

2018-2023

*The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Region*

## **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

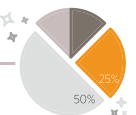


*Prepared for the Economic Development Agency  
By the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments*

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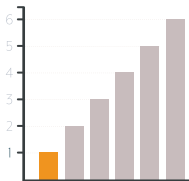
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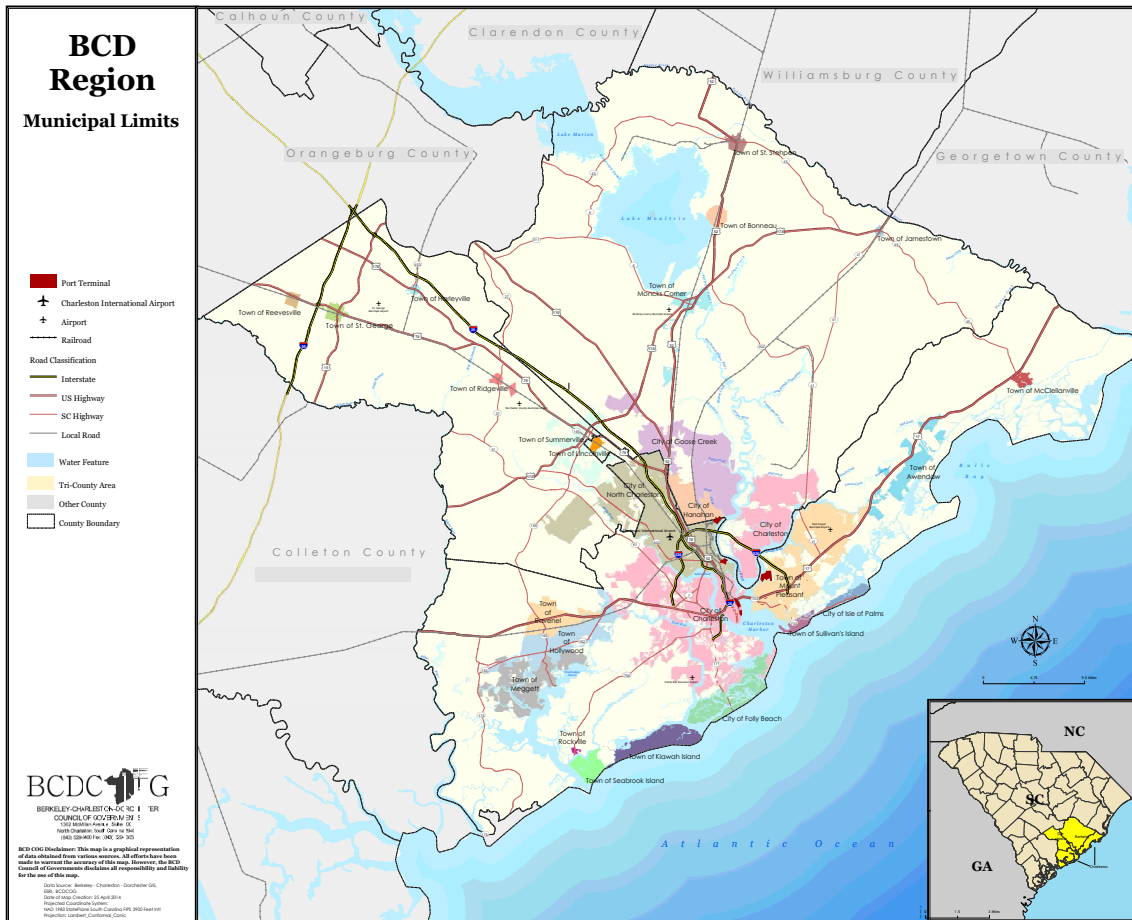
*The Bell Tower of St. George's Anglican Church, Dorchester County*



## **SECTION 1:** *Overview + Background of the BCD Region*



## OVERVIEW + BACKGROUND



The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Region, named for the three counties that make up the area, represents a diverse mix of communities, cities, towns and varied economies that are all contributing to the rapid and steady pace of growth in the area. According to the Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) an estimated 45 new residents move to the Region every day.<sup>1</sup>

The BCD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will guide effective economic development in the region through “a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process.” The idea of the CEDS was created by the Economic Development Agency (EDA) in order to “successfully serve as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration.”<sup>2</sup> With a focus on establishing a “strategy-driven plan” to aid in the prosperity of the Region, the CEDS also exists to promote economic resiliency, which will aid in addressing future downturns and natural disasters.

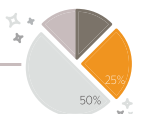
### Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

The BCD Council of Governments (BCDCOG) is the regional government that facilitates coordination, cooperation and implementation across multiple

jurisdictions in the tri-county area. Local governments in Berkeley and Charleston Counties first created a Regional Planning Commission in 1968 to encourage a regional approach to regional issues. Dorchester County government elected to join the Commission three years later. In 1976, the organization changed its name to the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments. Governed by a board of 57 members, consisting of a mix of elected and appointed members from each of the counties and municipalities within the Region, these leaders work together to make decisions which aid in guiding the future of the area.

<sup>1</sup> Charleston Regional Development Alliance. 2017. “Population and Demographics.” <http://www.crda.org/local-data/population-demographics/>

<sup>2</sup> Economic Development Agency. 2017. “CEDS Content Guidelines: Overview.” <https://www.eda.gov/ceds/>



The BCDCOG provides various services to the Region, these include:

- *Regional Planning*
- *Transportation Planning*
- *Workforce Development*
- *Economic Development*
- *Community Development*
- *Comprehensive Planning*
- *Regional Water Quality Management*

Specific examples of these services range from current planning for small towns to implementation of a future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line between Downtown Charleston and Summerville.

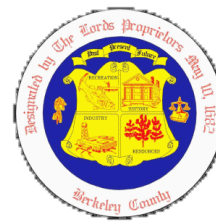
### *The CEDS Steering Committee*

The Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB) was selected to serve as the CEDS steering committee. The TWDB was chosen because the composition of its membership coordinates with the committee requirements established by the EDA. All 25 of the individual board members are senior management or executive-level decision makers in the public and private sectors, and many of them serve the community as leaders on other boards and agencies.

### *Supplementary and Supporting Documents*

There are several resources and plans which aim to guide the Region from not only an economic standpoint, but also from a growth and social equity perspective. These will be mentioned later in the Action Plan section of the document.

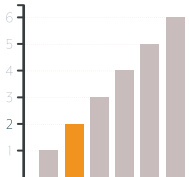
- *Our Region Our Plan (BCDCOG)*
- *The Neck Prosperity Plan (BCDCOG)*
- *One Region (CRDA)*
- *Berkeley County Comprehensive Plan*
- *Charleston County Comprehensive Plan*
- *Dorchester County Comprehensive Plan*
- *TWDB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional Plan*



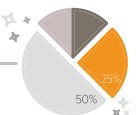




*"This is truly a landmark moment and truly a great day in South Carolina as we welcome Volvo Cars' first manufacturing plant to our state."  
-Nikki Haley, Ambassador to the U.N., Former South Carolina Governor*



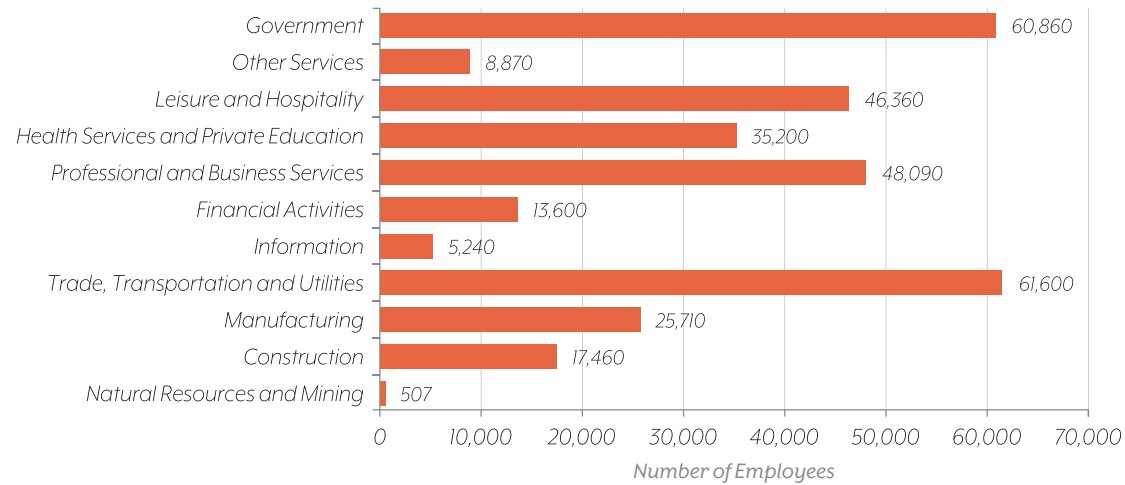
## SECTION 2: Economic Profile of the BCD Region



