

Roadmap to Reuse

North Wilkesboro, North Carolina

Acknowledgements

This study reflects a collaborative effort made possible through the partnership and shared knowledge of key organizations.

- **The Town of North Wilkesboro Department of Planning and Inspections** played a vital role in guiding the project's direction and ensuring alignment with local planning objectives.
- **The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality** contributed essential environmental insights that were crucial to understanding the site's redevelopment potential.
- Additionally, the expertise provided by **ICMA, the Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB)** provider for Region 4, was instrumental in advancing our collective efforts.

Together, these partners have contributed significantly to the comprehensive analysis and strategic recommendations presented in this report.

Produced by Atlas Community Studios, a team specializing in project implementation and the pre-development work needed to be implementation-ready, including research, planning, funding strategies, grant writing, and advocacy.

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Executive Summary

The former Smoot Tannery Site is well-positioned in a critical part of North Wilkesboro. This 3-acre parcel is in a recreational foothold near the town's flagship Smoot Park, the Yadkin River, and valuable trail infrastructure that attracts residents and visitors to the neighborhood. In its current state, with buildings crumbling to the ground and possible contamination from decades of industrial use, the site is negatively impacting North Wilkesboro's economy, public health outcomes, and preventing the town from reaching its full potential. Given the local, regional, and statewide commitment to growing the outdoor recreation economy, now is the time to put this site back into productive use.

This market study explores opportunities to revitalize the Smoot Tannery Site in ways that:

- Demonstrate Market Support, ensuring that any new development is feasible and sustainable, and
- Align with the town's Vision and Plans, supporting strategic investments that advance North Wilkesboro's growth and development goals.

Three potential reuse options were considered for the site:

- **Destination Recreation and Entertainment Facility:** A facility designed to attract both locals and tourists by offering a variety of recreational and entertainment activities, potentially including indoor and outdoor attractions, events, and community gathering spaces.
- **Food Hall:** A vibrant, communal dining space featuring multiple vendors offering diverse food and beverage options, creating a dynamic culinary experience supporting local food entrepreneurs.
- **Light-Manufacturing Facility for Outdoor Recreation Equipment:** A small-scale production center focused on the fabrication and assembly of outdoor recreation equipment, catering to the growing demand for locally-made, high-quality recreational products.

While a suitable option if it includes a retail or consumer-facing component, manufacturing is better suited for North Wilkesboro's industrial park or another commercial site. However, because this option has strong market support, detailed information is included in this study so that the town can consider pursuing it elsewhere.

It is recommended that North Wilkesboro pursue a destination recreation entertainment facility at the former Smoot Tannery site.

This model could include elements of a food hall to diversify its offerings and build partnerships, making the project more sustainable and resilient. More detailed information about each of these concepts, as well as demonstrated market support and references to similar successful projects in other communities, is detailed in the full report.

The study examines demographics and consumer behaviors among people local to North Wilkesboro—those living within town limits, Wilkes County, and within a 60-minute drive—and visitors, including people traveling to (or near) North Wilkesboro. A few key indicators of opportunity for a destination recreation and entertainment facility across the local market areas include the following.



871,827

people within a 60-minute drive of North Wilkesboro



NOTABLE INCREASES

ages 5 to 14 and 25 to 34, number of households & incomes

\$1.15B

spent by locals on **recreation & entertainment** in 2023

\$1.08B

spent by locals on **dining out** in 2023

\$4M

investment in Smoot Park

\$114.5M

spent by tourists in 2023 in Wilkes County

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VENUES WITH:

- indoor/outdoor recreation for all ages
- combined dining and entertainment
- direct connectivity to trail/river access

Despite the challenges posed by the site's deteriorating buildings and possible contamination, such properties are often located in desirable areas and can be significant assets for the community. The former Smoot Tannery site, in particular, is valuable to North Wilkesboro and, with careful planning and action, can be revitalized to spark further development and strengthen the town's position in the outdoor tourism economy.

This **“Roadmap to Reuse”** offers a detailed look at the site, an analysis of the demographic and consumer characteristics of the local markets, an overview of potential reuse options, case studies, and a high-level plan for reclaiming the Smoot Tannery site for the benefit of North Wilkesboro.

Introduction

IN THIS SECTION ↓

Historical Significance & Current Condition

Goals & Objectives

Methodology & Limitations

Existing Plans & Studies

Historical Significance & Current Condition

The 3-acre site known as the Smoot Tannery was originally operated by C.C. Smoot & Sons Tannery from 1897 until 1925, when it was sold to the International Shoe Co. During the 1920s, a New York company constructed a smokestack on the site, replacing the original four-sided smokestack. The new structure, built with clay masonry, stands approximately 150 feet tall, has a round cross-section, and features a base diameter of about 48 feet. This smokestack, designed to channel smoke from coal burned to generate electricity and power the tannery's boilers, remains a valued local landmark.

The tannery was Wilkes County's largest employer for much of the first half of the 20th century but was heavily damaged in the flood of 1916. Despite this, International Shoe Co. continued operations until the 1940 flood, which destroyed the

facility. Following the 1940 disaster, International Shoe Co. opted not to reopen the tannery. The site was later owned by a local businessman who operated Jenkins Wholesale and other businesses from the facility.

Today, the smokestack serves as a visual reminder of the tannery's historical significance and is a meaningful landmark in the local skyline. The site's proximity to the Yadkin River, a significant local and regional outdoor recreation and economic development asset, presents opportunities for revitalization, despite the property not being riverfront itself. Redeveloping the Smoot Tannery site could unlock the potential of adjacent riverfront properties, supporting the implementation of development priorities outlined in the adopted Outdoor Economy Plan and the state's Yadkin River State Trail Plan. However, current real and perceived



contamination at the site hampers its redevelopment, along with that of nearby areas. Recent environmental assessments have provided valuable insights into the extent of contamination and the cleanup required to repurpose the site, but without remediation, progress cannot be made. Additionally, the dilapidated

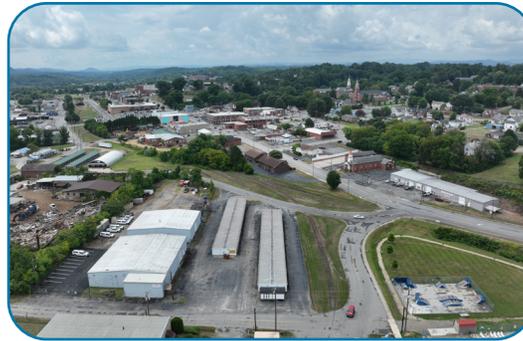
warehouse and industrial buildings on the site pose a significant safety risk as an attractive nuisance, potentially drawing individuals into dangerous situations that could lead to accidents.

Given the former Smoot Tannery site's historical significance and current relevance to economic development

priorities, now is the time to shift focus toward its redevelopment. The negative impacts that the site's real or perceived contamination and dilapidation have on the community can be transformed into potential positive outcomes of revitalization.

Goals & Objectives

The purpose of this market study is to establish the former Smoot Tannery site as a key development focus for the Town of North Wilkesboro. To guide this effort, the study focuses on the following objectives.



Identify reuse concepts that leverage the site's proximity to existing assets and align with local and regional development plans and priorities.



Demonstrate how these concepts align with market demands and assess their potential to contribute to local and regional economic growth.

Methodology & Limitations

METHODOLOGY

The market study for the former Smoot Tannery Site redevelopment was designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the site's potential for strategic development. The methodology included a detailed review of existing plans related to North Wilkesboro and Wilkes County, as well as studies assessing the site's environmental conditions, infrastructure, and surrounding land uses.

A high-level market study was conducted to ensure that the analysis was grounded in current market realities. The project team examined population data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, as well as the

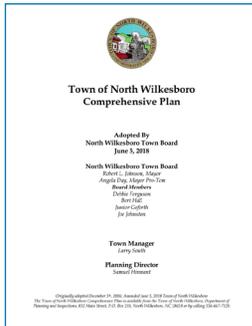
latest business and consumer data from ESRI, to identify trends, demands, and opportunities in three identified market areas. Community input from targeted plans was used to assess community preferences.

LIMITATIONS

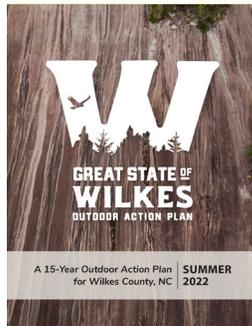
A major limitation of this study was the short project timeline, which prevented direct community engagement. Instead, survey data from recent relevant plans was utilized. This approach provided valuable insights but did not capture the community's preferences specific to the former Smoot Tannery Site. Recognizing this limitation, the next phase of redevelopment planning must include a more extensive community engagement process.

Disclaimer: *The results of this feasibility study do not guarantee the achievement of any specific outcome or success. The real estate market, economic conditions, regulatory environments, and numerous other factors beyond the control of any party can affect the results of any redevelopment effort. Any decision to proceed with a project or investment based on the contents of the study should be made only after careful consideration of all relevant factors, including independent financial, legal, and technical advice.*

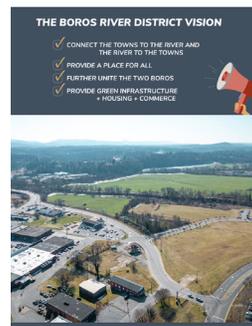
Existing Plans & Studies



**TOWN OF NORTH
WILKESBORO
COMP. PLAN**
June 2018



**GREAT STATE
OF WILKES
OUTDOOR
ACTION PLAN**
2022



**BOROS RIVER
DISTRICT PLAN**
2022



**SMOOT PARK
MASTER PLAN**
2022

- PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT**
- PHASE II ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT**
- BROWNFIELDS SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT**
- REGULATED BUILDING MATERIAL SURVEY**
- REPORT OF LIMITED STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT**

Site Assessment

IN THIS SECTION ↓

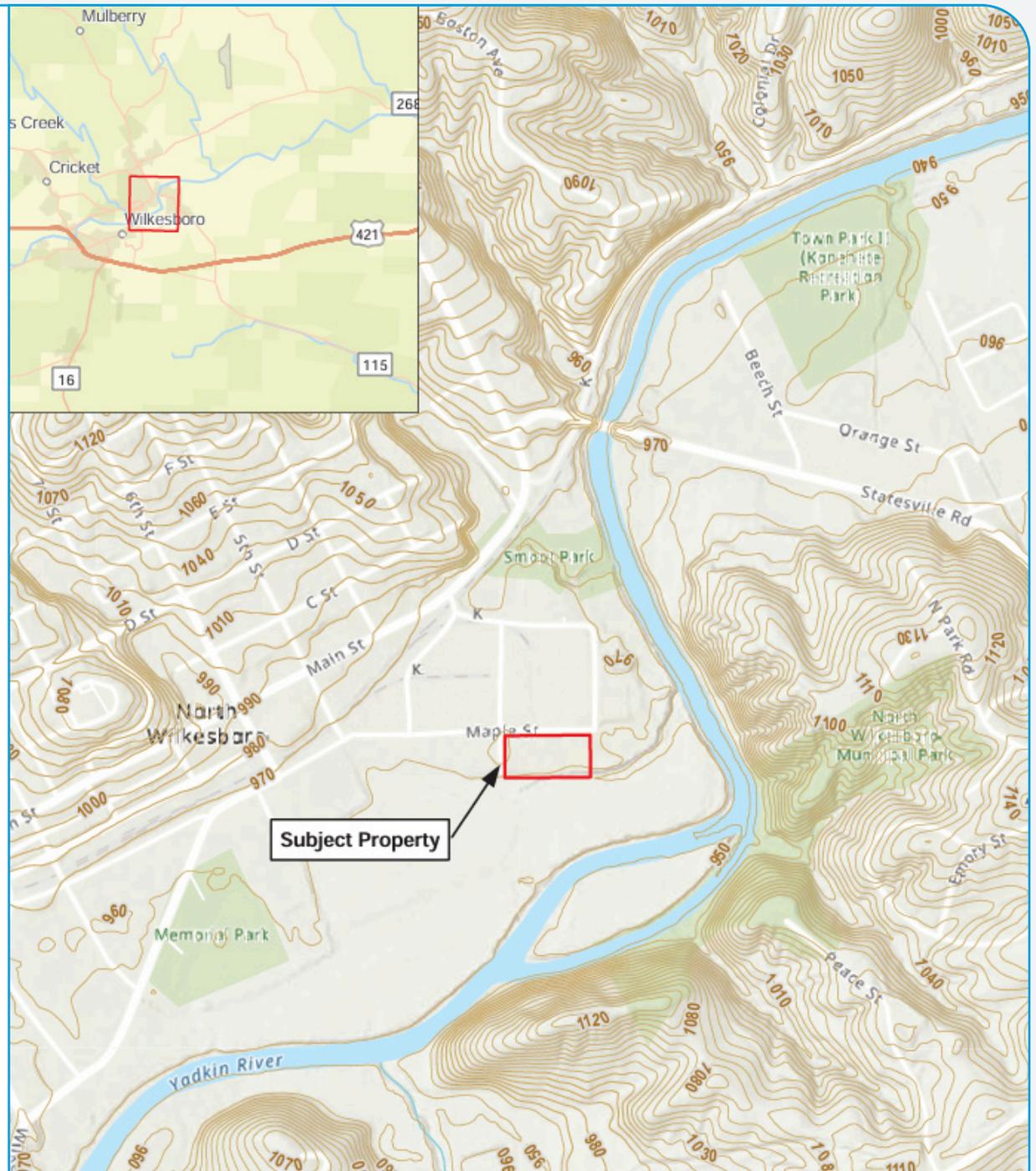
Site Location

Site Constraints

Impacts of the Current Condition

Site Location

The former Smoot Tannery site is strategically located between the town's flagship park, Smoot Park, the Yadkin River, and Blair Island. Additionally, the site is situated along the Yadkin Greenway Trail, the Yadkin River Trail, and the Overmountain Victory Historic National and State Trail. The site is also adjacent to the town's municipal wastewater treatment plant. It comprises a 3.01-acre parcel in a commercial/industrial area and is occupied by six vacant and dilapidated office and warehouse buildings and an iconic smokestack.



Site Constraints



LOCATION

The former Smoot Tannery Site is situated near a municipal wastewater treatment plant, which poses a potential challenge for redevelopment aimed at tourism and recreational use. However, based on feedback from trail-users and a tour of the area in August 2024, odors and noise are largely absent, and the visual impact is minimal. The surrounding area includes active or inactive industrial properties, which may further diminish the site's appeal for tourism-related purposes.



