



# City of Chester, SC 2019 Economic Development Strategic Plan



# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Chester County Economic Development Strategic Plan Summary .....	4
Economic Development Strategic Plan .....	5
Implementation .....	11
Appendices	
Appendix A: SWOT Analysis-Chester County, Chester, Fort Lawn & Great Falls .....	11
Appendix B: Economic and Demographic Profile .....	18
Appendix C: Chester Retail MarketPlace Profile.....	39
Appendix D: Survey Results .....	40
Appendix E: Study Sponsors and Consultant.....	55

## Executive Summary

Chester County is transforming. New large employers are drawing new residents to the county, which is spurring residential development. Visitors are traveling to Chester County to experience its natural resources and history. Government leaders are trying to stay ahead of the transformation with sustainable growth policies. Entrepreneurs are looking to capture the opportunities emerging in the county. Chester County used to be like most rural counties – declining population, few job opportunities, lacking business opportunities – but not anymore.

This transformational time is ideal to update the Chester County Economic Development Strategic Plan. 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 City of Chester has a nonprofit and civic organization network, but the network has not been drawn together to work cohesively on community development. The strategic plan seeks to remedy this by using the city as vehicle to bring the community together. Working collaboratively, the city and its partners can address the issues of slow economic growth, poverty, and apathy.

Chester is not unlike many rural, southern, former big industry cities. Population growth is declining. There are commercial businesses and corridors but few large employers to spur economic activity and boost tax revenue. The city has few resources to invest in community development. However, Chester does have government, business, and civic leaders who want to see the community thrive.

The Chester economic development strategy includes revitalizing downtown and business districts, creating tourism destinations, improving communications, and working on appearance enhancements. Chester will need strong partnerships with Chester County, municipalities, and regional organizations to succeed. Most of all, it will need to turn the tide of apathy among its citizens. Chester needs every citizen to be an ambassador – they need everyone to be “all in.”

### **Chester Economic Development Goals**

- **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 Resource Capacity**

# Chester County Economic Development Strategic Plan

## Summary

The Chester Economic Development Strategic Plan was developed as part of the county economic development strategic plan. They are aligned and complement each other. 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.

Chester County Economic Development mission statement:

**“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

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. The partnership with the City of Chester is one of those key, strong partnerships needed for success.

## 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**

# Economic Development Strategic Plan

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 City of 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.

## Economic Development Goals

- **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 Resource Capacity**

## Goal: Business Development to Revitalize the Economy

### Strategy: Attract New, Grow Existing, and Support Start-Up Businesses

#### *Action Steps:*

- Organize a "downtown open house tour" to showcase available buildings and business development opportunities.
  - Gain commitment from building owners to participate in the open house with a firm lease/sales price and input into the information about the building.
  - Place displays in vacant buildings such as "this could be a children's clothing store" or "this could be an outdoor recreation outfitter" or "this could be a farm-to-table restaurant."
  - Invite real estate developers, SBDC, and businesses from the region who may want a second location in Chester.
  - Follow up with quarterly eblasts to participants on available properties.
  - Keep the available building list current with CCED and SBDC.
- Using CCED's expertise, identify the top three business development sites in Chester. The sites could be for industrial or large commercial use.
  - Vet the developability of the sites. Rank order in priority.
  - Develop marketing briefs on each site. Post on the city's website, and if it is an industrial post on the county website.
- Leverage the Chester Regional Agribusiness Center for business development, tourism, and placemaking.
  - Add the Agribusiness Center to the city's website under "Proud Affiliations" and Discover Chester.

- Organize an “alfresco farm-to-table” dining experience (ticketed event) at the Farmers Market in the spring and fall. This could be organized by the Chamber of Commerce as a fundraising event.
- In partnership with other municipalities, hold pop-up farmers markets at other locations in the county a few times each summer to encourage people to come to the market in Chester.
  - Set up a display at the farmers market advertising happenings and stores in downtown. Downtown businesses may sponsor the display.
- Activate the Agribusiness Center with special events – hold special town meetings in the center, conduct a familiarization tour of the facility for town council leaders from neighboring towns, and hold pop-up art market events.
- Consider a “Taste of Chester” foodie event at the Agribusiness Center. Such an event could be organized by a nonprofit as a fundraiser.
- Investigate the feasibility of a small business incubator in downtown. Abbeville, SC, created one in the upstairs of the Chamber building. A small incubator could be in excess public space (city hall), chamber, or in space provided by another community development partner.
- Explore creating a small business incentive package. Examples from other cities:
  - Market and promote the Bailey Bill – a property tax abatement to encourage rehabilitation of historic properties.
  - Rent subsidy for pedestrian-oriented businesses in downtown. This is a grant for 1-2 years that offsets a portion of rent in a downtown building for businesses that attract foot traffic.
  - Columbia enacted a vacant building revitalization grant to encourage the upfit and occupation of vacant buildings in economically distressed areas.
  - Façade, mural, and landscaping grants are used to offset a portion of funds an owner spends on beautification.
  - See the Small Business Incentives and Grants of Abbeville, SC, which include energy efficiency, historic building improvement, and loans.
- Market and promote Chester’s two Opportunity Zones. Place information on the city’s website. Share content with CCED to include on their website.
- People come into Chester to buy gas, electronics, and general merchandise (see Retail MarketPlace Profile in Appendix C). They leave Chester to buy groceries and automobiles.
  - As the income levels of Chester County increase, position Chester to be the location for a more upscale grocery store. If Chester is successful at becoming the downtown servicing new developments, traffic patterns will support a city location for a grocery store.
- Make annexation of business development areas a priority to boost revenue to allow the city to invest in itself.

## Goal: Chester as a Destination

### Strategy: Position Chester to be THE Downtown Serving Visitors to the Gateway and New Residential Developments

#### *Action Steps:*

- Develop a regional cultural arts draw like the Newberry Opera House. The Chester City Hall had an opera house on the upper floor that could be renovated and reopened. The historic features of the building lend itself well to niche cultural arts programs.
  - We recommend a different focus than the cultural programming scheduled for The Gateway Conference Center. Meet regular with The Gateway staff to plan events far in advance to ensure no conflicts of programming.

- The city could seek a nonprofit partner, like an arts council, to manage the opera house venue.
- Use pop-up events to draw people into Chester. Examples include food truck rallies, art markets, special equipment shows, etc.
  - Pop-up events could be organized by the city or nonprofit partners such as an arts council organizing an art market. Some cities have a holiday art market in early December.
  - Use pop-up events to activate unique places like the Agribusiness Center and opera house.
  - Festivals are one example of pop-up events. Consider hosting a cultural festival.
  - Use geofencing technology to market the events to new residential neighborhoods.
- Position Chester to be a second location for a major tourism draw such as a children's museum or sporting experience.
  - Example: The Discovery Place, first developed in uptown Charlotte, built a second location in Huntersville.
  - Explore second locations of popular South Carolina destinations like museums, arts centers, science centers, etc.
- Envision how a developed Chester city walk could attract people from across the region in the future. Invest in a master plan for a city walk to visually show citizens and developers how it could look. That's a first step – helping others see your vision.
- Work in partnership with Chester County to ensure that major county facilities remain in the city. This draws people into Chester to eat, shop, and do business.

### **Strategy: Develop Amenities that will Draw More People to Live, Work, and Play in Chester**

#### *Action Steps:*

- Keep focused on the city's top three priority amenities:
  - Track field at the recreation park
  - City hall renovations, which could include the third floor opera house
  - Amphitheater
- Lay the future groundwork for amenities such as a splash pad and other entertainment that will draw people into Chester.
- Identify and market land for future housing development in the city.
  - Develop a marketing brief on housing development sites and the opportunity for residential development. Post on the city's website. Share with CCED, which is sometimes contacted by residential developers.
- Continue to update the city's master plan for streetscape, recreation, and capital improvement projects.
  - Include pocket parks in neighborhoods, greenway/trail connectivity, streetscape beautification.

### **Goal: Have Others Tell Your Story for You**

#### **Strategy: Internal Communications and Public Relations**

#### *Action Steps:*

- Take control of the Chester story. Develop key messages and social media content that can be shared with allies such as the Chamber, civic groups, and nonprofits. Posting the same positive messages will boost Chester's good story.
  - Develop a schedule of content development and sharing so regular messages are posted.
- Update the city's website. Websites are the number one way visitors, citizens, and businesses access information about your community.

- Discover Chester – Add a menu choice for Visit Chester. Add information on Where to Stay, What to Do, Where to Eat, Where to Shop, etc. Link to the Olde English District.
  - Check out Newberry, SC's website. On the home page there are buttons for "I'm a Resident", "I'm a Business", and "I'm a Visitor."
- Commissions & Committees – Include information on how citizens can serve on committees and commissions to encourage more engagement.
- Living in Chester – Include a Community Information menu choice with general livability information such as links to public schools, York Technical College, hospital, recreation parks, chamber of commerce, and other basic information a newcomer would want to know.
- How Do I? – Add "start a business" as a menu option. On the page, include links to small business development agencies (SBDC) and starter kits on how to start example businesses in Chester (food truck, daycare, retail store, hair salon, etc.).
  - See the Business Development section of the Newberry, SC, website. It has available properties, business directory, and FAQs, among other information.
- Check the social media links on the home page to ensure they are active.
- Add a community calendar to the website or link to one. Promote all community events in Chester, whether sponsored by the city or not.
- Add an Instagram account for the Town and maintain it. Instagram is a leading social media site to share a visual story to visitors and citizens.
- Develop 5 talking points about the city's goals, plans, and successes and share with city staff and elected leaders. The same story is told over and over, reinforcing the message. Print talking points on a small card so leaders have them at the ready.
- Develop a standard PowerPoint presentation about the city's goals, plans, and successes. City staff and elected leaders can give the presentation at civic clubs.
- Host a monthly Coffee with the Mayor that is open to the public. Everyone buys their own coffee and spends time talking about issues important to Chester's future.

## Strategy: Increase Civic Engagement

### *Action Steps:*

- Use the "Heart and Soul" model of community engagement being employed in Fort Lawn. This high level of citizen engagement has motivated Fort Lawn citizens into action to revitalize their community.
- Participate in the volunteer portal recommended in the county strategic plan. It would be a website portal listing organizations that need volunteers and a way for volunteers to sign up to participate.
  - Focus on volunteer organizations that engage with children and education to help with the cycle of poverty in Chester.
- Identify a neighborhood champion in each of Chester's residential neighborhoods. Bring them together to discuss strategies for civic engagement in their neighborhood. There may be technologies, like the app Nextdoor, that could be helpful. Neighborhood block parties and other personal engagement may facilitate more cohesiveness.

## Goal: Leaders for the Future

### Strategy: Develop Leaders that will Support Government, Civic, and Nonprofit Organizations

#### *Action Steps:*

- Develop a citizen's academy whereby a cohort of citizens will learn about city government. Typically the group will participate in monthly seminars (for 6 months) on public safety, planning

and zoning, public works, recreation, and other aspects of local government. The goal is to “graduate” citizens with the background to be informed leaders.

- Encourage an ally organization such as the Chamber to sponsor a Chester Leadership program to develop civic, nonprofit, and community leaders. Local leadership programs typically run 6-9 months, meet once a month, and cover topics such as healthcare, economic development, history, recreation, education, and other topics. The goal is to develop leadership skills in people who can become the next generation of leaders in Chester.
  - This could be a takeoff on the Clemson University / Palmetto LEAF program.
  - A county leadership program is recommended in the county strategic plan. The city program should be coordinated and could be a ‘feeder’ program for leaders from Chester.

## Goal: Beautiful Communities that will Attract Visitors, New Residents, and Businesses

### Strategy: Raise Appearance Standards

#### *Action Steps:*

- Develop an Appearance Commission or expand the beautification and appearance mission of the Historic Preservation Committee or the Planning Committee. An Appearance Commission develops ordinances to be passed by City Council that outline design standards and ensure a consistent development theme in a jurisdiction.
- Review city 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.
- Through community volunteer organizations, organize community clean up days. Leverage statewide initiatives such as Palmetto Pride, the state's anti-litter and beautification program,
- Participate in the County Appearance and Beautification Annual Meeting, recommended in the county strategic plan as a way to align the appearance standards of the county and municipalities.

### 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 has made application to CDBG for demolition. Seek their advice on a Chester 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:*

- Support Chester County developing a countywide wayfinding signage program. It should coordinate the county and municipalities for consistent wayfinding imagery.
- Ask the county to extend The Gateway entrance gateways/signage/landscaping concept to Chester and other municipalities, investing in a landscaped gateway at the main entrances to town.

## Goal: Leverage Chester County to Boost Chester's Capacity

### Strategy: Grant Writing to Expand Access to Funds

#### *Action Steps:*

- Utilize the county grant writer – a new position recommended in the county strategic plan – to access tourism development grants.
- Participate in the quarterly or semi-annual Grants Meetings recommended in the county plan as a way to coordinate municipal grant projects.

### Strategy: Align Economic and Community Development Strategies

#### *Action Steps:*

- Participate in the new group recommended to bring all of Chester County together. We recommend calling it *The Collaborative*. Its purpose is to align economic and community development strategies across the county.
  - The group will discuss topics such as: grant writer priorities, capital improvement projects, shared service opportunities, leveraging marketing and special events, appearance standards, etc.
    - It could hold an annual Appearance Planning Meeting, a workshop on grant priorities, etc.

### Strategy: Leverage CCED Marketing Expertise

#### *Action Steps:*

- Use CCED marketing expertise to develop content for Chester's website and social media platforms. We have recommended CCED develop a press kit of images, messages, tweets, photos for Instagram, etc. so municipalities can reinforce the county's marketing messages.
- We recommended the county fund the creation of a photo library for partners to access for marketing.

# Implementation

The City of Chester should lead implementation of the strategic plan. We understand that staff and resource capacity of the city is limited. Therefore, much of implementation will fall to the committees and commissions of the city, Chester County Chamber of Commerce, and county and regional partners such as Chester County and Chester County Economic Development. Whenever possible, the city should seek partners and allies. It is critical to ensuring implementation does not stall.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown open house tour</li> <li>• Identify top 3 business sites</li> <li>• Small business incentive package</li> <li>• Make Opportunity Zones</li> <li>• Update city website</li> <li>• Add social media platforms (Instagram)</li> <li>• Standard presentation on city goals, talking points</li> <li>• Coffee with the Mayor</li> <li>• Aggressive code enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incubator feasibility study</li> <li>• Organize pop-up events</li> <li>• Feasibility for a regional cultural arts destination (opera house)</li> <li>• Marketing materials on housing development</li> <li>• Model Heart and Soul process in Chester</li> <li>• Citizen academy</li> <li>• Chester Leadership Program</li> <li>• Grants to demolish derelict properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility for a major tourism destination (children's museum)</li> <li>• Plan future amenities such as splash pad</li> <li>• Neighborhood champions</li> <li>• Appearance Commission, review of ordinances</li> </ul>

Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage Agribusiness Center - add to website, events</li> <li>• Continue master planning</li> <li>• Retain County offices in the city</li> <li>• Continue work on track field, city hall renovations, amphitheater</li> <li>• Volunteer beautification and clean up programs</li> <li>• Participate in County Collaborative to align city and county goals</li> <li>• Utilize County grant writer when hired</li> <li>• Leverage CCED marketing messages, expertise</li> </ul>

# Metrics

**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. We recommend Chester select a few community well-being metrics to track and report. Examples include income, educational attainment, poverty, and crime.

# Appendix A: SWOT Analysis—Chester County, Chester, Fort Lawn & 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 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 investments

### 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 comments 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 Breakfast's
- 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
- Declining education quality
- County elected leadership conflicts
- Failure to act, not working the plan/vision
- Trust
- No place for youth
- Disaster shelters
- Dilapidated housing and buildings
- Land use planning

# Appendix B: Economic and Demographic Profile

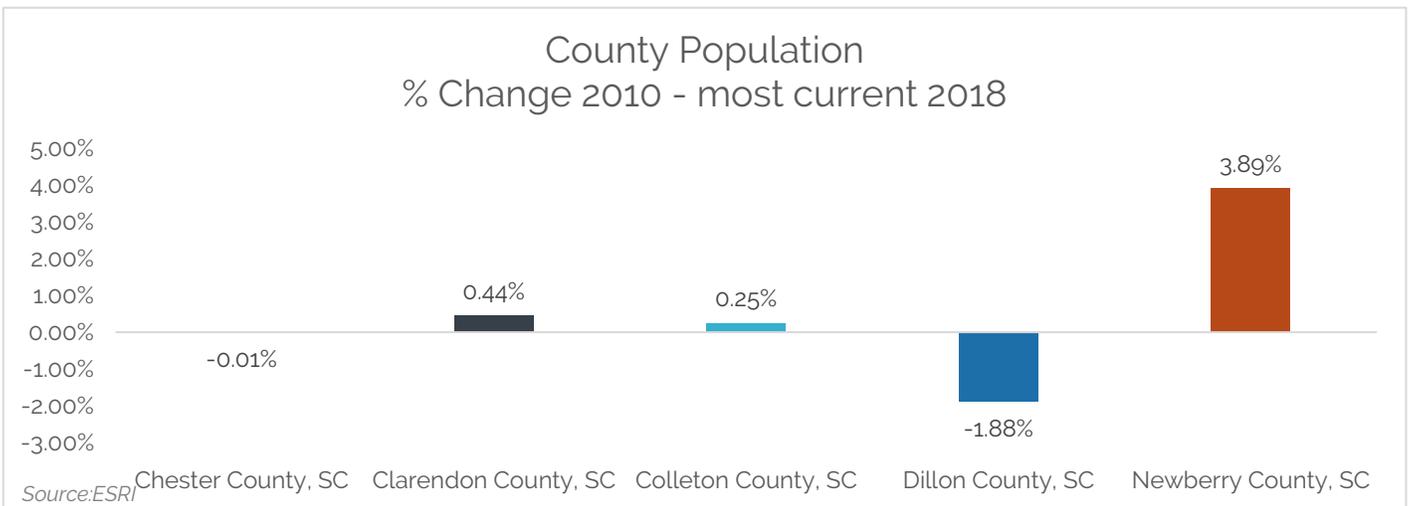
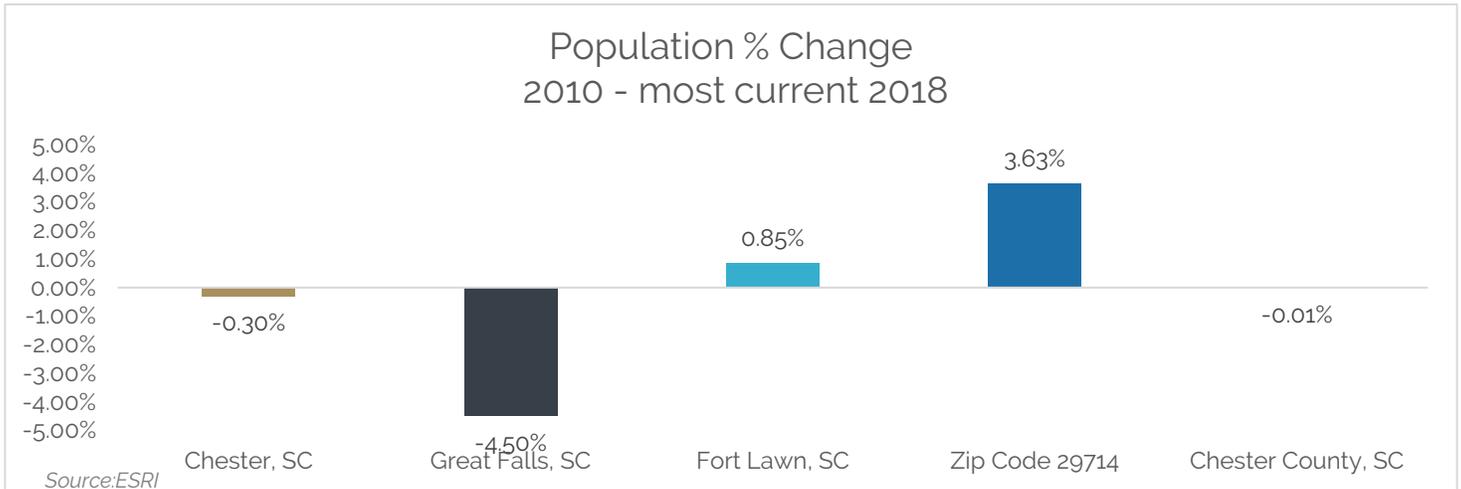
## Economic and Demographic Profile Summary

- ⊙ 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 zip code 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.

