

**LOWCOUNTRY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

2022

PREPARED BY:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT	1
THE LOWCOUNTRY EDD AND ITS ECONOMY	3
General Description	3
Background Information and Historic Context	3
Beaufort County	3
Colleton County	3
Hampton County	4
Jasper County	4
LEDD Land Use	4
Natural Resources/Climate and Geography	6
Environmental Issues	7
Political Geography	8
County Governments	8
Beaufort County Municipal Governments	9
Colleton County Municipal Governments	9
Hampton County Municipal Governments	9
Jasper County Municipal Governments	9
Population and Labor Force	10
Population	10
Education	12
Workforce	13
Economy	15
Infrastructure and Services	17
Transportation	17
Water, Sewer and Solid Waste	18
Housing	19
Educational Facilities	20
Medical Facilities	20
Cultural and Recreational Opportunities	20
Planning and Economic Development Activities	21
Economic Development Activities	21
Planning Activities	22
Workforce Development Activities	23
DISASTER RESILIENCY	23
ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT	24
Beaufort County	24
Colleton County	25
Hampton County	27
Jasper County	27
OPPORTUNITY ZONES IN THE LEDD	29
VISION FOR THE REGION	30
Vision Statement	30
Goals	30
OBJECTIVES	32
ACTION PLAN	33
Program and Project Selection	33
Course of Action	35
EVALUATION	38
TABLE OF APPENDICES	40

We are the Lowcountry Council of Governments

The Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) was founded on April 22, 1969, as the “Lowcountry Regional Planning Commission”: an entity created to foster and promote community and economic development activities, serving a four-county area (Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper). In accordance with South Carolina law, this region-focused entity has been tasked with:

1. Undertake multi-purpose, area-wide development planning, and
2. Support economic, natural, social, physical and governmental development activities in the area, and
3. Promote cooperation and coordination among various public and private agencies and organizations in the area. In 1976, the name “Council of Governments” was adopted to give a common recognition to all regional councils in South Carolina and their objectives.

Today, there are ten Councils of Governments in South Carolina. The Lowcountry Council of Governments was designated in 1975 by the United States Department of Commerce / Economic Development Administration (EDA) as the “Lowcountry Economic Development District” (LEDD).

What is This Document?

This document represents the LEDD’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy¹ (CEDS): a local planning process designed to develop strategies to stabilize and/or expand economies through job creation and diversification. As the Lowcountry Economic Development District acts as the region’s representative, LCOG is tasked with administering, revising and adjusting the Strategy, as needed. This document:

1. Presents the regional trends and conditions that affect and impact the local economy, and
2. Evaluates the economy of the LEDD, and
3. Identifies possible goals and solutions which could address the area’s development potential and shortcomings, and
4. Offers strategies and action plans for implementing a planned program of growth for the future, and
5. Summarizes the standards for evaluating the achievements of the program.

Public works and economic development projects that receive EDA funding must be consistent with their District’s CEDS. Annually, LCOG summarizes and evaluates the previous year’s activities and, when appropriate, presents new or modified program strategies. By keeping the CEDS up-to-date and producing an annual report, the District is able to maintain its eligibility for EDA funding.

¹ Funding for the CEDS is through the EDA planning assistance grant under Section 301(b) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended.

What We Have to Offer:

LCOG's expertise lies in providing professional and technical guidance/assistance in numerous governmental activities, especially in the field of Economic Development. Lowcountry Council of Governments takes on projects to overcome barriers by using local resources. These projects have the means and potential to challenge the Region's status-quo for the better. This can be seen as early as 1991, when LCOG adopted its mission statement and established goals for program areas:

- 1. Improve the lives of Lowcountry citizens through client programs and services to local governments**
- 2. Serving as a resource to the twenty-five local governments in the Region and a connection between them and certain state and federal programs**
- 3. Encouraging and promoting regionalism**

The primary program areas and goals for LCOG are:

- ❖ **Community and Economic Development:** Advocate progressive economic policies and administer sound economic and community development programs.
- ❖ **Health and Human Resources:** Coordinate and support a continuum of human resource service systems.
- ❖ **Workforce Development:** Coordinate and consolidate employment and training services in order to meet the needs of area employers and job seekers.
- ❖ **Growth Management and the Environment:** Provide responsible development guidance, environmental management and stimulate recreational and cultural opportunities.
- ❖ **Administration and Support:** Provide a foundation for successful council and local government program development and implementation.

LCOG is governed by a Board of Directors² that is comprised of appointed and elected officials that represent multiple municipalities and counties within the District. The members represent a variety of occupational backgrounds, guiding and advising as to what activities would be most beneficial to our region. For Beaufort County, seven of the eleven members are appointed by Beaufort County Council, one member appointed by the Beaufort City Council, one member appointed by the Port Royal Town Council, one member appointed by the Hilton Head Island Town Council, one member appointed by the Bluffton Town Council, and there is no current member appointed by the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation. The member composition for the eight Colleton County members includes five appointed by Colleton County Council, one appointed by the Walterboro City Council, one appointed by the Cottageville Town Council (non-voting board member), and one appointed by the Edisto Beach Town Council (non-voting board member). From Hampton County, the six members include two appointed by Hampton County Council, one appointed by the Estill Town Council, one appointed by the Hampton Town Council, one appointed by the Varnville Town Council, and one appointed by the Yemassee Town Council (non-voting board member). The five Jasper County members include three appointed by Jasper County Council and one each appointed by the Hardeeville City Council and the Ridgeland Town Council.

² A current Board of Directors roster can be found in Appendix A.

Welcome to the Lowcountry

The Lowcountry of South Carolina is a four-county region in the southern most corner of the state, including Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties. Accounting for nearly 3,304 square miles of the Coastal Zone and Plain, the Lowcountry has an abundance of natural resources, recreational, scenic and historic areas which make this region a desirable location live. The boundaries of the Lowcountry are mostly refined by bodies of water: Edisto River to the North and East, Savannah River to the South and West, and the Atlantic Ocean to the East. All the counties in the District touch the Atlantic Ocean, with the exception of Hampton County.

A Brief History of Our Counties

Beaufort County was named for The Duke of Beaufort, one of the Lord Proprietors of South Carolina in 1769; however, settlements came to the area much earlier. In 1562, French explorer Jean Ribaut established Port Royal, one of the oldest colonies in South Carolina. The county seat is the City of Beaufort, which was established as the second oldest city in South Carolina in the year 1711. St. Helena Island, in Beaufort County, is the location of the Penn Center, formerly know as the Penn School. The Penn School was established in 1862 by Laura Towne and Ellen Murray and is recognized as one of the oldest schools for formerly enslaved individuals. The campus now expands fifty-acres on the island.



Colleton County was one of South Carolina's three original counties that were established in 1682. In 1662, King Charles II granted 12,000 acres of land to South Carolina's Lord Proprietor, Sir John Colleton. Colleton was a heavily agrarian society, focusing mainly on cattle between 1685 to 1715. The Revolutionary War changed the agricultural focus in Colleton County to cash crops: rice and cotton. Edisto Island and its surrounding marshy areas were ideal for larger cash crop production and many plantations were formed. This changed after General William T. Sherman's "March to the Sea" during the Civil War as many plantations were destroyed. In the wake of Sherman's march, Colletonians began to make the shift from plantation-style farming of cotton and rice to large tracts of timber and farms of corn, soybeans, and back to livestock. The City of Walterboro was designated as the county seat in 1822.

Hampton County was created after residents petitioned to break away from Beaufort County. Citizen's primary concern was the distance and expense of having to more than sixty miles to the courthouse. The petition listed potential names for this new county, such as "Washington" and "Palmetto"; however, the final version proposed the name "Hampton". General Wade Hampton, III was one of South Carolina's historical military leaders who would later sign the act to create Hampton County. The departure was made official in 1878, during the Reconstruction efforts post-Civil War. The county seat is the Town of Hampton. Hampton County hosts many municipalities that were founded near industrial sites that were dependent upon railway transportation. Since the creation of I-95, the county has seen developments become more ruralized, moving away from historical centers.

Jasper County, the youngest of the four-county district, was formed from parts of Beaufort and Hampton Counties in 1912. The county is named after a Revolutionary War hero, Sergeant William Jasper. Thomas Heyward, Jr., one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, also came from Jasper County. Traditionally, Jasper County's land has been used for forestry and agriculture. There are only two municipalities in Jasper County: Town of Ridgeland and City of Hardeeville (the former being the county seat).

A Land of Growing Opportunities

The LEDD is located in the Coastal Zone and Coastal Plain of South Carolina, and contains extensive wetlands, marshes and swamps, which allows for great recreational uses, such as boating, hunting, fishing and camping. These activities have profited from the abundance of natural resources, low density population and mild climate here in the Lowcountry; however, the protection of these natural resources have delayed commercial development in areas.

TABLE I: Area and Density of Lowcountry Counties

<i>County</i>	<i>2019 Population</i>	<i>Total Square Miles</i>	<i>Land Area Sq. Mi.</i>	<i>Water Area Sq. Mi.</i>	<i>Population/ Sq. mi. (land)</i>
Beaufort	192,122	923	576.28	346.72	333.38
Colleton	37,677	1,132.05	1056.49	75.56	35.66
Hampton	19,222	562.72	559.90	2.82	34.33
Jasper	30,073	685.84	655.32	30.52	45.89
LEDD	279,094	3,303.61	2,847.99	455.62	98.00
South Carolina	5,157,702	32,020	30,060.70	1,959.3	171.58

Source: USA Counties in Profile: StatsAmerica, 2019.

From big to small, Colleton County is, by far, the largest county in the Region (see table above) and also the fifth largest county in the state. Colleton spans more than 1,056 square miles. Colleton County touches the Atlantic Ocean at its southern tip, Edisto Beach. Beaufort County, on the other hand, is the smallest county by land area and accounts for over sixty islands. Beaufort County is divided into northern and southern areas by the Broad River, which empties into the Atlantic Ocean at one of the county's two sounds, Port Royal. The Combahee River joins the Coosaw River to flow into the ocean at St. Helena Sound. Beaufort County's area is almost one-third covered in water.

Jasper County is the second largest county in the Lowcountry; however, according to the County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the county's land is mostly designated as agricultural/undeveloped and conservational/recreational areas. Jasper's western and southern borders are defined by the Savannah River and Atlantic Ocean, respectively, and is home to over 161 square miles of forested land. This county's population is growing, and there is much room for development. Hampton County is the only county in the LEDD that does not touch the Atlantic Ocean. Hampton is riddled with small towns that developed near the industries that relied on railroad transport. Hampton county is the most sparsely populated county and remains heavily agrarian-dependent.

When it comes to land use in the LEDD, each county has a considerable amount of undeveloped land. According to Beaufort County's Comprehensive Plan of 2010, 71.4% of the 235,496 acres in the county is designated as rural/undeveloped or preserved land. Colleton County's Comprehensive Plan of 2009 establishes that approximately 138,525 acres have been designated as reserved land by federal, state and private entities. Also, Colleton has limitations to land development as over 44% of the county is located within a flood plain. Hampton County has roughly 68% of their 563 square mile area is designated for forested and agricultural uses. Jasper County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the largest area of the county falling into two designations: agricultural / undeveloped and conservation / recreation. Almost 235 square miles of woody wetlands and 161 square miles of forested land are present.

Diversification is happening in the Lowcountry. Over the last few decades, southern Jasper County has become increasingly developed and more residential. Its proximity to the City of Savannah to the south and Beaufort, Bluffton and Hilton Head to the east make Jasper County an attractive place for residents and industries to locate. Beaufort County has the largest population and continues to grow every year. The availability to resources, transportation and its location make this area the perfect place to live, work and ultimately retire. Land here is continuously being developed for residential and commercial uses; however, the county has designated large portions of land for conservation and recreational purposes.

Colleton County and Hampton County are largely forestry and agriculturally based, but these two counties are beginning to make big changes. These two counties host multiple access points to I-95 and are in close proximity to major ports and airports. Development efforts are being made to increase productivity and their residents' quality of life as land is being designated for industrial development and recreation / conservation.



Natural Resources, Climate & Geography

The Lowcountry Region is a part of the Southern Climatic Division of the State of South Carolina. The region features a coastal climate, recognized for the hot, humid summers and cool winters. According to the U. S. Department of Commerce's National Climatic Data Center, the annual average temperature is 67.1 degrees, with an average daily high of 75.8 degrees. The average daily low is 58.4 degrees. In a typical year, the LEDD will average nearly 61 inches of rain.

The counties of the Lowcountry are part of the coastal plain and coastal zone: an area of land created as a result of the ocean's receding. Millions of years ago, the Lowcountry was underwater and a part of the continental shelf. The shelf is relatively flat and is covered (to a large extent) with rain-eroded rock fragments from mountains and hills, and dirt and clay from the lowlands.

The Lowcountry District has no known precious metal deposits, and the soils are majorly consisted of sand; however, some clay materials are present. The mining or use of these materials is limited to local road formation and masonry uses. There are multiple sand quarries located in the LEDD.

The most significant natural resources in the LEDD are those that make the Lowcountry special: water, forests, marshes and wetlands. These areas support a wide range of critical habitat for the flora and fauna that are found here. Many of the Lowcountry's residents have expressed their concerns for the preservation of these habitats, and many are active in localized conservation efforts for these habitats and resources. This is evident through, but certainly not limited to, the ACE Basin Project and the efforts of several counties in establishing land trusts.



