



Ayden 2017 Economic Development Strategic Plan

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CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING, LLC

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
SWOT Analysis	4
Economic and Demographic Analysis	10
Strategic Plan	12
Appendices	
A: Economic and Demographic Profile	22
B: Community Survey Results	32
C: Study Sponsor and Consultant Information	37

Executive Summary

Ayden is a small town with a big vision. The town of 5,035 people is nestled next to Greenville. With a new highway bypass under development, the town is poised to capture more growth spinning out of the metro area. However, Ayden is not content to becoming a bedroom-only community. The town is pursuing a Food Commercialization Center project, which could be transformational not only to the local economy but also to the region. It is pursuing residential and downtown development with vigor. Ayden wants to be more than a bedroom community. It wants to regain a level of economic vitality that attracts new business and residents alike.

The economic development strategic planning process sponsored by ElectriCities of N.C., Inc. serves as a service to its member communities. ElectriCities knows that companies and people invest in communities that invest in themselves. This strategic plan will guide Ayden to make strategic investments that will result in a stronger, more sustainable economy.

The strategic planning process included community engagement, SWOT Analysis, and economic and demographic research. An asset-based approach to strategic planning was used, building goals, strategies, and action steps around Ayden's assets and future opportunities. Ayden's strengths include available land, arts and recreation programs, and proximity to Greenville. The town is challenged by the decline of downtown and the lack of new industry and business to attract new residents, tourists, and support businesses. Opportunities include the Food Commercialization Center, Hwy 264 bypass, and growth spilling over from Greenville. Most of the threats identified are things that Ayden can impact through policy change and strategic investments.

The Ayden Economic Development Strategic Plan outlines strategies in new business recruitment and downtown revitalization, site and building development, residential development, small business development, and internal marketing. The economic development goals, strategies, and action steps are summarized on the next page. We encourage a full read of this report to understand the context of the strategic plan.

Ayden has a small group of citizens and leaders who are passionate about revitalizing the community. Although small, the group has a clear vision for Ayden's future. According to Margaret Mead, a small passionate group is all that is needed to change the world.

Ayden Economic Development Strategic Plan Summary

Goal: New Business Recruitment and Downtown Revitalization

Strategy: Market the New Business Opportunities in Ayden

- Food Commercialization Center
- Downtown Opportunities
- Target sectors
- Bypass development
- Regional engagement

Strategy: Focus on Redevelopment, Investment, and Appearance in Downtown

- Redevelopment district incentives
- Downtown parking
- Code enforcement
- Property owner engagement
- Public art
- Beautification

Goal: Sites and Buildings for New and Expanding Businesses

Strategy: Make Sites Shovel-Ready and Support Speculative Building Development

- Minges and Worthington Parks
- Ownership/control
- Due diligence
- Database of available properties downtown
- Future park development
- Spec building

Goal: Population Growth and Residential Development

Strategy: Invest in Appearance and Promotion

- Fam tours with realtors
- Housing incentives
- Beautification program
- Engage schools

Goal: Growing Small Businesses and Fostering Start-Ups

Strategy: Start-Up, Grow, and Retain Small Businesses

- Business retention and expansion for small businesses
- Use retail leakage information to support small business growth
- Revolving loan fund
- 'How to start a business in Ayden'
- Small Business Liaison
- Expanding home-based businesses

Goal: Internal Marketing

Strategy: Tell the Ayden Story and Tell It Often

- Public information officer
- Shuttle service to ECU during events
- Business news in The Collard Chronicles
- Social media
- OpEd or signed editorial in local paper.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis was compiled using information from interviews and a community survey, along with staff and leadership input. In total, approximately 140 people had input into the strategic plan. Please refer to Appendix B for full results of the community survey.

Citizens in Ayden enjoy a small-town quality of life, but also struggle with the limited resources of a small town. A central theme throughout the planning process has been the need to invest in downtown and capitalize on the 264 bypass. Ayden, like most small towns, is trying to find its niche in economic development.

Strengths

- Hwy 264 bypass
- Available land
- Recreation and arts programs
- Proximity to Greenville, Pitt Community College, East Carolina University, and Vidant Medical Center
- Small town atmosphere
- Historic buildings

Weaknesses

- Empty and dilapidated downtown buildings
- Negative perception of town and schools
- Lack of new industry and business
- Lack of high speed internet
- Overall appeal and look of the town
- Attracting tourism dollars
- Workforce skills

Opportunities

- Revitalize downtown
- Leverage Greenville growth
- Food Commercialization Center
- Bypass development
- Housing development
- Promote arts and recreation
- Hospitality industry
- Growing public school enrollment

Threats

- Lack of vision
- Lack of jobs
- Perceived negative impact of bypass on downtown
- Becoming a bedroom community
- Not investing in downtown
- Ineffective marketing
- Appearance of downtown

STRENGTHS

Strengths are assets that support business development, attract visitors, and positively impact the quality of life. One quote from the community survey sums up many of the comments: “The town has room to grow and a history of vibrancy. It's a good place to live.” Most citizens value the small-town attributes of Ayden like friendly people and recreation, while being a short distance to access to a major university, healthcare system, and community college. This strategic plan is built on the assets Ayden has today and its opportunities for the future.

- ⦿ Proximity to Greenville, Vidant Medical Center, East Carolina University, Pitt Community College
- ⦿ New highway 264 bypass and access to Highways 11, 102, and 43
- ⦿ Potential for growth and a strong desire for growth by Ayden citizens and Leaders
- ⦿ Minges and Worthington Industrial Parks
- ⦿ Low taxes
- ⦿ New town manager who has a vision for growth
- ⦿ Schools
- ⦿ Small-town atmosphere
- ⦿ Potential bedroom community to Greenville, Washington, New Bern, and Wilson
- ⦿ Relationship with ElectriCities of N.C., Inc.
- ⦿ Available land
- ⦿ Strong and growing public schools
- ⦿ Great recreation and arts programs
- ⦿ Known for Bar-B-Que
- ⦿ Public safety
- ⦿ Location, location, location
- ⦿ Downtown Ayden, Second Street growth
- ⦿ Availability of good utilities
- ⦿ Welcoming environment
- ⦿ Workforce
- ⦿ Taking advantage of empty buildings
- ⦿ Supermarkets
- ⦿ Ayden Golf and Country Club
- ⦿ Proximity to Greenville and its educational establishments and growing health care facilities
- ⦿ Small businesses
- ⦿ Sports, recreation, and youth programs

WEAKNESSES

Every community has obstacles to growth. The most significant obstacle for Ayden is the small size of the business and residential base from which to grow. The town has invested in amenities such as recreation to attract more citizens and the industrial park to attract business. Obstacles such as revitalizing downtown, upgrading infrastructure, and overcoming negative perceptions will take more time and strategic investments.

- ⊙ Transportation access, lack of public transportation
- ⊙ Lack of industry and business
- ⊙ Lack of quality jobs
- ⊙ Empty downtown buildings in disrepair, few updated retail spaces
- ⊙ Retaining businesses
- ⊙ Lack of high speed internet
- ⊙ Getting good retail business to come and stay
- ⊙ Negative perception of town and schools
- ⊙ Inability to attract businesses
- ⊙ Utility cost
- ⊙ Overall appeal and look of the town – “We do not look progressive.”
- ⊙ Feels like a satellite of Greenville / Winterville and not a cohesive town
- ⊙ Lack of incentives for small businesses to relocate or open in Ayden
- ⊙ Outdated infrastructure (roads, sewer)
- ⊙ Cultural diversity
- ⊙ "Stagnant" thinking - keep things the same old way
- ⊙ Crime
- ⊙ Difficult to recruit skilled employees
- ⊙ Lack of investment by retail businesses
- ⊙ Attracting tourist dollars
- ⊙ Downtown area parking
- ⊙ Difficult to get customers off the main highway to go downtown to shop at local businesses
- ⊙ Town building inspectors and staff are not supportive of growth

OPPORTUNITIES

The citizens of Ayden are optimistic. They see how their town can be transformed into a flourishing bedroom community that attracts not only people but also small businesses. The plan for a Food Commercialization Center is one example of how leaders in Ayden are forward-thinking.

- ⦿ Accessibility
- ⦿ Revitalize downtown, support specialty businesses
- ⦿ Improve schools
- ⦿ Invest in recreation
- ⦿ Greenville's outward growth toward Ayden can be leveraged for things like antiquing, restaurants, shopping, etc.
- ⦿ Bypass and Ayden exit
- ⦿ Small hotel development
- ⦿ Redevelop old abandoned buildings and use them to the benefit of the town, clean up dilapidated properties and eyesores
- ⦿ Available land and buildings that can be used for startup business
- ⦿ Educational institutions
- ⦿ Liquor by the drink to support restaurant development
- ⦿ Housing that is affordable
- ⦿ Food Commercialization Center
- ⦿ Modern businesses to attract middle-aged, middle class, and young professionals with families
- ⦿ Collard and Barbeque festivals
- ⦿ Ayden Golf and Country Club's potential growth for residential development
- ⦿ Promote arts and sports programs
- ⦿ Promote the historic aspects of downtown
- ⦿ Hospitality industry (restaurants and lodging)
- ⦿ Wi-Fi downtown
- ⦿ Personnel to help prospective business owners start up

THREATS

Threats must be identified and mitigated in an economic development strategy. Some threats are national trends, such as the shrinking middle class about which little, if anything, can be done locally. However, there are threats that can be impacted locally such as not investing in downtown and negative perceptions of the community.

- ⦿ Lack of vision for the future and resistance to change
- ⦿ Lack of jobs
- ⦿ Low income housing
- ⦿ Bypass impact on downtown
- ⦿ Becoming only a bedroom community to Greenville, Washington, and New Bern
- ⦿ Empty businesses and houses
- ⦿ Overall appearance of town
- ⦿ High utility bills
- ⦿ Lack of incentives to draw people
- ⦿ Lack of skilled workforce
- ⦿ Roads in town
- ⦿ Lack of business opportunities
- ⦿ Not using what we have to the fullest advantage
- ⦿ Unsustainable development
- ⦿ High cost of living
- ⦿ Owners of derelict property letting downtown appear like a ghost town
- ⦿ Businesses and people unwilling to change hindering economic growth
- ⦿ Aging infrastructure
- ⦿ Competition with nearby towns
- ⦿ Crime
- ⦿ Lack of funding to support economic development
- ⦿ Ineffective marketing via news media, social media, and internal communication
- ⦿ Shrinking middle class
- ⦿ Schools that can handle additional student population
- ⦿ Low population growth
- ⦿ Aging population

WHAT IS ONE THING THAT AYDEN DOES BETTER THAN OTHER TOWNS?



