Project Report

for

Town of North Wilkesboro, NC

October 2012

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Overview

The Town of North Wilkesboro held a series of workshops from August thru October 2012. The overall project task was to identify things that can be done over the next 3-5 years to make North Wilkesboro a great place for people to live, work, shop, play, and visit … things that will help to preserve community character and increase community investment (especially in housing). These workshops provided participants with opportunities to engage in strategic thinking and action planning, and the results are paths that can guide decision-making and nurture pro-active community change.

This report summarizes information about workshop activities. Organization of this document includes information about participants, process design, results, and the next steps.

Workshop Participants

Twenty-three persons participated in the series of workshops. Figure 1 is a listing of the participants.

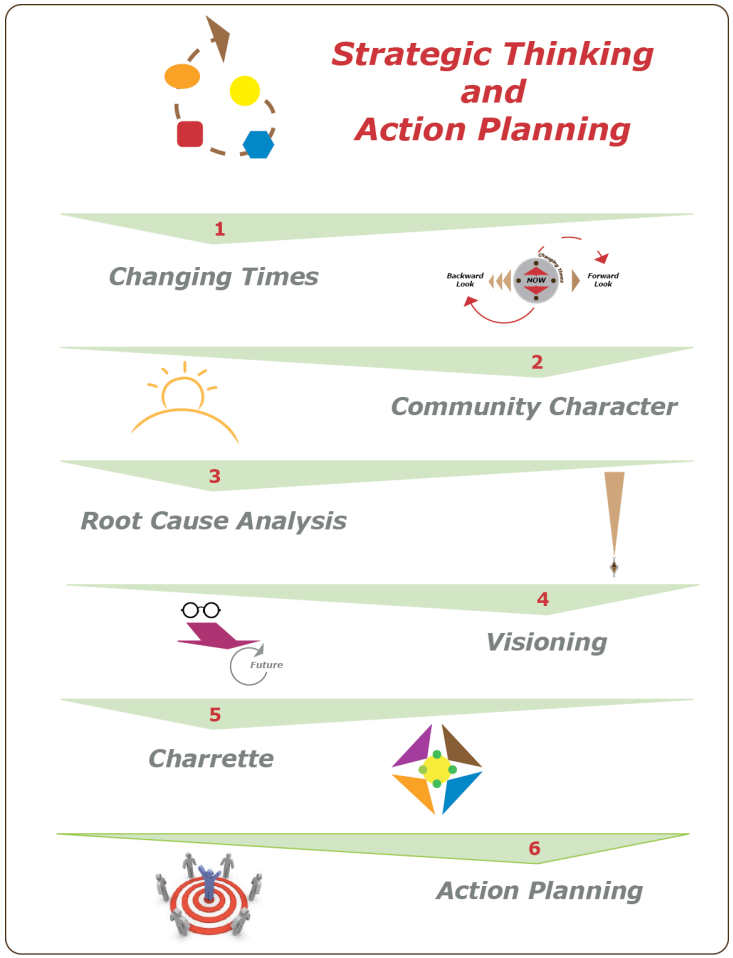
Figure 1. Workshop Participants

Names		
Vanya **Baker**	Russell **Ferree**	Robert **Johnson**
Leonard **Baugham**	Teri **Ferree**	Isaac **Kerns**
Mary **Bauguess**	Ned **Fowler**	Aisha **Little**
Caprice **Cheek**	Joshua **Harrold**	Joe **McMillan**
Carla **Cooksey-Hauser**	John **Harwell**	Martha **Nichols**
Amy **Cox**	Eddie **Holland**	Kelly **Pipes**
Dustin **Deal**	Margo **Hurd**	Laura **Welborn**
Debbie **Ferguson**	William M. (Bill) **Hurd**	

Process Design

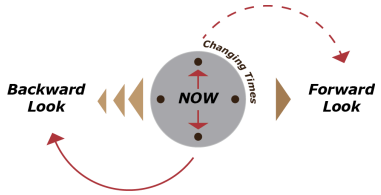
The process design included six workshop activities. Figure 2 graphically illustrates the sequence of these workshops.

Figure 2. Workshop Activities



The Results

1–Changing Times Workshop



During this workshop participants developed – based on a collective recollection of their life experiences over time – components of an environmental scan. They explored three levels of life experiences: global–nation–state, local (town–county), and personal (individual– family) … over three time periods: before 2000, 2000-2007, and 2008 to the present. Below are the results from this workshop, to include story-lines, trends, and implications for the next 3-5 years.

Notes:

1 – An asterisk (*****) indicates that this was a *turning point*
2 – Vertical arrows indicate either a *high point* (🡅) or a *low point* (🡇)
3 – A horizontal arrow (🡆) indicates that this provided *momentum*

Before 2000: Optimism and Overlooked Opportunities

Global/Nation/State

- Congress passed: Tax Reform Act (86), NAFTA (94) *****
- These were *fat and happy times* for many
- Important events: JFK assassination (63) 🡇, landed man on the moon (69) 🡅, Berlin wall came down (89) 🡅
- Military conflicts: Vietnam War ended (75) 🡆

- President Nixon impeached/resigned … Clinton elected
- Significant out-sourcing of manufacturing jobs began (1990s) 🡻

Local (Town–County)

- Apple Festival began
- Controversy over *must be the same*
- County: booming economy 🡺, new construction, growth in arts, schools merged 🡹 (and moved out of North Wilkesboro 🡻)
- Economy: several local businesses sold (Holly Farms, North Wilkesboro Bank, American Drew, Carolina Mirror) *****, growth in tourism, Wilkes Community College employment up, growth of Lowe's 🡺
- Hospital renovations *****
- Reservoir built (1960s)
- Town commissioners: failed to annex US 421 area, leadership saw little need for change because all seemed well on the surface
- Town hall moved to new building

Personal (Individual–Family)

- Beginning of arthritis health problem
- Married … children born
- Military service: USAF for 4 years, retired from military
- Moved many times, working hard in my career field, commuting to Greensboro and Hickory
- Received graduate degree

- Spent childhood growing up in Wilkes County

2000–2007: Missed Wake-Up Call

Global/Nation/State

- Growth of a flatter and inter-connected world, internet and social media become routine *****
- Inflation of home prices
- Military conflicts: 9-11/World Trade Center disaster, Afghanistan and Iraq wars
- President Bush in office
- Y2K

Local (Town–County)

- Began to feel repercussions from continuing loss of home offices and local businesses, Lowe's corporate office moved ***** ↓, lack of opportunity for young people with college education wanting to return home and find jobs
- Caustic political environment in North Wilkesboro
- Change in population demographics
- Greenway construction ↑
- US 421 widened ↑↓
- Wilkes Regional Medical facility renovations continue

Personal (Individual–Family)

- Entered USAF
- Had hip replacement

- Met my wife
- Moved to North Wilkesboro
- Ran for political office and got elected!
- Transition from youth to adulthood: graduated from college (baccalaureate and graduate studies + financial impact on parents), paying own way in life, worked as an archaeologist

2008–Present: Fear, Hardship, and Uncertainty

Global/Nation/State

- Congress enacted Affordable Care Act
- Economy: growing national debt, housing bubble burst 🡻, recession and global financial crisis 🡻, bank fraud exposed, big job loss 🡻, middle class hard hit, lingering impacts from recession, price of gas doubles … small towns in US hit hard, larger cities seeing improvement, and no long-term change in sight … a few bright spots
- National political polarization and gridlock 🡻
- President Obama elected
- Rise of social media and linkage to social change *****
- State legislative political winds are changing
- Unrest around the world (e.g., Iran, Syria)

Local (Town–County)

- Economy: continued stagnation and job loss, no commitment of resources for risk taking, declining revenues for local business owners 🡻, town revenues declining every year with no end in sight
- Increased institutional cooperation relating to water and other regional issues 🡺

- Lowes call center established ↑
- Many homes in town on market for sale long periods and values down ↓
- New and renovated downtown buildings ↑ →: new county library in North Wilkesboro, new art galleries, renovation of downtown buildings (e.g., Tailias, Carl Page, and Todd Jordan)
- Projects: Key City Condos renovation project ↑, Rose Glenn assisted living facility, Block 46 LLC project started (public/private partnership), Faw Insurance building renovation, Key City Grill (old building, local business)
- Significant growth and market share for Wilkes Regional Medical facility ↑→
- Town adopted: pedestrian plan, downtown streetscape master plan
- Wine Festival began

Personal (Individual–Family)

- Death of parent
- Got married, became a father, 1st child
- Graduated from college with master's degree
- Moved to New York City and then back to Wilkes County
- Moved to Wilkes County

Story-lines

- Differing life experiences shape personal perspectives, and perspectives today are changing more rapidly than in the past

- Good times have not always been good for many town residents
- Government can make a difference … both good or bad
- It takes a large demographic group aged 25-40 to drive entrepreneurship and development, and the decline of this age group impacts the town in many ways
- It takes a long time for a deep economic down-turn to make positive corrections
- Many external forces impact us at the local and personal levels, in a variety of ways
- Many in North Wilkesboro failed to recognize or accept that major changes have been taking place
- Now that town government is functional, residents and stakeholders feel more positive about getting involved
- The town should focus on controlling those things it has the ability to control

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Trends

- Acceptance of the certainty of change (e.g., compared to feelings of security that existed before 2000 and before 2007 when things were more predictable)
- Demographic decline in small communities
- Social indicators: *now* phenomenon … immediate/instant feedback/news and access; *you owe me* attitude growing; loss of initiative
- Adjusting to the global economy: loss of jobs and large employers***,*** jobs went overseas with some starting to come back home (we think), impacts relating to economies of scale
- Times of violence (assassinations, mass murders, random targeting)

- Changing and competing economic patterns … people moving away from Wilkes County … maintaining identity within region (e.g., competition between Elkin area with Wilkes area)
- Loss of small retail businesses
- Challenges relating to maintaining a safe environment and community
- Sense of *wholesomeness*
- Increase in poverty
- Low levels of education in work force (i.e., needed skills and people who can be trained)
- We can't dictate to others what to do
- High average age (compared to state)
- Poor job market in North Wilkesboro
- Aging housing stock … increasing disrepair
- Absence of spec homes

Implications for the Next 3-5 Years

The keys to realizing successful growth and change will involve many things:

- Cooperate and look to the future
- Develop political leverage and linkages that extend beyond the community
- Emphasize the importance of thinking/shopping locally … to include the school system
- Encourage public/private ventures (e.g., to improve housing)
- Explore the *retirement community* niche
- Find ways to renovate entire blocks
- Get people excited about North Wilkesboro … utilize/emphasize value of small-town living
- Target specific groups/people/projects/initiatives

2–Community Character Workshop

Building Community Character

During the second workshop participants identified specific issues relating to community character. They took over 400 photos relating to community character issues and wrote on the back of each photo the reason(s) for taking the pictures (i.e., key words and phrases). The photos were then grouped into 8 categories, duplicates were removed, and key words and phrases were consolidated. Participants used the remaining photos (over 200) to analyze community character within the town.

Note – The below tables have 3 columns of numbers under Priority. The middle column is the number of controlled votes (i.e., each participant used 2 for each category); the right column is the number of discretionary votes (each participant had 8 free votes); and the left column is the number of total votes (controlled plus discretionary)

1 – Neighborhoods, Renovated Housing, and Historic Homes

Key words and phrases

- Housing: providing for essential needs (for all income groups)
- Appearance: well maintained … nice landscaping … transitions between different uses … not dilapidated but needing improvement … well kept but surrounded by blight
- Historic homes: beautiful … special character … welcoming architecture and style … private preservation
- Neighborhoods: naming and signing … investment in neighborhoods
- Renovations: small houses recently fixed up … need more of this … nice remodel … renovated as a residence … new use ... examples of what can be done

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Creating positive sense of place feelings for residents
- Encouraging investment (and reinvestment) in both homes and neighborhoods
- Gentrification is occurring, but not all is good
- Historic homes are important to the town, and although significant reinvestment has occurred involving historic properties, most of these properties lack distinctive identity (i.e., missing heritage linkages)
- Lack of both consistency and incentives regarding maintenance and restoration of properties
- Most neighborhoods lack clear delineation and identification
- Need regulation/supervision of homeless shelters
- Possible issues regarding regulatory controls (e.g., zoning and codes); poor transitions between land uses is an example
- Renovations can add value to neighborhoods and house values
- Some people in town are living in tents and out of cars

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Neighborhoods and town-wide

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
9	6	3	Develop plan to help under-housed or homeless residents

8	8		Provide tax incentives for renovations
4	4		Obtain/provide neighborhood assistance for owners not physically or financially able to perform maintenance
3	2	1	Target specific houses for renovation
1	1		Determine which properties should receive a *historical* designation
1	1		Market housing preservation as a way of being green
			Highlight feature homes using the media and signage
			Research regulations/policies regarding homeless shelters
			Encourage handicapped accessibility in renovations

2 – Mixed-use Housing, Multi-family Housing, and Apartments

Key words and phrases

- Mixed-use housing: often means mixed problems … risk-taking to realize positive changes … many nice homes in poor condition … difficult to find uses for brownfield sites
- Downtown/urban living: involves both front and rear of buildings (entrances and landscaping) … some much better than others
- Public housing: the best it has ever been
- Rentals: primary focus on duplexes and apartments … several existing examples of nice looking properties, but many properties are messy and not attractive … often minimal landscaping … lack of standardization

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Appearance involves a package that includes the structure, landscaping and yards, clutter, and utilities (buried versus above-ground)
- Being willing to take risks for potential, positive gains
- Celebrating examples of what can be done … for example, adaptive re-use has been successful (Key City condominiums, which also included historic preservation element) … there are other examples of nice multi-family housing in town that can serve as benchmarks for improvement
- Encourage mixed use housing development in the downtown area

- Find ways to prevent deterioration of properties before they become community eyesores
- Initial focus should be on multi-family housing (versus single-family housing) … seek greater consistency when targeting re-investment in multi-family housing
- Poorly kept rental properties may correlate with increased crime … several rental properties involve absentee landlords and unethical rental practices
- Regulatory controls (e.g., zoning and codes) are important; for example, additional design standards may be necessary

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Localized within neighborhoods and the downtown area

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
15	13	2	Enforce existing regulations
13	8	5	Review existing regulations, and develop new design and renovation standards, as needed
4	3	1	Develop disincentives for poorly maintained properties (starting with rental or realtor-held properties)
2	2		Be sensitive to low income needs
			Cultivate sense of pride in homes (both renters or owners)

3 – Dilapidated and Vacant Housing

Key words and phrases

- Upkeep … tender loving care … neglect … blighted properties … overgrown landscaping
- Long-term vacancies
- Not all renovations turn out well
- Rental housing is often a problem … landlord versus tenant issues
- Repair versus demolition
- Vacant homes next to well kept homes
- Lots of small homes in town

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Finding ways to push/require/help owners maintain and fix properties … helping low income home owners balance choices between vital necessities and home repairs … deciding when to require demolition (versus repair)
- If not fixed, these properties can turn into sub-standard housing (which is not good for anyone)
- It helps when the community accepts responsibility to fix the problem jointly with the property owner … addressing problems and issues as a community project
- Regulatory controls: assuring that ordinances address the problems/issues, enforceability, and active enforcement (sometimes an indicator of manpower shortage when not being done)
- Yards (and landscaping) are often an indicator of a developing housing problem

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Town-wide and localized areas involving road corridors (e.g., NC 18 north) and neighborhoods (e.g., Town Hill)

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
11	7	4	Enforce existing ordinances
10	6	4	Create programs to acquire, renovate, and sell homes to low-moderate income buyers

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles *(continued)*
6	4	2	Make property owners more accountable
5	1	4	Hire additional staff to enforce ordinances
5	4	1	Budget funding for demolition
4	3	1	Provide incentives (e.g., lower property taxes) for renovation
2		2	Develop minimum housing code
			Add an additional tax for abandoned property

4 – Older, Derelict, and Renovated Buildings

Key words and phrases

- Main Street: should be a positive showcase … distinctive architecture … mixed uses (e.g., businesses and offices)
- Thinking outside the box: theme developments … seasonal uses
- Vacant commercial buildings: ugly parking lots ... out-of-control vegetation … abandoned … unwelcome … uninviting … safety issues

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Being proactive (e.g., to avoid types of development most residents don't want)
- Deciding when to require demolition (versus repair) … funding to accomplish demolition
- Maintaining distinctive architecture in downtown area and encouraging mixed uses
- Many vacant buildings are on major road corridors and near high-traffic areas … places residents and visitors see daily … creates both first and lasting impressions … over time vacant buildings result in perceptions of being abandoned
- Property owners need to finish renovations, once started, within reasonable time periods
- Renovations have many focal points: front and rear of buildings, roofs, facades, exterior painting, doors, window treatments (e.g., awnings), landscaping, and accouterments (e.g., umbrellas and tables)

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Localized area (downtown, especially Main Street) and road corridors (e.g., NC 268 east)

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
10	7	3	Tear down unsalvageable buildings
8	5	3	Create and strictly enforce ordinances to prevent unsafe buildings
5	4	1	Encourage renovation of older buildings that have unique architecture
5	4	1	Assist owners in identifying the highest and best use for their properties (mandatory versus voluntary participation at some point)
4	2	2	Evaluate excess parking needs, and create inviting alternative uses (e.g., landscaping, benches, courtyards, etc.) to replace parking spaces not needed
3	2	1	Provide incentives for renovations/improvements
3	1	2	Develop inventory of problem buildings, and categorize the condition of these buildings
1		1	Incentivize small business development
			Experiment with thematic redevelopment

5 – Landscaping

Key words and phrases

- Aesthetics
- Kudzu
- Lack – or absence – of landscaping … many older, smaller homes need landscaping
- Maintenance … unkempt appearance … lazy or absentee landowners
- Safety

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Create landscaping bright spots throughout the community: adds to curb appeal … seasonal color and combining with art are pluses … makes parks and open spaces more inviting

- Finding ways to help low income home owners balance choices between vital necessities and landscaping
- Landscaping (to include lack of it) does make a difference
- Overgrown shrubbery/trees and lack of trimming impacts aesthetics, safety, and viewsheds … not all vegetation is good thing
- The town should lead by example (e.g., city-owned properties, to include cemeteries)
- Vegetation should not interfere with pedestrian safety or viewsheds

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Town-wide (but should have localized focus)

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
10	7	3	Upgrade town standards for landscape maintenance
9	8	1	Enforce existing landscaping requirements in town ordinances
6	4	2	Encourage personal investment in neighborhoods (e.g., community flower and vegetable gardens)
4	3	1	Begin implementation of the existing town streetscape plan
4	3	1	Offer/provide landscape planning guidance
3		3	Organize teams to care for public areas (e.g., greenway, kudzu control, etc.)
3	1	2	Delineate and name neighborhoods … install signage (to cultivate personal commitment and pride in properties)
2	1	1	Promote community art projects
			Provide landscaping incentives
			Get some kudzu goats
			Initiate *yard of the month* contest

6 – Community Facilities, Downtown, Historic Structures (other than housing), and Special Places and Destinations

Key words and phrases

- Access
- Community focal points … favorite places … anchors … bond for community … assets
- Harm to neighborhoods
- Large medical presence in town … regional
- Meeting places
- Natural beauty
- Older buildings … nice architectural style
- Pocket parks … small and nice … updating

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Community facilities require targeted funding for maintenance and improvements
- Establishment of multiple community anchor points is important
- It's usually better to renovate versus demolish
- Move the post office to a downtown location
- Parks: valuable community assets … need to be both clean and inviting … greenway is a big plus for the town (natural beauty + recreation) … must be accessible … require landscaping, maintenance, and periodic updating
- Preserving and finding new uses for older, historic buildings is a challenge but can honor structures, local talent, and the town's heritage
- The siting of community facilities, to include parking associated with these facilities, should not do harm to surrounding neighborhood
- Two natural terrain features that help to define the town are the Brushy Mountains and the Yadkin River

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Town-wide

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
10	8	2	Evaluate both public and private community facility parking spaces; develop plan to convert excess spaces for landscape options, benches, etc.
8	1	7	Investigate bringing passenger train service to town
6	5	1	Earmark funding for projects
6	5	1	Create park landscaping and improvement plans
6	3	3	Move post office to downtown location, and assist with revitalization of old site
3	3		Increase enforcement
			Encourage continuation and expansion
			Change outdated artwork at Main Street Park

7 – Roads and Streets, Parking, Signage, and Decorative Art

Key words and phrases

- Access
- Alternative transportation
- Art
- Highway-oriented businesses
- Intersections … parking lots … sidewalks … streetscapes
- Kudzu
- Lighting and signage
- Screening and transitions

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

- Adding landscaping and curb extensions to 4-way stop signs would improve downtown area streetscapes and make the area more inviting and attractive
- Alternative transportation choices (bicycles and walking) encourage healthy living … this requires both access and dedicated space/facilities
- Important aesthetics elements relating to roads/streets and parking: lighting, signage, streetscapes, and landscaping
- Incremental changes over time – when done consistently – can be as effective as master or comprehensive plans

- Intersections are major focal points and should be inviting and attractive
- Public art is both decorative and makes/adds interest to an area
- Replacing timed traffic lights with sensor lights will improve traffic flow
- Screening is important (e.g., dumpsters and providing transitions when land uses change)
- The town does a good job keeping streets clean and free of debris
- The town has a lot of highway-oriented businesses (remnants of sprawl) which are neither attractive nor welcoming … curb appeal is important on many levels or scales (e.g., house, block, neighborhood, and town)

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

- Town-wide and road corridors

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			**Potential Guiding Principles**
13	7	6	Stay the course with traffic calming devices, crosswalks, and 4-way stops
12	8	4	Establish finite periods of time for business to meet updated zoning standards
5	3	2	Create more sidewalks, trails, and walkways
4	4		Add more crosswalks at intersections
4	3	1	Accelerate implementation of town sidewalk plan
2		2	Continue to encourage beautification on Main Street
			Provide more options for transit
			Research grants to assist with street beautification
			Start new on beds, stop over-piling mulch

8 – Community Pride

Key words and phrases

- Crime areas
- Empty sign frames
- Graffiti
- Parked cars
- Screening
- Stray animals
- Trashy yard … unkempt … poorly maintained … disrepair … neglect … junk
- Vacant and run-down buildings

Root problems/issues … keys to community character

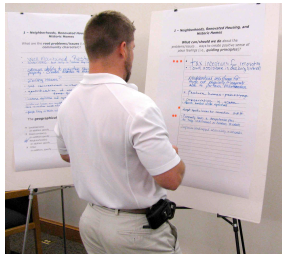
- Finding ways to help low income home owners balance choices between vital necessities and community aesthetics, health, and safety issues
- Holding landlords accountable for the appearance of their property
- Improving community points of pride should result in lower crime (e.g., vandalism and graffiti)
- Making important community issues a policy and manpower priority
- Poorly maintained signs, landscaping, and structures create negative images of the town
- Problem areas are not just poor neighborhoods
- Regulatory controls can help with some issues (e.g., signage, buffers, screening, vehicles, and animals) … establishing and then enforcing clear standards

Geographical extent of the problems/issues

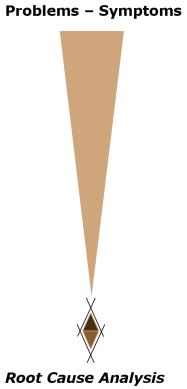
- Both town-wide and several neighborhoods

What can/should be done to create positive sense of place feelings?

