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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Richland County Economic Development Office

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INTRODUCTION

Richland County, South Carolina, is a unique place that has immense potential to be one of the economic superstars of the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. Home to Columbia, the state's capital city, Richland County is blessed with a wealth of assets and advantages. Among these assets is the array of top-quality higher education institutions in the County, including the state's flagship University of South Carolina (UofSC), Midlands Technical College, and several other liberal arts, religious, and technical institutions. The County also benefits from a well-connected transportation infrastructure that includes three major interstate highways, direct access to the Port of Charleston via I-26, two Class I railroads, and a commercial airport that serves three major US carriers, FedEx, and is a United Parcel Service (UPS) hub. In recent years, the County has made significant investments in expanding the quantity and quality of available industrial sites and now controls over 2,300 acres of prime industrial property among three parks and one site. Evidence of the underlying economic strength of the County, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting global economic disruption, Richland County Economic Development Office (RCEDO) had a record year in 2020 in new investment and job creation. This also reflects the experience, diligence, and professionalism of the RCEDO team.

Beyond its attractive business climate, Richland County is also a desirable place to live. Its communities offer a network of unique neighborhoods and districts; historical landmarks and homes; a thriving riverfront; cultural, arts, and entertainment offerings; and abundant outdoor recreational amenities. Its lifestyle and housing are affordable compared to other urban markets in the region. The community is also anchored by Fort Jackson—the US Army's largest and most active initial training base—and home to thousands of active-duty military service members, veterans, and their families.

Despite these advantages and successes, Richland County faces difficult challenges that need to be addressed to reach its true growth potential. Some are driven by external conditions and trends that RCEDO must account for in its programs and initiatives. COVID-19 has forced all County government to rapidly react with programs and assistance designed to help stabilize the economic losses suffered by its businesses and workers. Indeed, the County should be commended for staying the course and following through on its commitment to a new economic development strategic plan, which is more critical now than ever.

Other challenges are long term in nature and will require a comprehensive approach to finding solutions. Even though the County is home to a high-quality research university, the region's entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem lacks maturity and scale. Even with the substantial investments the County has made in securing industrial properties and sites, more must be done to ensure additional real estate product to accommodate new employment centers, especially in commercial office and mixed-use sites suitable for knowledge industries. Employers report difficulty in retaining and attracting highly skilled professionals and knowledge workers. The substantial presence of publicly owned properties that remain off the tax rolls means that the County's property tax rates are among the highest in the state. This forces the County to pay a premium in financial incentives to compete for new projects. The economic growth the County has experienced over many years has not been shared by all populations or locales. There remains a distinct need to make sure that economic equity and inclusion is a central principle of the County's economic development program. Finally, Richland County, indeed the whole Columbia region, must do more to raise its profile and strengthen its brand among the site selection community and industry decision-makers. This entails working with partners to increase marketing efforts in addition to the County being more assertive and intentional in generating its own investment leads.

Nevertheless, the leadership and citizens of Richland County should have every confidence that it can overcome its economic development challenges. This plan positions RCEDO to leverage the County's strengths and to address weaknesses head-on in a long-term, sustained effort. This will require some structural changes within the organization and a willingness by County leadership to implement economic development in new ways. This strategic plan lays out a roadmap for getting there.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

In April 2020, TIP Strategies (TIP) was engaged by the Richland County Economic Development Office (RCEDO) to develop an economic development strategic plan for the County. A strategic plan helps to focus and maximize economic development efforts, especially during times of crisis. The economic development landscape is undergoing significant changes, and the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic will be immense.

Over the course of nine months, the TIP Strategies consulting team worked closely with RCEDO to identify promising opportunities to capitalize on the County's strong economic base and considerable assets. The team also developed a set of operational recommendations regarding governance and internal structure to better position RCEDO to achieve the plan's strategic objectives. The planning process was conducted in three phases: discovery, opportunity, and implementation. Due to the travel and in-person meeting limitations caused by COVID-19, all client meetings and stakeholder engagements were conducted by phone and/or virtually.

- ▶ **DISCOVERY:** Conducted over 20 interviews with economic development stakeholders in Richland County and the Columbia region. Important constituencies were engaged during this process, including the following.
 - ▶ Richland County Council members
 - ▶ Richland County executive staff
 - ▶ RCEDO staff
 - ▶ Business and industry representatives
 - ▶ City of Columbia elected leadership and staff
 - ▶ State of South Carolina
 - ▶ Regional economic development partner organizations
 - ▶ Technology entrepreneurs
 - ▶ Higher education officials
 - ▶ Real estate developers
- ▶ **OPPORTUNITY:** Identified major priorities for the strategic plan. A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, vision, mission, and strategies were developed based on input from discovery.
- ▶ **IMPLEMENTATION:** Developed action items and tactical recommendations.

The County should not view this strategic plan as a static document, but as one that invites revisions and amendments as conditions change. Now, more than ever, stakeholders should take a dynamic approach to implementation—one that revisits this plan on a regular basis to measure progress and to reprioritize strategies and actions as needed.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The summary of a data analysis of factors that define Richland County's overall economic competitiveness is included in this section. The analysis specifically looked at demographics, employment sectors, workforce characteristics, housing, and regional connectivity.

A UNIQUE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE. Richland County's demographic profile shows a confluence of distinctive attributes that characterize the region. Richland County is a minority-white county with Black residents accounting for the largest share (42 percent) of the population—an even larger share than within Columbia proper. The

County's residents also tend to be younger and more educated than neighboring counties in the Columbia metro with nearly half (46 percent) of Richland residents over 25 holding a college degree. However, higher education has not translated into higher wages as County median income is about the same as the state's median, which is nearly \$10K below the national median. Net domestic migration to the County has been falling in recent years. The County even suffered a net loss of over 800 domestic residents in 2019, which was the first net loss in more than 20 years.

SECTOR DYNAMICS. Healthcare and education continue to be the dominant employment sectors in Richland County, though they are on different trajectories. Healthcare has consistently gained jobs since 2014, adding nearly 4,000 jobs in total, while education has shed over 600 jobs in the past 3 years. Jobs in other sectors have also migrated between Richland County and the others in the Columbia metro. In 2010, more than 80 percent of the 5,000 information and media jobs in the metro were concentrated in Richland County, which has since decreased to less than 60 percent. In contrast, arts and entertainment employment has gradually moved into Richland County from other counties since 2010, growing to account for about two-thirds of the metro's 4,500 entertainment jobs in 2019.

A REGIONAL JOB HUB WITH BIG-CITY CONNECTIONS. While 2020 was an abnormal year for air traffic and commuting patterns, there is still value in understanding the historical movement patterns of people who live, work, or visit Richland County. Flight segment data show that Atlanta, Georgia, and Charlotte, North Carolina, continue to be the main transportation hubs connected with the Columbia Metropolitan Airport, though the District of Columbia and Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, have steadily increased their passenger counts to and from Columbia in recent years. At the regional level, Richland has been a consistent net importer of jobs with about 60K net inbound commuters in 2017; however, the number of residents commuting out of the County for work has steadily risen each year since 2011. Additionally, nearly 100K residents live and work in Richland, which likely contributes to the County's shorter average commuting time compared to the metro overall.

PERCEPTION SURVEY

As part of the strategic planning process, TIP Strategies conducted an online survey of site selection, real estate, and economic development professionals familiar with Richland County. The survey was open for two weeks during the latter half of July 2020 and drew 111 respondents. The survey instrument opened with three basic questions about respondent demographics, location, and professional responsibilities. The remainder of the survey included 14 questions directed at respondent perceptions of and experiences working with site location and development projects in Richland County. All responses were confidential. Complete question-by-question survey results were delivered to RCEDO in an interactive data visualization using Tableau Reader. The key findings of this survey, summarized in this section, were used to guide the direction of the strategic plan.

DIVERSITY OF RESPONSES. An overwhelming 86 percent of respondents self-identified as having responsibility for site selection or development decisions. Roughly 70 percent (75) of respondents were based out-of-state with the remaining 30 percent (36) in South Carolina. Gen Xers (47) were the dominant age group in the survey, followed by Baby Boomers (39), Millennials (19), and other age groups (6). Though not designed to be a scientific sample, the pool of respondents was nevertheless an adequate representation of site selectors and real estate professionals doing business in South Carolina.

LACK OF BRANDING. A few of the questions, either directly or indirectly, asked respondents to comment on the Columbia region's identity. A central theme that emerged throughout the survey was the lack of a regional brand similar to competitors like Charleston and Greenville. Central South Carolina, while accessible and well located, was seen as lacking a strong identity. A few respondents compared Richland County's institutional anchors (i.e., state capital, flagship university) to better-known locations like Austin (Texas), Madison (Wisconsin), and Columbus (Ohio). Underscoring the lack of brand, most respondents cited the South Carolina Department of

Economic Development as their first point of contact. Those who cited a local body were split across multiple entities, and one person commented, “so many, it’s confusing.”

