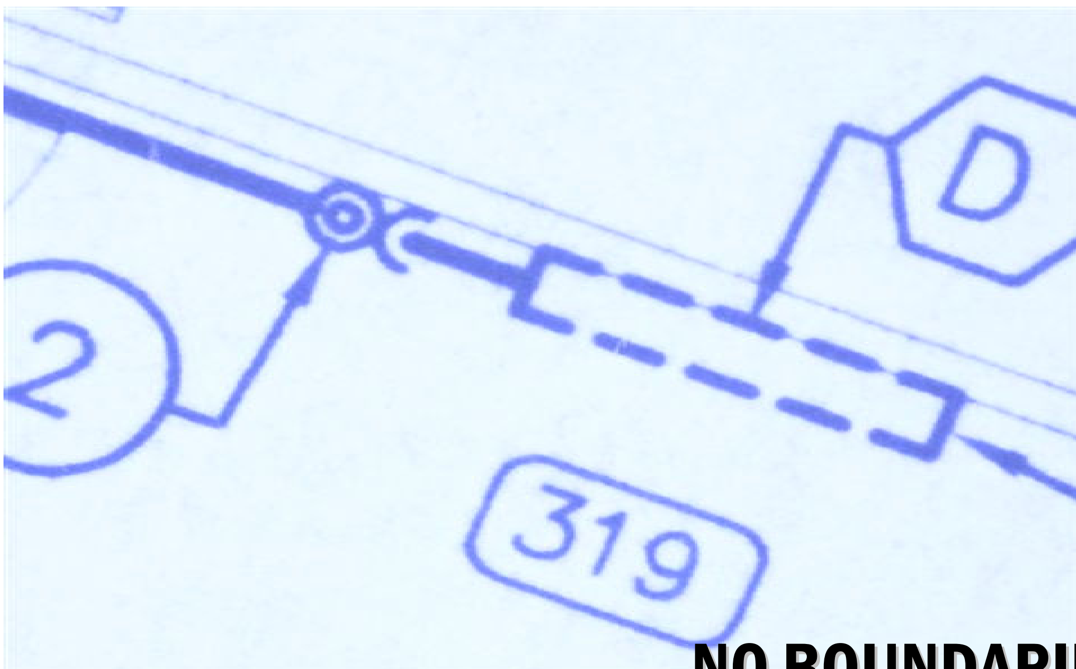
Centralina Economic Development Commission

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



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July 2007

Centralina Economic Development Commission
1300 Baxter Street – Suite 450 – Charlotte, NC 28235

Centralina
Council of Governments

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Centralina Economic Development Commission, incorporated as a public non-profit in 2005, is designated as the Economic Development District for the Centralina Region. This report reflects updated information and is based on work completed by Angelou Economics, Inc. in 2004. A Regional CEDS Committee oversaw the development of this document and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the nine-county region of Centralina. The Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Centralina COG, and the Centralina Economic Development Commission funded this report, and all nine counties have provided their input throughout this initial assessment.

A CEDS is a plan that emerges from a broad-based continuous planning process that addresses a region's economic opportunities and constraints. The guidelines for developing a CEDS include effective general planning practices that can be used by any community to direct its economic growth. A CEDS is a prerequisite to be eligible to receive funds from the EDA, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The *Background Report* is the first of two reports comprising the CEDS, providing an overview of the region's strengths, challenges and opportunities for improving its economy. The second report, *Action Plan*, includes regional economic development recommendations. Both documents use the *No Boundaries* report, adopted in October 2004, to establish baseline conditions.

Key Findings

The following are the most important regional issues that this strategic document addresses:

- ✓ ***The core county gained, but other counties in the region have lost 25-44 year olds.***
- ✓ ***Educational attainment levels are high but workforce skills and literacy levels could hamper overall success in economic development.***
- ✓ ***Regional economic development approach is strong. Regional and local effort should continue to focus more on programs that assist existing business growth, which will ultimately help in business recruitment efforts.***
- ✓ ***Entrepreneurial efforts remain somewhat fledgling, somewhat duplicative, and competing for similar resources. The new effort to develop a collaborative network should be supported.***
- ✓ ***Research and development assets are tremendous but not well known or leveraged in the region.***

- ***Recreation and tourism assets exist throughout the area but have not been promoted at a regional level in a coordinated fashion. A new effort should be supported by the region.***
- ***Collaboration among workforce, education, economic developers and businesses is improving. These efforts must continue***

Regional Priorities

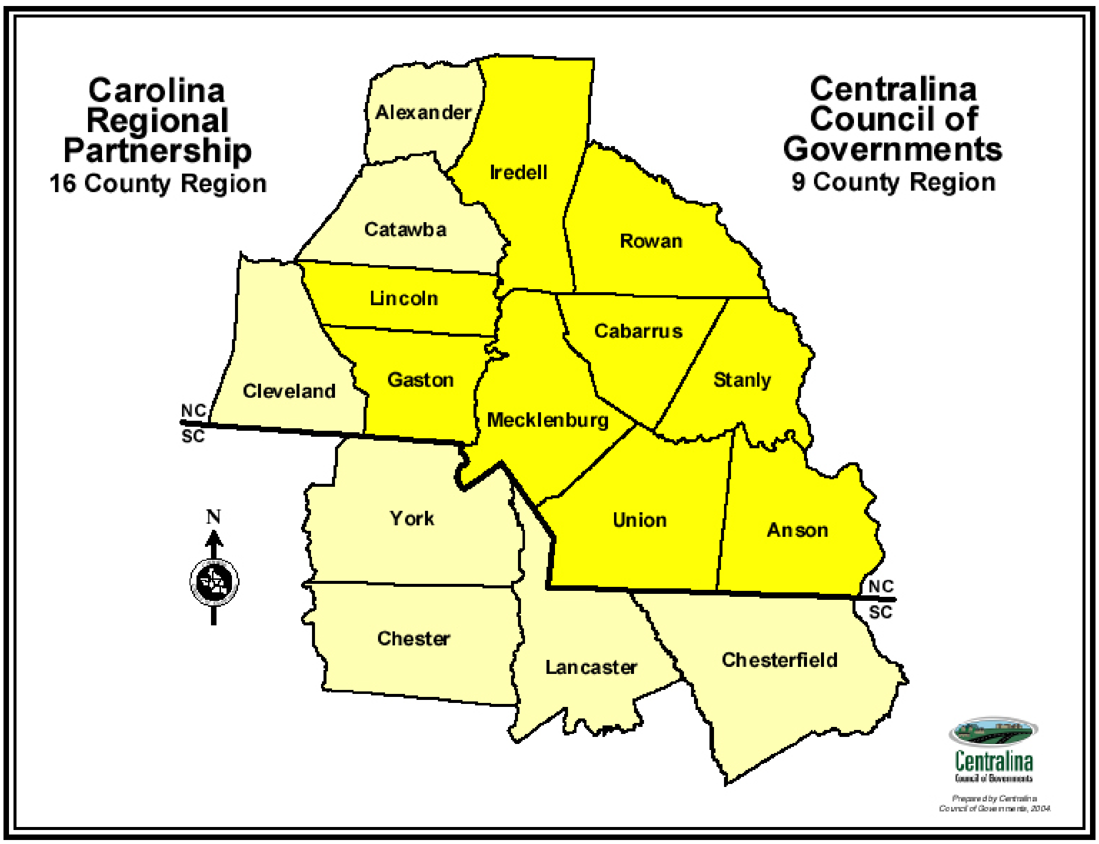
- ***Incorporate advanced manufacturing in all business sectors that can adopt it.***
- *Expand research and development by focusing on the motorsports, optoelectronics, biotech/bioinformatics industries, and agriculture.*
- ***Improve the region's workforce preparedness through programs in literacy and basic skills development. Expand technology transfer educational programs.***
- ***Develop a culture that promotes and encourages entrepreneurship.***
- ***Promote the region's tourism assets through a well-funded cooperative effort.***
- ***Enhance the distribution network for the region by investigating the feasibility of an intermodal site at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.***

Introduction

The purpose of the Centralina Regional CEDS Project is to develop a regional strategy for improving the economy of the following counties that make up the Centralina Council of Governments (COG):

Anson	Iredell	Rowan
Cabarrus	Lincoln	Stanly
Gaston	Mecklenburg	Union

Although these nine counties comprise the geographic area of the Centralina Council of Governments region (denoted in bright yellow below), they are also part of a larger economic region, referred to as the Charlotte Regional Partnership, which includes seven other counties, including four counties in South Carolina. This report focuses primarily on the Centralina Region, yet some of the assessment information and preliminary recommendations address the entire Partnership region.



What drives our regional economy?

The Council on Competitiveness tells us "Competition in today's economy is far more dynamic. Companies can mitigate many input-cost disadvantages through global sourcing, rendering the old notion of comparative advantage less relevant. Instead, competitive advantage rests on making more productive use of inputs, which requires continual innovation.

In our global economy, place matters more than ever. Even as technology, capital, and knowledge diffuse internationally, the levers of national prosperity are, in fact, becoming more localized. As talented people and new ideas become the most critical drivers of economic growth, regional economic conditions have assumed greater importance. Regions that can attract talented residents and support the development of highly innovative firms will support great prosperity. Regions that rely on low-cost labor and basic extraction of natural resources will not. While the U.S. has many successful regions, America is also home to many areas that do not offer the environment necessary to support productive firms -- and the higher salaries those firms offer. We are becoming a land of innovation haves and have-nots.

Addressing this challenge requires a shift away from traditional economic development models. Instead of low-wage rates and tax incentives, regions in industrialized countries compete today on the quality of their skilled workforce and incentives that reward innovation." (The Council on Competitiveness, January 2007, www.compete.org)

How do regions prosper and grow jobs and investment?

- **Successful regions leverage their unique mix of assets to build specialized clusters:** Successful regions do not pick winners, but build on their inherited assets (e.g., geography, climate, population, research centers, companies, governmental organizations), to create specialized economies that both differ from other regions and offer comparative advantages to local companies.

- **Building strong regional economies takes decades:** There are many steps in building a regional economy – developing inherited assets, creating new assets, linking companies to these assets, attracting outside companies – and this process takes time.

- **Institutions for collaboration play an important role in building regional economies:** Institutions for collaboration help build regional economies by facilitating the flow of information, ideas, and resources among firms and supporting institutions.

  (Excerpted from *Clusters of Innovation: Regional Foundations of U.S. Competitiveness*, a report of the Council on Competitiveness written by Michael E. Porter, Harvard University.)

A word about clusters:

Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field. Clusters encompass an array of linked industries and other entities important to competition. They include, for example, suppliers of specialized inputs such as components, machinery, and services, and providers of specialized infrastructure. Clusters also often extend downstream to channels and customers and laterally to manufacturers of complementary products and to companies in industries related by skills, technologies, or common inputs. Finally, many clusters include governmental and other institutions - such as universities, standards-setting agencies, think tanks, vocational training providers, and trade associations - that provide specialized training, education, information, research, and technical support.

(Excerpted from *Clusters and the New Economics of Competition*, Harvard Business Review; Boston; Nov/Dec 1998; Michael E. Porter.)

Purpose of Report

The purpose of a CEDS is to identify regional economic development strategies on which communities within a region can collaborate to bring about sustainable economic prosperity.

The primary benefit in having all nine counties of the Centralina COG participate in the development of a CEDS is the establishment of an Economic Development District (EDD), an increase in the region's competitiveness for federal grants, and a decline in the region's required local level match for federal grants. Additionally, EDDs receive annual funding that can be used for additional economic development planning and implementation of recommendations that will be developed from this planning initiative.

The first phase of developing an action plan builds a baseline for the region. The purpose of the Background Report is to provide the region with a thorough understanding of where it is today, what its competitive advantages and assets are, and what areas need improvement.

OVERVIEW OF A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

CEDS are designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen Regional economies. The CEDS should analyze the Regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing Regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a Regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. Public and private sector partnerships are critical to the implementation of the integral elements of a CEDS. As a performance-based plan, the CEDS will serve a critical role in a Region's efforts to defend against economic dislocations due to global trade, competition and other events resulting in the loss of jobs and private investment.

(Excerpted from *Federal Register* Vol. 70, No. 54, Section 303.7.)

Methodology

The report investigates the region's economic conditions and perceptions of the region that was gathered during its interviews, focus groups, regional tours, and meetings with the CEDS Advisory Committee. It also considers how closely those perceptions align with the economic and demographic information.

Combined, the economic and demographic assessment and the qualitative analysis form the foundation for the recommendations offered in the second report.

The *Background Report* is structured around six factors critical to the region's future success:

Economic and Demographic Trends. Quantitative variables that describe demographic and economic trends and outlook for the region. Topics explored include: population growth, ethnicity, wages, and industry trends.

Quality of Life: Issues that influence an existing or potential resident to live in a community or a company to expand or relocate in a particular area. Topics explored include: cost of living, cultural/recreational/entertainment options, crime rate, diversity of housing, and the environment.

Workforce & Education: Programs and delivery of services by organizations and institutions involved in workforce development and education including K-12 education, community colleges, universities, and workforce development boards/organizations. Topics explored include: educational attainment, communication and collaboration between workforce/education organizations, economic development organizations and the private sector, resource allocation, and effectiveness of service delivery.

Economic Development Efforts: The activities of local, regional and state organizations involved in any form of economic development activity. Topics explored include: external promotion and marketing, internal promotion, and resource allocation.

Business Climate and Entrepreneurship: Variables that impact the business success and activities of local and regional organizations involved in entrepreneurship activity. Topics explored include: tax rates, regulatory climate, R&D activities, entrepreneur education and promotion, small business lending, and business plan competitions.

Geography and Environment: Infrastructure, as well as site-specific infrastructure to support business expansion and development. Topics explored include: transportation (roads, rail, air), utilities (water, wastewater, electricity and gas, telecommunications), land and real estate, and industrial sites.

Public Participation

The community's perceptions of the Centralina region as a place to live and work are important to understand when developing a regional plan such as this CEDS. Public input gathered from businesses identifies specific problems that must be addressed in order to retain local companies.

Industry Focus Groups and Network Meetings
Numerous focus groups with businesses were have been held throughout the region, including:

- Manufacturers met in Union County, Cabarrus County, and in Charlotte where input on key issues was discussed;
- Three networking meetings to discuss community needs in regard to the bioinformatics and biotech industries were held during the past year. Public Education systems, community colleges, and
- Three network meetings were held in Mecklenburg County for the logistics industry, which was identified, in the previous CEDS as a target industry.

Regional Visioning Project

- A forty member regional committee met four times to agree on an overall regional vision and develop a strategy to implement the vision. All of which is described in a report entitled *Connect: The Greater Charlotte Bi-State Regional Visioning Project,(November 2006).*

Interviews
Approximately 38 interviews have been held with individuals, including private sector CEOs, elected officials, economic development professionals, university and community college representatives, and researchers from key industries.
Advantage Carolina Progress

Carolina Competitiveness Forum
This forum was sponsored by Duke Energy to primarily discuss the future role of manufacturing in the Carolinas, how to build the Carolinas' competitiveness, and how to drive economic development transformation. Information from this forum has also been incorporated into this assessment report.

Initial Findings

The Centralina region has tremendous assets and is transitioning from a traditional manufacturing economy. There are, however, issues that will hamper the region's success if they are not effectively addressed. The *No Boundaries* report completed in 2004 first identified the following major issues that were evaluated during the CEDS process in 2007.

Issues presented that will impact the region's economy in future years:

Improving workforce skills and basic education should be a top priority for the region.

The most critical economic development issue in the nation is the current and projected gap between the employer demand for workforce skills and employee skill sets. This issue is most glaring in regions such as Centralina where skills employed in traditional industries such as textile and manufacturing are no longer in as much demand as they used to be. These traditional skill sets do not match up well with industries that the region has targeted for future growth or with the fastest growing occupations in the technology and medical fields. It is very important for regional leaders to understand that nearly 20% of national businesses require a baccalaureate while close to 80% require skills and educational attainment below a baccalaureate. The community college system in North Carolina is excellent. The region is well served by these institutions, but more collaboration among community colleges, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and school districts is needed – especially in sharing best practices and acquiring state, federal and other funds. Literacy issues should be of paramount importance to the region. The region needs to develop and fund creative ways to increase literacy in all the counties. **Reading and basic skills are the most important aspects of a workforce. The North Carolina workforce ethic is of course strong and wages are competitive but a business leader needs to know that the job can get done and that employees can learn on the job.**

Regional economic development approach is strong.

Fortunately for the region, there is a good balance of both private and public sector participation in economic development programs. The Charlotte Regional Partnership is a very effective organization. The regional brand – "Charlotte USA" – is good at drawing attention to the region. The organization is well staffed from the top down, and the board is a high level, business-focused group. The counties support the Partnership and their initiatives, and the local economic development groups collaborate with the Partnership on economic development initiatives. The Centralina Economic Development Commission plays a role in economic development as an Economic Development District. Weaknesses that are being addressed are: connecting the economic development message and target industries to the UNC Charlotte's core competency centers, embracing a more proactive selling of target industries and connecting the R&D competencies to high tech programs.

Location and transportation network are tremendous assets.

The Charlotte region is one of the premier distribution hubs in the Southeast. The region is served by four major interstate highways and is within a 24-hour drive of more than 56 percent of the nation's population. The Charlotte/Douglas International Airport is one of the busiest passenger airports in the world, and the rail network is also one of the best in the U.S. There are needed improvements in the transportation network that are being addressed, including increased investment in public transportation, but this infrastructure is one of the region's best assets. **There are tremendous opportunities to elevate the significant distribution/warehousing cluster to a more value-added product into Advanced Logistics. Secondly, there is an opportunity to enhance this network through improvements at the airport and in the intermodal system that would only enhance the region's competitiveness in distribution and logistics.**

Entrepreneurial efforts are fledgling yet expanding.
Angel Investment groups are few and far between. Many entrepreneurs have mentioned during the course of this project that they have had to go outside the region for investment. The numerous "Committees of 100" that exist in several counties provide some of these services within their respective counties, but a more holistic regional collaboration focused on entrepreneur development is very much needed. **The region cannot afford to be deficient in its entrepreneurial efforts. A separate and focused entrepreneurial strategy should be developed for the region.**

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is an important regional asset.
UNC Charlotte's research capabilities and links with the business community are significant. UNC Charlotte, in response to earlier findings, has expanded its outreach efforts to regional businesses. The Charlotte Research Institute moved into larger facilities and offers increased space for commercial collaboration. The new Bioinformatics Center is under construction. The Charlotte Research Institute has opened an office at the new North Carolina Research Park in Kannapolis. The University has a new program called, Open for Business, which is the gateway to University resources for local businesses.

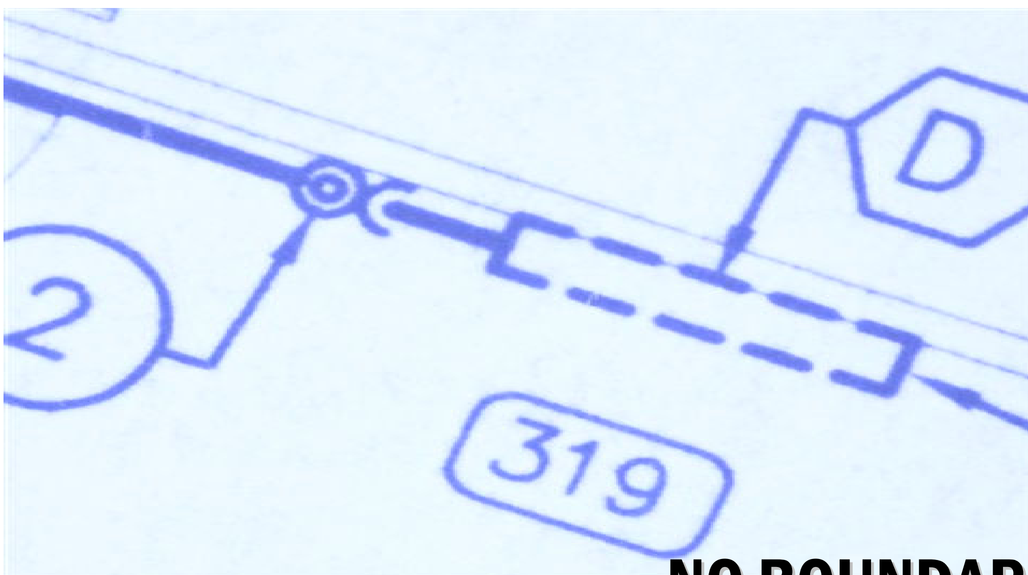
Significant recreation and tourism assets exist throughout the region.
Every county in the region has a tourism asset. From the Lowe's Motor Speedway in Cabarrus County, to the beautiful city of Salisbury in Rowan County, the region has a bounty of assets. Mecklenburg County gains the lion share of tourism revenue, with its downtown and sports-related amenities. The newly reorganized Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority intends to extend its reach beyond the borders of Mecklenburg County to promote regional tourism. Although it will be a challenge from a resource perspective, this type of **regional tourism will undoubtedly have a larger, positive impact on the region's ability to capture tourism than any one single county in the region can achieve alone.**

The motorsports industry is strong and tied to workforce, education and economic development.
NASCAR is one of the fastest growing sporting events in the U.S., and North Carolina is home to nearly 90 percent of the racing teams. Several racing facilities exist in the region, including Lowe's Motor Speedway, and estimates put the industry's impact on the region at more than $5 billion. Nevertheless, it is estimated that less than half of the industry's revenue is spent in North Carolina. Existing efforts of UNC Charlotte, community colleges, economic development groups and others should be aimed at capturing more of this industry's economic impact.

Finally, the Charlotte region must become more assertive as an economic development destination and create the necessary vision and find the determination not to merely be competitive, but a trend setter and a leader in economic development. The region must think and believe that its peer communities are the top economic development destinations in the nation today (regions such as Dallas, San Diego, Seattle, Atlanta, Denver, and Chicago) only then can the region truly reach its full potential.

SECTION 1
Ba ckground

Centralina Economic Development Commission



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Background of the Region

Economic and Demographic Trends

The Centralina region is diverse in many respects. As the following pages illustrate, the nine counties are very different in industry and demographic composition. However, the counties are tied together in many ways. The region includes cities of all sizes, workforces of all skill levels, and industrial traditions ranging from textiles to banking. The first portion of the Economic and Demographic Trends section focuses on the entire region's demographics.

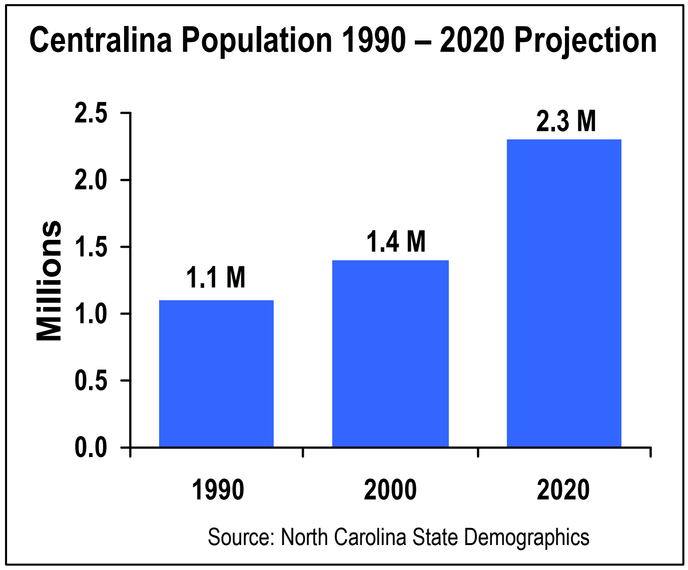
The second portion of the Economic and Demographic Trends section focuses on the Charlotte-Gaston-Concord metropolitan statistical area (C-G-RH MSA) and five selected benchmark metro regions: Austin, Dallas, Denver, Jacksonville, and Phoenix. It is important to understand how this smaller metropolitan region compares to regions with whom the Charlotte area should aspire to compete.

The following are economic and demographic highlights of the Centralina region:

- **The region is experiencing rising populations, increasing by 26 percent during the 1990s. Another 900,000 people will be added by 2020.**
- **This rapid growth has led to a commuter culture, with large numbers of people traveling into Charlotte each day for work. In-commuters hold one-third of all jobs in Mecklenburg County.**
- **The Centralina region is transitioning to a service-oriented economy. Currently in Centralina, there are five times as many service jobs as manufacturing jobs.**
- **The most troubling outcomes of this transition have been the mass layoffs and plant closings in traditional manufacturing.**
- **Centralina's continuing challenge: fostering new economy industries while simultaneously providing opportunities to displaced workers who have traditional manufacturing skills.**

Growth in the Centralina region has been rapid over the past twenty years and is projected to continue.

- The total population in the region was 1.14 million in 1990 and had grown by 26% to 1.44 million by 2000.
- Estimates by the State demographer place Centralina's population at 2.3 million by the year 2020.
- This growth is astounding and has placed five of the counties in the region (Union, Mecklenburg, Iredell, Cabarrus and Lincoln) among the 20 fastest growing in North Carolina.



Centralina is a multicultural community.

- Hispanics are one the fastest growing segments of the local population, and current population estimates are more than eight times larger than what they were in 1990.
- 7-1/2 percent of the population is of Hispanic ethnicity.
- Racially, Centralina looks very much like North Carolina, with white and black residents accounting for most of the population. 68 percent of area residents are white, and just over 21 percent are black.
- With an increasingly multicultural community, an important issue to address is cultural competency, or how a region embraces this change and people of different ethnicity, age, and gender.

Population by Race / Ethnicity

	White		Black		Other		Hispanic	
	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005	1990	2005
Centralina	78.1%	68.0%	20.3%	21.3%	1.6%	3.2%	0.9%	7.5%
North Carolina	75.6%	68.3%	22.0%	21.8%	2.5%	3.5%	5.9%	6.4%
United States	80.3%	66.9%	12.1%	12.8%	7.6%	5.9%	13.8%	14.4%

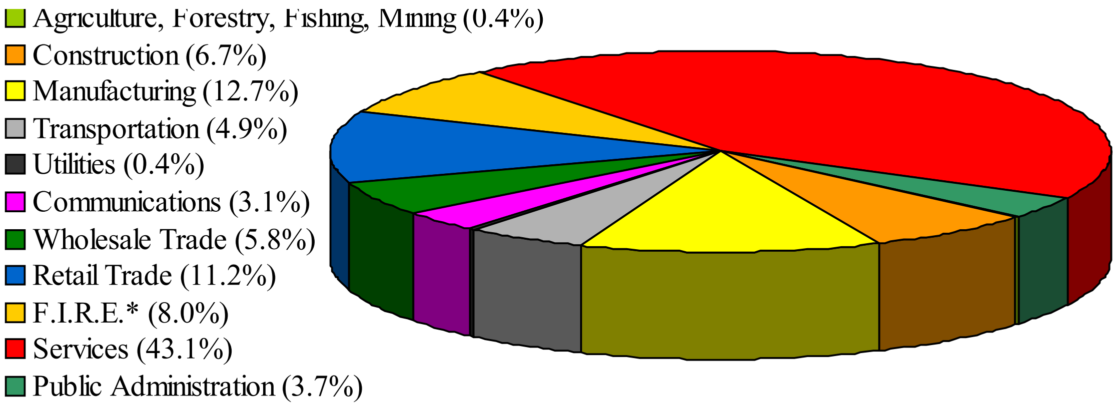
Source: US Census Bureau, 2005

Workforce Development

The Centralina region is served by three Workforce Development Boards who serve their specified counties.

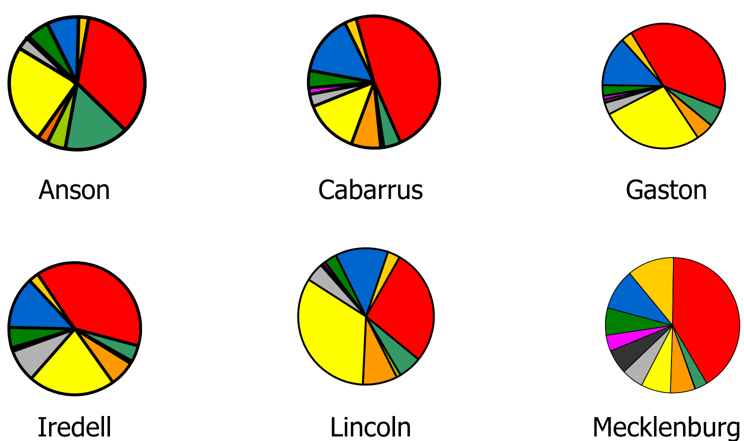
The Competitive Workforce Alliance is the workforce network for the greater Charlotte Region, comprised of the Centralina Workforce Development Board, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development Board and the Gaston County Workforce Development Board. The Alliance is representative of 9 counties including Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union. The group's study also consists of data from the South Carolina counties Chester, Lancaster and York, as well as Cleveland County, NC.

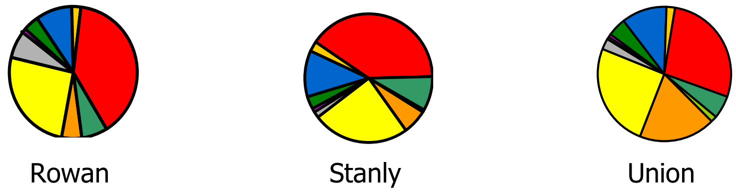
Regional Employment By Industry



Workforce By County

Workforce Composition By County





Source: Employment Security Commission, 2006

The following information on Workforce Development is excerpted from *The Workforce Network for the Charlotte Region: Building a Competitive Workforce Advantage for the Region*, 2005 Executive Summary, pp. 7-9, a report of the Competitive Workforce Alliance.

A well-prepared and career-aware workforce will maintain economic vitality.

The Story: Learning, Awareness and Readiness for a Changing Environment

- Education and learning beyond high school is perhaps the single most important factor influencing economic prosperity.
- As change and restructuring to companies, occupations and industries becomes more commonplace, all levels of workers need ongoing training and learning opportunities to ensure they have the skills and experience to remain employable throughout their lifetime.
- Companies require workers with the right mix of skills and interests, and the workers have the ability to "learn to learn."
- Partnerships among industry, educators, employers, and community-based organizations to promote career awareness have increased effectiveness of the education and training system.

The Challenges

- Leadership and employer interviews reflect a general perception that the education and training system needs a lot of improvement. Employers are satisfied with the performance of the community colleges, career and technical education programs, and four-year programs. Employers consistently express concern regarding the preparedness of graduates from the secondary systems in the region.
- Roughly one-third of the students entering North Carolina's community college system in any given year are taking remedial education courses.
- There is a misalignment in the Charlotte Region between the market demand and actual supply of workers trained in technical and skilled trades. There are more workers with Bachelor's degrees than jobs available, and there is a need for more technically skilled workers to meet market demands.
- Many employers around the region are participating in some type of career awareness program, but participation is not consistent in form. There is no systemic approach or evidence of any career awareness programs.

Writing the Next Chapter

- The region must continue to develop the core skills of the region's workers as the cornerstone of a competitive workforce.
- As the sophistication of technical jobs grows, access points must be provided for the technology have-nots to bridge the digital divide. It is the capacity of the entire workforce to engage in technical, digital, and knowledge work that will define the region's competitive attractiveness on a global stage.
- Better understanding of career availability and educational demands is needed to stem the increasing number of "backwards transfers" – four-year degree holders enrolling in community college seeking technical skills and training.
- Creative partnerships across business, education, community residents and government will allow regional leaders to organize resources quickly and differently to ensure that all workers have the skills and education to support the growth of existing and new companies in the region.

<u>"Growing your own" helps offset impacts of global change.</u>

The Story: Small Businesses are Key

- Nearly three quarters of the 40,000 plus private sector businesses in the Charlotte Region employ less than 20 employees. Over half of the region's private sector employment is found in businesses that employ less than 100 people and nearly a quarter of the jobs are found in businesses employing 50 or fewer employees.
- A key component of a region that fosters small business and entrepreneurship is the pervasiveness of networks and the breadth of education, information, mentoring, services and access to capital that those networks provide.

The Challenges

- Nationwide, networking is not recognized as a crucial asset for small business success. Instead, institutionalized support is for entrepreneurship centers and business incubators.
- Access to capital and regulatory red-tape are universally cited as barriers by entrepreneurs.
- While entrepreneurship was a focal point of project interviews and dominated many conversations, there is no region-wide coordinated strategic planning effort to foster the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Writing the Next Chapter

- Regional leadership needs to aggressively take up and expand the discussion on entrepreneurship to sharpen the focus and broaden the response to this widely-cited need. Coordinating education, workforce, and community resources to promote entrepreneurship opportunities may be one of the most effective approaches to attracting younger workers to the region and providing new employment opportunities for the region's mature workforce.
- The Community Forums included suggestions to incorporate awareness of entrepreneurship options and skill development into educational curricula at all levels. Another creative suggestion was the creation of an online university for entrepreneurship.

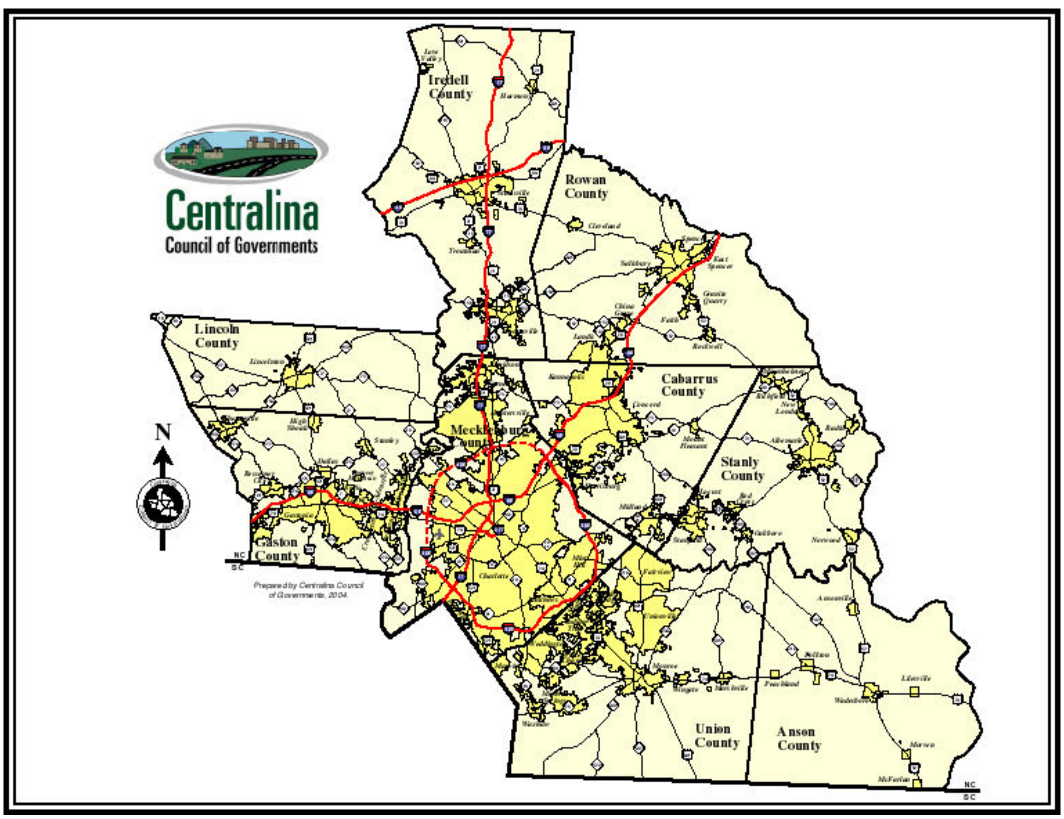
Transportation Network

The Centralina region has an exceptional transportation network, including an airport with a major airline hub and a state and federal highway system that provides good access to major markets throughout the southeastern United States.

<u>Roads</u>
With three major interstate systems and excellent state highways, the region is the second largest trucking center in the Southeast and ranks 11th nationally. North Carolina is in the process of building a 60-mile outer-belt that will link many highways and roads. The region lies at the junction of two major north-south interstate systems, I-77 and I-85 with east-west interstate I-40 just forty miles north.

Several highway improvements are underway, with plans for several others throughout the region. For example, I-85 is being widened to eight lanes and will have a huge impact on many of the counties in the region. **Expansion of Hwy-74 is a needed improvement that will help much of the region.**

<u>Rail</u>
Charlotte boasts that the region has the largest, most consolidated rail system in North Carolina. The region has two major freight railroad lines, including the CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern with extensive rail networks throughout the region. The intermodal depot in Charlotte has reached its capacity. It would be beneficial for the region to consider areas such as near the airport where a larger intermodal depot could be developed. This would increase the distribution industry and would help the airport to expand its distribution services.



Air
The Charlotte/Douglas International Airport is the sixth largest major airline hub in the nation. With more flights per day per capita, Charlotte ranks first among the top 30 metro regions in the country. Additionally, with daily nonstop service to London, Frankfurt and Paris, it is often said that Charlotte is one plane change away from virtually any major city in the world. Several improvements to this airport are planned or are underway. However, the threat of losing US Airways as a HUB is a very serious issue and an issue that the region should be discussing and dealing with proactively.

The Charlotte/Douglas airport recently heard that they will be receiving $15.4M in grants from the Federal Aviation administration for safety equipment and to help prepare a third runway. The FAA still must give final approval for the 9,000-foot runway, which will be built on the western border of the airport. The grants will provide funding for other upgrades, including a rescue and firefighting vehicle. The airport's new digital radar system in its air traffic control center, called the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System retires technology that dates to the 1970s and should improve safety and minimize delays. The system can collect data from up to 16 radars, detail local weather and track up to 1,350 aircraft over a 60-mile radius. The Charlotte airport is among the first nationally to employ the system, which was designed by Massachusetts-based Raytheon Corp.

Several municipal or regional airports exist throughout the region that provide general aviation services, and some offer locations for corporate jet landings and storage.

Commuter Rail
The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) was developed to address a need for alternative transportation in the region. CATS currently operates regional express bus services to several adjacent counties. CATS is also planning five rapid transit corridors that could eventually extend into adjacent counties. The North Corridor Commuter Rail project is proposed to extend into Iredell County. A Major Investment Study led by the City of Rock Hill is currently underway to determine the best option for rapid transit between Charlotte and York County, South Carolina.

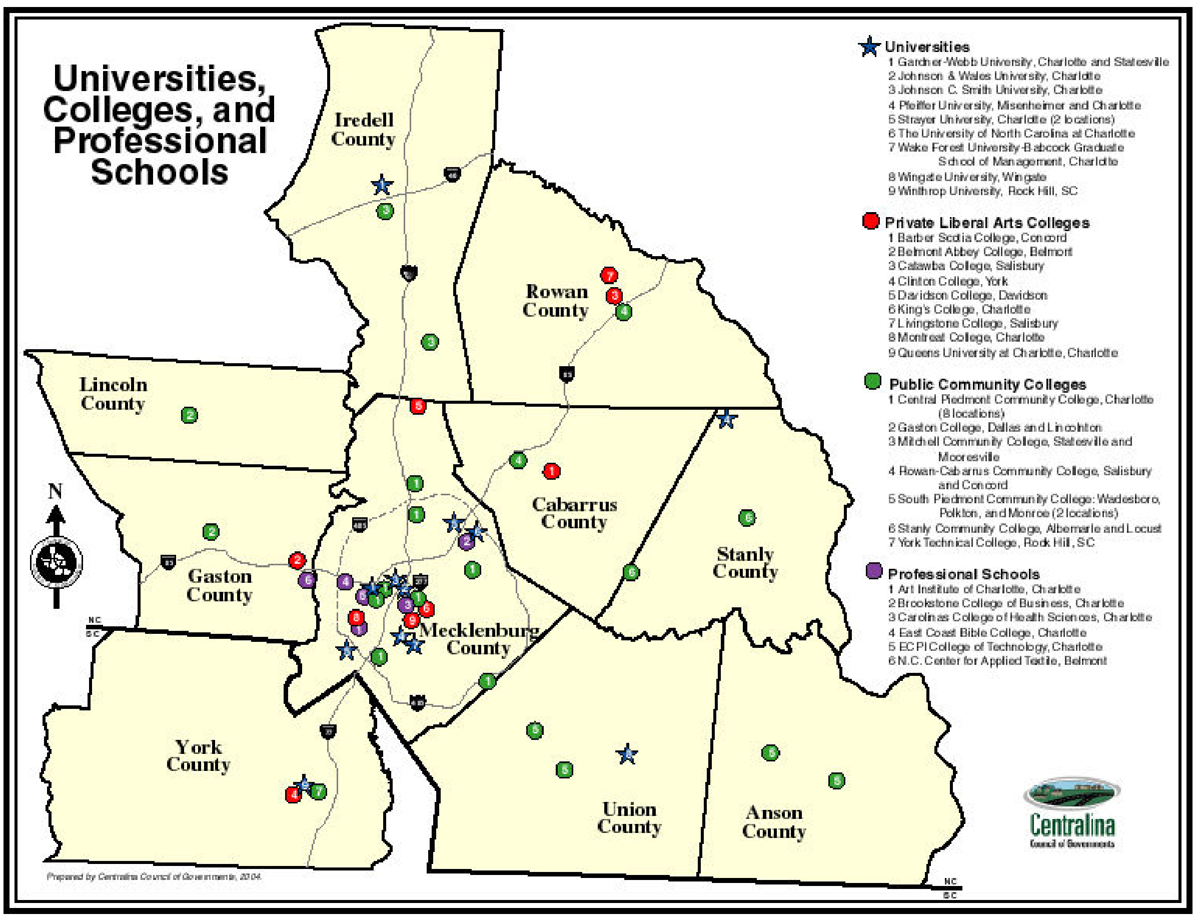
This system could serve as a test-bed for deployment of the world's first commuter rail application of hydrail technology, provided on-going development of the technology confirms its superior safety and operating characteristics. The region needs additional innovative programs such as this to bring national attention to the region's technology assets.

Resources

Workforce Development

Several workforce development boards exist in the region, including Centralina Works, which serves most of the Centralina Region, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development Board, and the Gaston County Workforce Development Board. These organizations help in coordinating workforce delivery programs among community colleges, businesses and the public sector. These organizations played a crucial role in retraining displaced workers from those businesses that have recently closed or reduced the number of employees.

The community college system in Centralina is very good, and the Central Piedmont Community College is rated as one of the best in the U.S. Resource allocation for education and workforce providers is a critical issue. Both CPCC and UNC Charlotte appear to be the lowest funded among their respective peers in North Carolina. The private sector supports several initiatives within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District, but that type of support doesn't exist as much throughout the region. Some businesses do support business-specific training at the community colleges, but it is becoming increasingly obvious that additional resources are needed. For example, the CPCC had to turn away nearly 2,500 students recently due to resource constraints.



Universities and Colleges

Several public and private colleges and universities exist in the region and provide excellent education. **It is critical to understand the types of business links that exist among area universities and the business sector.** A good regional example is the UNC Charlotte's Lee College of Engineering, which created a motorsports and automotive engineering program in 1998, one year after Rowan-Cabarrus Community College launched the state's first motorsports management technology program. UNC Charlotte's offering has developed more than $2.25 million in external research and program development related to vehicle technologies. Nineteen faculty members aid the educational efforts of more than 100 undergraduate students enrolled in the motorsports field of study and programs.

