
M *Nature's Playground*
Morganton
NORTH CAROLINA



Morganton Economic Development Strategic Plan

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CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING, LLC

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Strategic Plan Process

The strategic planning process included a review of previous studies, economic and demographic research, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, community engagement, and prioritization of initiatives. We made a few changes to the Morganton project scope since citizens had recently been engaged for the Downtown Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan. We used information from those studies to build a foundation for the SWOT analysis and focused citizen engagement on prioritizing projects.

The strategic planning process was kicked-off with a SWOT input session with city staff and county economic development staff. This leadership team oversaw the planning process. Next, we interviewed approximately fifteen community leaders from a wide range of industries including real estate, retail, professional services, education, health care, and nonprofits. The entire community had the opportunity to provide input via an online survey, through which received 168 responded. A focus group was held to vet draft strategies and provide input.

205 people
had input in the
planning process

The Morganton Economic Development Strategic Plan brings together initiatives from the Downtown Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, citizen input on economic growth, and best practices from similar communities.

Executive Summary

Morganton is on the verge of transformational economic change. Just as Broughton Hospital led to economic stability, a professional workforce, and a new business network over 100 years ago, the NC School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM) has the opportunity to transform Morganton into a major educational center. The development will add more professional workers and related service businesses, bringing more economic stability. The key will be to leverage the state investment with local public and private investments.

The economic development strategic planning process was sponsored by ElectriCities of N.C., Inc. 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 Morganton 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 Morganton's assets and future opportunities. Morganton's strengths include the state employment and facilities, parks and recreation, downtown, health care, Western Piedmont Community College, cultural assets, and many more. The city's challenges include housing, workforce shortage, hotel shortage, and lack of youth and family entertainment venues. The most significant opportunity is the investment by NCSSM, which together with WPCC and Broughton campus, could create a mixed-use corridor connecting to downtown. Most of the threats identified are common to most towns, and are things Morganton will need partners to change.

Goals of the economic development plan include:

- ⦿ **Increase Housing Options**
- ⦿ **Capitalize on Education Developments**
- ⦿ **Downtown Development**
- ⦿ **Coordinated Marketing**
- ⦿ **Entrepreneur Development**
- ⦿ **Enhance the Visitor Experience**

All of the right economic development ingredients are in Morganton. City leaders are progressive and passionate about the community and willing to make investments. Significant state investments will spur growth. Citizens are supportive of community and economic development, especially downtown development. Private investors are at the table building hotels and restaurants. All of these are contributing to Morganton's positive growth trajectory.

Morganton Economic Development Strategic Plan Summary

Goal: Increase Housing Options

- Strategy: Leverage partners and new developments to spur a wide range of housing development

Goal: Capitalize on Education Developments

- Strategy: Connect NCSSM, Broughton redevelopment, and WPCC to form a corridor for mixed-use development

Goal: Downtown Development

- Strategy: Continue to make strategic public investments to encourage more private investment

Goal: Coordinated Marketing

- Strategy: Consistent marketing message

Goal: Enhance Visitor Experience

- Strategy: Expand Morganton's tourism destinations and amenities

Goal: Entrepreneur Development

- Strategy: Support the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and small business growth

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Housing was the hottest topic discussed in interviews and community meetings. Citizens understand the need for a range of housing options to attract new residents and encourage in-commuters to make Morganton home. Housing, downtown development, and capitalizing on the NC School of Science and Mathematics are linked. Morganton needs housing and a vibrant downtown to attract NCSSM faculty and staff to become residents. Connecting the NCSSM development with WPCC and Broughton redevelopment presents the opportunity for transformational economic change in a corridor that ties to downtown through the cultural corridor (CoMMA, library, history museum, etc.). Beyond housing, educational assets, and downtown, the strategic plan addresses entrepreneurs, small businesses, tourism, and marketing.

Morganton has consistently made strategic public investments to spur growth and attract private dollars. This economic development strategic plan continues that history with recommendations for public investments that will spur residential and downtown development, leveraging significant state investments in education.

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

- ⦿ Increase Housing Options
- ⦿ Capitalize on Education Developments
- ⦿ Downtown Development
- ⦿ Coordinated Marketing
- ⦿ Entrepreneur Development
- ⦿ Enhance the Visitor Experience

Goal: Increase Housing Options

Housing was the number one most discussed topic during the strategic planning process. Professional housing to attract NCSSM faculty, workforce housing for the new jobs being created by industrial recruitment projects, transitional housing for homeless, and downtown living were all a part of the discussion.

Morganton is already doing many placemaking things necessary to encourage housing development. Creating an environment that draws people will help drive the housing market. Continuing to encourage the county to fund quality schools, supporting expansion of health care facilities, and investing in recreation all support a stronger housing market. Morganton has, and will need, many partners in the area of housing development: state, community college, county, private developers, economic development, and many others.

Strategy: Leverage partners and new developments to spur a wide range of housing development.

Action Steps:

1. Support the Burke Development, Inc.(BDI) housing development initiative. The county economic development organization is leading an effort to raise awareness of the housing gap, identify residential development sites, and market opportunities to developers.
 - 1.1. Working with BDI, identify sites within the city and promote to residential developers.
 - 1.2. The housing initiative will address a wide range of housing needs. There is keen interest from the city to encourage multi-family and young professional housing.
 - 1.2.1. Continue the downtown housing incentive program.
2. Promote infill development in existing neighborhoods. There are vacant lots in areas already served by infrastructure.
 - 2.1. Identify vacant lots and contact owners/developers and share the housing study gaps analysis.
3. Continue support of mixed-use redevelopment in the Brought District. The NC School of Science and Mathematics is creating an opportunity to redevelop the property for a mix of uses, including residential.
 - 3.1. There is an opportunity to create “teacher’s village” housing. This, coupled with a teacher recruitment program, will encourage more teachers and staff to live in Morganton.
4. Identify sites within the city where public investments in water, sewer, and streets could spur residential development.
 - 4.1. Through the BDI initiative, market these areas.

5. Create zoning with greater density. This will allow for more residences in areas already served with infrastructure. It will also maximize the investments already made in transportation.
6. Encourage “residency” programs to spur housing development. Examples could include artist in residence, health care professionals housing, and nonprofits.
 - 6.1. There could be a partnership with the NCSSM development for visiting faculty housing.
7. Continue to inventory and promote brownfields for redevelopment, and, where appropriate, residential development.

Goal: Capitalize on Education Developments

After housing, the second most discussed topic during the planning process was the opening of the NC School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM), redevelopment of Broughton campus, and connections to Western Piedmont Community College. Linking these areas in the Broughton District could form an “education corridor.” It could be a catalyst for mixed-use development. The corridor development aligns with Morganton’s position as the western location of important state institutions.

Strategy: Connect NCSSM, Broughton redevelopment, and WPCC to form a corridor for mixed-use development.

Action Steps:

1. Remain a leading and active partner in NC School of Science and Mathematics campus development, which has the potential to be a transformational economic development project.
 - 1.1. Continue support of the Broughton District re-development concept.
 - 1.1.1. Connect the NCSSM campus with WPCC and downtown via plans for greenways and streetscapes.
 - 1.1.2. Conduct an economic impact analysis of proposed mixed-use developments to show how public sector investment can be leveraged and multiplied by private sector investment.
2. Expand the university presence in Morganton.
 - 2.1. The university presence could be public or private and focused on health care, a niche in Morganton.
 - 2.2. The presence could be an expansion of four-year program access already on the WPCC campus, or the recruitment of a new four-year institution.
 - 2.3. It could be a partnership that includes NCSSM, a part of the UNC system.

3. Seek state funding for redevelopment of the Broughton district.
 - 3.1. Learn from other communities with large state assets. One out-of-state example is the former Central Virginia Training Center in Amherst County, VA. The county hired a lobbyist to seek special appropriations and funds for redevelopment planning.
4. Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan with a priority on greenway extensions to the Broughton District.
5. Support the Chamber in developing a Young Professionals Network.
 - 5.1. See this free resource on YP Networks: <http://www.creativeedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Blacksburg-Final-Report.pdf>

Goal: Downtown Development

Morganton has a vibrant downtown. There has been significant public and private investment in development and redevelopment projects over many years that now provides a strong foundation. Most citizen comments were about implementing the master plan, more restaurants, and retail variety. The adage that “retail follows rooftops” is true; thus, the aforementioned focus on housing.

Strategy: Continue to make strategic public investments to encourage more private investment.

Action Steps:

1. Implement the Downtown Master Plan
 - 1.1. Make the Courthouse Square project a priority.
 - 1.2. Include permanent event space. This will enhance placemaking by creating another destination in downtown for events. Citizens noted the need for downtown event space in the survey.
2. Continue support of the fixed route bus transportation project. This will help activate downtown, connect the community to health care services, and encourage more young people (more of whom prefer to avoid car ownership) to live downtown.
3. Purchase key properties from absentee owners for redevelopment. Morganton has a successful model of the city purchasing downtown properties, renovating for new uses, issuing an RFP for a business partnership, and launching a new business in downtown.

- 3.1. Danville, VA, has a successful model for best practices.
4. Continue the coalition to address homelessness in downtown.
 - 4.1. Include in the housing discussion “transitional housing” that will aid the homeless to transition to supportive housing.
5. Apply urban design standards to encourage development in an “artisan/craft district.”
 - 5.1. This could be an overlay district in/near downtown. It could be tied to the city’s public art initiatives.
6. Extend the focus on downtown redevelopment to the Broughton District via the cultural arts corridor.
 - 6.1. When planning in downtown areas, consider extending the plans and designs to areas beyond the traditional downtown, such as the education corridor.
7. Enhance existing parking areas with more lighting, signage, and pathways to main streets. Studies have shown there is sufficient parking in downtown, but people need encouragement to use them.
8. Continue to invest in wayfinding signage.

Goal: Coordinated Marketing

The key to efficient marketing is consistency in message and delivery. There are many organizations telling the Morganton story – city, downtown, chamber, BDI, and many others. In order to maximize their limited resources and ensure message consistency, we recommend a marketing consortium.

Strategy: Consistency in marketing message and delivery.

Action Steps:

1. Convene a marketing consortium to develop a joint marketing plan for the greater Morganton area. Bring together partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development, BDI, TDA, Valdese tourism, Burke County, and others to develop a comprehensive, collaborative marketing plan and leverage limited resources.
 - 1.1. The partners can advocate for more marketing funds to implement high priority initiatives.
 - 1.2. Collaborative event planning should be a part of the marketing plan. Not all events can be spaced out to maximize attendance, but better coordination will help.
 - 1.3. Define and maintain a community calendar of events.
 - 1.4. Develop key marketing messages for the consortium to share.
 - 1.4.1. Review partner websites for consistency of message. Look for ways to leverage partner websites.
2. Update the city economic development web pages.

