

Downtown Strategic Vision

Strictly Private & Confidential

Downtown Hartsville, TN
Trousdale County



LETTER TO OUR PARTNER

Dear Mayor Chambers,

Through our *Downtown Strategic Visioning* process, we assessed the five pillars of downtown Hartsville's mix: **Market Analysis, Policy & Administration, Design, Tourism & Promotion, and Economic Vitality**, to provide a true roadmap to revitalization.

For Downtown Hartsville, we identified and created a tailored strategy to enhance, revitalize, and mobilize your community's efforts. When properly fueled, your Downtown can be a powerful economic, tourism, and quality of life engine and our team of professionals was honored to help you define this potential and empower this community to achieve it.

Downtown Strategies exists to assist communities in taking the next, or first, step in their Downtown's journey.

Downtown Strategies' Strategic Visioning process operates on **three key tenets**: utilizing asset-based methodology based on the community's existing strengths and potentials, holistically evaluating the community's Downtown, and creating implementable strategies for continued success.

The holistic approach utilized in our process included varying degrees of emphasis on the five pillars:

- **Market Analysis** to uncover and define the **economic potential** in your Downtown area
- **Policy & Administration** to ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality by creating a strong foundation for a **sustainable revitalization effort**
- **Design** to support a **community's transformation** by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart,
- **Tourism and Promotion** to position your downtown as the center of the community and **hub of economic activity**,
- **Economic Vitality** to assist new and existing businesses, **catalyze property development**, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.



Jenn Gregory, President
Downtown Strategies
Retail Strategies

We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you and your team, and we look forward to continuing a strong and productive relationship as you all embark on this revitalization journey.



DOWNTOWN STRATEGIES

Your Team



Jenn Gregory

President

Downtown Strategies

Jenn founded a consulting firm specializing in solutions for community development, downtown revitalization, retail recruitment, non-profit board development, governmental relations, and public affairs, where she has represented clients in Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and South Carolina.

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Elliott Cook

Retail Development Coordinator

Retail Strategies

As Retail Development Coordinator, Elliott specializes in retail recruitment and focuses on the identification of companies to fill the product and service gaps within each city's trade area.

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Laura Marinos

Director of Marketing

Retail Strategies

As the Director of Marketing Laura specializes and assists in GIS mapping, market research, market development plans, site submittal packages, project coordination, event management, client communication, and team operations.

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Ryder Richards

Creative Director

Retail Strategies

Ryder specializes in design and web development. Developing marketing materials and all forms of digital or new media his role allows for a unique combination of a creativity and technical wizardry. Yes, that's right, Ryder is a wizard.

rrichards@retailstrategies.com | [806] 790-5508



Charlene Capps

Director of Research

Retail Strategies

As a Director, Research & Analytics for Retail Strategies, Charlene increases efficiencies by creating standardized practices. She finds best ways to tell the story through numbers and data-driven insights that assist with deal making decisions.

ccapps@retailstrategies.com | [205] 905-5708



1

downtown strategies

MARKET ANALYSIS

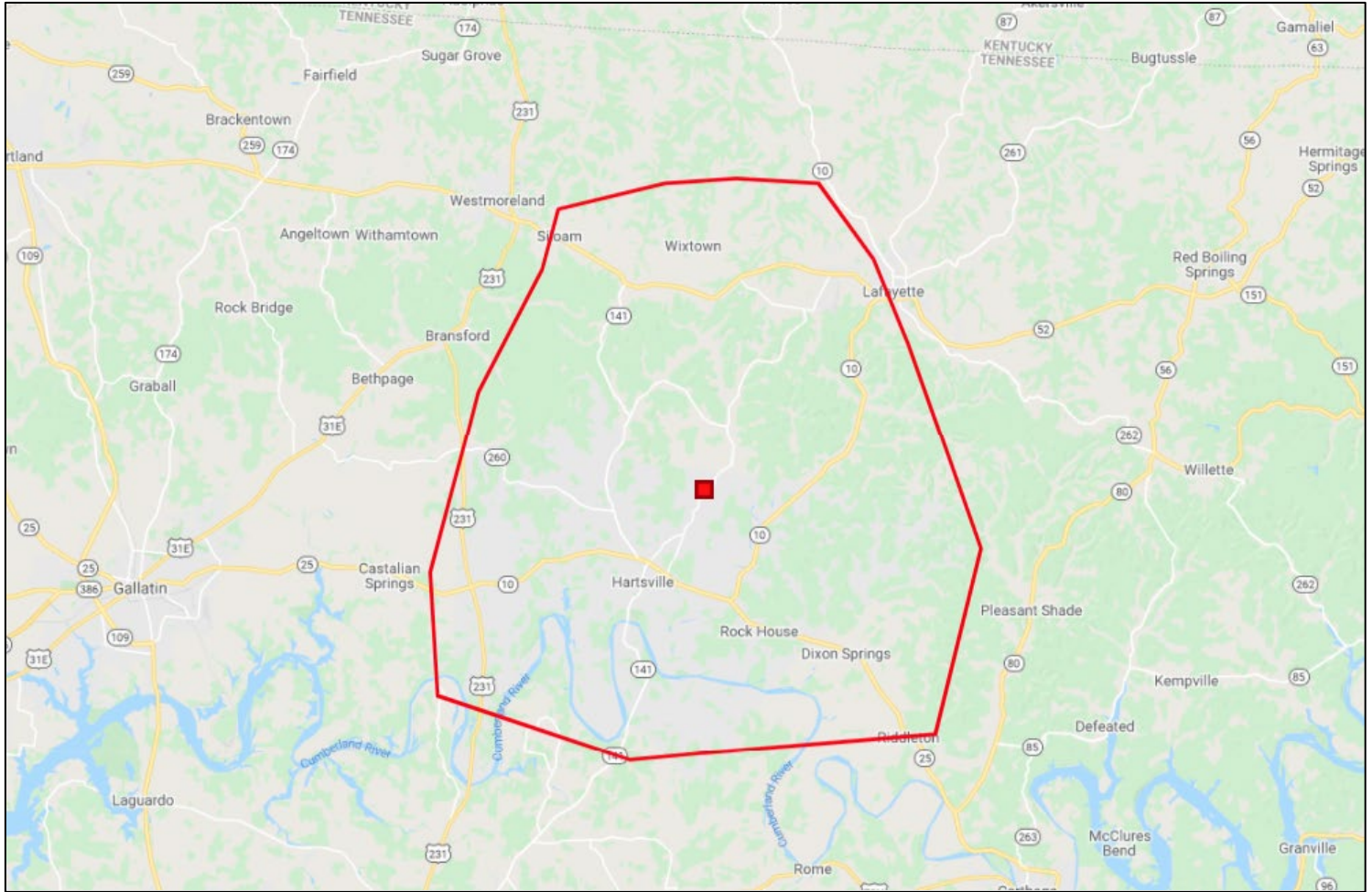
We begin by assessing your consumers from multiple geographies. Using our advanced analytics and proprietary tools, we uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area based on a custom trade area derived from mobile data tracking.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CUSTOM TRADE AREA



Hartsville, TN Custom Trade Area (CTA)

Population – 18,280

*The following demographics reflect the Custom Trade Area (CTA) and not geographic community boundaries.

State of Tennessee

Population – 6.8M



MARKET ANALYSIS

Mobile Data Tracking

Mobile data tracking uses **data collected from mobile phone users** who have agreed within their apps and phone settings to enable location information. This technology includes mobile phone data with **latitude and longitude points** that are accurate to approximately 20 feet. Data inputs are updated as quickly as every 24-hours.

The data shown **includes shoppers who visited the defined location** during a 1-year time period. This tool allows us to identify where consumers are actually coming from to shop in your market (Custom Trade Area) using actual data. This information is used to optimize your trade area, analyze business locations, compare frequency of visitors, and more **accurately predict business success**.

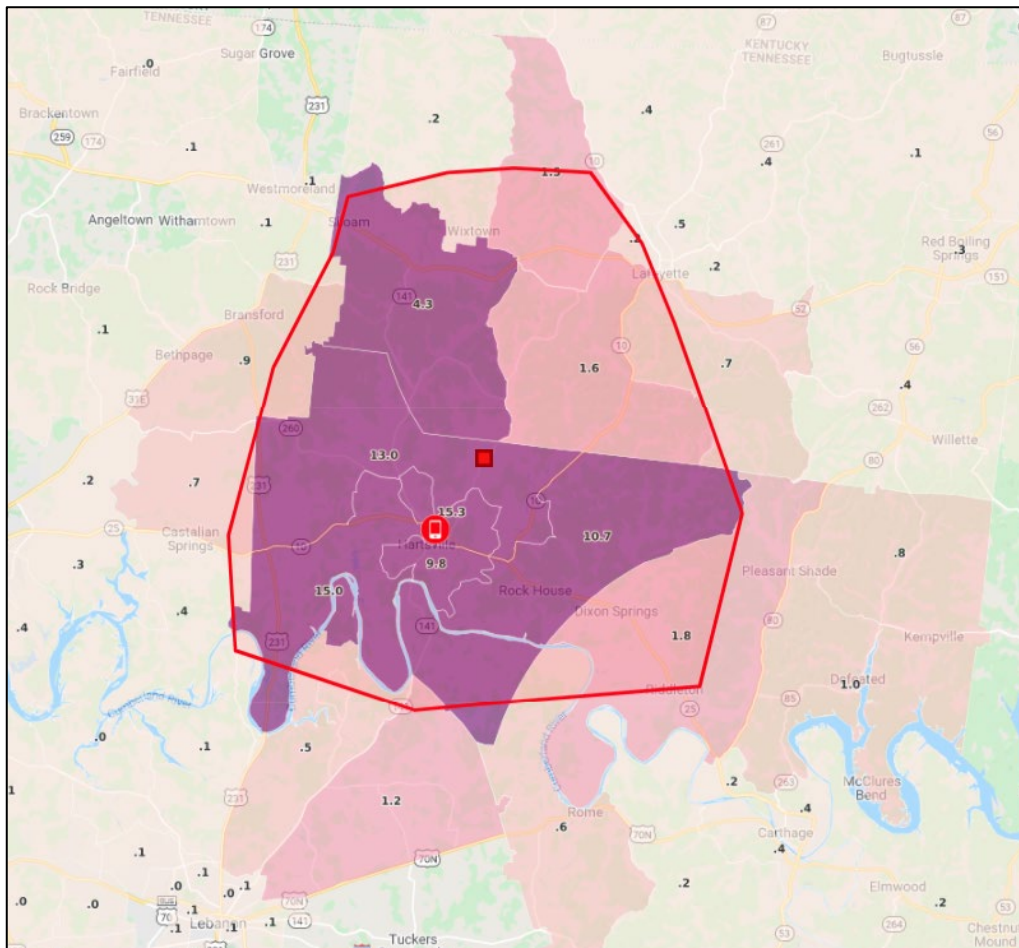
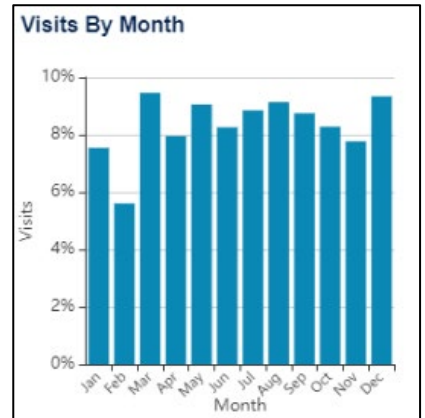
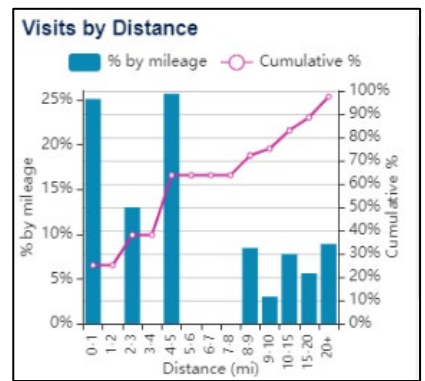
This data is intended to support the trade area but does not solely define the trade area.

Piggly Wiggly
130 McMurry Blvd E
Hartsville, TN 37074



Details

Brand	Piggly Wiggly
Top Category	Grocery Stores
Sub Category	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
Median Dwell Time	10.67 min
Median Distance from Home	3.9 miles
Annual Visits	4,952 visits
Monthly Visits	413
Monthly Visitors	231
Tourist Visits	2.6%





MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

POPULATION



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18,280

2020 estimated
population



19,175
projected 2025
population

4.9%
projected growth rate
2019-2024

39

male avg. age

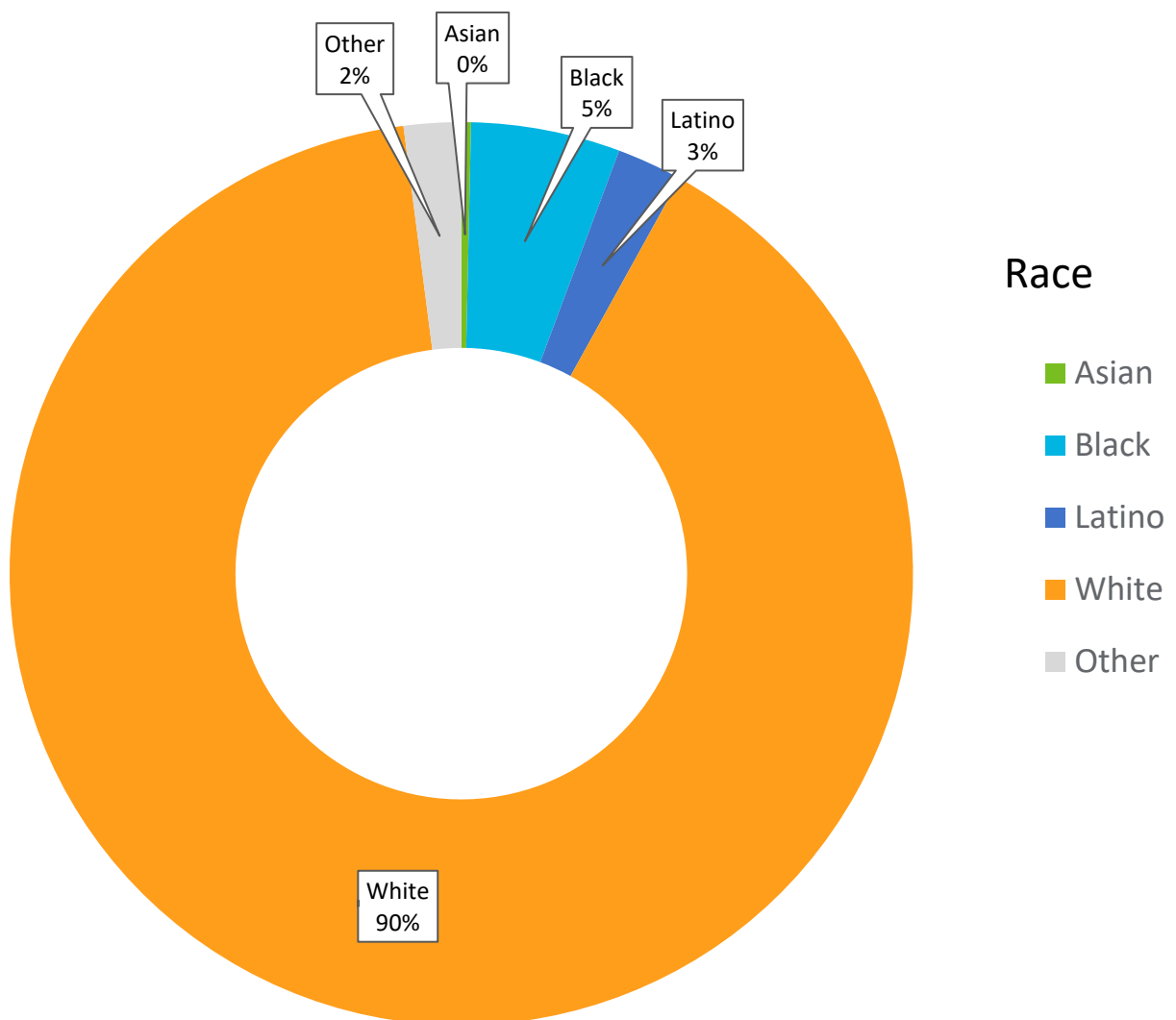
41

female avg. age



Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION BY RACE





MARKET ANALYSIS

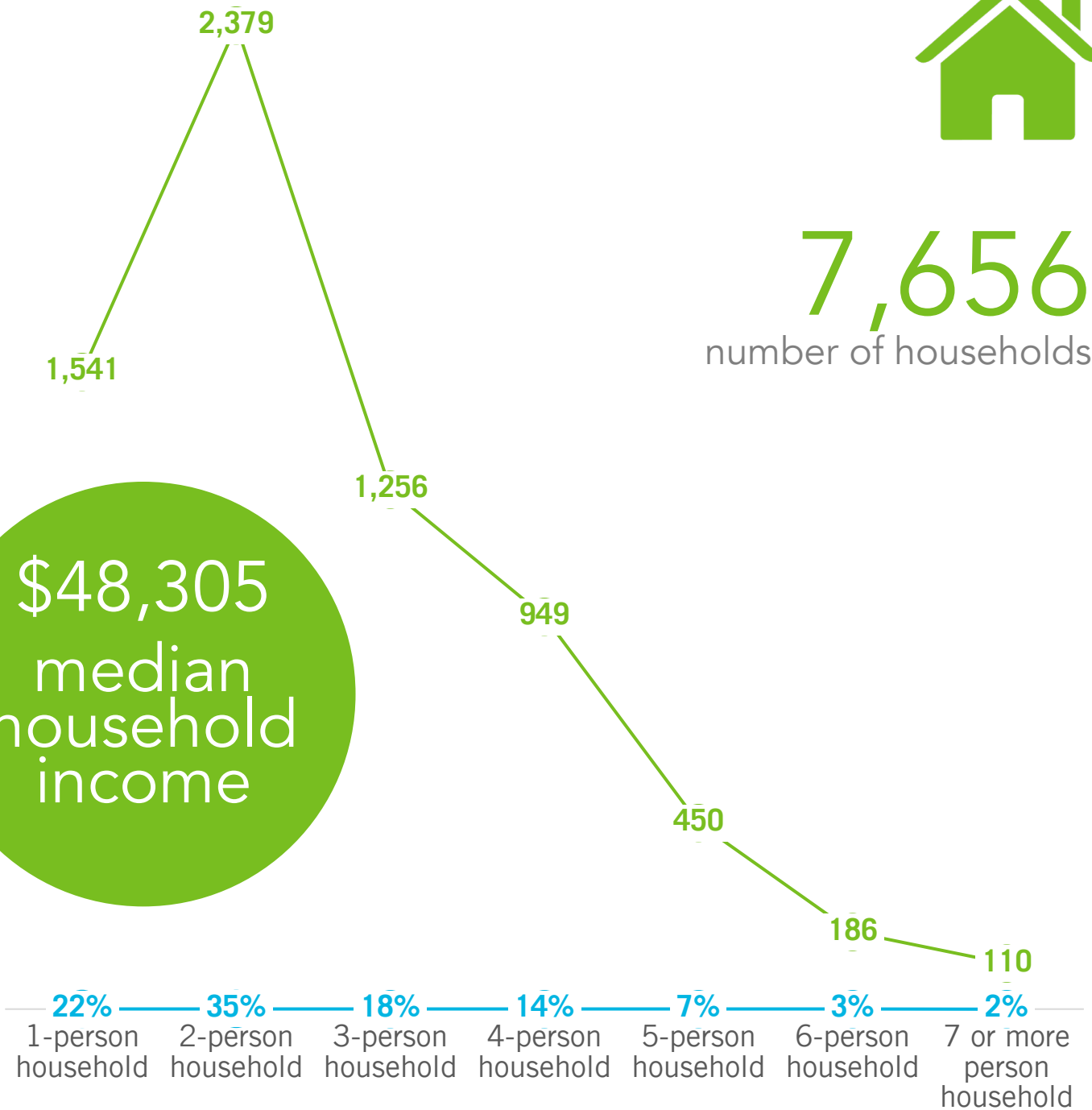
Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE



