

Angier Economic Development Strategic Plan 2021

A View to the Future



Pinnacle Eye Productions

Angier Economic Development Strategic Plan 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Triangle region of North Carolina is one of the nation's fastest-growing in both population and employment growth. Angier's location once seemed remote but is now solidly in the path of change. Town stakeholders interviewed for this plan accept this reality and see it as an opportunity for the town to grow in a desirable, high-quality manner.

Angier has a population of approximately 5,500 residents, and is projected to continue its rapid growth. The town's population is more diverse and younger than the state average. The town's housing stock is older and relatively affordable. Recently, existing housing has been augmented by a surge in new construction, offering options with the features that appeal to young professionals and young families. Workers from Angier overwhelmingly commute outside the town to reach their jobs.

This plan reviews the strongest existing industry sectors in Harnett County, and highlights emerging sectors that could become more prominent over time. Currently, Angier lacks available industrial buildings and construction-ready sites, as well as the resources to carry out significant economic development marketing and recruitment. For now, the town should concentrate on developing land and building options in promising areas such as along the new bypass corridor, and partnering with Harnett County Economic Development.

Stakeholders want to see Angier "grow well" and become a more desirable place that will attract talented workers, young families and young professionals, and entrepreneurs. Participants consistently mentioned themes of downtown vitality, strong code enforcement and higher development standards, adequate infrastructure, and amenities such as parks, trails, festivals, and events.

This Angier Economic Development Strategic Plan presents 27 strategies organized around five topic areas:

- 1) The Downtown
- 2) The NC 55 Bypass
- 3) Quality of Life and Amenities
- 4) Infrastructure
- 5) Business Development

Stakeholders believe that even small investments made now will pay future benefits that allow the town to take advantage of opportunities for improving business vitality, downtown activity, employment, tax base, and overall desirability.

INTRODUCTION

The Research Triangle region of North Carolina is one of the nation’s most popular destinations for talented people to live and work. Over the ten-year period from 2010 through 2019, the Raleigh metro area was America’s second-fastest growing large metro. Its 23 percent population increase trailed only the rate of Austin, Texas. Employment growth during this period was also among the fastest in the nation, with total job gains of more than 32 percent. These trends did not appear to be reversing even during the COVID-19 pandemic. If anything, the Triangle region might be earning more of a reputation as a prime location for investment, jobs, and talent in leading economic sectors like technology and life sciences.



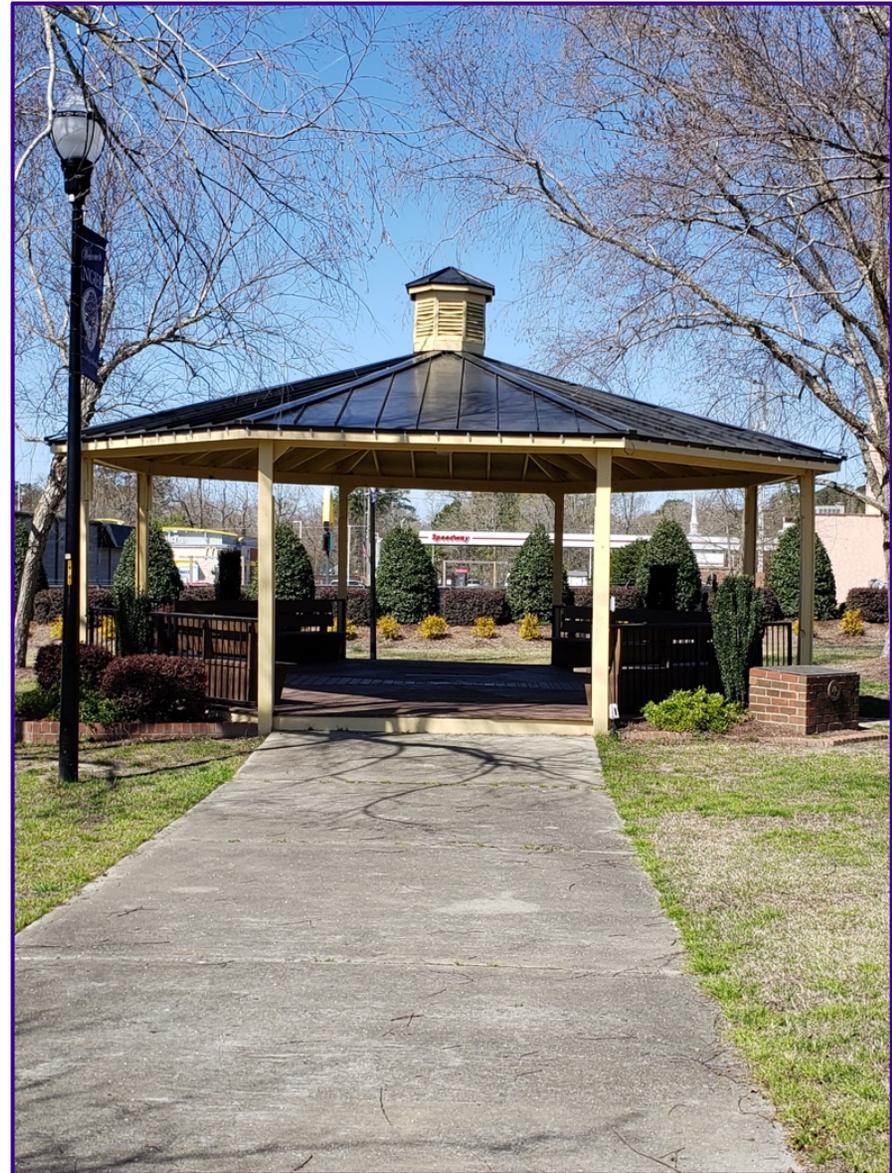
None of this will come as a surprise to the people of Angier, a small, historic town that now lies squarely in the path of regional growth. Angier stakeholders interviewed for this strategic plan accept this as fact, and aim to guide the town in a direction where it will “grow well.” Much of their focus is on what is often called “placemaking” – providing the quality of life and amenities that will be attractive to young families, talented workers, and entrepreneurs. Downtown plays a crucial role in achieving these goals, and the NC 55 bypass project (if planned and implemented well) provides another opportunity for growing the town’s tax base, jobs, and building a larger residential base to support the downtown.

This updated Economic Development Strategic Plan for Angier starts by reviewing the town’s demographic profile and housing conditions. It then provides an updated industry cluster analysis, showing which existing industry sectors are adding jobs in Harnett County and which emerging industries merit further attention. It also summarizes the input gained from in-depth interviews with a wide range of stakeholders across Angier.

Finally, it provides strategies for improving Angier’s economic outlook by focusing on five key areas:

- 1) The Downtown
- 2) The NC 55 Bypass Project
- 3) Quality of Life and Amenities
- 4) Infrastructure
- 5) Business Development

Stakeholders stressed that even though the town has limited new financial and staffing resources for economic development, small investments made now can put Angier on a trajectory that will enable it to take advantage of the opportunities coming its way. Sound decisions and good partnerships can allow Angier to grow in a manner that emphasizes a high quality of life and an attractive, thriving small town atmosphere.



ANGIER DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

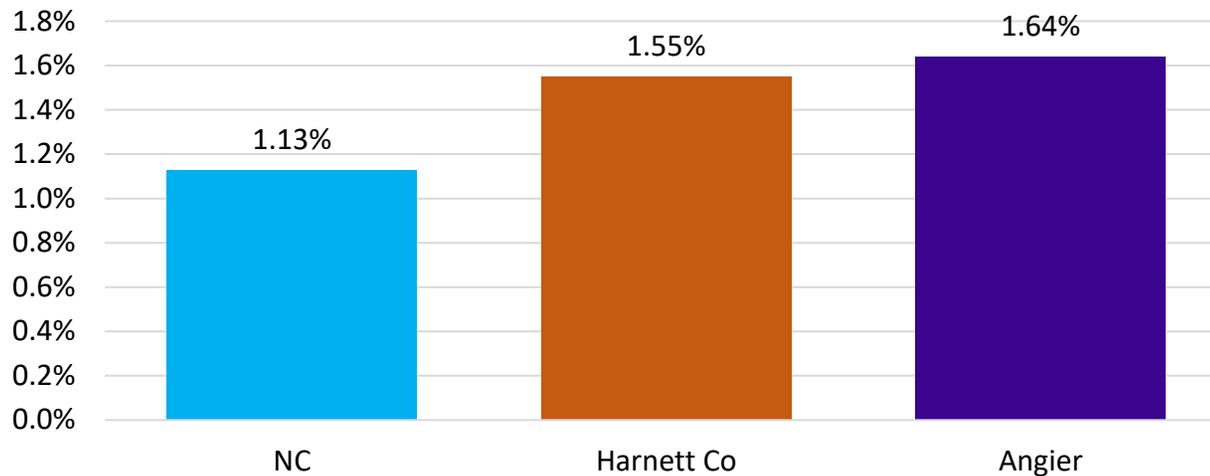
According to three recent sources (federal government, state government, and a private data provider), the Town of Angier has a population of nearly 5,500.

Angier Population Estimates

NC OSBM 2019 Estimate	5,462
US Census Bureau 2019 Estimate	5,415
ESRI 2020 Estimate	5,407

Angier is projected to grow at a faster rate than Harnett County and North Carolina overall over the next five years.

Projected Annual Population Growth Rate 2020-2025



Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

Below is Angier's population broken down by race and ethnicity.

