



2023-2027 Economic Development Strategic Plan



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Executive Summary

Leland citizens describe the Town as a “growing, thriving community” and as having a “small-town quality of life with access to city amenities.” This economic development strategic plan sets out a vision for how Leland can continue to have the best of both worlds, growing and thriving while retaining its character. The goal is to meet citizen desires for diversified amenities, health care, and quality local jobs without losing established small-town roots.

The 2023-2027 strategic planning process included input from approximately 900 citizens, 850 through a survey and others through interviews and focus groups. Citizens contributed to a SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) that inventoried assets such as strategic location, low cost of living, and small-town quality of life. The analysis also identified the lack of affordable housing, the lack of a town center, and the pressures of fast growth as weaknesses. Opportunities that are leveraged in the strategic plan include master planned and mixed-use development, connectivity with trails and sidewalks, and diversified amenities. Most of the potential threats are related to growth and strains on infrastructure.

Leland citizens reported on the survey and in interviews that they want long range planning to manage growth. The strategic plan calls for continued investments in long-range planning such as studies and plans to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth. Citizens also want to expand and diversify retail and dining options, expand health care, and attract businesses with professional, high-paying jobs. The strategic plan goals of attracting, starting, and retaining businesses to provide quality jobs and making strategic investments in placemaking were developed to support the types of businesses citizens want to see in Leland. The goals were developed with citizen input, research, and best practices, and the vision and mission statements were previously developed by the Economic Development Committee.

Vision

To promote business expansion and economic diversification within the Town of Leland in order to provide sustainable jobs, expand its tax base, and stabilize its vulnerability to economic downturns.

Mission

To promote economic development activities that will improve the economic vitality and sustainability of the Leland community and lead to the success of the Town's businesses and a high quality of life for its residents.

Economic Development Goals

- Attract, Start Up, and Retain Businesses that will Provide Quality Local Jobs.
- Make Strategic Public Investments in Placemaking.
- Market and Promote Leland.
- Strengthen the Economic and Community Development Department, Programs, and Policies.

Leland is at a pivotal time of transition. The Town, located in a fast-growing region within a fast-growing state, will remain a top location choice and continue to experience fast growth. The region is attractive to businesses looking to capitalize on the talented workforce and growing population. There are major investments from the public and private sectors on the horizon. The strategic plan leverages these economic development opportunities in a way that will retain what makes Leland so very special.



Economic Development Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Attract, Start Up, and Retain Businesses that will Provide Quality Local Jobs.

Increasing local, well-paying job opportunities will support citizen priorities of less traffic congestion and more local retail and dining amenities. Local employment centers will reduce commuting (now 23.1 minutes, *U.S. Census*) and attract amenities that support a “live, work, play, and learn” community.

Strategy 1: Focus business attraction efforts in target sectors that will provide well-paying, local jobs.

Targeted business attraction is used in economic development to focus marketing resources on sectors and companies that meet economic development goals.

Action Steps:

1. Focus on the following sectors for business attraction: Life Sciences, Information Technology, Medical Technology, Aerospace, Marine Biology, and Wind Energy.
 - Meet with economic development allies (county, region, and state) to discuss Leland’s target sectors so they will know the Town’s priorities.
 - Develop web content on Leland’s competitive advantages for each target sector.
 - Give more consideration to companies in target sectors and targeted areas of the Town when preparing incentive proposals.
2. Continue to network with health care systems and providers to make them aware of Leland’s growing market and opportunities for new health care facilities such as specialized care and hospitals.

Strategy 2: Support quality retail and commercial development.

Citizens stated on the survey that they want higher quality and more diversity in retail and dining. Economic development can target companies that meet those criteria.

Action Steps:

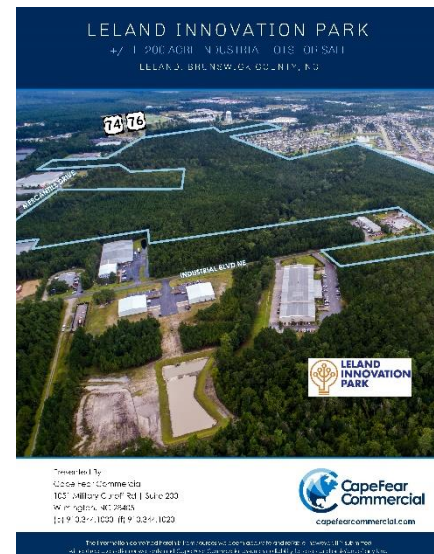
1. Identify retail and dining businesses that will expand, diversify, and enhance options. Develop a marketing program to make those companies aware of Leland’s market opportunities and make developers aware of the types of retail and dining Leland desires.
2. Maintain local and regional market information to share with developers and companies.
3. Maintain a listing of available properties on the website.

Strategy 3: Develop employment centers that will attract companies that will provide local, well-paying jobs.

By developing local employment centers, Leland can promote real estate options to companies providing well-paying jobs, which will reduce commuting time for citizens and enhance quality of life.

Action Steps:

1. Continue working with property owners and Brunswick Business and Industry Development (BID) to develop and market the Leland Innovation Park.
 - Complete conceptual site plans for a range of possible users. Include greenspace and trail connections in plans.
 - Develop a drone video to market the site.
 - With partners, develop a marketing brochure of the park that touts the location advantages of the park. Promote to allies such as BID, NC Southeast, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC).
 - Complete site due diligence: Phase 1, geotechnical analysis, wetlands determination, review for endangered species/cultural resources, etc. Ensure assessments are done to the NC Certified Site standard so the park may be entered into that program.
 - Extend infrastructure and interior road through a public-private partnership agreement.
 - Install uniform wayfinding signage.
 - Create a significant gateway(s) with signage and landscaping.
2. In partnership with Brunswick Business and Industry Development, begin conceptual planning for the Highway 74 corridor to include employment centers in the mix of uses in development nodes.
 - Identify parcels to combine into a future corporate park.
 - Form a partnership to control the land through option agreements. This could be through a town-county nonprofit economic development organization.
 - Explore a multi-jurisdictional development between Leland and Brunswick County. The coalition could include other municipalities and counties. Brunswick County has experience with multi-jurisdictional park developments in the International Logistics Park partnership with Columbus County. Other examples in North Carolina include Burke County and its municipalities; municipalities of Huntersville, Cornelius, and Davidson; and Triangle North, a five-county development.
 - Complete site assessments and due diligence to determine the development potential and buildable acres.
 - Engineer infrastructure extensions, identify funding sources, and plan for public infrastructure to support future employment centers.
 - Complete conceptual site planning that shows a few scenarios of building sizes and layouts.
 - Jointly market the new corporate park. Drone videos have been developed by county and regional partners for other business development sites.
3. Identify underutilized and vacant commercial, office, and industrial properties and meet with owners to discuss redevelopment potential.
4. Complete a speculative building feasibility study to determine if there is market demand for a public-private spec building program that could be in partnership with Brunswick County.



Leland Innovation Park

Strategy 4: Implement a business retention and expansion (BRE) program in partnership with allies.

According to the International Economic Development Council, the majority (70%) of all investment and job creation comes from existing businesses, making BRE a core economic development strategy.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a one-page e-brochure of the Town's BRE services – site identification, market data, finance and incentive programs, expansion solutions, business liaison, etc. – and place the content on the website.
2. Develop the list of companies to be prioritized in the BRE program. Priority companies could include large employers, fast-growing and at-risk companies, and companies in target sectors.
3. Establish an information tracking process, such as using a customer relationship management tool (CRM).
4. Develop an in-person survey tool to use when conducting BRE site visits.
5. Meet with allies to discuss the BRE program, how they can assist, and protocols for collaboration (e.g., confidentiality) – BID, Brunswick Community College, education partners, utility partners, Small Business Center, Small Business and Technology Development Center, etc.
6. Set a goal of three BRE visits a month.
7. Annually survey all businesses for input into the BRE program and Town policies.
8. Use BRE data in strategic planning - track trends, keep good records for follow up, and use in strategic planning.
9. Host quarterly or semi-annual networking events for local businesses. These could be open to anyone or more focused, specifically for target sectors or larger employers, for example. This, and other networking, could be in partnership with the North Brunswick Chamber of Commerce.

Strategy 5: Support the entrepreneurial ecosystem with start-up programs and space.

Supporting start-up enterprises and resources supports local jobs, wealth retention, business diversity, and can attract remote workers.

Action Steps:

1. Designate the Economic and Community Development Director as Leland's Business Liaison. Share with all Town staff to refer businesses to this single point of contact who will guide businesses through regulatory processes.
2. Develop an entrepreneur and small business resources page on the website with links to agencies such as the Small Business Center, Small Business Administration, SCORE, Small Business and Technology Development Center, etc.
3. Promote regional entrepreneurship activities locally – networking events, pitch completions, and makers markets.
4. Host an annual Leland maker's market to showcase entrepreneurial ventures in partnership with small business allies and arts groups.
5. Participate in the Main Street Program as a way to bring state-level resources to small business development.

6. Conduct a feasibility study for an entrepreneurship hub that could include incubation, cowork, shared use kitchen, and maker space. Brunswick Community College has manufacturing incubation space that always has a waiting list.

- If the study is positive, search for an established partner to form a public-private partnership development. Some cowork companies have affiliate programs whereby they support administration and marketing to reduce cost. Common Desk and Blue Mind Coworking are a couple of examples of coworking facilities in the Wilmington area. Louisburg, NC's [Workspace](#) is a town-owned coworking example.
- Designate space for service providers (SBC, SBTDC, etc.) to be in residence a couple of days a month.



Blue Mind Coworking

7. Include a maker space in the entrepreneurship hub. Alternatively, a maker space could be part of a town center development or Gateway District.
8. Develop information on the website to attract remote workers – promote cowork space, professional groups for networking, and broadband capability.
9. Develop a package of financial support programs for small businesses, startups, expanding existing businesses, and new companies locating in Leland. Financial programs could include grants and loans.



The Maker Space



Goal 2: Make Strategic Public Investments in Placemaking.

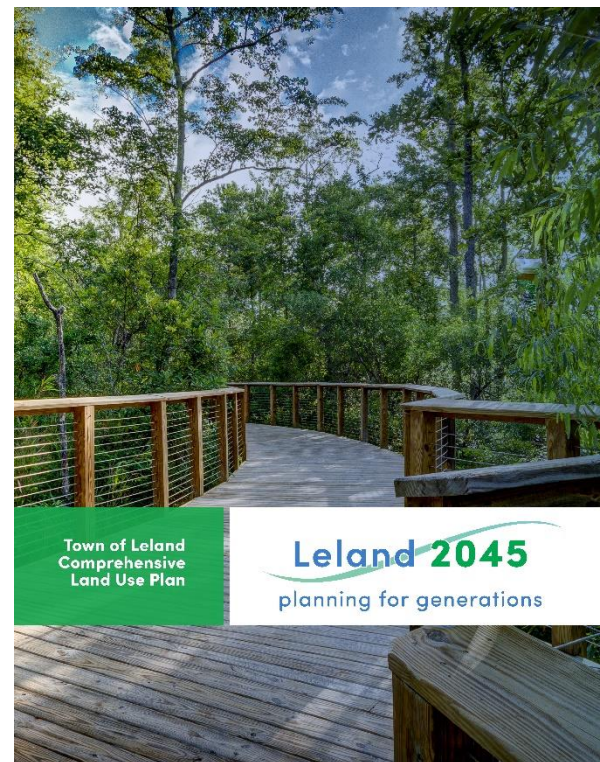
Citizens want more local amenities and improvements in commercial areas. Investing in placemaking is a way to connect people to a place through visuals and experiences. Consider designating development districts or nodes to focus strategies.

Strategy 1: Develop a town center and activity hub that will connect people through recreation, entertainment, shopping, dining, and other amenities.

Citizens commented on the survey and in interviews about the need for place identity and place attachment. As a new town, Leland does not have a traditional downtown as a foundation for place attachment – it needs to create it through placemaking.

Action Steps:

1. Identify and study an area (likely the Hwy 17 corridor) that could accommodate a large-scale town center development. A town center could be a hub for destination retail, dining, entertainment, recreation, education, and other amenities.
2. Identify ways to connect a town center development to other development nodes.
 - Connect other important nodes, such as the Gateway District, with greenways and trails for walkability and bikeability.
 - Use visitor projections from the town center development to market to restaurants and retail to expand shopping and dining options.
 - Identify and promote sites or buildings for redevelopment that are suitable for these uses.
 - Install wayfinding signage and other visuals to connect to other parts of Town. Align the brand and theme of the town center development with Leland's brand.
 - Integrate greenspace into a town center development.
 - Leverage Town recreation with a town center development – splash pad, walking paths, Town rec center for fitness classes, etc.
 - Make sure there is a large “commons” in the town center for gatherings like “Live at Five,” or special celebrations like the Fourth of July, festivals, etc.
 - Include public art to signify it is a unique place.
3. Leverage a town center development to diversify shopping and dining options in other parts of the Town.
4. Work closely with developers of a town center hub to connect the brand and imagery with Leland's new brand.



Strategy 2: Continue to support redevelopment of and facilitate investment in the Gateway District.

Developing districts or nodes offers the opportunity to create identifiable markers of place with visuals, business mix, and development themes.

Action Steps:

1. There are undeveloped tracts of land near Northgate Drive and Delivery Road. Those tracts, along with redevelopment of other tracts, could yield an approximate seven-acre development. The use in this area could be a mix of commercial, office, and institutional.
2. Promote the land between Carolina Avenue and Village Road for commercial and office development and redevelopment.
3. Promote land in the vicinity of Division Drive and Old Fayetteville Road for development/redevelopment to leverage the new brewery. With the Town park across the street, the area could become a destination entertainment node with shops and restaurants complementing the brewery.

