

City of Conway Comprehensive Plan

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

In a community, economic development creates the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, firms, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, lower transaction costs, and responsibly produce and trade valuable goods and services (*U.S. Economic Development Administration*).

The economic development element includes historic trends and projections on the numbers and characteristics of the labor force, where the people who live in the community work, where people who work in the community reside, available employment characteristics and trends, an economic base analysis and any other matters affecting the local economy. Tourism, manufacturing and revitalization efforts are appropriate factors to consider (*Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments 2018*).

The Economic Element of the City of Conway's Comprehensive Plan provides both an inventory and an assessment of a variety of economic statistics used to determine trends and patterns in economic growth. Providing a stable environment for economic growth is key to achieving economic well-being for both current and future citizens and businesses of Conway. Such an effort involves cooperation and collaboration between public and private entities, industry leaders, and organizations, educational institutions and citizens.

A Brief History:

In 1670, the British settled Charles Town (Charleston, SC). The area now known as Horry (O-Ree) County was part of old Craven County, established in 1682. In 1730, Robert Johnson, Royal Governor of SC, included Kingston Township in a plan to encourage development of the Province of SC. By 1732, the site of the Town of Kingston (Conway) was marked out. In 1734, a plan for the town was completed and by 1735 the first settlers had begun to arrive (*City of Conway 2018*).

Many area residents fought in the American Revolutionary War. Small engagements were fought near Kingston at Bear Bluff on the

Waccamaw, at Black Lake along the Little Pee Dee, and in the Socastee area. Gen. Francis Marion, who was known as the "Swamp Fox", had relatives living in the area. He and his troops encamped in the Village of Kingston on his way to battle the Black Mingo.

Kingston was located in the Parish of Prince George, Winyah, established in 1722. In 1769 the colony was divided into circuit court districts and the land comprising what is now Horry County became part of the newly created Georgetown Judicial District. In 1785 new lines were drawn and "Kingston County" was created out of the old District. The new county's name was changed to "Horry District" in honor of General Peter Horry in 1801, and a courthouse was established in Kingston at that time. The name of the Village of Kingston was later changed to Conwayborough, for General Robert Conway, a general in the SC State Militia.

The Village of Conwayborough was slow to grow. Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury recorded in 1801 that the town had a population of about 100. Thomas Lockwood's geography of the state published in 1832 reported that the number of inhabitants was 200.

In 1860, Conwayborough had a population of 273 whites and 203 blacks. The Waccamaw River was the town's main transportation link. Planters, who developed plantations both large and small, owned much of the land along the Waccamaw and Pee Dee Rivers. Throughout the rest of the county were small farms, plantations and forests. The important industry in the area in 1860 were "naval stores", i.e. turpentine and lumber. When South Carolina seceded from the Union, area residents rallied to the Confederate cause. Thomas W. Beaty and Benjamin E. Sessions of Conwayborough signed the Ordinance of Secession in Charleston. At the end of the way, Union soldiers from Maine occupied the town for a time.

During the 1870s, the naval store industries continued to expand. Riverboats transported passengers and goods along the Waccamaw River between Conwayborough and Georgetown. The South Carolina General Assembly shortened the town's name to Conway in 1883. In 1887 the railroad reached Conway and in 1898 the town incorporated

and elected its first mayor. Much of the present-day downtown was built in the early 1900s following a destructive fire. The old live oak trees and beautiful Waccamaw River provide the perfect setting for South Carolina's Historic River Town.

Source: City of Conway website (www.cityofconway.com)

Conway, Present-Day:

The City of Conway is currently home to 23,720 people, with a median age of 37 years (*ConwaySCNow 2018*).

As a census place that borders Red Hill, SC, Conway is a city that makes up part of the larger Horry County. The 2010 Census found Horry County as the 5th populous county in SC, with a total population of 289,650. Horry County, notably, has the lowest tax rate in South Carolina and has a cost of living that is seven percent lower than the national average. These factors have been main drivers in the county's burgeoning growth in recent years, as people and businesses alike are coming to the region for affordable real estate and low taxes and interest rates (*MBREDC*). In fact, Horry County is the second fastest growing county in the United States (*Conway Chamber of Commerce*).

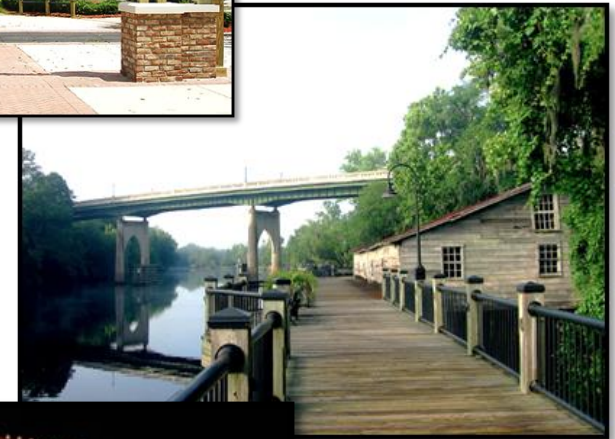
Since the completion of the Main Street USA project in the 1980s, Conway's downtown has been revitalized with shops and bistros. Highlighting the renovation of the downtown area is the Riverwalk, which follows a stretch of the Waccamaw River that winds through Conway.

The City of Conway and Tourism

Conway has been the gateway in which millions of people pass through each year on their way to Myrtle Beach and the entire Grand Strand, with most never realizing the unique experiences that Conway has to offer (*Conway SC Chamber 2018*).

From the Riverwalk, unique shopping experiences in the historic downtown district, to live theatre productions at the old Main Street Theatre or Coastal Carolina University's Wheelwright Auditorium, Conway is increasing economic development through the expansion of its tourism programs and industry with far-reaching benefits for

everyone. With careful planning, the impact of tourism has been (and will continue to be) a positive one (*Conway Chamber of Commerce 2018*).



Source: City-Data.com



Source: Conway Chamber of Commerce 2018

Conway Visitor Center. Located just 15 miles from Myrtle Beach, Conway is filled with history and charm. Many sites in the Downtown District are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and Conway is also recognized as a Tree City, USA.

The Conway Visitor's center is located in the historic Fifth and Main building in downtown Conway that once served as Conway's Post Office. The newly renovated facility welcomes approximately 8,000 guests annually. In addition to welcoming visitors from all 50 states, the center sees a significant number of guests from Canada and Europe. The Visitor Center features information about Conway businesses, parks and attractions. On-site ambassadors are well-versed in information on tourist attractions as well as new resident information. Visitor Center staff members represent the City of Conway at off-site community events such as CCU events, health fairs and newcomer events. The Visitors Center works closely with area groups to provide tours for schools, churches, civic groups, coach tours and individuals. Utilizing rack cards, TV ads, billboards, in-room visitor TV, social media and print advertising, the Visitor Center maintains a constant presence for those visiting the Grand Strand and relocating to the Conway area. The recently renovated Visitor Center is available for rent. Since they opened in the spring of 2017, the facility has hosted birthday parties, weddings and staff retreats. The building has a capacity for 99 people and offers tables and chairs for renter use.



Source: Conway Downtown Alive

Bucksport Marina. Located at mile marker 377 on the Waccamaw River, Bucksport Marina is close to both Conway and Myrtle Beach. The marina's mission is to continue to offer a historic, scenic and beautiful destination to its patrons who are either visiting or traveling to Horry County and the Myrtle Beach area. The marina wishes to provide activities that will be fun, exciting, relaxing and interesting while maintaining their history and low country culture in an eco-friendly and sustainable environment. Their goal is to demonstrate a guest-friendly experience that makes their visitors want to share their story while visiting again and again.



