



ONE REGION
A GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY

2018 One Region Update

Prepared for the CRDA, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce,
and One Region Executive Committee by Avalanche Consulting

July 5, 2018





Introduction

In May 2016, the Charleston region completed its five-year global competitiveness strategy, One Region. The strategy adopts a holistic view of economic prosperity inclusive of many dynamics not traditionally associated with an economic development plan, such as affordability, mobility, social equity, and talent.

The CRDA and Metro Chamber partnered on the creation of One Region, and almost 900 stakeholders participated in the planning process through an Executive Committee, Advisory Group, interviews, focus groups, and a survey.

One Region established a refreshed vision, which is to “act as a unified region to be a globally competitive place where people and businesses flourish.” Supporting that vision are four core regional values that resonate with all residents of the region, transcending political position or socioeconomic status:

- **Our region values having a strong, resilient economy.**
- **Our region values attainable opportunities for all residents to live, learn, and earn.**
- **Our region values balancing growth with nurturing our unique character.**
- **Our region values being a connected community.**

As the region moves into One Region’s third year of implementation, the vision, values, can goals should remain the same. While One Region’s annual agenda of projects should adapt over time, the vision, values and goals should continue to be the region’s framework for action. The framework is as relevant today as it was in 2016, and should remain relevant for many years to come (even well past the five-year tactical plan included in One Region).

