted businesses in both Horry and Georgetown counties. At its peak in April 2020, Horry County, the largest tourism and hospitality industry within the Waccamaw Region saw unemployment rates escalate to nearly 23% which was nearly double the average unemployment rate for South Carolina. Georgetown and Williamsburg counties also saw significant increases in unemployment peaking in April 2020 (Georgetown County-15.1% and Williamsburg County-12.1%). These spikes in unemployment were significant, as the average unemployment rate pre-COVID (January 2020) for the Waccamaw Region was approximately 4.5%, which was still 1.5% higher than the state average (at 3%). In September 2020, the unemployment rate was down in Horry falling to 6.0% and Georgetown was slightly lower at 5.8%. Williamsburg County had the highest unemployment rate in the region at 6.6%. As most businesses have begun to reopen, the unemployment rates have improved significantly. As of October 2021, the Waccamaw Region averaged 3.8%, slightly higher than the state average of 3.1%, however much lower than the national average of 4.3%. Horry County held the lowest unemployment rate in the region for October at 3.8%, while Williamsburg County had the highest rate at 4.8%. Georgetown County averaged 4.3% unemployment in October.



Chapter VII. Economic Resiliency

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the region's other major economic sectors (Healthcare and Manufacturing) were also impacted. Healthcare facilities saw record levels of patients, with regional hospitals such as Conway Medical Center, Grand Strand Health, McLeod Health, and Tidelands Health reaching or nearing 100% occupancy. The pandemic increased the demand for additional healthcare workers even more than previous years. Many hospitals have had to rely on travelling nurses and lab technicians to assist with the increased volume of patients. The interruption in colleges and technical schools exasperated the problem, as students in healthcare related occupations earned certifications and degrees later than anticipated.

All major industry sectors in the Waccamaw (Healthcare, Hospitality, and Manufacturing) have seen significant workforce issues. While all sectors have experienced issues with finding and retaining talent, Hospitality has seen the most difficulties as this sector experienced higher than normal tourism, while having lower numbers of employees. The lack of J-1 student Visas during the 2021 summer season created additional workforce issues. In 2019, the Myrtle Beach area hosted approximately 3,200 international J-1 visa students, however the 2021 summer season saw only 729. The need for more workers in the Hospitality sector has driven up wages. Many fast food and retail workers are seeing \$15 per hour, rather than \$9-\$12 per hour pre-Pandemic. In addition, housekeeping positions and maintenance positions were in high demand throughout the 2021 summer season, with many employers offering sign-on bonuses and above average wages.

The Manufacturing sector has seen the least amount of impact from COVID-19, as many manufacturers in the Waccamaw Region have continued operating with little disruption. Some manufacturers such as Laudisi, Embroidery Solutions, and Hemingway Apparel saw increased demand for their products, while others such as Liberty Steel in Georgetown County and Sykes in Williamsburg County were forced to permanently close-these two closures resulted in approximately 200 jobs lost.

Regardless of the industry, all closures have impacted small businesses, especially retail and restaurants. Many business have permanently closed which has been devastating to smaller communities such as Kingstree, in Williamsburg County. This county, one of the poorest in the state, saw the loss of Sykes, a call center (categorized under Manufacturing sector), and also the loss of a chain restaurant and chain clothing store. Although the area lost a major grocer, it was later replaced with a comparable store just months later. Food and supplies are essential for the residents of Williamsburg County, and any loss can create shortages in the area. Horry and Georgetown counties also saw significant numbers of restaurants and retail stores, mostly small businesses close.

In October of 2015 South Carolina experienced a historic rainfall and flooding event that stemmed from a low-pressure system that funneled tropical moisture from Hurricane Joaquin. As a result, an estimated 52 dams statewide were impacted and over 541 roads were closed. Some of these roads even collapsed due to the massive amount of flowing water.

The Waccamaw Region was among the most severely impacted, with some areas receiving almost 2 feet of rain in a week. What made this event even more severe was its impact on our most vulnerable populations. Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties were the places in most need of aid after looking at the amount of damage along with their social vulnerabilities. Williamsburg County is a designated Persistent Poverty County and also has over 41% of its population living in mobile homes. These mobile homes are prone to more damage and also much harder to repair than single family homes. When the impacts of poverty and race, a lack of wealth, and the percent of age dependent population (children under the age of 5 and adults over the age of 65) are also added to the equation, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties were the most vulnerable and devastated areas in the state.

