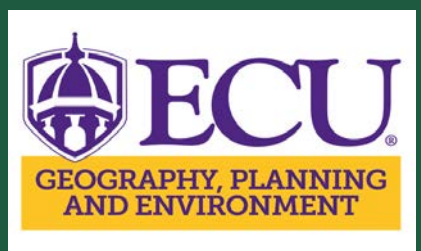


# Hilton Garden Inn Impact Assessment Greenville, NC



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# Table of Contents

## **01 Introduction**

- Client
- Purpose
- Project Scope
- Executive Summary

## **02 Community Background**

- History
- Current Demographics
- Current Hospitality State

## **03 Project Area**

- Hotel
- Existing Business Landscape
- Existing Available Resources
- Existing Concerns or Problems

## **04 Literary Review**

- Hotel Benefits
- Hotel Ramifications

## **05 Insights from Comparable Communities**

Boone

City

City

Overall Findings

## **06 Public Engagement**

Method Used

Results

Findings

## **07 Recommendations**

Parking

Advertising

Funding

Hotel Partnerships

Summary

## **08 Sources**

# 01 Introduction

## Client

The East Carolina University Planning Department is working with the City of Greenville's Neighborhood and Business Services Department to analyze the impacts of the Hilton Hotel development on downtown Greenville

## Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to examine the anticipated impacts of the forthcoming hotel development in downtown Greenville on local businesses. By exploring both the potential benefits and drawbacks, we aim to develop strategies to mitigate negative effects and capitalize on positive opportunities.

## Project Scope

This study seeks to identify and recommend toolkits and policies that can be implemented to support the seamless integration of the new hotel, fostering a mutually beneficial environment for the local business community and the evolving downtown landscape.

The ultimate objective is to contribute to the sustainable growth and prosperity of downtown Greenville through informed decision-making and strategic planning.

## Executive Summary

Through the development of the first hotel in Downtown Greenville, our team has undertaken the responsibility of identifying potential benefits and concerns for local businesses, supported by preliminary research. Our primary objective is to offer recommendations and practical solutions to the Neighborhood and Business Services department, empowering local businesses with the necessary tools to address challenges arising from the hotel. Our overarching goals also extend to the retention and sustainable economic growth of small businesses.

Our team has derived solutions from concerns expressed by local businesses, as gathered through a survey crafted by us. The key issues brought to light include the lack of parking, the need for increased advertising for local businesses, and the requirement for funding support. The solutions we propose for the Neighborhood and Business Services of Greenville, NC, include:

### **Parking**

- Wayfinding Signage
- Technology Application

### **- Advertising**

- Interactive Tourist Touchscreen Kiosk located in Hotel
- Paper Map Wayfinder

### **Funding**

- Tax Program Implementation
- Public-Private Partnership

### **Hotel Partnerships**

- Collaboration
- Local Showcase
- Business Event Rental Space

# 02 Community Background

## History of Downtown Greenville

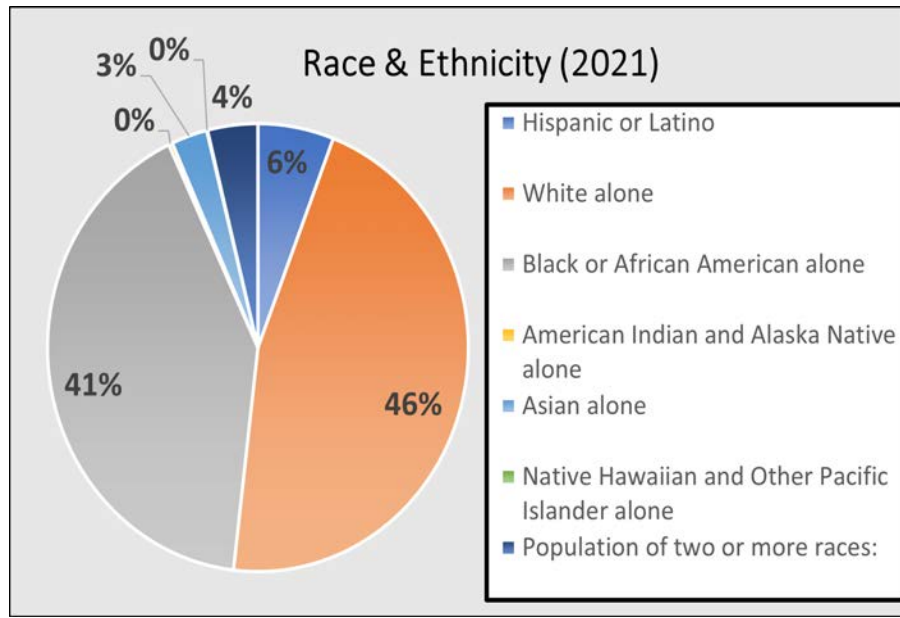
Downtown Greenville, NC, has a history deeply rooted in industry, particularly tobacco and textiles. The city served as a commercial center, attracting businesses and residents seeking economic opportunities in these sectors. Over the years, economic shifts and urban planning initiatives have influenced the downtown landscape (Case, 2010).