MAJOR SECTORS IN THE REGION

The BCD Region’s economy benefits greatly from a diverse economic base. These industries range from hospitality to aeronautical manufacturing to a burgeoning information technology sector, which has been coined, “Silicon Harbor.” Each county in the region brings a variety of industries to the table, creating a strong, cohesive economic foundation for the Region. To further illustrate the attractiveness and importance of the Region to businesses, during FY 2015-2016, a \$3.9 billion economic impact has been made in recent announcements of corporate expansions and relocations to the area.<sup>3</sup>

Fig. 1: Industries throughout the BCD Region



PUBLIC SECTOR		PRIVATE SECTOR	
Company	Employees	Company	Employees
Joint Base Charleston	20,000	The Boeing Company	7,400
Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)	13,000	Roper St. Francis Healthcare	5,500
Charleston County School District	6,000	Trident Health System	2,500
Berkeley County School District	6,000	Walmart, Inc.	2,300
Dorchester County School District II	3,500	Robert Bosch LLC	1,800

Source: Center for Business Research, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce—6/2017

<sup>3</sup> Charleston Regional Development Alliance. 2017. “Local Data--Location and Expansion Log.” <http://www.crda.org/local-data/>



## Aerospace

Known as one of the fastest-growing U.S. mid-size metros for aircraft manufacturing, the BCD Region has continued to grow in this industry since the arrival of The Boeing Company in 2009. Boeing's footprint in the region is significant, as it has two corporate campuses, the Main Campus and North Campus. The Main Campus, the exclusive manufacturer of the 787-10, hosts the 787 Dreamliner final assembly and delivery line and paint facility. The 777X design and engineering integration division is located on the North Campus.

With Boeing's presence, and in the broader scope of the aerospace industry in the BCD Region, a host of suppliers have followed. Some of these suppliers include a partnership between General Electric (GE) Aviation and SKP Group, Eaton, AMT Senior Aerospace and Parker. Aside from Boeing suppliers, other niche sectors have emerged such as subassembly operations and advanced materials manufacturers and fabricators.<sup>4</sup>



## Automotive

For more than a decade, the state of South Carolina has seen significant investment from automotive industry titans such as Michelin and BMW in the Greenville-Spartanburg area. The BCD Region is certainly not an exception. In 2015, the groundbreaking for the 2.3 million square-foot Volvo manufacturing facility commenced. The plant is expected to bring an estimated 4,000 jobs and is scheduled to come online by the end of 2018. In addition to the Volvo plant, Daimler initiated its \$500 million expansion to the existing Mercedes-Benz Plant, which produces the popular Sprinter vans. The plant will begin full-production in 2018 and plans on hiring more than 1,300 workers.

Currently in the Region, there are various other companies making an economic impact, which include, Bosch, Turbo Technologies, Stoba, Cummins Turbo Technologies and many others.

## Information Tech

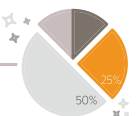
Known recently as "Silicon Harbor," Charleston has experienced exponential growth in the information technology sector. With more than 250 tech companies such as Blackbaud, Google, Blue Acorn, and Boomtown!, the Region has earned a #1 ranking for mid-size metro for IT jobs growth from 2010-2015.<sup>5</sup> It has also been recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau as the #1 mid-size metro for millennials (ages 25-34), the largest living generation in the country. The Region offers a labor force of more than 350,000 employees, which is currently growing four times faster than the U.S. average.<sup>6</sup>

The military sector also has a presence in the information technology industry, thus adding to the diversity of this specific industry. With more than 18,000 ex-military, civilian and government employees in this sector, software development and other high-tech systems are currently being developed. A major player in this field and in the Region is the U.S. Space & Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic (SPAWAR).

<sup>4</sup> Charleston Regional Development Alliance. 2017. "Aerospace/Aviation." [http://www.crda.org/assets/pdf/target-industries/Charleston\\_SC\\_Economic\\_Profile\\_Aerospace.pdf](http://www.crda.org/assets/pdf/target-industries/Charleston_SC_Economic_Profile_Aerospace.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Avalanche Consulting Headlight Data System. 2016. <http://www.avalancheconsulting.com/our-services/headlight-online-portals/>

<sup>6</sup> Charleston Regional Development Alliance. 2017. "Information Technology." [http://www.crda.org/assets/pdf/target-industries/Charleston\\_SC\\_Economic\\_Profile\\_Info\\_Tech.pdf](http://www.crda.org/assets/pdf/target-industries/Charleston_SC_Economic_Profile_Info_Tech.pdf)





## Life Sciences

Life sciences, which includes a wide range of “niche” sectors including health care, pharmaceutical manufacturing, research laboratories and many others, has become an emerging industry in the Region, especially in Charleston. The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) is a major source of the subsequent investment that has occurred in the Region. The CRDA estimates that the MUSC annually attracts more than \$200 million in research funding. Additionally, MUSC is the second largest public employer in the Region, with more than 13,000 employees.

## Logistics

Charleston’s existence as a trade port has been maintained since its founding in 1670. Today, it has been named “the most productive and the fastest growing port in North America.”<sup>7</sup> By 2019, SC Ports will deepen the harbor channel by 52 feet. Additionally, a new container terminal is currently under construction, which will boost capacity by 50%. According to the Post and Courier, the Port of Charleston has set a record by moving 1.21 million cargo containers through the port in fiscal 2017.<sup>8</sup>

Aside from strictly maritime trade, the Region has created itself to be a logistics hub. There are approximately 20 million square feet of prime Class A industrial distribution centers scheduled to open in the Port of Charleston market in the next few years. Speculative buildings, which will range from 200,000 to 1.5 million square feet, are planned within an hour’s drive of the port. The Region also has a diversity of logistics companies and distribution centers throughout the area. Some of these companies include: UPS, Gildan, FedEx, Fruit of the Loom, Gerber Childrens wear and Mediterranean Shipping Company.



## Tourism

One of the most established economic drivers in the Region is the tourism sector. Offering a wealth of historical, cultural and natural resources throughout the area, the Region drew an estimated 5.1 million visitors in 2015, which had an economic impact of \$3.7 billion and 41,000 jobs. Adding to the Region’s tourism success was the announcement that the City of Charleston was rated the number one city in the U.S. for the fifth consecutive time by Travel + Leisure Magazine. Charleston was also ranked five years in-a-row as the top small city in the U.S. by Condé Nast Traveler’s annual Readers’ Choice Survey. The Charleston Metro Chamber estimates that the Metro Region will see continued growth over the next two years, with 150,000 to 200,000 more visitors annually.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Charleston Regional Development Alliance. 2017. “Logistics.” <http://www.crda.org/logistics/>

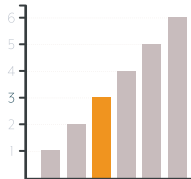
<sup>8</sup> Wren, David. “Charleston port boxes up a record year in cargo.” *The Post and Courier*. 13 July 2017: B1. Print.

<sup>9</sup> Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. 2016. “Charleston Metro region’s economic forecast shows continued growth in tourism industry over the next 2 years.” <https://www.charlestonchamber.net/charleston-metro-regions-economic-forecast-shows-continued-growth-in-tourism-industry-over-the-next-2-years/>





Opening day of the Spoleto Festival U.S.A., a 17-day arts festival located in Charleston



## SECTION 3: *Demographics*

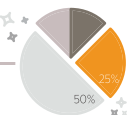
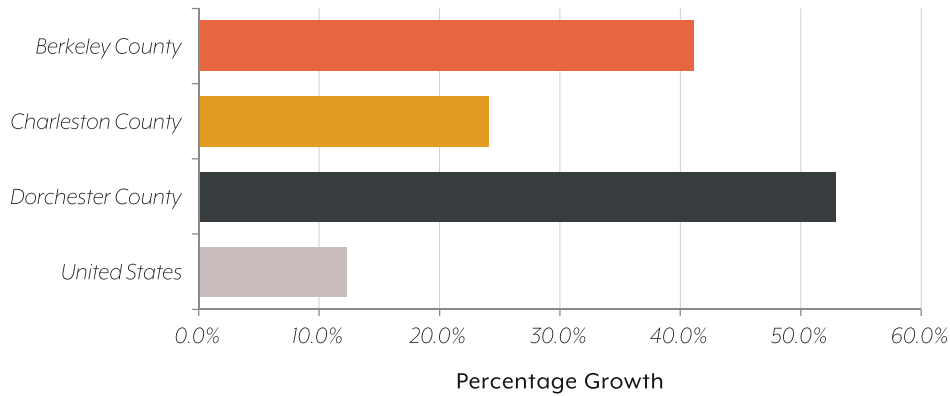


Fig. 2: Population Growth (2002 - 2016)  
Charleston Region vs. U.S.



