

York SC Forward



A Vision for the City of York

Presented by the
York Economic Development Corporation

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Vision

York will be a safe and healthy place for all.

York will be a city of economic opportunity and decreasing poverty.

York will have a well-balanced variety of appropriate and affordable housing options.

York will have a broad diversity of amenities, including restaurants, grocery stores, shops, services, and institutions.

York will have a quaint but vibrant downtown alive with history, arts, culture, and commerce.

York will have well-maintained and up-to-date parks & recreation facilities and programs, serving families, children, aging adults, and the general community.



York will have a healthy and productive ecosystem of entrepreneurs, small businesses, larger businesses, and workforce training initiatives.



York will be a place where citizens volunteer and contribute for the good of the community.



York will be a place where a child of York is likely to be economically and emotionally successful and proud of where they come from.



York will be well-funded and well-stewarded in all fiscal matters.

Snapshot

Input

Overview

In November and December of 2017, the York SC Forward team conducted a community input initiative. This initiative included three publicly advertised and facilitated input sessions, a short list of presentations to various existing community groups with question/answer sessions, and a longer list of meetings with various people in both the public and private sector. There is also a longer narrative of this project included in addendum.

What We Heard

While the people who participated had a list of negatives that they carried in with them, the events were positive in nature, and the focus was on how to create positive change. There was open and engaged dialogue, some of which went into socially difficult issues. There were challenges of opinion. And, all the while, the whole thing was positive and productive. People demonstrated high-levels of interest in participating and in helping even beyond these meetings. Also, one constant was a fondness for and emotional attachment to York and, in many cases, Western York County. Also a common theme was lots of family in and connections to the eastern part of the county as well. Each person spoke lovingly of York and York County. And they loved their own activities and inner circles and their own neighborhoods, as well.

The list of concerns/opportunities generated at the meetings includes:

- Water & Sewer
- Housing Diversity
- Biking Trails, Sidewalks, Parks, and Green Spaces

- Amenities (Hotel, Grocery Store, Swimming Pool, etc)
- Downtown Shopping & Restaurants
- Jobs & Industry
- Workforce Readiness & Development
- Public Transportation
- Activities for Children & Youth
- Equitable Distribution of Services & Resources
- Arts & Entertainment
- More Progressive City Council Leadership
- Recognizing York as County Seat
- Not a Business Friendly City
- Neighborhood Clean Up/Beautification
- ML King Street
- ML King Day of Service (Volunteer Recruitment)
- Agri-Business

Summary

YEDC Board Support

The board showed visible support. All public input sessions included several board members.

Positive Participation

The public input sessions and presentations drew an eager, interested, and good-sized crowd. The calls and lunches and meetings have been plenty and positive. People seem ready to participate in positive change.

Low Minority Participation

The Rec Center audience was the most diverse. Out of approximately 30 participants,

nearly half were African-American. The other sessions were conspicuously missing any minorities excepting one or two people. There was no visible participation from any other ethnic minority groups.

Race & Class Issues

Race and class issues surfaced during the Wesley Social Services Group session, the Harold C Johnson session, and the Rec Center session. These were handled with civility. Many expressed thanks for the opportunity to even have that dialogue. It is commonly understood that York is segregated in a negative way. And it is commonly understood that said segregation is a complex mixture of social, historical, economic, and race-related issues. It is believed that low participation by African Americans in the input sessions and process reflects a general disillusionment with the city, a general belief that their concerns will not be addressed regardless of input.

People are Connecting

People are making connections for actions already (and have been before we got started on our project). Some examples include: Dr. Vernon Prosser (District 1 Schools) and Charles Gary (Jasmine Café & Catering) connected at the Rec Center Session and have met to discuss the possibility of a Culinary Arts Internship Program. The project seems to be moving forward. Two people from the Rec Center Session have joined the Community Development Committee. County Council representatives have participated in presentations and conversations around projects for change in York. And some of the conversations are already altering people's potential plans in different ways.

Community Development Committee

The community development committee has lots of energy around the Park Study, Children & Youth, and Parent Engagement. The committee continues to attract new people. Current Projects include 1) Park Study and 2) Community Wide Reading Initiative & Literary Festival.

Downtown YEDC Committee

This committee is focused on working cooperatively with the city and landowners to develop solutions and designs for placemaking in the downtown. This work includes improvements and beautification for parking, sidewalks, green spaces, public spaces, crosswalks, and more.

Downtown Business Association

This crowd showed a lot of energy. The mayor, city staff, and the chamber were in attendance. The passion for success is palpable. And the vision of success is shared - a quant, but vibrant downtown that enriches the lives of all. The downtown businesses are eager to collaborate with one another and with the city. There was no shortage of creative ideas. The disconnect seems to be that there is not a single person or entity that is charged with the coordination and execution of those ideas. It's more of a group input session, and then random execution by individuals beyond the meetings. They did discuss collaborative events that they thought were successful, such as the balloonazon. We discussed the possibility of the city contracting the chamber to coordinate collaboration among the downtown businesses, to design and facilitate events, and to market the downtown. There was general enthusiasm about such an idea.

Informal Neighborhood Organizations

There are informal neighborhood groups and leadership in most neighborhoods. For example, there is an informal network of neighborhood leadership that represents Maiden Lane, Johnson City, East End, and The Valley. These are predominantly African American neighborhoods. Volunteering is also strong in neighborhoods. For example, there are individuals in Forest Hills who take it upon themselves to cut grass and clean trash on property owned by the city.

Ideas for Change

There is no shortage of ideas for change for York.