## Greenville's Current Demographics

As of the 2020 Decennial Census, the city of Greenville, NC, boasts a population of 87,521, highlighting its continuous growth and serving as a foundation for understanding its social and economic dynamics.

Examining the economic landscape, the median income in Greenville, NC, stands at \$50,120 annually. This figure provides valuable insights into the community's standard of living, affordability, and income distribution.

Moreover, Greenville is characterized by its rich racial diversity, with approximately 45% of the population being White, 41% being Black or African American, and the remaining 14% comprising other racial groups. This diverse demographic makeup adds to the city's vibrant tapestry and contributes to its unique cultural fabric (Bureau, 2021).



## Greenville's Current Hospitality State

According to the Smith Travel Research Report for Greenville, NC, there are approximately 33 hotel/motel properties and 2,389 rooms in the Pitt County. However, none of these hotels are situated near the Downtown Greenville Area. The construction of the new Hilton Inn would mark the first hotel in this central district, presenting a myriad of opportunities and concerns for the residents and businesses in the area (Smith Travel Research Report 2023).

# 03 Project Area

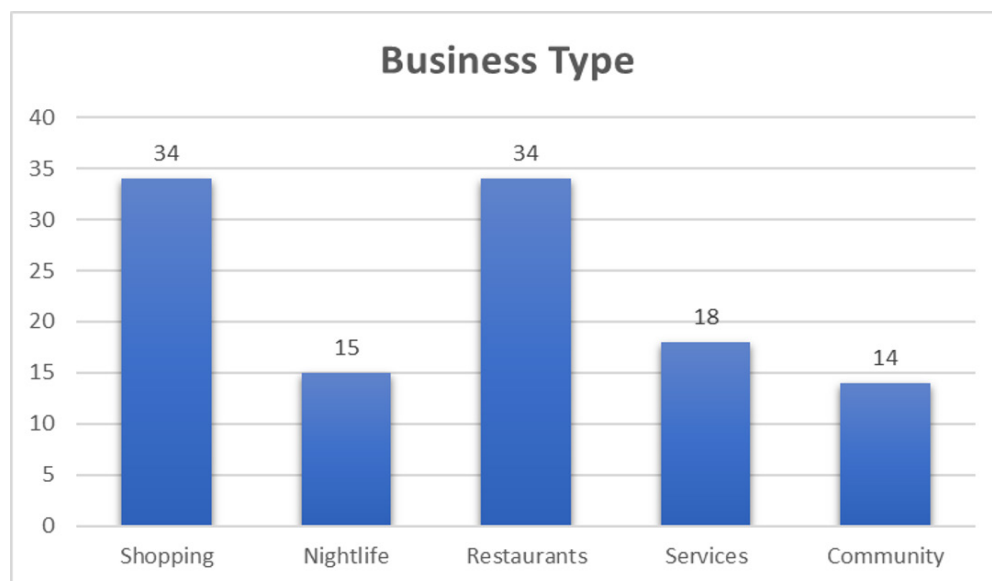
## The Hilton Garden Inn, Downtown Greenville:

The hotel in question is being built in Downtown Greenville, NC. The address for this location is 423 Evans Street. According to Hilton's website, the Hilton Garden Inn is being finished in 2024.

This new hotel will be an eight-story building, with 101 rooms for guests. The amenities that the hotel planned will include a bistro, a roof-top bar, and a conference room.



## Existing Business Lanscape: (Downtown Greenville Business Community 2023)



## Existing Available Resources:

[greenvillenc.gov/government/financial-services/mwbe-program/resources-for-business](http://greenvillenc.gov/government/financial-services/mwbe-program/resources-for-business)

1. Certifications
2. Construction Resources
3. Credit, Loan, and Grant Matching Financing
4. "How to do Business" Brochures

## Existing Concerns or Problems

Current Issues in the Downtown area expressed by the local business owners within a previous survey was the lack of parking for both employees and potential customers. Our team hopes to address these problems along with other problems that may arise within this document.

