



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

# The Economic Impact of *Main Street* in North Carolina

January-December 2022 Activity



**N.C. Department of Commerce, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center**

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center works in regions, counties, cities, towns, downtown districts, and designated North Carolina Main Street communities to inspire placemaking through building asset-based economic development strategies that achieve measurable results such as investment, business growth, and jobs.



*North Carolina*  
**MAIN STREET**

Machelle Sanders, Secretary of Commerce | Kenny Flowers, Assistant Secretary for Rural Economic Development  
Elizabeth H. Parham, Director, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center | Sherry Adams, Program Manager, NC Main Street Program



Main Street America™ is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Coordinating agencies such as the N.C. Department of Commerce’s NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, locally designated communities in North Carolina, and more than 1,200 additional neighborhoods and communities across the country are working in collaboration with the National Main Street Center to build stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. There are 79 designated Main Street and Small Town Main Street communities in North Carolina, yet the principles of Main Street® are adopted and followed by hundreds of communities, of all sizes, throughout the state.



Small Business Saturday in Lenoir, NC

## The Programs

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center (the Center) manages the NC Main Street, Small Town Main Street, and Downtown Associate Community programs, the Rural Transformation Grant Fund - Downtown Revitalization category, and the NC Main to Main Trail Initiative. Through its Main Street Program, staff provides designated communities with strategic economic development planning and technical assistance for downtown revitalization, Main Street® program guidance, extensive training and education for staff and volunteers, and grants and funding information for downtown. The Main to Main Trail is a tourism-based destination development initiative that is supported in part by a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

## Training & Education

Attendance counts for the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center’s robust downtown revitalization training and education opportunities totaled 2,384 in 2022. The Center held Regional Meetings with downtown professionals in June and November, and a Main Street Directors’ Meeting in Elizabeth City in August 2022. Main Street Basic Training courses were held in January, April, August, and October, and provided Main Street and Small Town Main Street program staff, board members, and volunteers with in-depth knowledge of the components of each of the four areas of Main Street’s comprehensive program: *Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization*. The Center provided site-specific training for designated Main Street, Small Town Main Street, and Downtown Associate Community programs that requested training for board and committee members on downtown revitalization topics.

### NC Main Street Conference

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual NC Main Street Conference, held in March 2022, used a virtual platform. The conference, *Healthy Communities Begin on Main Street*, attracted 600 attendees and is the largest statewide downtown revitalization conference in the United States. The 2022 *Annual Main Street Awards Ceremony* honored 10 Main Street and Small Town Main Street projects and the 2022 *Main Street Champions Recognition Ceremony* honored 33 individuals, organizations, and agencies that made significant contributions to their local Main Street programs.



### Leverage NC

In partnership with the NC League of Municipalities, the NC State Historic Preservation Office and the NC Downtown Development Association, the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center offered 19 webinars through Leverage NC in 2022, which provided training for 1,231 individuals.



## Strategic Economic Development Planning & Technical Assistance

The NC Main Street Program team works with individual Main Street programs and their community leaders on strategic economic development planning, market analysis and property redevelopment initiatives, and, in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Department of Interior Architecture, provides façade improvement plans to property and business owners located in the downtown districts of designated NC Main Street and Small Town Main Street communities.

### On the Cover Clockwise

**The Andy Griffith Plaza**  
Mount Airy, NC

**The Loading Dock**  
Wake Forest, NC

**Moonlight on Main**  
Belmont, NC

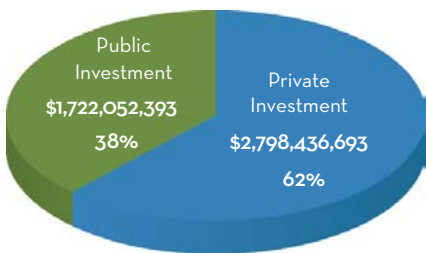
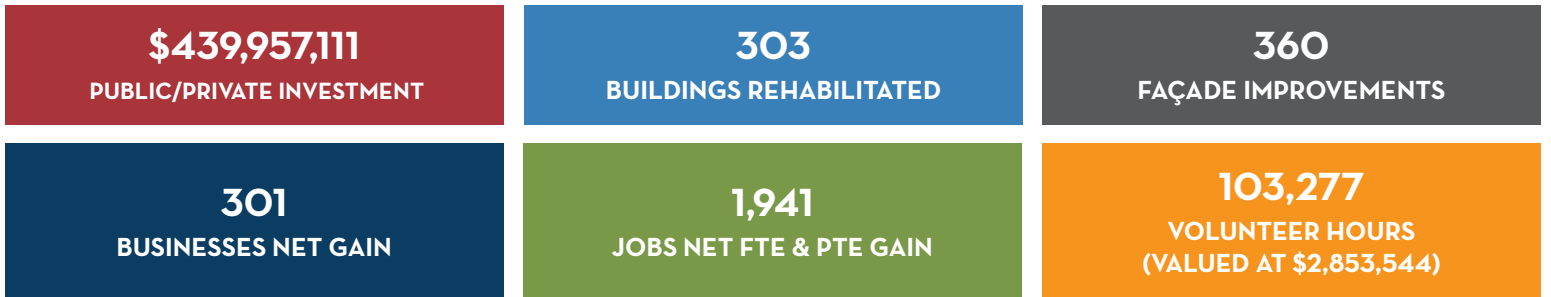
**Wilkes Communications Pavilion**  
Wilkesboro, NC