Priority			Potential Guiding Principles
17	9	8	Prohibit storing abandoned and unused vehicles in public view
10	7	3	Educate property owners about services town provides for handling trash/yard waste; need pamphlet that describes services
5	2	3	Strictly enforce regulations regarding poorly maintained property
4	4		Provide incentives for good maintenance
4	3	1	Develop low interest loan program for screening improvements
			Create buffers and screening, and update old buffers (as needed)
			Coordinate infrastructure improvements with utilities



3–Root Cause Analysis Workshop



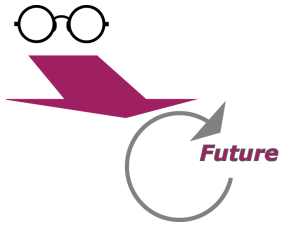
The purpose of the third workshop was to conduct a root cause analyses for a single issue: *why are* ***property owners not more accountable*** *for community character issues?* Property accountability was one of the issues identified during the previous workshop.

The analyses involved a 7–step procedure in which participants identified: 1–problems/symptoms relating to the issue, 2–duration, 3–fault tree branch linkages (e.g., physical, organizational, and/or human), 4–why the problems/symptoms exist (i.e., root cause), 5–how to address the root cause, 6–desired level of commitment, and 7–what to do and how to start. Figure 3 summarizes the root cause analyses workshop results.

Figure 3. Root Cause Analysis Results

Problems/ Symptoms	Duration	Fault Tree Branch	Why Problem Exists	Change Options	Desired Commitment	What to Do … How to Start
• Abandoned properties • Age of properties (i.e., older) … also aging renters • Deferred/poor maintenance • Finding qualified buyers for properties • Irresponsible renters • Lack of both staff and commissioner involvement • Large number of rental properties in town • Poorly done renovations	• About 30 years	• Physical (community-wide aesthetic impacts) • Governmental (leadership void) • Human (owners, renters, and residents in general)	• A feeling of community is often missing • Commissioners don't routinely budget for such needs • Elected officials not familiar with details of existing codes • Existing staff lacks time, personnel, and capability to be actively involved • Failure to take personal responsibility … all levels • Financing difficulties (maintaining cash flow and obtaining low interest loans) • It's often hard to be honest with one's neighbor • Lack of guidelines (i.e., either fix or condemnation + removal) • Local mindset (both inertia and problem denial) • Low priority combined with lack of caring • Low property values • Neglectful/absentee landlords • Private property rights value set is an obstacle • Residents don't convey their desires for action to elected officials • Shortage of in-town properties for new construction	• Add staff to increase both capacity and capability • Develop partnerships between town and other agencies/ organizations • Focus on neighborhoods … create/define small, distinctive areas … make connections to activity centers (e.g., community facilities) … name neighborhoods … better communicate with and involve property owners) • Greater involvement of non-profits (e.g., purchase and renovate) • Involve faith-based community in both acknowledging existing problems and seeking solutions • Make housing renovations a high town priority • Set/enforce standards, and be aggressive in improving or removing eyesores • Target specific populations (e.g., seniors)	• Act now (but recognize that actions will likely require incremental steps)	• Define neighborhoods town-wide • Develop a plan … and then act; this should include funding a staff position, commissioner oversight, and involving a large number of community members • Build pride by focusing on neighborhood-specific actions and activities (e.g., block parties and other events) • Use the existing ad hoc work group as an initial change agent (while also developing other change agents)

4–Visioning Workshop



Visioning is a procedure that can help a community integrate shared perspectives regarding where they want to be at some point in the future. The time-horizon for this project is 3-5 years, and the focus question that participants used for the visioning workshop was: *How should the town focus its efforts, over the next 3-5 years, in ways that address community issues identified during the previous workshops, to preserve community character, increase investment (especially in housing), and contribute to making the town a visually attractive, healthy, vibrant, and memorable community for both residents and visitors?*

The visioning scope was intentionally broad and included several potential vision activity threads (Figure 4). Participants identified four groupings or categories for their shared community vision: creating a livable/happy environment, fostering public engagement and support, enhancing livability, and staying on track. Figure 5 graphically summarizes the results from the visioning workshop.

Figure 4. Visioning Scope and Activity Threads

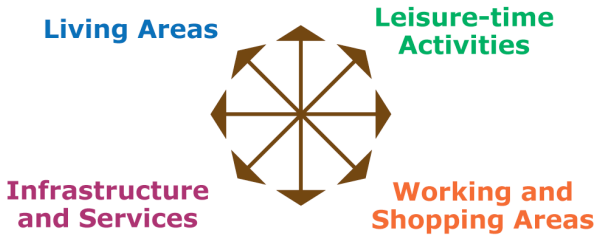


Figure 5. Visioning Results: *Re-imagining North Wilkesboro ➔ Moving Forward by …*

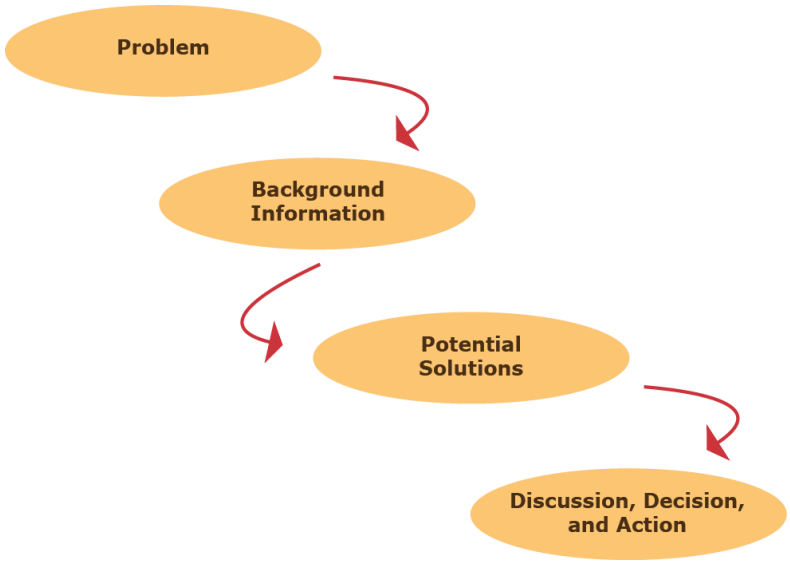
Creating a livable/happy environment	Fostering public engagement and support	Enhancing livability	Staying on track
• Better maintain public areas • Create a BID (business improvement district) • Define – and name – neighborhoods • Develop city-wide walking paths • Develop public/private sidewalk building incentives • Establish and regulate historic districts • Explore town-purchase of derelict properties • Find ways to prevent political interference • Focus on small projects • Identify point persons to execute plans • Increase staffing for code enforcement • Provide local tax credits for renovations • Pursue additional funding through grants • Strengthen existing housing standards	• Coordinate community resource groups • Coordinate *help your neighbor days* • Form public-private partnerships • Give priority to improving defined neighborhoods • Organize neighborhood meetings • Partner with Block 46 LLC • Seek public buy-in • Showcase a *house of the month* • Strive to achieve balance between rules and incentives • Try to bring more small businesses to the downtown area	• Appoint neighborhood captains • Create a *walk to* downtown environment • Encourage more downtown living • Explore conversion of Wilkes Towers • Hold owners responsible for their properties • Promote home revitalization • Provide incentives for upscale development • Support the transition of renting to property ownership	• Demonstrate a *get er done* attitude • Promote North Wilkesboro history

5–Charrette Workshop

The fifth workshop was a 2-day topical charrette that included a variety of issues relating to community character and housing. This workshop helped to synthesize and focus results from the previous workshops.

A charrette is a collaborative problem solving process, and the design of a charrette is complex. The design must provide for dynamic, interactive, and group-oriented activities. Figure 6 graphically illustrates the general design concept.

Figure 6. Generalized Charrette Process



Problem

The problem statement used for the charrette mirrored the project task, which was to identify things that can be done over the next 3-5 years to make North Wilkesboro a great place for people to live, work, shop, play, and visit … things that will help to preserve community character and increase community investment (especially in housing).

Background Information

In addition to evaluating results from the previous workshops, an environmental scan provided supplemental information about housing conditions (Appendix A), property tax data (Appendix B), and census data (Appendix C).

Potential Solutions

Participants developed three alternative future scenarios for the town. The *status quo* scenario requires doing nothing special to realize outcomes associated with this scenario. The other two scenarios are both pro-active and represent a *cautious* approach to pursuing change (i.e., incremental or small steps forward) and a *bold* approach to pursuing change (i.e., aggressive or larger steps forward).

1–Status Quo

- Aesthetic and safety issues proliferate town-wide
- Community facilities and neighborhoods both lack both cohesiveness and inter-connections
- Complaints about community eyesores increase
- Complaints about rental properties increase
- Continued loss of historic structures (and cultural heritage)
- Downtown businesses continue to close
- Drug and alcohol abuse increase as social problems
- Erosion of trust in elected officials
- Few alternative transportation choices are available

- Fewer residents go downtown
- Graffiti becomes more common than public art
- Highway-oriented businesses are the predominant shopping choices available to residents
- Home ownership declines
- Home values fall in most neighborhoods
- Homelessness increases as a social problem, with more people/families living out of cars and in tents
- Housing conditions continue to deteriorate
- Junk and clutter become an accepted norm
- Lack of consistency in renovation of properties
- Lack of direction results in low expectations
- Lack of unified purpose
- Little or no curb appeal in many neighborhoods
- Low level of community pride
- Many residents refer to changes resulting in *North* Wilkesboro becoming *Neglected* Wilkesboro
- More older/vacant structures are being boarded up
- North Wilkesboro falls behind other small NC towns in use of technology
- Overgrown grass and shrubbery are common
- Regulatory gaps (relating to both code standards and enforcement) continue to exist
- The number of substandard dwelling units increases
- The town becomes an aesthetic hodge-podge of signs (many unframed), designs, and architecture
- Tourism mostly by-passes North Wilkesboro
- Use of vegetation buffers receives little attention
- Very little public participation in the political process
- Youth forced to leave town to find jobs … and have no real desire to return

2–Be Proactive and Cautiously Pursue Change

- Begin testing alternative ways to improve housing conditions
- Block parties strengthen neighborhood camaraderie and public support for project-oriented activities
- Community pride improves, and residents start to buy and invest locally
- Complete, nice, and aesthetically pleasing streetscapes
- Delineation of neighborhoods and creation of volunteer leadership cells within each neighborhood (that meet every 6 months with elected officials)
- *Destination downtown* focuses on two new venues – entertainment (e.g., Benton hall impromptu comedy zone) and art crawls
- Dilapidated and vacant structures evaluated for livability and safety … mandates for repairs and penalties for violations
- Elected officials begin asking – at various community levels – what people want – sometimes meeting at local facilities such as churches
- Establishment of a 10-year technology plan for the town that includes wi-fi and fiber optics
- Establishment of *green* businesses (e.g., compost)
- Expansion of farmer's market
- Exterior art requirement for new commercial construction
- Facade grants provided for downtown structures
- Hart square used for arts and crafts demonstrations
- High school dropout rate shows improvement
- Implementation of downtown landscaping plan
- Improvement of existing recreation facilities
- Improvements to gateway signage along major road corridors
- Inventory and celebration of existing historic properties
- Key City condos used as a model for additional multi-family housing projects
- Landscaping themes developed for central business district

- Lincoln Heights opens community kitchen for classes/canning/cooking
- Maintenance monitoring program developed for housing
- Many residents are starting to think outside the box in terms of jobs, to include providing greater flexibility regarding home businesses
- More options for people of all ages to use alternative transportation modes … better access to downtown amenities and events
- Neighborhood residents focus on curb appeal initiatives … well maintained yards
- Police officers walk downtown … some use Segway transporters and bicycles
- Project-oriented volunteerism increases within the town
- Public transportation shuttles adults to evening high school classes at Lincoln Heights
- Redevelopment project includes a small community for early retirees
- Residents are working together more and see progress being made
- Residents feel invested in local government and frequently share their opinions with elected officials
- Residents realize the value of *telling the story* about North Wilkesboro's cultural heritage … kiosks, historic markers, and way finding signage are tested
- Streetscapes and nice landscaping make residents feel safe when parking in public places
- Study select sites for a planned *village*
- System of new walkways and playgrounds built for town residents
- Temporary community flower/vegetable gardens allowed in renovation areas until permanent development occurs
- The public supports new development controls (with special emphases on aesthetics and facades)
- The town develops a capital improvement program for managing community character and housing issues
- Theme development for downtown storefronts
- Town cleans up several eyesores
- Town develops slogan (i.e., where the blue ridge shines)
- Town hires a planner to help with code enforcement, neighborhood issues (e.g., renovations), and economic development

- Town identifies vacant/dilapidated buildings and begins dialogue with owners
- Town more strictly enforces existing codes
- Town researches use of tax incentives for business and residential improvements
- Town residents take personal responsibility to address social problems
- Town uses ordinances to clean up junk cars and litter
- Train depot becomes a welcome center
- Work group explores ways to market the town's reasonable housing costs … turning a problem to an advantage

3–Be Proactive and Boldly Pursue Change

- Aggressive enforcement of zoning
- Angle parking with meters being used in several downtown locations
- Balanced housing choices exist for residents
- Block 46 development completed and includes a park
- Broadband internet access is available town-wide
- Celebration of cultural heritage finds important linkage with tourism
- Community volunteer teams help to clean up and renovate properties (much like missionary and ambassador groups) … faith-based teams initiate this effort
- Compliments made about how nice it is to no longer have to look at junk cars or litter
- Defined neighborhoods (with identified signage) include local planning committees
- Downtown area is prospering … few vacant buildings
- Effective programs and facilities exist to treat important social problems
- Elected officials extensively use ad hoc committees to help address community needs
- Employment in general reinvents itself … small scale technology and creative class emphases
- Growth in agri-businesses (to include a commercial kitchen)
- Growth in tourism results in additional lodging being built within the town

- High level of community pride
- High school dropout rate is equal to or better than the state rate
- Historic and decorative signage markers in downtown area (i.e., way finding)
- Historic preservation initiatives are common
- Housing authority receives condemnation authority
- Improved access to the downtown area helps small businesses and also promotes tourism
- Improved dialogue between community members and town staff results in feelings of teamwork
- Improvements made to public housing (both interior and exterior)
- Increased employment opportunities result in more youth staying in town after graduation
- Local investors help to build/repair playgrounds, parks, gardens
- Many people are working together and trust each other
- Markers identify and explain historical sites and homes
- Mixed-use development is common … mixed-use zoning in many parts of town
- Multi-family conversions no longer allowed within small, predominantly single-family neighborhoods
- Neighborhoods connected to downtown area with sidewalks and bike lanes
- New and renovated structures are energy efficient
- New development (and certain renovated properties) include a mix of affordable housing
- Old/existing buildings undergo adaptive reuse
- Outdoor art and signage are at all entrances to the town
- Plan developed for downtown placement of art/sculpture/murals
- Public service announcements publicize work in progress (with continuous emphasis describing community pride initiatives)
- Renovation of Wilkes Towers
- Residents are interested and actively involved in government … increased empowerment by elected officials (especially at neighborhood level)
- Residents say that change is good and take pride in aesthetic consistencies achieved throughout the town

- Serious and competitive incentives provide for improvements to structures
- Several mixed-use structures built (and renovation of existing structures)
- Sidewalks built within all defined neighborhoods to provide inviting spaces to walk and sit
- Small scale employment results in greater job diversity
- Some people are complaining about being too busy (rather than not having anything to do)
- Spur rail service links North Wilkesboro to Charlotte and Greensboro … town becomes gateway for rail service to the high country area … old depot becomes operational again
- Strict enforcement of codes regarding dilapidated and vacant structures … previous problems corrected
- Strong sense of neighborhoods … well kept year round
- Technology is state of the art and energy efficiency is incentivized
- The downtown area is an architecturally and aesthetically attractive economic activity center
- The town adopts a multi-year capital improvement program to implement several on-going initiatives involving neighborhoods and activity centers
- The town aggressively seeks niche employment opportunities based on assets
- Thriving and expanded farmer's market/co-op
- Thriving downtown areas are focal points and gathering places for both residents and tourists
- Town adopts comprehensive landscape ordinance for all types of development
- Town aggressively seeks/recruits/incentivizes investment
- Town coordinates schedule of weekly block/neighborhood work sessions to promote owner investment (e.g., landscaping and repairs)
- Town establishes time limits for making repairs to vacant and dilapidated structures, with fines and condemnation being follow-on actions for violations
- Town hires an additional planner dedicated to neighborhood improvement initiatives and neighborhood activities
- Town implements complete streets program
- Town implements streetscape plan
- Town is committed to high level of maintenance for parks, streetscapes, and other public properties

- Town maintains register of historic structures (some being placed on the national register)
- Town upgrades and modernizes all public areas (to include use, landscaping, and access emphases)
- Walking and biking are active life style components for many residents

Discussion Points, Decision-making Issues, and Action Agenda

Community character is …

- A reflection of reputation … those things for which a town is known
- Appearance … images that evoke positive impacts
- Architectural integrity
- Being a good neighbor
- Creating a sense of community and being together … belonging
- Engaged citizens
- Having and implementing plans
- Helping others … showing a caring attitude
- Linked to effective government
- Mutual investment that includes leadership, people working together, and funding arrangements
- Neat and well-kept public and private spaces
- Often defined by a geographical context
- Points of pride
- Providing quality health care
- Providing recreation opportunities for all age groups
- Taking responsibility for the way things are
- The public images that people have about a place … reflecting collective and shared values, history, and sense of place
- The relationships between how locals might define the town and how an outsider might define the town
- The spirit of place

Community character and housing are important to the town because …

- A large portion of the town's revenue relates to investments in housing and community character-related issues
- Home owners want property values to be stable or increase (versus being volatile or decreasing in value)
- Housing quality has a ripple affect that impacts a variety of community aspects and functions
- Satisfies several basic needs for town residents (e.g., shelter)
- The look or appearance of a town reflects its reputation
- Together they create and sustain economic, social, and spiritual opportunities … provide building-blocks to making the town better … create a sense of community … reflect personal interests, values, and pride on a community-wide scale … promote greater public participation … serve as a blending factor … build relationships … nurture being friendly … make the town inviting and attractive to others
- When done well, provides a feeling of *wholeness* to the town (versus isolated, segmented parts or pieces of community)

Indicators that community character and housing problems exists in the town …

- High rate of rental housing (versus home ownership)
- Lack of quality multi-family housing choices
- Lack of undeveloped land *and* redevelopment of existing properties
- Landlords shirking their responsibility
- Large number of vacant houses and businesses
- Low education rates
- Low income levels … under-employment … poverty
- Low levels of public participation in government or community
- Older age of existing housing stock
- Persistent housing problems despite having high percentage of property owners who live in North Wilkesboro
- Poor housing conditions overall (many dwelling units being sub-standard)

Driving forces affecting community character and housing in North Wilkesboro are …

Society/Demographics

- Aging population
- Ethic of accepting one's *station in life* (e.g., don't forget from where you have come)
- Low education levels
- Low income levels
- NIMBY (not in my back yard) and private property rights attitudes
- Reluctance to embrace change and new ideas

Government/Politics

- Commitment of board members … vested interests
- Competing attitudes and values relating to role of government
- *Good old boy* networks
- Limited funding sources
- Political correctness and priorities
- Social conservatism
- Staff capacity
- Understanding extent and depth of existing problems

Technology

- Access
- Information sharing (e.g., WWW blogs)
- Public investment (e.g., funding priorities)

Economy

- Access to capital
- Availability of resources needed to make a difference
- Business competition
- Employment trends (e.g., jobs … lack of jobs)
- Generational poverty
- Having (and allocating) funds to maintain properties
- Property values

Other

- Educating home owners about ownership responsibilities
- Finding balance between what one wants versus what can be versus what one is willing to do
- Finding commitment (e.g., to preserving historic structures)
- Geography and landforms
- Neighborhood size

Key players involved in community change are …

- Ad hoc neighborhood leaders
- Appointed town officials (e.g., planning board)
- Builders and developers
- Business owners
- Community organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, Downtown North Wilkesboro, Lions Club, Rotary International, library groups, and churches)
- Economic Development Commission
- Elected town officials

- Housing authority
- Property owners (to include both owner-occupied and landlords)
- Real estate agents
- School officials
- Town staff
- Wilkes Transportation Authority

Commitment requirements needed to realize the pro-active change scenarios are …

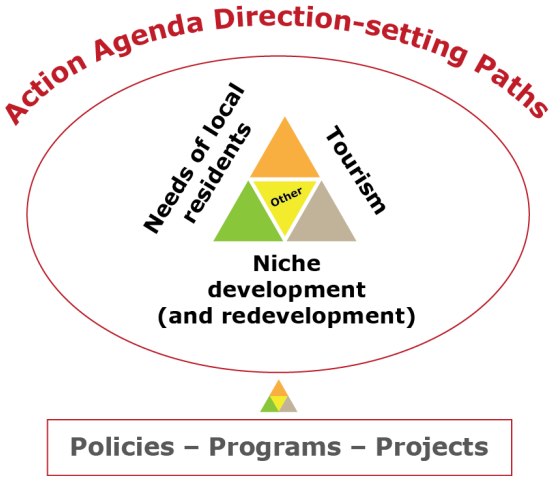
- Active participation at multiple levels of community
- Coalition leadership
- Community action groups
- Empowerment by elected officials
- Focus on housing
- Funding (public, private, and grants)
- Individuals and groups working together (shared sweat and elbow grease)
- Investment in education and training
- Leaving personal agendas at the door
- Partnering with others (e.g., Northwestern Regional Housing Authority)
- Property owners who take take personal responsibility
- Support from elected officials
- Volunteers (time and skills)

An action agenda for the town should include …

Developing an action agenda is analogous to determining the right prescription for eyeglasses. When the prescription is correct, one can better focus on being a pro-active change agent.