- 2.1. Add an opening page that lists the value proposition of starting, expanding, and locating a business in Morganton.
 - 2.1.1. Include key city and county contacts.
- 2.2. Update the Grants and Loans page with all of Morganton's incentives, including ones for downtown.
- 2.3. Add a page on available downtown and commercial properties. These will not be in the AccessNC database.
- 2.4. Add a page on How to Start a Business in Morganton with a step-by-step guide.
 - 2.4.1. Include "starter kits" for the most often started businesses (e.g. restaurant).

Goal: Enhance Visitor Experience

Tourism is an important part of the Morganton economy. Whether visiting Morganton for the day or for a weekend, tourists want more things to do, places to stay, and entertainment.

Strategy: Expand Morganton's tourism destinations and amenities.

Action Steps:

1. Through a partnership with the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, recruit a Western NC Discovery Center or similar family tourism destination. Morganton is the western location for many state assets, and this could be another.
 - 1.1. Identify a similar facility (e.g. Museum of the Albemarle) and create a rendering and vision for a facility in Morganton.
 - 1.2. After some traction, invest in a feasibility study.
 - 1.3. Locate a site that will activate the Broughton District redevelopment and cultural arts corridor.
2. Recruit family and youth entertainment businesses. Morganton lacks in youth entertainment compared to cities of similar size and market area.
 - 2.1. BDI typically does not recruit commercial businesses, so lean on other partners like Downtown Development and the Chamber.
3. Continue support of hotel developments already underway.
 - 3.1. Continue to identify sites for future hotel developments.
4. Encourage the county to upfit the Foothills Higher Education Conference Center to recruit more regional conferences and meetings.
 - 4.1. Expand parking for the conference center through partnerships.

5. Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, with a focus on development around the Catawba River.
 - 5.1. Leverage the location of the Overmountain Victory Trail headquarters and Exploring Joara Foundation's Living History Center.
 - 5.2. Enhance marketing of recreation tourism by incorporating into the marketing consortium program.

Goal: Entrepreneur Development

Nearly 84% of all businesses in Burke County have less than 10 employees. Small business is important not only to Morganton's downtown development strategy, but also to its overall economic development strategy.

Strategy: Support development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem and small business growth.

Action Steps:

1. Encourage the integration of entrepreneurship training in education and workforce development programs by expanding Work in Burke.
 - 1.1. Raise the awareness of entrepreneurship as a career pathway for students.
2. Support the chamber by including entrepreneur training and networking among entrepreneurs in the Young Professionals Network.
 - 2.1. In partnership with the chamber, organize a Maker's Market or Side Hustle Expo to showcase freelance and gig economy workers.
3. Determine the feasibility of mixed-use entrepreneur space, potentially in collaboration with education institutions.
 - 3.1. Identify space, leveraging regional (e.g. Manufacturing Solutions Center) and private partners.
 - 3.1.1. It could be a small manufacturing or flex space. See this blog about a manufacturing incubator in Abbeville, SC.
<http://www.creativeedc.com/growing-small-ideas-into-big-business/>
 - 3.2. The space could be associated with the Broughton district redevelopment.
 - 3.3. NCSSM and their partners are potential collaborators in entrepreneurship.
4. Leverage the Certified Entrepreneurial Community® designation and consider reviving the program.

Appendix A: SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) was compiled using information from interviews, survey, previous economic development plan and other studies, staff, and leadership input. Morganton is on the verge of transformational change. The opening of the NC School of Science and Mathematics campus, redevelopment of Broughton, and connecting these developments with WPCC and downtown could transform the Morganton economy with new residents, professional workers, and significant public and private investment. Citizens see the opportunity for new housing, restaurants, and entertainment and are eager to capitalize on it.

Strengths

- Quality of life
- Western Piedmont Community College
- Health care
- Downtown
- State facilities and employees
- Cultural assets: museums, CoMMA, art galleries, and many others
- Recreation including greenway system and other trails
- Retail Hub
- City Leadership

Weaknesses

- Housing
- Workforce availability
- Youth/family entertainment
- Industrial and business product
- Homelessness in downtown
- Hotels
- Marketing coordination

Opportunities

- NC School of Science and Math
- Redevelopment of Broughton
- Downtown Master Plan
- Parks and Recreation Plan
- Expanded tourism assets/destinations
- Downtown housing
- Expanded higher education offerings
- Retaining out-commuters

Threats

- Continued brain drain
- Slow pace of state redevelopment of Broughton
- Continued public support of investments in infrastructure
- Lack of collaboration between county and municipalities
- Stagnate population growth
- Failure to preserve natural and historical assets

STRENGTHS

Strengths are assets that support a vibrant and growing economy and quality of life amenities. In many ways, Morganton is a model small town. From the community survey: "We have been here for 15 years and have seen great improvements made to our little town - keep up all of your hard work!!" Morganton has a vibrant downtown, quality health care services, amenities, and economic stability resulting from a high concentration of professional workers in health care and education.

- ⦿ Small town quality of life
 - Health care
 - Low cost of living
 - Parks and recreation
 - Cultural programs
- ⦿ Western Piedmont Community College
 - Investments in facilities
 - Training programs such as mechatronics
 - National model drop-out project
- ⦿ Investments by Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge
- ⦿ Downtown
 - Downtown master plan
- ⦿ State facilities and state employee presence
 - State investment
 - Economic stability
 - Draws professional workers
- ⦿ CoMMA
- ⦿ Transportation access – interstate, airport, pilot fixed route bus transportation
- ⦿ Recreation
 - Parks and recreation master plan
 - Catawba River recreation
 - Over Mountain Victory Trail and trail connectivity
 - Greenways and connectivity
 - Catawba Meadows
 - Lake James State Park
- ⦿ Workforce concentration in manufacturing (high economic multiplier), health care and education services
 - Work in Burke initiative
- ⦿ Historical assets with tourism value
- ⦿ City leadership
- ⦿ Recent BDI project announcements of hundreds of new jobs
- ⦿ Water and sewer infrastructure
- ⦿ Morganton is a retail hub, drawing from smaller nearby towns

WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses are obstacles to growth that deter business expansion and negatively impact quality of life. Most of the weaknesses listed below are not unique to Morganton. Most communities are facing a workforce shortage, housing shortage, gaps in amenities, and the need for more industrial and commercial facilities.

- ⦿ Housing
 - Wide range of housing needs: affordable, workforce, multi-family, market rate, single-family, management/executive
 - Impacts ability to recruit professionals
- ⦿ Workforce
 - Very low unemployment rate
 - Skills disconnect with current demand
 - Workforce reliability
- ⦿ Youth and family entertainment venues
- ⦿ Industrial and business product (sites, buildings, parks)
- ⦿ Opioid addiction issues and support services
- ⦿ Lack of full utilization of parking options in downtown by public
- ⦿ Need a solution to homelessness issue in downtown
- ⦿ Number of hotel rooms, hotel needed near/in downtown
- ⦿ Gap between upper and lower end senior care/assisted living
- ⦿ Organizations that market and promote Morganton not coordinated

OPPORTUNITIES

Morganton's future is bright. There are many opportunities on the horizon that will bring significant economic benefit. Public investments in the NCSSM and Broughton, along with private investment in mixed-use development will benefit citizens, attract new residents, retain more young people, and support business growth and development.

- ⦿ Leverage the NC School of Science and Math development
- ⦿ Redevelopment of the Broughton District into a mixed-use district
- ⦿ Complete the Downtown Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan
 - Courthouse Square, permanent stage
- ⦿ Expand tourism assets, including tourism destination locations
- ⦿ Providing more housing opportunities in/near downtown and across the city to attract new residents and encourage in-commuters to live in Morganton
 - Infill in existing developments
 - Develop areas already served with city services
 - Housing for NCSSM faculty and staff
 - Housing for growing health care sector
 - Senior living
- ⦿ Attract a four-year university/college and/or expand offerings at WPCC higher education partners
- ⦿ 11,000 out-commuting workers
- ⦿ More cultural arts venues
- ⦿ Transitional housing for homeless
- ⦿ Improve conference meeting facilities to attract more regional meetings
- ⦿ Expand on the value of CoMMA

THREATS

Threats must be identified and mitigated in an economic development strategy. Morganton has few threats, and most are common to similar cities. One that stands out specific to Morganton is the potential for state investment and redevelopment decisions of the Broughton campus to be slow and drawn out.

- ⦿ Continued brain drain (loss of youth)
- ⦿ Slow pace of state redevelopment of Broughton facility
- ⦿ Community support of continued public investments in infrastructure and placemaking
- ⦿ Lack of collaboration between city and partners like Burke County
- ⦿ County and municipalities not working collaboratively on filling the housing gap
- ⦿ Stagnate population growth - population figures increased in 2017 after a decline from 2010-2016
- ⦿ Failure to preserve natural and historical assets

Appendix B: Economic and Demographic Profile

The consulting team analyzed economic and demographic data to get a snapshot of how Morganton is growing and changing. The main take-away from this research is that the city should leverage the workforce in manufacturing, education, and health care. Manufacturing has a high economic multiplier and recent business expansion announcements will ripple dollars through the economy. The concentration of professional workers means higher wages, and in the case of Morganton, more economic stability due to many of the jobs being in state government. The key to leveraging this workforce asset will be to develop housing so they become residents of Morganton, not just commuting workers.

Summary

- ⦿ After a decrease in population from 2010 to 2016, Morganton's population saw an up-tick in 2017 to 16,969. If this trend holds, it will substantiate the investments the city has been making to attract new residents.
- ⦿ While the median age has been climbing, the working age populations between 35 and 54 have been growing. Young workers between 20 and 34 have been declining. Overall, the city has more younger people, aged 20-34, than the county and region.
- ⦿ Morganton has more racial and ethnic diversity than the county and region. There is a significant Hispanic population in the city and citizens that identify as "some other race".
- ⦿ The city's population has a higher educational attainment than Burke County and the region, only topped by the state numbers. This is partially due to the state facilities in education and health care. Morganton should market the high rate of people with graduate or professional degrees along with the high numbers of people with bachelor and associate degrees. The slightly higher percentage of people with an associate's degree supports the recruitment of mid-skilled jobs. The SAT scores of the county are above the national average and are on par with the state average.
- ⦿ Per capita income surpasses the county and region, while median household income falls below every comparable jurisdiction. This is important to the workforce housing discussion.

*Median age
from 39.7 to
43.7*



*Higher
educational
attainment than
county & MSA*

- ⦿ Homes are less affordable in Morganton than in the county and region. This substantiates the need for more housing options in the city. The median home value in Morganton is \$137,400.
- ⦿ Labor force growth in Burke County is growing and currently stands at 41,061. The unemployment rate is declining and is at 3.3%, well below what is considered full employment.
- ⦿ Most people are employed in Manufacturing, Education and Health Services, and Trade, Transportation and Utilities. The highest paying sectors are Financial Activities, Manufacturing, and Information. It is important to note that one of the largest employment sectors, Manufacturing, is also one of the highest paying sectors. The average weekly wage is \$845.
- ⦿ Top employers include the State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Burke County Schools, CHS Blue Ridge Healthcare, Turning Point Services, and Valdese Weavers.
- ⦿ Approximately 84% of all Burke 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, indicating that Morganton remains a retail hub.
- ⦿ A quality of life feature of Morganton is that more people have a shorter commute than in the county and region. More than half of residents commute less than 15 minutes.