7,656
number of households

\$48,305
median
household
income





MARKET ANALYSIS

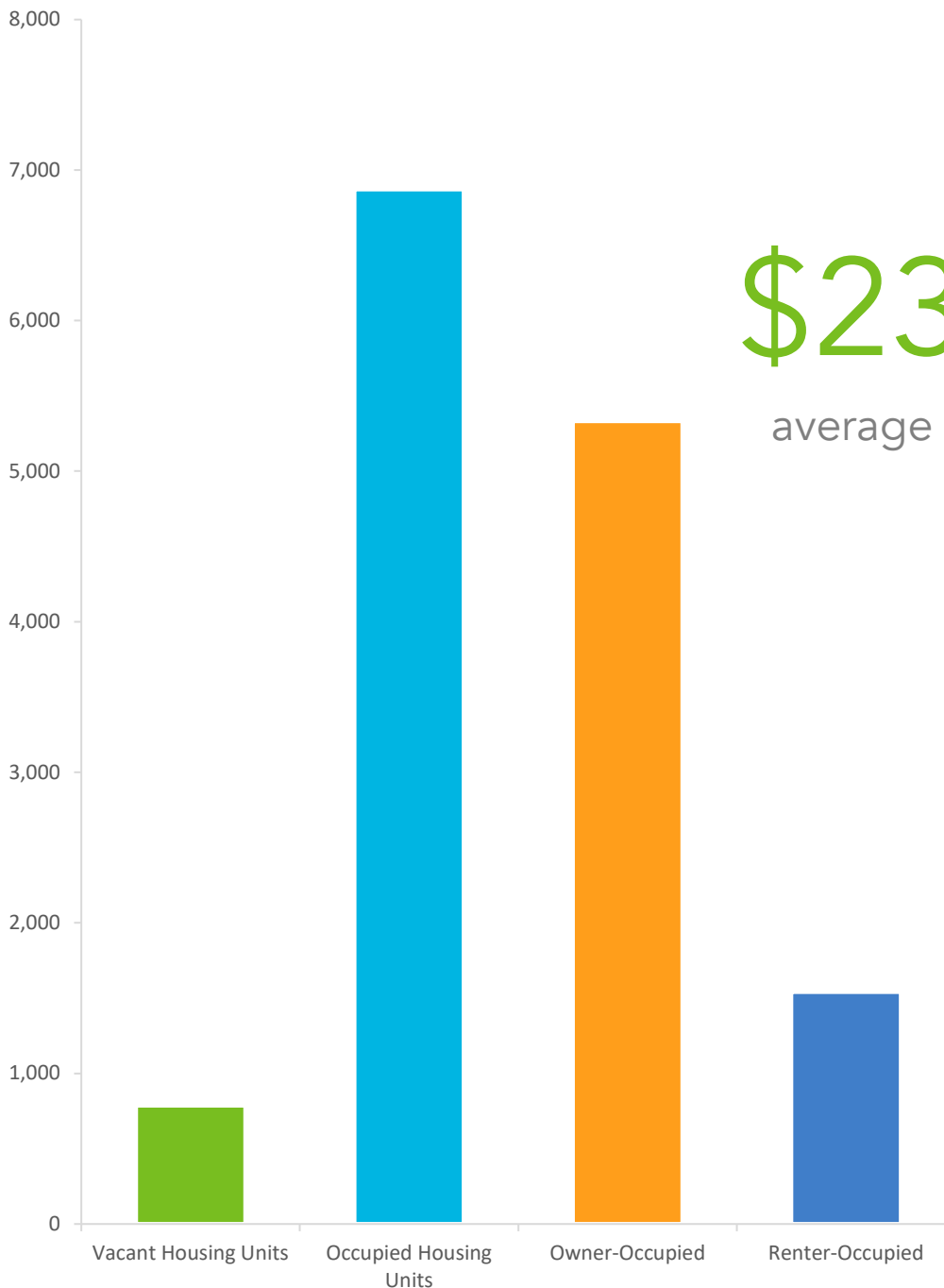
Our Research

2020 ESTIMATED HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE



\$235,410

average housing unit value



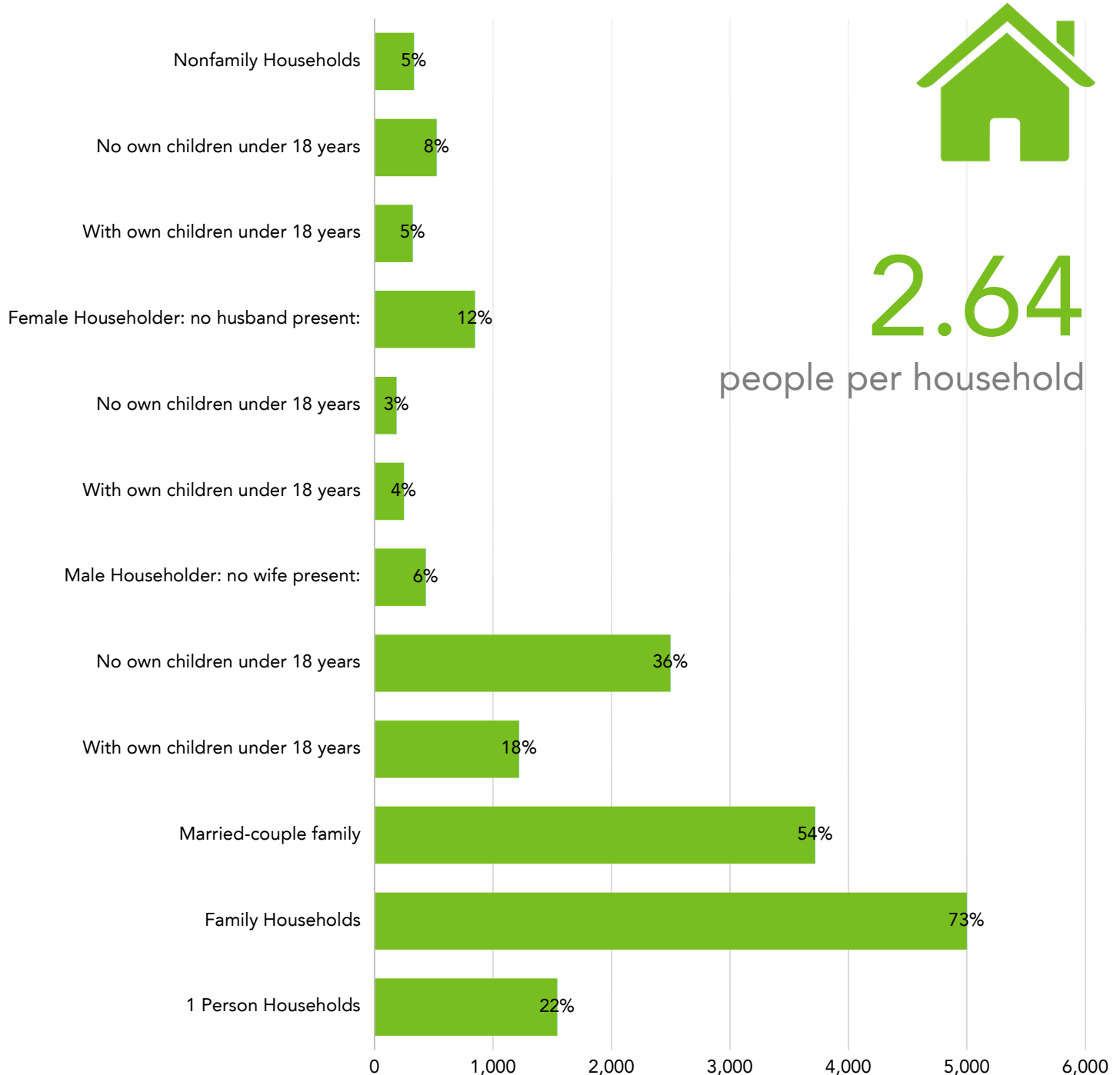
- Vacant Housing Units
- Occupied Housing Units
- Owner-Occupied
- Renter-Occupied



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE



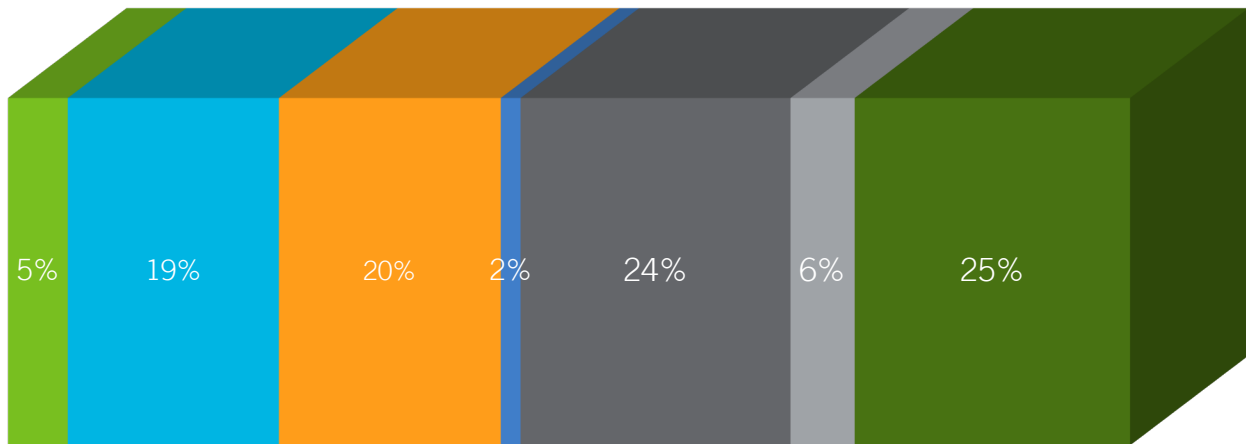


MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

DAYTIME POPULATION

- Children at home
- Homemakers
- Employed
- Student Populations
- Retired/Disable persons
- Work at Home
- Unemployed



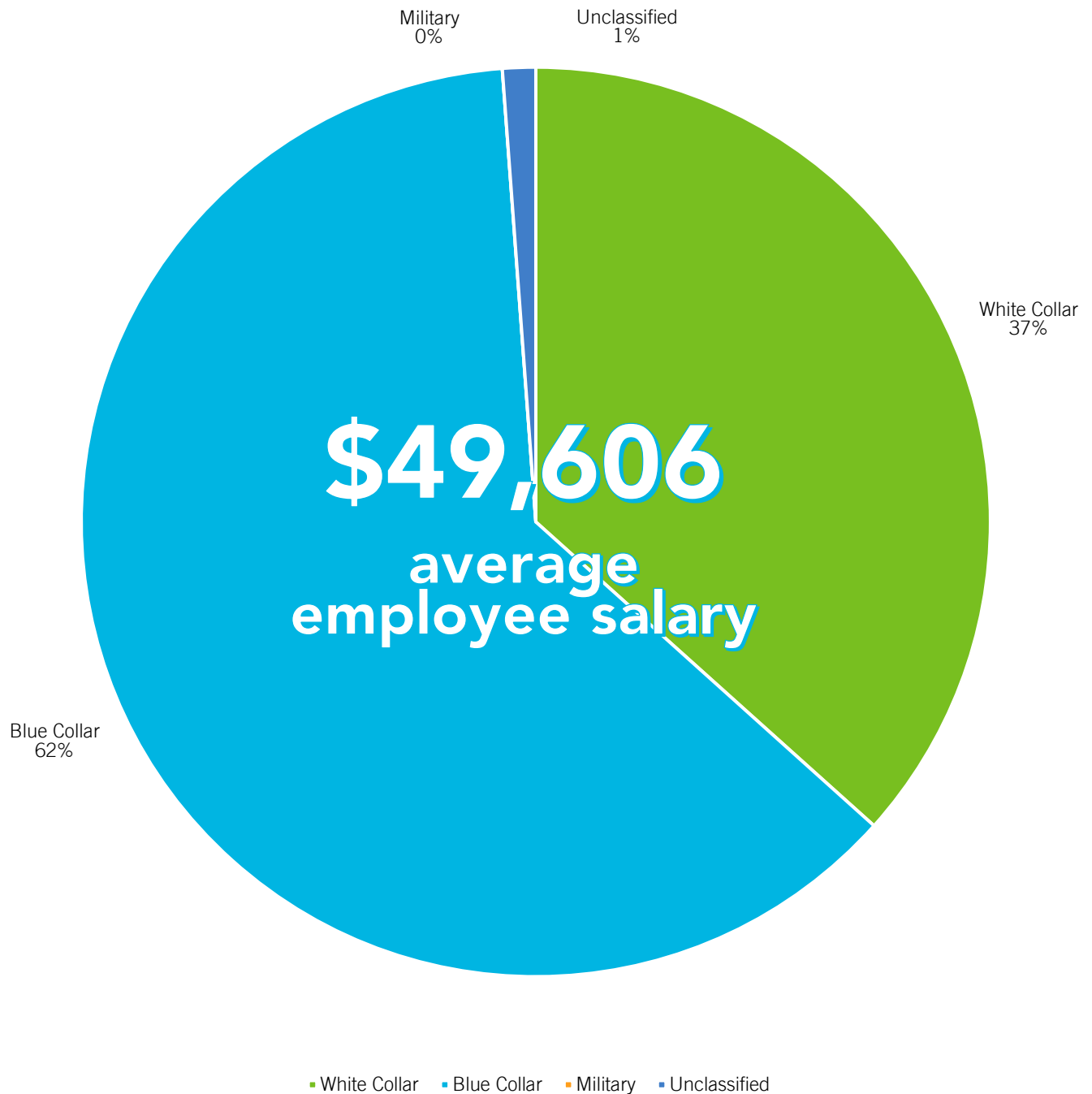
14,471
daytime population



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

EMPLOYMENT TYPE

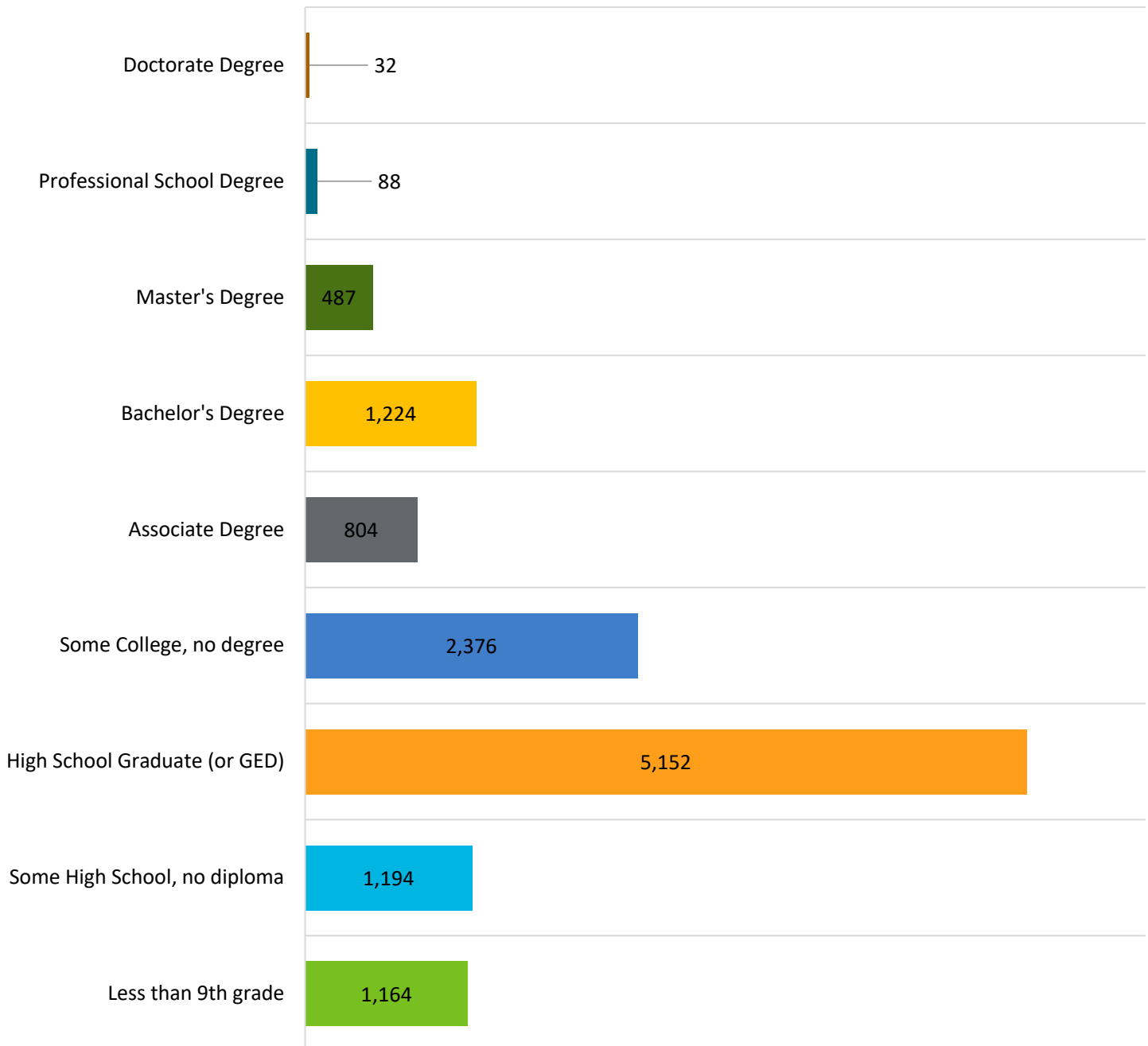




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION AGE 25+ BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

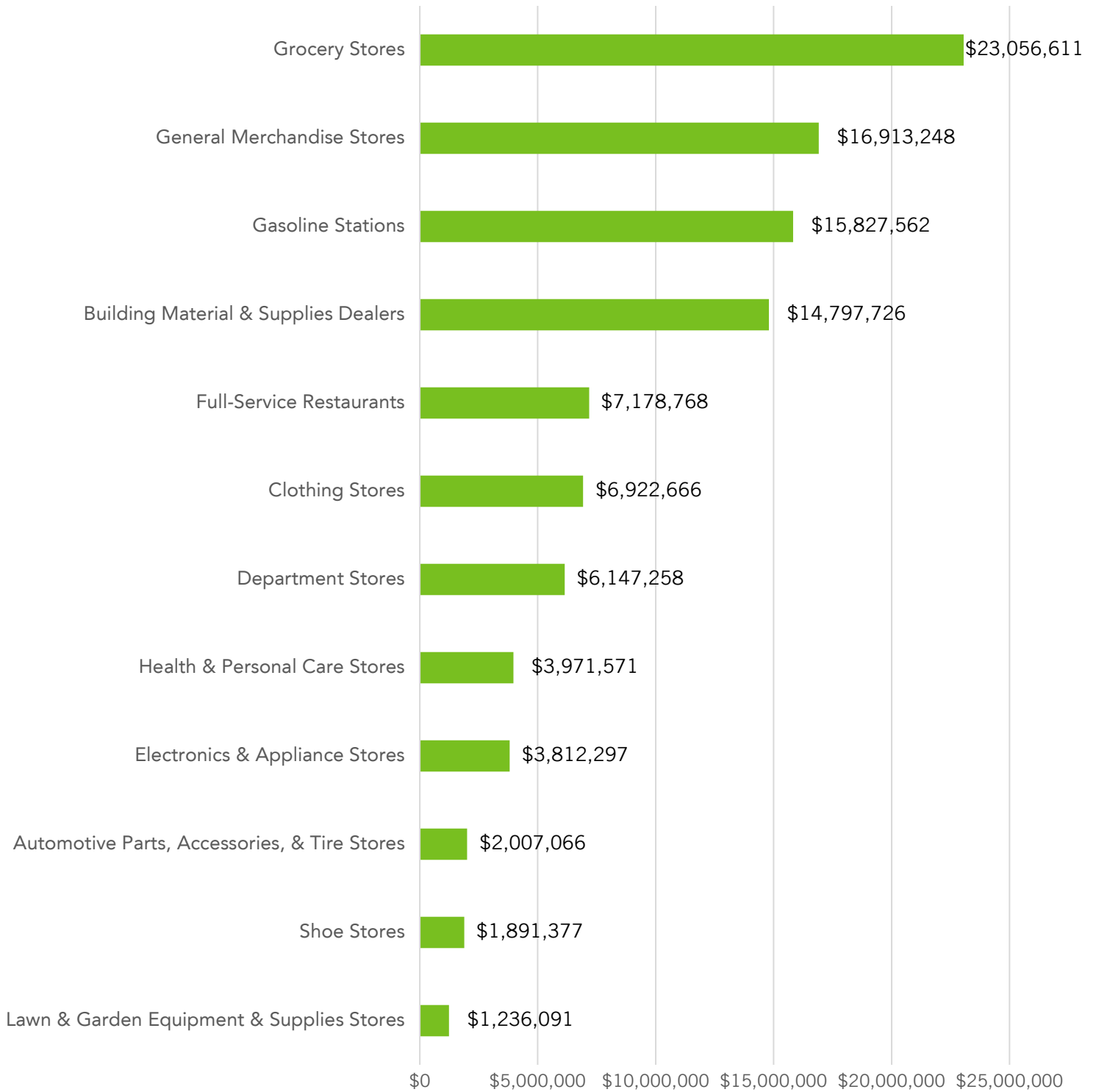




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

OPPORTUNITY GAP (SHORTAGE)

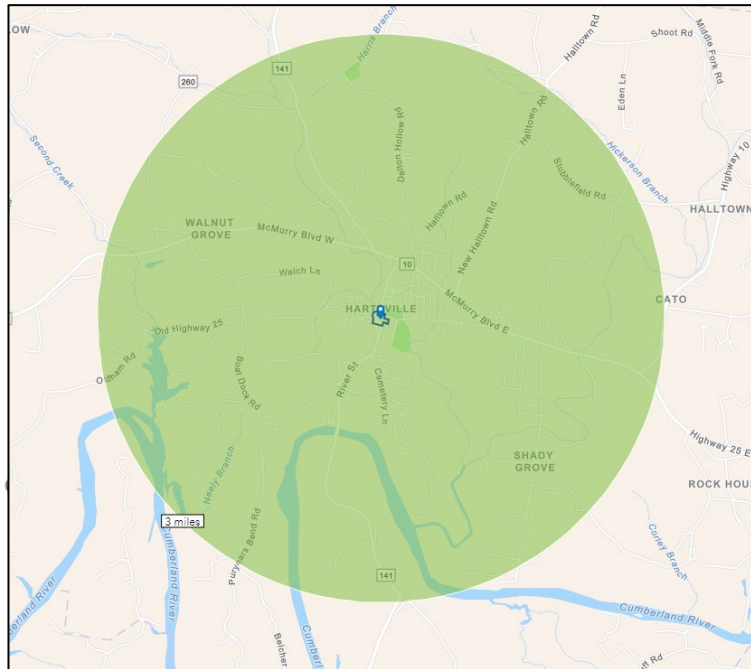




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

COMMUTE PROFILE: 3 MILES



WORKERS



1,916
ACS Workers Age 16+



72.2%
Drove Alone to Work



122
2018 Workers 16+
Worked at Home
(ACS 5-Yr)

TRANSPORTATION TO WORK



0.0%

Took Public Transportation



20.7%

Carpooled



0.7%

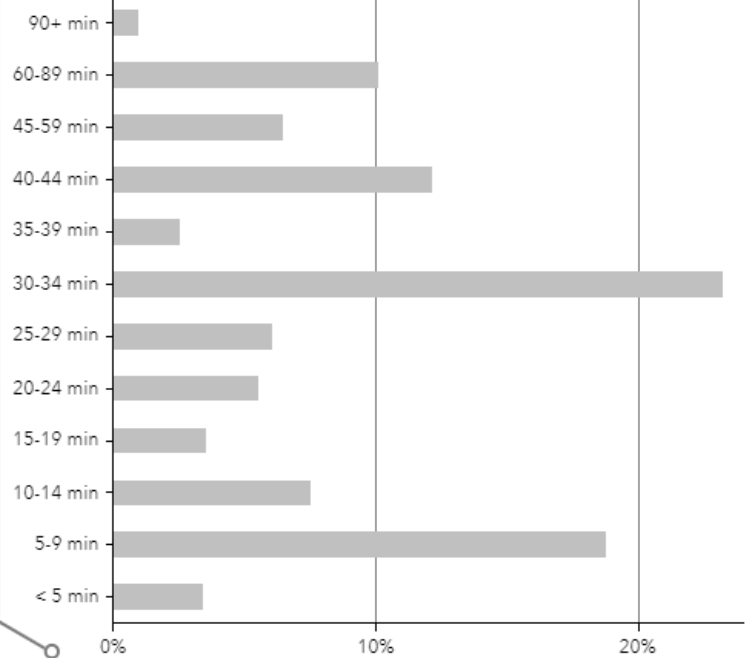
Walked to Work



0.0%

Bike to Work

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



Percent of Workers

This infographic contains data provided by American Community Survey (ACS). The vintage of the data is 2014-2018.