The region has a competitive advantage with UNC Charlotte. The university is relatively small and young. The university first began teaching in 1967 and developed its first doctoral program as recently as 1994.

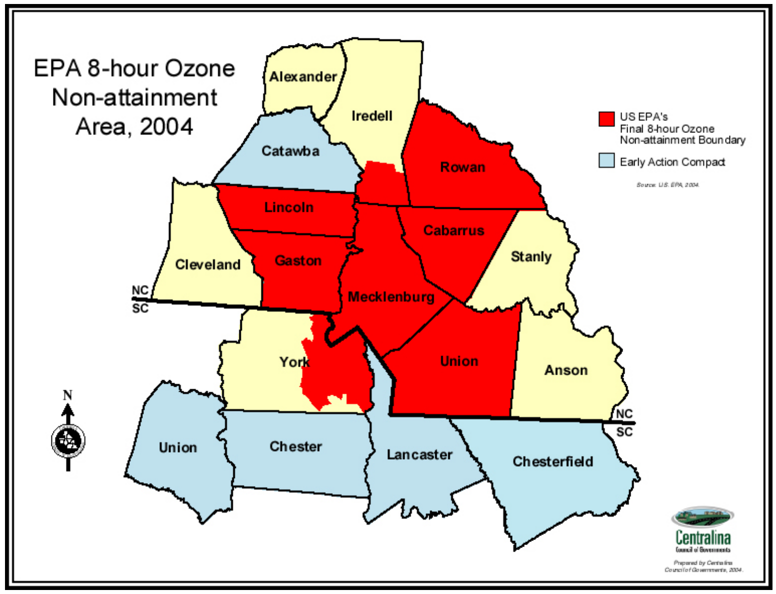
The advantage in being young and small is that the university fully embraces the concept of leveraging its assets for economic development. Not all universities understand this important linkage.

Technical Institutes also abound in the region. Another good model that exists is the NASCAR Technical Institute in Mooresville, which broke ground in 2001. Highlights of this program include:

- It is the country's first technical training school to combine a complete automotive technology program and a NASCAR-specific motorsports program and is the exclusive educational partner of NASCAR.
- It is a $12 million, 146,000-square-foot training facility located on 19 acres in Mooresville, N.C. – known as Race City, USA – which is 20 miles north of Charlotte. More than 75 percent of the NASCAR Winston Cup Series, Busch Series and Craftsman Truck Series teams reside in the near vicinity.

Communication and collaboration between workforce/education organizations and economic development organizations and the private sector is improving. These effort need to continue.

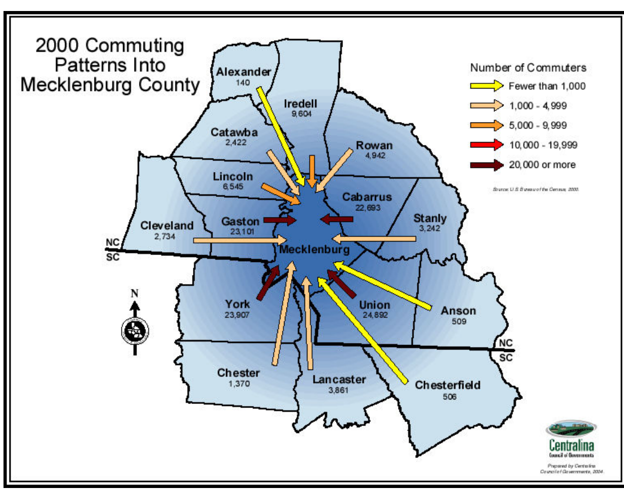
Environment

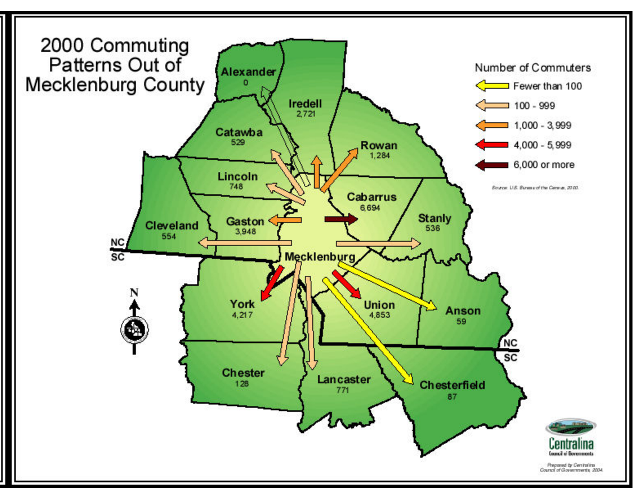


According to the American Lung Association, Charlotte was the ninth most ozone-polluted city in America in 2002. Portions of the region have recently received a non-attainment status from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA recently cited Mecklenburg and seven surrounding counties in violation of the new ozone standard for air quality.

The Centralina COG was awarded a two-phased grant from the EPA that totals over $700,000 in grant and matching dollars to implement and expand regional efforts to protect the quality of life in the bi-state metro Charlotte region. The program is called Sustainable Environment for Quality of Life (SEQL).

Although issues that impact air quality are diverse, car pollution is universal. As the table and maps to the right illustrate, the region is similar to other urban/suburban areas in the U.S. in commuting for employment, a growing American social trend. The percentage of residents who commute throughout the region has increased significantly from 1990-2000. The largest percentage increase in those who commute outside their county to work was in Anson, Gaston, and Stanly Counties. The largest percentage increase in those commuting into a county occurred in Cabarrus, Iredell, and Rowan Counties. Rowan County also experienced the smallest percentage increase in out-commuters (1 percent).





Geography

The region's climate can best be described as moderate, pleasant and sunny, making weather one of the region's strongest assets. Rainfall is evenly distributed throughout the year with an average annual precipitation of 43 inches. By comparison, Miami has 60 inches and Denver 13 inches. The summer months bring the heaviest rainfall; March is the wettest month, with 4.8 inches; October is the driest month, with 2.7 inches of precipitation. The region's normal summer humidity is 74%, compared to 80% in the central interior of the United States, 77% in Jacksonville, Florida, and 76% in Houston. Yearly morning humidity averages 83%, noon humidity, 54% and evening humidity, 61%.

The Centralina region generally comprises the southern Piedmont region of North Carolina. The Piedmont itself is a rolling plateau that has historically been a strategic corridor in which much of the state's urbanization and industrialization has occurred. Today, three Interstate highways intersect within the region, giving it high-speed access to the rest of the nation in all directions. Charlotte-Douglas International airport, one of the nation's busiest, offers direct flights to most of the country's major cities and to several international points as well. This strategic location, augmented by major transportation system investments, has positioned the region well to share in the strong growth of the U.S. South. This growth is expected to continue into the future.

In the past 15 years, the region has experienced strong and sustained population growth. Projections to the year 2030 indicate that growth is expected to remain robust. A number of significant issues in the region are likely to become more prominent as this growth continues:

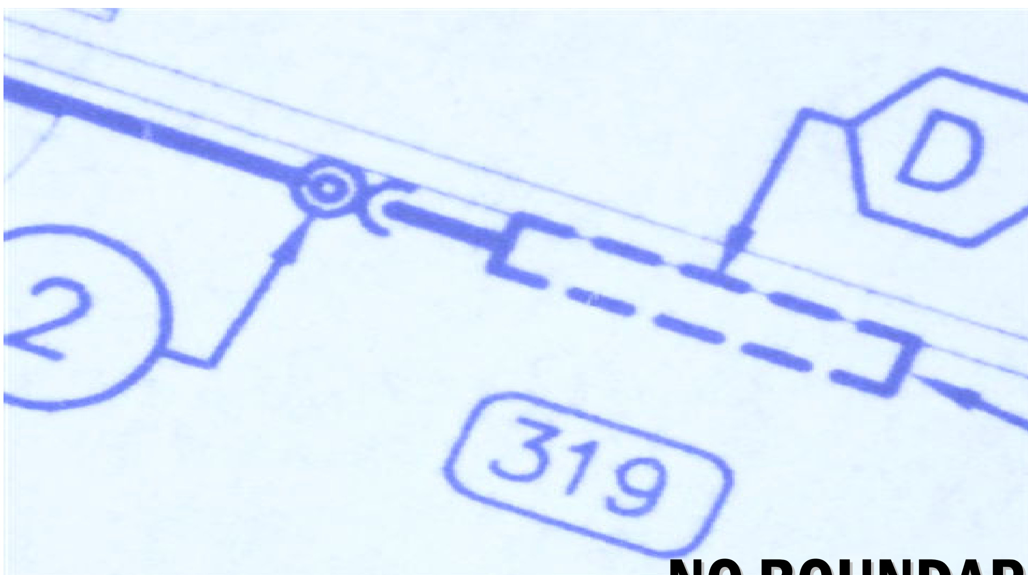
- **Land consumption.** Land is currently being consumed at a rate that is four times faster than the rate of population growth.
- **Transportation.** Traffic congestion is on the rise. During the period between 1989 and 1998, vehicle miles traveled increased more than twice as fast as population. In Charlotte, time spent in traffic increased from 17 hours per capita in 1982 to 43 hours per capita in 2003.
- **Air quality.** Several of the region's counties have been designated non-attainment for the eight-hour ozone standards. In the summer of 2006, there were 17 Code Orange days in the region.
- **Economic shifts.** Over the past ten years, the region has seen a huge loss of manufacturing jobs in the textile and furniture business. However, the regional economy remains strong and the region remains the largest manufacturing center in the Carolinas. Other areas of the economy, such as the financial and health sectors, have experienced dramatic growth.

Even though significant steps are being taken to address some of these issues and the changes they bring, it is becoming increasingly clear that the key to addressing these and many other emerging issues rests in the ability for the region to act in unison.

SECTION 2

Problems and Opportunities

Centralina Economic Development Commission



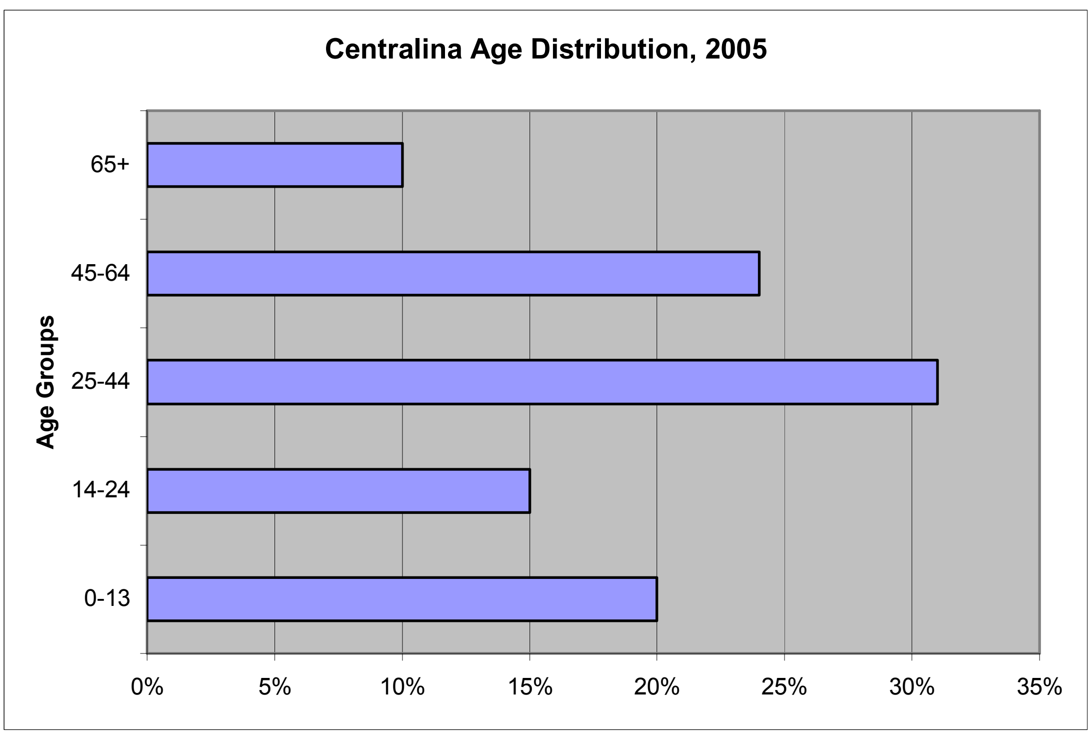
NO BOUNDARIES.

Economic and Community Development Problems and Opportunities

Economic and Demographic Trends

Site selectors for high technology companies seek regions with more than 34 percent of its population between the ages of 25-44. This age group is more willing to take risk, works longer hours, and is often viewed as being more productive than other age groups.

- The Centralina region has approximately 31 percent of its population in this age group – a decline from nearly 34 percent in 1990. This drop in such an important age category should be disconcerting to the region's leaders.
- 24 percent of Centralina residents are of late-career age, 45-64. These residents are typically more stable and have higher incomes; they also have different needs as they approach retirement age. As this group exits the workforce, skilled workers will be needed to take its place.
- Age distribution within Mecklenburg County shows a somewhat younger population. Data from ERSI (2006) indicates that 33% of the workforce is between 25-44. The percentage of workers in late-career age is lower at 23%.
- **The region needs to fully understand what is important to each of these demographic groups and continue to improve its quality of life and marketing. Attracting and retaining the younger demographic will be an important indicator for future economic growth.**



Source: North Carolina State Demographics Unit, 2005

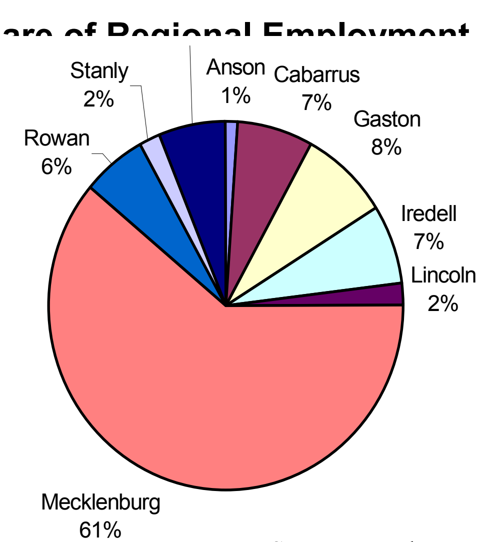
Areas such as the Centralina region that experience rapid growth are often confronted with threats to the local environment and to the overall quality of life. Growth in the region is accompanied by suburban sprawl and a greater dependence on automobiles for transportation. This is especially true in regions such as Centralina, where a strong urban community such as Charlotte provides a major share of employment in the region.

- More than 146,000 people commute into Mecklenburg County each day, a 43% increase since 1990.
- **In-commuters represent one in three jobs in Mecklenburg County.**
- The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) provides local, express, and regional express bus service and is developing a five-corridor rapid transit system to offer commuters transportation alternatives to the automobile.

Regional Commuting Patterns

County	% Residents Commuting Out		% Worforce Commuting In	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Anson	30%	40%	19%	23%
Cabarrus	43%	47%	31%	38%
Gaston	26%	37%	20%	25%
Iredell	24%	31%	17%	24%
Lincoln	48%	52%	22%	28%
Mecklenburg	7%	9%	28%	31%
Rowan	31%	32%	18%	26%
Stanly	22%	32%	12%	17%
Union	39%	47%	25%	28%

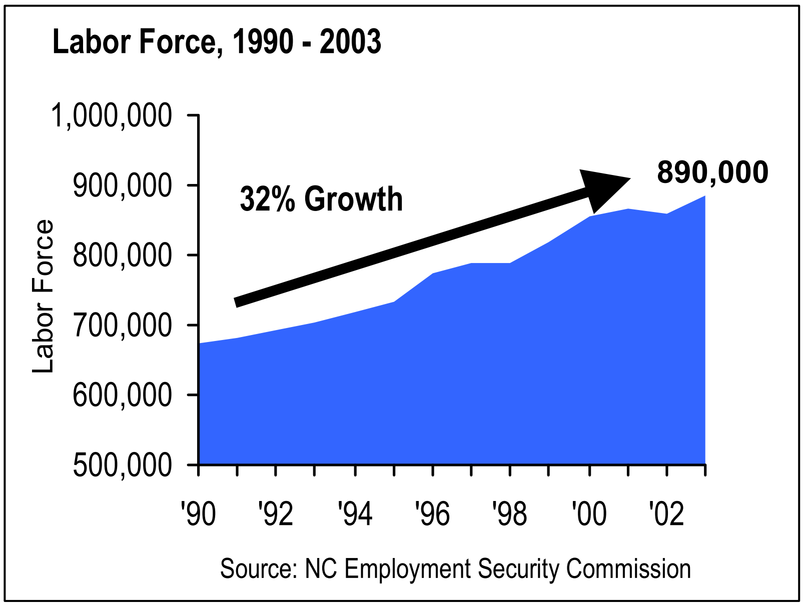
source: US Census Bureau

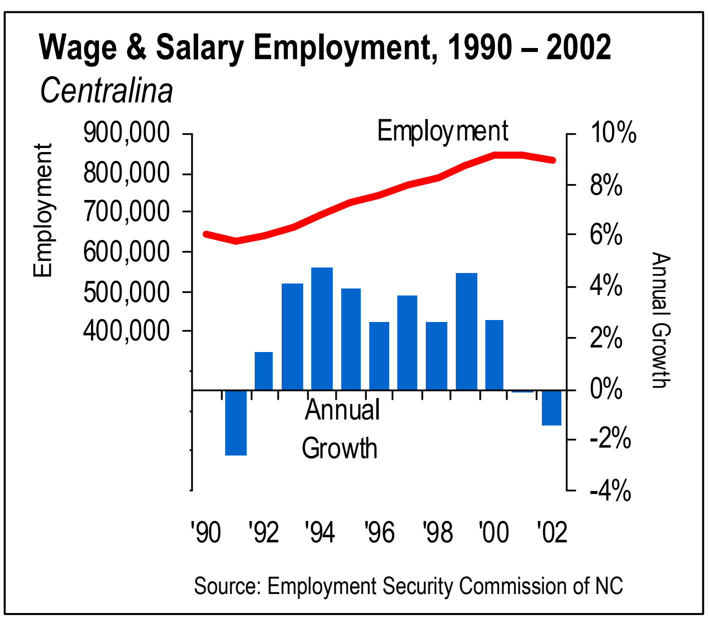


Source: Employment Security Commission of NC, 2005

<u>While financial services and the labor force continue to grow, regional manufacturing continues to decline.</u> Mass layoffs, primarily in the textiles industry, have been large enough to lead to a decline in total employment.

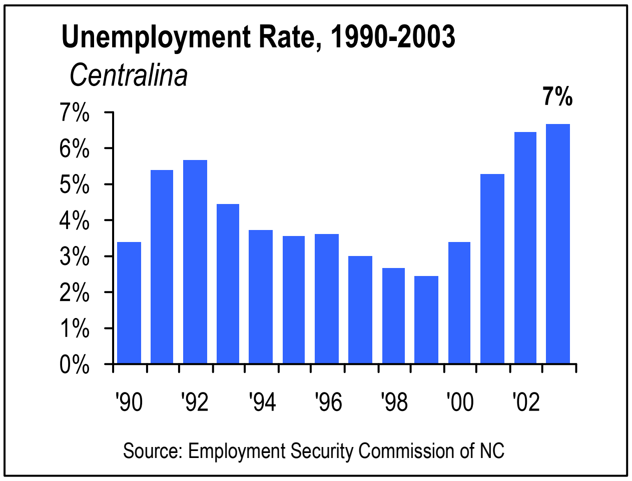
- 286 Fortune 500 companies are represented in the region.
- The headquarters of two national banks, Wachovia and Bank of America, are located in Charlotte, making it the second largest financial center in the U.S.
- Labor force has grown to 890,000 since 1990, but annual growth in employment has declined.





Layoffs have been widespread throughout the region.

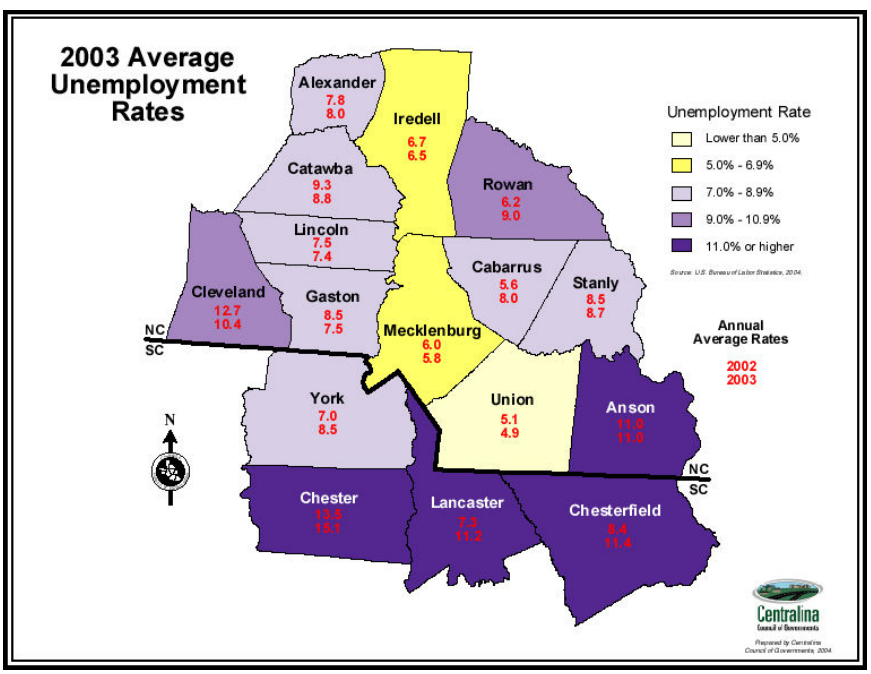
- More than 21,000 Centralina residents have been affected by layoffs and plant closures since 2002; over 50,000 people have been laid off since 1999.
- There is a considerable amount of variance between the county unemployment rates: while Union County maintains a relatively low 4.2 percent, Anson County is as high as 11 percent.



Centralina Unemployment and Layoffs

	Unemp Rate '03	Layoffs 99-'04	Layoffs 02-'04
Anson	11.0%	449	80
Cabarrus	8.0%	7,590	5,520
Gaston	7.5%	10,074	2,257
Iredell	6.5%	3,617	1,331
Lincoln	7.4%	608	212
Mecklenburg	5.8%	21,448	8,490
Rowan	9.0%	5,491	2,400
Stanly	8.7%	1,576	719
Union	4.9%	963	641
Centralina	**6.6%**	**51,816**	**21,650**

source: Employment Security Commission of NC



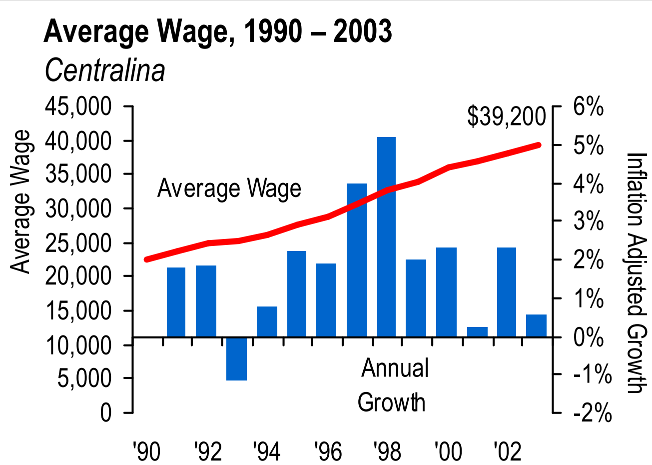
Changes in the economy have reduced upward pressure on wages throughout the U.S. and Centralina region. Slow continual growth in real wages brings higher levels of prosperity to households but keeps labor costs competitive for local employers.

- Centralina is a good example of this favorable trend; wage growth among Centralina counties slowed, but it remains above regional inflation rates.
- Average wages in Centralina are above the averages of North Carolina, South Carolina, and the U.S.
- Much of this is a result of the large local banking industry, which includes several corporate headquarters. These facilities generally pay high wages and bring executives into the community.
- Manufacturing wages, however, are only slightly higher than the North Carolina and South Carolina averages and are well below the national average. The Carolinas remain cost competitive places for manufacturing.
- As the workforce skills gap increases, wages for more advanced skill sets and education will increase.

Average Wage Comparison, 2005

	Avg Wage, All Sectors	Avg Wage, Manufacturing	Avg Wage, Finance & Insurance
Centralina	$42,489	$44,699	$85,675
North Carolina	$35,932	$42,703	$64,405
South Carolina	$32,915	$42,239	$46,412
United States	$40,677	$49,287	$73,385

Source: Employment Security Commission of NC; Employment Security Commission of SC; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005



Source: Employment Security Commission of NC; Bureau of Labor Statistics

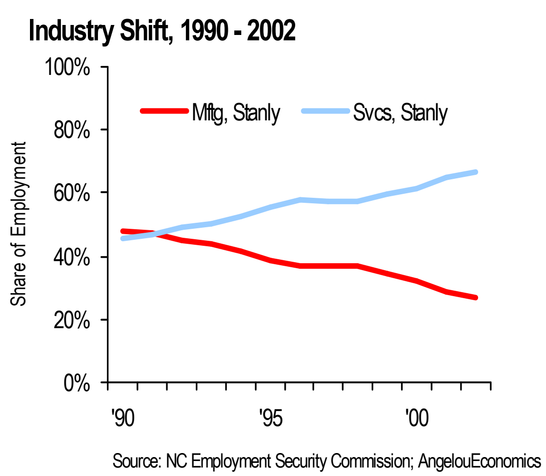
The economy in the Centralina region is changing.

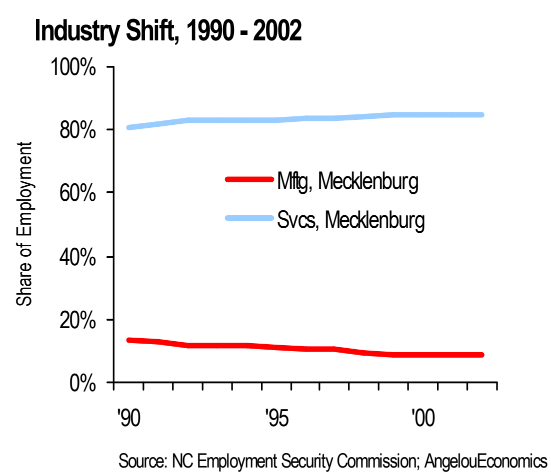
- By 2002, manufacturing represented only 15 percent of total regional employment.
- Roughly 78 percent of Centralina employment is in the service sector; however, these figures are heavily influenced by Mecklenburg County's large job numbers, relatively few of which are in manufacturing.
- In all other counties, manufacturing makes up at least one in five jobs, with the average being closer to one in four.
- Even in the most manufacturing intensive counties (such as Stanly County shown below), the service sector surpassed manufacturing's share of employment in the early 1990s.
- **Manufacturing will continue to be an important part of the regional economy, and indeed, some companies continue to add workers to fill rising orders.**

Composition of Employment, 2005

	% Manufacturing Employment	% Service Employment
Anson	23%	69.7%
Cabarrus	13.3%	79.2%
Gaston	24.2%	70.8%
Iredell	20.1%	73.2%
Lincoln	31.3%	60.2%
Mecklenburg	6.7%	86.9%
Rowan	24.3%	69.9%
Stanly	25.0%	68.0%
Union	22.6%	59.6%
Centralina	12.6%	80.3%

Source: Employment Security Commission of NC, 2005





Workforce Development and Education

Leaders in the Centralina region recognize that workforce and education should be the cornerstones of a sound regional economy. During Duke Energy's *Carolina's Competitiveness Forum*, regional leaders stated that one of the primary barriers for manufacturing growth in the Carolinas is educational training and workforce skill development. Forum participants also stated that high school graduates of North Carolina public schools are not ready for the workplace. During interviews and focus groups, several industry leaders in the region stated that many new workers have less than an 8th grade comprehension. While this is a concern of existing industry leaders in the region, it certainly would be a problem for new business and industry considering locating in the region.

Workforce and Education
SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strength:
- ✓ *Community College*
- ✓ *UNCC*
- ✓ *Drop out rates on par with state and nation*

Weakness:
- ✓ *Funding for WF/Education*
- ✓ *Educational Attainment levels in some counties*

Opportunity:
- ✓ *Collaboration*
- ✓ *Private Funding*
- ✓ *Foundation Funding*

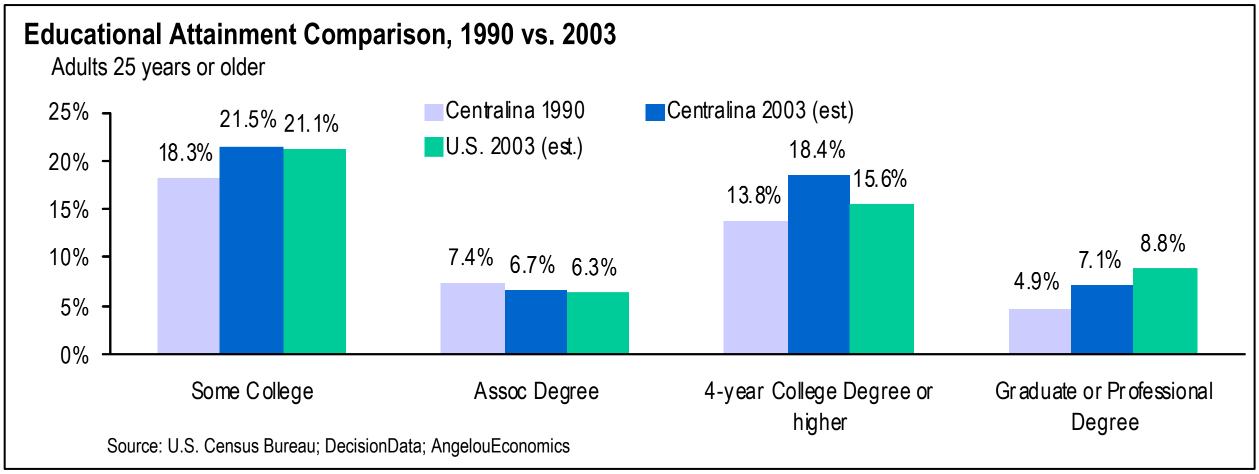
Threat:
- ✓ *Workforce skills gap*
- ✓ *Existing basic skills*

The following are workforce development and education highlights of the Centralina region:

- **Regional educational attainment levels are above the national average in most categories, but there is significant disparity of educational attainment levels within the nine counties.**
- **Dropout rates are on par with the state of North Carolina and the nation.**
- **North Carolina has a premier community college system and the Centralina region has a community college campus in every county.**
- **UNC Charlotte is a premier state university that receives the least amount of funding in the UNC system.**
- **Several other private colleges exist throughout the region and provide liberal arts education as well as other specialty degrees.**
- **Several technical institutes exist in the region and provide, among other specialties, certifications in the motorsports industry, helping to enhance the workforce in one of the region's targeted industries.**
- **All of the workforce and education providers need to further collaborate on legislative issues related to funding.**

Educational Attainment

The region's educational attainment levels have increased in all areas from 1990 to 2000, except for associates degrees, in which the region has decreased slightly. In all areas except graduate or professional degrees, the region has higher educational attainment levels than the U.S. average.



A more salient issue that needs to be understood and addressed is the relatively high percentage of adults in some counties with less than a high school education and the issue of illiteracy that is of paramount importance to address.

- While the regional average of adults without a high school education is less than one point above the national average, the variance among counties is quite large.
- Nearly 30 percent of Anson County adult residents have not completed high school.
- Additionally, of the labor force with Bachelors degrees, the region (25 percent) has a higher percentage than the state of North Carolina (22 percent) and the U.S. (24 percent), but this is skewed by Mecklenburg County (36 percent).
- Other counties such as Anson (9 percent) have a much lower rate of bachelor degree holders than the region.
- North Carolina ranked 41st in 1997 and 38th in 1994 in a combined mean proficiency in reading (*"Literacy in North Carolina", NC Literacy Resource Center, Mary Dunn Siedow, 1998).*

Educational Levels Adults Age 25 or Older, 2003

	Less than High School	Bachelors or Grad	Assoc. Degree
Anson	30.1%	9.0%	5.6%
Cabarrus	22.0%	18.8%	7.1%
Gaston	28.8%	14.0%	6.4%
Iredell	21.8%	17.2%	7.8%
Lincoln	28.5%	12.7%	5.6%
Mecklenburg	14.0%	36.8%	6.8%
Rowan	26.0%	14.0%	6.1%
Stanly	26.8%	12.5%	7.0%
Union	19.9%	21.1%	7.2%
Centralina	20.1%	25.5%	6.7%
North Carolina	21.8%	22.5%	6.8%
United States	19.7%	24.5%	6.3%

source: Applied Geographic Solutions, 2003

K-12 Education

Performance in K-12 varies considerably across the region. Perhaps the most critical issue for the Centralina region to address is the poor basic skills and education of high school graduates. In nearly every focus group and interview, the issue of basic skills and reading comprehension came up as an issue of critical concern.

Performance of Centralina School Districts

	Grades 3-8 End of Grade Composition, 2002		High School		
	Math	Reading	Average SAT, 2003	% Tested	Dropout Rate, 2001
Anson	72.1%	67.7%	886	54.5%	5.3%
Cabarrus	87.9%	83.8%	1037	68.2%	4.9%
Gaston	84.2%	77.6%	980	55.0%	6.4%
Iredell	83.9%	79.1%	991	56.6%	6.1%
Lincoln	85.5%	78.1%	981	49.7%	4.8%
Mecklenburg	82.3%	76.4%	1001	70.0%	5.4%
Rowan	83.5%	78.7%	989	46.5%	4.5%
Stanly	88.1%	82.6%	960	55.2%	4.2%
Union	88.5%	83.0%	1008	62.6%	4.1%
North Carolina	84.4%	79.5%	1001	68.0%	5.2%

source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Being able to read is perhaps the most important area to improve in basic education. Without sound reading skills, it is difficult for workers to succeed and continually improve their skills. Resource allocation is one the major obstacles to overcoming educational deficiencies, but the challenge also lies within students' homes. A high school diploma was not always a requirement to work in textile businesses, for example. This mindset still exists throughout North Carolina.

The K-12 providers should also continue to collaborate with the business community and community colleges. One good model in the region to address this issue is within Mecklenburg County. Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) provides feedback to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County School District on how incoming high school graduates' basic education and skills fare. This type of dialogue between the community colleges and K-12 providers is critical and should be shared throughout the region as a model for incorporating into the education and workforce delivery system.

CPCC is also helping with dropout rates among area school districts. In partnership with the school district, they provide skills training to over 300 high school graduates per year as part of their Careers in Transition program. They also hire area school district counselors during the summer to increase the understanding within this key group that workforce skills development is of paramount importance for high school graduates.

It is crucial to launch a regional campaign about the importance of basic skills and high school education as well as increase collaboration among regional workforce and education providers, the private sector, and economic development organizations.

*To reduce the high school dropout rate and encourage disadvantaged or unmotivated students to enter the workforce with adequate education or training, "**middle college high schools**" offer a combination of necessary high school classes with college level courses or valuable training. Some programs motivate students to pursue higher education after college, but many offer occupational training, an associate's degree or other supplements. These programs give students the necessary skills to enter the job market after finishing high school. Often these programs are intended to benefit financially disadvantaged students who otherwise have little chance of post-secondary education. Supporters see the concept as a way to reinvigorate high school for disadvantaged students and encourage more students to pursue higher education. They believe underachieving high school students who get a more rigorous, challenging curriculum that includes courses taught by college professors will rise to the occasion.*

Workforce Skills

> *Projections by the United State Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the seven fastest growing occupations this decade will all be in technology, and these will be the first to experience the labor shortage. During the rest of this decade and the next, the baby boom generation will retire. The largest generation in American history now constitutes nearly 60 percent of what both employers and economists call the prime age workforce – that is, workers between the ages of 25 and 54. The generations that follow this age group are just too small to take the baby boomer's place.*

Improving workforce skills to meet current and projected employer needs is the most critical issue that the nation and the Centralina region face. The skill sets of traditional textile workers can be transferable to other industries. The issue that focus group participants addressed is how to reach the older workers who have been displaced. The community colleges have done a tremendous job in helping many individuals improve their workforce skills so that they meet basic skill requirements of other industries.

Workforce providers in the region gave their input on critical issues for the region through an online survey tool that was utilized for this project. Seventy-eight percent of survey respondents stated that *basic job skills* are the highest in demand by areas businesses, followed by *communication skills* (67 percent) and *interpersonal skills* (58 percent). Very few survey respondents rated *employee workforce preparedness* as very good in any of these areas. Twenty-two percent rated *basic job skills* of users of their workforce programs as poor; 34 percent rate their *communication skills* as poor; and 32 percent rate their *interpersonal skills* as poor. Again, these are all areas that are very important to businesses in their search for employees, and the survey reveals a need to continue to address these areas in K-12 and workforce development efforts.

Quality of Life

Quality of life issues are those that influence an existing or potential resident to reside or a company to expand or relocate in a particular area. Quality of life factors[1] are normally not the driving factor in expansion and relocation decisions, yet they do continue to play a more significant role in the decision-making process of businesses. As it was pointed out earlier in this report, the region's share of 25- to 44-year-olds declined from 1990-2000 and studies have found that quality of life factors play an even more important role in this younger demographic. Hence, this group should be a focus of economic development efforts.

The quality of life in the region is very good but not for everyone. The layoffs that have been occurring during the last five years have impacted the capabilities of many individuals to afford housing and healthcare and to take advantage of the numerous cultural and recreational amenities in the region. The quality of life in the region will improve as the economy improves. It is important for the region to focus on quality of life enhancements and preservation for attraction and retention of businesses and young professionals. Additionally, as the economy improves, so will the lives of many of the displaced workers.

Quality of Life
SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strength:
- ✓ *Downtown Charlotte*
- ✓ *Small Towns' charm*
- ✓ *Home Values*
- ✓ *Recreational Assets*

Weakness:
- ✓ *Non-attainment*
- ✓ *Access to Healthcare*
- ✓ *Affordability for Displaced Workers*

Opportunity:
- ✓ *Regional Land Planning*
- ✓ *Regional Tourism Promotion*
- ✓ *Public Transportation Network*

Threat:
- ✓ *Growth Pressures*
- ✓ *Decreasing Percentage of 25-44 year olds*

The following are quality of life highlights of the Centralina region:

- **The cost of living in the Centralina region varies considerably from county to county and Charlotte is considered fairly affordable relative to its peers.**
- **Air quality is poor in the region. Much of the region is in federal non-attainment yet the region is working together to address this.**
- **The region's natural beauty is a tremendous asset; however, as the area's population grows, much of this open farmland will be utilized for development.**
- **The distribution of home values and the median home value in Centralina is nearly identical to the national average.**
- **The rate of violent crimes in the region is slightly above the national average.**
- **Access to healthcare is a concern for some area residents.**
- **Recreational amenities are plentiful in the region.**

[1] Quality of Life Factors include: Well-paid jobs, Quality education / life long learning, Medical facilities, Quality and affordable housing, Low pollution/environmental damage, Public amenities, Low crime Recreation, Entertainment and intellectual stimuli, Low cost of living and low taxation, and Aesthetic build and natural environment. (IEDC, http://www.iedconline.org/hotlinks/QualLife.html)

Land Planning

The purpose of comprehensive land use plans and land development ordinances is to guide the development of an area's geography to balance community needs with individual property interests. Community needs will include the protection and enhancement of public health and safety, and may well include the development of land for business and industrial investment and the protection of open space. Regardless of the community needs served by the planning process, the plan and the process through which it is implemented should also meet the needs of the business/development community for predictability and consistency. In a rapidly growing region such as the Centralina region, the planning process is a particular challenge. This is due to the varying ages of individual jurisdictional plans, the varying visions they represent, and the varying extents to which the plans are "comprehensive" in scope.

All of the counties in Centralina's region have undergone a land development planning process in the last ten years, and as noted above, these plans represent varying levels of complexity, specificity, age, and vision. Much of this is due to different priorities and expectations among the counties. The current plans of several counties (including Iredell and Rowan) emphasize farmland preservation, while Charlotte-Mecklenburg's plan emphasizes a "corridors and wedges" concept that focuses densest development along future transit corridors. In most cases, the variation in plans represents not so much deliberately inconsistent visions as difference in focus. The extent to which plans are being implemented through the adoption of ordinances to support them also varies. The municipalities in Gaston County, and the County itself, are conducting a review of all ordinances to determine the extent to which they are consistent, and are working to develop a single code that reflects the joint vision of the County and its municipalities.

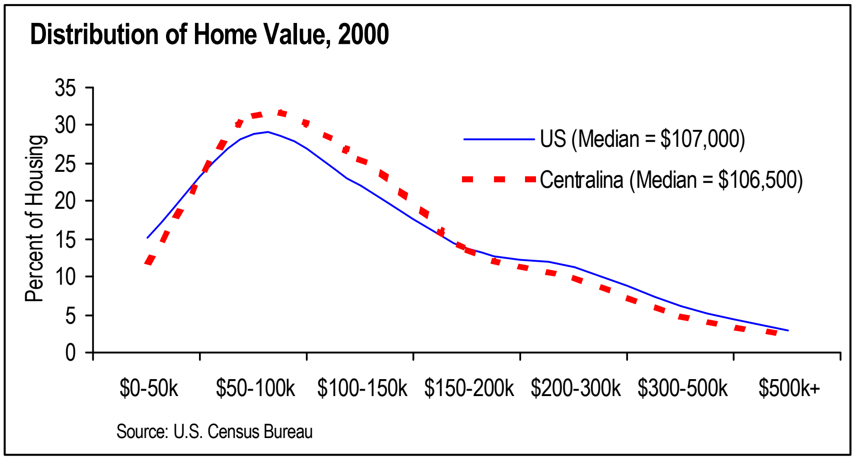
Regional Vision

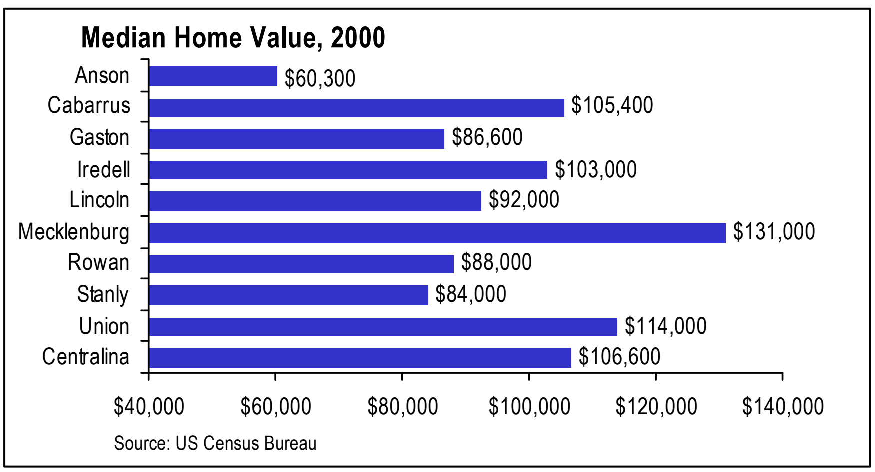
During the summer of 2006, Centralina in partnership with the Catawba COG in South Carolina, began a regional visioning process. The report, issued in November 2006, is entitled "Connect: Greater Charlotte Bi-State Regional Visioning Project, Phase I, Taking Stock."