SITE CONTROL

The redevelopment of the former Smoot Tannery site is contingent upon the successful acquisition of the property by the Town or a designated redevelopment partner. Until the property is secured, progress in transforming the area into a community recreational space or other use cannot proceed.



PRESERVATION COSTS

While a valuable landmark, the historic tannery smokestack represents a possible constraint on the site's redevelopment. As provided by WSP USA Environment & Infrastructure Inc., preserving the smokestack would require an estimated restoration cost of \$75,000 to \$125,000. These preservation costs are in addition to the expenses associated with site remediation and the demolition of existing structures.

CONTAMINATION & STRUCTURAL ISSUES

The site's history as a tannery has led to confirmed contamination, as detailed through completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs). Additionally, three of the buildings on site were observed to to be heavily dilapidated and deemed unsafe/inaccessible to enter by the assessment team at WSP. Addressing these environmental concerns and structural issues is crucial to ensuring the site is safe for future use, whether for recreational, commercial, or industrial purposes. The associated costs and complexity of remediation and demolition present an additional challenge to the redevelopment efforts.

Impacts of the Current Condition on North Wilkesboro



ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC HEALTH

The current condition of the site poses direct risks to environmental and public health due to contamination that pollutes soil, air, and water both on- and off-site. Hazardous materials, such as asbestos in dilapidated buildings and PAHs in the soil, present ongoing exposure risks to the community. These hazards can affect individuals who walk on the site, are exposed to windborne contaminants, or consume groundwater impacted by the site.



ECONOMIC

The site, in its current state, represents a lost opportunity for economic activity, particularly in a Tier 1 county like Wilkes County, where economic revitalization is crucial. The presence of the brownfield limits potential business development and job creation, contributing to the area's economic stagnation.



PROPERTY VALUES & LOCAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The blighted condition of the site negatively impacts surrounding property values and creates a deterrent for local business investment. The perception of neglect and contamination discourages potential investors and undermines efforts to improve the local economy.



COMMUNITY PERCEPTION & MORALE

The site contributes to a perception of blight within the community, which can erode community morale and cohesion. The presence of abandoned and hazardous structures fosters a sense of neglect and can lower the overall quality of life for residents.



SAFETY CONCERNS & SOCIAL ISSUES

The deteriorating condition of the site poses significant safety hazards, including the risk of injury from unstable structures and exposure to contaminants. Additionally, the neglected state of the site can attract unwanted activities, contributing to social issues within the community. Addressing these safety concerns is essential to improving the overall well-being of the area.

Market Analysis

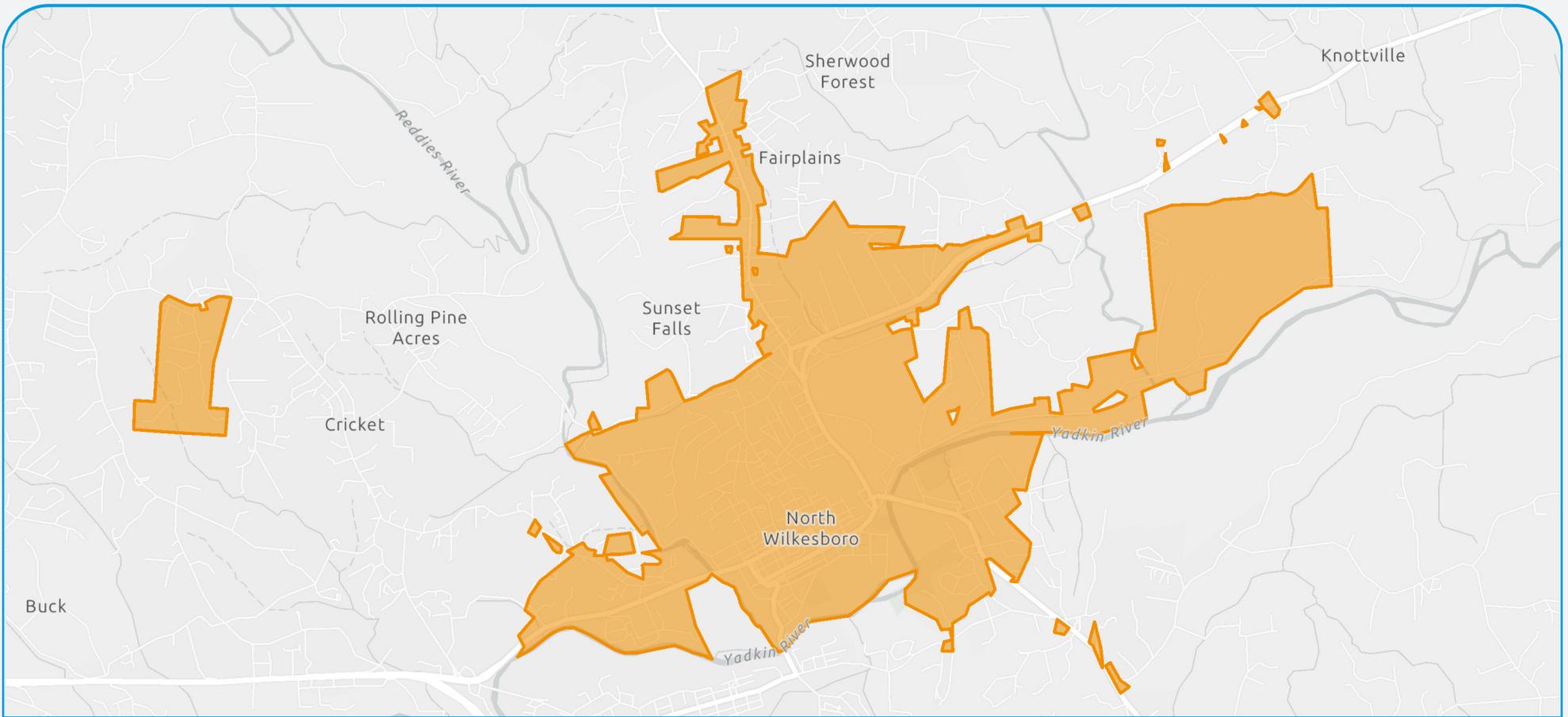
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Market Areas Defined

Primary Market: North Wilkesboro

Secondary Market: Wilkes County

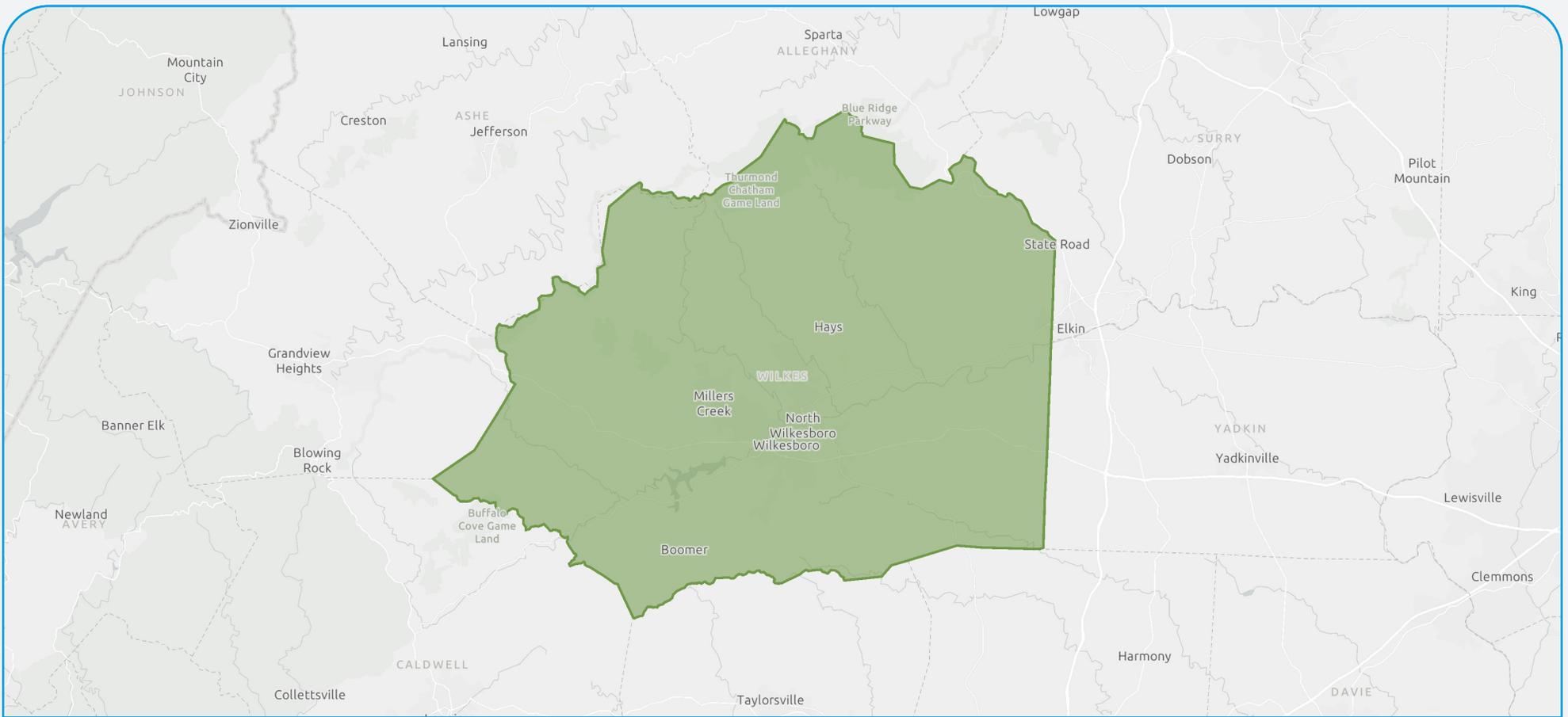
Expanded Market: 60-Minute Drive Radius



Market Areas Defined

PRIMARY MARKET: NORTH WILKESBORO

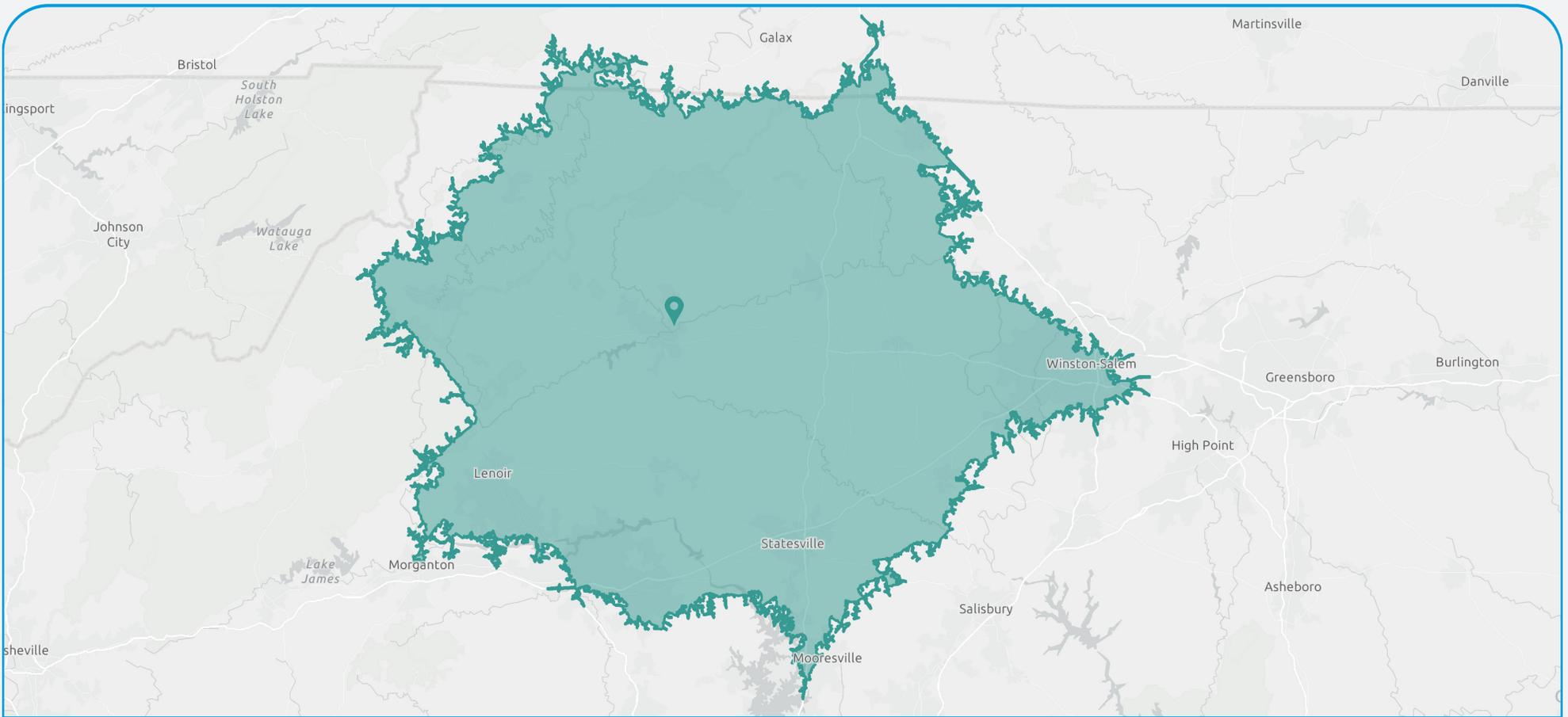
The Primary Market Area is centered on North Wilkesboro, focusing on the immediate town and its residents. This area represents the core market where the majority of direct economic impact and engagement are expected to occur.



Market Areas Defined

SECONDARY MARKET: WILKES COUNTY

The Secondary Market Area extends beyond North Wilkesboro to encompass all of Wilkes County. This area includes surrounding towns and communities within the county, capturing a broader audience that supports and influences economic activities in North Wilkesboro.



