



# ONESPARTANBURG VISION PLAN 2.0



**OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0**  
Spartanburg County, SC | March, 2022





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# INTRODUCTION

There is a simple truth about communities: they will change over time no matter what we do. The most successful places understand that they can have a say in the matter by adopting shared strategic visions that inspire action.

Spartanburg County began its strategic journey in 2016 when it developed the first OneSpartanburg Vision Plan. The strategy was launched on January 24, 2017, with 42 investors committing \$4.5 million over five years to fund implementation of four key drivers, talent, economy, image, and place aimed at advancing a core goal: to raise levels of prosperity and improve quality of life for all Spartanburg County residents.

While implementation of the Vision Plan over the course of the past five years has largely been successful, leaders in Spartanburg understand that their work has only just begun; bold action must be their path forward. The community must maintain the momentum of the 2016 Vision Plan but also update this ambitious 1.0 strategy with an even grander new vision that can inspire the community, attract new investment, and take Spartanburg to the next level of success. OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 will be a bold, innovative five-year community and economic development strategy driven by data and community feedback.

With the pandemic and its economic uncertainty entering a new phase and once-in-a-generation opportunities from federal government and philanthropic investment emerging in Spartanburg, the timing for a new vision is perfect. The next step on Spartanburg County's journey begins now.

## ABOUT BROAD RIPPLE STRATEGIES

Broad Ripple Strategies has been selected as Spartanburg County's partner to develop the OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0. BRS represents nearly 30 years of experience crafting community, workforce, and economic development strategies that build consensus, drive investment, and get results. Our team has helped more than 60 clients develop 90+ strategies for community and economic development, talent and workforce sustainability, and quality of place. Our team partnered with Spartanburg County on the development of the first OneSpartanburg Vision Plan and has previous experience working with the Upstate South Carolina Alliance.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 will be developed through a four-phase process that began in August 2021 and will conclude in February 2022. It is led by a dynamic Steering Committee of key community leaders. This group is tasked with sharing their perspectives and insights, reviewing research and input findings, considering the guidance the BRS team provides, and making key decisions about the priorities and strategies that will define the new Vision Plan. The 49 leaders selected for the Steering Committee reflect the diverse opinions, perspectives, and backgrounds of the Spartanburg community and its residents.

## Phase 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Input from the people who live and work in a community is an essential component of a strategic planning process. The BRS team worked with OneSpartanburg, Inc. to develop a robust engagement process consisting of interviews, focus groups, and an online survey that garnered 2,800 responses.

## Phase 2: Competitive Assessment and Implementation Evaluation

This phase provided key insights into Spartanburg's competitive position and helped the Steering Committee make informed decisions on the key issues and opportunities that will shape the new Vision Plan. The Competitive Assessment synthesized existing research, quantitative data, and qualitative input to evaluate Spartanburg as a place to live, work, and do business. It is complemented by an Implementation Evaluation that identifies key "lessons learned" from the activation of the first OneSpartanburg Vision Plan.

## Phase 3: OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0

This phase resulted in the development of a next-level Vision Plan for Spartanburg that blends ongoing initiatives that warrant continuation with new priority programs and investment. The Vision Plan 2.0 establishes strategic priorities for the next five years for OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners. Creation of Vision Plan 2.0 occurred in three phases: a high-level outline or framework of goals and objectives; a draft strategy; and final plan. Each phase incorporated review and comments from the Steering Committee, whose work will be completed with the final approval of Vision Plan 2.0.

## Phase 4: Implementation Guidelines

While the OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 will determine "what" Spartanburg will do strategically for the next five years, the Implementation Guidelines will prescribe "how" that will be accomplished. It will analyze and establish implementation costs and resources, lead and support entities for priority strategies, launch dates and project phasing, and performance measures to track progress towards goal attainment. The Guidelines be developed in consultation with OneSpartanburg, Inc., the Vision Plan Advisory Board, and other partners that will play a direct role in activating the strategy.

# THE ONESPARTANBURG VISION PLAN 2.0

The OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 is a holistic economic development strategy that will guide the actions of OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners over the course of the next five years. The recommendations herein will help make Spartanburg County more competitive for jobs and talent, raise levels of prosperity, and improve quality of life for residents. This section describes how the Vision Plan 2.0 was developed and provides a high-level overview of its structure and contents.

## HOW THE VISION PLAN 2.0 WAS DEVELOPED

The OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 process began with two fact-finding phases. The first phase, **Stakeholder Engagement**, entailed focus groups and one-on-one interviews with leaders in Spartanburg County and an online survey open to all that received 2,800 responses. This input was combined with dozens of quantitative data indicators to create the **Competitive Assessment**, the foundational research document of the strategic planning process. The Assessment evaluates Spartanburg County's competitive position as a place to live, work, play, and do business.

The key findings from the Competitive Assessment directly informed the third phase of the process: the development of the Vision Plan 2.0. This phase will ultimately consist of three meetings over the course of four months. At the first meeting in November, the Steering Committee provided input on the desired strategic direction for Spartanburg County and confirmed the high-level framework around which the Vision Plan 2.0 is organized. At the second meeting in December, members evaluated a first full draft of the Vision Plan 2.0. The feedback from this second meeting is reflected in this near-final draft of the Vision Plan 2.0. (An accompanying memorandum provides an overview of the substantive changes between drafts.) **At the February 17 meeting, Committee members will be asked to provide any additional feedback on this draft and – pending any final adjustments – formally approve the OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0.**

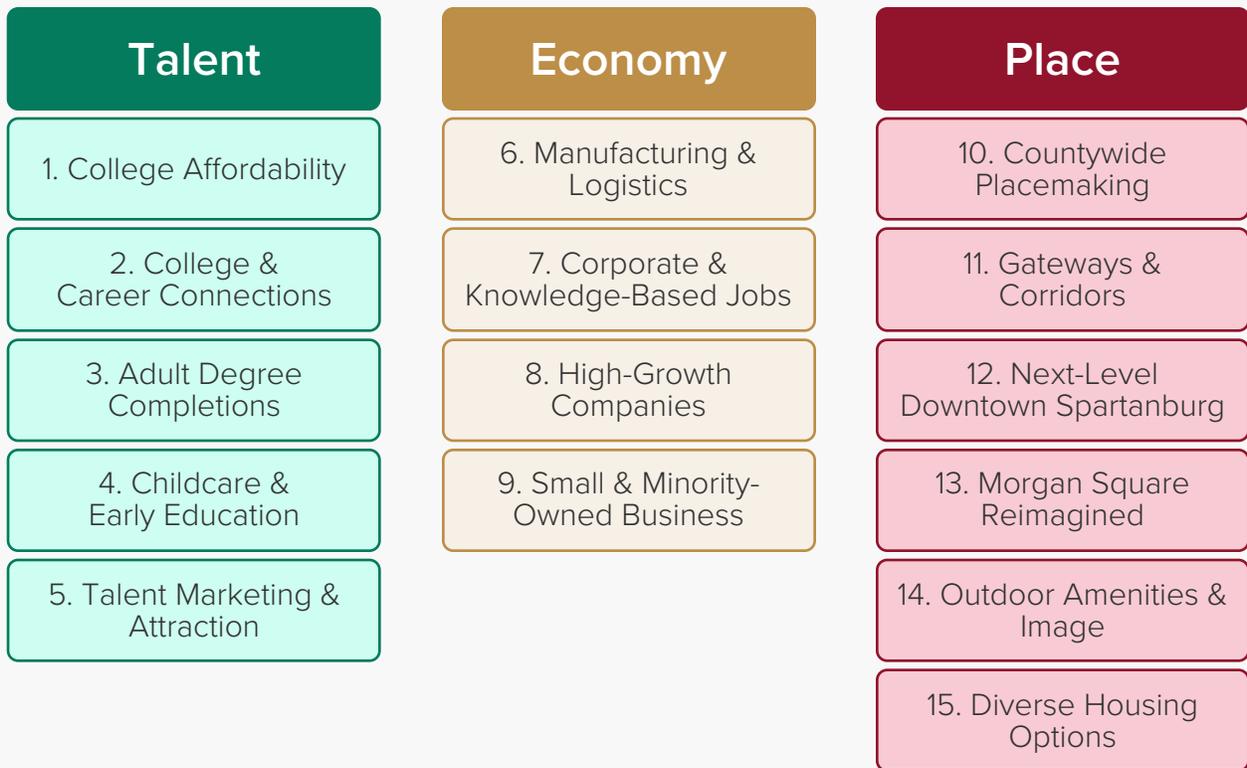
## THE ONESPARTANBURG VISION PLAN 2.0 FRAMEWORK

Based on the key findings from research and input detailed on the preceding pages, it is reasonable to organize the OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 around the following framework. At the top are six **Primary Goals** that reflect the principle aims of Vision Plan 2.0. These Primary Goals can be advanced by activating a limited set of 15 **Key Initiatives** that correspond to specific programs and/or investments. The Key Initiatives incorporate a range of ongoing and planned activities along with new concepts that can help Spartanburg County reach the next level of success. For organizational purposes, these Key Initiatives are grouped into one of three **Focus Areas** that represent major strategic themes: Talent, Economy, and Place. **The Primary Goals, Focus Areas, and Key Initiatives are summarized in the graphic on the following page.** The remainder of this document describes the Key Initiatives in further detail. (Note that the Initiatives and Action Steps are numbered for the purposes of clarity; the order in which items appear does not imply priority.)

OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners will pursue **six Primary Goals..**

1. Raise levels of prosperity
2. Increase educational attainment
3. Attract and retain talented individuals
4. Diversify Spartanburg County’s economy
5. Improve quality of life for residents
6. Reduce racial equity gaps in entrepreneurship and business ownership

...by advancing **15 Key Initiatives** organized into **three Focus Areas:**



## RECOMMENDATIONS OUTSIDE OF THE VISION PLAN 2.0 FRAMEWORK

The OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 establishes the strategic priorities that OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners will advance in the next five years. It incorporates a blend of ongoing efforts and new ideas. This is by design, as developing and implementing a strategic plan of this nature can be likened to “jumping on a moving train.”

There are also many important efforts and issues that fall outside the scope of the Vision Plan 2.0. Input from the Steering Committee, OneSpartanburg, Inc. leadership, and key stakeholders from partner organizations revealed a strong preference for a **focused economic development strategy consisting of a limited number of high-impact programs and investments**. Additionally, the Vision Plan 2.0 must consist of actionable recommendations that can be advanced primarily by OneSpartanburg, Inc. and/or its key public and private partners. The 15 Key Initiatives of the Vision Plan 2.0 have been carefully selected to meet these requirements. Ultimately, the Vision Plan 2.0 is intended to complement the many other strategic plans and initiatives that will help make Spartanburg County a more prosperous and successful place.

Before proceeding, it is important to call attention to two important issues: educational opportunities for adults who have never attended college and transportation alternatives for individuals who do not have access to and/or do not wish to drive a car. **These issues are not included among the 15 Key Initiatives but were identified as important competitive considerations for Spartanburg County by members of the Steering Committee.**

**Adult education** is a component of Spartanburg County’s “talent pipeline” – the many organizations, institutions, and services that support educational attainment and workforce development for people of all ages. The Vision Plan 2.0 focuses on a limited set of issues with respect to talent, namely:

- Reducing financial barriers to college for prospective students
- Reversing the decline in the proportion of high school graduates enrolling in college
- Encouraging individuals who have completed some college to finish degrees

These issues are included in the Vision Plan 2.0 for several reasons. First and foremost, they emerged from research and input as top competitive priorities for Spartanburg County as it seeks to strengthen its workforce and raise standards of living for residents. Second, they are areas in which OneSpartanburg, Inc. is well-positioned to play an important role as a lead implementer or supporting partner. They are also areas where strategic action can lead to significant near-term gains in workforce strength and individual outcomes.

While not directly represented in the Vision Plan 2.0, it is nevertheless crucial that the entirety of Spartanburg County’s talent pipeline is strong and well-connected. The Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM) is ideally positioned to coordinate this work. SAM brings together a wide variety of partners in service of improving

economic mobility through academic achievement. Many of these partners (e.g., the Adult Learning Center) offer programs and services to help adults who have never attended college further their education.

**Suggested action: OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners should continue to support the work of SAM and relevant program providers to create a strong talent pipeline that supports adult education and lifelong learning.**

**Transportation** emerged as a significant competitive challenge during research and input. As discussed in the Competitive Assessment, the vast majority of workers in Spartanburg County commute to work via car, but more than 6,700 households did not have access to a vehicle according to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Many input participants – including representatives from local employers – said a lack of reliable transportation to work represents a major barrier to workforce participation for Spartanburg County residents.

Several aspects of the Vision Plan 2.0 support transportation alternatives for individuals who do not have access to or do not wish to use a car. These include improvements to bicycle, pedestrian, and accessibility infrastructure and co-locating residential, employment, and retail/services in Downtown Spartanburg. But stakeholders said there is a need to go further in helping Spartanburg County residents access employment opportunities without using a car. Given Spartanburg County’s land use patterns and the high capital and operating costs of fixed-route transit, this need cannot be quickly met with a comprehensive public transportation system. Instead, OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners are pursuing a pilot “Commute with Enterprise” program that will provide carpool and/or vanpool services to help individuals access jobs. While this program is not a Key Initiative in the Vision Plan 2.0, it is worth pursuing.

**Suggested action: OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners should continue to pursue the Commute with Enterprise pilot program – monitoring its performance and potential to scale – in support of a stronger workforce and improved economic opportunities for Spartanburg County residents.**

# 1. COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

**Objective:** Develop and deploy resources to guarantee college tuition and funding for Spartanburg County residents with demonstrated financial need.

In 2008, the then Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce created a task force to examine educational attainment in the community. The group's final report began with the following:

*"Spartanburg County faces a crisis. It is serious. The Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce has concluded that this crisis is the number one limitation on the future of the County's economic development capacity ... It is a crisis in educational attainment."*

The task force identified 10 recommendations to address this crisis, one of which was "The Spartanburg County Compact." This proposal was designed to ensure that all high school graduates in Spartanburg County who had met certain conditions and demonstrated financial need would be guaranteed tuition and fee funding to attend college at a local institution. Other communities around the country have pursued a similar approach, including Kalamazoo, MI and several cities in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic that participate in the "Say Yes to Education" network.

The 2008 recommendation did not come to fruition, however, and more than a decade later, educational attainment remains one of Spartanburg County's biggest challenges when it comes to raising levels of prosperity, diversifying the local economy, and making progress on a host of other issues ranging from public health to civic engagement.

Stakeholders said the time has come to face this challenge; addressing the financial barriers to college represents the best way to "move the needle." This Key Initiative focuses on developing resources to guarantee tuition and fees to residents in Spartanburg County with financial need. At full capacity, financial assistance would ideally be available to both recent graduates of Spartanburg County high schools and adults who have completed some college credits but have not earned an associate's or bachelor's degree.

This Key Initiative is bold and resource intensive. Given the costs involved, it is prudent to pursue a multi-pronged approach. This will entail pursuing various types of short- and long-term federal funding, taking full advantage of state workforce scholarships, and seeking philanthropic gifts to endow a scholarship fund.

Importantly, this Key Initiative does not have to be an "all or nothing" proposition. While the long-term goal is to ensure that every student with financial need does not pay tuition or fees, the program can be scaled up from the current offerings, reaching a larger percentage of the eligible population over time.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Convene key funding partners to design programming

- Empanel a temporary working group consisting of SAM, OneSpartanburg, Inc., key employers, higher education institutions, PK-12 school systems, and philanthropic organizations
- Charge the temporary working group with vetting existing programs such as the “Compact” model, Say Yes to Education, and other potential program-design solutions
- Task the group with devising program parameters and eligibility requirements, including sequencing of the phased rollout described in Action Step 5

**BEST PRACTICE #1:** The Kalamazoo Promise (Kalamazoo, MI)

### 2. Advocate for public support of higher education

- Continue to work with all relevant partners at the state level to support funding for higher education
- Identify and secure funding streams from pandemic-related stimulus programs to support near-term tuition and fee reductions

### 3. Fully leverage the Workforce Scholarships for the Future pilot program

- Develop expertise in the program and directly connect prospective students to opportunities via recommended programming in Key Initiatives #2 and #3

### 4. Develop the Spartanburg Compact Scholarship Fund

- With the temporary working group, determine financial need and parameters for a scholarship fund aimed at reducing or eliminating tuition and mandatory fees for Spartanburg County residents
- Pursue local and nationally competitive grants and gifts to develop and sustain the fund

### 5. Initiate a phased rollout of financial assistance that prioritizes equity

- With the long-term goal of providing funding for all eligible residents, begin a phased rollout of financial assistance as established in Action Step 1
- Could begin by providing awards for certificates and two-year degrees followed by expansion into four-year degrees
- Through Initiatives #2 and #3, target initial outreach to prospective students with the highest needs, prioritizing demographic and geographic equity

**BEST PRACTICE #2:** The Greenwood Promise (Greenwood County, SC)

## 2. COLLEGE & CAREER CONNECTIONS

**Objective:** Connect every high school student to a postsecondary degree or training program or a career-track job within one year of graduation.

The ultimate goal of any economic development initiative is to raise standards of living and improve quality of life for residents. For most individuals, this means having access to employment that can provide self-sustaining wages and opportunities for advancement. The vast majority of these jobs require at least some postsecondary education, extensive on-the-job training through an internship or apprenticeship, or both. This Key Initiative focuses on connecting Spartanburg County's high school graduates to opportunities for college or high-quality, career-track employment in an occupation that does not require a degree.

While stakeholders identified many ways in which Spartanburg County's "talent pipeline" can be improved, it makes sense for OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners to focus on this aspect because it can have a positive near-term impact on workforce availability and help the community's youngest adults get off to a promising start at the outset of their careers.

Research and input also revealed that this is a major area of need. Data from SAM indicate that the proportion of high school graduates enrolling in school within one year of graduation has been declining steadily over the years. While educators said these trends have been observed in many other places (as things like a strong economy can be inversely correlated with enrollment), this is nonetheless a concerning trend for a community seeking to raise levels of educational attainment. At the same time, stakeholders in fields such as advanced manufacturing or the skilled trades report a difficulty in finding workers interested in receiving on-the-job training and/or enrolling in apprenticeship programs.

These findings suggest a need to design diverse programming that engages high school students and recent graduates to help connect them with opportunities that can lead to a lifetime of benefits. One aspect of this is financial. While Key Initiative #1 seeks to grow the pool of financial assistance available, a critical component of this Key Initiative is ensuring that prospective college students are taking full advantage of various forms of assistance that are already available. This work is complemented by a range of programs to help individuals who are at high risk of struggling to transition to college successfully make the leap.