Thinking of the Environment

Issue I: Coastal Growth and Wastewater Disposal

Section 208 of the Federal Clean Water Act and implemented at the state level in Area-wide Water Quality Management Plans (208 Plans), are regulations with the intent to minimize the environmental effects of sewage disposal. LCOG administers the 208 plans for South Carolina's Region X. The principal concern of 208 planning in the region is the proper disposal of treated waste effluent. The Lowcountry region contains marshes and other bodies of water with Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) ratings- the highest water quality possible. Currently, environmentally sound disposal sites for waste effluent are limited, and most wastewater in the coastal zone is being sprayed on golf courses and tree farms. This process seems to remain environmentally sound; however, it is unclear whether an increase in this activity could potentially contaminate groundwater supplies. Therefore, the ability to safely dispose of wastewater may become a constraint to future coastal development.

Issue II: Infrastructure Development for Southern Beaufort County and Jasper County

These areas are subject to rapid growth and development. In anticipation of this rapid growth, the Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority (BJWSA) built a wastewater treatment plant in the Cherry Point area several years ago and brought online a new water distribution system connected to the BJWSA's Chelsea water plant. BJWSA also in recent years built a new water treatment facility along the Savannah River at Purrysburg to meet expanding water needs. South Carolina Electric and Gas (SCE&G, now Dominion Energy), seeing the need to address electrical demand in the Lowcountry built a new natural gas fueled power plant in Purrysburg.

In addition to water and sewer infrastructure and electrical needs, the US 278 Connector has been completed to assist with transportation needs in the Lowcountry. The Connector links US 278 to Interstate 95 at exit 8 in Hardeeville. The completion of this highway further prepared the areas of Hilton Head Island, southern Beaufort and Jasper Counties for growth. A main concern here is how to maintain the high environmental quality and visual character of this rapidly developing area and have it coexist with new development.

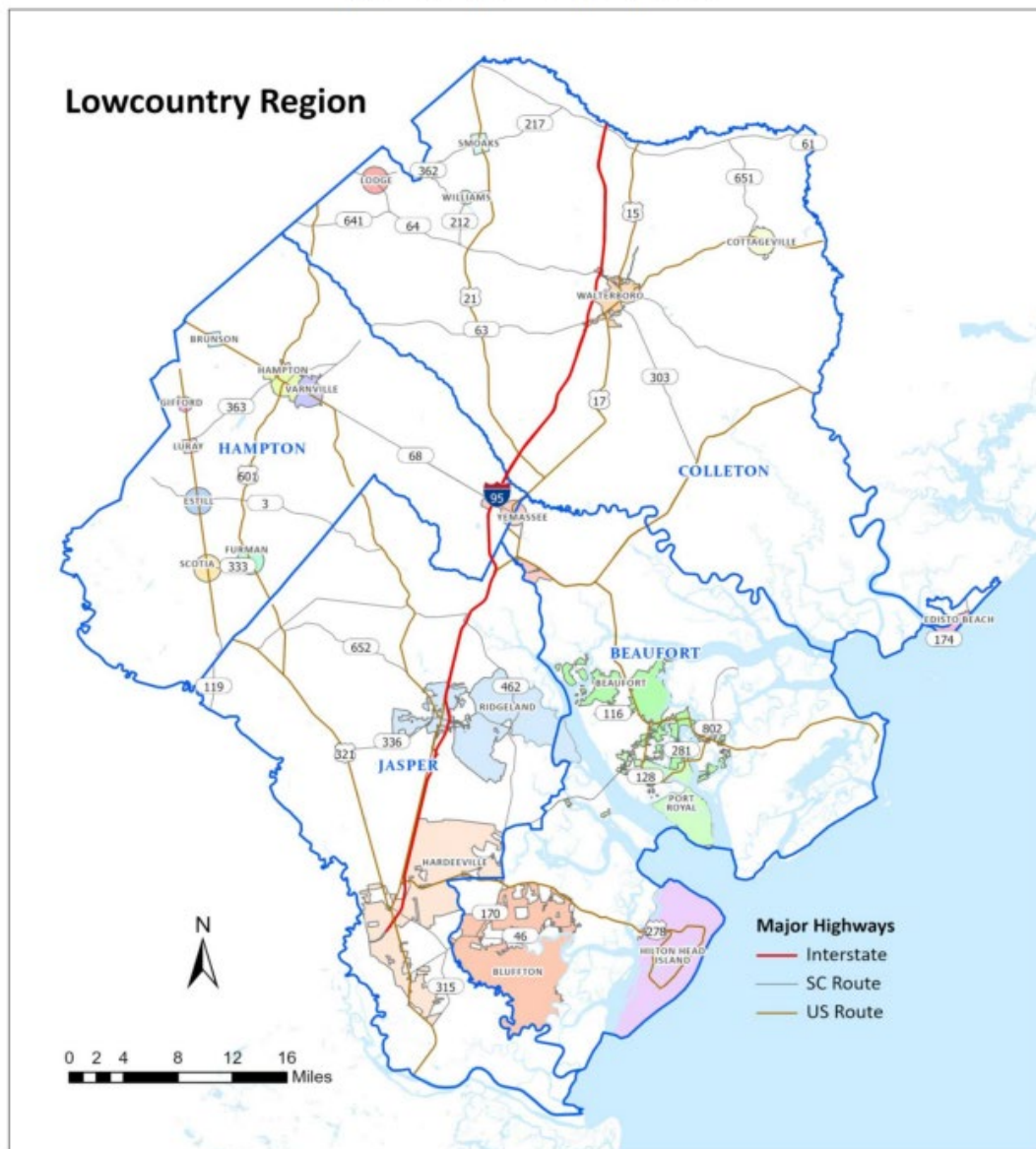
Issue III: Infrastructure Development for Stormwater and Drainage

The Lowcountry must remain vigilant in their efforts to combat stormwater concerns in all four counties. Beaufort and Jasper Counties have the lowest elevations and drainage remains one of the primary concerns, here. Colleton and Hampton Counties often have troubles with flooding and standing water, to a lesser degree than their neighbors to the south. Much of the LEDD is designated as wetland or floodplain areas which limit opportunities to build residential and commercial structures. The diversion of water and drainage will be a primary concern in coming years as the need for expansion occurs.

Political Geography

County Governments.

The four county governments within the Lowcountry Economic Development District have the council-administrator form of government. Beaufort County is divided into eleven political districts with each district represented by a member on council. Colleton County has five council members elected to four year terms as follows – two from the eastern district, two from the western district and one at-large for the entire county. Hampton County has a five-member county council that is elected at-large for four-year terms. Jasper County has a five member council with four single member districts and one at large; all seats have four year terms.



Source: South Carolina Department of Natural Resource (SCDNR)

Beaufort County Municipal Governments.

There are four municipalities in Beaufort County: City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal, Town of Bluffton and the Town of Hilton Head Island. The City of Beaufort, located on Port Royal Island, is the county seat. It contains 4,566.6 acres. The City has the council-manager form of government. An elected mayor and four council members are elected at-large for four-year terms. The city manager is hired by the council and serves at its pleasure.

The Town of Port Royal, also located on Port Royal Island, contains 1,440 acres. Like the City of Beaufort, the town has the council-manager form of government. An elected mayor and four council members are elected at-large for four-year staggered terms.

The Town of Bluffton, located along the May River in southern Beaufort County has the council-manager form of government. The town has an elected mayor at 4 years and four councilpersons four-year staggered terms, all elected at-large. As a result of recent annexation efforts, the Town of Bluffton covers 38,012 acres and is the largest municipality in the county in terms of land area.

The largest municipality in the county, in population, is Hilton Head Island. With about 26,900 acres, this is the second largest island on the East Coast of the United States. The Town has the council-manager form of government. The mayor is elected at-large and six council members are elected single member districts (wards) for four-year staggered terms.

Colleton County Municipal Governments.

Colleton County has six municipalities: Town of Cottageville, Town of Edisto Beach, Town of Lodge, Town of Smoaks, City of Walterboro and the Town of Williams. Walterboro, a 2,995.2-acre city located near the center of the county, is the county seat. The seven-member council, including the mayor, is elected at-large. The city operates under the council-manager form of government.

The Town of Edisto Beach operates under the mayor-council form of government. This resort community has a mayor and five council members, all elected at-large. The small rural Towns of Cottageville, Lodge, Smoaks and Williams all operate under the mayor-council form of government, and have five at-large, elected council members and a mayor.

Hampton County Municipal Governments.

In Hampton County, there are nine municipalities: The Towns of Brunson, Estill, Furman, Gifford, Hampton, Luray, Scotia, Varnville and Yemassee. The Town of Hampton, a 2,816-acre community, is the county seat. The town operates under the council form of government. The mayor and the four council members are elected at-large and serve four-year staggered terms.

The Town of Estill has the council form of government and employs a city administrator to manage the day-to-day activities of the town. The mayor and four council members are elected at-large. Brunson, Gifford, Luray, Scotia, and Yemassee are all operated by a mayor-council form of government with mayors and council members elected at-large. Furman and Varnville have the council form of government with a mayor and four councilpersons elected at-large.

Jasper County Municipal Governments.

There are two municipalities in Jasper County: Ridgeland and Hardeeville. Ridgeland, centrally located in the county, serves as the county seat. The town has the council form of government with a mayor

and four councilpersons elected at-large. The City of Hardeeville, in the southern part of the county has a council-manager form of government and five council members (including the mayor) who are elected at-large for four-year terms.

The People of the Lowcountry

Population.

South Carolina's population grew by 15% from the year 2000 to 2010. Over the same period of time, the population of Beaufort County grew by 34%. Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties' rate of growth were significantly less: 1.6%, -1.4% and 19.8%, respectively. The growth rate in population was larger in the 1990's than the 2000's; however, the growth rate in the LEDD continues to average higher percentages than the State's in the last decade (see *Table II*). Major population centers in the southern area of Beaufort County are the Town of Hilton Head Island, the Town of Bluffton and the US Highway 278 Corridor between Hilton Head and I-95 in Jasper County. Hilton Head Island is the most densely populated and commercialized district in the southern region largely because it is a major international resort and tourist destination.

TABLE II: Population by County, Region and State, 2000-2019

	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	2019	% Change 2010-2019
Beaufort	120,937	162,233	34.1%	192,122	18.4%
Colleton	38,264	38,892	1.6%	37,677	-3.1%
Hampton	21,386	21,090	-1.4%	19,222	-8.9%
Jasper	20,678	24,777	19.8%	30,073	21.4%
LEDD	201,265	246,992	22.7%	279,094	13.0%
South Carolina	4,012,012	4,625,364	15.3%	5,157,702	7.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Population for selected years*.

The Lowcountry Region, as a whole, is experiencing consistent growth in population. Since 2010, this growth has seen a slow down in the overall growth, but Jasper County continues to grow at over 14% faster than the State overall. As a region, the population has increased by 21.4% between 2010 and 2019, from 246,992 to 279,094 people. Most of the growth comes from Beaufort County, which grew by 71,185 persons, or 59 percent since 2000.

The remaining counties in the region have seen vastly different rates of growth. Jasper County has seen significant growth due to its close proximity to the City of Savannah, Georgia and the Bluffton, Hilton Head Island and Beaufort areas. This county experienced a 21% increase in population. Colleton County and Hampton County both experienced population loss as the population has moved to pursue job opportunities in adjacent counties. Both counties have made increasing efforts to provide their respective citizens with job opportunities and skills development to increase competitiveness.

TABLE III: Age Distribution by County, Region and State, 2019*

	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Beaufort	29,755	22,716	39,465	19,750	25,192	49,217
	(16%)	(12.2%)	(21.2%)	(10.6%)	(13.6%)	(26.5%)
Colleton	6,799	4,633	8,589	4,678	5,454	7,432
	(11.5%)	(12.3%)	(22.8%)	(12.4%)	(14.6%)	(19.8%)
Hampton	3,456	2,351	4,997	2,551	2,697	3,512
	(17.6%)	(12%)	(25.5%)	(13.0%)	(13.8%)	(18.0%)
Jasper	5,156	3,321	7,438	3,431	4,099	5,212
	(17.8%)	(11.6%)	(25.9%)	(12.0%)	(14.4%)	(18.3%)
Region	45,166	33,021	60,489	30,410	37,442	65,373
	(16.6%)	(12.1%)	(22.2%)	(11.2%)	(13.7%)	(24.0%)
State	914,006	659,829	1,268,682	646,916	667,815	863,558
	(18.2%)	(13.2%)	(25.2%)	(12.9%)	(13.3%)	(17.2%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2019

The median age throughout the United States has continued to rise with increased living conditions and medical and technological advancements. The State of South Carolina's median age increased from 37.9 to 39.9 years of age between 2010 and 2019. All counties in the Lowcountry have a higher median age than the state, especially Beaufort County with a median age of 45.5. What makes Beaufort County's median age so high is the number of retired persons that move to the county to enjoy the culture, weather and activities. The population in Beaufort County, over the age of 65, has increased over 7% between 2010 and 2019. Because of the progressions of Sun City, Hilton Head and other residential developments targeted to serve seniors, it is expected that the number of seniors in the LEDD will continue to rise. On the other hand, the individual counties rank behind the State's percent of total population below 14 years of age. The percentage of persons 18 to 64 (the "working years") is also lower.