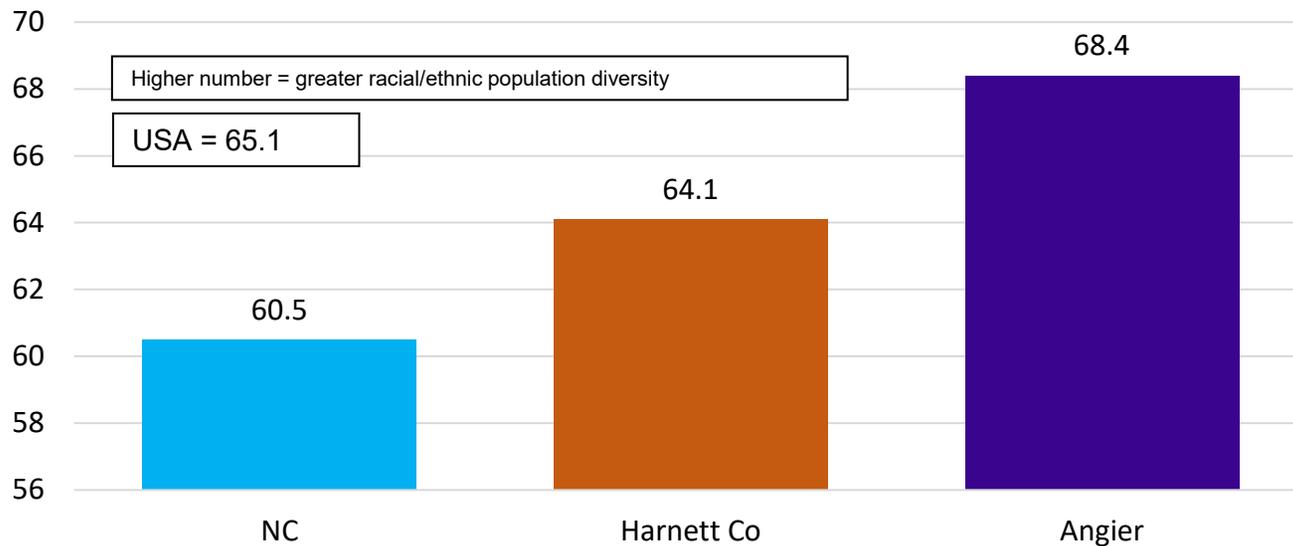
Population – Race and Ethnicity

White	67.2%
Black	15.6%
Other/Multiple Races	17.2%
Hispanic (Any Race)	21.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2018 data

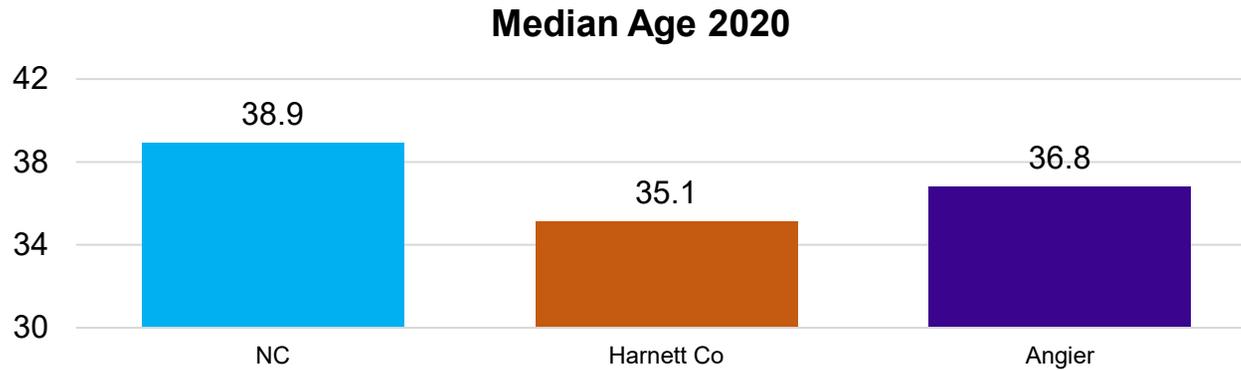
According to data provider ESRI's Diversity Index measure, Angier has a more diverse population mix than Harnett County, the state, and the nation.

Diversity Index



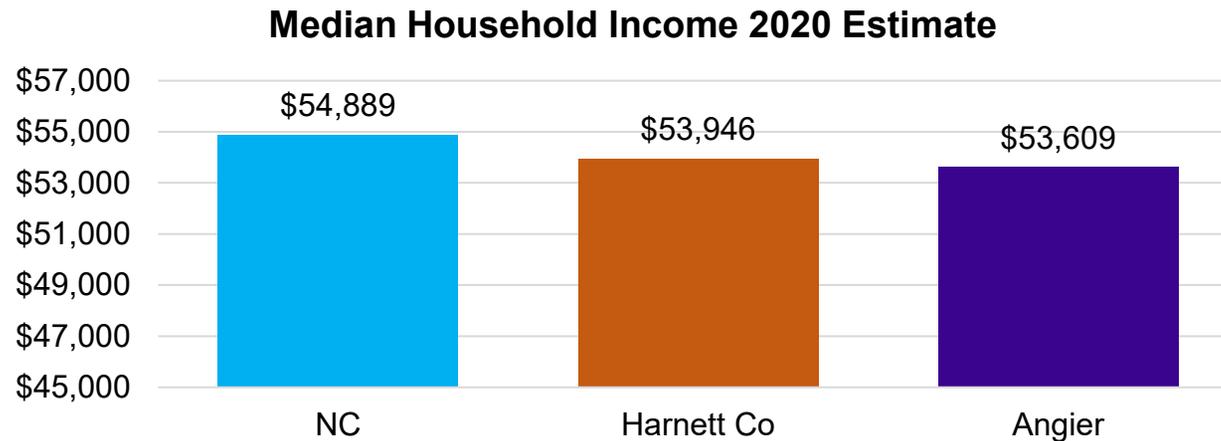
Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

Angier has a younger median age than North Carolina, but a higher median age than Harnett County overall.



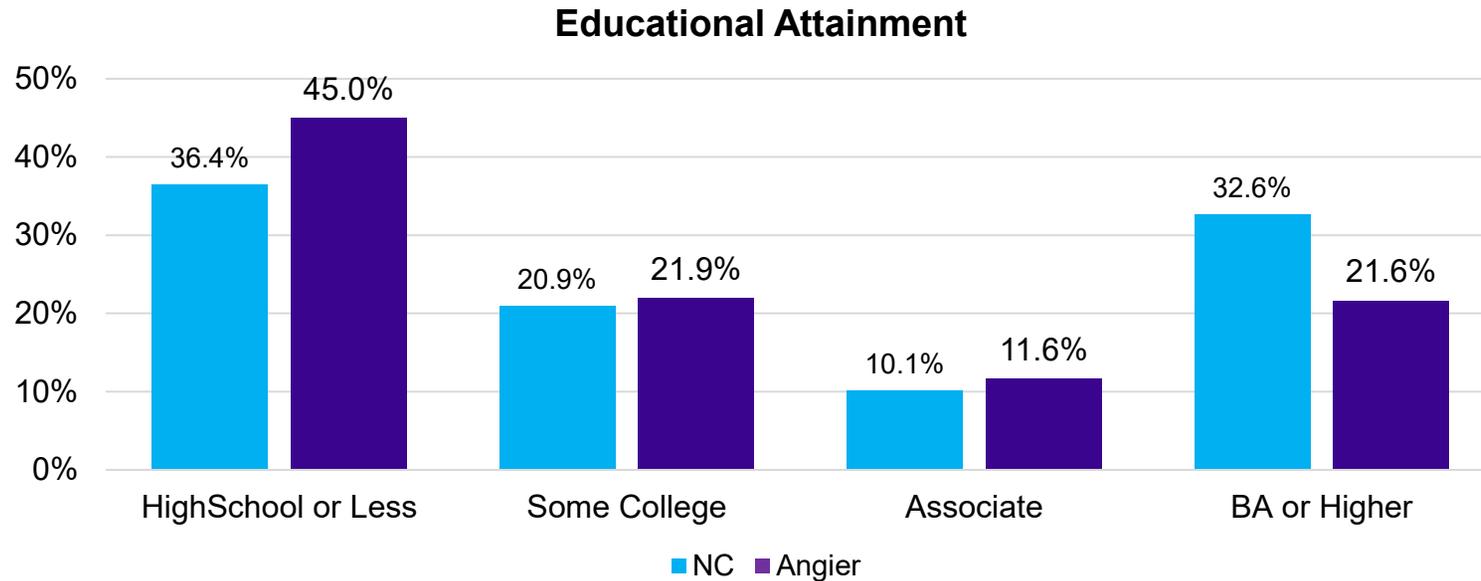
Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

The town’s median household income is close to the statewide and county median incomes. Angier’s estimated median household income for 2020 is about two percent less than North Carolina’s, and virtually identical to the median income in Harnett County.



Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

Angier's population lags the average educational attainment across North Carolina. Angier has a greater percentage of the adult population with a high school diploma or less (45.0 percent versus 36.4 percent in North Carolina), and fewer adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (21.6 percent versus 32.6 percent).

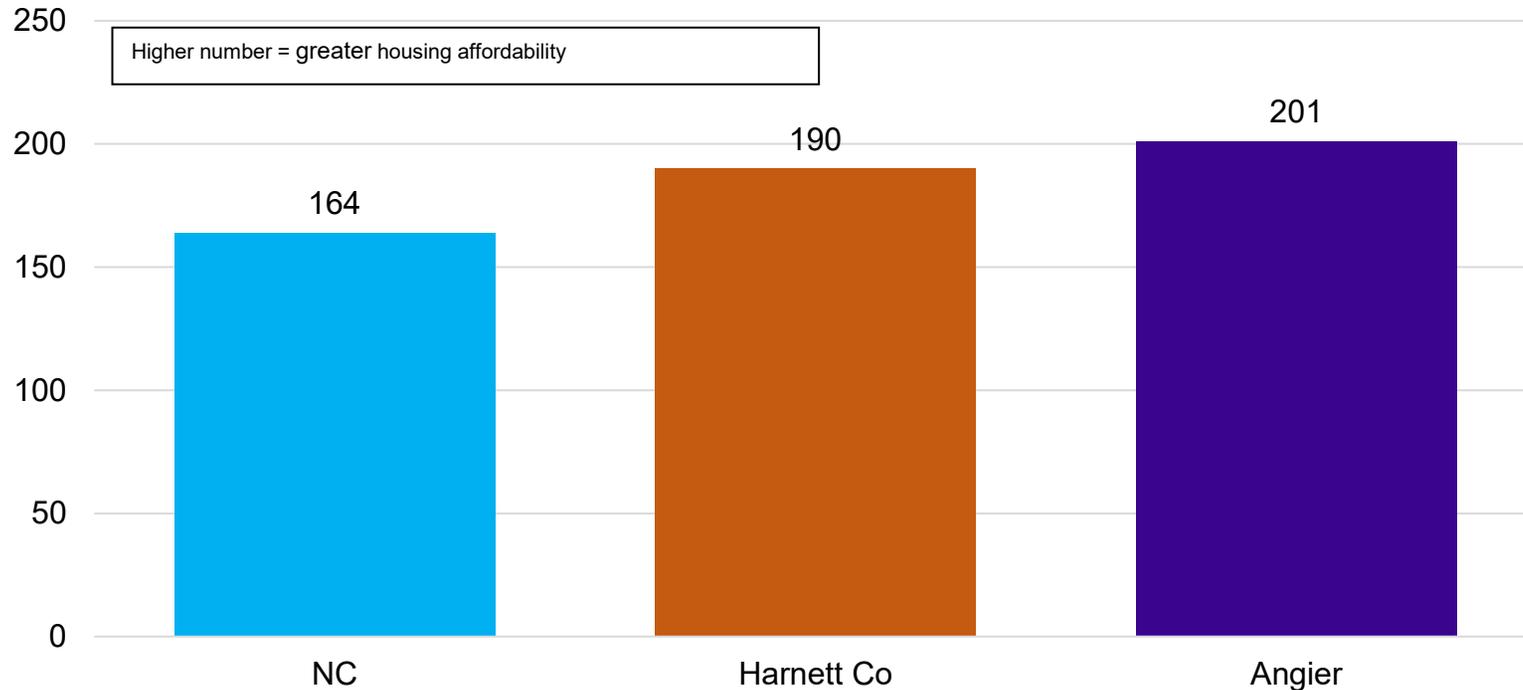


Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

Both the Raleigh-Cary and Durham-Chapel Hill Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) are among the top ten MSAs in the country for educational attainment with close to fifty percent of adults in the core counties having received a bachelor's degree or higher. This is a key factor driving the broader region's fast growth in advanced industries.