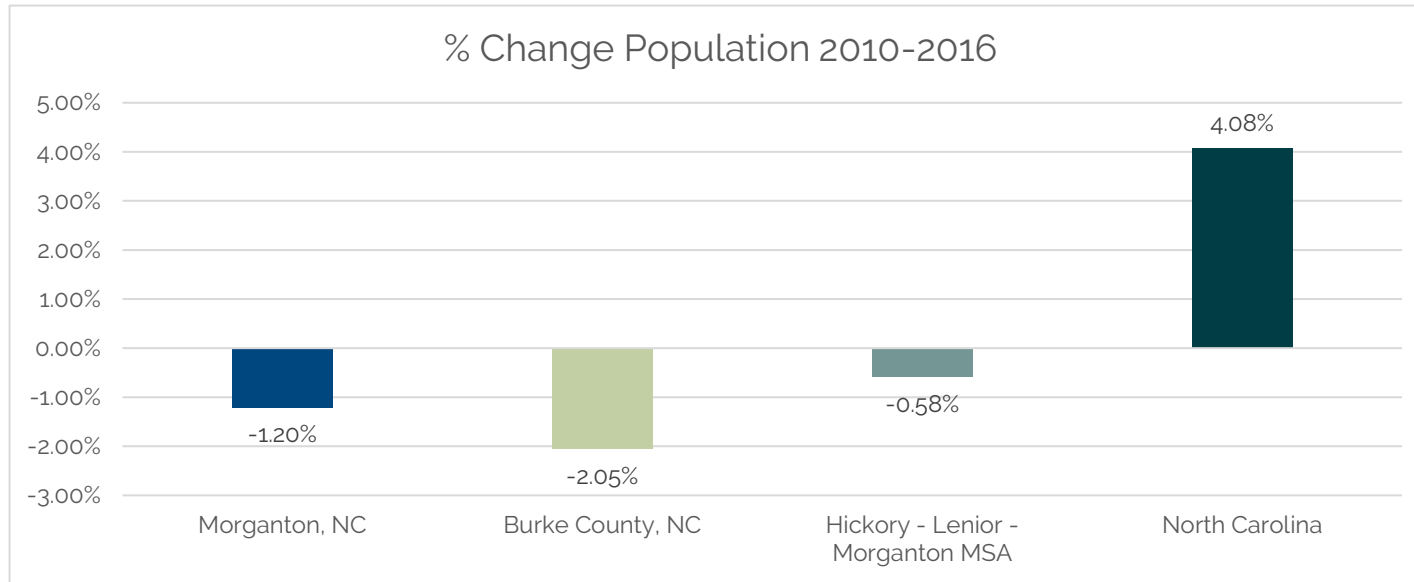
*labor force
Growing*

*\$845
avg. weekly
wage*

Retail Sales 

The index crime rate in Burke County has been decreasing since 2012, with the exception of an up-tick in 2016.

The 2010-2016 population figures show a decline in Morganton; however, the 2017 population number, 16,969, shows an increase.



Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder Population Data for 2010 and 2016. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.)

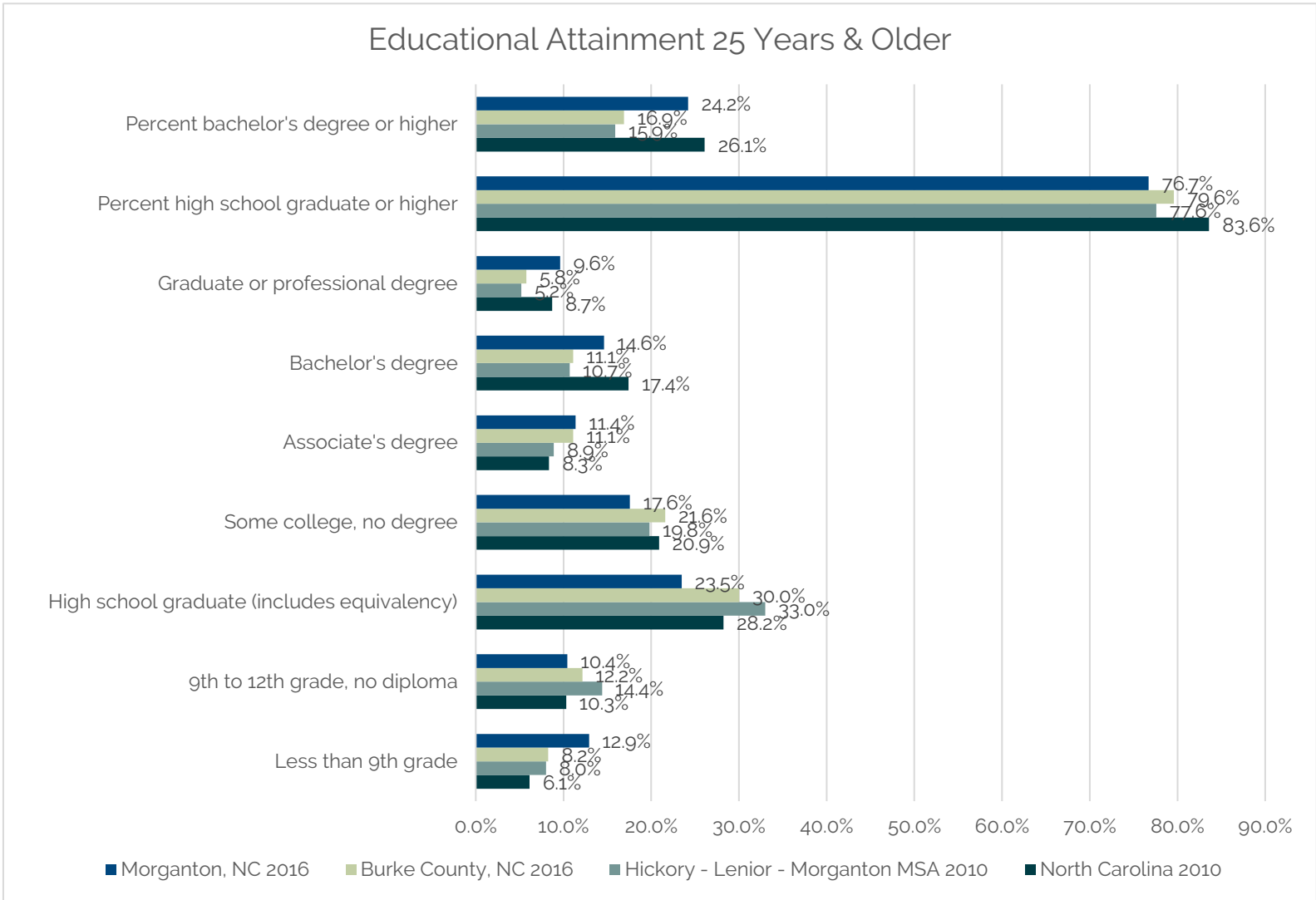
Age Groups	Morganton, NC		Burke County, NC		Hickory - Lenoir - Morganton MSA	North Carolina
	2010	2016	2010	2016	2016	2016
Total population	16,918	16,717	90,912	89,082	365,497	9,940,828
Under 5 years	6.80%	4.89%	5.57%	4.82%	5.3%	6.1%
5 to 9 years	5.93%	5.49%	5.85%	5.42%	6.1%	6.5%
10 to 14 years	5.92%	5.67%	6.42%	5.90%	6.3%	6.6%
15 to 19 years	6.47%	6.89%	7.66%	6.61%	6.3%	6.6%
20 to 24 years	6.38%	5.91%	5.77%	6.32%	6%	7%
25 to 34 years	12.87%	10.23%	10.70%	10.96%	11%	13%
35 to 44 years	11.95%	12.05%	13.38%	12.26%	12.8%	13.1%
45 to 54 years	13.48%	13.96%	15.18%	14.98%	14.9%	13.8%
55 to 59 years	6.02%	6.00%	6.77%	7.46%	7.3%	6.7%
60 to 64 years	5.98%	7.85%	6.56%	7.05%	6.6%	5.9%
65 to 74 years	8.34%	10.18%	9.10%	10.64%	7.4%	8.7%
75 to 84 years	6.76%	7.17%	5.20%	5.32%	2%	4.3%
85 years & over	3.10%	3.72%	1.84%	2.28%	1.8%	1.7%
Median Age	39.7	43.7	41.2	43.3	42.2	38.3

Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder Population Data for 2010 and 2016. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.)

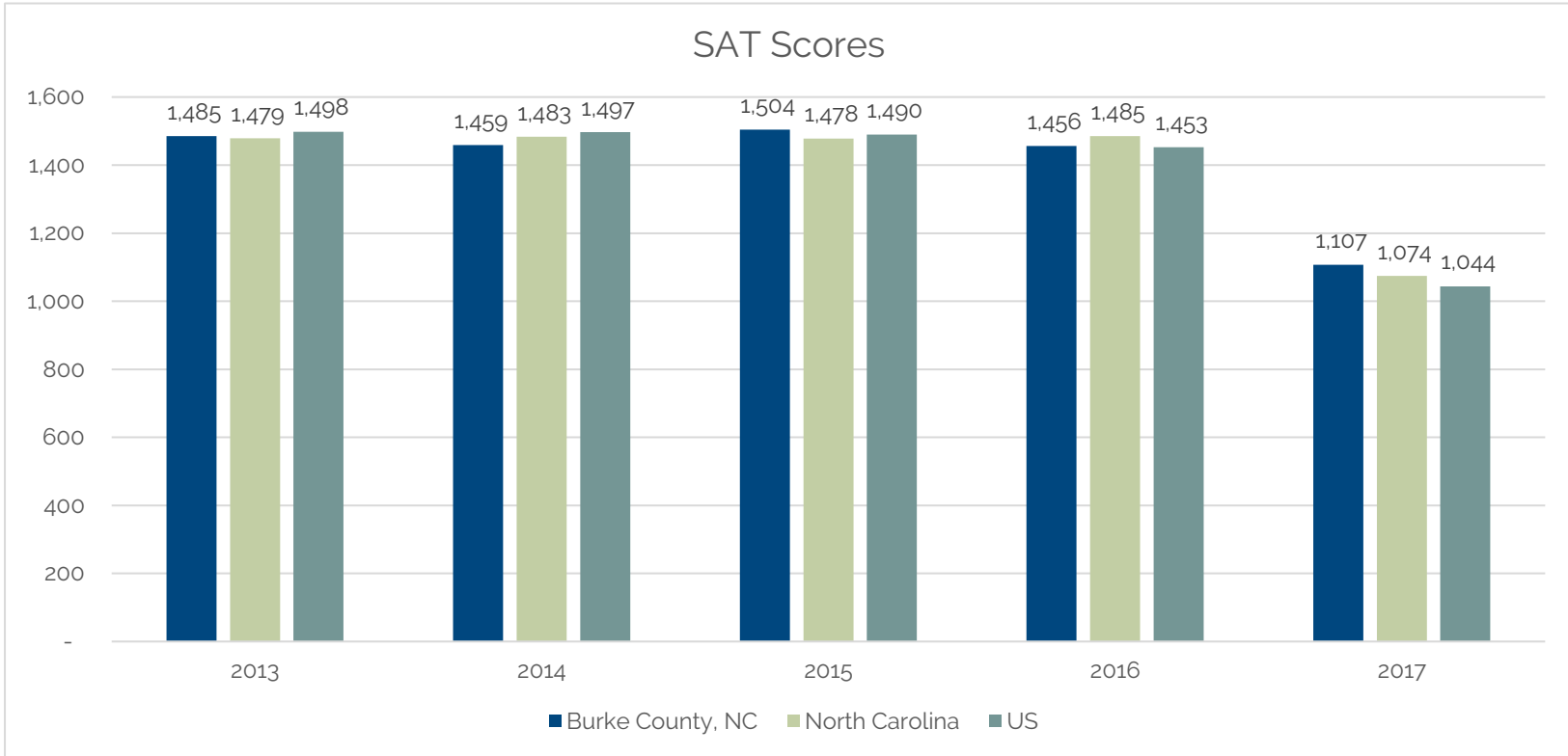
Race	Morganton, NC		Burke County, NC		Hickory - Lenoir - Morganton MSA	North Carolina
	2010	2016	2010	2016	2016	2016
White Alone	70.07%	74.89%	84.38%	84.37%	84%	69.2%
Black Alone	12.16%	9.46%	6.61%	6.16%	6.9%	21.5%
American Indian Alone	0.85%	0.24%	0.36%	0.52%	0.4%	1.2%
Asian Alone	2.36%	1.06%	3.50%	3.64%	2.8%	2.6%
Pacific Islander Alone	1.48%	0.14%	0.33%	3.77%	0.02%	0.067%
Some Other Race Alone	10.23%	12.44%	3.05%	0.03%	4.4%	3%
Two or More Races	2.86%	1.76%	1.76%	1.53%	1.6%	2.5%
Hispanic Origin	16.41%	18.45%	5.10%	5.80%	7.2%	9.2%

Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder Population Data for 2010 and 2016. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.)

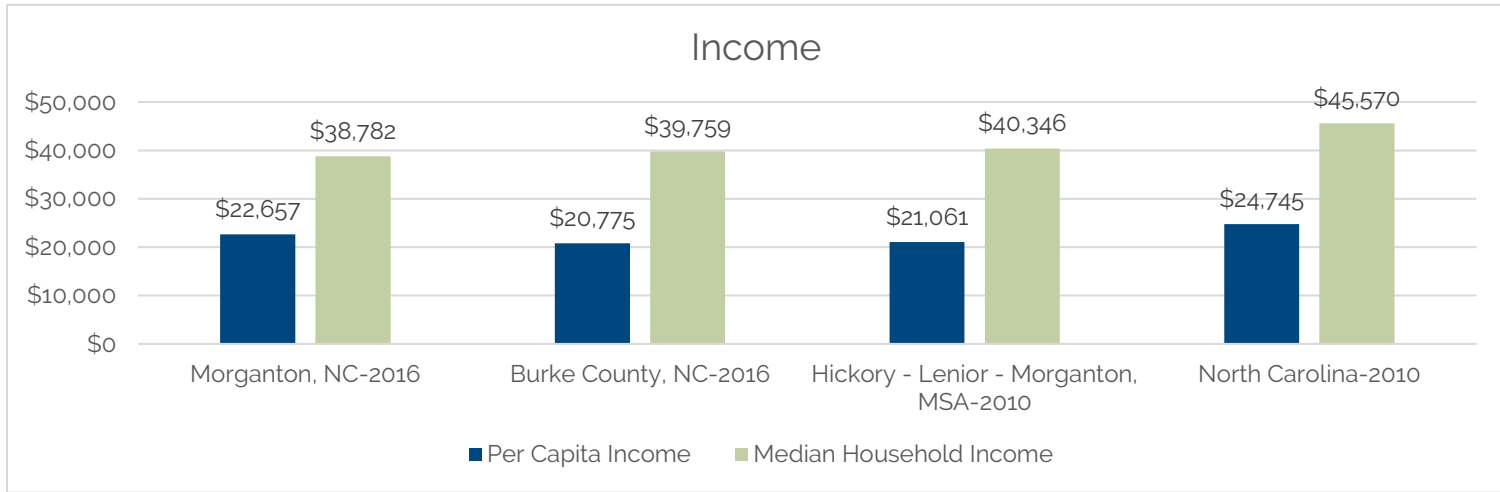
Educational Attainment 25 Years & Older



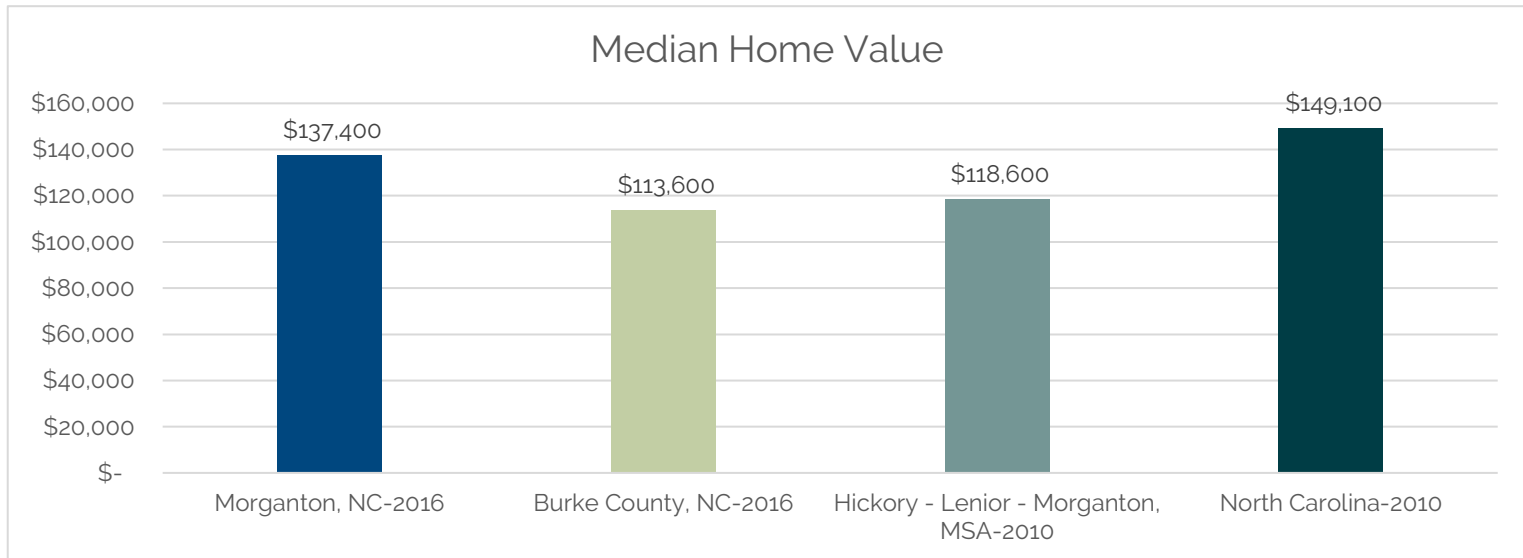
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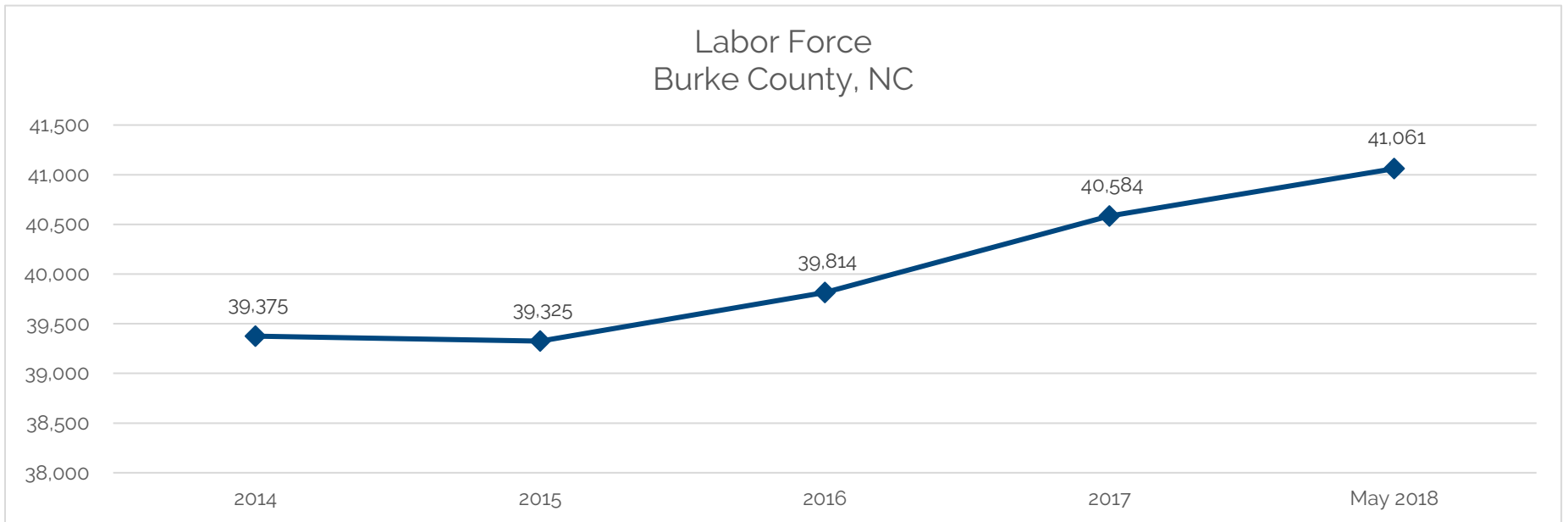
Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (www.ncdpi.state.us)



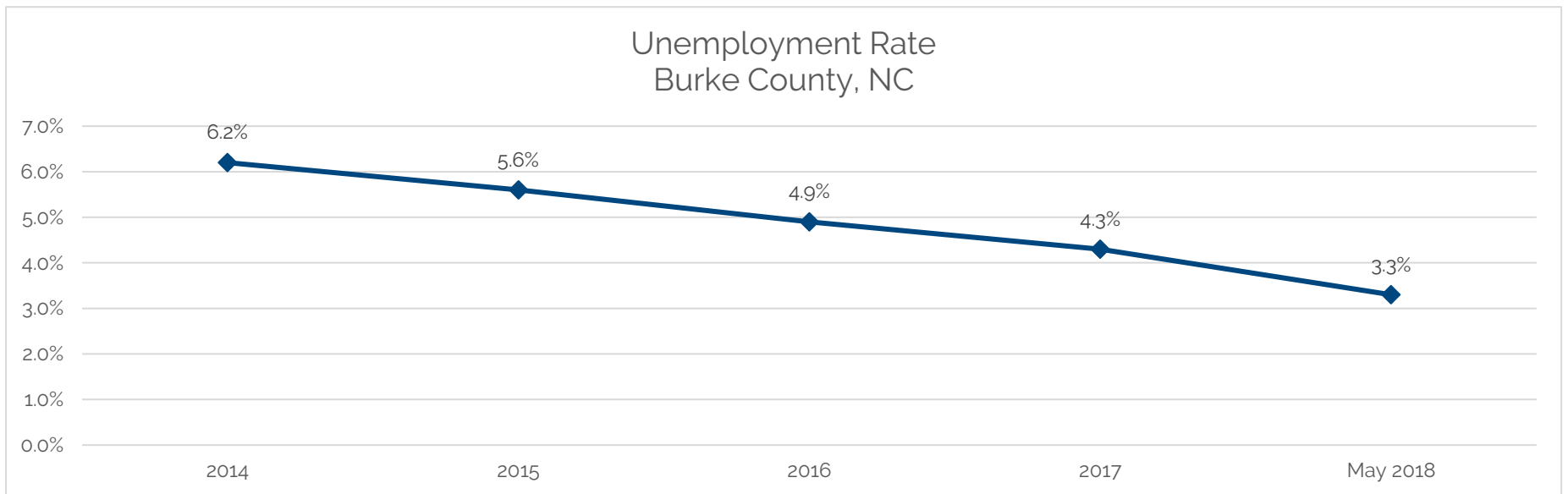
Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder Population Data for 2010 and 2016. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.)



