Central Midlands Council of Governments

Board Meeting

Thursday, December 8th, 2022

Call to Order

Foster Senn, Chair

Determination of Quorum

Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

Invocation

Introduction of Guests

Good News from CMCOG,
Around the Region, and Regional Spotlight

Benjamin Mauldin
Foster Senn

Good News from CMCOG and Around the Region

Spotlight: Workforce

- **Create Opportunities is a public/private partnership the Board has been involved with for the last 2 years. The program screens job seekers interested in a career in software engineering but lack any formal IT training.**
- **For those selected, they go through an intense 6 month training course at Midlands Technical College followed by a 6 month On-the-Job Training employment contract with a local employer.**
- **The program is an apprenticeship program and the job seekers gain wage progressions as his/her knowledge increases at the worksite. Joseph is pictured below in a meeting with his cohort of Create Opportunity participants.**

Spotlight: Ombudsman

- **The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program hosted an Advanced Directive Training on 11/30/22 in person and via Zoom. The meeting was well attended by volunteers, other agencies, Board Members, facility staff and members of our own staff at the COG.**
- **Ms. Shelia Bell-Ford reviewed the Living Will, the Healthcare Power of Attorney and the Five Wishes Form. Three attendees volunteered to become Ombudsmen Witnesses to help execute the Living Will and we also had four attendees to assist in distributing Advance Directives information in the community. We provided them with approx.. 70 packets total.**
- **We would like to thank Representative McDaniel, Ms. Vina Abrams and Ms. Rebecca Connelly for their attendance and support.**

SOUTH CAROLINA
POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR MY HEALTH CARE

Spotlight: Aging

- In early 2022, a Senior Population needs assessment survey was conducted state-wide by the regional Area Agencies on Aging in SC to determine the needs of seniors throughout the state.
- In the CMCOG region, we had 563 respond region wide. Information collected from the survey will be used to update the 2023-2025 Area Agency on Aging Plan.
- The Area Plan update will be completed by March 2023. Staff will present the plan at an upcoming meeting.

Reasons that affect your ability to live independently in the home

Reason	Fairfield	Lexington	Newberry	Richland	Total
24) I cannot do my yard work due to physical or medical reasons.	7	145	23	35	210
6) I am concerned about falls or other accidents.	5	131	20	42	198
15) I do not know how I could pay for nursing home care when/if I needed it.	4	119	19	33	175
3) I have trouble keeping my home clean.	5	121	13	36	175
2) Sometimes I feel lonely or sad, even isolated.	6	106	13	29	154
8) I cannot grocery shop or cook much, so home delivered meals would be helpful.	3	107	13	22	145
32) I have no needs or concerns.	3	100	10	22	135
7) It is difficult for me to get to the grocery store, pharmacy and/or medical appointments.	4	90	9	31	134
4) It is difficult for me to do my laundry due to lifting, folding and putting clothes away.	5	80	12	32	129
23) I am unable to make necessary repairs to my home due to costs.	4	87	12	22	125
1) I need to exercise more, but don't know where to start.	5	70	14	29	118
16) I cannot afford to pay for dental care.	4	70	15	23	112
11) I have problems keeping my paperwork in order and sometimes lose things.	3	68	16	19	106
28) I have to deal with challenging family issues that are stressful.	2	74	2	17	95
5) I need assistance with bathing, dressing and toileting.	2	54	9	26	91
17) I cannot afford to pay for hearing aids.	2	60	16	10	88
18) I cannot afford to pay for eyeglasses.	0	50	13	16	79

Spotlight: Planning

- **BLEC Partners with Martin Farms**
- **Roadside Farm Stand Serving Lexington County| Locally Grown Produce | Affordable, Organic and Healthy**

Good News: Around the Region

Cola Daily Sign Up for Free Daily News

$60 million mixed-use project coming to West Columbia

Alexia Greene 17 hrs ago 0

1 of 3

West Columbia is continuing to grow with the sale of a 37.87-acre property, which will soon become a mixed-use development. The city's new $60 million project known as Langley Pointe will feature a combination of Class-A housing and commercial components.

NAI Columbia's development team facilitated the $3.75 million deal located between Sunset Blvd., Henbet Dr. and Ephrata Dr.

"Our development team has been invested for many years to help strategically redevelop West Columbia," says NAI Columbia's Ben Kelly. "To make the Langley Pointe project come to fruition, we worked in close collaboration with the City of West Columbia, Lexington County, SCDOT and other stakeholders."

PALMETTO MILLWORKS OF THE CAROLINAS, LLC EXPANDING OPERATIONS IN RICHLAND COUNTY, SC

DECEMBER 7, 2022

Congratulations to Palmetto Millworks of the Carolinas, and our partners in Richland County, on today's expansion announcement. This investment not only helps the company with building its business but provides residents and the surrounding community a better future with new career opportunities.

######

PRESS RELEASE: South Carolina Department of Commerce

December 7, 2022

Palmetto Millworks of the Carolinas, LLC expanding operations in Richland County

$5.5 million investment will create 47 new jobs

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Palmetto Millworks of the Carolinas, LLC, a locally owned and operated polyvinyl chloride (PVC) column manufacturer, today announced plans to expand operations in Richland County. The company is investing $5.5 million and creating 47 new jobs.

Founded in 2021, Palmetto Millworks of the Carolinas, LLC provides high-quality products, designing every column around a structural aluminum core to provide enhanced quality, safety and durability. In addition to columns, the company produces porch arches, gable brackets, garage trellises and flower boxes.

Relocating its existing Richland County operations to Lightwood Industrial Park at Interstate 20 and Farrow Road in Columbia, Palmetto Millworks of the Carolinas, LLC's new facility will accommodate additional capacity due to increased demand.

The expansion is expected to be complete in 2023. Individuals interested in joining the Palmetto Millworks of the Carolinas, LLC team should visit the company's contact page.

EXECUTIVE PERSONAL COMPUTERS, INC. EXPANDING WITH NEW OPERATIONS IN LEXINGTON COUNTY, SC

NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Congratulations to ECP, Inc. on establishing a new East Coast hub in Lexington County. Dually beneficial, the company and skilled workers from around the area will benefit from the career opportunities that come with this investment.

######

PRESS RELEASE: S.C. Department of Commerce

For Immediate Release

Nov. 16, 2022

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Executive Personal Computers, Inc. (EPC, Inc.), a subsidiary of CSI Leasing, Inc., today announced plans to expand with new operations in Lexington County. The company's $9.5 million investment will create 133 new jobs.

Founded in 2008, EPC, Inc. is one of the largest information technology asset disposition (ITAD) providers in the world. EPC, Inc. services organizations by providing premium, flexible and secure solutions for sustainable information technology disposal. The company's services also include secure on-site hard drive shredding, wrap and pack, receiving, auditing, cleaning, recycling and resale of information technology assets.

Located at 1326 Bush River Road in Columbia, EPC, Inc.'s new 203,000-square-foot facility will serve as the company's East Coast hub and accommodate increased production.

Operations are expected to be complete by the first quarter of 2023. Individuals interested in joining the EPC, Inc. team should visit work4epc.com.

City of Cayce
1d ·

The City of Cayce is the proud recipient of The South Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA SC) Planning Award for Small Urban Outstanding Planning Project! The award is given for outstanding efforts and achievements that advance the understanding of local government planning. The award was given specifically for the work put forth in the recent Cayce Comprehensive Plan.

Citizen input had a tremendous influence on how our Cayce Planning Commission, Cayce City Council, and Staff; along with our consultant Central Midlands Council of Governments, wrote the Cayce Comprehensive Plan.

Cayce Mayor, Elise Partin, receives 2022 Presidential Citation Award from Columbia Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

December 2, 2022 | admin | Comments Off | NEWS, Social Media

From Ashley Hunter- City of Cayce – The Columbia Chapter of The American Institute of Architects honors Cayce Mayor, Elise Partin, with the 2022 Presidential Citation Award. This award is in recognition of exceptional service and professional partnership to enhance local community design.

The AIA Columbia Chapter's partnership with Clemson University has been an essential program for the board, local firms, and Clemson's faculty and students. Every spring semester, Clemson brings a studio of students to the Midlands for a day where students are introduced to the city and a site where they will design a prospective building. The

Growing Local: Lexington County has plenty of Christmas tree farms

Price's Christmas Tree Farm is one of at least eight working farms in the Lexington County area.
KAILEE KOKES | CHRONICLE

Good News: Around the Region

NEWS19 News Weather Sports VERIFY WLTX

ADVERTISE WITH US CORONAVIRUS STREET SQUAD IRMO STREET SQUAD LEXINGTON

HIGH SCHOOL

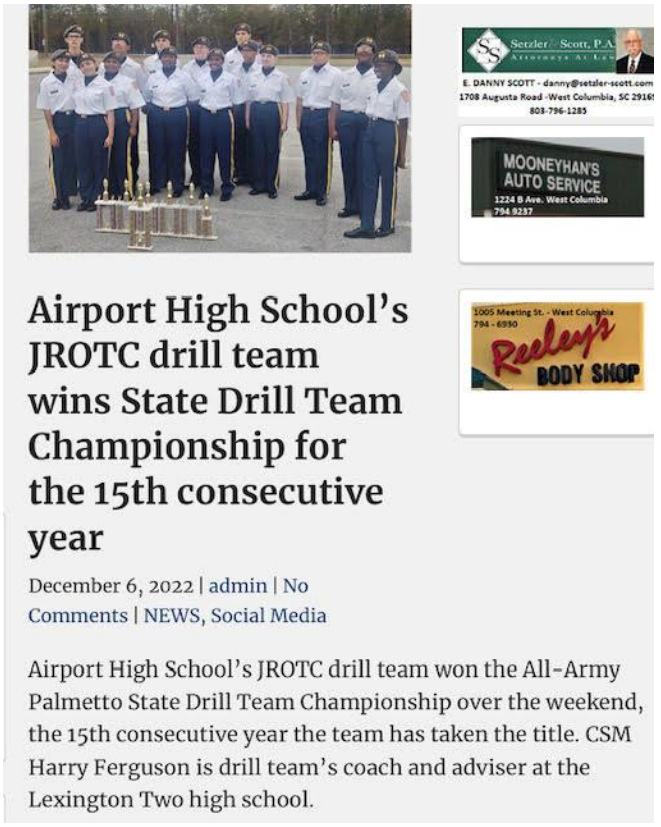
Back on top of the Class 5A mountain, Dutch Fork dominates Fort Dorchester 47-10

The Silver Foxes were up 26-3 at halftime and after a touchdown by Fort D cut into the lead, Dutch Fork responded with 21 unanswered points to close out the game.

Author: Reggie Anderson
Published: 5:01 PM EST December 3, 2022
Updated: 1:06 AM EST December 4, 2022

COLUMBIA, S.C. — After being dealt a stunning loss by Gaffney in last year's Class AAAAA state championship game, Dutch Fork returned to the scene of the crime, and this time the Silver Foxes left no doubt as they defeated Fort Dorchester 47-10.

The win was the seventh state championship for Dutch Fork and the sixth in the last seven years with the only loss coming last year.



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MOONEYHAN'S AUTO SERVICE
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794 9237

1005 Meeting St. - West Columbia
794 - 6930
Reeley's BODY SHOP

Airport High School's JROTC drill team wins State Drill Team Championship for the 15th consecutive year

December 6, 2022 | admin | No Comments | NEWS, Social Media

Airport High School's JROTC drill team won the All-Army Palmetto State Drill Team Championship over the weekend, the 15th consecutive year the team has taken the title. CSM Harry Ferguson is drill team's coach and adviser at the Lexington Two high school.

Good News: Around the Region

Good News: Around the Region

Holiday Market

December 1, 2022 By Staff Leave a Comment

Photos: Barbara Ball

WINNSBORO – Vendor booths and shoppers filled the Fairfield County Farmers and Artisans Market on Saturday for one of four special Holiday Markets.

The Market will be open for two more Saturdays for Holiday Markets: Dec. 3 and Dec. 10 from 9 a.m. to noon-ish.

Locally and SC grown season vegetables, fruits, breads and meats are available. Local crafters offer a variety of items for sale.

The Market is located at 117 E. Washington St. in downtown Winnsboro behind the Town Clock.

NEWS19 News Weather Sports VERIFY WLTX19+

ADVERTISE WITH US CORONAVIRUS STREET SQUAD IRMO STREET SQUAD LEXINGTON

Fairfield County residents, leaders meet to map out the county's future

Residents and community leaders in Fairfield County spent their Tuesday mapping out what they want the area to look like.

Author: Walker Lawson
Published: 6:50 PM EST December 6, 2022
Updated: 7:27 PM EST December 6, 2022

FAIRFIELD COUNTY, S.C. — Residents and community leaders of Fairfield County spent their Tuesday mapping out what they want the area to look like.

It comes after Fairfield was one of 25 communities awarded the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Grant. This federal grant helps the county host meetings, develop a committee and apply for other grants to help move their county forward.

Good News: Around the Region

City of Newberry, SC Government
22h ·

Friday afternoon, the City of Newberry celebrated the beautifully renovated Wells Japanese Garden and those that helped make it a reality for our community! We were happy to be joined by members of the Wells family, that said they were thrilled with how the renovations came out.

Good News: Around the Region

City of Columbia Government
32m ·

The new Greene street bridge project is now open for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles!