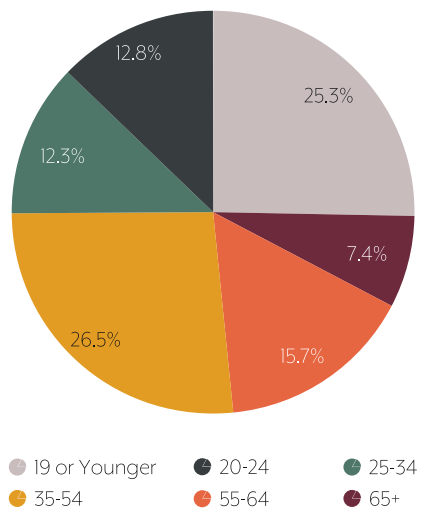
**Population**

According to U.S. Census data, the Charleston Region's population is growing 3 times faster than the national average. From 2012 to 2016, the Charleston MSA grew by 14.5%, compared to the national average of 4.7%. This has been partially attributable to the steady stream of well-educated young talent, who move for jobs or come to start their own businesses.

As of 2016, the BCD region's population was a total of 761,150 residents. Of the three counties, Dorchester County experienced the most growth, with a 52.9% population increase from 2002 to 2016. The county to receive the second largest percentage of growth is Berkeley County (44.1%). Although Charleston County had the smallest percentage of growth (24.1%), this is still nearly double the national average of 12.3%.

Much of this exponential growth in Berkeley and Dorchester Counties is attributable to greater access to land for development, cheaper land costs and overall affordability compared to Charleston County. As mentioned in the Overview & Background section, 45 new residents move to the Region every day. Should this trend continue, accommodating this influx of residents will require multi-faceted coordination between municipal governments in order to address challenges that could threaten upward economic growth.

Fig. 3: Population by Age



**Age**

The BCD Region has a competitive advantage in the age of its relatively young population. 26.5% of the population consists of persons age 34-55 and 25.3% of residents are 19 years-old or younger. This creates a median age of 36 throughout the Region.

**Employment**

Throughout the Great Recession, the BCD Region was relatively unaffected by the downturn. Nonetheless, the industries that were hit nationwide were also affected in the Charleston area, such as real estate, construction and finance. The Region's diverse economic portfolio allowed it to navigate the uncertainty, which did not last as long as for the metro area. As shown on the next page in Figure 4, the annual growth rate for all industries before the Recession was nearly double the national average. Employment growth in the region was hit fairly hard in the collapse, but regained and surpassed 2007 levels in 2016.

Source: Charleston Regional Development Alliance





Fig. 4: Annual Growth Rate: Employment - All Industries (2006-2016)  
Charleston Region vs. U.S.

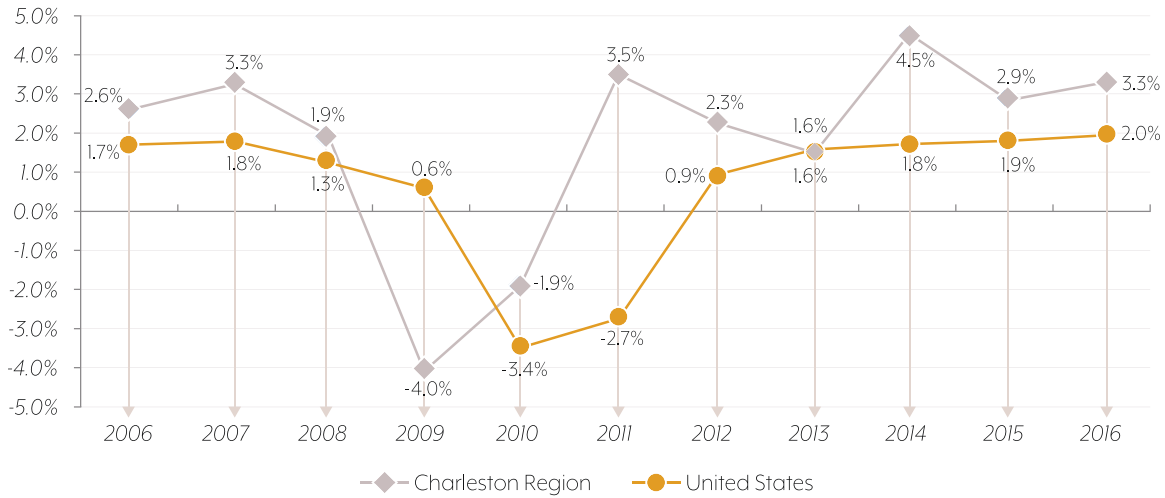
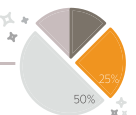
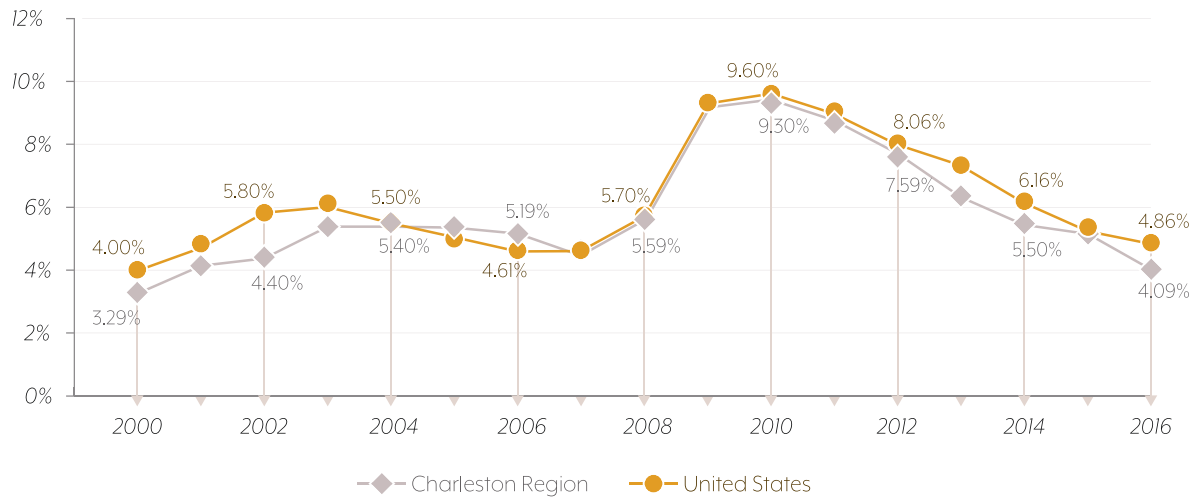


Fig. 5: Unemployment Rate (2006-2016)  
Charleston Region vs. U.S.