It also involves working with employers in the trades, advanced manufacturing, etc. to identify career track positions and better position these opportunities to students and recent graduates who are not interested in attending college.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Leverage existing college and career programming in PK-12 schools

- Work with SAM, higher education institutions, PK-12 schools, and employers to evaluate existing college and career program and identify potential improvements
- Continue to seek opportunities for partnership between PK-12 schools, businesses, and higher education institutions to promote college and career opportunities to middle and high school students in Spartanburg County

### 2. Enhance efforts to help students and families access federal financial aid

- Through SAM, continue to help students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Work with OneSpartanburg, Inc. and corporate partners to expand efforts into a highly visible, multi-channel outreach campaign modeled after a successful initiative in Austin, TX

**BEST PRACTICE #3:** FAFSA Volunteers (Austin, TX)

### 3. Create a “Bridges to Success” program to help at-risk students transition to college

- With SAM, Spartanburg Community College, USC Upstate, and other key partners, create a “Bridges to Success” program modeled after similar efforts (e.g., Valencia College in Orlando, FL); risk factors could include first-generation college students, poverty status, etc.
- Develop comprehensive programming before and during college enrollment to help support students as they make the transition from high school to college
- Continue to evaluate the efficacy of the Start Smart pilot program designed to engage soon-to-be and/or recent high school graduates in Spartanburg County with text-based outreach
- Ensure students are connected to all available financial aid opportunities

**BEST PRACTICE #4:** Bridges to Success (Valencia College; Orlando, FL)

### 4. Work with employers and trades to connect students to career-track opportunities

- Work with employers and PK-12 schools to connect students to internships, apprenticeships and/or career-track positions in field such as advanced manufacturing (internship promotion may include both high school students who are unsure about college and students currently enrolled in college)
- Work with employers to offer “signing bonuses” or similar incentives to recent high school graduates who enter a career-track job and complete a minimum period of service

### 3. ADULT DEGREE COMPLETIONS

**Objective:** Launch the “Unfinished Business” program to re-engage adults who have completed some college but do not have a degree.

As Spartanburg County seeks to raise levels of educational attainment and increase its economic competitiveness, the community’s relatively large proportion of adults who have attended some college but have not earned a degree stands out as both a challenge and an opportunity. Helping a substantial number of these individuals “re-engage” with higher education opportunities has the potential to provide a major near-term boost to the community’s workforce competitiveness.

According to Census estimates from 2019, approximately 22 percent of adults aged 25 and over fall into the “some college, no degree” category compared to a national average of 20 percent. Numerically, this works out to nearly 48,000 Spartanburg County residents who could be potential participants in a program to boost adult educational attainment.

The first OneSpartanburg Vision Plan acknowledged this issue, recommending an “upskilling initiative” targeted toward younger adults who lacked college degrees. As OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners began implementation of the Vision Plan, this recommendation began to evolve. Stakeholders engaged The Graduate! Network – a nonprofit organization that evolved out Graduate! Philadelphia, a successful effort that is similar in nature to this Key Initiative – for advice on program design.

Ultimately, OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners have laid the groundwork for an initiative tentatively titled “Unfinished Business.” This Key Initiative is focused on refining and launching the Unfinished Business campaign to encourage and incentivize adults who have completed some college but do not have a degree to further their education. This effort embraces a multi-generation focus by expanding outreach efforts to a wide variety of adults in the community.

A substantial portion of this Key Initiative will entail designing outreach efforts to directly connect adults to higher education opportunities. Financial assistance will also be a crucial aspect of the program. In addition to the expanded financial assistance proposed in Key Initiative #1, this effort entails working with companies to encourage scholarships, consistent scheduling, paid time off, and other assistance and incentives for employees pursuing degrees.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Ensure funding for prospective program participants is available

- Through Key Initiative #1, ensure that tuition and fee support is available for adults who wish to continue their college education

### 2. Develop staff and programmatic capacity to advance the Unfinished Business initiative

- Work with public and private partners to identify funding to support the staff, administrative, and outreach expenses associated with the initiative
- Evaluate the need to engage an external partner for program expertise

**BEST PRACTICE #5:** Recapture Your Dream (Corpus Christi, TX)

### 3. Launch a comprehensive outreach and marketing campaign

- Work with higher education institutions and other partners to identify individuals who have completed some college credits but do not have a degree; develop strategies to contact these individuals directly with information about the Unfinished Business initiative
- Launch a multi-channel marketing campaign to promote the Unfinished Business program and the availability of financial assistance
- Utilize Census and other to target outreach messages to areas with high proportions of individuals with some college, no degree; prioritize racial and geographic equity whenever possible
- Designate diverse program ambassadors to promote opportunities to a wide variety of residents

### 4. Partner with local employers to encourage program participation

Encourage major companies to offer benefits to employees wishing to complete degrees, including scholarships (if unavailable through Key Initiative #1), consistent scheduling to allow for class attendance, paid time off, and other forms of assistance

## 4. CHILDCARE & EARLY EDUCATION

**Objective:** Ensure that young children in Spartanburg County have access to high-quality childcare and pre-kindergarten programs while lessening a key burden to workforce participation for parents and guardians.

A consistent theme from stakeholder engagement is that childcare is a major challenge in Spartanburg County. Input participants said that while the pandemic certainly exacerbated this issue, the underlying conditions were in place prior to any COVID-related disruptions. This viewpoint is supported by data. For instance, according to JobsEQ, the “Child Day Care Services” business subsector is approximately 25 percent less concentrated locally relative to the national average.

Stakeholders said the childcare challenge has several dimensions. For some families, childcare is prohibitively expensive. But input participants said that even households with sufficient income to easily cover costs are struggling to find available slots at daycares and preschools. Stakeholders also said they would like to see more pre-kindergarten slots along with complementary services like before- and after-school care.

Input participants said the lack of childcare has several negative consequences. Many families are facing financial hardships or strains on their time resulting from enrolling their children in care and preschool programs that are far from their home or jobs. Stakeholders also said that many parents and guardians are having trouble entering or staying in the workforce due to a lack of available childcare, a factor that could be contributing to Spartanburg County’s low prime-age workforce participation rates. Overall, childcare and early childhood education have a broad impact on talent in Spartanburg County – from workforce participation to talent attraction to the long-term benefits that high-quality early childhood education can provide to learners.

This Key Initiative seeks to address challenges related to childcare and early childhood education. Pre-kindergarten and related programs are expensive propositions, and few communities in the United States offer truly “universal pre-K.” That said, there is an opportunity to seek pre-kindergarten expansion through advocacy efforts.

Another relatively unexplored area is actively promoting and incentivizing private-sector childcare activity. This entails engaging national and regional providers to promote the Spartanburg County market, incentivizing and assisting smaller local providers with launching or expanding operations, and working with major companies to identify opportunities for offering childcare as an employee benefit.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Assess market conditions and barriers to entry

- Convene a task force of stakeholders to better understand opportunities and challenges in the childcare and private preschool markets in Spartanburg County; engage current and prospective childcare providers, major employers, and other individuals with subject matter expertise
- Ensure that the task force includes strong representation from women with children
- Identify “childcare deserts” where the number of childcare slots are far below need

### 2. Advocate for expanded funding of pre-kindergarten slots and supportive programs

- Work with public partners at the state and local level to identify opportunities to expand the number of pre-kindergarten slots and supportive services such as before- and after-school care

### 3. Encourage regional and national childcare providers to enter the local market

- Through OneSpartanburg, Inc., develop relationships with regional and national childcare providers and preschools to promote the Spartanburg County market

### 4. Incentivize the creation of additional childcare and private preschool slots

- Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a dedicated “deal-closing fund” or similar economic development incentives for major childcare and preschool operations
- Work with local governments to establish a grant fund to assist local providers with licensing and training requirements and other startup or expansion costs

### BEST PRACTICE #6: Duluth 1200 Fund (Duluth, MN)

### 5. Explore pilot programs for employer-provided or pooled childcare

- Through OneSpartanburg, Inc., assess interest among major employers in opportunities to provide childcare as an employee benefit
- Vet potential options such as “pre-reserved” slots to encourage new private providers to enter the market and pooled or on-site childcare programs

## 5. TALENT MARKETING & ATTRACTION

**Objective:** Enhance the “See Yourself in Spartanburg” talent marketing campaign and related programs to attract talented individuals to Spartanburg County.

For communities with relatively low levels of educational attainment but strong net in-migration, talent attraction and marketing can be an important tool. By targeting messages to educated and skilled individuals who may be inclined to relocate, communities can make progress toward a stronger workforce and economy.

Spartanburg County falls into this category. Accordingly, talent attraction was a key component of the first OneSpartanburg Vision Plan. In recent years, OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners have developed the “See Yourself in Spartanburg” (SYIS) marketing campaign, which has included a dedicated website, talent attraction guide, and other components. This Key Initiative entails taking the SYIS campaign to the next level and complementing marketing activities with a targeted talent incentive program.

Talent attraction can be expensive, and the competition is fierce. Given these factors, it is critical that campaigns and messages be well-targeted. Research reveals that the largest single source of in-migrants to Spartanburg County is the Upstate region – Greenville County in particular. This suggests a marketing campaign targeted toward educated and skilled individuals in the Upstate could be successful (and given the size of the market, also likely less costly relative to broader approaches).

Targeting messages toward individuals with specific degrees or work experience can also be an efficient approach. Accordingly, this Key Initiative recommends conducting a “talent gap analysis” to determine what occupations will be in demand – and in what quantities. This analysis can help OneSpartanburg, Inc. work with employers to develop customized talent marketing campaigns in order to assist with recruitment efforts.

As with all marketing activities, metrics are crucial. OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners should monitor and assess the effectiveness of campaigns, including the number of impressions for paid and social media, click conversions, and – when relevant – the identification and hiring of candidates.