Market Areas Defined

EXPANDED MARKET: 60-MINUTE DRIVE RADIUS

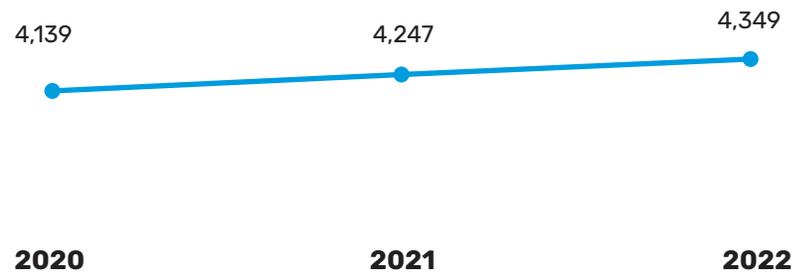
The Expanded Market Area covers a 60-minute drive radius from the former Smoot Tannery site. This area includes potential visitors, customers, and businesses from neighboring counties and regions who can access North Wilkesboro within an hour, contributing to the wider economic reach and influence of the market.

Primary Market: North Wilkesboro

Demographics

TOTAL POPULATION

The total population increased by 5.1% from 2020 to 2022 indicating a growing community.



	2020	2021	2022
Total Male Population	2,151	2,201	2,219
Total Female Population	1,988	2,046	2,130

POPULATION BY AGE

	2020	2021	2022	% Chg (2020-22)
Under 5 Years	5.0%	5.2%	5.1%	+7.2%
5 to 9 Years	6.6%	7.2%	7.1%	+12.8%
10 to 14 Years	4.2%	6.1%	6.5%	+61.5%
15 to 17 Years	4.0%	3.6%	3.2%	-14.6%
18 to 24 Years	5.7%	5.2%	6.5%	+19.0%
25 to 34 Years	17.0%	12.7%	8.0%	-50.8%
35 to 44 Years	11.4%	13.3%	16.6%	+53.6%
45 to 54 Years	14.7%	13.4%	15.5%	+11.0%
55 to 64 Years	13.1%	15.1%	12.5%	-0.2%
65 to 74 Years	9.6%	8.6%	11.5%	+26.3%
75 to 84 Years	6.1%	7.5%	6.0%	+4.8%
85 Years and Over	2.7%	2.2%	1.5%	-40.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE ↑

children aged 5 to 14 suggests a potential rise in demand for educational facilities and family-oriented services

14.6% DECLINE ↓

in 15-to-17-year-olds indicates a possible outmigration of teenagers or a demographic shift.

19% INCREASE ↑

in 18 to 24 age group potentially reflecting an influx of young adults, possibly due to educational opportunities or entry-level job availability

SIGNIFICANT DECLINE ↓

people aged 25 to 34 suggests challenges in retaining young professionals and families, possibly due to housing, employment, or lifestyle factors

ROBUST WORKING AGE POPULATION

people aged 35 to 54 saw considerable growth, indicating a potential increase in demand for housing, jobs, and amenities catering to this demographic

NOTABLE INCREASE ↑

people aged 65 to 74 suggests an aging population that might drive demand for healthcare services, senior housing, and recreational facilities

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	2020	2021	2022	% Chg (2020-22)
Less than \$10,000	11.5%	13.4%	5.7%	-49.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	19.8%	15.2%	13.6%	-29.4%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	12.9%	9.2%	9.6%	-22.9%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	3.2%	3.0%	5.8%	+85.2%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	2.5%	6.1%	10.8%	+351.1%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	3.0%	2.3%	3.4%	+17.5%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	0.0%	0.6%	2.0%	
\$40,000 to \$44,999	3.3%	2.6%	1.1%	-66.7%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	3.0%	1.7%	5.1%	+72.4%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	8.7%	6.4%	6.3%	-25.5%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	4.9%	10.1%	5.7%	+18.1%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.0%	9.3%	9.2%	+4.7%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	12.0%	11.4%	5.0%	-57.2%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	1.3%	3.4%	11.8%	+866.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.6%	1.0%	1.0%	+58.3%
\$200,000 or More	4.2%	4.5%	4.1%	+1.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates

SIGNIFICANT DECREASES ↓

households earning less than \$19,999

suggests an improvement in lower income brackets

NOTABLE INCREASES ↑

households earning \$20,000–\$29,999 and \$45,000–\$49,999

indicates economic improvements for households moving up from lower-income statuses

INCREASING AFFLUENCE ↑

among households earning \$125,000–\$199,999

HOUSEHOLDS



16.7%

increase in the number of households with one or more people under 18 years, indicating a growing number of families with children.



15.4%

increase in the number of nonfamily households without children under 18 years.



40.1%

increase in married-couple families with children, suggesting a trend towards more traditional family structures.



40%

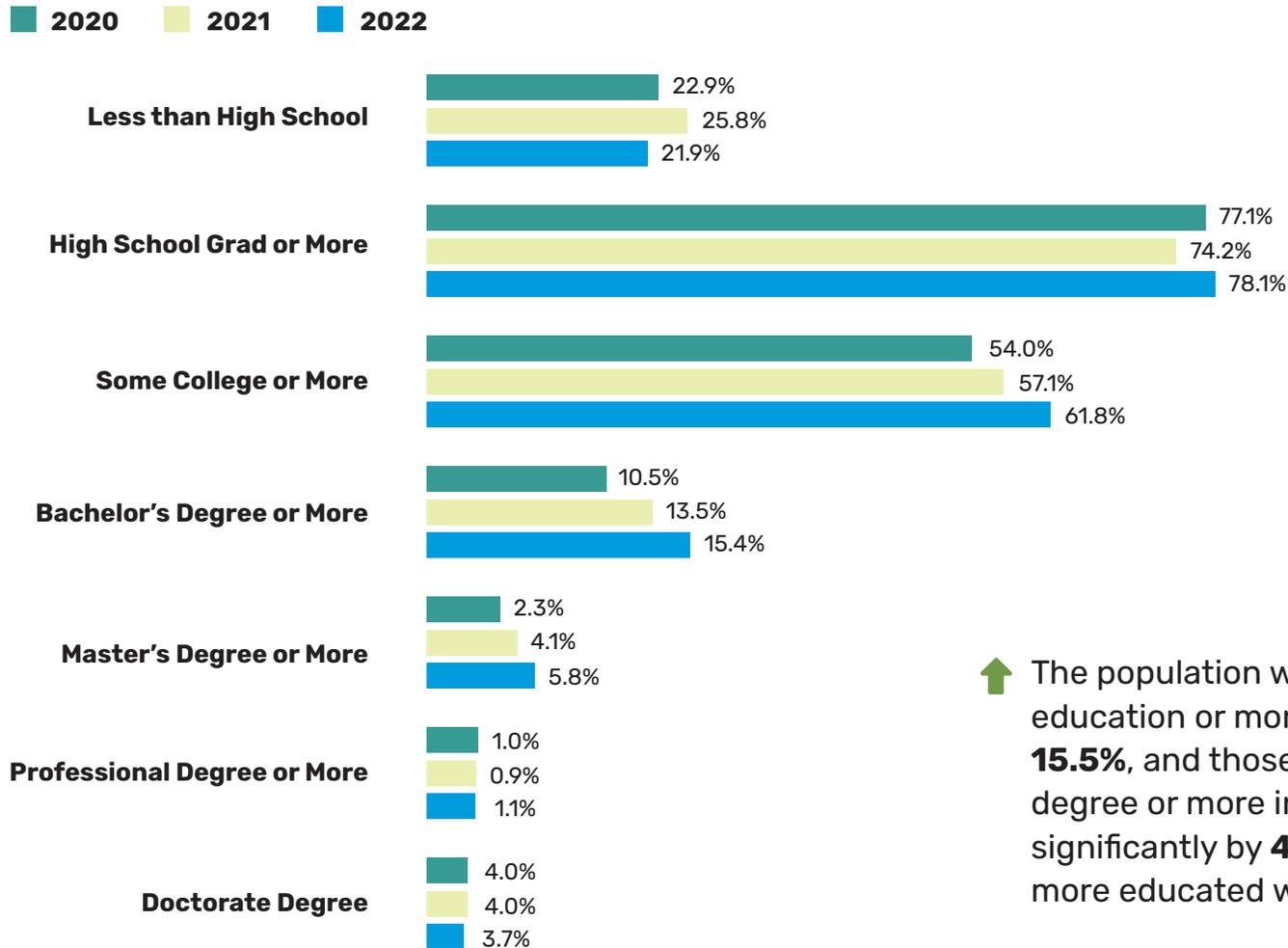
increase in the number of female-headed households without husbands.



The increased diversity in household types signals increased demand for “all-age-friendly” amenities, services, and entertainment options.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Population 25 Years and Older



↑ The population with some college education or more increased by **15.5%**, and those with a bachelor's degree or more increased significantly by **47.8%**, indicating a more educated workforce.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2018–2022)

Consumer Behavior

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

Tapestry Segmentation by ESRI classifies US neighborhoods into 67 unique segments, based on demographics and socioeconomic characteristics to help you understand your audience. Tapestry segments offer insights into North Wilkesboro's age distribution, income levels, household composition, education, and lifestyle preferences. This information helps tailor the mix of market-supported end uses to better meet the needs and preferences of the local population.

Small Town Sincerity 57.8%

Includes young families and senior householders that are bound by community ties. The lifestyle is down-to-earth and semirural, with television for entertainment and news, and emphasis on convenience for both young parents and senior citizens. Residents embark on pursuits including online computer games, renting movies, indoor gardening, and rural activities like hunting and fishing.

Midlife Constants 20.0%

Midlife Constants residents are seniors, at or approaching retirement, with below-average labor force participation and below-average net worth. Although located in predominantly metropolitan areas, they live outside the central cities, in smaller communities. Their lifestyle is more country than urban.

Heartland Communities 12.3%

These older householders are primarily homeowners, and many have paid off their mortgages. Their children have moved away, but they have no plans to leave their homes. Their hearts are with the country; they embrace the slower pace of life here but actively participate in outdoor activities and community events. Traditional and patriotic, these residents support their local businesses, always buy American, and favor domestic driving vacations over foreign plane trips.

PROJECTED SPENDING



Apparel & Services

\$2,185,748
2024 → \$2,508,934
2029
\$323,186



Alcoholic Beverages

\$582,676
2024 → \$669,280
2029
\$86,604



Entertainment & Recreation

\$3,999,217
2024 → \$4,587,610
2029
\$588,393



Food Away from Home

\$3,583,630
2024 → \$4,112,843
2029
\$529,213



Food

\$10,877,017
2024 → \$12,478,262
2029
\$1,601,245



Mortgage Payments & Home Basics

\$11,908,730
2024 → \$13,669,983
2029
\$1,761,253

Membership fees for clubs and fees for participant sports are expected to see significant growth, indicating a **strong demand for recreational activities.**

RECREATIONAL PREFERENCES

Key Takeaways from the 2022 Smoot Park Master Plan Survey

HIGH PRIORITY:

- Pools
- Playgrounds
- Main Pavilion

indicating strong community support for maintaining and potentially enhancing these areas

NEED EXPANSION AND/OR IMPROVEMENTS:

Pools
Playgrounds
Shelters

MULTIPLE RESPONDENTS HIGHLIGHTED DEMAND FOR FACILITIES

-  pickleball courts
-  splash pad
-  larger skate park
-  improved restrooms

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL AMENITIES:



toddler play areas



dog park



an outdoor stage

indicates a community interest in diverse recreational offerings

Business Landscape

EMPLOYMENT



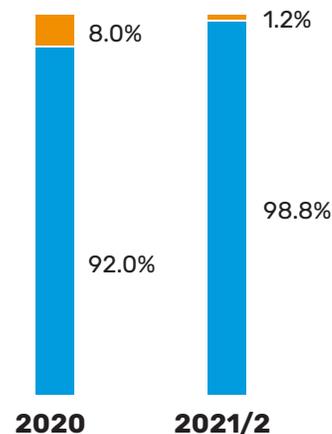
1.2% INCREASE ↑

total labor force

from 2020 to 2021, indicating a stable and slightly growing workforce

■ **Employed** ■ **Unemployed**

An increase in employment from 2020 to 2021 and 2022, indicates improved job availability. While decreases in unemployment highlights successful employment initiatives or general economic recovery.



EMPLOYMENT INCREASES IN SECTORS:

- Transportation and Warehousing
- Educational Services
- Health Care
- Arts and Entertainment

Indicate areas where workforce demand is rising and potential opportunities for development and investment exist.

EMPLOYMENT DECREASES IN SECTORS:

- Manufacturing
- Retail Trade
- Wholesale Trade
- Professional Services

While employment in manufacturing has decreased, potentially signaling declines in the industry's competitiveness, North Wilkesboro remains marketable for manufacturing opportunities due to its skilled workforce and deep-rooted generational knowledge.

BUSINESSES

Sector	Businesses	Employees
Retail Trade	153 (25.8%)	1,778 (23.1%)
Services	270 (45.6%)	4,261 (55.3%)
Manufacturing	14(2.4%)	517 (6.7%)
Construction	26 (4.4%)	184 (2.4%)
Accommodation + Food	26 (4.4%)	429 (5.6%)



592
businesses



7,704
people employed



SERVICE SECTOR
is a key driver of the local economy



ROBUST MARKET
for consumer goods and services



Secondary Market: Wilkes County

Demographics

POPULATION BY AGE

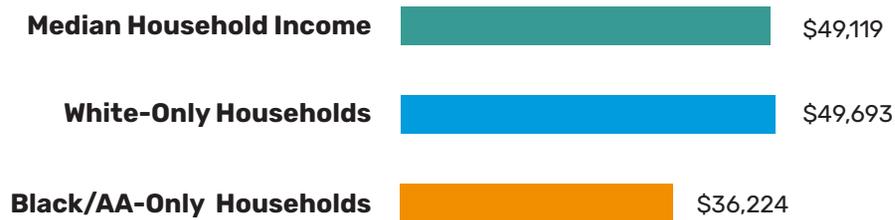
Wilkes County has a population of 66,125, fairly distributed across various age groups, with a **notable concentration** in the 25-34 years, 35-44 years, and 55-64 years age brackets.

