



2019 Economic Development Strategic Plan



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Executive Summary

Chester County used to be like most rural counties – declining population, few job opportunities, lacking business opportunities – but not anymore. Chester County is transforming into a suburban community of the greater Charlotte and Columbia regions. People are finding living wage jobs. New housing is attracting new residents. Commercial and small business development is taking off to capitalize on the economic multiplier of large industrial developments. The Chester County economic development strategy is built to capture and direct the transformational growth taking place.

This transformational time is ideal to update the Chester County Economic Development Strategic Plan. Chester County Economic Development has long been a leader of rural counties in South Carolina. It has an aggressive site development program and a focus on business retention and expansion. Building on that solid foundation, this strategic plan expands CCED's program of work to include increased marketing, small business development, tourism, and placemaking. In order for Chester County to reap the full benefits of recent industrial developments, investment in these areas of economic development is need.

With foresight, Chester County Economic Development broadened the scope of strategic planning to invite municipalities to participate. The approach recognizes the importance of placemaking in economic development. Quality communities are needed to attract workers for new industrial developments. Chester County wants those new workers to live in and become a part of the county.

The Chester County Economic Development Strategic Plan aligns with the mission of the organization.

“The mission of the Chester County Department of Economic Development (CCED) is to create an environment that supports existing industry expansion, encourages new industry investments, fosters entrepreneurialism, and welcomes visitation by others—all of which support the provision of public services and otherwise improves each citizen’s prosperity and overall quality of life.”

Each part of the mission statement is reinforced by an economic development strategy:

- ⊙ *Creating an environment* = placemaking and business climate
- ⊙ *Supporting existing industry expansions* = business retention and expansion program
- ⊙ *Encourage new industry investments* = business attraction
- ⊙ *Fostering entrepreneurialism* = small business and entrepreneur support in municipalities
- ⊙ *Visitation by others* = developing the tourism economy
- ⊙ *Improves overall quality of life* = amenities that support the well-being of the community

Looking toward the future, Chester County and its municipalities will need stronger partnerships within and outside of the county to succeed. The changes taking place are bigger than the county – they are transforming the region.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Chester County Economic Development Strategic Plan update comes at a critical time for the economic development program. New residential developments will bring hundreds of new residents to the county. Cities and towns need support from the county to capitalize on tourism, commercial, retail, and residential growth. CCED will have a key leadership change in 2019 after many years of consistent professional leadership. At this critical time, it is important to validate the mission of the organization, update goals and strategies, and think ahead about investments and policies that will support long-term, sustainable growth.

Chester County Economic Development Goals

- **Recruit, Retain, and Develop Quality Employers that will Attract More Residents to Work Locally**
- **Market and Promote Chester County to Attract Businesses, Visitors, and People**
- **Support the Talent Pipeline through Retention, Development, and Attraction**
- **Use County Resources as a Catalyst for Community Development and Placemaking**
- **Develop a County Tourism Program to Support Placemaking**
- **Economic Development Organizational Excellence**

Goal: Recruit, Retain, and Develop Quality Employers that will Attract More Residents to Work Locally

Strategy: Recruit Businesses that Diversify the Economy and Boost Wages

Action Steps:

- Update Chester County's targets for business attraction. The regional target industry analysis was completed in 2014. Much has changed in the Chester County economy in five years.
 - The regional targets are likely still relevant to the region, but Chester County's specific opportunities may have changed. Regional targets include: Advanced Materials, Aerospace, Motor Vehicles, and Corporate and Financial Services.
 - Chester County's specific targets from the 2014 study are Chemicals and Food Processing. These industries should be reviewed and validated.
- We recommend a supply chain analysis to support existing businesses and to aid in the recruitment of companies within the supply chain of target sectors.
 - A supply chain analysis is very important for Chester County because of the concentration of automotive suppliers in South Carolina and opening of Giti Tire.
- As additional staff is added to CCED, increase participation in regional sales trips, consultant events, trade shows, and external marketing events. Leverage Chester County's investment in both the I-77 Alliance and the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance.
 - Update the marketing plan to include a few new outreach sales initiatives in 2020 and ramp up as more staff is added.

- Develop target sector marketing brochures/flyers for each Chester County sector. Use I-77 Alliance brochures (e.g. Advance Materials) in the interim. Post brochures on the website/link to the regional brochures.
 - In-house, or with consultant support, develop the competitive position statements for each target sector.

Strategy: Support the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem of Municipalities

Action Steps:

- Develop a county level revolving loan program for small and medium sized businesses – open to all Chester County businesses. Set up a revolving loan committee to oversee the program.
 - Have municipalities, chamber, Small Business Development Center, and other agencies market the program to entrepreneurs in their communities.
 - Promote the program to small manufacturing companies who need gap financing.
 - CCED could contract with a development corporation to administer the loan program.
 - The loan program could initially be funded through a grant. USDA Rural Development has provided grants for revolving loan programs in the past.
- Create a Chester County "Websites for Business Growth" initiative. The county would fund the development of 3-4 basic templates (such as in Wordpress). Small businesses, with a little training, could use the template and add their content in order to have a web presence. This will be helpful in growing small tourism related business with no current web presence. This program would benefit many small businesses across the county.
 - This action step could include developing a generic Chester County logo that could be modified for small businesses unable to create their own logo. The Agribusiness Center in Chester has done something similar for farmers.
- Add a new "Start a Business" page to the website under Business Resources. Link to regional small business and entrepreneurial resource providers.
 - See the Lincoln County, NC, Entrepreneur Growth website section. It has lots of good resource information. <https://www.resources4business.info/lincolncda/>
 - CCED could develop "starter kits" on how to start a few standard business (restaurant, retail store, hair salon) and place on the website. We recommended this for the municipalities as well. If the county takes the lead, share content with towns/cities.
- Invite the Rock Hill Area Small Business Development Center to operate out of an office at The Gateway a couple of days a month. The staff person could use it as a base to visit Chester County small businesses and hold business programs.

Strategy: Focus on Business Retention and Expansion

Action Steps:

- Dedicate one staff position to focus on existing business retention and expansion. In the small-staffed CCED office, it is difficult to delineate responsibilities; however, one staff position should hold priority time for BRE visits and follow up.
 - Set as a goal 50 BRE visits each year.
 - Maintain a data system to track trends such as cluster growth and contraction, workforce needs, and utility issues,
- Incorporate succession planning into the BRE program. There are 12 million baby-boomer-owned business in the U.S. that will transition ownership in the next few years. Create a list of companies with owners near retirement with no succession plan in place. They are candidates for succession planning support services from SBDC and other agencies.
- Increase communications with existing business through an eblast newsletter, increase social media followers from industry, and form online discussion groups.

- Recommended above, a supply chain analysis can inform existing businesses of where they fit into the local supply chain and inform the targeted business attraction program.
- Organize quarterly or semi-annual networking events for existing business. Lunch-n-Learns are one example. Ensure the content is relevant, like a program on tariffs.
- Add information on the website about the resources CCED provides for existing businesses. It could be under Business Resources.

Strategy: Develop Buildings and Sites that will Attract Investment

Action Steps:

- Complete the shell building and create a shell building program that will provide ongoing building development.
 - 82% of companies want or prefer an existing, quality industrial building. An ongoing spec building program will meet this need. Currently, only one building listed on LocateSC has ceilings higher than 20 feet, an important consideration.
 - Identify, assess, and prioritize sites for spec buildings, always keeping at least two priority sites identified.
 - Plan to fund the construction of a spec building every two years. Some communities in South Carolina set aside a percentage of new fees for product development. Some counties use the Santee Cooper zero-interest loan fund.
 - Complete an economic impact analysis of companies locating in spec buildings to show the full direct, indirect, and induced impacts resulting from investing in the spec building program.
- Maintain an updated Product Development Plan.
 - In-house, or through a third party, assess and rank order Chester County industrial site opportunities.
 - Develop cost estimates for the top five priority sites.
 - Create a funding plan for due diligence and site improvements.
 - Keep the plan updated with an annual review.
- Group sites into a business park. Companies prefer locating in business parks with restrictive covenants as opposed to stand-alone industrial sites. Grouping and marketing sites as a business park will provide a marketing advantage.
- Continue to qualify or certify one site/park a year. There are currently two Palmetto Sites (L&C Tract P and Oliphant #1). CCED has taken advantage of the Duke Site Readiness Program and should continue to do so. Proactive and aggressive site development is the leading factor in Chester County's industrial success.
- Working with municipal leaders, identify the best business development site in each city/town. The site could be for industrial, commercial, retail, or residential development.
 - Use staff expertise to develop an outline of development steps for each site.
 - Create a marketing brief on each site with competitive positive messages.
 - Post the site opportunity on the CCED website and municipalities will post on their website.
 - Using CCED's network, market opportunities to develop municipal sites.
- Participate in Chester County capital improvement and comprehensive planning processes to ensure that infrastructure is being extended to potential growth areas in the county.

Goal: Market and Promote Chester County to Attract Businesses, Visitors, and People

Strategy: Marketing Planning and Implementation

Action Steps:

- Add a CCED staff position for marketing and communications. This has been a recommendation in previous strategic plans, and it is now critical. The Gateway expansion, tourism developments, industries hiring hundreds of new employees, and large residential development attracting new residents make this a critical time to "Tell the Chester County Story."
 - Until a Marketing and Communications Manager can be hired, contract for marketing support services.
 - The new position will support economic development external and internal marketing, the proposed tourism development program, and The Gateway promotion.
- One of the first duties of the new Marketing and Communications Manager will be to develop a marketing plan. The marketing plan should address:
 - Economic development external business recruitment
 - Communications to retain and grow existing businesses
 - Social media
 - Tourism promotion, itineraries, and events
 - A calendar of events at The Gateway
 - Media content for municipalities to use in local marketing, advertising, and social media

Strategy: Use the Website as a Marketing Tool

Action Steps:

- Constantly update the website. It is the primary marketing tool of economic development agencies.
 - Overall, transition the ChooseChester site to less narrative and more infographics, images, videos, and interactive content. People are reading less and less narrative on websites.
 - Business Resources
 - Business Costs – transition the narrative to infographics
 - Demographics and Workforce – transition the narrative to infographics
 - Transportation and Infrastructure – add maps to show location and access
 - Testimonials – transition text testimonials into videos. Post on the website and on a Chester County Economic Development YouTube channel.
 - Data Center – Studies is blank. If you do not anticipate any studies posted near-term, eliminate this page.
 - Move Recent Announcements to the News and Events menu choices.
 - General
 - Link to the I-77 Alliance, which has great marketing content on its website.
 - Link to the Chester County brochure. It's a great marketing piece for the county.
 - Source and date all data used on the website.

Strategy: Use Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Action Steps:

- Maintain social media platforms with current information. The Facebook and LinkedIn pages are well done with lots of images and video links.
 - Boost friends, followers, likes, and shares. CCED is posting good content that needs viewers and people to amplify the message.

- Explore the Social Toasters app used in Oconee County to encourage local business leaders to amplify the economic development message. <https://www.socialtoaster.com/>

Strategy: Use Events as a Marketing Tool

Action Steps:

- Continue the annual meeting of the Chester Development Association. Expand invitees to include more community and municipal leaders. Use it as a tool to tell your story.
- Annually, conduct a familiarization tour for business, county, and municipal leaders showcasing a positive story. It could be a tour of the whitewater developments in Great Falls, new residential developments in Richburg, or a historical tour of downtown Chester.
- Seek out specific event opportunities to bring the county together. Examples: Manufacturing Day, open houses of businesses, job/career fairs, business expos. etc.

Goal: Support the Talent Pipeline through Retention, Development, and Attraction

Strategy: Help Employers Retain Quality Talent

Action Steps:

- Develop an Employer Toolkit brochure. It would contain education and workforce development resources and contacts, apprenticeship and internship contacts, strategies for employee retention, and best practices in talent recruitment (like the best places to advertise positions).
- Engage with human resource managers for input on things Chester County can do to help them retain employees. Examples include investing in schools, developing recreation, amenities, advocating for healthcare, housing options, and training needs.
- With existing business support, survey employees every 2-3 years to ask for their input on what they want to see improved in their community. Ask those who in-commute what it would take for them to move to Chester County.

Strategy: Increase Educational Attainment and Skills Development

Action Steps:

- Seek a community nonprofit partner to raise funds for a College Promise program. See the Greenwood Promise as an example. Every high school student has the opportunity for a free, two-year technical college education. Other examples include Abbeville County and Wythe County, VA. The Abbeville County program is in partnership with McCormick County and funding was raised through the Freshwater Coast Community Foundation.
- Explore the Work Ethics Certification Program pioneered in South Carolina by Greenwood County. Students volunteer to be assessed on work ethics criteria such as showing up on time, dressing appropriately, teamwork, follow through, etc. Companies in Greenwood County recognize the credential in the hiring process, thereby making it valuable to students.
- Explore the Greer Made program, which has developed a manufacturing skills certification program for high school students. After 10 hours of study, students are awarded a certificate that recognizes they have basic skills needed to work in manufacturing.

Strategy: Incorporate Talent Attraction into the Marketing Program

Action Steps:

- See an award-winning example of talent attraction in the Charlotte's Backyard marketing campaign <https://charlottesbackyardnc.com/>.

- Talent attraction programs include additional content on the economic development website, or a new site dedicated to live/work/play/learn.
- Some communities launch a marketing campaign with billboards, radio, and advertising.
- The "Think Oconee" campaign, which started as a buy local program, has turned into a lifestyle type of campaign. <https://thinkoconee.com/>
- Incorporate talent attraction marketing into the website:
 - Change the Lifestyle section of the website to something like "Live Here" and include a page on jobs in Chester County. Some communities develop a jobs portal and others have job-seeking resources. Start with the latter. The page could include links to employment sites, top ten employers hiring in Chester County, and job search services like at York Tech.
 - See the Abbeville Works Facebook page as an example. https://www.facebook.com/pg/AbbevilleSCJobs/about/?ref=page_internal
- Continue the success of the student video with a series that aligns with career pathways: health care, manufacturing, construction and trades, etc.

Goal: Use County Resources as a Catalyst for Community Development and Placemaking

Strategy: Align Economic and Community Development Strategies

Action Steps:

- Organize a countywide group called *The Collaborative* for the purpose of aligning economic and community development strategies across the county.
 - The group will discuss topics such as: grant writer priorities (see below), capital improvement projects, shared service opportunities, leveraging marketing and special events, appearance standards, etc.
 - Have an annual Appearance Meeting to discuss aligning appearance standards across the county.
 - The group should include two representatives of each local government and a representative of the chamber of commerce, community development organizations, and agribusiness center.
 - The group will be led and facilitated by CCED.
- Host an inter-governmental meeting for all local governments in Chester County once or twice a year to foster collaboration.

Strategy: Tell the Chester County Story – Consistently

Action Steps:

- Use CCED marketing expertise to develop content for municipalities to use.
 - Develop a press kit of images, messages, tweets, photos for Instagram, etc. so municipalities can reinforce the county's marketing messages.
 - Distribute talking points before major countywide events.
 - Distribute potential social media content messages before major events.

Strategy: Images Tell Stories

Action Steps:

- Fund the development of a photo library that can be accessed by municipalities and partner agencies. This will ensure a consistent visual marketing message across the county.

- Include photos of industry, small business, downtowns, quality of life, recreation, schools, etc. Be sure to focus on real people engaging in real activities in Chester County.
- CCED should lead a planning session with municipal and strategic partners to outline the scope of the library, where photos will be housed, and create a "licensing" agreement to clearly outline usage.

Strategy: Stay Ahead of Growth with Planning

Action Steps:

- Use the CCED network to engage government, education, and business leaders in a discussion of long-range planning. A wide group of leaders and citizens should have input into comprehensive planning, capital improvement plans, and municipal development plans. CCED could host a facilitated Annual Planning Conference to gain input into upcoming planning processes.
- Identify communities that are 20 years ahead of Chester County in terms of growth and take leaders on field trips to see these communities. Just to the north in York County there are good examples of where planning was behind the growth curve and areas where it was ahead of the growth.
- Advocate for the county to create an Appearance Commission to ensure the county develops in a way that maintains its small-town charm.
- Encourage the Town of Richburg to invest in a website and e-communications since many of the new residential developments will be in the Richburg area. The town could become a hub of information and services for the developments.
- Encourage the county to engage professional land planning firms to lead long-range planning projects.
- Maintain a high level of collaboration between CCED and Chester County Planning Department with monthly or quarterly meetings.

Strategy: Raise Appearance Standards

Action Steps:

- Develop a County Appearance Commission and meet with municipal appearance commissions to align overall beautification goals.
- Review county ordinances and look for ways to improve appearance and beautification. Examples include ordinances that require owners to fix broken windows, noxious weed ordinances, codes that address dilapidated structures, etc.
- Aggressive code enforcement should be an integral part of the effort to beautify Chester County.
- Through community volunteer organizations, such as garden and horticulture clubs, organize community clean up days. Leverage statewide initiatives such as Palmetto Pride, the state's anti-litter and beautification program,

Strategy: Demolish Vacant and Abandoned Dilapidated Houses and Industrial Buildings

Action Steps:

- Seek Community Development Block Grant funds to demolish vacant and abandoned houses as well as commercial and industrial structures. Great Falls had made an application for CDBG funds. Seek their advice on a county application. See this article about North Charleston using the program to improve neighborhoods by demolishing eyesores.
<https://www.counton2.com/news/south-carolina-news/city-of-north-charleston-demolishing-uninhabitable-homes/>

Strategy: Wayfinding Signage

Action Steps:

- Seek grants to implement a wayfinding signage program. This will become even more important as new visitors try to find their way to state parks, whitewater areas, sporting events, and The Gateway events.
 - If possible, coordinate with municipalities for consistent wayfinding imagery.

Strategy: Increase Access to Funding for Community Development

Action Steps:

- Encourage Chester County to hire a grant writer on staff to serve all of Chester County, including municipal grant applications. Grant writers bring more value to the county in grant dollars awarded than the cost of the position.
- Have a quarterly or semi-annual Grants Meeting with all local governments to prioritize grant applications and direct the work of the grant writer. Without coordination, some municipal priority projects will miss grant application deadlines.

Strategy: Increase Civic Engagement Throughout Chester County

Action Steps:

- Develop a Volunteer Portal that will match nonprofits seeking volunteers with people who want to volunteer. Seek a partner to lead the project, such as the United Way, and use a third-party web developer to create the Volunteer Portal. CCED's interested in this project because civic engagement leads to more people attached to the Chester County.
- Search for a partner to reactivate the county leadership program that used to be supported by Clemson Extension.

Strategy: Support Municipal Development Initiatives

Action Steps:

- Meet with each municipality to learn of their priorities for development including housing, downtown revitalization, amenities, and beautification.
- Support city/town initiatives by speaking at public meetings in support of the initiative and describing how it aligns with the county's economic development goals.
- Pass resolutions of support of municipal initiatives at CCED and CDA.
- Support the county matching municipal incentive programs that encourage building redevelopment, beautification (façade, mural, landscaping), job creation, and new business start-ups.

Goal: Develop a County Tourism Program to Support Placemaking

A countywide tourism development program has been advocated for in previous strategic plans. Now is the time. Tourism opportunities are here and growing – river attractions, state parks, outdoor recreation, special events center, cultural arts, historical sites, and many others. It not only adds critical diversity to the economy, it supports placemaking at a time when new people are moving to Chester County.

Strategy: Staff and Fund a Chester County Tourism Development Program Under CCED

Action Steps:

- Create a countywide tourism development agency under CCED. Staff and resources should be allocated to developing the tourism economy. Marketing, event planning, tourism asset development, grant writing, and many other tasks could fall to this program.

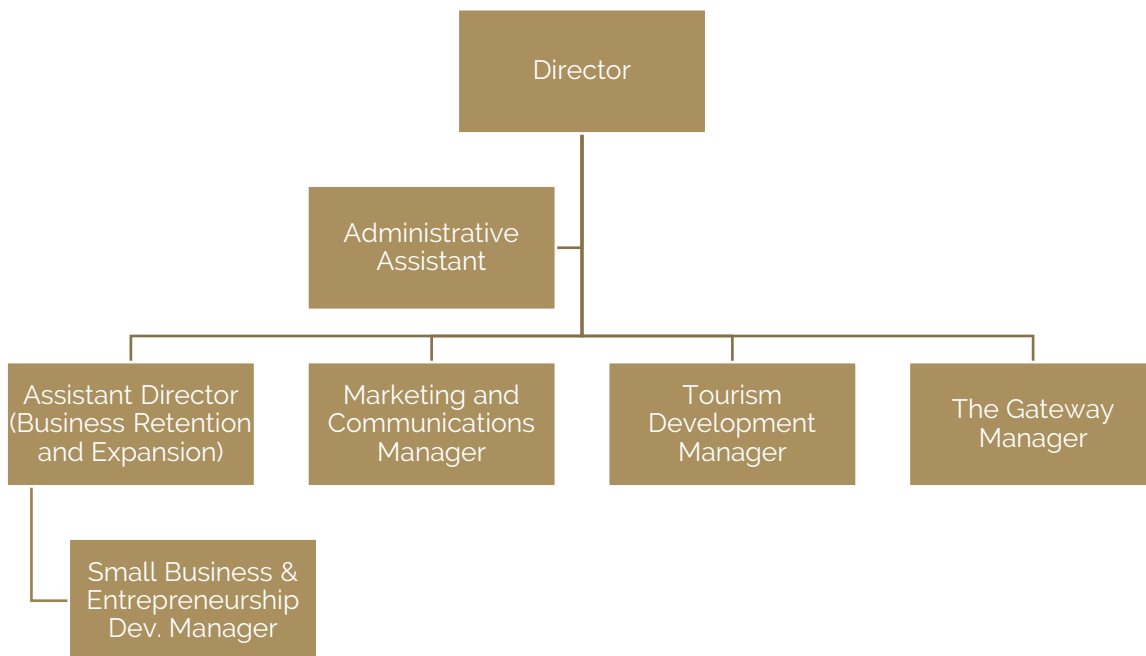
- Hold regular planning meetings with municipalities to incorporate their tourism niches.
- Include agri-tourism, eco-tourism, historical tourism, sports-related development, and others.
- Develop a tourism marketing program to include:
 - Tourism website that has content for all municipal tourism assets and links.
 - Cooperative advertising with municipalities and tourism organizations.
 - Common calendar of events.
 - Asset development program, timeline, and grant funding sources.
 - Strategy to draw more conventions and meetings to Chester County.

Goal: Economic Development Organizational Excellence

Strategy: Staff for Organizational Excellence

Action Steps:

- Develop a visionary, long-term staffing model for CCED. It should become the umbrella organization housing all activities related to economic development: business recruitment, business retention and expansion, product development, marketing, tourism, The Gateway, and eventually, small business development.



- Create, fund, and implement a professional development program for each staff position.
- Every two years complete a salary and benefits survey of comparable economic development organizations with similar responsibilities and results.
 - Chester County should meet or exceed industry salary average on all staff positions in order to retain and recruit quality staff.

Strategy: Sustainable Funding for Economic and Tourism Development

Action Steps:

- Develop a dedicated public funding stream for economic development. Some South Carolina counties set aside a portion of new fee revenue for economic development.
- Use Accommodation Tax revenue to help fund tourism development.
- Dedicate a portion of revenue from The Gateway to fund marketing and promotion and event recruitment.
- Increase the number of private investors in the Chester Development Association to provide additional funding for economic development.

Implementation

Chester County Economic Development will lead implementation of the strategic plan. CCED will need strong support from Chester County, Chester Development Association, municipalities, local allies, and regional partners. Without funding, shared expertise, and collaborative marketing, CCED will not be able to accomplish the action items in this strategic plan.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Industry Analysis & Supply Chain Analysis • Target sector marketing materials • Website updates • Complete shell building • Create a product development plan • Identify, assess, market best site in each municipality • Develop long-term CCED staffing model • Add CEDC staff position for Marketing and Communications • Organize a county collaborative for aligning goals and implementation • Develop a countywide photo library • Advocate for aggressive code enforcement • Encourage the county to hire a grant writer • Advocate for a County Tourism Program and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revolving loan program • Websites for Business Growth • Dedicated staff position to BRE • Update product development plan • Develop a countywide, collaborate marketing plan • Employer Talent Toolkit • Industry and employee survey on amenities • Work Ethics Certification Program • Talent attraction added to marketing • Develop marketing content, press kit for municipalities • Advocate for a county appearance commission • Support expansion of wayfinding signage • Add Tourism staff position • Chester County Leadership Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBDC office at The Gateway • Create an ongoing shell building program • Update product development plan • College Promise Program • Manufacturing Skills Certification for high schoolers • Ordinance review for appearance • Advocate for county demolition of derelict structures • Develop a volunteer portal • Add Small Business & Entrepreneurship staff position

Ongoing Program of Work

- Increased business recruitment sales trips, consultant events, trade shows
- Networking events for existing businesses
- Increased communications with existing businesses
- Certify/qualify one site a year
- Participate in county capital improvement and comprehensive planning processes
- Maintain website information and updates
- Maintain social media platforms with current information
- Annual FAM tour for county leaders
- Event each year that will bring the county together (e.g. State of the County)
- Continue student workforce videos
- Host inter-governmental meeting, 1-2 times a year
- Support municipalities marketing messaging
- Quarterly meetings with Chester County Planning to align development goals
- Advocate for community clean ups and beautification programs
- Support municipal initiatives - speak at public meetings, pass resolutions of support, meet regularly to discuss goals
- Create, fund, and implement staff development plans
- Create sustainable funding streams for CCED to carry out economic, tourism, and small business development

Metrics

There are three sets of metrics economic development organizations should monitor – program, organizational, and community well-being.

Program Metrics – These are metrics that measure the outcomes of economic development activities. CCED should track these metrics and report to stakeholders. Examples

- Recruitment: project announcements, new jobs, new capital investment, recruiting trips
- BRE: retention visits, closure/layoffs, appreciation events
- Product Development: new parks/sites/buildings
- Marketing: mailers, presentations, shares, likes

Organizational Metrics – These are metrics that measure stakeholder satisfaction and how well the organization is running.

- Board and stakeholder satisfaction surveys
- Customer satisfaction surveys (new recruitment projects, existing businesses)
- Employee satisfaction and retention
- Financial stability

Community Well-Being Metrics – Well-being metrics measure the overall well-being of the community including wellness, economic security, safety, and quality of life. These metrics are often tracked by cities and counties.

Summary of Municipal Economic Development Goals

Chester County Economic Development broadened the scope of strategic planning to invite municipalities to participate. The approach recognizes the importance municipalities and community development in overall economic development. Quality communities are needed to attract workers for new industrial developments. Chester County wants those new workers to live in and become a part of the county. Municipalities are the lead in amenity development and placemaking. Much of Chester County's tourism opportunities also reside in municipalities. Chester County needs strong cities and towns to fully realize the economic benefits of the county economic development program.

Chester Economic Development Goals

The Chester economic development plan is designed to channel resources – people and funding – into revitalizing the community. The city has many assets to support economic revitalization – historic architecture, commercial corridors, civic organizations, and passionate citizens. The Chester economic development goals build upon those assets. The plan focuses on downtown, business development, creating destinations, marketing and communications, beautification, and forming stronger regional partnerships. Much of economic development takes people power. People are needed to build coalitions, change policy, and seek out funding sources. Chester will need to continue grassroots organizing of people, civic groups, and public organizations to have the people power needed to implement the strategic plan. City leaders will need to be creative to fund the strategic plan. Working together, the community will continue to transform

- Business Development to Revitalize the Economy
- Chester as a Destination
- Have Others Tell Your Story for You
- Leaders for the Future
- Beautiful Communities that will Attract Visitors, New Residents, and Businesses
- Leverage Chester County to Boost Chester's Capacity

Fort Lawn Economic Development Goals

The Fort Lawn economic development plan is designed as a "start small, then grow" strategy. The momentum started by the Heart and Soul project can be used to push forward economic development initiatives. The Fort Lawn economic development goals use that momentum for amenity and business development, marketing and communications, beautification, and forming stronger regional partnerships. Much of economic development takes people power. People are needed to build coalitions, change policy, and seek out funding sources. The success of the Heart and Soul project harnessing Fort Lawn's people power indicates that the community will be successful in implementation.

- Enhance Quality of Life Amenities
- Business Development and Creating a Business District
- Expand and Improve Infrastructure and Transportation
- Have Others Tell Your Story for You
- Beautiful Communities that will Attract Visitors, New Residents, and Businesses
- Leverage Chester County to Boost Fort Lawn's Capacity

Great Falls Economic Development Goals

The Great Falls economic development plan is designed to capitalize on the transformational whitewater project and leverage it to revitalize the town. After many years of talk, the whitewater project is becoming a reality. People will be traveling to Great Falls to play, stay, eat, shop, and enjoy the outdoors. The town must develop the tourism infrastructure to capture the economic benefit. The economic development plan focuses on business development, creating tourism assets, marketing and communications, beautification, and forming stronger regional partnerships. Great Falls and the Home Town Association will need strong support from county and regional partners to realize the full benefit of tourism growth. This strategic plan provides a road map for the town and its partners.

- Capitalize on the Economic Opportunities of Tourism
- Have Others Tell Your Story for You
- Beautiful Communities that will Attract Visitors, New Residents, and Businesses
- Leverage Chester County to Boost Great Falls' Capacity

Appendix A: SWOT Analysis—Chester County, Chester, Fort Lawn and Great Falls

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis is the foundation of an asset-based approach to economic development planning. Creative EDC developed an overall county SWOT based on the analysis in the 2014 strategic plan, updated with interviews, surveys, and research. SWOTs were developed for Chester, Fort Lawn, and Great Falls based on community input sessions, surveys, and research.

All localities enjoy similar strengths and weaknesses. Strengths that cover the whole county include proximity to I-77, Charlotte and Columbia, and natural resources. They share assets like York Technical College, existing business base creating quality jobs, and The Gateway development area. The communities also share weaknesses such as poverty, youth moving away, infrastructure needs, and deteriorating housing and buildings. Even though there are many common opportunities such as tourism, each municipality has its own niche. Chester's downtown could become a historic draw, building upon unique architecture. Fort Lawn could become a residential hub along the Catawba River, drawing new residents. Adventure awaits in Great Falls where whitewater is sure to attract outfitters and ecotourism.

The economic development strategic plan builds upon strengths, addresses weaknesses, captures opportunities, and mitigates threats.

