



# INTRODUCTION

## **BOLD, AMBITIOUS, AND ASPIRATIONAL**

The following Don Ryan Center for Innovation Economic Development Strategic Plan is a bold, ambitious, and aspirational plan that will guide the organization to expand economic development in Bluffton, South Carolina. The Don Ryan Center for Innovation will execute the greatest attempt at reaching the goals and delivering upon the strategies set forth in this plan but reserves the right to adjust as needed in an ever-changing economic environment.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **About the Don Ryan Center for Innovation**

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI) focuses on creating a vibrant business climate within the Bluffton area through economic development emphasizing entrepreneurship and sustainable growth.

DRCI fosters and promotes economic development in five core areas:

- **Entrepreneurism**
  - Including Business Incubation, Co-working offerings (The HUB), and Business Startup/Concierge Services
- **Business Attraction, Expansion and Retention**
- **Real Estate and Infrastructure**
- **Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction**
- **Marketing, Education, and Outreach**

## **OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Bluffton is a beautiful, dynamic, and growing town in the heart of the Lowcountry region of South Carolina. It is well positioned to continue to attract diverse individuals and families, groups, organizations, and businesses. Led by the DRCI – the lead economic development organization for the area, Bluffton must grow its primary industry<sup>1</sup> business base through focused strategies provided in this strategic plan - The Don Ryan Center for Innovation Economic Development Strategic Plan (DRCI Strategic Plan).

Growing the primary industry business base will provide a sustainable economy that will continue to support the high-quality of life enjoyed and expected by the residents, businesses, and visitors in Bluffton. With the execution of strategies set forth in the DRCI Strategic Plan, the DRCI will successfully lead the conscious, deliberate, and smart growth of the Bluffton area.

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<sup>1</sup> A primary industry business exports its goods and services outside the region, has mobility, has domestic or global competition, and is susceptible to recruitment by competing geographies. Primary industry businesses are related to Traded Clusters. “Traded clusters are groups of related industries that serve markets beyond the region in which they are located. They are free to choose their location of operation (unless the location of natural resources drives where they can be)...Since traded clusters compete in cross-regional markets, they are exposed to

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many individuals have contributed to the development of the DRCI Strategic Plan. We would like to acknowledge the DRCI Board of Directors, Mayor, Town Council, and Town Administration who have demonstrated outstanding leadership in undertaking this process as part of the continual development of the Bluffton area. The DRCI Strategic Plan would not have been possible without these leaders. We offer a special appreciation and acknowledgement to the following individuals:

### **DRCI Board of Directors**

- Mr. Matt Green, Chairman
- Mr. Berl Davis, Vice Chairman
- Mr. Michael P. Mathews, Secretary
- Mr. Larry Hughes
- Mr. Gregory J. Johnson
- Mr. Walter Nester
- Ms. Sarah Reed
- Mr. Kevin Ryan
- Ms. Lisa Sulka, Mayor

### **DRCI Ex-Officio Board of Directors**

- Mr. Ryan Clark
- Ms. Natalie Majorkiewicz
- Mr. Brian Messman
- Ms. Ariana Pernice
- Mr. Mark Polites
- Mr. Matt Raehn
- Mr. Larry Toomer

### **Town of Bluffton Council**

- Ms. Lisa Sulka, Mayor
- Mr. Larry Toomer, Mayor Pro Tempore
- Mr. Fred Hamilton, Councilmember
- Mr. Harry Lutz, Councilmember
- Mr. Dan Wood, Councilmember

### **Town of Bluffton Administration**

- Mr. Marc Orlando, Town Manager, ICMA-CM
- Ms. Natalie Majorkiewicz, Treasury Manager

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competition from other regions.” The only key difference is that a primary industry business does not necessarily exist within a geographical cluster of like businesses.

Traded Clusters: President and Fellows of Harvard College. US Cluster Mapping, 2014, <http://www.clustermapping.us/content/clusters-101>. Accessed 26 Sep. 2016.

The DRCI Strategic Plan will guide DRCI leadership on how to leverage DRCI, Bluffton, the Lowcountry Region, and South Carolina's strengths and capitalize on emerging economic development opportunities. The commitment to the strategic planning process and implementation illustrates the DRCI Board and Town's strong leadership – championed by those who are devoted to enhancing the operation, governance, and effectiveness of the DRCI's resources. Thank you to these leaders.

### **Message to the Board of Directors**

The DRCI Board of Directors has the important responsibility to lead the organizational direction and strategic actions of the DRCI. Board Members are responsible for authorizing programming, recommending appropriations, and providing leadership and oversight to ensure the DRCI is fulfilling its member and economic development duties. The DRCI Board of Directors must serve as the lead implementers of the DRCI Strategic Plan, while guiding DRCI Team leadership and staff as well as engaging regional economic development partners.

### **Engaged Stakeholders**

There are many engaged stakeholders who are deeply passionate about the economic development success of the Bluffton area. The DRCI Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the engagement and essential input from the following private business leaders, regional economic development partners, and DRCI Team Members. Thank you to everyone who offered their perspectives, knowledge, expertise, concepts, and support throughout the process. Your efforts are very much appreciated!

### **Bluffton-Area Private Business Leaders**

- Mr. John Arlotta, President & CEO, eviCore healthcare
- Mr. Geoff Block, Manager, RLB Squared
- Mr. Randy K. Dolyniuk, Founder, Chairman, and CEO, Coastal States Bank
- Mr. Joe Friesen, President and Chief Operations Officer, CrossFlight Sky Solutions
- Ms. Meg James, Executive Officer, Hilton Head Area Home Builders Association
- Mr. Matt Lyle, President of the Board of Directors, Hilton Head Area Home Builders Association
- Mr. Ned Nielsen, CEO, Monroneylabels.com
- Mr. Baker Wilkins, Principal, NAI Carolina Charter

### **Regional Economic Development Partners**

- Ms. Megan Anderson, Senior Project Manager - Global Business Division, South Carolina Department of Commerce
- Mr. Danny Black, President & CEO, SouthernCarolina Alliance
- Ms. Sandy Steele, SCCED, Director of Operations, SouthernCarolina Alliance

- Mr. Brandt Herndon, Vice President of Business Development, Savannah Economic Development Authority
- Mr. John A. O'Toole, CECD, Executive Director, Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation

### **DRCI Team Members**

- Mr. Trent Williamson, Interim CEO
- Ms. Dorothy Guscio, IOM, Operations Manager
- Mr. David Nelems, Former CEO
- Ms. Keri Dylan, Former Operations Manager

### **Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) – Consulting Partner Team**

- Mr. Thomas P. Miller – Executive Consultant
- Mr. Dustin Lester – Project Lead
- Mr. Brian Points – Research Support
- Mr. Jack Woods – Research Support

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

The DRCI has undertaken a bold approach to strategic planning to ensure that the economic development strategies advanced by the organization are designed for the next five years, aligned with the market, target industries specific to Bluffton, regional assets, are effective in producing new jobs and investment, and are complementary to the unique characteristics of the area. Organizationally, the DRCI Strategic Plan will address opportunities for operational enhancements regarding Board and Committee development; economic development programming; membership; and fiscal and organizational sustainability.

### **Strategic Plan Definition**

A strategic plan is a living document developed over time by related stakeholders to guide an organization through deliberate change into the future with the goal of continuous improvement for internal and external audiences.

### **Strategic Planning Process**

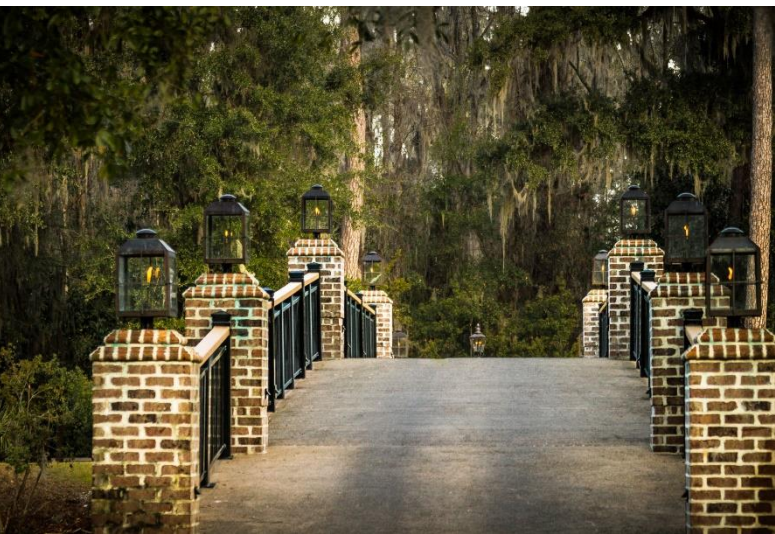
DRCI selected TPMA to work with the DRCI Board; Team; private businesses, and regional economic development partners to develop the DRCI Strategic Plan. The plan will enhance the organization's economic development programming, operations, and solidify the DRCI's position as the lead economic development entity in the Bluffton area. Ultimately the plan will position the DRCI to enhance its ability to create, expand, and attract new businesses to Bluffton to realize new jobs and capital investment.

The DRCI selected TPMA to lead the organization through the strategic planning process; conduct economic research; facilitate strategic planning sessions; interview private business and regional economic development

partner stakeholders; research, demonstrate, and integrate best practices in economic development; and coordinate the production of the DRCI Strategic Plan with a focus on implementation. The strategic planning process ensured alignment with the Town's priorities, economic development partners' work, related plans, stakeholders, and business interests.

The strategic planning process integrated the following important qualitative and quantitative elements:

- Two Week-Long On-Site Engagements in Bluffton:
  - January and February 2018
  - Qualitative Research and Engagement:  
The combination of Board of Directors, private business, economic development partner, and Team engagements provided the qualitative data that complemented TPMA's target industry and entrepreneurship research, which ultimately directed the goals; mission statement; organizational structure; and recommendations in the strategic work plan section of the DRCI Strategic Plan.
    - Engagements in the Form of:
      - Board of Directors Strategic Planning Sessions (2 sessions)
      - Private Business Interviews (7 interviews)
      - Regional Economic Development Partner Interviews (3 interviews)
      - DRCI Team Interviews (3 interviews)
- Contributing Independent Research:
  - Bluffton, South Carolina Target Industry Study
  - DRCI Board of Director Pre-Work Prior to Strategic Planning Session #2
  - Entrepreneurism in the 55 to 64 Year-Old Demographic
  - Sites and Buildings Tours
  - Walking Tours of Old Town Bluffton
- Prior Plans and Reports:
  - Don Ryan Center for Innovation Business Plan, 2016
    - DRCI (Internal Author(s))
  - Strategic Plan: 2013-2018/Don Ryan Center for Innovation/Bluffton, South Carolina, 2013
    - Lyle Sumek Associates, Inc.
    - Town of Bluffton, SC
  - Town of Bluffton Strategic Plan – Fiscal Years 2017-18 (Revised, 6/13/17), 2017
    - Town of Bluffton, SC



# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

## **OVERVIEW**

### **About the Don Ryan Center for Innovation**

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- **Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction**
- **Marketing, Education, and Outreach**

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OVERVIEW**

The Strategic Work Plan section of the DRCI Strategic Plan provides the detailed direction for the DRCI to successfully implement the organization's daily economic development activities in each of the five core areas - Entrepreneurism; Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention; Real Estate and Infrastructure; Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction; and Marketing, Education, and Outreach.

Before the Strategic Work Plan is presented, it is important to provide the detailed and impactful updates to DRCI organizational structure. Many of these enhancements are strategic in their own way – further aligning and better utilizing the human, organizational, and physical assets of the DRCI. The greatest enhancements are realized with an empowered Board – organizing and applying their diverse expertise. Other organizational enhancements are found with the DRCI mission statement; updated target industries; membership priorities; Team staffing alignment; funding structure; and technology planning.

## **DRCI MISSION STATEMENT**

The Don Ryan Center accelerates innovation and economic development in the Bluffton, South Carolina region.



## TARGET INDUSTRIES

### Overview

Throughout the course of developing the DRCI Strategic Plan, a target industry study was produced to guide the DRCI on the Bluffton region's top industries and projections for these industries into the future. This report has been provided as a separate deliverable to the DRCI. Ultimately, the DRCI will use the identified target industries to prioritize economic development efforts and ensure the organization is focused on companies that are likely or desired to be started, expanded, or located in Bluffton.

This report was discussed with the DRCI Board of Directors, Team, and economic development partners during the second onsite strategic planning session. During the session some adjustments were recommended that have been integrated into the final target industries identified below. Notable adjustments include the addition of General Warehousing and Storage and Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services; and Computer Facilities Management Services and Other Computer Related Services.

### Top Clusters

Industry clusters represent groups of industries that exist in close proximity and tend to share similar inputs, workers, technological needs, and tend to buy and sell from one another. The advantage of supporting entrepreneurship and conducting business attraction and retention using industry clusters is that changes in employment multiply and create demand for other products and services within the region. The top five clusters for the Bluffton region include:

- Business Services
- Marketing, Design, & Publishing
- IT & Analytical Instruments
- Aerospace (Savannah)
- Communications

### Target Industries

The adjacent table identifies target industries for DRCI to focus recruitment efforts based on association with existing clusters and in-region demand from businesses and individuals. Industry recommendations are determined by the amount of annual purchases made by businesses and consumers within a 60-minute radius of the Town of Bluffton to out-of-region businesses. A greater amount of annual purchases out-of-region indicates stronger demand occurring in the region of analysis for the products and services of that industry. In addition to Annual Purchases Out-of-Region, recommendations also consider Top Industries and Top Clusters.