Economic and Demographic Profile

The consulting team analyzed economic and demographic data to get a snapshot of how Ayden is changing. The full data set can be found in Appendix A. The main take-away from this research is that the city needs to attract quality jobs. Even though the population is growing, industrial, commercial, and retail growth has been slow. The population growth is coming from Greenville and part of Ayden's strategy is to capitalize on that growth.

Summary

- ◎ The 2015 population of Ayden is 5,035. Over the last five years, the population has grown 2.05%, while the region and state have seen higher population increases. *Population has grown 2.05%*
- ◎ Ayden has fewer young workers, aged 25 - 34, than the county, region, and state, and more workers aged 45 - 54. The median age in the city decreased from 40.6 to 38.1 from 2010 to 2015, but remains above the regional and state averages. *Median age ↓ from 40.6 to 38.1*
- ◎ Ayden is more racially diverse than the county, region, and state.
- ◎ Ayden's population has a higher percentage of people with an associate's degree and some college, which supports the recruitment of mid-skilled jobs. Overall, educational attainment (73.2% are high school graduates or higher) falls below the county, regional, and state averages. The SAT scores of Pitt County are significantly below the state and national averages. *43% have associate's degree or some college*
- ◎ Per capita and median household incomes fall below the regional and state averages. Recruiting jobs that pay above the average wage will be important to Ayden to increase income levels. *\$792.33 avg. weekly wage*
- ◎ Homes are more affordable in Ayden and Pitt County than in the region, making Ayden a good value for home buyers. However, lower home values could indicate a limited inventory of professional and management level housing. *82% of Pitt County businesses have less than 10*
- ◎ The fact that labor force growth is flat is concerning. However, the unemployment rate is declining, a positive economic indicator.
- ◎ Most people are employed in Trade, Transportation, Leisure and Hospitality, and Education and Health Services. The highest paying sectors are Manufacturing, Professional and Business Services, and Construction. It is important to note that one of the largest employment sectors, Manufacturing, is also one of the highest paying sectors, at \$1,144 a week. The average weekly wage is \$792.33.

- ◎ Approximately 82% of all Pitt County businesses have less than 10 employees, making small business development an important part of the economic development strategy.
- ◎ Retail sales and collections of sales and use tax have been increasing.
- ◎ A quality of life feature of Ayden is that more people have a shorter commute than in the county and region. Almost 20% commute less than 10 minutes.
- ◎ The tourism industry has seen growth in total expenditures, payroll, and employment.
- ◎ The index crime rate in Pitt County has been decreasing since 2011, 21% over the five-year period 2011 – 2016.

*20% commute
less than 10
mins.*

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Citizens of Ayden ranked new business recruitment, existing business support, and small business/entrepreneur support as the top three economic development strategies. This aligns with the concern expressed over downtown revitalization and attracting quality jobs. Following this top group of strategies, retail and commercial development, infrastructure improvements, education and workforce development, and residential development were ranked next. Citizens want to see these strategies result in downtown revitalization, local job creation, and increased business-start-ups. The fact that downtown revitalization ranked first in economic development goals shows that citizens will support the town making strategic investments in downtown.

The **goals** of the strategic plan are:

- ◎ New Business Recruitment and Downtown Revitalization
- ◎ Sites and Buildings for New and Expanding Businesses
- ◎ Population Growth and Residential Development
- ◎ Growing Small Businesses and Fostering Start-Ups
- ◎ Internal Marketing

Goal: New Business Recruitment and Downtown Revitalization

Ayden has three significant opportunities on the horizon to recruit new business. First is the Food Commercialization Center project. The center could impact not only the Ayden economy, but the Greenville region. Second, the bypass will open up land for commercial, industrial, and residential development, and bring Ayden closer to Greenville. Finally, and most important, revitalizing downtown will attract retail and commercial businesses.

Strategy: Market the New Business Opportunities in Ayden

Action Steps:

- ◎ The Food Commercialization Center will be a transformational economic development project for Ayden and the whole Greenville region.
 - Continue to market the opportunity internally. Create a standard presentation on the project that can be given at civic clubs, local government meetings, and to ally organizations.
 - Continue to seek funding for the project.
 - Grants could be available through the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Golden LEAF, USDA Rural Development, private foundations, and other sources.
 - It is not out of the realm of possibility that a special appropriation could be made for this project, given its impact on the region and agri-business.
 - Include the vision of the center in marketing materials for the ag and food products sector targeted by Pitt County Development Commission.
 - The scope of the project has grown. It may be hard to gain funding for this large of a project until proof of concept has been made. Therefore, develop a pilot project that can be started with less funding to prove that Ayden is the location for an eastern version of Blue Ridge Food Ventures. For example, maybe start with one aspect, such as cold storage or value added processing.
- ◎ Pitt County's target sectors are plastics, medical devices, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, life sciences, ag and food products, and advanced manufacturing. All of these sectors are appropriate for Ayden; however, the town may want to focus its marketing efforts on the ag and food products sectors given the opportunity of the Food Commercialization Center. Also, beyond the Food Commercialization Center, Ayden has a cluster of value added food companies that could be grown.



- Develop information on why Ayden is a value-added food hub. Post to the website. Develop a marketing brochure. Consider participating, in partnership with Pitt County Development Commission, ElectriCities, and NC East Alliance, in marketing initiatives targeted to the food industry.
- ◎ The new Ayden bypass exit will be a significant economic development project. Prepare marketing materials that show conceptually how land around the exit can be used for industrial, commercial, and residential development. The small area planning underway could provide some useful graphics. Use the ElectriCities network to send the marketing materials to developers and real estate agents. Directly contact existing industrial and commercial businesses in the area to discuss expansion at the bypass area.
 - Use the ElectriCities network to reach out to hotels and chain restaurants.
- ◎ Identify Ayden leaders to serve on the board of Pitt County Development Commission or NC East Alliance to raise awareness of Ayden and its assets to the region's economic development community.
- ◎ Host regional allies and the real estate community for a tour of available sites and buildings once a year – could serve famous Ayden barbeque.

Strategy: Focus on Redevelopment, Investment, and Appearance of Downtown

Action Steps:

- ◎ Designate a redevelopment district in downtown Ayden. Offer incentives to businesses that occupy vacant buildings and to property owners and businesses who redevelop buildings. The Building Revitalization Incentive Grant can work like a traditional industrial incentive grant. The grant can be a percentage of net new property tax revenue realized from the increase in taxable investment. The Building Revitalization Incentive Grant Program can be modeled after the one in Columbia, SC.
- ◎ Downtown parking is almost always a hot topic when discussing downtown revitalization. We often find that there are actually enough parking spaces, and the problem it is a perception issue. Enforce a time limit on parking on downtown streets. This will keep business owners and their employees from taking up spaces that could be used by



customers. Second, install wayfinding signs that direct people to parking not easily seen from the street.

- ◎ We note how code enforcement supports beautification in the residential development section below. Code enforcement is also an important part of downtown revitalization. Broken windows, leaking roofs, and dilapidated buildings detract from the appeal of downtown as a prime business location. Some communities have passed Active Storefront Ordinances that require businesses to maintain an operation during regular business hours. It would prohibit churches, for example, which do not bring people downtown during regular business hours.
- ◎ There are property owners in Ayden that are not on board with the revitalization effort. Identify and target them for specific engagement:
 - Educate building owners about finance options for redevelopment. Use the UNC Development Finance Initiative as a resource.
 - Make building owners aware of grant programs offered by the town (façade, renovation grants).
 - Keep an inventory of absentee owners who are willing to sell.
 - For properties critical to revitalization, such as for historic purposes, consider the town purchasing and entering into a public-private partnership for redevelopment.
- ◎ Public art is another way to enhance the appearance of downtown. Ayden is already known for arts programs in the Arts and Recreation Department. Some towns provide space for art created by students and/or donated by artists. Laurinburg is one example, with a partnership between the city and the UNC Pembroke art program. Other cities place a surcharge or tax on capital projects to create a fund to pay for public art. Seek a partnership with East Carolina University arts programs to provide student-created public art.
 - Citizens mentioned the former town hall as a potential location for an “artist in residence” program. Vet the concept of Ayden housing an artist in residence program sponsored by East Carolina University.
- ◎ In conjunction with the public art program, partner with garden clubs to beautify downtown with hanging baskets, banners, and small pocket parks or signature flower gardens.

Goal: Sites and Buildings for New and Expanding Businesses

Every business, no matter how big or small, needs space. Ayden has two business parks with a total of 140 acres available, but no buildings, which are in far greater demand than sites.

Strategy: Make Sites Shovel-Ready and Support Speculative Building Development

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Ayden's two business parks, Minges and Worthington, used to be certified sites with the NC Department of Commerce. Due to changes in the program, they were not recertified. If Ayden or Pitt County were to gain control of the park (such as through an option), we recommend applying for the ElectriCities Smart Sites Program. Through the program, due diligence will be updated: Phase 1, Geotech, archeological study, historical review, wetlands identification, site plan, etc.
 - Ownership, or some level of control, would benefit the marketability of these parks. One owner is not highly motivated and the other park is not priced competitively for the market.
 - If Ayden or Pitt County cannot secure the property, it will not be a candidate for the Smart Sites Program. In that case, we recommend that Ayden fund the due diligence updates in partnership with the owners, maybe through a zero-interest loan that is repayable when the land sells. More important than certification is being able to share due diligence assessments with consultants and prospects.