Hope for Change

People have varying perspectives on whether real change will occur. The hope among those who attended is probably indicative of them attending and cannot be a real measure of the public's feelings on this.

Resources & Communications

Some resources are underutilized simply because people don't know about them.

Arts Facilities & Venues for Everyone

This topic generated significant discussion in the public input sessions. Discussion circled around new facilities. But a conversation at the Rec led most present to agree that much more can be done with existing facilities with a little upfitting and some program coordination. This will be a way to get something good started quickly and let it grow into needing new facilities as it takes shape.

Public Investment

People seemed very interested in the public sector making significant public investments in York and for York's success. When discussing the downtown at Harold C., for example, we specifically asked if people were OK with the city spending public dollars to market the downtown, and people said yes, they thought it was good and necessary.

Opportunity for Dialogue and Input

People want to talk and seemed to appreciate having the opportunity to talk, though some are skeptical about the outcome.

Conclusion

People want positive change, and they are excited about at least discussing it. There is mixed opinion if any real change will happen, but there is a strong crowd that is hopeful and willing to participate.

Demographics and Data

Reports provided by the York County Economic Development staff include:

- Demographic and Income Profile
- Market Profile
- Restaurant Market Potential
- Retail Market Potential
- Retail Marketplace Profile
- Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile

Attached in Addendum.

LINK: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HeISu4axlxlzECilpQcCrzFr-MZXEsbn>

Overview

The two most obvious themes in the data is that York is growing, yet York is poor. Growth is undeniable, and it is a force that will significantly affect York in one way or the other. Think about if you have a garden, and you see water coming. If you route that water strategically, then you can have a greater garden for it. If you don't do anything, the water will roll right over your beloved plot and do as much damage as good. York already has lagging infrastructure and not much budget to do much about it (though they are newly innovative in how they are approaching such issues). York is also strikingly segregated and is almost half minority in population. The city has pockets of relative affluence, a low median income, and high rates of poverty.

On the economic upside, there is significantly more wealth within a twenty-minute drive East. And obviously much greater wealth within forty-minutes, due to Charlotte (not shown in these reports). Therefore, York must draw participants and consumers from a 20 to 40 minute drive to be economically successful (see section on negative Retail Gap below). York must also have a balanced property tax base to be successful. Thus,

investing in making York a place where people want to live is not only what will improve all of our lives, but it is what will make us economically successful in the process.

Growth:

	Downtown York York, South Carolina Drive Time: 5 minute radius	Prepared by York County Economic Latitude: 34.99312 Longitude: -81.24270	
Demographic Summary		2017	2022
Population		6,699	7,177
Population 18+		4,938	5,277
Households		2,519	2,705
Median Household Income		\$37,049	\$41,959

Make-up:

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		2017		2022	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	3,333	53.8%	3,478	51.9%	3,605	50.2%
Black Alone	2,403	38.8%	2,650	39.6%	2,893	40.3%
American Indian Alone	44	0.7%	43	0.6%	43	0.6%
Asian Alone	35	0.6%	48	0.7%	61	0.8%
Pacific Islander Alone	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	2	0.0%
Some Other Race Alone	253	4.1%	314	4.7%	368	5.1%
Two or More Races	126	2.0%	162	2.4%	205	2.9%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	498	8.0%	621	9.3%	729	10.2%

Wealth:

	Downtown York York, South Carolina Drive Time: 5, 10, 20 minute radii	Prepared by York County Economic Latitude: 34.99312 Longitude: -81.24270		
2017 Households by Income		5 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes
Household Income Base		2,519	5,455	29,882
<\$15,000		18.8%	15.2%	11.0%
\$15,000 - \$24,999		15.5%	13.9%	9.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999		13.1%	10.9%	8.8%
\$35,000 - \$49,999		13.9%	15.3%	14.2%
\$50,000 - \$74,999		17.1%	18.2%	19.3%
\$75,000 - \$99,999		11.3%	13.1%	15.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999		7.5%	9.7%	14.6%
\$150,000 - \$199,999		1.6%	2.3%	5.0%
\$200,000+		1.0%	1.2%	2.8%
Average Household Income		\$50,343	\$56,493	\$72,251

Retail / Restaurant

The Retail Marketplace Profile shows us that the Median Disposable Income goes up from \$32k to \$48k when you widen from a five-minute drive radius to a twenty-minute drive radius. Also, you can see the retail gap and the leakage here:

		Downtown York York, South Carolina Drive Time: 5 minute radius			Prepared by York County Economic Latitude: 34.99312 Longitude: -81.24270		
Summary Demographics							
2017 Population		6,699					
2017 Households		2,519					
2017 Median Disposable Income		\$32,455					
2017 Per Capita Income		\$19,510					
Industry Summary	NAICS	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses	
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$65,230,033	\$137,022,478	-\$71,792,445	-35.5	66	
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$59,321,325	\$128,390,265	-\$69,068,940	-36.8	46	
Total Food & Drink	722	\$5,908,708	\$8,632,213	-\$2,723,505	-18.7	20	

This shows that there is more supply in downtown York than there is demand (even with the small supply that we have). This means that the population around downtown can't support the retail and restaurants that are currently there, much less new ones. The downtown has to attract visitors from 10 and 20 minutes away to survive. If the downtown can do this (as that's what good downtowns do), then it is a huge boon to the city as those are all hospitality tax dollars from people who don't have residences in the city limits. In other words, they come, they give us their money, and they go home.

