

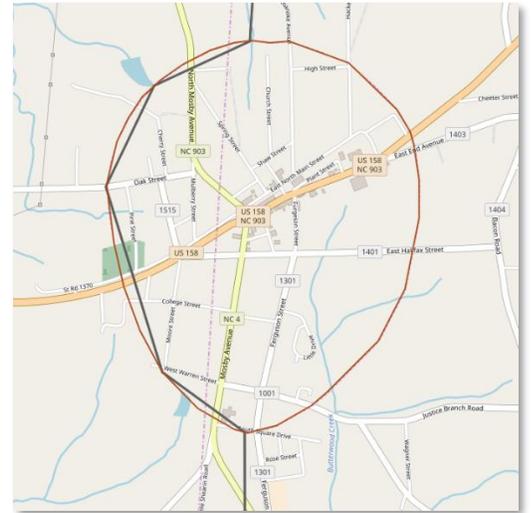
# LITTLETON ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Prepared by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center Staff



High performing organizations are those that learn to anticipate and adapt to change by creating value for those served, and motivation and meaning for those who serve them. The best tool for accomplishing these objectives is strategic planning.

In September 2017, the Town of Littleton requested the North Carolina Rural Development Division, Rural Planning Center help the Town prepare an economic development strategic plan. A planning committee was formed and began meeting in late September 2017. The committee met over the fall of 2017 and discussed the issues facing the Town of Littleton, in regard to economic development.



The committee articulated a vision for the future of Littleton and addressed many issues in developing a strategic vision:

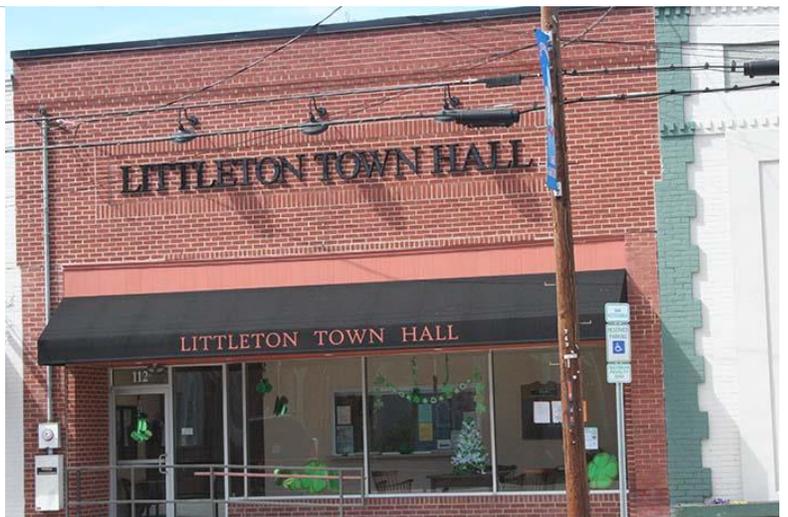
## *Littleton, a welcoming hometown open for business*

Then they began the difficult task of identifying major issues, strategies, and setting measurable objectives to implement the plan's vision. Finally, they developed a system to monitor progress of the plan and to inform changes to the action plan and renewal of vision.

This document is the culmination of their efforts.

If the wishes of the Town are to have any meaning, they must be accompanied by deliberate planning efforts to move the organization and the community toward a desired future. This requires clearly defined goals, proactive objectives, committed leadership, and effective management. Above all, it requires managing the forces of change. Those forces include community demographics, state and federal mandates, fiscal constraints, economic conditions, emerging technologies, and many other influences on service delivery efforts.

The Action Plan is composed of the following elements: *Goals, Objectives, Actions, and Tasks*. The Time Horizon of the plan is 5 years, with 1 Year Implementation Plans updated annually.