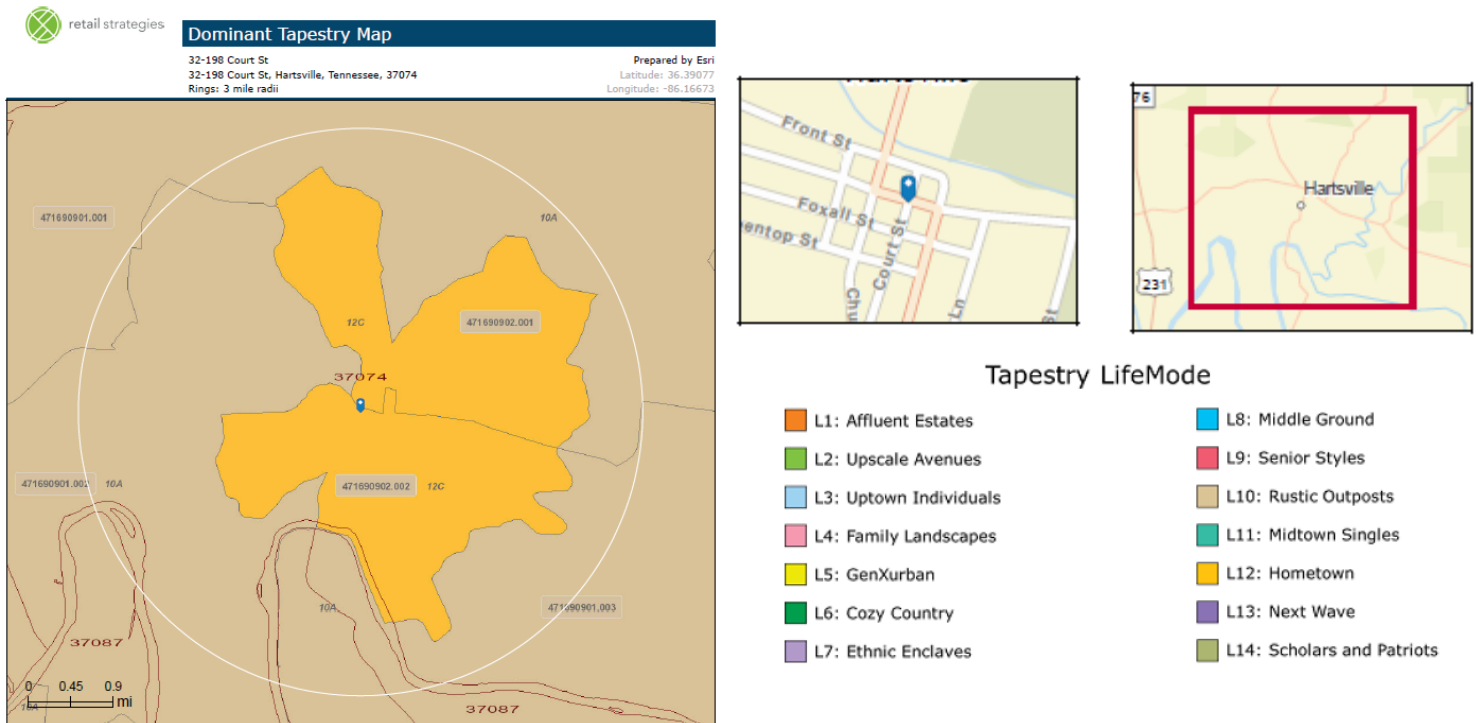


MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

Tapestry Segmentation classifies neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based not only on demographics but also socioeconomic characteristics. It describes US neighborhoods in easy-to-visualize terms, ranging from Soccer Moms to Heartland Communities.

Tapestry gives you insights to help you identify your best customers, optimal sites, and underserved markets by understanding customers' lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time.



Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile

32-198 Court St
 32-198 Court St, Hartsville, Tennessee, 37074
 Ring: 3 mile radius

Prepared by Esri
 Latitude: 36.39077
 Longitude: -86.16673

Top Twenty Tapestry Segments

Rank	Tapestry Segment	2020 Households Cumulative		2020 U.S. Households Cumulative		Index
		Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
1	Small Town Simplicity (12C)	67.5%	67.5%	1.8%	1.8%	3675
2	Southern Satellites (10A)	32.5%	100.0%	3.2%	5.0%	1,028
Subtotal		100.0%		5.0%		



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Hometown

Small Town Simplicity

12C

Households: 2,305,700

Average Household Size: 2.26

Median Age: 40.8

Median Household Income: \$31,500

WHO ARE WE?

Small Town Simplicity includes young families and senior householders that are bound by community ties. The lifestyle is down-to-earth and semirural, with television for entertainment and news, and emphasis on convenience for both young parents and senior citizens. Residents embark on pursuits including online computer games, renting movies, indoor gardening, and rural activities like hunting and fishing. Since 1 in 4 households is below poverty level, residents also keep their finances simple—paying bills in person and avoiding debt.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- They reside in small towns or semirural neighborhoods, mostly outside metropolitan areas.
- Homes are a mix of older single-family houses (61%), apartments, and mobile homes.
- Half of all homes are owner-occupied (Index 79).
- Median home value of \$92,300 is about half the US median.
- Average rent is \$639 (Index 62).
- This is an older market, with half of the householders aged 55 years or older, and predominantly single-person households (Index 139).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 67% with high school diploma or some college.
- Unemployment higher at 7.7% (Index 141).
- Labor force participation lower at 52% (Index 83), which could result from lack of jobs or retirement.
- Income from wages and salaries (Index 83), Social Security (Index 133) or retirement (Index 106), increased by Supplemental Security Income (Index 183).
- Price-conscious consumers that shop accordingly, with coupons at discount centers.
- Connected, but not to the latest or greatest gadgets; keep their landlines.
- Community-orientated residents; more conservative than middle-of-the-road.
- Rely on television or newspapers to stay informed.

MARKET PROFILE

(Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- *Small Town Simplicity* features a semirural lifestyle, complete with trucks and SUVs (domestic, of course), ATVs, and vegetable gardens.
- Residents enjoy outdoor activities like hunting and fishing as well as watching NASCAR and college football and basketball on TV.
- A large senior population visit doctors and health practitioners regularly.
- However, a largely single population favors convenience over cooking—frozen meals and fast food.
- Home improvement is not a priority, but vehicle maintenance is.

multiplied by 100.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

Southern Satellites

10A

- Households:** 3,856,800
- Average Household Size:** 2.67
- Median Age:** 40.3
- Median Household Income:** \$47,800

WHO ARE WE?

Southern Satellites is the second largest market found in rural settlements but within metropolitan areas located primarily in the South. This market is typically nondiverse, slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Two-thirds of the homes are single-family structures; almost a third are mobile homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

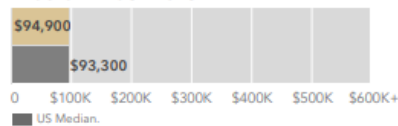
INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- About 78% of households are owned.
- Married couples with no children are the dominant household type, with a number of multigenerational households (Index 112).
- Most are single-family homes (67%), with a number of mobile homes (Index 509).
- Most housing units were built in 1970 or later.
- Most households own 1 or 2 vehicles, but owning 3+ vehicles is common (Index 144).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: almost 40% have a high school diploma only (Index 140); 45% have college education (Index 73).
- Unemployment rate is 6%, slightly higher than the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.1%, slightly lower than the US.
- These consumers are more concerned about cost rather than quality or brand loyalty.
- They tend to be somewhat late in adapting to technology.
- They obtain a disproportionate amount of their information from TV, compared to other media.

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- Usually own a truck; likely to service it themselves.
- Frequent the convenience store, usually to fill up a vehicle with gas.
- Typical household has a satellite dish.
- Work on home improvement and remodeling projects.
- Own a pet, commonly a dog.
- Participate in fishing and hunting.
- Prefer to listen to country music and watch Country Music Television (CMT).
- Read fishing/hunting and home service magazines.
- Partial to eating at low-cost family restaurants and drive-ins.
- Use Walmart for all their shopping needs (groceries, clothing, pharmacy, etc.).

JS rate multiplied by 100.
II.



MARKET ANALYSIS

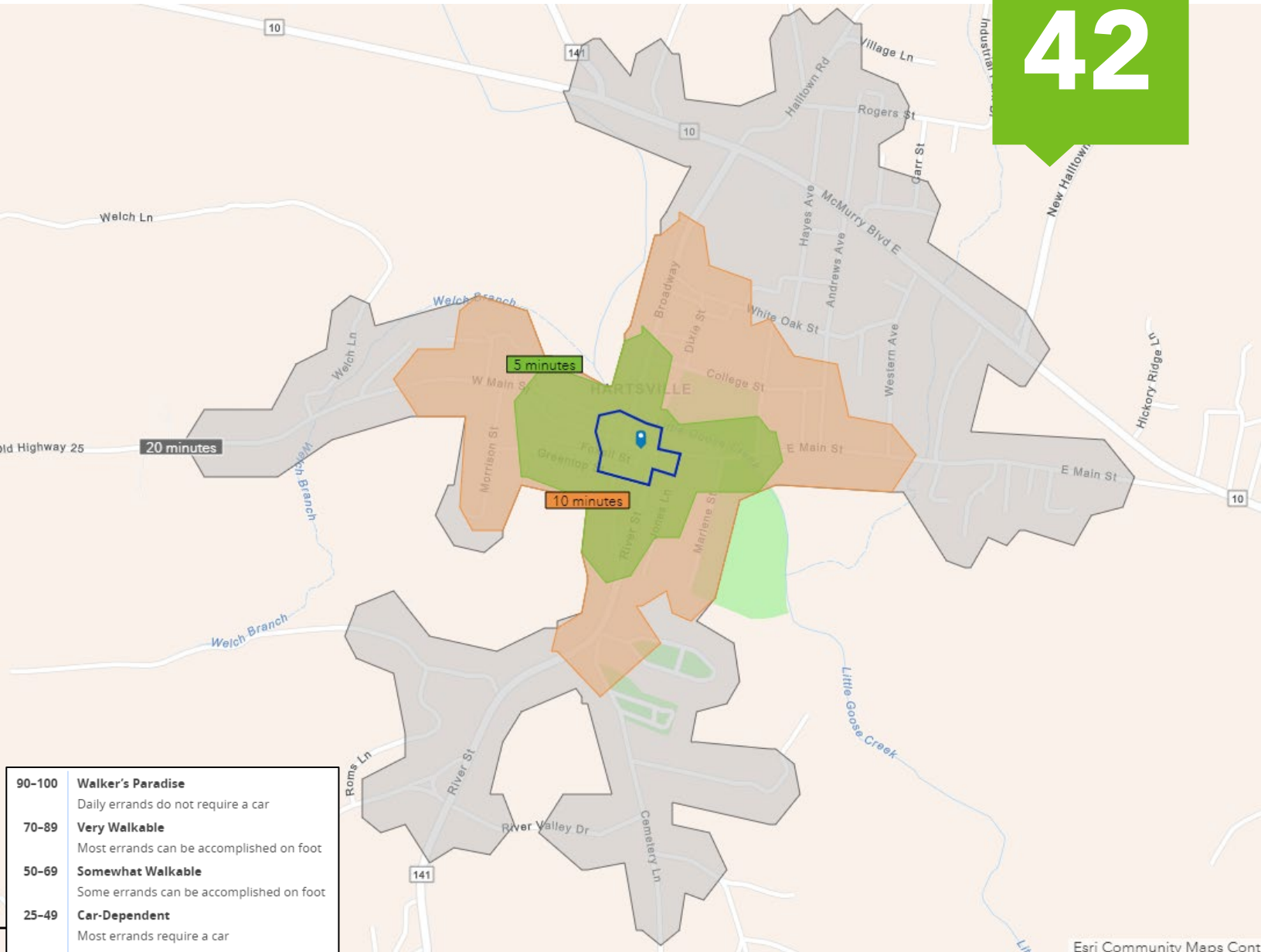
Walkability Assessment

What's your Community's Walk Score?

A community's walk score is determined by analyzing 3 factors: **walkable distance** between boundaries, presence of a **comprehensive network of pathways** designed for pedestrians and cyclists, and variety of restaurants, retailers, and service providers **necessary for regular life**.

This assessment shows your Downtown with boundaries notating a 5, 10, and 20-minute walk. A walk time from one Downtown boundary to the next that exceeds 20 minutes is not considered walkable.

42



90-100	Walker's Paradise Daily errands do not require a car
70-89	Very Walkable Most errands can be accomplished on foot
50-69	Somewhat Walkable Some errands can be accomplished on foot
25-49	Car-Dependent Most errands require a car
0-24	Car-Dependent Almost all errands require a car



MARKET ANALYSIS

Walkability Assessment

A community's walk score is determined by analyzing 3 factors: walkable distance between boundaries, presence of a comprehensive network of pathways designed for pedestrians and cyclists, and variety of restaurants, retailers, and service providers necessary for regular life.

1

Walkable Distance Between Boundaries

Downtown Hartsville's boundaries fall within a 0.25-mile radius and a less than 10-minute walk time from end to end of the area, which is considered extremely walkable from a distance perspective.

2

Presence of a Comprehensive Network of Pathways

While there are sidewalks on the main thoroughfare, priority should be given to expanding this by focusing on curb cuts, on-street parking, and sidewalks and bike paths on some of the secondary streets within Downtown Hartsville. Implementing the existing Downtown Connectivity plan should be where efforts begin.

3

Variety of Restaurants, Retailers & Service Providers Present

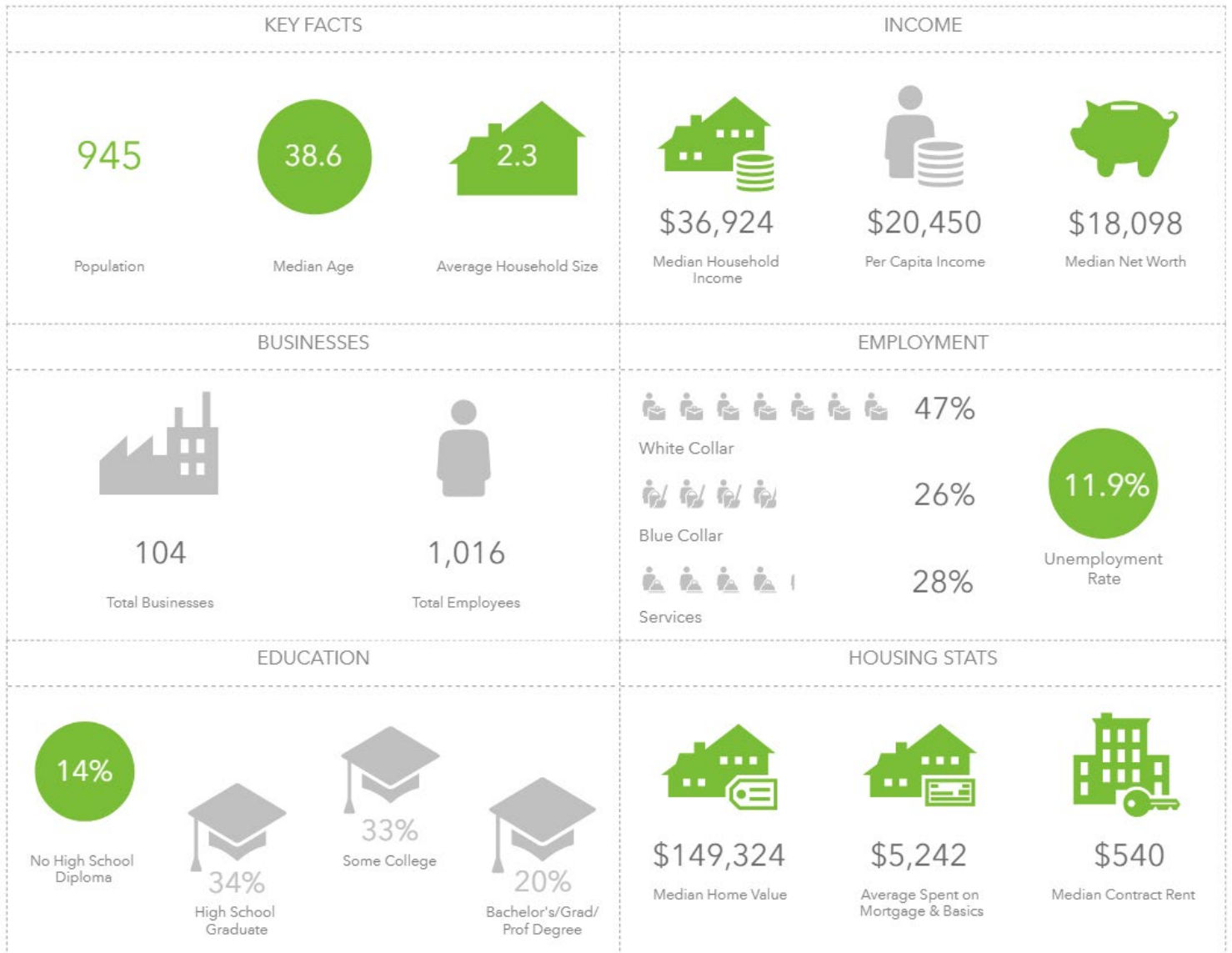
The greatest amount of potential lies with identifying more qualified restaurant and retailer prospects and matching those with available real estate in the Downtown area to improve the business offerings. Downtown Hartsville has the potential to be even more of a true destination for residents and visitors.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Walkability Assessment

The following demographics represent the **population of residents** within a **20 minute walk time** of the Downtown Study Area. Keep these figures in mind when imagining the possible economic impacts of developing your Downtown into a walkable destination.



A person is holding a wooden crate filled with various plants. The background features a wall with a colorful mural and a chalkboard with drawings of plants in pots. The scene is dimly lit, creating a warm, indoor atmosphere.

2

downtown strategies

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Policy & Administration involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.



Dedicated Staff Person for Downtown Development



Recommendation

Take steps to identify funding and support for a full-time position with the individual focused on social media management, community event planning and retail promotion, retail recruitment, and implementation of this Downtown Strategic Plan.

Downtown Development Manager

The Downtown Development Manager is responsible for development, planning, implementation, and oversight of designated community events, programs, and organizational priorities.

This position works closely with responsible volunteer chairs and committee members to ensure that all events and programs are delivered on time, within budget, and at the desired level of quality. This individual cultivates positive long-term relationships with all program stakeholders, especially committee members and Downtown stakeholders and seeks to consistently improve program execution and revenues.

As a social media manager, this position will develop a revolving content calendar for social media channels, original content supporting the community brand, and suggest creative and strategic ways to attract more visitors and relocations to the community.

Ultimately, this individual should be able to increase web traffic and customer engagement metrics aligned with broader marketing strategies that he/she develops.



Committees for Downtown Development



Recommendation

Establish a framework of committees under Downtown Development Staff tasked with recruiting volunteers and multi-disciplinary professionals to begin tackling specific programs and strategies within this plan, and to expand the network of downtown development supporters.

Purpose of Downtown Development Committees

Downtown Development Committees should be formed with the mission to rejuvenate the downtown, thereby creating a vibrant atmosphere for business and social activities.

Committees should work in conjunction with the City, Chamber, Director of Downtown Development, merchants, and asset owners in the community to identify areas of need and steps to take to move forward.

The committees should rely on recommendations and strategies within this plan as their work plans, meet regularly, encourage collaboration and diversity, and keep themselves accountable for realistic timing of implementation of their various work plans.

Communication with stakeholders is key, and notes and minutes should be kept for accountability and transparency.

The success of Downtown Development committees is based on its comprehensive nature. By carefully integrating volunteers and committee work into a practical downtown management strategy, a local program will produce fundamental changes in a community's economic base.



Committees for Downtown Development

Retail Promotion & Events

Retail Promotion & Events committee creates excitement downtown. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways this committee encourages customer traffic. This committee also focuses on promoting an enticing image to shoppers, investors, and visitors. Enhancing the attractiveness of the business district, historic building rehabilitation, street and alley clean-up, colorful banners, landscaping, and lighting all improve the physical image of the downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live which contributes to marketing efforts. These overall improvements result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to downtown.

Real Estate & Redevelopment

The Real Estate & Redevelopment committee involves analyzing current market conditions to develop long-term solutions. Recruiting new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and developing strong relationships with existing property owners and potential investors will allow this committee to be proactive with potential opportunities. Understanding existing zoning and codes and mitigating barriers to investment is essential.

Business Development & Entrepreneurship Support

The Business Development & Entrepreneurship Support committee supports and promotes emerging businesses and entrepreneurs by providing programs that address the challenges of establishing, growing and scaling businesses. This committee also educates, promotes strategic alliances, addresses the concerns of these businesses and provides excellent networking opportunities. Additionally, the committee will focus on sharpening the competitiveness of existing traditional merchants.



Customized Toolkit of Incentives

Consider implementing the following list of incentives to publicly re-invest in the Downtown area and to foster and support private investment in vacant or deteriorating structures.

The following incentives, ordinances, and programs have been selected as successful tools for revitalizing Downtown Hartsville. Further information and details regarding each incentive and program follow within the plan:

Local Ordinances

- Vacant Storefront Tax

Local Incentives

- Lease Assistance Incentive for New Businesses
- Local Tax Increment Financing
- Façade Grant Improvement Program (in-progress)
- Historic Tax Credits (National Register of Historic Places)



Vacant Storefront Tax

Site-specific Causes for Vacancies

Knowledge gap

Smaller, independent property owners may lack an understanding of appropriate asking rents for a commercial tenant, the best way to market their space to prospective tenants, or how to assist tenants with occupying the space effectively. This is further exacerbated when property owners employ non-local real estate agents that may not be adept working within the Cambridge market and are not privy to the unique character of each sub district and their respective customer bases. Still other property owners may not be able to afford traditional brokerage services and will attempt to go it alone instead.

Tax write-off

Institutional investors with large real estate portfolios may benefit from keeping certain commercial properties vacant as part of a larger strategy to claim tax write-offs on passive income. This scenario not only creates a disincentive to the owner to find a long-term tenant, but also temporary users like pop-ups.

Tenant attraction strategy

Property owners may have a deliberate plan to attract a specific tenant to complement the larger retail mix. In several instances, it was found that property owners had turned down offers from credit-worthy formula retail tenants offering more competitive rents and elected instead to wait for a particular operator perceived to better complement neighboring uses.



Vacant Storefront Tax

Site-specific Causes for Vacancies

Development/lease negotiation

Some vacancies are the result of owners seeking to develop or rehabilitate properties. During this period, the space may or may not have a committed tenant, though lease negotiation can also contribute to prolonged vacancy.


High asking rents

Property reappraisals may increase real estate tax obligations to property owners, wherein they pass the additional expense on to their tenants through higher rents, thereby contributing to turnover/vacancies.

Speculative rents

Property owners located in central locations of high-demand may feel justified holding out for high rents, believing the long-term benefit outweighs short term losses.

Disinterested owner

Property owners in peripheral commercial areas may be less beholden to the community or feel less compelled to activate their space than those located in areas like Harvard Square and Central Square. 

Community opposition

In instances where a property owner procures a tenant, but the community opposes the use/operator, it can delay occupancy.



Vacant Storefront Tax



Recommendation

Implement a Vacant Storefront Tax to incentivize property owners to rehabilitate, lease, or sell their buildings within the Downtown area.

Vacant Storefront Tax Ordinances, implemented in numerous cities and towns across the country, requires that owners of vacant commercial properties submit information to a registry and pay an annual fee for each year that the property remains vacant.

In so doing, the municipality is able to track and monitor vacant properties, establish a dialogue with property owners to understand the nature of the vacancy, and develop strategies to help the owner either tenant the space, temporarily activate it, or else adhere to minimum standards for the appearance and maintenance of the property while vacant.

How is a vacancy typically defined?

Any property that is not legally occupied, is abandoned, or is not used for a period of at least 90 consecutive days or longer by occupants having custody or legal right of entry to such property; or is intermittently occupied by persons with legal right of entry but exhibits in the opinion of the Building Inspector dilapidated walls, roof or doors which fail to prevent the entry of a trespasser for a period of more than 7 days.

How is the registration fee determined/structured?

Initial and renewal registration fees are \$400 per storefront annually (based on estimated cost to the city of \$100 for quarterly inspections).



Vacant Storefront Tax

At what point must a vacancy be registered?

Within 90 days of last legal occupancy. Fees are due at time of registration. Registration requires a statement by the owner reflecting their efforts to regain occupancy.

Under what conditions can an owner seek a waiver/exemption?