But downtown York is not currently enough of a destination (does not have a large enough draw) to support businesses that are not themselves each a destination (something unique that people will drive 20 minutes for). That is why we seem to be stuck in the two-steps-forward, two-steps-back reality in the downtown. Business owners open with passion in their eyes, and then they have to close when their business is not enough of a destination on its own to bring in the consumers that will support it. Those businesses that are very niche and have good internet sales can make it, but most businesses will struggle. And that reality is ultimately a downward spiral, as infrastructure decays with no money to invest in it. The path to success for downtown is for the

downtown itself to be the destination, the draw. The downtown and all of its parts (the businesses, the open space, the history, the architecture, the art, the events, etc.) - that is the destination. Then the businesses can cater to those visitors as well as to locals. There are many initiatives that can contribute to the downtown being a destination, including arts and culture as well as professional clustering (like the Law Park project).

As far as restaurants on the bypass, franchises choose places with a positive Retail Gap because it means that the residents have plenty of money and are currently having to drive somewhere else to eat. Think about Newport before the Walmart / Charandas / Empire / HWY 55 / etc. There were neighborhoods there full of people and their disposable income, but there were no restaurants and retail. Those people had to drive out to Cherry road for a chain restaurant and to York for the Walmart. It wasn't enough money for a national chain restaurant to want to come there, but instead it was perfect for the regional and local chains - which add more community character than national chains anyway.

The point is that it was a no-brainer for a regional chain restaurant to open in Newport due to the *positive* Retail Gap. But with a *negative* Retail Gap, you have to draw people from 10 to 20 minutes away. Currently, even the bypass has too much negative Retail Gap to support high volume regional chain restaurants, unless those restaurants were part of a larger destination. The area currently can't even draw the higher quality fast food. But if there was a mixed-use, master-planned development on the bypass at Cooperative Way, that development could be both the destination for the draw and provide a positive Retail Gap because of who would live in such a community. That's why mixed-use developments do so well. They are both. For example, a mixed-use development that had an agri-lifestyle, agri-commerce, agri-tourism theme could be a powerful draw (by being a tourist and commercial destination) and could create a positive Retail Gap microcosm by recruiting the affluent to live there. Such a vision/plan could easily have us at the table with a list of local and regional chain restaurants.

Agri-Commerce

Think about the Agri-Commerce initiative we’ve talked about and look at fresh produce (“Fresh Fruits and Vegetables”) in the table below. In a 20-minute radius, there are 26,000 adults who buy fresh fruit and vegetables regularly. This is a promising hint of a sector ripe for capitalization.

Downtown York
York, South Carolina
Drive Time: 20 minute radius

Prepared by York County Economic
Latitude: 34.99312
Longitude: -81.24270

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults/HHs	Percent of Adults/HHs	MPI
Grocery (Adults)			
Used beef (fresh/frozen) in last 6 months	21,986	73.6%	106
Used bread in last 6 months	28,540	95.5%	102
Used chicken (fresh or frozen) in last 6 months	21,199	70.9%	103
Used turkey (fresh or frozen) in last 6 months	4,718	15.8%	100
Used fish/seafood (fresh or frozen) in last 6 months	16,013	53.6%	98
Used fresh fruit/vegetables in last 6 months	25,957	86.9%	100
Used fresh milk in last 6 months	26,802	89.7%	103
Used organic food in last 6 months	4,612	15.4%	75

Tax Imbalance

Current Conundrum

It is commonly said by city, county, and state folks that our tax balance is out of whack. It is commonly pointed out that we are one of the lowest in the nation in residential property taxes and among the very highest in industrial taxes. It is commonly quoted that for every \$1 in residential property taxes collected, we spend \$1.35 back in services. This means we're literally losing 35 cents for every dollar we collect. It is commonly quoted that for every \$1 we collect in industrial property taxes, we pay back about 35 cents. This means we make a very high margin on every dollar we collect in industrial property taxes. Commercial taxes (mostly small businesses) are in the middle of the two.

The outcomes of this situation are many, complex, and not good. For example, our tax laws make industrial property development (specifically manufacturing) both critical and disincentivized at the same time. It's critical for our financial viability (because it subsidizes the falsely low residential taxes that we lose money on). Yet, it is disincentivized because it's so expensive from the perspective of the industrial business paying these high tax rates that they don't want to come here. So, therefore the only way we can get them to come here is by waiving the very tax income that makes us need them in the first place (with fee in lieu of tax and other economic development mechanisms). This is poorly constructed tax law, as it creates a critical need and then pits incentives against it.

Another negative outcome of the current state tax situation is that the commercial sector ends up carrying the majority of the burden for our local taxes (especially with schools). This is because of two reasons. One is a result of the property tax illustration above, that residential property taxes are falsely low and the industrial taxes that are supposed to make up the difference are often being waived as a recruitment tool. Commercial (mostly small business) is left to pick up the tab. The second reason small businesses end

up with a disproportionate burden is that SC Act 388 explicitly disallows any residential property taxes to be put towards funding local schools. This means the burden, again, falls on Commercial development, which is the small businesses and the people who create local jobs and local opportunities.

York County is particularly vulnerable to this tax imbalance because our geographic relocation competition for industry are the other counties in the Charlotte marketplace. Most of them are in North Carolina, and they do not have the high industrial property taxes that we do in South Carolina. This gives our relocation competitors a huge advantage out of the gate. The county and the city have dealt with this by introducing a list of tools (such as fee in lieu of tax) that works with any one business looking to relocate and reduces their contribution in different ways to try and level the playing field with other Charlotte-market areas looking to recruit this industry. The problem with that, of course, is that we need these taxes. That's why we want the businesses in the first place (that and jobs). So, waving the tax revenue doesn't do us much good. While it may fix the disincentive (and help land a business), it exacerbates the fact that such tax base is critical to our financial viability.