# 03 Project Area

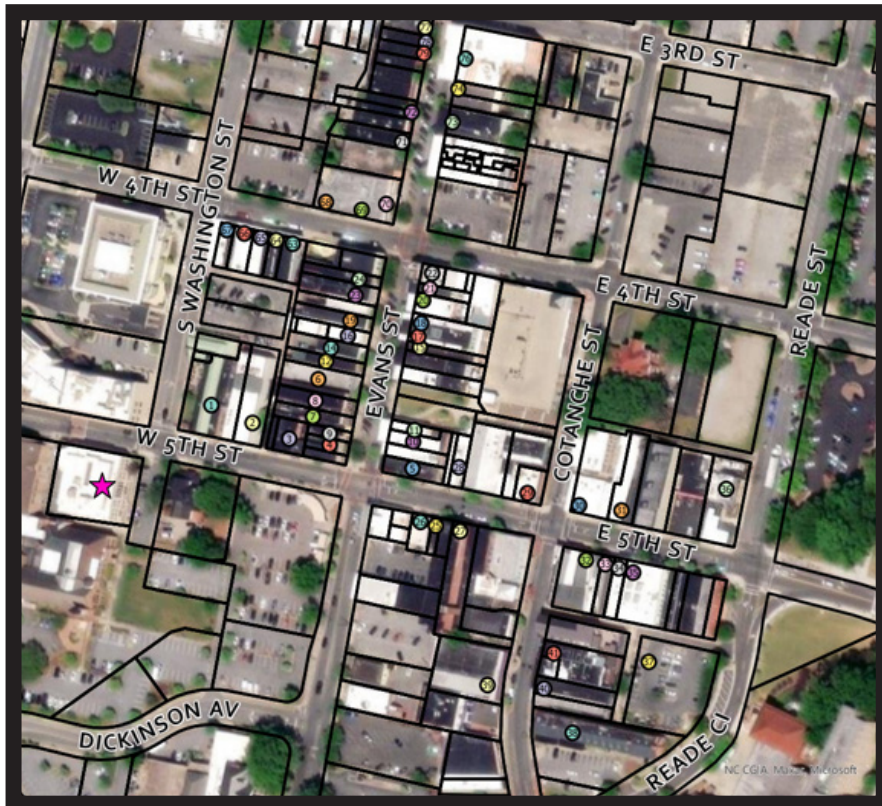
## Area of Study

The business landscape in the Downtown Greenville area is a vibrant tapestry, showcasing a rich diversity of services that cater to the wide-ranging needs and preferences of Greenville residents. This diversity is a key feature of a dynamic and multifaceted commercial environment, contributing significantly to the overall vibrancy of the downtown district.

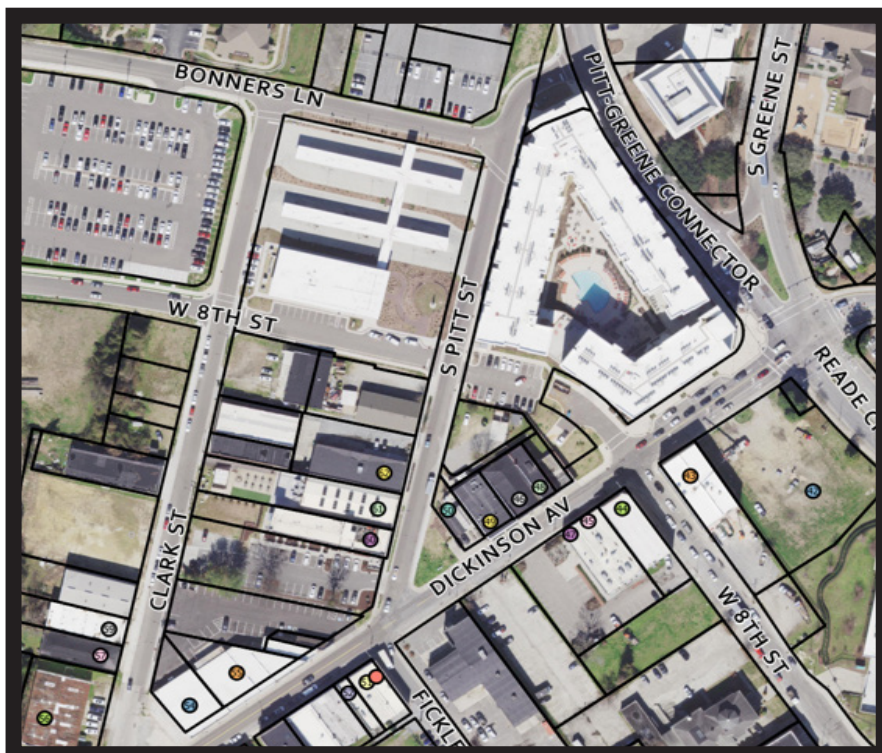
Downtown Greenville is not only a hub for night entertainment, offering a lively mix of bars, clubs, live music venues, theaters, and late-night dining options, but it also boasts an array of boutiques, restaurants, and pubs. This eclectic mix creates an inviting atmosphere for tourists to explore, providing a delightful fusion of entertainment, culinary experiences, and local charm.