The racial composition of the Lowcountry Region has experienced some changes in characteristics that are similar to what is occurring at the national level. The percentage of the region's population that is of Hispanic origin is only 9.4%, which is significantly higher than the state's 5.7%. Jasper County has continually had a fast-growing Hispanic population in the Region. The black community accounts for 25.9% of the population in the Lowcountry, which lags behind the State's 26.8%. The percentage of white persons in the Lowcountry is the same percentage as the State's: 67.2% (see *Table IV*).

TABLE IV: Racial Mix by County, Region and State, 2010-2016

	Hispanic origin (of any race)		White		Black	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
2010						
<i>Beaufort</i>	19,567	12.1%	116,606	71.9%	31,290	19.3%
<i>Colleton</i>	1,094	2.8%	22,173	57.0%	15,178	39.0%
<i>Hampton</i>	744	3.5%	8,999	42.7%	11,359	53.9%
<i>Jasper</i>	3,752	15.1%	10,658	43.0%	11,406	46.0%
<i>Region</i>	25,157	10.2%	158,436	64.1%	69,233	28.0%
<i>State</i>	235,682	5.5%	3,060,000	66.2%	1,290,684	27.9%
2019						
<i>Beaufort</i>	20,635	11.1%	142,874	76.8%	35,544	19.1%
<i>Colleton</i>	1,205	3.2%	21,523	57.3%	14,411	38.3%
<i>Hampton</i>	787	4.0%	8,227	42.1%	10,451	53.4%
<i>Jasper</i>	3,851	13.4%	15,011	52.4%	11,909	41.6%
<i>Region</i>	26,478	9.4%	187,635	67.2%	72,315	25.9%
<i>State</i>	285,458	5.7%	3,372,011	67.2%	1,344,139	26.8%

Source: US Census Bureau and ACS Data.

Education.

Over the last several decades, educational attainment (as measured by the percentage of persons 25 years or older who have four years of high school and with four or more years of college) has made great improvements in South Carolina. As a region, the numbers reflect similar projections to the State's. A closer look shows that Beaufort County's numbers skew the region's. The region's focus on education has only grown over previous years. Beaufort County's numbers show a positive light as 24% of the population here has achieved a bachelor's degree, and 17% have finished graduate programs. The rest of the counties in the region show a steep drop-off after "Some College, Associates". Most of the Colleton, Hampton and Jasper populations have a completed high school or the equivalent (see *Table V*).

TABLE V: Educational Attainment by County, State and Nation, 2000-2019

Educational Attainment 2000	Beaufort	Colleton	Hampton	Jasper	S.C.	U.S.
Less Than High School Diploma or Equivalent	12.2%	30.4%	33.1%	34.9%	23.7%	19.6%
High School	24.2%	37.0%	37.8%	35.9%	30.0%	28.6%
Some College, Associates	30.5%	21.1%	19.1%	20.5%	26.0%	27.4%
Bachelors	21.6%	7.4%	7.2%	6.2%	13.5%	15.5%
Graduate	11.6%	4.2%	2.9%	2.6%	6.9%	8.9%
Educational Attainment 2010	Beaufort	Colleton	Hampton	Jasper	S.C.	U.S.
Less Than High School Diploma or Equivalent	9.4%	24.7%	24.1%	25.1%	17.0%	14.9%
High School	24.2%	39.1%	41.0%	39.6%	31.2%	29.0%
Some College, Associates	29.0%	22.6%	23.9%	25.8%	27.8%	28.1%
Bachelors	23.2%	9.5%	7.6%	6.7%	15.5%	17.6%
Graduate	14.1%	4.2%	3.3%	2.7%	8.4%	10.3%
Educational Attainment 2019	Beaufort	Colleton	Hampton	Jasper	S.C.	U.S.
Less Than High School Diploma or Equivalent	7.3%	13.4%	19.0%	21.2%	12.5%	12.6%
High School	22.3%	45.4%	42.5%	34.9%	29.1%	27.3%
Some College, Associates	29.4%	26.6%	26.6%	29.1%	30.3%	29.1%
Bachelors	24.1%	9.6%	8.8%	9.9%	17.8%	19.1%
Graduate	17.1%	4.9%	3.0%	4.9%	10.3%	11.8%

Source: US Census and ACS Data, Social Characteristics in the United States by County/Nation, 2019.

On the other hand, the educational enrichment within the Lowcountry has increased overall. From 2010 to 2019, each county increased in the percentage of population who acquired bachelor's degrees, as well as a decrease in the number of people who did not complete high school.

Workforce.

As seen in *Table IV*, most of the labor force in the Lowcountry Region (pre-COVID-19) was employed. The region's unemployment percentage was lower than the State's 3.4%; however, three of the four counties had greater unemployment percentages than the national average. Beaufort County maintained the lowest unemployment numbers in the region at 2.6%. The statistics are undoubtedly import; however, the issue in the Lowcountry is largely underemployment, as opposed to unemployment.

TABLE VI: Labor Force Data 2019

COUNTY	LABOR FORCE	TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT	% UNEMPLOYED
Beaufort	87,127	76,980	4,076	2.6
Colleton	17,312	15,900	1,412	4.7
Hampton	8,289	7,470	819	5.2
Jasper	13,305	12,309	961	4.1
Region	126,033	112,659	7,268	2.6
S.C.	2,447,854	2,275,531	139,526	3.4
U.S.	164,629,492	154,842,185	8,713,400	3.4

Source: US Census, Economic Characteristics by County/Nation, 2019.

The statistics represent the LEDD during 2019, a year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the variants that have arisen in previous months, which devastated the entire country. Unemployment rates increased as many citizens were sent into quarantine, unable to work or afraid of the impact that COVID may have. Understandably, these circumstances shook the foundations of local economies, especially in the tourism sector. These mandated closures caused major losses in revenue, seen most prominently in Beaufort County where tourism was a major economic driver. South Carolina was also heavily impacted as the state's major historic and tourist-centered hubs were closed.

(Rest of Page Intentionally Left Blank)

The Economy

The Lowcountry's economy is driven by select major industry sectors that, in many cases, show similarities across county lines. On the next page, *Table VII* expresses comparative wage rates for the specific sector by county and South Carolina's average. The largest variation in compensation can be seen in the highest and lowest wage rate categories. These wage rates are determined as the result of underlying supply and demand of labor in each county.

TABLE VII: Average Annual Wage Rates by Industry for Employees for the Second Quarter 2020

Occupation	Beaufort	Colleton	Hampton	Jasper	SC
Accommodation and Food Services	\$22,152	\$15,860	\$14,040	\$16,952	\$18,304
Administration, Support and Waste Management	\$33,644	\$36,036	\$32,188	\$38,220	\$37,388
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$36,348	\$45,136	\$48,308	\$47,736	\$38,376
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$29,380	\$41,236	---	\$41,704	\$24,700
Construction	\$51,324	\$42,640	\$42,172	\$50,492	\$54,548
Educational Services	\$61,516	---	\$41,028	\$45,864	\$48,152
Finance and Insurance	\$105,196	\$53,976	\$40,248	\$54,288	\$72,592
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$50,596	\$38,064	\$35,464	\$29,848	\$51,740
Information	\$60,112	\$78,364	---	\$48,152	\$68,068
Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$57,616	---	---	\$29,848	\$84,812
Manufacturing	\$50,544	\$42,744	\$51,064	\$46,488	\$59,332
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extension	---	\$94,432	---	---	\$67,080
Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$35,932	\$28,444	\$27,560	\$30,368	\$37,336
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$65,624	\$40,508	\$61,932	\$43,836	\$73,112
Public Administration	\$54,444	\$39,624	\$49,504	\$43,472	\$49,556
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$43,212	\$41,184	\$39,468	\$50,960	\$49,764
Retail Trade	\$30,576	\$24,128	\$25,792	\$37,232	\$30,784
Transportation and Warehousing	\$46,540	\$47,112	\$48,672	\$39,104	\$47,476
Utilities	\$87,516	\$83,044	\$68,120	\$93,808	\$83,252
Wholesale Trade	\$62,920	\$67,444	---	\$54,496	\$69,368

Source: South Carolina Department of Employment & Workforce, Community Profile, 2021.

The lower-than-average wages make it difficult for low-to-moderate income persons to afford necessary utilities and housing costs. This only adds value to the LEDD's desire to create better-paying jobs. The number of low-to-moderate families in the region represent a large percentage of the population (see *Table VIII*).

Table VIII: Persons of Low to Moderate Income by County, 2015

COUNTY	LMI PERSONS	% LMI
Beaufort	72,605	43.77%
Colleton	17,024	45.47%
Hampton	8,610	45.15%
Jasper	12,390	47.75%
LEDD	110,629	44.55%

Source: HUD Exchange, LMISD local governments by county, based on ACS 2011-2015

The number of persons living at-or-below the poverty line in the Lowcountry region, and South Carolina as a whole, has decreased over the past several decades. The Lowcountry represents slightly higher projects of people who live in poverty, as compared to the state. Beaufort County's poverty rate is, however, below the state average (refer to *Table IX*).

Table IX: Poverty Rates in the Lowcountry 2000-2019

	2000	2005	2010	2019
Beaufort	10.3	11.5	10.5	10.2
Colleton	19.3	23.9	21.3	21.8
Hampton	20.0	23.9	20.8	20.5
Jasper	22.2	24.8	21.5	17.7
South Carolina	12.8	15.6	16.4	15.2

Source: StatsAmerica, Measuring Statistics, 2019..

The relative economic status of the counties within the Lowcountry can be seen through the comparison of per capita income (see *Table X*). Based on per capita income, Beaufort County is nearly \$10,000 greater than the State of South Carolina. This is due to the large number of retirees that have relocated to Beaufort County and is not indicative of local economic activity. The counties of Colleton, Hampton and Jasper trail behind the State's figures. The contrast in per capita income between these three counties and Beaufort County indicate that a wide range of economic wellbeing exists within the region.

Table X: Per Capita Income by County and State, 2000-2019

COUNTY	2000	2010	2019
Beaufort	\$25,377	\$32,731	\$38,946
Colleton	\$14,831	\$17,842	\$21,377
Hampton	\$13,129	\$16,262	\$18,424
Jasper	\$14,161	\$17,997	\$24,566
South Carolina	\$18,795	\$23,443	\$29,426

Source: U.S. Census and ACS, Economic Characteristics by County, 2019.

Capacity and Capability

Transportation.

The routes for transportation use are majorly defined by natural barriers. Extensive marshlands, wetlands, rivers and streams that crisscross the Lowcountry are considered when designing routes for highway and railway use. Historically, these natural barriers had a great influence on the development and growth of commercial and residential centers but, today, primary and secondary highways serve as connectors between majorly populated areas.

The genesis of Interstate-95 (I-95), in the late 1960s to early 1970s, altered the way and frequency in which people travel. I-95 has become the major artery for travel along the eastern seaboard as over 14 million vehicles pass through Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties³. Beaufort County does not have direct access to I-95. Nearly the center of the LEDD, Exit 33 (US 17 and I-95), roughly 1.5 million vehicles enter or exit I-95, many of which join with traffic coming from Port Royal Island, at Gardens Corner, to become part of the roughly 3 million vehicles that travel US 17 towards Charleston each year. The majorly commercial hubs in the region experience the largest volumes of traffic. US 278 on/toward Hilton Head Island averages an annual daily traffic count of 54,700 vehicles per day (per SCDOT). The average daily traffic counts recorded in and around the City of Beaufort (US 21, SC 170, SC 281 and SC 802) range from around 15,400 to 34,600 vehicles. Most of the other primary roads in Beaufort County have higher average daily traffic counts than what is reported on roads in the other counties.

In Colleton County, aside from I-95, with the largest traffic counts are: US 17, US 17-A, SC 63, SC 64, US 15. US 17-1A acts as the main corridor connecting Walterboro to Charleston and accounts for a range of 12,600 to 17,800 vehicles per day. Hampton County's highest traffic counts are near the Towns of Hampton and Varnville along US 278 (11,800 AADT), US 601 (2,700 AADT), and SC 363 (3,400 AADT). The main North-South corridor is US 321, which passes through the Town of Estill and has an average of 6,000 AADT.

I-95 in Jasper County can see a range of 47,800 to 56,700 vehicles per day. The County also hosts sections of US 17, US 278, US 321, SC 46, SC 170A, SC 336, and SC 462. Average traffic flows vary from as little as 3,600 AADT on SC 462 in the northern parts of the county to as much as 29,800 AADT on US 278 near Hardeeville. Higher traffic flows exist near and in the Towns of Hardeeville and Ridgeland. The high traffic counts recorded in the rural areas of the county can be attributed to the vehicles that travel between Hilton Head Island and Beaufort and I-95 or Savannah.

Due to the location of the LEDD and its coastal nature, maintenance and continual improvements on the transportation system is imperative for hurricane evacuation when necessary. US 21, I-95, US 278, and US 321 all serve as key evacuation routes within the Lowcountry and need to be maintained. LCOG has updated a regional disaster preparedness plan which will address specifically evacuation transportation. Also, LCOG has recently completed a Long-Range Transportation Plan which recommends heavily weighting projects that address the regions evacuation routes.

³ Average Daily Traffic Counts are from the SC Department of Transportation's 2016 count.

Water, Sewer and Solid Waste.