The greatest demand is for businesses in the Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices as well as industries that manufacture Aircraft Engines and Engine Parts and Other Aircraft Parts and Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing. Recommendations also factor in regional strengths such as prominent environmental and ecological assets located in the region or the presence of Gulfstream Aerospace and Boeing South Carolina in North Charleston. Bluffton's location in the Sea Islands Coastal Region makes the Town an appealing location for

**Figure 1: Target Industry Study**

Industry	Annual Purchases Out-of-Region (\$ Millions)
<b>Corporate, Subsidiary, &amp; Regional Managing Offices</b>	\$1,003M
<b>Aircraft Engine &amp; Engine Parts Manufacturing</b>	\$380M
<b>Other Aircraft Parts &amp; Auxiliary Equipment Manufacturing</b>	\$345M
<b>Light Truck &amp; Utility Vehicle Manufacturing</b>	\$321M
<b>Research &amp; Development in the Physical, Engineering, &amp; Life Sciences</b>	\$298M
<b>Computer Systems Design Services</b>	\$262M
<b>Software Publishers</b>	\$252M
<b>Engineering Services</b>	\$224M
<b>Semiconductor &amp; Related Device Manufacturing</b>	\$213M
<b>Search, Detection, Navigation, Guidance, Aeronautical, &amp; Nautical System &amp; Instrument Manufacturing</b>	\$194M
<b>Custom Computer Programming Services</b>	\$189M
<b>Internet Publishing &amp; Broadcasting &amp; Web Search Portals</b>	\$169M
<b>General Warehousing &amp; Storage &amp; Process, Physical Distribution, &amp; Logistics Consulting Services</b>	\$52M
<b>Computer Facilities Management Services &amp; Other Computer Related Services</b>	\$44M
<b>Testing Laboratories</b>	\$25M
<b>Environmental Consulting Services</b>	\$8M

companies operating in the Testing Laboratories and Environmental Consulting Industries.

## **DRCI WORK PILLARS**

DRCI fosters and promotes economic development in five core areas:

- **Entrepreneurism**
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- **Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction**
- **Marketing, Education, and Outreach**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The DRCI has a renewed focus on developing membership to the DRCI. Beyond the revenue opportunity, memberships build loyalty and develop true stakeholders of the DRCI. Further, increased community ownership enhances the DRCI's value in the Bluffton community.

### **Membership Programs**

There are three types of memberships:

- Student Membership (Free)  
This 12 month membership provides post-secondary and secondary students:
  - Free access to all monthly educational sessions
  - 1 ticket to the Annual Innovator event
  - Advance notice on DRCI activities and opportunities
  - Member newsletter

Engaging the post-secondary and secondary students enhances opportunities for young entrepreneurs and supports talent retention.
- Individual Membership (Annual fee)  
This 12 month membership gives:
  - Free access to all monthly educational sessions
  - 1 ticket to the Annual Innovator event
  - Advance notice on DRCI activities and opportunities
  - Member newsletter
- Company Membership (Annual fee)  
Ideal for an organization that wants multiple people to have access to DRCI events.
  - Up to five (5) employees from the same member company
  - Free access for up to five (5) attendees to all monthly educational sessions (a \$600 value)
  - Five (5) tickets to the Annual Innovator event
  - Advance notice on DRCI activities and opportunities
  - Member newsletter

## **DRCI BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

The DRCI Board of Directors is the essential backbone to the organization. Intentionally comprised of a diverse set of senior executives mostly from the private sector, the DRCI is the voice of the DRCI's end client – the private sector business community. The Board's diverse technical expertise helps advise the DRCI Team on technical business matters and advises the expectations of corporate enterprises when contemplating workforce matters, facility and operational expansions, and even opportunities to attract relocating businesses. Further, many of the Board Members have been entrepreneurs at some stage in their career, thus lending experience relevant to the DRCI Incubation Program and other entrepreneurial programming.

Through the strategic planning process, it was clear that the DRCI Board must be empowered and utilization must be enhanced. Therefore, the following enhancements have been development – organized by the Board's new roles on Board Committees, role in membership development, and the role in marketing the DRCI.

### **Board Committees**

The DRCI Board of Directors will employ their diverse business and technical expertise to drive policy, program development, and progress in each of the five DRCI core areas, and DRCI Foundation, through a public committee structure. The committee membership will consist of a majority of Board Members with minority representation from relevant private sector leaders, citizens, and staff from the Town of Bluffton. Upon the first two Board Committee Meetings, each committee will develop detailed roles and expected outcomes. The committees will provide reports at the full DRCI Board Meetings detailing action items for work that needs to be accomplish or has been accomplished within that committee over the course of the last two months.

#### Board Committees Include:

- **Entrepreneurism**
  - Leadership and technical expertise guiding:
    - Business Incubation
    - Co-working offerings (The HUB)
    - Business Startup/Concierge Services
- **Business Attraction, Expansion and Retention**
  - Leadership and technical expertise guiding:
    - Business attraction efforts including regional, national, and global strategies engaging site selectors, prospects, and ensuring adequate data and response time for requests for information (RFIs)
    - Business Retention & Expansion
- **Real Estate and Infrastructure**
  - Leadership and technical expertise guiding:
    - Sites & buildings/real estate product
    - Infrastructure & communication w/ public & private partners

- **Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction**
  - Leadership and technical expertise guiding:
    - Connecting workforce needs with regional workforce development programming and education
    - A new focus on talent retention and attraction to the Bluffton area
- **Marketing, Education, and Outreach**
  - Leadership and technical expertise guiding:
    - The combined desire for Marketing and Public Relations with the related public-facing activities of Education and Outreach
- **DRCI Foundation**
  - Leadership and technical expertise guiding:
    - A focus on funding the DRCI Foundation

#### **The DRCI Board's Role in Economic Development Lead Development**

The DRCI Board Members have a great opportunity to leverage their regional, national, and global network to identify potential economic development leads. Though the CEO and VP of Economic Development are responsible for lead development and project management, Board Members' business network, travel, and industry exposure opens opportunities for these leaders to identify leads and connect them to the CEO and VP. It is the CEO and VP's responsibility to adequately prepare the Board on what to look for, how to introduce the DRCI, establish a relationship, and advance the opportunity.

#### **The DRCI Board's Role in Membership Development**

The DRCI Board Members have an important role in identifying and relaying opportunities for new membership – thus supporting this growing source of revenue. The Board has a strong network of regional professionals that would benefit from a DRCI membership. Therefore, the Board will represent the DRCI membership benefits when appropriate and connect these opportunities to the DRCI CEO or other related staff.

#### **The DRCI Board's Role in Marketing the DRCI**

The DRCI Board of Directors will leverage their global business network to represent the DRCI and the Town of Bluffton for business attraction opportunities. Though the Board will not lead attraction activities, it is logical that the DRCI Board will serve as ambassadors and demonstrate the advantages of the Bluffton region when presented with relevant opportunities. Further, the DRCI Board will participate in DRCI events and engage in social media to help advance marketing efforts.

## **DRCI STAFFING**

### **CEO**

Under general direction of Town Council; the Town Manager; and the Board of Directors, the CEO position oversees the DRCI both in operations and in the DRCI's five core areas of business. This position requires highly professional, administrative, strategic, and technical work and encompasses oversight of daily operations, staff goals and performance, and assisting the Board of Directors with executing the DRCI Strategic Plan and Mission Statement that has been developed by the DRCI Board of Directors and various stakeholders.

Other duties include work on the Town's public development planning and implementation efforts, coordinating with the private sector, and alignment with related governmental agencies. The CEO will evaluate local and regional resources, needs, opportunities, and aggressively promote businesses in the Town of Bluffton. The position also requires hands on involvement in the DRCI Incubator Program operations, The HUB, and Education/Outreach opportunities.

### **VP of Economic Development**

Under general direction of the CEO, the VP of Economic Development plans, organizes, and implements economic development functions. These include business retention and expansion; business attraction and incentive programs; and performs a variety of responsible administrative, professional, and technical tasks. The VP works to implement economic development goals and strategies, interfaces and coordinates with the development community, and aligns efforts with local businesses and various Town departments and staff.

### **Operations Manager**

The Operations Manager performs detailed professional level assignments for the organization involving implementation, monitoring, and continued improvement of programs and new enterprises. Performance success requires project management, administrative duties, online research, social media postings, membership program administration, basic grant writing, note taking, public and private meeting setup and logistics, volunteer coordination, working with a wide variety of vendors, and juggling multiple disparate tasks that are all at varying stages of completion. These tasks occur within the confines of the Town of Bluffton's policies and procedures. Responsibilities are very diverse and include internal and external communications.

## **DRCI FUNDING**

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) entity. The Town of Bluffton finance department handles most financial information such as, but not limited to, financial records; employee pay; expenses; monthly and yearly budget information; and tax returns.

Funding areas include:

### **Town of Bluffton**

Currently, the majority of funding is through the Town of Bluffton. The remainder is made up from special events, sponsorships, membership, and grants. The long term goal is to bring in more revenue from the areas below and rely on less funding from the Town as time goes on. This is demonstrated by a renewed focus on the DRCI Foundation, implemented by the new DRCI Foundation Board Committee.

### **Rental Income**

The DRCI Incubation Program charges a nominal monthly amount to the innovators that are enrolled in the formal program.

### **Entrepreneurship in Residence**

Certain program graduates are very good at passing on what they have learned to new innovators in the program. It has been recognized that this is a valuable service that can enhance all parties. This program will be offered to a limited number of qualifying DRCI Incubator Program graduates on a short-term basis. It will allow graduates who would benefit from being involved in the physical location to continue their occupancy in exchange for a monthly rental fee and counsel to new innovators.

### **Grants**

The DRCI will apply for multiple grants every year. This opportunity is enhanced as the DRCI is a 501(c)(3). Since current DRCI staff are not as experienced in this area, the DRCI will rely on the Town of Bluffton to help with grant applications when necessary.

### **DRCI Corporate and Facility Sponsors**

The DRCI has always had a small number of dedicated corporate sponsors. The goal is to actively increase efforts in this area. As the new DRCI building is developed there will be opportunities for corporations to have naming rights in association with certain elements of the space.

### **Special Events**

The DRCI will host up to two special event fundraisers per year. A fall event will be an annual golf outing, while the spring event will likely be an oyster roast or similar type of event. These events will fund the DRCI Foundation.

### **DRCI Membership Programs**

The DRCI Membership Programs were established in 2015 and have evolved over time. As mentioned in the DRCI Membership Programs section, the DRCI has a renewed focus on developing membership to the DRCI. Though fundraising can't be a prime focus for the DRCI, membership growth presents prospects for enhanced revenue and long-term sustainability. Further, memberships provide opportunities for the business and citizen community to have ownership in the DRCI, thus building broad-based community support.

### **DRCI Foundation**

In 2015, the DRCI established an endowment with the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry. The goal is to take a percentage of net income and fundraising efforts and pass those monies into the Foundation. The new DRCI Foundation Board Committee presents opportunities to enhance funding of the Foundation.

### **The HUB**

The DRCI will establish a co-working environment at the new DRCI location, called The HUB. It will enable members and other individuals outside the formal DRCI Incubator Program to rent desk or office space. The HUB will provide new sources of revenue and increase opportunities to attract new enrollments into the DRCI Incubator Program or even discover expansion or attraction leads.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is an important asset to running any organization, but it is particularly valuable when managing economic development projects; engaging prospects; and guiding innovators. The following information focuses on software related to the operational, economic development, and project management needs of the DRCI.

Operational, economic development, and project management software include:

### **Project Management Software**

The DRCI requires project management software both for initiatives detailed in this strategic plan but also to benefit the innovators in the DRCI Incubation Program. Currently, the DRCI uses Basecamp<sup>2</sup> for project management needs.

### **Customer Relationship Management (CRM)**

Economic development organizations benefit from utilizing CRM's to manage prospect, project, and existing business information. Structured properly and effectively managed, a CRM can support DRCI when leading economic development deals, preparing for business development opportunities, conducting business retention & expansion, and guiding entrepreneurs. A CRM should be mobile and there is the possibility for CRM integration with Basecamp. The DRCI will research and select a CRM that best fits the organization's needs.

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<sup>2</sup> Basecamp. <https://basecamp.com/>, (accessed March 21, 2018).





# STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

## STRATEGIC WORK PLAN OVERVIEW

The DRCI Strategic Work Plan provides strategic action for each of the five DRCI core areas and guides activities for the DRCI Foundation. It directs how the DRCI will operate within each core area, combining economic development best practices with customized solutions for DRCI and the Town of Bluffton. These strategies have evolved by employing objective sources such as the Target Industry Study, synthesizing relevant best practices such as site selector engagement, and is representative of the Board strategic planning sessions that developed the overall DRCI Strategic Plan.

Before presenting the strategies for each focus area, it is important to identify the DRCI Goals and Measures of Success upon which each strategy will be held accountable to. The Economic Development Partner Alignment diagram helps the DRCI establish an understanding of the partner organizations that are essential to the successful implementation of each strategy.

## GOALS

Goals define what the DRCI will become. They are the foundation of what the Strategic Work Plan has been built upon. Goals direct the strategy, related actions, and resources that must be aligned to realize the sustainable economic growth of the Bluffton region.

### GOAL

#### ***Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development***

***Pillars: Business Attraction and Business Retention & Expansion;  
Real Estate and Infrastructure***

The DRCI will be a leading regional driver of primary industry business and job growth through results-driven economic development programming.

### GOAL

#### ***Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism***

***Pillar: Entrepreneurism***

The DRCI will be the epicenter of inclusive high-tech entrepreneurship in the Lowcountry.

### GOAL

#### ***Leading Regional Economic Development Resource***

***Pillars: Workforce Development & Talent Retention/Attraction;  
DRCI Foundation***

The DRCI will be seen as a leading economic development influencer, educator, and resource in the region.

### GOAL

#### ***Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission***

***Pillar: Marketing, Education, and Outreach***

The DRCI will realize an increase in awareness through outreach opportunities and media highlighting its success in supporting the creation, expansion, and attraction of primary industry businesses and quality jobs.