Participate in Conversation for Change

There are lots of conversations about changing the tax situation in the state. And there are lots of conversations about how the current system is a pending doom. The schools are particularly hard hit, due to changes made with Act 388 - which escalated the tax imbalance issue by many times over.

We should use York as a stage for a tax reform conversation. This could go well with the identity that we want to build around government offices and facilities being in York. We could show off coming projects and get York some marketing attention that's based on history and governance and law.

Apply Reality to Our Strategy

The tax situation will not change immediately, so we have to work with what we've got. We must be strategic about how we balance property development between residential, commercial, and industrial. We also must be strategic about how we use tax incentives and not give away that which we were after in the first place. We should do a tax balance study that will give us our existing, our breakevens, and our ideal mix of these three property tax sources.

State of Infrastructure

Electricity

York seems to have adequate electricity for growth. Furthermore, the electricity providers are active participants in the economic and community development of the city.

Water

From the city website: “The City of York provides water service to more than 3,500 residential and commercial customers in the York area. Our constant goal is to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water.”

The city has made a deal recently with the City of Rock Hill to purchase all of its water in the future. This requires a pumping station to be built in Newport, a project that is currently underway. This deal will allow for the city to shut down the existing York Water Plant. This move will improve York’s quality of water and its ability to provide consistent service. The water quality is also affected by the aging infrastructure throughout the city. The city does not have the budget to replace it all at once, so instead the pipes are replaced as they are repaired or as construction allows the opportunity to do so. There are specific areas of the city where the presence of water (and sewer) could drive important growth and lead to annexation that would increase York’s tax base.

Read the city’s drinking water report here:

http://yorksc.gov/vertical/sites/%7BC22F4068-92BF-4EBB-9000-16643D20C629%7D/uploads/CCR.Confidence_Report_2017.pdf

Sewer

From the city's website: "The City of York provides sewer service to more than 3,500 residential and commercial customers in the York area. Our purpose is to provide quality sanitary sewer service to our customers through the effective use of available resources and by effectively treating the City's wastewater thus producing clean water for discharge into Fishing Creek."

The sewer infrastructure of the city is aging. The city cannot afford to replace it all at once so must replace it as it is repaired or as construction allows the opportunity. There are specific areas of the city where the presence of sewer (and water) could drive important growth and lead to annexation that would increase York's tax base.

It is specifically critical to add sewer infrastructure around the bypass for the purposes of planned, balanced development for light industrial and mixed-use development. This needs to be done even if it takes increased taxes and/or debt to do it.

Digital Connectivity

The city lacks in providing digital connectivity to many properties, businesses, and homes. Not only does Internet access help drive business growth, but it can be a major factor in opening doors of opportunity for the lower economic population. We should seek partnerships, grants, and other opportunities in both areas of using Internet access for development:

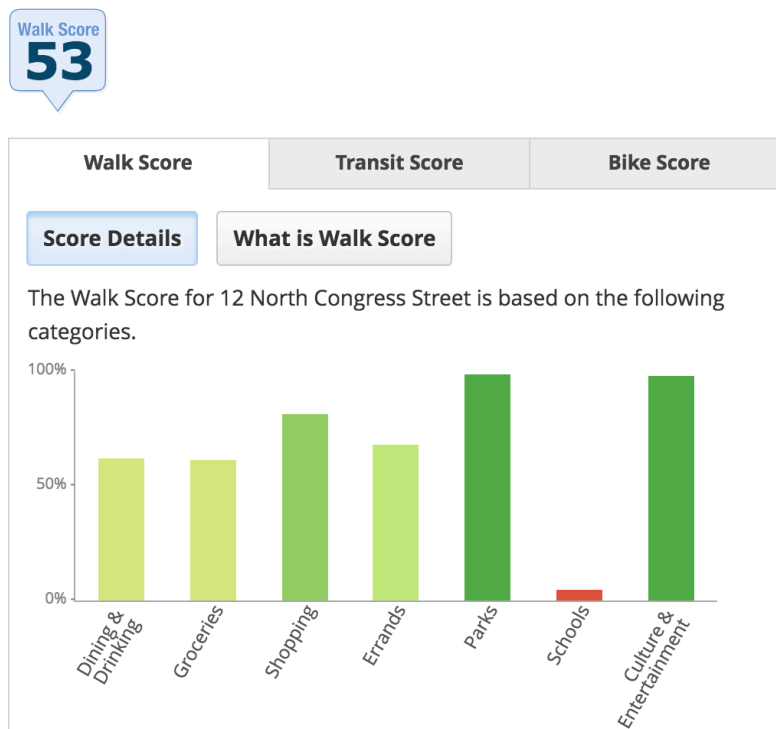
1. Small business support/recruitment
2. Providing access to the underserved

Walkability

As stated above, the downtown must be a destination for it to be successful. For it to be a destination, it must be walkable. Walkability though is bigger than that. Walkability is an idea that a place must be walkable to be commerce and culture friendly, as well as supportive of its citizens basic needs.

Walk Score is a measure the walkability of a place assessed by rating the distance to amenities as well as the ease, safety, and pleasantness of walking to them. It's a simple way to compare downtowns in their placemaking. Below are the walk scores of some downtowns in North and South Carolina in order to draw comparisons to York. The data below gathered from WalkScore.com.