Chester County SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- I-77, highways, rail
- Location
- Industrial and commercial land
- Existing business base
- York Technical College
- Natural assets for agriculture and tourism

Weaknesses

- Industrial buildings
- Workforce shortage, skills, public schools
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Community appearance
- Resources for future public

Opportunities

- Tourism development agency
- Gateway and surrounding development
- Spec building and product development
- Talent attraction
- Building on existing businesses

Threats

- Lack of planning for growth
- Infrastructure not ready for future demand
- Maintaining natural resources
- Communities not investing in placemaking

Strengths

- I-77 Corridor, SC Hwy 9
- Location
- Available land for industrial development, large parcels, qualified sites
- Dual rail along SC Hwy 9 and short rail
- Two electric utility suppliers, three hydroelectric plants
- Public school system
- Workforce
- Wastewater capacity in Great Falls, natural gas, telecommunications
- The Gateway Conference Center
- Local airport and Charlotte-Douglas International Airport
- Historic fabric woven into the community and rural scenery
- York Technical College
- Chester County Economic Development program and staff
- Agri-business, farm tours
- Quality of life, rural scenery, community pride, family-oriented, safe
- Recreation, state parks, natural resources, Catawba River, Great Falls rapids, hunting and fishing
- Desire to grow
- Arts, arts tours
- Festivals
- J. Marion Sims Foundation

Weaknesses

- Available quality industrial buildings
- Lack of quality business park at the interstate
- Public schools are seen as a strength and a weakness. Citizens comment on good schools; however, statistics show low educational attainment levels. Facility improvements needed.
- Workforce, chronic unemployed, shortage of labor
- Lack of job opportunities for young people
- Housing - affordable housing, abandoned housing, housing options, multi-family, market-rate
- Water and sewer access and capacity
- Communications between towns and county
- DOT maintained street repairs needed
- Accountability of elected and government appointed officials
- Perception of rural community
- Apathy of citizens, core group of naysayers, lack of internal promotion
- Hospitality training
- Youth recreation and entertainment options, lack of quality childcare
- Dilapidated buildings, mills, and houses
- Monopolies
- Community appearance
- Lack of county tourism department

Opportunities

- Countywide tourism development agency (e.g. Convention and Visitor's Bureau) to create unified vision for all of Chester County's tourism assets
- Sports complex to attract major tournaments for overnight stays
- Enhance Exit 65 as the main gateway into Chester County
- Rebranding the Gateway corridor for external marketing
- Internal marketing campaign
- Spec building

- Engage new citizens moving to the community to work in new industries and live in new housing developments
- Existing business growth and expansion
- New hotels for visitors, dining, entertainment
- Capitalizing on the Giti Tire facility and other existing businesses
- Tier 1 and 2 suppliers to large industries in the Carolinas/Southeast
- Strengthen York Technical College's presence
- Leverage hotel development and other growth around The Gateway
- Infrastructure improvements, extensions
- Broader definition of economic development: agriculture, tourism, housing
- Placemaking in towns: leverage history, historical buildings, cultural, façade grant for buildings
- Regional cooperation through the I-77 Alliance
- Youth recreation
- Industrial sites
- Wayfinding signage
- Agri-business, agri-tourism
- Retirement community development

Threats

- Municipalities not being progressive enough about placemaking to support overall economic development and talent attraction and retention
- Infrastructure not ready to meet needs of development in terms of capacity and distribution
- Quality of housing
- Unplanned growth is worse than no growth
- Air quality impact from Charlotte
- Maintaining quality of Catawba River
- Unplanned impacts of Giti Tire facility
- Old mills remaining vacant
- Destruction of historic properties
- Not funding nor adequately staffing CCED to implement the strategic plan
- Labor unions
- Increasing crime

Chester SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Historic downtown
- Recreation and natural resources
- Agribusiness and Food Kitchen
- Health care
- Rail service
- Redevelopment opportunities

Weaknesses

- Lack of vision for future
- Dilapidated housing
- Dilapidated downtown buildings
- Crime
- Retail leakage
- Lack of resources for change

Opportunities

- Marketing and promotion
- Medical University of South Carolina
- Retail development
- Farmer's Market
- Redevelopment
- Housing development

Threats

- Crime
- Sewer capacity
- Lack of land use planning
- Young people not staying

Strengths

- Location, Hwy 9, access to I-77
- Historic landmarks and historic district
- Railroad service to the area
- Catawba and Broad Rivers, Woods Ferry Recreation Area, Chester State Park, new state parks, river through town, Wylie Park (50-acre park in town), community parks
- Access to Charlotte airport
- Faith community and churches
- People connected to the community, volunteerism
- Farms and agriculture community
- Land available for development
- Public schools
- Brainerd industrial
- Small town, peace and quiet, family-oriented
- Retirement location
- Health care: hospital, Medical University of South Carolina partnership
- Chester Golf Club
- Talented people but some moving out and/or commuting
- Chester Agribusiness Center and Food Manufacturing Kitchen
- Arts
- York Technical College
- Public library
- Walkability
- Special needs programs: housing, daycare, employment
- YMCA
- Gateway Conference Center
- Clemson University Cooperative Extension Program
- Bed and Breakfasts
- Football state champs

- Industrial growth in Richburg provides jobs in the region

Weaknesses

- Lack of consensus/synergy on vision among citizens, leadership
- Lack of willingness to sell downtown properties
- Housing, need upscale and young professional
 - Dilapidated, derelict, not reparable
 - Ordinance changes needed to support housing development
 - Community coordination needed to support redevelopment
- Litter
- Downtown buildings dilapidated, need accountable ordinances
- Violent crime
- Labor skill sets and lack of willingness to work
- Brain drain
- Roads need repair
- Improved walkability and connectivity
- Government transparency
- Public transportation
- Retail leakage
- Low wage jobs, poverty
- Quality of life amenities
- Strict zoning that does not support redevelopment
- Negative reputation of schools
- Internal negativity reflected in lack of support of local businesses
- Finances and resources for change
- Apathy
- Don't take advantage of opportunities when presented
- Shopping local-need more local support

Opportunities

- Vision for community growth with leadership support and buy-in
- Marketing and promotion through a business portal
- Welcome packet
- Attract new citizens to uplift the community
- USDA StrikeForce Zone
- Leverage Medical University of South Carolina relationship with Chester
- Homeowner investments
- Downtown redevelopment including residential upstairs living
- Retail development
- Capitalize on historic and architecturally significant properties, conduct inventory
- Teacher housing information packet
- Recreation facilities for youth - track, tennis courts, swimming pool, amphitheater
- Regionalism
- Music-related tourism
- Promote farmer's market to an external audience
- Focus on dilapidation
- County grant writer
- Reduce number of council representatives to facilitate consensus building and decision-making
- I-77 interchange, developments in Richburg attracting people off the interstate
- Capitalize on outdoor and ecotourism of Great Falls and other regional assets

Threats

- Train schedule
- Violent crime, law enforcement understaffed
- Sewer capacity and financing expansions
- Losing more homes to flooding
- Bridges in need of repair
- City professional capacity, need more expertise, employees, skill sets
- Failure to act, not working the plan/vision
- Trust
- No place for youth
- Disaster shelters
- Dilapidated housing and buildings
- Land use planning

Fort Lawn SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Community Heart and Soul Project
- Active retiree group
- Low crime
- Catawba River, Landsford Canal State Park
- Available land
- Community Center

Weaknesses

- Job opportunities
- Business base
- Infrastructure outside town for expansions
- Housing
- Health care services
- Road conditions

Opportunities

- Springs Industries redevelopment
- Catawba River, Fishing Creek Lake
- Farmer's Market
- Small business development
- Community communications
- Expand Community Center

Threats

- Young people not staying
- Retail leakage
- Business closings
- Lack of resources for future investment
- Drugs and related crime

Strengths

- Location and proximity to highway, urban areas, Lancaster
- Small, friendly, safe, quiet, engaged neighbors
- Community Heart and Soul Project and support of J. Marion Sims Foundation and Orton Family Foundation
- Group of retirees active in community betterment
- Growing and expanding existing business
- Opportunity for growth
- People stay, connect to the town
- Growing area ideal for families
- Close to large towns

- Low crime
- Catawba River, boat ramps
- Land available for development
- Growing, small new businesses
- Affordable place to live
- Small town atmosphere
- Landsford Canal State Park along the Catawba River

- Restaurants, well-known Catawba Fish Camp Restaurant and Wagon Wheel
- 1 stop light
- Fort Lawn Community Center, facility and programming
- Quality local government and town services: water, sewer, police, recreation, community center
- Churches and faith community

Weaknesses

- Few jobs
- Lack of youth activities
- Limited shopping, dining, entertainment offerings
- Lack of grocery store
- Out-commuting due to lack of local jobs
- Lack of sewer service outside town and water
- Lack of affordable rental, multi-family, senior, and market-rate housing
- Fast food franchise
- The town "doesn't belong to anybody" since it is between cities and near county lines
- Perception of public schools and lack of local schools

- No public transportation
- Limited post office hours
- Roads in poor condition
- Communications - social media, newspapers (Community Center mails a newsletter)
- Getting past Springs Industries closures
- Low wages and poverty
- Anti-change mentality
- Manufacturing facilities are outside the town and not taxed
- Lack of infrastructure for industry
- No emergency medical services station in the zip code
- Struggling small businesses

Opportunities

- Springs Industries plant redevelopment, brownfield redevelopment
- Aqua and agri businesses
- Catawba River, Fishing Creek Lake, related businesses such as outfitters, recreation, rentals, fishing tournaments, etc.
- Restaurants-local farm-to-table
- Farmers market
- Property available for development
- Service and cottage businesses: Hair salon, grocery store, childcare
- Jobs for families with children
- Industry and business development

- Roads improvements
- Sewer and water expanded by the Chester Sewer District
- Prepare for development
- Communications - neighborhood communications, events to connect people (e.g. concerts at community center)
- County and town networking for economic growth
- River front park
- Master plan for the town
- Grant writer
- Public transportation
- Retirement community

Threats

- Young people moving away
- Dollars leaving the area
- Citizen participation
- Businesses closing (e.g. retirement of owners)
- Lack of infrastructure
- Cost -financing of infrastructure
- Limitations due to scale
- Apathy
- Drugs and related crime
- Declining education quality
- County elected leadership conflicts

Great Falls SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Outdoor recreation, natural resources
- Historic area
- Catawba River
- Location between metros
- Major industry with jobs nearby
- Infrastructure

Weaknesses

- Broadband
- Market-rate housing
- Vacant and dilapidated buildings
- Uncertainty of local high school
- Out-commuting of labor

Opportunities

- Whitewater and ecotourism
- Outfitters and businesses associated with whitewater
- New state park
- Carolina Thread Trail connection
- Mill building redevelopment

Threats

- Drugs and related crime
- Apathy
- Regulatory processes stalling mill redevelopment
- Losing local high school
- Continued deterioration and blight

Strengths

- Outdoor recreation activities, natural beauty, trails
- Infrastructure, specifically a wastewater treatment plant
- Historic significant areas, historic district
- Small town, quaint
- People passionate about the town, connect to the town
- Business development with outdoor recreation
- Catawba River
- Interstate access nearby
- Location between Columbia and Charlotte
- Access to airports in Charlotte and Columbia
- Major industry nearby in Richburg, Giti Tire
- The Republic Golf Course
- Quality public schools
- Sporting clays venues nearby
- Downtown architecture
- Film industry settings
- Churches and faith community
- Affordable housing
- Proximity to vacation spots - beach and mountains
- Carolina Thread Trail – trailhead of the southern part
- Agriculture industry and farming community
- Whitewater rafting opportunity
- Flopeye Fish Festival – 36-year history
- Council of Governments support for grants
- Land available for development

Weaknesses

- Skilled labor for business and also local government (e.g. law enforcement)
- Out-commuting of labor because of not enough local jobs
- Broadband internet and telecommunications
- Low wages even for professionals such as teachers
- Lack of market-rate housing
- Dilapidated housing
- Higher unemployment
- Never recovered from the mill closing
- Distance to I-77
- Uncertainty on continuation of local high school
- Litter problem needs education to solve
- Vacant buildings, dilapidated condition
- Apathy, lack of community involvement
- Shrinking tax base
- Law enforcement struggles with drug and other issues
- Poor impression of the community due to appearance, lack of curb appeal
- Lack of funding to address community development issues, rely on grants but lack grant writing assistance
- Poor communication between local and state agencies
- Abundance of rental and Section 8 housing

Opportunities

- Whitewater and ecotourism and all of the amenities it will bring state park, ziplining, mountain biking, camping, boating, fishing, beaches, general store, etc.
 - People need to believe it will happen
- Wayfinding signage
- State park and related tourism
- Restaurants
- Lodging for tourists
- Shopping
- Awareness –
- Local youth engaged in outdoor sports and youth clubs
- Promotion of historic assets
- Outdoor recreation related tourism, hiking, Carolina Thread Trail
- Birding – Designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society
- Fostering the artistic community and youth art
- Redevelop business sites, neighborhoods, and villages
- Mill building redevelopment, mill architecture in residential redevelopment

Threats

- Drugs and crime
- Apathy
- Economic downturn
- Regulatory processes stalling mill redevelopment - building codes, Department of Health and Environmental Control, county planning and zoning
- Need updates to ordinances to control growth
- Severe drought
- Site contamination
- Maintaining a local high school
- Having to travel outside of town for work, shop

Appendix B: Economic and Demographic Profile

Economic and Demographic Profile Summary

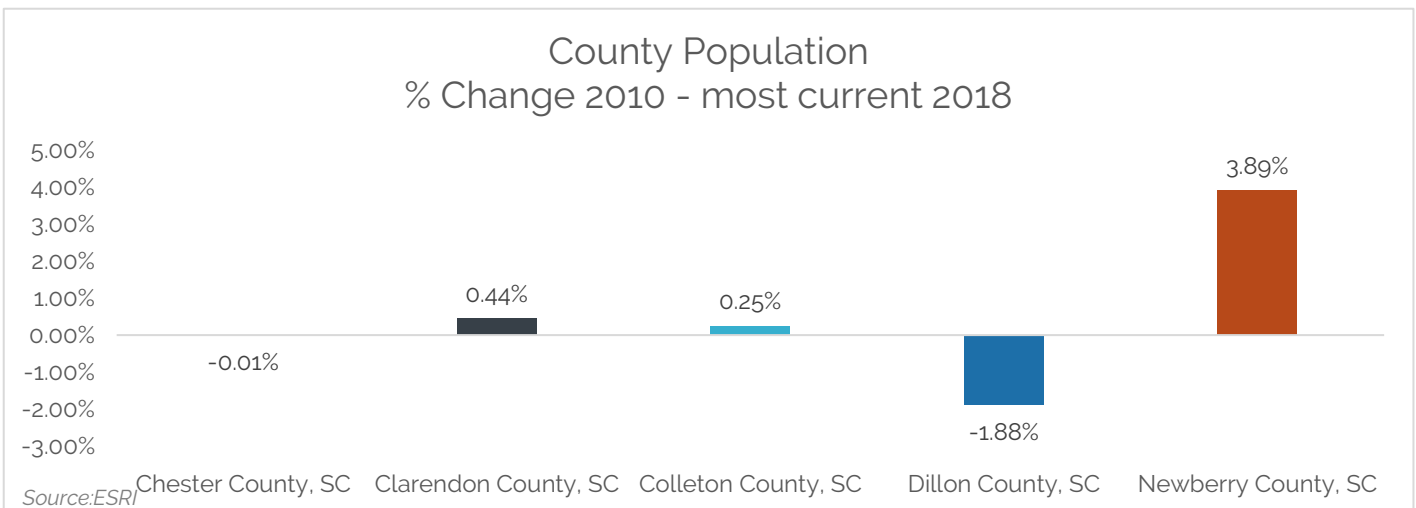
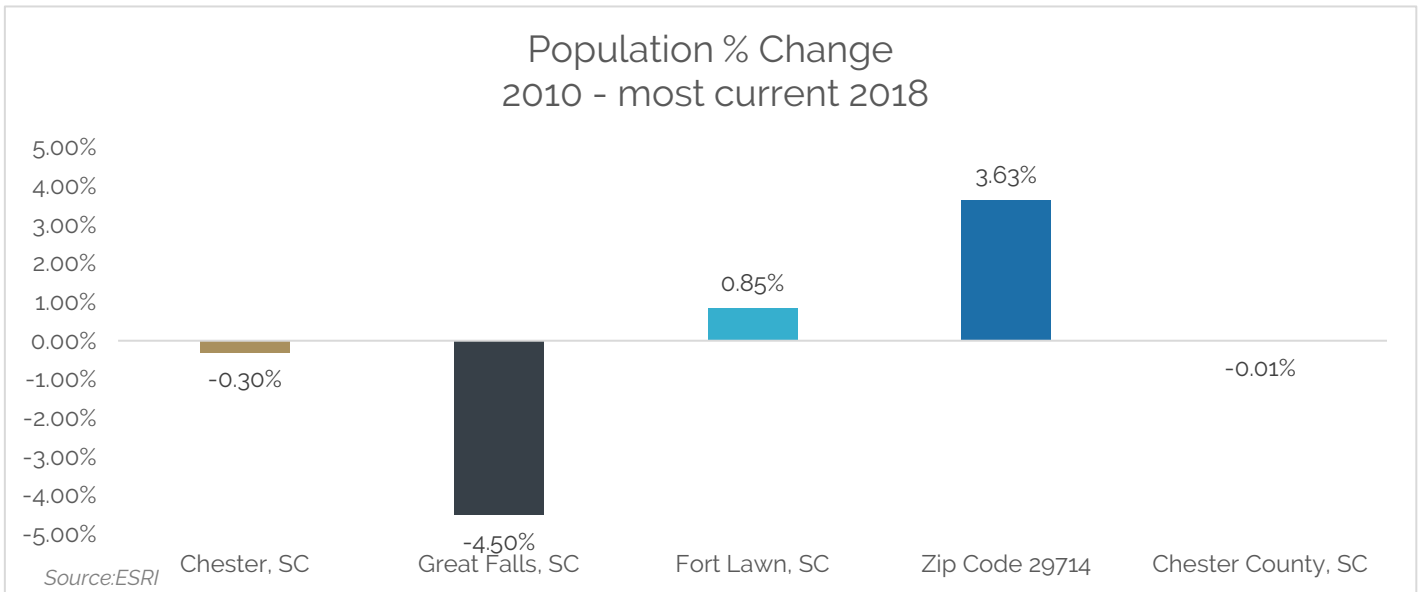
- ⊙ Chester County's population is flat, which is common among rural communities. The recent job gains have helped to mitigate a greater negative decline. Of the towns, only Fort Lawn has seen population growth.
- ⊙ Great Falls is the standout with more young people than the other towns and the county average. Overall, Chester County needs to attract more working-age people. It is aging faster than the region and state.
- ⊙ The City of Chester has the reverse white/African American ratio (33.5% white and 63% African American) than the other towns and county (60.9% white and 35.5% African American). The county's diversity index is lower than the region, state, and comparable counties.
- ⊙ Fort Lawn stands out in educational attainment with a higher percentage with some college and associates degrees. The county has a higher percentage with bachelor's degrees. The county surpasses the region and state in associate's degrees and is a leader among the comparable counties. This is a foundation to attract skilled and semi-skilled jobs. SAT scores are average.
- ⊙ Per capita and median household incomes are low in Chester and Great Falls. The county is below the region and state averages but is second in the comparable group. Chester County is projected to make significant income gains due in part to recruiting higher wage jobs.
- ⊙ Homes are affordable in Chester County; however, there is a projected significant increase in the cost of housing (20%). Being affordable is good on one hand; however, the lower value of homes in Chester is primarily due to deteriorating homes.
- ⊙ The labor force and employment have been growing. Unemployment is declining. This is due to the longest national economic expansion on record and several new industries and existing industries adding new jobs.
- ⊙ Manufacturing remains the largest employment sector in Chester County, employing 37.1% of the workforce. This is an advantage since manufacturing has a high economic multiplier. The average manufacturing wage is \$987 and exceeds all comparable counties.
- ⊙ Violent crime has been declining in each town. Similarly, property crime has declined.

This research supports the strategic planning process by identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Building on the strong manufacturing base and addressing poverty, education, and housing are a part of the strategic plan.

Research Note: The Fort Lawn data is for zip code 29714 to match the study area in the Heart and Soul Project. We note the population of the Town as 940 and the zip code 2,981, a substantial difference.

Population	2000	2010	2018	2023	% Change 2010 - most current 2018
Chester, SC	6,603	5,607	5,590	5,541	-0.30%
Great Falls, SC	2,216	1,979	1,890	1,842	-4.50%
Fort Lawn, SC	831	895	940	948	0.85%
Fort Lawn 29714 Zip Code, SC	2,728	2,867	2,971	2,981	3.63%
Chester County, SC	34,068	33,140	33,137	32,850	-0.01%
Clarendon County, SC	32,502	34,971	35,124	34,887	0.44%
Colleton County, SC	38,264	38,892	38,988	39,403	0.25%
Dillon County, SC	30,722	32,062	31,458	30,573	-1.88%
Newberry County, SC	36,108	37,508	38,967	39,871	3.89%
Charlotte, SC MSA	1,717,490	2,217,012	2,565,531	2,804,119	15.72%
South Carolina	4,012,012	4,625,364	5,108,693	5,437,217	10.45%

Source: ESRI



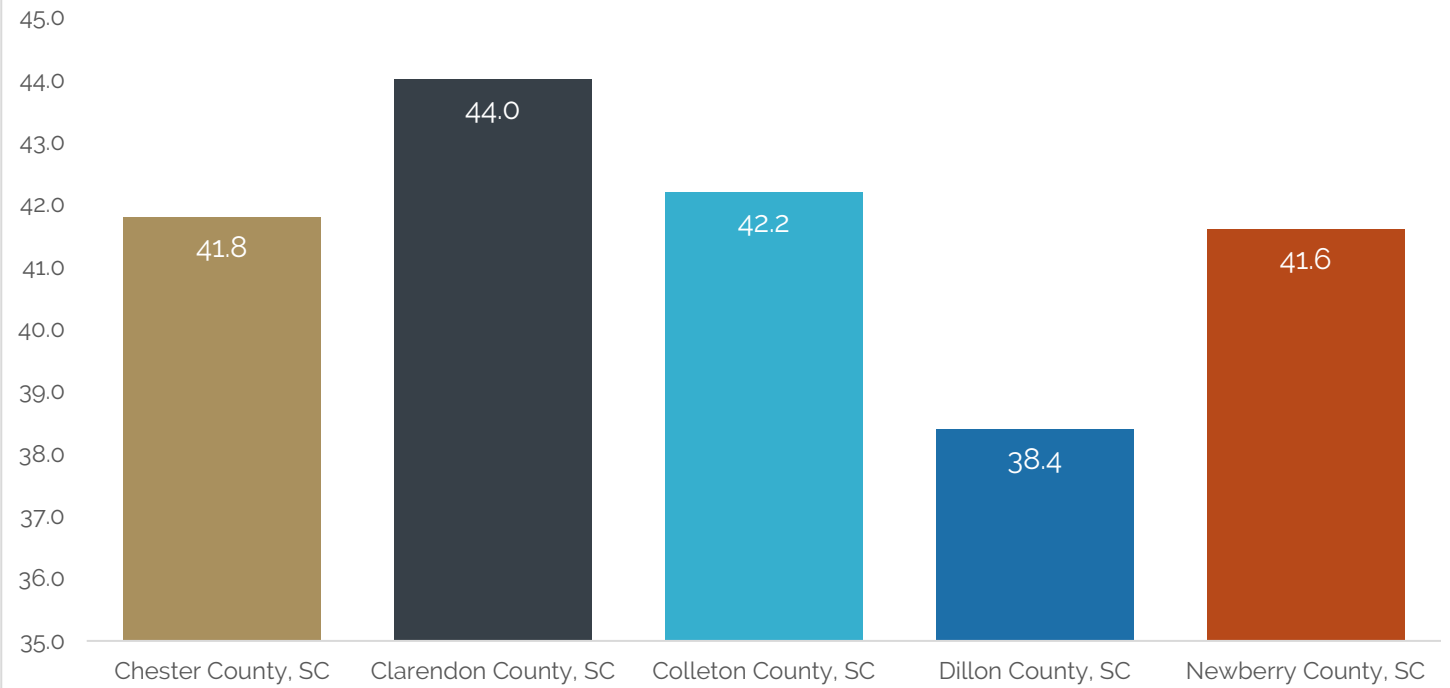
2018 Age-Cities & County

Age Groups	Chester, SC	Great Falls, SC	Fort Lawn, SC	Zip Code 29714, SC	Chester County, SC
Total population	5,588	1,894	941	2,971	33,137
Under 5 years	7.0%	6.5%	6.7%	6.2%	6.1%
5 to 9 years	7.5%	7.3%	7.1%	6.7%	6.5%
10 to 14 years	6.9%	6.3%	6.2%	6.0%	6.2%
15 to 24 years	12.3%	22.0%	11.1%	10.8%	10.9%
25 to 34 years	12.9%	15.1%	13.4%	12.8%	12.5%
35 to 44 years	11.0%	11.5%	11.3%	11.6%	11.6%
45 to 54 years	12.2%	11.7%	14.8%	14.8%	13.6%
55 to 64 years	13.5%	12.9%	14.1%	14.9%	14.7%
65 to 74 years	10.4%	9.0%	9.8%	10.5%	11.3%
75 to 84 years	4.7%	5.6%	4.3%	4.3%	4.9%
85 years and over	1.7%	2.7%	1.4%	1.3%	1.7%
Median Age	38.1	37.7	40.2	41.7	41.8
Source: ESRI					

2018 Age-County, MSA, State

Age Groups	Chester County, SC	Charlotte, SC MSA	South Carolina
Total population	33,137	2,565,531	5,108,693
Under 5 years	6.1%	6.3%	6.0%
5 to 9 years	6.5%	6.7%	6.1%
10 to 14 years	6.2%	6.8%	6.1%
15 to 24 years	10.9%	12.7%	13.0%
25 to 34 years	12.5%	13.9%	13.4%
35 to 44 years	11.6%	13.8%	12.3%
45 to 54 years	13.6%	13.8%	12.7%
55 to 64 years	14.7%	12.3%	13.4%
65 to 74 years	11.3%	8.4%	10.5%
75 to 84 years	4.9%	3.8%	4.8%
85 years and over	1.7%	1.4%	1.7%
Median Age	41.8	37.5	39.2
Source: ESRI			

2018 County Median Age

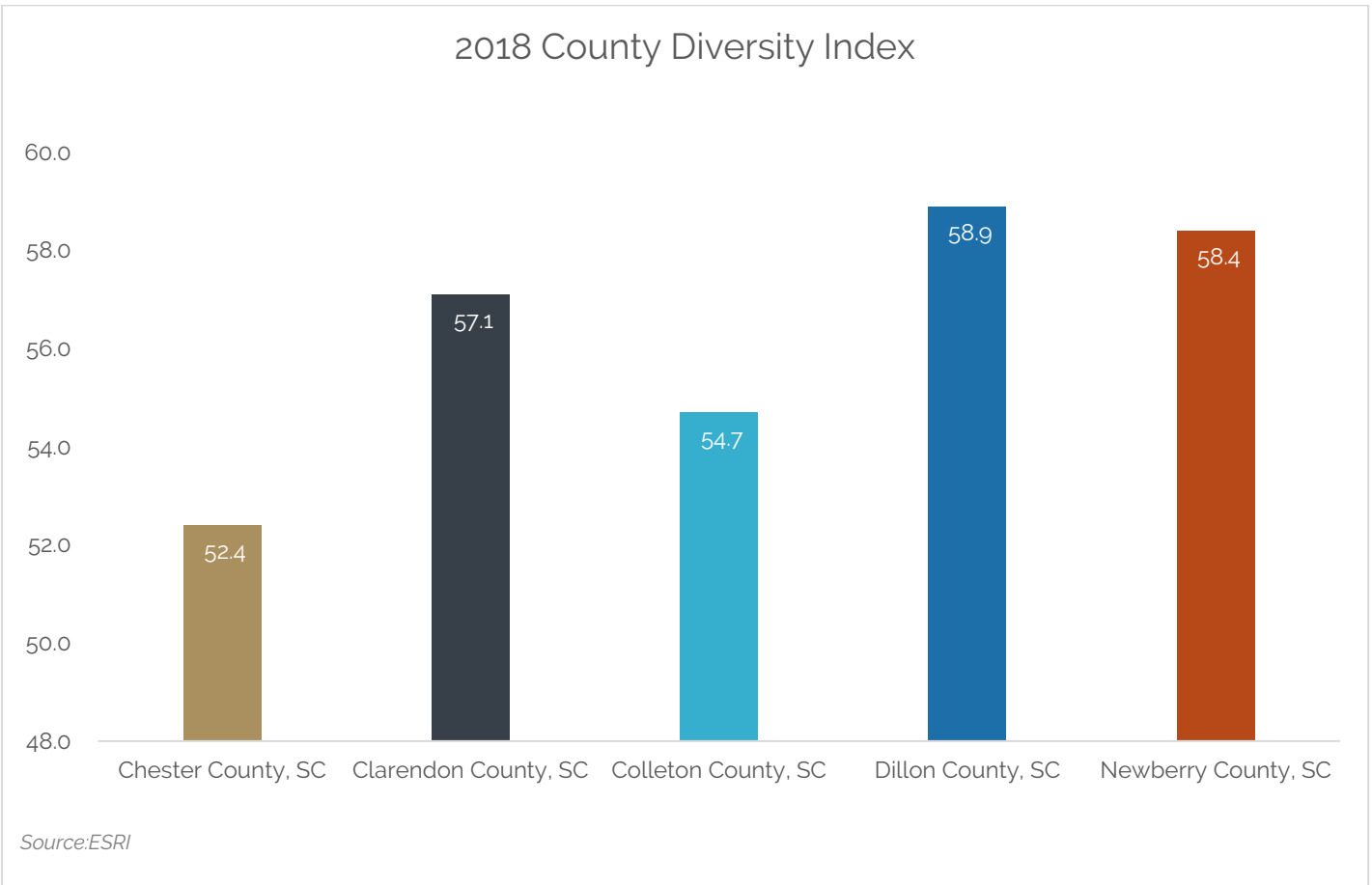


2018 Race-Cities & County	Chester, NC	Great Falls, SC	Fort Lawn, SC	Zip Code 29714, SC	Chester County, SC
White Alone	33.5%	64.8%	64.4%	68.0%	60.9%
Black Alone	63.0%	32.4%	30.6%	27.3%	35.5%
American Indian Alone	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%	1.0%	0.5%
Asian Alone	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	0.5%	0.3%	1.3%	1.1%	0.8%
Two or More Races	2.0%	2.5%	1.9%	2.1%	1.9%
Hispanic Origin	1.6%	1.2%	2.1%	2.3%	2.0%
Diversity Index	50.8	48.7	51.3	48.7	52.4

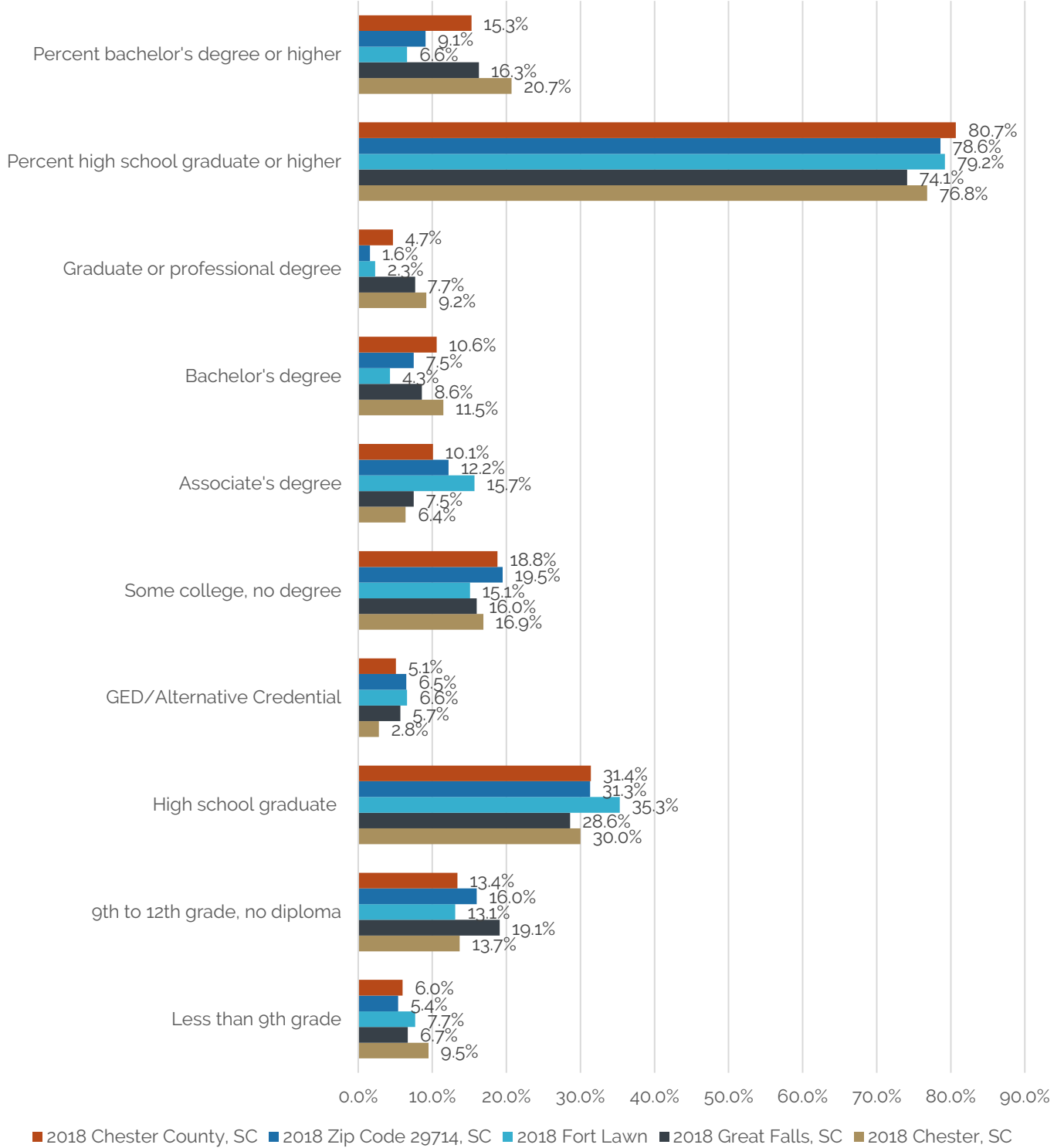
Source: ESRI

2018 Race-County, MSA, State	Chester County, SC	Charlotte, SC MSA	South Carolina
White Alone	60.9%	65.0%	66.0%
Black Alone	35.5%	22.8%	26.9%
American Indian Alone	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%
Asian Alone	0.5%	3.0%	1.6%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	0.8%	5.2%	2.7%
Two or More Races	1.9%	2.6%	2.2%
Hispanic Origin	2.0%	10.3%	5.7%
Diversity Index	52.4	61.2	59.6

Source: ESRI



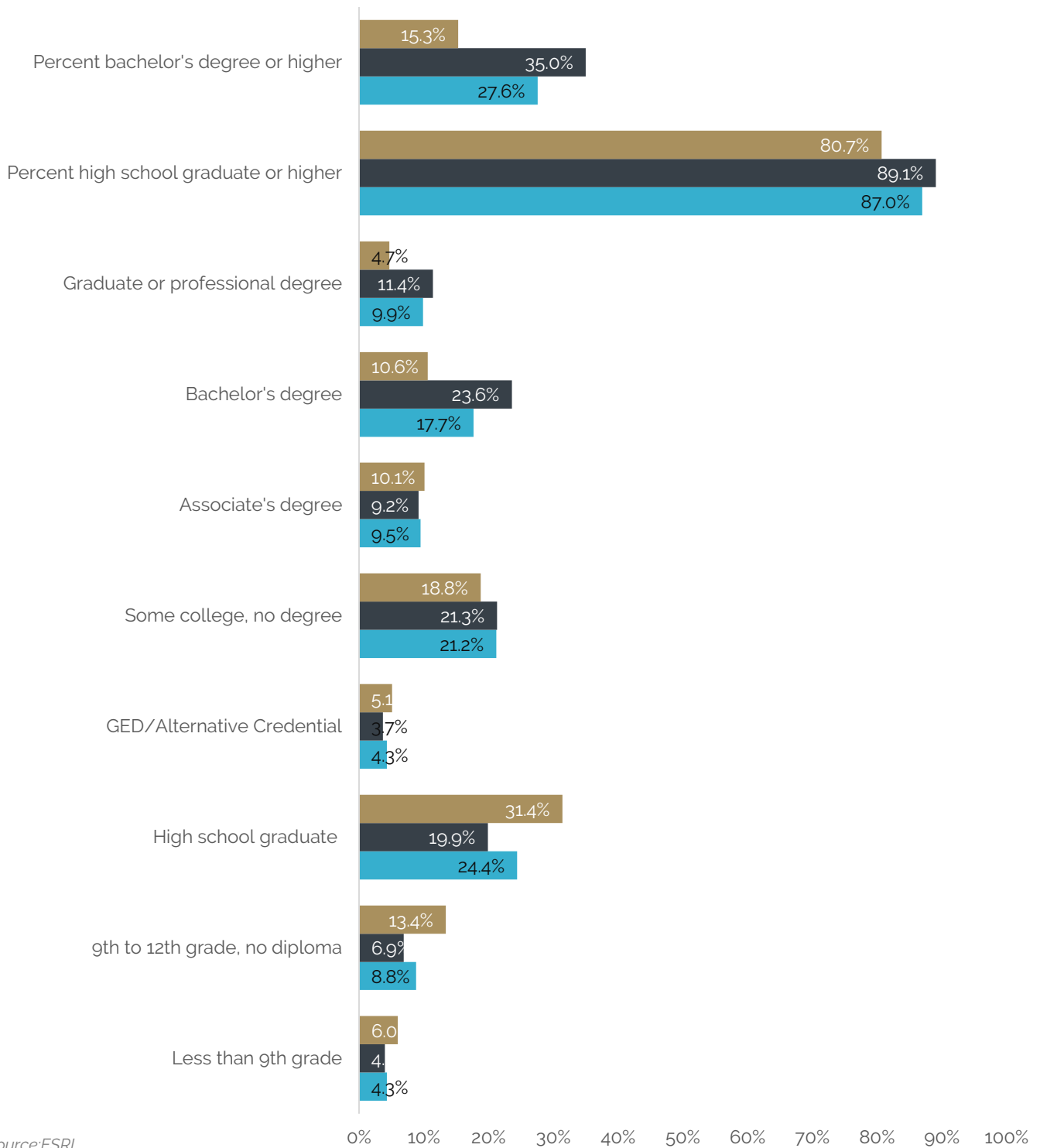
2018 Cities & County Educational Attainment