Currently, there are adequate supplies of potable water in the LEDD. Municipalities in Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties, as well as the Beaufort-Jasper Water and Sewer Authority (BJWSA) and the Lowcountry Regional Water System pump water from the Floridian Aquifer and/or the Savannah River. In the Town of Hilton Head, several public service districts provide water service. BJWSA serves the faster-growing areas in the LEDD and meets current and projected service needs. LRWS is a joint-municipal system that serves the majority of Hampton County's municipalities, but for the Towns of Estill and Scotia.

Recently, increasing demand and heightened regulations on the quality of water provided has increased the efforts of public officials all along the eastern seaboard to find alternate sources of water. New EPA regulations for water quality, increasing demands on the supply, and recent evidence of salt-water intrusion in some existing wells have made many in the Lowcountry concerned. Hilton Head Island previously decided to reduce its dependence on water from the aquifer by accessing the Savannah River for a new source of water. There are limits on the amount of water that can be pulled from the Savannah River to ensure there is no unintentional damage to the river's ecology.

Generally, added regulations requiring the frequent testing of water-quality and the increasing demand on a diminishing supply is increasing the cost of water along the coast. In most rural areas, households depend on private wells, wherein the quality of water is largely untested and not known. There is no data immediately available on the percentage of households that employ septic tank disposal of waste effluent versus a sewerage system. However, most homes in the unincorporated areas and portions of the incorporated areas use a septic tank. Municipal and smaller privately owned wastewater systems are found predominantly within incorporated areas and in many of the "closed-gate" residential developments.



Public water systems serve all the incorporated communities in the Lowcountry and portions of unincorporated areas immediately outside them. BJWSA is the primary service provider for Beaufort County and Jasper County, with the exception being the Town of Ridgeland. The Lowcountry Regional Water System (LRWS) serves municipalities in Hampton County. This only leaves Colleton County without a regional water and wastewater provider. Wastewater service is present only in and around the larger, more developed areas. These include the City of Beaufort, Town of Bluffton, Town of Hilton Head Island, portions of unincorporated Beaufort County, City of Walterboro, Town of Brunson, Town of Estill, Town of Gifford, Town of Hampton, Town of Varnville, Town of Yemassee, City of Hardeeville and the Town of Ridgeland.

The disposal of municipal solid waste is governed by SC Department of Health & Environmental Control (SCDHEC). Localities are required to submit plans every five years regarding their methods of waste disposal and recycling. Beaufort and Jasper Counties currently dispose of their waste at the Hickory Hill landfill in the east central section of Jasper County. Colleton and Hampton Counties each have a county owned landfill and dispose of their waste there. The number of pounds of waste generated per person per day varies widely between Beaufort County and the other three counties. Beaufort County's average is approximately twice that of the other counties, which represents waste from the transient population of a coastal, tourism-oriented county.

Housing.

The number of housing units has lagged the population growth rate, beginning in the 1990s (see *Table XII*). In Beaufort County and Jasper County, the number of housing units increased by over 30 percent between 1990 and 2000 and at a time when the population in the counties increased by 39.9 percent and 33.5 percent. Our population was growing faster than the housing stock. Colleton and Hampton County's experience was similar in that their population growth was not outrunning their housing stock in 2000.

TABLE XII: Total Number of Housing Units: 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2019

	1990	2000	% Change 1990 to 2000	2010	% Change 2000 to 2010	2019	% Change 2010 to 2019
Beaufort	45,981	60,509	31.6	93,023	53.7	99,204	6.6
Colleton	14,926	18,129	21.5	19,901	9.8	20,112	1.1
Hampton	7,058	8,582	21.6	9,140	6.5	9,181	.4
Jasper	6,070	7,928	30.6	10,299	29.9	11,865	15.2
South Carolina	1,424,155	1,753,670	23.1	2,137,683	21.9	2,286,826	7.0

Source: US Census Bureau, *Housing Characteristics by County, 2019*.

New housing construction has slowed overall relative to the percentage change in population. Across the Lowcountry Region as a whole, the population increased faster than the available housing units did. Beaufort and Jasper counties stand alone in positive increases in population and the number of housing units, while Colleton and Hampton Counties both saw a decline in population. Beaufort County had a net increase of 6,181 housing units, while its population increased by 29,889 persons. Jasper County's increase in housing units was 1,566 while the population increased by 5,296 persons. Colleton County had a net increase of 211 housing units while its population decreased by 628 persons. Hampton County had a net increase of 41 housing units while its population decreased by 1,868 persons. The need for affordable housing and work force housing is important in the LEDD.

Educational Facilities.

The Lowcountry Region is home to approximately 43,527 students, enrolled from preschool to high school. An additional 9,033 residents are enrolled in a college or university, and 1,897 are enrolled in a graduate or professional program. There are sixty (60) public schools in the region with a total enrollment estimated at 34,117 students. All counties, but Hampton County, have one county-wide school district. Hampton County is currently divided into two districts, Hampton I and II; however, county council recently passed plans to consolidate the two. There are twenty-five (25) private schools in the region with a total enrollment estimated at 4,321 students. Each county has at least one private school. Beaufort County has six non-parochial schools with K-12 and seven parochial schools throughout the county. Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties each have one non-parochial school (K-12).

The Lowcountry has a two-year technical college, the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL). The main campus is in the City of Beaufort, with satellite branches in Southern Beaufort and Jasper County, Colleton County and the Town of Varnville. TCL offers Associate Degree programs in the Arts, Science, Civil Engineering Technology, Computer Technology, Criminal Justice Technology, Early Care and Education, General Business (GB), General Technology, Industrial Technology, Nursing (AND), Office Systems Technology, Legal Assistant/Paralegal, Physical Therapist Assistant, and Radiologic Technology. There are also other diploma programs and numerous other certificate programs tailored to the local economy are offered.

There are two branches of the University of South Carolina in the Lowcountry. USC-Beaufort is a four-year college with Associate degree programs in Science and Arts. Also, a bachelor's degree can be obtained in Nursing, Interdisciplinary Studies, Early Childhood Education and Business Management. USC Beaufort has two campuses – a north campus located in the City of Beaufort and a south campus (New River) located in Southern Beaufort County. The USC-Salkehatchie branch campus, located in the City of Walterboro is a two-year college, which offers Associate Degrees in Arts and Science. The Academy for Career Excellence provides vocational training for Beaufort and Jasper Counties. The Thunderbolt Career & Technology Center is the primary provider of vocational training in Colleton County.

Medical Facilities.

The Lowcountry hosts six hospitals, five of which are available to the public, with major trauma centers in outlying Charleston and Savannah. Beaufort County has three hospitals, one in the City of Beaufort, one in the Town of Hilton Head and the Navy Hospital in Port Royal. The Navy Hospital provides medical service to active and retired members of the armed forces. Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties each have one hospital.

Cultural and Recreational Opportunities.

The southern portion of South Carolina was one of the first areas to be explored and settled in North America. In 1521, less than 30 years after Columbus discovered America, Francisco Gordillo

landed among the Lowcountry's sea islands and named the area Santa Elena. Since that time, successive generations have left a rich cultural heritage, which lives on in the numerous churches, houses, barns, forts, and plantations. The City of Beaufort has a 304 acre Historic District that was designated a National Historic Landmark on July 7, 1973. The district offers a museum and other historically significant buildings dating back to 1717. In nearby areas within Beaufort County, there are remnants of structures that date back to the 16th century and intact structures from the 17th and 18th centuries.

The historically significant buildings that can be found in Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties are from the 18th and 19th centuries. The City of Walterboro has two historic districts. Many buildings were destroyed during the Civil War.

Four state parks dot the Lowcountry, two in Colleton County, one each in Hampton and Beaufort Counties. All offer cabins and/or campsites, picnic areas, swimming, fishing and hiking. Beaches are easily accessible at Edisto Beach State Park and Hunting Island State Park.

Nature preserves and wildlife refuges are an integral part of the Lowcountry environment. Ten sites offer nature trails and exhibits for a special look at wildlife management. These site/projects include the ACE Basin, a protected wildlife habitat covering 350,000 acres in a tidewater region of Colleton County. Historic rice fields, managed wetlands, pristine coastal waters, extensive swamps and marshlands, and large blocks of forest land have made the ACE Basin one of the most important wildlife habitat areas in North America. Also included is the Great Swamp Sanctuary an 842-acre tract with nature trails that contains the headwaters of the Ashepoo River. Fishing, hunting and boating are three of the most avidly pursued activities in the Lowcountry. Many hunters from out-of-state now lease properties on which to hunt.

The Lowcountry, particularly Hilton Head Island, has a wide selection of outstanding resorts that offer golf, tennis, dining, entertainment and shopping facilities. The area is home to many fine artists and artisans. Art galleries are prevalent, and each year several arts and craft festivals attract many thousands of people. The SC Artisan's Center located in Walterboro is the State's official fine crafts center.

Planning and Economic Development Activities

Economic Development Activities.

LCOG has played an active role in the four-county region furthering economic development, creating job opportunities for low-to-moderate income persons and decreasing the underemployment rate. LCOG has done so through the administration of community and economic development grants. A cooperative relationship exists with our member governments, county economic development boards and alliances, and the private sector. LCOG serves as an auxiliary support to the regional alliance group that is now serving all member counties of the LEDD. Southern Carolina Alliance (SCA) is the key marketing and prospect and product development arm of the LEDD. LCOG prepared an Economic Diversification Study that identifies the cluster areas our development officials need to focus marketing and recruitment efforts. LCOG provides technical assistance, especially in the areas of grants development and financial packaging. These projects illustrate LCOG's commitment to intergovernmental cooperation as a means of

bringing about economic development. (Please see Appendix D for a list of recently awarded grants in the LEDD.)

Planning Activities.

LCOG has increased its involvement in area-wide planning issues. The staff is using its professional resources to provide local governments with reports, statistics and information on land use and prepares zoning ordinances, comprehensive plans, and other planning assistance related to economic development. The Planning Department is under contract to SCDOT to be the regional transportation planners for the Lowcountry. As a result, the department has recently completed a Long Range Multimodal Regional Transportation and a Business Plan for a fixed-route bus system (in conjunction with the Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority) and is currently working with a consultant, SCDOT and regional social service agencies on a Transportation Coordination Plan.

Active planning departments with full-time professional staff in the Lowcountry, are limited to Beaufort County, City of Beaufort, the Town of Bluffton, the Town of Hilton Head Island, the Town of Port Royal, Colleton County, Jasper County, Town of Ridgeland and the City of Hardeeville. All of the local governments in the region have made efforts to update their respective comprehensive plans that were originally developed to meet the 1999 State mandated deadline. Many localities make continuing efforts to keep these plans as up-to-date and relevant as possible, with some localities performing various studies that coincide with their individual needs. Jasper County has just completed its plan and Hampton County is undertaking a joint county-municipal process.

Workforce Development Activities.

The Lowcountry Council of Governments has a crucial role in design and implementation of workforce development activities as prescribed under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. This is being accomplished through three major activities that include the administration and supervision of one-stop centers, a youth program and the LEDD's workforce development program.

Currently, the Lowcountry Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) has four mobile teams that serve the LEDD. The one-stops provide three levels of service for job seekers – universal access to information on employment opportunities and training opportunities, intensive programs in which case workers can assist job seekers in becoming self-sufficient, and training opportunities for dislocated workers. The LWIA also manages a youth program that is designed to serve youth aged 14 to 21 with the goal of preparing them for the workforce. This is accomplished by working to increase graduation rates and credential rates (GED), and to improve the participants' basic skills, occupational skills, and job readiness skills. The LCOG workforce program is an important part of the LEDD's comprehensive economic development strategy to increase investment and create new jobs paying above the state average wage.

Recently, Educational Data Systems, Inc (EDSI) conducted a study to address the workforce for the counties overseen by Southern Carolina Alliance (Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties). EDSI acknowledged noted that SCA's region is currently limited by its sparse, rural population; education and healthcare availability; limited transportation; and limited infrastructure, such as water, sewer and broadband. These areas have been primary focal points for localities within the LEDD, and this study offers suggestions to advance local workforce training, such as: creating a regional workforce strategy, creation and implementation of a plan for a centralized workforce development center, and conducting a detailed study of local employer needs. The LEDD plans to work closely with SCA and other regional partners to develop these strategies and assist in their implementation.

Disaster Resiliency

The LEDD's proximity to the coast makes it susceptible to natural disaster, often experiencing collateral from tropical storms and hurricane-force winds. Over the last decade, the Lowcountry has encountered a series of tropical storms, hurricanes, ice storms, minor earthquakes, a flood and, most recently, tornadoes in April of 2020. The Lowcountry hosts many rural and isolated, coastal areas that equate to slower response times and slower returns to normalcy. Major setbacks due to these occurrences include restoring electrical grids and clearing roadways.

Planning for natural disasters has been a focus for localities, more so now than in previous years. Updates made to infrastructure and broadband capabilities has allowed for better communications in general, but more importantly to emergency communicational purposes. Citizens are more aware of potential disasters due to readily accessible weather reports via the internet.

March of 2020 took the United States by surprise as COVID-19 allowed for a better understanding at how unprepared localities, states and governments were for health-based crises. The creation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allowed for disbursements to individuals, businesses, nonprofits and localities to offset the impact of the virus. These efforts have helped foster economic stability during uncertain times; however, communities were still devastated by the continual effects of the pandemic.