Angier’s housing market will be covered in much more detail in a later section of this plan. But the two following charts provide a brief introduction. As numerous stakeholders mentioned, Angier offers relatively affordable housing options. The town’s housing affordability index is much higher (meaning more affordable) than the statewide average, and slightly higher than Harnett County’s.

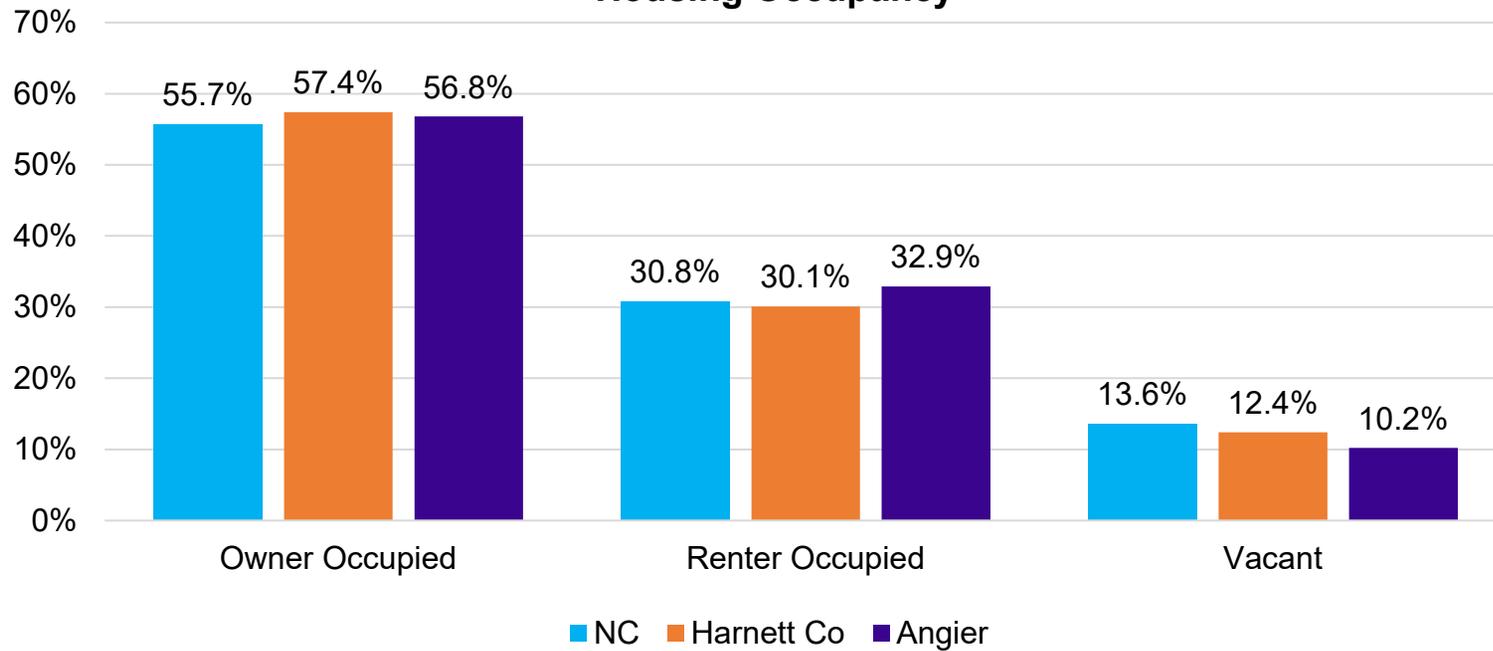
Housing Affordability Index



Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

In terms of occupancy of housing units, Angier does have a somewhat higher percentage of renter-occupied units, but it also has a lower percentage of vacant units than Harnett County and North Carolina overall.

Housing Occupancy



Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2021

Finally, Angier and Harnett County are known as being home to many residents who commute elsewhere for work, and the data bears this out. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and using 2018 data for the location of Angier residents' primary job, just 68 residents also stayed in town to work. A total of 2,219 left to work outside of Angier, while 1,070 people who live elsewhere commuted into Angier for work.

The lack of jobs nearby necessitates that many Angier residents commute long distances to work. While the greatest percentage – nearly half – commute between 10 and 24 miles each way to their primary job, more than 15 percent report traveling more than 50 miles.

Resident Commuting Distance – All Primary Jobs, 2018

Less Than 10 Miles	20.3%
10 to 24 Miles	48.4%
25 to 50 Miles	15.8%
Greater Than 50 Miles	15.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2018 data

The destinations of out-commuters from Angier are remarkably diverse. The most frequent work destinations reported in 2018 were Raleigh (21.4 percent), Cary (7.9 percent), and Fuquay-Varina (6.1 percent). Angier’s location has positioned it as a bedroom community for many employment centers.

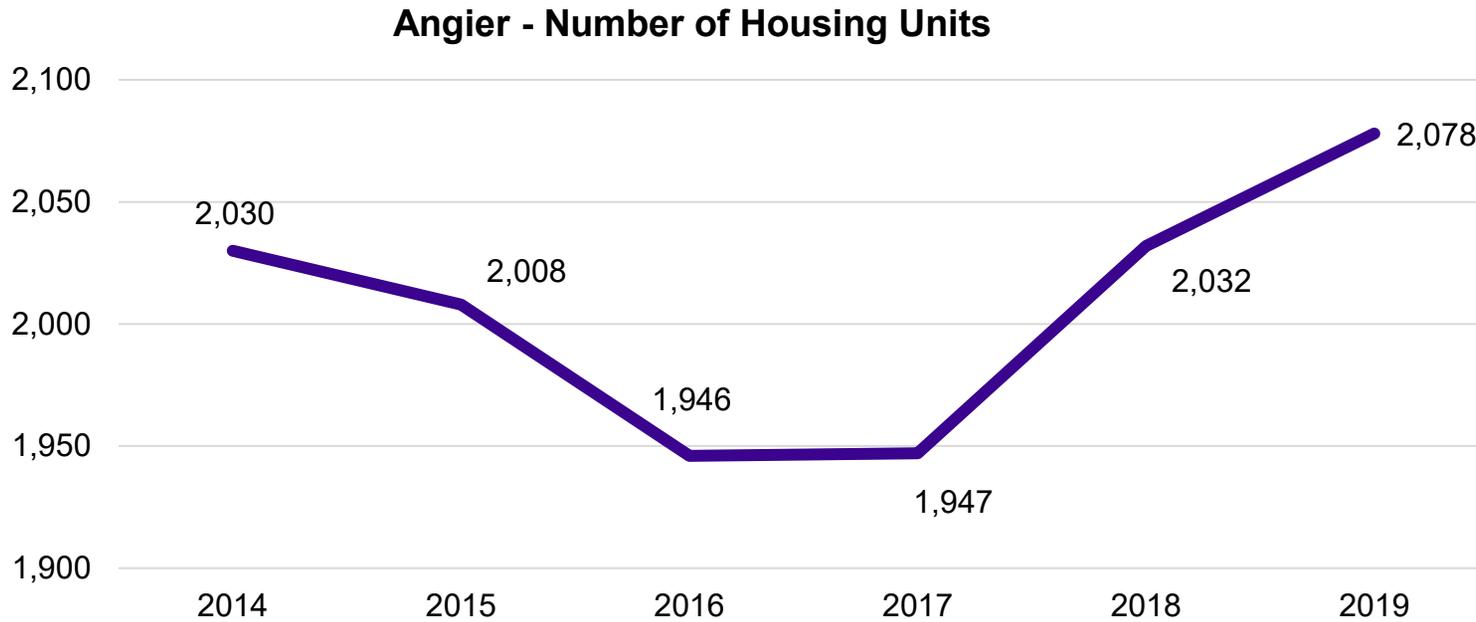
Resident Commuting Destinations – All Primary Jobs, 2018

Raleigh	21.4%
Cary	7.9%
Fuquay-Varina	6.1%
Fayetteville	3.1%
Stay in Angier	3.0%
Durham	2.8%
Apex	2.7%
All Others	53.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2018 data

ANGIER HOUSING MARKET PROFILE

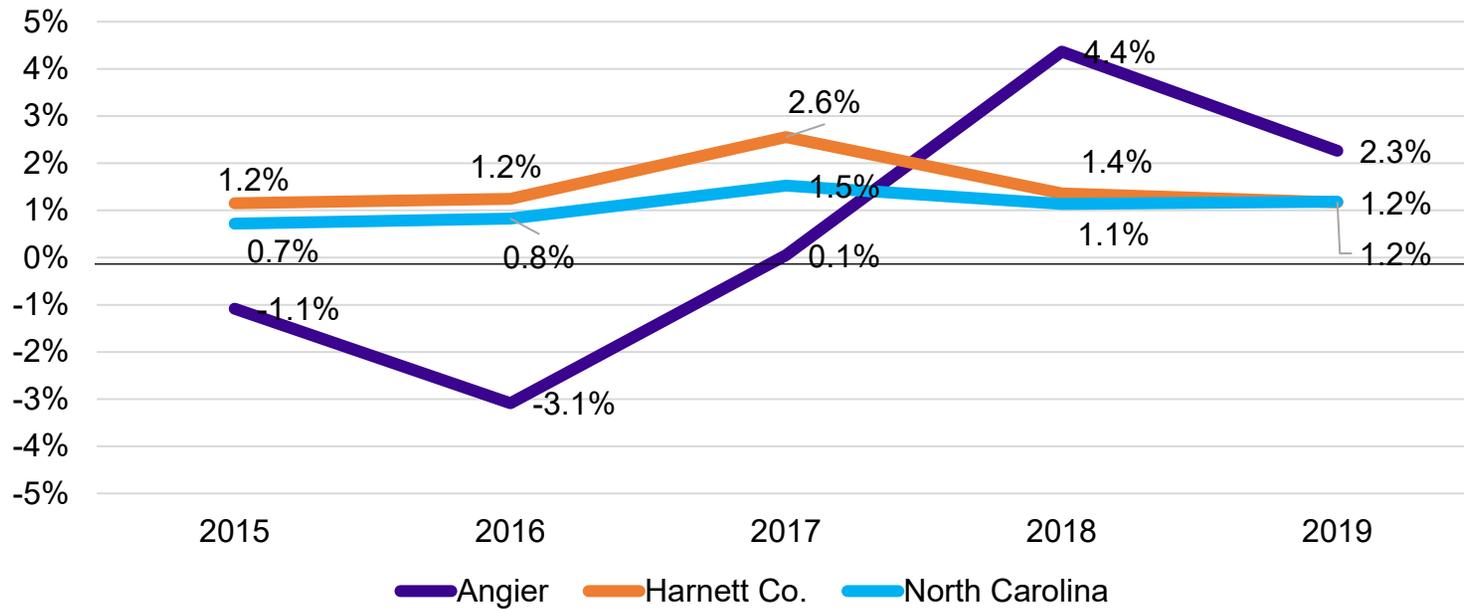
The Town of Angier had 2,078 housing units in 2019, or about four percent of Harnett County's 51,828 housing units (*US Census American Community Survey*). According to the Census Bureau, the town experienced a stable housing market from 2014 through 2019, with a slight increase in the number of units. It is not clear why Census data shows a decrease in units from 2014 to 2016, and it may be a survey error. During the five-year period Harnett County had a 13 percent increase in housing units. The number of units statewide in North Carolina increased by 5.5 percent during the same period.