Source:ESRI

2018 County, MSA, State Educational Attainment

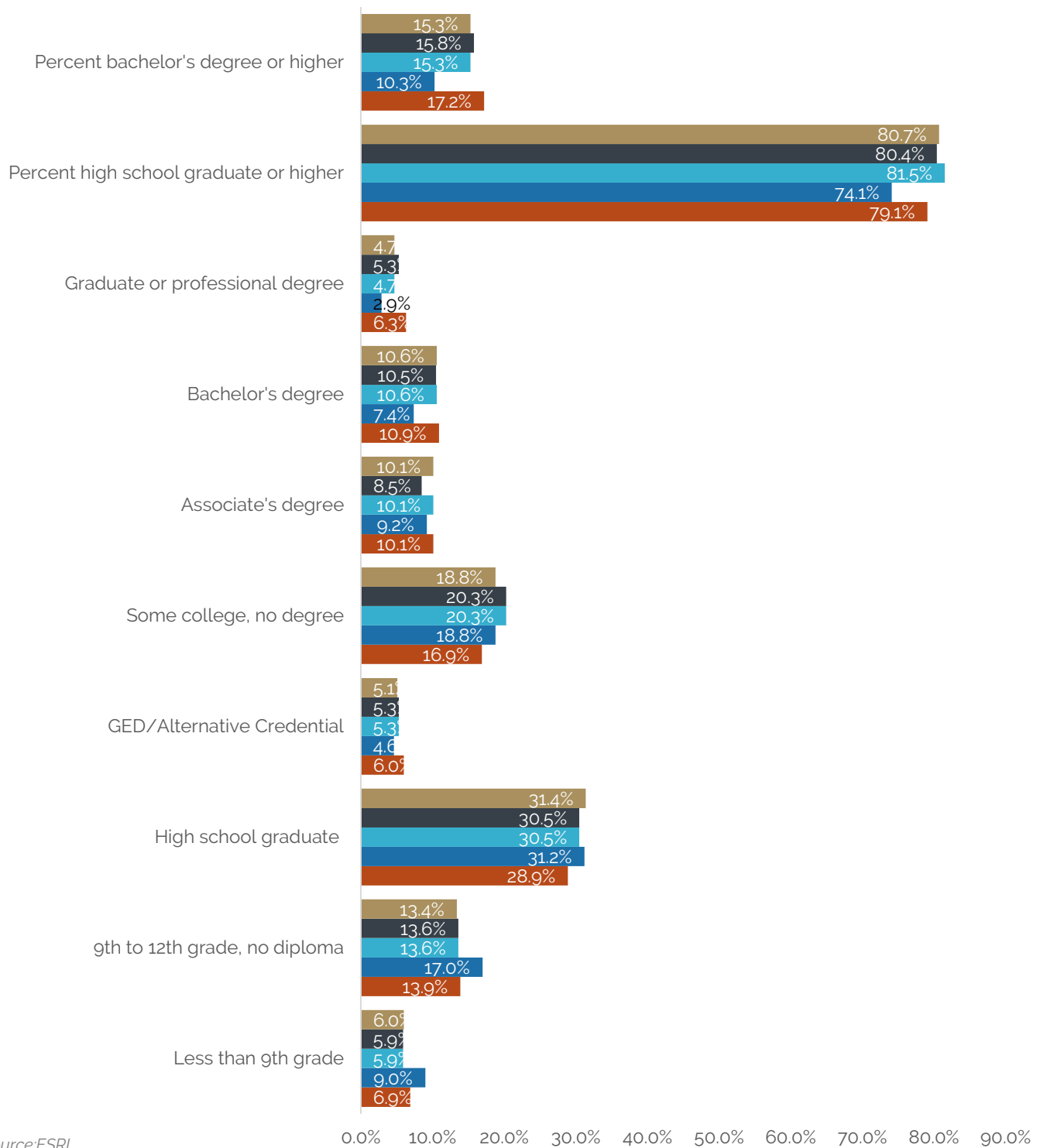
■ Chester County, SC ■ Charlotte, SC MSA ■ South Carolina



Source: ESRI

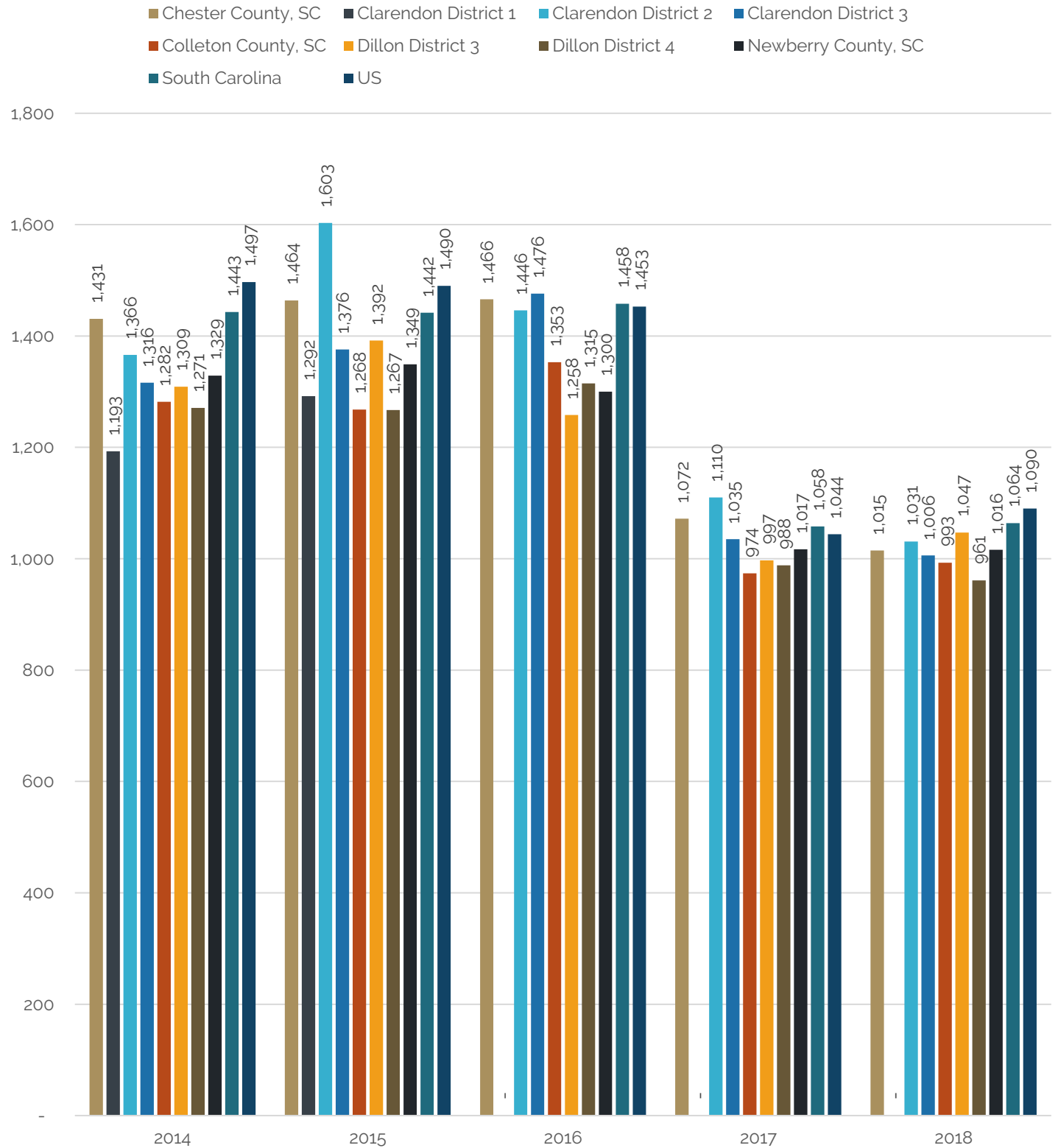
2018 Counties Educational Attainment

■ Chester County, SC ■ Clarendon County, SC ■ Colleton County, SC ■ Dillon County, SC ■ Newberry County, SC



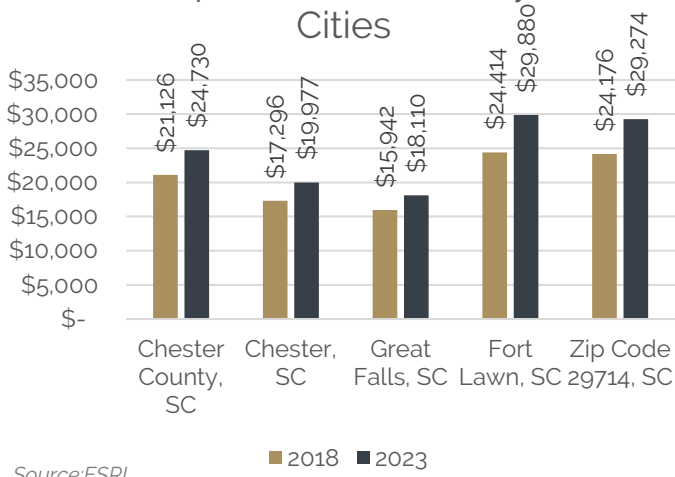
Source: ESRI

SAT Scores



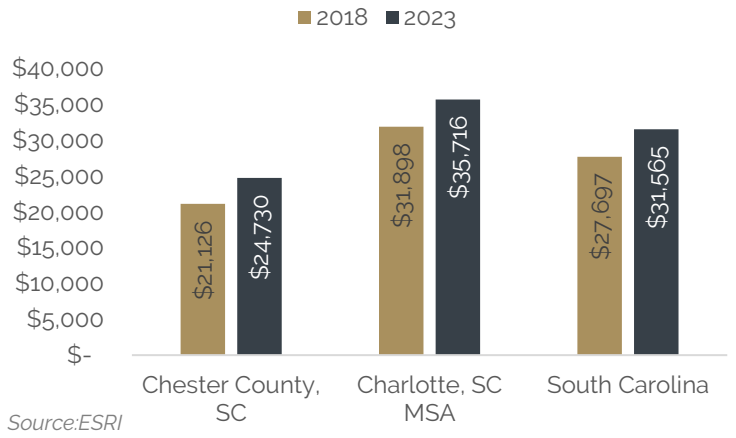
Source: South Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Per Capita Income County and Cities



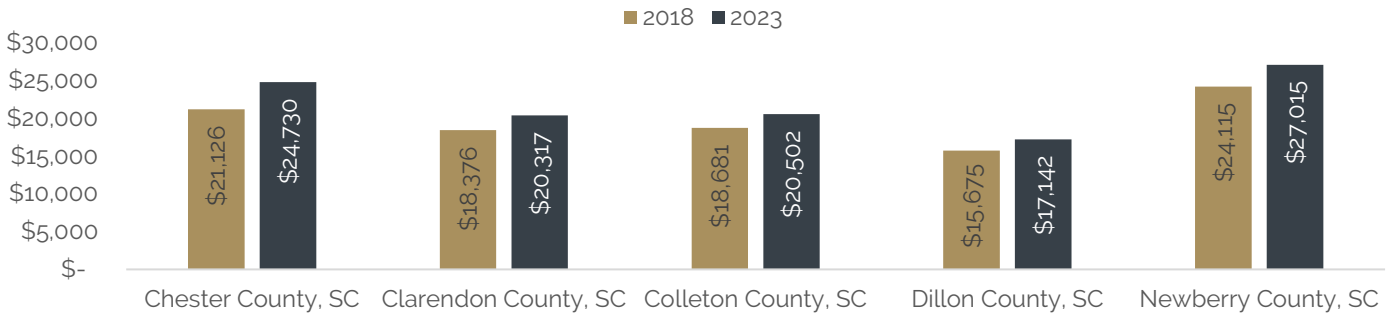
Source:ESRI

Per Capita Income County , MSA, State

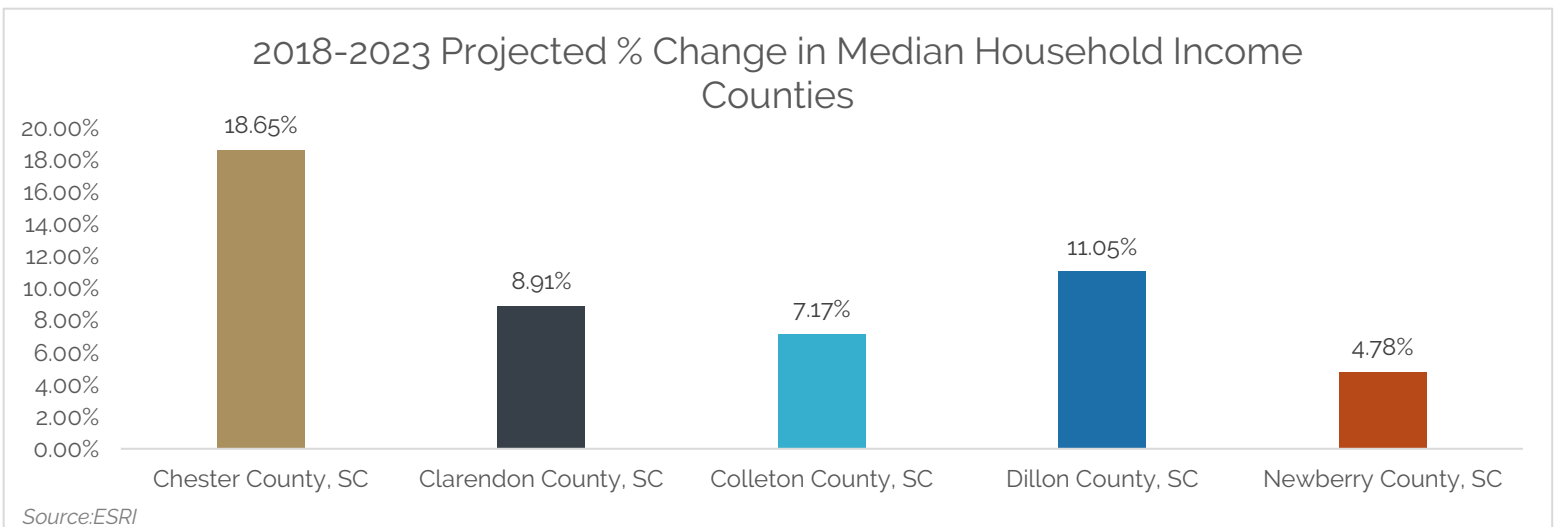
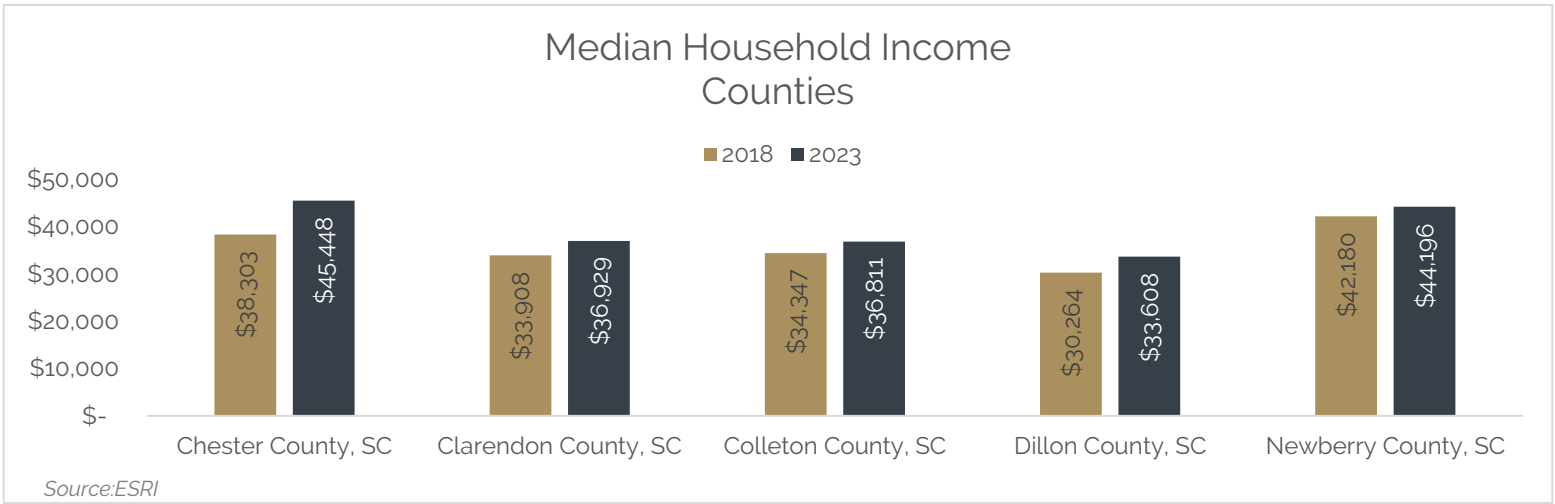
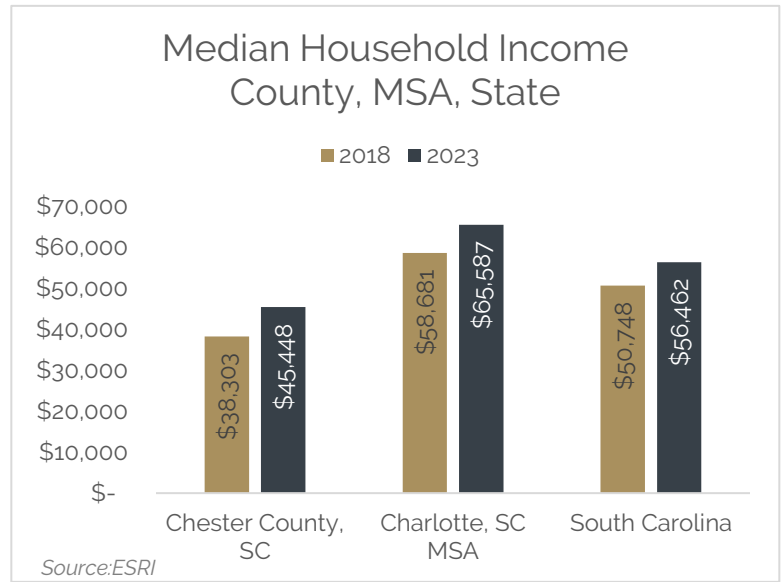
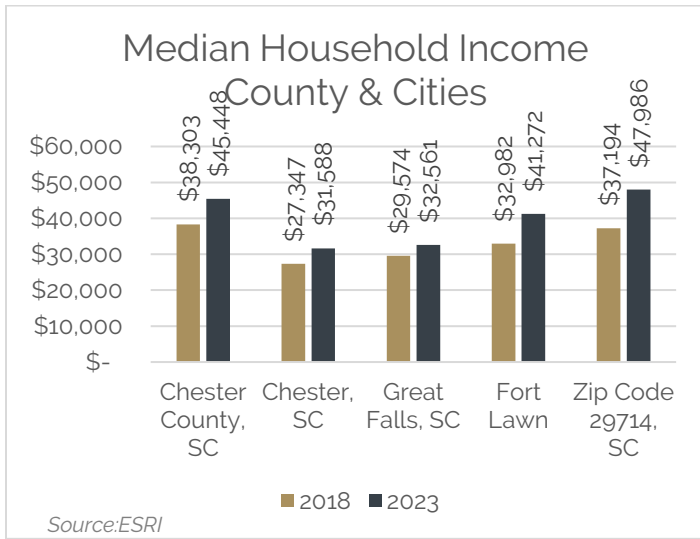


Source:ESRI

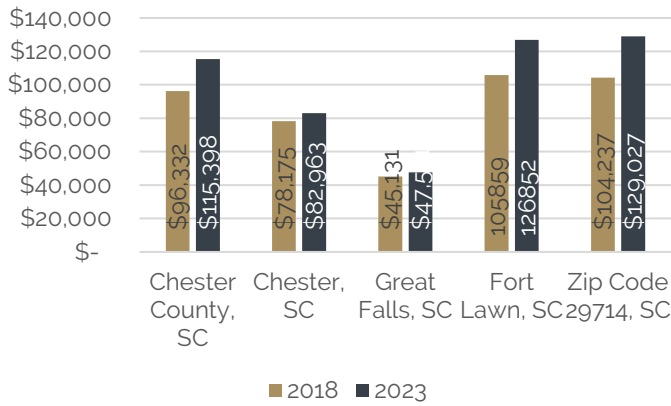
Per Capita Income Counties



Source:ESRI

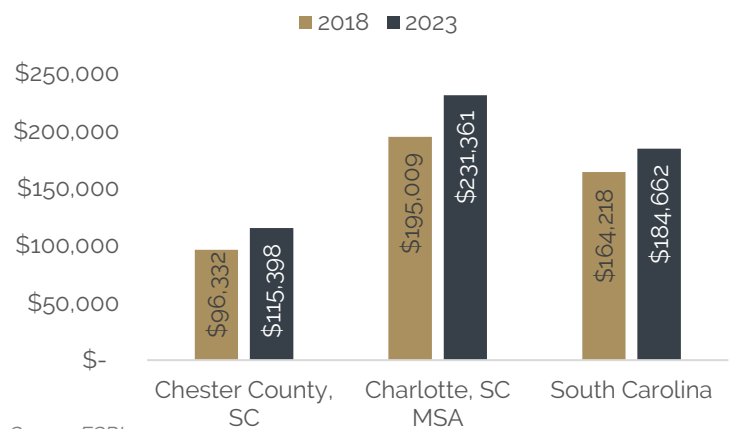


Median Home Value County & Cities



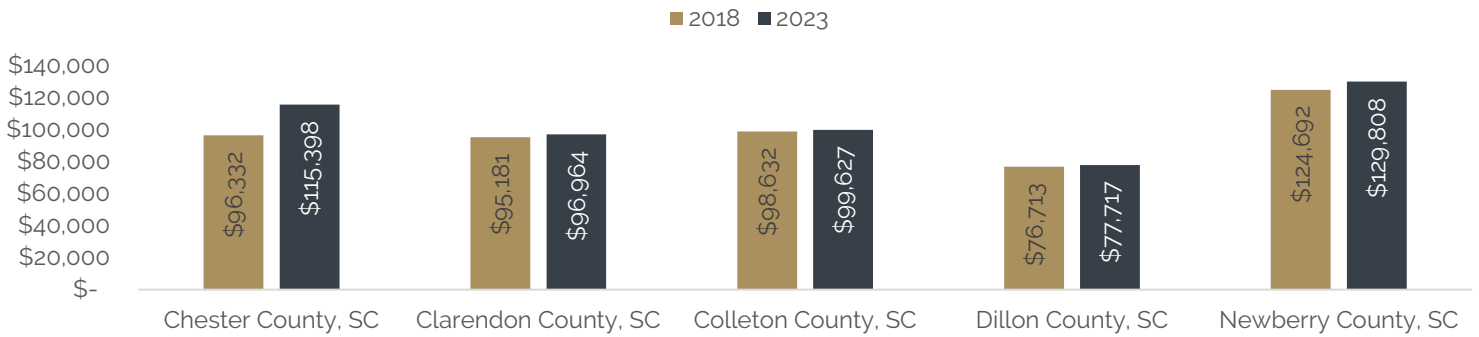
Source:ESRI

Median Home Value County, MSA, State



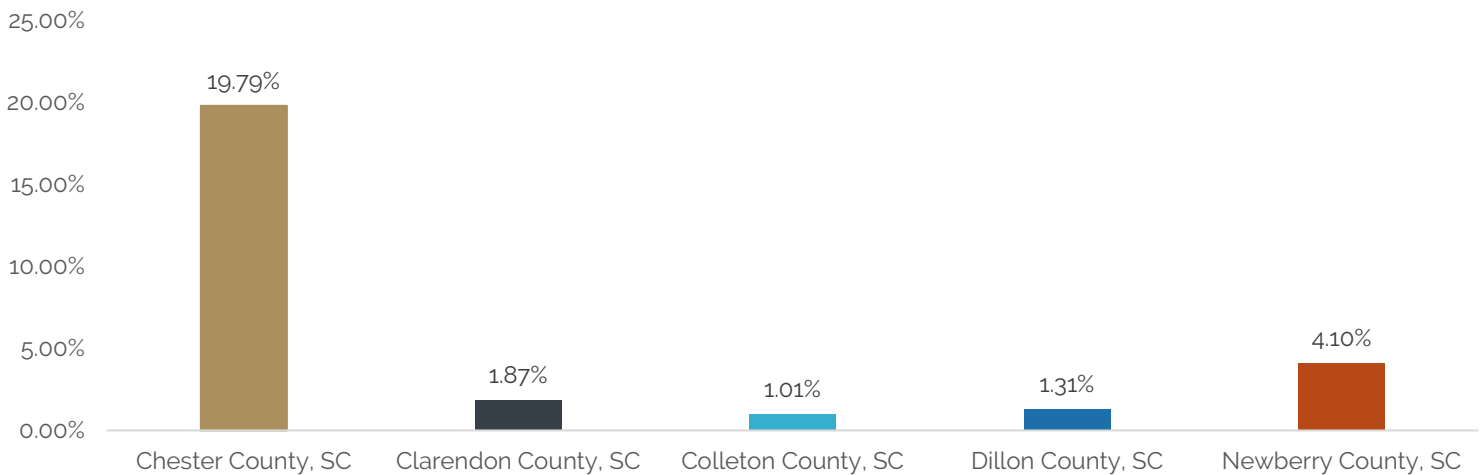
Source:ESRI

Median Home Value Counties



Source:ESRI

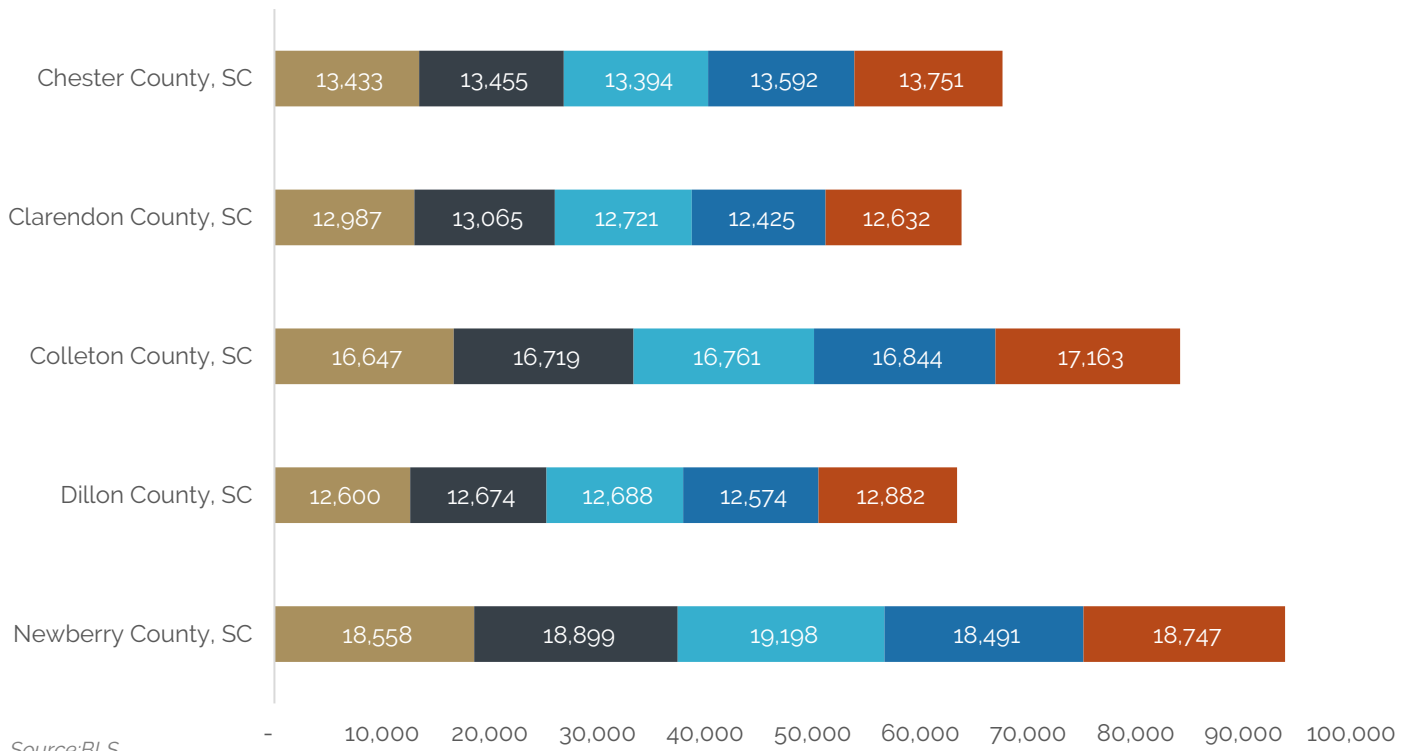
2018-2023 Projected % Change Median Home Value Counties



