



Economic Development Strategic Plan

SPONSORED BY ELECTRICITIES OF N.C., INC.

CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING, LLC

July 2020

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Executive Summary

Clayton, NC, has a range of opportunities before it. In the face of tremendous growth and development, Clayton is benefiting from new residents and increased tax base. This growth brings resources to shape and execute a vision for Clayton which leverages the small-town charm and community which is attractive to newcomers and valued by longtime residents. These resources and this plan give the town the platform to discuss and plan for needed infrastructure to support this growth and preserve the charming qualities of Clayton that ensure continued success.

This 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 can guide Clayton to make strategic investments that will result in a stronger, more sustainable economy.

The strategic planning process included community engagement by way of interviews, community meetings and an online survey, SWOT Analysis, and economic and demographic research. An asset-based approach to strategic planning was used, building goals, strategies, and action steps around the town's assets and future opportunities. The identified strengths include proximity to Raleigh and the Triangle region, strong growth trends, and a family-friendly environment. The town is challenged by congested thoroughfares, perceived bureaucracy, and a lack of available real estate. Opportunities include expanding on a strong and positive brand, increasing connectivity with wayfinding, and improving walkability. Threats to this future success include needed infrastructure improvements and expansions as well as the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan outlines strategies in attracting and growing jobs in Clayton, leveraging the charm and place of downtown to strengthen the community and brand, building the community and quality of life through amenities and placemaking and developing and investing in infrastructure to support continued growth in residents and business. The planning process was started in 2019, well before the COVID-19 pandemic. Long-term economic development will likely not be impacted by the pandemic as those plans are based on the town's strategic assets. However, short-term strategies will be impacted as the economy enters a recession. The economic development goals, strategies, and action steps are summarized on the next page; however, we encourage a full read of this report to understand the context of the strategic plan.

Clayton is developing a small group of citizens and leaders who are passionate about revitalizing the community and have a clear vision for the future. According to Margaret Mead, a small passionate group is all that is needed to change the world.



Economic Development Strategic Plan Summary

Goal: Grow jobs for Clayton through recruitment, existing business development, and small business and entrepreneurial support

- Work with allies to advance new business recruitment to Clayton
- Identify and position available sites and buildings for potential investors or employers
- Support Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth
- Connect with existing business to promote growth and investment

Goal: Build on a charming and historic downtown through redevelopment and placemaking

- Continue to position Downtown as the heart of placemaking, the heart of Clayton
- Identify and prioritize properties for development and redevelopment
- Address parking capacity through research and communication

Goal: Build Clayton's sense of community and quality of life with amenities, placemaking, branding

- Use wayfinding, collaterals, and signage for attractive, cohesive visuals to create sense of place and extend the Clayton brand
- Identify and cultivate community champions
- Communicate current information during the COVID crisis
- Tell Clayton's story. Use multiple media channels to create and distribute positive messages and keep residents informed.

Goal: Develop the infrastructure necessary to improve quality of life in Clayton and facilitate continued business growth

- Address safety and congestion issues by building the transportation network of the future including highway expansion, commuter rail, and BRT
- Expand non-motorized network of trails, greenways and open space
- Grow pre-K-20 educational capacity to meet the workforce needs of the future
- Ensure utility and broadband capacity exists to facilitate continued industrial, commercial and residential growth

SWOT Analysis

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis was developed from meetings, interviews, and a community survey (Appendix B). Altogether, more than 350 people had input into the strategic plan. Citizens see a foundation to build on in the family-oriented, growing small town that is adjacent to world-class metropolitan assets. They see potential in the coming transportation and wastewater improvements, opportunities for development and redevelopment in downtown, and job growth related to the strong industrial base. While employment opportunities are growing, welcoming and incorporating new residents into the life of Clayton will extend the small-town feel. From an outsider's perspective, the consulting team noted an opportunity for collaboration with nearby allies and stakeholders and other local governments in the region. There are also weaknesses to overcome to ensure growth is sustainable. Keeping on top of strong growth rates and continuous plans for development and redevelopment mean that the town can never stop looking ahead and communicating the vision with citizens in Clayton, and showing the opportunities are lined up and at hand. The town is in a position to plan for investments and initiatives to assure positive and consistent outcomes from anticipated growth.

Strengths

- Sense of community
- Family-oriented
- Strong and growing industrial base
- Proximity to Raleigh and Research Triangle
- Public art and arts community
- Mix of newcomers and "old-timers"
- Affordability compared to Raleigh
- Historic downtown
- Main Street corridor
- Future Interstate 42
- Geographic location

Weaknesses

- Challenge of planning for growth
- Perceived bureaucracy
- Desire for local restaurant options as well as chains
- Relationship with tourism development allies
- Enforcement issues for codes and compliance
- Rising costs of living and development
- Changing expectations for local developers

Opportunities

- Rehab downtown properties
- Greenway extension
- Wayfinding signage
- Improve gateways
- Welcome and leverage newcomers
- Explore event or conference center
- Increase marketing messages
- Connect downtown with other activity areas

Threats

- Road congestion
- Strained local budget
- Rising construction costs
- Pressures from unincorporated neighbors
- Maintenance issues in commercial buildings
- Conflicting expectations among newcomers and "old-timers"
- Lack of long-range infrastructure plans

Strengths

Strengths and assets are the foundational building blocks of a sound economic development strategy. Strengths are the reasons why businesses and people locate in a community. They are also the key marketing attributes of a town. Clayton is in a strong position for executing on a strategic plan. The strengths and opportunities identified for Clayton far outweigh the weaknesses and threats. In order to position Clayton for success, and take advantage of the momentum for job growth, development and public investments in the community should be a priority. With above-average population growth, excellent location advantages and planned infrastructure coming online, there is a compelling foundation for success.

- ⊙ Growing
- ⊙ Sense of community
- ⊙ New electric substation
- ⊙ Family-oriented
- ⊙ Recreational opportunities
- ⊙ Progressive leadership
- ⊙ Chamber and civic organizations
- ⊙ Main Street corridor
- ⊙ Green space
- ⊙ Strong and growing industrial base
- ⊙ Proximity to Raleigh and Research Triangle assets
- ⊙ Public art and arts community
- ⊙ Population and incomes growing
- ⊙ Engaged business community
- ⊙ Older buildings to reuse
- ⊙ Streetscape
- ⊙ Unique identity
- ⊙ Johnston County Public Schools
- ⊙ Pharmaceutical industry cluster
- ⊙ Greenways connecting the community
- ⊙ Mix of newcomers and "old-timers"
- ⊙ Affordable compared to Raleigh
- ⊙ Clayton Center
- ⊙ Cultural arts
- ⊙ Recreation assets
- ⊙ Good proximity to health care
- ⊙ Geographic location
- ⊙ Future I-42
- ⊙ Welcoming community
- ⊙ Historic downtown
- ⊙ Strong, stable town council
- ⊙ Historic properties for development
- ⊙ Quality medical care access
- ⊙ Diverse population

Weaknesses

The challenges and weaknesses facing Clayton are in large part a result of things that are also considered strengths. With a population transitioning due to an influx of new residents, there are diverse expectations in Clayton for amenities, housing patterns, and programming, as well as diverse responses to the results of development and population growth. When there are divergent opinions, it is important for the town to communicate consistently to share strategies, investments, and other initiatives that respond to community needs and challenges. With Clayton surrounded by growth corridors and adjacent to economic drivers in the Research Triangle, it is important to recognize and leverage collaborations and a regional approach where possible.

- ⊙ Parking
- ⊙ Perception of distance to retail and restaurants
- ⊙ Keeping up with growth: transportation and schools
- ⊙ Bureaucracy
- ⊙ Lack of discretion by local government representatives
- ⊙ "It is not easy to open a business here"
- ⊙ Confusing signage in town
- ⊙ Confusing "fees" for businesses
- ⊙ Poor customer experience in town hall/development office
- ⊙ Lack of local restaurants
- ⊙ Lack of location for new restaurants
- ⊙ Poor Tourism Development Authority relationship
- ⊙ Inconsistent application of building codes and regulations
- ⊙ Living costs are increasing
- ⊙ Congested thoroughfares
- ⊙ Economic challenges related to the pandemic

Opportunities

Much of the input from citizens and leaders focused on the opportunities related to downtown development and increased capacities in ground transportation and wastewater treatment. While there is clear opportunity for physical development in Clayton, there is also caution that this development must be incorporated into the “small town feel” that both newcomers and long-time residents say draws them to Clayton. In addition to the development opportunities, there is space for increased communications regarding growth and the city's investments and plans. There is also the opportunity to educate residents about the roles for various local governments, for example, the role of Johnston County in funding and planning for public schools. The window for some opportunities, such as hotel and conference center, may be pushed to future years due to the impacts of the pandemic.

- ⊙ Beautify US 70 corridor
- ⊙ Use zoning to drive desirable downtown uses
- ⊙ “Tell our story”
- ⊙ Make Main Street a destination
- ⊙ Leverage additional wastewater capacity coming online
- ⊙ Recruit a hotel
- ⊙ Passenger rail connections to Triangle
- ⊙ Use infrastructure to connect downtown to other activity areas
- ⊙ Destination restaurants – local restaurant “experience”
- ⊙ Leverage Hotel Occupancy Tax
- ⊙ Increase visibility on social media for images of downtown and Town of Clayton
- ⊙ How to start a business resources for entrepreneurs
- ⊙ Become a destination
- ⊙ Divert US 70 traffic to downtown Clayton
- ⊙ Wayfinding improvement from western gateways of Clayton
- ⊙ Leverage the growth – welcome new residents – get them engaged
 - Chamber/Clayton 101
 - Clayton info welcome packet
- ⊙ Rehab downtown properties
- ⊙ Improve vacant storefronts with pop-ups, displays
- ⊙ Parking options to support downtown business
- ⊙ Event or conference center
- ⊙ Downtown properties rehab opportunities
- ⊙ Improve vacant storefronts
- ⊙ Greenway extension
- ⊙ Improve parking options to support downtown
- ⊙ Divert US 70 traffic to downtown
- ⊙ Wayfinding signage and branding
- ⊙ Improve gateways from the west
- ⊙ Create Clayton 101 program
- ⊙ Distribute welcome information to newcomers
- ⊙ Growth in life science and pharmaceutical industry

Threats

Threats are potential obstacles to economic growth. A community should be aware of threats in order to mitigate them. Some threats are external, such as the economic downturn, and some threats are localized. Taking these threats into consideration can help prioritize strategies and allocate resources. Most of the threats voiced by citizens in the survey result from growth and the varied perceptions of optimal growth rates and development patterns. Strong approaches toward managing the effects for strong growth will include a high level of communications to residents as well as collaborative relationships with neighboring communities and the county government.

- ⊙ Road congestion
- ⊙ Increasing car traffic
- ⊙ Strained local budget made worse by reduced sales tax revenue
- ⊙ High construction costs
- ⊙ Adjacent unincorporated communities compete for land use, residential
- ⊙ Many development factors out of Clayton control
- ⊙ Sprawl and congestion
- ⊙ Lack of developable buildings and property
- ⊙ Tense relationships with county and neighboring communities
- ⊙ Lack of attention to downtown
- ⊙ Challenges related to growth
- ⊙ People do not understand economic development
- ⊙ Maintenance of older buildings
- ⊙ Influences out of Clayton control such as the course of the pandemic
- ⊙ Lack of long-range infrastructure plans
- ⊙ Impacts of Covid-19

WHAT IS ONE THING CLAYTON DOES BETTER THAN OTHER CITIES?



Economic and Demographic Profile

Summary

Clayton has a strong economic and demographic profile. It has a growing population of young people, a relatively diverse population, a strong manufacturing sector, affordable housing, and low unemployment rate. Areas of concern for the economy are low educational attainment, lagging income, and long commutes for work. Building upon the strength of existing business clusters and focusing on education and training are an integral part of Clayton's economic development strategy.

- ◎ The 2020 population of Clayton is estimated to be 24,104. Over the last ten years, the town population has grown by 51%, which is more than double the growth rate in the county, region, and state.
- ◎ Clayton has more young workers, aged 35 - 34, than the county and state. The median age in the town is 36.4, which is lower than the county and the state.
- ◎ Clayton is less racially and ethnically diverse than the county, region, and state. The diversity index, 59.0, is only slightly below the county and state.
- ◎ Looking at Clayton's educational attainment statistics, the population has a high educational attainment, with more than 93% having a high school diploma. The percentage with a bachelor's degree, 30.5%, is lower than that of the state and region, but higher than the county. The SAT scores of the county are on par with state and national averages.
- ◎ Per capita and median household incomes are higher than the county and the state, but below the Raleigh MSA. Median Household Income is \$57,153, about \$12,000 less than the regional average.
- ◎ Homes are more affordable in Clayton (\$174,279) and Johnston County (\$163,637) than in the region, making Clayton a good location for home buyers.
- ◎ Labor force is growing in Johnston County. The unemployment rate was declining at the time of this research but has since increased due to the pandemic. The declining unemployment rate was a positive sign of the strength of the economy.
- ◎ Most people are employed in Trade, Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Leisure and Hospitality. The last of those sectors will be the hardest hit by the pandemic. The highest paying sectors are Manufacturing, Information, and Management Activities. It is important to note that one of the largest employment sectors, Manufacturing, is also one of the highest paying sectors.
- ◎ Approximately 84% of all Johnston 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 Clayton remains a retail hub. The retail leakage report shows there is leakage in general merchandise stores, sporting goods, and automobile dealers
- ◎ In general, people in Johnston County have long commutes. Most people commute 25 - 44 minutes.
- ◎ The tourism industry had seen growth in total expenditures, payroll, and employment.
- ◎ The index crime rate in Johnston County declined since 2013 and has remained relatively constant.

*Median age
is 36.4*

*High rate of
high school
completion*

*Labor
Force
growth*

*\$1194.36
avg. weekly
mfg. wage*

*Long
Commute
Times*

Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Clayton community ranked new business recruitment, downtown development, existing business support, and small business and entrepreneurial development as the top four economic development strategies. Citizens want to see these strategies result in local job creation, a more vibrant downtown, and clear strategies to increase amenities for residents while mitigating the perceived negative impacts of fast growth. The desires of citizens align with the overall strategic goals of Clayton – sustainable growth while maintaining the uniqueness of the community.

The strategic plan includes four goals to meet the vision of Clayton. The first goal relates to job creation and includes a wide range of business development, attraction, and retention to reach that goal. The second goal supports downtown development and redevelopment, focusing on the heart of Clayton. The third goal supports placemaking, which will attract people, visitors, and new businesses. Finally, there is a goal related to the infrastructure necessary to make progress in the first three goals.

- ⊙ **Grow jobs for Clayton** through recruitment, existing business development, and small business and entrepreneurial support.
- ⊙ **Build on a charming and historic downtown** through redevelopment and placemaking.
- ⊙ **Build Clayton's sense of community** and quality of life with amenities, placemaking, communications, and branding.
- ⊙ **Develop the infrastructure** necessary to improve quality of life in Clayton and facilitate continued business growth.

Goal: Grow jobs for Clayton through recruitment, existing business development, and small business and entrepreneurial support

Local job creation is important to Clayton. Local jobs mean reduced commute times, less stress on transportation infrastructure, and more local spending. Local jobs also mean citizens have more time to spend with their families, volunteer, and participate in leisure activities. Local jobs are a key to the live, work, play culture many communities strive to achieve.

Strategy: Work with allies to advance new business recruitment to Clayton

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Foster alignment among allied organizations with a focus on downtown vitality and COVID-19 recovery.
- ⦿ Create a biopharma manufacturing district and market it as a unique location choice for business.
- ⦿ Communicate strategic goals to the Economic Development Partnership of NC, NC Biotech Center, Research Triangle Regional Partnership, and Johnston County EDC, and discuss the town's potential support and investment for targeted projects.
 - Communicate the competitive position statements of Clayton: biotech and pharmaceutical cluster, transportation, utilities, out-commuting workforce potential for local employment, and cost of doing business.
- ⦿ Near-term focus on biotech and pharmaceutical since they are expected to expand domestic production post-pandemic. for example, designate a biomanufacturing district.
 - A supply chain study could identify target clusters for recruitment.
- ⦿ Clayton has clear competitive advantages for biotech and pharmaceutical processing. Add employers in these sectors as "key accounts" for existing industry support and develop messaging to share about assets and advantages supporting future growth in this sector.
- ⦿ Add video testimonials from executives in these industries on the town's website.
- ⦿ Add competitive position/target sector brochures for these industry sectors on the town website.
- ⦿ Host regional allies and the real estate community for a tour of available sites and buildings once a year.
 - While meeting and travel restrictions are in place, use short videos of sites and buildings in e-communications.
- ⦿ Participate with ElectriCities recruitment missions and trade shows when available.



*Biotech and
Pharmaceutical
focus*

Strategy: Identify and position available sites and buildings for potential investors or employers

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Carefully inventory available sites and buildings for those suitable for new employers -- industrial, commercial, and retail. Maintain a listing of priority available properties and advertise promising examples on the town website. Provide detailed information in a format to enable the county economic development website to advertise the most recent and complete information about the buildings and sites in Clayton.
 - Leverage the new ElectriCities Site Assist Program to identify and prioritize sites.

- ⦿ Focus on filling in commercial development at NC 42E and US 70 Business.
 - Continue participation in the International Council of Shopping Center show and focus on infill retailers and restaurants.
 - Collaborate on this recruitment with ElectriCities retail recruitment program.
 - In the absence of this in-person trade show, reach out with virtual recruitment strategies.
 - Also include hotel chains in recruitment targets as Clayton has a need for an additional name-brand hotel chain. This will lay the groundwork for when the hotel industry rebounds into an expansion mode.
- ⦿ Identify a large tract of land for a “White Oak” or “Birkdale” type of development. A mixed-use development, in a live/work/play environment, could be an ideal attractor for young professionals.
- ⦿ In collaboration with Johnston County EDC and ElectriCities, identify the specific size of sites and buildings most requested and not found in the county. Use this to direct site and building development strategies and to inform private developers of market opportunity.
- ⦿ Consider a specific evaluation for new industrial sites in collaboration with ElectriCities in the new Site Assist Program.
- ⦿ Consider identifying and preparing space for specific desired purposes e.g. a restaurant.
 - The City of Danville, VA, has purchased key downtown properties and pitched to developers for specific uses like an international restaurant. Morganton, NC, has also participated in public-private partnership building redevelopment projects in downtown.
 - Use storefront displays to showcase what the building could be. Other towns have made “this could be...” displays for outdoor retailer, restaurant, music shop, etc.
- ⦿ Work with ElectriCities to identify, evaluate and prepare sites for new businesses. The ElectriCities Smart Sites program provides due diligence for qualifying industrial sites as well as marketing assistance. The assessments completed in this program can be used toward certification in the NC Certified Sites Program.

