



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

July 22, 2025

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Tracy Dodson, COO, Charlotte Regional Business Alliance (CRBA)

by Elly Clary

“My passion is this community,” declared the Charlotte Regional Business Council’s chief operating officer. Tracy Dodson proceeded to spew eye-popping facts about the economy of Charlotte and its 14-county region.

Dodson left no doubt about her commitment to the mission of CRBA, formed in 2018 when the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce merged with the Charlotte Regional Partnership.

“We want to grow the economies, to be an advocate for business and convene stakeholders,” she said. That includes business recruitment, promoting small businesses, and research and marketing, while advocating for both Carolinas.

Dodson has lived here 33 years, initially arriving to attend the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She has compiled decades of experience in economic and business development, research, marketing, communications and investor relations. She joined the CRBA from the City of Charlotte, where she was assistant city manager and director of economic development.

“So far this year, we have announced 2,500 jobs across the region,” Dodson said. “We have 1,200 more in the pipeline.”

Charlotte attracts 157 people daily, she said, and by 2028 the city’s population will top 1 million. Annually, about 6,500 people relocate from New York City, 1,100 from Atlanta, 3,500 from across Florida, and 1,500 from the West Coast.

Driving this migration are four “critical ingredients,” she said.

- Commerce: The region is a dual-state market that counts 27 company headquarters, including behemoths such as Bank of America as well as smaller entities like Krispy Kreme and Bojangles. Advocate Health, parent of Atrium, is the country’s third-largest non-profit health system.
- Talent: Diverse talent is here, and capable people are moving in. Multiple universities, as well as technical and community colleges, train long-time residents and newcomers alike.
- Transportation: The area is connected by air, rail, and roads. Charlotte-Douglas International Airport served nearly 60 million passengers last year and represents 5 percent of the state’s GDP. By 2030, there will be 45 miles of light rail, and expansion projects are ahead for area interstate highways.
- Quality of Life: The cost of living is competitive. She counted hundreds of amenities like concerts, restaurant openings, cultural events, and museums, as well as breweries, wineries, and distilleries. She reminded of work to add and enhance parks and open spaces, and she ticked off major professional sports franchises and tournaments.

“Over the past six months, we’ve seen an enormous uptick in inbound business growth,” Dodson said.

The CRBA has targeted five areas for strategic growth: advanced manufacturing, financial services, innovation economy, logistics and distribution, and life sciences and health.

Companies considering a Charlotte presence are attracted to newer office buildings with “activated, walkable and vibrant spaces.” The three submarkets garnering most attention are Ballantyne, South End, and Uptown.

A recording of the meeting can be found here:

This one is without the slides: <https://vimeo.com/1104203722?fl=pl&fe=sh>

This one is with the slides: <https://vimeo.com/1104166426?fl=pl&fe=sh>

The program introduction starts at 19 minutes.