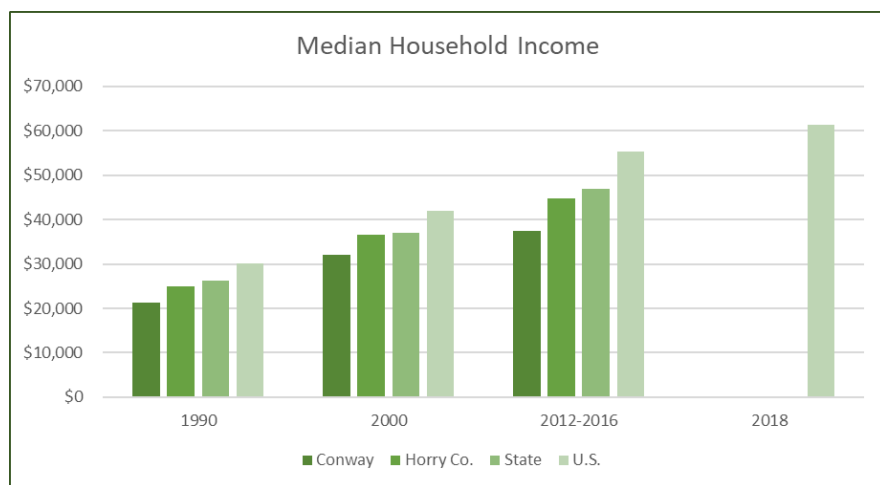
Source: Bucksport Plantation (website)

ECONOMIC PROFILE

Income

The median household income in Conway, SC is \$37,432; an 8.14% increase between 2015-2016 (2018 Data USA). The median household income for Horry County is \$46,475. The median annual income in the United States is \$61,378, as of September 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau). The median annual income for the state of South Carolina is \$46,898 (U.S. Census Bureau). Conway's median annual income is \$9,466 less than the rest of South Carolina and \$23,940 less than the rest of the nation. Table ED-1 provides median household income comparisons for years 1990, 2000, 2012-2016, and the national median household income, as of September 2018.

Chart ED-1: Median Household Income comparisons, previous years



Source(s): ACS PUMS 5-year Estimate, U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. of Commerce; Data USA (2018); City of Conway Comprehensive Plan 2019

Median household income increased 2.4 percent in the US between the 2015 and 2016, and was the fourth consecutive year with a statistically significant increase in the ACS estimate of median household income for the nation (2016 ACS Briefs, US Census Bureau).

Per Capita Income

A good indicator of regional economic health, data on per capita income allows for equal comparison from the local level up to the national level. As of 2016, the per capita income in Conway, SC is \$19,211. Horry County's Per Capita Income is \$46,475 (ACS 2016).

Conway continues to lag behind Horry County, the State of South Carolina and the United States in per capita income, median household income and median family income.

Wage Distribution

The GINI Index is a summary measure of income inequality. The Gini coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with a 0 indicating perfect equality, where there is a proportional distribution of income. A Gini Index of 1 indicates perfect inequality, where one household has all the income (Census.gov).

The City of Conway has a GINI Index of 0.437, which is lower than the national average of 0.485. From 2015 to 2016, income inequality had a 3.91% decline in Conway. Therefore, wages are more evenly distributed in Conway in comparison to the national average (2016 ACS PUMS 1-year Estimate, US Census Bureau).

Wage by Race and Ethnicity

In 2016, the highest paid race/ethnicity of Conway workers were white, with average salaries of \$36,314. These workers were paid 1.14 times more than American Indian workers, who came in with the second highest average salary of any race/ethnicity at \$31,923. Workers of two or more races came in third at \$28,390 (Source: 2016 ACS PUMS 5-year Estimate, US Census Bureau).

For Horry County, Asian workers had the highest salaries, at \$50,579, followed by White workers at \$47,261 and American Indian workers at \$45,968 (Data USA). Asian workers also had the highest salaries nationally at \$63,353, followed by White workers at \$52,856 and workers of two or more races at \$42,425 (Data USA).

Wage by Gender

As of 2016, the average male salary in the City of Conway was \$44,432, while the average female salary was \$37,796. Full time male employees made 1.18 times more than female employees (2016 ACS 5-year Estimate, US Census Bureau). On a national level, the 2017 median earnings of men (\$52,146) and women (\$41,977) working full-time, year round decreased from their 2016 medians by 1.1 percent. The 2017 female-to-male earnings ratio was .805, not statistically different from 2016 (Census.gov).

Between 2016 – 2017, the number of men and women working full-time, year-round (nationally) increased 1.4 million and 1.0 million, respectively (Census.gov).



POVERTY

The poverty rate in a given area is the number of people living below a federally established level of income for a household of a certain size. To determine who classifies as impoverished, the U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds, or poverty thresholds, that vary by family size and composition. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, that family and every individual in it is considered to be living in poverty.

From 2016 to 2017, the number of people living in poverty *nationally* decreased for people in families, people living in the West, people living outside metropolitan statistical areas, workers who worked less than full-time, year-round, people with a disability, people with a high school

diploma but not a college degree and people with some college but no degree (Census.gov).

The city of Conway ranks as the 19th poorest city in South Carolina, with 28.7 percent of the population living below the poverty line; a number that is significantly higher than Horry County's poverty level of 15.5 percent and the national poverty level of 12.3 percent (Census.gov; Data USA).

28.7%

Poverty Rate in
Conway, SC

According to the 2016 American Community Survey, the largest race or ethnicity living in poverty is black or African American, followed by White and Hispanic or Latino.

LARGEST RACE & ETHNICITY LIVING IN POVERTY FOR CITY OF CONWAY

1. Black or African American – 3,766
2. White – 1,576
3. Hispanic or Latino - 86

SOURCE: [2016 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE]

LARGEST DEMOGRAPHIC LIVING IN POVERTY FOR CITY OF CONWAY

1. Male 18-24
2. Female 18-24
3. Female 25-34

SOURCE: [2016 ACS 5-YEAR ESTIMATE]

The largest demographic in Conway living in poverty are males, ages 18 to 24, followed by females, ages 18 to 24 and then females, ages 25-34.

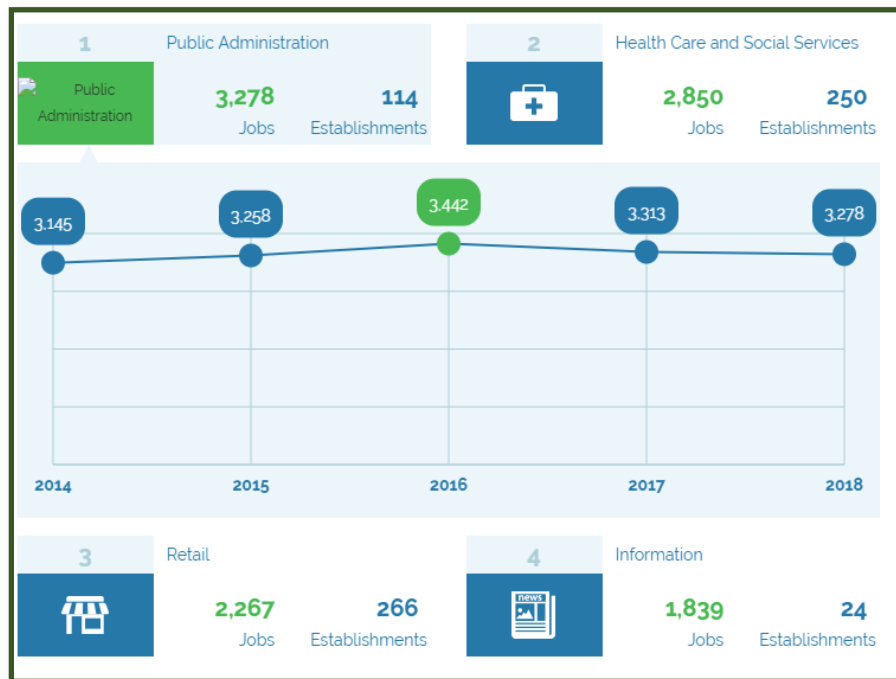
CONWAY'S LABOR FORCE

There are 19,783 employed individuals within the city of Conway, SC (ConwaySCNow 2018). This is down from the previous year, from 21,232 in 2017, however it is up from the years prior to 2017.

Businesses and Jobs

*There are 1,693 businesses in Conway, as of 2017. The leading industries included Public Administration, Health Care, Retail, and Information (ConwaySCNow 2018).

Top Industries by Jobs | Source: ConwaySCNow 2018, Community Profile



*Not all businesses may be located in the city limits of Conway

Business Licensing. The number of business licenses issued has averaged out to be the same over the past seven years. Below is Table ED-1 that shows the number of licenses issued for within the City of Conway for the past seven years.

Table ED-1: Business Licenses Issued Over Last 7 Years

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1122	1118	1130	1131	1156	1123	1133

Source: City of Conway Business License Dept. (December 2018)

EMPLOYMENT

Conway's Employment Trends

Employment figures are a reflection of Conway's economic stability and growth. From 2015 to 2016, the employment rate grew 10%, from 8,073 employees to 8,882 employees (2016 ACS).

*As of 2018, the total labor force grew to 11,620 (ConwaySCNow 2018).

Employment – Fast Facts:

- The average hourly wage is \$15.78
- The average weekly wage is \$631
- The average annual wage is \$32,812
- The average annual wage in South Carolina is \$45,604 (SC Works).
- As of September, 2018, the unemployment rate in Horry County is 3.8% (S.C. Dept. of Employment & Workforce)
- According to the US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 estimates show that 59.2% of the population is in the labor force.