Finally, communities around the country have recently launched talent incentive programs to entice individuals to relocate. While the size and scope of these efforts vary, many are found in communities that are struggling with aging populations and persistent out-migration – neither of which is a competitive concern locally. Spartanburg County could instead design a more targeted incentive program (informed by the gap analysis and employer perspectives) to recruit talent that cannot be easily recruited from within the Upstate region.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Pursue a “talent gap analysis” to identify specific needs

- Commission an analysis of local industry sector and occupation trends and gather input from local employers to identify and quantify future employment needs

### 2. Continue to market to highly educated intraregional and “boomerang” talent

- Advance ongoing aspects of the See Yourself in Spartanburg campaign, including marketing within the Upstate region and targeted outreach to prospective “boomerang” talent, i.e., individuals with a pre-existing connection to Spartanburg County
- Develop metrics to track success and evaluate the efficacy of the program

### 3. Expand marketing campaign to attract talented professionals from beyond the Upstate

- Based on the findings of the gap analysis and input from local corporations, promote Spartanburg County in a targeted manner to out-of-market professionals in in-demand career fields
- Evaluate the feasibility of organizing outbound marketing trips to job fairs in potential feeder markets (could be modeled after a similar effort in Dallas, TX)
- Work with employers to develop customized solutions for talent recruitment

### 4. Advance a highly targeted and differentiated talent incentive pilot program

- Through OneSpartanburg, Inc., convene partners from local governments and the business community to develop parameters for a talent incentive program to differentiate Spartanburg County in a crowded marketplace; leverage findings from the talent gap analysis to inform design
- Establish desired return on investment for the incentive program such as the desired length of stay and level of engagement within the community for program participants

**BEST PRACTICE #7:** Remote Shoals (Muscle Shoals region, AL)

### 5. Influence internal and external perceptions of Spartanburg County

- Continue internal marketing efforts that boost community pride
- Continue external marketing and communications efforts that highlight Spartanburg County’s differentiators and successes
- Engage in search engine optimization (SEO) to improve search results for key searches related to the Spartanburg community

## 6. MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS

**Objective:** Expand Spartanburg County’s competitive advantage in manufacturing and logistics by optimizing infrastructure and sites and staying on top of emerging trends.

As previously discussed, for most individuals and households, high-quality employment is the key to raised standards of living and improved quality of life. In Spartanburg County, two business sectors stand out as being crucial to providing these opportunities: manufacturing and logistics.

Together, the sectors employed nearly 44,000 individuals as of the second quarter of 2021. In the preceding five years, they added nearly 8,400 jobs, which accounted for more than half of the net job growth in Spartanburg County. The growth rates for both sectors also far outpaced the national averages.

This strength is reflective of the fact that Spartanburg County has an asset base for manufacturing and logistics that few other communities can match. Its strong and growing workforce, prime location, and excellent connectivity to transportation networks will likely lead to continued opportunities in the future.

That said, the community’s competitive edge in manufacturing and logistics should not be taken for granted. Stakeholder engagement revealed several areas in which to act strategically to support continued growth in these sectors. There is also the opportunity to capitalize on emerging trends to sustain and even expand the community’s attractiveness into the future.

One key issue is ensuring that manufacturing and logistics can continue to thrive as the region adds residents and developable land becomes less available. The ongoing Growth Potential Study pursued by OneSpartanburg, Inc. along with information gathered through business retention and expansion (BRE) activities can help determine infrastructure needs that will be supportive of continued manufacturing and logistics expansion as the community grows.

The Growth Potential Study can also help clarify where certain land uses are likely to locate. This can help inform the expanded use of performance-based zoning – already successfully used in some areas of Spartanburg County – to preserve prime industrial sites while also benefitting the community’s housing market (see Key Initiative #15).

OneSpartanburg, Inc. and its partners can also act to ensure the community stays on top of changing market conditions and industry requirements. One current opportunity is the opportunity to assist employers with supply chain resiliency and “reshoring” key inputs and processes – topics that moved to the forefront during the global pandemic.

## ACTION STEPS

1. **Continue to operate a best-in-class business retention and expansion (BRE) program**
  - Continue regular outreach and existing business care to manufacturing and logistics firms.
2. **Leverage the Growth Potential Study and BRE findings to identify infrastructure needs**
  - Identify needed road and utility infrastructure to ensure that Spartanburg County will remain a highly competitive location for manufacturing and logistics operations as the community continues to grow
3. **Encourage expanded use of performance-based zoning to preserve high-quality sites**
  - Build upon the success of performance-based zoning to encourage industrial development in prime areas identified through the Growth Potential Study and local knowledge
  - Utilize performance-based zoning to balance the preservation of industrial land with housing needs discussed in Key Initiative #15
4. **Assist local firms with supply-chain resiliency and potential “reshoring”**
  - Reach out to local firms to identify opportunities to shorten supply chains
  - Build data-supported messaging and tactics for sectors most likely to benefit from sourcing inputs from North America and integrate this approach into business attraction efforts

**BEST PRACTICE #8:** Reshoring Initiative (Nationwide)

5. **Continue to evaluate emerging trends and opportunities**
  - Continue to evaluate emerging trends and technologies in manufacturing and logistics, particularly those that could impact Spartanburg County’s largest employers and subsectors, and develop proactive response to potential opportunities and threats

## 7. CORPORATE & KNOWLEDGE-BASED JOBS

**Objective:** Attract, retain, and develop jobs in corporate and knowledge-based sectors to diversify Spartanburg County’s economy.

One of the most prominent themes to emerge from input is that stakeholders in Spartanburg County desire a more diverse local economy – specifically more corporate and knowledge-based jobs. These jobs can be found in operations such as corporate headquarters, research and development facilities, professional services offices, business operations, and so on. These sectors typically “export” services to other markets, thereby bringing new wealth into a community. They can help balance the community’s other primary export strengths related to the production and movement of goods.

The most important location determinant for corporate and knowledge-based jobs is workforce, i.e., the presence of a large labor pool of educated and skilled individuals. To become more broadly competitive for corporate and knowledge-based jobs, Spartanburg County must raise levels of educational attainment.

But the community can also take other steps to improve its “product” for corporate and knowledge-based jobs and seek out near-term opportunities to diversify its economy. One approach to doing so involves “diversifying through strength.” That is, seeking to grow corporate and knowledge-based employment that is connected to the community’s manufacturing and logistics sectors. This entails prioritizing manufacturing and logistics locations and expansions that include corporate or knowledge-based functions and recruiting specialized firms that wish to co-locate with these sectors (e.g., logistics consulting or software developers).

Stakeholders also desire growth in corporate and knowledge-based sectors that are not directly connected to manufacturing and logistics, which can help the local economy be more sustainable in the event of economic downturns. One major barrier to growth in this area is a lack of Class A office space locally.

This challenge is exacerbated by the rise of remote work that the pandemic accelerated. In the short term, this has put downward pressure on demand and costs in more expensive markets, cutting into a potential competitive advantage for Spartanburg County. There is also a strong possibility that aggregate demand for office space will remain significantly below the pre-pandemic baseline in the long run, making development challenged. That said, there still could be opportunities for development of new Class A space that the community can pursue.

Economic development professionals also noted that the community could be well-positioned to attract smaller, established firms with growth potential from nearby major metro areas in the short- and medium-term timelines. The recent announcement that Agape Care Group will locate 76 jobs at its new corporate in the Montgomery Building in Downtown Spartanburg offers evidence to support this approach.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Advocate for incentives that support corporate and knowledge-based job creation

- Continue to work at the state and local levels to align incentives with desired opportunities for economic diversification in Spartanburg County.

### 2. Proactively seek opportunities to “diversify through strength”

- Through BRE activities and local relationships, engage manufacturing and logistics firms that may be interested in co-locating corporate or knowledge-based functions in Spartanburg County
- Work with regional and state economic development partners to participate in outbound marketing events (e.g., international missions) that can establish connections with firms interested in co-locating manufacturing or logistics facilities with headquarter operations in Spartanburg County

**BEST PRACTICE #9:** Air Capital of the World (Greater Wichita, KS)

### 3. Support the development of Class A office space as market conditions allow

- Monitor market trends locally, nationally, and in key target markets (e.g., Atlanta and Charlotte) to determine likely climate for new office product in Spartanburg County; maintain an ongoing dialogue with local and regional developers
- Focus on building a “critical mass” of office product in Downtown Spartanburg and ensure that incentives are in place as needed

### 4. Launch a highly targeted corporate and knowledge-based recruitment program

- In consultation with site selection professionals, engage smaller knowledge-based firms with growth potential that may be inclined to leave high-cost markets in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic

## 8. HIGH-GROWTH STARTUPS

**Objective:** Convene innovative entrepreneurs, companies, and institutional partners to launch and scale “homegrown” companies with high growth potential.

In recent decades, communities around the country have expanded their economic development programs to support strong entrepreneurial ecosystems and new business formation. But not all entrepreneurs and startups are alike. A select few have highly marketable ideas and/or significant capacity for innovation that can translate into high-growth businesses.

High-growth firms may be in traditional “tech” fields such as IT and software development, or they could be predicated on an innovative new service, product line, or process that advances the state of the art or fills a niche in some other business sector. Regardless of sector, however, they have a highly specialized set of needs, including top talent, access to angel investors and venture capital, market intelligence, and so on.

Because of these needs, the most dynamic startup scenes tend to form and cluster in markets with major research universities and/or significant capital networks. Neither of these assets is present in Spartanburg County. That said, stakeholders said the community is home to ambitious entrepreneurs and innovative corporations. This Key Initiative focuses on bringing these partners together in support of launching and scaling high-growth companies in Spartanburg County.

