



**SPARTANBURG**  
AREA CHAMBER of COMMERCE



## PHASE 5: COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Submitted by Market Street Services, Inc.  
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Spartanburg County Community and Economic Development Strategy

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Steering Committee.....	1
Project Overview .....	3
Community and Economic Development Strategy .....	5
1. Talent .....	9
1.1 Develop Talent from Cradle to Careers .....	10
1.2 Market to Attract and Retain Talent .....	16
2. Economy .....	19
2.1 Grow and Diversify the Economy through Strengths .....	20
2.2 Cultivate a Dynamic Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.....	24
3. Place .....	28
3.1 Build a Vibrant Downtown Spartanburg .....	29
3.2 Enhance Quality of Place Throughout the Community .....	34
4. Image .....	38
4.1 Create Champions for Spartanburg County .....	39
4.2 Tell the Spartanburg Story .....	41
Appendix A: Best Practices.....	43
Appendix B: Research Summary.....	51

# STEERING COMMITTEE

Committee tri-chairs are shown in **bold**.

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Title/Role; Organization</u></b>
Ms. Pontheolia Abernathy	Owner; Clevedale Historic Inn & Gardens
Ms. Martha Albergotti	VP of Franchise Development; Pure Barre Corporate HQ
Mr. Andrew Babb	Broker; NAI Earle Furman, LLC
Mr. Jeff Bailey	Supervisor - Wastewater Management; City of Inman
Mr. Lee Bailey	City Manager; City of Woodruff
Mr. Wade Ballard	Partner; Ford & Harrison, LLP Attorneys At Law
Mr. Bill Barnet	CEO; Barnet Development
Mr. Bert Barre	Executive Vice President; Colonial Trust Co.
<b>Hon. Hope Blackley</b>	<b>Clerk of Court; Spartanburg County Clerk of Court</b>
Mr. Steve Bolin	Town Administrator; Town of Cowpens
Dr. Russell Booker	Superintendent; Spartanburg School District 7
Mr. Doug Burns	Town Administrator; Town of Duncan
Mr. Andrew Cajka	Owner; Southern Hospitality Group
Ms. Caitlin Cothran	City Administrator; City of Landrum
Dr. Cheryl Cox	VP Academic Affairs; Spartanburg Community College
Mr. Ed Driggers	City Administrator; City of Greer
Ms. Kathy Dunleavy	President/CEO; Mary Black Foundation
Mr. John Easterling	CEO; Pulliam Investments
Mr. Dave Edwards	President/CEO; Greenville-Spartanburg Airport District
Mr. Alex Evins	Partner; Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein, LLP
Ms. Jennifer Evins	President & CEO; The Arts Partnership of Greater Spartanburg
Ms. Karen Floyd	CEO; The Palladian Group
Mr. Jaime Fulmer	Senior VP - Public Affairs; Advance America
Mr. William Gray	Project Manager; McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture
Dr. George Haddad	Medical Director; Children's Hospital, Greenville Health System
Mr. Mark Holden	VP of Operations; Auriga Polymers
<b>Mr. Bruce Holstien</b>	<b>President/CEO; Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System</b>
Mr. Todd Horne	VP of Business Development; Clayton Construction Co. Inc.
Mr. Martin Huff	Self Storage Development Manager; Johnson Development Associates
Ms. Heidi M. Jameson	Director, Marketing Strategy; JM Smith Corporation
Mr. Chris Jennings	Executive Vice President; Convention & Visitors Bureau
Mr. Geordy Johnson	CEO; Johnson Development
Mr. Mustan Kapasi	Owner; Kapasi Glass Mart, Inc.
Mr. John Kimbrell	Executive Vice President; Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Craig Kinley	Owner; Growler Haus
Mr. Avi Lawrence	President; Contec
Hon. Michael Meissner	Mayor; Town of Pacolet
Mr. Ed Memmott	City Manager; City of Spartanburg

**Name**

Mr. Max Metcalf  
Mr. Gregg Miller  
**Mr. John Miller**  
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Ms. Renee Romberger  
Dr. Nayef Samhat  
Mr. Ralph Settle  
Mr. Allen Smith  
Mr. Carter Smith  
Ms. Melanie Steinbach  
Mr. Todd Stephens  
Dr. John Stockwell  
Ms. Betsy Teter  
Mr. Tony Thomas  
Ms. Angela Viney  
Mr. Pete Weisman  
Mr. Steve Wunder

**Title/Role: Organization**

Manager - Government & Community Relations; BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC  
Treasurer; Town of Lyman  
**President/CEO; Denny's**  
Vice President; Montgomery Development  
VP of Development, Southeast; Agracel Inc.  
Administrator; Spartanburg County  
Superintendent; Spartanburg School District 6  
CEO; HealthPlotter  
VP, Community Health Policy & Strategy; Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System  
President; Wofford  
Director of Development; RealOp Investments  
President & CEO; Spartanburg Area Chamber  
Executive Vice President; Economic Futures Group  
Chief Human Resource Officer; Milliken & Company  
County Librarian; Spartanburg County Public Library  
President; Spartanburg Academic Movement  
Executive Director; Hub City Book Shop  
Northside Voyagers  
Director; Upstate Forever  
Partner; Corporate Center  
President; Duer/Carolina Coil, Inc.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The six-phase research and strategic planning process will last approximately nine months, concluding in October 2016. A diverse Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the public, private, and non-profit sectors will guide this process and ensure that it lays a foundation that allows people and businesses to thrive and wealth to accumulate.

### ***Phase 1: Stakeholder Input***

The Stakeholder Input phase informed every subsequent phase of the strategic planning process. *Market Street* gathered community input via one-on-one interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, and a community-wide online survey. Collectively, these input techniques reached thousands of community members. The online survey alone received 3,180 responses – one of the highest totals in any *Market Street* client community. The findings from input were incorporated into the Community Assessment in order to form a holistic view of how community preferences align with the community and economic development opportunities of Spartanburg County.

### ***Phase 2: Community Assessment***

The Community Assessment answered the question: “How is Spartanburg County doing?” Using original quantitative research and qualitative input gathered from Phase 1, *Market Street* developed a detailed examination of Spartanburg County’s competitiveness as a place to live, work, visit, and do business. The findings were integrated into key “stories” facing Spartanburg County, and it answered key questions about the county’s people, its quality of place, and economic structure issues that impact the county’s ability to create lasting prosperity for its residents.

### ***Phase 3: Target Business Analysis***

Incorporating many of the findings of the previous phases, the Target Business Analysis identified those business sectors that align with Spartanburg County’s competitive strengths and have the greatest potential to drive future growth and wealth creation in the county. Special consideration was given to those sectors that have the highest potential for diversification and lead to high-wage opportunities for workers in the Spartanburg County area. The primary purpose of this phase in the strategic planning process was to identify the best opportunities for Spartanburg County to diversify and strengthen its economic base through existing business expansion, recruitment, and entrepreneurship.

### ***Phase 4: Marketing Review***

The Target Business Analysis was complemented by a Marketing Review that reviewed the viability of existing economic development marketing programs and identified potential enhancements to future efforts. Using best-practices examples and *Market Street’s* institutional knowledge, the Marketing Review examined existing marketing efforts being led by the Spartanburg Area Chamber and its partners to market the county as an attractive place for private investment. Recommendations were made as necessary to ensure that marketing

efforts are efficient, effective, and align with the opportunities for investment identified in the Target Business Analysis.

### ***Phase 5: Spartanburg County Community and Economic Development Strategy***

Using the findings from the previous research phases as the initial framework, *Market Street* facilitated a series of discussions with the Steering Committee to determine what overarching goals and potential action steps should be included in the Community and Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy is holistic and inclusive of the many components that affect the county's ability to be a prosperous community. The Strategy will serve as a tool unifying constituencies behind a consensus blueprint for its activities and associated strategies that position Spartanburg County for continued success in economic development.

### ***Phase 6: Implementation Plan***

While the Spartanburg County Community and Economic Development Strategy outlines what Spartanburg County must do to be a more prosperous community, the Implementation Plan will outline how this will be accomplished. The Implementation Plan will put the Strategy's recommendations into action until the strategic goals are achieved. *Market Street* will develop both activity measures and performance benchmarks to provide a clear process for evaluating progress over the course of the Strategy's implementation.

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Spartanburg County has much to be proud of in recent years – strong job growth, major economic development announcements, a burgeoning downtown Spartanburg, and numerous, public, private, and philanthropic investments geared toward making the community a better place. However, research reveals the possibility of a troubling “status quo future” for Spartanburg County. Recent economic growth and progress has not translated into greater prosperity for all residents, and low educational attainment rates – especially among young people – and rising child poverty rates will seriously challenge the community’s long-term ability to compete in the knowledge economy if steps are not taken to reverse these trends.

Leaders in Spartanburg County understand that bold and decisive action is required. A highly engaged group of public, private, and non-profit leaders worked together to create this comprehensive Community and Economic Development Strategy that establishes what the community must do to secure its desired future. The remainder of this section describes how the Strategy was developed and outlines its structure.

## HOW THE STRATEGY WAS DEVELOPED

This holistic planning process began with the development of two foundational research documents that directly informed the Strategy itself. The Community Assessment analyzed Spartanburg County as a place to live, work, play, and do business while the Target Business Analysis & Marketing Review evaluated the community’s near-term competitiveness for business sectors and examined the capacity and efficacy of its existing economic development marketing program. Both documents are based on in-depth data analysis covering demographic, socioeconomic, economic, and quality of life trends as well as extensive public input gathered through focus groups, interviews, and an online survey that received 3,180 responses from community stakeholders. A more thorough executive summary of each document is available in Appendix B of this report, but briefly, the Community Assessment identified eight key stories that summarize the issues facing Spartanburg County:

- 1) Low Educational Attainment and Signs of a Growing Gap
- 2) Spartanburg County’s Economy: A Competitive Edge in Manufacturing and Transportation Bolsters Prosperity
- 3) Uneven Prosperity and Rapid Growth in Childhood Poverty Threaten Long-Term Outcomes
- 4) Homegrown Talent: Raising Standards and Retaining the Best and Brightest
- 5) A Significant Need for Young Talent in a Challenging Regional Environment
- 6) Quality of Life and Place Enhancements are Vital to Better Talent Attraction and Retention
- 7) Entrepreneurship: Unrealized Potential
- 8) Community Cohesion and Identity: From a Mill Village History to #OneSpartanburg

The Target Business Analysis identified five business sectors that the community can pursue in the near-term through “targeted activities.” They are: Automotive Manufacturing, Machinery and Equipment, Advanced Materials, Distribution and Trade, and Targeted Corporate Opportunities, the latter of which incorporates functions such as corporate headquarters and consulting operations that are related to the community’s core strengths in manufacturing and distribution. The Target Business Analysis also discussed why a holistic approach to community and economic development – inclusive of improvements to quality of place and educational attainment levels – will be vital to Spartanburg County as it seeks to diversify its economy to include more “white collar” activities. The Marketing Review found that Spartanburg County’s existing economic development program is underdeveloped and identified ways in which the community’s external communications can be improved to help in its pursuit of additional job growth and investment.

**The two research documents summarized above and in Appendix B – along with the input from thousands of people who live and work in Spartanburg County and the guidance of an engaged Steering Committee – have collectively informed the creation of this comprehensive Community and Economic Development Strategy.**

## THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The research, public input, and Steering Committee feedback described in the previous subsection led to the determination of a strategic framework that organizes the holistic range of efforts and initiatives that Spartanburg County will address in the coming years. At the heart of this framework is a **CORE GOAL**: raising levels of prosperity and improving quality of life for all Spartanburg County residents. The community can work toward this goal by focusing its actions around four **KEY DRIVERS**: Talent, Economy, Place, and Image. Connected to these Key Drivers are eight **OBJECTIVES** that correspond to specific issues that Spartanburg County must address through strategic action.

The relationship between these primary framework elements is shown in the following graphic. The Core Goal is shown in the center and is surrounded by the Key Drivers. The Objectives are shown in the eight small surrounding circles. As the color coding indicates, each Key Driver is directly connected to two Objectives. However, the circular nature of the graphic and the thin outer circle connecting the eight Objectives represents the fact that the various elements of the strategy are interdependent and connected. No single element of the strategic framework can in isolation advance Spartanburg County toward its desired future – they are all designed to work together and support one another.

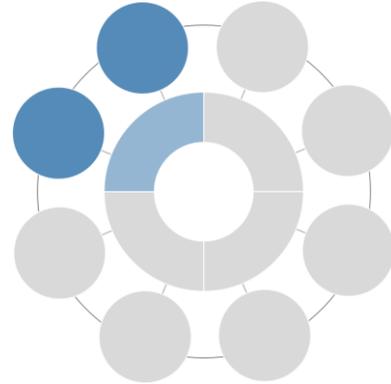


Each Key Driver and Objective is briefly profiled later in this document. Underneath each Objective (and not shown in the preceding graphic) is a series of **TACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS** that correlate to a specific action, agenda, program, etc. that will help fulfill that Objective and move Spartanburg County toward the Core Goal. For the purposes of clarity and organization, each Objective and potential Tactical Recommendation is numbered, but it should be emphasized that **the arrangement of the various elements in this strategy does not imply hierarchy or priority. All are vitally important to securing Spartanburg County's desired future.** The upcoming Implementation Plan will identify those Tactical Recommendations that will be critical to advance in the first year of implementation.