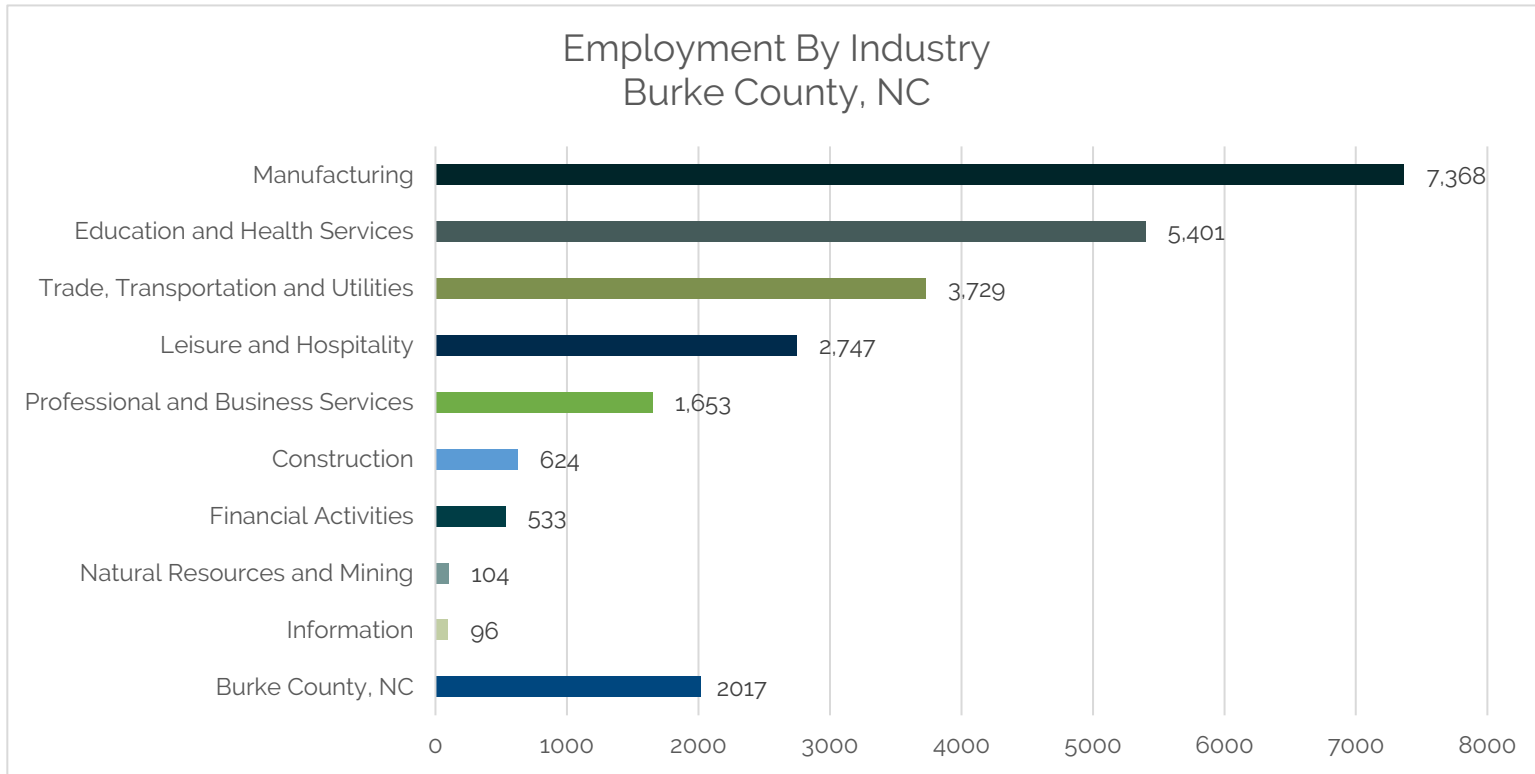
Source: www.census.gov (American Fact Finder Population Data for 2010 and 2016. American Community Survey 5-year estimates.)



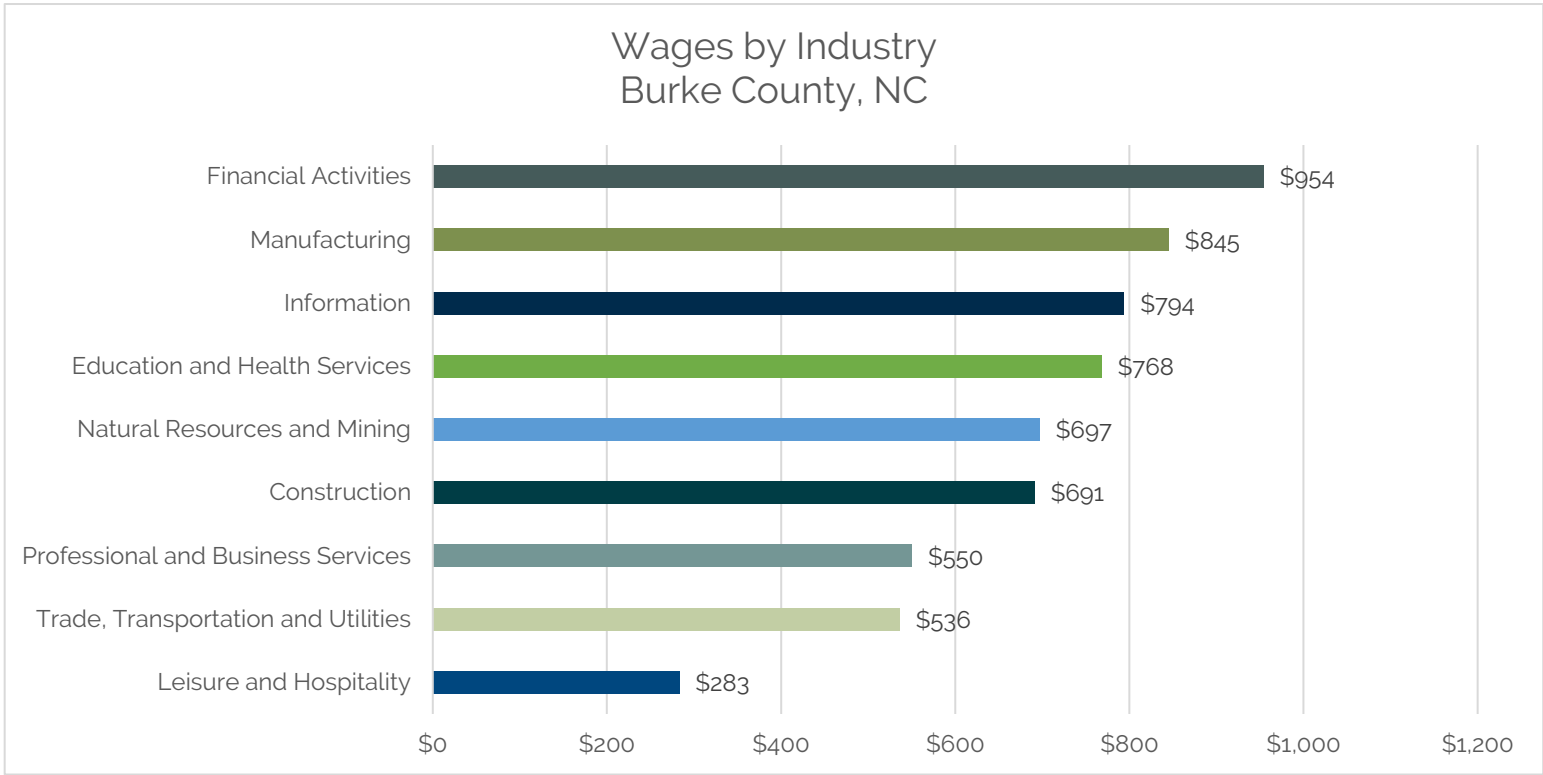
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)



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



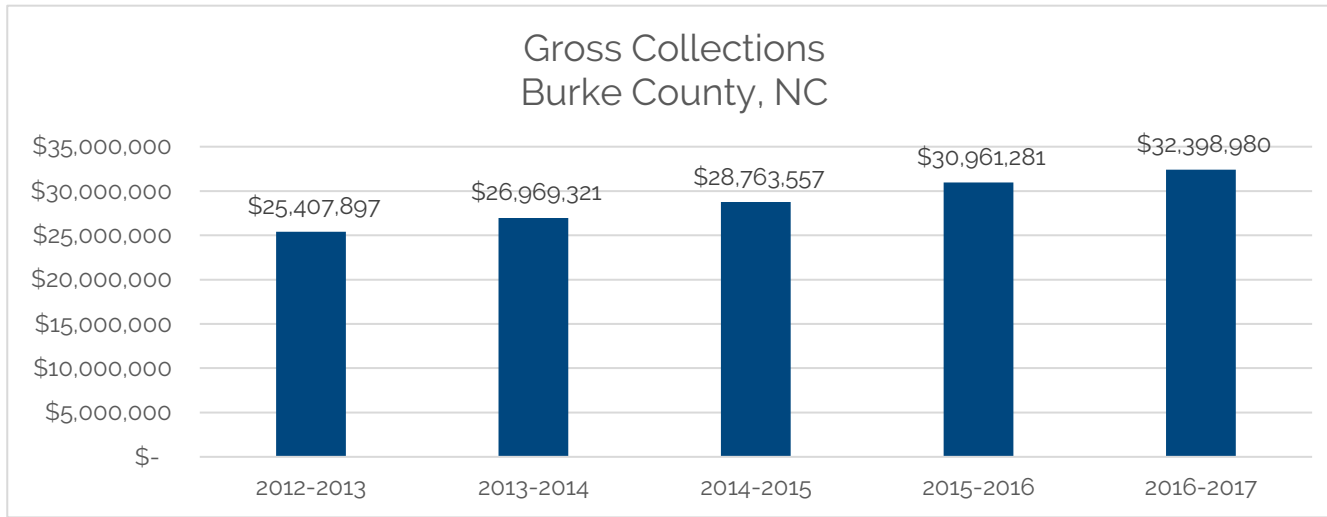
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)