Experience has shown that efforts to promote high-growth startups must not be driven from the “top down” by economic development organization (EDO) such as OneSpartanburg, inc. Instead, successful efforts involve entrepreneurs and innovative partners working together in a more independent, nimble fashion to identify challenges, opportunities, and solutions.

Accordingly, this initiative is predicated on forming an active network of entrepreneurs and innovative companies to plot the course ahead. Eventually, this group could be broadened to include Spartanburg County’s colleges and universities that can support entrepreneurship through academic programming and other means. The initial role for established organizations such as OneSpartanburg, Inc. would be as a “convener” to help kickstart these activities and as a partner providing administrative support.

Additionally, there is an emerging trend of experienced investors seeking to promote startup activity around highly developed economic clusters – e.g., advanced materials or health sciences – in small- and mid-sized metro areas. Partners in Spartanburg County could seek out and pursue such investment and expertise to promote additional startup activity locally (potentially centered on the region’s thriving logistics sector).

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Establish an active network of innovative entrepreneurs, startups, and corporations

- Convene entrepreneurs, startups, and large employers with capacity for innovation to develop entrepreneur-driven programming focused on high-growth business formation and expansion
- Seek diverse and inclusive representation among the group membership.
- The network could be modeled on an existing “tech councils” in communities around the country, though the specific mission, structure, resourcing, and branding of the group should be developed and refined by its members and potential investors.

**BEST PRACTICE #10:** CHATECH (Chattanooga, TN)

### 2. Encourage the network to design programming and identify needed investments

- Evaluate the need and desirability of co-locating network participants and programming in a shared physical space for entrepreneurs and startups
- Evaluate the need for an FTE staff position to support high-growth startup and innovation activity

### 3. Engage higher education institutions in supporting entrepreneurship

- With the network well established, evaluate the potential to engage Spartanburg County’s higher education institutions with the network to coordinate curriculum related to entrepreneurship and related programming

### 4. Seek external partners to expand Spartanburg County’s capacity for innovation

- Through OneSpartanburg, Inc. and corporate partners, seek external partners such as investor groups or networks that may be interested in providing programming expertise, mentoring, and access to capital to startups in Spartanburg County
- Highlight Spartanburg County’s advanced manufacturing and logistics clusters as potential “verticals” for innovation

## 9. SMALL & MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

**Objective:** Build and connect a continuum of support services and technical assistance for small and minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

The preceding Key Initiative focuses on the narrow set of startups that have the potential to translate into high-growth firms. This Key Initiative balances this approach by creating a supportive environment for a much broader range of entrepreneurial and small business activity. While most enterprises will never hire hundreds of employees and realize revenues in the tens or hundreds of millions, small businesses can collectively have a major impact on a community's economic growth and capacity for wealth creation.

Data reveals that Spartanburg County has relatively lower levels of entrepreneurial and small business activity compared to the national average. A proportionally smaller share of the community's employment is concentrated in small firms and new businesses. Levels of self-employment also lag the national average. Self-employed individuals are typically sole proprietors, independent contractors, and individuals with part-time businesses who may eventually incorporate their operations and hire employees.

Stakeholders noted that Spartanburg County had a relatively small Black business community, which can make it difficult for aspiring Black entrepreneurs to connect with potential mentors and access capital. This viewpoint is supported by data; for instance, when adjusting for population, White, non-Hispanic residents own "nonemployer" businesses (e.g., sole proprietorships) at roughly the same rate as the national average while the number of Black-owned nonemployer businesses was nearly 30 percent below average. Accordingly, while there is a need to enhance Spartanburg County's overall entrepreneurial ecosystem and small business support systems, data suggest that the community would benefit from an approach that seeks to help Black and minority residents start and grow businesses.

This Key Initiative focuses on building out a continuum of services to support small and minority business owners and entrepreneurs in Spartanburg County. The primary emphasis is on technical assistance – providing the skills and knowledge that entrepreneurs need to start, sustain, and grow businesses. This starts with leveraging existing resources such as the City of Spartanburg's Accelerator programs that are already assisting entrepreneurs and identifying any gaps that need to be filled.

This Key Initiative also seeks to tailor support services and outreach to diverse audiences in order to boost entrepreneurial activity in communities and areas with lower levels of activity and/or that have suffered from disinvestment. These services can then be complemented by new and enhanced physical spaces for small businesses and increased availability of capital through a targeted small business loan fund.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Connect a formal Resource Network of entrepreneurship and small business partners

- Bring together existing partners in Spartanburg County that provide programs or other assistance to small business and entrepreneurs, including the Spartanburg Area Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the City of Spartanburg's Accelerator programs, Spark Center SC, colleges and universities, and so on
- Inventory existing services to seek alignment and identify programmatic gaps
- Utilize OneSpartanburg, Inc. marketing capacity to further awareness of resources

### 2. Provide customized services and support to grow minority businesses

- Through the Resource Network, align and expand programming to support minority businesses with access to capital, technical expertise, connections to local networks and customers, etc.
- Seek out mentors with strong network connections and trust to raise awareness organically within specific neighborhoods and/or communities

**BEST PRACTICE #11:** The 800 Initiative (Memphis, TN)

### 3. Connect entrepreneurs and small businesses to local customers

- Provide technical assistance to help local firms navigate government contracting and large institutional procurement processes
- Evaluate opportunities to connect local sellers and buyers within a given industry vertical or supply chain (e.g., helping local food service providers access local agricultural products)

### 4. Increase the supply of co-working and “micro-retail” spaces in Downtown Spartanburg

- Through OneSpartanburg, Inc., work with private developers and property owners to increase the supply of co-working spaces, smaller-scale storefronts, and “micro-retail” spaces in Downtown Spartanburg

### 5. Develop a targeted small business loan fund to help small businesses access capital

- Work with public and private partners to design and resource a self-replenishing revolving loan fund to provide small-scale loans to businesses and entrepreneurs with solid business plans but difficulty accessing traditional capital
- Work with OneSpartanburg, Inc. and public sector partners to support small businesses making larger potential capital investments with economic development incentives

# 10. COUNTYWIDE PLACEMAKING

**Objective:** Support placemaking enhancements to increase vibrancy and enhance quality of life throughout Spartanburg County.

As discussed in the Competitive Assessment, quality of place is a critical factor in attracting and retaining businesses and talent. Now more than ever, communities must offer aesthetically pleasing environments, a variety of entertainment options and places to socialize, and so on.

Input participants indicated a clear preference for quality of place enhancements throughout Spartanburg County. This Key Initiative seeks to support a variety of public, private, and community-driven “placemaking” enhancements around the community.

In its simplest form, placemaking can be defined as “the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in. Placemaking is a process. It is a means to an end: the creation of Quality Places.” It is also often a “method of improving a location over a long period of time through many separate small projects or activities.”<sup>1</sup>

An incremental approach that can be advanced over time in a variety of ways is an ideal approach for a community as large and varied as Spartanburg County. This Key Initiative includes a variety of potential place-based improvements for local stakeholders to pursue.

These include public-sector driven improvements to streetscapes, parks, and other public goods. The initiative also entails support for private investments into amenities such as restaurants, retail, and other gathering places and entertainment options. It also includes activities that can be driven by neighborhood groups, such as murals, public art – ideally supported by a grant program to cover costs of incremental improvements.

This approach envisions pursuing these improvements throughout the whole of Spartanburg County (with the exception of Downtown Spartanburg which is covered in Key Initiative #12). Key geographic areas on which to focus would be smaller downtowns and commercial corridors, neighborhood centers, and other gathering places. Improvements should be made with geographic and racial equity in mind, with an emphasis on driving improvements in areas that have suffered from disinvestment. Additionally, these improvements can be done in combination with corridor redevelopment and outdoor amenity improvements described in Key Initiatives #11 and #14.

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<sup>1</sup> Steuteville, Robert. “Four types of placemaking.” *Public Square; Congress for the New Urbanism*. October 10, 2014. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/four-types-placemaking>

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Create a resident-driven placemaking program to drive small-scale improvements

- Engage an external partner such as the Better Block Program to provide technical assistance and a “toolkit” for neighborhood groups, business associations, and other interested groups to advance local placemaking efforts

### 2. Continue and expand the Community Impact Grant program

- Continue the Keep OneSpartanburg Beautiful program of “mini-grants” to fund small-scale beautification projects
- Expand the scope of the program to support the activation of retail storefronts in historic downtowns and other walkable/accessible commercial areas throughout Spartanburg County; the program would ideally pair artists with property owners to enliven the storefront of an existing business or vacant property, with grant funds covering material costs and a stipend to the artist
- Prioritize grants to disinvested areas and/or areas that have received technical assistance through the placemaking program discussed in the previous Action Step

### 3. Ensure that public sector investments support quality placemaking

- As local government partners make planned investments into roads and streets, public rights-of-way, parks, and other amenities and infrastructure, ensure plans are supportive of placemaking
- Seek opportunities to fund streetscape improvements, park expansions and upgrades, public art, etc.; seek synergies with other Key Initiatives, namely corridor redevelopment and outdoor amenity improvements described in #11 and #14

**BEST PRACTICE #12:** Great Streets Akron (Akron, OH)

### 4. Support business developments that enhance quality of life throughout the community

- Through the Resource Network established in proposed Key Initiative #9, target small business mentoring and financial assistance to promote restaurant and retail development in neighborhood centers and downtowns throughout Spartanburg County, with an emphasis on promoting activities in disinvested areas
- Leverage OneSpartanburg, Inc. staff capacity and expertise to help guide potential larger-scale private sector investments that could positively impact quality of place

# 11. GATEWAYS & CORRIDORS

**Objective:** Create positive impressions and enhance quality of life by beautifying gateways and promoting redevelopment of key corridors and sites.