MISMATCH WITH INVESTOR NEEDS. Other challenges cited throughout the survey were more specific to the needs of real estate capital investors. The availability of sites and real estate product was often mentioned as an issue. Respondents also expressed frustration with the lack of direct air service to major destinations, the property tax structure, the cost of electricity for industrial users, and the availability of skilled workers.

PERCEPTION GAPS. Perceptions of the Columbia region’s business climate varied significantly, depending on the location of the survey respondents. Those based in South Carolina were more likely to have negative perceptions, while those based out-of-state had a decisively more positive view of the local business climate.

TARGET INDUSTRY ALIGNMENT. In a couple of questions, respondents were asked to comment on a list of regional target industries proposed in a 2020 Deloitte Development LLC report.¹ In general, respondents did not associate the proposed industries with the Columbia region. In a separate question, respondents cited workforce availability, skills and talent, and critical mass among the barriers to successful recruitment.

¹ *Columbia’s Economic Development Action Plan: Knowledge Economy Cluster Development Strategy for the Columbia Region.* Deloitte Development LLC. June 25, 2020.
<http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Portals/0/Departments/PublicInformationOffice/Docs/070620FinalDeloitteActionPlan.pdf>.

SWOT

This page provides a summary of Richland County’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The SWOT analysis was developed based on direct input from internal and external stakeholders, the perception survey, and the economic context analysis.

 STRENGTHS	 WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Presence of many high-quality higher education institutions. ▶ Ability to offer County financial incentives. ▶ Over 2,300 acres of County-owned/controlled industrial properties. ▶ Interstate highway access. ▶ Substantial water and sewer capacity. ▶ Served by two Class I railroads with direct access to the Port of Charleston. ▶ Assertive state economic development organizations and programs. ▶ Proximity to state government. ▶ Affordable cost of living. ▶ Well-regarded workforce. ▶ Fort Jackson and other military assets. ▶ Popular tourism attractions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Absence of a common economic development vision within the County and the region. ▶ Lack of industrial and commercial office real estate product (sites and buildings). ▶ High property tax rate (third highest average rate in the state). ▶ Limited commercial air connectivity. ▶ Need for greater investment in physical infrastructure. ▶ Lack of a strong economic development brand and image of the County/region. ▶ Uncertainty and confusion about regional economic development ecosystem. ▶ Immature entrepreneurship ecosystem. ▶ Attraction and retention of skilled professionals and knowledge workers.
 OPPORTUNITIES	 THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Presence of many high-quality higher education institutions. ▶ Ability to offer County financial incentives. ▶ Over 2,300 acres of County-owned/controlled industrial properties. ▶ Interstate highway access. ▶ Substantial water and sewer capacity. ▶ Served by two Class I railroads with direct access to the Port of Charleston. ▶ Assertive state economic development organizations and programs. ▶ Proximity to state government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Long-term economic disruption caused by COVID-19—global. ▶ Growing economic disparities within the County. ▶ Deteriorating business climate due to discord among political leadership. ▶ Falling further behind competitive metros, such as Greenville, Raleigh, and Charleston for new investment and talent. ▶ Future military base realignment and closure (BRAC) and/or loss of mission/personnel at Fort Jackson. ▶ Population loss.

STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

With rapid changes reshaping the global economy, the need for strategic and organizational focus is greater now. The purpose of this plan is to enable RCEDO to better anticipate, respond, and evolve with changes affecting the economic success of residents and businesses. The framework, strategies, and actions detailed in this plan are informed by extensive data analysis and thorough stakeholder input, including interviews with state and County officials, regional partners, and business leaders.

VISION

Richland County's economic development strategy must be driven by a vision of what RCEDO aspires to achieve. Meaningful vision statements should be bold, provide a clear direction, and differentiate the County from its peers and competitors. The following vision achieves those objectives and reflects Richland County's economic potential.

Richland County will build on its strong economic base and considerable assets to emerge as a global center for innovative businesses, technologies, and people.

MISSION

RCEDO's mission statement underscores its core economic development role of powering growth and shared prosperity for all populations and geographic areas in Richland County.

To advance Richland County's competitiveness by building a dynamic, diverse economy and increasing economic prosperity for all residents.

GOALS

This strategic plan is built around four major goals: global business development, existing business retention and expansion, communications and marketing, and other strategic areas of influence. Developed based on input from stakeholder engagement and economic assessments, the set of strategies and actions identified under each goal is meant to provide the County with a roadmap to organize its programs and strengthen Richland County's economic vitality over the next 5 years.



1. GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Position Richland County to compete with any community in the nation for new high-quality investment and jobs.



2. EXISTING BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Foster a more resilient, innovative, and dynamic base of existing businesses in the County



3. COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Engage in a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of Richland County's advantages and RCEDO's successes.



4. STRATEGIC AREAS OF INFLUENCE

Commit targeted resources and work with regional allies to support workforce development, entrepreneurship, community development, and economic equity in the region.

STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL 1. GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Position Richland County to compete with any community in the nation for high-quality investment and jobs.

Attracting new investment and jobs to Richland County is essential to expanding the County's tax base. RCEDO has demonstrated its ability to recruit new investment projects in recent years, even during the COVID-19 economic crisis. Richland County is well positioned to continue competing for new jobs and investment due to its County-owned/controlled industrial sites, transportation access (commercial airport, interstate highways, Class I railroads), robust utility infrastructure, multiple institutions of higher education, and financial incentives. Richland County is also a primary cog in a broad network of economic development organizations serving the Columbia region and the I-77 corridor.

Cementing Richland County's ability to compete with any community in the nation for high-quality investment and jobs will require ongoing investments in real estate product and financial tools. RCEDO should also be more proactive in business development and lead generation, including direct outreach to decision-makers in target industries and site selectors.

- 1.1. Build relationships with real estate brokers and site selectors. The perception survey revealed a gap in awareness among site selectors, especially those located out-of-state, of Richland County. This weakness cannot be fully solved by regional marketing and branding efforts. It will require more direct business development efforts by RCEDO to increase awareness of sites, developments, and investment opportunities in Richland County.
 - 1.1.1. Build and maintain RCEDO's existing database of national and regional developers, brokers, and site consultants. The database used for the perception survey provides a good foundation.
 - 1.1.2. Schedule regular trips to call on the site consultants in targeted metropolitan areas, such as Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, and Dallas-Fort Worth.
 - 1.1.3. Host events, periodically, in Richland County that highlight specific assets, such as County-owned sites, buildings, or new projects.
 - 1.1.4. Continue maintaining and updating data and information of interest to commercial and industrial site selectors on the RCEDO website.
- 1.2. Generate leads for economic development prospects from nontraditional sources.
 - 1.2.1. Obtain lease expiration data in competing cities. Send marketing materials to companies headquartered in these markets whose leases are expiring within 24 months.
 - 1.2.2. Utilize Google Alerts to get news updates on companies in target sectors that are considering expansion, relocation, or consolidation. For instance, create alerts for terms such as "insurance headquarters relocation."
- 1.3. Position Richland County as a desirable landing spot for emerging companies in larger southeastern metros, such as Charlotte and Atlanta.
 - 1.3.1. Target successful startups in business incubators/accelerators in other markets that are on the cusp of outgrowing their existing spaces and could be positioned for expansion/relocation to Richland County.