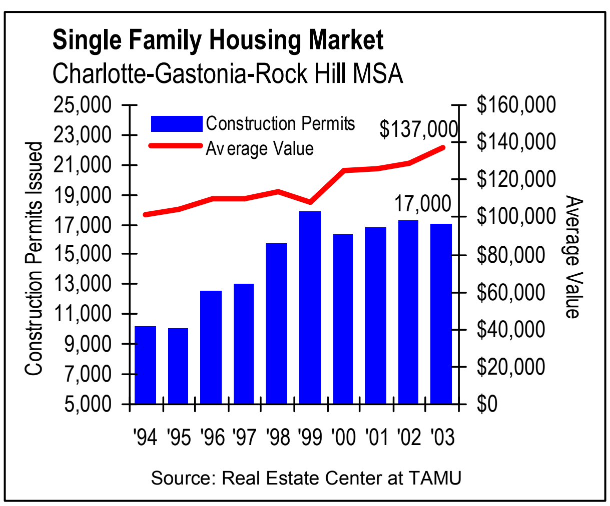
The purpose of the regional vision and plan is NOT to mandate local development decisions, but to capture commonalities among community visions, to provide a consensus set of "framework principles" toward which all communities' plans work, and to provide the business/development community with "one stop shopping" in terms of information about land development planning.

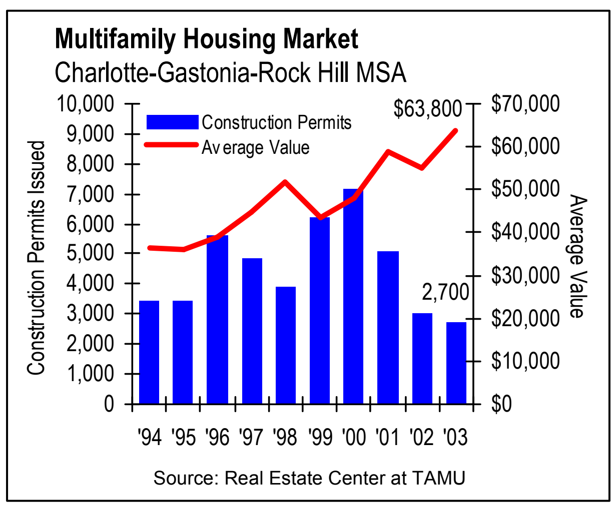
Housing
The diversity of housing available in Centralina is excellent. The distribution of home values is nearly identical to that of the U.S., as is the median home value. However, the median home value varies considerably among the counties. Anson County's median home value is $60,300, compared to Mecklenburg's $131,000. Mecklenburg and some of other county's median home value have increased since 2000.

The average value of new housing of both single family and multifamily has increased, with a much more significant increase in multifamily housing since the market's decline from 2001-2002. Permits for single-family housing have continued to increase, but there has been a significant decrease in new multifamily housing in the region since 2000.





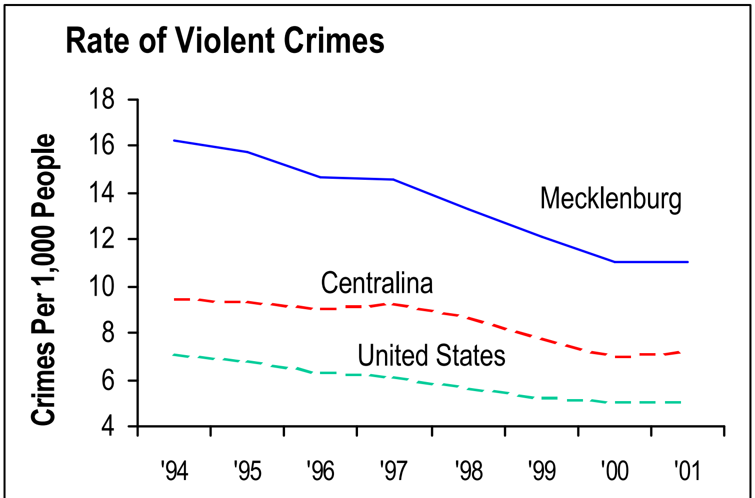




Crime

Maintaining a safe community for residents and businesses is an important issue. The rate of violent crimes for urban areas should be near national and state averages.

- Individuals in focus groups have reported a recent regional increase in crime.
- While the most recent data only goes up to 2001, the trend is actually going down.
- Outside Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties, rates of violent crime are quite low.



Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Violent Crimes Per 1,000 Pop, 2001	
Anson	3.0
Cabarrus	2.3
Gaston	7.2
Iredell	3.5
Lincoln	2.3
Mecklenburg	11.1
Rowan	3.5
Stanly	3.0
Union	2.3
Centralina	**7.2**
North Carolina	**4.9**
U.S.	**5.0**

source: FBI, Uniform Crime Statistics

Healthcare

Quality and availability of healthcare is an important quality of life criterion, especially for retirees. As the chart to the right illustrates, there is a disparity in the population per physician by county. Anson County has only one physician per 1,275 residents versus Mecklenburg's one physician per 414 residents. **Although the community colleges in the region are producing health care technicians, the region lacks a medical school.**

Healthcare Providers by County, 2002

	# Physicians	Population Per Healthcare Provider		
		Physicians	RNs	Dentists
Anson	20	1,275	202	8,499
Cabarrus	300	466	102	3,329
Gaston	327	589	146	2,791
Iredell	240	545	96	2,145
Lincoln	61	1,095	264	4,771
Mecklenburg	1,773	414	86	1,621
Rowan	159	842	137	3,189
Stanly	80	743	166	3,714
Union	128	1,063	230	5,442

source: NC Dept of Commerce, Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Svcs Research

A very troubling issue is that estimates are that 34% of children in Mecklenburg County are on public assistance.

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Amenities

The area has several recreational assets from parks to rivers to sports facilities. The region has higher per capita giving to the arts and sciences than any other community in the U.S and also receives more philanthropic dollars for arts and science programs than all other cities in the U.S. other than New York.

In addition to many other area cultural and natural resource amenities is motorsports. The region is mostly known for its NASCAR presence. UNC Charlotte put together a study late in 1996 called the "Survey of the Motorsports Industry in Cabarrus, Mecklenburg and Iredell Counties." The survey, which identified 135 largely motorsports-related enterprises, found the overall economic impact of motorsports to be $655 million. Cabarrus County had about 72 companies, followed by Iredell with 48 and Mecklenburg with 15. Four years later, another study from UNC Charlotte found the economic impact of Lowe's Motor Speedway to be $276.4 million in all three counties. The motorsports industry also recently formed its own caucus to increase its visibility to the state legislature.

Additionally, this industry is tied to community colleges, technical institutes and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. This industry not only provides a tourism benefit to the region, but it is certainly a job creator and income producer for area residents.[2]

Charlotte Region Motorsports Highlights

- Over 90% of the NASCAR teams are located within 50 miles of the Charlotte region
- NC economic impact of over $2.0 billion annually *(NC Motorsports Association)*
- Regional Motorsports events include:
  - — Coca-Cola 600
  - — The Nextel All-Star Challenge (formerly The Winston)
  - — UAW-GM 500
- Two local wind tunnel facilities are available for accurate aerodynamic testing, one of which boasts a one-of-a-kind yawing rolling road
- Home to NASCAR's Research and Development Site, which houses rules officials, corporate officers, accident investigators, and directors of the truck, Busch and Nextel Cup series
- Location of the Richard Petty Driving Experience – one of the largest motorsports-related driving schools in the U.S.
- Several museums dedicated to racing and racing history in the area

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Motorsports Program

- Multidisciplinary Program in Motorsports and Automotive Engineering
- Special concentration in motorsports engineering is part of the Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering
- Over 100 undergraduate students currently enrolled in the program
- UNCC Motorsports Program developed more than $2.25 million in external research related to vehicle technologies
- On-site equipment includes chassis dyno, shock dyno, engine dyno, scales, and Pi/CDS Data Acquisition
- UNCC strengths include vehicle dynamics, aerodynamics, instrumentation, safety and metrology

[2] Information on the motorsports industry has been provided by UNC Charlotte and the Charlotte Regional Partnership. The two tables on this page are from the *Greater Charlotte Biz Journal* (January 2004).

Economic Development Efforts

Economic development efforts include the activities of local, regional and state organizations that strive to improve quality of life and financial stability of residents within a particular region. Economic development initiatives are generally categorized by business retention and expansion, business recruitment, marketing, and tourism. The region is blessed with effective economic development organizations that operate both locally and regionally.

The most important economic development issues are:

- **Regional economic development efforts of Duke Energy and the Charlotte Regional Partnership. The Centralina Council of Governments will play a larger role in economic development if an Economic Development District is created.**
- **Per capita resource allocation for economic development within each county varies considerably.**
- **Most of the Industry targets for the region are appropriate targets, but is important that more efforts to ensure that workforce development groups understand the skill requirements for these target industries.**
- **Tourism efforts are not well coordinated regionally.**

Economic Development Efforts
SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strength:
- ✓ *Charlotte Regional Partnership*
- ✓ *Duke Power*
- ✓ *Focus on Target Industries*

Weakness:
- ✓ *Lack of Private Sector funding in some counties*
- ✓ *Regional Tourism Promotion*

Opportunity:
- ✓ *Further Collaboration*
- ✓ *Private sector funding*
- ✓ *Economic Development District*

Threat:
- ✓ *Turfism among county economic development groups*
- ✓ *Focus on incentives*

Economic Development Organizations

Both the Charlotte Regional Partnership and Duke Power provide economic development services for the region. The Partnership provides marketing and networking assistance for a 16-county region, which includes 2.2 million people in 12 counties in North Carolina and four counties in South Carolina. Duke Power has an economic development division that provides similar but complementary services to member municipalities in nearly all the Centralina region. Duke Power has also recently developed attractive incentive programs for businesses within its service area. The initiation of this CEDS project is the COG's first step into economic development. The COG will continue to facilitate economic development as the region develops an Economic Development District and seeks to implement some of the strategies identified in this CEDS project.

In addition to the regional initiatives, all nine counties in the Centralina region have an economic development organization that is devoted to business recruitment, retention and expansion. Additionally, Chambers of Commerce at the city or county level also exists throughout the region. There is significant disparity among the counties in how many financial resources are devoted to economic development.

The table below[3] illustrates the disparity of resources devoted to economic development in each county in the region. **A more detailed table is found in the Appendix.** Highlights of this resource allocation table include:

County Comparison of Economic Development Funding

County	County Economic Development Budget	Per Capita Resources
Anson	$ 150,000	$ 5.96
Cabarrus	$ 450,000	$ 3.15
Gaston	$ 1,500,000	$ 7.77
Iredell	$ 477,298	$ 3.58
Lincoln	$ 359,000	$ 5.34
Mecklenburg	$ 5,050,000	$ 6.71
Rowan	$ 400,000	$ 2.99
Stanly	$ 170,596	$ 2.90
Union	$ 475,000	$ 3.25

- The per capita resources devoted to economic development ranges from $2.90 in Stanly County to $7.77 per capita in Gaston County.
- Gaston County has more private sector funds per capita than any other county in the region.
- Union County's Partnership for Progress is 100% private sector funded.
- Iredell, Lincoln, Gaston, and Union counties have private sector funding to support economic development initiatives. The other counties have very little private sector support.

[3] Data to support this table was provided by economic developers in each of these counties and assimilated by the Charlotte Regional Partnership. This data does not include funding from the various "Committees of 100", from Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, nor from other similar private sector efforts.

Tourism

While tourism has been in decline regionally and nationally since the events of 9/11, it remains an important source of revenue for every county. Seven of the nine counties currently have a local occupancy tax that brings in anywhere from $30,000 per year (Anson County) to almost $1.2 million per year (Mecklenburg County).

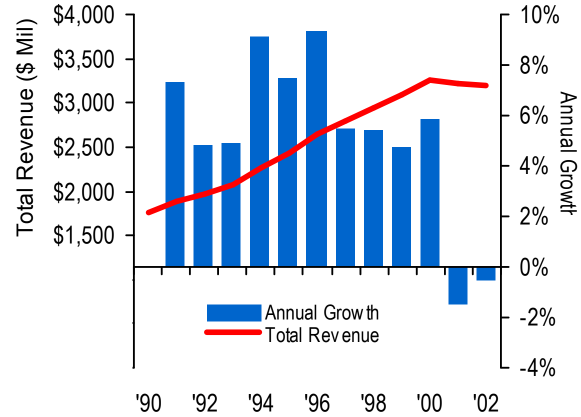
Every county also has at least one organization to promote tourism within the county, and every county has its own tourism assets. Common assets throughout the region include historic downtowns with small town charm and motorsports. The region has a bounty of assets - from the Lowe's Motor Speedway in Cabarrus County to the beautiful city of Salisbury in Rowan County. Mecklenburg County gains the lion share of tourism revenue, with its downtown and sports-related amenities.

The newly reorganized Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (RVA) intends to reach out beyond the borders of Mecklenburg County to promote regional tourism. This will be a challenge from a resource perspective, but **this type of regional tourism will undoubtedly have a larger, positive impact on the region's ability to capture tourism than any one single county in the region can achieve alone.**

The Charlotte RVA web site is outstanding. In particular, the "Map It" feature is one of the best tourism-based web sites in the country. It would be a significant benefit to the region if this site could be used to show more features outside of Charlotte. Given that the mission of any CVB is to improve tourism within their respective county (due to resource allocation), this may prove to be a challenge but one that the region should discuss.

Tourism Revenues, 1990-2002

Centralina



Source: NC Department of Commerce

Local Occupancy Taxes, 2003

	Currently Has Tax	2003 Revenues
Anson	yes	$ 29,130
Cabarrus	yes	$ 845,727
Gaston	yes	$ 354,336
Iredell	no	$ -
Lincoln	yes	$ 57,463
Mecklenburg	yes	$ 1,174,765
Rowan	yes	$ 291,285
Stanly	yes	$ 162,097
Union	no	$ -

source: NC Dept of Treasury

Tourism Revenue ($Millions)

	2005	Growth '97 – '05
Anson	12.7	30%
Cabarrus	222.2	84%
Gaston	163.0	44%
Iredell	155.6	55%
Lincoln	34.8	25%
Mecklenburg	2,928.6	30%
Rowan	103.6	37%
Stanly	57.0	52%
Union	74.8	45%
Centralina	**3,752.3**	**34%**

Source: NC Department of Commerce, 2006

Internal promotion

The region does not currently share a common vision for economic development. Some counties do a better job than others of educating the general public about economic development initiatives and successes. The region is still experiencing layoffs in traditional industry sectors so **now is an even more important time than ever to clearly communicate what each county and the region is doing to address the region's economic transition**.

External promotion and marketing

The Partnership has developed a marketing brand for the region, called "Charlotte USA". Although it receives high praise from a national marketing audience, several counties in the region would like to have their own unique brand. Site selectors look first to the region before they look to a county level, so it is important to maintain a regional brand identity. However, each county could develop its own brand that ties to the overall regional branding strategy.

The graphic to the right illustrates how each county can establish a unique identity that fits within a regional tourism message.

The Partnership's web site is very good. It is clear, easy to navigate and thorough. The web site provides detailed information on the region and each county. The biggest attribute of the web site is the database and mapping component that allows individuals to find any building or attraction in the region based on certain criteria.

Some counties have mentioned that not all attractions in their county are included on the web site; however, it is possible that some attractions are not listed because it has been difficult to obtain this information directly from the counties. The Partnership is in the process of improving this site.

Incentives

Economic development is not just about incentives. According to a recent study by KPMG, of all of the business site selection factors such as labor costs, incentives, and tax rates rank #1, #6, and #7 in importance to corporate executives. It is important for the region to be able to compete among peers for incentives, but it is more important to focus resources on improving the foundation for economic development success, including workforce preparedness and entrepreneurial development.

In this same study[4], the consultants compared Nebraska's incentive programs to other peers, including North Carolina. The next page provides an overview of how North Carolina compares. The most obvious trend is that North Carolina incentives fare well over a seven-year period, but in the examples provided only the Corporate Headquarters category does North Carolina rank in the top 5 of "Total taxes after Credits, Refunds, & Abatements."

Ranking of Factors that Influence Business Locations

1. State and local incentives	14. Environmental regulations
2. Labor costs	15. Low union profile
3. Availability of skilled labor	16. Availability of broadband telecom services
4. Highway accessibility	17. Right- to- work state
5. Occupancy or construction costs	18. Proximity to suppliers
6. Tax exemptions	19. Availability of long- term financing
7. Corporate tax rate	20. Raw materials availability
8. Energy availability and costs	21. Availability of unskilled labor
9. Proximity to major markets	22. Accessibility to major airport
10. Availability of land	23. Training programs
11. Availability of telecom services	24. Proximity to technical university
12. Cost of land	25. Railroad service
13. Environmental regulations	26. Waterway or oceanport accessibility

Source: Geraldine Gambale, "2003 Corporate Survey," Area Development, December 2003

[4] "A Comparative Analysis of Nebraska's Tax and Incentive Climate", KPMG (2004).

Distribution Company
State Rankings (1=Highest, 10=Lowest)

Rank	Total Taxes Before Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Total Taxes After Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Incentives Utilized (over 7 years)
1	Oklahoma	Colorado	Oklahoma
2	Kansas	Missouri	North Carolina
3	Colorado	Oklahoma	Iowa
4	Nebraska	South Dakota	Minnesota
5	Missouri	Wyoming	Missouri
6	Minnesota	Iowa	Nebraska
7	North Carolina	Nebraska	Kansas
8	Iowa	North Carolina	Colorado
9	South Dakota	Kansas	South Dakota
10	Wyoming	Minnesota	Wyoming

Start-up Technology-based Company
State Rankings (1=Highest, 10=Lowest)

Rank	Total Taxes Before Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Total Taxes After Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Incentives Utilized (over 7 years)
1	Nebraska	South Dakota	Kansas
2	South Dakota	Colorado	Missouri
3	Colorado	Wyoming	Minnesota
4	Wyoming	Iowa	Nebraska
5	Kansas	Nebraska	North Carolina
6	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Iowa
7	Missouri	North Carolina	Oklahoma
8	Iowa	Missouri	Colorado
9	North Carolina	Kansas	South Dakota
10	Minnesota	Minnesota	Wyoming

Information Services Company
State Rankings (1=Highest, 10=Lowest)

Rank	Total Taxes Before Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Total Taxes After Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Incentives Utilized (over 7 years)
1	Colorado	Colorado	North Carolina
2	Nebraska	Missouri	Kansas
3	Kansas	Oklahoma	Minnesota
4	Oklahoma	South Dakota	Oklahoma
5	Missouri	Wyoming	Missouri
6	Minnesota	Iowa	Nebraska
7	North Carolina	North Carolina	Iowa
8	South Dakota	Nebraska	Colorado
9	Wyoming	Minnesota	South Dakota
10	Iowa	Kansas	Wyoming

Corporate Headquarters
State Rankings (1=Highest, 10=Lowest)

Rank	Total Taxes Before Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Total Taxes After Credits, Refunds, & Abatements (1 year)	Incentives Utilized (over 7 years)
1	Nebraska	Colorado	Iowa
2	Colorado	South Dakota	Kansas
3	Kansas	Wyoming	Oklahoma
4	South Dakota	North Carolina	Minnesota
5	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Missouri
6	Minnesota	Nebraska	North Carolina
7	North Carolina	Iowa	Nebraska
8	Iowa	Kansas	Colorado
9	Missouri	Missouri	South Dakota
10	Wyoming	Minnesota	Wyoming

Target Industries

The region recognizes that certain traditional industries are not going to grow in North Carolina. During the *Carolinas Competitiveness Forum,* nearly 40 percent of the region's leaders stated that the future of textiles and furniture in the Carolinas is very poor. Recognition of this reality is paramount to the success of the region's ability to foster other industries that it can grow.

The chart below illustrates those industries that are being targeted for business development in the Centralina region. It is important that the region agrees on industries to target and continue to cooperate on marketing efforts to attract and retain the target industries. Due to individual county assets or liabilities, each county in the region is going to have varying success with targeting specific industries and will end up having its own success within specific niches of the target industries. However, the success of each county is tied to the success of the region. For example, as the region targets tourism, each county will experience its own success within the industry. Tourists may come to the region because of a specific cultural event in Mecklenburg County; however, while they are here, they may travel to Salisbury to look at the impressive Craftsman-style homes or to Gastonia to visit the Shields Museum.

The region can do a better job of educating K-12 providers and community colleges about the industries that it is targeting, as well as skill sets that are required by these industries. Many of the community colleges are familiar with the targeted industries for the region, but the majority of workforce providers indicated in the online workforce providers survey that they are focusing (among other industries) on tourism, healthcare and manufacturing occupations. **Local and regional economic development organizations can improve their role in educating the workforce and education providers of the specific needs of these industries.**

Regional Target Industries

Goal: To build an integrated economic development delivery system which dramatically improves the region's ability to grow, retain, and attract manufacturing investment and jobs.

Objective: To specify which industries in which the Charlotte region has inherent physical and human resource strengths, and which have the most potential for short-term growth and long-term sustainability:

- Transportation equipment
- Plastics
- Commercial machinery
- Food processing/packaging
- Construction materials
- Value added textiles
- Life Sciences R&D

- Motorsports R&D
- Financial Services
- Healthcare Services
- Creative Industries

Business Climate and Entrepreneurship

Maintaining an attractive business climate is crucial to a region's economic success. Additionally, 80 percent of future business growth will be among small businesses; therefore, the activities of local and regional organizations involved in entrepreneurship activity are also very important.

The following are business climate and entrepreneurship highlights of the Centralina region:

- **The Charlotte region has a pro-business friendly environment with relatively low property taxes, but high corporate income tax rates.**
- **Significant research and development assets exist in the region and are closely tied to key industry sectors.**
- **The small business development centers exist at many of the community colleges play a significant role in small business development**
- **Junior Achievement programs exist in all counties but are more active and better funded in some counties than others.**
- **An angel investor network is desperately needed for the Charlotte area.**

Business Climate/Entrepreneurship
SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strength:
- ✓ *Property taxes*
- ✓ *Pro-business environment*
- ✓ *Small business centers at community colleges*
- ✓ *R&D at UNCC*

Weakness:
- ✓ *Regional entrepreneurship efforts*
- ✓ *Angel investment and small business funding*

Opportunity:
- ✓ *Increasing regional entrepreneurship activities*
- ✓ *Models exist in region for Junior Achievement*
- ✓ *Charlotte Research Institute*

Threat:
- ✓ *Average wages*
- ✓ *North Carolina tax structure*
- ✓ *Lack of understanding in region of importance of entrepreneurship*

Tax Rates

The Charlotte region has been recognized as a “pro-business” community. These types of accolades are important, but a more in-depth analysis reveals that although local property taxes are relatively low in North Carolina, the state’s personal and corporate income tax rates are generally higher than neighboring South Carolina. Low property tax rates and high corporate income tax rates are generally representative of an economy based in capital-intensive manufacturing. Without considering the effect of incentives, the region’s tax burden should still be considered attractive to target industries.

Comparative Tax Rates, 2003 (State Ranking in Parenthese*)

	North Carolina	South Carolina
Top Personal Income Tax Rate	8.25% (44)	7% (35)
Top Capital Gains Tax Rate	8.25% (46)	3.92% (16)
Top Corporate Income Tax Rate	6.9% (24)	5% (9)
% Personal Income towards Property Taxes	2.12% (10)	2.75% (21)

*1 being the lowest; source: Small Business Survival Committee

Tax Rates

	Property 1Q'04 Per $100 Val	Sales Taxes 2003
Anson	$0.7760	2.5%
Cabarrus	$0.5600	2.5%
Gaston	$0.8930	2.5%
Iredell	$0.4350	2.5%
Lincoln	$0.6200	2.5%
Mecklenburg	$0.7364	3.0%
Rowan	$0.6300	2.5%
Stanly	$0.6675	2.5%
Union	$0.5300	2.5%

Source: NC Dept of Commerce;
NC Dept of State Treasurer

Entrepreneur education and promotion / Business plan competitions

The Business Innovation and Growth Council (BIG) is a fledgling organization that has recently added a new leader from Silicon Valley who is has a significant amount of experience in entrepreneur initiatives. This organization needs additional resources for furthering its efforts throughout the region.

The Biz-HUB program developed as a regional small business networking program. This program could also partner more effectively with BIG and other similar entrepreneur education initiatives.

UNC Charlotte's Research Institute sponsors a small-scale business plan competition. This should be broader in its reach and attract angel funds to support the winners of this competition. BIG, UNC Charlotte, and the Biz-HUB, among others, could partner in developing a model regional entrepreneurship program.

Additionally, organizations such as "Committees of 100" exist in several counties in the region. Several of these groups are seeking to understand how they can have a more pivotal role in small business creation. Several of the strategies identified in the other CEDS projects point to the need to develop small business incubators. It is doubtful that the region can support incubators in each of the counties or even several incubators throughout the region. **A more regional approach to entrepreneurship and small business development will be more sustainable than each county spearheading its own initiatives.**

Community College Involvement with Small Business Development
The following community colleges have small business development resources at their facilities:

<u>Central Piedmont Community College (Mecklenburg—Eight Locations)</u>
CPCC's Small Business Center can help strengthen one's knowledge of management, accounting and marketing strategies needed for business. The Center offers a selection of classes to help new entrepreneurs and growing businesses build the foundation for business goals to become realities. Available topics include hands-on business plan development and dynamic marketing strategies.

The Small Business Center was established to offer support to those who want to start a small business or those who need help with an existing business. The Center is open to the public and its experienced staff is there to arm them with reliable information, solid advice, additional training, one-to-one counseling, and business contacts. The Center will also assist trainees in developing solid marketing and business plans to ensure the success of their business in a competitive marketplace. The Small Business Center's training programs serve over 3,000 existing, expanding, and new companies.

Gaston College (Dallas and Lincolnton)

The Gaston College Small Business Center is providing a Business Seminar Series for existing and new business owners. The seminars are offered at both the Dallas Campus and the Lincolnton Campus of Gaston College. Small business owners and entrepreneurs, current and prospective, are invited to participate in these free seminars and counseling sessions.

Mitchell Community College (Statesville and Mooresville)
The Small Business Center at Mitchell Community College provides information, training, counseling, referrals, and other technical/managerial assistance to small businesses and individuals who are interested in starting a small business. Throughout the year, the Small Business Center and the Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce sponsor seminars and workshops on topics pertinent to starting and managing a small business. Specific seminars offered include: Ten Steps to Starting a Small Business, Developing a Business Plan, Creating Effective Loan Packages, and Marketing a Small Business.

The Small Business Center also works collaboratively with the Small Business and Technology Development Center and provides group counseling twice per month. Individual counseling is also available by appointment. These services are free of charge.

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College (Salisbury and Concord)
The Small Business Center is designed to assist people starting a small business and to help people expand existing businesses. There are more than 4,000 businesses in RCCC's service area and only 86 have more than 100 employees. Through workshops, seminars, and referrals to other agencies, the centers are able to provide free assistance to the small business owner. Workshop and seminar topics include: How to Start a Business, How to Write a Business Plan, Record Keeping and Taxes, Financing a Business, and Marketing for Success. The Small Business Center also provides free, confidential counseling services for new and existing businesses.

Cabarrus County and RCCC have begun Phase II of a $3.5 million project to redevelop a former school administrative office into a business and technology training center that will concentrate on workforce re-training and education. The space is being planned so that it will also have a small business center.

South Piedmont Community College (Wadesboro, Polkton, and Monroe)

The Small Business Center of Anson and Union Counties provides confidential consultations, counseling, and referrals. Employees of small businesses can take courses to train or upgrade their communications and leadership skills for many occupations, including: cashiers, security and clerical workers, bookkeepers and technicians.

Union and Anson counties are official Rural Entrepreneurship Through Action Learning (REAL) sites. This is a unique 16-week, self-employment education course that uses hands-on techniques for planning, opening, and operating a business. Graduates of the REAL program have had an 87 percent business success rate for the past six years. REAL classes are held in Monroe at SPCC in the fall and spring.

<u>Stanly Community College (Albemarle and Locust)</u>

The Corporate and Professional Education Center includes a small business center, where business seminars are offered. The REAL program also exists within Stanly Community College.

Junior Achievement

Junior Achievement (JA) is an effective program to instill the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship at an early age. JA programs exist in all counties but are more active and better funded in some counties than others.

All school districts in the region should develop a well-funded Junior Achievement program. Programs that exist in the region should be improved and successful JA initiatives should be shared with other programs in the region.

Research and Development

The UNC Charlotte Research Institute will be developed on 100 acres of the UNC Charlotte campus adjacent to US 29 and will contain multiple research facilities. Currently a campus master plan is being developed. The Institute will have a significant impact on the region and will fuel the development of high technology companies and enhance competitiveness of the regional and state economy. This institute is not well known and needs to be better promoted both regionally and nationally as programs are further developed. The state of North Carolina has recently appropriated $4 million for a motor sports test and research facility to be administered by UNC Charlotte that may ultimately be a test track.

Technology Transfer and Commercialization

University-led economic development is playing an ever increasing role in today's tough economic climate. Innovations born within the university systems are shaping industry and the world at a faster pace than ever before. And based on recent survey results released by the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM) for fiscal year 2001, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Office of Technology Transfer is one of the country's best programs at putting intellectual capital to work.

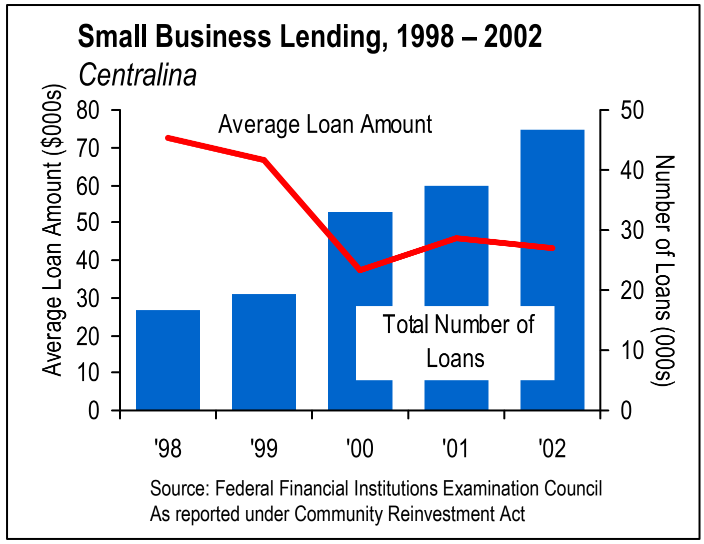
According to the AUTM survey of American universities, when comparing universities on equivalent footing - by normalizing the survey results per $10 million of research expenditures - UNC Charlotte ranked:

1st in start-ups formed
2nd in invention disclosures received
2nd in patent applications
3rd in patents issued
5th in licenses executed
20th in licenses and options yielding income

The Ben Craig Center Business Incubator at UNC Charlotte works collaboratively with the University and Technology Transfer and Commercialization programs to develop business applications and ultimately create jobs from the research programs within the University

Access to Capital

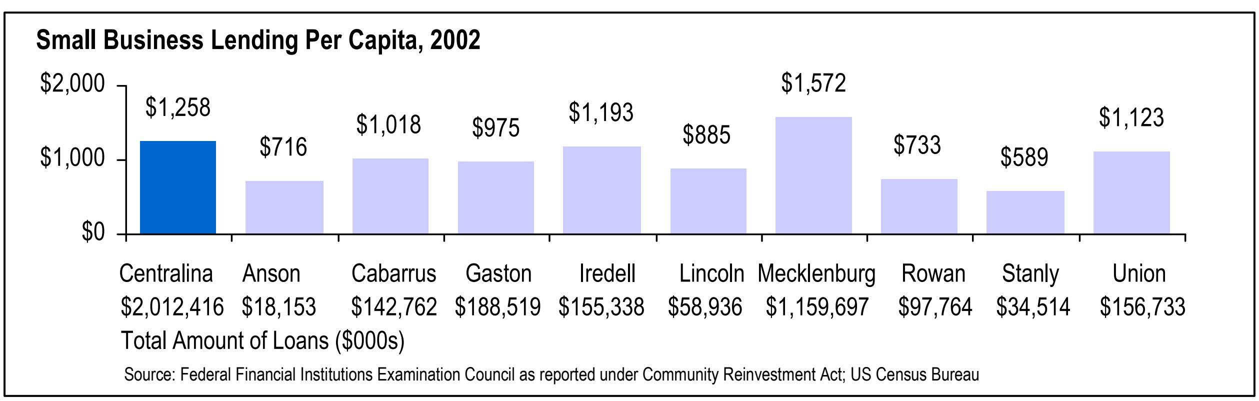
Access to capital is an important part of growing local entrepreneurship. Area companies often report trouble finding funding sources, particularly in their early stages of development.



Both regionally and nationally, early stage funding has become scarcer. Lenders are less likely to fund risky ventures than they were during the late 1990s.

- Small business lending among Centralina counties, however, has actually been increasing over the past five years.
- The current trend favors more widespread entrepreneurial activity, going from an atmosphere of relatively few large loans to many smaller loans.
- Of course, there is a large disparity of lending activities among counties. Cabarrus, Iredell, Mecklenburg, and Union lead the counties with over $1,000 of per capita small business lending. Anson, Rowan, and Stanly each have per capita lending below $800.

Centralina is home to many small regional banks that are active leaders in the community and are more likely to fund small businesses in their communities. These regional banks are tremendous assets and are rare in most other U.S. communities. **The "gang of four" and other traditional investors in the Charlotte region need to be shown the types of entrepreneur potential that the region has, and a more aggressive/less conservative approach of business financing and angel investing needs to be developed in the region.**



Land Use, Sites and Infrastructure

Land Use, Sites and Infrastructure is defined as the regional transportation network, utilities, and sites and buildings that are available to support business expansion and development.

The following are land use, sites and infrastructure highlights of the Centralina region:

- **The region's infrastructure is very good and rates are competitive.**
- **There are needed improvements in the transportation network and utilities, but the transportation network is one of the region's best assets.**
- **Industrial sites are plentiful in the region, but many are not currently certified by the State Department of Commerce.**

Land Use, Sites and Infrastructure
SWOT SNAPSHOT

Strength:
- ✓ *Road network*
- ✓ *Rail network*
- ✓ *Charlotte/Douglas International Airport*
- ✓ *Utilities are competitively priced and plentiful*

Weakness:
- ✓ *Transportation network to Anson county*
- ✓ *Lack of telecommunication assets (Wi-Fi networks) outside Charlotte*

Opportunity:
- ✓ *Highway improvements*
- ✓ *Airport expansions*
- ✓ *Commuter Rail lines and "Hydrail"*

Threat:
- ✓ *Load loss for Duke Power*
- ✓ *Industrial sites that are not certified by State DOC*

Utilities

Electricity

Duke Power provides electricity to all counties in the region, except for Anson County, which obtains its electricity from Carolina Power and Light and by Pee Dee Electric. Nuclear power generated 57 percent of the electricity used by Duke Power customers last year. The cost of generating electricity with nuclear power is stable and economical. As the prices for other power generation fuels escalate, such as in the case with natural gas, Duke Power rates remain basically the same. It is a major reason why the base rates Duke Power customers pay today are at 1986 levels.

Industrial Electric Rate, Cents / kWh

North Carolina	
Duke Power Customers	**4.47**
Rest of State	**4.70**
California	**11.40**
Georgia	**3.95**
New York	**5.16**
South Carolina	**3.85**
Tennessee	**4.15**

source: Duke Power

Electric Power Rates

	Demand (kW)	Energy (kWh)	$ Per kWh	
			Progress Energy	Duke Power
Commercial	5	360	$0.12	$0.13
	10	720	$0.11	$0.11
	25	1,800	$0.09	$0.10
	50	18,000	$0.07	$0.06
	100	36,000	$0.07	$0.06
Industrial	1,250	450,000	$0.07	$0.05
	1,500	540,000	$0.07	$0.05
	5,000	1,800,000	$0.07	$0.05
	10,000	3,600,000	$0.07	$0.05
	25,000	9,000,000	$0.06	$0.05
	50,000	18,000,000	$0.06	$0.05

source: NC Dept of Commerce

Water

Water is an underutilized resource for the area. Centralina counties, especially Anson County, have large water reserves because they were built around mills. As these mills have gone out of use, water has become very plentiful. Anson County, for example, now exports water. There are also very few water quality problems in the region.

Wastewater

Wastewater service exists in all municipalities in the region, but debates about growth management controls have limited centralized sewers to many parts of some of the counties. This will be a limiting factor for growth in some areas where locations for retail development are outside cities and are not currently served.

Gas

In most parts of the region, Piedmont Gas provides natural gas. Rates for natural gas are nationally competitive and resources are plentiful.

Telecommunications

According to a 2000 study, although telecommunications access and usage in North Carolina increased substantially from 1990 to 2000, the state still fell behind the national average in terms of Internet access, computer access and telephone access. North Carolina ranks higher than South Carolina in several important categories.

Computer, Internet Access, and Telephones

State	Percent of Households with Computers			Percent of Households with Internet Access			Percent of Households with Telephone		
	1998	2000	% Change	1998	2000	% Change	1998	2000	% Change
NC	35	45.3	29.4	19.9	35.3	77.4	93.1	93.9	0.9
SC	35.7	43.3	21.3	21.4	32	49.5	92.9	93.2	0.3
US	**42.1**	**51**	**21.1**	**26.2**	**41.5**	**58.4**	**94.1**	**94.4**	**0.3**

Sources: NTIA. (July 1999). *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide;* NTIA. (October 2000). *Falling Through the Net: Toward Digital Inclusion; FCC. Telephone Subscribership in the US (February 1999 and March 2001).*

Charlotte's Web was one of the first community-wide networks in the nation. Several communities have incorporated wi-fi and wi-max into their business development programs. The Mecklenburg County Department of Parks and Recreation has put wi-fi into several parks in the core area and has plans to incorporate wi-fi into the Greenway system as well. The City of Concord is working on a system for their downtown. **Wi-Fi systems should be a consideration for all the larger cities throughout the region.**

illustration by Peat Duggins

Industrial Buildings
Earlier CEDS reports cite the enormous amount of vacant industrial building space throughout their respective regions. The table to the right illustrates that approximately 27 million square feet of vacant industrial building space exists in the Centralina region. This information is very important to understand so that no more new speculative development is done.

A report prepared in 2005 for the City of Charlotte estimated industrial square footage and projected construction of square footage of industrial space through 2024. The private sector activity is projected to be adequate to meet anticipated demand.

Centralina Available Industrial Buildings

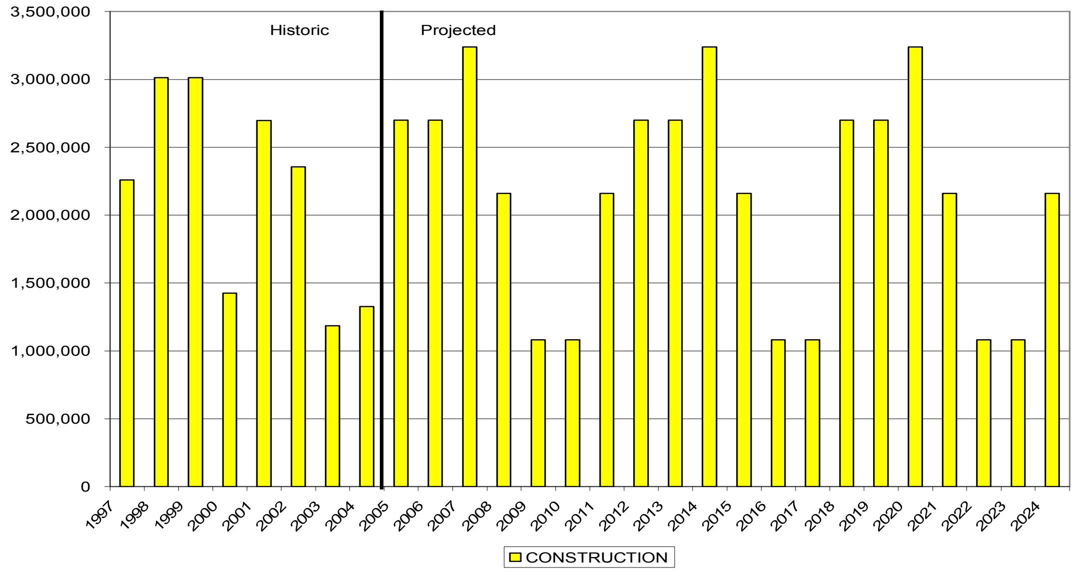
	# Buildings Listed	Sq Ft Industrial	Avg Rent / Sq Ft
Anson	3	667,660	$2.38
Cabarrus	20	858,607	$2.92
Gaston	59	3,627,987	$2.51
Iredell	30	1,319,238	$2.92
Lincoln	28	1,051,703	$2.57
Mecklenburg	59	3,310,752	$3.33
Rowan	20	1,703,775	$1.71
Stanly	5	219,030	$2.00
Union	8	456,581	$4.22
Centralina	**232**	**13,215,333**	**$2.71**

Source: As listed by Charlotte Regional Partnership, January 2007

"It was estimated that the six-county Charlotte MSA had about 115 million square feet (sf) of industrial properties at year-end 2004, including warehouse/distribution, flex space (multi-purpose industrial and showroom) and manufacturing uses in facilities larger than 15,000 sf. The Karnes Research and CB Richard Ellis organizations independently report that an average of approximately 2.1 million sf of new industrial space is constructed each year in the Charlotte MSA, varying annually based on business cycles, market demand and the availability of capital for industrial investment.

Future Regional Industrial Development Potential: As "just-in-time" computer-drive inventory control and logistics management continues to improve throughout the U.S. and world-wide marketplace, continued growth in the Charlotte MSA could produce a probable estimate of added industrial space as indicated in the following table. This hypothetical construction schedule is based on likely development of industrial space, which could occur in the industrial areas of the six-county Charlotte MSA given the forecast economic cycles of capital investment – or business cycles – for the region."

Historic to Projected Construction Cycles
Industrial Space in the Charlotte MSA
(In Square Feet of Space Built)



(Excerpted from the Economic, Employment and Tax Impacts: Potential Expansion of Norfolk Southern Railroads Intermodal Service, Charlotte, NC, June 2005)

Additionally, the average rents per square foot vary considerably throughout the region, with Stanly County's average rent being the lowest at $1.76/ft2 and Mecklenburg County's being the highest at $3.19/ft2.

Certification of sites throughout the region should be a top priority among economic development groups.

Other Plans and Strategies

During the past four years numerous plans have been completed for different parts of the region as well as varying regional configurations. Four plans are summarized below.