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



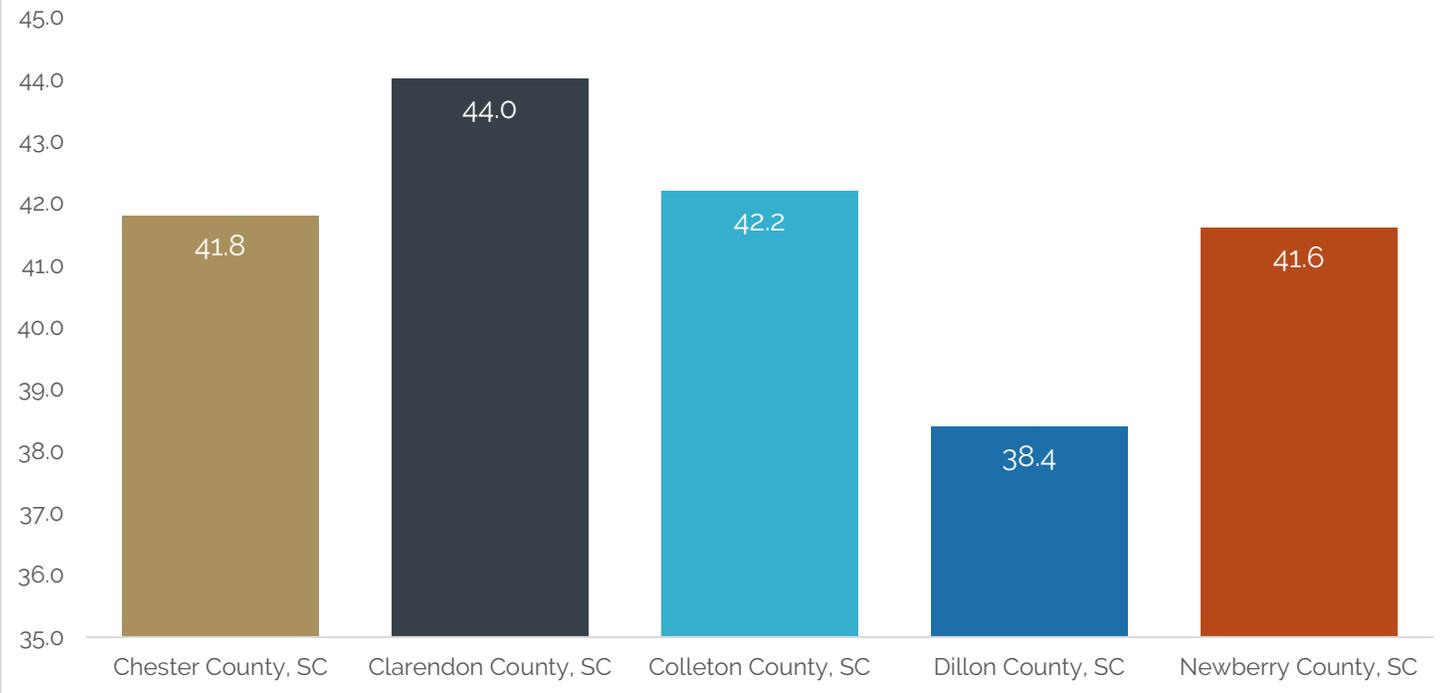
### 2018 Age-Cities & County

Age Groups	Chester, SC	Great Falls, SC	Fort Lawn, SC	Fort Lawn 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

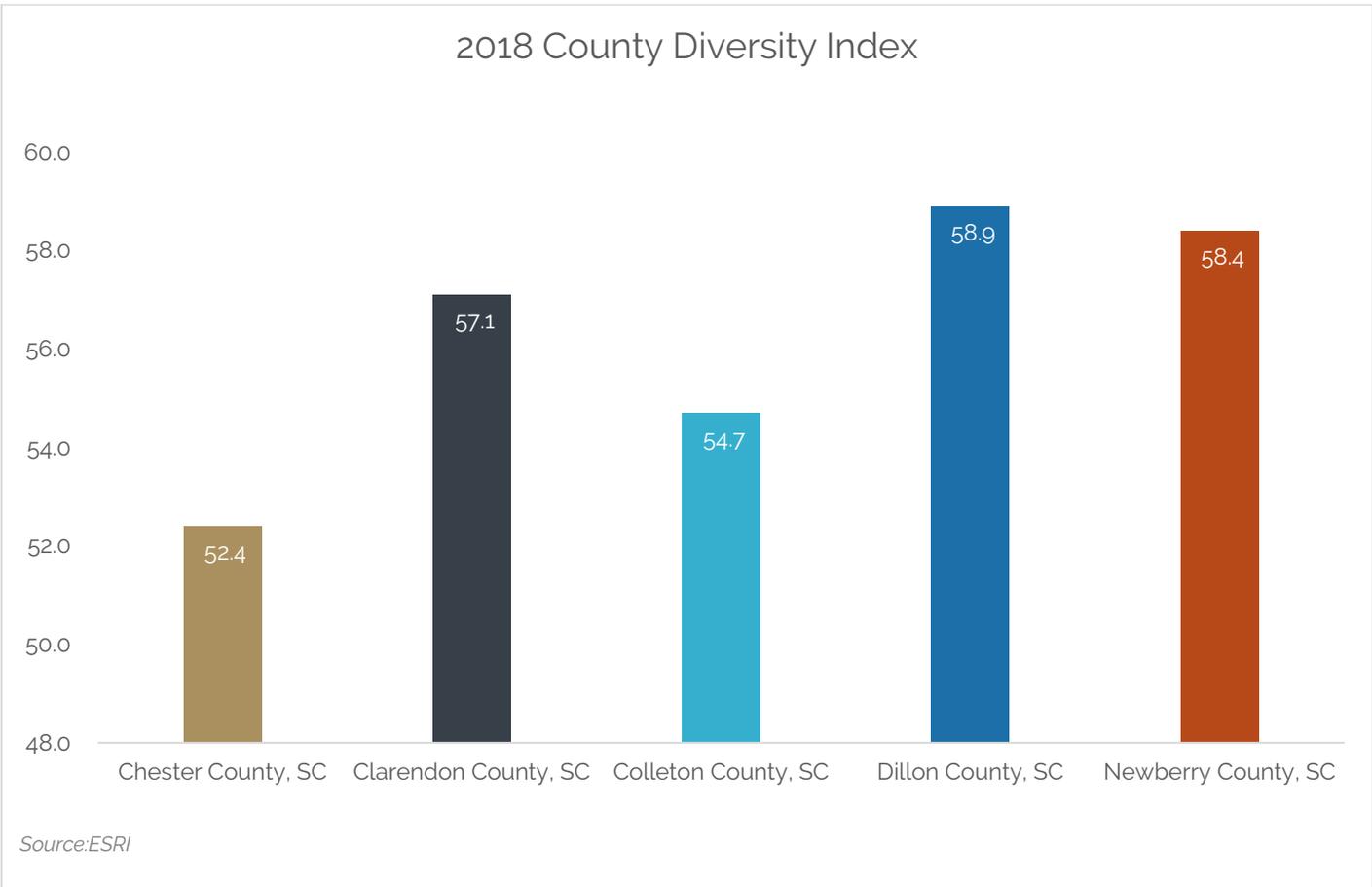


2018 Race-Cities & County	Chester, NC	Great Falls, SC	Fort Lawn, SC	Fort Lawn 29714, SC	Chester County, SC
White Alone	33.5%	64.8%	64.4%	68.0%	60.9%
Black Alone	63.0%	32.4%	30.6%	27.3%	35.5%
American Indian Alone	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%	1.0%	0.5%
Asian Alone	0.6%	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%
Pacific Islander Alone	0.1%	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

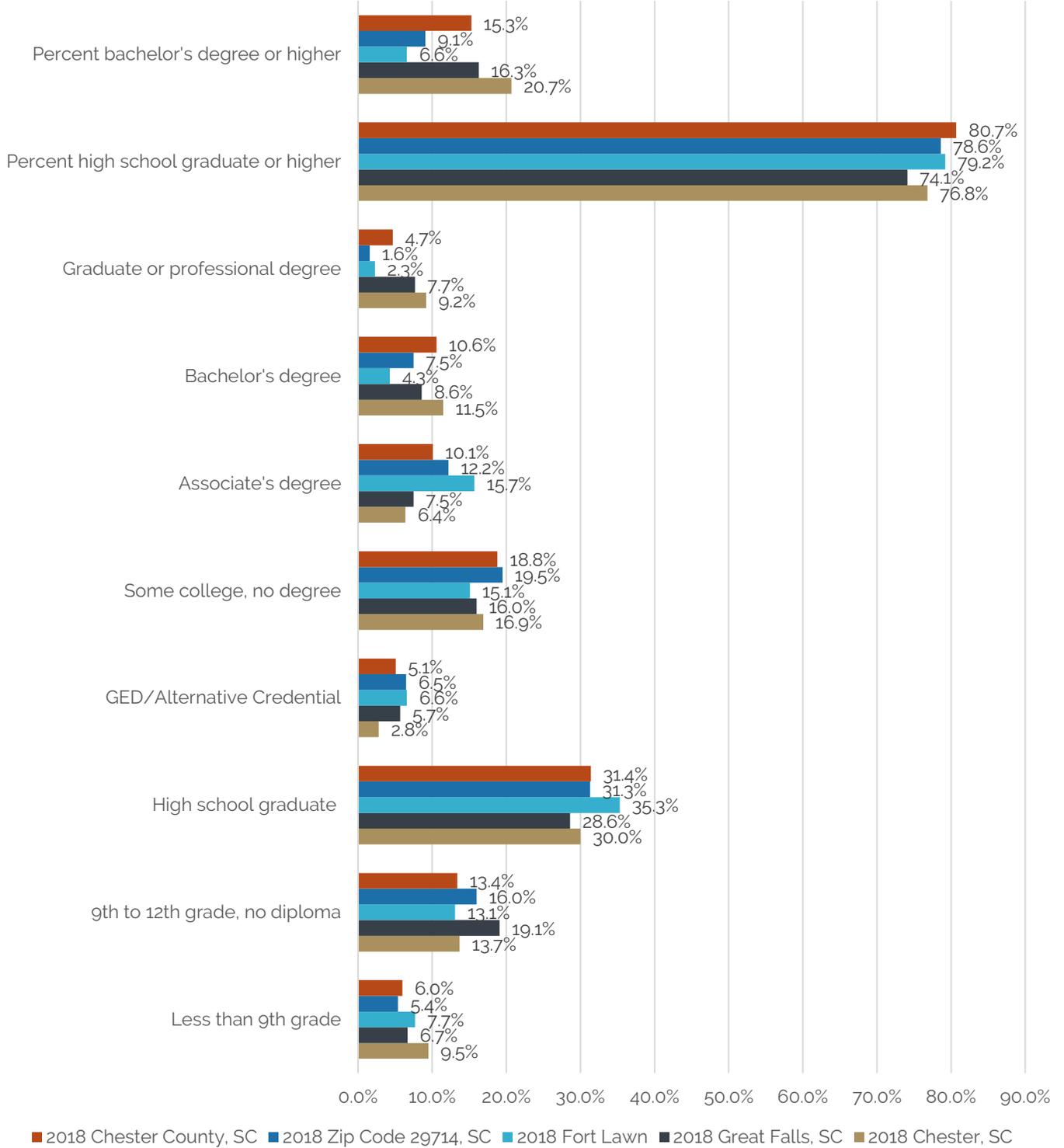
Source: ESRI

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

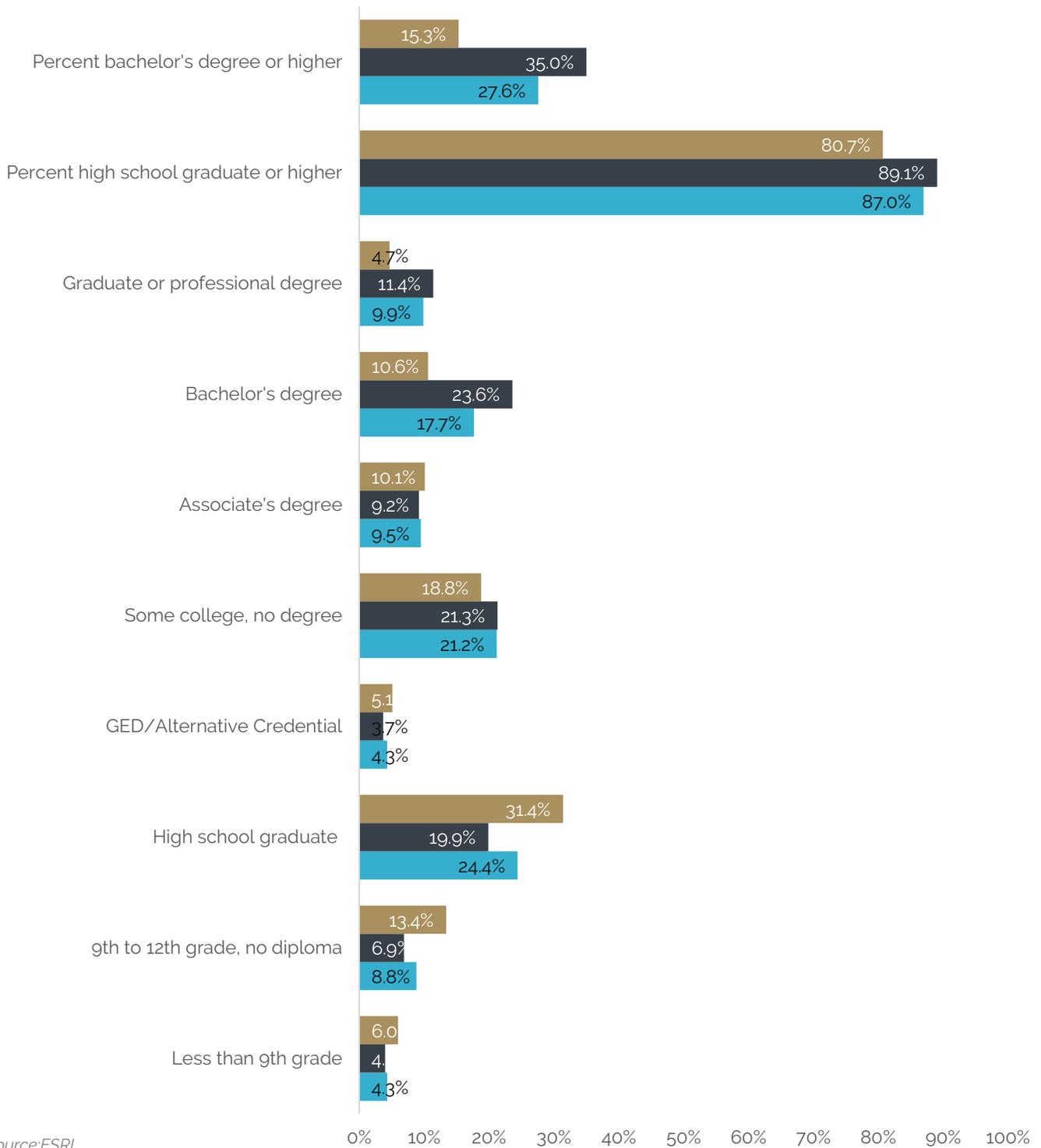


## 2018 Cities & County Educational Attainment



## 2018 County, MSA, State Educational Attainment

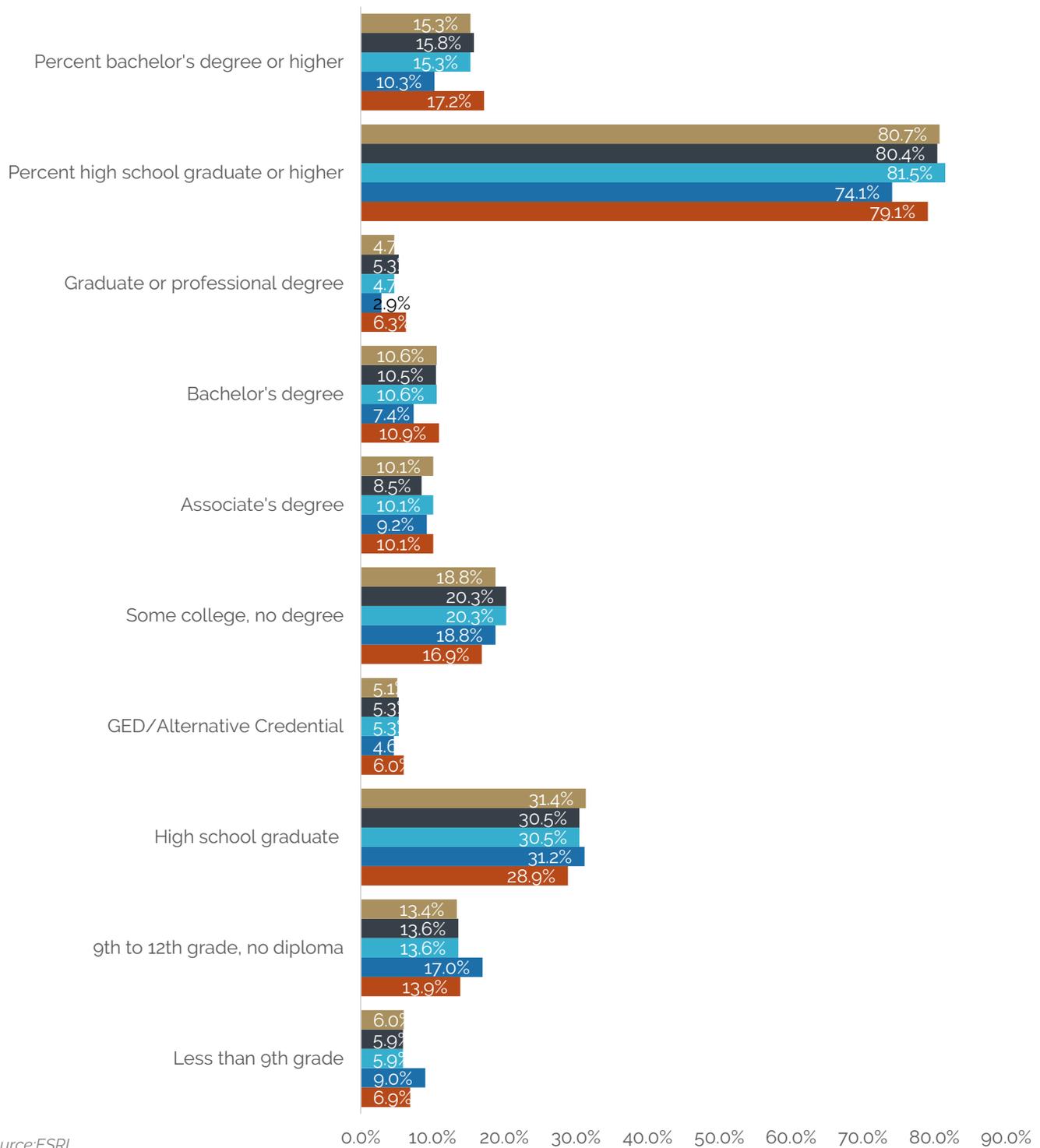
■ Chester County, SC ■ Charlotte, SC MSA ■ South Carolina



Source: ESRI

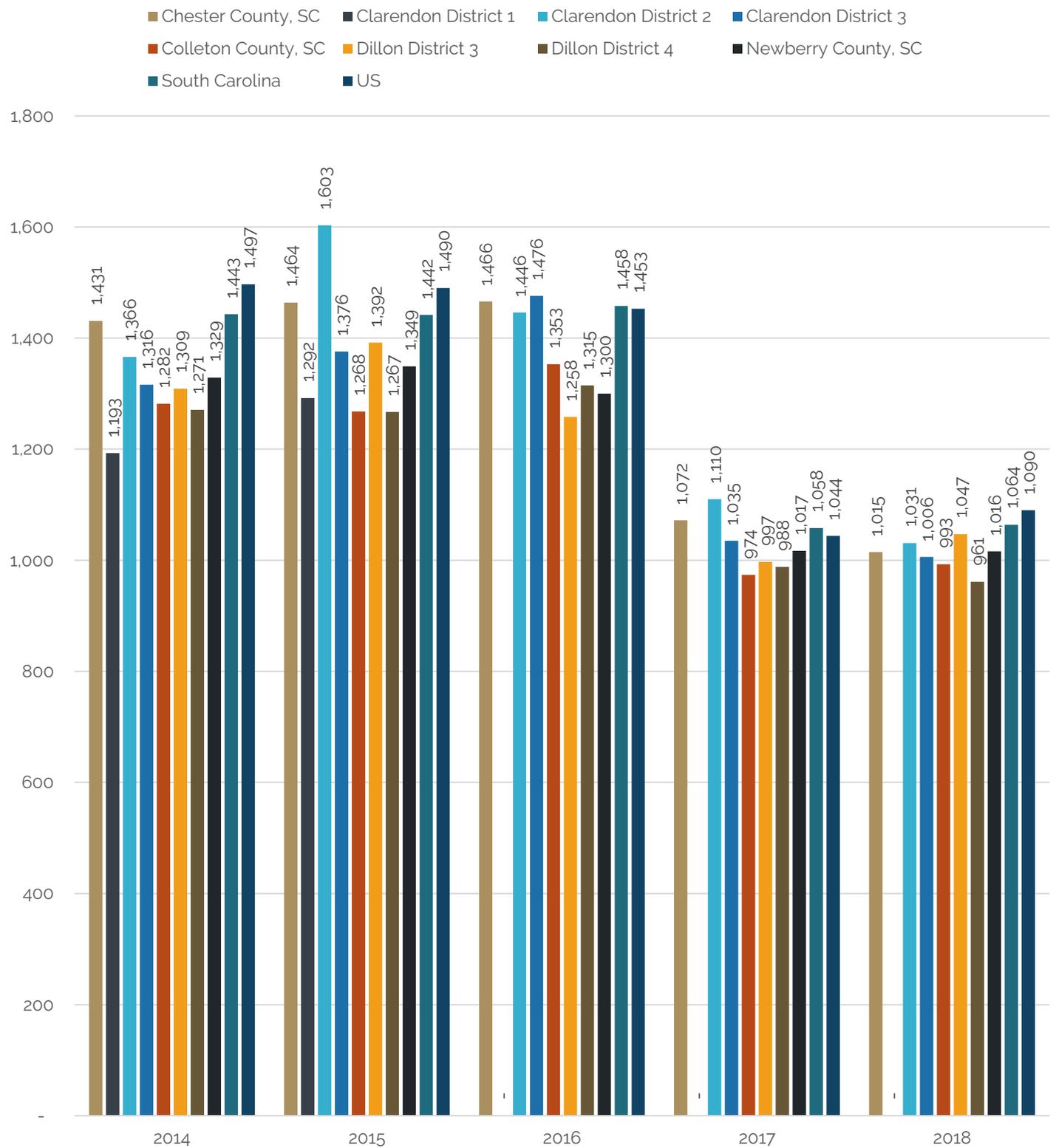
## 2018 Counties Educational Attainment

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



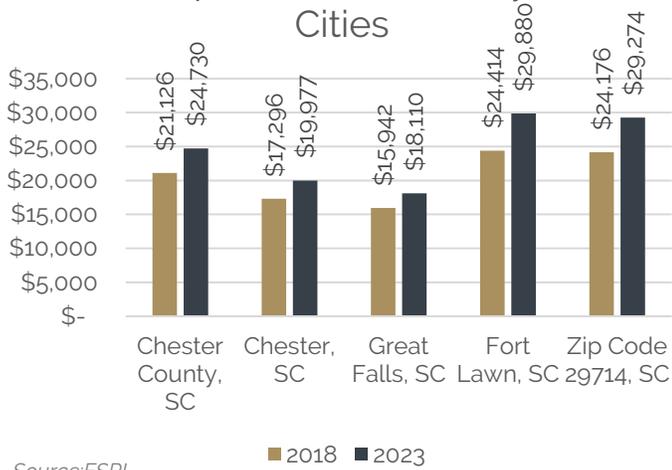
Source: ESRI

# SAT Scores



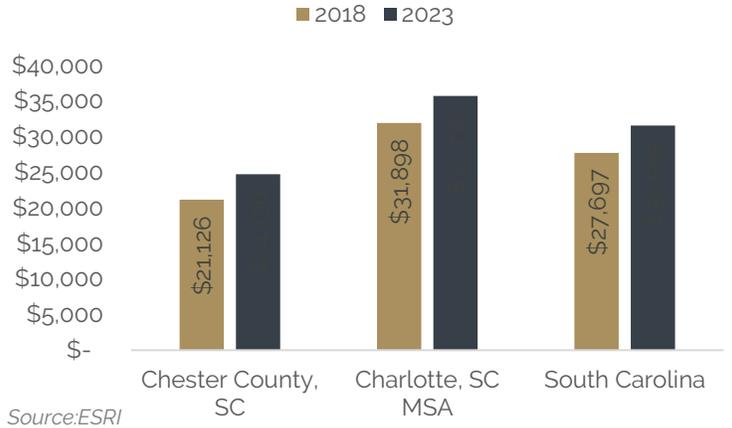
Source: South Carolina Department of Public Instruction