Source: US Census

In the past couple of years Angier’s housing unit growth has accelerated and exceeded the percentage growth in North Carolina and Harnett County.

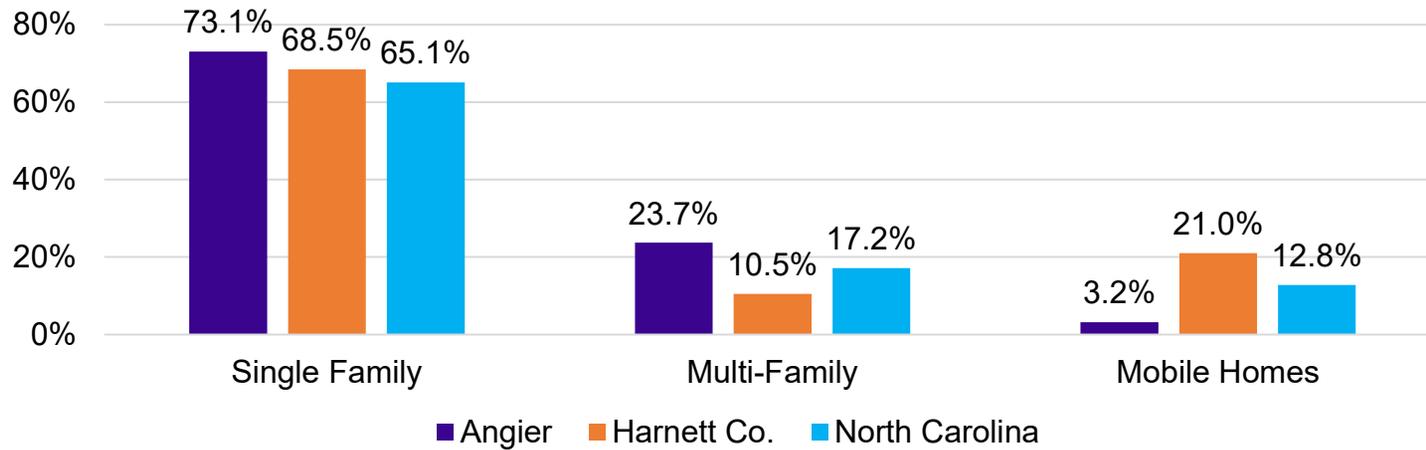
Percentage Growth in Housing Units



Source: US Census

Most of the housing units are single-family detached, at 73.1 percent of the town’s 2019 total. This is higher than both Harnett County at 68.5 percent and North Carolina at 65.1 percent. Ten percent of the Angier housing stock is multi-family units and 3.2 percent is mobile homes. Angier has little multi-family housing, only 683 units in 2019. To attract additional young professionals to Angier, there is a need for additional apartment rentals with modern amenities.

Housing by Type (2019)



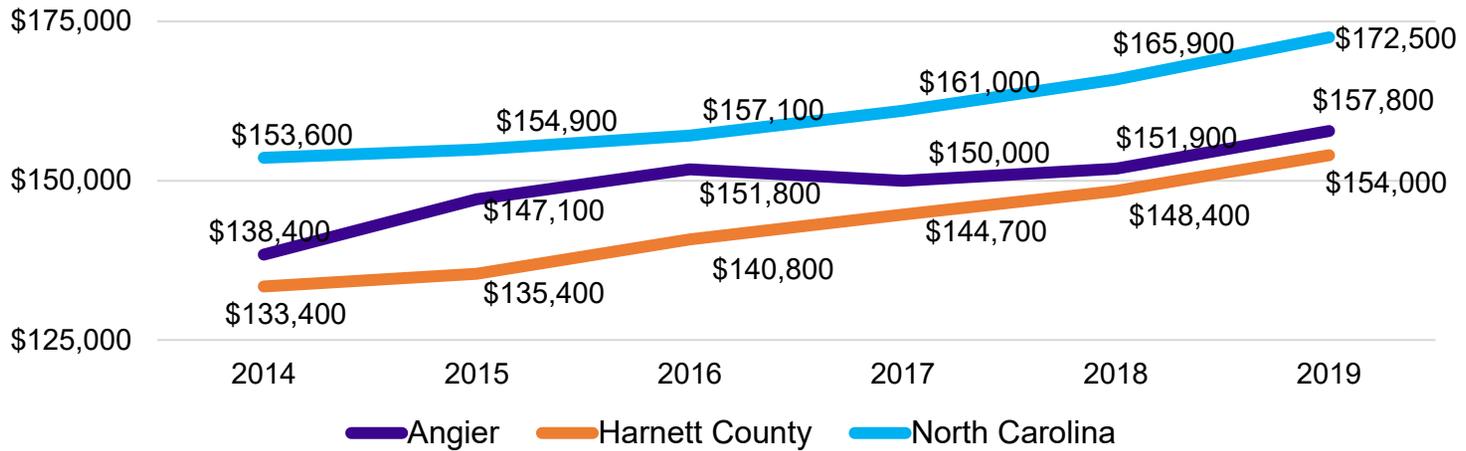
Source: US Census

Angier - Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units



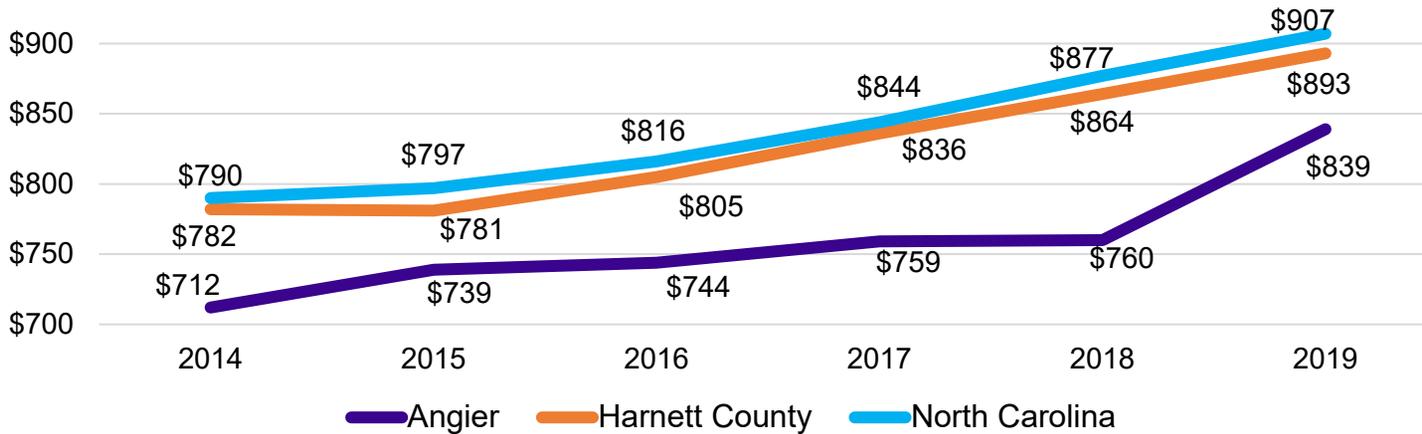
Source: US Census

Value of Owner - Occupied Housing Units

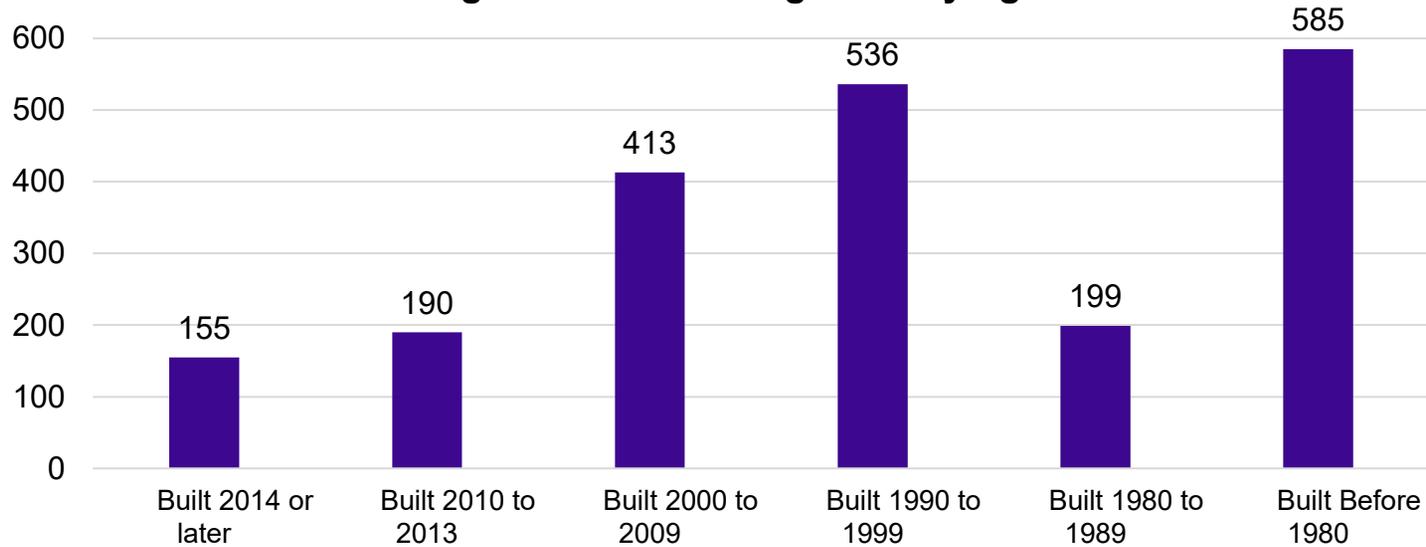


Source: US Census

Median Rent



Angier - Total Housing Units by Age



Source: US Census

Angier’s housing stock is relatively old, with 83.4 percent of occupied housing built before 2010. Harnett County has 87 percent of occupied housing built before 2010. Older homes likely do not possess the current amenities and floor plans sought after by young professionals and young families. However, this has been addressed by a surge in new single-family home permits in Angier over the last five years. Permits for 339 new single-family homes in the town have been issued since 2016, as shown below.