- 1.3.2. Monitor high-growth, innovative companies in those markets that have recently received venture capital funding.
- 1.4. Develop potential investment leads through the business and retention (BRE) program.
 - 1.4.1. Inquire, during BRE visits and events, about existing business vendors and suppliers to uncover supply chain recruitment opportunities in target sectors.
 - 1.4.2. Include the project manager in BRE visits with major employers.
- 1.5. Work with Experience Columbia SC and other regional partners to develop a conference and meeting strategy linked to targeted occupations, groups, and industries. This is a strategy recommended in the Deloitte plan.
 - 1.5.1. Identify industry associations within each target industry and encourage them to consider the Columbia region as a destination for annual events and meetings.
 - ▶ Engage talented professionals—conferences and meetings hosted locally are an excellent opportunity—in a conversation about how they can pursue their careers, start a company, or relocate an existing business to the region.
- 1.6. Continue utilizing financial incentives and tools to compete for new investment, business expansions, and talent. Richland County’s high property tax rate—the third highest average rate in the state—puts the County at a significant competitive disadvantage for large capital investment projects, especially in manufacturing. Consequently, the County must offer generous financial incentives to overcome the property tax disadvantage. The Deloitte plan provided many recommendations related to city, county, and state incentives in South Carolina that could benefit the Columbia region. Two are listed.
 - 1.6.1. Develop a County incentive more geared toward knowledge economy-based sectors. The Deloitte plan suggests broadening incentive definitions for qualified businesses, full-time equivalent employees, and the term “development” within research and development (R&D) incentives to prioritize knowledge-based businesses and sectors.
 - 1.6.2. Develop an incentive designed to attract and retain talent in key occupations. Many stakeholders described the difficulty of attracting and retaining skilled and educated science and technology professionals in the Columbia region. Several states and communities have created various forms of financial incentives that involve repayment/subsidies for student loans or housing for new residents who remain in the community for a specified period. Like Columbia, the city of Birmingham, Alabama, struggles to retain and attract skilled technology professionals. In response, the city established a series of talent-focused incentives, including the Talent Investment Program, which supplements employer wages for occupations where demand consistently outstrips supply.
- 1.7. Continue expanding the quantity and the types of real estate product sought by businesses across sectors. The lack of available industrial sites has long been a challenge to accommodating new large-scale investment in Richland County. In recent years, Richland County has attempted to address this competitive weakness by assertively acquiring industrial and commercial property in the County. As a result of its investment strategy, the County now owns or controls over 2,300 acres of prime industrial property, spanning three business parks and one site. These properties, especially the 1,349-acre Blythewood Business & Industrial Park, preserve a long-term supply of high-quality industrial land in the County.
 - 1.7.1. Work with Richland County Planning & Zoning and municipalities to protect the limited supply of industrial-zoned land in the County. Rapidly expanding housing construction in some areas of the County threatens to encroach on the limited amount of industrial-zoned land. Once industrial land has been rezoned and developed for housing, it is effectively no longer available for industry.

- 1.7.2.** Collaborate with local partners and institutions to develop technology corridors in Richland County. Such corridors often seek to combine physical spaces, broadband infrastructure, anchor institutions, amenities, events, networks, and incentives to become a magnet for knowledge-based sectors, businesses, and entrepreneurs. There are numerous examples of such corridor development initiatives around the nation. Some are publicly initiated, and some are privately developed.
- 1.8.** Target strategic growth sectors for new and expanded investment. RCEDO's business development program has experienced the most success in targeting the manufacturing, logistics, contact center, and insurance sectors. The Deloitte plan was tasked with analyzing and recommending knowledge-based sectors (financial services, software & information technology [IT] services, healthcare IT, aerospace, biotechnology, and medical devices) and value chain segment intersections (R&D, business operations, manufacturing, distribution, commercial activities, headquarters). TIP recommends RCEDO also pursue the following strategic growth sector opportunities.
- 1.8.1. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY.** The global COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate the demand for more data centers and cloud storage as companies and workers transition to working remotely. Telecommuting will likely be widely embraced as employers and employees become more comfortable with working from home. Virtual meetings will become prevalent as executives and managers recognize that they can reduce travel and still conduct business. Richland County is well positioned to benefit from the increase in demand for cloud storage and data due to its available land, abundant water, and competitive electricity rates.
- 1.8.2. FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROCESSING.** The production of specialty foods and beverages remains one of the fastest-growing sectors in the US. Growth in emerging markets and urbanization, increasing consumer focus on health, and increasing demand for convenience foods signal favorable conditions for continuing and even accelerated growth in the food processing sector. Moreover, regardless of economic conditions, people still require food and beverages. Richland County's water and sewer capacity, transportation infrastructure and access, and proximity to major urban areas make it a competitive destination for food and beverage processing.
- 1.8.3. MANUFACTURING IT.** COVID-19 is accelerating the swift transition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0), which involves the utilization of rapidly advancing digital technologies into production processes. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, process automation, Internet of Things, cybersecurity, big data, additive manufacturing, and augmented reality are completely reshaping the global manufacturing sector. One of the Columbia region's strengths is the manufacturing IT technical expertise present in the region. This not only represents a unique industry strength on which to build, but there is a tangible benefit of helping existing manufacturers in the region become more innovative and resilient.

GOAL 2. EXISTING BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Foster a more resilient, innovative, and dynamic base of existing businesses in the County.

A strong business and retention (BRE) program is the foundation of any economic development program. Research from the US government has shown that the bulk of job flows result from the expansions and contractions of existing businesses. An effective BRE program is especially crucial in the current economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. RCEDO's immediate priority is to help businesses survive until normal economic activity resumes. For example, RCEDO distributed 500 thermometers to existing businesses to help make their facilities safer for workers and customers. Ensuring the long-term success of existing companies also aids business attraction, as firms considering relocation options will often talk to existing firms in the community.

RCEDO's existing business program seeks to be a general resource for employers, helping to coordinate help and resources to companies needing assistance. The program primarily focuses its outreach to businesses in the manufacturing and logistics sectors. Other components of the BRE program include a business visitation program, a wage survey, business-to-business (B2B) original equipment manufacturer (OEM)/supplier matchmaking events, and hosting industry council meetings. This plan advocates for building a more robust BRE program by raising its profile among the business community, expanding outreach to knowledge-based sectors, creating a business visitation questionnaire, publishing a regular BRE report, and capturing business development intelligence through interactions with existing businesses.

- 2.1. Raise the profile of the BRE program within the region's business community.
 - 2.1.1. Establish an identifiable brand name for the program that resonates within the business community. The Charleston County Business Concierge Program is an example of such a branded program. Creating a unique brand name will make the program more recognizable within the business community and will hopefully result in greater participation. It also reinforces the message that RCEDO values existing businesses and is not solely focused on recruiting new companies.
 - 2.1.2. Organize reoccurring events throughout the County that bring in multiple businesses, especially in the same industry or at the same size. For example, hold off-site information and networking events at locations where multiple business are located, such as a business park or an office building. Such events could feature guest speakers, refreshments, and information about RCEDO's existing business program services.
 - 2.1.3. Create a quarterly BRE report that highlights the program's activities, summarizes discernable trends, and communicates local business success stories.
 - 2.1.4. Communicate success stories that result from BRE visits. Such successes might not translate directly to new job creation or increased capital investment, but they can still be quite valuable to existing businesses. Examples could include assistance with permitting, workforce training, or infrastructure challenges.
 - 2.1.5. Report on local business success stories via RCEDO's social media accounts.
 - 2.1.6. Feature testimonials from business executives whom RCEDO has assisted on its website, in reports, and in social media.
- 2.2. Bolster the business visitation program to build relationships with major employers. The visits should be structured to gauge the abilities and needs of local businesses and to educate them about resources and services offered by the County.

- 2.2.1. Continue the annual goal of meeting with 100 businesses in the County.
- 2.2.2. Maintain a virtual business visitation program until the COVID-19 health crisis recedes.
- 2.2.3. Create a brief questionnaire for use during business visitation that captures a base set of standard information and metrics that are consistently captured and entered into the customer relationship management (CRM) database. The meeting, however, should not be guided by scripted questions. Moreover, if meeting with the business owner/chief executive, avoid questions that can be answered from a secondary source or by someone else in the company. Basic questions should inquire about these topics.
 - ▶ Business climate concerns.
 - ▶ Training and technical assistance needs.
 - ▶ Employment growth/contraction over the past year and future hiring plans.
 - ▶ Site/facility expansion plans.
 - ▶ Industry trends.
 - ▶ Primary markets served (domestic and foreign).
 - ▶ Supply chain opportunities (that could be filled by local companies or through new recruitment).
 - ▶ Adoption and utilization of new technologies in production processes (e.g., artificial intelligence, big data, cybersecurity, augmented and virtual reality, robotics and automation, additive manufacturing/3D printing, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things).
- 2.2.4. Act as a concierge to priority businesses to help them navigate processes within other County departments.
- 2.2.5. Establish relationships with employers headquartered outside of Richland County by meeting face-to-face with headquarters executives.
- 2.3. Expand the pool of existing businesses that RCEDO has interacted with in the past.
 - 2.3.1. Identify companies in the County that serve external markets or are suppliers/service providers to existing businesses.
 - 2.3.2. Broaden contacts and interactions with companies in knowledge economy-based sectors, such as financial services, life sciences, and information technology.
 - 2.3.3. Increase efforts to reach out to women-owned firms and minority-owned firms, many of which are facing greater challenges through the current economic downturn than other businesses.
 - 2.3.4. Use recent County emergency COVID-19 grant and loan funding applications as a source of up-to-date business intelligence to target programs and support to local companies with the greatest needs.
 - 2.3.5. Connect with businesses outside of the urban core, especially in unincorporated areas of the County.
- 2.4. Prepare and administer an annual online “take the pulse” business survey as a means of keeping in touch with local businesses and documenting specific needs or expansion plans. This survey would supplement the information and data generated by in-person visits. Include questions on the survey for employers regarding their attitudes toward the business climate, talent availability, and workforce quality in Richland County.

GOAL 3. COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Engage in a comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of Richland County's advantages and RCEDO's successes.