### Per Capita Income County and Cities



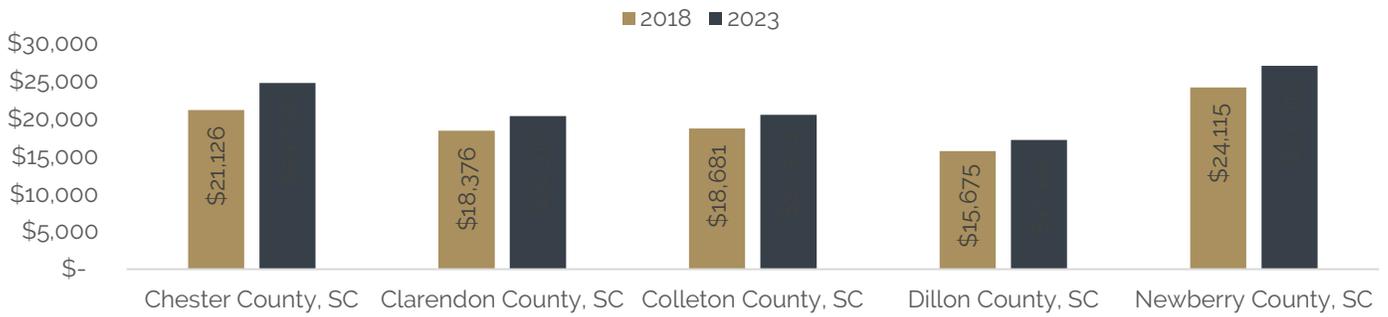
Source:ESRI

### Per Capita Income County , MSA, State



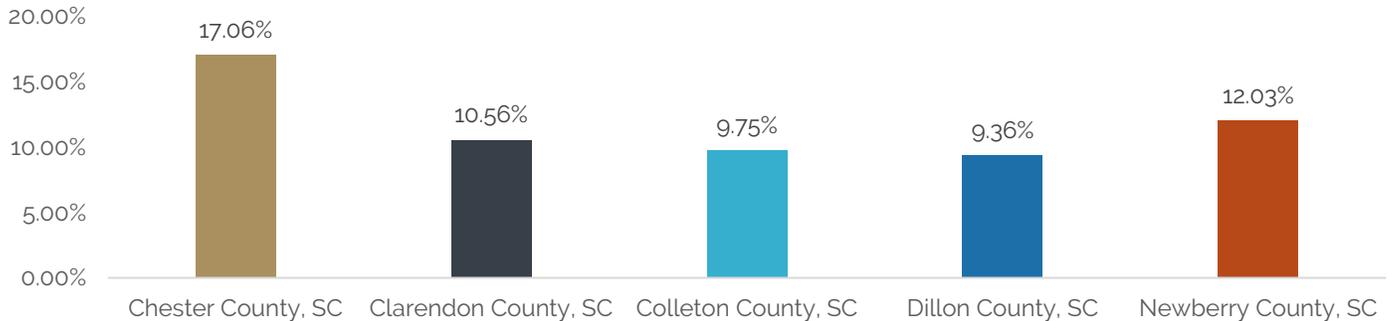
Source:ESRI

### Per Capita Income Counties

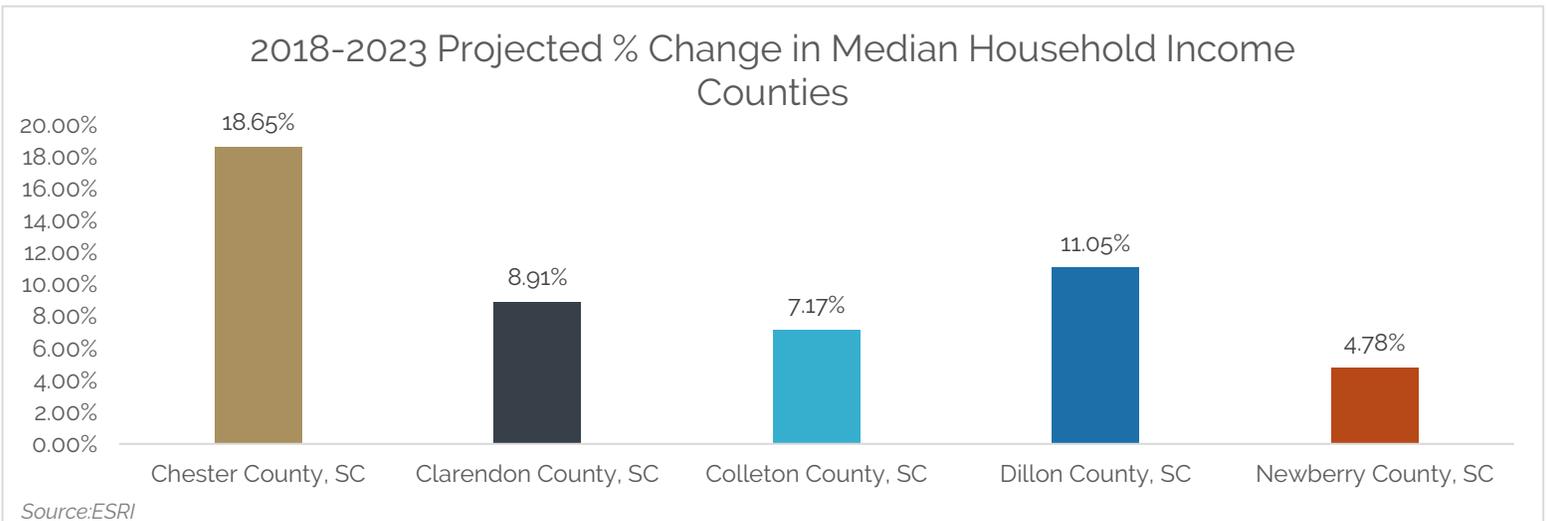
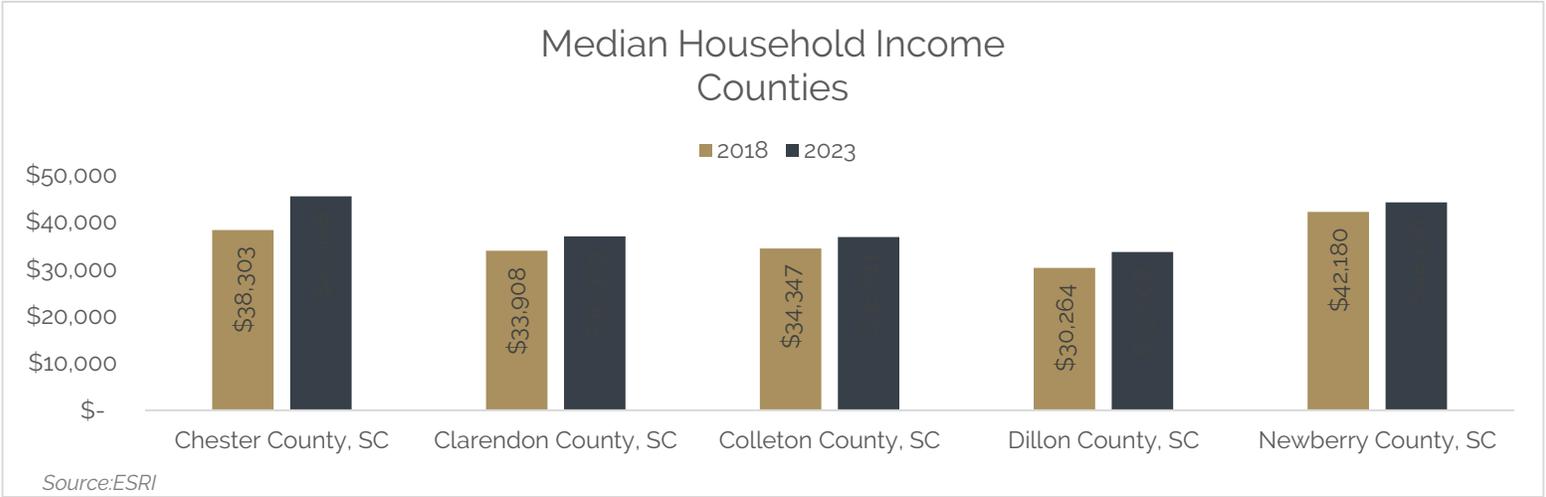
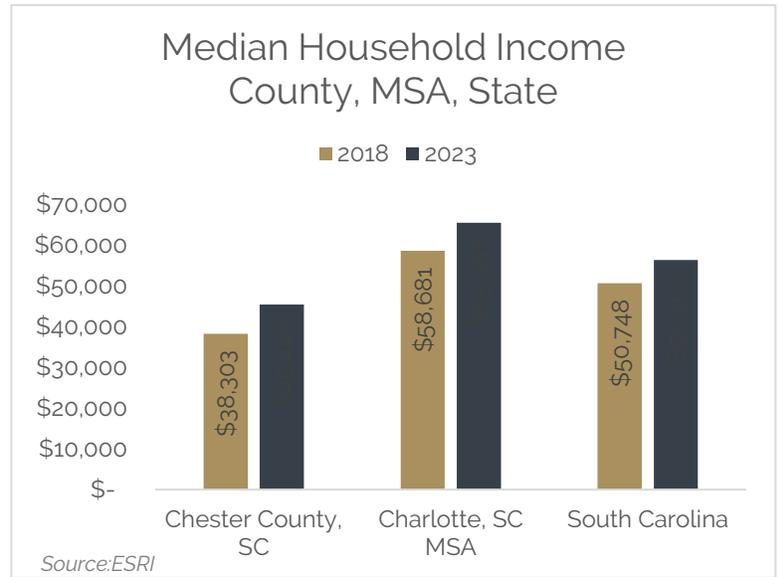
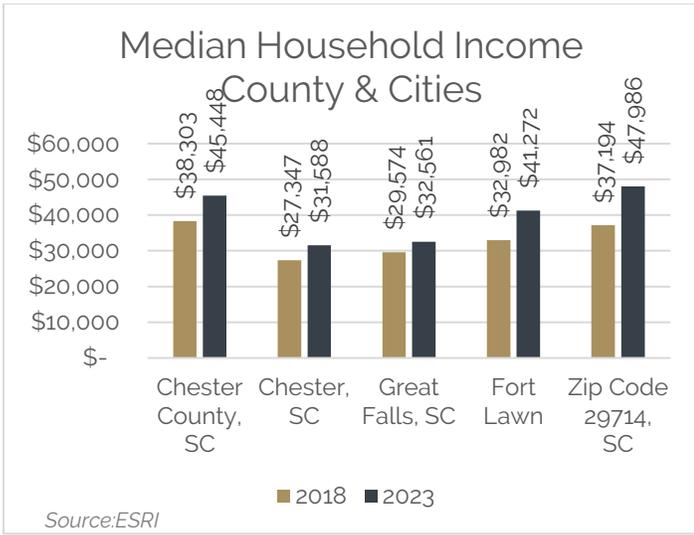


Source:ESRI

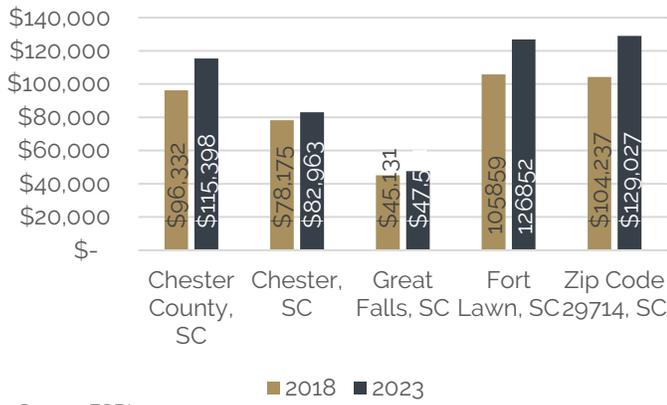
### 2018-2023 Projected % Change Per Capita Income Counties



Source:ESRI

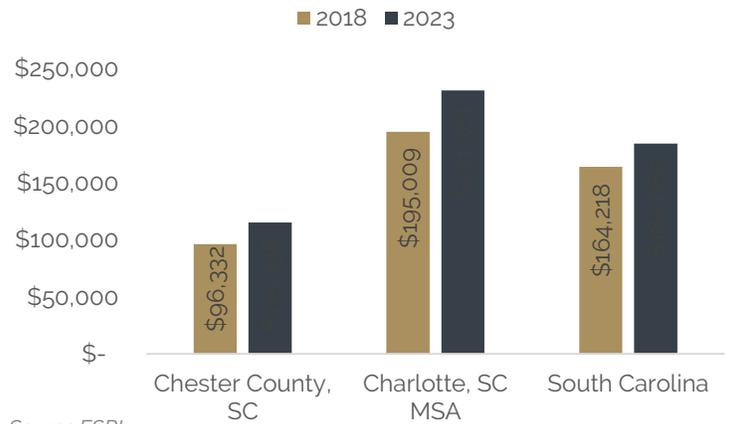


### Median Home Value County & Cities



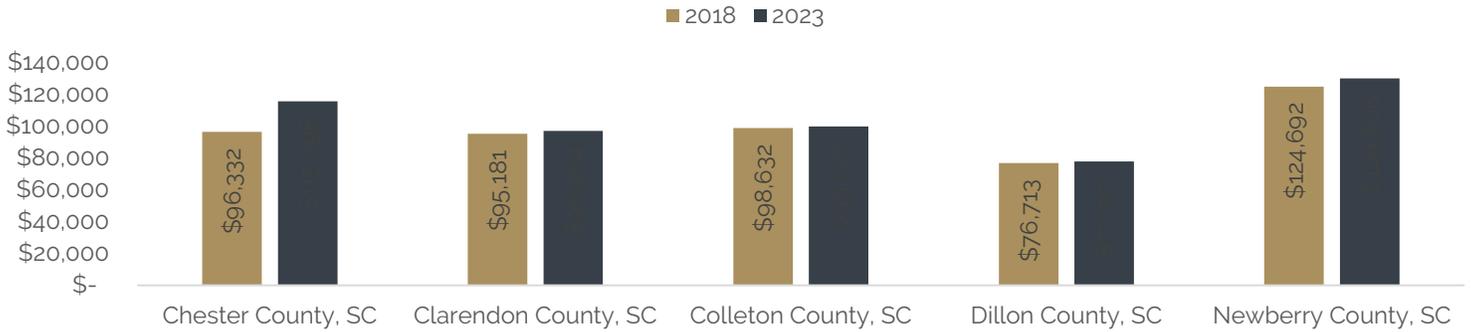
Source:ESRI

### Median Home Value County, MSA, State



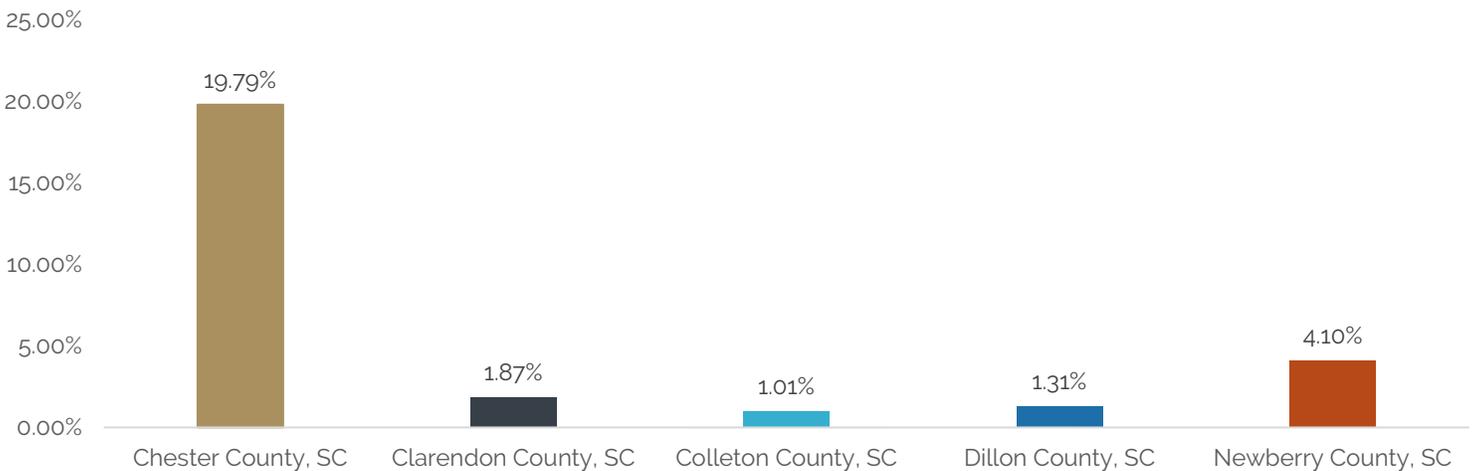
Source:ESRI

### Median Home Value Counties



Source:ESRI

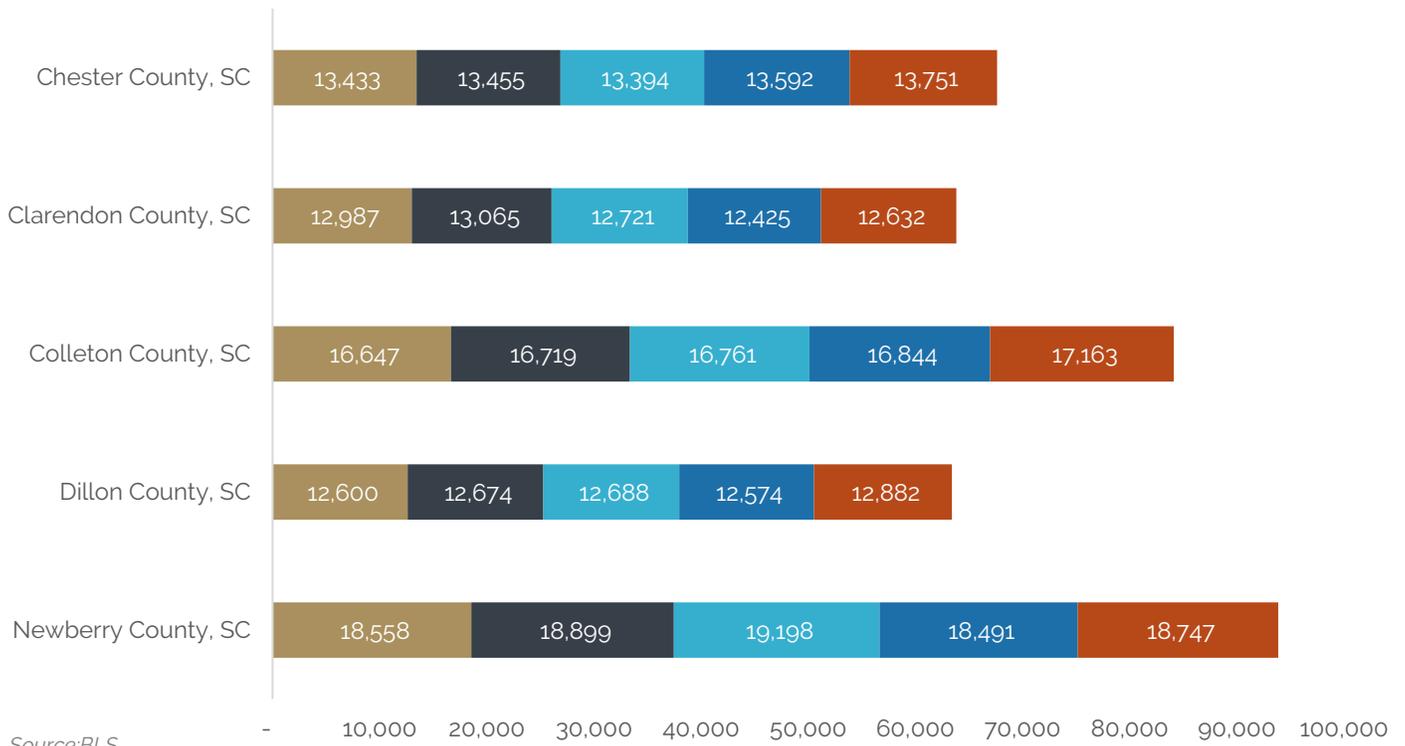
### 2018-2023 Projected % Change Median Home Value Counties