The LEDD saw rises in unemployment, beginning in April of 2020. Beaufort County metropolitan (Hilton Head, Bluffton and Beaufort areas) saw a rise in unemployment from 2.7 to 12.0 from March to April of 2020⁴. Both, Colleton and Jasper Counties saw peak unemployment rates in May 2020, both having rates of 9.6. Hampton County saw a spike in July at 7.7. Unemployment rates continued to be higher for the LEDD during the remaining months of 2020 than before the pandemic, with a gradual decline and infrequent spikes.

As tourism bolsters the economy of historical and scenic districts throughout the Lowcountry, the pandemic devastated locally owned businesses and restaurants. The continuous efforts of localities,

⁴ Unemployment statistics provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020.

economic development districts and the state have attempted to alleviate major financial burdens taken to ensure consumer safety. Now, efforts have been made to return to some form of normalcy by removing some of the restrictions on dining, masks and recreational activities.

Lowcountry Economies of Scale

The Lowcountry Region is diverse in terms of land use, economies, natural and cultural resources, worker skills and income. Diversification can be a positive force and is an important economic development goal. The diversity that exists in the Lowcountry Region can offer potential employers a range of workers for jobs ranging from low-skilled service sector jobs to high skilled, high-tech jobs. Social and economic characteristics in the Lowcountry district are sufficiently different that the four counties essentially play on different fields. This presents some challenges in forging a regional partnership in economic development and otherwise. This section offers an understanding of each county's assets and liabilities as it pertains to economic development. The proximity to Charleston and Savannah and access to the interstate system and rail are potential assets to all the counties of the Lowcountry district. Many people are attracted to these larger markets and some take advantage of the opportunity to explore cultural sites or experience the abundant scenic beauty or attend the many festivals and events held each year in the region.

Beaufort County.

Beaufort County contains the largest amount of economic activity in the LEDD. The county is the most affluent of the four and has the strongest economic base. With 30 miles of Atlantic Ocean coastline and a myriad of sea islands and waterways, Beaufort County has been a natural magnet to tourists and retirees. During the 1960's, Beaufort County was one of the poorest areas in the state, but today Beaufort County has become one of the most prosperous counties, largely because of development in Southern Beaufort County, beginning with Hilton Head Island, but now more so in Bluffton and along the SC 170 Corridor and to a greater extent along the US 278 corridor which connects the area to I-95 and serves in part as a border for Beaufort and Jasper counties.

Traditionally, residents in Beaufort County have lived in an agrarian and aquatic society. Today, Beaufort County's economy is influenced by the retail and service sectors which are fueled by tourists, retirees and the military. The tourism industry relies almost exclusively on disposable income, so Beaufort County's economy is usually related to the health of the nation's economy.

Job creation is occurring, but many of the new jobs are in the service sector and are directly or indirectly in response to growth in the tourism and retirement industry. Resort (waiters, maids and cooks) and other tourism-related jobs are lower paying and generally have no fringe benefits, most importantly health insurance. Since tourism is seasonal, workers are not employed in full-time year-round positions. Thus, while the area may have low unemployment rates, the amount of underemployment remains high. Efforts are being made to diversify especially by focusing on attracting technology-based companies and

jobs. However, with those types of industries there comes a need to train an existing workforce that has traditionally been focused on jobs that are not as technologically advanced.

Housing costs are higher in Beaufort County relative to surrounding counties. Land values are higher which translates into higher assessed values and property taxes. This has placed an additional hardship on those property owners, specifically the life-long residents who are working in low paying or minimum wage jobs. Higher housing costs are forcing many younger workers to live farther from their jobs where costs are more affordable. Though housing and living costs are higher than surrounding counties, relative to the nation as a whole, Beaufort County would be categorized as affordable. Residential and commercial development properties are readily available at comparatively lower cost than what is found in many urban or highly developed sections of the country. The Port of Port Royal was closed by the State of South Carolina. This mandated closure is giving Port Royal is the opportunity to re-develop the port property. One anchor to Beaufort County's economy is the military. A good neighbor and an invaluable asset to the community for over fifty years, the Military Tri-Command, consisting of the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Parris Island Training Depot, and the Beaufort Naval Hospital, presently has a military population of approximately 10,087. There are 1,329 Department of Defense civilian employees. These numbers do not include veterans and retirees who have located in the region. The labor income generated from the bases total \$1 billion. The annual economic impact for the region is \$2.3 billion. There is no single greater influence on the local economy than the military and its loss would be difficult to overcome.⁵

Colleton County.

Colleton County is adjacent to Dorchester and Charleston Counties, two of the fastest growing counties in the state. Summerville, in Dorchester County, and Charleston are popular destinations for the residents of Colleton County. Often Colleton County residents spend their discretionary dollars outside the county, which has placed a strain on local retailers and service providers. Also, roughly a thousand persons, or one in ten of the total working population in Colleton County, work in Charleston or Dorchester Counties.

Colleton County has five exits along Interstate 95, the main north-south corridor along the East Coast. Many businesses have prospered from Interstate travelers. Highway 17, the main corridor of traffic between Charleston and areas to the south, passes through the southern portion of the county. However, a very limited number of commercial establishments are located along Highway 17 within Colleton County. Much of the land along this corridor within the county is not available for development because it is part of the ACE Basin.

The ACE Basin lies between the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto Rivers in the southeastern part of Colleton County. The Edisto and Combahee Rivers are the northern and southern county lines. The land is owned by private landowners, public agencies and non-profit organizations to be protected in perpetuity. This 350,000-acre wildlife preserve is destined to become a national treasure and an eco-tourism plus for the county. Edisto Beach, a small town of summer homes, lies in the lower part of Colleton County and is the only portion of the county that adjoins the Atlantic Ocean. Visitors can camp at the state park and use

⁵ 2017 Economic Impact of SC's Military Community.

the marine facilities. Edisto Beach remains a destination for persons seeking a quiet family-oriented place to vacation or live.

The City of Walterboro, the county seat, is the largest incorporated area of the county and the main center of commerce. Walterboro continues to dominate the issues of the county because of its size and political base. Businesses in Walterboro have been successful attracting persons from neighboring Hampton County and outlying areas outside of the LEED. Many residents at the western end of the County travel to Walterboro for their basic shopping. In addition to a Wal-Mart Supercenter and an expanded department store (Belk), the city has other attractions that include a cinema, restaurants and medical facilities which include a Veterans Administration nursing home that is managed privately. Moreover, Walterboro is gaining a reputation as an antiques shopping destination.

Just outside the City of Walterboro is the Lowcountry Regional Air Park, an excellent park with paved roads and utilities. The Park has several moderate to small sized buildings and large sites. Despite the park's age there is room for expansion. Lack of an educated and trained work force has made it difficult to meet the full potential of the industrial park. The Lowcountry Regional Airport is also located adjacent to this industrial park. With three runways more than 5,000 feet, the airport is unique for a community of its size because the airport can accommodate all but the largest jet aircraft. The airport's main runway was extended to 6,002 ft., recently resurfaced and a taxiway was added.



(Lowcountry Regional Airport)

Colleton County has also developed the Colleton Commerce Center which is a 260-acre park located on one of the northern I-95 exits in the County. Recruitment for this park has focused on distribution and logistics and would tie to the existing industrial area through the establishment of a foreign trade zone. Colleton is starting to experience greater prospect traffic that is migrating from the greater Charleston area with companies that supply certain cluster industries such as the avionics industry.

Colleton County recently acquired a 1,481-acre plot of land off of Exit 57 on I095. This space has potential to advance Colleton's economic base with its close proximity to I-95, access to Palmetto

Railways' system and access to international ports and airports in Savannah and Charleston. The county and the City of Walterboro are making considerations to provide utilities to this site.

Hampton County.

Hampton County has undergone fewer changes than her faster growing neighbors over the past twenty years; the size of its population and civilian labor force remains about the same. Lack of economic growth has resulted in a relatively low cost of living, low median household income and higher unemployment rate. Relative to the state and the nation, the population is poorly educated and lacks a trained labor pool.

The Lowcountry Regional Industrial Park (LRIP) is a 1,200-acre regional industrial park located eight miles off Interstate-95 between Yemassee and Hampton/Varnville. The five counties cooperating in promoting the park were successful in attracting two local business expansions as well as a new business. The fact that the park is regional allows the attraction of moderate-to-large employers by offering the most favorable Targeted Jobs' Tax Credit Program in the State. The Park also has the added benefit of being located in a Foreign Trade Zone that provides advantages to companies that conduct foreign trade as part of their business. Property taxes paid by businesses that operate in the park are divided evenly among the five counties. In addition to the LRIP, the Towns of Estill, Hampton, Varnville, and Yemassee each have smaller parks that have varying amounts of available land and/or buildings.

Hampton County's primary assets are access to federal and state government grants programs, location on I-95, low cost of living, affordable land, and proximity to two major southeastern cities and their ports. The county's work force, its rural nature (lack of amenities and limited choices of goods and services), and small tax base are deficits to attracting industry and creating jobs in the county. However, Hampton County has proportionately more people employed in the manufacturing sector, which in large part is due to existing industries that have made long term commitments to be in the County.

Jasper County.

Historically, Jasper County has difficulty attracting residents and companies to the county despite being adjacent to the City of Savannah. Without access to developable land, little infrastructure and lack of support from the state, Jasper County has been prevented from progressing and enjoying any real growth. However, with two new industrial parks, the attraction of new industries that are housed in these parks, and the eventuality of a large container port in Southern Jasper County on the Savannah River, Jasper County has arrived as a more significant contributor to the region's economy.

Jasper County is adjacent to Chatham County, Savannah and to the Hilton Head/Bluffton area of Beaufort County and is beginning to experience some residential overflow. This is making the need to strengthen the school system, educate and properly train the work force, and upgrade existing infrastructure an immediate need. For years, timber companies controlled large tracts of land in Jasper County, paying a relatively small amount of property tax per acre. The inability to develop the land and the lack of a strong tax base has severely hampered the county. This is changing due to increasing land values, particularly in

southern Jasper County increasing. Land that has been unavailable for development for decades is being released for this purpose by large timber interests and key families.

The county hosts a state welcome center along I-95, and a regional welcome center at Point South, which presents an excellent opportunity for Jasper County, as well as all the counties of the Lowcountry, to promote their communities and events. Jasper County recently received 50% ownership of the Jasper Ocean Terminal (JOT) project. The ownership was transferred from South Carolina Ports Authority, making Jasper County co-owner with Georgia Ports Authority. BJSWA's water and sewer infrastructure in the Cherry Point area, new water treatment plant in Purrysburg, and SCE&G's new electric plant have all been constructed with the anticipation of increased electricity needs. This estimated five-billion-dollar project will be a new economic driver to Jasper and Beaufort Counties, as well as the remainder of the LEDD. Developments in Jasper County will continue to increase as development restrictions and land prices are higher in neighboring Beaufort County.

The 278 connectors have opened new opportunities for development from its terminus at I-95 and the junction with SC 170. Beaufort Memorial Hospital, Hilton Head Medical Center and Memorial Medical Center have facilities in that area and the Coastal Carolina Medical Center operates at Exit 8 (the intersection of I-95 and US 278). In addition, the new Technical College of the Lowcountry Campus has opened alongside of various commercial, light industrial and residential uses planned for the land along that corridor.

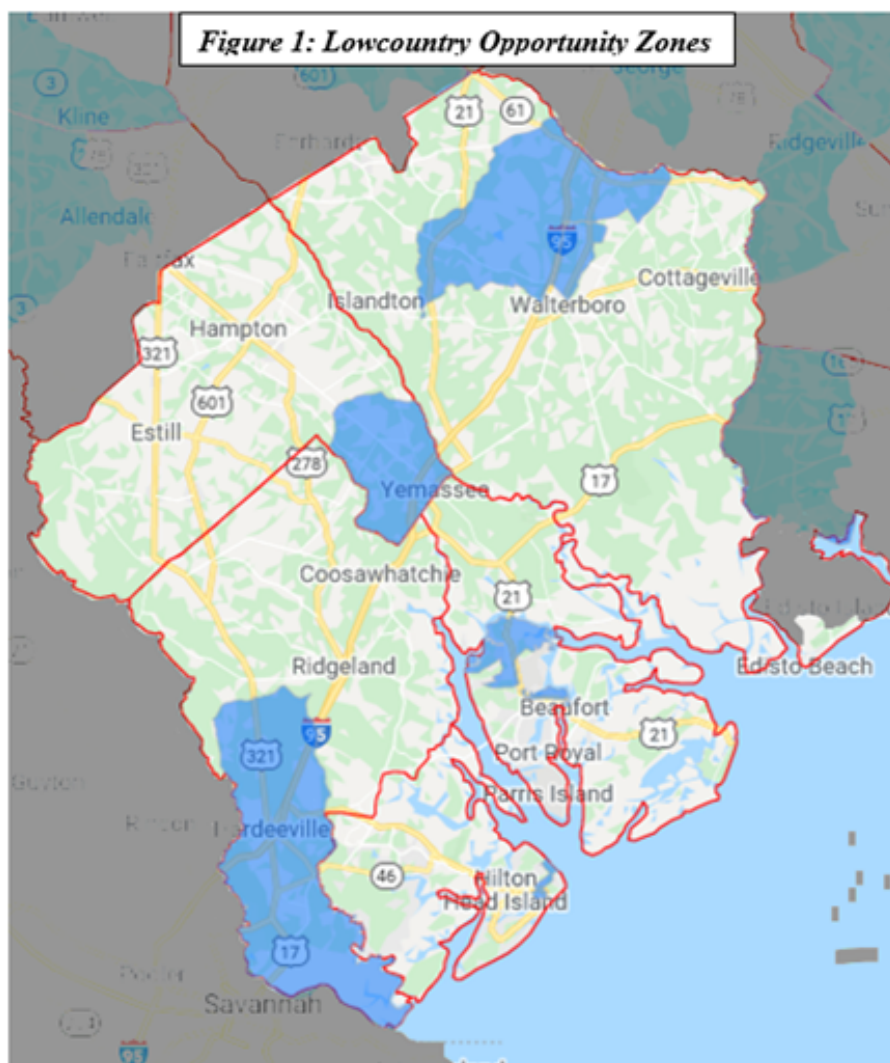
Construction has begun to widen U.S. 17 between South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. This improvement will expand 4.2 miles of highway, adding two additional lanes and a grass median. This expansion has been long awaited and will add to the potential for economic development in this region. The project is expected to be completed in 2025, with an estimated price tag of \$60 million.