Downtown York, SC



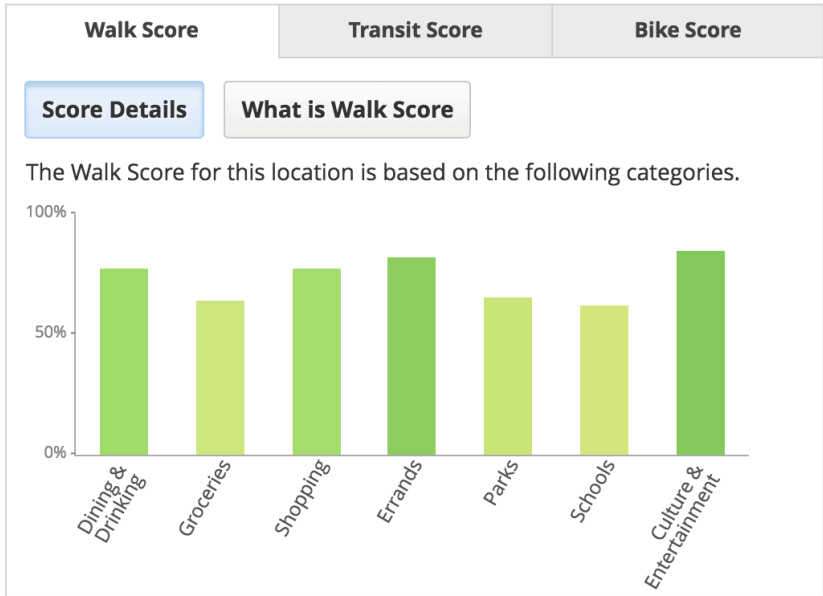
Downtown Tryon, NC

Walk Score
54



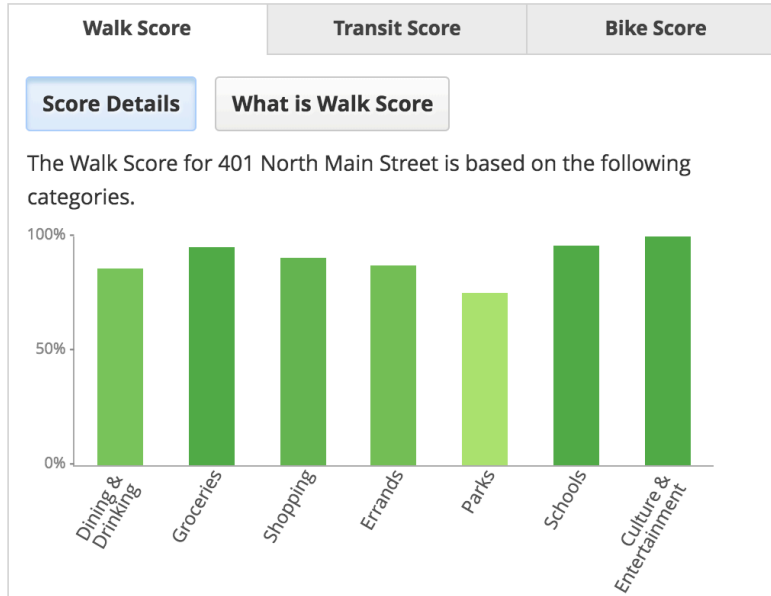
Downtown Belmont, NC

Walk Score
64



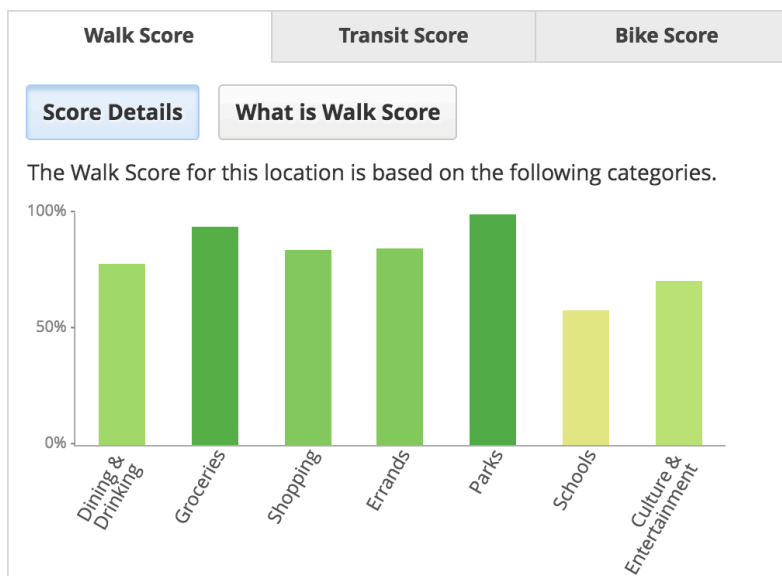
Downtown Hendersonville, NC

Walk Score
79



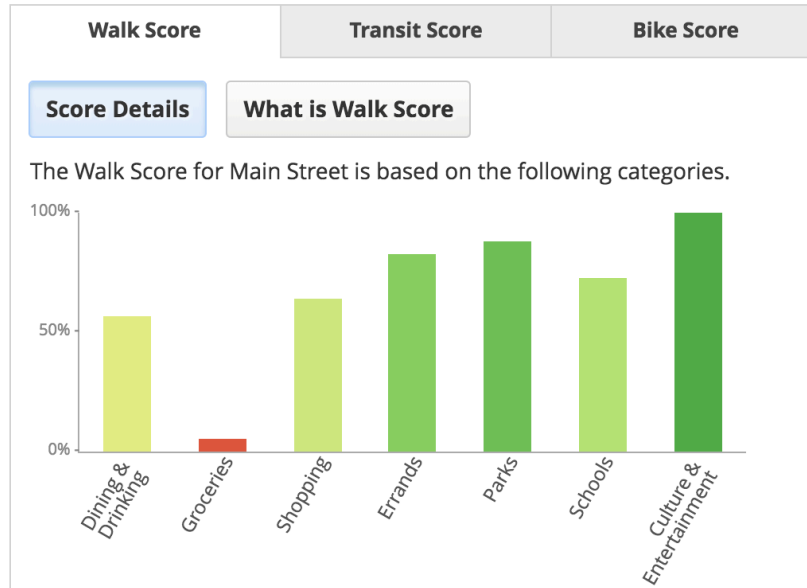
Downtown Greer, SC

Walk Score
73



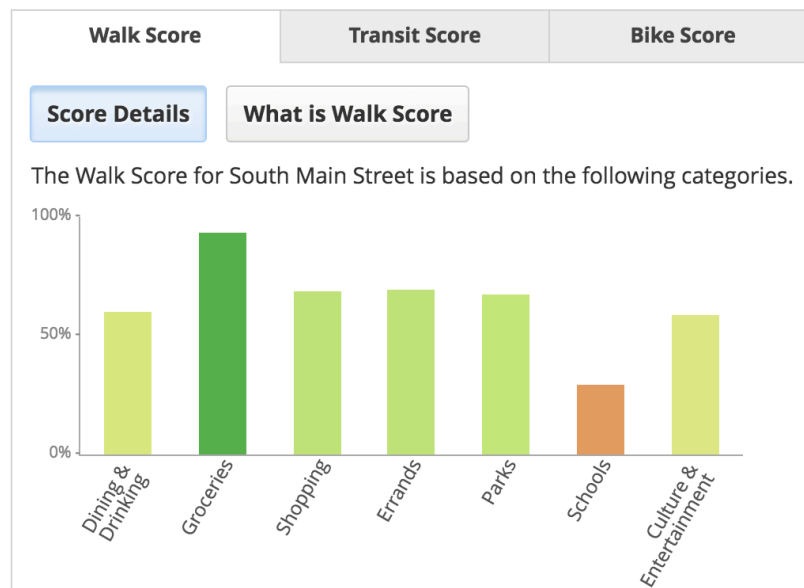
Downtown Chester, SC

Walk Score
52



Downtown Lancaster, SC

Walk Score
57



Summary

Challenges

- York is growing.
- York has high poverty, lagging infrastructure, and limited resources.
- York is historically and still mostly racially, ethnically, and economically segregated.
- York lacks safe & healthy connectivity for walking, biking, and driving.
- York lacks amenities for more affluent consumers.
- York downtown can have its lively moments, but it lacks commercial viability.
- York must draw people from outside of its city limits to support its businesses.
- York faces complex, multi-jurisdictional issues for economic success.
- York has lacked a shared community vision and direction.

Opportunities

- York is growing.
- Positive change is already happening in York at the city level.
- Many positive things are happening in all kinds of private, community, and/or nonprofit initiatives in arts, history, agri-commerce, downtown, health, education, leadership, and more.
- The citizens of York have much pride and love for the city.
- There is open interest in public dialogue on positive change and working together.
- There are a list of projects already underway and unfolding that will have significant impact on the city.
- The county will likely be very supportive of York's success.
- Rock Hill will likely be a supportive partner to York's success.
- There is plenty of money to be attracted within a 20-30 mile drive of York's center.

Objectives

OBJECTIVE #1: *Attract & Retain People*

York will attract and retain an economically healthy, participating population by providing the amenities, housing, commerce, and activities attractive to this population set.

OBJECTIVE #2: *Engage People*