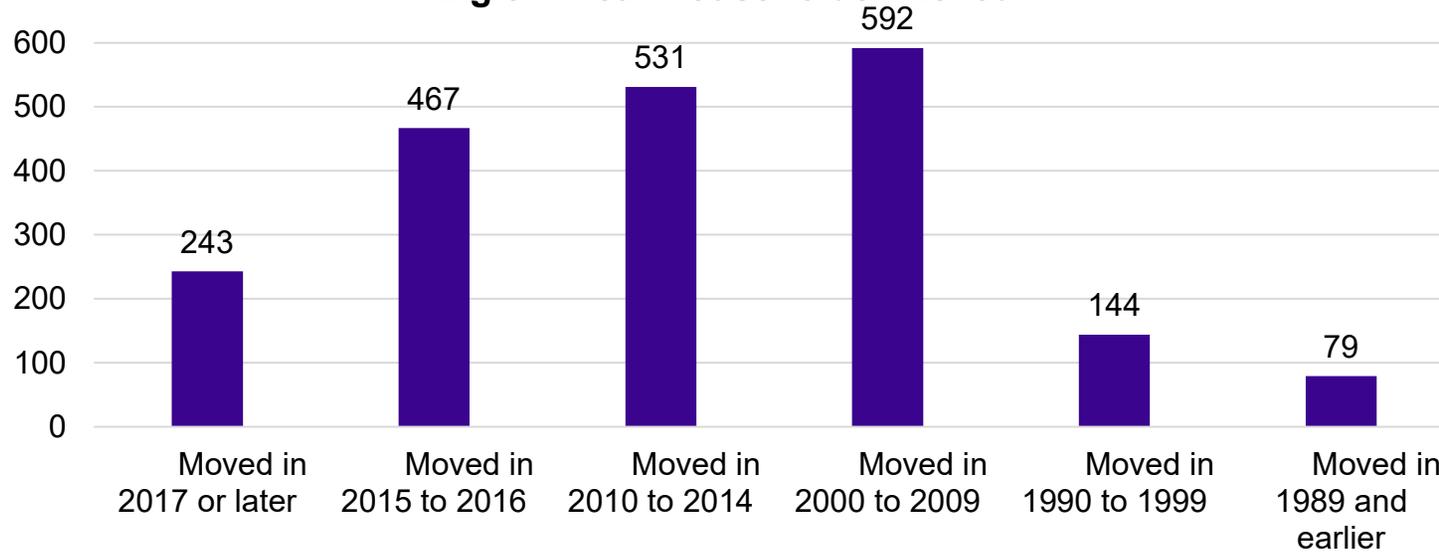
New Single-Family Residential Permits Issued in Angier

2016	29
2017	40
2018	42
2019	66
2020	162

Source: Town of Angier Planning & Inspections

There has been an influx of new household residents, with almost 55 percent of current households moving into their homes between 2000 and 2014. The trend continues, with almost 35 percent of households having moved into their homes since 2015.

Angier - Year Householder Moved In



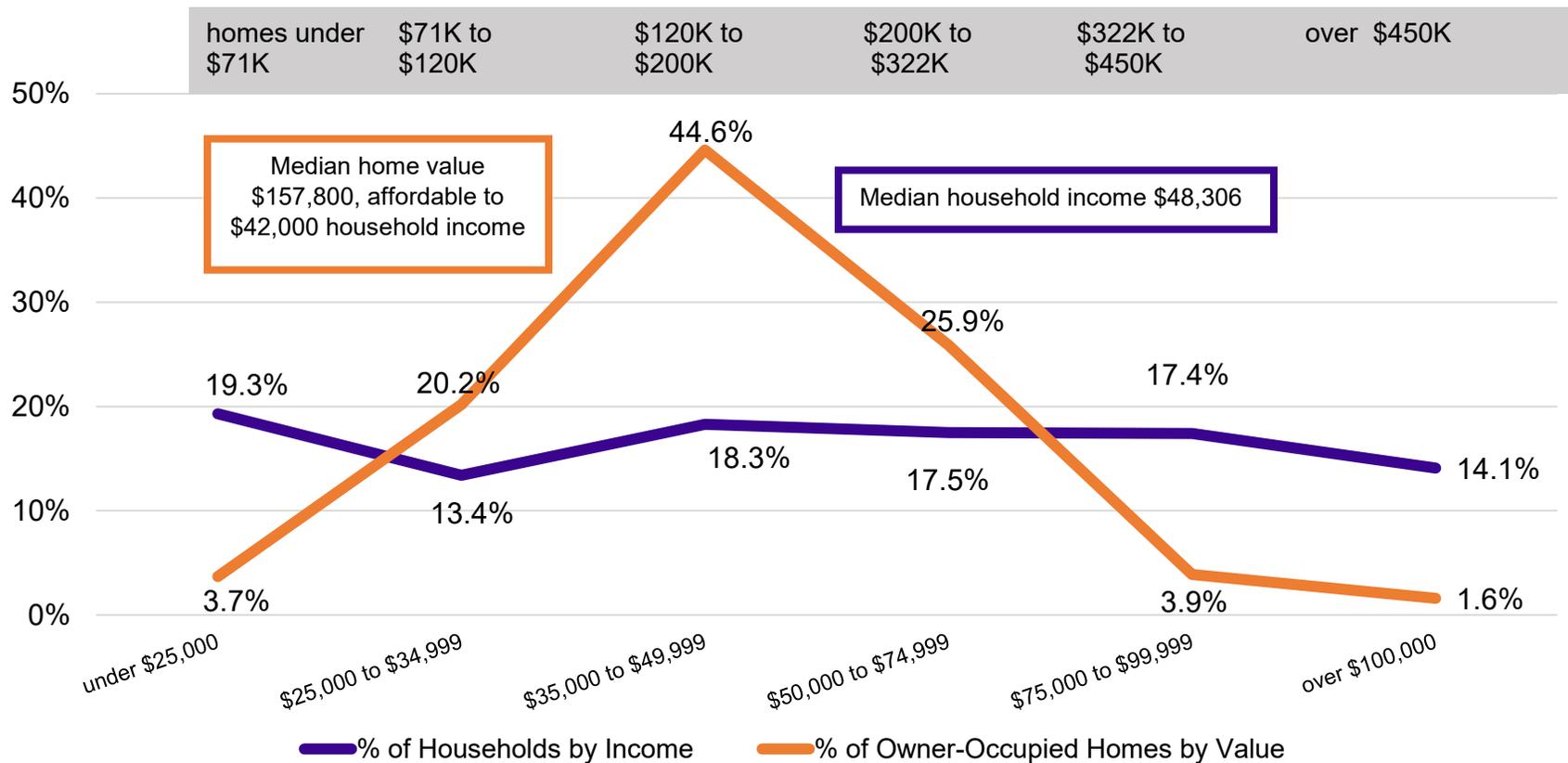
Source: US Census

One of the policy issues often discussed is ensuring that the housing available in Angier meets the needs of the community. Economic Leadership analyzed the current housing affordability by comparing current housing values from the U.S. Census with household incomes. Using a formula that incorporates full housing costs, including principal and interest, taxes and insurance, we estimated housing affordability using the Zillow Housing Affordability Calculator to estimate total mortgage payments.

Household Income Bracket	Number of Households	% of Angier Households in This Income Bracket	Maximum Mortgage at Lower End of Range	Maximum Mortgage at Upper End of Range	House Price at Lower End of Range	House Price at Upper End of Range	# of Owner-Occupied Homes in This Bracket	% of Owner-Occupied Homes Affordable to Households in This Bracket
Less than \$10,000	109	5.3%	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$10,000 to \$14,999	76	3.7%	-	-	-	-	-	-
\$15,000 to \$24,999	212	10.3%	\$198	\$497	\$27,537	\$71,472	51	3.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	276	13.4%	\$497	\$796	\$71,472	\$120,953	278	20.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	376	18.3%	\$796	\$1,246	\$120,953	\$198,676	613	44.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	360	17.5%	\$1,246	\$1,996	\$198,676	\$322,378	355	25.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	358	17.4%	\$1,996	\$2,746	\$322,378	\$446,079	54	3.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	228	11.1%	\$2,746	\$4,246	\$446,079	\$693,483	11	0.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12	0.6%	\$4,246	\$5,746	\$693,483	\$940,886	11	0.8%
\$200,000 or more	49	2.4%	\$5,746	-	\$940,886	-	0	0

Next, we combined several of the income and housing cost brackets to reduce the number of categories. As the chart below shows, the available owner-occupied units for households with incomes between \$25,000 and \$75,000 exceeds the number of households in Angier. There is less affordable housing available for households earning less than \$25,000 annually, and also little income-appropriate housing available for the town’s highest-income households, those earning above \$75,000.