Of the 8,882 individuals who were employed in 2016 in Conway, a majority worked for privately owned companies. 1,806 were government workers, 298 were self-employed, and 28 were considered unpaid family workers (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year Estimates). Table ED-2 provides comparisons for the labor force for various years beginning in 1980.

The number of government workers in the City can be largely attributed to the fact that Conway is the County seat and the Horry County Government & Justice Center is located in the city limits of Conway on Second Ave.

Table ED-2: Conway's Labor Force Comparison

Conway Labor Force Comparison				
Year	Total in Labor Force	Total population over 16 - employed	Total unemployed - in labor force	Percent unemployed
1980	4,767	4,443	250	X
1990	4,649	4,314	293	X
2000	5,696	5,040	656	7.2
2010	7,787	7,101	686	8.8
2011	7,562	6,777	785	10.4
2012	7,994	7,097	897	11.2
2013	8,494	7,459	1,035	12.2
2014	8,717	7,762	955	11
2015	9,019	8,073	946	10.5
2016	10,007	8,882	1,125	11.2

Source: US Census Bureau 2012-2016; ACS 2016; City of Conway Comp. Plan 2019

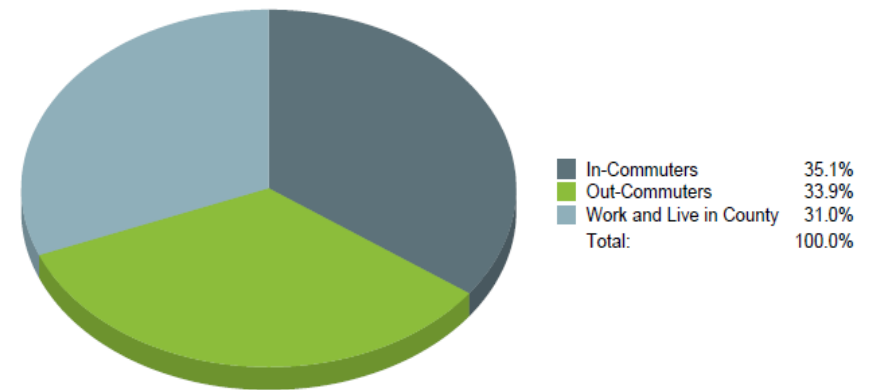
Commuting to Work

The largest number of workers drove alone (81.1%) (2012-2016 ACS 5-year Estimates). Car-pooling made up 8.1%, followed by Public Transportation at 1.4%. Employees in Conway, SC have an average commute time of 21 minutes, which is a shorter travel time than the U.S. average of 25 minutes (ACS 2016). Car ownership has an average number of two vehicles per household.

The SC Department of Employment and Workforce estimates that, as of 2010, 35.1% of employees in Horry County commute into the County for

work, 33.9% commute to work outside of the county and 31% work and live within Horry County (SC DEW 2018).

Chart ED-2: In-county and out of county commuters



Source: SC Dept. of Employment and Workforce (Community Profile 10/19/2018)

Conway's Top Occupations

The most common job groups, by the number of people living in Conway, SC, are Sales & Office, Management, Business, Science & Arts, and Service. Table ED-3 provides a breakdown, in percentages, of the top occupations held by people living in Conway, SC (ACS 5-year Estimate; Data USA).

Table ED-3: Employment by Occupation (percentages) – Conway, SC



Source: Data USA; ACS 5-year Estimate

Top Employers

Horry County, SC, benefits from several types of companies and industries who have planted roots in the region. The City of Conway, situated in Horry County, benefits from these businesses as well, as the top five employers are either situated or based, in whole or in part, in the City limits of Conway, SC (MBREDC).

1. Horry County School District: 5,650 employees
2. Wal-Mart: 2,800 employees (one located in city limits of Conway)

3. Horry County Government: 2,200 employees (county seat in Conway)
4. Coastal Carolina University: 2,125 (located in city limits of Conway)
5. Conway Medical Center: 1,400 (located in city limits of Conway)

For a complete list, please visit www.mbredc.org

Some of the top employers within the City limits of Conway, other than those listed by MBREDC, are as follows:

- Grand Strand Water & Sewer Authority (300 employees)
- Horry County Public Safety (300 employees)
- Horry County Police Dept. (290 employees)
- Horry County Fire Rescue (275 employees)
- Horry-Georgetown Technical College (275 employees)
- Conway High School (266 employees)
- Conway City Hall (City of Conway) (250 employees)
- Conway Manor (230 employees)
- Wild Wing Plantation (225 employees)
- Conway National Bank (209 employees)
- Lowe's Home Improvement (205 employees)
- Pepsi Bottling Ventures, LLC (200 employees)

Work Distribution

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012-2016 data), there were 1,861 total firms in Conway (between 2012-2016). Of that 1,861, 920 were owned by men, 616 by women, 417 by minorities, and 251 by veterans (U.S. Census Bureau).

Additionally, current distribution of total employees in Conway are Blue Collar: 33% and White Collar: 66% (ConwaySCNow).

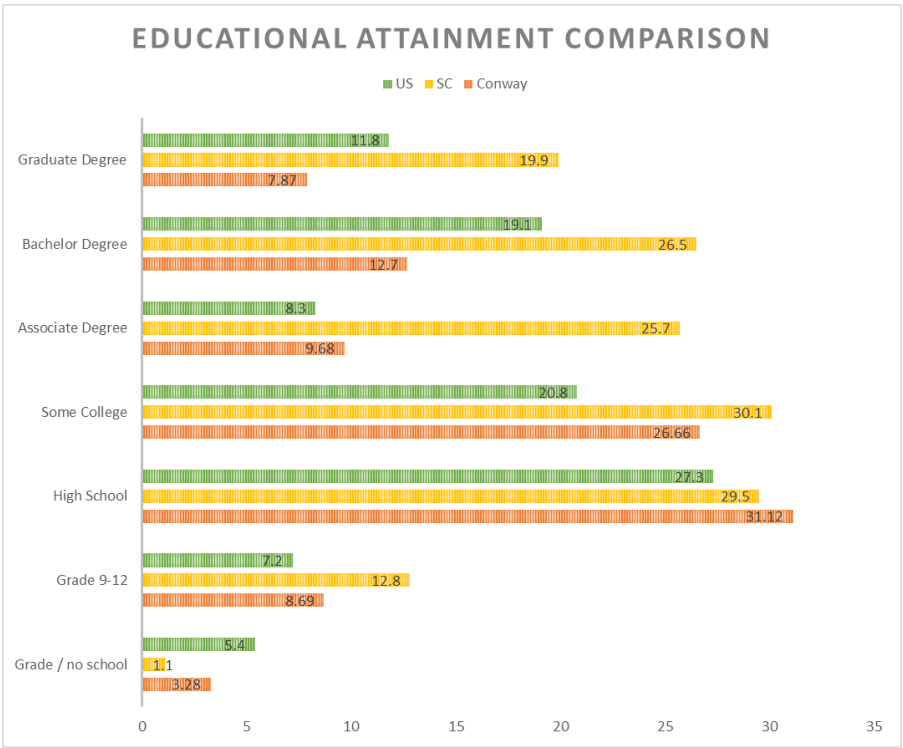


Source: ConwaySCNow 2018

Educational Attainment of Conway's Population

According to ConwaySCNow, 30.25% of Conway's population have a college degree. Chart ED-3 provides a breakdown of Conway's population educational attainment, compared to the state and the U.S.

Chart ED-3: Educational Attainment of Conway's population



Source: ConwaySCNow website; Town Charts website

HOUSING & LIVING

The 2016 median property value in Conway, SC is \$145,900, a 0.97% increase from \$144,500 in 2015; however, Conway's median property value is 0.71 times smaller than the national average of \$205,000 (Data USA 2018).

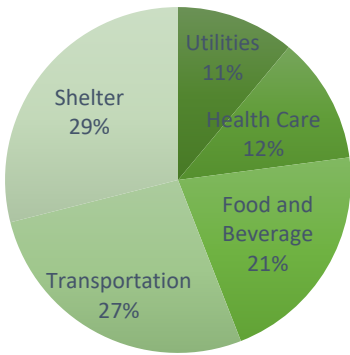
According to ConwaySCNow's community profile (2018), Conway's home ownership rate is 61.31%, which is lower than the national average of 63.6%. In addition, 38.69% rent their homes vs. own their homes. There are 58% more households who own their homes than there are renters (ConwaySCNow 2018). The median gross rent (2012-2016 data) for Conway is \$723 (US Census Bureau).