## **MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Quantitative and qualitative measures of success connect the DRCI Goals and Strategic Work Plan. The implementation of the strategic actions is measurable upon the following variables.

### **QUANTITATIVE**

#### **Traditional Economic Development Organization Measures**

- New businesses created, attracted, or expanded (project wins)
- Jobs
- Average wages
- Capital investment
- Projects worked
- Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) visits, calls, or engagements

#### **Entrepreneurial Measures**

- DRCI Incubator Program graduates
- Equity raised
- Exits
- Incubator mentors

#### **Business Development, Marketing, and Media Measures**

- Prospects/pipeline
- Marketing and business development conferences or trips
- Earned media
- Social media engagements
- Speaking engagements

#### **Organizational and Asset Measures**

- DRCI revenue/fiscal sustainability
- DRCI memberships
- DRCI Foundation
- Sites & buildings inventory
- Workforce availability

### **QUALITATIVE**

- Partner and client recognition as a major economic development resource
- Business client satisfaction
- Relationships with economic development partners
- Relationships with developers and site selectors
- DRCI viewed as a major conduit to capital
- The new DRCI location viewed as an inclusive and central location for business growth and resources

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNER ALIGNMENT

The DRCI has an import network of regional economic development, workforce development, government, and post-secondary education partners. These partners support the DRCI through direct economic development leads or resources to further the development of the DRCI's core work. The following diagram is an illustrative representation of the DRCI's central network and how it supports the DRCI and opportunities for mutual benefit. This diagram is non-exhaustive and the DRCI acknowledges and thanks the countless organizations, businesses, and individuals that support the DRCI's Mission. The DRCI is grateful for these partnerships.

### STATE-ALIGNED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



## ENTREPRENEURISM

### ***Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism***

Entrepreneurism is a foundational strength for the DRCI. The roots of the organization were fully focused on entrepreneurship before the merger with the Bluffton Public Development Corporation (PDC). The DRCI was established in 2012 to function as a business incubator to grow the Bluffton region's economic base by helping innovative start-up and early stage companies. The organization has incubated at least 28 companies and has expanded into partnerships with Beaufort County Schools, University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB), Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL), Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), the Town of Bluffton, and the City of Beaufort to promote and support innovation and entrepreneurship for the purposes of economic development.

Entrepreneurial programming presents strong prospects for economic development and organizational sustainability. Through the strategic planning process, the related programming for Business Incubation; Co-working offerings (The HUB); and Business Startup/Concierge Services have been organized under a formal Entrepreneurism umbrella to serve the purpose of organizational alignment and efficiency.

### **The Incubation Program**

The DRCI Incubation Program offers entrepreneurial support services through both private and public resources. The program facilitates and promotes entrepreneurship by offering startup companies in high-tech industries shared facilities, resources, hands-on consulting support, business mentorships, technology evaluation, product development services, marketing services, intellectual property research, and seed financing introduction.

#### Incubation Program Process:

The Incubation Program is organized in a simple, three-step process that includes the Pitch to be considered for the program; Support – guiding the innovator throughout the Program; and Launch – focusing on long-term business growth and graduating the entrepreneur.



#### **PITCH**

Entrepreneurs can propose their idea to the DRCI "pitch pool" for review. A full business plan is not a prerequisite; this is an exploratory process to determine if the idea can be grown through the utilization of DRCI resources.



#### **SUPPORT**

Upon entering the program, entrepreneurs have access to a range of resources including R&D, market development research, angel funding, creative workspace, and human resources. DRCI supports and fosters idea development. DRCI uses Basecamp to keep all team members on task and informed.



#### **LAUNCH**

The DRCI is designed for entrepreneurs who anticipate a 12-18 month development cycle. The DRCI is focused not only on supporting the innovators' technology and product development, but also on ensuring innovators are building sustainable business models.

Incubation Program Services Provided:

The DRCI Incubation Program provides services to address the specific needs of the innovators in the Program. The following list demonstrates the services available.

- Business licensing and company formation advice
- Sales advice
- Marketing advice
- Accounting/financial advice
- Mentors
- Funding introduction
- Ongoing business / technical consulting
- Office space & infrastructure
- Structured bi-monthly team meetings
- 18 month goal planning and execution
- Business plan development/execution
- Social media advice and planning
- Website advice and development
- Other services as required by the innovator

Incubation Program Facilities Provided:

The DRCI Incubation Program will be located at the new DRCI facility. Facilities and resources available to the innovators in the Program include:

- Low cost furnished office space at the Don Ryan Center for Innovation
- Conference room access
- Shared office equipment including copier, printer, fax, etc.
- Phone service including domestic long-distance service
- Internet service
- Video conferencing service
- Basic office supplies
- Parking on site
- Mail service
- Break room service
- Janitorial service

Innovator Criteria:

The DRCI Incubation Program is an inclusive high-tech incubator, focused on attracting diverse and talented individuals or teams to work with the DRCI to launch their business in Bluffton. The Program encourages individuals or teams from all backgrounds to pitch their business or idea for consideration into the Program.

Ideal innovators will establish businesses mostly aligned with the DRCI Target Industries – seen in the Target Industries section of this strategic plan. However, the DRCI Team will consider all high-technology and product-based businesses.

Innovators or teams must:

- Be a for-profit business in a high-growth field
- Have a product or service that can be commercialized within a reasonable amount of time
- Be in the early stages of business development
- Demonstrate a strong market for products or services

- The company should intend to remain in the Bluffton region
- Have a basic business overview or a written description of a business
- Have the ability to pay the incubator's monthly fee
- Agree to meet twice a month with your team to set goals and objectives and to evaluate business conditions

Incubation Program Fees:

The DRCI Incubation Program fees are \$250 per month.

**STRATEGIC WORK FOR THE INCUBATION PROGRAM**

STRATEGY

**Develop a Formal Curriculum for the Incubation Program**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Incubator Program Graduates

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction

The DRCI Incubation Program will develop a formal curriculum for all innovators who participate in the program. A formal curriculum will provide an organized process, resources, and enhance the success of graduates. The curriculum also will enhance organizational efficiencies for the DRCI Team as predictability, scheduling, and rotations of innovators can be better managed. The DRCI will research curriculums from peer incubation programs with similar characteristics. DRCI staff will benefit from tours of the peer programs and will benefit from expanding their peer network.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will identify, research, and analyze best practice curriculums for incubation programs from communities with similar characteristics.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will travel to peer incubators with similar characteristics to tour and understand firsthand how these peer programs operate, their curriculum, and to development relationships with leadership from these organizations.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI will integrate research, best practices in curriculum design, and synthesize these considerations to meet the specific needs of the Bluffton entrepreneurial community.

## STRATEGY

### **Organize Innovators in the Incubation Program into Cohorts**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Incubator Program Graduates*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction*

Incubator cohorts present great opportunities for innovators to collaborate, build relationships, and leverage mutual resources. The DRCI may also leverage a cohort structure when presenting to potential investors through organized pitch events. Further, organizing innovators into cohorts provides programmatic efficiencies for the DRCI Team.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will organize the next round of innovators into cohorts with identical launch and graduation dates.

## STRATEGY

### **Expand and Formalize the DRCI Incubation Program's Angel and Equity Network and Develop an Equity Fund for Seed Funding**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Equity Raised*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: DRCI Viewed as a Major Conduit to Capital*

The DRCI Incubation Program has a robust network of angel and equity investors to connect to innovators. Yet, the DRCI should engage wealthy philanthropists in the region to solicit investments in either an equity investment fund or to be available to consider direct investments into startups. There is untapped opportunity to grow and formalize this network, which will present expanded benefits to new Incubation Program candidates and enhance their opportunity to mature into sustainable and independent enterprises.

The DRCI Incubation Program is an incredible asset to the Bluffton community and emerging entrepreneurs. However, the Program does have competition. A lot of the competition has something the DRCI does not provide – seed funding. Therefore, in concert with expanding the DRCI's angel and equity network, the DRCI will develop an equity fund for seed funding.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will write and advertise an RFP to contract with an attorney and finance professional specializing in the development of equity funds to establish a seed fund and policies for the DRCI.

#### Action Item #2:

The DRCI CEO will expand the position's executive and philanthropic network. This will be accomplished by seeking opportunities to join regional Board of Directors; membership in regional social clubs; and seeking referrals to high-net worth individuals, particularly philanthropists.



Action Item #3:

The DRCI will formalize an ever-evolving list of angel and equity investors.

Action Item #4:

The DRCI will expand relationships with regional and state-wide angel and equity networks as well as entrepreneurial support organizations including but not limited to the South Carolina Department of Commerce Office of Innovation/SC Innovation Hub; the South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA); the Clemson University Institute for Economic and Community Development; and regional post-secondary partners including the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) and the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL). Engagement with USCB and TCL are further described in another strategy below.

STRATEGY

**Attract and Develop Encore Entrepreneurs**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*  
*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Incubator Program Graduates*  
*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

Encore Entrepreneurism<sup>3</sup> is the development of businesses and innovation led by experienced and skilled individuals in the mid-to-later stage of their careers. Some Encore Entrepreneurs have had long corporate careers where they have amassed years of technical and business experience and are now in the position to establish their own ventures in a related sector. Others have similar experiences but are looking to leverage their business experience to create enterprises unrelated to their background. Some Encore Entrepreneurs are quasi-retired but have the strong desire and qualifications to realize the dream of entrepreneurship but also contribute to their community.

According to research from The Kauffman Foundation<sup>4</sup> and the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Initiative on Innovation and Placemaking,<sup>5</sup> Encore Entrepreneurism is on the rise amongst the 55-64 year demographic. Factors include a willingness to continue to add value in the business community, opportunities for continual income, resources, and a strong business network that increases risk tolerance.<sup>6</sup> Since 1996, US entrepreneurs in this demographic have increased by 64%<sup>7</sup> and show no signs of slowing down. This is evident in the Bluffton region. Between 2012 and 2017 the 55-64 year demographic grew by 11% in Beaufort County, SC and grew by 40% in the Town of Bluffton, SC. This demographic also is projected to grow over the next

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<sup>3</sup> Cal Halvorsen, "Encore Entrepreneurs: Creating Jobs, Meeting Needs" ENCORE.ORG. <https://encore.org/blogs/encore-entrepreneurs-creating-jobs-meeting-needs/>, (accessed April 11, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, "2016 The Kauffman Index: United States of America Entrepreneurial Demographics" <https://www.kauffman.org/microsites/kauffman-index/profiles/entrepreneurial-demographics/national?Demographic=Age&Report=StartupActivity>, (accessed March 20, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Jessica A. Lee, "Beyond Millennials: Valuing Older Adults' Participation in Innovation Districts" Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Initiative on Innovation and Placemaking. March, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Lee, "Beyond Millennials: Valuing Older Adults' Participation in Innovation Districts"

<sup>7</sup> Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, "2016 The Kauffman Index: United States of America Entrepreneurial Demographics"

five years. Between 2018 and 2022 the 55-64 year demographic is anticipated to grow by 9% in Beaufort County and grow by 10% in the Town of Bluffton.

Bluffton's lifestyle, business, and community assets are conducive to attract Encore Entrepreneurs. According to the Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Initiative on Innovation and Placemaking, Encore Entrepreneurs are attracted to locations that accommodate walkability, good access to healthcare, business and community assets, and a vibrant culture. Bluffton provides these assets in numerous ways as well as provides an authentic Lowcountry lifestyle, great weather, and access to natural recreation.

Bluffton has directly benefited from the success of Encore Entrepreneurs. Bluffton-headquartered, eviCore Healthcare was co-founded as CareCore National by co-founder, chairman, and CEO Donald Ryan in Bluffton in 1994. EviCore has grown to be one of the most prominent companies in the region, a national leader in healthcare management, and an employer of hundreds in Bluffton. As seen, Mr. Ryan is memorialized in the Don Ryan Center for Innovation's name, culture, and entrepreneurial spirit. There are numerous other regional examples of successful Encore Entrepreneurs and many other potential candidates that the DRCI will connect with both in the Bluffton region and beyond.

Action Item #1:

Provide access to the following consolidated list of national resources for Encore Entrepreneurs. This list will be made available on the DRCI website: [www.donryancenter.com](http://www.donryancenter.com).

- [US Small Business Administration \(SBA\) Office of Entrepreneurship Education. Encore Entrepreneur: An Introduction to Starting Your Own Business Course](#)
- [Encore.org](#)
- [AARP Encore Entrepreneurs](#)

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will develop education and outreach sessions to communicate the resources listed above for Encore Entrepreneurs. Further, this engagement may possibly produce new candidates to the DRCI Incubation Program.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI will distribute a national press release about the organization's intention to attract Encore Entrepreneurs to the DRCI Incubation Program. This tactic may in turn produce earned media to help market the approach.

Action Item #4:

The DRCI will engage the Beaufort County Association of Realtors, the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors, and select regional realtors to communicate the DRCI's resources and open invitation to engage Encore Entrepreneurs.

Action Item #5:

The DRCI will connect with planned and organized communities such as Palmetto Bluff and many others to market the DRCI's opportunities for Encore Entrepreneurs. There may be logical opportunities to connect with candidates for initial conversations in their own neighborhoods.