Richland County utilizes funds from the Richland County Penny Tax for the Innovista-Greene Street project and the City of Columbia manages the project and timeline for completion.

Next...Phase 3 of the Innovista-Greene Street project plans to provide connectivity to a proposed waterfront park on the Columbia side of the Congaree River.

#WeAreColumbia

New Columbia brewery launches first drinks from North Main facility. Here are the details

BY CHRIS TRAINOR

UPDATED DECEMBER 05, 2022 12:47 PM

Production of drinks is up and running at Peak Drift Brewing Company in North Main Street in Columbia, with some beers and hard seltzers hitting shelves this week. PROVIDED PHOTO BY LYNN LUC

Only have a minute? Listen instead

Powered by Trinity Audio

00:00 03:12

A large-scale brewery project in north Columbia has production up and running on some of its drinks.

City of Columbia Government
6d ·

Councilwoman Aditi Bussells & Councilwoman Tina Herbert for District 1 along with North Columbia Business Association and the Office of Business Opportunities welcomed Abney Seafood back to the City of Columbia with a ribbon cutting.

Congratulations Abney Seafood!

#WeAreOpen... See more

ACTION

Consent Agenda Items

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting – 27 October 2022 *(Enclosure 1)*
2. Rural Planning Work Program Amendment – Planning Funds *(Enclosure 2)*
3. Resolution to apply for Federal and State Grants *(Enclosure 3)*

ACTION

Regular Agenda Items

1. Quarterly Financial Status Report (thru September 30, 2022) *(Enclosure 4)*
2. 2045 LRTP Amendment – Setting the Safety Performance Measures *(Enclosure 5)*
3. 2022-2027 Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) *(Enclosure 6)*

ACTION

Quarterly Financial Status Report (thru September 30, 2022)

(Enclosure 4)

Missi Labbe,
Director - Finance

Central Midlands Council of Governments
Unaudited Financial Statement
July 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022

Enclosure 4

	Approved Budget	Y-T-D Actual	Percent of Budget
Revenue			
Local Revenue			
Member Governments	700,353.00	157,486.47	22%
State Aid	70,407.00	48,673.00	69%
Interest Income	75.00	40.27	54%
WorkKeys	0.00	4,467.23	0%
Local Revenue-Other	0.00	75,201.31	0%
Fringe Recovery	1,090,327.00	230,682.23	21%
Indirect Cost Recovery	965,310.00	197,486.97	20%
Total Local Revenue	2,826,472.00	714,037.48	25%
Regional and Other Programs			
Aging Planning & Administration	1,282,793.00	301,767.80	24%
Ombudsman Program	482,574.00	121,745.23	25%
Midlands Workforce Development Board	940,194.00	264,307.32	28%
Transportation	2,226,858.00	247,661.27	11%
Regional Planning	120,000.00	0.00	0%
Community Development	183,000.00	39,889.50	22%
Economic Development Administration	290,000.00	74,229.84	26%
Local Technical Assistance	35,500.00	0.00	0%
Transfer To Other Program Areas	481,641.00	67,928.52	14%
Total Regional and Other Programs	6,042,560.00	1,117,529.48	18%
Total Operating Revenue	8,869,032.00	1,831,566.96	21%
Contracted Services Revenue			
Midlands Workforce Development Board	2,409,953.00	417,917.00	17%
Aging Contractor Revenue	3,673,468.00	967,937.00	26%
Total Contracted Services Revenue	6,083,421.00	1,385,854.00	23%
Total Revenue	14,952,453.00	3,217,420.96	22%

	Approved Budget	Y-T-D Actual	Percent of Budget
Expenses			
Personnel Costs	3,343,133.00	712,210.42	21%
Fringe and Indirect Cost Allocation	2,055,637.00	422,594.20	21%
Operations and Maintenance	988,754.00	175,642.49	18%
Employee Training & Development	83,050.00	16,203.71	20%
Travel, Transportation & Board Expense	164,476.00	15,700.43	10%
Capital Outlays	284,000.00	2,766.20	1%
Consultants and Contracts	1,468,340.00	108,242.78	7%
Transfer To/(From) Other Programs	481,641.00	68,721.43	14%
Total Operating Expense	8,869,031.00	1,522,081.66	17%
Contracted Services Expense			
MWDB Contractors	2,409,953.00	417,917.97	17%
Aging Contractors	3,673,468.00	967,937.32	26%
Total Contracted Services Expense	6,083,421.00	1,385,855.29	23%
Total Expenses	14,952,452.00	2,907,936.95	19%
Revenue Over/(Under) Expenses	0.00	309,484.02	0.00

ACTION

2045 LRTP Amendment – Setting the Safety Performance Measures

(Enclosure 5)

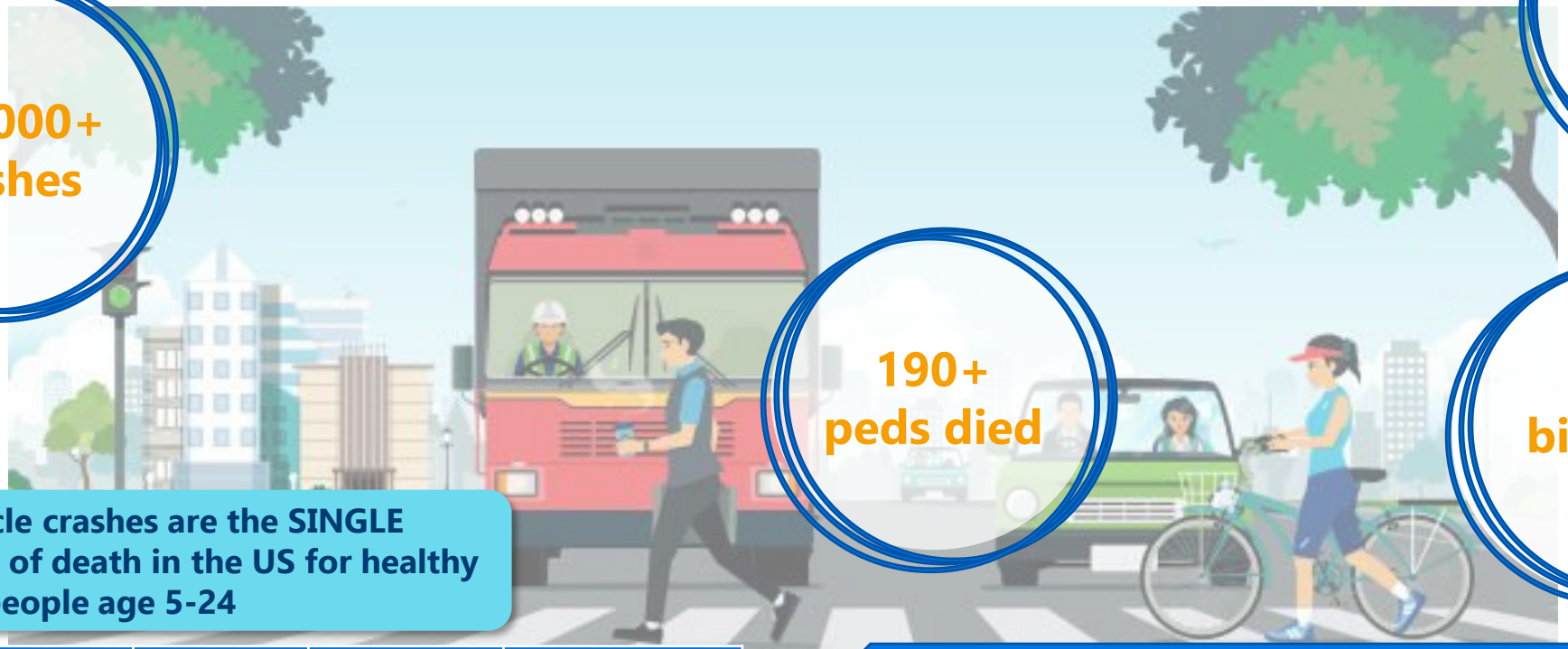
Reginald Simmons,
Deputy Executive Director / Director - Transportation

SOUTH CAROLINA
SAFETY TARGET PRESENTATION

SC Traffic Collision Annual Stats

160,000+ crashes

1,100+ deaths



190+ peds died

20+ bicyclists died

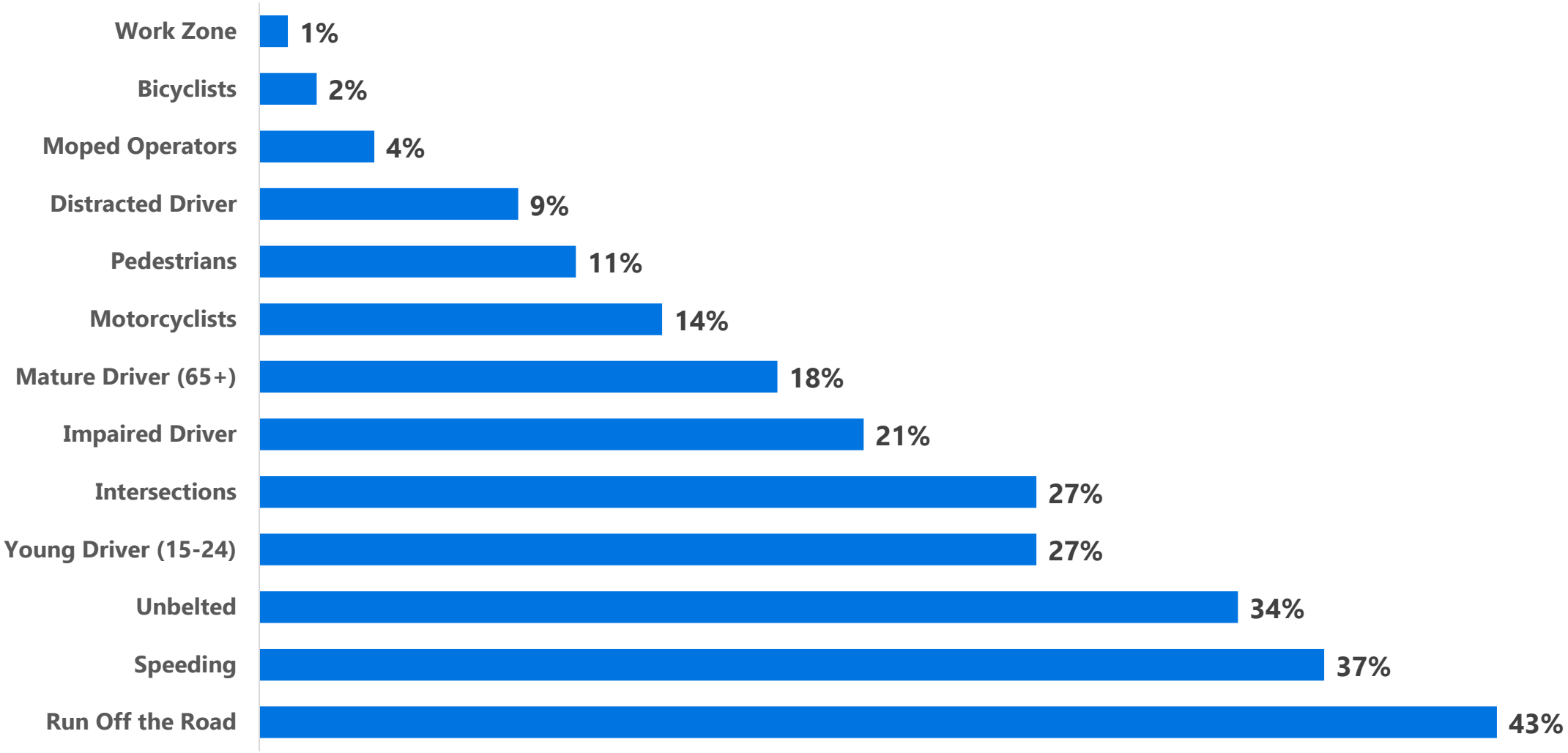
Motor vehicle crashes are the SINGLE GREATEST cause of death in the US for healthy people age 5-24

	2020	2021	% Change
South Carolina	1,064	1,198	12.6%
US	38,824	42,915	10.5%

Nationally, traffic deaths were up 10.5%

IT'S NO ACCIDENT IT'S A CRASH

Emphasis Areas as a Percentage of Total Fatal & Serious Injury Crashes



2016-2020 Data
16,578 F&SI Crashes

How does SC establish its targets?