Beyond the realms of entertainment and food, Downtown Greenville serves as a host to various professional services. From legal services provided by lawyers to real estate expertise and the realm of social media management, the area caters to a broad spectrum of professional needs. This diversity of services not only enhances the convenience for local residents but also contributes to the overall economic vitality of the downtown business district.

## Central Downtown



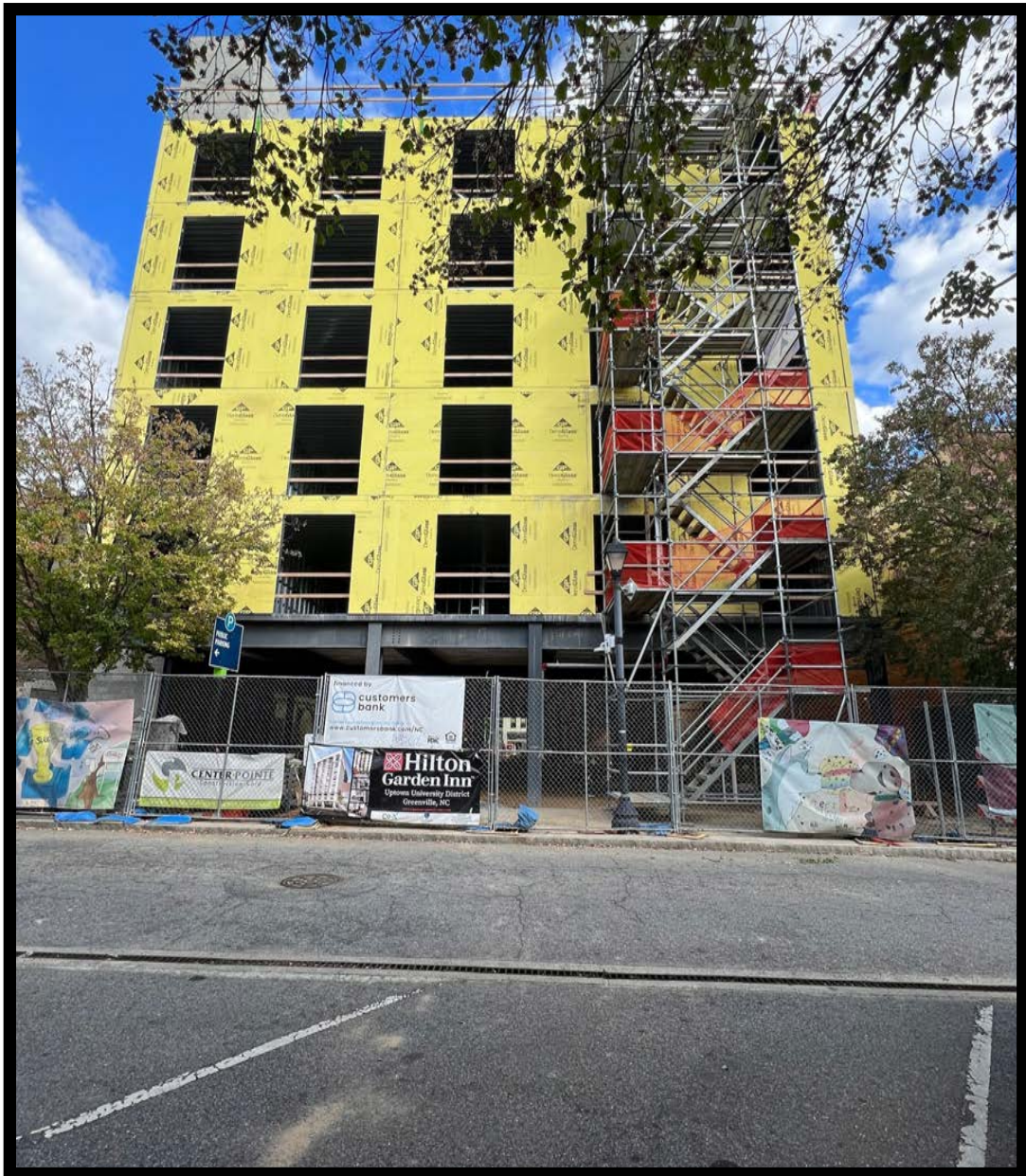
## Dickinson Avenue



# 03 Project Area

## Site Area





# 04 Literary Review

The construction of the first hotel in the Downtown Greenville area raises numerous questions, opportunities, and even concerns. Before initiating public outreach, our team conducted preliminary research to identify common benefits and ramifications associated with the introduction of hotels in cities and towns. Below, we made sure to comprehensively list these benefits and ramifications to provide a comprehensive overview for informed discussions.