## Unemployment

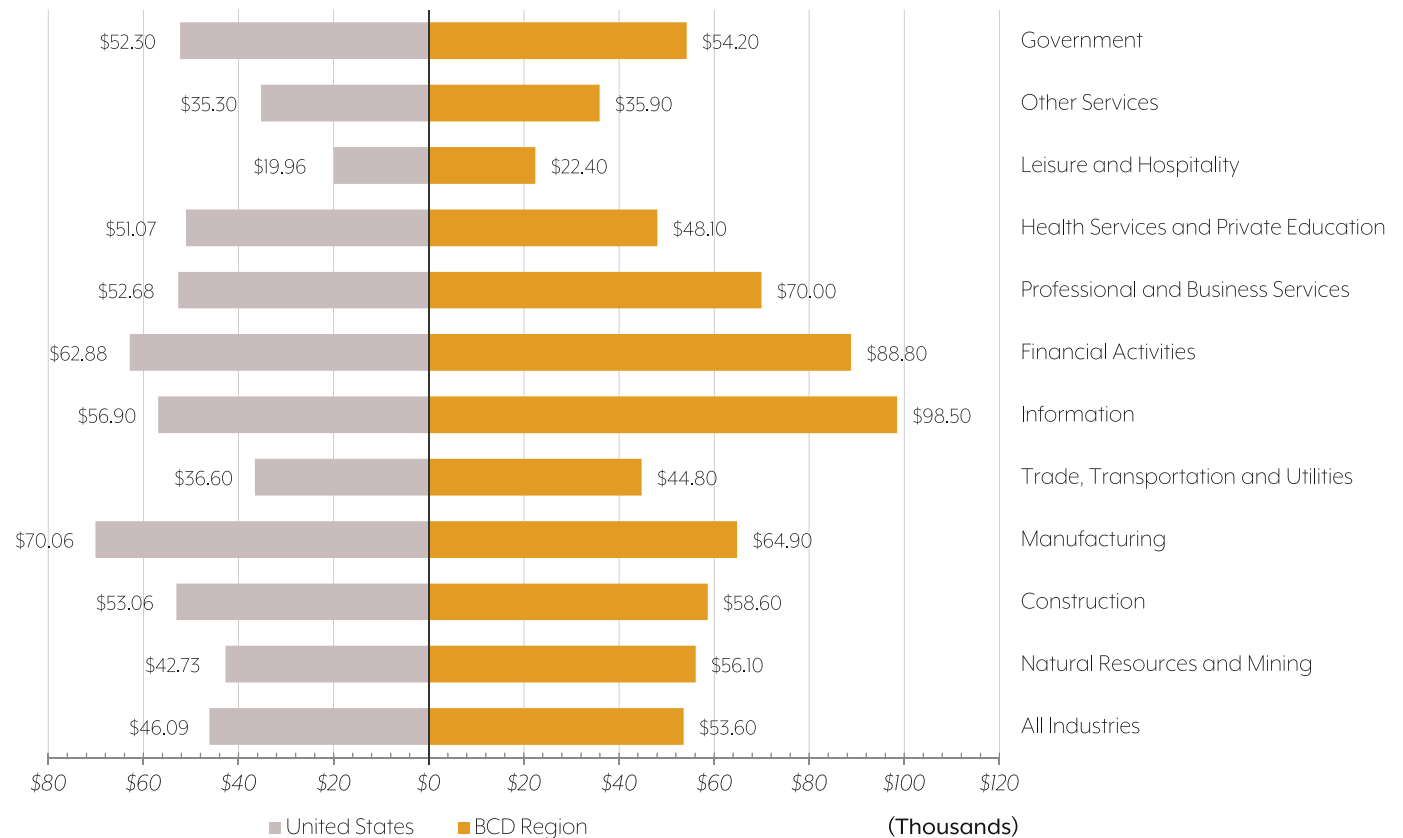
As mentioned in the Employment section, the Region was not as adversely affected as other parts of the country. At the onset of the Recession 2009, the Region had a nearly equal unemployment rate to national rate. In 2010, the unemployment rate began to decrease steadily at a higher rate than the national average, where today the unemployment rate (4.09%) still remains lower than the U.S. average of 4.86%.

## Income

According to data from the Charleston Regional Competitiveness Center, the median household income for the BCD Region is \$56,010. Compared to the U.S. median (\$55,780), the Region's median is slightly above the national average. Since 2000, median household income has steadily risen by 38%, with occasional, natural fluctuations.

However, industry sectors' average salaries remain slightly behind the U.S. averages, with the exception of the Manufacturing industry and Health Services and Private Education industries. In all industries, the U.S. average remains approximately \$7,500 above the Charleston Regional average. Salaries are significantly lower compared to the national average for certain industries such as the Information, Financial Activities and Professional and Business Services industries. These gaps in these particular fields range from a \$17,000 to \$41,000 difference.

Fig. 6: Average Salary by Industry (2016)  
Charleston Region vs. U.S.



## Education

Educational attainment across the Region is, for the most part, on par with the national averages in each of the categories listed below in the table, Educational Attainment Levels by County. The Region has a slightly higher percentage of residents with associate's and bachelor's degrees than the U.S. average.

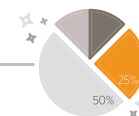
In a county to U.S. comparison, averages were significantly above the U.S. average. For example, all three counties had lower percentages of residents with "less than high school graduate" than the national average (13.3%). Specifically, Charleston County had higher education attainment levels for bachelor's and graduate degrees than the U.S. average.

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT LEVELS BY COUNTY (POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER)					
	<i>Berkeley</i>	<i>Charleston</i>	<i>Dorchester</i>	<i>Regional Average</i>	<i>U.S.</i>
Less than high school graduate	12.2%	10.3%	10.1%	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
High school graduate	31.1%	21.6%	29.2%	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>27.8%</b>
Associate's degree	9.8%	7.8%	10.6%	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
Bachelor's degree	14.7%	25.9%	15.8%	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
Graduate or professional degree	7.6%	14.5%	9.2%	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>

Source: 2015 American Community Survey

Residents of the Region enjoy diverse options in K-12 education, including:

- Four public school districts
- A growing number of public charter schools
- 65 independent schools
- A number of public magnet schools, including Charleston County's Academic Magnet High School, rated among the nation's top ten schools by Newsweek.
- South Carolina's Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities or the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, ranked among the best academic secondary schools in the nation.





The Region also has a Career Academy program in all three of the county school districts. Career Academies are career-themed schools within high schools, in which the learning environment reflects the atmosphere and expectations of the 21st century workplace. These academies focus on science, technology, engineering and math, business and IT, culinary/hospitality and health sciences. Studies show that this model has positive outcomes such as increased graduation rates, improved attendance, lower dropout rates, higher earnings after graduation and various others. Current partners who have teamed up with school systems include AECOM, AT&T, Banks Construction, Boeing, Charleston County, Davis & Floyd and many others.<sup>10</sup>

It is estimated that nearly 90 percent of the fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs require some postsecondary education. The BCD Region is home to 26 colleges and universities that provide an array of educational disciplines.<sup>11</sup> Some of these include public and private institutions, such as Charleston Southern University, The Citadel Military College of South Carolina, College of Charleston, Medical University of South Carolina and Trident Technical College. In addition, some of these colleges are registered as for-profit institutions, such as Virginia College and Centura College.

## REGIONAL FACTORS

### Geography

The BCD Region is located in the central area of the South Carolina Lowcountry. The tri-county area, made of Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties, has a land area of 2,614 square miles and 91 miles of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean.

Major highways and interstates run throughout the Region, these include: I-26, I-95, I-526, U.S. 17, U.S. 52 and U.S. 78. These corridors provide easy access to all areas west of the region, including the densely populated Middle Atlantic states.

Nationally, the BCD region is essentially the midpoint between Miami and New York City. Locally, the Region acts as the recreational center among prominent points in the state such as the State Capital, Columbia and Myrtle Beach and is also only a two-hour drive from its Colonial counterpart, Savannah. According to the CRDA, more than one-fifth of the U.S. population resides within 500 miles of the Charleston Region.

### Cultural Resources

Given its early beginnings in the late 17th century as a colonial economic engine under the British crown, the Region is steeped in layers of history spanning the centuries, throughout the three counties. From the Battery to Drayton Hall to the Biggin Church Ruins, the Region has a strong commitment to historic preservation. Various preservation organizations in the area aid in preserving these symbols of culture and history. Some of these organizations include: the Preservation Society of Charleston, Historic Charleston Foundation, Berkeley County Historical Society, Dorchester County Historical Society and the Upper Dorchester County Historical Society.

In addition to historic preservation, the Region also offers various other cultural offerings such as the Spoleto Arts Festival, Piccolo Spoleto Festival, MOJA Festival, the Flowertown Festival, The Gibbes Museum of Art, South Carolina Aquarium and the minor league baseball team, the Charleston River Dogs. All of these mentioned cultural resources contribute to the Region's tourism industry.



Front door and façade in the historic district, South of Broad.

(Image Source: Architectural Digest)

<sup>10</sup> Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. 2017. "Career Academy Partners." <https://www.charlestonchamber.net/career-academy-partners/>

<sup>11</sup> Center for Business Research. 2010. "Colleges and Universities in the Charleston Metro Area." [www.charlestonchamber.net](http://www.charlestonchamber.net)



## Workforce Development

Trident SC Works, a BCDCOG workforce development program, offers services through its three centers located in North Charleston, Moncks Corner and Summerville. These centers serve residents of all three counties by offering job seekers direct access to information about everything from open positions to specialized assistance and training programs. Workforce specialists are also available to access the most recent labor market information and on-the-job training opportunities, as well as to offer other employment related assistance.<sup>12</sup>

Another resource for the workforce development agency is readySC. A division of the SC Technical College System, readySC exists to promote the economic and workforce development of the state of South Carolina by providing customized training for new and expanding businesses and industry, as well as provide training at little to no cost to qualifying companies.<sup>13</sup> The main industries readySC serves are aerospace, automotive, biotech, call centers, chemicals, distribution, food and food processing, metal, plastics, textiles and various others.