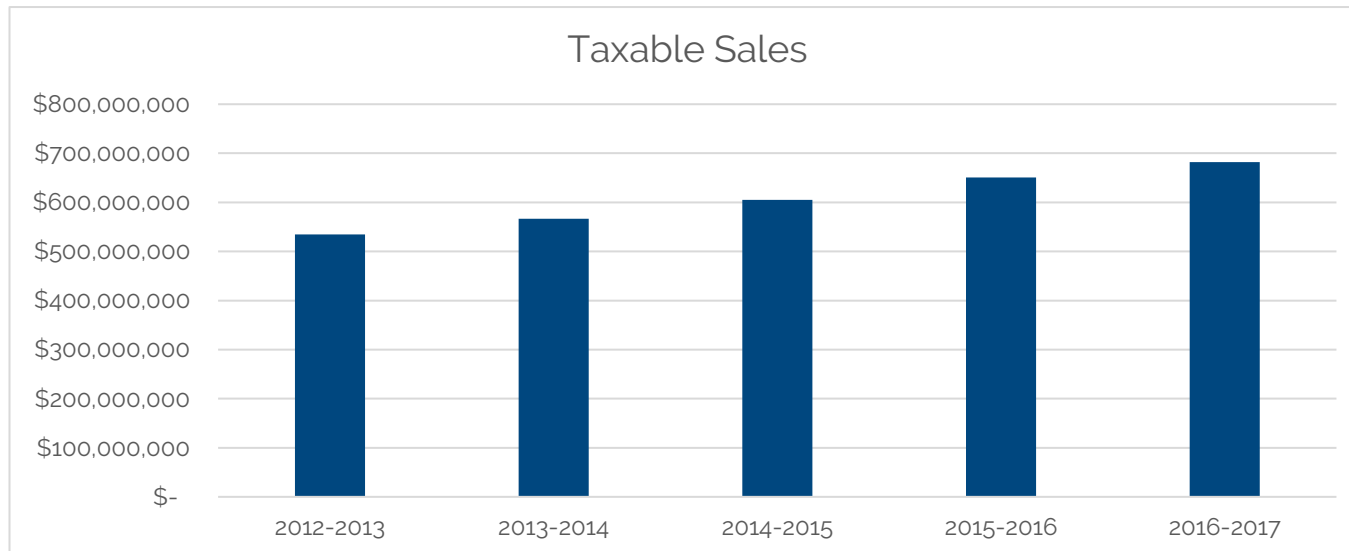
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov)

Burke County, NC Top Employers			
Rank	Company Name	Industry	Employment Range
1	State of Nc Dept Of Health & Human	Public Administration	1000+
2	Public School System	Education & Health Services	1000+
3	Blue Ridge Healthcare Hospitals	Education & Health Services	1000+
4	Turning Point Services Inc	Education & Health Services	500-999
5	Valdese Weavers	Manufacturing	500-999
6	Burke County	Public Administration	500-999
7	Dept Of Public Safety	Public Administration	500-999
8	Case Farms Processing Inc	Natural Resources & Mining	500-999
9	Leviton Manufacturing Co Inc	Manufacturing	500-999
10	Continental Automotive Systems Inc	Manufacturing	250-499
11	Western Piedmont Community College	Education & Health Services	250-499
12	City of Morganton	Public Administration	250-499
13	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499
14	Food Lion	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499
15	Viscotec Automotive Products	Manufacturing	250-499
16	Crothall Healthcare Inc	Leisure & Hospitality	100-249
17	Chaddock	Manufacturing	100-249
18	McDonald's	Leisure & Hospitality	100-249
19	Molded Fiber Glass North Carolina	Manufacturing	100-249
20	Hooker Furniture Corporation	Manufacturing	100-249
21	S G L Carbon LLC	Manufacturing	100-249
22	Saft America Inc	Manufacturing	100-249
23	Kellex Seating	Manufacturing	100-249
25	Bimbo Bakeries USA Inc	Manufacturing	100-249
25	Peds Legwear	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	100-249

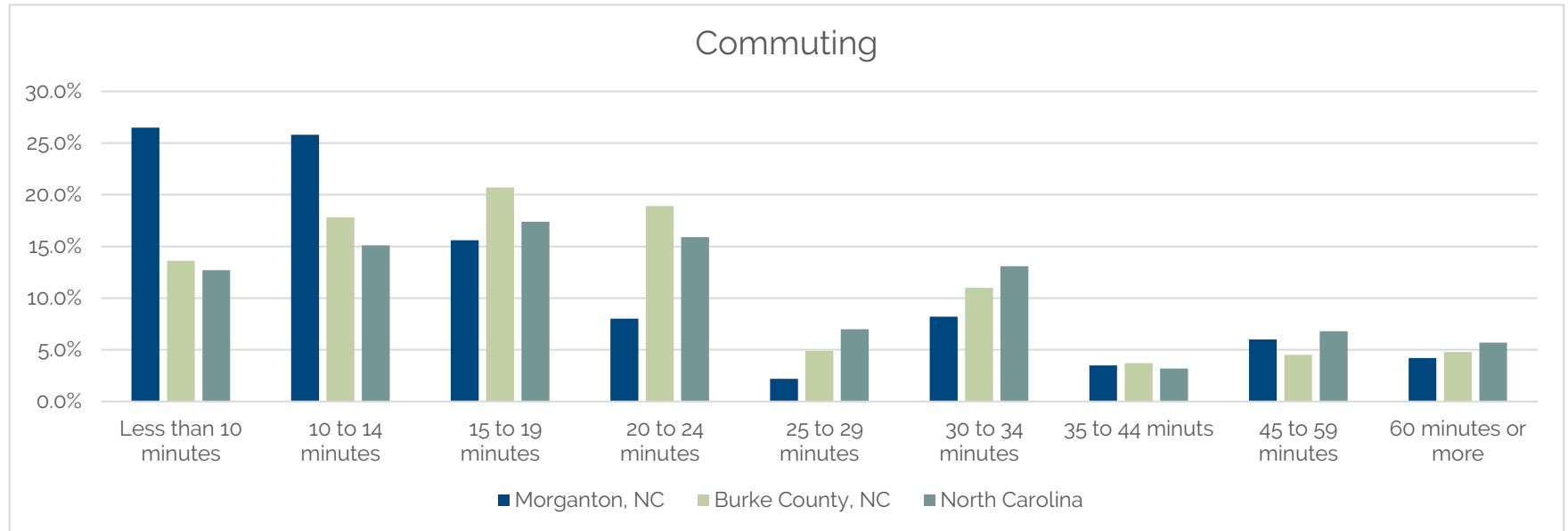
Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce



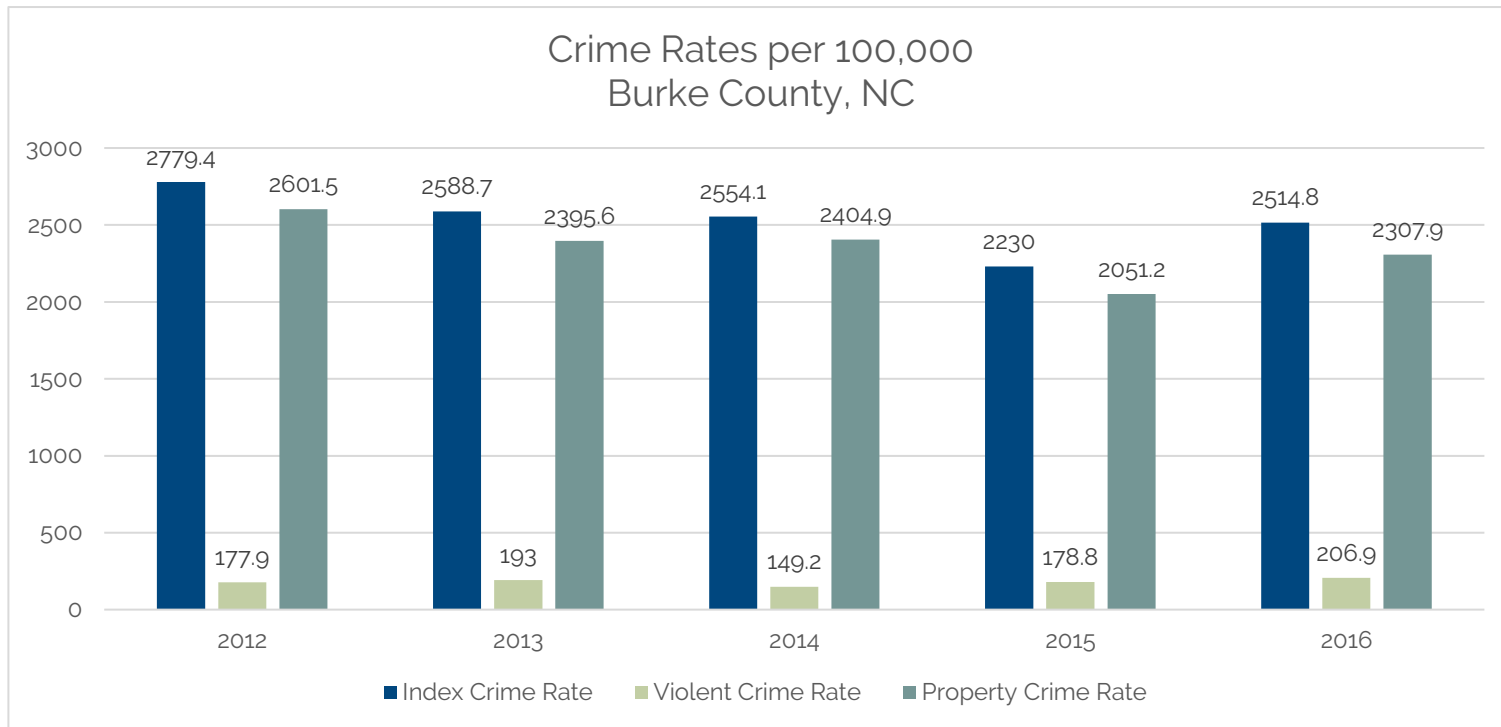
Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue



Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue



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



Source: <http://crimereporting.ncsbi.gov/Reports.aspx>

Burke County 2012-2016 Employment Stages				
ESTABLISHMENTS	2012	% of TOTAL	2016	% of TOTAL
ALL	5,000	100	4,404	100
Self-Employed (1)	634	12.7	624	14.2
Stage 1 (2-9)	3,646	72.9	3,071	69.7
Stage 2 (10-99)	665	13.3	644	14.6
Stage 3 (100-499)	48	1	58	1.3
Stage 4 (500+)	7	0.1	7	0.2