Pictures courtesy of [www.townoflittleton-nc.us/](http://www.townoflittleton-nc.us/)

The *goals, objectives, actions* and *tasks* refer to the following definitions:

## Goals...

...are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve – they are usually long-term and represent global visions, such as “grow the local economy”

## Objectives...

...define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals. Unlike goals, objectives are specific, measurable (number, timeframe, percentage), and may have a defined completion date

## Actions...

...often, each objective is associated with a series of actions. Therefore, implementing a strategic goal typically involves implementing a series of actions along the way

## Tasks...

...a step by step list that will help you accomplish each action, usually achievable in 1 year

## Littleton Economic Development Implementation Plan for 2018

### Economic Positioning/Vision: Littleton, a welcoming hometown open for business

WELCOMING HOMETOWN	OPEN FOR BUSINESS
<p><b>GOAL: Maintain a community-oriented small town atmosphere</b></p> <p><i>Objective #1.1: Increase the numbers of people reached via real time analytics and public participation</i></p>	<p><b>GOAL: Improve the prosperity and appearance of Main Street</b></p> <p><i>Objective #2.1: Increase number of downtown customers, museum traffic, and downtown investment</i></p>
<p>Action: Develop a communications plan to inform residents and visitors about events and businesses</p> <p>Task: Work with NC Main Street on a communication plan</p> <p>Task: Include town activities on a message board at the Fire Department, social media, and a newsletter</p>	<p>Action: Develop a façade improvement grant program</p> <p>Task: Contact other towns to develop façade improvement guidelines</p> <p>Task: Fund the grant program</p>
<p>Action: Highlight the unique assets of Littleton</p> <p>Task: Work with Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce to promote the Lakeland Theater and Cryptologic Museum via social media</p>	<p>Action: Develop a “Business In A Box” package that will assist new and existing businesses in development and expansion</p> <p>Task: Study other communities’ programs and tools/incentives</p> <p>Task: Draft a package and determine best methods and locations to disseminate it</p>

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Constant evaluation of the goals, objectives and action steps in this plan, via regular review sessions with the Strategic Planning team and other Town leadership, is critical to ensuring it remains a viable, living document. The Town will continually monitor progress on how well and successful the Town is at managing projects, meeting deadlines, communicating internally and to multiple external audiences, and utilizing the resources available.

The Littleton Economic Development Strategy is a living document used to prioritize the needs of the community and outline Town objectives. The value of the plan lies with the ability of the Town to set realistic goals — and implement innovative strategies — against which progress can be measured. It also allows the community to gauge the ongoing product of its local government.

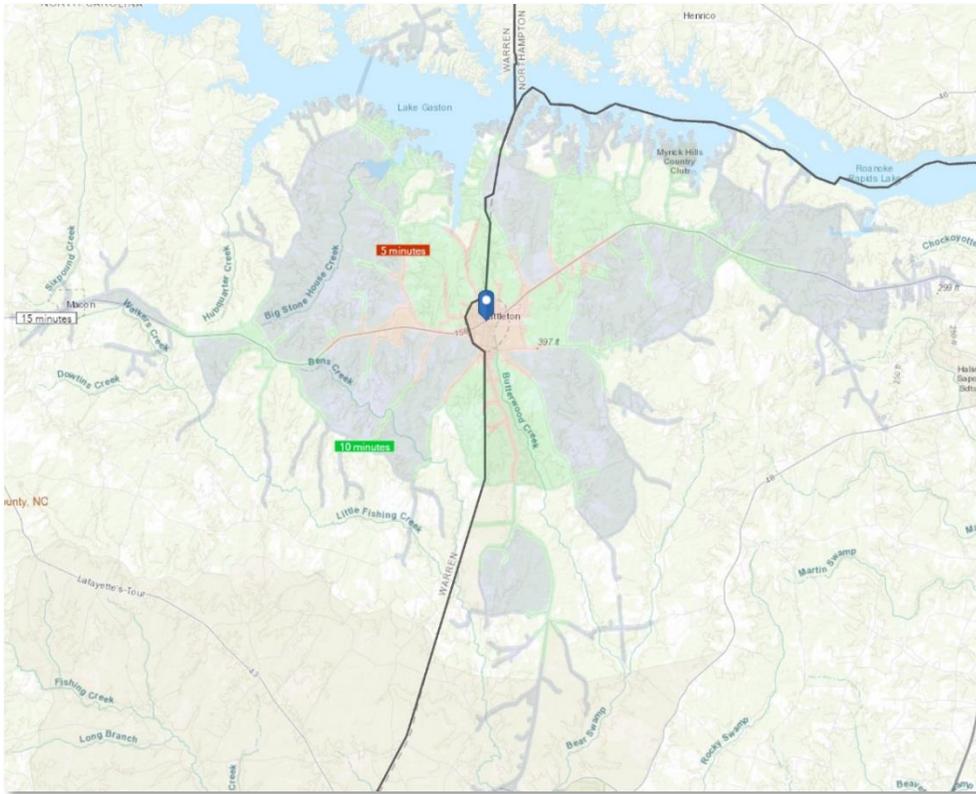
Implementation, evaluation and modification will be continuous in order for the plan and the Town of Littleton to remain relevant, responsive and proactive. This strategic effort will provide greater accountability and represents an organization-wide approach to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life our very special community enjoys.