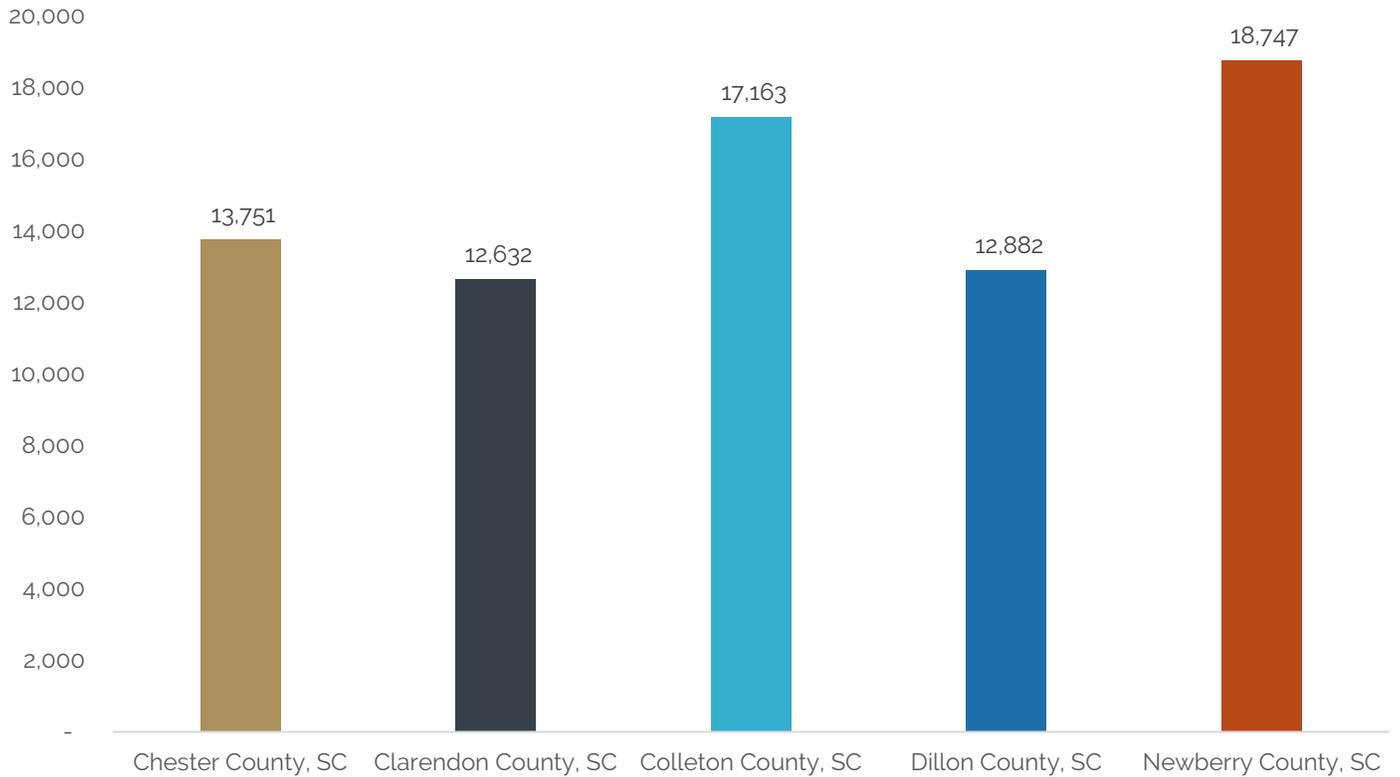
Source:ESRI

## Labor Force

■ 2014   
 ■ 2015   
 ■ 2016   
 ■ 2017   
 ■ December 2018

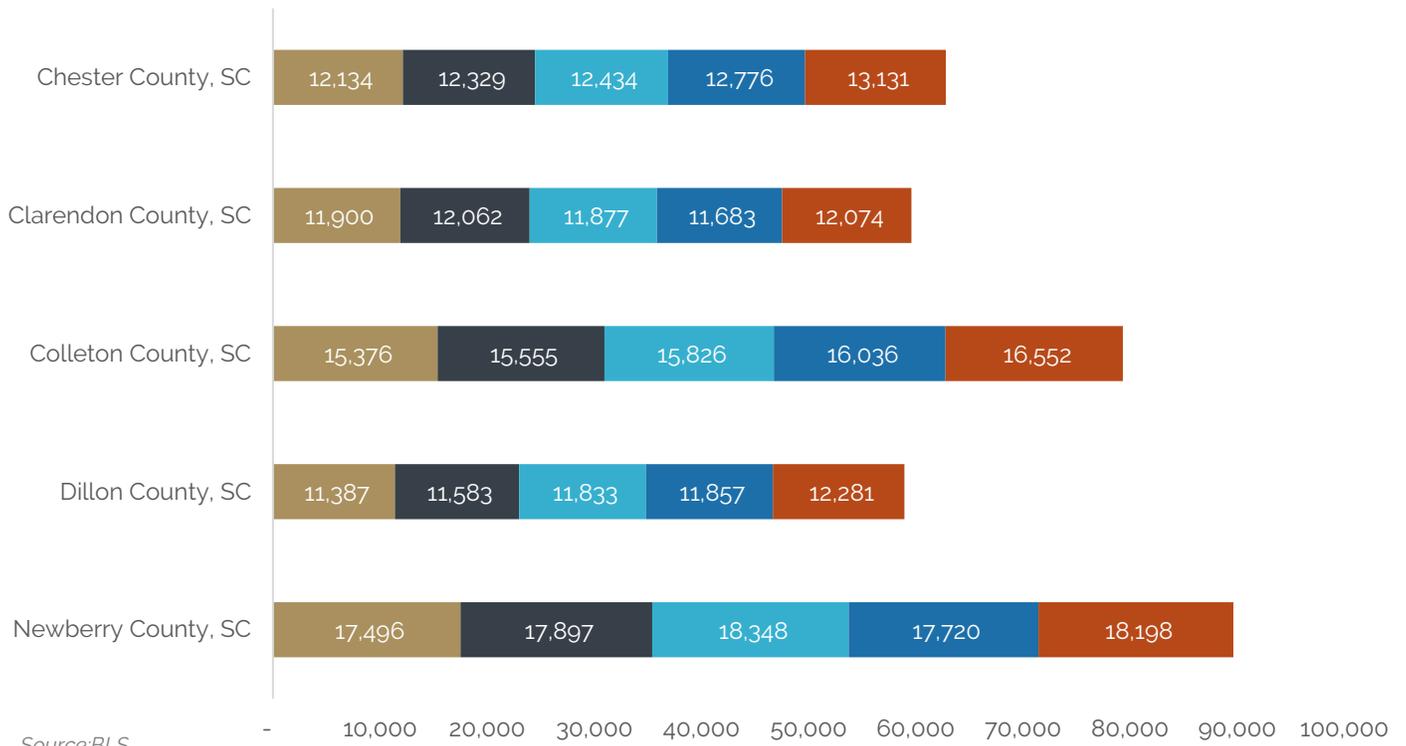


## Labor Force December 2018

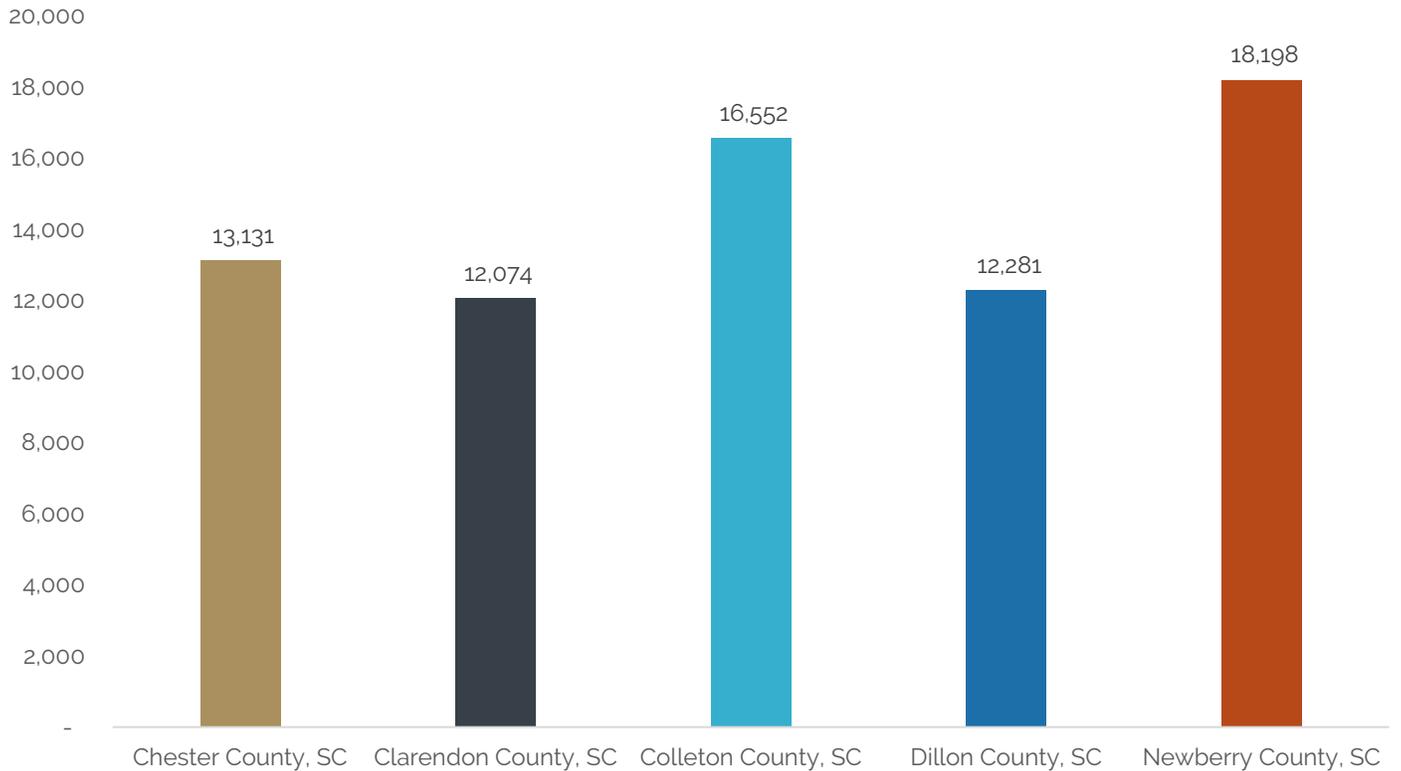


## Employment

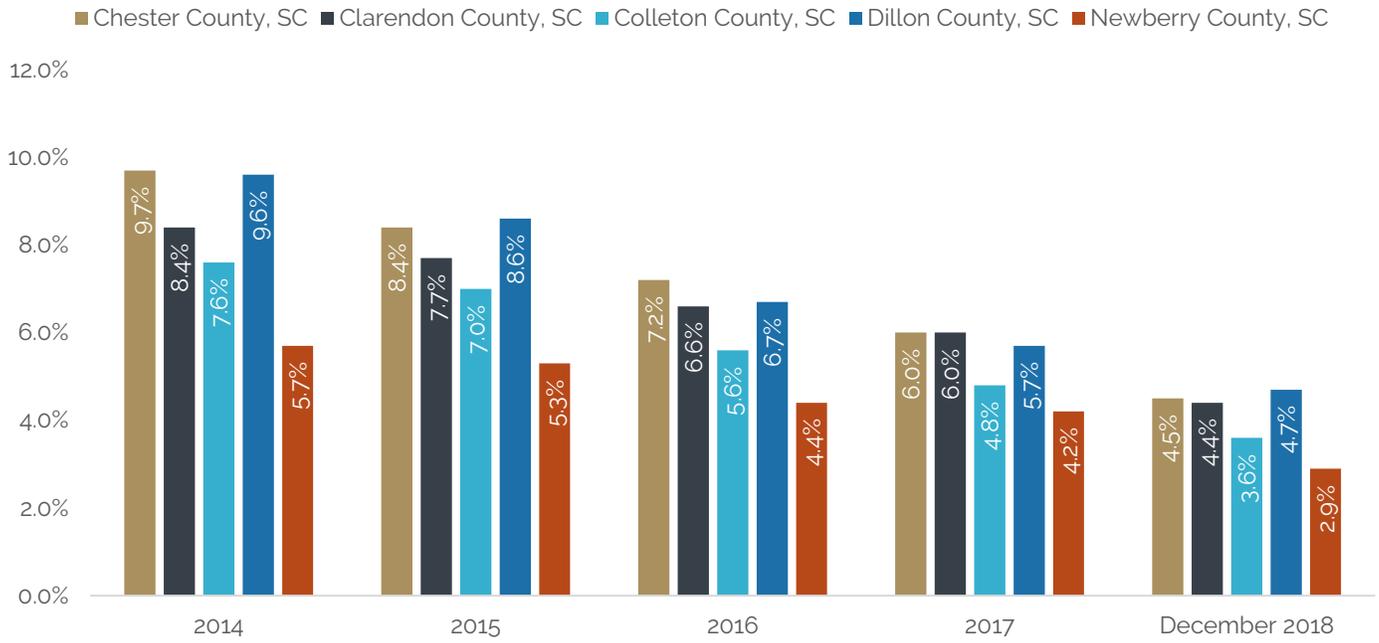
■ 2014   
 ■ 2015   
 ■ 2016   
 ■ 2017   
 ■ December 2018