Excerpted from "Economic/Workforce Development in the Charlotte Region Overview and Comparison of Four Recent Studies and Plans" December 2005

Economic/Workforce Development in the Charlotte Region

Overview and Comparison of Four Recent Studies and Plans

During the last several years a number of studies and plans that focus on economic development and workforce development have been undertaken for Charlotte and the surrounding region. These include:

- **Centralina Regional CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy)**
- **Community Assessment Report and Recommendations** (Aug and Sept 2004)
- **Advantage Carolinas Economic Profile, Comparative Analysis and Targeted Business Analysis for the Charlotte Region (**January 2005)
- **State of the Workforce Report** (September 2005)
- **City of Charlotte Economic Development Strategic Framework 2005-2010** (July 2005)

While many similarities and overlaps exist in some of the data, findings and conclusions in these pieces of work, they are uniquely different in focus and geography covered. The CEDS plan addresses economic development needs in a nine-county Charlotte region. Advantage Carolina's analysis focuses on a 16-county region that matches the Charlotte Regional Partnership geography. The State of the Workforce Report focuses on a 13-county area, and the City of Charlotte's economic development plan was developed for Charlotte, but within a regional context.

Since all four of these studies/plans center on economic development and workforce development issues, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development Board thought it prudent to compare all four to reveal any conflicting data, conclusions or recommendations that may send mixed messages about Charlotte's and the region's economic future and its workforce development needs and response. When it comes to preparing and building the workforce for tomorrow, it would be beneficial to everyone at the local and regional level to be working on a united front.

Key Findings and Challenges for Economic/Workforce Development in the Region

Each of the studies/plans identifies or alludes to key findings or challenges that are critical for the region's economic vitality and workforce competitiveness in the future. The following are some that are common in all four reports:

- Overall, the region lags in **educational attainment**.
- **Adult literacy** is a significant weakness, and is compounded with illiteracy among the growing immigrant population.
- Traditional manufacturing jobs are declining in the region, which will require significant **retraining of workers** who have or will lose their jobs.
- New types of manufacturing coming to or being recruited to the region require **technical skills** that are lacking in the current workforce.
- More must be done to attract **young professionals** to the region.
- Greater efforts are needed to encourage and support **entrepreneurship** in the region.
- **Research and development** assets are tremendous, but not well known or leveraged in the region.
- **Collaboration** among workforce, education, economic developers and businesses is not focused in the region.

All four of the studies/plans emphasize that a skilled workforce will be key for Charlotte and the region to remain competitive in the regional, national and global economies. They also stress that the skills of the region's workforce need to match the needs of existing and targeted industry sectors and that education and training institutions should be in alignment as well. Increasing literacy, improving educational attainment and focusing on skills development for new industries are priorities endorsed in all four reports. The main and most striking difference among the four is between the CEDS and the Advantage Carolina's Targeted Business Analysis recommendations for industry sectors that should be targeted over the next five to ten years. They offer two different views of what those sectors should be.

Industries Sectors to Target

CEDS' Recommendations

- Biotechnology/Bioinformatics
- Optoelectronics
- Fuel Cells
- Defense/Advanced

St Ad Advantage

- Health Care
- Plastic Rubber Manufacturing
- Automotive/Motor Sports
- Logistics

The Partnership does not have a specific study or written plan to put into the mix for comparison, but it does promote five industry sectors that differ from those promoted by the CEDS and Advantage Carolina. These include:

- Manufacturing
- Distribution
- Business Services
- Logistics
- Creative Industries

Critical Strategic Regional Issues on for Competitive Regional Advantage 2006-2010

- **Business Growth**
  - Grow and expand existing businesses
  - Recruit new businesses
  - Enhance UNC Charlotte's economic research capacity
- **Educational**
  - Address adult and child literacy
  - Strengthen regional educational attainment
  - Enhance workforce technology and priority industry skills
- **Urban Development**
  - Address deteriorating conditions surrounding urban centers
  - Build and support destination and tourism assets
  - Provide additional affordable workforce housing
- **Regional Planning**
  - Enhance mobility
  - Expand telecommunications
  - Infrastructure
  - Implement Catawba River Centennial Collaborative
  - Address air quality and water resources

Excerpted from "Economic/Workforce Development in the Charlotte Region Overview and Comparison of Four Recent Studies and Plans" December 2005

Past, Present & Future Economic Development Investments

Iredell County

Mooresville: Langtree Properties

Langtree Properties has filed with the Mooresville Planning Department for zoning changes to build a $750 million, massive lake-view project near the future Exit 32. According to Mooresville Mayor Bill Thunberg, the project is "going to be a huge economic investment in that area. It will be a super tax benefit," he said. "That's the southern gateway of Iredell County." The State Department of Transportation has already committed to building a new interstate exit at Langtree Road "that's supposed to start this fall."

Langtree Properties plans on building four, five, six and twelve stories on both sides of the interstate with condos, offices, and businesses. Bob Morgan, president of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, said, "It is further evidence that the kind of investment we are seeing in Charlotte is also picking up around the region."

The drawings on file at the planning office include the following:

- North and west of Langtree Road: a 12-story hotel, three six-story residential buildings and several one- to four-story non-residential buildings, including parking. The hotel has 250 rooms, while 375-400 residential facilities would be built nearby. According to plans, Alcove Road would be relocated to better serve the new development.
- South and west of Langtree Road: five five-story residential buildings, four three- or four-story non-residential buildings, three six-story residential buildings and one four- or five-story non-residential building.
- The northeast corner of the interchange: two four-story non-residential properties, a two-story non-residential building, and a nine-hole golf course backing up to the Lowe's Inc. corporate campus.

The project may include a grocery store of about 35,000-square-feet. Construction of the northwest quadrant – including the hotel -- could begin summer 2007, if approved by the planning board and the Mooresville town board.

Iredell County: Opening of the Lowes Corporate Headquarters and Customer Support Center

Lowe's Inc.'s new customer support center in Mooresville includes a 400,000 sq. ft, 5-level building with 2 office wings with a central core connector atrium housing food service, reception and meeting rooms. The 165-acre campus is currently home to over 1,500 employees. At build out, the campus will house between 8,000 and 10,000 employees.

The campus features a 7-acre lake flowing underneath the building with walking trails and 4 acres of wetlands. Most of Lowe's vendors and suppliers are choosing to open offices in Mooresville-South Iredell to be close to the new campus. New office and showroom space for over 400 vendors is anticipated in the next three years.

Economic Development in Mooresville

According to the Mooresville-South Iredell Chamber of Commerce, between 1995 and 2004, significant economic development announcements in the area included:

- Lowe's Companies, Inc. $100 million Phase 1 corporate campus
- Cardinal Fig's new glass plant with an investment of $75 million
- NGK Ceramics' expansion totaling $66 million in the past three years
- Ingersoll-Rand's expansion totaling $12.5 million

Cabarrus County
Kannapolis: The North Carolina Research Campus

The North Carolina Research Campus under way in Kannapolis, in partnership with the University of North Carolina System, Duke University and the North Carolina Community College System, will extend the research and job training power of those institutions for the good of our state, our nation and the world.

Located just minutes from Charlotte, the research campus will give North Carolina a biotechnology corridor that stretches across the state. The campus is another step in the state's economic transformation from a leader in traditional industries such as textiles and tobacco to an innovator in emerging industries like biotechnology. Health and wellness will be a primary focus of the research taking place at the campus.

This public-private venture on 350 acres will boast the most technologically advanced biotechnology campus in the country. It will feature several prestigious, university-run research facilities and labs as well as private industries. Community colleges will play a key role by providing job training for area residents who have been hard-hit by economic changes and job losses. The North Carolina Research Campus will be a mixed-used development, providing its tenants, partners and their guests places to live, work, learn and play.

Mecklenburg County
Planned Expansion of the Charlotte Research Institute at UNC Charlotte

UNC Charlotte established the Charlotte Institute for Technology Innovation (now the Charlotte Research Institute) in December 2000. Research within the Institute focuses on three primary areas: precision metrology, e-business technology, and optoelectronics and optical communications.
The physical facilities of the Charlotte Institute include the existing Cameron Center and Burson Physical Sciences Building. Construction is underway for a Science and Technology Building, which will house the College of Information Technology and its eBusiness Technology Center, as well as the Biology Department and Electrical and Computer Engineering Department.

Also under construction are the Applied Optics and Physics Building, which will house the Department of Physics and Optical Science and the Center for Optoelectronics and Optical Communications, and the Engineering Research Building that the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Center for Precision Metrology will call home. These three buildings will total more than 360,000 square. The expansion will provide the Charlotte Research Institute with additional instructional and laboratory space in which to partner with businesses seeking solutions to industry challenges.

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte has recently established a Bioinformatics Program. This is a joint effort by scientists within the Departments of Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, and Mathematics, and in the Research Division of the Carolinas Healthcare Center. The focus of the program is on genetic factors in disease and gene regulation, although Bioinformatics can be more generally defined as the discovery, development and application of powerful computational tools to extract knowledge from complex biological data. Currently, faculty work on a variety of projects including genetic factors in ovarian and hepatic cancer, new approaches to the analysis of microarray data, and the use of systems analysis techniques to understand gene-gene interactions. The Bioinformatics Program will be located in a $35M, 70,000 square foot Bioinformatics Building under construction on the Charlotte Research Institute Campus of UNC Charlotte.

Carolinas MicroOptics Triangle (CMOT)

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Clemson University and Western Carolina University Carolinas formed the Carolinas Micro Optics Triangle (CMOT) in 2002 to formally synergize the technology platforms of the partnering institutions for technology advancement, local education support, support to local companies, and economic development in the region. Since that time over 150 jobs have been created, new degree programs have been established and the region has gained fame as an optics center.

CMOT is supporting key markets in the region by collaborating with companies for homeland defense applications, pharmaceutical diagnostics, automotive components, telecommunications and manufacturing sensing needs.

Gaston County
Bessemer City

Bud Antle Inc., an indirect subsidiary of Dole, will invest $54 million to build and equip a processing plant for vegetables in Gaston County, creating 525 jobs within three years and a total of 900 jobs by 2016. Dole is the world's largest producer of fruits and vegetables.

Pharr Yarns, LLC will build a new state-of-the-art fiber extrusion plant adjacent to its Complex 46 facility in McAdenville, North Carolina. This new manufacturing plant will produce extruded polyester and nylon filament yarns and fiber for our carpet yarn manufacturing operations.
The plant and equipment will represent a $30 million investment in the future of Pharr Yarns.

This new manufacturing plant will result in the creation of up to 75 new jobs when the facility reaches full production (over the course of the next three to four years).
The new jobs being created at the plant will be manufacturing related positions such as machine operators, electricians, and technicians as well as management and administrative support positions. Pharr will immediately begin construction of the new manufacturing plant with initial manufacturing operations beginning in 2005.

Rowan County
NASCAR

TRD announced that they will build a new Chassis Engineering and Competition Support facility in Rowan County. The Cline Site, on Peach Orchard Road was selected after a lengthy multi-state search. In 2007, Toyota is supporting 7 full-time cars and 2 more cars at some races, in the NASCAR Nextel Cup series. Toyota will also have 4 full-time Busch Series cars and 10 full-time Craftsman Truck Series trucks. The first phase of the development is expected to include a 32,736 square foot facility with a development, test and warehouse area. The site will be prepared to support additional phases of development as appropriate.

Granite Quarry

In one of the biggest projects of the year for the Charlotte region, new life has come to a vacant building and a new industry has come to Rowan County.

PGT Industries Inc. has relocated to the 390,000-square-foot former GDX Automotive building. The $31 million project is expected to bring 400 jobs by the end of the year with plans to add an additional 300 employees by 2008. The facility near Granite Quarry provides the space the company requires to handle increased production and future growth. By fall 2007, glass tempering and laminating capabilities are expected to be fully operational.

Lincoln County

Calico Coatings announced plans today to invest $1,500,000 in a new manufacturing facility in Lincoln County, North Carolina. The 20,000 square foot facility will be built in the new Balsom Ridge Business Park off Highway 16 in Denver, North Carolina. Construction is expected to begin in January, 2007 with a tentative completion date in October, 2007

In 2006, Crate and Barrel announced plans to invest $8,400,000 to expand its distribution center in the Lincoln County Industrial Park. The current 211,000 square foot facility will be expanded to 383,000 square feet. The project will create at least 10 new jobs in Lincoln County.

Union County

The 2005-06 fiscal year saw the relocation and/or expansion of four companies: ATI Allvac investing $33 million, Parkdale Mills adding 36,000 square feet to its big plant, Metal Recycling Services investing $6 million in its expanded facility, and the Extreme Ice Center creating one of the largest ice skating and ice hockey facilities in the region. These companies combined with the previous year's activity represent $97.7 million dollars in new investment and 263 new jobs for Union County.

Monroe

Monroe Economic Development is developing a new industrial park adjacent to the Monroe Regional Airport. AeroPointe Industrial Centre will initially encompass over 80 acres and the first phase is targeted for completion by the end of August 2007.

Darnel Inc. a subsidiary of Colombian-based Ajover S.A will manufacture plastic foam containers, plates, bowls, “to-go” boxes, and meat trays for the food industry at the former Square D facility located on Airport Road in Monroe. The facility will also be the company’s North American Headquarters and the distribution point for many products currently manufactured in South America. The company plans to employ 40 people by the end of 2007, ultimately hiring 100 over the next three years. While wages will vary by job function, the average weekly wage of the new jobs will be $593 plus benefits.

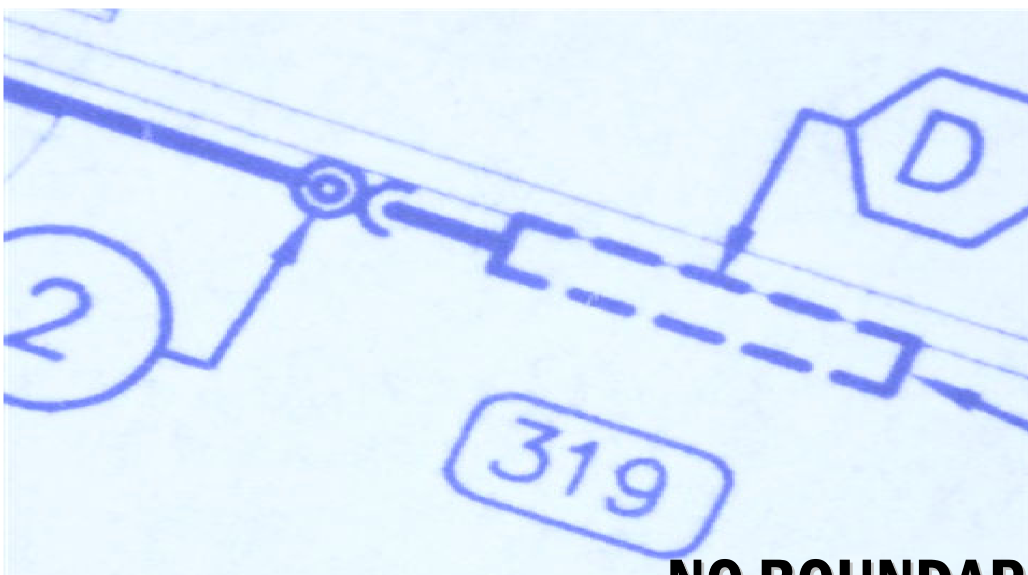
Anson County

The Anson Economic Development Corp. is developing the Anson Industrial Park-West, a 100 acre industrial park. Located on U.S. 74 in east Polkton with frontage on U.S. 74, and has county water and sewer available.

SECTION 3

Goals and Objectives

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

Goals

This *Recommendations Report* contains recommendations that will increase the region's opportunities for growing its target industries and other high impact businesses. AE has identified five goals for the region to improve the economy. Each goal relates to each section of the CEDS plan. The goals are:

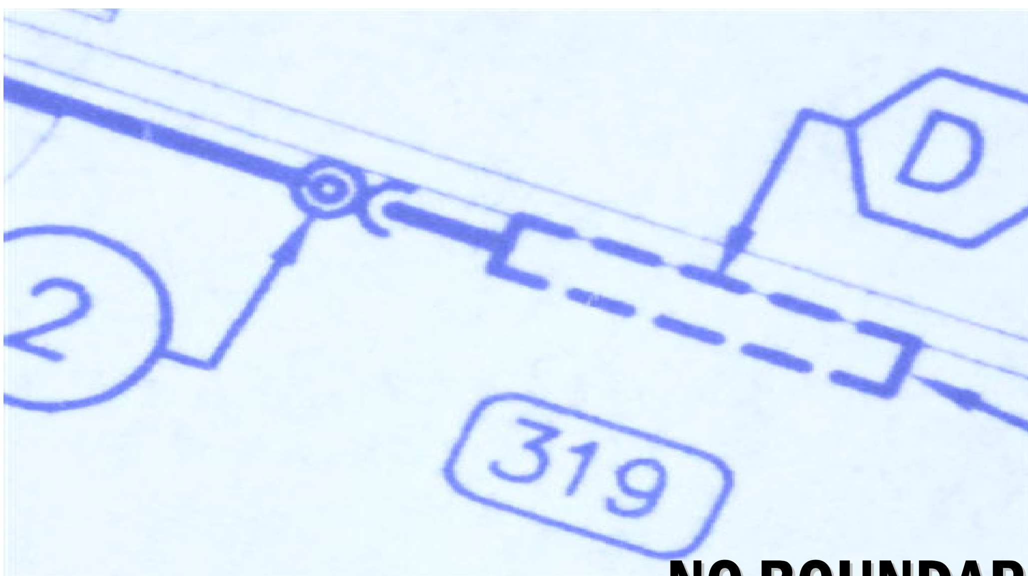
Goal One:	**Workforce development and education** programs are focused on preparing the workforce for the region's target industries.
Goal Two:	**Entrepreneurship and small business** are significant drivers of the economy.
Goal Three:	The region offers a place for its residents to **live, play, and work**, and appeals as a place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by **target industry companies**.
Goal Four:	The Region's **sites and infrastructure** meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.
Goal Five:	The Region's existing talents, leaders, and resources are coordinated so that there is **a seamless system for economic development services**.

The table below provides an explanation of key headings that are found in the **implementation matrix** and terms that are used throughout this plan.

TERM	DEFINITION
Goal	Outcome statements that define what the region is trying to accomplish.
Objective	Measurable actions that support the completion of each goal.
Recommendation	Tasks that will lead to the achievement of the objective.
Action	Specific steps to take that support each recommendation.
Budget	Additional funds necessary to implement several actions.
Primary Implementer	The organization that has primary responsibility for convening taskforces and leading implementation of a specific goal.
Supporting Implementer	The organization(s) that should support the primary implementer.
Time Frame	Period which it takes to begin and accomplish an objective.
Metric	Performance measurements to monitor, adjust, and rate the success of actions taken to accomplish an objective.

SECTION 4
Community and Private Sector Participation

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

The table provided below illustrates the key stakeholders that should be involved in the implementation of this plan. **Note that for every major section of this plan, one organization is listed as the primary implementer under the "Function" heading.** That is not to say that the organization is responsible for implementation, but rather based upon their current involvement in their respective programs, they should spearhead the implementation in cooperation with the other stakeholders listed. This primary implementer should help in the formation of taskforces to support each major function area. Other organizations not listed as supporting organizations will be actively recruited to participate in the implementation of this plan.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Centralina Council of Governments

Facilitating Organization

Functions	Supporting Organizations
Centralina Workforce Development Board **Workforce Development and Education**	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Board; Community Colleges; Charter Schools; Gaston County Workforce Development Board; Colleges and Universities; Literacy Councils; Advantage Carolina; School Districts
Centralina COG **Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development**	BIG Council; Charlotte Regional Partnership; Community Colleges; BizHUB; Charlotte Research Institute; Junior Achievement Orgs.; Committees of 100; Business Schools; Small Business Centers; Communities in Schools; Chambers of Commerce; Advantage Carolina; Workforce Boards
Regional Planning Alliance **Quality of Life**	Chambers of Commerce; Lee Institute; Councils of Government; Cities; Local Business Districts; Advantage Carolina; Convention and Visitors Bureaus; Urban Institute; Counties; Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority
Centralina COG **Infrastructure**	CATS; Duke Power; Charlotte-Douglas International Airport; Telecommunications Providers; Cities; Urban Institute; Counties
Charlotte Regional Partnership **Economic Development**	City and County ED Organizations; Centralina COG; Duke Power; Chambers of Commerce; Electric Coopertatives; Advantage Carolina; Electricities

Public Participation

The community's perceptions of the Centralina region as a place to live and work are important to understand when developing a regional plan such as this CEDS. Public input gathered from businesses identifies specific problems that must be addressed in order to retain local companies.

<u>Industry Focus Groups and Network Meeting</u>
Numerous focus groups with businesses were held throughout the region, including:

- Manufacturers met in Union County, Cabarrus County, and in Charlotte where input on key issues was discussed;
- Three networking meetings to discuss community needs in regard to the bioinformatics and biotech industries were held during the past year. Public Education systems, community colleges, and
- Three network meetings were held in Mecklenburg County for the logistics industry, which was identified, in the previous CEDS as a target industry.

Regional Visioning Project

- A forty member regional committee met four times to agree on an overall regional vision and develop a strategy to implement the vision. All of which is described in a report entitled *Connect: The Greater Charlotte Bi-State Regional Visioning Project,(November 2006).*

Interviews

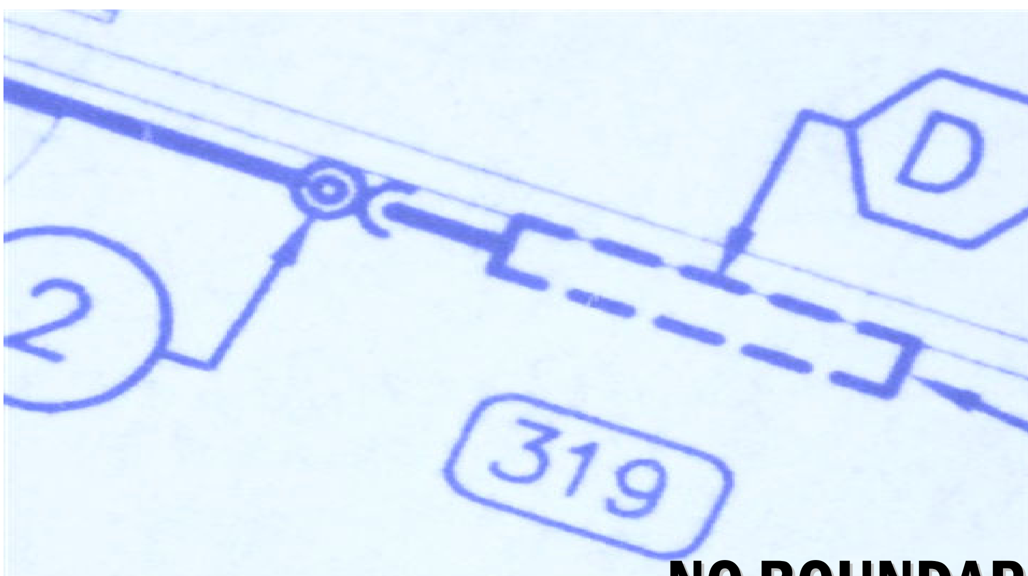
Approximately 38 interviews have been held with individuals, including private sector CEOs, elected officials, economic development professionals, university and community college representatives, and researchers from key industries.
Advantage Carolina Progress

Carolina Competitiveness Forum

This forum was sponsored by Duke Energy to primarily discuss the future role of manufacturing in the Carolinas, how to build the Carolinas' competitiveness, and how to drive economic development transformation. Information from this forum has also been incorporated into this assessment report.

SECTION 5
Projects

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

Recommendations from Other CEDS Projects

ANSON COUNTY

County: ANSON	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Sites & Infrastructure		
	US Hwy 74 Upgrade	A much needed major transportation improvement is the connection of I-95 to I-485 in Charlotte along US Highway 74. 74 is a major east-west connector from the State Port of Wilmington to the Tennessee border. The highway is recognized by the NC Dept of Transportation as an Interstate Corridor and a Key Economic Development Highway from US 17 in Brunswick County (Wilmington) to I-26 in Polk County near Hendersonville. The upgrade of this Intrastate Connector is vitally important to the economy of the region and state as a whole.
	US Hwy 74 Misc. Improvements	New US 74 upgrade projects have been currently identified in the Transportation Improvement Plan for 2004-2010 for three state division of the NCDOT, including Division 10 (Anson, Cabarrus, Stanly, Union). All of these projects should be identified and the value of their development communicated by their economic development agencies as a whole to their respective elected officials.
	Monroe Bypass	The construction of the Monroe Bypass on US 74 in neighboring Union County to clear congestion of the main transportation service artery to the west.
	Widen Lanes of US 52	Widening to four lanes of US 52 from US 74 to the South Carolina state line.
	Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility	Cabarrus, Union and Mecklenburg Counties have been planning to build a regional wastewater treatment plant to serve eastern Mecklenburg, northwestern Union, and eastern Cabarrus Counties. The proposed site for the wastewater treatment plant is in Union County at the confluence of the Rocky River and Goose Creek.
	Expansion/Rerouting of Hwy 52	Conceptual planning has been envisioned for the expansion/rerouting of US Hwy 52 from Albemarle to Salisbury. This plan is designed to upgrade 52 to a limited access, 4-lane highway to improve access from Albemarle to I-85 in Rowan County. The development of this project is important as a regional initiative affecting the economic viability of both Cabarrus and Stanly Counties through commercial and industrial development possibilities.
	Spec Industrial Building	Build a spec industrial building.

County: ANSON	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
	Certified Industrial Sites	Develop sites built with natural gas lines, sewers, other infrastructure.
Sites & Infrastrucutre Cont.	Grantsmanship Center	Create a business incubator using 3000 ft. available in Lockhart Taylor building.
	Community Facilities	Improve community facilities to include: renovate Crisis 911 Operations Center for emergency broadcasting, command center, electronic media; develop a Youth Center; advance Recreation Department Projects – playing fields, indoor multi-court gym; creation of a wellness center and fitness center; develop a greenway system along sewer lines; develop a new governmental facility – possibly expand the courthouse, library, post office and volunteer fire departments.
	Existing Textile Mills	Assess reuse potential for existing mills; assess and reclaim brown fields sites, renovate buildings.
	Natural Gas	Expansion of Natural Gas Infrastructure to south west portion of county.
	Water and Sewer	Expand water and sewer lines to outlying areas.
	Internet Access	Broaden availability of broadband internet access. Create public access sites where high-speed internet is available. Develop e-commerce and e-government.
	Affordable Housing	Create more affordable housing, both rental and owner-occupied.
Economic Development		
	Agricultural Development	Electronic agribusiness. Re-vamp Farmer's Market. Develop livestock marketing facilities. Develop agri-tourism.
	Agricultural Opportunities	Expand and manage agricultural resources.
Retention		
	Industry Retention	Develop a retention plan for existing industries.
Education		
	Tele-Com Center	Create telecommunications center for distance learning opportunities, accessible for media.
	Learning Resource Center	Renovate LRC on SPCC's Polkton campus for new programs.
	Adult Illiteracy	Develop a comprehensive strategy with initiatives to combat adult illiteracy.

CABARRUS COUNTY

County: CABARRUS	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Sites & Infrastructure	Improve US 74	New US 74 upgrade projects have been currently identified in the Transportation Improvement Plan for 2004-2010 for three state division of the NCDOT, including Division 10 (Anson, Cabarrus, Stanly, Union). All of these projects should be identified and the value of their development communicated by their economic development agencies as a whole to their respective elected officials.
	Philip Morris Site	2100 Acre Mega site with direct access to US 29 and NC 49 (both four lane roads). There is rail service to the property.
	Upgrade US 74	Upgrade US 74 to Interstate quality between Charlotte and Interstate 95 in Robeson County
	Upgrade Highway 220	Upgrade Highway 220 to Interstate quality, connecting Greensboro to Interstate 74 near Rockingham.
	1000-acre Mega-Site	In conjunction with the expansion and rerouting of US Highway 52, a 1000-acre mega site has been identified in northeastern Cabarrus County as a development possibility. This site would provide a rail-served property with access to high-voltage power transmission lines as a potential for major industrial development projects such as an automotive assembly plant.
	I-85	Widen I-85 to eight lanes.
	US-52	Upgrade US 52 to 4-lane limited access standards from Albemarle to Salisbury.
	Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility	Construct a regional wastewater treatment plant for Cabarrus, Union and Mecklenburg Counties, in Union County, at the confluence of the Rocky River and Goose Creek.
	Expansion of Water Resources	Identify additional water sources to supply the county and build the needed lines and infrastructure. Support the Inter-basin water transfer from the Catawba River.
	NC 73	Upgrade the NC 73 corridor per plan recommendations.
	Educational Infrastructure	Construct infrastructure for the North Carolina Research Campus biotechnology hub.

GASTON COUNTY

County: GASTON	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Economic Development		
	Land for Industrial Development	Some combination of zoning in key locations, incentives for private sector procurement for the long-term, and public sector land assembly and acquisition. Within Gaston County, new industrial park locations should be identified, primarily along US-321 North and I-85 West, and land will also need to be identified and secured at one or more key interchanges along the proposed Garden Parkway in the southern part of the county. A more immediate priority would be the development of a high-density warehouse-only distribution park on the east side of the county to take advantage of completion of I-485 and I-85.
	Gastonia Tech Park at Gaston College	A priority project is the completion of the Gastonia Technology Park adjacent to Gaston College just off US-321. This is a 380-acre site envisioned as being subdivided into some 15 lots of varying sizes from six to fifty acres but still requires significant investment in internal roads, services, and landscaping. Already some $6 million has been spent on the first phase, where there is currently one occupant, Pass & Seymour, Legrand, on a 41-acre site with a 155,000 square feet plant, employing 125 people. The intention is to recruit high quality manufacturing companies that need larger sites and that would create training, cooperation, and education programs with the college.
	Downtown Revitalization	Uptown Shelby Association supports a focus on Uptown Shelby: increasing the tax base by taking unoccupied or underutilized buildings and converting them to revenue-producing businesses; increasing the retail mix so that dollars that would be spent elsewhere are circulated locally; encouraging much-needed building maintenance and facade rehabilitations; increasing tourism and tourism-related dollars.

County: GASTON	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Infrastructure Development		
	Highway Infrastructure	Perform a land-use study for each proposed Garden Parkway interchange, and pursue an interstate designation for the proposed parkway. Consider extending the proposed parkway to NC 16 in the northeast County quadrant. Pursue an interstate designation for US 321 fromI-85 to I-40. Request NCOS to redevelop the I-85/US-321 interchange to meet current Interstate Highway design standards. Perform a feasibility study for US 29/74 to evaluate improvements in traffic flow and route aesthetics, and improvement/widening to bridges that traverse the Catawba River. Evaluate NC 279 widening from Cherryville to US 321 to enhance US 321 access.
	Utility Infrastructure	Develop a plan for extending municipal wastewater service outside of Belmont, Cramerton, Gastonia and Mount Holly municipalities. Priority service areas are the proposed Garden Parkway corridor and northeast quadrant of the County. Water and wastewater service area expansions should consider economic development potential relative to the required capital expenditure. Pursue funding restoration to the Gaston County Water and Sewer District, which would enable service extensions to unincorporated areas of the County.
	Real Estate	For industrial parks located within municipal boundaries, Gaston County should develop a program for multi-jurisdictional funding of infrastructure and road improvements to maintain its competitive land prices. Gaston should secure and allocate funding for the road extension into Tech Park to allow for small parcel sales (10 acres and under). Gaston should develop a high density warehouse-only distribution park (as in industry cluster) on the east side of Gaston County to compete with west Mecklenburg County locations. This should be considered a priority with the completion of I-485 to I-85.

County: GASTON	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Marketing & Communications		
		Gaston should develop a complete set of information about the county's demographics, sites, buildings, education offerings, workforce, quality of life, government and taxes, incentives, and other details often required by prospects, and make available on the website. Later should come a marketing brochure on each developed park and major greenfield site, with all pertinent statistics, photos, site plans and other contact information. An up-to-date website is necessary. Also, a strong graphic identity system, including a logo, stationery, binders, and other printed materials should be developed.

IREDELL COUNTY

County: IREDELL	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Interstate Projects		
	I-40	SR 1717 (Exit 138) in Catawba County to West of SR 1512 (Exit 146) in Iredell County. Pavement and bridge rehabilitation.
	I-40/I-77	Statesville. Modification of interchange area.
	I-40	Asheville to Winston-Salem. Review existing interstate route and evaluate for future improvements.
	I-77	SR 2171 (Jane Sowers Road). Convert grade separation to an interchange.
	I-77	South of SR 1891 in Iredell County to South of SR 1125 in Yadkin County. Pavement and bridge rehabilitation and safety improvements.
	I-77	Planning/design of widening I-77 from Mecklenburg County line north to I-40.
	I-77	Mazeppa Road-Cornelius Road connector including a new I-77 interchange.
Rural Projects		
	US 21/NC 115	Troutman Cedar Lane Avenue to SR 1336 in Barium Springs. Widen to a multi-lane urban facility.
	US 70	SR 2318 in Statesville to US 601 in Salisbury. Widen to multi-lanes, part on new location.
	NC 150	NC 27 in Lincolnton to I-77. Widen to multi-lanes.
	SR 1100 (Brawley School Road)	SR 1177 (Chuckwood Road) to US 21. Widen to multi-lanes with an interchange at I-77.
	SR 1379/SR 1364	Statesville Airport. Relocate SR 1379 (Airport Road) and SR 1364 (Fleetwood Road).
	Mooresville	SR 1206 (Alcove Road) relocation.
	Statesville Airport	Statesville Airport expansion to a 9000 linear foot runway and new radar/instrumentation.
Urban Projects		
	Statesville	SR 2333 (East Side Drive), SR 25332 (Barkley Road) to SR 2321 (East Broad Street). Widen to multi-lanes, part on new location.
	Statesville	US 21, SR 1933 to I-77. Widen to multi-lanes and realign offset intersections of SR 1922 and SR 2171.
Urban Projects Cont.	Statesville	US 21, US 64 to SR 1933. Widen to multi-lanes.
	Statesville	US 70, SR 2352 to I-77. Construct additional turn lanes and other improvements to improve traffic flow frrom Statesville Industrial Park to I-77.
	Statesville	US 64-70 (Garner Bagnel Road), I-40 to I-77. Widen to four lane divided facility.

County: IREDELL	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Feasibility Studies		
	NC 150	NC 115 to NC 150/NC 152 split. Widen to four lane divided facility.
Federal Bridge Projects		
	US 21/NC 115	Hunting Creek. Replace bridge no. 103.
	US 21	Third Creek. Replace bridge no. 38.
	NC 115	Rocky Creek. Replace bridge no. 69.
	SR 1333	Buffalo Shoals Creek. Replace bridge no. 86.
	SR 1421	Alexander Railroad. Replace bridge no. 513. Southern Railroad. Replace bridge no. 514.
	SR 1521	Third Creek. Replace bridge no. 116.
	SR 1526	Replace bridge no. 100.
	SR 1537	Third Creek. Replace bridge no. 95.
	SR 1581	Snow Creek. Replace bridge no. 140.
	SR 1832	Hunting Creek. Replace bridge no. 292.
	SR 1854	Rocky Creek. Replace bridge no. 228.
	SR 2308	Fourth Creek. Replace bridge no. 312.
	SR 2382	Weathers Creek. Replace bridge no. 14.
	VARIOUS	Environmental mitigation for bridge projects in Division 12.
Bicycle & Pedestrian Projects		
	Statesville	Museum Greenway: Free Nancy Road to Broad Street including Statesville Park.
	Lake Norman	Planning/design/acquisition of a Lake Norman Regional Bike Trail.
Enhancement Projects		
	Mooresville	Phase A: Main Street, East McClelland Avenue to East Center Street. Streetscaping.
	Mooresville	Phase II: North Main Street north of Center Avenue to South of Moore Street. Streetscaping.
Enhancement Projects Cont.	Statesville	Sidewalks in suburban low-income area to link recreational areas, shopping and social services building.
Hazard Elimination Projects		
	I-40	Catawba County Line to Davie County Line. Install shoulder rumble strips.
Passenger Rail Projects		
	Mooresville	Catawba Avenue at Norfolk Southern Railway Crossing 721 681V. Safety improvements.
	Statesville	Station rehabilitation. Platform and track work for Western North Carolina Service.
Roadside Environmental Projects		
	I-77	Renovation of buildings to address safety and operational issues until a new pair are completed.
	I-77	Renovation of buildings to address safety and operational issues until a new pair are completed.

County: IREDELL	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
	I-77	New rest area pair on new location to replace two existing pairs. One in Iredell County (Lake Norman) and the other at the Iredell/Yadkin County Line. To improve spacing and reduce maintenance costs.

LINCOLN COUNTY

County: LINCOLN	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Infrastructure Development		
	Regional Water Distribution System	The project involves increasing connections by other governmental entities to the Lincoln County Water System. Lincoln County is currently pursuing a connection with the City of Hickory and Catawba County on Cat Square Road whereby it could purchase water from Hickory. That connection would strengthen the regional supply system and would enhance ability to supply water to Lincolnton and High Shoals in time of need. Lincoln County has also talked with Hickory concerning a connection on NC 150 at NC 16, which would allow water to flow either way.
	NC 150 Improvement Feasibility Study	This project is currently in the NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program as an unfunded project. Expediting the completion of the feasibility study would develop a strategy in which to relieve congestion and decrease travel times between I-77 and US 321, promote economic development along this corridor and increase potential employment opportunities.
	Hwy 16 Improvement Study	A new four-land Highway 16 is being built to interstate standards through eastern Lincoln County. These improvements could continue but need to be examined to determine feasibility.
	Catawba River Sediment Removal Project	Sediment is a critical issue in the Catawba River. The WPCOG has been working with an engineer and Caldwell County to look at several aspects including loss of storage capacity in lakes due to sediment in the river. A demonstration cove in Lake Hickory has been identified and a $450,000 grant is needed to implement the program.
	Brownfield/Vacant Building Survey	The need to rehabilitate sites and vacant buildings that closed because of the current economic situation is critical. Funds are needed to tear down, rehabilitate, reuse and market these sties. A regional inventory of brownfield sites is needed.
	Fiber Optic Gap Analysis	The NC Rural Center has funds available to identify major corridors in the region that do not have fiber optics.
	Development Corridor Plans	Identify transportation corridors as the main focus for future planned development.

County: LINCOLN	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Infrastructure Development Cont.	Mega-Development Program	The plan calls for a mega-site development that would put Future Forward in competition with other parts of the US. Multiple counties could to incremental financing with a phased option to purchase.
	Lincolnton/Lincoln County Regional Airport	Bringing water and wastewater infrastructure to the airport will allow the airport to add commercial hangars and develop an air-oriented business park on adjacent property. In addition, new terminal facilities and road network are needed.
	NC 73 Water Project	A new water line and water tank along NC 73 are needed to bring additional water capacity to the industrialized central zone of the County. This project would improve the reliability of the entire Lincoln County water system.
	New Wastewater Treatment Plant	This project is in the design phase and will substantially increase Lincoln County's ability to accommodate new commercial and industrial projects. The proposed plant will be at a new location remote to the current Forney Creek facility but will be in the eastern end of the County.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY

County: MECKLENBURG	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Transportation & Infrastructure		
	Critical Projects	Neighborhood Improvement Program
		Sidewalk Program
		Statesville Road Widening (I-85 to Sunset)
		Rea Road Widening
		Idlewild Road Widening
		Harris Boulevard/Milton Road Intersection
		Eastway/Central Intersection
		Plaza/Sugar Creek Intersection
		Beatties Ford Road Widening--Planning (Capps Hill Mine to Lakeview
		Loganville Drive (Prosperity Church Road to Prosperity Village Road)
		Prosperity Church Road (Loganville Drive to Prosperity Village Road)
		Prosperity Ridge Road (Panthersville Drive to Prosperity Church Road
		Sharon Amity/Central Intersection
		Old Steele Creek/West Boulevard Intersection
		Community House Bridge Replacement
		Arterial Signal Systems
		Farm-to-Market to Urban Roads
		Oakdale/Hovis/Brookshire Intersection
		Johnson-Oehler/Mallard Creek Road Intersection
		South Davidson Street Connector
		Dixie-Berryhill Road Extension
		Eastland Mall Area Improvements - Phase II
		Future Transit Station Area Infrastructure
		Fire Station Renovations
		Fire Station Number 30
		NE Equipment Maintenance Facility
		Verhoeff Drive Extension
		Animal Control Spay/Neuter Clinic
		Bailey Road Widening
		Extension of Bailey Road to US 21
		Extension of Bailey Road to Barnhardt Road
		Westmoreland Road Improvements (west side of interstate)
		Joint Business Park in Huntersville
		River Center (indoor amateur sports facility)

ROWAN COUNTY

County: ROWAN	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Interstate Projects		
	I-85	North of SR 2120 (Exit 81) in Rowan County to US 29-52-70/I-85 Business (Exit 87). Additional lanes and bridge reconstruction.
	I-85	Us 29-601 Connector (Exit 68) to North of SR 2120 (Exit 81). Rehabilitate bridges and widen to eight lanes.
	I-85/US 601	US 29 and NC 152 (Exit 68). Interchange revision.
	I-85	NC 73 in Cabarrus County to US 29-601 Connector in Rowan County. Add additional lanes.
	I-85	SR 1221 (Old Beatty Ford Road). Construct an interchange.
	I-85	Cabarrus County Line to NC 152. Repair pavement and overlay with Novachip.
Rural Projects		
	US 52	Multi-lanes south of NC 49 at Ritchfield to I-85 north of Salisbury. Four lanes divided on new location.
	US 70	SR 2318 in Statesville to US 601 in Salisbury. Widen to multi-lanes. Part on new location.
	NC 152	I-85/US 601 interchange to relocated US 52 near Rockwell. Upgrade facility.
Urban Projects		
	Concord	US 29, SR 1305 (Pitts School Road) in Rowan County. Install closed loop system.
	Landis	Construct grade separation at Rice Street over Piedmont High Speed Rail Corridor.
	Salisbury	SR 2541 (Kluman Road), construct a grade separation with the North Carolina Railroad.
	Salisbury	SR 1002 (Bringle Ferry Road)/US 29-70 (Main Street). Five lane urban intersection. Grade separation over North Carolina and Norfolk Southern Railroads and an access road to Long Street.
	Salisbury	NC 150, SR 1516 to west of Grants Creek. Widen to multi-lanes
	Salisbury	Jake Alexander Boulevard at Harrison Road to Peach Orchard Road at I-85. Two lanes on multi-lane right of way. New location.
	Spencer	SR 2120 (Long Ferry Road). Grade separation at Southern Railway.
Feasibility Studies		
	Landis	Extension of SR 1211 (Kimball Road), SR 2739 (Main Street) to SR 1221 (Bostian Road). Construct connector on new location.