Source: Your Economy Data (www.youreconomy.org)



Morganton City, NC
 Morganton City, NC (3744400)
 Geography: Place

Summary Demographics

2018 Population	17,145
2018 Households	6,812
2018 Median Disposable Income	\$30,336
2018 Per Capita Income	\$23,325

2017 Industry Summary

	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$178,335,622	\$603,270,890	-\$424,935,268	-54.4	333
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$161,977,607	\$533,368,598	-\$371,390,991	-53.4	241
Total Food & Drink	722	\$16,358,015	\$69,902,292	-\$53,544,277	-62.1	92

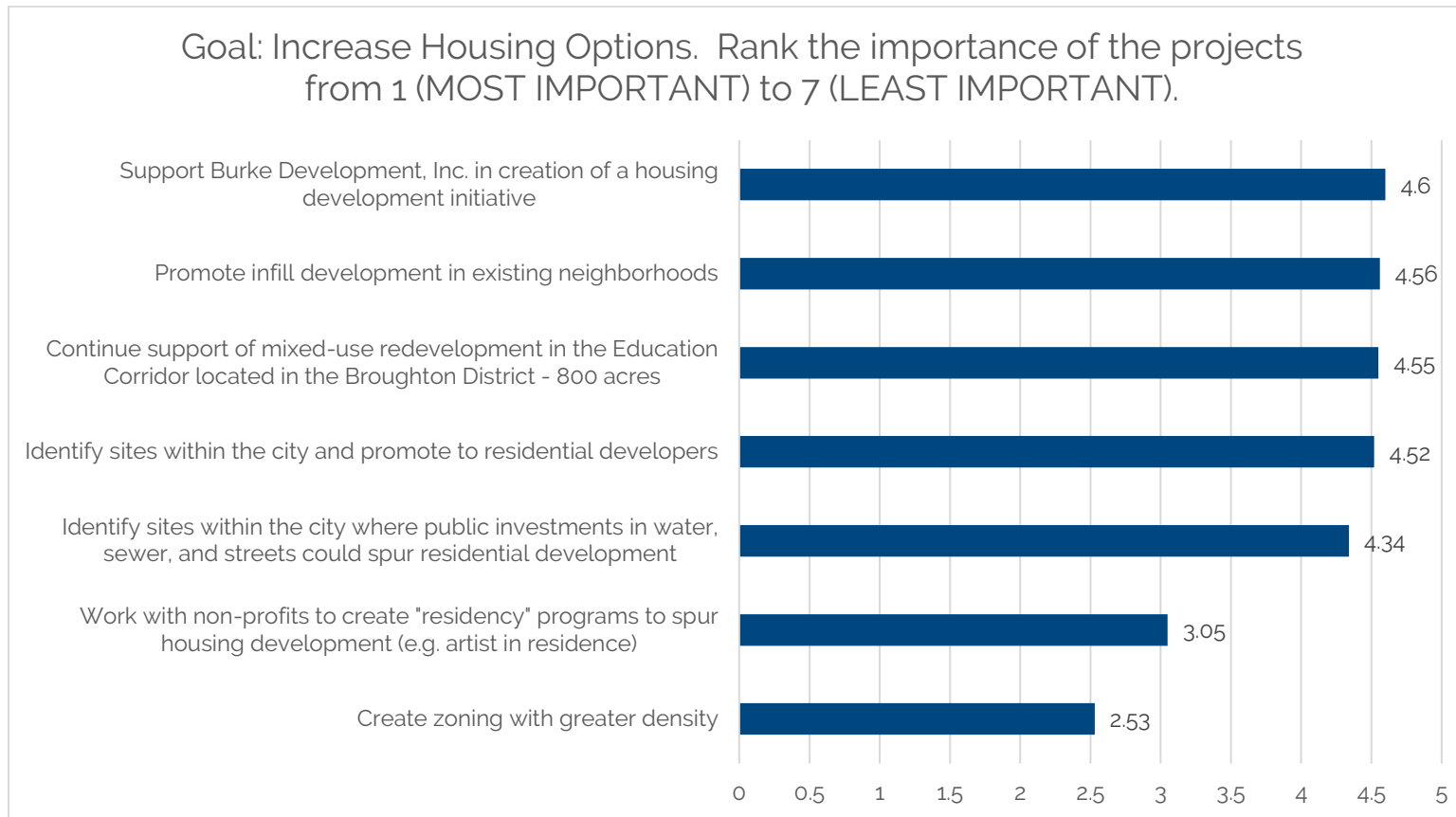
2017 Industry Group

	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$35,544,459	\$68,571,892	-\$33,027,433	-31.7	30
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$29,196,974	\$56,688,391	-\$27,491,417	-32.0	15
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$2,900,657	\$1,546,169	\$1,354,488	30.5	3
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$3,446,828	\$10,337,332	-\$6,890,504	-50.0	12
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$5,881,740	\$107,595,698	-\$101,713,958	-89.6	17
Furniture Stores	4421	\$3,595,258	\$104,150,044	-\$100,554,786	-93.3	12
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$2,286,482	\$3,445,654	-\$1,159,172	-20.2	5
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$4,611,554	\$6,949,665	-\$2,338,111	-20.2	6
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$11,539,909	\$30,730,068	-\$19,190,159	-45.4	18
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$10,766,358	\$27,946,516	-\$17,180,158	-44.4	14
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$773,551	\$2,783,552	-\$2,010,001	-56.5	4
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$28,347,218	\$93,321,582	-\$64,974,364	-53.4	26
Grocery Stores	4451	\$26,386,773	\$89,084,985	-\$62,698,212	-54.3	19
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$1,033,557	\$4,236,597	-\$3,203,040	-60.8	7
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$926,888	\$0	\$926,888	100.0	0
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$10,471,222	\$45,244,168	-\$34,772,946	-62.4	26
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$17,801,239	\$46,968,236	-\$29,166,997	-45.0	23
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$7,188,307	\$13,955,369	-\$6,767,062	-32.0	21
Clothing Stores	4481	\$4,756,806	\$8,751,170	-\$3,994,364	-29.6	15
Shoe Stores	4482	\$1,143,879	\$3,051,127	-\$1,907,248	-45.5	3
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$1,287,622	\$2,153,072	-\$865,450	-25.2	3
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$4,140,699	\$12,765,449	-\$8,624,750	-51.0	15
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$3,497,670	\$12,143,806	-\$8,646,136	-55.3	11
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$643,029	\$621,643	\$21,386	1.7	4
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$26,268,559	\$89,037,800	-\$62,769,241	-54.4	24
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$18,748,050	\$64,544,412	-\$45,796,362	-55.0	8
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$7,520,509	\$24,493,388	-\$16,972,879	-53.0	16
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$7,292,032	\$16,229,848	-\$8,937,816	-38.0	34
Florists	4531	\$233,086	\$492,799	-\$259,713	-35.8	4
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$1,416,287	\$3,136,558	-\$1,720,271	-37.8	3
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$767,891	\$1,743,475	-\$975,584	-38.8	7
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$4,874,768	\$10,857,016	-\$5,982,248	-38.0	20
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$2,890,669	\$1,998,823	\$891,846	18.2	1
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$1,938,239	\$0	\$1,938,239	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$153,602	\$1,998,823	-\$1,845,221	-85.7	1
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$798,828	\$0	\$798,828	100.0	0
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$16,358,015	\$69,902,292	-\$53,544,277	-62.1	92
Special Food Services	7223	\$153,406	\$0	\$153,406	100.0	0
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$1,080,997	\$234,414	\$846,583	64.4	1
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$15,123,612	\$69,667,878	-\$54,544,266	-64.3	91

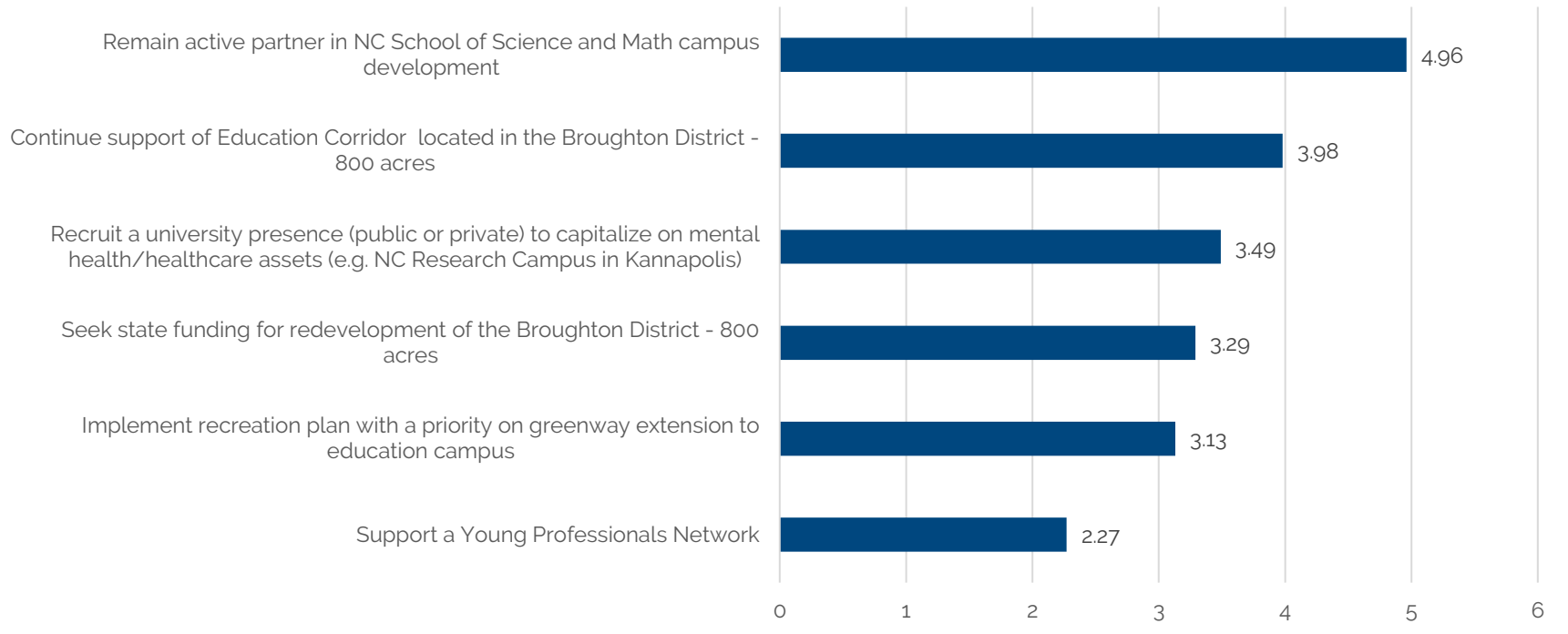
Source: Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2018 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace. Copyright 2018 Esri. Copyright 2017 Infogroup, Inc. All rights reserved