Participation in One Region’s Development

8 Member Executive Committee

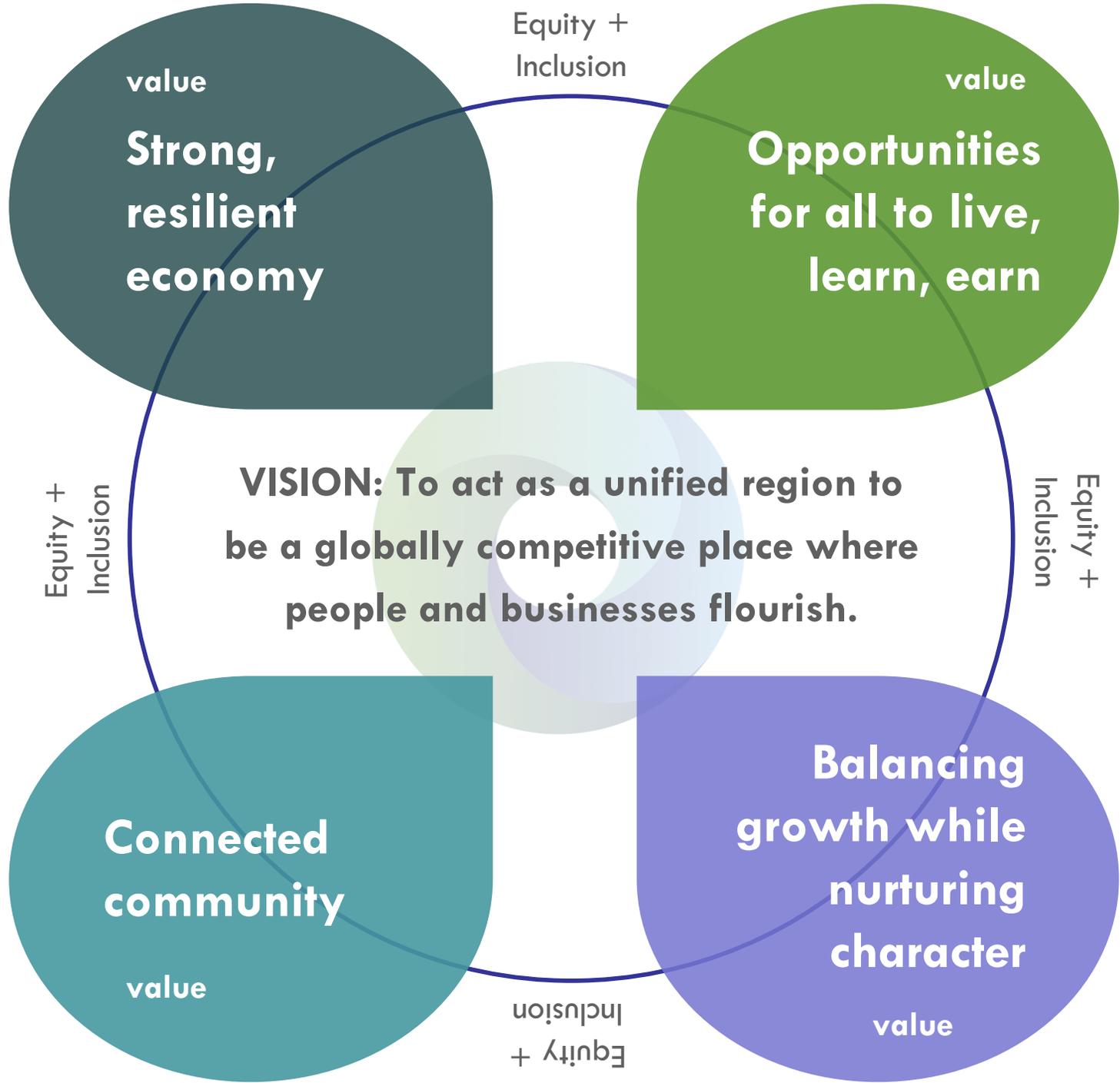
74 Member Advisory Group

520 Stakeholder Survey Responses

263 Interview, Focus Group, Meeting Participants

- 4 Technical Advisory Committee Workshops
- 4 Advisory Group Workshops
- County Tours and 2 County Stakeholder Roundtables
- 3 Diversity and Inclusion Roundtables
- 2 Young Professionals Roundtables
- Education Roundtables
- CRDA Board Workshop
- Charleston Metro Chamber Board Workshop
- Economic Leadership Committee Workshops

One Region Framework



Commitment to Strategy

One Region is the latest in a series of strategies that have guided the region’s approach to economic development. In fact, since the CRDA was established in 1996, the region has invested in strategic plans and have coalesced leaders in their implementation. Strategic planning is part of the region’s culture, and the region has experienced healthy economic growth as a result.

The three five-year strategies that Avalanche Consulting has been involved with, starting with 2005’s Forward Charleston, have focused on creating an increasingly more global, diverse, and vibrant regional economy. Forward Charleston emphasized economic diversification to create higher paying jobs and deepen emerging industry clusters. Launched in 2010, Opportunity Next concentrated on enhancing the region’s position as an internationally competitive destination for businesses and talent. One Region is directed at continuing momentum while caring for the community foundations needed to to have a resilient, sustainable economy long-term.



Source: US Census Bureau; HeadlightData.com



Approach to 2018 Update

Between March and June 2018, Avalanche Consulting conducted a thorough review of news, reports, and other information related to the region's performance over the past 12 months. In addition to several planning calls with CRDA and Chamber liaisons and the One Region Director, Avalanche led 10 interviews with local leaders to gain their perspectives on One Region progress. Finally, a virtual workshop with CRDA's marketing and business development team provided insight into the performance of One Region's recommended target clusters.

While Avalanche was conducting its review and interviews, One Region's Executive Committee and Director facilitated two working group sessions for each value of the strategy. These productive sessions assembled a diverse group of 10-15 leaders whose community involvement directly correlate to the value. During the first round of workshops, the groups inventoried all initiatives currently occurring in the region whose objectives relate to the value at hand. During the second round of workshops, the groups discussed which initiatives could be prioritized and support One Region. In addition, they identified organizations that are / need to be involved, barriers, and opportunities to enhance the initiative. The results of workshops were summarized by One Region's Director and shared with Avalanche to review prior to our June update presentations.

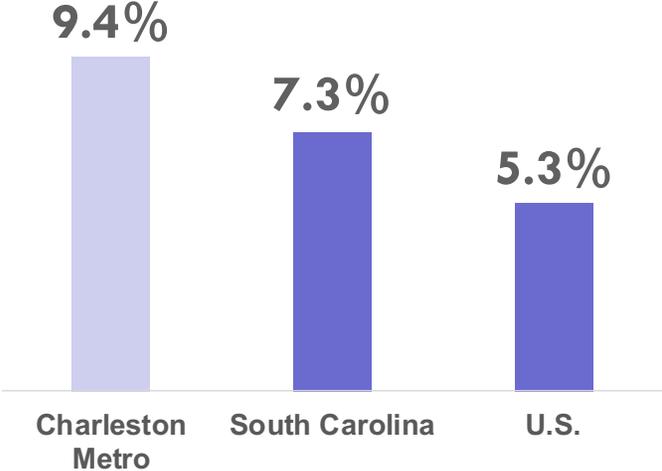
In June, Avalanche traveled to the region to share our One Region update. During the visit, Avalanche presented to the One Region Executive Committee, One Region Stakeholders, CRDA's Executive Committee, Chamber and CRDA communications staff, and CRDA's business development and marketing team members.