Housing Affordable to Angier Households by Income

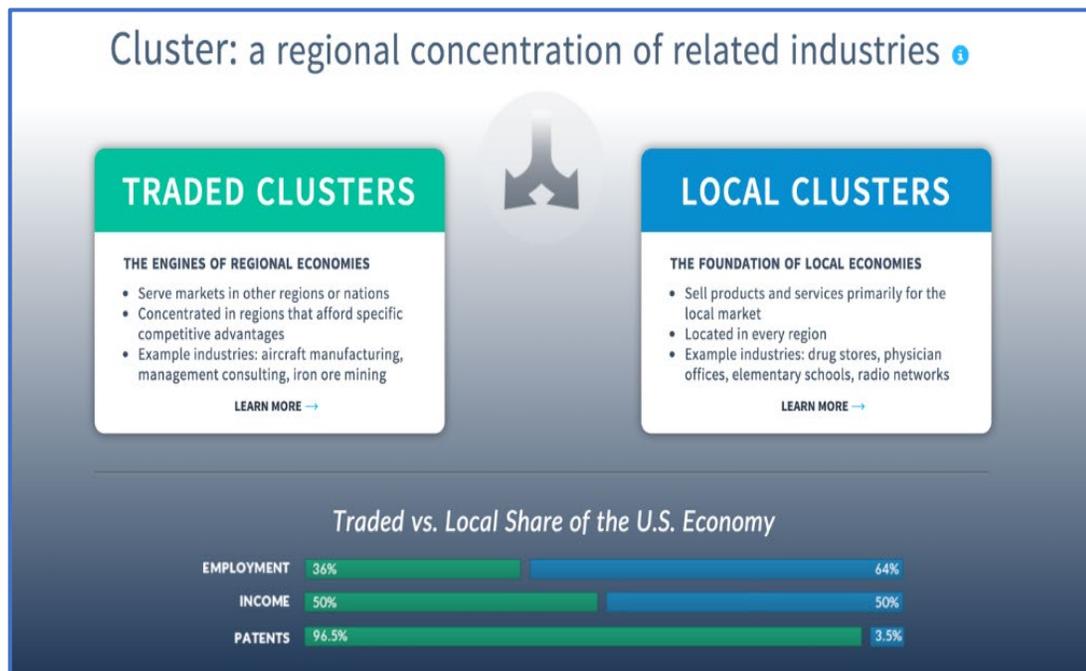


This analysis is only for existing owner-occupied housing and does not address the rental housing or mobile home markets.

HARNETT COUNTY INDUSTRY CLUSTER AND EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS

Traded clusters are groups of industries that serve markets outside of a region (domestically and/or internationally.) Clusters also contain a supply chain that supports an industry such as suppliers, infrastructure, and machinery.

Focusing on clusters in an economic development strategy narrows efforts to those industries which are most likely to thrive in a region. This is particularly important as the competition for investment and jobs is intense, and resources are limited. Studies have shown that assets that support clusters are more efficient and cost effective than providing subsidies and solutions to individual companies.



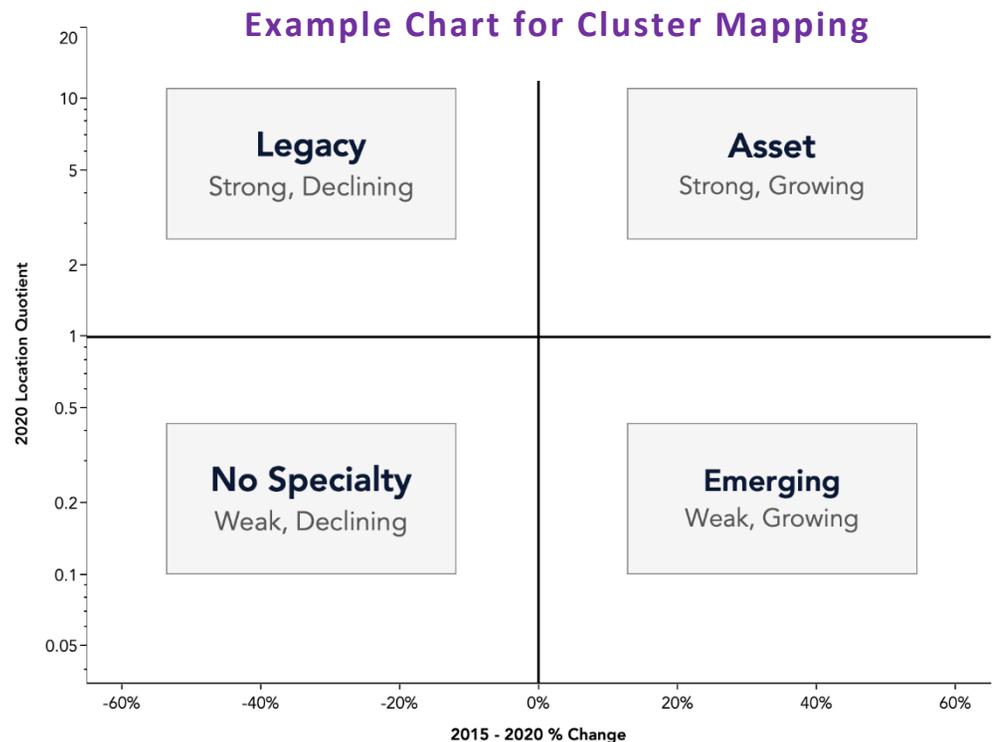
Source: US Cluster Mapping

Traded clusters often account for less than 40 percent of a region’s employment. However, they are usually responsible for 50 percent or more of a region’s income and innovation.

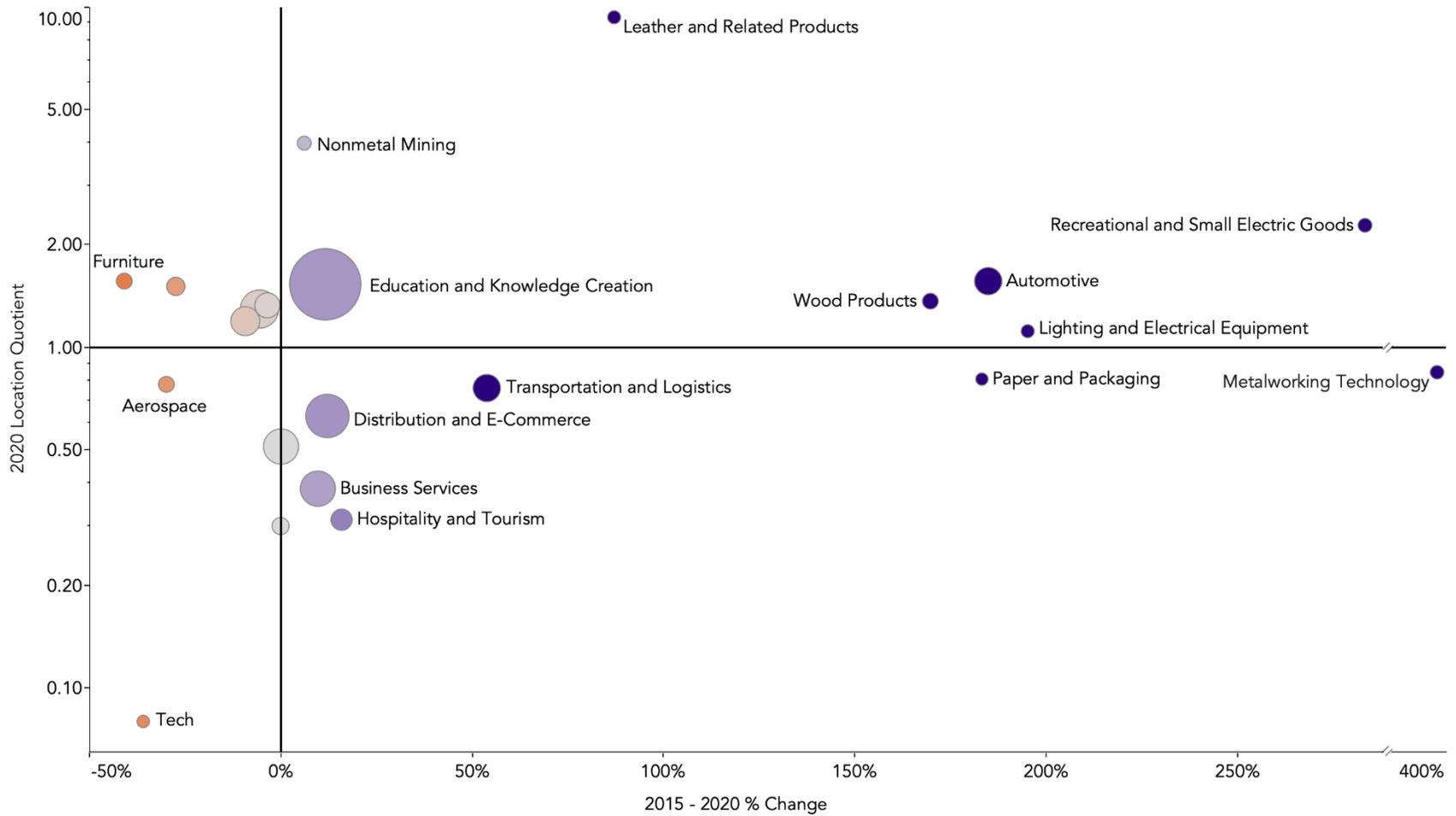
To determine the current state of traded clusters in Harnett County we collected employment and wage data for over 680 six-digit NAICS code industries for the county. These industries were then grouped into 53 traded clusters. The cluster groupings are very closely related to those provide by US Cluster Mapping, a project of the Harvard Business School. Those cluster groupings have not been updated to reflect the most recent iteration of NAICS codes. Therefore, we used EMSI’s conversion of the Harvard clusters using 2017 NAICS codes. A few tech-related sectors were moved from the business services cluster to the technology cluster. These clusters were then evaluated on recent growth, location quotients, wages, and total employment.

Location quotients (LQs) help demonstrate the clusters that have high concentrations in a region. LQs are the concentration of a cluster’s employment in the region compared to national employment levels. A location quotient greater than 1.00 demonstrates a higher concentration than what would be expected based on national levels. This can reveal what clusters are strongest in Harnett County and are generating wealth from outside of the region through exporting.

LQs when mapped alongside employment growth can show which clusters are thriving or declining. The adjoining chart demonstrates where a cluster may fall on the chart and how it corresponds to its strength and growth.