The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce has also taken on the effort to increase the Region's workforce development capacity. The Chamber has partnered with regional education and business partners to increase the Charleston area's talent pipeline through a series of initiatives. These initiatives include:

- **Career Academies:** *Located within high schools across the Tri-County area, these programs seek to engage students in high-demand work sectors through internships and immersive career driven classes.*
- **Youth Apprenticeship Programs:** *Programs that connect high school juniors and seniors with local companies, who hire them as apprentices while in school.*
- **Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative:** *A Tri-County effort focused on improving the quality of life of its citizens and its workforce though education by collectively aligning resources and working toward common goals.*



CARTA bus at Charleston City Hall. (Image Source: Charleston City Paper)

## Transportation Access

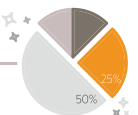
The primary mode of transportation in the BCD Region, like many other regions in the Southeast, is the automobile or single occupant vehicle (SOV). The majority of the BCD Region commutes to Charleston County for employment. According to Census Bureau data, 88.2% of Charleston County residents work in their resident county. Concurrently, only 43.5% of residents in Berkeley County and 37% in Dorchester County worked in their resident county.

According to Avalanche Consulting and the Center for Neighborhood Technology, residents spend 57% of their income on housing and transportation costs. Low-income residents spend considerably more--71% for housing and transportation.

As mentioned in the Overview section, the BCD Region is positioned where two major federal interstates (I-26 and I-95) intersect and various U.S. highways (U.S.-17, U.S.-52, U.S.-78) cut through the area. Given the low density of the Region and unbalanced investment

<sup>12</sup> Trident SC Works. 2017. "Services." <http://www.tridentscworks.org/services.htm>

<sup>13</sup> ReadySC. 2017. "About Us." <http://www.readysc.org/about.html>



on roadways versus transit, diverse transportation options are limited for residents. Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA) and Tri-County Link (TCL) are the primary public transportation systems in the Region. CARTA specifically serves the urbanized area of Charleston County through bus transit and offers fixed-route, flex service, express commute service and paratransit service to residents. This service area includes City of Charleston, North Charleston, Hanahan, Summerville, Mt. Pleasant, West Ashley and James Island. Two percent of the Region relies on CARTA as their main mode of transportation.

Tri-County Link (TCL) serves the rural areas of the Region, with its hub located in Moncks Corner. TCL's system consists of nine regular fixed routes and four commuter routes. Although the bus service maintains their published schedules, each route offers a "route deviation option," which means the driver may go off the fixed route up to a quarter mile to pick up customers that are unable to get to designated bus stations.

The Region has a major airport hub in Charleston International Airport. Also acting as a joint Air Force Base, Charleston International is located in North Charleston and offers 23 non-stop flights, 66 daily departures and hosts major U.S. carriers such as American Airlines, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest and United.

North Charleston is also home to the Region's connection to the Amtrak national rail network. Located off Rivers Avenue (U.S.-52), the Charleston Station (CHS) is served by the Silver Service/Palmetto Line. This line, which has three train departures daily, begins in Miami and continues northward through Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Savannah, Charleston, Washington D.C. and ends in New York.

Aside from passenger-related transportation, the Port of Charleston hosts the movement of large amounts of freight throughout the Region and beyond through federal interstates and U.S. highways (I-26, I-95, etc.) and railroad corridors (Palmetto Railways, CSX, Norfolk-Southern). The South Carolina Ports Authority is the most productive in the nation, with high container crane production and low truck turn times.<sup>14</sup> The Ports Authority and the State of South Carolina have committed \$2 billion to invest in port-related infrastructure throughout the state, including the Hugh K. Leatherman Sr. Terminal, which will cost a total of \$700 million. The Leatherman terminal will have direct connectivity for Class I rail carriers to distribute and receive freight. It is estimated that one intermodal train can carry the cargo of 280 semi-trucks on the road.<sup>15</sup>



*Sunset over the marshes of the Lowcountry in the Charleston region*

### **Environment**

The BCD Region lies at the edge of the Coastal Plain, which comprises the southern and eastern thirds of the state and consists of slightly rolling terrain near the midlands and flat terrain toward the coast. Its elevation varies from sea level to about 300 feet across all three counties. The Region's coastline makes up approximately 50 percent of the 187-mile-long general coastline of South Carolina (not including off shore inlands, sounds bays, rivers, creeks, etc.). Protecting the Region's coastline, as well as the entire state, are many barrier or sea islands. These major islands in the Region include Sullivan's Island, Johns Island, James Island, Folly Island, Kiawah Island, Wadmalaw Island, Seabrook Island, Edisto Island, Isle of Palms and Dewees Island. Also covering

<sup>14</sup> South Carolina Ports Authority. 2017 "Fact Sheet." <http://www.scspsa.com/wp-content/uploads/scports-factsheet.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Palmetto Railways. 2017. "Navy Base Intermodal Facility." <http://palmettorailwaysintermodal.com/>





the coast and parts of the inland are tidal and freshwater marshes, which extend south into Georgia.

Regional wetlands, both coastal and inland, greatly affect development patterns, as well as expansion of infrastructure. The Ashley-Combahee-Edisto system is made up of a series of short rivers that form near the Sandhills and flow across the Coastal Plain. These waters, which carry little sediment, have a signature blackened hue to them because of the tannic acid found in the various tree species in the swamps. Common trees in the BCD region include live oaks, pines, cypresses, gums and magnolias, which are mostly draped in Spanish moss.<sup>16</sup>

### Natural Resources

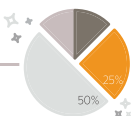
The Lowcountry has one of the most abundant ecosystems in South Carolina with innumerable natural resources, especially in the BCD Region. Located throughout the various counties, residents have access to seven beaches, which include: Folly Beach, Isle of Palms, Edisto Island, Kiawah Island, Seabrook Island and Sullivan's Island. Additional natural resources include:

- ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge
- Various tidal rivers and creeks: Ashley River, Cooper River, Edisto River, Stono River, Wappoo Creek and many others
- More than 160 parks and recreation facilities
- 8,000 acres of park space
- Francis Marion National Forest

There are also two Santee Cooper-built lakes, Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie, which provide a variety of recreational activities and tourism in the upper area of Berkeley County. There are several conservation groups that work throughout the Region to protect the area's natural resources. Some of these include the Coastal Conservation League, Lowcountry Land Trust and the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), South Carolina Chapter.



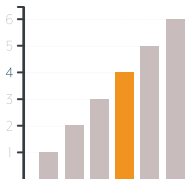
<sup>16</sup> Bushman, Donald and Winberry, John. 2017. "South Carolina--Land." Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Carolina>





*"This is a watershed day for the company, the state, the region. This airplane will only be built here in North Charleston. Pieces will continue to be built around the globe in our supply chain, but the 787-10 will only fly out of North Charleston."*

*-Darrel Larson, Build Integration Leader for Boeing South Carolina*



## SECTION 4: SWOT Analysis

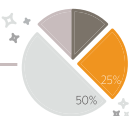


## SWOT ANALYSIS

BCDCOG staff conducted interviews with each of the three counties' economic development directors and various staff to survey the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the BCD Region faces. A considerable amount of overlap existed between all of the stakeholder's positions, thus giving credence to the region-specific aspects of the SWOT analysis. Alternatively, the stakeholders interviewed also gave ideas that were different from one another, but nonetheless will require attention and placement in the CEDS.