The most successful strategic planning efforts approach implementation from a network-based model, versus a more traditional hierarchical model (top-down approach). An Implementation Committee should be appointed to oversee the Town's efforts and to reach out to partners. By working with economic partners such as NC Department of Commerce, Halifax County Economic Development Commission, and the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Government, Littleton's economic development strategy can leverage resources and capacity. NC Department of Commerce has yearly Actions & Tasks templates to assist the Town in measuring progress, and the Town should reach out to NC Commerce once a year to help evaluate success.

The Town Commissioners will revisit the plan twice yearly (at budget time, and in November) to mark progress and amend the plan as necessary.

## Appendix: Market Snapshot

**Map 1: ESRI**



The adjacent map, **Map 1**, is from the ESRI On-Line Business Analyst outlining the three trade areas within a distance radius. **Drive Times (5, 10, and 15 minutes)** analyze the trade area around a fixed center, such as the center of town, in this case, the intersection of East South Main Street and Johnson Street. This data helps define where the customers are from and their spending potential. From these areas along with the retail surplus and leakage information we gather demographic information giving insight into spending

**Table 1: Supply & Demand**

Table 1 shows total demand and supply for each drive time. There is more demand than supply within each drive time, indicating a retail gap (in green). Supply (retail sales) estimates sales to consumers by establishments. While demand (retail potential) estimates the expected amount spent by consumers. A negative value (in red) represents a “surplus” of sales where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area. In Table 2, the Median Disposable Income is shown referring to income remaining after deduction of taxes and other mandatory charges and available to be spent or saved as one wishes.

Drive Times	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap	# of Retail Businesses
5	\$8,804,112	\$24,632,936	-\$15,828,824	28
10	\$23,951,656	\$28,583,186	-\$4,631,530	32
15	\$67,866,647	\$39,136,758	28,729,889	45

**Table 2: Population, Households & Disposable Income**

Drive Times	Population	Households	Median Disposable Income	Per Capita Income
5	789	388	\$26,186	\$20,319
10	1,866	894	\$29,894	\$22,838
15	4,771	2,212	\$34,244	\$26,816

**Table 3: Retail Opportunity**

Retail Opportunity Identified by ESRI: The following tables indicate retail business groups, based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) where there are identified retail gaps (i.e. demand is greater than the supply) in the various drive times. If there is a surplus (supply is greater than demand), those business groups are not listed. Thus, the Total Leakage, Demand, Supply, and Number of Businesses will differ from the totals in Table 1.

Retail Potential for 5 Minute Drive Time				
Business Type	Total Leakage	Demand	Supply	# of Businesses
Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers	\$1,631,861	\$1,840,755	\$208,894	1
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$270,496	\$270,496	\$0	0
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$203,322	\$379,335	\$176,013	3
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$193,362	\$193,362	\$0	0
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$168,824	\$573,392	\$404,568	1
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$113,796	\$323,842	\$210,046	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,581,661</b>	<b>\$3,581,182</b>	<b>\$999,521</b>	<b>6</b>

Retail Potential for 10 Minute Drive Time				
Business Type	Total Leakage	Demand	Supply	# of Businesses
Motor Vehicles & Parts Dealers	\$3,299,561	\$5,100,781	\$1,801,220	2
General Merchandise Stores	\$1,446,484	\$3,360,811	\$1,914,327	1
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$793,185	\$1,054,018	\$260,833	3
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$635,250	\$847,857	\$212,607	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$519,371	\$519,371	\$0	0
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$289,392	\$1,682,931	\$1,393,539	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,983,243</b>	<b>\$12,565,769</b>	<b>\$5,582,526</b>	<b>9</b>