Strategy 3: Expand educational and networking opportunities for Leland citizens.

Bringing people together creates community connections, which is an important part of placemaking and making a place “sticky.”

Action Steps:

1. Support Town, county, and board of education collaboration to ensure educational facilities and programs keep pace with growth.
2. Include a destination children’s learning place as part of the town center development, or in another area of Leland. This could be a science or art center for children such as Discovery Kids in Huntersville, NC which is a regional destination.
3. Seek opportunities for Leland to host a satellite campus/programming of higher education institutions. One example is UNC-Wilmington or another university hosting classes at the Leland Center of Brunswick Community College. Develop a recruitment package to present to institutions that includes demographics, potential locations, and ways the Town will be supportive.
4. Host an executive speaker series at the Leland Center with a different theme each year.
5. Find a partner to co-sponsor with the Town a Young Professionals network to connect young professionals. It could be a subgroup/chapter of the [Port City Young Professionals](#) in Wilmington.
6. Ensure the Leland welcome/newcomer packet includes ways to engage in the community through volunteering, education, and business associations.



Discovery Kids

Strategy 4: Invest in beautification, appearance, and public art to preserve the uniqueness of Leland.

Investments in public art and visuals is one way to differentiate a place, showcase its uniqueness, and create connections to a place.

Action Steps:

1. Continue investments in the new public art program. Some towns have a signature art feature such as painted pigs in Lexington, metal sculptures in Greenville, and whirligigs in Wilson. Leland's branding initiative could lead to a signature artistic feature that can be used in place branding. Examples: Wilson [Whirligig Park](#), Greenville [sculptures](#), and Washington, NC, crab statues.
2. Plan for memorable features when planning streetscape. Unique visuals help create a sense of place. North Carolina is home to the world's largest chest of drawers (High Point's position as the furniture capital of the world) and the satellite park in Durham is a unique artistic visual.

Strategy 5: Continue to invest in long-range planning.

Foundational to placemaking is planning for spaces that promote connectivity, engagement, inclusivity, and quality of life.

Action Steps:

1. Continue to invest in studies and plans to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth (e.g., transportation, utilities, broadband, schools).
2. Continue to seek out best practices in affordable housing to ensure living in Leland is open to everyone. The University of North Carolina produced an [Affordable Housing Development Toolkit for Local Governments](#) with many examples.
3. Continue to seek out best practices in transportation planning and access to combat traffic congestion. The City of Wilmington is piloting an "Uber-like" program called RideMICRO like Wilson, NC's RIDE.
4. Use the Economic and Community Development Department as a liaison to engage a broad base of businesses in planning processes.
5. Include expansion of recreation facilities and amenities in long-range planning.



Greenville Sculptures



Wilson Whirligig Park



Goal 3: Market and Promote Leland.

“Tell your story, tell it so often that others tell it for you,” is a favorite quote in economic development. Sharing the vision of the Town internally and externally builds a strong network of allies and champions who will help Leland reach its vision.

Strategy 1: Market Leland to attract businesses, talent, and visitors.

Marketing strategies should align with Leland’s economic development goals of attracting quality companies that diversify the business base, talented workers, and visitors who contribute to the local economy.

Action Steps:

1. Brand Leland to reflect what it wants to attract – talented people, technology companies, and amenities that raise the quality of life. Show that Leland is more than a bedroom community to Wilmington.
 - Much of Leland’s brand is tied to Wilmington; thus, consider the best practice example of Cleveland County, which markets itself as “[Charlotte’s Backyard](#),” leveraging its biggest asset – proximity to Charlotte. A branding process could do the same – leverage regional assets and proximity to Wilmington to attract companies and skilled workers.
2. Create a standalone economic development website for Leland, or significantly expand the current department website. Include important content:
 - Services and resources for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and all existing businesses.
 - Competitive position messages for target sectors for business attraction.
 - Improved property listing information. It currently does not include search options for office, research, and technology space.
 - Livability information – education, health care, housing, amenities, entertainment.
 - Connections to Wilmington and regional business, education, and health care systems.



Charlotte’s Backyard

- Calls to action that encourage people to engage with features such as “ask” and “request a meeting” buttons.
3. Budget to update and expand Leland’s video library for the new website and e-marketing. Additionally, invest in a photo library of images to be used in e-marketing.
 4. Launch an e-marketing program targeted to regional industrial and commercial real estate brokers; county, regional, and state economic development allies; and private developers involved in commercial and industrial development in the region.
 5. Launch e-communications with retail and dining companies that Leland wants to attract. Consider participating in the International Council of Shopping Centers events.
 6. Add recommended 1, 2, and 3-day itineraries to the “Visit Leland” list of things to do.
 7. Work with Visit NC to get Leland listed as a “location” in the [Wilmington area](#) for things to do.

Strategy 2: Ensure internal communications keep stakeholders and the public informed of economic development program activities.

The best ambassadors of Leland are informed citizens. An internal communications strategy will keep citizens updated so they can help tell the “Leland story.”

Action Steps:

1. Regularly contribute content to the Town’s social media platforms. Examples are raising awareness of new businesses opening, major hiring events, and when companies are recognized with awards.
2. Give quarterly updates to the Town Council and include progress on the strategic plan.
3. Develop a quarterly or semi-annual e-communication for stakeholders that includes new developments, upcoming events, and general updates on economic development. The content can be posted on a “news” section of the website.
4. Produce an annual report on economic development activities and progress on the strategic plan.
5. Post the strategic plan and annual reports to the website.



Instagram



Facebook



Twitter



Goal 4: Strengthen the Economic and Community Development Department, Programs, and Policies.

Leland needs an economic development program that can stay out in front of the fast-growth and rapid change to ensure the community grows in a way that maintains its small-town character.

Strategy 1: Fund implementation of the strategic plan.

The strategic plan calls for expanding current programs and new initiatives. Appropriately resourcing the department is necessary for implementation of the plan. Examples of unique funding streams for economic development in North Carolina include Orange County passing a quarter-cent sales tax where a portion was designated for economic development; Gaston County designating a multi-year commitment to real estate development; and other local governments passing general obligation bonds for development projects, streetscape, and amenities.

Action Steps:

1. Increase the budget for implementation. Some tasks can be performed in-house with staff resources or contracted; thus, the following ranges are recommended.
 - Program funding = \$75,000 - \$125,000 a year
 - Additional staff position including benefits = \$100,000 a year
2. Consider a dedicated funding stream for the strategic plan and/or economic development in general.
 - Some communities dedicate “x” pennies on the tax rate for economic development.
 - Performance based funding models are used in other states whereby x% of net new property tax revenue from economic development projects is set aside into an economic development fund.
 - Some local governments dedicate an amount each year that builds in an economic development fund to be drawn down for significant projects.

Strategy 2: Staff and structure the Economic and Community Development Department for success.

Similar to the strategy above, appropriate resources for implementation including additional staff and staff development. A nonprofit economic development organization can be used to expand resource capacity.

Action Steps:

1. Create a transition plan for the change in director leadership in the Economic and Community Development Department.
2. Expand the department to two positions to support implementation of the strategic plan. In year two of the strategic plan, evaluate the need for a third position.
3. Create a 501(c)3 nonprofit economic development organization to carry out some of the action steps in the strategic plan. Many public economic development agencies have a “sister” nonprofit corporation. Activities that may be best suited to be under a nonprofit are revolving loan fund, optioning and development property, small business grant programs, and private sector fundraising.
4. Budget annually for professional development and professional association memberships and support staff interest in professional certifications.

Strategy 3: Strengthen coalitions and partnerships to advance economic development.

Economic development takes a coalition of local, regional, and state partners to be successful. Strengthening that coalition will benefit Leland's economic development efforts.

Action Steps:

1. At the staff level, coordinate quarterly meetings with economic development allies to leverage programs and identify partnership opportunities – BID, Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Center, Brunswick County Community College, and Brunswick County Schools are a few of the local partners.
2. Host a semi-annual breakfast for the Leland Mayor and manager, Brunswick County Commission Chair and manager, BID Executive Director, and Leland Director of Economic and Community Development for networking and discussion of collaborating on joint projects and initiatives.
3. Get to know state and federal agency representatives that support economic development – the U.S. Economic Development Administration NC representative, EDPNC Prosperity Zone Regional Industry Managers, and Cape Fear Regional Council of Governments.
4. Continue to network with regional economic development allies such as NC Southeast and the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.

Strategy 4: Facilitate a “no-wrong door” development culture and policies.

A Town government culture of “no wrong door” supports the Department's position as the Business Liaison.

Action Steps:

1. On the annual BRE survey, ask questions about the Town's policies and regulatory process and use for continuous improvement.
2. Host an annual work session with all Town departments to review the strategic plan, inform of business feedback gained during the BRE program, request feedback on collaboration opportunities, remind of the business liaison/point-of-contact, etc.
3. Mentioned above, refer all business inquiries to the Town's Business Liaison to ensure everyone has a go-to person in Town government.



Measuring Success

There are three types of metrics tracked in economic development. Program metrics measure the activities and outcomes of programs like the business retention and expansion program. These are used to track the performance of economic development programs and are most useful to a board or governing body. The Department should provide an annual report to Town Council and the Economic Development Committee on progress made in strategic plan implementation and can provide more frequent updates using the dashboard metrics below.

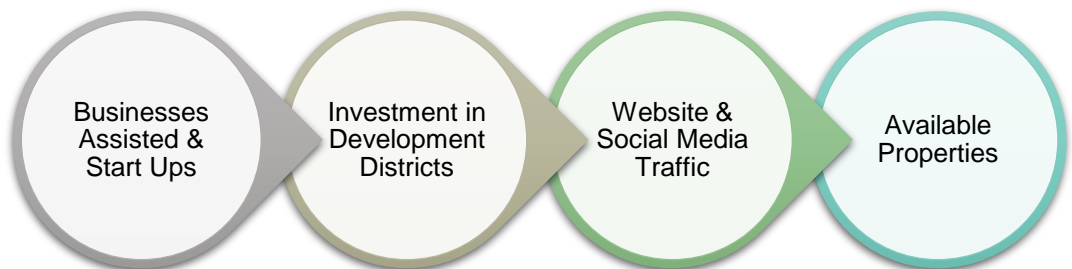
Organizational metrics measure the health of the economic development organization, like funding stability and employee satisfaction. These are used to understand the sustainability of the organization. Example organizational metrics are funding stability, council satisfaction, private sector engagement, and employee satisfaction. The Economic and Community Development Department is recommended to track funding, private sector engagement, employee retention and satisfaction, and progress of strategic plan implementation.

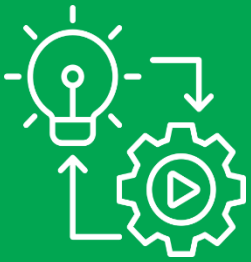
Community well-being, or economic health indicators, are measures of how well the community is doing, such as educational attainment and per capita income. The economic development program should impact these indicators over a long period of time, but they are not annual measures of the program. The [City of Greer, SC](#) has done a very good job tracking community well-being. They survey citizens every three years on a wide range of “livability” factors. The Town of Leland should consider a similar survey to measure community well-being.

In addition to tracking and reporting program and organizational metrics internally, the Department may want to present a dashboard to stakeholders.

Recommended Program Dashboard of Metrics

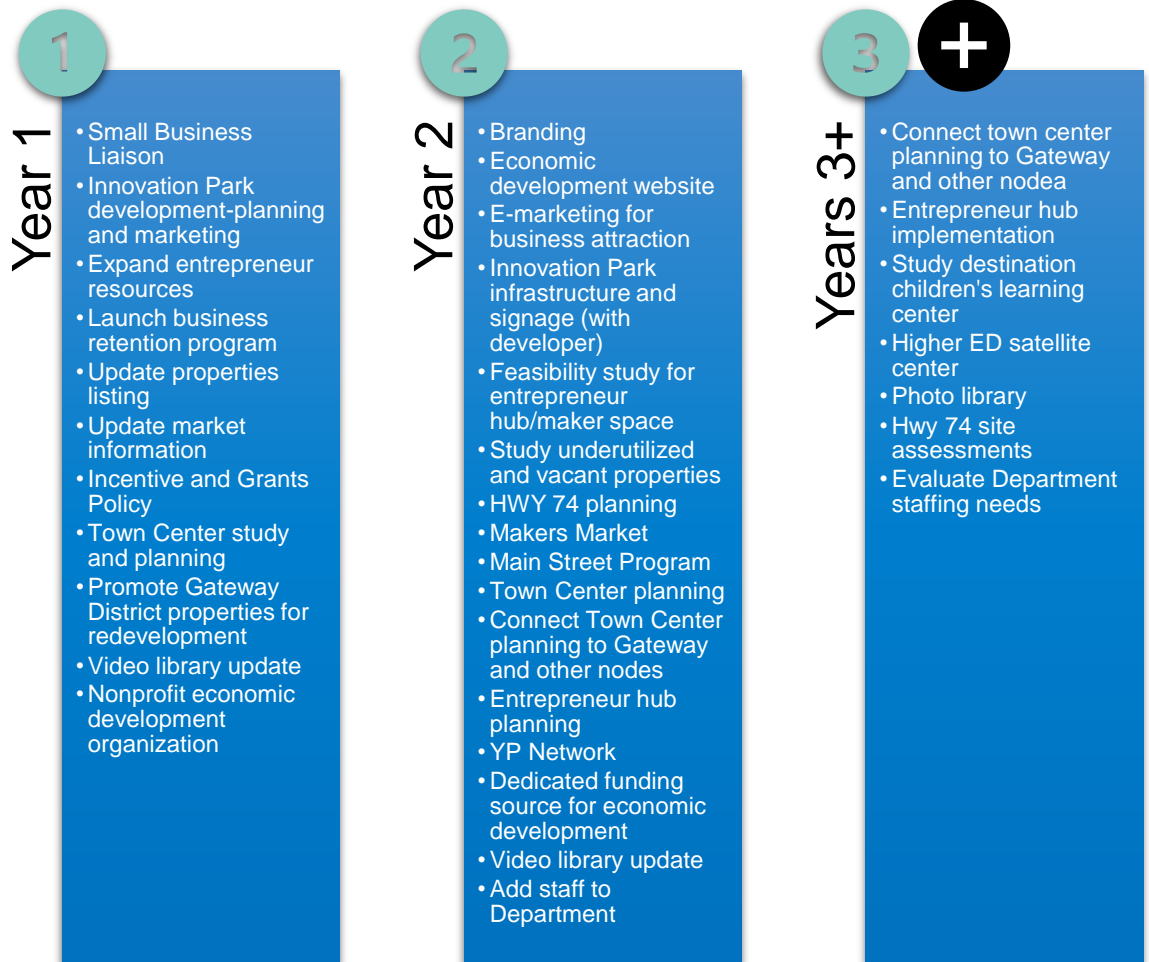
The dashboard metrics below were chosen based on the goals of the strategic plan. They relate to business development, marketing, and placemaking.