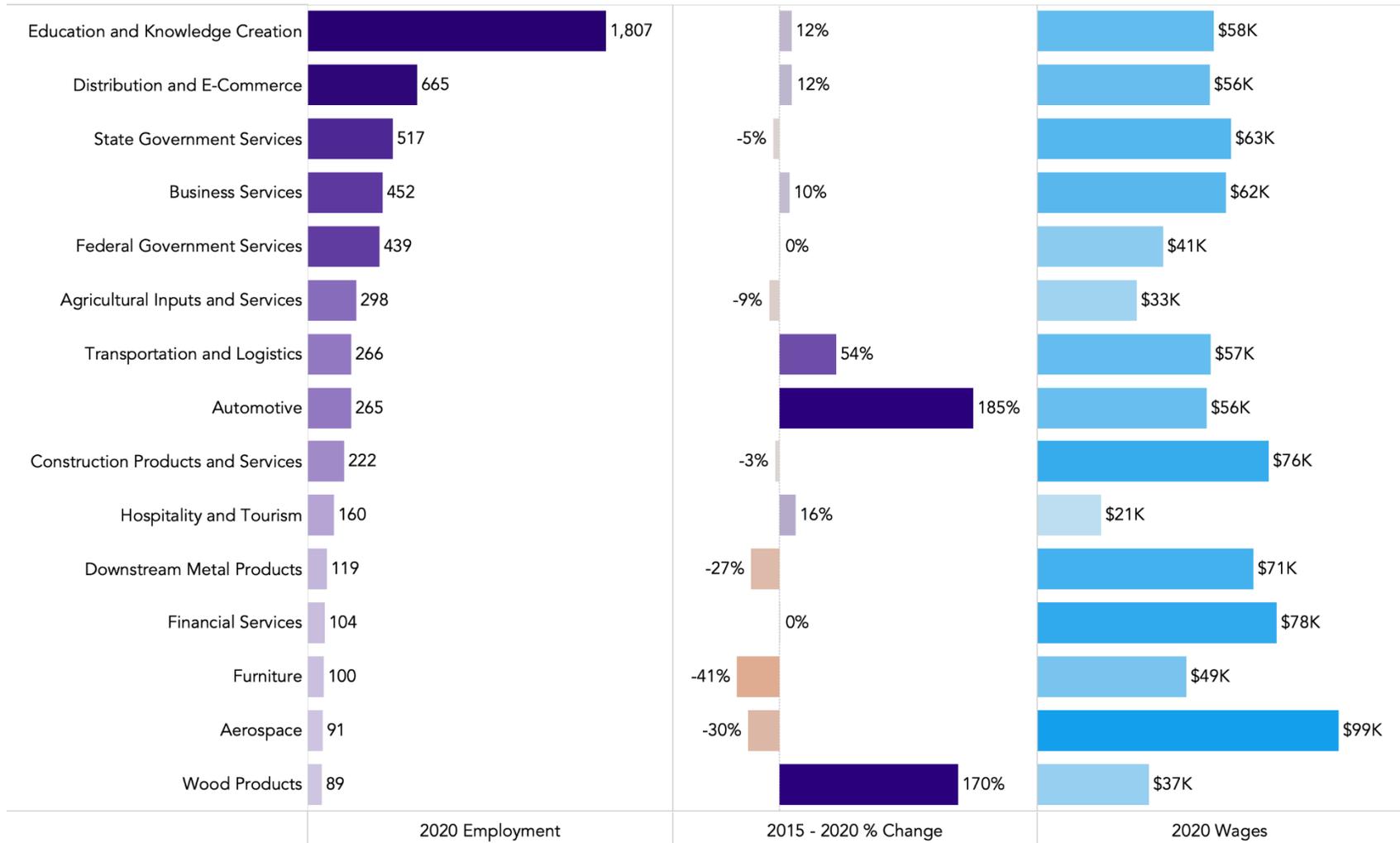
Harnett County Cluster Map



Source: EMSI 2021.1

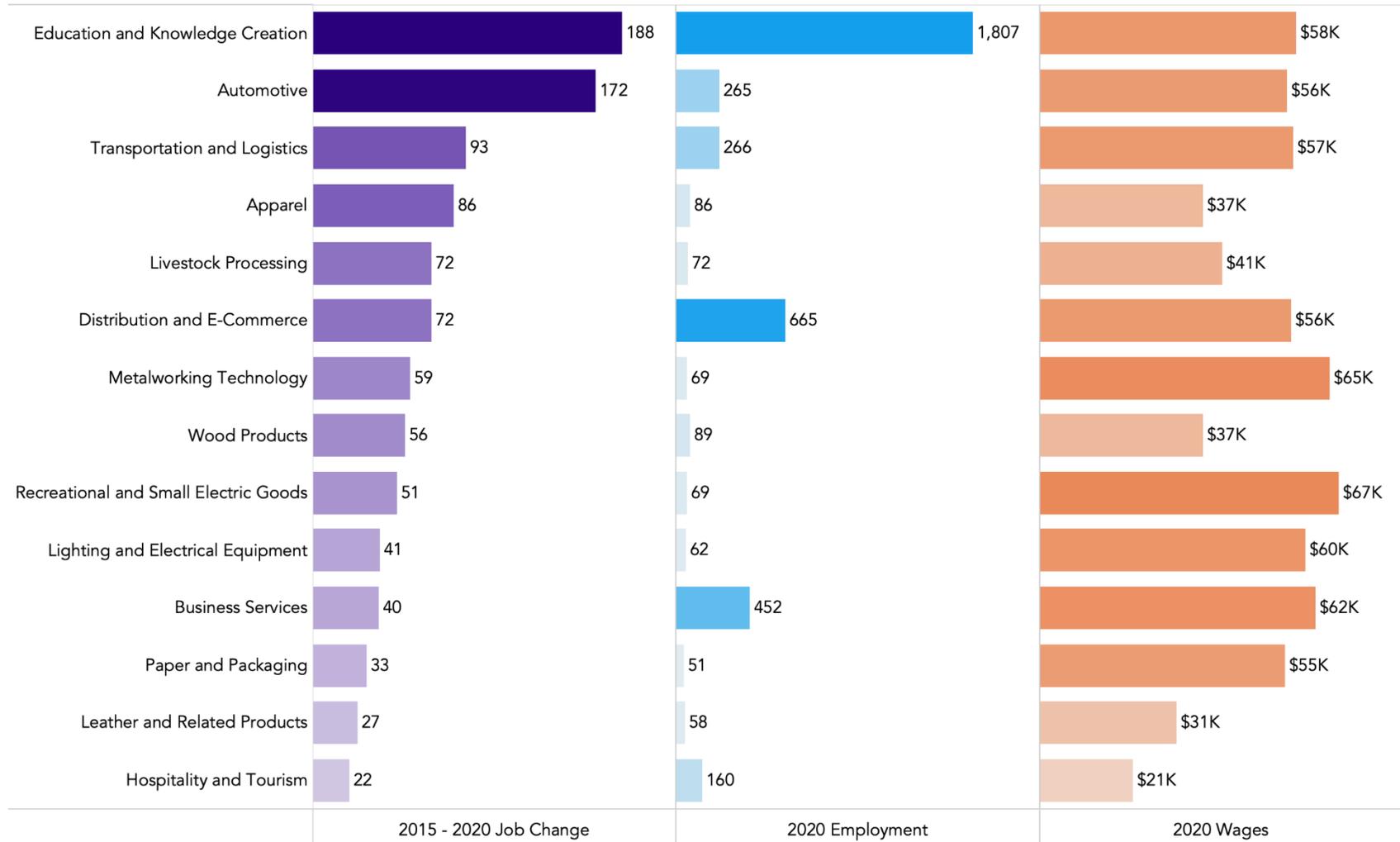
Note: The size of each cluster bubble is determined by the size of 2020 employment levels. The color of each cluster is determined by the employment growth from 2015 to 2020. Clusters with fewer than 50 employees were left off the chart.

Top Traded Clusters by Employment in Harnett County



Source: EMSI 2020.3

Fastest Growing Clusters in Harnett County



Source: EMSI 2020.3

SUMMARY OF STRONGEST INDUSTRY CLUSTERS and FUTURE GROWTH IN HARNETT COUNTY

At this point Angier does not have the resources to conduct marketing to attract new businesses, but as it prepares for future opportunities (such as along the bypass) you can expect the following clusters to be important to the county and to Angier:

- Education & Knowledge Creation
- Agriculture Inputs & Services
- Automotive
- Construction Products & Services
- Downstream Metal Products

In future years these emerging clusters, if supported, could be the source of new opportunities:

- Transportation & Logistics
- Recreational & Small Electric Goods
- Metalworking Technology
- Lighting and Electrical Equipment

The lack of available vacant buildings and ready-to-build land inhibits current non-residential growth, but as the bypass is developed, planning for employment opportunities in these industries can increase the likelihood of attracting jobs and investment.

ANGIER STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

This strategic plan process included one-on-one interviews with 18 Angier stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests and viewpoints. These individuals included local elected officials, small business owners, chamber of commerce and downtown advisory board representatives, home builders, developers, and town and county staff working in land use planning and economic development. Below is a summary of the input and areas of consensus gleaned from the stakeholder interviews.



Current Strengths and Weaknesses:

In terms of the community's strengths (overall and especially for economic development), respondents point to the town's strategic location which offers convenience and proximity to Raleigh, Wake County, and the entire Research Triangle region. Along with that is a location poised for growth, and a town able to accommodate some growth with available utility capacity. Although in the path of growth, Angier still offers a small-town atmosphere, a good place to raise a family, and relative affordability (though some respondents noted that this might be going away).

Other strengths mentioned often include a downtown that is "cute," "quaint," and has the potential to be a bigger draw. Jack Marley Park is another asset, described as a "beacon" with well-run programming that draws families.

The two community weaknesses mentioned most often are:

- a) the lack of amenities – dining, shopping, entertainment, and other activities – that appeal to residents, especially young people; and
- b) "blighted" buildings in poor condition that need to be renovated or removed, and some property owners that are reluctant to either improve them or sell.

Other weaknesses include infrastructure (particularly water pressure and concerns about future utility capacity and control) and traffic. A couple of stakeholders mentioned the lack of a local newspaper or other good means of communicating with residents.

The Town's Image:

The most frequent response regarding Angier's image (especially among those that don't live in the town) is that Angier is slowly becoming known, the image is changing for the better, and it is increasingly seen as a place where families are moving in. Several interviewees mentioned the "old image" of a poor, run-down small town. Others stressed that residents feel positive momentum and excitement about what is going on in Angier, especially downtown. It is known by some for being affordable and having a friendly, small-town feel.

Potential Impacts of the Bypass Project:

Perhaps surprisingly, most stakeholders feel that an NC 55 bypass will be a net positive, even for the downtown area. The largest number of respondents said that the reduced congestion will be a "huge relief," particularly from pass-through traffic during the morning and evening rush hours. They suggest that downtown will become safer and more walkable. However, several people stress that it is important not to lose focus on downtown as a priority, and to keep investing in it to help make it become a destination for residents of Harnett and southern Wake counties.

Regarding the bypass corridor itself, respondents believe that it could create a new retail hub as well as provide a suburban residential base for downtown businesses. Several emphasize the need for strong land use planning and zoning along the bypass corridor so that it does not create an unattractive, clogged commercial strip. Government staff noted that some planning updates have already been made to promote mixed-use development. Stakeholders believe that more, regular coordination between NCDOT, the town, residents, and businesses will be needed in order for new bypass-related development to be a positive addition to Angier.

A small number of interviewees noted that the NC 55 bypass could be a convenient location for light industrial, flex, or office development. Given the desirability of including job creation as an economic development goal for Angier, it does make sense to plan for some business park-type development along the bypass corridor.