- In coordination with SC Department of Public Safety (SCDPS)
- Utilizing historical and trendline analysis along with modeling to project future years
- Apply programmatic reductions
- Report targets in SCDPS & SCDOT reports
- Provide MPO/COG baseline data and SC targets

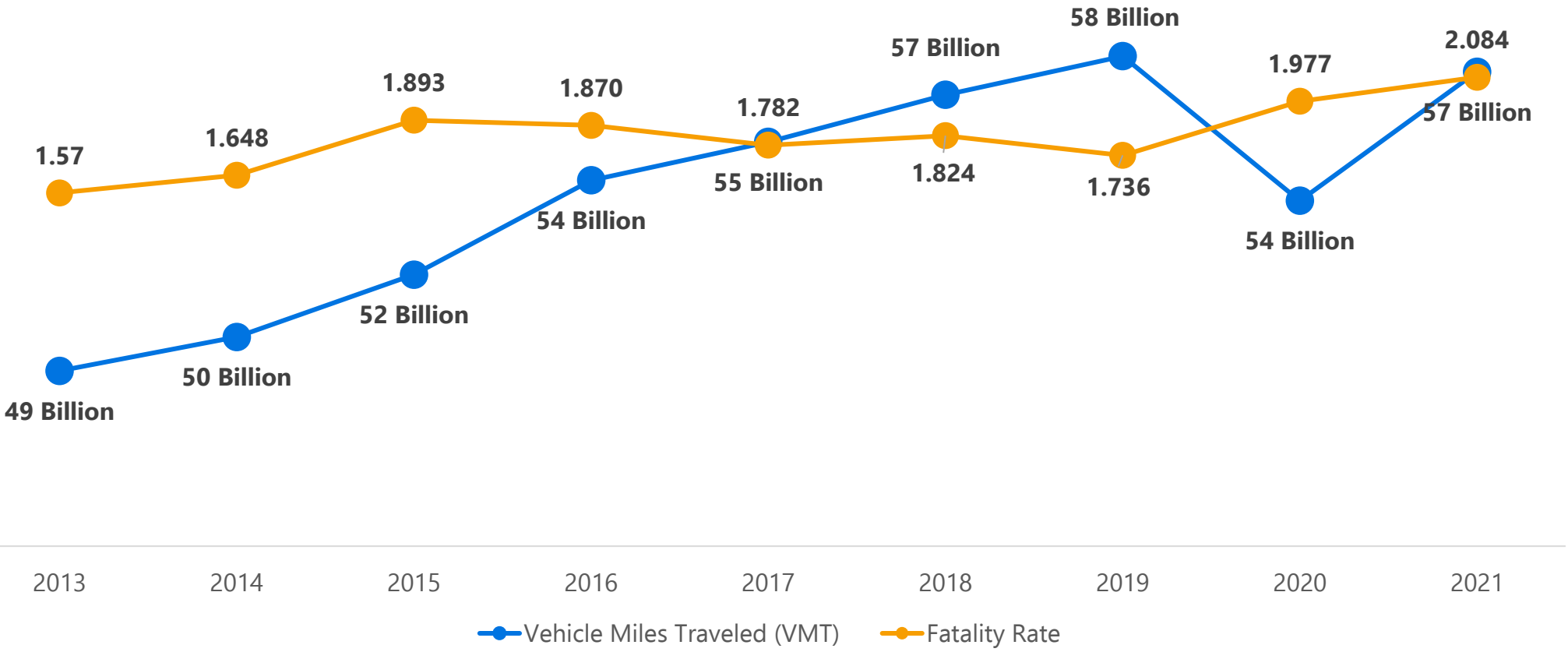
Target Setting Performance

60% of states did not achieve targets

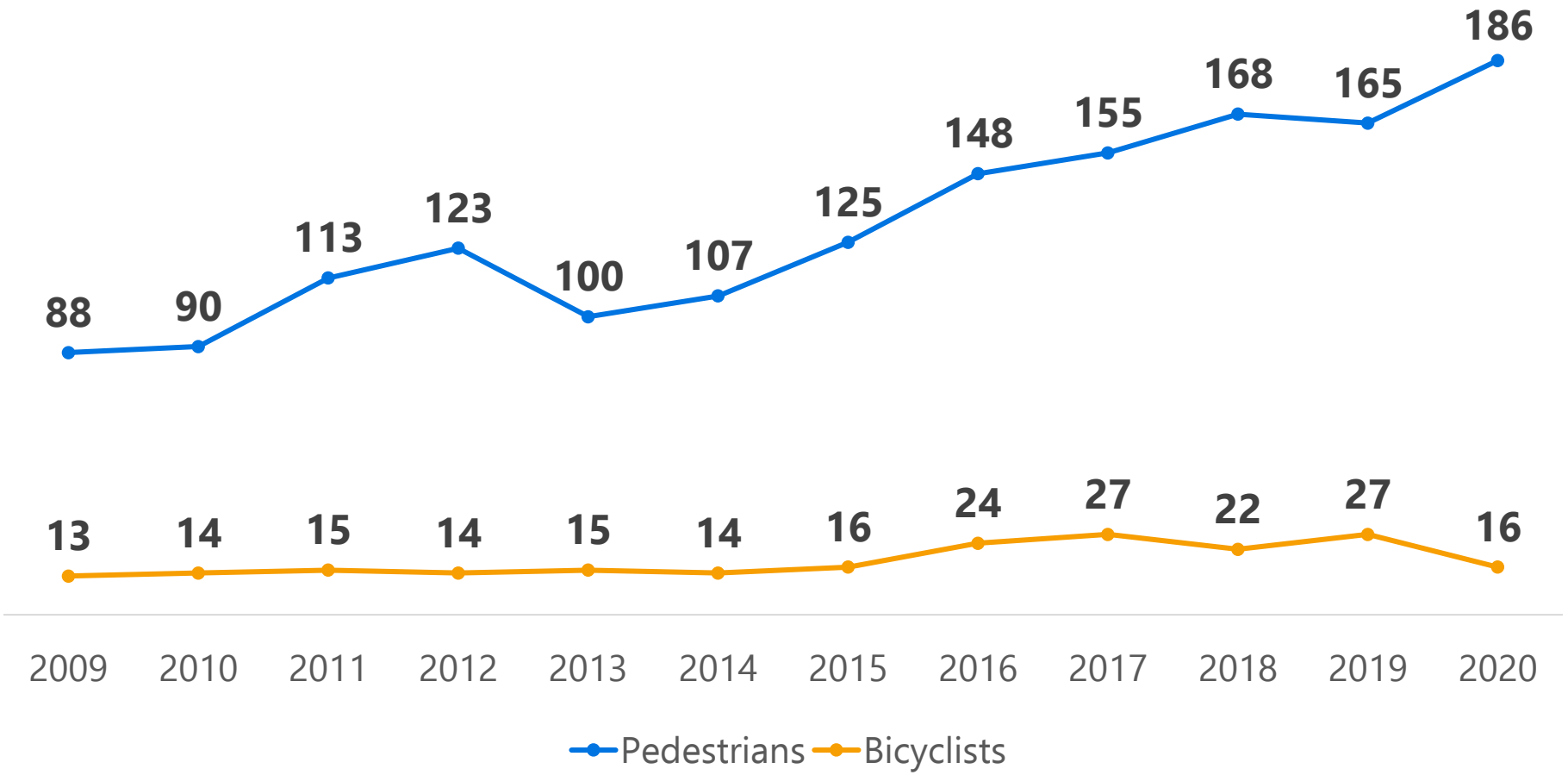
- On April 21, 2022, FHWA notified SCDOT that the state failed to meet or make significant progress on the 2016-2020 safety performance targets.

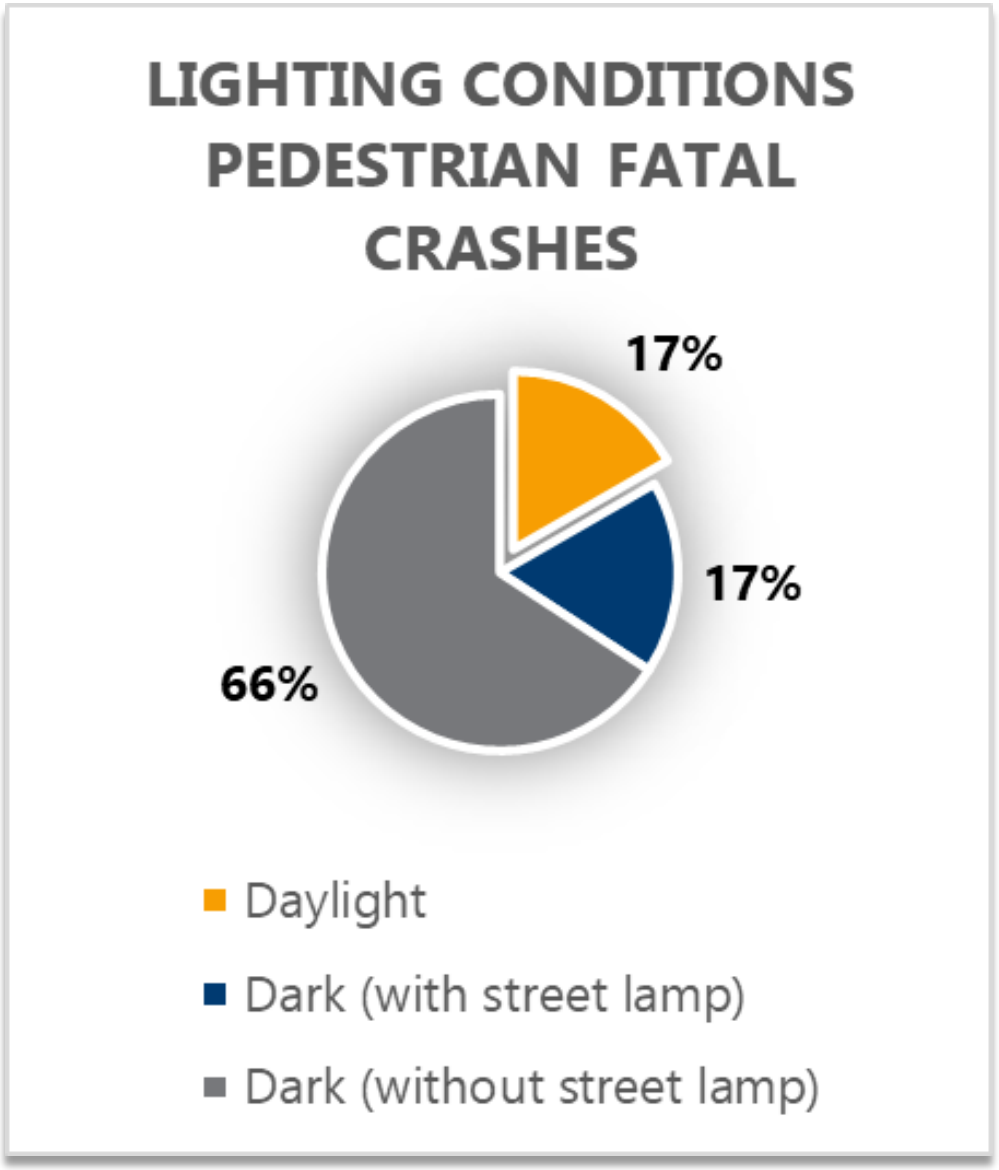
Performance Measure	2016-2020 Target	2016-2020 Outcome	2014-2018 Baseline	Met Target?	Better than Baseline?	Met /Made Significant Progress
Number of Fatalities	1,011.0	1,023.0	969.4	No	No	No
Fatality Rate (per HMVMT)	1.819	1.836	1.802	No	No	
Number of Serious Injuries	2,781.0	2,888.2	2,938.8	No	Yes	
Rate of Serious Injuries (per HMVMT)	4.979	5.180	5.584	No	Yes	
Number of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	380.0	438.8	393.2	No	No	

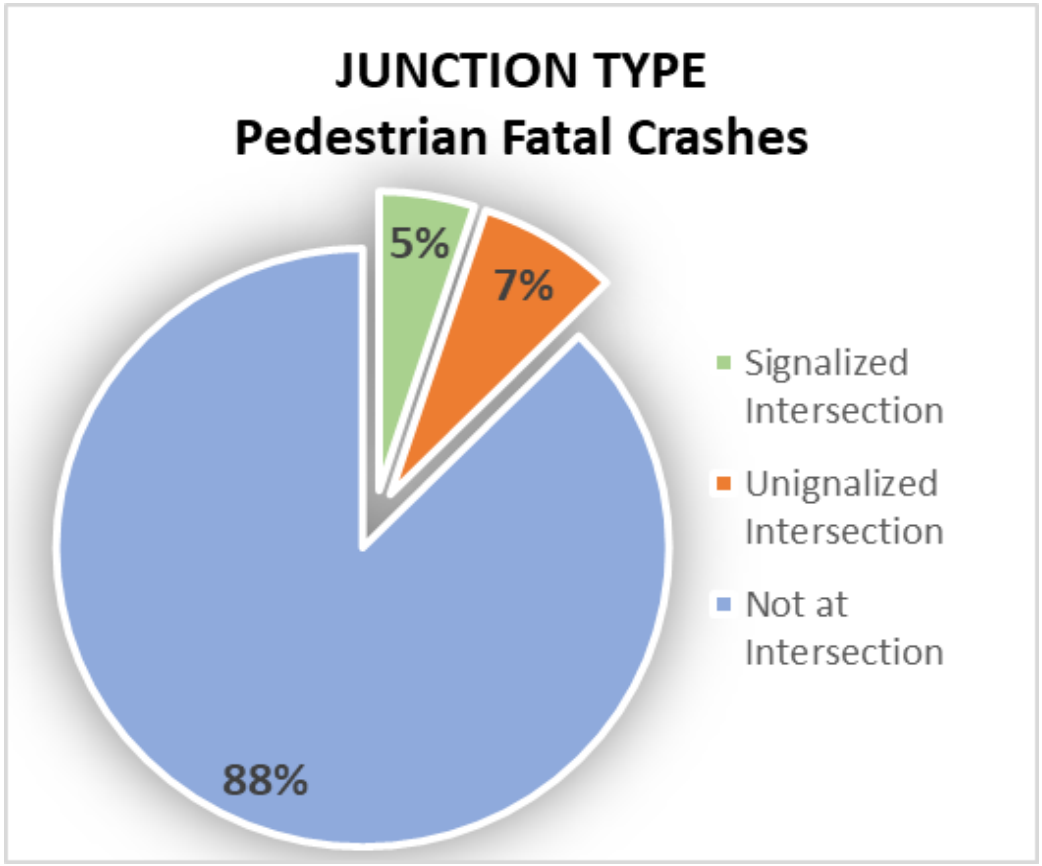
SC Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled & Fatality Rate