Income and Spending

Household expenditures for Conway residents average \$44,490 per year. The majority of these expenditures include shelter, transportation, food and beverage, health care and utilities (ConwaySCNow 2018).

Chart ED-4: Household Expenditures of Conway Residents

Household Expenditures (percentage)



Utilities Health Care Food and Beverage Transportation Shelter

Source: ConwaySCNow 2018

Cost of Living

How much we pay for housing, gas, food, clothing and other everyday items is our cost of living. The cost of living index is a measurement tool to compare expenses between different locations over time (*The Balance 2018*).

Specific data for the City of Conway is not available, however according to Horry County's *Imagine 2040 (draft)* Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Element, the cost of living in Horry County is 7.4% lower than that of the United States average.

While income is on the rise for the county and the City of Conway, and cost of living is lower in comparison to the state and the nation, income is still lower than the national average and costs associated with housing have seen significant increases since the housing recession (*Imagine 2040, draft*).

The Median Household Expenditure at \$44,940. A breakdown of household spending is below:



Source: ConwaySCNow Community Profile (2018)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Local and Regional Economic Development Organizations

City of Conway. While the City of Conway is not an economic development organization, many of the departments either directly or indirectly affect the general condition and growth of the local economy. The provision of water and sewer extensions, maintenance of streets, solid waste collection and stormwater management are basic services provided by the City. Tourism, recreation, parks and beautification projects help business recruitment efforts and provide amenities for the business community.

The City provides funding assistance for Conway Downtown Alive (CDA) and the Chamber of Commerce.

There are several incentives available for property and/or business owners in Conway that contribute to the economic vitality and development of Conway. They include the following:

- Preservation Tax Incentive
- Family Entertainment Incentive
- Redevelopment of Commercial Buildings 25,000 square feet or Greater
- Incentive to Reimburse Certain Fees in Connection with Occupancy of Vacant Buildings Located in the Central Business District
- Redevelopment Enhancement Incentive

Incentives discussed in further detail under the Economic Opportunities section, on pg. 20-21 of this document.

Conway Area Chamber of Commerce. Incorporated in 1958, the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. They currently have three (3) full-time positions and the Executive Vice President Serves as the CEO (*Conway SC Chamber*).

The Chamber of Commerce is comprised of 5 divisions: Community and Special Events, Economic Development, Educational Programs, Governmental Relations, Marketing and Membership Services.

The mission of the *Community and Special Events Division* is to organize community festivals and Chamber events and to enhance community spirit by involving as many volunteers as possible; to increase tourism opportunities by utilizing these festivals and events to promote the community, thus creating a positive economic impact for the business community.

The *Economic Development / Government Relations Division* seeks to promote business and tourism in the greater Conway area, facilitate cooperation between government and business, serve as a voice for business and increase interaction with Federal, State and Local resources. The Economic Development / Government Relations Division activities include the following:

- Promote Positive Economic Development
- Governmental Relations
- Business Seminars / Informational Meetings
- Membership Breakfast Meetings
- Update and Distribute Demographics, Relocation and other Statistical Information
- Transportation Issues
- Small Business Resource Center
- Grand Openings and Ribbon Cuttings

The goal of the *Educational Programs Division* to promote and support excellence in education in Conway and throughout Horry County; to provide knowledge and leadership skills to the business community, as well as the youth, to ensure they have the necessary skills to become the business and community leaders of the future. The Educational Programs Division is responsible for the following programs each year:

- Leadership Conway (Sept. – May)
- Salute to Education (held in May; award scholarship to outstanding Senior in Horry County)
- Business Brunch (Every other month in Chamber Board Room)



The mission of the *Membership Services Division* is to increase Chamber membership, member retention, provide benefits based on member needs, and create a greater awareness of the Chamber's efforts in promoting business opportunities in the community. Activities of the Membership Services Committee are:

- Membership recruitment
- Retail and develop Chamber "family"
- Chamber awareness campaign & member services
- Business after hours
- New member receptions

Source: Conway SC Chamber

Conway Downtown Alive (CDA).

The National Trust for Historic Preservation developed the Main Street program through its National Main Street Center. In 1985, South Carolina joined the revitalization movement and established a statewide Main Street program. In 1986, Conway was chosen, along with Aiken, Beaufort and Georgetown, as a founding program for Main Street SC. In June 2011, Conway Main Street stepped out from the South Carolina Main Street program umbrella and chose a new name, Conway Downtown Alive (CDA), to match the expanding programming. Conway Downtown Alive continues to utilize the Main Street program's approach to continue promoting and preserving Downtown Conway (*Conway Alive*).



Conway Downtown Alive operates with a Board of Directors, Executive Director and program staff. The organization has four standing committees including: Design, Economic Vitality, Promotions and Organization. Together these committees facilitate approximately 20 event days per year, façade and rent assistance programs, marketing and promotional opportunities, workshops, business recruitment programs and business recognition events.

Conway Downtown Alive works in partnership with the City of Conway to operate the Conway Visitor Center and assist with the management of the 5th

and Main Building. Conway Downtown Alive strives to create and sustain interest in Downtown Conway as a place while promoting and preserving our Historic Rivertown, Conway SC (*Conway Alive*).

CDA offers the following incentives:

- **Façade Grants:** Any existing or proposed commercial building located within the City of Conway Central Business District (CBD) and/or the Conway Downtown Alive program area which is leased or owned by an eligible applicant, is eligible to apply for the Façade Incentive Grant Program. The maximum funding available for each applicant is up to 50% of the total project cost, as permitted by the annual funds available through the Conway Downtown Alive program. Materials, labor and architectural/engineering design services for improvements to the front, rear or sides of buildings are eligible. Applications will also be accepted for Parklet construction and improvements.
- **Rent Assistance Program:** This program was developed to encourage business development in the Central Business District (CBD), Riverfront Warehouse District and the Conway Downtown Alive program area in Conway, South Carolina. The program is a business recruitment tool targeting new, not yet established, businesses seeking to locate in downtown Conway. To apply for the Rent Assistance Program, applicants must fall into one of the outlined business categories. The program is available for 7-12 months of the initial lease term and cannot be used for start-up costs, renovations or merchandise. The maximum funding available for each applicant is up to 50% of the monthly property rent, as permitted by the annual funds available through the Conway Downtown Alive program.

ConwaySCNow. The mission of ConwaySCNow is to serve as the leading economic development organization for attracting, recruiting and retaining quality businesses and investments in Conway, SC. ConwaySCNow is a local economic development (LED) initiative established by a collaborative effort between the Conway Chamber of Commerce and the City of Conway (*ConwaySCNow 2018*).

ConwaySCNow serves as the nexus for business opportunities and workforce development within Conway. Whether looking to relocate to Conway or ready to grow and expand, ConwaySCNow makes the necessary connections to propel each business to success.

ConwaySCNow supports and assists the business community of Conway through information, research and training and are committed to quality development and aggressive local economic growth.

ConwaySCNow aims to create jobs by growing the local economy. Partnering with city government creates and cultivates the necessary environment for businesses to be established and to expand. ConwaySCNow also partners with the City of Conway to ensure that recruiting efforts expand the economic infrastructure and supports the overall vision and strategic plan for Conway, SC (*ConwaySCNow 2018*).



Conway Innovation Center (CIC). The

CIC is a business incubation center that focuses on the development of emerging technology, life science, information technology and service businesses. It is designed to foster entrepreneurial growth and sustainable companies in our community. The CIC is a public/private economic development effort that is funded by the regional business community, their major educational and other leading private foundations and administered through the Fifth T Innovation Group.

CIC is a combination of expert consulting, mentoring and the research support from its academic and economic development partners that provide select companies the developmental support necessary to launch a business. CIC also offers office space and a meeting environment people need to take their businesses from concept to reality to build an enterprise. CIC helps businesses identify financing sources and initiates contacts for strategic partnerships and business alliances, and most importantly, CIC will take businesses to the next level of business plan development with the formulation of marketing plans and strategies to launch a business.



For additional information on CIC, please visit their website:
www.cicinnovation.com

Source: Conway Innovation Center (CIC) website

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG). The WRCOG fosters intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships for the communities within the three-county region it serves: Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg counties (WRCOG).