In total, this disaster disrupted business up to 6 weeks in some areas. In response to this event, local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) (Winyah Bay VOAD – Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties, Waccamaw VOAD – Horry County) developed Long Term Recovery Groups to guide the process of rebuilding as well as setting up a framework to aid in recovering in a faster manner in the future.

Before this flooding event, the last major disaster to affect the Waccamaw Region was Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Damage from Hurricane Hugo in South Carolina was estimated at \$5.9 billion, which ranks as the strongest and costliest hurricane in the history of the state. There were also 35 related deaths. More recently, in 2014 there was a significant ice storm that affected the area. South Carolina was declared a disaster area and 11% of the state's timber was lost. \$360 million in damages made it the worst storm since Hurricane Hugo. Foresters were able to salvage 15% of the timber and 10% of the value.

As the region continues to recover from the October 2015 flood event and hurricane Matthew on October 08, 2016 the region experienced an unusual snow and ice storm in January 2017. The region continued to experience unusual weather conditions with hurricane Florence on September 14, 2018 which resulted in major flooding in some parts of Horry County. Horry County (Conway, Longs, Bucksport, and Socastee) reached \$40 million in damage to homes and businesses due to the Waccamaw and Little Pee Dee rivers flooding from intense rainfall during the hurricane.



Most recently, the region experienced hurricane Dorian on September 5, 2019. The region was impacted by wind, flooding, isolated tornados, and beach erosion. Businesses, government, and schools were also closed due to the hurricane. It is estimated that hurricane Dorian impacted SC's tourism industry by about \$117 million in visitor spending. According to an article in the Post and Courier, the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism's reported that South Carolina has lost \$438 million in tourism due to hurricanes and flooding over the last 5 years. Although the Waccamaw Region avoided catastrophic hurricanes in 2020, flooding continued to be an issue for the region, especially along the Waccamaw River in Horry and Georgetown counties. The Socastee area saw homes along the river flood again in February of 2020-making this the fifth time some area homes have been flooded over the past 6 years.

Climate Change and Economic Resiliency

The National Climate Assessment predicts average temperatures to increase by 4 to 8 degrees by 2100. This climate change will bring sea level rises and increased vulnerability to flooding, especially our low-lying coastal areas. Issues such as storm surge, beach erosion, and reduction of wetlands will have a significant impact on not only the tourism industry but also our agricultural industry due to salt-water intrusion. The increase of temperature by a few degrees will also increase the number of algae blooms, increase the number of bacteria that could infect humans via shellfish, and decrease yield on crops such as dairy, corn, cotton, soybeans and rice. Economic resiliency will become more important in the coming years as our economy and climate change over time. The Waccamaw Region continues to implement new mitigation plans and other emergency management strategies to recover from, withstand, or avoid shocks to the environment and economy.

Mitigating the Impacts of Future Storm Events on the Waccamaw Region's Economy

Georgetown County is StormReady and TsunamiReady. The National Weather Service manages both of these programs. The StormReady program helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property during severe weather events. The TsunamiReady program, which was modeled after the StormReady program, helps communities minimize the risk posed by tsunamis through better risk assessment, planning, education and warning communications. Waccamaw leads the state in fire safety as 15 of the 33 Firewise Communities in South Carolina are located in Horry (12) and Georgetown (3). The Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire. Georgetown County has multiple hazard mitigation plans in place including: expanding current

Geographic Information Systems, encouraging wind-resistant design techniques in new residential construction, new dunes program that will reduce flooding and storm impact, and continued efforts to educate the public with educational materials, advertising and promoting the availability of flood insurance, and coordinating Emergency Operations Center activities/drills that encourage citizens to become more prepared. Georgetown County Emergency Management also trains volunteers through their CERT Program and coordinates evacuation drills.

Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties have a very detailed comprehensive emergency management plan. Their comprehensive plan breaks down into six sections. The first is preparedness which discusses required training, exercises, and public information, including an outreach plan. The second section is response which involves emergency operations plan and the logistics plan.

Recovery is the next section and this is where their short-term recovery plan is laid out. The fourth section is mitigation. In this section they discuss mitigation strategies for anything ranging from storm surge to cyberterrorism. After that is the continuity of operations plan and the final section includes hazard or function specific plans. Horry County Emergency Management runs a very active Facebook page in coordination with their plans to engage with the local community. Horry County also has a VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters) organization and has designed plans for readily accessible facilities and Disaster Recovery Centers where citizens may go for information on assistance programs run by FEMA or the SBA.