SC Pedestrian and Bicycle Deaths

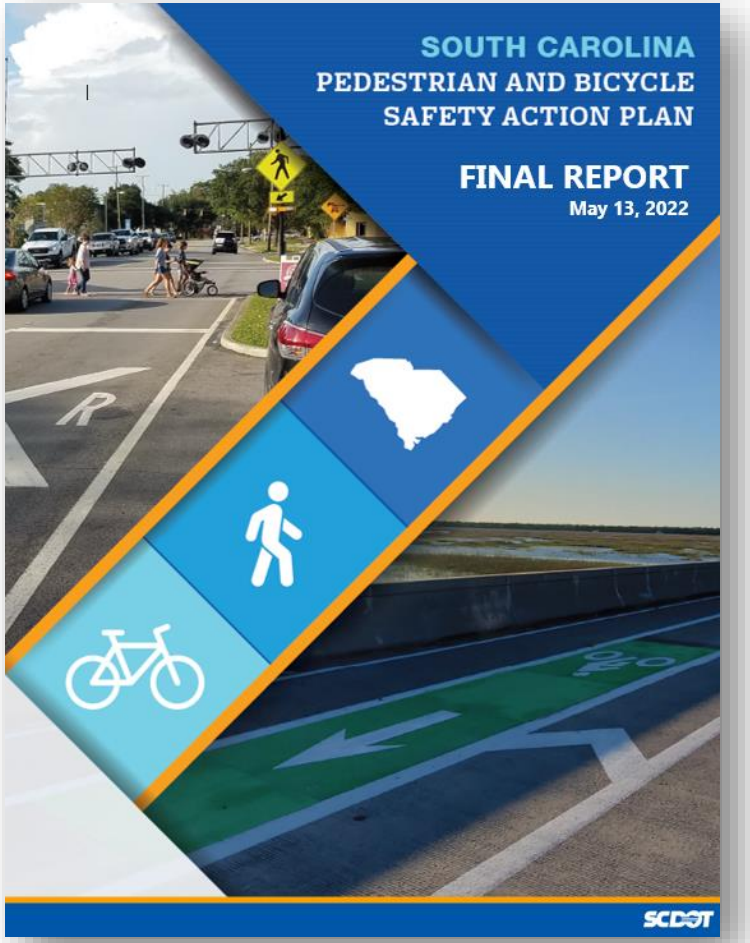



LIGHTING CONDITIONS
PEDESTRIAN FATAL CRASHES
17%
17%
66%
Daylight
Dark (with street lamp)
Dark (without street lamp)


JUNCTION TYPE
Pedestrian Fatal Crashes
5%
7%
88%
Signalized Intersection
Unignalized Intersection
Not at Intersection

Safety Planning focused on ped/bike

- Published SC's first Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan (PBSAP)
  - Recommendation from the Strategic Highway Safety Plan
  - Referenced in SCDOT's Complete Streets Departmental Directive
- Please visit SCDOT's Bicycle & Pedestrian Program webpage for additional resources, links, and final report. https://www.scdot.org/projects/bikeped.aspx
- Final high-crash and high-risk lists are available in Excel and kmz formats
- Share social media posts *(forthcoming!)*



2019-2023 Safety Targets

Performance Measure	5 Year Rolling Averages	
	2017-2021 Baseline	2019-2023 Target
Number of Fatalities	1,058.0	1,119.0
Fatality Rate (per HMVMT)	1.880	1.940
Number of Serious Injuries	2,859.0	2,868.0
Rate of Serious Injuries (per HMVMT)	5.073	4.960
Number of Non-motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	458.0	485.0

MPO Safety Target Baselines (2017-2021 Average)

Study Area	Traffic Fatalities	Fatality Rate*	Severe Injuries	Severe Injury Rate*	Non-Motorized Fatalities and Severe Injuries
ARTS	22.2	1.540	52.2	3.606	11.4
ANATS	19.8	2.006	49.6	5.170	8.8
CHATS	88.4	1.540	324.0	5.624	76.6
COATS	103.8	1.406	256.6	3.468	51.4
FLATS	29.4	1.738	73.8	4.368	16.8
GSATS	53.4	1.730	187.4	6.100	41.0
GPATS	102.8	1.682	328.6	5.372	54.6
RFATS	29.2	1.306	99.0	4.466	12.0
SPATS	47.4	1.648	130.8	4.556	20.0
SUATS	14.2	2.018	45.0	6.394	8.4
LATS	25.2	1.374	89.4	4.870	13.6

*Per 100 million vehicle miles traveled

COG Safety Target Baselines (2017-2021 Average)

Study Area	Traffic Fatalities	Fatality Rate*	Severe Injuries	Severe Injury Rate*	Non-Motorized Fatalities and Severe Injuries
Appalachian	72.0	2.272	181.6	5.750	15.4
BCD	40.6	2.250	79.4	4.428	10.6
Catawba	44.0	2.368	114.6	6.164	11.0
Central Midlands	37.2	1.950	64.4	3.358	9.4
Lowcountry	40.6	2.002	78.4	3.842	11.8
Lower Savannah	63.0	2.106	151.4	5.068	12.2
Pee Dee	70.0	2.510	127.4	4.556	20.6
Santee Lynches	36.8	1.908	80.8	4.190	7.4
Upper Savannah	55.2	2.366	119.8	5.116	12.8
Waccamaw	42.6	3.044	98.8	7.046	11.2

*Per 100 million vehicle miles traveled

How will MPOs establish targets?

MPOs establish safety targets by either:

1. **Adopting the State DOT targets**

- Agreeing to plan and program projects so that they contribute toward the accomplishment of the State DOT HSIP target
- Include targets in your LRTP/TIP

2. **Setting your own targets**

- Committing to a quantifiable safety target(s) for the metropolitan planning area.

What if the state does not meet its targets?

- SCDOT must submit an HSIP Implementation Plan that describes actions the State will take to meet or make significant progress toward meeting its target.
- Guidance can be found here: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/legislationandpolicy/fast/hsip_implementation_plan_guidance.cfm

- No penalty/action for MPOs that adopt the State targets should the State fail to meet those targets.

Timeline

July 1, 2022

- DPS report 3 identical HSIP targets in the HSP to NHTSA

August 31, 2022

- State DOT's report targets in the HSIP Annual Report to FHWA

February 27, 2023

- Last day for MPOs to establish 2019-2023 Target

ACTION

2022-2027 Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

(Enclosure 6)

Gregory Sprouse,
Director – Research, Planning & Development

CENTRAL MIDLANDS

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2022-2027

CENTRAL MIDLANDS Council of Governments

Newberry • Fairfield • Richland • Lexington

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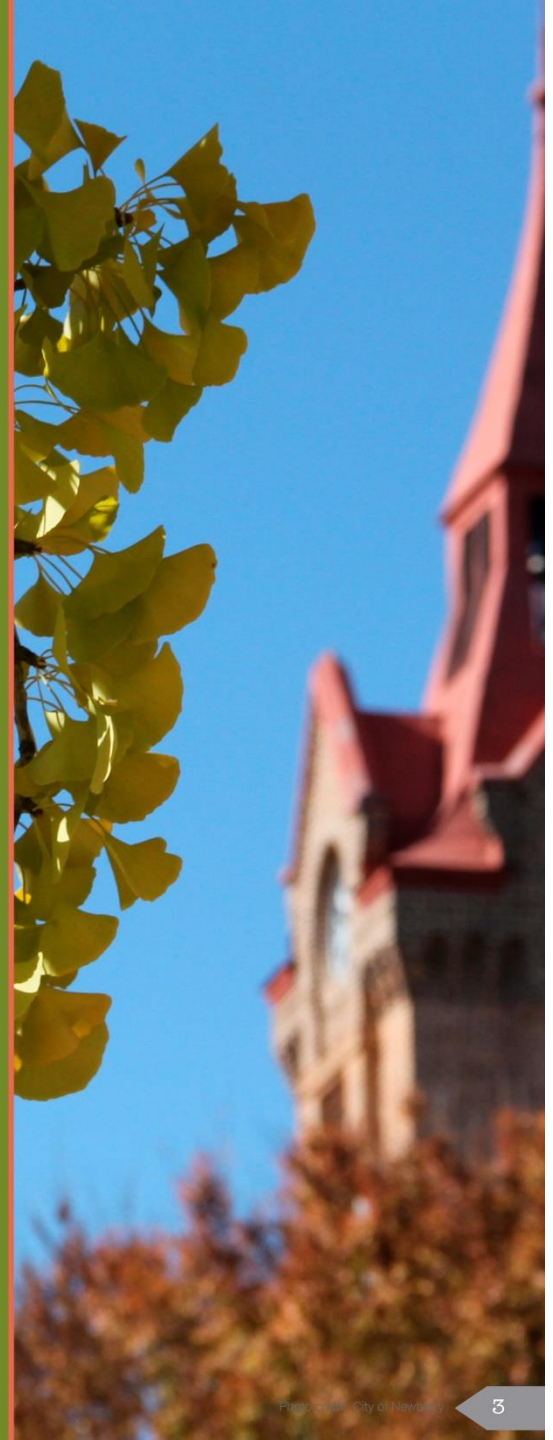


Photo Credit: City of Newberry

Introduction

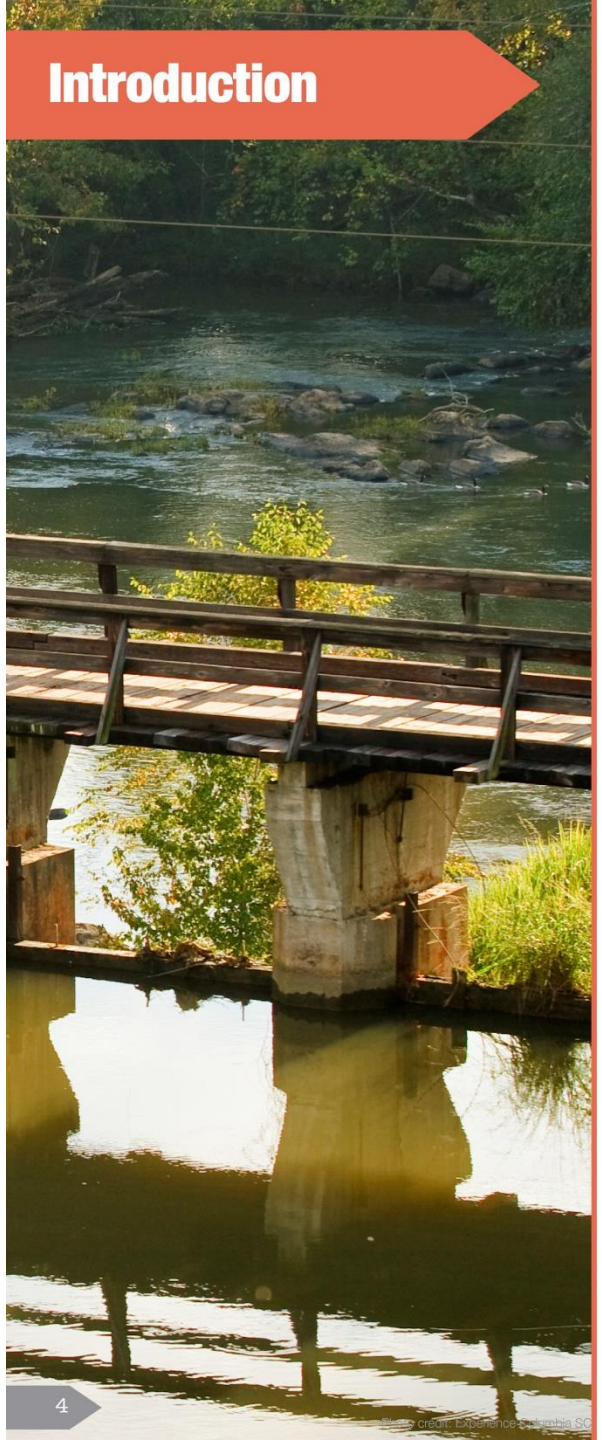


Photo credit: Experience Columbia SC

The United States Economic Development Administration (EDA), which is part of the US Department of Commerce, is charged with leading the federal economic development agenda for the country by promoting innovation and regional collaboration as a means for increasing global competitiveness and building diversified and resilient regional economies. EDA accomplishes this goal by making strategic regional investments that foster job creation, leverage public and private resources, foster innovation, increase competitiveness, promote environmental sustainability, and strengthen underserved communities. To ensure development of a diversified grant portfolio that helps communities to grow, proper, and become more resilient, EDA has defined the following investment priorities:

- Equity
- Recovery & Resilience
- Workforce Development
- Manufacturing
- Technology-Based Economic Development
- Environmentally-Sustainable Development
- Exports and Foreign Direct Investment

EDA grant applications should demonstrate alignment with one or more of these investment priorities in order to be considered for funding under the competitive grant process.