A common theme that was heard from stakeholder input was the need to do a better job of increasing awareness of the region and telling success stories. In addition, one of the central findings from the site selector perception survey was that the region lacked an identifiable brand that competitors like Charleston and Greenville enjoy. Moreover, some out-of-state site selectors were not able to associate Richland County with the Columbia region. RCEDO has not traditionally engaged in high-profile marketing efforts, either on behalf of Richland County or itself. The RCEDO team does not currently include a position focused on communications and marketing. While RCEDO should continue to utilize Central SC Alliance as a primary partner for regional economic development marketing, it should take a more active role in crafting a regional brand and increasing awareness of Richland County among target industry decision-makers and site selectors.

In addition, RCEDO should more assertively tell its own story within the region, including its business attraction, retention, and expansion successes. Making the citizens and the business community of Richland County more aware of its contributions to economic growth and prosperity will generate greater support for economic development. Another need is informing and educating County-elected leadership about RCEDO's mission, activities, and achievements. This will require more frequent engagement with Council members, collectively and individually.

As currently structured, RCEDO does not have the capacity to pursue any substantial marketing and communications activities. Therefore, the organization will need to add a dedicated communications and marketing specialist to the team. This recommendation is discussed in the Internal Structure section of this plan.

- 3.1.** Establish a digital marketing campaign to highlight Richland County's economic development advantages and success stories. Develop baseline digital marketing tools and engage in regular digital marketing activities, including the following.
 - ▶ Infographics created to visually highlight the County's core assets and advantages.
 - ▶ Periodic LinkedIn Pulse articles that describe the County's competitive business advantages, using interviews with existing businesses to tell their stories.
 - ▶ Weekly Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter posts linking to the Pulse article.
 - ▶ Brief YouTube videos created to highlight what makes Richland County a great community for businesses and residents.
- 3.2.** Be more assertive in telling success stories that resulted from RCEDO efforts.
 - 3.2.1.** Publish a quarterly newsletter that highlights RCEDO activities and success stories.
 - 3.2.2.** Pursue a public relations and communications campaign targeting regional and state media outlets.
 - ▶ Cultivate and maintain relationships with regional and state media outlets.
 - ▶ Pitch story ideas and share current news with the aim of generating more coverage for RCEDO and Richland County.
 - ▶ Broadcast business successes in state and regional publications through press releases and editorials.
 - 3.2.3.** Organize and host an annual business appreciation event.

- ▶ Highlight local business achievements and enlist County-elected leaders to give awards to local businesses in different categories.
- 3.3. Assume a higher profile in regional meetings, conferences, and gatherings.
 - 3.3.1. Seek public-speaking opportunities for the director and the deputy director.
 - 3.3.2. Consider high-profile sponsorship opportunities that highlight RCEDO.
- 3.4. Work with the County administration to identify new opportunities for the director and the deputy director to interact with councilmembers outside of routine project update presentations.
 - 3.4.1. Provide an orientation for newly elected council members about RCEDO strategic priorities, initiatives, activities, and successes.
 - 3.4.2. Make a regular presentation to the Richland County Council during retreats.
- 3.5. Partner with allies to enhance and promote the region’s economic development brand.
 - 3.5.1. Encourage allies to develop a regional economic development brand that more directly connects to Columbia. This would address a finding from the site selector survey that Richland County and central South Carolina lack an easily identifiable image and brand outside of the state.

GOAL 4. STRATEGIC AREAS OF INFLUENCE

Commit targeted resources and work with regional allies to support workforce development, entrepreneurship, community development, and economic equity in the region.

Beyond the main goals of business development, BRE, and marketing, there are several other critical issues that economic development organizations often address. However, with a relatively small staff and constrained operational funds, RCEDO is limited in its practical ability to programmatically impact needs such as workforce development, entrepreneurship and innovation, community development, and economic equity. There are other departments and organizations in the region that specialize in these areas. Still, as the chief economic development organization in the County and a crucial participant in the Columbia region, RCEDO does have a role to play. It might be an indirect role that involves financial support for outside initiatives or participating in regional efforts organized around these integral issues.

- 4.1. **EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH.** Traditionally, equitable growth and development have been viewed as the responsibility of the community development and workforce development departments within public agencies; however, this notion is changing. The rising social justice movement, as well as the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on vulnerable populations, has caused the economic development profession to take a more active and deliberate approach to expanding opportunity for people of color. Full participation of people of color in the economy is associated with greater economic prosperity for everyone. Recent research commissioned by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation indicates that \$325 billion could be added to state and local tax revenues in the US by increasing the earnings of people of color.² The following strategies offer ways for RCEDO to address inclusion and equity more fully in its program.
 - 4.1.1. Coordinate with multicultural organizations in the Columbia region to provide targeted information for businesses owned by women and people of color.

² Ani Turner. W.K. Kellogg Foundation. "Business Case for Racial Equity—July 2018." <https://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2018/07/business-case-for-racial-equity>.

- ▶ Research indicates that these small business owners face structural exclusion from traditional sources of capital and aid packages, including the US Small Business Administration (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program.

4.1.2. Consider the use of community benefit agreements (CBAs) for large-scale developments or major business attraction in Richland County. CBAs require businesses and developers to commit to providing benefits to economically distressed communities so that residents are not displaced from their neighborhoods and are able to access economic opportunities that the new employer or development will provide. Examples of benefits include commitments to job training and hiring, living wages, affordable housing, transit integration, and philanthropic giving to local communities.

4.1.3. Track social and economic demographics of participants in RCEDO's programs and events. Set goals for increasing diversity among participants. RCEDO should also hold events in areas of the County so that a more diverse set of business owners and residents are able to participate.

4.1.4. Highlight businesses owned by women and people of color in marketing materials and through digital marketing channels to increase awareness and promote their successes.

4.1.5. Work with regional partners to disaggregate social and economic indicators by race and income levels to show how vulnerable populations are faring in comparison to other segments of the population. Such indicators could include the following parameters.

- ▶ Broadband access by neighborhood.
- ▶ Eviction rates.
- ▶ Household composition by educational attainment.
- ▶ Transfer payment recipients.
- ▶ Employment in occupations paying a living wage.
- ▶ Better understanding of specific needs, such as childcare.

4.2. WORKFORCE. Access to talent continues to be the top site selection factor for companies planning new facilities, expansion, and/or relocation. According to The Conference Board's annual survey, the top internal issue concerning chief executive officers (CEOs) and C-Suite leaders is attracting and retaining top talent at all levels of their companies.³ Talent availability outranks other issues, including adaptation to disruptive technology and cost reductions. Consulting team interviews with Richland County employers reinforced that workforce is a vital economic development issue in the Columbia region. Indeed, workforce is one of the four pillars of the Deloitte Development *Columbia's Economic Development Action Plan*, which recommends a substantial number of workforce, training, and education strategies for the region's large network of organizations and institutions engaged in this pillar to implement. RCEDO's immediate role in addressing workforce is focused primarily on connecting employers with available assistance and resources, financially supporting local initiatives, and helping to anchor transitioning military personnel in the region and connecting them with employers.

³ Charles Mitchell, Ilaria Maselli, Rebecca L. Ray, and Bart van Ark. The Conference Board. *C-Suite Challenge™ 2020: Risks, Opportunities, and Hot-Button Issues*. January 2020. <https://conference-board.org/research/csuitechallenge/C-Suite-Challenge-2020>.

- 4.2.1. Support the talent recruitment efforts of major employers by providing them with marketing resources that effectively promote Richland County to potential employees. Marketing materials should cover topics of interest, including housing, education, entertainment, and recreation.
- 4.2.2. Engage directly, through the BRE program, with regional employers to identify specific talent and workforce initiatives and connect them with state and local assistance and resources.
- 4.2.3. Continue to financially support innovative talent initiatives such as Create Opportunity Columbia.
- 4.2.4. Connect military personnel separating from service in the region with local employers. This aligns with the Deloitte plan recommendation to form a metro area military employment partnership.
 - ▶ Work with regional economic development and workforce partners to create a Fort Jackson Veterans Inventory Initiative for soldiers transitioning from Fort Jackson to civilian life. See the case study in Appendix C for a description of the veterans inventory initiative at Fort Hood, Texas.
 - ▶ Adopt innovative models from other regions focused on connecting veterans to employment with critical employers and in strategic growth areas for the County. Examples include the Amazon Veteran Technical Apprenticeship program in Northern Virginia and the Camo2Commerce initiative from the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council.