County: ROWAN	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Federal Bridge Projects		
	NC 49 (Eastbound Lane)	Yadkin River and Winston-Salem Southbound Railroad. Rehabilitate deck bridge no. 3.
	NC 801	Withrow Creek. Replace bridge no. 28.
	NC 801	South Yadkin River. Replace bridge no. 80.
	SR 1003	Third Creek. Replace bridge no. 26
	SR 1004	Church Creek. Replace bridge no. 143.
	SR 1004	South Second Creek. Replace bridge no. 141.
	SR 1308	Lake Fisher. Replace bridge no. 221.
	SR 1547	Back Creek. Replace bridge no. 12.
	SR 1759	Back Creek. Replace bridge no. 6.
	SR 1949	Replace bridge no. 78.
	SR 2048	Second Creek. Replace bridge no. 25.
	VARIOUS	Environmental mitigation for bridge projects in Division 09.
Municipal Projects		
	Salisury	I-85 Town Creek Sewer
	Salisbury	Second Creek Sewer
	Salisbury	City-wide fiber network
	Kannapolis	Pump Station Road over Bakers Creek Branch. Replace bridge no. 277.
	Salisbury	North Ellis Street over Southern Railway. Replace bridge no. 393.
	Salisbury	East Fisher Street over Southern Railway. Replace bridge no. 138.
Bicycle & Pedestrian Projects		
	Countywide	Bicycle route mapping and signage.
	Countywide	Uwharrie Lakes Region bicycle route mapping and signage.
	Grants Creek Greenway	Construct Grants Creek Greenway.
	Kannapolis	8th Street Greenway.

County: ROWAN	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Bicycle & Pedestrian Projects Cont.	Salisbury	Kelsey-Scott Park/Catawba College Greenway Connector.
	Salisbury	Grants Creek Bicycle Trail.
	Salisbury	Kelsey-Scott Park/YMCA Connector.
Enhancement Projects		
	Granite Quarry	Construct sidewalk and curb and gutter and install landscaping and bike rack on Brown Street.
	Kannapolis	Construct a ten-foot greenway and pedestrian walkway linking Baker's Creek Park to the CBD.
	Salisbury	North Carolina Transportation Museum Back Shop Project.
	Salisbury	Phase I: 100 and 200 blocks of East Fisher Street and 100 block of South Lee Street landscaping.
	Salisbury	Relocation of diesel locomotive no. 6133 at the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

STANLY COUNTY

County: STANLY	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Economic Development		
	Prime Power Park at Stanly County Airport	Support the development of the "Prime Power Park" through the improvement of necessary utilities such as water and sewer infrastructure to this unique park that seeks to recruit users with mission critical power needs. Continue to improve the facilities of the Stanly County Airport, including terminal expansion, in order to enhance its ability to act as a recruiting magnet for the Prime Power Park. Improve vehicle and rail access to the Prime Power Park.
	Development of a "Boutique" Automotive Site	Work to establish a multi-county site that is conducive to the development of a smaller automotive or automotive supplier facility. Such facility should also be promoted to entice Motorsports related testing and/or production facilities.
	Agriculture and Heritage-Based Tourism	Promote the continued development of Stanly County as a center for heritage-based, historic-focused tourism, capitalizing on the unique assets of Downtown Albemarle and the County as a whole. Continue the development and marketing of Agricultural and Eco-tourism in Stanly County. Engage in projects to enhance, market and expand these assets.
	Develop a Rail/Truck Transfer Station	Utilizing Stanly County's multiple rail providers, develop a multimodal transportation facility that will provide rail to truck transfer capabilities for multiple users, thus increasing access to rail service and increasing the utilization of existing infrastructure.
	Development of a Multi-county Industrial Park in the Southwestern Portion of the County	With the increasing growth pressures extending from the Greater Mecklenburg urban center, it is critical that Stanly and other fringe counties work to ensure adequate non-residential development to support the services required by additional residential development. Numerous opportunities exist for potential inter-municipal cooperation.
	Preparation of Land Suitable for Industrial Development	With increasing residential growth pressures along the Hwy 24/27 and Hwy 49 Corridors, it is critical that Stanly County identify, engage, and develop opportunities for industrial and other non-residential development in these key areas in order to ensure the continued stability of the County tax base and to take advantage of the close proximity of the greater Charlotte market.

County: STANLY	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Economic Development Cont.	Development of an Eco-Tourism related convention/meeting facility	With Morrow Mountain State Park and hundreds of miles of lake shoreline, Stanly County is well suited to host a professional retreat/conference center. Such a facility would allow the greater Charlotte community to engage in strategic planning and team building events in a rural setting without being more than an hour from Uptown Charlotte.
Infrastructure		
	Improve US 52 from Interstate 85 to US 74	Conceptual planning has been envisioned for the expansion/rerouting of US Hwy 52 from Albemarle to Salisbury. This plan is designed to upgrade 52 to a limited access, 4-lane highway to improve access from Albemarle to I-85 in Rowan County. The development of this project is important as a regional initiative affecting the economic viability of both Cabarrus and Stanly Counties through commercial and industrial development possibilities.
	Improve Hwy 24/27 from end of current project West of Albemarle to US 220/Future Interstate 73/74	This corridor is Stanly County's main link to the Charlotte region and offers one of the greatest opportunities for future interaction with the developing US 220/Interstate 73/74 corridor. This corridor is currently being expanded to 4 lanes from Locust to just west of Albemarle. This process must be continued through Albemarle to the western edge of the County and then on to US 220/Interstate 73/74 in Troy.
	Improvement to Prime Power/Airport Access	Improvements are necessary to Hwy 740 and Airport Road in order to ensure adequate accessibility for industrial and military vehicle traffic. These improvements must include a link to the North East Connector that joins US 52 and Hwy 740 north of Albemarle.
	Improve Hwy 49 Throughout Stanly County and North to US 220/Future Interstate 73/74	Hwy 49 is currently being improved to 4 lanes in Cabarrus County. These improvements must be continued through Stanly County to the intersection of US 220 and US 64 in Asheboro. Portions of this project have already been completed north of Stanly County. This corridor, when improved, will not only provide an important vehicle transportation corridor for Stanly and surrounding Counties, but will also provide a viable alternative for vehicle traffic between Raleigh and Charlotte, relieving pressures on Interstates 40 and 85 as well as providing important emergency planning operations for Raleigh and Charlotte.

County: STANLY	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Infrastructure Cont.	Improve Hwy 73	Improvement to Hwy 73 will allow Stanly County to better interact with regional partners such as Cabarrus County. This improved infrastructure will also provide a viable transportation link to Interstate 85 and the improved Hwy 49 for the western and northwestern sections of Stanly County.
	Water Improvements	In order to ensure adequate water availability throughout the region, water infrastructure should be extended along US 52, Hwy 24/27, Hwy 49 and Hwy 73. Such extensions must be designed to interlink with systems in neighboring counties and provide options for inter-municipal water transfers in times of emergency demand.
	Sewer Improvements	Provide improved access to wastewater treatment for major industrial corridors and future growth areas. Develop a long-range action plan to improve capacity in the western and southwestern portion of the County. Possible solutions include upgrading and extending infrastructure, the development and/or expansion of sewer treatment facilities, and/or the partnering with neighboring counties to facilitate additional treatment capacity.
Marketing & Communications		
	Targeted Marketing Materials	Stanly County must develop a comprehensive series of marketing materials that can be customized to highlight each County municipality and be widely distributed. These materials must also provide industry specific information to potential clients and site selection professionals. Information must be made available in multimedia formats including print, video/DVD, CD-Rom and streaming internet/website presentations. Materials will target the brokerage community, select industries, and the Site Selection community.
	Downtown Albemarle Redevelopment	Downtown Albemarle holds vast potential to once again be a hub for commerce and community growth. Projects such as building rehabilitation, conversion to residential units and new retail/entertainment space should be aggressively pursued. Additionally a vehicle to convey the opportunities in Albemarle must be created. Such a vehicle may include print, direct mail and guided/personal tours and programs.

County: STANLY	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Marketing & Communications Cont.	Tourism-Related Marketing	Additional steps should be taken to enhance the capabilities of Stanly County's Convention and Visitor's Bureau. This includes the development of professional marketing pieces as well as resources to further develop tourism-related events and activities.
Education & Literacy		
		Upgrade the educational and literacy levels in the County.
Capital Improvements		
		Prepare a long-term capital improvement infrastructure study.

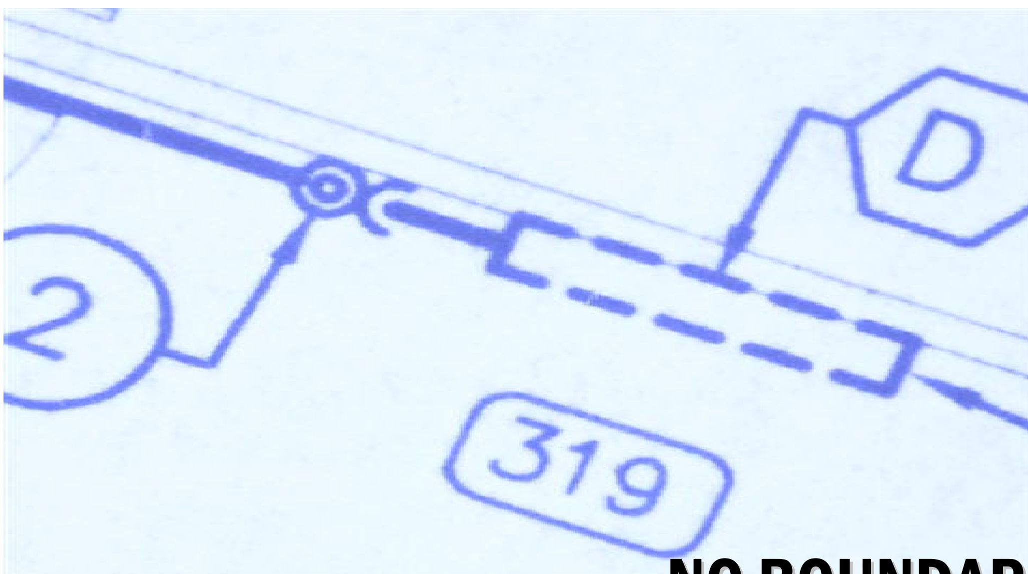
UNION COUNTY

County: UNION	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Infrastructure Development		
	Highway 74	Upgrade Highway 74 to Interstate quality to solve the congestion problem and provide effective passage through Union County.
	Highway 74	New US 74 upgrade projects have been currently identified in the Transportation Improvement Plan for 2004-2010 for three state division of the NCDOT, including Division 10 (Anson, Cabarrus, Stanly, Union). All of these projects should be identified and the value of their development communicated by their economic development agencies as a whole to their respective elected officials.
	Waxhaw By-Pass	Construct a Waxhaw By-Pass.
	State Highway 75	Improve State Highway 75 from Mineral Springs to the South Carolina border.
	Energy Court	Extend Energy Court 1,300 feet into the Union County Corporate Center.
	Idlewild Road	Widen Idlewild Road to four lanes for approximately 1,800 feet.
	Monroe Regional Airport	Construct the needed runway extensions and a larger airport terminal at Monroe Regional Airport.
	Water and Sewer Infrastructure	Upgrade the County water supply system from Anson County to Union County to a 16-inch water line. Create additional pumping capacity. Expand the water and sewer capacity in the Waxhaw Area. Seek funds to expand the current wastewater treatment capacity in eastern Union County.
	Waste Water Treatment Plant	Relocate the regional wastewater treatment plant from the confluence of Rocky River and Goose Creek to Rocky River and Crooked Creek. The length of the proposed line is 4.2 miles.
	Regional Water Treatment Plant	Construct a regional water treatment plant on the Pee Dee River in Anson County.
	Telecommunication Infrastructure	Place fiber optic cabling and equipment in strategic areas throughout the City of Monroe and between Charlotte and Monroe.
	Industrial Sites	Purchase land around Waxhaw for future product development, and ensuring job creation.

County: UNION	Issue/Topic	Project/Recommendation
Economic Development		
	Equestrian Center	Develop an Equestrian Center in Union County.
Education		
	Vision 2020	Seek funding for Vision 2020.
	Small Business Support Center Network	Construct a larger downtown Monroe facility.

SECTION 6
Regional Priorities

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

Regional Priorities

Priority projects have been identified that can provide the most significant impact for growth and development of the region's economy. The other recommendations found in this plan will also have a direct impact but many of the other recommendations need to be carried out at a local level. The following prioritized projects will help anchor certain industries in the region, improve the economies of communities in the region, and assist the region in directing resources to the most critical needs and to areas that will have the biggest impact:

- ✓ **Incorporate advanced manufacturing in all business sectors that can adopt it.**
- ✓ Expand research and development by focusing on the motorsports, biotechnology/bioinformatics, optoelectronics industries, and agriculture.
- ✓ **Improve the region's workforce preparedness through programs in literacy and basic skills development. Expand opportunities in technology transfer educational programs.**
- ✓ **Develop a culture throughout the region that promotes and encourages entrepreneurship.**
- ✓ **Promote the region's tourism assets through a well-funded cooperative effort.**
- ✓ **Enhance the distribution network for the region by investigating the feasibility of an intermodal site at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport.**

Detailed descriptions for each of these priority projects are found on the following pages.

1. **Enhance the environment for manufacturing in the region by promoting innovation and incorporating advanced manufacturing in all business sectors that can apply advanced technology in their operations.**
   Status: Ongoing

Many manufacturing businesses are moving portions or all of their business overseas to take advantage of cheap labor and availability of skills. The United States will be able to retain and expand those manufacturing businesses that continue to use advanced technology in the development of products. The region would benefit tremendously by having a center that would focus on developing advanced technological applications to assist the existing manufacturing companies in the region and be a draw to recruiting other businesses who would take advantage of this asset.

North Carolina State University (NCSU) has a program that unites materials engineering with industry in the Center for Advanced Manufacturing Processes and Materials (CAMP-M). The center uses the materials and processes developed for microelectronics in other industries. In a project tailored to NCSU, three departments were recently awarded a joint grant by the National Textiles Center to study the application of plasma processes, developed for the electronics industry, to fibers and textiles. New high density plasma processes are used to modify the surface of fibers by etching or depositing thin coatings on them. Next, these plasmas will be used to explore the removal of surface etching contaminates in an environmentally friendly vapor process that will also reduce manufacturing costs. In addition, using these processes to harden fibers will minimize both friction and wear of textile machinery.

Recommendation 2004: The region should develop a broad agenda for manufacturing and then perform a feasibility analysis to determine how a center for advanced manufacturing in this region could compliment the efforts at NCSU and assist the region and state in growing advanced manufacturing.

In 2005, using EDA funds and those from local partners, the CEDC began examining manufacturing in the region. A steering committee was formed to guide the feasibility analysis. Angelou Economics completed Phase I of the program in May 2006 with the issuance of two reports and a regional map showing the location of advanced manufacturers in the twelve counties included in the target area.

CH2M Hill, a nationally know engineering consulting firm, undertook Phase II of the analyis in September 2006 by further refining the definition of “ advanced manufacturing” and specifiying the industries within the target area. Phase II was finished in May 2007 with the report showing the final analysis and recommendations.

2. Expand research and development to support the motorsports, optoelectronics industries, biotechnologies, and energy.

Motorsports and optoelectronics are two industries that have provided millions of dollars in investment and thousands of jobs in the Charlotte area. Both of these industries would substantially benefit from increased research and development to support industry growth. This collaborative should be between the Charlotte Research Institute (CRI) - the industry-collaborative arm of The University of North Carolina at Charlotte and community colleges, economic developers and businesses. Other regional R&D efforts, and those outside of the region that can support regional programs, should also be considered.

Biotechnology:
With the rebirth of Kannapolis as the North Carolina Research Center, biotechnology has come to the Greater Charlotte Region. The research campus will (1) house research facilities for several universities (2) include a 311,000 square foot Core Laboratory with a state of the art contract manufacturing biogenic facility (3) include the Dole Research Institute and LabCorp, a pioneer in genomic testing.

The North Carolina Biotech Center now has an office in the region, located in the Charlotte Research Institute. These tremendous assets are attracting attention from researchers across the globe.

Motorsports:
North Carolina is the epicenter for world motorsports, providing close to a $1.5 billion impact. There is also a recognized synergy between the motorsports concentration in North Carolina and automotive technologies in South Carolina, leading to an educated and available workforce fertile for the addition of an automotive manufacturer in North Carolina.

UNC-Charlotte announced in May 2007, a planned expansion of the Motorsports facility on campus. The Charlotte is spending at least $6 million to expand its facilities, staff and equipment at the N.C. Motorsports and Automotive Research Center.

Information collected during the advanced manufacturing analysis process indicated a need for more data on the supply chain relationships in the region within the motorsports industry. The proposed initiative would help to expand and retain this industry in the region and facilitate the development of small specialty manufacturing firms.

Project Funds necessary:	**$35,000**
Source of Funds:	**Economic Development Administration (EDA)**
Timing:	**Spring 2009**

Optoelectronics: In 2004, the region supported the development of a corporate incubator laboratory in the new optoelectronics building at UNC-C. The university applied for and received a $1.5 grant from EDA to build the corporate lab space which will promote jobs and innovation within this key technology. Optoelectronics research continues to be important and a regional priority.

Energy: Cluster information from Moody's Economy.com (Metro Preceis March 2006) indicated that utilities is a growing cluster in the region. Efforts are underway in the region to add a research component to the cluster with the addition of a new program at UNC Charlotte. Under the Senate budget, UNC Charlotte would receive $76.2 million in bond funding for a new energy production program located in the College of Engineering. Money would pay for the Energy Production Infrastructure Center. It's a new component of the engineering school that will train engineers to build coal and nuclear power plants. Proposed funds would pay for construction and the start of the programs.

According to the US Geological Survey, coal is used to produce half of the Nation's electrical energy needs. The US Department of Energy in the *AEO2007* reference case, predict increasing coal use for electricity generation at existing plants and construction of a few new coal-fired plants cause annual production increases that average 1.1 percent per year from 2005 to 2015, when total production is 25.7 quadrillion Btu. The growth in coal production is even stronger from 2015 to 2030, averaging 1.8 percent per year, as substantial amounts of new coal-fired generating capacity are added.

The US market for alternative energy, alone, is expected to reach over $168 billion dollars by 2015.

With the increased emphasis on energy, energy sources and the environment as well as the new capacity for research in production technologies, this sector will grow in importance. The region should examine this growing cluster to determine appropriate cluster strategies.

3. Improve the region's workforce preparedness through programs in literacy and basic skills development. Expand opportunities in technology transfer educational programs.

Improving workforce skills and literacy should be of paramount importance to all concerned. Although there is a section in this plan devoted solely to this goal, the region feels it is necessary to highlight its importance as a priority project. The three Workforce Development Boards serving this region as well as the community colleges, school districts and other workforce and education providers are already addressing several initiatives described in this plan. However, funding must be acquired for several specific initiatives: 1) developing Literacy Councils in every county, 2) developing a Youth Literacy Corps serving the region, and 3) developing a sophisticated and well-funded campaign to promote the importance of literacy and education. It is also mentioned in the Workforce Development and Education section that the region does need to continue to address retraining of displaced workers as well as continue to foster learning for advanced students.

Project Funds necessary: **$500,000 (1/3 for each major initiative)**
Source of Funds: **Private sector, Corporation for National and**
Community Service: **Knight Foundation**
Timing: **Fall 2008**

4. Develop a culture that promotes and encourages entrepreneurship. Status: Ongoing

Small business and entrepreneurs must become a major focus for the region. These businesses and individuals will be the mainstay of the economy in years to come. Several initiatives exist or are being planned throughout the region to assist individuals interested in starting their own small business or expanding their existing enterprise. Many of the organizations involved in these efforts compete for the same pool of funds and there is real and perceived duplication of services which creates confusion in the mind of those seeking help and those wanting to support the initiatives.

It was recommended in 2004 that stakeholders should undertake a separate study that examines all of the groups that are involved in small business and entrepreneurship, their respective services, and their sources of revenue. Secondly, a strategy should be developed that all of these organizations can commit to participating in that would best serve the region. Components of this strategy would be an organizational structure of a regional initiative, funding strategy for the initiative, and short and long-term work plan for the primary and supporting stakeholders.

Beginning in 2006,the BizHub Network, supported by the CEDC, workforce development boards, and others, worked to establish a regional program to connect all agencies and working with entrepreneurs and small business.

Their goal is to

- develop a regional network of small business services and
- promote greater accessibility and
- promote greater collaboration
- Increase the number and success rate of small businesses in the region.

The plan is that each organization in the region will continue to offer its own programs, activities, becoming part of a greater network to enlarge the resources available to entrepreneurs in the greater Charlotte Region.

The new software, Resources Navigator, developed through the support of the Marion Kaufman Foundation, was purchased to provide the base support for the fledgling network.

During the next five years, support for the regional network should be broadened. Using the new program and after purchasing software, the Bizhub will have the data to describe both entrepreneurs and programs in the region. This data is not now being collected.

Project Funds Necessary: $ 25,000
Source: Workforce Development Boards, State, EDA, counties, community colleges
Timing: 2008-2009

5. Promote the region’s tourism assets through a well-funded cooperative effort. Status: Ongoing

Tourism is not currently promoted in a regional context. Each municipality promotes itself through its local tourism and/or economic development group but a sophisticated marketing effort should be undertaken that incorporates local tourism assets and builds upon each local tourism effort to effectively promote the entire region. The purpose of this study should be to determine an effective strategy for promoting the area to tourists and business travelers. The study should look at a larger area such as the Charlotte Regional Partnership region than just the nine counties in the region and include such items as: branding and marketing, tourism infrastructure, organizational structure for implementing a regional tourism program, cultural tourism, destinations, market analysis for the region's success in tourism, and tourism cluster development.

The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority has taken the lead in these efforts. Meritage Consulting was hired to complete the work in two phases. Phase I is underway and activities include an inventory of assets, development of themes, and programs to market the themes. The first phase should be complete by the end of 2007. Phase II gets underway in 2008 and will implement the marketing programs.

Project Funds necessary:	**$250,000**
Source of Funds:	**Private sector, chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, cities, counties Charlotte Regional Partnership, Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority**

Timing: Phase I complete at the end of 2007
Phase II completed by the end of 2008.

6. **Enhance the distribution network for the region by investigating the feasibility of an intermodal site at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport.**

The primary intermodal system for the region is near downtown Charlotte, where trains coming along the Norfolk-Southern rail lines bring their cargo and where trucks then transfer the cargo to other areas, including the airport. This depot is landlocked and cannot be expanded to handle additional cargo. The Charlotte Douglas International Airport does have land sufficient for the current intermodal depot and future expansion of its operations – leading to additional cargo being transported to the airport. This change would significantly benefit the distribution and logistics industries in Greater Charlotte, providing an increased demand in services from these industries. A feasibility analysis was completed by the City to determine the potential costs and associated issues involved with this project.

The next step is a corridor study to determine the impact on the adjoining areas and plan for redevelopment of the corridor.

Project Funds necessary:	**$150,000 (impact study and plan)**
Source of Funds:	**Airport funding**
Timing:	**In progress**

Several of the regional priority projects are further discussed in the remaining sections of this plan.

Target Industries

The information provided in this section and in the appendix are recommendations on industries that the region should target for business growth. **By understanding and focusing on existing businesses in the region, targeted business recruitment will be more successful.** It is important to know the managers at all of the major manufacturing facilities, understand who their suppliers are, and trends that they foresee in the immediate future for the industry. Business expansion and retention should be a major focus of every local economic development organization in the region, and will support business recruitment efforts.

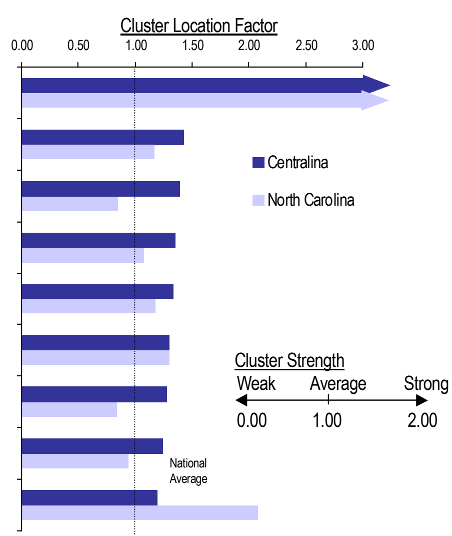
Summary of Existing Clusters

It is important to understand growth issues of existing industries and look at national and industry growth trends to determine if these industries will continue to expand and prosper. The chart to the right illustrates the relative industry strengths that currently exist in the region. Dark blue bars that go beyond a 1.00 indicate that Centralina has more employment in this industry relative to the nation.

The Centralina region is anchored by a large metropolitan city and supported by counties that range in population and economic prosperity - with each county having its own unique identity and business strengths. This provides for a variety in employment options for the local workforce as well as industry growth opportunities. With the headquarters of both Bank of America and Wachovia, Charlotte provides the region with a large financial services cluster. Charlotte is also primarily responsible for Centralina's above average housing, communication services, and computer equipment clusters. The less urban counties contribute to the large textiles, chemicals, and distribution clusters.

Cluster Distribution, 2003
Centralina and North Carolina

Cluster	Centralina	North Carolina
Apparel & Textiles	4.62	4.84
Chemicals & Plastics	1.43	1.17
Financial Services	1.39	0.85
Logistics & Distribution	1.35	1.08
Housing & Construction	1.33	1.18
Food Processing	1.30	1.30
Communication Services	1.28	0.84
Wholesale	1.24	0.94
Computer Equipment	1.20	2.08



Source: Dun and Bradstreet; AngelouEconomics

While textiles and plastics are the area's largest clusters – indicating a relative regional strength and certainly important industries to the area - they are not industries in which Centralina will find significant future growth. North Carolina's textile cluster is the largest in the U.S., but the domestic apparel industry is struggling to deal with global competition. The industry will likely continue to decline in the immediate future except for niche advanced manufacturers. The chemicals and plastics industry has been successful and the area boasts many assets specific to that industry, such as the Polymers Center for Excellence at UNCC, but as with textiles, plastics is not a high growth industry overall. Centralina's other large clusters are in fast growing and high impact industries nationwide.

Workforce

The region boasts a relatively educated workforce. However, many individuals with traditional workforce skills who lack post high school education and are in declining industries must be trained with more advanced technological skills. There is an ample supply of educated workers in the region with the 17,000 student body at UNCC, and numerous small to mid-sized colleges; 26 percent of the workforce have at least a four-year degree - higher than state and national averages. **Targeting workforce skill development of displaced workers and tomorrow's workforce for the following target industries, as well as other key industries the region wishes to target, is a critical factor for Centralina's economic prosperity.**

Target Industry Recommendations

The key challenge to the region will be developing industries with high growth nationwide that play to the areas strengths. The following six industries fit with the region's strengths, will provide the best opportunities, and should be a focus for economic development efforts:

>> Defense and Security: Charlotte is home to a number of companies in the security industry, in both manufacturing and services. The area's workforce, location, and non-union labor market are ideal for relocating defense manufacturers. Centralina should also target companies and research efforts tied to security services. This includes market segments such as surveillance and monitoring, access control, biometrics, computer security, fire/burglar alarms, and home automation.

>> Automotive: The American automotive industry has been migrating to the Southeast. North Carolina is one the few states that does not have an OEM facility. North Carolina possesses many of the same qualities that led foreign firms from Daimler to BMW to Toyota to choose Southern states for new facilities. The Centralina region boasts a large cluster of automotive suppliers, many supplying the nearby BMW facility. UNCC offers a multidisciplinary program in Motorsports and Automotive Engineering and the areas community colleges offer a multitude of vocational and technical programs tailored to manufacturing. Centralina is also home to the NASCAR industry which has grown rapidly in recent years and provides thousands of jobs that are related to NASCAR, such as component parts manufacturing.

>> Software Development: Software is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. and Centralina meets nearly all of the industries site selection requirements. The area's quality of life, well educated workforce, and lower than average wage rates make it an ideal fit for relocating software developers. Centralina should focus on two niche sectors within software development: companies that provide services for the financial service industry and security software firms. These niche sectors have obvious fits with other Centralina industries and are among the fastest growing sectors of the software industry. Centralina should also consider fostering a strong logistics industry to support the strong distribution network that exists in the region.

>> Biotechnology/Bioinformatics: Bioinformatics is a relatively new industry that utilizes tools from the software and biotech industries. Firms in this industry use software and high end computing systems to speed up the development of new drugs by pin pointing the efficacy of newly discovered materials and the specific population groups for testing. Centralina faces challenges establishing a large biotech cluster due to Raleigh's proximity, the fierce competition for biotech firms, and the lack of a large medical research institution. However, the proposed research center in Kannapolis will offer a nucleus for growth of the industry, especially given the focus on nutrition. The region has a developing bioinformatics industry and should focus efforts there. Gaston College has established a biotechnology research center, which presents a good opportunity for the region.

>> Optoelectronics: Optics is expected to revolutionize the 21st century-just as electronics did for the 20th century. Optoelectronics is the combination of optical and electronics products into a one field whose products span numerous industries. While the optics industry has suffered since the technology downturn the niche optoelectronics industry has been less affected and long term growth prospects are excellent. UNCC's Center for Optoelectronics and the area's existing industry cluster will be invaluable in developing this cluster.

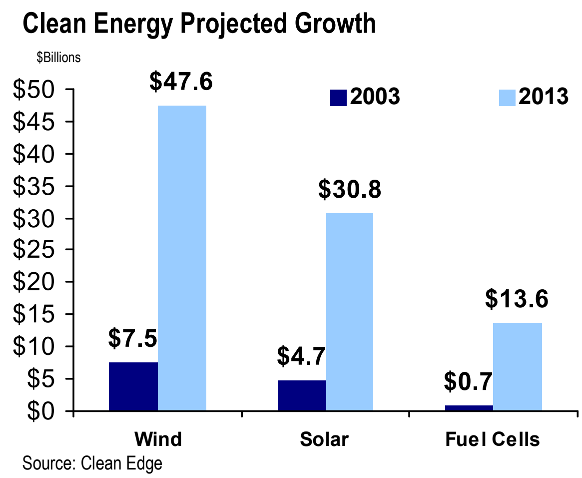
The information provided above highlights the Targeted Industries.

More detail on each industry is found in the Targeted Industry section of the Appendix.

Target Industries

Alternative Energy

Industry Trends



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According to the US Geological Survey, coal is used to produce half of the Nation's electrical energy needs. The US Department of Energy in the *AEO2007* reference case, predict increasing coal use for electricity generation at existing plants and construction of a few new coal-fired plants cause annual production increases that average 1.1 percent per year from 2005 to 2015, when total production is 25.7 quadrillion Btu. The growth in coal production is even stronger from 2015 to 2030, averaging 1.8 percent per year, as substantial amounts of new coal-fired generating capacity are added.

The US market for alternative energy, alone, is expected to reach over $168 billion dollars by 2015.

With the increased emphasis on energy, energy sources and the environment as well as the new capacity for research in production technologies, this sector will grow in importance. The region should examine this growing cluster to determine appropriate cluster strategies.

Alternative Energy in Centralina

The alternative energy industry represents a great opportunity for the Centralina region. The likelihood that sometime between 2010 and 2015 CATS' Charlotte-to-Mooresville North Corridor line could see the world's very first hydrogen fuel cell powered passenger rail conveyance bodes well for the local fuel cell and hydrogen industries. Even though this planning is in the very early stages starting a dialogue about such an ambitious project is important. UNC Charlotte is pursuing two early research initiatives to complement the Vehicle Projects R&D work and attract Hydrail to North Carolina. The first initiative is the creation of a Hydrail Technology Working Group to address fueling, regulatory, safety and economics issues. The second initiative will study ways to integrate and deploy a combined fueling infrastructure for Hydrail, buses, fleets and eventually personal cars.

Centralina is a member of the National Clean Cities Program, locally represented by the Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition. The program promotes, accelerates, and expands the use of alternative fuels in the transportation sector. Working through locally-based government-industry partnerships, the Clean Cities Program seeks to expand the use of alternatives to traditional fossil fuel consumption. Clean Cities is a federal program designed to accelerate and expand the use of alternative fuel vehicles in communities throughout the country and to provide refueling and maintenance facilities for their operation. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Efforts are underway in the region to add a research component to the cluster with the addition of a new program at UNC Charlotte. Under the Senate budget, UNC Charlotte would receive $76.2 million in bond funding for a new energy production program located in the College of Engineering. Money would pay for the Energy Production Infrastructure Center. It's a new component of the engineering school that will train engineers to build coal and nuclear power plants. Proposed funds would pay for construction and the start of the programs.

EcoVehicle, located in Salisbury, is one of the first independent zero emission transportation manufacturers in the country. The company plans to manufacturer an electric powered vehicle and already has a prototype. The prototype measures 11 feet long and 69 inches high and includes an A-frame suspension, tubular steel construction, rack-and-pinion steering, and everything else one would expect in a traditional automobile. The EcoVehicle plugs into a standard 110 volt electrical outlet for power and can drive 30 miles on a single charge. A full charge lasts seven hours, at a cost of 80 cents in electricity. The battery is expected to last about three years. The car is designed for urban or small town driving and has a top speed of 25 mph.

Charlotte has also been the host city for a variety of industry conferences including the 2002 Conference on Hybrid Power Systems which was sponsored by the Department of Energy and the United Nations, marketing the city and area to a wide range of industry professionals.

Additional Industry Requirements

Public-Private Sector Cooperation. Fuel cell companies locate where they have strong support from government agencies, area universities, and local economic development officials. This has played a large part in the development of the fuel cell industry in California and New Mexico. As the industry moves from the early research stages into development and manufacturing, communities across the nation will have an opportunity to develop this cluster.

Workforce. The fuel cell industry is still small, so employees have traditionally been recruited away from more established industries. Complementary industries are therefore important in building a local workforce. They are also important because much of the work on fuel cells originates from division of companies in other fields. Centralina's high tech workforce and existing automotive industry will be attractive to relocating fuel cell firms.

Flex Industrial Space. Fuel cell facilities carry out a number of duties. Besides being the company's office space, they also include lab space and at least a small manufacturing bay where prototypes are built and tested. While fuel cell companies are not large manufacturers, their manufacturing needs precludes them from locating downtown. Rather, fuel cell companies show a strong preference for industrial parks. The Centralina region offers plenty of affordable flex industrial space and is well suited to absorb the region's fuel cell industry growth.

Competitive Assets - Fuel Cells

Asset	Centralina
Public-Private Cooperation	✓
Technical Workforce	✓
Affordable industrial space	✓
Low cost of doing business	✓

Biotech/Bioinformatics

Industry Trends

Biotech is the only major tech sector with employment growth between 2001 and 2003. Global sales of prescription drugs currently top $300 billion, with the U.S., Japan and Europe accounting for 80 percent of all sales. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, drug manufacturing will add 75,000 jobs between 2000 and 2010, while the sector's output will grow even faster at an average annual rate of 5.6 percent (in real terms). Medical equipment is expected to add another 50,000 jobs in the same period, a growth rate of 1.6 percent. Additionally, research and testing facilities are expected to net an additional 227,000 jobs between 2002 and 2012, growing at an annual rate of 2 percent. All told, biotechnology should add nearly 400,000 jobs throughout the current decade across the United States. Still, biotechnology is an industry in its infancy, still relatively small even after a decade of substantial growth. Today, less than 50 industry companies have over 1,000 employees and none rank among the top 25 employers in the largest biotech metros.

Biotech

NAICS Definition

3254 Pharmaceutical Mfg
3391 Medical Equipment & Supplies Mfg
4234, 4242 Medical & Pharmaceutical Wholesale
54171 Life Sciences R&D
621-623 Hospitals & Health Care Facilities

Industry Employment

- 12 million employed - US

Wage Rates

- $18 an hour in the US

Location Criteria

- Educated workforce
- Access to capital
- Affordable lab space
- Major research presence

Major markets for biotechnology products include: agriculture, energy, environmental, food processing, government, manufacturing process, medical, pharmaceuticals, public utilities and research. The U.S. government will also demand biomedical products to support efforts to detect and protect against chemical and biological agents.

Competition for biotech firms will be fierce, as almost every major metro includes it among its list of target industries. The Brookings Institute has reported that out of 77 local and 36 state economic development agencies surveyed 83 percent list biotechnology as one of their top two target industries. Biotech and health services, however, will likely experience growth in all markets, creating opportunities for those communities best prepared. Successful communities will be those are able to target specific markets within the biotech field. Currently, most biotechnology clusters are located in the Northeast (New Jersey and Boston), the Research Triangle, and California (San Francisco and San Diego). New contenders in recent years include Central Texas, Minneapolis and Salt Lake City.

An emerging field within biotech is bioinformatics. Bioinformatics is the marriage of molecular biology and high-speed computing to develop databases and algorithms that enhance the understanding of complex biological interactions and processes. This niche within biotechnology has recently yielded the completion of the Human Genome Project, in which all 80,000 human genes were identified and catalogued. Current projects in this niche capitalize on the use of high-speed algorithms and databases to collect and analyze biological data to accelerate the discovery of new drugs.

The bioinformatics industry will report revenues in excess $950 million in 2004, which are forecasted to grow to $1.6 billion by 2006. Within bioinformatics, the market for bioinformatics analytical software is estimated to reach $240 million in 2004 and growth will continue at an annual rate of 9.3% to reach approximately $375 million by 2009.

Biodefense research is also one of the fastest growing niche markets in the biotech and bioformatics industry. Government spending on biodefense research is likely to continue to increase at a rate exceeding investment in other areas of biological research and development, and is attracting both scientists and the companies who support them. President Bush's authorization of the Project BioShield Act is but one of many government initiatives to improve the country's defenses against bioterrorism.

The development of the bioinformatics sector could spark other growth within the cluster. One of the fastest growing subsets of bioinformatics is drug identification. A thriving bioinformatics cluster could attract pharmaceutical firms to the region. This would round out and diversify the cluster, extending it from being purely R&D-dependent to encompassing manufacturing as well. Manufacturing would be a very important addition because of its strong backward linkages into the economy established by attracting suppliers and business services.

Bioinformatics in Centralina

The presence, both locally and regionally, of a biotech industry is essential for the development of the bioinformatics cluster. While Centralina lacks the traditional medical research infrastructure, such as a major research hospital, the area has an established local biotech industry, including a large number of medical equipment and pharmaceutical manufacturers. Centralina will also benefit from North Carolina's reputation as a biotech location, particularly the Raleigh area.

The proposed $35 million bioinformatics research center at UNCC will be one of the first centers of its kind in the nation and an invaluable tool in developing this industry. UNCC will develop the center using state funds recently appropriated. UNCC has doctorate programs in both biology and information technology and has expertise in software, optics, and computer modeling.

The Canon Research Center on the campus of the Carolinas Medical Center in downtown Charlotte conducts research in biomedical fields. The center's research budget is $10 million, which comes from a combination of federal, state, and private industry funding. Research conducted at the center resulted in a venture funded biotech company located in Charlotte.

The region's medical manufacturing base, which includes 150 companies and 6,000 employees, will also be an asset in recruiting and developing the biotech and bioinformatics industries.

Additional Industry Requirements

Quality of Life. Biotech workers are generally younger, with a stronger preference for "fun" towns. These workers, much like the companies they work for, will be attracted to the low cost living and vibrant community in Centralina. This demographic is also more likely to start their own company, leading to a large number of "home grown" companies typical of high tech towns.

Workforce. The industry has a number of occupations that are unique, or more critical than others in the economy. These include biochemists, biophysicists, and materials scientists that are often involved in research and development; electronics engineers and software developers involved in the production of applications; and techincal writers and animators that ensure products are user-friendly and fulfill their intented uses.

Local Educational Institutions. University research is one of the most important drivers of technology site selection decisions, particularly for small and mid-size firms. In Centralina, UNCC not only supplies knowledge-based workers and research, but also plants the entrepreneurial seeds as professors and students often transform technologies into start-up companies. UNCC's office of technology transfer ranks near the top nationally in a wide range of metrics.

Financial Needs. Less than 1 out of every 1,000 biotech related patents produces a successful commercial innovation, and it can take more than a decade for a product to come to market. Often small biotech firms are highly dependant upon a single drug or product that could fail or be tied up in a lengthy FDA approval process, which is a considerable risk. Therefore biotech firms need financial backers that understand the timelines and risks of the industry and have long-term funds available for investment. Venture capital in the Centralina region has been in steady decline 2000, reflecting national trends. Area companies received nearly $500 million in venture funding in 2000, but less than $50 million in 2003, a decline much steeper than national averages. Venture capitalists like to fund companies they are familiar with, and thus generally pick local companies. For Centralina companies, this means that they compete with Research Triangle firms for regional venture investments.

Competitive Assets - Biotech

Asset	Centralina
Regional Research Strength	✓
Educated Workforce	✓
Access to capital	✓
Available office and lab space	✓

Optoelectronics

Industry Trends

Just as electronics did for the 20th century, optics is expected to revolutionize the 21st century. In the next five years, more and more optical products will play a key part in products and applications that are currently performed by electronics. Optics is also enabling a wide variety of new therapies in medicine, such as laser and arthroscopic surgery. Within optics, the optoelectronics market is expected to grow faster than the industry.

Known as the "science of light," optoelectronics research is focused on the emission, transmission, deflection, amplification and detection of light by optical components and instruments, lasers and other light sources, fiber optics, electro-optical instrumentation, and related electronics.

Optoelectronics

Cluster Definition

333314 Optical Instruments
333315 Photographic Equipment Mfg.
334112 Computer Storage Device Mfg
335921 Fiber Optic Cable Mfg.
334612 CD/DVD Reproducing

Industry Profile

- $56 billion in revenues

Wage Rates

- $21 an hour in the US

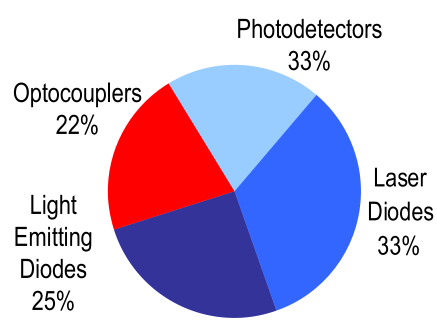
Location Criteria

- Regional research strength
- Proximity to university engineering programs
- Strong technical workforce
- Good local telecom

The economic slowdown and particularly the technology sector's downturn negatively impacted the optoelectronics market, resulting in reduced demand from end-user industries such as computer manufacturers and the telecommunication industry. The industry is still left with over-capacity that has also led to price erosion and industry consolidation. Industry revenues reached $4.23 billion in 2002, compared to $4.63 billion in 1999. Projected growth is expected to coincide with the renewed expansion of the semiconductor market over the next four years. The Semiconductor Industry Association forecasts device sales to the optoelectronics industry to grow by 37% in 2004 and 23% in 2005.

Total revenues for the optoelectronics market will reach $7.23 billion in 2009 as newer applications are introduced that use optoelectronic devices, especially in the telecommunications industry. Shrinking product sizes and a need for reduced power consumption will continue to drive sales growth of optoelectronic components in the telecom and computer industries.

Optoelectronics Industry, 2002



Source: Frost and Sullivan; Optoelectronics Report

Light emitting diodes accounted for 25.3% of $4.23 billion in industry revenues in 2002, and optocouplers represented 21.7% of total revenues. The convergence of faster bandwidth and telecom is expected to drive growth in optocoupler-device revenues through 2009.