**Leprechaun Chase Scavenger Hunt**  
Lenoir, NC

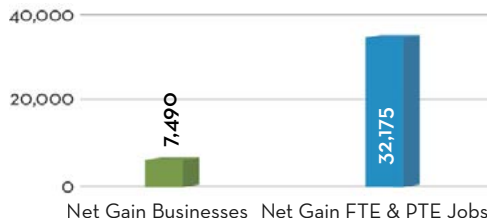
# 2022 Calendar Year | NC Main Street Program Services Delivered to 157 Communities



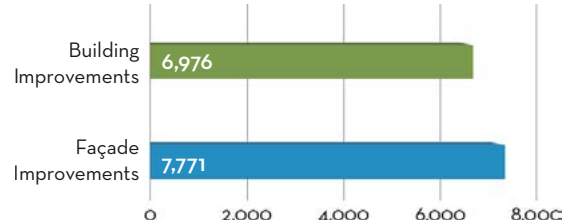
## Total NC Main Street and NC Small Town Main Street Statistical Data | FY 2021-2022



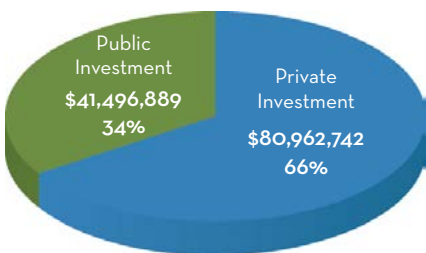
NCMS | Cumulative Investment, 1981-2022



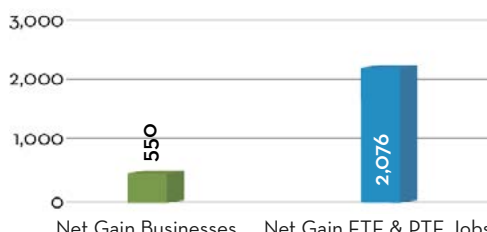
NCMS | Cumulative Job Growth, 1981-2022



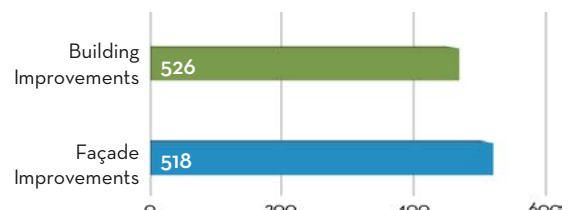
NCMS | Cumulative Property Improvements, 1981-2022



STMS | Cumulative Investment, 2004-2022



STMS | Cumulative Job Growth, 2004-2022



STMS | Cumulative Property Improvements, 2004-2022

STMS numbers reflect communities that moved up to NC Main Street designation.

## Rural Transformation Grant Fund - Downtown Revitalization

In the spring of 2022, the N.C. Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division launched the Rural Transformation Grant Fund (RTGF). One of four funding categories, Downtown Revitalization, received 36 applications in round 1, totaling more than \$28 million in requests, and 63 applications in round 2, totaling more than \$44 million in requests. Following a thorough review of both rounds, 36 projects totaling \$23,000,778 were awarded funding for publicly owned projects in downtown districts from Murphy to Elizabeth City. The fund was made available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and is the largest single funding source that has been available to downtown districts since the inception of the Main Street North Carolina program in 1980.



Rural Transformation Grant Fund design proposal for building rehabilitation in Maysville, NC.

### NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center Team

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center team is comprised of Main Street and downtown revitalization specialists, rural and community economic development planners, and a Geographic Information System (GIS) analyst.

Elizabeth (Liz) Parham, CMSM  
*Director*

Sherry Adams, CMSM  
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Karen Smith, AICP  
*Program Manager, Rural Planning Program*

Ann Bass  
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Kyle Case  
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*Downtown Development Specialist*

Jeff Emory  
*Community Economic Development Planner - Southwest Region*

Charles Halsall  
*Main Street Program Specialist*

Grace Lawrence  
*Community Economic Development Planner - Sandhills Region*

Glen Locascio  
*GIS Analyst*

Bruce Naegelen  
*Community Economic Development Planner - North Central Region*

Lee Padrick  
*Chief Planner, Community Economic Development Planner - Northeast Region*

Naomi Riley  
*Coordinator, Downtown Services*

Amy Suggs  
*Community Economic Development Planner - Southeast Region*

For a complete list of NC Main Street and Small Town Main Street communities, visit [commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/nc-main-street-rural-planning-center/main-street-program](https://commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/nc-main-street-rural-planning-center/main-street-program)