FORT HOOD REGION VETERANS INVENTORY INITIATIVE

In 2006, the city of Killeen, Texas, and the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (GKCC) partnered with TIP Strategies to craft a regional plan (named Operation Economic Transformation) that would reduce the region's military-related economic dependency while simultaneously building on the region's growth opportunities associated with Fort Hood. One outcome of this plan was the creation of the Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative (FHRVII) survey, which continues to be administered on a quarterly basis. FHRVII captures information from soldiers who are about to separate from the military. The survey asks questions about their educational levels, skills, post-separation career plans for them and their spouses, and suggestions to improve the area's quality of place. Once the results are compiled, the results are sent to local partners so that they can highlight the incoming talent pool for economic development marketing and in responding to investment request for proposals (RFPs). Inspired by GKCC's efforts, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) began its own survey in 2018, modeled after the FHRVII, and recently completed its third assessment.

Source: <https://www.hotda.org/veterans-inventory-initiative>.

- 4.3. **ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION.** Building a more robust and competitive regional entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem is also one of the four pillars in the Deloitte plan for the Columbia region. As the County and the region seek to create a more diversified and dynamic economic base, it is crucial to establish an environment and the support structures that enable entrepreneurs to thrive and businesses to innovate. RCEDO should continue its efforts to strengthen ties and collaboration with higher education and to also connect entrepreneurial companies with resources and expertise.

- 4.3.1. Deepen collaborations and ties with area colleges and universities.
 - ▶ Align business attraction and retention efforts in knowledge-based sectors with research priorities and capabilities at the University of South Carolina and other R&D organizations in the region.
 - ▶ Continue enlisting the support and expertise of university researchers and officials with appropriate investment prospects.
 - ▶ Continue providing financial support to university-led accelerator programs.

- 4.3.2. Assist entrepreneurial companies, through the BRE program, to scale-up by connecting them with local and state resources and expertise.
- 4.3.3. Tell entrepreneurial success stories. An important component of building an entrepreneurial culture is making residents aware of how entrepreneurship can help to drive the economy. This message is best communicated by raising awareness of business success stories, both internally and in target markets.
- 4.3.4. Support youth entrepreneurship programs at local school districts to foster a culture of innovation and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurship education is especially pressing for helping the County's low-income and minority youth to develop skills and knowledge that will support their future successes and benefit their communities.
 - ▶ The National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education provides resources and technical assistance for entrepreneurial education. (<http://www.entre-ed.org/>)

4.4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMAKING. The attraction and retention of businesses alone is not enough to make communities into vibrant destinations where people can live, work, and thrive. Increasingly, the economic development community is focused on quality of place—a more holistic conception of a community's attractiveness and livability that integrates physical space, cultural amenities, and social experiences. Quality of place is essential to creating dynamic and vibrant communities, and placemaking is the process of creating quality places. Successful placemaking is vital to effective business development and talent attraction. For example, COVID-19 has accelerated the trend of remote working. As people are more able to work remotely, their choices about where to live are made not about where their companies are located, but instead about what lifestyle they want to have. To this end, RCEDO should work with the Richland County Planning and Development Department to ensure that the County's economic development, land use planning, and placemaking efforts are aligned and mutually supportive.

- 4.4.1. Reestablish a regular quarterly meeting between RCEDO and the Richland County Planning and Development Department to exchange updates and collaboratively identify where and what types of future industrial, mixed-use, and commercial development should be targeted.
- 4.4.2. Work with Richland County Planning and Development Department and municipalities to protect the decreasing supply of industrial-zoned land in the County. (See Strategy 1.7.1.)
- 4.4.3. Highlight Richland County's quality-of-place assets (e.g., cultural, entertainment, historic, natural, recreational, events) within business development marketing materials.
- 4.4.4. Encourage private developers to incorporate place-based amenities into new employment center developments.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

RCEDO's capacity to fully implement this plan would benefit from a revised approach to its governance and internal staffing structure.

GOVERNANCE

Since its formation in 2009, RCEDO has operated as a department within Richland County. While RCEDO has functioned effectively as a public entity, the highly competitive environment in South Carolina and the southeast region for new investment and jobs compels a new approach to organizing economic development in Richland County. This plan recommends that a new independent public-private partnership (P3) should be established to house RCEDO.

Privatization of County economic development is not the goal. Rather, a new P3 will allow Richland County to fully partner with the private sector and better utilize the resources, relationships, and expertise of the business community. County leadership will have the opportunity to work with a rising class of business leaders on growth-related matters critical to the County's future. RCEDO will also be better able to compete with other fast-growing regions in the state that feature economic development P3 (e.g., Greenville Area Development Corporation, Spartanburg Economic Futures Group, Advance Dorchester, Sumter Development Board).

The consulting team recommends that the P3 should be formed as a 501(c)(3), primarily due to its capacity to receive charitable donations. This will offer the entity greater flexibility in being able to raise nonpublic funds. And while RCEDO would be limited in its ability to advocate directly about policy matters, it can still have a prominent role in educating the public about economic development issues.

WHY A P3 MAKES SENSE

Operating as a P3 will allow RCEDO to be more effective in executing its economic development mission. Specific advantages would include the following.

- ▶ More speed and efficiency in responding to business development opportunities.
- ▶ Greater access to private sector networks, industry knowledge, and resources.
- ▶ Added potential to engage on such issues as workforce, housing, and social equity.
- ▶ More operational flexibility and autonomy on issues of financial planning and budgeting, human resource management, information technology, purchasing, and procurement.

OVERSIGHT

Richland County Council will still retain oversight of the organization through board representation, appointments, and the authority to approve any financial incentives negotiated by RCEDO. The private sector will also play an essential role in governing and guiding the organization. Preliminary recommendations for board composition and how accountability to the taxpayer will be ensured are listed here.

- ▶ The Richland County Council will appoint board members.
- ▶ The board of directors should consist of seven to nine members representing the public and private sectors.
- ▶ The director will present a slate of private sector candidates for the council's consideration.
- ▶ Quarterly reports and an annual report will be submitted to the Richland County Council.

- ▶ The director reports to the board and is responsible for day-to-day management of the organization and the staff.
- ▶ The authority to approve incentives will remain with the Richland County Council.
- ▶ RCEDO will be responsible for promoting, structuring, and administering County incentives just as it does now.

FUNDING

RCEDO should continue to be funded by business tax revenues flowing from the various companies the County has incentivized and placed in the major capital improvement project (MCIP). If a P3 is established, RCEDO will also be able to receive additional private financial support. Private contributions, however, will likely make up a small percentage of total funding for the organization. Private fundraising should be dedicated to supporting specific economic development initiatives and business development expenses. Moreover, RCEDO would not adopt a pay-to-play investor funding model for private sector contributors.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

In addition to reorganizing RCEDO as a P3, this plan recommends internal restructuring of some staff and duties. These changes will also allow RCEDO to better achieve its mission by optimizing staff responsibilities and aligning them with the strategies and actions outlined in this section. Understandably, changing the internal staffing structure is difficult for any organization. Each member of the RCEDO team provided candid and thoughtful input on how the organization can be most successful. Moreover, these recommendations are not based on the performance or skills of existing RCEDO staff. Staffing recommendations within a 5-year strategic plan should only reflect the types of positions the organization requires and the duties they should perform in order to enhance RCEDO's ability to implement the plan.

EXISTING STAFF POSITIONS

These recommendations pertain to the five existing RCEDO staff positions.

DIRECTOR

The RCEDO director position should focus more on strategic initiatives, running the organization, council relations, and external outreach. Currently, much of the director's time is spent on managing economic development projects, both large and small. While the director should still have a role in working with large investment prospects, much of the day-to-day project management work should be assumed by another member of the team. This will allow the director to have a more prominent role in elevating the profile of RCEDO, strengthening the relationship with the Richland County Council, taking a more prominent role in collaborating on large regional initiatives, and managing the RCEDO team.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

The deputy director should continue focusing on product development, policy and incentives, and financial management of the organization. In addition, the deputy director should support the director in activities related to external outreach, council relations, and regional strategic initiatives.

MANAGER OF EXISTING BUSINESS

The manager of existing business should oversee an expanded BRE program outlined in Goal 2.

MANAGER OF RESEARCH

The ability to produce high-quality research and analysis is an important need for any economic development organization. Ideally, that role would continue being served internally by the manager of research position. However, RCEDO has other critical needs that need to be filled and is faced with limited resources for funding new positions. Moreover, Central SC Alliance already has a robust team of researchers who should be able to perform research and analysis functions for RCEDO. This includes compiling and updating site location information and data on the County for the RCEDO website and for prospect proposals, maintaining site info on County-owned properties, and providing RCEDO with insightful business and economic trends in the region for utilization in marketing and outreach activities.

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

The administrative coordinator should continue providing basic administrative and office management duties for RCEDO. Other duties the administrative coordinator would perform include providing some basic research support (data for requests for information, map creation, etc.) and helping to coordinate events and site visits.

NEW POSITIONS

TIP recommends adding two new staff positions to the RCEDO team to give the organization some new capabilities and to supplement existing core functions. These new positions include a project manager and a communications and marketing specialist.