## Hotel Benefits

- Generate sales for nearby retail and service businesses and capture tourism dollars in the community.
- Generate significant tax revenues while creating many new jobs for local residents.
- For each \$100 of spending on lodging, hotel guests spent another \$220 during their trip (Economic impact of the US hotel industry - ahla 2023).

“The downtown hotel will increase the walkability for our guests that want to experience downtown. It should also help create additional hospitality infrastructure...restaurants, retail shops upscale nightclubs etc....since there will be an increase in foot traffic downtown with overnight guests from the hotel.”

-Andrew Schmidt, Executive Director Greenville Convention and Visitors Bureau

## Hotel Ramifications

- Limited space in downtowns can strain the availability for additional amenities and parking facilities.
- Introducing lodging downtown can bring to light safety concerns, such as increased crime rate and traffic injury.
- Parking and traffic challenges increase with more people downtown.
- Rising Operational costs, including utilities, property taxes, and labor, may be implemented.

### Current YTD Data for Greenville, NC (Smith Travel Research Report, October 2023)

Occupancy Rate: 63.6%

Average Daily Rate: \$110.52

101 rooms \* 63.6% occupancy rate = 64 average occupancy at the Hilton Garden Inn/night

64 rooms rented \* \$110.52 average daily rate = \$7,073.28 gross revenue/night

\$7,073.28 gross revenue/night \* 365 days/year = \$2,851,747.20 gross revenue per year

\$2,851,747.20 gross revenue/year \* 6% NC occupancy tax = **\$154,904.83 occupancy tax revenue**

(Smith Research Report, 2023)

# 05 Comparable Communities

When comparing Greenville to similar communities in North Carolina, you will notice that while the statistics aren't as great as the other communities, that Greenville is a growing city. Greenville had a population of 88,733 people in 2021, while the largest comparable community Concord had a population of 107,688 in 2021 according to the 2021: ACS 1-Year Estimates. Greenville is currently at a 0.72% growth rate behind Concord at 1.82%. Comparable College Town Asheville, home to the University of North Carolina at Asheville generates much more tourism revenue than other comparable communities as it generated 2.6 billion tourism dollars in 2021, while Greenville, home to East Carolina University generated 257 million dollars tourism dollars in 2021. The last major comparison which is number of hotels in the city, is led by Asheville with 78 hotels in their city limits. Gastonia is the closest to Greenville in this category at 24 hotels, while Greenville sits at 31 hotels. (Bureau, 2021). *See sources for graphic in references.*

City:	Greenville, NC
Population:	88,728 (2021)
Growth Rates:	2.17%
Tourism Spending Per Year:	257 million (2021)
# of Hotels:	31
College Town (Y/N):	Yes
College:	East Carolina University

## Interpretation of Findings:

- While Greenville may not match the scale of some comparable cities in terms of population, tourism spending, and hotel numbers, the city exhibits positive signs of growth.
- Being a college town can influence the local economy, and the presence of East Carolina University may contribute to this growth.
- The lower tourism spending compared to Asheville suggests room for improvement in attracting visitors, but the existing revenue still contributes to the local economy.
- The number of hotels, though fewer than in some comparable cities, implies potential opportunities for expansion in the hospitality sector.

Asheville, NC	Gastonia, NC	Concord, NC	Apex, NC
94,067 (2021)	81,161 (2021)	107,697 (2021)	62,911 (2021)
1.37%	3.72%	1.82%	4.95%
2.6 billion (2021)	289 million (2021)	469 million (2018)	2.3 billion (Wake 2021)
78	24	67	20
Yes	No	No	No
University of North Carolina at Asheville	N/A	N/A	N/A

# 06 Public Engagement

## Methods

Public engagement was performed in the form of both a physical and an online survey. The survey targets were local businesses along both Dickinson Street and the Downtown Greenville Area. Our team has distributed around 32 surveys and was able to receive 16 back.

The results from the survey show a variety of different viewpoints from the local businesses.

While our team formulated a lot of questions, a few questions bring light to the issues that we aim to address.

### Downtown Small Business Survey

Business Name:

Business Owner:

You are invited to participate in a research project about Greenville Hotel Downtown Case Study. This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and responses will be kept

anonymous. You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. Submission of the survey will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate and that you affirm that you are at least 18 years of age. If you have any questions about the research, please contact the Project Leader, Mary Archibald, via email at [archibaldm21@students.ecu.edu](mailto:archibaldm21@students.ecu.edu) or the faculty advisor, Mr. Merrill Flood at [floodm18@ecu.edu](mailto:floodm18@ecu.edu).

Q1. What are your days/hours of operation?

Q2. What best describes the type of industry for your business?