Created in 1969, WRCOG is a link between county governments, municipalities and residents. Its expansive range of services help local governments make and implement joint regional decisions, as well as identify and solve problems best addressed at the regional level. WRCOG operates under the guidance of a 25-member Board of Directors comprised of elected officials and citizens-at-large from the tri-county area. The professional staff engages in four areas of activity: Planning, Workforce Development, Economic Development, and Aging & Disability. Services offered include:

- Transportation Planning
- Environmental Planning
- Land Use Planning
- Workforce Preparation
- Economic Development Activities
- Community Development and Affordable Housing
- Programs that benefit senior citizens
- Grant Writing Administration



WRCOG is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the region by developing strategies for diverse job creation and economic growth by partnering with economic development agencies in the region and providing support with Economic Development Administration Funding.

WRCOG also assists local governments and businesses develop Economic Development Administration (EDA) proposals and obtain funds geared toward attracting new business and industry. Such funds may be used to help communities expand or improve infrastructure to encourage economic growth (WRCOG 2018).

WRCOG is the local representative for the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. WRCOG administers a Revolving Loan Fund that is available to any business in the region for the purpose of creating or retaining jobs. Since 2001, nearly 8,000 jobs have been created or retained due to the efforts of WRCOG (WRCOG 2018).

Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation

(MBREDC). The MBREDC leads Horry



County's efforts in attracting, growing,

and retaining sustainable businesses that create jobs. They are also dedicated to the facilitation of development programs that benefit the residents of Horry County.

MBREDC has a 35-member Board of Directors who work closely with the organizations staff to ensure that strategic initiatives and goals are met. Many of these Board members include county and city leaders, as well as state representatives.

Formed in 1994, MBREDC functions as a comprehensive resource for location and expansion assistance, with a focus on three pillars of economic development:

- Raising the profile of the greater Myrtle Beach area as a prime business location
- Uniting key parties in the public and private sectors to accelerate economic growth
- Diversifying the economy by attracting suitable and sustainable industries

MBREDC has seven goals in which they conduct business, and when executed, these goals help establish Myrtle Beach region as one that is focused, determined, and oriented toward action. They include:

1. Expand and diversify the Horry County economy
2. Create well-paying jobs for Horry County residents

3. Provide opportunities for graduates to stay in the area and find employment
4. Support and grow existing industry
5. Generate private sector buy-in and support for economic development
6. Provide additional tax revenue for government jurisdictions and the Horry County School System
7. Stimulate private sector growth and investment

In 2016, The MBREDC Board of Directors approved a five-year strategic plan that will continue to move their organization forward, which includes three major initiatives:

1. Recruit and retain high quality industries to generate jobs for the citizens of Horry County, resulting in an annual increase of 175 fulltime jobs and at least \$5 million in private capital investment (stretch goals: 225 fulltime jobs, \$10 million in investment).
2. Provide a variety of high quality economic development products (sites and buildings) that attract new and existing industries.
3. Have MBRDEC be recognized as a leader in economic development within Horry County and throughout South Carolina.

The office for the Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation is currently located in Conway.

Source: Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corp.

For more information, please visit www.mbredc.org

(Myrtle Beach) Small Business Development Center.

The mission of the Small Business Development Center is to promote the growth and development of small businesses by providing management and technical assistance, as well as to contribute to economic growth and prosperity by encouraging entrepreneurship and the success of small businesses (Coastal Carolina University).



Coastal Carolina University (CCU), through the Division of Academic Outreach, operates the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The office serves both

Horry and Georgetown Counties by providing a variety of services and management training courses tailored to the needs of small businesses. SBDC consultants provide managerial and technical assistance to those starting or expanding their business (Coastal Carolina University).

Service Core of Retired Executives

(SCORE). Founded in 1964, SCORE is a



nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. Partnering with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), SCORE provides mentoring and training services to small businesses. Working and retired executives and business owners donate their time and expertise as business counselors.

Grand Strand SCORE was founded in 1984, and provides over 1,100 services to over 400 clients each year. They have over 25 counselors who provide the following:

- Mentoring advice 24/7 Ask SCORE online
- In person mentoring in their office, at a place of business or other options
- Low-cost or free workshops
- "How to" articles and business templates
- Online workshops and learning

SCORE has helped nearly 8 million small businesses by providing free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs. Horry County has a SCORE office in Myrtle Beach (SCORE).

Better Business Bureau (BBB).

BBB's vision is an ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other. BBB sees trust as a function of two primary factors: integrity and performance. Integrity includes respect, ethics and intent. Performance speaks to a business's track record of delivering results in accordance with BBB standards and/or addressing concerns in a timely, satisfactory manner (Better Business Bureau 2018).



BBB's mission is to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust, by doing the following:

- Setting standards for marketplace trust
- Encouraging and supporting best practices with educating customers and businesses
- Celebrating marketplace role models
- Calling out and addressing substandard marketplace behavior
- Creating a community of trustworthy businesses and charities

Source: Better Business Bureau

Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council (WEOC). Chartered in 1965, The WEOC and its affiliates have served over a half-million residents in the tri-county area, and its programs have boosted the economies of Horry, Georgetown and Williamsburg Counties by approximately \$250 million in direct assistance, with an economic impact of more than \$1.25 Billion (WEOC).

The WEOC celebrated their 50th anniversary in honor of all the positive progress they have made through serving the community since their inception.

The WEOC's Administrative office is located in Conway.

The Grant Center for Real Estate and Economics (at Coastal Carolina University) in the E. Craig Wall Sr. College of Business. The Grant Center leverages global ties of Coastal Carolina University (CCU) and key partners, including students, alumni, faculty, staff and board members. It offers commercial and investment real estate, publishes scholarly research and produces applied studies for stakeholders in the region. The center also hosts the annual real estate and economic summit and awards gala, provides seminar talks on a regular basis and consults for various private, government and nonprofit groups.

The key mission of The Grant Center is supporting the education of its students to the highest levels of competence and professionalism, and broadening the economic base of the region, serving as a bridge between CCU and the community.

The Grant Center was recently renovated (in 2018), and features a commons area for students in the economics, finance, commercial and investment real estate, and related departments at CCU. Additionally, the center will contain workstations equipped with industry software, including ArcGIS and ARGUS A&E.

The center will house a project lab that will function as a reserved working space for groups ranging in size from two to eight people, and will have a full-functioning screen with video-conferencing capabilities – a system that will be widely used for student interviews and consulting or research projects conducted by the Grant Scholars and Real Estate Club. This information hub will serve as a major resource for students and professionals interested in or already working in commercial real estate, allowing the real estate program at CCU to grow and flourish.

Sources: Coastal.edu; The Horry Independent, 11/29/18, issue XXXIX, No. 35.

State Organizations

South Carolina Department of Commerce. SC Commerce helps new and existing businesses grow, from assisting with the location of new sites and buildings to offering grants for community development and infrastructure improvements. SC Commerce promotes economic opportunity for individuals and businesses through workforce training initiatives (SC Commerce).

SC Commerce also maintain the [Palmetto Railways](#), the [SC Coordinating Council for Economic Development](#) and the [SC Coordinating Council for Workforce Development](#).

The state has a presence in Europe and Asia, where they provide advisory and support for many services, including:

- Identification of suitable communities, sites and buildings
- Detailed information on industry sectors and operating costs
- Introduction to the state's pro-business environment
- Access to technical and workforce training programs
- Government assistance, language interpretation and customary procedures
- An on-the-ground point of contact
- Trade assistance

- The SC Landing Pad Program, with assistance and connections to create a business's first US presence

More than 1,200 operations of international firms have found a second home in South Carolina. These companies have employed nearly 132,000 South Carolinians – 7% of the state's private industry employment. SC Commerce has a successful track record of helping international companies establish, relocate and expand their businesses in the US and North American markets (SC Commerce).

Source: SC Commerce

S.C. Coordinating Council for Economic Development (of the S.C. Department of Commerce).

Administered by SC Commerce and established in 1986, the SC



Coordinating Council for Economic Development was formed in response to a need for improved coordination of economic development efforts by state agencies involved in the recruitment and new business and the expansion of current enterprises throughout the state. The council consists of heads or board chairs of 11 state agencies concerned with economic development:

- SC Dept. of Commerce
- SC Ports Authority
- SC Dept. of Parks, Recreation & Tourism
- SC Dept. of Agriculture
- SC Technical College System
- SC Research Authority
- SC Dept. of Employment and Workforce
- SC Dept. of Revenue
- SC Jobs-Economic Development Authority
- SC Dept. of Transportation
- Santee Cooper

South Carolina ranks No. 3 for labor costs and No. 4 for workforce development programs by Area Development magazine. Companies come to SC for its pro-business, advantageous labor climate, as well as its

low corporate tax rates and competitive wages. Because of this, SC's job market has consistently outpaced national growth levels (SC Commerce).