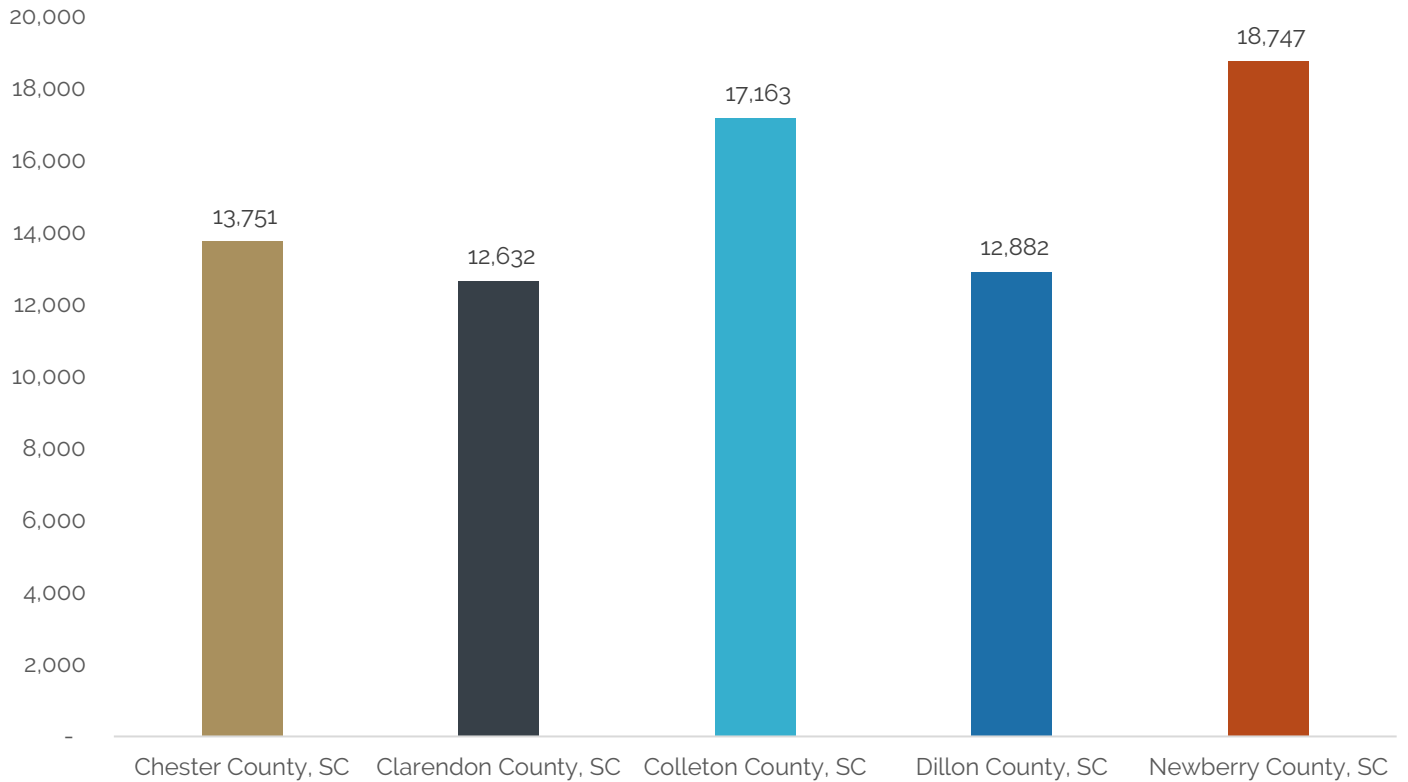
Source:ESRI

Labor Force

■ 2014
 ■ 2015
 ■ 2016
 ■ 2017
 ■ December 2018

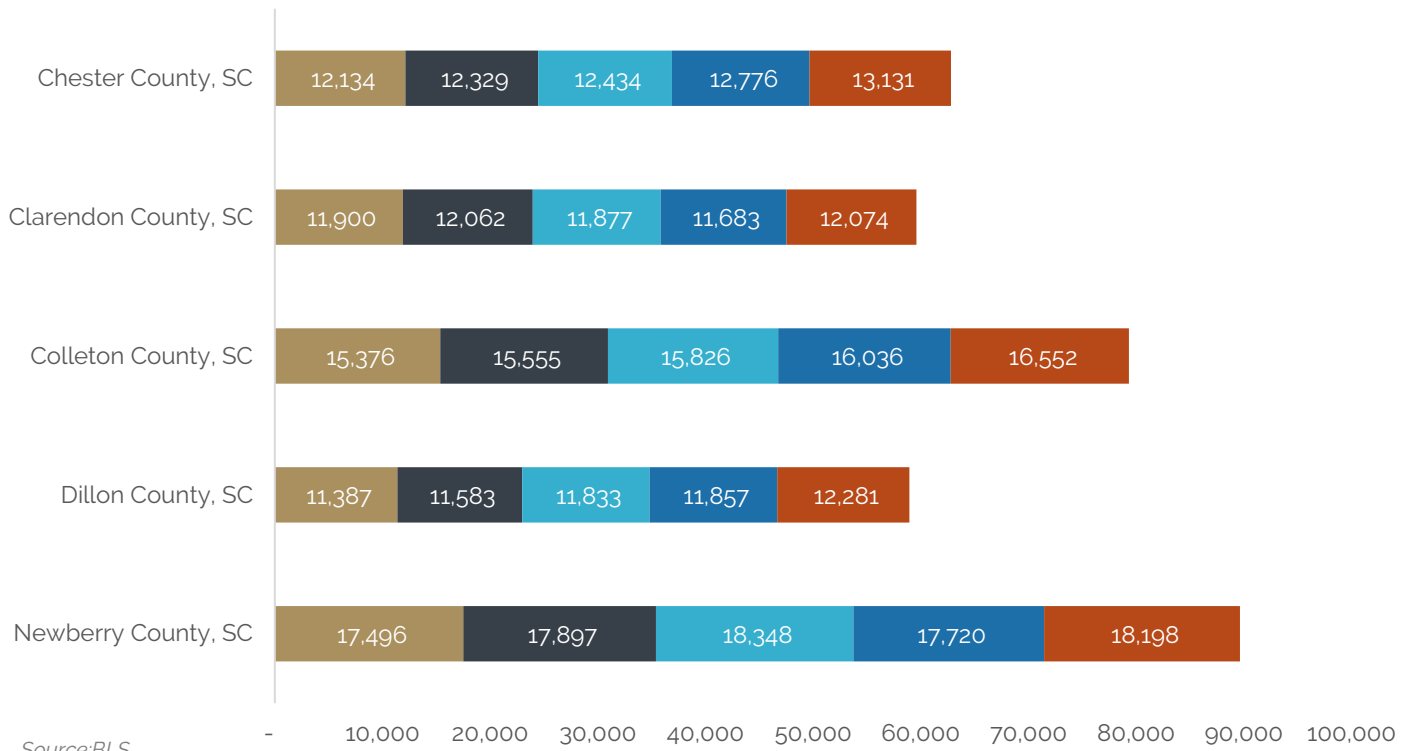


Labor Force December 2018

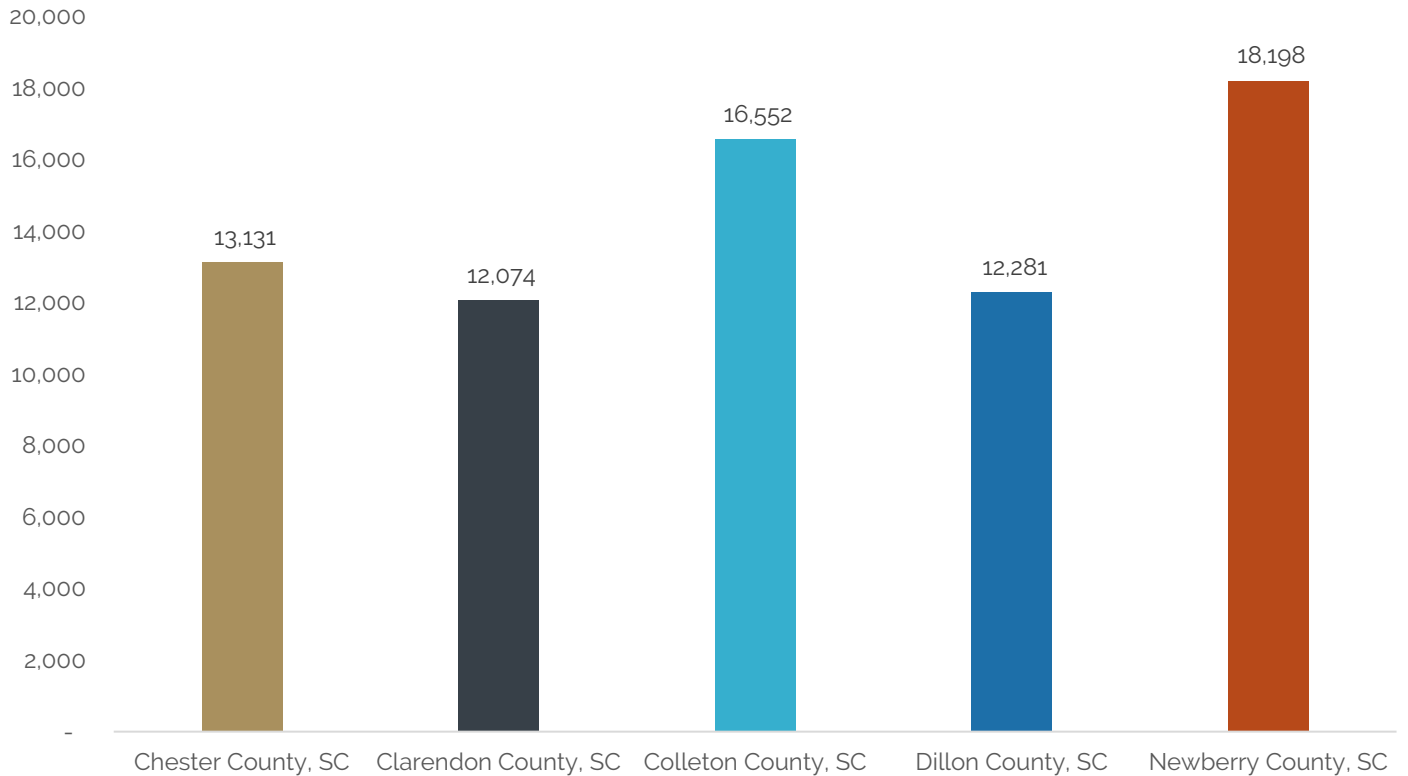


Employment

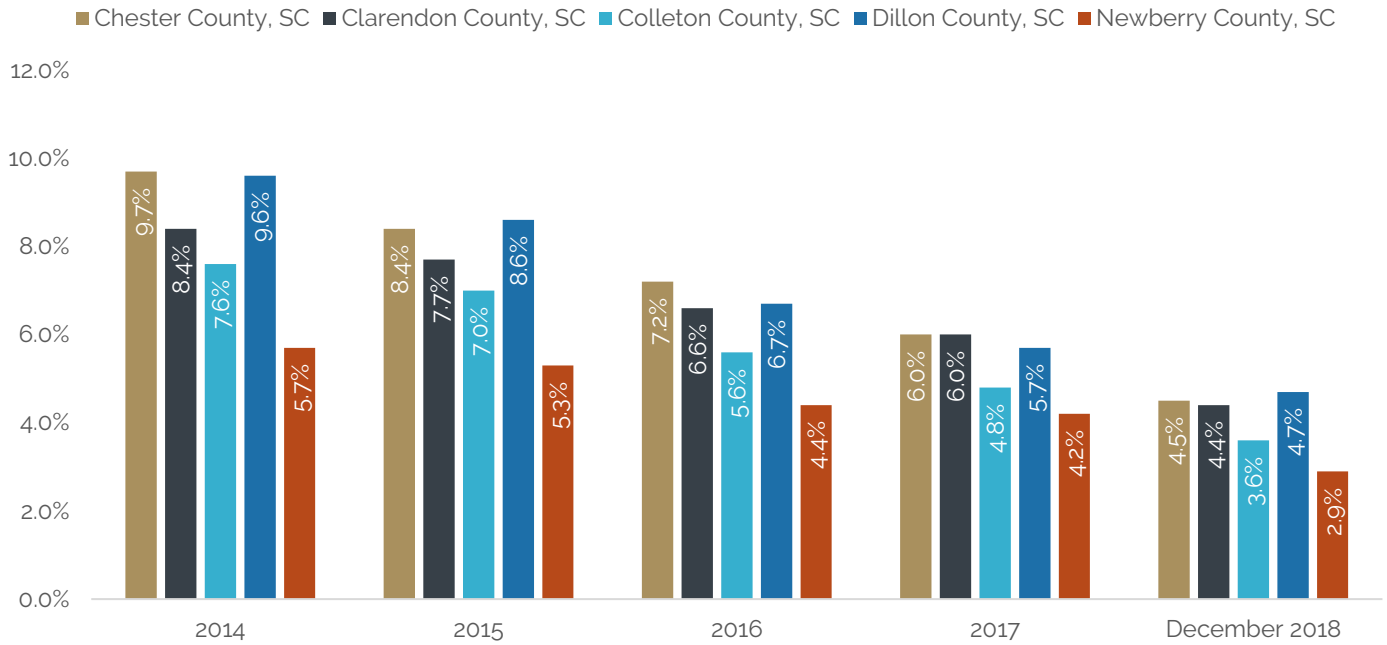
■ 2014 ■ 2015 ■ 2016 ■ 2017 ■ December 2018



Employment December 2018

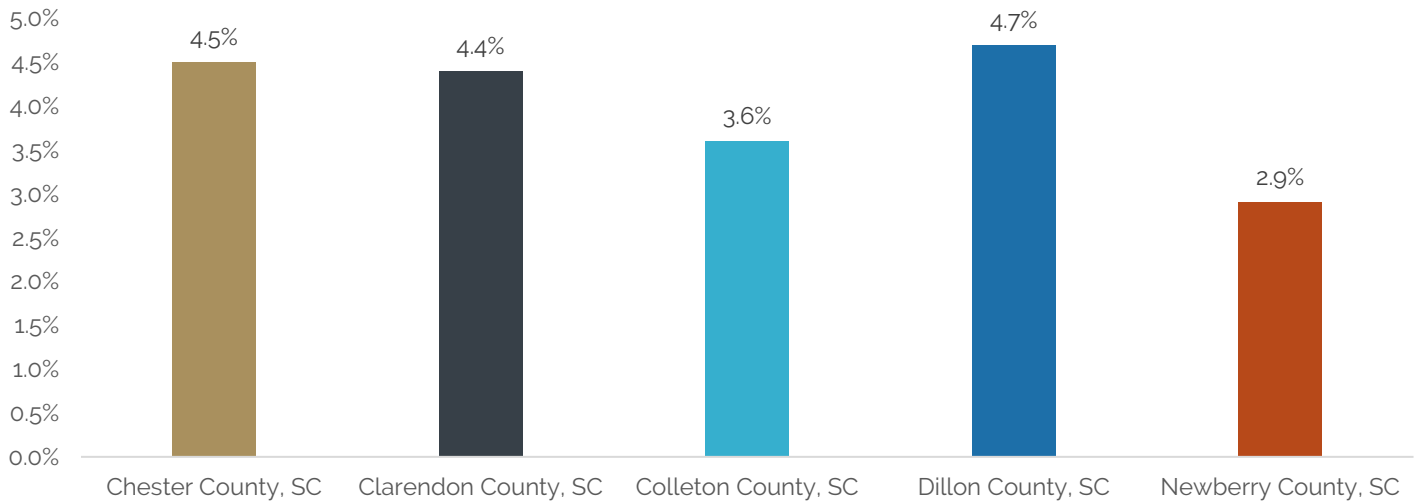


Unemployment Rate



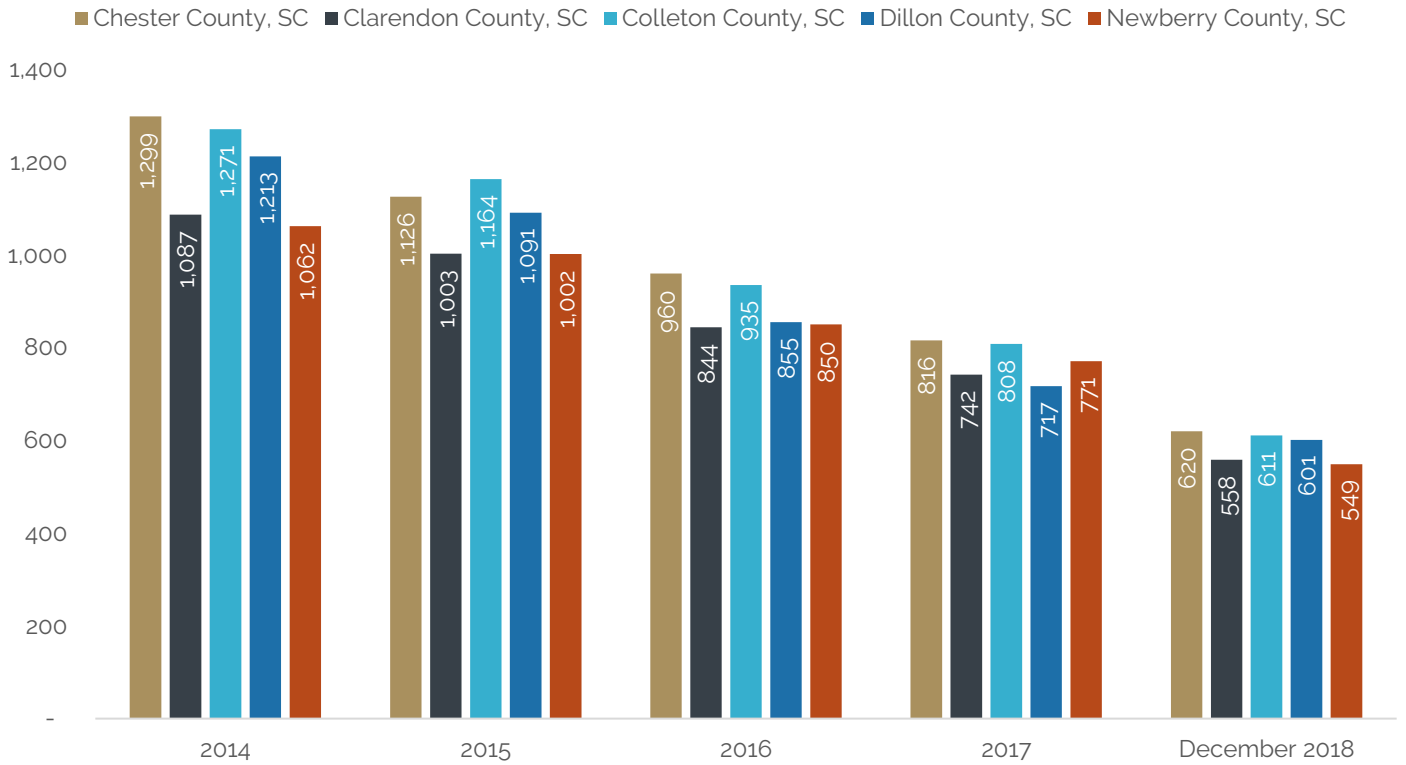
Source: BLS

Unemployment Rate December 2018



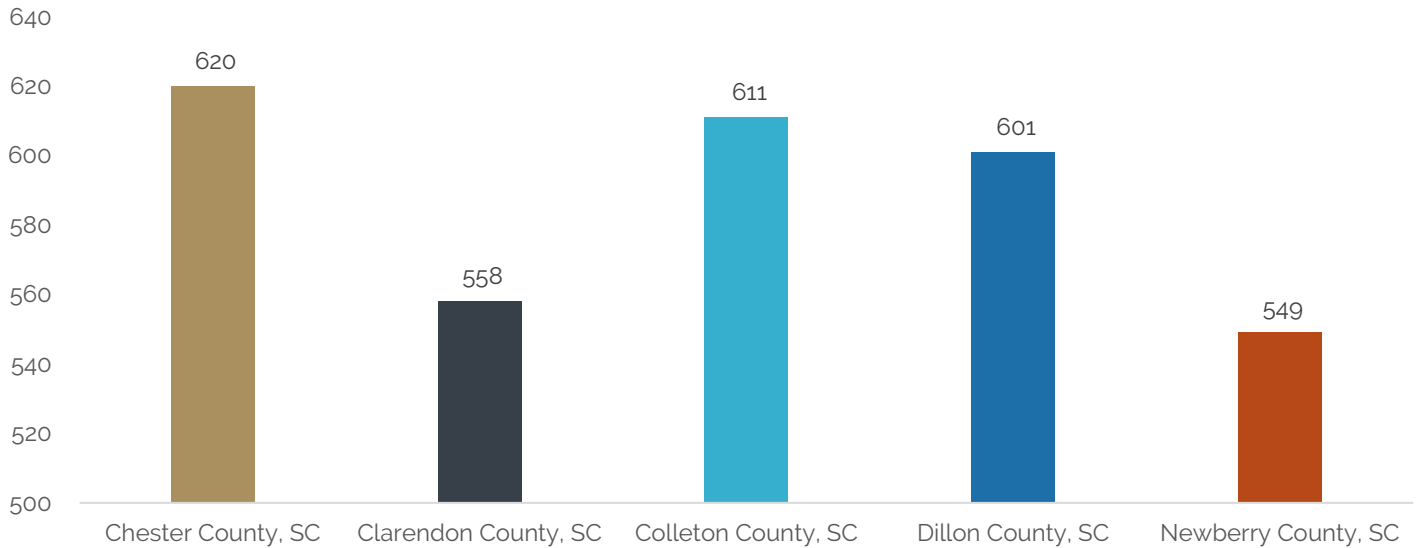
Source: BLS

Number Unemployed



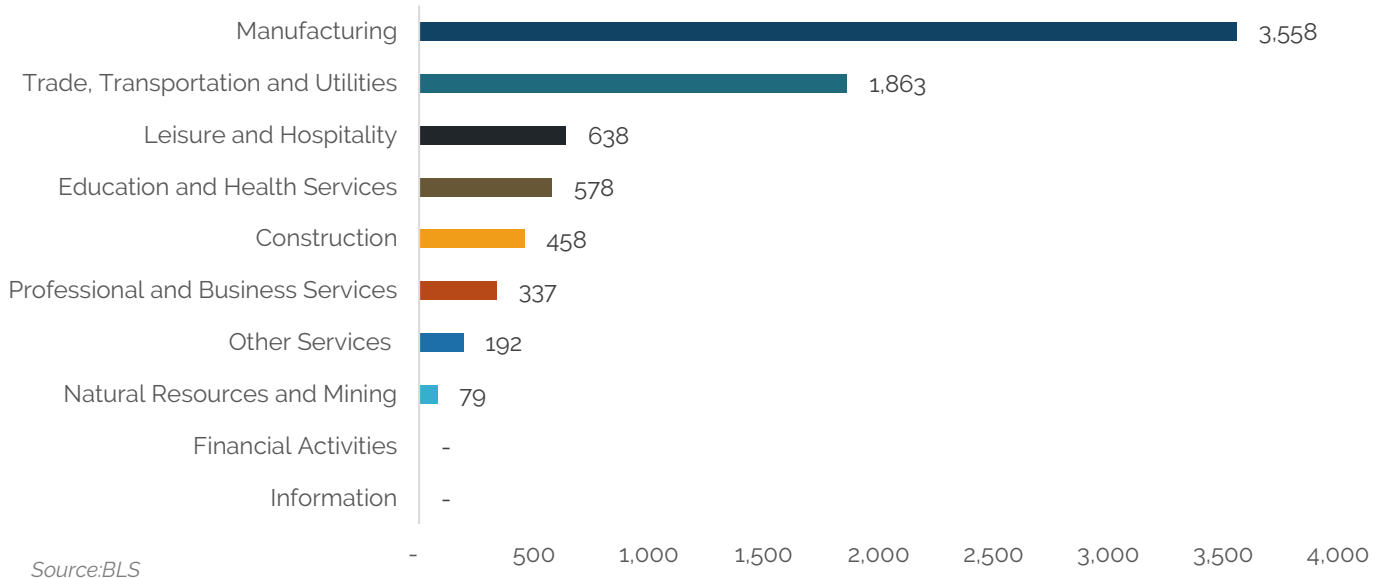
Source: BLS

Number Unemployed December 2018

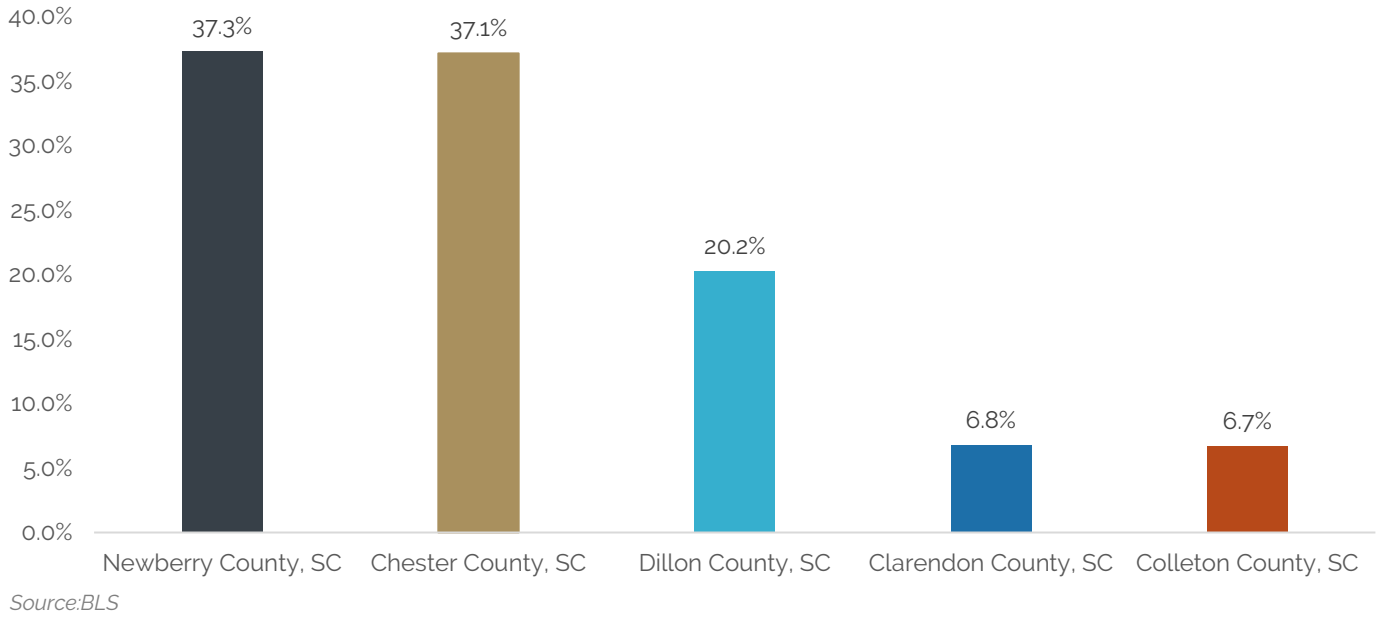


Source: BLS

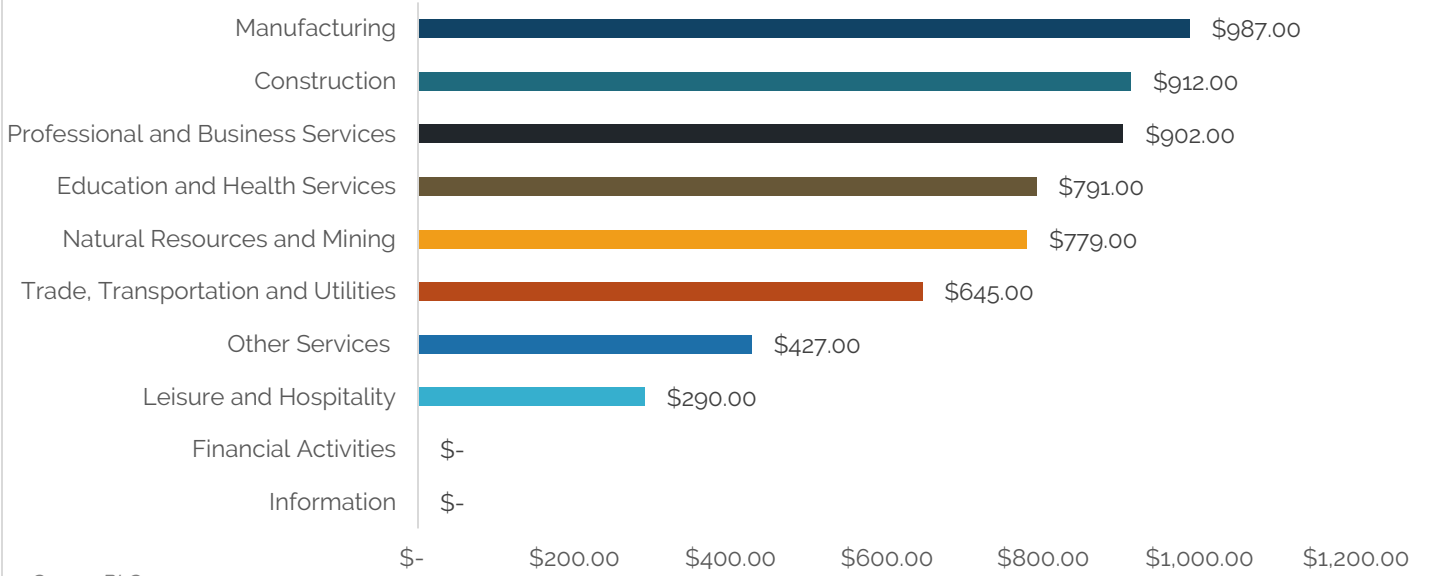
Chester County Employment by Industry Q3 2018



Manufacturing % of Total Industries Q3 2018

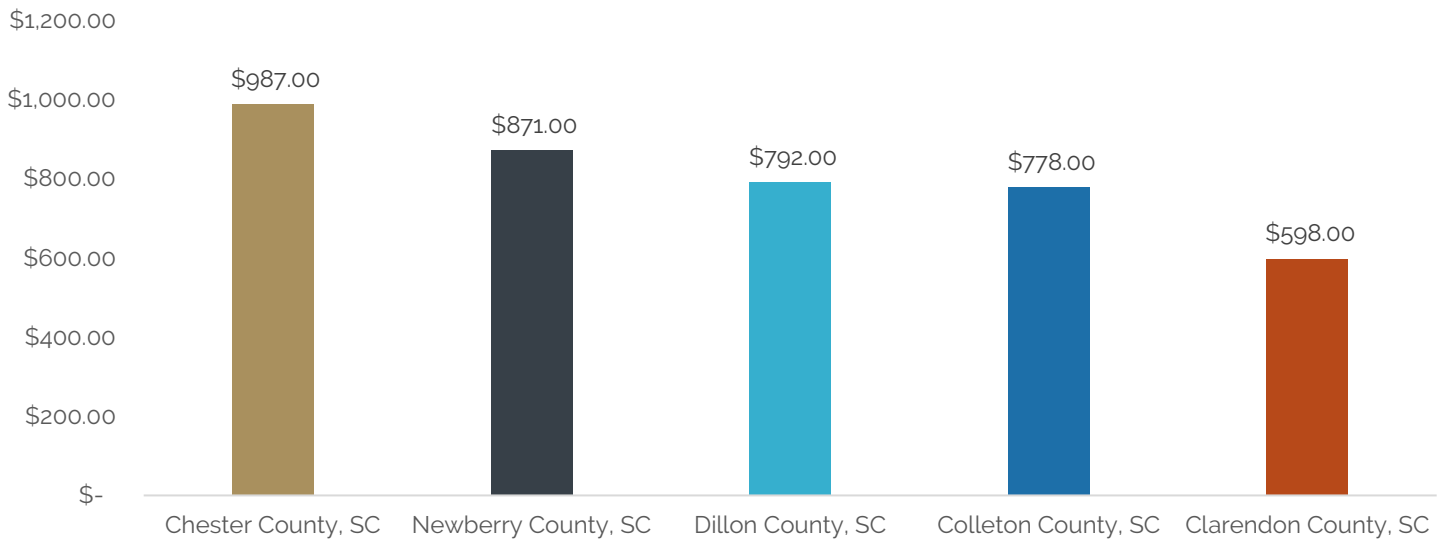


Chester County Wage by Industry Q3 2018



Source:BLS

Manufacturing Wages Q3 2018 By County



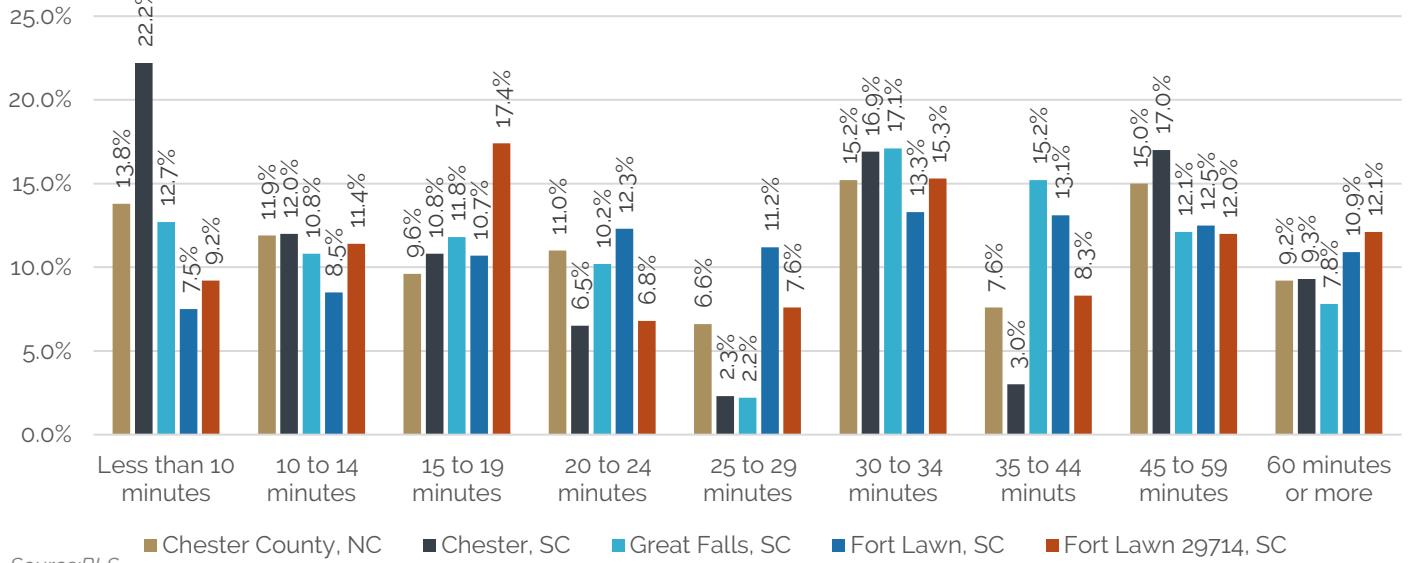
Source:BLS

Employers - Chester County, SC

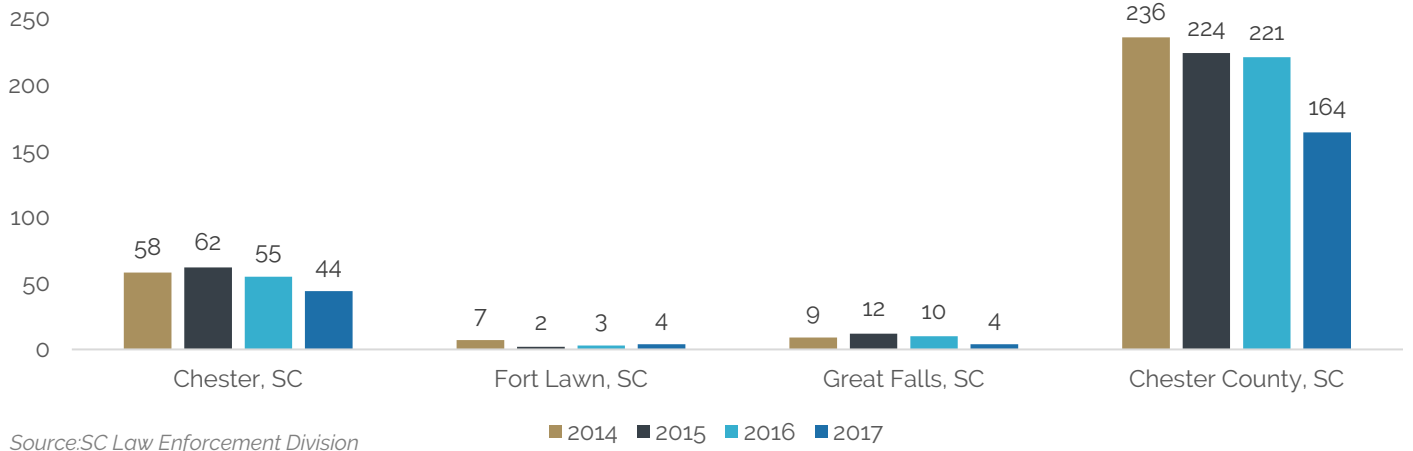
Boise Cascade Company
Boral Stone Products LLC
Carolina Poly Inc.
Chester County
Chester County School District
Chester HMA LLC % Carolinas Holding
Chester Telephone Company
Electri Glass Fiber America LLC
Footprint South Carolina LLC
GITI Tire Manufacturing USA Ltd.
Guardian Industries Corporation
Morning Star LLC
Reliable Management Solutions LLC
SC Dept of Transportation
Schneider National Carriers Inc.
Sun Fiber LLC
TDY Industries LLC
United Infrastructure Group Inc.
United Natural Foods Inc.
Wal-mart Associates Inc.
<i>Source: SCWorkforceInfo.com</i>

2017 Retail Sales	Chester County, SC	Chester, SC	Great Falls, SC	Fort Lawn, SC	Zip Code 29714, SC
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	\$ 265,114,078	\$ 65,799,635	\$ 9,056,195	\$10,529,689	\$ 9,684,938
Total Retail Trade	\$ 241,861,740	\$ 62,039,766	\$ 8,582,630	\$9,577,532	\$ 7,605,702
Total Food & Drink	\$ 23,252,338	\$ 3,759,869	\$ 473,565	\$952,157	\$ 2,079,236
<i>Source: ESRI</i>					

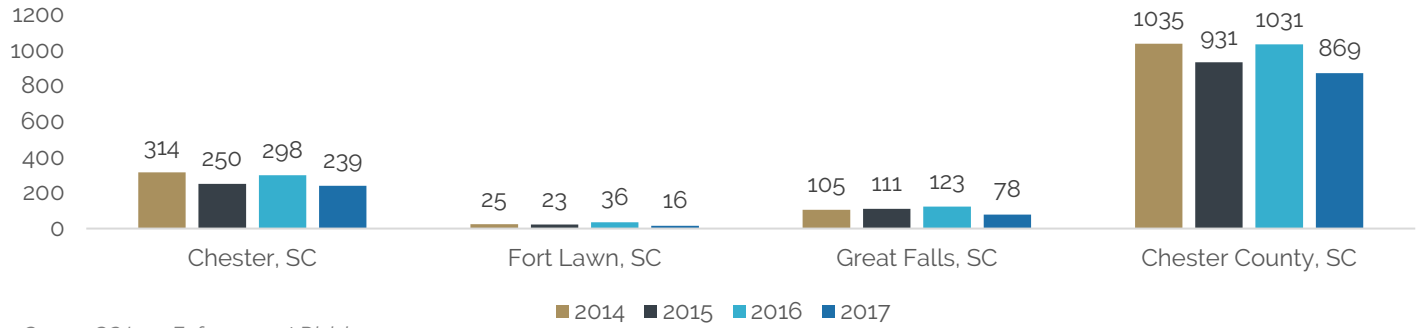
2017 Commuting



Violent Crime



Property Crime



Chester County, SC 2013-2017 Establishment Data

Gained	2013	2017
Total	500	831
Start Ups	38.4%	62.2%
Expansion Start Ups	4.8%	5.1%
Expansions	56.0%	30.7%
Move In	0.8%	2.0%
Lost		
Total	470	1,138
Closings	34.7%	93.8%
Contractions	59.1%	6.2%
Move Out	6.2%	0.0%

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

Chester County, SC 2013-2017 Employment Stages

ESTABLISHMENTS	2013	% of TOTAL	2017	% of TOTAL
ALL	1,325	100	1,271	100
Self-Employed (1)	224	16.9	192	15.1
Stage 1 (2-9)	900	67.9	889	69.9
Stage 2 (10-99)	185	14.0	176	13.8
Stage 3 (100-499)	16	1.2	14	1.1
Stage 4 (500+)	0	0	0	0

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

Appendix C: Chester County Retail MarketPlace Profile

Summary Demographics						
2018 Population						33,137
2018 Households						12,905
2018 Median Disposable Income						\$32,578
2018 Per Capita Income						\$21,126
2017 Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$348,363,143	\$265,114,078	\$83,249,065	13.6	195
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$318,479,704	\$241,861,740	\$76,617,964	13.7	141
Total Food & Drink	722	\$29,883,439	\$23,252,338	\$6,631,101	12.5	54
2017 Industry Group	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$74,043,147	\$10,833,228	\$63,209,919	74.5	16
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$60,375,116	\$1,461,484	\$58,913,632	95.3	4
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$6,817,029	\$4,919,084	\$1,897,945	16.2	3
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$6,851,002	\$4,452,660	\$2,398,342	21.2	9
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$9,932,117	\$11,200,961	-\$1,268,844	-6.0	8
Furniture Stores	4421	\$6,366,165	\$10,556,975	-\$4,190,810	-24.8	5
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$3,565,952	\$643,986	\$2,921,966	69.4	3
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$7,909,316	\$6,359,677	\$1,549,639	10.9	2
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$23,675,992	\$24,539,212	-\$863,220	-1.8	12
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$22,470,394	\$23,294,748	-\$824,354	-1.8	9
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$1,205,598	\$1,244,464	-\$38,866	-1.6	3
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$54,881,611	\$37,497,197	\$17,384,414	18.8	27
Grocery Stores	4451	\$50,571,754	\$33,616,809	\$16,954,945	20.1	20
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$1,921,976	\$299,631	\$1,622,345	73.0	1
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$2,387,881	\$3,580,757	-\$1,192,876	-20.0	6
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$21,336,914	\$8,344,797	\$12,992,117	43.8	6
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$39,507,559	\$73,358,434	-\$33,850,875	-30.0	24
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$12,057,070	\$2,887,822	\$9,169,248	61.4	6
Clothing Stores	4481	\$8,056,902	\$2,037,480	\$6,019,422	59.6	3
Shoe Stores	4482	\$1,996,288	\$718,007	\$1,278,281	47.1	2
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$2,003,880	\$132,335	\$1,871,545	87.6	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$7,992,110	\$815,068	\$7,177,042	81.5	3
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$6,894,921	\$815,068	\$6,079,853	78.9	3
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$1,097,189	\$0	\$1,097,189	100.0	0
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$49,427,685	\$54,390,253	-\$4,962,568	-4.8	15
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$35,732,341	\$49,643,881	-\$13,911,540	-16.3	5
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$13,695,344	\$4,746,372	\$8,948,972	48.5	10
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$12,783,204	\$11,245,998	\$1,537,206	6.4	20
Florists	4531	\$383,223	\$310,468	\$72,755	10.5	4
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$2,351,579	\$125,892	\$2,225,687	89.8	2
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$1,238,552	\$1,036,504	\$202,048	8.9	6
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$8,809,850	\$9,773,134	-\$963,284	-5.2	8
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$4,932,979	\$389,093	\$4,543,886	85.4	2
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$3,150,394	\$0	\$3,150,394	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$192,089	\$124,128	\$67,961	21.5	1
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$1,590,496	\$264,965	\$1,325,531	71.4	1
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$29,883,439	\$23,252,338	\$6,631,101	12.5	54
Special Food Services	7223	\$429,145	\$302,497	\$126,648	17.3	3
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$1,724,299	\$216,863	\$1,507,436	77.7	3
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$27,729,995	\$22,732,978	\$4,997,017	9.9	48

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

Appendix D: Survey Results

Chester County, Chester, Fort Lawn, and Great Falls – Survey Results

Online surveys were used to support the strategic planning process. A broad community survey was completed by 88 citizens. Those results are reported in total as well as broken out for Chester, Fort Lawn, and Great Falls. A business survey was completed by 20 people. The Chester Development Association (18 responses) also completed a survey.