York will decrease poverty through education, connectivity, training, and the development of economic opportunity, creating a more stable, inclusive, and productive economy and community for all.

OBJECTIVE #3: *Grow Community Wealth*

York will fuel the constant investment in our quality of life through fiscally responsible funding, which will include, but is not limited to, well-balanced tax base, increased tourism dollars, grants, and partnerships in both the public and private sectors.

Themes

These themes represent our major strategic areas of focus. These are the categories under which projects will live. These will generally remain our focus areas while projects and todos will change over time.

1. All People
2. Children
3. Seniors
4. Workforce
5. City Core
6. History & The Arts
7. Agri-Commerce
8. Industrial Development
9. Housing Diversity
10. Health & Recreation
11. Corridors

All People

York is segregated by race, ethnicity, and class. You can drive around and see it. The population of the city is made up of about 50% minority. Those minorities have a much higher percentage of poverty and a much larger percentage of disenfranchised citizens who don't see the city and institutions as working for them and on their side.

For a city to be successful, it must serve the interest of all of its citizens. Yet, history and social culture are powerful forces. The challenges mixed up in race and economic relations are many and extremely complex. Regardless, the city, no, the community is charged with the responsibility to do something.

We need to make York a better place for all people. This is not only the right thing to do, but it is the economically sound thing to do. We cannot sustain 30% poverty without it spiraling downward as the growth continues to come. If we are the home of the disenfranchised and impoverished, then that is what we will grow to become. Yet, if we are the home of innovation in community well being, if we are a community that is doing great things in engaging and enriching its citizens while improving the quality of their lives. Then, York is a place that people of choice want to live.

York should commit itself to the success and inclusion of those in need.