Demonstration of financial hardship, or by agreeing in writing to display public art for a period of up to one year and subject to the availability of public art. Demonstration of financial hardship is subject to a 30-day review period and is reevaluated on a quarterly basis until property is leased or sold.

How must the owner/property manager maintain a registered vacancy?

Vacant buildings must be maintained in accordance with all applicable local and state Sanitary Codes, Building Codes and Fire Codes; must promptly repair all broken windows, doors, other openings; boarding up is only permitted as temporary measure unless the Building Inspector determines otherwise, in which case boards or coverings must be colored to blend with the existing building color scheme. The building shall be maintained so as to appear not to be vacant. Advertising materials must be approved by the Planning Director or comparable position.

What is the fine structure for failure to register and/or additional violations?

Failure to register or other infractions are fined at \$100 per day in total. Failure to pay registration or fines will result in a lien against the property.



Lease Assistance Incentive for New Businesses

Incentive programs are typically developed to target needs in specific areas. In Downtown Hartsville, there is a need to help property owners improve the exterior and interior of these historic buildings, coupled with the need to support and incentivize new retailers, restaurants, and cultural asset providers to locate in the Downtown area. A Lease Assistance Incentive program, provided by the County or IDB, provides this direct support in a targeted and strategic way.

Purpose of Lease Assistance Incentive

The Rent/Lease Assistance Incentive Program for New Businesses is an incentive designed to provide financial assistance in the form of a rent reimbursement to targeted businesses that are wishing to locate within a targeted area of the Downtown area, specifically within the Business Improvement District boundaries. This incentive is provided to help reduce the initial monthly lease rates that the business would pay and assist them through the first few months of operation. These early months are generally the months that businesses incur the greatest costs with the least amount of income in their new location.

Creating a Niche Marketplace

Recruiting and growing a density of like businesses can also create a niche destination marketplace. For example, if a Downtown continues to draw restaurants and unique boutiques and cultural uses, it will begin to emerge as a lifestyle destination. This also contributes to promotion and recruitment efforts to encourage continued small business growth and development.



Recommendation

Determine funding capabilities for a Lease Assistance Incentive program for new businesses in the Downtown Hartsville area.



Local Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Local Tax Increment Financing (Local TIF) permits the use of a portion of local property and sales taxes to assist funding the redevelopment of certain designated areas within your community. Areas eligible for Local TIF must contain property classified as a "Blighted", as defined by Texas Statutes.

Purpose

Local Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool for financing improvements in a downtown area designed to assist in the elimination of blight in economically distressed areas in Texas cities and counties. TIFs provide opportunities for cities to invest in blighted, distressed areas, and utilize the property tax increases occasioned by those investments to reinvest and reinvigorate the target area.

Typical Budget Items

TIF may be used to pay certain costs incurred with a redevelopment project. Such costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Professional services such as studies, surveys, plans, financial management, legal counsel;
- Land acquisition and demolition of structures;
- Rehabilitating, repairing existing buildings on site;
- Building necessary new infrastructure in the project area such as streets, sewers, parking, lighting; and
- Relocation of resident and business occupants located in the project area.

Supported by Local TIF Revenues

The idea behind Local TIF is the assumption that property and/or local sales taxes (depending upon the type of redevelopment project) will increase in the designated area after redevelopment, and a portion of the increase of these taxes collected in the future may be allocated by the municipality to help pay the certain project costs, partially listed above.



Property Tax Abatement

A tax abatement is a local agreement between a taxpayer and a taxing unit that exempts all or part of the increase in the value of the real property and/or tangible personal property from taxation for a period not to exceed 10 years.

What is Property Tax Abatement?

Tax abatements are an economic development tool available to cities, counties and special districts to attract new industries and to encourage the retention and development of existing businesses through property tax exemptions or reductions. School districts may not enter into abatement agreements.

Local governments often use property tax abatements to attract new industry and commercial enterprises and to encourage the retention and development of existing businesses. Incorporated cities, counties and special districts are allowed to enter into tax abatement agreements. School districts cannot enter tax abatement agreements. While tax abatements are short-lived, they can have a significant future impact.

Abating Property Taxes in Tennessee: An Essential Tool in the Economic Development Toolbox

Included in your flash drive is a white paper authored by G. Mark Mamantov that details how Tennessee governments can offer tax abatement, and how this is a useful tool and investment for revitalizing Downtowns.



Recommendation

Consider offering property tax abatement to property owners that invest a minimum amount of funds into revitalizing their properties, in accordance with Hartsville Downtown Design Guidelines.



American Rescue Plan

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Development/lease negotiation

Local governments will receive \$130.2 billion in aid to be split among counties, metropolitan cities and non-entitlement (localities with population less than 50,000) units of local government, as follows:

- Counties will receive \$65.1 billion in population-adjusted payments based on each county’s share of U.S. population, with additional adjustments for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recipients.

Trousdale County Allocation: approximately \$2,188,400

- Metropolitan cities will receive \$45.57 billion in payments.
- Non-entitlement units of local government (localities with a population of less than 50,000) will receive \$19.53 billion in payments distributed by individual states and funded by the U.S. Treasury. Each jurisdiction will receive population-adjusted payments based on such jurisdiction’s share of the state population, not to exceed 75 percent of its most recent budget as of Jan. 27, 2020.

Hartsville Allocation: approximately \$836,500



Recommendation

Utilize American Rescue Plan funds for Trousdale County and Hartsville to implement specific measures of this plan, primarily streetscape and infrastructure improvements, as well as supporting existing small businesses.



American Rescue Plan

How Can Funds be Used?

Funds must be used by Dec. 31, 2024 and only for the following purposes:

- to respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality;
- to provide premium pay to eligible workers of the locality that are performing such essential work, or to provide grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work;
- for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of the locality due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency (pending Treasury guidance stating otherwise, (many organizations have interpreted the legislative text to allow for replacing revenue that was lost, delayed or decreased as a result of COVID-19); or
- to make necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband infrastructure.

When will Funds be Available?

- For localities with populations over 50,000, funds should be available within 60 days. For localities with populations under 50,000, funds will be passed through their applicable state and will be made available to the locality within 90 days. States have no authority to withhold or place restrictions on funds that are passed through them to non-entitlement localities.
- Governments will receive first tranche of funds (equal to 50% of funds within 60-90 days of bill being signed; with second tranche being allocated 12 months later.
- Localities also must make periodic reports to the Treasury Department to account for funds expended.
- Funds must be used by Dec. 31, 2024.

3

downtown strategies

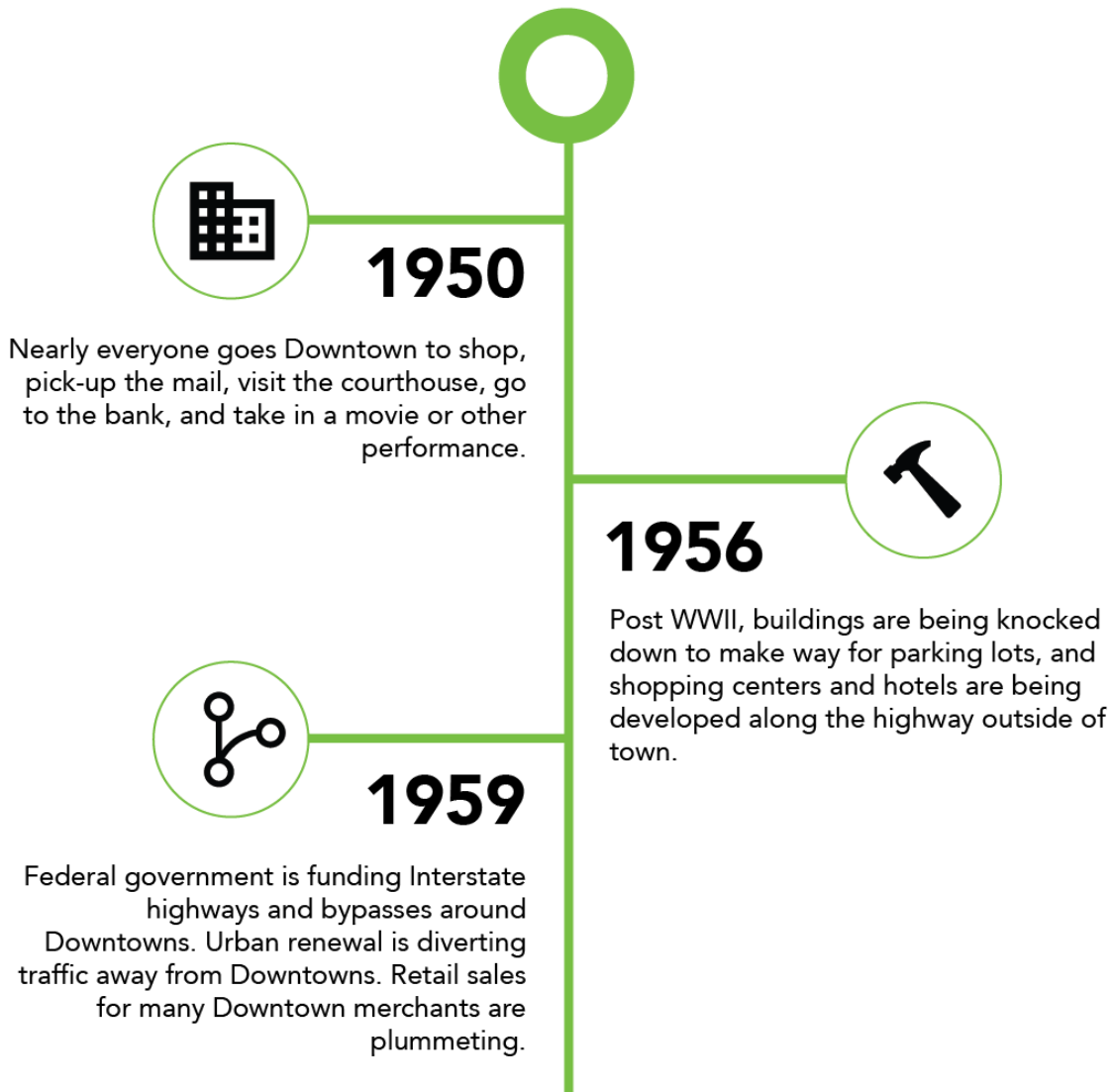
DESIGN

Thoughtful design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.



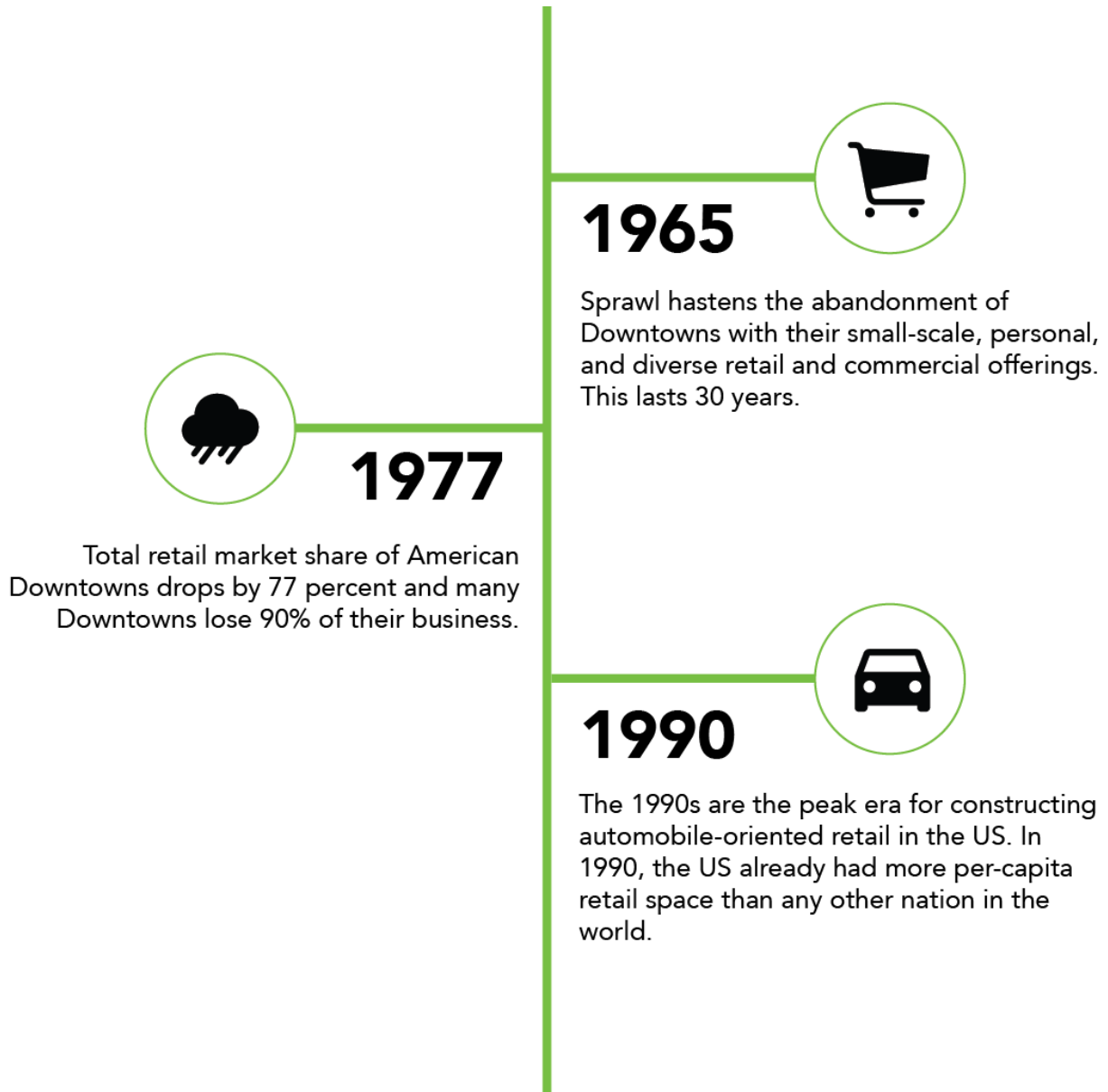
History of America's Downtowns

As we seek to redevelop and revitalize our Downtowns to their original vitality and significance, it's important to recognize how Downtowns functioned decades away, and how we got to this shift in perspective and priority.





History of America's Downtowns





History of America's Downtowns



1994

Amazon was founded and the Internet era begins. Consumer connections are greatly enhanced and more dynamic through the Internet as goods can be purchased anywhere from a computer.



1999

Declining urban crime and the New Urbanism prompts a change in market preference for living in walkable, urban places. Retailers begin to experiment with mixed-use town centers and "lifestyle centers" to recreate and/or mimic Main Streets and Downtowns.

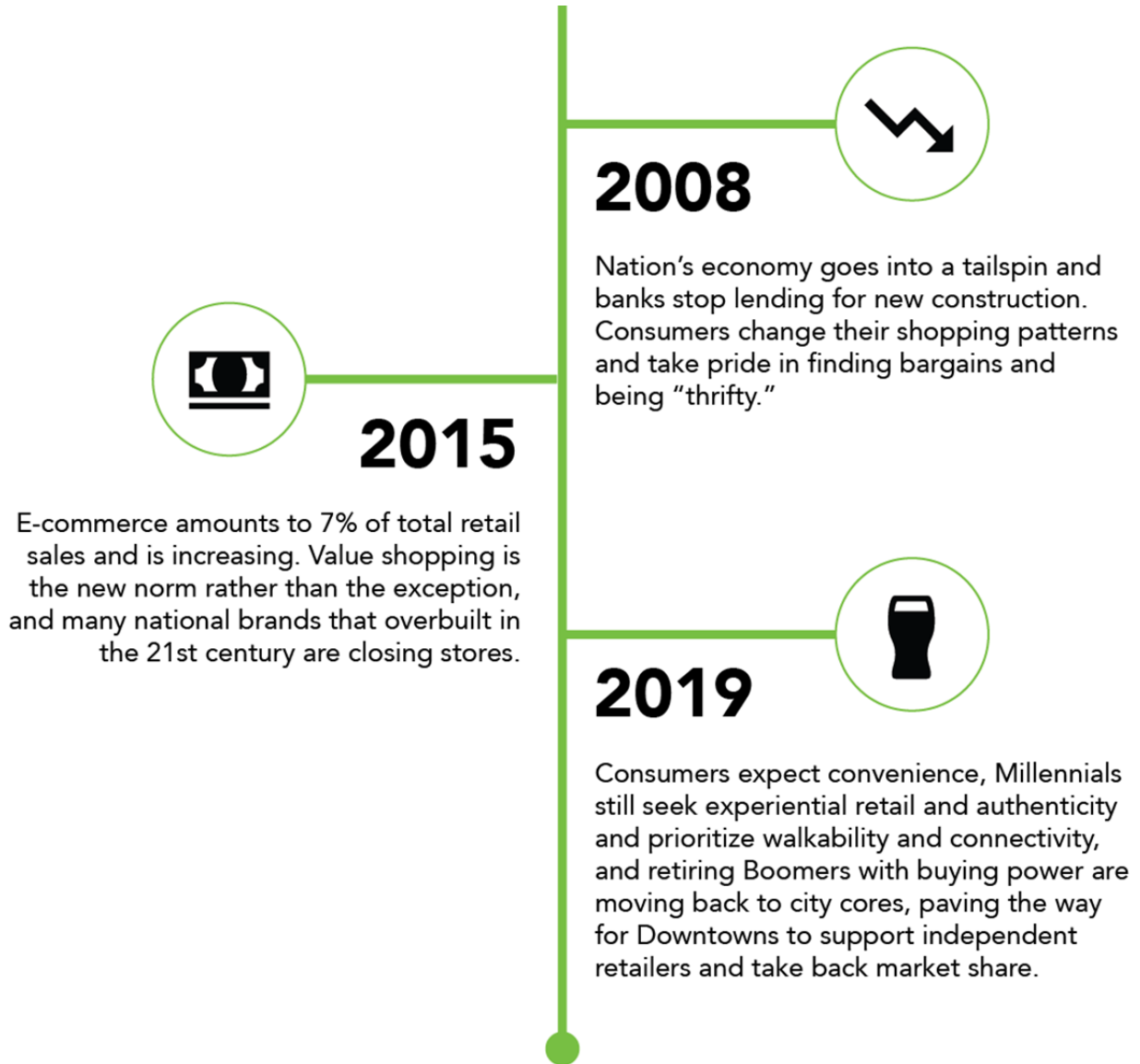


2005

Millennials seek more "authentic" experiences in their purchasing, marking a return to the mid-20th Century concept, when nearly all US shopping was local and unique to place.



History of America's Downtowns





Walkable Communities

Walkable communities are urban places that support walking as an important part of people's daily travel through a complementary relationship between transportation, land use and the urban design character of the place.

In walkable communities, walking is a desirable and efficient mode of transportation. Although nearly every human environment can accommodate some degree of walking, walkable communities give additional value and support to make walking an enjoyable experience.

Walkable communities have the following characteristics:

- A mix of land uses in close proximity to one another
- A mix of density including relatively compact developments (both residential and commercial)
- Building entries that front directly onto the sidewalk without parking between entries and the public right of way
- Building, landscape and thoroughfare design that is pedestrian-scale – in other words, that provides architectural and urban design features scaled and detailed to be enjoyed and appreciated by those who are traveling slowly and observing from the sidewalk at street level
- Thoroughfares designed to serve the activities generated by the adjacent context in terms of the mobility, safety, access and placemaking functions of the public right of way
- A highly connected, multimodal circulation network, usually with a fine “grain” created by relatively small blocks providing safe, continuous and balanced multimodal facilities that capitalize on compact urban development patterns and densities.

These principles and characteristics are the qualities found in urban places where development pattern, intensity and design combine to facilitate frequent walking and transit use. These same techniques and patterns can be applied to rural or non-urban contexts with adjustments of policy and perspective.



DESIGN

Complete Streets

By planning, designing, and constructing **Complete Streets**, communities of all sizes – whether rural hamlets, small towns, or booming metropolises – are able to provide the quality access to jobs, health care, shops, and schools their residents deserve, while also achieving greater economic, environmental, and public health benefits.

A **Complete Streets** approach can provide a more effective and balanced transportation system for the nearly 49 million Americans who live in rural areas and small towns.

Complete Streets are important in helping town centers and Main Streets thrive by improving street connectivity and allowing everyone, whether on foot, bike, or public transportation, to reach community focal points. Many smaller communities do not control their Main Streets; often, the state Department of Transportation does. Construction or widening of Main Streets that function as state highways takes its toll on pedestrian safety and can have a negative impact on small-town economies. In these cases, Complete Streets policies at the local level help communicate the community's vision, and policies at the state level ensure safe, accessible, and attractive streets. Creating Complete Streets can facilitate reinvestment and economic development in the heart of a small town.

Accommodate All Travel Choices

The needs of everyone are considered in the design of Complete Streets, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Of Americans over the age of 50, 40% report a lack of sidewalks in their neighborhoods, 55% say there are inadequate bike lanes and paths, and 48% feel that there is no comfortable place to wait for a bus. By adopting Complete Streets policies, communities are better able to address the needs of all residents.



DESIGN

Complete Streets

Are Good For Business

Adding a bicycle lane on San Francisco, CA's, Valencia Street resulted in a 60% increase in sales at local businesses. Providing better access to people who walk, take transit, and ride bicycles means encouraging more people to visit and shop on a street.

By making all travel options attractive, Complete Streets can help reduce congestion costs, improve real estate values, and create more jobs.

Encourage Active Living

Active communities are healthy communities. On streets with sidewalks, 65% of residents are more likely to walk for exercise or to nearby destination. Easy access to transit and networks of connected bicycle lanes encourage physical activity and can help reduce health care costs.

Save You Money

Of trips in urban areas that are under one mile, 65% are made using cars. Approximately 18% of household incomes (and up to 20% in car-dependent areas) are spent on transportation and much of this money goes directly to the gas pump. By 2020, Americans will spend an estimated \$260 billion on gasoline in one year. Walking, bicycling, and taking public transit all help individuals save money by reducing their dependence on gasoline.

Improve Your Community

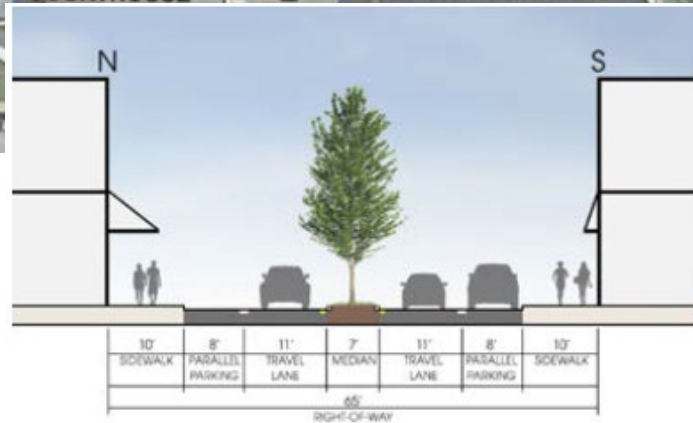
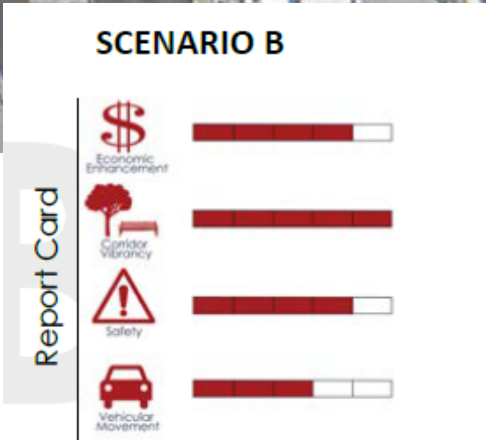
Investments in walking, cycling, and transit projects attract new residents and young professionals to communities. These projects improve public safety, reduce carbon emissions, and help residents feel connected to their neighbors. Streets that are designed around pedestrians can help reduce the risk of injury by as much as 28%.