What is a CEDS?

EDA promotes regional collaboration by designating local economic development districts (EDD) which are then required to create and maintain a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS). The CEDS is designed to be an inclusive, strategy driven planning process that defines a regional vision for economic growth and resilience and identifies local priorities for future investment. The CEDS is an ongoing planning process that must be revisited annually and updated every five years.

The last CEDS plan for the Central Midlands EDD, which includes Fairfield, Newberry, Richland, and Lexington counties, was adopted in 2017. The document presented here represents the 2022-2027 five year update. Per EDA guidelines the 2017-2022 CEDS includes the following elements:

- Summary background of the regional economy, including socio-economic trends, an inventory of natural and cultural resource assets, and an assessment of economic conditions
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis
- Regional goals and objectives
- Performance measurement framework

These elements were developed through a collaborative planning process that included coordination with representatives from local governments, community organizations, private sector partners, and other ongoing local and regional planning processes.

CEDS Strategy Committee

The CEDS Strategy Committee, which helps to guide the ongoing CEDS planning process, includes representatives from a broad range of public and private sector partners intended to represent the main economic interests of the region. Per EDA guidelines, the committee included involvement from the private sector, the economic development community, higher education, workforce development, and community groups. Ongoing outreach efforts and engagement also ensure geographic representation across the four county EDD.

Coordination and Synthesis with Other Plans

A primary goal of the CEDS planning process is to take into account, integrate, and leverage other planning processes. Such coordination efforts help to reduce the duplication of efforts, foster inter-agency/organizational collaboration, and recognize the economic development work already being done at the regional and local level. The 2022-2027 Central Midlands CEDS was developed by ensuring consistency with existing local and regional economic development plans, and directly engaging with ongoing planning processes. Some key regional and local planning projects that were directly integrated with the CEDS are summarized on the following page.

EDA Programs/Funding Opportunities

EDA strives to meet their investment priorities by making funding available to local and regional partners through the following programs:

- Public Works and Economic Adjustment
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms
- University Center Economic Development
- Regional Innovation Strategies
- Planning, Research, and Technical Assistance
- Economic Development Integration

In addition to these regular funding programs, EDA also allocates funding for disaster recovery and resilience. In response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, EDA made CARES Act and ARRPA funding available to communities through a wide range of new and innovative competitive grant programs designed to assist with economic response and recovery. In order to be eligible for EDA funding, projects should demonstrate consistency with the goals and objectives of the CEDS. For more information visit the EDA website at www.eda.gov.

MBLG Regional Competitiveness Initiative

The Midlands Business Leadership Group (MBLG), is an organization composed of over fifty (50) corporate leaders who convene regularly to work on issues critical to the Midlands region. Each year MBLG produces the Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report, which evaluates the competitiveness of the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in relationship to nine other metropolitan areas across the Southeastern United States. The report, developed in partnership with research economists at the University of South Carolina, measures economic competitiveness based the following five evaluation metrics:

- Talent
- Innovative Capacity
- Entrepreneurial & Business Environment
- Industry Clusters
- Livability

The report compares the Columbia MSA to the peer MSAs of Raleigh, NC; Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC; Knoxville, TN; Charleston, SC; Greensboro-High Point, NC; Winston-Salem, NC; Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC; Lexington-Fayette, KY; and Tallahassee, FL. According to the 2021-22, the Columbia MSA continues to rank high for entrepreneurial and business environment, but lags behind peer communities on talent, innovative capacity, industry clusters, and livability. In early 2022, MBLG created a new Midlands Regional Competitiveness Council to identify and implement strategies for improving on each of these competitiveness metrics.

The Congaree Biosphere Region

Congaree National Park, located in Lower Richland County, is the only national park within South Carolina. It includes one of the largest remaining tracts of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the state. The beauty and value of Congaree National Park is recognized internationally by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program's (MAB). In 1983 the park was designated as the Congaree Biosphere Region (CBR), becoming one of 28 sites in the U.S. Biosphere Network and one of 701 sites in the World Network of Biosphere Regions. Long, rich, and complex cultural legacies in the CBR encompass native American traditions, African American culture, colonial and Revolutionary war history, outdoor recreation heritage, agricultural and logging heritage, and more.

In May 2021, Central Midlands Council of Governments, South East Rural Community Outreach, and Congaree National Park established the CBR Advisory Council with the mission to "foster a future that celebrates, values, and sustains the rich natural and cultural legacies of the SC Midlands in concert with opportunities to promote healthy, vibrant, and prosperous communities". The CBR Advisory Council is a non-regulatory, voluntary landscape collaborative, working to promote sustainable community and economic development opportunities that celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the local landscape.

Fort Jackson McEntire Joint Land Use Study

Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) in partnership with the Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), and area military installations conducted planning and feasibility study to identify opportunities to guide land use development around the installations by directly connecting compatible conservation and "working" land uses with military readiness priorities. The planning assessment includes a "working" land suitability analysis, a peer community/case study review, a comprehensive supply and demand based market analysis of agriculture, forestry, conservation, eco and agri-tourism related industries, and an assessment of institutional demand for regionally produced agricultural and forestry goods.

Sentinel Landscape Initiative

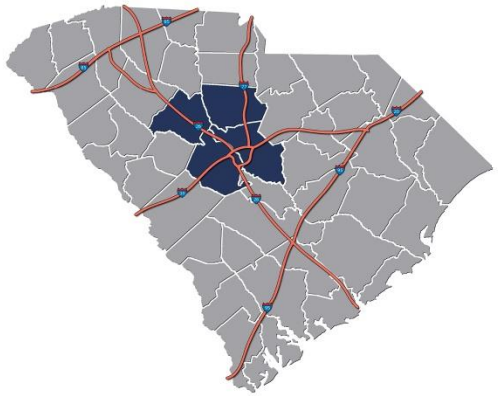
This study was coordinated with a larger effort by the Midlands Area Joint Installation Consortium to pursue a Federal Sentinel Landscape designation for the areas between Fort Jackson, McEntire JANGB, Shaw AFB, and the Congaree National Park. The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and the Interior established the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership to better serve areas of the United States where working and natural lands converge with national defense facilities. The goals and objectives of the Joint Land Use Study and the regional sentinel landscape efforts are consistent with the goals and objectives established in the 2022-2027 CEDS.

Other Regional and Local Plans

Other key planning resources that were directly consulted as a part of the planning process include:

- County Economic Development Plans
- Local Government Comprehensive and Strategic Plans
- I-77 Alliance Strategic Economic Plan
- Central SC Alliance Guides, Profiles, and Studies
- SC Council on Competitiveness Cluster and Initiative Profiles
- Regional and State Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plans
- CMCOG 2021 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- COATS 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Lower Richland Tourism Study
- Self-Sufficiency Standard for South Carolina 2020

Regional Summary



Population 18 and Under
22%

Population 65 and Older
14%

Median Age
36.6

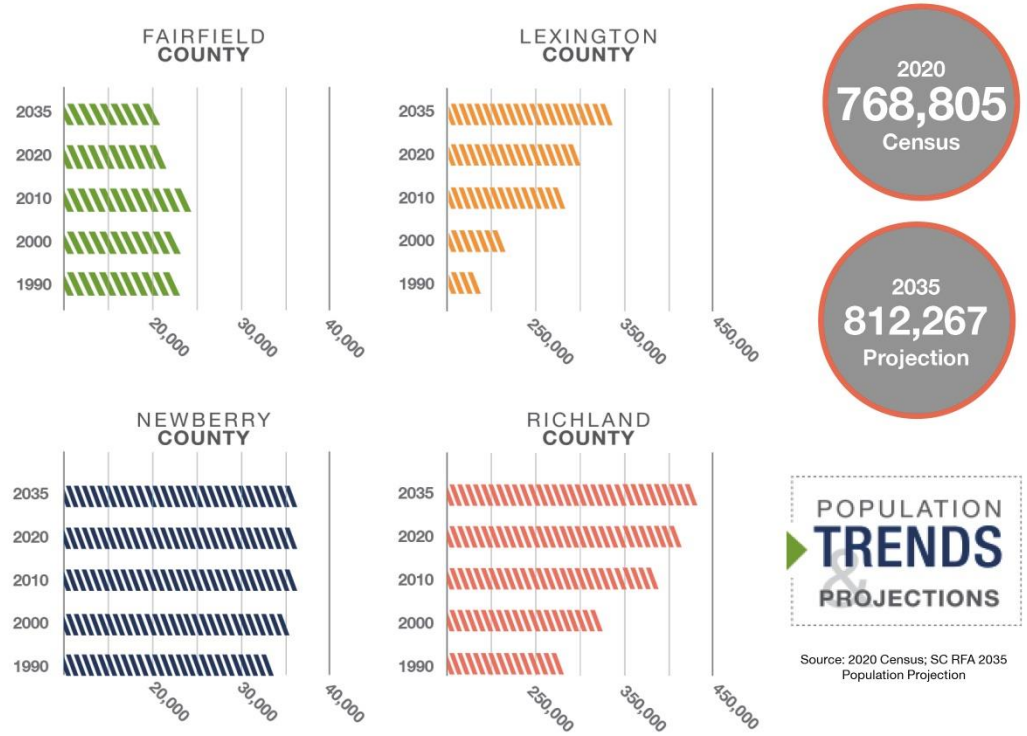
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 - 2020 American Community Survey

Focus On:
COMMUNITY

Located near the geographic center of the state, the Central Midlands Economic Development District (EDD) consists of Fairfield, Newberry, Richland, and Lexington Counties. The region is approximately equidistant between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, and is bisected by two major river systems, the Broad and Saluda, which converge in downtown Columbia. The four county region has a diverse and resilient economy, a rich natural and cultural heritage, and a growing population that is projected to exceed 800,000 by the year 2035. The following regional summary highlights key trends related to growth and development, natural and cultural resources, infrastructure assets, and the regional economy and workforce.

Growth and Development

Like many parts of the Southeastern United States, the Columbia Metropolitan area continues to be a hotspot for growth and development. Since the 1970s urban and suburban growth has spread outward from the city center transforming small rural towns into booming bedroom communities. Northeast Richland County, the Irmo-Chapin area, and the Town of Lexington consistently absorb the largest share of regional population growth. In recent years, however, downtown Columbia has experienced a residential and commercial resurgence, highlighted by the Bullstreet development, Main Street revitalization, and a boom in new student housing. Other historic business districts around the region, such as Newberry and Lexington, are also experiencing a renaissance, and are transforming themselves into vibrant, mixed use, regional activity centers.
Despite the rapid pace of growth in Richland and Lexington Counties, it is important to recognize that much of the Central Midlands region remains rural in nature and has not experienced the same level of residential and commercial development over the last several decades.

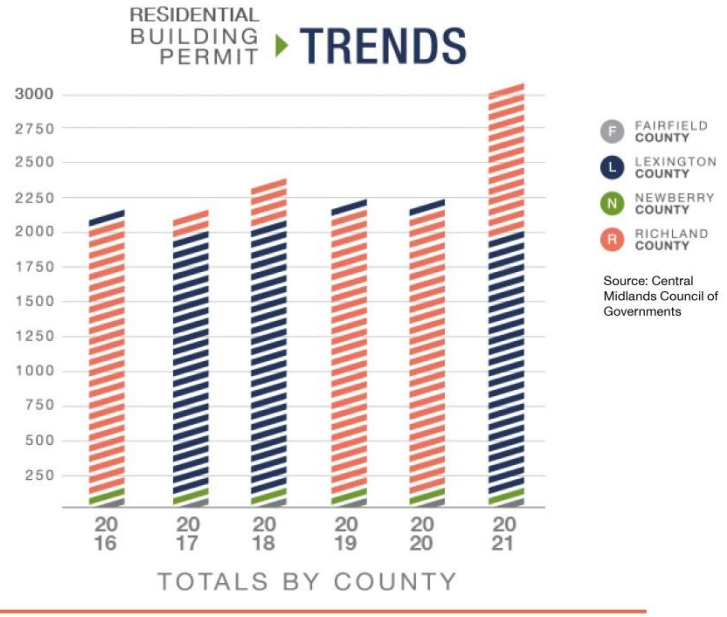


2020
768,805
Census

2035
812,267
Projection

POPULATION
TRENDS
&
PROJECTIONS

Source: 2020 Census; SC RFA 2035 Population Projection



The entire region, however, will likely be impacted in some capacity by the level of growth that is expected to take place over the next thirty years. By the year 2035, the entire region is expected to have a population of 812,267 people, which is a 15% (51,925) increase from the 2010 decennial census population.

As would be expected, the age demographics for the region are reflective of the urban and rural divide, with the urban counties having a much larger population of younger and middle age residents, while the rural areas have a much larger aging population. The region as a whole is expected to see substantial growth in this age cohort over the next thirty years as retirees continue to migrate into the Southeastern United States. Needed investments in services and infrastructure to accommodate this aging population will continue to play an important role in regional planning and economic development initiatives.