The **median age is 45.3 years.**

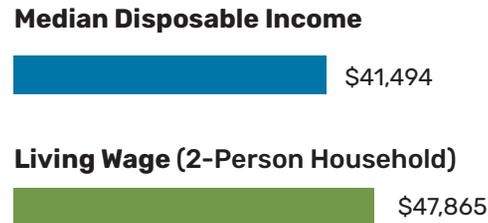
Under 5 Years	3,258	4.9%
5 to 9 Years	3,581	5.4%
10 to 14 Years	3,810	5.8%
15 to 17 Years	2,590	3.9%
18 to 24 Years	5,132	7.8%
25 to 34 Years	7,340	11.1%
35 to 44 Years	7,145	10.8%
45 to 54 Years	8,794	13.3%
55 to 64 Years	9,744	14.7%
65 to 74 Years	8,431	12.8%
75 to 84 Years	4,395	6.6%
85 Years and Over	1,905	2.9%

INCOME

The median household income is \$49,119, with significant disparities by race. White-only households report earning \$49,693, and Black or African American-only households report earning \$36,224.



The median disposable income is slightly below the living wage requirement for a two-person household. This indicates that many two-person households may **struggle to meet basic needs without additional income or financial support.**



\$66,851

living wage for household with two adults and one child

\$81,885

living wage for household with two adults and two children

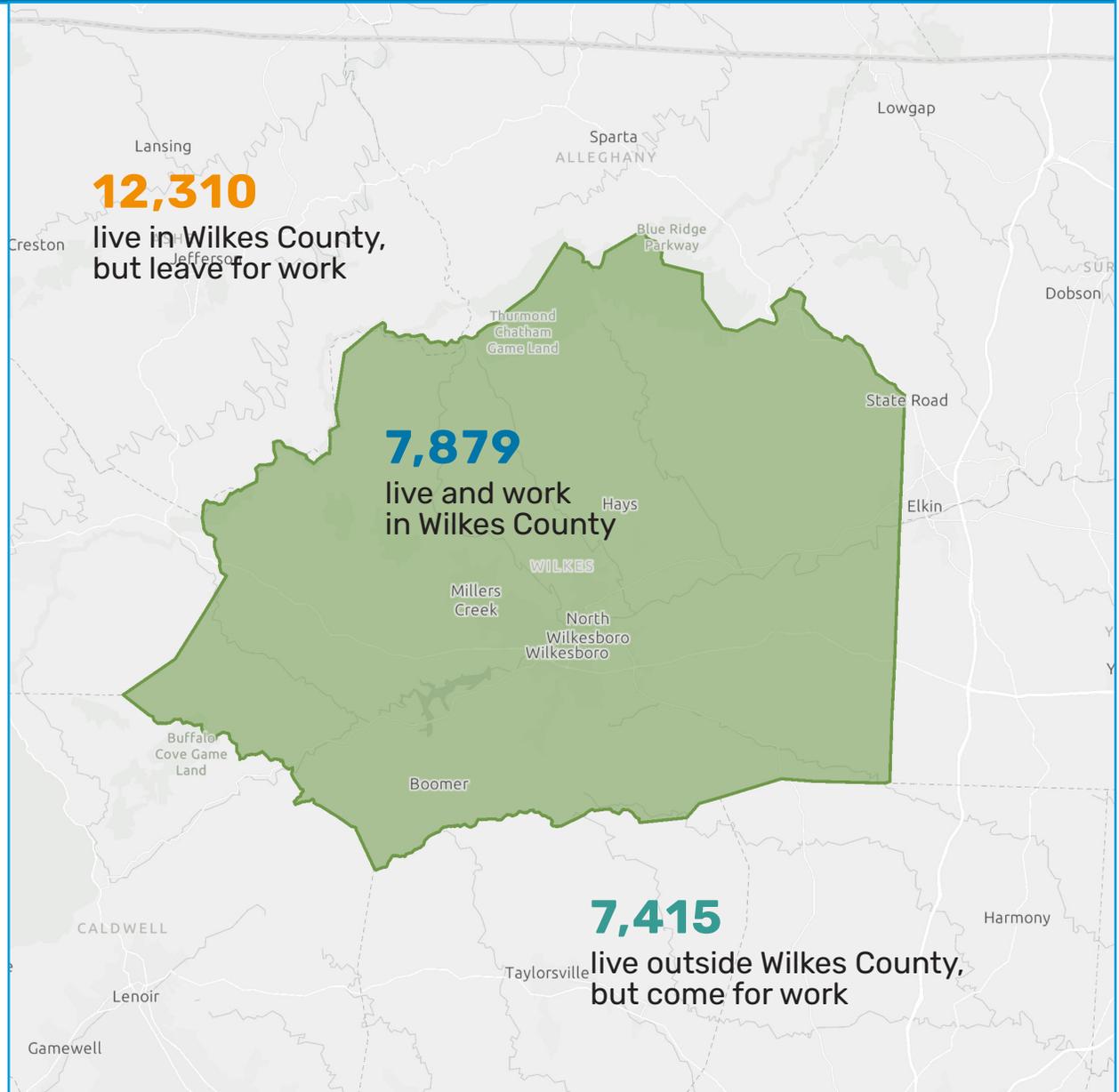
The living wage requirements for a household with one and two children far exceeds the median disposable income, suggesting that these households face substantial financial challenges.

Commuter Trends

A net outflow, with more residents commuting out of Wilkes County for work than commuting in, suggests the potential to attract and retain local residents by creating more employment opportunities within the county.

The most significant outflows are in higher-paying jobs earning more than \$3,333 per month and in residents aged 30 to 54. This suggests an opportunity to create higher-paying jobs that appeal to this prime working-age demographic.

However, the inflow of workers from neighboring counties and states suggests that Wilkes County has strong regional connectivity, which can be leveraged to attract businesses and employees.



Consumer Behavior

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

Tapestry Segmentation by ESRI classifies US neighborhoods into 67 unique segments, based on demographics and socioeconomic characteristics to help you understand your audience. Tapestry segments offer insights into Wilkes County's age distribution, income levels, household composition, education, and lifestyle preferences. This information helps tailor the mix of market-supported end uses to better meet the needs and preferences of the local population.

Rooted Rural 31.0%

Rooted Rural residents live in many of the heavily forested regions of the country. This group enjoys time spent outdoors, hunting, fishing, or working in their gardens. Indoors, they enjoy watching television with a spouse and spending time with their pets. When shopping, they look for American-made and generic products. These communities are heavily influenced by religious faith and family history.

Southern Satellites 26.7%

This market is typically slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

Rural Bypasses 11.2%

These families live within small towns along country back roads and enjoy the open air in these sparsely populated neighborhoods. Their country lifestyle focuses on the outdoors, gardening, hunting, and fishing. Those who are not yet retired work in blue-collar jobs in the agriculture or manufacturing industries.

PROJECTED SPENDING



Entertainment & Recreation

\$69,374,119
2024

\$10,038,238

\$79,412,357
2029



Food Away from Home

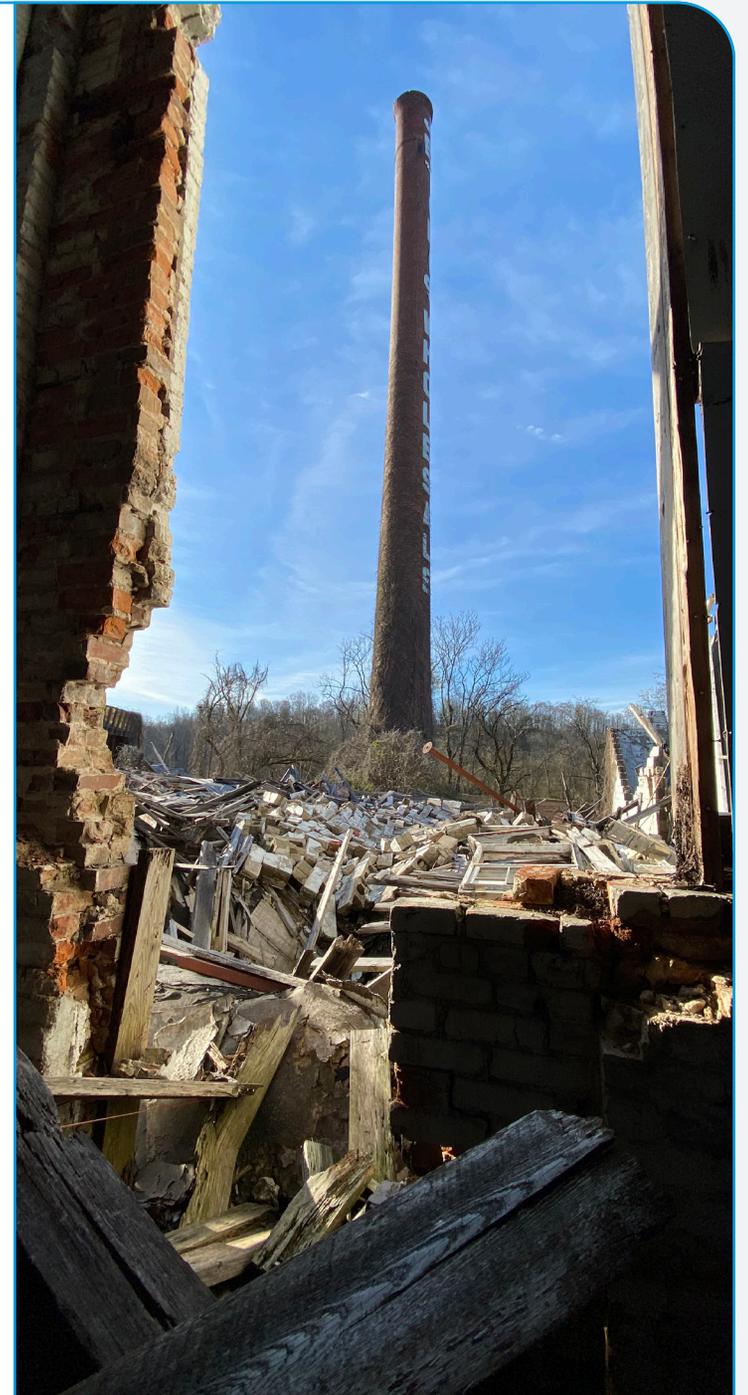
\$126,605,420
2024

\$8,917,793

\$144,920,490
2029



Wilkes County shows a high Market Potential Index (MPI) for fast food and dining out. Over 90% of adults are expected to frequent these establishments, indicating strong demand in the food and beverage sector.



RECREATIONAL PREFERENCES

Key Takeaways from the Great State of Wilkes Outdoor Action Plan Survey

WHICH ACTIVITIES HAVE YOU OR YOUR FAMILY PARTICIPATED IN WITHIN THE LAST YEAR IN WILKES COUNTY?



walking **89.7%**



hiking **65.1%**



festivals **63.1%**



downtown events **55.9%**



kayaking **39.5%**



swimming **32.7%**



camping **28.0%**



mountain biking **27.0%**

WHICH OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSETS IN WILKES COUNTY HAVE YOU OR YOUR FAMILY VISITED WITHIN THE LAST YEAR?

Yadkin River Greenway **69.0%**

Stone Mountain State Park **64.7%**

Cub Creek Park **64.7%**

Blue Ridge Parkway **85.1%**

Downtown Wilkesboro **84.1%**

W. Kerr Scott Reservoir **73.3%**

76.3%

of respondents believe outdoor recreation and tourism are very important to Wilkes County's future, underscoring the economic and social benefits of developing these sectors.

Business Landscape



2,373
businesses



22,457
people employed



25.8%
of total businesses are
in the retail sector

SIGNIFICANT INDUSTRIAL BASE & AGRIBUSINESS

Tyson Foods, ECMD, Inc., Thomas Brothers Meat, Wayne-Sandersson Farms Processing

The average wage in Wilkes County is significantly below the national average.

This suggests a more affordable labor market but may also indicate lower overall economic prosperity.

DIVERSE ARRAY OF INDUSTRIES



retail



healthcare



manufacturing



construction

Average Wage  \$45,710

National Average  \$70,857



\$2.8B
GDP in Wilkes County



\$227K
productivity per worker
Wilkes County



\$288K
productivity per worker
National

This lower productivity may reflect the economic challenges or opportunities for efficiency improvements in the local industries.

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS A VALUABLE ASSET TO THE COMMUNITY.

Offers programs linked to key industries:

-  Applied Engineering
-  Welding
-  Automotive Mechanics

This educational infrastructure supports the local manufacturing and technical job markets, providing a pipeline of skilled workers.

Offers several programs directly related to sectors:

-  Culinary Arts
-  Hospitality & Tourism
-  Business Development

These programs provide essential skills and training that support the local economy by developing a workforce tailored to the needs of these industries.

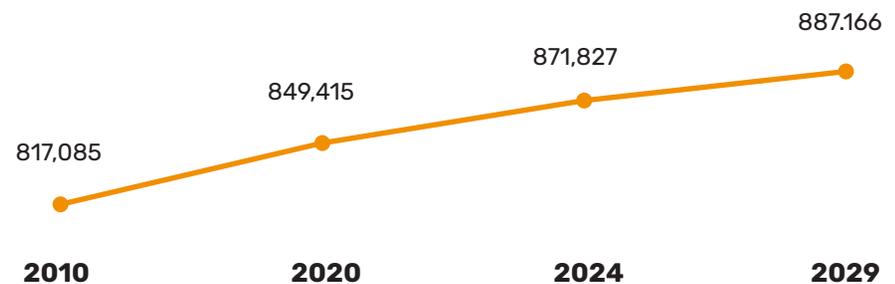
Expanded Market: 60-Minute Drive Radius

Demographics

POPULATION

The population within a 60-minute drive time radius of North Wilkesboro is projected to grow from 849,415 in 2020 to 887,166 by 2029.

The modest population growth could increase the demand for services, housing, and infrastructure. The slight shift in median age suggests increased consideration for the needs of an aging population. The median age in the expanded market is gradually increasing, from 39.1 in 2010 to 42.4 in 2029.



INCOME

The median household income is expected to increase from \$60,280 in 2024 to \$71,984 in 2029. **Rising incomes could drive increased consumer spending.**



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Although rates for bachelor's and graduate degrees are slightly below state and national averages, a substantial portion of the population (**30.2% combined**) with higher education suggests a workforce with diverse skills and educational backgrounds.



22%
of the state population
has a bachelor's degree
25 Years and Older in 2024

23.5%
of the U.S. population
has a bachelor's degree
25 Years and Older in 2024



11.5%
of the state population
has a graduate or
professional degree
25 Years and Older in 2024

13.5%
of the U.S. population
has a graduate or
professional degree
25 Years and Older in 2024

Consumer Behavior

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

Tapestry Segmentation by ESRI classifies US neighborhoods into 67 unique segments, based on demographics and socioeconomic characteristics to help you understand your audience. Tapestry segments offer insights into the expanded market's age distribution, income levels, household composition, education, and lifestyle preferences. This information helps tailor the mix of market-supported end uses to better meet the needs and preferences of the local population.