South Carolina is a right-to-work state, with a low unionization rate of 2.6%; the lowest in the US. The unionization rate is 1.5% for the private sector, giving SC the lowest percentage of total employed workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement of any state in the nation (SC Commerce).

South Carolina understands that competitiveness requires a commitment to research and development. The Palmetto State supports a plethora of development opportunities, from universities to world-class research facilities (SC Commerce), including:

- **SCLaunch:** created to facilitate applied research, product development and commercialization programs. SCLaunch provides entrepreneurs with the tools necessary to build new businesses and equity in SC.
- **Clemson University's International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR).** This state-of-the-art advanced technology research campus is where industry, government and academia come together to collaborate. CU-ICAR represents the ultimate private-public partnership and fuels the automotive and mobility industries in SC.
- **The Ronald E. McNair Center for Aerospace Innovation.** Founded in 2011 and named in honor of the SC Native and Challenger astronaut, Ronald E. McNair, the McNair Center's mission is to grow SC's knowledge-based economy and support industry through aerospace education, research leadership and industry advancement.
- **SCRA Applied Technologies.** SCRA provides research parks, wet labs, advanced manufacturing and IT infrastructure designed to support federal and corporate work. The state's three research facilities are located at Clemson University, the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and the University of South Carolina (USC).
- **Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing Technology (SiMT).** Located on a 146-acre campus, SiMT is the premiere service provider and training facility for industry in the southeast, providing

engineering, CAD and CAM, rapid prototyping and 3D and virtual reality services. SiMT also provides workforce and process training.

- **The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).** MUSC is the oldest medical school in the south, and with more than \$234 million in research awards, MUSC continues to expand research and promote scientific discovery and economic development.
- **University of South Carolina (USC) NanoCenter.** USC is an abundant resource for technology companies in SC, with research areas including Nanoelectronics, polymer nanocomposites and Nanoimaging. USC is also a DOE Energy Frontier Research Center and holds the highest designation awarded by the Carnegie Foundation.
- **Clemson University Restoration Institute.** A \$98 million, on-of-a-kind wind turbine facility is being constructed at the Restoration Institute in North Charleston. This test facility will advance wind turbine technology, improving reliability and efficiency.
- **Center for Manufacturing Innovation (CMI).** The Center for Manufacturing Innovation, located in Greenville, SC, is a unique collaboration between Greenville Technical College, Clemson University and advanced manufacturing companies representing a global footprint of diverse industries from automotive and aerospace to advanced materials and automation. CMI provides workforce training, manufacturing process development, rapid prototyping, space for start-up businesses and a range of other services for firms in advanced manufacturing. CMI is also the Southeast home of the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing institute, a vehicle assembly center and state-of-the-art 3D printing capabilities.
- **SmartState Program.** The SmartState Program authorizes the state's three public research institutions to create Centers of Economic Excellence to advance research, boost the state's economy and maintain competitiveness. Nearly 50 Centers have been created and more than 35 internationally recognized scientists and engineers have been recruited in areas including energy, nanotechnology, medicine and optics. More than \$363 million in non-state funds have been invested, with nearly two-thirds coming from corporations and foundations.

For more information on any of the above, or on the S.C. Coordinating Council for Economic Development, visit www.sccommerce.com

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

The *Horry County Imagine 2040* Survey included the question “Are there places in Horry County that you would like to see redeveloped or reinvigorated?” It received responses that included specific areas within the City of Conway. Most frequently, the participants called out the need to revitalize Downtown Conway as well as rejuvenating the historic area and district around the intersections of US Hwy 378 and Hwy 501 Bypass (*Horry County Imagine 2040, draft*).

Opportunity Zones. As part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, Congress established a community development program designed to encourage long-term private investments in low-income communities, called “Opportunity Zones.” This program provides a federal tax incentive for taxpayers who reinvest unrealized capital gains into “Opportunity Funds” dedicated to investing in the designated Opportunity Zones. These zones are comprised of low-income community census tracts and designated by governors in every state. South Carolina designated 25 percent of qualifying census tracts as an Opportunity Zone, and are based on the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (*Horry County Imagine 2040, draft*).

The program will offer investors the following incentives for putting their capital to work in low-income communities:

- Investors can roll existing capital gains into Opportunity Funds with no upfront tax-bill.
- A 5-year holding results in a 10% exemption in capital gains owed.
- A 7-year holding results in a 15% exemption in capital gains owed.
- Investors can defer their original tax bill until December 31, 2026 at the latest, or until they sell their Opportunity Fund Investments, if earlier.
- If opportunity fund investments are held for at least 10 years, there will be no capital gain whatsoever on the appreciation of the investment.

Horry County has six Opportunity Zones, with two located in the City limits of Conway:

- Tract 702 (Conway – Main Street)
- Tract 703 (Conway – West Downtown/Grainger Plant)

Map ED-1: Opportunity Zones



Source: www.grandstrandopportunityzones.com

Hometown Economic Development Grant. The City of Conway received a Hometown Economic Development Grant from the Municipal Association of South Carolina. This grant supports economic development projects that will make a positive impact on the quality of life in communities and promotes innovation in economic development practices. The City of Conway will receive \$25,000 to go towards a feasibility study for an outdoor amphitheater in the City of Conway. The outdoor amphitheater project was discussed in May after Conway City Council voted in favor of exploring the idea with a feasibility study. The City of Conway constantly looks for ways to improve its public amenities that also best showcases its unique features. An amphitheater, located along the banks of the Waccamaw River, will allow the city to present a new public area that can host events with a postcard view of Conway as the backdrop. The \$25,000 grant is a match grant, with the city having to match \$3,750 (15%). This project has the potential to move the city closer to revitalizing areas of the riverfront that were damaged by Hurricane Florence in September 2018, and also explore new opportunities for family entertainment in Downtown Conway (*City of Conway*).

Business Incentives (offered by the City of Conway)

- **Preservation Tax Incentive Program** – created for eligible historic property for 15 years equal to the fair market value of the property at the time of preliminary certification. Eligible properties include those which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing property in a district, are 50 years or more old and have designated as historic by the City Council, either individually or as a contributing property in a local historic district.

Additional incentives as part of the special tax assessment for eligible properties include Capital Recovery Fees and Building Permit Fees, which will be waived for rehabilitated properties that may ordinarily be due and payable as a result of a change in the use of the property. The owner and/or contractor is still responsible for obtaining a permit, however no permit fee will be charged or collected by the City. The building official will retain authority to review the plans and make regular inspections during construction.

To be eligible for the special tax assessment, the Community Appearance Board (CAB) and the Horry County Board of Architectural Review must review and approve as well.

City code: Article E, Section 1-5-50

- **Cinemas, Bowling Centers and Other Family Entertainment Incentive Program** – applies to any firm or corporation establishing a cinema, bowling center or other family entertainment facility in the city limits of Conway. At the discretion of City Council and approved on a case-by-case basis, the City may enter into an agreement to reimburse any person, firm or corporation any or all of any portion of the following fees:
 - Applicable water and sewer capital recovery fees (up to ½ of the total required fee paid)
 - Required building permit fee paid
 - Business License fees collected by the City of Conway for as many as 5 years
 - Hospitality fees collected by the City of Conway for as many as 5 years
 - Property taxes collected by the City of Conway for as many as 5 years

City Council shall set a reimbursement cap for any kind and all reimbursements on a case-by-case basis. All reimbursements in a calendar year shall be applied shall be applied for in writing between January 1 and January 31 of the following year.

City code: Article F, Section 1-5-76

- **Redevelopment of Existing Vacant Commercial Buildings 25,000 square feet or Greater Incentive Program.** This incentive applied to any person, firm or corporation redeveloping and fully occupying an existing vacant commercial building or storefront 25,000 sq. ft. and greater in the city limits of Conway. In order to be eligible for the program, the building and lot must meet all applicable zoning ordinances and is subject to review and approval by City Council. Incentives include:
 - Applicable water and sewer capital recovery fees up to ½ of the total required fee paid
 - Required building permit fee paid
 - Business license fee collected by the City of Conway for as many as 5 years
 - Hospitality fees collected by the City of Conway for as many as 5 years
 - Property taxes collected by the city for as many as 5 years

City Council shall set a reimbursement cap for any and all reimbursements on a case-by-case basis. All reimbursements for any calendar year shall be applied for in writing between January 1 and January 31 of the following year. The business in the subject building or storefront must be actively operating to receive reimbursement under this article.