Strategy: Support Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth

During the economic recovery period, small businesses will need a range of support. Some will need financial and advisory services to remain in business. Others will be in an expansion mode to take advantage of market changes. Near term, focus on retention and support services. As the economy moves into an expansion phase, shift more resources to business growth.

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Develop or support other agencies in developing a “COVID-19 Small Business Fund” for loans or grants to prop up small businesses in key sectors or locations. Other communities have raised public and private funds to provide grants as small as \$2,000 per business.
- ⦿ Entrepreneurship is an important strategy during times of high unemployment as it is an alternative for dislocated workers. Develop a “Start a Business in Clayton” toolkit. Present the toolkit on the town website with links to the county economic development website. The toolkit can include:
 - Regulatory steps for business start up
 - Local and regional resources for business planning, market identification, financing, and marketing.
 - Single point of contact in Clayton, a small business liaison or ombudsman, to walk them through the process.



*Start a business
tool-kit*

- ⊙ Once the toolkit is developed, consider a boot camp in partnership with other agencies to support and advance entrepreneurs in their journey from start-up to sustainability.
- ⊙ Explore an incubator, co-working, or "pop up" retail space in downtown, possibly in partnership with existing entrepreneurial service providers in the region.
 - A retail incubator is a location where startup retailers rent booth or kiosk space to get their business off the ground and garner a customer base. The goal is to "graduate" the retailer out of the incubator to a storefront in downtown or a commercial district.
- ⊙ Consider naming a business ombudsman/liaison/concierge on the town staff as a "one stop shop" to streamline town processes for new and growing businesses.
 - Communicate with town staff to make referrals to the ombudsman.
 - Promote the service on the town website.
 - Promote the business ombudsman service to allies like the chamber and Johnston County EDC.
- ⊙ Consider a special package of incentives and support for small businesses. Examples: revolving loan fund, one-year chamber membership, assignment of a startup ambassador who checks in every month the first year, lower incentive grant matches (like façade grant) for the first couple of years, etc.

Strategy: Connect with existing business to promote growth and investment

Action Steps:

- ⊙ Identify "key accounts" – significant existing employers to be monitored. These can be based on location, total employment, utility use or other criteria. It could also include gazelles (fast growing) and at-risk companies. Commit to some level of communication or visit for each of the key accounts over the course of a year.
- ⊙ Revisit the "at risk" company profile and target these companies for additional BRE support during the recession.
- ⊙ Conduct, potentially in partnership with Johnston County EDC, regular BRE surveys to determine the immediate needs of companies to weather the economic downturn.
- ⊙ The Johnston County Economic Development Program has a robust Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. Where possible, have a town employee participate in EDC visits to companies inside the town. Set a goal to visit 20 - 30 businesses every year (virtually, at the moment).
 - Until a regular visitation program can be established, host "Coffee with the Manager" or "Coffee with the Mayor" once each quarter, inviting major employers and utility accounts for a roundtable discussion which may be preliminary to a visitation program. If it turns out to be popular, continue after the BRE program is established to build relationships.
- ⊙ Through regular visitation, assess companies' potential for expansion and contraction. Maintain information on employment levels, potential new product/service lines, available expansion space, potential ownership changes, etc.
- ⊙ Use feedback gathered in the BRE program to inform town policies. Examples are regulatory process, transportation priorities, amenity development, and infrastructure investments.
- ⊙ Coordinate visits with allies such as Johnston County EDC, ElectriCities, and EDPNC to strengthen those ties and send a message to existing industries of collaboration and joint action.



*Key accounts
strategy*

- ◎ Build connection and community among the Clayton major employers with a Business Roundtable. Consider this in partnership or as a town program. The businesses in the group will appreciate the connection and sharing from peers and the town will benefit from hearing the plans and challenges of important employers. In the short-term this could be a LinkedIn Discussion Group.

Goal: Build on a charming and historic downtown through redevelopment and placemaking

Downtown's visual character can be the heart of a town. Once the vibrant economic centers of towns, downtowns in many areas have struggled to find their niche among modern commercial development. Creating unique shopping, dining, and cultural arts experiences are key to ensuring downtown remains the heartbeat of Clayton. Downtowns are struggling during the pandemic, so a concerted effort to help "Main Street" survive and thrive is needed.

Strategy: Continue to position Downtown as the heart of placemaking; the heart of Clayton

Action Steps:

- ◎ Publicize family friendly trails, itineraries, and outdoor activities. Asheville has good examples of walking trails in the city that visit public art and significant historic buildings.
- ◎ Extend the greenway to downtown, if not physically, then with signage and wayfinding. Another visual way to extend the greenway is with Clayton's logo stamped on the road leading to downtown. Think of the Clemson University tiger paw stamped on roads in and around downtown.
- ◎ Increase cleaning and maintenance of downtown. Perceptions of cleanliness and wellbeing will be important to encouraging visitors to return to downtown.
- ◎ Find opportunities for pop-up recreation, storytelling, classes, and retail to see what sticks. Pop-ups create a flow of people into downtown for unique experiences.
- ◎ Activate parks and common areas with free community activities and events. Some may be transferred from other locations to invest in these new community assets. Examples could include yoga, dance, art classes, or demonstrations. Some communities are bringing back Food Truck Fridays where the trucks are spread out along Main Street.
- ◎ Explore the potential for an event or conference center for county-wide and region-wide meetings.
 - Such a facility will not only allow citizens to gather for Clayton events, it will act as an economic engine for downtown, drawing others into experience it.
 - Step one is a feasibility study.
- ◎ Publicize to city clubs and organizations the opportunity to hold free public events in these spaces as events begin to reemerge. Consider a concert series, cooking demonstrations, pop-up petting zoos, and other fun and family events to brand these assets as part of the community. For example, the arts organizations could hold art walks or a First Friday Open Air Market.



Placemaking

Strategy: Identify and prioritize properties for development and redevelopment

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Review available downtown properties and prioritize based on location, use, and disposition of the owner.
- ⦿ Consider enacting a vacant building registry ordinance like Columbia, SC, is considering. Buildings vacant for 60 days must be registered. If dilapidated, a plan to upgrade must be submitted. Buildings that remain vacant must re-certify with a fee that increases each year of vacancy. The purpose is to discourage long-term vacancy.
- ⦿ Evaluate the existing façade grant program for potential expansion or revision in order to leverage public investment.
- ⦿ Create a prospectus for properties in the Opportunity Zone.

Strategy: Address parking capacity through research and communication

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Consider an analysis of parking supply proximate to downtown, including public as well as private spaces.
- ⦿ Evaluate signage relative to parking, increasing directional signage on thoroughfares.
- ⦿ Evaluate lighting in off-street parking areas to ensure the public feels safe to park there and walk into downtown.
- ⦿ Explore the City of Newton's parking app that directs people to open spaces in/near downtown. It was started as part of their streetscape enhancement program when downtown street repairs temporarily reduced parking. It was a big hit.
- ⦿ Consider implementing time-limited parking if supply/demand ratio warrants.

Goal: Build Clayton's sense of community and quality of life with amenities, placemaking, branding

Clayton wants to maintain its small-town character as it grows. Citizens want to make sure that the reasons they moved to and stayed in Clayton remain the same. Investing in amenities is a key to addressing that goal.

Strategy: Use wayfinding, collaterals, and signage for attractive, cohesive visuals to create a sense of place and extend the Clayton brand

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Install wayfinding downtown and at town gateways to connect and reinforce the Clayton brand. Find some inspiration from this blog on wayfinding, which includes much more than traditional signage <http://www.creativeedc.com/whats-your-sign>.
- ⦿ Consider walking tours highlighting kids' activities, art, history, etc. Walking tours could be "signed" with symbols on pavement, markers, or a walking trail brochure. Publicize these on the town website with wayfinding signage and with visitor allies.
- ⦿ Engage local artists in wayfinding. They can offer great suggestions on markers, trail signs, and other visuals.
- ⦿ Consider the exclamation point from "Think Clayton!" as a town icon which could be displayed throughout the town in public and private spaces and reinforce the cool Clayton brand.



Wayfinding

- The exclamation point could be an 8'-10' tall iconic artistic feature for Clayton. The "!" could become Instagram destination locations.
- Consider the Blacksburg example of the artistically decorated six-foot tall Hokie birds. Local artists develop a one-of-a-kind design for the purchaser who then places the bird at their business.
- Another example are the painted pigs in downtown Lexington.

Strategy: Identify and cultivate community champions

Action Steps:

- ◎ Be a catalyst for downtown redevelopment projects such as Town Square, Horne Square, and Old Town Hall
- ◎ Partner with the library to explore redevelopment of the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library
- ◎ With thousands of new housing units proposed, Clayton needs a way to integrate newcomers.
 - Host a newcomer's reception twice a year, led by the mayor. Have information/booths on how to become civically engaged in Clayton. In the current times, this could be a virtual fair.
 - Develop a Welcome to Clayton package for HR managers, realtors, and the chamber that encourages people to volunteer and connect in the community. This could be a video where clips are used in social media.
 - With the chamber and Johnston County EDC, promote employment information for trailing spouses.
 - Encourage civic clubs, boards, advisory groups, and other organizations to reach out to newcomers for leadership roles.
- ◎ Seek out leaders to serve on the boards of the Johnston County Development Commission and the Johnston County Commissioners to carry Clayton's strategies forward to county-wide bodies.
- ◎ Work to engage young people in town business. Find at least one person under the age of 40 to serve on each town committee, advisory board, and task force. Encourage civic organizations, nonprofits, and business associations to do the same.
- ◎ Offer to host a meeting of the board of the Johnston County EDC and RTRP in order to showcase Clayton's economic development assets.
- ◎ Create a citizens' academy, a program to train citizens on local government. Some town academies meet once a month for six months on programs in public safety, utilities, history, education, local government process, etc.
- ◎ Hold "how to serve on a board or commission" information sessions for younger residents and newcomers. This could become a video library on the website.
- ◎ Look for connectivity with the Chamber's Clayton 101 program. Include exposure to town programs and plans as part of the training program.



Community Leaders

Strategy: Communicate Current Information During the COVID Crisis

During the crisis phase of the pandemic, focus marketing messages on reinforcing the Clayton brand. During the recovery phase, expand marketing messages to soft-sell Clayton as a location for business and people. As the economy moves into the expansion phase, include direct sales messages in marketing.

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Keep current COVID information and resources on the town's website. Example: links to Governor's Executive Orders, NCDHHS guidelines, NCRLA information and programs. Post the town's COVID policies.
- ⦿ Keep a list of businesses that are opening and their restrictions (hours, curbside, etc.).
- ⦿ Through the local task team, develop a common set of recommendations to share with the public such as "maintain six-foot social distance" and "wear face coverings in public." You could use the state's Three "Ws." Wash your hands, Wear face coverings in public, and Wait six feet apart.
- ⦿ Gather frequently asked questions from the task force and post on the COVID resources page.

Strategy: Tell Clayton's Story. Use multiple media channels to create and distribute positive messages and keep residents informed.

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Building on the town's Public Information Officer, identify additional influencers who can re-share messages and provide feedback, especially on social media.
- ⦿ Explore partnerships with other stakeholders through an app like Social Toaster, which might contribute posts as well.
- ⦿ Continue to boost social media use and the town website. Popular sites for community development are Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Develop hashtags for the town, for example #ClaytonStrong, #ThinkClayton, or #LoveClayton.
- ⦿ Use Instagram to post photos of the town. Photos are important to tourists.
- ⦿ Include an "activity related" Calendar of Events on the website or social media.
- ⦿ Use the goals of the Strategic Plan as topics for communications with residents – consider "breakfast with the manager" (or mayor, or council member) opportunities once a month to brief attendees on town goals and upcoming activities. These briefings will create communication channels out from the town and may identify new participants for town initiatives.
- ⦿ Consider a monthly internal newsletter or communication in utility bills that highlights one of the goals or strategies and how it is being advanced in Clayton. This can be shared on social media as well. Residents want to be informed about priorities and may be more likely to become involved when they are informed. Share positive trends, stories, and accomplishments.
- ⦿ Issue periodic press releases to print and electronic media highlighting activities and accomplishments toward the strategic plan. Invite key media contacts for a "behind the scenes tour" of an event or town facility.
- ⦿ Develop a pool of spokespersons who can be available for print or electronic media to provide the town's perspective on the topic of interest. These people should be well versed in the town's strengths and strategies.



Storytelling

- Develop a standard presentation to give at civic clubs.
- Develop and share talking points with partners about town projects, such as an infrastructure project, to ensure a clear message.
- ⦿ Consider a weekly automated phone call to inform citizens of events.
- ⦿ Welcome new businesses to Clayton through social media. Have the mayor and town manager stage a ribbon cutting or other event to create a focal point and moment for celebration.
- ⦿ Use the town website to communicate the brand and key messages including goals of the strategic plan.
- ⦿ Include a recent news section on the new economic development pages on the city website

Goal: Develop the infrastructure necessary to improve quality of life in Clayton and facilitate continued business growth

Transportation, education, and utilities are important pieces of infrastructure that benefit residents and businesses alike. Building new economic assets, such as colleges and transit, and connecting them to existing assets, will enhance the town's ability to grow and attract talent for high quality jobs.

Strategy: Address safety and congestion issues by building the transportation network of the future including highway expansion, commuter rail and Bus Rapid Transit.

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Continue to partner with Johnston County and Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) on potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service to Clayton creating Johnston County's first transit connection to Raleigh, the RTP, and the region's many colleges and universities.
- ⦿ Continue to partner with Johnston County and CAMPO to explore commuter rail service.
- ⦿ Develop Clayton Station that would serve as a multimodal hub for BRT, commuter rail, and eventually Amtrak.
- ⦿ Consider partnering with Johnston County Visitors Bureau on an electric vehicle (EV) charging station plan.
- ⦿ Engage with CAMPO and NCDOT on expanding key corridors, such as NC42 E & W, US BUS 70, and I-42.



*Transportation
network*

Strategy: Expand non-motorized network of trails, greenways, and open space

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Extend greenway to downtown physically and/or with signage and wayfinding.
- ⦿ Activate parks and common areas with free community activities and events in downtown.
- ⦿ Support efforts to expand, improve and connect the town's pedestrian and bike trail network.

Strategy: Grow Pre-K-to-20 educational capacity to meet the workforce needs of the future

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Explore feasibility for developing a Johnston County Community College Clayton campus
- ⦿ Explore and expand connections between the Town of Clayton and K-12 to strengthen the relationships e.g. library programming, public safety visibility and programming.
- ⦿ Partner with employers, schools, and nonprofits to promote connections between students, teachers and local employers, such as Johnston County Works and INSPIRE
- ⦿ Support efforts to improve early learning in the community, especially in math and reading

Strategy: Ensure utility and broadband capacity exists to facilitate continued industrial, commercial, and residential growth

Action Steps:

- ⦿ Partner with Johnston County EDC and Town staff to ensure adequate wastewater capacity for future development.
- ⦿ Ensure economic development needs are clear in utility and broadband capacity and expansion conversations.
- ⦿ Enhance marketing of our electric system's capacity and reliability to development community.

Implementation Guide

The strategic plan is designed to be implemented over several years. In the figure below, near-term priorities are listed in #1; mid-term priorities are listed in #2 and longer-term priorities are listed in #3. As resources, opportunities and challenges change over time, these categories may be adjusted. We recommend staff integrating the strategic plan in an annual program of work and budget planning with input from council and stakeholders.