Southern Satellites 17.4%

This market is typically slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

Rooted Rural 7.0%

Rooted Rural residents live in many of the heavily forested regions of the country. This group enjoys time spent outdoors, hunting, fishing, or working in their gardens. Indoors, they enjoy watching television with a spouse and spending time with their pets. When shopping, they look for American-made and generic products. These communities are heavily influenced by religious faith and family history.

Salt of the Earth 6.7%

Salt of the Earth residents are entrenched in their traditional, rural lifestyles. Citizens here are older, and many have grown children that have moved away. Residents embrace the outdoors; they spend most of their free time preparing for their next fishing, boating, or camping trip. The majority has at least a high school diploma or some college education; many have expanded their skill set during their years of employment in the manufacturing and related industries.

PROJECTED SPENDING FOR 2029

ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION

\$1.15B
total consumer
spending

\$3,205.36
average household
spending

This trend indicates a strong potential demand for recreational activities and entertainment services within the area.

DINING OUT

\$1.08B
total consumer
spending

\$3,006.57
average household
spending

This suggests a strong market for restaurants, cafes, and other food service businesses.

HEALTHCARE

\$2.33B
total consumer
spending

\$6,484.84
average household
spending

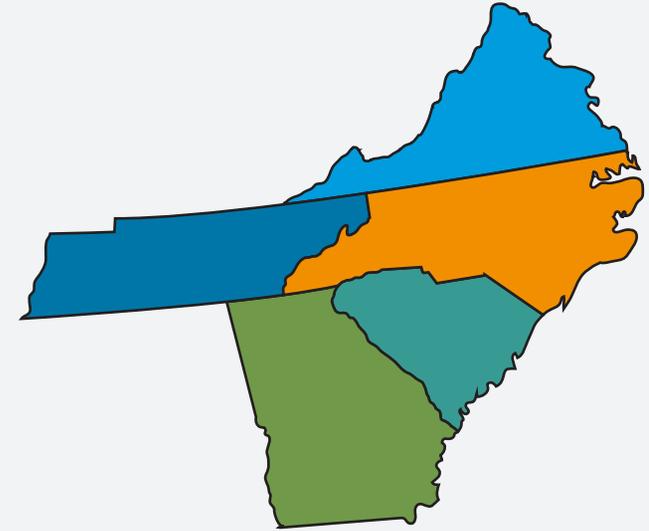
Highlights a substantial market opportunity for healthcare services and related businesses.

Households are projected to spend approximately **\$807 million** on travel, indicating a significant market for travel-related services and potentially tourism within the region.

TOURISM

The region attracts a significant number of tourists due to its strong market for outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, nature viewing, and scenic driving. These activities are among the most popular and contribute substantially to the area's tourism volume.

The majority of visitors come from North Carolina, followed by neighboring states Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.



The bulk of tourist spending is directed towards accommodations and dining, which underscores the need for quality lodging options and diverse food and beverage offerings in the area.

\$479
average spend per trip

\$4.9B
economic output from outdoor recreation-related visitor spending

\$114.5M
spent by tourists in 2023

\$101.65M
spent by tourists in 2021
a 37.4% increase from the previous year

637
people employed in the Wilkes County tourism industry

\$3.4M
local tax revenue generated

Business Landscape



35,491
businesses



455,277
people employed

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

The labor force participation rate within the 60-minute drive radius of North Wilkesboro is slightly lower than the national average and North Carolina.



Feasibility of Proposed Reuse Options

IN THIS SECTION ↓

Recreational Entertainment Facility

“Culinary Collective” Model

Light-Manufacturing for Outdoor
Recreation Equipment

OPTION 1:

Recreational Entertainment Venue

The former Smoot Tannery Site in North Wilkesboro presents an opportunity to introduce a **social entertainment venue** that combines food, drinks, and games in a vibrant, community-focused environment. The site's proximity to the Yadkin River and Yadkin Greenway creates unique opportunities to incorporate outdoor recreation opportunities into the business model, including equipment rentals, guided tours, catered events, and more.



Alignment with Plans

The proposed recreation entertainment facility aligns closely with the:

Great State of Wilkes Outdoor Action Plan by:

- enhancing connectivity between residential areas, community assets, downtowns, and the Yadkin River
- establishing Wilkes County as a premier outdoor adventure destination and recognizes outdoor recreation as a critical driver for local economic growth
- improving quality of life through expanded recreational opportunities and integrating with multi-use trails and greenways
- promoting the region's cultural and nature-based activities

2018 Comprehensive Plan for North Wilkesboro by supporting the town's focus on:

- place-based economic development through tourism and recreational opportunities
- enhancing connectivity by improving access to greenways and trails, further linking residential areas with community assets and downtown
- transforming underutilized sites into productive community assets
- expanding recreational facilities and increasing public access to parks and trails
- community growth and quality of life improvements

Smoot Park Master Plan's goals to:

- create accessible and inclusive recreational spaces
- expand opportunities for healthy living and community engagement
- improve connections between the park and nearby assets, including the Yadkin River Greenway
- enhance the quality of life in North Wilkesboro by providing diverse recreational opportunities that connect with broader community initiatives



Competitive Landscape

The competitive landscape for recreational and entertainment facilities within a 90-mile radius of North Wilkesboro includes a variety of venues offering indoor activities, dining, and outdoor recreation.

Key competitors like The Block Trampoline Park and W. Kerr Scott Dam & Reservoir have established themselves by catering to specific niches such as indoor family fun and outdoor nature activities. However, **gaps in the market remain**, particularly in the integration of indoor and outdoor experiences, the availability of structured adventure sports, and the lack of venues offering a combined social and recreational environment.

Gap Analysis

Venue/Recreation Area	Amenities/Services	Gap Analysis
The Lost Wombat <i>(North Wilkesboro)</i>	Spacious outdoor yard, playground, upstairs tavern, restaurant serving American cuisine with Australian twist	Lacks significant outdoor adventure activities and recreational sports facilities
The Block Trampoline Park <i>(North Wilkesboro)</i>	Indoor trampoline park, dodgeball, basketball courts, toddler park, roller skating rink, arcade, ninja warrior park, climbing wall, cafe with pizza, snacks, drinks	Focuses on indoor activities, lacks outdoor space and natural activities
W. Kerr Scott Dam & Reservoir <i>(Wilkesboro, NC)</i>	Boating, camping, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, park shelters, campgrounds	Lacks built-in dining options or social entertainment facilities
Rivers Edge <i>(Wilkesboro, NC)</i>	Space for community activities and events, available rentals, event calendar	Lacks structured outdoor activities, limited amenities beyond event space
Heritage Square Splash Pad <i>(Wilkesboro, NC)</i>	Splash pad with 29 jets, colorful lighting	Limited to a specific age group and lacks variety in recreational activities
Fantasy Lake Adventure Park <i>(Wake Forest, NC)</i>	Inflatable water park, kayaking, paddleboarding, scuba diving, movie nights on the water, cabana rentals, picnic areas, kid zone	Far from North Wilkesboro, lacks integration with other local amenities and indoor activities
Cub Creek Park <i>(Wilkesboro, NC)</i>	Family-friendly amenities, sports fields, and playgrounds	Primarily outdoor; may lack diversity in activities during bad weather
Smoot Park <i>(North Wilkesboro, NC)</i>	River and trail access; swimming pool; playground facilities	Pool and facilities are seasonal

This analysis highlights several gaps in North Wilkesboro's current recreation and entertainment landscape:

- Many existing recreational facilities in Wilkes County are primarily outdoor and seasonal, limiting their accessibility during colder months or inclement weather.
- While outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, and biking are well-represented, there is a notable absence of indoor facilities that can provide similar or complementary experiences throughout the year (e.g., climbing gyms, indoor tracks, etc.)
- Few local venues combine dining with entertainment in a natural setting.

The analysis of the recreational competitive landscape within Wilkes County highlights several significant opportunities for introducing water and trail-related recreation to the proposed concept. The popularity of activities like hiking, canoeing/kayaking, and scenic nature experiences emphasizes the potential demand for enhanced outdoor offerings.

By capitalizing on these gaps, the proposed facility could differentiate itself in the market and become a key destination for both residents and visitors.

There is a notable absence of indoor facilities that can provide similar or complementary experiences [to outdoor activities] throughout the year.

Opportunities for Market Differentiation



YEAR-ROUND RECREATION

By integrating indoor facilities for activities typically constrained by weather, such as climbing walls, pickleball, or activity simulators for things like cycling or rowing, this venue could address a significant gap in the market. This would establish the venue as a go-to destination for consistent recreational activities, regardless of the season.



ENHANCED TRAIL & WATERWAY INTEGRATION

The proximity to the Yadkin River and nearby trails offers a unique opportunity to differentiate the facility by incorporating seamless connections to these outdoor assets. By offering bike rentals, repair stations, secure bike parking, and hosting events like “kayak and paddleboard festivals” or “bike-to-brunch” weekends, the facility can set itself apart as a hub for both land and water trail activities.



INTEGRATION WITH OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Given the site’s location near the Yadkin River and trails, the North Wilkesboro concept could offer additional outdoor recreational activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding, or riverfront picnicking. The venue could also include bike rentals, repair stations, and secure bike parking. Special events such as a “kayak and paddleboard festival,” bike races or “bike-to-brunch” weekends could be organized, encouraging land and water trail use and drawing visitors to the site.

BRIDGE THE SEASONALITY GAP

The facility can offer popular seasonal activities, such as pickleball, year-round by bringing them inside, ensuring continuous engagement regardless of weather conditions. This approach can attract a consistent flow of visitors throughout the year.

INCORPORATE NEW OR UNDER-REPRESENTED ACTIVITIES

Introduce engaging activities not currently offered in Wilkes County and include adaptable spaces that can be modified in response to shifting trends (i.e. pickleball).

RIVERSIDE DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

The proximity to the river provides an ideal setting for riverside dining and outdoor entertainment. This could include live music performances, movie nights, or seasonal events like a fall festival or summer water sports day, making the venue lively throughout the year.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED EVENTS

The North Wilkesboro site could host community-driven events such as charity tournaments, local food and craft fairs, and community activities like paddling clubs. These events would strengthen community ties and establish the facility as a central hub for social interaction.

LEVERAGE LOCAL & REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Incorporating multi-use trails and greenways within the site aligns with the adopted Outdoor Action Plan and River District Plan and will cater to the high demand for walking, hiking, and biking, enhancing connectivity and access across the county.

COLLABORATIVE EVENTS & CROSS-PROMOTION

There is an opportunity for the venue to engage in partnerships with existing outdoor recreation sites, such as W. Kerr Scott Dam & Reservoir, through collaborative events that combine the best of indoor and outdoor experiences. This could further enhance the facility's appeal and broaden its market reach.

Assessment of Market Support

PRIMARY MARKET

The overall population increase, along with a notable rise in the population of children aged 5 to 14, indicates a **growing demand for family-oriented recreational facilities**.

Projected growth in spending on entertainment and recreation suggests **strong demand** for recreational activities.

Additionally, the increase in spending on membership fees for clubs and participant sports aligns with the potential for a recreational facility.

Survey results from the Smoot Park Master Plan show **strong community interest** in expanding recreational amenities, such as pools, playgrounds, and other facilities.

SECONDARY MARKET

Significant projected growth in spending on entertainment and recreation indicates a strong market potential for recreational facilities.

High participation rates in outdoor activities or indoor fitness events could be well-received by the community and **provide additional revenue streams**.

Adding more structured and accessible water-based recreation, such as year-round indoor kayaking or paddleboarding simulators, could meet an existing demand and **fill a gap** during off-season months.

High participation in family-oriented activities like picnicking and festivals indicates a **demand for versatile, family-friendly spaces**. Incorporating picnic areas, splash pads, or outdoor stages within the venue could address this gap.

EXPANDED MARKET

The population within a 60-minute drive is stable, with only a slight projected decrease. A stable population provides a **consistent consumer base**, essential for long-term success in recreation and entertainment businesses.

Projected spending on entertainment and recreation is significant. However, the Spending Potential Index (SPI) for entertainment and recreation is below the national average, indicating that while there is demand, it may not be as robust as in other regions.

The area attracts a substantial number of tourists, particularly for outdoor recreation, which could support a recreation and entertainment facility. The **strong market for outdoor activities** aligns with potential demand for facilities that offer complementary indoor recreation or entertainment options.

The dominant lifestyle segments show a **preference for practical and affordable activities, often centered around community and family**. This suggests that a recreation facility should focus on family-friendly, cost-effective entertainment options to appeal to the local population.

Market Demand

RATING: **STRONG**

The overall market demand for a Recreation Entertainment Facility in North Wilkesboro is considered “strong” and reveals notable potential across all market segments. In the primary market of North Wilkesboro, the population has grown by 5.1% from 2019 to 2021, with a notable increase among children aged 5 to 14, signaling a rising demand for family-oriented recreational activities. This is further supported by projected growth in spending on entertainment and recreation, as well as a community-driven desire for expanded amenities such as pools and playgrounds. In the secondary market of Wilkes County, the increase in working-age adults (25-44 years) combined with a projected \$10 million rise in entertainment and recreation spending from 2024 to 2029 suggests

a stable and growing demand. High community participation in outdoor activities and events also reinforces the need for a facility that offers both indoor and outdoor recreational options.

Within the expanded market, which includes a 60-minute drive radius around North Wilkesboro, the population remains stable, and significant spending projections for entertainment and recreation, totaling \$1.15 billion in 2024, underscore a consistent consumer base. Although the Spending Potential Index (SPI) is below the national average, the influx of tourists—particularly those drawn to outdoor recreation—offers a strong complementary market for a recreation entertainment facility.

CASE STUDY
Smash Park



Smash Park was founded to create a unique social entertainment experience that blends casual dining, drinking, and a wide variety of games. The founders identified a market opportunity in the growing demand for social venues that cater to a diverse range of ages and interests, combining sports, food, and entertainment in a single location.

READ MORE IN THE APPENDICES.