During the stakeholder engagement process, input participants involved in the activation of the first OneSpartanburg Vision plan identified several strategic initiatives from the first plan that should be continued as part of the 2.0 version. One of these was the beautification of the community’s “gateways” and major transportation corridors.

As the first thing visitors see, gateways and major corridors play an outsized role in shaping external perceptions of a community’s quality of place. Additionally, residents are likely to utilize major corridors when moving around the community in their day-to-day lives. Gateways and corridors that are attractive, vibrant, and well-maintained can create a welcoming environment and boost community pride; gateways and corridors that appear run down or disinvested can have the opposite effect.

Stakeholders in Spartanburg County said the community had made progress on corridor beautification in recent years, including raising initial funds for streetscape improvements along West Main Street, upgrading signage and improving landscaping signage in key areas, expanding code enforcement, and organizing community clean ups. Input participants noted, however, larger gateway and corridor improvements are cost-intensive activities that can take time to properly plan, resource, and implement. Accordingly, these individuals said several aspects of the first Vision Plan related to gateway and corridor enhancements should be continued in the Vision Plan 2.0.

The stakeholder engagement process also revealed a second key theme that is closely intertwined with gateways and corridors – redevelopment. While many gateway and corridor beautification efforts focus primarily on improving the public realm, the condition of private property can have a significant impact on the experiences of visitors and residents.

Stakeholders noted that some stretches of major corridors are lined with vacant, underutilized, or outdated properties. Supporting investment and redevelopment in these areas can help substantially improve quality of place in Spartanburg County. Additionally, stakeholders said there are several opportunities for large-scale redevelopment – the Westgate Mall foremost among them – in key areas of the community that warrant strategic attention.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Continue to pursue gateway and corridor beautification in the public right-of-way

- Continue to pursue aesthetic improvements such as landscaping and public art at key gateways into Spartanburg County and along major corridors including Asheville Highway, Business 85, U.S. Highway 29, and West Main Street
- Convene local partners to develop and submit applications to the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (and potentially other external sources) to advance priority corridor projects, including the conversion of Business 85 to a boulevard
- Corridor improvements would ideally include landscaping, lighting, and sidewalks in all contexts; where appropriate, consideration should also be given to adding protected bicycle infrastructure to allow a wide variety of people to access jobs and amenities via multiple transportation modes
- Ensure that gateway and corridor signage is attractive, well-maintained, and current; inventory existing gateway signage to identify signage that is outdated or in need of replacement and prioritize improvements based on greatest need and visibility
- Work with Keep OneSpartanburg Beautiful, local governments, and other public and private partners to continue activities such as litter pickup, brush removal, etc.

**BEST PRACTICE #13:** Northern Gateway (Pearland, TX)

### 2. Encourage and incentivize redevelopment along key corridors

- Evaluate options to encourage and incentivize the redevelopment of underutilized, outdated, or distressed commercial and residential properties along key corridors to reduce perceptions of blight
- Through Spartanburg County, the City of Spartanburg, and other local government partners, continue to emphasize code enforcement along major corridors throughout the community

### 3. Pursue mixed-use redevelopment of Westgate Mall and other key sites

- Continue to work with all relevant partners on pursuing opportunities for mixed-use redevelopment at the Westgate Mall site and other large properties along major corridors

## 12. NEXT-LEVEL DOWNTOWN SPARTANBURG

**Objective:** Establish Downtown Spartanburg as a nationally renowned downtown district with a walkable, accessible, and mixed-use built environment.

Downtown Spartanburg is a major competitive asset for Spartanburg County as it seeks to grow and diversify its economy, attract and retain talented individuals, and improve quality of life for all residents. As previously discussed, quality of place is an increasingly important consideration in economic development. Many companies and talented individuals prefer to be located within or near built environments that are mixed-use, amenity rich, and walkable and accessible. Downtown Spartanburg stands out locally as the area best suited to provide this type of environment.

Stakeholders understand the importance of Downtown Spartanburg to the overall competitiveness of Spartanburg County. Downtown Spartanburg was a top priority in the OneSpartanburg Vision Plan, and in the intervening years significant new investment and growth has occurred in the district. While some of Downtown Spartanburg's recent momentum may be "organic" and self-sustaining, input participants noted that there are clear opportunities for strategic action that can take Downtown Spartanburg to even greater heights. This Key Initiative focuses on these actions.

One clear opportunity is to leverage the district's ability to accommodate residential, office, and commercial growth. By increasing both the daytime population (in the form of more Class A office space and jobs) and the residential population (through the development of new housing units), Downtown Spartanburg has the potential to become the type of live-work-play environment that few mid-sized communities can match. Increased job and residential density will in turn create more favorable market conditions for new amenities, gathering places, and small and minority business activity.

The Downtown street grid and proximity to surrounding neighborhoods and institutions offers an opportunity to create a walkable, bikeable, and accessible environment that cannot be easily replicated in more car-dependent areas of the community.

Downtown Spartanburg also has entertainment and cultural assets such as Barnet Park, the Chapman Cultural Center, Denny's Plaza, Spartanburg Memorial Auditorium, and numerous smaller private venues could be complemented by a reimagined Morgan Square (see Key Initiative #13), a renovated Carolina Theater, and a potential new meeting space capable of accommodating 800 to 1,000 individuals. The community has an opportunity to pursue and program these assets in a way that would strengthen Downtown Spartanburg as an inclusive gathering place for all residents of Spartanburg County.

# ACTION STEPS

## 1. Ensure an attractive and vibrant Downtown Spartanburg

- Emphasize code enforcement to ensure downtown properties are maintained to a high standard
- Evaluate the feasibility of a city ordinance requiring Downtown property owners to activate vacant downtown storefronts with art installations or other temporary uses after a set amount of time (e.g., six months) without a lease; leverage Community Impact Grant or other monies to support activation

## 2. Pursue developments that increase the residential and daytime populations

- Pursue a mixture of housing products (including workforce housing) and Class A office and retail developments as market conditions allow; address barriers including tax structure and incentives

## 3. Develop a new pedestrian, bicycle, and accessibility master plan

- Consistent with the Spartanburg Comprehensive Plan draft recommendations, plan for complete street solutions and/or traffic calming measures where appropriate (e.g., Church Street)
- Emphasize connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and major employment centers and institutions; work with PAL and other partners to ensure integration into trail networks
- Develop messaging, signage, lighting, etc. to change perceptions about parking in Downtown

## 4. Pursue an integrated approach to event programming at Downtown-area venues

- Work with partners including the Chapman Cultural Center, the City of Spartanburg, and private venue owners to evaluate options for collaboration on event programming
- Evaluate the feasibility of creating a regional-draw music and cultural festival

**BEST PRACTICE #14:** Bragg Jam (Macon, GA)

## 5. Increase inclusiveness and minority business activity

- Advance Spartanburg Comprehensive Plan draft recommendations for increasing inclusiveness and minority business activity in Downtown Spartanburg
- In conjunction with Key Initiative #9, promote small and minority business activity downtown through enhanced support services and new retail development capable of accommodating “micro-retail”

## 6. Evaluate and pursue potential “catalytic” investments

- Evaluate options for creating an 800 to 1,000-person meeting space
- Pursue the redevelopment of the Carolina Theater and Morgan Square

## 13. MORGAN SQUARE REIMAGINED

**Objective:** Leverage the momentum of Morgan Square’s pandemic-era pedestrianization to create a permanent, people-centered space that catalyzes vibrancy and investment in Downtown Spartanburg.

During the stakeholder engagement process, many individuals said they viewed Morgan Square as a “catalyst” that can spur further development and dynamics in Downtown Spartanburg, which in turn will benefit the entire community. This is not a new sentiment. The first OneSpartanburg Vision plan included a recommendation titled, “Make Morgan Square an inviting gathering place through refreshed urban design and programming.”

According to stakeholders, this recommendation was slow to gain traction during implementation until the pandemic forced adaptations that began to change perceptions. To help restaurants and other businesses in the area stay afloat, the City of Spartanburg closed portions of West Main Street to vehicular traffic, creating a “pedestrianized” area with outdoor dining spaces. Stakeholders said these changes “opened eyes” about the possibilities in Morgan Square and created many advocates for the permanent pedestrianization of the area. This is not a unanimous viewpoint, and some business and property owners have voiced opposition to such a move.

In an online survey with 3,422 respondents, however, 69 percent said they were in favor of permanent pedestrianization of Morgan Square. Data from OneSpartanburg, Inc. further points to successful outcomes that have coincided with the pedestrianization effort: foot traffic in the Downtown area increased 17 percent over pre-pandemic baselines and restaurant sales reached record highs. In August 2021, the Spartanburg City Council voted to keep Morgan Square closed to vehicle traffic for an additional 12 months pending a permanent decision in 2022.

This Key Initiative focuses on creating a more vibrant, prosperous, inclusive, and people-centered Morgan Square. It entails advocating for the permanent pedestrianization of the Square. Simply put, there are abundant retail and commercial spaces in Spartanburg County fronted by streets that are open to traffic and/or ample parking. A pedestrianized Morgan Square would be a differentiated gathering space that is people-centered, welcoming, accessible, and safe for all residents of Spartanburg County.

The initiative also involves commissioning a professional redesign of the area to maximize the area’s potential as a gathering and passive recreation space. Finally, it calls for activating the reimagined space with inclusive programs and events (in conjunction with proposed Action Steps in Key Initiative #12) that increase sales for surrounding businesses without disrupting daytime office uses.