Implementation Guide

In addition to ongoing program activities in economic development, there are several new initiatives and programs recommended in this strategic plan. The implementation guide below assumes an increase in funding, allowing the Department to expand existing programs, fund special studies and projects, expand staff, and contract for services. Action items in year one require fewer resources and can be initiated quickly. Action items in year two will take more resources, planning, and coalition building. Years three and beyond include initiatives that will take long-range planning.



Appendix A: SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) was compiled with input from approximately 900 citizens. Almost 50 people were engaged in focus groups and interviews and approximately 850 in a survey. The SWOT Analysis Summary is a compilation of that input. The list of strengths and opportunities for Leland is very long. The summary has the most often noted input. Most additions to weaknesses list are connected to fast-paced growth, capacity issues, and how Leland has grown from a lower-cost retirement town near the beach to a town that is attracting people of all ages.

SWOT Summary

Strengths

- Strategically located
- Population growth
- Cost of living
- Lower taxes
- Small town quality of life
- Available vacant land, Innovation Park
- Public safety-low crime
- Leadership -board, committees, private sector
- Private developer investments
- Entertainment, shopping events
- Recreation

Weaknesses

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of town center
- Transportation options, congestion, planning
- Schools-overcrowded, test scores
- Demographics geared toward older adults
- Signage-wayfinding
- Appearance standards
- Range of health care services
- Cape Fear Memorial Bridge
- No vacant buildings

Opportunities

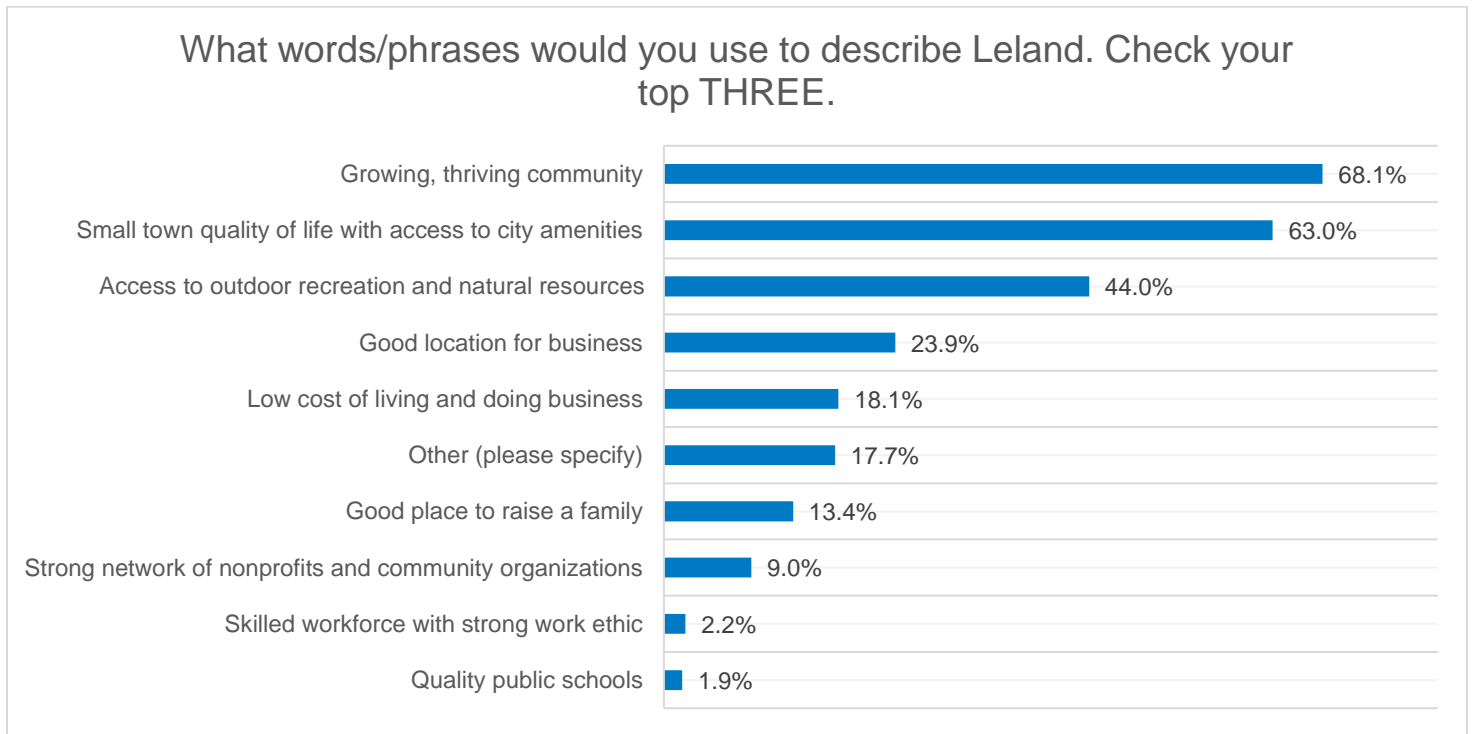
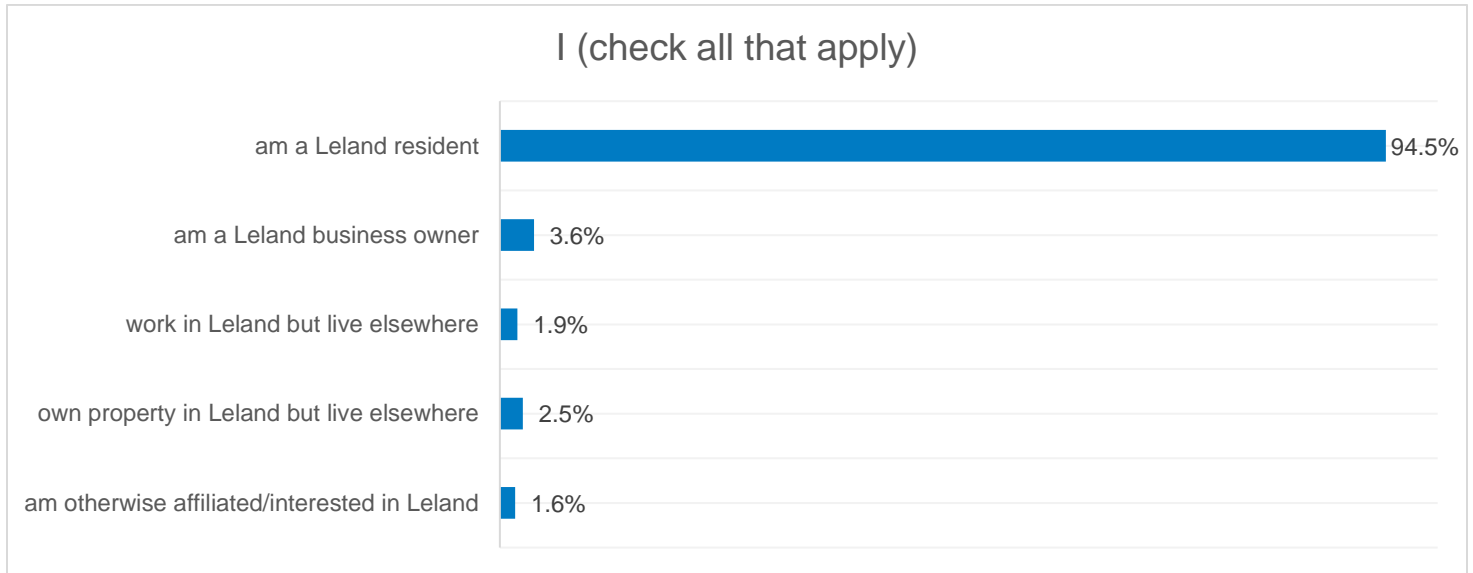
- Master planning, mixed use
- Connectivity, trails, sidewalks
- Amenities
- Health center with specialty care
- Innovation Park available land
- Town Center/entertainment destination
- Expanded recreation facilities
- County, regional state, town cooperation
- Riverfront development
- Incentive districts

Threats

- Limited infrastructure stalls growth
- Lack of storm recovery planning
- Bridge location
- Aging population
- Capacity to extend utilities for development
- Proactive infrastructure development
- Local government collaboration
- Annexation changes

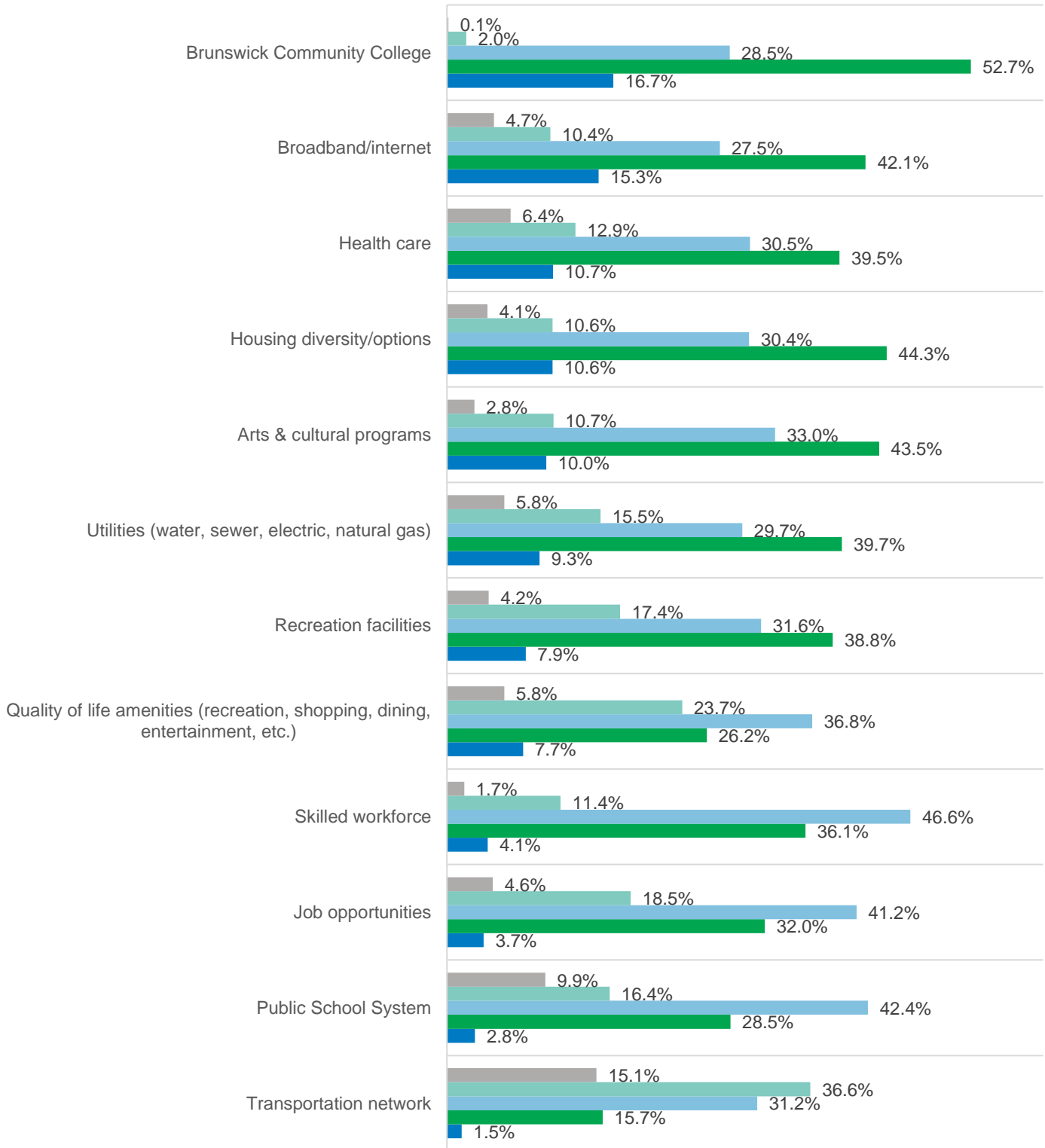
Appendix B: Community Survey Results

The Town of Leland promoted a survey to citizens through social media, website, and through ally agencies. There were 853 responses to the survey, a remarkable response rate. The high level of response shows that Leland residents want to be engaged in planning the future of the Town.