Plans to create Exit 3 off I-95 in Hardeeville have given rise to new land developments and potential industries moving to the area. Jasper County and the City of Hardeeville have been granted \$28.1 million and a matching loan. This exit is expected to be completed by 2023, the year the widening of I-95 between Georgia's border and Yemassee, South Carolina, to begin.

Opportunity Zones in the LEDD

Based on the State of South Carolina's Department of Commerce for January 2020, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper are "Tier III" counties, while Beaufort County is classified as "Tier I". The Lowcountry Economic Development District has seven Opportunity Zones. Hampton and Jasper Counties have one zone per county, while Colleton has two and Beaufort County has three.

Beaufort County's Opportunity Zones are located near Hilton Head Island to the South and surrounding the Marine Corps Air Station to the North of the county. The lower half of Jasper County, along the Georgia border, is a rather large Opportunity Zones. This zone ingulfs Hardeeville, along the I-95 corridor, to the Atlantic coastal line. Hampton County's zone splits the municipality of Yemassee and moves Northwest towards Early Branch. Colleton County's Opportunity Zones includes small sections of Walterboro and include large portions of land to the north and west of the county seat.



Colleton County is listed as a 2021 Nonmetropolitan Difficult Development Area⁶, qualifying all Low-Income Housing Tax Credit projects to qualify for additional tax credits.

⁶ LIHTC qualifying area information was provided by HUD Exchange, *State Table*, 2021.

The Lowcountry of South Carolina is also located in one of the twenty-two Promise Zones in the United States. Promise Zones were created for the promotion and creation of economic activities, education advancements, and personal investment opportunities. The Obama Administration announced South Carolina's Lowcountry as a Promise Zone in 2015. This opportunity is set for the duration of ten years, expecting to end in April of 2025.

Vision for the Region

Vision Statement:

“Creating, maintaining and sustaining economic development involves an integrated set of strategies and interfaces with all areas of society, including job creation, availability of capital, job training, education, childcare, affordable housing, environmental protection and social programs of all types.”

To accomplish LCOG's mission, we offer four main goals, or guiding principles:

Goals:

Goal I: Establish and follow a shared vision, that fully recognizes the district's strengths and weaknesses, all the while embracing the traditions, character and environment that make this region unique.

The acceptance and recognition of a common vision can help to keep a community focused on the direction it wishes to go and forge unity among its people. A comprehensive community assessment can help to identify the traditions, character and environment that must be preserved, and which make the community special to those who live there. Since it is impossible to be all things to all people, reasonable choices must be made based on an understanding of existing circumstances. The process should result in a commonly shared view that can guide local leaders in their governance and instill confidence in the business community.

A common vision of what the region is, what it has to offer, and what it realistically can become can stimulate economic development and enhance people's lives. Since change is inevitable, the decision becomes whether change will shape the community, or will the community shape the change. Economic growth is a fundamental goal for most communities. When a community fails to grow, it gradually deteriorates. However, when growth goes unmanaged or uncontrolled, the result can be undesired or objectionable. A commonly accepted vision can define the direction that a community desires to go.

Goal II: Promote local decisions and policies that consider what is occurring at the national and global level.

Think globally, act locally is a commonly espoused tenet. However, all too often, the tendency is to only think locally and not recognize that much of the local economy interacts directly or indirectly with that of the global. Communities of all sizes everywhere are entwined with and affected by world events. Modern day communication networks have the ability to compress time and distance to the point that the exchange of verbal and written information and direction can be accomplished instantaneously. A company or its branch operation can be managed from any point in the world. The location of a company's operation can be determined by factors that have more to do with the cost of producing goods or services measured in terms of overall productivity.

Today, travel time and cost between countries is vastly improved. Often, visitors and tourists are foreigners who very naturally evaluate their experience and pass along impressions of the local people and culture. Popular travel destinations can be quickly established or, in some cases, seriously fade. The tourism industry has increasingly catered to the global market. Most communities are evaluated on the existence of certain fundamentals; an educated and trained work force, an open and tolerant society, low crime, high family values and pride of ownership will attract more development opportunities, foreign or national. Communities that do not display these basic attributes will not compete favorably worldwide for economic opportunities. The decisions that affect or influence change in a community when viewed from a global perspective typically are quite different than those based solely on local concerns and conditions.

Goal III: Corroborate direct lines of communication and cooperation among localities within the district, to better serve the residents in the most cost-efficient way.

All residents of the United States, rural and urban, recognize that while government may be inefficient, the political arena makes change difficult. Fiscal pressures on local government force localities to enforce tax increases. As citizen participation increases pressure on politicians, so does the call to "trim fat" in local budgets. Localities have begun looking into regional approaches to improve cost reasonableness and increase productivity.

For years, opportunities for cost savings and increased efficiencies have been achieved in the private sector through economies of scale. Local governments are finding that they can solve common problems by achieving economies of scale. Opening a dialogue of cooperation for mutual gain and reducing the strongarm of bureaucracy should be practiced.

Goal IV: Establish and operationalize a "Resiliency Plan" that can be applied at the local, county and regional levels of the LEDD, to minimize the economic and environmental impact of natural and pathological disasters.

Over the last decade, the LEDD has suffered through natural disasters such as a series of tropic storms, hurricanes, ice storms, minor earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes. Many suffered physically and mentally from the havoc that was wrought in the wake of these occurrences, but even so, nothing could

have prepared the region for March 2020. All counties within the LEDD were negatively impacted due to the novel COVID-19 virus. These impacts can be seen not only by the health concerns and safety equipment shortages at the local, state, federal and international levels, but the economic impacts as well. The large, aging population within the Lowcountry increased concerns of safety and preparedness for these conditions.

Hazard mitigation plans are still important, but planning, preparing, adapting and overcoming the multiple hurdles that are thrown into the works. The goal of the Resiliency Plan is to establish intercommunity communications to discuss courses of action in open forums. The Lowcountry was vulnerable during the pandemic, but this heightened the need for sound infrastructure, broadband and accessibility to emergency equipment. The Resiliency Plan will account for localities and the way in which they prepare for disasters, as well as off suggestions to industry sectors that would be most impacted.

Our Objectives

The following proposed objectives adhere to the foregoing regional goals, while more clearly delineating steps needed to achieve economic growth in the region. These objectives are intended to be held as meaningful and realistic. Though a need may arise to prioritize certain objectives, it is suggested to concentrate efforts to meet all of them.

- Continue to organize forums and workshops that will explore programs, strategies and projects that can be pursued for the mutual benefit of the region including the establishment of a regional economic development alliance. The Lowcountry Council of Governments can be instrumental in the organization of the conferences. Discoveries and decisions formed as the result of the conferences would be recorded and included in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- Attempt to integrate each County and local government's comprehensive plan to the greatest extent possible. Each county has undergone or is in the process of updating their comprehensive plans. As the region's economy becomes more interrelated, it is incumbent upon each local government to cooperate with its neighbor. This will encourage and enhance the development of the shared vision.
- Assist in strengthening the local economy through the support of affordable housing efforts in the region. There continues to be a lack of available workforce housing which ultimately weakens the local economy because many of our workers do not live in or near the communities, they work in.
- Assist in securing public support for continuing improvement of education in the public schools, strengthening the region's higher learning facilities, and increasing opportunities for the working public to increase their job skills. The level of educational attainment evidenced in a community's labor pool is commonly assessed by a prospective business. Or from another viewpoint, educational attainment, labor skills and job experience determine the jobs for which a person can qualify. For the region to enjoy economic prosperity, diversity and growth, the region must support the educational enrichment and job skills enhancement of all its citizens.

- Institute programs that acknowledge and reward community involvement and participation. Getting people involved is difficult. Individuals often feel that their voice or contribution is not recognized. Volunteer awards, public awareness campaigns, leadership programs and voter registration drives are some examples of ways to improve community involvement. The more people who take an interest and pride in their community, the greater the likelihood of achieving meaningful and lasting improvements.
- Assist and foster communication that would allow for County and local governments to implement a plan that considers potential threats and possible solutions to naturally occurring and pandemic-like concerns. These plans will need constant and continual consideration as the world is continuing to move forward to combat these situations situation.

Action Plan

Program and Project Selection:

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties must continue to expand and diversify their industrial and manufacturing sectors to ensure economic prosperity. However, these sectors are subject to the economic dynamics of the world market. Industry, unlike tourism, can be established most anywhere and therefore competition to maintain and attract business is intense.

While the economies of the four counties combined are somewhat diversified, no one county is sufficiently diverse or large enough to withstand a prolonged economic slowdown or a catastrophic loss. For example, if the military base closed in Beaufort or when the region is hit by a major hurricane (as with Matthew in 2016), the road to a full recovery would be long and difficult because the overall economy is heavily reliant on the retail and service sectors. For the region to realize lasting stability, its diversity must be expanded, and efforts must be made to have the infrastructure in place to foster economic resiliency. Moreover, the manufacturing sector needs to continue to grow.

To address this need for diversification, Lowcountry Council of Governments initially prepared an Economic Diversification Study that was sponsored in part by the US Department of Defense. While the purpose of the study was to identify clusters that should be pursued to help diversify the region's dependence on the presence of the military bases, it has helped the region focus on economic clusters that are best suited to our strengths. Even with this study and work done in some of the counties in the LEDD to ascertain the perceived acceptability of various industries as classified by standard industry code, it has been incumbent upon the counties to develop a marketing plan, which targets specific industries based on existing economic resources. With the expansion of Southern Carolina Alliance into all four of the LEDD counties there has been some continued successes that can be attributed to their marketing efforts. Companies that have expressed interest in the area should continue to be courted assuming that the operation is compatible with the community.

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)⁷ recently conducted a study for Southern Carolina Alliance to detail the current workforce circumstances and offer possible suggestions. With the understanding that SCA's region is larger than that of the LEDD, the study offers suggestions to better compete with surrounding areas and to keep the talent pool local. Local employers suggest that they are looking to hire, and many of the resources and training needed are offered in the Lowcountry: from certifications, to training, to degrees. The study suggests that institutions of education, from K-12 and beyond, begin to reflect the reality of manufacturing and tech-based agriculture: these industries are well paid and evolving to be more competitive, more lucrative and more advanced. The LEDD will work closely with regional partners to identify the best ways to offer workforce training and 'soft-skills' that employers identified as a need in the coming years.

In addition to this, an assessment should be completed which would identify how the four counties depend upon one another. Obviously, the counties are geographically connected and in close proximity to one another and thus resources in one county are accessible to the others. Understanding where and how the counties are interdependent may present new opportunities for cooperation and utilization of combined resources to the good of the region as a whole. This becomes more necessary as recent catastrophic events (the floods of 2015 and Hurricane Matthew) have stretched local resources to the limit.

Obvious growth opportunities are present in the retail and service sectors because of the military, the large tourism industry and the rapidly growing retirement population in the LEDD. These opportunities do not require stimulus, but growth management plans need to be put in place to encourage the type of development that will best serve the long-term values of the counties in the region. Additionally, it has been determined through the results of the diversification study and subsequent studies that we need to focus our efforts on distribution and logistics clusters as well. With the center of the district is transected by the primary East Coast Interstate artery, the region needs to fully exploit economic opportunities that exist because of the presence of the Interstate system. With the assistance of various federal resources, we currently have only four of thirteen interchanges that do not have public water and sewer access.

Proximity to the Ports of Charleston and Savannah, and two foreign trade zones is an economic advantage. Companies that are dependent on overseas trade could be potential prospects for relocation to the Lowcountry. Existing companies in the Lowcountry should be supported in their interest to expand their market overseas. A local specialist in trading overseas could be retained and readily accessible to existing and prospective businesses.

Hampton County's industrial campus located in Early Branch has need for the expansion of infrastructure to accommodate the Agricultural Technology Campus (ATC) and other future developments. For the campus to succeed, the extension of roadways, water and sewer to accommodate potential industries looking to locate on site. The ATC will create a new source of sustainability in the region, creating over 1,500 new jobs and over \$300 million in private investments, but the park still has room for additional development.

⁷ EDSI's "A Sustainable Program to Provide Training Opportunities for Disadvantaged Workers, Support Economic Development, and Reduce Poverty" (June 2021)

Government grants and loan programs are designed to alleviate hardships found in the more impoverished areas of the United States. High levels of poverty and underemployment have been identified in the Lowcountry. Consequently, projects that put additional low to moderate-income people to work may be eligible for some assistance.