STRATEGY

**Attract and Develop Entrepreneurs from the University of South Carolina Beaufort and the Technical College of the Lowcountry**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*  
*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Incubator Program Graduates*  
*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

Beaufort County, home of Bluffton, has two major partners in higher education, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) and the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL) develop a strong pipeline of skilled individuals serving the workforce needs of regional employers. These institutions of higher education also accommodate an ecosystem of entrepreneurship. The DRCI will continue to develop institutional relationships with these centers of education and coordinate with their efforts to foster the entrepreneurial opportunities from their students.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will engage leadership at USCB to further the relationship between the DRCI and the University and to communicate the DRCI's desire to engage USCB's emerging entrepreneurs. Particularly, the DRCI CEO will formally meet with the Office of the Chancellor; Small Business Development Center USCB; and potentially engage specific USCB's academic departments including Natural Sciences, Business Administration, Mathematics and Computational Science, and Nursing and Health Professions.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will engage leadership at TCL to further the relationship between the DRCI and the College to express DRCI's desire to engage TCL's emergent entrepreneurs. Particularly, the DRCI CEO will formally meet with the Office of the President; leadership at the TCL Entrepreneurship Club; and potentially engage specific TCL academic departments including Building & Industrial Technologies, Business, Computers & Electronics, Health Sciences, and Science & Mathematics.

STRATEGY

**Develop a New Business Pitch Competition: "Gator Tank"**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*  
*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Incubator Mentors*  
*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

Pitch competitions are useful and fun ways to identify and attract new entrepreneurs from within or outside a community. They also provide opportunities to engage the

community, including private business partners that serve as monetary and in-kind sponsors of the competition. Pitch competitions typically attract attention to the hosting organization, sponsors, and the entrepreneurial team.

Pitch competitions typically reward the finalists or winner with a monetary prize – such as seed funding and in-kind business services such as legal advice, press, and other benefits. Pitch competitions have been organized by entrepreneurial support programs such as incubators or accelerators; downtown organizations; chambers of commerce; economic development organizations; and other related entities.

The DRCI New Business Pitch Competition – potentially named “Gator Tank” inspired by the popular show “Shark Tank” and integrated with the famous regional species – would attract new entrepreneurs to the DRCI but also would simultaneously serve as a marketing tactic for the DRCI’s entrepreneurial programming. The winner of the DRCI New Business Pitch Competition should receive benefits such as seed funding from the new DRCI fund; an additional free 1-year membership to the DRCI; free entrance into the DRCI Incubation Program; and business services provided by the competition sponsors.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI Team and the DRCI Entrepreneurism and Marketing, Education, and Outreach Committees will research best practices in pitch competitions, develop, and market the programmatic details of the DRCI New Business Pitch Competition.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI Team and the DRCI Entrepreneurism and Marketing, Education, and Outreach Committees will engage regional sponsors to provide monetary and in-kind business services to the winner.

STRATEGY

**Develop a DRCI Intrapreneurship Program**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Revenue/Fiscal Sustainability*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

Intrapreneurship opportunities allow for internal entrepreneurship – encouraging innovation within an existing organization. Successful intrapreneurship can result in benefits for the employee or intrapreneurship teams, the organization, and its customers or stakeholders. Major corporations encourage their employees to consider intrapreneurship and reward the opportunity if it fits with the company’s mission. Google’s Intrapreneurship Program allows selected employees to dedicate up to 20% of their work time on intrapreneurship projects.<sup>8</sup> With the DRCI’s entrepreneurial infrastructure, the organization can easily adapt resources to offer

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<sup>8</sup> Dr. Howard E. Haller and IntrapreneurshipInstitute.com, “Google’s Intrapreneurship Program” <http://www.intrapreneurshipinstitute.com/intrapreneurship-case-studies/intrapreneurship-case-study-googles-intrapreneurship-program-is-very-successful/>, (accessed March 20, 2018).

the DRCI Intrapreneurship Program as a fee-based service to selected individuals and businesses. Further, the Program will demonstrate a robust offering of Business Retention & Expansion services to existing industries and demonstrate the DRCI's sustained support to new business prospects.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will identify, research, and analyze best practices in intrapreneurship programming.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will tour peer intrapreneurship programs to understand best practices and establish a network of individuals leading intrapreneurship efforts.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI will establish the DRCI Intrapreneurship Program as a fee-based service to selected individuals or teams representing companies or organizations.

**Co-Working Offerings (The HUB)**

Located inside the DRCI's headquarters, The HUB will be the region's premier co-working office. This space will appeal to solo-preneurs, remote workers, freelancers, or people searching for some off-site inspiration. The HUB will be equipped with gigabit internet via Wifi and will create an atmosphere that will allow the guest to feel their most productive.

At The HUB small business owners, entrepreneurs, and freelancers will work in proximity to each other where they can collaborate, create, and be a part of the entrepreneurial community. A side goal of the service is to funnel qualified applicants into the DRCI Intrapreneurship Program to accelerate and incubate their business.

- Clients will be surrounded by diverse and like-minded people and the collaboration possibilities are endless
- The HUB memberships will be flexible so that as a client's business grows, their membership can grow with them.
- All memberships are month to month.

HUB Service-Level Options

The HUB will have various levels of office space to accommodate multiple needs:

HUB VISIT	HUB CASUAL	HUB DESK	HUB OFFICE
<p>This 'drop-in' is perfect for the occasional user who needs quick, on-demand work space. Grab a seat, jump on the Wifi, and get productive!</p>	<p>This plan works well for someone new to co-working, or for that road warrior who's only in town a handful of days every month. Includes 80 hours a month, M-F, 9-5.</p>	<p>Enjoy a dedicated station with unlimited 24/7 access. Seats 1-2 people. 4 hours a month of conference room time included.</p>	<p>Build your business with a dedicated private office. Seats 1-3 people. Lockable doors, and walls you can personalize. 16 hours a month of conference room time included.</p>

### Services

The HUB will provide clients with the tools necessary to be successful. From the fiber optic Internet; printing capabilities; meeting rooms available for reservation; and easy parking, clients are sure to excel while at The HUB. Full membership benefits (Desk and Office levels) include:

- Prime location with access to local restaurants, entertainment, and businesses
- Ability to work alongside diverse and like-minded professionals
- Fiber Optic Gigabit Internet Network
- Printing capabilities
- Fax machine, copier, and scanner
- Call-ready meeting rooms with AppleTV
- Postal and parcel address
- Free parking just steps away
- Access to a wide range of events and seminars
- Complimentary coffee and beverages

### **STRATEGIC WORK FOR CO-WORKING OFFERINGS (THE HUB)**

#### STRATEGY

##### **Identify, Research, Analyze, Visit, and Benchmark Peer Co-Working Programs**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*  
*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Revenue/Fiscal Sustainability*  
*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

As the new DRCI headquarters is in the process of being planned, the DRCI Team will promptly identify, research, analyze, and visit peer co-working programs. This level of research will inform the DRCI on best practices to help determine the specifics of The HUB's facility and programmatic needs. Further, these visits to peer programs will help establish or evolve peer relationships for mutual benefit.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will identify, research, analyze, visit, and benchmark peer co-working programs from communities with similar characteristics.

#### STRATEGY

##### **Secure Conference Room Sponsorships**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*  
*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Revenue/Fiscal Sustainability*  
*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

As the new DRCI headquarters is in development, the DRCI Team will begin engaging corporate and community organizations to discuss opportunities for conference room sponsorships. Securing conference room sponsorships has multiple benefits including direct revenue to the DRCI; providing a visible celebration of the Bluffton region's businesses and organizations; and an expansion of the relationships between the DRCI and the sponsoring entities.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will market conference room sponsorship opportunities on the DRCI website, social media channels, events, and during the course of individual or group engagements.

STRATEGY

**Engage Bluffton-Area High Schools to Consider The HUB**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Incubator Program Graduates

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources

In concert with talent retention and attraction strategies discussed later in this strategic plan, the DRCI will engage Bluffton-area high school administrators, teachers, students, and guardians to inform and market The HUB's resources in the community. It is important that high school students understand the entrepreneurial culture and resources in the Bluffton community, so they remain confident that they can have long-term exciting careers and possibly open a business in Bluffton. Further, administrators, teachers, and guardians may find opportunities to participate at The HUB – some may even become entrepreneurs themselves!

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will engage Bluffton-area high school administrators to discuss opportunities to present The HUB to other administrators, teachers, students, and guardians. The DRCI will highlight the connectivity to high-tech knowledge careers and entrepreneurship.

Action Item #2:

Upon approval, the DRCI will present The HUB to the regional high school community including administrators, teachers, students, and guardians. The Team will make the strong connection between secondary education, a post-secondary education, and the opportunities at the DRCI. The intent is capture these audiences early – especially the students, to build long-term loyalty to the region. The DRCI will invite these stakeholders to tour The HUB and there may even be opportunities for school-sanctioned field trips.

STRATEGY

**Market The HUB in Coordination with Other Organizational Changes**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Earned Media

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources

Once constructed, the new DRCI headquarters will be home to The HUB and the DRCI will have exciting opportunities to market the program in coordination with other announcements. The DRCI is currently in a strong position to celebrate past success but champion what is new. The organization is on the cusp of selecting a new CEO, has a new strategic plan, new or evolving programming, and will celebrate its new headquarters. These announcements simultaneously present a strong opportunity to comprehensively market the exciting changes – and this includes The HUB.



Beyond a press release and earned media regarding the DRCI's announcements, the DRCI must participate in direct marketing and salesmanship to secure memberships to The HUB. The DRCI will develop a call list of entrepreneurs, innovators, home-based employees, companies, and organizations that may benefit from The HUB's services.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will integrate The HUB into a more comprehensive sole or series of press releases in coordination with other major announcements.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will develop a call list and provide direct marketing and engagement of prospects for membership or transactional use of The HUB.

### **Business Startup/Concierge Services**

The DRCI and other partner organizations have given advice to existing companies as well as individuals who have been thinking of starting their own company. In the case of the DRCI, historically this has taken the form of a phone call to offer advice or making an introduction to a third party or contacts at Town Hall that can help. In a few instances, the DRCI has met with parties for several hours to understand the issues they are facing so advice can be offered. However, none of these companies have been enrolled in the formal DRCI Incubation Program.

There is now a larger vision and opportunity to embrace all entrepreneurs and emerging businesses and offer more specific help in the form of business startup and concierge services. This will not replace the DRCI Incubation Program but will be a form of intermediate assistance to ensure that every individual or business that comes to the DRCI can receive some level of help and get pointed in the right direction.

### **STRATEGIC WORK FOR BUSINESS STARTUP/CONCIERGE SERVICES**

#### STRATEGY

#### **Research Best Practices in Business Startup/Concierge Services**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

Identifying, researching, and analyzing best practices in Business Startup/Concierge Services will ensure that the programming and resources the DRCI provides will be effective.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will research best practices in the development of Business Startup/Concierge Services and programming. The research will focus on specific services, benefits, resources – particularly business startup handbooks, and marketing the services.

STRATEGY

**Coordinate with Regional Small Business and Entrepreneurial Support Partners**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

To maximize resources and provide best-in-class service, the DRCI will ensure the organization's Business Startup/Concierge Services are aligned with other resources and efforts.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will engage regional small business development and entrepreneurial support partners. This engagement will seek to fully understand and inventory all available services and resources on the local, county, regional, state, and national level. This data will guide the development of the DRCI Business Startup and Service Handbook.

STRATEGY

**Develop the DRCI Business Startup and Service Handbook**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

The DRCI Business Startup and Service Handbook will provide a comprehensive resource for new entrepreneurs, emerging businesses, and established companies. It also is a positive tool to be leveraged for business retention & expansion and business attraction programming. The Handbook will include detailed, yet user-friendly resources to help individuals and businesses start, expand, and operate a business. Elements will include resources to formally incorporate and start a business; address regulations and policies – such as permits, licenses, and zoning; state, county, and local government information; incentive and lending policies and programs; private and institutional financing resources; workforce development; education; industry resources such as manufacturing extension partnerships (MEPs); and other relevant resources.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will integrate research and analysis, write, produce, publish, and market the DRCI Business Startup and Service Handbook.

STRATEGY

**Market the Business Startup/Concierge Services with Other Organizational Changes**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Earned Media*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

As mentioned, there are a multitude of positive DRCI announcements emerging around the same time. An established Business Startup/Concierge Services program is an important element to the overall entrepreneurial support programming of the DRCI. It is important to coordinate the announcement of enhanced Business Startup/Concierge Services programming in relation to other DRCI news.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will integrate news about an enhanced Business Startup/Concierge Services program into a more comprehensive sole or series of press releases in coordination with other major announcements.

## **BUSINESS ATTRACTION, EXPANSION AND RETENTION**

### ***Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development***

Business Attraction and Business Retention & Expansion are two classic and important elements of an economic development organization's programming. These programs are not isolated from Entrepreneurism but serve more established companies. These businesses tend to need less entrepreneurial support (except for Intrapreneurship and partnering with or acquiring entrepreneurs), but require attention to operational needs around facilities, infrastructure, workforce, and the cost of doing business.

#### **Business Attraction**

Business Attraction is focused on recruiting new companies to a community. Like consumers, businesses have choice in who they procure products or services from, who they partner with, and where they operate. This free market model is a cornerstone of economic development, as it encourages healthy competition. This in turn can enable a community to recruit business that provide quality jobs, capital investment, provide government revenue, diversity the industry base, and support philanthropic causes. Increasing the primary industry business base supports a community's overall sustainability and vibrancy.

Business attraction comes in several forms. Some businesses choose to partially or completely relocate or consolidate to a new location. There are a variety of factors that may cause a business to consider relocation or consolidation. These include, but are not limited to, operational costs; workforce; customer proximity; transportation and logistics; and sometimes quality of life. Another form of business attraction may not result in the loss of operations and jobs at an existing location. As companies innovate, they may require new operational footprints to bring new products to market. These factors may include existing operational capacity restraints; proximity to key customers or markets; or business models that require a lower cost of business than existing operations within a company's footprint.

There are a variety of tools and strategies that are employed to successfully win business attraction projects. Many companies with a moderate-to-substantial attraction project hire a site selection consultant to guide the business through the process of eliminating geographies – and eventually specific sites from consideration, to ultimately select a new site for operations. Site selection consultants use or acquire objective industry, workforce, socioeconomic, geographical, real estate, and operational cost data to help guide the process of elimination. The consultants and prospects often complement the objective data with qualitative discussions with business executives and other relevant leaders in the community.