Available Industrial Sites/Parks in Ayden			
	City Electric	Acreage Available	Notes
Minges Corporate Park	Y	70	Previously Certified Site
Worthington Industrial Park	Y	70	Previously Certified Site

- ⦿ Start planning for future industrial park development. The new bypass interchange near Minges and Worthington industrial parks will open up additional land for development. Partner with Pitt County Economic Development to identify land for a future business park development. Apply best practices in industrial park development:
 - Gain short-term control of the site through an option agreement.
 - Complete due diligence assessments: Phase 1, geotech, wetlands, archeological, historical, endangered species, etc.
 - If all assessments are positive, move on to site planning and long-term control.
- ⦿ Approximately 65% of all new and expanding companies want an existing building. Another 15% prefer a building over a site. With no industrial buildings available, Ayden is missing out on a large part of industrial development prospects.
 - Seek a partnership with Pitt County Development Commission and a private developer to construct a spec building in one of the parks listed above (after it has completed due diligence). Catawba County has used a public-private partnership model to

develop its last two spec buildings. The county and city carried the cost of interest, electric utilities, insurance, and taxes for up to three years while a developer carried the cost and risk of the building. The total local government commitment was approximately \$200,000.

- Aligned with the goal to promote downtown investment and revitalization, maintain a database of available downtown properties to use when speaking with potential downtown investors or business owners.

Goal: Population Growth and Residential Development

The community survey shows that people see downtown, retail, and the hospitality industry as the greatest weaknesses in Ayden. The town needs more people with higher disposable incomes to attract the retail and service industries. Ayden is only a few minutes' drive from Greenville, ECU, and Vidant Medical Center. The bypass will shorten the already quick commute. Take advantage of the growth in Greenville to recruit people to live in Ayden. A push for residential development will help change the market profile, thereby attracting more retailers. The elementary school has seen impressive growth recently as it became a "choice school." This dynamic and popular school is a magnet for families to consider Ayden as their residence.

Strategy: Invest in Appearance and Promotion

Action Steps:

- ◎ Conduct familiarization tours with area realtors. The purpose of the event is to promote Ayden as a residential market for Greenville. Organize a half-day event for the Greenville-Pitt Association of Realtors. The half day could include a presentation on Ayden and tour of the area. Include vacant land suitable for residential development.
- ◎ Some communities are encouraging housing development with incentives. The City of Shelby will partially fund paving associated with new housing developments. Cities in distressed areas of the U.S. offer free land to people willing to build homes. Ayden may not go that far, but reducing fees and making the regulatory process smooth for developers could make a difference.
- ◎ Citizens want to improve the appearance of Ayden. Beautification programs support not only residential development but also business development. Companies invest in communities that invest in themselves.
 - We recommend Ayden create an Appearance Commission to influence design standards.
 - Beautification is also supported by strict code enforcement.
 - Nonprofit organizations such as garden clubs, boy scouts, and others, could "adopt" an area for beautification and maintenance.

- ⦿ Carry the message of Ayden revitalization to parents at the school. Volunteers and leaders can be recruited through the network of people connected to Ayden schools.

Goal: Growing Small Businesses and Fostering Start-Ups

Small business is big business in Ayden. 82% of Pitt County businesses have less than 10 employees. We expect that the percentage is higher in Ayden. Small business development is a niche that Ayden can fill, while relying on Pitt County Development Commission to lead larger industrial development projects.

Strategy: Start-Up, Grow, and Retain Small Businesses

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Create a local business retention and expansion (BRE) program for small businesses. Pitt County Development Commission has a BRE program focused on industry and large employers. Ayden can fill a gap by proactively supporting small businesses.
 - Set a goal to visit each small business in Ayden annually.
 - The purpose of the visit is to learn which businesses are poised for growth and which ones are struggling, and bring resources to them both. Another purpose is to improve town/business relations and learn how the town can better support local businesses.
 - Establish a set of incentives for small businesses. Examples include:
 - The Building Revitalization Incentive Grant discussed above.
 - Façade grant.
 - Beautification assistance such as matching funds for murals, landscaping, and public art displays.
 - Loan program described below.
- ⦿ The retail leakage report shows leakage in building materials, clothing stores, and general merchandise stores. Use this information to counsel small businesses:
 - Maybe a local store could add building materials to their current inventory.
 - With the bypass, market to general merchandise store chains through ElectriCities and their affiliation with Retail Strategies.
- ⦿ In addition to supporting building revitalization, support small business development and start-ups through a revolving loan program. Often revolving loan programs are seeded through a grant. The loans could be micro-loans, less than \$10,000, and be targeted to new businesses starting or expanding in downtown.

- ⦿ Develop “how to start a business in Ayden” information and post on the website. It could be under a new tab labeled “Business,” or under the “How Do I” tab. Information can include regulatory steps such as permits needed and who to contact for approvals; inventory of available buildings in downtown and retail corridors; listing of grants, incentives, and financing programs; and a list of small business resource partners that can help.
- ⦿ Designate someone on the Ayden staff to be the small business liaison. This person will work in tandem with the Pitt Community College Small Business Center to help new small businesses get off the ground.
- ⦿ Anecdotally Ayden has a number of home-based businesses. Through the chamber and other business networks and associations, seek out home-based businesses in the BRE program and identify candidates for expansion. If there is a cluster, then developing space, such as the former doctor’s office/clinic, which could be used as an incubator or co-work space.
 - Reach out to the Farmville Small Business Incubator and the Technology Enterprise Center of Eastern North Carolina for best practices and possible partnerships. Maybe one of these entities could establish an “Ayden satellite facility,” and/or provide support services in Ayden.

Goal: Internal Marketing

There is a small group of people passionate about revitalizing Ayden. According to Margaret Mead, that is all that is needed to facilitate change. However, sometimes the small group of passionate supporters cannot be heard over the naysayers. Ayden needs everyone to be a champion, and that will take a focused internal marketing effort.

Strategy: Tell the Ayden Story and Tell It Often

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Designate a staff person as the town Public Information Officer with the responsibility to market Ayden.
 - Ayden’s social media channels are woefully out of date (2013). The PIO should keep all social channels updated.
 - Update the events calendar on the website. People need to know that good things are happening in Ayden. One example is the arts and recreation programs.
- ⦿ Expose more people to Ayden. Launch a shuttle service from East Carolina University to Ayden during festivals to draw students to Ayden. If it is successful, add shuttle service during other special events and happenings.

- © Include business news in *The Collard Chronicles* to highlight business activity in the town. One example is to interview a business each month for the newsletter.
- © Use Ayden partners – Ayden Chamber of Commerce, Pitt County Development Commission, Pitt Community College Small Business Center, etc. - to tell the Ayden story by sharing press releases, connecting on social media, and marketing materials.

Implementation Guide

This strategic plan is meant to be implemented over a three-year period. Each year, we recommend Ayden identify a few action steps to work on. We also recommend that Ayden revisit the strategic plan annually to update and make course corrections. Below is a suggested outline for implementation categorized by years one through three.

01

- Market and seek funding for the Food Commercialization Center.
- Parking time limits and wayfinding in downtown.
- Regional engagement and partnership.
- Downtown redevelopment district, incentives, property owner education, and database of buildings.
- FAM tour for realtors.
- Business retention and expansion program.
- How to start a business in Ayden information on the website.
- Small Business Liaison.

02

- Pilot project for Food Commercialization Center.
- Marketing materials for development around the bypass.
- Develop marketing materials related to the ag and food processing sectors.
- Use ElectriCities network to market bypass opportunities.
- Industrial park control and site qualification.
- Small business revolving loan fund.
- Designate a Public Information Officer and increase public relations and media.

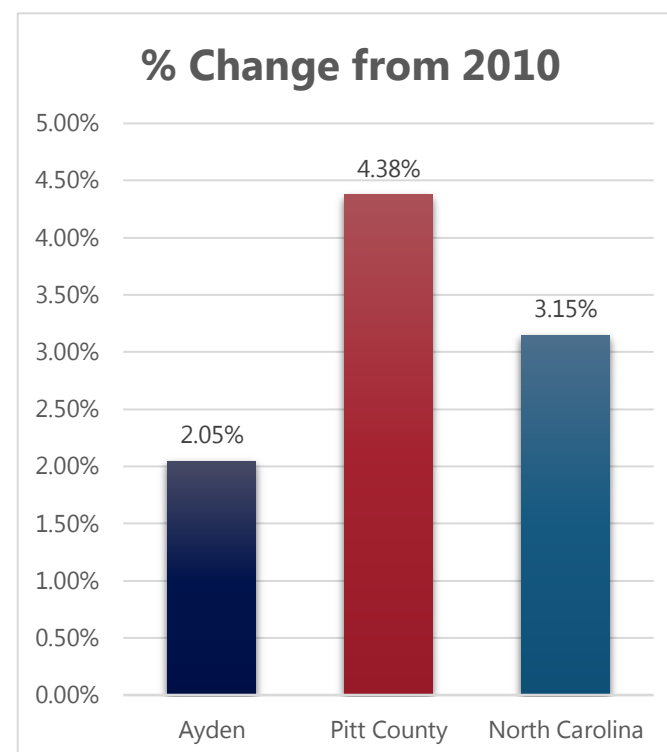
03

- Downtown ordinance review and code enforcement.
- Appearance Commission.
- Public art program and garden club partnership.
- Future industrial park planning around bypass.
- Spec building development.
- Target home-based businesses for expansion with an incubator.
- Shuttle service to ECU during events.