Retail Potential for 10 Minute Drive Time				
Business Type	Total Leakage	Demand	Supply	# of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$9,749,763	\$14,122,220	\$4,372,457	4
General Merchandise Stores	\$7,182,207	\$9,618,528	\$2,436,321	2
Food & Beverage Stores	\$5,246,544	\$10,560,455	\$5,313,911	9
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$3,020,686	\$5,854,718	\$2,834,032	7
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	\$2,651,742	\$5,428,306	\$2,776,564	6
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$2,225,332	\$2,527,008	\$301,676	1
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$1,852,151	\$2,157,868	\$305,717	1
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$1,567,190	\$2,899,216	\$1,332,026	5
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,497,904	\$4,204,289	\$2,706,385	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$1,383,816	\$1,506,478	\$122,662	1
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$1,296,671	\$4,788,449	\$3,491,778	3
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$605,181	\$1,660,001	\$1,054,820	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$38,279,187</b>	<b>\$65,327,536</b>	<b>\$27,048,349</b>	<b>43</b>

Tapestry Segmentations Identified by ESRI: These provide a detailed description of America’s neighborhoods. U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition, then further classifies the segments into LifeMode and Urbanization Groups. Each radii has numerous LifeMode groups for a total of 100%. The summaries on this page are considered the largest percentage within each radii for each Tapestry Segmentation giving a minimalistic snapshot of the largest segmentation by percentage in study area. By looking into the more detailed information, Littleton can get a sense of who their customers are and insight into how to market to and what types of products to possibly add to existing inventory, or even diving deeper into each Tapestry Segment’s LifeMode and Urbanization Group, there may be an entirely new business that could be added based on the tapestries within these radii. In Littleton, the top Segment for the 5 minute drive time is “Small Town Simplicity. Other segmentations listed can be explored at: <http://doc.arcgis.com/en/esri-demographics/data/tapestry-segmentation.htm>

### Tapestry Segmentations, Race & Ethnicity for 5 Minute Drive Time Radius

**Small Town Simplicity:** #1 Tapestry Segmentation within the study area, comprising 83% of the 5 minute drive time. Small Town Simplicity represents 1.9% overall in the U.S. They reside in small towns or semirural neighborhoods, mostly outside metropolitan areas.

**Characteristics of Small Town Simplicity:**

- 2,305,000 households nationwide
- Average Household Size: 2.25
- Median Age: 40 (US Median is 37.6)
- Median Household Income: \$27,000 (US Median is \$51,000)



**Who “We” Are:** Young families and senior householders that are bound by community ties characterize Small Town Simplicity. The lifestyle is down-to-earth and semirural, with television for entertainment and news, and emphasis on convenience for both young parents and senior citizens. Residents embark on pursuits like online computer games, scrapbooking, and rural activities like hunting and fishing. Since 1 in 4 households is below the poverty level, residents also keep finances simple – paying bills in person and avoiding debt.

**Our Neighborhood:** An older market, with almost half of the householders aged 55 years or older, and predominantly single-person households. Homes are a mix of older single-family houses, apartments, and mobile homes. A majority of homes are owner-occupied. Median home value is \$88,000, about half the U.S. median. Average rent is \$600.

**Socioeconomic Traits:** Community-oriented residents; majority of residents have high school diploma and some college. Unemployment rate is higher at 11.9%; labor force participation is lower than half, which could result from lack of jobs or retirement. Price-conscious consumers that shop accordingly, at discount centers. Connected, but not to the latest or greatest gadgets; most keep their landlines. Rely on television or newspapers to stay informed.

**Race and Ethnicity:** Nationally, 77% white, 13% black, 10% Hispanic

**Market Profile:** Features a semirural lifestyle, complete with trucks (typically domestic models), ATVs, and vegetable gardens. Hunting and fishing are favorite pastimes. A large senior population visit doctors and health practitioners regularly.

**Other Tapestry Segmentations in 5 Minute Drive Time Study Area:**

- Rural Bypasses – 14%
- Rural Resort Dwellers – 3%

**Tapestry Segmentations in 10 Minute Drive Time Study Area:**

- Small Town Simplicity – 37%
- Rural Resort Dwellers – 31%
- Rural Bypasses – 25%
- Other Segmentations (Senior Escapes and Silver & Gold – 7%)

**Tapestry Segmentations in 10 Minute Drive Time Study Area:**

- Rural Bypasses – 25%
- Rural Resort Dwellers – 25%
- Other Segmentations (Silver & Gold – 18%, Senior Escapes – 17%, Small Town Simplicity 0 15%)