Below, the various characteristics of the SWOT analysis that are in bold, represent a commonly occurring perspective through various stakeholder interviews.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of economic base throughout region</li> <li>• Upward population growth (large in-migration flows)</li> <li>• <b>Port of Charleston</b></li> <li>• Young population</li> <li>• <b>Business climate</b></li> <li>• Low unemployment</li> <li>• <b>Intergovernmental cooperation</b></li> <li>• <b>Natural environment</b></li> <li>• <b>Quality of life</b></li> <li>• Amenities, arts and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low supply of low-wage workers across various industries</b></li> <li>• <b>Affordability (Housing, Transportation, Cost of living)</b></li> <li>• Lack of public transportation network and options</li> <li>• <b>Lack of infrastructure concurrence with development and growth</b></li> <li>• <b>Limited supply of office space</b></li> <li>• <b>Increasing congestion</b></li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalize on upward population growth to fill job shortages</li> <li>• <b>Increased investment in public transportation</b></li> <li>• <b>Affordability improvements (Housing, Transportation, Cost of living)</b></li> <li>• Broadened educational opportunities</li> <li>• <b>Creating guidelines for sustainable land development</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduce Congestion</b></li> <li>• <b>Balance land uses with market demands</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to accommodate upward population growth (large in-migration flows) because of housing shortage, transit limitations, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Needed labor force moving or not willing to relocate because of affordability (Housing, Transportation, Cost of living)</b></li> <li>• Housing shortages</li> <li>• Federal trade regulations</li> <li>• Public Transportation limitations</li> <li>• <b>Lack of sustainable land development practices</b></li> <li>• <b>Congestion becomes unmanageable</b></li> <li>• <b>Base relocation and closure (BRAC)</b></li> <li>• Rising sea levels</li> <li>• <b>Lack of infrastructure funding</b></li> </ul>

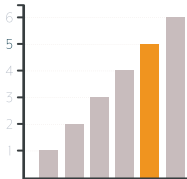






*"Sea level rise will be an important challenge for the city in the next 100 years. The good news is that with planning and continued wise infrastructure investments, the City of Charleston can well handle these challenges as it has others in its 346-year history."*

*-Former Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.*



## SECTION 5: *Economic Resiliency for the BCD Region*





## ECONOMIC RESILIENCY FOR THE BCD REGION

According to the EDA, economic resiliency, in the context of economic development, maintains three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock and the ability to avoid the shock altogether. These shocks previously mentioned can be delivered to a region in a variety of ways. They include:

- National or international downturns or significant events, which effect demand of locally produced goods and consumer spending
- Downturns specific to industries that make up a significant portion of the regional economy
- External shocks, such as natural disasters, closure of a military base, departure of a major employer, impacts of climate change, etc.<sup>17</sup>

In order to prepare for the inevitable economic challenges, the EDA suggests the placement of economic resilience initiatives, called steady-state initiatives and responsive initiatives. Steady-state initiatives essentially are pro-active strategies, which seek to provide long-term stability, so abrupt shocks don't upend the status quo. Responsive initiatives are exactly like they sound. These strategies are pro-active in a sense, but are aimed at building capacity to respond to shocks out of the Region's reach.

### PERSISTENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Although the BCD Region is known for its economic diversity and strength, it is nonetheless, like any region in the United States, invincible to challenges or deficiencies. With the unprecedented growth that has happened in the last ten years, the Region has experience a list of "growing pains." Below are some of them and how they are currently affecting or will affect the Region into the future.



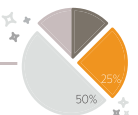
Congestion on I-526 (Image Source: Post and Courier)

#### Road infrastructure

With an estimated 45 residents moving to the Charleston area a day, it is no surprise that road capacity throughout the region is reaching its limitations. The state of South Carolina currently has a \$42 billion infrastructure funding shortfall.<sup>18</sup> However, the state gas tax was recently raised in May 2017. The new gas tax will be a total of 28.75 cents per gallon, which is 12.75 more cents than the previous tax. Two cents of the 12.75-cent increase went into effect July 1, 2017. Given the lack of funding and the backlog of improvement projects to be completed, major initiatives and policies and alternate forms of transportation will be required to rectify the situation. Currently, the BCDCOG is in the planning stages of drafting the CHATS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, which will aim to address various road infrastructure projects, as well as other modes of transportation.

<sup>17</sup> Economic Development Agency (EDA). 2017. "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Content Guideline: Recommendations for Creating an Impactful CEDs--'Economic Resiliency.'"Pg. 17. <https://www.eda.gov/files/ceds/CEDs-Content-Guidelines-full.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. 2015. "Fix SC Roads: Ensuring our infrastructure can sustain economic growth." <https://www.charlestonchamber.net/fix-sc-roads-ensuring-our-infrastructure-can-sustain-economic-growth/>



## Congestion

Matthias Sweet, a transport researcher at McMaster University, has found that businesses may be more likely to leave urban areas with lots of regional congestion, but prefer to stay in cities with lots of local congestion.<sup>19</sup> Overall, researchers have linked local congestion as a sign of positive economic growth—it's a place where people and businesses want to be. The latter comment should be a concern and focal point as the Region continues to grow.



*Awakening V Campaign to promote sea level rise created by Enough Pie (Image Source: Enough Pie)*

In the BCD Region, local congestion is being experienced in the urbanized area (Charleston, North Charleston, Hanahan, Summerville), although congestion in the rural areas is also increasing, as residents search for affordable housing. Last year, Berkeley County had a spike in growth, gaining nearly as many new residents as Charleston and Dorchester counties combined. Between 2015 and 2016, Berkeley County gained more than 8,000 people.<sup>20</sup> Berkeley County also has an estimated 30,000 residential units permitted for construction for the next 10 years. This is a considerable amount of development, should road capacities stay the same.

Already, local congestion is harming one of the Region's vital sectors, the Port of Charleston. A local packaging company has shared that poor road conditions are costing \$4.5 to \$5 million on an annual basis because of pot holes and detours caused by repairs to old bridges and roads. SCDOT has given I-526 and I-26 a D grade or worse at various times of the day because of their congestion.

Causing delays in the movement of goods, growing congestion has already developed into a quality of life issue for the majority of BCD Region residents. The potential of losing existing residents or losing potential residents or companies, for matters of congestion, could certainly hurt the economic fabric of the area.

## Flooding

Given its proximity to the coastline and its relatively flat topography, the BCD Region's terrain has been greatly affected by the issues of flooding, specifically the coastal cities and towns of the area. In 2016, the City of Charleston was struck by a record-number 50 days of tidal flooding, thus agitating congestion and inundating homes and businesses throughout the city and region. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this number is up from 38 days recorded in 2015. Predictions are estimating that in the next 30 years, 180 days of flooding will happen a year due to sea level rise.<sup>21</sup> The City of Charleston has taken a normative posture toward flooding and implemented a Sea Level Rise Strategy (2015), which aims at infrastructure investments, increasing coordination among emergency management agencies and collaboration with entities beyond the city limits to create solutions.

<sup>19</sup> Jaffe, Eric. "When Traffic Congestion is Both a Great Thing and Terrible Thing." *CityLab*. 3 March 2014. <https://www.citylab.com/life/2014/03/when-traffic-congestion-both-great-thing-and-terrible-thing/8534/>

<sup>20</sup> Slade, David. "Berkeley County population growth soars, fastest growing in the Charleston area." *The Post and Courier*. 23 March 2017. [http://www.postandcourier.com/news/berkeley-county-population-growth-soars-fastest-growing-in-the-charleston/article\\_b9d59516-0f13-11e7-b8ef-ebb651438044.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/berkeley-county-population-growth-soars-fastest-growing-in-the-charleston/article_b9d59516-0f13-11e7-b8ef-ebb651438044.html)

<sup>21</sup> Peterson, Bo. "Downtown Charleston broke record for flooded days last year; Rain, floods continue to swamp Lowcountry." 7 June 2017. *The Post and Courier*. [http://www.postandcourier.com/news/downtown-charleston-broke-record-for-flooded-days-last-year-rain/article\\_266c0424-4b9d-11e7-959e-53ca41732680.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/downtown-charleston-broke-record-for-flooded-days-last-year-rain/article_266c0424-4b9d-11e7-959e-53ca41732680.html)





Leon's Poultry & Oyster Bar, a restaurant in Downtown Charleston.  
(Image Source: Bon Appétit)



Aftermath of Hurricane Matthew (Image source: Business Insider)

### Shortage of workers across various industries

According to the 2016 Talent Demand Study conducted by the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Region is experiencing shortages in local talent and has to resort to recruiting workers from out-of-state. The Chamber has forecasted that software and IT, production, mathematics, engineering, communications and medical sectors will see a 10 percent increase in growth. In total, 26,000 new jobs will be created in the next five years. Because of this, the largest workforce shortages that will occur are general assemblers (838 jobs), accounting support (345) and software developers (278).

Aside from the aforementioned industries, the hospitality sector has reached a major shortage as well. Given the sector's large and storied presence in Charleston, it is trying to keep up with the influx of new residents, visitors, and new hotels and restaurants that are opening across the city.

### Potential Disruptions and Early Warning Tools

Potential disruptions in a region's future aren't necessarily a matter of if, but when, especially for the BCD Region, who in its history has weathered hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and of course, economic downturns. Aside from the mentioned recurring disruptions, there are others that may act as a shock to the Region in the coming years.