There is consistency in the overall survey results from citizens, separate town responses, and the business community. There are a few specific differences, such as Great Falls' focus on transportation and Chester and Great Falls' emphasis on attracting new residents. There are a few differences in responses from business, such as increasing the tax base as one economic development goal.

Overall, citizens rate the business climate as low, much lower than in the 2014 strategic planning process. Fort Lawn citizens have the most positive outlook and Chester residents had the lowest rating of the economic climate. Businesses are more positive about the economy than citizens.

There is consensus around the most important assets for economic development: proximity to Charlotte and Columbia, York Technical College, quality of life, workforce availability, recreation, and transportation.

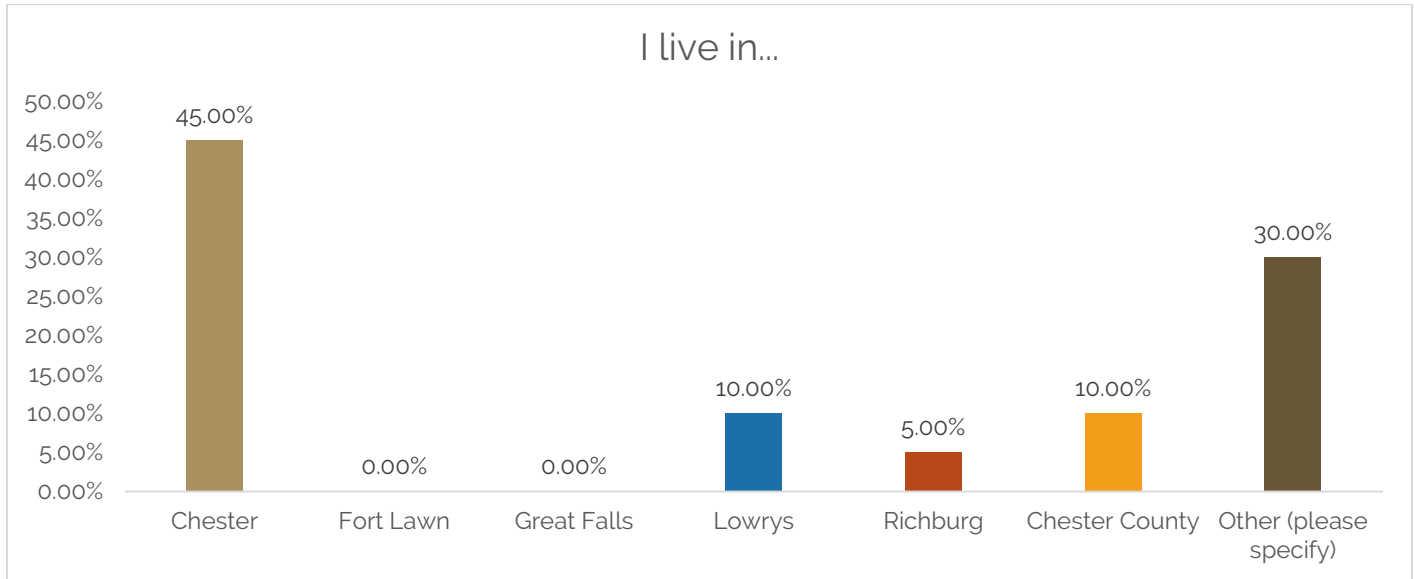
Citizens want to see the economic development program focus on education and workforce development, new business recruitment, existing business support, and small business development. The business community identified the same priorities.

Investments that citizens would like to see the public sector make for economic development include new business, downtown, and infrastructure development. Business diversification is also important. Great Falls citizens placed "transportation" in their list of top three investments.

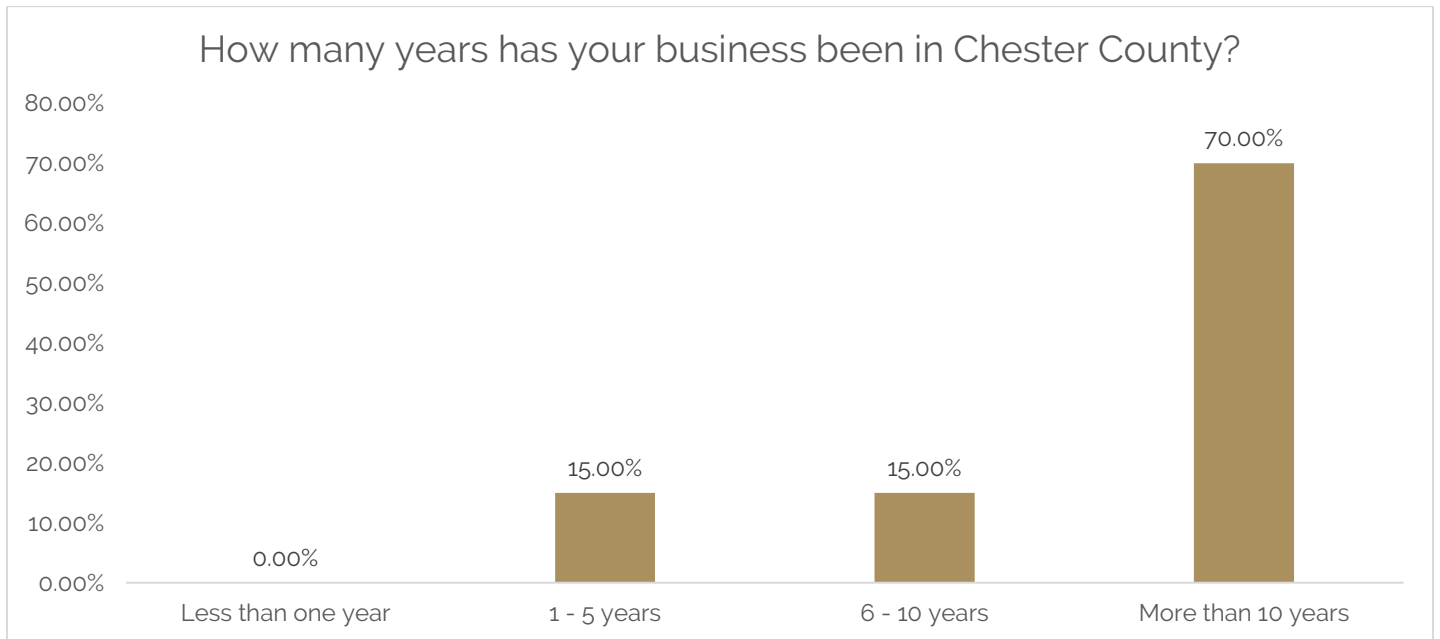
Education, workforce development, local jobs, good paying jobs, and housing are the outcomes citizens want to see out of economic development. Chester and Great Falls placed "attraction of new residents" in their top list of economic development goals. Businesses want to see increased tax based.

The survey results were integrated into the SWOT Analysis and used in the development of goals and strategies.

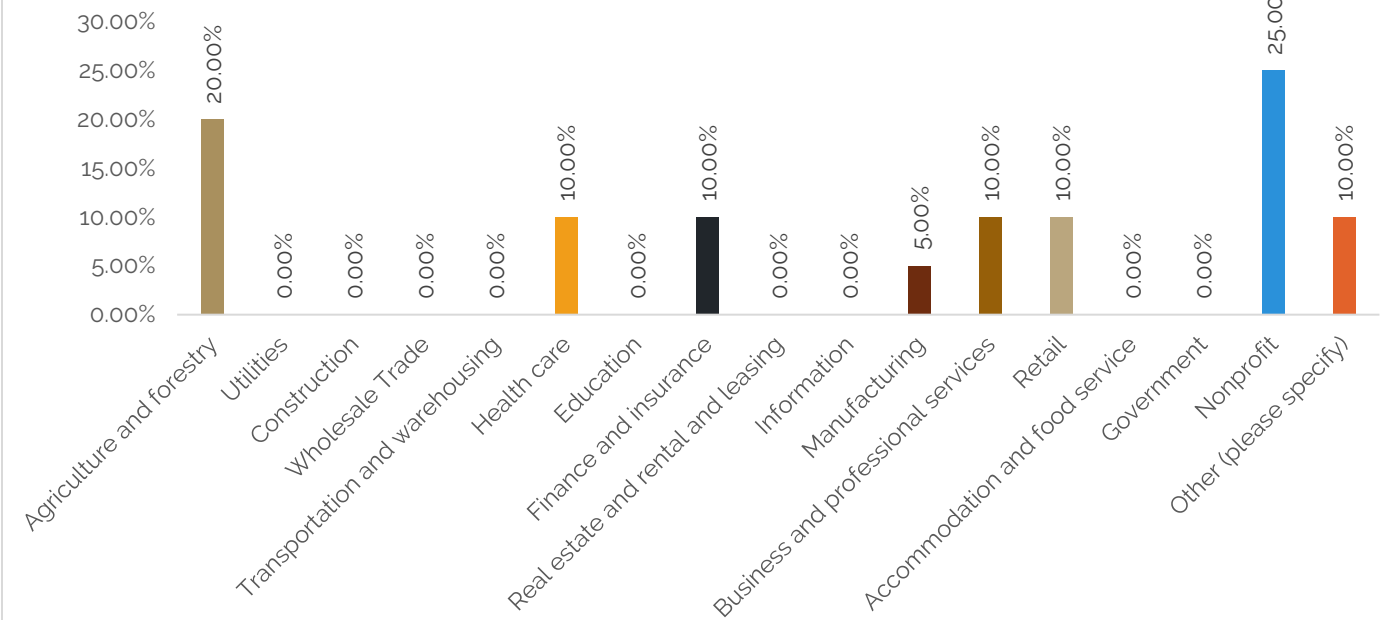
Chester County Business Survey-20 Responses



Other (please specify)
Lancaster County
Catawba
Boiling Springs NC
Fairfield
Rock hill
York County

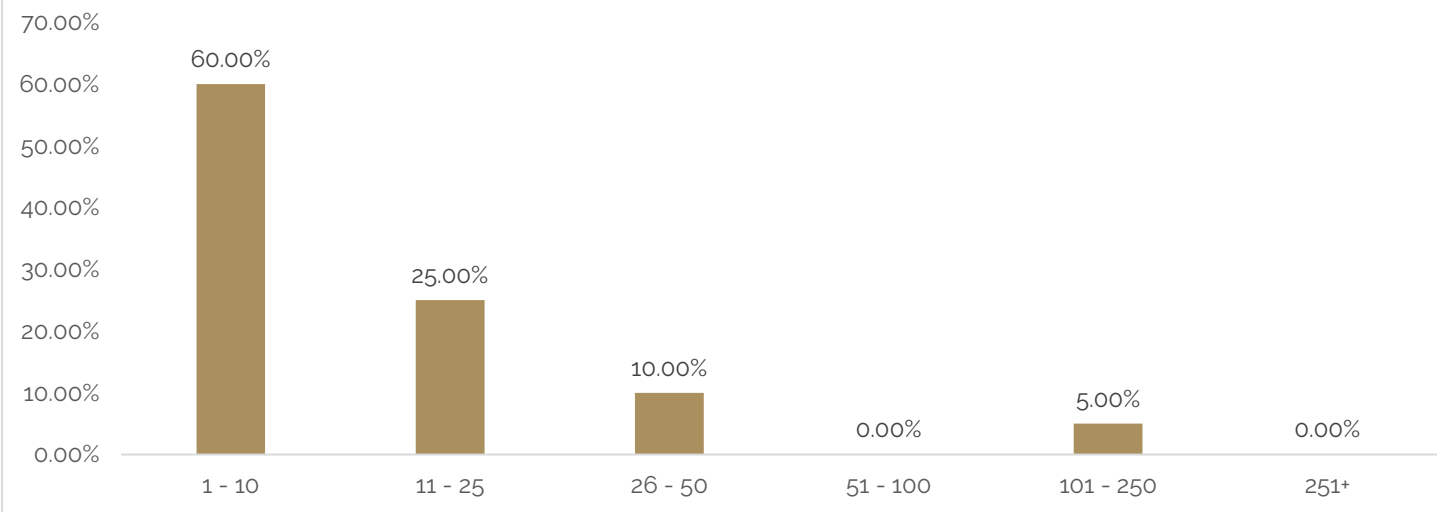


What business sector most closely matches your business?

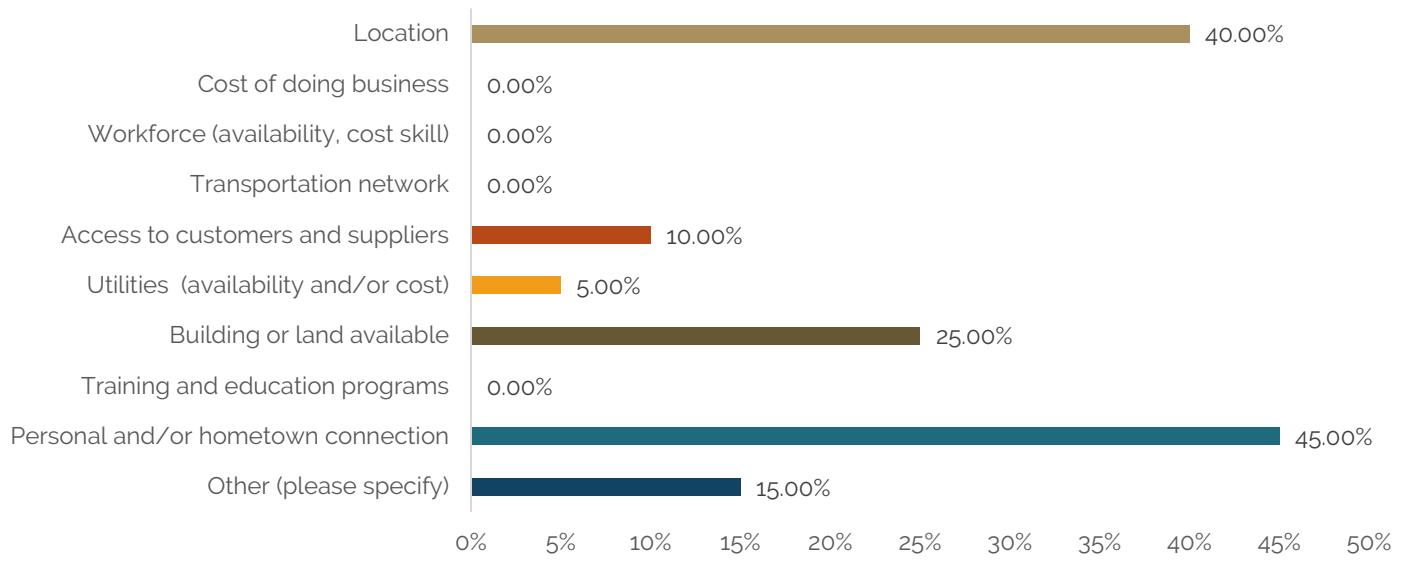


Other (please specify)
Legal
auto body repair

How many employees, full-time equivalents, are employed in your business?



Why did your company locate in Chester County? Choose all that apply.



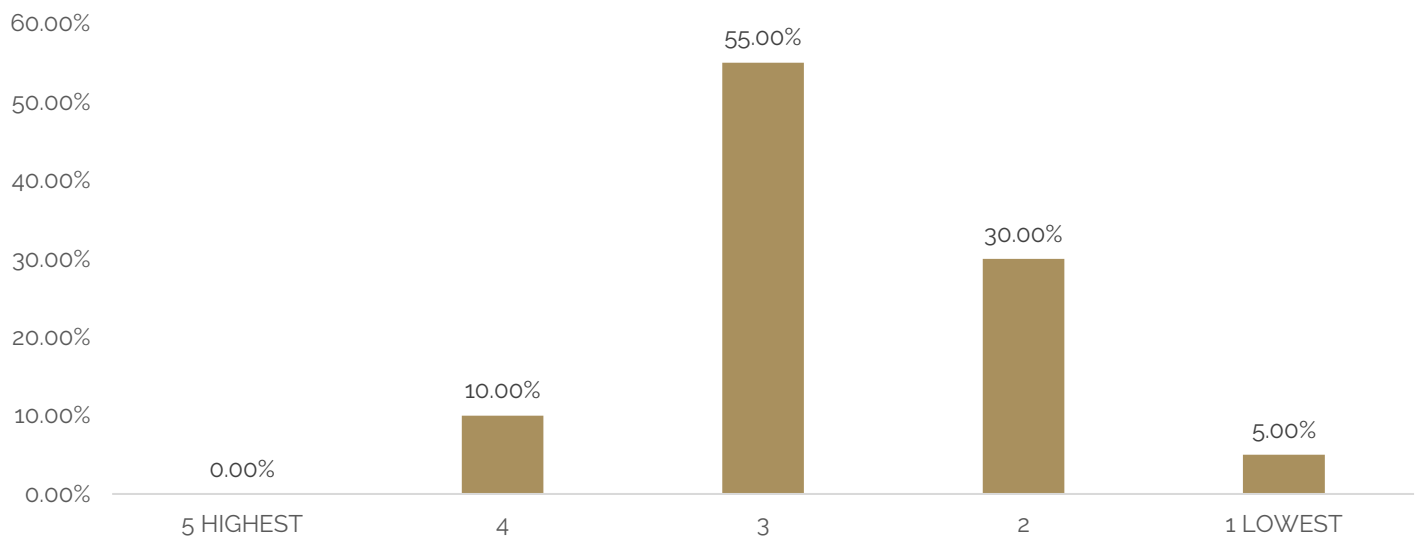
Other (please specify)

NEED

healthcare need

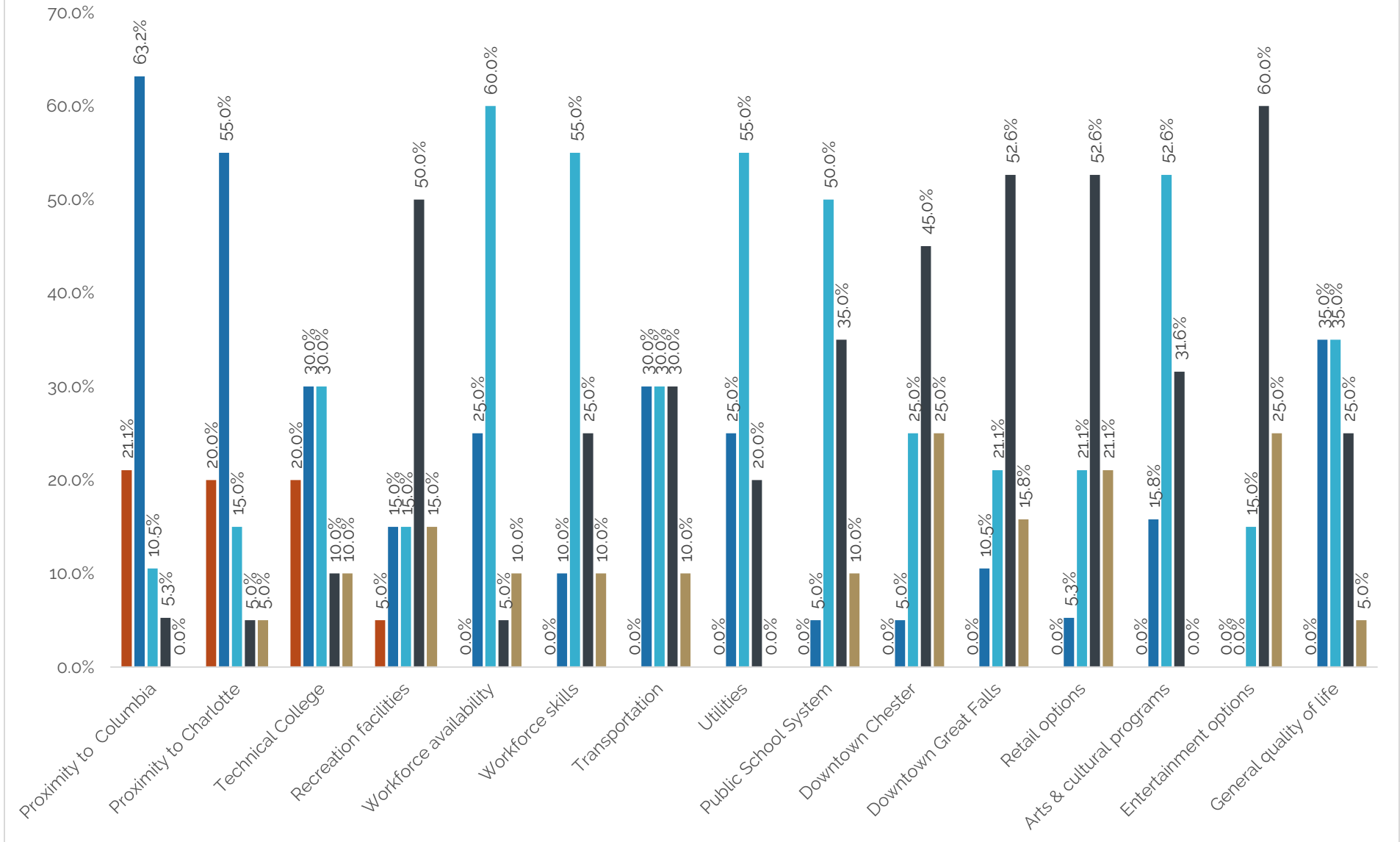
Market Opportunity

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

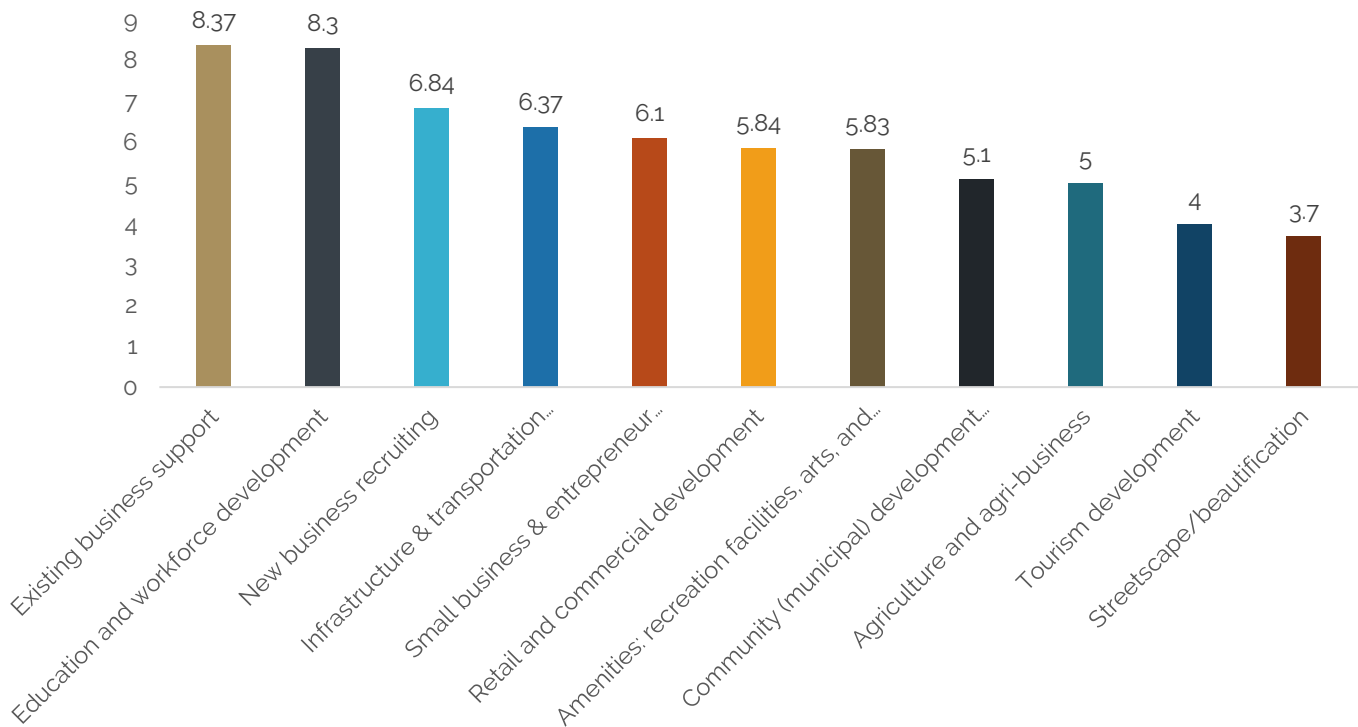


How satisfied are you with the following in Chester County?

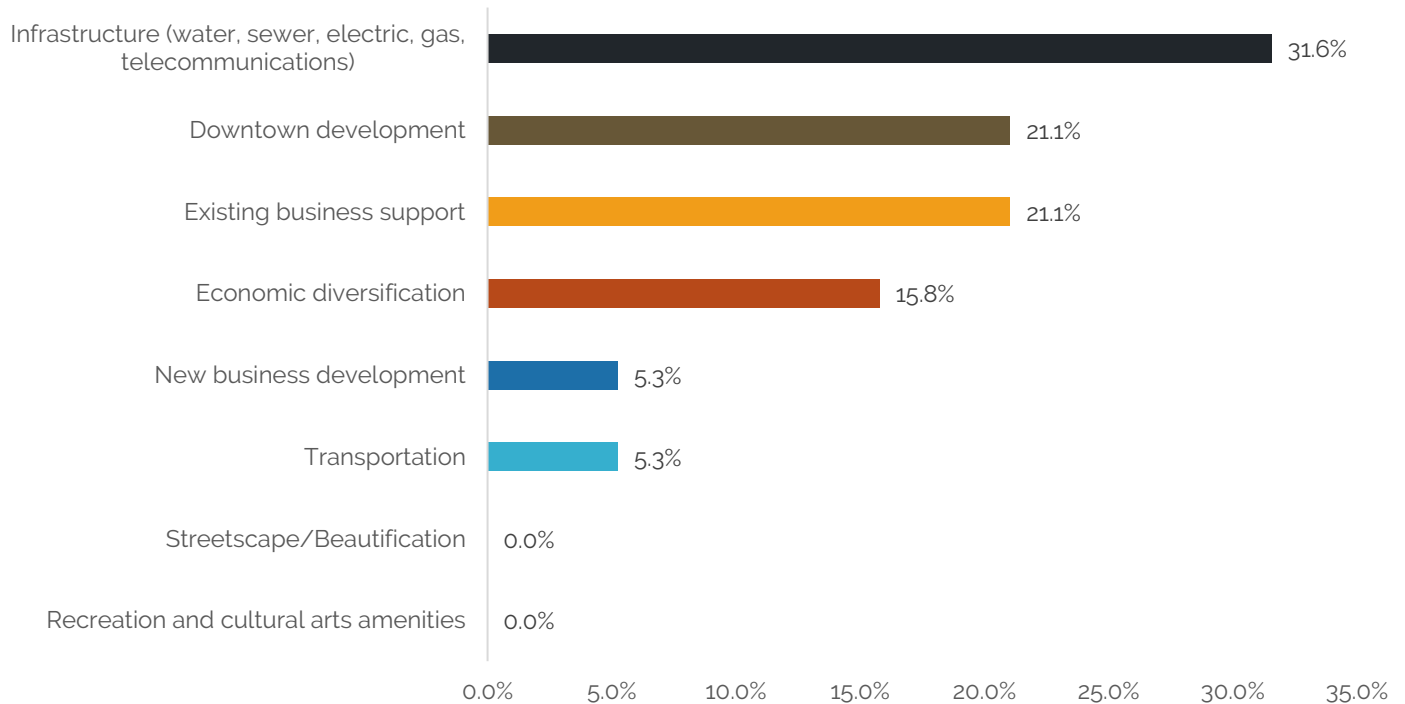
■ Very satisfied
 ■ Satisfied
 ■ Somewhat satisfied
 ■ Unsatisfied
 ■ Very unsatisfied



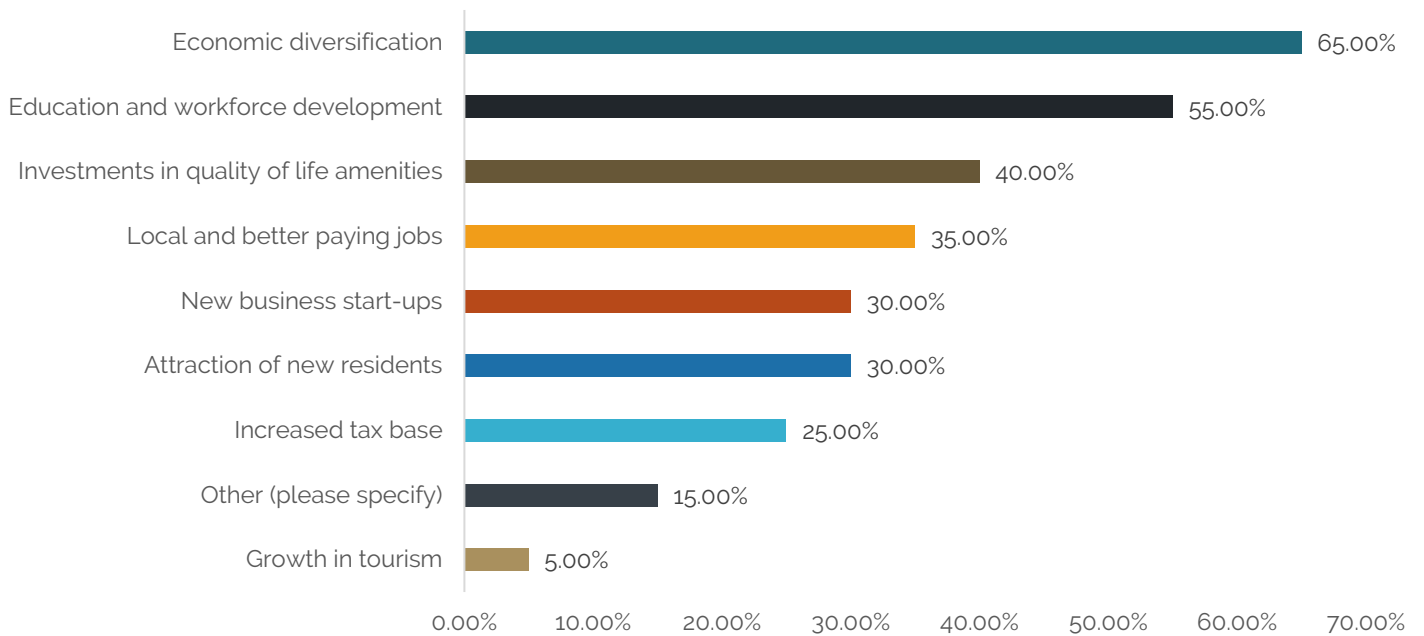
Rank order the following economic development strategies in order of importance with 1 being the most important.



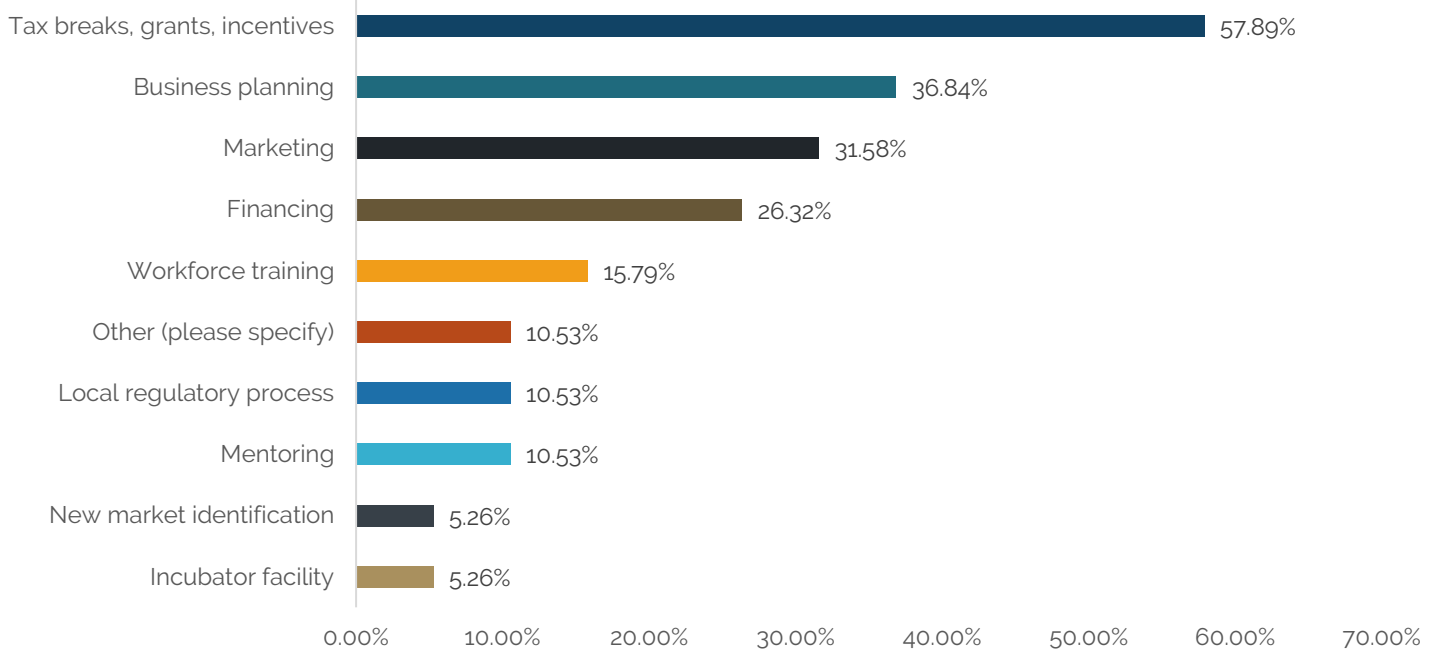
What is the most important investment Chester County could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



What should be the top THREE goals of the Chester County economic development strategic plan?