Williamsburg County has a very detailed and goal-oriented hazard mitigation plan to become a more resilient community as well. The four major goals of their mitigation plan are:

- Williamsburg County has no significant disruption in the functioning of the County's infrastructure and the continuity of local government operations in the face of a disaster.
- Williamsburg County is capable of initiating and sustaining emergency response operations during and after a disaster.
- Williamsburg County and incorporated towns are capable of developing, implementing, and maintaining effective mitigation programs.
- All sectors of community work together to create a disaster resistant County.

This plan includes a long list of action items such as: strengthening utility poles/conductor fixtures, establish procedures for construction or provision of "storm shelters", installing a flash flood warning system, conducting an engineering study on wind vulnerability of critical facilities, and researching the feasibility of tax relief/financial incentive program to encourage neighborhood residents or property owners to retrofit buildings. Williamsburg County received a grant in April 2015



FEMA to update their hazard mitigation plan. To aid in making the Socastee area of Horry County more resilient to flooding events which have plagued the area over the past 6 years, the county announced in June 2020 the intention to use HUD funding to help relocate residences in the flood prone area.

The region has taken steps to improve/upgrade the infrastructure in some areas that have experienced flooding during past weather events. The City of Georgetown received an EDA disaster grant to make stormwater improvements in its Historic District which is also the City's economic hub or central business district. Georgetown County received an EDA disaster grant to make drainage improvements in East Andrews. Georgetown County also received a CDBG grant to upgrade the drainage system in the Lincolnshire Drive community which has suffered from residential flooding even when rain events are not named storms. The Town of Kingstree, county seat of Williamsburg's county, has received CDBG funding to make drainage improvements to the Upper Kingstree Branch which is a canal that runs throughout the town and has caused significant disruption and damage due to flooding. The City of Conway received an EDA disaster grant to make wastewater system infrastructure upgrades to protect local businesses and allow for new developments in the area by eliminating overflow during flood events. The City of Conway received Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation funding from the South Carolina Office of Resilience for a Stormwater Master Plan. Horry County received funds from South Carolina Disaster Recovery Office launched a recovery and flood home buyout program in the Socastee Community (located near the Waccamaw River) for areas that have suffered from repeated flooding. The City of Conway has installed permeable pavement (porous solution that allows water to drain through it) on Laurel Street (located in the downtown area) as a way to test out innovative strategies for flood mitigation in the downtown area. The City is testing the pavement as it actively researches and proactively takes steps to mitigate flooding and flood damage in the future.

Mitigating the Impacts of Future Pandemic Events on the Waccamaw Region's Economy

The 2020 pandemic has compounded economic injury to the Waccamaw Region which had already experienced several years (2015-2019) of consecutive natural disasters ranging from flooding events, winter weather events, and hurricanes. Each year the region's businesses and industries experienced damages and loss due to the disasters. The workforce has also been impacted as well through loss of pay from job closures (temporary and permanent) and the toll of their personal loss of income, damaged/destroyed homes and other property. The local governments also experienced loss of various streams of tax revenue as a result of the weather disasters and the pandemic.

The regional economy has endured and is now in the recovery and resiliency phase which will take a collaborative approach. In order for the region to become more resilient, it is imperative that increased regional communication, regional strategic planning and development occur. To aid in the regional approach to recovery and resiliency, In July 2020, the Waccamaw Region received a \$400,000 CARES Act Supplemental EDA Award for EDD Partnership Planning which help strengthen its ability to help the region's local governments, businesses, and other stakeholders prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic. The grant is funding the development of a regional disaster recovery and resiliency economic development plan with a focus on pandemic recovery and resiliency. In addition, Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments partnered with 29 other counties in South Carolina to offer \$8.2 million in low-interest loans through the SC Business Loan Fund (SCBLF), available to businesses and agribusinesses affected by COVID-19 (Catawba Regional Development Corporation is administering the SCBLF on behalf of the partnering counties, including the Waccamaw Region). Funding has been provided from the U.S. Economic Development Administration as part of the CARES Act. To date, approximately \$1.5 million has been approved for area businesses in Waccamaw.

The region is currently experiencing an unusual shift. Although the unemployment rate has decreased significantly since the height of the pandemic (September 2021 regional unemployment rate 4.0%), there is now a labor shortage. Employers in traditionally low skill low wage industries such as hospitality and retail have struggled to find employees. Those with the most success have increased their wages. However, there is uncertainty in regards to the exact cause of the post-pandemic labor shortage or how long it will last. Other possible factors include: (1) decrease in workers age 55 and over returning to workforce; (2) decrease in women with children returning to workforce due to childcare and remote learning; (3) workers have shifted to other fields. Although there are labor shortages, in 2021 the hospitality industry experienced its greatest seasons on record (avg. 92% occupancy rates) and the Myrtle Beach International Airport was the busiest airport in South Carolina. Additionally, Myrtle Beach was rated the 3rd most popular summer 2021 destination by the Tripadvisor's 2021 Summer Travel Index.