An action agenda consists of policies, programs, and projects. Participants identified three primary direction-setting paths for their action agenda: addressing needs of local residents, seeking niche development (and redevelopment) opportunities, and strengthening economic linkages relating to tourism (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Direction-setting Paths



In order to provide better focus on change directions relating to community character and housing, the challenge is to combine the results from visioning with results from the alternative future scenario development. Participants did this by creating a matrix that included select policies, programs, and projects, grouped by importance (higher versus lower) and workability (easier versus harder) (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Action Agenda

		Importance	
		Higher	**Lower**
Workability	**Easier**	• Better maintain public areas • Create a walk to downtown environment • Define (and name) neighborhoods • Develop special incentives (e.g., tax credits) for both select new and older renovated properties • Focus on small projects • Form public–private partnerships • Give priority to improving defined neighborhoods • Help neighborhoods to get organized and hold meetings • Identify point persons to execute plans, projects, and programs • Promote strategic initiatives that build on tourism strengths relating to recreation, heritage, and agri-tourism • Pursue additional funding (e.g., through grants) • Research how the housing authority can help with condemnation and other housing initiatives • Stay focused on who we are as a community/town … similar to branding • Strengthen existing housing standards • Strengthen regulations involving multi-unit housing • Strive to achieve balance between rules/regulations and incentives	• Allow community gardens on designated public properties • Appoint neighborhood captains • Coordinate help your neighbor days • Focus on growing green-oriented businesses and agri-businesses • Partner with Block 46 LLC • Provide coordination involving community resource groups • Showcase a house of the month
	Harder	• Begin implementation of streetscape plan for Main Street • Create a BID (business improvement district) • Develop public/private sidewalk building incentives • Encourage more downtown living • Explore conversion of Wilkes Towers • Explore town-purchase of derelict properties • Find ways to prevent politics from interfering with good ideas • Hold owners responsible for the appearance of their properties • Increase staffing for code enforcement and planning in general • Insure access to social services • Promote home revitalization • Provide incentives to encourage upscale development and mixed-use renovations • Purchase the train depot • Redevelop blighted neighborhood areas • Seek public buy-in • Support the transition of renting to property ownership • Try to bring more small businesses to the downtown area	• Develop a city-wide system of walking paths • Establish and regulate historic districts • Expand farmer's market • Promote technology infrastructure (i.e., town-wide broad band internet and wi-fi in downtown)

6–Action Planning

A follow-up workshop will involve development of one action planning initiative … an illustrative example of what the town can do to engage community members and realize desired future directions. The topical initiative selected by participants for action planning was neighborhoods, and three of the four Figure 8 action agenda quadrants contain neighborhood-specific opportunities for policy–program–project action planning. This follow-up workshop will include specific planning actions, a targeted work program, and a separate report will document results from this workshop.

Next Steps

Implementation of the action agenda will require further identification – and execution – of specific programs and projects. In short, the action agenda provides a *framework* for things that can be done over the next 3-5 years to make North Wilkesboro a great place for people to live, work, shop, play, and visit … things that will help to preserve community character and increase community investment (especially in housing).

Appendices

A – Housing Condition Information

B – Property Tax Information

C – Census Information

Appendix A – Housing Condition Information

Overview

An inventory of housing conditions was conducted in the Town of North Wilkesboro, NC in August 2012 as part of a larger project to assess community character and housing. The purpose of this appendix is to provide an overview of the inventory process and document the results.

The determination of housing conditions requires application of criteria to obtain data that can be both mapped and statistically analyzed. The criteria used for this inventory is a simplified rating method consisting of 5 criteria (neighborhood, exterior, utilities, garage, and landscaping) and a scoring system (1 thru 7). Figure 9 is a snapshot of the various components of this method.

The actual application of this rating method results in a single score for each house. In addition, one can consolidate scores by zones and for the town as a whole.

Although neighborhoods are the preferred means of delineating zones, the town does not have well-defined neighborhood boundaries. Therefore, the zone boundaries used for the inventory are police patrol areas. Figure 10 shows the 8 zones used for this inventory (i.e., zones A thru H).

The Results

One can portray the inventory results both visually (e.g., maps) and statistically (e.g., charts or tables). Figures 11-12 show the results for the town as a whole, and Figure 13-14 show the results for each zone.
The summary analysis of the results indicates that:

- The housing condition scores for the town are low and likely reflect the age of the housing stock … the median score is below the average score.
- Zone F has the greatest need … the median score is below the average score.
- Need-based priority by zone: Priority 1–D_F_H, Priority 2–A_C, Priority 3–B_E; Zone G results indicate no need.

Figure 9. Simplified Condition Rating Method ©

Criteria	Rating						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
a. Neighborhood	• Very mixed LUs • Poor architectural integrity and/or varied bulk • Poor appearance			• Moderately mixed LUs • Varied architecture but similar bulk • Average appearance			• May include some mixed LUs • Nice architectural integrity and similar bulk • Very nice appearance
b. Exterior (Note 1)	• Poorly maintained			• Average maintenance			• Well maintained
c. Utilities	• Missing electricity or plumbing			• Both electricity and plumbing • Above ground			• Both electricity and plumbing • Buried
d. Garage	• Neither garage nor carport			• 1 car or carport			• At least 2 car
e. Landscaping	• No diversity • Poorly maintained			• Some diversity • Average maintenance			• Diverse and distinctive • Well maintained

Notes:
1 - Includes condition of roof, porch, siding (e.g., paint condition and general appearance), and driveway
2 - Ratings of 2/3 and 5/6 are judgmental and typically include mixed criteria

Figure 10. Town-wide Zones (map)

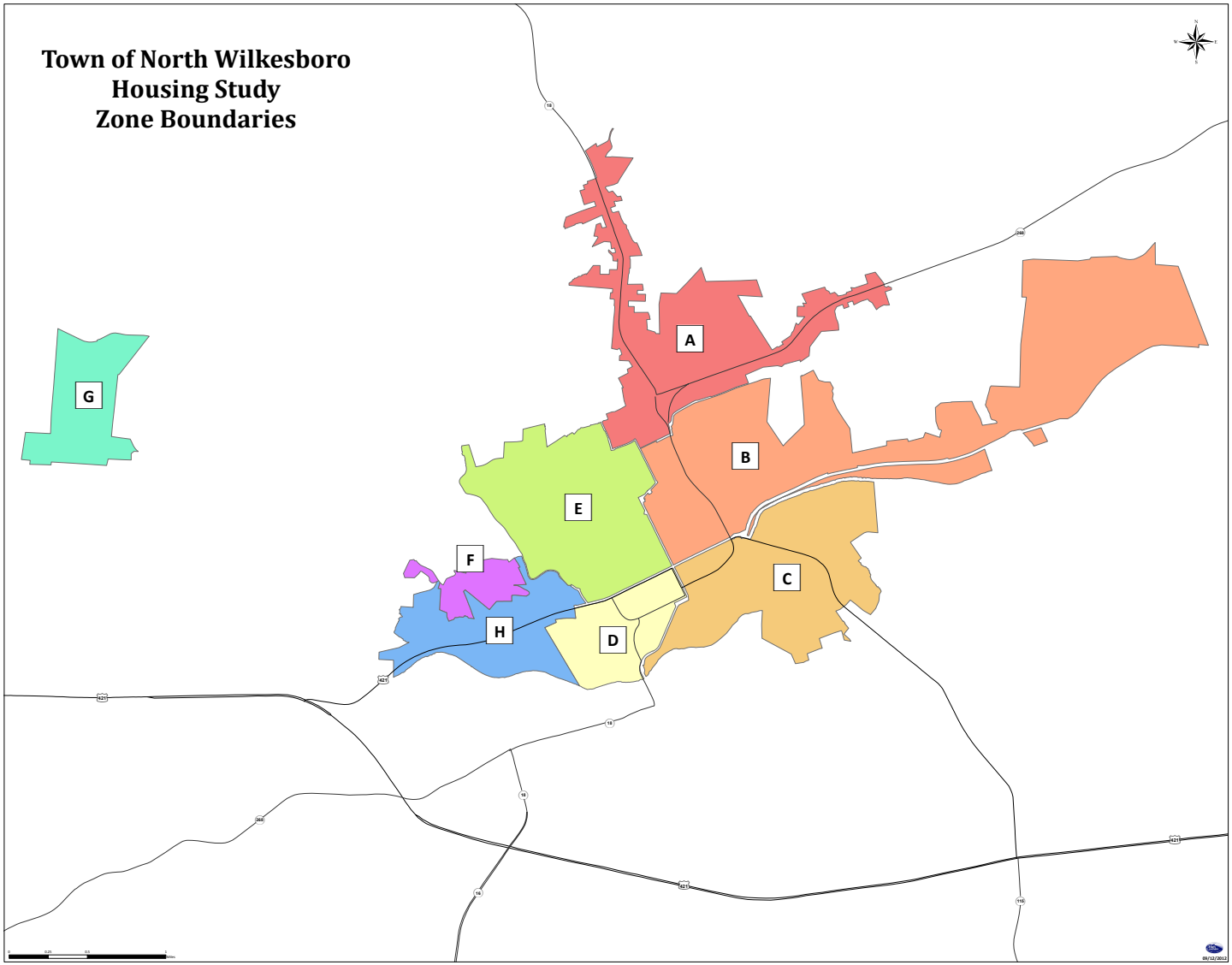


Figure 11. Town-wide Results (map)

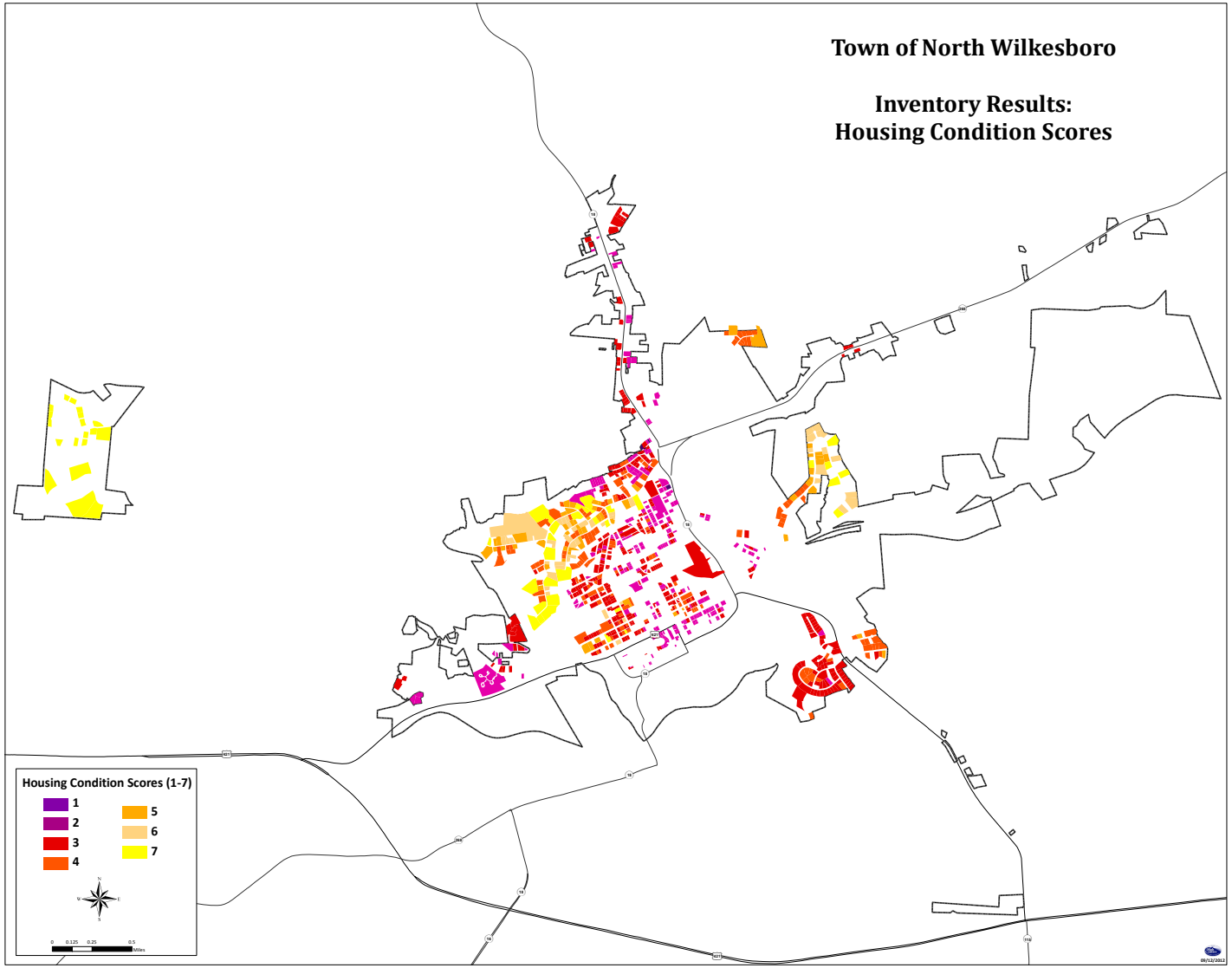
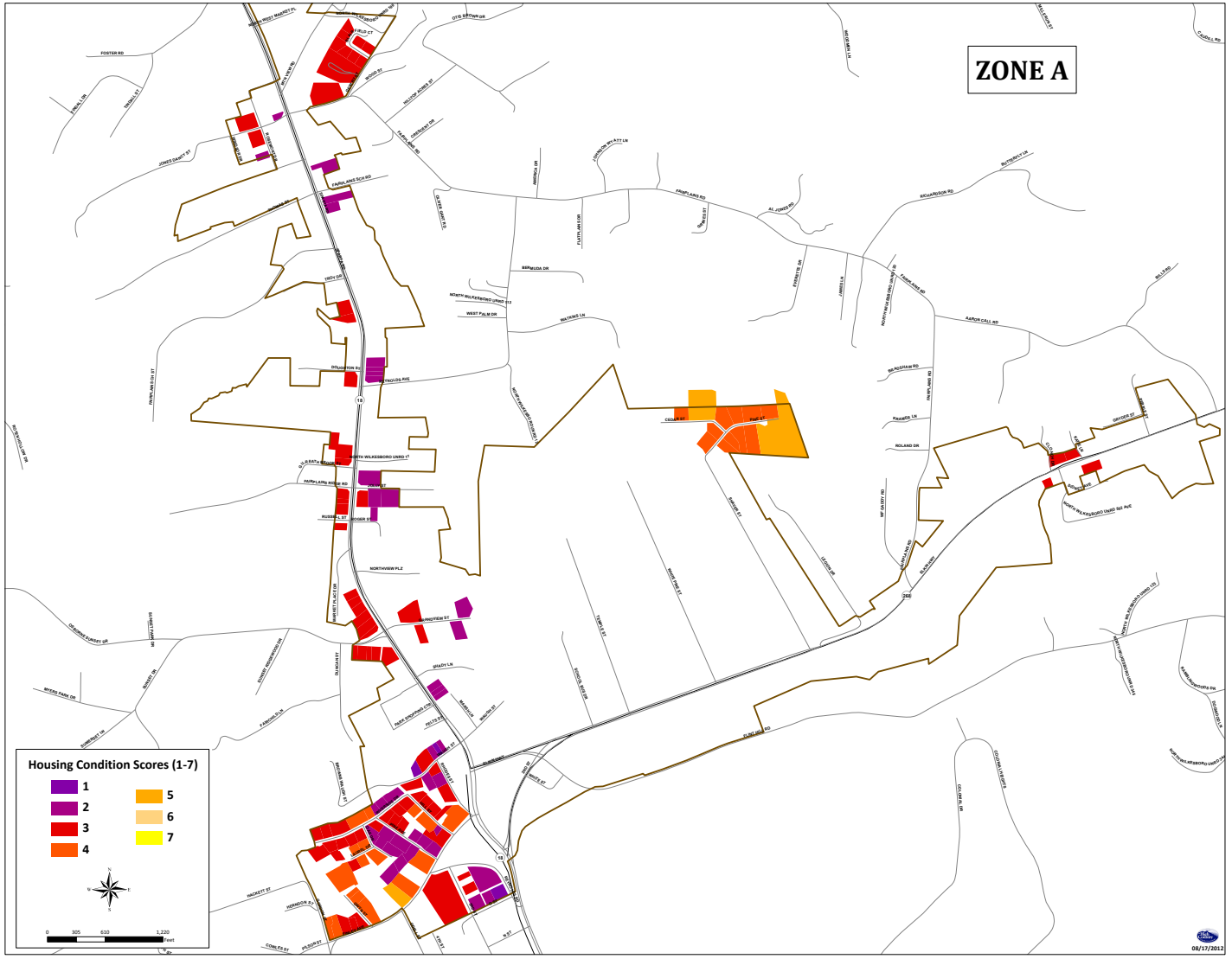
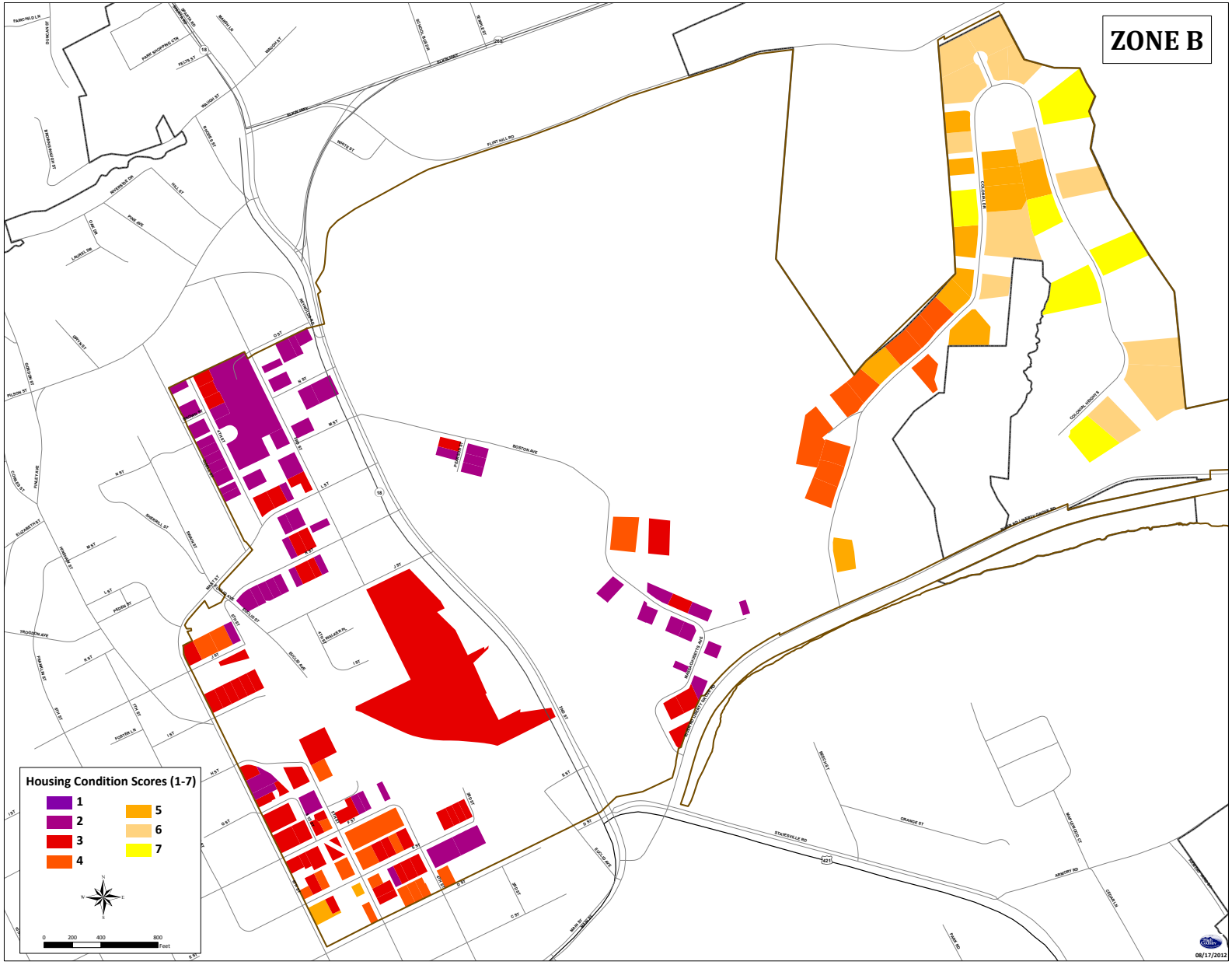


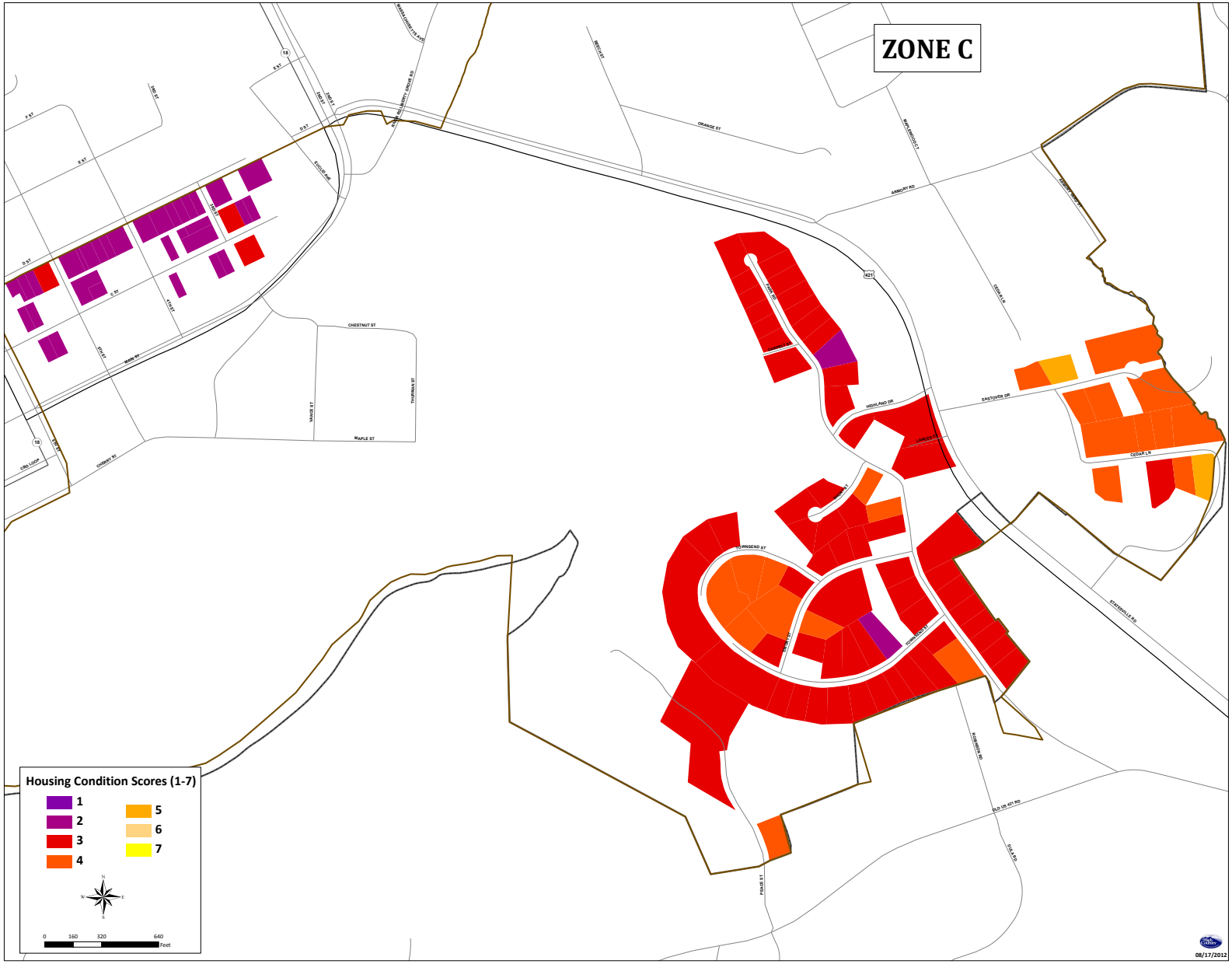
Figure 12. Town-wide Results (statistical)