Appendix A: Economic and Demographic Profile

Population	2010	2015	% Change 2010 - 2015
Ayden	4,932	5,035	2.05%
Pitt County	168,148	173,798	3.25%
North Carolina	9,535,483	9,845,333	3.15%

Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder 2010 and 2015 & American Community Survey Data)



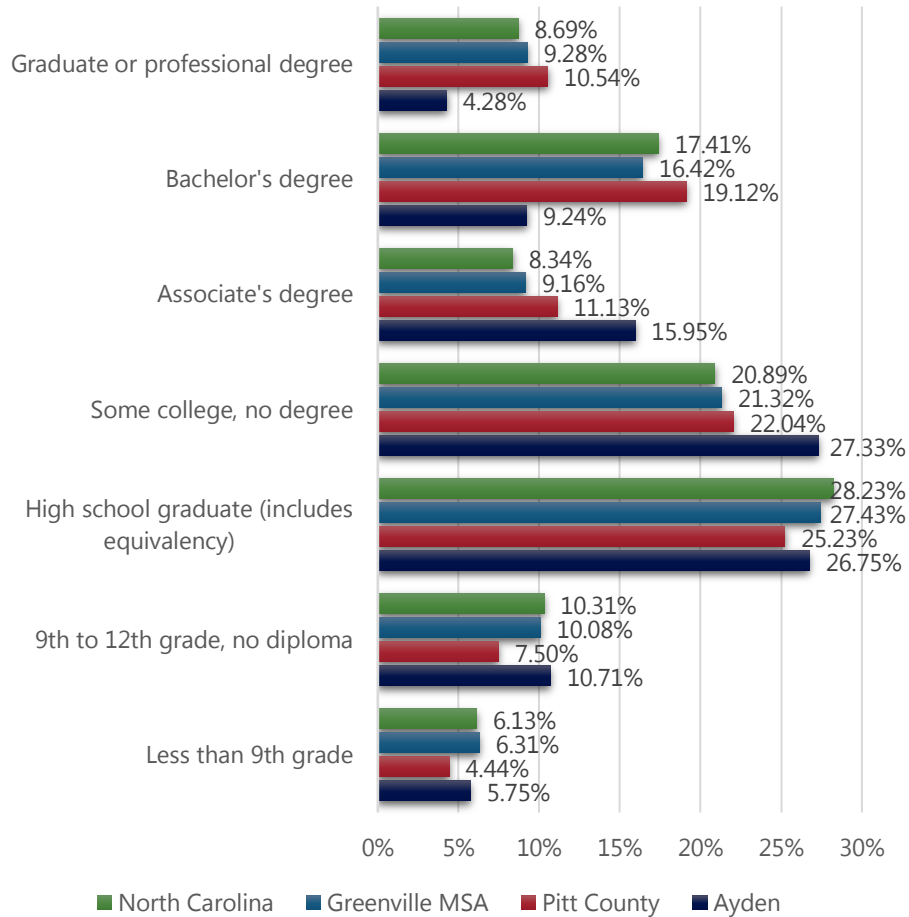
Age Distribution	Ayden		Pitt County		Greenville MSA	North Carolina
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2015
Total population	4,932	5,035	168,148	173,798	189,510	9,535,483
Under 5 years	7.06%	5.12%	6.68%	6.27%	6.69%	6.63%
5 to 9 years	6.49%	6.67%	6.19%	5.69%	6.21%	6.67%
10 to 14 years	6.18%	8.78%	5.99%	6.62%	6.05%	6.62%
15 to 19 years	6.55%	8.60%	9.18%	8.49%	8.84%	6.92%
20 to 24 years	4.95%	8.68%	12.83%	13.96%	12.08%	6.94%
25 to 34 years	12.04%	7.79%	14.37%	13.57%	14.35%	13.07%
35 to 44 years	11.27%	12.59%	12.24%	12.05%	12.41%	13.92%
45 to 54 years	13.54%	16.62%	12.43%	11.66%	12.77%	14.35%
55 to 59 years	6.47%	5.20%	5.53%	5.74%	5.68%	6.30%
60 to 64 years	6.41%	3.12%	4.68%	4.95%	4.77%	5.64%
65 to 74 years	9.96%	9.75%	5.54%	6.45%	5.69%	7.32%
75 to 84 years	6.29%	5.86%	3.13%	3.24%	3.23%	4.08%
85 years and over	2.80%	1.21%	1.22%	1.30%	1.25%	1.55%
Median Age	40.6	38.1	31.0	31.5	31.8	37.4

Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder 2010 and 2015 & American Community Survey Data)

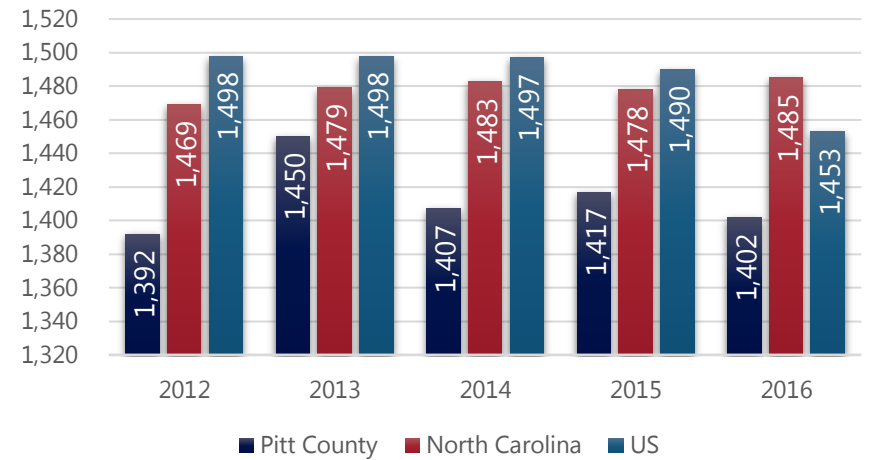
Race Distribution	Ayden		Pitt County		Greenville, NC MSA	North Carolina
	2010	2015	2010	2015	2015	2015
White Alone	47.30%	49.65%	57.12%	56.06%	55.97%	65.27%
Black Alone	47.91%	44.08%	33.79%	33.87%	34.15%	21.18%
American Indian Alone	0.53%	0.00%	0.28%	0.30%	0.30%	1.14%
Asian Alone	0.18%	0.12%	1.52%	1.67%	1.39%	2.17%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.02%	0.00%	0.04%	0.01%	0.04%	0.06%
Some Other Race Alone	0.08%	0.00%	0.17%	0.34%	0.16%	0.16%
Two or More Races	1.50%	1.53%	1.61%	1.97%	1.52%	1.63%
Hispanic Origin	2.47%	4.62%	5.47%	5.78%	6.47%	8.39%

Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder 2010 and 2015 & American Community Survey Data)

Educational Attainment 25 Years & Older



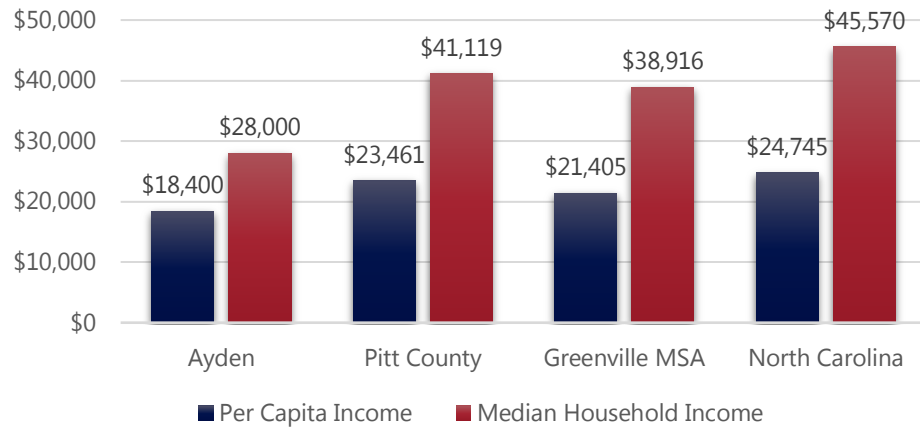
SAT Scores



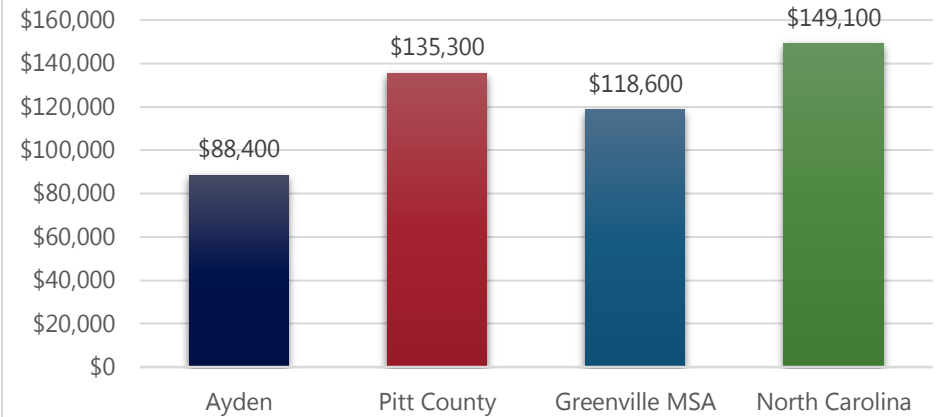
Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder 2010 and 2015 & American Community Survey Data)

2015 Income Data

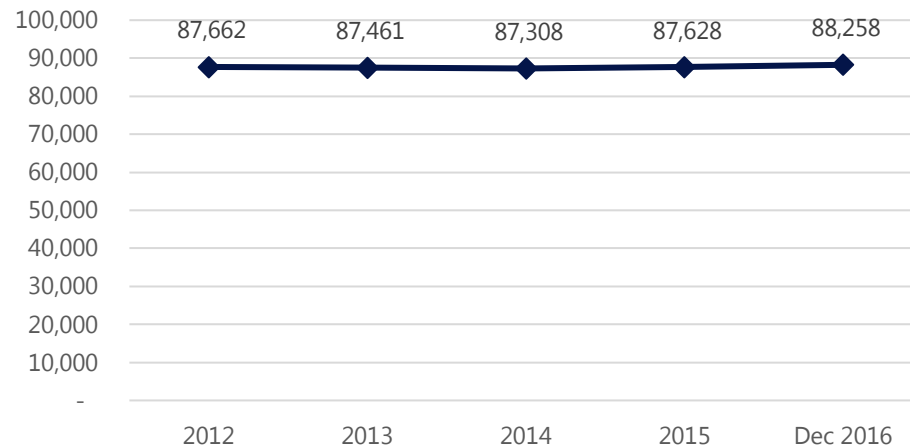


Median Home Value



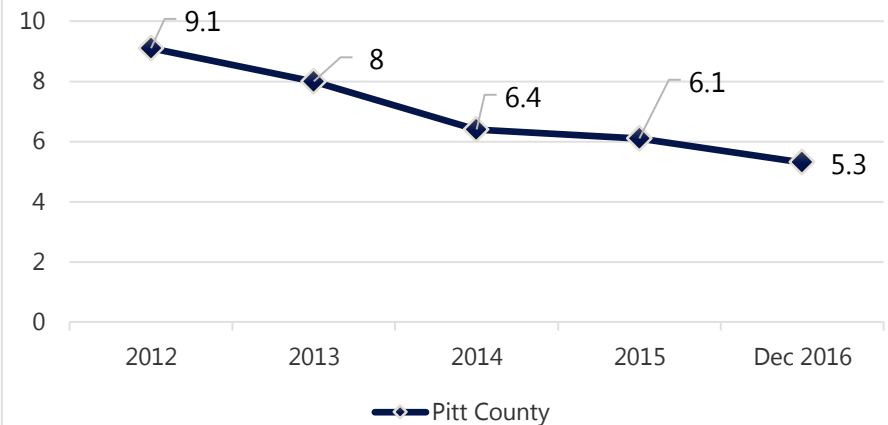
Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder 2010 and 2015 & American Community Survey Data)