It should be noted that a great deal of work is already underway in Spartanburg County related to each of the Objectives in this framework. This is partially by design as no community can or should start completely from scratch and, in many respects, the community will be "jumping on a moving train" to leverage existing capacity. But more can always be done with adequate resources, committed leadership, and a spirit of cooperation. The ultimate goal is to effectively incorporate existing, enhanced, and new activities under a coordinated implementation framework. Some of the Tactical Recommendations in this Strategy will be more resource-intensive than others. The assessment of implementation cost and existing capacity will be included in the Implementation Plan. While some Tactical Recommendations reference specific organizations or briefly touch on how a given program or initiative might take shape, **this Strategy is not intended to determine *how things will be done* or *who might do them*.** Those issues will also be addressed with the development of the Implementation Plan. This Strategy instead determines *what* Spartanburg County must do in order to raise levels of prosperity and improve quality of life for its residents.

# 1. Talent

In the knowledge economy, talent is crucial. Simply put, competitive communities will be those that have an educated, skilled workforce. Additionally, individual outcomes are closely tied to educational attainment. As a person becomes more educated, they are more likely to earn higher wages and less likely to be unemployed.



Research from the Community Assessment revealed that Spartanburg County must improve its talent base to become more prosperous and competitive for a wider range of business sectors. While the community is fortunate to have a strong manufacturing workforce, overall levels of educational attainment are low, and there are troubling signs that things may be getting worse. This Key Driver contains two Objectives that seek to address these challenges. **Develop Talent from Cradle to Careers** focuses on producing and retaining talent at all levels of the education and training pipeline. Such “homegrown” strategies are important but may take years or even decades to pay off. **Market to Attract and Retain Talent** seeks to address the community’s immediate needs by appealing to educated individuals.

## *Key Findings from Research and Input:*

- ✓ Just 22.6 percent of Spartanburg County adults aged 25 and over have a bachelor’s degree or higher, 7.5 percentage points below the national average
- ✓ In sharp contrast to national trends, Spartanburg County residents between the ages of 25 and 34 are less educated than those between the ages of 45 and 64
- ✓ Among all United States counties with at least 200,000 people over the age of 18, Spartanburg’s educational attainment rate for the 25-34 cohort ranks 242 out of 258
- ✓ Spartanburg County is attracting new residents who tend to be more educated than the county average, but other communities are attracting even more highly educated in-migrants
- ✓ Despite the community’s appeal to families with children, there were 1,655 fewer residents between the ages of 25 and 44 living in Spartanburg County in 2014 than there were in 2004
- ✓ If the above trends hold, Spartanburg County’s educational attainment levels will fall further behind
- ✓ The community is already taking proactive steps to address these issues, and input participants had high praise for the Spartanburg Academic Movement collective impact organization
- ✓ Spartanburg County residents had high praise for the community’s PK-12 schools, but data revealed that pre-K enrollment is declining and many graduates are not ready for college or a career
- ✓ Spartanburg County has strong higher education institutions but input revealed that the community must do more to retain graduates

## 1.1 DEVELOP TALENT FROM CRADLE TO CAREERS

*This Objective focuses on producing and retaining “homegrown” talent in Spartanburg County at every level of education and training. The community is fortunate to have a best-practice collective impact organization dedicated to raising levels of educational attainment – the Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM). The Tactical Recommendations in this section – many of which align with SAM’s existing program of work – represent ways in which the community can address issues such as kindergarten readiness, college and career readiness, and talent retention.*

### 1.1.1 Ensure that services for expectant parents, infants, and toddlers are widely available and well utilized

The earliest stages of a child’s life are critical for development. Prior to ever entering pre-kindergarten, children build social and emotional skills and learn how to talk, count, and problem-solve. Research from the National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families shows that developmental delays emerge as early as 9 months and that “by age 2, toddlers in the lowest socioeconomic quintile are behind all other children in measures of cognitive skills and emotional attachment.”<sup>1</sup> More than one in four children in Spartanburg County live below the poverty line, and this number is growing. Spartanburg County should proactively ensure that parents and young children – particularly those in low-income households – have access to the kinds of social services that can help its youngest residents thrive and succeed.

#### Potential Actions:

- ∟ Work with social service providers and other relevant entities to identify existing resources, specific areas of need, and potential funding sources to enhance, expand, and publicize services
- ∟ For childcare programs, prioritize those that rank high on the Spartanburg Quality Counts rating scale to ensure that children are engaged in developmentally appropriate learning and play and that caregivers are qualified
- ∟ Leverage research and data collection capacity (see 1.1.9) to assess kindergarten readiness among children in Spartanburg County and correlate results with demographic and other “birth-to-K” variables to determine program efficacy and guide future investment decisions
- ∟ Continue to work with the Institute for Child Success to determine the feasibility of using “Pay for Success (PFS)” financing to expand early childhood services within the City of Spartanburg; consider evaluating the scalability of this approach to a broader geographic area

### 1.1.2 Invest in Spartanburg County’s future through the provision of universal pre-Kindergarten

The importance of high-quality pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) programs is supported by a growing body of research. Children who attend pre-K programs do better on standardized tests and have better long-term outcomes than those who do not. Additionally, pre-K has been shown to narrow the “achievement gap,” with

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<sup>1</sup> “Putting Infants and Toddlers on the Path to School Readiness: An Agenda for the Administration and 113th Congress.” Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. 2013.

research showing that participation in a pre-K program had a larger effect on student outcomes than race, family income, and parents' educational attainment levels. Given the county's elevated levels of child poverty, pre-K is especially important. Accordingly, Spartanburg County, its cities, and its school districts should strive to make pre-K programs available to all three- and four-year olds. Doing so will necessarily involve a large financial commitment, but communities around the nation are pursuing similar policies. In Spartanburg County, early childhood education is critical to addressing many of the community's most significant challenges.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Work with SAM, school districts, and other relevant partners to identify existing and needed services
- ∟ Craft messaging and an outreach strategy to communicate the importance of early childhood education to elected officials, C-level executives, and other senior leadership as a precursor to resource development
- ∟ Develop a multi-faceted approach to funding, potentially including lobbying at the state level for additional program funding, pursuing nationally competitive public and private grants, working with local philanthropic resources, and identifying local public revenue streams; pursue phase-in of universal pre-K by focusing first on at-risk populations for which funding is more readily available
- ∟ Ensure that new and expanding programs rank high on the Spartanburg Quality Counts rating scale to ensure that children receive quality instruction and care
- ∟ Continue to work with the Institute for Child Success to determine the feasibility of using "Pay for Success (PFS)" financing to expand early childhood services within the City of Spartanburg; consider evaluating the scalability of this approach to a broader geographic area

**Best Practice:** Seattle Preschool Program (Seattle, WA)

**1.1.3 Create a county-wide program to introduce children to college and career opportunities from a young age**

There are a variety of ways in which children in Spartanburg County are introduced to post-high school opportunities. However, stakeholders from the K-12, higher education, and business communities expressed a desire for the community to more clearly help students identify possibilities and understand the work required to achieve them and the value in doing so. The community should create a formal program to introduce children throughout Spartanburg County to college and career opportunities.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene stakeholders from schools and school districts, higher education institutions, local businesses, parent organizations, etc. to design programming (likely as part of discussions outlined in 1.18)

- ∟ For in-demand and emerging careers, develop “career ladders”; identify necessary credentials and entrance points and work with relevant private-sector partners to provide training, marketing, and supports for students and schools within the ladders
- ∟ Incorporate additional opportunities to discuss potential careers into curricula beginning in elementary school through online and hands-on learning experiences, in-class presentations, off-site travel, etc.

#### **1.1.4 Support the ongoing expansion of the Citizen Scholars mentoring program to all seven school districts in Spartanburg County**

Keeping students on track in their studies and working towards goals is an important part of boosting college and career readiness. Stakeholders generally praised levels of parental involvement in the community, but input participants noted that some students are at risk of falling behind, struggling, or dropping out. The Spartanburg Community Foundation has long sought to address this issue through its support of the Citizen Scholars mentoring program. Stakeholders noted that this program – once limited to a single school district – has re-tooled its focus and is expanding throughout the county and has agreements in place with all seven school district superintendents to provide services for up to 210 students each year. The community should support this ongoing expansion.

##### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Continue to support Citizen Scholars and convene relevant partners to help implement its programming (including mentoring and mentor training, assistance with Individual Graduation Plans, parent workshops, and many other initiatives)
- ∟ Secure resources and volunteer commitments to ensure that the program operates at full capacity – 210 students drawn from all seven districts in the county

**Best Practice:** Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (Cincinnati, OH)

#### **1.1.5 Launch a community-wide Upskilling Initiative to incentivize educational attainment for young adults without degrees**

Younger residents in Spartanburg County are less educated than their older counterparts, an alarming statistic that contrasts with the national trend. Generally speaking, for each additional level of educational attainment an individual obtains, he or she is more likely to earn a higher wage and less likely to be unemployed. But Spartanburg County is home to many young people with relatively low levels of educational attainment. For instance, more than 10,000 residents between the ages of 18 and 34 do not have a high school diploma or GED. Among residents between the ages of 25 and 34, more than 25,000 do not have a college degree of any kind compared to slightly more than 11,000 who do. To address this challenge, Spartanburg County should launch a major initiative to re-engage young adults with opportunities for educational advancement. Doing so could have several desirable outcomes, namely a stronger workforce for the next few decades and increased prosperity for individuals throughout the community.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene representatives from K-12 school systems, higher education institutions, community organizations and foundations, faith-based groups, and the private-sector to oversee a broad-based campaign involving numerous partner organizations
- ∟ Evaluate the desirability of attaching one or more numeric goals to the initiative, e.g. “X-thousand new certificates and associates degrees by 2026”
- ∟ Work with partners to better establish the demographic, socioeconomic, and spatial (i.e. location in the community) characteristics of Spartanburg County residents who would benefit from participation in the initiative in order to tailor programming to targeted audiences
- ∟ Develop public and private resources to fund a variety of incentives and assistance measures for young adults seeking to further their education, including tuition and testing fee waivers, free or subsidized tuition, and stipends
- ∟ Work with public workforce entities and institutions such as Spartanburg Community College to identify and pursue federal funds for retraining displaced workers
- ∟ With K-12 partners, identify and reach out to dropouts with opportunities for adult learning
- ∟ With higher education partners, identify and contact former students who started but did not finish a degree or certificate program to offer options for expedited re-enrollment
- ∟ Work with local employers to offer incentives for existing employees to further their education and training, including flexible work hours and pay raises upon completion

**Best Practice:** Graduate! Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)

**1.1.6 Challenge Spartanburg County employers to create internships for area college students**

In 2014, Spartanburg County’s higher education institutions awarded nearly 3,000 total degrees and certificates, including more than 1,700 bachelor’s degrees, but evidence suggests that many of these graduates do not remain in the community. Internships are an effective way to retain college students by helping them to establish professional networks and ties to full-time employers. A 2015 survey of businesses conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers indicated that more than 50 percent of all interns accept full-time employment with the company where they completed their internship. Stakeholders noted that while Spartanburg County’s higher education institutions have established programs to place students in internships, there are simply too few opportunities available in the community. To address this, Spartanburg County should challenge its employers to create internships that can “attach” college students to the community.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Work with higher education institutions to assess existing internship placement programs and identify gaps and create an inventory of existing internship opportunities

- ∟ Work with the business community to develop a formal pledge for local employers that challenges them to develop internships for college students at both two- and four-year institutions and recent graduates
- ∟ Encourage companies to make internships paid and part-time; could potentially work with foundations or other private funders to subsidize positions at firms that cannot otherwise afford to make such commitments
- ∟ Work with other institutions outside of Spartanburg County to connect employers with students in academic programs that are not offered by a local institution

**Best Practice:** Greater Grads (Oklahoma City, OK)

#### **1.1.7 Create a college leadership program to introduce top students to local institutions and networks**

Many communities around the country have a formal “leadership” program to help prepare leaders and volunteers by exposing participants to issues and opportunities in a community and connecting them to peers. In Spartanburg County, this program is Leadership Spartanburg, administered through the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce. In an effort to retain more local college graduates who are passionate about their community, Spartanburg County should create a leadership program specifically for students at its higher education institutions. Such an effort would complement existing leadership and professional development programs at Spartanburg County higher education institutions by connecting students to a broader network of professional contacts, peers, and mentors.

##### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Work with Leadership Spartanburg to develop appropriate programming for the new initiative
- ∟ Work with higher education institutions to identify annual cohorts consisting of two to four students from each institution – ideally second-year students at two-year colleges and juniors at four-year institutions
- ∟ Connect “graduates” of the college leadership program with internships in the community (see 1.1.6) and prioritize these individuals for participation in Leadership Spartanburg upon establishment of a local career
- ∟ Evaluate the viability and necessity of expanding the program to include a high school component

#### **1.1.8 Create a formal framework to connect businesses and education providers to determine education and training needs**

Local K-12 schools and higher education institutions are the most important source of talent for any community. Stakeholders in Spartanburg County identified a need to better align programs at these institutions with the current and future needs of local businesses. Input participants noted that some of this work is already occurring on an as-needed basis, but Spartanburg County would benefit from a more formal program – an approach that is utilized in many high-performing communities around the country.