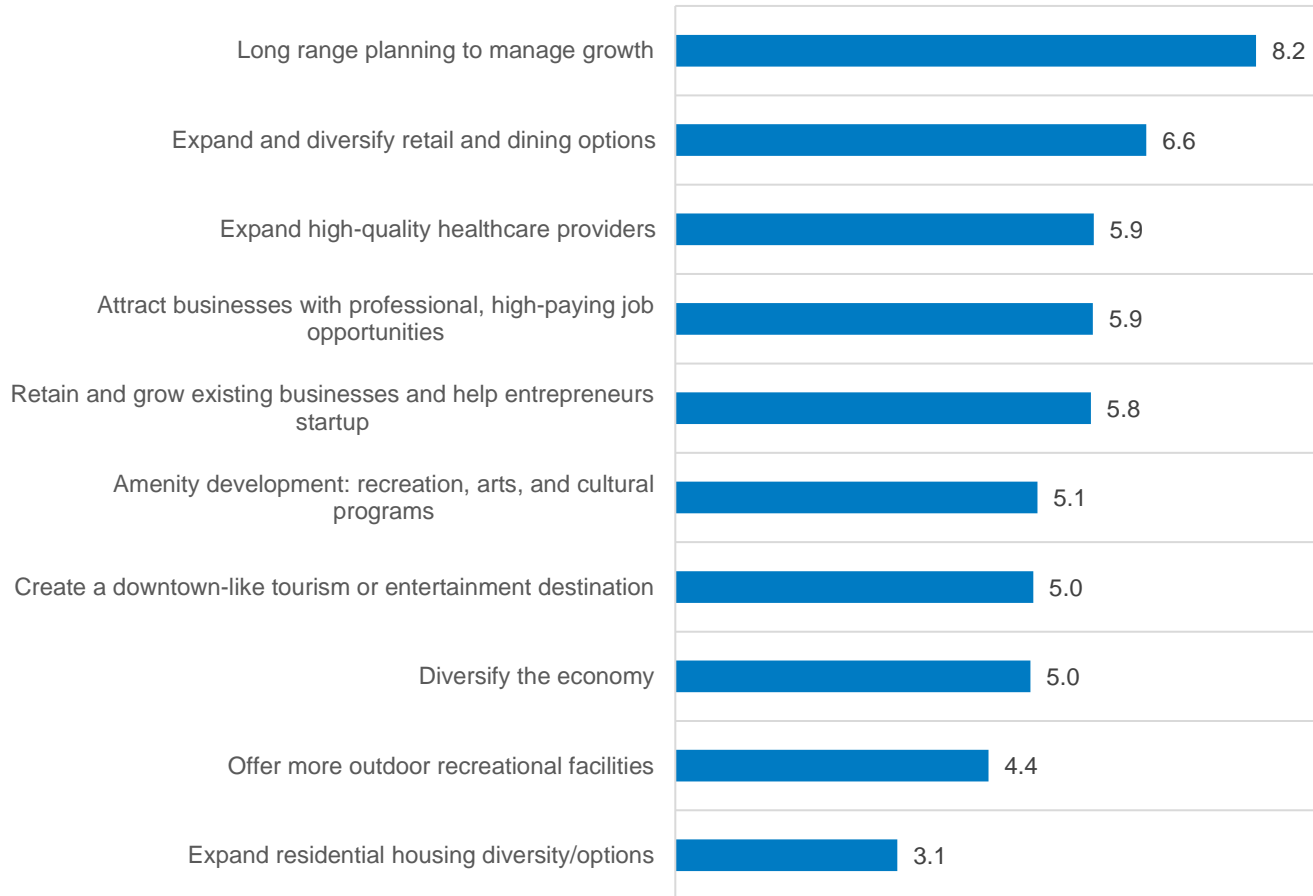


Overall, how satisfied are you with the following in Leland?

■ Very unsatisfied
 ■ Unsatisfied
 ■ Somewhat satisfied
 ■ Satisfied
 ■ Very Satisfied



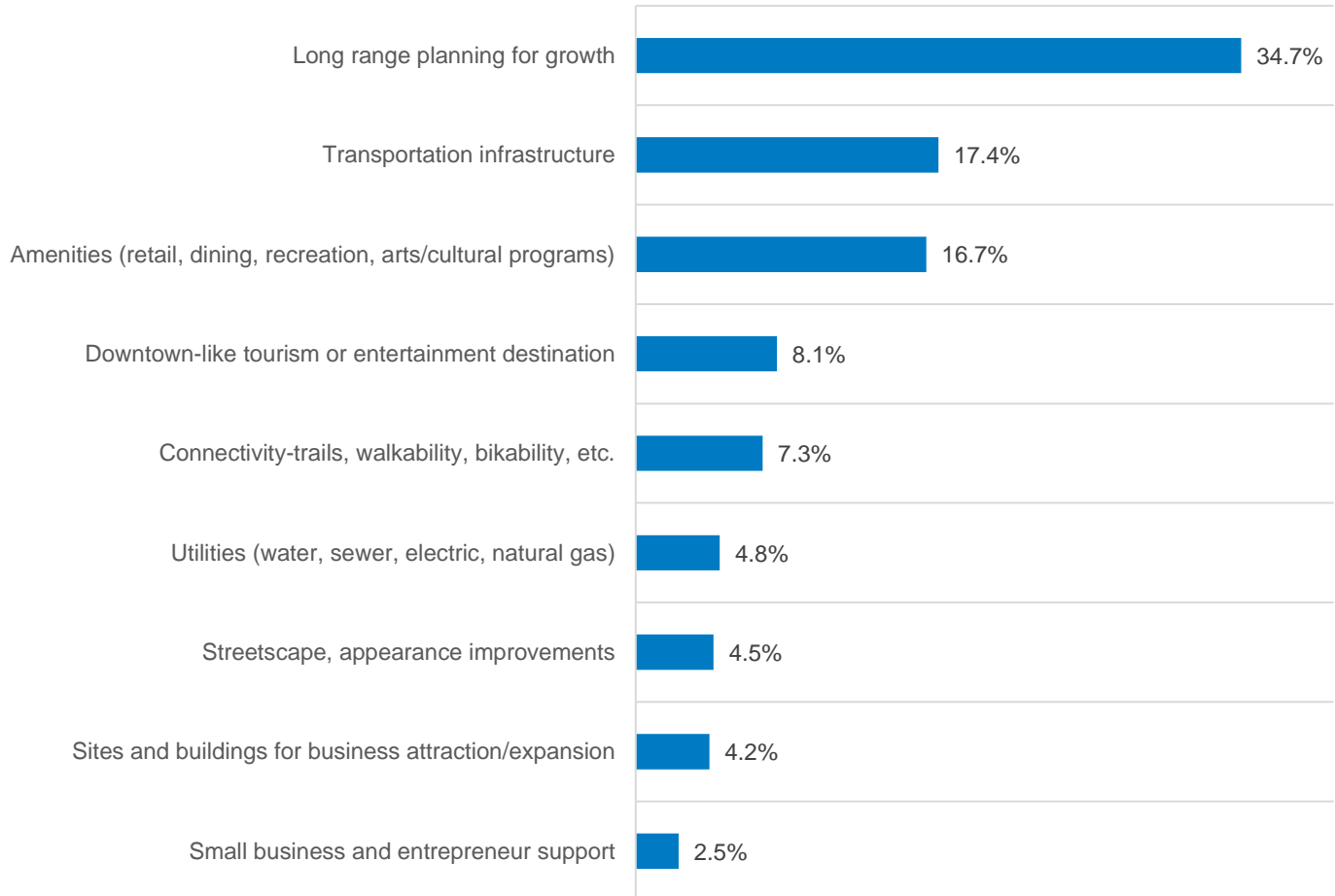
What should be the focus of Leland's economic development program?



Is there something beyond the list above that you believe should be a priority of the economic development program? *(Summary of dominant themes of the 439 responses.)*

- Transportation improvements, reduce congestion, alternative transportation, public transportation
- Public safety
- Green infrastructure
- Sustainable development
- Affordable business space
- Education improvements
- Affordable housing
- Childcare
- Natural resource preservation
- Walkability, bikeability
- Regional partnerships
- Flood control
- Improved cellular service
- More communication on Town plans for growth
- Beautification, streetscape, landscape regulations for business development, litter control
- Tourism destinations, venues
- Expanded health care facilities (hospital, rehabilitation, emergency care)
- Green space
- Expanded library facilities
- Improved river access for recreation
- Expanded recreation amenities (pickleball, dog park)

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



What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan? *(Summary of dominant themes of the 853 responses.)*

- Smart, managed, sustainable growth
- Capacity (roads, infrastructure) that keeps pace with growth
- Long range planning that includes near-, mid-, and long-term goals
- Healthier Town
- Walkable Town
- Equitable Town
- Upscale restaurants, shops, housing
- Safe and secure community
- Maintain small-town feel
- Long-term and short-term goals that are implemented, clear action steps
- Better regional connections
- More of a sense of community
- Fiscal responsibility and analysis of development impacts
- Improved schools, education, and training opportunities
- More professional, well-paying jobs
- A destination downtown-like/city center area
- Destination entertainment, tourism venue
- Green space, natural area preservation
- Affordable housing
- Transportation improvements to reduce congestion and grow with the Town
- Clean water for residents
- More age diversity
- Contiguous Town borders
- Attract businesses to Leland Innovation Park

Appendix C: Alignment with Regional Strategies

North Carolina's Southeast is the regional economic development organization serving 19 counties, including Brunswick and New Hanover. The organization is a regional public-private partnership that markets the state's Southeast Region – nationally and globally – to encourage new economic growth. In late 2020, North Carolina's Southeast (NCSE) published a new competitive positioning strategy. The extensive research supporting the strategy examined trends like urbanization, slowing globalization, and disruptive technological transformation that were impacting the region. The bulk of the research examined regional workforce assets and the marketing targets that would provide the best opportunities to successfully attract jobs and investment.

The Targeted Industry Analysis recommended that the region target Advanced Textiles with a focus on health and safety, Value-Added Agriculture and Food Processing, Medical Technology with a focus on medical devices, Distribution and Logistics, and Production Technology and Heavy Machinery. Construction and building products were also expected to grow and deserved special attention. Opportunities in the broader Technology sector were suggested for the Wilmington subregion, especially in Life Sciences.

In NCTECH's 2020 State of Technology report, North Carolina remained a top five state for technology job growth. While much of the growth is concentrated in Charlotte and the Research Triangle, the data suggests that many parts of the state, including areas of the Southeast region and especially areas around Wilmington, have enjoyed recent growth. Using the slightly broader definition of technology established by NCTECH, the Southeast's technology sector added close to 1,700 net new jobs to the region between 2014 and 2019. Basic Information Technology (hardware, software, and communication) and the energy technology subsector were virtually unchanged. Environmental Technology companies added over 300 net new jobs. The big success was in Life Sciences, with an overall growth of 23 percent and a net job increase of over 1,300 jobs.

The NCSE analysis also included a deeper dive into the Wilmington submarket. This microregion includes New Hanover, Pender, Brunswick, and Columbus counties. When the sub-region industries are mapped, several high growth sectors including Construction Products and Services, Production Technology and Heavy Machinery, and Tech had high concentrations. Health Care and Education are the top sub-regional employers, anchored by the major hospital systems serving the region. Aerospace is a unique asset cluster to the microregion, although nationally the sector has experienced turbulence for the past three years. Although not specifically identified in the NCSE analysis, Marine Biology remains a focus area for the region.

North Carolina's Southeast, a regional economic development organization, recently released 2020-2022 Annual Report highlighted success with new regional announcements in pharmaceuticals, life sciences, building products, logistics, food manufacturing and renewable energy.

Given Leland's assets, the sectors of Life Sciences, Information Technology, Medical Technology, and Aerospace are appropriate targets for business attraction. The sector of Marine Biology will continue to find the region a good location for new and expanding business. There is a newly developing supply chain for wind energy that has similarities to the Aerospace industry that will also be attracted to the Wilmington region.

Appendix D: Site Assessment

The consulting team reviewed four areas for the potential of industrial and large commercial development: Leland Innovation Park, Highway 74 Corridor, Gateway District, and Highway 17 Corridor. Each has development potential but in different ways. Leland Innovation Park and the Highway 74 Corridor are the current and future areas best suited for industrial development. The Gateway District is slated for a mix of commercial, office, institutional, and some residential. The Highway 17 Corridor will also see a mix of uses but those uses will be more residential, commercial, and entertainment.

Leland Innovation Park

This area has the most immediate opportunities for industrial development. “Industrial” is a broad term that includes technology, life sciences, marine biology, advanced manufacturing, and other Leland target sectors. There is land remaining in the park proper, including infill sites, and land surrounding the park (inside and outside Town limits) for expansion. It is easier to locate companies in an established industrial area where infrastructure is in place. To make the Innovation Park more marketable the Town could complete the following, some in partnership with the owner/developer:

- Complete conceptual site plans for a range of possible users
- Develop a drone video to market the site
- Complete due diligence: Phase 1, geotechnical analysis, wetlands determination, review for endangered species/cultural resources, etc.
- Extend infrastructure and interior road
- Install uniform wayfinding signage
- Create a significant gateway(s) with signage and landscaping

Highway 74 Corridor

Highway 74 west of Leland Innovation Park offers the best opportunity for long-term, future industrial development. Land along the north side of Highway 74, in the vicinity of Malmo Loop Road, has good access, highway visibility, and is near to other industrial and commercial development. It could be considered a “Phase 2 Innovation Park” development. Land further west along Highway 74 also has potential for industrial development. This area could be a multi-jurisdictional development between Leland and Brunswick County. The county has experience with multi-jurisdictional park developments in the International Logistics Park partnership with Columbus County. In partnership with Brunswick County:

- Identify parcels to combine into a future “large scale” business park
- Form a partnership to control the land through options. This could be a town-county nonprofit economic development organization.
- Option land
- Complete due diligence
- Complete conceptual site planning
- Jointly market the new park

Gateway District

There are a few opportunities for new development of infill parcels in the Gateway District. Much of the land is currently developed. The real opportunity in the Gateway District is in redevelopment.