PROJECT MANAGER

RCEDO should add a full-time project manager position to focus on business development activities and on managing new business investment and existing business expansion projects. This position would add a critical need to the team and would allow other existing team members to focus more time on their core duties. Specific responsibilities for the project manager should include the following.

- ▶ Leading business development efforts.
- ▶ Ensuring incentives compliance.
- ▶ Managing site visits.
- ▶ Coordinating with Central SC Alliance on research and analysis needs.
- ▶ Participating in existing business site visits with major employers to identify supply chain development opportunities in target sectors.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING SPECIALIST

Critical to the goal of elevating awareness of RCEDO inside and outside of the region is to add a communications and marketing specialist to the team. Currently, this is a role that is unfilled in the organization. Specific duties for the communications and marketing specialist could include the following.

- ▶ Leading communications products and activities (e.g., newsletters, press releases, social media, website updates, public speaking, events).
- ▶ Supporting the director's outreach activities to the County government.
- ▶ Supporting request for proposal (RFP) responses and site visit activities.
- ▶ Coordinating with regional partners, especially with Central SC Alliance, on external marketing/rebranding efforts.

APPENDIX A. METRICS

A critical component of a successful strategic plan is the set of metrics by which the plan’s implementation is tracked. It is imperative that RCEDO focus on a set of strategic metrics to track progress on critical economic outcomes. Staff should create a performance dashboard that can be used to communicate performance metrics to County leadership on a regular basis. This is vital to tracking progress as well as maintaining accountability throughout the implementation of this plan.

Figure 1 provides a list of performance metrics that are intended to focus RCEDO on high-level strategy and outcomes; however, RCEDO staff will also need to identify programmatic and operational metrics to track progress toward program-specific goals. Moreover, not all of these measures are ones that RCEDO can directly impact through its programs and activities. Still, RCEDO should work with Central SC Alliance to track these measures as much as possible to provide an overall indicator of the relative economic health in the County and the region.

FIGURE 1. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE METRICS

METRIC	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES
Job growth	Number of jobs created and retained.	SC Works, business surveys, and interviews
Investment	Growth in capital investment from both existing and new businesses	In-house data collection, business surveys, and interviews
Wages	Average wages of jobs created/retained	SC Works, business surveys, and interviews
Portion of jobs at a livable wage	Percentage of jobs in the County that pay a living wage (see MIT living wage calculator).	SC Works, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Employment gap	Percentage difference in employment rate between Whites and people of color (ages 16–64).	US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Startup survival	Percentage of startups that are active after 1 year and 5 years.	In-house data collection, business surveys, and interviews
New business establishments	Number of new businesses in Richland County and year-to-year growth.	In-house data collection, business surveys, and interviews
Office space	Amount of new office space (square feet) added as well as vacancy rate.	Regional commercial real estate brokerage (e.g., Jones Lang LaSalle–JLL)
Domestic migration	Net migration to Richland County	US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Talent availability	Population 25+ with associate’s degree or higher.	US Census Bureau, American Community Survey
	Population 25+ with bachelor’s degree or higher.	US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

APPENDIX B. PARTNER NETWORK ANALYSIS

TIP Strategies conducted an organizational network analysis of the core and support functions for the 31 partner organizations that have the strongest impact on economic development in the Columbia region. The list of organizations was initially compiled by RCEDO. TIP examined each organization's website and conducted additional online research to determine the core and auxiliary economic development functions they engage in. The purpose of the analysis is to identify areas of overlap, duplication, and gaps in regional economic development functions. It is likely this analysis did not capture all the organizations in the region that play a role in economic development, so some apparent gaps might actually be the reality.

The matrix in Figure 2 lists the activities where each organization currently dedicates staff and resources. The columns are organized around four broad functional areas: business, place, people, and communication. Under each function are common activities that are connected to economic development. The cells with a solid circle indicate the primary mission/function of each organization. A half-circle indicates a secondary function for the organization.

Richland County's economic development program is focused on its core functions of business retention, expansion, and recruitment. RCEDO also engages directly in providing/negotiating incentives, marketing, data collection, and infrastructure (site development). Indirectly, through financial support and partnerships, RCEDO supports workforce development and entrepreneurship and innovation.

Listed here are some summary points from the matrix.

- ▶ For its size, the Columbia metro area is served by a large number of organizations that touch on economic development in the region.
- ▶ Some core functions are relatively well served by multiple organizations in the region, especially BRE, business recruitment, and small business assistance.
- ▶ The matrix might indicate a substantial amount of duplicative business development activities in the region, based on the large number of organizations with similar functions. A deeper analysis of the regional economic development ecosystem would be needed in order to make such a determination.
- ▶ Workforce development is the functional area served by a high number of organizations, especially as a primary function.
- ▶ Diversity, equity, and inclusion only seems to be addressed by one organization (Eau Claire Development Corporation) as a secondary function. This highlights a regional need for more organizations to focus on increasing shared prosperity for all residents of the Columbia region.
- ▶ Beyond the efforts of Central SC Alliance and two accelerators/coworking spaces, talent attraction and retention is also an area that appears to require additional attention within the region.

FIGURE 2. PARTNER NETWORK ANALYSIS: ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS

● = Primary function ○ = Secondary function

ORGANIZATION	TYPE	BUSINESS						PLACE				PEOPLE			COMMUNICATION						
		BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION	BUSINESS RECRUITMENT / SITE SELECTION	SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE	BUSINESS FINANCE & INCENTIVES	INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH	ENTREPRENEURSHIP / INNOVATION	PROCUREMENT	DISTRICTS & CORRIDORS	HOUSING	PLANNING & ZONING	INFRASTRUCTURE	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	JOB PLACEMENT	TALENT RETENTION & ATTRACTION	K-12/EARLY CHILDHOOD	MARKETING & PROMOTION (ED)*	RESEARCH & DATA	MARKETING & TOURISM	POLICY & ADVOCACY	DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION
Richland County Economic Development Office	EDO*	●	●	○	●						○						●	●			
Lexington County Department of Economic Development	EDO	●	●	○	●		○		○								●	○			
City of Columbia Office of Economic Development	EDO	●	●	○				●		●							○	●			
Central SC Alliance	EDO	●	●	○		●	○							●			●	●			
I-77 Economic Development Alliance	EDO	●	●	○		●		●	○								●	●			
Columbia Development Corporation	EDO	●	●																		
West Columbia Economic Development	EDO		●		●			●	○								●				
City of Cayce Economic Development Department	EDO	●	●		●												●		●		
EngenuitySC	NONPROFIT	●		○		○	○					○						●	●		
Midlands Business Leadership Group	NONPROFIT	●			○	○						○						○			
Experience Columbia	NONPROFIT	●			○	○						○							●		
IT-oLogy	NONPROFIT											○									
City Center Partnership	NONPROFIT	●	●					●	○								○				
Eau Claire Development Corporation	NONPROFIT	○						●	●												○
Congaree Vista Guild	NONPROFIT	○		○				●									●				
The River Alliance	NONPROFIT							●									●		●		

● = Primary function ○ = Secondary function

ORGANIZATION	TYPE	BUSINESS						PLACE				PEOPLE				COMMUNICATION				
		BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION	BUSINESS RECRUITMENT / SITE SELECTION	SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE	BUSINESS FINANCE & INCENTIVES	INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH	ENTREPRENEURSHIP / INNOVATION	PROCUREMENT	DISTRICTS & CORRIDORS	HOUSING	PLANNING & ZONING	INFRASTRUCTURE	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	JOB PLACEMENT	TALENT RETENTION & ATTRACTION	K-12/EARLY CHILDHOOD	MARKETING & PROMOTION (ED)*	RESEARCH & DATA	MARKETING & TOURISM	POLICY & ADVOCACY
Main Street District	NONPROFIT	●						●			●					●		●	●	
South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership	NONPROFIT	●										○								
Midlands Education and Business Alliance	NONPROFIT											●	●		●					
Columbia Empowerment Zone	NONPROFIT															○				
UofSC Office of Economic Engagement	HIGHER EDU.*			○			●					●								
UofSC/Columbia Technology Incubator	HIGHER EDU.			●			●					●					●			
Midlands Technical College Enterprise Campus Authority	HIGHER EDU.		●	●			●					●								
Columbia Chamber of Commerce	CHAMBER	●	○	●								●				●			●	
Lexington Chamber and Visitors Center	CHAMBER	●		○								○				●		●	○	
Greater Cayce West Columbia Chamber of Commerce	CHAMBER	●														●				
SOCO	COWORK/ACCEL.*		●	●			●					●		●						
GrowCo	COWORK/ACCEL.	○		●			●					●		●						
Partnership for Small Business Recovery	SBDC*	●		●	●														●	
Midlands Workforce Development Board	WORKFORCE DEV.*											●	●		●					
readySC	WORKFORCE DEV.											●	●							

* ED = economic development. EDO = economic development office. EDU = education. ACCEL = accelerator. SBDC = small business development center. DEV = development. Source: TIP Strategies Research.