Pitt County Labor Force



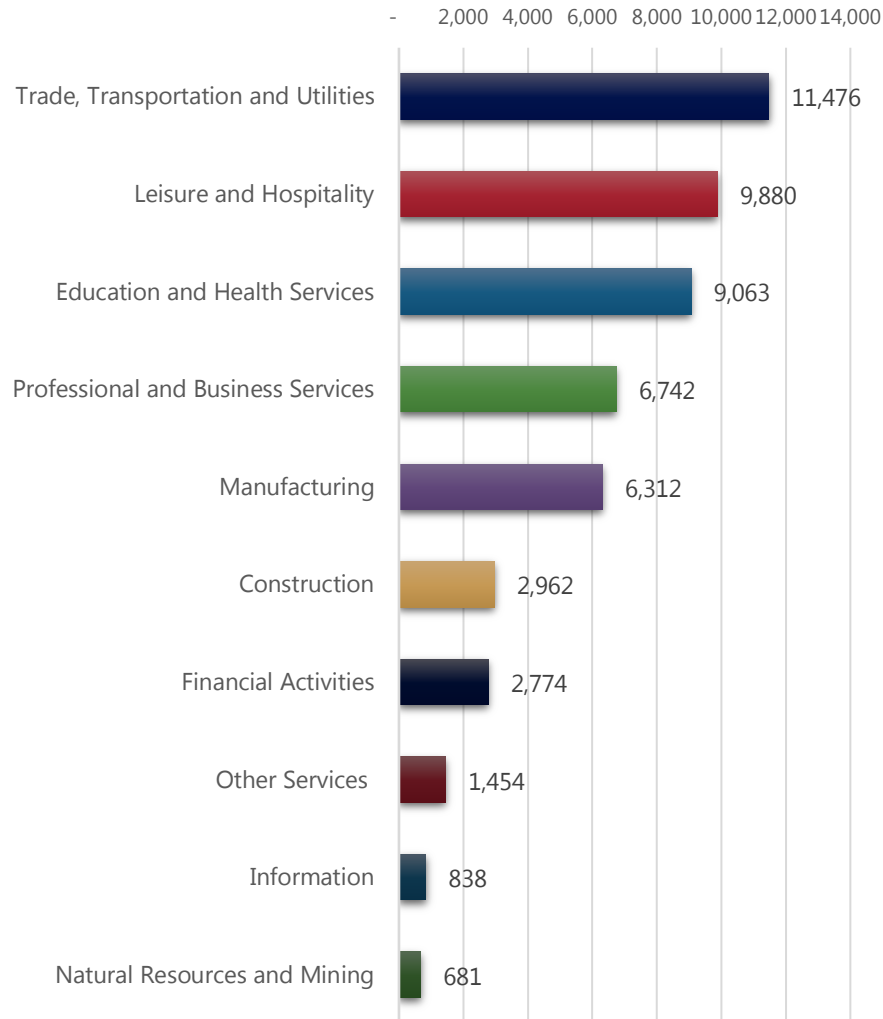
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

Unemployment Rate



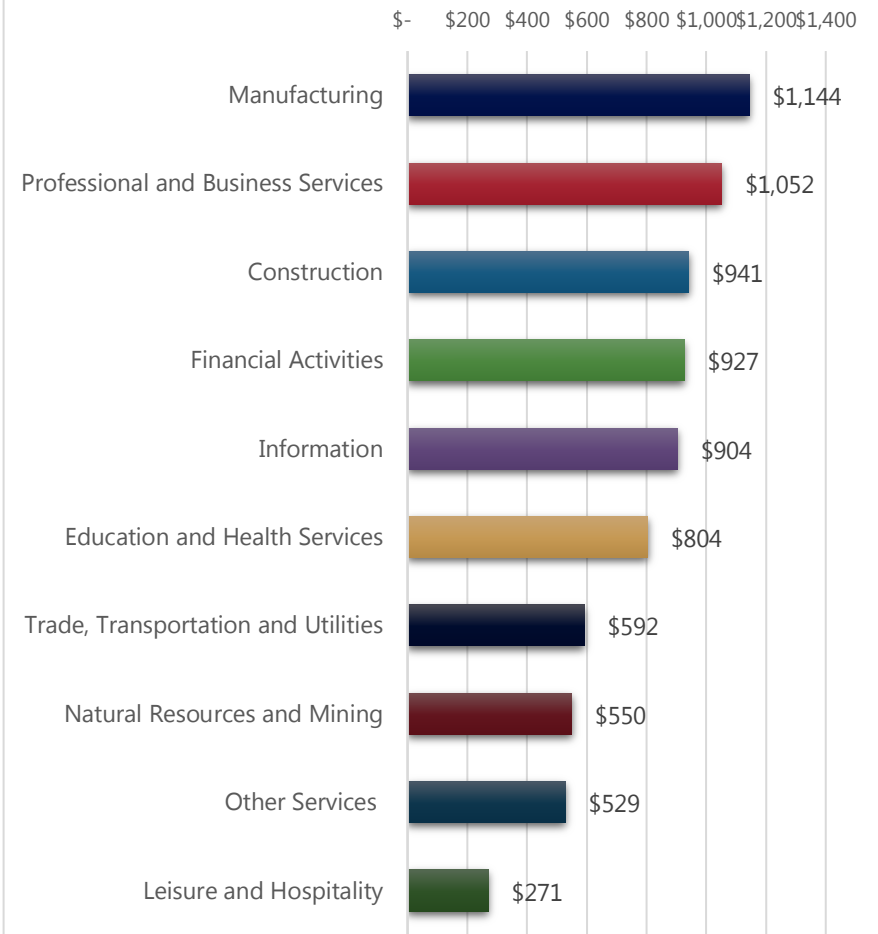
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

Pitt County Employment by Industry



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

2016 Pitt County Average Weekly Wage by Sector



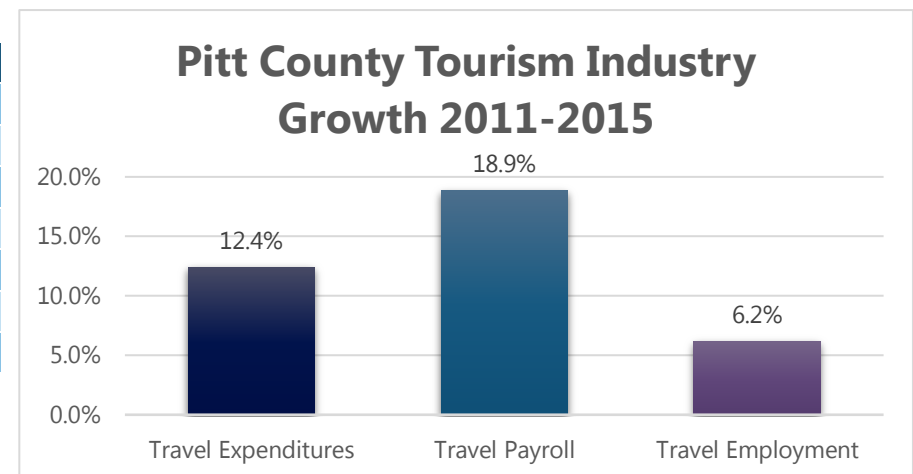
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

Pitt County Top Employers			
Rank	Company Name	Industry	Employment Range
1	Vidant Medical Center	Education & Health Services	1000+
2	East Carolina University	Education & Health Services	1000+
3	Pitt County Board of Education	Education & Health Services	1000+
4	Wal-Mart Associates Inc	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	1000+
5	City of Greenville	Public Administration	1000+
6	Nacco Materials Handling Group Inc	Manufacturing	1000+
7	Patheon Manufacturing Services LLC	Manufacturing	1000+
8	Pitt County	Public Administration	500-999
9	Pitt Community College	Education & Health Services	500-999
10	Food Lion	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	500-999
11	Alliance One International Inc	Manufacturing	500-999
12	Asmo Greenville Of North Carolina	Manufacturing	500-999
13	Wells Fargo Bank NA (A Corp)	Financial Activities	500-999
14	Physicians East Pa	Education & Health Services	500-999
15	Dixon Foods Group Inc	Leisure & Hospitality	500-999
16	Metrics Inc	Manufacturing	250-499
17	Greenville Utilities Commission	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499
18	The Roberts Company Field Services	Construction	250-499
19	Bojangles Famous Chicken & Biscuits	Leisure & Hospitality	250-499
20	Attends Healthcare Products Inc.	Manufacturing	250-499
21	Vidant Medical Group LLC	Professional & Business Services	250-499
22	Convergys Customer Mgmt Group	Professional & Business Services	250-499
24	Dsm Dyneema LLC	Manufacturing	250-499
24	Speedway LLC	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499
25	Overtons Inc	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499