- There are undeveloped tracts of land near Northgate Drive and Delivery Road. Those tracts, along with redevelopment of some tracts, could yield an approximate 7-acre development. The use in this area could be a mix of commercial, office, and institutional.
- Nearby land between Carolina Avenue and Village Road is also prime for commercial and office development.

- Land in the vicinity of Division Drive and Old Fayetteville Road could be developed/redeveloped to leverage the new brewery. With the park across the street, the area could become a small entertainment node with a few shops and restaurants complementing the brewery.

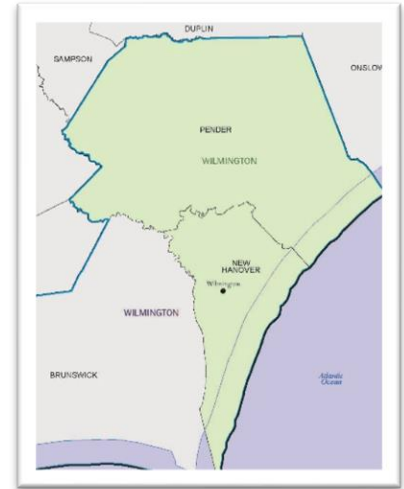
Highway 17 Corridor

There is a substantial entertainment and mixed-use development proposed for Highway 17. There are other proposed developments along Highway 17 including housing units, commercial, and retail space. This corridor will continue to develop with live and play mixed-use as infill development occurs. We do not recommend industrial development for this corridor.

Appendix E: Economic and Demographic Data

Key Highlights

- Fast growing, educated Town population
- Town projected to attract young and older age brackets
- County SAT scores below state average but above national average
- Town average income exceeds county, state, and regional average
- Town higher cost of housing than the county, region, and state
- Growing county labor force, declining unemployment rate
- Retail, hospitality, and health care are top county employers
- County retail sales growing
- Most Town residents (51%) commute 15-25 minutes
- County crime declining

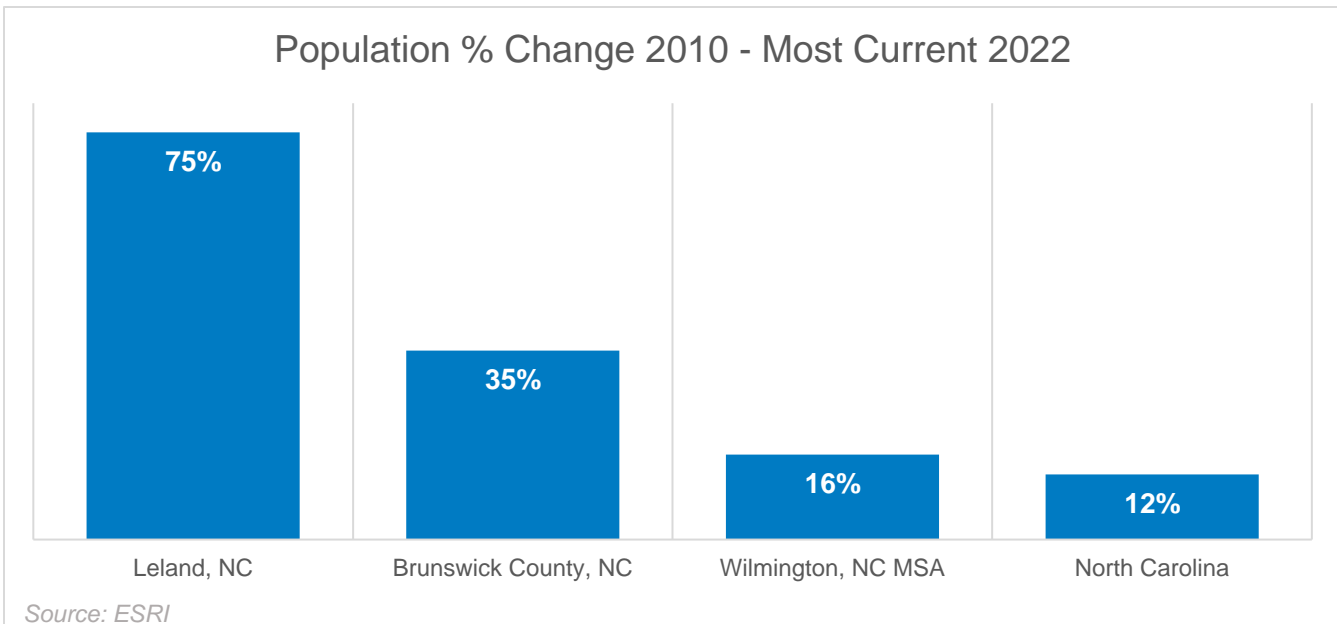


Wilmington MSA

Population	2010	2020	Estimated
Leland, NC	14,215	23,427	25,974 (2021)
Brunswick County, NC	107,431	136,693	144,215 (2021)
Wilmington, NC MSA	254,884	301,284	294,635 (2022)
North Carolina	9,535,483	10,439,414	10,698,973 (2022)

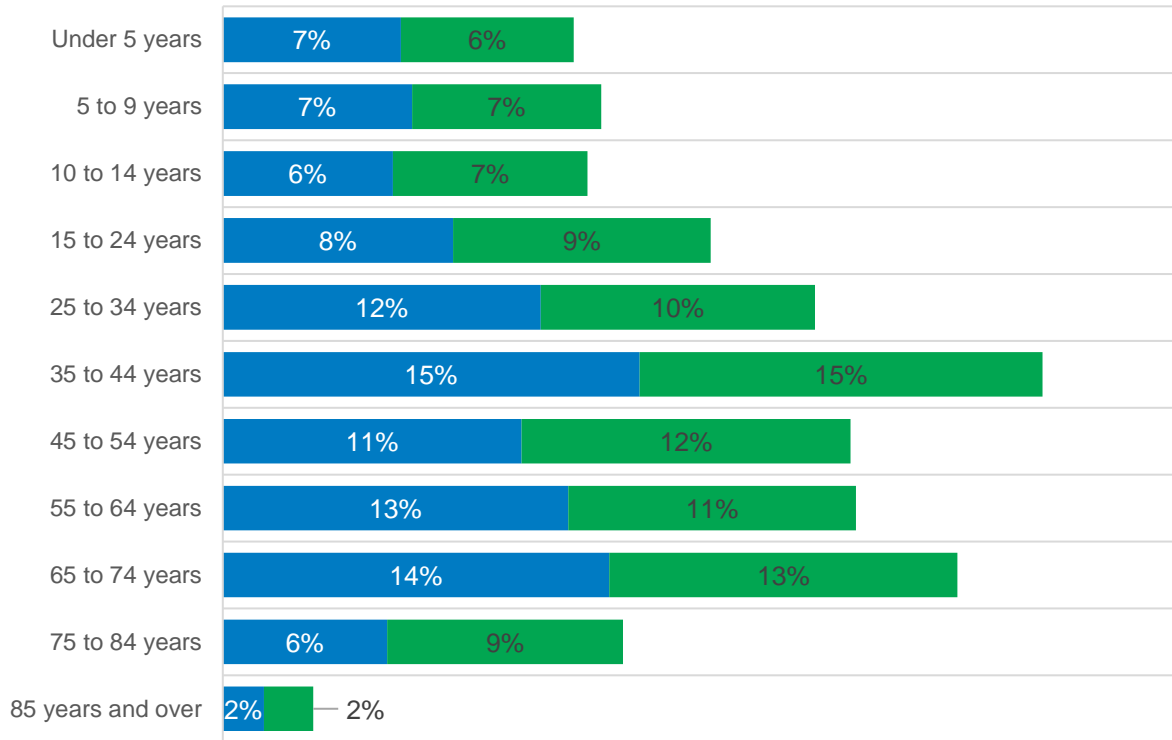
Source: ESRI

Leland’s population estimate for 2045 is 74,344, a near tripling of the current population.