Photodetectors accounted for 20.3% of optics revenues in 2002. The growth rates in the LED and optocoupler segments are projected to be comparatively higher than the photodetector market. Photodetectors are projected to lose market share of the total optoelectronics by the end of the forecast period, although it is believed that the effect on the revenue growth of the photodetector market will be minimal. Laser diodes represented 32.7% of the industry in 2002. It is projected that laser diodes will find some extended application in fiber-optic communications that will help increase the segment's share of the global OE market. High-bandwidth Internet proliferation coupled with greater use of medical electronics in network environments will drive revenue growth of the OE market worldwide.

Optoelectronics Industry in Centralina

Centralina has multiple research centers focused on the optics industry but UNCC's Center for Optoelectronics and Optical Communications is the largest and most important. The center, scheduled to move into a $24 million facility in 2005, acts as a research center for the industry, a link between the local industry and the university, and provides infrastructure to researchers and private companies. A primary focus of research at the center is "intelligent" integrated optics. This area will allow for remote reconfiguration, data provisioning, wavelength conversion and data routing. Developmental research areas include light sources, optical amplifiers and dynamic interconnects. In the application of such devices, our research encompasses the fabrication, characterization and packaging of new components for chip-to-chip and board-to-board optical connections.

The Center's lab space, equipment, and technician support are available to private sector firms on an hourly basis and include 3,000 feet of clean room space and a wide variety of optical equipment. The new facility will provide space for more than 30 optics faculty and was awarded $8 million from the federal government through DARPA for state-of-the-art optical fabrication and characterization tools.

Additional Industry Requirements

Workforce. Access to a pool of highly educated, talented, and technically skilled workers is vital to any technology company. Attracting and retaining a quality workforce is more important in high tech fields than other fields. Workers tend to be highly mobile, meaning that they are willing to venture into a community, but they are also easily swayed away. In an industry with high turnover, technology workers seek communities with numerous employment options. Availability of local technical graduates is important for technology companies, especially growing ones. Local technical graduates help companies manage labor costs that are by far the largest expenditure of most high tech service firms. Centralina's young, well educated workforce and academic infrastructure will meet the needs of optoelectronic firms.

Research & Development. R&D is heavily emphasized in the optics industry. There is an acute shortage of research dollars and skilled workers. Locating near a research university can allow start-ups to access cheap lab space, technology transfer opportunities, and potential employees. University research is one of the most important drivers of technology site selection decisions, particularly for small and mid-size firms. Many of the nation's most successful technology firms located in cities with university-level research activity. UNCC consistently ranks near the top of all schools in variety of technology transfer metrics and will be seen as an enormous benefit to relocating technology firms. This is especially true of those in the optics industry due to the Center for Optoelectronics and Optical Communications.

Business Climate / Structural Assets. Corporate site selection is increasingly affected by tax environments, and more than ever, companies seek predictability and avoidance of risk in their tax burden. Most tax and incentives decisions are made by capital- or research-intensive industries such as semiconductor manufacturing, electronics manufacturing, and biotech research. Tax liabilities can vary greatly from state to state. While some states have high property taxes, which greatly affect manufacturers, they often compensate with accelerated depreciation schedules for technology equipment or investment and R&D tax credits on income or purchases. Income tax apportionment formulas can also vary widely from state to state. States with triple-factor-sales formulas for corporate income heavily favor technology companies who export a majority of their products or services out of state. Labor-intensive firms should closely monitor the impact of income taxes in many states. Due to the complexity and variability of tax systems across the U.S., technology companies should employ the services of a talented site selector or accounting firm to estimate the impact of their location decision. Often, this analysis is done too late in the process to alter a decision or be used as a basis for incentives negotiations.

Competitive Assets - Optics

Asset	Centralina
Regional Research Strength	✓
Technical workforce	✓
Low costs of doing business	✓
Strong telecom	✓

Automotive

Industry Trends

The automotive industry's primary functions are to design, manufacture, and distribute transportation vehicles. Automotive suppliers provide engine parts, electrical systems, seats, and chassis components to auto assembly plants.

The automotive industry in the United States has over 1.3 million direct employees and is responsible for over $240 billion in wages. Annual sales of automotive suppliers now top $800 billion. Auto sales have surpassed 16 million new vehicles thanks to low interest rate financing and record rebates on new purchases. Domestic growth for the industry is projected to remain modest, closely following population growth levels.

The industry has experienced migration of domestic automotive factories from the Michigan area toward the Southeastern United States. To mitigate currency risks and bypass U.S. tariffs of up to 25%, foreign companies such as Honda, Toyota, Nissan, BMW, Mercedes, and Hyundai now have located factories in the U.S. The Southeast is attractive due to lower prevailing wages and low unionization rates. Another industry trend is for large automotive companies to use independent component companies as their suppliers. GM and Ford have both spun off their internal component groups into independent firms.

Automotive

NAICS Definition

326 Plastics & Rubber Products
3336 Engine & Turbine Mfg
3353 Electrical Equipment
336 Transportation Equipment
332 Fabricated Metal Products
71121 Spectator Sports

Industry Employment

- 1.7 million employed - US

Wage Rates

- $22 an hour in the US

Location Criteria

- Proximity to customer base
- Proximity to good technical training institutions
- Large affordable tracts of land
- Good affordable power supply

Competition for automotive plants is fierce, due to the large number of quality blue collar and white-collar jobs associated with automotive manufacturing. Proximity to plant customers is vital to modern automotive supplier firms. Centralina should continue to target both automotive manufacturers and their suppliers.

Also within the automotive industry is NASCAR, one of the nation's fastest growing sports. NASCAR, created in 1948, now draws the second largest audience in sports after the NFL. NASCAR is a multi-billion dollar industry that is still expanding into new markets. The company has become a juggernaut with TV deals worth $2.8 billion, ticket sales at $1 billion, merchandise sales of $2 billion, and corporate sponsorships worth $1 billion annually.

Automotive Industry in Centralina

Centralina has a large existing transportation equipment cluster that employs over 11,000 workers. The area also benefits from close proximity to the BMW manufacturing facility in Greenville, South Carolina, which is only 75 miles away.

Centralina is home to the NASCAR industry. NASCAR's research and development facility, which also houses many corporate functions, is in Centralina. The greater region is home to

90% of all NASCAR teams and the industry produces a $2 billion economic impact annually for the state.

UNCC's automotive and motorsports engineering program has been a huge success and benefits all industry firms. The program in a concentration in the school's mechanical engineering program and is unique in the country. 100 students are currently enrolled.

UNC Charlotte's N.C. Motorsports and Automotive Research Center plans to spend $6 million to expand facilities, staff and equipment due to the increasing demands coming from local racing teams. Funding is contingent on approval from the NC General Assembly in 2007. Professor Jim Cuttino, program director, says the local race team community has been asking the university to help develop more motorsports engineers. The funding would allow the university to increase from 65 to 200 students.

Additional Industry Requirements
Automotive suppliers operate in a low margin industry and are always concerned with a community's recurring cost structure. They will also need excellent transportation infrastructure and a location within a reasonable distance of the final assembly line. Centralina meets all the needs of relocating automotive manufacturers and suppliers and should aggressively target this industry.

Economic Conditions. Increasingly, automotive firms are proponents of just-in time manufacturing. These firms prefer that suppliers locate within 200 miles of the main assembly plant, but not so close as to compete for the same workers. As of late, the industry has been gravitating towards more rural areas in the South where wages are lower, unions are less prevalent, and growth is occurring.

Structural Assets. Suppliers will be concerned about an area's recurring cost structure more than many other industries. Auto suppliers use large amounts of electricity, natural gas, and water and need an affordable, reliable supply. Suppliers also need large, unencumbered land tracts and desire low property taxes due to the large amount of land and building space they use. Suppliers prefer to locate on major highways with direct access to the main assembly plant. Rail is often a key requirement for large component facilities.

Cost of Doing Business. The automotive industry requires a low cost of doing business including low prevailing wage rates, cheap electricity, and favorable tax treatment. Because of their large impact on the communities in which they located, auto firms and their suppliers have become adept at negotiating large incentive packages. Tax systems can affect plants greatly, and auto manufactures tend to look for areas with low property tax rates and sizable income tax credits. Many recent auto projects have also received significant workforce training credits in addition to sizable tax incentives. Few industries receive more financial incentives.

Competitive Assets - Automotive

Asset	Centralina
Industry cluster	✓
Low strutural costs	✓
Right to work state	✓
Large land tracts	✓

Software Development

Industry Trends

The software industry is comprised of computer programming services, prepackaged software, data processing, and information retrieval services. Software is a group of instructions, understood by computers, which allow computers to complete desired tasks. Demand for software is driven by efficiencies derived through computer automation or in the case of the gaming industry, through entertainment value.

Software firms now have worldwide revenues in excess of $200 billion. Approximately half of these sales come from software applications, development tools and infrastructure software splitting the remaining market. Major areas of growth are in data security and business intelligence. Due to the low start-up costs associated with a software firm, many small software companies exist. However, the industry is quickly maturing and many analysts forecast consolidation of these firms. Large software companies such as Microsoft, IBM, and Oracle have already bought many smaller companies. Other major trends in the software industry include outsourcing programming duties to low cost regions and the "open source" movement. China, India, and Russia have low cost computer scientists, ensuring further investment in these regions. The "open source" movement has gained momentum behind the Linux operating system. Open source refers to the practice of allowing free access to the building blocks of a computer program, which in turn multiplies the number of programmers who can work on building solutions around that program.

Software Development

NAICS Definition

511210 Software Publishers
541511 Computer Programming Services
541512 Computer Systems Design Services
541519 Computer Related Services
7372 Prepackaged Software

Industry Employment

- 240k employed - US

Wage Rates

- $39 an hour in the US

Location Criteria

- Educated workforce
- Access to capital
- Research incubator
- Excellent quality of life

Applications Software Market

	2003	2004	2005	2006
CRM	$2.4	$2.4	$2.5	$2.7
ERP	$4.6	$4.7	$4.9	$5.1
SCM	$1.9	$1.9	$2.0	$2.2
Total	$8.9	$9.0	$9.4	$10.0

Source: Gartner

Security Software Market

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Infrastructure	$2.8	$3.3	$3.7	$4.2
Administration	$1.1	$1.2	$1.4	$1.6
Security All	$3.9	$4.5	$5.1	$5.8

Source: Gartner

The software industry was hit hard during the technology downturn but recovered more quickly than the manufacturing side of the IT industry. Software is continually evolving and growth seems to come from new areas every few years. Recently, security software revenues have jumped considerably as more viruses and hackers attack business and individuals alike. Overall security software revenues are projected to grow by nearly $2 billion, or nearly 50%, by 2006. The security segment is also more disparate than the overall software market, with segment leading firms located from Washington to Israel.

The applications software market will also see healthy growth, although not as substantial as the security market. Total applications software revenue is projected to grow by $1.1 billion by 2006. Centralina should focus on recruiting and developing the software and firmware development firms with application targeted to the financial services industry.

Software firms are located in nearly every city in the United States. Major centers for the software industry are Seattle, San Jose, Washington D.C., Boston, Austin, New York, Raleigh, and Boulder.

Centralina lacks a developed software industry and the area's cluster rating is far below the national average, as is North Carolina's in general. Most financial service software used by area companies is developed outside the region. The area has many successful companies such as Venetica, Xpient, TIAA-CREF, and IBM. The cluster has never fully developed though, and Charlotte is not considered a software locale.

Additional Industry Requirements

Structural Assets. Software firms require reliable utility service at affordable rates. Many industry firms will require access to a SONET ring and numerous T-1 lines. Software companies will also require high-end office space.

Workforce. As with other technology industries software is entirely dependant on its workers. Companies need highly educated, talented, and technically skilled workers. The area's workforce will meet the needs of software companies although some firms may find an underrepresented workforce.

Research & Development. Due to the relatively low cost of computers, computer software development can occur nearly anywhere. Many significant developments are produced by hobbyists and entrepreneurs as well as by universities and corporations. Due to the large amount of proprietary information involved software firms keep all R&D in house. Microsoft, for example, has never revealed the source code for its Windows operating system effectively suppressing any outside research. University research can be vital for training workers as well as producing new technologies.

Cost of Doing Business. Software and Internet companies' primary costs are computer and networking equipment, and employee salaries. Electricity and rental space are also a primary concern. The Internet makes software distribution very cheap and efficient so transportation costs are typically not an issue. Software firms pay high wages, employ highly skilled workers, and are extremely low impact operations and as such they are highly coveted by communities.

Competitive Assets - Software Development

Asset	Centralina
Educated workforce	✓
Access to capital	✓
Area research	✓
Excellent quality of life	✓

Defense/Advanced Security

Industry Trends

The U.S. security market is broad and includes market segments such as surveillance and monitoring, access control, biometrics, computer security, fire/burglar alarms, and home automation, just to name a few. The industry has received greater recognition due to the appalling attacks of September 11th. Many security users, including the federal government, have increased purchases of equipment and services to beef up protection of vital assets. The advanced security industry does not include traditional security measures such as guards.

Defense/Advanced Security

Cluster Definition

334119	Biometrics system input device
3355999	Electrical Equipment Manufacturing
541380	Testing Laboratories
5417	Scientific Research and Development
56162	Security Systems Services
561612	Security Patrol Services

Industry Profile

- $23.4 billion sales

Wage Rates

- $52,000 avg. salary

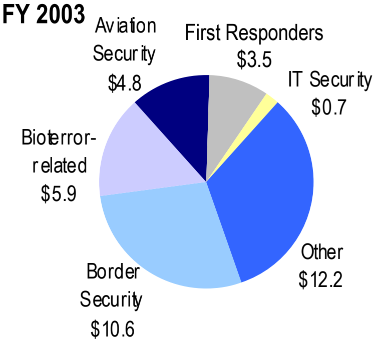
Location Criteria

- Educated, affordable workforce
- Research institutions
- High tech cluster

The overall U.S. security market is a multi-billion industry with a double-digit growth rate. The industry is divided into three main end-use segments: commercial, government, and residential. In 2002 the U.S. security market had record revenues of $23.4 billion. Industry consultants the Freedonia Group expect revenue to more than double to over $48 billion by 2009. Revenue growth is just as fast outside the United States. Western Europe and Japan are the largest markets outside the U.S., but East Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East have the strongest revenue growth.

Commercial security purchases will grow considerably from $14 billion in 2002 to $29 billion in 2009. A combination for deceasing prices and increased demand from industrial and utility users is driving this growth. The fastest growing commercial markets are healthcare and financial services due to increased crime and corporate fraud.

Homeland Security Funding, FY 2003



Source: Morgan Keegan Research

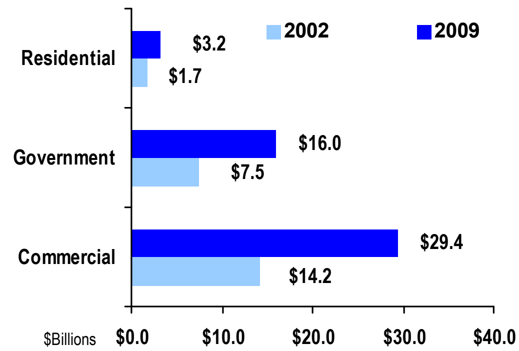
Government spending on security increased dramatically in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The U.S. government spent $7.5 billion on security in 2002, that number rising to $16 billion by 2009. Terrorism fears are behind the increase in government spending as state and federal authorities attempt to secure the nation's vital facilities. While the government market is not the largest security market, it is the most advanced.

The residential security market is the smallest of the three main segments with 2002 sales of $1.7 billion. Growth is strong though, and 2009 revenues are forecasted at $3.2 billion. The residential market is focused on home security systems and other relatively low-tech aspects of the security market.

Centralina has a moderately sized defense industry with both large industrial firms and small service companies. Goodrich, based in Charlotte, supplies goods and service to the aerospace and defense industries. The company is a major supplier to the Defense Department and had 2003 revenues in excess of $4 billion.

UNCC also has ties to the Defense Department and recently secured $8 million in funding from DARPA for the Center for Optoelectronics.

Security Market by End Use Segment



Source: Freedonia Group

Additonal Security Requirements

Workforce Requirements. The defense and security industry needs a highly technical workforce. About one in four employees are in computer-related occupations, most notably software engineers, computer programmers, and computer systems analysts. This industry, after all, is as much about about preserving and protecting data as it is people.

Structural Requirements. Defense and Security companies are the epitome of mission critical processes. Their mission is to secure the data and resources of business and government, and thus must be highly secure themselves. They need electricity that is beyond reliable. Sites must have a redundant power supply as well as an on-site generator. Electric power in Centralina has been mentioned as an area strength.

Research & Development. R&D in government data security has increased dramatically since the increased terrorist concerns following the September 11th attacks. Virtually every government defense agency funds major research projects, including the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, all branches of the US military, and the National Institutes of Health. Widely spread computer viruses have led the private sector to increase product development in network security. Because the nature of the industry involves staying one step ahead of terrorists and hackers, R&D will always be an important part of this industry.

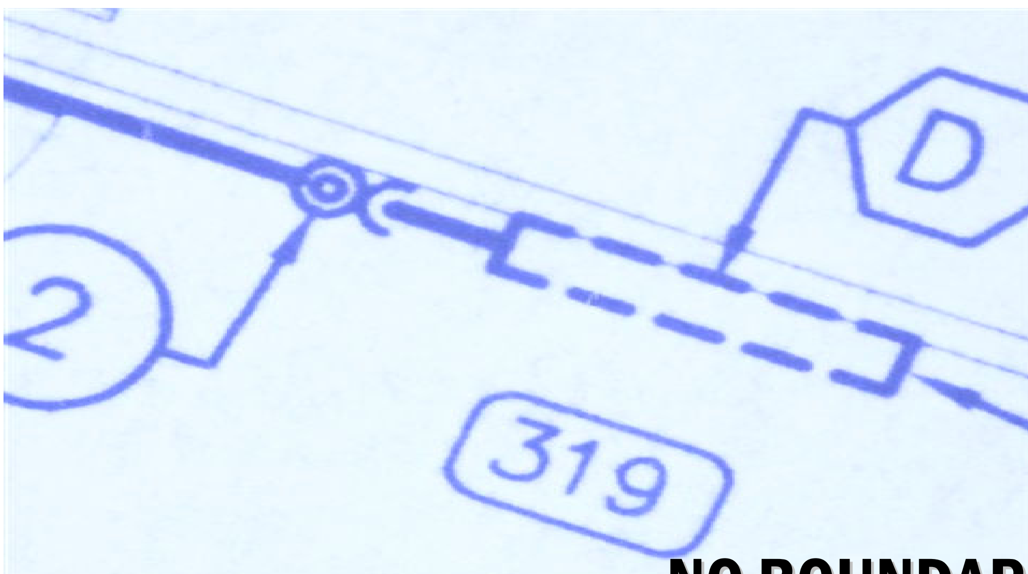
Competitive Assets - Defense/Advanced Security

Asset	Centralina
Defense presence	✓
High tech cluster	✓
Educated workforce	✓

SECTION 8

Plan of Action

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

Implementation

To facilitate the implementation of the plan, a matrix has been developed (found in the Appendix) that lists each Objective, Recommendation and Action Step; a timeline for when steps should be taken; and identification of which organization should lead and which ones should be supportive of each Goal.

- **Adopt this plan.** Centralina Economic Development Commission as an Economic Development District is required to complete and adopt a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS also helps the region obtain federal funding and sends a message throughout the region that communities are committed to working together to compete in the world economy.

- **Centralina COG should facilitate plan implementation.** The COG should collaborate with the major stakeholders in the implementation of this plan by leading efforts such as convening and facilitating meetings, providing summaries and follow-up notes of key meetings, and providing grant writing assistance. Other organizations listed on the following pages should take a lead role in certain aspects of implementation. Since this is a regional plan, many people and organizations should work on implementation.

- **Evaluate progress.** The implementation matrix and metrics provided in the Appendix should be reviewed regularly and updated if necessary. The use of surveys to develop baseline perceptions is mentioned throughout this plan. The region should consider using a common approach to developing and implementing this survey instrument.

- ***Celebrate in successes of this plan.*** *The often-forgotten part of implementation is appreciating the success that the region has achieved. Public and private sector leadership should provide an update to both those that have and those that have not been involved in the development and implementation of this plan. Economic development organizations should recognize key accomplishments as well as key individuals and organizations that have provided a significant contribution toward implementation.*

Implementation Matrix

Summary of Workforce Development and Education Recommendations

GOAL: Workforce development and education programs are focused on preparing a workforce for the region's target industries.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Page # in Rpt.
Objective WF-1: Enhance collaboration of businesses, economic development organizations, community colleges, workforce development boards and K-12 providers. ***Measurements:*** • *Communities in Schools will exist in every County in the region by fall 2006.* • *Curriculums for each target industry are found in every community college by fall 2006.* • *New marketing collateral such as billboards and advertisements is developed that will serve all three workforce development boards by fall 2005.*	2004	2006	$ 500,000	22
Recommendation 1: Develop Communities in Schools (CIS) programs in every school district and at every high school. **Recommendation 2**: Adopt core industry curriculums at all community colleges and high schools. Adopt core industry curriculums at all community colleges and high schools. **Recommendation 3**:Develop an ambitious strategy to increase the current level of funding and efforts for marketing the importance of education, literacy and skill development as well as the economic development strategy that the region has developed.				
Objective WF-2: Develop well-funded and innovative literacy programs. ***Measurements:*** • *Literacy Councils will exist in every county in the region by fall 2005.* • *A Youth Literacy Corps is in place with staff and at least 10 corps members by summer 2006.*	2005	2006	TBD	24
Recommendation 1: Develop Literacy Councils in every County. **Recommendation 2**: Develop buy-in and participation from Workforce Boards, School Districts, Community Colleges, and businesses for a Youth Literacy Corps Program serving the region. **Recommendation 3**:Acquire funding and develop Youth Literacy Corps Program.				
Objective WF- 3: Develop School/Career Partnerships with a focus on skills training and drop-out prevention. ***Measurements:*** • *Develop at least one alternative school/career partnership in every school district in the region by fall 2006.* • *Double the number of school/career partnership programs in school districts with existing programs by fall 2007.*	2005	2006	TBD	25
Recommendation 1:Educate all school districts about this important program and how it can benefit the region. **Recommendation 2**:Identify potential partnerships in every county to establish a school-career program				

Priority Code - Must Do = Good to Do

TOTAL BUDGET = $ 500,000

Summary of Quality of Life Recommendations

GOAL: Region is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by target industry companies.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Page # in Rpt.
Objective QOL-1: Develop a Greater Charlotte Young Professionals Association *Measurements:* * *Share of residents aged 25-44 years old will increase by 2010.* * *Interest of students and young professionals in staying in the region increases by 100% by fall 2008.*	2005	ongoing	$ 50,000	33
Recommendation 1:Understand young professionals' opinions about living in the region. **Recommendation 2:** Organize a Greater Charlotte Young Professional's Association. **Recommendation 3:** Assist local educational institutions in conveying a positive image of the region to their students. **Recommendation 4:** Empower young professionals to participate in leadership organizations. **Recommendation 5:** Develop collaborative university student body "Adopt-a-Neighborhood" programs throughout the region.				
Objective QOL-2: Develop a vision for regional growth and development *Measurements:* * *A vision for the region will be developed by spring 2006.*	2005	2007	TBD	35
Recommendation 1: Develop support for a regional visioning process. **Recommendation 2:** Implement the regional visioning process				
Objective QOL-3: Link parks, open space, and tourism destinations with a greenway network *Measurements:* * *Dedicated greenway trail network increases by 100% per year beginning fall of 2006.*	2005	2006	$ 300,000	36
Recommendation 1: Develop a greenway trail network plan throughout the region. **Recommendation 2:** Assist stakeholders throughout the region in acquiring more greenway trails through land development and community planning.				
Objective QOL-4: Increase the awareness and understanding of different cultures throughout the region. *Measurements:* * *By fall 2007, more than 75% of survey respondents state that ethnic diversity benefits the region.*	2005	2007	TBD	37
Recommendation 1: Understand how the region feels about issues of diversity and cultural awareness. **Recommendation 2:** Develop and support visible celebrations of diversity. **Recommendation 3:** Promote learning about different cultures in K-12				
Priority Code - = Must Do = Good to Do	TOTAL BUDGET =		$ 350,000	

Budget Explanation: Several budgets are To Be Determined (TBD) depending upon the scale of the project and initiative.

Summary of Entrepreneurship Recommendations

GOAL: Entrepreneurship and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Page # in Rpt.
Objective SBE - 1: Market and leverage Research and Development (R&D) resources. *Measurements:* * *The level of understanding of the Charlotte Research Institute (CRI) increases by 200% by fall 2005.* * *The number of business partnerships with the CRI increases by 200% by fall 2006.*	2004	2006	$ 185,000 $ 5,190,000	29
Recommendation 1:Increase the understanding of the CRI. **Recommendation 2**:Increase utilization of CRI by businesses in the region.				
Objective SBE - 2: Develop an entrepreneurial culture. *Measurements:* * *All high schools in the region will have a Junior Achievement program by spring 2006.* * *More than 85% of survey respondents state that the networking events are very useful.* * *Angel investment to regional entrepreneurs increases by 200% by fall 2008.*	2004	2008	$ 200,000	30
Recommendation 1: Foster entrepreneurial spirit in education. **Recommendation 2:** Support entrepreneurs throughout the region.				
Objective SBE - 3: Improve, coordinate and streamline services to small business and entrepreneurs. *Measurements:* * *More than 75% of small businesses and entrepreneurs report that services for this group have improved by spring 2006.* * *More than 75% of donors for small business and entrepreneur services see the return on their investment being more effective by spring 2006.*	2004	Jun-05	TBD	31
Recommendation 1: Improve collaboration among small business and entrepreneurial groups. **Recommendation 2:** Make information about starting and expanding a small businesses or enterprise widely available and centralized.				
Priority Code - = Must Do = Good to Do	TOTAL BUDGET =		$ 5,575,000	

Budget Explanation: Several budgets are To Be Determined (TBD) depending upon the scale of the project and initiative.

Centralina Council of Governments

Summary of Land Use, Sites and Infrastructure Recommendations

GOAL: Region's sites and infrastructure will meet the needs of target industries and new economic development vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Page # in Rpt.
Objective LUSI-1: Increase competitiveness of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport ***Measurements:*** * *Average fares decrease by 25% by fall 2007.* * *Feasibility study for intermodal hub at airport is complete by spring 2008.* * *Conduct preliminary engineering/environmental analysis of West Rapid transit corridor connecting Airport to downtown Charlotte by fall 2006.*	2005	2008	$ 350,000	39
Recommendation 1: Proactively approach the loss of a HUB. **Recommendation 2:** Improve the intermodal system at the Airport				
Objective LUSI -2: Improve regional transportation circulation ***Measurements:*** * *More than 30% of cities and counties in the region adopt dedicated bike lane standards for new roadways by spring 2006.* * *More than 75% of survey respondents report that commuter options have improved by spring 2008.*	2004	ongoing	TBD	40
Recommendation1: Develop system of bikeways connecting major urban areas and tourism destinations. **Recommendation2:** Develop well-integrated and sustainable regional rapid rail system.				
Objective LUSI -3: Improve utilization of existing sites and buildings. ***Measurements:*** * *More than 50% of the existing industrial sites that are currently not certified are certified by spring 2006.* * *Three vacant mills or other industrial buildings are identified for redevelopment by spring 2006.* * *The region achieves national press recognition on the process it is using in redeveloping these vacant sites.*	2004	ongoing	TBD	41
Recommendation 1: Take efforts to certify all adequate commercial and industrial sites in the region. **Recommendation 2:** Redevelop vacant mills near urban centers				
Objective LUSI -4: Improve technological infrastructure in region. ***Measurements:*** * *The region will host a national conference on Wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) by spring 2006.* * *Five communities in the region will have sophisticated Wi-Fi systems by fall 2007.*	2005	2007	TBD	42
Recommendation 1: Develop Wi-Fis throughout target cities **Recommendation 2:** Fully understand and market fiber optics network and capabilities.				
Objective LUSI -4: Implement key infrastructure projects from other CEDS reports.	2005	2007	TBD	43
Priority Code - = Must Do = Good to Do	**TOTAL BUDGET = $ 350,000**			

Budget Explanation: Several budgets are To Be Determined (TBD) depending upon the scale of the project and initiative.

Summary of Economic Development Efforts Recommendations

GOAL: The Region's existing talents, leaders, and resources are coordinated so that there is a seamless system for economic development services.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Start Timing	End Timing	Budget	Page # in Rpt.
Objective ED - 1: Develop a well-funded internal marketing campaign. **Measurements:** * *75% of survey respondents identify the top three issues that the region is trying to address by spring 2006.*	2004	2006	TBD	45
Recommendation 1: Implement a joint publicity campaign aimed at public and private sector to build awareness of key issues.				
Objective ED – 2: Improve efforts to support existing business. ***Measurements:*** * *By resolution, more than ten communities in the region adopt a Business Retention and Expansion program as their primary economic development effort by spring 2005.*	2004	2005	TBD	46
Recommendation 1: Gain support for a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program **Recommendation 2:** Implement a BRE program				
Objective ED – 3: Develop a regional tourism campaign. ***Measurements:*** * *Regional tourism revenue grows by 10% per year beginning in 2006.* * *More than 75% of survey respondents rate the region as a tourist destination by spring 2006 and can identify more than five tourist destinations throughout the region.*	2005	2006	$ 300,000	47
Recommendation 1: Develop consensus towards a regional tourism promotion program. **Recommendation 2:** Develop a regional tourism program.				
Objective ED – 4: Develop a unified regional and local marketing program. ***Measurements:*** * *At least 75% of local economic development organizations incorporate "a Charlotte USA Community" into local marketing efforts by fall 2005.*	2005	2006	TBD	48
Recommendation 1: Develop an understanding throughout the region of the importance and benefits of utilizing a regional tagline. **Recommendation 2:** Local economic development organizations should consider updating their respective marketing efforts with a focus on regional consistency with local flexibility.				
Objective ED – 5: Focus economic development on target industries and other key industries for the region. ***Measurements:*** * *Develop a list of businesses within the region that fall within the target industries by spring 2005.* * *Host at least one conference per year for key target industries beginning by spring 2006.*	2004	2006	TBD	49
Recommendation 1: Build support and understanding of target industries **Recommendation 2:** Actively recruit businesses in targeted industries to the region.				
Objective ED – 6: Develop and utilize incentives for sustainable industry. ***Measurements:*** * *An analysis of existing incentive policies is performed by fall 2005.* * *An economic toolbox is developed by spring 2006.*	2005	2006	TBD	50
Recommendation 1: Gain a thorough understanding of incentive policies throughout the region. **Recommendation 2:** Provide advice to municipalities and economic developers on recommended changes to incentive policies and other tools to use in business development.				
Objective ED – 7: Create an Economic Development District for the region. ***Measurements:*** * *An Economic Development District (EDD) is created by fall 2005.* * *Funds for the EDD are acquired by fall 2005.*	2004	2005	$ 150,000	51
Recommendation 1: Create an EDD. **Recommendation 2:** Develop a work plan and support for implementing a work plan for the EDD.				
Priority Code - = Must Do = Good to Do	**TOTAL BUDGET : $ 450,000**			

Budget Explanation: Several budgets are To Be Determined (TBD) depending upon the scale of the project and initiative.

Recommendations

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

GOAL: Workforce development and education programs are focused on

preparing a workforce for the region's target industries.

Workforce development and education initiatives should be the cornerstone of any economic development initiative. It is crucial to improve literacy levels and basic workforce skills, and reduce drop out rates. The region is currently working on programs to retrain displaced older workers for new jobs and prepare everyone for jobs of the future. The recommendations found in this section and others are meant to compliment the existing programs and services and prepare the workforce for existing and future job opportunities.

The region should focus on the following objectives to address key workforce and educational issues:

- ✓ **Enhance collaboration of businesses, economic development organizations, community colleges, workforce development boards and K-12 providers.**
- ✓ **Develop well-funded and innovative literacy programs.**
- ✓ **Develop School/Career Partnerships with a focus on skills training and drop-out prevention.**
- ✓ **Expand opportunities for technology transfer educational programs.**

The following pages provide additional information and specific actions to take to achieve the above objectives.

Objective WF-1: Enhance collaboration of businesses, economic development organizations, community colleges, workforce development boards and K-12 providers.
Measurements:

Recommendation 1:
Develop Communities in Schools (CIS) programs in every school district and at every high school.

Actions:

a. Determine which counties do not currently have a CIS program.
b. Have a representative from CIS and from other school districts that have CIS meet with superintendents and board members from non-participating school districts and educate them about the impact of CIS and how they can establish a program.
c. Assist these other school districts in acquiring the funds to develop their own program

Communities in Schools (CIS)

CIS Programs exist in several school districts in the region, but not all. This is a very successful program that encourages private sector support for various school programs. Communities invite a state CIS representative to present CIS strategies to community leaders. Interested communities then identify a local liaison who continues to introduce CIS concepts while soliciting input and support from community stakeholders. During this process, the local liaison is guided by a steering committee and community leaders. The introductory process adapts the CIS strategy to meet local needs and leads to the formation of a permanent governance structure. The CIS state office trains and works with the local liaison and serves as a continuous resource to the steering committee. http://www.cisnc.org/

Recommendation 2:
Adopt core industry curriculums at all community colleges and high schools.

Actions:

a. Develop a well-defined list of workforce skills and appropriate curriculums for each targeted industry, as well as other key industries that growth potential in the region.
b. Hold several workshops throughout the year with the community colleges, economic developers, businesses in these industries and K-12 to learn about these industries and their skill requirements.
c. Establish a pact/agreement to develop curriculums that would provide the most impact for the region, related to these target industry requirements.
d. Seek funding to develop the curriculum and gain private sector support.

Recommendation 3:
Develop an ambitious strategy to increase the current level of funding and efforts for marketing the importance of education, literacy and skill development as well as the economic development strategy that the region has developed.

Actions:

a. Convene a joint meeting with the community relations committees of each workforce board to understand what internal marketing efforts have been most successful. Invite community colleges and school districts to participate in this initial discussion.
b. This coalition should consider pooling funds together and acquiring additional private sector funds to develop a sophisticated and targeted marketing campaign that elevates the current efforts of each of the workforce boards.
c. Hire a marketing consultant with experience in developing marketing collateral for such an effort.
d. Implement this new marketing strategy.

Objective WF-2: Develop well-funded and innovative literacy programs.

Measurements:

- ***Literacy Councils will exist in every county in the region by fall 2011.***
- ***A Youth Literacy Corps is in place with staff and at least 10 corps members by summer 2011.***

Recommendation 1:
Develop Literacy Councils in every County.

Actions:

a. Identify those counties that do not have a Literacy Council and determine what has limited the county's ability or interest in develop a program.
b. Have peer-to-peer discussions among counties with Literacy Councils and counties without Literacy Councils to encourage the development of more Literacy Councils to improve literacy.

Recommendation 2:
Develop buy-in and participation from Workforce Boards, School Districts, Community Colleges, and businesses for a Youth Literacy Corps Program serving the region.

Actions:

a. Hold a meeting with potential stakeholders to discuss this program. Invite a program administrator from the Corporation for National and Community Service.
b. Develop a plan for how such a program would work in Centralina and obtain letters of support and agreement from major stakeholders.

Recommendation 3:
Acquire funding and develop Youth Literacy Corps Program.

Actions:

a. Develop and submit and an application for funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service.
b. Obtain funding and begin developing program.
c. Seek volunteers from throughout the region.

Seattle Youth Literacy Corps

Each member serves at a partner service site four days a week, providing literacy education and support services. The focus areas include English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education, preparation for the GED test, Conversational ESL, family literacy, financial literacy and computer literacy. AmeriCorps members receive a $10,200 stipend and are eligible for a basic medical & dental program. Members completing the required service commitment receive a post-service education award of $4,725 that can be used to pay student loans off or to cover tuition expenses at qualifying schools. In addition to the literacy service, they work within communities on local service projects such as trail renovation, a soccer tournament for homeless and low-income students, painting murals with students at a local grade school, and documenting the oral histories of a group of local seniors. Literacy AmeriCorps participates in up to 10 service projects each program year.

Objective WF- 3: Develop School/Career Partnerships with a focus on advanced skills training, worker retraining, and drop-out prevention.

Measurements:

* ***Develop at least one school/career partnership in every school district in the region by fall 2011.***
* ***Double the number of school/career partnership programs in school districts with existing programs by fall 2011.***

Recommendation 1:
Educate all school districts and community colleges about this important program and how it can benefit the region.

Actions:

a. Identify all existing programs in the region and ask them to provide a 1-page summary of their activities, with descriptions of how they were started, key partners, funding, staffing, and results.
b. Hold a regional forum/conference that focuses on each type of alternative school/career partnership program.
c. Develop an email network so that program representatives can answer follow-up questions from school districts interested in establishing programs.

Recommendation 2:
Identify potential partnerships in every county to establish a school-career program.

Actions:

a. Secure funding to bring school district representatives and potential partners to several model programs in the nation to visit these sites and see first hand how the respective programs are effective.
b. Each school district should work with their local community college to identify the most appropriate program for their given situation.
c. Develop a strategy for how each school district and partner(s) will develop a program of their own. For school districts with existing programs, they should continue furthering the programs.

The following two pages provide descriptions of the different types of alternative school-career partnership programs as well as models throughout the country.

Summary of School/Career Partnership Programs

School Type	Charter Schools	ECHS Initiative Schools	Middle College HS	Other Early College High Schools
Description	Innovative public school offering alternative to traditional high schools.	Small school that combines high school and community college curriculum	Type of ECHS that works in conjunction with a community college and is located on CC campus.	Additional independent collaboration allowing students to receive higher education before leaving high school
Typical Location for Classes	Separate School Campus	Separate School Campus	Community College Campus	Mix (some HS, college campus)
Target Demographics	Wide mix, ranging from economically disadvantaged students to "early achievers" and creative type.	Disadvantaged / at-risk	Disadvantaged / at-risk	Wide mix, disadvantaged to early achievers
Created by	Local/state organizations or school boards, also	Non-profit organizations with Gates Foundation	Middle College Consortium with Gates Foundation, with collaboration between community colleges and public schools	Collaboration between community colleges and public schools
Short-Term Funding Source	Charter Sponsor (Local organization)	Gates Foundation through non-profit organizations	Gates Foundation and public funding	Public funding
Long-Term Funding Source	Public, Charter Sponsor	Public funding	Public funding	Public funding
Grades taught	usually 9-12+	usually 11-14 in 2years total	9-12+	Mix
Focus (Internships / Work)	Wide mix (Work & Internship)	Internships	Internships / Community Service	Wide mix (Work & Internship)
Special Opportunities	Job Experience	Opportunity for associate's degree	Opportunity for associate's degree	Opportunity for associate's degree
Examples	CART (CA), Indian River Charter High School	Portland's Gateway to College schools, KnowledgeWorks Foundation schools (OH)	LaGuardia Middle College HS (NYC), Mott Middle College (MI)	Chicago Public Schools & DeVry University

Early College/High School Initiative - Model Programs

Antioch University of Seattle	Antioch University Seattle is working with tribal communities, schools, and colleges in Washington State to establish eight early college high schools for Native-American youth. The programs integrate high school and Associates of Arts curricula with a local cultural emphasis at each site. Additional components include family engagement with the schools, a year-round calendar, outreach to or inclusion of middle-level students, and academic support services.	http://www.antiochsea.edu/about/earlycollege/
City University of New York, Office of Academic Affairs	The City University of New York, in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education, will be creating ten early college high schools, to be located throughout New York City.	www.collegenow.cuny.edu
Foundation for California Community Colleges	The Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC) is developing and implementing 15 sites for the Early College High School Initiative. The Initiative is a collaborative effort of the California Community Colleges and its K-12 feeder schools in the state.	www.foundationccc.org
Jobs for the Future	Jobs for the Future, an action/research and policy organization that promotes innovative reform in education and workforce development, is the lead coordinator, manager, and policy advocate for the Early College High School Initiative.	www.jff.org
KnowledgeWorks Foundation	KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Ohio's largest public education philanthropy, is developing a network of six early college high schools, located in large urban as well as rural Appalachian school districts.	www.kwfdn.org
Middle College National Consortium	The Middle College National High School Consortium is designing 20 early college high schools that offer underserved youth an alternative path leading to a combined high school diploma and associate's degree in five years.	www.laguardia.edu/mcnc
National Council of La Raza	The National Council of La Raza is creating 12 early college high schools serving Latino communities, and most will be charter schools. The schools have longer days and longer years than traditional public schools and offer a middle school outreach component prompting the awareness of early college high school as an option.	www.nclr.org
Portland Community College's Gateway to College	Portland Community College is creating eight "Gateway to College" schools located on community college campuses. These schools provide youth who have dropped out of school with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while achieving college success. Students simultaneously accumulate high school credits and college credits leading to an associate's degree or certificate.	http://www.gatewaytocollege.org
SECME, Inc.	SECME partners with school systems, universities, industry, and government to increase the pool of historically underrepresented students prepare for postsecondary studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. SECME will create eight early college high schools, each partnering with a SECME school system with a member historically black or Hispanic-serving institution.	www.secme.org
Utah Partnership for Education	The Governor's Office and the Utah Partnership for Education are creating six magnet and science New Century High Schools in partnership with public and higher education. Students will be encouraged to complete the equivalent of an associate's degree by graduation, qualifying for a New Century Scholarship.	www.utahsbr.edu/html/new_century.html www.utahpartnership.utah.org
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation	The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation is working to establish or redesign up to ten early college high schools, all of which emphasize the liberal arts. The foundation is engaging with research universities and liberal arts institutions in this effort.	www.woodrow.org

Source: http://www.earlycolleges.org/Partners.html

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGIES

GOAL: Entrepreneurship and small business are significant drivers of the economy.

The *Community Assessment Report* described the state of small business and entrepreneurship in the region. The findings illustrate that there is a significant lack of a coordinated effort to promote entrepreneurship throughout the region and that the research and development (R&D) strengths of local educational institutions are not well known and underutilized. There is also confusion among many in the region about the difference between small businesses and entrepreneurs.

The motivational model of entrepreneurship suggests that people are faced with the choice of becoming entrepreneurial at distinct phases in their lives - when changing jobs, moving locations, during a period of discontent with their current working environment, when the work-life balance becomes lopsided, early retirement or a return to work after a career break. This model fits with the experience of entrepreneurs and makes entrepreneurship an opportunity that can be grasped in many and varied circumstances, and allows people to consider the risks of entrepreneurship in a proper balance with the other elements of their lives. By fostering a strong small business and entrepreneurial environment, the region will attract and retain young workers and provide opportunities to some who have been displaced.

The region should focus on the following objectives to address key small business and entrepreneurship issues:

- ✓ **Market and leverage Research and Development (R&D) resources.**
- ✓ **Develop an entrepreneurial culture.**
- ✓ **Improve collaboration among small business and entrepreneurial groups.**

The following pages provide additional information and specific actions to take to achieve the above objectives.

Objective SBE - 1: Market and leverage Research and Development (R&D) resources.

Measurements:

* ***Increase the awareness of the Charlotte Research Institute (CRI) by 200% by fall 2011.***
* ***The number of business partnerships with the CRI increases by 200% by fall 2011.***

Recommendation 1:
Increase the awareness of the CRI.