What business assistance was or would have been helpful when you started/expanded your business?

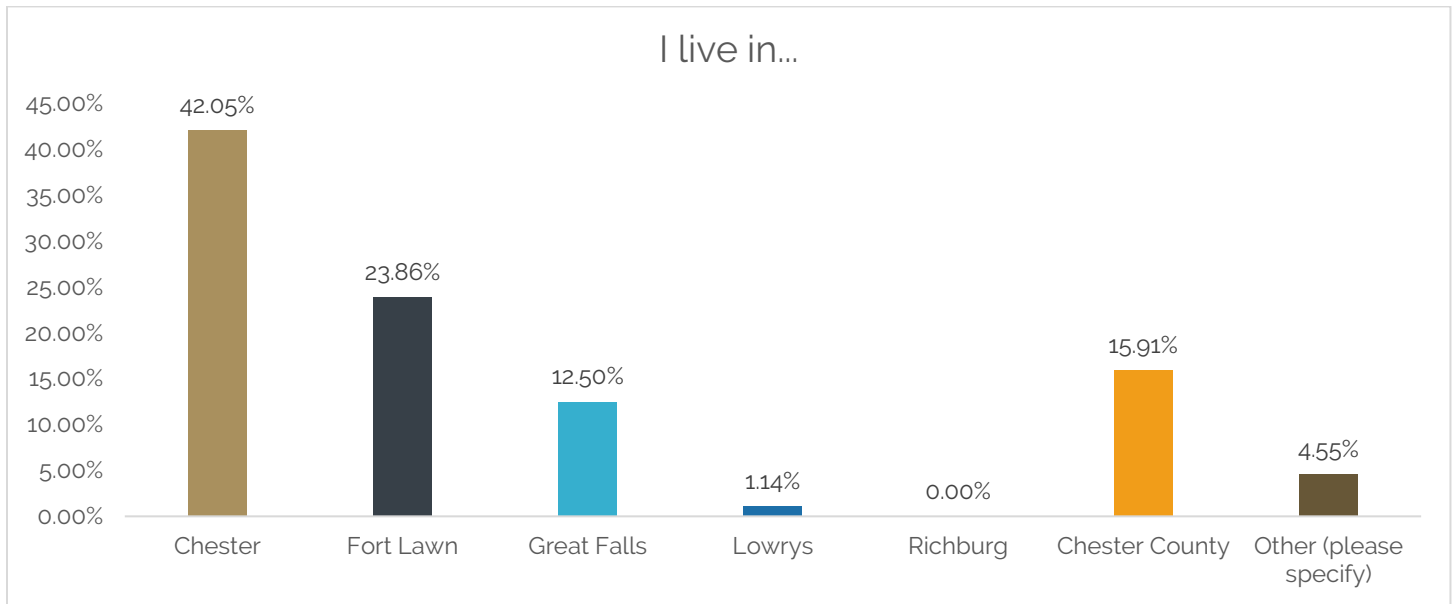


Other (please specify)

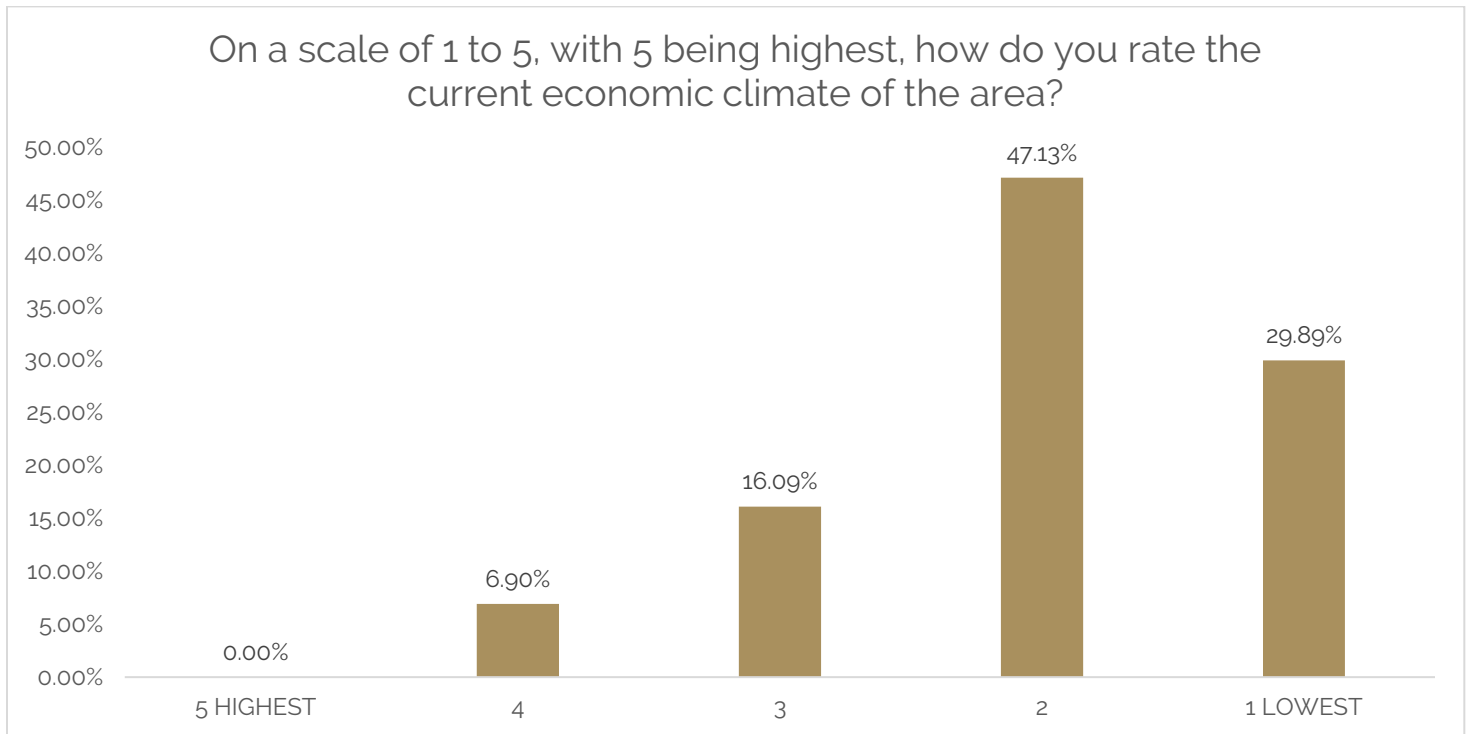
Help to walk through the regulatory process

Strategic Plan

Chester County Community Survey-All Results-88 Responses

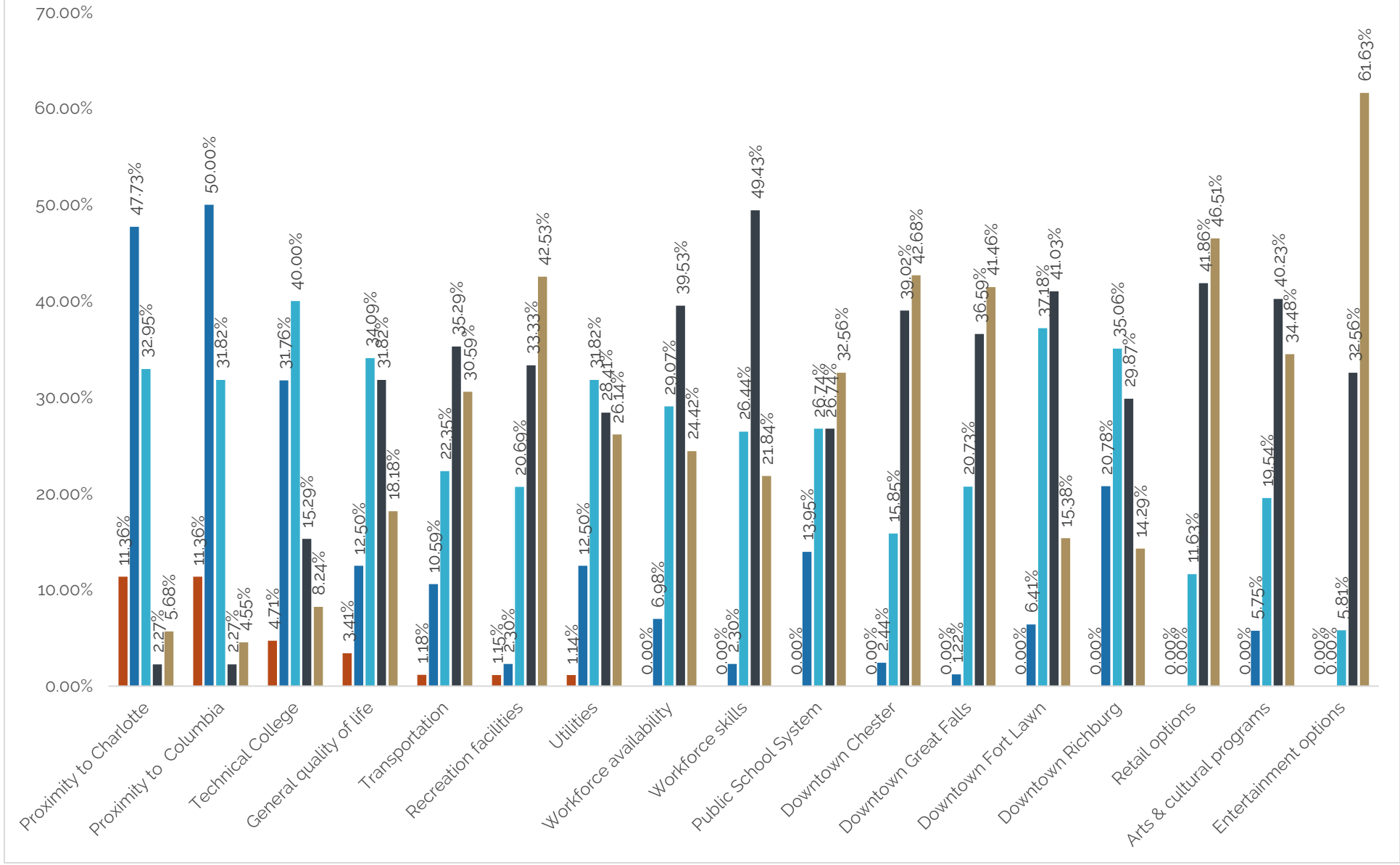


Other (please specify)
Anderson County
Blythewood, SC
Blackstock
Lancaster County - Work in Fort Lawn

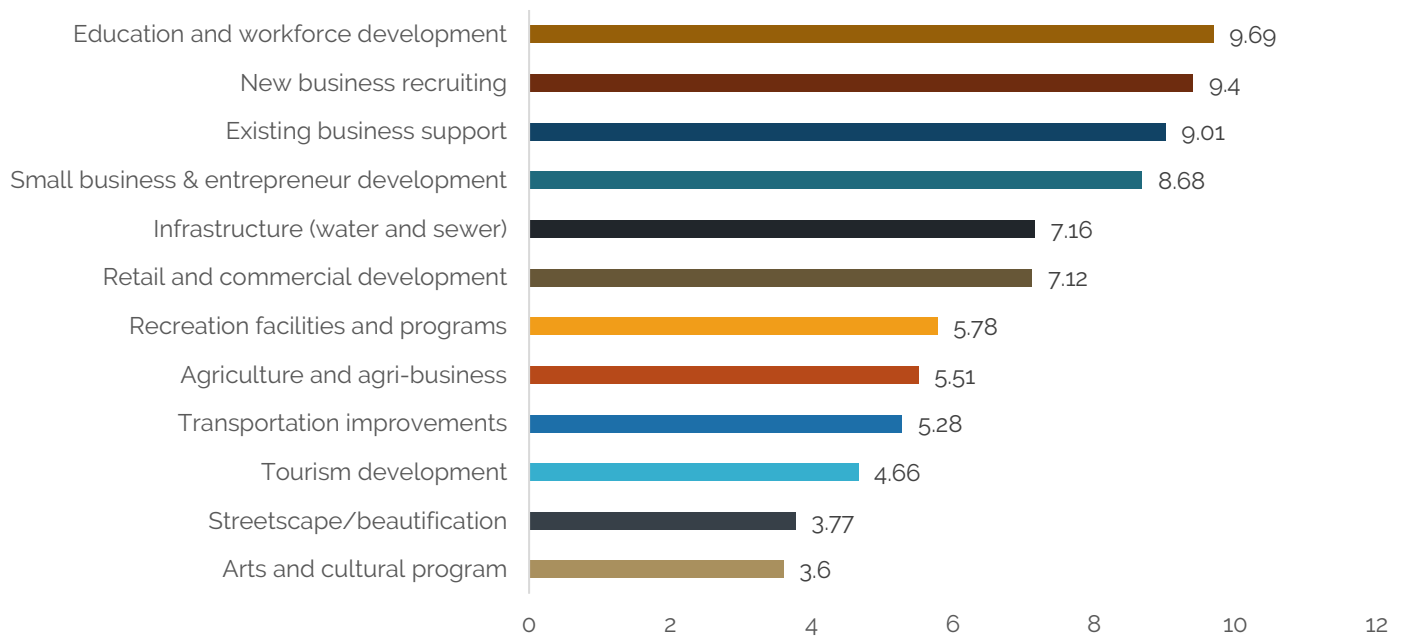


How satisfied are you with the following in your community?

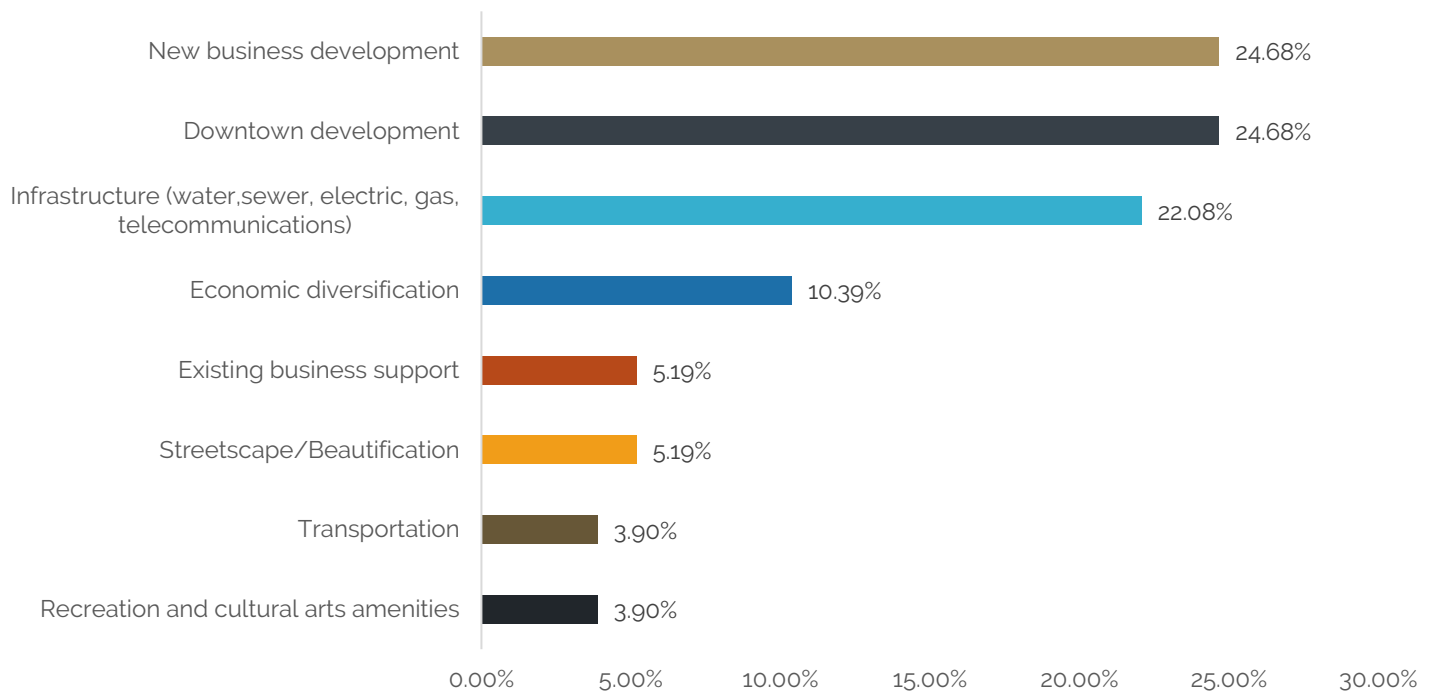
■ Very Satisfied
 ■ Satisfied
 ■ Somewhat satisfied
 ■ Unsatisfied
 ■ Very unsatisfied



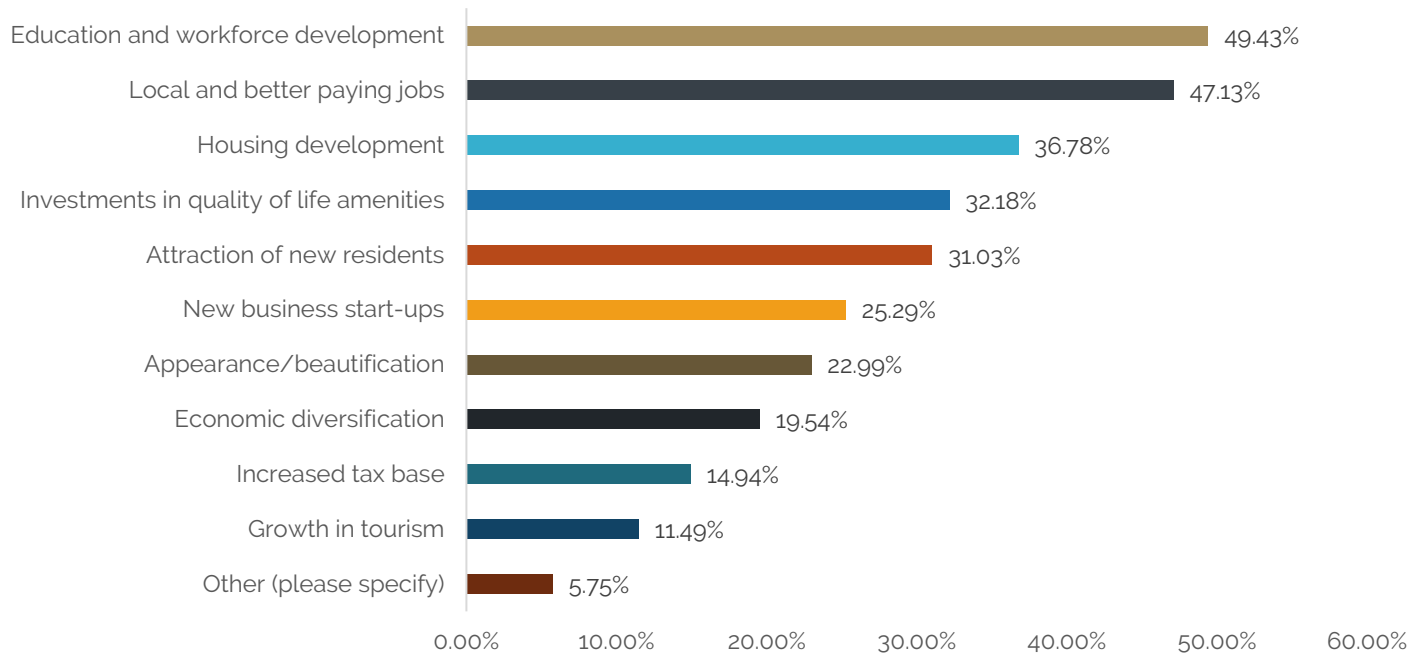
Rank order the following economic development strategies in order of importance with 1 being the most important.



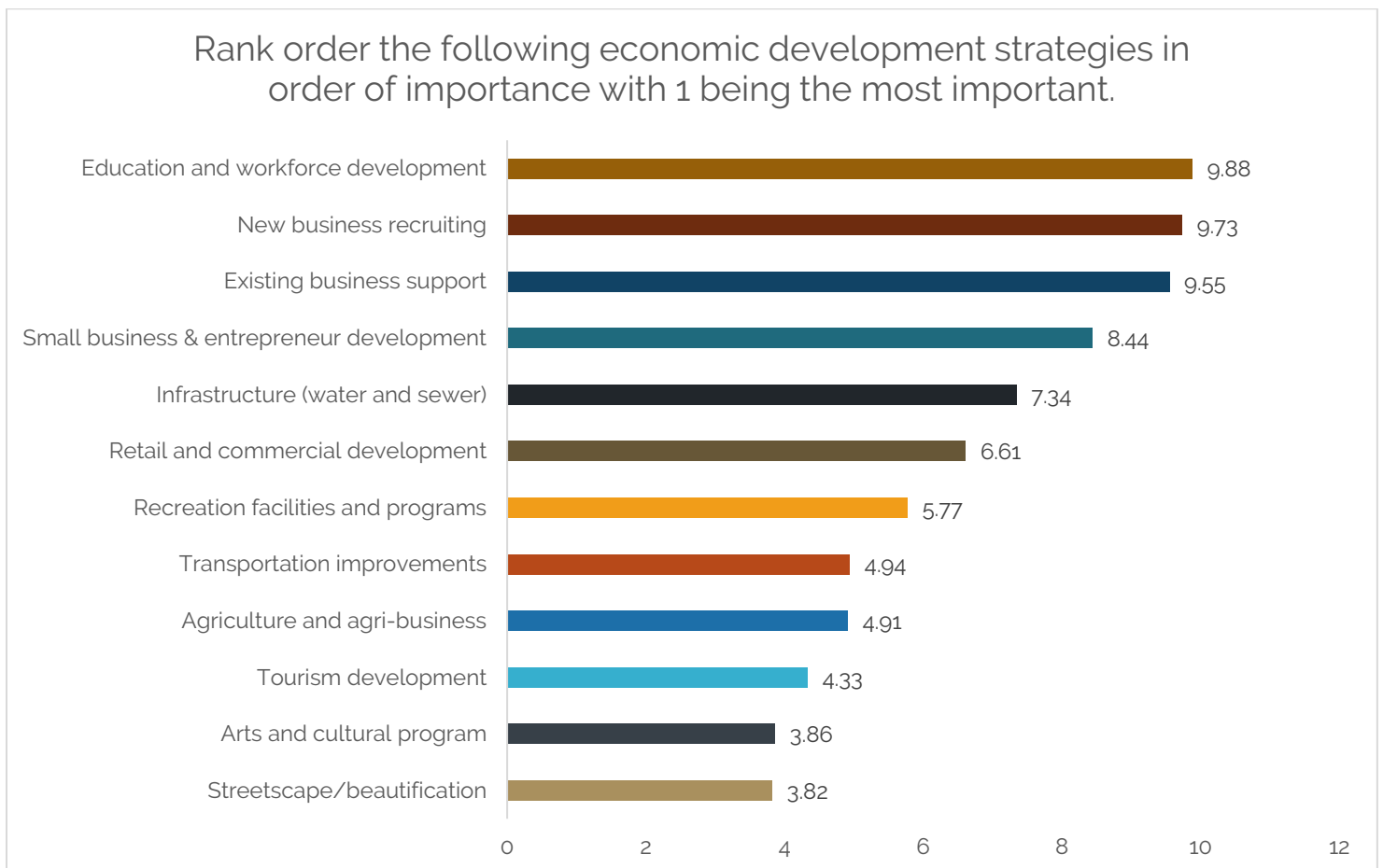
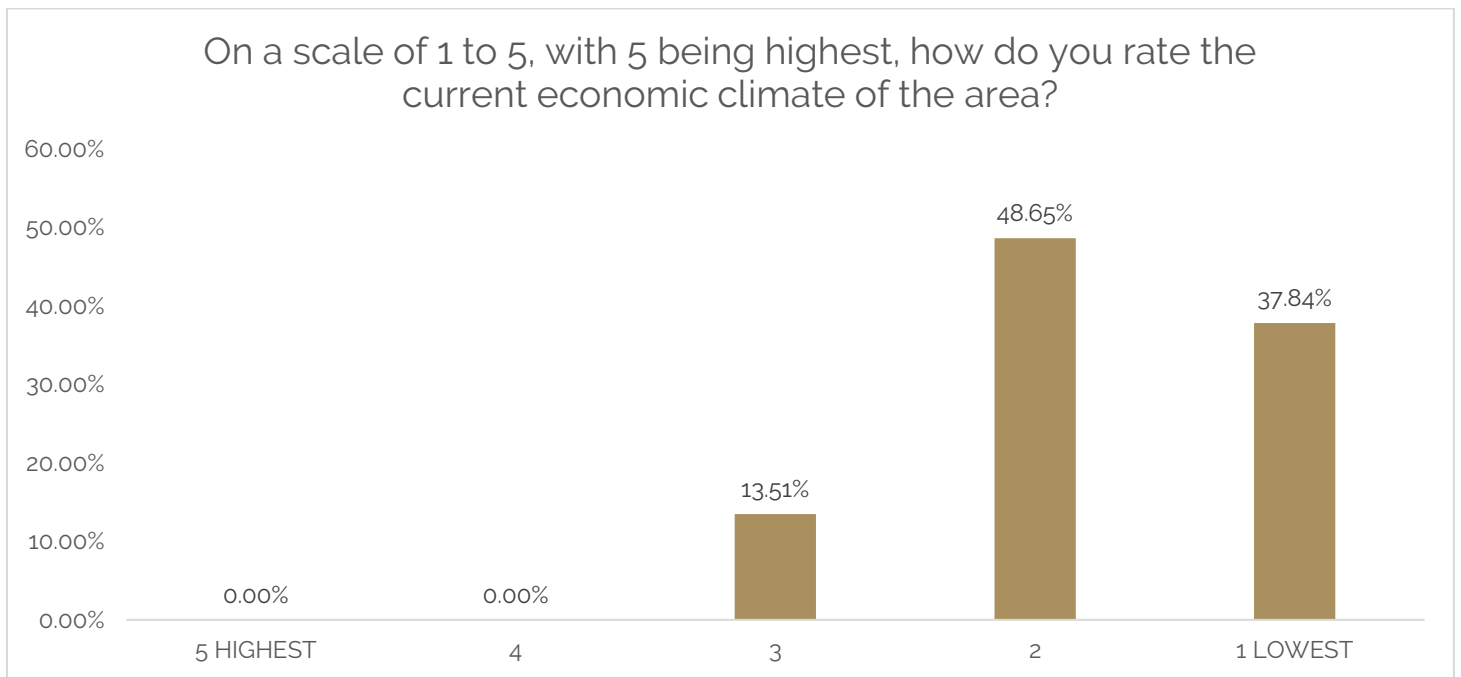
What is the most important investment your city/town or the county could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



What should be the top goals of economic development?

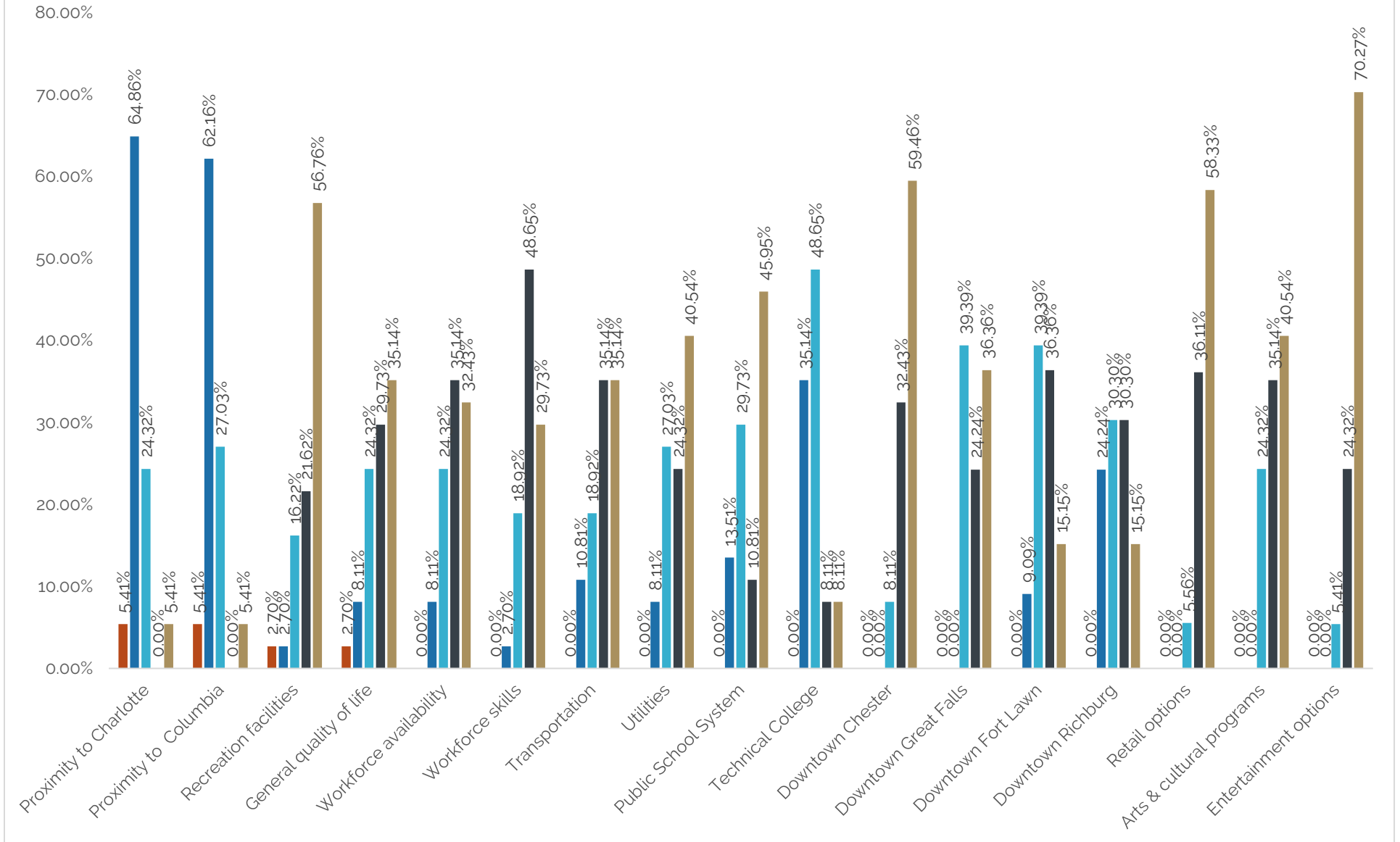


Chester Community Survey Results–37 Responses

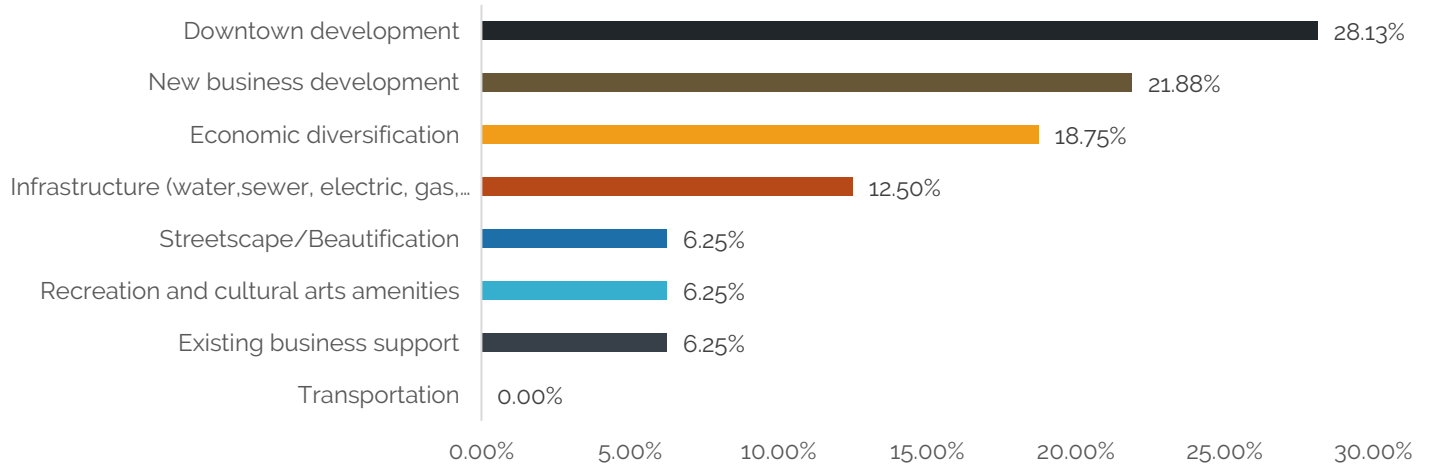


How satisfied are you with the following in your community?

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

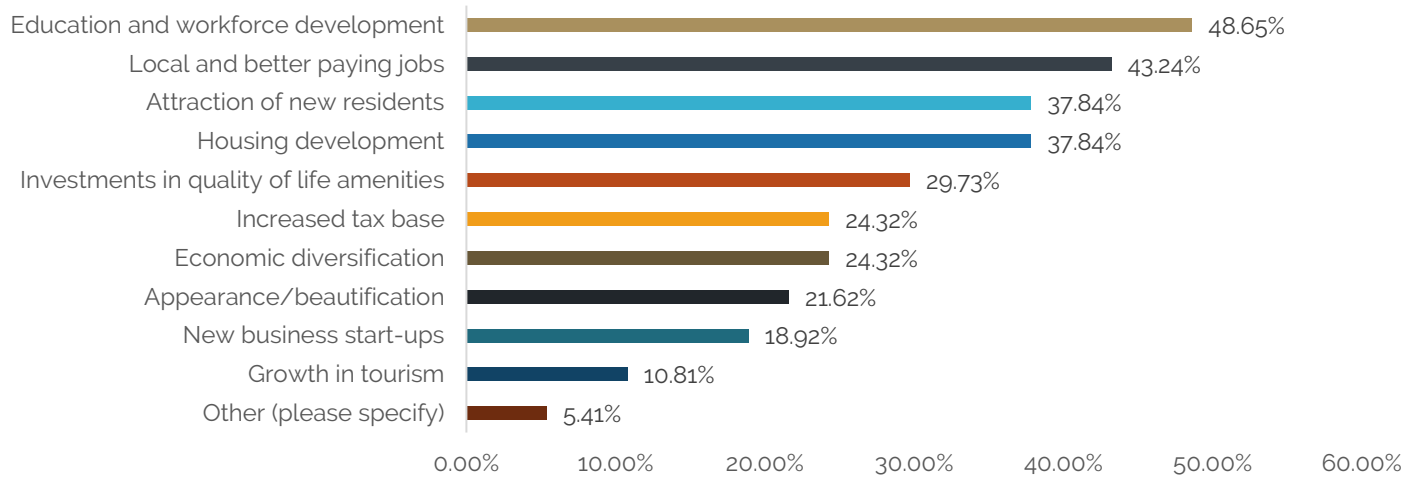


What is the most important investment your city/town or the county could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



Other (please specify)
Economic diversion
Financial responsibility
Housing
Enforce code and get rid of corruption
Effective leadership

What should be the top goals of economic development?