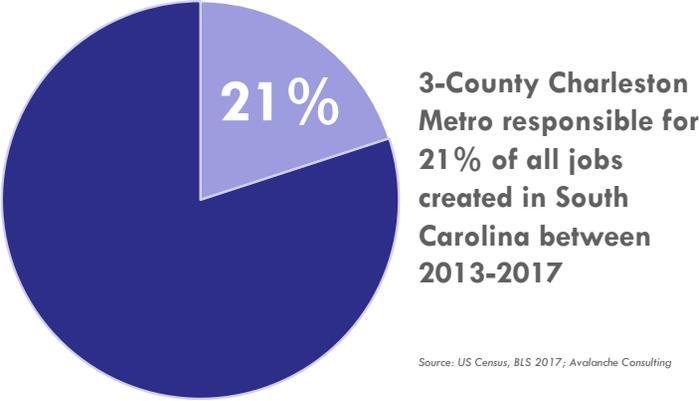
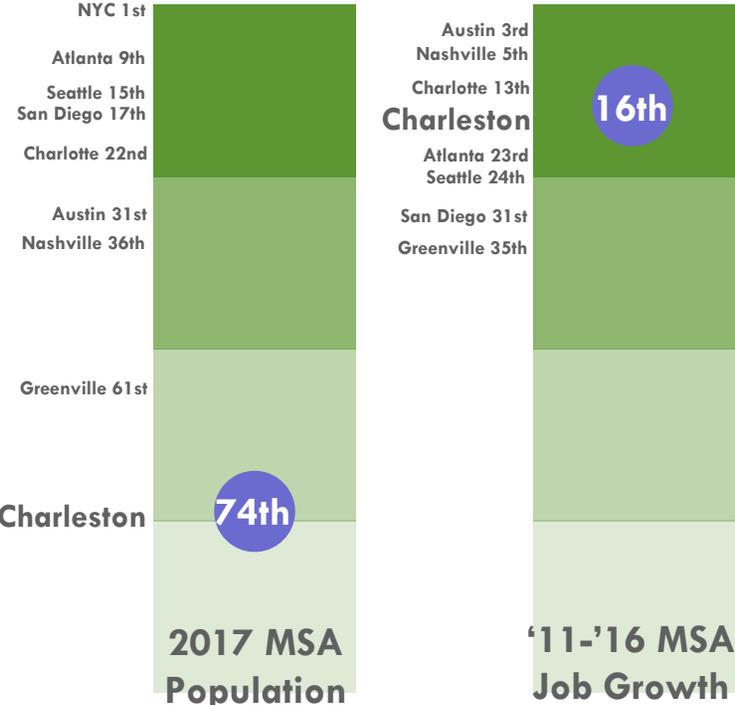
Regional Economic Performance

The three-county Charleston Metro is among the best performing economies in the U.S. Between 2014 and 2017, the region experienced a 9.4% increase in jobs, almost double the U.S. average. The Metro was responsible for creating more than one of every five new jobs in South Carolina since 2013. Despite being the 74th largest metro in terms of population size, the region's job growth since 2011 ranked 16th in the nation, a rate greater than Atlanta, Seattle, and San Diego's.

Job Growth, 2014-2017



Source: US Census, BLS 2017; Avalanche Consulting



Source: US Census, BLS 2017; Avalanche Consulting



Sample 2017-2018 One Region Accomplishments

While a focus of One Region over the past 12 months has been formalizing its governance and hiring a full-time Director, there has been significant movement in support of One Region's framework. As revealed during the working group meetings that led up to this Update, numerous initiatives across the region are aligned with One Region values. In fact, dozens of organizations in the region are engaged in activities that directly and indirectly advance One Region. Brief examples of success are listed below. A more comprehensive list is available in the reports produced after the working group meetings.