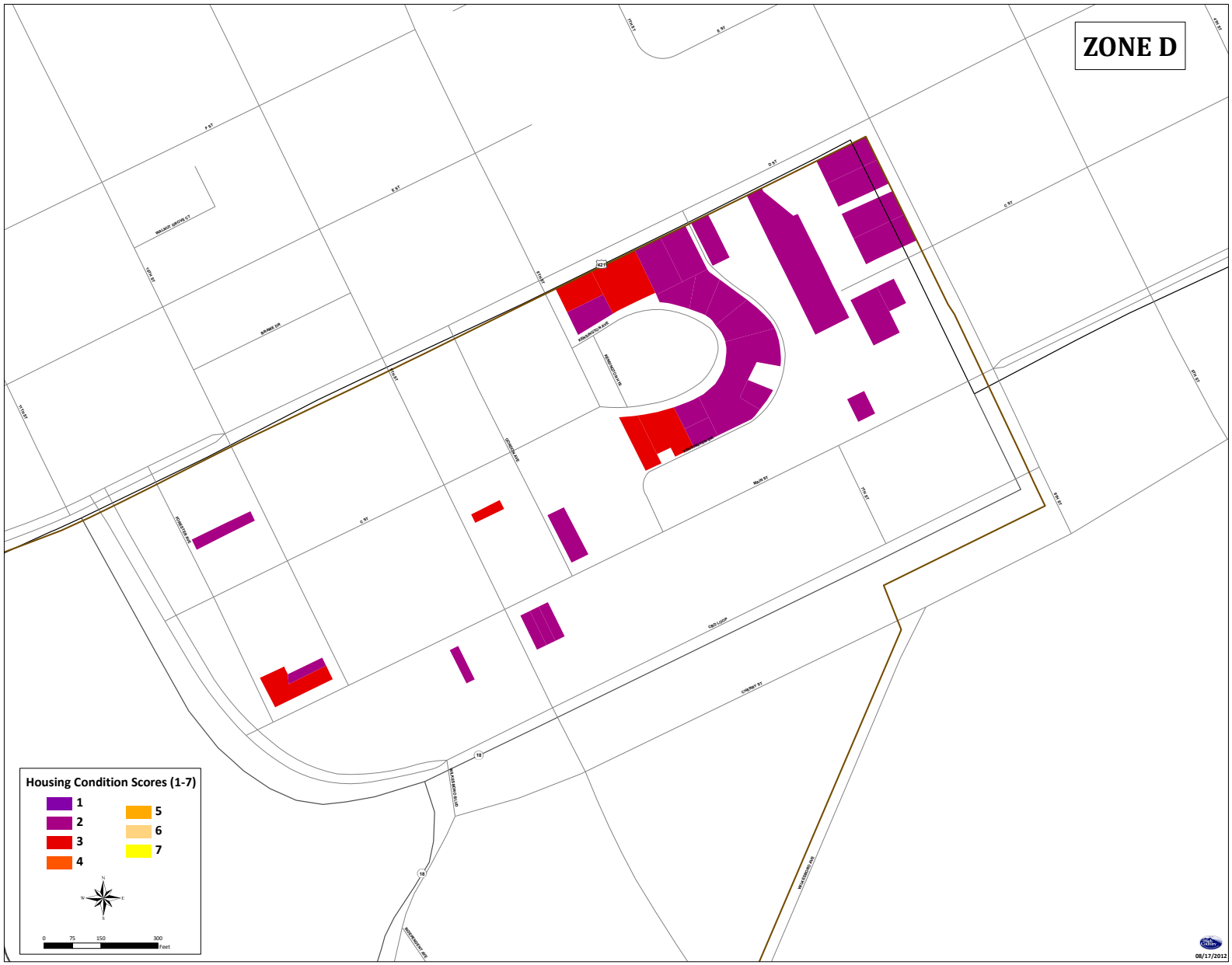
Zone	Low Score	Average Score	Median Score	High Score
A	1	2.92	3	5
B	2	3.34	4.5	7
C	2	2.93	3.5	5
D	2	2.18	2.5	3
E	2	4.02	4.5	7
F	2	2.6	2.5	3
G	7	7	7	7
H	2	2.45	2.5	3
Town	*1*	*3.43*	*3.25*	*7*

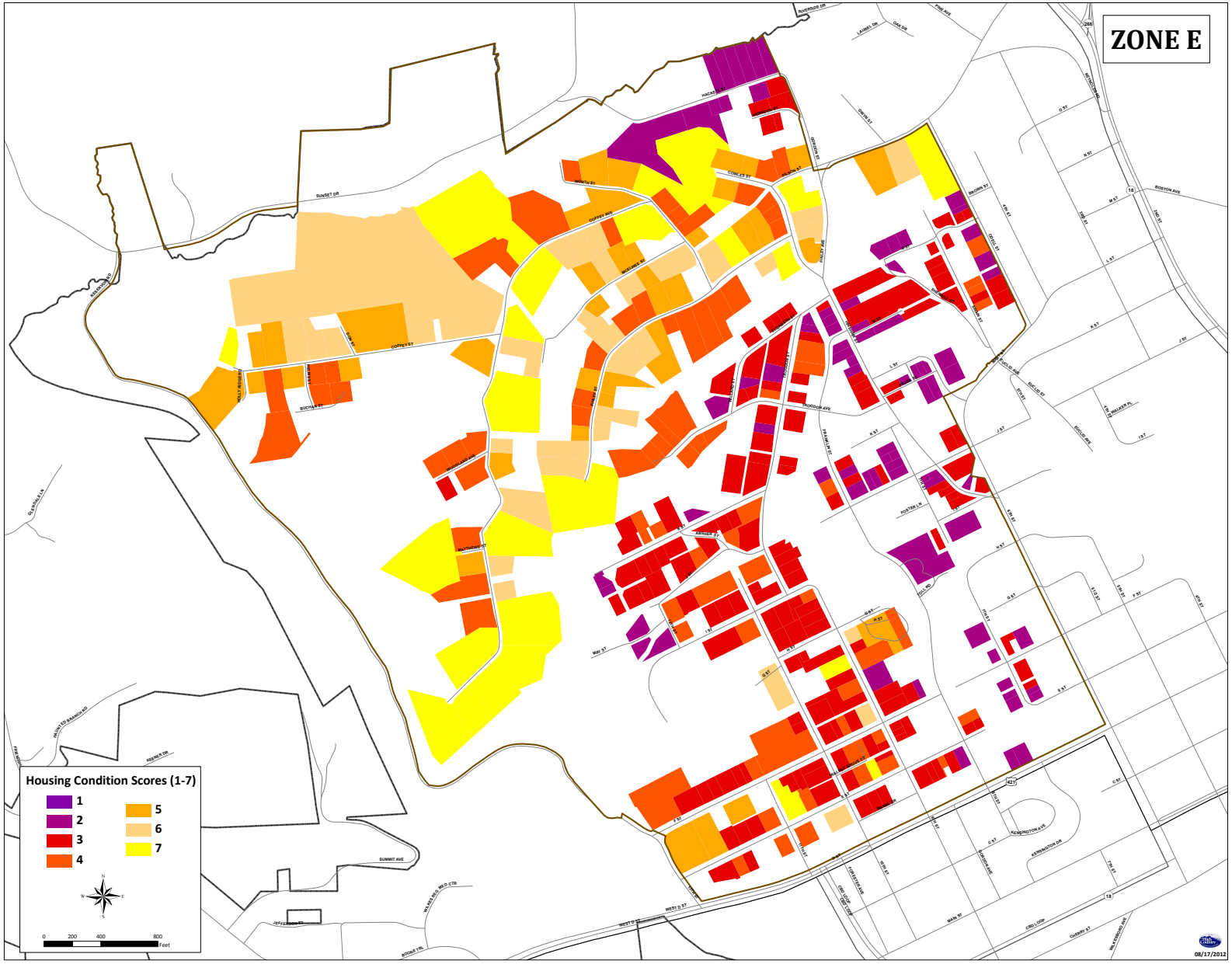
Figure 13. Results by Zone (maps)

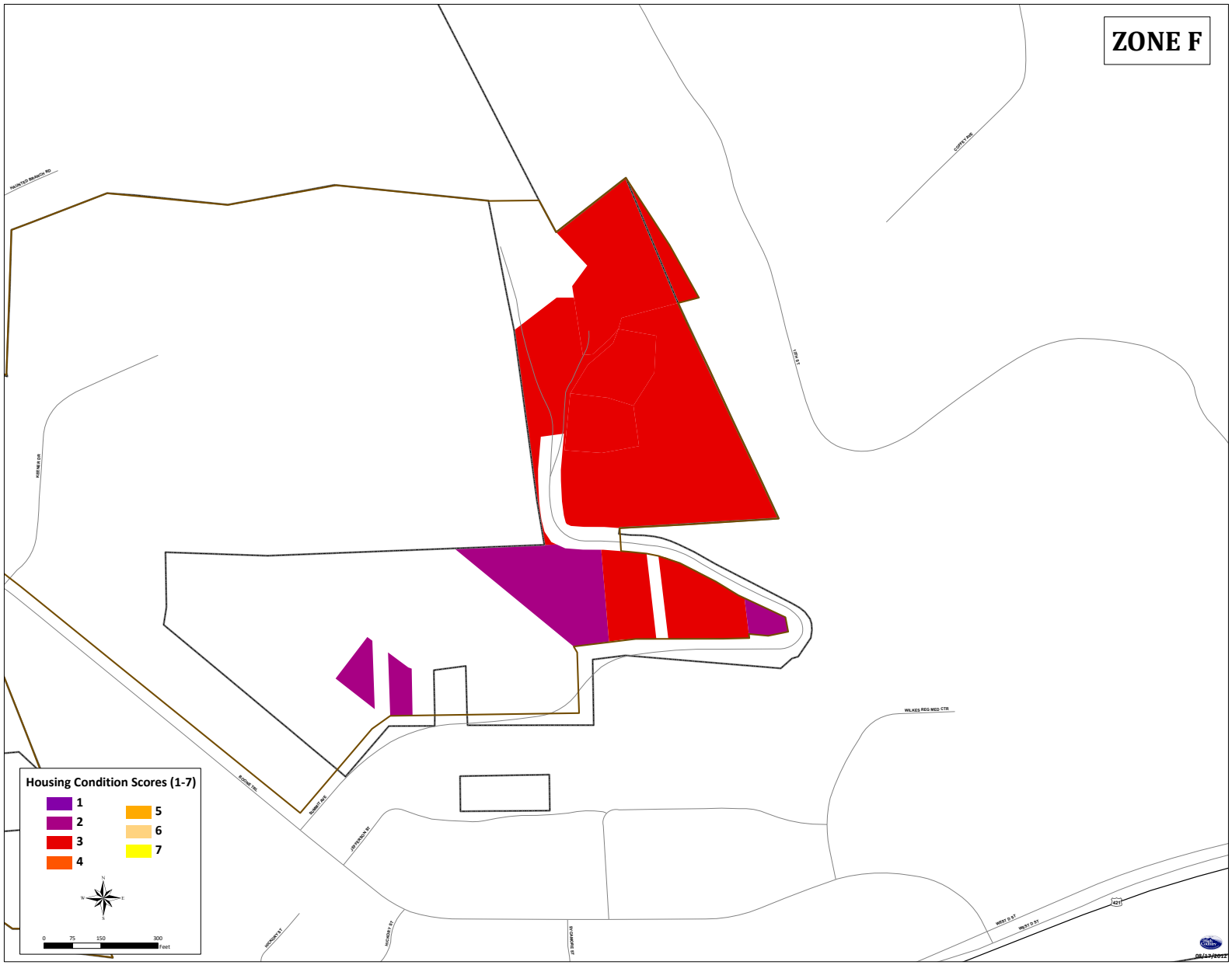



ZONE B
Housing Condition Scores (1-7)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
0 200 400 800
Feet
08/17/2012

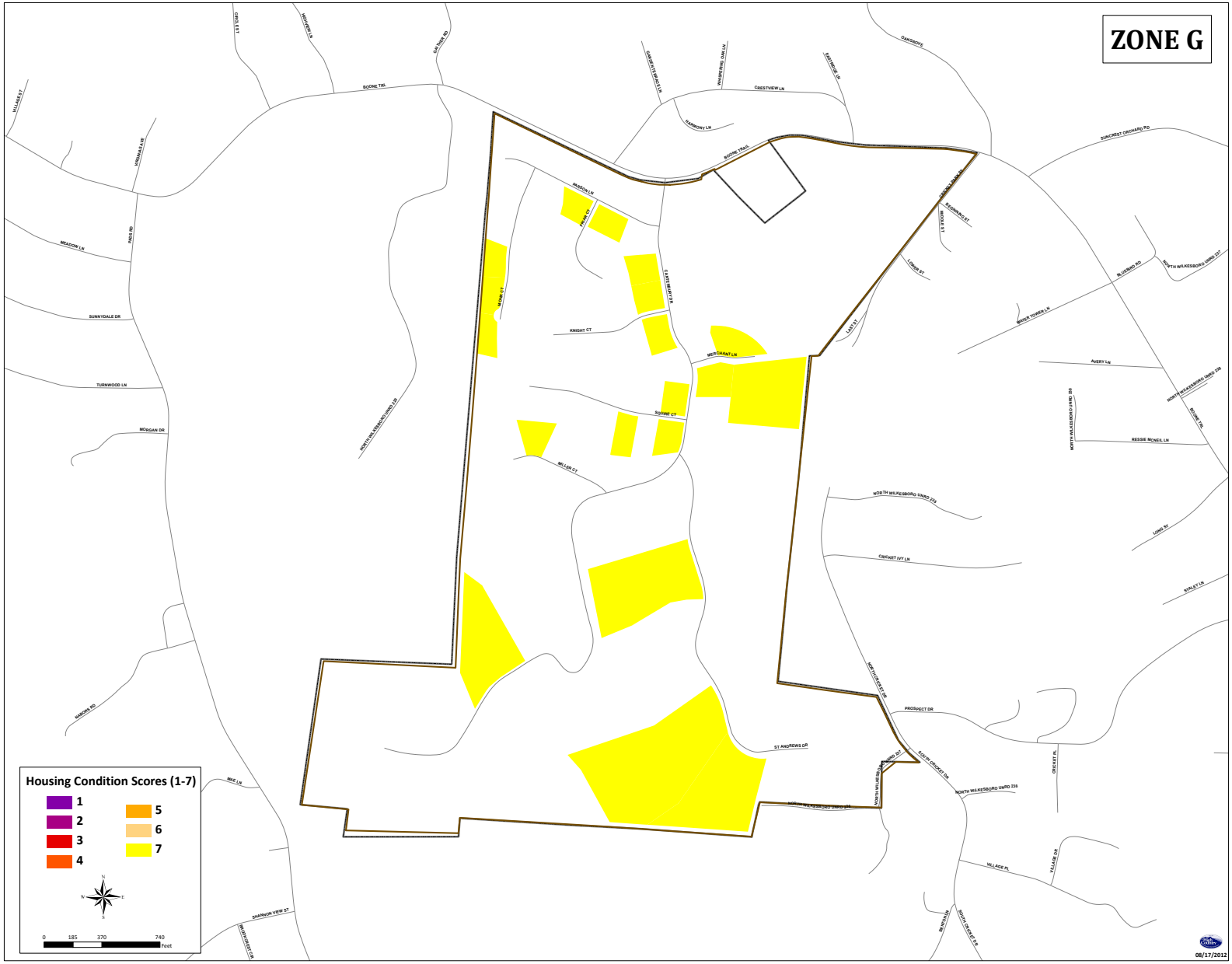

ZONE C
Housing Condition Scores (1-7)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
0 160 320 640
Feet
08/17/2012


ZONE D
Housing Condition Scores (1-7)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
0
75
150
300
Feet
08/17/2012


ZONE E
Housing Condition Scores (1-7)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
0 200 400 800
Feet
08/17/2012


ZONE F
Housing Condition Scores (1-7)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
0
75
150
300
Feet

Appendix A – Housing Condition Information



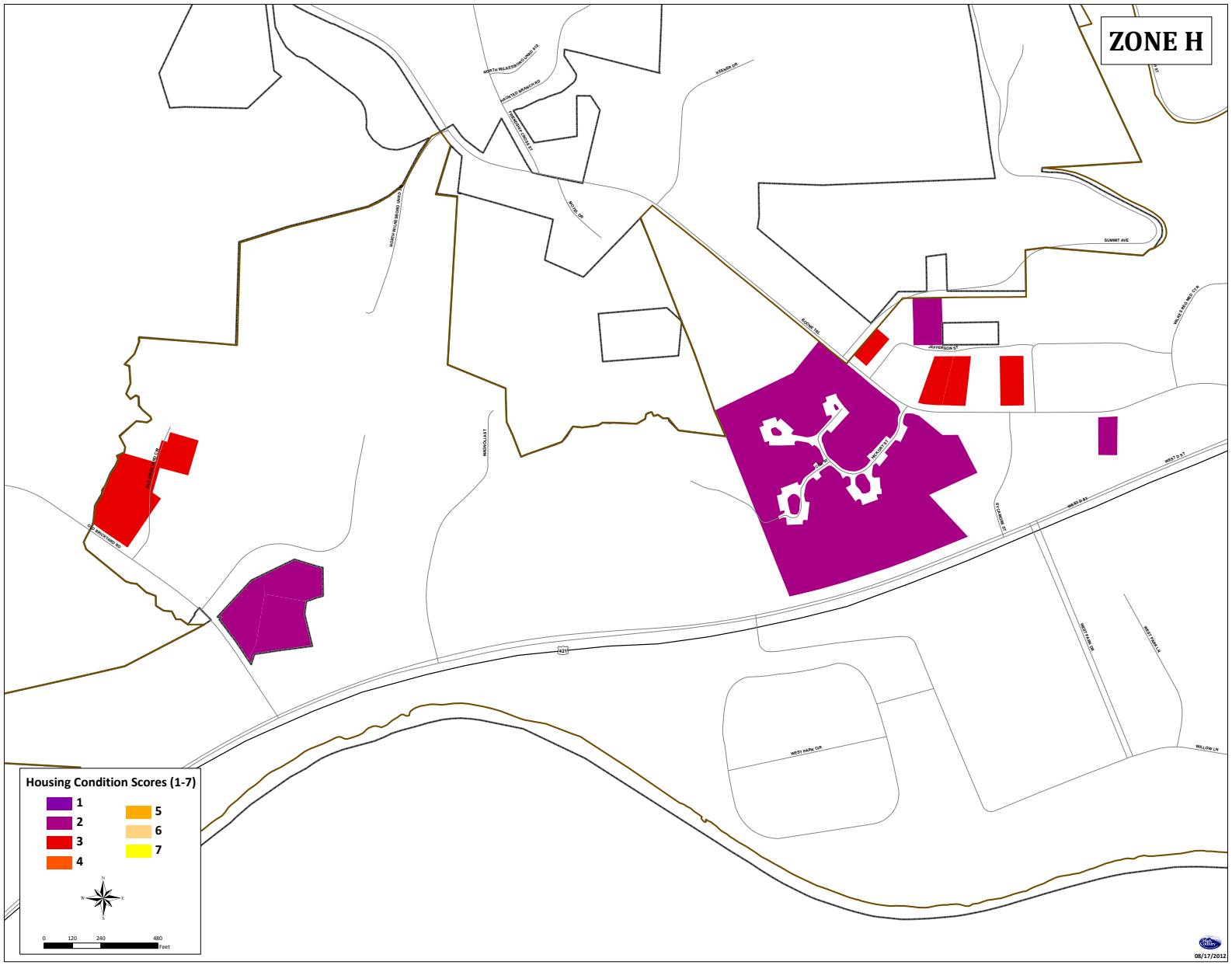

ZONE H
Housing Condition Scores (1-7)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
0
120
240
480
Feet
08/17/2012

Figure 14. Results by Zone (statistical)

Zone	Low Score	Average Score	Median Score	High Score
A	1	2.92	3	5
B	2	3.34	4.5	7
C	2	2.93	3.5	5
D	2	2.18	2.5	3
E	2	4.02	4.5	7
F	2	2.6	2.5	3
H	2	2.45	2.5	3
G	7	7	7	7
Town	*1*	*3.43*	*3.25*	*7*

Zone	Low Score	Average Score	Median Score	High Score
D	2	2.18	2.5	3
H	2	2.45	2.5	3
F	2	2.6	2.5	3
A	1	2.92	3	5
C	2	2.93	3.5	5
B	2	3.34	4.5	7
E	2	4.02	4.5	7
G	7	7	7	7
Town	*1*	*3.43*	*3.25*	*7*

Zone	Low Score	Average Score	Median Score	High Score
D	2	2.18	2.5	3
F	2	2.6	2.5	3
H	2	2.45	2.5	3
A	1	2.92	3	5
C	2	2.93	3.5	5
B	2	3.34	4.5	7
E	2	4.02	4.5	7
G	7	7	7	7
Town	*1*	*3.43*	*3.25*	*7*

Zone	Low Score	Average Score	Median Score	High Score
D	2	2.18	2.5	3
F	2	2.6	2.5	3
H	2	2.45	2.5	3
A	1	2.92	3	5
C	2	2.93	3.5	5
B	2	3.34	4.5	7
E	2	4.02	4.5	7
G	7	7	7	7
Town	*1*	*3.43*	*3.25*	*7*

Appendix B – Property Tax Information

The purpose of this appendix is to provide summary information about housing in North Wilkesboro, NC in relation to county tax data. Report sections include land use codes and analysis of tax data using these codes.