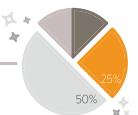
## POTENTIAL DISRUPTIONS

### Natural Disasters

Lying in the path of typical hurricane patterns, which last from June 1 until November 30, the BCD Region almost annually is struck by a significant hurricane or tropical storm. These disruptions cause serious physical damage throughout the Region, especially the coastline, and even more significantly, economic damage. Last year, Hurricane Matthew inflicted an estimated \$64 million dollars in damage statewide. Even though the hurricane was downgraded to a category 1 when it hit land in Charleston, there still was a 6-foot storm surge, downed trees, severe flooding in the historic downtown area and 866,000 residents without power. This damage was minimal compared to the floods in 2015, which cost the state \$12 billion, an almost equal impact as Hurricane Hugo in 1989.<sup>22</sup>

Although much rarer than hurricanes and floods in the area, the Region has experienced earthquakes in its past and could experience them in the near future. The Charleston Earthquake of 1886 was an estimated magnitude of 7 (extreme), and could be felt as far away

<sup>22</sup> Burris, Rodney. "SC floods' damage: \$12 billion, economists say." *The State*. 1 December 2015. <http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article47471060.html>



as Boston, Chicago, Milwaukee and New Orleans. The earthquake caused between \$5 and \$6 million (\$234 million today) and nearly almost all structures in the city were damaged. Today, seismologists at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimate that the Charleston area is at a high risk for a damaging earthquake within 50 years.<sup>23</sup>

### Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

Aside from natural disasters, the potential shock of a base realignment and closure (BRAC) could have a large impact throughout the Region. The Naval Base closure of 1996 left the immediate, surrounding community and small commercial centers around the base, economically devastated. With the departure of Navy families and businesses which supported the base, neighborhoods like Chicora-Cherokee dissolved. Luckily, Charleston's economy bounced back in a relatively brief amount of time, as other related and non-related businesses opened on the former base. Before the closure, the base was the area's largest employer with more than 20,000 employees. Today, the same number of employees (20,000) is currently employed at Joint Base Charleston. Incompatible developments near base facilities have occurred and pose a potential threat to the base's mission, which could possibly open the Region to a BRAC.

### Another Economic Downturn

An economic downturn is inevitable, be it devastating or minimal. As mentioned in the Employment and Unemployment section, the Region was not drastically affected by the Great Recession. Regardless of this, experts across the country are predicting a possible recession in 2017 or a few years after. According to economist Jay Zagorsky at Ohio State University, "capitalist economies do not simply grow steadily larger. Instead, their long-term growth is periodically punctured by downturns."<sup>24</sup> Zagorsky further explains that there have been 33 recessions in the last century and half, and their frequency has been around every five years. Even though it's now been over seven years since the Great Recession, he suggests that another is due. Regardless should this happen soon or not, downturns are to be expected, not forgotten.

## EARLY WARNING TOOLS AND FLEXIBILITY MECHANISMS

Early warning tools serve as a proactive approach for the Region to potential shocks in the future. These tools seek to mitigate disruptions and also serve as a way to possibly avoid them. In the BCD Region, the CRDA, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and all three counties' economic development arms, all utilize the early warning tools approach in order to safeguard the regional economy.

### Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA)

The CRDA was initially formed out of a major disruption and essentially was created as a marketing tool to highlight the region as a diverse economic center. After the devastating announcement of the Navy Base BRAC, the CRDA was formed in 1995 in response to the closure and was funded with both public and private dollars. Prior to its founding, there was intense competition among the three counties and regional cooperation was a challenge. The CRDA since has sought to market the Region for the betterment of all three counties. The CRDA produces the following reports in conjunction with the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce:



Source: Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA)

23 Ringe, Brenda. "We are the bulls-eye! Future events might shake us up, according to quake maps that put Charleston in a high-risk zone, but area is prepared." 16 July 2014. *The Post and Courier*. [http://www.postandcourier.com/archives/we-are-the-bull-s-eye-future-events-might-shake/article\\_dde5d19d-9637-5e5e-8fld-c0b918d94074.html](http://www.postandcourier.com/archives/we-are-the-bull-s-eye-future-events-might-shake/article_dde5d19d-9637-5e5e-8fld-c0b918d94074.html)

24 Zagorsky, Jay. 2017. "I'm predicting an economic recession in 2017. Are you ready?" *PBS Newshour*. <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/making-sense/get-ready-economic-recession-coming-2017/>





- **Annual Economic Scorecards:** *The Regional Economic Scorecards are intended to be a resource to inform discussions by local leaders regarding strategies for building a globally competitive economy now and into the future.*
- **One Region Strategy:** *A multi-year economic development, global competitiveness strategy to enhance the Region's economy. The ultimate goal of the strategy is to work collaboratively as a region to further enhance the economy through advancements in talent, infrastructure and other assets characteristic of a globally competitive metro; an investment in the community for a robust and stable economy for the future.<sup>25</sup>*

### Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

Created in 1773, the Charleston Metro Chamber is considered to be the first municipal chamber of commerce in the United States, as well as the longest continually operating business membership association.

The Chamber provides a variety of services to meet the region's business needs such as talent, advocacy, regional advancement, leadership, business development and membership and has a total of 1,600 member organizations. Like the CRDA, the Chamber publishes insightful documents and reports in order to inform business and political leaders on the state of the economy across the Region. These include:

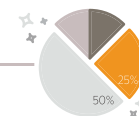
- **Business Priorities/Annual Report:** *This is two reports in one. The first highlights the business priorities in order to raise Rate of Investment (ROI) and accessibility for the Region. Some examples of the 2017 Business Priorities include: deliver relevant and localized member programming within a 15-30 minute drive of members, increase diversity, connectivity and engagement of members, etc. The annual report gives updates on all activities and initiatives that are carried out by the Chamber.*
- **Talent Demand Study:** *A study to provide current data on the workforce pipeline for the Region's fastest growing industries.*
- **Emergency Preparedness Education Portal:** *Provides resources to address planning, implementation, testing and exercises and program improvement before, during and after a natural disaster.*
- **Annual Economic Scorecards**
- **One Region Strategy**

### County Economic Development Departments

All three counties in the Region (Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester) maintain strong and effective economic development divisions that serve their businesses well in the event of an economic or natural disaster. All counties take a proactive approach with all of their members. For example, Charleston County has what is called "Business Concierge," which aims to meet with its primary employers at least once a year. Berkeley County takes a business-friendly approach for its members and does not require the issuance of business licenses in the county, although municipalities within the county do.

In addition to business-friendly practices, the counties also have workforce development programs. Berkeley County recently initiated a campaign called Berkeley Builds. This program connects residents to readySC and SCWorks and also provides residents with GED training and a three-week manufacturing course with Trident Tech, all free of charge.

<sup>25</sup> CRDA. 2016. "One Region: A Global Competitiveness Strategy to Enhance the Region's Economy." <https://www.charlestonchamber.net/one-region-a-global-competitiveness-strategy-to-enhance-the-regions-economy/>



The three county economic development divisions also all keep track of their own respective emerging and declining clusters in order to forecast any major loss or helpful gain. These clusters include ones that have been mentioned under the CRDA and Metro Chamber's lists of priority sectors and others such as information technology, biomedical science, military manufacturing, construction and energy.

All county economic development agencies also coordinate tightly in the event of natural disasters through their county emergency preparedness plans, as well as check in on companies in their jurisdictions to see what they need and how they can help.

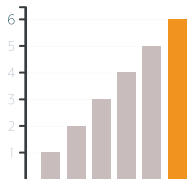


Mural in the Town of St. George (Image Source: BCDCOG)

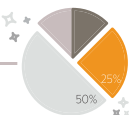




*Cranes lining the Charleston skyline*



## SECTION 6: *Strategic Direction + Action Plan*



The Strategic Direction and Action Plan acts as an economic steering document for the Region. It presents a framework for the questions of what, as a Region, do we want to see happen in the next 20 years? How will we accomplish what that vision will eventually look like?

### **Vision Statement**

*“The BCD Region will aspire to flourish regionally for the next twenty years by sustainably pursuing economic prosperity through **wise, diverse investment**, devotion to maintaining a **high quality of life for all residents** and for **preserving the natural and historical beauty** of the tri-county area.”*

Should all three interchangeable tiers (wise diverse investment, high quality of life for all residents and preserving the natural and historical beauty of the Region) of the BCD Regional vision be strived for or accomplished, the Region will not only profit from an economic standpoint, but from an expansive social capital perspective as well, thus perpetuating a virtuous cycle where economic investment and quality of life are made of equal importance.