More programs should be established that will provide the essential elements to a business' success – access to capital and qualified and professional business expertise. Other programs could be established that are tailored to the local economy. Virtually every rural area is interested in expanding their manufacturing sector and all are offering comparable financial incentives to prospective businesses. The most recent studies done on business recruitment strongly suggests that companies are making site selections based on several factors above and beyond financial incentives. The primary factors are:

- The availability of an educated and trained work force in that business' field.
- Infrastructure (water, sewer, optic fiber communications and broadband).
- Moderate to low cost of living (measured in terms of housing, taxes, health care and transportation).
- Essential and discretionary social amenities (quality health care, recreational and cultural amenities).
- An excellent public school system.

From a national basis, the data indicates that LEDD measures low in these areas. In today's industrial recruitment market, the suburban areas of major metropolitan areas are competing most favorably for new and expanding businesses.

Course of Action

Based on the CEDS' identified goals and objectives, the LEDD Board of Directors has formulated a list of future projects that best execute the purpose of this document. Contingent upon the availability of federal and state assistance, and the execution / implementation of programs and projects, the Board will adjust its list of activities and projects. Economic development and industrial recruitment of businesses that pay at-or-above the State's average wage remains one of the region's highest priorities.

1. The LEDD will continue to work closely with Jasper County and other, local and regional organizations to support the development of the port (Jasper Ocean Terminal) in the southern portion of the County. The County continues to have increased prospect activity as a result of the plans in place for the development of the port and the LEDD continues to provide development data for those prospects. The River Port project in Hardeeville is particularly important and the warehousing/distribution/logistics business sector remains a focus for the LEDD.
2. Work closely with SouthernCarolina Alliance to further the initiatives established through the Promise Zone designation that include not only supporting efforts to bring forth their 6 near term transformational projects but also to work on long term infrastructure projects that support the goals and vision of the Promise Zone. These efforts include but are not limited to expanding

broadband access throughout the LEDD, developing technology centers, and developing improved healthcare centers that provide more specialized services in the LEDD through telemedicine.

3. The SC Hwy. 68 Corridor at I-95 Exit 38 in Hampton between Yemassee and Varnville remains a focus for economic development efforts within the LEDD. The LEDD is working closely with the occupants in the Lowcountry Regional Industrial Park (LRIP) to overcome obstacles faced there. Through our Workforce Development Program actions are being taken to strengthen the area's labor force. Hampton County now has full ownership of the LRIP and is continuing to market the park as a full member of the Southern Carolina Alliance.
4. Continued support for expansion of the Southern Carolina Industrial Campus along the SC Hwy. 68 Corridor. Currently, the park has one building that is home to two companies. The ATC is looking to locate on site, but critical infrastructure is needed before any park expansion can occur, including water, sewer, stormwater and roadways.
5. Support of Hampton County and the Town of Yemassee's efforts to expand the Town's WWTF to a discharge limit of 1.5MGD to support the Lowcountry Regional Industrial Park, the Southern Carolina Commerce Park and the Angel tract which represents the County's industrial corridor.
6. Support of the Lowcountry Regional Water System's (LRWS) continued growth to support the economic development efforts of Hampton County and her municipalities and to add resiliency to their system in the event of natural disasters.
7. To better meet the needs of employers and increase job skills, LCOG will work to secure funding to establish technical training centers in key locations in all LEDD counties by partnering with Technical College of the Lowcountry and the Lowcountry Workforce Investment Area and focusing on development of skills training programs that support the demand of our current employers and are relevant to the employment clusters that are emerging in our region.
8. The LEDD will support projects that will increase economic resiliency in the event of natural disasters and epidemics that will minimize shutdowns. Creating a continual line of communication and shared information regarding best practices and ordinances for these events.
9. The LEDD will support the development of an inland port to connect the Jasper Ocean Terminal by rail to the interstate highway system, particularly I-95.
10. The LEDD recognizes the importance of having available financing & the need to continue to market and support the Title IX Revolving Loan Fund.
11. Lowcountry COG is in its fourth three-year term as a regional HOME consortium to support affordable housing efforts for residents of the Lowcountry. All original participants renewed for the new three-year period. Twenty-four of twenty-five local governments are members.
12. Continue with the marketing of the Cypress Ridge Business & Industrial Park in Ridgeland and the construction of additional water, sewer and road infrastructure within the park to access other parcels for development. This goal will result in additional jobs in the park that have a higher wage rate and provide benefits to employees.

13. Encourage and assist with industrial and commercial development in the southern Jasper County/Hardeeville area that will result in the creation of new jobs particularly with the Hardeeville Commerce Park, RiverPort and Sherwood Tract developments.
14. Continue to work with Jasper County and the Town of Ridgeland to develop products to support commercial and industrial development in the northern part of the county.
15. Support construction efforts for a new WWTF in Ridgeland to serve new businesses locating in the Town and the publicly owned parks the Town serves. A new WWTF is needed to generate new jobs in the Cypress Ridge Business & Industrial Park and in the I-95 corridor of northern Jasper County.
16. Continue work on the development of the four I-95 corridor interchanges within the LEDD that have no infrastructure. Encourage local governments to enact development regulations in these areas that support warehousing and distribution. This includes the development of Exit 3 along I-95 to support the port development along with needed improvements to the US Hwy 17 corridor.
17. Support the efforts of local governments and regional non-profits to establish small business loan pools that meet the needs of local business. This could include micro lending and/or public/private partnership initiatives to grow businesses locally.
18. Also, as a result of the recent economic downturns, there are a number of industrial buildings in the LEDD that are currently vacant as a result of closures. The LEDD will work with local and state officials to market those buildings for adaptive reuse for industries that are expanding.
19. Give high priority to transportation projects within the LEDD that support economic growth within the region, as part of the State Transportation Improvement Plan and support transportation alternatives that support commuting options.
20. Continue to develop and expand the SC Works Center System to meet the needs of employers and workers in the LEDD.
21. Continue to work with the county economic development organizations to implement recommendations of the Regional Economic Diversification Study, specifically a distribution and logistics center cluster, film studio development, and healthcare cluster.
22. Work with Colleton County officials to develop business sites directly on and/or accessible to the Lowcountry Regional Airport in Walterboro.
23. Work with Town of Port Royal and Beaufort County officials to support efforts to redevelop the property that was once the Port of Port Royal.
24. Work with the local and regional economic development organizations to support businesses developing value-added products to build upon the agriculture and wood product businesses.
25. Work with local governments and business to promote working waterfront enterprises including areas like the seafood industry and the charter industry.
26. Work with the Town of Hilton Head Island on redevelopment projects that create jobs and investment.
27. Work with communities that want to expand the tourism industry in their area to include working with businesses involved in environmental tourism, heritage tourism and activities that support the Preserve America initiatives.

28. Continue to support projects that promote outdoor recreation and increased quality of life.
29. Work closely with SCA and other regional, private and public partners to address workforce development needs, foster job training and work closely with educational institutions to reshape the perception of skilled jobs.

While a directed program is preferred over random activities, the LCOG Board supports all economic development efforts that provide job opportunities, increase the level of personal income and working wage rates and expand the tax base of communities. In response to LMI job commitments made by employers, water and sewer projects are developed. Few communities can proactively undertake water and sewer service projects thinking that if they build it, they will come. The needs are out there but the funding is not. Every opportunity to expand or improve a water and sewer system will be pursued with FEMA, CDBG or EDA funds if possible.

The Lowcountry Council of Governments will continue to offer planning and technical assistance to local governments. Efforts will be made to assist in areas other than economic development including environmental protection, housing, aging, transportation, community development, coastal zone management, solid waste management and social programs. A coordinated effort at the regional level can be facilitated by LCOG, which has the expertise and knowledge to access available federal and state resources.

Evaluation

Successfully implementing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy requires all sectors of the community: government, education, private enterprise, social services, health, trade and professional organizations, chambers and economic development boards engaged in a shared vision of what the community can and should become. It is less difficult to undertake projects and programs when there is a consensus of action and thought. Piecemeal implementation of projects and programs invites unproductive endeavors. Coordination of activities can amplify all undertakings and ensure immediate and sustainable economic progress. An evaluation system can be established which will keep the region informed of its rate of progress.

An established successful way to track the progress of a community or region is through a quality-of-life survey. The survey can be designed to provide information and insight into the many areas of the community which have been targeted for improvement. The survey would measure criteria typically not found researching available data and statistics. Improvements in the external environments of the region are measured by periodically surveying the following areas: the economy, public safety, health, education, natural environment, mobility, government/politics, social environment and culture/recreation. These

surveys are conducted annually and comparisons over time could be made to measure progress. In essence, this would be a report card for those in the community and those considering relocation to the community.

Several benchmarks can be used to determine the effectiveness of the LEDD in addressing area distress. Six important areas measure how successful the LEDD is in generating job opportunities and creating wealth in the region. Those benchmarks are reviewing progress in reducing the unemployment rate of the counties, increasing per capita income of the residents of the region, increasing the average weekly wage rate of the counties, increasing the skills of the workforce, comparing the annual GPRA Data collected against the local developers' performance goals for their communities.

Regarding unemployment, the goal is for all member counties' unemployment rates to be below the State average. This goal has for the most part been met but underemployment remains a particular concern. In terms of per capita income, we are seeing downward trends in our member counties. We would like to see these percentages increase consistently so that all LEDD counties have per capita income figures at or above the per capita income for all non-metropolitan areas of South Carolina (\$29,426, based on 2019 ACS estimates).

In the area of average weekly wage rates in the LEDD, the rates on a county basis have consistently lagged behind the State as a whole. A primary goal of the LEDD remains to see average weekly wage rates increase to the State average or above. The gap between the County wages and the State average is continuing to be narrowed particularly in Beaufort and Jasper Counties where some sectors are above the State average, but the region as a whole continues to lag behind.

In the area of increasing workforce skills, the LEDD has been successful in providing services to give people opportunities to increase their skill levels to be successful in the work environment. A primary goal of workforce development in the LEDD remains to provide services to all.

APPENDIX

TABLE OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Lowcountry Council of Governments Board of Directors.....	42
APPENDIX B Lowcountry Industrial and Manufacturing Companies.....	43
APPENDIX C Municipal Governments	47
APPENDIX D Community and Economic Development Projects	48

APPENDIX A

**LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2021-2022**

NAME		APPOINTING JURISDICTION
BEAUFORT		
(SECRETARY)	Phil Cromer	Beaufort City Council
	Gerald Dawson	Beaufort County Council
	Brian Flewelling	Beaufort County Council
	Herbert Glaze	Beaufort County At-large
	Tamara Becker	Hilton Head Island Town Council
	Mary Beth Heyward	Port Royal Town Council
	Chris Hervochon	Beaufort County Council
	Mark Lawson	Beaufort County Council
	Joseph McDomick	Beaufort County Minority
	Paul Sommerville	Beaufort County Council
	Dan Wood	Bluffton Town Council
COLLETON		
(VICE-CHAIR)	Esther Black	Colleton County Minority
	Greg T. Pryor	Walterboro City Council
	Joseph Flowers	Colleton County Council
	Thomas Mann	Colleton County At-large
	Crawford Moore	Edisto Beach Town Council
	Phillip Taylor, Sr.	Colleton County Council
	Gene Whetsell	Colleton County Council
	Mayor Tim Grimsley	Town of Cottageville
HAMPTON		
(TREASURER)	Pete Hagood	Hampton County Council
	Pete Mixson	Hampton Town Council
	Buddy Phillips	Hampton County Council
	Joe Hadwin, Jr.	Estill Town Council
	Mayor Nat Shaffer	Town of Varnville
	J.L. Goodwin	Yemassee Town Council
JASPER		
(CHAIR)	John Carroll	Hardeeville City Council
	Barbara Clark	Jasper County Council
	Danny Lucas	Jasper County At-large
	Christopher DuBose	Town of Ridgeland
	Gwen Johnson Smith	Jasper County Minority

APPENDIX B

LOWCOUNTRY INDUSTRIAL AND MANUFACTURING COMPANIES⁶

Company Name	Product	# Employees
Hampton County		
Agriculture Technology Campus	CEA Vegetable and Fruit Products and Co-Packing	1547
Canfor Sawmilling Co.	Lumber Mill	205
Le Creuset of America	Enamel-Clad Cookware North & South America	202
	Distribution Headquarters	
Yield Scientific, LLC	Pharmaceutical Grade Hemp Processing and Development	107
Love's Travel Stop	Travel Stop & Truck Service	60
Oakwood Products	Chemicals	57
R&L Carriers	Global Transportation	55
CMT	Fiberglass Flag and Lighting Poles	41
Nupi Americas	Pipe Fabrication and Distribution	37
World Energy	Advanced Bio Fuels	30
Spencer Industries	Vacuum and Pressure Form Plastic	23
Megco Services	Cotton Gin, Cypress Mulch	20
Southern Metal Works, Inc. (SMW)	Metal Fabrication	18
Precision Machine Components	Machined Components, Metal Fabrication	16
Carolina Textile Care LLC	Commercial Laundry	13
Kapstone	Wood Chips	13
Coastal Technologies	Mist Eliminators	12
Company Two	Refurbish Fire Truck	10
American Machining & Manufacturing	Machining/ Tool & Die	9
Southern Millwright & Supply	Welding Fabrication	9
AgrowStar (Archer Daniels Midland-ADM)	Soybean and Other Grains Processing	8
McCrary's	Prototype Steel Millwright	8
Progressive Packaging Inc.	Corrugated Box Distribution	8
Wiggins Concrete	Concrete Manufacturer	8
KCB Services, Inc.	Wood Pallet Manufacturing	7
US Ironworks	Steel Recycling	5
Hoo Cum Mechanical Contractors	Steel Fabrication	4
Triangle Ice Company	Ice Manufacturing	4
Brunson Laundry and Lowcountry	Medical Linens & Laundry Service	42
Medical Linens		
Southern Current	Solar Farm	0
Colleton County		
Carolina Composites (Pioneer Boats)	Boat Manufacturer	110
Wayne Brothers Company	Industrial Concrete Construction	75
Carolina Visuals	Flag & Banner Manufacturer	68
Crescent Dairy Beverages, LLC	Ultra Pasteurized Beverages	61
Floralife	Floral chemicals and Forms Manufacturer	60

⁶ Industry and employee information provided by Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance.