Town of Leland Age

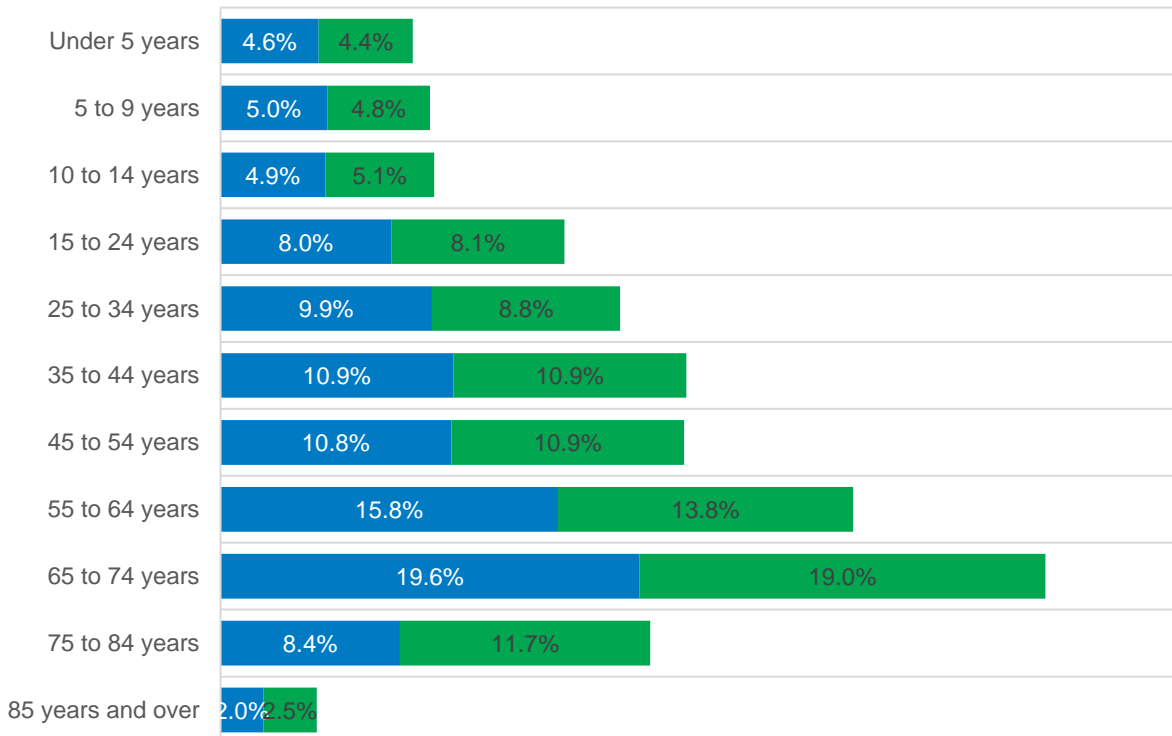
■ 2022 ■ 2027



Source: ESRI

Brunswick County Age

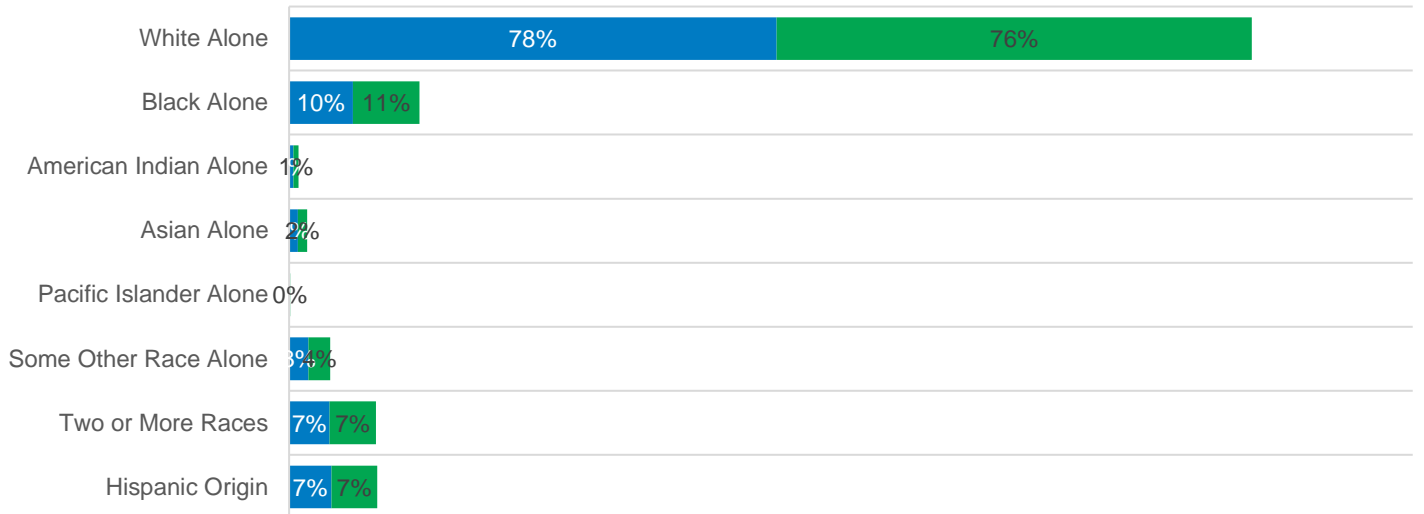
■ 2022 ■ 2027



Source: ESRI

Town of Leland Race

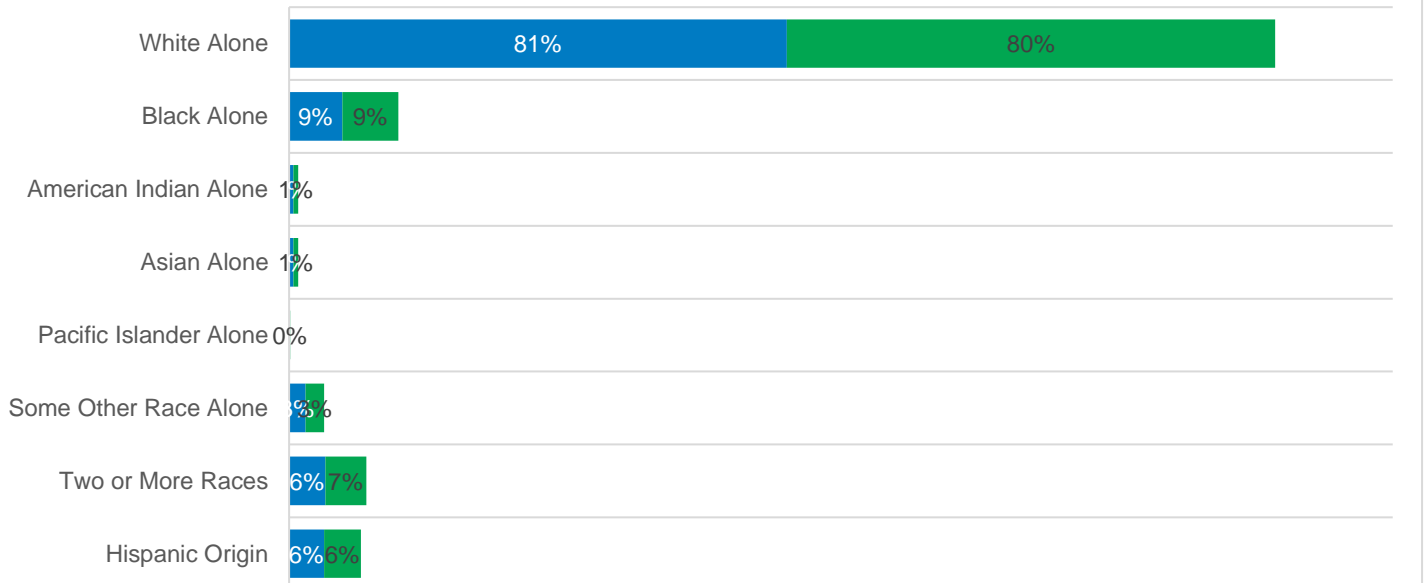
■ 2022 ■ 2027



Source: ESRI

Brunswick County Race

■ 2022 ■ 2027

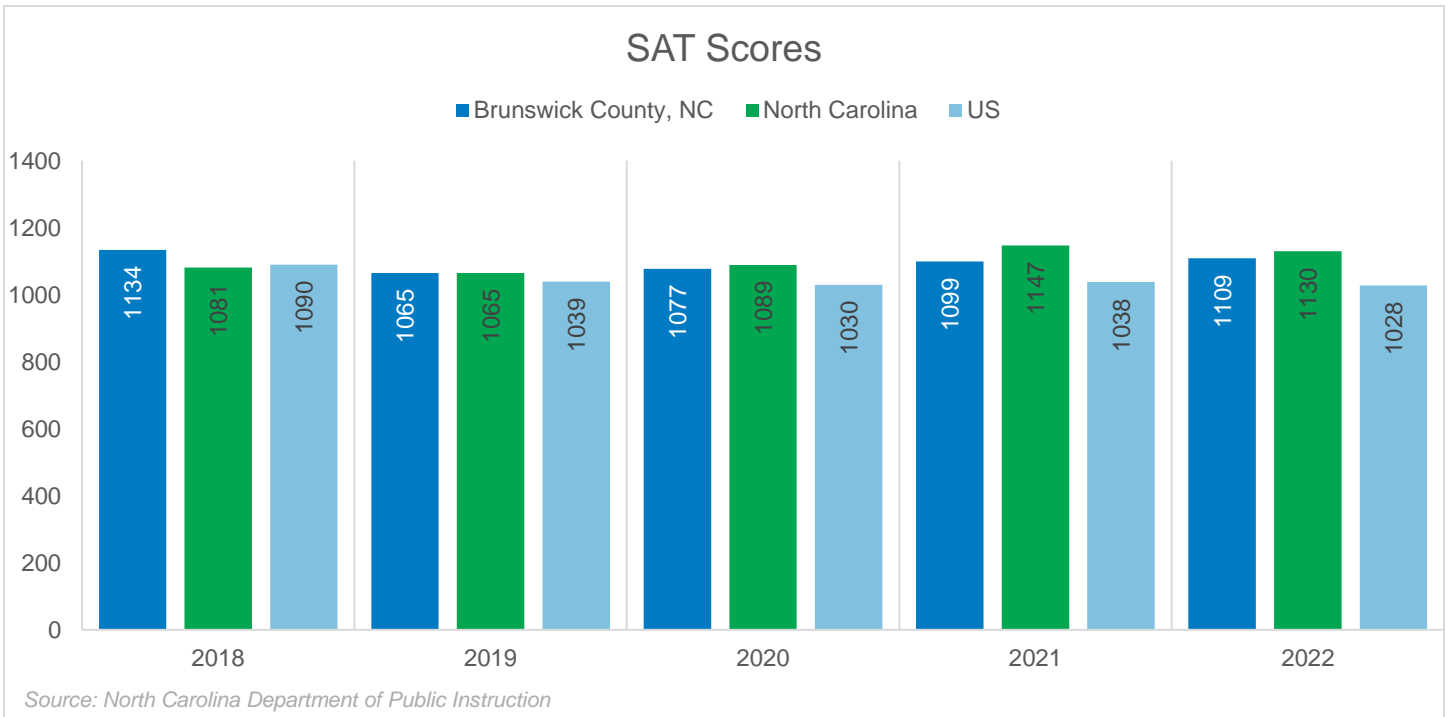


Source: ESRI

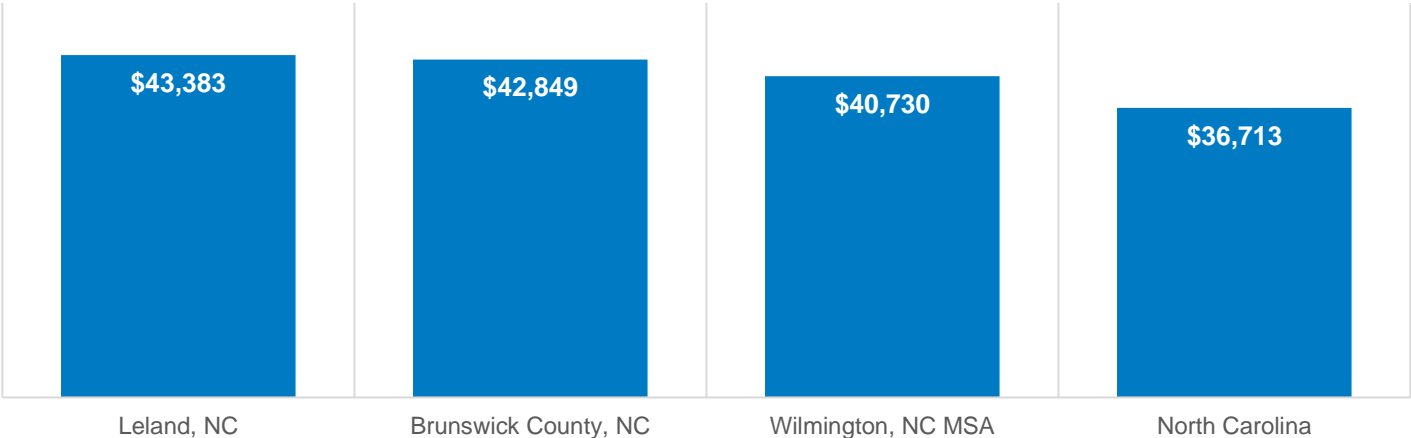
2022 Educational Attainment

	Leland, NC	Brunswick County, NC	Wilmington, NC MSA	North Carolina
Less than 9th grade	2%	2%	2%	4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5%	6%	5%	7%
High school graduate	22%	24%	19%	22%
GED/Alternative Credential	5%	4%	4%	4%
Some college, no degree	20%	20%	19%	19%
Associate's degree	13%	13%	11%	11%
Bachelor's degree	23%	21%	26%	22%
Graduate or professional degree	12%	12%	14%	13%
Percent high school graduate or higher	94%	93%	94%	90%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	35%	32%	41%	34%