City code: Article G, Section 1-5-101

- **Incentive to Reimburse Certain Fees in Connection with Occupancy in Existing Vacant Buildings Located in the Central Business District.** This incentive applies to any person, firm or corporation establishing a new business in a previously vacant building in the Central Business District (CBD). The Central Business District is defined as any property in the Central Business District shown on the city's official zoning map. A vacant building is defined as any building or storefront which has been vacant and ready for occupancy for a period exceeding three months. All eligibility is subject to review and approval by the city

administrator. The city administrator, on behalf of the City of Conway, may reimburse any person, firm or corporation the following fees:

- o The required building permit fee
- o The business license fees collected by the City of Conway for two years.

All fees are reimbursable within 60 days of payment. The business in the subject building or storefront must be actively operating in the Central Business District to receive reimbursement under this Article.

City code: Article H, Section 1-5-108

- **Redevelopment Enhancement Incentive.** This incentive applies to any firm, person or corporation establishing a new business or expanding an existing business in the Central Business District (CBD), Core Commercial (CC) or any commercial property in the Central Business District zone, Core Commercial zoned or any property with a commercial zoning designation with frontage on Highway 378 (Wright Blvd), or Highway 701 (Main Street/4th Ave) as shown on the city's official zoning map. All eligibility is subject to review and approval by the city administrator.

On behalf of the City of Conway, the city administrator may reimburse any person, firm or corporation 100 percent of capital recovery fees. All fees are reimbursable within 60 days of payment. The applicant or business must be actively operating in the Central Business District, Core Commercial District, Waccamaw Riverfront Districts (WRD-1 and WRD-2) or on any commercially zoned property fronting Hwy 378 (Wright Blvd) or Hwy 701 (Main St./4th Ave) to receive reimbursement under this article.

City Code: Article I, Section 1-5-114

For additional information on the aforementioned incentives, please contact the City of Conway Planning Dept.

Conway's Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan

As the community has continued to thrive, many parcels along the waterfront have remained vacant under the ownership of the Burroughs family. In 2016, the Burroughs Company, agreed to partner with the city on the development and redevelopment of key parcels along the Waccamaw and in downtown Conway. The City of Conway commissioned the Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan to accomplish several important goals:

- Explore how the city might utilize properties in its possession to encourage thoughtful development and redevelopment of the Burroughs property in partnership with the company;
- Better connect the Riverfront with the commercial district of Conway, which heretofore, has been viewed by some as separate districts;
- Look at long term development opportunities that may exist in the study area that may go beyond the initial investments under consideration;
- Study key gateways into Conway to enhance the visitor experience to the City, encourage visitors and residents to go downtown, and improve the adjacent neighborhoods to these gateways.

The City of Conway engaged with design and planning professionals to craft the plan with input from key stakeholders throughout the community, consultation with City Council in public sessions, and through the cooperation of experienced City Staff. The key focus areas of the plan include Hwy 378/9th Ave gateway, Hwy 378/501 gateway, the riverfront and the entirety of downtown Conway.

The plan provides a blueprint for the future of downtown Conway that recognizes the city is facing the most important economic opportunity for thoughtful growth of the downtown in nearly a century. The plan was divided into three key strategies:

- Changing the mindset: Gateway Impressions
- Securing Opportunities: Downtown and Riverfront Development
- Building the Network: Enhancing Physical Connections

Recommendations included with the first two strategies are focused within four areas of the City as illustrated in Exhibit 1: Context Plan. Additional recommendations dealing with connectivity and included in the third strategy are city-wide.

Map ED-2: Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan, Context Plan

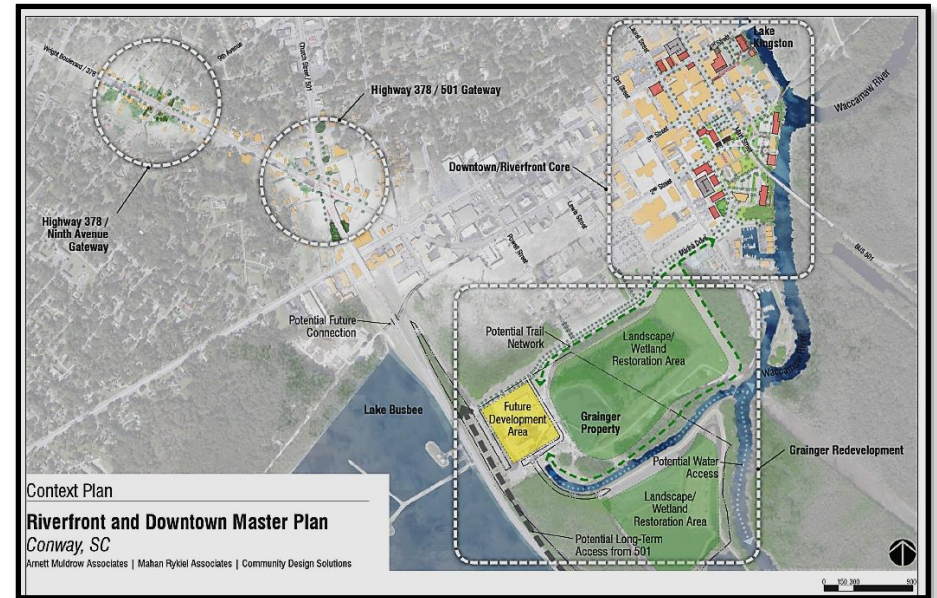


Exhibit 1: Context Plan

Source: Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan, City of Conway

Click the link below to access the complete Riverfront Downtown Master Plan for Conway, SC.

[http://www.cityofconway.com/ConwayMP%20\(4\).pdf](http://www.cityofconway.com/ConwayMP%20(4).pdf)

THE ECONOMY AND EDUCATION

Coastal Carolina University (CCU) and the Economy

Founded in 1954, CCU is a public comprehensive liberal arts institution



that seeks to develop students who are both knowledgeable in their chosen fields and prepared to be productive, responsible, healthy citizens with a global perspective (CCU). CCU recruits highly qualified and motivated students, faculty, and staff from the region, state, nation and world in order to create a diverse and dynamic student-centered learning environment (CCU).

Coastal Carolina University has embraced the support of the community and stakeholders while embarking on an aggressive growth campaign in recent years. Enrollment has increased 130 percent since becoming independent of the South Carolina system in 1993, with new academic programs, research centers, and expanded relationships with partners around the world. CCU has also made its presence known in athletics, winning the 2016 College World Series in the same year the University joined the Sun Belt Conference (Tarleton MBA & Salvino Ph.D., 2017).

According to the *Project Report: The Economic Impact of Coastal Carolina University on the South Carolina and Grand Strand Economics* (Fiscal Years 2016-2017), the University's total economic impact on South Carolina in 2016 was \$565.8 million. The report further includes the economic impact on Horry County, excluding state-specific benefits such as state taxes and expenditures in the state but outside the county, and estimates the impact at approximately \$497.9 million (Tarleton MBA & Salvino Ph.D., 2017).

In addition to the direct impact of the University's general expenditures (i.e. payroll, construction, etc.), which have made a considerable contribution to the state and local economy, student spending also makes a substantial contribution to the state's economy. In 2016, with an overall student population of 10,479 students, 55.1 percent of CCU's students lived off-campus. Compared to the estimated \$43.8 million

spent by on-campus students, students living off-campus spent approximately \$95 million. The two figures combined total \$138.8 million in spending by CCU students in 2016, in addition to tuition, goods or other services spend at the University (Tarleton MBA & Salvino Ph.D., 2017).

CCU's impact on the economy is substantial. The economic impact in the state exceeds \$565.8 million and continues to grow each year with the addition of new programs and opportunities. The current economic impact supports over 3,900 jobs providing nearly \$200 million of income and an average salary of approx. \$51,000 per year (Tarleton MBA & Salvino Ph.D., 2017).

For additional information on the University's economic impact, or the University itself, please visit their website: www.coastal.edu or click the following link to access the report:

<file:///P:/FORMS%20&%20DOCUMENTS/Comprehensive%20Plan%20-%202035/Economic%20Element/NEW%20Coastal%20Carolina%20University%20Economic%20Impact%20Report.pdf>



Aerial view of CCU campus
Source: CCU Website



Horry County Schools (HCS)

Horry County Schools (HCS) is a countywide school district, encompassing 52 schools in nine attendance areas, including Myrtle Beach, Carolina Forest, Conway, Socastee, North Myrtle Beach, Loris, Aynor, Green Sea Floyds and St. James. With more than 42,000 students, HCS is South Carolina's third-largest school district (HCS).

Horry County Schools' (HCS) vision is to be a premier, world-class school system in which every student acquires an excellent education. Their schools will be welcoming centers around high-quality teaching and learning (HCS).