As the regional population grows, it is also becoming more diverse. Since the 2010 Census each County in the region has seen an increase in racial and ethnic diversity with 5.8% of residents identifying as a race other than white or African American. Based on the 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, Hispanics or Latino's (of any race) comprise 5.6% of the region's population, and approximately 59,000 or 8.13% of residents 5 years and older speak a language other than English, 4.4% of which primarily speak Spanish.

Housing

The demand for new housing continues to rise across the Central Midlands region, particularly in the high growth areas of Richland and Lexington counties. In 2021, over 5,000 residential building permits were issued at an estimated value of $1.2 billion. Steady growth in building permits since 2011 indicates long term sustained recovery from the 2008 recession. The COVID-19 pandemic did not cause a slow down in building permit activity as the region saw some of the highest numbers and values of permits issued in recent years. On average, about 71.3% of households own their home versus renting. This number has seen a slight decline over the last several decades.

Richland and Lexington Counties

Average Monthly Rent

$960

12% Increase Over 5 Years

Fairfield and Newberry Counties

Average Monthly Rent

$747

50% Cost Burdened Renters

23% Cost Burdened Owners

54% Cost Burdened Renters

26% Cost Burdened Owners

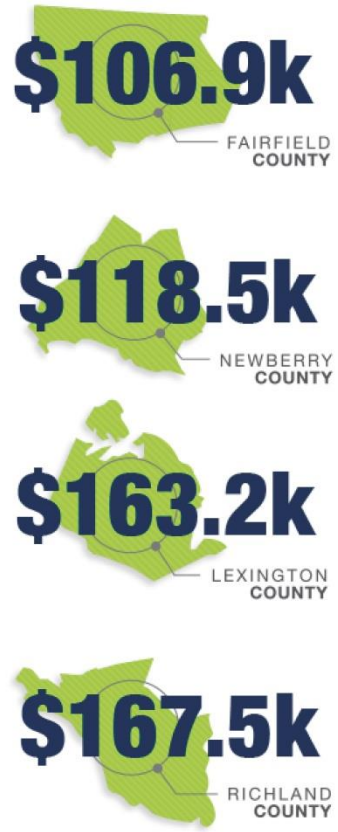
Median home values and rents have been on the rise, but continue to be slightly below the state average, and in some cases are significantly lower than other comparable market areas across the country. The median household income has also remained steady showing very little growth when adjusted for inflation. These numbers, averaged for the region, are comparable to SC as a whole, but significantly less than the US. Affordable housing is an ongoing challenge across the region with 52% of renters and 25% of homeowners being cost burdened, which is defined by HUD as occupants that spend more than 30% of their income for housing costs.

Income and Poverty

Since 2000, the region has seen a steady increase in families below the federal poverty level with the highest percentage in Fairfield County and the lowest percentage in Lexington County. The current regional poverty rate is 14.8%. On average, 9.5% of the total population is considered to be food insecure with the highest insecurity rates found in Fairfield and Richland counties. Approximately 5.68% of households do not have access to a vehicle and 33.7% have access to only one vehicle, with some of the highest rates occurring in rural areas with limited access to public transportation. According to the United Way of the Midlands Self – Sufficiency Standards for South Carolina, in order to make ends meet (e.g., pay for housing, child care, food, healthcare, transportation, etc.), a family of 2 adults with 2 school age children would need to make approximately $50,989 a year, which is higher than the median household income of $48,143. This data underscores the importance of regional planning and inclusive economic development initiatives that increase equitable access to food, transportation, affordable housing, and living wage employment opportunities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016- 2020 American Community Survey

MEDIAN HOME VALUE



Source:
U.S. Census Bureau,
2016 - 2020 American
Community Survey

Median Household Income

HOURLY

$18.84

Self Sufficiency Standard for One Adult with a Preschooler

$38,548

ANNUAL

Source:
United Way Association of SC, The Self-Sufficiency Standard for South Carolina 2020

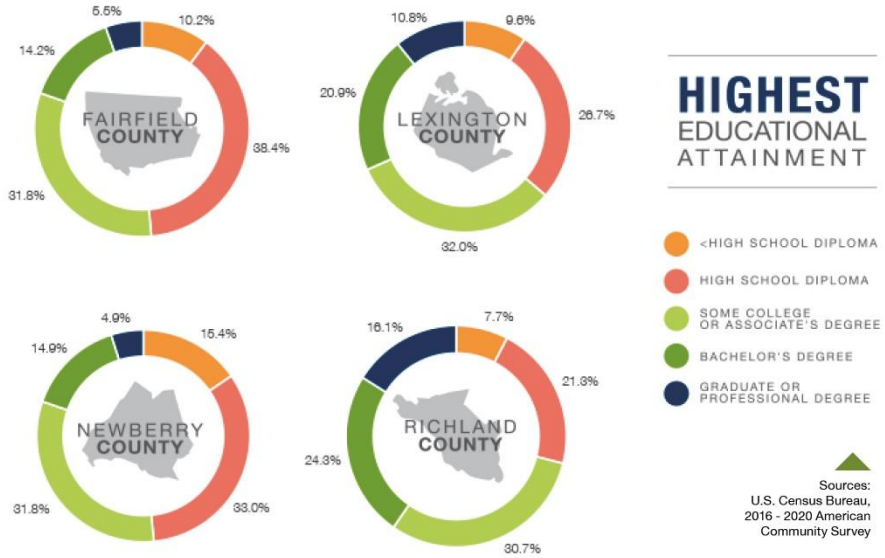
Focus On:

Regional Summary

WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION

Since 2010, the region has added an estimated 34,000 people (civilian population 16 and over) to the labor force with a 64% participation rate. This increase in the labor force has largely been a result of population growth in Richland and Lexington Counties as the population in the labor force has slightly decreased in Newberry and Fairfield Counties. During this same time frame, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has dropped by 7% from an all-time high of 9.8% in 2009 to 2.8% in 2022. The regional unemployment rate peaked at 8.2% during the height of the pandemic but made a strong recovery over the last two years. Despite the record low regional unemployment rates, Fairfield County's 2021 annual unemployment rate of 5.8% is still well above the regional, state, and national average.

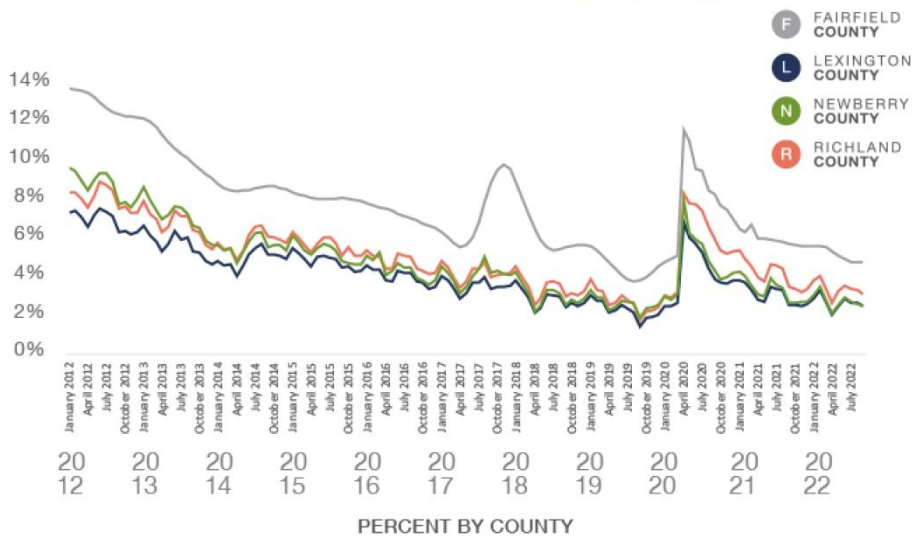
Because of the existing educational infrastructure in all four counties, the region is relatively strong in terms of educational attainment. Approximately 24.5% of the population 25 to 64 years old have a high school diploma, while 22.2% have a bachelor's degree, and 13% have a postgraduate degree. The region is well endowed with a number of quality institutions of higher education serving a student body of 52,734. Each of these institutions have an essential role to play in workforce development and training, as well as community and economic development initiatives. These anchor institutions can leverage their influence, purchasing power, research capabilities, and community reach to affect positive change and create inclusive economic development opportunities. Benedict College, one of the region's two Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs), is developing innovative and transformative programs, including an EDA funded project, to support, grow, and remove barriers for small, minority, and women owned businesses (SWMBEs), marginalized workers, and at-risk student populations.



Sources:
U.S. Census Bureau,
2016 - 2020 American
Community Survey

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS



Fairfield County
2021 Annual Unemployment Rate
5.8%

Newberry County
2021 Annual Unemployment Rate
3.3%

Lexington County
2021 Annual Unemployment Rate
3.0%

Richland County
2021 Annual Unemployment Rate
4.1%

Source: South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
2021 ENROLLMENT

ALLEN UNIVERSITY	621
BENEDICT COLLEGE	1,908
COLUMBIA COLLEGE	1,389
COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	2,338
FORTIS COLLEGE	438
MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE	8,702
NEWBERRY COLLEGE	1,242
SOUTH UNIVERSITY	625
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA	35,471

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

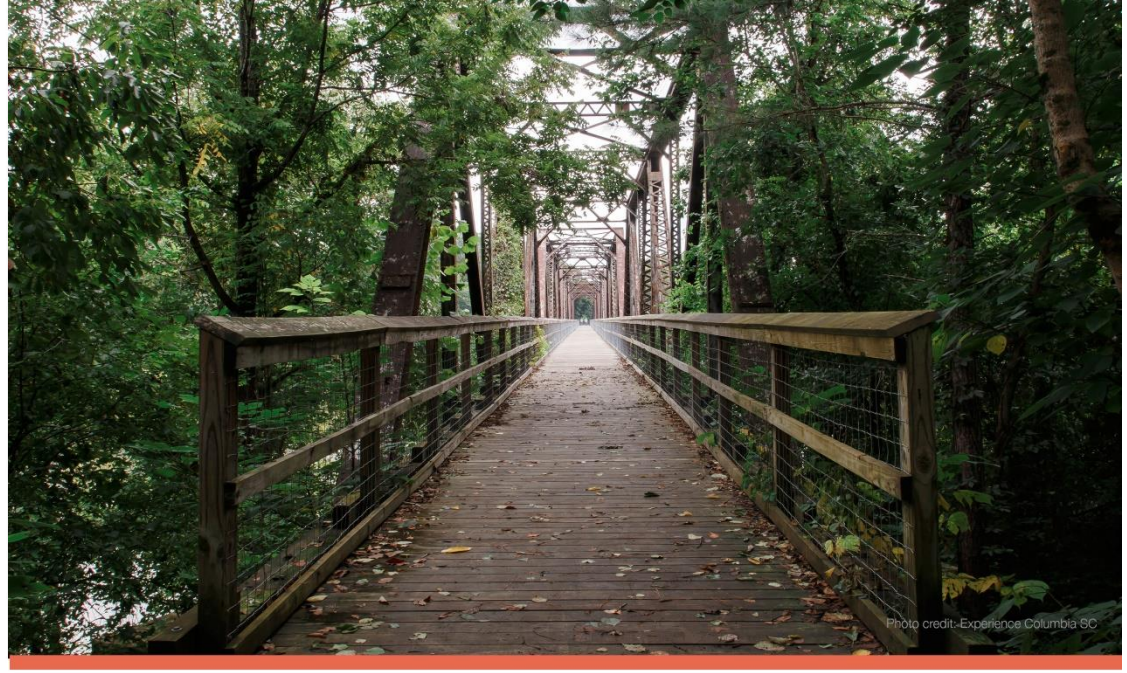


Photo credit: Experience Columbia SC

Natural and Cultural Resources

The preservation and long term sustainability of regional natural and cultural resources provides a significant asset for economic development and should be a top priority. In addition to supporting area businesses, a clean and attractive natural environment with an abundance of art, culture, and recreational resources is essential for attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, promoting tourism, and ensuring that the region maintains a reputation as one of the best places to live and do business.

Water is a uniquely abundant resource for the Central Midlands region and supports a wide range of commercial, recreational, and industrial activity. The three rivers which converge in downtown Columbia are now being recognized as an important asset. A renewed focus on a clean, accessible river system promises to serve as a major selling point for the region for years to come. Much work still needs to be done, however, as 25% of the water quality monitoring stations in the region are impaired and do not support their designated use. This is especially important for Lower Saluda, Broad, and Congaree rivers which support a growing recreational water use industry.

The region's land base is both biologically diverse and economically viable. It supports South Carolina's only national park and a strong agricultural sector that thrives through a rich heritage and renewed emphasis on local foodways. Protecting critical habitat, preserving working land uses such as farming and forestry, and promoting outdoor recreation and tourism, are important and essential objectives with great economic development potential. According to Experience Columbia, tourism has a significant economic impact on the region, generating $2.4 billion annually, generating $120 million in state and local taxes, and creating 21,000 jobs. As the natural, cultural, recreational, and tourism sectors of the economy continue to grow they should continue to be supported by public and private entities alike in order to sustain this growth and create new economic opportunities, especially in rural areas.