DESIGN

Complete Streets

Downtown Connectivity Plan



Recommendation

Utilizing American Rescue Plan funds, implement Scenario B streetscape option from the Downtown Connectivity Plan to enhance walkability and streetscapes in Downtown Hartsville.



Key Streetscape Amenities



Recommendation

As budget allows, incorporate enhanced streetscape elements, many from the Downtown Connectivity Plan, into the Downtown area to improve pedestrian experience. Pitch these projects to local civic organizations as funding/partnering opportunities.

The key is to create and support people-oriented streets that mitigate suboptimal development patterns and the need for expensive infrastructure, increase walkability, and encourage investment and entrepreneurship, all with the goal of a harmonious, safe, and cost-effective balance of people's and vehicular needs.

Street Trees

Street trees and other landscaping not only provide aesthetic enhancements to a street, but also help mitigate air pollution, provide shade and lower temperatures, and provide opportunities for better stormwater control. Proper maintenance is key to the success of planted areas. Opportunities for widening tree belts and narrowing streets should be considered whenever roads are reconstructed.

Planters and Hanging Baskets

Plants add color and vibrancy to a streetscape, create insect habitats, and help mitigate stormwater runoff. Incorporating edible plants can also make the planters a source of fresh fruits and vegetables for local restaurants or residents. Consult with botanists and gardeners in your community to help identify the plants that will thrive in your climate and setting. Before planting, be sure to have a maintenance plan in place and a dedicated agency or volunteer group who will take care of the plants and flowers on schedule.

Street Lighting

Street lighting is a key organizing streetscape element that defines the nighttime visual environment in urban settings. Street lighting includes roadway and pedestrian lighting in the public right-of-way. Street light poles and fixtures can also create a defining visual characteristic during daylight hours.



Key Streetscape Amenities

Banners

Banners create visual interest in the streetscape, help support the district's image and events, and promote community pride. Banner design should be consistent with your Main Street brand and the overall design vision for the commercial district to create a consistent and cohesive visual. To create an opportunity for public engagement, you could install temporary banners that have been designed locally or voted on by community members.

Public Art

Artwork in public spaces can help create a distinct sense of place and offer an excellent opportunity to engage the community and support local artists. In some cases, they can even be a traffic calming measure or “mental speed bump,” as placemaking expert David Engwicht¹ describes them. Placement, construction, and materials are crucial—take time to think through what makes the most sense for your district.

Seating

Benches and other outdoor seating options not only provide resting places for people in your commercial district while they socialize or wait, but also offer a visual cue to drivers and potential pedestrians alike that a street puts people first. Bench placement is as important as design—locate them at regular intervals in places where people will feel comfortable sitting on them (e.g. not next to a trash can). Moveable seating options, on the other hand, make it easier for people to find their own perfect placement, creating impromptu gathering spaces in plazas or parks.

Trash Receptacles

Well-maintained and well-placed trash receptacles are essential to a clean and attractive Main Street. If people have to walk more than half a block to throw away trash, most will not do it. Trash bags should be simple for sanitation workers to remove yet be secure and resistant to vandalism and wind.



Key Streetscape Amenities

Water Features

Fountains and other water features can add interesting and engaging visual elements to a public space. They not only add a calming auditory element to your streetscape but can actually mask or cover up unwanted noise.

Family Friendly Amenities

Providing family-friendly amenities, such as recreational facilities, playgrounds, and splash pads, can make your commercial district a fun and engaging place for all ages. Providing pet-friendly amenities, such as water bowls and connections to dog parks or dog runs, can also encourage people to stay and hang out.

Charging Stations & Public Wi-Fi

Offering free charging stations and free WiFi is a good way to get people to come and spend time in your community's public spaces. Providing WiFi as an amenity can facilitate social interaction during some solitary activities, support communities during disasters, promote tourism throughout the town, and allow users to easily research Main Street destinations and access online services at all times.

Outdoor Dining

One of the easiest ways the private sector can contribute to creating a more vibrant commercial district is by providing outdoor dining options. Outdoor seating, tables, and advertising (e.g. sandwich boards) give the impression that something is going on in the district, while providing an additional safety measure by adding more eyes on the street. When outdoor seating is allowed, seating areas need to be wide enough to be comfortable, while at the same time not hindering the flow of pedestrian traffic.



Design Guidelines

Design guidelines help strengthen the character of the built environment and enhance property values by improving the quality of development and by making Downtown a more desirable place to live, work and play. Design guidelines help preserve a cohesive character and also help clarify the community's expectations for new development.

In many communities, Design Guidelines are codified and meant to manage alterations and new construction in a Downtown area. For Downtown Hartsville, we recommend developing basic style guidelines first that provide direction and visual evidence of successful installation of appropriate signage and awnings, provide a paint palette for unified and cohesive color schemes for façade improvements, and suggest appropriate use of potted plants and other storefront enhancements.

The following color scheme was derived from Downtown Hartsville's existing historical inventory and natural resources and features historically appropriate colors and tones.



Recommendation

Create a "Design Guidelines" booklet to showcase preferred and recommended styles of façade improvements and design alterations within the Downtown district.



DESIGN

Design Guidelines: Exterior Paint Palette



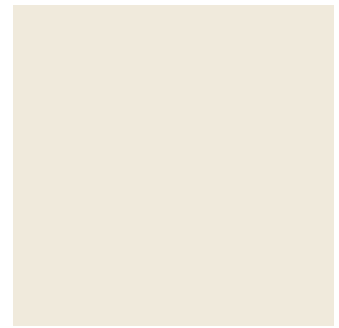
Bunglehouse Blue
SW 0048



Black Magic
SW 6991



Lanyard
SW 7680



Dover White
SW 6385



Cajun Red
SW 0008



Urbane Bronze
SW 7048



Dutch Tile Blue
SW 0031



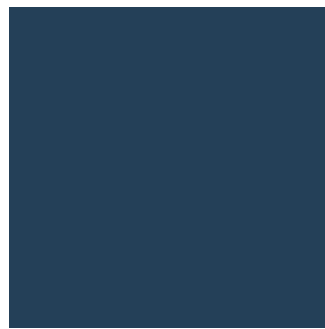
Gallery Green
SW 0015



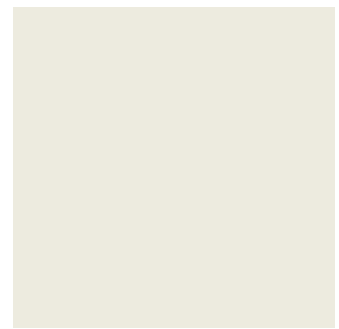
Cut the Mustard
SW 6384



Light French Gray
SW 0055



Salty Dog
SW 9177



Alabaster
SW 7008



Historic Preservation



Recommendation

Promote the benefits of federal tax credits to property owners while supporting rehabilitation and redevelopment of historic properties in the Downtown area.

Benefits of being listed in the National Register include:

- Potentially stopping the damage or destruction of registered places by requiring state or federally permitted/funded/licensed projects to examine alternatives
- Offering a federal income tax incentive for rehabilitating income-producing places.
- Offering a property tax assessment freeze incentive for rehabilitating single-family, owner-occupied residences
- Increasing awareness and appreciation of registered places

Being listed in the National Register DOES NOT:

- Require private property owners to obtain prior approval to change their property when using private, city or county funds
- Require private property owners to preserve or restore their registered place
- Block state or federally funded/permitted/licensed projects when these are desired by the owner and shown to be in the public interest

Rehabilitation Tax Credits are dollar-for-dollar reductions in income tax liability for taxpayers who rehabilitate historic buildings. Credits are available from the federal government. The amount of the credit is based on total rehabilitation costs. The federal credit is 20% of eligible rehabilitation expenses. Tennessee is one of only a handful of states that currently do not offer a state historic tax credit.

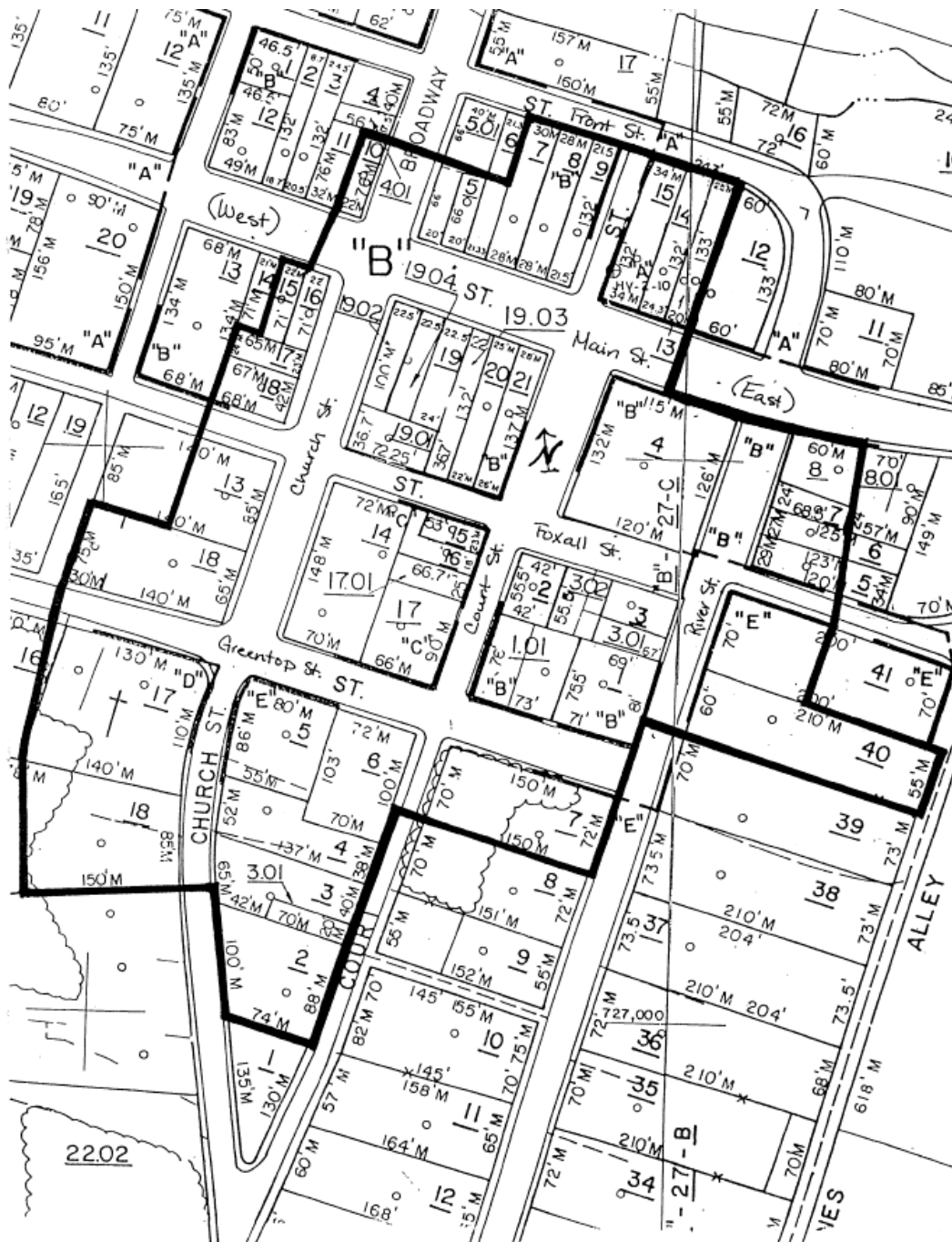


DESIGN

downtown strategies

Historic Preservation

Hartsville Historic District





Activating Vacancies with Art

Reimagining how vacant storefronts are viewed by the pedestrian, such as by installing public art in windows or painting boarded up windows with murals, residents and visitors begin to view the block or Downtown area as interesting, rather than dead.

Storefront Art Programs

During the Great Recession, as the U.S. retail economy suffered the effects of the market collapse and rising unemployment, public officials and arts administrators in cities around the country noticed a problem on their streets: empty storefronts. And many of those leaders, in an attempt to bring attention and activity to darkened windows and shuttered spaces, decided to fill the vacancies with art.

The concept wasn't new: **Retailers have always displayed their wares creatively in shop windows**, artists and arts organizations had used storefronts as their canvas in the past, and more commercially focused pop-up shops had been a trend for nearly a decade by the time the recession hit. Not all of the vacancies were new, either: Many storefront programs targeted spaces that had sat empty for years or even decades, in neighborhoods that had already been struggling before the economy dealt an additional blow. But fueled by the recession, art in storefronts proliferated in the late 2000s and early '10s, in cities big and small.





Activating Vacancies with Public Art



Recommendation

Engage local artisans to implement a storefront art initiative until vacancies are filled.



Unanticipated effects of a storefront art program is the **sense of community** created in the spaces where art is installed.

Projects such as this not only provide artists and other relative entrepreneurs with critical business and retail experience through public art and pop-ups, but the locations can become a 'hang out' space in the best sense of the phrase.



4

downtown strategies

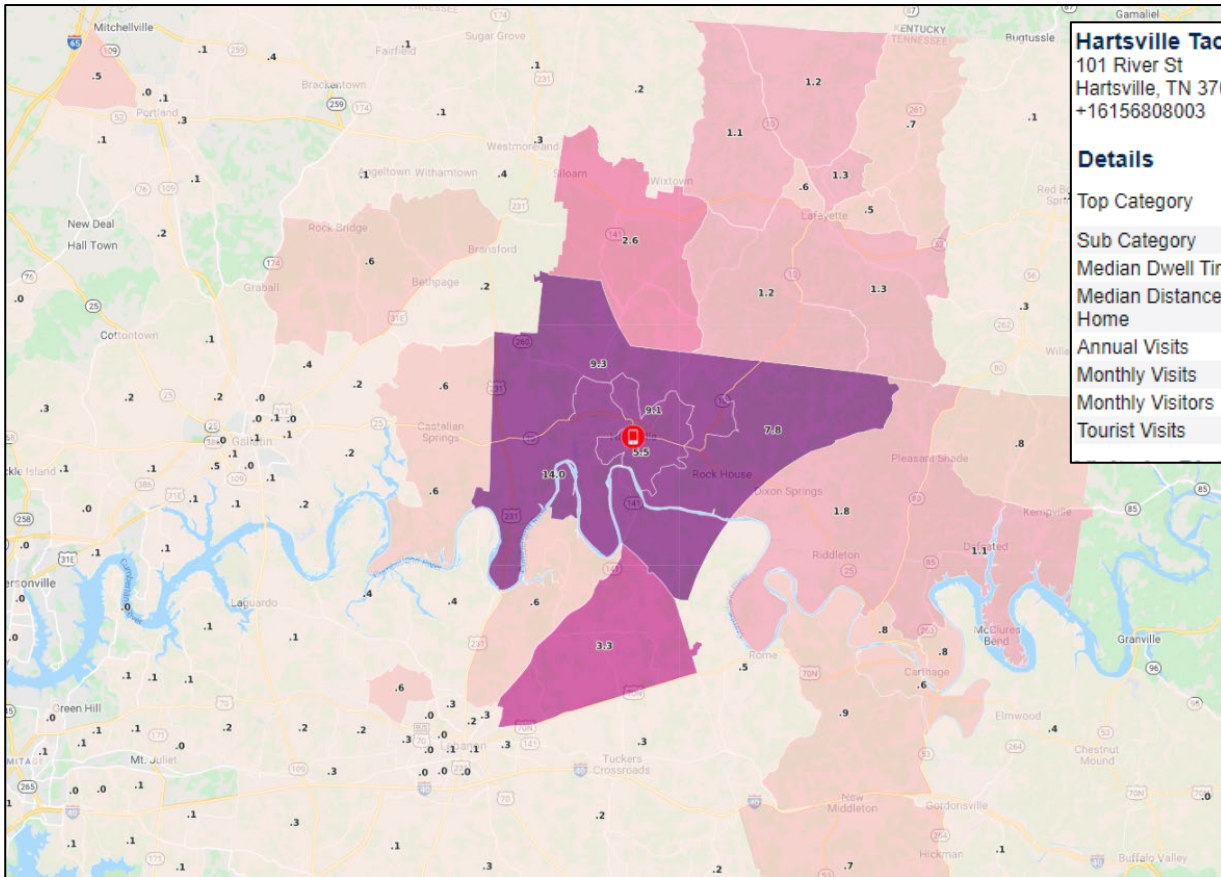
TOURISM & PROMOTION

Smart promotion initiatives position your Downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.



TOURISM & PROMOTION

Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



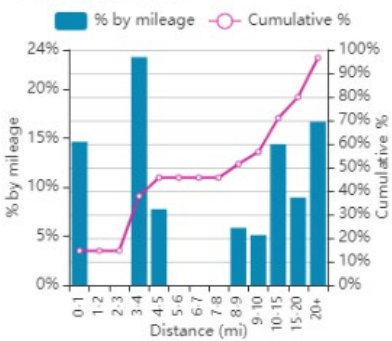
Hartsville Taco Co
 101 River St
 Hartsville, TN 37074
 +16156808003



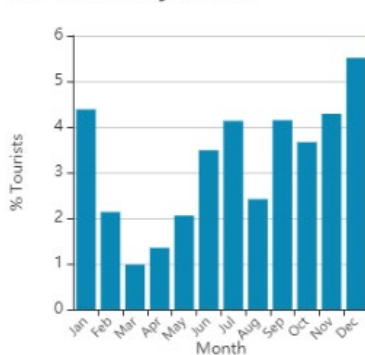
Details

Top Category	Restaurants and Other Eating Places
Sub Category	Full-Service Restaurants
Median Dwell Time	35.67 min
Median Distance from Home	6.9 miles
Annual Visits	5,372 visits
Monthly Visits	448
Monthly Visitors	261
Tourist Visits	3.4%

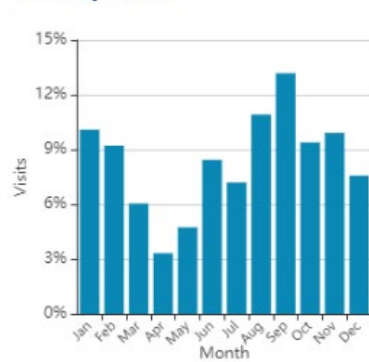
Visits by Distance



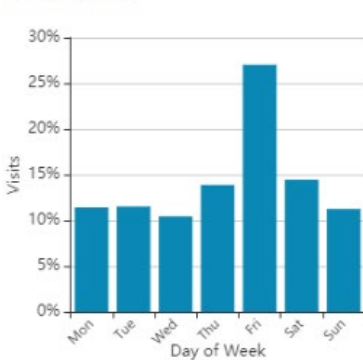
% Tourists by Month



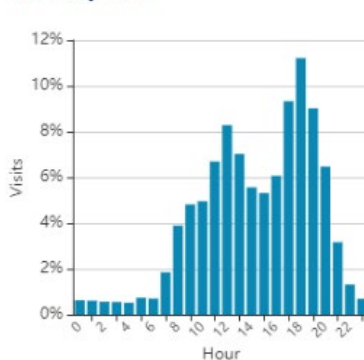
Visits By Month



Visits by Day



Visits By Hour





Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding in Downtown landscapes proves to be critical beyond basic navigation. Identification and information represented in elements such as monuments, directional systems, directories, interpretive and even regulatory signs enrich our experiences with Downtown environments.

In order to create a successful wayfinding system, even in an age of smartphones and GPS, physical wayfinding elements and systems strengthen brands by improving the legibility, navigation, understanding, and accessibility of the environment.

Wayfinding Signage Systems

- Reinforce an area's defining history, architecture, and landmarks
- Give less prominent districts and destinations a much-needed boost
- Help the public find parking, improve traffic flow and ease the transition between car, pedestrian and transit use
- Reduce visual clutter with clear, consolidated and on-brand information and identity

The following is a set of signage features an example of a well implemented comprehensive signage system:



Recommendation

In Hartsville, wayfinding signage should be strategically implemented to provide directional navigation to and from key destinations such as Downtown, parks, the river, and other tourism attractions.



Comprehensive Wayfinding Signage

Provided is an example of a comprehensive wayfinding signage system example. The system begins with welcome signs at the edge of the municipality and follow thereafter with large directional signs that reduce in size as the traveler's speed reduces and as he nears the interior of the community.

Example of well-designed comprehensive system





Sign Consolidation



Recommendation

Consolidate existing and new wayfinding signage for a more seamless visitor experience and a more aesthetically pleasing view of the Downtown.

Before



After





Retail Promotion Strategies



Recommendation

Incorporate retail promotion strategies into Downtown Hartsville's program of work to encourage activity throughout the day, especially in the evenings.

After 5 Events

One of the biggest ongoing complaints from the public about small-town downtowns is that stores close at or before 5:00 pm, making it difficult for working patrons to shop locally. Create a Facebook 'event' for an After 5 Shopping Night. Hold these event nights when stores are typically not open after 5 pm. By creating a Facebook Event, you'll also see "who's going" which can help you build a list of local shopping supporters. A key benefit of Facebook Events is that when a "friend" says they are "going" to an event, their friends will also learn about it too. Facebook Events are simple ways to crowd source for events.

Mini Performance Hubs

Convert one or two parking spaces into mini performance 'amphitheaters' with a summer deck feel, complete with wood benches and plants. This can constitute a single amenity to add to existing events, or it can become a concert series in and of itself. Too often, parking spaces are converted to outdoor cafe spaces in the summer only, or as a response to COVID. But these are somewhat limited options for downtowns with few restaurants. Mini deck amphitheaters can add excitement and amenity to your downtown year-round and for multiple purposes.



Retail Promotion Strategies

Versatile Signage

Work with local retailers to install professionally branded sandwich board signs in front of their business. These signs are extremely adaptable: they can feature specials, words of humor, social media promotions, and most importantly, they provide readable content at sidewalk-level for pedestrians who don't always look left or right in a storefront window. They also give visual evidence that there is vitality and commerce in the business district.

Cooperative Promotion

Focus on the comparative aspects of retailing in the district, clustering stores that are in the same category and can be promoted together. Whether it's a wine tasting event for ladies night, where participants can pop-in to each participating store to taste a unique wine and do a little shopping while they're there, or a seasonal event like Christmas Open House, promoting retailers together within the Downtown District begins to brand downtown as a retail destination.

Incorporate Public Wi-Fi Zone Downtown

As Downtowns move to positioning themselves as destinations, rather than just an attractive place to drive-through, the need for a dedicated, public, free wi-fi zone becomes more prevalent. A free wi-fi zone encourages residents and visitors to stay in the Downtown area longer, and it allows them to search for restaurants and boutiques nearby, and better yet, gives them a strong connection to post photos or comments about their experience in your community, which furthers efforts of marketing of messaging. In addition, the zone can be set-up such that a landing page featuring a Downtown map and list of businesses is the first page that pops-up on connected devices.