Children

Economic planning is long term, but really, planning for our children to enter the workforce isn't that long term at all. It is just upon us. Our children are our future. (There's a reason that's a cliché.) We heard strongly in the community input sessions that youth development was needed. We heard great desire to implement programs in engineering and/or the arts... to go beyond sports (and to also do sports well). We heard a desire to help make our children not only successful but fond of York and to make each be a possible candidate for being a productive citizen of York, even as they are people who perceive that they could choose to move anywhere.

There are all kinds of activities and initiatives that we need to be doing for our children. We need to be hugely supportive of our schools - celebrating achievements, contributing to the success of programs and positive work being done. We need to organize a volunteer effort, as there is great desire from adults and youth to participate. We need increased positive youth activity through existing and new programs, as well as existing and new facilities. We need to nurture and transition such engagement from the youth into life-skills and workforce training through the high school and into adulthood.

These are just examples of work to be done. But focusing on the positive development of our children, with particular focus on those most in need, is the right investment morally as well as economically. And it needs to begin in earnest immediately.

Seniors

York needs to take care of its seniors. To do so we need to look at the full spectrum of economics.

We need to make sure that lower economic seniors are not left out in the cold (literally and metaphorically speaking). And we need to provide the housing and amenities sought by aging baby boomers of the middle class and those of affluence.

We should support specific existing organizations like the county's Council on Aging, seeking to understand their mission, needs, and successes.

We should look to provide ways for active adults to participate in our community as mentors and investors for positive change and progress.

We should make specific efforts to celebrate in our community the contribution of our senior citizens, be it through veteran celebrations or honoring volunteers or those who have made a difference in public and/or private leadership.

A simultaneous focus on seniors and children makes for a wholesome community.

Workforce

York needs to have a coordinated, streamlined, and professionally managed workforce development effort.

We need to

- understand what is already available and working, as there seem to be many programs from the school district to the colleges to SC Works and more;
- see how it all fits together and where there are gaps;
- partner with organizations, institutions, and employers;
- package and market our workforce offering to potential industry (equipping the county economic development staff with the best sales materials possible);
- facilitate getting employers to the table to participate;
- provide training and facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and more;
- have and/or market job fairs and help measure success of such events.

There is so much to do that it is overwhelming. So, where do we start? First we need to audit what is out there and have it on a common list. Then, we look at how we can support what exists. Then, we identify where there are gaps and see who may step to the front to fill them.

Most of all, we need a workforce coordinator - a person or group that is championing this effort.

City Core

The city core includes the downtown and the surrounding residential areas. It is the heart of the community. It's the identity of the city itself and ultimately the key to its long term success. With no strong central identity and city core, York will develop with outside sprawl and back-filled poverty. To those with means in the county, York would become only commercial districts along highways by tracts of housing that serve other communities. And to those people inside the city, at its core, York would be a dilapidated, poor place. Yet, this dismal view is not the reality we are creating.

The community is becoming unified on some basic desires. We want the city core to be a quaint but vibrant place, an attractive and safe place for everyone, a place people will choose to spend their time and their money, a place where we experience arts and culture and entertainment.

Aside from being a shared desire among citizenry, the success of the downtown is also a key to our economic strategy and success. If we seek to recruit and retain productive people, then the downtown is the key amenity. This is true for millennials who can bring the needed talent for the economy (or even bring their own jobs), as well as executives who are the decision makers in relocation projects and business formation, as well as retiring couples and individuals who would like to spend time and money on amenities and give back generously for a quality life and lifestyle.

Simply put, people choose to work and live in a place they want to be. Being a place of choice for productive people is a critical strategy for York's success, and one of the key factors in being that place is the vibrancy of the downtown and city core.

History & The Arts

We need to capitalize on and support the success of the history tourism that we already have, and we need to mix into that success a focus on crafts, arts, and antiques. There are already groups and individuals heavily invested in promoting York's historic district. This should be supported.

We need to invest in

- Our Historic District (with beautification and marketing)
- Public Art
- Public Parks
- McCelvey (with beautification and marketing)
- Sylvia Theater (to make sure it remains a theater)
- STEM and Arts programs at the Rec and other locations

We should seek to bring other arts, crafts, and history related businesses and organizations into the downtown. And we should put considerable resources in differentiating York through celebrating its historic district.

Agri-Commerce

It is important to understand that *Agri-Commerce* is not the same thing as *Agri-Business* or *Agri-Tourism*. **Agri-Business** is usually a global market of giant corporate food processors that may not have the best paying jobs. That's not what we're looking for with *Agri-Commerce*. **Agri-Tourism** is a good thing for sure, and we do want it. It's about agricultural-related facilities and events that bring people from outside of the community in for entertainment purposes (e.g., tourism). Again, that's great, but that's not the same as *Agri-Commerce*. **Agri-Commerce** is an entrepreneurial, small-business-based marketplace existing around food (production, selling, delivery, preparation, and consumption). It's the farm-to-table movement. Think craft beer, microgreens, local produce served at local restaurants, and so on. This is a growing marketplace that has seen much success in small towns across North and South Carolina. Often, businesses serve both the Agri-Commerce and the Agri-Tourism markets - promoting an **Ag Lifestyle**. Just look at Windy Hill, Bush n Vine, and Black's Peaches. This is great for the community and should be supported.

York is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the regional Agri-Commerce marketplace.

York can be the connector between the market of the eastern part of the county and the land of the western part of the county. The convergence of these can be an active commercial and consumer market. This applies to services as well as to locally grown and produced foods and goods. It could be a marketplace that serves the local community, the region, and through the Internet, the nation and the world. York could have a food and agriculture identity that, when combined with the history and arts of a quaint but vibrant downtown, makes York is a unique and compelling place. Plus, York's success in this arena would be to great advantage to the county at large. It would help keep Western York County rural by helping it become productive in producing food. And it would help keep Eastern York County supplied so the restaurants have locally sourced foods for their spending customers.