Accordingly, Spartanburg County should evaluate whether existing programs at higher education institutions and K-12 systems are generating graduates with the in-demand degrees, certificates, and skillsets.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Create a permanent, formal framework for convening stakeholders from local businesses, K-12 school systems, and higher education institutions
- ∟ Identify specific degree and certificate programs that are absent or in need of further development or promotion
- ∟ Leverage findings from the business retention and expansion (BRE) activities carried out by the Economic Futures Group and from the industry sector councils (see 2.1.5) to identify needs
- ∟ Share findings collectively among employers and education providers and develop strategies for implementing or modifying programs when warranted and eliminating or refocusing underutilized programs

**1.1.9 Measure outcomes of educational initiatives by gathering and analyzing student-level data**

Measuring results is paramount in any holistic community and economic development process, and the Implementation phase of this process will develop a broad list of metrics that the community can use to track direct and indirect progress. Stakeholders noted that when it comes to educational initiatives, there is also a need to monitor the impact that initiatives are having on individual student progress. Collecting this type of data requires careful planning. Accordingly, the community should ensure that SAM, local school districts, and other relevant partners are working in concert to collect and analyze student-level data to measure the impact of local programming in addition to more generally tracking educational progress.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene SAM, school districts, and other relevant partners (potentially including state officials and researchers from local higher education institutions) to identify data needs and develop protocols for data collection and analysis
- ∟ Make student privacy the highest priority; work with school officials to ensure data collection complies with all district policies and state and federal regulations, and devise a parent outreach strategy to communicate scope and purpose of data analysis
- ∟ Work with SAM and partners to report findings and adjust programming as needed based on evidence

## 1.2 MARKET TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT

*The talent development and retention initiatives outlined in Objective 1.1 will be vitally important to Spartanburg County's long-term competitiveness, but many will take years or even decades to pay off. Given its low levels of educational attainment among adults aged 25 to 34 and desire to diversify its economy with additional white collar jobs as soon as possible, the community cannot afford to wait to increase its pool of highly educated individuals. This Objective focuses on how the community can market itself to talented people – both outsiders who may be inclined to relocate to Spartanburg County and existing residents who may be influenced to stay put.*

### 1.2.1 Create a “boomerang” talent marketing program to attract educated people with local roots

Research clearly demonstrates that Spartanburg County must attract new highly educated residents to the community. With the global economy becoming ever more knowledge-intensive, the competition for talent among communities is increasing, and standing out in a crowded marketplace can be difficult even for the most successful regions in the United States. In order to achieve an acceptable return on investment, Spartanburg County should pursue a talent marketing campaign that is highly targeted toward skilled individuals with a pre-existing connection to Spartanburg County who may be inclined to return or “boomerang” back to the community. This initiative could focus especially on young families with a connection to Spartanburg County or the Upstate who have or are considering children and are looking for a family-friendly community in which to settle.

#### Potential Actions:

- ∟ Convene a network of representatives from higher education institutions and K-12 school systems, alumni associations, the private sector, and Spartanburg Young Professionals to develop and oversee the campaign
- ∟ Support Spartanburg Young Professionals and position the organization to take on a formal role in talent and attraction efforts
- ∟ With higher education and alumni association partners, identify individuals from local institutions who have moved to other markets to reach with targeted messaging
- ∟ With private-sector partners, identify in-demand skills and utilize social media tools such as LinkedIn to identify qualified individuals with a connection to the community that could fill existing or future job openings
- ∟ With K-12 school systems, identify top recent graduates and college-bound students with whom to develop relationships as they progress through their academic and early professional careers
- ∟ Develop a targeted advertising campaign for alumni publications, websites, and social media accounts of selected colleges and universities (e.g. Clemson, USC, and large out-of-state institutions) including profiles of successful alumni in Spartanburg County

- ∟ Work with all relevant partners to identify high-value out-of-market job fairs and evaluate feasibility and ROI of promoting Spartanburg County at these events

### **1.2.2 Launch an intra-regional talent marketing campaign to differentiate Spartanburg County within the Upstate**

Spartanburg County is a net attractor of residents from other parts of the Upstate, and research revealed that nearly one quarter of the net in-migrants to Spartanburg County between 2000 and 2013 came from one of the other nine counties in the region. Stakeholders suggested that Spartanburg County's low real estate costs, comparatively strong public schools, and other factors make the community a competitive location within the Upstate, especially for young families. To leverage this advantage, Spartanburg County should develop a regional marketing campaign to position the community as a desirable location for talented individuals already in the Upstate. This campaign would also directly or indirectly target individuals who already live in Spartanburg County by reinforcing positive impressions of their community.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene relevant partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, particularly individuals with experience in marketing activities to oversee program; this group could overlap fully or partially with the group convened in 1.2.1
- ∟ Retain a marketing or advertising firm from outside the Upstate with experience in talent marketing campaigns
- ∟ Identify appropriate messaging and channels, potentially including billboards, advertisements in local media, online media, etc.
- ∟ Work with the Spartanburg Convention & Visitors Bureau, local event organizers, and promoters to continue to develop and promote memorable events in Spartanburg County that can showcase the community to individuals from around the Upstate region
- ∟ If successful, evaluate expanding the geographic focus beyond the formal footprint of the Upstate (e.g. into adjacent North Carolina counties)

### **1.2.3 Develop an online presence to serve as the “front door” for talented people considering a relocation to Spartanburg County**

Just as the Economic Futures Group and the Convention and Visitors Bureau have websites designed to serve as the “front door” to Spartanburg County for their respective prospects, many communities have developed websites geared especially toward talent who may be considering a relocation. To make a positive impression on individuals researching the community for a potential relocation, Spartanburg County should create an attractive, user-friendly talent marketing website with regularly updated content.

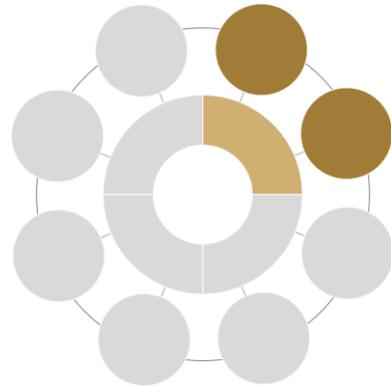
**Potential Actions:**

- ∠ Work with the outside marketing or advertising firm (see 1.2.2) to develop site messaging and content, including information about lifestyle and cultural amenities, one-stop shop links to community resources, and resident testimonials
- ∠ Highlight the breadth of local job opportunities in order to address concerns about market size; could include an inline integration with local online job listings
- ∠ Consider options to highlight the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the community to address stakeholder concerns that this diversity is not well-publicized
- ∠ Promote the website through social media channels and ensure that it follows search engine optimization (SEO) best practices to maximize its visibility to relevant target audiences

**Best Practice:** CarpeDM (Des Moines, IA)

## 2. Economy

Spartanburg County is a highly competitive location for the production and distribution of goods. Few communities can match its combination of central location, excellent connectivity to transportation networks, access to ports, and a strong manufacturing workforce. These factors have helped fuel recent growth in manufacturing and distribution sectors and are a crucial influence on the community's overall prosperity.



Spartanburg County residents understand the importance of economic diversity and are eager to see the community add a wide range of high-quality jobs. The community's workforce challenges described in the preceding Talent section are a significant barrier to white collar growth. Raising levels of educational attainment (in part by attracting more talented individuals through improvements to the community's image and quality of place) will be necessary, particularly over the long-run. But this Key Driver contains two objectives that seek to more directly influence economic growth and diversification. **Grow and Diversify the Economy through Strengths** focuses on growing quality jobs in part by leveraging the community's existing advantages. **Cultivate a Dynamic Entrepreneurial Ecosystem** addresses ways in which the community can support the creation and growth of new businesses in a wide variety of sectors.

### *Key Findings from Research and Input:*

- ✓ Spartanburg County experienced strong job growth in the post-Great Recession years, far surpassing state and national figures; manufacturing and distribution were significant drivers of this growth
- ✓ Manufacturing jobs are a significant source of local prosperity – the average employee in the sector earns \$18,000 more per year than the average employee across all sectors in Spartanburg County
- ✓ White collar sectors such as professional services and finance are significantly less concentrated in Spartanburg County and accounted for just 6.4 percent of local employment in 2015
- ✓ The Target Business Analysis recommended pursuing corporate opportunities such as headquarters, research, and consulting firms related to core strengths in manufacturing and distribution
- ✓ Many input participants expressed a strong desire for Spartanburg County to position itself to attract a wider variety of corporate and professional services jobs in the near term
- ✓ Stakeholders said that while the county has a strong overall business climate, the entrepreneurial ecosystem could be improved, though significant component parts of this ecosystem are in place
- ✓ Survey data revealed that many entrepreneurs and small business owners are unaware of resources

## 2.1 GROW AND DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY THROUGH STRENGTHS

*While issues such as workforce and quality of place will play an enormous role in Spartanburg County's future prosperity, this Objective focuses on direct approaches to growing jobs and investment. It includes a variety of approaches to create a wide variety of high-value jobs for individuals with at all skill and education levels. It should be noted that the recommendations described herein are a starting point – as Spartanburg County's economy continues to grow and diversify in the future, opportunities will emerge that warrant new approaches.*

### 2.1.1 Launch a best-practice economic development marketing program to promote Spartanburg County as a destination for jobs and investment

Through the Economic Futures Group (EFG), Spartanburg County has a strong track record of success in attracting and growing jobs and investment through economic development activities. However, the Marketing Review completed during Phase 4 of this process revealed that Spartanburg County's economic development marketing platform is underdeveloped relative to other top-performing communities. In order to communicate the community's competitive strengths and opportunities to outside audiences, Spartanburg County should re-tool the existing marketing activities of the EFG to align with best-practice standards.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Incorporate the initial recommendations from the Marketing Review, focusing particularly on an overhauled website, an enhanced social media presence, limited print collateral to communicate value to prospects and investors, and enhanced inbound marketing events
- ∟ Leverage the ongoing brand refresh at the EFG and its umbrella organization, the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce, and coordinate and sequence efforts within the context of the overarching brand strategy (see 4.2.1) and the earned media campaign (4.2.2)
- ∟ Include specific messaging and information related to the target sectors identified in the Target Business Analysis and white collar attraction efforts (see 2.1.2)

### 2.1.2 Position Spartanburg County to attract and retain white collar jobs

One of the top priorities that emerged from the public input process was stakeholders' desire to see a more economically diverse Spartanburg County. Specifically, input participants desire to see additional white collar jobs in the community. The term "white collar" is somewhat of an anachronism in an era when distinctions between office and manual labor jobs are blurring and "no collar" jobs in fields such as software development are increasingly important. Even so, stakeholders generally used the term as a useful catchall for jobs in headquarter operations, professional services, finance and insurance, and so forth. As discussed in the Community Assessment and Target Business Analysis, Spartanburg County's ability to attract and grow these jobs is limited by educational attainment rates in the community and the overall talent pool across the Upstate. Many of the recommendations in this Strategy are geared toward making Spartanburg County a more competitive place for talent – and by extension, for a broader range of quality jobs – in the future. Given the strong desire in the community to move toward economic diversification as soon as possible,

Spartanburg County should take immediate steps to put the community in a position to attract and retain white collar jobs.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Work with economic development staff to develop relationships with regional brokers, site selectors, and others involved in the process of siting corporate and professional services firms to determine competitiveness for white collar jobs and to identify potential prospects for recruitment
- ∟ Task economic development staff with conducting business retention and expansion (BRE) visits to a wide range of key white collar employers in Spartanburg County
- ∟ Pursue the development of additional Class A office product at prime locations in Spartanburg County and work with the real estate development community to determine prospects for speculative Class A office development and if speculative development is not feasible, identify and prepare a handful of pre-ready sites to accommodate potential office users
- ∟ Work with local elected officials and economic development professionals to develop and prioritize tax incentives for firms that diversify Spartanburg County's economic base

**2.1.3 Establish an economic gardening program to assist "second-stage" firms with high growth potential**

Many of Spartanburg County's top employers – particularly those in service sectors – have deep roots in the community. Firms such as these are important to all local economies, as the majority of job creation in any community is driven by expansions from existing firms. To increase the likelihood of new "homegrown" success stories, Spartanburg County should pursue an "economic gardening" program similar to those that have led to demonstrable successes in other communities around the country. This type of program provides customized support to second-stage firms that are poised for growth by helping them identify new markets and sales leads, develop new business relationships, and optimize their existing business and marketing plans. It is differentiated from the entrepreneur-focused efforts established under Objective 2.2 in that it focuses on firms that are past the startup stage and need assistance in scaling up. Much of the market and business intelligence that the program provides would be expensive or otherwise difficult to obtain or develop. Firms in this program would ideally be those with high growth potential, but it is important to point out that "high growth" is not synonymous with "high tech." For example, economic gardening could entail assisting a candle maker in achieving greater retail distribution. This effort could utilize an existing model or pursue implementation assistance from an organization such as the Edward Lowe Foundation, which will guide communities through a pilot program. To be eligible, communities must sign up five second-stage companies and commit to providing financial, staff, and organizational support.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Become familiar with the economic gardening concept and determine whether the Edward Lowe Foundation program or another solution is appropriate
- ∟ Develop the necessary resources and staff capacity to support the program

- ∟ Identify and recruit eligible second-stage firms to participate in a pilot program
- ∟ If successful, consider transitioning the pilot program to an ongoing effort

**Best Practice:** Economic Gardening Program (Littleton, CO)

#### **2.1.4 Work collectively to develop research partnerships between Spartanburg County firms and research universities**

While the Upstate has numerous research assets such as Clemson University and its affiliated facilities, there is not a university-backed research facility in Spartanburg County. The Target Business Analysis identified expanding capacity for research and development in the community as one possible pathway to support a more diverse range of economic activities, especially in instances where such activities dovetail with Spartanburg County's significant manufacturing capacity. While stakeholders did not feel a physical research presence is feasible in the short-term, Spartanburg County should seek to forge relationships between local companies and universities to identify opportunities for public-private research partnerships.

##### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene economic development professionals, representatives from Spartanburg County higher education institutions, and individuals with contacts at nearby universities to develop a formal framework for relationship building
- ∟ Task economic development professionals with making connections between Spartanburg County firms and university administrators and department chairs
- ∟ Seek to identify instances in which university expertise, funding, and technical capacity could be applied in Spartanburg County

#### **2.1.5 Convene sector-specific industry councils to identify competitive issues and increase the community's profile for targeted activities**

Many communities engaged in comprehensive community and economic development efforts empanel sector-specific "industry councils" – deliberate, cooperative, business-driven efforts to maximize an area's competitiveness as a location for a specific type of economic activity. Spartanburg County should convene one or more councils related to its well-established business clusters (e.g. manufacturing and distribution) to improve its overall competitive position and to provide direct benefits to participating firms.

##### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Identify potential constituencies that would benefit from the approach; potential councils could include "Distribution and Supply Chain Management" and "Manufacturing" or subcategories thereof, such as "Advanced Materials"
- ∟ Evaluate the viability of a health care council focused on Spartanburg County or the Upstate region

- ∠ Convene C-level executives, HR officials, education and training staff, and other key representatives from area firms to meet at least once per quarter and discuss common issues such as workforce shortages or infrastructure needs
- ∠ Assign professional staff from the EFG to each council to provide guidance and gather key information about sector needs to complement business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts
- ∠ Leverage councils to serve as community and target sector “ambassadors” by facilitating networking and development opportunities for existing firms, identifying potential recruiting targets, travelling with professional and economic development staff to tradeshow and targeted marketing missions, and assisting with inbound marketing events
- ∠ In conjunction with the EFG’s BRE efforts, engage in “supply chain mapping” efforts to identify opportunities for enhanced local synergies within council focus areas; this could involve matching existing local suppliers and buyers and identifying new prospects for recruitment among companies that are integral to Upstate supply chains but are located elsewhere

**Best Practice:** Memphis Regional Logistics Council (Memphis, TN)

**Best Practice:** Nashville Health Care Council (Nashville, TN)

#### **2.1.6 Work across political jurisdictions to advocate for improved infrastructure in the Upstate**

Spartanburg County’s prime location and excellent infrastructure connectivity are among its chief advantages as a competitive location for businesses in a wide variety of sectors. However, public input revealed significant concerns about the maintenance and upkeep of this infrastructure, particularly with respect to roads and bridges. These concerns – and potential solutions to address them – are not isolated within a single jurisdiction and are instead a common concern for all communities in the broader region. Accordingly, Spartanburg County should work with public and private leaders throughout the Upstate and beyond to advocate for high-quality, well-maintained infrastructure.

##### **Potential Actions:**

- ∠ Work with local and state-level elected officials, private business leaders, and relevant organizations such as the South Carolina Department of Transportation and the Upstate Alliance to identify needs and potential solutions
- ∠ Evaluate the need to form a temporary or permanent advocacy alliance to work on key issues (or determine whether an existing organization could fill this role)
- ∠ Ensure that legislative and other advocacy agendas of local organizations are consistent and aligned with respect to the issue

## 2.2 CULTIVATE A DYNAMIC ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

*Recruiting outside businesses and retaining existing firms are two pillars of economic development. The third is promoting an “ecosystem” that is conducive to business startups and growth. This Objective focuses on how the community can align and enhance its entrepreneurial programs to support new homegrown companies.*

### **2.2.1 Identify a professionally staffed umbrella organization to coordinate and publicize entrepreneurial services in Spartanburg County**

As discussed in the Community Assessment, a wide variety of input participants said that Spartanburg County’s entrepreneurial ecosystem needs improvement. Stakeholders familiar with the entrepreneurial climate said one of the biggest needs is better coordination. Some aspects of the local ecosystem need improvement and are addressed in subsequent Tactical Recommendations in this section, but stakeholders noted that the community has assets that could be leveraged for growth. The problem, input participants said, is that these assets are not always working together and are not necessarily well known. The latter point is consistent with findings from the online survey, which revealed that many self-identified entrepreneurs and small business owners were unaware of various resources and services. Spartanburg County should identify an “umbrella” organization to better coordinate and publicize its current and future entrepreneurial resources. This organization would not duplicate any ongoing work. Instead, its professional staff would work with a range of partners to amplify existing resources, ensure that various components of the ecosystem are working well together, and increase awareness of entrepreneurial assets and programs in the community.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene relevant stakeholders from the entrepreneurial community – including existing organizations, higher education institutions, and prominent local entrepreneurs – to determine needs and an ideal framework for coordination
- ∟ Identify the appropriate lead organization; a likely candidate is the Spartanburg Entrepreneurial Resource Network (SERN), which was established for this express purpose but, according to stakeholders, has yet to achieve its full potential
- ∟ Ensure that the lead organization is professionally staffed
- ∟ Task the organization’s staff with working with relevant partners to enhance and promote the local entrepreneurial ecosystem

### **2.2.2 Develop a “Center for Innovation” in downtown Spartanburg to serve as a physical hub of research and entrepreneurship**

A common component of local startup “ecosystems” is a hub of activity to provide geographic focus to what are often disparate networks of entrepreneurs and young companies. Often referred to as “entrepreneurial centers of gravity,” these hubs typically feature event and co-working spaces and, frequently, customized labs and offices for research-focused institutional and private tenants. The community should pursue the development of a “Center of Innovation” to co-locate various activities into a dynamic focal point for research and entrepreneurship. Such a center would ideally be located in downtown Spartanburg to leverage the

neighborhood's existing density of amenities and social opportunities. Doing so would have the added benefit of further contributing to the vibrancy of downtown.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ As a necessary condition, seek a commitment from one or more local corporate partners that could serve as an "anchor tenant" and key funder of the Center; corporate partners could locate a research division in the Center and benefit from a highly visible location in an environment that is attractive to top talent; additional tenants may be attracted to the Center by the anchor(s) and programming would likely evolve to "piggyback" off of their presence
- ∟ Establish or identify a non-profit entity to develop and operate the Center
- ∟ Convene partners including local entrepreneurs, private-sector leaders, higher education institutions, local governments, and providers of small business and entrepreneurial support services to plan the Center
- ∟ Resource capital and operating costs from a range of partners including higher education institutions, corporate partners, foundations and philanthropic sources, and potentially public funds
- ∟ Purchase, lease, assume control of, or develop an appropriate physical space for the Center; prioritize buildings and/or sites with high visibility, significant amenities within a short walking distance, and "cool character"
- ∟ Co-locate the region's entrepreneur and small business support services in a "one-stop" location that includes space for the umbrella organization (see 2.2.1) and the entrepreneur-in-residence (see 2.2.3)
- ∟ Ensure that the space has sufficient and flexible spaces such as co-working space, meeting rooms, a kitchen and common areas, and office suites that could be leased to accommodate future users or programs (e.g. an incubator)

**Best Practice:** Mayo Center for Innovation (Rochester, MN)

**2.2.3 Establish an entrepreneur-in-residence to enhance mentoring opportunities**

Stakeholders familiar with the entrepreneurial climate in Spartanburg County said the community's "ecosystem" would benefit from additional mentoring opportunities for entrepreneurs. Input participants noted that some opportunities currently exist but a more formal system is desired. Spartanburg County should therefore establish an entrepreneur-in-residence (EIR) to expand and enhance local mentoring capacity.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Identify a proven entrepreneur and/or an individual with extensive experience operating a successful incubator or accelerator willing to commit to mentoring work in exchange for office space at the Center for Innovation (see 2.2.2) and potentially a stipend resourced through private and/or public funds

- ∟ Task the EIR with working in concert with the professionally staffed umbrella organization (see 2.2.1) and other community partners to develop and implement appropriate mentoring services
- ∟ Leverage the administrative capacity of the umbrella organization to free up the EIR to focus on high-level issues and mentoring relationships

#### **2.2.4 Create a virtual “front door” for entrepreneurship and small business resources in Spartanburg County**

During the public input process, stakeholders said many of the community’s existing entrepreneurial resources are not well known. This point was underscored by an unusually high number of “don’t know or N/A” responses from entrepreneurs and small business owners on questions about local offerings. Just as the Center for Innovation (see 2.2.2) would serve as a physical “front door” for entrepreneurship in Spartanburg County, the community should create a virtual front door in the form of a highly visible website that highlights the community’s existing and emerging entrepreneurial assets and opportunities for assistance.

##### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ With the umbrella organization (see 2.2.1) and other relevant partners, identify appropriate content for the website; task the umbrella organization with regularly updating content
- ∟ Retain a web design firm to create the site
- ∟ Complement the website with a broader social media strategy to be overseen by the umbrella organization and integrated with the overarching brand strategy (see 4.2.1) if feasible

**Best Practice:** LaunchPGH.com (Pittsburgh, PA)

#### **2.2.5 Position Spartanburg County as the leader in manufacturing entrepreneurship by creating an integrated “makerspace to marketplace” product development pipeline**

Manufacturing entrepreneurship is a burgeoning field due in large part to emerging technologies such as 3-D printing that have made it far easier for entrepreneurs to develop tangible prototypes and products. Communities around the country have embraced the “maker movement” by creating “makerspaces” with the necessary fabrication tools and resources for inventors and entrepreneurs to innovate and tinker. For individuals with marketable ideas, “scaling up” to full-fledged production can be a significant challenge. Spartanburg County has a special set of assets that can substantially lower these barriers. In addition to its well-established overall manufacturing edge, the community is home to Spartanburg Community College’s Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Development. The Center is a 363,000 square foot facility capable of providing the necessary space and mentorship for new or relocating manufacturing firms in Spartanburg County. For instance, a current arrangement allows business innovations developed at CU-ICAR to be brought into the manufacturing phase at The Center. To capitalize on national trends and its significant asset base, Spartanburg County should create a “makerspace to marketplace” pipeline by establishing a new makerspace aligned with The Center and complemented by enhanced mentorship opportunities and capital availability for manufacturing startups.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene relevant partners from SCC and The Center and the local manufacturing and entrepreneurial communities to identify the appropriate corporate structure for a new makerspace
- ∟ Purchase, lease, or assume control of an appropriate physical space for the makerspace
- ∟ Identify resources for the makerspace and seek sponsorships and in-kind donations of depreciated or surplus equipment from local communities
- ∟ With relevant partners, establish protocols for “graduating” from the makerspace to The Center
- ∟ Ensure that firms exiting The Center are connected to the Economic Futures Group for assistance with locating suitable space in Spartanburg County
- ∟ Consider firms graduating from The Center for inclusion in the economic gardening program (see 2.1.3)
- ∟ As the pipeline comes to fruition, market its existence to innovators and investors both inside and outside the Upstate region, potentially in conjunction with an earned media campaign (see 4.2.2)

**2.2.6 Work with the Spartanburg Angels to expand funding options for local high-growth firms**

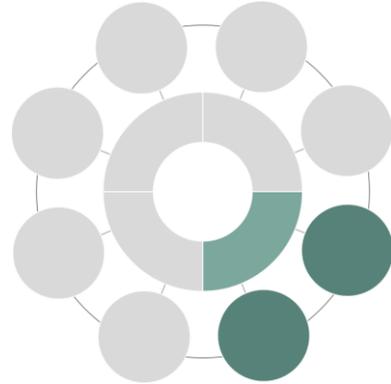
In all but a few top markets, access to capital is a significant challenge for most entrepreneurs. Public input gathered from individuals with knowledge of the local entrepreneurial climate revealed that this holds true in the Upstate region. Stakeholders also noted, however, that Spartanburg County is tremendously fortunate to have the Spartanburg Angels, an angel investment group formed in 2015 that funds small startups and entrepreneurial ventures, primarily in South Carolina. The Spartanburg County community should continue to support this important asset and work with the group to increase investment in worthy businesses based in the county that have high growth potential.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Leverage local business networks to recruit additional investors and expand the pool of available capital
- ∟ With the Spartanburg Angels, evaluate the viability of setting a “soft goal” of funding a certain number of Spartanburg County-based companies each calendar year
- ∟ Through the new entrepreneurial programming established in this section, seek to identify firms that are strong candidates to receive angel funding

### 3. Place

Quality of place plays a significant role in community and economic development, particularly when it comes to talent attraction and retention. Research shows that community attachment is heavily influenced by factors such as how a place looks and the availability of opportunities and places to socialize. Additionally, many talented and educated workers are increasingly attracted to various types of communities in which they do not have to use a car to access shops, restaurants, amenities, and even jobs.



During public input, a consensus emerged among stakeholders that Spartanburg County must improve its quality of place, particularly if it is to attract the talent and high-quality jobs that the community desires. The two Objectives in this Key Driver seek to advance that process. **Build a Vibrant Downtown Spartanburg** focuses specifically on the county’s largest historic downtown, which has near-term potential to be a significant community amenity and talent attraction driver. **Enhance Quality of Place throughout the Community** focuses on making all of Spartanburg County a better place to live by addressing issues such as quality development, aesthetics, and connectivity.