Actions:

a. Develop and administer a baseline survey of economic developers, elected officials, community colleges and business leaders to determine the existing level of understanding of the CRI and its programs.
b. Based upon the results of this survey, identify key steps to take to increase the understanding and address key issues brought up in the survey.
c. Develop effective collateral and provide presentations to key business and civic groups on the most significant aspects of the CRI and its impact in the region.
d. Utilize effective public relations efforts with local, regional and national media on the commercialization and technology transfer effectiveness of the university.

Recommendation 2:
Increase utilization of CRI by businesses in the region.

Actions:

a. Identify ways in which the CRI can assist businesses among the target industries and other key industries in the region.
b. Host "Industry Days" for the target industries and other key industries to the region where the CRI demonstrates how they have assisted businesses in these industries utilize R&D in their operations and what results they have produced.

The recommendations listed above are meant to assist the CRI and the region. The regional priority project related to increasing the region's R&D for the motorsports and optoelectronics industries will also help

Objective SBE - 2: Develop an entrepreneurial culture.

Measurements:

* ***All high schools in the region will have a Junior Achievement program by spring 2010.***
* ***More than 85% of survey respondents state that the networking events are very useful.***
* ***Angel investment to regional entrepreneurs increases by 200% by fall 2010.***

Ideas to incorporate in education that will foster an entrepreneurial spirit:
-Promote the development of personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship, such as creativity, spirit of initiative, risk-taking and responsibility;
-Raise students' awareness of self-employment as a career option (the message being that you can become not only an employee, but also an entrepreneur);
-Provide the business skills that are needed in order to start a new venture.

Recommendation 1:
Foster entrepreneurial spirit in education.

Actions:

a. Develop Junior Achievement Programs in every school district.
b. Provide training to at least one teacher at every school in the region on the subject of entrepreneurship and how they can incorporate entrepreneurship into their daily curriculum.
c. Encourage entrepreneurship and start-ups at the university level.
d. Host "Career Days" beginning in elementary school through high school, community college, and universities that focus on traditional and non-tradition careers but emphasize target industries.

Recommendation 2:
Support entrepreneurs.

Actions:

a. Meet regularly with angel investment networks in and outside of the region to discuss plans for enhancing entrepreneurship.
b. Encourage the development of management teams that can assist start-ups and middle stage entrepreneurs in succeeding.
c. Provide an online source for local investors to provide additional capital for entrepreneurs.
d. <u>Expand business plan</u> competitions throughout the region and at all levels including high school through middle stage entrepreneurs.
e. Celebrate the success of entrepreneurs through effective public relations and award programs.
f. Develop a sophisticated electronic newsletter for those involved in education, economic development, small business development and entrepreneurship throughout the region. This newsletter will announce fun networking events, business plan competitions, training programs being offered, and highlight recent small business and entrepreneur successes in the region.

The 'Entrepreneurial City'
Primary Schools in the Netherlands

The 'entrepreneurial city' is a project based on learning by doing. This has been put into practice by creating various 'learning landscapes' in the 'entrepreneurial city'. A learning landscape is a project in which children are trying to accomplish a certain goal, for example, setting up their own power station at school or starting their own third world shop. These projects appeal to basic entrepreneurial qualities, such as independence, creativity and cooperation. A critical success factor is the involvement of people outside the school (parents, entrepreneurs, etc.). Nowadays, more than 30 educational landscapes have been developed and several schools in different parts of the Netherlands have participated.

g. Hold regular networking events that are fun, interactive and entertaining for small businesses and entrepreneurs to share ideas, learn from one another, conduct business, and form strategic alliances.

Objective SBE - 3: Improve, coordinate and streamline services to small business and entrepreneurs.
Measurements:

* ***More than 75% of small businesses and entrepreneurs report that services for this group have improved by spring 2011.***
* ***More than 75% of investors for small business and entrepreneur services see the return on their investment being more effective by spring 2011.***

Recommendation 1:

Improve collaboration among small business and entrepreneurial groups.

Actions:

a. Develop a baseline survey of small business owners, entrepreneurs and investors to these individuals to identify their perspectives on the effectiveness of current programs and services that support small business and entrepreneurs.
b. Examine all of the groups that are involved in small business and entrepreneurship to understand their respective services, their primary client targets, and their sources of revenue.
c. Develop a strategy that all of these organizations can commit to participating in that would best serve the region (Components of this strategy would be an organizational structure of a regional initiative, funding strategy for the initiative, and short and long-term work plan for the primary and supporting stakeholders).

Several groups within the region provide services for small business and entrepreneurship with programs ranging from training, technical assistance, funding, and networking. The following are the primary organizations involved in this area:

- Business Innovation and Growth Council.
- BizHUB
- Chambers of Commerce
- SBDCs/SBTDCs
- Community Colleges
- Universities
- Committees of 100
- Workforce Boards

Recommendation 2:

Make information about starting and expanding a small businesses or enterprise widely available and centralized.

Actions:

a. Once the small business and entrepreneurial strategy is developed (see above) a targeted marketing strategy should be developed that includes the development of one primary location (both an online portal and physical location) for individuals to obtain information on financing, business planning, networking events, procurement opportunities and other services identifies in the strategy.
b. Hold annual or quarterly focus groups with entrepreneurs throughout the region to better understand their needs and tailor service delivery accordingly.

QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES

GOAL: Region is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by target industry companies.

The region has tremendous assets that are appealing to tourists, businesses and residents. The region's population has increased more than 25% since 1990 but the share of the 25-44 year old demographic is decreasing, while the ethnic diversity is increasing. It is crucial for the region to take steps to attract and retain a younger demographic, develop higher levels of appreciation and tolerance for diverse populations, and preserve the assets that make this region a great place to live and work.

The region should focus on the following objectives to address key quality of life issues:

- ✓ **Develop a Greater Charlotte Young Professionals Association**
- ✓ **Develop a vision for the regional growth and development**
- ✓ **Link parks, open space, and tourism destinations with a greenway network**
- ✓ **Increase the awareness and understanding of different cultures throughout the region**

The following pages provide additional information and specific actions to take to achieve the above objectives.

Objective QOL-1: Develop a Greater Charlotte Young Professionals Association

Measurements:

* ***Share of residents aged 25-44 years old will increase by 2010.***
* ***Interest of students and young professionals in staying in the region increases by 100% by fall 2010.***

Recommendation 1:
Understand young professionals' opinions about living in the region.

Action:

a. Involve the universities, community colleges and key industries such as banking in creating and administering a survey of students and young professionals to determine what they do and do not like about the region. Ask participants to state what they would require to remain in the area.
b. Administer this survey annually. The baseline information obtained from this survey can be used to measure success of implementation of several strategies in this plan.
c. Share results of this survey with media and key stakeholders.

Recommendation 2:
Organize a Greater Charlotte Young Professional's Association.

Actions:

a. Launch a regularly scheduled young professionals' networking event.
b. Create an "alternative" web site, containing weekly club listings, movie times, and articles tuned into an 18-45 year old audience.

Recommendation 3:
Assist local educational institutions in conveying a positive image of the region to their students.

Action:

a. Economic developers should work with community colleges and universities in the region develop information about the region geared toward young people.
b. All of these groups should make this information available to students.

Recommendation 4:
Empower young professionals to participate in leadership organizations.

Action:

a. Leadership organizations should invite young professionals to participate in their respective programs. The region will receive fresh ideas for the development of the region and their involvement will help retain young workers.
b. Charge the newly-formed Greater Charlotte Young Professionals Association with the task of creating a plan to make the region a more youth-friendly place. Provide resources for this effort. The Association should present the plan to regional stakeholders and seek funding for its major initiatives.
c. Provide funding for an annual awards ceremony where the region recognizes the contributions of young professionals in the region.

Recommendation 5:
Develop collaborative university student body "Adopt-a-Neighborhood" programs throughout the region.

Actions:

a. Develop a consortium between student bodies at community colleges and universities to have a unified approach to helping with improvements in the following areas throughout the region:
    - Housing rehabilitation
    - Neighborhood Clean-up
    - Business planning for small businesses
    - Marketing assistance for neighborhoods, businesses, and community groups
    - Literacy programs
b. Develop a strategy for how this consortium can assist stakeholders in the above categories.
c. Consider developing a "volunteer match" web site for students as well as other volunteers to assist in specific needs. This can be part of the alternative web site mentioned above.
d. Target community college and university classes that can integrate this effort into their curriculum (E.g., business, public policy, or community planning programs).

Objective QOL-2: Develop a vision for regional growth and development.

Measurements:

* *A vision for the region will be developed by spring 2010.*
* *Completed in 2011.*

Recommendation 1:
Develop support for a regional visioning process.

Actions

a. Develop examples of other regional visioning projects throughout the nation and prepare a power point presentation on the purpose, the process and the outcomes of such an initiative in the region.
b. Hold meetings throughout the region with key business and public officials to reach a consensus on undertaking this initiative.
c. Develop a committee comprised of key private and public leaders that will guide the regional visioning process.
d. Raise support for the initiative.

Recommendation 2:
Implement the regional visioning process

Actions

a. Build upon past and current efforts including the SEQL project, the Regional Planning Alliance, the Centers and Corridors Vision, and the Voices & Choices "Open Space Framework" which provides a conceptual tool for identifying and preserving valuable open space.
b. Develop and implement a baseline survey that asks residents and businesses what they value in the region.
c. Hold land use charette workshops throughout the region to develop several scenarios for regional growth.
d. Survey the region on these growth scenarios to identify a consensus for a particular regional growth pattern.

A regional visioning forum is designed to build regional identity, increase knowledge of the common interests that link the region, identify the topics that are important to the region, and develop strategies to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next twenty years.

Centralina should be encouraged to continue current regional visioning and planning efforts. The purpose of the regional vision and plan is NOT to mandate local development decisions, but to capture commonalities among community visions, to provide a consensus set of "framework principles" toward which all communities' plans work, and to provide the business and development community with "one stop shopping" in terms of information about land development planning.

The outcomes of the regional visioning process could include:

- To capture the values of the region
- To correctly identify the trends that could take the region away from those values
- To recommend actions that will preserve the region's values and individual community character and interests.

Objective QOL-3: Link parks, open space, and tourism destinations with a greenway network

Measurements:

* ***Dedicated greenway trail network increases by 100% per year beginning fall of 2010.***

Recommendation 1:

Develop a greenway trail network plan throughout the region.

Actions

a. Through the regional visioning process and current regional planning initiatives, continue to reach consensus on a regional greenways trail network.
b. Identify appropriate areas throughout the region (utilizing floodplains, existing parkland, and conservation easements) for a regional greenway trail network.
c. Seek state, federal and private sector support for this initiative.
d. Integrate greenways with sidewalks, transit nodes, and other pedestrian points wherever feasible.

Recommendation 2:

Assist stakeholders throughout the region in acquiring more greenway trails through land development and community planning.

Actions

a. Educate communities about the potential benefit of this trail network so that their respective park plans are congruent with the overall regional trail network.
b. Develop a tool box for local communities to utilize that provides sample ordinances that promote the dedication of green space towards the development of a regional greenway trail network.
c. Continue a collaborative discussion involving CATS, chambers of commerce, convention and visitors' bureaus, developers, and city and county planners on the location of this network and how they work together on this initiative.
d. Utilize volunteer support for trail development and maintenance. Consider utilizing the Greater Charlotte Young Professionals Association and Youth Corps participation in this effort.

Objective QOL-4: Increase the awareness and understanding of different cultures throughout the region.

Measurements:

* ***By fall 2010, more than 75% of survey respondents state that ethnic diversity benefits the region.***

Recommendation 1:
Understand how the region feels about issues of diversity and cultural awareness.

Actions

a. Develop a survey instrument to understand how residents feel about specific issues related to diversity. Consider utilizing the information from the Social Capital survey regarding this issue.
b. Analyze this survey information and provide educational forums to certain groups throughout the region about how the region feels about this issue.
c. Develop a plan that is supported by public and private stakeholders to address major issues that arise in this survey.

The region must realize that a community's or region's openness to new people and ideas, diversity, tolerance, respect and acceptance of others is a sign of social integrity, but also a practice that will pay off economically since creative individuals are drawn to areas that appreciate and celebrate these concepts.

Recommendation 2:
Develop and support visible celebrations of diversity.

Actions

a. Sponsor programs during nationally recognized celebratory months (as well as other times during the year) to highlight the various cultures represented in the region.
b. Support the concept of "Diversity Champion and Best Practices" of the Charlotte Chamber and consider expanding this program to a regional level.
c. Gain global recognition and stature for this program and use it as a means of branding the region internationally.
d. Use images of diverse individuals living in the region in branding and image strategies.

Example Calendar for Diversity Celebration

Hispanic Heritage Month - September
Native American Heritage Month - November
Kwanzaa Celebration - December
Black History Month - February
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month - May
International Awareness Week - April

Recommendation 3:
Promote learning about different cultures in K-12.

Actions

a. Workforce developers and educators should meet regularly to discuss how they can adopt strategies within their programs to address an appreciation of diversity.
b. Ask student councils in high schools to support this concept and develop their own programs for celebrating diversity.

LAND USE, SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: The Region's sites and infrastructure meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.

Some of the region's best assets include the transportation network and accessibility. The region has a plethora of vacant industrial sites but not all of them are certified by the state and cannot be actively marketed. The technological infrastructure is plentiful with miles of dark fiber optic cable throughout the region, but very few cities have more advanced technological assets that can be appealing to small business and entrepreneurs.

The region should focus on the following objectives to address key land use, sites and infrastructure issues:

- ✓ **Increase the competitiveness of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport.**
- ✓ **Improve the regional transportation circulation.**
- ✓ **Improve utilization of existing sites and buildings.**
- ✓ **Improve technological infrastructure in region.**
- ✓ **Implement key infrastructure projects from other CEDS reports.**

The following pages provide additional information and specific actions to take to achieve the above objectives.

Objective LUSI-1: Increase competitiveness of the Charlotte Douglas International Airport

Measurements:

* ***Feasibility study for intermodal hub at airport is complete by spring 2010.***
* ***Conduct preliminary engineering/environmental analysis of West Rapid transit corridor connecting Airport to downtown Charlotte by fall 2011.***

Recommendation 1:

Proactively approach the loss of a HUB.

a. US Airways filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and is now planning a low fare restructuring. It is important for the entire community to look at other airports that have lost a major HUB to understand the potential impact to the Charlotte region if this were to happen.
b. Ask major businesses who use the airport to provide a top five list of their destinations with an approximate number of trips made per year for each major business. Ask the airport to provide similar information on specific trip destinations.
c. Identify carriers who could potentially provide the service demands of major business.
d. Ask major businesses to provide letters of encouragement to these other carriers and then take a regional delegation of public and private leaders to meet with the heads of these carriers to encourage them to provide service if needed.
e. Identify strategies and federal funds to assist with a potential displacement of thousands of airline employees.

How Arkansas Dealt with Losing Airlines

The Arkansas Employment Security Department received three federal grants from the U.S. Department of Labor totaling $2 million to aid hundreds of workers affected by layoffs in the state's airline industry for the following:

• A grant of $1.6 million that will provide assistance to individuals laid off from the Southwest Airlines Reservation Center in Little Rock. The federal funds will help about 400 workers in Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline counties. Southwest announced in November that it will close its reservation center here, resulting in the loss of 730 Arkansas jobs.

• A grant of $400,000 that will provide assistance to 111 workers in Benton and Washington counties laid off from Ozark Aircraft Systems in Bentonville.

Recommendation 2:

Improve the intermodal system at the Airport

a. Determine the Airport's and the City of Charlotte's ability to pay for a feasibility study to look at moving the current intermodal system from downtown to the airport's land.
b. Develop a request for proposals and hire a consultant to undertake this feasibility study.
c. Based upon the results of the feasibility study, begin talks with Norfolk-Southern and other primary stakeholders to work towards developing the intermodal site at the Airport.
d. Engage the community in a series of discussions about the benefit of this project.
e. Develop support from public and private sector throughout the region and in Washington, DC.

Objective LUSI -2: Improve regional transportation circulation

Measurements:

* ***More than 30% of cities and counties in the region adopt dedicated bike lane standards for new roadways by spring 2011.***
* ***More than 75% of survey respondents report that commuter options have improved by spring 2010.***

Recommendation1:

Develop system of bikeways connecting major urban areas and tourism destinations.

Actions:

a. Build upon the efforts of the greenways and trails planning project that is discussed in the Quality of Life section above.
b. Work with city, county and state transportation planners and officials to develop standards for new roads and highways that could include dedicated bike lanes.
c. Consider utilizing the rail right-of-way for hike and bike lanes.

Recommendation2:

Develop well-integrated and sustainable regional rapid rail system

Actions:

a. Support the efforts of the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) in providing alternative transportation choices in the region.
b. Provide more of an educational forum on the benefits of the long-range multimodal plan, highlighting the cost-benefit, the benefits of traffic congestion given population growth that is expected, and illustrate examples of successful light and commuter rail systems in other cities in the nation. This information could be provided on the website, but also provided at civic organizations.
c. Successfully implement the South Corridor Light rail project (the first rapid transit line in the region).
d. Collaborate with CATS in conducting Major Investment Studies to identify how rapid transit can extend into adjacent counties.
e. Collaborate with counties in the region to expand regional express bus service.

Objective LUSI -3: Improve utilization of existing sites and buildings.

Measurements:

* ***More than 50% of the existing industrial sites that are currently not certified are certified by spring 2010.***
* ***Three vacant mills or other industrial buildings are identified for redevelopment by spring 2010.***
* ***The region achieves national press recognition on the process it is using in redeveloping these vacant sites.***

Recommendation 1:

Take efforts to certify all adequate commercial and industrial sites in the region.

Actions:

a. Identify all of the sites in the region that need certification.
b. Understand how the Future Forward region is embarking on this strategy and what success they are experiencing.
c. Meet with staff from the North Carolina Department of Commerce to fully understand the requirements in site certification.
d. Identify funding sources (such as the Golden Leaf Foundation) that can assist in the site certification process.

Recommendation 2:

Redevelop vacant mills near urban centers.

Actions:

a. Continue the efforts that are currently underway to analyze the feasibility of redeveloping mills into mixed use urban villages. Look to other CEDS projects such as Future Forward to understand how they will be using federal funds on a similar initiative.
b. Identify several sites throughout the region that have market potential for redevelopment.
c. Host a national conference that addresses industrial redevelopment. Consider asking organizations such as the Urban Land Institute to sponsor such a program.
d. Market several sites to national developers for redevelopment.

Objective LUSI -4: Improve technological infrastructure in region.

Measurements:

* *Five communities in the region will have sophisticated Wi-Fi systems by fall 2011.*

Recommendation 1:
Develop Wi-Fis throughout target cities

Actions:

a. Hold a regional conference for cities in the region to learn about the benefits and costs of developing a Wi-Fi system in their downtowns and other targeted areas.
b. Invite several communities from across the country to highlight their programs.
c. Encourage wireless technology, internet and telecommunications providers to sponsor the event, and gain national attention.
d. Identify costs, benefits and financing opportunities for communities in the region to develop Wi-Fi systems in appropriate locations.

Recommendation 2:
Fully understand and market fiber optics network and capabilities.

Actions:

a. Develop an understandable map and associated text of the region's fiber optic resources.
b. Utilize this information in business expansion, retention and recruitment efforts.

Wi-Fi in Parks

Mecklenburg County installed its own wireless network in Freedom Park In 2006, using seven wireless access points to blanket the 98-acre facility with free Wi-Fi service.

The County intends to add wireless access to other parks and greenways in the future.

Objective LUSI -5: Implement key infrastructure projects from other CEDS reports.

Several key infrastructure projects were recommended in the three other CEDS plans. Information on these infrastructure projects as well as other key projects is provided in the Appendix of this plan.[5]

However, AE feels that of all of these projects, the extension of Highway 74 through Anson County is crucial to the livelihood of that county and will certainly benefit the region by improving the highway network and accessibility for tourism and distribution. The Monroe Bypass could also be significant and is currently funded but must cross several environmental hurdles before developed.

Although not part of another CEDS projects, AE also feels that Independence Freeway in Mecklenburg County is also a priority infrastructure project for the region.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

GOAL: The Region's existing talents, leaders, and resources are coordinated so that there is a seamless system for economic development services in Region.

The Charlotte region must become more assertive as an economic development destination and create the necessary vision and find the determination not to merely be competitive, but a trend setter and a leader in economic development. The region must think and believe that its peer communities are the top economic development destinations in the nation today (regions such as Dallas, San Diego, Seattle, Atlanta, Denver, and Chicago) only then can the region truly reach its full potential. The region must also become more active in business retention and expansion. By focusing on existing business, business recruitment efforts will become more successful.

The region should focus on the following objectives to address key economic development issues:

- ✓ **Develop a well-funded internal marketing campaign.**
- ✓ **Improve efforts to support existing business.**
- ✓ **Develop a regional tourism campaign.**
- ✓ **Develop a unified regional and local brand program.**
- ✓ **Focus economic development on target industries and other key industries for the region.**
- ✓ **Develop and utilize incentives for sustainable industry.**
- ✓ **Create an Economic Development District for the region.**

The following pages provide additional information and specific actions to take to achieve the above objectives.

Objective ED - 1: Develop a well-funded internal marketing campaign.

Measurements:

* ***75% of survey respondents identify the top three issues that the region is trying to address by spring 2010.***

Recommendation 1:

Implement a joint **publicity campaign** aimed at the general public but more importantly at the private sector to build awareness of key issues.

A regional internal marketing campaign builds awareness on key issues that all counties face, such as the importance of education and entrepreneurship. An internal marketing campaign also applies to tourism – getting people interested, knowledgeable and excited about visiting locations throughout the region.

Actions:

a. Administer a survey to asses the region's current understanding of the key economic issues that are being addressed.
b. Hire a public relations consultant
c. Agree on key areas to focus publicity, but consider 1) education & workforce development, 2) entrepreneurship, and 3) economic development vision.
d. Support the regional awareness campaign by advertising utilizing billboards, newspapers and business journals, and primary radio stations.
e. Develop a collateral (value of education) piece with a letter that can be used in a direct mail campaign to residents and also reside on each county's ED Web site
f. Build awareness by having marketing task force members speak at regional business association events.
g. Host annual regional economic forecast conference. The forecast could be held as an annual follow up to this strategy.

Objective ED – 2: Improve efforts to support existing business.

Measurements:

* ***By resolution, more than ten counties and/or communities in the Charlotte Regional Partnership region adopt a Business Retention and Expansion program as their primary economic development effort by spring 2010.***

Recommendation 1:
Gain support for a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program

Action

a. Enlist the support of regional economic developers to assist in education and training at the local level on how to develop a BRE program. Include the Charlotte Regional Partnership, Electricities, Electric Cooperatives, Duke Power, Centralina COG/EDD and others.
b. Identify communities that are interested and ready for training and education to develop their own specific BRE.
c. Raise necessary funds to provide this training and support.

Recommendation 2:
Implement a BRE program

Action

a. Have both municipal and county elected officials sign resolutions of support for a local BRE program.
b. Identify a local sponsoring agency (E.g. economic development corporation or chamber of commerce).
c. Provide training and materials to local communities (elected officials should also be a part of this training).
d. Implement an existing business survey. Send an introductory letter, signed by the city and county chief elected officials as well as the president of the sponsoring agency and regional entities, to each plant or office manager.
e. Develop a pre-survey and post-survey publicity program. This is normally done by the local sponsoring agency.
f. Develop a system to respond to local problems identified during the survey process.
g. Develop an ongoing follow-up program for established businesses.

Several sophisticated business retention and expansion programs do exist in the region and should be looked to as models for the region to replicate. Lincoln and Gaston counties.

Objective ED – 3: Develop a regional tourism campaign.

Measurements:

* ***Regional tourism revenue grows by 10% per year beginning in 2006.***
* ***More than 75% of survey respondents rate the region as a tourist destination by spring 2011 and can identify more than five tourist destinations throughout the region.***

Recommendation 1:
Develop consensus towards a regional tourism promotion program.

Action

a. Convene a meeting among local organizations that promote each county for tourism.
b. Discuss in a facilitated format specific areas that each local group could see a benefit from cooperating in a regional tourism program.
c. Identify specific areas that the group is willing to cooperate.
d. Each local organization should take this information to their respective boards and gain a resolution of support for cooperating on these agreed upon regional tourism initiatives.

Recommendation 2:
Develop a regional tourism program.

Action

a. Develop a strategy, including marketing collateral, for a regional tourism program.
b. Develop and implement a survey of local residents and tourists coming from outside the region on their perspectives of the region as a tourism destination. Utilize this baseline information to assess progress of this effort.

Objective ED – 4: Develop a unified regional and local marketing program.

Measurements:

- ***At least 75% of local economic development organizations incorporate "a Charlotte USA Community" into local marketing efforts by fall 2010.***

Recommendation 1:
Develop an understanding throughout the region of the importance and benefits of utilizing a regional tagline.

Action

a. The Charlotte Regional Partnership should consider providing an educational forum to local economic development organizations (EDO) on what type of impact they could receive by utilizing a regional tagline in their local economic development marketing efforts. This could be a part of a larger discussion but it is crucial for EDOs to understand that site selectors and businesses that the communities are trying to target for business recruitment will recognize the regional identify before they would recognize the local identity.

Recommendation 2:
Local economic development organizations should consider updating their respective marketing efforts with a focus on regional consistency with local flexibility.

Action

a. Each local economic development organization should consider updating their local brand and determine how it can be unique and representative of their community, yet tie into an overall regional brand.
b. The Partnership may wish to assist local communities with this effort.

Objective ED – 5: Focus economic development on target industries and other key industries for the region.

Measurements:

- ***Develop a list of businesses within the region that fall within the target industries by spring 2005. (Completed 2005)***
- ***Host at least one conference per year for key target industries beginning by spring 2010.***

Recommendation 1:
Build support and understanding of target industries

Action

a. Develop a clear and concise brochure that illustrates the key target industries that the region will focus its economic development efforts.
b. Develop a list of target industry businesses in the region.
c. Hold a forum for elected officials, economic developers, workforce providers and educators that showcase target industry businesses that exist in the region. Combine efforts of this action with those in the Workforce Development and Education section of this plan.

Recommendation 2:
Actively recruit businesses in targeted industries to the region.

Action

a. Perform peer to peer marketing. This form of marketing is one of the most effective economic development marketing tools. Once the region has identified key target industry businesses within the region, it should take site visits to key areas in the nation where there is a concentration of similar businesses. Business leaders should attend these marketing trips – not just economic developers and elected officials.
b. Develop collateral that is specific to each target industry.
c. Become a host for several of the target industry's annual conferences. Highlight the region's assets in each of these key target industries; educate the participants about the direction that the region is taking to build a cluster within this industry.

Objective ED – 6: Develop and utilize incentives for sustainable industry.

Measurements:

* ***An analysis of existing incentive policies is performed by fall 2010.***
* ***An economic toolbox is developed by spring 2011.***

Recommendation 1:
Gain a thorough understanding of incentive policies throughout the region.

Action

a. Obtain a list of incentive programs and policies for every taxing entity in the region
b. Develop an analysis to show what types of industry/business are being encouraged through the incentive programs and determine if these policies will encourage the targeted industries and other high value industries that the region is encouraging to grow.
c. Provide summaries of this analysis to economic developers throughout the region.

Recommendation 2:
Provide advice to municipalities and economic developers on recommended changes to incentive policies and other tools to use in business development.

Action

a. Develop sample incentive policies for communities.
b. Develop an economic development toolbox for promoting businesses throughout the region.
c. Support the self-financing bond referendum with a unified regional public relations strategy.

Sample Contents of an Economic Development Toolbox

✓ Sample agreements for self-financing bonds.
✓ Examples of how federal and state funds have been creatively utilized to promote different types of business development.
✓ Case studies of successful economic incentives and practices.
✓ Examples of economic impact analyses to determine if incentives yield a net positive result to a community.
✓ Sample sustainable industry incentives could include green building practices and clean industry incentives.

Objective ED – 7: Create an Economic Development District for the region. (Completed 2006)

Measurements:

* *An Economic Development District (EDD) is created by fall 2011.*
* *Funds for the EDD are acquired by winter 2011.*
*

Recommendation 1:
Create an EDD.

Action

a. Meet with Economic Development Administration (EDA) officials to fully understand the application guidelines and the process for obtaining the federal designation of an EDD for the region.
b. Submit an application and the appropriate support documentation to EDA for EDD designation.

Recommendation 2:
Develop a work plan and support for implementing a work plan for the EDD.

Action

a. Obtain public and private sector support for any required match for the EDD work plan.
b. Working with the CEDS committee, develop a work plan for the EDD that builds upon this CEDS Strategy. The work plan should be a detailed work plan for the first year and a more broad work plan for subsequent years.
c. Update the work plan annually and continually build support for the EDD.

An anticipated outcome of this CEDS study is the creation of an Economic Development District (EDD) encompassing the nine counties of the Centralina COG. These districts are federally sanctioned organizations created to reduce unemployment and under-employment, and increase incomes in areas of economic distress. The main component for accomplishing this function is the creation of a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS). Economic Development Districts are established because no other organizations within their region have the capacity and access to resources to create regional economic development plans that include and benefit each community in the district.

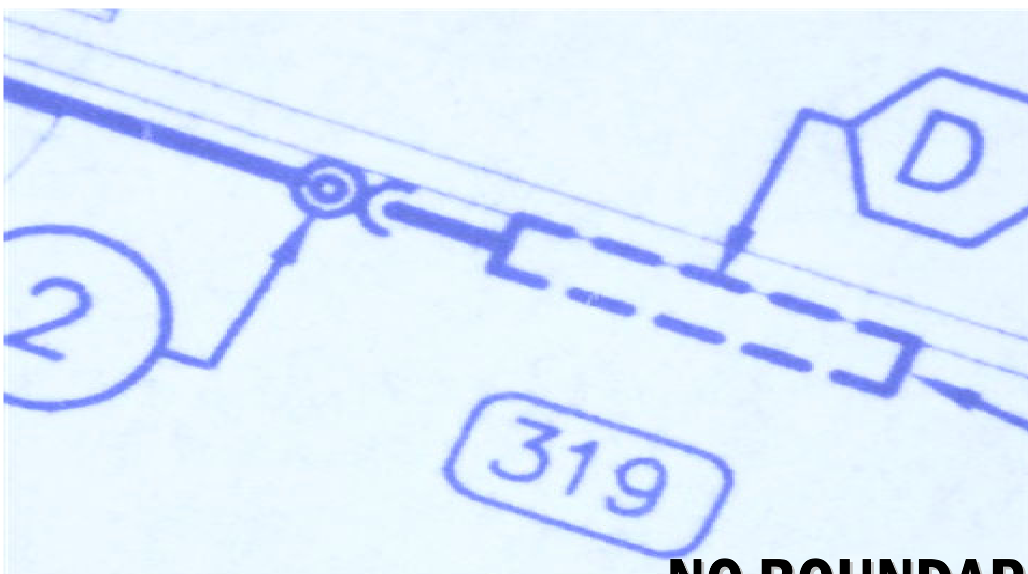
Partnership Planning Grants for Economic Development Districts (source: EDA)

Ongoing planning grant assistance provides support for the formulation and implementation of local economic development programs as well as strategies designed to create and retain permanent jobs and increase income for the unemployed and underemployed in areas of economic distress. Grants are intended to enhance economic development planning capability, support the formulation of development policies, and assist in building local institutional capacity. Planning grants are awarded to establish and implement effective economic development programs at local and regional levels. Eligible activities under this program include:

SECTIONS 9 & 10

Performance Measures,
Methodology

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

Section Nine
Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Year	Data Source
	2008	
1. Number of jobs created in the Region after the implementation of the CEDS.		
2. Number and types investments undertaken in the Region.		
3. Number of jobs retained in the Region.		
4. Amount private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS.		
5. Changes in the economic environment of the Region.		

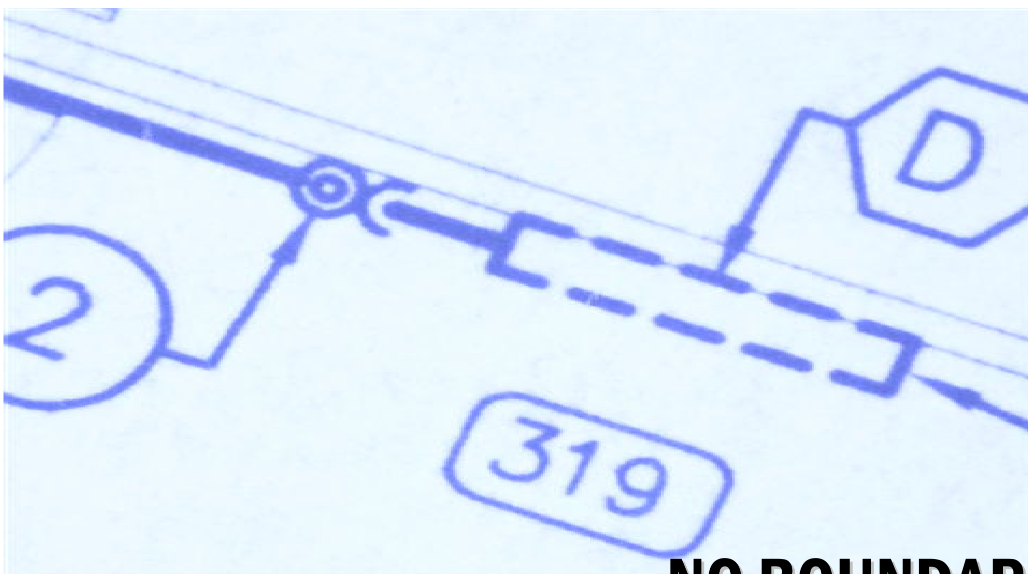
Section Ten
Methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with North Carolina's economic priorities.

North Carolina does not have a written strategy; instead, uses programs and initiatives to implement their economic development plans. The CEDC will continue to workvia meetings ,workshops, and conferences, with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the NC Rural Center, the North Carolina legislature, and other state agencies to ensure that the economic Development District's policies are well integrated with state strategies.

ADDENDUM:

Background Report

Centralina Economic Development Commission



NO BOUNDARIES.

Centralina
Council of Governments

Workforce Providers Survey Summary

County Comparison of Demographic and Economic Variables

County Comparisons of Economic Development Funding

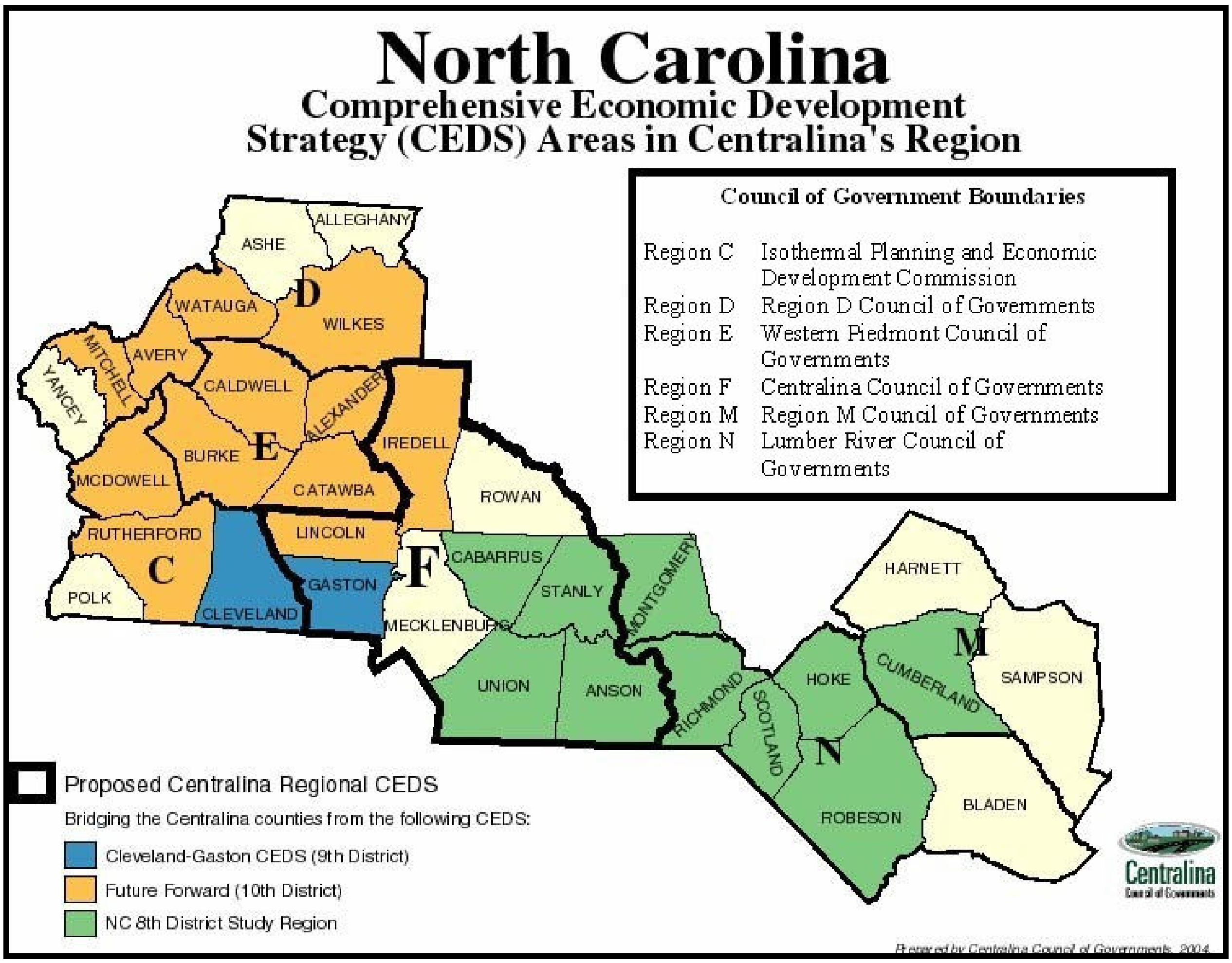
Earlier CEDS Projects in Region

Three other CEDS projects have been developed recently that have included seven of the nine counties in the Centralina region:

- The Cleveland – Gaston CEDS, representing the 9th District (Cleveland, **Gaston** counties)
- The Future Forward CEDS, representing the 10th District (Alexander, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, **Iredell, Lincoln**, McDowell, Mitchell, Rutherford, Watauga, Wilkes counties)
- The 8th District CEDS (**Anson, Cabarrus**, Cumberland, Hoke, Montgomery, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland, **Stanly, Union** counties)

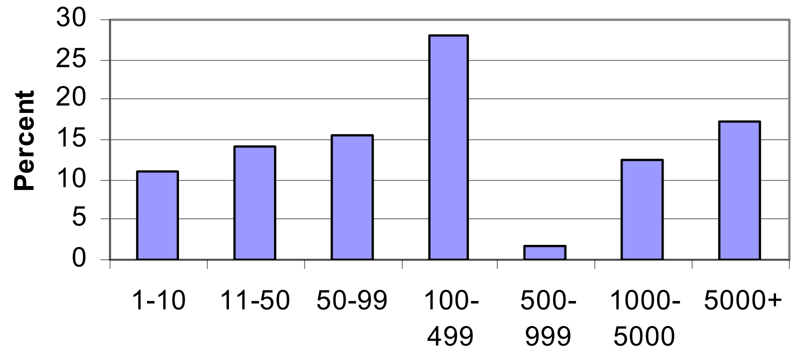
*(**Bold** denotes counties within the Centralina COG)*

A significant amount of resources was devoted to the development of these three CEDS projects, and an objective of this study has been to build upon the work that has been done in these other CEDS. The Centralina Regional CEDS has therefore incorporated assessment information and strategies from reports of the other CEDS projects into its own reports.

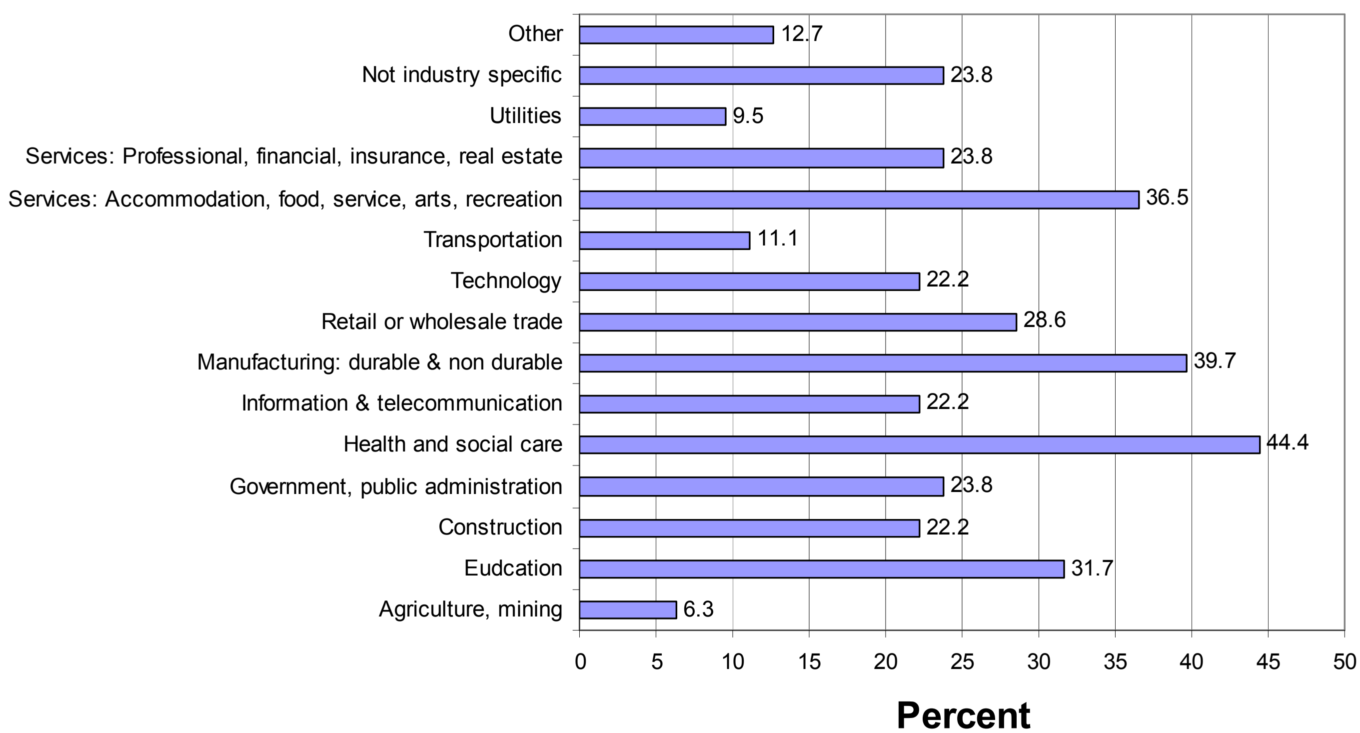


Centralina Workforce Survey Results

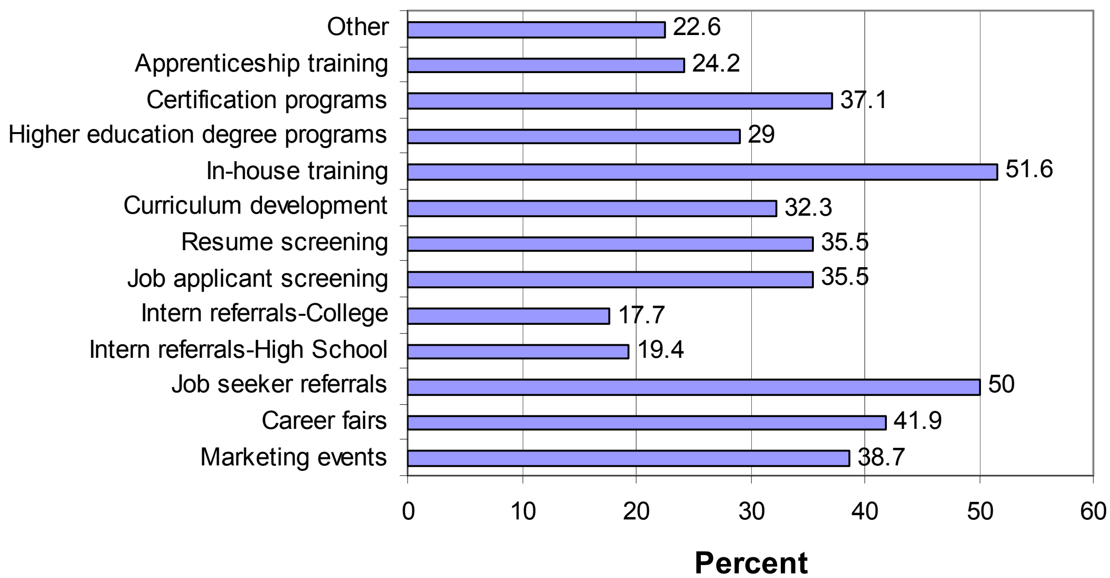
How many area workers take part in your workforce development training activities each year?