Economic Development Priorities, Goals, and Strategies

Angier stakeholders are clear on what they see as the top priorities related to economic development. The health and vitality of the downtown is their number one focus area by a good margin. The top four priority areas cited most often are:

1. Downtown – its overall vitality, business mix, improved occupancy and condition of buildings via renovation and new uses, and movement toward a more attractive and uniform look and feel through signage, façade enhancements, etc.
2. Utilities and Other Infrastructure – especially water pressure, water and sewer capacity.
3. Ordinances and Code Enforcement – development ordinances to raise the bar for the quality of new development, and code enforcement to improve the town’s attractiveness, building and property maintenance.
4. The Park – prioritizing this important quality of life amenity by improving or enlarging Jack Marley Park, and/or creating a second park in Angier.

Beyond those, interviewees stressed that a broad-based approach to economic development is needed, and that all voices in the community should be heard. This includes emphasis on long-range planning for Angier (including traffic issues), so that as it grows it will be “growing well.” Stakeholders in Angier also mentioned amenities appealing to families and young people such as trails, greenways, sidewalks, and bike paths. A few mentioned the need for business development, building and site availability including locations for light industrial, flex space, and office space. Finally, some focused on assistance for small and local businesses.

The Future: What Angier Can Accomplish in the Next 5 to 10 Years:

Finally, we asked stakeholders in Angier what would represent a significant accomplishment over the next five years. And, if Angier continues on a successful course, what would economic development success for the town look like in ten years?

Not surprisingly, most respondents hope to see an improved downtown in five years. This would be evident in new downtown investments, new anchor or destination businesses, more nightlife, and better parking. After that, they would consider better maintenance of private properties to be an accomplishment, and hope that the town and county can work closely with property owners to make it happen.

Several stakeholders envision Angier being known for more than affordability and location and becoming more than a bedroom community. It would have more quality of life amenities including parks, trails, and sidewalks. A greater number and better mix of businesses is another desire, as is more consistent development and building standards. Finally, a few mention that an important accomplishment will be having all stakeholders moving in the same direction with leaders working together and no infighting.

In ten years, Angier stakeholders would judge economic development efforts a success if increased downtown vitality results in more discretionary spending remaining in the town. Several mention Fuquay-Varina as a model in terms of dining options, shops, and appearance. After that, they stress the overall attractiveness of the town, and suggest streetscape and other beautification projects. Next, they indicate that success could be measured by young people – including the children of residents – wanting to live and work in Angier.

Amenities again feature prominently. These include everything from dining options, parks and recreation, and festivals and events to a YMCA or Boys & Girls Club. Other indicators of success mentioned more than once: a) the bypass will be complete and done well; b) the area will have one or more new K-12 schools; and c) the overall quality of life will be improved.

Other Thoughts:

A few additional topics were brought up by multiple respondents. These include:

- Events, festivals, farmers markets and craft shows all add to the quality of life. Outdoor event spaces are important, and existing spaces could be improved or enlarged. The Clayton farmer’s market is cited as a good model. Establishing a regular civic event like “First Saturdays” was suggested.

Best Practice:

Even in small towns, a YMCA can be a successful, major draw. The Y in Boiling Springs, NC (population 4,600) was completed in 2008 and boasts an indoor climbing wall as well as an outdoor pool and splash park. It sees approximately 140,000 visits per year from town and county residents and students at Gardner-Webb University.

Yadkinville, NC’s YMCA was built in 2001 and includes an indoor pool and a gym with walking track above. In a town with 2,900 residents and a county with total population of 37,700, the Yadkinville Y still receives about 50,000 visits annually.

- The Town of Angier needs a new Town Hall and a new police station. Keeping these civic uses downtown is desirable. As part of any new government building project, public restrooms should be considered.
- A YMCA in Angier would be a great amenity to attract young families.
- Fuquay-Varina's great "curb appeal" is a model for what Angier could be.
- Parking, especially downtown and for park events, needs to be addressed along with other public investments.



ANGIER'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Growth pressures – whether desired or not – have come to northern Harnett County and will undoubtedly continue to impact Angier. The stakeholders we spoke with are not intimidated by the growth heading the town's way, but see it as an opportunity to “grow well.” The five strategy areas and 27 detailed strategies below are built around themes of community vitality, quality of life, and amenities. Even small investments made now, during this time of transition, will help position Angier as a desirable place to live, to work or own a business, and to enjoy amenities and activities as a resident or a visitor.

Strategy 1. Focus on the Downtown

1. Downtown Angier is the top priority for economic development efforts. The downtown has great character and offers great potential for improved business vitality and increased tax base. The NC 55 bypass could create a new commercial hub, but this should not divert attention from the downtown as the heart of the community.
2. Whether or not Angier is an official North Carolina Main Street program participant, many actions will require Main Street program-type cooperation between the town, existing businesses, the Downtown Advisory Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and others. The town government must assign a significant portion of a staff person's time to downtown improvement strategies.
3. Angier will pursue these downtown economic development strategies:
 - a. Fund streetscape improvement projects and work closely with NCDOT on their implementation;
 - b. Provide incentives for property owners to make building signage and façade improvements, creating a more uniform appearance and better “curb appeal”;
 - c. Improve the downtown business mix and business vitality through coordinated recruitment with Harnett County

Best Practice:

The little town of West Jefferson, NC (pop. 1,540) is a good example of maximizing small-town charm. West Jefferson has 19 murals throughout the downtown, including one highlighting the contributions of the town's significant Latino population. Other draws include a “gallery crawl” with 15 stops, and two craft breweries.

Best Practice:

A good resource on code enforcement in NC is “Maintenance of Vacant or Neglected Commercial Buildings: Options for NC Local Governments,” from the UNC School of Government (March 2018).

<https://canons.sog.unc.edu/maintenance-of-vacant-or-neglected-commercial-buildings/>

Economic Development, increased small business assistance utilizing SBTDC and Central Carolina Community College's Small Business Center, and use of Main Street program principles;

- d. Support increased nightlife options and other attractors for young people and young families;
- e. Increase local events and festivals;
- f. Invest in parking improvements;
- g. Work with the Downtown Advisory Board and Chamber of Commerce to improve the distribution of information throughout the community.

- 4. Emphasize increased enforcement of building and property maintenance codes and ordinances. Where possible, the town could obtain derelict properties with the goal of transferring them for redevelopment by the private sector.
- 5. Commit to keeping town government uses downtown and locating new facilities downtown – such as a new Town Hall and/or police department headquarters. New downtown facilities should incorporate amenities such as public restrooms.
- 6. Review financial incentive programs for their effectiveness in promoting an attractive and vibrant downtown.

Strategy 2. The NC 55 Bypass

- 7. Prioritize the NC 55 bypass project as an important opportunity to increase and diversify the non-residential tax base, provide local jobs, and add new types of housing options.
- 8. Frequent communication between the town and NCDOT to plan for this project's impacts and opportunities is essential.
- 9. Although some land use plan updates have already been accomplished in anticipation of the bypass, the town will implement a process for continued public and business community input to fine-tune land use goals and strategies.

Best Practice:

To ensure that all aspects of planning for a successful bypass project are taken into account, review the *Southwest Bypass Land Use Plan* created for Pitt County in October 2018. This plan was funded by the county, the town of Ayden, and NCDOT.

<https://www.pittcountync.gov/715/Southwest-Bypass-Land-Use-Plan>

10. Development along the bypass corridor should attempt to minimize strip development, traffic congestion, and frequent curb cuts while promoting a mix of uses including retail and attached residential.
11. For employment and non-residential tax base growth, incorporate opportunities for office, light industrial, and business “flex” space into bypass corridor planning. This could take the form of a master-planned business park.
12. Heighten standards for new development along the bypass corridor, stressing quality and appropriateness with Angier’s existing character.

Strategy 3. Quality of Life and Amenities

A focus on quality of life and amenities is needed to move Angier beyond being known as an affordable place for commuters to sleep. To compete with other communities for talented workers, entrepreneurs, young families and individuals, it needs to be known as having the amenities that make these groups want to live, work, and enjoy activities without leaving Angier.

13. Jack Marley Park is a prized asset. Maintaining and improving its condition and programming is a priority. Provide sufficient parking for park activities. If possible, consider expansion of the park.
14. Plan for a second town park in another part of Angier. The town should explore funding mechanisms for acquiring land for a second park, such as issuing bonds and/or obtaining grant funds.
15. An expanded network of sidewalks, trails, greenways, and bike paths is another important amenity. Plan for sidewalk expansion in the town’s capital improvements budget, and work with NCDOT to prioritize sidewalks in any streetscape or road expansion projects. Emphasize the inclusion of trails, greenways, and/or bike paths in standards for new development.
16. Town government should participate in any discussions and support efforts to locate new family amenities such as a YMCA or Boys & Girls Club in Angier or northern Harnett County.

Best Practice:

Cornelius, NC is a good example of a small city (pop. 29,000) with an extensive trail and greenway network. A 13-mile “Emerald Necklace” of paths and greenways around the city is underway.

<https://www.cornelius.org/123/Greenways-Trails>

17. Work with Harnett County Schools to designate new school locations in Angier and its ETJ, and include new school sites in negotiations and the review process for large new developments.
18. Pursue tax incentives and other funding programs that encourage private sector renovation and improvement of poorly-maintained properties, including historic district designation(s).
19. Prioritize public gathering spaces in town planning efforts, including potential areas for a farmers market, crafts market, etc. Incorporate public restrooms into plans for these spaces.
20. Hire a grant writer on an as-needed basis to pursue funding for any of these quality of life improvements.

Strategy 4. Infrastructure

21. The top infrastructure priority for Angier is to ensure adequate water pressure for all residents and businesses in the town.
22. Town staff will meet regularly with county utility directors to review long-range plans for ensuring water and sewer capacity for Angier, and report to the Board of Commissioners at least annually on capacity plans, issues, and opportunities.
23. Prioritize any opportunities (including state grant programs) to improve broadband internet service to all parts of the town and its ETJ.
24. Consider public parking to be an important infrastructure item, and plan accordingly – particularly parking to serve the downtown and Jack Marley Park.

Strategy 5. Business Development

25. Coordinate business development efforts closely with Harnett County Economic Development. The town manager's regular discussions with county staff should include a briefing from the county economic development director two to four times per year. It can be assumed that larger economic development clients will be shepherded by county, regional, or state economic development officials, but regular communication and follow-through is needed to ensure that the town is ready to provide information and respond to client questions and data requests.

- 26.** To plan for a variety of non-residential uses that would create local jobs and improve the town's tax base, Angier's land use planning should designate new locations for business park-type development that could include office, warehouse/distribution, and light industrial uses. The NC 55 bypass corridor is one logical location for these uses.
- 27.** The town will designate a point person on staff to coordinate downtown business retention, recruitment, and small business training efforts with the Downtown Advisory Board and Chamber of Commerce.

This plan was prepared in 2021 by the firm Economic Leadership LLC. The primary researchers and authors were Greg Payne, Sara Casey, and Ted Abernathy.