1

- Create a formal BRE program, partnering with Johnston County where appropriate
- Develop a "Start a Business in Clayton" toolkit
- Use web and social media to share goals and progress
- Communicate goals of plan to ED partners and residents
- Inventory and promote promising sites and buildings for Clayton
- Identify and develop sites for future development
- Strengthen county-wide collaborations and alignment in Clayton agencies
- Engage with CAMPO & NCDOT for corridor planning & transit options
- Explore JCC Clayton Campus
- Use Major Employer roundtable for feedback and communications
- Review & prioritize available downtown properties
- Partner with the Library to explore redevelopment of the HEM Library

2

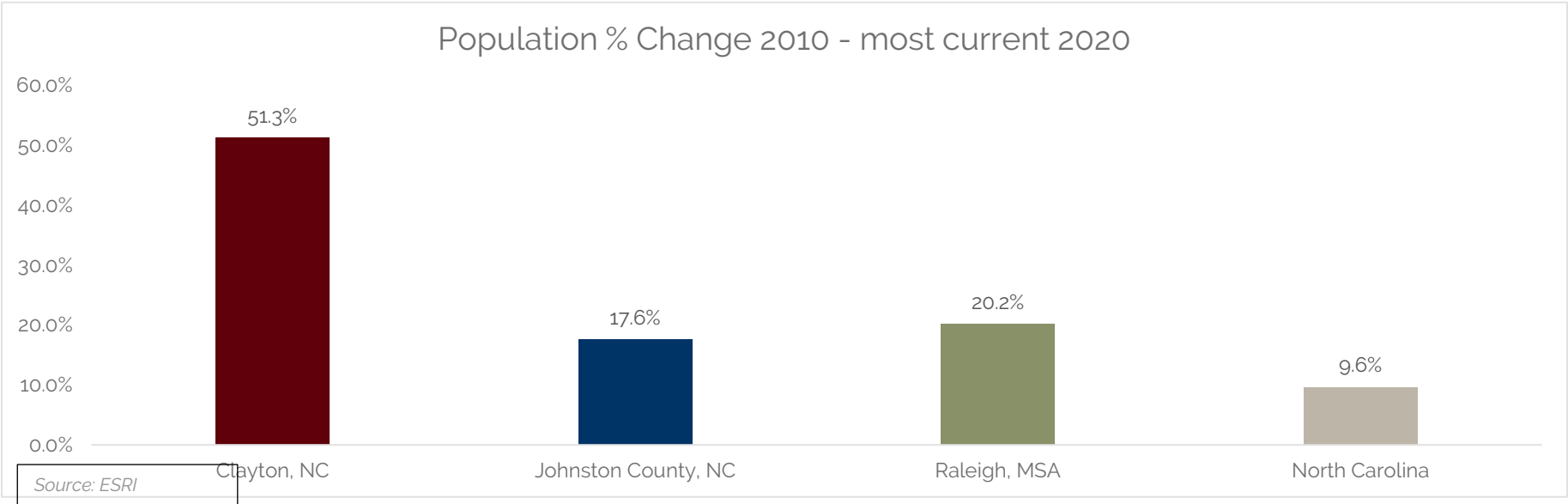
- Expand and strengthen communications and marketing of Clayton's priorities and brand
- Develop targeted recruitment strategies
- Host regional allies at Clayton sites & buildings
- Recruit an additional hotel
- Develop a Town incentive policy
- Consider a parking supply/demand analysis
- Expand connectivity of the Greenway physically and/or with signage
- Augment town website marketing messages with video etc.
- Expand town communications; add Instagram, newsletter, etc.
- Participate with ElectriCities & other ED partners on missions and trade shows
- Collect feedback from existing business to inform town policies and priorities
- Develop and expand the Clayton brand
- Evaluate existing façade grant program
- Evaluate and improve wayfinding
- Explore redevelopment of the library
- Evaluate infrastructure needs relative to planned development
- Identify large tracts of land for potential mixed-use development inside the city

3

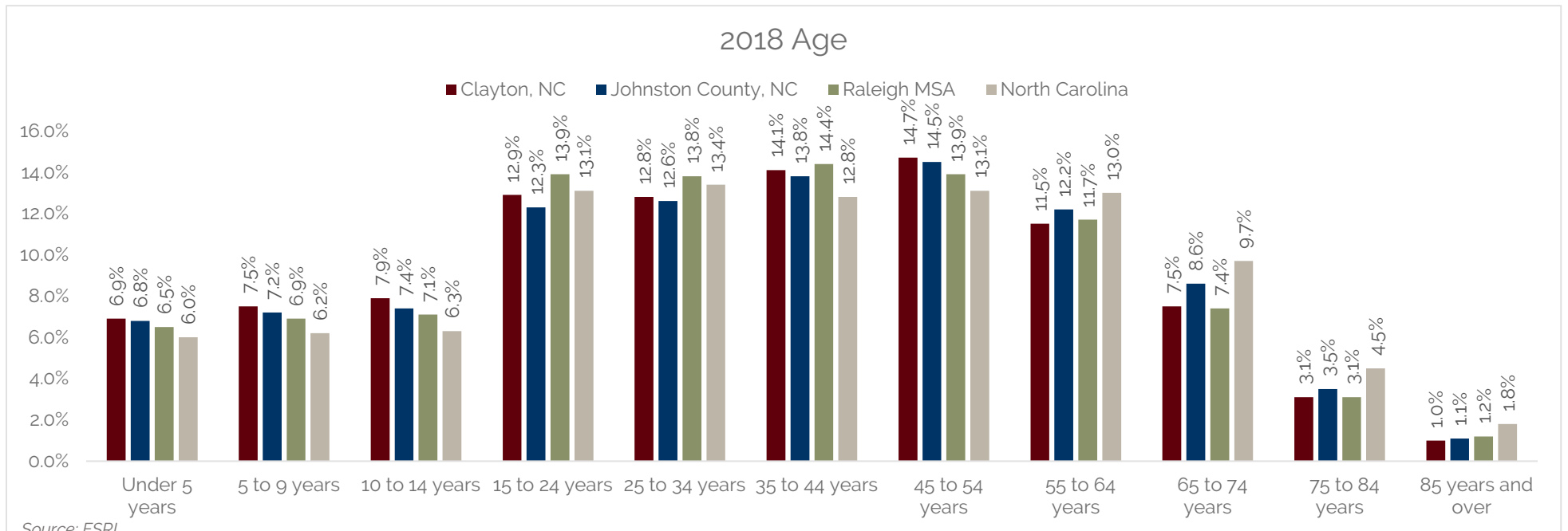
- Explore business ombudsman position
- Create "Citizens' Academy"
- Create a biopharma manufacturing district
- Explore potential for event center
- Explore incubator, co-working and pop up spaces for small business
- Consider Small Business Support such as revolving loan fund, programming
- Continue to activate downtown and common areas with area clubs, organizations, activities
- Host a "Newcomers Reception"
- Promote Clayton leaders as members of county boards and commissions
- Expand social media outreach with influencers
- Welcome new businesses to Clayton on social media
- Evaluate parking app, time-limited parking, and needs assessment
- Consider vacant building registry program
- Engage in utility and broadband capacity and expansion conversations
- Engage in utility and broadband capacity and expansion conversations

Appendix A: Economic and Demographic Profile

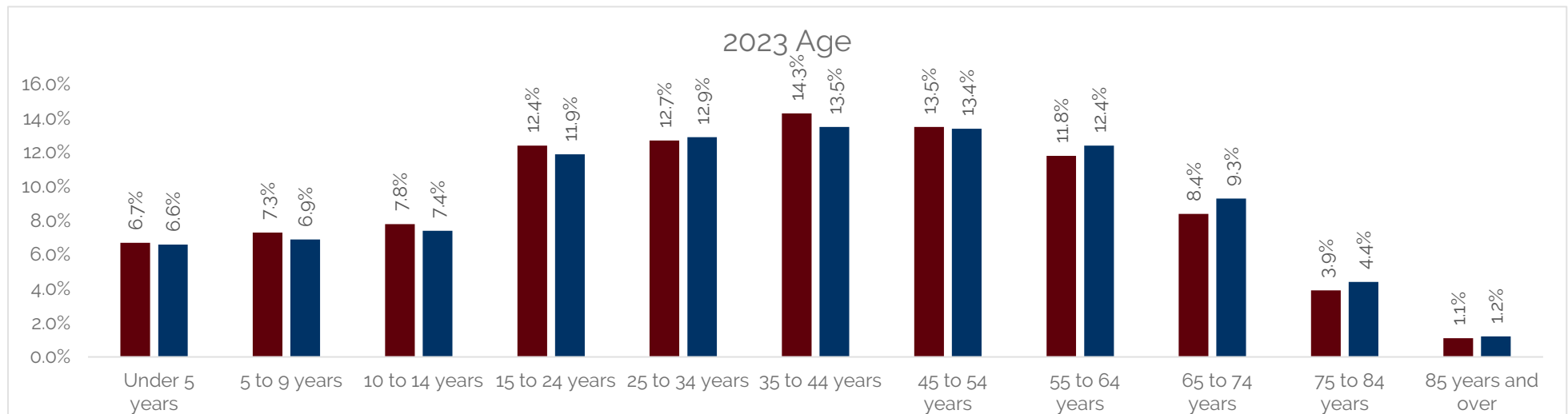
This economic and demographic profile was produced in March of 2019 as part of the strategic planning process. These data informed the discussions in 2019 with stakeholders and community leaders as the broad goals and priorities for the strategic plan were developed. At time of publication in July 2020, the population and retail market data were updated below.



Population	2010	2020	2025 for Clayton, 2023 for others	% Change 2010 - most current 2020
Clayton, NC	15,926	24,104	27,764	51.3%
Johnston County, NC	168,878	198,647	220,023	17.6%
Raleigh, MSA	1,130,490	1,358,294	1,515,978	20.2%
North Carolina	9,535,483	10,455,604	11,061,202	9.6%
Source: ESRI				