#### Key Findings from Research and Input:

- ✓ Stakeholders broadly agreed that a more vibrant downtown Spartanburg is a significant community priority; the graphic at the bottom of this page shows words that individuals used to describe what they would like to see changed in the community in the next 10 years – the consensus around “downtown” in these responses is among the most powerful *Market Street* has seen in many years of utilizing this visualization tool
- ✓ On the online survey, stakeholders praised the community’s volunteer opportunities and cultural and arts amenities, but nightlife options for adults and the ability to access amenities without using a car were a significant concern
- ✓ Input participants were proud of several ongoing place-based efforts, including the comprehensive Northside Initiative and the work of Partners for Active Living and others to promote bicycle and pedestrian trails



## 3.1 BUILD A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN SPARTANBURG

*Quality of place is an increasingly important factor for top talent and businesses making location decisions, and downtown Spartanburg has the potential to be a significant quality of place asset for the community. This Objective focuses on ways in which public, private, and non-profit organizations and resources can be aligned and leveraged to create a more vibrant live-work-play district.*

### 3.1.1 Create a Downtown Partnership and related Business Improvement District (BID) to create a more vibrant and prosperous downtown Spartanburg

Historic downtowns throughout the country have been revitalized in recent decades. Much of this phenomenon can be attributed to shifting lifestyle preferences and increased market demand, but many of the most successful communities have benefitted from a proactive, organized, and professional approach to downtown revitalization. Stakeholders said that downtown Spartanburg has seen numerous positive changes in recent years due in large part to the commitment of individual investors, philanthropists, and *ad hoc* coalitions as well as public staff devoting part of their limited time to advancing developments and initiatives. To take downtown Spartanburg to the next level, the community must adopt a more formal approach. Spartanburg should create a professionally staffed public-private partnership to serve as the lead organization for “all things downtown.” This Partnership should also administer a BID (technically known as a “Municipal Improvement District” under South Carolina law). A BID is a means through which property owners in a district may voluntarily raise their taxes to fund various improvements and services that in return increase property values. A similar approach is currently in use in Columbia with the City Center Partnership and its associated BID.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene stakeholders including representatives from the City of Spartanburg, downtown property owners, and potential private funders to establish the appropriate organizational framework
- ∟ Work with City of Spartanburg elected officials and staff and downtown property owners to establish a BID to fund infrastructure improvements and services such as public safety and beautification
- ∟ Staff the Partnership with at least one full-time professional with significant experience in leading a downtown or community development organization, with other positions possible pending need and funding
- ∟ Task staff with promoting, marketing, and advocating for downtown Spartanburg; position the organization as the “front door” for potential developers and investors seeking information
- ∟ Task staff with fulfilling a coordinating role between various organizations also engaging in core functions such as promotion and marketing (Spartanburg Downtown Association and CVB), advocacy (Chamber), planning and development (City and private sector), and programming (HUB-BUB, et al.)

### 3.1.2 Create a privately capitalized, non-profit development entity to activate underutilized sites and buildings in downtown Spartanburg

While there have been numerous development and redevelopment projects in downtown Spartanburg in recent years, input participants noted that many buildings and sites in downtown Spartanburg remain underutilized. Stakeholders with knowledge of the downtown real estate and development climate said many owners are unable to improve properties on their own or are waiting for market conditions to improve to sell – a process that could take many years. Input participants said that to activate underutilized properties and catalyze additional development, a proactive approach is required. Leaders from the community recently saw the results of such an approach in Chattanooga, where the River City Company has worked with public, private, and philanthropic entities to develop, plan, and design projects, acquire land, and in some cases, fund specific developments. The company began with an initial investment of \$12 million from local foundations and private sources. In order to continue to build momentum in downtown, Spartanburg should establish a non-profit entity to catalyze development or redevelopment projects that further the live-work-play vision for downtown Spartanburg but would be unlikely to happen organically in the near future.

#### Potential Actions:

- ∟ Create or identify an entity devoted solely to planning/design, land acquisition and disposition, and development financing in downtown Spartanburg
- ∟ Identify local community, corporate, and family foundations interested in catalyzing development in downtown Spartanburg without a need for a standard financial return on investment
- ∟ Empanel a board of directors consisting of investors and individuals with significant experience in real estate development and finance
- ∟ Identify and pursue development or redevelopment projects that further the vision of downtown Spartanburg as a vibrant live-work-play destination and can have a catalytic effect; prioritize projects that would be unlikely to occur organically
- ∟ Leverage the Downtown Partnership (see 3.1.1) for staff and administrative assistance

**Best Practice:** River City Company (Chattanooga, TN)

### 3.1.3 Create a favorable climate for development in downtown Spartanburg

Input participants familiar with the real estate and development climate in downtown Spartanburg said that market forces alone are unlikely to produce the type of live-work-play environment that these stakeholders value. For instance, research revealed that despite a national boom in apartment construction, multifamily development in the whole of Spartanburg County has been relatively limited, and downtown Spartanburg has seen virtually no new-build activity. Input participants familiar with multifamily development conditions attributed this to high property taxes relative to achievable rents. A brief analysis in the Community Assessment revealed that property taxes in downtown Spartanburg are much higher than those in some other South Carolina downtowns. While specifics vary, communities around the country have responded to similar challenges by leveraging public funds or mechanisms to catalyze downtown growth and ensure that

their overall business climate is strong. Spartanburg County should take similar steps to evaluate and implement appropriate public policy solutions to achieve a favorable climate for downtown growth.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene elected and appointed officials and private-sector partners to identify needs and barriers
- ∟ Continue to consider statutory tools such as a Multi-County Industrial Park or Tax Increment Finance districts to catalyze worthy projects by defraying development costs associated with hardscapes, parking infrastructure, wayfinding signage, beautification, utility upgrades, and/or relocations, etc.
- ∟ Evaluate the ability to leverage existing public facilities (e.g. parking decks) to support residential or retail projects
- ∟ Work with all relevant partners to identify the means by which the City of Spartanburg’s tax base can be broadened and expanded to address relatively high property tax rates for commercial and non-owner-occupied residential properties
- ∟ Prioritize projects that significantly add to the supply of housing units or supportive neighborhood retail (e.g. grocery stores) to address stakeholder desires for more residential product in the area
- ∟ Work with public officials and representatives from the development community to ensure that the development process is clear and easy to navigate in a timely matter; leverage the Downtown Partnership to provide assistance in matters such as permitting, grant applications, etc.
- ∟ Leverage economic development staff capacity to assist prospective developers in pursuing multifamily projects or commercial tenants or retailers such as grocery stores

**3.1.4 Make Morgan Square an inviting gathering place through refreshed urban design and programming**

A wide variety of input participants viewed Morgan Square as an asset the community, but many noted that the design of the square itself is not conducive to accommodating the kind of formal and informal gatherings that occur in great public spaces. Downtown Spartanburg lacks a waterfront or other defining natural feature. Stakeholders suggested, however, that a redesigned Morgan Square could serve as an important, memorable focal point for downtown. Input participants acknowledged that Morgan Square has undergone multiple redesigns in the past and that its current status as a pleasant park-like space is an improvement on previous iterations. The community should seek to maximize the potential of Morgan Square by transforming it into an active centerpiece for downtown and all of Spartanburg County.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Work with City staff capacity and engage a nationally recognized planning and design firm to gather public input, reimagine the space, and create an actionable plan
- ∟ Work with elected officials and staff in the City of Spartanburg to build support for the concept

- ∟ Develop funding for planning and construction costs through a combination of public capital expenditures and private gifts
- ∟ Leverage the new Spartanburg Downtown Cultural District to increase activity in the square and continue to tap the community's cultural sector – including but not limited to the Symphony, HUB-BUB, Hub City Books, and so forth – to create formal programming for the square; ensure that the new design is conducive to events such as outdoor concerts and performances

### **3.1.5 Create a socially focused multi-use space to serve as a vibrant gathering place**

Input participants had high praise for Spartanburg County's arts and cultural offerings and facilities such as the Chapman Cultural Center. Young professionals in particular noted that arts could be a distinguishing factor for downtown Spartanburg as it carves out its identity. However, stakeholders noted that downtown presently lacks a multi-use space capable of hosting concerts, performances, and other late-night events. Spartanburg County should pursue the creation of a multi-use venue that can promote social interactions and add to the vibrancy of downtown both during and after business hours. This would be differentiated from but supportive of efforts to develop entrepreneurial networking space in the downtown (see 2.2.2).

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Work with the Downtown Partnership (see 3.1.1) and other relevant stakeholders to determine feasibility of a purely for-profit venture
- ∟ If a purely for-profit venture is not feasible, work through the Downtown Partnership to develop appropriate model; this could entail subsidies to a for-profit operator or purchasing an appropriate venue and leasing the space to an operator at a reduced rate
- ∟ Work with partners to identify a suitable location – ideally in a building with historical charm and character with sufficient space to house facilities such as a music venue and "all-day" tenants such as a coffee shop or restaurant/bar

### **3.1.6 Continue to support the Northside Initiative and ensure that its successes are well-known**

While increased investment and revitalization in downtown Spartanburg are important, so too is ensuring that the neighborhoods around it are strong. In this sphere, the community has already made tremendous progress in the form of the Northside Initiative, a comprehensive effort supported by a range of committed public, private, and non-profit partners to transform the Northside area. Stakeholders had effusive praise for the Initiative during public input, and evidence of its progress is already apparent. The community should continue to build upon this initial momentum, advance specific plans, and ensure that the successes of the initiative are known throughout the nation.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Continue to build support and resources for the full implementation of the Northside Master Plan

- ∠ Enlist a broad range of community partners to aggressively pursue national public and private grant money to further planning and implementation efforts, including Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants
- ∠ Consistent with existing plans, prioritize the improvement of physical connections (including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure) between the Northside and downtown Spartanburg to create important linkages between these rapidly progressing districts
- ∠ Publicize positive outcomes resulting from the Northside Initiative as part of a broad earned media strategy (see 4.2.2)

## 3.2 ENHANCE QUALITY OF PLACE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

*Quality of place is not merely a “downtown” issue – successful communities around the country are pursuing initiatives to address issues of place at a broad geographic scale. Spartanburg County is fortunate to have many ongoing public, private, and non-profit initiatives aimed at improving quality of place and quality of life for local residents. Many are programs that Market Street might have otherwise recommended were they not already in place or in advanced planning stages. The potential Tactical Recommendations in this section are not intended to duplicate or replace ongoing work, but rather to complement these efforts and identify existing programs that, if advanced, could make Spartanburg County a better place to live.*

### 3.2.1 Support the beautification and revitalization of key gateways and corridors

“Gateways” or the key entrance points to a community have a major influence on perceptions of quality of place. They have a significant impact on the first impressions of visitors to a community, any of whom may be a potential resident, employer, or investor. They are also the first thing to greet residents upon returning home from travel. Stakeholders noted that many gateways and key corridors throughout Spartanburg County are unattractive and occasionally lined with distressed properties. Spartanburg County should seek to make these corridors more aesthetically pleasing and economically vibrant.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Continue to advance ongoing beautification efforts and work with local elected officials and staff to build momentum and support for additional enhancements
- ∟ Work with the South Carolina Department of Transportation to develop long-range corridor improvement plans to focus on aesthetic improvements such as streetscapes, upgraded wayfinding signage, lighting, and utilities (preferably underground when financially and operationally feasible)
- ∟ Explore local funding options for capital improvements, particularly TIF
- ∟ Seek sustainable funding streams or volunteer commitments to address landscaping, litter pickup, and other ongoing maintenance tasks
- ∟ Conduct an “underutilized property analysis” along key corridors, identifying land parcels or sites that are not activated to their highest and best use; develop a database detailing property conditions and owner-in-fact of underutilized parcels to improve marketability of properties and ease code enforcement efforts
- ∟ Commission local artists to create murals and art installations along key corridors

**Best Practice:** Gateway and Corridor Beautification (Augusta, GA)

### 3.2.2 Support quality development throughout Spartanburg County

While downtown Spartanburg was a frequent topic of conversation during public input, stakeholders also expressed a desire to see quality development throughout the entirety of Spartanburg County. Input participants expressed a desire to see more live-work-play developments and opportunities to access an amenity such as a restaurant without a car (which, as survey data revealed, is difficult to do in most areas today). Spartanburg County should pursue policies and initiatives that support these aims.

#### Potential Actions:

- ∟ Support the implementation of Area Performance Planning to allow for quality development (including mixed-use development) in areas where the context is appropriate in Spartanburg County
- ∟ Ensure that the subdivision ordinance promotes internal street connectivity within developments and that design standards for streets include infrastructure for safe and comfortable walking and biking to promote a wider range of transportation choices
- ∟ Encourage towns throughout Spartanburg County to participate in the Main Street South Carolina program to improve downtown districts

### 3.2.3 Adopt a pilot program of highly targeted neighborhood beautification

Spartanburg County residents contacted during the public input process generally love where they live, but stakeholders noted that some areas of the community are struggling with blight, disinvestment, and crime. To address this issue, Spartanburg County should launch a “micro-targeted” campaign of neighborhood beautification and revitalization. This program applies enhanced government services in a small area for a short time in an effort to make an immediate and noticeable improvement in the physical appearance of a neighborhood. After this initial push, the initiative should be paired with ongoing and coordinated volunteer efforts that will carry on beautification and maintenance efforts.