## Employment December 2018

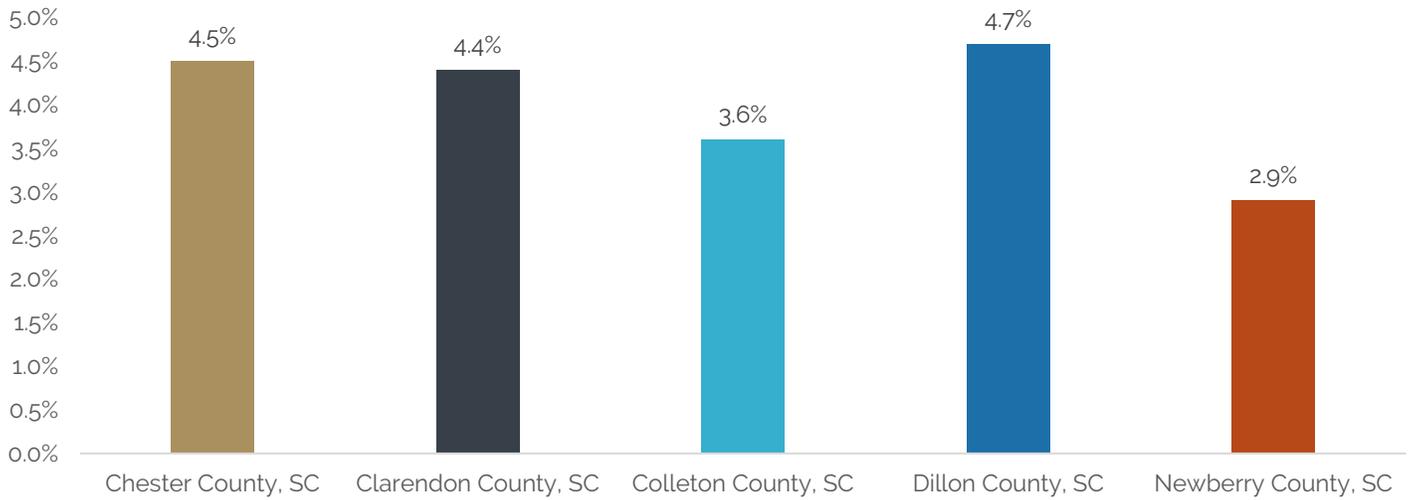


## Unemployment Rate



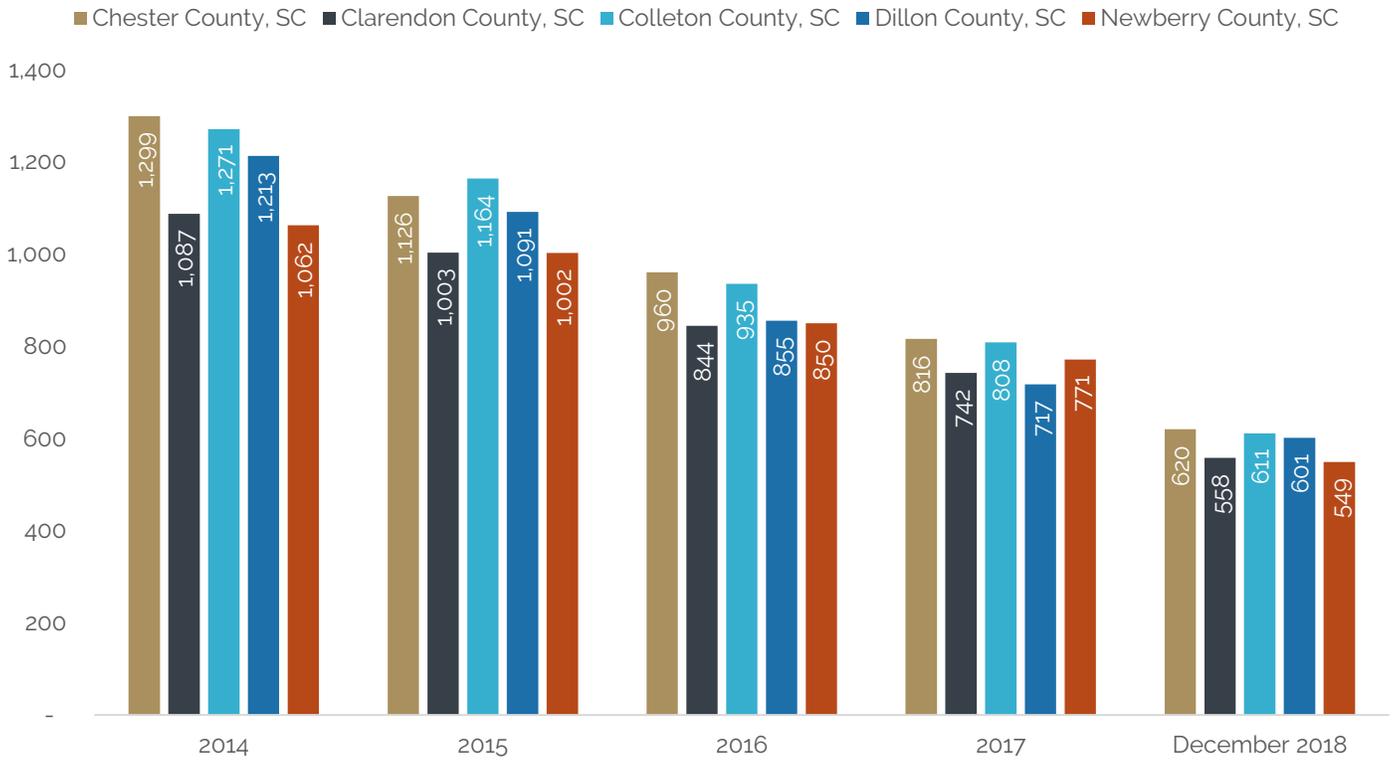
Source: BLS

## Unemployment Rate December 2018



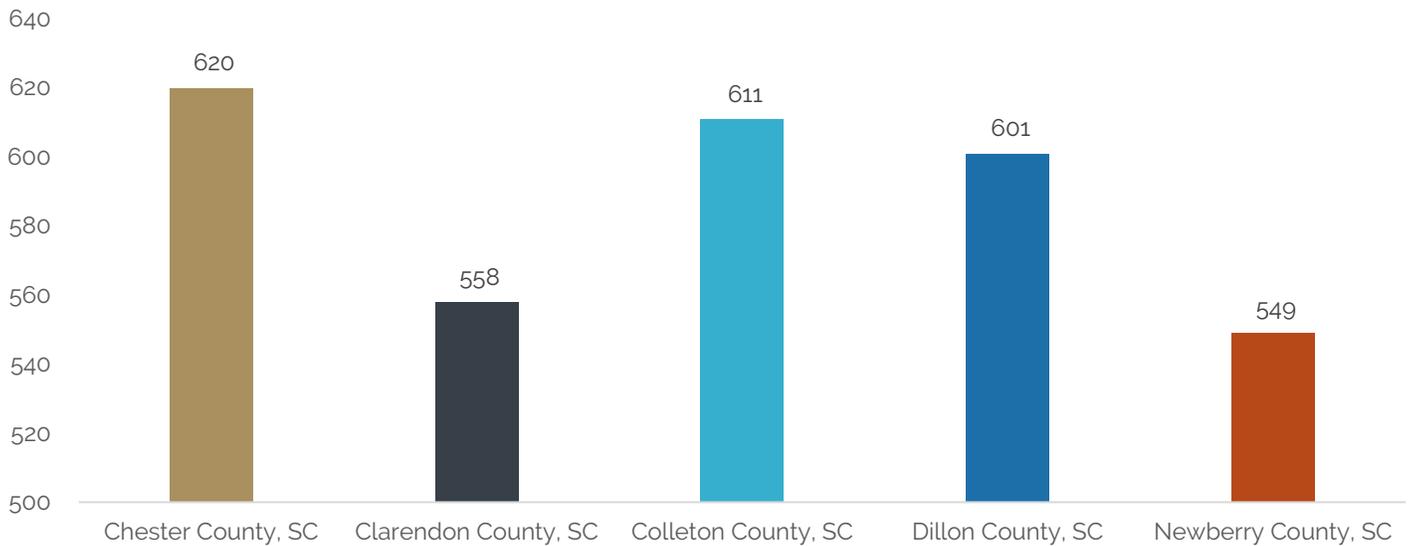
Source: BLS

## Number Unemployed



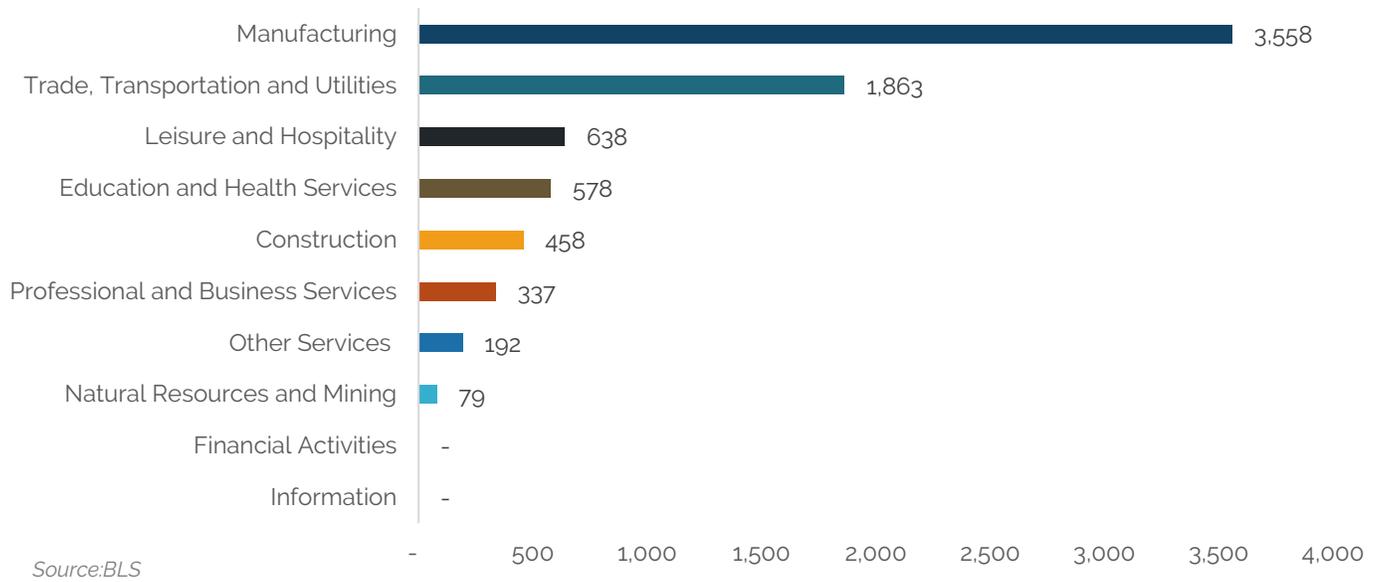
Source: BLS

## Number Unemployed December 2018

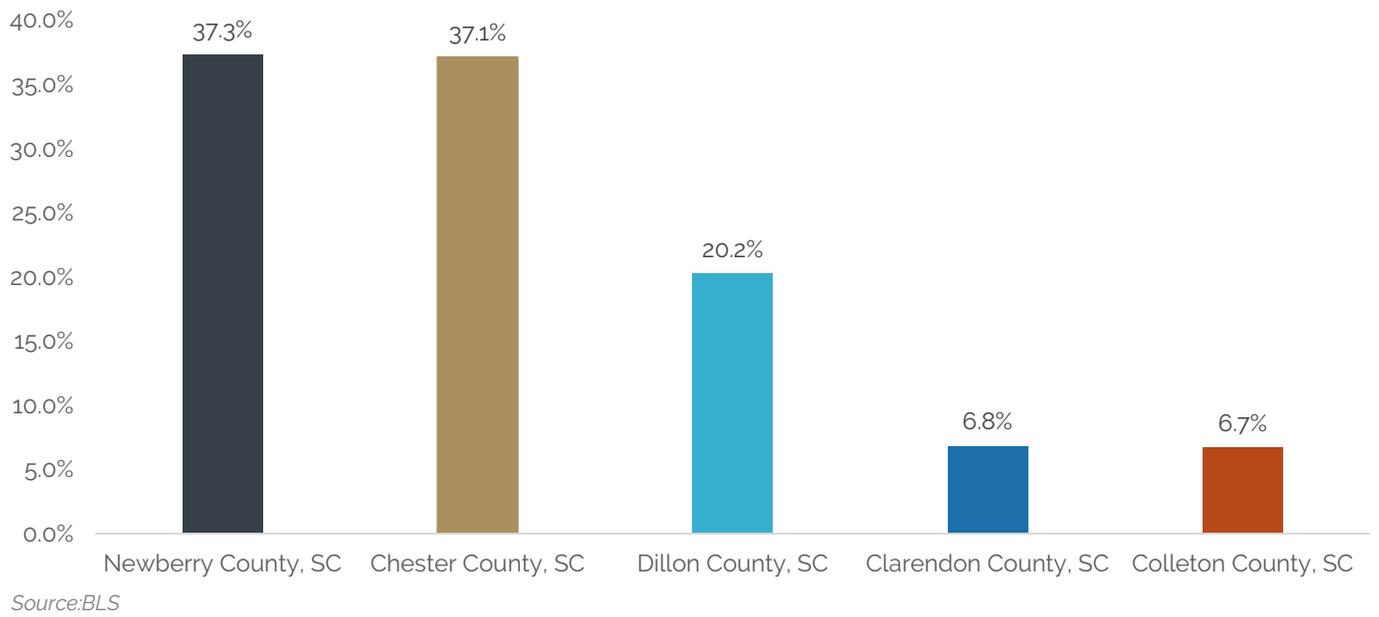


Source: BLS

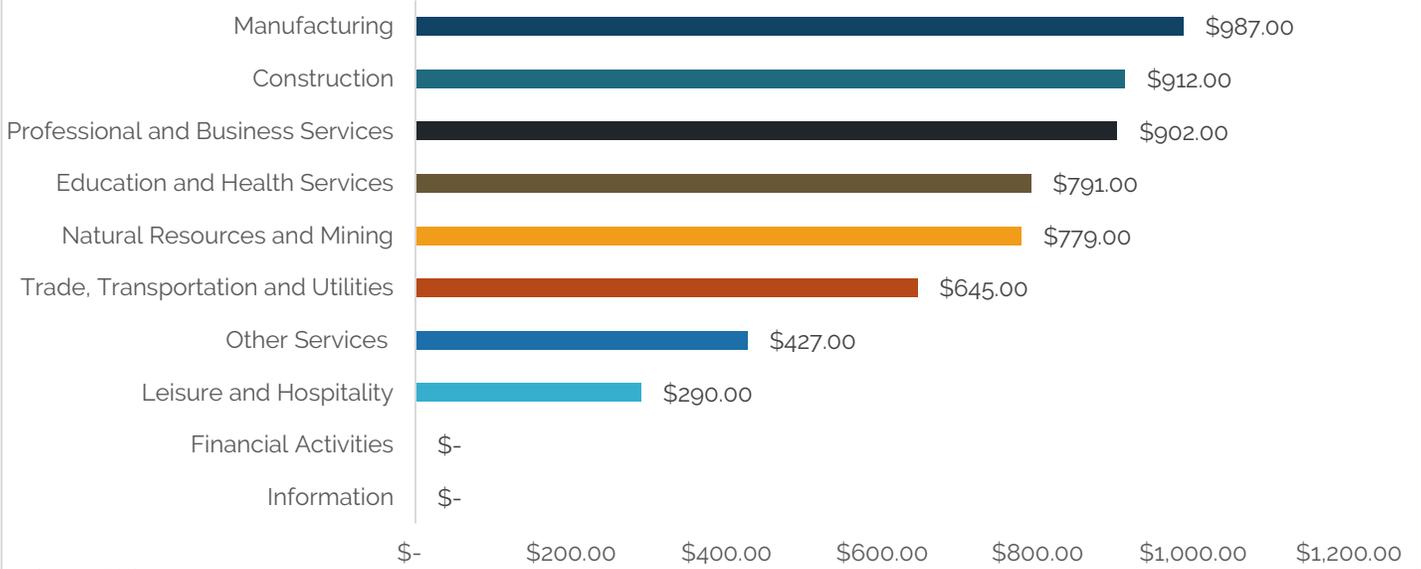
## Chester County Employment by Industry Q3 2018



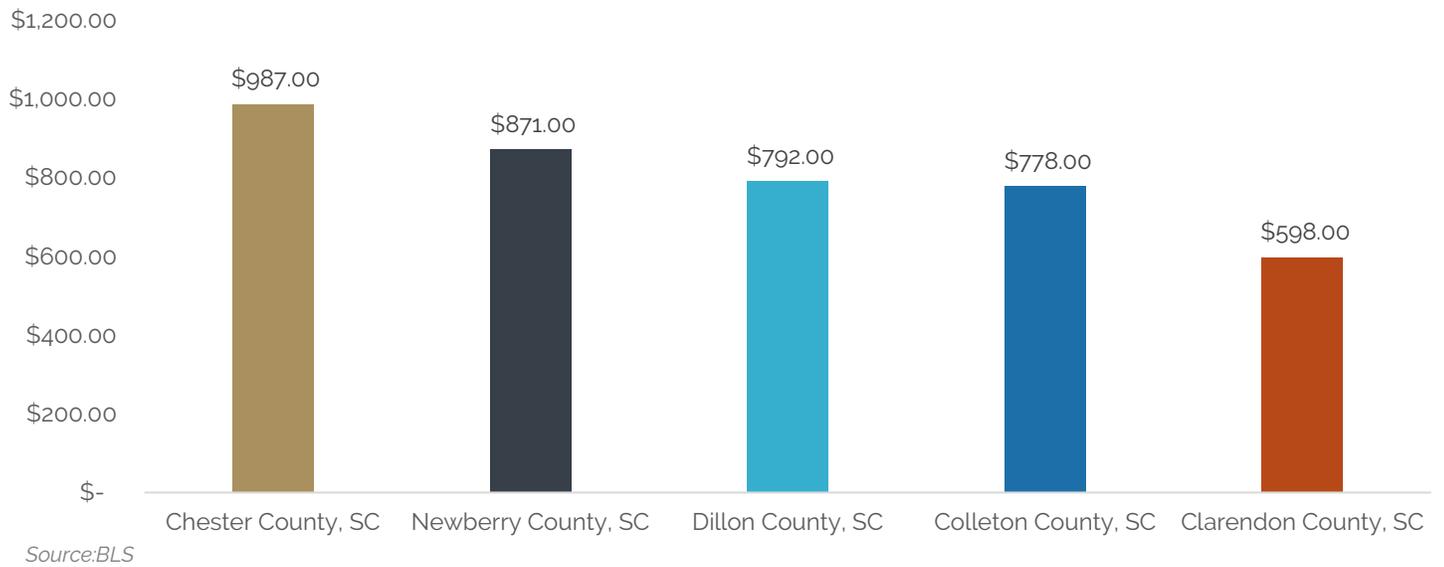
## Manufacturing % of Total Industries Q3 2018



### Chester County Wage by Industry Q3 2018

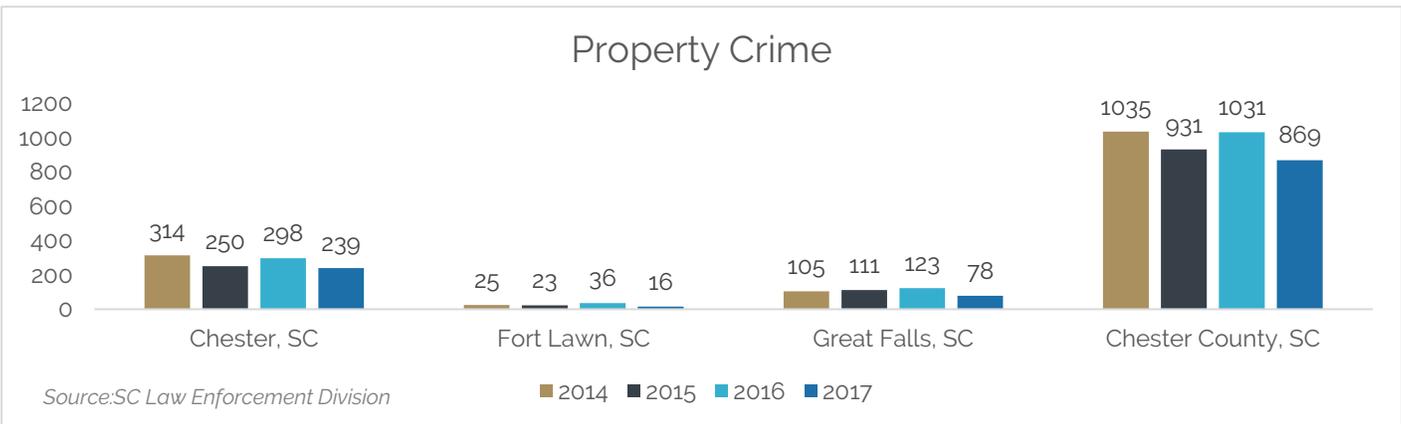
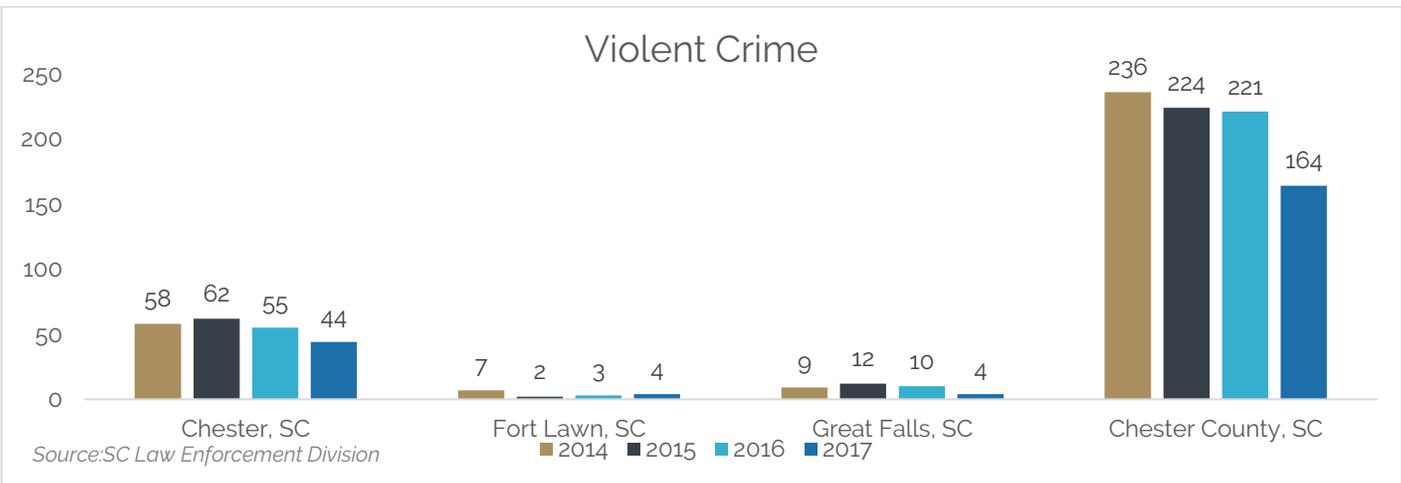
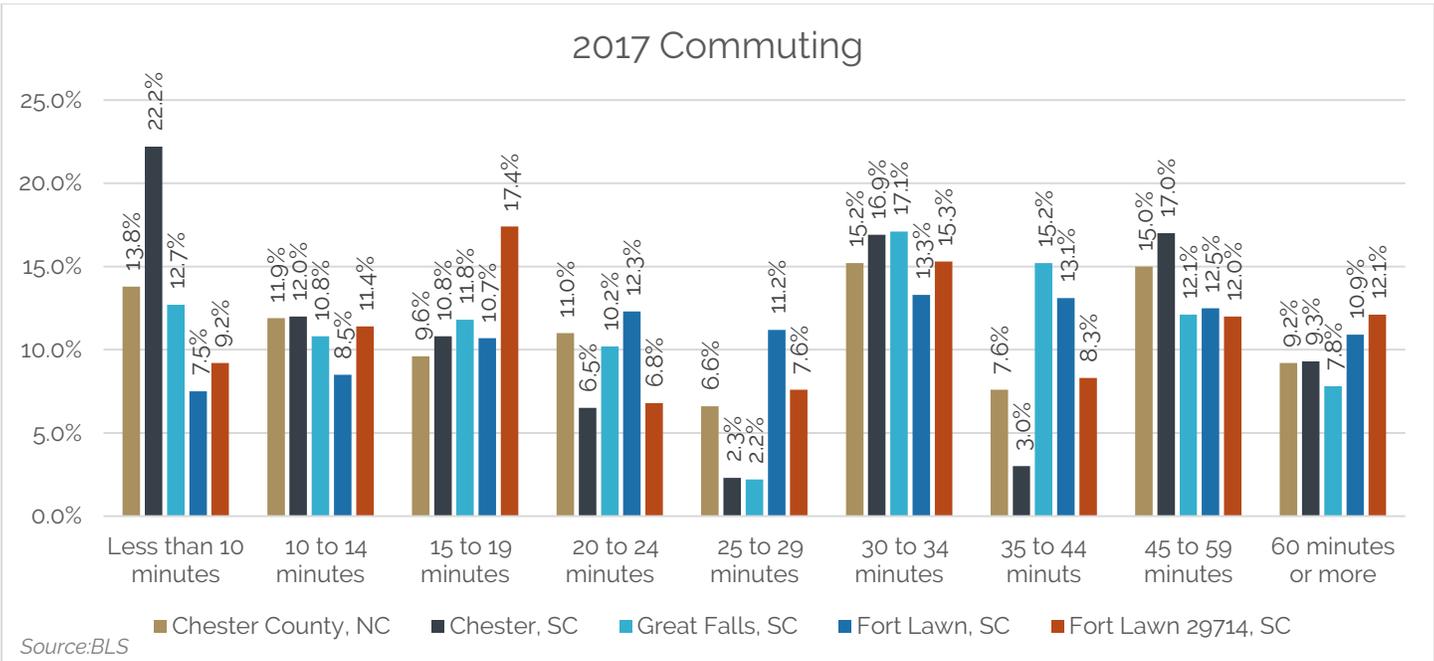


### Manufacturing Wages Q3 2018 By County



<b>Employers - Chester County, SC</b>
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>

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



## Chester County, SC 2013-2017 Establishment Data

<b>Gained</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2017</b>
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%
<b>Lost</b>		
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](http://www.youreconomy.org))

<b>Chester County, SC 2013-2017 Employment Stages</b>				
<b>ESTABLISHMENTS</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>% of TOTAL</b>
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](http://www.youreconomy.org))

# Appendix C: Chester Retail MarketPlace Profile

Summary Demographics						
2018 Population						5,590
2018 Households						2,174
2018 Median Disposable Income						\$23,673
2018 Per Capita Income						\$17,296
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	\$48,103,996	\$65,799,635	-\$17,695,639	-15.5	47
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$43,871,369	\$62,039,766	-\$18,168,397	-17.2	37
Total Food & Drink	722	\$4,232,627	\$3,759,869	\$472,758	5.9	10
2017 Industry Group	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$9,937,183	\$1,975,051	\$7,962,132	66.8	3
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$8,092,042	\$0	\$8,092,042	100.0	0
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$886,138	\$0	\$886,138	100.0	0
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$959,003	\$1,975,051	-\$1,016,048	-34.6	3
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$1,416,579	\$2,156,529	-\$739,950	-20.7	2
Furniture Stores	4421	\$923,478	\$2,156,529	-\$1,233,051	-40.0	2
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$493,101	\$0	\$493,101	100.0	0
Electronics & Appliance Stores	443	\$1,144,278	\$6,189,792	-\$5,045,514	-68.8	1
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$3,014,506	\$1,314,252	\$1,700,254	39.3	4
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$2,859,458	\$1,295,941	\$1,563,517	37.6	3
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$155,048	\$18,311	\$136,737	78.9	1
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$7,762,788	\$3,139,012	\$4,623,776	42.4	4
Grocery Stores	4451	\$7,145,293	\$1,403,419	\$5,741,874	67.2	3
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$272,679	\$0	\$272,679	100.0	0
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$344,816	\$1,735,593	-\$1,390,777	-66.9	1
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$2,947,019	\$1,188,336	\$1,758,683	42.5	1
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$5,450,959	\$19,081,941	-\$13,630,982	-55.6	4
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$1,717,465	\$334,088	\$1,383,377	67.4	2
Clothing Stores	4481	\$1,143,728	\$267,921	\$875,807	62.0	1
Shoe Stores	4482	\$280,439	\$0	\$280,439	100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$293,298	\$66,167	\$227,131	63.2	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$1,117,719	\$0	\$1,117,719	100.0	0
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$955,239	\$0	\$955,239	100.0	0
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$162,480	\$0	\$162,480	100.0	0
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$6,940,422	\$25,533,183	-\$18,592,761	-57.3	5
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	4521	\$5,025,086	\$24,402,729	-\$19,377,643	-65.8	2
Other General Merchandise Stores	4529	\$1,915,336	\$1,130,454	\$784,882	25.8	3
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$1,746,004	\$906,778	\$839,226	31.6	10
Florists	4531	\$52,620	\$107,258	-\$54,638	-34.2	3
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$331,397	\$114,447	\$216,950	48.7	2
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$183,424	\$538,444	-\$355,020	-49.2	3
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$1,178,563	\$146,629	\$1,031,934	77.9	2
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$676,447	\$220,804	\$455,643	50.8	1
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$447,687	\$0	\$447,687	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$27,247	\$0	\$27,247	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$201,513	\$220,804	-\$19,291	-4.6	1
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$4,232,627	\$3,759,869	\$472,758	5.9	10
Special Food Services	7223	\$59,479	\$109,999	-\$50,520	-29.8	1
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$253,129	\$0	\$253,129	100.0	0
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	7225	\$3,920,019	\$3,649,870	\$270,149	3.6	9

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 and Chester 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.