Although there has been some recovery, there is a need for continuous focus on economic resiliency. The region continues to see the need to diversify its economy to lessen the impact of future economic downturns and to meet the needs of a growing population (particularly in Horry County) and aging population. The region understands that a diversified economy will strengthen its resiliency. An improved infrastructure and willing, available, and skilled workforce are also needed. Horry Georgetown Technical College, Williamsburg Technical College, and Coastal Carolina University are key partners in the preparation of a skilled workforce. Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments continues working throughout the region to build the



required communication, collaboration, and planning needed to assist the local governments, economic developers, and other strategic partners with economic development activities which promote the development of new high-paying jobs. The region's CEDS is used to identify development needs and to prioritize development activities.

In an effort to mitigate economic impacts related to the healthcare and emergency sectors, Waccamaw Regional has been developing plans for a First Responders Pipeline for Georgetown County, where there is a great need for additional Firefighters and EMT's, who are often at the forefront of emergencies, including pandemics. According to SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), Horry County alone needs an additional 155 hospital beds by 2024 to keep up with the increasing population. Grand Strand Health, McLeod Health, Tidelands Health, and Conway Medical Center have all made proposals to construct new hospitals in Horry County to help mitigate the need for more hospital beds. In addition, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) began the construction of Black River Medical Center in Williamsburg County. Black River Medical will replace Williamsburg Regional Hospital in Williamsburg County as well as Lake City Community Hospital in neighboring Florence County. The hospital will have 25 licensed beds, full operating and diagnostic services, a 16-bay emergency department and telehealth capabilities.

The pandemic shined a light on the region's insufficient broadband infrastructure. The demand for remote work and education highlighted areas within the region which lack broadband. The broadband infrastructure is reflective of Waccamaw's "two economies". It is imperative that steps are taken to close digital divide within the region as those most vulnerable, lowest income, rural areas are most often the areas within the region with the greatest lack of broadband infrastructure. In an effort to mitigate the economic, educational, and social impacts related to lack of access to broadband the region has sought funding opportunities to assist with extending broadband to hard to reach rural areas of the region. Williamsburg county (along with 21 other rural counties and 16 different internet providers in the state) received grant funding from the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff to expand broadband internet connection with an anticipated project completion date of October 2022. Horry Telephone Cooperative (HTC) received a grant from the South Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Program to support its expansion high-speed broadband internet connection to a rural part of Georgetown County (North Santee Community and South Island Community). According to FCC data, 27.3% of the rural areas of Georgetown are without broadband access. The region will continue working to secure additional funding from state and federal sources to expand broadband access throughout Waccamaw.

Although the hospitality industry is experiencing a grand recovery in 2021, the region experienced the economic setback due to its reliance on hospitality and tourism. In order to become more resilient, the region must continue to take efforts to diversify its economy. There are emerging trends that are growing in Myrtle Beach. There is a focus on growing its sports tourism industry as well as investing in and developing its Arts and Innovation District. The Arts and Innovation District focuses on growing tech jobs, small businesses, and arts. The City of Myrtle Beach and Horry Telephone Cooperative (HTC) also began the HTC Aspire Hub (located in the downtown area) as a new co-work space to house entrepreneurs and small business owners. The HTC Aspire Hub is located in a renovated building downtown.

The City of Myrtle Beach as well as others within the region have already begun or are planning to pursue downtown revitalization and mainstreet improvement/revitalization projects in an effort to renew interest and revitalize economic development in the center of their municipalities. The downtown business district revitalizations and renovations being used as ways to recruit businesses, bring new jobs, and improve the economy.

Georgetown County and Williamsburg County continues to help diversify the regional economy by bring diversified manufacturing to the region. Horry Georgetown Technical College continues to build both certificate and associate degree programs for the new Advanced Manufacturing Center at the Georgetown, SC campus. Citadel Brands LLC, a clothing and apparel company, announced plans to establish operations in Williamsburg County. The more than \$7.5 million investment will create 116 new jobs and is expected to be operational by June 2022. The company's new operations will increase distribution capacity and promote future growth for new products and brands.

