

## Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) Quarterly Impact Report #4

2021 Quarter 4 (October - December) Activities

### What Is CERRI?

In January 2021, the Rural Planning Program (RPP), part of the N.C. Department of Commerce's Main Street & Rural Planning (MS&RP) Center, launched CERRI in response to the economic challenges small towns and rural communities in the state have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CERRI provides participating communities with a planning process to develop local economic recovery strategies and technical assistance to implement them. Key CERRI services the RPP offers include conducting a community assessment; facilitating development of an economic recovery plan of work to build local economic resiliency and support small businesses; and providing guidance and assistance, as needed, with plan of work implementation.

The RPP engaged 11 communities in CERRI in 2021 (see those shown as "Initial" on the map, below). In 2022, the RPP will continue working with the initial communities while extending CERRI services to 17 more (shown as "New" on the map, below).

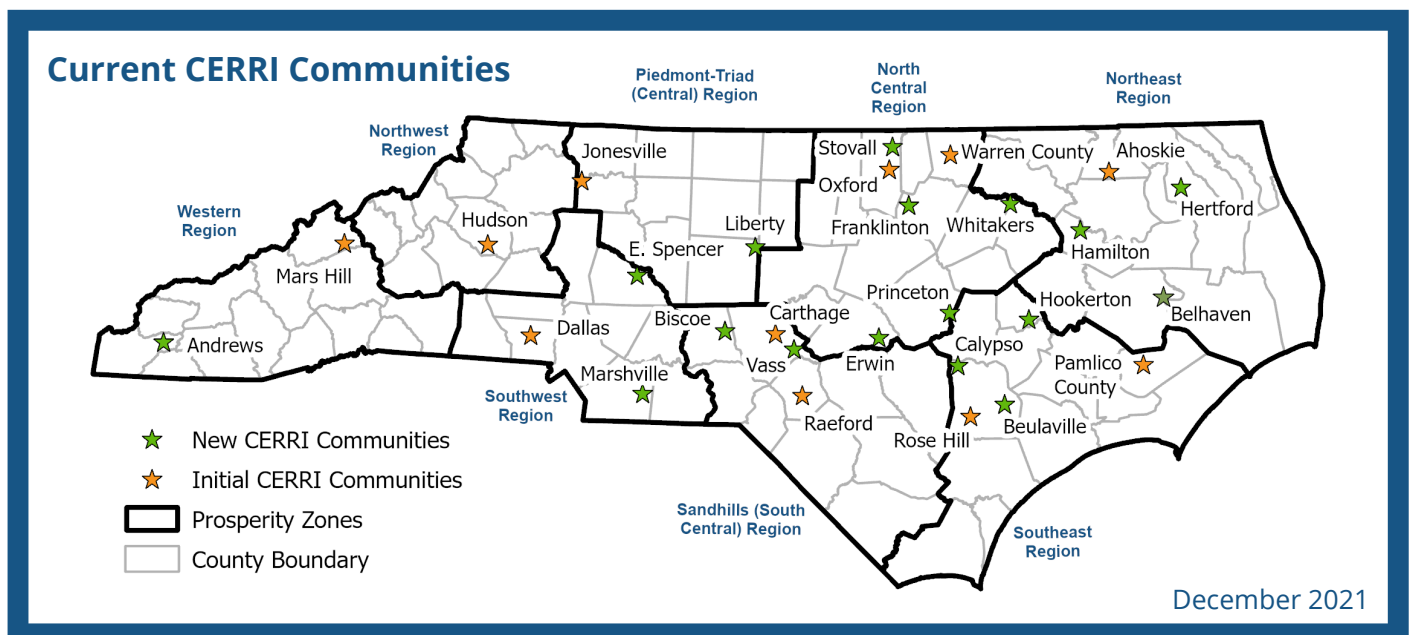
### Thank You, CERRI Partners!

CERRI communities receive help with project development, resource identification, and implementation from RPP partners, including NC Hometown Strong, the NC Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) program, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the NC Main Street program, regional councils of government, and economic development organizations. Training and tools are also available thanks to MS&RP Center affiliations with Leverage NC, the NC Small Business and Technology Development Center, and others.

***The RPP appreciates the support its partners provided in 2021 for CERRI and the initial 11 communities involved in the new initiative.***



Hudson Uptown Building (HUB) Station, a former school campus owned by the Town of Hudson, houses an arts center and a business center.



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### 2021 CERRI Activity Highlights (Initial 11 Communities)

	2021 Q4 (Oct-Dec)	2021 Q1-Q4 (Jan-Dec)
Economic recovery plans of work completed by CERRI local work groups	1	4
Economic recovery plans of work adopted by governing boards	1	2
CERRI local work group meetings facilitated by RPP staff	7	34
Meetings of RPP staff and CERRI local coordinators and/or project partners	10	56
Presentations by RPP staff to governing boards	2	4
Hometown Strong Action Team visits with CERRI communities	1	10
Leverage NC webinars highlighting one or more CERRI communities	1	2

#### Hudson Adopts CERRI Economic Recovery Plan of Work

The Town of Hudson adopted its CERRI final report and economic recovery plan of work in October 2021. ARC planner Kyle Case, with support from RPP planner Jeff Emory, led the town's work group through a planning process to develop strategies for building community economic resiliency and supporting small businesses. Hudson's plan of work focuses on three goals: 1) increasing traffic to the central business district and the HUB through connectivity and design efforts; 2) creating a cohesive brand and marketing strategy to inform and attract residents and visitors; and 3) improving communication with the local small business community and providing support services where possible.

#### Dallas Work Group Begins CERRI Planning Process

The CERRI work group for the Town of Dallas began meeting in the last quarter of 2021. During its first two sessions, the work group identified local economic drivers and assets and completed a SWOT analysis. RPP staff surveyed work group members, the local government, and Dallas businesses, and interviewed community stakeholders. The work group's next task is to select issues and topics it wants to study further before developing economic strategies.



Historic Courthouse in Dallas, the initial Gaston County seat of government.

*“The CERRI planning process was great for our small town since it generated collaboration between government and business to identify how the local government can better support our business community, not just during the pandemic, but in general. The resulting work plan has become a cornerstone for how we think and plan local government activities that benefit our small businesses. As we begin planning for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget, this work plan will be used a guide as we prioritize funding.”*

**Jonathan Greer, Town Manager  
 Town of Hudson, NC**

#### Leverage NC Webinars Highlight CERRI Communities

In 2021, four CERRI communities were featured in Leverage NC webinars. In August, “Planning for Recovery: Highlights from the Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI),” included conversations between RPP staff members and representatives from Ahoskie, Carthage, Jonesville, and Pamlico County. A segment in the December webinar, “Tap Into Your Rural Division Partners,” focused on CERRI and contained an interview with Ahoskie Chamber of Commerce staff. Leverage NC is a resource for communities looking to strengthen their local economies and support enhanced business opportunities. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center is one of several collaborators that partnered in June 2020 to establish Leverage NC. The partnership has produced many educational webinars with experts addressing a variety of topics. For more information, and to view recordings of past webinars, visit the Leverage NC website at [www.leveragenc.org](http://www.leveragenc.org).