#### Potential Actions:

- ∟ Work with local governments to develop and launch a pilot version of the program
- ∟ Identify potential services to deploy, including police, building inspection and code enforcement, engineering, public works, parks and recreation, economic and community development, emergency management, etc.
- ∟ Select two to four areas to receive enhanced services in a short period of time
- ∟ Convene volunteer teams at each location to continue upkeep for a period of one year after treatment, potentially leveraging the proposed volunteer initiative (see 4.1.2)
- ∟ If the program proves effective, evaluate options to scale and apply across the community

**Best Practice:** 5x5 Program (Macon, GA)

**Best Practice:** Des Moines Neighborhood Revitalization Program (Des Moines, IA)

### **3.2.4 Accelerate implementation of the Trails and Greenways Master Plan to support bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout Spartanburg County**

In the online survey, more than two thirds of respondents rated the “ability to access shops, restaurants, and services without using a car” in Spartanburg County as below average or very poor. Many stakeholders said they would like to see improvements in bicycle and pedestrian facilities – for both transportation and recreational purposes. This is consistent with national trends, where the ability to access amenities and recreation opportunities without using a car is increasingly valued – particularly among top talent in technology and “creative” fields. The Spartanburg community is fortunate to have an existing Greenways and Trails Master Plan advanced by Partners for Active Living (PAL) and a broad coalition of partners. The community should pursue an aggressive timeline for implementation of the plan, primarily through the commitment of additional public resources.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Continue to seek philanthropic and private-sector resources for plan implementation and staffing of the Trails Coordinator position
- ∟ Develop new public resources to fund accelerated implementation of the plan, including state and federal grants and the application of local infrastructure funding toward proposed facilities
- ∟ Work with relevant partners to develop an awareness campaign to communicate the low cost of implementation (slightly more than \$1M/mile for a new multi-use trail – less than the cost to mill and resurface a mile of four-lane road) relative to positive health and talent attraction ROI
- ∟ Work with relevant public and private partners to seek upgrades to neighborhood sidewalks and on-street improvements (such as shared-lane markings) to further enhance connectivity around trails network

### **3.2.5 Implement the Spartanburg County Blueways Master Plan to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities**

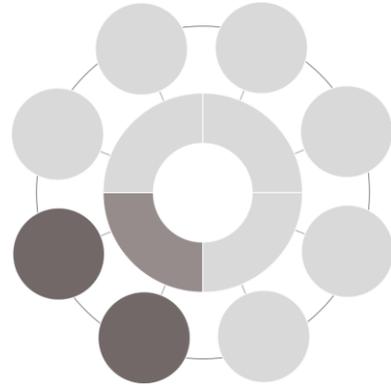
Input participants recognized Spartanburg County’s outdoor amenities as significant place-based assets that can appeal to residents and visitors alike. Among these are the community’s three major rivers and their various tributaries – waterways that once powered the local textile industry. In recent years, there has been a significant push to expand access to these bodies of water for recreation and tourism purposes. This interest eventually led to the Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE) and partners developing the Spartanburg County’s Blueways Master Plan. (A blueway is defined in the plan as a “water path or trail that is developed with launch points, vehicle access, and points of interest for canoeists, paddle boarders, kayakers, and other forms of passive riparian recreation.”) To build on this momentum and leverage some of its finest natural resources, Spartanburg County should pursue the implementation of this plan.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∠ Continue to support SPACE and other relevant partners in finalizing the plan
- ∠ Develop public, private, and non-profit resources for stewardship, promotion, and other key actions recommended by the plan

## 4. Image

The preceding Key Drivers focus on issues (workforce quality, economic diversification, and quality of place) that directly impact a community's prosperity and quality of life. In community and economic development, it is also true that "perception is reality." That is, what people think of a place plays an important role in its ability to compete for jobs, talent, and investment.



During the public input process, stakeholders in Spartanburg County noted that the community could be doing a better job of promoting itself to regional and national audiences. How residents perceive and talk about their own community is also important – and, in this department, stakeholders agreed that Spartanburg County residents have much work to do. The two Objectives related to this Key Driver focus on internal and external perceptions of Spartanburg County. **Create Champions for Spartanburg County** seeks to boost community pride and cohesion within its own borders. **Tell the Spartanburg Story** addresses ways in which the community can better communicate its value and successes to the outside world.

### ***Key Findings from Research and Input:***

- ✓ Input participants said that Spartanburg County residents generally love where they live
- ✓ However, many input participants also noted divisions within the community that negatively impact community pride and cohesion
- ✓ Stakeholders said there is an "East/West" divide in the county, and research revealed major differences in population trends, with the West rapidly growing and the East experiencing declines
- ✓ Input participants also described localized "silos" that have their roots in the community's mill village history and more modern divides between various political jurisdictions
- ✓ Stakeholders said that the county's various divisions – political, geographical, racial, etc. – can be overcome and that doing so is a top priority for the community
- ✓ Input participants praised the "One Spartanburg" campaign as a step in the right direction
- ✓ Public input also revealed a general sentiment that Spartanburg County could be doing more to promote itself to a variety of external audiences
- ✓ Stakeholders specifically cited a need for greater consistency in messaging across a variety of channels – talent marketing, economic development, destination marketing, and overall promotion and branding of the community

## 4.1 CREATE CHAMPIONS FOR SPARTANBURG COUNTY

*This Objective focuses on how Spartanburg County residents might come together to increase community pride and cohesion. Its title – “create champions” – reflects the idea that a community’s own residents and business leaders are its best advocates and representatives to the outside world.*

### 4.1.1 Leverage the “One Spartanburg” tagline to launch an internal marketing campaign to boost community pride

As detailed on the previous page, the public input process revealed that Spartanburg County residents generally love where they live, but numerous divisions exist within the community. Additionally, some stakeholders said that Spartanburg County residents occasionally have negative perceptions of their own community. This represents a concern for Spartanburg County as it seeks to promote itself to employers, investors, and talented people from outside the community. As a complement to its external marketing efforts, the community should launch an internal campaign that leverages the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce’s new “There’s Only One. Spartanburg.” tagline to increase community pride.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene a variety of stakeholders, including residents with marketing expertise, to develop the campaign
- ∟ Work with leaders from cities and unincorporated portions of the county to develop messaging about how “One Spartanburg” benefits all parts of the community
- ∟ Determine appropriate messaging and channels, which should include some type of official branding or logo that could be adopted by a wide range of businesses, organizations, and residents in the community to show their commitment to “One Spartanburg”
- ∟ Develop profiles of a broad cross-section of Spartanburg County residents, businesses, and organizations that are making a difference and contributing to the “positive energy” that many stakeholders said is emerging in the community
- ∟ Profile companies and individuals that are working toward the “economic future of Spartanburg County,” emphasizing economic diversity
- ∟ Identify “grassroots” leaders and influencers in the community to spread the campaign through word-of-mouth marketing techniques

### 4.1.2 Create a “One Spartanburg Volunteer Initiative” to promote pride and collaboration throughout the county

Volunteering can help individuals feel greater pride and “ownership” in their community. Public input revealed that divisions exist within Spartanburg County as a result of factors such as the area’s mill village history and current development patterns. Through a converted volunteer initiative, the community has an opportunity to engage its citizens and break down barriers all at once. Spartanburg County should create a large-scale and ongoing volunteer initiative that encourages residents to make a difference both in their own

“neighborhoods” and in other parts of the county with which they might be less familiar, with the ultimate goal of increasing pride and reducing internal barriers.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene a network of partners including foundations, non-profits, service and faith-based organizations, public agencies, private businesses, and others to develop a coordination framework and establish program details
- ∟ Encourage residents to form geographically based “volunteer teams” at some agreed upon unit of local geography – formal or informal neighborhoods, elementary or high school enrollment boundaries, etc.
- ∟ “Pair off” sets of two volunteer teams from different parts of the county and task the pairings with devising two neighborhood-oriented service projects – one in each area; would recur at some regular interval (e.g. fall and spring)
- ∟ Consider leveraging volunteer efforts as part of the targeted neighborhood beautification program (see 3.2.3)

**Best Practice:** Watch Muskegon (Muskegon, MI)

**4.1.3 Promote broader and more diverse membership on area non-profit and membership organization boards**

During the input process, a variety of stakeholders praised the dedicated volunteer leaders of Spartanburg County’s non-profit and membership organization boards, but many also noted that there is significant overlap between these various boards and expressed a desire to see a more diverse range of individuals engaged in leadership roles. The community should seek to broaden its local leadership pool with the ultimate goal of creating new “champions” for Spartanburg County that reflect its diversity.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene leaders from non-profits and a wide variety of other community organizations to secure commitments to diversify board leadership
- ∟ Formally challenge local organizations to increase board diversity based on factors such as age, race and ethnicity, longevity in the community, etc.
- ∟ Leverage the knowledge of community organizations and existing programs such as Leadership Spartanburg to identify potential new candidates for service
- ∟ Encourage organizations to relax financial contribution requirements for some board positions in the interest of building a more engaged citizenry

## 4.2 TELL THE SPARTANBURG STORY

*As the preceding Objectives and potential Tactical Recommendations indicate, Spartanburg County must take strategic action to address a wide variety of issues and opportunities in order to improve its overall prosperity and competitive position. As Spartanburg County continues to make progress, the community must also ensure that its successes are communicated to a broad outside audience. This Objective includes a pair of Tactical Recommendations that the community can pursue to enhance its external profile.*

### **4.2.1 Develop an overarching brand strategy to tell a consistent story across various marketing platforms without sacrificing audience-specific needs**

Spartanburg County is currently engaging in a variety of forms of external marketing – or may do so as a result of this Strategy. These include talent attraction (see 1.2.1 to 1.2.3), economic development (see 2.1.1), and destination marketing. The focus of each is different. For instance, to reach groups that may want to hold a trade show or event in a community, destination marketers utilize specialized messaging through specific channels that have limited relevance to an economic development marketer attempting to recruit a prospective employer. That said, the lines between these various forms of marketing are blurring. As an example, a travel and tourism advertisement promoting nightlife or outdoor recreation opportunities could also be seen as talent marketing for an individual seeking community with those amenities. Successful communities around the country are therefore establishing overarching brand identities that can incorporate various forms of external marketing. Spartanburg County should create a flexible brand framework that would strengthen the impact of all its external marketing efforts by creating synergies between different messages and establishing a memorable identity for the community as a whole.

#### **Potential Actions:**

- ∟ Convene stakeholders from all organizations – public and private – engaged in external marketing to oversee the creation of the brand strategy
- ∟ Evaluate the viability of “There’s Only One. Spartanburg.” as an external brand/tagline
- ∟ Create a framework that would function as an “umbrella” under which public and private organizations in the community could align a portion of their messaging, potentially including logos, slogans, marks, etc.
- ∟ Retain a marketing firm with significant experience in community branding to develop an impactful brand and identify potential audiences

**Best Practice:** We Don’t Coast (Omaha, NE)

### **4.2.2 Launch an earned media campaign to highlight the community’s current and future successes to a national audience**

Earned media is generally coverage that is “won” as opposed to “bought” and is regarded as highly credible – and in many cases more cost efficient than other forms of external marketing. As Spartanburg County continues to build positive momentum, it should seek to publicize its noteworthy successes through a

coordinated earned media campaign. This would primarily involve seeding positive stories about Spartanburg County with influential national and regional outlets.

**Potential Actions:**

- ∠ Identify an individual or firm with high-quality contacts at major media outlets to facilitate earned media outreach
- ∠ Work with the individual or firm to communicate existing newsworthy programs or accomplishments as well as new “wins” that result from this Strategy
- ∠ Ensure that any positive coverage is quickly and prominently leveraged through other marketing channels (see 4.2.1)

## APPENDIX A: BEST PRACTICES

### SEATTLE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (SEATTLE, WA)

[seattle.gov/education/child-care-and-preschool/seattle-preschool-program/about](http://seattle.gov/education/child-care-and-preschool/seattle-preschool-program/about)

In the fall of 2013, the Seattle City Council unanimously adopted a resolution that would support the creation of a program to make high-quality preschool services available and affordable to all 3- and 4-year-olds in Seattle. Leaders in Seattle long recognized a significant achievement gap among schoolchildren in the City that falls along lines of race and income, and universal pre-K was seen as a necessity to ensuring the future competitiveness of the area's workforce. In November 2014, voters in Seattle approved a four-year demonstration project for the Seattle Preschool Program. The project is funded by a \$58 million property tax levy that equates to less than \$45 per year for the average homeowner in Seattle. Tuition is free for children from families earning less than 300% of the federal poverty level, and tuition is based on a sliding scale for families earning above that level. Some level of subsidy is available to all families participating in the program. The Seattle Preschool Program served over 250 children in its inaugural 2015-2016 school year, and the hope is to reach 2,000 children in 100 classrooms by 2018.

### CINCINNATI YOUTH COLLABORATIVE (CINCINNATI, OH)

[cycyouth.org](http://cycyouth.org)

For over 30 years, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC) has actively engaged the business community, the Cincinnati Public Schools, and local organizations and governments to take a collaborative approach to tackling dropout rates and empowering children and young adults to succeed in education, career, and life. The program offers one-on-one mentoring for students as young as second grade and continues on through high school. Mentors are expected to meet with their mentees once a week for at least year. They also offer tutoring services, college advisors, and career specialists in an effort to keep students in school and on the pathway to success. In 2014, CYC had 40 dedicated staff members, 1,300 volunteers, and 59 corporate partners. Overall, 2,900 students were served, and the program had tremendous success. Reports show that 96% of senior students in CYC programs graduated from high school, and 88% of seniors successfully transitioned to college, career, or military.

### GRADUATE! PHILADELPHIA (PHILADELPHIA, PA)

[graduatephiladelphia.org](http://graduatephiladelphia.org)

Graduate! Philadelphia is a joint initiative of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board and the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania that works with adults who have completed some college to return to school and get their degrees. To do this, Graduate! Philadelphia provides free in-person and online guidance and support to help clients fill out and file financial assistance forms, receive academic support, balance school with work and family schedules, access a computer, complete paperwork, and improve study skills.

Graduate! Philadelphia has partnered with 15 local accredited colleges and universities to help transition adults back into the college and degree program that work best for them. Six staff persons manage the program.

## GREATER GRADS (OKLAHOMA CITY, OK)

[greatergrads.com](http://greatergrads.com)

Greater Grads is an initiative of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Education and Workforce Development division. It launched in 2006 to build Oklahoma City's talent base by connecting Oklahoma graduates—a vital component of the City's future workforce—with employers in the Oklahoma City region. These connections will help Oklahoma City's flourishing economy, creating even more opportunities in the years to come. Upon recognizing that the Oklahoma City region was experiencing brain drain although it is home to over 120,000 college students every year—with regional higher education enrollment as large as Boston or Philadelphia—the Chamber launched a targeted effort necessary to focus those students on opportunities available to them locally.