Land Use Codes

The Wilkes County tax administration office uses several land use codes for differentiating housing in relation to land use. Figure 15 is a listing of the various codes, together with annotated descriptions and notes relating to analytical use of these codes.

Figure 15. Land Use Codes

Code	Description
105	Mobile home (personal property, tongue and axles attached)
106	MH-mobile/manufactured home, single-wide (real estate)
107	MH-mobile/manufactured home, double-wide (real estate)
108	SF (single-family) plus mobile home (any type)
109	MH-mobile/manufactured home (any type) located on lease-hold property
110	SF
111	MF (multi-family) special, residential condominium
112	MF general (multi-plex and townhome)
121	MF special, rooming and boarding house
124	Retirement home (nursing home)
126	MF special, apartment
130	MF special, residential hotel
997	MXD-mixed commercial/residential building (commercial is primary use)

Notes:

1. 105 includes a variety of trailers in addition to mobile homes; because it is difficult to isolate only mobile homes within this code, 105 is not included for analytical purposes
2. 106, 107, and 109 are combined for analytical purposes
3. 108 and 110 are combined for analytical purposes
4. 111, 112, 121, 126, and 130 are combined for analytical purposes
5. 124 is a commercial activity and not included for analytical purposes

Analysis

The sort function in a computer data base program is a helpful tool in performing statistical analysis. Figures 16-19 contain summary information relating to the statistical analysis of 1,069 *housing tax records* for the Town of North Wilkesboro.

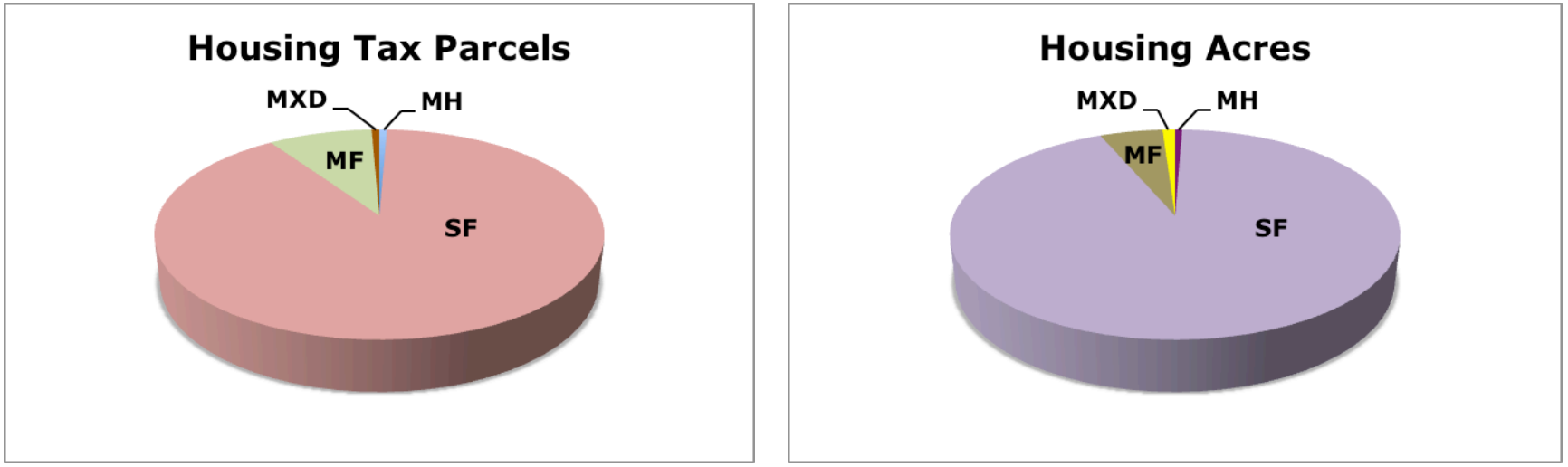
Figure 16. Descriptive Data

Data category	MH-mobile/ manufactured homes	SF dwelling units	MF dwelling units	MXD-mixed-use building (residential and commercial)	Town of North Wilkesboro (composite)
• Total tax parcels	7	960	95	7	1,069
• Acres	5	780	45	9	839
• Hi assessed tax value	$112,170	$2,315,790	$2,034,640	_	$2,315,790
• Lo assessed tax value	$10,010	$14,950	$26,400	–	$10,010
• Average assessed tax value	$67,960	$141,876	$273,130	–	$153,563
• Median assessed tax value	$94,410	$99,470	$178,340	–	$106,190
• Oldest in age	1974	1850	1900	1925	1850
• Newest in age	1999	2011	2009	1961	2011
• Average age	1989	1953	1966	1943	1954
• Median age	1992	1953	1952	1941	1953

Notes:

1. Assessed tax value data includes structure plus property (i.e., total assessed value)
2. MF excludes public housing

Figure 17. Tax Parcel and Acreage Comparison



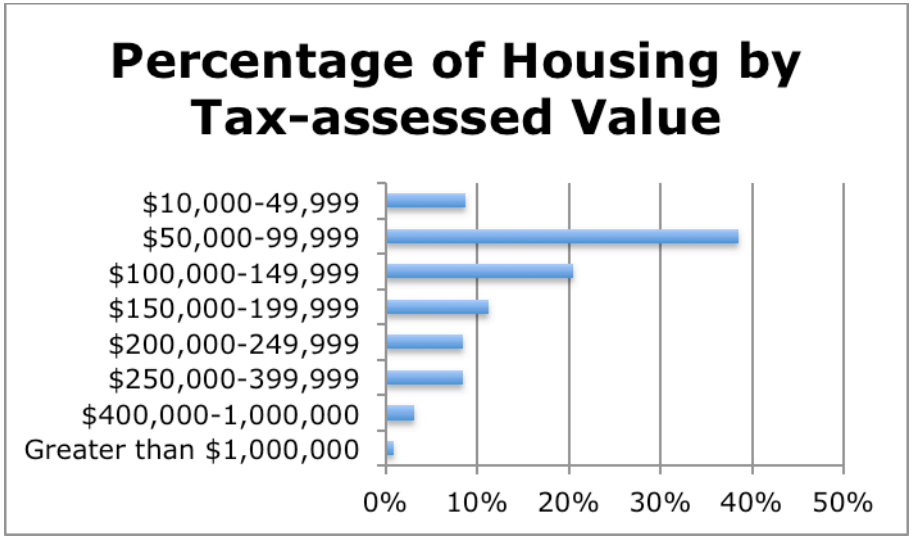
Note: Approximately 90 percent of housing is SF, 9 percent is MF, and MH/MXD are each less than one percent

Figure 18. Ownership Based on Zip Code

Location	Percentage
• North Wilkesboro	76%
• Wilkesboro	8%
• Some other NC town/city	13%
• Outside NC	3%

Figure 19. Tax Assessed Values (structure plus property) Groupings

Tax-assessed Value	Percentage of Total	Number
$10,000-49,999	9%	94
$50,000-99,999	39%	412
$100,000-149,999	20%	219
$150,000-199,999	11%	121
$200,000-249,999	8%	90
$250,000-399,999	9%	91
$400,000-1,000,000	3%	33
Greater than $1,000,000	1%	9



Appendix C – Census Information

One can make several observations relating to US census data and NC Employment Security Commission data for North Wilkesboro and Wilkes County …

Demographics

- The population trend for NW (North Wilkesboro) indicates very slow growth
- Although the overall age-specific population structure for NW has improved since 1990, imbalances exist in 2010 female cohorts for the 25-44 year age groupings and in 2010 male cohorts for the 60 to over 85 year age groupings
- Household demographics for NW are similar to those of NC (North Carolina) and the US (United States) with one exception: the town has a higher percentage of single parents (and many of these single parents are males)
- NW is not diverse in terms of race
- When compared to NC and the US, NW has a higher percentage of persons 25 and older who have not completed high school, and a lower percentage of persons 25 and older who have not attended college

Employment

- Wilkes County economic sectors that are growing in terms of *employers*: wholesale trade, finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing, professional and technical services, administrative and waste services, educational services, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services
- Wilkes County economic sectors that are growing in terms of *employees*: construction, educational services, health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and public administration
- Manufacturing jobs in Wilkes County have declined significantly
- Wilkes County economic sectors with the highest earnings (reflected in annual wages): construction, manufacturing, retail trade, educational services, health care and social assistance, and public administration
- There has been growth in the average annual earning per employee in all economic sectors in Wilkes County except: finance and insurance
- The percentage of males and females not in the work force is higher for NW than both NC and the US
- Production, transportation, and material moving are major occupational categories for NW
- The most common industry in NW is construction (for both males and females); in comparison, the

most common industry in NC (for males) is manufacturing and (for females) educational services
- Most common occupations (males) in NW that have at least twice the percentage of workers compared to NC: computer specialists, laborers/material movers, and retail sales
- Most common occupations (females) in NW that have at least twice the percentage of workers compared to NC: production occupations and electrical/mechanical installation and repairs
- Retail trade, finance and insurance, health care, accommodations and food services, and other services are the major NAICS employment sectors in NW
- Household income percentages below $50,000 are greater for NW than both NC and the US (especially for incomes below $15,000), and percentages $50,000 or more are less for NW than both NC and the US

Housing

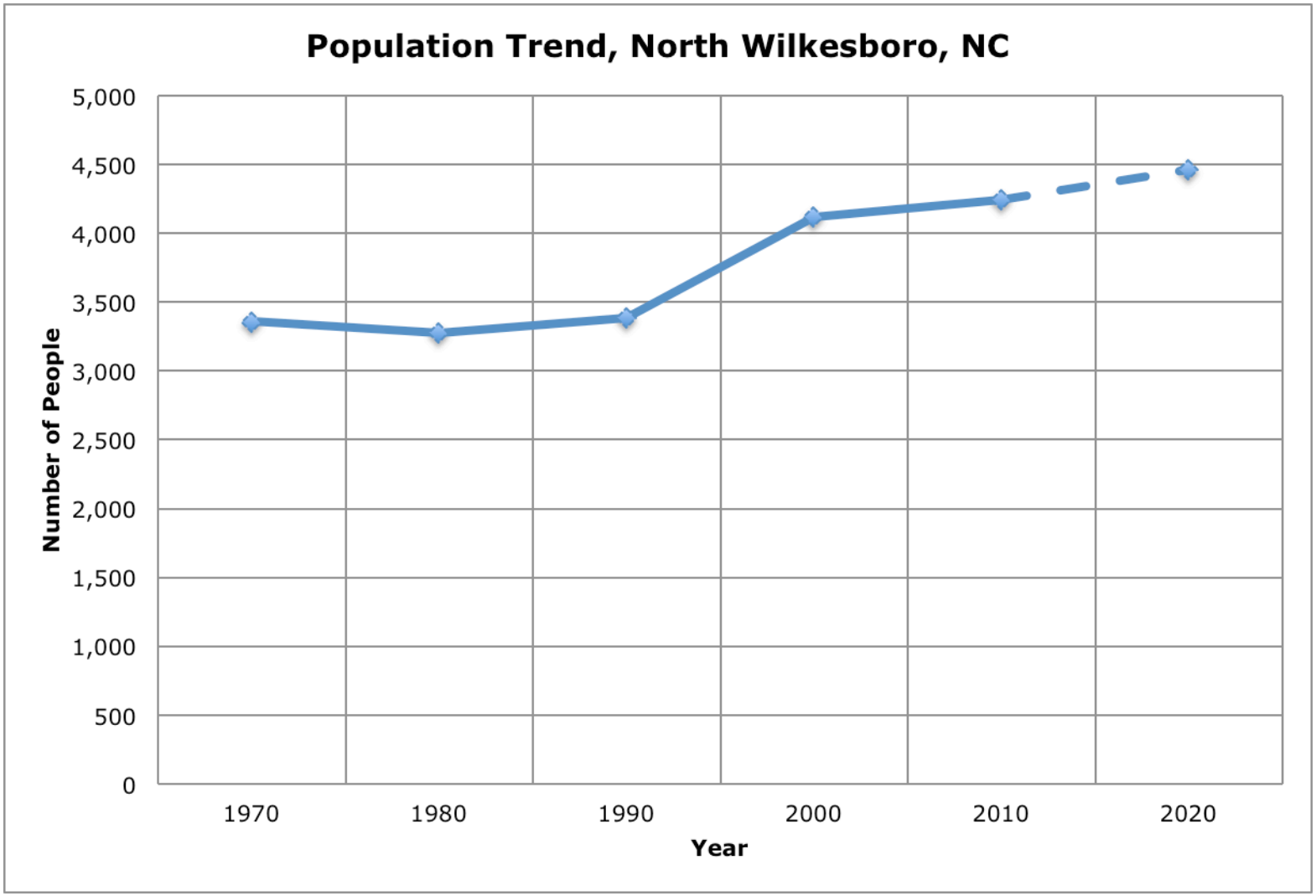
- Much of the NW housing stock was built prior to 1980
- Most home values in NW are less than $250,000
- Rental housing in NW accounts for about one-third of the housing stock
- The range for most rental housing in NW is $250-$1,250 per month, with $500-$749 accounting for a large percentage of renter-occupied housing

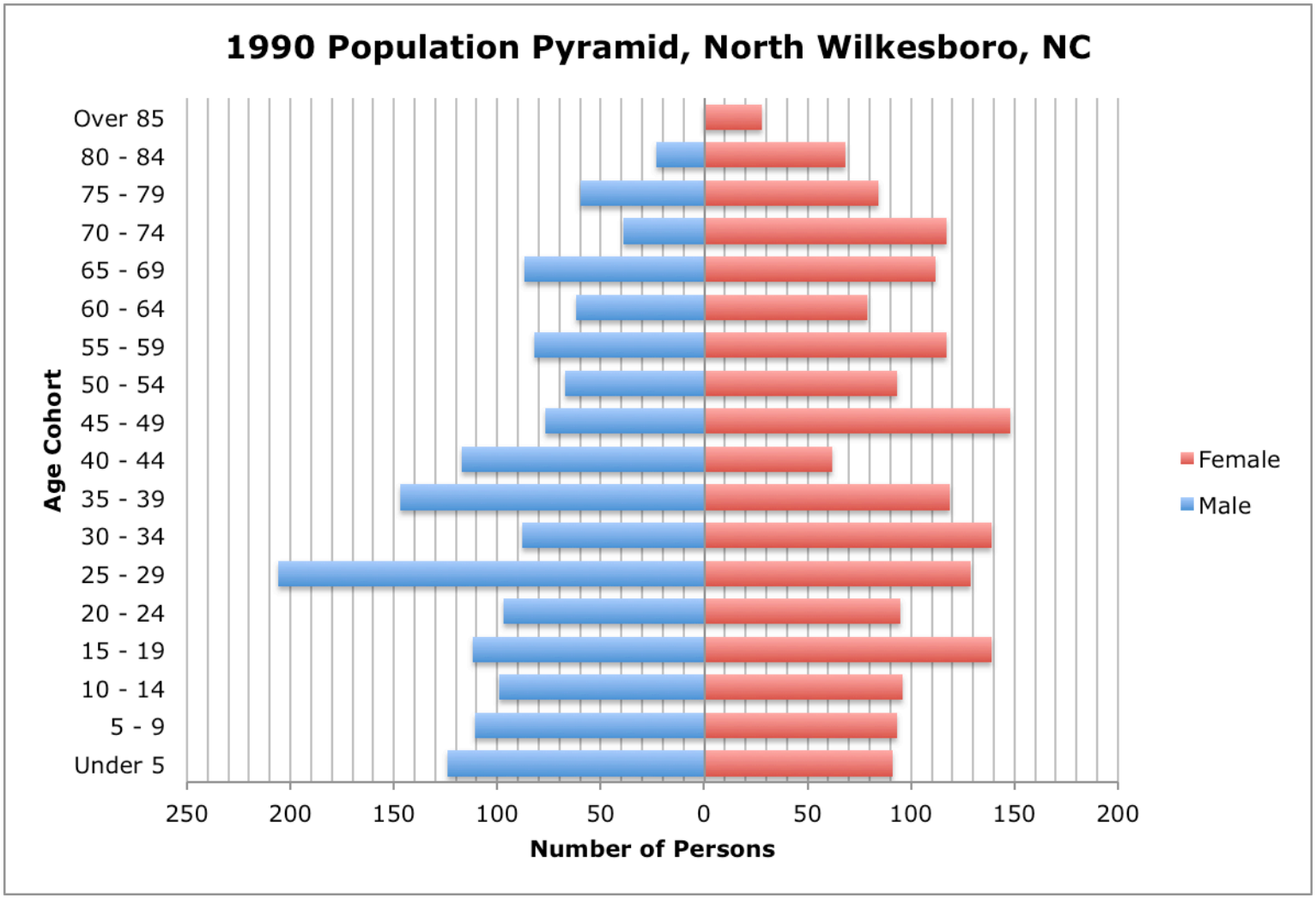
Other

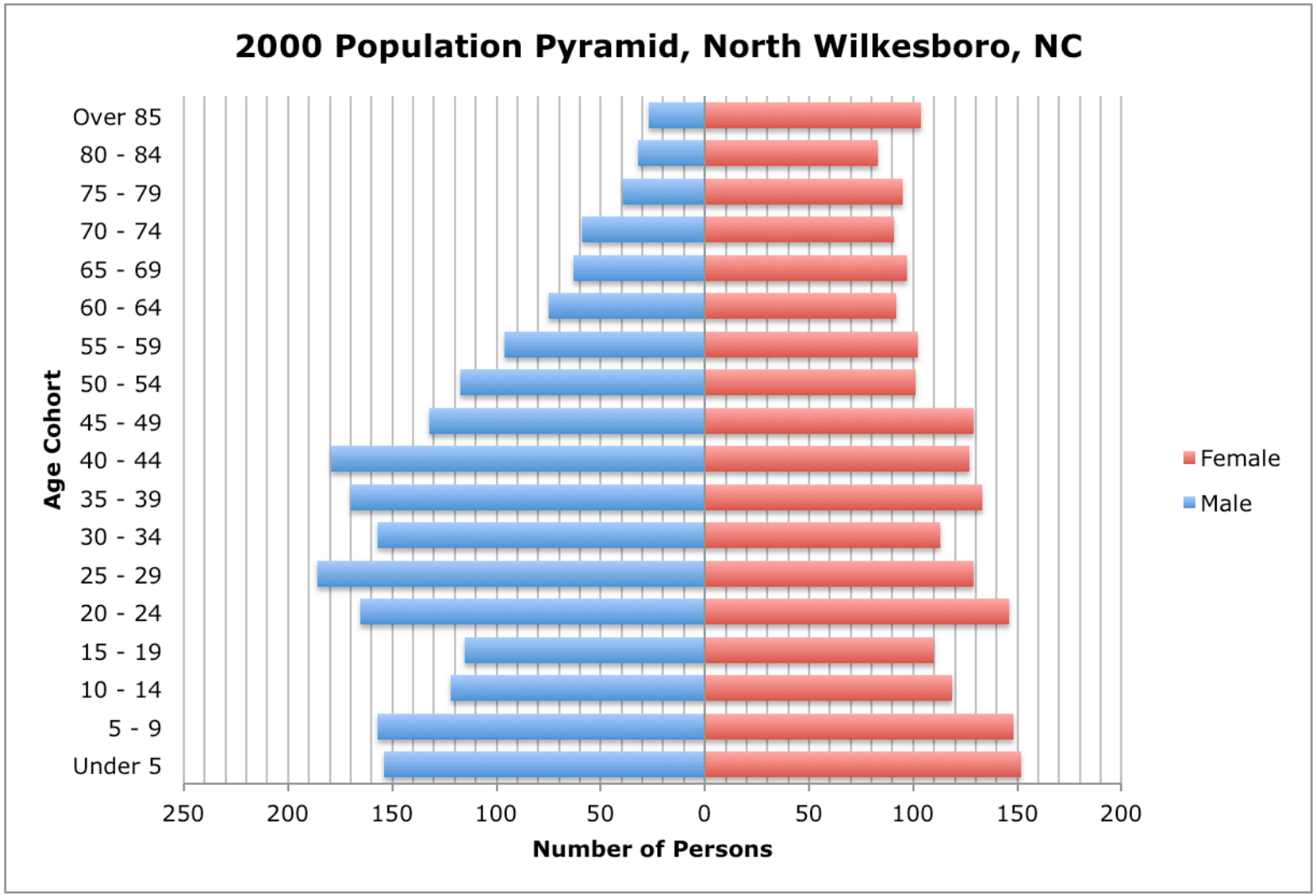
- NW is safer than NC and the US for crimes relating to murder, robbery, and motor vehicle theft
- NW is less safe then NC and the US for crimes relating to rape, assault, burglary, and larceny