Suitability for the Smoot Tannery Site

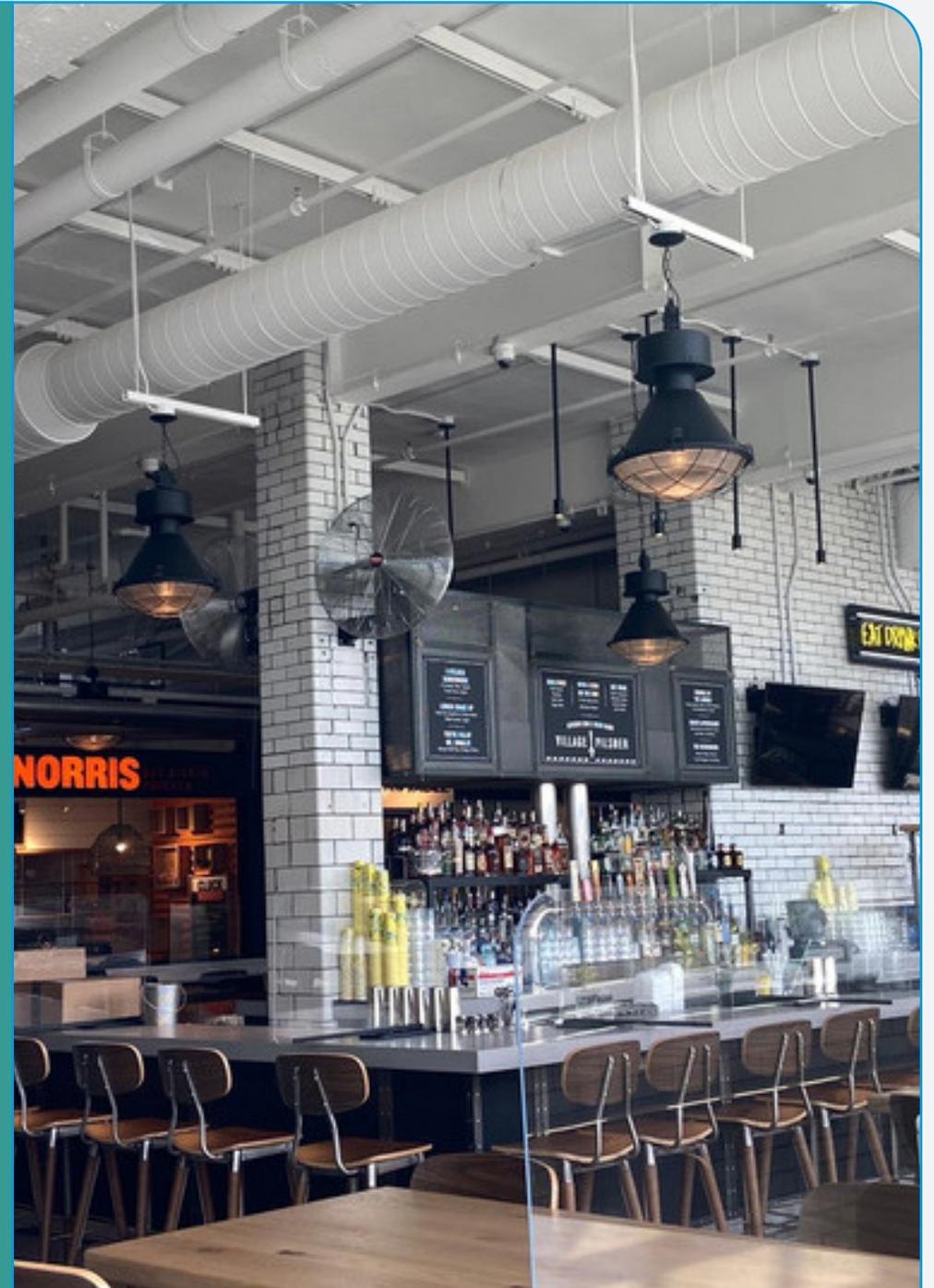
RATING: STRONG

The proposed recreation entertainment facility aligns well with North Wilkesboro's commitment to the outdoor recreation economy and regional development priorities. The Smoot Tannery site's proximity to the Yadkin River and nearby trails offers unique opportunities to integrate outdoor activities with the facility's offerings, bridging seasonal gaps by providing year-round recreation options. This alignment with existing town and regional plans enhances the project's viability, making it a strong candidate for development at the former Smoot Tannery site.

OPTION 2:

“Culinary Collective” Model

The “Culinary Collective” Model proposed for North Wilkesboro envisions a **dynamic food hall combined with a restaurant incubator and a unique learning and workshop training component**. This concept offers a vibrant space where emerging culinary talents can develop and launch their businesses while providing the community and visitors with diverse, high-quality dining options. In partnership with Wilkes Community College, the Culinary Collective will also serve as a training ground, offering culinary workshops, classes, and hands-on learning experiences. This dual-purpose facility aims to create a culinary destination that fosters innovation, supports local entrepreneurs, and enriches the local food scene while providing educational opportunities for aspiring chefs and food industry professionals.



M, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Alignment with Plans

The Culinary Collective aligns with North Wilkesboro's strategic goals and planning initiatives, particularly those focused on economic development, downtown revitalization, and community engagement. The concept complements the town's efforts to enhance the local economy by attracting tourists and providing residents with unique dining and educational experiences. Additionally, it supports the broader objectives outlined in local economic development and tourism plans, which emphasize the importance of creating vibrant, multifunctional spaces that draw both locals and visitors into the downtown area.

Competitive Landscape

The competitive landscape in North Wilkesboro and the surrounding region includes various dining establishments, from independent restaurants to chain eateries. However, there is a lack of a centralized culinary hub where multiple vendors can operate under one roof, offering a diverse range of food options in a shared environment. Additionally, there are no existing facilities that combine a public-facing culinary experience with an educational component. The Culinary Collective, with its focus on both dining and culinary education, would stand out as a unique destination in the region, appealing to food enthusiasts, students, and those seeking new dining and learning experiences.

Gap Analysis

Restaurant	Cuisine	Price	Current Representation
<i>Anchor Coffee</i>	Coffeehouse, Light Fare	\$\$	Moderate: Coffeehouses are present but offer limited to light fare.
<i>Big Al's Pizza Wings and Craft Beer</i>	Pizza, Wings, American	\$\$	Strong: Well-represented in casual dining and sports bar niches.
<i>Brushy Mountain Smokehouse</i>	Barbecue, American	\$\$	Strong: Barbecue is a staple in the area with multiple establishments.
<i>Dispensary Restaurant and Pub</i>	American, Pub Food	\$\$	Moderate: Pub food is moderately available, but lacks variety.
<i>Dom Bakeries</i>	Bakery, Pastries, Light Fare	\$\$	Moderate: Bakeries are present but limited in offering full meals.
<i>Don's Char Grill</i>	American, Diner Food	\$\$	Strong: Traditional diner food is well-represented.
<i>Hadley's Restaurant</i>	American, Southern	\$\$	Strong: Southern comfort food is a staple in the area.
<i>La Fortuna</i>	Mexican, Vegan Options	\$\$	Moderate: Mexican is represented but could benefit from diversity.
<i>Pelican's SnoBalls</i>	Desserts, Shaved Ice	\$	Weak: Limited to seasonal and dessert-only offerings.
<i>Roselli's on 10th</i>	Italian	\$\$\$	Weak: Few upscale Italian dining options in the market.
<i>Sixth + Main Restaurant and Catering</i>	American, Catering	\$\$	Moderate: Few upscale casual dining venues available.
<i>Talia's Espresso</i>	Coffeehouse, Light Fare	\$\$	Moderate: Coffeehouses are moderately available but are limited to light fare.
<i>Ted's Famous Kickin' Chicken</i>	American, Chicken Specialties	\$\$	Moderate: Focused on niche market (chicken).
<i>Ten Ten Thai</i>	Thai	\$\$	Weak: Limited representation of Thai cuisine in the market.
<i>The Lost Wombat</i>	American with Australian twist	\$\$	Weak: Unique concept with niche appeal.
<i>Village Inn Pizza Parlor</i>	Pizza, Italian	\$\$	Strong: Pizza and Italian cuisine are common.

Gap	Opportunity
Lacks full meal options	Introduction of a full-service cafe
Common sports bar fare	Introduce higher-end casual dining with varied cuisine
Limited menu for non-barbecue	Broader range of Southern cuisine
Casual pub atmosphere	Upscale pub with craft cocktails and innovative dishes
No full meal options	Expansion into a bakery-cafe offering brunch and lunch
Traditional menu	Modern twist on classic diner cuisine
Traditional Southern dishes	Expand menu with diverse regional Southern dishes
Limited to Mexican cuisine	Explore diverse Latin American cuisines
Seasonal operation	Year-round dessert cafe or expanded frozen treat options
Limited upscale dining options	More upscale international cuisines
Limited upscale dining venues	Full-scale fine dining experience
No full meal service	Introduction of meals for lunch and dinner
Focused on chicken specialties	Diversify with other proteins
Only one Thai restaurant	Expansion into other Asian or fusion
Unique but niche cuisine	Broaden appeal with more Australian specialties or fusion dishes
Focused on pizza and pasta	Introduction of more diverse Italian dishes

The gap analysis highlights several opportunities for the proposed culinary model in North Wilkesboro:

- There is a noticeable gap in the availability of certain international cuisines, particularly Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean. Expanding these offerings could attract a broader demographic, including tourists and locals seeking diverse dining options.
- The majority of restaurants are in the \$\$ price range. Introducing a fine dining option (\$\$\$\$) or budget-friendly quick-service restaurants (\$) could address different segments of the market.
- While there are casual and family-friendly options, there is room for more upscale, intimate, or experiential dining experiences, such as a chef's table or farm-to-table concept that could cater to special occasions.

Opportunities for Market Differentiation



DIVERSE CUISINE OFFERINGS

The underrepresentation of specific cuisines, such as Thai, upscale Italian, and other Asian or Latin American options, highlights an opportunity for a Culinary Collective to introduce these diverse food options under one roof. This would cater to a wide range of tastes and preferences, drawing in a broad audience.



FLEXIBLE PRICE POINTS

A Culinary Collective can offer a range of price points, from affordable quick bites to more premium dining options, which would meet the needs of a diverse customer base, including both residents and visitors.



VARIED ATMOSPHERE

By curating a mix of vendors with different atmospheres, the Culinary Collective could become a dynamic dining destination that appeals to different segments of the market at different times of the day. Or, it could become a venue that intentionally brings different market segments together to celebrate diversity and promote social interaction.



CULINARY INNOVATION & EDUCATION

Existing restaurants may not have the flexibility or resources to experiment with new concepts, limiting the culinary innovation in the area. Also, there are no current offerings that combine culinary education with a public-facing dining experience, leaving a gap in both the food and educational markets.



SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

The Culinary Collective could serve as an incubator, providing low-risk opportunities for new businesses to thrive while offering educational support through Wilkes Community College.



AGRITOURISM

Leveraging local farms and orchards, the Culinary Collective could also serve as a hub for agritourism by offering farm-to-table dining experiences and partnerships with local producers, enhancing the region's appeal as a destination for food and agriculture tourism.

Strategic Partnership Opportunities

Strategic partnerships with local organizations, educational institutions, and community groups could bolster the success of the Culinary Collective.

- **Wilkes Community College:** Collaborating to provide culinary workshops, classes, and hands-on training for students, creating a direct pipeline of talent for the incubator.
- **Local Farmers and Producers:** Working with local farmers and food producers to supply fresh, locally sourced ingredients for both the food hall and educational programs.
- **Tourism and Economic Development Organizations:** Partnering with local tourism boards and economic development entities to promote the Culinary Collective as a key attraction that offers both dining and learning experiences.
- **Existing Restaurants and Vendors:** Offering established local restaurants and vendors a platform to expand or test new concepts within the food hall while participating in educational workshops.



Public-Private Partnership Opportunity

Merging the recreation and entertainment venue business model with the workforce training and business development focus of the Culinary Collective through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) would combine the strengths of both public and private sectors to maximize the site's potential. With key partners including a private business owner, Wilkes Community College, the SBA, and the Town of North Wilkesboro, this hybrid model would **drive job creation, skill development, and local business support**. Additionally, the partnership would offer shared operating costs for the private operator, ensuring long-term success and sustainable community impact.

Assessment of Market Support

This is not an accidental duplication of information. Both the food hall concept and the recreation entertainment concept are supported by the same data indicators. The market information is shared again here for clarity.

PRIMARY MARKET

The overall population increase, along with a notable rise in the population of children aged 5 to 14, indicates a **growing demand for family-oriented recreational facilities**.

Projected growth in spending on entertainment and recreation suggests **strong demand** for recreational activities.

Additionally, the increase in spending on membership fees for clubs and participant sports aligns with the potential for a recreational facility.

Survey results from the Smoot Park Master Plan show **strong community interest** in expanding recreational amenities, such as pools, playgrounds, and other facilities.

SECONDARY MARKET

Significant projected growth in spending on entertainment and recreation indicates a strong market potential for recreational facilities.

High participation rates in outdoor activities or indoor fitness events could be well-received by the community and **provide additional revenue streams**.

Adding more structured and accessible water-based recreation, such as year-round indoor kayaking or paddleboarding simulators, could meet an existing demand and **fill a gap** during off-season months.

High participation in family-oriented activities like picnicking and festivals indicates a **demand for versatile, family-friendly spaces**. Incorporating picnic areas, splash pads, or outdoor stages within the venue could address this gap.