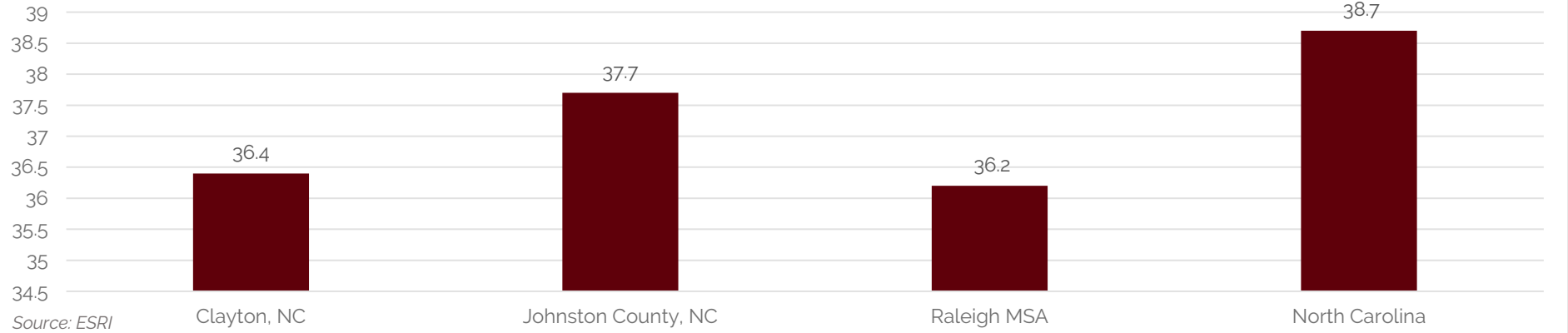
Source: ESRI



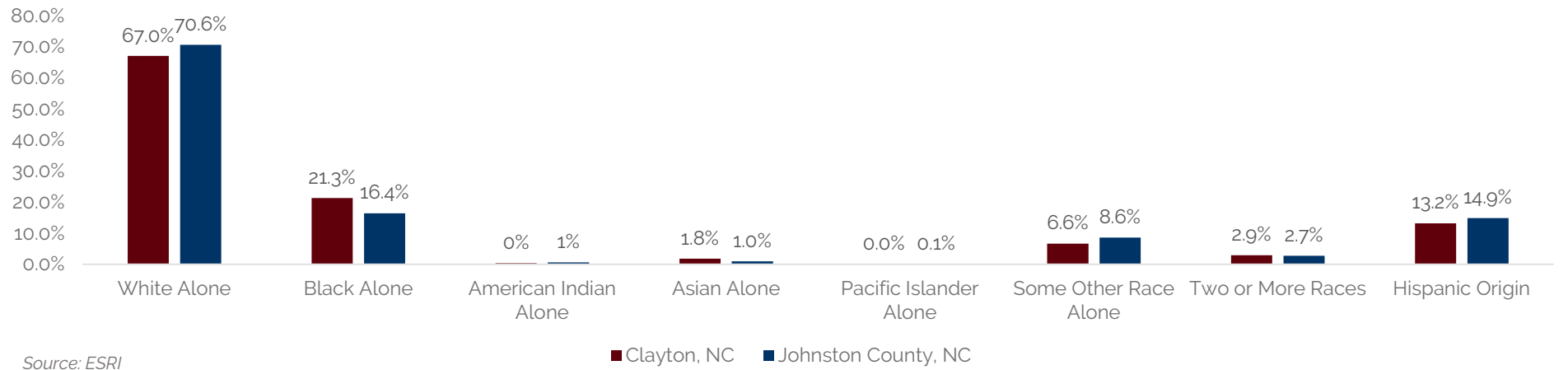
Source: ESRI

■ Clayton, NC ■ Johnston County, NC

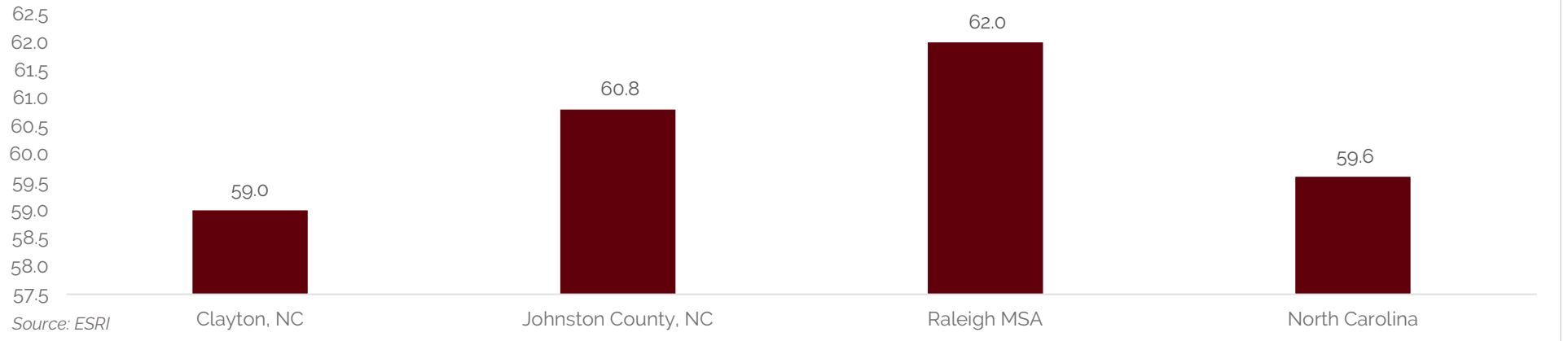
2018 Median Age



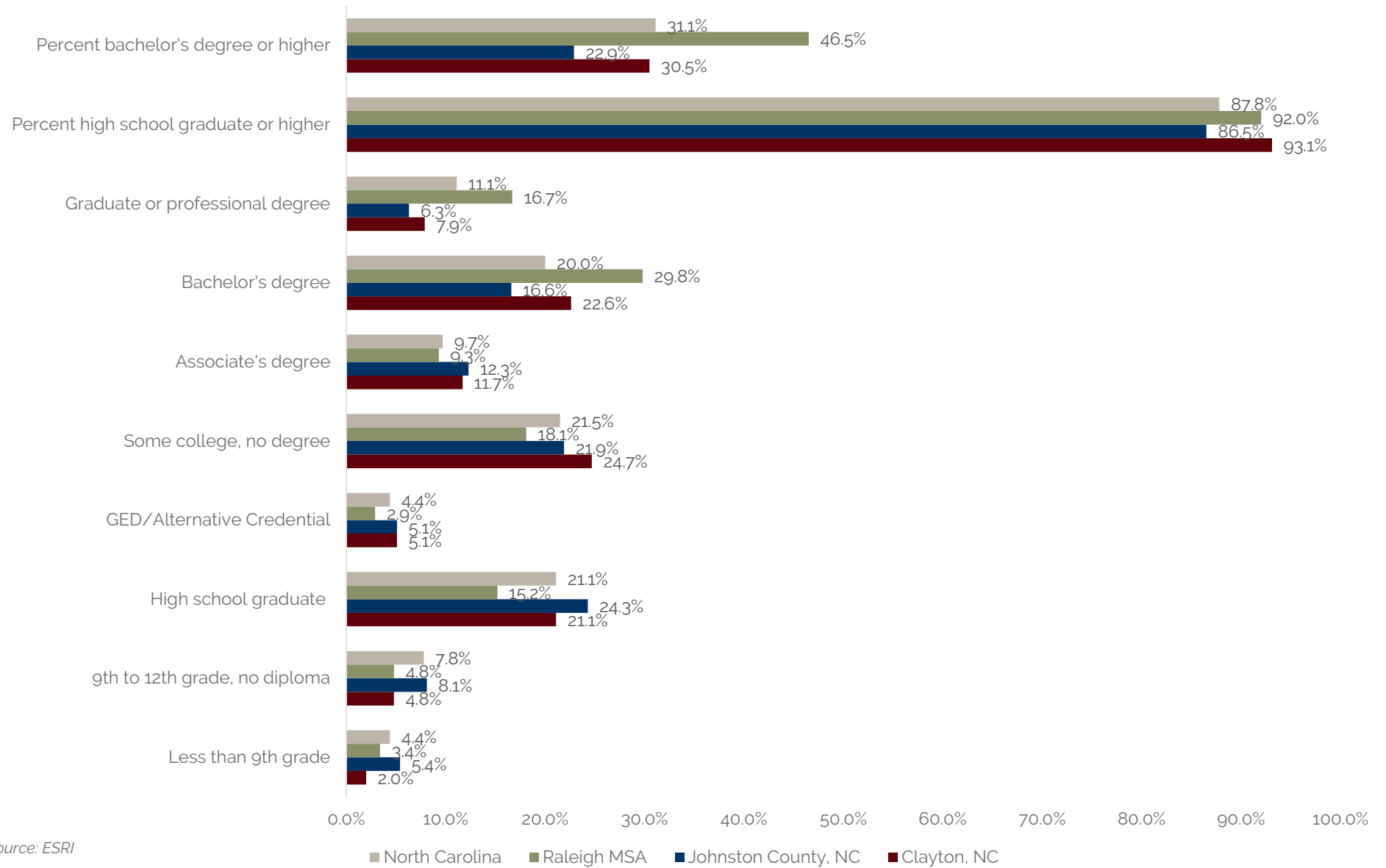
2023 Race



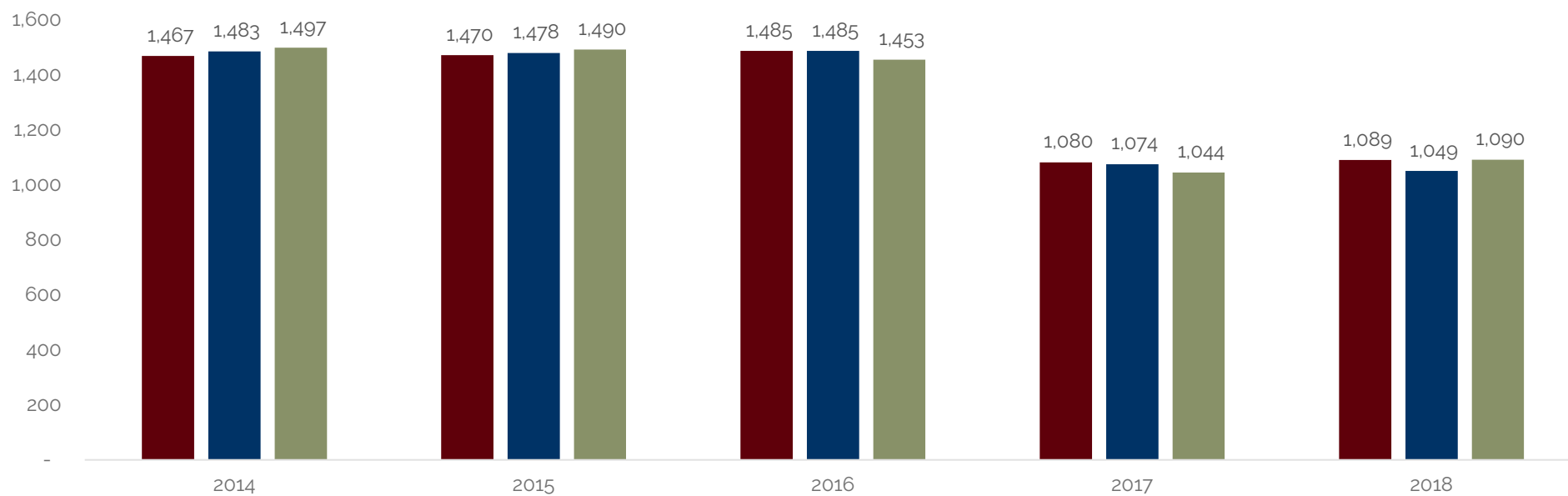
2018 Diversity Index



2018 Educational Attainment

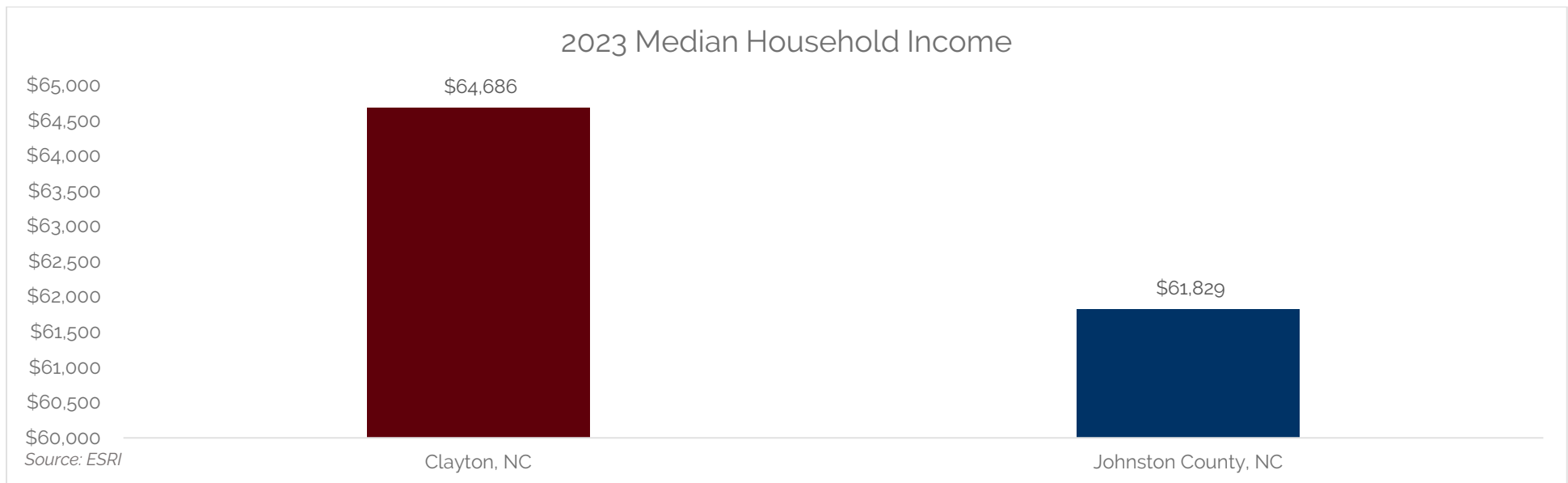
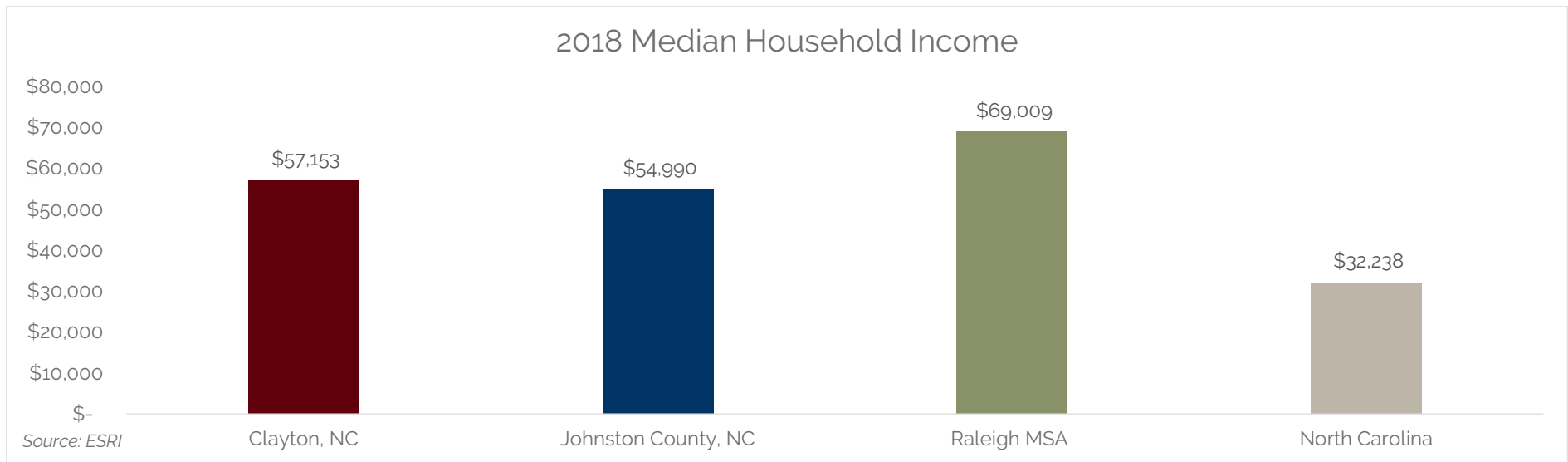


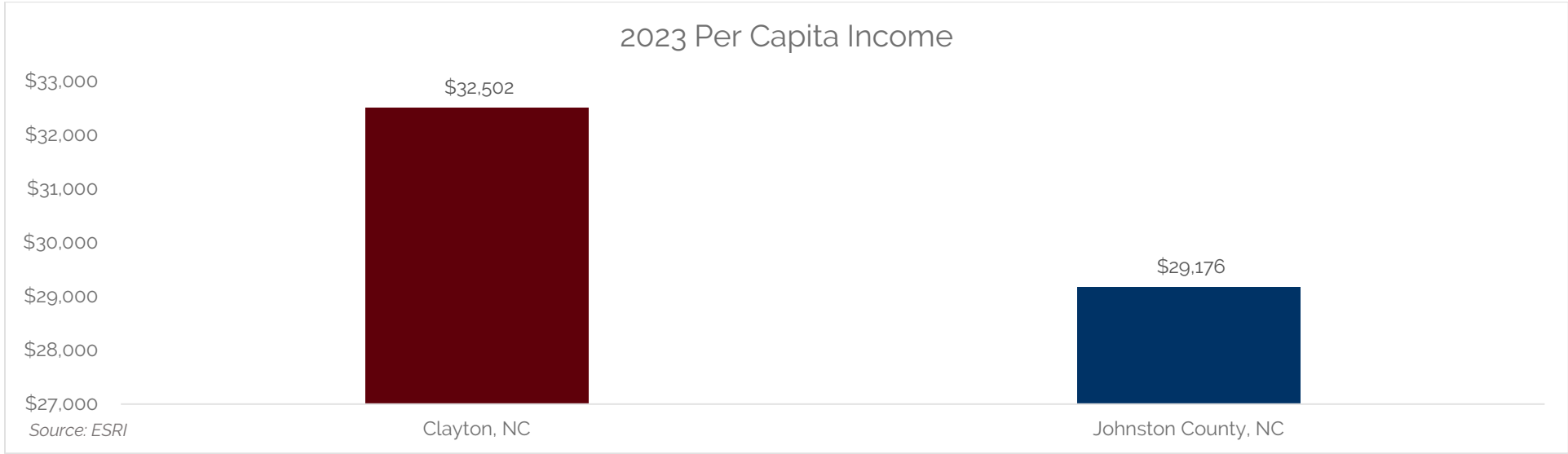
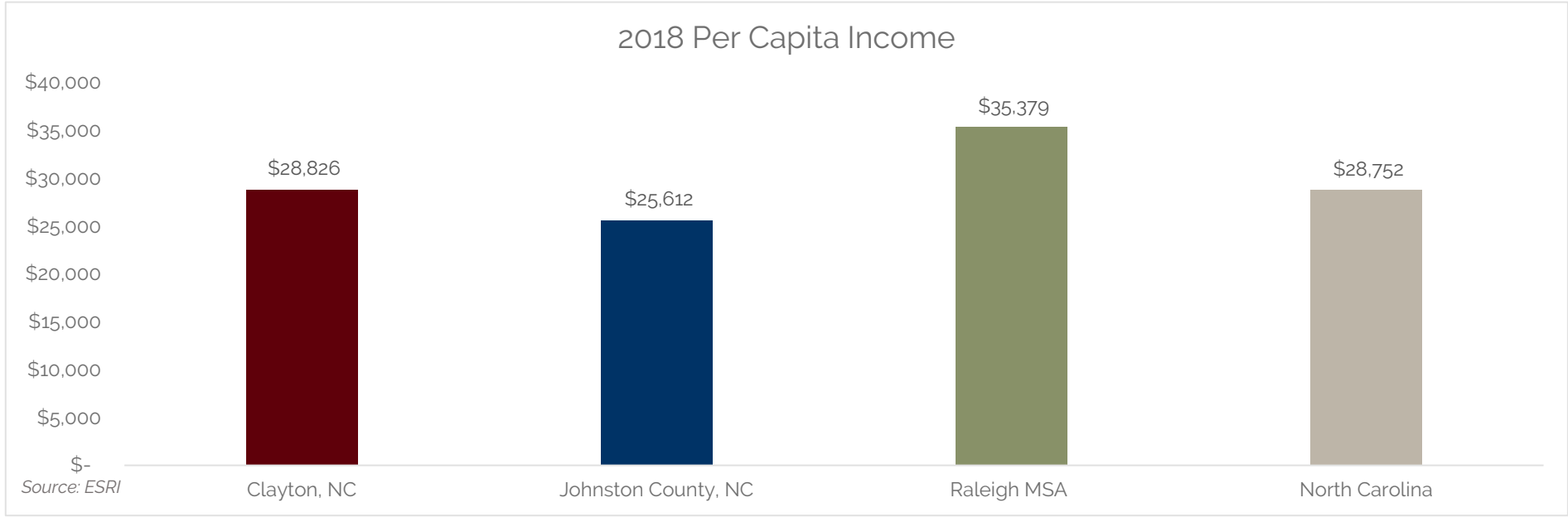
SAT Scores

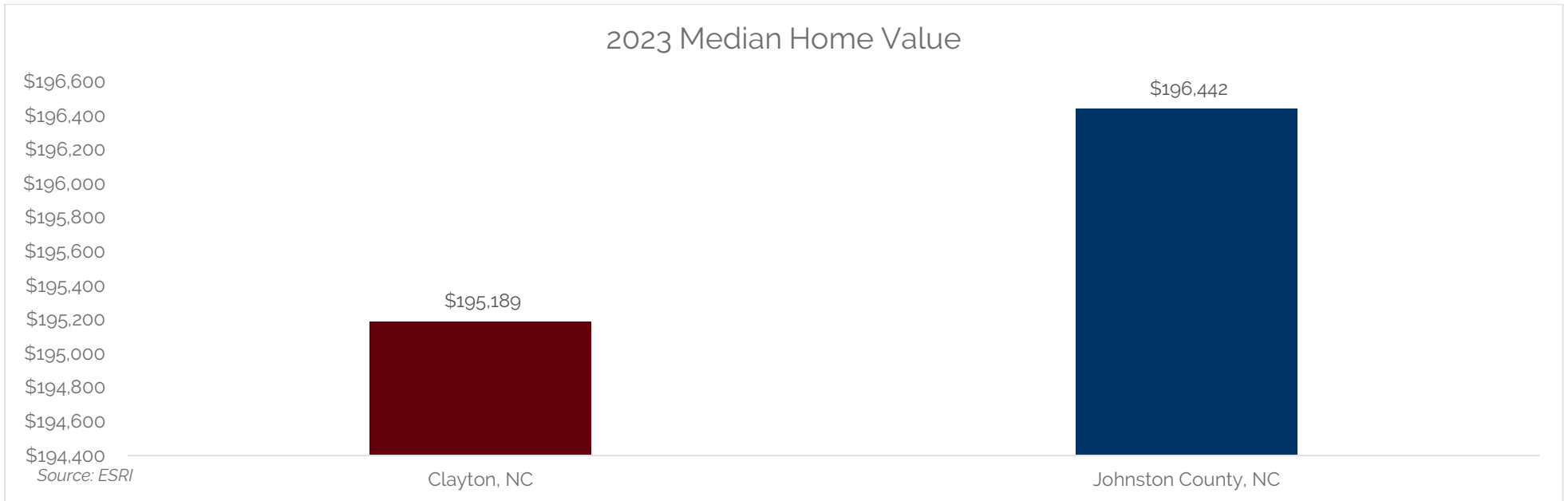
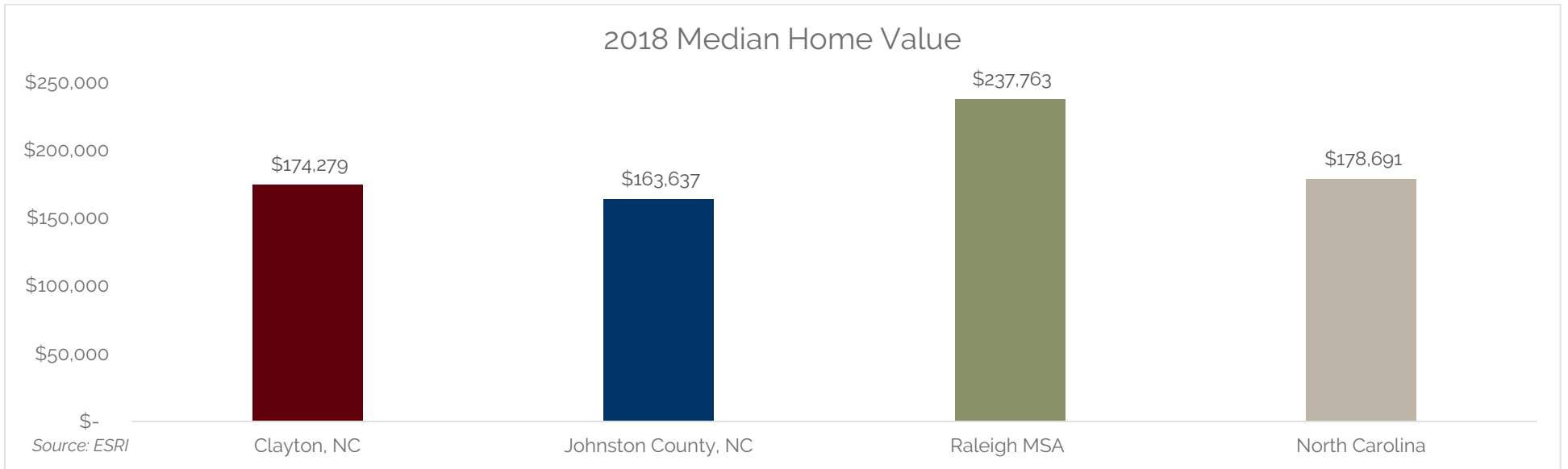


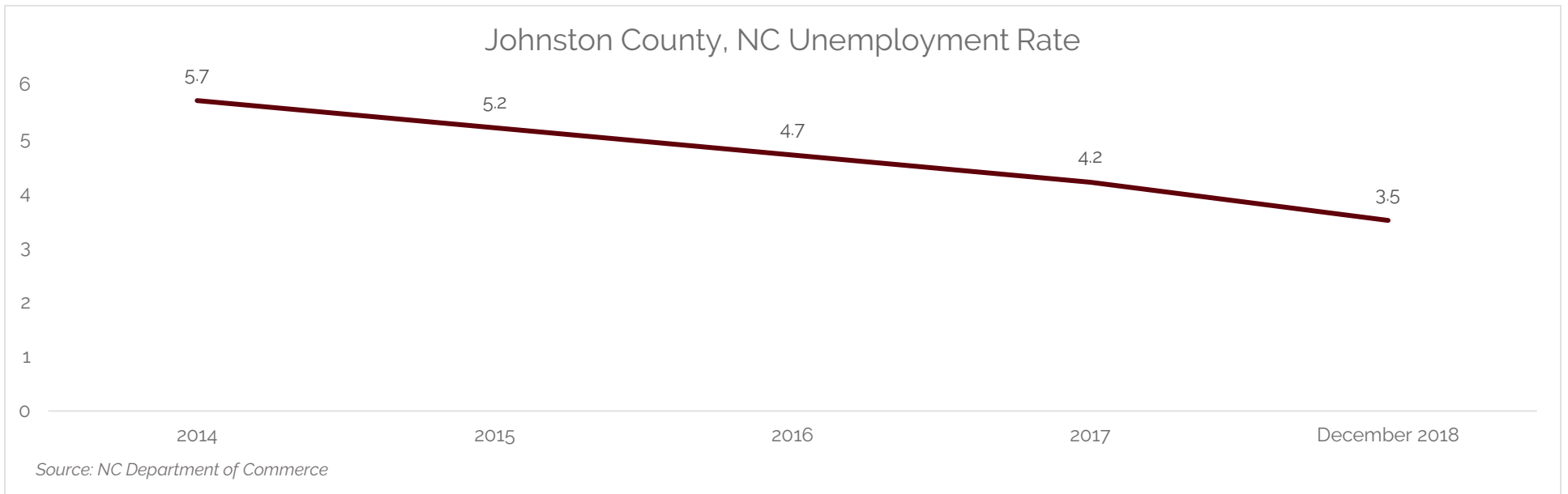
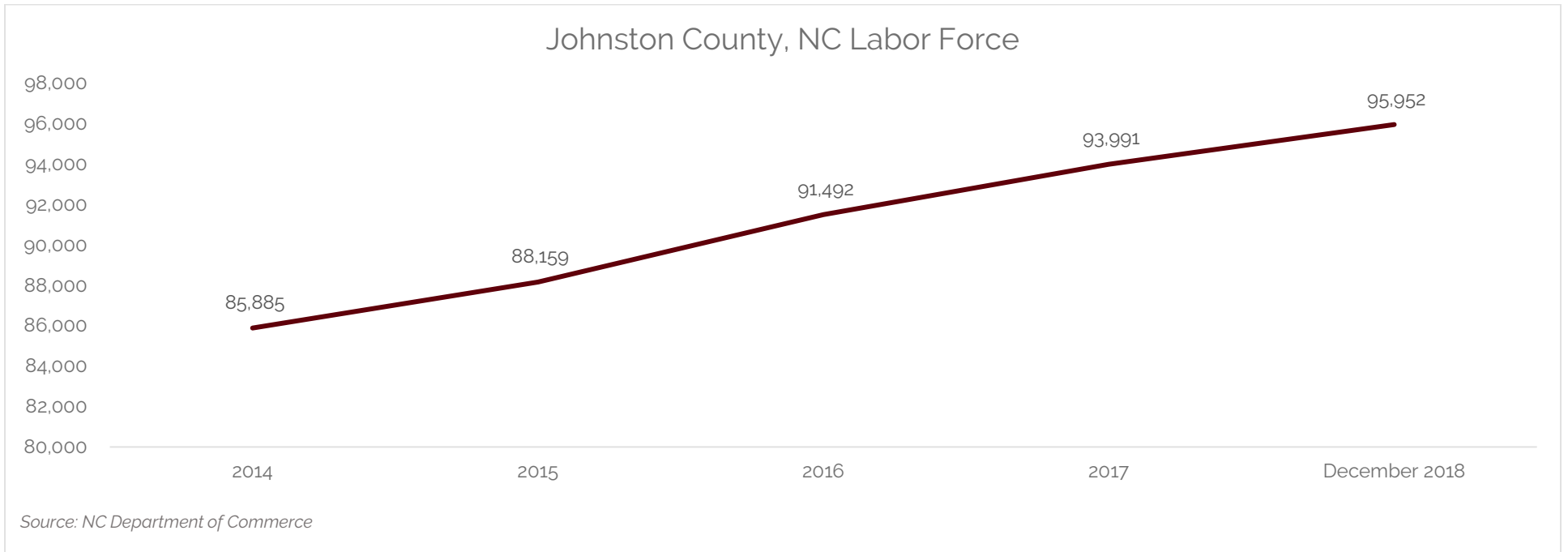
Source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