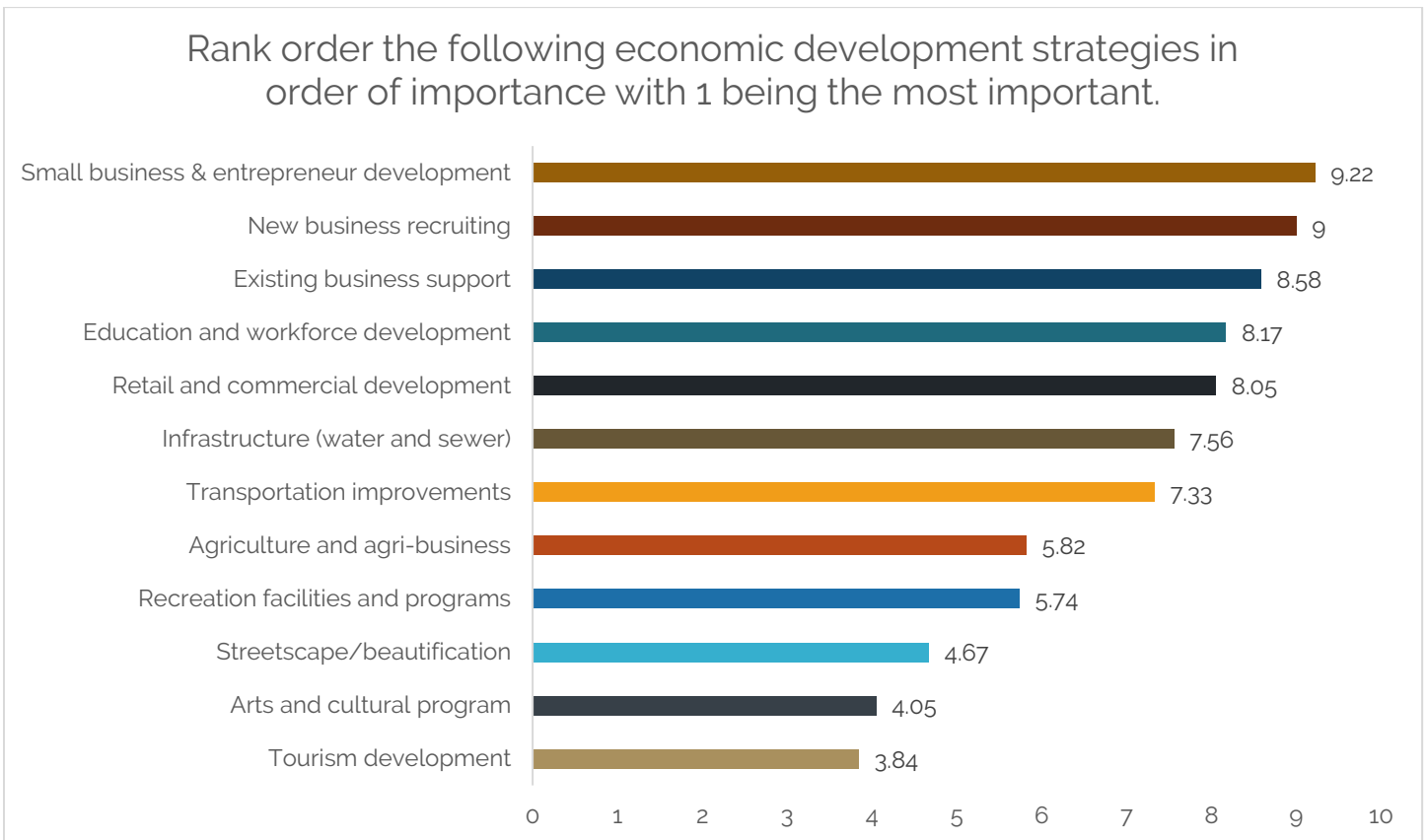
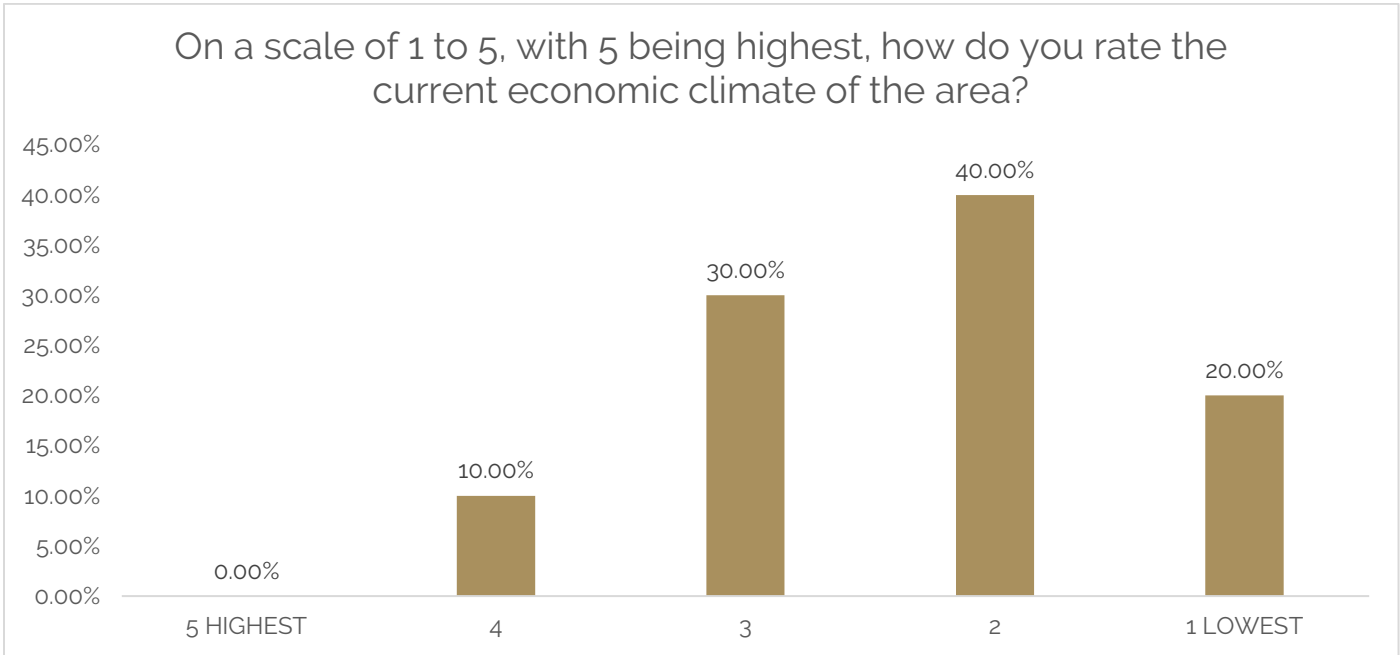


Other (please specify)
Recreational amenities
School improvement and increase in capacity

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?

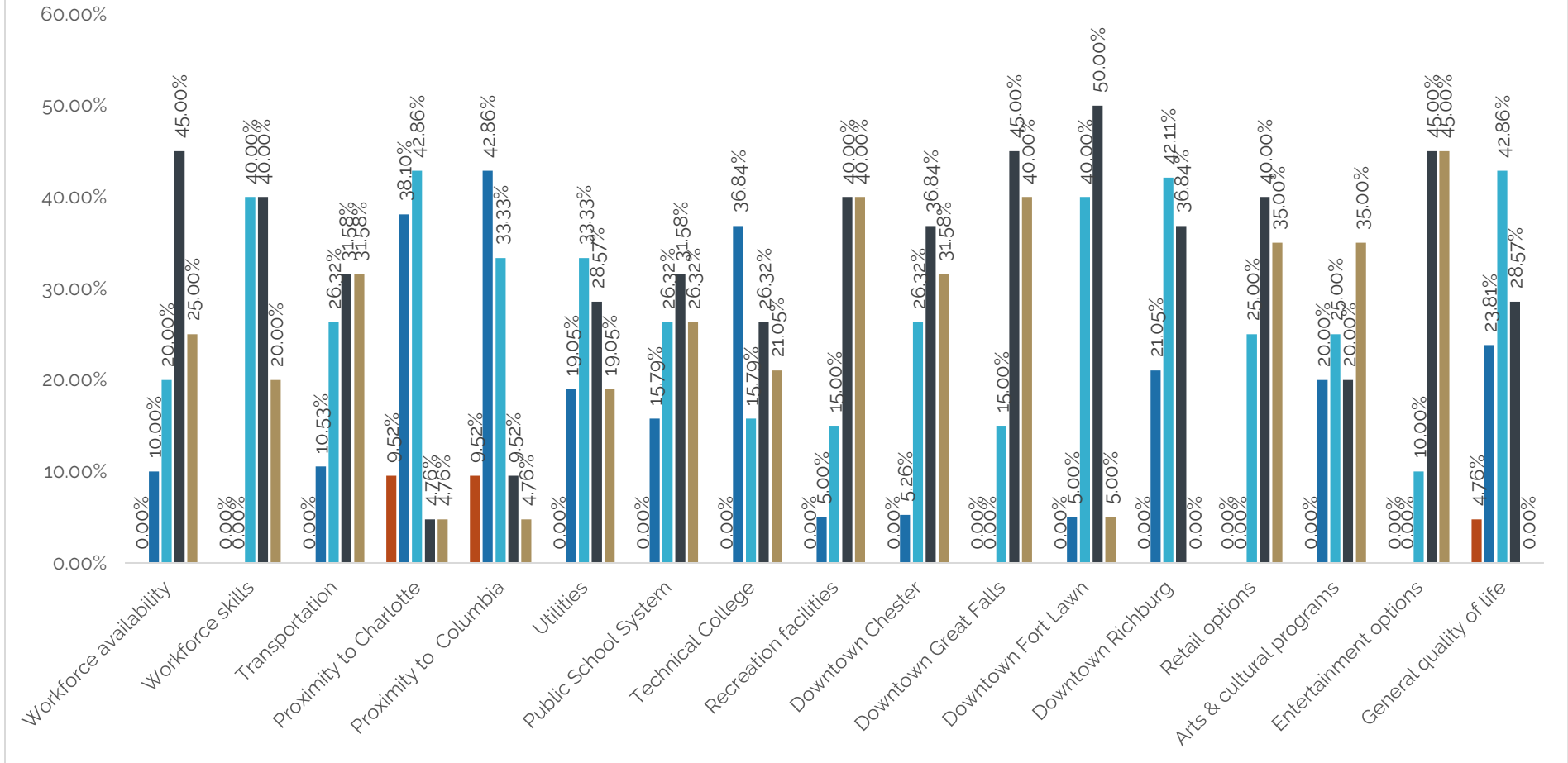
Responses
Business growth and job skills development
More housing, jobs and recreation
improvement within city of Chester
A clear plan that capitalizes on the proximity to Charlotte and Columbia: incentives for transplants and tourism. Having a serious social media presence would help tremendously. Getting young people excited about investing in all the potential in Chester County would be easy with the right social media expert.
Ways that businesses and city and county could work together to boost Chester's economic future and to have more business come and hire that would help Chester's Economy tremendously
Community organizations churches, businesses, nonprofits, government, county and city, school district, police all making it practice working together in activities that potentially attract tourists and others they may come to live in our community.
Plan to insure economic growth
A better quality of life for our city.
We actually see some change being made and businesses moving in.
Chester's biggest challenge is to improve the quality of life for the existing businesses and residents. Focus a vision for growth and attracting new businesses when this happens. Again, recognize the existing problems and work toward fixing them.
Inclusion
Action
Invest in education and youth programs.
A 5, 10, and 20 year outlook with measurable steps.
More people working and spending their money in Chester.
A financially secure Chester with historic neighborhoods safe from zoning changes. And safer neighborhoods with less crime.
Short and long-term goals with a defined vision and path forward
To see Chester thrive
Arts
More ongoing resident input in areas like participatory budgeting.
Increased residential investment and local business
A unified county government
If we don't have affordable housing options with community amenities, it'll be difficult to attract new residents and new businesses.
Better looking town
Growth in the city, bringing in more funds to our community
Jobs
Downtown development is very important. As we can see from a past failed attempt, beautification is not enough. A real plan needs to be put into place, stuck to and enforced.
Move the county into the 21st century

Fort Lawn Community Survey Results-21 Responses



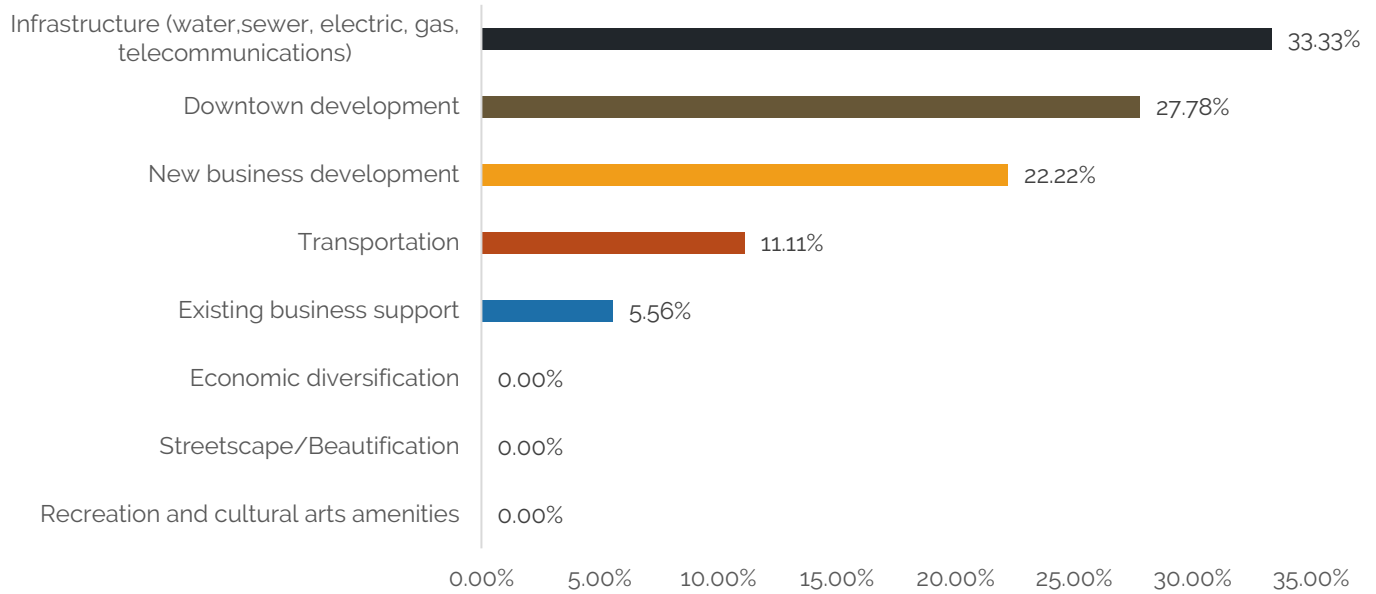
How satisfied are you with the following in your community?

Very Satisfied Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Unsatisfied Very unsatisfied

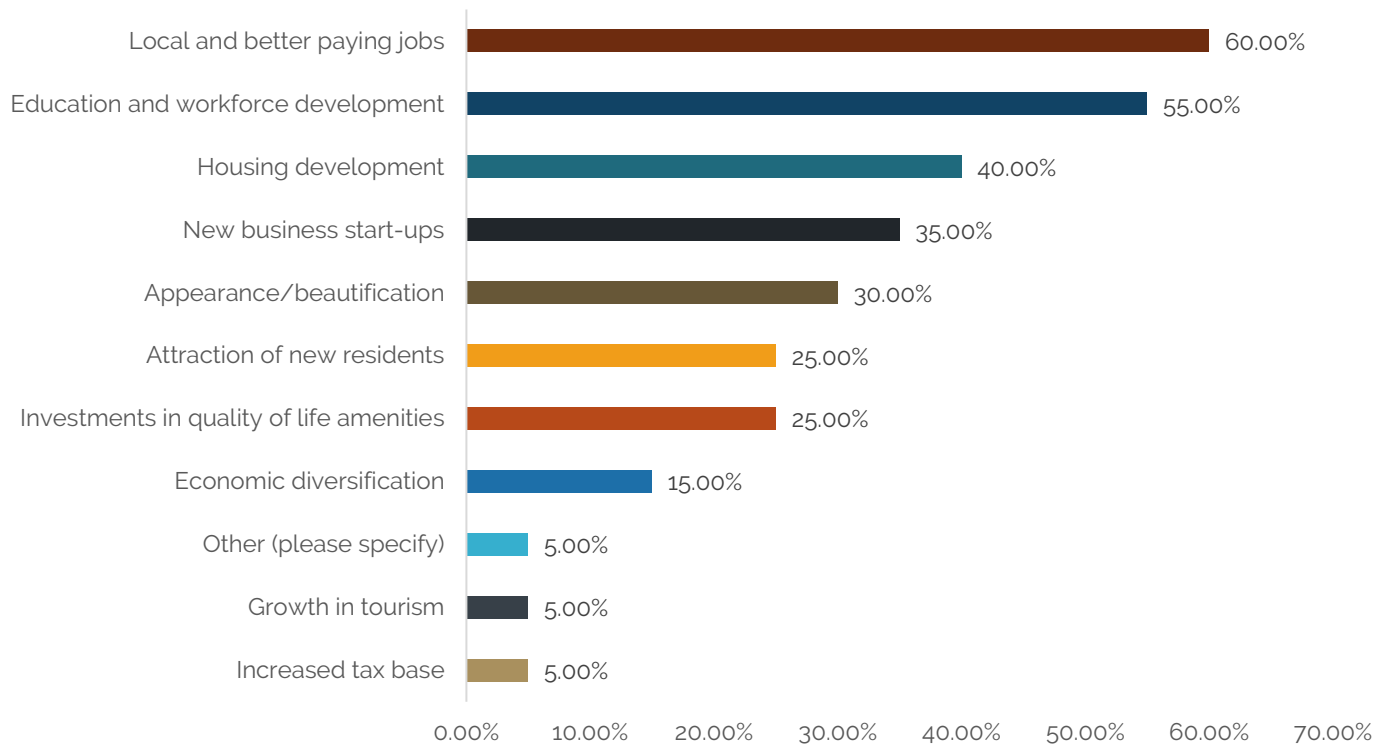


Other (please specify)
 Quality of roads is terrible
 We moved to Fort Lawn because we wanted the country and away from people. I would not like to see too much growth as that would bring in more people and with that more trouble.

What is the most important investment your city/town or the county could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



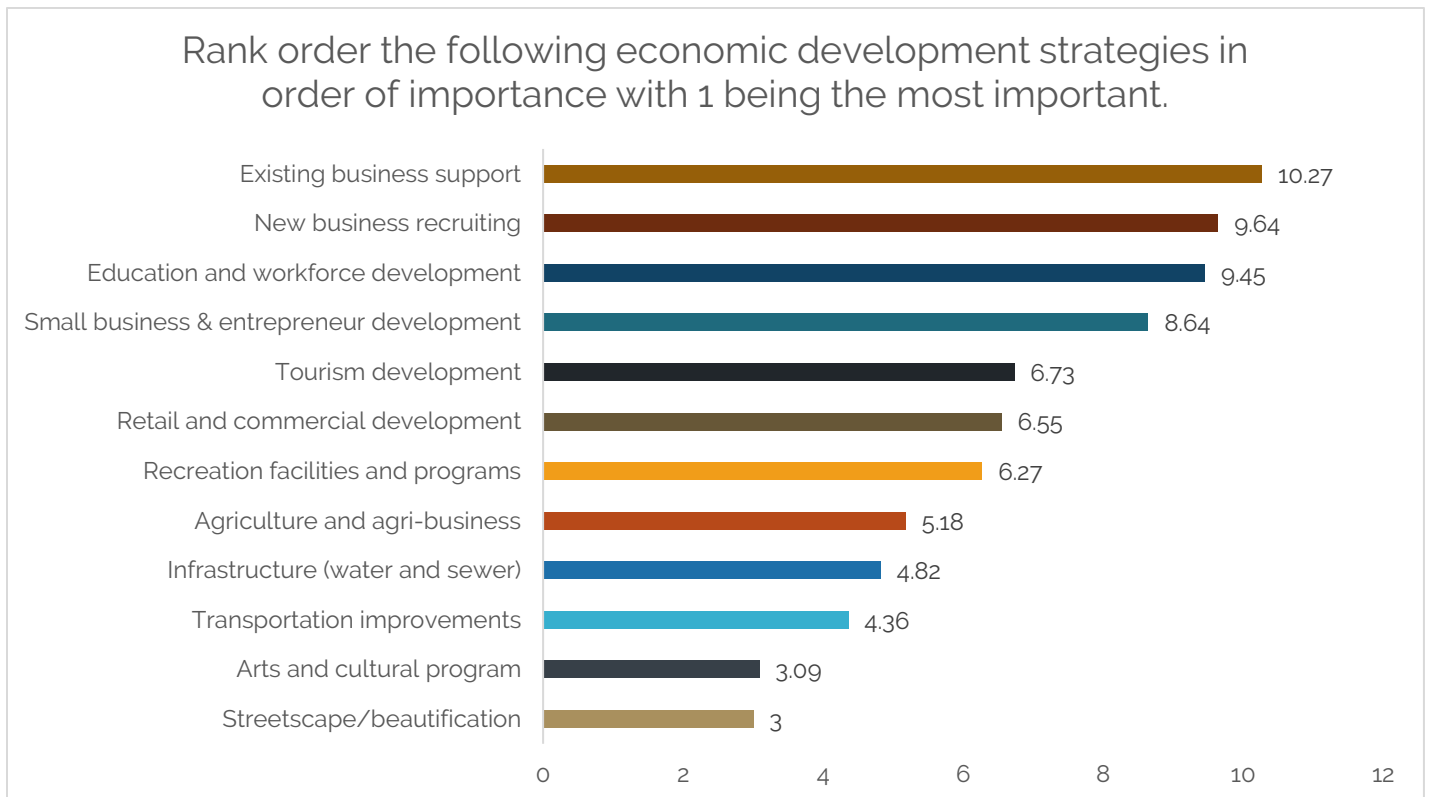
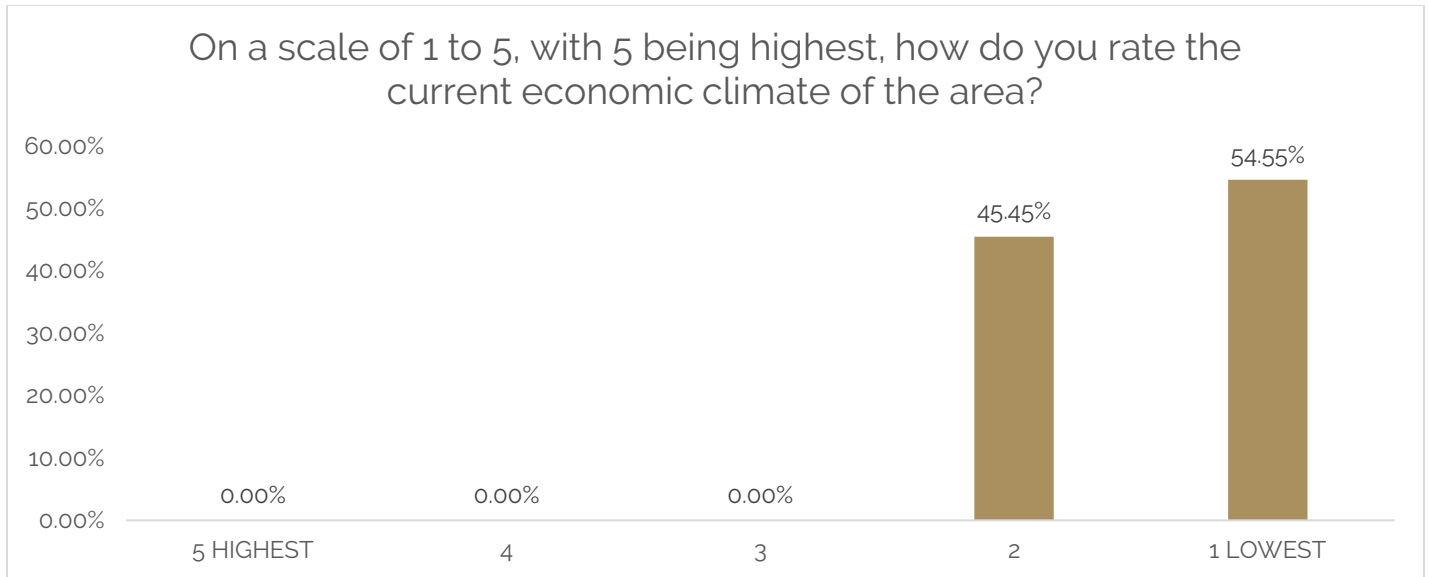
What should be the top goals of economic development?



What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?

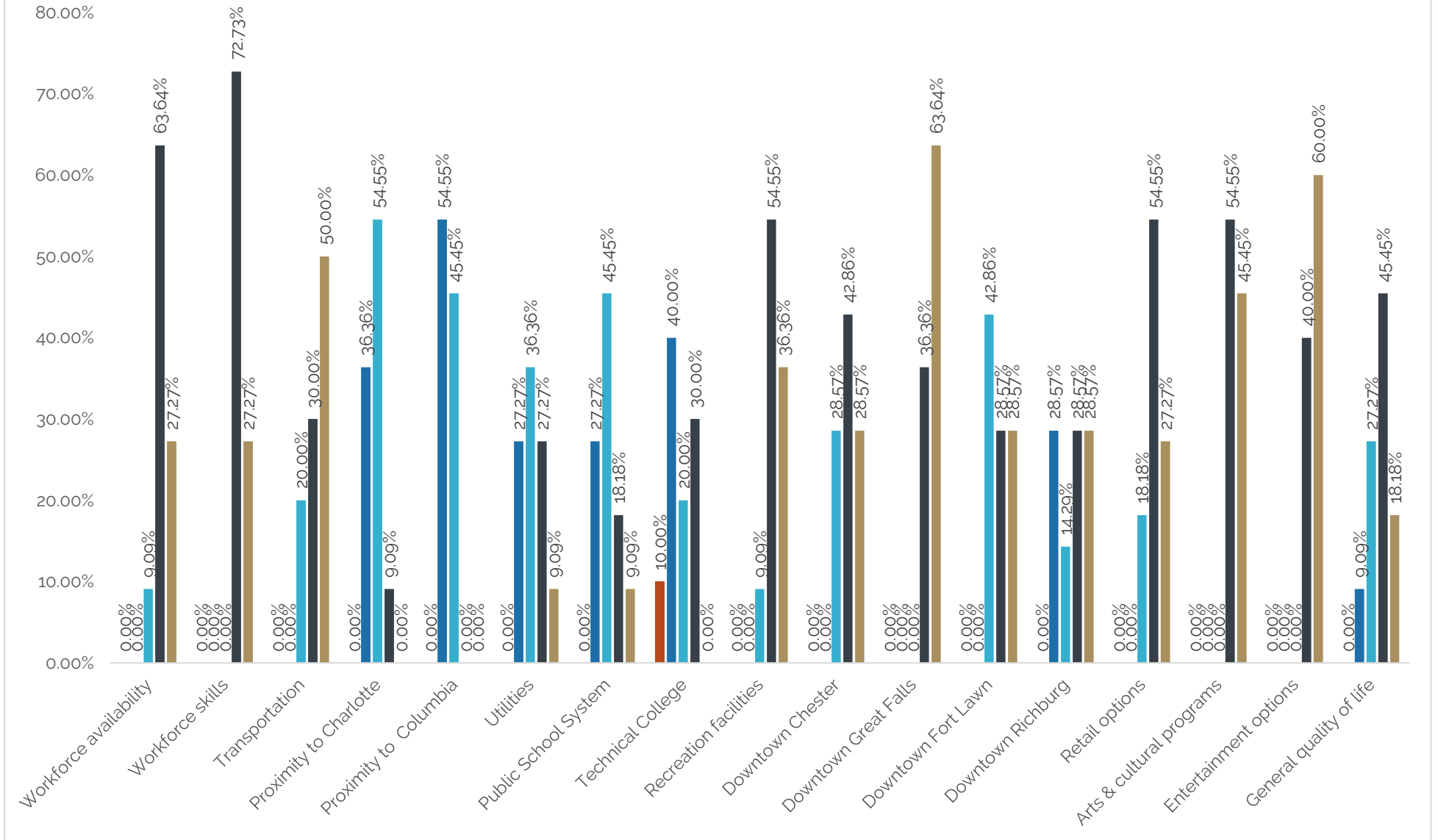
Responses
Increase in jobs, decrease in crime and better educational opportunities
Better-paying jobs, school system improvements, and retail options to attract more diversified younger families who aren't broke. The beautification will happen on its own when we get more people who can afford to take pride in their property and their town.
Positive growth
Business or industry coming to Fort Lawn
Education should be top priority
Better schools and property values
Affordable housing for seniors
A forward-thinking plan that looks, realistically, at what we could be rather than where we are currently.
Fort Lawn will need more consumer amenities and patriotic flags, banners and Christmas decorations such as nearby Great Falls has invested in. This gives folks a joyful uplift as they pass through town.
Better roads, cleaner highways, new businesses, cleaner waterways, stricter penalties, policing the waterways.
Basically the items mentioned previously in this survey. More, better paying jobs appears to be first in the order.
More small businesses
Housing development
More support given to public education, funding mostly. Support of local-small businesses, and support for existing businesses

Great Falls Community Survey Results-11 Responses

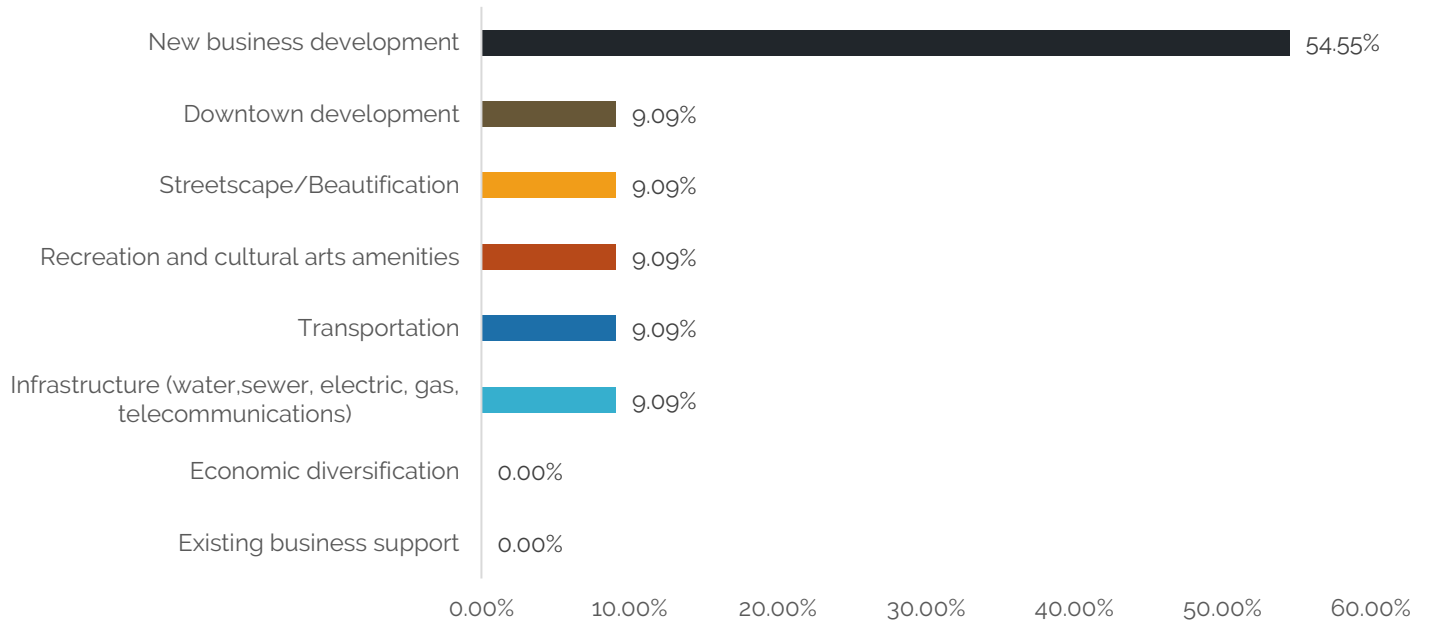


How satisfied are you with the following in your community?

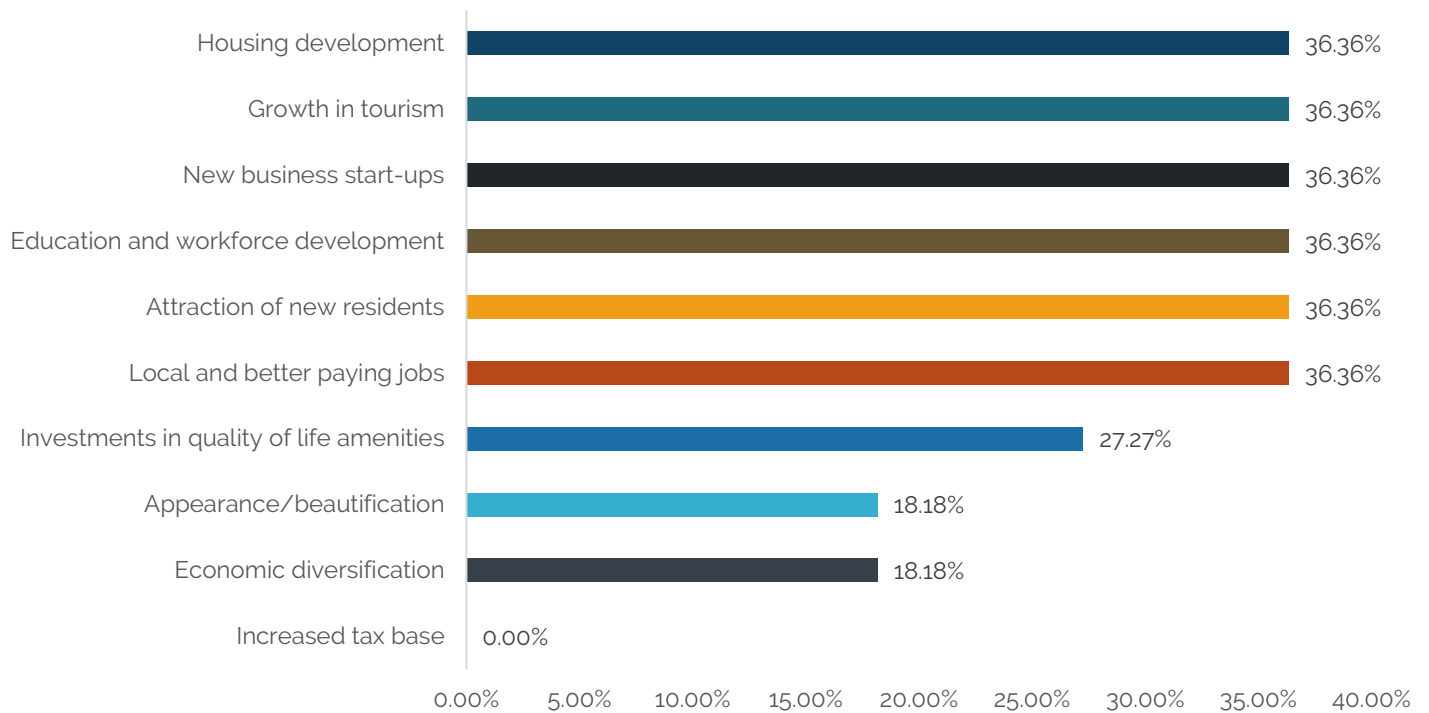
Very Satisfied Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Unsatisfied Very unsatisfied



What is the most important investment your city/town or the county could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



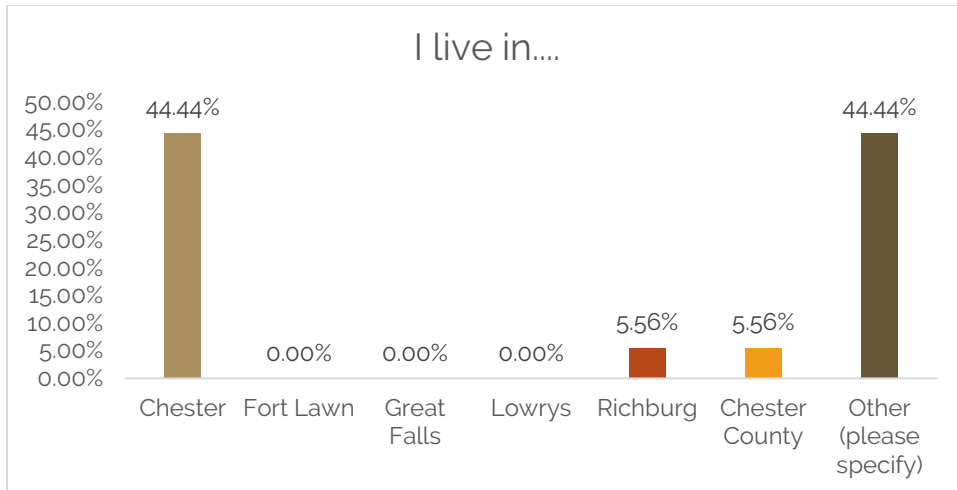
What should be the top goals of economic development?