## ACTION STEPS

- 1. Clearly define the geography of “Morgan Square” for planning purposes**
  - Work with all public and private stakeholders to clarify the specific “boundaries” of Morgan Square; clearly communicate which areas will be pedestrianized and which areas will be open to vehicular traffic but included in updated urban design plans
  
- 2. Commit to the permanent pedestrianization of Morgan Square**
  - Advocate for the full pedestrianization of Morgan Square to serve as a differentiated public space for the entire community
  
- 3. Commission a world-class reimagining of the public realm in Morgan Square**
  - Engage a highly qualified urban design and/or landscape architecture firm to guide the community through a process to redesign Morgan Square as a people-oriented community gathering space
  - Pursue design solutions that enhance traffic and sales at adjacent properties
  - Consider pairing Morgan Square design work with strategies to enhance walkability and accessibility between Morgan Square and other areas of Downtown, with a particular focus on pursuing traffic calming measures along Church Street (see Key Initiative #12)
  
- 4. Launch inclusive event programming in the reimagined space**
  - As discussed in Key Initiative #12, launch inclusive event programming in the reimagined Morgan Square, ensuring that programming does not conflict with weekday daytime office uses adjacent to the space

## 14. OUTDOOR AMENITIES & IMAGE

**Objective:** Enhance and promote Spartanburg County’s outdoor recreation opportunities to improve quality of life for residents and attract talent and visitors.

A community’s quality of place is not limited to its developed areas. Parks, trails, green and open spaces, and other outdoor amenities contribute significantly to resident well-being and happiness. They also can serve as significant assets for economic development, talent attraction and retention, and travel and tourism.

Input participants said that Spartanburg County has a strong value proposition for individuals who value natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. This Key Initiative focuses on enhancing and leveraging this value proposition.

When discussing outdoor recreation in Spartanburg County, stakeholders frequently cited the The Daniel Morgan Trail System or simply “The Dan,” an urban trail system that could total include 50 miles of multi-use paths upon completion. This vision became much closer to becoming reality in November 2021 thanks to a successful grant application spearheaded by Spartanburg County’s government and PAL. The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the community a \$23.8 million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) grant that will fund nearly 14.6 miles of 10-foot-wide multi-use pathways, a pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Interstate 295, and numerous other improvements.<sup>2</sup>

Stakeholders said they would like to see the community harness this momentum to build out even more proposed trails, ultimately leading to a fully connected system with widespread coverage. Input participants also suggested that there are opportunities to consider the land uses around the existing and planned trail system. In some contexts, this may mean preserving green spaces and natural areas; other areas may be conducive to the kind of trailside commercial and residential development that has fared well in other markets such as the Atlanta BeltLine and Greenville’s Swamp Rabbit Trail. Stakeholders also noted an opportunity to pursue a river outfitter operation to allow a wider variety of individuals to access “blueways.”

Finally, input participants view Spartanburg County’s outdoor amenities as a significant asset for attracting both prospective residents and visitors to the community. This is consistent with findings from research conducted as part of OneSpartanburg, Inc.’s Destination Next Tourism Assessment. Respondents to a survey conducted as a part of that process highlighted “outdoor recreation” as a key asset for generating travel and tourism. While the Tourism Assessment is still under development, OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 will seek to complement and support the strategy to enhance Spartanburg County’s outdoor image.

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<sup>2</sup> Wen, Eva. “Spartanburg County receives \$23.8 million for infrastructure as part of \$1 billion USDOT grant program.” *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*. November 19, 2021.

## ACTION STEPS

### 1. Continue to pursue the full buildout of “The Dan”

- Seek public, private, and philanthropic funds to build upon the momentum of the RAISE grant
- Pursue near-term opportunities for earned media exposure related to the trail expansion

### 2. Seek Opportunities for “trail-oriented development” where appropriate

- Pursue new developments and adaptive re-use strategies along areas of the trail system that travel through intensely developed areas
- Consistent with the 2021 Spartanburg Comprehensive Plan draft recommendations, pursue trail-oriented mixed-use developments along the Union Street Corridor
- Work with communities throughout Spartanburg County to promote smaller-scale trail-oriented development opportunities in smaller communities (similar to trailside retail in Travelers Rest)

**BEST PRACTICE #15:** Lafitte Greenway Guide to Trail-Oriented Development (New Orleans, LA)

### 3. Preserve green spaces and natural areas around Spartanburg County

- Work with partners such as the Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE) to promote green spaces and preservation of natural areas around Spartanburg County
- Where appropriate, seek to pair green space preservation with trail system development to create opportunities for natural recreation

### 4. Pursue a private-sector outfitter for Spartanburg County’s “blueways”

- Work with public and private partners to identify an ideal location for a private-sector river outfitter and identify potential operators and investors

### 5. Integrate Spartanburg County’s outdoor image into talent and tourism marketing

- Ensure that outdoor amenities are highlighted in travel and tourism marketing campaigns
- As the Destination Next Tourism Assessment takes shape, identify ways in which the Assessment and the OneSpartanburg Vision Plan 2.0 can support and complement one another

# 15. DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS

**Objective:** Support and incentivize the development of a wide variety of market-rate and workforce housing to increase competitiveness for jobs and talent.

Spartanburg County has experienced rapid population growth in recent years. But according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the net growth in housing units in the community has not kept up with the next growth in the number of households. Additionally, Zillow estimates that the typical value of a Spartanburg County home increased by more than 50 percent between August 2016 and 2021 after more than a decade of relatively stable prices.

These data points lend support to a major theme to emerge from the stakeholder engagement process: Spartanburg County needs more housing. Input participants said that the community needs a wide variety of new housing products. This includes everything from affordable and workforce units to multifamily product that appeals to young professionals to the executive housing necessary for growth in the knowledge-based and corporate job sectors.

A detailed analysis of housing market conditions is beyond the scope of the Vision Plan 2.0 process. Additionally, the development of new housing is heavily influenced by a wide variety of local, national, and even global forces that are beyond the control of any local community. That said, stakeholders with knowledge of local real estate market conditions said there is a strong case for strategic action to pursue a wide variety of new housing products in Spartanburg County.

Input participants said one major area of need is “executive housing,” or homes at a higher price point that are geared toward the mid- and peak-career professionals that many businesses in Spartanburg County must attract and retain in order to be successful. Stakeholders noted that the community should aspire to encourage as many of these individuals as possible to live in Spartanburg County as opposed to somewhere else in the Upstate region.

Additionally, input participants said there is a significant opportunity to support multi-family housing in Spartanburg County. Stakeholders said there are numerous areas that can accommodate multifamily growth, with Downtown Spartanburg standing out as an especially attractive option. These individuals emphasized that multi-family housing should include both market-rate and workforce units to help expand the housing supply for a wide variety of households. Input participants also emphasized the importance of providing housing and services for unhoused individuals in the community as part of a comprehensive approach to housing.

## ACTION STEPS

- 1. Leverage the Growth Potential Study to determine future housing opportunities and needs**
  - Identify residential growth potential and geographic areas of opportunity for new housing
  - Ensure that the study explores the potential for multi-family and mixed-use development in and around Downtown Spartanburg
  - Continue to support the implementation of performance-based zoning in more areas of Spartanburg County to help incentivize residential development while preserving prime industrial sites to support economic and job growth
- 2. Pursue the development of “executive housing” in Spartanburg County**
  - Engage local, regional, and national homebuilders to pursue opportunities for developing housing and amenities at price points that appeal to top talent needed to achieve widespread economic growth in Spartanburg County
- 3. Support multifamily housing development, particularly in Downtown Spartanburg**
  - With OneSpartanburg, Inc. and local government partners, support the development of multifamily housing product, including both market-rate and workforce units
  - Prioritize multifamily development in Downtown Spartanburg (see Key Initiative #12)

**BEST PRACTICE #16:** REV Birmingham (Birmingham, AL)

- 4. Support recommendations to provide services and housing for unhoused individuals**
  - Support the draft recommendations in the Spartanburg Comprehensive Plan to provide services and housing for individuals experiencing homelessness

# APPENDIX: BEST PRACTICES

## #1 – The Kalamazoo Promise (Kalamazoo, MI)

<https://www.kalamazoopromise.com>

The Kalamazoo Promise is widely regarded as the first truly universal, community-based higher education guarantee. Started in 2005 with gifts from anonymous donors, the Promise guarantees every graduate of the Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) who meet basic eligibility requirements up to four years of tuition and mandatory fees at public colleges and universities in Michigan. The program has inspired many other communities to adopt similar models in recent years. While most of these programs kick in only once federal financial aid has been awarded, the Kalamazoo Promise is a “first dollar scholarship” that is awarded to eligible recipients before any other forms of aid are considered. According to its website, the Kalamazoo Promise is also set up to exist in perpetuity, creating a lasting force for change in the community. As of summer 2021, the Promise has awarded more than \$165 million in scholarships to nearly 8,800 recipients who have earned more than 3,400 postsecondary credentials. The program has also had positive community impacts. For one, it helped to reverse a decades long decline in enrollment in KPS; in the first 10 years of the program, enrollment grew by 24 percent and the district opened its first new schools in nearly 40 years.<sup>3</sup> The Brookings Institute also noted the potential impact of programs like the Kalamazoo Promise on a community’s human capital: “While it is still too soon to draw clear conclusions, early indicators suggest that well-designed Promise programs can address one of the most challenging dynamics in mid-tier communities: the continued exodus of home-grown talent, often after realizing a high-quality higher education at local colleges and universities.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “About the Kalamazoo Promise.” W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. Retrieved from:

“<https://www.upjohn.org/about/research-initiatives/promise-investing-community/about-kalamazoo-promise>”

<sup>4</sup> Miller-Adams, Michelle and Austin, John C. “How Promise programs can help former industrial communities.” *The Brookings Institute*. July 18, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/07/17/how-promise-programs-can-help-former-industrial-communities/>

## #2 – The Greenwood Promise (Greenwood County, SC)

<https://www.greenwoodpromise.com>

The Greenwood Promise is a place-based last-dollar scholarship inspired in part by the Kalamazoo Promise. The Promise seeks to offset the remaining balance of post-secondary tuition and mandatory fees for every high school graduate whose primary residence is in one of three school districts. The Greenwood Promise is notable as an active example of a “promise” program in South Carolina and for its gradual phase-in. While the “dream” of the project is to provide full four-year funding for all students, the program began with a Phase 1 that allows students to obtain a certificate, diploma, or associates degree from Piedmont Technical College (PTC) or another technical college in the state if a major is not available at PTC. The Greenwood Promise is currently in the midst of its Phase 2 campaign, which will seek to cover the costs of Phase 1 plus an additional two years of post-secondary education at Lander University or another state school.