Source: ESRI

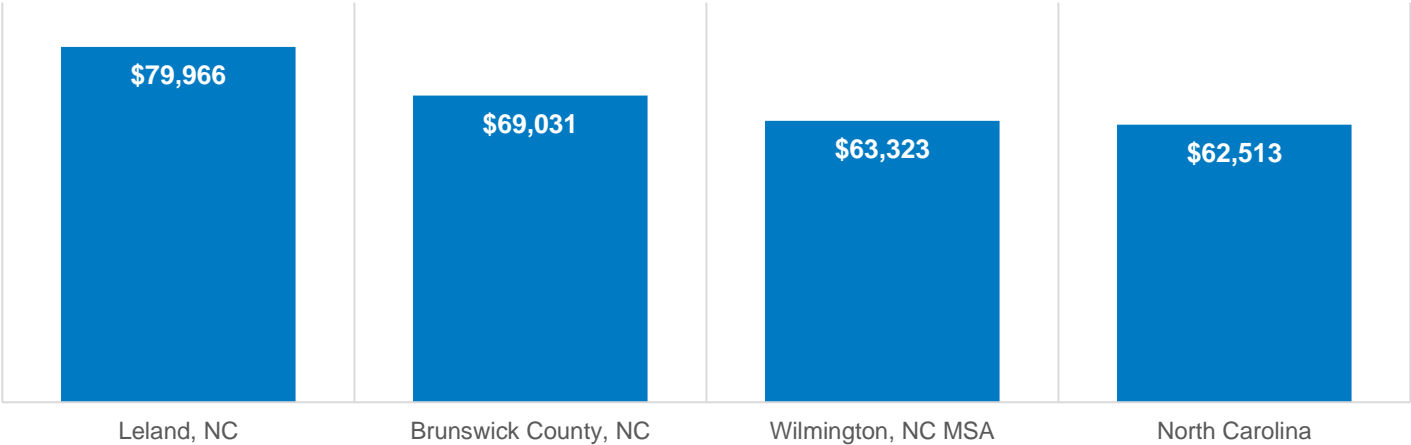


2022 Per Capita Income



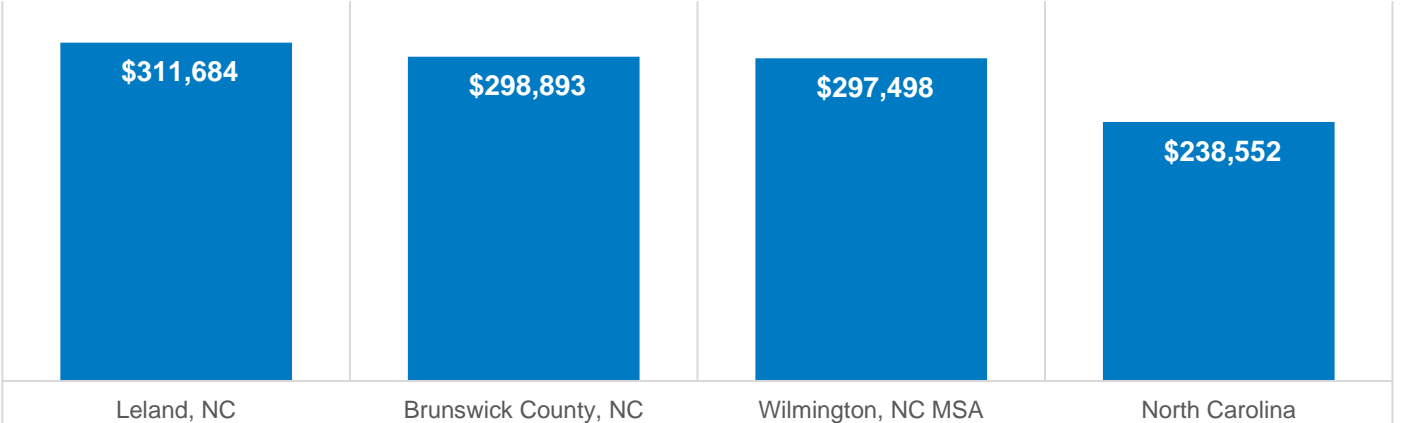
Source: ESRI

2022 Median Household Income



Source: ESRI

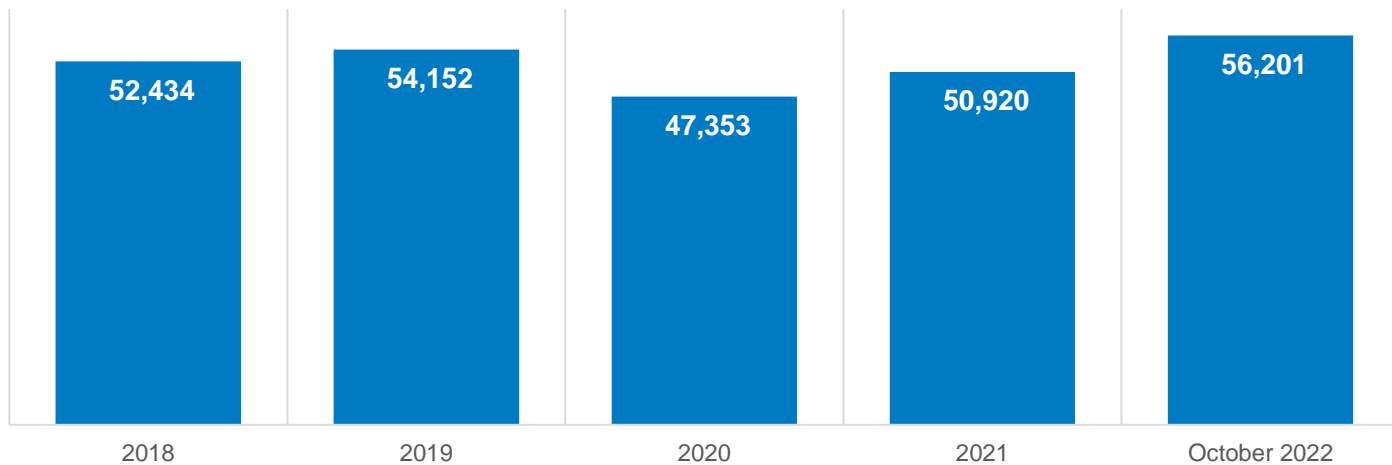
2022 Median Home Value



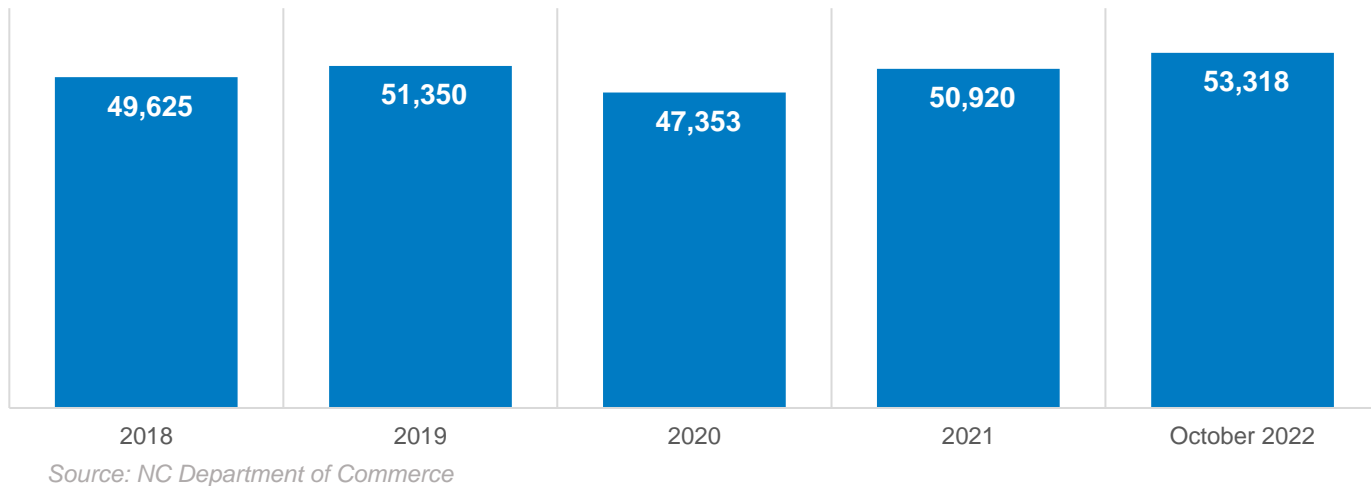
Source: ESRI

2022

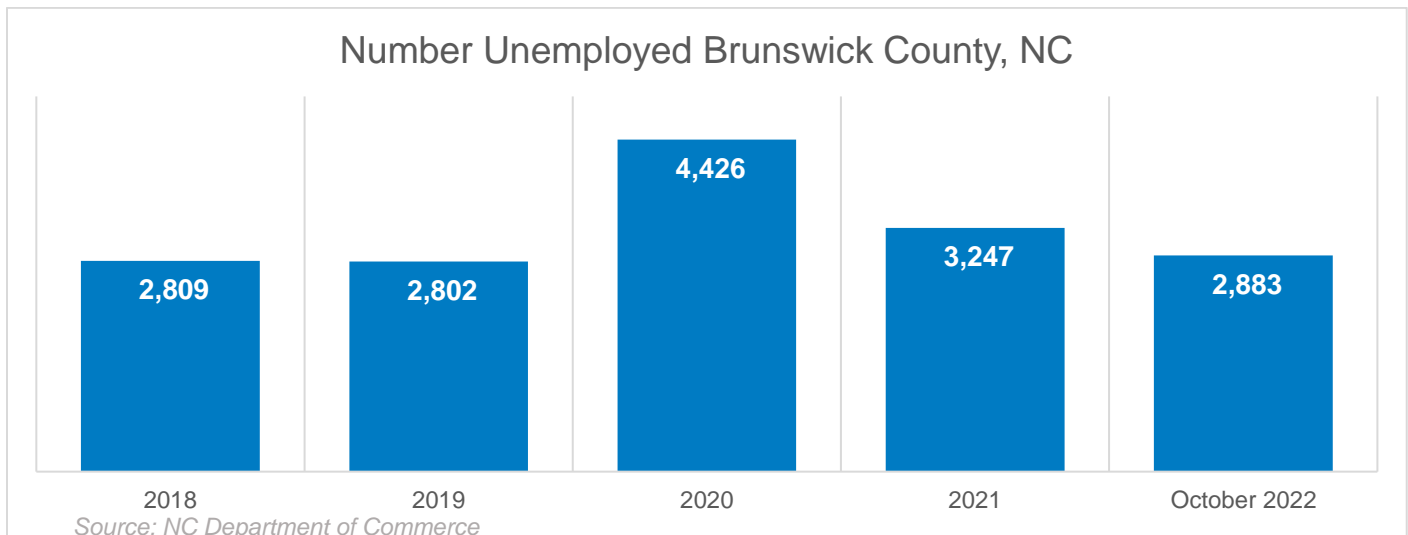
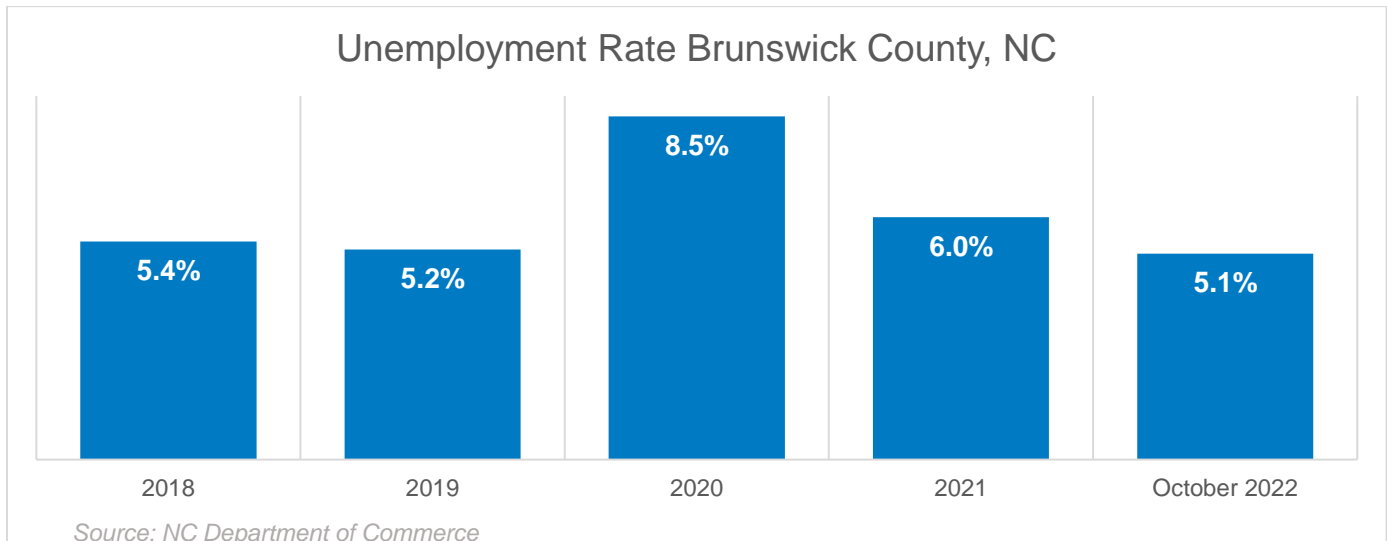
Labor Force Brunswick County, NC



Employment Brunswick County, NC



Leland Projected 2022 Unemployment Rate 3.5%



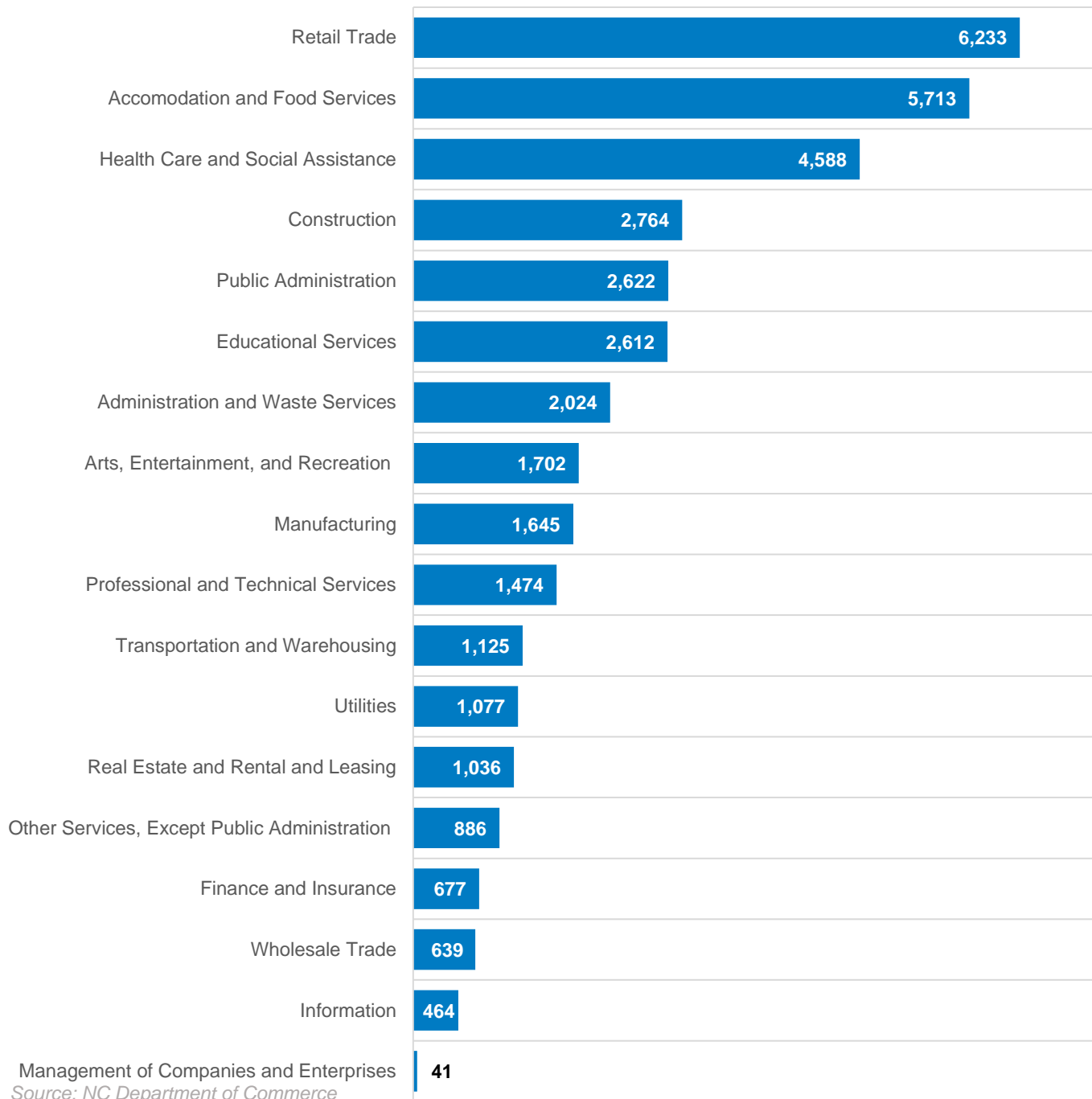
2022 Employed Population 16+ by Industry