Colonial Precast Concrete of Carolina	Precast Concrete	55
Jenshau	Modular Tiny Homes & Shipping Container Buildings	11-50
J&L Wire	Galvanized Wire Decking & Shelving	48
48Forty Solutions	Wood Pallet Recycling	47
Paper Converters	Paper Tube/ Core Manufacturer	38
Lowcountry Aviation	Aircraft Management	36
Jaxco Industries	Promotional and Fundraising Products	31
Charleston Composites	Advanced Tooling for Manufacturing Large Boats	28
Rockford Steel Manufacturer	Metal Building Manufacturer	27
ITW Graphics	Heat Transfer and Graphic Art Industry	25
JGBR	High Precision Steel Balls & Ball Bearings	20
Mayzo	Specialty Chemical Additives	20
Walterboro Pole Co. LLC	Utility Poles & Pine Bark Mulch	15
Meter Bearings Group	Ball and Cylindrical Roller Bearings Manufacturer	11
Carolina Textile Recycling	Textile Recycling	10
OldCastle	Mulch Manufacturing and Packing	9
Colleton Tile & Concrete	Ready-Mix Concrete, Blocks and Septic Tanks	8
K&M Tire Distribution	Tire Distribution	5
Jasper County		
TICO Manufacturing	Terminal Tractors; Equipment	155
Coca-Cola Consolidation	Distribution	78
KBRS, Inc.	Custom Shower and Tileable Components	68
	Manufacturer	
Grayco	Distributor of Building Supplies	63
Be Green Packaging	Compostable and Recyclable Packing	60
Waste Management	CNG Trucking Terminal & Waste Disposal Services	53
Nimmer Turf	Turf Grass	50
SafeTech, USA	Aviation Safety Equipment and Services	11-50
AGM Imports	Headquarters, Distribution of Natural Stone	36
Beverly Processing Inc	Poultry Processing	35
Shaw Manufacturing	Sheet Metal Fabricators	35
Quality Beverage	Cheerwine Distribution	29
Greif	Recycled Paperboard Products	28
Jasper Pellet Company	Wood Pellet Manufacturer	27
Peacock Collision Center	Automotive Remanufacturing and Reconditioning	25
Southeast Rails and Screens	Fabrication of Rails and Gates	25
Gretsch Drums	Percussion Instruments	21
Carolina Metal Castings	Nonferrous Metal Castings	20
Wildcat Steel	Steel Fabrication and Structural Steel Erection	19
Master Steel	Structural Steel Fabrication and Erection	16
Armor Building Solutions	Storm and Security Shutters	15
Lowcountry Paver LLC	Concrete Pavers	15
Capitol Materials Coastal	Warehousing and Distribution of Building Materials	13
Brown Campbell	Steel Grating Fabrication	10
Ohio Gratings, Inc.	Steel Grating	8
AS/R Systems Inc	Rebuilt and Customized Carousels	6
Blythe-Ridgeland Plant	Asphalt Production	6
Lucky Dog Cuisine	Packaging Meals for Dogs	6

Apac-Southeast (Preferred Materials)	Asphalt Production	5
RCL Burco	Assembly, Warehousing and Distribution of Utility and Railroad Supplies	5
J&J Machinery Transport	Industrial Machinery Transport and Storage	4
Setting Tools Inc	Riveting Tools	3
Dominion's Solvay Solar Energy	Solar Energy	0
Beaufort County		
Lockheed Martin	Global Aerospace, Defense and Security	100-150
Alpha Genesis Inc	Life Sciences, Pharmaceutical and Biotech	125
BFG Hilton Head	Marketing Consulting Services	120
Spartina 449	Accessories, Clothing, Lifestyle Brand	94
Beaufort Gazette	Newspaper Publisher	82
Glass WRX SC	Recycled Glass Products	63
Ackmann & Dickenson	Application Development and Digital Marketing	11-50
Adger Solar	Solar Electric Power Generation	11-50
American Air & Water, Inc.	Warm Air Heating and Air Conditioning	11-50
AS/R Systems Inc	Rebuilt and Customized Carousels	11-50
Beachside Tire&Auto Repair	Auto Repair Services	11-50
Bear Steele Global	Architectural Services	11-50
Burnt Church Distillery	Distillery	50
Coastal Concrete Southeast, LLC	Non-Metallic Minerals, Construction	11-50
Creative Cabinets of the Low Country	Wood & Paper Products	11-50
Dust Solutions	Machinery	11-50
eviCore Healthcare	Healthcare Management	11-50
Ferguson Enterprises	Metal Products, Plastics and Rubber	11-50
Fibergard Chemical Corp	Chemicals, Textiles	11-50
Flint Group Pigments	Chemicals, Wood & Paper Products	11-50
Gaddis Inc	Metal Products	11-50
Geismer North America	Railroad Equipment Supplier	30-50
Greenline Industries Inc	Wood & Paper Products, Construction	11-50
Harris Pillow Supply	Textiles, Machinery, Consumer Products	11-50
L3 Harris Technologies	Aerospace & Aviation, Medical, Electronics and Computers	11-50
SmartScan Technologies	Temperature and Environmental Monitoring Systems	11-50
Salt Marsh Brewing Company	Craft Brewery	43
Stoneworks	Granite, Marble and Tile Floor and Counter Coverings	10-25
Advanced Kitchen Designs Inc	Agribusiness, Wood & Paper Products	11-20
Global Infection Control Consultant	Environmental Consulting Services	20
Blue Sky Processing LLC	Hemp Processing	16
Athena Corp	Composites & Advanced Materials, Non-Metallic Minerals	1-10
B&T Auto Machine Inc	Automotive, Metal Products	1-10
Blasch Precision Ceramics	Composites & Advanced Materials, Non-Metallic Minerals	1-10
Cera Products, Inc	Food Processing, Consumer Products	1-10
Environmental Graphics	Wood & Paper Products	1-10
Gourmet Warehouse	Barbeque Sauce, Spices & Rubs	5-10
Kazoobie Kazoos LLC	Plastics and Rubber, Consumer Products	1-10

Litchfield Cabinetry & Trim, Inc	Wood & Paper Products, Construction, Consumer Products	1-10
MAPtech Packaging	Food Processing, Machinery	1-10
Megawatt Lasers, Inc	Life Sciences, Pharmaceuticals and Biotech	1-10
Seabrook Classics Inc	Wood & Paper Products	1-10
Store Support Group	Metal, Wood & Paper Products	1-10
Vetronix Research Corp	Electronics and Computers	1-10
Woodshop Inc	Wood & Paper Products	1-10
Baldwin Aviation Safety & Compliance	Information Technology	8
Blasch Ceramics Global Specialty Products Division	Composites and Advanced Materials	5
B&T Auto Machine Inc	Machine Shops	4
APPementary	Computer Training	2

APPENDIX C

TABLE II: Municipal Governments

	Form of Government	Number of Council Members	Term Length	Election method
BEAUFORT COUNTY				
City of Beaufort	Council Manager	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Port Royal	Council Manager	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Bluffton	Council Manager	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Hilton Head	Council Manager	7	4	Non-partisan one member from each ward
COLLETON COUNTY				
Town of Cottageville	Mayor Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Edisto Beach	Mayor Council	4	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Lodge	Mayor Council	5	2	Non-partisan at large
Town of Smoaks	Mayor Council	5	2	Non-partisan at large
City of Walterboro	Council Manager	7	4	Partisan at-large
Town of Williams	Mayor Council	5	2	Non-partisan at large
HAMPTON COUNTY				
Town of Brunson	Mayor Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Estill	Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Furman	Council	5	2	Non-partisan at large
Town of Gifford	Mayor Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Hampton	Mayor Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Luray	Mayor Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Scotia	Mayor Council	4	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Varnville	Mayor Council	7	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Yemassee	Mayor Council	4	4	Non-partisan at large
JASPER COUNTY				
Town of Hardeeville	Council Manager	5	4	Non-partisan at large
Town of Ridgeland	Council	5	4	Non-partisan at large

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

<i>COUNTY</i>	<i>APPLICANT</i>	<i>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>FISCAL YEAR</i>	<i>TOTAL COST</i>
Beaufort	Beaufort County	Bonaire Sewer Extension	CDBG	2016	\$1,000,000
Beaufort	Beaufort County	Detour Road Sidewalk Extension	CDBG	2020	\$200,000
Beaufort	City of Beaufort	Mossy Oaks Drainage-Basin 2	CDBG	2018	\$1,000,000
Beaufort	Town of Bluffton	Goethe-Shults NR	CDBG	2018	\$500,000
Beaufort	Town of Bluffton	BIS 5	CDBG	2019	\$320,000
Beaufort	Town of Port Royal	Royal Palms Sewer Extension	CDBG	2020	\$838,851
Beaufort	Town of Port Royal	Paris Avenue Streetscape	CDBG	2020	\$644,490
Beaufort	City of Beaufort	Spanish Moss Trail Extension	CDBG	2020	\$200,000
Beaufort	Beaufort County	Bonaire Sewer Extension	SCRIA	2017	\$500,000
Colleton	Colleton County	East Side Water Improvements	CDBG	2019	\$487,500
Colleton	Colleton County	Gadsden Loop Neighborhood	CDBG	2016	\$483,502
Colleton	Colleton County	Stadium Demolition	CDBG	2018	\$500,000
Colleton	Colleton County	Buckner Demolition	CDBG	2020	\$360,000
Colleton	Colleton County	Venture Park Infrastructure	EDA	2019	\$891,072
Colleton	Colleton County	Venture Park Improvements	SCRIA	2019	\$500,000
Colleton	City of Walterboro	WWTP Upgrades Phase II	EDA	2020	\$15,672,000
Colleton	City of Walterboro	Black Street I&I	CDBG	2020	\$1,351,649
Colleton	City of Walterboro	Buckner Building Demolition	CDBG	2020	\$360,000
Colleton	City of Walterboro	Sub-System 1-East & 3	CDBG	2021	\$2,321,831
Colleton	City of Walterboro	Dry Cleaners Demolition	CDBG	2021	\$150,000
Hampton	Hampton County	New Ambulance	CDBG	2020	\$200,000
Hampton	Hampton County	Public Facilities Modifications	CDBG	2021	\$285,278
Hampton	Hampton County	Demolition	CDBG	2018	\$282,915
Hampton	Town of Hampton	Lightsey Sewer I&I	CDBG	2018	\$500,000
Hampton	Town of Hampton	Nix St NR	CDBG	2017	\$500,000
Hampton	Town of Varnville	Hwy 278 Streetscape	CDBG	2015	\$462,000
Hampton	Town of Furman	Neighborhood Revitalization	CDBG	2015	\$318,983
Hampton	Town of Scotia	Water Improvements	CDBG	2019	\$135,485
Hampton	Town of Gifford	Clearance	CDBG	2017	\$71,940
Hampton	Town of Gifford	Rosenwald Tech Center	CDBG	2017	\$150,000
Hampton	Town of Gifford	Water Extension	CDBG	2018	\$419,000
Hampton	Town of Gifford	Business Development	USDA	2020	\$32,319
Hampton	Town of Yemassee	Demolition	CDBG	2019	\$193,636
Hampton	Town of Yemassee	Salkehatchie W/S Improvements	CDBG	2020	\$861,970
Hampton	Town of Estill	Clearance	CDBG	2017	\$500,000
Hampton	Town of Estill	Demolition Phase #2	CDBG	2018	\$149,630
Hampton	Town of Estill	Southwest Quadrant Water Improvements	CDBG	2020	\$750,000
Hampton	LRWS	Brunson Sewer Rehab	EDA	2019	\$1,694,000
Hampton	LRWS	Infrastructure to Serve Business	EDA	2021	\$525,000
Jasper	Jasper County	Church Stiney NR	CDBG	2017	\$500,000
Jasper	Jasper County	Fire Substation	CDBG	2018	\$500,000

Jasper	Jasper County	Church Road Drainage	CDBG	2020	\$1,022,223
Jasper	Jasper County	Hwy 278 Corridor	EDA	2020	\$1,125,000
Jasper	City of Hardeeville	Commerce Park Infrastructure	EDA	2019	\$1,860,000
Jasper	Town of Ridgeland	Sewer I&I	CDBG	2018	\$750,000
Jasper	Town of Ridgeland	Sewer I&I Phase II	EDA	2020	\$3,388,000
Jasper	Town of Ridgeland	Generator for Town Hall	FEMA	2020	\$109,5000