## #3 – FAFSA Volunteers (Austin, TX)

<https://www.austinchamber.com/education-talent/k-12-initiatives>

Austin, Texas invests in high school students to help prepare them for success in college, careers, or the military by assisting them with filling out federal financial aid forms to qualify for student loans. As part of the Austin Chamber’s annual financial aid campaign to help families afford education beyond high school, staff recruit and train volunteers to help students and parents complete the FAFSA and TASFA forms. All volunteer trainings are held virtually. After training, volunteers help families fill out and submit forms at multiple area events.

## #4 – Bridges to Success (Orlando, FL)

<https://valenciacollege.edu/students/bridges-to-success/>

Bridges to Success (BTS), a program of Valencia College in Orlando, assists diverse populations with the post-secondary transition from application to enrollment and graduation. BTS works within the college to provide services and programs of interest and benefit to diverse student populations. As a part of its action plan for minority recruitment and retention, BTS maintains connections with colleges, universities throughout the country, minority churches, other civic organizations, and local ethnic groups. To qualify for BTS, students must be graduates of an Orange or Osceola County high school, have a minimum 2.75 unweighted academic GPA, be a first-generation college student, complete required academic courses, qualify for the federal Pell Grant, and be eligible to receive free and reduced lunch.

## #5 – Recapture Your Dream (Corpus Christi, TX)

[https://coastalcompass.org/recapture-your-dream-yp\\_rand519372/](https://coastalcompass.org/recapture-your-dream-yp_rand519372/)

Recapture Your Dream is a free program providing direct assistance to individuals who enrolled in a college or workforce program but did not graduate. Recapture Your Dream Navigators work with individuals to re-enroll in college or career workforce programs and overcome barriers that can impact degree attainment. Individuals can re-enroll at any college or workforce program in the Coastal Bend including Coastal Bend College, Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend, Del Mar College, Saint Leo University, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, Texas A&M University – Kingsville, University of the Incarnate Word, and other programs and institutions. The program is housed at the Coastal Compass Education and Career Resource Center, one of the few one-stop public education workforce destinations in the country.

## #6 – Duluth 1200 Fund (Duluth, MN)

<https://1200fund.com/>

The Duluth 1200 Fund provides incentive loans for business expansions and relocations within the City of Duluth. Bank participation and business owner equity are both required to be part of the financial package supporting a business's growth. A loan from the Duluth 1200 Fund is intended to address a gap in the financial package, not replace business owner equity contributions or traditional bank lending. The Fund offers Childcare Loan Programs that provide gap financing for licensed Duluth childcare providers who are starting up or expanding within Duluth city limits. Loan amounts range from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. The term of the loan can last up to 17 years.

## #7 – Remote Shoals (Muscle Shoals Area, Alabama)

<https://remoteshoals.com/>

The Remote Shoals program launched in June 2019 with a goal of getting people who work in tech fields to relocate to the Shoals region (Lauderdale and Colbert counties) in Northwest Alabama. The Covid-19 pandemic broadened interest in the program, which recently doubled its allotment of relocation slots due to increased demand as many other communities around the country launched similar programs. While Remote Shoals is focused exclusively on remote and self-employed workers, its primary features could be adapted to support targeted corporate talent attraction efforts. Participants agree to relocate to the Shoals and live there for at least 12 months. During that period, participants can receive up to \$10,000 based on their earned wages, which is paid out over 12 months. Applicants must be at least 18 years old with an annual income of \$52,000 or more. They must be either a full-time employee with a remote employer or work as a freelancer or business owner outside of the Shoals.

## #8 – Reshoring Initiative (national)

<https://reshorenow.org/programs/>

The Reshoring Initiative offers programs to help economic development organizations, trade associations, manufacturing companies, Manufacturing Extension Partnerships, universities, and community colleges bring offshored work to their region or industry and develop a stronger skilled workforce. Programs include:

- The Import Substitution Program (ISP) is an integrated package to help regions replace imports with local production.
- The Supply Chain Gaps Program identifies a list of targeted supply chain gaps and product categories that have no or minimal domestic production, and large volume of imports.
- The Economic Development Program combines resources from the Reshoring Initiative and a top data provider to identify opportunities for products that could be economically reshored.
- The Skilled Workforce Development Program is designed to help communities improve its manufacturing skilled workforce by raising awareness of the benefits of choosing careers in manufacturing.

## #9 – Air Capital of the World (Greater Wichita, KS)

<https://www.aircapitaloftheworld.com/>

As the top ranked metro in America for concentration of manufacturing employment and the hub of a state that delivers 35 percent of all general aviation planes built in the U.S., Greater Wichita seeks to leverage these strengths through a differentiated marketing campaign calling itself the “Air Capital of the World.” Currently, over 450 suppliers feed into the region’s aviation cluster. The Air Capital website promotes Greater Wichita’s heritage of innovation, business climate, location, workforce and talent pipeline, academic institutions, and quality of life assets.

## #10 – CHATECH (Chattanooga, TN)

<https://chatechcouncil.org/>

CHATECH is Chattanooga’s staffed technology council with a mission to connect the Chattanooga technology community to help drive economic growth across the region. The 501c3 non-profit organization provides outreach and educational programs for youth, awards scholarships to college students to help create the region’s next generation of IT professionals, manages peer group programs and leadership forums, collaborates on economic development partnerships, and offers networking opportunity for local technologists. Membership is comprised of 12 major industry sectors and companies of all sizes.

## #11 – The 800 Initiative (Memphis, TN)

<http://the800.org/>

Part of the broader [Memphis Moves](#) minority business development program, The 800 Initiative seeks to grow minority firms' revenue by \$50,000,000 in five years. This will be accomplished through the deliberate investment of assistance, capital, corporate engagement, and other resources. The focus is on minority firms with paid employees, as well as promising minority businesses with no paid employees. There are three phases to the plan: 1) Building Phase (expanded R&D and partner alignment), 2) Growth Stage (enhance promising programs), and 3) Sustainability Stage (institute policy and structural frameworks for success beyond administration).

## #12 – Great Streets Akron (Akron, OH)

<https://www.greatstreetsakron.com/>

Great Streets is a City of Akron initiative aimed at improving 13 of the city's Neighborhood Business Districts by enhancing, growing, and connecting districts and empowering the unique, local culture that makes them neighborhood "hubs." The concept of placemaking is the key approach to planning and urban design efforts driving the initiative. The program's Business Resource Guide provides a starting point to navigating city, county, and state resources as they apply to business development, including a local Matching Façade Grant Program. Efforts also address transportation, public safety, aesthetics, urban design, and public space improvements.

## #13 – Northern Gateway (Pearland, TX)

<https://www.pearlandedc.com/developments/state-hwy-35/>

Strategic planning for this fast-growing Houston-area city identified gateway and streetscape improvements for a key commercial corridor as a catalyst for improving image and sense of place, market appeal, and overall taxable value of the area. A concept plan for the gateway received extensive public comment and led to approval of a \$6.2 million vision for road and streetscape improvements. Completed as part of the project were tree and shrub plantings, irrigation, median concrete demolition, tree wells and trenches, and enhanced pedestrian plazas.

## #14 – Bragg Jam (Macon, GA)

<https://www.braggjam.org/>

What began as a concert to honor two local musicians tragically killed in a car accident has evolved into a full-scaled community arts festival and Macon’s premier music event. Established as a non-profit governed by a volunteer board, Bragg Jam consists of a two-day, multi-venue concert crawl on the last weekend of July. A typical schedule includes 50-plus bands at over ten stages in downtown Macon. Today, Bragg Jam has grown to also include the Second Sunday Concert Series and Arts & Kids Fest.

## #15 – Lafitte Greenway Guide to Trail-Oriented Development (New Orleans, LA)

<https://www.lafittegreenway.org/trod>

The Lafitte Greenway Guide to Trail-Oriented Development provides a comprehensive set of planning and design principles for new development along the Lafitte Greenway. The principles outlined in the report were built on and codified in the City of New Orleans Master Plan for the 21st Century, Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, Lafitte Greenway Master Plan, and Lafitte Corridor Revitalization Plan. Developers, city officials, and community members are encouraged to use the guide in combination with these public documents to ensure successful and responsible development.

## #16 – REV Birmingham (Birmingham, AL)

<http://revbirmingham.org/>

From identifying sites to facilitating incentives to retail leasing assistance, REV helps developers with projects in Birmingham’s downtown and select neighborhoods across the city. REV’s Design & Development Team works with investors, developers, and businesses interested in developing or redeveloping a property navigate the process and better understand the context of their project within the market and the community. REV helps development teams with market data research, site identification, due diligence assistance, permitting and regulatory assistance, and connections to financing and incentives.