■ Johnston County, NC ■ North Carolina ■ US

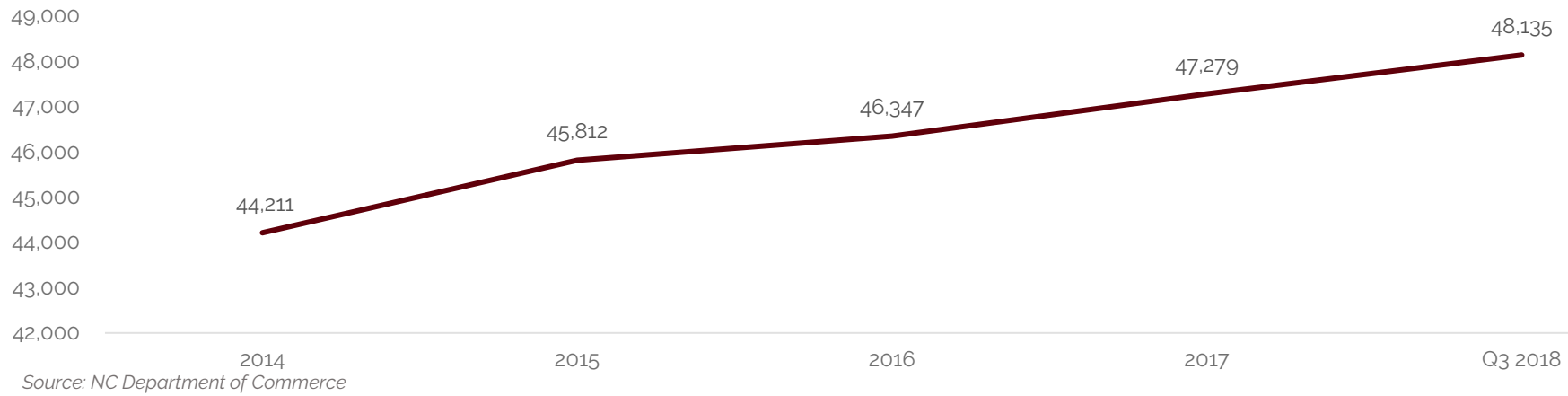




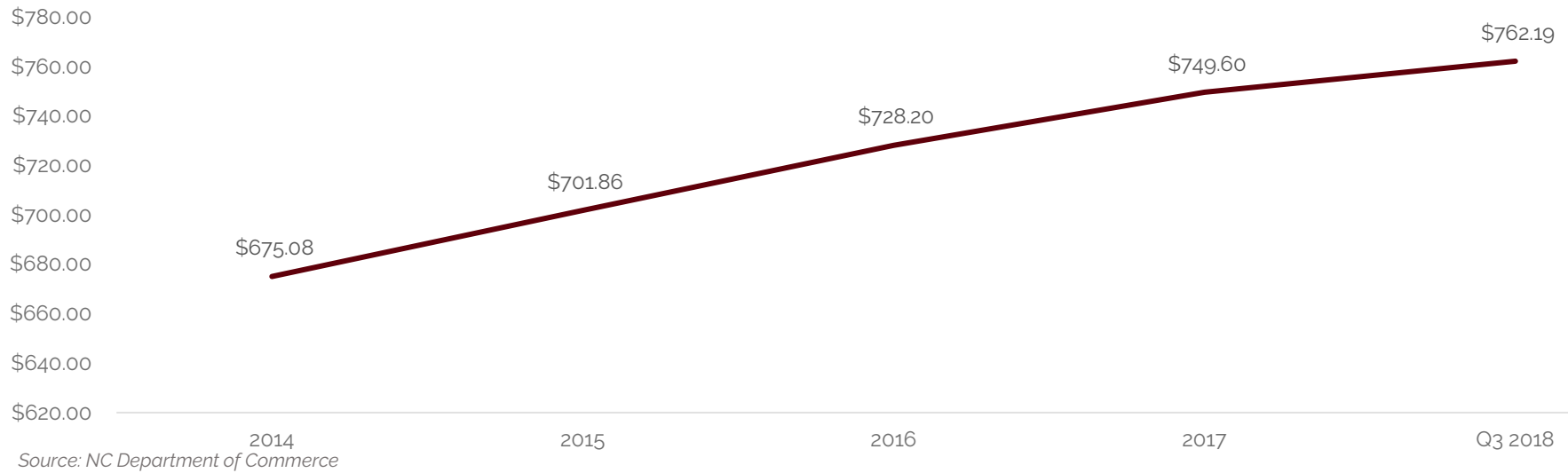




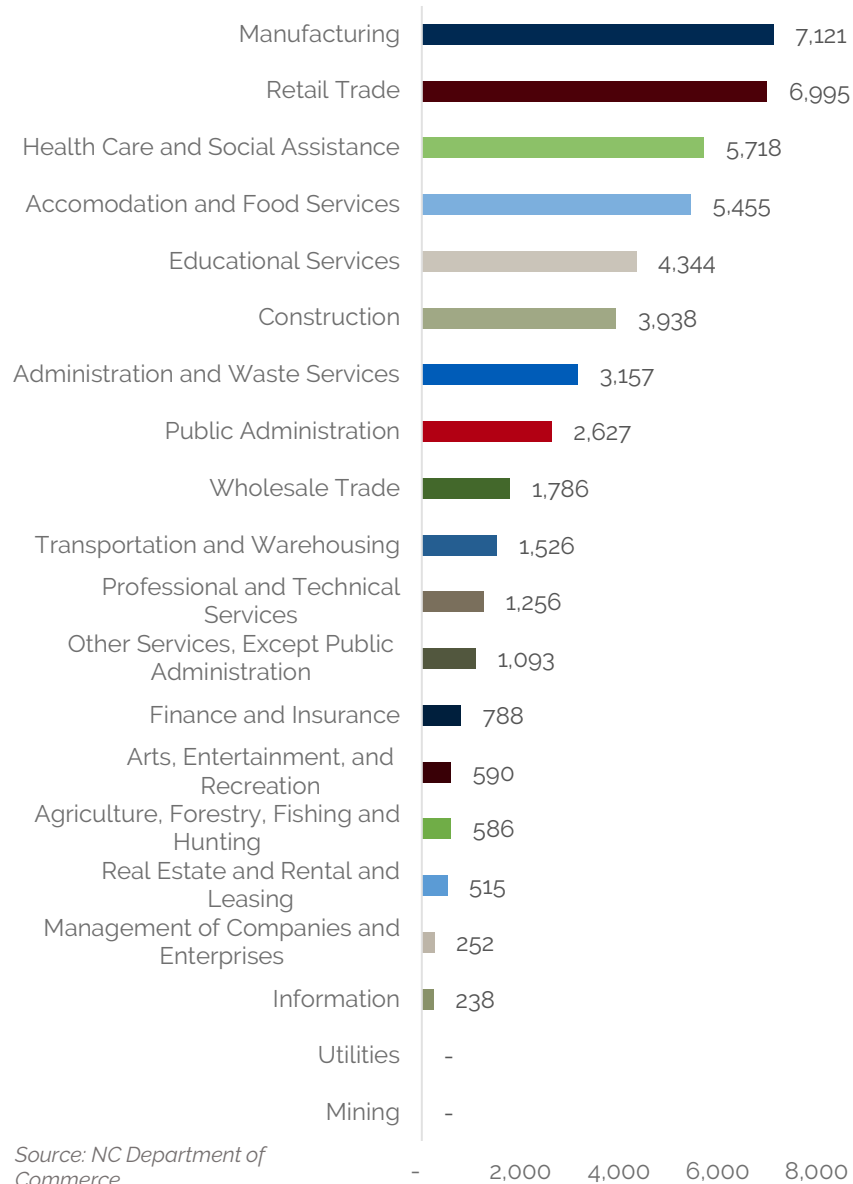
Johnston County, NC Employment Total, All Industries



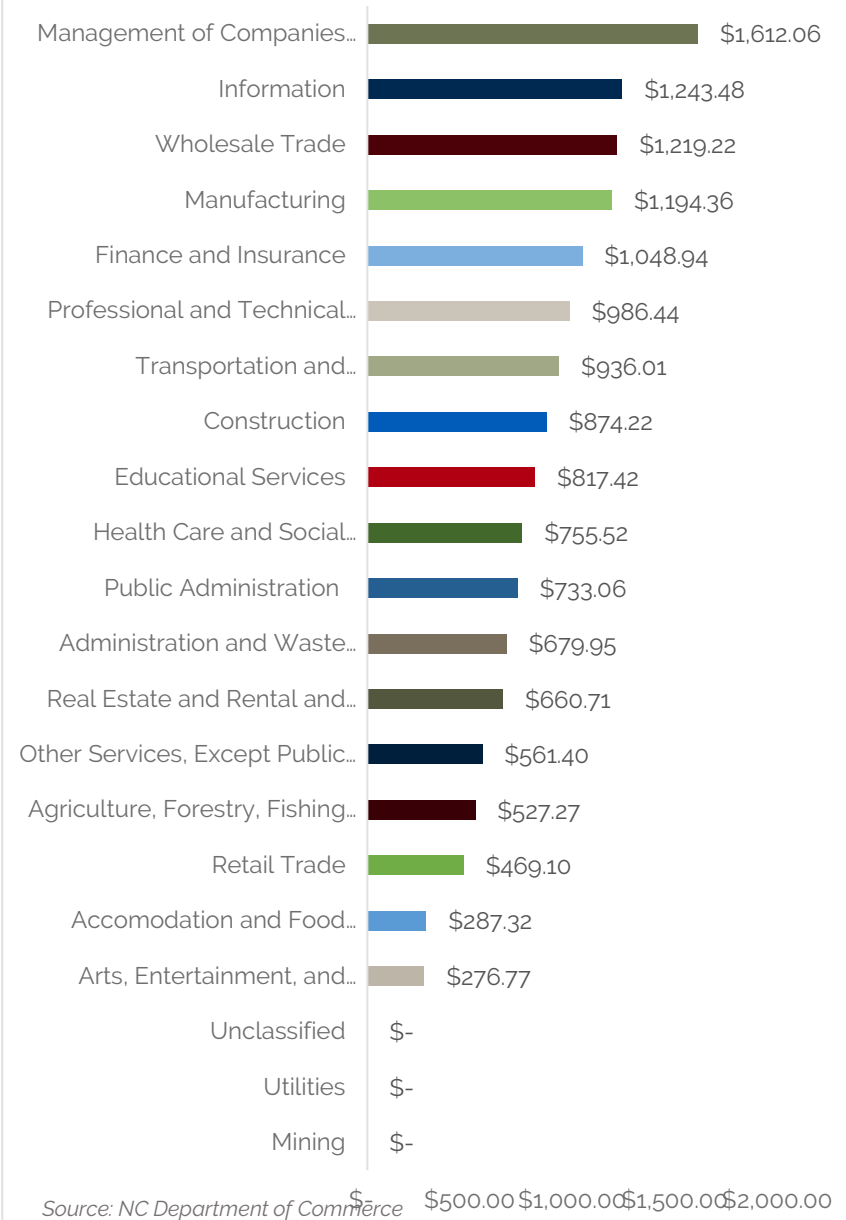
Johnston County, NC Wages Total, All Industries



Q3 2018 Johnston County, NC Employment by Industry



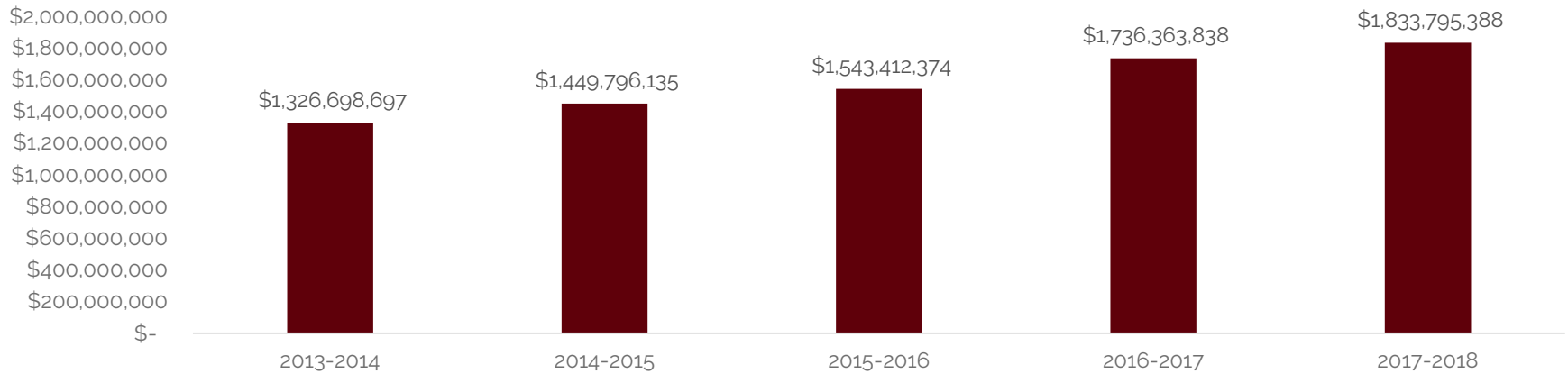
Q3 2018 Johnston County, NC Wages by Industry



Top Employers Johnston County, NC

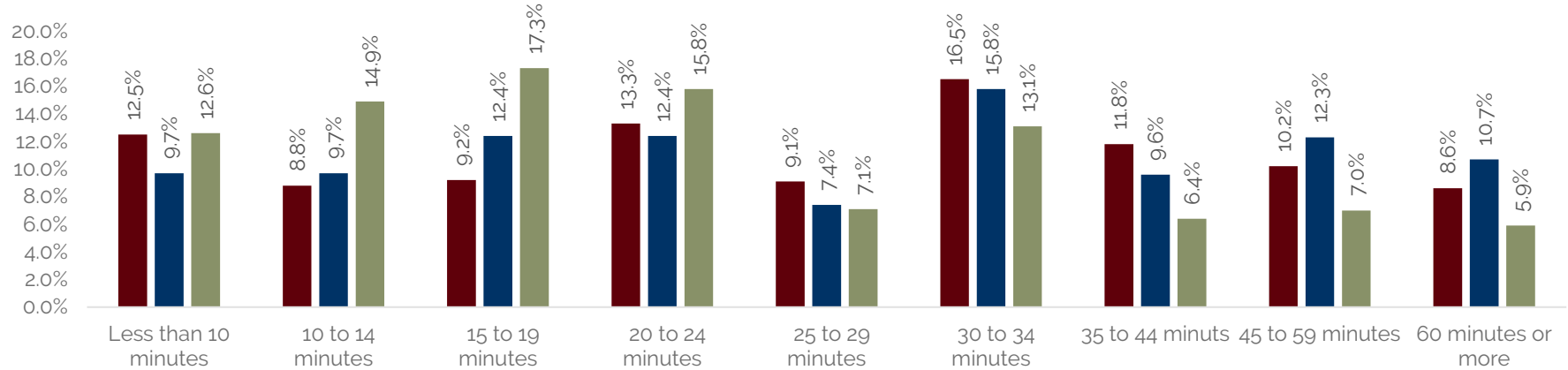
Rank	Company Name	Industry	Employment Range
1	Johnston County Public Schools	Education & Health Services	1000+
2	Johnston Health	Education & Health Services	1000+
3	Grifols Therapeutics Inc	Manufacturing	1000+
4	County of Johnston	Public Administration	1000+
5	Novo Nordisk Pharmaceutical	Manufacturing	1000+
6	Asplundh Tree Expert Co Inc	Professional & Business Services	500-999
7	Food Lion	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	500-999
8	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	500-999
9	Caterpillar Inc	Manufacturing	500-999
10	Johnston Technical Institute	Education & Health Services	500-999
11	Precisionaire	Manufacturing	250-499
12	Sysco Raleigh LLC	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499
13	Lowes Home Centers Inc	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	250-499
14	Airflow Products Company Inc	Manufacturing	250-499
15	Town of Clayton	Public Administration	250-499
16	Executive Personnel Group LLC	Professional & Business Services	250-499
17	McDonald's	Leisure & Hospitality	250-499
18	Principle Long Term Care Inc	Education & Health Services	250-499
19	Bojangles	Leisure & Hospitality	250-499
20	3c Packaging Inc	Manufacturing	250-499
21	Dept Of Public Safety	Public Administration	100-249
22	Opw Fueling Components Inc	Manufacturing	100-249
23	Pgi/Chicopee Inc	Manufacturing	100-249
24	Nike Retail Service	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	100-249
25	U S Postal Service	Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	100-249
Source: NC LEAD			