Regional Summary

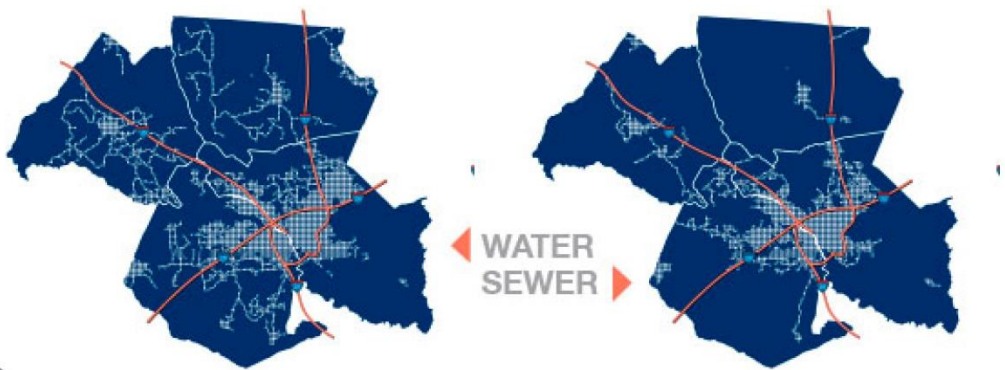
Focus On: INFRASTRUCTURE

Investment in our regional infrastructure is a critical component of economic development that enhances the daily functioning of our community and provides the necessary ingredients for growth and prosperity. Because of the abundance of water resources, the region has been successful in developing an expansive water distribution and sewer collection system serving the urbanized area. The lack of centralized water and sewer in rural areas, however, continues to be a limiting factor for residential growth and industrial development. Fairfield County is working to expand water and sewer capacity with planned expansions of the Winnsboro water plant and the development of a new wastewater treatment plant to provide sewer service to the new industrial park megasite being developed on the I-77 corridor.

Broadband access, an important economic driver, also follows the urban-rural divide as it is abundant in the urban and suburban areas but limited in the two rural counties. Broadband infrastructure is currently being expanded across the state through a program being implemented by the SC Broadband Office. This project will have a significant impact on Fairfield and Newberry counties where service has been historically limited.

The region is served by a well-connected multi-modal transportation system consisting of highway, rail, bus transit, and air infrastructure. Because of its location in the center of the state, the transportation network effectively connects the Columbia area to the port of Charleston and a number of other major metropolitan markets within the Southeastern United States. Despite the regional connectivity, peak hour congestion in the Columbia area is a major challenge with some of the hot spots consisting of the I-26/I-20 interchange and many of the region's primary thoroughfares connecting suburban areas with the interstate and downtown Columbia (e.g., US 378 and US 1). The Comet, which is the region's primary public transit system, provides fixed route bus service in the Columbia area with some limited services in Lower Richland County and West Columbia/Cayce.

The region is poised to make significant investments in the regional transportation system in the coming years. The Richland County 1% penny sales tax, passed in 2012, is providing a steady stream of funding for road improvements, transit service, and bike, pedestrian, and greenway facilities. SCDOT also started construction on the $2 billion Carolina Crossroads project designed to improve traffic flow along the I-26/I-20 corridors. The Comet is also poised to make significant investments in regional transit improvements as it begins implementing recommendations from the recently completed system improvement plan called "Reimagining the Comet."



PLANNED TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

I-77, I-26, I-20 Widenings
Columbia Ave S-48
Hard Scrabble Road SC 262
Shop Rd Extension
Agusta Hwy

3 Rivers Greenway Saluda Bridge
3 Rivers Greenway Congaree Bridge
Lower Saluda Greenway
Gills Creek Greenway
Smith/Rocky Branch Greenway

New Buses
New Routes
New Stops and Shelters
Systemwide Changes

Source: Central Midlands Council of Governments

Carolina Crossroads
$2b

Interstate Widening Projects
$404m

Top Road Widening Projects
$183m

CAE

Source: Columbia Metropolitan Airport

Total Enplaned Passengers

2021: 170,271
2020: 282,324
2019: 671,414

Regional Summary

TOP 5 LARGEST PRIVATE EMPLOYERS

PRISMA HEALTH
15,000

LIVE FEARLESS South Carolina
10,900

LEXINGTON MEDICAL CENTER
7,893

Dominion Energy
3,066

amazon
2,500

Competitive Advantages

Central Location
Abundant Water Supply
Stable Institutional Anchors
Low Cost of Living
Natural and Cultural Resources
Infrastructure Access

Focus On:

ECONOMY

The region is fortunate to have a diversified economic base built on a foundation of anchor institutions such as the state government, higher education, healthcare, military installations, and a broad range of large private sector employers of regional and statewide significance. Overall the regional cluster portfolio is approximately 70% local and 30% traded. Some of the top overall (local and traded) industry clusters by location quotient include: public administration; utilities; finance and insurance; administration, education, and support services; accommodation and food service; retail trade, educational services, and manufacturing. Top manufacturing clusters include: electronic equipment, appliance, and components; plastics and rubber products; chemicals; paper and wood products; textiles, machinery, and food processing.

Some of the region's largest employers include state and local governments, higher education and local school districts, Prisma Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Lexington Medical Center, Dominion Energy, Amazon, Michelin, UPS, Samsung, Kraft-Heinz, and Nephron Pharmaceuticals. The insurance tech industry , and transportation, distribution and logistics, have historically been areas of competitive advantage for the region. The region is also developing significant competitive advantages in the Pharmaceutical, BioTech, and MedTech industries because of the influences of Nephron Pharmaceutical Corporation, which has recently expanded its operations to produce medical grade nitrile gloves; and the Medical University of SC which will be building a new state of the art facility at the Bull Street development in downtown Columbia. The construction, real estate, and development industry is also a significant sector of the economy. The construction industry alone provides approximately 5% of regional jobs and has some of the highest average wages for local clusters.

Agriculture and local food systems is an area of the regional economy that has the potential for future growth as the demand for local foods continues to increase. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Lewis' 2017 report: Harvesting Opportunity, there was a 223 percent increase in growth in local food demand over a 20-year span that far outpaced the average rate of sales growth in the U.S. agricultural sector. South Carolina is a prime food source for the Eastern Seaboard. However, despite the growing demand for local foods, over 90% of the food purchased by South Carolinians is sourced out-of-state. This data indicates a huge leakage in food purchases to out-of-region sources when demand indicates a potential for retaining much of the food chain dollars within the regional economy. According to Utah State University Extension, more food purchased locally means more money will remain in the local community. On average, it is estimated that buying local keeps approximately 65% of your dollar within the community, whereas shopping at large chain stores keeps only 40%. Creating new linkages in the local food chain would build the regional economy that would increase the multiplier effect of each food dollar spent purchasing from local farms.

The region's military installations are another critical aspect of the regional economy with a combined total economic impact of $6.6 billion. Statewide, the military economic impact is up 35% from 2019. Continuing and strengthening the ties between the installations and the region will strengthen the regional economy in the short term and ensure the long-term continuation of the military installations as a major regional economic engine.

The outdoor recreation and heritage tourism industries are also important target sectors because of the abundance of regional assets that have community and economic development significance for both rural and urban communities. Leveraging outdoor recreation and heritage tourism assets is an important means for supporting local economic development initiatives, revitalizing communities, and improving quality of life. The Congaree Biosphere is an important regional hub and anchor for this type of heritage based economic development. In 2021 the total economic output for Congaree National park was estimated at $14.8 million and created 145 jobs. Regional planning efforts such as the Congaree Biosphere Region can help to ensure these economic impacts are equitably distributed within the local community and are effectively connected to similar efforts across the region. Fairfield County is also currently working on an initiative through the EPA to position itself as an outdoor recreation and heritage tourism destination.

Entrepreneurship and small business development is another important focus area for strengthening and diversifying the regional economy. The region has an abundance of existing small business development support programs ranging from technical college and university supported business incubators and accelerators, to private co-working and collaboration spaces, to local and state government supported small, minority, and women business enterprise (SWMBE) programs. SWMBE programs are essential for inclusive economic development, as significant barriers and inequities exist for SWMBEs, resulting in long-standing wealth and opportunity gaps. Supporting the growth and sustainability of SWMBE's is essential for local and regional economic recovery and resilience.

TOP 5 INDUSTRY CLUSTERS BY LOCATION QUOTIENT

Public Administration
Utilities
Finance and Insurance
Admin, Ed., and Support Services
Accommodation and Food Service

TOP 5 MANUFACTURING CLUSTERS BY LOCATION QUOTIENT

Electronic Equipment, Appliances
Plastics and Rubber Products
Chemicals
Paper
Wood Products

Strategic Target Sectors

Advanced Manufacturing
Aerospace and Aviation
Arts, Outdoor Recreation, and Tourism
Construction
Entrepreneurship and SMWBE
Healthcare/Health Sciences
Information Technology
Local Food Systems and Agriculture
Pharmaceuticals, BioTech, MedTech
Public Service - Social Service
Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution
Wood and Paper Products

Focus On:

RESILIENCE

Economic resilience is the ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from any type of major disruption to the local or regional economic base. A disruption can be caused by the loss of a major employer, by a downturn in a specific industry or cluster, by a larger economic recession, or by a man made or natural disaster. In order for a region to be resilient, it must be able to adequately evaluate socio-economic risk and vulnerabilities, assess potential impacts, and build the institutional capacity to mitigate, respond, and recover from an event. Examples of strategies a community can adopt include, economic diversification, workforce resiliency, natural hazard mitigation (i.e., protecting critical economic and infrastructure assets), and regional coordination for pre and post disaster planning.

The Central Midlands region is fortunate to have a diversified economic base, increasing its ability to withstand and absorb a major disruption such as the 2017 loss of the new VC Summer Nuclear reactors and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. There remains, however, a need for regional coordination and collaboration in assessing and responding to the longer term impacts of these types of economic disruptions, especially for vulnerable populations who are disproportionately impacted by these events.

Natural hazard mitigation is an important component of resiliency planning, as it contends with how a population recovers from events such as . Analyzing the historical extent and impact of hazard events aids in determining the probability of recurrence. Combining this information with socioeconomic data such as income, ethnicity, age, property values, and available housing units provides a clearer picture as to the locations most vulnerable and which may require assistance with returning to regular economic function. Reactive, post-disaster relief is a critical component of resiliency that facilitates that return to regular economic function within communities. But proactive, hazard mitigation saves lives and property before an event occurs, reducing the need for post-disaster relief. According to a 2019 report by the National Institute of Building Sciences, Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves, every $1 invested in federal hazard mitigation grants provides an estimated return of investment of $6. Adopting updated building codes that improve overall natural hazard resiliency was estimated to provide a return of investment of $11 per $1 invested.

Each county in the Midlands contends with various natural hazards, each with different economic implications and ways to address them. Hazards such as tornadoes and hurricanes are highly visible events and immediate in their impacts to life and property, while hazards like drought and extreme heat or cold result in hard-to-track but expensive economic impacts and threaten vulnerable populations such as the elderly. According to the 2021 Central Midlands Hazard Mitigation Plan, in the time period between 1960 and 2018 natural hazards caused more than $498 million in property loss and caused more than 400 casualties in the Central Midlands region. In the plan, the assessed building stock value in the region for these assets at risk were estimated at around $85 billion.

Continuous and collaborative long-term resiliency planning is needed in order for the region to adequately adapt to future changes in the frequency and variability of extreme weather events. Temperatures in the southeastern United States are projected to increase as a result of increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Climate models consistently project higher minimum (overnight) temperatures, and higher maximum (afternoon) temperatures. The number of extreme high heat days about 95 degrees will likely increase. Future changes in annual average precipitation are less certain as some models project higher annual precipitation, while others project decreases. However, heavy precipitation events could increase in frequency and intensity due to atmospheric water vapor increases. Despite possible increases in precipitation, increases in temperature can cause more evaporation and more rapid loss of soil moisture. When this happens in the midst of a dry spell, future droughts would be more intense. These changes will directly impact water quality and availability for the region as well as the natural and human systems that rely on this resource. Population growth in the region will increase competition for water and may also impact water quality due to land use change and decreased pervious surfaces near water bodies. In order to meet these challenges, the EDD should be prepared to serve as a source of information for resiliency planning and a facilitator for regional coordination and collaboration.

Food access, equity, and security is another important resilience related issue facing the region. A 2021 nationwide study by Feeding America analyzed the impacts of COVID-19 on food insecurity. The report concluded that people already impacted by food insecurity before the COVID-19 pandemic now face even greater hardship. These impacts would not be experienced equitably; every one in five African-Americans were estimated to suffer food insecurity versus one in nine for the white population. While food insecurity tends to impact rural counties more than urban ones, the report also suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened food insecurity regardless of location. In 2019, one out of every nine people were considered food insecure in urban counties versus one out of every eight in rural counties nationwide. For 2021, Feeding America estimates that this has worsened in urban counties, and now one in every eight individuals are considered food insecure, regardless of living in an urban or rural location.