Site selection consultants often work with their clients to negotiate incentives, financing, and workforce development training to maximize their project and leverage their up-front investment costs. Therefore, economic development organizations must have a robust program to adequately and efficiently engage site selectors and prospects – both in a proactive business development setting and reactively when responding to a Request for Information (RFI). Further, economic development organizations must have access to competitive incentives that are attractive to prospects but that ultimately provide a net benefit to the community. Finally, but not to be considered exhaustive, successful traditional public relations; media; and social media tools can evolve an image of a community over time. These strategies emphasize objective selling points such as a community's industry clusters or workforce strengths. Further, they can positively position subjective factors such as championing a downtown's vibrancy and culture. These strategies have great potential control a community's narrative and support attraction efforts.

### **Business Attraction at DRCI**

The DRCI has a great opportunity to enhance Business Attraction programming and win new attraction projects through new or refreshed strategies. Business Attraction is important to the success of the DRCI and the economic sustainability of the Town of Bluffton as it expands economic opportunity and the tax base. The following Business Attraction strategies have been developed through the alignment of the Board strategic planning process, the Target Industry Study, internal DRCI Team expertise, state and regional resources, and through the integration of national best practices.

### **STRATEGIC WORK FOR BUSINESS ATTRACTION**

#### STRATEGY

#### **Enhanced Alignment with Regional and State Economic Development Partners**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Prospects/Pipeline*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Relationships with Economic Development Partners*

The DRCI has a strong network and healthy relationship with regional and state economic development partners. These include, but are not limited to, the South Carolina Department of Commerce; SouthernCarolina Regional Development Alliance (SouthernCarolina Alliance); Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation; Jasper County, SC; Savannah Economic Development Authority; and of course, the Town of Bluffton. There is a great opportunity to continue to expand regional economic development collaboration with these partners. The DRCI will continue to engage these organizations and discuss how to enhance regional collaboration – enabling economic development benefit for all.

As the regional economic development organization representing the Bluffton area, SouthernCarolina Alliance serves as a major partner and source for leads and RFIs. To assess the DRCI's ongoing operational improvement – much of what will be implemented from this strategic plan, and the Town of Bluffton's assets and liabilities, the DRCI will continue to engage SouthernCarolina Alliance to enhance Bluffton's opportunities to respond to RFIs and compete for economic development projects.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI CEO and VP of Economic Development will establish a concerted and formal executive-to-executive engagement strategy. This will mostly be in the form of ongoing scheduled meetings, lunches, and relationship building opportunities. These conversations will be friendly but meaningful – focused on advancing organizational relationships and finding opportunities to pool resources.

#### Action Item #2:

The DRCI will engage SouthernCarolina Alliance around specific and ongoing discussions about assets and liabilities in Bluffton. The focus will be on enhancing the DRCI's ability to respond to RFIs. Further, the DRCI will seek opportunities to partner with SouthernCarolina Alliance on business development travel and site selector and industry engagements.

## STRATEGY

### **Expand the Encore Entrepreneurism Strategy for Business Attraction**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*  
*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

As Encore Entrepreneurs are experienced and skilled individuals in the mid-to-later stage of their careers, it is logical that a similar profile of individuals may also be suited for business attraction. This scenario can occur if the Encore Entrepreneur is already a business owner in another geography, has business and/or personal mobility, and would be attracted to Bluffton's high-quality of life. A hypothetical example could see the owner of a small-to-mid sized manufacturing company in a supply chain relevant to Bluffton (aerospace, automotive, hospitality products, etc.) relocate or create a second facility in Bluffton due to both business interests and the opportunity to enjoy the high-quality of life or quasi-retire.

Additionally, highly-valued C-level executives in corporations may have the desire to move business operations to Bluffton due to the lifestyle and for strategic business reasons. They may be so influential in their organizations that they would receive corporate or Board approval for a relocation and bring other employees with them.

Identifying these individuals will require innovation, marketing, and strong networking acumen. It is no secret that the Bluffton, Hilton Head, Beaufort County area is an attractive region for well-connected executives from all over the world. Therefore, it is important to leverage these existing assets through strategic networking at social clubs, events, serving on Boards, and through leveraging networks. Further, it is important to change the narrative that the region is only a great area to retire, have a second home, or go on vacation. Effective branding and marketing can evolve the image of Bluffton to be seen as the strategic and business-friendly epicenter of the Lowcountry.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will distribute a national press release about the DRCI's intention to attract the owners of small-to-mid sized manufacturers, software developers, business service companies, and other companies to relocate their families and businesses to Bluffton. This tactic may in turn produce earned media to help market the approach.

#### Action Item #2:

The DRCI will engage the Beaufort County Association of Realtors, the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors, and select regional realtors to communicate the DRCI's resources and desire to connect with relocating – or second home owners of businesses from other geographies.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI will connect with planned and organized communities such as Palmetto Bluff and many others to market the DRCI's resources and desire to connect with relocating – or second home owners of businesses from other geographies. There may be logical opportunities to connect with prospects in their own neighborhoods.

Action Item #4:

The DRCI CEO and/or VP will expand the DRCI's global executive network to identify and engage small-to-mid sized business owners to attract to Bluffton. This will be accomplished by seeking opportunities to join regional Board of Directors; membership in regional social clubs; and seeking referrals to high-net worth individuals, particularly business owners.

STRATEGY

**Site Selector Engagement**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Prospects/Pipeline*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors*

The DRCI will mostly work with the SouthernCarolina Alliance and, on select occasions, the South Carolina Department of Commerce on lead site selector engagement opportunities. The DRCI should emphasize the organization's interest in being involved in any in-bound site selector engagements as well as out-bound site selector and industry forums.

The DRCI will have opportunities to engage site selectors outside of the coordinated events with the SouthernCarolina Alliance and South Carolina Department of Commerce. The opportunities will be realized through individual site selector forums of which the SouthernCarolina Alliance and South Carolina Department of Commerce choose not to attend; industry shows specific to the DRCI Target Industries; and through regional engagements with the Savannah Economic Development Authority.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will coordinate with the SouthernCarolina Alliance and, on select occasions, the South Carolina Department of Commerce to express the desire to be actively involved in any regional in-bound site selector engagement opportunities and out-bound forums.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will identify select, strategic, and relevant opportunities to engage site selectors and business prospects at events that fall outside of the coordination with SouthernCarolina Alliance and South Carolina Department of Commerce.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI will research and analyze the extensive Site Selection Firms and Site Selection Consultants list found in **Appendix A**. The DRCI will strategize unique outreach opportunities in coordination with SouthernCarolina Alliance and other regional economic development partners. There may be opportunities in the future where DRCI leadership will engage these site selectors and therefore, it is important to know their background and specializations.



STRATEGY

**Business Development Travel: Site Selector Forums and Trade Shows**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Marketing and Business Development Conferences or Trips*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors*

The DRCI will mostly align with the SouthernCarolina Alliance and, on select occasions, the South Carolina Department of Commerce on coordinated outbound site selector forum and industry show travel. However, there may be unique and select occasions where the DRCI desires to attend forums outside of SouthernCarolina Alliance's business development plans. The DRCI leadership may attend these forums alone or coordinated with other regional economic development partners.

**Forums and Conferences**

The following table demonstrates a recommended list of economic development, site selector, industry, or innovation forums and conferences. The list has been developed in relation to the Target Industry Study; strategic planning; and other relevant variables that direct business development opportunities for the DRCI.

***It is understood that the DRCI marketing budget may not be able to accommodate all forum and conference opportunities.***

Notes:

- TIS = Conference relevancy to industries identified in the new DRCI Target Industry Study
- Conferences are organized by ascending date (closest date first)

**Figure 2: 2018-2019 Economic Development, Site Selector, Industry, & Innovation Conferences to Attend**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Conference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Registration<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Priority</b>
DIG SOUTH	<a href="#">2018 DIG SOUTH Tech Conference</a>	Charleston, SC	April 25-27, 2018	Approx. \$599	Over 100 top-shelf speakers share their knowledge and know how with 2,000 attendees. Tracks include technology, business and marketing. <i>TIS: All</i>	High
South Carolina Economic Developers' Association (SCEDA)	<a href="#">2018 SCEDA Annual Conference</a>	Hilton Head Island, SC	May 2-4, 2018	Undetermined	Statewide economic development conference. Opportunity to highlight DRCI as a regional asset. Close proximity to DRCI. <i>TIS: All</i>	High

<sup>9</sup> Registration price is assuming one registration. The cost for exhibition varies upon event and booth size.

Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)	<a href="#">2018 BIO International Convention</a>	Boston, MA	June 4-7, 2018	Approx. \$1,750	The leading biotech convention where DRCI will engage 16K+ biotech and pharma industry leaders. DRCI can demonstrate DRCI/Bluffton's assets for expanding bio firms. <i>TIS: Related Life Science and Manufacturing Targets</i>	Low
Farnborough International Airshow	<a href="#">Farnborough International Airshow</a>	Farnborough, UK	July 16-22, 2018	Various	A leading aerospace convention rotates years w/ the Paris Air Show. A top opportunity to engage industry leaders & market DRCI. <i>TIS: Related Aerospace Manufacturing Targets</i>	Medium
Site Selectors Guild	<a href="#">2018 Fall Forum</a>	Greenville, SC	September 10-12, 2018	TBD	The leading fall forum for some of the world's top site selectors. DRCI can directly engage these consultants. Close proximity to DRCI. <i>TIS: All</i>	High
Industrial Asset Management Council (IAMC)	<a href="#">2018 IAMC Fall Forum</a>	Philadelphia, PA	September 15-19, 2018	Approx. \$250	A leading conference on manufacturing real estate investment. Opportunity to market DRCI in front of real estate executives. <i>TIS: Related Manufacturing Targets</i>	Medium

International Economic Development Council (IEDC)	<a href="#">2018 Annual Conference</a>	Atlanta, GA	September 30 - Oct. 3, 2018	Approx. \$750	The leading international economic development conference hosts leading site selectors & demonstrates industry trends. <i>TIS: All</i>	High
Urban Land Institute (ULI)	<a href="#">2018 ULI Fall Meeting</a>	Boston, MA	October 8-11, 2018	Approx. \$2,495	DRCI will engage more than 6K leaders from every sector of the real estate industry. <i>TIS: All</i>	Low
Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR)	<a href="#">2018 SIOR Fall World Conference</a>	Denver, CO	October 11-13, 2018	Approx. \$1,170	Worldwide conference attended by corporate real estate brokers. Opportunity to market DRCI & specific sites. <i>TIS: All</i>	Medium
State Science & Technology Institute (SSTI)	<a href="#">2018 SSTI Annual Conference</a>	Salt Lake City, UT	December 3-5, 2018	Approx. \$775	Engage leaders in the innovation economy to understand trends. <i>TIS: Related Life Science; Computational Sciences; Information Technology (IT); &amp; Manufacturing</i>	Medium
Geekend by The Creative Coast, Inc.	<a href="#">Geekend 2019</a>	Savannah, GA	February 1-2, 2019	Approx. \$129	Geekend is a two-day conference where Savannah's hackers, hustlers, designers and makers converge. It has been held annually since 2009 and showcases the best and brightest innovators from tech, education, design, engineering and business in Savannah and beyond. Close proximity to DRCI. <i>TIS: All</i>	High

South by Southwest (SXSW)	<a href="#">2019 SXSW</a>	Austin, TX	March 8-17, 2019	Approx. \$1,150 (premium)	A leading conference for entrepreneurs & companies presenting new tech and ventures. DRCI will be able to engage these entrepreneurs, industry leaders, & influencers. <i>TIS: All</i>	Medium
HANNOVER MESSE	<a href="#">2019 HANNOVER MESSE</a>	Hannover, Germany	April 1-5, 2019	Approx. \$105 €	A leading conference on global manufacturing innovation. Opportunity to market DRCI in front of mfg. real estate executives. DRCI will see emerging mfg. tech and be able to engage these industry leaders. <i>TIS: Related Manufacturing Targets</i>	Low
Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC)	<a href="#">2019 Meet The Consultants</a>	Dallas, TX	April 19-20, 2019	Approx. \$560	The SEDC consultant forum provides the DRCI great access to site selection consultant and emerging trends in economic development. <i>TIS: All</i>	High
International Business Innovation Association (InBIA)	<a href="#">2019: 33<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Business Incubation</a>	TBD	TBD, potentially late April, 2019	Approx. \$1,195	More than 600 people who are engaged in helping entrepreneurs succeed gather to share ideas, learn new tools and techniques, explore effective program ideas, and look to the future of the industry. <i>TIS: All</i>	Medium

South Carolina Power Team (SC Power Team)	<a href="#">SC Power Team Annual Meeting</a>	TBD	TBD	Undetermined	The SC Power Team is the economic development organization representing the state’s 20 electric cooperatives that power more than 2 million South Carolinians. Connections to their leadership and network is strategic for the DRCI. Close proximity to DRCI. <i>TIS: All</i>	High
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Action Item #1:

The DRCI will coordinate the Figure 2 list of forums and conferences with the SouthernCarolina Alliance to determine their travel calendar and to seek efficiencies and regional business development alignment.

Action Item #2:

Once the DRCI fully determines the SouthernCarolina Alliance business development travel schedule, DRCI leadership will prioritize forum travel from Figure 2.

Action Item #3:

Upon confirming the DRCI 2018-2019 business development travel, the DRCI identify the appropriate Team members to attend the events.

Action Item #4:

Upon confirming the DRCI 2018-2019 business development travel, the DRCI will seek sponsorship opportunities to offset registration and travel costs.