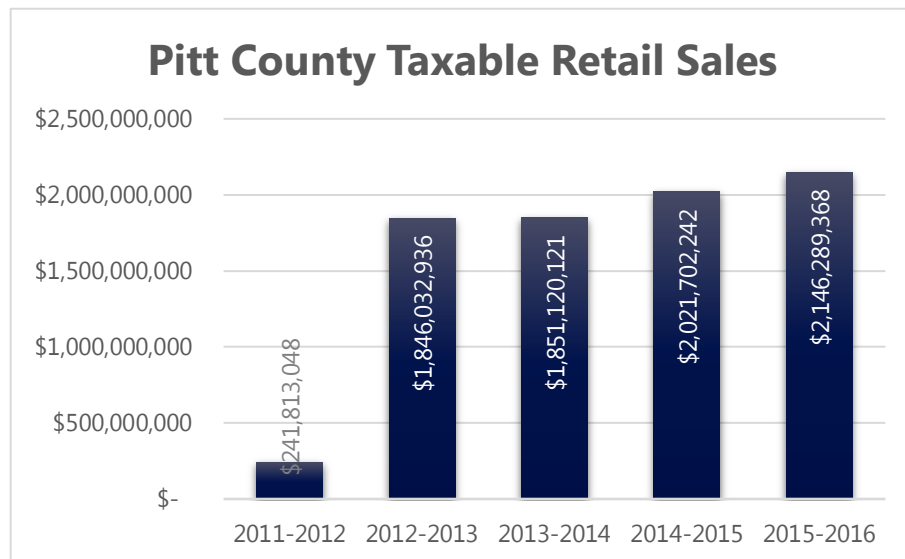
Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce (www.nccommerce.com)

2011-2015 Employment Stages				
ESTABLISHMENTS	2011	% of TOTAL	2015	% of TOTAL
ALL	7,398	100	8,694	100
Self-Employed (1)	1,127	15.2%	1087	12.5%
Stage 1 (2-9)	4,888	66.1%	6,071	69.8%
Stage 2 (10-99)	1,299	17.6%	1447	16.6%
Stage 3 (100-499)	73	1%	78	0.9%
Stage 4 (500+)	11	0.1%	11	0.1%

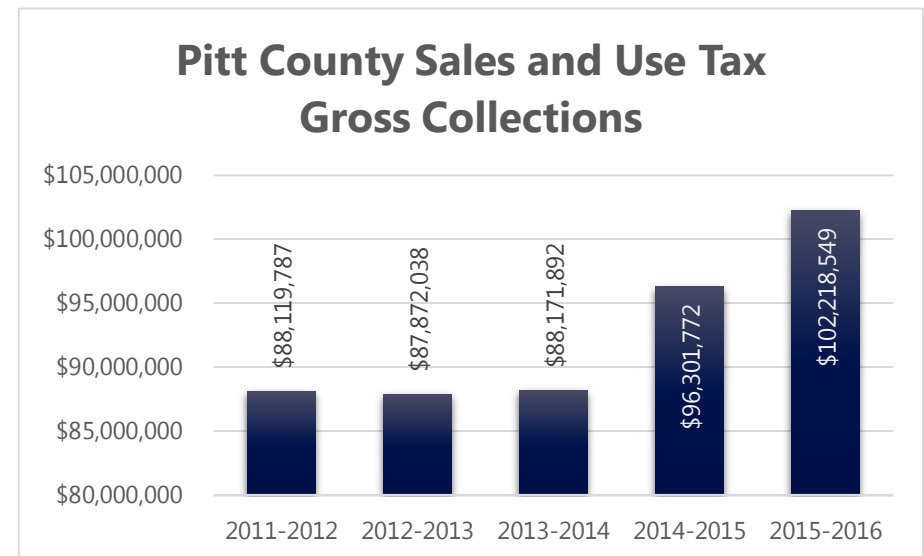
Source: YourEconomy.Org



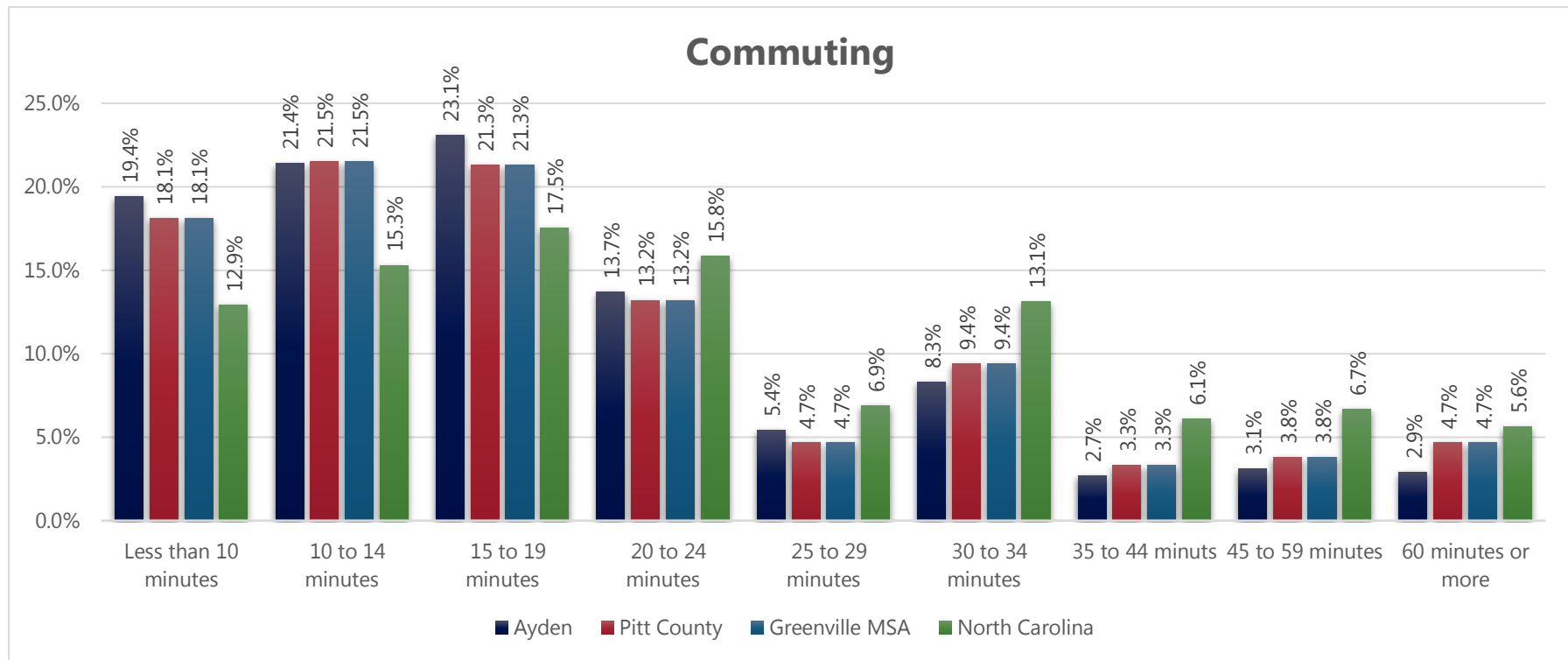
Source: NC Office of Budget and Management



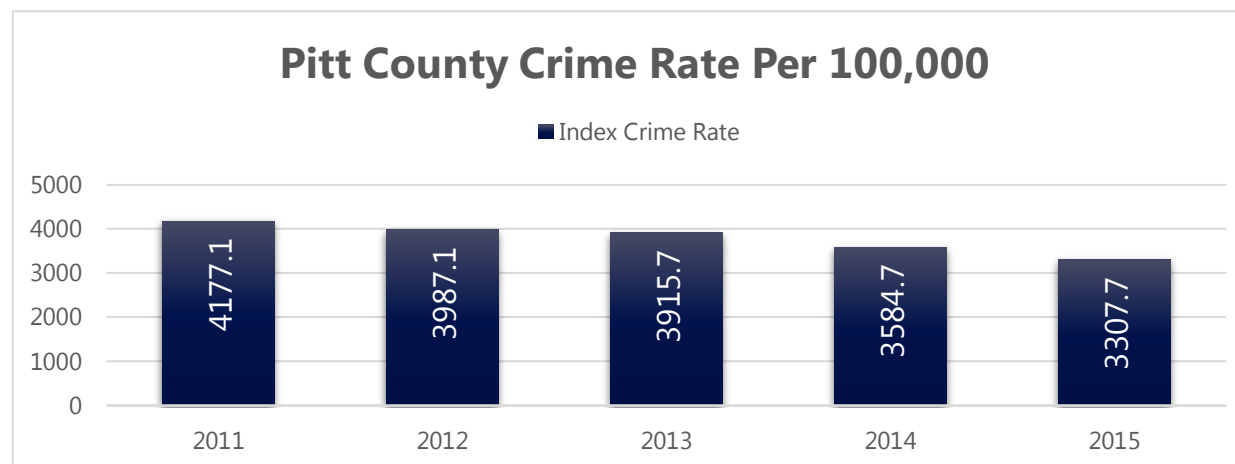
Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue (www.dornc.com)



Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue (www.dornc.com)



Source: U.S. Census (www.census.gov American Fact Finder/American Community Survey)