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Art entertainment and recreation | I. Professional services     |
| B. Agriculture                      | J. Real Estate               |
| C. Auto/auto related                | K. Retail                    |
| D. Construction and repair          | L. Transportation            |
| E. Healthcare                       | M. Wholesale trade           |
| F. Childcare                        | N. Personal services         |
| G. Manufacturing                    | O. Food services/hospitality |
| H. Other (Please Specify)           |                              |

Q4. When did you open your business? (Month, year)

☐ Very Dissatisfied ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat Satisfied ☐ Very Satisfied

Q8. Do you have designated parking for your business? If so, how many parking spots do you currently have?

Q9. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate foot traffic around your business compared to other areas of downtown? (1, being little to no foot traffic. 10, being an excess of foot traffic).

Q10. The Hilton Hotel will be impactful on my business.

☐ Totally Disagree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Totally Agree

Q11. Do you foresee increased competition with the arrival of the Hotel?

a. Yes b. No c. I am not sure

Q12. Do you foresee more opportunities or challenges with the arrival of the hotel?

☐ All Challenges ☐ More Challenges ☐ Neutral ☐ More Opportunities ☐ All Opportunities

Q13. What are your biggest concerns with the development of the hotel?

Q14. What are some opportunities you predict will occur from the development of the hotel?

Q15. What resources, strategies, or policies do you think development of the Hotel?

Q16. After the hotel is finished, how do you expect the c

- Average Rent: \$2,203

- Average Year Business Opened: 2015

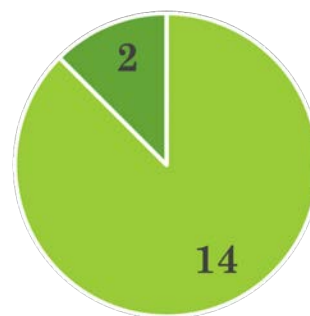
- Median Employees/Business: 6

- 69% Do NOT have Designated Parking

- 75% Agree the Hotel will be Impactful,

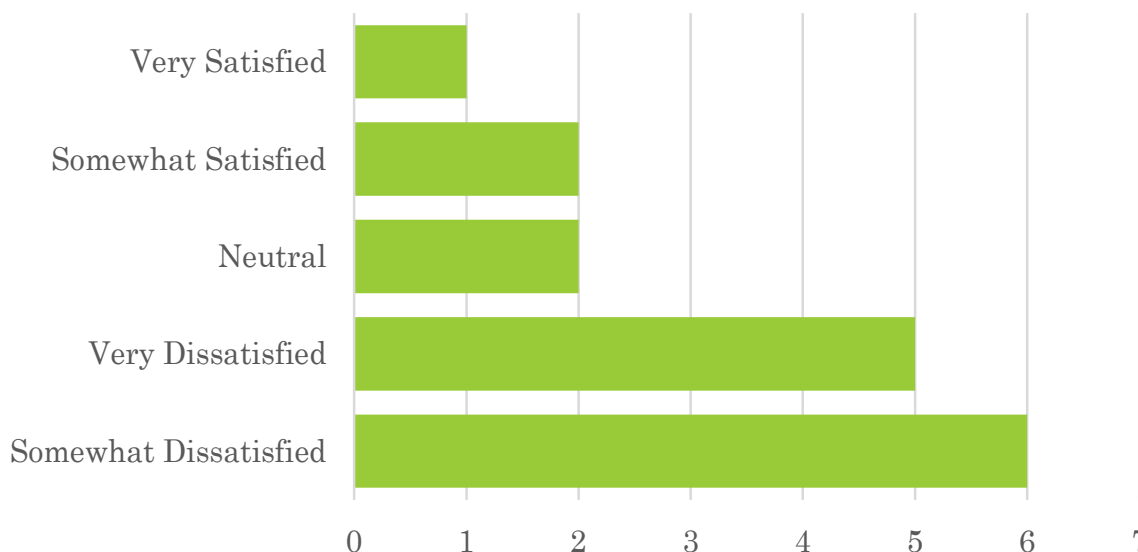
- 12 Business believe the hotel will bring opportunities to their business, 4 neutral

Rented Vs. Owned Businesses



■ Rent ■ Own

'How satisfied are you with the current parking?'



# 07 Recommendations

Through the use of our research along with community outreach, our team has found three concerns that we aim to solve with a few recommendations.