**Business Retention & Expansion**

As a critical component to any community's toolbox of economic development services, a BRE program provides assistance to companies to facilitate growth and expansion leading to new jobs and capital investment. Further, a BRE program prevents companies from relocating or closing. The primary objective of a BRE program is to identify and address the needs of businesses and is accomplished through sustained relationships and data collection. This allows DRCI, the Town of Bluffton, and other regional partners to better align policies, investments, and economic development efforts with its clients.

There are a variety of ways to create and implement a BRE program. DRCI will formally develop a multifaceted program that gathers crucial intelligence, offers technical assistance, and helps a variety of primary industry businesses to grow. Fundamentally, the DRCI BRE program should position the DRCI to be seen as a direct resource

provider. This includes being a technical assistance provider, a broker of assistance resources – including access to capital, and a business community advocate in relation to the business climate and associated policies and procedures of the Town of Bluffton, Beaufort County, and the State of South Carolina.

The DRCI BRE Program will include the following elements:

- Comprehensive list of existing Bluffton businesses
- BRE program infrastructure
- Survey instrument to regularly collect, analyze, and track data on both the company and industry
- BRE database to house and analyze data and provide consultation to partners – this will be included in the new DRCI CRM

### **BRE at DRCI**

The DRCI has strong relationships with Bluffton's existing businesses. This should continue. The development of a formal BRE program will further demonstrate DRCI's commitment to existing businesses; demonstrate DRCI's value to Bluffton businesses and prospects; provide concerted organizational direction for the program; and organize data to help guide local and regional policy and service delivery enhancements.

### **STRATEGIC WORK FOR BRE**

#### STRATEGY

**Develop a Formal List of Existing Primary Industry Businesses in Bluffton**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)*

*Visits, Calls, or Engagements*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction*

When developing a BRE program, first, it is vital to understand the portfolio of existing businesses in a community. It is logical to know the businesses that need to be engaged and to build a program around these clients.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will research, analyze, scrub, and develop a formal and comprehensive list of existing primary industry businesses in Bluffton. This list will include the confirmed identification of existing businesses with their formal and known name; baseline contact information; and business data.

## STRATEGY

### **Develop a Formal BRE Program Infrastructure**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)*

*Visits, Calls, or Engagements*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction*

A BRE program should have a formal and organized programmatic structure. BRE is a deliberate and long-term process of relationship building and data collection. As sensitive and private business information is often shared, and there are broader variables at play, SOPs become an important tool to guide the interactions. Further, a major benefit of BRE is the ability to collect business data to produce aggregate reports. SOPs and a formal program infrastructure will ensure the data is collected consistently and fully utilized.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will develop an optimal structural composition for a successful BRE program. This development will include standard operating procedures (SOPs); the integration of the list of existing primary industry businesses; rotational BRE visitation or outreach schedule; clearly identified and aligned BRE partners; accountability and evaluation metrics; and other key information.

## STRATEGY

### **Develop a BRE Survey**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)*

*Visits, Calls, or Engagements*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction*

Once the program structure, including roles and responsibilities, has been established, the DRCI will develop a business survey instrument that best fits the organization's needs. Fundamentally, there are four (4) ways to conduct a business survey:

- Mail
- In-person interview
- Combined mail and in-person interview
- Email or web-based

Each type of survey delivery has its benefits depending on the strategic BRE objective, and it is important to choose the model that best matches the resources—both financial and human—available at the DRCI. However, an in-person interview is recommended to establish or expand the relationships between business leaders and the DRCI.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will design a survey questionnaire, focusing on topics such as:

- Basic firm contact information and background
- Business climate

- Labor and training needs
- Marketing and trade
- Financing needs
- Regulatory issues
- Barriers to growth and expansion plans
- Satisfaction with public services and utilities
- Past utilization and satisfaction of local assistance

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will design and integrate the BRE Survey into a process to collect and analyze consistent data.

STRATEGY

*Develop a BRE Database or Integrate with the New DRCI CRM*

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)*

*Visits, Calls, or Engagements*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction*

As the BRE Survey is designed to obtain business data to be used to respond to retention threats, expansion opportunities, and to advise policy; there is a need to store, organize, and analyze the data with the use of a BRE Database or through the use of a CRM.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will integrate a BRE Database into the new DRCI CRM.

Action Item #2:

If the DRCI is not yet able to accommodate a CRM, the DRCI will develop a BRE Database using spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel.

STRATEGY

*Prioritize BRE Visits*

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)*

*Visits, Calls, or Engagements*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Business Client Satisfaction*

It is important to conduct BRE visits and service with every primary industry business in Bluffton. However, strategic implementation of a BRE program will require that Bluffton's largest, fastest growing, and most at risk employers are prioritized in the BRE rotation.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will utilize the portfolio of existing primary industry employers in Bluffton to identify, prioritize, and increase the frequency of visits with Bluffton's largest, fastest growing, and most at risk employers.



STRATEGY

**Market the BRE Program**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Earned Media*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

A BRE program offers tremendous value to existing primary industry businesses and the community. It is often the case that communities with a BRE program do not communicate that the program exists and its value. This is a missed opportunity, making it harder to secure BRE visits and failing to demonstrate the value to the community. Successfully marketing the BRE program will communicate DRCI's intent when they request meetings and emphasize the organization's commitment to Bluffton's primary industry businesses.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will integrate news about an enhanced BRE program into a more comprehensive sole or series of press releases in coordination with other major announcements.

## **REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development**

The DRCI has an important role in leading conversations about the portfolio and adequate availability of sites and buildings for primary industry business economic development projects. The organization also must guide conversations around the connectivity between operational requirements of businesses and Bluffton's existing and planned infrastructure. These conversations will not occur in a vacuum and must be aligned with numerous public and private development partners.

#### **Real Estate: Sites & Buildings**

Economic development requires communities to have an adequate inventory of sites and buildings to accommodate economic growth. Hypothetically, a community can become fully built out. However, there is always opportunities for infill development. The DRCI must lead conversations about balancing Bluffton's recent development growth with the need to preserve and develop sites for primary industry development – in contrast to commercial development. Further, some attractive economic development projects require Class A Office real estate. The DRCI should also engage private and public partners to gauge the market and attract Class A Office developers to Bluffton to accommodate more corporate, back office, bio, and IT/computer and software development projects.

#### **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is a related and important element of the development conversation. The DRCI must engage in conversations with public and private partners to assure that Bluffton has adequate infrastructure, both in utilities and transportation, to accommodate economic development projects and the community's growth. Elements of infrastructure to assess include, but are not limited to, roads; bridges; traffic planning; electric; gas; water; sewer; stormwater; refuse and recyclables; telecommunication; and broadband.

### **STRATEGIC WORK FOR REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

#### **STRATEGY**

[Link the SouthernCarolina Alliance Sites & Buildings Database to the DRCI Website](#)

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Prospects/Pipeline*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Relationships with Economic Development Partners*

Contemporary economic development organizations offer a Sites & Buildings Database on their website. A database provides site selectors, prospects, and regional economic development partners easy access to a listing of available sites and buildings in a given community. Developing a Sites & Buildings Database can be costly. Therefore, instead of developing a separate database solely for Bluffton, the DRCI will link the SouthernCarolina Alliance Sites & Buildings Database to the DRCI website and ensure all available sites and buildings are listed.

#### **Action Item #1:**

The DRCI will coordinate with SouthernCarolina Alliance and link their Sites & Buildings Database to the DRCI website.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will coordinate with local developers, brokers, property owners, and Southern Carolina Alliance to ensure all available sites and buildings are listed and updated on the Southern Carolina Alliance database.

STRATEGY

**The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will Lead the Regional Discussion Regarding Sites & Buildings**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Sites & Buildings Inventory*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors*

The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will be comprised of DRCI Board Members, local governments, utilities, transportation partners, and relevant representatives of the development community. The formation of this committee was designed to address Bluffton's need for more sites and buildings and take a lead role in driving new development opportunities.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board and DRCI Business Attraction, Expansion and Retention Committees will collaborate and share data such as BRE reports and RFI's that DRCI could not submit sites or buildings for, to drive regional conversations aimed at advancing property development in Bluffton reserved for primary industry economic development projects.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will collaborate the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to enhance land use planning and zoning (through Comprehensive Plan updates and other means) and development policies to expand opportunities for more development reserved or suited for primary industry economic development projects.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will engage regional utilities and transportation partners to assess limitations and opportunities to enhance the local infrastructure in Bluffton to increasingly accommodate primary industry economic development projects.

STRATEGY

**Attract Developers**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Sites & Buildings Inventory*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors*

Bluffton still has greenfield sites available and even more infill development opportunity. Throughout the course of the strategic planning process it was apparent that developers are interested in Bluffton in both of these development scenarios. Combining Bluffton's growth and the strategies set forth in this strategic plan, the DRCI must proactively engage developers to attract and entice them to build in Bluffton.

Action Item #1:

the DRCI Team and DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will court regional developers to consider greenfield and infill development in Bluffton.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TALENT RETENTION/ATTRACTION**

***Aligned Closest with the Goal: Leading Regional Economic Development Resource***

### **Workforce Development**

Workforce development is a task that every economic development organization should be concerned with. Workforce development has historically occurred in two forms:

- Place-based strategies that attempt to address the needs of people living in a particular neighborhood
- Sector-based strategies that focus on matching workers' skills to needs in an industry already present in the region

Across both approaches, themes for best practices have emerged. Successful workforce development programs typically have a strong network of ties in a community, and are equipped to respond to changes in their environments. Additionally, they take a holistic approach to the problems faced by participants. What this means is the DRCI must engage with organizations that are on the front lines when it comes to training workers.

Examples of these organizations/programs are:

- University of South Carolina at Beaufort (USCB)
- Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL)
- Beaufort County School District (BCSD)
- Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)
- Collaborative Pipeline Programs linking K-12, Technical College of the Lowcountry, and USCB
- Chamber and other organizations marketing Bluffton as a destination for skilled and experienced retirees (Encore Entrepreneurs)
- Community recruitment
- University of South Carolina Beaufort's Hilton Head Gateway Campus, South Carolina's newest 4-year college
- Early college and career programs
- ReadySC, South Carolina's premiere employment training resource
- Lowcountry Council of Governments/SC Works

The long-range goal is that businesses looking to expand or relocate to Bluffton will benefit from a quality labor pool marked by competitive wages and ample skilled employees representing diverse demographics from retired executives to young professionals.

### **Talent Retention and Attraction**

Talent Retention and Attraction is an important element focused on providing existing and prospective businesses the quantity and quality of workforce required for businesses to thrive in the Bluffton region. With a growing population; strong business base; regional institutions of higher education; a vibrant town center – Old Town Bluffton; beautiful beaches; and the Lowcountry lifestyle, the DRCI and partners have a lot to work with. However, the area does lose talent to larger metropolitan regions and thus, Talent Retention and Attraction will be enhanced.

### **LowcountryWorks.com**

LowcountryWorks™ is a part of the DRCI's comprehensive Workforce Development & Talent Retention and Attraction strategy. LowcountryWorks™ is a directory and

map of known high-knowledge, high-impact companies in the Bluffton region. Career seekers find this site especially useful by being able to quickly view the companies that are hiring and directly link to the respective career opportunities.

The Company Showcase, features a simple, comprehensive, and up-to-date listing and map of companies operating within the region. Companies can be quickly filtered by industry or limited to show only those known to be currently hiring.

## **STRATEGIC WORK FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TALENT RETENTION/ATTRACTION**

### STRATEGY

#### **Utilize BRE and RFI Data to Advise Workforce Partners**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Workforce Availability*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

The power of an aligned economic development strategy is evident when you can utilize data from other strategies to provide meaningful direction for another. This is evident in DRCI's ability to employ BRE and RFI data to advise regional workforce development partners on the workforce gaps and opportunities in Bluffton.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will utilize BRE and RFI data to continuously engage workforce development partners to directly or broadly respond to Bluffton's existing business workforce needs and those of prospects considering the region.

### STRATEGY

#### **Engage Secondary and Post-Secondary Students for Talent Retention and Attraction**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Workforce Availability*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

The DRCI has a major role in the collaborative approach to retaining and attracting talent for the Bluffton region. Leveraging the DRCI Incubation Program; The HUB; regional businesses; post-secondary educational institutions; and a vibrant Lowcountry culture, the DRCI has opportunities to align efforts – with partners as well – and engage both secondary and post-secondary student. The message should focus on the career assets that are already in place, that are growing, and specifically how these students can be successful in Bluffton.

#### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will coordinate with regional economic and workforce development partners to engage Bluffton-area high school administrators and post-secondary education partners to lead a discussion with students on how the Bluffton region offers strong career opportunities and accommodates entrepreneurs.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI and regional economic and workforce development partners will engage Bluffton primary industry businesses to encourage the availability of paid internships and the connectivity of these opportunities to secondary and post-secondary schools.

Action Item #3:

The DRCI and regional economic and workforce development partners will engage Bluffton secondary schools' office of alumni relations to develop a marketing campaign to invite alumni who have graduated from colleges outside of the region to return to the Bluffton region. This also should be coordinated with Bluffton's primary industry employers.

## MARKETING, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

### Aligned Closest with the Goal: Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission

Marketing, education, and outreach are important components to the DRCI's Mission as it is important that the DRCI is visible in the community and demonstrating its value. Further, the DRCI's strategic work requires visibility to attract new entrepreneurs, businesses, and talent. The DRCI will align the related activities for Marketing, Education, and Outreach to effectively connect DRCI to the Bluffton community.