Johnston County, NC Taxable Retail Sales



Source: NC Department of Revenue

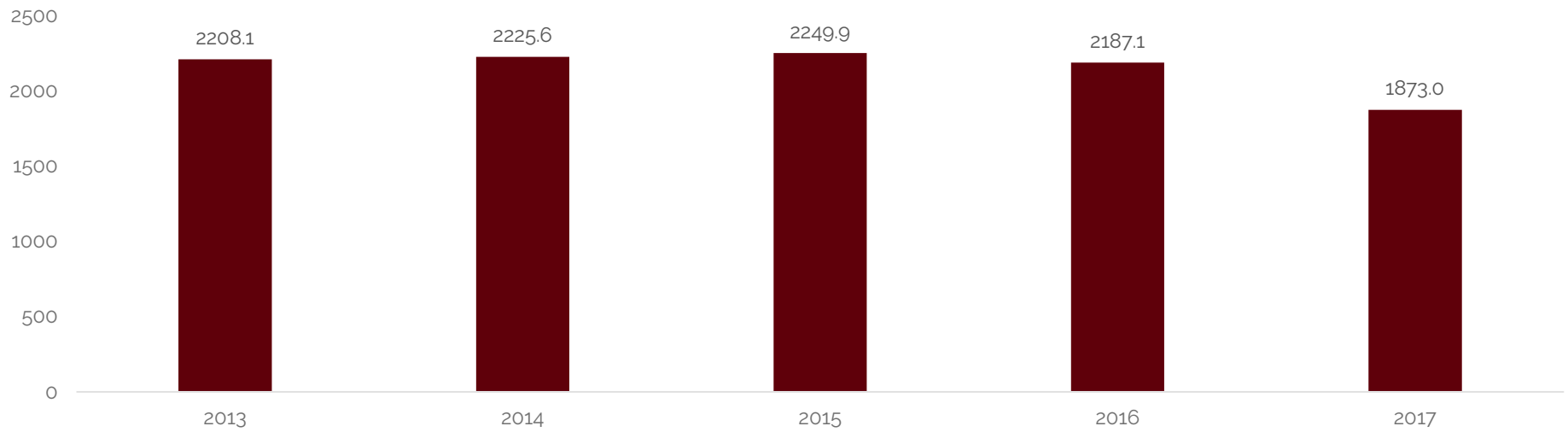
2017 Commute Time



Source: US Census

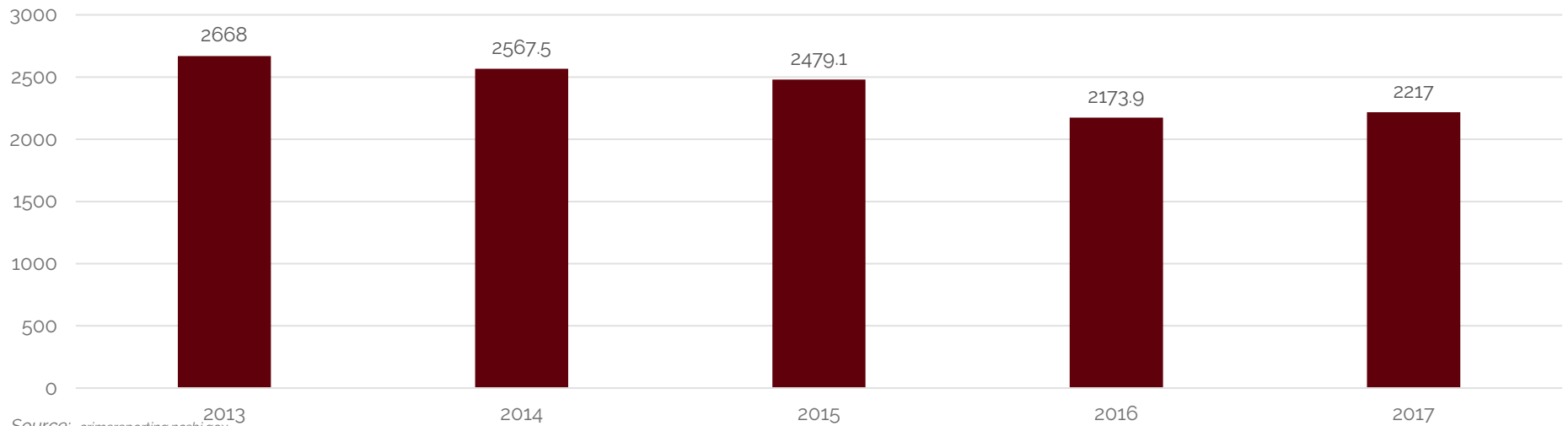
■ Clayton, NC ■ Johnston County, NC ■ North Carolina

Johnston County, NC Index Crime Rate



Source: crimereporting.ncsbi.gov

Clayton Index Crime Rate



Source: crimereporting.ncsbi.gov

Johnston County 2013-2017 Establishment Data		
Gained	2013	2017
Total	4,448	8,167
Start Ups	35.6%	74.0%
Expansion Start Ups	13.8%	10.0%
Expansions	47.8%	13.8%
Move In	2.8%	2.2%
Lost		
Total	4,338	7,357
Closings	39.1%	84.5%
Contractions	57.8%	13.4%
Move Out	3.1%	2.0%
Source: Your Economy Data		

Johnston County 2013-2017 Employment Stages				
ESTABLISHMENTS	2013	% of TOTAL	2017	% of TOTAL
ALL	5,625	100	6,673	100
Self-Employed (1)	821	14.6	901	13.5
Stage 1 (2-9)	3,798	67.5	4,667	69.9
Stage 2 (10-99)	936	16.6	1040	15.6
Stage 3 (100-499)	65	1.2	62	0.9
Stage 4 (500+)	5	0.1	3	0
Source: Your Economy Data				

Johnston County Tourism Information						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% Change
Travel Expenditures	204,510,000	214,940,000	221,720,000	232,490,000	239,090,000	16.9%
Travel Payroll	30,350,000	32,240,000	34,650,000	36,660,000	39,290,000	29.5%
Travel Employment	1,660	1,710	1,770	1,830	1,860	12.0%
Source: data.osbm.state.nc.us						

Retail Market Place Profile-Johnston County

Summary Demographics

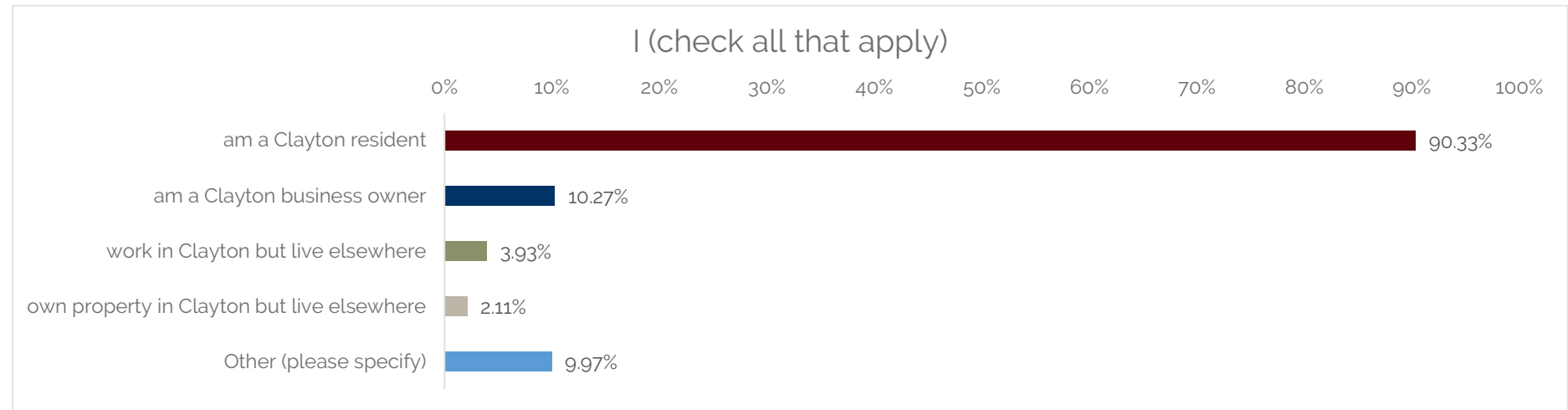
2020 Population	213,644
2020 Households	78,027
2020 Median Disposable Income	\$48,979
2020 Per Capita Income	\$28,310

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	\$2,295,108,437	\$2,193,271,896	\$101,836,539	2.3	1,111
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$2,074,154,677	\$1,990,877,747	\$83,276,930	2.0	828
Total Food & Drink	722	\$220,953,760	\$202,394,151	\$18,559,609	4.4	288
2017 Industry Group	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$451,424,289	\$359,401,800	\$92,022,489	11.3	141
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$371,011,701	\$254,275,394	\$116,736,311	18.7	74
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$36,646,474	\$23,844,387	\$12,802,087	21.2	13
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$43,766,110	\$81,282,019	-\$37,515,909	-30.0	54
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$80,491,675	\$53,467,356	\$27,024,319	20.2	36
Furniture Stores	4421	\$48,707,197	\$10,214,480	\$38,492,717	65.3	10
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$31,784,478	\$43,252,876	-\$11,468,398	-15.3	26
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$61,409,502	\$19,465,906	\$41,943,596	51.9	29
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$151,337,772	\$139,591,979	\$11,745,793	4.0	68
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$142,397,558	\$117,605,953	\$24,791,605	9.5	49
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$8,940,214	\$21,986,026	-\$13,045,812	-42.2	19
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$356,562,552	\$480,332,809	-\$123,770,257	-14.8	101
Grocery Stores	4451	\$331,321,699	\$466,543,737	-\$135,222,038	-16.9	77
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$13,045,749	\$2,375,660	\$10,670,089	69.2	15
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$12,195,101	\$11,413,411	\$781,692	3.3	9
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$128,642,932	\$123,650,873	\$4,992,059	2.0	44
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$224,708,765	\$409,088,246	-\$184,379,481	-29.1	82
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$97,671,014	\$111,537,911	-\$13,866,896	-6.6	96
Clothing Stores	4481	\$64,117,788	\$82,476,379	-\$18,358,590	-12.5	65
Shoe Stores	4482	\$15,908,13	\$19,691,736	-\$3,783,605	-10.6	18
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$17,645,094	\$9,369,795	\$8,275,299	30.6	13
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$54,879,064	\$13,935,733	\$40,943,331	59.5	34
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$46,503,659	\$12,637,878	\$33,865,781	57.3	30
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$8,375,405	\$1,297,855	\$7,077,550	73.2	4
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$343,025,416	\$178,094,959	\$164,930,457	31.6	45
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$247,760,991	\$139,200,281	\$108,560,710	28.1	8
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$95,264,425	\$38,894,678	\$56,369,747	42.0	37
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$89,592,569	\$93,592,848	-\$4,000,279	-2.2	140
Florists	4531	\$2,925,783	\$4,198,618	-\$1,272,835	-17.9	23
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$18,900,798	\$4,963,870	\$13,936,928	58.4	20
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$10,475,776	\$7,107,456	\$3,368,320	19.2	23
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$57,290,212	\$77,322,904	-\$20,032,692	-14.9	74
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$34,409,127	\$8,717,328	\$25,691,799	59.6	12
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$25,116,47	\$778,235	\$24,338,236	94.0	2
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$1,950,190	\$0	\$1,950,190	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$7,342,466	\$7,939,093	-\$596,627	-3.9	10
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$220,953,760	\$202,394,151	\$18,559,609	4.4	288
Special Food Services	7223	\$2,041,351	\$751,032	\$1,290,319	46.2	7
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$14,871,870	\$2,751,788	\$12,120,082	68.8	9
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$204,040,539	\$198,891,33	\$5,149,208	1.3	272

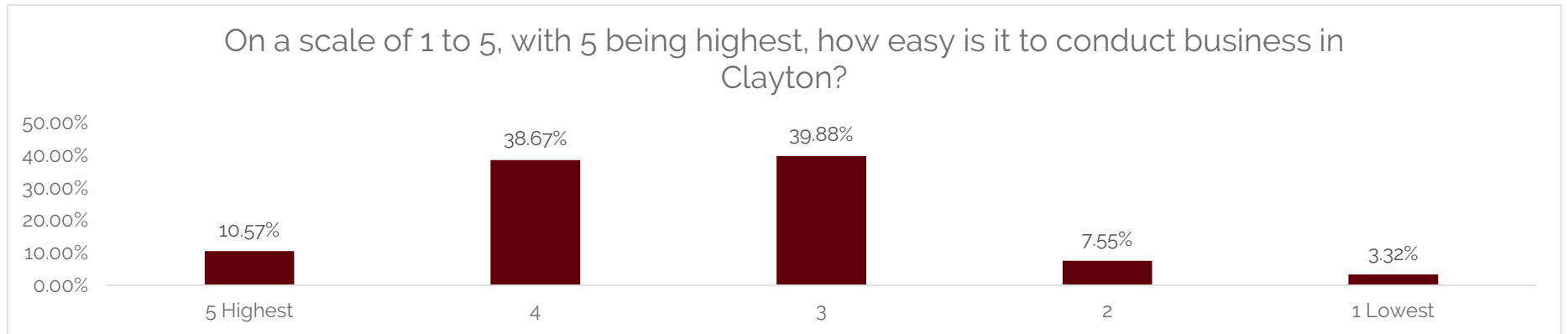
Source: Esri and Infogroup. Esri 2020 Updated Demographics. Esri 2017 Retail MarketPlace. ©2020 Esri. ©2017 Infogroup, Inc. All rights reserved.

Appendix B: Survey Results

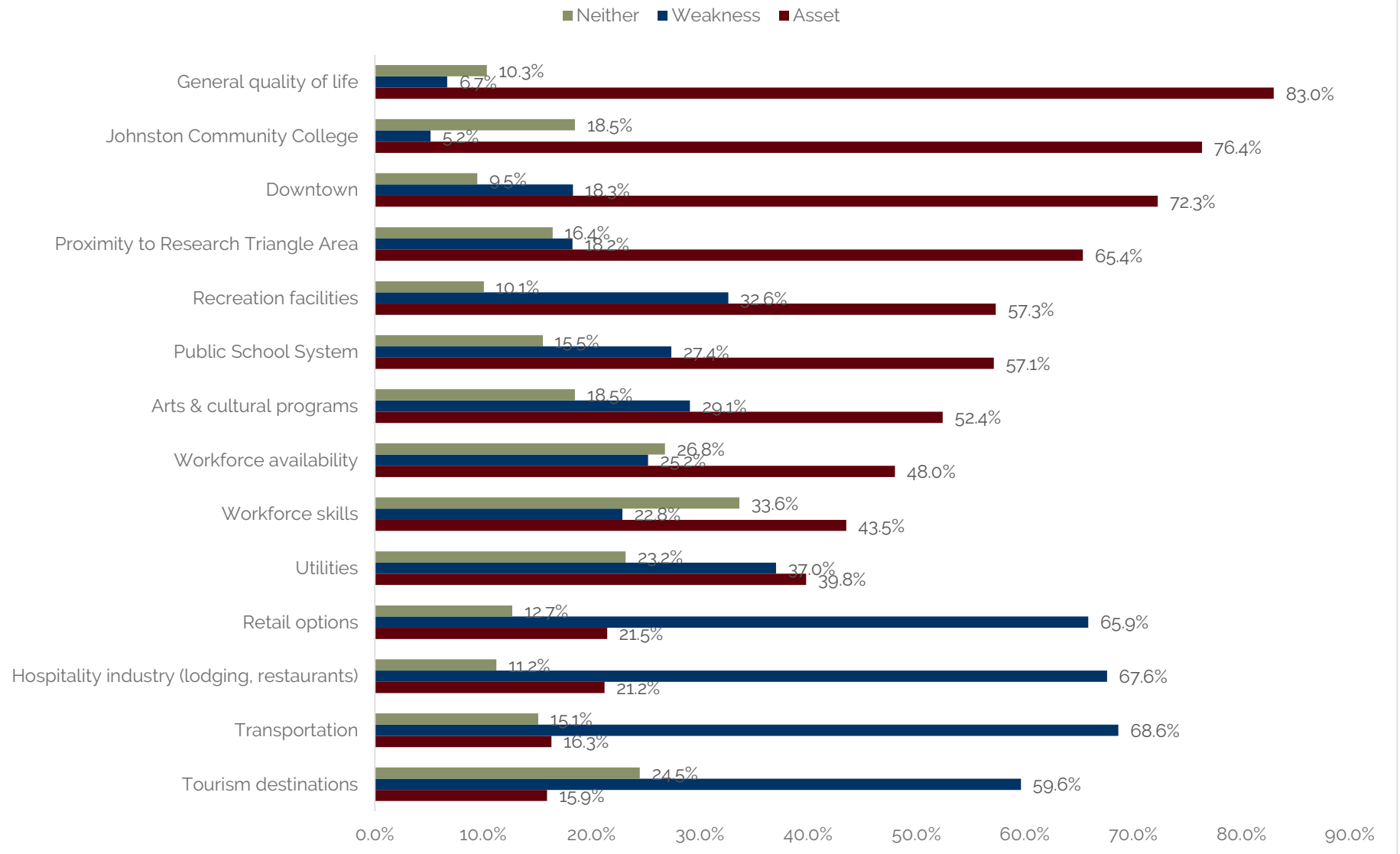
There were 331 responses to the survey which was distributed by the Town of Clayton and its allies during the summer of 2019.