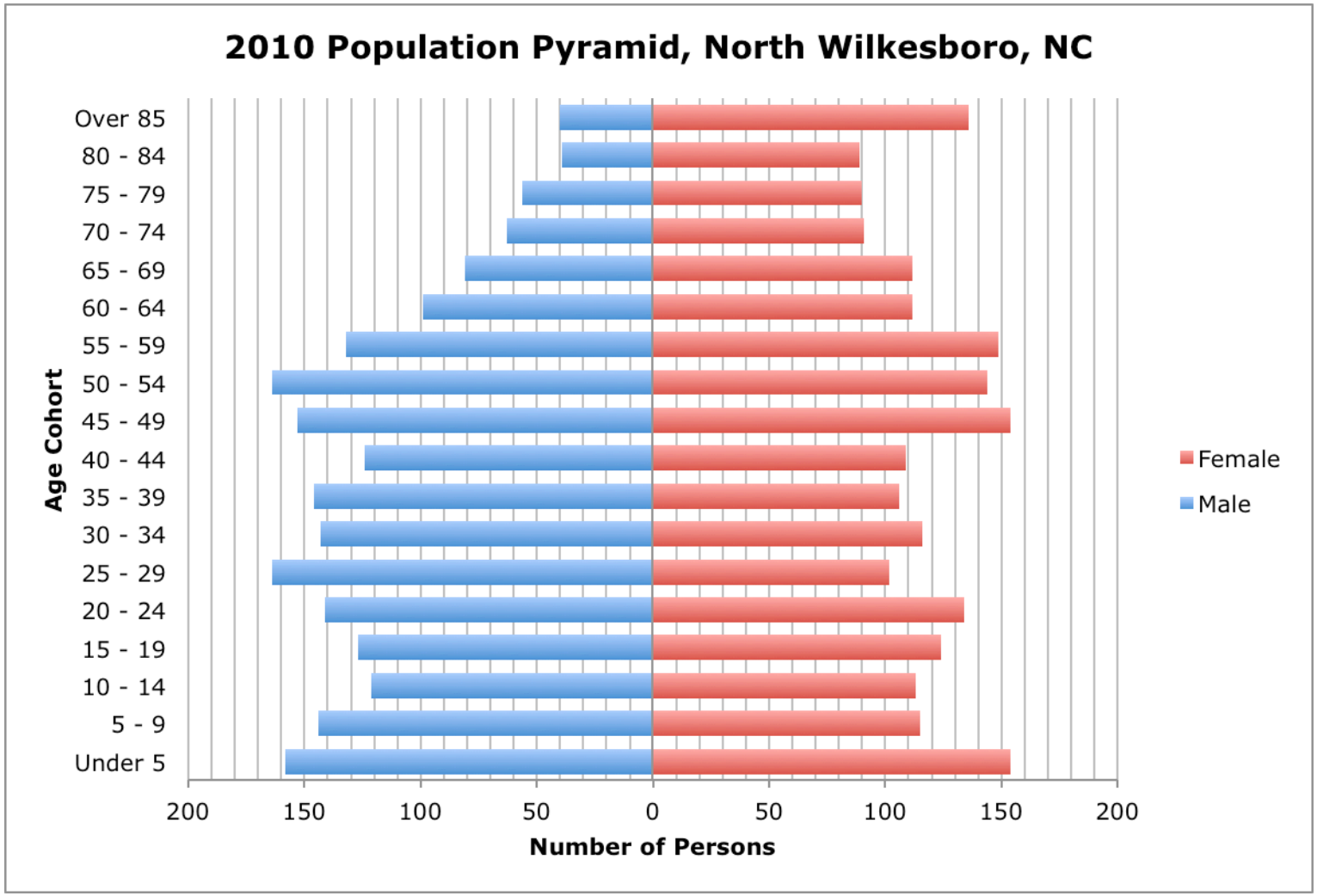
Data Sources

- NC Employment Security Commission
- www.census.gov
- www.city-data.com/city/north-wilkesboro-north-carolina
- www.clrsearch.com/north_wilkesboro_demographic/NC


Population Trend, North Wilkesboro, NC
Number of People
5,000
4,500
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
Year


1990 Population Pyramid, North Wilkesboro, NC
Over 85
80 - 84
75 - 79
70 - 74
65 - 69
60 - 64
55 - 59
50 - 54
45 - 49
40 - 44
35 - 39
30 - 34
25 - 29
20 - 24
15 - 19
10 - 14
5 - 9
Under 5
Age Cohort
250
200
150
100
50
0
50
100
150
200
Number of Persons
Female
Male


2000 Population Pyramid, North Wilkesboro, NC
Age Cohort
Over 85
80 - 84
75 - 79
70 - 74
65 - 69
60 - 64
55 - 59
50 - 54
45 - 49
40 - 44
35 - 39
30 - 34
25 - 29
20 - 24
15 - 19
10 - 14
5 - 9
Under 5
250
200
150
100
50
0
50
100
150
200
Number of Persons
Female
Male


2010 Population Pyramid, North Wilkesboro, NC
Over 85
80 - 84
75 - 79
70 - 74
65 - 69
60 - 64
55 - 59
50 - 54
45 - 49
40 - 44
35 - 39
30 - 34
25 - 29
20 - 24
15 - 19
10 - 14
5 - 9
Under 5
Age Cohort
200
150
100
50
0
50
100
150
200
Number of Persons
Female
Male

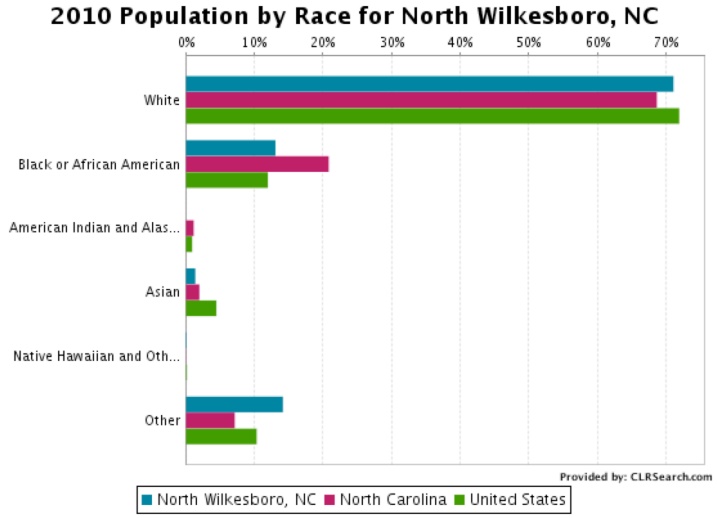
Appendix C – Census Information

Household Family Makeup Statistics | **Household Size Statistics**

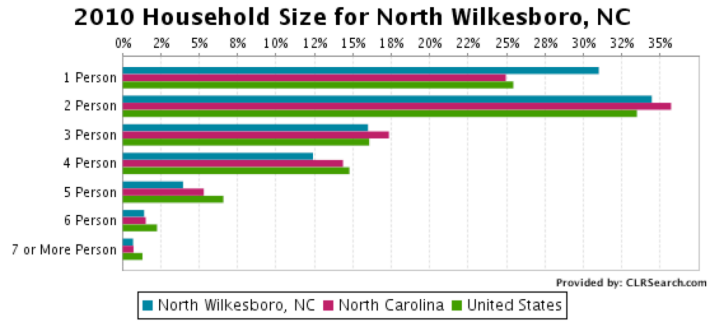
2010 Household Family Makeup Statistics	North Wilkesboro, NC		North Carolina		United States	
Family HH	1,004	65.28%	2,613,446	69.08%	80,786,957	68.23%
Non-Family HH	534	34.72%	1,169,616	30.92%	37,615,186	31.77%
Family Households						
Married Family HH	738	73.51%	2,016,295	77.15%	61,788,433	76.48%
Other Family HH	266	26.49%	597,151	22.85%	18,998,524	23.52%
Other Family Households						
Male Householder, No Wife Present	81	30.45%	158,387	26.52%	5,269,052	27.73%
Female Householder, No Husband Present	185	69.55%	438,764	73.48%	13,729,472	72.27%
Married Family Households						
with Children Under 18	263	35.64%	831,970	41.26%	26,914,156	43.56%
with No Children Under 18	475	64.36%	1,184,325	58.74%	34,874,277	56.44%
Other Family Households						
Male Householder, No Wife Present with Children Under 18	29	10.90%	79,406	13.30%	2,679,014	14.10%
Male Householder, No Wife Present with No Children Under 18	52	19.55%	78,981	13.23%	2,590,038	13.63%
Female Householder, No Husband Present with Children Under 18	102	38.35%	261,316	43.76%	8,162,103	42.96%
Female Householder, No Husband Present with No Children Under 18	83	31.20%	177,448	29.72%	5,567,369	29.30%
Non-Family Households						
Male Householder	236	44.19%	551,551	47.16%	17,889,615	47.56%
Female Householder	298	55.81%	618,065	52.84%	19,725,571	52.44%

Appendix C – Census Information

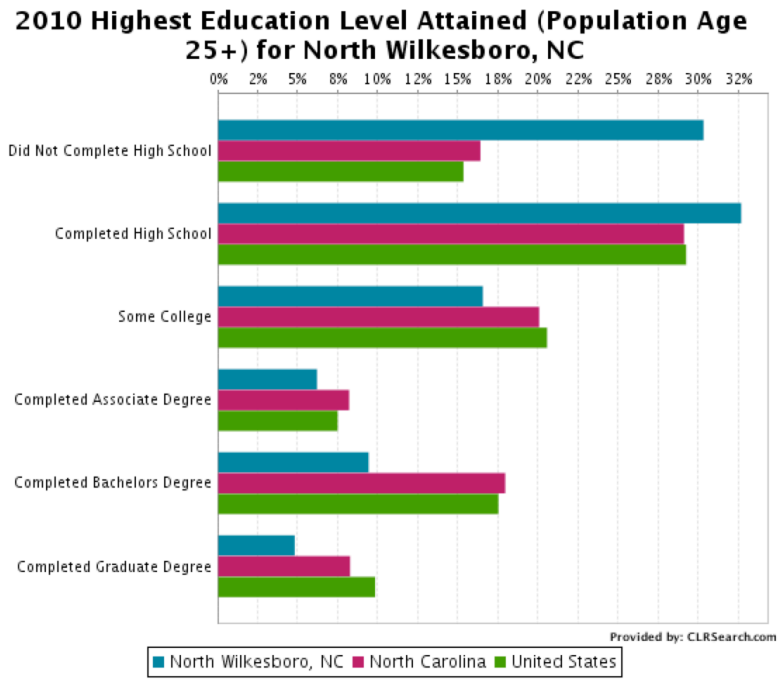
Population by Race and Ethnicity

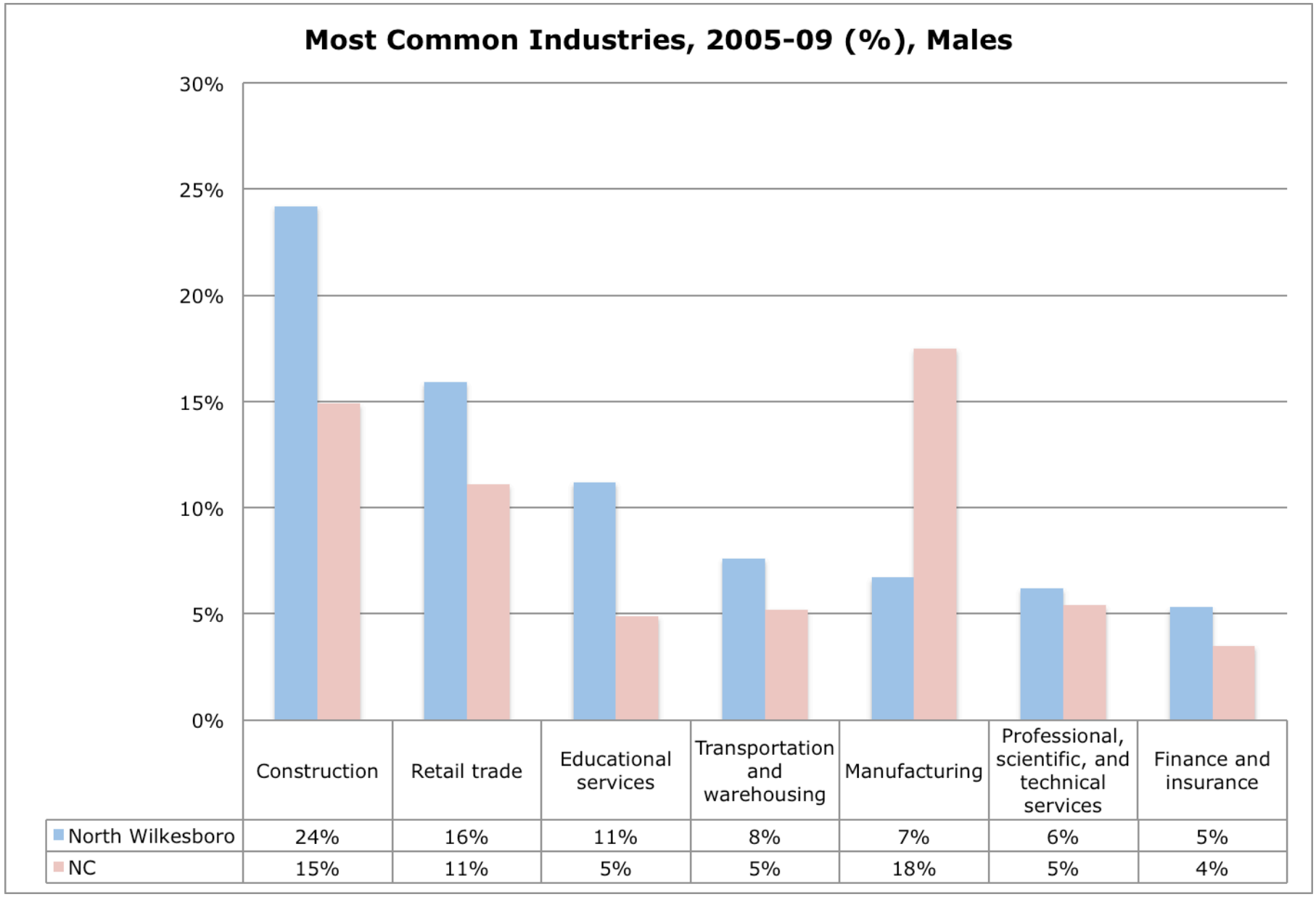


Household Family Makeup Statistics | Household Size Statistics

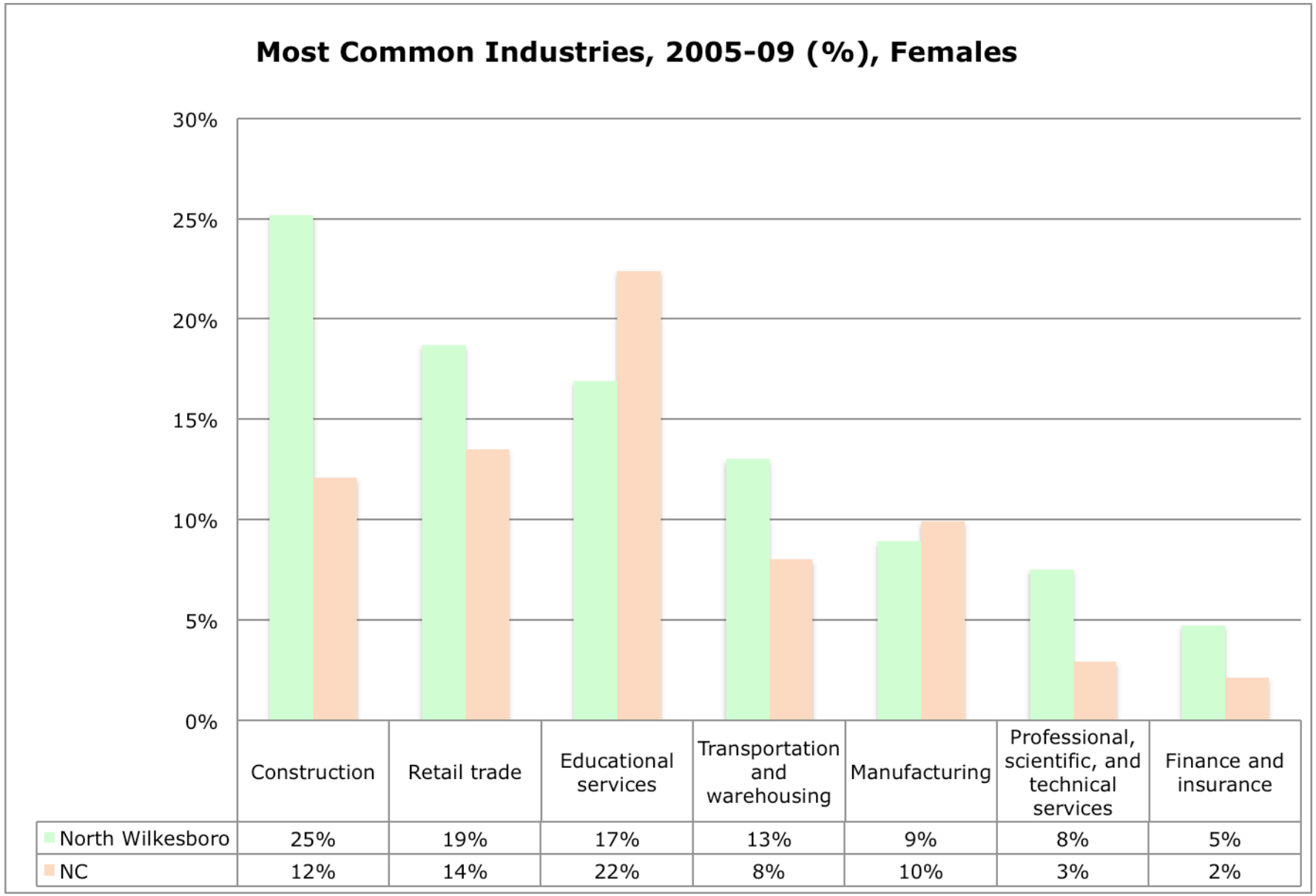


Highest Education Level Attained | Education Enrollment

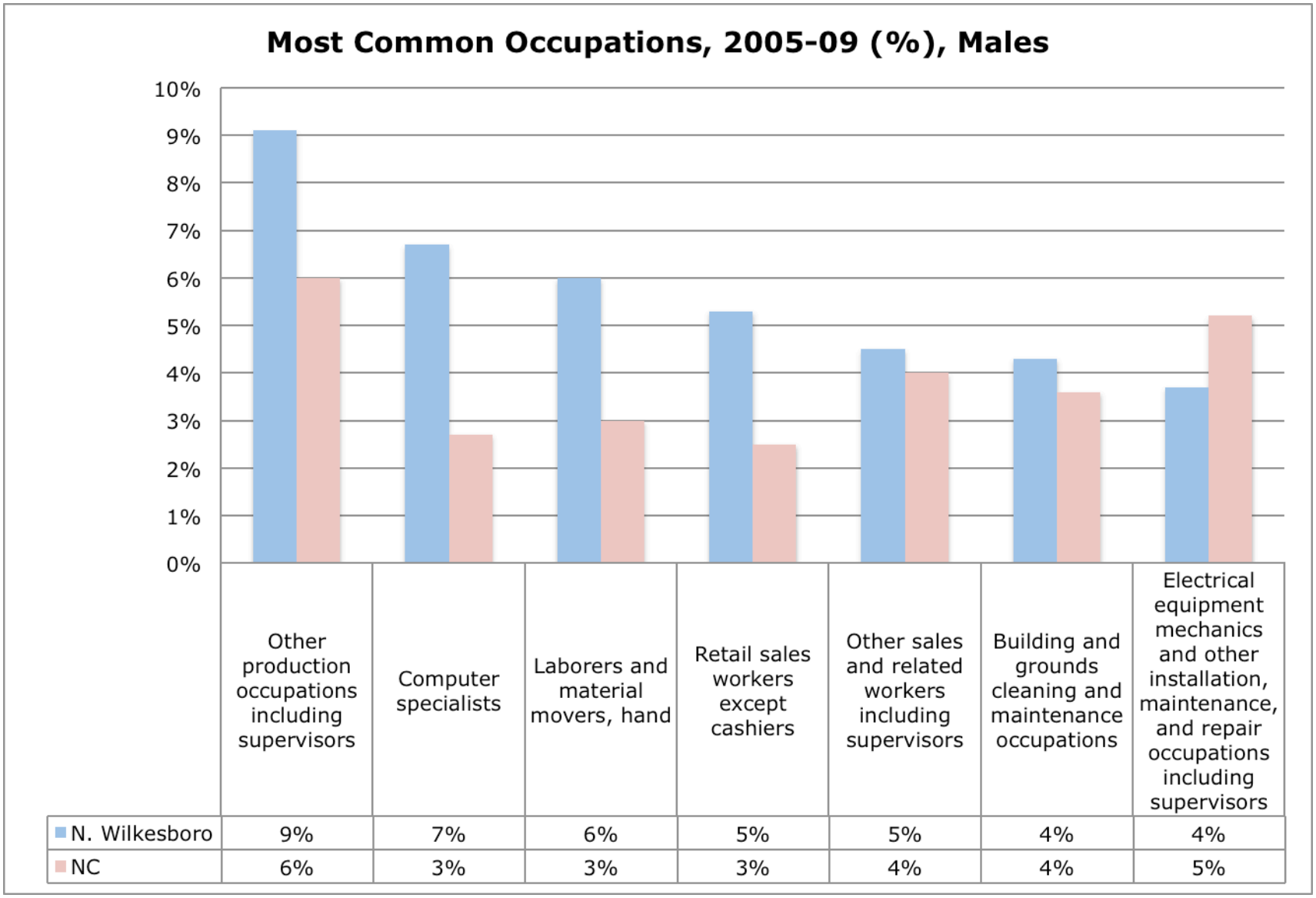




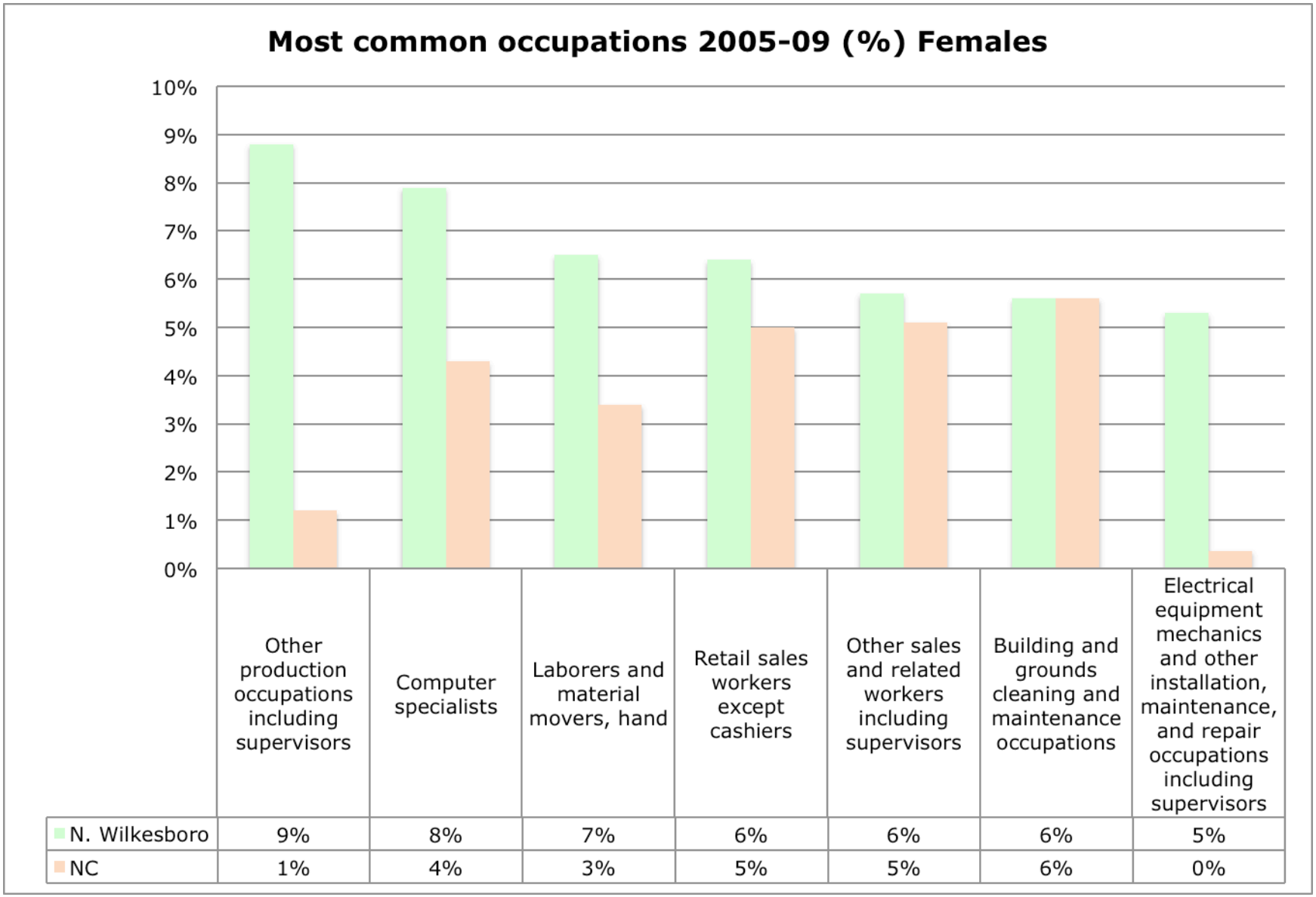
	Construction	Retail trade	Educational services	Transportation and warehousing	Manufacturing	Professional, scientific, and technical services	Finance and insurance
North Wilkesboro	24%	16%	11%	8%	7%	6%	5%
NC	15%	11%	5%	5%	18%	5%	4%