APPENDIX C. VETERANS INVENTORY CASE STUDY



CASE STUDIES: Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative (FHRVII) AND Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) Transition Assistance Survey

LOCATIONS : Killeen, Texas, and San Antonio, Texas

WEBSITES

<https://www.hotda.org/veterans-inventory-initiative>

<https://www.jbsa.mil/Mission-Partners/>

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative

- ▶ Soldier for Life—Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP)
- ▶ Workforce Solutions of Central Texas Board of Directors, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas Workforce Service Centers
- ▶ Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (GKCC)
- ▶ Heart of Texas Defense Alliance (HOTDA)
- ▶ Texas Veterans Commission

Joint Base San Antonio

- ▶ Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA)
- ▶ Bexar County, Texas

BACKGROUND

In 2006, the city of Killeen, Texas, and the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce (GKCC) partnered with TIP Strategies to craft a regional plan (named Operation Economic Transformation) that would reduce the region's military-related economic dependency while simultaneously building on the region's growth opportunities associated with Fort Hood. One outcome of this plan was the creation of the Fort Hood Region Veterans Inventory Initiative (FHRVII) survey, which continues to be administered on a quarterly basis. FHRVII captures information from soldiers who are about to separate from the military. The survey asks questions about their educational levels, skills, post-separation career plans for them and their spouses, and suggestions to improve the area's quality of place. Once the results are compiled, the results are sent to local partners so that they can highlight the incoming talent pool for economic development marketing and in responding to investment request for proposals (RFPs).

Inspired by GKCC's efforts, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) began its own survey in 2018, modeled after the FHRVII, and recently completed its third assessment. After receiving the completed survey, JBSA sends the information to Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA). WSA analyzes the results and publishes the findings. WSA then uses this data to apply for training dollars. A major consistent finding of the survey is the need for more entry-level, professional career opportunities for recently separated military members in the San Antonio area. This diverges from older assumptions that veterans are more primed for blue-collar work and affects what workforce and training programs JBSA is willing to partner with.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Assess soon-to-be separating military members before they leave to ensure survey completion.
- ▶ Be comprehensive when creating a survey for this specific demographic so that the data can support funding for all facets of economic development in your region.
- ▶ Regularly administer the survey in order to produce fresh and compelling data that can be applied for funding opportunities.

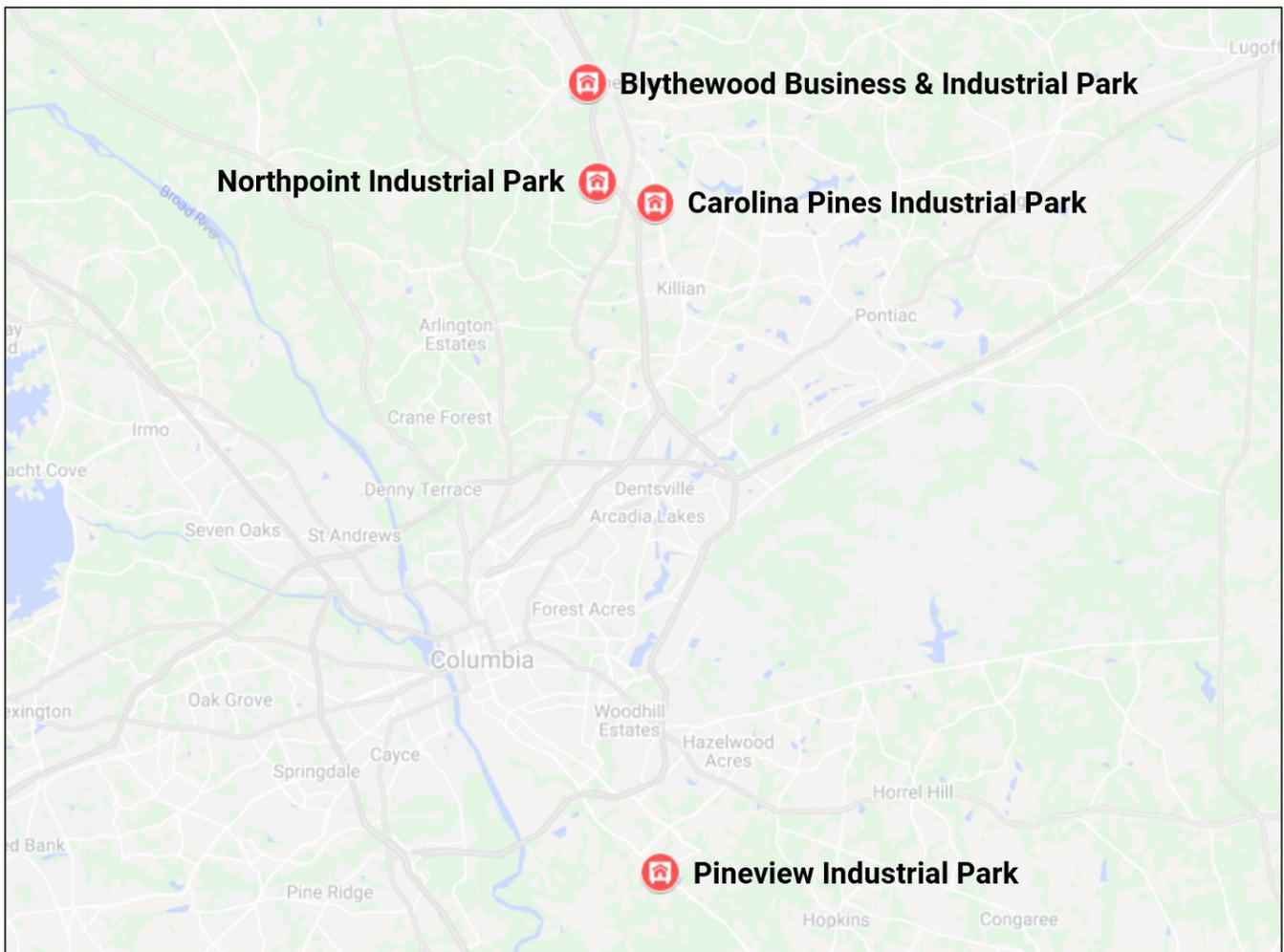
Image source: Fort Hood <https://home.army.mil/hood/>.

APPENDIX D. PRODUCT REVIEW

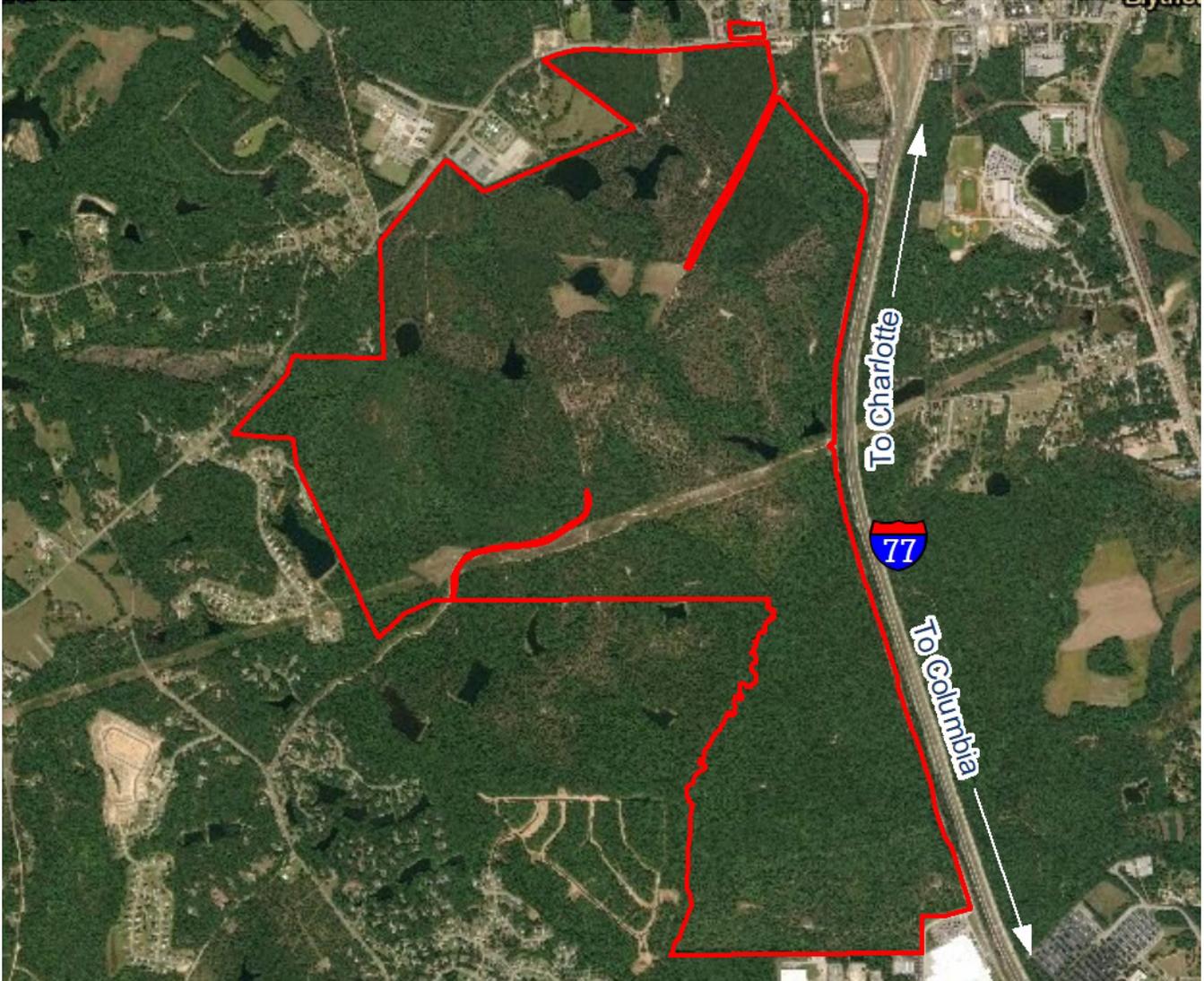
A critical component to RCEDO's success in expanding the County's tax base and attracting new investment is the presence and availability of competitive real estate product. In the past few years, Richland County has made significant investments to acquire land in the County to accommodate new industrial development. Richland County now owns or controls more than 2,300 acres of prime industrial property. As Richland County's inventory of vacant business and industrial parks shrinks, developing these sites will be critical for economic competitiveness.