The program consists of three parts:

- ✓ InternOKC summer program: Interns can be enrolled in this four-week series that includes a kick-off session and four lunch sessions that highlight the benefits of living and working in the Oklahoma City region, fosters peer networking and provides resources to help students transition from college to career.
- ✓ Greater Grads Career Fair: The career fair is held each spring with more than 100 recruiters from local companies. A link on the Greater Grads website provides attendees with resume and interviewing tips.
- ✓ Website for graduates and employers: This website focuses on promoting Oklahoma City to recent college graduates and young professionals and connecting them with jobs available at local businesses.

In just the first six months of the site's launch, traffic increased by 300 percent. Site data shows that the average length of stay is 10 minutes, which is 400 percent above Greater Grad's goal of two minutes (generally considered the standard benchmark for successful sites). Ten internships were posted on GreaterGrads.com at its launch; now the website features over 100 during peak intern hiring periods. A year after Greater Grads' debut, a partnership was forged with the Alliance of Emerging Professionals (AEP), Oklahoma City's young professionals group. These recent college graduates return to their campuses to promote the Greater Grads program and website to college students during monthly AEP social events. Greater Grads is one of the primary programs of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber's Education and Workforce Development department and a direct tactic of the Chamber's economic development strategy. It is staffed by a full-time manager of education and outreach programs.

## CARPEDM (DES MOINES, IA)

[seizedesmoines.com](http://seizedesmoines.com)

Launched by the Greater Des Moines Partnership, CarpeDM ([www.SeizeDesMoines.com](http://www.SeizeDesMoines.com)) is a website that acts as a one-stop shop for new and prospective residents of the Greater Des Moines Area. CarpeDM provides a wealth of information for relocating residents including a relocation guide, information regarding local school and higher education systems, detailed neighborhood information as well as links to neighborhood resource organizations, and bus and air service infrastructure navigation assistance in the Greater Des Moines Area. Perhaps CarpeDM's strongest feature is its integration of the professional networking site LinkedIn. While browsing the interactive website, prospective new residents can connect with community members who have volunteered to be ambassadors for certain topic areas and local programs. For instance, new residents desiring to learn more about the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of Des Moines can easily select an ambassador and connect with them through LinkedIn. To assist in generating content, the Greater Des Moines Partnership has leveraged the Greater Des Moines community by adding a "contribute content" feature. Once registered, CarpeDM users can create their own profile, connect with ambassadors through LinkedIn, add pages, edit content, and submit photos. The site also provides opportunities for users to get connected to job opportunities.

## ECONOMIC GARDENING PROGRAM (LITTLETON, CO)

Littleton, Colorado is a small town of less than 50,000 people, but the community's full-on embrace of economic gardening as a primary means of job creation has put them on the map in economic development circles. In 1987, Littleton suffered the sudden loss of over 7,000 jobs after missile manufacturer Martin Marietta (now Lockheed Martin) significantly downsized its workforce. As a result, Littleton implemented an economic gardening plan targeted at second stage companies, in order to spur significant job creation from existing small- and medium-sized businesses in lieu of aggressively recruiting businesses through tax incentives. Two decades later, Littleton has more than doubled its jobs base and more than tripled its sales tax revenue. Littleton's success in implementing its economic gardening program has drawn the interest of hundreds of other communities who have reached out to the City of Littleton to hear its success story. While Littleton represents a municipal example of a successful economic development program, numerous states and regional economic development authorities have also had success with pilot economic gardening programs. In one such example, 20 companies participated in a regional pilot program led by the Greater Rochester (NY) Enterprise that resulted in the creation of 117 new jobs at a cost of \$1,700 per job – much lower than the typical cost per job associated with incentive-based strategies.

## MEMPHIS REGIONAL LOGISTICS COUNCIL (MEMPHIS, TN)

[memphischamber.com/The-Chamber/Councils/Regional-Logistics.aspx](http://memphischamber.com/The-Chamber/Councils/Regional-Logistics.aspx)

The Memphis Regional Logistics Council (RLC) was established in 2004 by the Memphis Regional Chamber as a way to strengthen the region. By addressing Memphis' ever-growing, ever-changing role in global distribution and logistics, the council works to establish the Memphis region as a leader in the industry and

to better tap into its role as “America’s Distribution Center.” The RLC is comprised of logistics and distribution professionals who lend their insights to the region’s myriad logistics and distribution issues. Members include trucking and drainage companies, freight forwarders, steamship lines, railroads, air carriers, contractors, developers, barge lines, warehouses, and distributors. At meetings, professionals are encouraged to share their ideas and expertise regarding how to improve Memphis’ ability to be a logistics center. The council includes four main committees: infrastructure, marketing, workforce development, and strategic alliances.

The infrastructure committee recently helped execute the contract for the region’s new Memphis: America’s Aerotropolis strategy. The marketing committee works to brand the community and promote Memphis’ assets and support the Chamber’s ongoing marketing efforts, including but not limited to the targeted in-house publication *HUB* magazine with a circulation exceeding 20,000; hosting editors of major logistics and supply sector trade publications for the Logistics Tour of Memphis; full advertising supplemental section to *Inbound Logistics*; and the maintenance of a frequently updated and interactive website promoting regional logistics capabilities. The workforce development committee focuses on promoting the city’s economy by improving the quality of its workforce. The strategic alliance committee works to develop partnerships critical to logistics growth. The strategic alliances committee builds relationships with national and international logistics firms.

## NASHVILLE HEALTH CARE COUNCIL (NASHVILLE, TN)

[healthcarecouncil.com](http://healthcarecouncil.com)

The Nashville Health Care Council was founded in 1995 as an initiative of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. Since that time, the Council has evolved into one of the nation’s top industry-specific councils and led to the creation of dozens of new companies employing thousands of workers. A staff of nine works with more than 220 member organizations to foster a supportive operating environment for existing, startup, and relocating health care businesses. Through educational programs, the Council also provides executives with information on key operational and policy challenges facing health care companies, as well as networking and mentoring activities. Sub-sectors represented by member companies include hospital management, outpatient services, disease management, pharmaceutical services, academic medicine, medical technology and health information technology. Also represented are professional services firms with wide-ranging expertise in the health care industry.

## MAYO CENTER FOR INNOVATION (ROCHESTER, MN)

[centerforinnovation.mayo.edu](http://centerforinnovation.mayo.edu)

The Mayo Clinic launched its Center for Innovation (CFI) in 2008 in an effort to formalize a process to incubate health and healthcare innovation aimed at improving the patient experience. The CFI emphasizes human-centered innovation and design thinking as a means to optimize the healthcare service delivery system. The CFI is housed in a 15,000 square foot facility and employs over 50 healthcare professionals ranging from service designers to healthcare clinicians. The CFI has completed hundreds of innovation projects and has

emerged as one of the most well-known health care innovation centers in the U.S. – a subset of the healthcare industry that is rapidly growing in popularity.

## LAUNCHPGH.COM (PITTSBURGH, PA)

### launchpgh.com

Launchpgh.com is an online portal operated by the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) that connects entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs in the Pittsburgh area to the entrepreneurial resources they need to thrive. The website is both visually appealing, intuitive, and comprehensive in the information it provides to connect area entrepreneurs with an extensive network of business opportunities. The website provides information about upcoming events and contests of interest to area innovators and an assortment of helpful information about heavily relied upon entrepreneurial resources, from co-working space availability to venture capital and seed funding resources. The website was an IEDC “Gold” winner in 2015 for the category of Special Purpose Website for a community with a population of 200,000 to 500,000 people.



## RIVER CITY COMPANY (CHATTANOOGA, TN)

### rivercitycompany.com

River City Company was first created as a private non-profit in 1986 in order to implement a 20-year, 22-mile blueprint for Chattanooga’s riverfront and downtown development. The organization was originally capitalized with \$12 million from local foundations and financial institutions. For the past 30 years, River City Company has been the chief economic development entity tasked with spurring downtown development in Chattanooga. Throughout its existence, the River City Company has been funded by the private sector. River City Company has an annual budget of approximately \$3.2 million.

## GATEWAY AND CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION (AUGUSTA, GA)

[augustaga.gov/1721/Gateway-and-Corridor-Beautification](http://augustaga.gov/1721/Gateway-and-Corridor-Beautification)

In 2010, a public-private partnership named the Gateways & Corridors Committee was established in Augusta, GA to beautify the City's primary entryways and corridors. The partnership was a collaboration between the City of Augusta, Georgia Department of Transportation, the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau, Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., Augusta Utilities Department, business leaders, and Augusta's citizens. A tax deductible organization, Garden City Improvement Fund, was established in December 2010 in order to help raise private dollars for specific gateway and corridor improvement projects. The Augusta Community Foundation manages the monies, while a board of directors distributes the monies. For each of the improvement projects, the Gateways & Corridors Committee has commissioned plans, conducted bids, managed construction, and overseen landscape maintenance obligations.

## 5X5 PROGRAM (MACON-BIBB, GA)

[maconbibb.us/5x5](http://maconbibb.us/5x5)

The City of Macon's 5x5 program is an initiative whereby enhanced city services are targeted to a five block area for five weeks to beautify the community's neighborhoods and support revitalization. Numerous departments are involved in the collaborative effort, including the Mayor's Office, the Police Department, the Fire Department, Inspection and Fees, Engineering, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Central Services, Economic and Community Development, and Emergency Management. The program engages residents in the targeted areas by soliciting their input on the specific areas that need services and encouraging their involvement in clean-up efforts. In Ward I, the program helped remove 18,000 pounds of debris and solid waste, paint more than 8,000 feet of curbs and 200 feet of crosswalks, install 52 new signs, and fix potholes and sidewalks that required patching.

## DES MOINES NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (DES MOINES, IA)

<https://www.dmgov.org/DEPARTMENTS/COMMUNITYDEVELOPMENT/Pages/NeighborhoodDevelopment.aspx>

*Note: The Des Moines program has a long track record of success and represents a more robust neighborhood revitalization program facilitated by a non-profit entity and involving formal planning work. It represents a potential evolution of a targeted neighborhood beautification program such as the relatively newer 5x5 program in Macon, GA.*

The City of Des Moines and the Polk County Board of Supervisors created the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) in 1990 to help stabilize and improve Des Moines' neighborhoods. A key component of the revitalization effort is the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC), a 501(c)(3) entity that serves as the central source for the delivery of funds for assistance to both homeowners and developers.

The NRP uses a strategy that calls for neighborhood residents, the City of Des Moines, Polk County, local business leaders, and the NFC to develop a public/private partnership that addresses revitalization issues within the Des Moines area. The NRP gives citizens the opportunity to organize and create neighborhood organizations that can be officially recognized by the City Council and County Supervisors.

Approximately every two years, all recognized neighborhoods are invited to apply for designation status. At that time, the existing designated neighborhoods are evaluated and if they have met their goals, they can be moved to charter status. Recognized neighborhoods that are applying to become designated submit their applications to the Neighborhood Revitalization Board. The NRB is a citizen board appointed by the City Council. Each City Council member appoints three citizens from their ward representing a low income citizen, a neighborhood resident, and a business/nonprofit/educational representative. The NFC has one representative, and the local business leaders' organization has one representative on the NRB.

Once the NRB has designated a neighborhood, the residents, City, County, and NFC work together to develop a neighborhood action plan. The neighborhood planning process relies on active resident groups to identify critical neighborhood issues in their area. For example, the River Bend neighborhood plan lists their priorities as housing, economic development, community building, infrastructure, neighborhood image, and strengthening the neighborhood association. The staff of the Neighborhood Development Division provides technical assistance and planning coordination. Neighborhood Planning staff work with the neighborhood group to develop appropriate goals and a feasible action plan. Neighborhood action plans provide a list of activities and identify parties responsible for implementation efforts. Success of the neighborhood action plan depends on a continued coordination of efforts between the neighborhood organization, the City, County, NFC and private organizations.

Since its inception, twenty-two neighborhoods have completed the action planning process. Of those neighborhoods, sixteen have successfully completed the process by accomplishing the bulk of the activities in their action plans. They are capable of continuing implementation activities with less support from the City and have graduated to charter status.

## WATCH MUSKEGON (MUSKEGON, MI)

[watchmuskegon.com](http://watchmuskegon.com)

Watch Muskegon is a county-wide, privately funded campaign launched in 2015 that was spearheaded by the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce. The campaign seeks to improve the image of the Muskegon area to both internal and external audiences. The goal of the three-year campaign is to improve the overall image of the Muskegon area, share positive changes that have taken root in the community, and educate residents about the community's assets. The 14-point community image campaign is primarily focused on three pillars: 1) Marketing, 2) Beautification, 3) and Community Education (leadership training, familiarization tours, etc.). The county-wide initiative was influenced by public input, and over 100 community groups have signed onto an "Image Campaign Stakeholder" pledge that affirms their willingness to help promote the community as an attractive place to live, work, and play.

## TULSA'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS – TYPROS (TULSA, OK)

[typros.org](http://typros.org)

Tulsa's Young Professionals (TYPros) was founded by the Tulsa Metro Chamber in 2003 in response to the region's "brain drain" of new graduates and young professionals to other cities and states. TYPros has since grown to more than 8,000 members. To ensure that the group was maturing into an active facilitator of community change, TYPros developed "work crews" allowing young professionals to have a collective voice and impact on a number of community concerns and initiatives. TYPros work crews are issue-focused and include: Business Development; Colleges & Universities; Community Ambassadors; Community Redevelopment; Diversity; Government Relations; Next Generation Leadership; Special Events; and Sustainability. The Government Relations Crew has organized legislative days on which they rent buses and take a large contingency of young professionals to the state capital for a day of meetings with state representatives from the region. TYPros also launched and runs its own small-business incubator called The Forge.