- ✓ One Region's **Executive Committee and Director are in full swing**, with governance in place and a diversity of regional leaders on board. Hiring One Region's Director is a significant 2017-2018 accomplishment as success depends on having a full-time person dedicated to coordinating initiatives.
- ✓ One Region's **website and newsletter** have launched. The website, OneRegionStrategy.com, contains links to One Region's reports and current news stories relevant to each value. Distributed on a monthly basis, the newsletter keeps the community updated on progress.
- ✓ The CRDA and Charleston Metro Chamber's marketing teams are meeting on a regular basis to **coordinate One Region communications**.
- ✓ An active **Global Fluency committee** dedicated to supporting the Connected Community value successfully launched a new website, CharlestonCommunityGuide.com, that provides comprehensive information for people relocating to the region. In addition, the Global Fluency committee and One Region Director are making strong progress in installing **multilingual signage** at the Charleston International Airport.
- ✓ While a longer-term project, efforts to **update land use codes around key nodes of the Lowcountry Rapid Transit route** are moving ahead. The initiative involves a cross-county coalition focused on ensuring mixed-income, transportation-oriented developments are encouraged along the route.



2018-2019 Recommendations: Organization

In the following pages, we offer recommendations for the upcoming 12 months of One Region implementation. We include suggestions for strengthening One Region's organizational capacity, elevating communications, and identifying priority projects. Organizational recommendations include:

- Continue regularly scheduled meetings of the One Region Executive Committee. Ensure that governance includes a **succession plan** for off- and on-boarding committee members, including guidelines for vetting potential committee members.
- Encourage Executive Committee members, the One Region Director, and volunteer project team members to take **diversity and inclusion** training. Ensure that inclusion and diversity is a requirement of all One Region projects.
- Establish a **permanent pool of funds for the One Region Director position and activities**. Over the next 2-3 months, activate a volunteer group to raise funds. Consider a 'give or get' request of One Region Executive Committee members.
- Allocate funds for the One Region Director to participate in **professional development** programs.
- Secure the services of a **grant writer(s)** to assist the Executive Committee with pursuing funds for One Region-specific initiatives. The grant writer could, for example, be on loan on an as-needed basis from another organization in the community.
- Long-term, explore the potential of establishing a pool for funds that awards grants to eligible projects that directly support One Region values.
- **Activate annual One Region priority projects**. Ideally each year, the Executive Committee will accept input from the larger stakeholder community and then identify one project for each value. There can be a mix of short- and long-term projects, but each must have a discrete 12-month action plan with an annual goal. Additionally, One Region may serve in a lead or a supporting role. For example, updating land use codes to allow for TODs along the LRT route may require several years to complete. One Region volunteer teams serve as supportive influencers in the process, but an annual work plan is still needed to structure their involvement. In contrast, the Global Fluency team had a lead role in launching newcomers' guide website and did so within a 12-month period. Both initiatives support One Region, but their timeline and level of direct leadership differs.



2018-2019 Recommendations: **Communications**

In the next 12 months, it is critically important to amplify communications about One Region. Build awareness about the strategic framework, grow buy-in and support, and encourage participation. Recommendations include:

- Continue One Region **outreach and reporting** across the region. In addition to the Director, Executive Committee members and others should serve as ambassadors by making presentations on One Region to community groups and bringing up the strategic framework in their daily conversations. Provide all ambassadors with talking points, such as those provided on the next page, so that everyone shares messaging when describing One Region.
- Continue **updating the One Region website and monthly newsletters**. Later, with additional funding in hand, invest in an even more sophisticated, branded online presence. Consider, for example, converting the existing website into an online ‘magazine’ format that streams One Region related news and social media.
- **Brand and tag One Region supportive initiatives**. Create a One Region social media hashtag (e.g., #OneRegionCHS) to link related news and remind people that the framework is actively in place. Ask local organizations whose own initiatives align with One Region’s values to make statements indicating so (e.g., “Our XYZ initiative supports our region’s value to balance growth while nurturing our unique character. #OneRegionCHS.”). Also, refer to One Region on CRDA, the Charleston Metro Chamber, and other organization’s websites and newsletters. Highlight a One Region initiative in CRDA and Chamber newsletters, economic forecast publications, and regional scorecards.