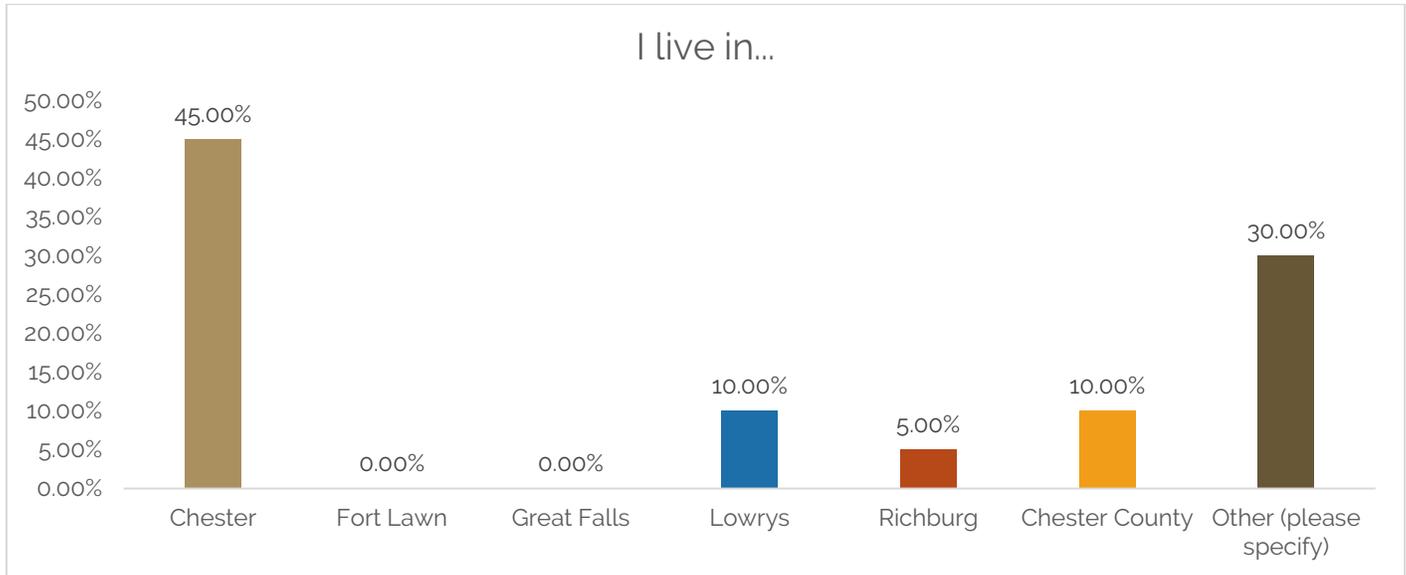
Citizens want to see the economic development program focus on education and workforce development, new business recruitment, existing business support, and small business development. The business community identified the same priorities.

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.

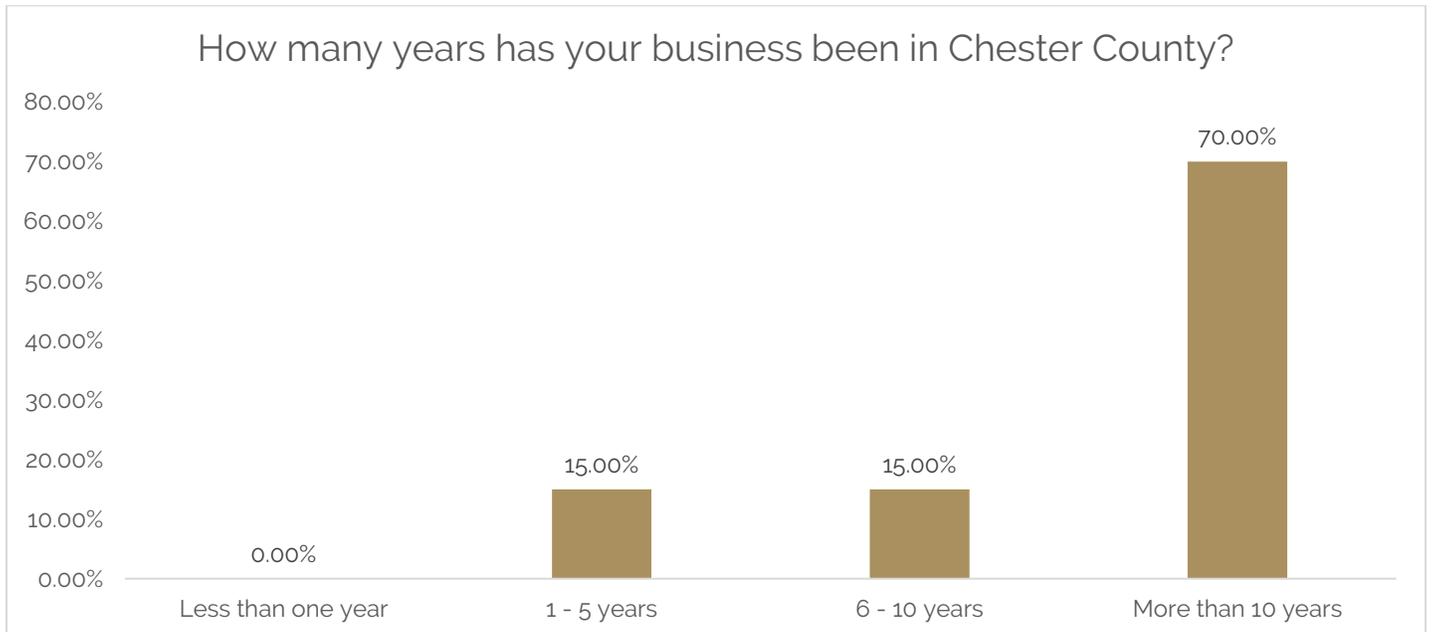
Education, workforce development, local jobs, good paying jobs, and housing are the outcomes citizens want to see out of economic development. Chester and Great Falls placed 'attraction of new residents' in their top list of economic development goals. Businesses want to see increased tax based.

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

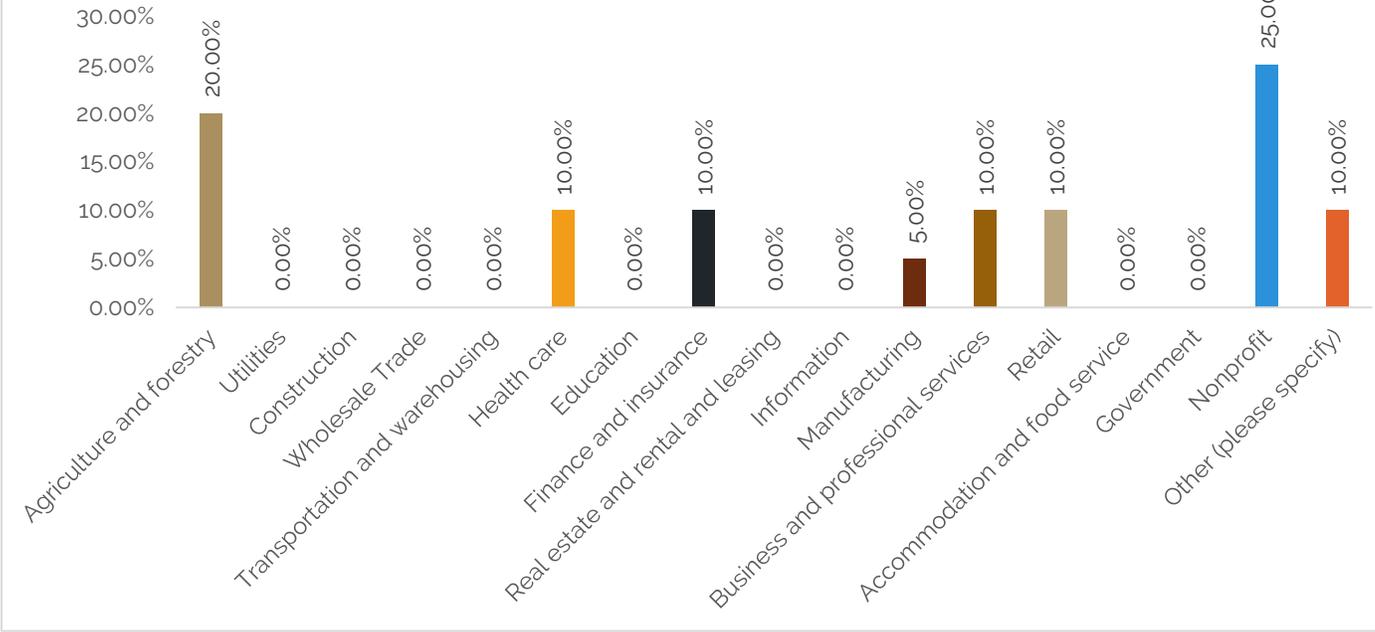
# Chester County Business Survey-20 Responses



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

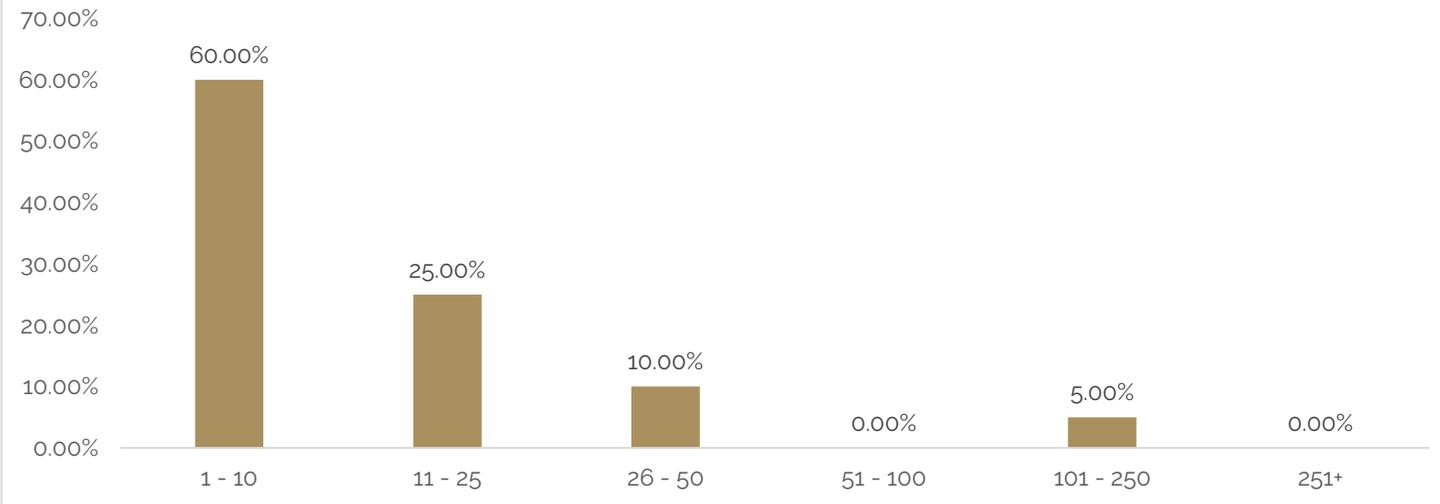


### What business sector most closely matches your business?

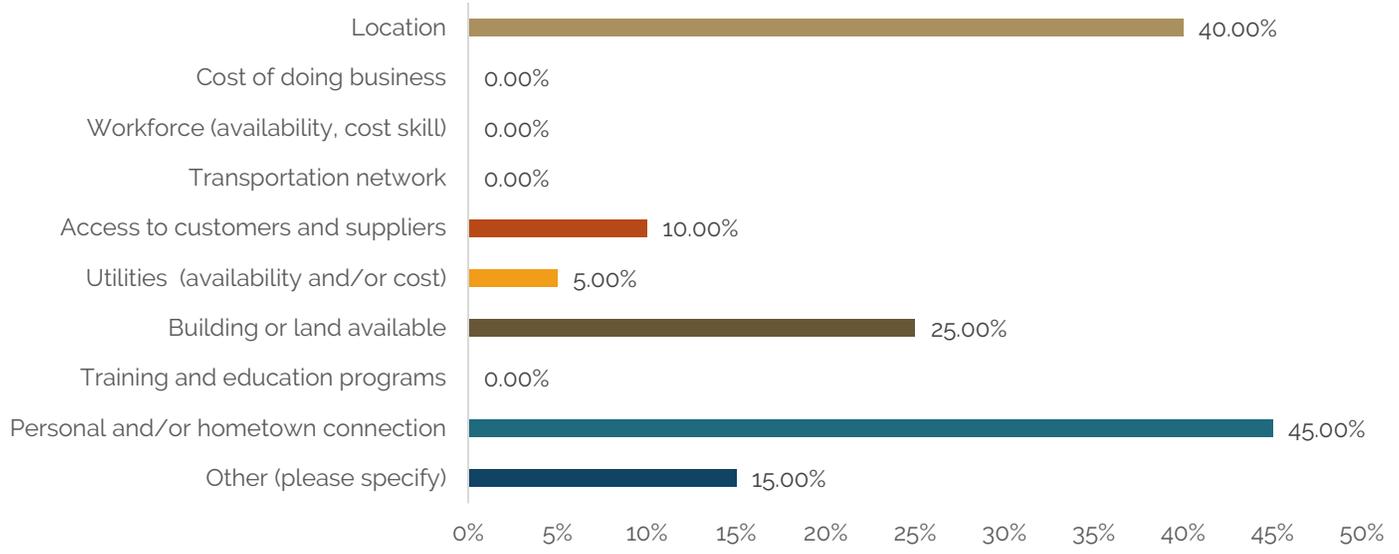


Other (please specify)
Legal
auto body repair

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



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



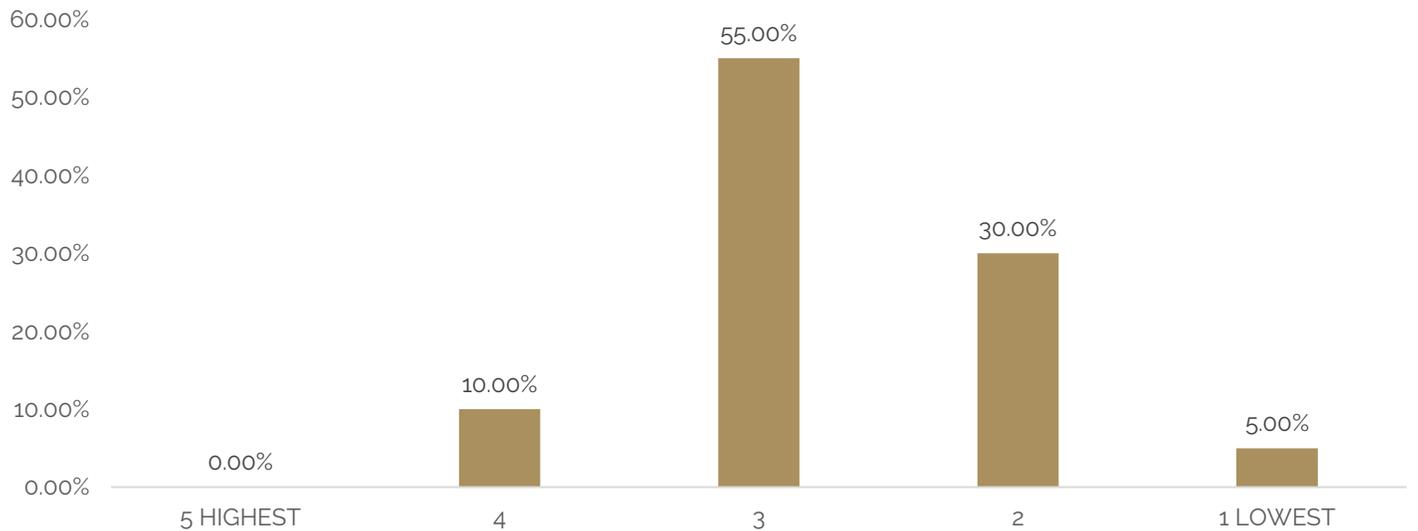
Other (please specify)

NEED

healthcare need

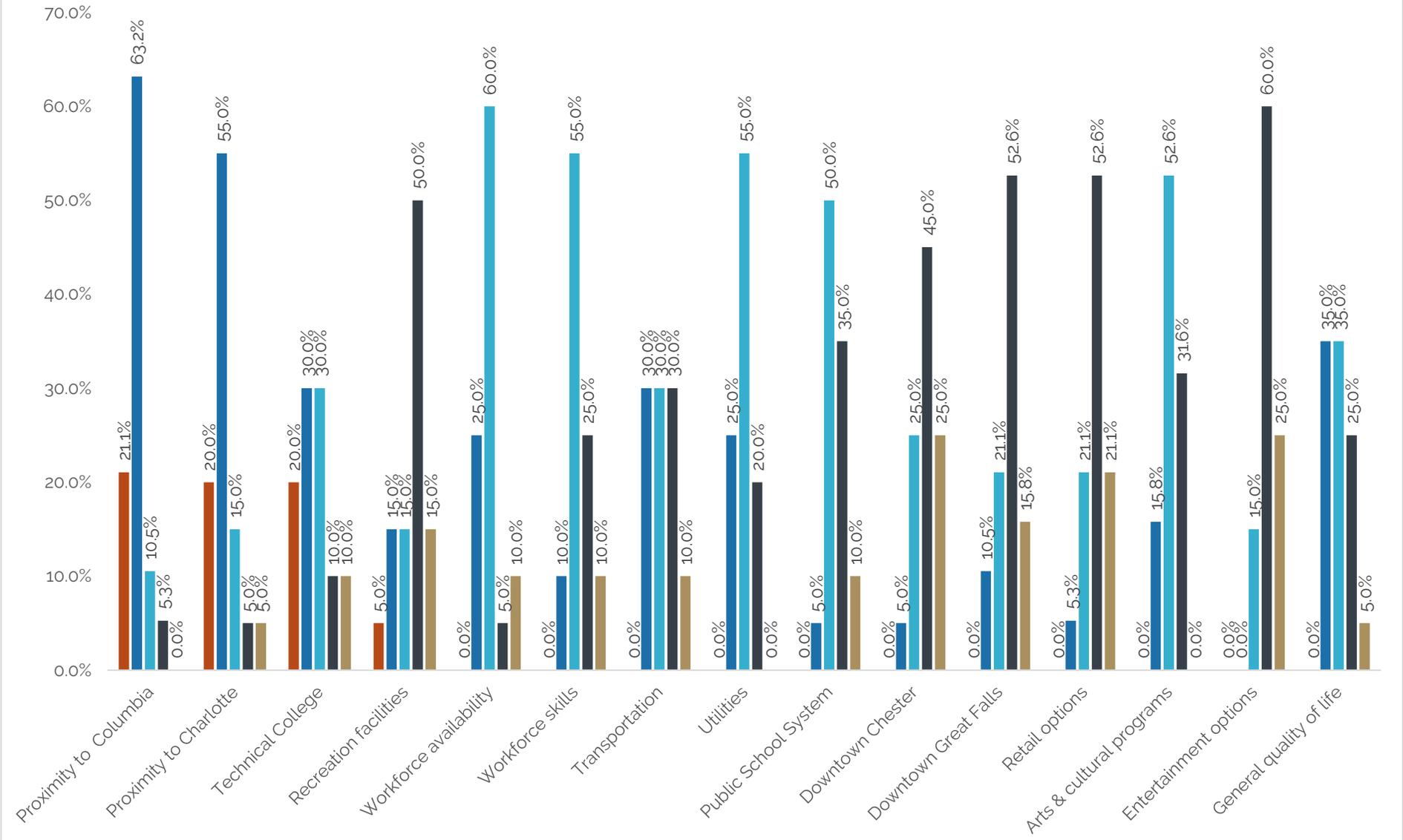
Market Opportunity

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

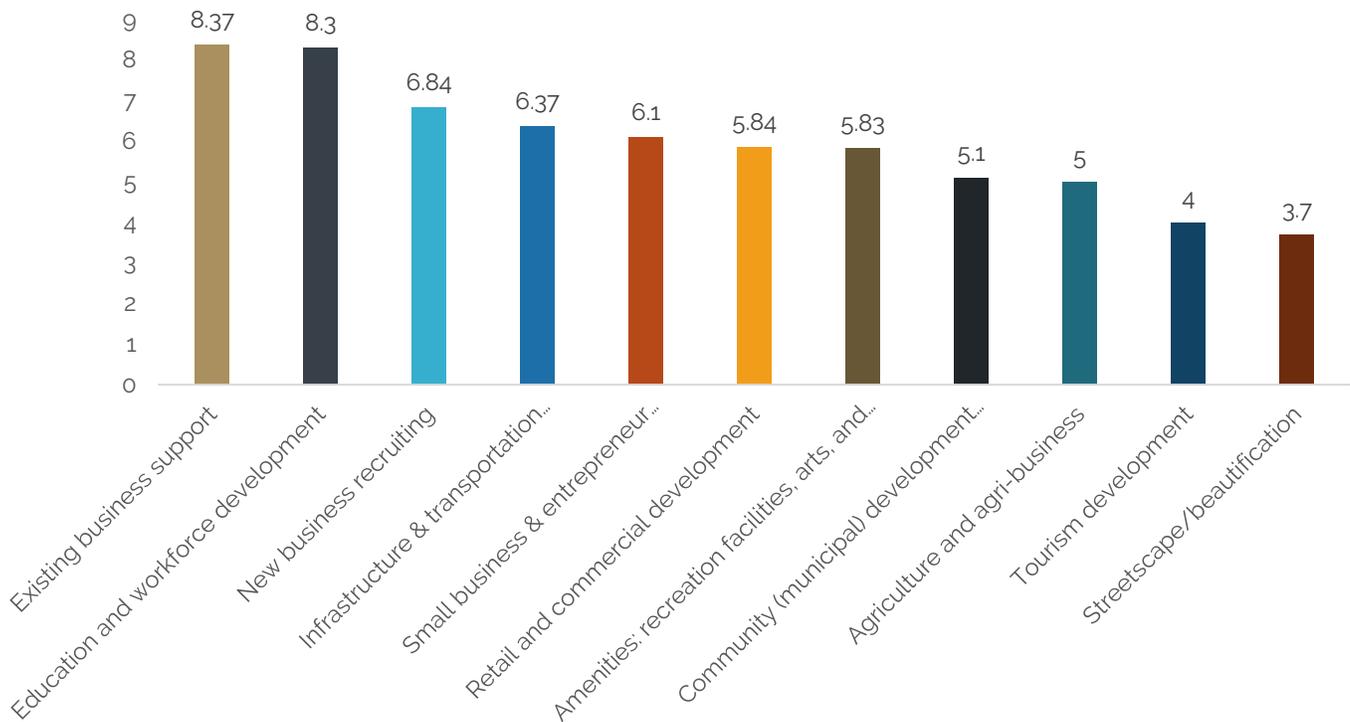


## How satisfied are you with the following in Chester County?

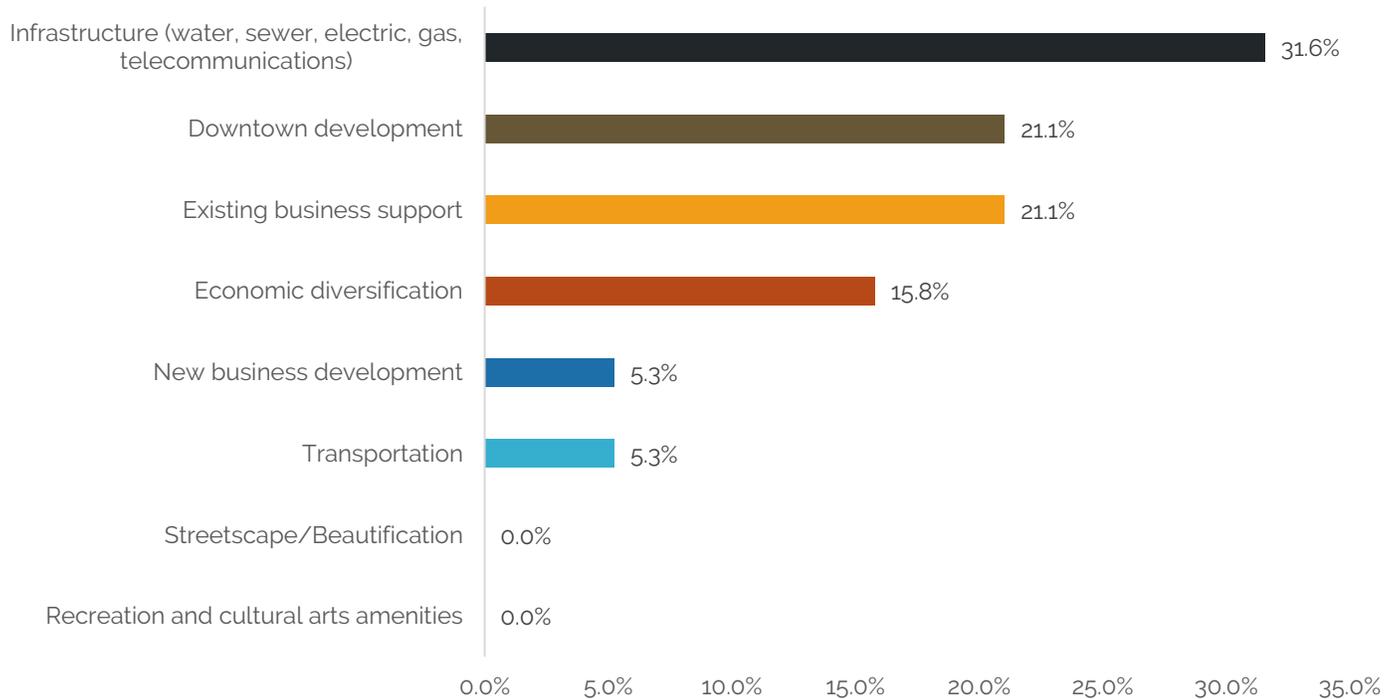
■ Very satisfied  
 ■ Satisfied  
 ■ Somewhat satisfied  
 ■ Unsatisfied  
 ■ Very unsatisfied