Industrial Development

For economic reasons, York needs industrial development within and around it. Ideally, this could be done without changing the nature of the community. Therefore, any industrial development should be light industrial, integrated within the community, and bringing with it some improvement or amenity for the community at large.

To control how the inevitable development affects the community, the City of York must proactively recruit small and mid-sized businesses in small-scale manufacturing, looking to the York Economic Development Corporation for targeting and strategies for such recruitment. The City of York will need to develop fully professional industrial product for these recruiting efforts. York also really needs to do something special, as it is disadvantaged in business recruitment in its competitive marketplace. York needs something marketable, something a healthy business will choose as being the best of all location choices (and not just the cheapest of all land). York should put forward a compelling vision for integrated, non-destructive, amenity-adding, light industrial development. Then, York should market this vision aggressively, in concert with the county.

To begin, the city should commit to partner, collaborate, support, and invest in the success of the East York Industrial Park. We should look at how to connect the success of East York with more development opportunities in other locations around the city. One challenge York faces is the lack of sewer infrastructure around the Alexander Love Bypass. This challenge must be overcome. Some long term opportunities include countywide and multi-jurisdictional initiatives. Short term opportunities lie in successful development in areas where there is currently appropriate infrastructure to inspire the community's confidence to invest in laying down the remainder of the infrastructure around the bypass.

Housing Diversity

A person or family in York should be able to buy or rent an appropriate and affordable home.

1. York needs to address its homeless issue.
2. York needs attractive and amenity-supported housing options for at least these groups:
 - a. Downsizing or relocating baby boomers
 - b. Downsizing or relocating empty nesters
 - c. Upsizing or relocating families
 - d. Professional X'ers and millennials
3. York also needs appropriate and affordable housing for
 - a. The renters (individuals or families) currently in very low economic status
 - b. The buyers (including first-time buyers) in lower economic status

When a developer comes and is willing to put the money on the table to develop something, the city is either usually against it because they're just against change, or they're for it only because they think, well at least this is something. But what we need to do is to flip this script. We need to put forward the housing balance and diversity that we want. We show the amenities as part of that vision. And then let's attract and work with those developers who can make that happen. We need to be data-driven and intentional about our housing development decisions. City Council needs to know and see clearly what our current housing balance is (this is visible currently in county reports) and what implications that has on our economy (taxes, services, consumer spending, etc.). They need a reference card alongside them as they evaluate development and housing so that we're achieving the balance that we desire.

Health & Recreation

The community desires safe and nice health and recreation facilities for community activity including programs for youth, adults, the aging, and the community at large.

First of all, we need to address our current facilities. Some portions of the York Recreation Center, for example, are (or have been) falling apart, even dangerous. These should be fixed immediately. Next, we need to look at soccer and other youth sports as an opportunity. Look at the positive outcome of the soccer fields built in Clover. That is a pretty simple facility, but it has great community impact. We then need to think bigger about developing some facilities that could be part of the Sports Tourism success of Rock Hill. Do teams need practice fields? Are there smaller events (that encircle larger ones) that could be held in York? The big plus for sports tourism is that the fields are public amenities, improving the quality of the citizens lives, as well as tourism and economic drivers. Such investments would also serve as catalysts to address our specific objective of recruiting and retaining economically healthy people because the facilities themselves are examples of the “nicer amenities” that this population seeks.

Also, we need to look at health and recreation as a lifestyle. Can people walk safely to the store or the downtown? Are the parks well kept? Are the neighborhoods walkable? We want our whole community to encourage health in its design and emphasis.

Also, we want to connect our health and recreation to our agricultural theme. Not only is eating local produce good for you, but picking it is exercise.

We want to teach our youth healthy habits - eating well, no smoking, exercising, etc.

Corridors

Corridors of focus include

1. HWY 161 commercial district
2. HWY 5 passing East York Industrial and Moss Justice
3. Alexander Love Highway (The Bypass)
4. HWY 49 coming in from Lake Wylie
5. Lincoln Road coming in from Clover
6. Hunter St. from Alexander Love to Madison and then East Liberty
7. Railroad Avenue/Church St. corridor leading from 321 South to East Liberty/Hunter
8. SC Hwy 324(McFarland Rd.) which intersects with East Liberty
9. HWY 321 coming in from Clover
10. HWY 5 coming in from Blacksburg
11. HWY 321 coming in from the South
12. HWY 49 coming in from the South

Each of these corridors is in a different state of being, and there are different projects already queued up for different areas. The new roundabout on the 49 is a success. All of these areas need to be reviewed in a general study of traffic flow taking advantage of planners available at the Catawba COG.

The top priority needs to be the diversion of passthru traffic coming from Rock Hill, which is the strongest stream of water so to speak in flooding York with change. We need to dig the channels to send the water where we want it to go. Those who are coming into York to participate in York, should come into a beautiful town and be welcomed with open arms. Those who are just driving through should go around. We need to design this into the roads in such a way that it is simply the driver's choice to do our will and not something we have to continuously fight and enforce. High on the list, also, should be making the 161 Corridor a nice walkable, crossable developed corridor that would bring some higher-end amenities and also provide safe walking for those citizens who live behind and around the district. Also improvements in such areas like the corner of West Liberty and 321, would go a long way in providing opportunity and combating poverty.