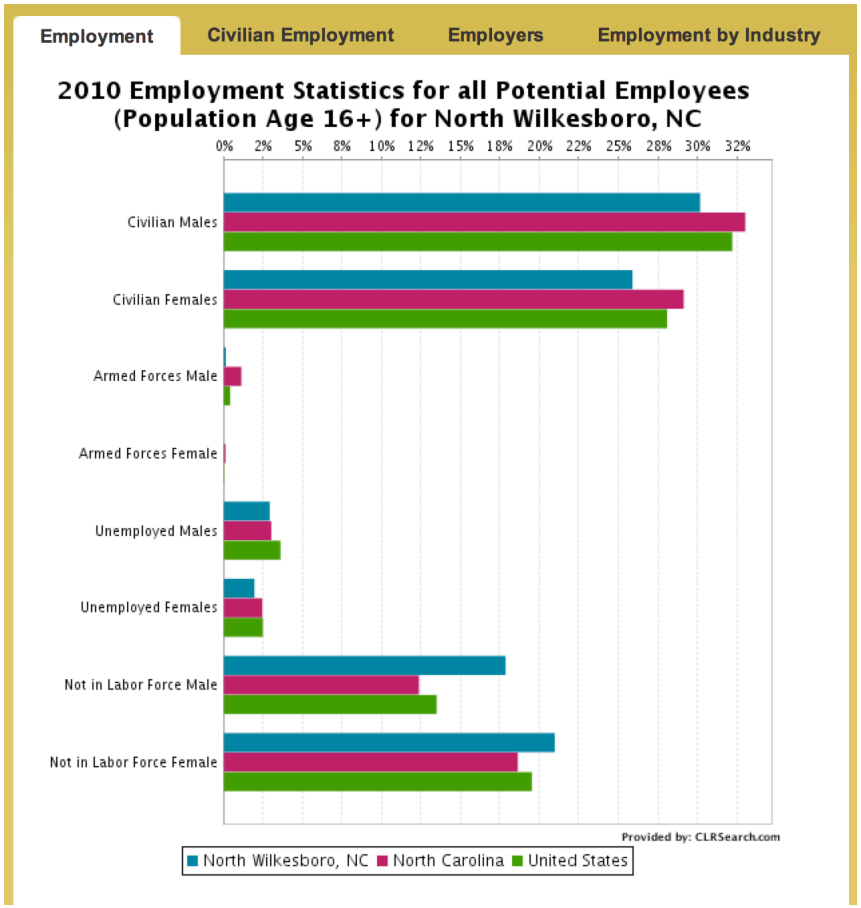
	Construction	Retail trade	Educational services	Transportation and warehousing	Manufacturing	Professional, scientific, and technical services	Finance and insurance
North Wilkesboro	25%	19%	17%	13%	9%	8%	5%
NC	12%	14%	22%	8%	10%	3%	2%

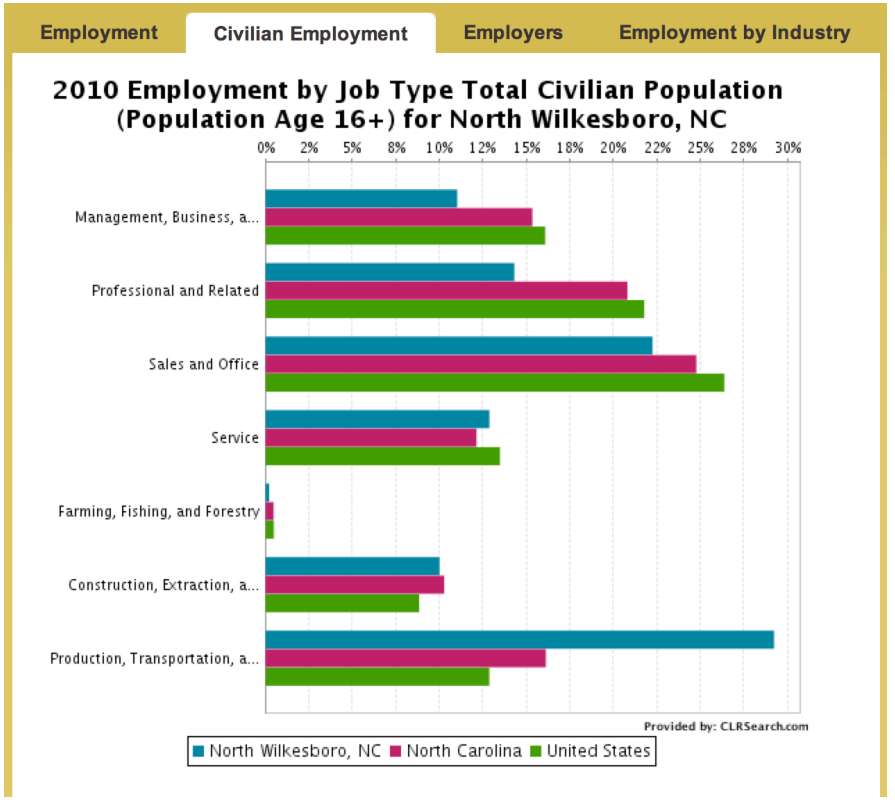


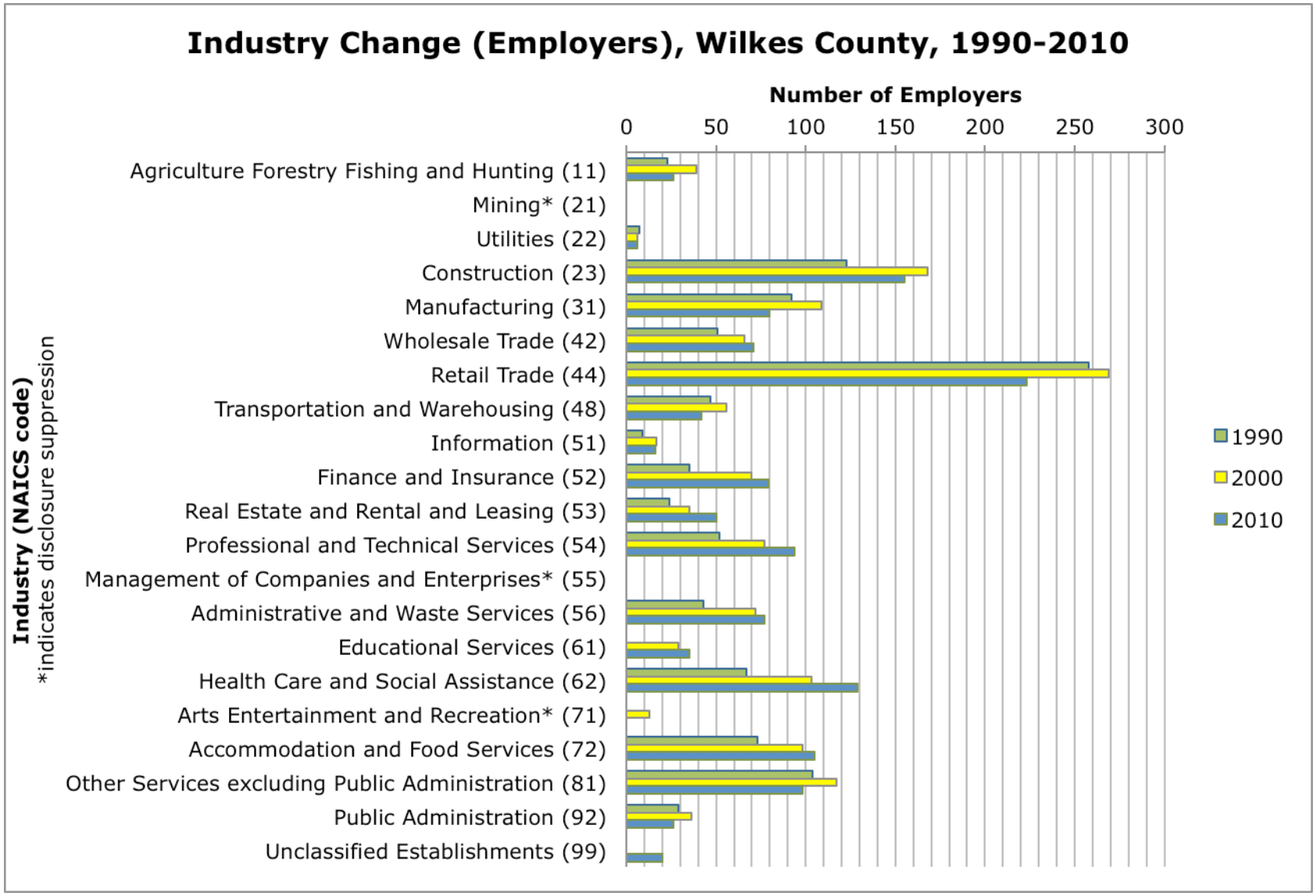
	Other production occupations including supervisors	Computer specialists	Laborers and material movers, hand	Retail sales workers except cashiers	Other sales and related workers including supervisors	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	Electrical equipment mechanics and other installation, maintenance, and repair occupations including supervisors
N. Wilkesboro	9%	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%
NC	6%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%

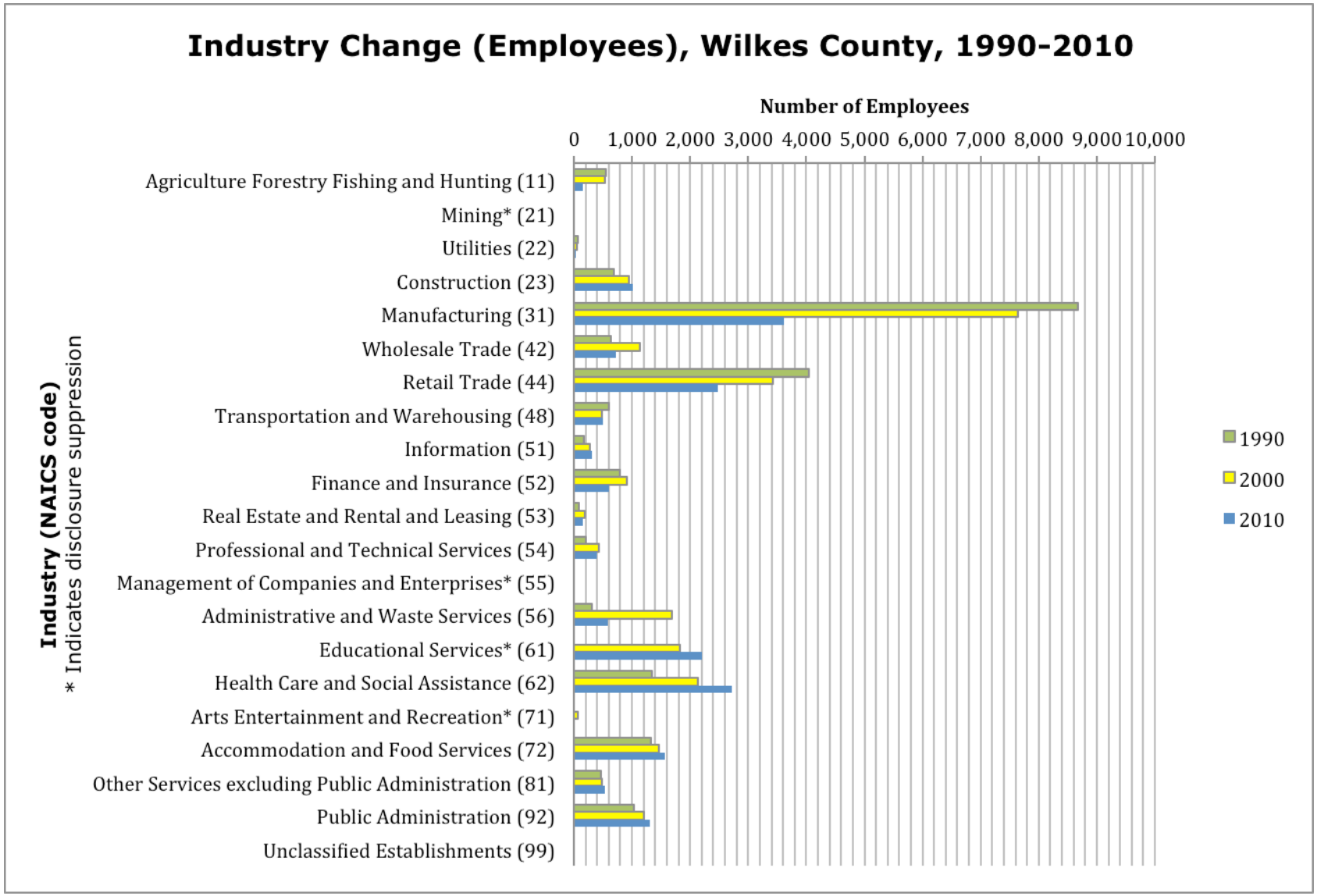


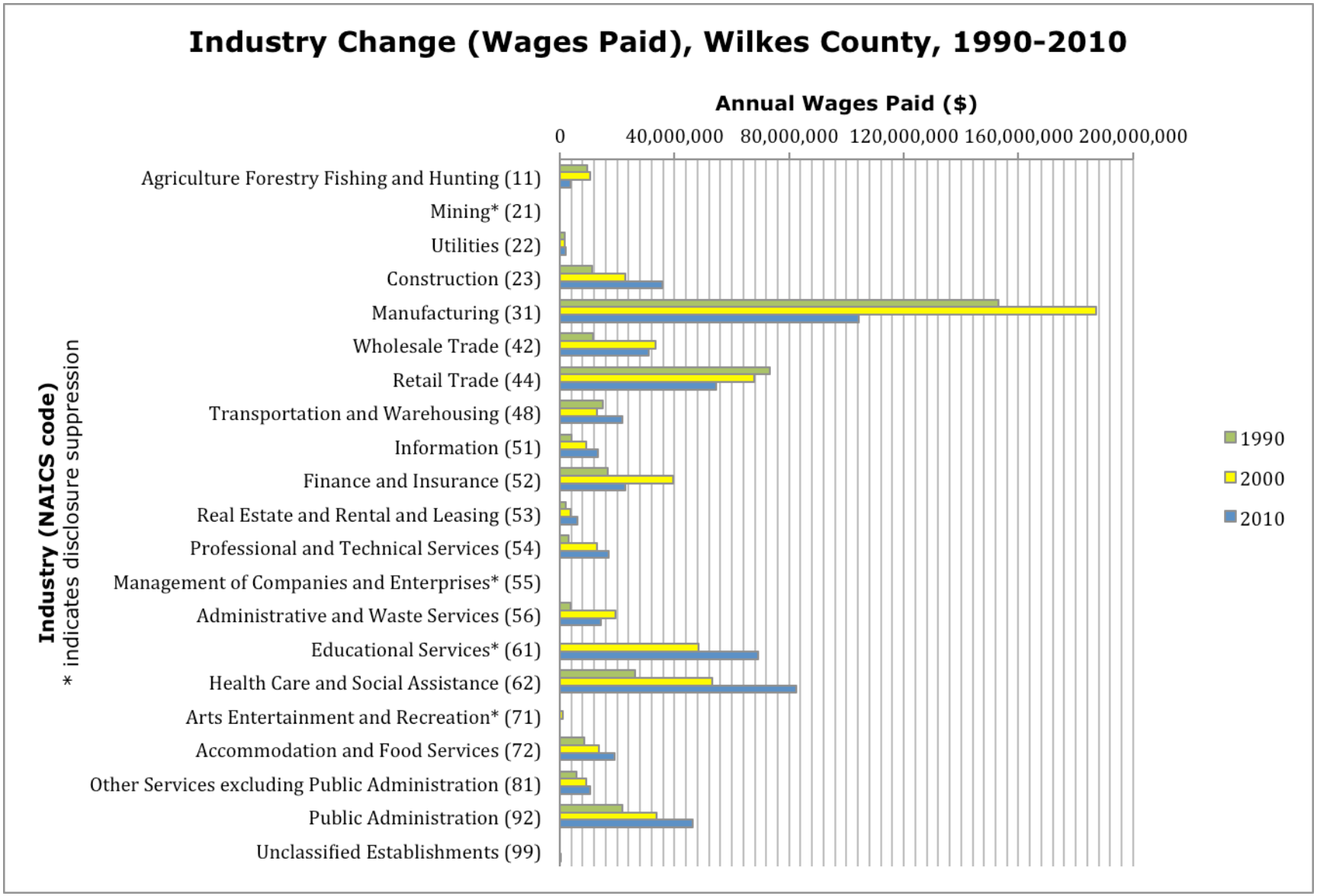
	Other production occupations including supervisors	Computer specialists	Laborers and material movers, hand	Retail sales workers except cashiers	Other sales and related workers including supervisors	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	Electrical equipment mechanics and other installation, maintenance, and repair occupations including supervisors
N. Wilkesboro	9%	8%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%
NC	1%	4%	3%	5%	5%	6%	0%

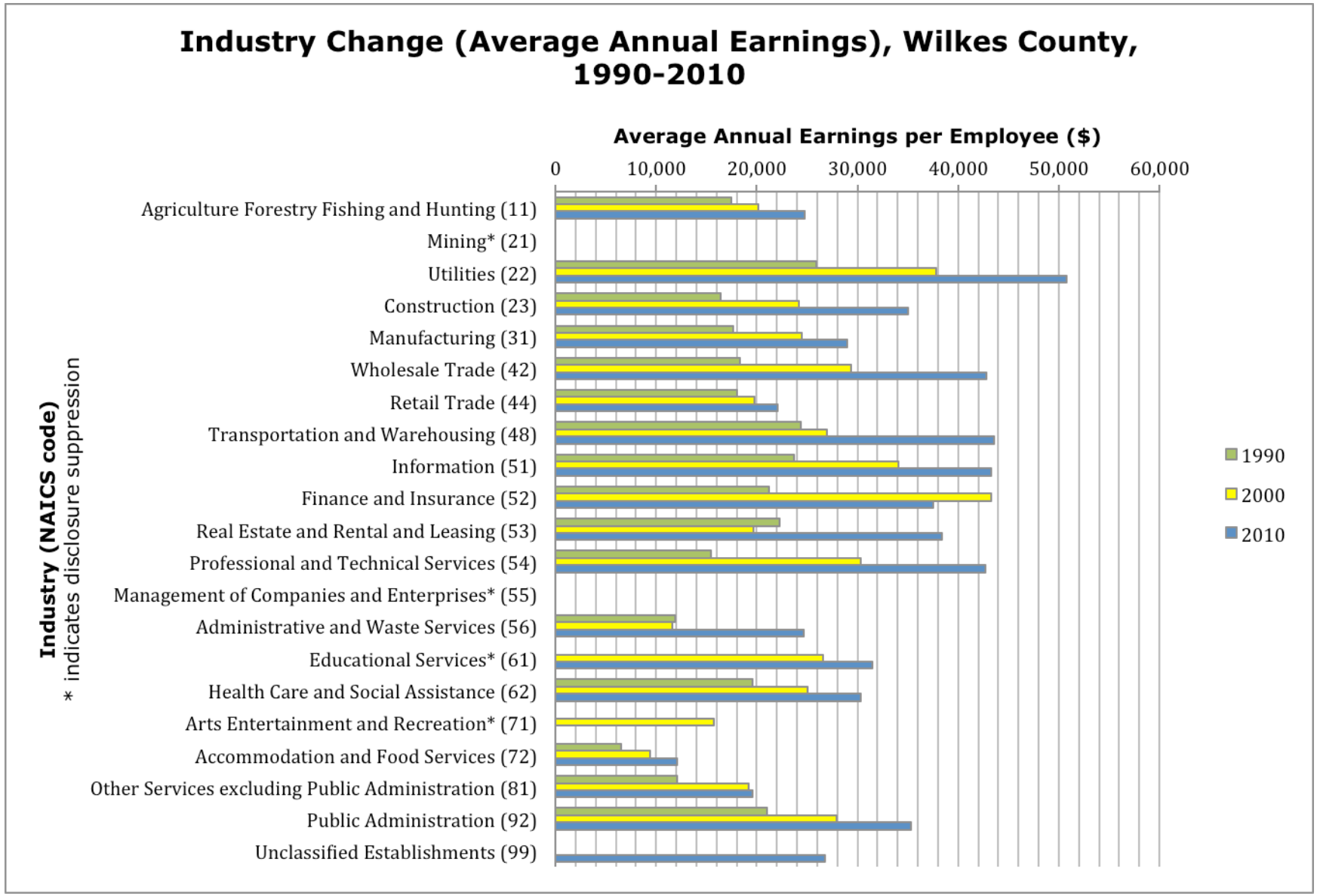

Employment
Civilian Employment
Employers
Employment by Industry
2010 Employment Statistics for all Potential Employees (Population Age 16+) for North Wilkesboro, NC
0% 2% 5% 8% 10% 12% 15% 18% 20% 22% 25% 28% 30% 32%
Civilian Males
Civilian Females
Armed Forces Male
Armed Forces Female
Unemployed Males
Unemployed Females
Not in Labor Force Male
Not in Labor Force Female
Provided by: CLRSearch.com
North Wilkesboro, NC
North Carolina
United States