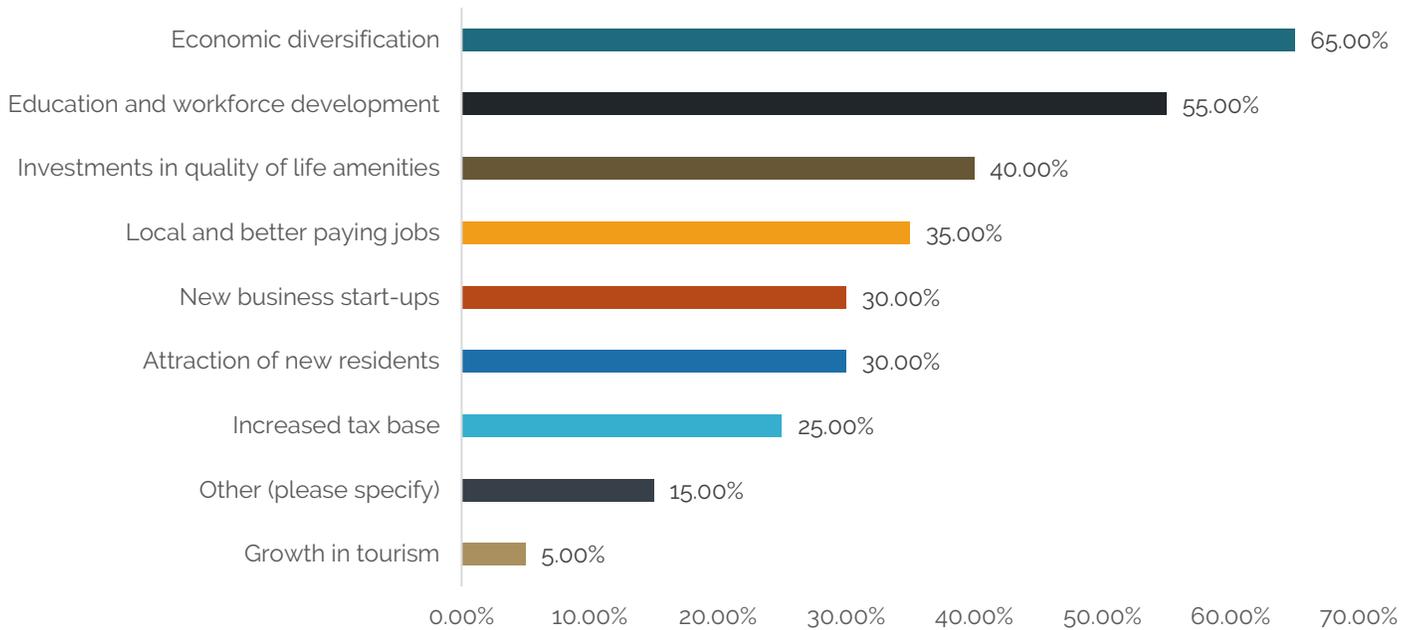
Rank order the following economic development strategies in order of importance with 1 being the most important.



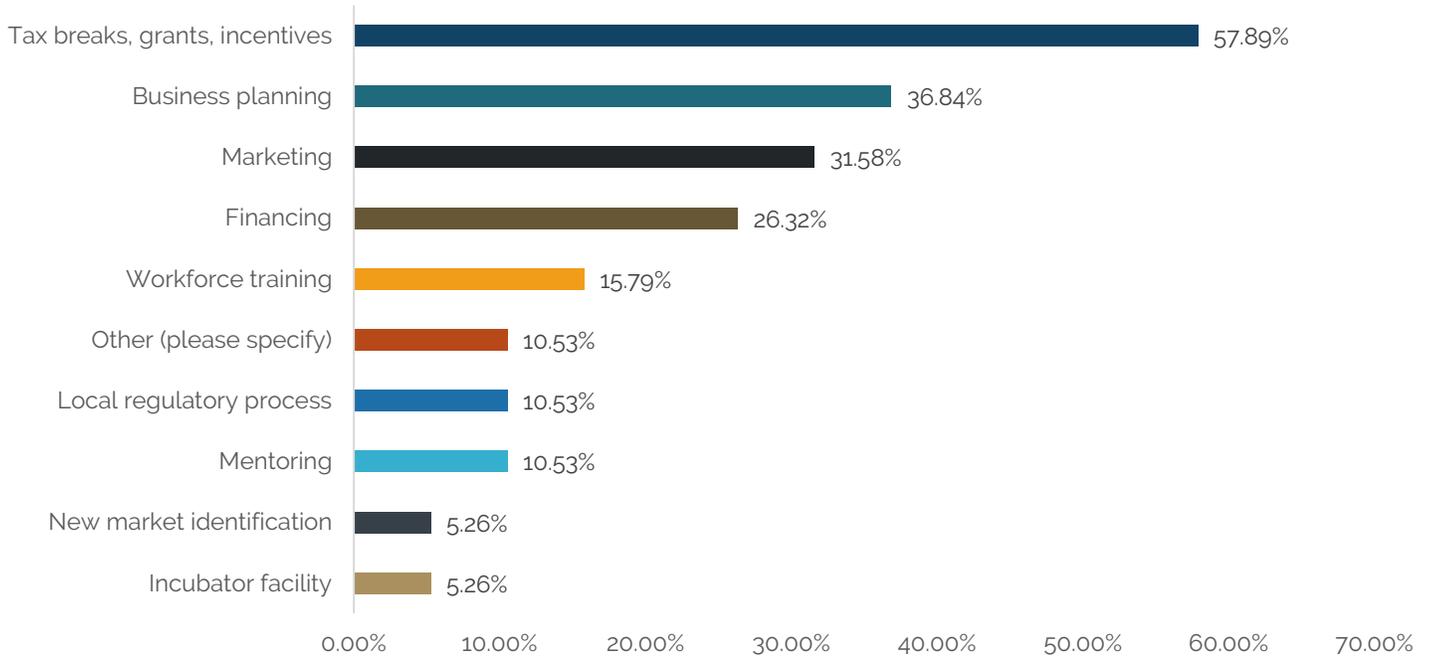
What is the most important investment Chester County could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



### 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?

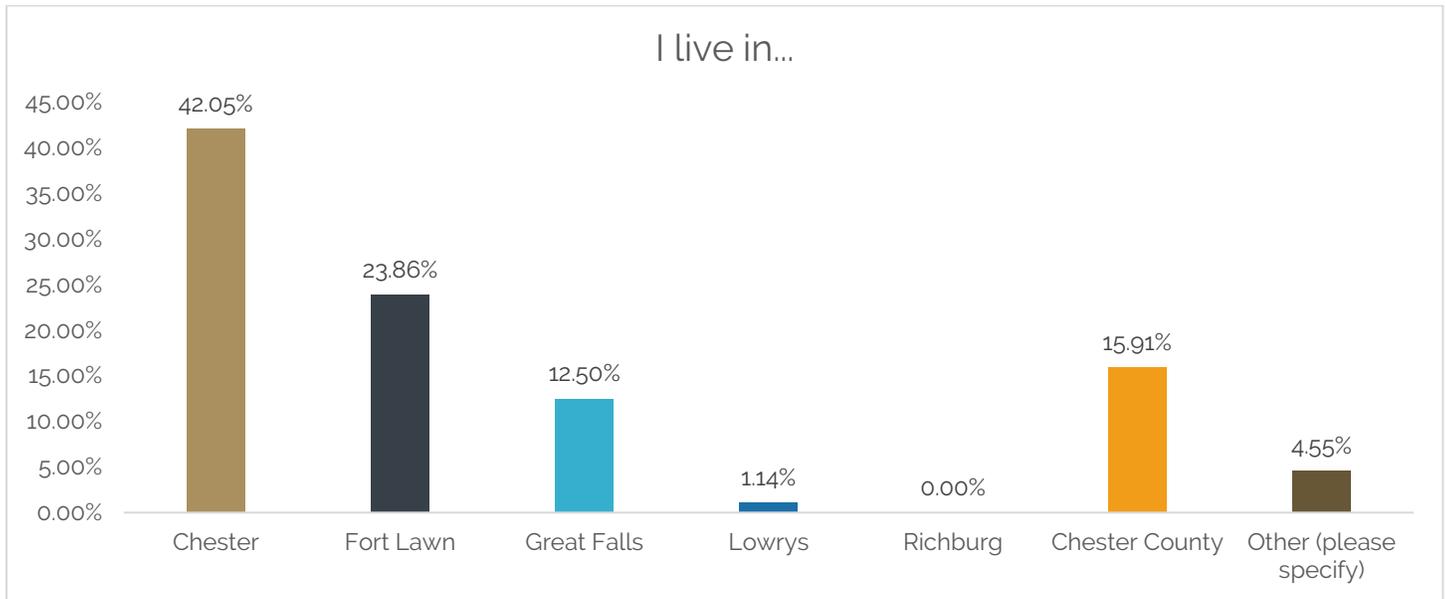


#### Other (please specify)

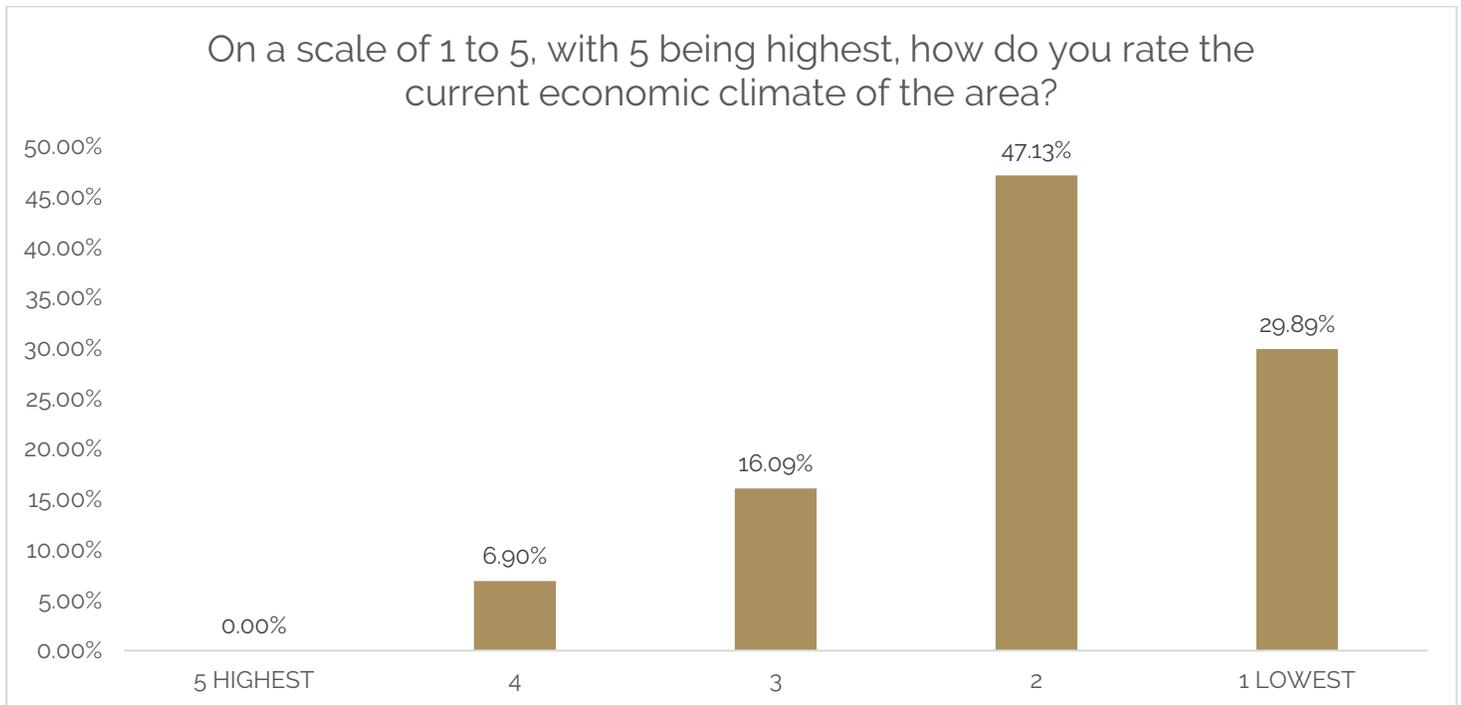
Help to walk through the regulatory process

Strategic Plan

# Chester County Community Survey-All Results-88 Responses



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

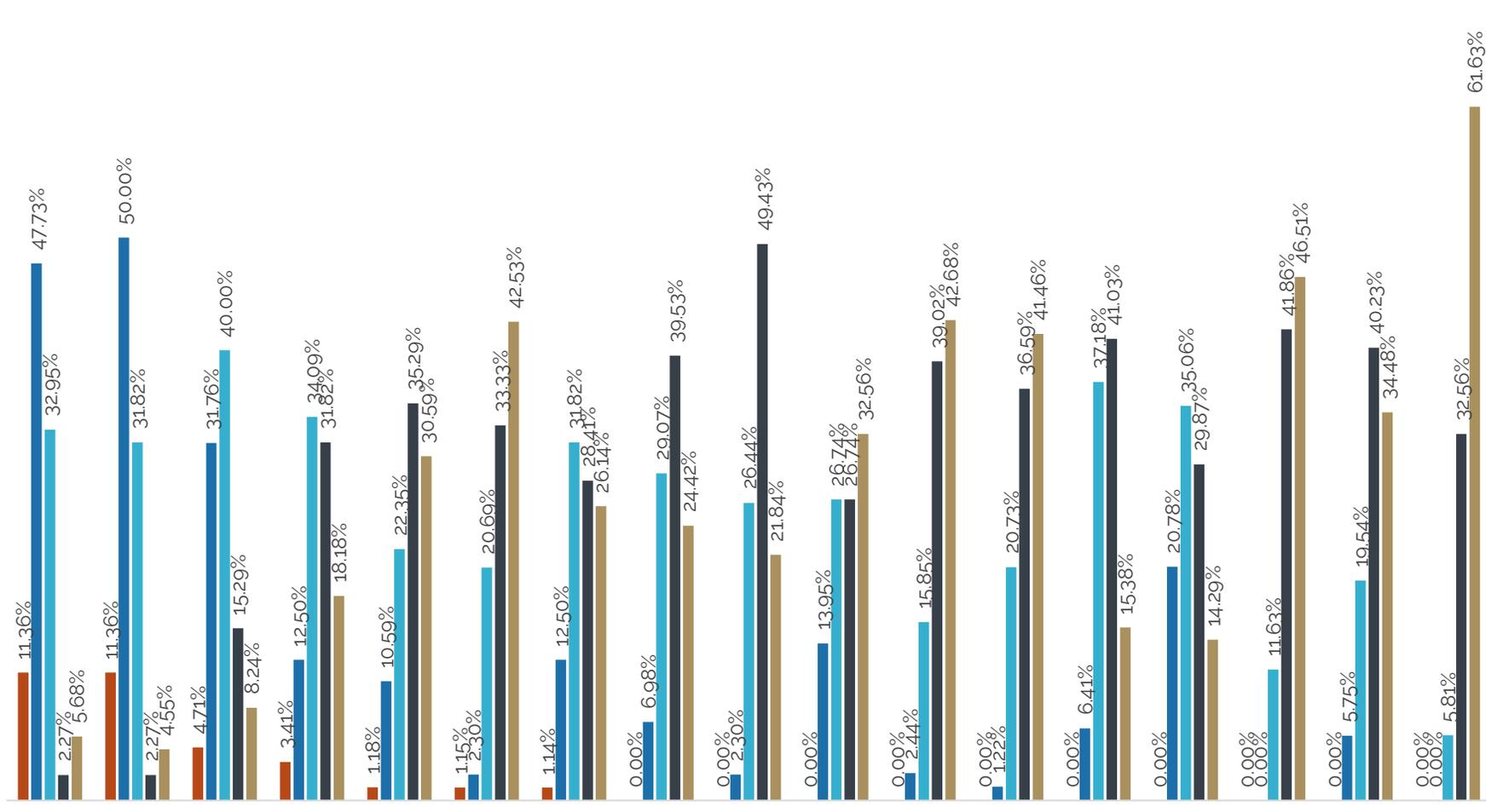


# How satisfied are you with the following in your community?

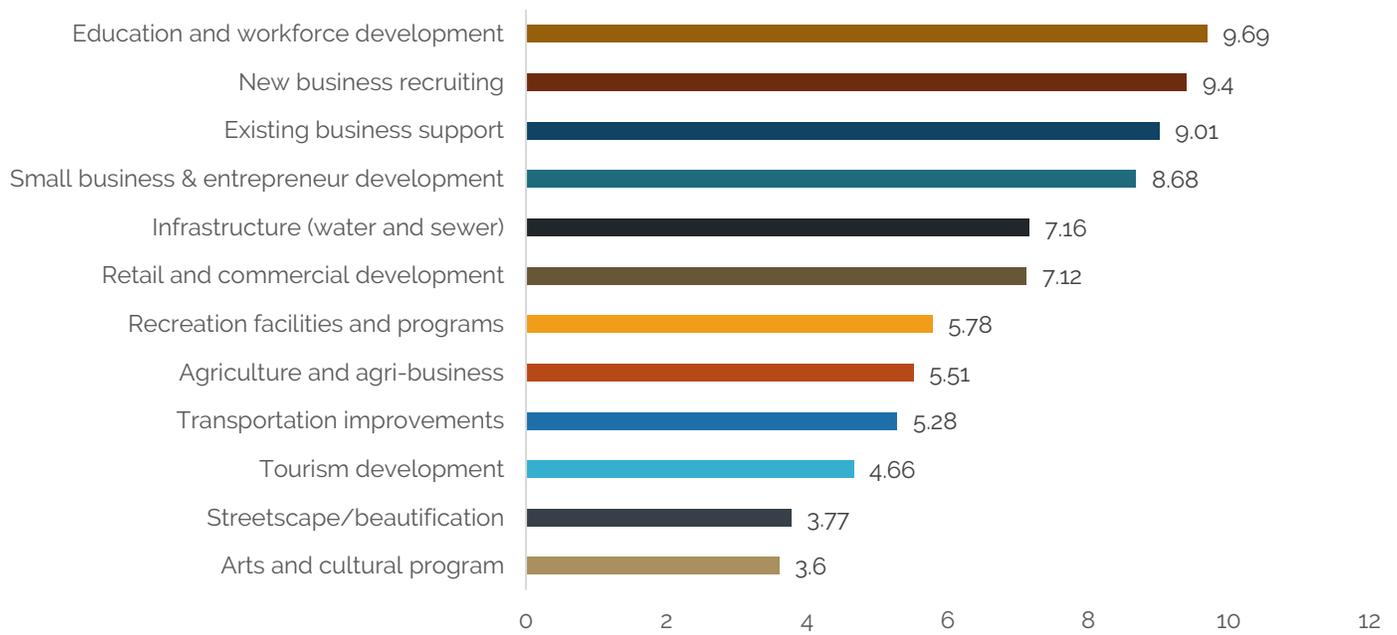
■ Very Satisfied  
 ■ Satisfied  
 ■ Somewhat satisfied  
 ■ Unsatisfied  
 ■ Very unsatisfied