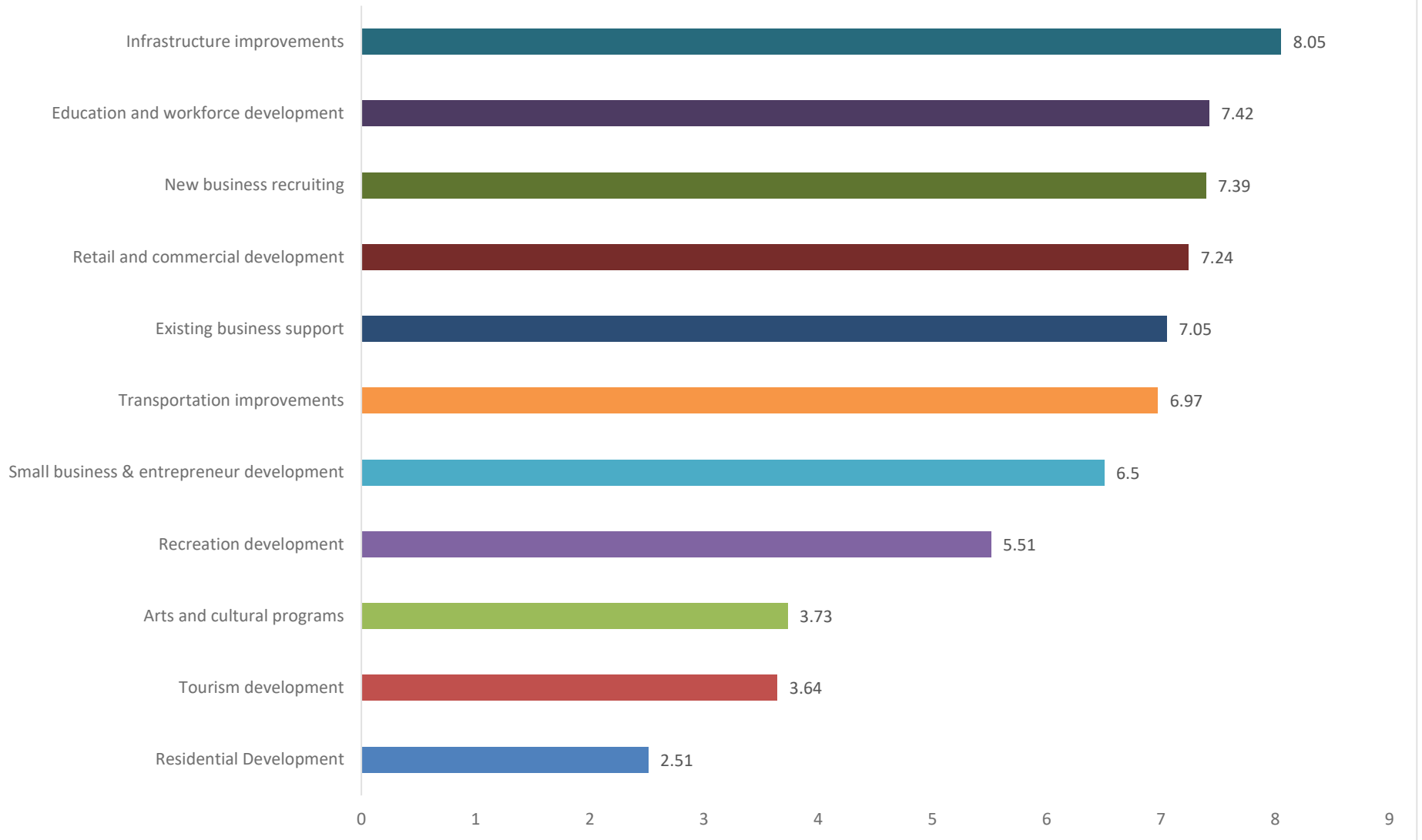
Other (please specify)
Live outside of Clayton with a Clayton mailing address and my husband works in Clayton
I live in the Cleveland area but consider Clayton my town and do a lot of business in the area.
I am in the ETJ of Clayton, on the very edge of town.
Wanting to leave Clayton because of the high taxes, rates, and fees
Flowers
Grew up in Clayton, live at 40/42 now
Own property on the ETJ so follow city rules, but vote for county officials
I have lived in Clayton and wanted to help with this survey.
family in Clayton
Live here, have a long commute to work.
Also work in Clayton
Live near Clayton
In Clayton ETJ and do lots in community



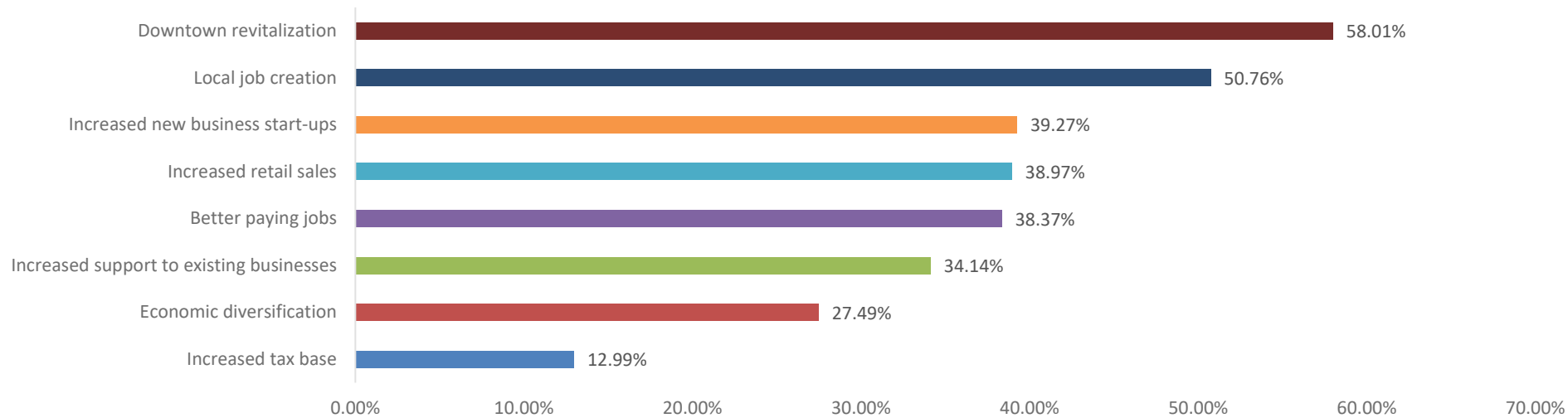
Please rate each of the following assets as it relates to economic development and growth in the Clayton area.



Rank order the following economic development strategies in order of importance with 1 being the most important.



What should be the top three goals of Clayton's economic development strategic plan?



Other (please specify)
Improve infrastructure
New economic development to increase tax base of businesses
Keep Clayton from turning into another overcrowded, high crime version of near-by cities. Clayton's small-town charm is what brought people here and it is being lost.
Higher level of economic diversification not lower.
Connecting Clayton's resources (schools, parks, homes, stores, etc.)
TRANSPORTATION
Open spaces
Improve recreation facilities and options including greenways, classes, facilities.
Free youth center for young kids and teens
Adding sidewalks within the city limits
Sports fields, turf soccer fields, trail paths connecting to the Neuse river trail
And more things for young families to do!! Young families are the ones who want to live in Clayton but there's hardly anything within the town limits for children.
Better/ more parks and recreational facilities
Increase what is considered city limits
Creating a more walkable town and improvements to transportation

What is a model city for Clayton - a place Clayton should emulate?	Duplicates were removed.
A little more like Cary would be nice.	Clayton should not emulate another city. Other cities should emulate Clayton!
Abingdon, VA	Dallas
Alexandria, VA	Downtown Fredericksburg, VA
Annapolis	Dunedin, FL
Apex	Durham
Asheville, NC	Ellicott City
Austin, TX	Evanston, IL
Basking Ridge NJ	Frederick, MD
Be unique	Fuquay-Varina
Beaufort SC	Garner/Raleigh
Beaufort, NC	Goldsboro
Benson	Grand view OH
Blacksburg VA	Greenfield MA
Blowing Rock, NC	Hampton's, NY
Boston	Hendersonville, NC
Boulder	Hillsborough
Brevard, although a mountain town, its packs a lot into a little	Holy Springs, NC
Brookfield, CT	I reject the premise of the question. Clayton needs to deal with its needs on its own terms.
Burlington, VT or a southern version of this place or Dahlonega, GA.	I think Clayton is a model town
Can Clayton be original? Quit trying to be Apex and Cary, Clayton is not that big.	Instead of trying to emulate another city, be your own by listening to all of the exceptional residents that live here! Clayton is an amazing small town; we are so happy to be a part of this community!
Carmel, Indiana	Jackson TN
Carrboro	Kinston
Cary	Knightdale NC

Chapel Hill	Let Clayton be Clayton. Good schools, land, cute local downtown. If you HAVE to copy a place. Consider parts of Wilmington. Heavy push of arts/startups/cool hang out places/nice parks & libraries & nice (non-strip mall) shopping centers & food places
Charleston, South Carolina	Locally I would say Wake Forest
Charlotte, NC	None. I love Clayton. Other places should copy us
Charlottesville, VA	Oswego Illinois
Clayton should be Clayton	Patchogue, NY
Let	Pine Level
Los Angeles	Raleigh
Macon, GA	Rocky Mount
Matthews NC	Salt Lake City
Middletown, NJ	Savannah Ga
Monroe, NC	Shreveport Louisiana
Monroeville, Pennsylvania	Small town America
Most small towns in New England...Shops, restaurants, beauty, tourism and more!	Smithfield
Mount pleasant SC	Southern Pines/Pinehurst, NC - small but impactful
New Bern	Spokane, Washington
None be unique!!	Swansboro
West Jefferson	Temecula California
WhiteOak/Garner	Wake Forest
Wilmington NC	Wellington FL
Wilson, Apex, Boone, Wendell	
Winston Salem	

What is one thing that Clayton does better than other towns?
What you are doing now. Gathering data and making decisions based on future goals
Wants to grow
Cleanliness/Appearance
Everyone has a voice regarding planning
Hospitality - we have a strong sense of community
Downtown Christmas Tree lighting.
Engages community involvement in planning.
Hometown feel
Greenways
Towne Square family events
Fireworks
Recruit bio jobs like those on hwy 70
Local events —music on the lawn events
Attract employees
Love the small-town charm and that everyone knows everyone
Still has a small-town feel and is not overdeveloped
We have great community events
Make everyone feel like family with get together soon like Town square.
Police department
Provides a welcoming, very friendly atmosphere for newcomers, both business and citizens
Downtown area is really cute small town
Beautiful parks, development without bulldozing trees.
Welcome Newcomers
Sense of community
Celebrations downtown. Lots of smiles and lots of respect for the arts.
Excellent job of keeping common area up.
Existing business support
Keeping it safe...thankful for our law enforcement and all first responders, they should be paid more!!
Downtown Entertainment Events
Keeping Main Street alive
Hometown spirit through supporting high school sports, harvest festival, annual community events.
Communicate through social media
Promote events and the library
Communication
I love that Clayton uses the downtown area

What is one thing that Clayton does better than other towns?

Downtown has come a long way in recent years! The activities and businesses are right on track

Keeping the small-town feel

Festivals

We still have a small-town feel, family business owners, great town events.

Having this survey is hopefully a start

Customer or resident satisfaction. The town's utilities and services and the people who work there are awesome. The downtown area is quaint and has a homey feel that I enjoy.

Reimagine historic downtown spaces

Culture and community events

Local business support

Community events

Small and relatable

Includes family activities, and business opportunities.

Supporting local art and businesses

Diverse restaurants less chain/franchises

Small town feel

Marketing

Family involvement opportunities

Hometown atmosphere

Support local business

Keep residents informed

Love the quaint downtown

Downtown is very good. Neuse trail also good.

Despite the increase in growth, Clayton manages to keep the "small town" feel

Keeping it small and local

Entertainment for all. Centrally located in town.

Community outreach and development

Free Concert Series

Library activities

Presence of home-grown businesses, particularly restaurants

Family recreational activities

The downtown area has a great vibe and excellent locally owned businesses- keep it going!

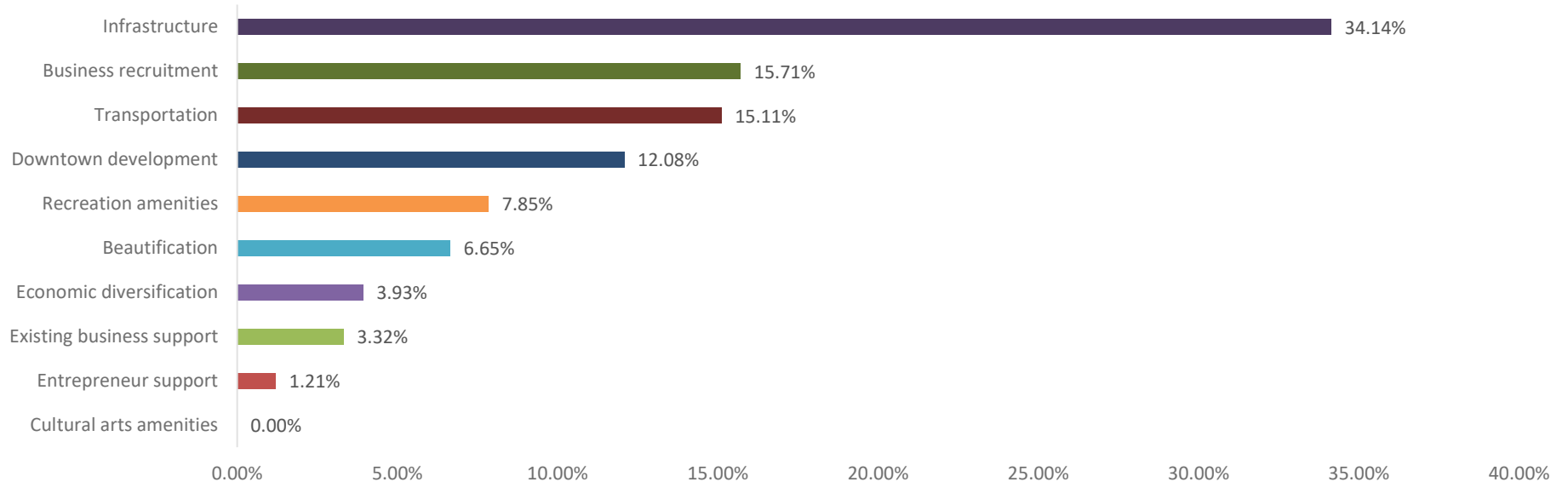
Parks and Trails

Open spaces

It's super-friendly and has a good sense of place/history.

What is one thing that Clayton does better than other towns?
Quaint, livelier than most Eastern NC towns. The downtown is not dead.
Arts/Cultural events
Good paying jobs
Still has pride in its history
Friendly people
Downtown area is great with events and local places like Deep River, Blvd West, First Street Tavern
Grass roots
Amount of family free activities
Manage growth relative to infrastructure
Has retained major employers
Parks and recreation
Youth sports
Open space
Snow removal and storm prep
Small town feel
Listening to residents
Lots of free events
Where to start? Clayton is, as is, the greatest place to live.
Appears to attract new businesses
Downtown restaurants
Focuses on downtown development activities to keep core strong
Parks and Recreation
Events. They are awesome and well attended.
Tries to keep the small town feel despite the growth.
There are some nice cultural events throughout the year, but need more with more diversity in what they are
Small town events
Maintains a good low-cost standard of living
Welcome new businesses
Good summer program for kids.
Open to new ideas and is welcoming
There is a huge sense of community in Clayton. Keep the town events going strong. We LOVE the traditions here!
We have deliberately kept the small-town feel, even though we are growing.
Downtown clayton area is beautiful and has unique shopping and dining options
Facebook, Communication about upcoming events and changes to service-EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE
It has a great small-town, friendly feel. It is the best of both worlds with a lot to do, but still small and friendly.

What is the most important investment Clayton could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



Other (please specify)

If a city is unsightly nobody would care to live here.
Anything to attract more tourists. Example more history museum or littler mom and pop shopping stores
Get some public transportation
Not sure where it fits but a destination venue that brings Clayton into view.
Wish I could choose all of the above
Control spending lower taxes
Families are moving here in droves. Keep clear roadways, Bring in fun places/events to hang DT, good schools & parks!
Capitalize on all great projects for the public to thrive and enjoy.
Reduce number of vehicles
Police
Slow down the growth while it catches up to what we have and plan for better infrastructure
Sidewalks
Build a YMCA building
Better roads and more schools

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
Good decision making
Investment in local job creation
Better infrastructure, good paying jobs, public transportation
Allow growth, but at a reasonable pace. Clayton, is growing faster than it needs to, schools reach or exceed capacity as quickly as they are built, and the roads cannot handle the amount of traffic.
Increased sales for downtown businesses and additional businesses
Downtown area more accessible to residents, schools less crowded, equally divided in numbers.
Growth that is sustainable...keeping a balance between diverse occupancy, business development and infrastructure.
Controlled growth
Organized growth, sensible layout of business and residential areas.
Improved and expanded roads
Clean up highway 70 coming into Clayton; clean up entrance of Main street
Big box retailers, restaurants, and new roads
You have to have infrastructure in order to allow growth by bringing new businesses and a growing housing market
Downtown beautification
Recreation activities
Improved downtown/new businesses and improved traffic flow
Parks, and retail/restaurant/commercial development.
Love to see better shopping, new business/industry with better paying jobs
Better infrastructure, keep farmland, and support the farmers
To build the tax base by bringing in larger businesses, job creation and improvements in infrastructure.
Viable vibrant Downtown with shopping, culture & restaurants
Improved infrastructure in schools, utilities, and transportation
A plan that is followed that produces positive results for Clayton for years to come.
A long-range, date sensitive strategic plan with benchmarks easily identified.
My retirement years spent here...
A well-planned community
More activities for family
A plan where growth is encouraged but controlled so as the town does not sprawl out uncontrollably.
Diversified plan backed up by sustainable budget
Continued focus on growth with the infrastructure to support it.
Better high schools and high-end businesses
Keeping the small-town feel to Clayton
Better roads, better traffic patterns, better jobs for low income ppl
Make it easier for residents of Clayton to shop, dine, and enjoy life without leaving town.