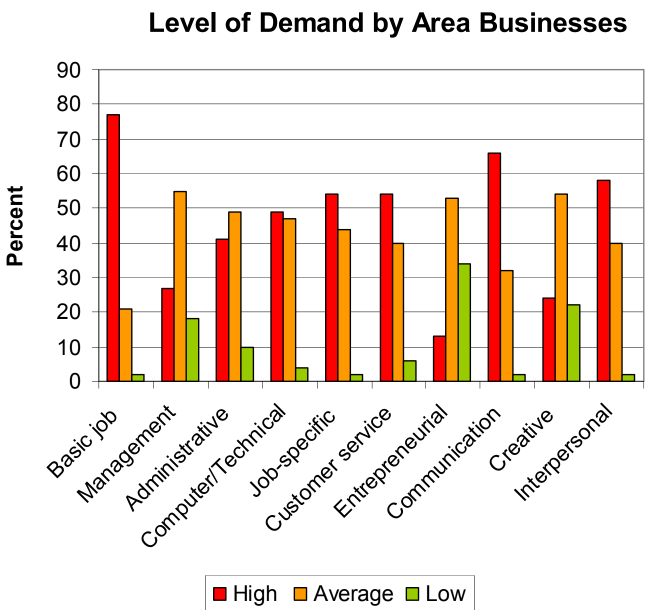
Please indicate which, if any, industry category your workforce development initiatives target.

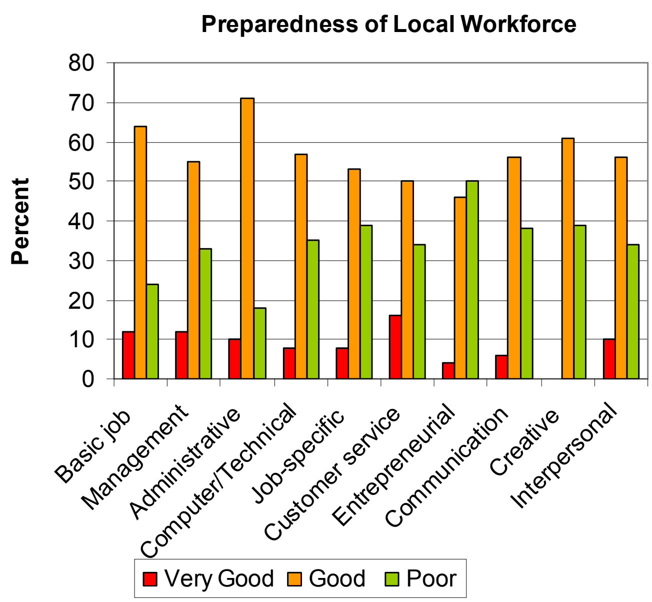


Please indicate which workforce services your organization or agency provides.



What skills are most in demand by local employers and how prepared is the local workforce to meet those skill traits?





Which skills, if any, is your workforce especially lacking?

1. Computer
2. Basic education, confidence
3. Entrepreneurial
4. Customer service
5. Adaptability to the global economy
6. Personal finance management
7. Skilled trades, professional level
8. N/A
9. Communication
10. Entrepreneurial
11. Basic job readiness skills
12. Computer, color matching ability
13. Communication skills
14. Work ethic
15. Basic job skills
16. Communication, team-work, interpersonal, independent learning
17. High school and GED
18. Computer skills
19. Creative
20. Computer/technical skills
21. Basic skills and communication skills
22. Basic academic skills and interpersonal skills
23. Interpersonal
24. Job specific
25. Technical
26. Basic math and communications
27. Communication, problem solving, team building
28. Basic skills such as reading, writing, communication, etc. (1/3 of our workforce doesn't have a high school degree)
29. Exception: dropouts
30. Many are recently trained and need OJT
31. None. We have a good pool of skill sets to pull from
32. Computer
33. Very good reading and math skills
34. Computer/technical training
35. Continuous improvement quality training
36. At this time, I believe a lack of education
37. Technical training
38. Administrative skills
39. Faculty
40. Industrial maintenance
41. Basic skills
42. Work related values and interpersonal skills
43. Literacy attributed to disability
44. Education and transportation
45. N/A
46. Work readiness

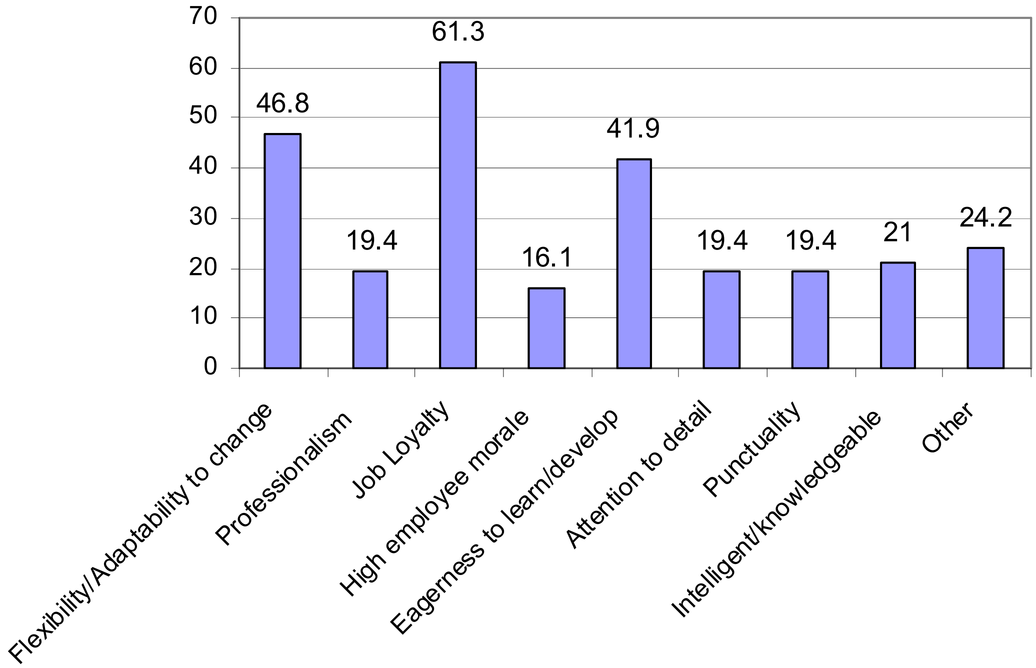
For positions important to employers in the region, which are easiest to fill with local workers?

1. Custodial
2. Custodial
3. Fast food
4. Manufacturing
5. Traditional hourly wage positions
6. Poultry workers-manual laborers
7. Non-licensed positions
8. Jobs with flex hours
9. Administrative
10. Manufacturing
11. Food service
12. Entry level such as material handlers
13. Unskilled manufacturing and service
14. Service
15. General labor
16. Low entry jobs with few skills
17. Basic duties
18. Warehouse
19. Drivers
20. Service/retail
21. Basic employment- no skill necessary
22. Service occupations
23. Low skill, low wage
24. Factory
25. Basic skills
26. Laborers
27. Unskilled
28. Service
29. Unskilled
30. Basic
31. Nursing and related has more local supply
32. Customer service
33. Service
34. General labor
35. Low to medium job skills
36. Entry level manufacturing
37. Service industry
38. Unskilled or under skilled
39. Daycare
40. Service area
41. Low-level service sector hourly labor
42. Manual labor, service jobs
43. Clerical
44. Flexible hours w/good pay
45. Service
46. Production worker
47. Entry level manual labor
48. Jobs with low educational requirements
49. Fast food workers
50. Restaurant jobs
51. Entry level, all occupations

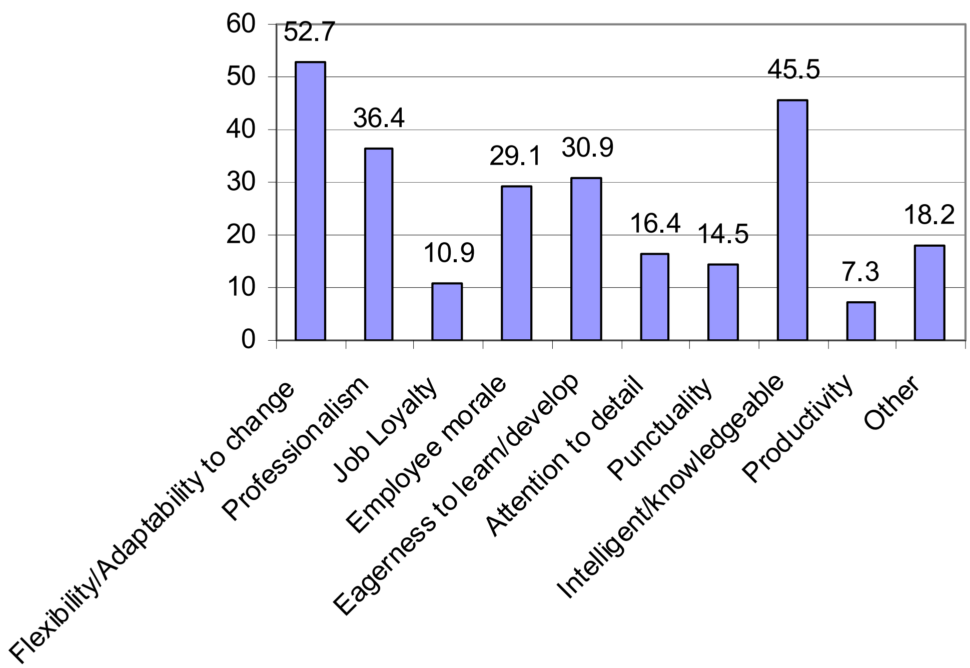
For positions important to employers in the region, which are hardest to fill with local workers?

1. Clerical
2. Clerical
3. Jobs that require college and multitasking
4. Administrative
5. Jobs requiring advanced educational degrees
6. Technical- welders, etc.
7. Nursing
8. Jobs without benefits
9. Technical
10. Nursing
11. Skilled
12. Experienced in gravure printing
13. Skilled and semi-skilled manufacturing
14. Manufacturing
15. Bi-lingual administrative
16. High-technical skill
17. Management
18. Executive secretary
19. Professional
20. Technical
21. Placements requiring experience or education beyond high school
22. Health care workers and highly technical occupations
23. Technical
24. Education
25. Job-specific
26. Maintenance/technical
27. High skilled (machinist, heating and air conditioning mechanic, marketing
28. Highly specialized/technical
29. Skilled
30. Skills/technology
31. Specialty medical fields come from all over
32. Information technology
33. Professional
34. Registered nurses
35. High tech and teaching related
36. Facilities maintenance - electrical
37. Highly technical
38. High technical and management
39. Computer tech
40. Middle management and technical skills areas
41. Specialized skills, i.e. Machine op. And nursing
42. Industrial maintenance
43. Odd hours/ not family friendly/ specialized
44. Professional
45. Manufacturing management
46. Technical
47. Tech jobs
48. Educators
49. Federal jobs
50. Industry specific

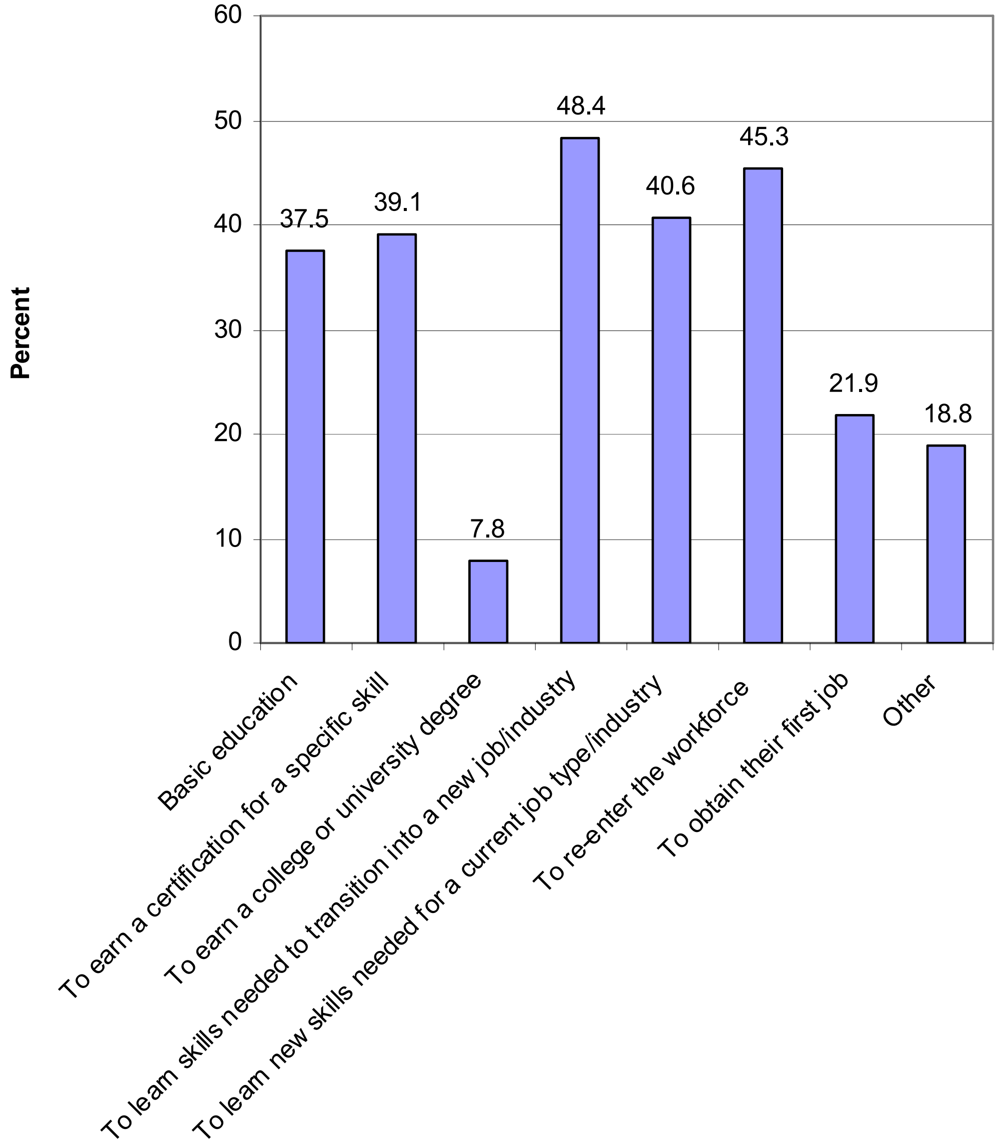
What do you consider to be the three best attributes of the 9-county workforce?



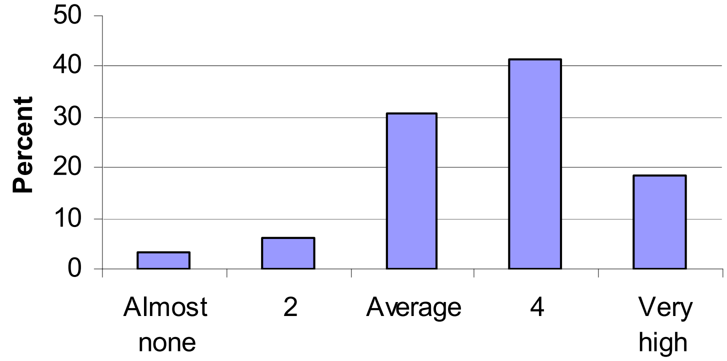
What do you consider to be the three worst attributes of the 9-county workforce?



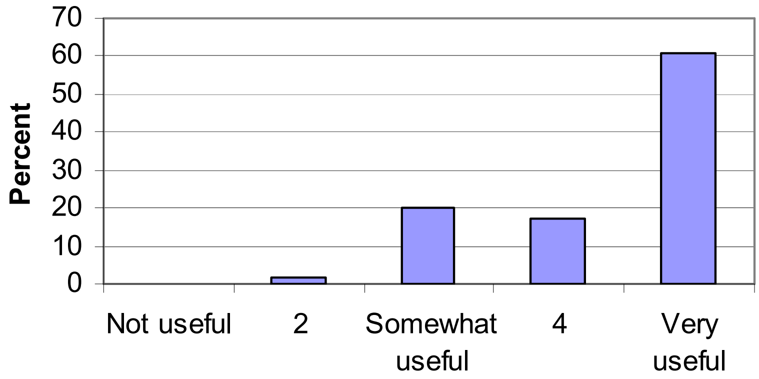
What are the three main areas that clients use your workforce development programs?



How would you describe the level of collaboration and cooperation between area workforce development providers and agencies?

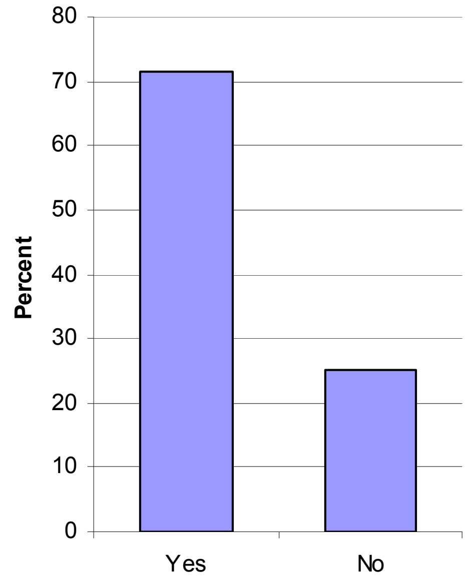


How would you view an enhanced level of collaboration and cooperation between area workforce development providers and agencies?



Are there any educational and/or workforce development programs that you would like to see developed or expanded?

If yes, please list programs you would like to see:



1. Curriculum development for training sessions on widely-used that could be customized and used by most anyone who has training needs but are budget limited
2. Assistance with teeth, glasses when vr can't help because the participant isn't disabled
3. Culture change to the new economy
4. More financial literacy programs
5. Greater efforts toward Latino population
6. Communication and professionalism
7. Trade skills development, basic management/financial skills
8. More high school-secondary technical education
9. Entrepreneurship
10. Job skill training and job readiness for first time employees especially female employees with small children
11. It would be great if small molding shops could get funding to train their employees.
12. Some additional basic courses as well as computer training in house
13. More short-term training that leads to employment
14. Technology training
15. 1Incumbent worker
16. Pathways to employment/short term programs at CPCC
17. Creative thinking.
18. Would like to have source of funds to develop new programs
19. Services for small business operations are in need of additional state funding
20. Funding for focused industrial training and small business centers (community college programs)
21. More technology
22. Youth
23. Machine shop training
24. Focused industrial training
25. More work-based learning opportunities for students
26. Not sure
27. Work-based learning for all students
28. More effective collaboration between providers in region
29. Incumbent training/OJT
30. English as a second language
31. Computer/technical training specific to the older population
32. Technical training in all areas
33. Local computer training classes
34. Business ownership feasibility
35. Without being too specific, we are looking at expanding some of the

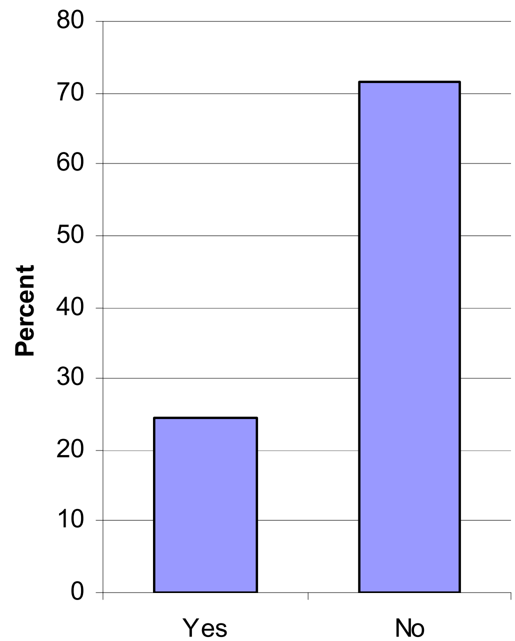
health occupations offerings, we are expanding our air conditioning, heating, and refrigeration program, we are considering others

36. Area of human/social services & teaching
37. More push at high school level on ed. and less on sports
38. Information technology and biotechnology
39. Vocational education programs

Are there any educational and/or workforce development programs that you feel are ineffective and need to be restructured or eliminated?

If yes, please list those programs:

1. WIA, goodwill job connections
2. Customer service--politeness
3. Too much emphasis on 4- year college
4. Green thumb, work first
5. Unknown
6. Adult and youth services
7. Welfare to Work, Urban League
8. I personally feel that the option of taking college classes in lieu of working is abused by a very high percentage of participants.
9. We need to be better aligned with ESC and the infinite rules and regulations of the TRADE legislation to ensure that clients have the maximum flexibility to pursue training under WIA funds.
10. School-to-Career
11. Some WIA Training Provider OST
12. Computer Education



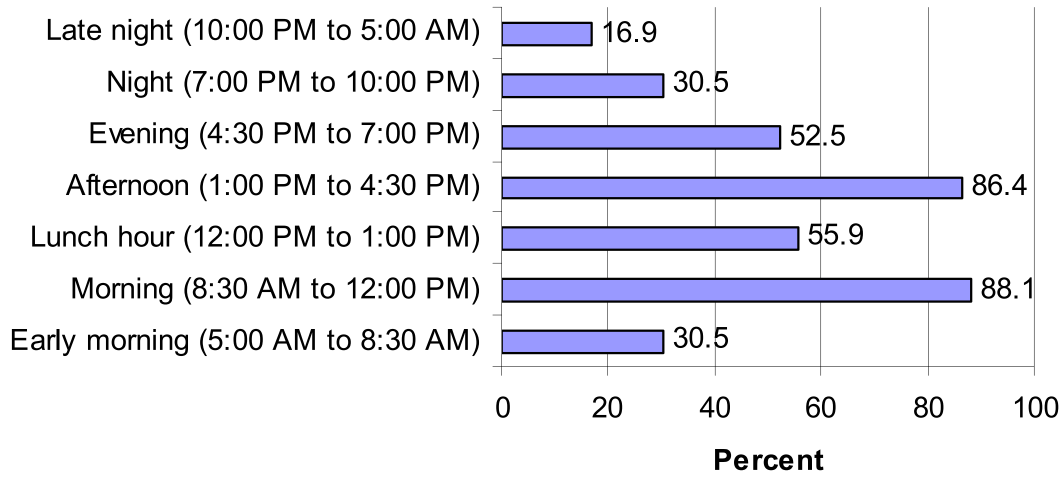
What information would you like to have from area employers or residents that would help your organization become more effective?

1. Benchmark data collected through surveys and field reporting. This data could be disseminated and used by businesses and community colleges to help develop curriculum and meet community/business needs
2. Continue paper applications other than computer applications which employers are especially interested in mature workers
3. What they are looking for in an employee, and what employees can do to retain their jobs (info besides the job skill basics)
4. Total community needs assessment involving government, education, and industry. Citizen input needed
5. Better communicate/publicize the work of our job ready Program in order to build more partnerships with the business community that would support our student and teacher education
6. A Quarterly Newspaper section directed to our population that could list available services/providers and program highlights. This could also include a "survey" where the issues of those who need services could be expressed to the providers. We are always seeking ways to be more effective
7. Role of construction industry in area and job opportunities related thereto
8. Contact information on citizens interested in starting their own business
9. Job requirements for first time employees and job expectations
10. In put on future hiring needs
11. Future job development trends and needs
12. None
13. There needs to be planning among the workforce development agencies so that each activity is directly connected to the overall goals of the region.
14. More job listings and details of open positions.
15. Would like to have more direct interface with companies regarding pre-employment training and assessments to develop focused programs that prepare workers for entry-level positions. Many potential employees who have been displaced or are re-entering the market need refresher in math/reading before seeking jobs
16. Where are they sending clients who need more intensive and individualized (meaning one-on-one) assistance?
17. Numbers and types of jobs available now and in the future. Trends in business and industry; we get a good bit of this through our program advisory committees, but more is always needed
18. A precise skills inventory
19. From employers, specific shortcomings in applicants they receive from us
20. A higher level of response to the development of a database on jobs and pay scales that local business and industry can provide
21. Current information regarding the Critical needs of regional employers Appreciation/support of the value of an education and lifelong learning
22. Skills/positions they are having trouble filling
23. Need more employers to participate in school to career and/or tech prep to share industry/business needs
24. Need better avenues for communication between employers and job seekers and more timely coordination of jobs in demand information to the training infrastructure
25. No comment
26. Jobs from employers with good job descriptions
27. Specific job training skills needed, plus give us the time to get them properly trained
28. Weekday, part-time job opportunities for older workers
29. Would like more job listings, and more on the job training
30. Better feedback from results from employers.
31. Complete Job Descriptions With Stated Closing Dates
32. I would like to know about collaborative efforts to help recently unemployed individuals. Sometimes our agency is left out of the loop because we don't have one person who specifically addresses workforce development issues. Yet many of our programs would benefit those who suffer from job losses.
33. Openness to hiring adults with disabilities
34. With a high unemployment rate and low job opportunities in the county it is hard to say WHAT we need
35. A survey of area employers on the skills wanted from entry-level employees

Please feel free to give us your overall comments about the Centralina regional workforce.

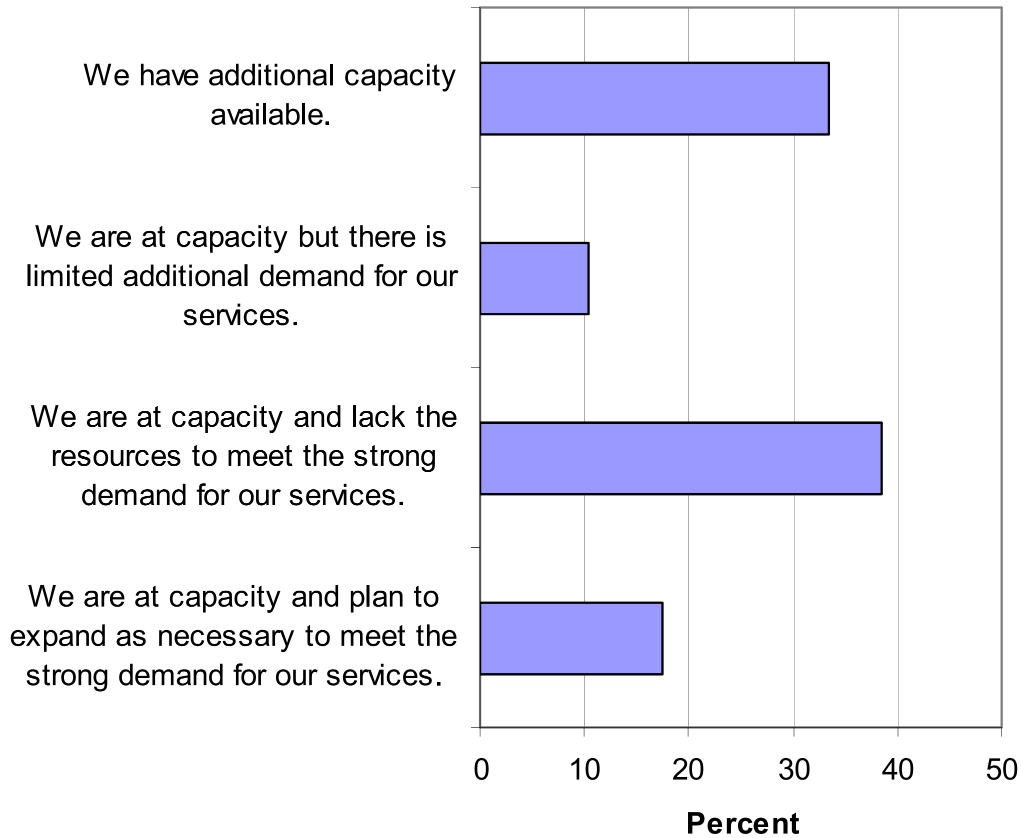
1. We've found them to be flexible and easy to work with. They are tied to some grant paperwork that appears to be more than necessary after working with another state's grant program. If the paperwork could be reduced it may allow them more time for other meaningful tasks
2. Centralina appears to be the most organized and fluid among the five service areas I serve
3. I think it is wonderful and doing well
4. None yet - have to get to know the area as I develop my new company
5. I sincerely appreciate the support your organization has given our JobReady Partnership Program.
6. A large number in our workforce are like refugees... the loss of jobs in our area has affected the self-esteem of everyone. Many who were good, loyal textile/industrial workers have become despondent. After years and sometimes generations of working and living a particular way, they're having a difficult time transitioning to a different path. The trauma of loosing a job eliminates more than a paycheck. They have the desire to return to self-sufficiency, it's hard, like learning a new language and loosing your house at the same time. It's a humanity issue... people need to feel secure and in control of their lives
7. Used to serve on it, but do not see its impact in my current role
8. The Workforce Investment Act programs do not target enough workers. Too much of the funding is used to cover administrative costs rather than provide training for dislocated workers. Many of those receiving the funding are nothing more than a referral agency whose salary would be better spent on providing training for the workers
9. A very diversified group from textile workers to technology developers
10. The Centralina regional workforce needs to become more committed to getting and keeping a job rather than depending upon the government to provide them an "out." Many of the Pillowtex workers could be working, but they choose to take classes at RCCC and really have no intention of attempting to secure employment in those fields. They will take a job when there's no more unemployment or program funding
11. Good people doing good things. Yet, some question to their effectiveness. Seems to be a disconnect between actions and effect on community. How does agency determine who is impacted, what are the goals of others, and how they work to actually meet those goals
12. The Workforce of the region is more diverse and more prepared in the immediate Mecklenburg physical area than in some of the rural communities. Additionally, many workers outside of Charlotte are unwilling or unable to commute for competitive jobs. Displaced textile workers do possess a strong work ethic, loyalty, and commitment but lag in technical skills and are generally older and less able to adjust to a rapid pace
13. Frankly, I don't feel that it's been very effective in addressing real issues. It spends a lot of time addressing philosophical issues without actually changing anything
14. Centralina is well organized and managed and does a good job collaborating to meet the needs of the workforce
15. Centralina is an area affected by the close of our textile industry; hard working, dedicated, loyal employees
16. Would like to see more meetings between Charlotte Meck and other WDB's
17. No comment
18. The Centralina regional workforce has great teamwork with professionalism. The local area Director David Hollars provides ongoing information and works hard to enhance the regional workforce
19. Excellent collaboration of private, public, and non-profit vendors in the delivery of employment and training services to customers
20. N/A
21. Good productivity
22. As the Director of this agency I find working with Centralina has been a breath of fresh air. WI enjoy working with the staff and find them to be on our side when it comes to finding solutions to problems that we face in Anson Co. They are willing to go the extra mile

At what times during the day does your organization offer training/workforce development services? (Check all that apply)



Where does your organization offer training/workforce development services? (Check all that apply)

Please indicate which statement best characterizes the ability of your organization to provide services to additional clients.



Economic and Demographic Variables – County Comparisons

	Centralina	Anson	Cabarrus	Gaston	Iredell	Lincoln	Mecklenburg	Rowan	Stanly	Union
Population										
2003	1652796	25168	142740	193097	133387	67275	752366	133931	58846	145986
1990	1198493	23474	98935	174769	93205	50319	511211	110605	51765	84210
Change, 90-03	37.91%	7.22%	44.28%	10.49%	43.11%	33.70%	47.17%	21.09%	13.68%	73.36%
Age Groups (2003)										
0-13	19.70%	18.90%	19.80%	19.00%	19.60%	18.80%	20.20%	18.80%	18.50%	21.50%
14-24	14.10%	14.70%	14.30%	13.90%	13.80%	14.00%	14.10%	14.80%	14.80%	14.90%
24-45	31.40%	27.60%	30.00%	29.00%	28.70%	29.20%	34.20%	28.30%	27.40%	30.50%
45-65	23.70%	24.40%	24.20%	24.90%	25.00%	25.70%	22.70%	24.10%	24.60%	23.60%
65+	10.80%	14.10%	11.60%	12.80%	12.70%	12.00%	8.80%	14.00%	14.60%	9.70%
Change in 24-45, 90-03	28.91%	3.12%	37.31%	1.98%	31.85%	21.95%	36.16%	12.99%	4.80%	112.56%
Race / Ethnicity, 2003										
White	72.9%	49.4%	83.2%	82.9%	82.1%	90.2%	64.0%	79.9%	84.6%	82.8%
Black	21.3%	48.8%	12.3%	13.9%	13.7%	6.5%	28.0%	15.9%	11.5%	12.6%
Hispanic	6.3%	1.0%	6.5%	3.8%	4.2%	7.2%	8.1%	5.2%	2.6%	7.9%
Change in Hispanic, 90-03	837.7%	279.1%	1835.8%	754.2%	743.9%	753.5%	811.3%	981.0%	395.1%	1608.0%
Educational Attainment (2003)										
Some College, No Degree	21.50%	16.90%	21.80%	21.20%	21.00%	21.20%	22.50%	20.30%	17.70%	15.00%
Associate's	6.70%	5.60%	7.10%	6.40%	7.80%	5.60%	6.80%	6.10%	7.00%	5.60%
Bachelor's	18.40%	6.40%	14.20%	10.20%	12.50%	9.40%	26.40%	10.20%	9.00%	6.60%
Graduate	7.10%	2.60%	4.60%	3.80%	4.70%	3.30%	10.40%	3.80%	3.50%	3.10%
Housing										
Median home value, 2000	$ 106,600	$ 60,300	$ 105,400	$ 86,600	$ 103,000	$ 92,000	$ 131,000	$ 88,000	$ 84,000	$ 114,000
Income										
Median household income, 2003	$ 47,628	$ 31,953	$ 49,298	$ 42,136	$ 44,643	$ 44,346	$ 53,799	$ 40,338	$ 39,518	$ 53,795
Per capita income (PCI), 2003	$ 24,827	$ 16,169	$ 22,532	$ 20,799	$ 22,551	$ 20,127	$ 29,131	$ 19,329	$ 19,056	$ 23,359
PCI change, 90-03	71.4%	72.2%	67.9%	67.8%	72.8%	63.2%	73.8%	63.4%	71.4%	80.3%

Source: 2000 Census

Economic and Demographic Variables – County Comparisons (continued)

	Centralina	Anson	Cabarrus	Gaston	Iredell	Lincoln	Mecklenburg	Rowan	Stanly	Union
Labor Force										
Labor Force, 2003	887024	10889	77433	103478	70165	36275	417880	70368	26608	73928
Change, 90-03	31.50%	-7.40%	39.78%	8.39%	33.88%	28.84%	40.18%	20.24%	-6.31%	59.62%
Unemployment rate, 2003	6.6%	11.0%	8.0%	7.5%	6.5%	7.4%	5.8%	9.0%	8.7%	4.9%
Employment										
Covered employment, 2003	823524	8023	57794	68689	55523	19458	501199	46627	19491	46720
Change in employment, 90-03	28%	-13%	43%	-14%	34%	27%	38%	18%	-8%	34%
Layoffs, 02-04	21,650	80	5,520	2,257	1,331	212	8,490	2,400	719	641
Average wage	$ 39,082	$ 25,480	$ 32,344	$ 29,900	$ 30,472	$ 27,092	$ 44,772	$ 31,616	$ 25,948	$ 30,368
Commuting, 2000										
% workforce commuting in		23%	38%	25%	24%	28%	31%	26%	17%	28%
% resident workers commuting out		40%	47%	37%	31%	52%	9%	32%	32%	47%
Taxe Rates										
Property tax, $ / $100 valuation		$ 0.7760	$ 0.5600	$ 0.8930	$ 0.4350	$ 0.6200	$ 0.7364	$ 0.6300	$ 0.6675	$ 0.5300
Sales tax		2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%	0.025
Small Business Lending										
Total amount of loans, 2002	$ 2,012,416,000	$ 18,153,000	$ 142,762,000	$ 188,519,000	$ 155,338,000	$ 58,936,000	$ 1,159,697,000	$ 97,764,000	$ 34,514,000	$ 156,733,000
Number of loans	46,657	509	3,568	3,944	3,663	1,619	25,451	2,725	1,278	3,900
Average loan amount	$ 43,132	$ 35,664	$ 40,012	$ 47,799	$ 42,407	$ 36,403	$ 45,566	$ 35,877	$ 27,006	$ 40,188
Sites and Infrastructer										
Sq ft available industrial space	26,886,667	389,660	7,842,436	4,460,052	2,023,730	504,526	7,651,461	2,243,478	717,193	1,054,131
Average rent / sq ft industrial	$ 2.80	$ 2.28	$ 3.23	$ 2.36	$ 2.79	$ 2.79	$ 3.19	$ 2.26	$ 1.76	$ 2.74
Homes with internet access, 2003		56.04%	98.45%	85.71%	78.09%	60.21%	87.70%	75.98%	89.09%	73.81%

sources: US Census Bureau; Applied Geographic Solutions; NC Employment Security Commision; NC Dept of State Treasurer; Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council; Charlotte Regional Partnership

Source: 2000 Census

Charlotte Region Economic Development Organizations

County	EDA Organization	Mission Statement	Org. Entity	Private Funding (%)	Estimated ED Budget	County Population	Per Capita Resources
Anson	Anson County Economic Development		County	0	**$150,000**	**25,168**	**$ 5.96**
Cabarrus	Cabarrus County Economic Development	The Mission of Cabarrus Economic Development is to responsibly recruit new business and support existing business in such a manner that: - The tax base of Cabarrus County is expanded and diversified. - The employment opportunities for the people of the County are expanded and diversified. - A positive business environment is assured throughout the county and the region and is clearly demonstrated to new and expanding business. - Existing business is supported and encouraged. - Maintenance and expansion of community infrastructure is encouraged. The resources of Cabarrus County are made readily available to new and expanding business	501 (c3)	0 (as of now but will change within 3-6 month)	**$450,000**	**142,740**	**$ 3.15**
Gaston	Gaston County Economic Development	The Gaston County Economic Development Commission (GCEDC) is dedicated to attracting and retaining desirable employers to continue improving and diversifying economic opportunities in the county. The GDEDC's main functions are: - attracting new, quality industry and commerce; - helping existing industry and businesses grow; - stimulating development of appropriate land and buildings; improving area infrastructure, especially water, sewer and transportation; - improving the general buisness climate, including conditions for new industry; - informing citizenry of the advantages of economic development	department government	9%	**$1,500,000**	**193,097**	**$ 7.77**
Iredell					**$477,298**	**133,387**	**$ 3.58**
	Mooresville/ South Iredell Chamber of Commerce	The Mooresville-South Iredell Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to prosperity and quality of life through the promotion of orderly and planned developments, and a commitment to the economic and social well being of the area.	Chamber	through Chamber 43.49%	$252,298		
	Greater Statesville Economic Development Corporation	The purpose of the Greater Statesville Development Corporation is to stimulate and promote the industrial and commercial development of the City of Statesville and the Town of Troutman, North Carolina, and the surrounding area by providing services and assistance of a nature and kind calculated to encourage and facilitate the locating, establishing, building, operating, maintaining and expanding of new and existing businesses and industries in the Statesville-Troutman community and area.	501 (c3) 501 (c6)	13.33% ($30.000)	$225,000		
Lincoln	Lincoln County Economic Development	To foster an economic environment that promotes: • An increased tax base • Enhancement of the standard of living for the citizens of Lincolnton and Lincoln County.	501 (c3)	12%	**$359,000**	**67,275**	**$ 5.34**

Charlotte Region Economic Development Organizations (continued)

County	EDA Organization	Mission Statement	Org. Entity	Private Funding	Estimated ED Budget	County Population	Per Capita Resources
Mecklenburg					**$5,050,000**	**752,356**	**$ 6.71**
	Charlotte Chamber of Commerce				$1,000,000		
	Charlotte Center City Partners	To make the Center City a great place to live, work and play.	501 (c4)	1%	$1,800,000		
	City of Charlotte	We will partner with internal and external organizations, within a Smart Growth framework, to: • Retain and expand existing businesses; • Provide tools and resources to promote small business development; • Promote development and investment along business and transit corridors; • Attract new business investment and jobs; and, • Ensure that a diverse population participates in economic opportunities.	Government	0	$2,250,000		
Rowan	Rowan County Economic Development	To promote a vital economy, to improve the overall quality of life for residents of Rowan County	501 (c4)	0	**$400,000**	**133,931**	**$ 2.99**
Stanly	Stanly County Economic Development	The purpose of the Economic Development Commission is two fold: work for the expansion of our current tax base through the recruitment of desirable new industry and promotion of expansion by existing industry and commercial enterprises; and, to continually provide for the improvement of the quality of life for our citizens through desirable Economic Development	County	0	**$170,596**	**58,846**	**$ 2.90**
Union					**$475,000**	**145,986**	**$ 3.25**
	Union County Partnership for Progress		in the process of applying for 501 (c3)	100& County	$250,000		
	City of Monroe Economic Development	The Monroe Economic Development office seeks to improve the overall quality of life of every citizen in the Monroe City Limits, through the recruitment and retention of industry that will increase the per capita income, provide new opportunities, and reduce the overall tax burden; while strengthening the local economy through the diversification and broadening of the tax base.	funded by City of Monroe	0	$225,000		
Charlotte Regional Partnerhsip		To allocate and leverage regional economic development resources to sustain and enhance the economic growth, viatality, and global competitiveness of the Charlotte region.	501 (c6)	50%	**$2,300,000**	**2,263,253**	**$ 1.02**

* 50% small business development center and 50% general

Centralina Council of Governments

Centralina Economic Development Commission

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