Describing One Region: Talking Points

With a strategic framework that intentionally encourages broad, diverse participation in implementation, it is important that stakeholders are describing One Region within the same context. While One Region began as an economic development strategic plan, it evolved into the region's framework for long-term economic prosperity. It provides a comprehensive vision and shared values that should inspire decisions across a broad diversity of organizations.

One Region is a coordinating framework for advancing the Charleston region's economy. It is:

- **The region's north star** – One Region sets the region's direction and should be the guide when the path forward is not clear. Its vision and values should be a constant, superseding competing interests and uncertainties.
- **Built to last** – While the tactical action plan for achieving One Region's vision and supporting its values should change over time, its framework is designed to last over many years. In fact, while past five-year strategies have revised the region's vision statement and goals, future updates of One Region should retain the vision and values. This consistent, long-range view will further enhance the region's vitality and reflects the approach of the county's best economic development initiatives.
- **The culmination of regional priorities, crossing political boundaries and emphasizing regional cooperation** – One Region emphasizes regional cooperation because opportunities like improved mobility, increasing the supply of attainable housing, and expanding the talent pipeline cross geopolitical lines. One Region provides reason to assemble a regional group of stakeholders to address issues that cannot otherwise be tackled by a single city or county.
- **A format for bringing together diverse stakeholders to solve big issues** – One Region encourages breaking down silos for the greater good of the region. While the community partners that gather to support a One Region project may not be in 100% agreement with each other on a daily basis, they are willing to set aside those differences to advance a cause that has shared significance for each of them.



2018-2019 Recommendations: **Priority Projects**

VALUE WORKING GROUPS' RECOMMENDATIONS

During the One Region stakeholder meeting in June, two leaders from each value working group presented the 2018-2019 priority projects that emerged from their planning sessions. The key priorities presented included the following:

Our region values having a strong, resilient economy.

- Work with municipalities to ensure local entrepreneurs have access to suitable real estate.
- Expand connectivity among the region's entrepreneurial sector through ideas like technology councils and meetups.

Our region values attainable opportunities for all residents to live, learn, and earn.

- Prioritize equity and equality in education by actively supporting organizations calling for systemic change like the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative.
- Adopt public policies that diversify the variety and affordability of housing in the region.

Our region values balancing growth with nurturing our unique character.

- Work with municipalities to address space and affordability challenges through creative zones and trusts.
- Improve collaboration between municipal planning and economic development departments to improve coordination and build knowledge.

Our region values being a connected community.

- Continue to focus on multi-modal solutions, particularly Bus Rapid Transit.
- Improve regional attitudes and awareness throughout the region.



2018-2019 Recommendations: **Priority Projects**

AVALANCHE CONSULTING'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to the Update presentations, Avalanche also developed a list of potential projects for the year ahead. In many cases, our recommendations echo those prioritized during the value working groups:

Our region values having a strong, resilient economy.

- Strengthen entrepreneurial networks and policy solutions to encourage more flexible, entrepreneurial-accessible real estate.
- Arm municipalities across the region with inspiration and best practices for streamlining and improving predictability of development processes.

Our region values attainable opportunities for all residents to live, learn, and earn.

- Be at the ready to convene diverse regional leadership to support specific education and workforce initiatives. There are numerous focused education and workforce development initiatives already in place in the region. Around this topic, One Region can play a meaningful support role without creating new initiatives.
- Agree to solutions to regional housing availability such as inclusive zoning, regional housing trust, or a regional development authority.

Our region values balancing growth with nurturing our unique character.

- Work with municipalities to support creative and cultural organizations, especially related to their real estate needs.
- Inventory infill density opportunity sites across the region, estimate the economic impact of redevelopment, and lead public outreach with the results.

(continued)



2018-2019 Recommendations: **Priority Projects**

AVALANCHE CONSULTING'S RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

Our region values being a connected community.

- Vocally endorse and support city/county updates of land use codes to encourage density and development at key nodes of the LRT route.
- Create programs to advance multi-racial leadership across the region.
- Work with employers to adopt flex time and telecommuting programs. Develop a 'how to' guide with examples of how other businesses in their industries have successfully embraced these programs.