### **Marketing**

Marketing is a complementary activity to Business Attraction. It is known that site selectors and prospects use objective data and systems in their process of elimination. However, decision making is never purely objective. Therefore, marketing has a strong role in assertively defining a geography, positioning its strengths, and being prepared to address or redirect messages that overcome perceived or actual liabilities. Marketing should be driven by data but complemented by engagement – which builds ownership and value, and by succinct and impactful messaging. Coupled with other Business Attraction efforts, the DRCI can use marketing to assert Bluffton's opportunities for new businesses. Marketing also supports programmatic efforts in BRE; Workforce Development; Talent Retention and Attraction; and opportunities to support the DRCI Foundation. Further, it demonstrates the DRCI's efforts; successes; and strategic initiatives.

### **Education**

#### Coding Programs:

Apart from companies in the technology sector, there are an increasing number of businesses relying on computer code. Eight of the top 25 jobs this year are tech positions. A software engineer could just as easily find themselves working at Apple, as they could in a hospital, or at an automotive manufacturer.

As a result, coding has become a core skill that bolsters a candidate's chances of commanding a high salary. Burning Glass and Oracle Academy researchers found that jobs requiring coding skills pay up to \$22,000 per year more, on average.<sup>10</sup> "For students looking to increase their potential income, few other skills open the door to as many well-paying careers,"<sup>11</sup> they write in the report. Nearly half (49%) of all jobs that pay more than \$58,000 require some coding skills, according to their analysis.<sup>12</sup>

The DRCI has a growing footprint in this area; to teach coding skills to individuals of all ages. In 2016 the DRCI partnered with the organization "Girls Who Code" (GWC) - a national non-profit organization founded in 2012 with the goal to teach computer science concepts and coding to girls in the 6th to 12th grades. Their mission is to inspire, educate, and equip girls with the computing skills to pursue 21st century opportunities, with the specific goal to provide computer science education and exposure to 1 million young women by 2020. The 2016 DRCI GWC club had an enrollment of 17 students. Beyond GWC, the plan is for DRCI to expand its offering to other ages groups, co-ed classes, and other programming languages. GWC is just the first step down this path for the DRCI.

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<sup>10</sup> Burning Glass and Oracle Academy, "Beyond Point and Click: The Expanding Demand for Coding Skills" Burning Glass Technologies. June, 2016.

<sup>11</sup> Burning Glass and Oracle Academy, "Beyond Point and Click"

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

### Other Education Programs:

The DRCI will continue to consider strategic opportunities to provide education for the benefit of the organization's economic development efforts. Opportunities will align with strategies outlined in this strategic plan.

### **Outreach**

A major initiative of the DRCI is to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation at the regional level to the general public. By creating an environment such as this we foster more awareness that people can start their own companies. The plan is to do this with students, young adults, and older adults (Encore Entrepreneurs) by reaching out to them in schools and throughout the community.

As seen throughout this strategic plan, the DRCI will be engaged with the major educational institutions in the region. Among these include:

- University of South Carolina at Beaufort (USCB)
- Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL)
- Beaufort County School District (BCSD)
- Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

As appropriate, the DRCI will seek opportunities to engage the public for the strategic benefit of entrepreneurship and economic development in Bluffton. This sincere outreach complements the DRCI's goal to be seen as a leading economic development influencer, educator, and resource in the region.

## **STRATEGIC WORK FOR MARKETING, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH**

### STRATEGY

#### **Assess DRCI Marketing Tools**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: Earned Media*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

It is prudent to seek continuous improvement in all matters of operations; but in the case of marketing trends and tools, adaptation is key. It is clear that modes of media can dramatically change as new technology and services compete with traditional sources. Social media channels see dramatic swings in users. Further, unique experiences and non-traditional marketing such as Guerilla Marketing<sup>13</sup>, challenge traditional marketing delivery. The DRCI must be cognizant of various marketing trends as the organization employs marketing for programmatic efforts.

### Action Item #1:

The DRCI will inventory and assess all current marketing tools. The intent is to understand the marketing tools that are effective and those that may be a distraction. The DRCI will emphasize those tools that work.

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<sup>13</sup> "Guerrilla marketing embraces 360 degrees of communication, reaching target audiences in as many ways as are affordable and possible. Your task as a guerrilla is to be aware of all the marketing weapons available to you, to experiment with many of them, and then to identify the combination of weapons that provides the highest profit to you."

Levinson, Jay Conrad. *The Best of Guerrilla Marketing: Guerrilla Marketing Remix*. Entrepreneur Press, July 8, 2011.



Action Item #2:

The DRCI will explore new marketing methods or applications to advance the organization.

STRATEGY

**Strategically Align Press Releases**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *Earned Media*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

As mentioned, the DRCI is on the verge of numerous announcements. From announcing a new CEO; to the new DRCI headquarters and HUB; and new or enhanced programming; the DRCI has a lot of great things to share with the Bluffton, regional, state, national, and global community. Further, any significant economic development announcements warrant a strategically timed press release. Therefore, the DRCI must carefully coordinate emerging announcements.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will inventory upcoming announcements, note appropriate timing for public consumption, and potentially submit a consolidated press release.

Action Item #2:

The DRCI will explore the opportunity to contract with a professional public relations firm to guide the DRCI on timing and alignment of the upcoming announcements.

STRATEGY

**Assess Opportunities for Expanded Education or Outreach**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *Speaking Engagements*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

The DRCI must assess current Education and Outreach activities while identifying new opportunities to add value in the Bluffton community. Educational programming at the DRCI adds to the vibrancy of entrepreneurial efforts, supports talent retention and attraction, and creates loyalty and ownership in the community. Outreach programming builds relationships with direct or indirect partners that are so crucially needed to execute economic development strategies.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will assess current Education and Outreach programming in alignment with the DRCI mission, other programming, and this strategic plan.

Action Item #2:

As needed, the DRCI will identify expanded opportunities to provide Education and Outreach programming related to entrepreneurship and economic development.

## **DON RYAN CENTER FOR INNOVATION ENDOWMENT (DRCI FOUNDATION)**

**Aligned Closest with the Goal: Leading Regional Economic Development Resource**

Endowments or foundations provide flexible and philanthropic support to advance the mission of an organization. At times, endowment support is in concert with market-based opportunities or fills a market-based gap. The DRCI Foundation provides grants that align with DRCI's mission and supports the advancement of the entrepreneurial and economic development opportunities in the Bluffton region. The DRCI Foundation is managed by the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry. The DRCI Foundation will grow over time to enhance the sustainability of the organization and diversify the DRCI's financial support from the Town of Bluffton.

**Donations to the DRCI Foundation can be made directly by clicking this sentence.**

Learn more at: Community Foundation of the Lowcountry: <http://www.cf-lowcountry.org/>

### **Mission of the DRCI Foundation**

The mission of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation Endowment (DRCI Foundation) is to provide grants in support of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation, a nonprofit organization providing programs and services which support new innovative/technology company formation and development in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina.

### **STRATEGIC WORK FOR THE DRCI FOUNDATION**

#### **STRATEGY**

**Leverage the DRCI Foundation's 501(c)(3) Status**

**Aligned Closest with the Goal: Leading Regional Economic Development Resource**

**Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Foundation**

**Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource**

Non-profit organizations with a 501(c)(3) status have expanded opportunity to receive financial support from endowments and public sources. These opportunities diversify revenue sources and expand opportunities for programming. The DRCI will leverage this status in alignment with the DRCI's Mission and programming.

#### **Action Item #1:**

The DRCI will research, identify, and apply to specific grant opportunities that leverage the DRCI Foundation's 501(c)(3) status.

#### **Action Item #2:**

The DRCI will leverage the DRCI Foundation's 501(c)(3) status to partner with or apply for grants directly from other endowments.

STRATEGY

**Fundraising Events for the DRCI Foundation**

*Aligned Closest with the Goal: Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

*Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: DRCI Foundation*

*Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

The DRCI will continue to host up to two special event fundraisers for the DRCI Foundation per year. A fall event will be an annual golf outing while the spring event will most likely be an oyster roast or similar type event. These fundraising events are fun and engaging opportunities for the DRCI to receive visibility in the community, expand membership and contacts, identify leads, and to increase revenue for the DRCI Foundation.

Action Item #1:

The DRCI will plan and coordinate up to two fundraising events annually for the DRCI Foundation.



# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

### Next Steps

The DRCI Board, Committees, and Team will make the Don Ryan Center for Innovation Economic Development Strategic Plan a living and evolving document – focused on implementation. This plan will be prioritized and connected to immediate economic development projects; new innovators; expanded or aligned programming; and budgeting for the organization. This plan was developed to enable the DRCI Board, Committees, and Team to take immediate action on all strategies. The following tables will help the DRCI Board, Committees, and Team to quickly understand options for implementation.

### Implementation Matrix

<b>ENTREPRENEURISM</b>
<b>The Incubation Program</b>
<b>STRATEGY: DEVELOP A FORMAL CURRICULUM FOR THE INCUBATION PROGRAM</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Incubator Program Graduates</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will identify, research, and analyze best practice curriculums for incubation programs from communities with similar characteristics.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will travel to peer incubators with similar characteristics to tour and understand firsthand how these peer programs operate, their curriculum, and to development relationships with leadership from these organizations.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #3:</u></b> The DRCI will integrate research, best practices in curriculum design, and synthesize these considerations to meet the specific needs of the Bluffton entrepreneurial community.
<b>STRATEGY: ORGANIZE INNOVATORS IN THE INCUBATION PROGRAM INTO COHORTS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Incubator Program Graduates</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will organize the next round of innovators into cohorts with identical launch and graduation dates.

<b>STRATEGY: EXPAND AND FORMALIZE THE DRCI INCUBATION PROGRAM'S ANGEL AND EQUITY NETWORK AND DEVELOP AN EQUITY FUND FOR SEED FUNDING</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Equity Raised</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Viewed as a Major Conduit to Capital</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will write and advertise an RFP to contract with an attorney and finance professional specializing in the development of equity funds to establish a seed fund and policies for the DRCI.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI CEO will expand the position's executive and philanthropic network. This will be accomplished by seeking opportunities to join regional Board of Directors; membership in regional social clubs; and seeking referrals to high-net worth individuals, particularly philanthropists.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #3:</u></b> The DRCI will formalize an ever-evolving list of angel and equity investors.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #4:</u></b> The DRCI will expand relationships with regional and state-wide angel and equity networks as well as entrepreneurial support organizations including but not limited to the South Carolina Department of Commerce Office of Innovation/SC Innovation Hub; the South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA); the Clemson University Institute for Economic and Community Development; and regional post-secondary partners including the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) and the Technical College of the Lowcountry (TCL). Engagement with USCB and TCL are further described in another strategy below.
<b>STRATEGY: ATTRACT AND DEVELOP ENCORE ENTREPRENEURS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Incubator Program Graduates</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> Provide access to the following consolidated list of national resources for Encore Entrepreneurs. This list will be made available on the DRCI website: <a href="http://www.donryancenter.com">www.donryancenter.com</a> .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">US Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Entrepreneurship Education. Encore Entrepreneur: An Introduction to Starting Your Own Business Course</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://Encore.org">Encore.org</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">AARP Encore Entrepreneurs</a></li> </ul>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will develop education and outreach sessions to communicate the resources listed above for Encore Entrepreneurs. Further, this engagement may possibly produce new candidates to the DRCI Incubation Program.

**ACTION ITEM #3:**

The DRCI will distribute a national press release about the organization's intention to attract Encore Entrepreneurs to the DRCI Incubation Program. This tactic may in turn produced earned media to help market the approach.

**ACTION ITEM #4:**

The DRCI will engage the Beaufort County Association of Realtors, the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors, and select regional realtors to communicate the DRCI's resources and open invitation to engage Encore Entrepreneurs.

**ACTION ITEM #5:**

The DRCI will connect with planned and organized communities such as Palmetto Bluff and many others to market the DRCI's opportunities for Encore Entrepreneurs. There may be logical opportunities to connect with candidates for initial conversations in their own neighborhoods.

**STRATEGY: ATTRACT AND DEVELOP ENTREPRENEURS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT AND THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *DRCI Incubator Program Graduates*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

**ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will engage leadership at USCB to further the relationship between the DRCI and the University and to communicate the DRCI's desire to engage USCB's emerging entrepreneurs. Particularly, the DRCI CEO will formally meet with the Office of the Chancellor; Small Business Development Center USCB; and potentially engage specific USCB's academic departments including Natural Sciences, Business Administration, Mathematics and Computational Science, and Nursing and Health Professions.

**ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI will engage leadership at TCL to further the relationship between the DRCI and the College to express DRCI's desire to engage TCL's emergent entrepreneurs. Particularly, the DRCI CEO will formally meet with the Office of the President; leadership at the TCL Entrepreneurship Club; and potentially engage specific TCL's academic departments including Building & Industrial Technologies, Business, Computers & Electronics, Health Sciences, and Science & Mathematics.

**STRATEGY: DEVELOP A NEW BUSINESS PITCH COMPETITION: "GATOR TANK"**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *Incubator Mentors*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

**ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI Entrepreneurism and Marketing, Education, and Outreach Committees will research best practices in pitch competitions, develop, and market the programmatic details of the DRCI New Business Pitch Competition.

**ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI Team and the DRCI Entrepreneurism and Marketing, Education, and Outreach Committees will engage regional sponsors to provide monetary and in-kind business services to the winner.

**STRATEGY: DEVELOP A DRCI INTRAPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *DRCI Revenue/Fiscal Sustainability*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

**ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will identify, research, and analyze best practices in intrapreneurship programming.

**ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI will tour peer intrapreneurship programs to understand best practices and establish a network of individuals leading intrapreneurship efforts.

**ACTION ITEM #3:**

The DRCI will establish the DRCI Intrapreneurship Program as a fee-based service to selected individuals or team representing companies or organizations.