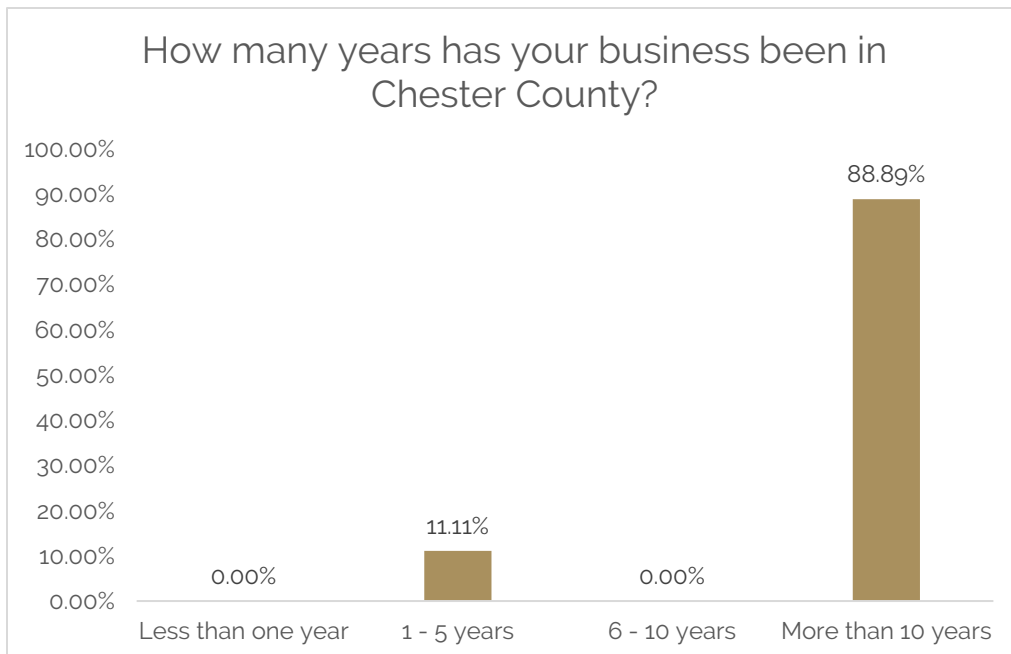
What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?

Responses
Grants for existing businesses and the Town of Great Falls fix up the buildings they own.
Like to see GF alive again....drug free
Would like to see GF cleaned up. Many areas look like a dump and until we are able to do this, we cannot expect to bring others in to improve our town. People are leaving because of all the meth dealings and the problems which come with it. We need to upgrade housing with more expensive rent which will denture the rift raft. Better police coverage.
Chester county becoming a better place to live
There are many people in Great Falls that do not have transportation to job training or to jobs. There are no jobs in Great Falls, so they are just left to live off of handouts.
I would like to see some form of transportation from Great Falls to the areas that have vocational training.
To be able to attract new residents to our town by having a stable economy, local schools, and businesses to employ the new residents.
A working in unison with jobs and community
True action, not just talk!
Improve how town looks
Realistic path forward
To have a readiness plan to market our community better.

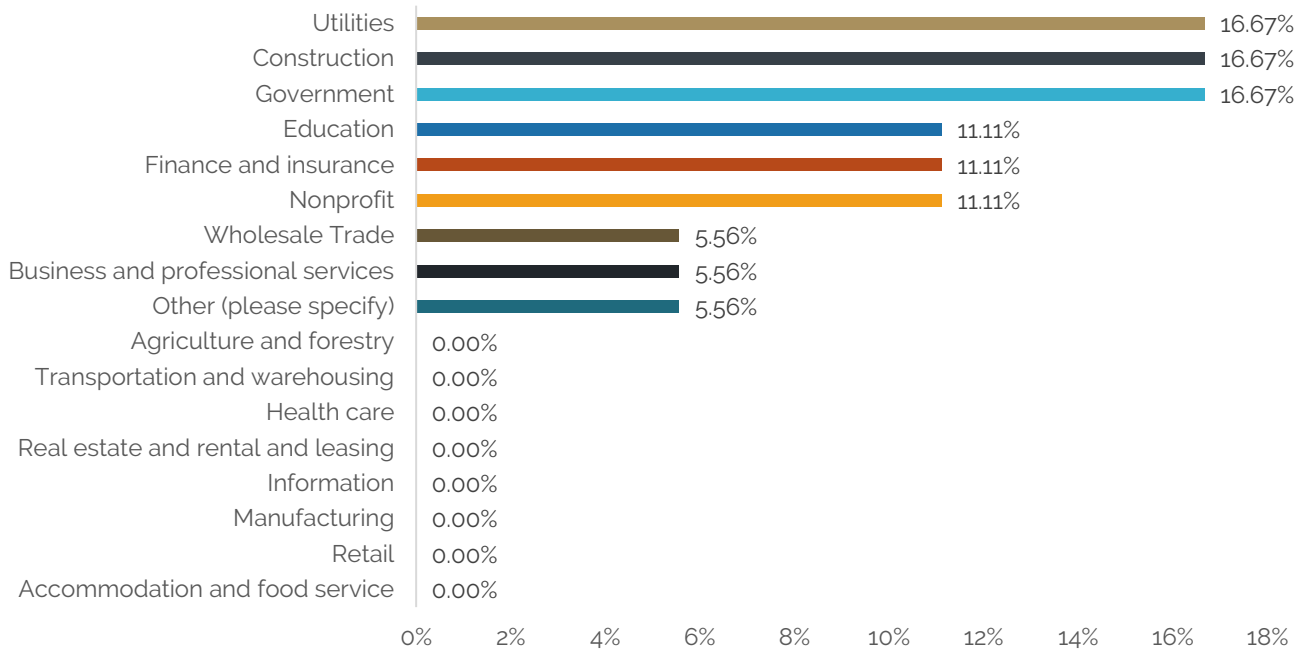
Chester Development Association Strategic Plan Survey –18 Responses



Other (please specify)
York county line
Richland County, SC
Columbia
Another county in SC
Charlotte
Ft Mill - York County
Rock Hill
Lancaster



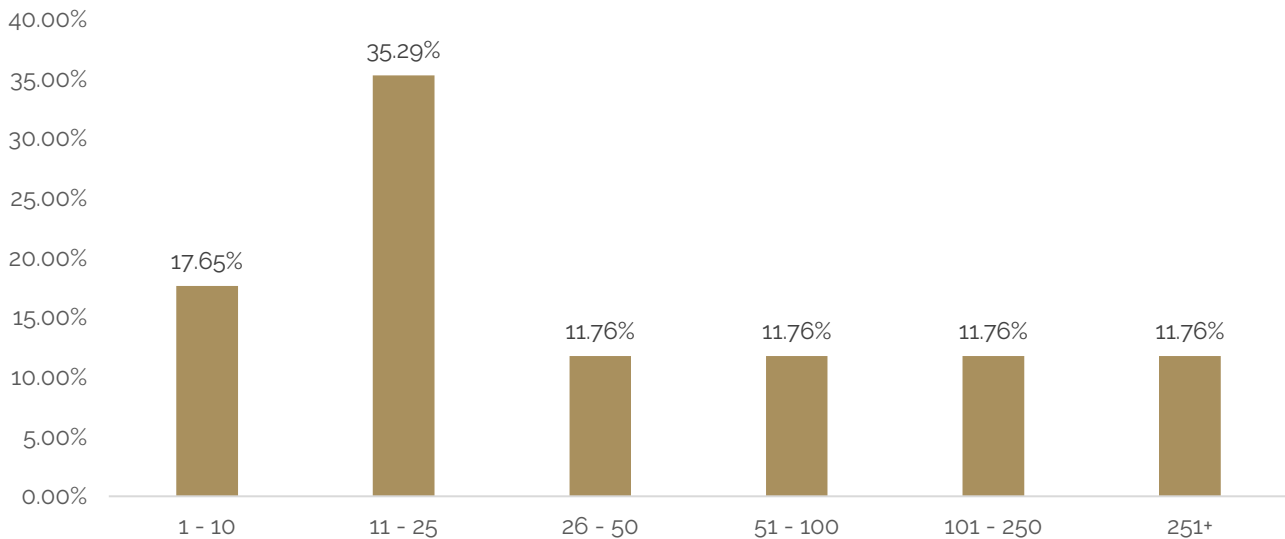
What business sector most closely matches your business?



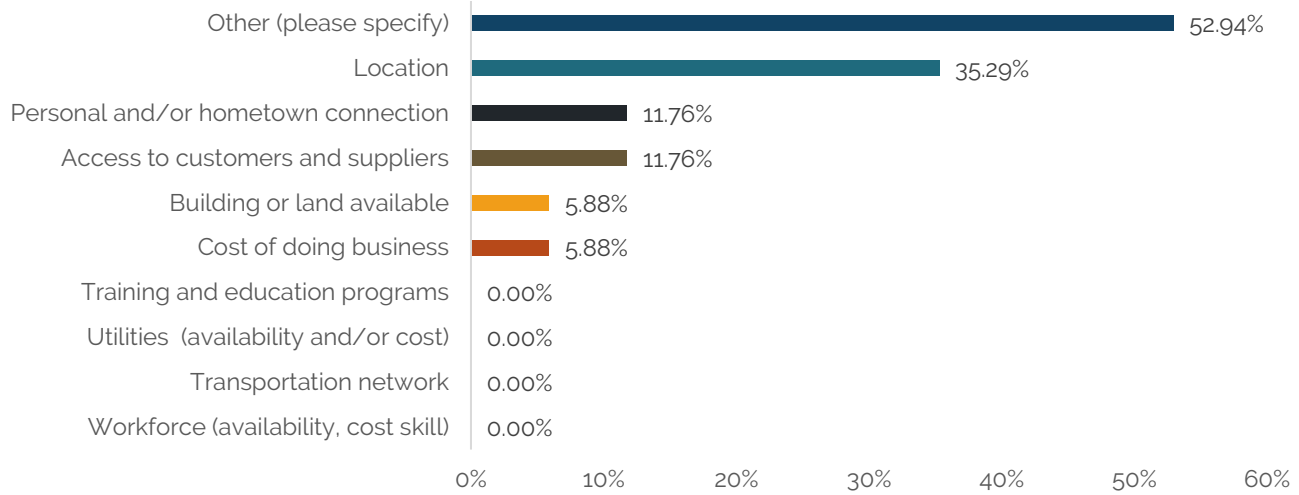
Other (please specify)

Legal

How many employees, full-time equivalents, are employed in your business?



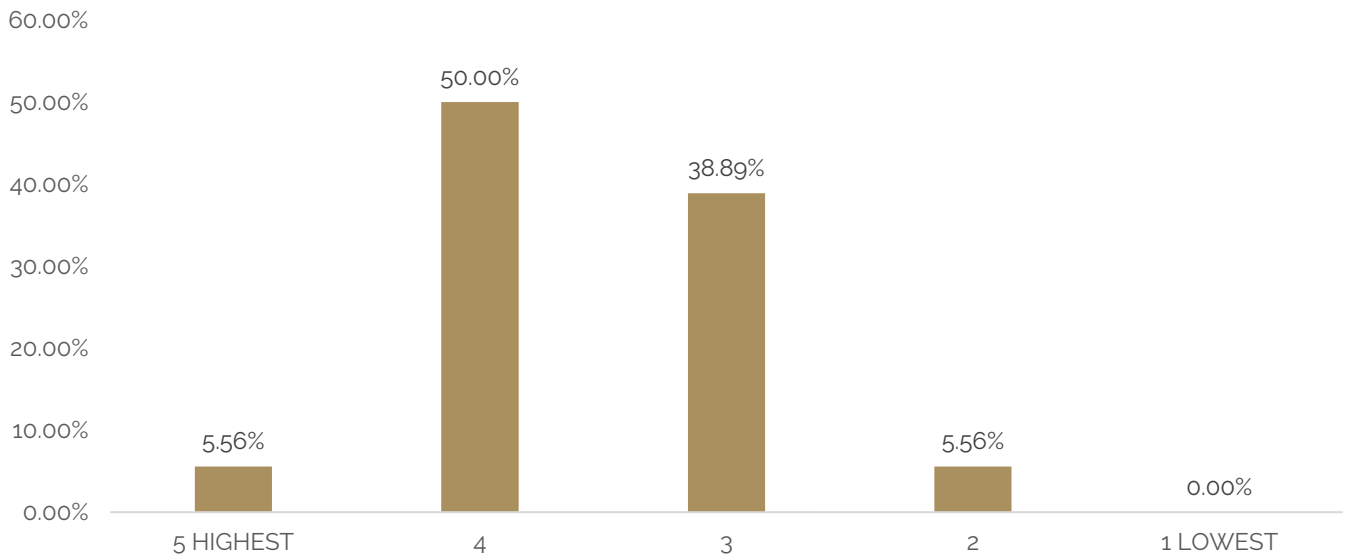
Why did your company locate in Chester County? Choose all that apply.



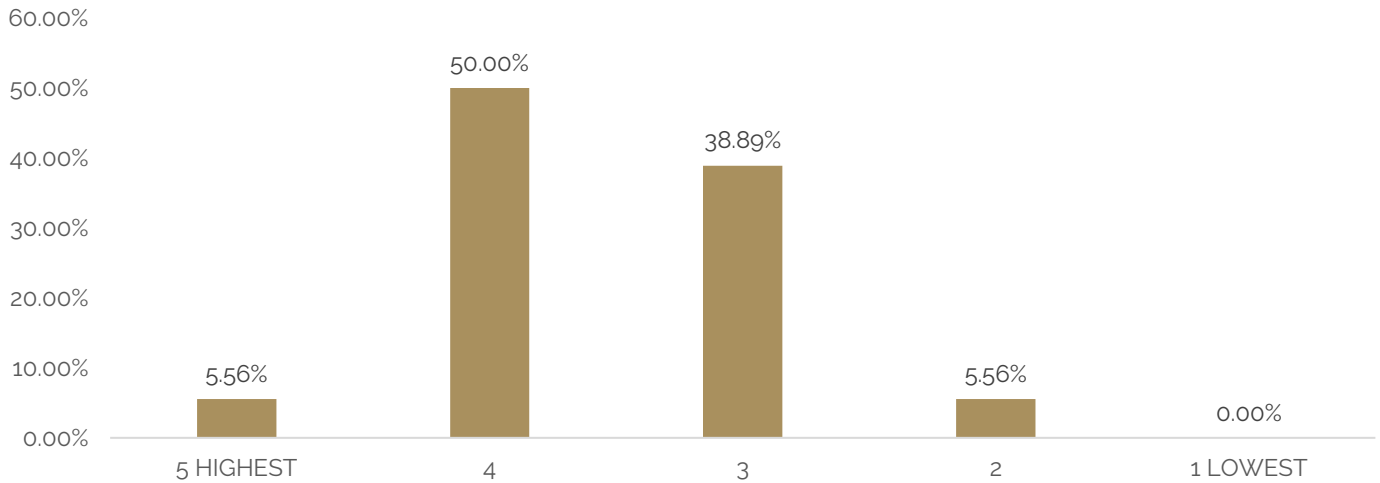
Other (please specify)

- Not located in Chester County but we work in the county.
- Assigned and unassigned service territory
- Local utility
- Grew up in Chester
- School district
- We are located in Rock Hill but have been completing work in Chester County for 20+ years.
- Our business has been here for 127 years
- Community Hospital

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

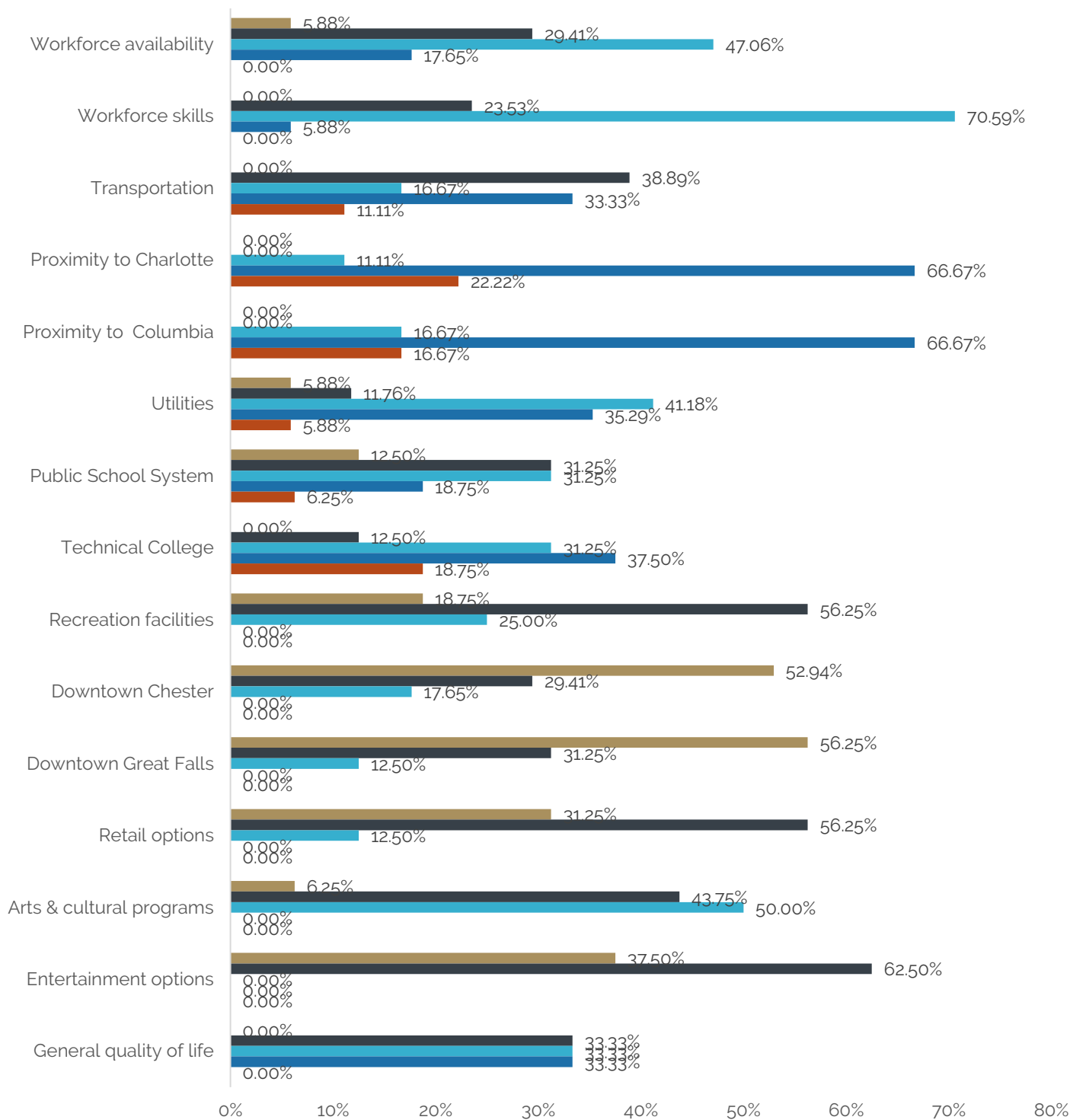


On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest, how do you rate the current business climate of the area?



How satisfied are you with the following in Chester County?

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



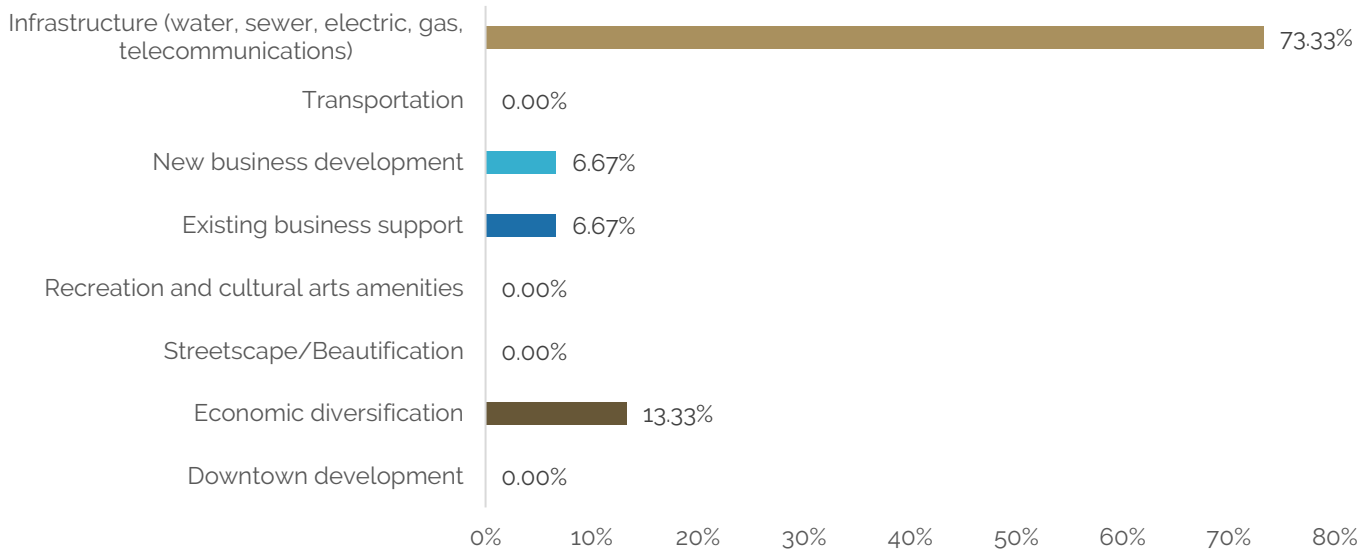
Other (please specify)

Crime and gang violence big issue

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



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



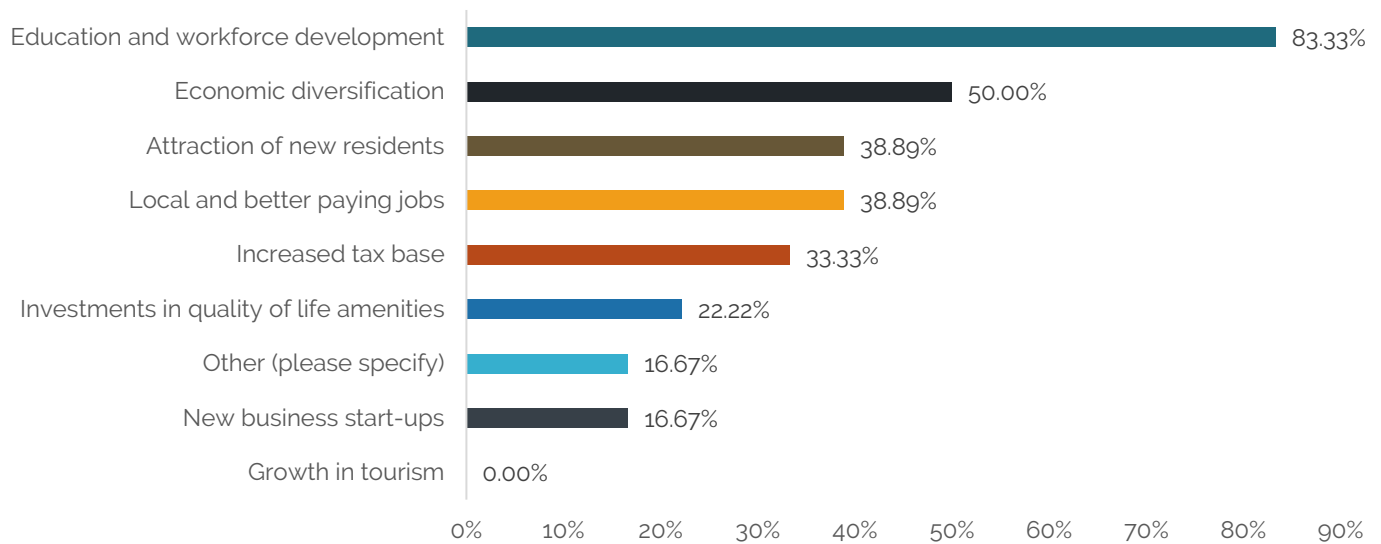
Other (please specify)

Education

Housing

Housing

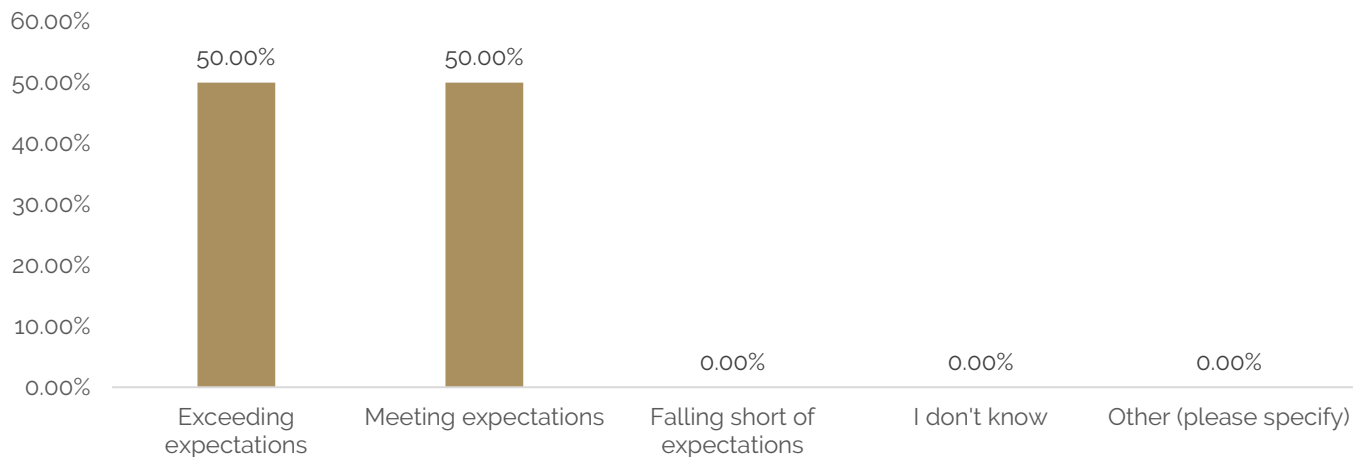
What should be the top THREE goals of the Chester County economic development strategic plan? CHOOSE THREE



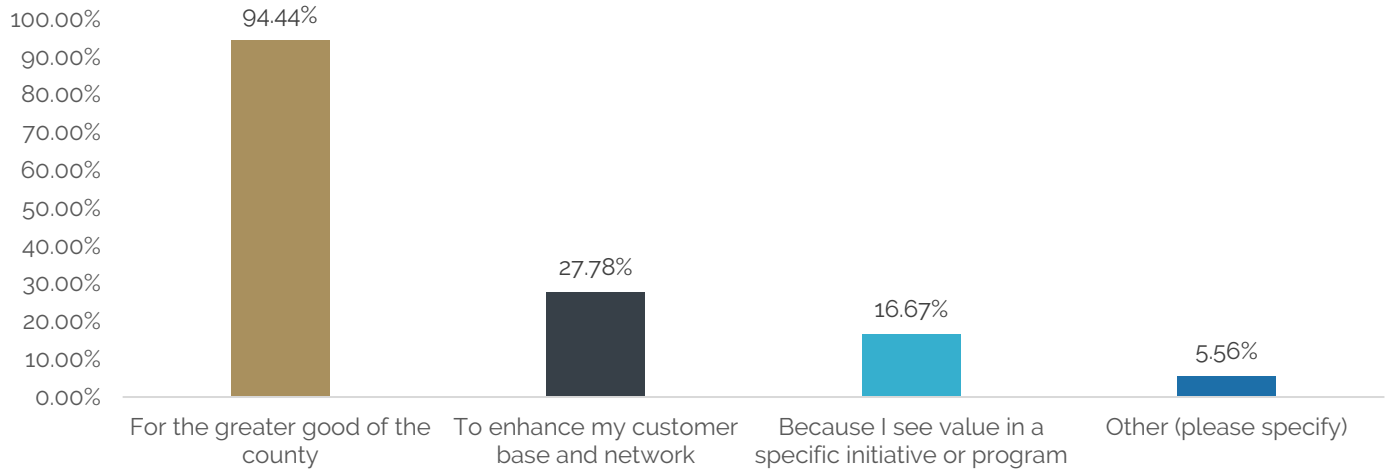
Other (please specify)

Investment in infrastructure
Spec building development for industry.
Retail development

Mission Expectations



Why do you invest in the CDA?



Is there anything the CDA should consider doing to increase its value to investors?

The CDA is one of the best development organizations my company supports. Please continue to focus, as you already do, on job creation and capital investment.

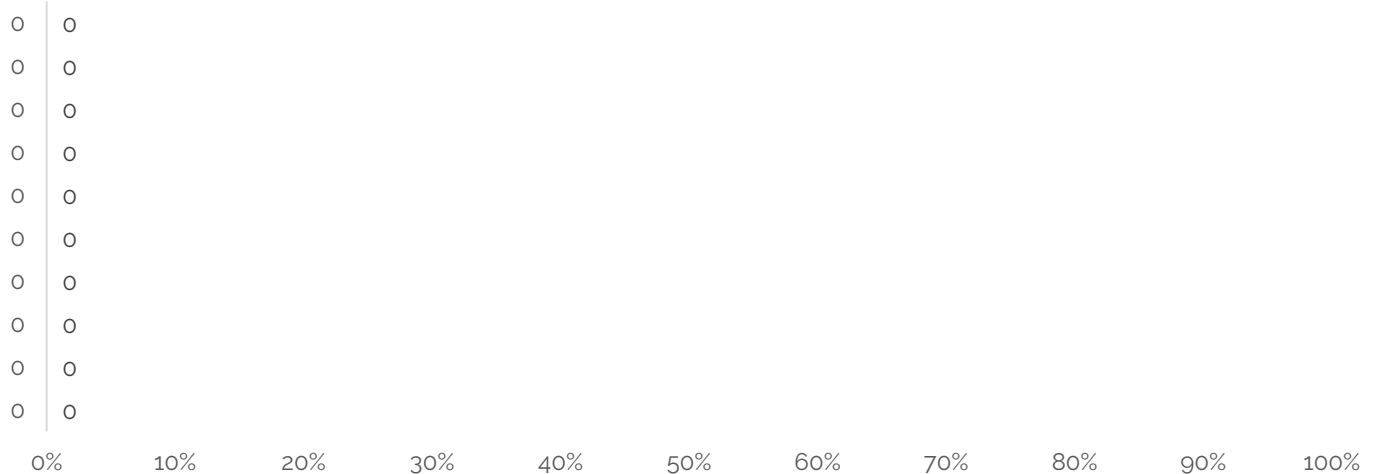
Require that local businesses be included when applicable and when capable in new development RFQ and proposals when tax incentives are used to induce companies to locate in Chester County

Create a plan on how our large investors can help to beautify their property and the area by not leaving unsightly areas and weeds from the front of their plant to road right of way.

Promote Housing Investment

More community forums, education, work sessions.

What business assistance was or would have been helpful when you started/expanded your business?



Other (please specify)

A crystal ball! Something that would tell us exactly where the load growth will happen and when to grow to meet that load.

Availability of small office space for firms such as accountants, dentists, insurance

What is an outcome you would like to see from the strategic plan?

Actionable items with measurable results.

Be careful taking on too many goals, focus on the few that will make the most difference (or make sure you have enough resources/people to drive the results).

I would like to see smart growth that allows for increased jobs, higher per-capita income, and enhanced living conditions for all of Chester County's citizens --- while maintaining as much of the area's character and "rural SC" appeal as possible.

Growth in new business and citizens locating in the area. Long-term planning in airport facilities.

To see Chester County become economically diverse with good retail, entertainment, and commercial options to attract residents not just commuter workers.

A plan that other areas of the state or country would emulate.

Educating the workforce of tomorrow's Chester County.

Put a strong emphasis on educational and recreational development to enhance the local community and attract other, new residents to fill jobs.

A better way to measure the results

Continuing to develop specific steps to maintain and improve positive economic development in Chester County.

Better vision and focus

More residential homes being planned and built

Please make any additional comments here.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this survey. Thank you, CDA, for always focusing on what's next --- and for moving forward to effect the most favorable outcome.

CDA has done a wonderful job attracting a manufacturing base where job-seekers want to travel to work. Now we need to go to the next phase and develop a community where people want to work, play, shop, eat, and live.

Have a design for the Richburg area with sidewalks, lighting, signage, and plantings, to allow for a clean and visually impressive area that all citizens can be proud to call home.

I am new to CDA, but I think that people with money puts an economy into motion. We need people here that have money to spend. We need to develop our local people to be able to make money and attract others that will have or make money to our community.

The mill sites need to be addressed

Think we are on the right track.

Appendix E: Study Sponsors and Consultant

The strategic planning process was jointly funded by Chester County Economic Development, Chester Development Association, City of Chester, Fort Lawn Community Center, and the Town of Great Falls.



The mission of the Chester County Department of Economic Development (CCED) is to create an environment that supports existing industry expansion, encourages new industry investments, fosters entrepreneurialism, and welcomes visitation by others—all of which support the provision of public services and otherwise improves each citizen's prosperity and overall quality of life



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