Messaging & Branding

A strong place brand helps a place compete in the global marketplace. A business or a potential resident or a visitor can go anywhere they want today, so articulating differentiating and unique characteristics is important to attracting investment, people and capital to your place. A well-articulated place branding strategy strengthens a community's sense of place, because it creates alignment between the language and messages created for and by business, community and visitors. When those three are aligned, there's true resonance.

Here are seven ways to start to define your city's brand the right way and put it on the map:

Inventory Your Assets

What makes your city distinct from anywhere else? Assets span the gamut from signature foods like Chicago deep-dish pizza and Philly cheesesteak, to historical and cultural sites like the Alamo or Graceland, to major industries like the auto industry that gave rise to Detroit's nickname as the Motor City. Other important assets are unique annual events like Tampa's Gasparilla Pirate Festival, and even the vibe of your Downtown or entertainment district, such as Miami's famous South Beach.

Keep it Real

Branding is not about pretending to be something you're not. It's about revealing, packaging and promoting awareness about what you intrinsically are. Asheville and Santa Fe both have established their positions as cities with a thriving and unique arts scene. Austin has staked its reputation as the "Live Music Capital of the World," and its now-famous "Keep Austin Weird" slogan speaks to its eclectic mix of people, culture and entertainment. Don't try to be all things to all people. Put your city's real face forward, and those who want what you have to offer will be drawn in.



Messaging & Branding

Focus Your Message

Especially if you're a small city, focus your energies on a single reason to visit. It may be great hiking trails, a top bass fishing spot, the most authentic Southern greens and grits, or a famously good Bluegrass scene. This increases the chances that people who are interested in that find you in a Google search. Mount Dora, FL is a great example of a small city that draws visitors for its Craft Fair and then wins them over with its other local charms.

Create a Sense of Place

Innovative communities are using placemaking to reimagine public spaces in ways that promote cultural, social, behavioral and economic connections. Bourbon Street and Times Square are quintessential examples of placemaking, which help to define those cities' brands. But parks, town centers, outdoor markets, lakes and even streets can have a powerful, positive placemaking effect. In Florida, the branding of the City of Tavares as "America's Seaplane City" has been an economic and community-building success.

Deliver the Experience You Promise

Although a great slogan can help to focus and galvanize awareness of what makes a city unique and exceptional, it would be a mistake to think that branding is merely a slogan and a logo. Think of branding as a promise that you deliver through an experience. What is the experience of your city's brand? Friendly? Relaxed? Bike-friendly? Exciting? Eclectic? Easy to navigate? How can you add touch points that make that experience more reliable?



Messaging & Branding

Involve Your Community

A sustainable branding effort requires broad buy-in. Don't create your city's brand in a vacuum or a boardroom. Create a process to involve influential community leaders and residents at all levels, including small business owners, and they will become enthusiastic brand ambassadors. Look for and promote ways for all stakeholders to benefit from tying into the city brand.

Give it Legs

Once you define your city's brand, extend and support it with a comprehensive, ongoing and multi-faceted strategy. Dallas's "Big Things Happen Here" campaign is a good example of a branding effort with diverse and sustained components, from experiential elements that citizens and visitors can interact with (physical displays in which people form the "I" in "Big") to live events and heavy social media engagement to an online store that sells branded products to live events.

A strong brand identity can yield a big and long-term return on investment for a city. To ensure that kind of ROI, start by defining and refining what makes your city the special place it is.



Recommendation

Engage a consultant to facilitate a branding exercise for the City of Hartsville, establishing a strong, clear brand for the Downtown, County, and its path forward.



Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Should you be using Facebook to promote your community to residents and tourists?

68% of U.S. adults use Facebook and 51% of them use it several times a day.

The short answer? **Yes.** These tips and strategies will help you get the most out of your Facebook marketing efforts.

Create a Captivating Profile

A **profile picture** is the first point of contact your audience interacts with on your page. Easy recognition of the picture is key to being liked and found on Facebook search. Cluttering a profile picture with slogans, contact details is not recommended. Consistency with your branding is important for the coherence of your image.

Cover photos are another element representing your brand and speak loud to your customers as the first impression. Your cover photo should be high quality, engaging and eye catching. Don't clutter it with texts and be sure to change it often or during your campaigns.

Craft a Complete 'About' Page

This is the most visited section of your Facebook profile and informs your audience about your brand and values. Whenever visitors want to find out more information about your business, they head to this section. It is important to give them a clear and concise snapshot of what your brand is about. **Your mission, vision, your story, company information and any other relevant details that best showcase your brand.** Facebook allows you to customize sections that record your milestones, awards, etc.



Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Customize the 'Call to Action' Button on your Page

A **call-to-action button** is what prompts people to take a certain action. The button prompts things like 'Sign Up', 'Call Now', 'Book Now', 'Watch Video', etc. and users are offered the possibility to customize it to different URL destinations they consider pertinent. As a marketer, this gives you the opportunity to drive traffic from your Facebook page to your site easily. This can be added by simply clicking on the page and clicking on the 'Add a Button' box, choose which one you want to create and insert the URL you want to direct visitors to. Facebook Insights will help you measure and report the effectiveness of the CTA button.

Know your Audience

Facebook demographics are used to ensure you know your customer personas. They are continuously evolving hence the need to have tools to help you measure, report and keep track of the changes. Knowing your customers' behaviors will help you tailor your marketing campaigns and promotions to target them. **The below questions can help you better understand your ideal customers:**

- What is your brand user demographic? Their age, education background, gender, income level, etc.
- Which is the goal of your Facebook campaign? This helps you target the right audience that has the highest chances of being interested in your offer.
- Which is your competitive advantage? What differentiates you from other Downtowns?

Create Engaging Content

One of the most important Facebook rules is **creating content that probes your audience to take action**. Developing an engaging relationship with your followers is what will determine their interaction with your brand. As content creator, you should not just stick to general statements, opinions and facts but be bold and spice up your content with some fun. Questions, photos that ask questions, and fill-in the blanks are some examples of content that entice people to act.



Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Don't Forget to Engage

Respond to conversations in the right rhythm and cadence, **be responsive and social**. Going out of your way to make your audience feel important makes them bond with your brand. Quick feedbacks on Facebook are highly appreciated especially in the early stages of community building. This shows the brand commitment to customer service and smooth communication with its customers.

Create a Balanced Posting Strategy

How frequent you publish posts and when you post them is vital for your Facebook marketing activity. Posting too often might irritate your followers. On the other hand, not posting frequently enough might reduce your chances of credibility and authenticity. Striking a good balance between the two is the key to a strong brand presence.

Facebook insights will greatly help with this as once you have observed the performance of your previous posts you may customize the frequency, timing and strategy as required. **Here are some tips to help as you start off:**

- 1 Afternoons and evenings are the times of the day when most people visit their Facebook account so post between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
 - *However, avoid being robotic by posting at the exact time daily.*
- 2 Posting twice a day is adequate to create awareness and gain post impressions. This ensures consistency and originality without looking spammy.
- 3 Always include images where possible.

There are apps and platforms that allow you to schedule posts in advance, so you're not on the clock 24/7.



Mistakes to **Avoid** in Facebook Marketing

Facebook gives organizations a platform to showcase its character, promote events, and connect with its users.

But with these benefits comes the potential for mistakes that can damage your brand.

What Not to Do

- 1 Never have a personal profile to represent a brand. Create an authentic Facebook Business Page.
- 2 Never publish personal content on your brand page. Always assign page roles on need-to basis and post as a brand not as a private person.
- 3 Never spam your followers. Aim to be classy, yet perceptive.

It is of outmost importance for all brands to understand how to properly manage a Facebook business page. The Facebook business page best practices previously listed aid to tight the connection between communities and brands. You get noticed, followed and engage with your target audience creating a reliable pool for lead generation.

But as Facebook is continuously evolving, you need to be up to date and willing to adapt and try different strategies to see massive success and results for your business.



Social Media Content Calendar



Recommendation

Using the template provided, create a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and/or annual content calendar to pre-plan social media posts and ensure topical and timely information is shared frequently enough to be maximally effective for your brand and efforts.

Organizing and managing a posting schedule

Creating a posting schedule that works is a process of constant experimentation and refinement. In the end, this pays off not only with a social media content calendar that delivers results, but also by helping you continually gain a better understanding of what your audience is seeking. As you continue to fill in your social media calendar, play around with different posting times and the number of times per week you post. You'll gain tremendous insight into what works specifically for your audience.

Below are suggestions based on the most up-to-date research on how often to post to each social media platform for maximum visibility:

Facebook pages: 1-2 per day

Twitter: 3-10 times per day

Instagram: 1-3 times per day

Instagram Stories: 2-5 times per day

Pinterest: 3-20 times per day

LinkedIn: 1-2 times per week



Social Media Content Calendar

Tracking and analyzing your social media content calendar

Account for specific campaigns across different social platforms. Different social media platforms serve different purposes, so you should plan strategically when looking to increase the reach of a given post on other platforms. It's important to remember that just because a post is popular on one platform, doesn't mean it will perform well on the others—for example, a post that does well on Instagram may need to be reused as the featured image for a more text-heavy post on LinkedIn, rather than being reshared without any changes.

Follow-up on your scheduled posts by establishing a process of responding and engaging with your audience.

As the marketer, your time is too valuable to spend deciding what to post on every single day. A well-planned out social media content calendar lets you use your time to plan for the future and focus on other aspects of your marketing strategy.

Benefits of using a Social Media Content Calendar

- Ensures you're sharing a good mix of content types.
- Guarantees people who are logged in at the same time every day don't see the same posts over and over.
- Maximizes the impact and reach of your content.
- Helps you recognize just how many event posts you're doing.

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downtown strategies

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Economic Vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.



Retail & Restaurant Mix



Recommendation

Formulate a team to focus on recruiting retailers and restaurants to Downtown Hartsville filling the categorical gaps listed below. If vacancies are at a minimum, focus on creating a prospect list to dispatch as soon as vacancies arise.

People love a main street, but the tired, dated look and incomplete tenant mix of many smaller downtowns—along with car-oriented streets—are a deterrent to revitalization. Small-to-midsized downtowns represent some of the best opportunities and biggest challenges for urban retail in the next decade.

Up to the 1950s, most Americans shopped, and sought services and entertainment in downtowns—large and small. Then a succession of strip malls, indoor malls, and big box stores captured most customers. Many middle-class households moved to the suburbs and suburban malls benefited from a coordinated tenant mix and management that downtowns lacked. The main streets and downtowns lost up to 90 percent of their business in the latter half of the 20th Century.

A return to urban living means that downtowns have an opportunity to regain some of their market share, if positioned properly.

The following are categories of businesses that show a propensity for success based on Market Analysis & Consumer Spending Patterns.

Hartsville should take steps to recruit these types of businesses from other areas of the City or from neighboring communities for expansion:



building supplies & garden



health & personal care



clothing & shoe stores



full & limited service restaurants



grocery



Recruiting Retail Downtown

Retail leads can be broken down into four general categories:

1 Existing Businesses within or near the business district

Often the best leads are found near home. Leads might include existing businesses seeking more space or a better location in the business district. The district's business owner survey as well as ongoing conversations and personal contacts of the recruitment team, chamber of commerce and other economic development professionals can help identify these leads.

2 Emerging Entrepreneurs

Downtowns and business districts are often attractive to independent businesses. Accordingly, leads might include home-based or garage-based businesses seeking more fitting space and a convenient location for their customers. These leads might include managers of existing businesses wishing to go into business on their own. Commercial lenders, business schools, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counselors, Main Street program business specialists, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), chamber of commerce and other public or private small business professionals should be asked to help identify these leads.

3 Existing Local or Regional Businesses

Local or regional businesses, particularly those that have branch stores and are ready to expand, are often excellent prospects. These business operators typically have a good knowledge of the market area, and may already have multiple stores. They are often interested in expansion as a way to improve their penetration of the market. These leads can be identified through your team's knowledge of the business mix in other communities in the region and information collected from your local consumer research. In addition, realtors, commercial brokers, sales representatives and suppliers that work within the region can be helpful. Sometimes ads in regional business, real estate and regional lifestyle periodicals can generate leads.

4 National Chains

If local or regional businesses are not interested in expanding, larger national chains can be contacted. It is important to be realistic about the kinds of chains that might be interested in a small community as their market, store size and parking requirements may preclude them from considering your district. Leads can be identified through directories and private databases listing chain site selection criteria and contacts. In addition, leads can also come from commercial brokers, trade shows, "deal making forums," and conferences such as those offered by the International Council of Shopping Centers.



Supporting Entrepreneurship



Recommendation

Work with property owners to encourage development of entrepreneur ready shell space in ground floor of vacant properties. Determine opportunity for local incentives from Trousdale County to accompany this effort.

What is Shell Space?

Shell space refers to a suite or floor within a building that has floor, walls, windows and a roof, but no interior improvements. It may also have some basic HVAC, plumbing and electrical.

Shell Condition Space Typically Does Not Include:

- Demising walls
- Doors, frames and hardware
- Ceilings
- Finishes including paint and flooring
- Millwork
- Mechanical Systems
- Electrical Power and Lighting
- Plumbing for restrooms and breakroom areas

Shell condition space is typically found in new construction but can also be found in older Downtown buildings if the landlord has demoed an existing suite or is looking to attract new tenants.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Supporting Entrepreneurship



downtown strategies

Developing Shell Space in Vacant Ground floor Property



A typical example of what you can expect from shell space in a new development.



Downtown Retail Incubator

Launching a retail business in a downtown storefront is a capital and knowledge intensive endeavor. Equally, Downtowns across the country are struggling to retain and attract tenants, with each new empty window display threatening the economic health of the street as a whole. Here, we explore how retail incubators can bridge the gap between capital-strapped retailers and empty storefronts.

Retail-focused Incubator Models

Like tech and entrepreneurial incubators, the retail-focused model is designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services, and networking connections. Local governments, non-profits and private businesses across the country are developing programs and spaces to seed downtown buildings with locally formed new businesses

Any retailer interested in opening a shop faces high costs. Capital is needed to cover a lease, inventory, location improvements, IT, staffing and marketing, among other expenses. Equally challenging can be maneuvering state and local requirements and building a customer base while managing the day-to-day of a business.

Program-based retail incubators help by providing technical assistance and mentorship as well as capital. These incubators are led primarily by downtown organizations or cities focused on nurturing and sustaining retail businesses for the overall economic health of the downtown core.



Downtown Retail Incubator

Case Study: Kalamazoo, MI

In 2009, downtown Kalamazoo, MI was fighting a battle to recruit and retain retailers. In a story familiar to many towns, the vibrancy of downtown was being challenged by recession and growing competition from big box retailers and lower-rent strip malls. Unable to convince established retailers to take the risk of opening an additional store in the evolving downtown, economic development officials turned to the promise of retail start-ups. But these start-ups, lacking the necessary resources and expertise, needed help.

The State of Michigan had passed an amendment to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Act in 2008 allowing DDAs to create, operate and fund retail business incubators. Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. (DKI) was the first to take advantage of the legislation that “targeted tenants who will provide goods or services that are not available or that are underserved in the downtown nearby” by establishing the Retail Incubation Program.

DKI’s Business Recruitment & Retention Committee managed the program which provided the following support to retail start-ups in downtown:

- 18 months of subsidized rent, incrementally reduced from a maximum of 50% or up to \$830 a month.
- Training in Merchandise Management, Marketing, Human Resources, Financial Management and Customer Service.
- Business mentoring from a successful downtown business.

Returns to the community were maximized by requiring that participants:

- Attend all of the training sessions.
- Obtain a bookkeeper or CPA deemed acceptable by the program.
- Provide sales, inventory and expense information to the program for macro tracking of downtown retail.
- Be open for business 6 days a week or 50 hours a week.



Downtown Retail Incubator

Case Study: Kalamazoo, MI (cont.)

The program was not tied to a single location but allowed a retailer to occupy any downtown space as long as the property owner agreed to the terms and conditions. Before store owners started out in one of the spaces, they received the types of assistance that have been proven to grow businesses — **training, mentors and money.**

In four years, the **street-level vacancy rate in Kalamazoo's downtown dropped from 20-percent to 2-percent.** As the program filled key locations with interesting, new retail concepts, business attitudes towards downtown changed.

Similar programs followed suit around Michigan and throughout the country and are still active today, including through the **Midland Michigan DDA and the Cudahy Wisconsin DDA.**

Program-based retail incubators have been effective, not necessarily because of specific subsidies, but because they coordinate financial support for new retailers with actions to address knowledge and networking gaps.

Further study is required to assess the long-term efficacy of the programs, which fortunately have been designed with the future in mind and are already collecting the data.



Recommendation

Explore the opportunity to create a Retail Incubator in Downtown Hartsville. Seek partnerships and establish a steering-committee to determine feasibility and to make a long-term plan.



Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

Many examples of how retailers are innovating for success come from big box retailers. While small business brick-and-mortars may struggle in the shadow of Walmart and other big box stores, they can benefit from exploring actions that many big box retailers are taking to innovate along with other strategies specific to medium and small business. Successfully retail businesses exhibit the following trends:

Integrate customer offerings across channels through omnichannel retail strategies.

There is an increasing emphasis on the omnichannel experience as businesses look for new ways to connect to customers offline and online. The rise of e-commerce has been a notable trend, accounting for up to 12% of the retail market in 2020. The omnichannel strategy relies on the concept of seamless shopping experience in brick and mortar stores along with a variety of digital channels, which provides the added value of both instore assets and online access. Walmart is looked to as the prime example of an omnichannel retailer that has upgraded brick and mortar stores resulting in increased foot traffic while also increasing its online offerings.

Make use of technology to strategically grow business. Develop technological capacity where needed.

Successful retailers are adapting to increasing technology use by consumers and using technology to streamline and create new ways of doing business. Large retailers are looking to engage with technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality. A great challenge for small retailers is keeping up with the fast pace of technological change. However, they can explore options, evaluate potential returns on investment, and take strategic steps to technologically innovate. From a customer-facing perspective, retailers can embrace mobile technology and mobile payment methods, use video marketing, use social media, and offer same-day delivery options and “buy online pick-up in store” services. From an operational perspective, businesses are anticipated to increasingly use POS (point of sale) technologies, operate on the Cloud, and utilize other digital tools such as Shopify and Comment Sold.



Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

Build a strong digital presence as a touch point for initial and recurring interaction with customers.

While not as widely noted as e-commerce as a trend, **digital-first retail** is arguably more influential than e-commerce. Digital-first retail is the growing tendency of consumers' shopping journeys to be influenced by digital channels, regardless of where the ultimate transaction takes place. Leading brands, from Apple to Nike to Walmart, are evolving into digital-first organizations. They're investing to create product content that serves as the bridge between the online and offline worlds, and helping consumers shop when, where and how they want. While e-commerce now accounts for approximately 12% of all retail sales, it's projected that web-influenced physical store sales are about five times online sales.

Invest in understanding the customer. One notable trend is customer experience.

Retailers are doing more to understand and engage the customer. One important trend is that customers are increasingly valuing experience. Customer experience has been called the next competitive battleground. The success of Apple, Lululemon, and Free People are attributed to creating a valued, personalized in-store customer experience. Technology provides an opportunity for retailers to understand and connect more directly with customers.

Strengthen brand engagement and build a base of loyal followers.

Lululemon and Free People are commonly cited examples of companies that have built strong brands based on quality and lifestyle. This branding has been attributed to not offering products at a discount, whereas other companies have trained customers to buy during regular product discount periods. However, other off-price retailers such as Ross and TJ Maxx take advantage of culture of bargain hunting and have survived their competitors. These retailers are examples of brand identities that have found a niche in consumer preference.



Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

Leverage consumer preference for uniqueness, authenticity and local flavor. Explore submarkets and consider engaging local institutions and community.

Consumer preference for uniqueness, authenticity, and local flavor is noted to be on the rise. Brick-and-mortar retailers and those on main streets are poised to capitalize on this trend. Related to this trend, local retail stores can benefit from awareness of the resources and efforts of local institutions and building relationships with local institutions and the community. Examples from cities where local businesses and main streets are invigorated communities creating strong local business associations; working with local agencies to support walkability, streetscape improvements, and residential and commercial use; renovating historical buildings in commercial districts; and attracting restaurants, breweries, and shops that contribute to local personality.

Are strategic about innovating ways of doing business.

Across trends, successful retailers are strategic rather than reactionary in finding innovative ways of doing business. They are evaluating business nuts and bolts and opportunities unique to them, right-sizing brick-and-mortar stores, carefully constructing brands, finding niche markets, finding new ways to serve the customer, creating new partnerships and connecting with expertise and networks. New technologies for most small businesses is not an either/or proposition. They can adopt the use of new technologies and still rely on the tried-and-true ways of doing business.



Recommendation

Partner with the Chamber to hold merchant training and workshops to encourage Downtown business owners to increase their level of operations, modernize their reliance on technology, and implement new and savvy ways to reach customers of all generations.



Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

The good news about tough economic times is that they breed ingenuity. Property owners and City Leaders need to think “inside the box” -- the vacant storefront, the empty warehouse, or the small office building abandoned by the busted start-up firm.

By thinking short-term instead of long-term lease, entertainment instead of shopping, farmers market instead of vacant lot, that space -- particularly in well located areas -- may be suited to new opportunities.

Short-term Leases

A short-term lease program activates vacant properties by introducing new, creative, and temporary retail locations with visual aesthetic. These programs can create an environment that engages customers and authenticates downtown as a vibrant space, ready for long-term investment.

Pop-ups

One type of short-term lease is a pop-up, featuring leases that usually last between six weeks and a year, with many non-seasonal retailers willing to sign month-to-month leases that could result in long-term tenancy. Rents for pop-up shops tend to be less expensive than those secured by traditional leases, sometimes by as much as 50% below lease value.

Of course, this concept works best when there is little or no space modification necessary. Generally, just adding desks and chairs or some kind of display shelving or fixtures is all that's required. And, these simple additions/changes can be easily implemented or erected and then torn down. Modifications are usually not a stumbling block because the tenant wants an easy move-in/move-out phase, and the landlord wants little or no refit between tenants.



Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

Event Space

If the vacant space is located in a central area, property owners can rent the commercial space for private events, until a suitable more permanent tenant is located. In many communities, there's a consistent demand for well-appointed venues for parties and corporate events, and commercial space owners can meet that demand. From fundraisers to art sales to parties to corporate events, vacant commercial property landlords can market their space for a variety of purposes.

Subdividing Ground Floor Storefronts into Smaller Parcels

A smaller retail space means lower overhead costs and allows retailers to quickly move inventory in and out of the store. It also ensures retailers keep their displays fresh and continually try new merchandising tactics. With an initial build-out investment, property owners can reimagine their existing storefront footprint, and subdivide into more, lower square footage spaces, increasing the vitality of the corridor, but also lessening the burden for entrepreneurs.

Reimagining Design of Vacant Space

A smaller retail space means lower overhead costs and allows retailers to quickly walk-up window restaurants feature no indoor dining space and facilitate a pedestrian-focused grab-and-go style experience. Locating a walk-up window restaurant adjacent to a parklet or a shared outdoor dining space is ideal for using public space in a collaborative way. This technique also backfills vacant space on a micro-level, while preserving non-storefront space for office space or other uses.