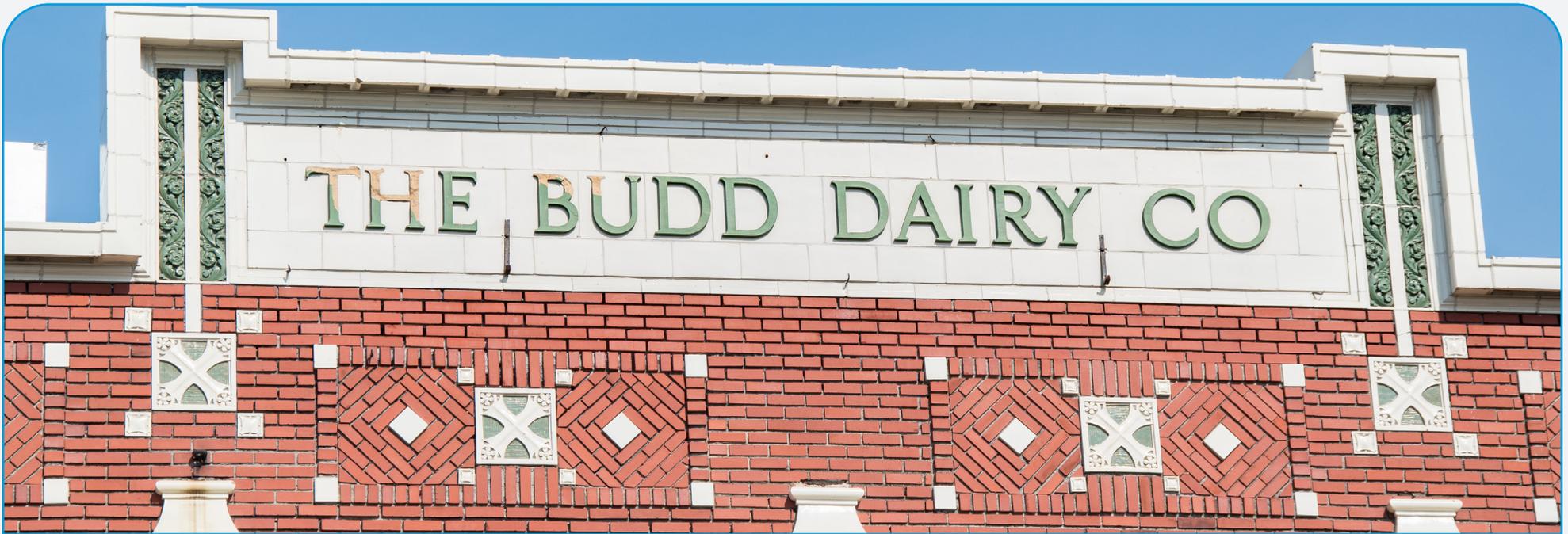
EXPANDED MARKET

The population within a 60-minute drive is stable, with only a slight projected decrease. A stable population provides a **consistent consumer base**, essential for long-term success in recreation and entertainment businesses.

Projected spending on entertainment and recreation is significant. However, the Spending Potential Index (SPI) for entertainment and recreation is below the national average, indicating that while there is demand, it may not be as robust as in other regions.

The area attracts a substantial number of tourists, particularly for outdoor recreation, which could support a recreation and entertainment facility. The **strong market for outdoor activities** aligns with potential demand for facilities that offer complementary indoor recreation or entertainment options.

The dominant lifestyle segments show a **preference for practical and affordable activities, often centered around community and family**. This suggests that a recreation facility should focus on family-friendly, cost-effective entertainment options to appeal to the local population.



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Market Demand

RATING: STRONG

Increasing household incomes in the region indicate rising spending power, making residents more likely to explore new dining and culinary experiences. Additionally, the area's growing tourism sector, particularly among outdoor enthusiasts, brings in visitors who seek diverse dining and educational opportunities. This aligns with the trend toward experiential dining, where consumers are increasingly interested in combining food with unique learning experiences. The community's strong support for local businesses and education further enhances the appeal of the Culinary Collective, providing a built-in customer base for new ventures and educational programs.

Suitability for the Smoot Tannery Site

RATING: **STRONG**

The Culinary Collective concept aligns closely with town and regional development priorities, particularly those focusing on enhancing the local economy through tourism and community-oriented projects. The adaptive reuse of the former Smoot Tannery site into a vibrant culinary hub would not only preserve a historical asset but also fulfill regional goals for economic diversification and the promotion of local food systems. The site's proximity to the Yadkin River and greenway trails further enhances its appeal, offering unique opportunities for integrating outdoor recreational activities with the dining experience, making it a destination for both locals and visitors.

CASE STUDY Budd Dairy Food Hall



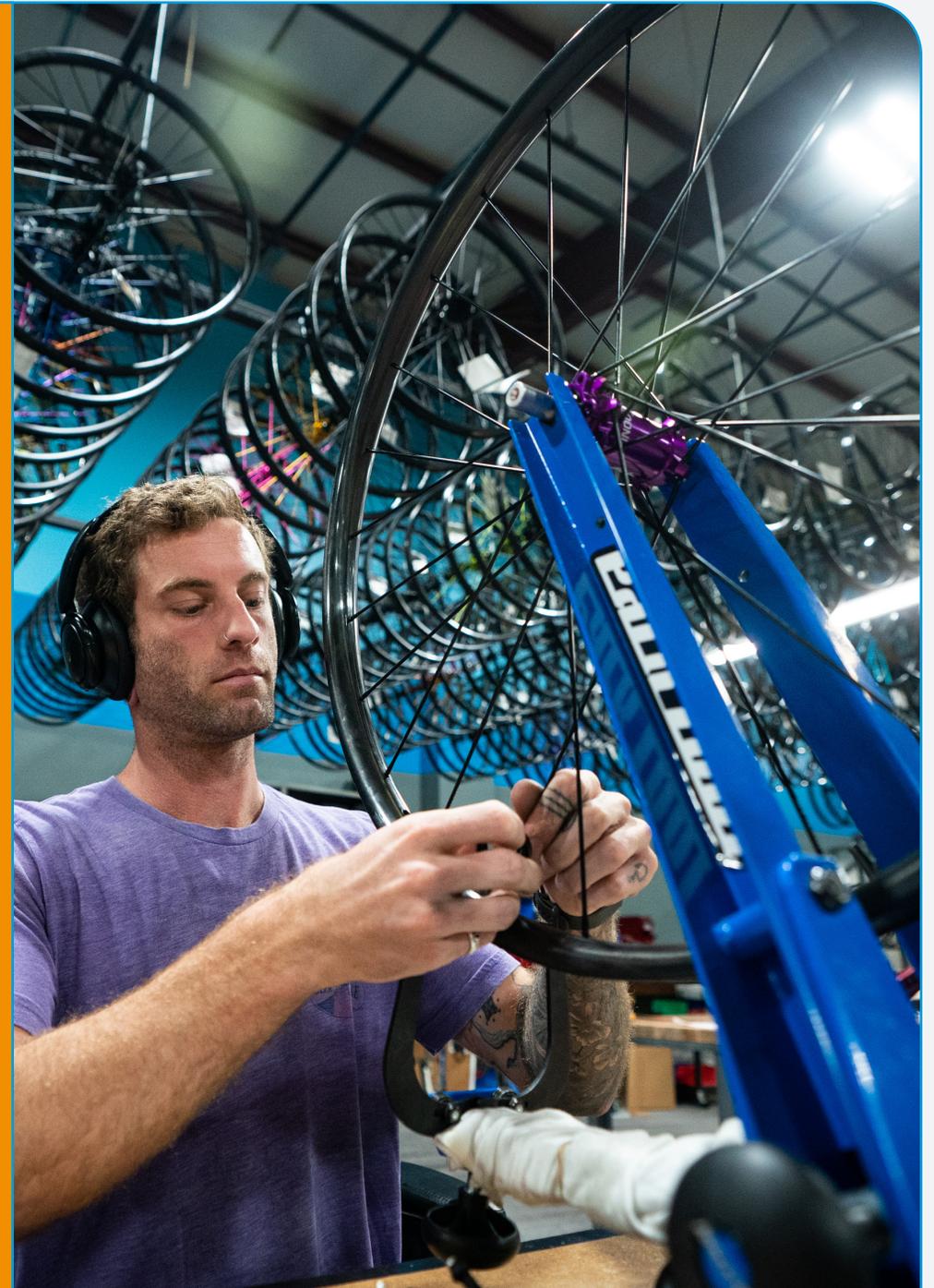
Budd Dairy Food Hall is situated in the historic Budd Dairy Company building, a structure originally built in 1916 for milk processing and distribution. Starting in 2018, the building was renovated to historic preservation standards. Despite delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Budd Dairy Food Hall officially opened its doors to the public in April 2021. The food hall operates as a chef-driven incubator, providing space and resources for emerging culinary entrepreneurs. This innovative business model allows chefs to showcase their talents and experiment with new concepts in a supportive environment.

[READ MORE IN THE APPENDICES.](#)

OPTION 3:

Light- Manufacturing of Outdoor Recreation Products

The proposed project would introduce a **manufacturing facility that integrates a retail component**, such as a bike production company, kayak manufacturer, or similar outdoor recreation brand, with a public-facing component, such as an outdoor gear store, bike shop with taphouse, or similar. This facility would be designed to cater to North Wilkesboro's growing outdoor recreation community.



Alignment with Plans

The proposed recreation entertainment facility aligns closely with the:

2018 Comprehensive Plan for North Wilkesboro by:

- Emphasizing small and medium-sized business development, particularly those that diversify the local economy and leverage place-based assets like outdoor recreation.
- Highlighting the importance of redeveloping vacant or underutilized industrial sites to foster economic growth and improve community appearance.
- Prioritizing investment in recreational and tourism opportunities to attract outdoor enthusiasts and tourists, thereby supporting the broader outdoor economy.
- Emphasizing integrating land use with infrastructure improvements, particularly in enhancing access and connectivity through trails and greenways.

Outdoor Action Plan by:

- Emphasizing the importance of capital infrastructure that supports the outdoor economy.
- Having a stated goal of creating jobs and improving residents' health through increased physical activity
- Highlighting the importance of connectivity between community assets, downtowns, and natural resources like the Yadkin River
- Valuing small business growth and investment
- Calling for the promotion of activities that combine culture and nature

Competitive Landscape

The outdoor gear manufacturing industry includes a broad range of products such as bicycles, kayaks, tents, backpacks, and other equipment used for activities like hiking, camping, and watersports. North Carolina is home to several manufacturers due to its varied terrain and growing outdoor recreation sector. The key outdoor gear industries in North Carolina are:

BICYCLE MANUFACTURERS

The state hosts several custom bicycle manufacturers, particularly those focusing on high-end, niche markets. For example, Industry Nine in Asheville is well-known for its custom-built wheels and other cycling components.

KAYAK & CANOE MANUFACTURERS

Companies like Liquidlogic Kayaks in Hendersonville are significant players, producing high-quality whitewater and recreational kayaks.

OUTDOOR APPAREL & GEAR

ENO (Eagles Nest Outfitters) in Asheville, known for its hammocks and camping gear, is another important company in the state.

FISHING GEAR

The state also hosts manufacturers of specialized fishing equipment, which ties into the region's rich angling culture.

The competitive landscape for manufacturing locally is more about the operational environment—access to labor, cost savings, and logistical advantages—than direct competition with other manufacturers.

ACCESS TO LABOR

North Wilkesboro and the surrounding Wilkes County region provide access to a moderately sized labor pool, with a civilian labor force of approximately 21,365 people. The region has a robust labor force skilled in manufacturing, and Wilkes Community College offers programs in applied engineering, welding, and automotive mechanics, which could support the skills needed for a modern manufacturing facility. However, the average wage in the region is significantly below the national average, which may indicate that higher-skilled labor could be more challenging to attract without competitive compensation.

COST SAVINGS

- The average wage in Wilkes County is \$45,710, which is below the national average of \$70,857. This suggests that labor costs for a manufacturing facility could be lower compared to other regions, providing a competitive advantage in terms of operational expenses.
- North Wilkesboro’s infrastructure, including water and sewer systems, is robust, with the town having excess capacity in both areas. The presence of nearby transportation networks can reduce logistical costs associated with shipping and receiving goods.
- The town’s economic development strategy includes partnerships with the Wilkes Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and other local entities to support business retention and expansion, potentially offering financial incentives or support to new manufacturing ventures.

CASE STUDY

Combining Manufacturing & Retail Models for an Outdoor Recreation Facility

LOGISTICAL ADVANTAGES

North Wilkesboro is well-connected via major highways (US Highway 421, NC Highway 268) and has access to rail service and a local airport, which provides logistical advantages for manufacturing operations. The town's location also places it within reasonable proximity to larger metropolitan areas like Winston-Salem and Charlotte, which could facilitate the distribution of manufactured goods.

This case study explores the integration of two successful business models: [Industry Nine](#), a bike component manufacturer in Asheville, NC, and [Freeheel and Wheel](#), a bike shop in West Yellowstone, MT. The goal is to suggest a hybrid model that combines a manufacturing facility with a retail component, leveraging the strengths of both businesses. While this example focuses on bicycles, the model is versatile and could easily be adapted to other outdoor products such as kayaks, tents, or backpacks. The key criteria for product selection are that the item is outdoor recreation-focused, involves light manufacturing, and has a clear connection to the retail component, such as rentals or direct sales.

[READ MORE IN THE APPENDICES.](#)

Market Demand

RATING: STRONG

The market assessment for light manufacturing of outdoor recreation gear or products in North Wilkesboro demonstrates strong support. This support is demonstrated by a well-established industrial base in the region, particularly within the manufacturing sector, and the strong demand for outdoor recreational activities in the area, as evidenced by high participation rates in hiking, biking, and other outdoor pursuits, indicating a steady market for locally produced gear and equipment. The stable and slightly increasing median household income suggests consumers may have the purchasing power to support locally manufactured products. These elements collectively suggest a favorable environment for developing a light manufacturing facility focused on outdoor recreation gear.

Suitability for the Smoot Tannery Site

RATING: IT DEPENDS!

While manufacturing is well-supported in North Wilkesboro, a standalone facility may not be the best fit for the former Smoot Tannery site. Instead, a dual-purpose facility that combines manufacturing with a public-facing retail component would align better with the site's recreational focus. A fitting example for North Wilkesboro could be a bike manufacturing facility paired with a retail space that includes a coffee shop, outdoor gear store, and bike shop, creating a dynamic and engaging destination for both locals and visitors.

Road to Reuse

IN THIS SECTION ↓

Secure Site Control

Site Preparation and Readiness

Pre-Development Planning and Conceptualization

Detailed Planning, Design, and Tenant Identification

Vertical Construction and Build-Out

Finalization and Site Activation

The "Roadmap to Reuse" isn't a straightforward path—it's a dynamic journey where various phases often occur concurrently and evolve over time. This realistic approach provides flexibility, allowing project partners to adapt to unexpected cleanup situations, changing market conditions, community needs, and emerging opportunities.