70.00%  
60.00%  
50.00%  
40.00%  
30.00%  
20.00%  
10.00%  
0.00%

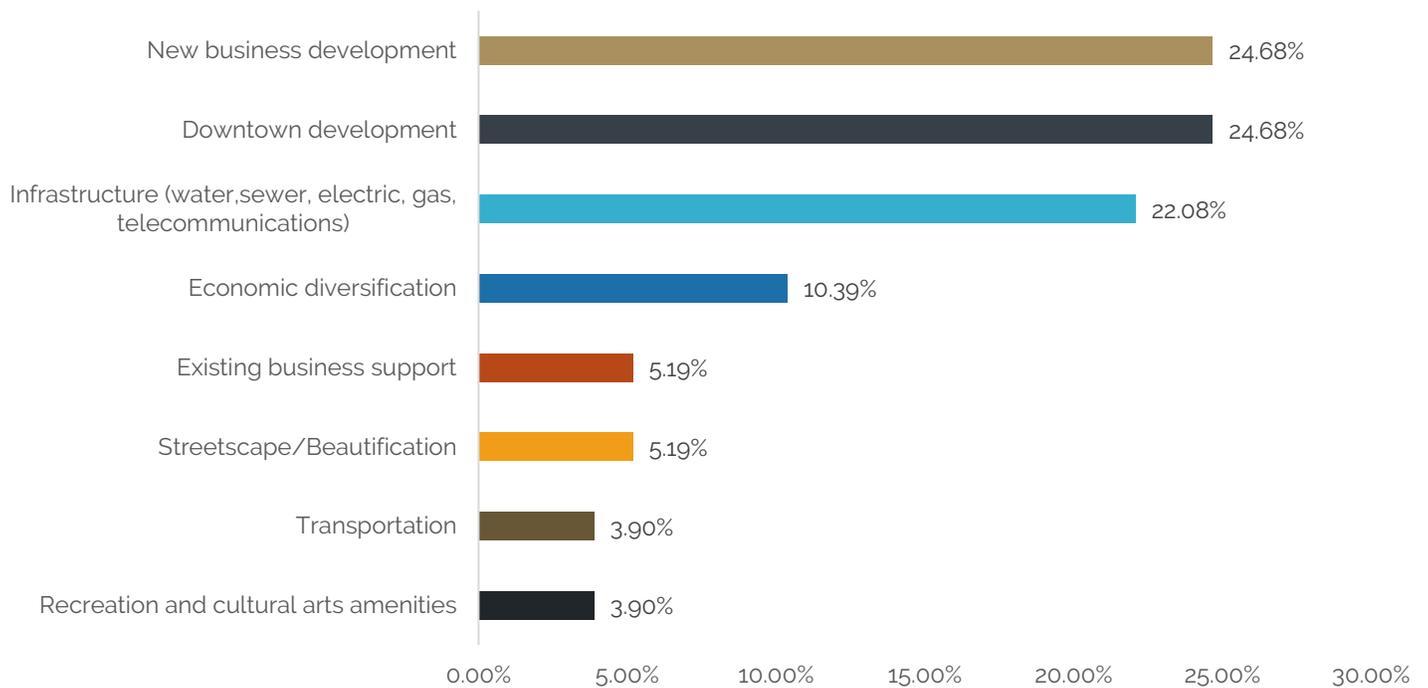
Proximity to Charlotte  
 Proximity to Columbia  
 Technical College  
 General quality of life  
 Transportation  
 Recreation facilities  
 Utilities  
 Workforce availability  
 Workforce skills  
 Public School System  
 Downtown Chester  
 Downtown Great Falls  
 Downtown Fort Lawn  
 Downtown Richburg  
 Retail options  
 Arts & cultural programs  
 Entertainment options



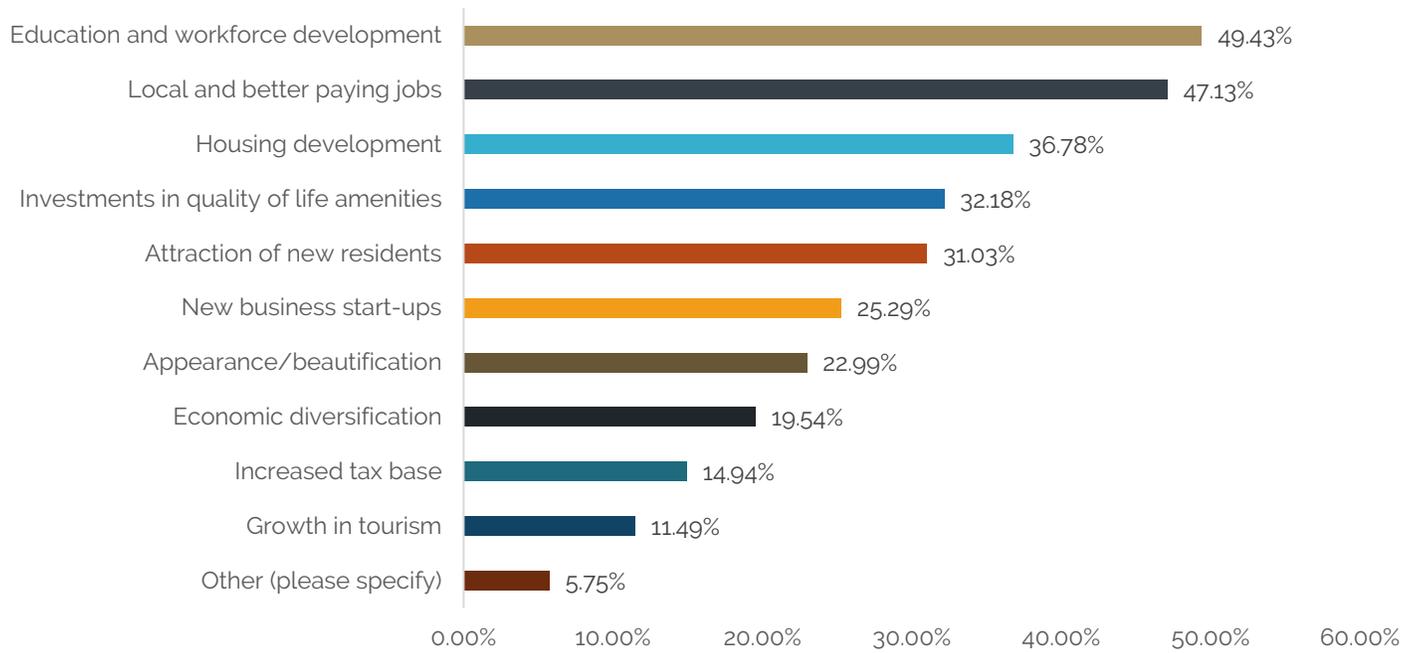
Rank order the following economic development strategies in order of importance with 1 being the most important.



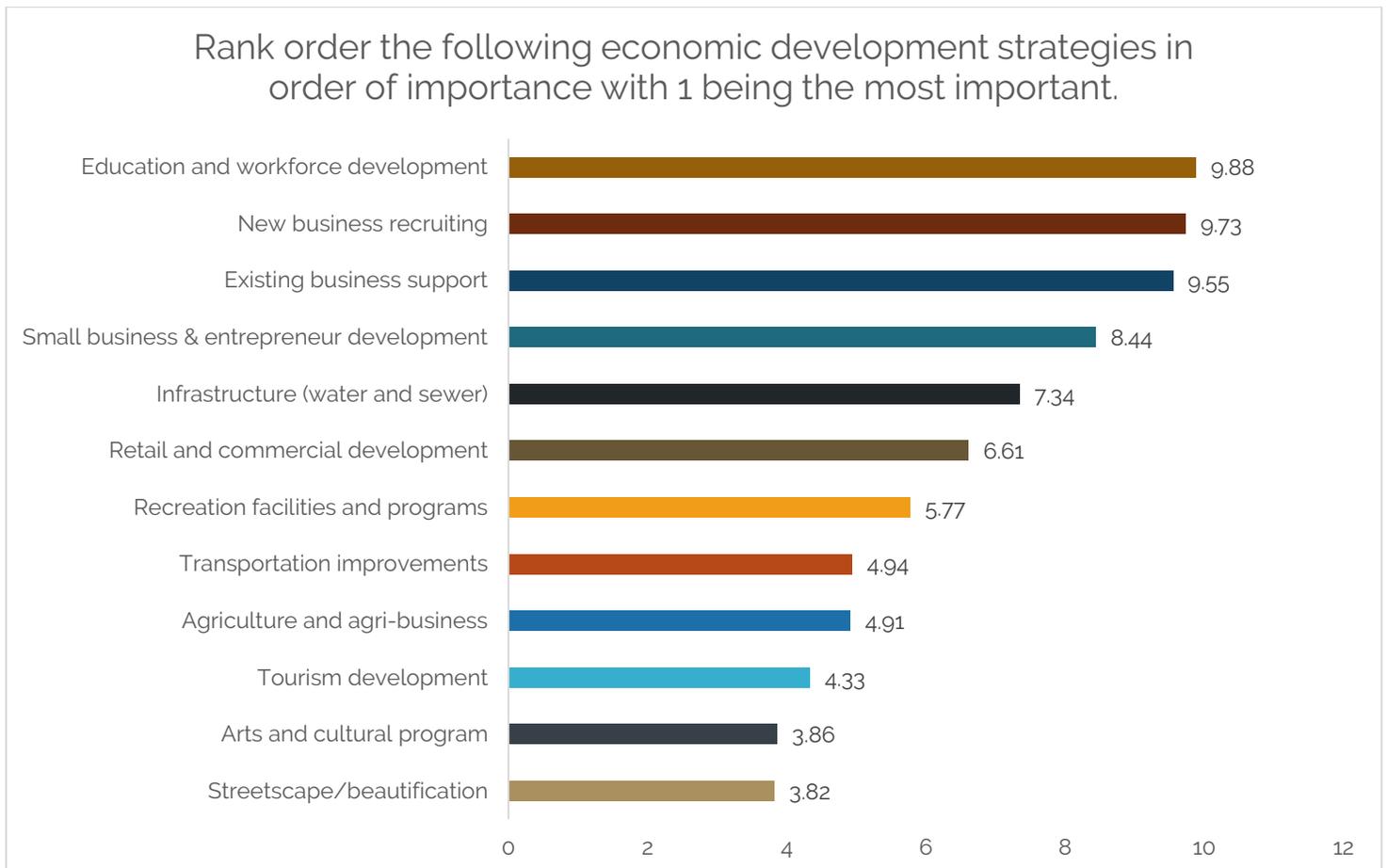
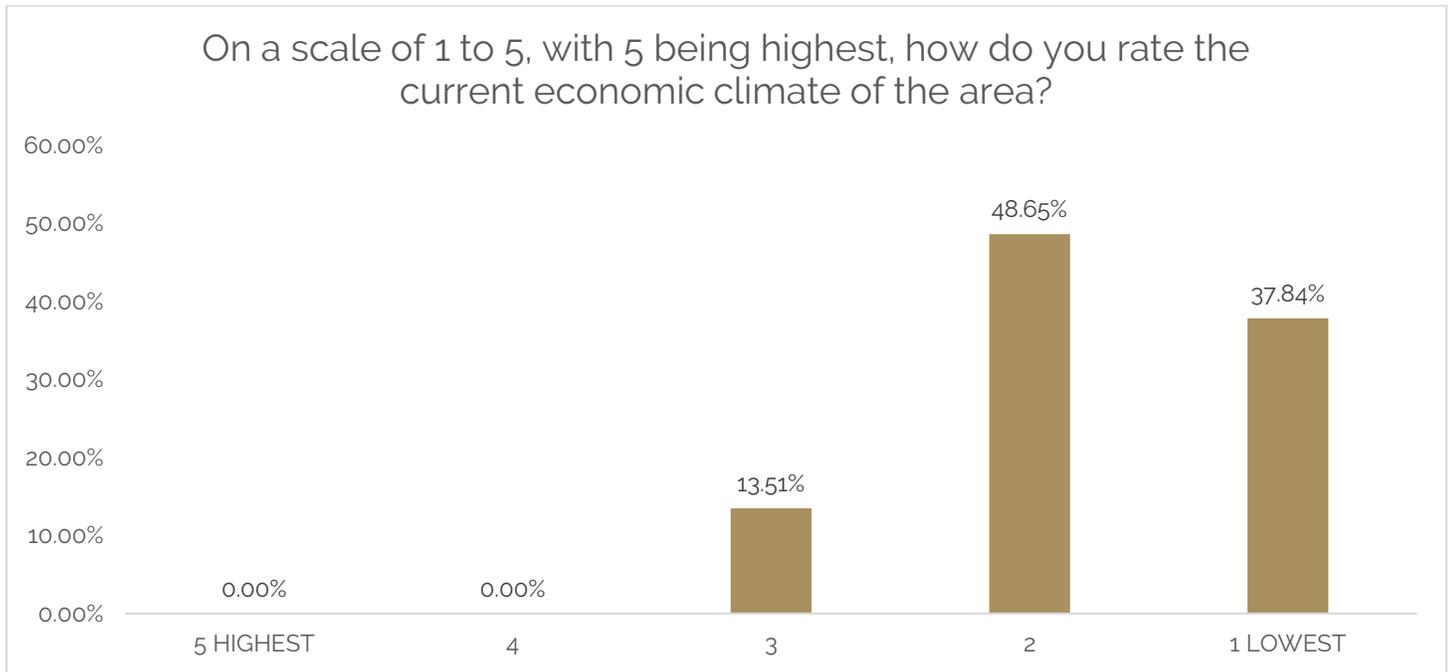
What is the most important investment your city/town or the county could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



## What should be the top goals of economic development?

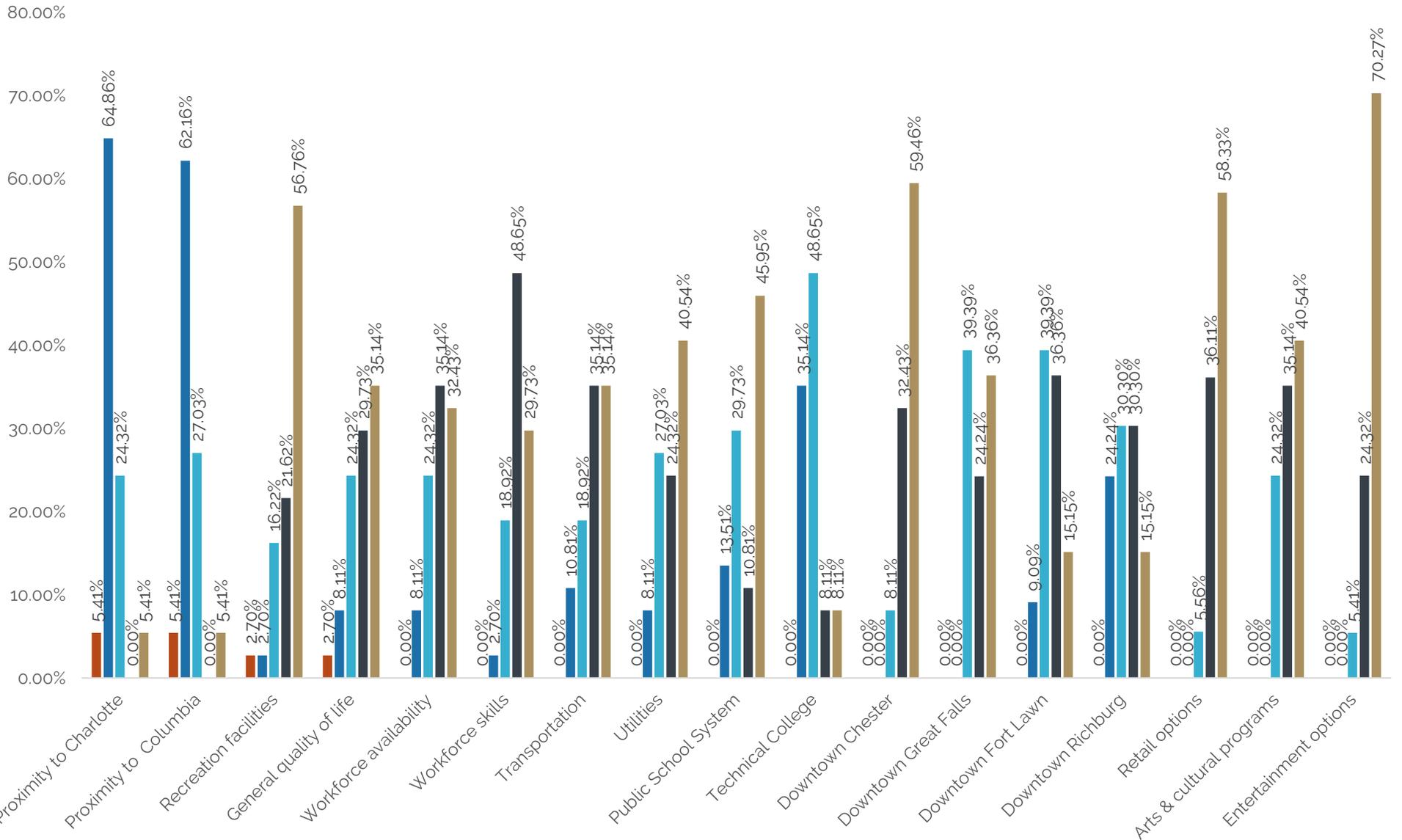


## Chester Community Survey Results–37 Responses

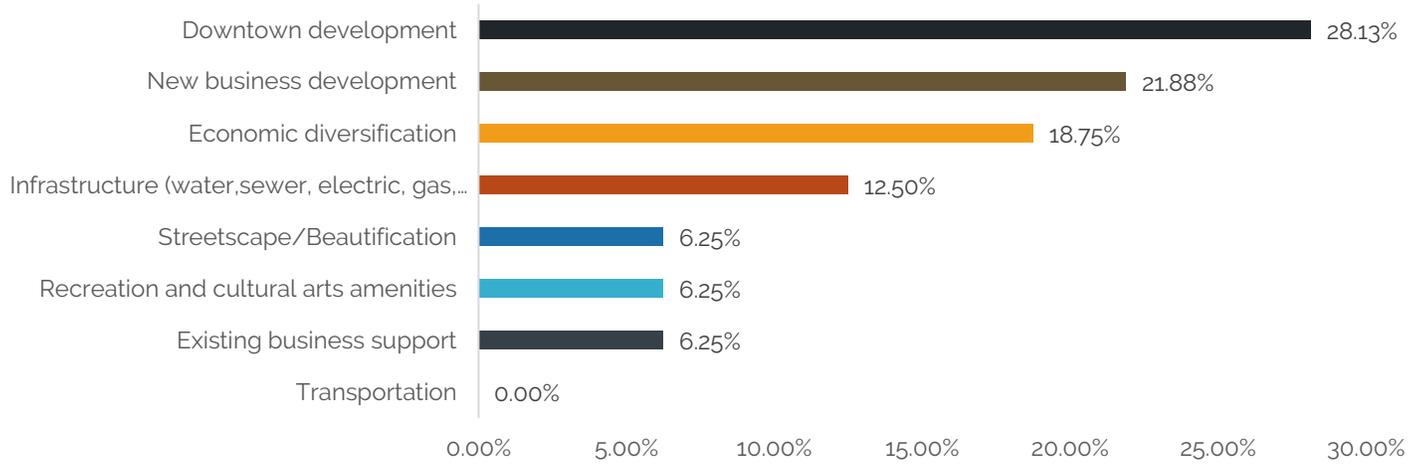


# How satisfied are you with the following in your community?

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

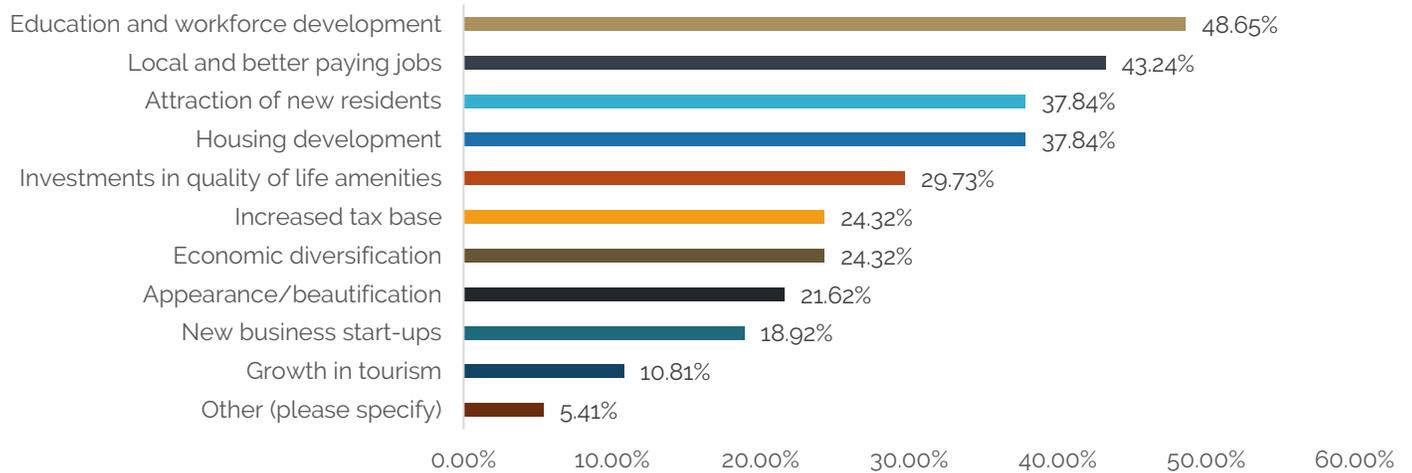


## What is the most important investment your city/town or the county could make to ensure long-term, sustainable economic growth?



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 to work 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

## 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



economic development consulting

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

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