Appendix C: Community Survey Results

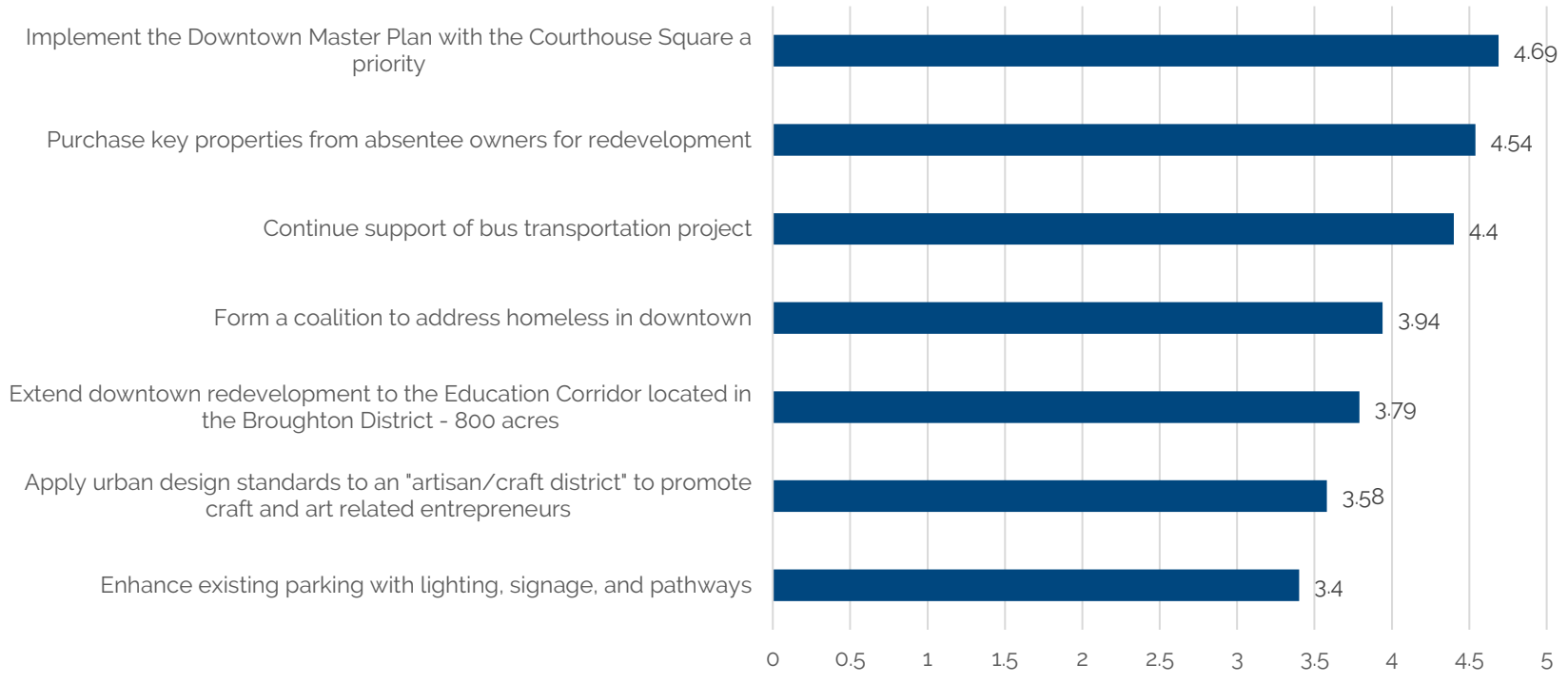
The community survey asked citizens to rank strategies in five goals. The results of this ranking, along with feedback from a community focus group, was used to prioritize strategies. The survey had 168 responses.



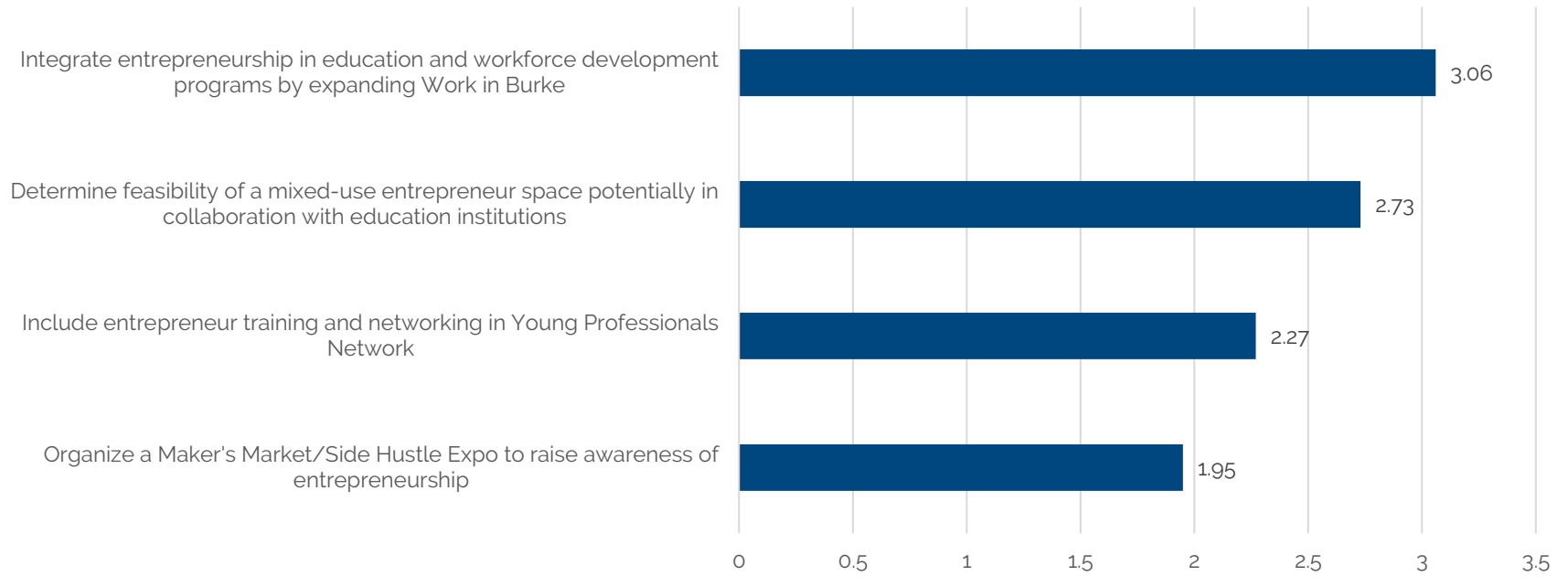
Goal: Capitalize on Education Developments. Rank the importance of the projects from 1 (MOST IMPORTANT) to 6 (LEAST IMPORTANT).



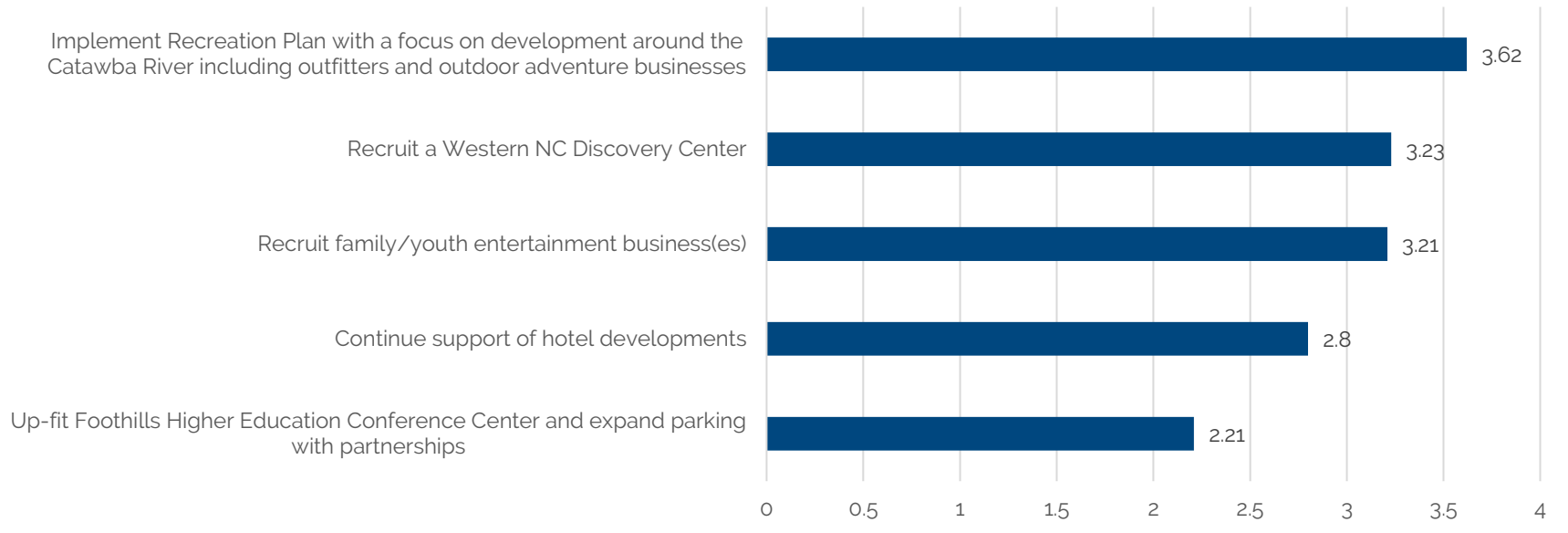
Goal: Downtown Development. Rank the importance of the projects from 1 (MOST IMPORTANT) to 7 (LEAST IMPORTANT).



Goal: Entrepreneur Development. Rank the importance of the projects from 1 (MOST IMPORTANT) to 4 (LEAST IMPORTANT).



Goal: Enhance the Visitor Experience. Rank the importance of the projects from 1 (MOST IMPORTANT) to 5 (LEAST IMPORTANT).



6. Thank you for participating in the survey. Please leave any comments for the strategic planning committee here.

Of the 168 survey responses, 49 made comments. For confidentiality, we did not include the specific comments. To summarize: most made comments on quality of life amenities they want, expressed a desire for sustainable growth, asked for more investments in downtown, and want to ensure inclusiveness. The comments were incorporated into the SWOT analysis, goals, and strategies.

Appendix C: Study Sponsor and Consultant



ElectriCities of N.C. Inc. sponsored the City of Morganton Economic Development Strategic Plan. ElectriCities offers a variety of services to promote NC Public Power communities to businesses and economic developers. They help 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

www.electricities.com



Creative Economic Development Consulting, LLC provides strategic planning, product development, organizational development, social media, and economic impact analysis services to communities. Creative EDC is an innovative firm that owns three proprietary programs: Certified Entrepreneurial Community®, CreativeSiteAssessment.com, and Certified Industrial Buildings. Creative EDC supports ElectriCities' strategic planning and Smart Sites initiatives.

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