Source: NC Department of Justice

Retail Leakage-Retail Market Place Profile

Summary Demographics

2016 Population	5,059
2016 Households	2,151
2016 Median Disposable Income	\$28,426
2016 Per Capita Income	\$19,049

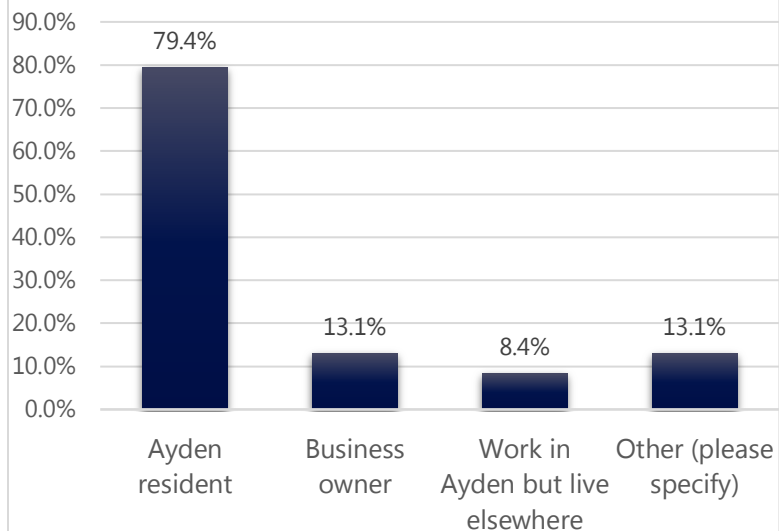
NAICS Industry Summary		Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$56,954,682	\$95,522,461	-\$38,567,779	-25.3	63
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$51,993,828	\$86,280,614	-\$34,286,786	-24.8	46
Total Food & Drink	722	\$4,960,854	\$9,241,847	-\$4,280,993	-30.1	17
NAICS Industry Group		Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$12,298,488	\$40,264,060	-\$27,965,572	-53.2	8
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$10,383,016	\$35,967,930	-\$25,584,914	-55.2	3
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$1,004,769	\$1,106,726	-\$101,957	-4.8	1
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$910,703	\$3,189,404	-\$2,278,701	-55.6	4
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$1,693,459	\$1,000,891	\$692,568	25.7	1
Furniture Stores	4421	\$1,069,396	\$1,000,891	\$68,505	3.3	1
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$624,063	\$0	\$624,063	100.0	0
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$2,191,866	\$1,655,346	\$536,520	13.9	1
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$3,225,965	\$461,948	\$2,764,017	74.9	2
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$2,963,532	\$180,286	\$2,783,246	88.5	1
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$262,433	\$281,662	-\$19,229	-3.5	1
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$9,483,767	\$22,878,183	-\$13,394,416	-41.4	13
Grocery Stores	4451	\$8,768,472	\$22,134,004	-\$13,365,532	-43.3	11
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$461,265	\$0	\$461,265	100.0	0
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$254,030	\$744,179	-\$490,149	-49.1	2
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$3,207,708	\$2,795,827	\$411,881	6.9	2
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$3,756,251	\$3,235,084	\$521,167	7.5	3
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$2,026,145	\$0	\$2,026,145	100.0	0
Clothing Stores	4481	\$1,354,016	\$0	\$1,354,016	100.0	0
Shoe Stores	4482	\$306,188	\$0	\$306,188	100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$365,941	\$0	\$365,941	100.0	0
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$1,195,893	\$4,486,293	-\$3,290,400	-57.9	4
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$993,419	\$1,802,748	-\$809,329	-28.9	2
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$202,474	\$2,683,545	-\$2,481,071	-86.0	2
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$9,005,916	\$7,059,217	\$1,946,699	12.1	4
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$6,709,195	\$5,411,236	\$1,297,959	10.7	2
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$2,296,721	\$1,647,981	\$648,740	16.4	2
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$2,804,799	\$2,443,765	\$361,034	6.9	8
Florists	4531	\$75,594	\$226,301	-\$150,707	-49.9	2
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$409,405	\$40,356	\$369,049	82.1	1
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$209,425	\$522,854	-\$313,429	-42.8	3
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$2,110,375	\$1,654,254	\$456,121	12.1	2
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$1,103,571	\$0	\$1,103,571	100.0	0
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$661,679	\$0	\$661,679	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$58,224	\$0	\$58,224	100.0	0

Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$383,668	\$0	\$383,668	100.0	0
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$4,960,854	\$9,241,847	-\$4,280,993	-30.1	17
Special Food Services	7223	\$44,680	\$0	\$44,680	100.0	0
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$293,087	\$304,243	-\$11,156	-1.9	2
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$4,623,087	\$8,937,604	-\$4,314,517	-32	15

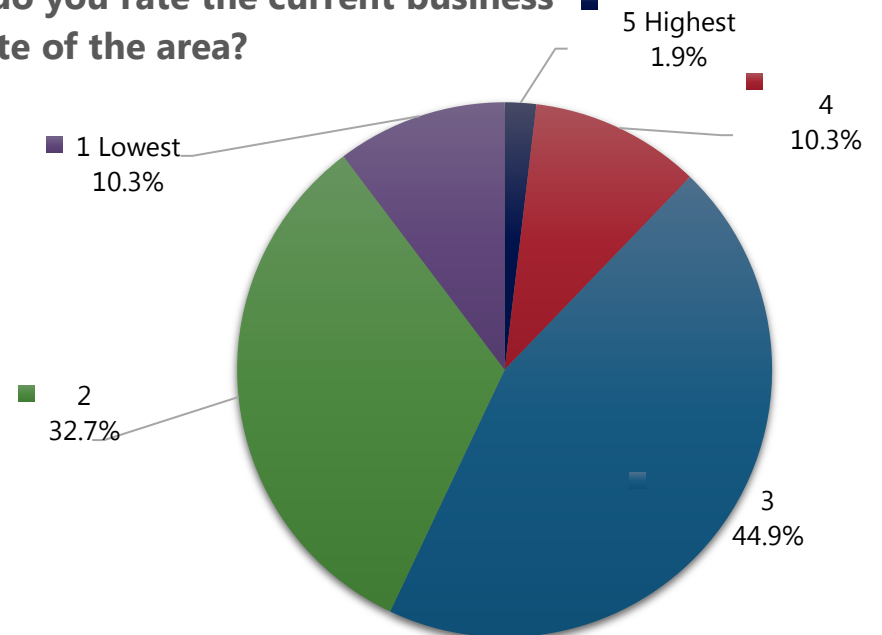
Source: Esri and Infogroup. Retail MarketPlace 2016 Release 2. Copyright 2016 Infogroup, Inc. All rights reserved.

Appendix B: Community Survey Results

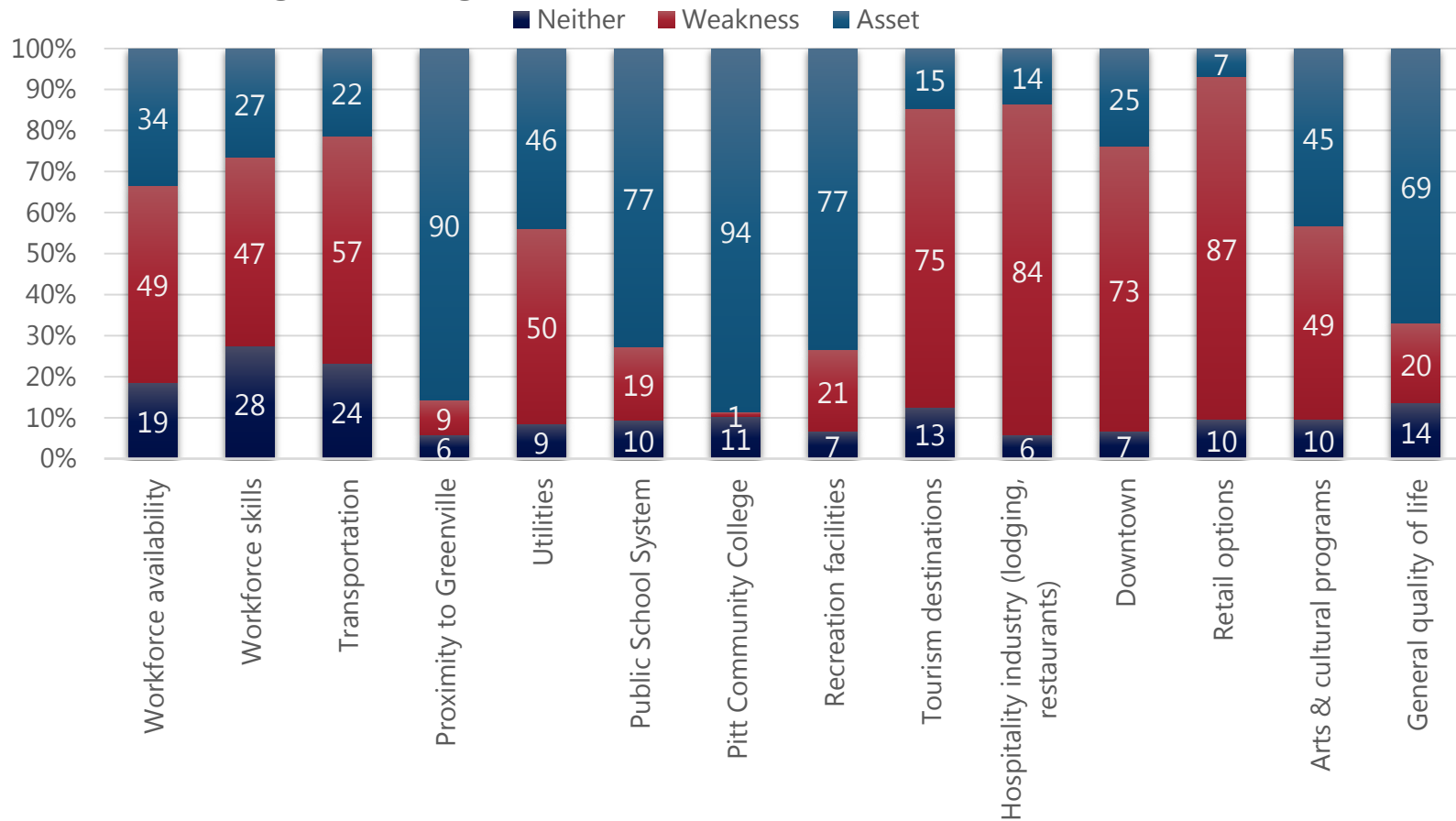
I am a (check all that apply)