9.5%
Food Insecurity Rate

Economic Impacts of Natural Hazards in the Midlands Since 1960-2018

Property Loss
$498m

Damage to Building Stock
$85b

Sources: Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments; NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, State Climate Summaries: South Carolina; An All Hazard Risk Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Central Midlands Region of SC, 2021 Update

SWOT Summary

Strengths

- Interstate highway and freight rail connectivity
- Abundant arts, culture, recreation, and tourism resources
- Abundant water, land, and ecological resources
- Strong military presence with regional economic impact
- Diversified economic base with strong industry clusters
- Comparatively low cost of living
- Excellent higher education institutions with an economic impact
- Strong public and non-profit sector
- Strong sense of regional and local community
- Successful and adaptable workforce development programs
- Proximity and access to larger regional markets

Opportunities

- Continued expansion and access to the greenway system
- Enhancement and coordination of regional marketing and branding efforts
- Streamlining of business licensing and permitting processes
- Reduce commercial and industrial property taxes
- Development of suitable sites and incentives for target sectors
- Infill development and community revitalization efforts
- Invest in improvements, expansion, and upgrades to aging infrastructure
- Expand water and sewer capacity in rural areas
- Better coordination between economic and workforce development organizations
- More programs to support workers and businesses with barriers to entry
- Increase access to capital and support services for SMWBEs
- Promote resilience planning, equity, and inclusive economic development

Weaknesses

- Low internal and external awareness of community assets and attractions
- Aging workforce and infrastructure
- High commercial and industrial tax rates
- Geographic disparities, historical disinvestment, and social equity concerns
- Lack of quality affordable housing
- Immature entrepreneurship ecosystem
- Confusion about regional economic development ecosystem
- Limited rural infrastructure, especially water and sewer capacity
- Lack of access to capital for SWMBE firms
- Lack of access to workforce supportive services such as childcare
- High percent of employment in low-wage sectors
- Small pool of companies with high growth potential

Threats

- Ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Supply chain and workforce shortages in key sectors
- Inflation and rising costs of services, materials, and equipment
- Potential for recession and economic uncertainty
- Equitable access to healthy food, jobs, transportation, affordable housing
- Natural hazards and impacts of climate change
- Not enough focus on existing business growth and retention
- Limited commercial flight options at CAE
- Lack of regional coordination in planning and development
- Pollutant loading and regulations for surface waters
- Lack of diversity in leadership and employment
- Loss of workforce age population, jobs, and essential services in rural areas
- Aging and retiring workforce with limited transition planning

Action Plan

Based upon the regional summary, SWOT analysis, input from stakeholders, and review of assessment of other planning initiatives integrated into this document, several major goals emerged as regional priorities. These goals and their underlying strategies address systemic issues and opportunities which have the potential to transform local communities, create quality education and workforce development opportunities, improve regional infrastructure, strengthen the regional economy, and enhance the region's ability to mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural hazards and economic downturns.

VISION

The Central Midlands will be a diverse, resilient, and creative region supported by a sustainable and inclusive environment for the development of a diversified economic base, a skilled workforce, and a high quality of life for all residents.

GOAL 1: COMMUNITY

Support the health, sustainability, economic well-being, and quality of life for all residents, visitors, and businesses.

GOAL 2: EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Provide high quality and accessible education, training, and workforce development opportunities.

GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve, expand, and maintain regional infrastructure.

GOAL 4: ECONOMY

Strengthen, grow, and diversify the regional economy.

GOAL 5: RESILIENCE

Strengthen the region's ability to mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural disasters, future pandemics, and economic downturns.

GOAL 1: COMMUNITY

Support the health, sustainability, economic well-being, and quality of life for all residents, visitors, and businesses.

Objectives:

Growth & Development	Housing	Regional Equity
• Promote and incentivize infill development, adaptive reuse, and neighborhood revitalization projects that leverage existing infrastructure and community assets • Support regional and local gateway and commercial corridor revitalization projects • Strengthen coordination around regional marketing and branding initiatives • Protect, preserve, and promote the regions unique natural, cultural, arts, and outdoor recreational resources • Support public health initiatives focused on healthy eating, active living, and reduction in chronic diseases • Invest in local and regional park and recreation facilities	• Increase and preserve access to safe and affordable housing across the region • Promote regional communication and coordination around affordable housing projects, policies, and best practices • Develop partnerships to expand minor hope repair and rehabilitation programs low and moderate income communities • Support education and outreach initiatives to better inform the public about the role and benefits of affordable housing initiatives	• Prioritize placed-based approaches for ensuring equitable growth and economic inclusion across the region with a focus on poverty reduction, equitable access to resources, and revitalization of low and moderate income communities • Promote and incentivize development projects within designated opportunity zones • Diversify and develop regional leadership for regional boards and commissions, including those of non-profits • Increase public sector engagement and coordination with service providers, community, leaders, and stakeholder groups representing limited English proficiency (LEP) populations

Indicators/Evaluation Metrics:

- Population estimates and projections
- Demographic data
- Building permits
- Home values
- Average rent
- Cost Burdened households
- Poverty rates
- Self-sufficiency standards
- Median income
- Water quality data
- Natural and cultural resource preservation trends
- Opportunity Zone Investments

GOAL 2: EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Provide high quality and accessible education, training, and workforce development opportunities.

Objectives:

Education and Training

- Support and strengthen development and coordination of training and apprenticeship programs with a focus on alignment with the workforce needs of target sectors
- Promote coordination/collaboration between higher education institutions on workforce development programming and economic impact initiatives
- Develop strategies for attracting and retaining workers, to include veterans and recent high school and college graduates
- Develop workforce training and certification pipelines for public, non-profit, and essential service sector jobs in high demand (e.g., water and sewer operators, public safety, healthcare, senior services, education, etc.)

Supportive Services

- Identify gaps, needs, and barriers to essential workforce support services such as transportation, affordable housing, and quality childcare.
- Strengthen and expand essential workforce support services, high quality early childhood education, and life skills training opportunities
- Expand workforce opportunities for essential supportive service occupations such as childcare .

Accessibility

- Increase access to equitable education opportunities and support systems
- Increase workforce and soft skills development programs for vulnerable populations
- Identify gaps and barriers that limit employment for vulnerable populations and marginalized workers
- Support programs focused on removing barriers for small, minority, and women owned businesses (SWMBEs), at-risk student populations, and marginalized workers, to include veterans and formerly incarcerated individuals
- Expand adult education and reskilling programs to meet labor force demand and promote economic mobility

Indicators/Evaluation Metrics:

- Employment and unemployment trends
- Occupation data
- Educational attainment
- College and University enrollment data
- Graduation and retention rates
- Inventory of apprenticeship and workforce development programs
- Number of apprenticeships and companies served

GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve, expand, and maintain regional infrastructure.

Objectives:

Water and Sewer

- Improve water and sewer capacity in rural areas to support new industrial, commercial, and residential development to include development of a new WWTP in Fairfield County
- Replace and upgrade aging water and sewer infrastructure, including consolidation of small systems and septic tanks where appropriate
- Promote regional coordination in short and long term water and sewer planning, including updating the Central Midlands Regional 208 Plan
- Support watershed and basin level planning for water resource management

Transportation

- Support improvements to the regional transit system to include recommendations from "Reimagining the COMET, and expansions of service in Cayce, West Columbia, and surrounding areas
- Identify opportunities for expanding transit service in rural areas
- Expand regional bike, pedestrian, and greenway connectivity to include continued support for expansion of and connectivity with the three rivers greenway
- Invest in strategic road improvements using a variety of federal, state, and local funding mechanisms
- Support regional planning efforts to improve freight mobility, manage congestion, improve intercity passenger rail connectivity, and develop a new multi-modal transportation center in Columbia
- Identify transportation strategies for improving healthy food access

Broadband

- Work with the SC State Broadband Office to expand and improve broadband access in rural areas
- Work with local governments, education providers, and non-profit organizations to narrow the digital divide by providing affordable and equitable access to digital technology, training, and literacy
- Strengthen IT workforce training and capacity in rural areas to supply local labor for new investments in digital technology

Indicators/Evaluation Metrics:

- Water and sewer capacity and expansion projects
- Average commute time
- Traffic counts (AADT)
- Transit route and ridership data
- Investments in bike, pedestrian, greenway facilities
- Investments in road improvement projects
- CAE enplanement data

GOAL 4: ECONOMY

Strengthen, grow, and diversify the regional economy.

Objectives:

Competitive Advantages

- Deepen regional coordination and collaboration among economic development organizations, higher education, local chambers of commerce, and visitor bureaus
- Coordinate regional marketing to promote the region for both economic development and tourism
- Support the work of the Midlands Regional Competitiveness Council and implement strategies for improving on competitiveness metrics
- Promote use of a diversified economic development toolbox that includes municipal improvement, tax increment financing, and business development districts
- Expand/improve/coordinate incentive programs to include review/revision of regional tax structure

Target Sectors

- Continue to pursue and support a diversified economic development portfolio with a mix of traded, blended, and local clusters and a focus on target sectors
- Undertake and support target sector research, planning, and feasibility studies
- Expand focus on existing business retention and expansion and recruitment of small to medium size corporate and R&D offices
- Invest in and leverage regional arts, entertainment, outdoor recreation, and tourism assets as catalysts for community and economic development, including support for the Congaree Biosphere and other local initiatives
- Increase economic connections between regional military installations and communities
- Develop a sustainable, accessible, local food system that supports local agriculture, stimulates demand for locally produced goods, decreases food insecurity, and reduces food waste

Entrepreneurship

- Support entrepreneurship and small business development across the region with a focus on building capacity in rural areas and low and moderate income communities
- Build small business capacity for the growth and creation of quality, living wage jobs by coordinating and expanding regional small business support programs, lending/funding opportunities, and worker cooperatives
- Support development and growth of small business incubators, accelerators, and coworking spaces
- Expanding pool of start ups by breaking down barriers to entry and building stronger sense of entrepreneurial community
- Identify opportunities for leveraging the purchasing power of anchor institutions to support small businesses (e.g., development of an anchor institution collaborative)

Indicators/Evaluation Metrics:

- GDP, Consumer Price Index, Cost of Living
- Retail goods and service expenditures
- Tourism-related income and economic impact
- Target sector projects and investments
- Inventory of SMWBE programs
- Small business equity metrics
- Employment and industry data
- Public sector employment trends
- MBLG Regional Competitiveness Report

GOAL 5: RESILIENCE

Strengthen the region's ability to mitigate, respond to, and recover from natural disasters, future pandemics, and economic downturns.

Objectives:

Natural Hazard Mitigation

- Promote local adoption, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of the CMCOG Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Support education and outreach initiatives for local officials and community partners regarding potential risks and mitigation measures for hazards with high probability of occurrence in the region (e.g., drought, heat, and flood)
- Support education and outreach initiatives regarding the anticipated local impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities of climate change
- Evaluate effectiveness of disaster and pandemic recovery and support programs to help plan for future disruptions

Regional Coordination

- Establish and convene resilience, recovery, and response committees for selected target sectors to include but not limited to: Small, Minority, and Women Business Enterprises (SWMBEs); local food systems; arts, outdoor recreation, and tourism; higher education and workforce development.
- Work with local governments to evaluate natural hazard risks, social vulnerability, climate change, food access and equity, and inclusive development economic in the Resilience Elements of their comprehensive plans.
- Encourage/train local businesses to develop business continuity and preparedness plans
- Coordinate the development of a regional business emergency operations and recovery center

Inclusive Economic Development

- Adopt inclusive and equitable economic development practices as a foundation for economic resilience, response, and recovery initiatives
- Build SWMBE capacity for growth and development of living wage jobs by expanding access to capital, incentivizing development of affordable commercial space, and reducing barriers for participation in public contracting opportunities
- Incentivize economic development investments in low and moderate income communities and explore opportunities for using community benefit agreements
- Create education and outreach opportunities for SMWBEs regarding entrepreneurial opportunities in high growth and target sectors
- Expand access to capital, support micro-lending programs, and establish more community development financial institutions

Indicators/Evaluation Metrics:

- Natural hazard occurrences by type
- Economic impact data
- Food access and equity metrics
- Inventory of industry specific networks/organizations/partnerships
- Number of new industry specific initiatives

INFORMATION

Executive Director's Report

Ben Mauldin,
Executive Director

Executive Directors

Aging: Thanks to our CMCOG AAA State Health Insurance Assistance Program Counselors (SHIP) , Sheila Bell-Ford and JuJanna Davis for assisting many seniors throughout the region with Medicare Open Enrollment.

MidlandsWorkforce
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Workforce: The Midlands Workforce Development Board is currently collecting public comment on its Regional and Local Plans. The Regional and Local plans serve as a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and to support the State's vision and strategic operation goals under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Comments regarding the plan(s) can be sent to mwdb@midlandsworkforce.org.

https://www.midlandsworkforce.org/plan

Public input requested on bike share expansion in Columbia

- Please see the links below for providing input on bike riding in the Columbia area.
- Input can be provided through an interactive online survey and map, and comments provided will help shape the development of the expansion study.
- The study is part of a collaboration with the Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) and the City of Columbia, The Comet, City of Cayce, City of West Columbia, Town of Springdale, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

Thank you for representing and supporting CMCOG!

South Carolina Association of Regional Councils:

Thank you to all board members that have signed up to attend this year's conference from November 20-22,2022.

CMCOG received an honorable mention for Regional Project of the Year:

Reimage The COMET

Happy Holidays!

- Thanks to all our Board Members, Member Governments and Partner Agencies. We really appreciate your support and look forward to working with you in 2023.

Thank you, Midlands Technical College!!

- Special Thanks to Midlands Technical College for hosting the CMCOG Board Meetings!

- Upcoming Meeting Locations:
- January 26
- February 23
- March 23
- April 27

Old/New Business

Other Business

Next Meeting – 26 January 2023

Adjourn

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!