HCS has seven program schools, which include the following:

- Academy for Technology & Academics
- Academy for the Arts, Science, and Technology
- HCS Virtual
- Horry County Adult Education
- Horry County Education Center
- Playcard Environmental Education Center
- Scholars Academy



Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC)

Founded in 1966, Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is a comprehensive two-year community/technical college offering more than 65 associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs for students seeking quick entry into the workforce or desiring to transfer to a senior institution to pursue a bachelor's degree (HGTC).

HGTC is a leader in custom training and development programs, offering advanced training options in fields like manufacturing, engineering, machine operations, CNC welding and more. HGTC's quick startup and thorough instruction precisely follow the training needs of employers. HGTC leaders work closely with local economic

development officials and companies to grow, train and diversify Horry County's workforce (ConwaySCNow).

HGTC is a full partner with Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation

(MDREDC) and provides free and low-cost training for job creators. From building new welding and machine tool labs and starting new associate degree programs, to delivering online and on-site career training, HGTC stands ready for start-up (HGTC).



Source: HGTC website

Miller-Motte Technical College (MMTC)

Miller-Motte College and Miller-Motte Technical College include 11 campuses spread across six different states: North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. Their first campus was established in 1916 in Wilmington, NC, and began as a training school founded by Judge Leon Motte who wanted to provide the legal community with a small training center for courtroom stenographers. In the late 1980s, Miller-Motte expanded by opening a branch in Clarksville, TN which eventually became their primary campus (Miller-Motte).

Over the past century, MMTC has been dedicated to helping students become professionals. They have obtained national accreditation and hired qualified instructors, to help students find careers. Miller-Motte has gained a reputation for excellence and established professional relationships with hundreds of local businesses and organizations. Miller-Motte has a campus located in Conway (Miller-Motte).



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

While much of the economic data provided is at the county or state level, the increases in total number of jobs and record low unemployment are significant for the City of Conway as well.

Positioning Conway for continued economic growth depends on how well the community can develop a sustainable economic development strategy in a global economy. Assuming economic responsibility, environmental responsibility, as well as social and cultural responsibility, will provide the central core to guide the community in maintaining a viable economy within the context of practicing proper environmental stewardship in order to assure that Conway remains a special place for its residents and visitors, and not just another location.



Source: Conway Downtown Alive Facebook page

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Primary Goal:

The City of Conway should strive to establish community sustainability by fostering local economies that are economically viable, environmentally sound, as well as socially and culturally responsible. Achieving this goal requires participation from all sectors of the community, both to determine community needs and to identify and implement innovative and appropriate solutions.

Goal: Foster opportunities for capitalizing on the economic growth that is occurring in Horry County.

Objective: Recognize and follow Horry County's efforts to expand the economic base in manufacturing.

Strategies:

Continue a relationship with Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation and ConwaySCNow	On-going
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Objective: Improve Conway's appearance along major corridors with business and other development as part of the plan

Strategies:

Continue improvements being made along Highway 378 / 9 th Ave as part of the Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan.	On-going
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Continue improvements being made along Hwy 378 / Wright Blvd and Hwy 501 Gateway as part of the Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan.	On-going
--	----------

Continue improvements being made downtown as part of the Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan.	On-going
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Objective: Develop a list of potential businesses that will fill gaps in Conway's position in the regional market.

Strategies:

Use the market information developed by Conway Chamber of Commerce / Conway Downtown Alive (CDA) and other sources to use in business recruitment/development efforts.	On-going
--	----------

Identify and market suitable locations for new businesses and industries capitalizing on Conway's growth and concentrate in prime areas for annexation while protecting our natural/fragile and scenic areas.	On-going
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Promote incentives for the reuse of existing buildings downtown and throughout Conway.	On-going
--	----------

Goal: Promote and support efforts to improve workforce capabilities

Objective: Establish a program for addressing workforce issues.

Strategies:

Work with local non-profits to determine measures for identifying and addressing the specific needs of existing businesses in the Conway area.	On-going
--	----------

Encourage the expansion and development of areas educational institutions' programs that are geared toward economic development. Stress the need to diversify our economic base.	On-going
--	----------

Work with Horry County Schools to continue lowering dropout rates in area schools. Stress the need for education in the current job market and especially in the future.	On-going
Work with Higher Education Institutions to grow the local workforce and to ensure talent entering workforce meets need for business recruitment.	On-going
Encourage local Economic Development entities to target and recruit businesses whose models promote higher wages and specializations, providing students with viable local economic opportunities post-graduation.	On-going
Objective: Identify ways the City may assist in lowering its unemployment rate and increase Conway's workforce.	
Strategies:	
Provide assistance in promoting the existing Graduate Equivalency Designation (GED) programs. Stress the yearly income increase that occurs by obtaining this designation. Use the City's communication tools to promote the program.	On-going
Promote locally the need for associate degrees (at least) in the workplace of the future. Tie this need into the promotional efforts of the need to complete GED's.	On-going
Work with non-profits and others to hold a local Job Fair aimed at this issue.	On-going
Work with Economic Development entities to develop industrial sites.	On-going

Goal: Recognize and encourage entrepreneurship / innovation in business development in Conway.	
Objective: Develop programs/projects, which will be attractive in targeting the needs of the business community.	
Strategies:	
Target businesses downtown that will make downtown attractive to people to live – "24-hour downtown".	On-going
Promote incentives for reuse of large spaces/buildings throughout Conway.	On-going
Work with Conway Chamber, ConwaySCNow and Conway Downtown Alive to encourage small businesses to locate in downtown shops by promoting incentives and lowering barriers to startups.	On-going
Partner with local economic development groups to promote the development of additional business incubators with technology zones and 3 rd spaces as part of this development strategy.	On-going
Continue working with Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Corporation (MBREDC) to attract companies to the downtown Conway and surrounding area.	On-going
Objective: Use the City's resources to research and provide assistance to new small business projects.	
Strategies:	
Encourage the development of entrepreneur based programs in the educational systems of Horry County.	On-going
Explore possible programs with the Chamber of Commerce and Conway Downtown Alive (CDA) for promoting and assisting in small and one person businesses. Consider industry and talent clusters.	On-going
Work with Conway Chamber / Conway Downtown Alive to encourage small businesses to locate in downtown shops by promoting incentives and lowering barriers to startups.	On-going

Improve the City's website by including links and information regarding economic development resources.	2019
Create a flowchart for potential business owners to assist them in easily navigating the different process and opportunities that opening or expanding a business may have.	2019

Goal: Use historic preservation, improvements to the community's appearance and protection of natural resources as economic development opportunities in addition to ways to enhance our quality of life.	
Objective: Continue and expand Conway historic preservation efforts.	
Strategies:	
Expand the programs in place to promote quality infill construction.	On-going
Promote the use of the special tax assessment for rehabilitation of buildings in the historic downtown area(s).	On-going
Ensure that the land use plan promotes development in suitable areas for development.	2019
Consider having "gap" funding for major historic preservation projects.	On-going
Continue the use of CDBG funds for home rehabilitations.	On-going
Objective: Promote ecotourism in our natural areas.	
Strategies:	
Create incentives for small businesses involved in ecotourism.	2020
Use the Visitor Center and City website and access channel to promote ecotourism.	On-going
Coordinate promotional efforts of the Waccamaw River Trails and recreational opportunities on land with the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	On-going
Promote the efforts of the Waccamaw River Keepers program.	On-going
Work to establish Conway as a destination for ecotourists such as birders, paddlers, nature lovers, etc.	On-going
Continue to eliminate barriers to thriving ecotourism businesses.	On-going
Objective: Encourage quality development community-wide	
Strategies:	
Incorporate smart growth principles into the Land Use Element on a community-wide basis.	2019
Fully develop the Bike Trail Plan.	2020
Continue to incorporate Complete Streets design into all of Conway's street system(s).	On-going
Create a new <i>default</i> zoning district that will allow for more spacious residential areas that are aesthetically pleasing and in character with the surrounding areas in the more rural parts of the city.	2019

SOURCES:

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Municipal Association of SC <https://www.masc.sc/SiteCollectionDocuments/Land%20Use%20Planning/Comp%20Planning%20Guide.pdf>

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Best Choice Schools: <https://www.bestchoiceschools.com/50-great-affordable-eco-friendly-colleges/>

Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council: <http://www.weoc.org/agency/history.html>

Miller-Motte Technical: <https://www.miller-motte.edu/>

<http://www.grandstrandopportunityzones.com/>

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Conway Downtown Alive: <https://conwayalive.com/>

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Town Charts: <http://www.towncharts.com/South-Carolina/South-Carolina-state-Education-data.html>

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