Vacancy Taxes

Local governments, wary of landlords who choose to keep their properties empty — sometimes for months and years in the hopes of landing a deep-pocketed tenant — can respond by enacting financial penalties against these proprietors. Arlington, Massachusetts began its measure in early 2017. It requires landlords to register with the city and charges them \$400 annually for each vacant storefront. When the fees were first levied, there were 17 empty storefronts in Arlington Center. Only six remained by the end of the year.



Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

Next Steps

The lack of open stores in neighborhoods decreases property values, which has a trickle effect of less foot traffic and even more vacancies. By keeping your storefront active, even through a short-term commitment, the surrounding area (and rents) will benefit as well.

Remember, recruiting new restaurants and retailers requires a holistic approach to Downtown revitalization and placemaking. Entrepreneurs and expanding businesses want to locate in neighborhoods with vitality and foot traffic. Residents and visitors don't often think to shop or dine in an area with shuttered retail and vacant storefronts. Which comes first and where should community leaders begin?

It begins with a strategic vision to not only identify new prospects for your Downtown, but to also address opportunities for expanding the aesthetic, vitality and vibrancy of the area.



Recommendation

Work with existing property owners with vacancies to explore these creative strategies for activating vacant space and supporting entrepreneurship.



What makes a good pop-up?

Well managed pop-ups are thoughtfully designed spaces, that allow for customers to interact with merchandise, try on options, and develop a connection with the brand. Pop-ups should be beautiful, mobile extensions of the brand. They should house remarkable experiences for customers, influencers, and employees.

Why are they effective?

They're experiential – Experiential Retail is a strategy used in the retail landscape to increase engagement, interest, and traffic in physical retail locations. It provides an opportunity for brands to connect in one-on-one interactions with their customers. Theoretically, these interactions happen in an environment where happy and powerful memories are being made. While the experience can take many forms, experiential retail usually includes some sensory, educational, and communal experiences with emotional connotations. So, through your experience-driven retail strategy, the brand becomes associated with those powerful memories.

They're temporary – the temporary nature of pop-up shops is baked right into the model. Temporary opportunities are often perceived as scarce and therefore develop a sense of urgency in a customer base. That's why big sales have a time limit. Customers need to come in fast, regardless of the obstacles, to take advantage of the sale. Pop-ups drive a similar phenomenon but instead of saving money, customers save themselves from FOMO (the fear of missing out).

They're inexpensive – When we talk about inexpensive options, we're typically talking about the total cost of ownership. The temporary nature of a pop-up means that you aren't paying the 10-year lease agreements common for most brick-and-mortar retailers, you aren't required to customize the space, and you aren't tied down to a single location. Beyond that, pop-ups are typically custom designs or DIY projects which gives an entrepreneur or brand much more flexibility to play with design, materials, and layout to value-engineer a budget.



Walk-up Window Restaurant Concepts



Recommendation

Work with a local architect to create a speculative walk-up window restaurant build-out design to share with popular restaurants and property owners in the area.

Walk-up window restaurants feature no indoor dining space and facilitate a pedestrian-focused grab-and-go style experience. Locating a walk-up window restaurant adjacent to a parklet or a shared outdoor dining space is ideal for using public space in a collaborative way.

This technique also backfills vacant space on a micro-level, while preserving non-storefront space for office space or other uses.





Open

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RESPONDING TO COVID-19

With Small Businesses suffering now more than ever in the midst of COVID-19, cities should prioritize support of entrepreneurs and encourage creative strategies for property owners to backfill current or forthcoming vacancies.



Contents: Resources for Small Businesses & City Leaders



Serve as a conduit between small businesses and available resources

Small businesses are overwhelmed, and information from the Federal government is constantly changing and updating. Support the community by serving as a local expert and conduit between these small businesses and resources included within this report.

Main Street America recently surveyed 1,600 Downtown commercial districts, comprised of over 300,000 small businesses. According to their forecasts released in April 2020, approximately **3.5 million businesses** are in danger of permanent closure over the next two months, while **7.5 million** are in danger of closing over the next five months as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Similarly, depending on geographic location, anywhere **between 50-75% of businesses responding indicated that they did not have a digital commerce presence** prior to COVID-19.

Your team at Downtown Strategies has created the following resources that will equip you with fresh and creative strategies and solutions and encourage you to take inspiration from best practices other communities have implemented to create a recovery and rebuild plan of your own:

- 2021 American Rescue Plan Summary
- 2021 Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act Summary
- 2020 CARES Act Summary
- Top Questions Answered: City Management & Funding
- Navigating COVID-19 for Small Businesses
- Small Business Financial Resources
- Plan Ahead: Start Today to Ensure Your Community is "Open for Business" Tomorrow
- Community to Community: Knowledge Sharing Platform



retail strategies

American Rescue Plan Summary

March 2021
Subject to Change

retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0386 | info@retailstrategies.com

2200 Magnolia Ave South, Suite 100 Birmingham, AL

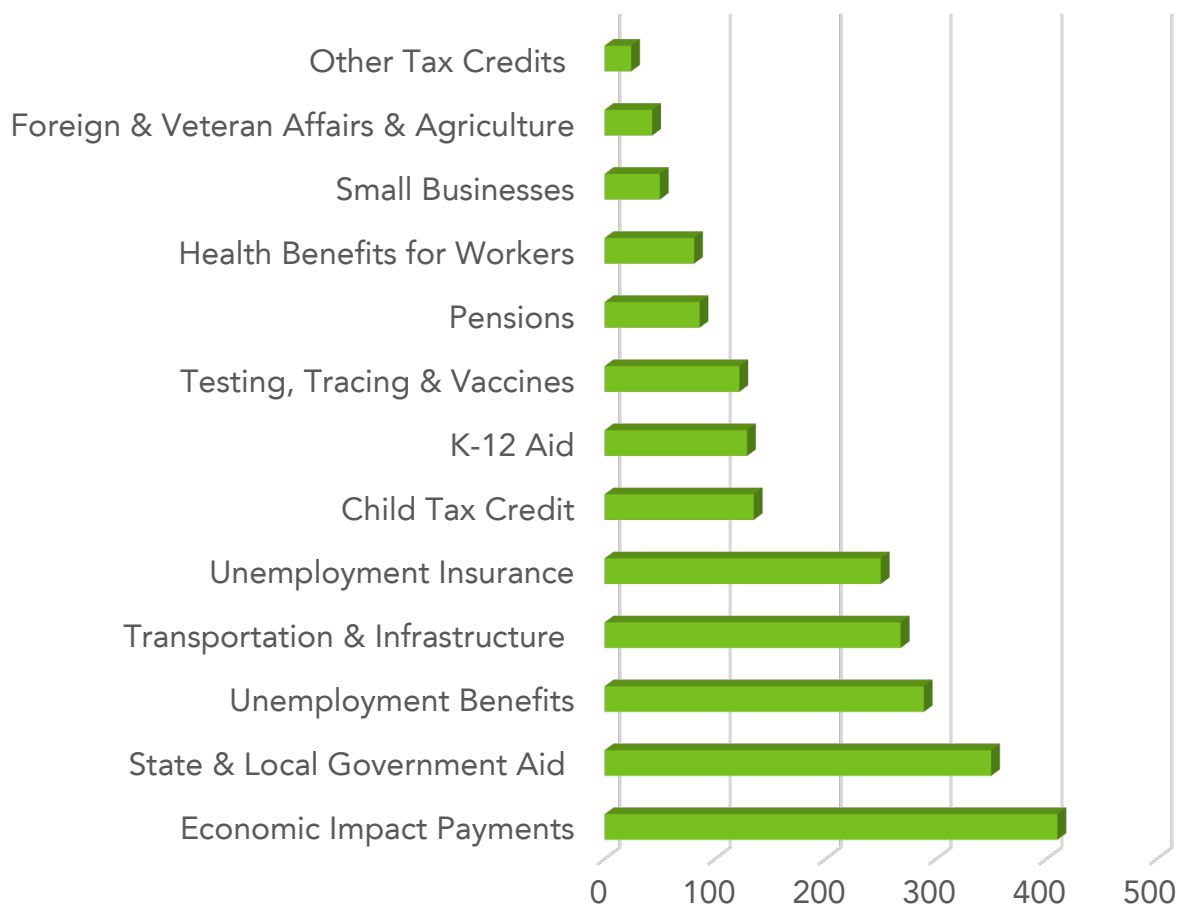


American Rescue Plan

On March 10, 2021, Congress passed the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021** (H.R. 1319) providing \$1.9 trillion of relief and stimulus funding for vaccines, schools, small businesses, everyday Americans, anti-poverty programs, and a whopping \$350 billion for states and local governments.

President Biden signed the bill into law on March 11, 2021.

American Rescue Plan Relief (\$ Billions)



■ American Rescue Plan Amounts by Category (in billions)



American Rescue Plan

Funding for Cities & States

- \$350 billion of the bill will be allocated to local and state government.

Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund

States, the District of Columbia, tribal governments and U.S. territories will receive \$219.8 billion in aid to be distributed, as follows:

- States will receive a total of \$195.3 billion in aid, of which:
 - (1) \$25.5 billion will be split evenly among each state and the District of Columbia, with each state and the District of Columbia receiving \$500 million of aid; and
 - (2) \$168.55 billion will be distributed based on each state's share of total unemployed workers over a three-month period of October 2020 to December 2020.
- District of Columbia will receive an additional \$1.25 billion payment.
- Tribal governments will receive \$20 billion in payments.
- U.S. territories will receive \$4.5 billion in payments.

In addition to the above allocations, the U.S. Treasury will receive \$50 million to cover costs of administration of the fund.



COVID-19



downtown strategies

American Rescue Plan

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Development/lease negotiation

Local governments will receive \$130.2 billion in aid to be split among counties, metropolitan cities and non-entitlement (localities with population less than 50,000) units of local government, as follows:

- Counties will receive \$65.1 billion in population-adjusted payments based on each county's share of U.S. population, with additional adjustments for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recipients.
- Metropolitan cities will receive \$45.57 billion in payments.
- Non-entitlement units of local government (localities with a population of less than 50,000) will receive \$19.53 billion in payments distributed by individual states and funded by the U.S. Treasury. Each jurisdiction will receive population-adjusted payments based on such jurisdiction's share of the state population, not to exceed 75 percent of its most recent budget as of Jan. 27, 2020.

When will Funds be Available?

- For localities with populations over 50,000, funds should be available within 60 days. For localities with populations under 50,000, funds will be passed through their applicable state and will be made available to the locality within 90 days. States have no authority to withhold or place restrictions on funds that are passed through them to non-entitlement localities.
- Governments will receive first tranche of funds (equal to 50% of funds within 60-90 days of bill being signed; with second tranche being allocated 12 months later.
- Localities also must make periodic reports to the Treasury Department to account for funds expended.
- Funds must be used by Dec. 31, 2024.



COVID-19



downtown strategies

American Rescue Plan

How Can Funds be Used?

Funds must be used by Dec. 31, 2024 and only for the following purposes:

- to respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality;
- to provide premium pay to eligible workers of the locality that are performing such essential work, or to provide grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work;
- for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of the locality due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency (pending Treasury guidance stating otherwise, (many organizations have interpreted the legislative text to allow for replacing revenue that was lost, delayed or decreased as a result of COVID-19); or
- to make necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband infrastructure.



American Rescue Plan

Industry Support (Restaurant & Others)

There are a variety of provisions in the legislation to offer support to various industries. The Small Business Administration (SBA) will receive \$25 billion for a new grant program for "restaurants and other food and drinking establishments." Grants will be up to \$10 million per entity and \$5 million per physical location, with a maximum of 20 locations. The legislation sets aside \$5 billion of the total money to be targeted to businesses with less than \$500,000 in revenue in 2019. The legislation includes another \$1.25 billion for the Small Business Administration's Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program

To support the transportation sector, the legislation allocates nearly \$30 billion for transit costs, including payroll and personal protective equipment; \$8 billion for airports; \$3 billion for a temporary payroll support program to help support the aerospace manufacturing industry; and \$1.5 billion to recall and pay Amtrak employees who were furloughed because of the pandemic and to restore various daily routes. Another \$15 billion will also be allocated to support workers in the airline industry.

Unemployment Benefits

Federal unemployment insurance payments will remain at \$300 per week. The benefits will extend through September 6. The Senate's bill makes the first \$10,200 in unemployment payments nontaxable for households with incomes under \$150,000.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

The bill includes \$7.25 billion in new money for the small-business loan program known as PPP and will allow more nonprofits to apply, including groups that engage in advocacy and some limited lobbying. It also allows larger nonprofits to be eligible.

Education

There are over \$128 billion in grants to state educational agencies, with 90% allocated to local educational agencies, plus \$39 billion in grants to higher education institutions. Nearly \$15 billion in funds are directed to the Child Care & Development Block Grant program to help support child care facilities, particularly in high-need areas.



American Rescue Plan

Direct Payments

The bill allocates funds for a third economic impact payment to qualifying Americans. Individuals earning up to \$75,000 and couples earning up to \$150,000 will receive the full direct payments of \$1,400 per person. Individuals will also receive an additional \$1,400 payment for each dependent claimed on their tax returns. Senate Democrats agreed to lower the income cutoff at which payments phase out from \$100,000 to \$80,000 for individuals, and from \$200,000 to \$160,000 for couples filing jointly.

Child Tax Credits

The legislation will temporarily expand the child tax credit, increasing the amount to \$3,000 for children ages 6 to 17 and \$3,600 for children under age 6. The amount is gradually reduced for couples earning over \$150,000 and individuals earning over \$75,000 per year. Families eligible for the full credit will get payments of up to \$300 per child per month from July through the end of the year.

Support for Low-income Families

The legislation includes \$4.5 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP, to help families with home heating and cooling costs. One provision will give the agriculture secretary the authority and funding to temporarily boost the value of cash vouchers for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) up to \$35 per month for women and children for a four-month period during the pandemic. There is \$1.4 billion in funding for programs authorized under the Older Americans Act, including support for nutrition programs, community-based support programs and the National Family Caregiver Support Program. The bill provides \$37 million to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program for low-income seniors.

Rental Assistance

There is \$25 billion for emergency rental assistance, including \$5 billion for emergency housing vouchers for people experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic violence and victims of human trafficking.



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Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act Summary

December 2020
Subject to Change

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Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

On December 21, 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 133) to provide more than \$900 billion in emergency assistance for individuals, families, non-profits and businesses impacted by the COVID pandemic.

President Trump signed the bill into law on December 27, 2020, allowing relief funding to begin to be distributed across the United States.

Direct Payments

Includes another round of stimulus checks of \$600 for individuals who make up to \$75,000 and \$1,200 for couples who make up to \$150,000, as well as an extra \$600 per eligible dependent. The payments will be based on income from 2019 and could arrive as early as the first of January 2021.

Rental Assistance

Creates an emergency federal rental assistance program run by the Treasury Department and administered by state and local governments, based on population. Includes \$25 billion in funding for the program, which will provide targeted assistance to renters impacted by the pandemic. Eligible renters will be able to use this assistance for past due rent, future rent payments, as well as to pay utility and energy bills and prevent shutoffs. The eviction moratorium was also extended through the end of January 2021.

Universal Charitable Deduction

Includes an extension of the \$300 universal charitable deduction for non-itemizers through 2021 and doubles the cap to \$600 for joint filers.



Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

Small Business Support

\$325 billion allotted to help small businesses includes \$284 billion for first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans and expands eligibility for local newspapers and TV and radio broadcasters. The bill also includes \$20 billion for Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

The bill requires the Small Business Administration (SBA) to establish regulations on small-business support no later than 10 days after the legislation is signed into law, which would be Wednesday, January 6.

Businesses that received PPP loans would be able to take tax deductions for the expenses covered by forgiven loans –

Paycheck Protection Program

Included are several provisions for first – **and second** – PPP applicants:

- Loans are available until March 31, 2021 (i.e., deadline to apply for PPP.)
- The loan forgiveness process is simplified for loans of \$150,000 or less.
- Organizations with 300 or fewer employees that can demonstrate a revenue decline of at least 25 percent in any quarter in 2020 over the same quarter in 2019 can receive a second PPP loan of up to \$2 million.
- \$35 billion of PPP funds are reserved for first time loan recipients.
- Forgiven PPP loans will not be classified as income and tax deductions are now allowed for expenses paid with proceeds of forgiven PPP loans.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)

Additional \$20 billion added to the EIDL Program. These loans provide eligible applicants with favorable 30-year loans accompanied by forgivable grants, as an advance, of up to \$10,000. Payments on these loans are deferred for a year. Applicants must employ 500 or fewer employees and demonstrate a working capital loss due to COVID.



Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

Small Business Support

Non-Profit Eligibility

Beginning early 2021, 501(c)(6) nonprofits can apply for PPP loans under the following criteria:

- The organization does not receive more than 15 percent of receipts from lobbying activities.
- The lobbying activities do not comprise more than 15 percent of total activities
- The cost of lobbying activities of the organization did not exceed \$1,000,000 during the most recent tax year that ended prior to February 15, 2020; and
- The organization has 300 or fewer employees

Payroll Tax Deferral

Employers that utilized the payroll tax deferral executive order issued in September would now have until the end of 2021 to pay back deferred taxes, rather than the end of April.

Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC)

Extends the refundable tax credit starting January 1, 2021 through July 1, 2021 and significantly expands access:

- Increases the limit on per-employee creditable wages from \$10,000 for the year to \$10,000 for each quarter;
- Increases the credit rate from 50 percent to 70 percent of qualified wages;
- Expands eligibility by reducing the required year-over-year decline in gross receipts from 50 percent to 20 percent.



Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

Small Business Support

Other Tax Provisions

Temporarily extends tax breaks for renewable energy, including incentives for wind energy and carbon capture and includes deductions for business meals.

Lower excise taxes on beer, wine and spirits that were set to expire Dec. 31 will be permanently extended, and tax incentives for investing in low-income areas and hiring workers from disadvantaged groups would be extended for five years.

Health & Vaccines

\$69 billion for vaccines, testing, tracing, and to support community health and health care providers.

Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG)

\$10 billion in federal grants to provide childcare subsidies for low-income families with children under age 13. The CCDBG also allows for flexibility to pair state and federal funds to improve the overall quality of childcare available to families within existing state and local systems. This includes \$250 million for the Head Start program.

Banks

\$12 billion in support to small lenders focused on low-income and minority communities.

Entertainment Venues

\$15 billion for independent movie theaters, live entertainment venues and cultural institutions.



Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act

Farms

\$12 billion to crop farmers, cattle ranchers and rural communities. This includes funds to growers that may sell goods at local farmers markets.

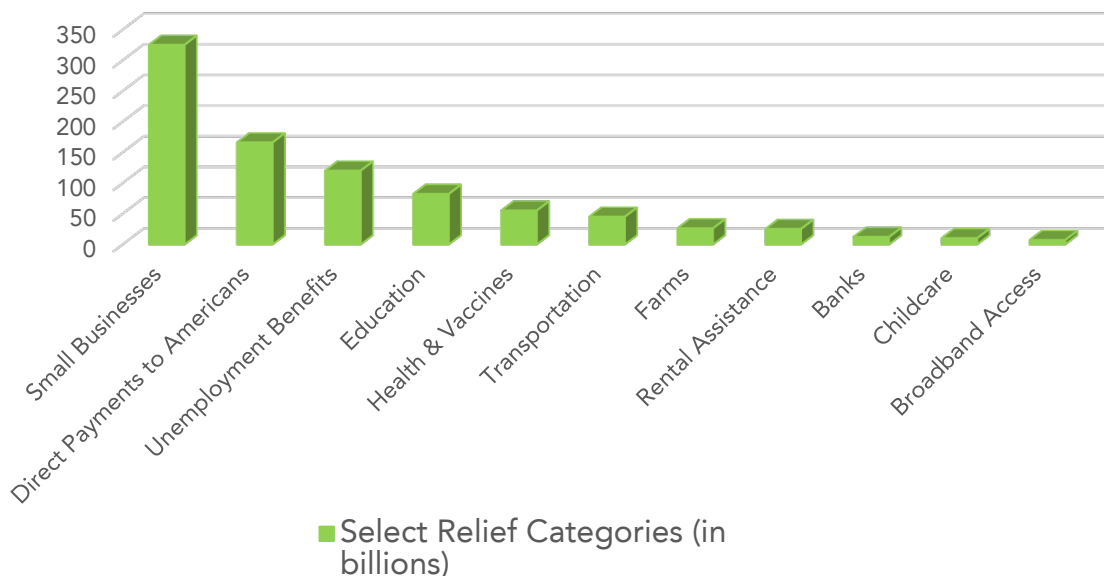
Postal Service

\$10 billion forgivable grant to the United States Postal Service, and previous conditions imposed by the Treasury in the CARES Act would no longer apply.

Other

- Transportation: \$45 billion
- Education: \$82 billion
- Nutrition and agriculture: \$26 billion
- Community development: \$12 billion
- Broadband access: \$7 billion

2021 COVID-19 Relief Bill Allocation





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CARES Act Economic Relief Plan Overview

City and State, Small Business,
and Retailer Opportunities

April 2020
Subject to Change

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CARES Act Economic Relief Plan Overview

Congress' \$2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package is the rare bipartisan legislative agreement that will have an immediate and lasting impact on ordinary citizens around the country.

Thousands of dollars in direct payments to most Americans, as well as a huge loan package designed to help keep small businesses afloat as Main Street struggles through what could become the worst recession in American history will soon be available.

Direct Payments

Americans will receive a one-time direct deposit of up to \$1,200, and couples will receive \$2,400. The payments will be phased out based on income levels, before ending for those earning more than \$99,000 annually. Families receive an additional \$500 per child.

Small Businesses

Small businesses will receive \$367 billion to keep making payroll while workers have to stay home. Companies with 500 employees or less that keep paychecks steady could get up to \$10 million each in forgivable small business loans. Federally guaranteed loans will provide eight weeks of assistance for qualifying employers who maintain payroll. Those who meet requirements would have costs such as utilities, mortgage interest and rent forgiven.

* On Friday, April 24, the President signed a \$484 billion bill, which largely replenishes this fund for Small Businesses.

States and Local Governments

States and local governments will receive \$150 billion, with \$8 billion set aside for tribal governments.



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CARES Act Economic Relief Plan Overview

The Unemployed

The program's extended unemployment insurance program ensures laid-off workers, on average, will receive their full pay for four months. It also allows furloughed workers to stay on as employees, so that when the crisis ends they can quickly resume work. The deal extends to gig economy workers, such as Uber drivers as well.

Hospitals and Health Care Workers

The deal injects \$100 billion into hospitals and the nation's health system, and billions more into providing personal and protective equipment for health care workers, testing supplies, and increased workforce and training.

Industry

Big businesses like airlines and others will receive \$500 billion in loans, which would ideally help stave off layoffs for employees in these industries.

Payroll Taxes

The measure enables individuals to defer payment of their 2020 payroll taxes until 2021 and 2022.