<b>Co-Working Offerings (The HUB)</b>
<b>STRATEGY: IDENTIFY, RESEARCH, ANALYZE, VISIT, AND BENCHMARK PEER CO-WORKING PROGRAMS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Revenue/Fiscal Sustainability</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will identify, research, analyze, visit, and benchmark peer co-working programs from communities with similar characteristics.
<b>STRATEGY: SECURE CONFERENCE ROOM SPONSORSHIPS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Revenue/Fiscal Sustainability</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will market conference room sponsorship opportunities on the DRCI website, social media channels, events, and during the course of individual or group engagements.
<b>STRATEGY: ENGAGE BLUFFTON-AREA HIGH SCHOOLS TO CONSIDER THE HUB</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>DRCI Incubator Program Graduates</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will engage Bluffton-area high school administrators to discuss opportunities to present The HUB to other administrators, teachers, students, and guardians. The DRCI will highlight the connectivity to high-tech knowledge careers and entrepreneurship.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> Upon approval, the DRCI will present The HUB to the regional high school community including administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The Team will make the strong connection between secondary education, a post-secondary education, and the opportunities at the DRCI. The intent is capture these audiences early – especially the students, to build long-term loyalty to the region. The DRCI will invite these stakeholders to tour The HUB and there may even be opportunities for school-sanctioned field trips.
<b>STRATEGY: MARKET THE HUB IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Earned Media</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will integrate The HUB into a more comprehensive sole or series of press releases in coordination with other major announcements.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will develop a call list and provide direct marketing and engagement of prospects for membership or transactional use of The HUB.

<b>Business Startup/Concierge Services</b>
<b>STRATEGY: RESEARCH BEST PRACTICES IN BUSINESS STARTUP/CONCIERGE SERVICES</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource</i>
<b>ACTION ITEM #1:</b> The DRCI will research best practices in the development of Business Startup/Concierge Services and programming. The research will focus on specific services, benefits, resources – particularly business startup handbooks, and marketing the services.
<b>STRATEGY: COORDINATE WITH REGIONAL SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT PARTNERS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource</i>
<b>ACTION ITEM #1:</b> The DRCI will engage regional small business development and entrepreneurial support partners. This engagement will seek to fully understand and inventory all available services and resources on the local, county, regional, state, and national level. This data will guide the development of the DRCI Business Startup and Service Handbook.
<b>STRATEGY: DEVELOP THE DRCI BUSINESS STARTUP AND SERVICE HANDBOOK</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource</i>
<b>ACTION ITEM #1:</b> The DRCI will integrate research and analysis, write, produce, publish, and market the DRCI Business Startup and Service Handbook.
<b>STRATEGY: MARKET THE BUSINESS STARTUP/CONCIERGE SERVICES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Epicenter of Inclusive High-Tech Entrepreneurism</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Earned Media</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b>ACTION ITEM #1:</b> The DRCI will integrate news about an enhanced Business Startup/Concierge Services program into a more comprehensive sole or series of press releases in coordination with other major announcements.

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION, EXPANSION AND RETENTION

### Business Attraction

**STRATEGY: ENHANCED ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL AND STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *Prospects/Pipeline*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Relationships with Economic Development Partners*

**ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI CEO and VP of Economic Development will establish a concerted and formal executive-to-executive engagement strategy. This will mostly be in the form of ongoing scheduled meetings, lunches, and relationship building opportunities. These conversations will be friendly but meaningful – focused on advancing organizational relationships and finding opportunities to pool resources.

**ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI will engage SouthernCarolina Alliance around specific and ongoing discussions about assets and liabilities in Bluffton. The focus will be on enhancing the DRCI's ability to respond to RFIs. Further, the DRCI will seek opportunities to partner with SouthernCarolina Alliance on business development travel and site selector and industry engagements.

**STRATEGY: EXPAND THE ENCORE ENTREPRENEURISM STRATEGY FOR BUSINESS ATTRACTION**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *New Businesses Created, Attracted, or Expanded (Project Wins)*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources*

**ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will distribute a national press release about the DRCI's intention to attract the owners of small-to-mid sized manufacturers, software developers, business service companies, and other companies to relocate their families and businesses to Bluffton. This tactic may in turn produced earned media to help market the approach.

**ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI will engage the Beaufort County Association of Realtors, the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors, and select regional realtors to communicate the DRCI's resources and desire to connect with relocating – or second home owners of businesses from other geographies.

**ACTION ITEM #3:**

The DRCI will connect with planned and organized communities such as Palmetto Bluff and many others to market the DRCI's resources and desire to connect with relocating – or second home owners of businesses from other geographies. There may be logical opportunities to connect with prospects in their own neighborhoods.

<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #4:</u></b> The DRCI CEO and VP will expand the DRCI's global executive network to identify and engage small-to-mid sized business owners to attract to Bluffton. This will be accomplished by seeking opportunities to join regional Board of Directors; membership in regional social clubs; and seeking referrals to high-net worth individuals, particularly business owners.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY: SITE SELECTOR ENGAGEMENT</b></p>
<p>Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i></p>
<p>Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Prospects/Pipeline</i></p>
<p>Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors</i></p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will coordinate with the SouthernCarolina Alliance and, on select occasions, the South Carolina Department of Commerce to express the desire to be actively involved in any regional in-bound site selector engagement opportunities and outbound forums.</p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will identify select, strategic, and relevant opportunities to engage site selectors and business prospects at events that fall outside of the coordination with SouthernCarolina Alliance and South Carolina Department of Commerce.</p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #3:</u></b> The DRCI will research and analyze the extensive Site Selection Firms and Site Selection Consultants list found in Appendix A. The DRCI will strategize unique outreach opportunities in coordination with SouthernCarolina Alliance and other regional economic development partners. There may be opportunities in the future where DRCI leadership will engage these site selectors and therefore, it is important to know their background and specializations.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAVEL: SITE SELECTOR FORUMS AND TRADE SHOWS</b></p>
<p>Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i></p>
<p>Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Marketing and Business Development Conferences or Trips</i></p>
<p>Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors</i></p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will coordinate the Figure 2 list of forums and conferences with the SouthernCarolina Alliance to determine their travel calendar and to seek efficiencies and regional business development alignment.</p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> Once the DRCI fully determines the SouthernCarolina Alliance business development travel schedule, DRCI leadership will prioritize forum travel from Figure 2.</p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #3:</u></b> Upon confirming the DRCI 2018-2019 business development travel, the DRCI identify the appropriate Team members to attend the events.</p>
<p><b><u>ACTION ITEM #4:</u></b> Upon confirming the DRCI 2018-2019 business development travel, the DRCI will seek sponsorship opportunities to offset registration and travel costs.</p>

<b>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE)</b>
<b>STRATEGY: DEVELOP A FORMAL LIST OF EXISTING PRIMARY INDUSTRY BUSINESSES IN BLUFFTON</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE) Visits, Calls, or Engagements</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will research, analyze, scrub, and develop a formal and comprehensive list of existing primary industry businesses in Bluffton. This list will include the confirmed identification of existing businesses with their formal and known name; baseline contact information; and business data.
<b>STRATEGY: DEVELOP A FORMAL BRE PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE) Visits, Calls, or Engagements</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will develop an optimal structural composition for a successful BRE program. This development will include standard operating procedures (SOPs); the integration of the list of existing primary industry businesses; rotational BRE visitation or outreach schedule; clearly identified and aligned BRE partners; accountability and evaluation metrics; and other key information.
<b>STRATEGY: DEVELOP A BRE SURVEY</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE) Visits, Calls, or Engagements</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will design a survey questionnaire, focusing on topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic firm contact information and background</li> <li>• Business climate</li> <li>• Labor and training needs</li> <li>• Marketing and trade</li> <li>• Financing needs</li> <li>• Regulatory issues</li> <li>• Barriers to growth and expansion plans</li> <li>• Satisfaction with public services and utilities</li> <li>• Past utilization and satisfaction of local assistance</li> </ul>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will design and integrate the BRE Survey into a process to collect and analyze consistent data.

<b>STRATEGY: DEVELOP A BRE DATABASE OR INTEGRATE WITH THE NEW DRCI CRM</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE) Visits, Calls, or Engagements</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will integrate a BRE Database into the new DRCI CRM.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> If the DRCI is not yet able to accommodate a CRM, the DRCI will develop a BRE Database using spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel.
<b>STRATEGY: PRIORITIZE BRE VISITS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE) Visits, Calls, or Engagements</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Business Client Satisfaction</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will utilize the portfolio of existing primary industry employers in Bluffton to identify, prioritize, and increase the frequency of visits with Bluffton's largest, fastest growing, and most at risk employers.
<b>STRATEGY: MARKET THE BRE PROGRAM</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Earned Media</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will integrate news about an enhanced BRE program into a more comprehensive sole or series of press releases in coordination with other major announcements. identify, prioritize, and increase the frequency of visits with Bluffton's largest, fastest growing, and most at risk employers.

<b>REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b>
<b>STRATEGY: LINK THE SOUTHERNCAROLINA ALLIANCE SITES &amp; BUILDINGS DATABASE TO THE DRCI WEBSITE</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Prospects/Pipeline</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Relationships with Economic Development Partners</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will coordinate with SouthernCarolina Alliance and link their Sites & Buildings Database to the DRCI website.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will coordinate with local developers, brokers, property owners, and SouthernCarolina Alliance to ensure all available sites and buildings are listed and updated on the SouthernCarolina Alliance database.
<b>STRATEGY: THE DRCI REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD COMMITTEE WILL LEAD THE REGIONAL DISCUSSION REGARDING SITES &amp; BUILDINGS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Sites &amp; Buildings Inventory</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board and DRCI Business Attraction, Expansion and Retention Committees will collaborate and share data such as BRE reports and RFI's that DRCI could not submit sites or buildings for, to drive regional conversations aimed at advancing property development in Bluffton reserved for primary industry economic development projects.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will collaborate the Town of Bluffton and Beaufort County to enhance land use planning and zoning (through Comprehensive Plan updates and by other means) and development policies to expand opportunities for more development reserved or suited for primary industry economic development projects.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #3:</u></b> The DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will engage regional utilities and transportation infrastructure partners to assess limitations and opportunities to enhance the local infrastructure in Bluffton to increasingly accommodate primary industry economic development projects.
<b>STRATEGY: ATTRACT DEVELOPERS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Driver of Primary Industry Economic Development</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Sites &amp; Buildings Inventory</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>Relationships with Developers and Site Selectors</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI Team and DRCI Real Estate and Infrastructure Board Committee will court regional developers to consider greenfield and infill development in Bluffton.

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TALENT RETENTION/ATTRACTION**

### **STRATEGY: UTILIZE BRE AND RFI DATA TO ADVISE WORKFORCE PARTNERS**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *Workforce Availability*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

#### **ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will utilize BRE and RFI data to continuously engage workforce development partners to directly or broadly respond to Bluffton's existing business workforce needs and those of prospects considering the region.

### **STRATEGY: ENGAGE SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS FOR TALENT RETENTION AND ATTRACTION**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *Workforce Availability*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

#### **ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will coordinate with regional economic and workforce development partners to engage Bluffton-area high school administrators and post-secondary education partners to lead a discussion with students on how the Bluffton region offers strong career opportunities and accommodates entrepreneurs.

#### **ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI and regional economic and workforce development partners will engage Bluffton primary industry businesses to encourage the availability of paid internships and the connectivity of these opportunities to secondary and post-secondary schools.

#### **ACTION ITEM #3:**

The DRCI and regional economic and workforce development partners will engage Bluffton secondary schools' office of alumni relations to develop a marketing campaign to invite alumni who have graduated from colleges outside of the region to return to the Bluffton region. This also should be coordinated with Bluffton's primary industry employers.



<b>MARKETING, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH</b>
<b>STRATEGY: ASSESS DRCI MARKETING TOOLS</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Earned Media</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Earned Media</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will inventory and assess all current marketing tools. The intent is to understand the marketing tools that are effective and those that may be a distraction. Further, the DRCI will emphasize those tools that work.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will explore new marketing methods or applications to advance the organization.
<b>STRATEGY: STRATEGICALLY ALIGN PRESS RELEASES</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Earned Media</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will inventory upcoming announcements, note appropriate timing for public consumption, and potentially submit a consolidated press release or a series of strategically aligned press releases.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> The DRCI will explore the opportunity to contract with a professional public relations firm to guide the DRCI on timing and alignment of the upcoming announcements.
<b>STRATEGY: ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDED EDUCATION OR OUTREACH</b>
Aligned Closest with the Goal: <i>Increased Awareness of the DRCI and Its Mission</i>
Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: <i>Speaking Engagements</i>
Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: <i>The New DRCI Location Viewed as an Inclusive and Central Location for Business Growth and Resources</i>
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #1:</u></b> The DRCI will assess current Education and Outreach programming in alignment with the DRCI Mission, other programming, and the strategies in this strategic plan.
<b><u>ACTION ITEM #2:</u></b> As needed, the DRCI will identify expanded opportunities to provide Education and Outreach programming in the Bluffton community related to entrepreneurship and economic development.

## DON RYAN CENTER FOR INNOVATION ENDOWMENT (DRCI FOUNDATION)

### **STRATEGY: LEVERAGE THE DRCI FOUNDATION'S 501(C)(3) STATUS**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *DRCI Foundation*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

#### **ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will research, identify, and apply to specific grant opportunities that leverage the DRCI Foundation's 501(c)(3) status.

#### **ACTION ITEM #2:**

The DRCI will leverage the DRCI Foundation's 501(c)(3) status to partner with or apply for grants directly from other endowments.

### **STRATEGY: FUNDRAISING EVENTS FOR THE DRCI FOUNDATION**

Aligned Closest with the Goal: *Leading Regional Economic Development Resource*

Closest Quantitative Measure of Success: *DRCI Foundation*

Closest Qualitative Measure of Success: *Partner and Client Recognition as a Major Economic Development Resource*

#### **ACTION ITEM #1:**

The DRCI will plan and coordinate up to two fundraising events annually for the DRCI Foundation.