Leland, NC

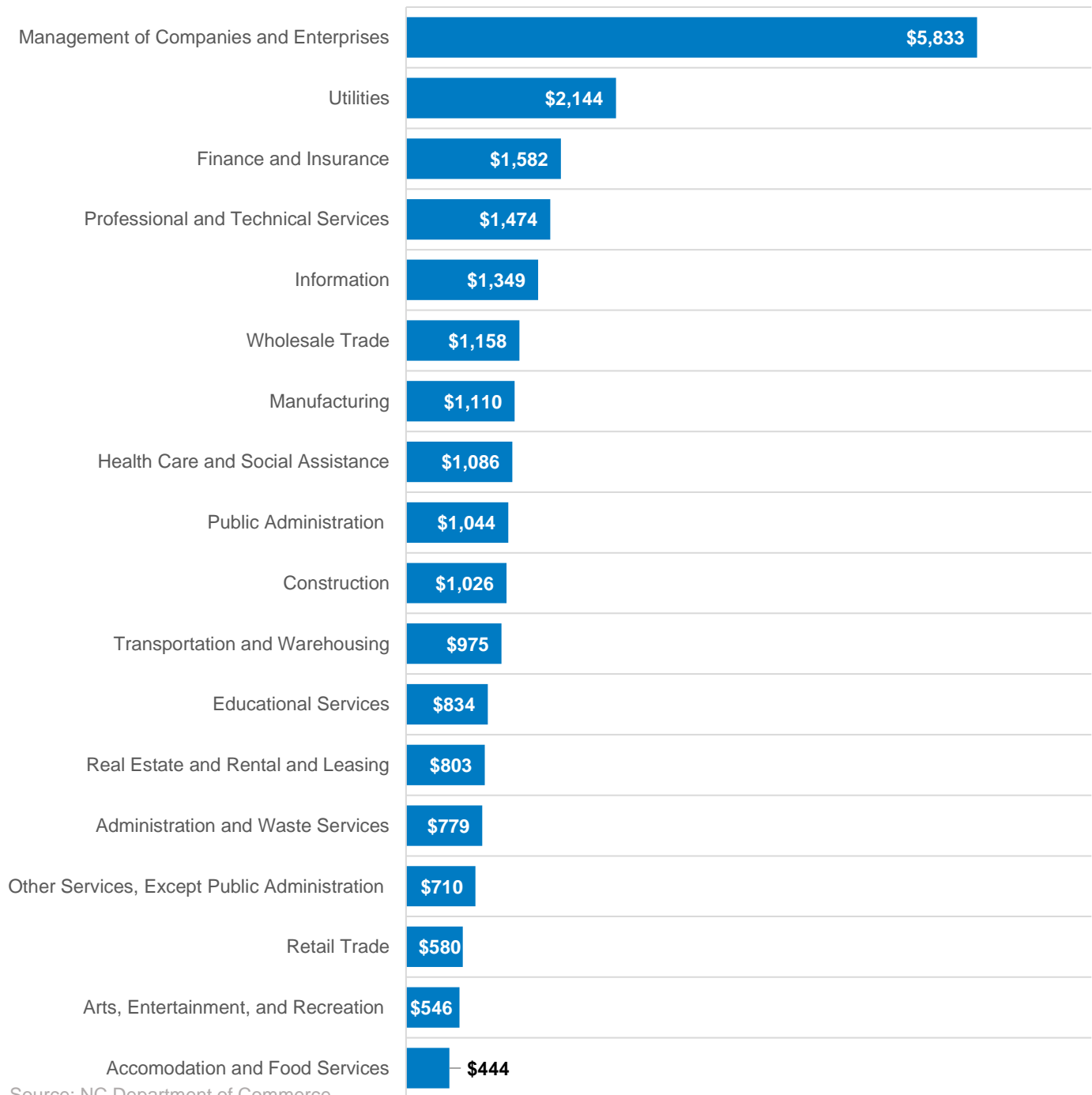
Agriculture/Mining	34
Construction	1,244
Manufacturing	961
Wholesale Trade	157
Retail Trade	1,752
Transportation Information Utilities	123
Utilities	678
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	565
Services	5,113
Public Administration	689
	11,316

Source: ESRI

Q2 2022 Brunswick County Employment by Industry



Q2 2022 Brunswick County, NC Wages by Industry

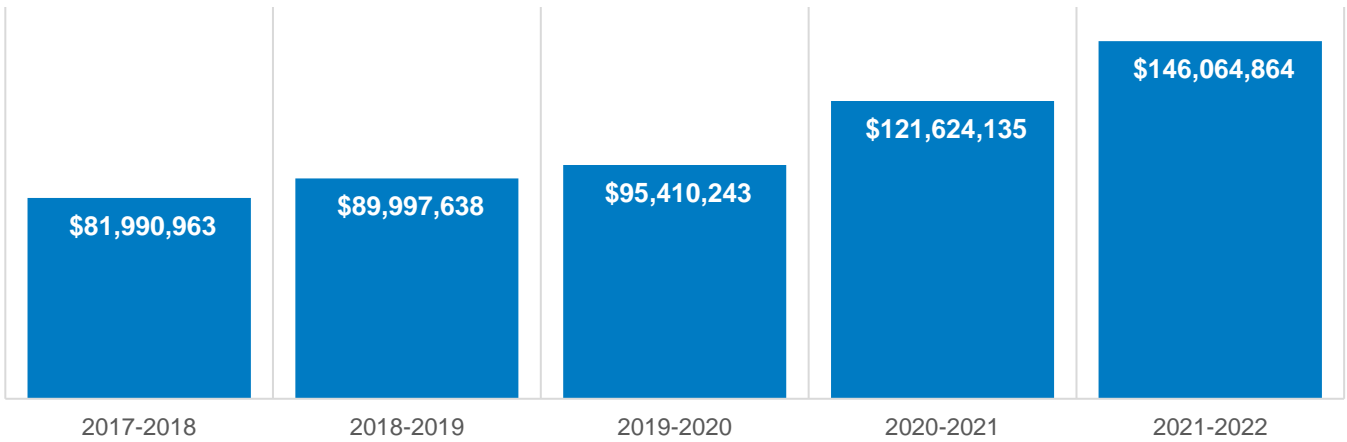


Brunswick County, NC Top 25 Employers

Rank	Company Name	Industry	Employment Range
1	Brunswick County Board Of Education	Educational Services	1000+
2	County Of Brunswick	Public Administration	1000+
3	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Retail Trade	500-999
4	Progress Energy Service Co	Utilities	500-999
5	Food Lion	Retail Trade	500-999
6	Brunswick Novant Medical Ctr.	Health Care and Social Assistance	500-999
7	Lowe's Foods LLC	Retail Trade	250-499
8	Victaulic Co	Manufacturing	250-499
9	Brunswick Community College	Educational Services	250-499
10	Lowe's Home Centers Inc	Retail Trade	250-499
11	Liberty Healthcare Group LLC	Health Care and Social Assistance	250-499
12	Dosher Memorial Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance	250-499
13	Defense Ex Army Navy & Air Force	Public Administration	250-499
14	Charter Day School Inc	Educational Services	250-499
15	Novant Medical Group Inc	Health Care and Social Assistance	250-499
16	Troon Golf Administration LLC	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	250-499
17	McAndersons Inc	Accommodation and Food Services	250-499
18	Bald Head Island Club	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	100-249
19	SBB Wilmington LLC	Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249
20	Atlantic Seawinds	Information	100-249
21	U S Postal Service	Transportation and Warehousing	100-249
22	Publix North Carolina Employee Serv	Retail Trade	100-249
23	Carolinas Staffing Solutions,	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	100-249
24	Portus Terminals LLC	Transportation and Warehousing	100-249
25	Town Of Leland	Public Administration	100-249

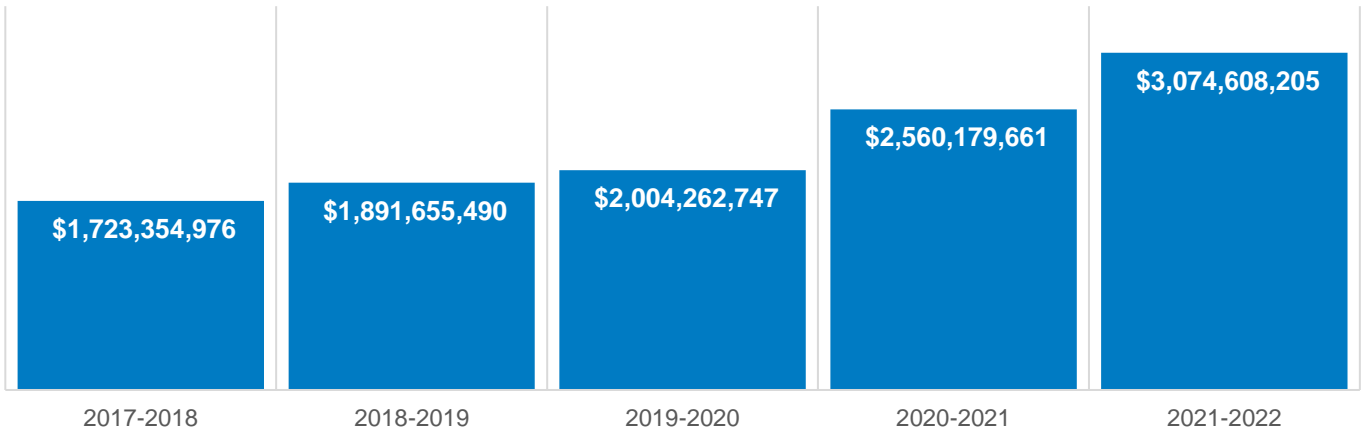
Source: NC Department of Commerce

Brunswick County, NC Gross Collections



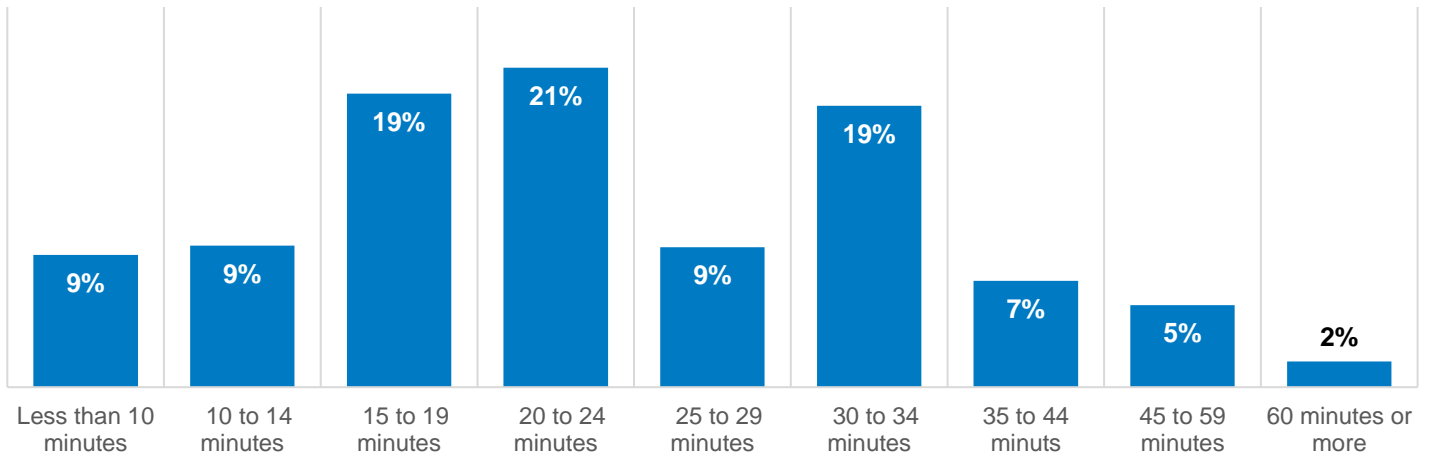
Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue

Brunswick County, NC Taxable Sales

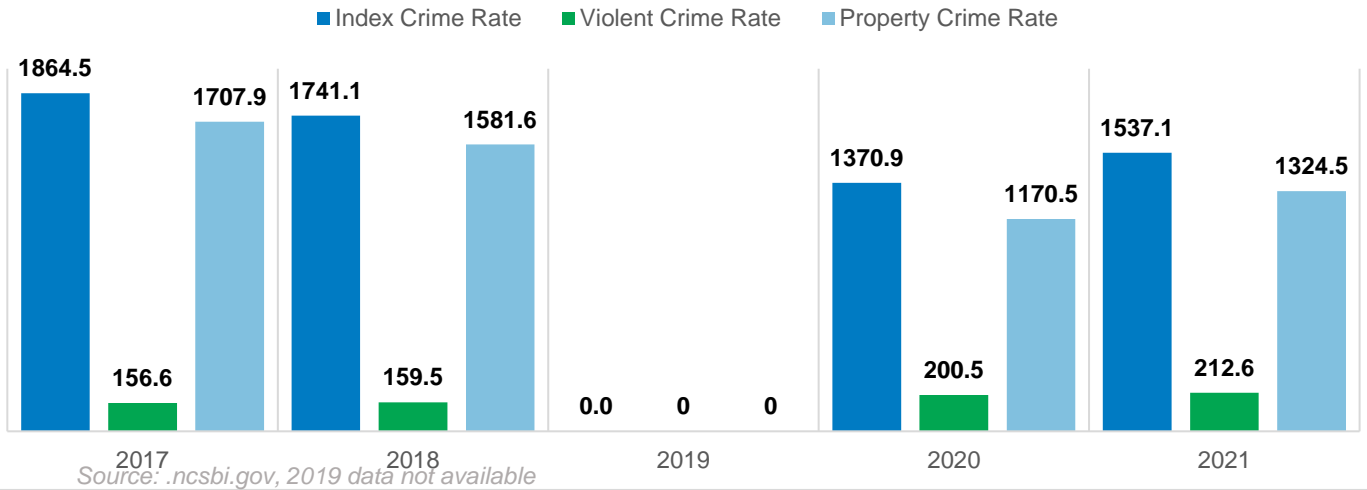


Source: North Carolina Department of Revenue

2021 Commute Times Leland, NC



Brunswick County Crime Statistics



Study Sponsor and Consultant



Department of Economic and Community Development

Vision

To promote business expansion and economic diversification within the Town of Leland in order to provide sustainable jobs, expand its tax base, and stabilize its vulnerability to economic downturns.

Mission

To promote economic development activities that will improve the economic vitality and sustainability of the Leland community and lead to the success of the Town's businesses and a high quality of life for its residents.



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