## "WE DON'T COAST" CAMPAIGN (OMAHA, NE)

[wedontcoast.com](http://wedontcoast.com)

Largely to overcome Omaha's "flyover" community perception, the Greater Omaha Chamber launched a regional brand and image initiative based upon extensive research showing that Omaha ranks highly against other metro areas across the country but lacked an identity. The Chamber convened thousands to create a cohesive, recognizable brand that sought to communicate the region's attributes, character, and "can do" spirit. We Don't Coast was launched as a multi-faceted campaign to use across the region to share Greater Omaha's story; positively communicate its character; and grow, retain, and attract business and talent. The campaign was presented a 2015 Award of Excellence by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. Though it is not exclusively an internal brand, the We Don't Coast initiative in Omaha was nevertheless intended to serve both an external and internal awareness-building purpose to positively communicate the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the Greater Omaha region.

# APPENDIX B: RESEARCH SUMMARY

## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT: SUMMARY

The Community Assessment represents the critical first step in the Spartanburg County Community and Economic Development Strategy process. The Assessment examined a wide variety of demographic, socioeconomic, economic, and quality of life indicators that collectively examine Spartanburg County's competitiveness as a place to live, work, visit, and do business. The extensive quantitative analysis was supplemented by a significant amount of community input gathered from focus groups, interviews, and an online survey that received 3,180 responses from area residents, workers, and business leaders. This quantitative and qualitative information was woven into eight key stories that present a narrative discussion of the key issues facing Spartanburg County. These stories incorporate the community's key strengths, weaknesses, assets, and challenges that must be leveraged and addressed in order to raise levels of prosperity in the community over the long-term. The stories are listed below and are followed by a brief recap of each.

- 1) Low Educational Attainment and Signs of a Growing Gap
- 2) Spartanburg County's Economy: A Competitive Edge in Manufacturing and Transportation Bolsters Prosperity
- 3) Uneven Prosperity and Rapid Growth in Childhood Poverty Threaten Long-Term Outcomes
- 4) Homegrown Talent: Raising Standards and Retaining the Best and Brightest
- 5) A Significant Need for Young Talent in a Challenging Regional Environment
- 6) Quality of Life and Place Enhancements are Vital to Better Talent Attraction and Retention
- 7) Entrepreneurship: Unrealized Potential
- 8) Community Cohesion and Identity: From a Mill Village History to #OneSpartanburg

### ***Low Educational Attainment and Signs of a Growing Gap***

Spartanburg County's educational attainment rates are alarmingly low across the board. The proportion of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher – a common measure of a community's top talent necessary for competitiveness in the modern economy – is an especially large concern. Further, the bachelor's attainment rates among the community's 25- to 34- year-old cohort is very low and trending in the wrong direction, and the county is not attracting well-educated in-migrants at a rate that is comparable to peer communities. The tie between educational attainment and lifetime individual earnings potential underscores the need for the community to urgently take steps to boost levels of educational attainment among adult residents in order to raise community-wide levels of prosperity.

### ***Spartanburg County's Economy: A Competitive Edge in Manufacturing and Transportation Bolsters Prosperity***

Spartanburg County has experienced strong employment growth since the end of the Great Recession due in large part to its numerous competitive advantages related to the manufacturing and distribution of goods. Strong performance in these sectors helped the county exceed state and national job growth rates between 2010 and 2015. Manufacturing firms in particular have an enormous positive influence on levels of prosperity in the community, paying wages well in excess of the county average and close to the national sector average. While recognizing the community's significant strengths in manufacturing and distribution, many input participants expressed a desire to see the local economy diversify its jobs base by adding more white-collar jobs. However, the county's ability to increase its competitiveness for white-collar job opportunities is heavily dependent on its ability to produce, retain, and attract the kind of top talent that firms in these sectors rely upon to succeed.

### ***Uneven Prosperity and Rapid Growth in Childhood Poverty Threaten Long-Term Outcomes***

Although Spartanburg County's economy has expanded in recent years, multiple data indicators show that the county's economy is not working for everyone. Per capita income, household income, and poverty rates reveal that the prosperity of Spartanburg County residents lags behind many peer communities. Notably, one in four children in the county live below the poverty line, and a large body of research suggests that children who grow up in poverty are at an increased risk to struggle academically, socially, and economically over their lifetimes. The county's rising child poverty rates and other lagging indicators of personal and household financial well-being make it clear that the status quo cannot be maintained in Spartanburg County if the community is to be a more prosperous place for future generations.

### ***Homegrown Talent: Raising Standards and Retaining the Best and Brightest***

While Spartanburg County's schools generally received high praise from input participants, there is evidence to suggest that the community must raise its standards if its homegrown talent is to make an impact on its talent pool in the future. All levels of the talent pipeline must be addressed. College readiness data shows that Spartanburg County's graduates tend to be less well-prepared than their counterparts nationwide; in some cases, local test scores fall below state averages. While the community's talent production capacity at the two- and four-year college level is substantial, Spartanburg County must make a more concerted effort to retain the top talent that passes through its colleges and universities.

### ***A Significant Need for Young Talent in a Challenging Regional Environment***

Spartanburg County's ability to compete in a knowledge-based economy will largely hinge upon its ability to attract more talented residents, primarily young workers who stand to be engaged in the workforce over the long-term. However, the proportion of residents aged 25 to 34 who hold a four-year college degree is relatively low, and population growth patterns indicate that this age cohort experienced sluggish growth in the county over the past 10 years. These facts and supporting qualitative data from the public input process suggest that Spartanburg County struggles to attract top young talent. Additionally, the community exists within the broader context of the Upstate region. This is a benefit from a "labor shed" perspective, as

employers are able to draw workers from a larger talent pool. It is important to note, though, that migration data reveals that Greenville County is a stronger net attractor of new residents from outside the Upstate region, and in-migrants to Greenville tend to be far more educated. With a strong competitor for top talent on its border, Spartanburg County must take steps to differentiate itself.

### ***Quality of Life and Place Enhancements are Vital to Better Talent Attraction and Retention***

The link between a community's quality of life and quality of place and its overall prosperity cannot be overemphasized. In many respects, the relationship is obvious – people who suffer from poor health outcomes or who lack an efficient and safe means of travel to work cannot adequately engage in the local workforce. Beyond that – and of particular importance to Spartanburg County – is the fact that quality of life and quality of place are increasingly viewed as important for a community's talent attraction and retention efforts. Strategies to enhance a community's talent pool and to produce more homegrown talent can take decades to pay dividends. Thus, making immediate and continuous improvements in the community's quality of place and quality of life assets represents a more immediate potential solution to the community's talent attraction and retention woes.

### ***Entrepreneurship: Unrealized Potential***

Entrepreneurship is a vital component of a community's economic development efforts, as it constitutes one of the "legs" of the three-legged stool of economic development (along with business attraction and existing business expansion). Entrepreneurship has an important role to play in the community's pursuit of economic diversification and a greater presence of high-paying jobs outside of traditionally strong sectors such as manufacturing. The consensus among key stakeholders in Spartanburg County is that the community does have some important entrepreneurial resources in place, but more work and better coordination is needed to fully leverage these resources.

### ***Community Cohesion and Identity: From a Mill Village History to #OneSpartanburg***

Public input revealed that Spartanburg County residents are generally proud of their community, but that several divisions exist within the community. Its history as a textile manufacturing hub led to a "mill village mentality" that has created tangible and intangible differences in the community, while "East/West," "City/County," and racial divisions are also present. These community barriers were viewed as a key challenge that Spartanburg County must overcome to grow prosperity for all county residents. Spartanburg County is unmistakably moving in the right direction to unite the community and inspire pride for the entire County, as noted by the "One Spartanburg" campaign and the community's engagement in the Chamber-led strategic planning process.

## TARGET BUSINESS ANALYSIS: SUMMARY

Communities across the country are pursuing differentiated economic development strategies that seek to support the development of “targeted” business sectors which may benefit from specific competitive advantages afforded by the community, its location, and its asset base. The practice of “targeting” has grown as communities have witnessed the advantages that come from directing finite resources toward the development of such “targeted” business sectors. The Spartanburg County Target Business Analysis ultimately focuses on those targets that have the greatest potential to lead to job growth and investment in the community over the next five years, while remaining mindful of the fact that the overall community and economic development process will better position Spartanburg County to capitalize on long-term opportunities for economic growth. With that in mind, the Target Business Analysis of this comprehensive strategic planning process identified and profiled those sectors which possess the greatest potential to elevate prosperity through job and wealth creation in the years and decades to come.

### *Key Concepts Related to Target Sector Development*

**CLUSTERS:** Agglomerations – or “clusters” – represent groups of interrelated businesses that choose to co-locate. The historical growth of clustered economic activity in areas such as the Silicon Valley, Route 128 in Massachusetts, and the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina are well-developed case studies to which many other regions across the nation refer as they strive to develop similar agglomerations. But there are countless examples of such clusters around the country and the world. Clustering can occur among competing or cooperative firms for a variety of different reasons. For instance, a group of suppliers may choose to locate in proximity to a major manufacturer for research and development efficiencies and reduced transportation costs. While the factors that have led to clustering vary tremendously by region and sector, such agglomerations occur over time because a location has an asset base that affords the sector and the companies that operate within them some form of competitive advantage. The competitive advantages derived by these firms often result in comparatively high potential for employment growth and wealth creation.

**TARGETS:** A targeted sector – or simply a “target” – is any type of business activity that is strategically pursued by an economic development organization and its partners for growth and development. That is to say, a “target” is an area where financial and staff resources, and the programs and policies they support, are specifically focused. “Targets” are often those segments of an economy where competitive advantages exist, prospects for future growth are greatest, and return on investment is likely highest. A “target” can be a single business sector with high growth potential or a “cluster” of businesses in related sectors. Many communities choose to target business sectors that are not presently concentrated in their community or characterized by existing competitive advantages. This may be because such activities are rapidly expanding, exhibit potential to become clusters in the years and decades to come, or align with other strategic objectives of the community. The ultimate aim of “targeting” is not necessarily to create new clusters of business activity – communities with multiple clusters are rare and tend to be among the nation’s largest and most dynamic economies.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR ASSET BASE:** Strategic targeting is predicated upon a solid understanding of a community’s strengths and weaknesses, specifically as they relate to the needs of specific business sectors

and the companies that operate within them. The factors that medium to large companies consider when evaluating a community as a potential location for a new facility are often referred to as site location factors, site selection factors, or site considerations. These factors vary tremendously by sector. For example, data center operations typically seek locations with low natural disaster risk, affordable and abundant water necessary for cooling, and redundant and exceptional fiber-optic infrastructure, among other attributes. Corporate headquarters typically seek locations with a well-educated workforce, exceptional passenger air connectivity, and abundant amenities. Accordingly, communities that are able to offer such characteristics are better positioned to attract these kinds of operations. Understanding the community's asset base – inclusive of a wide variety of these potential site location factors – is critical to understanding the community's competitiveness for various business sectors. Likewise, an understanding of its deficiencies in terms of such site location factors will help the community identify areas that need further investment if the community wishes to transform such deficiencies into future assets.

**A HOLISTIC APPROACH:** For decades many communities and their economic development organizations have exclusively associated "economic development" with "business recruitment." While the recruitment of new companies is an important component of any targeted economic development program, it is only "one leg of the stool." The growth of regional economies and their target business sectors are overwhelmingly driven by existing businesses and entrepreneurs. While new investments generate ribbon cuttings and headlines, a variety of studies have shown that the majority of the country's job creation over various time periods has been attributable to the expansion of existing companies. Accordingly, any effort to develop target sectors and nurture employment growth within them must focus upon the needs of existing businesses as well as entrepreneurs.

### Recommended Target Sectors

Key findings from the Community Assessment, stakeholder input, and extensive quantitative analysis were used to identify existing and potential cluster activity. Based on the analysis of Spartanburg County's economic composition and assets, *Market Street* recommended five target sectors for the community to pursue to grow and attract jobs and investment in the next five years. The proposed sectors are as follows:



The four targets shown at the top of the graphic are reflective of Spartanburg County's core economic strengths related to *making* products and *moving* all manner of finished goods and inputs. The **Automotive Manufacturing** target captures the BMW Spartanburg plant and the many parts manufacturers and related firms that have clustered around it. The **Machinery and Equipment** target includes all other types of machinery and equipment manufacturing operations. The **Advanced Materials** target includes establishments engaged in manufacturing and/or developing new or better materials that are early in their product lifecycle and have significant growth potential. These may be finished products or they could be component parts of another good. As a result, there can be significant overlap between Advanced Materials and the other manufacturing targets, as advanced materials have many applications in automobiles, aerospace, and many other fields. The **Distribution and Trade** target includes business establishments that facilitate the movement of goods. These include distribution centers, warehouses, trucking firms and third-party logistics providers, and wholesale operations that complete bulk sales. *Market Street* also identified near-term prospects for growth in narrowly defined white collar areas shown underneath the **Targeted Corporate Opportunities** target. As the arrows in the graphic indicate, these opportunities will likely be connected to the region's existing manufacturing and distribution strengths. **The full Target Sector Analysis presents a more comprehensive evaluation of the factors influencing the competitiveness of specific economic activities that reflect *Market Street's* recommendations for target business sectors in Spartanburg County, including a review of sector performance, workforce attributes, and site location considerations.**