**There are a multitude of other provision for various programs within government and the private sector. For the full text of HR 458, please visit www.congress.gov.*



City & State Funding Opportunities

Coronavirus Relief Fund

- Creates a \$150 billion fund to **provide direct assistance to states and localities to use for expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19** in the face of revenue declines, allocated by population proportions, with a minimum of \$1.25 billion for states with relatively small populations. 55% to states; 45% to localities. Localities eligible for direct assistance include: a county, municipality, town, township, village, parish, borough, or other unit of general government below the State level with a population that exceeds 500,000.
- The language states that a State, Tribal government, and unit of local government shall use the funds provided under a payment made under this section to cover only those costs of the State, Tribal government, or unit of local government that—“(1) are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); “(2) were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of the date of enactment of this section for the State or government; and “(3) were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 11 2020.
- In addition to federal aid, **states also have the option to access their own emergency reserves called rainy day funds**, which are intended to help fill budget gaps and allow states to respond to unexpected events like the coronavirus outbreak. **Overall rainy day fund balances are at an all-time high**, but spending levels are still not back to their pre-2008 levels and budgets have become more rigid as fixed costs (like Medicaid) have ballooned; this means that despite record-high levels of emergency cash, states may not have enough on hand to endure a prolonged economic downturn.

Department of Commerce

- **Economic Development Administration (EDA)** – The bill provides \$1.5 billion for economic adjustment assistance, which can be used to help rebuild impacted industries such as tourism or manufacturing supply chains, capitalize local funds to provide low-interest loans to businesses of all sizes, and support other locally-identified priorities for economic recovery.
- **Support for Manufacturing** – \$50 million is provided for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers recover.



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Small Business Funding Opportunities

The Senate's plan currently supports American small businesses in the following ways:

- A 50% refundable payroll tax credit on worker wages will further incentivize businesses, including ones with fewer than 500 employees, to retain workers
- Looser net operating loss-reduction rules that will allow businesses to offset more
- A delay in employer-side payroll taxes for Social Security until 2021 and 2022
- Sole proprietors and other self-employed workers could be eligible for the expanded unemployment-insurance benefits the bill provides
- A portion of the \$425 billion in funds appropriated for the Federal Reserve's credit facilities will target small businesses

The Small Business Administration, under the stimulus package, will oversee the **Paycheck Protection Program**, which will distribute \$350 billion to small businesses that can be partially forgiven if the companies meet certain requirements. The loans will be available to companies with 500 or fewer employees.

Businesses can receive loans up to \$10 million, based on how much the company paid its employees between Jan. 1 and Feb. 29. The loans will carry an interest rate up to 4%. The bill provides for an expedited origination process.

If the business uses the loan funds for the approved purposes and maintains the average size of its full-time workforce based on when it received the loan, the principal of the loan will be forgiven.

** Since the original allotment of \$350 billion was allocated, Congress passed a replenishment of funding totaling \$320 billion specifically for the Paycheck Protection Program, that was signed into law on April 24, 2020 by President Trump.



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Retailer Funding Opportunities

Hotels

The majority of U.S. hoteliers qualify as businesses with fewer than 500 employees, making less than \$35 million in annual revenue, and therefore, qualify for the \$350 billion in loans and grants for small businesses. Language was included in the bill that defines each individual hotel as its own business.

Retailers

Retailers won a correction that was already in the works to a drafting error in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that required them to expense property improvements over 39 years, instead of in the first year as was initially intended. Because of the mistake, retailers, along with restaurants and hotels that made such improvements over the last two years, overpaid their taxes by as much as \$30 billion. The bill allows that money to flow back to these companies. This was far less than many national retailers lobbied for.

Restaurants

For restaurants, a range of operations are set to be eligible for small-business loans. Previous versions of the loan provision had capped the employee head count at 500, smaller than many franchised operations. Now, most franchisees should qualify for the program.

Small Businesses

The bill allows businesses and non-profits with up to 500 employees in a single location to apply through qualifying banks for loans backed by the Small Business Administration. The loans would convert to grants that don't have to be repaid for amounts spent on items such as payroll, rent or utilities, with the grants reduced when workers are laid off. The loans will be capped at \$10 million and cover wages up to \$100,000 a year.

Other Community Development Opportunities

Farmers

The bill directs more than \$48 billion to agriculture and nutrition programs, with \$9.5 billion specifically to support producers of specialty crops, livestock and dairy, as well as those farmers who supply farmers markets, restaurants and schools.

Music

The bill provides expanded unemployment and small-business loans to independent contractors and sole proprietors. Charitable organizations affiliated with the music business could receive grants from the new funding for the National Endowment of the Arts.



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CARES Act: Top Questions Answered

City Management & Funding

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Top Questions Answered: City Management & Funding



How do I recoup lost sales tax revenue due to Covid-19 related closures, cancelled events, and lack of tourism?

Unfortunately, there is not a direct provision in the CARES Act that reimburses municipalities or stimulates the economy to recoup this revenue. However, the following provisions exist that other entities in your community may be eligible for that would indirectly provide support and enhancement:

Department of Commerce

Economic Development Administration (EDA) – The bill provides \$1.5 billion for economic adjustment assistance, which can be used to help rebuild impacted industries such as tourism or manufacturing supply chains, capitalize local funds to provide low-interest loans to businesses of all sizes, and support other locally-identified priorities for economic recovery.

Support for Manufacturing – \$50 million is provided for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers recover.

Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a flexible program that provides communities and states with \$5 billion in funding to provide a wide range of resources to address COVID-19, such as services for senior citizens, the homeless, and public health services.

Department of Agriculture

\$9.5 billion total allocation with partial funding allocated specifically for specialty crops, producers who supply local food systems and farmers markets, restaurants and schools, livestock producers, (e.g. cattlemen and women, and dairy farmers).



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Top Questions Answered: City Management & Funding



How do I support small businesses in my community?

Today, you can support small businesses by connecting them with local banks that are certified lenders of the Paycheck Protection Program grants and loans through the Small Business Association and the CARES Act. Time is of the essence, and these resources can help your small businesses survive through the next 8 weeks. Tomorrow, your small businesses will need a resurgence of consumers and activity in your Downtown or town center.

Events, festivals, retail promotion events, farmers markets and art programs will reintroduce your residents back to these key areas of your community. Developing your roadmap now will pay dividends when the crisis is over.



I'm hearing that my small businesses are having trouble accessing the Paycheck Protection Program funds from our local lenders. What should I tell them?

The \$349 billion allocated to this program in the CARES Act has all been claimed; however, Congress has replenished the fund with an additional \$320 billion for PPP.

Businesses can apply for PPP funding through any existing Small Business Association (SBA) 7(a) lender or through any federally insured depository institution, federally insured credit union, and Farm Credit System institution that is participating. SBA offers a handy tool where small businesses can find eligible lenders near their geographic location.

However, most lenders are prioritizing current clients. If a small business can't get traction with their existing banker, encourage them to try reaching out to credit unions or more community-based banks that may be more incentivized to participate in this program.



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Top Questions Answered: City Management & Funding



What do I do if a business closes?

First, you need to expect businesses to close. Retailers and restaurants run on a very thin margin and disruptions such as this will cause many to close. Following this crisis, the businesses and entrepreneurs who weathered the storm will have the ingredients for expansion: lower real estate values, lower cost of capital, and lower construction prices.

Second, when a business closes ideally you already understand the type of property that is now available, the prospective tenants who can occupy the space, and have inroads with expanding businesses that want to be in your market. If you have this knowledge base and relationships – leverage them.

If you do not have that information, the best thing you can do to reach out to the property owner or broker to identify how the City can assist.



The **BOTTOM LINE**

We understand that in times like these there are more questions than answers. Our team is still working hard and welcome to opportunity to provide answers to your questions. At the end of this crisis we know that communities' strategic priorities will include:

- Creating jobs
- Bolstering sales tax revenues
- Ramping up quality of life and sense of place
- Enhancing and supporting small business efforts

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE

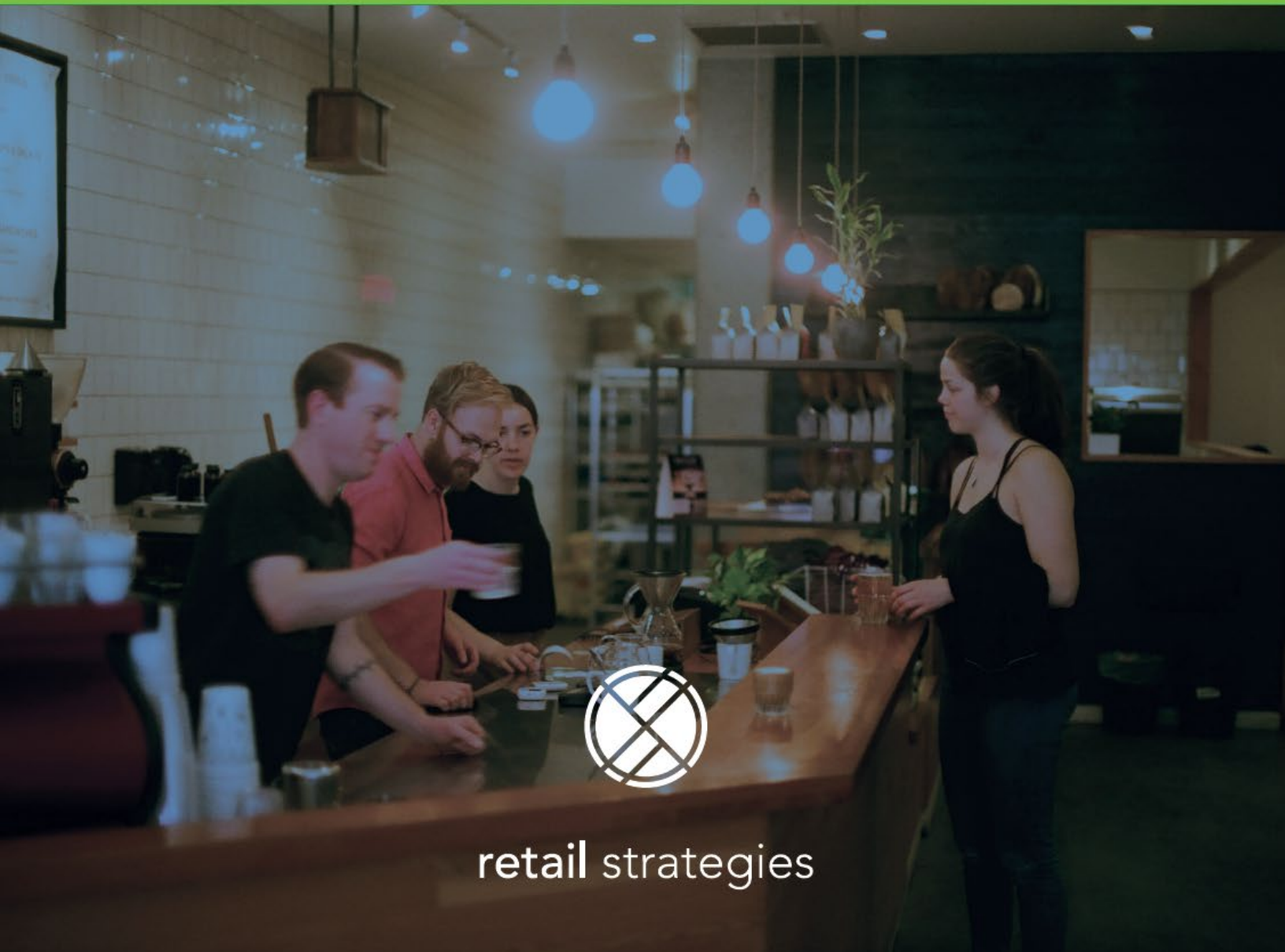


Navigating the Future Amidst COVID-19



Strategies and Resources for Small Businesses

March 23, 2020



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LOCAL

Marketing Strategies

First and foremost, prioritize and take all health and safety precautions for yourself, your employees, and others in your community. Community health as a whole depends on working together, and small businesses are the lifeblood of the local economy.


Businesses that choose to remain open during these uncertain times must adapt to their clients and customers' fears and needs for social distancing by implementing these strategies:

.....

If your business is open, tell people! Post your hours on social media, update your Google My Business profile, and send out an e-newsletter to your distribution list letting your customers know your plans.

To Do:

Ramp up your online presence. There is undoubtedly less browsing occurring in the market today as many of the workforce are working from home or are home with children out of school, so meeting customers where they are, which is likely online and on social media, is critical to promoting your merchandise or services.



OPEN

LOCAL

Marketing Strategies

Regularly sanitize hard surfaces in your store such as counters and doorknobs throughout the day and **share photos** of your staff doing so on social media. This not only protects your customers, but it gives them confidence and peace of mind.



Restaurants:

Promote carry-out and curbside delivery. Restaurants are seeing a large decline in the midst of social distancing, but many families need prepared food now more than ever. Promote your menu online and offer discounts for daily specials. Offer catering-sized portions of favorite dishes, such as soups and casseroles, and offer these for curb-side pick-up.



LOCAL

Getting Creative

- Post high-quality photos of your merchandise throughout the day on social media and **offer online ordering** via phone or social media and curbside pick-up as an option.
- Take shoppers on a video **virtual tour** of your store to spark interest in your products.
- If you're a **bakery** owner, consider assembling cookie decorating kits available via curbside pick-up for children to create at home.
- **Local health and wellness store:** Assemble a wellness box containing products for increasing immunity and overall well-being.
- **Hardware store:** Many consumers are stuck at home for an uncertain amount of time. Assemble DIY project kits such as a home interior paint kit that offer a simple way for customers to get what they need easily and with minimal social interaction.





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Small Business Financial Resources

Funding Programs & Business Support

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Small Business Financial Resources

Main Street America conducted an online survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses and help us better understand what kinds of support programs will have the most impact. The findings are sobering: Nearly 7.5 million small businesses may be at risk of closing permanently over the coming five months and approximately 35.7 million Americans employed by small businesses appear to be at risk of unemployment. These resources are available immediately to assist.

Small Business Administration Loan Programs

The Paycheck Protection Program is designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses and nonprofits to keep their workers on the payroll. SBA will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities. Economic Injury Disaster Loans provide small businesses and nonprofits with working capital loans of up to \$2 million for vital economic support. Be sure to check out the National Trust Community Investment Corporation's highlights of SBA resources that could help small businesses and nonprofits in this recap, as well as their summary of the Paycheck Protection Program.

Facebook is offering \$100M in cash grants and ad credits through their Small Business Grants Program. Applications become available April 22. Learn more. They also set up a Business Resource Hub.

The Save Small Business Fund, a new grantmaking initiative from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, is offering short-term relief for small employers in the United States and its territories. Funded by corporate and philanthropic partners, the Save Small Business Fund is a collective effort to provide \$5,000 grants to as many small employers as they can.



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Small Business Financial Resources

ioby has launched a new match grant opportunity: National COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Match Fund. Wherever you are in the United States, when you crowdfund for a project that responds to COVID-19 in your community, they'll waive their fiscal sponsorship and platform fee, and double your donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$8,000.

JPMorgan pledged \$50 million global philanthropic commitment to support communities and people hit hardest by this public health crisis, including \$2 million to existing nonprofit partners and \$8 million to assist small businesses.

The James Beard Foundation is launching a fund that will be gathering support from corporate, foundation, and individual donors to provide micro-grants to independent food and beverage businesses in need.

MainVest, a crowdfunding platform, announced its new Main Street Initiative: a \$2,000, zero-interest, 120 day loan for restaurants or other brick and mortars affected by the shutdown.

Opportunity Fund, which specializes in money lending to small businesses owned by women, immigrants and people of color, is collaborating with investors and nonprofits to put together a coronavirus relief fund that will provide grants and low-interest rate loans.

The Go Fund Me Relief Initiative is intended to support our local businesses facing financial loss. Make a difference today by donating or starting a fundraiser.



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Ensure Your City is "Open for Business" Tomorrow

Economic Development, Rethinking
Public Facilities & Talent Recruitment
for Tomorrow

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Ensure Your City is “Open for Business” Tomorrow

During this pandemic it is important to be intentional with your time allocation dedicating a portion to the immediate tasks of today and a portion to prepare for the future. Life will go back to a new type of normal and we all have the responsibility to do what is right for today and the opportunity to prepare for our future.

Even as cities focus on a full-out mobilization of required health and medical resources to cope with the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to be prepared safely and securely for the future, too.

In this resource, we’ll identify steps your team can take now to prepare for getting back to business breaking it down between economic development, healthcare and city-wide initiatives.

Rethinking Public Facilities

Prepare City Hall and other city-owned offices where the public frequently visits by **adding painted lines** on floors and stanchions to **promote adequate social distancing** in waiting areas, as well as providing masks and hand sanitizer.

Think of assets in your community where **large groups gather** – stadiums, performing arts centers, schools – pandemic-proof these assets as much as possible. Work with operators of these facilities to talk about their plans for reopening, opening up discussions around limiting the size of future crowds, temperature checks upon entry, and signage to leave seats open in between guests.

Talent Recruitment

In the midst of a **nationwide work from home experiment**, this is certainly something that will likely be supported by more companies in the future. Take advantage of this movement by luring new residents to move to your community. The city of Tulsa, Oklahoma implemented the Tulsa Remote program offering remote workers \$10,000 and free desk space to move to the city. Northwest Alabama and Topeka, Kansas have followed suit with similar programs.



COVID-19



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Ensure Your City is “Open for Business” Tomorrow

Economic Development

Conduct market research on your own market, including downtown and other commercial corridors. Strong restaurant and retail companies are looking at this uncertain time as an opportunity to enter markets that they normally couldn't afford or to find ideal real estate in markets that were previously overpriced or occupied. Community leaders that are equipped with the right information, tools, and resources will be in a much better position once things get back to “normal”.

Invest in downtown to make sure Main Street survives. Mom and pop businesses are the fabric that make your community truly unique. Capital investment in the restaurants, coffee shops, galleries, retail establishments, and bars are critical for survival, but so is promotional help from the city. Provide ongoing advice, marketing support, and guidance to businesses downtown to mitigate future loss of these businesses.

Focus on placemaking. Consumer behaviors will change coming out of this shelter-in-place period and people will desire common places to take their families and connect with others. Placemaking capitalizes on your community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Identify areas in your community where you can invest resources to create these needed common places.

Economic development teams need to **assess the clusters of industry** that currently make up the area. Connect with local business leaders across different sectors to discuss ideas and create a plan to diversify industries to plan for future economic challenges and the hopeful reshoring of new industry.



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Community to Community: Knowledge Sharing

Best Practices & Strategies from other
Partner Communities

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Community to Community: Knowledge Sharing

At Retail Strategies, we're fortunate to work hand-in-hand with city leaders from communities of all sizes across the country. As a partner of these communities, we've curated examples to promote knowledge sharing of what cities have put into place to market local restaurant and retail businesses, provide financial assistance, and encourage community collaboration.

We understand how important it is to support your local business community and hope you'll find these examples helpful as you continue to evolve your strategy.

Community Collaboration & Business Impact Surveys

Promoting collaboration within community businesses and getting a pulse for what small business owners are facing is another trend that we are hearing from client communities.

Tullahoma, Tennessee

The city joined a county-wide Community Collaboration initiative to promote a single website for citizens looking to support the local business community, people seeking employment, financial resources and more.

Phelps County, Nebraska

The Phelps County EDC created a program called the Magic Multiplier gift card program, encouraging citizens to support local businesses by purchasing gift cards, and matching the purchase dollar-for-dollar.

Fayetteville, North Carolina

Many communities are trying to get a handle on economic impact due to COVID-19. The Cool Spring Downtown District in Fayetteville put together [a business impact survey](#) for local business owners.



COVID-19



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Community to Community: Knowledge Sharing

Financial Assistance

To assist the local business community, **Peachtree Corners, GA** has implemented a 60-day deferral period on all business license fees. The annual fees, normally due by March 31, are now due May 31. There will be no penalty fees assessed during this period. The city is also temporarily waiving the convenience fees charged for online and/or internet transactions and deferring payment of alcohol excise tax for 60 days. No penalty fees will be assessed during this period.

In **Buda, TX**, A Hotel Occupancy Tax Payment Emergency Deferral + Forgiveness Program was created to provide a 60-day deferral of tax payments requiring applying hotels to submit a written employee retention plan to receive the deferment.

In **Lincolnton, NC**, The Lincolnton Small Business Emergency Loan Program is providing assistance to locally-owned, non-franchise businesses located within the Lincolnton corporate limits. Eligible businesses may receive up to \$5,000 per month for up to three months.

In **Newport, AR**, the Newport Micro-Business Bridge Loan is a joint project of the Newport Area Chamber of Commerce and the Newport Economic Development Commission. The Bridge Loan, a one-time loan of \$1,500, is designed to help self-employed individuals, sole proprietors or sole member LLC or S Corporation that meet certain criteria including:

- Businesses required to close by the State including barbers, beauty shops, massage therapists, nail salons, etc
- Must operate within the county
- The Qualified Business Owner will be filing an unemployment claim with the State
- The Qualified Business has determined that the SBA PPP Act loan and the SBA EIDL loan are unavailable to them, or unfeasible for their situation, and that they will not be applying for these loans



COVID-19



downtown strategies

Community to Community: Knowledge Sharing

Restaurant Guides & Promotion

Seabrook, TX

The city is running a shop local promotion where they will award gift card prizes to individuals that spend the most money at local restaurants until the end of the month. Contest participants scan and submit their receipts. Gift card prizes range from \$500-\$15.

Rosemount, MN

During a month-long restaurant promotion, the city encouraged residents to play Restaurant Takeout Bingo with restaurants that have remained open for to-go orders and delivery.



America's restaurants are in crisis.

The coronavirus poses a significant threat to the future of an industry that employs more than **15 million Americans**. That's why we're asking everyone in America to support restaurants and their employees.

It's more important than ever to order delivery and curbside pickup meals. **Help save America's restaurant industry by ordering takeout!**

The Great American Takeout

General Information & Tips:

- This list is not exhaustive.
- Things are still changing, sometimes by the hour, please understand that this information is correct to the best of our knowledge. We'll update as we can.
- For some places, takeout is new. Please be patient with the restaurants who've had to lay off their employees and figure out this new normal on their own.
- Picking it up yourself will leave more money in the restaurant's pockets.
- **Tip. Tip large.** Many of these places are pooling tips to distribute among their laid off service staffs.

Don't see your restaurant listed?

Email [\[insert city contract email here\]](#) with the following information:

- Restaurant Name
- Phone number
- Address
- Website Link
- Delivery Options: takeout, delivery app name, curbside pickup only, etc.
- Gift Cards Available? Yes or No

Common Delivery Apps: Grubhub, Doordash, UberEats, Postmates, Instacart, Delivery.com, goPuff, ChowNow. *These may not be available in all areas.

Retail Strategies has created a Dining in Place template that you can use and customize, detailed on the next 3 pages, that is included on your flash drive.



Let's Eat!

A Guide to Dining in Place

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Mellow Mushroom Pizza

(205) 212-9420

1200 20th St S #100, Birmingham, AL 35205

www.mellowmushroom.com

Delivery Options: Uber Eats, curbside pickup

Gift Cards Available? Yes

The Woolworth

(205) 518-6311

1006 20th St S, Birmingham, AL 35205

<https://woolworthbham.com/>

Delivery Options: curbside pickup only

Gift Cards Available? Yes

Restaurant Name

Phone Number

Address

Website Link

Delivery Options: takeout, delivery app, curbside pickup

Gift Cards Available? Yes or No

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