## Parking

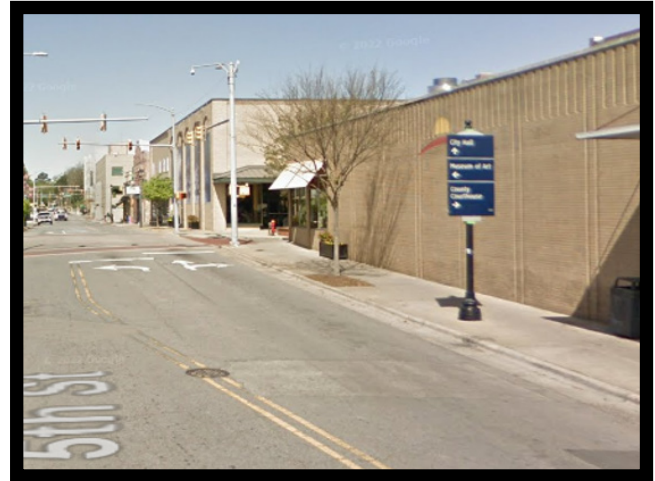
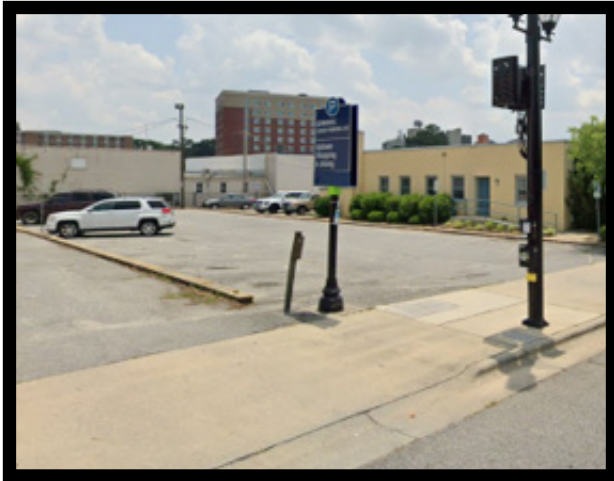
Within the teams public outreach and previous survey's, parking availability is a serious concern that has only been exasperated by the development of the new hotel.

Through the use of the new parking policies, residents, and tourists have to download the Passport App, where to input their license plate and the parking zone they are in. Luckily, Greenville Parking has given everyone up to two hours of free parking. However, the issue comes to light when you realize that there are no signs or wayfinders that show where parking lots are.

Our team recommends two different alternatives to the parking solution.

**1. Wayfinding Signage:** Our team has concluded that parking should not only be expanded, but Greenville should also add in signage and wayfinders entering into the city that will show residents and tourists the location of parking lots.

**2. Technology Application:** While we acknowledge Greenville just starting their partnership with the Passport App, utilizing different parking apps, such as ParkMobile App will not only allow residents and tourists to pay for parking, but also find which areas or zones have available spots.



# 07 Recommendations

## Advertising

Survey results conclude that business owners want the City, the new Hotel, and Local Businesses to work together to advertise each other.

Our team has come together to offer two alternatives to the advertising solution.

### 1. Interactive Tourist Touchscreen Kiosk located in Hotel

- Downtown restaurants, activities, nightlife, shopping
- Available Public Parking in the city

Pros: User Friendly Interface, Interactive Maps, Multilingual, Accessibility, Allows updates when needed, Marketing for businesses

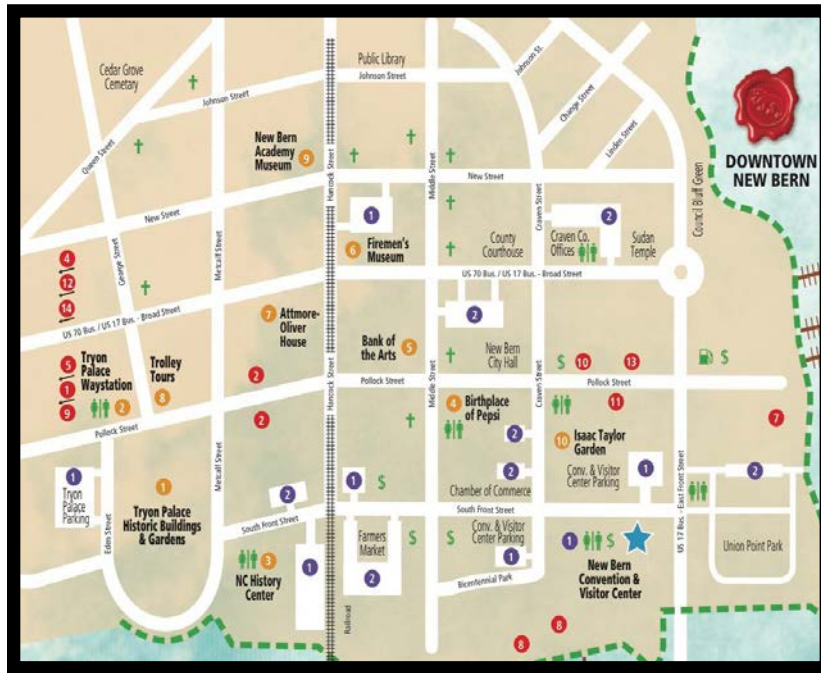
Cons: Price, would need hotel collaboration

### 2. Paper Map Wayfinder

- Downtown restaurants, activities, nightlife, shopping
- Available Public Parking in the city

Pros: Inexpensive, Marketing for Businesses

Cons: May need to be updated for changing landscape, not interactive



## Budget Considerations



\$2,559.99 each

# 07 Recommendations

## Funding for Local Businesses

Due to concerns over lack of grant/funding opportunities, our team has concluded that providing a competitive grant program for local small businesses will greatly increase financial stability in the area. A concern brought to our team was how the city would find and put aside funding for this grant program. Luckily, our team has come together with a few ideas to help the City curb any actual costs, and hopefully have the grant program be funded by these methods only.