Georgetown County is taking effort to help diversify the economy by taking steps to create a new Aviation Economic Development Area at the airport. It announced a new business will be moving into their airport. The business, Sherpa Air will create 43 high-paying specialized jobs. Sherpa will also partner to run an apprenticeship program for students at Horry-Georgetown Technical College.

Additional mitigation efforts that will be needed to help make the region more resilient, include an improved infrastructure. Water and Sewer expansions are still needed in some rural areas of the region. In order to recruit businesses and employees, critical infrastructure is needed. Work has begun on upgrading the stormwater systems and drainage in various parts of the region. Broadband infrastructure needs to be expanded in some areas and upgraded in other parts of the region. More roads, specifically interstate access is needed in the region. The pandemic highlighted the need for interstate access as the Waccamaw region was at the end of the supply chain due to lack of easy access via interstate. The region is quickly growing, as a result, more healthcare facilities are needed. This issue is being mitigated right now.



Chapter VII. Economic Resiliency

The Waccamaw Region experienced a disaster each year since 2015. The counties in the region have updated plans such as mitigation plans, resiliency plans, and emergency response plans. However, although the plans have been developed, the region has learned over the years, that regional communication, cooperation, and collaboration are key to economic resiliency. Each county and municipality within the region gathers strength from each other; none can bounce back better on their own. Currently Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is writing the regional disaster and economic resiliency plan and the data collection has clearly shown that building relationships during “blue sky days” will make the “black cloud days” much easier and the road to recovery and resiliency won’t be traveled alone, because the relationships will have been made to help each other along the way.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Waccamaw Region



Chapter VIII
Appendices

Georgetown County • Horry County • Williamsburg County

Appendix A

References

Georgetown County

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Waccamaw Economic Outlook

Williamsburg County Economic Development Board

Williamsburg County School District

WMBF News

WPDE

Appendix B

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments

Board of Directors

Board Member	Representative County
Rep. Carl L. Anderson	Georgetown County
Hon. Brendon Barber, Sr.	Georgetown County
Hon. Lillie Jean Johnson	Georgetown County
Hon. Frank McClary	Georgetown County
Mr. Jerry Oakley (Secretary)	Georgetown County
Ms. Peggy Wayne	Georgetown County
Hon. Alma White	Georgetown County
Hon. Barbara Blain-Bellamy (Vice-Chairwoman)	Horry County
Mr. Robert F. Childs	Horry County
Hon. Cam Crawford	Horry County
Rep. Heather Crawford	Horry County
Ms. Jean Dozier	Horry County
Hon. John Gardner	Horry County
Rep. Tim McGinnis	Horry County
Mr. Leslie McIver, Sr.	Horry County
Mr. W. Paul Prince	Horry County
Hon. Tyler Servant	Horry County
Hon. Jean Timbes	Horry County
Mr. Randal Wallace	Horry County
Hon. Charlie Fulton	Williamsburg County
Mr. Harry Huggins	Williamsburg County
Former Lt. Gov. J. Yancey McGill (Chairman)	Williamsburg County
Mr. Andy McKnight	Williamsburg County
Sen. Ronnie A. Sabb	Williamsburg County
Hon. Darren Tisdale	Williamsburg County

Appendix C

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments

CEDS Committee

Board Member	Affiliation and Title
Andy Roberts	Agru America, Corporate Purchasing Manager
Jan Harper	Tidelands Health, Senior VP and CHRO, Human Resources
Rochelle Geathers	Wal-Mart, Front End Manager
Peg Skalican	Pittsburg Institute of Aeronautics, Campus Director
Bonita Engleman	Ocean Lakes Service Corp, Vice President – Human Resources, Training & Safety
Henry Poston (Chairman)	Palmetto Synthetics, President
Chris Battle	Personal Touch Beauty and Barber College, President
Verlon Wulf	Carolina Cool, President Registered Apprenticeship
Frank Espinal	Ship On Site Owner and General Manager
Jason Greene	Habitat for Humanity, Executive Director
Sherrill Walker Smith	Georgetown Container Division IP, Executive Administrator
Wilhelmina Pressley	The Williamsburg Co. Education Faculty Association, Hemingway High School
Wallace Evans	A Father's Place, Executive Director
Greg Mitchell	Horry Georgetown Technical College, VP of Continuing Education
Etta Carter	Horry County Adult Education, Director
Kim Burke	SC DEW, Regional Manager
Allen Abernethy	Williamsburg Regional Hospital, CEO