This section provides a high-level review of significant business and industrial properties/sites the County owns. Additionally, barriers/constraints for development are identified for each site as well as how they might link to new opportunities.

The sites profiled here are displayed on the map on this page. They include the Blythewood Business & Industrial Park, Northpoint Industrial Park, Carolina Pines Industrial Park, and Pineview Industrial Park.

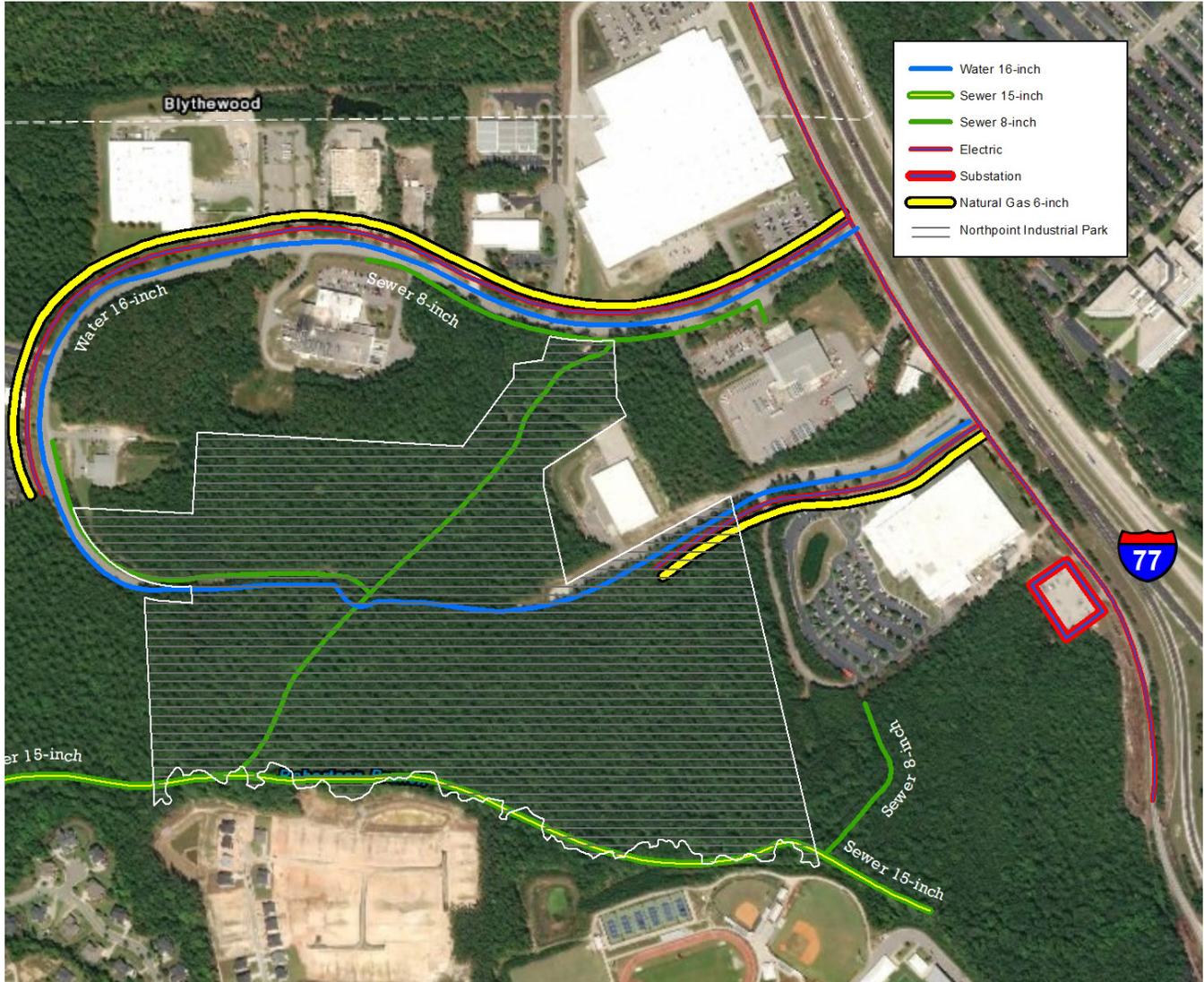


BLYTHEWOOD BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL PARK



Location	Community Road and I-77
Property Size	1,349 acres
Owner	Richland County
Zoning	Light industrial
Utilities	24"/48" water; 8"/21" wastewater; 4"/6" natural gas; 230 kV transmission; fiber
Transportation	Accessible by two I-77 interchanges
Key Attributes	Nearly 2 miles of interstate frontage
Barriers	Some wetlands on the site
Opportunities	Fully developing the site will be a long-term endeavor. Potential for subdividing site into smaller parcels and partnering with private developers to build spec buildings.

NORTHPOINT INDUSTRIAL PARK



Location	Located at the NW quadrant of the I-77 and US 21 interchange
Property Size	90.2 acres
Owner	Richland County
Zoning	Light industrial
Utilities	12" water; 15" wastewater; 4" natural gas; 23/115 kV transmission; fiber
Transportation	1.2 miles to I-77; Northpoint Boulevard (two lanes)
Key Attributes	The park features a 300,000-square-foot graded building pad. There are several businesses already operating adjacent to the site.
Barriers	None
Opportunities	The park is relatively developed, and there are already several businesses operating in the park. The development-ready pad site presents a great opportunity for employers in need of a turnkey site or a developer interested in building a spec building.

CAROLINA PINES INDUSTRIAL PARK



Location	Near the US 21 and I-77 interchange
Property Size	70.10 acres
Owner	Richland County
Zoning	Light industrial
Utilities	16" water; 8" wastewater; 6" natural gas; 23/115 kV transmission; fiber
Transportation	0.5 miles to I-77; rail service provided by Norfolk Southern Railway
Key Attributes	Features ±12.36-acre pad-ready site that can accommodate up to a 200,000-square-foot building. There are several businesses already operating adjacent to the site.
Barriers	None
Opportunities	Substantial electrical infrastructure and transmission capacity can accommodate large digital technology operations, such as cloud storage and data centers.

PINEVIEW INDUSTRIAL PARK



Location	Located at the intersection of Pineview Road and Shop Road
Property Size	780 acres
Owner	Richland County (460 acres under option, 780 total acres)
Zoning	Light industrial
Utilities	16" water; 8" wastewater; 6" natural gas; 115 kV transmission; fiber
Transportation	1 mile to I-77; rail service provided by Norfolk Southern Railway
Key Attributes	300,000 gallon/day water capacity; 200,000 gallon/day wastewater capacity. There are a number of companies already operating near the site.
Barriers	Two small water areas on the site
Opportunities	Ample water and wastewater capacity will be attractive to food and beverage manufacturers. The County has already successfully attracted a large beverage manufacturer to the park that will result in \$400 million in new investment and potentially 800 new jobs.