### **GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

The following goals and objectives will serve as an overarching framework for the CEDS document and provide an outline on how to accomplish the Region’s vision:

#### *Strengthening Our Economic Foundation*

**Goal 1:** Grow and support the Region’s economic base around existing and new sectors that provide long-term economic resiliency and growth

- *Related References: Our Region Our Plan—Plan Element 4 (Economy), GOAL 1; Plan Element 3 (Mobility and Transportation Infrastructure), GOAL 1; TWDB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regional Plan, Joint Regional Business Services Strategies*

*Objective 1:* Work to maintain the existing diversity of sectors present in the BCD Region

*Objective 2:* Work to recruit new and innovative sectors, which will aid in the resiliency of the regional economy

*Objective 3:* Continue to highlight the Region as a global center for commerce

*Objective 4:* Support the Joint Regional Business Service Strategies of the South Coast Regional Plan, as adopted by the Trident Workforce Development Board (TWDB)

*Objective 5:* Encourage the continuation of region-wide infrastructure improvement projects to sustain the growth brought by new economic investments

*Objective 6:* Continue to support Joint Base Charleston and ensure its needs are being met

#### *Practicing Business Hospitality*

**Goal 2:** Continue to provide a hospitable and healthy business climate to attract the right investments

*Objective 1:* Ensure that grants and incentives continue to be offered for the security of attracting more businesses to the Region





*Objective 2:* Encourage the creation of small businesses across the Region

*Objective 3:* Encourage the continuation of services from regional economic development organizations such as the county economic development departments, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, CRDA, etc.

*Objective 4:* Support and promote women-owned and minority businesses

### *Investing in Quality Education*

**Goal 3:** Ensure that all residents of the Region have access to a variety of education and training opportunities

- *Related References: Our Region Our Plan—Plan Element 4 (Economy), GOAL 3*

*Objective 1:* Continue to invest in “alternative” education and training programs to provide residents across all skill levels with access to opportunity

*Objective 2:* Work to increase funding for programs of local colleges and universities including but not limited to College of Charleston, Trident Technical College, The Citadel, etc.

### *Pursuing Regional Cohesion*

**Goal 4:** Work to further increase intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in order to strengthen regional unity and success

- *Related References: Our Region Our Plan—Plan Element 5 (Regional Leadership and Stewardship) GOAL 1;*

*Objective 1:* Continue to build upon existing channels of communication and events that foster intergovernmental cooperation

*Objective 2:* Encourage municipalities to look more regionally (primarily connectivity) concerning the maintenance and construction of new infrastructure to minimize congestion

*Objective 3:* Encourage municipalities to consider concurrency between land development and infrastructure that exists, will be improved and can be built efficiently

### *Preserving Place*

**Goal 5:** As individual counties, the BCD Region must seek to protect and preserve the cultural and natural resources for the future generations of the Tri-County area, as well as seek to provide an affordable place to live

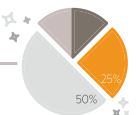
- *Related References: Our Region Our Plan—Plan Element 2 (Natural Environment), GOALS 3,4; One Region Plan—Four Regional Values & Goals*

*Objective 1:* Foster regional dialogue between county and regional economic development organizations and preservation organizations (cultural and natural) to locate industries where said resources are least impacted

*Objective 2:* Continue to encourage the on-going regional dialogue on housing affordability in the Region to create solutions



*Consultant Kat Morgan speaks at the Tedx Charleston Conference (Image Source: Change Ability Solutions)*



## ACTION PLAN

The CEDS Action Plan exists as the implementation element of this CEDS document, and is a distillation of the Vision, Goals and Objectives of the BCD Region. It is a call to action and a possible way forward for the success and betterment for all three counties. Below are the responding actions identified under each of the five main goals.



Norfolk-Southern Railroad in the Lowcountry (Image source: Post and Courier)

### *Strengthening Our Economic Foundation*

1. Continue an existing high level of service to existing companies to ensure that they have chosen the right location and context to conduct their business.
2. Recruit new businesses to augment the diversity of each, individual sector.
3. Expand the range of new industries recruited to the Region. These industries should foster a sense of economic longevity and permanence.
4. Continue to recruit related industries to major sectors in the Region. (Example: recruiting a tire manufacturing company to complement existing automotive sector)
5. Increase the participation of public-private partnerships (P3s) to create and build more supportive infrastructure projects (roads, transit, bicycle/pedestrian).

### *Practicing Business Hospitality*

1. Continue the encouragement and lobbying for state incentives, such as no state property tax, no local income tax, no inventory tax, no wholesale tax, etc., as laid out by the South Carolina Department of Commerce.
2. Engage in dialogue with SC Department of Commerce for the perpetuity of discretionary and statutory incentives.
3. Support the success of small business incubators throughout the Region to generate additional employment opportunities.
4. Conduct a disparity study for women and minority-owned businesses in order to identify gaps.

### *Investing in Quality Education*

1. Collaborate with the CRDA, Chamber and county economic development directors to encourage programs like Career Academies, STEM and apprenticeships to continue for middle schools and high schools in the Region.
2. Collaborate with the CRDA, Chamber and county economic development directors to encourage businesses, government or both to begin more apprenticeship programs for those without a high school degree.
3. Collaborate with the CRDA, Chamber and county economic development directors to encourage the continuation of technology and manufacturing training programs as more suppliers and new companies relocate to the Region (readySC).



### *Pursuing Regional Cohesion*

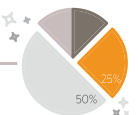
1. Increase the number of regional forums for county economic development initiatives to collaborate.
2. Educate municipalities on the importance of linking land use and transportation decisions.

### *Preserving Place*

1. Work to identify areas where development should not occur in order to preserve important habitats or artifacts.
2. Explore the possibility of creating a regional coalition, made up of various stakeholders, that seeks to preserve all aspects of place (cultural and natural).
3. Encourage municipalities to protect their identities in order to preserve their respective communities as unique activity centers throughout the Region.
4. Encourage establishment of a coalition to advise municipalities on affordable housing policies.
5. Increase the participation of the variety of stakeholders in the already on-going housing affordability conversation including, but not limited to: government officials, real estate developers, planners, architects, housing and community development specialists, etc.
6. Encourage the creation of P3s to help address potential housing solutions.
7. Educate municipalities on various planning tools, such as inclusionary zoning, land trusts, housing trust fund, etc.



*Cypress Gardens in Moncks Corner, SC. (Image Source: Wikipedia)*



## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK THROUGH PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In order to have the capacity to evaluate the successful development and implementation of this CEDS document, performance measures must be put in place. Said measures must align with the CEDS' Goals and Objectives and sufficiently allow the Region to analyze its strategy and ensure it is providing an adequate roadmap to economic prosperity. Performance measures will also act as a barometer to gauge the effectiveness of each multi-faceted strategy presented. The following measures are tracked by the CRDA, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, County economic development divisions and other public entities.

### *Performance Measures for the BCD Region*

1. Number of businesses recruited throughout the implementation of the 2018-2023 CEDS
  - *The number of businesses recruited will provide a gauge for recruiting accomplishments, but the amount of investment (in dollars) brought in by business should be used as well to measure the full economic impact*
2. Number of jobs created by existing businesses across the major sectors of the Region
  - *This number will not only show the economic impact in the Region, but also the impact on reducing unemployment and providing a stronger quality of life for residents*
3. Number of jobs created by new businesses across major sectors and new sectors
  - *This number will not only show the economic impact in the Region, but also the impact on reducing unemployment and providing a stronger quality of life for residents*
4. The value of financial investments given to existing or new businesses because of tax incentive structure of State and Region
  - *This measure will be another way to illustrate the influence of programs on the growth of existing and new businesses in the Region*
5. Attendance and graduation rate for high school, career academies and apprenticeship programs
  - *This measure will show the effectiveness of the Region's high schools and related programs and the amount of residents being added to the talent pool*
6. Number of activities and meetings committed to intergovernmental cooperation and coordination
  - *The number of activities and meetings will be easy to track and could potentially be monitored by BCDCOG staff, given its regional focus*
7. Number of infrastructure projects completed with a focus on concurrence of development and infrastructure
  - *Will demonstrate the level of coordination with all involved agencies*
8. Amount of affordable/workforce housing stock built
  - *Will provide a gauge for the progress of augmenting the housing stock with options affordable to all income levels*
  - *Will also measure amount of investment for affordable/workforce housing*
9. Amount of public and private investment in preserving historic resources
  - *This measure, in dollars, will show the investment efforts being made by the Region in order to preserve its history and sense of place*
10. Amount of public and private investment in preserving natural resources
  - *This measure, in dollars, will show the Region's progress in protecting its natural resources*







BERKELEY-CHARLESTON-DORCHESTER  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PLANNING, PARTNERSHIP & PROSPERITY

1362 MCMILLAN AVENUE - SUITE 100

NORTH CHARLESTON, SC 29405

TEL. (843) 529-0400 | FAX (843) 529-0305