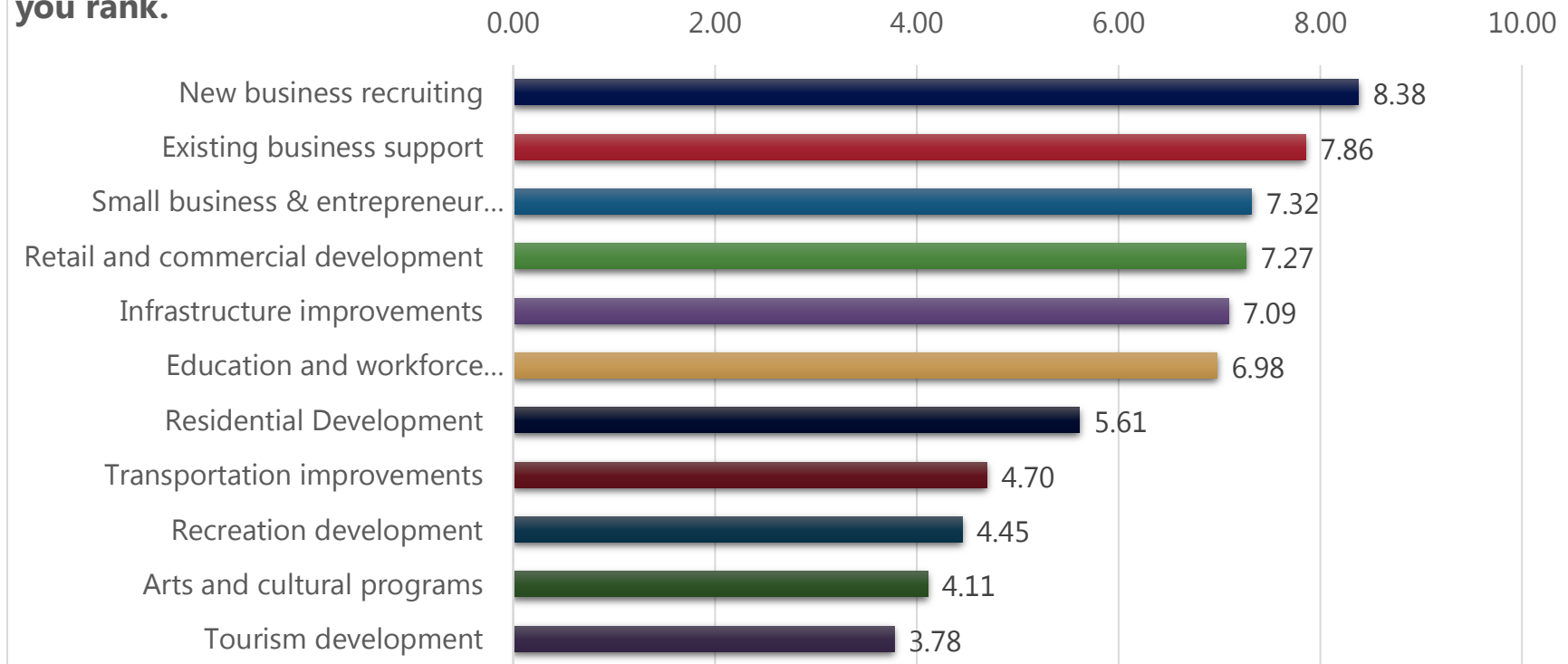
On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest, how do you rate the current business climate of the area?



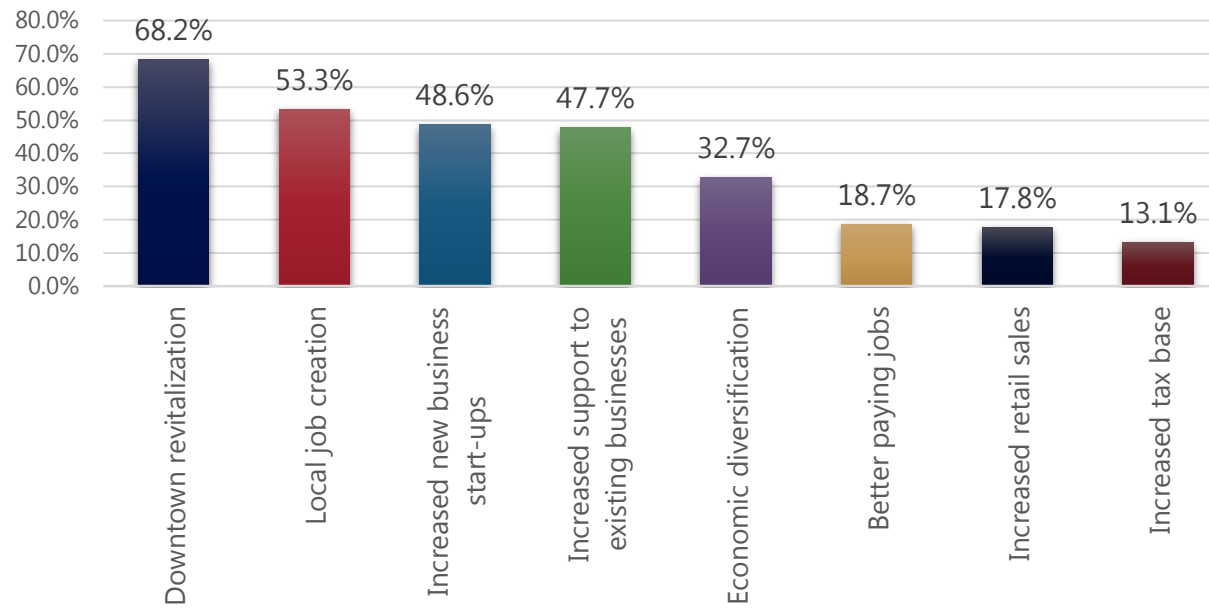
Rate the following as an asset supporting economic development or a weakness hindering economic growth or neither



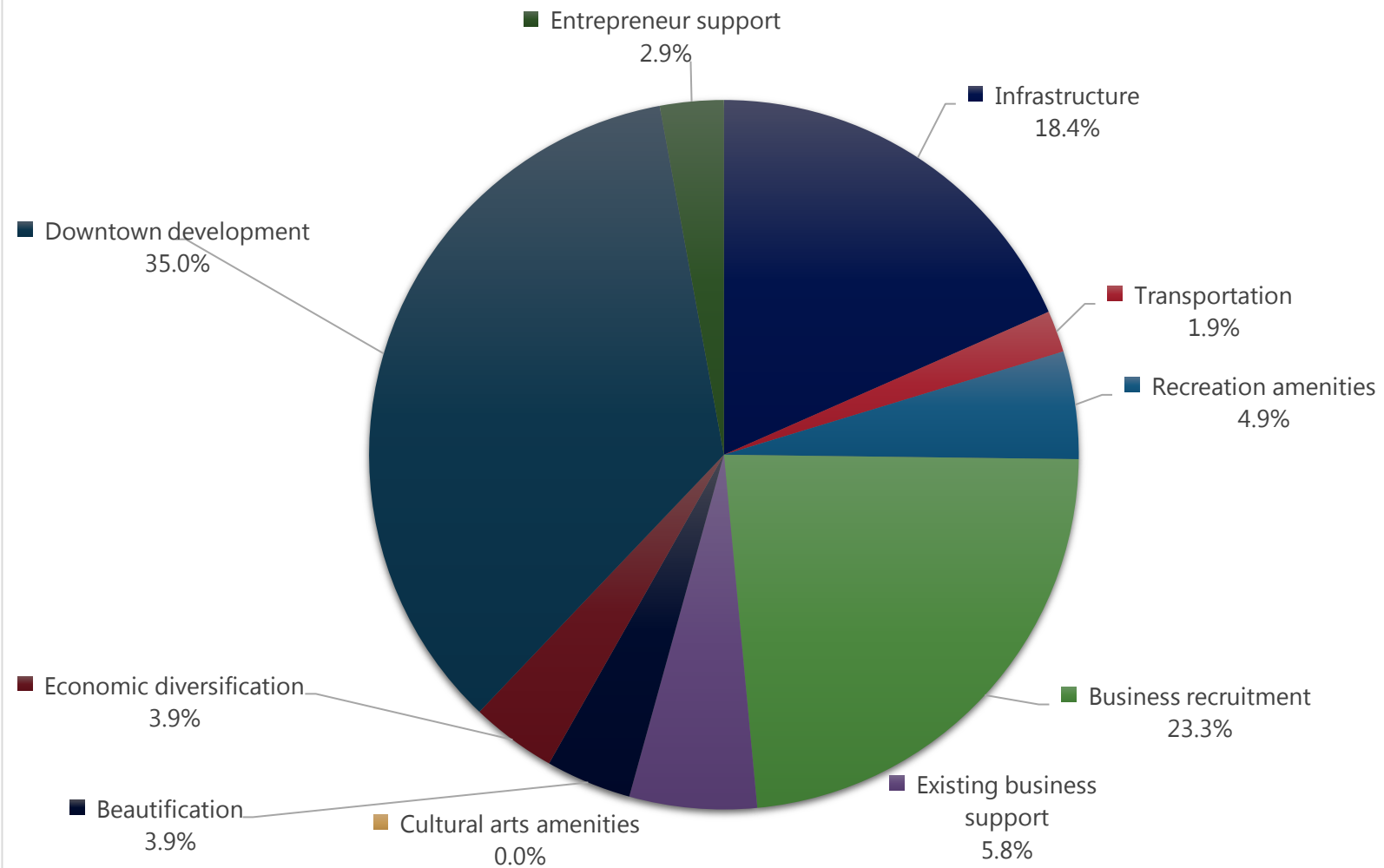
Rank order the following economic development strategies in order of importance with 1 being the most important. Note: The list will re-order as you rank.



What should be the top three goals of the town's economic development strategic plan? CHOOSE THREE.



What is the most important investment the town could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth? CHOOSE ONLY ONE.



Appendix C: Study Sponsor and Consultant



ElectriCities of N.C. Inc. sponsored the Town of Ayden Economic Development Strategic Plan. ElectriCities economic development department offers a variety of services to promote NC Public Power communities to businesses and economic developers. It helps communities recruit business and industry by providing:

- ⊙ Target Marketing
- ⊙ Marketing/Collateral Assistance
- ⊙ Aerial Photography
- ⊙ Proposals for Prospects/Clients
- ⊙ Advertising Opportunities
- ⊙ Target Sectors
- ⊙ Trade Show Opportunities
- ⊙ Direct Marketing
- ⊙ Retail/Commercial Developments

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