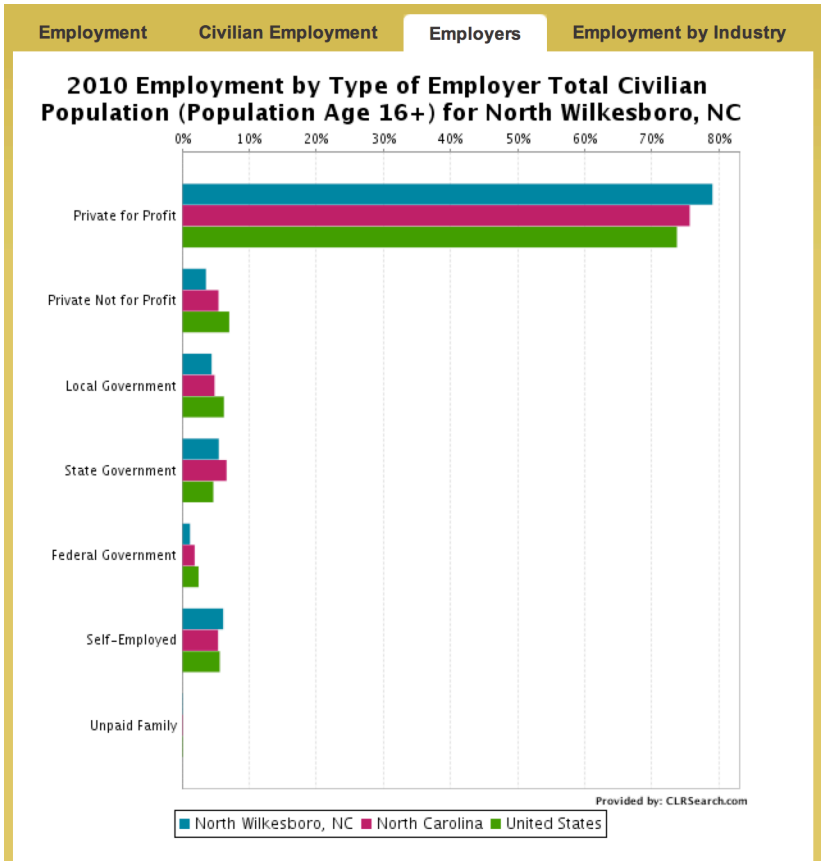

Employment
Civilian Employment
Employers
Employment by Industry
2010 Employment by Job Type Total Civilian Population (Population Age 16+) for North Wilkesboro, NC
0% 2% 5% 8% 10% 12% 15% 18% 20% 22% 25% 28% 30%
Management, Business, a...
Professional and Related
Sales and Office
Service
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
Construction, Extraction, a...
Production, Transportation, a...
Provided by: CLRSearch.com
North Wilkesboro, NC
North Carolina
United States

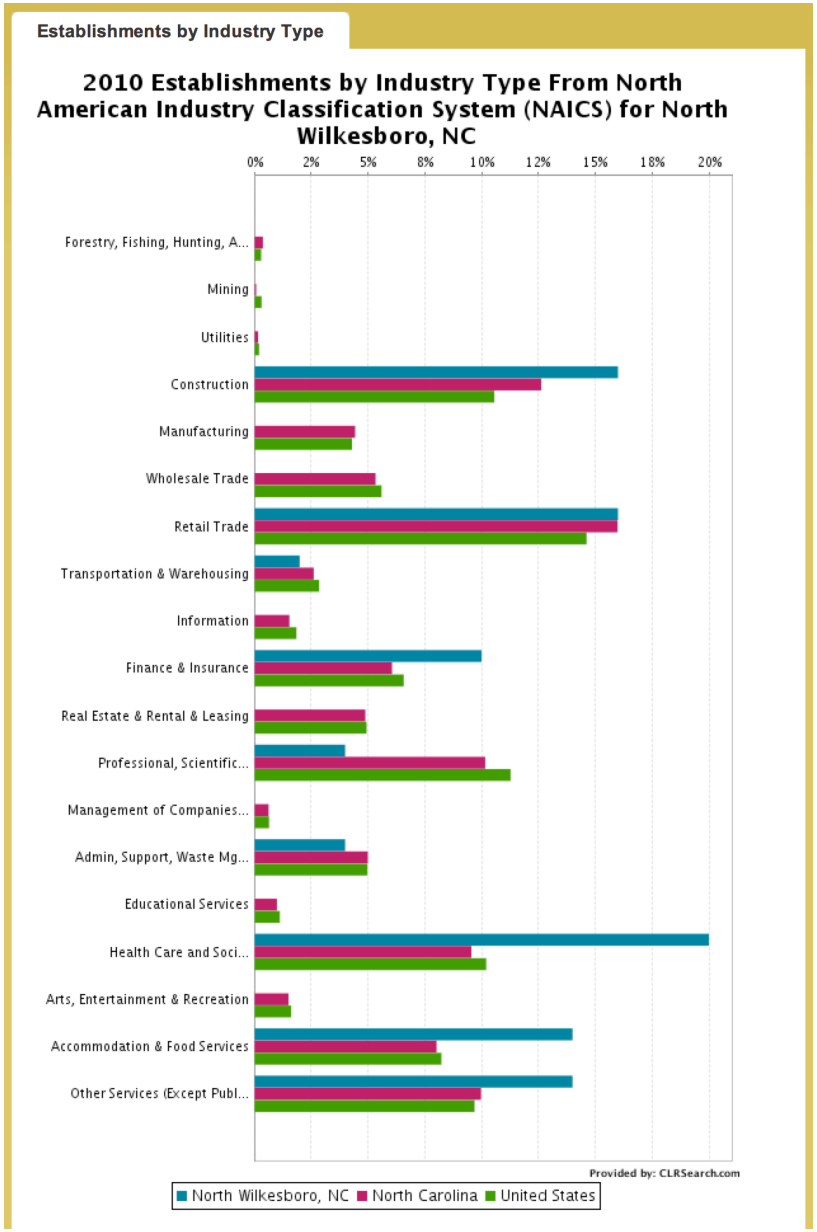

Industry Change (Employers), Wilkes County, 1990-2010
Number of Employers
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
Industry (NAICS code)
*indicates disclosure suppression
Agriculture Forestry Fishing and Hunting (11)
Mining* (21)
Utilities (22)
Construction (23)
Manufacturing (31)
Wholesale Trade (42)
Retail Trade (44)
Transportation and Warehousing (48)
Information (51)
Finance and Insurance (52)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)
Professional and Technical Services (54)
Management of Companies and Enterprises* (55)
Administrative and Waste Services (56)
Educational Services (61)
Health Care and Social Assistance (62)
Arts Entertainment and Recreation* (71)
Accommodation and Food Services (72)
Other Services excluding Public Administration (81)
Public Administration (92)
Unclassified Establishments (99)
1990
2000
2010


Industry Change (Employees), Wilkes County, 1990-2010
Number of Employees
0
1,000
2,000
3,000
4,000
5,000
6,000
7,000
8,000
9,000
10,000
Agriculture Forestry Fishing and Hunting (11)
Mining* (21)
Utilities (22)
Construction (23)
Manufacturing (31)
Wholesale Trade (42)
Retail Trade (44)
Transportation and Warehousing (48)
Information (51)
Finance and Insurance (52)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)
Professional and Technical Services (54)
Management of Companies and Enterprises* (55)
Administrative and Waste Services (56)
Educational Services* (61)
Health Care and Social Assistance (62)
Arts Entertainment and Recreation* (71)
Accommodation and Food Services (72)
Other Services excluding Public Administration (81)
Public Administration (92)
Unclassified Establishments (99)
1990
2000
2010
Industry (NAICS code)
* Indicates disclosure suppression


Industry Change (Wages Paid), Wilkes County, 1990-2010
Annual Wages Paid ($)
0
40,000,000
80,000,000
120,000,000
160,000,000
200,000,000
Agriculture Forestry Fishing and Hunting (11)
Mining* (21)
Utilities (22)
Construction (23)
Manufacturing (31)
Wholesale Trade (42)
Retail Trade (44)
Transportation and Warehousing (48)
Information (51)
Finance and Insurance (52)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)
Professional and Technical Services (54)
Management of Companies and Enterprises* (55)
Administrative and Waste Services (56)
Educational Services* (61)
Health Care and Social Assistance (62)
Arts Entertainment and Recreation* (71)
Accommodation and Food Services (72)
Other Services excluding Public Administration (81)
Public Administration (92)
Unclassified Establishments (99)
Industry (NAICS code)
* indicates disclosure suppression
1990
2000
2010

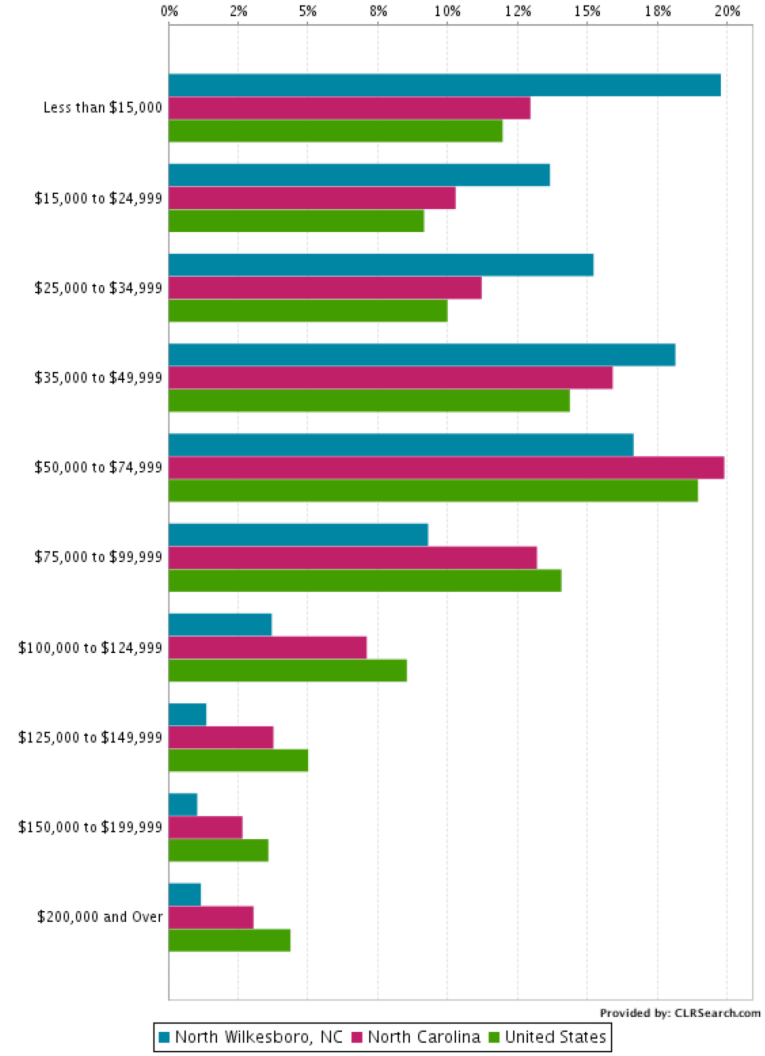

Industry Change (Average Annual Earnings), Wilkes County, 1990-2010
Average Annual Earnings per Employee ($)
0
10,000
20,000
30,000
40,000
50,000
60,000
Industry (NAICS code)
* indicates disclosure suppression
Agriculture Forestry Fishing and Hunting (11)
Mining* (21)
Utilities (22)
Construction (23)
Manufacturing (31)
Wholesale Trade (42)
Retail Trade (44)
Transportation and Warehousing (48)
Information (51)
Finance and Insurance (52)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (53)
Professional and Technical Services (54)
Management of Companies and Enterprises* (55)
Administrative and Waste Services (56)
Educational Services* (61)
Health Care and Social Assistance (62)
Arts Entertainment and Recreation* (71)
Accommodation and Food Services (72)
Other Services excluding Public Administration (81)
Public Administration (92)
Unclassified Establishments (99)
1990
2000
2010


Employment
Civilian Employment
Employers
Employment by Industry
2010 Employment by Type of Employer Total Civilian Population (Population Age 16+) for North Wilkesboro, NC
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
Private for Profit
Private Not for Profit
Local Government
State Government
Federal Government
Self-Employed
Unpaid Family
Provided by: CLRSearch.com
North Wilkesboro, NC
North Carolina
United States


Establishments by Industry Type
2010 Establishments by Industry Type From North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) for North Wilkesboro, NC
0%
2%
5%
8%
10%
12%
15%
18%
20%
Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, A...
Mining
Utilities
Construction
Manufacturing
Wholesale Trade
Retail Trade
Transportation & Warehousing
Information
Finance & Insurance
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing
Professional, Scientific...
Management of Companies...
Admin, Support, Waste Mg...
Educational Services
Health Care and Soci...
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation
Accommodation & Food Services
Other Services (Except Publ...
Provided by: CLRSearch.com
North Wilkesboro, NC
North Carolina
United States

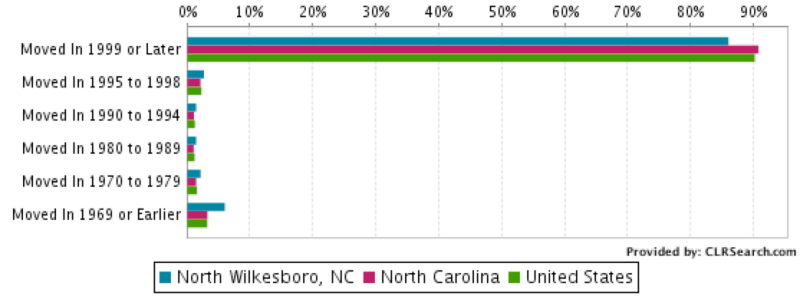
Household Income Statistics

2010 Household Income Statistics for North Wilkesboro, NC



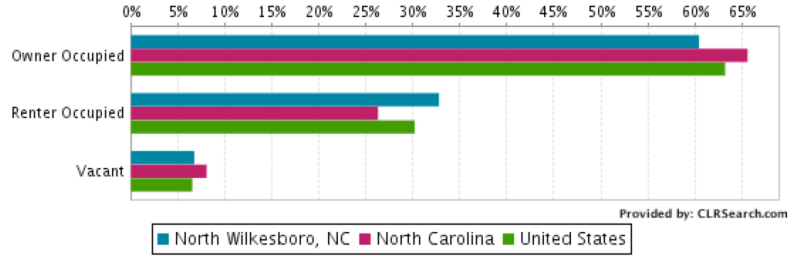
Move In Date | Occupancy | Year Built

2010 Household Statistics, Move In Date by Year for North Wilkesboro, NC



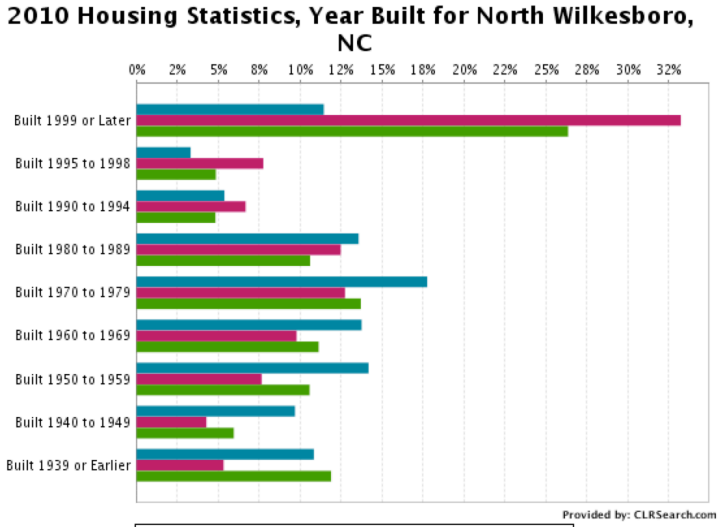
Move In Date | Occupancy | Year Built

2010 Housing Statistics, Occupancy Statistics for North Wilkesboro, NC

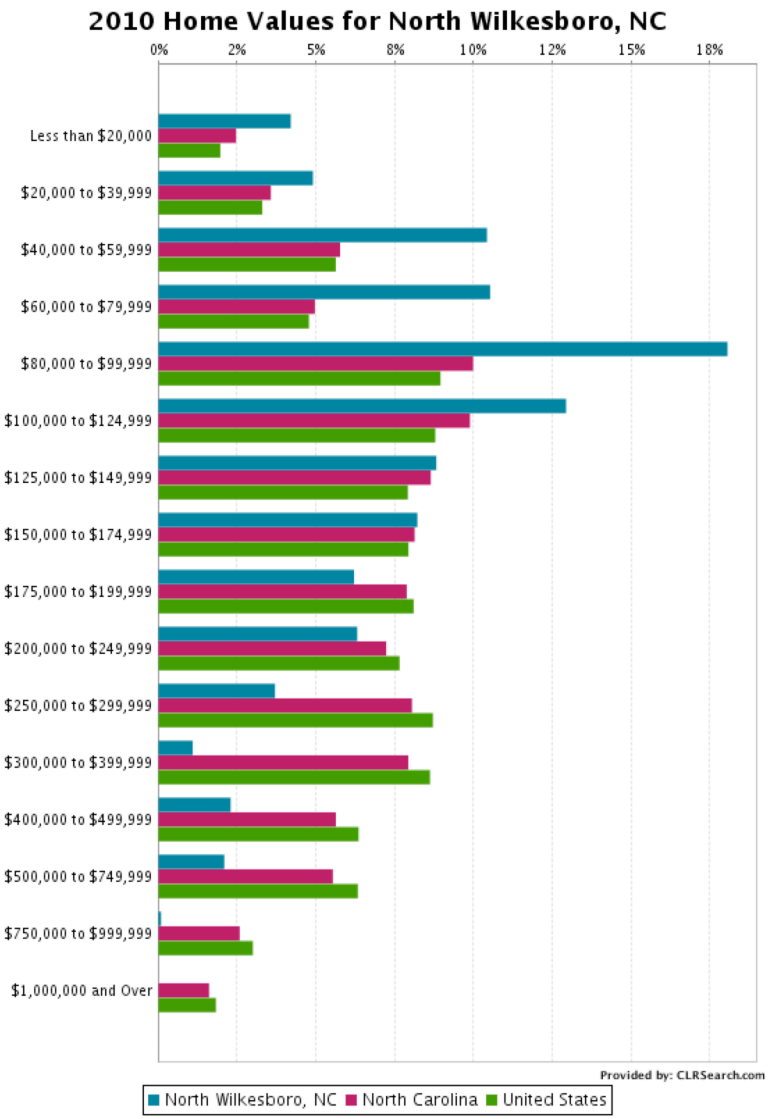


Appendix C – Census Information

Move In Date | Occupancy | Year Built

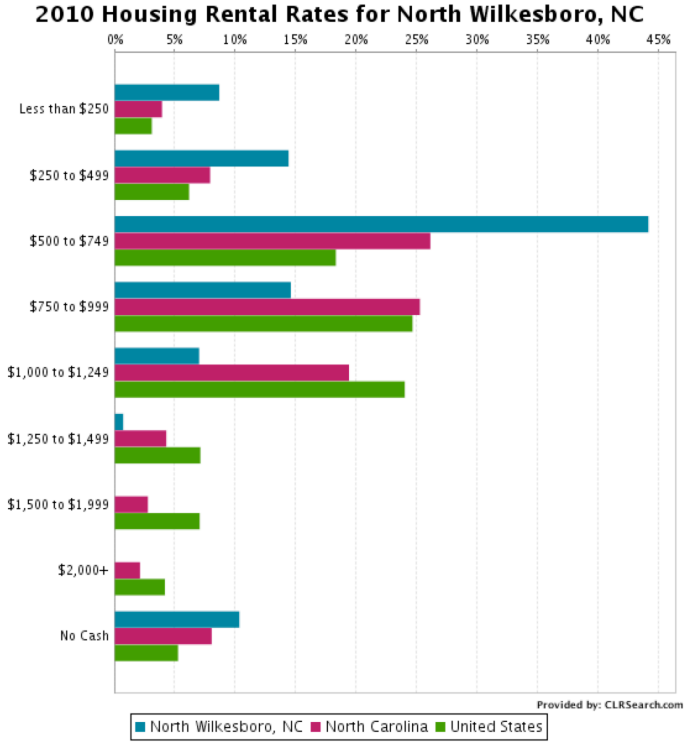


Home Owner Statistics and Home Values | Housing Rental Rates

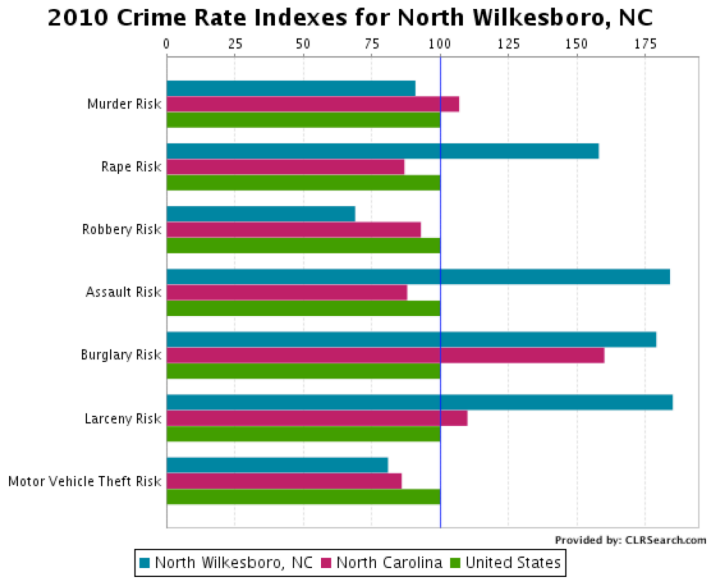


Appendix C – Census Information

Home Owner Statistics and Home Values | Housing Rental Rates



Crime Rate



Notes

Technical Assistance Provided By
Garry V. Cooper Associates