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
Sustainable growth
More jobs, better transportation system
I'd like to see that while addressing infrastructure, beautification and functionality are happening at the same time. At the end of the day, when it's easier for everyone to get from point A to point B, then it's an easier sell to retailers to see Clayton as a lucrative place to set up shop.
Attract and please residents by NOT making Clayton a city. Protect valuable green space.
The ability for Clayton to focus on parking downtown, traffic flow and intersections.....especially during high traffic times each day.
Increased revenue from consumer spending and retail and property taxes from new residents. Improve benefits for people that pay town property taxes and give people a reason to move here and STAY here.
Increase in tax base, higher end employment options.
Getting infrastructure up to bar before more residential growth.
Community pool
Please love quaint small towns that offer a lot of restaurants, boutiques, antique stores...
A plan that allows current residents to prosper, enjoy downtown, and want to stay. Giving future residents and businesses more reasons to want to move to Clayton while keeping its small-town feel.
Growth
Increased property value.
Focus on main street & easy to access family venues, parks, areas for kids & bikes... too much in Clayton must be driven to
Complete I540... access to big businesses and jobs. Highway planning... opportunities for business growth along existing highway 70.... bypass and alternate highway around and through Clayton. Timed traffic lights.
Controlled growth. Allowing infrastructure and transportation needs to be met before or while other development is occurring, rather than as an afterthought. Things to do for families.
Good jobs
Keeping town clean and organized
Community involvement
A comprehensive strategy with both short term and long-term goals that involve the town, chamber, civic organizations, and the community.
Limit new housing starts/subdivisions.
Step it up and support the growth around the area. People are moving in from everywhere and taking money to Raleigh every single day. Support six figure income families and they'll support you.
Controlled/packed growth. Need more senior friendly, AFFORDABLE housing. Inclusive communities for aging adults.
Methodical growth
A decrease in residential development and increase in infrastructure and road capacity
More entertainment opportunities year-round

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
Revitalize downtown
Expanded resources for citizens
A large employer which makes a significant economic impact. HALO wish would be a professional sports team.
Greater tax base and no increased property tax
Please improve the parks. They are lacking in number and quality to most towns its size!
Better local support. Slowing of growth until the resources can handle growth--traffic, schools, etc.
The traffic is a real problem, would love to see roads out of city limits looked at.
Accommodate more for all the growth of the town such as new schools.
Better Transportation, More lanes, Cross Walks on 70 for safety.
Less approvals for new neighborhoods and more recreational spots
More local quality shopping, more arts/cultural activities
Expanding Clayton so that people want to move here in 10 years
Improve business support and bring new business into town.
To see there is a plan to build hospitals, schools, restaurants, and parks for the influx of families moving here.
A shopping mall
More jobs in Clayton, less commuting.
More grocery stores like Aldi, Lidl, Whole Foods,. Farmers Market would be great if it was bigger with more local vendors
I just hope y'all actually read these and take into account what the people want instead of putting on a show.
Reduce traffic, provide alternative modes of transportation (to, from, and around Clayton), and connecting resources through sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails.
A more beautiful and inviting downtown. Having a place that is a destination for visiting consumers.
Charming, well planned, retail and community centered town.
Home price growth
Specific targeted logistical plans
Less development, more green space, improved school capacity and road improvements.
Keep Clayton a nice and safe community to live in.
I'd love to see Clayton remain an affordable place to live. Young families are buying their first homes here and my fear is that continued development or over development may lead to saturation, and the cost of living could become unaffordable.
Infrastructure improvements
More retail, better schools, downtown revitalization
More people moving to Clayton and improvements to Main Street
Better roads and access. More and bigger parks.
Less chain restaurants and more mom and pop restaurants. Shopping center like White Oak closer to Flowers community.
More enclosed playgrounds for young children and more schools.
More family events and fun stuff to do downtown

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
More restaurant diversity in downtown and making the recreation options even better!
Growth plan but still keeping with the small-town feel. How does this town become the next Cary or Apex where folks want to settle?
Larger growing employment opportunities with transportation
Investment in park space and protecting green space
Improved city appearance and maintenance. Specifically landscaping and building maintenance on 70
Slow down residential growth until local businesses & schools can catch up
Amtrak stop near downtown Clayton, and finally adding the playground at East Clayton Community Park that has been in the works for nearly 10 years.
Including Clayton citizens' ideas and advice as to what we want. Sending out announcements to taxpayers. about what's happening, etc.
Halt growth until infrastructure catches up
5 Year vision plan
More roads, less home building.
It would be so awesome to be able to commute back and from Raleigh and surrounding areas on a reliable and safe system.
Want to continue to live here, or I'll have to move if everything continues to be so far away. Too many fast food restaurants and grocery stores.
More small business/restaurants, develop downtown
Having high-quality companies offering jobs
More retail and restaurants opportunities. More public schools
Downtown rehab
More bypasses and routes to divert traffic around HWY 70 and HWY42.
More local jobs, growing downtown
Improvement to existing roads and building new roadways.
Larger retailers and businesses locating in Clayton so there are more local, higher paying job opportunities.
Improve recreation facilities on a large scale to include East Clayton and other parts of Clayton with more offerings for all ages and interests, including improving the greenways and walking trails and making new ones.
More parking and youth facilities
Growth.
More higher paying jobs
Development here seems painfully slow. The shops at Glen Laurel is taking forever. Would be nice to know more about planned completion and tenants. Faster paced projects with results would be good.
For Clayton to continue to thrive by boosting small, local businesses up and keeping the "small town" feel alive.

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
Some quality new local business in a revitalized downtown district
More direction and engagement of local businesses and other people in the community. Clayton seems to have the same few private individuals steer strategy in a way it best suits them. Let's focus on the totality of the people living here and working here and engage and interact with the community.
A feeling like there is a suitable plan in place to take care of growth before work on the growth begins (i.e.: more schools, lane widening, lights...before new homes built)
New outer loop with business development plan for future growth with more warehouse space for business expansion!
Retain small town character
The strategic plan should support Clayton's economic growth & protect agricultural businesses/ interests and green spaces.
Clear, smooth, and concise path that developers can easily follow to reap rewards from their investment in Clayton.
A fifteen-year plan developed with infrastructure and the starting point. How many times do we continue to have to have detours due to utility issues? Start rebuilding that now, if you don't you will get left behind. It happens in too many cities that think they are going to grow and trending to grow, once you have a clean, organized, presentable town then start marketing. Social Media create something that is unique to Clayton. You have all these major companies here, that's spending millions of dollars. You should really try to elevate yourself to be trendy, tech-savvy, but keeping your small-town feel. Wendell offers free Wi-Fi to everyone in the city
New businesses spread out, not clumped into one area causing traffic issues.
The plan becoming a reality
Keep the downtown charm and vibe! It is a real draw. Make sure that expansion of the downtown keeps the original flavor and doesn't get too commercial.
More, bigger retail that will increase us staying in town rather than going to garner or other towns. Therefore, keeping our money supporting us rather than other towns.
Business recruitment
Organized plan for population growth that supports the needs of the community and not just a few individuals. Especially for residential development
I would like to see an increase in public safety. You would be shocked to see how much public safety (Fire, PD and EMS) plays a part in ordinary citizens' decision on where to live.
Local businesses providing customer needs, less chains, destination for those in surrounding counties
I'd love to see public willingness to buy into infrastructural amenities (library, senior center, parks & rec) and council/town willingness to stick to strategic initiatives.
Easy access to regular activities in downtown.
Connect the housing communities with downtown for easy accessibility for biking, shared trails. An example, my community of Cobblestone is walkway disconnected from downtown. Please improve that by ensuring safety for walkers, wheelchair or golf cart accessibility to downtown. Create a community of walkers, bikers, golf carts.
Better cooperation between city and county government which will be key for the betterment of all of the areas listed above.
Infrastructure with transportation

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
A parking garage downtown, more fire stations, better places to eat
More strategic planning
Improve traffic
More quality retail. Key word quality. Cater to new demographic. Change is happening. Embrace it.
Less traffic?
Improve north/south roadways (Covered Bridge/O'Neal, Shotwell Rd., Amelia Church)
A progressive town
Making Downtown Clayton a destination for shopping and restaurant more so than us currently available
Transportation
Retail shopping
More focus on making Clayton the best place to live in NC. Less wasted spending of our tax dollars
Stay small and manage traffic
Less land sold to developer
Open arms for commercial dev
Reasonable, responsible growth
Slow down new construction
More transportation
More retail coming to the east side of clayton
Better control of growth.
Increase dining options; larger restaurant options
Middle school for Powhatan. Chick-fil-A and Target. Better roads
Less low-quality retail (e.g. no more storage facilities)
Beautification and more retail
A better experience for residents having all in one area availability
More restaurants
Fast turn around
Downtown revitalization
As large businesses grow or move to Clayton, they assist with costs of building new schools needed due to population growth.
Limit housing developments. Chick-Fil-A
Expansion of downtown
Business growth
More big box retail stores in the Clayton Town limits.
A commitment to appropriate growth but mindful of the impact in terms of traffic/congestion.
Thriving economy, happy residents

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
More dining options, more recreation facilities like indoor pool or YMCA
Less congestion on roads, more public transportation opportunities
Industrial development around the perimeter of town. Locations between Clayton and Archer Lodge, Clayton and Cleveland, Clayton and Garner.
More local business and variety
More restaurants stores theatres etc.
Better focus on maintaining infrastructure
Just to make it more "out of town" friendly driving. Our streets need fixed - as in - make some one way.....no parking on the street at certain times of the day so tourism can park.
Better ability for highways to handle the influx of people
Increased businesses, jobs and road conditions.
Support for existing businesses. Business owners pay more in taxes and do more to provide opportunity than most. Support to make their job more efficient would increase growth
More support of existing businesses outside downtown main street, more entrepreneurial support, more development of affordable retail space in attractive locations
Better stores and businesses
Less crowded and underfunded schools
more economic growth. Less traffic congestion
Better facilities for seniors and more affordable activities for all to keep people in the area.
New ideas, striving high to be beautiful and a place people want to live and shop
More entertainment for families.
Growth is great when there is a plan for the existing. Ensure we are ready for the growth that you want to make possible. These schools cannot handle the growth that is currently being envisioned and focused on
More diversification in our retail options in and around downtown clayton
Reasonable growth
For Clayton to continue to grow, as well as maintain its small-town appeal.
That we continue or enhance the policies that have brought business to the south part of town and use that tax revenue to improve the quality of life in Clayton (streets, recreation, amenities, etc.)
To keep the small-town feel but have opportunities from the city life.
More businesses so I don't have to go to Garner or Raleigh for everything
Commercial expansion in the ETJ near bypass
infrastructure improvements and more businesses
More recreation and cultural opportunities
Rich and diverse downtown
Larger thriving downtown

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
Better road conditions, more small businesses, a hotel and support to small businesses, including home based businesses.
Better traffic flow, better transportation options, more parks
Less overcrowding of houses in the downtown area. Leave "old" Clayton the way it is. Better community planning. Clean up Hwy 70. Bring better retail stores if you are continuing to bring business to Clayton. Get nicer, sit down restaurants.
A clear path for growth and how to ensure growth does not get out of control.
Increase planning staff
Support for businesses old and new
Support for safe schools
Smart growth that provides value to the community rather than just more tax revenue
Addressing traffic congestion and downtown economic prosperity
More retail and restaurant businesses
Better roads, maintain and increase school quality
Sidewalks to town, schools and parks
Update some of downtown remove some of worn out buildings rebuild
I would love to see community beautification events or initiatives to take care of Clayton as is while continuing to elicit public input. Beautification and development of more natural tourism and recreation will organically cause the town to prosper and will increase quality of life overall in this great city.
Support existing community while allowing growth.
Infrastructure!
Increase school sizes, road sizes, stores and restaurants to match home growth.
More concern for making roads & schools can handle the significant growth before more of it occurs. Both are overcrowded.
A plan that's actually executed and doesn't sit on a shelf. The best plan is one that would improve the local economy but keeps the small-town character of the town. That's a tall order but will make Clayton stand out. It all starts with the heart of the town - the downtown.
Higher quality development, higher standards.
Support to local businesses to boost affordability to residents to be able to support local
Comprehensive road and traffic plan for growth
Better traffic management
More diversity in restaurant and retail options, better infrastructure
Real plans to address transportation and infrastructure. Clayton is already far behind; it's concerning to see where it will be in five years.
Continued community coops, events and festivals. Continued improvements of roads and traffic congestion. Increased incentive for new small business development. Decreased residential development to help preserve small town feel and exclusivity of living in Clayton.
Public Transportation and Entertainment Options

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?
Road improvements
Stop approving so many housing developments without a place for the kids to go to school or enough roads to support all the cars
Clayton boasts its love of the arts - add more to the town. Another performing arts center or performing arts group that includes adults - this would undoubtedly attract visitors from outside of Clayton and increase economic growth for retail, restaurants, and other small business.
I would like to see more business come to Clayton.
Improved infrastructure for businesses and residents
More locally based businesses, that don't repeat themselves
Keep traffic under control
Defined goals of what Clayton will be like in 5, 10 or 20 years
A recreation area with a pool for non-community members. Younger teenagers have nothing to do in Clayton
New business-like restaurants and high-end fresh grocer
I would like to see more accessibility to downtown clayton to bring residents in so they can help support local businesses. I would also enjoy bringing my children to more recreational amenities. This town is very family friendly, so providing more options is always an excellent way to keep residents here or bring new residents in.
Better roads and more schools.
Downtown continues to grow and we obtain more restraints they would keep citizens money in town does not garner
More non-fast food style restaurants and retail shops other than Walmart. We need a Ross, Target, or Marshalls. We have to spend so much money in other areas of the county or wake county to get some of the things that we need.
Achievable objectives
Forward thinking
A place to be proud to call home
Continued growth
Support growth while Maintaining small-town character
Plans for more schools and infrastructure.
A place for everyone old and young.
Wider roads, more schools
Bringing in more retail and restaurants and infrastructure improvements
More parking. And an Amtrak depot would be an excellent addition.
Better quality for current residents
An aesthetically attractive town with good schools and a vibrant downtown.
I would like to see downtown vibe spill out onto Hwy 70 more restaurants and shops
Amenities/convenience of Cary with the friendliness of Clayton.

Appendix C: Detailed Staff-Developed Implementation Priorities

Detailed Implementation Priorities – Near Term

Create a BRE program to engage businesses in town, partnering with JoCo EDC when appropriate

- Identify and communicate with "significant employers" in town on a regular basis
- Use BRE program to assess expansion and contraction opportunities with business and assist when necessary
- Collaborate with partners on BRE visits and other similar initiatives to demonstrate collaboration

Develop a major employer Business Roundtable to encourage connection to peers and the Town

- Inventory and publish available sites/buildings for new industrial, commercial and retail employers
- Develop new sites and building types based on demand data from partners

Utilize EC Smart Site program to identify and market industrial sites for potential certification

Develop a "Start A Business in Clayton" toolkit/Develop a Boot Camp for new and existing businesses

Communicate goals and value prop to ED partners locally, regionally and statewide

Create alignment amongst organizations with a focus on downtown vitality and COVID-19 recovery

Review available downtown properties and prioritize base on location, use and disposition of owner

Be a catalyst for downtown redevelopment projects such as Town Square, Horne Square and Old Town Hall

- Use goals of strategic plan as topics for regular communications to residents
- Continue to boost social media and Town website use
- Use town website to communicate brand and key messages from the strategic plan

Include a recent news section on the new economic development pages on Town website

Include a calendar of event for activities on website

Explore historic signage to identify Downtown Clayton as the Historic Heart of the Town

Engage with CAMPO and NCDOT on expanding key corridors, such as NC42 E & W, US BUS 70, and I-42

Continue to partner with JoCo and CAMPO on potential commuter rail and BRT extensions to Clayton

Explore feasibility for developing a JCC Clayton campus

Partner with the Library to explore redevelopment of the Hocutt Memorial Library

Explore feasibility for an event or conference center in downtown

Detailed Implementation Priorities – Mid-term

Host regional allies and CRE to available sites and buildings annually

Attract JoCo EDC or RTRP to host meetings in Clayton to highlight assets

Participate with EC on recruitment missions and trade shows

Utilize BRE data to inform town policies and priorities

Develop targeted recruitment strategies utilizing anchor tenants

Recruit an additional hotel

Develop a Town incentive policy for business recruitment and retention

Publicize family friendly trail, itineraries and activities in downtown

Consider walking tours targeting kids, history, art, etc. Both virtual and physically signed.

Evaluate existing façade grant program and ensure it is maximizing public investment

Consider a parking supply/demand analysis

Explore a parking app

Consider implementing time-limited parking

Evaluate parking signage

Evaluate lighting in off-street parking areas for safety

Install wayfinding downtown and town gateways

Engage local artists in wayfinding efforts

Consider the Think Clayton! Exclamation point as a town icon

Engage young people in business in town activities and committees

Hold a "How to Serve" class for younger and newer residents

Develop a program to integrate new homeowners

Create a citizens' academy to train them on local government

Enhance marketing of our electric system's capacity and reliability to development community

Extend greenway to downtown physically and/or with signage and wayfinding

Work with partners to ensure adequate wastewater capacity for future development

Consider partnering with JoCo Visitors Bureau on an EV charging station plan

Partner on education-industry programs, such as JoCo Works and INSPIRE

Detailed Implementation Priorities – Longer-term

Consider Town development of specific spaces in targeted locations

Focus on filling commercial developments at NC42E and US BUS 70

Identify a large tract for a White Oak or Birkdale type mixed used development for young professionals

Explore incubator, co-working or pop-up retail spaces in downtown

Consider a business ombudsman/"one stop shop" model for new and existing businesses in town

Consider a small business support package, including RLF, ambassador/advocate check-ins and grant matches

Create a biopharma manufacturing district

Create pop-up recreation, storytelling, classes and retail to increase foot traffic in downtown

Encourage and/or partner with civic organization to hold their own free public events in downtown

Consider a vacant building registry program to discourage long-term vacancies

Explore partnerships with other stakeholders like Social Toaster to contribute posts and content

Seek out Clayton leaders to serve on JoCo ED Commission, County Commission and other places

Activate parks and common areas with free community activities and events in downtown

Partner with JoCo Schools to promote connections with local employers in the classroom

Support efforts to improve early learning in the community, especially in math and reading

Support efforts to expand, improve and connect the Town's pedestrian and bike trail network

Engage in utility and broadband capacity and expansion conversations

Appendix D: Study Sponsor and Consultant



ElectriCities of N.C. Inc. sponsored the City of Newton 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 four proprietary programs: Certified Entrepreneurial Community®, CreativeSiteAssessment.com, Certified Industrial Buildings, and CBOSS-Creative Back Office Suite of Services. Creative EDC supports ElectriCities' strategic planning and Smart Sites initiatives. www.creativeedc.com