### 1. Tax Program Implementation

The City of Greenville can implement different tax programs to help fund this Small Business Fund. A couple examples include implementing a sales tax allocation, and possibly even an occupancy tax.

### 2. Public-Private Partnership

The City of Greenville hosts a variety of different institutions and companies that the City could work with to help provide funding towards a Small Business Fund. Whether the City works with an institution such as East Carolina University, or a big company in the area such as Taft Company.

#### Identifying Common Goals:

Public and private entities come together when they share common goals related to local economic development. These goals may include job creation, infrastructure development, community revitalization, and fostering entrepreneurship.

#### Financial Contributions:

Public and private partners contribute financial resources to support local businesses. Public funding may come from government grants, subsidies, or low-interest loans. Private funding may include equity investments, loans, or other financial instruments.

#### Incentives:

Public entities may offer financial incentives like tax breaks to encourage private sector involvement.

#### Sharing Risks and Rewards:

PPPs often involve a risk-sharing mechanism where both public and private partners share the risks and rewards associated with the success or failure of the initiatives. This encourages a collaborative approach and aligns the interests of both sectors.

## Small Business Fund Implementation Plan

Needs Assessment & Stakeholder Engagement	Conduct a detailed assessment of downtown businesses needs. Engage in conversations with local businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to learn about their difficulties and concerns.
Policy Development	Create a clear policy framework detailing the tax program fund's objectives, scope, and guidelines. Define the categories of businesses eligible for help, the assistance criteria, and the duration of the program.
Legal & Regulatory Review	Establish that the proposed tax program is consistent with existing laws and regulations. Seek legal counsel to resolve any potential legal or regulatory issues and to create any ordinances or resolutions that may be required.
Financial Planning	Establish a budget for the tax program fund. Consider alternative funding sources, such as reallocating existing resources, applying for grants, or enacting a particular tax or levy for specified objectives.
Establishment	Create the tax program fund as a dedicated financial the entity. Define the governance structure, including the duties and responsibilities of the fund's relevant city departments or agencies.
Public Awareness & Education	Launch a public awareness campaign to educate local businesses and residents about the tax program fund. To encourage participation, clearly convey the benefits, qualifying criteria, and application process.
Application Process	Create a simple and open application process for businesses to gain access to the tax program fund. Outline the paperwork needed, the evaluation criteria, and the dates.
Selection & Approval Process	Create a fair and impartial application assessment and approval procedure. To analyze applications based on defined criteria, form a selection committee or use existing city departments.
Collaboration with Financial Institutions and Private Partnerships	Consider collaborations with financial institutions and other groups to have access to extra resources and knowledge. To expand the program's reach, work with local chambers of commerce and business associations.
Monitoring, Evaluation & Improvement	Conduct a detailed examination of the tax program fund on a regular basis. Solicit input from businesses and stakeholders in order to discover areas for development and to increase the program's efficacy.

# 07 Recommendations

## Hotel Partnership

One way to ease the transition of the hotel development after construction is to encourage engagement between the Hilton Garden Inn and the local businesses. Engaging with local businesses can be mutually beneficial for hotels and the community. It enhances the overall guest experience, supports the local economy, and strengthens the hotel's ties with the community. Here are some ways our team believes the hotel can effectively engage with local businesses:

### 1. Collaboration

- Establish partnerships with local restaurants, cafes, and bars for catering services or exclusive discounts for hotel guests.
- Collaborate with local attractions, museums, or theaters to offer special packages or joint promotions.

### 2. Local Showcase

- Include local brands in amenities, like locally sourced coffee or snacks in guest rooms.
- Rotate art exhibits or installations from nearby galleries.

### 3. Business Event Rental Space

- Allow local businesses to rent out spaces such as conference rooms to host business meetings, trainings, and social events.
- Promote use for local business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Greenville Partnership

### 4. Business Recommendation & Promotion

- Feature local businesses on the hotel's social media platforms.
- Use social media to share information about local events, promotions, and community news.
- Create a local business directory or guide for guests, highlighting nearby shops, restaurants, and attractions.

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