Secure Site Control

Securing site control is a critical next step for the Town of North Wilkesboro in the brownfield cleanup and redevelopment process. By establishing clear ownership and control of the former Smoot Tannery site, the town can effectively plan and execute necessary environmental assessments and remediation efforts. Without site control, the town may encounter significant barriers in accessing funding, negotiating with stakeholders, and fulfilling legal and regulatory requirements. Gaining control of the site will reduce potential liabilities and position the project for successful revitalization. It will enable the town to attract investment, leverage public and private resources, and ensure the redevelopment aligns with identified community and economic development goals.

SITE CONTROL OPTIONS



Deferred Payment to County for Site Acquisition

To facilitate the redevelopment of the former Smoot Tannery site, the town should consider requesting a deferred payment arrangement with Wilkes County. Given that the county has indicated a need to recover back taxes, the town can propose deferring this payment until after the site has been redeveloped and brought back into productive use. By deferring the payment, the county would demonstrate its investment in North Wilkesboro's economic growth and development, recognizing that the value generated from revitalizing the site will ultimately benefit the town and county in terms of future tax revenues and economic vitality.



Exploring Grant and Funding Opportunities

The town should actively explore state and federal grant opportunities for brownfield redevelopment and economic development projects. Potential funding sources include Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) brownfield grants, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and other state-level funding programs aimed at revitalizing underutilized properties. Securing such grants could help cover costs related to site acquisition, environmental cleanup, and initial redevelopment efforts, thereby reducing the financial burden on the town and the county.



Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Another viable option is forming a public-private partnership to share the costs and risks of the site's redevelopment. The town could leverage private capital and expertise while engaging private developers or investors interested in the project while maintaining a stake in the site's future use. The town could offer incentives such as tax abatements or infrastructure support to attract private partners, aligning public and private interests in bringing the site back into productive use.



Intergovernmental Agreement for Shared Economic Benefits

The town and county could enter into an intergovernmental agreement that outlines a shared vision for the site's redevelopment and the distribution of economic benefits. Such an agreement could stipulate that, in exchange for deferring the payment of back taxes, the county would receive a portion of future tax revenues generated by the redeveloped site. This agreement would align the interests of both entities in ensuring the site's successful redevelopment while providing a clear pathway for both parties to benefit economically.

Site Preparation and Readiness

Site readiness is a foundational step that ensures the site is prepared for immediate development and flexible enough to accommodate a range of market-supported and vision-aligned uses. This phase involves clearing the site, addressing environmental concerns, and establishing the necessary infrastructure to support future development activities.

Site Clearance and Remediation

- Clear the site of any existing structures, debris, or vegetation.
- Conduct necessary environmental remediation (e.g., asbestos removal, soil decontamination).

Infrastructure Improvements

- Upgrade or install essential utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electricity, internet).
- Develop or enhance access roads, parking areas, and pedestrian pathways.
- Implement stormwater management systems and any necessary drainage solutions.

Initial Grading and Landscaping

- Perform grading to ensure proper site leveling and drainage.
- Prepare basic landscaping and erosion control measures to stabilize the site.

Cleanup Roles & Responsibilities

Securing Site Control

The Town of North Wilkesboro must secure ownership or control of the site to be eligible for federal and state cleanup grants. This may involve negotiations with current property owners or, in this case, negotiating deferred payment agreements with Wilkes County for back taxes.

Overseeing Cleanup Activities

Once funding is secured, the town is responsible for overseeing the cleanup activities, which might involve hiring contractors, managing schedules, and ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

Applying for Grants

The town is responsible for applying for brownfield cleanup grants, such as those from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These grants require detailed applications that include site assessments, proposed cleanup plans, community involvement strategies, and cost estimates.

Incorporating Technical Assistance

The cleanup grant itself can include provisions cleanup activities, including costs for an appointed project manager or environmental consultant who specializes in brownfield cleanup.

Community Engagement

The town needs to engage with the community throughout the cleanup process, ensuring that residents are informed and have input. This might include public meetings, surveys, and information sessions.



Pre-Development Planning and Conceptualization

This phase builds on the findings of the completed market study, the recommended neighborhood revitalization plan, and the forthcoming downtown master plan and river district plan. Through stakeholder engagement and facilitated conceptualization exercises, this phase ensures that future development aligns with broader revitalization goals and financial sustainability.

Site Analysis and Due Diligence - COMPLETE

- Conduct detailed assessments of site constraints and opportunities (e.g., topography, access).
- Engage with stakeholders and community members for input.
- Identify regulatory requirements, zoning restrictions, and any additional environmental concerns.

Concept Development and Feasibility Studies - COMPLETE

- Develop potential use concepts for the site based on market demand and community needs.
- Prepare preliminary feasibility studies, including financial modeling and return on investment analysis.

Detailed Planning, Design, and Tenant Identification

Site readiness is a foundational step that ensures the site is prepared for immediate development and flexible enough to accommodate a range of market-supported and vision-aligned uses. This phase involves clearing the site, addressing environmental concerns, and establishing the necessary infrastructure to support future development activities.

Master Planning and Design Development

- Develop a comprehensive master plan, including layout and design of buildings and open spaces.
- Prepare detailed site and architectural plans, including utility and infrastructure integration.

Permitting and Regulatory Approvals

- Submit plans for necessary zoning approvals, variances, and building permits.
- Obtain all regulatory approvals, including environmental permits and traffic impact assessments.

Vertical Construction and Build-Out

This phase involves coordinating various construction activities, from foundational work to interior finishes. Parallel to construction, negotiations with identified tenants continue, finalizing lease agreements, and customizing build-outs to tenant specifications to ensure readiness for occupancy upon completion.

Building Construction

- Begin construction of vertical structures, including foundations, framing, and roofing.
- Coordinate with subcontractors for electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and other essential systems.

Interior Finishing and Equipment Installation

- Complete interior finishes, such as walls, flooring, and fixtures.
- Install necessary equipment, furnishings, and technology infrastructure

Finalization and Site Activation

Once construction is complete, the focus shifts to final inspections, obtaining occupancy permits, and preparing for tenant move-ins. This phase includes activating the site for its intended use, finalizing lease agreements, and ensuring spaces are tailored to tenant needs. Community engagement through marketing and opening events is vital to drive interest and utilization, establishing the development as a vibrant community asset.

Final Inspections and Approvals

- Conduct final inspections to ensure compliance with building codes and safety standards.
- Obtain a certificate of occupancy and any remaining regulatory approvals.

Occupancy and Opening

- Facilitate tenant move-in or owner occupancy and ensure operational readiness.
- Launch marketing efforts to promote the site and attract visitors or customers.

Community Engagement and Activation

- Host a grand opening or community event to engage local stakeholders and generate interest.
- Implement strategies for ongoing community engagement and site activation.

Appendices

IN THIS SECTION ↓

Case Study: Smash Park

Case Study: Budd Dairy Food Hall

Case Study: Combining Manufacturing & Retail Models

Case Study: Smash Park

Smash Park was founded to create a unique social entertainment experience that blends casual dining, drinking, and a wide variety of games. The founders identified a market opportunity in the growing demand for social venues that cater to a diverse range of ages and interests, combining sports, food, and entertainment in a single location.

The first Smash Park opened in West Des Moines, Iowa, and quickly gained popularity. The success of the initial location led to plans for expansion into other markets.



Case Study: Smash Park

CORE OFFERINGS

Smash Park differentiates itself by offering a mix of traditional and trendy games. Key activities include pickleball, cornhole, bocce ball, shuffleboard, and various yard games. These activities are available both indoors and outdoors, catering to different preferences and weather conditions.

The venue features a full-service bar and a restaurant offering a menu of casual, approachable dishes. The food and beverage offerings are designed to complement the gaming experience, with a focus on shareable plates, craft beers, and signature cocktails.

Smash Park also offers event hosting services, catering to private parties, corporate events, and community gatherings. This adds a significant revenue stream and increases brand visibility.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Smash Park targets a broad demographic, including families, young professionals, and groups of friends. The venue is designed to be accessible and enjoyable for people of all ages, making it a popular choice for multi-generational gatherings.

The concept capitalizes on the growing trend of experiential entertainment, where consumers seek interactive and social experiences over traditional forms of entertainment. Smash Park appeals to those looking for a fun, active environment where they can socialize and engage in friendly competition.

Case Study: Smash Park

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Smash Park locations are strategically chosen based on demographic data, traffic patterns, and the availability of large spaces that can accommodate both indoor and outdoor activities.

The layout of Smash Park venues is designed to encourage social interaction. It features open spaces, communal tables, and a seamless flow between gaming, dining, and drinking areas. The design also allows for flexibility in hosting different types of events.

The company strongly emphasizes customer service and ensures that staff are well-trained in hospitality and game facilitation. This dual focus helps create a welcoming and engaging environment for guests.

MARKETING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Smash Park markets itself as a destination for fun and social connection. Marketing efforts include social media campaigns, local partnerships, and event sponsorships. The brand's messaging emphasizes its unique blend of sports, food, and entertainment.

To build a loyal customer base, Smash Park engages with the local community through charity events, sports leagues, and partnerships with local organizations. This community-centric approach helps to establish Smash Park as a beloved local hangout.

Case Study: Smash Park

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Smash Park generates revenue through several channels, including game rentals, food and beverage sales, event hosting fees, and merchandise sales. The diversified revenue model helps to stabilize income and reduces reliance on any single source.

Following the success of the initial location, Smash Park has explored opportunities for franchising and expanding into new markets. The company's financial performance in its flagship location serves as a model for potential investors and franchisees.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Smash Park faces competition from other entertainment venues, sports bars, and family entertainment centers. To stay competitive, the company must continuously innovate and adapt to changing consumer preferences. As Smash Park expands, maintaining the quality of the customer experience and the consistency of its brand across multiple locations will be crucial. Effective franchise management and operational oversight will be key to successful growth.

Case Study: Budd Dairy Food Hall



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Budd Dairy Food Hall is situated in the historic Budd Dairy Company building, a structure originally built in 1916 for milk processing and distribution. Starting in 2018, the building was renovated to historic preservation standards. Despite delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Budd Dairy Food Hall officially opened its doors to the public in April 2021.

The food hall operates as a chef-driven incubator, providing space and resources for emerging culinary entrepreneurs. This innovative business model allows chefs to showcase their talents and experiment with new concepts in a supportive environment. Budd Dairy Food Hall **collaborates with Columbus State Community College to offer culinary students practical experience**. This partnership enhances the food hall's **educational and workforce training** component, aligning with the college's mission to train future culinary professionals and providing students with invaluable real-world experience.

Case Study: Budd Dairy Food Hall

FEATURES AND OFFERINGS

- **Diverse Culinary Options:** The food hall hosts ten food service locations, including a rotating pop-up space for new culinary ventures. It features a variety of cuisines, from pizza and Mediterranean to Southern comfort food and more.
- **Community and Entertainment:** In addition to dining, Budd Dairy offers community seating, live music, and entertainment. The venue includes three bars, one of which is located on a rooftop patio, providing a vibrant social atmosphere.

IMPACT AND RECOGNITION

- **Community Engagement:** Budd Dairy Food Hall has quickly become a popular gathering place, celebrated for its role in supporting local culinary talent and enriching the Columbus food scene.
- **National Recognition:** Within its first year, Budd Dairy was named one of Fodor's Travel's "10 Best New Food Halls in the U.S.," highlighting its innovative concept and community impact.

Budd Dairy Food Hall successfully integrates a food hall and restaurant incubator, fostering culinary innovation and entrepreneurship. Its partnership with Columbus State Community College further strengthens its role as an educational hub, providing aspiring chefs with invaluable hands-on experience. **This model not only supports local culinary talent but also contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of the Columbus community.**

Case Study: Combining Manufacturing & Retail Models

This case study explores the integration of two successful business models: **Industry Nine**, a bike component manufacturer in Asheville, NC, and **Freeheel and Wheel**, a bike shop in West Yellowstone, MT. The goal is to suggest a hybrid model that combines a manufacturing facility with a retail component, leveraging the strengths of both businesses. While this example focuses on bicycles, the model is versatile and could easily be adapted to other outdoor products such as kayaks, tents, or backpacks. The key criteria for product selection are that the item is outdoor recreation-focused, involves light manufacturing, and has a clear connection to the retail component, such as rentals or direct sales.



Case Study: Combining Manufacturing & Retail Models

ABOUT INDUSTRY NINE

Asheville, NC

Industry Nine specializes in high-end bicycle components, particularly wheels, hubs, and spokes. It is known for its precision engineering, innovative design, and high-performance products. The company has built a reputation in the cycling community for quality and customization, offering products tailored to cyclists' specific needs.

ABOUT FREEHEEL AND WHEEL

West Yellowstone, MT

Freeheel and Wheel is a retail store offering bikes, outdoor gear, and related services, including rentals and repairs. It serves as a hub for the local cycling community and caters to tourists visiting Yellowstone National Park. The shop emphasizes customer service, community engagement, and providing a comprehensive outdoor experience.

COMBINING MODELS: A HYBRID MANUFACTURING-RETAIL FACILITY

The ideal location for the proposed hybrid facility would be a region that attracts outdoor enthusiasts and has a supportive local community, similar to Asheville and West Yellowstone. Proximity to natural attractions (like national parks) and access to cycling trails and rivers would be beneficial.

Case Study: Combining Manufacturing & Retail Models

Facility Design

- **Manufacturing Space:** A dedicated area for the production of high-quality bike components, drawing from Industry Nine's expertise in engineering and design. This space could also be adapted for other light-manufacturing outdoor products, such as kayaks or camping gear.
- **Retail Space:** A showroom for finished products, complemented by a full-service bike shop. The retail component would follow Freeheel and Wheel's model, offering rentals, repairs, and guided tours. Depending on the product focus, this space could also include kayak or camping equipment rentals.
- **Community Engagement Area:** A space for workshops, outdoor recreation events, and community gatherings to foster a local outdoor culture.

Conclusion

A hybrid model combining the manufacturing capabilities demonstrated at Industry Nine with the retail expertise of Freeheel and Wheel offers an opportunity to create a vertically integrated outdoor recreation business. While bicycles are the focus of this case study, the model's adaptability allows for the substitution of other outdoor products, such as kayaks for river use, tents for camping, or backpacks for hiking. When considering this concept for the former Smoot Tannery site, the essential criteria remain that the products are light-manufactured, outdoor recreation-focused, and integrally linked to the retail component.



A PLAN BY ATLAS COMMUNITY STUDIOS